

Napier is an active, thriving place and has a good location on the bay with a fine "back country." The situation of the town proper is very peculiar. The site is really a peninsula, or rather a large hill, almost completely surrounded by water, and connected to the main land by a very narrow neck. The churches, banks, business houses, etc., are on the flats at the base of this hill, and the residences picturesquely placed on the slopes and top.

It so happened we were there on New Year's day and the Monday following, which was the day of celebration. It was a fine day, though rather warm, and the town was fairly deserted, for, according to the custom of the place, almost everybody had gone into the country, picnicing, etc., or to the races. Sunday-school picnics, or "festivals," as they are called, were held on that day. How strange it seemed to us—picnics at New Year's time! Horse racing is the standard amusement of the colony, and it is carried to a very great extreme—every village, no matter how small, having its "race meetings" at frequent intervals. It has come to be the "curse of the country," and the wasted time, drinking, and especially the gambling consequent upon these races, is a source of terrible evil. Many thousands of pounds sterling are annually put through the "totalizer" or "gambling machine" alone at these races.

But to proceed. From Napier our route was overland to Wellington (200 miles) by rail, except the seventeen miles between Woodville and Palmerston, a gap where the railroad is still unfinished, which we fortunately had to perform by coach—I say fortunately, because it was through one of the prettiest bits of scenery I have ever been privileged to look upon.

Soon after leaving town the train passes through a good stretch of fine country laid out in farms, principally sheep and stock-raising, with occasional agricultural sections. Haying was just being finished and harvesting had about commenced. Away to the north-west of the train was a snow-streaked range of mountains. Except the drive through the Manawatu Gorge, of which I am about to speak, there is but little in this trip to Wellington to attract the purely sight-seeing tourist. The train reached Woodville in time for lunch, directly after which the coach started.

After a mile or two we crossed the Manawatu River by a fine bridge and entered the magnificent and very narrow gorge, through the bottom of which flows the handsome river—broad, swift, and deep—a noble stream. On either side the precipitous, I might almost say perpendicular, walls tower up hundreds of feet, and are clothed in a most luxuriant and fresh vegetation—splendid trees, shrubs, and ferns through the whole length of six miles.

The coach road, both smooth and good, has been cut out along one side and is a mere shelf in mid-air, barely wide enough, and without fence or rail-

ing to prevent going over. As the coach spun along, the horses on the full trot, one looked almost straight down upon the swift river fifty or seventy-five feet below, and above, as far as the eye could reach, was the impending embankment clad in nature's best, following the curves and turns of the gorge—a grander spectacle can scarcely be pictured. But one thing marred the scenery, and that was the cutting on the opposite side for the railway track, which is being put through—a very difficult piece of engineering. But for all it was so beautiful, frequently the turns were so alarmingly short around projecting rocks, the wheels coming within twelve inches of the very edge, one could but feel a sense of relief when again safely out on the open plains. At intervals indications of small washouts and land slides did not augment the pleasure of timid passengers. It was the first time in my life I can remember being really nervous while riding or driving, and I had previously been over some very dangerous places. We put up at Palmerston, quite a large village, for the night,



THE PETS ON A NEW ZEALAND STOCK FARM.

proceeding next morning by early train. Some miles before reaching Wellington the railway follows the west coast, winding about the rocky cliffs close to the water's edge, there being a great many pretty little bays and inlets; then it passes through a very mountainous district, many short tunnels being necessary. It is when emerging from one of these tunnels that Wellington with its pretty harbour comes suddenly into sight—a very pleasing surprise. The city is situated on the sides of a group of hills, which slope down towards its splendid harbour, forming a vast amphitheatre, as it were; the very opposite to Napier's location.

Wellington, the capital of New Zealand, is a city of perhaps 28,000 people, and has large commercial and shipping interests, its harbour being the safest and most commodious in New Zealand. It was on the site of Wellington that the first practical settlement was made in the colony.

We took our departure from the capital and the North Island on January 6th, sailing for Lyttleton, the port of Christchurch, on the east coast of the

South Island, where we arrived early the following morning. There was a stiff breeze blowing and the air perfectly clear, so that we had an excellent opportunity of seeing the fine rugged, rocky cliffs and headlands of the coast we were leaving, and in the dim distance the coast and snowy mountains of the South (or middle) Island were just visible. Having nothing to detain us at Lyttleton we went on at once to Christchurch, which is but half an hour by rail from its port, the range of hills along the coast being pierced by a tunnel a mile and five-eighths in length. The heights along the coast form an excellent protection to the interior country against the severe gales blowing down the coast.

Christchurch is the chief business centre of the famous Canterbury District, and is situated on the plains of that name on the River Avon. It is frequently styled the "City of the Plains," and in this respect, owing to its flat location, is a great contrast to other New Zealand cities. As I stood at some of the street corners and looked up and down the streets out over the plains, level and prairie-like, I could but think of Winnipeg. Christchurch is, however, "eminently English in its appearance, architecture, and surroundings," but I would add, "except that its streets are much wider than those of an English town." There are several fine buildings, among them the Museum, which contains a valuable and unique collection, and a cathedral (not as yet quite complete, though in use) with a tower 210 feet high\* and a peal of ten bells which last I heard with much delight on Sabbath morning and evening.

Christchurch claims, with its suburbs, forty odd thousand inhabitants. It is a neat pretty city, and the beautiful River Avon, which flows through it, lined with handsome weeping willows, and the adjoining parks, are very attractive features. Altogether I was much taken with the place

(See cut on front cover.)

The Canterbury Plains are the pride of all New Zealand, and no wonder. A more beautiful agricultural district I never visited. A rich and very fertile stretch of, for the most part, flat prairie-like country extends from the East Coast to the mountain range in the west of the island, and here are to be seen some of the largest and finest farms in existence—the whole like one mammoth garden. Picture to yourself a tract of country, well laid out in farms, splendidly irrigated, the fields of which are each protected by well-trimmed gorse hedges (instead of old stumps, rails, or barbed wire fences), and the roads clean, neat, and in good condition; imagine each field to contain a heavy and even crop of wheat or oats, with an occasional potato patch, in as perfect condition as you can conceive of nature's attaining, and you will have

\*A portion of this tower was shaken down by a severe earthquake since Mr. W. E. H. Massey's visit at Christchurch, a brief account of which appeared in the December 1894 issue of MASSEY'S ILLUSTRATED, under Foreign News.—Ed.