

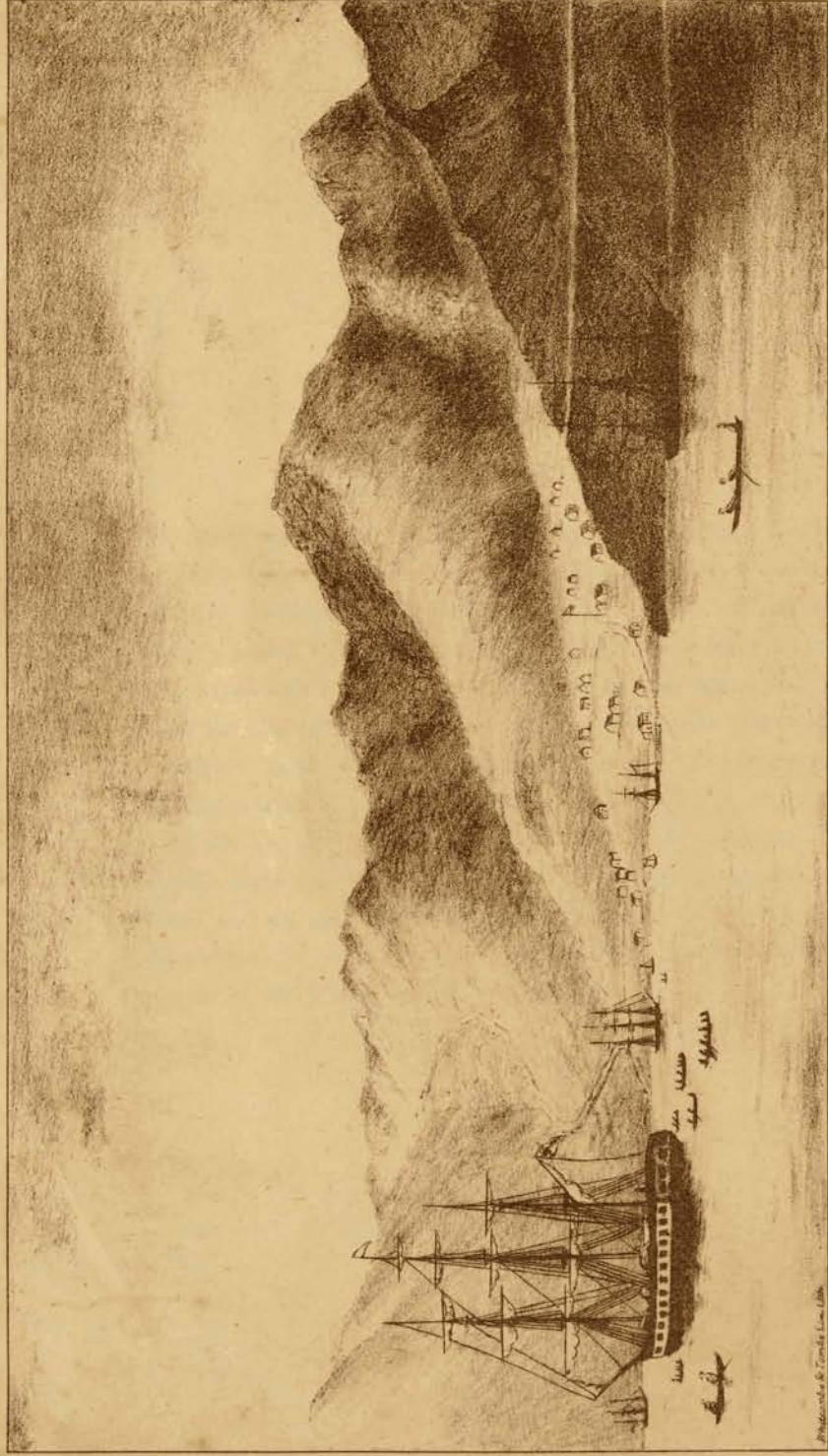




## PREFACE.

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*THE Directors of the Canterbury Caledonian Society having arranged to have a series of papers on various subjects of interest read at the ordinary Monthly Meetings of the Society, did me the honour to request that I should prepare the first. The main portion of the pages which follow were comprised in that paper, but, as it was felt that the subject was one likely to interest the community generally, it was decided to put it into print. The paper, as originally constructed, was not intended for publication; hence it has become necessary to re-write it, and add to it somewhat. I can only express a hope that it will prove interesting to my readers, and act as an incentive to abler pens than my own, ere it be too late, to compile a record of the trials, difficulties and struggles of the pioneer settlers of Canterbury.*



Ship "Cressy" arriving.

Bridle Road to the Plain.

Wharves and Pier.

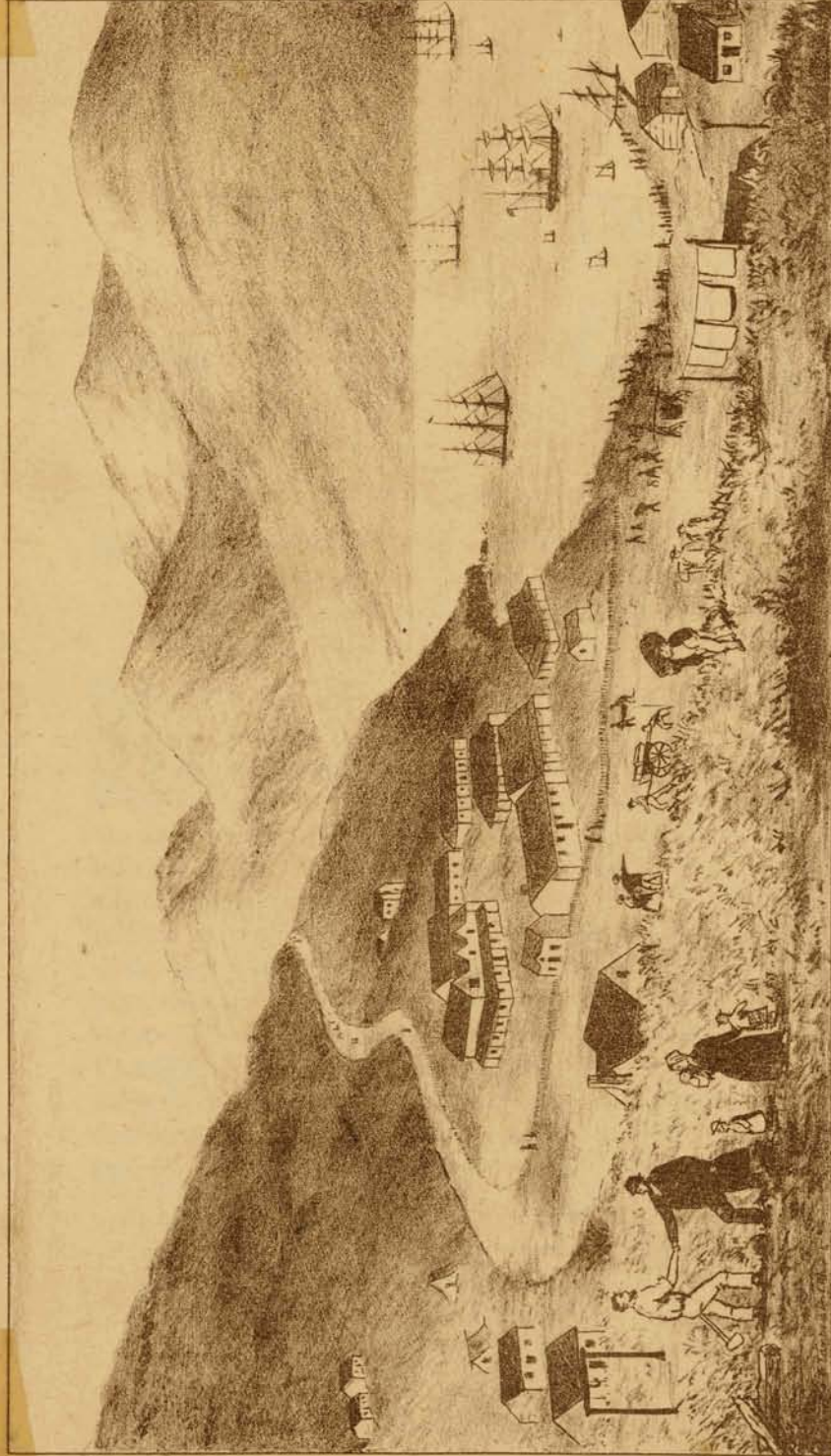
Immigration Barracks  
and Mr. Godley's House.

Sumner Road to Lyttelton.

**PORT LYTTELTON**

(From a drawing by Miss Mary Townsend, 1851.)

VICTORIA HARBOUR, 28th Dec., 1880.



Sumner Road to Lyttelton.

Mr. Godley's House and Immigration Barracks.

East Shore of Victoria Harbour.  
"Charlotte Jane," "Randolph," "Cressy,"  
"Sir George Seymour."

**PORT LYTTELTON**

(From a drawing by Miss Mary Townsend, 1851.)

Passengers by the "Cressy" landing, 29th Dec., 1850.

# STRAY LEAVES

FROM THE

## Early History of Canterbury.

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### CHAPTER I.

HOW CANTERBURY WAS FOUNDED.—THE HISTORICAL FIRST FOUR SHIPS.—ARRIVAL OF THE "CRESSY" AND LANDING OF HER PASSENGERS.—HOW THE PILGRIMS HAD TO ROUGH IT.

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**T**HE few stray leaves which it is purposed to collate together in this little volume have not much to recommend them to the reader, save that they are a linking together of memories connected with the early history of Canterbury, which may prove not uninteresting. The main object the author has in view, is to afford some of the later comers here an idea of what the pioneers of civilization had to go through in the earlier stages of the history of the settlement. To that end, and, in order that my readers may be able better to realise the word pictures I shall endeavour to put before them, I must ask their forbearance whilst I briefly recount the history of the settlement of Canterbury. In doing this I do not by any means purpose to put it in the orthodox three volumes, but merely to give the outlines which are necessary in order to fully-comprehend the narrative of events.

As most of my readers are probably aware, the foundation of the settlement was projected by an Association, called the Canterbury Association. This was a most aristocratic and highly religious body, composed as it was of Peers of the realm, younger



not feel inclined to go so far north as the other three vessels did. Considerable anxiety was expressed at the delay of our ship. the more so as, being esteemed the crack one of the squadron, we were honoured by having the bank on board. The illustration, given on the other page, which is taken from a drawing made by Mrs. W. Donald, who, as Miss Townsend, was a passenger with us on board the *Cressy*. will give some idea of the scene which met our eyes as we sailed up the harbour of Lyttelton one beautiful summer morning, at the end of December, 1850, after a four months' sea voyage. That we were warmly welcomed by our fellow Pilgrims goes without saying. They had been conjuring up all kinds of accidents as having happened to us, and our appearance off the Heads, unheralded then by telegraphic message, created a great deal of excitement. Of course we were all eager to get on shore, and shortly after this we were landed in the ship's boats, with our belongings, in the then infant township of Lyttelton. The second illustration, also from the pencil of the talented lady referred to, gives an idea of what Lyttelton was like at the end of 1850. It will enable my readers to compare the aspect of the Port of Lyttelton then with that of now—only some thirty-six years later. Then—very nearly in its primitive state, with a few buildings dotted here and there; now—a pretty little seaport town, with its railway, electric light, graving dock, and all the appliances of modern civilization. The jetty shewn in the illustration, was situate almost where the railway gates are, just below the Post Office. The large building to the left, which is still extant, and used as the Municipal Council Chambers, was the Government House of the infant settlement, where resided Mr. Godley, the Resident Agent of the then all powerful Canterbury Association. As the last comers, we had of course to take our chance of accommodation on arrival in the barracks—the range of buildings a little lower down than Mr. Godley's house. The extent of room, as may be seen, available in the barracks, was but limited; and as it was summer weather and exceedingly hot, a number of families, amongst others my own, preferred to camp out, after the manner of an extended pic-nic, amongst the high fern and

long grass, which was then growing where now exists asphalte pavements and busy warehouses. Thus our first night on New Zealand soil was spent in the open air, which by no means unpleasantly contrasted with the cooped up state in which we had been for the previous four months on board the ship. The next move now, having fairly set our foot on the Promised Land, was to get a domicile of our own. The Association, then most paternal in its conduct with regard to the emigrants, allowed each married man sufficient timber to build a temporary residence for himself and family at merely nominal cost. There was then no very ornate style of architecture prevalent in the community. The most popular was what is known as the V hut, from being in the shape of a letter V inverted. Sod *wharés*, of all kinds and designs, were also to be seen here and there; but the fashionable style was the V hut. My father, before our first week of picnicing was over, of which we were just beginning to have had enough, had built one for us—his first essay in the art and mystery of carpentering—but still sufficient to cover us fairly well, and we moved from where we had been camping to our new home. This magnificent structure, which comprised two rooms, was built on the site now occupied by the Colonists' Hall, and was on the slope of a hill which rose behind us. As to the tenure upon which we held the section, I believe it was mainly founded on the good old Border law of

"Let him take who has the power,  
Let him keep who can;"

at any rate I know we paid no rent, nor were we troubled at any time with the rate collector's visits, and we remained in occupation under this charmingly Arcadian system till we left to go over on to the Plains. Our V hut was, as I have indicated, though compact, not by any means palatial, but we were in an aristocratic neighbourhood, as just above us, in a sod *wharé* of one room, resided no less a personage than the Hon. Stuart Wortley, now Earl Wharnccliffe. Whilst the summer weather lasted, of course our hut was not by any means uncomfortable; but when the rainy season came the water soon found out the defects of my father's carpentering. We derived one little

comfort, however, from the fact that we were not so bad off as some of our neighbours. An old "Shagroon," as those who were here when the settlers arrived were called, had given us the salutary advice to cut a ditch round our hut so as to carry off the water coming down the hill, and we cut it. Not so, however, our neighbour, the Hon. Stuart Wortley. The consequence was that when the rain came down from the hill it went through his sod *wharé*, and crumbled it down like so much sugar. There was no help for it; he had to beat a hasty retreat and take shelter with us in our hut. Subsequently he reconstructed his *wharé*, but on more scientific principles, and it remained intact some time after Mr Wortley had returned to England.

## CHAPTER II.

CHRISTCHURCH IN 1851.—THE BRIDLE PATH.—HOW THE OLD  
SETTLERS MANAGED TO GET THEIR GOODS OVER THE HILL.  
—THE SUMNER BAR.—OUR FIRST NIGHT ON THE PLAINS.



OF course the great ambition of the majority of the settlers, though Lyttelton was then the hub of civilization, as far as Canterbury was concerned, was to get over to the Plains, and many a trip was made to the top of the Bridle Path to have a look, though from afar off, at our future home. The outlook then was different to what it is now. Instead of smiling homesteads, with clusters of houses and plantations, nothing was then to be seen but the great wide bare plain stretching away for miles on either side, and as far as the eye could reach no sign of human habitation appeared. The two clumps of bush—Riccarton and Papanui—were conspicuous objects in the landscape. Some of our number immediately on arrival, who were sent out like the spies of the Israelites of old, to look at the land, reached as far as Riccarton, where they received from the Messrs. W. and J. Deans—the pioneers of the plains—a hearty Scottish welcome. One by one families began to move over the hills; at last our turn came, and one autumn day saw us in company with some shipmates bound on the same journey. Those who have arrived here in later years, will no doubt smile when I say that this was a journey to be undertaken with no small amount of trepidation, on account of the difficulties surrounding it. They can have no idea what the transit of a family with all its household goods from Lyttelton to Christchurch meant in those days. The only road communication was by means of the Bridle Path, then only partly completed, and over which, as they had no other conveyance, the Pilgrim Fathers—and mothers too for the matter















































