

Krent's Gate House. Rotorua, New Zealand.

June 12th 1899.

Extracts from letter of W.^o C. F. Bridge to W.^o C. H. Bridge.

"We left Auckland for the Thames in bad weather, reached Te Aroha on Thursday last. There the weather was most unpleasant, howling wind day and night, it is not a bad little place but has a bad reputation for wind. It rained all Saturday for our journey here and that was tiresome, as the train runs through very pretty bush scenery, ^{with} 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 Whakarewarewa. It is a Maori pah about two miles from here, a trap goes backwards and forwards to take visitors.

It is a desolate country, nothing but bracken and manuka scrub, but there are pretty peeps of the lake now and then. The pah is in a valley which is full of boiling springs,

you hear them bubbling all round, and you are every now and then enclosed in a cloud of steam. A Maori woman came forward and offered to guide us about, she took us to a Geyser that was playing, but ~~the~~ geyser that rose sixty feet has been quiet for four years. This is the place where terraces are being formed, we saw just a little bit that gave me a very slight idea of what the famous ones must have been. There were some fearful looking cauldrons boiling and bubbling. The pah is not in the least picturesque, chiefly old tumble-down hovels built in European fashion. We saw one carved whare, but that was spoilt by a square sash window and door. The Maori woman told us she was at Wairoa in the Tarawera explosion, but Will Rutherford laughed and said, "They all tell you that." I want to go to the native settlement here, Ohinemutu, there you see the Maories bathing and cooking in the hot water holes."

Letter dated June 19th 1899 from
 Mr C. F. Kridge to Miss Kridge -
 Motoua -

"We made an expedition on Saturday to a place called Tititere. We paid Cook's Agent 10/- each for the day and everything was provided for us, boat, steamer, buggy and luncheon 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 Hamarua where a small river runs into the lake. We had a very pretty walk by the side of the stream which is planted with willows like the Avon, the guide told us they were planted forty years ago

by the missionaries who had called at St Helena on the way out and brought willow cuttings from Napoleon's tomb. Then we came to a post with "Wait here" painted on it, so we waited till our boat appeared, having gone up the stream. We were rowed up the river no more willows, but beautiful bush covering steep banks, there were large cabbage palms, Fuchsia trees, ferns, creepers, and amongst them all every now and then a sweet briar, its crimson berries showing well in the midst of the dark green. We were taken to the head of the stream, a deep black pool where you can see the spring bubbling up, it was very lovely, and I was glad to get away from the incessant boiling and clouds of steam here at Motoua. We rowed back again to the mouth of the stream, there we got into our launch again and steamed back by the island of Motoua to which

Hinemoa swam from the mainland. Then we left all the beauty behind and went to another point where a buggy and pair of horses awaited us. We had a drive of about four miles to Tiki Tere through desolate manuka scrub and bracken. Tiki Tere is famous for its boiling mud springs, it is a place of wonder and horror. We thought we had better fortify ourselves with luncheon before we walked round. There is a Maori whare made of raupo where we were told to go, and here was a table and a fireplace, and an inner door which being opened disclosed four beds divided from each other by raupo walls, all as primitive as you can imagine. The beds were of dried fern with a Maori mat spread over each, yet people actually stay in this whare for weeks at a time for the sake of the baths. We were "Cook's tourists" so we had no trouble about anything, our luncheon was all ready for us and then we went to look at the wonders.

At Tiki Tere

Close to the whare is the mud bath roughly enclosed with raupo, 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 crutches 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 suiter, rough hard stones and rock. We saw great black or rather brown depths all bubbling up amidst clouds of steam, large things like cauldrons, small things like pots, but all boiling and bubbling as if some devilish agency was at work below. One is called the "Devil's Cauldron", another "The Devil's Porridge Pot", and so on. One fearful cavern is called "The Gates of Hell". I was glad when this round was over and we got back to the comparatively innocent and beneficent mud bath. Then your uncle and aunt and a gentleman

who had joined our party went to refresh their eyes with seeing the Blue Lake. This is a small lake surrounded by bush and deep blue in colour, about a mile distant. I did not go but sat in the sunshine and talked to a Maori woman who I found was the wife of the owner of the Whare. She had a little girl nine years old with whom I tried to make friends, but she was too shy. I suppose they make a 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 pay thirty-five shillings a week, I should be sorry to stay there, but perhaps if I were crippled with rheumatism I might be glad to do even that. When they returned from the Blue Lake we got into the buggy and drove to Rotorua, getting in about five o'clock, very tired and hungry, but having greatly enjoyed our expedition, the weather being perfect. "

Wrents Kettlegate House - Rotorua - June 20th - 1899
From Mr C. F. Kettle to Mr C. H. Kettle.

"One day we walked to Ohinemutu, it is a pretty walk and by sitting down and resting several times I managed it very well. We went to the top of a rising ground from which we had a very pretty view of the Lake and the surrounding hills. Though there is no beauty in Rotorua itself there are very pretty peeps of the Lake and the surrounding country and the columns of steam here and there give a character to them. Then we went down into the pa, there is a small church which was built originally for the Maoris though the English now use it also. There are real whares for the most part, and a finely carved Wharepuni or meeting house, with baths and pools of steaming water everywhere. We saw a woman take her dinner out of one of these holes, first came a pot which she informed us was "meat, hot, hot," then a bit of potatoes. Then we came upon two little Maori children disputing themselves in a bath, jumping in and out. The place altogether is quite worth a visit."

Letter from Mr. P. J. Bridge to Mr. C. H.
 Bridge - Huiarau - Auckland
 July 14th 1899.

"We left
 Rotorua at 8.30. a.m. on the 14th. Mary
 and I got out at Otoroiri, about forty
 miles on the way to Auckland. We were de-
 lighted with Otoroiri, its beauty had not
 been exaggerated. The hotel stands on
 a hill and through the grounds flows the
 Waikou river, more commonly called the
 Otoroiri 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 im-
 mense force forming rapids. Just at the
 foot of these, where the river spreads out
 into a deep basin, are the warm baths,
 but there is no bubbling and steaming mud
 as at Rotorua, it is all loveliness. There
 is the Fairy Bath in which we both bathed,

a warm bath in a bower of ferns lighted
 up at night by glow-worms, so they say.
 There is a tradition connected with the
 rapids. The Otoroiri Maories defied
 another tribe to shoot the rapids in their
 canoe, they accepted the challenge and
 thirty five Maories attempted it. Every one
 was dashed to pieces, the canoe floated
 a few yards further and got wedged
 between the rocks. There it is now, I have
 got a photograph of it.

Mary and I went for a
 drive this morning to St John's College
 and round some of the suburbs. Yes -
 today 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
 delicious, so warm and yet fresh and
 invigorating, it is certainly an ideal winter
 climate."

Norway.

Letter from Dr. W. W. Piffie to Mr. H. W. Bridge -
dated July 19th 1901.

..... We are just back from a holiday in Norway where we went to recruit, not having had a holiday of more than a week since we were married six years ago. So we boldly took a month, and have come back renovated in body and mind. Moreover, just before starting, I was appointed Ophthalmic Surgeon to 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 takes in our berths. Stavanger was the first port touched at, and from thence 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 these are well preserved and contain various relics of that time. Bergen is said to be the wettest place in Norway, and certainly 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 seventy miles long, to the terminus - Voss, and thence posted in a "stool-car" (so called from the small seat behind on which the boy who drives you sits - the reins passing between the two people sitting in front) to Mathem, 1200 feet up in the mountains, and the next day to Gudvangen where we took the steamer on the Fjord. Here the mountains rise sheer out of the water for from two to three thousand feet, and down their sides fine waterfalls descend in many places, being fed by the melting snow. The echoes on blowing a horn or firing a cannon are very fine. The fjord steamers touch at various spots and we spent a few days at Ketholm and Fjaerland - near

the latter are two fine glaciers to which we paid a visit. Still on the move, we again plunged into the mountains till we arrived at Vatnahalsen 2600 feet up. Here we stopped some days, the air being most invigorating, and a lake being handy on which we boated. Passing on, and with the help of a guide, we crossed the mountains at a height of 5000 feet, and were for several hours wading over the snow with magnificent views in all directions. Late at night (though at this time of year daylight reigns all night, and one can read a newspaper at midnight) we reached Ulvik on a branch of the Hardanger Fjord. We had had a long day and our faces were blistered, but next day we were all right. We steamed over the Hardanger, stopping at Vikingraas for three days, and finally arrived back at Bergen after three ~~months~~ most delightful weeks of perfect weather. I must not forget to mention how lovely the spring flowers were carpeting the wayside, nor how simple and kind the Norwe-

gians are, how picturesque the women's costumes. 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 rather like a chocolate blancmange in colour, we got attached 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 Hull was very smooth. I cannot tell you how this trip has set us up in health."

Addenda in letter same date to Mr. C. H. Bridge on same subject — "The Norwegian language has many affinities with German and Scotch — and is not difficult. We picked up a good many phrases and words, and hope to acquire more by a study of the grammar, dictionary and cookery book we brought back with us."

Letter from Miss Hastings to Wm. C. H. Bridge.
December 8th 1901.

Karioi. Via Waunganui River.

"I expect you will have heard particulars of my journey which I enjoyed very much, except the night on the steamer. The voyage up the Waunganui is very pretty. Two boats started at seven a.m., the first stopped nowhere, I came in the second. The longer passage is made worth while by the picturesque scenes which occur as the boat runs into the bank and the Maories go on and off, their friends coming down the steep banks to welcome them or send them away. At Jerusalem, where we landed two miles, there was a large party of Maories, the women with bright clothes and streaming black hair. Kipiriki took me quite by surprise, a steep road took me up to an excellent hotel in a grand situation. As I sat in the verandah, I could have believed myself in Switzerland, such a group of heights to gaze at. A very comfortable hotel, 10p a day. When I arrived, I said to the landlord, "Wm. Great was to send an express here for me". A Maori

standing by, said "That's me", and shook hands with me at once. Next morning I started with him at eight o'clock, and to my mind that was the cream of my journey. For the first few miles after leaving Kipiriki the road wound through cliffs clothed in magnificent bush, ferns, countless tree ferns, I had never been so near the bush before. How grateful I felt to my dear friend for the slower express, instead of the rattling coach. Afterwards, the hand of man came in, burning, clearing, melancholy to see, but before arriving at Karioi, there was lovely bush again. Of my welcome I need not write. From the window of my room, where I write now, I see Kuapehu in solitary grandeur with his everlasting snows. A plain stretches at his feet over which flows the delicious air of 2500 feet above the sea. A few hundred yards from the house a swift stream wanders about, by it is the wash house, and near is Janet's whare, hidden by a bank from the house. At this time she has given it up to

Lily and Louise to keep them from the poor sick servant, who starts for home to morrow with her mother. Dear Janet (Rutherford) is well, except that her eyes are easily 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 cow, afraid to trust the little three quarter caste boy who milks her. He and his sister live here because they had a bad home. Lily is like a little angel among the Maories. I have just come from a service in the schoolroom read by a Maori lay-reader. Everything about their life here is very interesting. The children bring me curious flowers, small orchids.

Monday 9th They have quite a nice vegetable garden here, finer panishes I never saw.

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

large piano, and the children sing Maori hymns very sweetly. Last night Janet took me out to see a bush fire, all I can say is, that it reminded me of a picture I have seen of Sodom and Gomorrah burning. Lily is quite overcome, I am glad that the school breaks up next Thursday, and next week she goes away to stay at Hukarere, Napier. We have various plans for the holidays, Lake Taupo is the best.

I hope you and Hastings will go somewhere and enjoy it, the distance is the objection to "Wanganui."

M. A. Hastings.

