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Account of a trip on the Peninsula (Rakitis) made by Miss Hastings, Mrs Chapman and Miss Griffin in January 1879.

We left Christchurch by the nine a.m. train, on ^{Wednesday} January the ⁸ th 1879, a party of three ladies starting on a little excursion for a summer holiday. We proposed to go from Lyttelton to Pigeon Bay by steamer, then take the coach from there and cross the range intersecting the peninsula and on to Akaroa, a seaport and small watering-place on the south. This is a French settlement, founded by a French ship-load of emigrants. When the English government heard of the intended departure of these settlers, they determined, if possible, to forestall them, and plant the British flag on the heights of South Peninsula. When the French captain sailed in to the harbour confident of claiming the settlement in the

name of his master, the King of France, to his deep mortification he beheld the English flag waving a triumphant welcome to the new comers. The English ship had arrived about hours before and Akaroa was lost to the French. But I have settled down at this Picturesque spot as if it were the end of our wanderings, instead of the half way point. From thence our ^{return} route lay along the winding range slowly ascending to the summit, known as Hill Top, near the highest peak on the peninsula Mount Hau following the track down the other side to a sheltered spot called Little River which nestles at the foot of the hills, there we will take the coach, and leave the high latitudes with their clear bracing air to resume our ordinary way of life on the low level of the Canterbury plains. We all met in Ch.Ch and stayed the night at the Terminus Hotel. At nine o'

clock next morning we set off in the train for Lyttelton, a journey occupying twenty five minutes. We pass through the famous tunnel which was constructed during the term of office of Mr Moorehouse, one of our superintendents who has made his name a household word in Canterbury, by urging on and constructing a work which but for his untiring energy would have been delayed for many years. The expense was great, and difficulties many, but it has made Christchurch the flourishing centre of business for all Canterbury, though Lyttelton has suffered hereby. The port is a strapping place, streets very steep, and well do I remember a fortnight spent there three years ago, and the amount of fatigue consequent on the shortest walk. There are a few good buildings notably the Post Office, but the harbour

is the chief feature of the place. It is a lovely scene on a sunny day, embrowned by irregular hills upon which the play of light and shade produces most beautiful effects. It is the finest harbour in the Middle island, and to-day the wharves showed great signs of bustle and activity, and there were many large vessels at the pier. At the Christchurch station we met the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Bishop Harper, with whom my friends were well acquainted. We were glad to find that he was travelling in our direction, intending to hold a confirmation service at Pigeon Bay. He had returned about three weeks previously from England, whither he had gone to attend the Lambeth Conference of 1878, and seemed full and hearty as men many years his junior. His conversation was most interesting, and helped to charm

away the feelings of sea sickness which slightly obtruded themselves as we coasted along in the Akaroa. We left Lyttelton at ten o'clock, and soon passed Godly Heads, admiring the numerous pretty bays which open up along the peninsula. A strong sea breeze was blowing, that combined with resolution and the Bishop's reminiscences, prevented us feeling more than qualmish.

At Pigeon Bay Hotel we had dinner and went on to Akaroa in the coach which runs there tri-weekly. We now ascended the road, the scenery was very picturesque, the weather delightful, and I and S had the box seat with the driver so there was no draw-back to our full enjoyment of the ride.

It appeared to me to be a dangerous road, some of the inclines were very steep, and the turns abrupt and sharp. But we were assured that

there had never been an accident, owing of course to well trained horses and careful driving. The box seats had been previously engaged by some gentleman tourists, but the driver, who had known something of my friends - and was desirous of obliging them if possible, represented one of us as his sister, the other as her friend. To this laudable fiction we owed much of the pleasure we derived from our ride. We arrived in Skaroa about four p.m. and were very glad of an early tea which revived us after the intense heat. There is a lovely harbour embosomed by hills, with a long entrance from the Heads. It seems strange that a place with such good facilities for shipping should be so lifeless and dull, having degenerated into a quiet little watering place. The surrounding hills afford splendid views of the town and port; many are covered with bush,

and form pleasant resorts for picnic parties. The view from our front windows was beautiful, especially in the evening when the waters were of that deep blue tint which so marly matches those of the sky, and the lovely shadows rested on the hills in all varieties of shapes and shades. The climate seemed to us most relaxing, the heat was intense, and we felt utterly disinclined for any exertion during the day, but the evenings were delightfully cool, and after an early tea, we used to saunter out to go up some of the lanes near the house, and pursue our various occupations of reading, writing and sketching. One morning we came across a curiously quaint vine-covered cottage which Miss H. recollects visiting eight years before, then occupied by a French settler named Boileau. We all went to see if the same person lived there now, and Miss H. at once recognized him in the old peasant who came forth to greet us. The conversation was conducted in French, and he

showed us all over his vineyard and orchard, which were in splendid order, the vines had thick stems, and were trained in rows like currant bushes. The pear and peach trees were very fine, the branches being laden with large tempting fruit ripe, to our sorrow, as it was early in the season. Monsieur Goileau gallantly gave us each a few stalks of all his sweet smelling plants - lemon balm, lavender, etc., and we afterwards sketched his cottage as a reminiscence of our visit. We twice went on the beach, but were disappointed in our finds, only getting three fine starfish, and one shell. I believe that at low tide very nice shells can often be gathered, but we were unfortunate in our visits. One day we procured horses, and, improvising a riding costume, went winding up a path round the hills, nearly getting to the top. One animal was blind of an eye, and persisted in going towards that side of the road, the other had a young foal, to which she paid an undue amount of

attention. Notwithstanding these annoyances, which we bore with stoical fortitude, the ride was very pleasant, rewarding us by occasional glimpses of the numerous bays, and Akaroa itself with its lovely harbour and hills lay before our admiring gaze. When we reached the top, we saw the open sea, faintly stretching out into the dim horizon, calm and smooth as glass, gleaming in the sunlight, and a clear blue sky with white fleecy clouds making up a delightful picture. We were away three hours in the hottest part of the day, and were very fatigued after it; but rest and dinner refreshed us. Sunday was hot also, we went to church morning and evening. It is a pretty edifice, and boasts a stained glass window and an organ, two things not often found in a New Zealand country church. In the afternoon we took a short walk along the shore, and later on concluded the arrangements for departure next morning when at ten o'clock we said good bye with regret at leaving so pretty a place. W. C. Mackell

drove us up to Hill Top in a dogcart, with a very strong mountain horse who took us up the hills splendidly. Some chance remark of Miss H's - touched a chord in the old man's memory, and he beguiled the journey with many interesting remarks on the daily habits of some of the same poets, in whose country he had spent his early years. When we arrived at Hill Top, we wrote them down at once, while they were fresh in our minds. During our stay at the summit which lasted two or three clear days, we were literally rained up. A steady ceaseless pourdown kept us prisoners by a large fire, and we read aloud and worked a good deal. The book which we were engaged on then was "Blue Roses", a pathetic story which often moved us greatly. At last the weather cleared, and we left immediately, as the hotel was changing hands, a sale of furniture was to be held that day, and our further presence was undesirable. It was such a lovely morning

that F and I soon decided to walk on and enjoy the freshness, leaving Miss H and our luggage to follow in the coach which left for Little River shortly after noon; accordingly we started at half past ten. The rain had left the road as clean and free from dust as any pedestrian could possibly wish and the air was deliciously cool. Our way lay down the other side of the range the winding path at every fresh turn revealing some new beauty to our admiring gaze. How some fresh ^{view} beauty or shape in the vast amphitheatre of hills stretching up into the blue sky before us, with their ever varying lights and shades which only a Turner could depict now - at a some bend a delicious little waterfall streaming gently down over logs and rocky stones - then trickling gently over our road into the creek below. The heavy rains had swollen these little mountain streams so that in some places they completely flooded the road.

and our agility was much exercised in springing from stone to stone to prevent wetting our feet. The bush was beautiful with its masses of wild convolvulus either banked together with scrub and lawyers, or wreathing round the stems of blasted trees with its fragile pure white blossoms, set in dark green foliage like stars in a wintry sky. Here and there we saw the tree fern, that most graceful of native trees, with its delicate fronds waving in the breeze, wearing that bright vivid green possessed by ferns when all around and under the stems themselves have been partly burned or scorched by the heat. Then out of the poor scarred tree like a phoenix from its ashes, grows the new lovely but eclipsing the lovelier former shade. At one spot a little more than half way on our journey we caught a glimpse of Lake Forysth and the narrow strip of beach between it and the sea which stretched beyond in the hazy distance, on either side the hills keeping silent watch over the blue

waters of the lake, resting at their feet. It was a lovely sight, and would have well repaid us for our walk if there had been nothing else of interest during the way. My companion and I had a most delightful conversation about books, authors, etc., and discussing the leading topics of the day, disposed of those vexed questions of the present system of education, and the higher training of women etc., entirely to our own satisfaction. All these pleasant conditions combined to make our walk one of the most enjoyable that could be imagined, and nothing that ~~had~~ occurred ~~since we~~
~~during~~
~~came out on our excursion~~ gave me greater pleasure. As we descended the last hill and were nearly opposite the English church at Little River, on that day opened for divine service by the Priests, the coach came up, so we paddy got in and drove the short remaining distance to the hotel. We had walked over six miles out of the seven between Hill Top and Little River, so felt we had distinguished

ourselves sufficiently. Mr. and Mrs. Offord kept the hotel, and although the landlady was away, yet our wants were well attended to by the servant. Here we again met the Bishop, who had come up the day before to consecrate the church and attend the tea and entertainment to have been held the same evening. But it had rained here as well as at Hill Top, and all arrangements were postponed till today. The consecration service was over, but we determined not to lose the remaining festivity. The Bishop bade us goodbye, telling us that the offertory that morning had amounted to eighteen pounds. He was obliged to return to Christchurch that afternoon, owing to previous engagements, and could not stay for the meeting. We were very sorry, as we should have liked to hear his address. During the afternoon Walter Bridge and Regis Locks arrived, to our great delight bringing a letter from George, posted at Aden, and written in the highest spirits, describing

entertainingly the various events of the voyage. At six o'clock we all went to the schoolroom where the tea-meeting was to be held, and sat down to a most liberal repast. The small room was crowded to excess at the after meeting when music, and two or three addresses constituted the entertainment, but as we were very tired, we did not stay long. We were glad to meet again the Westrops, who had been so kind when Miss Hastings and I were here a few months ago. Next day, Mr. Westrop took us out on the river (Wai-were), which we enjoyed greatly. In the evening, he and his wife came to bid us goodbye. He left the next morning in a trap, driving as far as Wosco's Hotel at Lake Forsythe. Little River or Wai-were, as the natives called it, possesses in a great degree many of the attractions of beautiful scenery. From our sitting room window, Joe had a lovely view of the hills, four distinct ridges of which run down into the valley, each thickly covered with bush to the

summit. Below these the river slowly winds along, right on in front of the house down to Lake Forsythe, of which from the front bedrooms there is a beautiful view. We saw it with the sun shining upon it in all the power of its meridian glory - a solid bank bound of hills surveying the scene with contemplative calm. There are also inducements to sportsmen in the quantity and excellence of game, so that it is a place of varied attractions. We had arranged with Mr. Olphert to drive us to Wosco's, choosing this way of going to the heat and close air of the coach, accordingly after a hasty lunch, we started off. Our way lay along the shores of the lake most of the time, the water in little wavelets rolling up within a foot of the road, while on the other side of us the hills towered, covered with scrub and fern. Their formation seemed very wonderful, at one in particular consisted of layer upon layer of piled up rugged rocks. In some places,

there was prettier bush than we had yet seen, with magnificent totaras standing out amongst the bright evergreen *ki-hou*, which is the principal element in New Zealand bush. The road though quite level, was stony, rocks were scattered about in great abundance, and the path was as winding as the other roads we had travelled on since going to the peninsula. Then at once point, we turned round to take our last look at Little River, which looked more picturesque than ever, like a Swiss view. The soft light and the dark heavy bush with masses of over hanging clouds in the most diversified shapes all but a peculiar charm to this retired and lovely scene. There is soon to be a railway constructed between Lincoln and Little River, when that is opened, tourists will make widely known the many beauties of the country. At Wosco's we got into the coach, disappoint-

ed about the box seats, as two gentle-
men had occupied them from Akaroa,
and declined to give them up.
I can hardly blame them for being so
disobliging, as it requires a great deal
of unselfishness, (not generally found in the
male species) to vacate the pleasantest
seats and crowd into the stuffy inside
with women and troublesome children.

A Maori woman of twice the usual size
sat opposite to us, she should certain-
ly have paid a double fare. She was
a restless being, would take off her hat
and arrange her attire during which
she would fling her arms about in a
most alarming fashion, then give vent
to gigantic yawns. Presently two Maories
rode up alongside the coach, when she
took off her hat, waving it and gesticu-
lating wildly to them. They conversed in
Maori, then rode away, when she ex-
plained to us that they were her hus-
band and nephews. This part of our

journey was very uninteresting, as we
had left the beautiful little Peninsula,
and were on the monotonous plains
once more. When we reached Lai
Papu, our friends were waiting to
drive us home, and our excursion
was ended, leaving us however, a store
of pleasant memories.

M. G. 1879.

W. Simckell's Recollections
of the Lake Poets —

Seen W. Wordsworth? Ay, and known him too for over thirty five year and more, knew him well for fifteen. Drove him to picnics times out of number always sat on the seat along with me. "Did he talk?", talk! yes and smoke too. Give me a whiff of your pipe post boy, he'd say, and that then did be content. I never saw him proud or fine but once, and that was when the Dowager Duchess you mind her — "Oh yes, of Kent?" Yes, that's her, the Queen's mother, you know, she came to see him once. Didn't he strut and walk then with her on his arm — a showing the place off.

"He wasn't nothing then, I suppose". No, no, (with a laugh) not that time. "Have you read any of his poems? Oh yes, since I came out to New Zealand and heard people talking about them, but we thought nothing on him at home, no more than a stone in the deck."

"Have you seen Rydal Hall?" Yes ma'am, and seen the old Lady de Fleming he wrote the poem too. "Did you ever see his sister?" Oh, yes, she wrote his poetry for him, she helped him a lot she did — they were ugly, you couldn't see two people uglier to be human and made in God's image like. "But their minds they were beautiful". Oh, mind was all right, and nice kind ways, both on 'em, but such ugly faces. The sister never went out, made deformed like somehow. "His daughter, was she nice looking?" Well, I don't remember her much, she went away young, but the sons, three fine young fellows, never 'ud think they'd such ugly parents. Wordsworth was poor, the nobility kept him up, but there was something noble in him, he didn't like it. "Wordsworth's poet friend, Butley — did you ever hear of him?"

Laws, yes man - he lived at Keswick. I was accountin a young woman as lived in service at his house - such a quiet place, never see a human being from Monday mornin to Saturday night - you might as well be up one of those hills in the middle of the bush where no one ever was afore for hearing anything. She (the servant) used to put the meals on the table and ring the bell to give warning that it was meal time, and go in two or three hours after and it ud never be touched. Breakfast dinner or tea, didn't matter which.

"Poor man, no wonder he became ill and broken down in health - was he married again when you knew him?" Never heard on his wife - "Oh yes, after his first wife died in the asylum, he married again." Oh, well, I never heard on it afore, but I knew all the country for a hundred miles about Keswick, and didn't know or care much about

those peoples doings. Heard some talk on 'em here, more than ever was said at home, people took no notice on 'em, we thought nothing on 'em. "Did you ever see Coleridge?" What, Dartey Coleridge! dozens of times. Knew him well. He lived at Nab's Scar, and boarded in the same house as I lived in - his mother paid it always, he couldn't be trusted with money. "Through drink, I suppose."

Yes man - Do you know how he started drinking? It was when he passed some examination, and the students set him off, then he never gave it up. No matter what society he was in, if he got two or three shillings in his pocket, he'd leave the party and go straight to some low joint house, and drink away with the worst on 'em. Many's the time he'd say to me, "John, lend me sixpence". Haven't got one, says I, "Ah, I know better than that, he'd

say, "come along, just one sixpence, John". Many a one I've given him to get him with - that was what he liked poor fellow. Read too - I've sat and listened to him reading four hours at a time and never moved once. But never thought he could write much, too delirious for that I thought. "Excitable, I suppose? Yes, very. He was the best runner in England too, it little man, wasn't he? Yes, indeed, only five feet four inches high, but a clever fellow that he was. But law, all these fellows, we thought nothing on 'em at home, we didn't, 't's only out here we find out what they've done for the country, the little country, why land wasn't worth half a crown an acre there, and through all their writing it's sold for hundreds an acre now, made some poor folks fortunes I can tell you. But we took no account on 'em at all, as more than a stone on the road.

Hill Top. Jan - 1879.

A drive to Lake Ellesmere from Leeston.

A bright sunny morning, a strong nor'east wind blowing his hair into ones eye and the cotsacks from ones train, and I, full of the exhilaration of spirits which rapid motion in the fresh breezy weather always produces in me, am being driven in the direction of the lake. Our destination lies about five miles off, and is separated from the sea by a broad shingle bank, it has one narrow outlet, and but for its size, would be more strictly termed a lagoon or arm of the sea. To day there is a mist hanging over the hills above the lake which prevented any of the views being particularly pretty. The scenery is tame, devoid of bush, and depends entirely upon the varied lights and shadows visible on a clear sunny day. The water is shallow, allowing only punts and fishermen's boats to cruise on its surface. It is the principal source of fish for the Ellesmere district and the city of Christchurch, the supplies being sent thither regularly by train.

Quite a colony of fishermen with their wives and families are settled on the northern and western shores, and are principally Italians. There was not much expense of water to be seen to day, as the lake has to be let out periodically, especially after heavy weather to prevent an overflow. This is done by cutting a passage through the bank, which the pressure of water keeps open during the first rush of drainage. A great portion of the flat is thus left in a swampy condition, from which the odours emanating as we passed were anything but salubrious and refreshing. The dangerous and rapid river Selwyn flows into the lake, and various small creeks contribute their quota to its enlargement. Our way lay through a cultivated district, farms all around and large fence hedges on either side in full bloom, giving forth their sweet spring scent. One of the prettiest spots we passed was a place named Kisluij Groote,

with a delightful glimpse of running water, bordered by a plantation on one side, and willows *toi toi*, and native grass on the other. Its banks and banks with luxuriant undergrowth gave ample materials for a very pretty sketch. Skirting the shore for a short distance we came to the timber yard where stood a forsaken looking shed, piles of timber lay around, and a rickety wooden jetty close by, not a person visible about the place, all was uninterrupted solitude. Dr Chapman explained to me that the trade ^{which had once been flourishing} had fallen off, principally owing to the supplies of timber becoming exhausted, and the fatal shortsightedness of the people in neglecting to plant trees either on barren spots or to replace those cut down. Thus the trade had drifted away into other channels. The timber is cut down on peninsula side, among the hills, and floated across in large punts worked with a sail and manned by two or three men. At one time they were taken in

tow by a small steamer but that was gradually found to be but seldom practicable, as the depth of mud was often too great & the water too shallow for navigation. So the boats are now relied on altogether, and if adverse winds arise, they may be out for some days, weather-broken, and causing great anxiety to their families. When the boat's arrival is expected, signs of life gather around yard and jetty, but to day all was silent and desolate, and after passing a while, we turned homewards, leaving the sheet of blue water and the dear hills fast receding from us into the far distance.

M. Bridge.
August 1880.

Visit to Wellington.

In March 1886 Hastings and I visited Wellington for change of air and scene, as my health was very bad, and also with a view of testing the requirements of the place as regards Surveyors. We went up in the Tarawera, (March 5th) which was greatly crowded, many passengers going up to catch the steamer for England. We had rooms at Miss Eric's, Mulgrave Street, opposite Bishop's Court. There we remained for five weeks enjoying the beautiful scenery of the harbour, and renewing old friendships, as well as forming new acquaintances. We saw a good deal of W^r. M^r. Cowper at Belmont, who formerly lived at Christchurch, also of the Mansfields at Newton, old Lincoln friends. In the society of the latter we made an excursion to Featherston on the famous Rimutaka line on St Patrick's Day. The scenery is lovely, the railway being laid out along the curves