

J. R. Gurney's last leaf Salt with A. K. Warren
& Gurney's farewell letter

ROSS AND SOUTH WESTLAND

Saturday, January 7, 1928

THE WESTLAND CHURCH SUPPLEMENT

5

St. Saviour's

As some of you know (to your cost!) I've been carrying on my annual raid on behalf of the funds of St. Saviour's Orphanage. But, owing to the fact that I've been trying to do several other things at once, I've not been able to get round to you all yet. I hope I won't miss any of you. I'd just hate to do that and deprive you of the pleasure and privilege of handing over your high-voltage cheques and many-horse-power notes to so splendid a cause. But if by any evil chance I do miss you, you'll know I didn't do it on purpose. So send along your casques of doubloons to me just to show the error of my ways.

My Departure

I've had no word yet as to when I'll be leaving these parts for Hawera. Neither have I heard any answer to the absorbing question, "Who is my successor?" However, I think I certainly won't be leaving before the end of January and probably not before well on in February.

Mrs. Young and my daughters are going over to Christchurch in the middle of January to be out of the way of the clouds of dust and straw and bits of paper with which I'm surrounded when I'm packing. Have you ever tried to pack crockery with three eager little daughters to help you? It's really much more enjoyable for them to be having a holiday somewhere else. Also they're out of the way of father's astonishing bursts of Hebrew poetry when he hammers himself on the thumb.

Anyhow, I'm not going to say goodbye to you in this Supplement, as I'll probably be perpetrating another one before I depart.

List of Services

- 1928—Jan. 1st.—Sunday after Christmas
Ross: 11 a.m. Holy Communion
7 p.m. Evensong
Ruatapu: 3 p.m. Evensong
- January 8—1st. Sunday after Epiphany
Wataroa: 11 a.m. Holy Communion
Hari Hari: 8 p.m. Evensong
- January 15—2nd. Sunday after Epiphany
Ross: 8 a.m. Holy Communion; 7 p.m. Evensong
Ruatapu: 11 a.m. Holy Communion
- January 16—Monday
Waitaha: 2.30 p.m. Evensong
Kakanotahi: 7 p.m. Evensong
- January 22—3rd Sunday after Epiphany
no services
- January 29—4th Sunday after Epiphany
Ross: 11 a.m. Holy Communion
Hari Hari: 8 p.m. Evensong
The Very Rev. Dean Julius will preach at both services.
- (N.B.)—Dean Julius, who is still our Archdeacon, hopes to visit Waiho during the week following.)
- February 5—Septuagesima Sunday
Wataroa: 11 a.m. Holy Communion
Hari Hari: 8 p.m. Evensong

THE FAR SOUTH

I always count this Spring trip of mine as among the wettest of the year. Also the rain had been raining in an intermittent way for about a month, so that one could just about reckon it was getting into its stride. Wherefore I made sure of my oilskin and sou'wester, gave my riding boots a thorough soaking in oil, and made what preparations I could for a semi-submarine voyage.

We had a service at Harihari on the morning of Sunday, Nov. 27th, and it was drizzling a bit in the afternoon, when, in company with the Rev. A. W. Warren, I climbed into "Primrose," and headed South. As most of you know, Mr Warren is out on leave from England, where he is working, though he is a New Zealander by birth. We had planned for some time that he should accompany me on this trip. Then, as the news of my impending departure spread as we went down, everybody took about three skips to the conclusion that I was bringing my successor with me. Unfortunately the idea fell to the ground when it stepped on the banana-skin of the upsetting fact that Mr Warren had to return to England in February. Still as he was some 6ft. 4ins. in height I considered that he ought to be more in touch with the upper strata of the atmosphere than I was, so I gave him sole charge of the weather for the expedition. And a wonderful job he made of it.

We had a service at Wataroa that afternoon and at Waiho in the evening. On the way down, we called at Tom Condon's, where I had bespoken a horse, and Tom promised to bring "Mollie" (in whose pleasant company I've travelled the road before) down to be ready for us after the Waiho service. Stan. Allen, who happened to be going down to Fred. Gibb's, took her on there for us, so we journeyed as far as Ted. Gibb's after service that night, and put "Primrose" to bed in his dray-shed.

Next morning (Monday, Nov. 28th) the weather was perfectly lovely, and we set off very gaily in the clear sunshine. "Bessie" was at the top of her form—full of spring grass and impudence, and "Mollie" was equally festive and seemed quite unperturbed by the fifteen stone or so of humanity she was carrying. I had thought the possibilities of sunshine such a negligible quantity that I had omitted to bring a hot-weather hat, and rode for

the first couple of days bare-headed through the sunshine, with the result that I grew a splendid crop of sunburn. After a while it began to peel until my venerable celluloid head presented the appearance of a rather over-cooked pink blanc mange, with a severe attack of scale blight.

However, we're getting ahead of our story. We made fair going over the long thirteen miles of hill across the three ranges. As we came down the further side of the first range and were nearing the little Oemaroa River, we came on Barney Rodden busily making a square stringer for a square job of bridging the little troublesome creek that crosses the corner of the road as you turn out on to the first flat by the Oemaroa. "Ah! Barney," said I, "it's the pampered motorists who get all the improvements in the road made for them." "But aren't you a motorist yourself these days?" he retaliated. I pointed out that I wasn't one at the moment anyhow, and Bessie snorted at the idea (or the new chips, I'm not sure which) and went flouncing off down the road, "casting nasturtiums," on Barney's personal appearance, and general politeness in a horse voice. A few minutes later when we came to the Oemaroa ford, we met Messrs Bill Roberts and Laughton, paddling pleasantly in the cool waters that hot morning. Incidentally they were carrying stretcher-loads of stones to build protection works against the ravages of the fierce little river. Mr Warren tested his camera out by taking a photo of them. I've not heard how much damage was done! So we left them to it, and climbed away up over the next saddle, along the sun-dappled road, with the birds singing, and the long delicate tassels of the young rimus swinging in the wind and the light glistening on the bright dark leaves of the ratas. All the gorges and clefts of that tumbled country were full of clear sunshine and purple shadows, and I was indeed glad that a visitor should have at least one day in which to see Westland as it ought to be seen.

Towards mid-day we came down the last long hill from the Weheka saddle and saw the wide, tawny flats stretching away to the smoky-blue expanse of Cooks river-bed. We called in at Fred. Williams' ever-hospitable home and were much refreshed by cups of tea which Mrs Williams kindly provided. For, as Bill Roberts says, it's a dry road to travel, even when it's raining.

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