

Floods and Otherwise

Most people at present are in mortal fear of being shaken out of bed, or of receiving a chimney on their heads. At K...

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THE WESTLAND CHURCH MAGAZINE

December, 1928

We had been going since 7.30, and so tea was welcome—it was our first time off the horses. After that, we set out in the storm for Bruce Bay. It was quite dark, but the horses could see the road. At the end of the track down the river, we found two of Dalgety's men wandering in the swamp trying to find the track. They must have been there for a long time. He set them right, while I got off to fix my bridle which somehow had come "unput." Charlie moved on, much to the disgust of Bessie, who showed her disapproval by breaking into a gallop before I had mounted. Naturally I dismounted, ungracefully, and saw constellations that no astronomer has seen through his telescope. Luckily Charlie saw that the horses reins were loose otherwise Bessie would have followed him quietly into Bruce Bay, and left me lamenting. However she proved too fast for him in a gallop down the beach, so I had to plod on behind the pack horse in the pouring rain, while Charlie rushed along the beach to intercept Bessie—which he did. Then we proceeded to the Bay, where we arrived about 10 o'clock.

That night and next morning were choice samples of what the sky can do. We had an early celebration, well attended, and then having borrowed Mr. Addison's bike—Jacob's River did not look inviting to ride across by horse—I pushed out to Mr. Wilson's, where arrangements were in progress for the nuptial event of the afternoon. After that Mrs. Thompson had a surprise visit, followed by a celebration. I had my second talk to Sam Fiddian, though it had to be cut short unfortunately. After dinner, the road led back to Mr. Wilson's, where George Koeti and Ruby Wilson faced the music. After the wedding breakfast, I made back for the Bay, and when I arrived, the sun came out. Leaving my coat behind, I went to visit the Mahuika and Bannister families. The sun had been only pulling my leg, because I could hear the roar of something coming miles away. It proved to be the hardest hail shower I have ever seen—and I beat it to George Bannisters verandah by one second.

That night we had a record service in the schoolroom—38 present. At the service, Billy Wilson's little boy and George Bannister's girl were both baptised: William Elden Fane, and Mora Mary. Next morning, which also was a magnificent example of what a northerly can do, the school children had their two stories, and promise of more to come. Then Mr. Ritchie, who had come back home on the previous day, went over my riding outfit and showed how near death I had been. I felt grateful for the added assurance that a stronger sircingle gave and went on, leaving Jacobs about 11.30. It rained off and on to Karangarua, where I found the river just high enough. After exploring the river bed for half an hour, I struck the road on the other side, and reached Mrs. Scease's just in time to dodge a big shower. After a welcome cup of tea, Harry and I went onto Have-lock creek, after which I carried on to Cook's. I wasn't feeling too confident about its passage, but again Charlie Smith was my guardian angel, because he

met me on the near side and escorted me across the biggest streams. After a talk with Jack Roberts at the hut, Bessie carried me on through innumerable gates to Mrs. Sullivan's. Here again I received welcome and refreshment, and about 5 p.m. or later set out on the last slow fifteen miles. Just as one rises from Weheka I met Mr. Sullivan, who seemed to think I was late setting out. At Waikukupa I met Mr. Sullivan, who seemed to think I was late setting out. At Waikukupa I met Mr. Power and the roadmen having a Conference in the street, but Bessie did not seem anxious to stay long, so we went slowly across the Oemeroa Range, arriving at Mrs. F. Gibbs' about 9.30—just as they were thinking of going to bed.

I thought my adventures had ended, but they hadn't: the next day was the most adventurous of the lot. I saw snow falling at the beginning of the day. That soon turned to rain and hail. Having given the children at the school a talk, I proceeded to Miss Gibbs', and then up the far side of Dougherty's, in the rain, to Mr. L. Gibbs'. Rather foolishly refusing their kind offer of dinner as I thought I would be to Waiho in time, having had a talk with Mr. Arndt, I tried to make the motorbike go. She seemed too sluggish altogether—evidently the rain and water from the creeks got on her "nerves," but at any rate I had to push it to Waiho. Then my engineer, Mick Collett, fixed up the magneto and other parts for me, and she "went." After I had a welcome cup of tea with Mr. McCormack to keep my emptiness less insistent, the Waiho children had their Bible lesson; and then, at 5 o'clock, I pushed off to get to Wataroa by teatime. Tom Clare got me across Slatey's alright on his dray, but MacDonalds had no dray handy. I certainly wasn't going to go back; so, shutting off the engine, I began to ford it. The first creek wasn't so very bad, though certainly high. The second looked impossible, but, with moisture other than rain running off me, the bike got to the other side. However, the water had come up to the seat of the bike, so I thought myself lucky to get across. The next

stream was smaller. Unexpectedly, I kicked on the kick-starter, but without further waste of time, pushed the bike to MacDonald's Creek Hut, where I lit a fire in anticipation of spending the night there. I found that the water had entered everything, but by 9 o'clock managed to get a kick out of her, and then she soon filled the room with her exhaust smoke. Quickly re-dressing into still wet clothes, I hit the trail, but found that the clutch had almost forgotten how to act. The bike certainly would not pull me in low gear up a slight incline. However, by combined effort, we got to the Hotel where I was very pleased to get something to eat, and then slowly and spasmodically pushed on to Wataroa. That night I did not even dream!

Westland Printing Works

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Published by Nelson Wright, H. M. Cocks and E. Osmer, Vicars of Hokitika, Kumara and Ross respectively and printed by W. E. Richards at his registered printing office, the Westland Printing Works, Revell Street, Hokitika.

December, 1928

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The Easter Trip to Bruce Bay

1904
Easter Monday at Waiho was wet, decidedly wet, that warm wet which brings the snow down and swells the rivers, so the Waiho indicated, and I decided to wait a day before continuing Easter Services in the South. Next morning was unsettled but bright in patches, so I thought I would go over the hills and have a look at the Cook. At Louis Gibbs a thunder storm arrived about the same time as I did and things didn't look too rosy for the South. Louis thought I would do well to keep north of the Cook river. At Weheka things looked brighter and I was assured things would be all right if I kept to the ford, which didn't sound too cheerful, however, after lunch I mounted "Mark" and ambled along amid showers and sunshine the six miles to the river.

The Fox was a dirty white torrent tearing down at seemed ten times its usual speed and "Mark" didn't like going in at all, yet once I was decided, he was, and we cossed O.K. The other streams were not so high, and we were soon at Karangarua. I found Mrs. Scease and Harry well, but not very hopeful of a congregation that evening, just us three, and we felt the force of the saying "Where two or three are gathered together in my Name there am I in the midst of them." Mrs. W. Scott made me comfortable for the night. Next morning Walter Scott assured me the river was fordable so I set off in threatening weather for Jacob's River and Bruce Bay.

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got across without getting fine and very warm. On y Wilson digging a lonely bit of news. I hadn't ull of P.W.D. men and ste had come through that

ate of cheeriness and he I went on to Jacob's— ver bank I saw what Bob k in the middle of the Some of the men were in the front seat with ough the cab. I offered cided to remain by the of converting her into a

's, I went back to the ng the ladies were quite ark Koeti and "Mark" cued an hour or so later. nd by the time I arrived and not "play about it." rying my ecclesiastical across my shoulders, it

reminded me of Pilgrim's Burden in the famous Pilgrim's Progress.

Clive Clark and Mr. Head Teacher welcomed me in to tea and dry socks, then found me a bunk in the Boss's house next door. The Boss was away to the Coronation, so besides his bed, I borrowed his old grey pants and gum boots—I put them back as I found them, they were holy before I used them.

After a visitation in the Bay we held service in the hall during a terrific downpour through which one could hardly hear oneself speaking—however we had a service. It's surprising how one overcomes trifles like that in S. Westland—the last time we had service in the hall the sand flies nearly drove us out in mad stampede. The next morning half a dozen sinners turned out to Holy Communion at 7 a.m.

After breker the rain came again and I set off to find my horse, intending to ride round to the P.W.D. camp to baptise Mrs. Cain's baby—the godparents had set off earlier on cycles—but lo! When I got to the paddock I couldn't find "Mark" anywhere—I searched high and low, ploughing through wet fern, brambles, and flax, and even looking up trees!—my heart sank, he had got out! but no! in a very inaccessible corner I found him, well tied up in supplejacks and looking wet and bedraggled. Procuring the saddle from a tree, we set off for the river. Turning a corner I heard shouts of mirth and saw sitting among a tangled mass of iron on the wet road the godparents, laughing heartily. None the worse for a spill, they picked themselves up and made for home, the Baptism being off until a better day. Arriving at Jacob's River I was glad of a hot