
Ship Crusader 10th October 18
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Present Cost to the Government: (difference between 1 and 2).
Ultimate Cost to the Government: (difference between 1 and 2, 3 and 4).
REMARKS.
THE MEMOIR OF CHRISTIAN LOUIS LAUGESEN 1840 ~ 1915
CHRISTIAN LOUIS
LAUGESEN
FROM DENMARK TO NEW ZEALAND



Image ~ Christian's diary and the photo albums of William Glassey DOYLE.

Chapter I

Early Life in Denmark

When a man has past the age of fifty, he is like a traveller in an unknown country, who has reached the top of a hill; he takes a long breath, he looks back over the hills and valleys he has been crossing. He looks on the hills he has been climbing, and he often then sees how easy a road he could have chosen, and how much less exhausted he would have felt. But it is too late. He looks ahead. A great country may yet have to be travelled over before he reaches his journey's destination, but a thick mist is hanging over the unknown land. The noon of life has past, the afternoon is present, and the evening and the rest of the day will come. He of course hopes that the country before him will be smoother and easier to travel, than that he has passed over yet in his experience of his long journey. But how little we know of the future and what a blessing to mankind.

My object in writing this book is simply to note down my experiences through life, and as my life has been a storm-filled one, I can tell many incidents which, when read by my children in years to come, may not only be of interest, but serve as a map over the wilderness of life, and as I hope, be of some guidance to those who are willing to learn.

As I never kept a diary, I cannot always give the exact dates, but all shall be the truth and only the truth. There shall be nothing added to it; but perhaps sometimes I shall have to cut something short. Every man has his one secret, which can only be known to him and his creator, and we all have got secrets which are as it were, too holy and dear to be mentioned.

I am not a Britisher but a Nordsman, so don't laugh at my writing or grammar.

My Childhood and Birthplace

In the heart of Denmark in the island of Zealand, at or outside a little town with the name of Soro, saw I the first light of day some fifty years ago. My birthplace is a beautiful spot in God's creation, it is known as the most lovely place in Denmark. The town itself is not only small but neat, but its surroundings is all forest and lakes. Three large lakes surround the city. Soro Lake, about 5 miles broad but a good deal larger lies on the east side and Pedersbrog Lake on the north, and Tuel Lake between those on the East.

Most of the land is covered in beech forest and had been there since time immemorial. The town had in time past been or at least connected with one of the largest monk cloisters there had ever been in Scandinavia, therefore the town had great attraction for strangers. All had a solemn and sacred or majestic appearance, which I am not able to describe in any better way than this - that I have never seen anything like it since. The walls stood yet round the part in which the cloister had been, they were about ten feet in height and about four feet in breadth - all large bricks.

The cloister had been a quadrangle, an enclosure of about one hundred acres. The two sides were the walls mentioned, the third side was a half circle protected by the Blue Lake. Many cells are there where the monks lived a thousand years ago. Their church ware is still there and used by the Lutherans. There are vaults under the church where are kept hundreds of knights and kings of the old days, many hundreds of years ago, mostly from the eighth to the fourteenth centuries. Many bishops and men of renown in the Danes history rest there. A caretaker will take you round and tell you the names of them all – if he knows them or not, I am not prepared to say. A young lady who danced herself to death or danced until she died in the twelfth century lay there in her ball dress beautifully. Knights with scars on their faces you can see. There you can see old Vikings in their armour. Yes, when one walks between those sleeping giants, you feel almost as if they were yet in life, and as when those sleeping and dried up muscles laid the foundation of the present times of grandeur, freedom and liberty and so many blessings of which they had no idea about. And so is the force of nature. One generation fights, works and dies for the good of the coming one.

What there made Soro important was a large academy where in 400 young men all of higher class were educated. It was a large four story building about 200 feet square with balcony all round the roof. It lay between the Church and the lake. Its lawn reached to the edge of the beautiful blue water. All round this grand old building dwellings for teachers, professors, directors, etc. all built in the old style of the fifteenth century. The Academy was gifted by Baronet Holberg. He presented it to the Crown. He did his part to frame knowledge in Denmark.

The town was separated from the Academy by the wall I have mentioned before, through which an archway led you into the town. Many tales and legends from that old romantic time are still told there such as: monks and friars can still be seen in the night everywhere, such as when young nuns have been killed. Yes, even they will tell you that they can hear babies crying in the monks cells, and I must acknowledge for those of a superstitious mind, the place especially by night would give a most uncanny feeling - those high silent walls, those long avenues of ancient trees which spread themselves in all directions and here and there in almost in every corner stand huge pillars hewn out of stone ten to twelve feet in height with many kinds of carving on the crown. Consider then all the archways, cells, vaults and steeples; in a still especially moonlight night would all help to make ones blood creep. In the daytime it all had a beautiful and majestic appearance.

I must not forget to mention that connecting the Academy and the Church was what we called Pro cademegarden (a pre-Academy school). It took in all the half circle along the lake, about fifty acres.

Opposite the Academy across a small lake were two forests, one was only small but one was about ten miles long. Between those two forests was a narrow strip of open land about half a mile broad. Alongside the largest forest, close to its boundary stood my father's house. From the forest it was separated by a very narrow road. There it led out to the public highway there led past my father's garden, here stood my cradle, here lived I my childhood. Yes, what a beautiful place that was to me, I could sit on the doorstep and look across the lake. I could see small boats with white sails rock here or there on the gentle billows, and the Academy, the steeples of the church, the tops of the houses between the tops of those large elm and lime and beech trees. Yes, how many summer evenings have I not been sitting on that doorstep and listening to the frogs in the pond. Yes, many kinds of sweet melodies could I hear there. The nightingale,



Sorø Academy, oil on canvas by Frederik Christian Kiaerskou 1875.

the drosk, the foxes barking, the deer howling, the koko etc. When the big bell rang as it did every morning and evening at seven o'clock, its tune rang over the lake and echoed in the surrounding forest. It sounded in my ears as a voice from an unknown world as it said come from labour, come from work, come to rest, come to rest. Yes, it was a peaceful home, and never any place on the whole globe can you find anything like the place in which you spend your childhood. Before I proceed any further it is my duty to mention something about my parents and after proceed about myself.

My Parents

My father was of fair complexion, broad build and was about my height which was about five feet eight or nine. To look at him seemed much stouter than I, although I do not think there was much difference.

My father was born near Tidsteed (Thisted) on the West coast of Jutland in a small village called Gespel or Gesbel in the year 1801. His father was a carpenter and mill builder. His name was Lauge Laugesen, his grandfather's name was Pawl Laugesen, who was a ships carpenter and my father thought he came together with his father from Norvy (Norway) in the beginning of the seventeenth century. My father also claimed to be a descendant of a knight, Godmon Laugesen, who after he had freed Denmark from an undesirable king in his mind (as father recalled?), he got killed although not in a very gentle manner. His family fled to Norvy, but I leave that for what it is as I have no further proof in that direction.

My father had six brothers older than him and two sisters younger. He said that he was the cleverest of them. Although there was compulsory schooling in Denmark in his childhood he got some college education in Tidsteed with the intention that he should have been a schoolmaster. His marks were not of the best, so that plan was given up. He went over to Copenhagen in 1819 for to learn to be a gardener. He often told me that he was six weeks on the journey on a sailing vessel. That is what we would call rather slow a trawler in our time.

My mother was born in 1801 near Aarhus in Jutland. Her fathers name was Thoer Christiansen. He had a large farm and came down from an old noble family, but to describe history as far as I know it would take me too much time and as I think will be of less interest as it do not raise itself what our ancestors were and as my object is to write down my own life and not five or ten generations. It should be enough to say that her great great grand-name was handed down from Mareethomas Raiss or Riss born in the state Rise or in history called Carise near Alborg on the same place where the son of Niels Ebesen, Charl of Rise lived in the twelfth century. His descendants are supposed to have lived in the same place for four hundred years. Charl of Rise was according to Professor Fugeman one of Denmark's greatest warriors at his time. Most of my knowledge I got from the register of the Getruerske Stiftelse of Copenhagen of which I am an heir in the fifth generation, of which it is not necessary to go into any further.

My mother was a tall handsome woman. She was the same height as my father. She had dark hair, brown eyes, a Greek nose, rosy cheeks, and was very religious and always had been. She was brought up well. She got married to my father in 1832 but did not leave her occupation in Copenhagen until 1835. She

managed the house for a Count (Greve) Trampe. A housekeeper in those days at a Counts house was different person to those we generally call housekeepers now. She had to be well brought up first class certificate for Kuoleck in cooking from some other gentlemen's lodges. She had to have means or else good security so that she could pay for all items at least for one month. She was like an officer. She was not required to work.

Why they didn't come to live together before 1835 I cannot say except that they had not yet got a permanent home.

Before I proceed any further I think I should mention a few words about those two names, namely Chari of Rise or Reese and Neiels or Niels Abeson was an Earl and a great warrior so was Charl Of Reese. His sister's son, the Count of Slesvig Holdtstein was a great warrior also a German in war with Denmark. He was one of its greatest enemies. He had conquered Randers, a town not many miles from Niels Abesons home. He travelled the whole country, but Niels Abeson swore that he would free Denmark from this awful enemy. He sent Count Feart for that was his name his glove with this message: if I meet you in a house or under the open heaven, you shall be my man, and fall from my hand.

One night accordingly Niels Abeson and Charl of Reese and one called the black warrior set out galloping to Randers, the town in which the Count lay with all his army. The bridge was drawn up, as there was a canal around the town. But nothing could stop those three giants. The horses plunged in to the water, swam across, galloped up the sideets to the great amazement of the sleeping army. They galloped to the Count's quarters, leapt off their horses, knocked down the guard, entered the house spreading dead to all sides until they reached the Count's sleeping room, whom they found in bed. The black warrior cut off his head and threw it out of the window so Tugerman said, but others think that Niels Abeson did the deed with his one hand. The garrison was now on their feet but our three warriors leapt in the saddle and with sword in hand, made a race through the enemy, swam the canal, and galloped home to Niels Abeson Borg, with Colberg. I suppose they wanted a breakfast after that lot.

But Denmark was not yet left in peace. Count Feart had a brother called the Tron Count. He came down from Holdstein with a great army for to revenge his brother. On the Place at Colberg stood one of the most desperate battles of the twelfth century. History tells us of a Danes bishop of such tremendous size and strength that he could split and did so split man for man so they fell on both sides of their horses. It seemed victory for the Iron Count, but in the thick of the battle three horsemen came galloping up alongside the bishop and then dead to the enemy the Germans commenced to retreat but up came the Iron Count in front of those four demons, for to stop their progress. But when Niels Abeson saw him he threw open his visor and the Count said, "Are you is the man I want to try?" A fearful struggle commenced but not long. Two great giants fell at the same time to the ground - each one split the other's head. Niels Abeson and the Iron Count fell and the battle was won for Denmark. Up to this day we sing Niels Abesons praise in Denmark and here I will take leave of him and leave him in peace.

When I left the narrative about my mother, she stopped in Copenhagen and my father went to his occupation. He was a gardener near Soro on an estate called Olbjerggaurd but a terrible calamity befell him. The place burnt in the night and he was forgotten until all the building fell down when they had to pull him out from the burning building. He was nearly dead, he laid in the hospital a whole year and suffered greatly, but he was a very strong man and his nature conquered and he got well. That may have been some reason for that they did not come to live together before 1835. That year my father bought the house wherein I was born. There were about 12 acres of good land that



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in those days was very cheap. He gave four hundred Daler for it which in 63 was sold for more than three thousand. It was my mother's money which bought it as my father was like me. He had nothing - I believe that weakness runs in the family.

My father layed out between two and three acres in a garden. He was a nursery gardener, a land gardener and a market gardener all combined.

In 1836 my older sister was born, 1838 my second sister. My older sisters name was Loise Marie the second was Elesebet Christine. I was born 1840. I couldn't really tell as I have had two registers. As one must be wrong and as I don't like to get old so I think I will take 43 or 44. But never mind, I was born the 3rd of February and my father told me that there was snow nearly to the top of the door, no windows then. That I always could stand the cold so well when I dared to enter upon this planet in such a cold time. I suppose no one would expect me to tell anything at least for a year or two, but I can remember many things from very early years but they are of no great consequence. I can clearly remember when my brother was born, he was two years younger than me, of my mother I cannot remember except that I often sat on her lap and kissed her and wiped her tear away from her eyes, as I often saw her cry. She often sat down and sang from her hymn book. She was a little melancholy, as I have heard since.

She died when I was six years old after she had borne a little girl. This was at a very old age, for that she would have been 46 that year. She was a wonderful woman to dream – she could always dream whatever uncommon would take place. Accordingly, before she died she told my father that she would bear a little girl but the child would die when it was three days old, and herself would die 6 days after. She said that she had seen herself with her little girl in her arms in the coffin. Exactly it came to pass. When the child died, my father kept it, and six days after my mother died and she had her in her arms. I can still remember, that when the men bore my mother to her grave, and stopped to shift. I was looking at the ground at the time and took no notice when they stopped, running my forehead into the coffin with such great force that I came down on an unmentionable place and got stunned for a moment.

Of course in such a position I was all too proud to cry. It was a great loss for us to lose our mother, for she was kind and good. I remember that the minister who buried her said - she shed many tears that the world did not hear nor see. I have heard from father that she was often melancholy and I think that this is all I shall have to write about my mother. She died in August.

In January my only brother, Petter was his name, caught a cold and I believe died of diphtheria. After my mother's death my father was seldom at home. He drove away in his gig and would stay away sometimes for weeks - he went to lay out for gardens. My oldest sister had to keep house and she was about eleven years old. My father had a house close by ours that he let out to two families. He generally asked them to look in now and then and see how we were getting on. I don't think they took much notice except a big man there used to come to see us in the long winter evenings. He would tell us ghost stories, but he only came because his wife would not listen to his foolery.

As I come to mention him I will describe him as he was of some interest for us. Although he was so big, he was only a child in his manner. It interested himself quite as much to tell us tales as it did for us to listen. Although it made us very frightened, I believe

that he got frightened himself from his own folly. He was one of the biggest men I have known, and one of the laziest too. People had many names for him. His name was Johan Frederickson, but people were not satisfied with that. They called him John big, John the lazy, and John Devil. He got the last name when he was young. He took a sheet on him and sat on the gate that led to the cemetery, for to frighten people, there he got that honourable name. Those other two I have given account for. He always coughed, as he wanted people to believe that he had consumption so that he could be free from work. He had a good little wife who looked after him. He was about 50 at the time. He had been a Baptist but now he was a Mormon. He told us that he would so like to go to Utah that he could come to lay under his fig tree. Then he would look up to heaven with such a praying look and say he was too big a man and no-one would pray for him. He told us so many ghost stories that I could write a whole book about them, but it would not be of any interest as ghost stories have not been brought out here yet. I can only say that he frightened us that much every evening, that we would not go alone outside.

We had a dog who was tied up, his name was Catus. He used to get a piece of bread at nine o'clock every morning, but poor Catus had to suffer sometimes because we were afraid to go outside the door. My sister sometimes made me go out, but if I had heard too much about ghosts I would stand at the door and throw the bread. It was only chance if the poor dog would get it or not as it was dark. I could see ghosts all over.

This John professed to be a follower of Christ. He told us often that he was meek and lowly of heart like his master especially when we teased him as we sometimes did. Sometimes my sister asked him to fetch a bucket of water from the pond which was not a chain away from the house. He would forget his likeness to his master and would say, no, you have got young legs, you should be ashamed to ask an old man like me. When I was your age I had to do so, and so, he would then preach a whole sermon and would take more time than he could have gone down to the pond ten times over. She would never ask him again except when there was snow to her knees, so you can imagine his charitable nature. I will take leave of this peculiar man for the present, I shall have to mention him further on.

I cannot exactly remember how we lived that lonely winter, but I can remember that our principal food was barley porridge and bacon. Ten months after my mother's death, my father got another wife, of course step-mother to me, my mother as I shall call her in the future. She was a little woman with blue eyes and a little freckled over her nose. She was not a beauty, but I think she fitted the circumstances better than my mother did. She was used to the country and could work. She was clean and proper, she would and did always look after us. She seemed especially concerned about our health, she was always afraid that I should get too much to eat. She said the upper class never got all the food they wanted. She was thirty-one years old. She was very kind at first, she called me her dear and her friend, but I do not think that she called me that more than for three months. She had a peculiar way when she got put out to turn her nose a little up and to one side, and then her mouth to the other side. Whenever that part was set in motion I knew that something was wrong. She was not cruel to me, and I should say if she had been my own mother, I would have thought her an excellent mother. For that matter I always told people that she was very good, for as soon as my father got married to her, every woman of course would stop us and inquire how is your step-mother to you, do you like her, and many more questions. They kept on as long as I was at home. I always said that she was very good, but of course that didn't please them. They would have wanted me to say a lot bad about her, which I never would, so they generally looked angry on me and let me pass. I am sure if she would not have kept on calling me her dear and not been so quick to take the food off the table, I should have liked her very much, and perhaps never noticed that she could screw her nose so wonderfully.

She commenced directly to teach me to read. I could read before my mother died but in those months which had elapsed since her death had been spent in anything else but reading. Consequently I had forgotten a lot, but I picked it up again. Sometimes I and her were not on the best of terms. She often had to screw her nose and mouth. Things went very well between us in general. I think it was about June that she came, for we had reaped strawberries. I can remember that was the first work I did together with her to pick them. Up to this time the wife of Johan Lasg used to go around the town with things of the garden every day and my father paid her. When my mother came, she had another opinion than my father had. She did not think that it would pay to send a woman. She said that I and my sister should go. When my father hesitated, she screwed her mouth and nose a little and said that she would go herself - you must never be above your station. Father gave in then and we had to go, and here my tale of life commenced.

But now before I go any further I must explain something about our situation. At the time about which I write our home was not so near connected with the town as it came to be later on. As I have said before, a bay of the lake separated us. It was first when I was thirteen years that the railway was made through Zealand, close past my father's land. A railway station was built there for Soro, then a road was made across that part of the lake to connect the station with the town, as we had nearly two miles before, we now had hardly one, no, a little more than half a

mile. I will explain this. In the time I had to do my business I had a considerable distance to walk. The school was about two miles from our house. My two sisters went to school and I did not commence before I was nine years old. It was compulsory to go to school from 7 to 14 but as my father was considered a learned man it was not considered so practical.

There were only two classes in the school called the little and the higher class. The class was every second day, so one of my sisters was always at home as one was in each class. My mother had the matter so nicely arranged. I should go (with) one of them every day, for she said, of course to flatter me, that I was a smart boy and I would soon manage the whole business. I know that she meant the reverse, but for all that I would show her that I was what she said. Accordingly, I asked if I should not go alone the first day as I liked the idea. So it came to pass, when I was only seven years old, I got some radishes and some asparagus in a little basket. One Monday morning and off to town I was in high spirits. I ran most of the way and as it happened I sold out directly. I went first to an old blind gentleman with the name Bjering. I know he was rich, he employed a young gentleman to read to him. When he heard who I was, he bought all my asparagus and gave me one shilling (equal to 1/4 in English) for myself. He was very well known to my father and he said to me, you will make a good business man for I came early in the morning. He lived in one end of the town, but I was not going to call on small people. I went straight to the other end of town where lived a great merchant whose name was Christensen. He to my surprise bought all my radishes and gave me some pieces of candy sugar into the bargain. He also flattered me, and now home I went with my tongue half out with the sugar in one hand and the basket in the other, and the money in my pocket. I forgot in my joy to buy my mother two ounces of tea. I had about 9 pence, and this in our money was a big sum to me. Consider, as a working man in those days only earned 6 pence a day. I was that proud in my glory as I met my youngest sister at the gate. She asked me how it had been going, but I would not answer her. I went in, gave the sugar to my mother, threw the money on the table and sat down for to take a breath. I thought myself a better man as I had shown my sisters that I knew how to do business. For the next two years one of them generally had to assist me. After that time the whole business and responsibility was put on to me.

I have much to write concerning those four years from nine to fourteen, but before I do that, I think I shall have to write a little about my dear father, so that anyone can get a clear idea about his character. Yes, I said my dear father, he was really very dear to me. I could never find any fault with my father that time. I always thought him far above any man. I could never be scared to kiss and cuddle him when I happened to sleep with him. Yes, even as late as my fifteenth year I can remember laying with my father in my arms. As a boy he was everything to me and he was really a good father. I can truly say that he was a good man, for a more truthful and honest man I have never known later in my life. I have seen his fault. He was of such a nature that his faults hurt no-one but himself. He liked to live in peace with all men. He seldom got angry, but if he did, he was not to play with. I can only remember a couple of times that I can say that he really was put out. I shall here mention one occasion. Our nearest neighbour was what the English would call a gamekeeper. He lived close to my father's garden alongside the gate that led into the forest. His name was Rasmus. I never heard any other name, perhaps he had no other. He had a wife but no children. He was well off I know, but where he got his money from I don't know. He had some land he had bought alongside ours, so when he went to his land he had to pass our garden and house, on that narrow road between our garden and the forest. My father and he were always the best of friends and I never heard them quarrel but once. This Rasmus always wore a high hat or biltober and one of his feet stuck out to one side. Otherwise he was a big and well made man. One day he was out on his land and my father was also outside in our garden, I believe to



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shift our cows because they were tethered when we had them out on the grass. I was in the garden and heard such a row between them. I looked over the garden fence and there stood Rasmus on his land, my father on his, and a high fence between them. They called one another some names. Who started it I can not say but I heard Rasmus call my father Jutland Franlump. It was a very funny name and I had never heard before or since. I heard my father say, what did you say you crooked leg, and he started to jump the fence. The gamekeeper did not wait for any further explanation, but took his hat in his hand and ran for his life. The fence hindered my father a little but soon he was clear and commenced to chase Rasmus. He gained on him and was close to him when they had to pass our gate. My mother had heard the row and also seen them coming. She stood at the gate and when they passed, she caught hold of my fathers coat and managed to stop him. My father turned round with his feet up not knowing in his race who there was to stop him. When he saw her he made a very ugly smile and said, yes, I think you were right in stopping me for else I should have made a Franlump of him. What, my mother said, made him a what? Oh, said my father, he called me a Jutland Franlump. So they both laughed and went in. Rasmus with his bald head and his hat in his hand had long disappeared inside his house and never again called my father such pretty names.

I in my own mind wished that mother had not interfered because I got awfully angry at Rasmus when I heard that he called father such a nasty name. I was eleven years old at the time. They did not speak together for sometime but then became friendly again. My father of course was sorry for a long time. After this occurrence he could not help laughing when he saw Rasmus.

His greatest fault I think was his pride. He thought himself more than he really was. He would never do anything that did not belong to what he called his profession. His profession was not much - it was of old standing. He was not of that opinion that he had to follow with the times. He thought that his knowledge would always stand good. He had always been well dressed, he would always be so. He liked to be called Herr Laugesen and see that people took off their hats to him. When I consider his small income and the struggle he had to make to make both ends meet, I consider that a great wrong. Of course in those days I thought he was as good as a king. When I now think over things I do not wonder that my mother would often screw her nose a little, but I never heard her say as a good many a woman would have said, why don't you go and do some other kind of work. I could see that she meant it all the same. I often now think that she was a far better woman than I thought she was at the time. As our years roll on we get a clearer understanding of things, although we will not believe that when we are young.

My childhood was otherwise a very quiet one at home as I had only a few companions, so of course my pleasures were only few. My greatest pleasure in the hours I was free from work, was to run about in the forest. It was beautiful there, especially in the spring. I could lie down among the flowers and dream myself into another world. Yes, I know the forest miles around there and perhaps it was more beautiful to me than it would be to a stranger. There were acres of lilies of the valley. I often visited that place, also plains of raspberries, and some places of strawberries. Those places of course were only visited in the summer, but I must not dwell on this too long, but try to go on. Among other pleasures I must not forget Christmas, when we always got something good to eat, as I was generally hungry. I often reckoned out how long there was until Xmas. My birthday also came around once a year and not without happiness. My mother always spoke very kindly to me that day and that was a lot to me. I also could take sugar myself in my coffee and take meat myself. Although it was an honour I did not altogether despise, I often thought that it would have been more to my personal advantage if my mother would have given (it) me herself, as I didn't like to take anymore than what I

was used to. I also generally got a little present or else a shilling. I was not an unthankful boy.

I can remember once that I had the measles. I had to lie in the bed a few days, and my mother was so kind to me. She went and bought some mead and gave it to me to drink. I can remember how glad I was. I praised her to God and asked that he would repay her for her goodness. I promised in my own heart that I should never forget her, I think I was about ten years old at the time. I speak the truth that I have never forgotten that time. I started to work, after I got well, with a far better will than I ever had before. If I got angry sometimes with her, I always remembered the mead. Yes, many years after, when I went home to visit my parents, I always brought a present of some sort for her. She did not know why, but I always thought of that time when I had the measles. How often in our life do we not forget that sometimes a little kindness will bear fruit a hundredfold, especially when shown to a child. I believe that this act of my mother had a great influence on my character. To a certain extent it softened my heart which by nature was pretty hard.

I will now have to go on with my experiences as a businessman and as I came into quite a few troubles sometimes, I shall mention only a few of the most important instances. In a town like Soro in those days, justice was not quite on so good a footing as we are used to out here. We had two policemen, one was an old tailor and the other an old bootmaker. They were generally half drunk or else sitting in a hotel and of course the boys in the streets had their own way. They were very bad and a lot of trouble to me. If I should write about all the battles I had with them from the time I commenced until I was fourteen, I could fill volumes, especially in the times of fruit. The boys of the Academy never interfered with me except one, and him I shall have to mention a little about. It was the boys of the simpler classes that I had to contend with. When I was about nine, one day a tall boy from the Academy came up to me and wanted me to give him a bundle of radishes. Of course I refused, and told him that I wanted to sell them, not give them away. He had a stick in his hand and he gave me one across my shoulder which smarted very much. Will you give me one, he said. I said, no. Whack, he gave me two. Will you now? I said, I will tell the police about you, I said and wanted to run away, but that scamp held fast my arm and gave me two more on my poor back that was already very sore. Will you now? Call me Herr Lieutenant, he said. You are not a Lieutenant, you are only a big boy, I said. Whack, whack again. Say now Herr Lieutenant, he said, and I shall let you go. I looked up the road but could see no help. I thought, yes it is better that I say it. I said Herr Lieutenant but the scoundrel gave me five or six into the bargain, and said, you can go little rascal. I felt quite bad and went home that day. I'm very sorry I didn't sell all I had, I told my father. He looked at my shoulder and said that it was quite blue. He said that he would call in and see this boy's father, but he never did. I felt very sore for many days and I promised in my heart that I would take revenge on that boy. My chance came as I shall tell by and by.

I shall not dwell long on my school years. They were not of much interest. When I was nine I commenced school, and at eleven I finished. I could read and write, so I only stayed in the little class for six months. I worked so well that I was top of the second and last class when I was eleven. My father wanted me at home, so he applied for leave to teach me himself. It was granted on the condition that I should have an examination every six months. Of course I was now at liberty. I could now go round in town every day in the forenoon and work in the garden in the afternoon. While I went to school I had rather a lot to do. They gave us a lot to learn by memory, mostly hymns. I knew so many hymns that it would surprise any Methodist minister, not to mention bible catechisms, mostly all about your doubt. All this I had to learn in the evening. In the forenoon I had to go into town, and in the afternoon I had to work. Now I could use



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every day to work. I was also stronger now and could fight much better with those mischievous boys.

I generally bought (earned) a Daler, about two shillings, or about that every day, more or less. It was a good deal of money in our country. My mother and father were never so well of before or after. Those three years of my early life have a whole history, and nothing that has happened to me since then stand clearer than those three years. I was generally in favour with my customers and some were very kind too. Of course all ask how my step-mother was to me, and they knew too that I often had to fight with those other boys, and they pitied me, but that did not make things any better. I had other friends there who assisted me, as it were. In the shops where I sold my radishes and carrots the young men were always very friendly towards me. They taught me all kinds of tricks on how to overcome my enemies. By the time I was fourteen I was a perfect fighting man. After those years I had more peace. I am not proud of all those battles, and I was quite aware at the time that I was doing wrong, but sometimes it is compulsory to break the law, and that was the case with me.

Before I go any further, I will write down a couple of instances. One day, I think I was about twelve, I came in contact with a big tailor's boy. He was about eighteen and of course bigger and stronger than I, but that was not always taken into consideration. It happened that I was on the right side of the footpath, but he took no notice of that little difference but ran into me with all his might. There was of course nothing for it but a fight, and we started then. He got hold of me directly, and consequently there was very little chance for me. Down we went and of course he was on the top. We tumbled about for some time until at last he caught hold of my hair and knocked my head up and down against the pavement, and kept going for rather a long time. I must say it was of very little amusement to me, so I thought that the best I could do was to lie still so that he would think that I was dead. I did, and it took effect on the tailor's boy and up he jumped. He called for someone to come, and like I was half dead I came up very slowly on to my feet. The tailor's boy was put off his guard and with a spring I planted my forehand with such a force in the middle of his round face that I upset his apple-cart. Over he went and up he came, but not to fight. I do not think that his faculty on that point was very good, he started crying like a child. With his hand he wiped his nose which had got rather an uncommon appearance. Of course I put up my feather like a turkey rooster and told him so many nice things. I told him among other things that my head was too strong for a tailor's son to break, and also that fifteen tailors' sons only weighed one pound, and many other great words. I got very proud to have tamed such a big monster, but the poor tailor's son was done for. He picked up his clothing basket and went home quietly, and never again did he come in my road. In the future he behaved, I must say, like a gentleman, but don't think that I felt so very well. Not far had I gone and I had gained or developed several bumps in the back of my head that would have puzzled any phrenologist. That was nothing compared to my victory. I brushed off my clothes and went on my way.

Of course smaller fights occurred generally every day, but that was generally with boys of my own age, and did not affect me much. I had one more I shall relate before I close this chapter of my life, as its consequence had some influence on my boys mind. It was about a year after my victory over the tailor's son. It was a summer morning in the beginning of June. I had got a flat basket with black cherries in it. They were in paper bags, one pound in each. I was walking up tile street in company with another boy who was one of my friends. We were in front of a hatmakers shop, when we met a big and ugly butcher's boy. He had a leg of lamb in his basket, he was eighteen, perhaps nineteen. He had flat feet and a very broad nose. I had never had the honour to make acquaintance with this gentleman before, as his master was a country butcher, and he was only allowed to sell in the market place. I suppose that this leg of lamb was an order. This boy got his eyes on my cherries, and accordingly he stopped the motion of his big feet and let his stupid eyes dwell most lovingly on my basket. I, of course stopped, for when I saw an admirer of my basket, I certainly expected a bargain. It seemed only admiration, so I asked him if he wanted to buy some and accordingly told him the price. I remember that it was only three shillings (3/4 of a pound) but he told me that he had no money that day, but if I would let him have a pound he would pay me some other day. Of course I could not do that. He started to beg me to give him some, but I told him that they were weighed, but he meant for me to take one or two cherries from each bag. No-one would be the wiser. I told him that I would not steal from my other customers to please him, and so one word followed the other, until we got pretty angry. But look here, he said, I could buy the whole lot of your cherries. I've got plenty of money but I would not have them if you gave them to me, as they are no good. They have been in that jolly basket for a week. I was not one that had left his tongue at home. I said, go away with your stinking meat, I don't know how long you have been walking about with that leg of mother fife, I said, and took hold of my nose. Now the animal got put out properly. He lifted up one of his front legs and struck me on my head. I set down my basket and asked the other boys to take care of it. This rather surprised the butcher as I could see he had never expected any resistance from such a little chap as me. He also set down his basket, laughing and saying, so you want a hammering do you? Before he had the last word quite out of his big mouth I had stamped him like the tailor's son. He rolled over his basket but came up more furious. He was



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not easily tamed like the tailor's son, but I had quite expected that, and was prepared for him. It was quite a new thing for him to be struck on the head, so he tried to catch hold of me but he kept his head to one side or well back. This also hindered him catching me. I managed to hit him several times in the region around his heart, at least where I thought it should sit, but I don't think he had any. I managed also once to catch hold of one of his ugly legs and got him down on his middle, but only for a moment, as I had to be on my guard for his long arms. I knew if he first got hold of me I would be done, but the boy at the basket was cheering with every little victory I had over the monster. This helped to keep up my courage although I was nearly tired out, but I leapt about with my utmost activity. At last he got a hold of one of my arms and of course was going to commence his revenge. In the same moment the hatmaker came tearing through his shop door and gave my opponent such a kick on his big head that sent him several yards away from me. The hatter was a big fat man and had seen the whole scene from his window. He said to the boy, take your basket and go your errands or I will tell your master of you, you ugly country bumpkin. I have seen the whole affair from the beginning. You struck him first, and I should not have interfered if he had half killed you, but you are big and ugly enough to take care of yourself. He pointed to me and said, he is only a child and he could make you tumble about like a drunken monkey. Away with you or I will kick you where you won't like it. Off you go, and off he went.

I thought a lot of that hatter after that. I always bought my hats and caps from him and long after, even after the war, when I came to Soro he always asked have you seen anything of that ugly butcher boy? I think you could beat him now. He always seemed very interested in my affairs from that time.

A few days after this conflict, I could not say if it was purposely or accidentally, but one day I went home with my empty basket when I met the boy close outside the town in a lonely place. There was another boy with him who was quite as big as himself. I could see that there was no getting away as they were close upon me. Before I took notice of them, I saw a house lying about four chains ahead, but how I would be able to reach it I didn't know. I could only try to deceive them. There were trees on both sides of the walkway and a deeper canal. I walked straight towards them and kept up my spirit. When I came so near that the butcher was just going to put out his arm for to catch me, I ran around one of the trees and off I went. My two friends came after me as fast as their bare feet could go. Of course they would soon have caught up to me if not for that house.

An old lady lived there with her daughter, a young lady of nineteen or twenty. She happened to be in the garden, which lay between the house and the walk. She saw the race and came out through the garden gate just between them and me. She stopped there and I stopped alongside her because I knew her well. She commenced to tell those two fellows there about their characters in not very nice terms. She told them that she would lodge information about them, and she told them that I was such a good boy. She commanded them to be off and mind their own business and so accordingly they went. After they were gone she spoke a lot to me and I had to tell her all about the fight, and about a good many more. She said, if you had been my brother, you would not have had to go like that and she spoke so kindly to me and told me that it was not very nice to fight. She told me never to strike anyone first, for that was not manly and she thought there was a man in me. She could see that and she patted me on my head and kissed me.

Will you believe that I made a god of that woman in my heart from that moment. I loved her over all things living, I thought nobody could come near her in goodness. I said to myself when I went home that afternoon, wait until I am big and rich. I will marry her. Yes, I pictured my future and hers with such grandeur that I do not think the world possesses it. Of course nothing was too good for her. How should I

get rich? I thought that was easy enough. I would now first start to work harder for my father and try to get more for what I sold. When my father got rich then of course I would get rich too.

I told my father all about the whole thing, but not about my idea to marry Miss Tape, for that was her name. I never had any secret from my father. I think that was the first. I would have told him my intention, but I was afraid that he would tell my mother and I know that she would have teased me, for she was very fond of doing that. I may say here that that was the worst fault I had found with her, for if anybody teased me, I felt that I would kill them. No doubt it is a great wrong, children should never be teased. It does no good, only causes hatred. I always have objected that my children should be teased, but I must not leave my story.

I can say that this young lady's kindness was a great boon to me, and I cherished her greatly in my mind. She was a star in my boy's heaven. What influence kindness can have. When I went away from her tears flowed down my cheeks, and those kind words from her did what all the hammering that I could get from those boys would not have done, for I would never cry in battle. After this I had very few rows and the boys took notice of it, and my mother even told my father that she thought I had changed lately. I worked much harder and every evening I prayed to God that he would bless my labour that my father may be rich. I never forgot to pray for that young lady, but it seemed I prayed in vain for she died of consumption two years after. It seemed to me that my star had gone down.

After this the winter came on and the time came for me to go for preparation as I was going to be confirmed in the spring. The winter at home was much better for me than the summer, as I had not much work to do. Of course Xmas and my birthday were in the winter. It had a lot more attraction for me than summertime. Then I very seldom went around town except with ordered apples, for my father had 260 fruit trees. I had to help my mother more in the house as we only went to the minister three times in the week. Sundays my father and mother generally went to church and then I had to make dinner until they came home. That was a grand time for me for I was the master of the castle. I imagined myself somebody, even my imagination went far. I took one of my fathers biltobers (hats) and a pair of his spectacles, a long pipe, and went outside and thought myself all kinds of things. I went down and had a look over the pond and was watching the image and forgetting the time. To my amazement a voice came from behind me and said, good day Mr Laugesen. When I turned around, there to my amazement was my father and mother, but they could not speak for laughter. However it soon ceased when Mother saw that I had fire in my pipe. She screwed up her nose a little and asked how the dinner was getting on, but my father laughed all afternoon. He could hardly keep solemn while he prayed at the table. Mother only made a twist of her nose and Father was solemn as an undertaker. When boys have got no playmates the imagination must be at work.

In the spring when I was fourteen I got confirmation. In our country it was like an examination into life and you cannot go without it if you belong to the state church. Your recommendation from the pastor there who confirmed you has a lot to do with your future life. I of course stood high in the ministers esteem for in knowledge of the Bible no one in the ministers six confermanter (as we call them) could come near to me in religious matter. I don't know if the minister himself could beat me in that line. So of course I stood on the top although I was little, still I was the highest. My dear father's most sincere object was to teach me religion. It was early and late. I must say I often got tired of it, especially when there stood a good meal on the table and he of course had to say grace. When there was a special occasion, such as Xmas, when the meal was exceptionally good, he would make a speechy long prayer and what a torment it was to me. Two or three minutes were to my hungry soul an hour. In the evening he would explain the scripture to me and mother. She seemed very eager, especially if my father happened to come to mention anything about a glutton. Of course she would sigh and look at me, and I of course knew that she thought me a glutton, but I did not think my sin was very great in that direction. You look out after that, I thought, and looked at her. I and her had many a little battle like that with our eyes on the quiet. Also sometimes when he happened to come to the ten commandments and when he came to honour thy father and mother, he would always place the emphasis on mother. My mother would sigh and glance towards me and I would think, honour to him, there is honour due and layed my hand on my stomach.

I always understood her thoughts and she often understood me too, because I could see it on her nose. It would commence to creep to one side.

My fathers zeal for me to know religion so well was of course so that I would be sure to go to heaven. I hope that I shall see him there, but it is not him that knows all, but him that obeys the will of god that shall enter into heaven. For all that, he did his best for me, and I am thankful to him and have been many times in my life. I have often had to acknowledge that his teachings have often kept me on the right path.

And now I shall soon have left my home. My father often spoke to me about what I wanted to be. I said often that I wanted to be a carpenter and sometimes I changed my mind and said that I would be a butcher, and other times something else. My father decided that I would be a gardener. He thought

a lot of his profession and that a trade was nothing compared with it. Now it may be as well that I explain. In Denmark no-one would ever think of calling himself a gardener or expect to be called so, except he had taken some kind of examination or had received a recommendation for several years as an apprentice in one of the government gardens. Such a recommendation was called an examination letter, and after you had received that you could go up for examination anytime you thought your self fit to do so. But to do so was combined with great expense, therefore many only got an examination letter. For this reason, gardeners in Denmark stood or could keep up their respect as it was generally boys of well-to-do parents that were able to be rich to any extent. Even to be taken as an apprentice in those gardens was not a very easy thing. Some other recommendation or spokesman was always wanted. You could be a garden boy with another gardener, but you would always be a garden man or garden labour, and nobody would ever call you anything else. Of course if you would start for yourself as a market gardener or so, you could of course call yourself what you liked. If you had not learnt much you would not come to much, but a real gardener In Denmark is thought a lot of and not like those I have met out here.

Of course it is necessary for me to note these things as I want to be thoroughly understood to those who think it worth the trouble to write this broken English.

My father was well acquainted with the gardener in Soro Academy garden, and between them a petition was sent to the government for a small assistance to enable me to stay there a few years as a cadet, and it was up to the gardener to take me on. It would also pay me twenty four skillings per day for the first two years and eight skillings a day more every year until three mark or 48 skillings. It didn't sound so bad, but when compared with English money the sound became very feeble. It takes four skillings to make one pence. I also would get 6 pence a day for food and clothing. That sounds like an impossibility, but I did it, and I was not quite a shadow when I left. It was of course not intended to be more than a help as my father was expected to help. That he never did, and I did not expect him to do so, for I was very proud of my chance and the world looked bright to me.

A very fine morning it was on the first day of May 1856 when I left my dear home for to go out in to the world to try my luck. Although so many years have passed by since that morning, and so many billows in the storming ocean of life have past over me. I can remember all and am able to describe everything, yes what things have happened since then, how many disappointments and sorrows, dangers and exceeding happiness and failure, and changes have past by or past over since then. Shall I complain? No, I have had my share of life so far and I mean and hope that I shall have it until the end of my life. No doubt many have been more lucky than I in the lottery of life, than I have been, but many more have been much more unfortunate. Therefore I cannot complain. As long as there is life there is hope, and in most cases we get it accordingly as we use our foresight.

I think I am going away from the subject altogether. I had not slept much the last night at home and when I did sleep I dreamt about the time coming. I rose very early that morning. Four o'clock I was out in the garden. I had so many dear things to say goodbye to, yes, every tree, every flower, every plant, yes, the good old dog Catus. He was as old as I but the world for him was nearly over when it was first commencing for me. His eyesight was almost gone. I went up to his house and embraced him, and he licked my hand. Yes, that hand that had often thrown bread to him in the dark and perhaps he never got it, I thought of that and my concern made me offer a few tears on his head I then had the two cows to pat, three sheep and a black ram who often had pounced on me with his horn, but that morning he seemed very solemn. I put out my hand, but he would not jump at it.

Mother called me to breakfast about five. She was all smiles that morning, she thought, it is a good thing that I get rid of him. I thought about the same, but I don't know if we felt the same. My father made an extra long prayer that morning and my mother said amen. I could not eat much as I never could when anything unusual came about. I soon finished and got my little bundle of food for three weeks, kissed father and mother, and then I was off.

It was an especially fine morning as I have said. The dew was still on the grass when I left, the sun was in such a position over the horizon that the lake looked like a silver basin, over which hundreds of black crows were swimming in the morning air. The larks were singing and also the thrush and most of all my heart, it was beating with all its force. Now and then I had to turn and have a look at my home. How dear it seemed to me that morning, although I knew that I would come home again on the next Sunday, still it seemed such a long time to me. I was meant to be at the garden at seven o'clock, and I was there in good time. When I reached there I took my stand in the door of a green house. For about half an hour I stood there before the big bell on the old church commenced to ring. It rang for about a quarter of an hour and then the gardener came down from his dwelling and out of another house there came thirty men and twenty women. They took their roads to several parts of the garden where they were working. The gardeners name was Voetmann. He was a tall fine looking man rather inclined to be fat, he had red cheeks, a large dark beard, and had some small inclination to stop when he was walking along. He came straight

over to where I stood and I of course took off my cap. He said good morning and then stood and looked at me for a few minutes then he said, It's you that wanted to be a gardener? Well we will try to make one of you, but mind, he said, it depends mostly on yourself, your will – your talent and your behaviour and so on. You shall have better times here than you have had, you stand under no one except me. Then he gave me something to do, which I did to his satisfaction when he came down the next morning. Before I go any further about myself I should like to say a few words about my master, as I shall call him in the future.

He was such a good and nice man, he stood in my estimation higher than any man I ever knew. First of all he was considered one of the most accomplished gardeners in Denmark. He had not only had a gardener examination but he was a professor in botany. He could speak German and French and was a renowned landscape gardener. His billet was also one of the best in his profession in the country. Far above those qualities was his character he was good to all poor and needy, he was well-known for all his kindness, he was a very humorous man. He always in good humour and his whole physiognomy would show you that at the first glance. I was there for three years and I never heard him speak an unkind word to anybody, which says a lot when we consider that about thirty men and twenty women were working in the garden all the summer and half the number in the winter. If a man did not suit him, he would give him his money on Saturday and tell him that he had no use for him. That would very seldom happen, as he was very careful in his selection and he would bear it over a very long time. I was told that if he got angry his anger knew no bounds, but I never saw it, and I was not at all anxious. He was a very strong man and lacked smartness, but there was no occasion to be afraid of him. You would always feel pleasant when he was near you and all his people loved him. He was about forty at the time I came there. He was married but had no children but he was so seldom at home. He had a great circle of friends and in fine weather he generally drove out. I often think how splendid a time those people had who were working there. No wonder that there was one man who had been working in that garden for 50 years. Perhaps you would not have believed me if I told you that the same man had one coat he used to go to work in all those weary years. His name was Sars Rasunusen and peace be with him ~ he must have been dead long ago. He was a nice old man and I liked him very much, but I have come away from my description of my master. I must follow him first, then I shall have to write a little about some other persons while I dwelled there.

Next morning when my master came down, he gave me some instructions. Now, he said, you are not coming here to work, we have got plenty of that to do except when I have something that you can be handier at than the men. He gave me something I had to look after every day and then told me that I for my own sake had to go one day through the nursery and flower garden and fruit garden and through the several places where men were at work so I could see how the work had to be done. This I think was the most trouble he took with me all the time I was there. I have seen later that he was all easy going with me. Sometimes I would ask him what I should do and he would smile and say, if you ever want to be a gardener you must be able to find out what work there is. There is much necessary work to be done. He generally sent me down in the Botanic System, so as a rule I went there if I had nothing else to do, not that I ever dreamt I would be a botanic gardener. I could easily have been one if I had taken any trouble but very few boys came to much except when they are forced to it. Botany is a branch of itself and is not necessary in common, but if one wants to reach the top, he cannot do without it.

My master had a single man who looked after his two horses, cut firewood, and made himself generally useful, as the saying goes. He had his room alongside the green house. Together with him I had to sleep. He was a most peculiar looking customer, his name was Christen, to begin with, he was about 45 years old. He had been serving Voetmann for the last 15 years and saved up all what he could in that time and before and had now something like 1500 Daler or £140 or £105 in the bank. He was considered a man with money, he was blessed by nature with the most crooked leg I ever saw. He was also very short of stature and had a long square face, and his bottom lip stood out. I suppose it was for to save anything that would be spilled from the higher region. His eyes were round and large and stood out like his lips. I often told him that he was not made to serve pigs as they would run through his legs. When it happened we followed a little although it was very seldom as he was not a bad fellow at all. He was so peculiar looking that you could not help to laugh when you looked at him. If you spoke to him he would open his mouth hide while you were speaking, like as he wanted the sound to enter in that way. I could tell a good few about him, but I have no time, only I tied his legs together one night while he was asleep in his chair and then I ran outside and called him. I was in such a position that I could see him fall across the floor. He told my master everything and of course that too, but my master laughed and told me not to play tricks on Christen. I am very sorry for it now as he was always very agreeable, but what will boys not do for a lark. People that have been blessed with such funny features and other bodily curiosities generally have to bear more than their children in this life.

I often think on those poor fellows at home. Now consider this man, he had only 144 Daler (£18) a year and had to find himself food and clothing, and

then could manage to save up 150 Daler in less than twenty years. I believe that he even lived better than working men lived out here if we accept that luck and money were not the only things he possessed. He had a supply of shirts, socks, and drawers that I am sure he could not wear out in his lifetime.

There was also another young man who should learn to be a gardener. His name was Gustav Hansen. He was the son of a lawyer and his father paid for his lodging with my master. He was about a year older than I, but a great deal taller and stronger. He and I became very good friends, although he was very proud and thought himself a great deal more than me. For all that he could not do without me and of course we often had our work together and I can thank him for a good deal of what I have learned as he was clever in theory. He was also well off compared to me. He not only got a gun for himself from his father, but he got a gun for me too, although a more inferior. Whenever we were free from duty or had some free time to ourselves, as often happened, we would either be shooting, sailing, swimming, or fishing. He was very fond of shooting, but I mostly had to go behind. I was not allowed to shoot except if he missed or his gun took fire. We had many little quarrels over this but then he always said, don't I keep you good company? Of course I gave in as he was otherwise very good to me.

Once we left our work because he had seen the foot print of a hare in the snow down in the fruit garden close to the lake. When we came down we tracked him so near that we could see the ears of the hare behind some scrub. Now, he said, don't shoot except if I miss. Up went the hare, but only his cap went off. I was ready and bang, after the hare. He did not go far, poor thing, he had got a few shots in his head. Now Hansen was angry. He threw his gun down and said that he had a good mind to break the thing. After a bit he said, look here, Louis, if you will say that I shot the hare I will give you those new pants, those that are a little short for me. Of course I agreed, because I needed pants, and he wanted honour. He sat at my masters table and liked to be praised for shooting such a splendid hare, but it leaked out of me after some time to some of the men. Of course the pants were alright, but I fancied that a little honour on the sly would do too, and he never got to know. Of course my master did not care who there had shot the hare.

This Gustav Hansen was a terror in disguise. He always wanted to be right and often we argued pretty hot so once he had to give me a pair of pants and also a waistcoat for not to argue anymore with him. He said it hurt him so much and I kept that promise. I never argued with him after that, although I was often in need of pants.

Sometimes we went out sailing, as my master had a fine boat, and once we nearly lost our lives. A thunderstorm came up suddenly when we were about two miles from land. We had a sail up and before we could get it down, the boat got on her side. If Hansen had not been so quick and jumped on the other side and balanced her up, none of us would have seen land again. Another time we sailed across a part of the lake in our dinner hour, as we had two hours in the summer. We often went over there and had a swim, but this day a heavy thunder commenced just when we landed and as it commenced to rain heavily, we lay down under a big oak. The thunder struck down in the oak and split it half way down. I never got so frightened in my life. I nearly lost my senses it was such a tremendous sound. I must not keep with those small events.

As I have said, I got six pence, three shillings every week. Saturday was of course pay day and Saturday night I generally bought all I wanted for the week. I bought a bread (of coarse rye) for 6 pence, one pound of butter for 6 pence, and 6 pence I paid for two dinners that I had on Tuesday and Thursday in town. I kept some sort of lager beer that cost me about four pence a week. Sometimes I could have the luxury of a small piece of cheese, but that was not every week. Sometimes, for a change I would buy 2 pounds of bacon. I could get two bacons for the same price as one of butter.

Every Sunday morning I went home to my parents, and as I always liked to see my mother in good humour I always bought for two or three pennies such as sugar or tea. She had to wash my shirts and socks and she was then always what I would call very pleased. I would have my dinner at home and she would never screw up her nose even if I ate a good deal. This rule was only the first as the second year I began to do a little gardening especially in the summertime in some of the gentlemen's gardens. I could manage that in my dinner hours and in the evening after seven o'clock I came home, as the evenings in the summer were quite long. I bought my clothes off tailors' boys, as there was such a lot of young men on the academy, there were a number of them that would give the tailor boy the old clothes when he bought them new ones. Those tailor boys were generally sharp one and they were not afraid to ask, and as those gentlemen's sons could not wear their clothes so many there were. The boy, or I may call him my tailor – as I was a regular customer. There was one particular boy at the time I was there. He would measure me and then turn such a kind of clothes as I would want and I must say that he was very reasonable and sometimes I had to ask him for two or three weeks to pay, when the money matters were not in the best of orders. My tailor was a smart one although he was only about 17 years old when our business commenced. He could fit me up so neat that no one could say that it was turned clothes and I can tell you that I was a real swell when I dressed up to out.



Old police station in Sorø 2010 ~ Photo Wikimedia Commons.

I was bound to have good clothes for every day also, as it was a public garden and swarmed with ladies and gentlemen all day. It was not like in a country place, but I was always well dressed and my master even remarked several times to my father that he was very pleased I always kept myself neat. My boots I of course I could not get turned, I had to have them from first hand but repair was done by boys, and I managed to creep along the best I could.

I was only sixteen years old when I layed out the first garden by my own hands. It was for that minister that had confirmed me. He saw me one day and he asked me if I could come to his place, he had something for me to do. He said of course I will pay you. I told him that I could only come on a Sunday, and he said that would be alright to come next Sunday. He said, I have got all my garden dug and I want to have it layed out differently. I shall have a lot of trees this week and I also would like to see if you understand as much about the garden as you do about the bible. Accordingly I came and it was a great work for me. When I had a good look over the garden I took a piece of paper and made a kind of drawing. When the minister came out of church between eleven and twelve, I had already some of the walks set out. I asked if he would like it like that and I produced my drawing and he said he was indeed very impressed. He pulled off his coat and said, you have no objection if I help you? He had to preach again at four o'clock.

We both worked hard until four o'clock, but the garden was about one acre so I had to come again next Sunday, and the next Sunday, until his man was able to do the remainder. The minister worked with me every Sunday and when I was done he asked how much I got a week, and I told him nine mark. Upon my soul, he said, you are worth that much a day, and he gave me twenty marks (£9). That was three weeks pay and not only that, but he praised me so much that I thought him the best man I had ever met. I was very proud. That day and next Sunday I bought four shillings worth of grocery for the minister.

This minister was not liked in general by people. They said he was proud and heartless. He was a tall fat man who wore spectacles and his name was Fryde. My master knew nothing of this, until it happened that he came to Pastor Fryde one day and of course they went out into the garden. The minister asked him what he thought of the gardener that had made it. Although Voetmann was an expert, he said whoever he is, he has some genius. The minister smiled and said Louis Laugesen that is the man. He told my father that my master got quite surprised and my master told some of the men of the garden that he thought that I would make a name for myself in that line. He told me that my father should let me be taught drawing, and from that time I always fancied that my master thought more of me than before. He would always take me with him when he would be laying out a garden and I got a lot more to do in my free time. He would recommend me if any would ask him for somebody to do something in their garden. I even sometimes would get a day off although I would get my pay. From that time I got on better in financial position. I must not forget to mention that at this time Miss Tape died of consumption, she was the young lady I have mentioned before. I can say I felt so sorry as if she had been my sister.

I often stood at her grave when my way brought me near there and often I felt some tears come, but soon I forgot all about her. I did not know that it was only the beginning of sorrow and that I should live and learn to overcome so many bitter and sorrowful days. Nature is so kind, she seldom gives us more than we are able to bear. That little Christen with his crooked legs also took bad and had to leave his place, and another took his billet.

There was another man who did not do me or my character any good, as he was a different character altogether. He was only a little, but well shaped man, but he was very conceited as you will generally find with small men. They have so little to show that they want to make the best of it. This lion's name was

Hans Christian, his father was a farmer and well off, and he had several brothers. When he spoke to any, especially a young woman, he would make his face so nice. At least he thought he did make it nice. He would use all his power to make such a nice smile, so that it made him very ugly although he was rather good looking. He was a good dancer and very fond of it too, but when he danced he would go about just like he had eggs under his feet. Of course he thought that he looked so nice. He would look about him like he would say, do you see how nicely I can dance? He would have been surprised if people had told him what they thought, for nobody had a liking for him. It is wonderful that it is those people who never try to make themselves agreeable are in most cases thought the most of. Make sure of a man that has so many faults showing about him for he has faults all through him. He will of course be nice to your face, but look out when he leaves you.

So much for his character. He was very good to me, he would never see me short of anything. His parents as I said were farmers and only five miles from the town. They bought him plenty of food and he would always eat with me. He was always willing to lend me money and he taught me to dance first although not quite so expertly as himself. He taught me also to play cards, as he was a great player and in those days in Denmark it was always played for money. We were the best of friends and I thought him an excellent young man, but as I said he did not give me the best influence. I would have gone on with my studies had Christen stopped. For now it was all dance and card playing and sometimes a little drink too, but my master got tired of his affections and gave him the sack after twelve months, and a more studious took his place.

I became very fond of dancing and I can say that it was my worst fault at the time. It was not a little drawback for not only in money matters but it also hindered me in my development as a gardener. In town there were dances every Sunday evening and I could not leave it at that, but I had to take lessons with a dancemaster that cost me something. But I think for all that, that it did me some good as I learned to walk properly and to hold myself up as a man, but that was all the good. It also harmed further as my desire for dancing grew, but not my money.

In comparison with what young men spend out here, it was simply nothing. I sometimes would spend a shilling an evening and I thought then that I had been extravagant, but we cannot compare those two countries together. We can ask the question from which of these two countries do you get the best men? However I spent very little but as I didn't get much, I thought it a lot.

When I was about seventeen years old it happened one Sunday morning that I came in contact with my friend or rather enemy. He was the boy that once had given me such a hammering with his stick and made my say Herr Lieutenant. I had often seen him, but not when he was alone, and as he was much bigger than I, it was not my intention to revenge myself before I was able. I always kept my eyes on him, for I could never think of forgiving him. Whenever I saw him, it boiled my blood. I had of course been thinking that it was a sin and I know it was wrong, but I could not help it. I had to pay him back sometime, sooner or later. That is no doubt a bad thing which I admit, but that is my fault, I cannot forgive, especially when I have had no fault. My anger to this fellow was always frank. He was a young man now over twenty, he was in the university in Copenhagen and only came to Soro on holy days. I always saw him then and took notice of him. He had not grown much in height, so that the difference between us now was not so great as when he had got the better of me.

It happened this Sunday that I had got some new clothes on and I had taken a longer road home, so I could have a good look at myself on the way. I took a footpath that was from the town over a swamp to the big forest, alongside which my fathers house lay. It had been a part of the lake in times gone by, and there was a broad drain on both sides of this walk, which was seven to eight feet broad, and full of water. It was about nine o'clock in the morning and a beautiful day too. I was very happy as I always was when I got new clothes on. I noticed him about ten chains away, coming towards me smoking a cigar and swinging his stick. I tell the truth, I felt his stick burning on my back just as it was the morning he hammered me. It was like a demon coming into my blood. I looked to see if we were alone, yes, but can I hammer him? He's a man and I'm a boy, I said, I can better stand it now than I could last we met, and I will at least give him a good appetite for his breakfast. I felt like I could have done away with him, and it was a good thing for him and for me that revolvers were not in use in those days. Who could have guaranteed that I could not have got one and used it. I set my teeth and went towards him. I felt like a giant. He took no notice of me, of course he had long since forgotten me. Perhaps I was not the only little boy he had hammered, but I stopped him in his walk and stood still in front of him. I said, Good Morning Herr Lieutenant. He lifted his stick a little, but let it sink again. I believe he saw something in my eyes for the coward got pale as death. In the same moment he was lying in the water with the most part of his body and out of the water he came while my stick danced the polka all over him.

I can only say that I gave or took no pardon. I kept saying, can you say Herr Laugesen?, and my stick danced in time with that. I did not retreat from him this time. He used his feet and stick too for a while, but only in the air, but I am sure I never missed once.

He was not used to such rough fights as I had been, and his conscience was also against him. I saw that he had grown wicked and I had got bigger. I stood in his way and thundered out, you shall not come from this place before you say Herr Laugesen. You coward, I said, you hammered me when I was a little boy, and I had done you no harm. He said Herr Laugesen, I had no better sense that time and I will gladly do you any good turn if I can. I turned my back to him and went home, for he rather touched my heart and I felt sorry for him. My victory was much greater than I had expected. I went home and told my father, I had to tell someone, and my father always got my secrets. He said I had done wrong although the scamp deserved it. He said that good could have come over him, but I was not quite of his opinion.

I have often in my life regretted this action. It is always far better to suffer wrong than to do wrong, for if you have a heart at all, you will feel sorry after revenge.

Perhaps I should not have put this in my history, but I wanted that those who read this to understand my character. All men have great faults but we seldom get at the truth and if I had time, to write down all my mistakes in my life, you would surely say that I had been a great sinner. So I have, I give into that. I have always found that I was more inclined to deal to others as they had dealt with me, although I know that it should be the other way - as I wanted them to do to me, but how far could you come in this world with that policy, not far I guess.

I think now that I shall close this chapter of my life, as all other things in this period are of less importance, and I shall never come to the end. I cannot dwell any longer on what I call my childhood. The more important future will have to be entered, for I was now getting more like a man, and as I had to leave my birthplace at this time, I close the first chapter of my life with the age of 18 years.





Chapter II

From My Eighteenth Year

When I was a young man of eighteen, I left my home for to go out in to the world. I felt quite a different spirit in me to what I feel now, although it is said the spirit is always willing. I doubt it.

I can remember my feeling that beautiful morning in May. I had slept at home with my dear father that night. I rose early, I had not a very long way to walk, but I had no rest. The sun was up in its fullest splendour over the lake, it looked like a silver beacon, too bright for the sky. The forest was just in its first beauty, thousands of birches were saying their morning prayers to their creator. All the trees were green as a garden lawn, spring flowers were coming forth everywhere. What a beautiful morning. A fairy land and how did I feel, I felt like a king. This world was so beautiful to me.

But does it look like that to all young men? I think so. If so, happy are you, and don't be offended if the old grumble a little. They do not feel like you do. I could find no fault whatever with the world that time, my heart was too full of hope. Oh, thought I, what a splendid world this is, now my life has just begun. I thought I could do all what a man could do, and be rich and happy without much trouble. Yes, I danced more than walked on the road, and I certainly expected more than this world possesses. I suppose that most young people do.

I passed the academy just when the old bell rang seven. That morning it seemed to say, home, home, home, home. I could always understand that bell, it had been sweet to me since my childhood, but since that morning I can never remember to have heard it again.

I now intend to skip a few years, as not much of any interest did happen. But I think I shall write a little about my first citation as a gardener. The name of the place was Kammerguve. That is a very long name, but not too long, for its owner was a very long man. He was one of the tallest men I have known. His name was Hluse, which means neck. I have often noticed that the name of a man seems to have much to do with his shape. So this man was all neck. He had very large feet, long legs, narrow shoulders, a long neck, and on top of' all this sat something I would call a head. He had a big nose with a flat country where nature had intended to form a chin, but by some mishap it was laid out as waste land. This man was about 32 years old and he lived to be about 40. Nature seldom can agree long with anything out of proportion, and so Hluse fell out of balance with his impairments early on.

He was not a bad man, but as the shape of his body so was his character with faults and starts. Sometimes kind, sometimes gloomy, and he would get fits of anger too.

I fell out with him twice in those two years I was there, but apart from that I and him got on splendidly. The first time I fell out with this wonderful man was about a salt herring. Now this seems a very small thing to fall out about so I must give a better explanation.

We did not live quite so luxuriously in those days as we do out here. The working man got every morning a bowl of barley, a salt herring and bread. The gentleman said that salt herring in the morning was the healthiest and most nourishing food that a man could eat. So accordingly he presented me with a large Norwegian herring every morning just at the break of day in my dining room. It was agreed upon that I should have the same food that he ate himself,

but I never thought he would go in for such a delicacy as that.

I was a little disappointed one morning, I slept rather long and when I came out in the garden he was there. He had put my man and woman to work. Of course being late was neglect on my part, but I was only a few minutes late, nothing to speak of. But he was in such a flurry and said that he would not stand that, so I got angry too, and told him that it was quite early enough to come up to bite into a raw fish. He did not understand me at first, as I don't think he ever thought that a salt herring was a raw fish. He lifted his big stick over my head and as he was so tall that this awful stick was about 10 feet above my head. I should be thankful that he did it to frighten me as I, he thought, was only a boy. My eyes dwelled solely on him, and gradually the stick came down from its full height, not on my head but quietly alongside his long legs. I always thought I had some power in my eyes, at least he got frightened and went away saying something about raw fish. He went and asked his lady what I could mean by that, but she could not understand. From that day I saw no more raw fish but I got bread and butter and cold milk. From that day all his working people called herring raw fish, even the gentleman himself got into the habit.

The other time I fell out with him is also of little importance and not worth the trouble to write down. I was there for two years and he thought a lot of me and said he was sorry that I was leaving. I gave him six months notice as was the law when an engagement was for a year.

My master in Soro had got a place for me in a government garden in Copenhagen where I as a cadet could study botany, if I had wanted to. This was an opportunity I did not take when the time came, as I have often regretted, for if I had I should certainly not have been sitting here and writing in English. But youth has no wisdom and old age has no strength. I got an offer of a citation similar to that I had but much higher and better which I preferred. But I was only there six months when my father and mother got it into their heads that I should have the place.

I myself thought it alright. I had about 100 dalers saved and I went home and started to work very hard. This was because it was winter and I meant to have the garden in order by spring so that it could bring something in. I can say that never before or after had my fathers garden been turned up like it was that winter. I cannot help but say that my mother regretted it. She had two small boys and she thought that if I got the place they would get nothing. My father was over 60 and she thought he would die soon, all this she did not say. But she still had her old habit and she sighed and also screwed up her nose especially after I had spent most of my money on the land. So I thought I would not be in anybodies road.

The stage came when a young man had to be inspected for being a soldier, which is every winter. My time would first come next year but now I was out of citation I thought it best to have an end to it, and I went and was taken to Artileterist.That spring my father sold my home. He had previously sold a part of it for about 1200 dalers and he got 1500 for what remained. My mother thought, if she had the place and he decided, she was compelled by law to give us our part, but the money she could have without giving an account. I can say nothing to blame her, perhaps it was the best after all. My father lived many years after he death (before he died) and long after the money had been spent and her little boys never got a sixpence out of it. She thought she acted wisely and perhaps so, if it hadn't been for my good, it may be for the good of my children, we cannot read the future.

But for me it was no plague. As I was a soldier, a soldier has not much pay, not more than he can just live by, and it is living very scarcely. All young men in Denmark who have no help to depend on have to save up a few daler for the time when they are in the service. I had, as I said, 100 daler which with care would have helped me through, but the dalers were going, and spring came, I got a pass to join on the 31 May, 1861. I had again bad luck, as I thought at the time I was taken to Artileterist. But my pass told me to meet at the Kongelige (Royal) Tugeneur Corps in Copenhagen, as the Artileterists only serve for 16 months, and have a very easy time. The Tugeneur serve for two years and a half and have much stricter service and a lot more to learn, but you are compelled to go where the kings commands. Of course we got a little more pay.

The Danes Tugeneur Corps at that time was a select corps and only trained sixty men every year. Most young men took great pride in having served their time in Tugeneur, but as I shall come to explain further on, they had to pay dearly for this honour. There was also a lot to learn which was to much good for everyone in his trade. Often in my life I realized that it was good for me as I should have to try so many different things in my life, so many things came in useful. In my profession as a gardener it was very little required, but be sure, you can never learn too much.



Chapter III

My Life as a Soldier

I left the green fields of the beautiful forest, the smiling lakes and lovely gardens for the dry barracks life, but chance has always been well received by me, consequently I packed my box the day before in high spirits. For I can say without boasting that I was a smart young man and people told me that I would go through the service very easily. But I can tell you that I got used to it for all my smartness and for more than I possessed. I had great confidence in my abilities, I thought that I would show these fellows some things.

But I found many much swarthier than myself and I found that a full purse or a good tucker box were better than good ability. Of course I possessed none of these and again, if you are well fed and have plenty, you can make yourself comfortable. Certainly you have a better spirit more likely to fulfill the requirements that are placed upon you. I tell you now that it is very hard to require a man to put all his strength and force and ability in motion when he feels very empty under his belt or below his heart. Then it is not very pleasant to get a good hit of a long sword across a place we are not to mention and to take that for fun when you perhaps would be black and blue for days after. Those there could take that without a murmur and with a smile into the bargain, and were often eager too. But I never could learn to do that, therefore often harder requirements would be asked of me than of some of those. For if you would not consent to unlawful treatment and unable to spend money or food on your leaders you must be a man of first class to do your duty, or woe unto you.

But I must start at the beginning and give a few sketches of those three to four years that I was in the service. We were, as I have said, to meet on the 31st of May in what is called the Citadel. It was situated close to the capital separated only by an esplanade and a canal over which was a long bridge. Then there was a long arch and a gallery under the wall into the Citadel. Inside stood two soldiers on guard with their rifles and bayonets, so when you first came there, you were as in a prison. There were 30 feet high walls all around the garrison. Inside was what the English would call the barracks. The Danes called it Carsene - it consisted of three stories of brick buildings three to four chains long with a street between them. In the centre was an open square circle which also had an esplanade. The square was also used for drilling. The whole citadel was a big affair and was as large as many of our towns in New Zealand. I cannot even tell how many streets there were, but there was also a grand old building such as for the Commandant of the whole army, and several others. All the long buildings I have mentioned were used for barracks for soldiers, some for drilling purposes, some for arms and clothings, one for a kind of a boarding house or restaurant, one building, and that was a large one was a bakery where all the bread was baked for the whole garrison of Copenhagen.

It was a very beautiful place, you could walk up on the wall which was of earthwork. Trees had been planted in old times on both sides so there was plenty of room for two wagons or cannons to meet with plenty of room beside. Then there were places where the cannons were layed where the walls would be much broader. When you were up there you could have a look and you would see all over the lawn, and what we call Oresand. You could in fine weather see some hundreds of ships from all nations pass by. About two miles from land you can see two batteries, Frecroner and Brovesteen, they are to protect the capital. An enemy must first battle them before they attack the citadel, and after the citadel come walls around the town.

I will have nothing to do with the town, at least not now. I must continue, as I have said, I packed my box and took a ticket to Copenhagen. The day before I

stayed in a hotel that night, next day in the afternoon I went with my box out to the citadel. There were a lot of young men there, a lot of Germans from Slesvig and Holsteen, and I may say from all portions of Denmark, as the Tugeneur was picked out from all parts of the kingdom.

I gave them my pass and was shown into the Sergeant in Arms, who was a little stout black looking man with a German accent. He delivered me a gun, a bayonet, clothes of all kinds that are unnecessary to mention, but he had a great deal of trouble in finding me a coat. They were all too big around my belt, or else too big or long in the sleeves, or too small across my chest. He told me I was a born soldier and to my disgrace I had to put on a very old coat and I had to keep that for 18 weeks, until the trial time was over and we would get better clothes. I was very sorry as I liked to look well, but they do not like to give a recruit any good clothing, specially, as I learnt afterwards, when you cannot give a few daler. That coat of mine cost me a lot of trouble, as I will come to by and by.

We were shown where to sleep and had no more to do that day. The next morning at five o'clock we heard reveille and after a moment in came a corporal who sang out of full lungs, all men up. That was the first word of command I had heard. It sounds in my ears yet, although it was 35 years ago, but then our trouble commenced.

We had a kind of breakfast, a cup of tea you could get in the restaurant for a shillings. After that you had to claim your batons to make you look like a soldier. At seven o'clock we were to stand in parade, and so seven o'clock came and we were all up in spirits because we did not know what a recruit meant to our teachers. That very morning I noticed that they spoke much more kindly to those who had good clothes on. I asked one with the name of Spencer, and he slipped alongside me and said, can you not see that they have paid the sergeant something and that is a signal to those other hungry thieves that those other fellows have money. But, said he, I can pay as well as they, perhaps better, but I intend to serve as a man and not pay those wolves to be kind to me, and so he could as I found out later. It gave me pluck as I saw that there were some there who could pay, and wouldn't.

There was a great explanation to us and a great deal of walking and so on, but no service that day. We had to be inspected by doctors at ten o'clock and then our socks and shirts at two o'clock and so on that day.

Now for those that chance to read this book, they can have some idea about the life of a recruit in those days. I will give a few particulars. The first few days we had to step on (parade) without our guns, of course the English call it falling in. We never fall in, except by accident. We were supposed to stand straight, walk to, step to salute and I don't know what was thought of us, but I know we were dreaming about like a lot of lunatics. We were called whatever pet name that our teachers could think of, every twelfth man had one. Those gentlemen behaved like madmen, they were only young Corporals but if you had heard them you would have at least have thought them Generals. They would blow themselves up like turkeys and roosters and sing out at us to frighten us with all they could possibly think of. They called us anything and wonderful names they could find. I often wondered if they had gone to school and learnt all those delicious names. I shall give a few examples such as crow, dog, shepherd, cub, horse, and old nag, a baby, a runaway lunatic, a chimney sweeper, a nurse, a chamber maid, and they even told us that there were plenty of jobs as night nurses but we weren't good enough for that. Many more excellent insults did we get which would be too good to mention here.

They did succeed in frightening us to a certain extent. We could neither get fat nor slip, as they ran us eight hours a day and told us a recruit was only a kind of animal. They would stand under a tree to rest and it was hot to be out of (in) the sun, but for us poor devils they would let us run back and forward in the sun, calling out 1-2-3-4 and woe unto you if you got out of step.

We had an hour for dinner, but those poor fellows who were a little clumsy would have to put in extra drill time and no dinner, and they had to do their drill in the sun of course. I can say that I was very lucky I never came in for this punishment, which was really very lucky as there was only me and a young man of the name of Spendrup that got free out of the whole company in those eighteen weeks. He was the man I mentioned before who said he meant to serve as a man and not pay for to be favoured. I and him were not so lucky by the extra parade on Sunday.

I often compare our position to what is called a soldier out here, and I can only say that if they would treat the volunteers out here as they did us, they would all resign the first day. I have often read a notice in the newspapers out here that at such and such a night and such and such a time that they would be called out to show fight. In those two years and a half we never could go to bed and be sure not to be called out before morning and in five minutes we were supposed to be down in marching order. Certainly you always had to have your things ready and also be wakeful, and when the time came that we were called upon to defend our country, war would come quite naturally to us.

I could give, or rather write, volumes of that long life in Garnesion, but I shall have to shorten it by only narrating instances and a few characters. The first person is our Commanding Sergeant in our schooltime. His name was Cook, he had of course been a

soldier from his childhood, and knew nothing else, but he had a peculiarity. I must give some description of him before I go any further. I and him were never friends, I often think of him and smile. As I have said, his name was Cook and he was much like one except for the feathers, as he would come walking just like a very proud bird. He was a single man at the time and about 40 years of age, with a full beard which was pretty long and inclined to be red, very large brown eyes. Those he could make as large as saucers when he happened (which was often the case) to find fault. He seemed from the very first to find great delight in finding fault and to scold me. He was well built, had a Roman nose and the colour of his face was red like his beard. But his face would take on a very high red and blue colour when he over exerted himself when calling names. He had also a very peculiar habit when put out, to move his knees back and forward one at a time something like a gateway, and sometimes like two springs. Now when he fixed his two saucers on you and commenced to twitch his knees you knew that he was going to tell you your character in very fluent language.



Danish Infantry Soldiers, from the Illustrated London News, 1864.

He always seemed to give my coat special attention, and as I have mentioned it was rather worn. It seemed to me that his eyes were always on my poor old coat. We were of course inspected every morning before our drilling commenced, and that was an hour of great suspense. Sergeant Cook would walk up and down the long row of men and let his loving eyes dwell so affectionately upon everyone, with his pencil stuck behind his long red ear, and his little notebook in his hand. Every button, hook or strap, belt and boot and whatever could be found on us was looked on by those eyes of his. He tapped our clothes with the ends of his fingers for to see if there was dust. My coat always came in for a good deal of this as it always looked a little dusty although I hammered and brushed the poor old thing all my spare time. If he could find the least fault, he would first look on you like a tiger and then commence to twitch his knees, and then call you a few pretty names. Then his hands would go up for his pencil. "What is your number? You shall parade for me personally every hour with that coat, do you hear? You ...". If you dared to say yes, then you would be daring indeed, even though he said 'what, what?' several times, we were not to answer. No, we had to stand like dummies.

Now consider that there stood, as I have mentioned, young men that had studied. We had several from Tegenuer, a few architects and others. There were men there who had got their military service postponed and had frolicked in other countries and were now 25 or 26 years old. There they stood for inspection by a Sergeant and they were the pick of the country, all tradesmen, and mostly from towns and sons of well to do citizens. There were of course some hard cases among us but those generally took good care to clean them-selves.

We happened to have a few who would be what I would call fools, and I shall mention one as he often caused great amusement. His name was Fredriksen but he got the name of Mols, as he came from a place in Jutland called Mols. We reckon that people from that place are very ignorant and it was not far wrong as far as Fredriksen was concerned. He was over six feet tall and had a very muscular build. He had a great deal of hair and beard about him, rather dark, staring eyes. If not for those eyes, you would not have taken him for a fool. He was born on the West coast of Jutland and all his life had not been schooled as there were no schools. 3till, he could read as they trained him one day in the forest of the company, or else he would have been dismissed forthwith. One that cannot read will never be taken on as a soldier in Denmark. Because of that reason all in our country can read except lunatics. How Fredriksen became a Tegeneur was a great mystery to Mr Cooke, for he and poor Mols had some lively times together.

I shall never forget one morning when Cooke and Mols were staring into one another's eyes. Cooke asked him "Did you, fool, ever go to school?" Mols stared for some time on Cooke and simply replied "School? Yes, you D . . . fool!" Cooke said "School – now there was no such thing out there. Were you confirmed?" After a good deal of staring, Mols said yes. "But there is no church out there either!" Cooke roared, "Can you read?" "Read? Yes." Out came a book of Cooke's packet of war articles. "Read this!"

Mols read so loud that the whole company could hear, right down to the farthest order. Cooke opened his eyes and said that would do, but Mols could not or would not hear, but kept on louder and louder until Cooke jumped like a tiger and snapped the book out of his hand. He said, "Can't you hear, you big ugly lunatic?" The whole company roared with laughter and I believe I even saw a slight smile on Cooke's face. I

think that was the only time I ever saw him smile, for he was surely put off his guard that morning.

As I have said, Mols had a strong beard and one morning he came down to the parade and some young fellows from the same room had shaved all his beard on one side, and only left the moustache and one sideburn only a few inches long. I am not able to give a true description of the look he had in those wild staring eyes, and far less am I able to describe the actions of our honourable Sergeant. His knees commenced to move faster and faster and his voice rose as thunder as if he was going mad. But Mols stood as a statue and looked down from his high upon Mr Cooke who was dancing about like a madman. Of course Mols did not know what was up, as he thought himself in specially good trim that morning.

Of course time went on. The 18 weeks of the infantry school passed and the Tugeneur School commenced and another 18 weeks passed and we came to the company. I happened to get a new uniform and better still, another Sergeant.

Lyshohu was his name and he was a Flostener. He was a good man compared to what Cooke was. He was straight but fair and reasonable. He was very short, but stout and had a raven black beard and a big one at that. We used to call him the black one. He did not come down on me all the time, and I rather think that he favoured me, and for two years when he had anything to do with me, he called me by no name but my own. Indeed, several times he took me as an example for the others, as I shall mention.

When you are a soldier and money is sent to you it must always go through the Sergeant in command of the company and so he knows exactly how every man stands in money matters. Of course he also knew that I never got any money sent from home. But I soon got some gardens to look after in my free hours as we generally were free every afternoon, and I also worked for a florist for a long time. When the others lay down after having served, I went to work, and I can say without any idea of praising myself, all my life I have liked to be in activity. I have therefore seldom been in want of money and Sergeant Lysholm would say, look at Laugesen, he never has any money sent and he can let his under uniform money stand for the year. And he has the best boots in the company, he got two pairs of new boots on his shelf and one good pair on, better shirts, socks and everything. He makes the money while you sleep and he cleans his uniforms while you are occupied with spending money your fathers, as fools, send you. Yes, I know, he would say, and I will be straight with you, look out that you get what you want first.

Of course his wife washed for the most of us, and he knew everything. I could relate here a volume of things which would be of less interest, such as what we thought. The whole thing came to this, as everybody knows, how best to be able to destroy our fellow man, or as the general expresses it, our enemies. Although service was hard and food sometimes short, time went quickly, for young of our age, food made up for our hardship. When Christmas came you could get ten days leave if you had had no punishment.

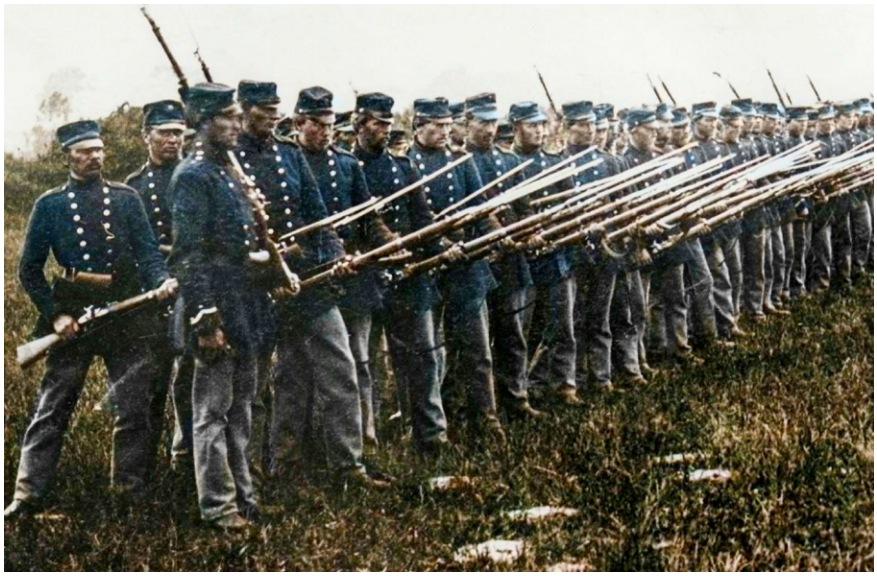
Consequently most of us went home and I too went to see my father and mother and friends, in our uniform of course, buttoned to the very top. We had a day set when we should be back to fall in at seven o'clock in the morning, without fail, or we would be punished. I had a bit of bad luck as I often have had, for(on) the evening before our time expired. I came three minutes late to the railway station at Soro, 45 miles from Copenhagen simply because I had no watch. I was told that I had plenty of time. This was





Christian with the Danish Medal for Bravery.

left: Danish Soldiers 1864



Danish Infantry Bayonet Drill 1864.

eight o'clock in the evening and (at) seven o'clock in the morning I was supposed to step into the range. There was no possible means for me to come there except by running the whole way, and I did not like to receive punishment. So I can say that I had the hardest and most dreadful experience that night, than I have ever had in my whole life through, and I hope never shall have. I stopped a stop there. All the blood went to my head, and I thought what shall I do? I calculated that I had eleven hours. Can I do it? Yes, do it, or die, that was my thought. Under better circumstances it would not have been so difficult an undertaking for me. I could run remarkably swiftly and I believe I could stand it better than any man in the whole company, but there was about a foot of snow on the ground, and snow fell continuously. It was bitterly cold and a piercing wind from the pole blew, which I had right in my face all night. I had only a small bundle to carry that was only a few pounds, but I must say it was heavy enough before I reached my destination.

I started off in a run and kept it up for about four hours, then I commenced to feel a little fatigued. I followed the King's highway, a splendid road made for Waldemur the Conqueror in the twelfth century. It goes right through Zealand with big trees growing on both sides of the road, so there was not any fear of losing it. There were also inns every eight or nine miles. Those inns are kept open all night for the convenience of wayfarers, and if you enter you will generally find a fat man asleep in a big chair or sometimes a fat woman asleep in a big chair. But I was more fortunate for when, as I said, I felt a little weary, I entered one of these resting places. I found a most handsome young girl in a big chair close to a hot stove upon which the kettle was sitting. The girl was fast asleep. I had to give her a gentle tap and she awoke with a little smile when she saw I was a young soldier. I asked her to give me a cup of hot coffee as quick as she could as I had no time to lose. She asked me to sit down, but I said I preferred to stand, as my legs had commenced to feel rather stiff. I also asked for the time. She said it was a little after twelve and I knew by counting the milestones that I had run about twenty-five miles. She asked me if I would not stop until morning, it was such a dreadful weather. I said I would rather – for to leave a young girl and a warm fire to face the weather again for another twenty miles was not very attractive. I said, I am duty bound. I swallowed up my coffee and paid two pence for it, shook her hand and said goodbye as if we had been old friends. I was sure I saw a tear of sympathy in that girls face. Off I went.

I was refreshed and went faster. I did not stop until I felt low again. I had some bread in my packet and also a flask. Those articles I took when I slowed a little. But as all good things seldom last long, neither did those. When another inn was passing, or rather I was passing the inn, I went in and asked for another cup of coffee. This time it happened to be a fat man, but a very polite one. He told me it was four o'clock. I had ten miles more to travel, but those ten were the longest I ever went in my life. I cannot describe what I suffered in that early morning. Several times I passed wagons with loads for the town, and the driver asked me if I wanted a lift, but I had to refuse their kindness as they would not come in time. When I came to Copenhagen the clock struck six in the tower. That was on one side of the town, and I had about two more miles before I reached the barracks. So I thought I would take a rest, as a wooden seat stood close by. Oh what a rest. I believe I fell asleep , but not long. I wanted to stand up but I could not. My knees were stiff and dead as wood. I tried and tried, but I could not. At last I commenced to rub my knees and legs and what great effort and pain. I got them into motion, but very slowly. I just managed to come to the citadel in time to step into my place in the ranks and the little black Lysholm walked up and down. He walked straight up to me and asked, what is the matter with you. You are bad or you did not sleep last night, he said, speak up. I told him my story and he made big eyes as he did not believe me at first, but when he had felt my clothes and looked at the soles of my boots, he told me to step out and go to bed. But that was easier said than done.

I was as stiff as a poker. I stamped away. Sergeant Lysholm cried out, this is a man, and then gave the company a lecture on their softness and unpunctuality, and at ten o'clock he himself brought me a cup of coffee and said I should stay in bed that day. I must say, I never obeyed a command more willingly, but I suffered awful pains in my feet and knees all day and night. But next day I could do my duty. I had a similar experience later on, but I was not bound to time, as I was not a soldier then.

The winter time was a very weary time indeed. We sat in a big room for reading two to four hours a day. The room as I said was called the fire room, but there was very little fire in it. You could just smell the coal if you came in from outside, that was all. We sat on benches that stood in rows like in a school, with a square clear in the centre. On the wall at one end of this square hung a great blackboard, on the other end sat the teacher.

Often we had his excellency Mr Cooke in the chair. When any one else was in the chair we generally had a good time, for after a few lessons they would take up a novel and pass the time and read to themselves if they could keep us quiet. But when Cooke came it was all go from eight to twelve, and you had often to go and express your mind on the blackboard with a piece of chalk. If Cooke could not understand your explanation, and he had a habit that way, but that was where the most fun came in, as I shall have to explain.

We had books that we should study, but little of course was done that way, I dare say. In this room we would be taught just like in a college. Cooke would lecture for about an hour, so hard that in spite of the cold weather and the small fire, perspiration would stand on his red face. From the chair to the black board, from there to the chair, woe to anyone that would dare to make the slightest noise. His eyes would enlarge, his knees would go and you would get your character told. After his lecture came to an end he would start to ask questions, and as a rule ask the noisiest first and after that ask the most ignorant, as they seldom listened. So Cooke would say, Jensen will you tell us the measurement of half a mine frame? Jensen would stand straight and answer, what size of timber is required. Cooke would ask another question and some kind of explanation would follow, but not a satisfactory one. Then Cooke would blow himself up like a turkey rooster and cry out, what good is it for you to know the measurement of a mine if you don't know how to start it? Go to the blackboard and let me see what you know, you fool. Jensen walked over, took the chalk and said, Here is the hill. Where? said Cooke. I do not see any. Jensen drew something like a little hill, then he started to explain. He drew something like the frame of a mine. Cooke cried out, is that your Grandmothers coffin? I see not the sides resembling a mine frame. I will teach you to listen when I lecture and so it went on. I laughed, and so did most, but although the tears rolled down my cheeks, you could hardly breathe for no sound was to be heard.

Now I must take leave of my friend Mr Cooke as I cannot spare more space for his dignity. Although I could write lots more about our time in Tarnson,



Wilhelm Camphausen's painting shows the fight in Schanze number 2 of the Danish fortifications near Düppel on April 18, 1864 at around a quarter past ten in the morning.

but more important parts of my life will take up much space, so this must close.

The War ~ 1864

Denmark had always had great trouble with Slesvig Holsteen. The great pressure of so great a population from Germany had almost Germanised the whole population. In 1794 a treaty was signed by several of the great powers and England too had signed that Denmark should have Slesvig Holsteen forever. But treaties are only good when there is peace. When war comes they leave their parties and fight it out themselves.

It was in 1849 to 57 and so likewise it happened in 1864. In October that year the German Forbund threatened to march their armies into Holsteen, and Denmark mustered her armies, about 50,000. Then Germany came with about 300,000. Of course we depended on England, but she stayed at home. Of course she tried to frighten Prussia, but Bismark only laughed, and said she won't come, and she didn't. They made a great mistake, and they will undoubtedly come to pay dear for that mistake. It was the beginning of the greatness and prosperity of Germany. They could easily have been stopped then by England but in 20 years time from now 1910, it will change the whole map or history of Europe. As man sows, so shall he also reap, still I am sorry I have to say so.

I am not going to write a history of the war, as it is so long ago that I have forgotten many of the dates. I will simply rest on a few events.

We left Copenhagen in October 1863 from there to Kiel, then to Flensburg, then to the town of Slesvig, from there to Fredrickstad, a lovely little town at the Eider. The people in Fredrickstad were the noisiest people I ever met, and that was one of the reasons I called one of my boys Frederik. Men, women, and young girls came and took us by the hand and led us home to our quarters. Although they were Germans in their minds and language and we were their enemies, in one respect they loved the Danish soldiers.

I shall tell some of the reason why. In the war in 1850, the Prussians bombarded the town, as the Danes had raised the water with artificial means so the town was surrounded with water for more than a mile. I was told by several women (I suppose that I should write ladies) while their tears rolled down their cheeks about how good the Danish soldiers had been to them in that fearful time. When the Germans were shooting down the town, they said, that if it had not been for the good natures of the Danes they should all have got killed. In the night when the Prussians could not see them, the Danish soldiers carried women, children, and even some old men over the water. The water was mostly up to their belts or middles and in some cases they would have to swim with their burden. Some would go back "kiaris bating" or other niceties, and all night back and forward they went.

Since that time those people had not seen a Danish soldier. That was the reason why they received us so well.

As that war lasted nearly two years after I went, I suppose the greater part of those brave soldiers would get shot, but their good deeds still lived, and we had the benefit. Therefore if we sow good seed in this our life, if we do not live to reap, someone else will harvest. I did feel very proud of my countrymen, and I did try in the three months I was there to show that the same spirit was still living, and I know that many of my comrades did the same if not all.

From Fredrikstad we went to Slesvig or Dannevirke. Always there was snow up to our knees from the 3 of February when we had a battle at Mesund to the 1st of July. At Dannevirke we had some hard experiences, but the retreat from Dannevirke to Dybell was undoubtedly one of the severest. Devil batteries we used to call the Bedders block as it was simply butchery. The last experience was when the island Al was taken. I was there too. There we retreated to the Island of Tyen. That was in the end of July when we



The Danish 8th Brigade about to charge at the Battle of Dybbøl 18 April 1864 by Vilhelm Rosenstand.



The retreat from the Dannevirke By Niels Simonsen, The Second Schleswig War ~ 1864.

came to Kerteminde. We were there until the end of August when we were relieved. That ended my military service and that war also.

It was not so pleasant to come home to Denmark after such an unlucky war. The whole country was in a very bad state. All those men came home and all wanted billets and work, but patience and hope will overcome all things. I had a nice tramp from Copenhagen to Korsor, a little over 60 miles. I had a sister living there, as I tried hard to get a billet at Copenhagen, but all in vain. My brother-in-law wrote to me to come down. I had only fourpence in all my earthly riches. I bought a little flask of brandy and a little white bread for two pence.

Off I went from Copenhagen in the evening, as I couldn't take the train when I had no money. Next day towards evening I came to Korsor. I was careful to come at the same time as the train so that my sister and brother would not know that I had walked. I had to look ahead so as not to trip on a rough stone, that sore were my feet. Not to speak about the emptiness of my stomach was hard, but I was well received and had a splendid meal. When I went to bed, I could not sleep for the pain in my knees. I believe I could stand the same walk better now although I am nearly 70. 12 months ago I walked from Arkles Bay to Devonport past the Wade, about 50 miles, and I felt nothing of pain of any kind. I often tell young men, take plenty of exercise while you are young, and you will reap the benefit when you get old.

I stayed at my sister's house about 5 months. Her name was Christine. She was my dearest sister of the two. She was as tall as I and we were like one another. Her husband's name was Gebert. He was a German by birth and his trade was a tinsmith. He was consumptive and died at fifty.

When spring came I got a billet as Gardener, and what a bad billet that was. The name of the estate was Sattisland. He was about the same age as I, twenty five. He could not keep anybody. The second day I was there he had a fight with his coachman and he left. There were about 50 young men on the farm, and everyday somebody left. He had a lovely little wife. She was only 18, she was kind and good, but he was a real brute. His name was Selcow Handen. I and him got on fairly well, as he did not have much to do with me, as the gardener has more to do with the lady. Still, we sometimes had a little quarrel but the lady came between us twice. But what kept him at a distance was that he knew that I was strong. Brutes like him fear nothing like physical force. He never liked anybody that he thought superior to himself in strength and agility

I was there nearly 12 months when he came down to the garden and commenced to kick up a row, saying that I had let the men cart manure in the garden. He was so angry that he ram against me, but I hurtled him in some gooseberry bushes and told him not to start to play with fire. That quietened him, and I got my money and left. A few years after that happened he happened to meet my father. He said, your son was the smartest man I ever had, but he left me without giving me any reason. Poor fellow. He died the year after he saw my father, so I will leave him in peace.

After that I went over to Sweden for a trip for three months and when I came back to Denmark I got a situation in Juellund. I was there 5 years. There I got married and there was born my first, Waldemar, and my first daughter, my little Dagmar.

I left there and took a place in Helsingor, but I was only there six months as neither me nor my wife liked the people.

I got a situation in Bensonsiede near Juelland that was my last place in Denmark and the best I ever



Hamburg Docks 1883 ~ Photo Wikipedia Commons.

had. Sorry I was in one way when I left and so was my master.

But my dear wife for some reason wanted to leave. So I and a friend of mine with the name of Lassen made up our minds to go together, and off we went in September 1872. I had 3 children, Waldemar (5), Dagmar (3), and Ludwig (1). We left Copenhagen for Lubeck, from there to Hamburg where we stayed for ten days. Then to London where we also stayed ten days, and we had a good look around, but as I had paid most of my money for the passages we were handicapped. Otherwise we could have enjoyed ourselves a great deal better, but money is everything save health.

Chapter IV

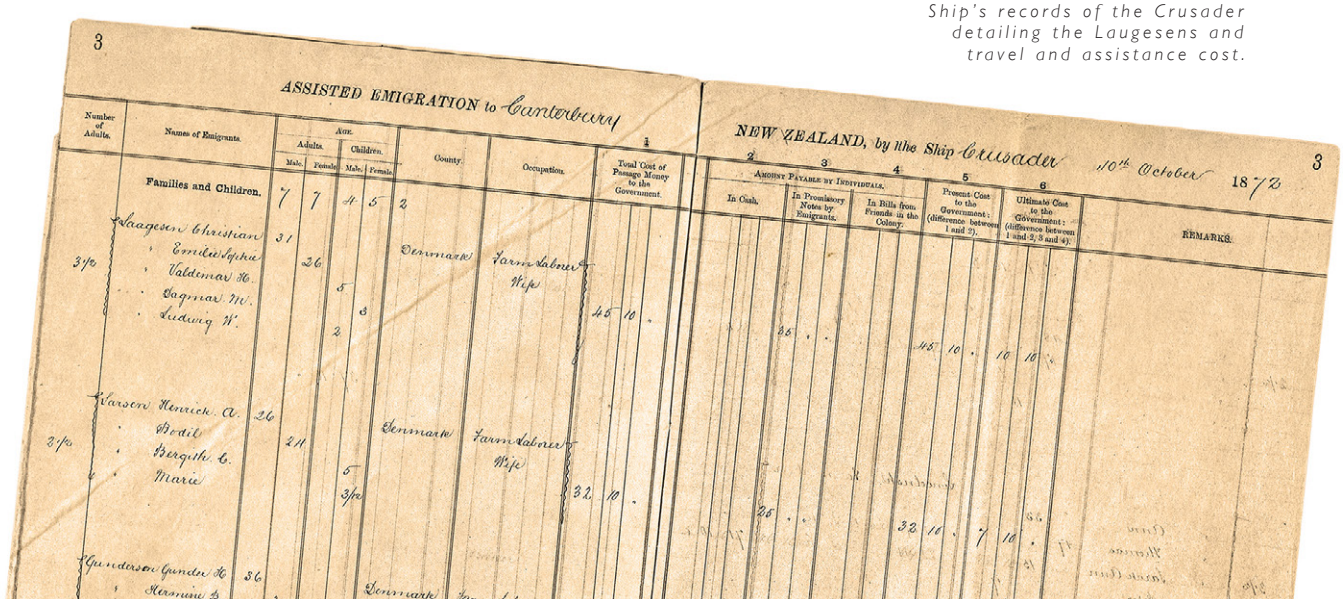
A New Beginning in New Zealand

IN the year 1873, on a beautiful summer's morning, we landed by the good ship "Crusader" on the golden shores of New Zealand on the 5th of January, after being rocked on the cradle of the deep for 84 days from London without touching or seeing land of any description. We landed at Lyttelton which, in those days, was not quite what it is now. There were no wharves or docks so we anchored outside the heads, several small steamers taking us off to the landing.

I cannot describe the feelings of my fellow passengers but it was with great joy and thankfulness that I set my feet on the soil of this beautiful country. We were 300 immigrants on board, more than half of whom were children. That I was not the only one that felt happy showed when those little ones were set ashore. They swarmed like bees attacking the flowers; dandelions, clover, flowers etc. All seemed so beautiful to them after the long voyage.

I had wife, three children and 2s in my pocket, two good arms, a good will and plenty of hope. *(editor's note; 2 shillings in today's currency is equivalent to around £21)* My knowledge of English was limited to "yes" and "no" and I was not sure that I could speak that quite correctly, as I am a Dane by nationality. As the Israelites went through the Red Sea into the promised land so we went under Lyttelton hills, which was more than Moses could perform. This journey occupied about five minutes then the bright landscape rolled out before our view. Through the fertile level land of the Heathcote Valley we shot like an arrow past the green hedges. The young plantations all looked fresh and charming. Now, some of those trees look old and ugly like ourselves. I have noticed that many of them have been cut down to make room for the younger generation - so likewise with mankind. We were all in the prime of life but many of us have been cut out and sent across the border to make room for others.

To me, all was wonderful and strange; every tree, plant and flower had a charm for me, which I can hardly describe. This feeling and admiration lasted a few years but in time wore away.



Ship's records of the Crusader detailing the Laugesens and travel and assistance cost.



NEW ZEALAND COMPANY, EMIGRATION.

THE COURT OF DIRECTORS NEW ZEALAND COMPANY

Are prepared to assist in Emigrating to their Settlements in New Zealand,

AGRICULTURAL MECHANICS, FARM LABORERS, Domestic Servants

Of good character, who will assist themselves by defraying a portion of the cost of their passage.

The Directors are still receiving Applications accordingly, until

WEDNESDAY, the 9th AUGUST,

From persons of the above descriptions desirous of proceeding on those terms by the Ship

AJAX

Appointed to Sail from the London Docks on

Monday, the 4th September next.

Further Particulars and Forms of Application may be obtained at New Zealand House,

By Order of the Court,

Thomas Cudbert Harington.

New Zealand House, 2, Broad Street Buildings, London,

24th July, 1848.

Newspaper Advertisement.



Image ~ restored and coloured (by the editor) of the black and white etching originally by T.A. Allom, who created it from a drawing by Mary Townshend ~ 1861.



The Crusader clipper ship sailed the London to New Zealand route bringing migrants to New Zealand. In total she made 28 voyages from Great Britain to New Zealand. Her average sailing time was 91 days ~ Photo National Library N.Z.

We alighted from the train at Addington and were directed to the Immigrant Barracks. We walked across a small paddock, all carrying parcels and packages which looked very comical. There were Irish, Scots, English, Germans and a few Danes in this large party. All dressed in various colours and fashions jabbering in their mother tongue and glancing with eager eyes at everything about them. When we reached the barracks we were shown to our rooms which were comfortable and clean. Then we were called into a big room where a gentleman addressed us. He was of a humorous disposition as I could gather from the laughter and applause with which he was greeted when speaking. I could not understand what the gentleman said but fell in with the rest to show my appreciation.

Anyone who has not had the experience of landing in a strange country and not being able to speak the language cannot have any idea of the great inconvenience and drawback it is for a long time, though it has its comical side. We were treated very well in the barracks. Although now, 38 years on, I fancy I can taste that delicious mutton still! Nothing I have had since has equalled it.

I shall just mention here that I left Denmark in the company of a friend whose name was Henrik Lassen. We had known one another at home for some years and decided to sail together to make a new home across the sea. As for years our paths crossed each other, I will introduce him to any readers. Henrik was 25 years of age (five years my junior), over 6ft in height and as straight as an arrow. In character he was just as upright, straight and honourable although he became rather penurious after he had been in this country for some time. He was always ready to help whenever it was needed. He had his faults, as have most of us, being of an obstinate nature. This characteristic is more or less prevalent in Scandinavia and Scotland and my friend Lassen had a good deal of it. He also had a good deal of pride about him but this latter is more a virtue than a fault, if it is the right kind. Lassen had a wife and two children when we left Denmark but somehow when we landed they had multiplied into three. He was a cooper by trade and had been manager in a large dairy consequently he was not acquainted with common labour. *(A cooper is a craftsman who produces wooden casks, barrels, vats, buckets, tubs and troughs from timber staves)*

Concerning myself, I had been trained as a nurseryman, florist and landscape gardener. Not quite the kind of gardener we sometimes see advertised for out here who is expected to milk a cow. My training was not of this kind. None of us knew much about hard work of the kind that was needed in New Zealand.

We stayed in the barracks for three days - many would stay there for weeks but we, neither Lassen nor myself, had any time to lose and took the first opportunity to get to work. Whenever a ship came in, in those days, farmers came in numbers to the Immigrant Barracks and there engaged men, married couples or young lads; a written contract being drawn up, signed by both parties and kept by the Government official. As Lassen and I were both family men no-one applied for us as 'married couple'. They wanted no children and as such a blessing does not fall to the lot of every 'married couple'. These kind of servants were rather scarce.

Harvesting was in full swing and men were in great demand. Lassen and I become engaged to work for a young Scotsman up country. We should receive £80 a year, have free house which we should occupy together. *(in today's currency is equivalent to around £5000)* This young Scotsman was about 25 years old, about the same height as Lassen. I liked the look of him and was not deceived. We had first been lying a couple of days in the sunshine between the tussocks, revelling in the climate of New Zealand when on the afternoon of 8th January our traveling carriage appeared. It was a big dray and horse driven by a lad of about 18; the son of a German. We should go up country about 17 miles. The dray was filled chiefly with our boxes, our two wives, six children and lastly our two selves and the German boy with his feet on the shaft. *(feet on the shaft was used figuratively to imply someone is in a position of power or control over something)*

Off we went, but very slowly. Our big fat mare was very strong but very lazy and she undoubtedly had many equals in the human race. We went but before we had covered three miles a stiff south-wester sprung up, so cold that one had to feel now and then to find his nose. Our glorious dreams about the climate of New Zealand, between the tussocks, became grim reality as such a sudden change of so severe a character was quite beyond our experience, unprepared as we



Commemorative Stamp.



Typical surfboat used to ferry passengers to shore 1884 ~ Photo National Library.

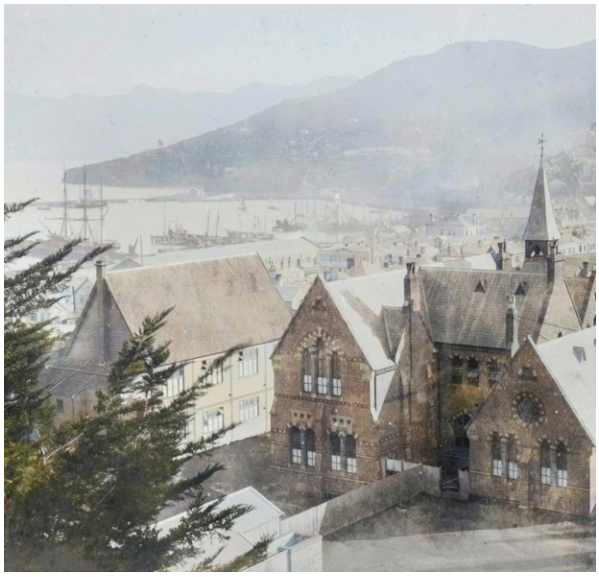
were. We had packed all our heavy clothing down in our boxes and as the rain came down in such torrents it was impossible to open them. Women and children curled up together the best they could. I, for my part, walked most of the way. Lassen was angry sitting in the dray, half dead with the cold, but was so obstinate that he would not get down and walk. I told him he would at least be able to keep warm. He used some strong language now and then to the boy on the shaft but that young gentleman could not understand him and nodded quite good naturedly, laughing and whistling and treating it as a joke, all that Lassen had to say. After four or five hours weary driving we arrived at the homestead, got into the kitchen in front of a roaring fire which soon warmed the little wanderers up. A good tea and plenty of colonial goose soon imbued us with new life.

After tea and more warmth beside the fire the tall Scotsman, who we will call John, came and made some signs to us which meant he wanted to show us where we should live, though it took him some time of 'sign-making' before we could understand.

He would put out his long arms, say something like house, then he put his head on his arm and closed his eyes. I had heard a little about 'Freemasonry' so I thought he asked if we were masons. I shook my head. John was certainly in great trouble but his mother, an old Scots lady, poked her head in the door and said "To hus to hus", then we understood. The lad took his place once more on the shaft and John, with a lantern, after him. We all followed like Chinamen in single file, each carrying a young immigrant.

The house we should occupy lay about a quarter of a mile from the homestead beside a swamp. The road to it was where cattle had to be driven night and morning. So it was not a pleasant walk. Dark and still raining heavily, the lantern only showed us the direction otherwise we plunged on from hole to hole the best way we could. At last we arrived at the house which was two-roomed with but one fireplace which caused a little disagreeable feeling between us. However, we got our things together and our beds made which made us rather late getting into them. Lassen took the room where a bedstead stood; we took the other and slept on the floor.

Next morning turned out a fine day and John came bringing us some new milk. He tried to make us understand there was no work to be done that day by laying down in the grass and closing his eyes, so we understood we should rest. My wife showed him a piece of bread as we wanted some. This caused him some trouble to explain where we could get it. He pointed to some place a long distance off, and



Lyttleton Schoolhouse and Sailors Institute 1880s ~ Photo Te Papa Museum.

punched with his fists as a baker in the dough but to no good. Then he mentioned a name which was the name of the lad who drove us, meaning that he would show us where the baker lived, but as we did not know the young fellow's name, it was impossible for us to know what he meant. Then he said “Coachman driver”, everything he could think of but all in vain. As all his thinking and sign making was nearly exhausted he caught a short rope which hung on a post and pulled and said “Gee up, gee up farmer.” We all had a hearty laugh and John too but Lassen could make nothing of it and said “He must be mad,” but I made out that he who drove “farmer” (the horse) would go with us and show us where the baker lived. Both of us went with John and all went well. Though we often had such scenes, John was always kind and pleasant and I thought a lot of him. As I have said, he was about six feet in height, smart, active with full beard and Roman nose. I don't think I have met a smarter young man since I have been in the country or one with better morals.

The other son, we will call Willie. He was 22 years old, not quite as tall though rather wild. They had a lot of sisters, some married and some single. Their mother was a widow and a very kind old lady. Their farm consisted of about 1100 acres of first-class agricultural land. I shall not give their names here as great trouble has since scattered the whole family, especially since the death of the old lady and some of the family.

The first day started work. John took us out into the paddock where there were some haystacks which had got spoilt with the rain. We got a fork each and John showed us how to spread it out and then he went away. After a while his brother came out to have a yarn with us. First he tackled Lassen but when he found he could get nothing out of him, he came to me. As I was the liveliest of the two, conversation was soon in full swing although neither he nor I understood a word the other said. He would hit his chest, stretch out his arms, lift his legs and shout. In fact, make all the signs a four-legged animal could do to make me understand but nearly always in vain. I understood that he wanted to know what I had been doing in Denmark.

I pointed to the garden but to no purpose. I tried to make holes in the ground with one of the fork prongs and put in a plant of grass but he only laughed. Then I wanted to tell him I had been a soldier and also I have been in Krig (which means war) thinking it would interest him, but it was all a blank to him. Then I got a happy idea. I took a hayfork and put it to my shoulder like a rifle, marched past him, turned and stopped in front of him and presented arms. He stood with open mouth and rolling eyes, taking it all in, but as he let fall no hint of understanding my instruction I drew the point of the fork as though to challenge with a bayonet and in covered position jumped about, and at last fell out with the point just glancing past his body. This settled all misunderstanding. Willie turned, raced as fast as his legs could carry him until he safely reached and jumped the garden fence. Lassen and I had a good laugh.

In the afternoon Willie came back again but he brought his big brother with him. They both stood and looked at me so hard that I thought that perhaps



Lyttleton Harbour as seen from Sumner 1880s ~ Photo Te Papa Museum.

I was not working just enough so I set to like a wild bull and sent the rotten hay flying in

all directions. Then they both went away and I noticed that Willie shook his head. I afterwards learned that he told his brother I was a dangerous customer and ought to be expelled from the place.

Lassen, being able to milk, was set to do so every night and morning as there were between 30 to 40 cows. The whole family were able to milk so I was not required to learn but while they milked I had to amuse myself feeding the pigs and calves.

One of my first experiences in this line was rather trying. There was a big fat calf in a house by himself and when I opened the door of his house to give him a drink he got frightened of me.

Perhaps Willie had warned him, he rushed past me and upset my bucket though I managed to catch hold of his tail and although I was not a weakling he got the best of me as he had a good start and off he went. I was quite inexperienced. I thought if I let go my master would lose his calf but when in our furious race we came past the cowshed, I heard John sing out "Let go," but I understood him to say "Don't let go," which I made up my mind to do, come what may. So away we went through gorse and flax. The calf was big and strong but I succeeded in getting his tail around my hand. His keen desire was to drag me though the worst of the mud and round and round the cowshed, sometimes up to its stomach in dirt, but as I was flying rather than running I took little notice until the race was over. At last it came to an end when the calf fell over something and I landed on the other side. A big "Hip, hip hurray" was heard from all the milkers who had been watching the sport. The calf was done for the present so I picked him up and carried him over to his house, though he got no milk that night.

The next morning John showed me out into the wheat paddock where he had a scythe lying and asked me if I could mow. I answered "Yes." There were about 50 acres of very heavy crop. He made signs that I should mow all around the paddock and make the corners round. He meant, of course, that I should make room for the reaper but I had never' seen one although I had heard that such things existed. I simply came to the conclusion that I should mow the whole paddock. Consequently I was not in the best of humour.

In Denmark, all reaping was done with the scythe but in a paddock of that size I had seen as many as fifty men in a row. But one man, a scythe with only a bow tied to it with flax, was a sorry affair. We had far better scythes for that purpose. So John went and I, with very low spirits, mowed the best I could. I thought "No wonder they will give me £80 a year when they expect me to mow a paddock like this." I



Emilie, Louis, Waldemar, Christian and Dagmar LAUGESEN.

only wished that Lassen had been able to mow, then we would have been two at it but one man to fifty acres puzzled my wits. But I thought to myself "I think I can mow with the best of men and I will tell him so if he should think it takes me too long." So I, in good faith, mowed on.

I daresay it would have taken me longer to go around if I had known I should go around once but I did my utmost thinking I should do the whole piece. But imagine my surprise when the two brothers came out with a kind of tiller. One of them sat on one of the horses and drove the other on the back of the machine and with a short handled rake had to pull the wheat out in the sheaf. It was hard work for the man on the machine as with a heavy crop he had not a second to lose.

I have never seen a machine like this one since. Next summer the self deliverer was to be seen everywhere. The former was a great improvement on their scythe. I found out as now I had only to mow the corners and keep them round so that the machine could cut all the time. The men had to change places every hour it was such hard work. How different now when a man can sit comfortably, smoke his pipe and not even move, saving so much time, labour and money and causing the price of wheat to fall forever.

We had a fine harvest time. I do not think we had one wet day 'til all the crop was in stack. I was along with the two brothers in the field all the time 'till the crop was mowed down. They were very kind to me, always trying to teach me English. I was getting on very well. In a couple of weeks I was able to understand nearly all they said. I could also speak a little but of



Haymaking, Canterbury 1900s ~ Photo Te Papa Museum.

course not of the best. Lassen did not get on quite as well as he was mostly alone and when he was not milking he had to cut thistles. In those days thistles (Scotch) were reckoned as noxious weeds and people were compelled to cut them but if attention had been directed as much to other weeds at the time instead of interfering with the "Scotchmen", New Zealand would not be so overgrown as it is now.

So Lassen chopped down thistles while I was learning English everyday. He had little chance to improve and often made great mistakes because he could not understand.

One morning before I went out in the field, I started to mould up some potatoes in the garden. I had done about six rows (there was about a quarter of an acre) and after I had gone one of the sons told Lassen to hoe up the potatoes. Lassen, in mistake, dug them up or 'haked' them up, as he said. He was told to put the tops in nice little stacks and put the potatoes (which were about the size of peas) in small stacks also. Excepting the few rows I had moulded up, he destroyed the whole piece to the great distress of the old lady who was very much put out about it. But Lassen persisted in saying that he was told to "hak" them up, which in Danish means to take up out of the ground. Although this was one of his greatest mistakes, he did many similar that often caused great amusement.

When the cutting down of the corn was finished, to tie it was the next performance. There were two gangs of "Tyers". In one gang was included an old Irishman and his two sons. My boss wanted Lassen and me to work with them (tying) until she should start to cart the corn to the stacks. They had 10s per acre for tying while we were engaged by the year and if we earned more, our master would have the benefit but that was no matter to us. Of course we could not understand the arrangement John had made with Mr Adelen (that was the name of the Irishman) but I could understand that Adelen would take me but not Lassen. This hurt my native feelings as Lassen was a fine specimen of humanity with few equals both in statue and qualities. But he was at a disadvantage here, never having tried his hand at this kind of work and being perhaps rather too tall for this tying business. It was a good thing for Adelen that Lassen could not understand him but I walked up to Mr Adelen, struck my chest and beckoned to Lassen meaning that I would tie for Lassen, then, holding up three fingers of one hand and striking them with two fingers of the other hand, gave Adelen to understand that we two could tie them. Whether Adelen or my boss could understand my meaning I did not know but John said "Alright Louis." I noticed that Mr Adelen took a step back when I presented myself to him and struck my chest as I believe I looked rather solemn over it. Often when people cannot understand one another a wrong meaning is arrived at. However, John told us we could tie with Mr Adelen. I can say for myself I was a good tier, very few being able to beat me as Adelen soon found out.

I even showed Lassen how to do the work but in the meantime I tied for him as well as myself. He was not long in picking it up and in a few days was able to hold his own against any of the Adelens. But, even before Lassen could do that I would tie both his and mine - gain a couple of chains ahead of them and sit down and light my pipe. This agitated old Adelen very much as his son got tired out and it was not many days before Lassen would turn around and ask if they were tired. But after a few days we became reconciled and all went well.

Adelen was not the kind of man to overwork himself and it did not profit my countryman to overwork ourselves for nothing. I first wanted to have a little

revenge on them. We tied together about a fortnight and it was very hard work, especially for the two young Adelens as they were only boys between 18 and 20. The crop was a heavy one but the five of us tied on an average eight acres per day. We were obliged to tie with flax as the 'nor' west would dry up the straw so that we could not make bands of it. It would break like glass and cut our hand which was not to be envied, especially when the paddock was well covered with scotch thistles. After 'tying' was over the carting commenced, though I was chiefly on the stack with John whose smartness I often wondered over. He always kept his horse (a smart hack of the racing type) tied close up to the stack and from the stack he could look all over the farm, it all being level country. Sometimes he would notice that some cattle or sheep or a horse, as the case might be, had broken through a fence and got out then he would call out to the man who forked up, "Hold on a bit." Down from the stack he would jump, onto his horse and off like the wind, drive the cattle out, put up the slip rails and be back again in a trice. I often thought when he went off on these excursions "Now we can have a spell." I would sit down on the stack but very little spell it proved, for before we got properly seated John would be back again to work. He surprised me many times.

One morning he asked me if I could shear sheep. I said I thought so as I had watched the process of shearing in our country by women. I thought there would not be much difficulty about that. John gave me a pair of shears and off we went to the yard. He caught a sheep which he was going to kill and gave it to me to shear but as at home I had seen them lay the sheep on a table and if I am not mistaken tie their legs together, consequently I first of all looked for a table and some string. John could see that I was in some difficulty so he took the sheep, sat on its rump, took the shears and started clipping round its neck. Round and round the body the shears went and before I could gather my thoughts about string and table the sheep jumped up and the wool lay on the floor, to my great astonishment. Such trifles were always done before we went to the stack.

One morning John said "Come on, we are going to kill a pig." I was willing enough but of little use, I guess, in such matters but off we went to the pigsty, John sharpening the knife as we went which was similar to the shearing of the sheep. Preparation in Denmark was always made the day before the event; sharpening knives, rolling out big tubs etc. and when the day arrived four or five men with ropes and whatnot would attack Mr Pig, but John, still with some of his breakfast in his mouth and sharpening his knife, pointed to the sty and said "Catch that one," pointing to a big black monster. I succeeded after a little exertion to stop its progress round the yard and then its time was short. John soon settled his account in about 15 minutes; the pig hung in state from a tree ready for the kitchen.

One day John had to go away so I got another mate to help me on the stack. He was an Irishman and his name was Dan. Whenever he had a chance he would slip down from the stack and disappear. I did not know what he was doing below so often but after a bit Dan began to slip about and swear that the straw was like glass. Now he was the builder of the stack and was going on his knees on the outside row and in danger every now and then of slipping down. It seemed however, that as he was on his knees he retained his balance but it was when he got on his feet that the smoothness of the sheaf puzzled him and every time he had been down he got worse, so I watched him. I found that Dan had a bottle of something under his coat at the foot of the stack. When he got up again he tumbled every way and used strong language about the hot weather. I could see now that the man was drunk so I still watched him and had many a good laugh to myself but all of a sudden he crawled too far out on the sheaf and down he went. The poor fellow may have got killed as we were pretty high up but I could not help laughing. If I could only describe the scene as it looked! When Dan found he was slipping his face became very grave, his eyes seemed to roll out on his cheeks and he spread out his wings (his arms) as if preparing for flight. He looked at me very pitifully and then disappeared, the



Tied hay bundles, Canterbury 1890s ~ Photo National Library.



Coaches crossing The Waimakariri River, en Route From Otira to Cass ~ Photo Auckland Library.



Reaping & Binding, early days ~ Photo Kaikoura Museum.



Oxford 1890 ~ Photo Christchurch City Library.

last I saw of him being his bright, sandy whiskers and all was over. When I got down poor Dan was struggling to get up but even the ground seemed too slippery for him. He could not work anymore that day, he said, as he must go up to the hotel to have something to steady his nerves after that darn fall.

They told me he was an old soldier and had been in India. I have, since the above episode, met many old soldiers and feel compelled to say that most of them suffered more or less from the same complaint.

On the first of February, harvesting was over John got Lassen work in a flaxmill. I stayed on 'till the end of the month and then asked John if I could go to Oxford and have a day off, as I wanted to have a look around. It was about 24 miles distance. John said "Have you got any relations there?" "No," I said. "I mean have you got any brothers or sisters?" "No," I said. "I want to rent a house there. I want to work there." This rather surprised John as he said he could give me plenty of work digging, gardening, ploughing etc. but I was persistent and he let me go. I was very sorry to leave them as they had been so kind to me and my wife and I had nothing to complain of but I have never been a servant of anyone in my life before, which was one of my reasons for going and the other was that I longed for the forest.

My cradle stood between forests and lakes and throughout my life I loved most of all to live near water and forests. Therefore, the green covered hills at Oxford had a great attraction for me.

So I left my kind friends one Monday morning and started on my way reaching Oxford about three o'clock in the afternoon. I was not disappointed in Oxford, I liked its wild and natural appearance. The flat and open plain was nothing to me in comparison with the half burned bush and the broken hillside with its snow covered top. I felt as though I had entered a great botanical garden. I had never had an opportunity 'till then of examining the rich and beautiful flora of the grand New Zealand forest. Here I felt at home and here I intended to stay. It had always been my greatest pleasure during life to make new land to change the wilderness into a garden, indeed it seems to be a part of my nature and if a man lives contrary to his fondest inclinations he can never have the pleasure he otherwise would have. For, if in this life we get no pleasure from our labour, our happiness cannot amount to much. It may not always lead to riches but satisfaction is perhaps worth more than riches.



Christian and Emilie LAUGESEN.



Snowballing at Hapuku ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE.



Snow storm, High Street, Oxford, 1918 ~ Photo Oxford Museum.



Chapter V

I shall here endeavour to note down a few of my experiences regarding the nature of man. Man is a machine of nature and he works, lives and enjoys himself according to his faculties, therefore if we are able to denote by the appearance of a man his most prominent faculties, we are able to tell which are his greatest and most pleasant inclinations which is the key to his character.

When I now tell the reader that my temperament is motive mental he will undoubtedly understand that the muscular system is the ruling force in my nature. Had I been of great vital temperament I would have liked flat country better than hilly open country better than bush, and chosen ease comfort and good living. Where mentality is not evident, the man with the large abdomen is often a money grabber, selfish and even dishonest. A person with a large brain which predominates over other bodily structure is purely mental. To him we owe our knowledge and our general advancement. It is his great pleasure to study and to write books. So we all have, as it were, certain inclinations which suit us best and if a man, in his youth, were given freedom to choose for himself his future occupation, there would not be so many disappointments.

Some parents choose for their son his future career while he is yet a child. Perhaps that he shall be a Minister of the Gospel when the child has not yet those high ideals which are requisite so that he either gives up in anguish or a miserable attempt. Then again, we find the father who says his son shall be a lawyer. Poor fellow, he sometimes has not the slightest gift of nature and consequently lives a life of misery. I believe that the best policy is to live according to one's inclinations. I once employed a doctor as bullock driver. He said he liked it better too.

As I have previously said, I reached Oxford at 3pm. First of all I went into a hotel, not exactly to drink but to gather information. I had a glass of beer and asked the lady at the bar if there was any work to be had about. She told me there was plenty of work to be had but money was very scarce. “But,” she said, “the government would soon borrow some.” She had a great deal to tell me. I could speak a little better by this time but I was not advanced so far that I could follow the lady's politics, government, finances elections etc. I asked her if any Danes lived there. She answered “No,” but there were lots of Germans. Of course she thought that everyone who was not English must be German. She seemed to study politics and neglect geography but as I could speak German I got her to direct me to a German-named Hense. I went down to Mr Hense about half a mile from the hotel and found this gentleman digging up potatoes in his garden. He was a man of medium height, slim with a light beard and hair. He came from Hanover. Mr Hense had a large mouth which is general found in those who like to boast. At least it proved a fact in him. I greeted him in German and was taken into his house and treated most kindly. After I had some refreshment a great conversation went on until bedtime, as they both insisted that I should stay the night. They had a nice new little house, everything being very clean within.

Concerning our evening conversation, it was a most peculiar one. Mr Hense had been in New Zealand about 15 years but his knowledge of English was very limited and he spoke badly every second word being German. My German was intermixed with Danish and I confess I put an English word in here and there so that Mr Hense would not think I was

very “green”. Mrs Hense was delightful. When I came she at once went upstairs and dressed herself in her best, her one weakness being her coquettishness and liked to appear young and beautiful in the eyes of men. She was about 40 years of age and Mr Hense 50 yrs. And I was a little over 30 at the time. They had no family, which is not always a blessing. Our conversation lasted until about 11 o’clock as Mr Hense had so many wonderful incidents to relate that they seemed without end. I soon found out that it was all fiction as I also heard afterwards that no-one in the place could believe him therefore he was delighted to get hold of a new chum, so that he opened his heart to its fullest extent. This talk was all about his own greatness, his marvellous courage which became so vigorous at times that it would have astonished Napoleon. Mrs Hense would wink at me now and then when Hense plastered it on too thickly and we would have a good laugh but Hense took no notice. I thought several times what a pity he wasn't a parson.

One of his tales I will give as a sample. He once crossed the Waimakariri River on horseback. This is a very deep and swift river and the horse had to swim several times. When the horse reached mid stream it got tired so Hense got off (I thought for a moment he was going to tell me he walked on water as he stopped a moment in the story to give me time to breathe) then he said “I swam beside the horse for some time but I could see he was nearly done so as quick as lightning I untied the girth and put the saddle on my own back and struck out for land as I could do no more. But,”-continued Hense, “I thought the saddle seemed rather heavy so I looked over my shoulder and what did I see? The horse had a front leg up beside my head and was actually riding on the saddle but I put forth all my strength and reached land thank God.” He gave a bit sigh and looked at me. I said “You can swim well then?” “Yes, like a fish” he answered. This was his last yarn as they were growing worse and worse and he became more excited. I bid them “good evening” and went to bed.

The next morning after breakfast, Mr Hense walked out with me to see if I could find a house, saying meanwhile that he could guarantee me plenty of work and with all his faults, he did what he could. We went to see some people who had a house to let and as we were talking the woman asked Mr Hense how long he had been out here, “Fifteen years,” he said. “Then how is it that you speak such bad English” asked the woman? “Your wife speaks much better.” “My wife can read, got good eyes,” answered Hense. I could see that it hurt his feelings and when we got outside Hense said to me “She thinks she knows something about English. I can speak better English than she.” However we succeeded in getting a house, 2 rooms with 2½ acres of land attached; the rent being 4s per week.

Mr Hense wanted me to stop another night at his place. Undoubtedly he had more of his wonderful adventures to relate but as my appetite in that direction was quite satisfied I made up my mind to walk home to my wife that night, as I longed to tell her all about our new home.

Oxford was not then what it is now, although it was an old settlement. The scarcity of building and fencing material for the great Canterbury Plains had caused the place to be opened for settlement long before my arrival. There were two stores in West Oxford and one in East and three hotels. The latter did great business and there was much road traffic going on all year round. A hundred teams passing in a day was no uncommon occurrence and wagons and farmers would come up from Christchurch and even from Rakaia and stay at the hotels at night while loading up. There were four sawmills there at the time although they were on a small scale and they employed a large number of men and I am inclined to believe that the inhabitants’ thirst for beer and whisky was much greater in those days than now. The hotels got nearly all the ready cash. The storekeepers had to struggle the best way they could everything being more on the truck system than anything else. He had



left to right back:
Christian, Louis,
Theodore, William,
Albert
front:
Juliana, Frank, Dagmar
LAUGESEN
Christchurch 1891.



Haystacking 1890s ~ Photo Kaikoura Museum.

to take posts, rails, stakes or firewood from the bushman in exchange for stores and again exchange the same with the farmers for other produce such as potatoes, chaff, eggs and butter. How the storekeepers managed to pay their bills I am not supposed to know but money was indeed very scarce.

I am now on my way home to my family and cannot write more on the district at present. I half ran and walked those 24 miles - I was so happy I could leave the farm and have my freedom, being my chief reason for coming to New Zealand. I was almost sorry that the people had been so kind to me they been the other way I should not have felt bad leaving them as I did but I could not help it. Our duty to ourselves must certainly come first. I comforted myself with the thought that John could soon get a better man than me. I reached home shortly after dark and of course had many things to tell about my travels. The country was still so new to us and we had seen so little of it. Now as I write this down, I still love this beautiful land and I think it would be harder for me to leave this country that it was to leave my first boss.

I left him the following week. My wife and children got into a wagon and off we went. We were very pleased to get into a house of our own once more and I could go to work where I liked. That same night a man came to my house and asked me if I wanted work. I told him I did and he asked me if I could use a shovel, at the same time taking up the position stooping a little and lifting up both arms as though in the act. But I understood him quite well without the performance though of course it was well meant. I could do shovel work and it was agreed he should give me 7s a day starting next morning. I was to work in a shingle pit but how to find the pit was the next difficulty. But Mr Flanagan, for that was his name, soon got over that. He said "Can you find the road you came on?" "Yes," I answered. "Well you go on until you see a sack on a corner post then turn to your left. Keep on then until you see a sack on your right, turn then always to the same side as the sack. A little up that road to the left and you will find the pit."

He must have placed all those sacks on his way home as I found them all there next morning and the pit also. I worked for Mr Flanagan for two weeks then his contract was finished. The same night I left him two other contractors came and wanted me. As I could work for only one at a time I chose to go to Mr Merton, a German. I worked for him for a long time, I believe about two years. Mr Merton was an honest and good man. He had a son about 20 yrs of age - George. This young man I especially thought a lot of. He had higher and nobler ideals than most young men had in general, whom I had met. So we became good friends and really enjoyed working together although it was hard. Of course, Adam was cursed to work but if he had filled shingle as much and as long as I had, I don't think his age would have reached my hundred year.

I lived in the little house I had rented for some time, then I bought six acres of burnt bush land. Lassen, my countryman, had in the meantime come to Oxford also and I let him have half my land, as we helped each other as far as possible. We each built a house, made gardens and settled down as neighbours in our new homes, quite close to that great man, Mr Hense. But it was good luck for Hense that a man named Cain came and lived between Lassen and Mr Hense as Hense turned out a most disagreeable neighbour, and although a little man, Mr Cain soon settled him, not in a very gentle manner either.

The trouble came to pass through Mrs McCain having a few words with Hense and Cain took his wife's part. Hense came out of his house with the leg of a chair undoubtedly to frighten Mr Cain but the plucky little Irishman stood his ground so there was nothing for Hense to do but to strike, but Cain was on his guard, got the chair leg from the great swimmer - treated him according to Irish fashion. Hense got one of his arms broken in the affray and Mrs Hense even got a mark across her face as she tried to assist her husband. I was working in my garden a few chains off

but as Mr Cain had been very kind and good to me I decided to let them alone, although I did not expect the affair to become so serious as it did.

It was a good thing I did not interfere otherwise I should be called into court. My opinion is that if two men fight, it is just the same as two nations at war. Both sides have faults, more or less. Although I pitied them both, I could not help laughing as Mr Hense came out like a roaring lion but was obviously frightened when he should strike thinking perhaps that he might kill Cain. I have no national hatred towards the Irish but confess I had a little towards the Germans having been at war with them in 1864. Therefore I looked upon this affair as a war between Germany and Ireland but Pat became the victor. Although Hense had the advantage in the subsequent court case, Cain disappeared without paying the fine or costs. Shortly after, Hense sold out and went away, probably his proud spirit broke. He always had such a high opinion of his own strength that it must have been a hard blow to him to get such a disappointment.

After I had been in the colony about two years a great influx of immigrants set in illustrating the government's free immigration scheme. So many different nationalities came to Oxford that the place became a real Babel. I am sorry to say that the majority of them were of a class that never should have been allowed to land in the colony. Most of them, of course, have passed away by now and their children make good colonists but for the time being, Oxford became a hotbed of crimes of all sorts, some of which I shall have to relate further on.

Up to the time those immigrants appeared, the people of Oxford were very good and kind. There came especially a lot of Austrians, who for a long time were more harmful than beneficial. In the first place they were all weavers coming from a manufacturing town in Bohemia. They were very poor and low in morals though the worst feature of all was that they did not know how to work and it was very hard for some of them for a few years but as they could live very cheaply they soon got on better. Sauerkraut was their chief food and they understood how to grow good cabbages of which this dish consists. I never tasted it myself but once saw a family preserving cabbages for this purpose. They had a great stack of cabbages cut up on the floor and a man stood in a cask with bare feet and tramped the cabbages together while a woman was filling in the cabbages and salt. She also emptied out all the superfluous water from the cask. I must here say the man's feet were perfectly clean and he was dressed in a snow white overall. The cabbage is then left in pickle until wanted and then bottled for use.

Before the Austrians came we used to throw our tools down anywhere when we left off work but after their advent, we had to hide them well. Even the storekeepers had to be very careful what they had lying on their counters when these light fingered people were about. But they soon came under the strict justice which is a special credit to the English nation. I must say, as far as my knowledge reaches, there is more security for life and property where the union jack flies. Otherwise of course, we can find fault with them as with other nations and it would be ignorance to think otherwise.

I worked on and off for Mr Merton for about two years and occasionally taking other work and contracts for a change. In the harvest fields, as it must be remembered in those days the tying was done by hand - the men generally going in gangs of five or six, during the first year I went alone, as I came in contact with two farmers on the plains. Their names were Stevens and Winter. I hope they are still alive. They lived near Carlton Station on a large sheep run. The railway station of that name had not yet appeared.



East Oxford Creamery, Opened 1893 ~ Photo Oxford Museum.



BNZ Oxford
1900s ~ Photo
Oxford Museum.

These two farmers agreed to give me all I could earn at 9s per acre and found if I would help to cart in at 1s per hour. Small farmers at that time had great difficulty to get a man to cart in the corn until all the tying was over. There was a gang of five men from Rangiora who had taken all the "tying" on condition that I got my part as I started one week before them.

I arrived at Mr Winter's place one Monday afternoon and was shown a paddock of wheat of about 10 acres. It was a pretty heavy crop so I started right away and by Saturday afternoon I had it tied and stacked. Mr Hense had been careful enough to warn me that I should be on the lookout or the farmers would swindle me. This warning I found quite unnecessary as not one tried to defraud me - on the contrary I found them most honourable and kind but abiding by the warning, went into Mr Winter's before I went home and asked him to pay me for the 10 acres I had tied. He looked a little surprised as it was not usual to pay the men before harvesting was over but Mr Winters was equal to the occasion. He opened a little corner cupboard and gave me a £5 note and told me not to forget to come on Monday morning as there were a good many more £5 notes. He never forgot this little incident and we often laughed over it when we met.



FREE PASSAGE.

EMIGRATION to NEW ZEALAND.

The Directors of the New Zealand Land Company hereby give notice that they are ready to receive applications for a Free Passage to their FIRST and PRINCIPAL SETTLEMENT, from Mechanics, Gardeners, and Agricultural Labourers, being married, and not exceeding 30 years of age. Strict inquiry will be made as to qualifications and character. The Company's Emigrant Ships will sail from England early in September next. Further particulars and printed forms of application may be obtained at the Company's Offices.

By order of the Directors,
JOHN WARD, Secretary.

No. 1 Adam street, Adelphi,
June 15, 1839.

I sometimes think of those old friends. They treated me very well and if those men still live and should happen to read this book, they will at least see that I have not forgotten them.

I was a strong, happy, young man in those days and time passed in jokes and pleasure but many a dark cloud has darkened the horizon of my life since but what would life be without them? Between those dark clouds we appreciate the golden rays which otherwise would not be seen.

I tied by night and carted in my day and I remember in one week I worked 20 hours out of 24 right through. The last two days in that week I could not sleep at night. Those five men that had the contract slept on the floor of the same room I slept in or proposed to sleep. I would watch 'till they were sleeping and then steal out and do a couple of acres. One morning Mr Stevens came out to the paddock at daybreak. He thought he heard the horses in the oats but it was only myself. I had tied all night and was stacking it up.

"Oh man" he said. "You must not do it - you will kill yourself." But I know Mr Stevens will be glad to know I am not dead yet. I worked three harvests for those gentlemen but it was not all pleasure as I shall explain. I always took the contract and got 4 or 5 men. The first day or two it was alright but when your hands got full of blisters, the skin round your nails raw and covered with thistles, then the trials commenced but our hearts were brave. All old colonists will agree with me that the 'self binder' was one of the greatest of blessings not alone to the farmers but humanity in general.

One year when we had done harvesting at Oxford, we went down to Rakaia as it had been a wet harvest and there were not enough hands to be had. So a party of us went down; Neilson (a Swede), Johansen (a Dane) and myself. There was now a railway to Rakaia so we took the train down. I had no time· to lose, my overdraft in the bank was £30 and I had to make it up



Traction Engine, Harvesting ~ Photo Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

during harvest. Rakaia was not much in those days; one hotel, a boarding house, a store and a small hall about 10 chains away from the hotel where those who spent their cheques could go over in the daytime and sleep off their beer and I must say it was patronised very freely.

We had no time to patronise that place although it looked rather inviting when the days were hot and dusty. We went out into the country and came to a big farm. The manager's name was Mr Brown. He was busy painting a buggy when we approached. I asked him if he wanted any 'tiers'. He said "yes, all I can get. I have five reapers working and only 27 tiers." He told us about four miles out was a paddock of oat barley and we could start there. He paid 8s an acre. "If there is anything you want I am going into Rakaia and can get it for you" said Mr Brown. He was a very kind man so we told him what we wanted and away we went. We found the barley paddock and started to work. Presently Mr Brown came driving along in his buggy and brought us our "tucker". He got out of his trap, shifted a few sheaves and said "That's right, if you keep on like this there will be no trouble." This was the last we saw of Mr Brown until the paddock was finished which did not take us long though we had some rough experiences before we were long at it.

The first night it set in raining very heavily and as it was all an open plain, all shelter to be found for miles around were barbedwire fences. We slept in three different departments. Johansen and myself had a stack each but Nielson, who was always most particular as regards his personal comfort, built himself an arch over a ditch near a wire fence. I could not sleep having been a poor sleeper at the best of times and under these circumstances it was quite impossible. I was wet to the skin before I turned out of my stack. I lit my pipe and walked about to keep myself warm as a very cold wind was blowing, I went over to my mates to see how they were faring. It took me some time before I could find Johansen as it was so very dark. At last I found him lying in the open field on his back snoring away as sweetly as though he lay in bed. His stack had blown clear away. I called him and he asked if it was time to get up. He soon became acquainted with his position as he shook like a leaf.

I next proceeded to find Neilson who was sleeping in the ditch. He was very proud and boasted of his better sense of precaution. It always seemed to him that he was very clever; he had no room to spare in his little cabin so Johanson and I walked about until we got warm then we put up a shelter of sheaves and sat behind. Johansen soon fell to sleep again and did not wake before he heard me laughing at Neilson, who crawled out of his ditch saying it was full of water. However, it was only a light shower and towards morning it cleared up, the bright warm sun soon put new life into us.

Breakfast was served and about 4 o'clock work commenced. Neilson objected at first, saying the sheaves were too wet. But as I told him we also were wet and would dry sooner moving about than sitting still. All went well and we got to work - the water soon went away.

A "nor-wester" started the next night and dried everything pretty well, in fact rather too much. We had no drinking water except what we got out of an old tank where there had once stood a hut and it played up with my two mates who both got dysentery very badly which weakened them to an awful degree. I never drank anything but tea so I could laugh at their calamity. We did this paddock in about four days and shifted into an oat paddock near the homestead. Here we had a loft to sleep in and were very comfortable and could get our billy boiled in the kitchen.

But the boiling of this billy cost us both trouble and amusement. Johansen and Nielson always attended to it, but after two days they both refused to go as they said they would rather drink water than go in there and be teased. All the working people had their dinner in there, numbering about fifty - a very rough

lot they were. Now when I look back I think they were about the roughest lot I ever came across in New Zealand. Several of them had just got out of gaol and all, without exception, were just making a cheque to go to spend in the hotel and go to sleep in that little hall.

There was, in particular, a tall Irishman who was one of the last arrivals from Lyttelton, who always seemed to enjoy a laugh at Johansen's expense. Johansen was a strong man and I can say a good man but he had the misfortune to have an accident to one of his eyes which did not improve his appearance. I proposed they should draw lots. He who drew the longest straw should go in with the billy but it was no good - both refused to go so I had to go if I wanted my tea. I felt a little put out with that Irishman and I promised Johansen if he tried to take "rises" out of me I would pay him back come what may. I went in, put my billy on the stove, then sat down and lit my pipe. The tall fellow sat at the end of the table eating potatoes and mutton. He looked at me several times before he found a subject to attach me. Then looking towards his companions he started "Have you heard," he said, "That Germany and France are to have another war? Bismarck has given orders that all Germans out here shall be sent home." They all laughed and he looked at me as he undoubtedly thought he was very smart. I was not a German but it was meant for me.

"Yes, my friend" I said, "we are undoubtedly going to have bad times as the last news is likely to be muddled up in the affair and Gladstone had given orders that all Irishmen, especially the wildest of them, shall be sent home at once - so you and me may perhaps have the chance to meet in business yet."

Then a laugh commenced at his expense but he never answered a word. Someone from the other end of the table called out "Oh you found your match mate," then another laugh. My billy boiled, I put in some tea and went out and Matt (as they called him) never tried to make fun of any of us. I had the pleasure of hearing Mr Brown call that gentleman out a few days after and tell him he was not wanted again. So Matt departed.

We had started, as I said, near the homestead in a paddock of oats of about 100 acres that had not been mown for sometime. It was the last of all the crop to be tied. There were 27 tiers in one lot so we three had to look smart to get as much done as possible. Therefore, when Saturday night came all the other lot who lived in the district went home but we kept on tying 'till Sunday morning. Then we went to bed and slept in pretty late as we needed rest after 24 hours of strenuous labour. It was fine weather and moonlight. That Sunday evening we started tying and kept on 'till Monday morning. We had tied about 9 acres while the other lot were at home. So they said some pretty strong expressions when they came on Monday morning but we had taken in our piece all round and they were compelled by the measurement to let us finish. In three days more all the tying was done.

A survey party who were surveying West Rakaia township had to survey the area we had worked. I was one of the last to go to Mr Brown for my cheque but instead of £29 Mr Brown gave me a cheque for only £12. I told him there was a big mistake which he could see but he told me the surveyor's account and could do nothing about it. He said "I suppose you want to go home?" "Yes," I answered, "as soon as I can." "Well you take the account" he said "and go about two miles out in a certain direction and you will find the surveyors at work at the township. I am going to Rakaia," continued Mr Brown, "as I have a new threshing machine arriving from England, so I must go but I will pay you there. Then you can go home with the afternoon train."

I must say I was a little excited about it as we had worked hard for our money and the other fellows may have got some of our money, the greater number of them now being in the hotel preparing for a rest in the little hall close by. I ran all the way over to the surveyors but to my satisfaction it was found out that



Farmers at work Canterbury 1890s ~ Photo Te Papa Museum.



William Glassey DOYLE, hunting in Canterbury ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE.

they had made a mistake. I got another account and went off full sail towards Rakaia.

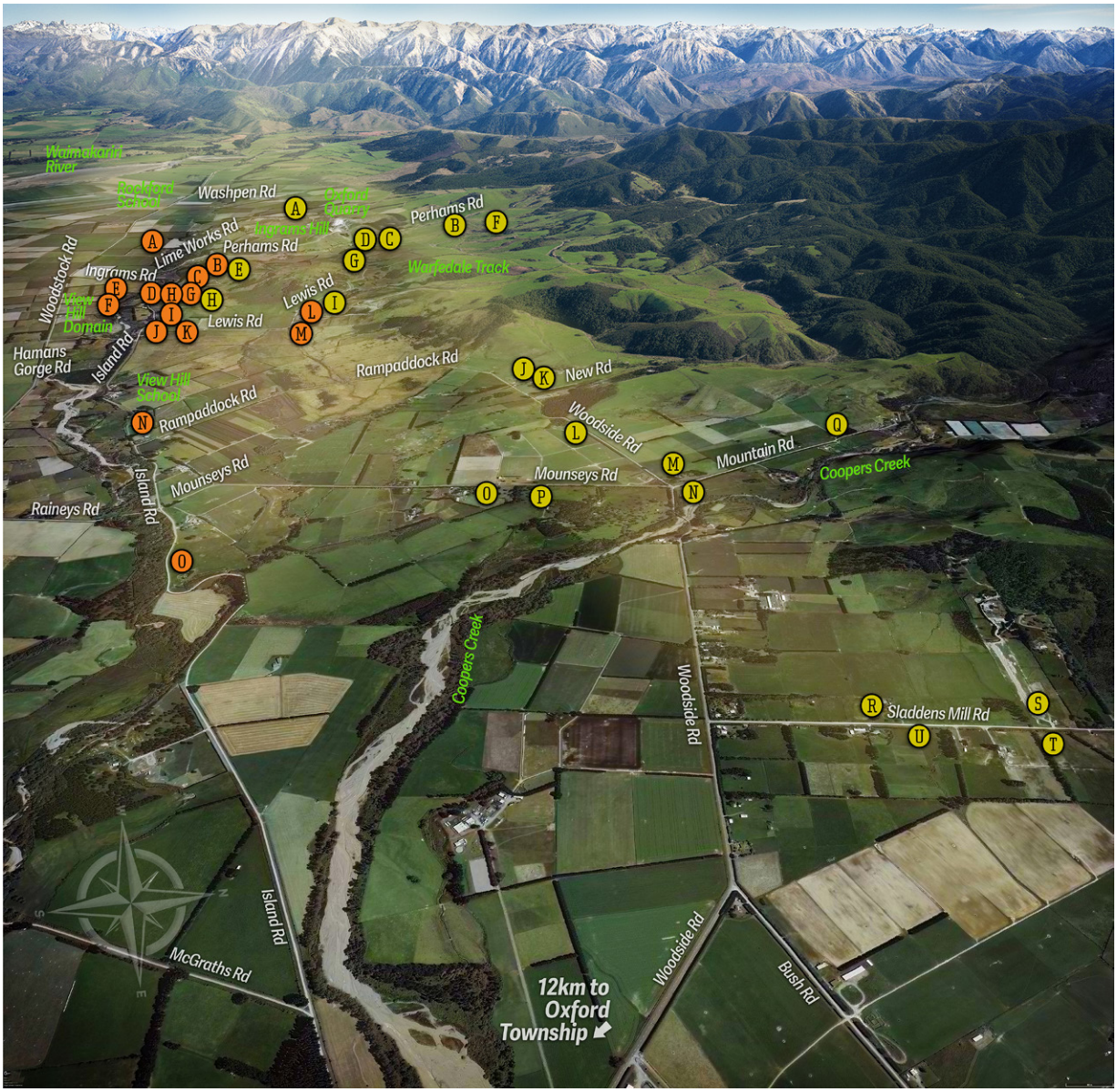
My mates, being already on the way with our swags I found Mr Brown and gave him the correct account. He said "I expect you thought we were going to humbug you but it was a mistake. Come in here and I will pay you." We went into a private room off the hotel and he gave me a cheque and receipt to sign. I had not looked at the cheque but when I looked at the receipt I noticed the amount was £49 instead of £29. I looked at the cheque. "Anything wrong" asked Mr Brown. "Rather" I said, "but not to my harm this time." He took the cheque and tore it up and gave me another. "You see," he said "I should have lost £20 if you had not told me. It is very seldom I meet people of your sort. Now look here," he continued, "are you going to do harvesting next year?" "Yes." "Well then" he said, "I shall have 1,000 acres in crop and if you want the job write to me about Christmas time". "I shall send you my price and you can bring 20 or so men with you. I think you are good men up there."

As the bank was about to close we said goodbye. That was Mr W.W. Brown and I admired him. I could have done anything for him. I could have gone into the hottest battle with a leader like him. I have known a few men of the same type and I know them when I meet them but sorry to say there are only a few. This was my very last harvesting experience. So I did not write to Mr Brown. The train left before I got my cheque changed so we had to stay at Rakaia 'till next morning. As we did not care for too select company we did not go up to the little hall on the hill but preferred the river bed. The weather being dry and fine, we were quite comfortable. Next morning we got away to Oxford. I paid my overdraft at the bank and glad. But now I have gone a few years ahead of my story as I have many things to relate which had occurred long before this but as it mostly included my experiences in this direction I thought it best to follow up the harvesting to the end.



Home Christian built on 3 Acres at the end of Bay Rd in Oxford abt 1879 ~ Photo From 'A Driving Force' pub 2001.

Oxford Homes and Mills in 1870



Sawmills

- Ⓐ LACE
- Ⓑ BUNN
- Ⓒ BOOTH
- Ⓓ LAUGESEN
- Ⓔ INGRAM & WHITE
- Ⓕ PERHAM
- Ⓖ FEARY
- Ⓗ YOUNGMAN
- Ⓘ FEARY
- Ⓙ YOUNGMAN
- Ⓚ ROSSITER
- Ⓛ BAXTER
- Ⓜ ROSSITER
- Ⓝ VALLANCE
- Ⓞ HAMILTON
- Ⓟ COOPER
- Ⓠ RYDE
- Ⓡ SLADDEN
- Ⓢ SHARPLIN
- Ⓣ PETRIE
- Ⓤ JENSEN

Homesteads

- Ⓐ J.R.GORTON
- Ⓑ ALF BONISCH
- Ⓒ BUNN
- Ⓓ FORDEN
- Ⓔ FERGUSON
- Ⓕ FFITCH
- Ⓖ PLASKETT'S MILL
- Ⓗ MRS ELLIOT
- Ⓘ CLARK
- Ⓙ BUTCHER
- Ⓚ BLACKSMITH
- Ⓛ DAY
- Ⓜ ZIMMERMAN
- Ⓝ BAXTER
- Ⓞ MOUNSEY

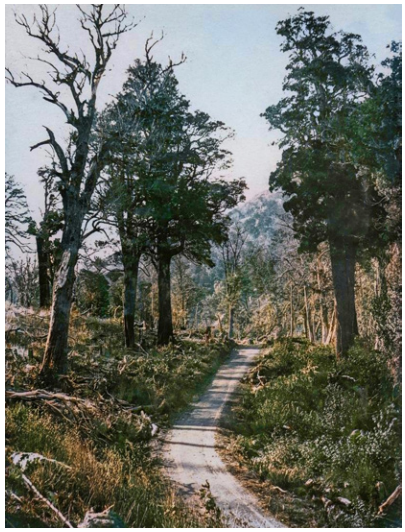
LAUGESENS is not shown as its closer to the township



Chapter VI

After I had been in Oxford 2½ years I had a two-roomed house and three acres of land about one acre being in nice garden, half of which was planted in fruit trees. I had cleared the garden, mostly in the evenings when I came home from the gravel pit. I remember often when it was moonlight I would work 'till eleven o'clock in the evening or even longer until my good wife would call me in and tell me not to work anymore.

Yes "youth, if thou had wisdom. Old age, if thou had strength, who would be like unto you" as nature will surely send in bill of fare some time or other. I have been pretty lucky so far but she has sometimes given me a few gentle hints that I have an account to settle.



Puhi Puhi Bush ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE.

I worked at a sawmill close to my house for a while. We had 7s a day and worked 10 hours. I thought it was splendid but we could not get our money regularly. One Christmas while I worked in this mill the manager or foreman asked me if I could cut hay, I said I could so he wanted me to help him to cut his hay during the Christmas holidays. I was always willing to earn money, also the mill did not start again before the new year. I had plenty of time. He agreed to give me the same pay I was getting in the mill and plenty to eat and drink so I accepted his offer. He was supposed to help me but he did not get much time. There were about ten acres to be cut but he was drinking beer and rum every day and complained he could not stand the stooping and indeed there was danger he should fall. He was a tall man and seemed much out of balances, especially in the afternoons. He kept his word about giving me plenty to eat and drink especially the latter. I could not drink enough for his satisfaction. He would rig himself out in his wife's bonnet and pinafore and in one hand held a plate of sandwiches and in the other half a bucket of beer. He said it was no use bringing a bottle of beer to a working man. He would come dancing down to me and singing in a tenor key and so day after day went past. When his jar got empty he would go and get it filled. In the meantime I got the grass down and then we should cart it in.

On one of the last days of the year this man engaged two bullock drivers with teams and dray to assist. Crettin (this was the man's name) was in the whare singing for the men while they had a good wash down of beer. I was called in to hear the concert, as he thought I had a fancy for singing. "Come in Louis" he called. "Let us have a bit of fun first, we can easily get that jolly hay in and if we don't get it in never mind, Christmas comes but once a year. I want you to sing. Plenty of beer and plenty of rum and if you want whiskey, one of those fellows can drive down and get a hog's head and we'll have a jolly spree." I told him I thought it best to see to the hay as the wind might rise. "Bother the wind" he said "we must have something before we start." But we had hardly begun our concert before a "nor-wester" began to blow with such fury that it sent the hay all over the paddock and over the fences onto his neighbour's land. Crettin held up his arms and said "Hip, hip hooray.

Now a fellow can have time to have his beer. Come on Louis, have something to eat and drink. You

mustn't think I am a bad boss. Here man, bring the money box. I will pay you up to the very time the devil took the hay." He paid me and would persist that I be paid up 'till 10 o'clock as he said that was the time old Nick came for the hay. "Thank God," he said "I have got my hay harvested". He was as happy as a king. I wonder if he felt so happy next morning.

This was about the time when the railway was under construction to Oxford and more life was evident for a time. The land fever had also set in and I got a touch of it too. But a man never knows when he is well off. If I had stopped at those three acres and kept on contracting - as it was first then that Government money came in to the Road Board by the thousands, I could have been living there in comfort to the present day and been free from so much worry and hard work. But man must live according to his mind - and now I must introduce Mr Rasmussen or "Roast Mutton" as he was often called.

It was not that he was a great personality but he was the most peculiar looking person I think that was every imported into this country. He was a born clown, not alone in appearance but in every action. He could have joined any circus without rehearsing and done well. The first day I saw this gentleman was one day I was walking along the road in East Oxford. It was a few weeks after a batch of immigrants had arrived and I met a young fellow carrying half a sheep on his back. He was under medium height with eyes of the almond type and wearing a slouch hat and a coat of swallow tail type. Its colour I could not tell. His toes went in and his heels went out with that peculiarity that you could see the soles of his boots as he walked on the uppers. Of course, every man has the right to walk as he likes but I would advise all young men to practise good walking as it acts much upon your character, health and appearance. However, I was so astonished at this young man's appearance that I stopped when I had passed him and looked at him as he proceeded on the gentle promenade. If he felt I was observing him I do not know as any observer will know that you can often turn another's glance upon you in the street or at a gathering by steadily looking at them. So the object of my glances made a dead stop, placed his toes in position, bent his knees a little, turned his head with the broad hat on and gazed at me. I could not help breaking into a laugh and went my way.

I had no idea he was a countryman of mine neither could I guess that beneath that rough coat and above those crooked boots, beat an honest and noble heart which would put to shame even many who preach the gospel. The following Sunday a Dane came to see me and brought this Rasmussen with him to introduce us as a newcomer, when he cannot speak the English language, always likes to meet one who has come before him. Of course, I must confess, I did



Viggo RASMUSSEN and his wife Lily.

not always approve of these visitors as their character was not all that could be desired, but if they were decent men I would always give them my first advice and sometimes a little help. But the worst feature was if you helped one he would tell a lot more and you would get too many who wanted help.

So I was introduced to Herr Rasmussen. He told me he was 18 years of age although he was already bald. He said his father was a schoolmaster on the west coast of Jutland (this latter was his constant brag). Then he said his father sent him to sea but I could understand from what he told me that the mate and captain of that ship were always busy with some rope ends on certain portions of his body which of course his dignity could not agree to and when I looked at him I could quite understand that as a sailor he would not shape well. He told me also that he was a chemist's apprentice but was dismissed within 12 months - over which I could not wonder - but I wondered most that he did not break all the chemist's bottles in less time than that. I asked him where he was working now and he said for the "Rhubarb". I was puzzled a little but found that he meant the Road Board but he said he had got the sack. The thing was that the poor fellow could not work, so I felt sorry for him and told him he could come to me - he could dig in my garden and learn to work. I would pay him what he could earn and let him stop with us 'till he could get something to do. This he did and soon got a job in a sawmill to wheel away sawdust and carry slabs. This he could do as he was pretty strong. I shall leave him here for the present.

About the time I arrived, a young man by the name of John Ingram came to Oxford to live. He had

lost his left arm in a flaxmill at Glentin. At Oxford he started a land agent and timber merchant. He had no capital and things were at that time in a very bad state in the place and he had a hard struggle to work up a business, as people made quite a practice of going through the court and he had several heavy losses but he was a splendid business man, well adapted for his undertaking and I can mention here that to him, Oxford owes much of its prosperity. I cannot speak too highly of Mr Ingram as with all my experience in the colony I have not met with a better man or one more pushing. Many men posses the faculty of making money for themselves without feeling for their fellow men. But this point Mr Ingram always studied. He would help anyone he could trust and give his best advice, as there was no legal advice in the place and he was pretty well acquainted with the law. He did a good deal of good for the population and was liked and respected by everyone. As time went on he did well for himself.

When the railroad was first laid to Oxford, Oxford was divided into East and West and a great blunder was made by laying the railway to both points the stations being only a mile apart. There was but a small population there at this time but the people in the West wanted the station there and the people in the East wanted it there. So both parties petitioned the Government with the result that each got satisfaction. West Oxford got the main station; East got a siding but by and by East got a Goods Shed and Telegraph Office. Had the station been built in the centre it would have made a place of it but now it is scattered and always will be besides being extra expense to the Railway Dept.

About this time a land fever broke out at Oxford and I got smitten with the disease. Everyone wanted to buy land and they who had sense enough, wanted to sell. A man by the name of W.Wilson hung onto me and talked me over to buy his land - 30 acres - as I was a "new chum". I should give £10 per acre, £100 down and the remainder in two years. It was undulating to broken land, partly worked out in the front but was only a mile from East Oxford Station. Wilson told me it was a bargain but I found to my dismay that he had the best of the bargain as I discovered he had picked out all of the best splitting timber all over and I was unacquainted with bushland at that time. I had a desire to make money and as the railway was finished and fencing material in good demand, I thought here was my chance! Little I knew that here my first experience should take 16 years of my life's hard work and so many misfortunes. At the end of that time left me in the same position as when I first came to the colony. I had, as I have said, my little home free and £100 cash which I paid to Mr Wilson and then I started business.

The section I bought laid about a mile from where I was living so it was within easy distance from my home. On the section was a tramway running in about 30 chains a little uphill grade all the way, except a couple of chains in a cutting. There was also a small trolley - a man could push it up - that is if he was not a lazy man. When I came to the trolley I could put on a cord of firewood or some quantity of posts or rails and then jump on behind and in a couple of minutes would be down to the road. It was a good tramline and trolley and the latter could not come off except if a piece of wood should happen to fall in front of it. Many a spill did I have but a wonder that I did not get hurt. For so many times I was hurled yards over the load or mixed up in it and much fun I had when people came to see me. I would ask them to jump on and have a ride down which was gladly generally accepted the first time but seldom the second. They usually said "thankyou I'd rather walk." But I must say - the speed - if not checked by the brake, was rather faster than most nerves could stand but a man can get used to everything except dying and that will always be against his nature.

The reason I went at such a rate was because I wanted to manage a cutting which had an upgrade



right to left: Christian, Albert, Willie, Theodore (behind), Frank, Fredrick. Back row: unknown workers. Taken between 1906 & 1909 ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE.



Doyles crossing The Puhi Puhi River, Kaikoura 1890s ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE.

when coming from the bush and if I did not come at a good speed I would have to push the trolley through. When I first got over this, I could put my foot on the brake and slacken the speed down to the road. But many, many a time I have had to go on my knees and push the trolley up this cutting inch by inch, especially when the weather was damp or half dry, for when raining or frosty, nothing could stop it, not even the brake and several times my trolley would run right through the fence on to the road. But, this only happened once when carrying passengers. One German fell off at the back and the other dived into the road though neither got hurt. I asked the latter for his 'ticket' but he did not want any fun and walked away mumbling to himself in German but he's never asked me for a ride since. I quite acknowledge that had the same legislation been in force then as now, I should have taken more care and not run away with either Germans or Englishmen at that rate.

I usually had six or eight men working for me and for three months I had as many as fourteen. I could run out about 10 cords of wood or a thousand posts and rails and about 600 posts per day but it was hard work and we never thought of having a half holiday. A day at that time was not measured by eight hours. There was also more freedom than we enjoy now. A man could work as long as he liked for whom he liked. When you told a man you did not want him anymore and paid him his wages, there was not a useless lot of men jabbering together as an Arbitration Board and if a man chopped off his finger he could not come on his employer for compensation, consequently he was more careful than he is today.

I spoke to a young man recently who worked in a flaxmill. He had just met with an accident and nearly got his arm torn out but got off with a sore shoulder. I said to him that he could be thankful he did not lose his arm. He said he didn't know, as he would have got £500 if he had lost it. I did not know before, that was the price a colonial set on his arm. It seems to me that as soon as a man has real freedom he does his best to get the chains of bondage round him again. Thousands of years passed our forefathers fought and from pole to pole streams of blood have flowed for the same cause. Through the dust and thunder of battle and through the clouds of gunpowder they saw the first rays of the light of freedom and as soon as the light had come to shine at its fullest splendour on the bright English Empire, then the Socialists and the unions started. Strikes commenced and dissatisfaction of every kind set in. We sing "Britains never shall be slaves." Do many of those who sing it know what they sing? We know very well he will never be a slave like the Negro but we have many kinds of slaves and it is well known that a great number of Negroes were happier in slavery than in freedom.

So Britains perhaps were happier in their days of trials than of freedom, because then they had something to look forward to and hope for but when the goal was reached they became slaves to fashion, pride, society and luxuries. Now they have 20,000 in London worse than slaves. They are beggars. They don't know in the morning where to get their next meal. I read a short time ago that 30,000 in London were only half fed. Now if we compare this land with our sunny New Zealand where have you got your freedom that you sing so much about? I will admit that you had it once but you have lost it and why? Because we became too well off. This country is perhaps the finest in the world therefore man has grown above his station. He cannot get enough wages, it costs him too much to live and he must have a weekly half-holiday. Fashions must be kept up, 'Woman' and 'servants' have given place to 'Ladies' and 'Ladyships'. Young men who used to go to their situations with a swag now carry "Gladstone Bags" and want to drive in motorcars. If he has any spare cash he goes to the racecourse to spend it. Of course he belongs to a union, attends the meetings and makes out he is not receiving enough wages.

Everything is in their own hands, as the Court I have mentioned must favour them or they go out

on strike. So he gets his extra shilling or whatever it might be and at the same time everything goes up accordingly; bread, meat, house rent etc. He has gained a shilling a day in his wages but it costs him now eighteen pence more a day to live. Next he says we have too long hours hence the early closing. Where, I ask, is your "freedom"? When you cannot employ who you like - you cannot open or close your door when you like. You cannot have your own son to help except if he is registered under the "factory act". You must pay 5s a year to be under its law. If a poor woman has a daughter who helps her earn an honest living her home is a factory and subject to its regulations.

I know wherein we have certainly too much freedom and which concerns both young and old and this is what I may call "holiday making". They can hang about on street corners and in hotels for months. As they are not caught house-breaking or drunk, the police cannot interfere with their freedom. They can stop as long as they can pay for their board, no matter where they get their money from. These young men and women are in training as it were, with other fellows and in most cases not of the best kind and this must have a bad influence on their whole life and is the road to the unemployed question.

I know countries where the police have the power (after a day or two) to ask such from whence they came and what was their object in view. If they could give a satisfactory answer they would be left alone and if not, they would get a gentle hint to make themselves scarce, the sooner the better.

There are no end of Acts and Regulations at the present time which interferes more or less with freedom and undoubtedly most of them will end in a smash up. There is always danger if we drive too fast. I believe that the Political Chariot in New Zealand is being driven too recklessly at present and nothing short of great depression will regulate its progress.

The last information I gave of my own affairs was when the Germans had a bit of a spill, so I continue from there. I always make mistakes and I made one when I bought that bush and started to work in it. If I had got a good man to work with me I could have had employment for years near my home and had more profit out of it. But I first saw this afterwards. At the time I felt very proud of being able to employ so many hands. I liked to take a lot of money in, although only a little of it was my own.

I knew one German who had £300 in the bank when I had none. He and his son had worked for me for years. I found out that I had the hardest of the work and the least of the profit. After I had worked on the section about 9 months two bush fires broke out; one in East Oxford and one in West simultaneously. I was at work trolleying when I saw the fire start a little to the west of my home. Not knowing that another fire was advancing on the other side of the hill at the back of me I left and went home to protect my house and when I got home and was further from the hill I could see the other fire coming towards my bush in great force. As I found the fire that had threatened my house still far away, I turned back to my bush but was too late to save anything as before I reached it, it was all in flames. I had about 50 cords of firewood stacked beside the road, 2,000 posts and rails and some stakes. My trolley, sledge and all my tools and about 40 chains of tramway besides a lot of fencing - all were burnt. The worst of it was I owed my men £25 for wages. This was my first experience of Oxford bushfires and I'm sorry to say it was not my last.

Of course my loss was pretty heavy as I had just started to get on. I calculated £70 to £80 of damage. It was not much if it had been easily made but it had cost me a lot of work. I shall note down in connection with this fire one or two incidents.

There lived at Oxford an old or middle aged bachelor - I will not give his name - but call him Denis. He was a peculiar looking customer. I often wondered why he and Rasmussen did not work in partnership. Denis had



Puhi Puhi Forest Fire
1900s
~ Photo
W.G. DOYLE.



Emilie BRAMMER LAUGESEN.



Sophie BRAMMER LAUGESEN.



Emilie & Sophie LAUGESEN ~ Headstone, Oxford, NZ ~ Photo B. TIPPER.



Laugesens trolleying logs over Jordan River 1911 ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE.

such a peculiar walk. He would come along smart enough but you could not tell whether he was dancing or walking. His legs seemed up to anything except what he wanted them to do. Consequently he often stumbled and then he would run a little ahead to gain his balance. When I went up to my house the second time I noticed something round the haystack which stood near the road. Although heat and smoke was very disagreeable, I stopped to see what it doomed to destruction for I could see fire all over it and sure enough it was dancing Denis with a pitchfork in his hand and a sack over his head. He was hammering the stack wherever he could see fire but the wind was blowing furiously and in a few seconds the whole stack was in flames and if the devil himself had danced around it he could not have saved it. Then Denis ran for his whare without seeing me. He passed a gorse fence and the sack that was on fire on his head was hurled against the fence and it set alight and before he had reached his whare the burning fence had reached it and then he danced in earnest. The story seems long but the whole thing was only a few minutes work. I was in a bad mood as I could see that all my little business was burnt which would take perhaps 12 months to make up but I could not help laughing. Although I was sorry for the poor fellow, it was so comical to look at that it aroused my humour. For a moment I forgot my trouble.



Logs going to Laugesen Mill 1900 ~ Photo Kaikoura Museum.

I could not do anything to save any of my timber and as it looked almost clear from smoke on the top of the hill 5 chains away, I ran up to get a little fresh air, also to see how the fire had spread. There were two small houses on the other side of the hill. They belonged to two Austrians. They were not burnt then but the fire was close round them. There was a valley between where I stood and those two whares. The fire was very fierce and I could not risk to run through. It seemed to me that the danger for those two shanties was over so I did not try to get around and did not see anyone trying to save them but it seems that the Austrians were working very hard digging holes in the ground, carrying clothes and blankets. I took no more notice but went home to tell my wife about my luck and I was surprised when I heard next day that these houses were burnt and the people had lost everything, clothes, blankets and all. So the good people started collecting for them, to get clothes and timber to build new houses and what surprised me most was that they even came to me with their list of subscribers. Their two houses together would cost about £25. They were mortgaged for £50 each and insured for the same. They had ten acres each and gave £5 per acre. The insurance went to pay off land. They got good houses and many good things given to them and had been in the colony only a year. But one of these men soon got tired of life and hanged himself in another man's stable with a bit of flax.

But it was not alone in bushfires that Oxford was renowned, but in accidents and crime as well. I could write a volume about them but I will only say that



William Glassey Doyle and Juliana Laugesens Wedding at 'Jordan House, Puhi Puhi 1905 ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE.

no insurance company had ever profited there. Several companies even went wrong all together but they started again when people got more careful. Bankruptcy was quite common and working men would fail whenever their grocer's or butcher's bills got too high for them. Indeed I knew four men who went and took a good stock of everything in the day before they failed, even luxuries they could do without and the poor storekeepers had to suffer. I had several losses through bankrupts. If you worked in a sawmill you were never sure when the owner would go bankrupt. If you delivered firewood to a poor man cash was seldom paid and when he owed you a £1 or £2, he would fail.

A short time after the first bushfire I built a house on my own section. I built it on a small hill about 100ft above the level. There was plenty of level land to build on below but I am fond of scenery and a good lookout. I could stand on my veranda and look over East and West Oxford and in clear weather could see the cathedral spire in Christchurch. But, for this luxury I had to pay dearly with hard work. I had to carry all the timber up on my back- about 5,000 ft up and the bricks for a double chimney. It lay about six chains from the road and pretty steep. Some people said it was foolery but it was a lovely spot to live in, healthy and free. I would have liked to live there always had circumstances not compelled me to leave. In time, the road was made and I could drive right up to my house.

Shortly after I had built, a young man named John Lee persuaded me to let him lay a sawmill on my land at a yearly rental of £20. As there were several hundred acres of bush at the back of my land and through my place was the only means of access. I worked in the mill as it was close to my home and Lassen also worked in it.

It was while we worked in this mill that a gruesome murder took place.

There was an old Austrian who lived about a quarter of a mile from the mill in the bush. His name was Hoff, was 63 years old and his wife was about 45. There was a bachelor, an Englishman named Barrett, who lived with these people. He was about 50 yrs of age. There seems to have been something out of place between Mrs Hoff and Barrett which made Hoff jealous. Hoff used to work with me and Lassen in the mill but one day he cut his hand and had to go to hospital. He could not speak English very well but often let me know what he thought of Barrett. However, when Hoff came out of hospital his hand was not well enough for him to go to work so he stayed at home with his wife. Barrett was working in the bush in connection with the mill when one morning we saw Hoff's house in flames.

Of course we did not take much notice of a house being burned but I had a boy of about 12 years old who ran down to see what was the matter. When he got up to the burning house he saw a woman lying outside, which of course gave him a fright. He came running back and met Mr Lee and told him what he had seen. So Mr Lee went down and pulled the woman away from the burning house about a chain without noticing whether she was alive or not. A few minutes afterwards Lassen and I came on the scene. We at once went down to the woman, as we heard her groaning. I lifted her hair, which was hung loose, and a frightful gash was in her head which had been made with an axe or tomahawk and a quantity of her brain was hanging out. Hoff was not to be seen and the house was already burnt down. In the meantime



William and Ruth LAUGESEN and family. Puhi Puhi Valley 1904 ~ Photo Kaikoura Museum.

Barrett came from the bush, driven I think by the smoke, when he saw the house was burnt he threw his hat up like a madman and swore at old Hoff saying the old devil had done that. I stood nearest to him and pointed to the well where Mrs Hoff lay but when he got his eyes on her he lost all self control. He ran down, knelt by her side, prayed to God, called her by name and swore at old Hoff. Hoff, it seemed, had tomahawked her inside and put fire to the house intending to burn her but she had managed to get out. Soon the doctor and police arrived to arrest old Hoff.

I have often heard about cowardice in the police force and I do believe there is a good deal of truth in it. The sergeant (McDonald) was as pale as a corpse and I heard him say to the doctor he had not got his revolver with him. Then I said to him that I would go with him to get Hoff. But as I could not speak Austrian one of that nationality was preferred. It proved no hunting was required to find the man. My boy, as I said, had got a fright and gone home and told his mother the whole story then it happened that an Austrian came past my home and my wife told him about the murder and the fire.

"By golly," he said "we must go home quick, Hoff is in my house, my boy Jo make Hoff's gun alright."

Off he went and brought Hoff to the police station. Hoff had gone into the bush with the intention of shooting himself but his gun would not go off so he went to this Austrian's house and got his boy to take out the loading but the boy's father came home before any further mischief had been done. We made a stretcher and four of us carried Mrs Hoff down to the road and she was placed in the doctor's trap and taken to the hotel. That was the last I had to do with the affair. She died next morning without recovering consciousness and after a good deal of court proceedings, Hoff got into Lyttelton gaol where he died a few years afterwards. The most sympathy was felt for Hoff and I was told afterwards that the judges said Barrett deserved the punishment but unfortunately they could not touch him. I have described this affair exactly as it happened - no other person in the district knew it better than I did but I was never asked one question about it nor those who were with me at the time. The police simply picked up anyone on the road, if they had only seen the smoke or seen Hoff a week or two before. A police report was sent to headquarters but the most of it was false. A few days after the affair happened both police came up to the sawmill and as we were talking I happened to say that had my wife not told the Austrian about it they would never have got Hoff. Both looked surprised and shook their heads but it was too late. Had I been summoned their report would have been no good. I write this for the benefit of the police to warn them that they should never be in a hurry over things of this kind. Soon after this a German drank himself to death and Barrett married his widow.

I now come to another little incident in connection with Rasmussen. When last I mentioned him he had got work in a sawmill but when he had made about £6 he fancied he had made a fortune so he tied up his swag and went away from Oxford without saying "goodbye" to anyone. Nothing was heard of him for about 18 months then one winter's evening (I had a few Irishmen working for me forming a road over a swamp) we were just knocking off as it commenced to get dark when we heard a rustling in the flax close by. Then quite suddenly a little crooked being appeared which I can hardly describe. It looked so very comical. It carried a little red bundle under its arm and bent nearly double. It was Rasmussen or rather what was left of him. He had been right down Southland and nearly perished before he got back. His big red blanket had been used, piece by piece, to catch woodhen with which to keep himself alive. He had not more than a couple of square yards left. The way he trapped the woodhen was by taking a square inch of his red blanket and putting it on a fish hook; then he would sit in the scrub and draw in his line. After



Workers cottages and the Jordan Mill, Puhi Puhi ~ Photo Kaikoura Museum.

catching his bird, of course, then came the cooking of it and hence his meal.

Once he was out on the Ashburton plains for two days without food and water. He meant to die, he said, but death did not overtake him so he got up and continued the battle. No-one would give him any work, his appearance was so much against him. A few took pity on him but they soon sent him on his lonely way again. He found a shepherd's hut somewhere in the hills which contained a· sack of flour and some salt. So here he stayed 'till it was finished - baking dampers while the flour lasted, and then he took his red blanket and went forth into the world again. I know the shepherd's would not use the best of language when they appeared in the spring.



Felling Rimu for Timber ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE.

Rasmussen was very timid and especially so of big farmers. If he saw a farmer in a field he would go up to the house and ask for a meal and sometimes he would be lucky enough to get one. But if it was evening he would first of all peep through the window to see if the farmer was in and how he looked before knocking. Sometimes he succeeded but often he was seen by the farmer first and then there was a run for it. Once he lost his billy and another time a pair of boots. He had no time to stop to pick them up, he said, but now he was back he said he would never go away again.

He soon got work and I gave him a pair of boots - in fact he was always short of boots for he never used them as the bootmaker intended. He usually blamed the boots when they got crooked. Rasmussen stayed at my place for a while though he soon got a situation at the "slab sawdust heap" in the sawmill. His greatest faults were towards himself. If he had anything he would help anyone, strangers were taken into his whare and kept for weeks. He would even give them his clothes until he had scarcely anything for his own back. I knew a poor widow who got a quarter of mutton every week for twelve months at Rasmussen's expense. No-one ever lost by him but he always lost through others. So many took advantage of his large heart even borrowing money from him without any intention of paying it back. People would also get him to buy horses that were no good. Rasmussen always had a big butcher's and grocer's account - always working but always in debt and always willing to help.

When Mr Lee, who had his mill on my land, had worked out the bush nearest the mill he gave up sawmilling and sold his plant to Mr Ingram who, together with Mr White, had got the contract to supply the Christchurch Tramway Co. with sleepers which was the time trams first started in Christchurch. Lassen, me and a man named John Brown had the contract to cut the timber. We got a good price, worked well together and made money, our monthly wages being from £20 to £26 each. It sounds very big money but if it were known how hard we worked it would not be thought too much. We worked about 10 hours a day

and often twelve hours. Brown had the easiest time of us all as he had to drive the engine and keep the saws sharp. We had only a 6 horsepower engine and our working gear was not as up-to-date as the sawmills nowadays. We had only a little single breaking down bench. Every big log had to be turned over to cut it through the centre. We had no loose pulleys therefore the saws were always running and water would fly all over the bench all day long.

During the seven months we were there I, especially, was wet to the skin every day as my work was what we call "breaking down". Now, consider it was winter time and the winter at Oxford is very severe. Sometimes we had to shovel the snow off the benches in the morning and thaw our frozen iron bars in the engine. We generally had a lantern in the morning as we men were there a little after 6 o'clock to get everything in order that the saws could keep running for ten hours without stopping and then I had to dive into the water, as it were, straight away; hard at work all the time, lifting or rolling those big logs alone. Lassen was so eager to make money that he always looked angry when I asked him to leave his work for a moment to give me a lift. For that reason I often lifted far above what was reasonable for a man to do. Consequently I suffered a good deal with stiffness in the back when I got up in the mornings. It often took me all my time to dress myself and when I started to work I had to clench my teeth with pain but after I got warmed up I got alright.

Mr John Brown was a bachelor about 45 years old at the time. He was a native of Yorkshire, England and could neither read nor write but he knew how to keep his money. In this respect he suited well with Lassen. Each of them only thought of how much they could save. That was all their pleasure, all their desire. They had no higher ambition, no higher thought of any kind. At this time Brown had about £2,000 in the bank. He had made it all with engine driving. He was all that could be desired as far as honesty went but was always afraid that he should be "taken in". The hardest day of the month was when he should have settlement for his work. You could see suspicion in his eyes all the day before. Lassen always went the first day of the month to Mr Ingram, got his cheque and went to the bank and cashed it. Mr Brown would look anxiously up the road until Lassen came back with the money. The first pay day we thought we could calculate how much each should have but Mr Brown objected. "No," he said "put the money in three stacks", so of course to please him we did and if there was a shilling short or even threepence "Hold on" Brown would say "I have change in my whare". Off he would go and make every stack equal. Brown's eyes would glisten and he would say "That's what I call business - now you can take what you like."

However after four months we had the bad luck to see the mill get burnt out to Lassen's and Brown's great sorrow, of course. I confess I was not pleased but I never take misfortune so close to heart as I had so much. We had to put the mill in order again with our own labour, the firm buying new saws and machinery which replaced that which was destroyed, but, we had to do the work without payment which was rather more than Lassen and Brown could bear. But there was nothing else for it and it had to be done. We then worked a few months until some difficulty occurred with getting the logs down and the mill was stopped and sold. Lassen asked me how much I had saved from the contract. I said "£50" and I thought I had done very well. We had made about £160 each. "And how much have you got?" I asked Lassen. "The lot" he answered. Of course his wife had kept the family by selling butter and eggs. Brown had saved the greatest part of his too. He always put his money in bottles and dug it down in the ground behind his whare. I used to see him after every pay day working there. He deposited his money in the bank in Christchurch when he went down. He would not trust such an insignificant bank as Oxford possessed.

Money is a good medium. You have the pleasure of getting something you need with it. It makes you feel independent. But a



William and his brothers taking logs to LAUGESEN Mill Puhi Puhi 1900 ~ Photo Kaikoura Museum.



Upper Gorge, Jordan River, Puhi Puhi ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE.



Takahanga Domain, Kaikoura, 1900 ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE.



William and co-worker cutting a Log up the Puhi Puhi Valley ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE.

medium in economy in money matters as everything else in life is best. The habit of saving money with many becomes a mania causing more anxiety than pleasure. The man who never buys anything for his money loses the pleasure of helping his fellowmen and is a useless member of the community. In Brown's case this was true and to a great extent in Lassens. How much better the world would be if selfishness were less practised but people in general misunderstand life. They act as though they should live for thousands of years.

Shortly after this, my loving wife died. I am not going to touch much on my family affairs in this narrative but I cannot pass by this without mentioning it was with great sorrow that I stood at the grave of her who loved me so much. She had left her friends and native land to be a loving and kind helpmate for me. She had born, me seven children; they all stood weeping at her grave. The oldest 12 years old, the youngest 11 months. It was not alone the bereavement but the responsibility that weighed on my mind when I looked down on all those little ones. My hope of progress was broken down. I could not earn my living at home and I could not go away. Times were also hard as depression had set in and the two years of my wife's illness had put me back considerably. I could not afford a housekeeper. My oldest girl was only eleven years and she was obliged to occupy that position. There were certainly many good people at Oxford who offered to take them off my hands but I had too much parental feeling to let them go - they were so dear to me. I therefore decided to keep them all together and do my duty towards them. But, I confess, it was a hard undertaking. Love is a strong spring that can accomplish and overcome almost anything.

One winter I walked five miles to and from work, another I had to walk eight miles. Some nights I would stay away but could never sleep as I was so anxious about the little ones and the last place at which I was working after I had walked all those miles and worked so hard, Mackenzie, the employer, went bankrupt. He owed me about £18 (I got 10s per day, my little boy working with me) for felling and cutting logs for the mill and often I had worked one or two hours overtime if I thought I had not earned my 10s. Often the men at the mill would tell me I should not consider Mr Mackenzie as he would not consider me but I went by my own counsel. Although only a small sum, it was a great amount to me at the time. Mackenzie was a Sunday Schoolteacher and reckoned to be a religious man so I suppose he did his best.

During this time sleeper cutting for the construction of the railway was a great industry at Oxford, also bridging timber, which was birch and supposed to last well. It undoubtedly would have done had the Government got the right kind for about the lasting quality of the real heart, there could be no denying. I have seen trees hundreds of years old which have been growing on their fallen birch and chopped into those fallen trees to the heart and found it green and as sound as though growing, therefore I can give no truer testimony. But the Government and country were shamefully swindled not that the sawmiller was always to blame but in most cases it was the ignorance of the Government inspectors. It takes a great deal of experience to tell which is sap or heart of birch when it is cut into timber, especially when it has been lying out for some time. Those men who were sent to pass sleepers or timber seldom had any experience in timber and less in bush. If a new inspector arrived you were never sure if your timber would be condemned or passed until you knew the new man's impulses or his knowledge of such. Some would condemn a sleeper with half an inch of decayed wood on the corner and pass one that had not an inch of heart



Looking up Jordan River to LAUGESEN Timbermill ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE.



Kaikoura Harbour 1900 ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE.



Kaikoura 1900 ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE.



View of cleared forest from DOYLES ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE.

right through perhaps. You had to know your man before you could know what sort he wanted. Sometimes a bottle of whiskey would make a good deal of difference. I, myself, have cut and got passed thousands of sleepers and feet of timber and could tell of some very amusing scenes that took place which would be interesting reading had I not so many things of more value to narrate but I must mention at least one or two.

A firm of sawmillers had a contract to cut timber for a bridge in the north of Canterbury which was to cost the country thousands of pounds. The agreement was that the Government should send an inspector to the mill before the timber was carted away, consequently when the ten thousand feet were cut Mr Inspector arrived. A gentleman of this degree must of course be driven up in a buggy so when he arrived he was invited into lunch by the sawmill proprietors before inspecting the timber. Of course whiskey was plentiful and cigars were served. Then out came the inspector "Now for business," he said. "Ahem ahem." His face was as red as a gobbler *(the head of a male turkey a "gobbler" when agitated or excited will turn bright red)*. A snub nose and yellow leggings were his chief adornments. His feet were very much in his way and anyone who passed beneath his gaze were almost withered up and in danger of being tramped down any moment. When 'His Excellency' arrived at the timber stack he made a dead stop. At the same time a great cloud of cigar smoke escaped from his mouth. As Rasmussen just happened to pass him he gave a glance at his crooked feet and then glanced at his own with great satisfaction. Then with a pretty sharp voice of great authority to the sawmiller he said "How much timber have you got here at the mill?" "Ten thousand feet". "Well, what good is it that I come here to pass that bit. I'll pass 20,000 while I'm here." But the miller said "That is not the timber Sir, that is only scantlings" *(scantlings - a timber of relatively slight width and thickness, as a stud or rafter in a house frame)*. "Oh, I thought so" and looked at the other lot which was double the quantity and he passed double the amount. Now can anybody wonder that the bridge was rotten in all its decking eight years after and in 15 years time? the whole bridge had to be renewed and cost the country something like £10,000.

I had another experience of timber inspection that happened to myself a few years after the above. I had an order for 400 planks 9 x 4 and 22ft long. Decking for a bridge in 8th Canterbury. When the 200 had been stacked at the railway station the inspector arrived so I sent two men to turn over the planks and arrived myself first as they had finished. I was greatly surprised when the men told me that 98 had been condemned. They were the best planks I had ever cut. I had a good price for them and we had been very particular so I could hardly believe the men. I had been so many years at the trade that I well knew what I was about but what could I do? There laid about £50 worth of timber condemned. The inspector was passing some more planks for another sawmiller close by so I went over to where they were and stood looking at them until they had finished. The planks he had passed for this sawmiller had been out about four months before mine and had been lying in snow and rain all the time consequently they had all turned black. Although they were a very poor lot the inspector passed them all and had no end of praise for them. When he was done I asked him what was the matter with mine. "They are not the right kind" he said. I felt rather angry and asked him if he was sure he knew what he wanted and told him he did not understand anything about them. Then 'His Excellency' braced himself up. "Who are you" he said, "that you think you can teach me - I am a civil engineer?"

I laughed outright "For that matter," I said, "I served my time as a 'Royal Engineer' but for the present I am a practical sawmiller and don't think you can find a man in this district who knows more about



DOYLES going to town for the day, Kaikoura ~ 1906
William Doyle, Juliana Doyle holding Julie Georgina, in back Emily Annie LAUGESEN, next to Alice Ella and Myrtle Florence ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE.



William Glassey DOYLE
Ashburton Mounted Rifles 1902
~ Photo W.G. DOYLE.



Juliana LAUGESEN DOYLE
holding Julie Georgina aged 8wks,
Kaikoura 1906 ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE.

timber than I do but you will have to go and tell what kind you want next time."

"No," he said, "I need not go over there, I want timber like this" pointing to the timber he had first passed for the sawmiller. "I want them black."

"Very well" I said, "You shall get satisfaction next time" and left him. A few days after I drove down to the station with a bucket in my trap and, getting some dirty water out of a ditch I threw a good lot over the condemned planks and I told the men in the mill they could cut anything but it must be black. Rasmussen was working in the mill and was a good hand at distinguishing timber so he said "If that is all he wants he is easy to satisfy - a few shovelfuls of ashes thrown over the wet planks will colour them beautifully." We stacked the newly cut timber on top of the condemned. Although the new ones were a little darker than the others the quality was far inferior but a few showers made them all look alike. So, when the inspector came again he passed them all except one that had a hole where a loose knot had dropped out and he told my men "I thought I taught your boss a lesson when I was here. He thought I was a greenhorn and I knew also that he was trying to have me." My men told me that he looked so proud.

As this is a true description of my experiences in New Zealand I cannot leave out my family affairs altogether, as I first intended, or my reminiscences would not be complete. For the first two years after my wife's death my eldest daughter kept house. Although she was only eleven years when her mother died she did remarkably well for her age. Then a sister of my late wife came out from Germany to keep house for me and help me to bring up my children. She was 28 years old, kind and good. Any praise I write down falls far short in describing her good and noble qualities and none will wonder that I grew to love her and she loved me in return, consequently we got married. We lived happily together for three years then she died, leaving me two sons. Again did sorrow darken my life but I shall not burden these lines with my grief more than I can help.

Before I go further I must mention the second bushfire which happened the first year my second wife arrived. My house lay on a hill and I had the good luck to be at home. My neighbours had worked out about 20 acres of bush first a few chains from my house in a northerly direction and when bushfires break out at Oxford they know no bounds. On that day thousands of acres were burnt. My wife and children went down to East Oxford but I had two men who worked for me helping to save my house, besides Rasmussen.

Although I have seen active service in war I have never been in a hotter battle in my life than I was on that day. First of all we carried all the furniture out on the lawn and Rasmussen kept it well moistened with a watering can to keep down the sparks. We had placed tubs filled with water all around the house in which we would dip sacks which we had fixed on long poles, the help of which we intended to keep the fire off the shingle roof. Just when the bush started to burn Dr Weld and Mr Pearson came up on horseback wanting to help. The smoke and heat were too severe for their ages, though before they left Mr Pearson said "Goodbye Laugesen, if you live through this and save your house Dr Weld and I will bring you a cask of beer." Then the battle commenced. Flames came right over the house and we had to have a sack over our heads when we ran around to use the poles. The house was creaking and groaning and the sacks on our heads kept catching fire every time we went round. I sent a man named Johnsen up on the ceiling as the sparks got under the shingles. He had a bucket of water up there but sang out several times that it was as hot as hell. I asked him if he had been there "No" he said, "but I have a good idea of it." Rasmussen also had to keep dancing around the bedding with his water can while I and another man ran around the house. This lasted fully four hours. People said down on the flat that Laugesen's house was burnt - perhaps himself and his men, as they could not see it for smoke. Several tried to get up to us but could



William LAUGESEN (front) William Glassey DOYLE (in cap) and unknown logging, Puhi Puhi ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE.

not. My wife and children were in a sorrowful state of mind but it soon commenced to rain, the smoke parted and there my house stood.

Up the road came two horsemen with a jar of beer between them on a long pole. It was Dr Weld and Mr Pearson with Rev. Mr Opie, the Church of England Minister, following in the rear. We all sat as if half dead on the veranda when the three gentlemen came up, congratulated us and we all had a good glass of beer. I say those three gentlemen sat down between us and some of my prohibition friends may feel shocked but I can tell them that Dr Weld was the finest noblest and most kind-hearted man I ever knew. He would always help anyone in need. He seldom sent a bill to a poor man, never if he knew that the person could not afford to pay. Pearson also was a real gentleman in heart and actions and of the Minister, there could be no doubt. "On their works ye shall know them."



Puhi Puhi Valley ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE.

Depression was now general all over the colony. The price of stock and wool went very low. Unemployed were largely in evidence and a soup kitchen was started in Christchurch. I had lived at Oxford about 14 years and at last managed to sell my place or rather give it away. I had brought it in its native state. I gave £10 an acre for 50 acres. I had it all cleared and grassed, built a 5-roomed house and large shed. I had a fine garden, 200 fruit trees. Then I borrowed £200 for which I paid 10% interest. I knew, without any exaggeration, that besides my labour and interest, it cost me £900 and I sold it for £460 and very glad to get rid of it. At the present time people may say I was foolish but allow me to explain that I am well-known in Canterbury and I am sure there is not a man living who would say I did not try to do my best. All the bush around my place was worked out. I had done my share of it, employing men all the time but with little profit to myself. There was no work to be had near and I could not stay away from home as I was blessed with such a lot of children. I tried dairying but in the summer butter was only four pence a pound so I sold my cows and bought young cattle, as I thought I could better go away to work. I bought 50 head of young steers and heifers for which I paid £2.10 a head. I kept them about two years, when prices went down and I had to sell them. I had lost a couple and the remainder hardly brought what I gave. Everything was very dear except beef and mutton. Sugar was seven pence a pound. Bread, tea and other necessities were equally dear. Then I had to pay £1 per annum to the school and £1.10 for each child to the number of four. Others went free, which was a marvellous concession.

Between all the measures, the Liberal Government has passed; none have done so much good for the country as the cheap money scheme. Of course, I only mention my own instance but I know several men who paid 12% interest, but the worst of all was that you got so little for your work and product and it was hard to get the cash. All was exchange and this depression lasted until Balance Ministry came into power. Since then we have had prosperity. But still the spirit of the conservative is abroad and still people



Early photograph of West End Kaikoura with the old Adelphi Hotel & stables on the left ~ Photo Kaikoura Museum.



Laugesen & Sons Sawmill Puhi Puhi 1898 ~ Photo Kaikoura Museum.

vote for it. They say a change would do good although they do not mean it as I do. I say it would do good in some respects. It would teach the people a great lesson. Although the opposition now call themselves Liberal, their environments have changed them. It must be hard sometimes to vote against every Liberal measure and I dare say many are like the Irishman when he first landed in America and asked a countryman if they had a Government. "Yes" answered his mate "and a good one too." "Then I'm against it" said Pat.

After I had sold my home I started a fruit business in West Oxford but the population was rather too small. My eldest girl kept the shop. She was a good girl and great help to me. At last I gave it up and took a contract with two men at a sawmill - one of whom was Victor Rasmussen at View Hill. The mill was a rented one and we took the contract for felling, logging, trolleying and cutting at 5s per hundred. I had a little money and managed to buy horses and other necessities but neither of my mates had anything. It was while I was here that I met with one of the greatest misfortunes of my life although I have had many of various natures. I moved my family up there, the children being handy to school and I was close to my work. Everything went well at the mill until we wanted our wages when the man we had the contract with always said he could not get his money in - which may have been true to a certain extent. But we had to employ some men and live ourselves, so things commenced to pinch a little.



Bush Rail 1900 ~ Photo National Library.

Then one fine day a great norwester sprang up and started a bushfire. Rasmussen and myself went up to the mill to try to save something but were too late and we had to think of saving our own lives. The smoke and heat was so awful that I cannot describe it. The mill was a mile and half in the bush and all that was on fire in no time. We first of all tried to follow the road out but it was impossible for the great heat. Then we tried to get through the bush. We did, of course, get out but how, I cannot tell. Then we go to an old sawmill shed which once belonged to Mackenzie, whom I have mentioned before. There was also a whare in which I had stored two tons of loose chaff and 10 sacks of oats. Fire was all around and although nearly suffocating we set to work to carry out the oats to a clear place and keep the fire out of the chaff. We succeeded a long struggle. There were only two chains to the river but we had only a broken beer jar to carry water in. After a couple of hours rain came and the fire was over. But, now our mill, all our timber stack and most of the train was burnt and we had about £150 to come from our boss. So things did not look very bright. At last we got things squared up in some fashion - our boss managed to raise some money that I was able to pay off my two mates and when the mill was restored to working order, I gave the boss £75 for his goodwill, taking it over in my own name. I got the lease of it from a firm called Feary Bros. They were good men and I can mention them with great respect as they were very kind to me.

Now I set to work with all my heart and strength. Victor Rasmussen still kept working for me. It is a great blessing that we cannot see into the future or

I should have lost heart, as a great event happened whereby I lost all I had made during 16 years with hard work and anxiety but such is life and mine has been especially hard.

Perhaps I am a descendant of Job. Sometimes a good gift of forethought can prevent many a mishap in a man's life but there are incidents which happen in a man's life that nothing can prevent.

After I had worked in the sawmill about 12 months I bought an empty shop where used to live a storekeeper, but he had given up because another had started in opposition in a shop belonging to Mr Plaskett. I also lived in a house that belonged to the same gentleman, which was situated between the two shops. I then started storekeeping in a small scale, my daughter managing the business and I got on very well and after a while built seven rooms onto the shop and moved out of Plaskett's house. In the meantime our business had increased and I had added Drapery and Hardware to my stock. We had just been living in the place about three months when misfortune again overtook me.

Mr Plaskett was a retired storekeeper. He owned a residence about 10 chains up the road but his land was lying to the northwest of my shop. He also had a few houses on this land that he let out. My shop was situated on clear land but Mr Plaskett still had some rough bush land, I should say about 10 chains from my store, where a lot of decayed logs were lying amongst the rushes. It was 7th September, 1889 and that day, about £100 worth of goods had arrived for my store and 200 bushels of oats which I had stored in a house in the yard. I came from the mill as usual a little after 5 o'clock and a norwester was blowing but nothing unusual.

Mr Plaskett had been burning the logs and rushes on his land all day. I noticed a little smoke as I passed on my way home but did not think there was any danger as the wind was moderate, I went inside and had my tea and then my daughter wanted me to see how nice it looked with all the new things. She was in high spirits. As soon as I got into the shop I heard the wind roar and my children came and called me saying two of Mr Plaskett's houses were burning. I looked out the window and was convinced at once that we were doomed. It looked as though the whole country was on fire. Monstrous flames leapt across the paddock, half burnt boards, and scantlings came dancing towards my shop and I could see there was no time to lose. I got a woman to take all my children over to a gravel pit not far off but the wind had risen to such fury that the woman blew down twice with my little boy in her arms before she reached safety. This I heard afterwards. As soon as my children were away I ran around the house and pulled the trap and harness out into the paddock but soon had to let go the shafts as the trap was full of burning debris and I quickly took it out, severely burning my hands then I looked towards the house and all along the side, loads of burning rubbish had stacked itself up. I ran up and started to remove it but it was quite useless as the wind was so fierce that it carried burning boards right up against the house. A local, John Day by name, came to help me but he blew over on a gorse fence. Although he swore in court afterwards that he never saw me that night. He was a witness for the other side. I now saw the whole building was on fire underneath. I rushed inside and told my daughter to get out and then went into the office and got out my account books. I went through the shop. When I got outside a man called Mr Clarke came and pulled me away saying that the building would fall in a minute. I was surprised to see it was all in flames. We had just got a chain away when the whole house collapsed. This same man, Clarke, also helped my daughter as when she first came out of the house she was almost fainting. He half carried her over to the riverbank. Then he ran back for me. The whole scene has taken some time to describe but from the time I ran around and pulled my trap out 'till the whole thing was demolished, could not have been more than six or seven minutes. Here I stood, I had no coat on or boots. My children in the gravel pit were crying and waiting for me. All was now destroyed for which I had striven for



Juliana and William DOYLE'S cottage Puhi Puhi ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE.



Puhi Puhi Valley ~ Willie LAUGESEN and family and the house he built 'Jordan House' in the early 1900s ~ Photo Kaikoura Museum.

so many years and so many things dear to my memory which could never be replaced or restored.

After the house had fallen, rain began to fall in torrents. It was always the way at Oxford, after the fire had done the mischief. We all got shelter for the night with people about half a mile away although the man who was the cause of the fire never offered me any assistance and he lived near and had plenty of houseroom. He had said to some neighbours that if he had helped me it would have been proof that he had been the cause of it. But the question came out in court and I think it went rather against him. Oxford was and is a nice place but for those fearful norwesters.

Eleven years before on 11th September, they had the heaviest gale at Oxford that white men have ever known. I mention this here as it has some bearing in the court case that comes further on. This gale started about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. There were 31 chimneys blown down at West Oxford. I was looking out of my window at the Methodist Chapel at East Oxford lifted like a box over the paddock in which it stood. The Church of England was twisted on its piles. One man lost his veranda and it was never found. The gaol at West Oxford also blew clean away and rumour had it that there was a prisoner inside and was never found again but I cannot guarantee for the truth of the latter. Also another Methodist Chapel blew down into the riverbed at West Oxford. Churches always seem to get the greatest benefit of a heavy gale. These were the most severe damages. There were many minor ones but I only mention the greatest to show how severe the wind was.

To get back to my fire again, the people where we all stayed that fearful night were called Cleave. They were very kind to us. It was a small house and they, themselves, had a lot of children so the comfort was not all that could be desired and in addition, it rained very heavily and leaked down through the whole house as the shingle roof had seen better days but there is an old saying that "where there is heart room there is also house room". So the night passed and before daylight I borrowed a pair of boots off Cleave's son, also a coat but the latter was too small so I had to go to a bigger man and get the loan of one.

I went for the police the first thing in the morning; it was Sergeant Scott. I told him all and he went to see Mr Plaskett who did not deny that he lit the fire but he said he did not know it was going to blow as it did. He also told Mr Scott that I could easily have got my things out but I never tried. The Sergeant asked him why he did not go down and help. He said it was none of his business. I got my insurance of £200 two days after, half of which I owed on the shop, the remainder I had to send to Fletcher Humphries Christchurch for stores I had got in the day previous. I had several other creditors and things did not look over bright. I was sorry for Mr Plaskett. I did not like to sue him but I could not help myself any other way except by going through the court or swindling those people who had trusted me and I could not do that. I thought I would fight it out first with Mr Plaskett. I sued at the Supreme Court for £600 damages. I had certainly lost more than that but this amount Id prove in black and white. It was a long case. We had 27 witnesses between us; Mr Plaskett fought well but everything went against him. Even his own witnesses did more harm than good as they had nothing to witness but on made-up tales. If you have nothing else to go to court with it is much better to stay away. Mr Kippenburg was my lawyer; Mr Stringer was Plaskett's and Mr Denniston, the Judge. We had 12 jurymen, the result being that I got judgement for £520 + costs; Mr Plaskett lost about £1,000. I was very sorry for him, had everything been my own but I could not do otherwise.

There are certainly many things in this case I should write about but it would make the story too long.

After I had got the money from Plaskett, which took a long time - at least four or five months (and Mr Plaskett made it as awkward as possible for me) I

paid the insurance company all my liability and had about £50 left. I gave over the sawmill to my eldest son. He was then 21 years of age. I could not bear to live at Oxford any longer. Everything had been so against me. The year before I had had the misfortune with the fire and a neighbour of mine, for whom I had cut a lot of railway sleepers, refused to pay me. I had to summons him but when I got judgement on him he went bankrupt. His creditors sold him out and got 11s in the pound. He was my neighbour on one side and Plaskett on the other. The reason I left was because I did not like to live between them, although several of my friends told me I should not leave for that, as they would think so much more of me; I had only done justice to myself and everybody else. But all, in their kindness could not prevail over my feelings. Love they neighbour as thyself does not always fit in, if your neighbours don't love you.

I said goodbye to Oxford though not without some sad feelings. It had been my home for 16 years. Although I had gone through so much anxiety and hardship, still those events attach one more to a place than where things run smoother. I think this world would be rather unsatisfactory if everything could be as man desires. I left for Christchurch with all my money. Packed all my children in the trap and drove down. I had been taught that little could be gained by hard work, so resolved to try something easier. But with a capital of £50 not much was to be expected.

However, I started a small stationery shop in Columbo Street and I am sure that would have turned out a success as my daughter was a good business woman but, as I could not put much money into it, her talent was to no avail. At the same time I started a small cigarette factory - my means were very limited. It went alright for a while although people in New Zealand preferred the imported article - even if it should be inferior. But I think I should have got over that difficulty if my feelings had not been against the business. However, I soon got rid of it.

One traveller I employed went to Ashburton with a quantity of cigarettes and as there happened to be races on and he being a "racy man", he lost all my money on the racecourse. The excuse he gave me was that he had lost his overcoat with his pocket book in it. Of course I knew the reason and as he had nothing I let him go. I had two travellers and as I say, the racecourse finished one. The other fell out with his wife and left Christchurch. The latter went to Sydney and I never saw the man again so I lost by him too. I will not give the names of these gentlemen as I know it would only do them harm and me no good and one is living in Christchurch yet. I had a patent on a cigarette box which I sold for £10 and gave up the business.

My daughter kept on the stationery shop and looked after the smaller children while I went to the North Island with one of my boys who was 16 years old. As I had never been there I thought I might find an opening of some kind. After we had travelled about a while I found that I would have to start some work or we should not get home. I went to Ekatahuna, myself and boy having some rough experiences there - the place being lonely and scattered in those days.

Our first experience commenced with pigeon-shooting. We went away one morning intending to be back for dinner but somehow the pigeons drew us further into the bush than we expected and we kept on 'till it commenced to get dark. Then we left the road intending to take a short cut home but we found it was a long one. It was wintertime, the days were short and heavy rain commenced to fall. We tried our best to get out doing much climbing up and down high spurs - greatly against my will of course, but we could not help it. We had lost our pigeons in a gully and, being afraid of losing our direction, we accordingly stopped our progress. We managed to make a shelter with tree ferns, also a fire.

After many disappointments as the rain came down in torrents my son went to sleep but I lit my pipe and sat down to wait for morning. When it came



More Cattle for the Market, Puhi Puhi 1900 ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE



Unknown landscape 1900. ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE.

we started off again. We knew exactly where we were and the way out but we had got too far in the bush and my boy was very hungry as we had nothing since breakfast the day before. As for myself, I could always stand a few days fast. However we got out in the afternoon but then we got to the river and the road to the township was on the other side. We found we were a long way from the bridge so we had no option but to cross the river. We did not know the depth of it but we chanced it as the road looked so tempting on the other side, after we had been travelling through bush for so long. I took my gun and asked my boy to catch hold of my coat and off we went. Luckily we reached the other side but we were very cold. We soon reached the boarding house and had a splendid dinner. The landlady, Mrs Hansen, was very glad to see us back. They had already arranged for a search party to go and find us but it was not necessary now. We found out how grand it was to know real hunger and rather amazed Mrs Hansen by our voracious appetites.

After this experience I took a job bush felling but that was not without roughing it. First of all we had to walk about six miles beyond Alfredton and the latter being about eleven miles from Ekatahuna. So we had from 17 to 18 miles to walk. We both had very heavy swags to carry besides axes and slashers and gun. We were very well loaded up but the worst of it was the road was in such a frightful state. Then, after we left Alfredton, rain and darkness set in and we had no knowledge of the road. Tired and weary we tramped along then we came to a shallow creek which we had to cross about ten times. My boy would go half way across first and then strike a match so that we could see the boulders but we often missed the stepping stones and got wet to the knees. With our heavy swags and the rain coming down our journey was anything but pleasant.

About midnight we came to a woolshed but we could not get inside so we pitched our tent and slept well 'till morning. Then we started off again and came to the homestead and found out we had gone miles past our road. A welcome cup of tea and sandwiches were given to us. We felt greatly refreshed and went back on our way. About noon we came to the camp. The contractor was a German and glad to see us. We had dinner- and started to work. In the evening we pitched our tent but could not get anything for a bed but wet fern. It was very rough. I am not very dainty but after I had seen the first dinner cooked was too disgusted to stay any longer. Breakfast was usually prepared in the evenings, consisting chiefly of pigeon stew, potatoes and doughboys. A stack of pigeons lay in the middle of the floor, the men sitting round plucking them while smoking and spitting. Then they threw them into a big- boiler, which was enough for me. We packed up in the morning and, after making some excuse said “Goodbye” to the contractor and took to the road again.

We had not got far on our way to Alfredton when we got a contract to fell 30 acres of bush at £1 per acre. We felled it in three months though it rained nearly all the time. When we started the contract some young fellows who were working next to us told my son he was too young for that kind of work and I was too old. When a man got over 40 he was no good in the bush, they said. However when we got our cheque they asked us how much we had made. I told them about 6s a day each. They were rather surprised as they said they had not made more than half a crown.

This happened first at the time when the Government servants were on strike, consequently the train was not running regularly to Ekatahuna and, as I wanted to get home again to my children as soon as possible, we decided to swag it to Masterton. It happened when we got about half way to our destination, we came across a lady sitting on the side of the road and a nearer view disclosed a buggy lying down below the road. Just as we got there the owner was coming towards us down the road. He told us he had



"A quiet spot", William Glassey DOYLE, Kaikoura 1900 ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE.

been looking for someone to help him but could not get anyone. "A man came past an hour ago" he said, "and promised to send help but he could not have been a very charitable Samaritan as he never returned." The gentleman who was in this dilemma was the Rev. Mr Reeves and wife from Masterton. He had been preaching the day before in Ekatahuna and was driving home when the horse shied at a sack of potatoes, which lay on the side of the road, and went over the bank with the buggy, passengers and all, about 70ft. Mrs Reeves was very much shaken. We got the buggy up on the road for the gentleman and with some string from the swags tied up their harness and they were soon on their way rejoicing. I saw Mr Reeves in Masterton next day. His wife was not very well and I do not think she ever quite recovered from that accident for she died not long afterwards. Mr Reeves is now also dead.

We reached Christchurch safely and found them all well at home. So, after I had got things in order, Willie and myself went up beyond Waiau and started a sawmill in the wandle bush. It was a great undertaking as I only had 5s in my pocket, a couple of loaves of bread and a little lard but I owed no man anything. I had plenty of hope, strong arms and willing to work - my son also.

My other son, Louis, came up to help us so we three together had rather hard times. Sometimes we had to eat porridge for a week and did not know where our next meal was to come from but we generally managed to shoot a pigeon or a kaka. Thus we got on slowly but surely. Three years after we went on to Kaikoura with sawmill plant, wagon and dray, 8 horses to the total value of about £1,000. At Kaikoura we did pretty well. I got all my children up from Christchurch and got a home established once more.

"Home sweet home". One realises its value when one has been without. Kaikoura is a beautiful spot in God's creation. I liked the climate and its people too. I was happy there for a time but many unforeseen instances cropped up; things we could not avoid. Had this not been so I do not think I should have left Kaikoura before they had carried me to the hillside but I had many reasons for leaving that I need not mention here only that I got married, Willie got married, also my elder daughter.

After leaving Kaikoura I went to Marton and bought a farm but sold it again after 12 months and returned again to Kaikoura to take up a small grazing run I had drawn in the land ballot. I worked hard on it a couple of years, sold it and went down to Dunedin. I bought 60 acres of swamp land near Port Chalmers. The man from whom I bought the farm had been living there for 20 years. I had some experiences here which I must note down. I paid £900 for the farm and thought that in a couple of years it would be at least twice its value (present) after some money and labour had been spent on it. I believe I thought myself too smart. However, had things turned out as I could see them in my mind's eye, it would have been alright. I kept 16 cows and two horses and expected, when I got the land dry, it would carry double that number. I set to work then and for two years worked very hard, mostly in water over my knees. I got a windmill and sluice gates fixed to keep the swamp dry, when the high tides were up and also improved the house and fences. I had the whole farm subdivided into 10 paddocks; drains all round them and a main drain, 40 chains, 6ft x 2 right through the centre. I got the land drier than it had ever been before. I thought that I had succeeded. But one day we had a very high tide. I could not take out the water. I had the sluice gates open, the windmill working and still the water was rising in the swamp. I walked about trying to solve the problem and at last found my prospects were doomed as I will now explain. Between the land and sea was a pretty high rise on which my house was situated and it was the only place where I had the sluice gate in the creek. In Adam's time or far back in history, this land had been a stony beach. These shores had gradually got covered with sand and formed this high level

across and the day I mention, when I could not make out where the water came from, I found out that it came out all under this rise so all the mills and sluice gates I could erect, could not stop it as the ground it got through was rotten for about 30 chains, so my prospects came to an end. I could do no more and my money was reduced considerably.

I had an offer of £700 for the place, which I accepted. Then I had a sale and my things went so cheap that one would hardly believe it. I had paid £180 for the stock at valuation. I had improved the land for £150 furnished the house, which had 11 rooms (it was a seaside resort) and the whole results of the sale amounted to only £140. People around that district did not seem to want furniture, although some had only boxes to sit on and had been sitting on them for 30 or 40 years. Although they were now all well-to-do, since the dairy factory started, the folks were mostly Scotch and Scotch people do not care to give their money away for things they do not consider very necessary. I gave the man that bought it possession, although he had not paid for it as yet but he told me at the sale that he would settle up in about a week, and as I had sold everything I shifted up to a neighbour's until things were settled.

But now my trouble commenced unexpectedly. One night about 1am a horseman came up to the house where I stayed, knocked on the door and inquired for me and told me that a man who had bought my place had just driven his cattle away. "I met him first now on the road," he said. This news gave me such a shock I can hardly describe. It indicated, of course, that the man would not have the place. I had now given all my things away, almost; the place was mortgaged and the time would run out in a few days. I was in a dreadful state. I had lost over £600 and two years hard work; I was now 63 years old and would have to face the world again with almost nothing so anyone can imagine my feelings.

However, the next day I went to Dunedin and saw the man. I could see he meant to humbug me so I engaged a solicitor and after a little frightening, he gave in at last. But in the meantime it was very unpleasant for me and my wife as things were so uncertain for us. But still our neighbours were very kind and all felt sorry for what had happened and here I shall mention one good quality of the Scotch people. It was not with empty words they pitied me but all the farmers had a meeting about my circumstances and each agreed to give me a cow, another would give a milk cart, another a horse. Although I could not have accepted it, it cheered me up a good deal to see them so kind. It is seldom we experience such sympathy; it is usually empty words that cost nothing.

It made me think of a story I once read about a hawker whose horse fell down dead in the street. A hundred or so people stood around and pitied the poor man when a gentleman came up, took off his hat and said "Now I pity this man, 10s and everyone of you pity him something according to your means and your sympathy and he shall soon get another horse." So his hat went around the unlucky man became a lucky one and got a better horse than the one he lost.

Then at last I got squared up with the buyer of my farm and my wife and two little boys went away from Dunedin. My intention this time was to get away to the north. My capital had, during those two years, sank from a little over £800 to below £200. I thought I could not do better than take up some land. I had still some energy and strength left that I could use and it had always been a great pleasure to me to make new land of the wilderness, although when a man is 64 he thinks himself old but I did not think myself too old to work.



Team crossing Jordan River. ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE

We went up the East Coast of the North Island and after looking about Gisborne, Napier etc we settled at Opotiki on 200 acres of bush land up the Otara River. My land was nine miles up the river so I rented a house in town for a time and used to walk up to the bush



Juliana and William's Puhi Puhi Cottage. ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE.

to start felling. By and by I got a horse, then I could travel faster.

This was in October 1904 and at Christmas time I was able to burn six acres. I bought some second-hand iron in Opotiki and built a nice little whare and got my wife and children out. We lived in this whare about two years. Six months after I had got the land we bought a cow. I was busy getting down the bush; the land was good but very steep. All went well until I had the bad luck to lose my cow but I got two others by and by.· I had been there about 18 months when I bought 14 head of young cattle. I had plenty of grass and turnips but Scotch thistle was my worst enemy. Then I got some pit-sawers up to cut timber for my house and as I can do a little carpentering I soon built a 4-roomed house and we moved out of the iron one. We also had a fine garden with plenty of vegetables and lots of young fruit trees. This was the seventh garden I have planted in this country and God knows how many more I shall yet plant.

We lived in Opotiki when we were overtaken with a very sad bereavement in the death, by drowning, of our dear little girl, almost three years of age. It was a cruel, hard blow and we thought it best to leave the place. So, we sold our bush farm for £650 and left Opotiki for Auckland with a heavy weight on our hearts.

There is much talk about speculation and gambling on the land. I think if a man is to make money out of bush land he must either spend money or lots of labour on it. Should he not then be entitled to something for his trouble? Mr Massey once said that a man, who would go into the back blocks and take up land, should get it for nothing. I am not quite so liberal minded but it would be far better if more of the unemployed, who swarm our streets, would start gambling that way instead of applying to the Government for help. I often wonder how young, strong men can be so wanting in self-esteem and honour not to be ashamed to ask for help if a few slack months happen to come, when in ordinary times they get twice as much wages as working men in other parts of the world.

I said once in this book that pride was a great virtue if it was the right kind. That kind of pride should be grafted in the dear unemployed as they do not possess it. I will first note down here what I did in three years in the bush at Opotiki although I was old enough to apply for "Old Age Pension". I felled 100 acres of heavy bush, grassed a lot of it, fenced and



LAUGESEN ladies Bullock team drivers between 1893 & 1909. ~ Photo Kaikoura Museum.



A panorma of two photographs taken from Monk's Hill ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE.

built a house valued at £200. I cleared about an acre for a garden and I am proud of it and would do it again if I got the chance.

My home is now in Auckland. I thought that a man of my age could do better in a small business than at hard work, consequently I started in a small fruit shop in Symonds Street but it did not satisfy me so I sold it and started a Stationery and Fancy shop in Eden Terrace but that did not give satisfaction either. Although I did not lose my money by it sorely tired of waiting for customers. Auckland is certainly a fine city but it is overcrowded with certain classes that have no business to be there. Of course as long as times are prosperous they find a living somehow but if a few years of depression set in a change for the worse would be bound to occur.

When I had been in Auckland 12 months I thought I would like to try some of the hungry land near Auckland, of which I had heard so much, feeling I would like to find out for my own satisfaction if it could be cultivated to any profit. So I went in for a small property at Arkles Bay; my first experience being rather unpleasant to begin with. The man I bought it off was called "Connor". He turned out to be rather slippery as I would call him. He sold me his place, got the deposits, told me I could come with my wife and family. and all my furniture anytime as there were plenty of rooms. Consequently we moved over there with all our belongings. When we got there we were not allowed to come into the house although there were two empty houses on the property. His wife said she had orders not to let us in. Mr Connor was not at home so for a little time a little row was going on but at last Mrs Connor gave in and we got inside but all our furniture was down at the wharf. She would not allow us to bring it up. Towards evening Connor came home. His wife went out to meet him and inform him of our arrival. Then one of my boys came in crying and said "Connor said he would get us out if he had his revolver."

He came in and went into his bedroom. I went in and asked him if he had found his revolver. "I have not got one" he said. I gave him a bit of my mind. Putting all things together I found he had sold the place to another man for £50 more than I gave. The day after our arrival was a Sunday and Mr Connor went to Waiwera saying he would meet me in Auckland on Tuesday morning as there was a boat leaving Arkles Bay then and he had a contract to finish at Waiwera. But I got to hear that a steamer was leaving Waiwera on Monday morning. I could then see his whole game that he was going to square up with the other party on Monday but I was not to be had like that.

I walked into Devonport on Sunday night and caught a night boat into Auckland about 1 o'clock. I did over 28 miles of walking. Then early next morning I went down to the wharf and caught Mr Connor first as he was landing from the boat and said "Your game



Juliana serves tea at Laugesen's Cottage 1904 ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE.



Juliana LAUGESEN DOYLE set for The hunt ~ Kaikoura 1910s ~ Photo W.G. DOYLE.



Kaikoura West 1900 ~ Photo Kaikoura Museum.

is up old fellow." He turned as white as a ghost. "How did you get in" he asked? I told him how I had done it and then managed to get him up to my solicitor.

But now the battle commenced. His solicitor had the deed and everything ready for the other party to sign and just as I had guessed, it all came to pass. The other man came into town that same day but I had bought it first and had the best of them. Although Connor's solicitor tried his best to bounce me and I suppose to frighten me, I am not easily given that way and told him so. But it seems very simple when a solicitor can see a man is a rogue and will try to help him to make an honest man suffer. Although I think the same solicitor is a respected man, I do not think much of him.

Well I got my deed and Mr Connor cleared out the same evening. I have been told he was in debt for about £500 but no-one could find him. So I am now living at Arkles Bay and will conclude with the exception of a few lines about my family and a few thoughts on political questions. My experiences at Arkles Bay do not extend to any length of time but the less said about the land the better. Still, there are men up here who can make a living. It is at least more honourable than running about the streets of our towns unemployed. New Zealand has land enough for all and there need not be any out of work. I have now lived in the country about 38 years. I have had pleasures and sorrows and ups and downs but I have never been in need of either food or clothing for myself or family and although a foreigner, I can say I have been treated very well. I have been told by several foreigners that the English don't like them but I can at least bear witness to the contrary. Not once have I been pushed aside and made to feel I was not a Britisher and even in cases I have been treated better perhaps than if I had been born in Britain. I cannot speak too favourably about the English nation. Of course, we cannot judge a nation by the mobs in the street. There will certainly be very little money to the Government when I die but I will leave to the country nine sons and two daughters, all healthy and strong. How many grandchildren I will not pretend to say but I feel proud that none of my children have ever been numbered amongst the unemployed and I don't think they ever will.



"Danebrog" Home of Christian and Deborah - Kaikoura ~ Photos W.G. DOYLE.





Opotiki Public School early 1900s ~ Photo Alexander Turnbull Library.



Auckland Wharf 1886 ~ Photo Te Papa Museum.



Chapter VII

I have never been a public man, my sensitiveness over my foreign dialect has always kept me back, but still I have always been interested in politics. All the world over I have studied the past and in my humble opinion I think I can prophesize a great deal of the future.

First I must give my ideas about our Government. I have always given my support to the present as I think it is the best we have had since I came here but they have been rather too liberal. They have given every man and woman a vote and we shall soon be ruled by the mob if nothing is done to prevent it. We shall soon have so many parties in the house that no good legislation will be done. Why not have an independent Government chosen from the very best men in the country? A non party one. It seems so ridiculous to send men into fight, as it were, against those we have chosen to govern the country. It might be said that the majority shall rule but it is this point that is wrong, both in the voting system and also those that represent them. For if we parted mankind into two classes we know very well it would be the minority that would have the noblest virtues and majority the lowest in all respects, both in ignorance and vices.

First of all the system of voting should be given only to men of honest and good character, otherwise he should be struck off the role. Any transgression against the laws of the country, the magistrates should be given the power to prevent those men from voting but we want a strong Government to fulfill this paragraph. The world is on the wave of change; neither Dreadnought nor airship that man can invent will stop its progress. Nature pulls down empires and Kingdoms and builds others up and the coming generation will read the reason. It has been so in the past and shall be so in the future. Every sensible man can see that something out of the common is bound to happen. All nations live, as it were, in a volcano and if only a spark is thrown in the whole will be in motion. We are neither savages nor civilized although we would proudly profess to be the latter. For about 2000 years we have kept thousands of men to stand up every Sunday and explain scripture but they have failed to teach mankind the meaning which is simply this "love they neighbour as thyself. Do unto others as you would want them to do to you."

But the world is now, more than any other time in the past, using all its energy and wealth to manufacture murderous machines to crush down its fellow men. War will not be war as it used to be but wholesale slaughter. The spirit of war has been quenched long ago. When you aim your great cannon on the enemy miles away or on a city, do you consider you love your enemy and want them to do the same to you? I doubt it!

I have had my experiences. In one town I saw the Prussian shells do harm and misery enough to innocent children and women to last in my memory for life. We choose Jesus of Nazareth as our model, our King and our God and yet we are not ashamed to align ourselves to the Pagan! I have heard Ministers preaching from the pulpit in such an excited spirit as though they were in battle themselves. I was young then but I could not help thinking when they spoke, the Holy Spirit must be an odd one.

The peace legislation has the noblest aims, the highest and most noble purpose that has ever been advocated. In a few hundred years our war machines will be shown in museums to a nobler race that will wonder that such a cruel race could be their forefathers. Some say they will have no more war but we shall have a great war to balance things up. Then the whole world will be divided into six or seven great

republicans. All Kings and Emperors will get their dismissal. Free trade will be universal - all men will be brothers and belong to one nation. Arbitration Courts will decide all disputes through representatives from all the republics of the world. Then war will be no more. Then men will "live and let live." Men will preach that "In their works you shall know them," and as many persons preach now "by faith only that we pass away" and the book of James will be the modern doctrine "Oh foolish man, can faith save you?" The old Gospel will live in man's hearts and bear fruit in life and his works and Jesus of Nazareth will rule more supreme. The socialists have some good points in their doctrine but they have got so many bad ones that they will never succeed. It is like our present day religion - too selfish.

I am glad that I have no creed. All denominations are the same to me but I cannot pass without mentioning here that the most noble and honest men I have met in this country have been "free thinkers". No doubt the other side have some noblemen also but it is not a general stamp on the professors of their creed. As I have just mentioned, when we aim our long reaching firearms, yes, since the invention of gun powder the spirit of war has been quenched and more so with every new invention and no wonder. How can flesh and blood be expected to stand against steel and iron - driven by steam and explosives?

When the land has been poisoned and the ocean covered with mines and the sky with airships I venture to say that not one nation in the world could depend upon their armies when it comes to a final struggle except the fanatics like the Japs and Chinese and then as our foundation has been laid, so our house will stand. As the German Kaiser said when he sent his army to China, "Take no prisoner, give no quarter but lay the foundation to a Christian civilization." Those are the most ridiculous words a Sovereign ever spoke yet they are true and murder and cruelty has always been the foundation on which nations have built up Christianity, so what can we expect?

I remember once during the Boer War I went to a cinematograph show in Marton and saw some pictures of the Boers and also some of the Arabs. There was one with about 100 Arabs in a round heap all shot dead except one man who still held up his flag. The master of the show told us with a smiling face that they could not do any harm to our army as they had only spears and lances. We could kill them all at a distance. But some of the people groaned as it looked such a pitiful sight but the showman was up to the occasion. "But," he said "they are not Christians and are cruel to our women and children," which gave a little satisfaction. A gentleman from Melbourne who sat next to me said "Well, according to that the Turks ought to have been shot long ago. In my time they have massacred hundreds of thousands of women and children of our faith and the Turks, like the Arabs, are not Christians." "Yes, friend" I answered, "but he has a licence and used far-reaching firearms."

FINIS.



LAUGESEN Family
Alice SPENSLEY, Ivan, Baltimore, Alice, Ruth (SPENSLEY) and William and Hercules LAUGESEN.



Theodore Christian Ernest LAUGESEN.



Dagmar Marie Petrine LAUGESEN.



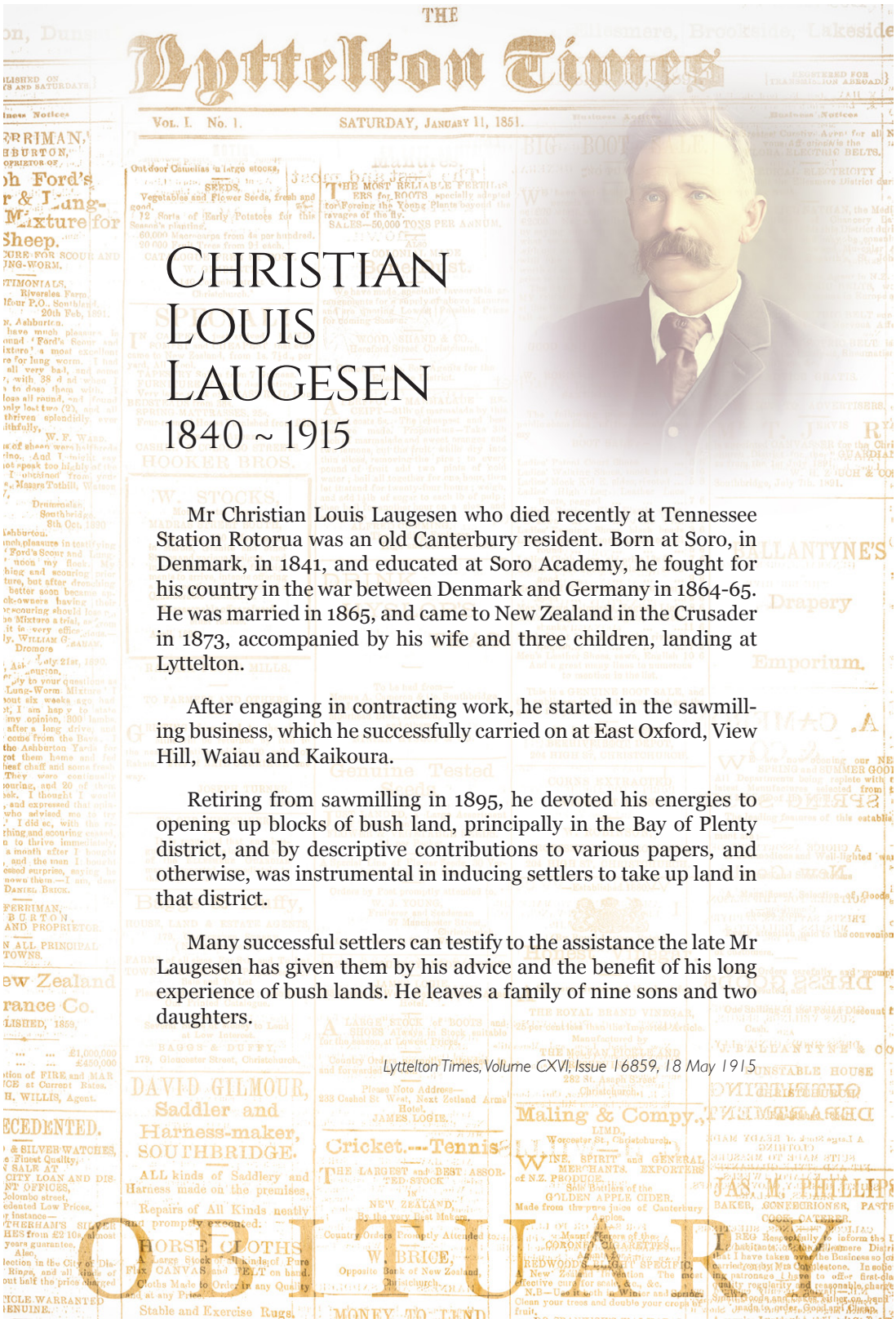
Deborah and Christian with children, Otara, Opotiki 1906.



"Christian" oil painting by Deborah COOPER LAUGESEN

"I felt as though I had entered a great botanical garden. I had never had an opportunity 'till then, of examining such a rich and beautiful flora as that of the grand New Zealand forest. Here I felt at home and here I intended to stay."

Christian



Christian Louis Laugesen
1840 ~ 1915

Mr Christian Louis Laugesen who died recently at Tennessee Station Rotorua was an old Canterbury resident. Born at Soro, in Denmark, in 1841, and educated at Soro Academy, he fought for his country in the war between Denmark and Germany in 1864-65. He was married in 1865, and came to New Zealand in the Crusader in 1873, accompanied by his wife and three children, landing at Lyttelton.

After engaging in contracting work, he started in the sawmilling business, which he successfully carried on at East Oxford, View Hill, Waiau and Kaikoura.

Retiring from sawmilling in 1895, he devoted his energies to opening up blocks of bush land, principally in the Bay of Plenty district, and by descriptive contributions to various papers, and otherwise, was instrumental in inducing settlers to take up land in that district.

Many successful settlers can testify to the assistance the late Mr Laugesen has given them by his advice and the benefit of his long experience of bush lands. He leaves a family of nine sons and two daughters.

Lyttelton Times, Volume CXVI, Issue 16859, 18 May 1915



Rotorua Cemetery, Bay of Plenty, New Zealand ~ Photo D. TIPPER.

Epilogue

written by Christian's youngest son Carl, March 10th 1985.

This manuscript of my father's was completed at Arkles Bay Whangaparoa, near Auckland during 1910. Not many months afterwards we moved to Whangarei where we lived for six months, then moving to Albany near Auckland, where we remained until 1913, when through domestic troubles, my mother and father parted and my father sold the property and went to live with a daughter and son-in-law, Mr and Mrs W. Doyle of Cambridge. He remained with them when they moved to Ngakuru, to their "Tennessee" station on the old Taupo Road near Rotorua.

One day in April 1915, Christian wandered off some five miles into the scrubland. His body was found three weeks later. Christian Ludwig Laugesen was buried in the Rotorua Cemetery. By the time Christian was found his son, Theodore, who had taken time off from Trentham to search for him, was on board a troop ship for Gallipoli. He saw action in the trenches there and died in France in September 1916.

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES

Service Number: 13/924

Pvt. Theodore Christian **LAUGESEN**

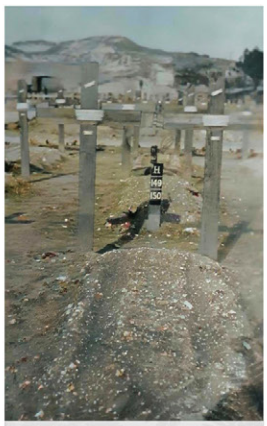
2ND BTN., AUCKLAND REGIMENT, N.Z.E.F.
WHO DIED ON 05 SEPTEMBER 1916 AGE 33
SON OF CHRISTIAN LOUIS & CECILE SOPHIA LAUGESEN,
OF ROTORUA, NEW ZEALAND.

REMEMBERED WITH HONOUR

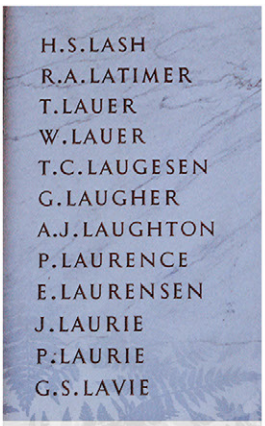
ETAPLES MILITARY CEMETERY | X. C. 2







Etaples Grave
1916 FRANCE



Auckland War
Memorial Museum,
Hall of Memories
NEW ZEALAND



Rotorua
Cemetery
NEW ZEALAND



Kaikoura
War Memorial,
First World War
NEW ZEALAND



Theo's Last Letters From France

August 27 1916. Gallipoli

Dear Julie.

Just a few lines, we are here in the thick of it. I have kept a bit of a diary, and if I go under you will get this I hope. This war is simply hell upon earth, and I hope we are laying down our lives for some good. My word! water is precious here and when I have been a few hours in the trenches and my bottle empty and still seven or eight hours to go I always think of those splendid streams at 'Tennessee'.

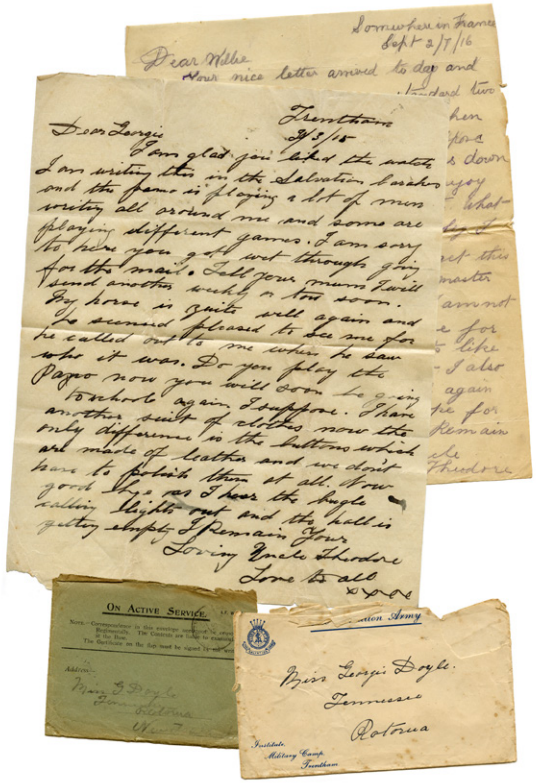
Kiss Georgie and Willie from me and tell them I am often thinking of them when the bullets are flying around my head. My word, the New Zealanders are a brave lot or chaps, grit through and through and there is not one of them showing the white feather, they all say we are second to none.

The Auckland Brigade have had all the charges up to now and have lost heavily, there is only a remnant of us left, but Godley came last night and asked us to led the way again and in broad daylight this time and he gathered us around in a circle and spoke to us, and it made us feel proud to belong to the Auckland Brigade and we are all going to do or die today.

Now dear Julie if you get this and I am gone you must not take it too hard for I am going with a stout heart and am happy to die for dear old New Zealand. But we must not look on the black side of it. l may be one of the lucky ones if it is my fate. But the only thing that worries me is that there are bound to be a lot of my mates go under.

Now I will close, hoping you will have ever happiness and prosperity, and if I go I will meet you over the boarder where there will always be peace.

your loving brother Theodore. Give my love to all the boys and wish them all good luck.

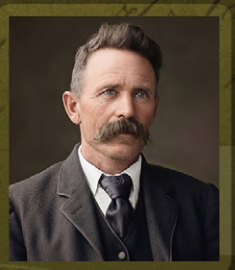


Dear Willie.

Just a few lines, I haven't much time as we are getting ready to go to the trenches. I suppose 'Tennessee' is looking well now. I hope to see it again, and the sooner the better for this war is very bad. I hope to hear you tell me a few yarns when I come back to good old New Zealand. It seems like paradise when we look back to it. I wore a bit of Kidney fern that Julie sent home in my hat and you should see the bush chaps look at it with longing eyes. There is no fear that they don't love their country. Good Luck. Your loving brother Theodore.

I have got through alright, but I was the only one of our thirty-five 'Waikatos' who were in the charge to get through unwounded.

Three Marriages & the First Laugesens in New Zealand



Christian L. **LAUGESEN** 1840 ~ 1915

Emilie had 7 Children



Emilie S. A. **BRAMMER** 1846 ~ 1880



Waldemar H. LAUGESEN 1867 ~ 1958



Dagmar M. LAUGESEN 1869 ~ 1960



Louis E. LAUGESEN 1870 ~ 1966



William E. LAUGESEN 1873 ~ 1959



Albert H. LAUGESEN 1874 ~ 1960



Juliana C. LAUGESEN 1877 ~ 1968



Frank A. LAUGESEN 1878 ~ 1974

Sophie had 2 Children



Sophia H. **BRAMMER** 1853 ~ 1884



Theo C. LAUGESEN 1883 ~ 1916



Frederick B. LAUGESEN 1884 ~ 1961

Deborah had 3 Children



Deborah L. **COOPER** 1876 ~ 1931



Norman W. LAUGESEN 1898 ~ 1942



Carl T. LAUGESEN 1900 ~ 1987

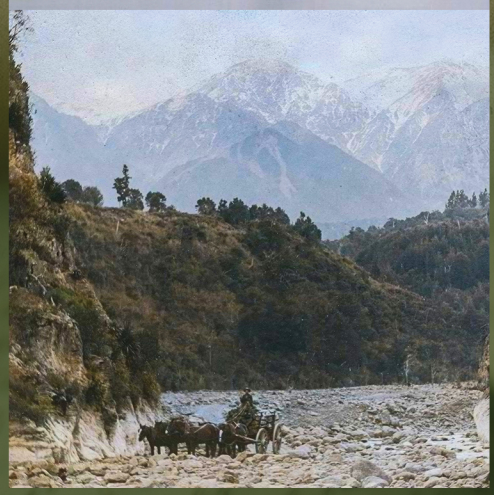


Ida D. LAUGESEN 1905 ~ 1907

THE TRANSCRIPTS OF TWO DIARIES BY CHRISTIAN, AS TOLD BY HIM







COMPILED & DESIGNED BY DAVE TIPPER