June 12th 1899.

Extracts from letter of Mr. E.L. Bridge to Mrs. E.L. Bridge.

"We left Auckland for the Thames in bad weather, reached Te Aroha on Thursday last. There the weather was very unpleasant, howling wind day and night, it is not a bad little place, but has a bad reputation for wind. We arrived all Saturday for our journey here, and that was tiresome, as the train runs through very pretty bush scenery, beautiful tree ferns. We are now established here for the present, and it has been fine since we came. It is a curious and wonderful country, not beautiful. We made a little excursion this morning to a place called the Haurauaarea. It is a Maori path about two miles from here, a track goes backwards and forwards to the river. It is a desolate country, nothing but broken and manuka scrub, but there are pretty jepa of the little 100 and then. The path is in a valley which is full of boiling springs.

You hear them bubbling all round, and you are every moment then enclosed in a cloud of steam. A Maori woman came forward and offered to guide us about, she took me to a geiser that was playing, but the pepper that rose sixty feet has been quiet for four years. This is the place where deep caves are being formed, we saw just a little bit that gave me a very slight idea of what the Japanese ones must have been. There were some fearful looking cauldrons boiling and bubbling. The yah is not in the least picturesque, chiefly old tumble-down huts, built in European fashion. We saw one carved there, but that was built by a square cut window and door. The Maori woman told us she was at Waeroa in the Serauera explosion, but Will Whiterfeld leaped and said, 'They all tell you that.' I want to go to the native settlement there, there you see the Maories dressing and cooking in the hot water holes."

"Much love to you all,"

"From your dear, E.L."
We made an expedition on Saturday to a place called Whiterock. We hired Mr. Crane at cost of each for the day and everything was provided for us boat, steamer, buggy and lunch on basket. It was a beautiful day, we walked to the shore of the lake at 10 a.m., and a row boat took us to a steam launch which lay a few hundred yards to the Wharf. It was so delightful that I think we should all have liked to row all the way, but it would have taken too long. We towed the boat behind us across the lake as it was wanted again at the other side, and landed at a place called Kamosoora where a small river empties into the lake. We had a very pretty walk by the side of the stream which is planted with willow kilts. The stream the guide told us they were planted forty years ago by the missionaries who had called at St. Helena on the voyage out and brought willow cuttings from Halifax town. Then we came to a pool with "wait here" painted on it, so we waited. A boat appeared, having gone up the stream. We were rowed up the river—very wide, willows, beautiful beach covering steep banks; there were large cabbage palms, Jacaranda trees, Jerome creepers and amongst them all every hue and then a sweet briar, its crimson berries showing well in the ditches of the dark green. We were taken to the head of the stream, a deep black pool where you can see the springs bubbling up. It was very lovely, and I was glad to get away from the incessant boiling and clouds of steam here at Victoria. We rowed back again to the mouth of the stream, there we got into our launch again and steamed back by the island of Victoria to which
Hecnora swmra from the mainland. Then we left all the beauty behind, and went to another point where a hungry and lazy Orara awaited us. We had a drive of about four miles to Whitiarere through oblique manuka scrub and bracken. Whitiarere is famous for its boiling mud springs, it is a place of wonder and horror. We thought we had better fortify ourselves with lunch, before we walked round. There is a Maori house made of mud where we were told to go, and here are a table and a fireplace, and an open door through which being opened disclosed four beds divided from each other by mungo walls, all as barren, in fact as you can imagine. The best were of dried fern with a little mat spread over each, yet people actually stay in this whare for weeks at a time for the sake of the baths.

We were both thrilled, as we had no trouble about anything, our lunch was all ready for us and then we went to look at the writer.

Close to the Whare is the mud bath, roughly enclosed with wampas, and a few yards away is a stream of water in which you wash after the bath. After seeing that and hearing wonderful stories of people who had come on sketches and walked away without them, our guide showed us round the springs. It was rough walking for these waters leave a deposit, which hardens and forms what is called emitter, rough hard stones and rock. We cast black or rather brown depths all bubbling up amidst clouds of steam large things like cauldrons, small things like jets, but all foaming and bubbling as if some devilish agency was at work below. One is called the "Oraro Cauldron", another the "Oraro Porridge Pot", and so on. One fearful causer is called "The Gates of Hell". I was glad when this round was over and we got back to the campfire, the only innocent and beneficent mud bath. Then our uncle and aunt and a gentleman
The had joined our party went to refresh
their eyes with seeing the blue lake.
This is a small lake surrounded by bush
and deep, dull in colour, about a mile
distant. I found a path cut in the sown
shime and talked to a Maori woman who
I found was the wife of the owner of the
shame. She had a little girl nine years
old with whom I tried to make friends,
but she was too shy. I suppose they made
great deal in the season by taking visitors
round. We each paid two shillings, and it
would not be safe to go alone. Persons
who stay at the Whare say thirty-five
shillings a week, I should be sorry to stay
there, but perhaps if I were crippled with
the sickness I might be glad to do the thing.
When they returned from the blue Lake
we got into the buggy and drove to Hobson
getting in about five o'clock. Very tired
and hungry, but having greatly enjoyed our
expedition, the weather being perfect."

Bronte Botanical House - Victoria. June 24th 1879
From W. C. & M. C. to W. C. & M. C.

"One
day we walked to Thunder Tree, it is a pretty
and by sitting down and taking several times I
aged it very well. We went to the top of a rising
ground from which we had a lovely view of
the Lake and the surrounding hills. Though
there is no beauty in Victoria itself, there are
very pretty walks of the Lake and the surrounding
country, and the Christmas Day steam here
and there give a character to them. Then
we went down into the far, there is a small
church which was built originally for the
Maories, though the English may do it also.
There are local thrives for the next part and
a pretty carved Warumunui or meeting house.
Both lasting and parts of the church everywhere.
We saw a woman take her dinner out of one
of these holes, just come a jet which she in
formed me was meat; last, lastly, then a bit of
vegetables. Then we came upon two little Maori children
dipping themselves in the water, jumping in and out. The
place is together is quite with a wish to
Letter from Mrs. F. J. Bridge to Mrs. C. H. Bridge, Auckland  
July 14th 1899.

We left Victorica at 8.30 am on the 17th. Mary and I got out at Stronville about forty miles on the way to Auckland. We were delighted with Stronville; its beauty had not been exaggerated. The hotel stands on a hill and through the grounds flows the Victorica river, more commonly called the Stronville Creek—a clear, mountain stream, the steep banks thickly clothed with a wealth of ferns, veronica and manuka. At one place the banks rise into steep cliffs, the river narrows and rushes down with increasing force forming rapids, just at the foot of these, where the river spreads out into a deep basin, are the garden baths, but there is no bubbling and steaming much as at Victorica, it is all loneliness! There is the Fairy Lake in which we bathed, a warm bath in a tower of ferns lighted up at night by fairy women, as they say. There is a tradition connected with the hotel. The Stronville Maoris defied another tribe to shoot the rapids in their canoe, they accepted the challenge and thirty-five Maoris attempted it. Everyone was drenched to pieces, the canoe floated a few yards further and got wedged between two rocks. There it is now, I have got a photograph of it.

Mary and I went for a drive this morning to St. Peter's College and found some of the students. Yesterday we went by bus to the foot of Mount Eden and walked to the top, a most lovely view of the two harbours, Onehunga and Auckland, and of the neck of land between. The weather is delightful, so warm and yet fresh and invigorating, it is certainly an ideal winter climate.
Letter from Dr. M. R. Griffin to Mr. H. W. Bridge, dated July 17, 1901.

We are just back
from a holiday in Norway, where we went to recruit, not having had a holiday since
than a week since we were married six
years ago. So we totally took a month, and have some backs recovered in
body and mind. Moreover, just before
starting, I was appointed to the local surgeon
of the Sussex County Hospital, and it
seemed a good opportunity to take
a holiday before settling down to hospital
work and routine. We crossed from
Hull to Bergen: the passage was rough,
and we spent the thirty hours it lasted in
our steerage. Stevanger was the first port
touched at, and from hence to Bergen,
our course lay amongst the innumerable
islands with which Norway is girt. Bergen is
a quaint and picturesque old town of
80,000 inhabitants, backed by high hills with
low islands in front. One part of the town
consists of the houses occupied in the
14th and 15th centuries by the Hanseatic League.
Many of them are well preserved and contain
various relics of that time. Bergen is said
to be the earliest place in Norway, and cer-
tainly there were showers the two days we
spent in it. From Bergen we journeyed
along the only line of railway in Western
Norway, and it is only recently it leads to
the terminus, Voss, and there posted in a
"Ferry Car," as called from the small seat behind
which the boy who drives you into the
towns passing between the two people sitting in
front, to the town, 1,382 feet up in the mountains,
and the next day to Fredvang, where we took
the steamer on the Fjord. Here the mountains
rise sheer out of the water for some two to three
thousand feet, and down their sides free water
falls descended in many places, being fed by the
melting snows. The scenes are lovely here
and fishing is very fine. The fish
steamer touched at various spots, and we spent
a few days at Christian and Akerland, near
The letter ere too fine glaciers to which we failed
sight. Still on the move, we again changed into
the mountains till we arrived at Vatnahalsen
2500 feet up. Here we stopped for some time, the
air being most invigorating, and a lake being
handy on which we boated. Messing up, and
with the help of a guide, we crossed the mountain
at a height of 5000 feet and were for ever
rained on during the rest of the way. Two
insufficient views in all directions. Late at
night (though this time of year daylight reigns
all night, and one can read a newspaper at
midnight) we reached Skjærv on a branch of
the Hardanger Fjord. We had had a long day
and our feet were tired, but next day
we were all right. We steamed over the
Hardanger, stopping at VÆring for three days,
and finally arrived back at Bergen after
three delightful weeks of perfect
weather. I must not forget to mention how
lovely the spring flowers were carpeting the
wayside, not hot simple and bright the Horne-
gian are, how picturesque the women's
coutume. The food was everywhere good
and wholesome, and fish appeared at
most meals. Cheese is much favoured,
and three or four varieties are usually
kept on the table. One in particular,
made from goats' milk, and butter like
a chocolate. Piece-ounce in colour, we
got attacked to and brought one back
with us. Berries grow on all the mountains,
and cranberry preserve is a favourite.
Our return journey from Bergen to Hell
was very smooth. I cannot tell you how
This trip has set us up in health.

Addenda in letter same date 8th. C. H. Kriese
or some similar: “The Norwegian language
has many affinities with German and Scotch
and is not difficult. I picked up a few
many phrases and words, and hope to acquire
more by actually using a grammar, dictionary
and thence broke. He brought back with me.”
Standing by, said "That's me," and shook hands with me at once. Next morning I started with the Atlantic Packet at eight o'clock, and by my watch that was the climax of my journey. For the first few miles after leaving Ripiscice the road wound through cliffs cloaked in magnificent bush, ferns, countless tree ferns, I had never seen so near the bush before. How grateful I felt to my dear friend for the slower express, instead of the rattling coach. Afterwards, the road of trees came in, screening, clearing, melancholy to see, but before arriving at Sarah there was lovely bush again. If my welcome I need not write. From the windows of my room, where I write now, I see my Patrick in waiting, grandeur with his everlasting snows. A plain stretches at his feet on which flows the delicious air of 2,500 feet above the sea. A few hundred yards from the house a swift stream downwards. Up it is junctions, where, hidden by a bank, the house. At this time she has given it up to
Lily and Connie to keep them from the poor little servant, who starts for home to nurse with her mother. Frances (Rutherford) is well, except that her eyes are very tired and can be used very little by lamplight. She is wonderfully bright and energetic. I cannot imagine what they would do without her here. About six in the morning she is off to the cows, afraid to trust the little three-quarter caste boy to watch her. He and his sister live here because they had a bad home. She is like a little angel among the Maoris. I have just come from a service in the schoolroom, and I saw a Maori lay reader. Everything about their life here is very interesting. The children bring me curious flowers, small orchids, &c.

Managing. They have quite a nice vegetable garden here, from cucumbers, tomatoes, &c., sent from the school. I made a mistake about the lay reader, he is an Englishman, proprietor of the accommodation house, very dark. We go into the schoolroom every morning for prayers, Mr. Grant plays on the
Arrived here some time after three quite exhausted by the long days travelling - St. Lucia's & St. Vincent, the Bay of Biscay, and land tea with the teams at the town back up the river. In the evening went to see the Raffles, finding all at home bustling.

She has lately left for her M. A. degree and is now enjoying a holiday in Auckland among friends.

Hiking Day - Hiking and Arthur spent the day either playing tennis or watching Cricket matches. Albert took me playing for the then day. I began reading "The Chariot" doing some work. In the afternoon called on Mr. Mason. We had just returned from England and is staying with Mr. Mantell senior. Went also to see Mrs. Ellen Greenwood. In the evening we went to St. Andrews at Opera House. immerg. I was at the theatre excellent. Finished packing and said goodbye to Arthur as we leave before in the morning and we go back to work and Constantine by evening's train. We have had two happy days together.