

CHAPTER III.

ARRIVAL OF FIRST SHIPS : DUNEDIN AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTRY : WORK BEGUN : SELECTIONS MADE : FIRST HOUSES : WORK AND WAGES : RURAL LANDS : SOUTH AND NORTH : LAW AND ORDER : FIRST ANNIVERSARY : SECOND YEAR AND THREE FOLLOWING YEARS : GENERAL NOTES.

WHEN the "John Wickliffe" arrived, she anchored in Wickliffe Bay. Some Maoris, who were out fishing for barracouta, slung on board a great number of fish, receiving in return sugar, biscuits, &c. They wanted tobacco, but refused to take tea. Next morning Pilot Driver came on board and took the ship to Port Chalmers. Driver was one of the hardest cases in the place, and gulled the passengers with fearful tales about the Maoris. When they asked questions about shooting, he told them that there was any amount to be had. "Go ashore," said he; "shoot anything you see." A party went ashore, and, seeing a large number of ducks on the beach, they shot several, but looked blue when the owner turned up and made them pay for the lot. Driver had a great love for Otago, and once, when comparisons between Wellington and Otago were made to the detriment of the latter, he remarked that he would sooner be hanged in Otago than die a natural death in Wellington.

Whilst awaiting the arrival of her sister ship, the "Wickliffe's" passengers were not idle. The first business was the housing of the immigrants, who had to stay on board while accommodation was being prepared by the Company's agents. Consequently Dunedin was visited, and arrangements made for building the first barracks, a structure made of posts and grass, with thatched roof.

Dunedin was a wild-looking, almost uninhabited place, and the bush grew right to the water's edge. The only houses were Watson's Hotel at the beach: Mr.

Kettle's house, near where the "Otago Daily Times" office now is; Pelichet's house at Pelichet Bay; and a clay hut on the point above Anderson's Bay. The older settlers lived at Otakou, as the settlement inside the Heads was called, and Port Chalmers boasted one house, a large clay whare, with thatched roof, while in the bush was a small hut, occupied by a man named French Charlie.

About Dunedin was forest, and to get into the country the traveller had to force his way through flax, tutu, fern, scrub, and swamps. The only way one could get to Anderson's Bay was either by boat, or by making a long detour round the sandhills at what is now St. Clair and Musselburgh.

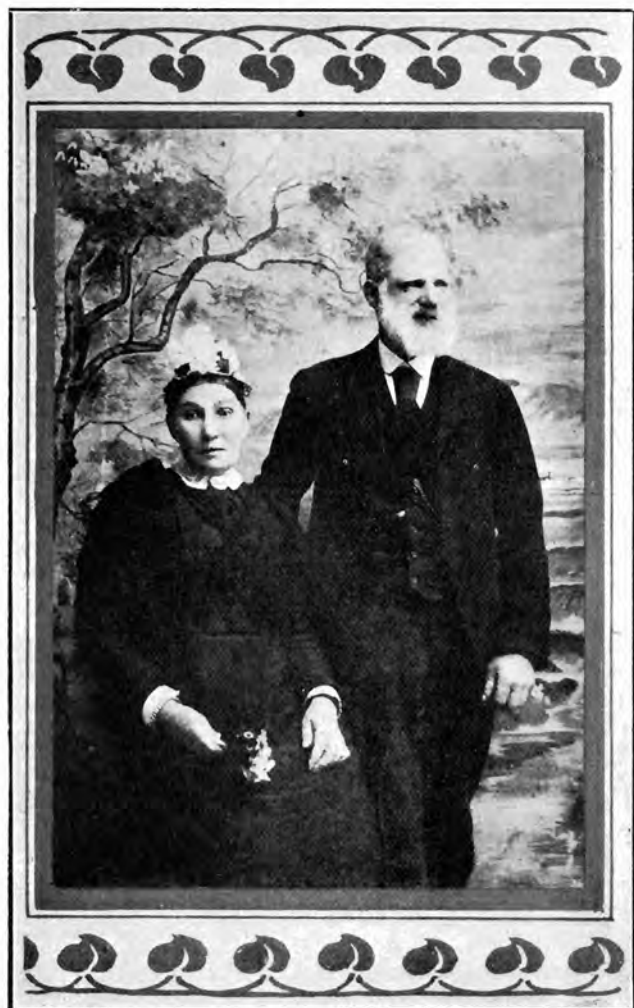
Meantime the "Philip Laing" arrived, and there was great rejoicing on the "Wickliffe" at her safe arrival. Before the passengers could be disembarked, the weather took a bad turn, and for three long, weary weeks the immigrants were cooped up in their quarters on board the ship. The succeeding three weeks were very wet, and on many other occasions the early settlers had experience of protracted rains.

Some of the first to get into their houses were afterwards driven out by floods, and one relates how he made his escape from his hut by swimming to another hut on higher ground. Captain Cargill and Dr. Burns soon began to build, and others put up huts, none of which were more than twelve feet square.

Some of the people, growing dissatisfied, offered to go to Wellington, which they were allowed to do, while some others were told to go by Captain Cargill, who was a martinet and easily offended. In order to allow the settlers to get on the land, Friday, 21st April, was fixed as the day for making selections, and about twenty selectors who held land orders proceeded to the site of the town.

Mr. Garrick held No. 1 order, and chose the section on which the Bank of New Zealand now stands. Mr. James Williamson chose the section at the corner of Princes and Manse Streets; while Mr. Andrew Mercer chose a section in Forth Street, where it is cut by Leith stream, his intention being to erect a sawmill. Captain Cargill selected a section in Princes Street South, and Mr. Burns one at the corner of Walker and Princes Streets.

The pioneers landed at Dunedin in boats at the foot of Manse Street, where the first jetty was built of rough



MR. AND MRS. MATTHEW MARSHALL

1848, "*Philip Laing*," AND 1849, "*Larkins*."

posts, and planked over on top. They found the whole frontage had been withdrawn for public purposes, and were very angry thereat, as this was in direct violation of the contracts entered into with land purchasers in London and Edinburgh; but, as there was no court to appeal to, they had to make their selections in the next best place, which appeared to be along Princes Street, which was represented by two survey lines. The street itself consisted of flax, grass, stumps, trees, creeks, and bogs.

The first houses built by the settlers were wattle and dab, and Mr. James Adams thus describes the erection of his house:—"On my leasehold there was a clump of Mapau trees, but before cutting them I stretched a line through them for the ground plan of the house. Trees which coincided with this line I left standing, and those out of line were cut down and put in the line by digging holes. By this plan the walls were made strong and substantial in one day. The natives then put small wands or wattles across the uprights about twelve inches apart, fastening them with flax, and over all they laced the long grass to the wattles, did the same to the roof, and at the end of four days my house was habitable. There was a difference of two feet in the gables, but, as no one could see the four corners at once, it was not known to anyone but myself."

This shows that Mr. Adams' first house was a grass house. Wattle and dab houses were built in the same way, only that wattles were nailed across at intervals of a few inches, inside the uprights. Then the whole was plastered with a mixture of well-wrought clay and chopped grass. The windows were in many cases calico, stretched across the opening, while the fireplace occupied nearly the whole of the end of the house. Firewood was plentiful, and the settler could at least indulge in the luxury of good fires. The floor was generally the natural soil, packed level with the spade before the walls of the house were erected.

Several settlers brought material for houses with them. Captain Cargill had one of these houses, while Mr. Garrick had one which was afterwards the Royal Hotel; one belonged to Mr. Edward Lee; Mr. Cutten and Mr. Jeffreys had each a small house, and there was one for Dr. Burns. These were the first timber houses built by the immigrants, although a party of sawyers had been at

work, for some months before the pioneer ships arrived, sawing timber for the use of the settlers.

The first party of sawyers consisted of Messrs. David Carey, John Logan, Charles Hopkinson, and James Bell. Antonio Joseph, who had run away from the whaler "Favourite," was cook to the party. When the pioneer ships were lying in the harbour, Mrs. Anderson bought timber of these sawyers to build her hotel. Shortly after that the Company's sawyers commenced work in what is now called Sawyer's Bay, where the first sawmill was erected by Hugh McDermid.

Captain Cargill often allowed people to build on what is now the Town Belt, and fence in a garden. One man, named Thorburn, fenced in half an acre and built a house, but he had killed some of the Captain's pigs which were running about. The Captain heard of it, and made inquiries from Thorburn, who asked: "Who told you?" "My girl," was the reply. The girl had the misfortune to be cross-eyed, and Thorburn asked: "How could you expect a girl with a crooked eye to see straight?" "No matter, you'll have to remove," said the Captain. "Which—house or garden?" "Both." "Well, I must say I'll look well, walking about with my house and garden on my back," was Thorburn's reply; but it was no use, he had to go. On another occasion the Captain found fault with one Simpson, a shoemaker, who had put up a sign: "Shoemaker to Her Majesty." Simpson refused to take it down, saying: "I did not say which queen; it might be Queen of Sheba for all you know."

Gradually the pioneers made their selections, or leased sections, and built houses until the first batch of immigrants were all housed. The next concern was to set the labourers to work, and the formation of Princes Street commenced. Wages for labourers were fixed at 3/- per day of ten hours, and for tradesmen at 5/- per day. Work commenced at six in the morning, and continued till nine. Then there was an interval of one hour. Work was resumed at ten and continued till two, when another interval of an hour was given. From three to six finished the day.

Farm servants had their wages fixed at £30 a year, with 10lbs. of meat, 10lbs. flour, or 5lbs. potatoes for every pound of flour. They were to get a house free and liberty to graze a cow. A married man got 50 per cent. more. When Captain Cargill announced that, owing to funds

available for wages becoming exhausted, the wages would be reduced from 3/- to 2/6 per day for labourers, the men left in a body, with one or two exceptions, one of whom said: "What can a man do? He cannot starve nor let his children starve." The men wanted shorter hours, but Captain Cargill pointed out that they were working shorter hours and earning more than they would at home. In the end they had to return to work, and the formation of Princes Street went on apace.

Roads to tap the country districts were commenced, and by the end of May things had progressed so much that all the immigrants had left the "Philip Laing" and taken up their quarters in Dunedin.

The selection of suburban lands was not made for some time after the town sections were taken up. The first country settlers went to Half-Way Bush. After that sections were taken up at Kaikorai, Green Island, and the Peninsula; also in the Suburban Town District, and at North-East Valley. Several of the early settlers chose selections at Port Chalmers in preference to Dunedin.

On account of the very wet weather the selection of rural lands was not made for a considerable time. Parties were organised to inspect and report, and several selections were made in the Molyneux District, but most were made in the Taieri. The earliest settlers in the Taieri were Dr. Williams and Mr. Milne at Henley, and Mr. Edward Palmer at Otakia. Mr. Valpy went to Waihola Park, and other settlers to other parts of the Taieri Plain.

Mr. Archibald Anderson, who came to Otago before the arrival of the pioneer ships, says that, when he first saw the Taieri Plain, it was all under water, only a patch of bush near Allanton being visible. With the spy-glass he could see the movements of the tips of the flax blades at the surface of the water. As the flax was ten or twelve feet long, the depth of the water may be guessed. He warned the first settlers, but they would not believe him. However, fires soon cleared away the flax, and the clearings made along the banks of the river formed a better outlet for the waters, with the result that no one has since seen such a flood as described by Mr. Anderson.

The immigrants did not wait for roads to be constructed, but set out, often accompanied by their wives and children, to force their way through flax, fern, and tutu, and to wade through streams and swamps with toil and difficulty. Gradually they spread through the Taieri.

Tokomairiro, and Molyneux Districts. Amongst others who settled on the Taieri were Edward Lee, James Fulton, Francis and William McDiarmid, James Buchanan, Donald Borrie, Grant, James Dow, and Rennie. At Berwick a Mr. Henderson had a large run.

Meanwhile other vessels arrived. The "Victory," with a small number of passengers, arrived on July 8th, the "Blundell" on September 21st, the "Bernicia" on December 12th, making the fifth vessel to arrive in 1848.

Before the end of the year a forward move was made by the settlement. The first Custom House was erected, the Church and School were opened, and the first newspaper, the "Otago News," printed and published by Mr. H. B. Graham, made its appearance on 13th December.

Law and order were established along with the settlement, and Mr. A. R. C. Strode was the first Resident Magistrate. At the same time Mr. McCarthy opened the first Custom House. The Police were represented by Sergeant Barry, Corporal Smith, and Privates McKain, L. Stewart, C. Stewart, and a Maori named Epa. These were stationed at Otakou, but Barry removed to Dunedin, leaving Smith and a couple of constables at Port Chalmers. Shortly afterwards Shepherd was a constable in Dunedin, and Donald Ross was appointed to the Southern Districts.

The first lock-up in Dunedin was a small weather-board hut, and the first prisoner (French Charlie) kicked the boards out in the night, and so got free. The next prisoner was chained to the lamp-post, erected to show the dangerous creek at Watson's Hotel. Old Gibbs was a wild man, and the police knew it was no good putting him in the lock-up, so he was marched to the lamp-post, where he made night hideous with his cries, till he was released in the morning to come before the Magistrate. After that a more substantial structure was built of strong posts, lined with timber inside, near where the present gaol now stands.

So the year passed. The first road to the Taieri by Half-Way Bush was made, bridges were built, and substantial houses erected. The New Year, 1849, had not long been entered upon when the "Ajax" arrived on January 8th.

On March 23rd and 24th, 1849, the first anniversary of the young colony was celebrated with great eclat. The first day was devoted to aquatic and rural sports, and the second to horse racing. On the 23rd, public worship

was held at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. in the Church, and the newspaper gave a stirring account of the state of affairs in the settlement.

During the second year, progress was steady, and, by the end of June, a dray road was completed as far as Saddle Hill. The first Post Office in Dunedin was kept by Mr. Archibald Anderson, who resigned in August, when Mr. H. B. Graham was appointed. One of the most notable events of the second year was the recognition of the eight-hour day in February, 1849, and ever since eight hours has represented a day's work in Otago.

During the year 1849 the following ships arrived: "Mariner," 8th June; "Larkins," 11th September; "Kelso," 21st November; and the "Mooltan," 25th December. The second anniversary was celebrated by races at Half-Way Bush, and by a regatta at Port Chalmers on March 27th.

During the three following years the settlers had to encounter many hardships. Most of the supplies came from Sydney, in Mr. Jones's schooner, the "Scotia," and there were times when the expected visit of the vessel was delayed longer than usual, when the settlers were driven to the direst straits.

The survivors of those days of hardship remember well when not a pound of flour could be obtained in Dunedin for love or money. A little wheat was procured from the Maoris, and a coarse flour made by grinding it in a steel mill turned by hand; some even tried to grind it in a coffee mill. The coarse flour thus obtained, after the roughest of the bran had been sifted out, made fairly good bread. The camp oven was the universal cooking appliance, but those who could not afford one had to make damper bread, that is, bread covered over with hot ashes after a big fire had been allowed to burn low, and so cooked before the heat cooled off.

When no tea was procurable the settlers used manuka leaves, or the leaves of the piri-piri or bid-a-bid. For coffee they roasted wheat, and ground it in a coffee mill. For tobacco the men smoked manuka bark, and tea leaves, when these were available. There was a time when the settlement was without salt, and for days on end every household might be seen boiling sea water, till a little salt could be gathered at the bottom of the pot. Those who came to Otago after means of communication had been fairly established knew nothing of the disadvantages under which the pioneers laboured.

Many of the first settlers in Tokomairiro and Molyneux had to carry their supplies on their backs from Dunedin, and there are those living who have carried 50lbs. of flour to the Molyneux.

The following sketch from the pen of Mr. James Elder Brown gives some idea of the prices current, and the difficulties that had to be met with:—

In 1851—Flour ranged from 20/- to 35/- per 100lb.; 4lb. loaf, 11d. to 1/2; beef and mutton, 5d. and 6d. per lb.

1852—Flour, 18/- to 35/-; loaf, 9d. to 1/2; beef and mutton, 5d. to 6d.

1853—Flour, 25/- to 40/-; loaf, 1/- to 1/3; beef and mutton, 5d. to 7d.

During these three years there was every element of stagnation. There was no proper system of land sales and no money to carry on improvements. All goods now paid duty, but there was no corresponding outlay of money. The price of some of the products, especially wheat at 8/- and 10/- per bushel, may seem excessive, but it has to be taken into account that almost the whole was grown on bush land, necessitating hard labour in every part of the process—from felling, burning off, chipping in with hoe or spade, reaping with hooks, threshing with flail, and winnowing in the wind. The high prices of 1853 were caused by the failure of supplies from Sydney.

The supplies grown by the settlers were chiefly confined to the suburban lands and the sides of the harbour. The chief means of communication with the latter was by boat, and nearly every settler had to have one. The only way to reach the Peninsula with animals was to go round by the Forbury and the sandhills. The way to reach Dunedin was by a footpath across the swamps, with small bridges on the creeks. The farmers of the day were just the labourers who had managed to acquire a few acres of land which they cultivated with great care. In Dunedin, in many cases, the tradesmen and others grew their own potatoes and vegetables, while some kept cows on the unoccupied parts, and supplied milk and butter to the others. There were few employers of labour, and everyone did his or her best to find means of employing themselves by cutting timber, fencing, or firewood, &c., and bringing them to market. Neighbours often assisted each other or exchanged labour. Money was very scarce, but there was scarcely a person who could not go to a store and get whatever supplies he needed, without any question as to when they would be paid for.

With the advent of the Provincial Council, which was established in 1853, the members being Messrs. Cutten, Rennie, and Adams, representing Dunedin, and Messrs. McAndrew, Reynolds, Harris, Gillies, McGlashan, and Anderson, the country districts, a stimulus was given to everything. More people arrived, and public works were entered upon with vigour. Those who wished to get land paid a deposit of 10/- an acre, and signed a guarantee to accept the terms that might be fixed by Regulation, and when, in 1856, the new Regulations came into force for the sale of Waste Lands at 10/- per acre, with £2 per acre to be expended on improvements in four years, the Province might be said to be fairly launched into a state of prosperity.

Perhaps the most startling event in the history of the colony so far was the robbery of the Custom House, at Port Chalmers. The safe, containing £1,400, had been looted and conveyed, no doubt, to a boat waiting for the purpose. Search was made of the various bays near the Port, and Mr. James Adams had the good fortune to find the safe unopened, half-submerged in the water.

An inquiry was instituted, and a reward of £100 offered, but to no purpose. Shortly after this the Custom House was removed to Dunedin, and its robbery was never again attempted.

Meantime immigrant vessels continued to arrive, and in 1859 the population in Dunedin had risen to 2,262, while Otago as a whole contained 8,899.

From the foregoing it will be seen that settlement had spread throughout the country, and the agricultural and pastoral industries had obtained a good foothold. In 1857, the only portion of the Otago Province settled was the Taieri Plain, Green Island, and Balclutha Districts, while here and there portions of land were taken up along the South Road as far as Popotunoa. Northwards, there was hardly any settlement, all the country being held as large runs.

About Oamaru there was no town, and even in 1861 only a few houses. The first lands in the district were sold in 1853, at the then fixed price of 10/- per acre, to Messrs. Frazer, at the Bluff, Moeraki; Benjamin Bailey and John Lemon, at Otepopo; Wm. Jones, at Lavant; J. R. Jones, at Puketapu; J. F. B., C. E. A., and C. Suisted, at Otepopo. In November of this year the Filleuls took up the Papakaio Run, and Hugh Robison the Oamaru Run.

From 1853 to 1858 the chief runholders up to the Waitaki were the Filleuls at Papakaio; H. Robison, the Oamaru Run; Williams and Lemon, Waikoura Run; Rich and Teschemaker, Kakanui; Frazer Bros., Tuparitanuiwha and White Bluffs; W. S. Trotter, Te Awa Kokomuko, between Horse Range and Moeraki; H. McHugh, Moeraki; John Jones, Waikouaiti and Puketapu; Suisted, all the land from the Otepopo to Oamaru; W. H. Valpy, the Maerewhenua Run; Borton and McMaster, between the Awamoko and Maerewhenua Rivers; J. J. MacEvoy, between the Maerewhenua and Otekaike Rivers, bought from the original holder, one Lawson; W. H. Dansey, Otekaike Run, purchased from J. P. Taylor; Julius Bros., Rugged Ridges Run; the Rev. J. C. Andrews, the Otemata Run; H. C. Robison, the Omarama Run; John MacLean, Morven Hills; Gouch and Miller, the Longslip Run; and A. MacMurdo, the Upper Waitaki Plain.

In 1855 Robison sold his Oamaru Run to W. H. Valpy, and in the same year E. MacGlashan purchased a share in Suisted's Run at Otepopo. In 1857 Major Richardson bought out Suisted's interest in all the runs, and Suisted left Otago about the end of the year. In 1854 Rich and Teschemaker brought sheep overland from Nelson, intending to take up a run in the Molyneux District; but they changed their minds, and took up the Kakanui Run, as stated. In 1857 Valpy sold his Oamaru Run to the Filleuls, who in 1859 sold to Jas. Hassell, who held it till it was proclaimed a hundred by the Provincial Government in 1862. About the end of 1858 Frazer Bros. sold their sheep station at the Bluff to Dr. Gleeson, and E. MacGlashan sold his Otepopo Run to F. Fenwick. In 1859 C. Hopkinson had a run somewhere about the Shag River, and from a return by Mr. Logie, chief inspector of sheep, the number of sheep-owners totalled 56, the number of sheep held in the Northern District being stated as 201,649.

At the beginning of 1857 the population in the north was 285, and it was in this year that the first northern mails were carried, the offer of David Hutchison, at the rate of £290 per annum, being accepted, and the first mail started from Dunedin on Monday, 2nd February. On the 10th February, a Mr. H. C. Hertslet, who had carried on business at Moeraki, advertised that he had enlarged his business, and had for sale all the goods usually required at stations. For some time Mr. and Mrs. Hertslet

were the only white family at Moeraki, and were on excellent terms with the Maoris, of whom a large number resided in the neighbouring kaik.

The site of Oamaru was not laid out and offered for sale until 1859, and between 21st March and 6th April 17 sections were put up to auction, realising £291, the upset being £12 10s. per quarter acre. From records it appears that the population at this time was only 25, but in 1861 it had increased to 210. The first real house was built in 1859 for Dr. King, and at the end of the year there were but four substantial dwelling-houses, belonging respectively to Henry France, Dr. King, J. Hassell, and H. Hertslet.

At this time Oamaru was visited by the Rev. Wm. Johnstone, of Port Chalmers, at intervals of about three months, and in February, 1860, he preached the first sermon delivered in Oamaru in Mr. Hassell's woolshed, the congregation of between 20 and 30 being nearly the entire adult population. During 1860 the s.s. "Geelong" was engaged to make one trip a week between Dunedin and Oamaru, at a subsidy of £1,500 a year, for two years, and soon the trade assumed such proportions that the authorities placed a hulk, "Thomas and Henry," in the bay for the accommodation of steamers and other craft, and William Hay was placed in charge of her.

The news of the discovery of gold at Tuapeka had little effect at first, but when reliable information was received caused great excitement, so much so that in July the town and district appeared nearly deserted. In this year there were only 47 houses in the town, very few being of stone, which cost 6d. a foot at the quarry and 6d. a foot cartage. During 1862 large numbers of sections were sold, but it was not until 1863 that the town made much progress. That year was one of the best and busiest experienced, and the prosperity of the place was finally assured.

The first school in East Taieri was started in 1853 or 1854, a Mr. Gebbie acting as teacher, till the arrival from Home of Mr. John Hislop in 1856. Mr. Hislop continued in charge till 1861, when he was appointed Inspector and Secretary in charge of the Otago Schools. Mr. James Waddell succeeded to the school, and occupied the position for nearly forty years, being succeeded, on his retirement, by his son James.

The coastal trade of the young colony was carried on

by means of large open boats, which supplied the settlers of Tokomairirō and the Molyneux before there were any roads. James Harrold ran one of these boats between Dunedin and the Taieri, taking goods to the head of Waihola Lake. Antonio Joseph traded another boat to the Molyneux, and up and down the coast from Wai-kouaiti to Stewart Island.

After that a small cutter, "The Spec," owned by Captain Simpson, took up the running, and then the "Pioneer" and "Scotia." Small steamers began to supersede these small sailing crafts, and the first coastal steamers were the "Oberon" and "Guiding Star." From these small beginnings has grown the present coastal and inter-colonial shipping trade, a trade well carried on at the present day by the Union Steam Ship Company and other smaller concerns.

As years passed on, the little community went on the even tenor of its way along the high road to steady progress, but this progress proceeded at a snail's pace, compared with the leaps and bounds it made when the gold discoveries of 1861 were announced. By December, 1861, the population had increased to 30,269 people. The inland districts became rapidly opened up, and soon the pioneers of Otago found themselves lifted into a life of activity and excitement. Dunedin advanced at a rapid rate, and those who knew the old town recognised it no longer. To follow up the different events of importance would take a volume in themselves, and are beyond the scope of this account.

A word might be said about the Press. As stated, the "Otago News" was first published in December, 1848, but its opinions and the subsequent death of the proprietor brought about its demise in December, 1850. On February 8th, 1851, was commenced the publication of the "Otago Witness," its first editor and proprietor being Mr. W. H. Cutten. The discovery of the goldfields and the advent of Julius Vogel induced Mr. Cutten to issue a daily newspaper, the "Otago Daily Times," the first issue of which took place on November 15th, 1861.