

minutes including stoppages by our present Express train. ~~There were no passengers bridges over the dangerous rivers in those days.~~ When we came to the Rakia we had dinner at the Accommodation House kept by a Mr. Flowers, or Flower. The place was always spoken of as Flowers - and the name struck me as being so odd for a man, I had never heard it but in connection with roses, buttercups and daisies, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> <sup>was</sup> <sup>not</sup> <sup>at</sup> <sup>all</sup>. Nearly all the hotels or stopping places were called accommodation houses, probably because of their primitive style and conveniences. Now came the most astonishing episode in my life. There were no bridges over the dangerous and often turbulent rivers in those days, and the Rakia had to be crossed in a bullock dray. Never before had I ~~heard~~ <sup>seen</sup> or ~~seen~~ <sup>heard</sup> of bullocks, and to be actually drawn by them seemed incredible. However we were got safely over, to our relief, and the river was high enough for the bullocks to swim in some places,

and there was much talk about fords and their shifting, and the number of horsemen who got drowned in going over because the ford was carried away. We reached Ashburton in the dark, being all thoroughly tired out, and of course spending the night there. We dressed and breakfasted by candlelight once more. I think we crossed the Ashburton river in the coach, but am not sure, only remembering that it was very wide. At the Rangitata we had dinner and think we crossed this river in a boat, if not it was in another bullock dray. I can recall looking down the river at the coach being taken across in a punt to the other side, where we presently got in again and drove away along the Great South Road, as the main road was called, towards Timaru. This punting over of the coach most probably took place at the Rakia also, but I am not clear about it. We reached Timaru without any mishaps of broken poles, or bolting