UNIVERSITY OF NEW ZEALAND.

THESIS

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THE EXPLORATION AND SETTLEMENT

OF THE UPPER RANGITATA DISTRICT.
FOREWORD.

The Upper Rangitata district has two claims to recognition in a history of New Zealand. Firstly, it was the home for a few years of the great English satirist, Samuel Butler, and secondly it was the location of the first high-country sheep-run in Canterbury. The scenery and pioneering life have been described by the pen of a genius in "Erewhon" and "First Year in the Canterbury Settlement." These accounts are fragments rather than history, but serve to lend charm to an already interesting district. This thesis covers a brief survey of the southern or right bank of the Rangitata River from Mt. Peel to the Southern Alps. Some of the information has been obtained from old diaries, and where possible, it has been verified from the records of the time. Many people have been interviewed, and efforts have been made to substantiate the data obtained. The problem of selection has been difficult, as this thesis contains only part of the historical facts ascertained.

The founding of Mt. Peel station has been dealt with in some detail. The chapter on Samuel Butler touches very lightly upon a subject which would readily lend itself to much closer treatment, but any real attempt to give a just appreciation of Butler would necessitate the proportions of a thesis by itself. The chapter on the mountain exploration of the district ends in 1914, with the work of Dennistoun. Since that time there has
been much exploration by mountaineering enthusiasts. Records of their climbs are available in the Alpine Club Journals and in the "Canterbury Mountaineer" and many similar publications. These accounts are most comprehensive, giving a wealth of detail, and it is regrettable that such a mine of information could not be used in the writing of this account of the district.

In the available maps of this region two "Butlers Saddles" are shown, one being the low shingle mountain up Forest Creek where Butler obtained his first view of Mt. Cook, and the other being the high pass he traversed between the Lawrence River and the Rakaia River. In this thesis where reference is made to "Butlers Saddle" it should be understood that the Lawrence pass is referred to, and to make this clear I have marked this pass "X Butler Saddle" in the map I am submitting herewith.

Acknowledgments: My sincere thanks are due to the Acland family, W. A. Kennedy Esqre. (N.Z.A.C.), to John D. Pascoe, Esqre. for permission to use several of his photographs, and especially to Dr. Hight.
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CHAPTER I.

GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION.

The Maori word "Rangitata", derived from "rangi" a chief, means "far away up", - an apt name for a river which draws its waters from the precipitous slopes of Mt. D'Archiac at the head of the Two-Thumb Range on its south bank, from Mounts McClure and Edison and other peaks of the main divide of the Southern Alps of New Zealand, and from the permanent snows of the Arrowsmith Range to the east of the main divide.

To the traveller journeying from the sea coast and ascending this turbulent river with its many intertwining streams, the distant mountains offer an irresistible allure. Even their foothills are often mantled in snow and the river itself, spread over a bed apparently many times too big for it, exhibits signs even in fair weather of that tremendous force and fury which are characteristic of it during most of the year.

The Rangitata is one of the snow-fed rivers which have built up that extensive alluvial coastal deposit known as the Canterbury Plains. It crosses the Plains at a point about three-quarters of the distance from Banks Peninsula to the Oamaru Hills. There is no town at its mouth, the nearest being the inland town of Ashburton to the north and the port of Timaru to the south.

An outstanding feature of the river is its series of terraces. It is steeply terraced almost throughout.
its whole length, and nowhere is this more noticeable than from the point of its emergence upon the plain (Peel Forest) to its mouth. In one place as many as seven terraces are distinguishable. As one proceeds upstream from Peel Forest, the valley, which is very wide at that point, closes in within twenty miles to a very narrow gorge. This upper reach of the river, unlike its lower reaches, is confined within one stream of great depth and turbulence, difficult to cross at any time. From the gorge, the river makes almost a complete right-angled turn, opening out into a broad valley about four miles wide and some twenty miles long. This valley is bounded on each side by high hills - the Two-Thumb Range on the left, and foothills from the Arrowsmith Range on the right, each side gashed by numerous declivities down which tumble tributaries to the main stream.

In this stretch the valley floor is surprisingly alluvial for such high country, the river for this part of its course being more smoothly graded than anywhere else throughout its length with the exception of the last few miles. The difference in grading, that is the more level grade above the gorge and the steeper grade below it, may be accounted for by earth movements which at one time travelled from the south-west and caused the fault line which shows most clearly at the gorge of the Waipara River.(1) The

differences in grade of the Rangitata may be noted from the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance in Miles</th>
<th>Fall of river per Mile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From the junction of the Havelock and Clyde Rivers to the beginning of the plains</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the beginning of the plains to the railway</td>
<td>23\frac{1}{2}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the railway crossing to the sea.</td>
<td>8\frac{1}{2}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tussocky lower slopes of the confining hills afford good pasturage, and although the floor of the valley itself is potentially all riverbed, its alluvial flats are capable of yielding good crops of winter feed.

The chief difficulty facing the settler is the great variation in the volume of the river from season to season. Under the influence of heavy rains and melting snows its level will rise many feet in a few hours, but there are flats here which are seldom flooded. The upper half of this valley comprises part of the Mesopotamia station. Eight miles past the point where the Mesopotamia homestead now stands the river divides into two branches, the Havelock (southern branch) and the Clyde (northern branch). Some miles further up the Clyde is joined by the Lawrence which flows from the slopes of the Arrowsmith Range within a few miles of the headwaters of the Rakaia River.

(1) "Historical Notes on the Geology of Canterbury and Westland", Julius Von Haast, Christchurch 1879, page 404.
The mountains are composed of greywacke, folded slates, and mudstones. The accepted theory is that they once formed a vast peneplain, which has been dissected first by the action of glaciers carving out deep valleys, and later by the friction of rivers flowing from the glaciers as they receded. The headwaters of the Rangitata River drain an area of approximately 150 square miles. Waters from glaciers on Mt. D'Archiac drain into the Havelock, as well as waters from some of the main divide glaciers, notably those on Mts. Edison and McClure, and from the Sinclair Range. The Clyde River on its northern side drains the Frances, the Agnes and other glaciers, and on the southern side Mt. Tyndall and Baker Peak. The Lawrence, a tributary to the Clyde, flows between the Jollie Range and the Arrowsmith Range and drains such mountains as Arrowsmith (9,171 feet), Couloir Peak, Jagged Peak, North Peak and Red Peak. All these Arrowsmith peaks also drain into the headwaters of the Rakaia River, and Mt. Arrowsmith itself also feeds the Ashburton River. Over to the west the drainage area of the Rangitata is separated from the headwaters of the Wateroa River in Westland by the main divide of the Southern Alps. The accompanying maps show the relative positions.

The valleys of the Rangitata headwaters show abundant signs of intense glaciation. They are typical

U-shaped valleys with flat floors and steep sides. Hanging valleys are numerous and are perfect examples of that type of glacier action of which there is so much other evidence in the moraines, roches-moutonnées, truncated spurs and ice-scoured shoulders. The landforms of the alpine region of the Rangitata have in recent years attracted many geomorphologists. It is the opinion of Professor Speight that the Lawrence Valley exhibits the remains of glaciation in their most perfect form. The valley floors are shingly and show all the signs of young valleys. Another interesting feature is the evidence of the fault line which runs through the Southern Alps. (2)

There are seams of brown coal in places in the valley, one of which near the Potts River, which joins the Rangitata about three miles above the Mesopotamia homestead, was found by Professor Speight to extend for twenty-five chains and to be about four chains wide with an average depth of eighteen feet. (3)

The Rangitata River, then, is formed by the junction of three main streams, the Havelock, the Clyde and the Lawrence, the first two rising in the main divide of the Southern Alps, which are here about 7,500 feet high, and the last-mentioned in the high mass of the Arrowsmith Range and the country west of it. The valleys of the two former are very wide, having two miles approximately of flat valley floor, but the Lawrence flows through a narrow valley.

(2) and (3). As above.
Below the confluence of these streams there was the wide valley previously mentioned, stretching for about twenty miles down to the gorge. The present bed of the river, as distinguished from its former courses, is here very wide in places, sometimes as much as half a mile. The slower current resulting from the banked-up waters above the gorge has facilitated the formation of a plain by the deposit of soil carried down.

The early settlers regarded the Rangitata as dangerous and treacherous. It was, like all other Canterbury rivers, subject to sudden and disastrous flooding, but its chief menace arose from its swift currents.

The original or natural vegetation of this region consisted of forest, mostly beech (fagus solandri) which extended to the junction of the Havelock with the Clyde. Above that point the forest gradually disappeared and a "new and strange vegetation took its place." Coarse grass grew in patches. Spaniard (matakauri) grew in clumps sometimes five to six feet in diameter and four to five feet high. The tussock grasses and rushes, typical of Canterbury grassland, gradually gave way to sub-alpine growth. This sub-alpine vegetation in turn gave place to the ice and snow of the

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(1) page 2, line 10.
Southern Alps. Von Haast noted the signs of the avalanches and the great destruction wrought by them, but comments that the power of nature was still greater for "everywhere among these blocks, where the least stability could be obtained, plants often in great luxuriance had driven their roots." (1)

(2) The rainfall of the district has been recorded for the areas mentioned below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mount Peel (1892 to 1918) only 19 years complete.</td>
<td>41.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peel Forest (1893 to date)</td>
<td>43.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Possession (July 1929 to date)</td>
<td>28.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Potts (August 1940 to date).</td>
<td>45.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The seasonal variation is illustrated by the average monthly values from Peel Forest:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>4.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>3.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>2.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>2.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept.</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct.</td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>4.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>4.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The annual total rainfall shows considerable variation from year to year, as the following table will show:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1890</th>
<th>1900</th>
<th>1940</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>56.04</td>
<td>44.03</td>
<td>52.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>58.44</td>
<td>43.84</td>
<td>55.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>41.44</td>
<td>42.28</td>
<td>39.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This completes a brief survey of the valley. It now remains to tell the story of its settlement. To bring the area down to the practical limits of a history such as this, only part of the available records of rainfall of the district have been quoted. Full information is contained in the records of the Meteorological Office, Wellington.
it is proposed to deal first with the settlement of the land
lying along the true right or southern bank of the river,
and then with the alpine exploration at the head of the valleys.
Before this can be done, it is necessary to give a brief resume
of the conditions prevailing in Canterbury at that time, and
the events which led up to the first settlement of the Upper
Rangitata district – the first high country run to be established
in Canterbury, and probably the first in New Zealand.
CHAPTER II

CANTERBURY LAND SETTLEMENT, 1850-1855.

The earliest settlers to go outside the "Canterbury Block" (1) naturally chose the most accessible land, the remaining sections of the flat and fertile Canterbury Plains. For reasons which will be apparent later when we come to consider the economic conditions of the time, these settlers were all pastoralists, so that it needed but very few of them to exhaust the possibilities of settlement on the Plains. The next type of land to be taken up was the rolling hill or downlands, as this territory also was suitable for sheep-raising. The last to be settled was the higher country of the uplands - the type of country which varies from high rugged hills with tussocky patches upon them, to wild mountainous country with old glacier valleys or riverbeds forming small portions of comparatively flat land between the hills or mountains.

The Rangitata district was no exception to this rule of precedence. Within four years from the arrival at Lyttelton of the first four ships under the Canterbury Association's settlement scheme, i.e. by 1855, the whole of the plains in the Rangitata as in the other districts in Canterbury had been taken up as grazing runs from the Association or from the Provincial Government. Yet by 1855

(1) See below, p. 12.
no one had even visited the Rangitata district above a line about twenty miles from the sea. This was the Great Unknown.

In order to understand the conditions prevailing in Canterbury in 1855 it is necessary to give a brief sketch of the district up to that date. The Canterbury Settlement was founded in 1848-1850, upon the Edward Gibbon Wakefield plan of colonisation. It was very carefully planned, the details having been threshed out by an association of public-spirited men in London, imbued with high ideals and the desire to see transplanted to the new land all that was best of the social structure of England, freed from the dire poverty, disease, incompetence, and illiteracy which trammelled older lands.

An Association was formed by Statute to carry out the project, and received a great deal of support financially and in other ways from these men. Capital for the building of roads and the provision of other public necessities was to come from the sale of the Association's land to intending settlers, the prices paid to be sufficiently high to form a sufficient fund for this purpose, and also to ensure that the land-holders were men of substance, having capital adequate to develop their lands. The labour requirements of the new settlement were carefully estimated - so many of each of the various classes of skilled farmworkers and artisans, so many labourers, and the necessary leaven from the professions and the more cultured. Lands were to be set aside from the
beginning to be offered as leasehold, not freehold, the income arising from them to be used as endowments for church and educational institutions, the latter to include a university. All applications to emigrate to the settlement were examined by a committee in London, and every attempt was made to see that only suitable persons came out. The result justified the hopes of the sponsors of the experiment, the early pioneers of Canterbury being on the whole of a very fine type, competent, high-principled, hard-working, and imbued with the highest ideals.

When the first colonists under the Association's plan arrived in December 1850, the great fertile Canterbury block lay comparatively untouched. The original provisions of the Association laid it down that agricultural land could be purchased by settlers at a price not less than Three pounds (£3) cash per acre. Unoccupied pastoral land could be obtained under license only by purchasers of agricultural land, and then only in the ratio of five acres of pastoral land to every one acre of agricultural land purchased. The rental for the leasehold was to be sixteen shillings and eightpence (16/8) per hundred acres if the purchaser had bought his agricultural land before August 1850, otherwise one pound (£1) per hundred acres. This land could be taken up at first only in sections of at least fifty (50) acres, but later this limit was reduced to twenty (20) acres.

The Canterbury Settlement thus founded grew strong
despite many difficulties. In 1853 its boundaries were extended to the Hurunui in the north and the Waitaki in the south, and it became the Province of Canterbury under the "New Zealand Constitution Act 1852", with a large measure of local control. In 1851 the "Lyttelton Times" commenced publication. The College projected by the Association was set up in a wooden building at Lyttelton, one room for the Collegiate Department, the other for the Grammar School. The Canterbury Provincial Council within a few years commenced the erection of a Provincial Chamber which should be in keeping with the pioneers' traditions, and be a place worthy to be the seat of government of the province. It still stands, a remarkable building, erected under extraordinary difficulties - a witness to the good architectural taste of the settlers and their appreciation of the importance of civic deliberations.

The financial standing of the Association did not prosper during these years. Land sales were not up to expectations, and the resultant lack of money caused much anxiety. The gold rushes to Victoria and New South Wales in Australia drew men away from Canterbury, and this caused a shortage of labour which aggravated the difficulties caused by the shortage of capital.

Squatters came from Australia, with their flocks and herds, and claimed runs on which to depasture them. These squatters were not prepared to pay Three pounds (£3)
per acre for the land, or even the Two pounds (£2) per acre to which it was later reduced. The Superintendent, John Robert Godley, was placed in an awkward position. He had no authority under the Regulations to grant runs to these Australians, but if he refused to do so, the young colony would lose the benefit of their capital and experience. The Canterbury Block extended only from the Waipara to the Ashburton Rivers, and it was quite possible for the newcomers to settle on land outside it, which was under the remote control of the General Assembly of the colony. In fact, many of them did so.

Godley took matters into his own hands in 1852 and allowed land to be taken up on a leasehold basis for pastoral purposes. In the following year Sir George Grey as Governor of New Zealand lowered the price of land outside the Canterbury block to Ten shillings (10/-) per acre — in some cases the price was as low as Five shillings (5/-) an acre. This meant that no one was likely to take up land within the block at Two pounds (£2) an acre when land outside it could be obtained at Ten shillings or even Five shillings an acre.

Godley's action in granting leases ruined the finances of the old Association, but it is now considered to have saved the province. (1) There was much to be said in favour of the cancellation of the Regulations. The

(1) See "Writings & Speeches By John Robert Godley" Christchurch 1863, p. 195, for his account of the financial difficulties which forced his hand.
provisions laid down to ensure that the settlement had a strong agricultural bias were not possible of execution in a new and sparsely populated country where it was impossible to cultivate more than a very small proportion of the land: the rest of the vast area must remain waste land unless it could be used for grazing. Then, too, the provisions themselves had been based on an incorrect estimation of the grazing value of the land. The Association had calculated that the land would carry three sheep to the acre, whereas in fact it took three acres to feed one sheep!

By 1854 much of the land outside the Canterbury Block had been taken up. In this year the runs already occupied were listed and mapped, and new licenses were granted to cover newly defined areas. In this year, also, the Commissioner, Brittan, instituted a much-needed reform by enforcing provisions with regard to the stocking of runs. This meant that those lessees who were unable to stock their runs, or who did not choose to do so, had to forfeit them. In this way many runs became available to real settlers, as speculators could not or would not fulfil these requirements. These runs were all taken up and stocked within a short time.

This thesis deals with the uplands of the Rangitata region in particular, but it is of interest first to trace the settlement of the land below Peel Forest - the dividing line between lowland and upland above which point no one had as yet penetrated.
On 1st November 1853 Francis Jollie secured a license from the New Zealand Government for twenty-five thousand (25,000) acres between the Orari and Rangitata Rivers (Run No. 12). His boundaries were: on the north-west the mountains, and on the south-east "a line parallel to the sea coast at such a distance as shall give the prescribed extent only". Later his run was defined as extending "from the crossroad just below the Upper Orari Bridge up to Peel Forest itself and took in the spur from Little Mt. Peel to the Orari".\(^{(1)}\) It is interesting to note that the present homestead of Peel Forest station, now occupied by Commander Dennistoun, was built by Francis Jollie in 1859.

The land from Jollie's run to the sea, between the Rangitata and Orari Rivers, was taken up by three brothers: W.K., A.R. and A. Macdonald. North of the Orari River, between the foothills and the sea, runs were held by Alfred Cox. Thus by 1855 the whole of the land on the south bank of the Rangitata from Peel Forest to the sea had been taken up.

Four runs occupied the territory of the north bank, stretching as far north as the Hinds River. Of these four, the most outstanding runholder was Benjamin Michael Moorhouse, who was a younger brother of the well-known William Sefton Moorhouse, four times Superintendent of Canterbury. Benjamin, although not registered as a practitioner, was a graduate in medicine of Edinburgh University. He was a man of happy and kindly disposition, and with his medical skill he inevitably

became doctor and midwife, adviser and friend to the whole community, smoothing out the worst of the rough places for all those about him. His run extended from the first island in the Rangitata River above Peel Forest, to the district now known as Mayfield.

Next to Moorhouse, John Cracroft Wilson (familiarly known as "the Nabob") held a run which extended fifteen miles from the sea. Beyond his run, and nearer to the sea, was one held by James Dowling Rogers. The last of the runs in this district stretched to the sea. It was held by two partners, Ernest Gray and William Scott, who named their station Coldstream, in joking reference to another Scots-Grey combination, the famous regiment the "Coldstream Guards".

While the above mentioned runs had occupied the comparatively flat country leading up to Peel Forest from the sea, the forest itself had never been penetrated, and the country beyond it was quite unknown to white men.

(1) An interesting personality. Educated at Oxford, he had a great career in India as a soldier. On a visit to N.Z. in 1854 he set up a run near Ch'Ch, finally settling here in 1859. He became a picturesque and respected figure in public life and held many offices. Created Knight in 1870.
CHAPTER III.

PEEL FOREST.

This forest had been observed from the plains and the sea. C. G. Torlesse,\(^{(1)}\) a surveyor sent out by the Canterbury Association, named it Guerdon Forest on his map in 1849, but Johannes Andersen\(^{(2)}\) considers it probable that the name "Peel" was given by Captain Stokes of the Admiralty survey ship "Acheron" which was in these waters about the same year as Torlesse, as well as in subsequent years. Torlesse evidently did his surveying from a considerable distance, as he estimated the extent of Peel Forest to be seven thousand (7,000) acres, whereas on later survey it proved to be just under two thousand (2,000) acres. The name of Peel supplants that of Guerdon on subsequent maps.

The forest itself is a mixed one of the subtropical type. It is interesting to note that some parts of the middle island of New Zealand, although in the temperate zone, contain many plants of a subtropical type, the persistence of these plants being made possible by the heavy rainfall and warm winds. In its virgin state Peel Forest must have contained some mighty specimens of the New Zealand native trees - totara (Podocarpus totara), matai (P. spicatus), and kahikatea (P. dacrydium), the latter two being often spoken of as black and white pine respectively. These three species belong to the Podocarp family, and here as elsewhere in New\(^{(1)}\) Torlesse was a nephew of Edward Gibbon Wakefield.
Zealand are found scattered throughout a forest comprised chiefly of smaller trees and shrubs of the broadleaf type. There are also many varieties of ferns and mosses, and the usual climbers such as clematis, rata, supplejack, and the ubiquitous lawyer. Some of them are very beautiful: the bloom of the rata trees in February enriches the whole forest.

Today as in 1855 the forest climbs up spurs to a height two thousand (2,000) feet above sea-level, but in 1855 it must have extended in places down to the waters of the Rangitata. Now it is arrested at the bottom of the foothills, and nowhere encroaches upon the plain.

The forest was, and is, very beautiful, with its many shadings of green — although Samuel Butler records (1) that he was disappointed at the absence of the brilliant colourings which "a burst of bloom such as there is in Switzerland and Italy" would have provided. He thought the monotony of our evergreens was not sufficiently relieved, not even by the brilliant red of the rata.

One of the features which intensifies the appeal of the forest is its bird life. The kuku, or woodpigeon, probably New Zealand's most handsome bird, is found in large numbers, and performs remarkable aerial acrobatics. He can very nearly loop the loop in his flight: to be exact, he can when he has gained sufficient velocity fly vertically, and for quite a considerable height. Preying on the woodpigeon, and

on lesser birds too, we have the bush-hawk. He accomplishes his ends against the much faster woodpigeon by guile. He selects a slower pigeon and keeps it from shelter, striking when the pigeon is exhausted.

Among the smaller birds, the pugnacious tui makes his presence very evident by his bell-like song, and by the sharp cutting sound of his wings. He can fly through the thickest undergrowth at terrific speed, veering past the larger stems and crashing his way through the smaller, and is much the fastest of the smaller birds. Even that spring-time intruder, the shining cuckoo, gets short shrift from the tui when he ventures too close. With the tui we find his fellow honey-eater, the bellbird, a very beautiful singer, with notes very similar to those of the tui. The pigeon, the tui, and the bellbird do more to fertilise the seed of the trees of the forest than any other agent. Without them the native forest could not survive.

Other native birds are the solitary little tomtit, jealously guarding his own little section of the forest from others of his species, the black and the pied fantails, hard at work all day long catching insects on the wing, and sharing with the tomtit the honour of being the tamest birds of the forest; and the grey warbler, who, in spite of his sad little song, has the most beautiful nest of all the native birds, but who is the foster-parent of the shining cuckoo. He ultimately outwits the cuckoo by raising a second brood after
the cuckoo's activities have ceased. We find there, too, the tiniest of all the New Zealand birds, the rifleman, standing guard for the forest giants against the insects which eat into their trunks.

On the forest floor, the weka is the only survivor of the flightless birds. And when all the forest is asleep, the terror of the small birds, the ruru, or more-pork, issues forth with his haunting cry and incredibly soundless flight.
CHAPTER IV.

TRIPP AND ACLAND.

On 4th January 1855 there arrived at Lyttelton two young men of outstanding merit, men who were in the days to come to typify in themselves the spirit incarnate of pioneering. By their courage and enterprise they subdued the hitherto unknown region above Peel Forest, and thus introduced to this country a new type of farming, that of high-level grazing. The quality of a man's life and work is so often coloured by his nurture and early environment that we must glance at the ancestry and education of these two men.

John Barton Arundel Acland was born at Killerton, near Exeter, on 25th November 1823, the sixth son of Sir Thomas Dyke Acland. After Mitcham School and Harrow, he went to Oxford and there graduated with a second in Mathematics. He then spent three years studying law in London, later practising there. He was always active and energetic, fond of outdoor sports.

His friend, Charles George Tripp, was the third son of the Rector of Silverton, Devon. He was born on 1st July 1826 and at the age of seventeen was apprenticed as a clerk to a Mr. Charles Bayley, a land agent of London. He was nearly five years in London, but during those years he seems despite the attractions of the metropolis to have felt the urge
to widen the scope of his life in some other way. He was interested in the colonies, and when the Canterbury Association was preparing to send settlers to New Zealand in 1849 he thought of emigrating, but was persuaded by Mr. Bayley to remain in England and to consider entering the legal profession. After a year spent on a farm in Hampshire, he entered Edinburgh University and studied Chemistry, Pharmacy, Philosophy and Agriculture, and then spent some time in supervising the construction of drains. It was not until 1851-2 that he commenced reading Law at London. Tripp had the restless enthusiastic spirit which seeks adventure and action rather than the well-paved paths of ordered industry, and, as previously mentioned, he was for many years keen to emigrate to one of the newer lands of the world, preferably Australia or New Zealand.

These two young men, Acland and Tripp, had many qualities in common, and it was inevitable that, following as they did the same profession in London, and living close to each other in Devon, they should come into contact with each other and exchange views and ideas.

The first record I have found of a close friendship between them comes from Acland's diary, (1) where, in November 1853, he records:

"Tripp's rooms in evening."
"Walk with Tripp to Baker Street."
"Breakfast with Tripp."

Acland's diary repeatedly bears witness to the
growing intimacy between them. The following entry on 17th February, 1854, is particularly interesting as showing that these two men were becoming aware of the possibilities of New Zealand.

"With Tripp to Young's New Zealand Room. To Jenkinson's Chambers. Tripp came, refusing to play whist; talk of Antipodes. Read a letter from Tripp's cousin in Melbourne."

It was only a matter of time until Tripp and Acland began seriously to consider leaving England for New Zealand. Tripp had long wished to go, and Acland shared with him those qualities of enterprise and initiative combined with an educated intelligence which make for the successful pioneer. But each had to overcome strong opposition from his family. Sir Thomas Acland qualified his consent with the stipulation that his son must not take up land or enter into any business dealings of a serious nature until he had been in the settlement for one year. This restriction, which he faithfully observed, was to prove a considerable hindrance to the quick-witted, clear-sighted Acland, who was not slow to form a just estimate of the potential value of land, and who saw his friend and himself forestalled in the purchase of very promising areas by land-hungry settlers and speculators. Another promise exacted was that he would return to England on a visit at the end of two years.

At that time (four years after the inception of the Canterbury Settlement), John Robert Godley, the Agent of
the Company, was again in England, and Tripp and Acland took the opportunity of consulting him. They also obtained information and advice from Sir George Gray, and from Bishop Selwyn, who had also returned to England by this time. Godley's letters to young Acland have been preserved by the Acland family, and they make very interesting reading. He advised the intending colonists to take leggings or jack-boots with them, as -

"to ride in trousers is out of the question...... Of shoes and boots in general, you can't take too large a supply. Saddlery, too, is very valuable...... You will find books a great comfort. Get editions which give much reading in small compass. There are libraries at Christchurch and Lyttelton of a miscellaneous kind. They are tolerably well selected, but not large...... All water-proof clothing is sought after in New Zealand, because one takes long journeys on horseback, and it is very disagreeable to come to your camp wet through. Take a swimming-belt, saddle-bags, several leather straps. Remember in furnishing your cabin that the furniture will be used on shore afterwards. Don't buy a gun. If you have an old one you may as well take it as throw it away, but you will never use it."

And then the postscript:-

"We have wonderful accounts of Canterbury prosperity. My wife heard the other day from Hamilton, (who is Treasurer), and he says he expects the revenue of the Province to be £70,000 this year! Last year they estimated it at £6,000."

The preparations made by Tripp and Acland are interesting, and show a great enthusiasm and a wealth of

(1) Letter dated 28th August 1854.
careful detail. Tripp went to the length of taking lessons in Mineralogy, at a fee of ten shillings (10/-) a lesson. He was very puzzled as to how to arrange his money matters, having been advised by some well-meaning but ill-informed friend that he should take as little as possible with him. He wrote asking Acland's opinion on the thorny question, and the advice he received was to the point, and sound. Acland outlined the system of transferring money by means of bills of exchange drawn against letters of credit, and then pithily remarked:

"For a gentleman to go without money, unless he has not got it, or is a remarkable man, must be a mistake."

However, the canny Tripp did not take out a letter of credit, or establish credit in London against which to draw a bill of exchange, as might have been expected. He chose instead to take out capital in the form of goods, including "50 pairs of women's superior leather boots", ploughs, grindstones, 12 saddles, harness, tarpaulins, axes, 15,000 bricks, and so forth. He sold these goods in due course in New Zealand, but unfortunately no records are available as to the profit his enterprise brought him.

They booked passages in the clipper "Royal Stuart", 337 tons, which was to sail from London direct to Lyttelton. They paid eighty-five pounds (£85) each for passage money for cabins measuring six feet by six feet eight inches, and had to furnish their cabins with their own furniture. When
the "Royal Stuart" left England on the evening of 9th October, 1854, (1) a new life had begun for our two pioneers. During the long voyage of fifty-seven (57) days, which was considered a quick run at that time, Acland kept a diary in which he recorded the events and routine from day to day. He mentions the sighting of an iceberg, among other things, and the usual ship-board quarrels and gossip. They arrived at Lyttelton on 4th January 1855. At this time Tripp was twenty-eight (28) years old, and Acland thirty-one (31). They had youth, enthusiasm, intelligence, practical ability, and - very important in a new country - capital. They knew that they would have to obtain their knowledge and experience of sheep-farming under the conditions existing in New Zealand, so they decided to await favourable opportunities of going on to runs as cadets.

Acland's diary indicates the manner in which he spent his time in the meantime. On 23rd January he bought a horse - a grey mare between six and seven years old, for which he paid seventy (70) pounds. Tripp also bought one, paying seventy-two (72) pounds. These were current prices; horses were in short supply and there was a keen demand, for the horse was then the best means of transport across the Canterbury Plains.

Prices generally were correspondingly high. Acland, in his diary, records that labour fetched 10/- a day;

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(1) The Crimean War had broken out in March.
that it cost 6/- to 8/- a day to stable a horse; board and lodgings for a man cost 10/- a day; eggs were 3/- a dozen. In these circumstances it is not surprising that Tripp and Acland decided not to linger in Christchurch. Besides this, Acland was not attracted by the plains; for him mountains had a stronger appeal, but he was disappointed that, as viewed from Christchurch, they lacked a cap of perpetual snow. He did not then know that what could be viewed from Christchurch were merely the foothills.

They had been in New Zealand only three weeks when they felt their first earthquake, which occurred on the night of 23rd January, and was sufficiently severe to drive them out of doors. This was the earthquake which caused extensive damage at Wellington. The reports of this disastrous quake did not reach Christchurch until nearly a fortnight later, so slow were the means of communication in those early days. Here are extracts from the report which appeared in "The Lyttelton Times" on 7th February:

"Wellington. An earthquake took place about nine o'clock on the evening of January 23rd. The first shock, which was very severe, and of about two minutes' duration, occurred about ten minutes past nine o'clock p.m., and was followed at intervals of a few minutes with sharp shocks........"

"This visitation has been as sudden and as unexpected as it has been disastrous. It is, however, consoling to reflect that under the mercy of Divine Providence, with one exception it has been unattended with loss of human life, as might have been the case if it had occurred during the
"busy part of the day, or at a later hour when the inhabitants had retired to rest...."

"Considerable loss has been sustained by the community, and it has been borne with manly fortitude and in a cheerful spirit of submission to the will of God, 'whose Providence ordereth all things both in Heaven and Earth.'"

It would appear that special reporters in those days approached their subject in a very different attitude of mind from that of reporters in our more material age! The actual damage to Wellington was considerable. The Wellington newspaper records -

"the entire destruction of the Council Chamber, the upper storey being completely severed from the lower; the treasury box, and the papers and documents apparently in the most irretrievable confusion."

These reports make interesting reading to us in these days of "journalesse" and sensationalism. Acland makes no mention in his diary of what he thought of the earthquake.

Tripp and Acland were now beginning to explore Canterbury. During the course of visits in the country they had opportunities of watching farming operations and learning the business. One of their early visits was to Kaiapoi, 12 miles north of Christchurch. Acland described it as a thriving town, and considered it possible that it would become the centre of Canterbury, as -
"...it is not far from the sea, and has water carriage, the river (1) being navigable..."

Kaiapoi has not come up to these expectations: it has a population now of about 1,630.(2)

Tripp and Acland made numerous journeys in the province, where they had opportunities of watching, learning and assisting in the various activities connected with sheep-farming, such as washing, yarding, droving, and so on. In February they cut a half-acre of oats and later carried and stacked it. On the many journeys in Canterbury they gained valuable information as to the trials which beset the farmer there - half-broken horses, treacherous rivers, swamps, thorny plants such as matakauri and spear-grass, and the one outstanding problem which was to loom large in their lives when they began to settle on their own holding - that of preventing animals from wandering when there were no fences or natural enclosures to curb their nomadic instincts. Each day spent out in the open seems to have begun with the task of catching the horses. They also had to contend with the strong gales which occasionally sweep across the plains from the north-west. One entry in Acland's diary reads:

"Up at 4 a.m. in consequence of the sides of the tent blowing in."

The rivers caused them endless difficulties: not only were they deep and swift, but their beds were steeply

(1) i.e. the Cam, not the Waimakariri.
(2) As at 1st April 1939, vide N.Z.Year Book, 1940.
terraced and getting the animals down the terraces to river level was attended by some risk.

In March of that year, 1855, Tripp went as a cadet, paying twenty-five pounds (£25) premium to Michael John Burke, who held runs one at Halswell near Christchurch and the other at the fork of the Opihi River in South Canterbury near Timaru. Acland went later as a cadet to Henry John Tancred(1) who held ten thousand (10,000) acres in the Malvern Hills, Mid-Canterbury. The fee in Acland's case was thirty pounds (£30) "for the year or whatever shorter term I am with him".

It was in this month that Tripp and Acland had their first opportunity of visiting South Canterbury, when they accompanied Burke on his journey to his southern holding. This journey must have been typical of the mode of travelling in those days, but anyone today meeting their caravan on the Main South Road could only stand and stare in amazement—not unmixed with amusement. It consisted of three drays, ten bullocks, two horses, and one goat— the goat being tied to the back of one of the drays "which", Acland says, "she vainly endeavours to pull back". In addition there were four saddle horses. The human beings in the party were Burke, Tripp, Acland, two travellers, and a bullock-driver and his wife. This couple had been married only a week

(1) Son of Sir Thomas Tancred of Boroughbridge, Yorkshire. He arrived in Canterbury in 1851 and at the time of his death in 1884 had long been a member and executive officer of the Provincial Council (its Speaker since 1866), and had held offices in three Colonial Ministries. When the University of N.Z. came into existence in 1871
and were spending their honeymoon, as Acland puts it, "sleeping under a dray".

The party took thirteen days to reach Burke's station near Timaru (less than one hundred miles distant), several of the thirteen days being spent waiting at the Rangitata for the floods to recede. Tripp and Acland spent most of the time speculating about the nature of the country up-river beyond the forest barrier, particularly as to its probable suitability for sheep-farming. On being told that only pigs lived there, Tripp retorted that where pigs could live, sheep could live.

After returning from South Canterbury, Acland spent the winter at the Malvern Hills station learning to be a good stockman. From there he made three trips to Christchurch, one being on the occasion of the visit of the Governor, Sir George Grey.

Tripp went out to see Acland at Malvern Hills to resume their discussion on the important subject of securing land, and they decided to explore likely country in the following spring. There is no evidence as yet that they had considered forming the partnership which later proved to be so long and profitable.
CHAPTER V.

ACQUIRING LAND.

It will be remembered that Acland was bound by his promise to his father not to enter into any partnership, nor take up a run, until he had been one year in New Zealand, but he could with a perfectly clear conscience apply for a license to a pastoral run, as this did not commit him to anything but the possible loss of his license fee of Ten pounds (£10). The license could not take effect for three months, and then he would be called upon to stock his run within six months, or lose the license fee. Accordingly on 30th July he lodged an application at the Land Office Christchurch for a run:

"about 80 miles south-west of Christchurch and about 40 miles from the sea, in the fork of the Rangitata." (1)

This meant that his license would not be operative until October, and he would not have to make a final decision until April of the following year - a date well outside the period stipulated by Sir Thomas.

Tripp had already applied for a run in the same locality, and it is interesting to note that neither of them was discouraged by the fact that he had never seen the land for which he was applying, nor had it been explored or surveyed. The phrasing of the boundaries mentioned in the applications

(1) Acland's diary.
was quite usual in these circumstances, but seems delightfully vague and picturesque to us. Tripp's read:

"G.G. Tripp: 57,500 acres. Bounded on north by the Snowy Range, on the east by the Rangitata to the Fork, thence by the eastern branch of that river so as to include the country in the forks on the south of Peel Forest and on the west by the higher range of the mountains running in a northerly direction from Mt. Peel."

J.B. Acland applied for:

"57,500 acres. Bounded on the north by the Snowy mountains, on the east by the base of Mt. Peel and the mountains extending therefrom in a northerly direction and the Rangitata, on the south by the runs of Messrs Jollie and Cox, and on the west by the Snowy Mountains."

Tripp also applied for an additional, or more correctly, alternative run, with the idea of deciding upon the one which upon inspection proved to be more suitable.

It was now that the suggestion of a partnership between Tripp and Acland was first made. We have seen that they had much in common, they were to occupy joining runs, and they had become enthusiastic as to the nature and future of their adopted country. They were attracted by the open-air life, the freedom from many social restrictions imposed by custom in the "Old Country", and the opportunities the new country offered to men of energy and ability.

Early in September they prepared to leave on their exploring trip. They were to travel part of the way
with Burke, who was going down to his southern run. After
leaving him it was their intention to travel up the northern
bank of the Rangitata, cross at the forks, and go up the
south bank to explore the land for which they had applied.
Where our modern New Zealand explorer sets out equipped with
a nice little "aeroplane-silk" tent weighing about 4 lbs,
ropes included, and with an aluminium alpine cooker, Tripp
and Acland had a tent which alone weighed 30 lbs! It must
have been a small marquee, judged by modern standards. It
was necessary to have the pack carefully balanced upon the
packhorses, and Acland ensured this by using a spring balance —
a reminder of the days when he went salmon-fishing in Norway.
Everything they took with them was weighed before it was
packed. They spent the evening of September 4th doing this,
at an inn, "The Traveller's Rest", which used to stand on
the site of the present Lower Riccarton Hotel. After their
experiences of travel in New Zealand they were aware of their
needs, and equipped themselves very well for their expedition.
In addition to food, they carried a telescope, a prismatic
compass, an aneroid barometer, and — bearing in mind the
idiosyncrasies of the Canterbury rivers — a life-belt!

Their trip was spiced with adventures, mishaps
and misfortunes. Their horses were refractory, and loading
packs on them was a difficult matter. The expedition lost
itself in the manuka scrub before reaching the Rakaia River,
and so wasted a day. The Rakaia River was very low, so they
had no difficulty in crossing it. The weather, quite
typical of Canterbury in spring, provided for the first part
of the journey a blast of the hot, dry nor'wester, (which out
in the open plains must have been no light matter), then a
cold, bleak, wet southerly. Their view of Mt. Peel was now
indeed one of "Snowy Mountains" - a beautiful sight.

When they had been on their journey a few days
they met a settler named Russell who had a run in the hills
south of the Ashburton River. Russell was vastly amused at
the notion of anyone trying to explore the Upper Rangitata.
He informed them that its banks were perpendicular, and that
he himself would not take a horse down them for £50. The
country across the river, according to him, was quite
impassable. His views were not likely to raise false hopes
in the breasts of the adventurous Tripp and Acland, but they
did have the opposite effect - they made them more determined
than ever to see the country for themselves, on the principle
that "the worse the account you hear of unoccupied country,
the greater the reason for going to look at it."

On reaching the Rangitata, they certainly found
the banks very steep, but they managed to get down to the
riverbed by means of a steep stony gully almost opposite the
site of the present homestead at Mt. Peel. They had now
reached the promised land! Their programme was quite simple:
they would burn off the original covering of scrubby vegetat-
on so that the new grass might grow up and be ready to feed
the sheep which would have to be brought down before the end of April, in compliance with the requirements of the License. Accordingly they fired the grass, and then set out to explore their holdings. The country was wild and broken. The terrace was indented with impassable swamps, sheer ravines, deep gullies; the horses’ legs bled from the attacks of the rapier-like spear-grass, but on they journeyed, burning as they went.

That first night the effect of their fires was startling: as a spectacle it transcended anything they had ever seen before, and must have been rather similar to that caused in our day by the Royal Air Force in action over a target on the Continent. Acland recorded in his diary that he was writing by the light of the flames, which were a mile distant. The fire, which was estimated to cover a ten-mile front, was seen sixty miles away. Next day the view was obscured by a heavy pall of smoke, but they travelled up another gully, still firing the scrub. Later as the earth grew cool they sowed clover seed.

Now another problem faced them— that of finding feed for their horses. In front of them was a line of fire: behind them was the riverbed. Their horses could feed on the grassy patches in the riverbed, but the problem was this: if tethered, the horses would half-starve; if free, they would be almost certain to cross the river and make off for Christchurch. The stony nature of the riverbed, too, might
lame the horses - and it was indeed a long way to the nearest blacksmith! They were in fact their own blacksmiths, but the other difficulties became so pressing that there was no alternative but to return to civilization.

Much had been learned about their domain. It had great possibilities; the country was fertile, (it had already supported a sturdy growth); and it was well supplied with those two commodities so vital to the pioneer, wood and water. In the matter of wood, this region was richly endowed with timber suitable for building roomy farmhouses, for the construction of stockyards, and for posts for the miles upon miles of fencing which must soon be set up. They had also evidence that the bush abounded in bird life. Wood-pigeons, woodhens, kakas, paradise ducks and other birds were frequently seen. Much had been accomplished on this first survey: an area estimated at fifty thousand (50,000) acres had been burnt; the aneroid had given them the approximate height above sea level; they now knew the direction, and the lie of the land, and its general environment.

Tripp stayed at Hayhurst's, between the Rakaia and Ashburton rivers, but Acland went on to Christchurch to have his horse shod, and while there took the opportunity of putting in a fresh application for a run, based upon his discoveries.

October 2nd saw them back up-country, viewing the result of their previous burnings. On this occasion they made experiments in boiling our indigenous "cabbage tree" (cordyline
australis) for food, but the result was not a success. They now reached a point from which they had a clear view up the Rangitata Valley - "a splendid sight" - but further progress up the river was prevented by the Rangitata Gorge.

They had definitely decided to take up their runs, so the next day, being Sunday and a day of rest with them, they refrained from travelling. Tripp and Acland were both deeply religious men, and felt as many of our pioneers did, that, even in the most remote corners of this far South, the Sabbath Day should not be robbed of its dignity. With this in mind, they spent their Sundays as days of rest for man and beast, and in many a lonely little camp set up in the vast region of virgin country, they took out their books of prayer and read the lessons of the morning services. An anecdote told of Tripp is that one day, years later, when he and his wife were crossing the Rangitata by means of a rowing boat, the boat was swept downstream with his wife in it. All appeared lost, and Tripp ran along the bank keeping pace with the boat and shouting to his wife: "See you in Heaven, Ellen."

On this particular Sunday they spent a quiet hour or two selecting a suitable site for a house. It was necessary to have wood close by, and a supply of water which would not fail even on the hottest summer days. The site chosen satisfied both these requirements, and for good measure provided a beautiful view of stream and mountain. It was
also reasonably central to the holding - unlike that of another wellknown settler in Canterbury who built his homestead in a remote corner of his holding because his wife did not like the sound of the bleating of sheep!

During the rest of this visit they continued their compass observations - and it was now that they climbed sufficiently high to catch a glimpse of that vast hinterland which was later to be named "Mesopotamia" by Samuel Butler. The same difficulty presented itself of finding feed for their horses while tethered, or alternatively of hunting the horses on foot when these were left untethered. Quicksands in the riverbed were always to be guarded against; rain and the cold temperatures made their work more tiring than it would otherwise have been - they were only five days without rain during the twenty days they were there; and the hunting of game for food extended the length of their already long working day.

They found a route which by-passed the Gorge, and explored many miles up the Valley, reaching as far as Mesopotamia Flat, some twenty miles past the Gorge, burning as they went and planting grass-seed. The horses were quick to adapt themselves to the new conditions, and became fairly expert in working their way round spear-grass and matakauri. The latter plant grew to enormous proportions in the Upper Rangitata region, sometimes reaching a height of fifteen feet and thus forming a wall of prickles which presented considerable difficulty to the two travellers.
However, both spear-grass and matakauri had the saving grace that they burned readily.

Two discoveries they made were immensely cheering: the first was an outcrop of coal in the unforsted expanse between Mt. Peel and Mesopotamia Flat, just where fuel was most needed. The other discovery - or rather confirmation of a previous assumption - was the presence of wild pigs, which provided a welcome change in diet from the everlasting wild duck - a fare which had already made Tripp quite sick.

By 20th October supplies were getting low. The two men were by this time down-river below the Gorge, and they decided to cross the river and make for the homestead at Gawlor Downs (Russell's). The crossing was made only with difficulty, they having had to lighten their packs leaving behind the tent and sundry other equipment. That night they were forced to camp out, without the tent, in the fork of the Hinds River, and on waking the next morning had the doubtful pleasure of finding that they had camped about three hundred yards from the outsheds of Russell's station.

They had not been lucky in the weather during these twenty days, but enquiry elicited the news that neighbouring stations had had a fall of snow - which the Rangitata Valley had escaped. This of course was splendid news, promising well for future winters on their run. They were still given earnest advice by the well-meaning neighbours on the Plains not to think of settling the country they had
just explored - it was too rough.

They stayed at Hayhurst's for a few days, and later at Gray's, assisting on the run, and with the very difficult work of transporting fencing rails through the lower Rangitata. They now took the opportunity of sketching Mt. Peel from the plains, and, nothing if not ambitious, had already begun to speculate upon the possibility of discovering a pass through the snowy mountains of the Main Divide!

Later, at Malvern Hills and at Christchurch, they interested themselves in the political and social affairs of the young but vociferous community of the Canterbury Province. One question of the moment was the appointment of a Bishop for Canterbury, and they were both very keen that the matter should not be allowed to lapse with nothing done. Acland also undertook some of the work of collecting information for the census which was taken on 13th January 1856, and he added a practical knowledge of sheep-shearing to his already long list of accomplishments.

During this period between their first and second exploratory trips they harvested a crop of self-sown wheat from a five-acre section they had bought, and it is an interesting commentary upon the development of Christchurch to note that what was their wheatfield is now the site of the Government Railway Workshops at Addington, a thickly populated suburb.

It is interesting to note the prices they paid
for their sheep. It will be remembered that in order to avoid forfeiting the license to their run, the stocking of it had to be "un fait accompli" by the end of April. With this in view they jointly bought one hundred and forty (140) lambs from six to twelve months' old at ten shillings each, and two hundred and thirty (230) ewe lambs from four to twelve months' old at twelve shillings and sixpence each. They bought the freehold of "240 acres of land at 10/- per acre on the west bank of the Rangitata north of Peel Forest" - defined in these terms, with no closer delineation; land quite untrodden, unsurveyed, unknown. It afterwards formed the nucleus of the Orari Gorge run, which will be mentioned later. They also paid to the Land Office the rent for the runs at Mt. Peel, eleven pounds five shillings (£11.5.0) each, and continued buying sheep. Their plan was to delay taking delivery of the sheep until nearer the expiry date, they in the meantime to go down and explore further country and prepare the land for the establishment of a station.

They set out early in March, and on their way south met Abner Clough, a half-caste Maori, who later proved to be a valued servant to them in their settlement of Mt. Peel. On reaching their destination they saw the fruits of their labours: the grass and clover had grown, and much "feed" had sprung up on the country they had burnt. They explored and burned fresh country, sowed more grass-seed, and travelled up the north bank of the Rangitata and explored its back-
country. They discovered and named Lakes Tripp and Acland, which still officially bear their names, but for some unknown reason one of them is always referred to locally as "Lake Clearwater".

They spent Good Friday camped in a riverbed about eighty miles from Christchurch and twenty miles from the nearest human being. As was their custom, they observed the holy day by a service in spite of their surroundings.

Before returning to Christchurch, where they arrived on 28th March, they had discovered the confluence of the Havelock and Clyde Rivers at the headwaters of the Rangitata, and had travelled over much hitherto unexplored country, particularly that on the other side of the river opposite Mesopotamia, and had obtained a close view of the magnificent panorama of the snowy mountains of the Main Divide.

Immediately upon their return they went to the Land Office and amended their applications for runs, fixing the boundary of the two hundred and forty acres already purchased, and buying a further eighty acres the situation of which was to be fixed later - either for the house or to secure the coal seams.

New Land Regulations were to come into force on 1st April, and, as Tripp and Acland wished to hold their runs under the old Regulations, they had to complete the arrangements for possession before that date. In a letter dated 28th March, 1856, to his family Acland describes the extent
"We have taken out the moderate quantity of 145,000 acres between us, about 180 square miles.... The two runs have been taken out in such a way that we shall be able to have only one home station at first, and stock both runs from that point...."
CHAPTER VI.

MT. PEEL STATION: THE PARTNERSHIP.

probably

Mt. Peel Station, the first "high country" station in New Zealand, dates from April 1856. The preparations had been very carefully made, and a partnership deed had been agreed upon, each partner putting two thousand pounds (£2,000) into the venture. They took delivery of the stock already bought, and purchased more, paying for ewes one pound (£1) each, for lambs ten shillings (10/-) each, and for wethers fifteen shillings (15/-) each. They engaged the services of Robert Smith, a Shropshire man, who proved to be an excellent shepherd whose skill contributed much to the success of their undertaking. He brought his wife and three children with him - in fact Mrs. Smith would not be left behind and insisted upon accompanying the pioneers into the wilderness. It was also arranged that a young man named Sharp, a friend of Tripp's, should go down as a cadet.

The next thing to be done was the purchase of bullocks and stores. The laying-in of stores and the stocking and equipping of a farm which extended for one hundred and eighty square miles, and which was high above sea level and distant inland many miles from the nearest road, must indeed have presented a complex problem. To eke out their grazing resources until more burning could be done and pasture grown, arrangements were made with their neighbour,
Dr. Moorhouse, to depasture some of their sheep for a few months on his run.

On 26th April 1856 the caravan left on its epic journey. Mrs. Smith and her three children sat on the front seat of the dray. There were eight bullocks - four just bought, and four which Tripp had owned for some time. Tripp and Acland were to suffer desperate heart-burnings over these bullocks in the days to follow, when they had to search feverishly for them up and down large tracts of the South Island before they could commence the next stages of their journey.

They had bought their dray in Sydney, and here is the cost of dray and harness as delivered to them:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dray</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bows, yokes, &amp; chains</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shipping Expenses, Sydney</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freight from Sydney</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duty</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenses at Lyttelton, etc.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>49</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Freight, Lyttelton to Christchurch (Ferry)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yokes, chains, etc., J. Anderson, Blacksmith</td>
<td>11 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2 64</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second day of their journey being Sunday, they rested. An early start next morning brought them to the Rakaia, where they were fortunate enough to find the river low. If they had come two days later, they would have found it
impassable for a week. It is interesting to note how the crossing of this swift, bitterly cold river was achieved. The dray was pulled through the water by the bullocks, and had to be partly unpacked for the purpose. Mrs. Smith and the children were sent over by the ferry boat which was a permanent institution at this ford. Five or six loads of baggage were also ferried across, but it must be understood that this process of "ferrying" was no simple matter. At each crossing the boat would be swept well down-stream by the current, so that it was necessary to tow it upstream again each time to the ford. This towing meant that someone had to wade along the edge of the river pulling the boat behind him. Tripp and Acland took turns at this task, and we can quite understand what the latter meant when he recorded, with admirable restraint, that he was "cold and wet"! Even after the ferrying over of five or six loads, plus the material taken over in the dray, there was still half a ton of flour which they had to leave behind as too heavy a load for the boat. However, a liberal supply of brandy that night helped them to ward off any ill-effects from exposure.

At that time there were few fences or stock enclosures in Canterbury, and certainly not one available on the south bank of the Rakaia. The result was as might be expected - the bullocks wandered off, and next morning Tripp and Acland spent two perspiring hours before they found them.

Navigation was another serious problem. Imagine the trackless, featureless Canterbury Plains, and the
difficulty in finding one's way from Chapman's Ford at the Rakaia to a ford about thirty five miles up the Rangitata! Early settlers in New Zealand frequently lost their way, and many were never heard of again. Acland himself had met a settler a few weeks earlier who reported that his shepherd had just been lost. This man was one of those who never returned. To lessen this risk to travellers, the settlers later made tracks, using an outstanding hill or mountain or some other prominent landmark along the border of the Plains as a guide. It is a feature of many of our Canterbury roads today that they follow the old tracks and point directly toward some hill or mountain.

Tripp and Acland had to adopt methods of their own. One of them would ride ahead in search of a former camping site or familiar landmark, and would then light a fire the smoke of which would guide the slower-moving dray to the rendezvous. They had an anxious night on May 1st, when Wyatt, the newly-engaged carpenter-cum-shepherd, lost his bearings. Wyatt had never before been out of Christchurch, and the reader can imagine the feelings of his employers as they searched frantically for him in the driving rain. However, about noon the next day the missing man was found, little the worse for a miserable night spent in the open without sufficient clothing.

At this stage in their journey they were joined by Abner Clough, the half-caste Maori whom they had met on
the previous journey and had now engaged. He was the son of an Englishman named James Robinson Clough and his high-born, highly tattooed, Maori wife. Abner was about eighteen years old at this time, and proved the type of worker who would be an asset to any New Zealand outstation. One of his remarkable accomplishments was his ability to walk in the swift Canterbury rivers with the water up to his chin without losing his footing. At the Mt. Peel station, sandwiched as it was between the Rangitata in front and the hills of the Ben McLeod Range behind, this skill in fording alone would have made Abner invaluable. He was also an expert bushman, and could track down strayed animals and wild pigs.

The party was held up at the Rangitata for a week before they could cross the river, and spent the time making a road down the terrace to the water's edge. On 8th May they succeeded in crossing, but it was strenuous work. They lightened the load of the dray, as usual, and drove the bullocks in. Near the middle of the main stream their worries began: the leading bullocks turned round and refused to budge. After much time lost in attempts at persuasion, the six leading bullocks had to be unharnessed and taken unencumbered across the river, and then by means of long chains and ropes they were made to haul the dray out.

This was the last lap of the journey; the great moment of arrival had come. The station was reached, the baggage had been brought across the river; it remained now to settle themselves in. The first undertaking was, of course,
the erection of a house.

House building in these vast regions of isolation and virgin forest was not an easy matter. They decided to use the trunks of what they termed "ti-tree", probably cordyline australis, which we know as cabbage trees, but getting them out from the bush involved, besides the chopping, the extrication of them from festoons of the prickly climber called "lawyer", rubus australis. It was a painful job, and they were badly scratched - as Acland puts it, they were "cut to pieces"!

The first Sunday on the Mt. Peel holding was not spent in the peaceful manner its two young owners would have liked. Wild pigs had been killed and it was necessary to clean and salt them, and the prospect of pigeon pie tempted them out on a shooting expedition; pigeon pie was the star item on the Mt. Peel menu that night.

Within a week the site for the house was cleared and the building commenced. Acland, accompanied by Sharp, the cadet, left for Christchurch on 13th May and spent several days collecting the sheep which had previously been bought but of which delivery had not yet been taken.

Then began the difficult task of driving the sheep down to Mt. Peel. The crossing of the Rakaia took several days. The weather was cold, and this made it more difficult to persuade the sheep to enter the water, and moreover made it equally uncomfortable for the men, who had to stand in the
water up to their waists forcing the sheep in. The river was crossed in stages - from island to island, and eventually all the sheep, except for the very few which had been drowned, stood on the southern bank. Another difficulty was the length of the grass, which slowed down the pace of the sheep.

In the meantime at Mt. Peel the house had been built, and work had begun on the construction of tracks and a road. Their difficulties were by no means over. The bullocks had been lost for days; when they were ultimately found, one of them had died from eating tutu. This tutu was a great source of worry to the pioneers. It poisoned their sheep and cattle - but curiously enough its poison did not result in death if the animals had been previously well fed. In other words, it affected only the hungry sheep or bullock, and horses were immune from any evil effects.

The newly-built house was invaded by a plague of rats so extensive that they had to bring cats down from Christchurch to cope with it. Pigs, too, caused some damage, and many a lamb from the Mt. Peel run fell a victim to some ferocious wild boar. These pigs were very numerous, and it was many years before their numbers were appreciably reduced. Wild pigs are still to be found on the Mt. Peel "high country". The wild dogs which also caused damage at first were soon exterminated.

The fording of the Rangitata was a constant source of anxiety, as all supplies for the station had to be brought
across the river. This river was (and is) a menace even in normal times, and in times of flood the grindingsound of large boulders as they were being swept along its bottom could be heard for miles. It took a heavy toll of the lives of the pioneers, as many as thirty being drowned within a period of six years. During the first month of the founding of the Mt. Peel station, young Fendall, a son of the family from which Fendalton, a suburb of Christchurch, was named, was drowned in that river. He was crossing lower down, and when news of the tragedy came, all hands at Mt. Peel searched for the body.

Another problem was the lack of fresh fruit and vegetables, and until the kitchen garden reached the productive stage, this shortage had a detrimental effect on the health of the men. Any cut or scratch tended to become septic, and caused the unfortunate victim weeks of pain and inactivity. Dr. Moorhouse, their kindly neighbour, proved an invaluable friend and medical adviser.

But all these difficulties were cheerfully faced and overcome during this period, as Acland wrote, of the "commencement of the pleasures and profits of sheep-farming."

It will be recalled that during this time some of the first sheep brought down had been in the care of a neighbour, Dr. Moorhouse, on the northern side of the Rangitata. Tripp now applied for permission to delay the stocking of the two runs Nos. 52 and 53. That of Orari Gorge, belonging to

(1) See pages 45 and 46.
Acland, was to be delayed for eighteen months on two grounds: first that the country was too rough and had not been burned, and secondly, that the sheep on the neighbouring run were diseased; and that of Mt. Peel was to be delayed until after Christmas, in order that the shearing might be done, when it would be easier to drive the sheep unburdened by heavy fleeces across the river.

These applications were made by Tripp for the two owners severally, not as partners, the reason being that as members of a partnership they would be granted only 92,500 acres for their 4,000 sheep, whereas taken separately each of them would be allowed 57,500 acres for 2,000 sheep—a difference of 22,500 acres. Another object to be achieved by dealing separately with the Land Office was so to arrange their boundaries as to exclude the barren country on Mt. Peel. If the partnership applied for land, it would have to include Mt. Peel, whereas the individuals Tripp and Acland need not apply for it, but could nevertheless allow their sheep to use what little summer grazing it afforded. Both applications were granted, the stocking date in respect of Mt. Peel being fixed at February. At this time the Mt. Peel run included the country extending from Mt. Peel Range as far as the forks of the Rangitata, then across the river to comprise the undulating country where the lakes had been discovered. The other run, Acland's No. 52, was on the other side of Mt. Peel, in the direction of Orari Gorge, but as Acland said, "We know
very little about it, having never been through it, but only at each end of it."

By 1858 life had begun to run a little more smoothly at Mt. Peel. A new and slightly more commodious house was under construction, and a second was planned, together with farm buildings. The eyes of the pioneers therefore turned to the forest, a great, and as yet untouched, source of wealth on their estate. Both men gave a great deal of thought to the question of the best method of logging; professional sawyers were engaged and the work started.

Within a few weeks the first house was completed, and the projected house was built; a punt was built for use on the river, stockyards were erected, and all the necessary timber was cut for a woolshed and a sheepyard. A pause in construction ensued while they added a good vegetable garden to their possessions.

The next undertaking was the building of outstations. Most early Canterbury homesteads were built as nearly as possible in the centre of the land-holdings, but not so Mt. Peel homestead. If a central situation had been attempted, it would have been found on the top of Mt. Peel itself, or in some equally inaccessible place. Our pioneers had to accept the principle of having parts of the estate remote from the homestead, and to build outstations to house the shepherds coping with mustering and the general care of their flocks. They made experiments to find the type of hutment most suitable to withstand the snows and high winds of the severe winters, and decided
upon that kind, made of wood, which from its shape of an inverted "V", had become known as the "V" hut.

The next stirring event shook the young station to its foundations! It was the birth there of its first child—a daughter to Mr. and Mrs. Smith. There was no maternity nurse, and during the anxious days preceding the event the young station-owners were as agitated as the poor husband. However, all went well, and we can imagine the fervent thanksgiving at the christening ceremony which they celebrated later in November. Acland was godfather with Mrs. Moorhouse as one of the godmothers.

A month later came Christmas, and the homesteaders, with the consciousness of all preparations made, looked forward as always to the enjoyment of a "holy" day—a day without labour, with leisure for thought of the things of the spirit.

Two sucking pigs left lying in the creek on Christmas Eve promised well for dinner the following day. Imagine, then, the consternation of everybody when it was discovered that the heavy rains had so swelled the creek that the carcasses had floated off and joined the brimming river on its way to the sea. There was nothing for it but to go forth pig-shooting—on Christmas Day!

The summer of 1856/1857 was a difficult one at Mt. Peel. The river rose higher, and stayed in flood longer than was usual after a storm. It was impassable for weeks at a time, and stores ran short. Travellers from the south
who had come up the river earlier in search of a ford had become marooned there and increased the demands on the provisions. Acland and Tripp welcomed them hospitably, but there is no doubt the food position became acute.

In January 1857 the partnership had the following assets in addition to the leasehold of the land:

4000 sheep. These they had devalued from £1. to 10/-, but this loss would be to some extent offset by the first wool clip, which was expected to yield £400.

Dray Valued at £50. (This long-suffering vehicle was still rated very highly!)

Axles etc. Valued at £80.

Bullocks Valued at £200 to £250.

Freehold land in Christchurch (5 acres) Valued at £100.

Freehold land at Mt. Peel (320 acres) Valued at £640. (Æ £2. per acre. The cost price had been 10/- per acre making £160.)

Goodwill Valued at £1,000 at least, although of course, they would not part with their run.

Their expenses were heavy, but income prospects for next year were very good. This was a very satisfactory situation for a station which had been in existence for less than a year. It should also be noted that this accounting makes no mention of the assets possessed in the form of buildings and farm equipment. The two partners had accomplished a very great deal in such a short time, and they had that satisfaction
which comes to those who have created something worth while. From the beginning they had had many disappointments and suffered much discouragement. The general opinion of the older runholders was that they were "harmless cranks" and that no one could even get through to, let alone settle upon the land they had chosen. Opposition came not only from experienced Canterbury pioneers, whose opinions presumably were based on a first hand practical knowledge of New Zealand conditions, but also from unexpected quarters in England. One learned English gentleman, Dr. Rowcliffe, based his opposition on what he considered to be sound logical lines. His letter to Tripp's father has been retained by the family and makes quaint reading: the light it throws on opinions that must have been held by not a few in England at this time as to the life and prospects of these southern colonies justifies its inclusion in full.

"Stogumber,
24th October, 1855.

Dear Sir,

Thank you very much for Mr. Charles Tripp's letter, which I have received and read with very great interest. But I am sorry to say that I cannot think the accounts at all encouraging, or such as to induce me to believe he is not going to lose his capital instead of making a fortune. I could have wished you had not sent him the £1000 because I fear it will not find its way back to him when he has laid it out, as it appears he intends, with an incautious hand. All this about high interest and profits I cannot understand, because he does not in the least shew me how it is to be done.

3rd November, 1855.

I had written so far when one of my old [1] for example see the views of Russell; Ref. page 35

See also page 40.
"attacks of asthma stopped me, and has much depressed me to this time - and I have not had heart or head to write. There can be no question that Australian life is not an enviable one, even to those amateurs. There is scarcely one of them who would not rejoice to be back, I think. Riding 50 miles a day, with your blankets, and sleeping on, or in them! Can it be enjoyment or more bearable to men who have been accustomed to the comforts of civilized life, and its luxuries too? It is a mistake.

If it be the road to fortune, it may and ought to be borne by young men who have their fortune to make, and who choose it in preference to the beaten tracks of great industry and great care, and perseverance at home. But even then, it is surely a lower kind of courage and endurance. It is manifest that for the last 3 or 4 years a couple of thousand pounds properly laid out and managed in farming pursuits in England would have realized far better returns than buying sheep at 55/- a head, "for the bush"! to return one half to four lbs of wool each, worth 9d. a lb. in Australia? - and one half the lambs. How many of the ewes must be lost by death, or accidents, and missing in the bush, in the course of the year? How many lambs are to be expected at the end of the year, to be counted, and divided, one half of them only for the Ewe owner. Then wages are very high: a pair of cart wheels £25: an ordinary draught horse £125!! Young College men labourers, a Baronet, Scab Inspector, with £300 a year and content, which your tenant at Roadwater would not be. Altogether I am convinced it is an Image of Brass and Clay which will fall to pieces. My young friend, Mr. Wm. Trevelyan, played the game and played it out, with the loss of £4,000, one half of his fortune, and then returned to his friends, sick of Australia, and they were very glad to have him, no worse. New Zealand is becoming another Australia, we learn from the letter: The Australians are coming in and buying up the Land.

Now, my dear Sir, do not accuse me of taking too gloomy a view. It is not only the just result of what I do read, and do not read from the letter, but of observation and experience in the same line of many other persons, my neighbours and friends, and the friends of my friends.

I most earnestly you all not to damage my friend, Mr. Charles Tripp, by sending him out more money. You have been most liberal to him, and he has had quite sufficient money to embark with, and
"earn a good freight, if it is to be earned, and if not, then he will have to rejoice, and so will you, that he has lost no more of his fortune in his new and present start. Perhaps you will send him this letter. It is my wish that he should read it, and answer it, with results, if he can; and no person will rejoice at it more than I shall.

We beg our kind regards to you and Mrs. Tripp and any of your family sojourning with you:

and I am,  
My dear Sir,  
Very sincerely your obliged  

(Signed)  
Cha. Rowcliffe.

The Rev. Charles Tripp, D.D.,  
Silverton Rectory,  
Collampton.

The partnership was now well established. Formal applications for their runs were now made, and the partners were allotted the land between the Rangitata and the Orari Rivers above Peel Forest, and the land on the northern bank of the Rangitata River. Their allotments were afterwards divided into the Mt. Somers, Mt. Possession, Mt. Peel and Orari Gorge stations, and parts became incorporated in the Mesopotamia and Hakatere stations. Until a survey was made, it was believed that the license for run 53NZR granted in Tripp's name covered Mt. Peel station, but on survey it was found that this license really covered Mt. Possession. Mt. Peel country was applied for and obtained under various licenses taken out in Acland's name. The land on which the present Mt. Peel homestead was later built was taken up on 9th August, 1858, and the last block at Mt. Peel (run 410, 6000 acres) was taken up in May, 1861. 1930. p.127.

(1) L.G.D. Acland, "The Early Canterbury Runs", Christchurch
Mt. Peel was the first of their runs stocked, and by 1858 they had 2,700 sheep. The run was not fully stocked for many years, nor were the other runs held by the partnership. The story is told by the Acland family that Mt. Possession station was stocked by the partnership rather hurriedly in response to a rumour that some other settler intended placing sheep there. Acland sent a shepherd named Rawle up there with 1,579 sheep to take possession, hence the name of the station became "Mt. Possession." (1)

In September, 1858, Tripp was married to Ellen Harper, a daughter of the first Bishop of Canterbury, who had arrived in the colony in 1857. Later, January 1860, Acland married Emily, another daughter of the Bishop, and it became the custom of Tripp and Acland to say that they had imported their wives, basing this claim on the fact that they had been among the first to sign a petition asking for the appointment of a bishop to the Canterbury diocese. (2)

Life at Mt. Peel for the young Mrs. Tripp was not easy. The Station was a lonely place, isolated from any other settlement by its natural boundaries. True enough, it now boasted of two small cottages, built on modest pioneer lines, and her husband had acquired six real chairs, which were considered to be a luxury in a Canterbury back country station, where most settlers had to sit on boxes. They also possessed a piano, which gave much pleasure to all at Mt. Peel as well as to visitors, some of whom were forced upon them by their

proximity to the unbridged Rangitata. The men of the
Mt. Peel Station were away all day, and Mrs. Tripp had
little congenial companionship. She was afraid to go any
distance alone because of wild pigs, which were numerous,
and one can understand her feelings when she "watched the
riverbank opposite the house, hoping to see a human figure
on the horizon." (1) In 1859 their first child was born
and Mrs. Tripp fed her son from a typical pioneer feeding
bottle, fashioned out of a tin and the finger of a kid glove.

Lack of fences at the station was a serious
inconvenience. It was difficult to understand how, in the
situation in which the runs were established, about 150 square
miles of land could ever be fenced in! The Rangitata formed
a more or less permanent barrier for stock, but the partner-
ship owned much land on the northern bank of the river, and
there was no such barrier there to keep stock from wandering.
Such fences as were built were made of wood, and it was not
until several years later, in 1862, that the use of wire
fencing made the fencing of country like this possible.

Mt. Peel station employed shepherds who had perforce
to be trackers. One of the more outstanding characters was
an Australian Black, named Andy, who possessed remarkable
powers of tracking down animals. He also had, in common
with many of his race, the ability to run long distances.
Mrs. Tripp records that when her baby was born, Andy ran all
the way from Mt. Peel to Christchurch, approximately 100 miles,

(1) and (2). "My Early Days" - Ellen Tripp. published
undated. p.8.-10. privately.
"just to see the new baby."

When Acland married, in January 1860, he and his bride lived in a small cottage behind the other cottages at Mt. Peel, and had their meals with the Tripps.

Sheep-farming in this high-country presented its problems. Mustering was always a big undertaking, and shearing was usually hampered by the lack of adequate labour as well as by the difficulty of providing protection from the rain. In the 1860's it was still a vexed question as to whether autumn lambing was preferable to spring lambing — in fact, it was the usual practice for "lambing down" to take place all the year round, as lack of fencing made it difficult to arrange otherwise. Many discussions took place as to whether it was better to wash the gathered wool or to wash the sheep before shearing. Transport was another problem. The wool would be sent to the sale by means of bullock waggons, but the getting of supplies to the outstations on Mt. Peel caused much concern. Until a few years ago trains of donkeys or mules were used for this purpose, and these served very well until more modern methods were used, and until some of the more inaccessible regions were abandoned.

On 14th September 1859 the first annual show of sheep in Canterbury was held on the station of B. Moorhouse, Rangitata. The show was conducted by the Canterbury Pastoral Association — "The idea of holding such a show would appear to have originated with J.B.A. Acland of Mount Peel, and it would
"have been held at Mount Peel had not the northern sheep men
"shown disinclination to cross the Rangitata with their stock.
"There were 28 pens in this first show of 1859, among them very
many of singularly fine character." (1)

In June, 1862, the partnership was dissolved and the
division of the runs effected by drawing lots. It must have
been a solemn moment for the young partners as the lot was
drawn. The result was that Acland took Mt. Peel, while
Tripp took Orari Gorge and Mt. Somers. Mt. Possession was
sold a year before. These two families are among the very
few Canterbury families who have retained to this day the land
taken up by their pioneer forebears. The Aclands still live
at Mt. Peel and the Tripp family are still at Orari Gorge.

By 1862 then the many square miles of land taken
up piecemeal by the Tripp and Acland partnership had been
sorted out and welded into three stations: Acland's Mt. Peel,
and Tripp's Mt. Somers and Orari Gorge stations. This
history deals more particularly with the Mt. Peel station.

(1) "A Jubilee History of South Canterbury", J. C. Andersen,
CHAPTER VII

MT. PEEL STATION FROM 1862.

Acland took a great pride in his station. He was an idealist in outlook, and had a splendid vision of a happy and contented village nestling beneath the quiet beauty of Mt. Peel. He thought that in time the land, as it became more adequately covered with English grasses would lend itself to closer settlement. His first steps were to build a house for himself and then to build a church to satisfy the spiritual needs of the many settlers he hoped would come.

The building of a house such as the present Mt. Peel homestead was an immense undertaking. It was built of bricks and timber, both of which were produced on the station. It was an ambitious plan in the days when there was scarcely a brick house to be seen in Christchurch. It is a house of about twenty rooms in the Victorian gabled style. The sliding windows are an unusual feature to the uninitiated, but are characteristic of the design adopted in many of the early settlers' homes in the high country. In those early days before shelter belts had grown to a useful height, the north-west wind swept unopposed across the Canterbury landscape. The pioneer had, perforce, to build a stout house, and woe to the builder who was foolhardy enough to indulge in more modern styles of windows which opened inwards or outwards - one good wind would demolish them. This devastating wind largely influenced the choice of a site for a pioneer homestead, and
in the natural corridor provided by the terraced bed of the Rangitata River, it was of paramount importance to choose a site protected from its full force. Nowadays, of course, trees afford comparative shelter. When building his homestead at Orari Gorge, Charles Tripp chose a hollow, which certainly gave protection from the wind, but had the disadvantage of losing the sun early in the day. Mt. Peel was more fortunate in being able to select a site which was partly sheltered from the wind, but which also commanded a good view, and was sunny.

One of the earliest tasks taken in hand was the planting of trees. Acland had that intense love of English trees inherent in Englishmen the world over. He imported and planted seedling trees from England, covering a considerable area. Today the Mt. Peel homestead stands surrounded by English trees, some of which are truly magnificent. One of the pine trees is now 27 feet round the base, and is considered to be one of the largest trees of its kind in New Zealand. One of the trees, a Wellingtonia (Sequoia gigantea) was imported as a seedling in 1862 from Veitch of Exeter, and other North American trees were imported as seedlings in 1859. The Wellingtonia is now estimated to be 110 feet high. Acland also imported trees from Sydney and seeds from Tasmania.

The imported trees at Mt. Peel form a beautiful setting for the house, and in spring and autumn the glorious colour of the deciduous trees shows magnificently against
the more sombre background of the native bush of Peel Forest. The present-day setting would probably have pleased even Samuel Butler, who considered that New Zealand scenery suffered from a lack of such a leavening of colour as that provided by the trees of the Old World.

One year after the house was completed, Acland turned his attention to the building of his ideal church. This was commenced in 1868, and he hoped the day would soon come when he would see Mt. Peel station surrounded by smaller holdings, the settlers upon which were all to share in the prosperity and happiness provided by the opening up of this fresh young land. The church accordingly was to provide room for these settlers, and their children, and their children's children, and was to combine strength with beauty of design. The building is constructed partly of stone from riverbed boulders, and partly of limestone which was brought across the river from Mt. Somers. The transporting of the limestone was a difficult task: the crossing of the Rangitata was not easy and the dragging of heavy loads of stone by bullock teams entailed much strenuous work. The blocks were all hand-shaped, and their preparation for the building was an art in itself. The construction of the church was in the hands of William Brassington of Christchurch, and its craftsmanship was so faithfully executed that it stands now, nearly a century later, in a good state of preservation, a
thing of great beauty, and a monument to the vision and high hopes of the young pioneer who conceived it, and to the skill of the craftsman who supervised its erection. The first child was christened there in 1869, Lucy Acland. There were three graves of children dying in infancy before the year 1865, (Emily Acland 1864, a Clough baby and an Irvine baby) so the church, when built, was given the name Church of the Holy Innocents.

It is interesting to note in passing that William Brassington also erected another building of which Canterbury people are very proud - one which they like to think unique in the Dominion - the Provincial Council Chambers. It is in the Gothic style, with graceful lines and most meticulous mosaic work.

Acland's dream of a prosperous community at Mt. Peel has not been realised. There is a village at Peel Forest, some four or five miles down the Rangitata, but the people are few in number and are scattered. About Mt. Peel itself there are a few homesteads, but these are far apart from one another. Acland built cottages on the Mt. Peel station in which to house his employees comfortably, and these are still in use for this purpose, but no other community has grown up. It must have been a disappointment to the owners of the station when they realised that the land surrounding them was not good enough to support a large agricultural population.

Though now settled far from the nearest town,
young Acland had not ceased to take an active interest in public affairs. In 1864 he became a member of the Geraldine Road Board, and in 1865 became representative of South Canterbury on the Legislative Council of New Zealand, the upper house of the General Assembly, which office he retained until 1899 - a period of 34 years. He was chairman of the Mt. Peel Road Board from its inception in 1870 until 1900. Education always had a special interest for him and he took an active part as member of the Board of Governors of Canterbury College and of the Senate of the University of New Zealand. He was an enthusiastic churchman, and was a prominent figure in the councils of the Church of England. As a lay-preacher he preached regularly at the churches at Mt. Peel and Peel Forest. (1)

Mt. Peel station experienced most of the vicissitudes of the young Canterbury Settlement. It was fortunate in avoiding the evil effects of the scab which infected sheep so disastrously in other parts of New Zealand in the eighties. No doubt Mt. Peel owed its immunity to its natural barriers, the Rangitata and Mt. Peel, and the dense forest to the east. "Smothers" caused great loss during the early history of the station. L.G.D. Acland records two smothers:— "They once smothered 5,000 in the gully this side of Rawle's Yards, and there was a small smother of about 80 sheep in 1895." (2)

The depression of the late nineteenth century struck

(1) "The Press" Christchurch, 19th May 1904 and 5th July 1930.
(2) L.G.D. Acland, "The Early Canterbury Rums", Christchurch 1930, page 128
hard at Mt. Peel, and its affairs did not recover for many years. In 1904 its founder, John Barton Arundel Acland, died, anything but a wealthy man. He lies buried in the graveyard beside the church which he himself had built with such splendid ideals nearly forty years previously. His station, Mt. Peel, has of course become much smaller. In 1912 the Government took many thousands of acres to provide land for its closer settlement policy, subdividing it into medium sized farms. The Mt. Peel station still stands as one of the great "high-country" stations which have done so much to further the prosperity of New Zealand.
CHAPTER VIII

MESOPOTAMIA STATION.

We have dealt with the founding of the Mt. Peel station, and incidentally with the inception of the Mt. Possession, Orari Gorge and Mt. Somers stations. The up-river boundary of Mt. Peel station was, in course of time, fixed at Forest Creek. Above that boundary the land has since been divided into many different lots, rejoined, and then gradually sorted out into a network of farms and holdings. It is, of course, not possible to deal with the history of all these changes, but one of the early runholders stands out prominently in New Zealand history, and no account of the Rangitata district would be complete without mention of him. Figuring very romantically in the early settlement of this region, he was a man of great and versatile ability who has won world-wide recognition in literature and art. His name is Samuel Butler.

Samuel Butler was born at Nottingham in Langar Rectory on 4th December, 1835. He was the son of an English vicar, Rev. Thomas Butler, and a grandson of Dr. Samuel Butler who was at one time headmaster of Shrewsbury School and later Bishop of Lichfield. He was educated at Cambridge University. He was an outstanding personality, and has been described as the most distinguished man in New Zealand at the time. The
satire "Erewhon", the book on which his literary fame mainly rests, has as its setting the hills, mountains and valleys of the Rangitata. He is not so well known as a painter, although some of his work is considered good. His self-portrait is in the McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch, where it is much treasured. Another of his pictures, "Mr. Heatherley's Holiday: An Incident in Studio Life", travelled through New Zealand and Australia in 1936-7 in the loan collection of British masters from the National and Tate Galleries, London.

Samuel Butler left England on the "Roman Emperor" on 1st October, 1859. The danger in sea travel in those days is exemplified by the fact that an earlier vessel upon which he had booked a passage but from which he had transferred at the last moment, failed to arrive. He reached New Zealand on 27th January, 1860, and found Lyttelton and the plains sweltering under our particular type of sirocco known locally as a "nor'wester". In those days, incoming traffic to Christchurch from Lyttelton had to come either by shallow-draught boat up the small stream known as the Avon, or by packhorse or on foot up the old Bridle track over the hill. Butler came over the hills, and it is indicative of his alertness of mind and vigour of body that even on this hard, hot climb, he had interest and energy enough to notice and later record the types of undergrowth, soil and rock he encountered on the way. The view of the plains now so pleasing to travellers on the Summit Road, failed to stir
Butler's emotions, but he was delighted with the gem-like beauty of Lyttelton Harbour as he looked backwards. "It is indeed an awful pull up that hill; yet we were so anxious to see what was on the other side of it that we scarcely noticed the fatigue; I thought it very beautiful....But, after all, the view was rather of the 'long stare' description. There was a great extent of country, but very few objects to attract the eye and make it rest any while in any given direction. The mountains wanted outlines; they were not broken up into fine forms like the Carnarvonshire Mountains, but were rather a long, blue, lofty, even line, like the Jura from Geneva or the Berwyn from Shrewsbury." ...."I must undoubtedly confess that the view, though fine, rather disappointed me. The one in the direction of the harbour was infinitely superior." (1)

He had come to New Zealand for one purpose - to make a fortune as quickly as possible and to return to England to live the life of an English gentleman and devote himself to art. Like most other newcomers at that time, he had visions of an open stretch of unoccupied land which would be his for very little money. He had in mind a plain like that discovered by the sheep-stealer Mackenzie. One of his first acts upon arrival was to buy a horse as a prerequisite for the search for land upon which to settle. He paid £55 for his mare ("Doctor"), which was a reasonable price.

considering the scarcity of horses and the stamina his mount would need to possess. He did not go immediately to the Rangitata valley, which was to become famous through its association with him. He first carefully examined all avenues of investment for his capital in an endeavour to see that he obtained the best and quickest return for his money. Butler's father had already supplied him with some capital, which finally amounted to £4,200, a sum £1,000 short of what Butler said his father had promised him. In considering profitable investment, the following were the alternatives:

(i) To buy sheep and put them out in charge of some established squatter, receiving the wool money as interest;
(ii) To buy the goodwill of an established sheep run;
(iii) To buy land and lay it down in English grasses;
(iv) To take up land and start a run of his own. (i)

Butler decided to attempt the fourth alternative first. In his search for promising grazing land, he made four explorations into mountainous country, and like the men of earliest civilizations, began by exploring the great river valleys. His first journey was up the Rakaia, where he penetrated into the ranges at the head of the Wilberforce River, above Lake Coleridge. His next journey from Christchurch was up the Waimakariri River, and this he undertook alone. Had he taken a companion, and had the Bealey valley (a transverse valley from the

Waimakariri) not been almost impossible to traverse on horse-
back, what we know as "Arthur's Pass", the main gap between
Canterbury and Westland, may have been "Butler's Pass", so
close was he to the discovery of this pass. His strenuous
and gallant efforts unrewarded, and convinced that all the
suitable land known to him had been taken up, Butler had almost
decided that he would have to buy an established run, and pay
the owner goodwill in addition to the price of the land, when
he made a third journey. This time he went up the Rangitata
River. As we already know, he was not the first to go up
there: the neighbouring land had already been roughly
divided into runs, and by this time only one small run was
available. This was run No. 367, and so far as can be
ascertained, it covered the part known as the "Valley", well
up the river, on which the Waiopuataia station now stands.
He made application for this run, and it was granted to him
in February, 1860. His land stretched between Bush Creek
and Black Birch Creek.

He built a hut on the famous "V" model at Forest
Creek (on land belonging at that time to Tripp and Acland)
and spent a winter there without stocking the run in order
to make sure that the country was safe for sheep during winter.
With him was his cadet-partner, Brabazon, and an Irish
shepherd. The privations of these three men may be imagined.
For some considerable time the hut could not be made water-
tight largely because none of them could lay on the thatch
so that the water would drain off the roof and not into the hut. Butler's account of sitting on the stones round a campfire is vivid:

"There was nothing for it but to make the best of it, so we had tea, and fried some of the beef - the smell of which was anything but agreeable, for it had been lying ten days on the ground on the other side of the Rangitata, and was, to say the least, somewhat high - and then we sat in our greatcoats on four stones round the fire, and smoked; then I baked, and one of the cadets washed up; and then we arranged our blankets as best we could, and were soon asleep, alike unconscious of the dripping rain, which came through the roof of the hut, and of the cold, raw, atmosphere which was insinuating itself through the numerous crevices of the thatch." (1)

This description gives not only a picture of the privations endured, but also an indication of Butler's remarkable powers of endurance. Most men who had so recently followed a life of comparative ease would have found either their will-power or their physical strength unequal to the strain. Whatever Butler may have felt, he did not allow his physical discomfort to mar his literary style. He records these hardships in a slightly humorous vein, and without so much as mentioning his health. Strangely enough, he had never been considered a robust man, but life in New Zealand suited his health - a surprising fact in view of the privations he endured.

After the first cruel winter, he decided that the run he had obtained was unfit for sheep during winter unless it could be worked in conjunction with lower land. Accordingly

in September, 1860, bought run No. 242 from Owen and Carter. These two runs combined to form the nucleus of Butler's Mesopotamia station, which he named after a bridge in his old university town.

He then set about building a house for himself. It was a comfortable house as a pioneer homestead. In this connection also the thatching seems to have given him much concern. L.G.D. Acland writes:— "When Butler was first thatching the cob house (which was standing until 1927) he put the top of each bundle of snow-grass outside the bottom of the one above, so that all the rain ran inwards; this, as George McMillan said, seemed 'extraordinary for so clever a man.'" (1) After building the house, its owner obtained a grand piano, incongruous with its backblocks setting. It left little space in the tiny sitting room, but proved of great comfort and pleasure to Butler, who was an accomplished pianist. He had a predilection for Bach's Fugues, and at times of stress would calm his spirit with these. He had a deep love for Handel's music, and many people feel that Butler shows his finest qualities in expressing the sincere appreciation he had for this music.

While at Mesopotamia station his alert mind was very interested in the natural phenomena of the district. The land terraces, the old river beds, the gorge formation, the peculiar "tight" between the nor'west and sou'west winds, the trees, birds, animals, and insects— all were described

by him and some attempt made to explain them.

Butler and his partner, young Brabazon, encountered the heart-breaking difficulties which the Rangitata region held in store for all those who attempted to settle there. The erection of the hut and then a house was difficult; the transportation of supplies and stock involved much hard work and many anxious hours; the crossing of the Rangitata with waggons and stock was always a problem. These difficulties have been described in some detail in the sections on Mt. Peel.

Butler, as was his habit, gave careful attention to many details. He gave much thought to the system of employing cadets then in vogue among runholders and came to the conclusion that it was not suitable. In Butler's opinion a cadet should either have a financial interest in the place, or pay for being taught. The unpaid cadet regarded himself as a gentleman, far above a mere labourer, and was inclined to work or idle at his own sweet will. The squatter found it very difficult in practice to enforce conformity to the terms of the contract: the cadet contracted to serve without salary in return for tuition in the art of working a sheep station. Brabazon, one of Butler's cadets, became his partner, investing £1,000 in the business.

Before he built his house, Butler had quarrelled with Cator, one of his neighbours. This quarrel, culminating in a race from the upper reaches of the Rangitata River to the Land Office in Christchurch, has become famous. Cator

(1) Not to be confused with Gator.
had built his hut on part of Butler's land. According to the law at that time, the land comprising the site of a house and garden and their environs could be bought as freehold, the owner of the leasehold having a pre-emptive right to purchase if he registered his application. In practice, the freehold of a homestead or yard would be useless if placed well within another man's block of leasehold. It was therefore only very rarely that difficulties arose from this source. In the case of Butler and Caton, the boundaries had not been clearly defined, but as soon as they were set out in survey maps, Butler visited the Land Office, Christchurch, and took tracings. As he suspected, Caton's hut was situated on Butler's land, and since it had been built on a very desirable site, it was natural that Butler should decide that this site was the most suitable for his own house. He says that he offered compensation to Caton, but that his offer was refused. Both were shrewd, hard men, not easily thwarted.

Caton's only method of securing the site on which he had built was to buy the land at the Land Office. Butler knew this, and set out himself one September morning in 1860 for Christchurch to forestall Caton. The Land Office opened at ten in the morning, and applications were taken in the order in which they were entered in the book, so both were aware that the first man in the office at 10 a.m. would be the winner. This journey of over one hundred miles on horseback was a grim one. The two men met and travelled together for some part of the way, each knowing why the other was going,
but neither mentioning it. On the way, Butler's horse fell lame, but he managed to borrow another from a friend. Caton pressed ahead, but since they could not possibly arrive before closing time, Butler did not hurry. When he arrived at the Land Office at twenty minutes to ten next morning, he was appalled to see the door open. Business appeared to be going on, and in trepidation he looked at the book and found that Caton's name had been entered. Looking again, he was more surprised still to see his own name - it had been entered on the previous day by his solicitor in connection with another matter. Caton had seen this entry, and had entered his own name before that of Butler's. This act of Caton's decided the issue. He was ruled out of order, and "severely animadverted" by the Land Board. In this way the site of the future homestead of Mesopotamia station became Butler's property. Butler's reaction to these stirring adventures was to play furiously on the first piano he saw. There was one in a room at the back of Wynn-Williams's (his lawyer) office in Hereford Street, and callers to that office were surprised to hear the strains of Bach's Fugues played with masterly if somewhat agitated skill. This office still stands in Hereford Street. A few changes have been made, the original doorstep having been turned upside down and patched with cement.

Some weeks later Butler bought out Caton, adding his run to those comprising Mesopotamia Station. He made
allowance to Caton for the improvements, including the hut and sheepyards. Within the next few months, Butler bought up leases of several other runs and incorporated them in his station. His purchases included parts of what were later named Lake Heron and Stronechrubie stations, but there is no evidence that he occupied either of these.

With his characteristic vigour and concentration of aim Butler kept in mind his main purpose in visiting New Zealand. He learned sheep-farming by following this pursuit assiduously under difficult conditions. How difficult these conditions were may be judged from the following copy of letter:

"I sometimes see in the papers that Dr. Sinclair's grave is lost, then that it has been discovered again by some intrepid explorer, or another. As you are aware, this grave was never lost, but is well known to everyone who has worked on Mesopotamia, and has a good tombstone on top suitably inscribed. What is not generally known, however, is that alongside it is another grave, which has no tombstone - that of a man named McKay, who met his death at Ross's cutting in a tragic manner. McKay worked on Anama Station, and one Sunday - I do not know the date - rode up to Ross's Hut to see his sweetheart, who was a daughter of the boundary-keeper there. He tethered his horse at some distance from the house and on leaving for home, while saying goodbye to the girl, he pulled the tether up and the horse, taking fright at something, wheeled round and got the top round McKay's body. McKay was dragged down the cutting and his brains dashed out at the roadside.

A man called Searle who was building the Iron Stable at Mesopotamia for the Campbells, chopped his foot half off with the adze and bled to death.

Jason's Creek is called after Jason Davis, who got frost-bitten in the feet when cutting firewood there, and when they got him down country his legs had to be amputated at the knees. He walked on the stumps for many years, however, and on one occasion he was taken for the devil by a nervous woman who met him in the
"dark on a lonely road near Darfield.

Another shepherd called Gilman, whom I knew well, was killed at Growling Camp (on Mesopotamia) by a rock falling on his head from a precipice under which he was walking. Hugh Urquhart was killed on the Forks by going over a precipice shortly afterwards."

All the time Butler watched the market with an eye to selling his run at a profit adequate for his purpose. He lived at Mesopotamia for four years, and when at the end of 1863, he became convinced that within the next few years sheep must fall in price, he sold Mesopotamia to William Parkerson for £10,000. By selling at this figure, Butler, and incidentally his partner Brabazon doubled their money in a little over three years, but he was a little too soon in selling, for Parkerson resold after only nine months for £13,500 - a profit of £3,500, whereas it had taken Butler over three years to make £4,000. The leases remained in Butler's name for many years after the sale was made, and to this day there is a record of twenty acres up the Rangitata River held in his name.

Having sold Mesopotamia station, Butler left on 15th June, 1864 for England. He later wrote "I felt, "moreover, that the life was utterly uncongenial to me, and "I thought it wiser to sell and go home...." (2) Although later in his life he more than once expressed a desire to revisit New Zealand, he did not return. New Zealand is indebted to him for his explorations of the major rivers of Canterbury, for his brilliant descriptions of these journeys,

(2) In 1867 "butler Runs," "mesopotamia Runs" was sold to Parkerson.
and, above all, for the records of life in early Canterbury, which he made. His "First Year in the Canterbury Settlement" is a valued contribution to our slowly emerging national history.

Mesopotamia station was sold by Parkerson to (1) William Cator and Michael Scott Campbell, and was for many years worked in conjunction with Stronechrubie. Parts of it are now set aside as education endowments, and a part is included in the Erewhon station.

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(1) Not to be confused with Butler's neighbour, Caton.
CHAPTER IX
THE MOUNTAINS.

We turn finally to a brief account of the exploration of the headwaters and mountain ranges of the Rangitata. Mountains have always captured the imagination of men, and the early pioneers were no exception to this rule. The earliest Canterbury pioneers looking from the plains westwards saw only the foothills, sometimes covered with snow, sometimes just blue silhouettes in the distance, and these they mistook for the main divide itself. Their interest in these mountains shows itself in the repeated references to the "Snowy Mountains" in documents of all kinds. To them, foothills were the snowy mountains. Years passed, and as settlement and exploration travelled further inland, men penetrated the fastnesses of the great mountains themselves. The settlers knew that over the mountain ranges of the Southern Alps were the bush-clad hills and valleys of Westland, and they were anxious to find passes through the mountains which would give them access to this land of the west. The mountain barrier itself was full of possibilities. Who knew what areas of flat, fertile land lay tucked away between the ranges, or what riches in the way of gold or precious stones lay ready to the hands of some enterprising explorer?

In 1847 and 1848 Brunner made his remarkable
Journey into Westland, explored a great part of the land, found coal, and traced the course of the Grey River. Exploration was much discussed, and an added incentive was given to it when Mackenzie(1) discovered the valley which now bears his name. The pioneers had much unexplored country to work on. In 1855 the map of New Zealand held many blank spaces.

As mentioned previously in 1855 the region above Peel Forest lay unexplored and untouched by white man, but there is evidence that the Maoris had travelled over it. Along the base of the ranges, old ovens, as well as greenstone and other stone implements have been found. The presence of greenstone seems to indicate that the Maoris came through the passes at the head of this river. Maori hunting and fishing tools, some of them fashioned from the rocks in the vicinity, suggest that the tribes were nomadic, probably summer visitors. There is considerable evidence of a much larger Maori population in earlier days, and it is highly probable that they would make use of the food resources of this region. What is lacking in the way of material evidence is made up by local legend. The Temuka pah have a story of a maiden from a pah near Hokitika, who, having quarrelled with her own tribe, ran away. This girl is said to have travelled up the Wataroa River, over the high mountain pass and down into the Rangitata, thence to Temuka where she married one of the local Maoris and

(1) J. Mackenzie, a notorious sheep-stealer, who was active in South Canterbury in 1855.
(2) Ref: Transactions of the New Zealand Institute, 1900, Volume 33, pages 426-428.
spent the rest of her life. It is quite possible that this legend is based on fact, but, of course, it is not possible to test this oral tradition.

There is another very interesting local legend. Most visitors to Peel Forest are shown a very large totara tree about which a great Maori battle is thought to have taken place. It is said that the members of a tribe were out in the forest gathering food when they were surprised by a war party from Westland and forced to make a last stand about the base of this tree. The defending chief, Te Wanahu, fought gallantly against overwhelming odds and was killed, most of his tribe suffering the same fate. This interesting legend is dispelled by the following facts: J.B.A. Acland had relatives from Cornwall visiting him who were steeped in the legendry of their native heath. On Christmas Day the Acland family and their visitors were picnicking in the Forest, and Mr. Dudley Mills entertained the children with one of legends of old Cornwall. To make the story more vivid, he gave it a local setting, using the background of the Forest and substituting a Maori hero for the Cornish one. It was easy to transpose "Wainhouse" into "Te Wanahu". However, the place has its own tragic memories for on Te Wanahu flat, near the great totara tree, a shepherd was lost in the Forest. Years later his skeleton was found close by, and the dankness and gloom of the bush where he met his fate deepened the tragedy of the old English legend in its Maori setting. The late

(1) Arthur Mills, M.A., on losing his seat in Parliament, came out with his wife and two sons to New Zealand. One of these sons, Dudley, sailed the ...
Miss Jessie Mackay wrote a poem on the gallant stand of Te Wanahu, a fine poem in spite of its dubious historic background.

It would seem, therefore, that although the Maoris did penetrate into Peel Forest and occasionally above it, they were not in 1855 in effective occupation of any of the land nearby, and from the nature of the description of the country above the gorge obtained by pioneers from the Maoris, it would appear that they had not been there for some time.

The first pakehas to penetrate beyond Peel Forest were Tripp and Acland. Their early journeys have already been described. In 1860 they made another exploring trip up the Rangitata, this time accompanied by Charles Harper, a son of the Bishop. The party left Mr. Peel station to investigate a Maori report that the Rangitata opened out into a large flat basin - in fact into ideal sheep country. Acland records that he had little faith in this rumour, but that he was indeed interested to ascertain the nature of the unknown country. They were able to reach the junction of the Havelock and Clyde without mishap, and went up the Clyde to the Lawrence. From a camp here they explored first the Lawrence as far as horses could go, and then the Clyde without finding the desired pasture land. They refrained from giving names to any of the places discovered, leaving this

(1) see pages 32 - 44.
(2) New Zealand Alpine Journal, Volume I, page 24
(3) This site was afterwards chosen by McRae for his home- stead at Stronecrubie, and has comparatively recently been included in Frewan station.
to later explorers, notably Von Haast.

Acland, accompanied by various persons, made numerous explorations into the region - in fact his trips were for a period regular yearly events. Finding by experience that the summer attempt was apt to be frustrated by flooding of the rivers, he changed the timing to autumn, with better results. Among other activities, he sought to determine the rate of ice-flow of the glaciers on this side of the main divide. For instance, in regard to the Sir Colin Campbell glacier, the largest glacier at the head of the true left branch of the Clyde, he reports:-

"I took the height of the highest point of "the moraine (as near as I could judge in the "same position) above the cutlet, in the "years 1866, 1867, and 1871. The several "results are: in 1866 1057 feet, in "1867 980 feet, and in 1871 752 feet; which "is startling, as shewing, if correct, (and "I believe it to be so) that in five years "ice to the thickness of 300 feet has melted, "without being renewed from above. I was ther "again in 1880, but I cannot find any record "of observation. I remember that I should "not have recognized the lower part of the "glacier, which looked like an old deserted "quarry heap." (1)

He contributed a great deal to our geographical knowledge of this district, in addition to the part he played in the development of the sheep country lower down.

The next explorer in the region was Samuel Butler. On his first journey here he went up the south bank of the river as far as Forest creek and explored that creek. At the head of it he climbed a low shingle mountain from which he obtained his first view of Mt. Cook, which he describes as:

"towering in a massy parallelogram, disclosed from top to bottom, in a cloudless sky, far above all others. It has been calculated by the Admiralty people at 13,200 feet, but Mr. Haast says that it is considerably higher. For my part I can well believe it. Mont Blanc himself is not so grand in shape and does not look so imposing. Indeed I am not sure that Mt. Cook is not the finest in outline of all the snowy mountains that I have ever seen. It is however well worth any amount of climbing to see. No one can mistake it. If a person says he thinks he has seen Mt. Cook, you may be quite sure that he has not seen it. The moment it comes into sight, the exclamation is: 'That is Mt. Cook!' not 'That must be Mt. Cook!' There is no possibility of mistake.... For my part though it is hazardous to say this of any mountain, I do not think that any human being will ever reach its top. I am forgetting myself into admiring a mountain which is of no use for sheep." (1)

Towards the end of that year, 1860, Butler, in company with a young surveyor named Baker, travelled, on horseback and later on foot, all the way to the headwaters of the three branches - Havelock, Clyde and Lawrence, and confirmed previous conjectures that there was no sheep country there. From the Lawrence they climbed to a pass which looked as if it might lead to the West Coast, but they found to their disappointment that they were looking not at Westland, but


(2) J.H. Baker - an able man. From his notes his daughter Noelene published "A Surveyor in New Zealand", a most readable book.
into the headwaters of another Canterbury river, the Rakaia. Beyond the Rakaia they could see what seemed to be a low pass across the main divide which must lead to the West Coast. Returning the way they had come, they went round the foothills to the Rakaia headwaters and followed up a small stream (now known as the Louper river) to the summit of the pass they had seen in the distance. It proved to be indeed a main divide pass, and Butler and Baker went over it and down the other side until they found the waters flowing to the west, and until they reached the almost impenetrable gorge of a typical West Coast river. Being satisfied now that they had found a pass to Westland, and that no sheep country was to be found there, they returned over the pass into the Rakaia valley and down the Rakaia river into civilization again. (1) Years later in England, Butler made use of these exploration experiences in the writing of "Erewhon". (2) Omitting place names (which were not existent then) he describes in detail his climb to

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(1) Butler reported the discovery of the pass to the Land Survey Office at Christchurch, and the Provincial Government sent Henry Whitcombe and Jacob Lauper to investigate it. Enduring terrible privations, they completed the journey through this pass to the Tasman Sea, but while attempting to ford the flooded Taramakau, Whitcombe was drowned. 1863. See Handbook of New Zealand Mines, Wellington, 1887, pp 101-109. The name "Lauper" has been changed to "Louper", vide Survey Maps. In connection with the death of Whitcombe, it is interesting to read a report in "Yesterdays in Maoriland" by Andreas Reischek (London 1933, page 52) which states that "Mr. Whitcombe...had lost his life like this. Some years before, when returning this way from an expedition, "the blowflies spoiled all his provisions and covered his "blankets with eggs, making them quite useless. Consequently he was starved and frozen to death."

the high saddle at the head of the Lawrence overlooking the Rakaia. (1) "Ten minutes more and the cold air from the other side came rushing upon me. A glance, I was not on the main range. Another glance. There was an awful river, muddy and horribly angry, roaring over an immense river bed, thousands of feet below me. Another glance, and then I remained motionless. There was an easy pass in the mountains directly opposite to me, through which I caught a glimpse of an immeasurable extent of blue and distant plains." For the sake of the story he introduces many departures from the actual happenings—for instance in place of Baker he is accompanied by an aboriginal named Chowbok who deserts him on route; but Chowbok may have been inspired by Andy, the Australian black employed on Mt. Peel station. Again, the precipices and ravines of the descent into the Rakaia exceed the reality; and he did not cross the Rakaia on a raft, but preferred a much safer two day detour on a horse; yet his description of the climb from the Rakaia riverbed to Whitcombe Pass and into Westland is an accurate presentation of the scene. (2) Many of the mountaineers I interviewed believe that the stones at the top of the Whitcombe pass inspired the "singing statues" of "Erewhon". Butler denies this. (3)

On his return to Mesopotamia, Butler was host to

(2) "The Note Books of Samuel Butler" H. Festing Jones, London, 1930, p.288 — "Up as far as the top of the pass, where the statues are, keeps to the actual geography of the Upper Rangitata district, except that I have doubled the gorge........"
(3) Ditto lines 154-5
the next explorer up the Rangitata, Dr. von Haast, who was the first official surveyor to come to this district. He explored all three branches of the Rangitata headwaters, naming them and some of the surrounding peaks as he did so. He used Mesopotamia as a base, and established camps higher up as they became necessary for his purpose. His system of nomenclature here is based upon famous men, either in connection with the Indian Mutiny, or in the realm of Science: — "Havelock" River for instance, and "Forbes" River (after the Scottish physicist), "Tyndall" Peak, (the English scientist), and so on. It is curious that he did not name the glaciers, although there are some which are large even today, and must have been considerably larger in his day. He describes them in enthusiastic terms. A number of minor mistakes were made by him, one of the more confusing of which to later mountainers has been Mt. Tyndall; he called many peaks by this name under the impression that they were one and the same peak seen from different angles.

Tragedy marred Dr. von Haast’s visit to the Rangitata. He was accompanied by his friend, Dr. Sinclair, an eminent English botanist, and during one return journey to Mesopotamia for supplies Dr. Sinclair was drowned while attempting to cross the Rangitata. Dr. von Haast had remained at the up-river camp in order "to make a collection of fossils which I had discovered on my way up", and the servant

(1) Dr. von Haast, an eminent geologist, was born and educated at Bonn, and arrived in New Zealand in 1858. He became assistant to Dr. von Hochstetter, and in 1861 was Surveyor-
who had accompanied Dr. Sinclair immediately went back for Dr. Von Haast. The arrival at Mesopotamia of the riderless horse brought a party from there, and a search disclosed the body about three hundred yards below the place where Dr. Sinclair had entered the river. The burial took place at Mesopotamia station, but Samuel Butler was at Christchurch at the time and unable to be present at the burial. William Vance in an article on the Life and Times of Samuel Butler writes:

"How fitting it seemed to the spirit of this back-country district, which knows not difference of race, religion, or social caste, that the funeral of one of the founders of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Dunedin, should have left the home of an agnostic son of a Vicar and the grandson of a Bishop, and that the burial service should be conducted by a German scientist with the aid of a Mass-book loaned by a bullock driver." (1)

Dr. Sinclair's grave is still to be seen "near the banks of the river just where it emerges from the Alps, with their perpetual snowfields glistening in the sun, amid veronicas, senecios, and covered with celmesias and gentians." (2)

Dr. Von Haast was deeply distressed over the loss of his friend and colleague, recording that "Great and deep was my sorrow, and with a saddened heart I had to continue alone the work upon which we had set out together." (3) He thus continued his work of making the first geological survey of Canterbury.

(2) "Historical Notes on the Geological Survey of Canterbury,"
(3) - Julius von Haast, Christchurch, 1879, p. 12.

It is believed by some residents that the gravestone the Geological Society from London, does not mark the actual
In 1877 the surveyor McClure visited the Rangitata territory, and made the maps of the Havelock-Clyde watershed which are to be seen at the office of the Department of Lands and Survey, Christchurch. The watersheds are clearly marked, but he did not affix names to the main divide peaks. His maps show Butler's Saddle, and the relative positions of the three Canterbury rivers, Rangitata, Rakaia and Ashburton, which so nearly converge.

By 1903 the headwaters of the three streams which form the Rangitata river had been explored and the country surveyed and mapped. Butler had discovered a pass into Westland (Whitcombe Pass) but this pass was a Rakaia one, and no pass had yet been discovered from the Rangitata direct into Westland. By this time a new problem had arisen which one man in particular was very keen to solve: the relationship of the headwaters of the Rangitata to the rivers on the other side of the main divide. On the Canterbury side were the Rangitata and Rakaia, (the Ashburton does not quite reach the main divide) and on Westland the Wataroa and the Wanganui river systems, but the relative position of the two pairs of rivers was not known. The man who was most anxious to solve this riddle was James R. Dennistoun of Peel Forest Station, a station a few miles down-river from Mt. Peel station. In 1907, the Westland explorer, A.P. Harper, had suggested to
Dennistoun that it would be interesting to find out exactly
where a pass from the Rangitata would lead to in Westland.
From his home, looking up the valley, Dennistoun could see
what he thought were two possible passes through the mountains
to Westland, so in February, 1908, accompanied by Eric Harper,
and with no alpine experience, little bushcraft, poor equipment,
but with a great deal of enthusiasm and a balance of common-
sense, he set out to test his theory. Their first assault
was upon a col above the glacier at the head of the Havelock
river, but upon reaching the top they found that the river
which lay sparkling thousands of feet below them flowed in
the wrong direction - they were looking into the headwaters of
the Clyde. In their chagrin they named the saddle "Disappoint-
ment Col", and it is now used by climbers and ski-runners as
a route from the Clyde valley to the Havelock.

After an abortive attempt to reach another high
col, they came further down the Havelock valley and climbed
to a high col at the head of a contributory stream which they
called Eric Stream. (1) This Col, now estimated to be 6,500
feet above sea level, (2) led them over into a valley which
certainly looked like Westland. They followed down the
stream in this valley for some miles, then camped under a large
rock at the junction of this stream and a tributary. Unfort-
unately torrential rain delayed them for some time, and they

(1) After Eric Harper. Possessing that attribute rather
dangerous to men bestowing place-names - a sense of humour -
they called the next stream "St.Winifred" of "Eric, or
Little by Little" fame. Ref: Dennistoun's diary.
(2) Survey Maps give this height.
were forced by lack of stores to return the way they had come, without being able to verify their conjecture that they had crossed the main divide. Before leaving, they stored much of their meagre equipment under their rock-shelter. They had no tent.

The next climbing season, in December 1908, Dennistoun set out from Westland and, accompanied by Peter Graham of Waiho and William Gunn of Wataroa, travelled up the Wataroa river to the Perth and up the Perth to its junction with the Scone, where they camped. Dennistoun tells what happened:

"For the last mile or two we could see up a creek which I imagined was the one we had come down last year and the saddle we had crossed, but I could not be quite sure. Next day was glorious, and we set out at once to find out for certain if it really was our creek. We followed up Scone creek for about a mile and then crossed to the north bank and began to go up our creek coming in from the south-east; and I began to wonder whether the creek that had come into our creek opposite where we had turned back last year could be Scone Creek. Everything looked so different in perfect weather from what it had been last year in fog and pouring rain. I was trying to puzzle it out when Peter saw a bit of puttee under a stone. I poked about and found the stone we had slept under, but could find no camera or blankets, etc - they had all been washed out. But five yards further down another bit of puttee was seen sticking out of the sand, and there we found everything - telescope, camera, blankets, etc. You can imagine how excited we were."

He had proved his point. The pass which he and Harper had crossed in 1908 led from the headwaters of the Rangitata to the Perth branch of the Wataroa. This pass is now called

Dennistoun Pass. Dennistoun, on this journey with Peter Graham and William Gunn, also found that the high snow saddle which he and Harper had attempted and found too difficult, between Disappointment Col. and Dennistoun Pass, also led over the main divide into the Perth stream. Hence Dennistoun had the pleasure of knowing that the two possible routes through the main divide which he had seen from Peel Forest were practicable passes into Westland.

In 1910 Dennistoun was again in the Rangitata, this time with L. M. Earle and Guide J.M. Clarke. This time he hoped to throw further light on the relationship between the Wairarapa and Wanganui watersheds, and was successful. During the year 1910 he travelled south with the "Terra Nova" when that ship returned to the Ross Sea in search of survivors of the Scott expedition. Back from this voyage, he and his brother, Lieutenant George Dennistoun, R.N. (later Commander Dennistoun) discovered a pass from the Havelock river into the headwaters of the Godley river which flows into Lake Tekapo and thence into the Waitaki. They named this pass "Terra Nova Pass" after Captain Scott's ship. A nearby peak became Mt. Pyramus, Lieutenant Dennistoun being at that time on leave from H.M.S. Pyramus.

James R. Dennistoun made other journeys of this nature which added considerably to our knowledge of the topography of the Alps in this district and elsewhere. In 1916
he died in a German hospital from injuries received when his biplane caught fire, and the Christchurch "Press" in an obituary notice stated:

"Lieutenant James Robert Dennistoun, North Irish Horse, attached R.F.C. died at Ohrdruf, in Thuringia, central Germany on 9th August, from wounds received while flying. His biplane caught fire and he had to descend into the enemy lines...

He took the keenest pleasure in mountaineering. He made the ascent of many of the snow-capped Southern Alps in New Zealand, among them that of several virgin peaks. He also climbed alone Mitre Peak in Milford Sound, which had up to that time been considered inaccessible. Lieutenant Dennistoun, who did a considerable amount of exploration work, was a member of the Alpine Club. At the outbreak of war ..." (1)

Since the time of Dennistoun the exploration of this district has been competently and thoroughly undertaken by members of the Canterbury Mountaineering Club and of the New Zealand Alpine Club. Virgin peaks have been climbed, new passes have been found, extensive glaciers have been identified and named, and generally a mass of geographical information has been collected. This district up to the outbreak of the present war was a popular field for mountaineering activity by the youth of the country.

Interest in the mountains is not now an interest in their grazing potentialities, as back-country farming has been developed in New Zealand probably to its optimum extent under present methods of production. We do not expect to find more grazing land, but interest in the

mountains themselves remains. They present a challenge to youth to seek conquest, pitting human courage, strength and ingenuity against the forces of nature. This appeal will always remain, but there is another aspect of the mountainous regions which will probably come more and more into public attention as time goes on - that of their mineral potentialities. Geological surveys have established the presence of some minerals, although in the Rangitata district not so far in payable quantities. Their working waits upon an increase in world demand.

CONCLUSION.

So we come to the end of this history of the Rangitata Valley. It is a record chiefly of courage in the face of difficulties which might have proved overwhelming. Its future, failure the finding of payable mineral deposits, seems to be bound up in the future of wool, and with the probable post-war development of wool-substitutes, this future does not loom now so bright as it did in the days of Tripp and Acland. With a shrinkage in the demand for wool these high-country sheep stations will be the first to reduce production. They are the marginal units of production for the reason that although they produce mainly fine wools, the nature of the country does not permit of the raising of the most remunerative dual-purpose sheep, hence the cost of wool production cannot be averaged with a large mutton or lamb yield. The cost of production per pound of
wool is therefore high. Financial difficulties already confront most of these high-country stations and the position would seem likely to deteriorate rather than to improve in the future unless some revolutionary change in the costs of production takes place. These factors must be taken into account but the memory of past achievements should not be lost.
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