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When we had breakfasted we passed a hearty vote of thanks to Mrs. Jack Cron and then passed through the gates and down the road to Ted's, where we completed the plot for Warren's complicity in the cattle-lifting deer-culling raid the next day. Then we travelled gaily along the ten miles or so of springy 'inside track' and good firm beach to the ford of the Okuru River. As the tide was low, we crossed very easily and turned down the mile and a half of beautiful road towards Jack Nolan's kindly home. Din Nolan caught us up (you've got to be travelling pretty fast if you're in front of Din and he doesn't catch you up!) and we complimented him on the beautiful climate of Okuru.

business.) And thus we scored an extra hour's sleep, while still arising at a more or less respectable hour.

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We found Mrs. Jack Cowan at home and her welcome as warm as ever. Jack was still up at Mahitahi putting the finishing touches on Harry Busch's homestead and building a boat for the Trans-Okuru-Harbour traffic. After lunch we called on Mrs. Ad. Cowan and then strolled up the road by the Turnbull River to meet her husband and Dave Heinz, who had been doing some clearing on Ad's upper section. On the way I delivered a telegram at Jack McBride's house—found no one at home, but left the wire in a conspicuous place with a note on the envelope hopefully demanding half-a-crown for special delivery. If my heart was given to being made sick by hope deferred, it would still be feeling a bit squeamish over that half-crown.

Presently there was the sound of the approach of heavy cavalry and Ad. and young Dave appeared, each astride a monumental draught horse. My old friend Billy was one of them (the Bishop's chariot-horse from the Haast down.) I didn't gather the name of the other; but he's like Billy only more so and puts down his feet with an even firmer hand. We brought Ad's cows along with us, and were given a job on appro. in the milking shed. Young Dave, struggling violently to suppress a grin, whisked on to me the 'beauty of the shed'—a red cow with a black temper, much frayed at the edges; a blind teat (I think she must have kicked the eye out of it) and two right-handed (i.e. dextrous) hind feet. She wouldn't be quiet even when I sang to her—a cow without a soul.

Next day, (Friday, December 2nd.) carried on the splendid tradition of cloudless weather. We decreed it a morning off for Mrs. Jack Cowan and did the lacteal fluid-extraction and fatty-globule-discrimination (yes; that means that we milked and separated) in good time. Then we made our plans with Hector Brown for the earliest start he could manage with Warren up to the Haast.

After breakfast we were treated to a front-row view of a little private circus Jimmy Nolan was having in rounding up a mob of river-bed horses on the hard, flat sands of the estuary at low tide. It was a most thrilling and finished display, and ended in the mob thundering off in the desired direction with Jim hard on their heels, the pistol-cracks of his stockwhip detonating through a cloud of dust.

We caught our horses and rode quietly up to inspect Messers Nolan Bros.' newly installed cheese-making plant. On the

way we passed Paddy Nolan shepherding a woolly flock to the sheep-yards for their annual haircut. Then we came on Charlie Smith striding along to collect outlying portions of His Majesty's mail in preparation for his long return journey: We also took a brief and singularly ineffective part in Jimmy's circus. The mob of horses had gone past the yard gate, and I stood to stop them going past again when Jim brought them back. As they came thundering along, I gave Bessie a dig in the ribs to move her into the road to cut them off. But she merely stood and grinned coyly and twitched herself, as who should say "Don't tickle me so!"; and by the time I realized I hadn't my spurs on, the circus was past and Jim had to head them again! However, he got them in the next time; and we rode on to the Cheese Factory. I met Bert Wilson there and was introduced to Messrs. Bert Henham and Bruce Culling of the cheese-making staff. We admired very much the up-to-date arrangements, all the way from the cow-bails to the cheese storing-room.

In the afternoon I saw the hunters depart in great spirits and a cloud of dust for the Haast. Later on I rode up the Turnbull in the company of the Misses Helen and Mamie and Mr Bill Harris (all on the one horse) who were returning home from school. I had afternoon tea with Mrs. Harris Sr. and Miss Lilly and also looked in to pass the time of day with George and his household next door. Then I rode back across the Turbhill and down to the McPherson homestead. I overtook Jim McPherson as he was bringing home the milk-suppliers. At the house I met Mrs. McPherson and Mrs. Tom Duggan and the latter's three young hopefuls, (all of whom are sprouting up at a great rate). I looked in at the milking shed before I came away and found Donald, black to the eyebrows, busily greasing the wheels of industry before the milking started.

I called in at Jack McBride's as I came past and found him and his gang of road-builders busy getting their tea. Messrs. Hope (who had been up Jacob's River with Bob Ritchie last time I was down) and Kennedy (whom I'd last met at Harvey and Caine's sawmill at Karangarua) and Simmers (who had come up from Barn Bay with Mr. Hugh McKenzie) were with him in camp. And I met Fred Bannan just coming in as I was leaving. They're engaged in extending the road up the Okuru River away beyond the Nolan homesteads. I was late for my job in Ad. Cowan's milking shed that evening and was the more sorry when I found that Ad., who must have eaten something very quarrelsome, had to retire to bed, which left Mrs. Jack Cowan and Dave Heinz with a good many handfuls of cows' teats upon which to bring pressure to bear. However I was in time to twirl the handle of the separator. Next day (Saturday, 3rd.) we decreed that Ad. should stay in bed. News had come down that the good ship "Elsie" was on her way south and Ad. was anxious to get his harbourmaster's boat out of the creek where it is tethered before the tide left it too high and dry. So I went and got it out and rowed it down to deep water before I joined in the milk extracting business. Later in the morning I was taken on in the butter-making department and Dave and I took turns in making the churn take turns. Presently Ad., who was a bit better, came along; and not long afterwards the butter came too; Then we had a change to the life of the navigator. Towards mid-day the tide was right out, and Ad., as harbour master, had to set his beacons for the guidance of the "Elsie" across the bar that evening. So his son, little Bernard, and Dave and I went with him to assist. The sea was wonderfully calm and the bar splendid. We went right over it to the open sea without encountering a break (except one that nearly happened

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in the handle of an oar.) Then we returned to shore and set up the beacons to give the navigator his line across the bar. And after that we collected handkerchiefs full of pipsis as bait for an afternoon's fishing expedition.

After lunch I walked round to Din Nolan's home, where I met Mrs. Nolan and her father, old Mr. John Ritchie, who still carries his well-over-eighty years with surprising agility. We discussed many subjects and afternoon tea together, and then I walked back to the wharf in time to see the "Elsie" in the offing. I watched her come gracefully in over the bar and up the channel, and then wandered off to my milking-stool!

We had our Evensong that evening full of Christmas hymns.

The next day was Sunday, December 4th, but for all that the milk still has to be extracted from bovines. After breakfast I accompanied Ad. down to the "Elsie" to pay my respects to Captain Archie and the ship's company. I was sorry to hear that Archie is relinquishing his command at the end of the month. What with him going from the sea and me going from the land, the place will be losing some of its most picturesque old identities! And what South Westland will do without either a ship's pilot or a sky-pilot, I don't know—not go on the rocks, I trust!

We had our Christmas Communion Service that morning. At the close of the Service, Mr. John Ritchie made a most embarrassing speech of farewell to the Vicar. It still sends my temperature up ten degrees to think of the kind things he said—and of how little I've done to deserve them!

But for all that (though I perspired) I appreciated very much the kindness which prompted his words. I've no idea what (if anything) the vicar said in reply, though I have a faint recollection of his doing some babbling.

After lunch, I caught and saddled "Bessie" and bade a fond farewell to beautiful little Okuru, dreaming in the sunshine, between its gleaming rivers, with the blue of the sea in front and the snow-capped mountains behind. It holds for me very happy memories of hospitality and friendship.

And so I rode up the beach to the Haast. I called in at Ted Cron's to collect Mr. Warren's "Mollie" and led her on up to Jack's. We were just contemplating dealing with afternoon tea when the three hunters returned, tired enough, sunburnt and happy. They had brought a mob of cattle straight down the riverbed, crossing the river where they met it, instead of taking to the tracks over the bluffs. So my companion had had some experience of places where the bottom of the water is some distance from the top! When we had tea and stirring accounts of the chase (of cattle and other things), Warren and I said our grateful adieus and set off across the Haast River once more and along the 12 miles or so to the Copper Creek hut. As we cantered along the 'inside track' by the beach, Bessie put her foot down a rabbit warren, and I prepared to dismount. However, after jazzing along in a manner of her own for about half a chain on her elbows and knees, she decided not to come down and we carried on as before. She's

an extraordinarily nimble old quaduped for her build.

As we neared the hut in the clear summer dusk I asked Warren to listen to the response I'd get. I let loose a howl of some sort, and sure enough was answered by Tommy Duggan's unique mill-whistle. My companions was all agog to know how it was produced, but was never enlightened. So we had our tea and spent a very pleasant evening there. Next morning (Monday, December 5th.) we were early astir. Still the draught held. Still the sun shone. We were on the road in good time thanks to Tom's ever-kindly help. The horses, headed homewards, were travelling so gaily that we'd gone a mile or more before I discovered that I'd left my spurs. However, it didn't take long to canter back and get them. Then up the long eight-mile hill we climbed through the cool of the morning. Warren took a snapshot or two of 'Slippery Face' as mementos. But, along the 'top going' the views were so wonderful and so plentiful that we hardly knew which to choose. Of one thing, though, I wish I had a photographic record. As Warren cantered along in front of me, I saw, raised by his horses' hoofs—what, think you? Spray? no; mud? no; a loose stone? no. None of these, but dust! Dust, I said! Dust, mark you! Dust, up on the 'top going' of the big hill! After that, I felt I'd have to give it up. No longer could I say that I knew anything about the climate of the Coast! Water I've seen by the river-full, and mud and hail and snow and sleet. But dust!—for the first time I felt that it was just as well I was going to Hawera!

Down the long, rough five-mile descent we came, from Stormy Corner to the Blue River. We paused at the little hut there to boil the billy and have our lunch and a siesta in the sunshine. Then we patterned along to the Paringa, called in at the hut there to warn the Mahitahi homestead of

our approach, crossed the Paringa River, passed the time of day with Tut and his merry men, and so along to the Mahitahi. We turned down the south side of the river and called on Jack Cowan at Harry Busch's new home. We admired the compact and ingenious little house very much.

During the afternoon, the sky had gradually become overcast, and there were puffs and sighs of a north wind in the treetops. As we rode along Warren had expressed the wish, after all he'd heard, to see just one river in a bit of a flood. He got his wish. That night, when we were safely under the Condon's hospitable roof, the rains descended and the winds blew and beat upon that house. They were still hard at it next day, and our steeds didn't respond very easily to our enticements when we went to catch them. Down the track through the bush by the river, we didn't feel the wind; but the rain kept dripping, enthusiastically. And when once we turned out on to the Bruce Bay beach we got the full benefit of the storm—wild, wind and driving rain and flying spray in our faces! But we could soon turn in off the beach again, and we made good going of it to Bob Ritchie's and lunch. Jacob's River was well up and whirling along in good style that afternoon. So I walked over the swing-bridge and paddled through the rain and streamlets the mile and a half down to Hunt's Beach to see the Wilson household. I found them all well and cheerful, and the children growing at a great rate. Ernie Wilson introduced me to his newly-acquired spring-cart, which he had got as a result of the notice I put in the last "Far South" Account. The success of the plan almost moves me to insert an advertisement of "Primrose" with whom, to my sorrow, I have to part. Perhaps something like this would do: "For sale, one car named Primrose Chevrolet; thoroughly quiet and kindly disposition,

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