



A CORNER OF J. BALLANTYNE & CO.'S MERCERY DEPARTMENT.

exertion, load himself with fossils of all sorts, from sharks' teeth and marine shells downwards, for high as this country is, it was evidently cast up from the deep sea at some remote date. The hotel itself is 2,371 feet above sea level, and is popularly accounted to be nearer heaven than any other hotel in New Zealand. There are any amount of trout in the immediate vicinity, and the Alpine climber can get on peaks a little over 7,000 feet in height with a minimum of risk and effort. The pretty growth of birch trees on the little sheep station on the left-hand side of the road is worth more than a passing notice. Six miles further on and the coach dips down the Craigieburn cutting, with light birch bush on both sides, and quite a respectable patch of native growth at the bottom. Shortly after crossing the Craigieburn River the horses are again changed, and we enjoy a delightful drive for about a mile along the shores of Lake Pearson, 1,990 feet above sea level, whose waters glitter blue in the bright sunlight, or are lashed into an ugly sea-green by driving winds, under the influence of a lowering sky. The traveller will not fail to note the huge mass of shingle, ever shifting towards the lake, over which the coach passes, and from the character of the débris above and below the well-kept track, he can easily judge the amount of trouble both horses and driver are put to when a crossing has to be made immediately after a fresh slip. Another pretty little lake, which is passed within view of the coach a few miles further on, is Grassmere, which looks lovely under a bright sun; and following an undulating road the Cass River is reached, and the blackened ruins of the old Cass Hotel, which, destroyed by fire a few years ago, was once one of the principal stopping places on the road. We are now thirty-five miles from Springfield, and ten from the Bealey township, and, after a stiff climb up Goldney's Saddle, emerge on to the celebrated Waimakariri cutting, one of the most interesting features of the journey. Here the roadway is carved out of the solid rock, and though wide enough for safety, and even to allow another vehicle to pass, the precipitous drop from the edge of the road is bound to awaken the interest of the passengers. Leaving the Waimakariri for the time being, we pass through a fertile valley, and a fairly straight and good road, with two or three of the inevitable river crossings, brings us to the Bealey, on the banks of the Waimakariri. This township is one of the highest in New Zealand,

BALLANTYNES' WORKMANSHIP IS EXCELLENT.

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