lodging as she wandered through the thinly-populated region. The settlers were too glad to welcome a visitor from the old country. Sometimes she was cheered by coming, as she thought, on a trace of Harold, at other times it seemed as if she were on a wild errand—fruitless, endless. Several times she lost her way; once she spent a night under a tree in the Bush, exhausted with hunger and fatigue. But Hope was strong and lived through it all.

She preferred to walk, she could then search every bush, visit every camp-fire near which Harold might be found. Once she paid for her keep, by remaining two days in a hut in charge of some little children, while the parents took the youngest baby some distance to be baptised. The necessary loving woman's work was balm to Hope's sore heart, she was almost sorry when she had once more to go out into the world again, the cruel world which somewhere was hiding her husband.

She had quite made up her mind now to forgive him and take him to her heart again, with or without the wretched gold. Harold would be penitent now, she was sure, and ready to come back to her. His health was far from strong, and at times he would be positively grateful to her for the care she took of him. However he might rebel at other seasons against her rule, a touch of illness always brought her husband back to her, she was wont to say to herself. And he might be ill now, in one of these rough huts, ill and neglected. Oh, why could she not hasten to him?

Of course people were curious, and asked the reason of her wanderings, and for these Hope had a story she really came to believe was true.

Her husband had gone to look at land up this way, and being delicate had most probably fallen ill somewhere. She was to have followed him later, but feeling anxious had come after him. He had probably written to her lodgings in Auckland, and so she had missed the letter. From one place she actually did send a letter to Mrs. White's lodgings, but it was addressed to Harold himself, praying him, if he had returned there, to send her a letter to Mersey Mouth, a little postal town on the Bay of Plenty. That was to be the end of her journeyings, she determined.

People were generally very kind if they were curious, and Hope was never turned from any door. If beds ran short, there was always a rug and a cushion on the floor for the belated wanderer.

She had been rather more than a fortnight on her travels, diverging here and there from the direct road as she heard rumours of a strange Englishman being seen in the region, when one evening she came upon the cleared lands of an evidently prosperous settler. The fences were well kept, the cattle well fed, the fields and gardens looked neat and well stocked. It must be Mr. Furniss's settlement.

'Be sure and go to Mr. Furniss's,' every one had said. 'Every one goes there, you are certain to hear of your husband.'

But now she was on the spot, Hope felt shy and disheartened. Her clothes had become shabby, her boots were wearing out; she was reluctant to thrust herself and her anxieties on this rich and prosperous household. Still it must be done. She rested for a while in an empty cattle shed, combed and coiled her dark hair neatly, washed her face, and put on Katie's soft white neckerchief, carefully kept till now in her bag. She tried to brush the soil off her boots, but they were hopeless, and she could only trust they would escape notice.

She waited till the dinner hour was past, and she watched the men of the house out to their work again; two drove off in a light cart, a girl waving them goodbye, and then she crept timidly to the side door under the verandah. Some one was working a sewing machine there—the tic-tac sounded familiar to Hope.

A cheery voice broke into a gay song as she approached. The tra-la-la was as free from care as a bird's carol. Hope waited till the verse ended, and then she knocked gently—once, twice.

'Who is there? Come in,' said the singer. And Hope turned the handle and went in.

(To be continued.)