

THE LANDED GENTRY
OF LOWLANDS ASHBURTON COUNTY,
1890-1896

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the Degree
of
Master of Arts in History
in the
University of Canterbury
by
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University of Canterbury

1974

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Abbreviations

- L.T. - Lyttelton Times, Christchurch.
- N.Z.P.D. - New Zealand Parliamentary Debates.
- N.Z.S. - New Zealand Statistics.
- N.Z.Y.B. - New Zealand Year Book.

PREFACE

The large landowners of the south are a group of vital importance to the study of nineteenth-century New Zealand. Throughout the colonial period they played a heavily disproportionate role in the country's politics, commerce, developing agriculture and society. The aim of this thesis is to subject a small section of the large landowning group to detailed analysis. It is an attempt to study a part, to make "useful and accurate" statements and generalisations, and so throw light upon the whole, as has been suggested by W.H. Oliver in his paper, Towards a New History.

The part chosen was lowlands Ashburton county. Ashburton county is a particularly convenient sub-region, as its political borders have remained unchanged since its first creation as a county. This provides an unusual stability, and a firm base for statistics. In addition, the county has recently been the subject of a detailed and scholarly history by the late W.H. Scotter, which enabled this thesis to proceed from an already well-prepared field. Ashburton county was also, in many respects, a "typical" southern county in the nineties, with a matured economic and social pattern common throughout the lowlands areas of the South Island and south-eastern North Island.

Once the county had been decided upon as the most convenient sub-region, it was decided to detach the high country half, thus leaving only the foothills and plains, or lowlands half of Ashburton. It was thought preferable to confine the study to as homogeneous an area as possible, and although the high country runholders were in all respects

the social equals and friends of the lowlands estate owners, their problems and way of life differed considerably on many points.

In this way, then, a small sub-region was selected. The study would be of the forty-five or so families who lived on the big free-hold estates. They comprised the small social "elite" in a county with a population of about 11,000. Some pains have been taken to stress the fact that this small group was only the tip of the rural iceberg. The large landowners were a small, vital part of a much wider society of farmers, township-dwellers, and landless labourers. As well as looking at the private lives of the large landowners, their antecedents, careers, estates, finances, and life styles, attempts have been made to tie them in with the wider picture. Wealthy landowners were as important a part of the local community as they were of the metropolitan, colonial, and imperial communities. This aspect of their functions has seldom been investigated.

Problems of terminology emerged. It was difficult to decide upon a simple name for the group. They were not "squatters", and the term "high farmers" could apply to many other landowners in the county. As well, the term lacked broader social connotations. It was not uncommon at the time for the group to be called "a landed aristocracy", or even "democracy's fiend" (Otago Daily Times, 23 July 1891), but this was mere rhetoric. Finally, the word "gentry" was decided upon. Many of the landowners originated in the British gentry, and in financial resources, occupations, and "ethic", the large landowners of the county were comparable with the typical English squire:

"a self-centred country gentleman with a dilettante interest in the arts, a shrewd interest in agriculture, and an enthusiasm for field sports such as coursing. ...Although (he) travelled on the Continent and made expeditions to London from time to time, his real interests were bound up with (his) neighbourhood, his family, friends, and dependants."

This description (Mitchell, R.J., and Leys, M.D.R., A History of the English People, London 1967, p.483) could be given, without alteration, to the landowners of Ashburton. If the particularly "English" connotations of the word are thought unacceptable, then precedents for the wider use of "gentry" can be found in a variety of societies, ranging from the ante-bellum southern states of the U.S.A. to imperial China. Finally, the word was used in New Zealand at the time, although not exclusively. Scotter writes that

"Squatters, large landowners, and commercial magnates were spoken of as 'gentry'. ...Conditions changed but the old terminology persisted."

(Scotter, W.H., A History of Canterbury, Vol.III, pp.476-77). It was formalised in Burke's Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Colonial Gentry, which sought to integrate the new colonial upper-classes with the old-established British social pattern. Since the 'nineties, modern historians in New Zealand have tentatively used the word. L.C. Webb, for example, wrote:

"Extensive pastoralism ... gave Canterbury its landed gentry."

(Hight, Sir James, and Straubel, C.R., A History of Canterbury, Ch.Ch. 1957, p.233). The term is convenient, specific, and does not necessarily imply an acceptance of the "British" aspect of the large landowning group.

The treatment has been largely literary. The gentry group was very small, and a statistical approach was impossible, as the material did not exist. The result is a

thesis which is perhaps too "impressionistic", with many gaps of information, or inadequate and incomplete sources. The nearest approach to systematic study consisted of combing newspaper files, particularly the Ashburton Guardian, which proved to be an invaluable source. Many other literary sources were found, including the biographical records held by the Canterbury Museum, a good deal of correspondence, journals and other such private papers, held by Ashburton families or by libraries, Lands and Deeds Department records, and many others. Reference was frequently made to secondary material written by descendants of gentry families; this material is not always reliable, but is a useful indication of attitudes transmitted in families. Because of the nature of the sources, the text too often lapses into becoming a mere catalogue. It was difficult to tabulate much information, however, as the fragmentary and incomplete nature of the sources prevented this approach.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to thank the many descendents of Ashburton landed families whom he has contacted, and who gave him much generous assistance. In particular, thanks to members of the Morrow family, the Ballantynes, the Studholmes, Mr J. Blair, Mr D.D.G. Chisnall, Mr P.A.B. Richards, and Mr and Mrs J. Tait. The co-operation and interest shown by the library staffs of the Canterbury Museum Library, the Christchurch Public Library, Ashburton County Council archives, Canterbury University Library, Alexander Turnbull Library, and General Assembly Library, and the encouragement of the late Dr W.H. Scotter are all greatly appreciated. The help of my friend, David Philips, in assisting with detailed and time consuming jobs is gratefully acknowledged, as are the labours of his wife, Ketty, who helped with graphic work. Especial thanks are tendered to Mr W.J. Gardner, for his patient advice and suggestions, and stressing of thorough scholarship.

CHAPTER I

THE COUNTY SETTING

I. THE PHYSICAL SETTING

The Ashburton County, one of the largest counties in New Zealand, sprawls inland from the Canterbury Bight in the east to the summits of the Southern Alps, some seventy miles inland. To the north it is bounded by the mile-wide bed of the Rakaia river and, forty miles to the south, by the Rangitata. The lowlands area, roughly forty miles by forty miles, or about the size of the English county of Wiltshire, embraces three main regions. The first is a belt of mountains and downlands descending from the first range along the western border of the area. This belt of land, about five miles wide, was largely forested when the first colonists arrived, and in the 'nineties much of this was still intact, as it is today. Two or three small milling villages, for example, Alford Forest and Staveley, were by the 'nineties becoming market and service centres for the surrounding countryside, and pools of labour for the estates. Where there was no forest there were extensive sheep runs, largely leasehold, and still covered with the yellow and golden tussock grasses which give the high country its own peculiar beauty.

Below this belt of hills were the broad plains. Originally built up of gravel scoured from the inland mountains by glaciation, they had since been overlain with finer soils by the Ashburton and Hinds rivers, both fed by fan-like tributary systems. These plains, appearing of a perfect flatness upon first glance, were in reality slightly

undulating, marked by long slopes rising from the secondary rivers to stony high interfluves, varied by small low knolls and scarps, and often lined with retreating series of old river terraces. The soils covering these plains were generally neither poor nor good, with considerable local variation. Favoured places, such as Methven, Flemington, and Wakanui, possessed heavy, deep soils of silt loam, while other areas, such as Ealing and Acton, consisted of poor, light, often stony land. Water was often a problem, particularly in the lighter, higher lands. The main rivers, usually broad shingle beds with a few streams braiding across them, but running bank-to-bank after rains, were fed by small tributaries, creeks, and marshes, which watered the lower, more fertile lands, but left the interfluves literally high and dry.

The third sub-region comprised coastal swamps. Banked up behind lines of dunes and sea cliffs, their soils were potentially the richest in the county, but required much draining. Before drainage this was a lush region of murky waterways, dark, tropical-looking vegetation, and raucous birdlife. By the 'nineties this had for the most part been done and the land converted to a more fertile version of the plains further inland. The dunes were stabilised with plantings, and the coastal lagoons lined with holiday cottages. Only the grey shingle cliffs which mark the end of the land, and the lonely, steep beaches below them had remained untouched, and provided the colonists with names such as "Longbeach", "Lowcliff" and "Seafield".

The resources of the whole lowlands area were almost exclusively favourable to farming. By the 'nineties most

of the economically millable timber in the foothills was gone, and the hundreds of miles of plantations lining the plains existed primarily for shelter and aesthetics. Mineral resources were insignificant despite abortive diamond rushes, and were limited to deposits of tin at Mt Somers and Alford Forest, limestone, and fine china clay. The land, on the other hand, was a powerful enticement to settlement first by run-holders and then by farmers. It was flat, open, sufficiently fertile, covered in native grasses and only an occasional tree, easily accessible, completely free of any native population, and available on leasehold for almost nominal rents. Such considerations, characteristic of vast areas of the South Island, invited rapid settlement. In 1853 the runs of Ashburton began to be allotted, mostly to the land-hungry gentry of Christchurch, and in 1854 the first stations were established, the first freehold sections being taken up in 1857. By 1896 the land-exploiting basis of the county was revealed by the statistics of that year: 880,000 sheep, 11,000 people.¹

By the 'nineties the physical appearance of the county was as firmly established as its economic structure had been by the end of the 1850s. The landscape of today, indeed, is little different from the landscape then, except in the poorest areas. There are now fewer people in the rural areas of the county (a fact not commonly realised).² The effect on the landscape of this population had been considerable, transforming open grassland into sub-divided farmlands, with

1 AJHR 1896, H-23, p. 97.

2 In 1896 there were 10,820 people in the county, outside of the single borough, compared with 10,450 in 1950. Figures from Scotter, W.H., History of Canterbury, Vol.III, Christchurch 1965, pp.490-491.

a horizon of "continuous forest";³ 630,000 acres were cultivated in 1896 - a not substantially smaller area than the 713,000 acres cultivated in 1950. Over 1,000 miles of water-races watered stock on 586,000 acres.⁴ Irrigation works were beginning and European trees, planted on a very large scale by private land-owners and the Ashburton County Council, often alongside water-races, provided "six hundred miles of grateful shade for man and beast".⁵ Men had made the countryside assume an eighteenth-century English appearance, covered with tidy farms and estates,⁶ and intersected with white roads, lined with gorse hedgerows. A local newspaper⁷ reported that:

3 Stewart, P.D., "Landscape Evolution in the Ashburton Plains, 1850-1950", M.A. Thesis, University of Canterbury, 1968, describes this process.

4 New Zealand Year Book, 1896, p.515.

5 Canterbury Times, 16 June 1883, p.17.

6 The "corn countries" of England still retained their older appearance well into the nineteenth century, and can be compared with Ashburton county - another "corn country". William Cobbett, in Rural Rides (1830) describes them thus: "every inch of land is appropriated by the rich. No hedges, no ditches, no commons, no grassy lanes; a country divided into great farms; a few trees surround the great farm-house. All the rest is bare of trees; and the wretched labourer has not a stick of wood, and has no place for a pig or cow to graze, or even to lie down upon." (quoted in Sambrook, G.A. (ed.), English Life in the Nineteenth Century, London 1942, p.36).

The English countryside in the eighteenth century, before enclosure, was different from the subdivided, closely hedged, and wooded landscape of the nineteenth century. Away from the paretterres of the great country houses the countryside was open, generally unfenced, treeless, under-cultivated, and with many rough edges. By the late nineteenth century, large areas of England (in Yorkshire, the south-west, and the Welsh and Scottish marches) were less "English" in appearance than Ashburton county's lowlands had become.

7 Ashburton Guardian, 2 November 1894.

"Strangers coming here from the Old Country say the county is now like a slice from one of the southern counties of England, with its nice roads, fine homesteads, and well defined and cultivated paddocks."

The climate of Canterbury was thought⁸

"well-suited to Europeans. It resembles that of Great Britain, but on the plains is far more equable. ...The climate, as a whole, is splendidly healthy, bracing, and most enjoyable."

The Ashburton county generally deserved such compliments; the main failing in the weather was its variability from one year to another, and wide temperature fluctuations, but in comparison with areas such as Australia and South Africa, it was thought regular and reliable. The force of the hot, dry norwester had been tempered by the planting of trees, and although heavy frosts and snowfalls were common in winter, especially in the inner parts of the county, they were usually followed by bright, clear sunny days. The rainfall of 25-40 inches was quite adequate when supplemented by water-races for stock, and the low humidity made for a comfortable climate. It was this generally beneficent climate that enabled not particularly good soils to produce an average profit per acre as large as the whole yield per acre in Victoria and Tasmania - the most favoured Australian colonies.⁹

Communications with the rest of the country were, after the rivers had been bridged, excellent and easy. In the north, what was called the "Great South Road", crossed the Rakaia on a bridge over a mile long, where gatekeepers collected tolls for the White family, local landowners.¹⁰

8 NZYB, 1896, p.515.

9 Canterbury, Its Resources and Progress, Christchurch, 1889, *passim*.

10 White, W., "Records of an Old Pioneer", 1939, in the ^{Christchurch,} Canterbury Museum Library, gives details of the construction, maintenance and operation of this bridge and its tolls by the White family.

Inland, a secondary connection with the north was the Upper Rakaia Ferry. To the South, the Great South Road crossed the Rangitata on another long bridge near Ealing, where the Wrights enjoyed similar toll rights as those of the Whites at Rakaia. Further inland the Arundel Bridge, built in 1872 to replace Du Moulin's Ford,¹¹ provided another link. Inns and accommodation-houses catered for the needs of thirsty travellers across the "drouthy" plains.

The South Island main trunk railway bisected the county, linking it with the seaports at Timaru and Lyttelton. Within the county, communications were well-developed. Roads were well-formed,¹² and complemented the railway system. Branching off from the main trunk at Rakaia was the Rakaia-Ashburton Forks District Railway, which ran inland to Methven and carried the wool and grain from the north-west of the county to the seaport of Lyttelton. The south-west was similarly served by the Mount Somers Railway, which ran inland from Tinwald to the village at Mount Somers. The gaps in the railway system were filled in by fleets of drays, owned by the great landowners, or by contractors who hired them out to the small farmers. These ponderous carts were in constant motion through the county, laden with bales, and hauled by oxen or traction engines. Passenger transport, for those who could not afford private carriages, was provided by horse-drawn coaches, which also carried the mails, such as

¹¹ Gillespie, O.A., South Canterbury, Timaru, 1958, p.233.

¹² Those who lived in the county a little after the 'nineties remember the lesser country roads as being not unlike English lanes; they were usually tracks of white earth or shingle, flanked by long grassy verges, and overshadowed by very high gorse and hawthorn hedges and occasional belts of trees. I am indebted particularly to Mrs J.R. Branch, of Red Park, near Mayfield, for her verbal picture of the countryside in the years at the beginning of this century.

Tisch's Mail Coach, which ran daily from Alford Forest to Springburn, leaving the Forest at 7 a.m., and arriving at Springburn in time for the Ashburton train.¹³

Dotted across this pleasant rural landscape were numerous small townships or villages and the one town, Ashburton. Every several miles was a township, with its school, church, hotel, blacksmith's shop, flour mill, and its cluster of cottages with perhaps one or two larger houses for the more substantial citizens. All the buildings would be built of wood or whitewashed cob, and sheltered by trees. Some of these townships have since disappeared, for "This was the era of the towns and villages as local centres for social and business life, and as reservoirs of labour for the estates."¹⁴ The advent of the motor-car, and the break-up of the estates, enabling the former labourer to live on his own small farm, or in Ashburton, sealed the doom of most of these villages. Some, such as Methven, absorbed the others, and grew proportionately larger. In the 'nineties, however, most supported populations of only two or three hundreds around a nucleus of clustered buildings. Methven in 1892 contained only 102 people. A correspondent wrote of Staveley village in 1896,¹⁵

"we pass a number of pretty cottages with gardens, cosy looking little farmsteads, and the Manse, and schoolhouse, and notice some very fair crops of oats not quite ripe enough yet for the reaper. At Staveley there is a townhall recently completed, a store, which is also the local post-office, and from opposite which, at the junction of the cross roads, there is a pretty view of the hills and bush, with Mount Somers in the distance. In another direction, on the road to the bush, there are several nice looking homesteads; the

13 This mail coach was regularly advertised in the Ashburton Guardian throughout the 1890s.

14 Scotter, Canterbury, p.125.

15 Guardian, 20 February, 1896.

residence of Mr Sharplin, with its pretty verandah and green venetians, being a very noticeable feature of the landscape."

Rakaia, with its courthouse and other public buildings, its ambitious street plan, and its population of some 400, was an example of the larger township. It had been described, eleven years earlier, by a newspaper columnist who wrote,¹⁶

"Healthy and vigorous is the young town of Rakaia, and evidently it is expected to be one of the principal agricultural centres of the future."

He mentioned

"the fine, large wooden wool and grain store ... (and) the fine large goods shed bordering the railway and the large stores of some of the best known of the Ashburton firms (are) established up and down the township ... Next in importance to the larger arterial provisions (are) the two principal hotels of the township ... We also have two saddlers, a firm of auctioneers, a dining establishment, and a firm of barristers and solicitors ... Two bakers, two bootmakers, two blacksmiths, and a milliner's establishment complete the list ... There is a handsome Episcopalian church (as well as Presbyterian services in the schoolroom, and Wesleyan services in the Library Hall). I must not omit to mention the particularly handsome Town Hall ... In addition to this palatial abode we have now a Police Court.

Sauntering around the township one can observe how the villa residences of the officials and representatives of the different firms are rising in the surrounding allotments."

The writer then took a quick look at the estates of the surrounding gentry:

"In the neighbourhood of Rakaia are some extensive properties devoted to agricultural and sheep farming, and notably that of Acton Station ... an estate which comprises 22,500 acres of rich freehold land, and 1,000 of leasehold, on which were pastured 32,000 sheep last season, exclusive of the lambs, the number of which was 8,000. On this estate there are 110 miles of gorse fencing and the number of acres that will be devoted to wheat for the coming season will be 4,000. This is really a splendid estate ..."

"Another fine estate is that of Mr E.S. Coster (Somerton), of 5,000 acres of freehold, upon which he has erected a handsome mansion, the gardens surrounding which present a picture gratifying to anyone who considers the New Zealand

¹⁶ Lyttelton Times, 15 July 1879, p.5.

climate, with all its faults, one for which all lovers of sweet-scented, bright-tinted flowers and luscious fruits ought to be grateful. Mr D.G. Holmes (of Holmeslee), Mr C.N. Mackie (of Lavington), and Mr Leonard White (of Langley), are some of the other large landowners in the neighbourhood of this place, though my space will not allow me at present to attempt any description of their estates."

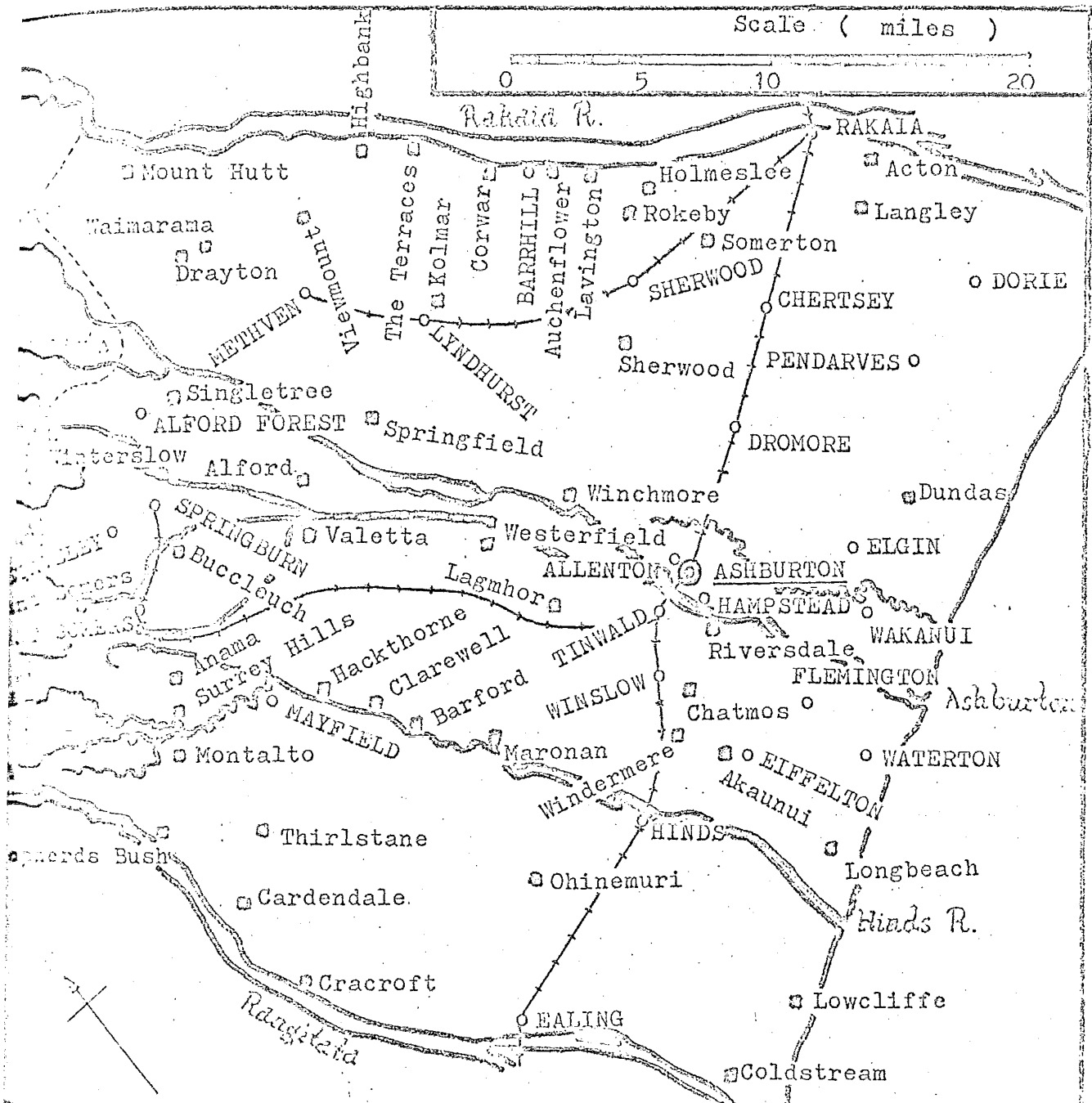
This picture was repeated, with variations, throughout the county. Tinwald, with a population of 538 in 1892, was another larger centre, and there were several to equal Staveley, now extinct, or virtually extinct, and often leaving only their names on maps to puzzle travellers - usually English or Scottish names such as Dromore, Sherwood, Cairnbrae, Hinds, or Willowby.

The centre of this wide countryside was the borough of Ashburton. This was the only town, and in 1890 contained about 2,000 people. With the three suburbs, this population rose to about 4,000.¹⁷ In 1879, the population of the borough proper had been 1,200, and throughout the depressed years of the 'eighties it had continued to grow steadily.¹⁸ This growth was increasingly being based upon commerce and light industry. By the 'nineties the county, on the other hand, had almost reached a demographic plateau which adjustments in the landholding pattern failed to alter. The borough, by contrast, has shown constant growth.

Differences between town and country must not, however, be exaggerated. Ashburton borough was the site of the county council offices, as well as the town hall, and was not only the administrative, commercial, and cultural heart of the county, but was also the place where many people from the land chose to retire. Furthermore, the professional

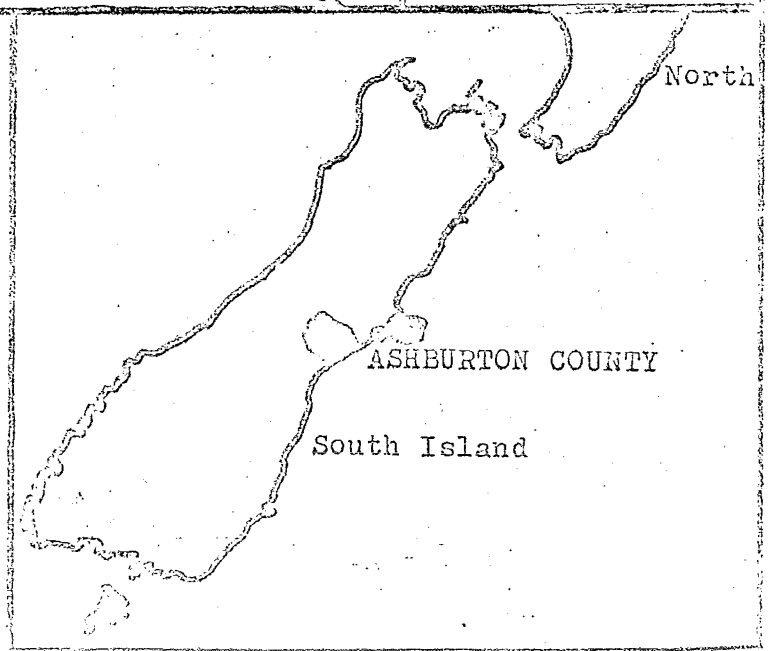
17 Scotter, *Canterbury*, p.125.

18 Ibid, p.493.



ASHBURTON COUNTY:
 showing townships and sta-
 tion homesteads.

(Inset) LOCATION MAP OF
 ASHBURTON COUNTY.



people and the merchants of the borough often mingled on terms of social equality with the landed gentry of the county. Ashburton borough was certainly not devoid of large colonial mansions.

The borough was claimed to be "a well-built town, with extensive and beautiful recreation-grounds and gardens."¹⁹

It was

"a considerable town, and plantations of poplars and bluegums greatly enhance its appearance ... it is a gas-lit town with spacious streets lined by shops, public buildings, hotels, churches, schools, a theatre and public library; the public health and convenience have been judiciously provided for by the dedication of pleasant reserves and wooded parks, while tall chimney stacks proclaim it the seat of numerous industries."²⁰

The town centred upon Baring Square, which was grassed and planted with trees, and "The Hub", the solid-looking commercial centre, built of brick and stone, with neo-classical or Italianate facades. From these extended the usual colonial gridiron street pattern, ending in broad avenues and the willow-lined banks of the Ashburton river, where the very poor huddled in a shantytown. The central area measured a mile square, and comprised the borough. Beyond this, and contiguous to it, were small suburbs. It was a place on which it was claimed "a good deal of money and forethought has been expended in enhancing the natural features of (the town)."²¹ It included an extensive public domain, with two lakes, thickly planted around with ornamental trees, shady walks, rustic bridges, and pleasant

19 NZYB, 1896, p.523.

20 Picturesque Atlas, p.631.

21 James's Guide to Ashburton, 1894, (no place of publishing indicated) p.19.

open greens for cricket and other sports. Nearby was the Hospital - a "somewhat pretentious building viewed from outside, and is constructed partly of brick and partly of the white and easily-worked building stone obtained from Mt Somers."²² Similarly constructed public buildings included the police court, the County Council Building, the post office, and the public library and Borough Council Building.

The grain trade centred in "West Street, on the western side of the Railway", which was "devoted almost entirely to Grain Stores, which are both large and numerous and well worth a visit of inspection."²³ There were several hotels, ranging from glorified grog shops to the Somerset, where "a grand mountain view can be obtained from the roomy balconies." In the Somerset, which had fifty bedrooms, the well-to-do could hire private suites of apartments and private drawing and dining-rooms, and stroll about in the late Victorian magnificence of ornate public rooms.

Religion, in a society at least formally religious, was catered for by a range of churches, from the "handsome and substantial Roman Catholic Chapel down to the less pretentious meeting houses."²⁴ The Roman and English churches were both built in stone, in the usual ponderous style. Less pretentious buildings were the five banks, the two breweries, the cordial factory, three flourmills, gasworks, ironworks, brickworks, and the large new woollen mills at Arlington - "a very flourishing concern."²⁵ To get about the town, one

22 Ibid., p.21.

23 Ibid., p.21.

24 Ibid., p.23.

25 Ibid., p.19.

could hire hackney cabs (whose regulations called for them to travel at least six miles an hour), private carriages at Scott's Bazaar (with coachmen in livery thrown in) or, for the more humble, "borough stage carriages" (an early form of public transport). Two newspapers, the Guardian, and the Mail, competed with the county newspapers - the Advertisers of Rakaia, Alford Forest, and Mt Somers - and the big Christchurch papers, and provided a small printing industry. Two volunteer fire brigades protected property.²⁶

Behind the facade of this bourgeois little town, where "the villas of its merchants are numerous, handsome and are surrounded by tasteful grounds",²⁷ surrounded by its extensive countryside, all was not quite as it seemed. A long, tenacious depression had gripped New Zealand throughout the 'eighties, and continued well into the 'nineties. The year 1894 was judged one of the worst of the depression, a year in which poor harvests, the lowest wheat price in the nineteenth century, and below-average quality wool clips, combined to make the farming and trading community "decidedly demoralized".²⁸ By 1896, the worst was over, but for many the period had been long and grim. Many businesses had failed in Ashburton and "the number of suicides shocked Ashburton especially."²⁹ For many years, "Ashburton ... suffered severely."³⁰ It was not, however, the upper and

26 Ibid. - this information is scattered through the booklet, some in the form of advertisements.

27 Canterbury Times, 11 September 1890, p.34.

28 Ibid, 1 March 1892, p.32.

29 Scotter, Canterbury, p.67.

30 Ibid, p.68.

middle groups which were hardest hit by the depression, but the lower classes^{who} were profoundly affected. Ashburton continued to grow and profits remained, except in times of panic, adequate. But this was only possible at the cost of lowered wages for working people, which in turn was possible only because of the high level of unemployment - worse in the provinces of Otago, Canterbury and Marlborough because of the seasonal demands of the wheat industry, and because most of the assisted immigrants of the 'seventies had come to the southern provinces. As wages declined, more and more of the lower classes, formerly described in such terms as "sturdy limbed", or "tidy, decent people",³¹ were reduced to destitution, or took to the roads as swaggers. Conditions of employment for those who remained became poorer and poorer. The Labour Acts of 1873, 1875 and 1881 offered some remedies, but "the administration of these Acts was a pitiful farce."³² The 'nineties opened with reports of the Sweating Commission. They revealed conditions shocking to many in the middle-classes, with wages almost at starvation level, and offered evidence that the working-classes were being harshly treated. Throughout the 'nineties poverty remained endemic, mitigated only slowly by the long haul back to prosperity and the first steps in labour legislation.

The social institutions of the county indicated differences between groups. The volunteer system, for example, provided for military training of all males between

³¹ See, for example, Lady Barker's description of a hamlet (probably Greendale) in the Malvern Hills, in the prosperous 1860s. Lady Barker, Station Life in New Zealand, London, 1883, p. III .

³² Scotter, Canterbury , p.73.

³³ Col. G.A. McLean Buckley of Lagmor, for example; mounted, armed, equipped and transported a complete detachment of men from his estate.

the ages of 18 and 60. It was never, however, strictly enforced, and membership was effectively limited to those who could afford the time and equipment. There was, in fact, a social prestige associated with membership. As a rule, the rank and file were drawn from the farming and mercantile groups, while the officer ranks were filled by the well-to-do gentry. In times of crisis, as was shown during the Boer War, the gentry would donate some of their best horses, contribute arms and regalia,³³ and the officers of the local forces would be lionised in the ballrooms of county society.³⁴ The county supported three units; the Ashburton Squadron of the Canterbury Yeomanry Cavalry (the most prestigious), the Ashburton Rifle Volunteers, and the Ashburton Guards. The members of these units were always from the "establishment" - landed gentry, "cockatoos" of some standing, and the bourgeoisie of the town - and this fact tended to underline the social divisions of the county.

Education was similarly selective. Primary education was by now free and compulsory - although often poorly supervised and incomplete.³⁵ But secondary education was neither, for³⁶

33 Col. G.A. McLean Buckley of Lagmhor, for example; mounted, armed, equipped and transported a complete detachment of men from his estate.

34 A good general account of the volunteer system in southern Canterbury can be found in Gillespie, op.cit., pp.415-17, 419,422. In addition, the lavish entertainment of Boer War officers by the gentry is chronicled in a novel, based on her own experiences of county society, by Edith Lyttleton, of Rokeby. This novel was written under the pseudonym of G.B. Lancaster, Promenade, Sydney & London, 1938, pp.462-66.

35 Adoption of the compulsory education clause was still incomplete in the county in the 1890s. The Cyclopedia, pp.786-865, listed only eight primary schools in the county - at Fairton, Hinds, Longbeach, Methven, Mt Somers, Rokeby, Southburn, and Ashburton, (two) - and this was still a very inadequate provision.

36 Sutch, W.B., The Quest for Security in New Zealand, Wellington, 1966, p.94.

Figure 1: Showing the proportion of sheep held in flocks of over 4,000 in selected southern counties, 1895.

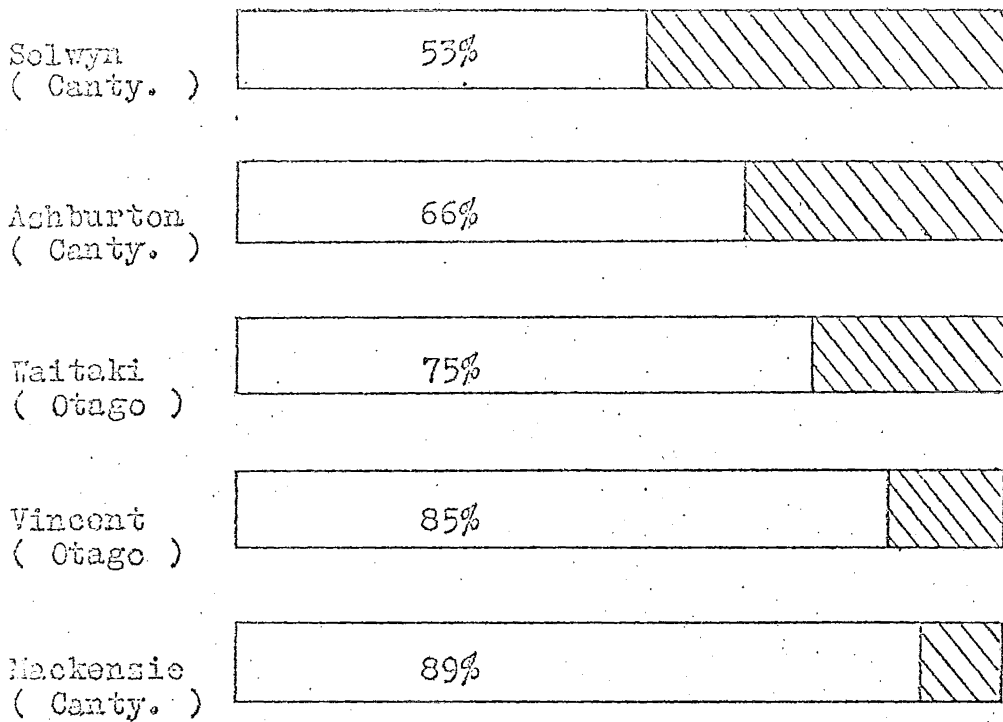


Figure 2: Showing the average size of sheep flocks of over 4,000 in selected southern counties, 1895.

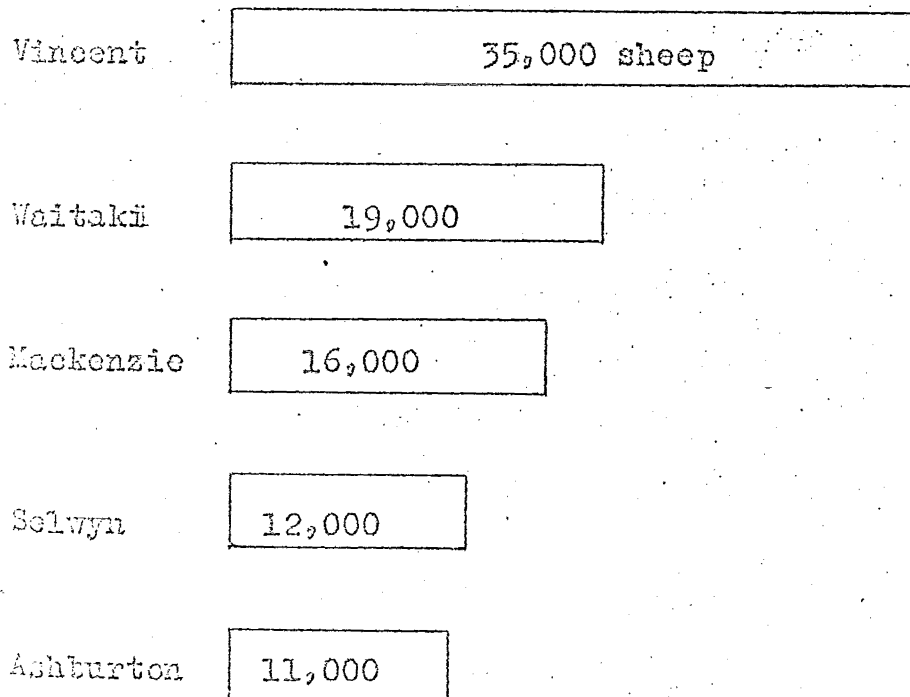


Figure 3: Showing the population density of selected southern counties; average number of persons per square mile.

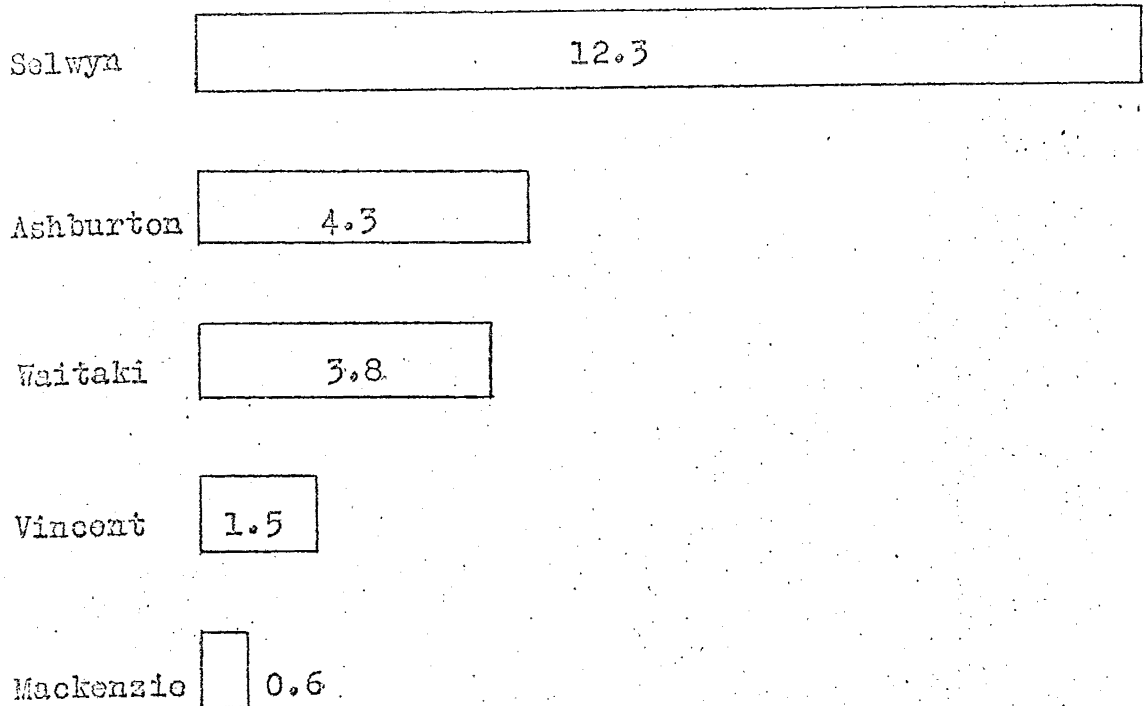


Figure 4: Showing the proportion of males in the total population of selected southern counties.

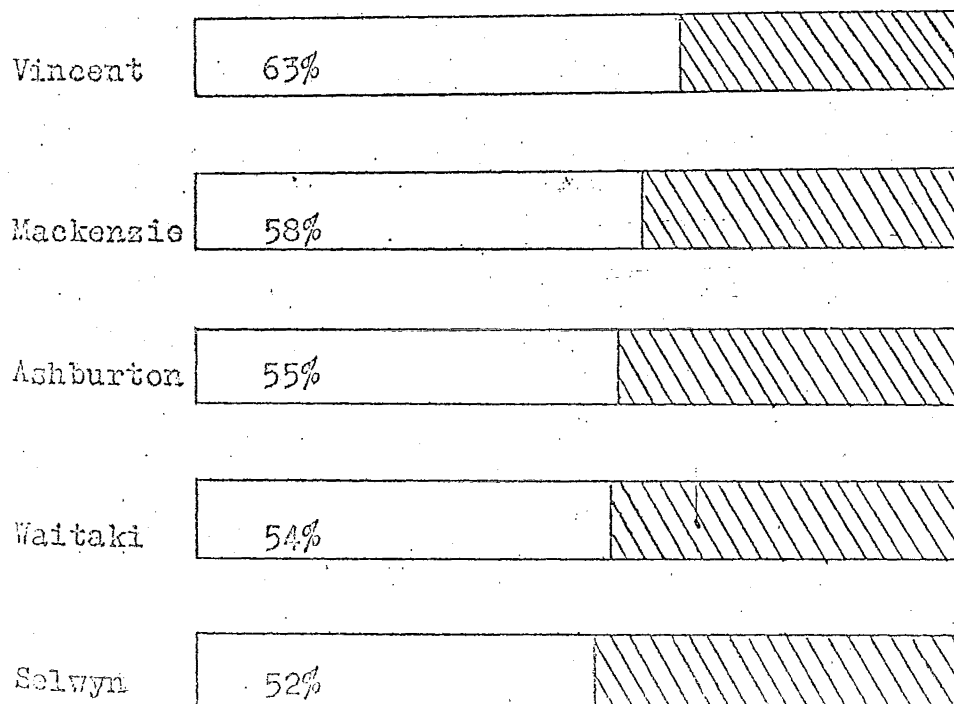


Figure 5: Showing the average number of sheep per head of population in selected southern counties, 1895-96.

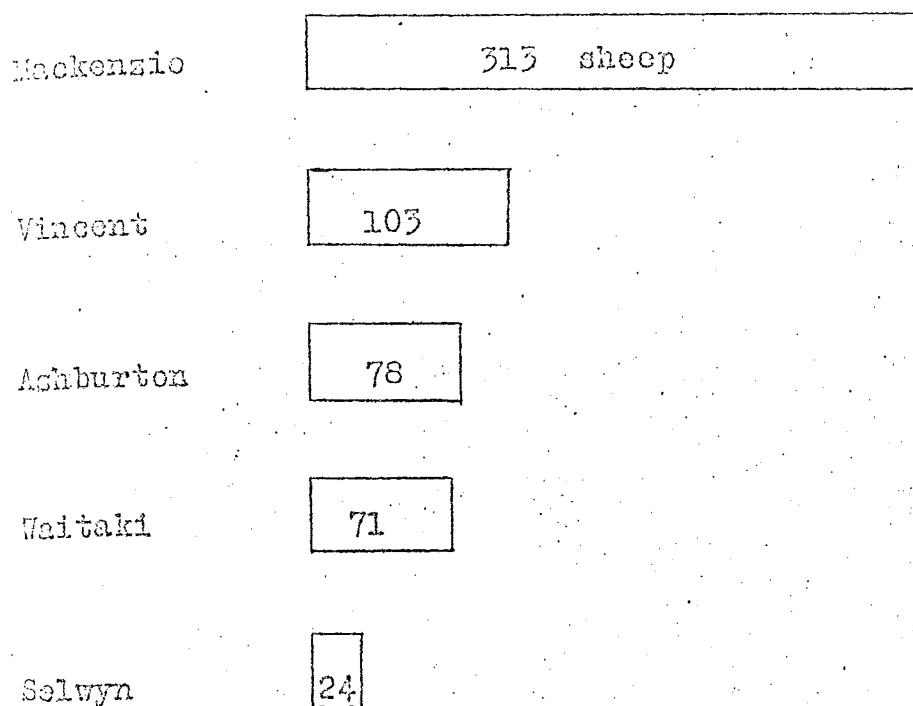
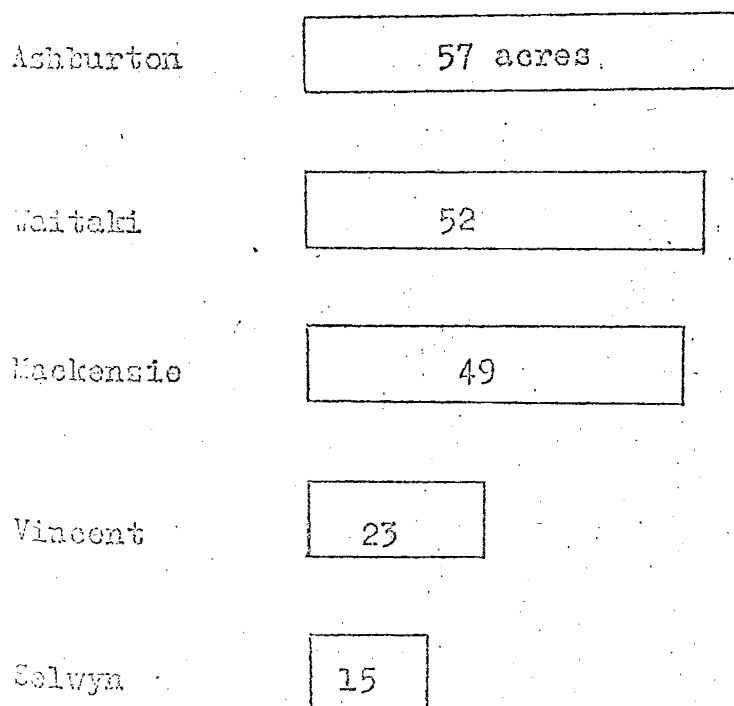


Figure 6: Showing the average acreage cultivated per head of population in selected southern counties, 1895-96.



"post-primary schooling was regarded as the preserve of the wealthier groups and the gentry."

Ashburton High School, established in 1881, with fees of £3.3.0 per term (with an extra £1.1.0 for music),³⁷ made secondary education accessible to the middle classes of the town, and the more prosperous of the farmers of the county. But when the industrial or rural workers' wages were reckoned in terms of shillings a week, it was hopelessly expensive for the lower groups. On the other hand, it was too cheap for the gentry, whose sons and (increasingly) daughters were usually sent to private schools in Christchurch or elsewhere.

So it was in all aspects of county life - a general division sustained not by entrenched privilege, but by a combination of money, family, and the more subtle hierarchical influences of rural society. In this, Ashburton county was by no means exceptional in New Zealand, and can in fact be seen as very much an "average" county of the southern part of the colony. Comparisons with four other southern counties of roughly the same area illustrate this. The relative economic dominance of the gentry can be indicated, for example, by looking at the proportion of all the sheep held in flocks of over four thousand in these counties. Figure 1 shows that, in this respect, Ashburton county lies somewhere between the most gentry-dominated county of Mackenzie, where 89% of all sheep in the county were held in very large flocks, and the least "oligarchic" county of Selwyn, where the proportion was only 53%. Ashburton seems even less gentry-dominated when it is noted that the figures for Selwyn were distorted by the presence of a good deal of very small-scale agriculture and farming on the fringes of the Christchurch urban area.

³⁷ Fees advertised in the Guardian throughout 1890.

Figure 2 rectifies this picture slightly by showing Ashburton in lowest place; Vincent county, with an imposing average of 35,000 sheep in each of the flocks held by great landowners, far outranks Ashburton and Selwyn counties, where the gentry flocks averaged only 11,000 or 12,000 sheep respectively. Figure 3 restores Ashburton to a more average position, with a population density of 4.3 per square mile, compared with the great gentry-dominated sheepwalks of Vincent and Mackenzie, and the fragmented farming areas in Selwyn, with a population density almost three times greater than that of Ashburton county. Imbalances within populations are also a valuable indicator of gentry dominance, for where males disproportionately out-number females, then there was a proportionate lack of small farms, and ^{an} engrossing of labour by great estates. Figure 4 shows that Ashburton was again average, with a population imbalance of 55% male, 45% female in 1896, compared with 52%/48% in Selwyn, and a heavy imbalance of 63%/37% in Vincent. Figure 5 shows Ashburton as having an average of 78 sheep per head of population, while Mackenzie had an average of no fewer than 313 sheep per head, which reveals a "sheep before men" society, dominated by large landholdings. Selwyn has a mere 24 sheep per head, which indicates far more small holding than the other counties.

Figure 6 is rather more of an anomaly, and shows that Ashburton was an unusually intensively cultivated county, with an average of 57 acres of land cultivated per head of population, compared with 52 and 49 in Waitaki and Mackenzie, a low 23 in Vincent, and a sparse 15 in Selwyn. The very high figure for Ashburton mainly reflects natural advantages

for agriculture in the county. While enormous acreages of wheat were common on great estates, many small farmers in the county planted a few acres of wheat, oats or turnips every season. Fragmentation of holdings was responsible for the low average in fertile Selwyn, while the lack of land suitable for intensive cultivation in Vincent and Mackenzie prevented the landowners in those counties from supplementing their great sheep flocks with cropping.

Ashburton county, then, appeared to be a typical, or at least average southern county in the 'nineties. Together with Waitaki county, it occupied a middle status in terms of human geography; it was neither overwhelmingly dominated by the great landowners, as were Vincent and Mackenzie, nor was it a county in which considerable fragmentation of holdings had occurred to place the gentry's dominance in a far more equivocal position, as in Selwyn. It was neither a particular "aristocratic", nor a particularly "democratic" southern county. It had its closest affinities with Waitaki county, and probably Ashley, coastal Marlborough, Levels and Geraldine, Clutha, and southern Southland. More unchallengably "aristocratic" counties could be found in the Amuri, southern Marlborough, Waipara, and the inland counties of Otago and Southland. The "cockatoos" were more numerous and influential by comparison in Selwyn although internal differences, as between genteel Malvern Hills, and fragmented Marshland and Halswell must be noted. Also in the counties of Nelson, and the Otago littoral. All the criteria used in the above tables are, however, economic, rather than social. It remains to be seen how much variation from county to county there was in social terms; even the most "democratic" areas in the South

Island (always excluding the West Coast) had their sprinkling of gentry,³⁸ who undoubtedly exercised far more influence than mere numbers would suggest.

Nevertheless, Ashburton county was, to all intents and purposes, an average southern county, and against this physical background it is now possible to look at its social composition in a more detailed manner.

II. THE SOCIAL PYRAMID IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

In the 'nineties, while there were only 45 or so estates (grazing some two-thirds of all the sheep in the county), there were several hundred small farms (supporting the remaining one-third of the flocks). In terms of population the gentry were very much in the minority; they numbered a mere couple of hundred or so, while below them the broad class of small farmers included nearly 3,000 people and, below them again, the landless poor, the great majority of the population, numbered about 5,000. Somewhere about the middle of this pyramid were the other 3,000 or so persons in the county - the suburban Ashburton dwellers, and the villagers. In terms of percentage, the gentry represented about 2% of the population, the "cockatoos" 25%,³⁹ the

³⁸ Even the Marshland district, in Selwyn, where landholdings were very fragmented, supported the King family in their English-style manor house of Burwood, and the Dalgety family in their white mansion surrounded by lakes and fountains at Waitikiri. Other big houses topped knolls at Hillcrest and Bracken Hill.

³⁹ The term "cockatoo", used to describe *small* farmers, originated in Australia. It usually had derogatory or condescending overtones, and in the 'nineties, some professed to believe that it was passing out of use (e.g. E.G. Wright, Guardian, 2 January 1891) to be replaced by the more neutral words of "farmer" or "yeoman". In fact it remained common usage, and became abbreviated to the modern "cockie". Reference was often being made in the 'nineties to "the ordinary cockatoo" as distinct from the large landowner (e.g. letter to editor by "Bystander", Press, 5 January 1891).

landless poor 45%, and the town and village dwellers the remaining percentage of about 18%. Rural society thus presented in numerical terms a "pyramid" social structure.⁴⁰

40 Precise figures for the occupations and dwellings of the people of the county in the period are difficult to come by. However, rough calculations, as follow, can give a useful general picture.

(a) The population of the county in 1896 was 10,820, and in the same year there were 712 sheep owners (AJHR 1896, H-23) One can take the number of sheep owners to approximate the number of landholdings sufficient to comprise a farm which could by any stretch of the imagination be called self-supporting.

(b) Defining an estate to be a holding (freehold) or over 2,500 acres or over a value of £15,000, which would produce an annual income of over £1,000, I found in A Return of the Freeholders of New Zealand, Wellington, 1884, 45 holdings which could thus be termed "estates". By 1896, small ^{passim,} alterations amongst the components of this number had occurred, but there is no reason to believe that the number of estates had either increased or decreased significantly. This conclusion is supported by the analysis of sheep figures, which also give a distinct group of about 45 properties supporting over 4,000 sheep - another base line for the definition of an "estate".

(c) Therefore there were about 45 estates, and 665 small farms in 1896.

(d) Included in the county were suburbs of Ashburton (1,214 pop.) and villages (inc. Tinwald 538, Rakaia 400). Altogether these would include about 3,000 persons involved in services, industries, etc., or dependents of those persons (bearing in mind that the bulk of the population of villages were landless labourers, dependent on seasonal or permanent work on local estates). This leaves about 7,800 persons in the county either on or dependent directly upon the land.

(e) In 1896, there were 356,658 adults in New Zealand, and a total population of 743,214 (NZYB 1896, pp.4 & 84). The average family unit was 4 (although there is every reason to believe it lower in the South Island, with a slower growth rate than the North, and in southern rural districts, where there was a good deal of unmarried labour).

(f) This means that the 665 small farms were inhabited by families totalling about 2,700 people, leaving about 5,100.

(g) The 45 estates were inhabited by families totalling about 200 people, leaving about 4,900.

(h) These 4,900 persons were the servants, labourers, and dependants of the estates and larger farms. Many would be only seasonal or casual labourers, and would have comprised the great majority of the owners of very small rural holdings revealed by the 1882 survey. They were further augmented in harvest and planting seasons by swaggers and other non-resident labour from outside the county.

Figure 7: Showing the "social pyramid" in Ashburton county, in terms of holdings of freehold rural land, 1882.

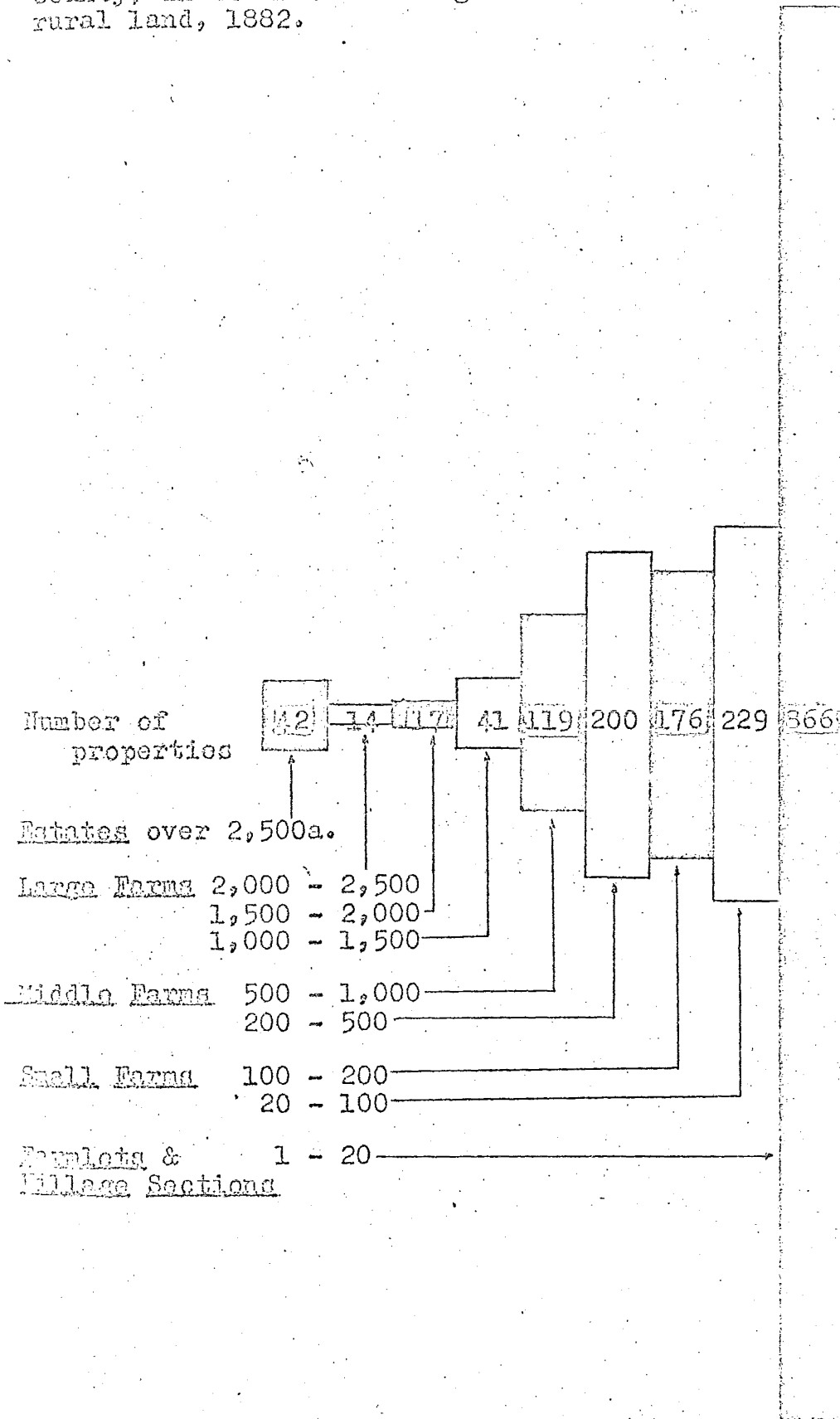


Figure 8: Showing the "social pyramid" in Ashburton county, in terms of owners of sheep flocks, 1895.

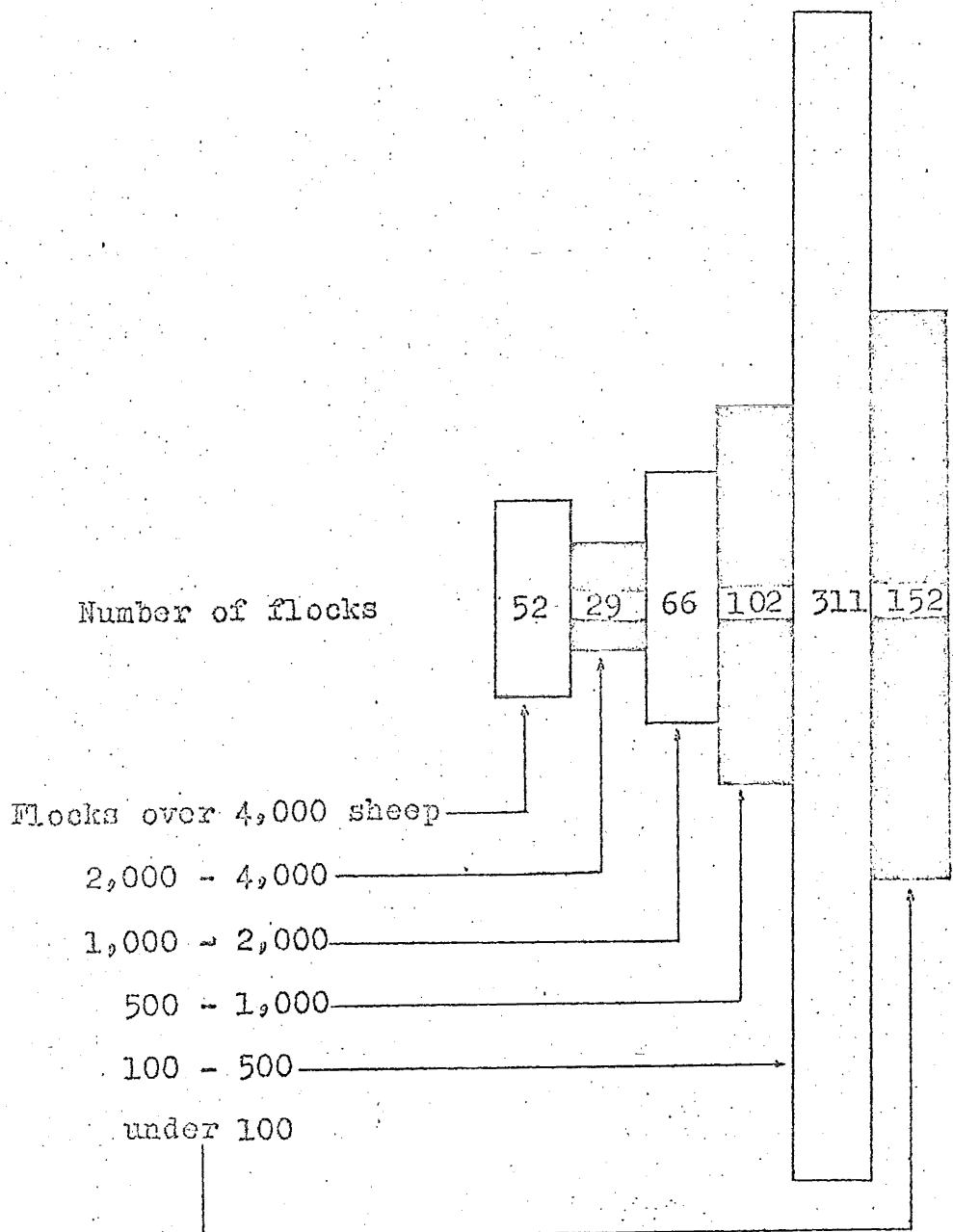
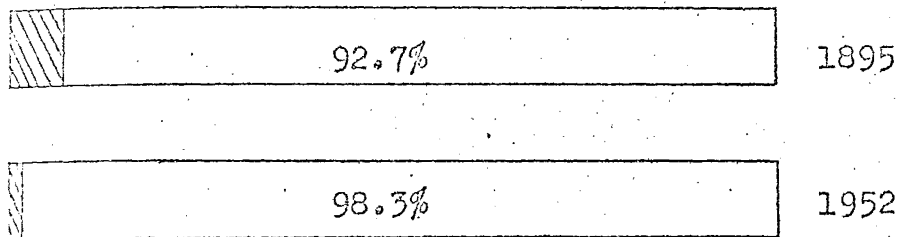
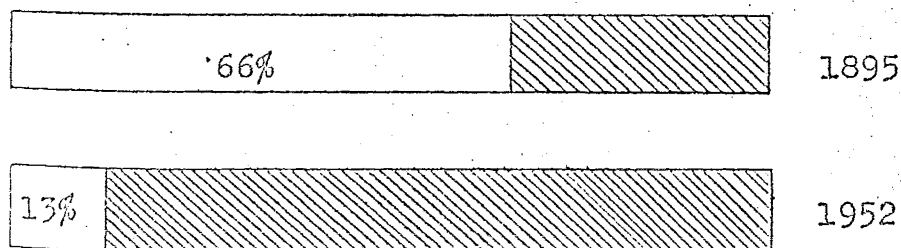


Figure 9: Showing the percentage of flockowners possessing fewer than 4,000 sheep in Ashburton county, in 1895 and 1952.



OR: in 1895, 7.3% of flockowners possessed over 4,000 sheep.
 in 1952, only 1.7% of flockowners possessed over 4,000 sheep.

Figure 10: Showing the percentage of sheep held in flocks larger than 4,000 in Ashburton county, in 1895 and 1952.



Further analysis of figures provides interesting details. The only comprehensive list of all freehold lands in New Zealand was compiled in 1882, in the so-called "Doomsday Book"⁴² of that year. Analysis of all the freehold properties of over one acre in Ashburton county of that year provides another illustration of the social pyramid. There were 1,704 properties in all, and of these about half were smaller than 20 acres. This latter group of properties roughly corresponds to the lowest stratum of rural society. With the exception of properties held by well-to-do villagers and townspeople, which would account for some of these farmlets, most of these units of land were village sections and very small farms, providing cottage sites and a few acres of farmland for families who would be almost totally dependent on employment on the local estates and bigger farms. Above them (see Figure 7) are succeeding layers of farms, the pyramid showing some fluctuations, but eventually tapering off from a solid group of 229 properties of between 20 and 100 acres, where many of the farmers would have been dependent on seasonal or occasional work on estates, to a small group of "gentry" estates immediately above it.

Figure 8 underlines this picture by analysing flock ownership in the county in 1895. Most noticeable is the fact that only 152 farmers owned flocks of fewer than 100 sheep. This implies that the great majority of the owners of very small properties were unable to graze stock efficiently and so cannot be classed as "farmers" but rather approach the category of "landless labourer". Above this level, the

42 The "Doomsday Book" is more properly entitled Return of the Freeholders of New Zealand, 1882, Government Printer, Wellington 1884.

pyramid is satisfactorily smooth. The biggest single group of flocks was from 100 to 500 sheep, and there were 311 of these. Flocks from 2,000 to 4,000 sheep numbered only 29, and this number represents once again the group of prosperous big farmers. The gentry with 52 flocks of over 4,000 (this total includes several high country flocks) are again a distinct bloc at the top of the pyramid.

In passing, fruitful comparisons with the farming pyramid of mid twentieth-century Ashburton county can be made. Figure 9 shows that the percentage of flock owners possessing over 4,000 sheep has declined considerably, from 7.3% in 1895, to a mere 1.7% in 1950. In addition, the percentage of all the sheep in the county owned by this upper group has declined from the imposing 66% of 1895 to a low 13% in 1950, as is shown in Figure 10. Such figures show that the social pyramid of the mid-twentieth century was, as is to be expected, far less extreme than that of the late nineteenth century. The picture that emerges of Ashburton county in the 'nineties is one of a handful of great grain and sheep growing estates "flanked by a small army of peasant farmers." So long as gentry dominance endured "the surfeit of labour was forced into the exploitation of marginal staples, struggling secondary industries, or subsistence agriculture on land unsuited to wool growing".⁴³ To many of the poor and the aspiring small farmers, the gentry seemed a block to mobility, and a check to the satisfactory embourgeoisement of society. To the gentry, as a feminine one of their number wrote,⁴⁴

43 Horsfield, I.W., "The Struggle for Economic Viability", M.A. Thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1960, pp.100, 250.

44 Lancaster, Promenade, p.432.

"The small man is a danger. How can any hand-to-mouth settler establish first-class breeds of sheep and cattle as we can, said the English county gentlemen, conscious of their duty to New Zealand, of new county families already opening eyes and mouths with infant cries."

But the picture was not so simple, and it is necessary to look at the composition of the "lower orders" which made up 98% of the county's population before proceeding to study the small gentry group with its disproportionate prominence.

1. The Cockatoos

Within the "cockatoo" class there existed a very wide range of life-styles, as has been suggested by the figures above. Some deserved the conventional description given them by historians who say, "most small-holders were condemned to lives of continuous grind trying to make their farms provide a bare living."⁴⁵ Such writers point out that the great estates produced most of the exports for sale abroad, in spite of the fact that

"The small farmers made up the bulk of the farming population. Life for them was a great struggle for existence on semi-subsistence farms growing vegetables, potatoes, possibly cereals, with (in the South Island) a few grazing animals. The farms in many cases did not provide enough good or income to keep the farmer and his family. It was quite common for the men, certainly the single men, to be working part of the time elsewhere."⁴⁶

This picture was undoubtedly justified in many cases. Others, were described by the Ashburton correspondent of the Canterbury Times in a series of twenty articles in 1887 on "the men of the plains". They had worked frugally and diligently to build up substantial farms, prosperous and

45. Stone, R.C.J., Economic Development 1870-1890, Auckland, 1967, p.20.

offering a modest competence to the families living on them.

Of such a broad class it is difficult to make generalisations. Those who have made such an attempt have often fallen into the errors of partial vision. The liberal tradition has sided with Sir George Grey, always a fervent opponent of the southern "aristocracy". He saw only the wretched inhabitants of the small leased farmlets at such places as the village settlements of Chertsey, South Rakaia, Dromore, Alford Forest, and Hinds, where the impoverished inhabitants could only coax a ragged few rows of wheat to grow, along with one or two emaciated animals ranging a paddock and "having to maintain themselves by working in the neighbourhood", as mere "serfs for the large proprietors".⁴⁷ Others have seen only those who could afford entries in the Cyclopaedia, which paints a delusively rosy picture of a prosperous, content yeomanry. Such tones could even be lent to colour the picture of the very poor smallholders. In 1893, for example, a cheerful article in the Guardian described the village settlers at Alford Forest, each of whom owned his twenty acres with "A few sheep, with wool and lambs therefrom, a good milking cow or two, and a useful brood mare ...". Casual work was obtainable on the local estates, such as Alford, Winterslow, and Singletree.⁴⁸

But in 1891, the local gentry in another part of the county, near South Rakaia, had seen fit to patronize and forward a petition from the poor smallholders of the local village settlement asking for rent relief. The crude, unsteady hand of one of their number wrote⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Scotter, Canterbury, p.108.

⁴⁸ Guardian, 15 February 1893.

⁴⁹ The Hall Papers, Library of the General Assembly, Wellington, James Foley and others to Sir John Hall, 17 July 1891.

"To Sir J. Hall Hon. Member for Ellesmere we the undersigned Village Settlers do ask and pray that you will present our petition to the proper place for Consideration there is eight families living on 128 acres and paying 10 shillings per acre which we consider to be an oppressive rent work being not to be had in this district at the present time we cannot see how we are to live if we put in a Crop it Costs one pound ten Shillings per acre before we get it to market our yield not being very good it is a poor prospect for to live on we hope by sending this petition that you as Hon gentleman will see your way to reducing our rent to something reasonable ... we consider it almost impossible for us to live."

This petition was "Signed" by men with names such as James Foley, Thomas Irvine (shown by an X), James Wilks, Thomas Ives, and so on. The copper-plate writing of E.S. Coster of Somerton, and the elegant signatures of other gentry, such as W.McN. Lyttelton of Rokeby and W.L. Allan of Acton endorsed this petition. It is not known whether relief was obtained or not, but the letter certainly substantiates the claims of liberals that the existing distribution of land condemned many to great poverty.

But it was possible to rise, with hard work and luck, and attain a modest prosperity. Such a career was that of Samuel Scott, who⁵⁰

"had started with thirty acres, and had added 130 acres from the Wakanui estate. He had kept himself going by building sod houses and walls, and had done without machinery until the previous year because he could not afford it. He was still living in his first sod house, much added to and improved."

Above such men again were those who not only possessed this sort of sturdy independence, hard-won, but also enjoyed some of the fruits of affluence. Such men were the ones who bought or rented farms of several hundred acres, together with a comfortable farmstead and establishment. One large landed proprietor put "The Grange" farm on his estate up for a new lease in 1893. This property of 725 acres was advertised

50 Canterbury Times, 28 July 1889.

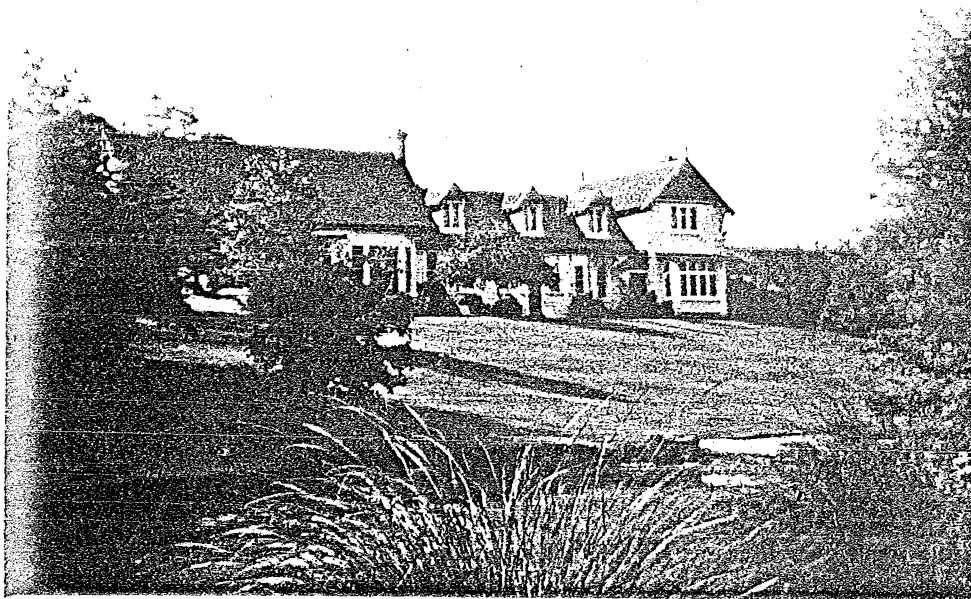
as having "a Dwelling House of seven rooms erected on the property; also commodious Stable, Loose Boxes, Harness Rooms and Loft overhead, with Implement Shed attached which could be used as a shearing shed; Cow Shed and other buildings, also Sheep Yards." The rental was to be £325 per annum for the first three years, and thereafter £310 per annum.⁵¹ The size of this rental is a good indication of the income the farm would bring in to its tenant, and at such a time.

An example of a successful cockatoo family, working its way up to affluence, is that of Thomas and Ann Hayman. This couple arrived in Canterbury in 1865 with no money, and worked for over a decade on C. Dampier-Crossley's Mt Grey estate. In this time, they saved and borrowed enough capital to enable them to move in 1877 to "Ashfield Farm", near Willowby, in Ashburton county. They eventually replaced the sod and thatched cottage on the farm with a commodious two-storeyed house with eight rooms, and surrounded this with grounds, and a large orchard of apple, plum and cherry trees. They studded their farm with plantations, and hedged it with gorse. At the farmstead they possessed a large stable with a loft for farm help, a dairy and an implement shed. They grazed sheep mostly, but also grew oats and some wheat. They took an active part in the local community, based on church and school.

"Centred around Willowby Methodist church was a virile religious and social life"⁵² overlooked by the Anglican gentry. The Haymans kept a four-wheeled waggonette of patriarchal dimensions, and drove their brood twice to church every Sunday.

51 Guardian, 26 January 1893.

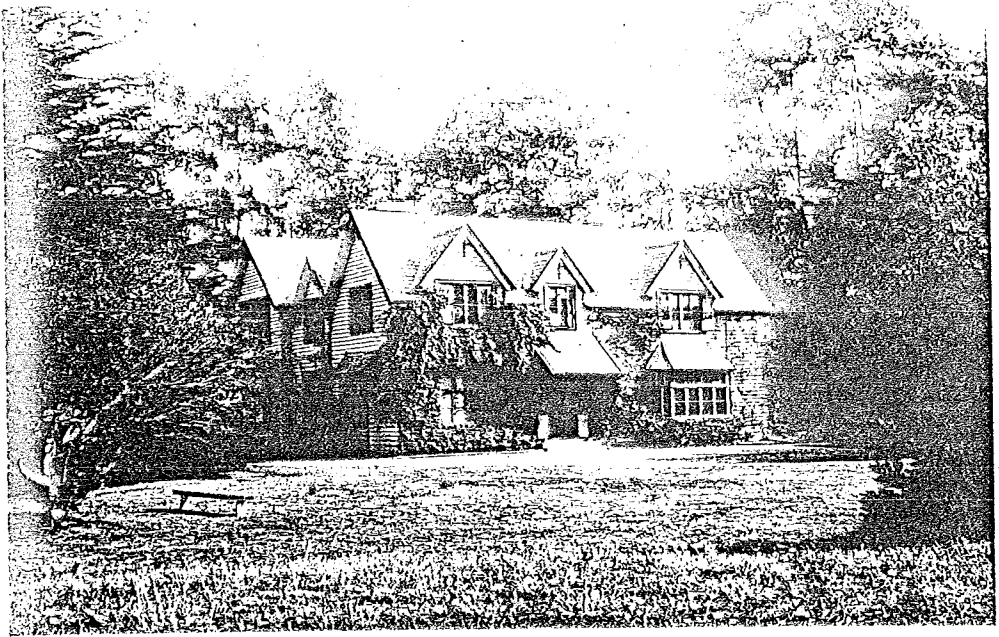
52 Hayman, B.F., The Hayman Family, Waimate, 1964, p.23.



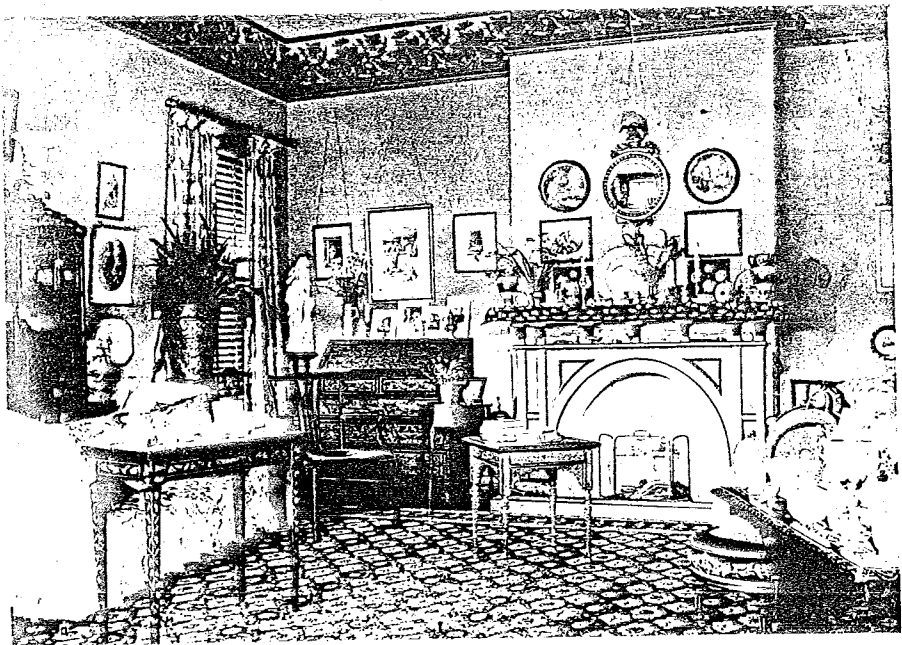
1. COLDSTREAM. The garden front of Col. J. Studholme's country homestead near Hinds. This front of the thirty-two roomed house overlooks the sunken garden and ornamental water.



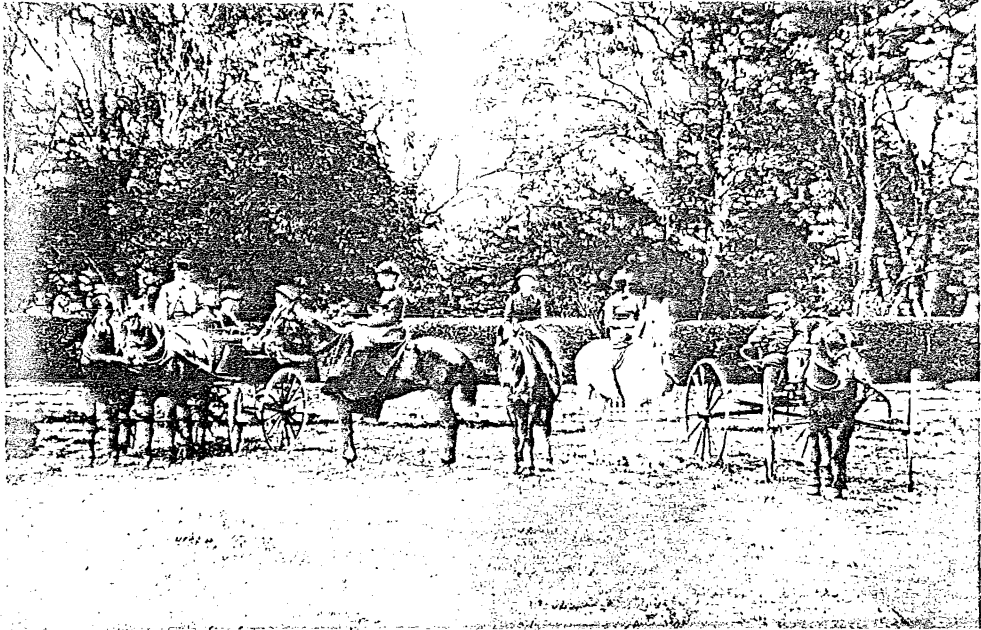
- (J. J. A. Studholme)
2. COLDSTREAM. View from the verandah of the garden front showing part of the sunken garden. Cottage on right was the first homestead, used in the period as a guest house. Young Studholmes on the lawn. c. 1900.



- (J.J.A.Studholme)
 3. MEREVALE. The Studholme family's town house, set in thirty acres of grounds near Christchurch. Leased to F. de Cartaret Malet of Clarewell for most of the 1890s.



- (J.J.A.Studholme)
 4. A COUNTRY HOUSE DRAWING ROOM. A drawing room in Kakahu homestead, on one of the Studholme family's lesser estates.



(J.J.A.Studholme)
 5. AN EQUESTRIAN FAMILY PORTRAIT. A gathering of the Studholme family at M.Studholme's South Canterbury estate of Te Waimate in the 1890s. J.Studholme I seated in the carriage on left, M.Studholme in the phaeton on right, various Studholme ladies on horseback and in the carriage.



(J.J.A.Studholme)
 6. HIGH FARMING. A ploughman at work in one of the great paddocks of the Coldstream estate.



(P.A.B. Richards)

7. A PATRIARCHAL GROUP. The Ballantynes of Thirlstane in the 1890s, taken in a drawing room of their Timaru house. From left to right: W. Ballantyne, Catherine Gould, J. Ballantyne, Christina Ballantyne, John Ballantyne, Mrs John Ballantyne, T. Ballantyne, Alice Ballantyne, Ellen Ballantyne, Elizabeth Ballantyne.



(Mrs J.V. Jacobson)

8. THE MORROW FAMILY. The family of D. Morrow gathered on the croquet lawn in front of the east frontage of Montalto homestead. Group includes the governess and tutor on left.

Afterwards came tea and dinner at the farmhouse, and numerous visitors, where "Tom was always the genial host, at his best carving the large roast, entertaining the regular twenty or more around the table at Sunday dinners ..."⁵³

They enjoyed the district's annual picnic at Peel Forest, and were enthusiastic participants in their church choral music. Their daily tasks were lightened by the help of an Irish couple they employed, the woman to help Ann in the house, and the man to work with Tom and the sons in the fields.

Tom Hayman was a laconic, equable man, who once said when a ram which had just cost him ten guineas killed itself, "Howsumever, there 'tis. Let be how shalt." His wife was a "capable" woman, "sewing and baking, washing and mending for her family, teaching Sunday School with a baby on her knee, catering for a table at the annual tea meetings for church and school."⁵⁴ They were seldom short of a few pounds, and regularly fed and housed swaggers overnight, or found work for them to do around the farm.

The upbringing and subsequent careers of their children is an index of their position. After a sketchy education, the Hayman boys worked on the home farm, and would also go out contracting; ploughing, reaping, chaff cutting, and stripping grass seed. Some were permitted to stay at school and advance, if they were so inclined. One became a teacher, and then a JP in a Maori district in the North Island. Another became a prosperous farmer in a large way in South Canterbury, built himself a large brick house in 1901, and

53 Ibid., p.24.

54. Ibid., p.25.

became prominent in local affairs. Another became an architect, while a second began as a small farmer, and ended up as a manager of stations and farm properties for the Salvation Army in Australia. While one son took over "Ashfield" from his parents, another became a machinery salesman, one established a catering business in Ashburton, and the last began as a stock buyer, and ended up as a station manager in the North Island. Some of them married the daughters of the local school teacher.

The Hayman daughters found work for themselves around the house, until marriage. The first married a Timaru architect, the second married a grocer, who subsequently became a tea and coffee merchant in Ashburton. The third wed a well-off Ashburton cockatoo farmer, while the fourth advanced to studies at Canterbury College and married a Methodist minister, and the fifth married a school-master. The husband of the sixth was a local farmer, who subsequently became a JP, and the seventh and last daughter married a farmer in South Canterbury who eventually acquired a small run.⁵⁵

Other farmers even attained wealth, and some could afford to compete with the gentry in their life-style. Time, and the consolidation of their wealth, together with the acquisition of such badges of affluence as green baize doors and tennis lawns, would eventually sanction the admission of some of these families into the gentry - families such as those of P. Drummond of "Lauriston", and H.J. Harrison of "Hatfield Lodge". But in the meantime, they could only

⁵⁵ Ibid, this information, together with much of the above, is scattered throughout the text of this family history.

aspire, and concentrate on the improvement and good farming of their properties, to which they often gave imposing names. An example was W. Aitken's "Bellevue", 1,100 acres of good freehold land; it included a large weatherboard house "consisting of drawing room, dining room, a comfortable kitchen and nine or ten bedrooms, with another similar estate house just out of sight."⁵⁶ Some 650 acres of the farm were cropped, mostly in wheat, in one typical year, and 100 further acres ploughed for turnips, and another 150 fallow. Small belts of trees were planted between the paddocks of the farm. Near the homestead were a stable measuring 66 feet by 23 feet, a granary and storehouse, and a water storage tank. In addition "mechanisation was well advanced ... and comprised: broadcast sowers, reapers and binders, McSherrys drills, double and treble furrow ploughs, and 15 draught horses."⁵⁷

The large farmers also frequently demonstrated an impressive mastery of farming on a large scale, and sometimes surprisingly intensive. In 1894, D. Brick, who owned the 399 acre "Urrall Farm", together with "Tara", another 400 acre farm nearby, and a farm near Kaiapoi, sold off his Ashburton stock, as part of a programme of consolidation of his holdings. The sale list reveals the high pitch of his stock raising. It included 500 3/4 bred two-tooth ewes,

56 Stewart, "Landscape Evolution", p.42.

57 Ibid, p.43.

58 Ibid, p.43.

59 Guardian, 16 January 1893.

1,500 first and second cross two-tooth ewes, 450 3/4 bred four-tooths, 400 first cross four-tooths, 2,100 prime fat two-tooth cross-bred wethers, 1,700 prime fat two-tooth cross-bred mixed sexes, 600 second cross lambs, 25 halfbred two-tooth ewes, and 30 halfbred two-tooth rams.⁶⁰

Such farming, with its corresponding profitability, enabled the most successful of the yeoman farmers to occupy an ambivalent status between the gentry and the less successful farmers. By the 'nineties, the "minimum economic flock" suggested by Horsfield was considerably lower than the 3,000 sheep needed before 1882. Higher yields, cross-breeding, and cropping meant that it was possible for a flock of 1,000 sheep to provide income well above "subsistence" level.⁶¹ Some, to all intents and purposes, were indistinguishable in life style from the gentry. One such was W.B. Denshire, who possessed a 2,000 acre farm at Wakanui. Born at Baston Rectory, Lincolnshire, the son of the Rev. W.C. Denshire, and educated at Marlborough Grammar School and Marlborough College, his antecedents were more impeccable than those of several families accepted as gentry. He had married in Nelson a daughter of J.R. Dodson, a farmer mayor of that city. Denshire maintained the "county" life-style, and "takes a keen interest in sporting generally and has been well known as an owner of thoroughbreds."⁶²

But the Denshires were in the minority. In general, the rich farmer was cast in a rather less elevated mould. Joseph Batty was more typical. The son of a prosperous

60 Ibid, 24 March 1894.

61 Horsfield, "*Economic Viability*", *passim*.

62 *Cyclopedia*, p. 833.

Yorkshire farmer, Batty had been employed on first arriving in Canterbury on the Westerfield estate, and then on D. Cameron's Springfield estate. From his savings he had bought a threshing mill, and later another, and then a combine. By 1883, he had been able to rent a farm on an estate, and was doing considerable contract work. He finally rented "Craigielea Farm" of 1,350 acres, built himself a two-storeyed farmhouse, and ran 3,5000 sheep on his property.⁶³ Such men were generally content to gain wealth, and seem to have had little thought for social aspirations, unless pushed by ambitious wives.

Within the cockatoo class there was, then, considerable mobility, and life for many was certainly no endless drudge. For those who could spare a shilling or two there were abundant entertainments. Frequent companies of strolling players visited the country townships, such as the "Cockatoo Variety" with a programme of "Mystery, Fun and Mirth".⁶⁴ For those of a more sober frame of mind there were popular lectures, often illustrated by the magic lantern and "oxy-ether lime-light", such as was offered by Messrs G.R. Hart and S.H. Seager from Christchurch in May, 1894 when they were to⁶⁵

"give their celebrated lecture on 'Old Canterbury' ... By the aid of the oxy-ether light and a powerful lantern Messrs Hart and Seager are enabled to reproduce valuable pictures and photos of the state of things existing in the good old days of the Canterbury settlement ..."

Touring drama groups offered regular theatre, if often of melodramatic standards, such as that presented by the

63 Macdonald, *"Dictionary of Canterbury Biographies"*, Canterbury Museum Library, card B225, Joseph Batty.

64 Graham, G.W., & Chapple, L.J.B., *Ellesmere County*, ChCh, 1965.

65 *Guardian*, 10 May 1894.

D'Orsay Ogden Company which opened its Ashburton season in July, 1890 with a performance of "Bleak House".⁶⁶ Amateur theatricals and concerts were often given in town halls and schools. In March, 1890, for example, in the South Rakaia Town Hall, "the Dixon brothers, Mr Boulnois", and others performed a pianoforte duet and several farces.⁶⁷ For a shilling in 1896 one could attend a Social Tea and Song Service in the Primitive Church, and hear "Miss Sears" singing solos, duets, and quartets from "The Messiah", "Elijah", and so on. In June, 1892, the Waterton district prepared to have a "tea, concert and ball in aid of the Library". It was quite common for such festivities to be mounted for some useful or charitable purpose, and they offered opportunities for large-scale social mingling. For the Waterton affair⁶⁸

"The young ladies of the district are arranging for the tea tables in their usual excellent style, and altogether, with fine weather, there should be a large gathering."

Mutual Improvement and Social Clubs in such townships as Rakaia and Ruapuna provided a chance for regular contact between farmers and the more active minds amongst the landless groups, and mounted programmes of "improving" lectures and social evenings. Added to such amusements were sports, from poaching game on the local estate, to riding behind the gentry (if one could afford the horse and trappings) on a hunt.

The daily concerns and preoccupations of these people were their farms, their families, death, birth, schooling,

66 Ibid, 30 July 1890.

67 Ibid, 31 March 1890.

68 Ibid, 7 June 1892.

religion and gossip. If they were literate, they expressed these concerns in long rambling letters, written in an uncertain hand, and with a vigorous disregard for conventions of spelling. One April a small farmer's wife from near Waterton shared her preoccupations when she wrote⁶⁹

"I was pleased to hear you have some neighbours ther about it is so nice to have someone to go too if you are wanting anything I am so glad you like the place I hope the school is began that will be such a good thing for you I suppose your 2 oldest could go now I hope Dear friend you will get booth post Office and Church it is very nice to have good books to read at home but one does want to go to Church sometimes to hear the word of God preached. I think it is such at help heavenward as we want bread for our bodies so we want food for our souls."

Many farmers bore a burden of problems. Some were sensational, and resulted more in a rapid flurry of gossip than sustained discomfort. Such an incident occurred in 1891, when the son of a well-to-do farmer near Rakaia allegedly raped one of his father's servant girls after a dance.⁷⁰ But while such incidents might ruin a family's respectability for a while, a much more insidious threat was that of financial ruin.

Reliable figures to show the financial position of small farmers are difficult to come by. It is certain that, beyond the fluctuations of weather and markets, the greatest single bogey hanging over the yeoman farmer was the old problem of rural indebtedness to creditor merchants and firms in the towns, or, in the case of Ashburton county, often to the local gentry. The gentry themselves often had to wrestle with mortgages, but enjoyed bank or stock and station agency assistance, while for many small farmers, with little collateral, and no friends in high places, they were often a

69 Letter written by H.J. Edge, at Waterton, 31 April 1897, copy in Canterbury Museum Library.

70 Guardian, 1 July 1891.

perpetual burden. An example can be seen in one small property which was freeholded originally in 1871 by a farmer, sold to another in 1878, when it was mortgaged by the new owner to a local landowner, L. Kennaway (called "gentleman" in the records). In 1881, the farmer managed to discharge the mortgage, but only to re-mortgage it in the next year to another landowner, J.C. Helmore (also called "gentleman"). In 1896, the farmer sold the property to another small man, who was able to discharge the mortgage (it is interesting to notice the differentiation in the official records between "J.C. Helmore, Esq^{re}", and the farmer, called simply "Mr Henry Wright").⁷¹

Those farmers who did not possess freehold farms, but instead rented farms from the gentry, or government, merely substituted problems of rent-raising for problems of mortgaging. In 1890, for example, one farmer, Edward McAnulty, who rented a farm from M. Friedlander on the Dundas estate, found himself unable to raise the year's rent. Then, under a clause in the tenancy agreement, he had to abandon the farm at the end of the financial year, and leave behind the crop "then in stack, upon the land, as security for the rent." By this means, he appears to have lost all the fruit of his year's cropping to his landlord.⁷²

But the picture was not one of unredeemed troubles, as has already been pointed out. The larger the farm, the greater the ability to cope, and the well-to-do man with eight or nine hundred acres could afford to be genial as he presided over barons of beef at his dinner table. One historian has recently concluded that the gradual spread of

71 Records of the Lands & Deeds Registry, Christchurch. This property was Crown Grant #189.

72 Guardian, 17 July 1890.

innovations occurred through all levels of the rural hierarchy, and the small farmers gradually "were able to embrace these new developments" to their profit.⁷³ Another historian cites one farm as being typical of the cockatoo properties of the period, with 6 horses, 10 cows, a bull, 25 sheep for domestic consumption, 2 sows, and poultry. Income was earned from 125 acres of crop (wheat, turnips, barley and peas) and five head of cattle of clover pastures, together with the sale of sheepskins, eggs, vegetables, farrows of swine, calves, and butter, giving a gross annual return of £743. Expenses included such items as extra labour at harvest, a ploughman, threshing, horse feed, blacksmithing, loan of machinery, road rates, and seed - a total outlay of £251. On top of this, a rent of £200 was paid to the landlord family (probably the Griggs of Longbeach), leaving a net annual profit to the farmer and his wife of £293.⁷⁴

This is by no means a picture of grinding poverty - indeed a clear income of £290 was equal to that of any men who enjoyed a "superior" rank in life, such as many of the clergy, and salaried public servants. That the average, middle farmer in the county was managing to cope, and even win some success, was asserted in a report given by the "Yeoman", the regular farming reporter in the Weekly Press, who was, it must be noted, prone to optimism. In 1891, in his "Ashburton Farm Notes", he wrote that

"The 'prevailing depression' has been a pretty general topic of conversation for several years past; but my own impression is that there has not been much real cause to complain of the general state of affairs in

73 Stewart, "Landscape Evolution", p.48.

74 Stevens, P.G., John Grigg, Ch.Ch., 1952, chapter 7.

the Ashburton district, for there are many signs of improvements going on, on the various farms throughout the county, and I venture to state that, take them as a whole, our farmers are making a bit of clear headway year after year. Many of them used to ride into Ashburton on market days in drays, but these slow travelling vehicles have in most cases given place to buggies and well-got-up light spring carts, drawn by well-conditioned, quick-stepping horses. Many of the old cob houses have given way to roomy, well-built and comfortably furnished dwellings; good stables and good granaries have, in numbers of instances, been built, and in travelling round and through the farming districts one sees plenty of evidence, that, in spite of all drawbacks, plodding industry is having its sure and certain effect, and the farms are coming out a bit to the good year after year. They are a hard-working, thrifty class, and may good seasons and good prices keep them company for a few years."⁷⁵

Most of the farmers were "quiet, plodding, hard working, unostentatious," or "steady, careful, hardworking men".⁷⁶ They farmed for long hours under the Canterbury sun, freeholded their few acres of land, reared their numerous offspring, poached and hunted, and on occasion, rose to declare the rights of numbers as above those of property. They were parochial in outlook, and if interested in religion, earnest, narrow, and dogmatic - many adhered to the less genteel sects such as Methodism, and Roman Catholicism. Some of them enjoyed a well-to-do life-style. It was contained in the gabled two-storeyed farm houses such as J. Carters' "Grove Farm" near Tinwald,⁷⁷ and J. Cochranes' "nice" villa-style homestead, set in its pleasant grounds, on the side of a stream near Wakanui.⁷⁸ Many more managed to win a steady prosperity and, at the bottom of the farming hierarchy, even the very

⁷⁵ Weekly Press, 1 April 1891, p.23.

⁷⁶ Canterbury Times, 8 July 1887, and 18 April 1889.

⁷⁷ Bayliss, E.R., Tinwald - A Canterbury Plains Settlement, Timaru, 1970. This book contains useful descriptions of life amongst the cockatoo class around Tinwald, with particular descriptions of "Grove Farm".

⁷⁸ Weekly Press, 8 May 1891, p.24.

poor did not entirely lack opportunities to improve their position, given favourable circumstances.

2. The Landless Poor.

Little has been written about the landless poor, in spite of the fact that they were the largest single group in most rural districts of the South Island, and "whole regiments of men" were employed by such properties as "the magnificent estates of Longbeach, Lagmhor,"⁷⁹ and the many others in the county. This is not altogether surprising. Many, if not most of the common labourers of the county were illiterate, products of an age which had only recently passed in which education was neither free nor compulsory. Even since the creation of a free primary education system, many had succeeded in partially or wholly evading its net, and in the 'nineties there were still many parents who preferred to keep their children at home, or restrict attendance in order to use their labour. Consequently, while the cockatoo has taken his place in his country's literature, the workers and servants that outnumbered him have passed into obscurity. And what has been written of the landless workers has been limited to remarks or anecdotes dealing with their quaint and comical ways, written from a "gentrocentric" viewpoint.⁸⁰ Or, at the other extreme, by political speakers or writers of the time who chose to portray them as a great discontented and oppressed servile class, clamouring for land and independence, held down by low wages, and thirsting for the "bursting up"

79 Canterbury Times, 11 September 1890, p.34.

80 A good example of this is found in Promenade, pp.417-18, with its description of "Robertson" with his "rusty beard", quaint views about weddings, and predilection for "dirge-like coronachs".

of the great estates. The anecdotal attitude towards the workers is probably an accurate reflection of the feelings of most landowners for their "people". And at least one landowner, A.E. Peache of Mt Somers Station, thought "the best" workers "are quite satisfied", and "a few agitators here are making a great noise, but the wages are too good to leave much room for complaint."⁸¹

In the face of such conscious or unconscious partiality on all sides, the paucity of factual written information, and the wide range of people embraced by the category "landless poor", it is once again difficult to make generalisations when discussing them. The status and condition of the landless worker in lowlands Ashburton varied from person to person, locality to locality, and period to period. The prosperous cockatoo who hired two or three workers on his farm tended naturally to fraternize with them, shared their labour, and dealt with them on a roughly egalitarian basis. The great landed proprietor who employed much larger labour forces, and for whom the workers were handled by an overseer, naturally knew his labourers less well - but once again there were variations.

Certainly, workers were expected to earn their bread. Ploughmen, for example, (nearly every farm of over 100 acres employed at least one ploughman)⁸² spent a fifteen-hour

81 Gray, C., Quiet with the Hills, Christchurch, 1970, pp.99-100. This book is a collation of Peache's papers. *Quotations* given in this text were written by Peache.

82 Thompson, B.J.G., "The Canterbury Farm Labourers' Dispute" 1907-8, M.A. Thesis, Canterbury University, 1967, p.9.

working day from 5.30 a.m. to 8.30 p.m., in the paddocks, and tending their teams. For such hours, workers received wages ranging from about £25 to £50 per annum.⁸³ Seasonal and casual workers lived an even more rigorous and insecure existence. The biggest demands for such labour were in the threshing season, beginning in January, when travelling mills, each employing a dozen men or so, and usually owned by large farmers or millowners, travelled the dusty hedge-lined roads of the county, and provided a great deal of (temporarily) lucrative employment. In summer also the shearing and harvesting seasons began, and for a few months there was an enormous demand for cheap labour. This was filled by men who spent the rest of the year in a precarious combination of odd jobs, where they could be found, living off savings accumulated from the previous season, or in penury. Most workers tried to get employment with farmers rather than on the estates of the gentry, in spite of the fact that "the evidence does not support the impressions current among farm labourers that wages on small farms were better than on large ones." Accommodation on small farms was certainly better than that on estates, as were food and general living conditions, and workers were "often treated as one of the family" by small farmers.⁸⁴

The effects of their uncertain labour on the workers themselves was variable and in many cases must remain unknown.

83 It is interesting to note that such wages, even when translated into terms of modern currency, still appear very small. The pound of the 'nineties must be multiplied by about 25 to give the dollar of the mid-1970s. This means that labourers were earning sums equivalent to only \$600 to \$1,200 a year. In the 'nineties, a landed gentleman with only a small estate would be making at least \$25,000 a year in modern terms, virtually tax free.

84 Thompson, "Farm labourers", p.10.

There were many of the landless poor who passed through their life without leaving any public mark. One such man, who had occupied the comparatively secure position of carpenter on G.A. McLean Buckley's Lagmhor estate, left on his death only a few meagre possessions, as recorded by Buckley's manager for the Deputy Official Assignee in Ashburton:⁸⁵

"1 wooden Box containing
 sundry clothing
 carpet bag
 Silver hunting watch (John Hislop Dunedin No.75465)
 Cash 17/- in silver
 Banknotes, receipt for payment of funeral expenses
 including certificate of purchase of plot is also sent
 you, also Key of Box."

Their attitudes to life and work must remain unknown.

But election meetings showed that many workers were resentful, or ambitious, and longed for the chance to establish their own small farm. They complained of the evil of an "old-world" system of agriculture, where the many seemed to toil for the profit of the few. Chances to improve their lot, and rise into the smallholding class of farmers were not entirely lacking. Often benevolently-motivated landed proprietors would assist deserving labourers in setting themselves up on a farm bought or rented from the estate. Such a case, possibly exceptional, occurred when J. Cathcart Wason of Corwar sold a farmlet outright to one "John Spring of Barrhill Laborer" in 1896.⁸⁶ Other labourers were lucky enough to gain other forms of assistance, such as Smith, who had been employed on E.H. Dobson's Ilesworth estate at

85 This letter dated 12 September, is contained in the Lagmhor Letter Book in the possession of Mr J. Blair, Lagmhor, No.1 R.D. Ashburton.

86 From information provided by the Lands & Deeds Registry, Christchurch, 17 October 1973. The transfer of title on this small rural lot was made on 12 October 1896.

10/- a week, and who had drawn a section in the Cheviot ballot of 1894,⁸⁷ and thus gained independence from the whims of employers. For many of the restless there appears to have been some chance for the fulfilment of their ambitions, even if only by migrating to the North Island to break in a bush farm.

There were compensations to working as a farm labourer. Many workers were housed by the master, fed by him, and some felt security and an attachment to the estate and family. There was also ample opportunity on the estates for higher abilities to be rewarded. The foreman and overseer, often with complete day-to-day charge of the estate, along with the blacksmith and wheelwright, the head shepherd and the coachman, the cooks, domestics and nurses, all enjoyed varying positions of respect and authority, both over their fellow employees and in the eyes of their employers. On stations such as Longbeach and Langley, there existed an esprit de corps, where all strove to get in a good crop and were all equally proud of their success. The workers' lives moved in time with the station bell, the rhythm of working gangs in the fields under the direction of the overseer, and the performance of regular, familiar tasks with tools provided for them. Many must have been placid cogs in the agricultural factory of the great estate.

It was certainly in the interests of the large landowners to believe so. To a certain extent, many seem to have believed their society had taken a step back into time, towards a simpler, romanticised, less complicated age,

87 Cresswell, D., The Story of Cheviot, Christchurch, 1951. pp.141-2.

already an anachronism in Europe. Ashburton landowners, such as one scion of the Hart family of Winchmore estate, who wrote of Canterbury as "one of the most romantic schemes of colonization that perhaps was ever projected in modern times",⁸⁸ could afford to believe this. But in the 'nineties, the present caught up with the county. The reformed franchise, the Labour strikes and disputes of 1890, and the "bad change in Government, the Radical Party having come into power, which is a bad thing for property"⁸⁹ complained of by one Ashburton landed gentleman, along with the new social legislation of the period, all seemed to amount to a "liberal revolution". Although modern scholarship tends to underrate this process, it seemed dramatic to the men of the time. Certainly expectations for the landless poor must have risen considerably. The early 'nineties were years of some suspense, when the "old order" and the old relationships appeared to be in a state of dissolution and readjustment.

3. The Notables.

Symptomatic of this social flux was the apparent growth of an "alternative oligarchy", formed by the fusion of prominent and rising elements in both rural and urban communities in the county. The steady growth of Ashburton town had led to the concentration of a good deal of wealth there, shared by merchants, businessmen, and representatives of the professions. The parallel intensification of settlement of the plains had in addition created the group

88 Hart, G.R., Stray Leaves From the Early History of Canterbury, Christchurch, 1887, p.50.

89 Gray, Quiet Hills, p.96.

of prosperous cockatoo farmers. Neither group enjoyed the prestige, the leisure, the homogeneity, or the "manner born" characteristic of most of the gentry. The apparent existence of a "land monopoly" by the gentry, with its attendant domination of most local government, colonial representation, justiceships of the peace, and strong connections with the metropolis, seems to have led to the creation and development of new "bourgeois" institutions. The gentry, entrenched securely behind its nearly endogamous marriage circle, and living an urbane life-style between town and country houses, was a difficult group to enter, unless the aspirant possessed very great wealth, as did the novus homo, D. Cameron. This meant that the rich farmer, the successful merchant, and the leading lawyer or doctor, allied to form a secondary elite group, which ran in tandem with the gentry, filling in the gaps left by the county families, and creating its own alternative institutions.

The gentry generally engrossed the higher politics of the county - parliamentary representation in Wellington was almost invariably a gentry perquisite, as was the chairmanship of the county council, a good deal of its membership, and the leadership of the road boards. This left considerable room for a group of notables,⁹⁰ however. They tended to

90 The term "notable" is a tentative suggestion, rather than a proven fact. There was a large group of well-to-do men in the borough and county who played prominent roles, but who were clearly distinct from the closed society of the large landowners. They seem to have had a good deal of contact with one another, and the columns of the Guardian give the impression that these well-to-do families formed a coherent group immediately below the "gentry". More numerous, and less distinctive than the gentry, they do not seem to have been aware of themselves as a group, but would probably have called themselves simply "the successful", or the "well-to-do". I suggest the term "notables" for them as an indication of the wider, and active role they played in local affairs.

monopolise the school committees, and participated in the road boards along with the gentry. In addition, an increasing number of county councillors were notables, and the borough council, whose importance grew with the years, was an unassailable notable stronghold. They also developed social bodies for their own benefit, and the doings of these bourgeois groups seldom were impinged upon by the gentry, as is shown by lists of membership and patrons. Bastions of the notables were the Orange Lodge, the Caledonian Society, Freemasonry, and various sporting clubs. The Horticultural Society was another such group, and the Volunteer Fire Brigade was organised under notable auspices. Names such as those of A. Orr, J. Bland, H.A. Gates, J. & T. Sealy, T. Bullock, R. Friedlander, W.H. Rule, and the like figured large in local affairs. An increasing number possessed justiceships of the peace, such as D. Thomas, A. Harrison, D. Williamson, W.G. Rees, and several others.

An example of a notable par excellence was G.W. Leadley. He came from a farming family that had originated in Yorkshire, and his father farmed in the Selwyn county. Leadley had married a Prebbleton farmer's daughter in 1881, and bought "Valverde Farm" near Wakanui. He rapidly became one of the most prominent farmers and notables in the county through his participation in county politics (as a county councillor, and member of the Wakanui road board), as a militant prohibitionist and leader of that movement in Ashburton, and as the president of the Farmers' Union. Leadley was a tough, energetic, hard-headed man, who wrote once of a Department of Agriculture inspector as a "whiskey-soaking crawler", and who was an aggressive Primitive

Methodist.⁹¹

As the decade advanced, there is some evidence of increasing cooperation between notables and gentry. As early as 1894, for instance, three eminent members of the gentry worked on a basis of equality with prominent notables to organise a new society, the Ashburton Polo Club. This body, which one would expect to be very much a gentry preserve, in fact mingled landed magnate with man of business or medicine in an unusual way. J.C.N. Grigg of Longbeach was patron, G.A. McLean Buckley of Lagmhor and R.W. Hart of Winchmore were vice-presidents, and all the other officers, including the president, were notables.⁹² Perhaps the essentially egalitarian nature of such sports encouraged a mingling not otherwise common. Hunting was also an important means of intercourse between the gentry and other prominent groups, and large landowners often acted as patrons of other sporting clubs, even if they did not participate actively.

But for the most part, a clear-cut distinction still remained at the end of the period. It was underlined by the strengthening of such "notable" institutions as the Ashburton Club, which in 1891 moved into new buildings - a "two-story building, with a strong hint of the Gothic in its style of architecture".⁹³ Set in landscaped grounds, with an "Italianate" portico, the rooms of this building were designed specifically for use by "merchants", and "big farmers", and the like. It included such facilities as a

91 Guardian, 20 February 1919.

92 *Ibid.*, 9 February, 1894.

93 *Ibid.*, 11 February 1891.

"commercial room" in addition to the more usual reading-room, library, billiards room, card and chess room, "bar parlour", and lecture room. In addition, a room was provided for the "ladies" of the farmers to relax while their husbands conducted their business about the borough.

Notable families, even in the depressed 'nineties, increasingly enjoyed the trappings of wealth and ease which had previously been limited to the gentry. Ostentatious display became common - best shown by architecture. No Ashburton merchants possessed town houses in Christchurch, but many erected costly residences around the borough, and surrounded them with extensive ornamental grounds, lakes, tennis and croquet courts, peacocks, and the other badges of wealth. Such a house was built in 1893 by a prominent medical practitioner, who also owned a small farm. His residence was considered "a handsome two storeyed brick building with outbuildings and stables". It was vaguely classical on the outside, but rendered in rich brick fired at Longbeach, contained fourteen rooms, and its front door "which opens into a fine roomy hall, is made of real English oak."⁹⁴

In these substantial houses the notables began to emulate the good life, as glimpsed in the big country homesteads and town houses of the gentry, or as read about in "Home" papers and magazines. They held garden parties. One took place in 1892 in the grounds of the vicarage of St Stephen's Anglican Church, the vicar of which was a

93 Ibid., 11 February 1891.

94 Ibid., 8 November 1893. The man in question was Dr Leahy, whose initials, antecedents, and subsequent career are uncertain.

member of notable rather than gentry society. No gentry family, except the Coxes, whose status was ambivalent anyway, attended this function, the guests all being wealthy town families or large farmers of the better sort.⁹⁵ This was in spite of the fact that the parish embraced countryside up to the foothills. At another time, a local newspaper spoke of the prospect of a garden party "to be held at Mr John Orr's residence tomorrow afternoon." It went on to say that "sedate matrons, matter-of-fact fathers, with a lot of merry swains and maidens, are longing for a bright sunny day." The party was successful, and took place at the Orr's large house "Hakaterere", situated a little way out in the countryside. Amongst its plantations, shrubberies and lawns the families of the notables played quoits, cricket, tennis, croquet, supped on strawberries and cream, or simply strolled about in the shade.⁹⁶

Even more ado was made over weddings, with their form and display. One took place in 1892, between A.J. Tyrell-Baxter, prominent Ashburton printer, and Miss Mary Campbell Boyle, at the Presbyterian Church. Here "the presents were numerous, and some exceedingly chaste and valuable." The report of this affair in the local newspaper was appended with a list of people present, with painstaking details of their dress.⁹⁷ Such snobbery was rampant in the 'nineties, and gained a fillip when the gentry occasionally lent further ton to notables' proceedings, as occurred at another wedding in 1890. On this occasion the manager of the Hart family's estates, Matthew Stitt, was marrying a Miss Kidd,

95 Ibid., 14 January 1892.

96 Ibid., 4 December 1895.

97 Ibid., 27 February 1892.

from a prominent merchant family in the borough. The Harts turned out in force to patronize this wedding, and their gifts headed the list detailed in the newspaper. Mrs Hart gave a silver teapot, Mrs Robert Hart a "butter dish in silver and oak - very chaste", Mrs Arthur Hart silver jam spoons, and Mrs Charles Hart a gold bracelet for the bride. "Mrs Dr Leahy" vied with them in presenting a silver epergne, and a long list of merchant and professional, and some large farming families followed in the newspaper report.⁹⁸

The other major source of status in 'nineties society was "travel", particularly to the fountain-heads of culture and polish, England and Europe, in that order. The trip "Home" imparted some of the glamour of that far land to those who made it, and while the gentry often lived an almost commuter existence between Britain and New Zealand, notable families departed for their once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage with considerable pomp and circumstance. Ashburton matrons and patrons joined the prosperous bourgeoisie that thronged the second saloons of the New Zealand Steamship Company's Liners, gawked at Tower Bridge and Windsor, and bought porcelain and paintings to add to the clutter in their suburban "villas". Their departures were diligently reported in the local press, together, often, with their send-offs. In 1892 a party at the Tinwald Hotel farewelled the Gates family of "Grove Farm" as they prepared to leave for a tour of Europe.⁹⁹ In another year, a typical entry read, "Mr and Mrs Thomas Wilson, of Beach Farm, Wakanui, left this morning for Christchurch, en route for

98 Ibid., 19 December, 1890.

99 Ibid., 7 May 1892.

the old country, where they intend to spend the English summer."¹⁰⁰ Some, such as the James Browns of Netherby Farm, Wakanui, were only able to attain the lesser dignity of a trip to Australia in the summer of 1892,¹⁰¹ while the Scotts, Ashburton merchant people, embraced that continent in their grand tour to Britain and Europe,¹⁰² in the same year.

But the notables were not gentry. They might strive after "appearances", but the source of their wealth was either urban, or won from personal farming. Few had inherited status, or enjoyed the advantages of birth and education that were commonplace amongst the large landed families, and many belonged to non-Establishment minorities, such as dissenter religious sects, Roman Catholicism, and friendly societies. Many came from very humble origins indeed, and most had their roots in solid, respectable, but distinctly un-aristocratic farming or shopkeeping families. A very rare case of absorption into the gentry did occur - such as that of Max Friedlander - but only if the aspirant was prepared to embrace the sporting, fundamentally conservative stance of the majority of the landed gentry. This meant that the notables were possibly an agent of transition. They spawned a large new group of educated, affluent, liberal sons and daughters, whose prosperity did not immediately transform them into Tories. A group appears to have come into existence which had the power to govern, and the abilities, but yet which was prepared to tolerate or even inaugurate reform. Without the establishment of such groups, the long

100 Ibid., 17 May 1894.

101 Ibid., 25 January 1892.

102 Ibid., 9 March 1892.

era of Reform Government, based on the alliance of rich farmers, urban bourgeois, and the descendents of the "gentry" would not have been possible.

CHAPTER TWO

THE LANDED GENTLEMEN

I THE FORMATION OF THE GENTRY GROUP1. Origins

The fifty or so men who possessed large estates in Ashburton county consisted of two distinct groups; these were, to borrow the terminology of the time, the "pukkah", and the "non-pukkah" men. The first group, dominant numerically, set the "tone" of gentry life, and comprised men from upper and upper-middle strata in Britain. The second group consisted of men who had, by means to be traced in more detail below, risen from more or less ambivalent social positions to enter the gentry group, and embraced its ethos.

A detailed analysis of the origins of Ashburton's landed gentlemen reveals the heavily "establishment" character of most of them before they ever set foot on the soil of the county. (Figure 1) They can be grouped by class, and by nationality. The criteria for social classification reflect the attitudes of the time, and not of the present, so that the professions are generally ranked lower than landowning. Three groups are recognised: upper, middle and lower. The "upper" group includes not only the scions of aristocracy and the landed gentry, but also sons of great mercantile families, and the upper clergy, who were accepted in all respects in nineteenth-century British society as "upper class". The "middle" group is

made to include all those below this rank with any pretensions to being "gentlemen", and embraces the sons of professional men, the lower clergy, yeoman farmers' sons, small gentry, former drapers, and engineers. The "lower" group includes those who formerly occupied ranks in the lower-middle or "better" lower class groups, now generally called "middling sorts" in social history. These men possessed none of the education and other marks of status enjoyed by the middle and upper groups.

To have one's family registered and "pedigreed" in the great tomes such as Burke¹ indicated that one was well and truly entrenched in the "Upper Few Hundred" families of the British realm; those Ashburton men whose families were thus honoured are indicated by the addition of the word Burke to their social classification.

Such a classification is by no means inflexible, or prescriptive, and must leave some room for doubt. The Costers, for example, although classified here as "middle", could possibly be called "upper". Their father was only a provincial doctor, but their mother came from a great "county" family, they enjoyed many connections and relations with Burke families, were brought up in gentry modes, and both married Burke wives. In their life style and in their accepted position in Devon society, they were "upper class". On the other hand, a good case could be made for downgrading William White from "upper" to "middle"; his antecedents

1 I have used here the History of the Landed Gentry of Great Britain and Ireland, London, 1882, the Dictionary of the Peerage and Baronetage, London, 1885, and A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Colonial Gentry, Burke, London, 1895. Other such books were Fairbairn's Book of Crests, Debrett's, and Muskett's Manorial Families.

were English landed gentry, but his father had had to make his own way in Canterbury, and the Whites were still relatively parvenu in local society, with an ambivalent status.²

Of fifty-one men who owned estates in the period, the majority, some twenty-nine, or 57%, belonged to the upper classes. Another twenty, or 39%, originated from the middle classes, and only two, or 4%, were drawn from the "middling sorts". It is significant that not one of the landed gentry had risen from ranks any more obscure than this; there was not a single instance of a "poor labourer who made good" - many had become farmers, but none had become gentry.

Classification by national origins is simpler, although even here there is some doubt. Ivan Rankin Colineus Cunninghame-Graham, for instance, had an English father, but his mother was a Polish noblewoman. Frederic de Cartaret Malet originated in the Channel Islands, and the seigneurial families of his ancestry included a great deal of French blood in their veins. Nevertheless, I have classed both these men as English, for in all their manners and ways they were archetypal "county" gentry, their exotic ancestries undetectable in their ways of life and attitudes.

Of the fifty-one men, no fewer than thirty-three, or 65%, were English. Another eleven, or 22%, were Scottish, three (6%), Irish (although significantly, not one was a true native Irish-Catholic), another three were born in New Zealand, and one born in France. Comparisons with the

2 For much of the biographical information through this chapter I have used *the* Macdonald "Dictionary of Canterbury Biographies".

colonial figures for the period are interesting; by 1896 63% of the population was New Zealand-born, less than 2% born in non-British countries, and the remainder in metropolitan Britain or other colonies.³ This seems to imply an excessive Britishness in Ashburton's landed society, with its mere 6% of landowners born in New Zealand. The explanation, however, is simple; the colonising generation had not yet, in most cases, disappeared. A great many Ashburton estates in the 'nineties were populated by ageing patriarchs who had founded the family fortunes, and were now surrounded by numerous middle-aged, New Zealand-born sons and daughters who only awaited the death of the parent. In other words, probably more than 40% of the members of the landed gentry were still largely British-born.

Certainly, the number of English gentry considerably outweighed the number of Scots, and justifies the editor of the Triad who wrote in 1895 that⁴

"Folk in Ashburton are for the most part 'quite English, you know', and it is like an oasis in the desert to encounter a belated Scot there."

The core of the landed gentry in Ashburton was, then, both English, and upper or upper-middle class. Scots and Irish, and the middle classes, were prominent minorities, but form the secondary group in the gentry, the group of people who emulated the former, and adopted its conventions. A generous leavening of true aristocracy maintained the distinctiveness of this group from all other classes in the county, registered both in the Landed Gentry and Peerage of

³ The Census of 1896 showed that of the white population of 703,000, N.Z.-born were 442,000, the total number born in British possessions 690,000, and the foreign-born 13,000. About 23,000 or over 3% were born in Australia.

⁴ Quoted in Guardian 2 December 1895.

Burke, as well as the more recent Colonial Gentry, with all their comforting badges of armorial bearings, pedigrees, titles and so on. Twelve men, or some 24% of the landed magnates, belonged to Burke families, and in addition there were many more (such as the Lyttletons, the Moorhouses, and the Cathcart Wasons) who enjoyed close connections by marriage or ancestry with extant Burke families.

Figure 1

	ESTATE	CLASS	NATIONALITY
Rev. Albert Edward Alington,	Lavington	Upper <u>Burke</u>	English
John Ballantyne,	Thirlstane	Middle	Scottish
Duncan Cameron JP,	Springfield	Lower	Scottish
Matthew Ingle Browne II,	Highbank	Upper	English
Edward Chapman JP,	Drayton	Upper	English
William Chisnall,	Ohinemuri	Middle	English
Edward Stafford Coster JP,	Somerton	Middle	English
Hon. John Lewis Coster M.H.R.,	Compton	Middle	English
Charles Percy Cox,		Upper	English
Peter Cunningham,		Middle	Scottish
Ivan Rankin Colineus			
Cunninghame-Graham,	Winterslow	Upper <u>Burke</u>	English
John Deans,	Waimarama	Middle	Scottish
Edward Dobson,	Ilesworth	Middle	New Zealander
Peter Drummond,	Lyndhurst	Middle	Scottish
Rev. John Elmslie DD,	Cardendale	Middle	Scottish
Max Friedlander,	Kolmar	Middle	French
Edward Mallaby Goodwin,	Cracroft	Upper	English
Hon. John Grigg JP, M.H.R.,	Longbeach	Middle <u>Burke</u>	English
Hon. George William Hart M.H.R.,	Winchmore	Upper	English
Cyril Goodricke Hawdon JP,	Westerfield	Upper <u>Burke</u>	English
Joseph Cornish Helmore,		Middle	English
David Gordon Holmes JP,	Holmeslee	Middle	Anglo-Irish
Hon. John Alexander Holmes			
M.H.R.,	Viewmount	Middle	Anglo-Irish
Hon. Charles John Harper			
JP, M.P.G.,	Hackthorne	Upper	English
Henry Hamilton Loughnan,		Upper	English
Alexander Duncan McIlraith JP,	Auchenflower	Middle	Scottish
James Archibald McIlraith,	Auchenflower	Middle	Scottish
Andrew McFarlane	Glenara	Lower	Scottish
Frederick de Cartaret Malet,	Clarewell	Upper	English
Col. George Alexander Maclean			
Buckley CBE, DSO,	Lagmhor	Upper	New Zealander
Rev. Charles Richard Mackie,		Upper	English
David Morrow,	Montalto	Middle	Scots-Irish
Hon. Capt. Hugh Percy			
Murray-Aynsley M.H.R.,	Mount Hutt	Upper <u>Burke</u>	English
Benjamin Michael Moorhouse			
II, MB, CM, MRCS,	Shepherds Bush	Upper	English
Cap. Westcott McNab			
Lyttleton II,	Rokeby	Upper	New Zealander

	ESTATE	CLASS	NATIONALITY
Capt. Henry William Packer,	Somerfield	Upper	English
Alfred Edward Peache JP,	Mount Somers	Upper	English
Hon. William Spence Peter M.H.R.	Anama	Upper <u>Burke</u>	Scottish
Arthur Fownes Somerville,	The Terraces	Upper <u>Burke</u>	English
Alexander Strachey,	Maranui	Upper <u>Burke</u>	English
Richard Strachey,	Maronan	Upper <u>Burke</u>	English
Col. John Studholme II, JP,	Coldstream	Upper <u>Burke</u>	English
William Strange,	Riversdale	Middle	English
Sir William Jewkes Steward JP, Major, MLC,	Barford	Middle <u>Burke</u>	English
Charles Franklyn Todhunter,	Westerfield	Upper	English
Thomas Everard Upton JP,	Sherwood	Upper	English
Hon. William Campbell Walker M.H.R., MLC, CMG,	Mount Possession	Upper <u>Burke</u>	Scottish
Hon. John Cathcart Wason M.H.R.	Corwar	Upper	English
Ven. Archdeacon James Wilson,	Valetta	Upper	English
Hon. Lieut. William White II, M.H.R.,	Langley	Upper	English
Hon. Edward George Wright M.H.R.	Windermere	Middle	English

This majority "core" group can be further subdivided into two divisions; those who were brought up on country estates as scions of the landed gentry and aristocracy of Britain, and those who originated in gentry or upper class families, but who were raised in official, military, church or wealthy mercantile, households. Many examples can be found of the former group. The Murray-Aynsleys were one of the county's aristocratic families. Burke noted that "This family is a cadet branch of the great ducal house of Atholl". Hugh Percy Murray-Aynsley of Mount Hutt was brought up as a younger son in the great mansion of his father at Underdown, in Hereford. His eldest brother became an admiral and was knighted. His grandfather was Lord Charles Murray-Aynsley, friend of Louis XVIII of France, and among his uncles and aunts were Sir Herbert and Lady Oakeley (Baronet), and General Sir John and Lady Oswald, G.C.B. His great-grandfather was the Duke of Atholl.⁵

⁵ Burke's Colonial Gentry, p. 555.

Still aristocratic, but rather less so, were the Stracheys, another Peerage family, but who went back only to the seventeenth century. The Stracheys of Sutton Court, Somerset, possessed an hereditary baronetage, and the grandfather of the Ashburton Stracheys was a Member of Parliament as well as a baronet. Their father was a younger son, and squire of Ashwick Grove. Richard Strachey, of Maranui, was the eldest son and heir to Ashwick Grove, while Alexander Strachey, of Maronan, was the second son.

William Campbell Walker of Mount Possession and Valetta was a member of the Scottish aristocracy. His father was also registered in the Peerage, and was Sir William Stuart Walker, CB, another former parliamentarian. John Cathcart Wason of Corwar, although not listed in Burke, was also the son of a Member of Parliament, and the Cathcart family were old Burke gentry, who lent their gloss to the Wasons.⁶

Less prominent than these aristocratic families were such solid gentry families as the Moorhouses, Cunninghame-Grahams, Coxes, and their like. The de Cartaret Malets of Clarewell originated in the island of Jersey, where they were one of the handful of ancient manorial families that ruled the Channel Islands. At the opposite end of the realm the McLeans, Lairds of Coll, sent out three sons to the antipodes to re-establish the family wealth, which eventually had led to the founding of Lagmhor estate by John McLean, uncle of George A. McLean Buckley.⁷ The de Cartaret Malets in Jersey, were wealthy and proud, the

6 Burke's Peerage (no page numbers given).

7 Vance, W., Land of Promise, Timaru 1957, p.45.

McLeans of far more modest means and on the very edge of the gentry group; more in the common pattern, were families such as that of Thomas Henry Potts, son of a wealthy landowner in Suffolk, or Henry William Packer, son of Richard Packer, squire of Cloverton. Charles Percey Cox can serve as an example of such families; his father was Capt. L. Fortnum Cox of the First Life Guards, and squire of Sandford Park, Oxfordshire. A recent ancestor was Lord Somers, and the family enjoyed many other noble and gentle connections, together with a coat of arms. Arthur Fownes Somerville was the son of a squire, his mother a baronet's daughter, he was connected with Lord Courtenay, and the Somervilles' pedigree in Burke was traced back to the sixteenth century. The Studholmes were another Burke's Gentry family, but only recently admitted to its select columns. Most of these men made a simple transition from landed society in Britain, to landed society in New Zealand, but others from English landed gentry provide more interesting cases. The Moorhouses, for instance, originated from an impeccably-pedigreed gentry family of Knottingley Park, Yorkshire, but Benjamin Michael Moorhouse I, who founded the Ashburton branch of the family, was a younger son, and had studied medicine. For a few years he had practiced as a doctor in Christchurch, until he abandoned his practice and withdrew to his estate of Shepherds Bush in Ashburton.

The Holmes family also enjoyed gentry origins. The Holmeses had possessed a castle, in Ireland, and belonged to the Anglo-Irish landed gentry. Hard times, however, had forced them to migrate to Canterbury, and build up fortunes as engineers, until finally they could once again sink their

wealth in landed estates such as Holmeslee, Bangor, Mount Harding, and several others. The Whites were another such family. They had formerly been squires in the North Country, with various business interests on the side to augment their income, but the family fortune had been squandered by a father too "fond of sport, of his violin, and of his books". His son, William White I, had inherited nothing more than breeding and the family plate, both of which he brought out with him to Canterbury, and built up another fortune in engineering works and other business interests. His son, William White II, extended these, and then sank his fortune in landed estates, including Langley in Ashburton, which he gave to his son.⁸

Other gentry families had been more peripatetic before settling in Canterbury. The Loughnans hailed from an old Catholic gentry family whose estate, Tilford, was in Surrey. R.J. Loughnan, a son of this old family, made a career for himself in the civil service, and eventually rose to the rank of judge, in India. His son, Henry Hamilton Loughnan, was born at Patna at this time. R.J. Loughnan later retired to New Zealand, where he bought Mount Pisa estate, in Otago. His son followed his legal career, and he too eventually bought an estate in Ashburton. The Cunninghame-Grahams of Winterslow enjoyed even more interesting origins. They were descended from the noble houses of the Earls of Menteith and Strathern, of which they were a cadet branch, and the Grahams possessed a baronetage in the eighteenth century.

8 Macdonald, "Biographies".

I.R.C. Cunninghame-Graham's father, as younger son of a great landed magnate, made a career for himself overseas, where he became a colonel in the army of the Austrian Empire, was made a knight, and a member of the Aulic Council.⁹ He married twice: firstly a French noblewoman, and secondly a Polish lady of title, by whom he had his son Ivan. Colonel Graham retired to an estate he purchased in Dumbarton, and from there his son sailed to Canterbury, where he bought Winterslow estate in Ashburton. Ivan Cunninghame-Graham's grandfather was a squire and magnate of Jamaica, his grandmother the sister of a baronet, and his great-grandmother the daughter of an earl.¹⁰ His cousin was a Member of Parliament, a Laird, and a notable South American horseman. He played an important part in the growth of British socialism, and his doctrines appear to have influenced his New Zealand cousin, who was an outspoken, if politically impotent, liberal.

A second upper and upper-middle class group of men was important in the Ashburton gentry. These men only indirectly stemmed from county families, or their privilege and birth derived from sources other than landed estates. One was Alfred Edward Peache, of Mt Somers. His family, which dated back to the seventeenth century, had acquired a large fortune in shipping and trade, and had sunk a portion of it in the purchase of a country estate called Belvidere, bought by Peache's grandfather, James Courthope Peache. His father was

⁹ The Aulic Council was an old institution of the Austrian Empire, of purely honorary significance.

¹⁰ Burke's Landed Gentry, pp. 675-676.

brought up to holy orders, and became a rich squire-parson, a great philanthropist, and married a daughter of the Coxes of Sandford Park. The young A.E. Peache was brought up amidst all the perquisites of wealth and status.

Other families combined fortunes earned in trade with status-giving landed estates. George Hart was the son of a rich businessman, who had bought an estate called Winchmore near London, and it was on this place that Hart was born. He later named his Ashburton estate after this property.

Edward Chapman of Drayton was the son of a great Wimpole Street banker, who had bought a country estate called Acton, after which Chapman named his first Ashburton property. The case of the Costers has already been touched upon. One genealogist¹¹ quotes this family's rise as an example of the changes in social status which have occurred in many prominent families. The earliest known ancestor of the Costers was a shoemaker. His son was a liveryman of the Stationers Company, and managed to bring up his own son as a country doctor. Having now attained some degree of respectability, this man in his turn brought up his son as a country doctor, and he married into one of the leading county families of Dorset, in the person of Letitia, daughter of Lewis Goodwin Husey-Hunt. His sons he brought up as "gentlemen", and they both made impeccable marriages, after which they emigrated and bought landed estates in Ashburton.

Others had been raised in households where there was considerable wealth, but as yet no alliance with landed society. Charles Franklyn Todhunter, for example, was the

¹¹ Hamilton-Edwards, G., In Search of Ancestry, London 1966, pp.15-16.

son of a successful London indigo merchant, and William Spence Peter was the son of a Dundee industrialist who acquired a coat of arms and married a Burke lady. Others stemmed from naval or military families. The Maclean Buckleys of Lagmhor, for example, traced their origins to a Capt. Buckley of the Royal Scots, who died at Waterloo. His son, Capt. William Henry Buckley, was an army officer who retired in 1815, and migrated first to Australia, and then to Canterbury. There he began to acquire property, and erected near Christchurch a suburban mansion called Casterton. His son, George Buckley, was not a military man, but built up a large fortune through land speculations and business, entered politics and was appointed to the Legislative Council. He married a daughter of the McLeans, great Canterbury and Otago landholders, who had bought Lagmhor in Ashburton. Thus was created the Maclean-Buckley "dynasty", through which in the 'nineties the Lagmhor estate passed to George Alexander Maclean Buckley, son of George Buckley. He continued the family's military tradition by becoming a colonel in the British army. His brother, St. John Maclean Buckley, and William Frederick Maclean Buckley, also became landed proprietors on a large scale.

Naval families were represented by the Lyttleton family. This family was a cadet branch of the noble house of Lyttelton of Hagley, and the first Capt. W.McN. Lyttleton was attached to the Navy in Canadian waters. Capt. W.McN. Lyttleton eventually bought Rokeby in Ashburton, evidently for his son, Westcott McNab Lyttleton II, also called "Captain", although the origins of this title are uncertain. Westcott III later inherited Rokeby from his father, who died in the 'nineties,

and the naval tradition on Rokeby was perpetuated by the regular firing of a naval cannon which had been mounted in the grounds of the homestead. Another naval family was represented among Ashburton landowners, by A. Macintosh Clark who was the son of a naval officer, and who bought Blackford in Ashburton in 1890. He was, however, an absentee, whose main estates lay elsewhere, and never became involved in county life.

In addition to these men from mercantile, official, military and naval backgrounds, there were sons of the Anglican clergy, or those clergymen themselves who played such an important part in the colonisation of Canterbury, as "squatter-parsons" comparable with the "squire-parsons" of England. Sons of clerics included Thomas Everard Upton of Sherwood, son of the Rector of Moreton Say, Shropshire, and Charles John Harper of Hackthorne, whose father was the Bishop of Christchurch. The antecedents of the Harpers are typical of this group of men, with their close ties with the landed gentry. The Harpers stem from a fifteenth century landed Worcestershire family. Marriages in the eighteenth century had firmly cemented their status by allying them with such families as the Stracheys and Jellicoes. A younger branch had splintered off and entered the medical profession (as in the Moorhouse family). The bishop's father was a doctor of medicine who had been educated at Oxford, and his son's entry into the church was one of several such options open to him. With the appointment of H.J.C. Harper to the Bishopric of Christchurch, the Harpers gained unassailable social acceptability, and marriage alliances were formed by the Bishop's numerous

daughters with many of the Canterbury gentry families, such as the Tripps, Aclands, Coxes and Blakistons.

Other landowners were clergymen themselves. The Venerable Archdeacon James Wilson had acquired several landed estates, including Roydon Lodge, and in Ashburton, Singletree, and Valetta - buying the latter to salvage his impecunious son-in-law, William Campbell Walker. Two Anglican clergymen owned estates near Rakaia. The Rev. Charles Richard Mackie had held the Lavington estate since 1853, and nearby was the property of the Rev. Albert Edward Alington, called Talbot Trees. The Alingtons were a cadet branch of the Lords Alington, and came from a long line of squire-parsons who had held the manor of Swinhope and the Rectory of Aston in Lincolnshire for several generations. Less elevated as a clergyman-landowner was the Rev. Dr John Elmslie of Carendale, who was a Presbyterian minister, the son of a mere rich farmer, and who had none of the noble and gentle connections enjoyed by the others.

Sons of farmers provided an important group within the Ashburton gentry class. Some of these men, sons of prosperous yeoman farmers, or of very small gentry, possessed a sound knowledge of farming, together with some substantial capital, and dogged tenacity, that enabled them to succeed as landowners in the new country, and enter the upper class of large landowners. The most notable example is John Grigg, who eventually became the richest landowner in the county. The Griggshad owned the manor of Bodbrane from 1700, and belonged to the class of small gentry which adopted the style of "gentlemen", but which farmed its lands directly. John Grigg was the eldest son, and on inheriting Bodbrane

Manor in the 1850s, sold it, and emigrated to New Zealand, where he eventually acquired Longbeach in Ashburton. Other men originated from even less genteel situations; David Morrow, who eventually acquired a large estate at Montalto, was the son of an old Scots-Irish yeoman family and began his career as a traveller for an ironmongery firm. The McIlraiths stemmed from similar stock in Scotland itself. Such families inherited a tradition of solid, respectable prosperity, centred upon substantial stone-built farmhouses, and leavened with some education. The great world of aristocratic and gentry connections was, however, utterly closed to them. It was not until they emigrated and founded fortunes based on new estates that they were enabled to rise above their old rank.

In addition, a few Ashburton landowners originated in the lower levels of the urban middle class. The "romantic, poetical, imaginative" Sir William Jewkes Steward¹² of Barford began his life as a draper's son, and only worked his way up to a landed estate and numerous honours by a combination of business acumen and luck. John Ballantyne of Thirlstane, before he made a fortune in trade and bought his estate, was the son of a Selkirk publican.

Only two large Ashburton landowners ranked lower than this in their original status. Duncan Cameron's origins are shrouded in obscurity, which seems to imply that they were not something Mrs Cameron was proud of. It is certain that he arrived in Canterbury in conditions of total obscurity, and although never the mere shepherd that legend insists

12 Macdonald, "*Biographies*."

upon, began building up his fortune as a penniless manager on Hart's estate of Winchmore. The second "unknown" is Andrew McFarlane, another Scot, who began as a blacksmith at Alford Forest, and eventually acquired an estate of 4,500 acres, together with a lucrative mortgage on Singletree.

Such men, however, are exceptional. The bulk of Ashburton landed gentry were true "gentlemen" upon arrival in New Zealand. They were mostly English, and mostly from the upper and upper-middle classes. Even when the county's magnates came from outside this core group, they usually strove to acquire the trappings of social superiority, as will be seen below.

There was a higher degree of social mobility than would have been possible in Britain - a larger proportion of Ashburton's large landowners were from obscure backgrounds than would be the case in an English county in the same period - but the substantial majority of the Ashburton gentry were from the "higher" walks of life.

2. Education.

The acquisition of education was an important part of this "social superiority", and the degree of a man's education a vital indicator of class. The gentry of Ashburton took this for granted, and even the parvenus strove to ensure that their sons, at least, were well-educated. The "founding fathers" themselves were, for the most part, well-educated. The usual education pattern they followed was to be taught by private tutors at an elementary level, then to attend one of the great public schools, and then finally, to proceed to Oxford, Cambridge, or Edinburgh, or to a college like

Cirencester. This last step was often deleted, particularly by the sons of country gentry, for whom a professional training was seldom necessary.

Thomas Everard Upton followed this familiar pattern, beginning with his education by private tutors at his father's rectory in Shropshire, and then progressing to a public school from which he emerged well-educated, but apparently prepared for no particular occupation. Edward Stafford Coster was sent first to Bruton, and then to Christ's Hospital, London, while Charles John Harper benefited from education in the liberal arts at Rossall, followed by a more practical education at Cirencester - a pioneering college devoted to the teaching of farming. Alfred Edward Peache was also sent to Cirencester after his earlier education at a private preparatory school and at Haileybury. He left Haileybury and joined his family in Switzerland in 1870, where he took lessons in a half-hearted fashion in French, German and mathematics, after which it was decided to send him to Cirencester, where "he had a lot of fun", but was "rather lazy".¹³ Even less useful as a preparation for colonial farming were the educations of most. Charles Percy Cox was typical, with his ornamental education at Cheltenham, or John Cathcart Wason, who passed through Lakeham and Rugby, and ended up at Middle Temple. In addition to these Church of England public schools the upper classes patronised various Presbyterian establishments, such as Aberdeen College, where A. Macintosh Clark was educated, and the Catholic school, Stonyhurst, where Henry Hamilton Loughnan studied, and formed

13 Gray, *Quiet Hills*, p.26.

friendships with other sons of the old Catholic gentry, such as the future Sir George Clifford.

Not all received this formal education. Some, such as Westcott McNab Lyttleton, were educated only by private tutors and such an education was not necessarily inferior to that provided by the public schools. One of Lyttleton's tutors later became a Prime Minister of Canada. For those of the Ashburton gentry of more obscure origins, however, education by less notable tutors, and perhaps at a preparatory or grammar school, was the rule. David Morrow, the Irish yeoman farmer's son, was educated by a private tutor, and with some success. This education fired Morrow's fascination with mathematics that later assisted him in his rise to fortune through business. A book of Euclid dated 1851 bears the stolidly-written name "Davy Morrow" on its cover page, as evidence of this early interest.¹⁴

The coping stone for many Ashburton landowners was a university education. Those who had been trained for the church or some other profession were sent up to one of the universities for that purpose, and included such men as Joseph Cornish Helmore, trained for the law, and Archdeacon Wilson, trained for the church. Others were sent up simply for the motives of prestige, "liberal education", and the making of contacts that were vaguely jumbled together in the minds of the upper classes as being the fruits of a university education. John Studholme I was educated at Queen's College, Oxford, and at about the same time William Campbell Walker was at Trinity College. Some even gained degrees. Arthur

¹⁴ In the possession of Mrs J.V. Morrow Jacobsen, Christchurch.

Fownes Somerville graduated B.A., for example. John Elmslie proved the worth of men from less exalted spheres by graduating M.A. from the more stringent King's College of the University of Aberdeen, but that institution had considerably less prestige than Oxford and Cambridge.

A similar preoccupation with education as a token of class, and as parts of the requirements of a "true gentleman", was manifested by Ashburton's landed magnates once they had founded their estates and built their homesteads. The pattern of education formed by the English gentry, and now extending down through the upper middle classes, was repeated in Canterbury, so far as was possible. At the lowest level, education was generally begun by governesses and tutors, but their young charges were usually speedily placed in boys' preparatory schools. In 1890, Christchurch supported some twenty-two private schools. Ashburton housed four more, and the whole province of Canterbury no fewer than sixty-seven.¹⁵ Many of these were Roman Catholic schools or "ladies' seminaries", but most were boys' "prep" schools, devoted to educating sons of the gentry and notables in the mores of the public schools. One such was Wicken's private boarding school at Sumner, where Robert Chorlton Todhunter was sent by his father in preparation for Christ's College and Aldenham.

Almost all the sons of the Ashburton gentry were placed either in English public schools, or in New Zealand schools that had been founded in their tradition. In this respect, the parvenus were no different from the scions of aristocracy.

¹⁵ Statistics of the Colony of New Zealand, 1890 Wellington, 1891, p.343.

Their sons mixed with one another at these schools, and were moulded into a uniform group, as far as possible in the image of the more respectable fathers. No democratic breezes stirred in the pseudo-Gothic cloisters of Christ's College, and the "College accent" was cultivated in boys such as the young Ballantynes, whose grandfather had been a publican, and the young Murray-Aynsleys, descended from peers. The private schools were one of the principal forces at work in forging the landowning group into an homogeneous "gentry", and in one generation turned parvenus into "old families".

The list of Ashburton gentlemen's sons who attended Christ's College alone is evidence of this; it includes boys of all types. The three sons of the de Cartaret Malets of Clarewell, sons of the proud gentry, were sent to the College along with John Charles Nattle Grigg, son of the son of a mere small gentleman. The two sons of B.M. Moorhouse of Shepherds Bush were educated there, as well as those of T.E. Upton, C.J. Harper, George Hart, Sir William Steward, the five sons of W.C. Walker, the six of W.S. Peter, the three of E.G. Wright, the two of William Gerard, the four of J.C. Helmore, the six of C.P. Cox, and those of Edward Chapman. The College Register shows that from the years 1890 to 1896 alone, sons of Ashburton landowners numbered twenty - a large contingent for only forty-five families. They included the following surnames; Cox, Todhunter, Grigg, de Cartaret Malet, Hart, Walker, Herring, Upton, Cunningham, Wright, Steward, Friedlander and Harper.¹⁶

16 The School List of Christ's College Grammar School, Fourth Edition, Christchurch, 1921.

The impact this system of education would have upon these boys is underlined by the length of time many spent at the College, and its preparatory school. Charles William Sandford Cox, for example, spent nine years there. Graham Loch Walker stayed seven years, as did Joseph Eccles Todhunter, while Edward Francis Joseph Grigg remained for eight years. Others, such as William de Cartaret Malet, stayed for shorter periods, in his case five years, and one, James Rudolf Friedlander, left the same year he was admitted. During these long years, most acquired some sort of honour on the sporting field, and a few in literary or intellectual pursuits; Thomas Everard Tichborne Upton was a member of both the First XI and First XV in 1889, while his brother, Robert Henry Bramley Upton was a prefect, captain of the XI in 1891-92, and a member of the XV for three years. Charles Godfrey Cracroft Harper was also a prefect, as was Percy Theodore Herring, and Edward Grigg was head prefect for one year, member of the XV for four years, and of the XI for two, in addition to which he won the Ballantyne Cup, donated by another Ashburton-ite.

In addition to Christ's College, there were many more such schools available for gentlemen's sons. John Alexander Holmes, for example, was educated at Nelson College. A smaller proportion gave their sons educations at English public schools. Both of Charles Franklyn Todhunter's sons were educated at Christ's College, and then sent on to English schools to "finish" their education. Others, such as the Alington boys (three of them) were sent directly to England, in this case to Uppingham. A letter from one of the Studholme boys reveals the preoccupations of these youths in

such establishments. All three sons of John Studholme I were sent to Christ's College, and then to England. Joseph Francis Studholme was sent to Rugby, and wrote on 1 January to his mother, who was at that time touring England on one of the Studholme's frequent trips "Home". His health had been doubtful, but he had just been for a walk, and felt "strong and well again now". He hoped his mother had liked Oxford, where another of her sons was, and that his new fellow-pupil, who was to arrive that afternoon, "will be a nice fellow". He went on to say¹⁷

"I am so glad father has taken another shooting box but I don't suppose it will be as nice as Ospisdale, it will be so jolly all being up there together again 'wont it'. I wrote to Lucy (a sister) on Saturday.

I suppose you will be going on the Continent very soon after Jessie leaves for N.Z. I do hope you will have good weather. What wretched weather we have been having lately ... I went to a drawing room concert last Friday ... I did not care much about it as nearly all the songs were French and Italian."

The object was, in short, to create English gentlemen to inhabit the station homesteads of Ashburton county. The finishing touches were sometimes provided by a university education, as they had been for many of the fathers. Some were sent as younger sons, to gain professional qualifications; others were sent, once again, for simple prestige and "finish". An example of the former is Benjamin Michael Moorhouse II, whose father sent him to Edinburgh University after he left Christ's College, where he gained high medical qualifications, and eventually was appointed as examiner for the Medical School at the University of Otago. At the same time he had

17 Amongst the collection of letters, journals, diaries, and other papers held by Mr J.J.A. Studholme, Coldstream, Hinds, henceforth referred to as Studholme MSS. Letter from J.F. Studholme to his mother, Mrs J. Studholme I, from Rugby, 29 January 1883.

many other interests in land and business. An even more successful example is Percy Theodore Herring, son of Herring of Alford. After a notable career at Christ's College, Percy Herring was to be sent on to a university to learn medicine. The question had arisen of what university would be best suited. This caused Herring's father some concern, and he wrote to a fellow landowner in 1891 a letter headed with the stamped legend, "Alford House, In Ashburton" printed in purple Gothic script. In this letter Herring asks whether a degree gained at Otago University would be recognised as qualifying his son for higher studies in Britain, and goes on to say¹⁸

"As your son has successfully passed the ordeal, and you were good enough to give me some information on this subject I took the liberty of writing to you at a time when you must be busy (with politics) ...

In consequence of the ambiguous nature of the Otago University Calendar Percy and several other students went a month too late. This is most unfortunate.

This is proving a fairly satisfactory year from here. Sheep have done remarkably well ..."

In the end, Percy Herring was sent on to Edinburgh University, where he began a career full of honours, and ended up as a lecturer and professor in physiology and histology at Edinburgh and St Andrews.

A more traditional course of education was given to eldest sons, such as Leonard de Cartaret Malet, who was educated at Christ Church, Oxford, Charles George Todhunter, who proceeded to Cambridge, and Aubrey Paul Cox, who gained a B.A. at Cambridge after obtaining an M.A. at Canterbury College. Aubrey Cox, significantly, is the only son of an

18 Rolleston Papers, 1891, General Assembly Library, Wellington. Letter from Edward Herring to William Rolleston, 8 May 1891.

Ashburton landowner who appears to have been educated at Canterbury College in that period. The preference was for British universities. Some Ashburton landowners sent all their sons to university. John Studholm I, for example, sent John II to Oxford, where he gained an M.A., William Paul to the same University, and Joseph Francis to Cambridge. The Griggs established the habit of sending their sons to Cambridge.

The system of education embraced by landed families was uncompromisingly English; its effect was to reinforce the mores of the numerically dominant English "gentlemen" amongst the founding fathers.

3. Careers.

To those men who were "to the manner born", the translation from English society to Ashburton landowning was a relatively simple process. They generally had arrived in New Zealand with a few thousand pounds at their disposal, the credit and contacts to raise more, or the ability to draw on relations in Britain. Most had been able to consolidate their positions in the years of good prices in the 1860s and '70s and, by practicing economy, had weathered the 1880s well. An example of these men is H.P. Murray-Aynsley, who had bought Mount Hutt from Col. Lean in 1862 after his arrival in Canterbury, and by the 'nineties seemed to have established a permanent dynasty based on that estate. Others took more time to settle finally on their Ashburton estate. The Stracheys began by investing their capital in Ashwick station, in South Canterbury, and they retained this estate until 1887. In 1880, however, they first bought Ashburton land, and

eventually each acquired a complete estate in the county, and built a homestead after the sale of Ashwick. Edward Chapman took up Acton in 1853, and seems to have been backed by considerable capital. He sold this 80,000 acre estate in 1864 to the Hon. Matthew Holmes, and then purchased the Drayton estate, near Methven, at which he remained into the 'nineties. He also leased Oakleigh, a small estate in Selwyn county, from the Rev. John Raven for a time. Another man who arrived with plenty of capital was J. Cathcart Wason, who came to Canterbury in 1869, and promptly laid down £10,000 in cash for Lendon station on the Rakaia. He renamed this estate Corwar after his family's ancestral property, and presumably the source of his capital. T.H. Potts first acquired Vale Head station after he arrived in the province, then leased The Terrace from Sir John Hall, and finally bought his Ashburton property of Hakatere in 1857. He added a 600 acre farm at Governor's Bay in the 1860s, and retained these properties into the nineties.

Later arrivals often enjoyed a similarly easy career. A.E. Peache, for example, came to New Zealand in order to help his uncle put his estate in better order, and then was backed financially by his father in taking over the property. Eventually, with his father's assistance, Peache acquired a second property, this time a high country run, which he held in conjunction with the Mt Somers station. The impecunious uncle, C.P. Cox, illustrates the fact that a few of the Ashburton gentry experienced struggles in maintaining the position bequeathed to them by family capital. Cox seems to have been born unlucky. He enjoyed all the advantages of class, education, status, and a wealthy family, but was never

able to capitalise on them to any great extent. He began his career in Canterbury as a cadet for two years on the Ashburton run of Double Hill - a sound preparation for a landholding career. But his subsequent investments were dogged by his personal ill luck. He was a partner with J.E. FitzGerald in the Springs and Longbeach stations, and failed to make much money out of either. He then bought Mt Somers in 1862, but through bad luck and mismanagement was forced to sell it to his nephew in 1876, and retire to a small freehold estate of about three thousand acres, where he remained into the 'nineties, and was forced to augment his income by various dubious financial speculations.

William Campbell Walker was another example of bad luck, and of being "bailed out" by relatives. He bought Mount Possession in Ashburton in 1864, and in 1870 added Valetta to his impressive acreage. But by 1882, his incompetence necessitated the intervention of his father-in-law, Archdeacon Wilson, who had only recently sold his Ashburton estate of Singletree, and now purchased Valetta. Walker retained Mount Possession into the 'nineties. Others began their careers unluckily, but ended up in a sound position. C.J. Harper, for example, began a series of unsuccessful speculations in stations from 1858 onwards, but only succeeded financially when he finally acquired Brackenfield estate in Ashley county, and retained it from 1871 till 1881, when he sold it to buy an estate in Ashburton county. He named this Hackthorne, and immediately built himself a large house on the banks of the Hinds, to show that he intended to stay. There are still Harpers at the second Hackthorne to this day.

For every man who immediately began purchasing estates

upon arrival in New Zealand, there was another who only reached Ashburton by a more circuitous route, via the professions, the management of other men's estates, or the world of business. Many of these men were already "upper class", sons of county families at "Home" whose stint in a profession or commerce was necessary to establish the financial base enabling them to purchase an estate. But others were obscure men who had no background of landowning, and who bought estates for other reasons - as a secure investment. For some, then, social mobility was involved, and the purchase of an estate was an upward step, conferring entry into the small gentry group. This phenomenon was strongly characteristic of Victorian society generally, and a cardinal principle of Victorian ethics had always been that there must be a just reward for thrift, sobriety, and industry. Social mobility had always been acceptable, even encouraged, in British societies, and was thought to be one of their sources of strength. Families such as the Ballantynes and Morrows began humbly, and ended up as fully-fledged members of the landed gentry.

Newcomers who were already "gentlemen" greatly outnumbered them, of course. These men arrived by several routes. Firstly there were the squatting parsons, whose motives for acquiring estates were usually to augment their stipends, and to secure livelihoods for their sons. Others had less worldly motives. The Rev. John Elmslie bought his Cardendale estate as an investment, and possibly for reasons of prestige, but also because he was a farmer's son, and had "always retained his interest in farming and love of country

life."¹⁹ The legal profession contributed several of Ashburton's landowners. Henry Hamilton Loughnan was partner in a firm of barristers and solicitors from 1876 before he began acquiring estates, and J.C. Helmore began his legal career in England before settling down in Christchurch and founding a firm of barristers and solicitors; he began buying land soon after. Neither of these men became primarily landowners or farmers, and for both their estates seem to have been investments only, as well as providing occasional retreats for holidays, or convenient places to send sons and daughters. A slightly different case was Frederick de Cartaret Malet, who bought an estate at Mount Grey Downs as soon as he arrived in New Zealand in 1861. But ill luck meant that he lost this property only four years later, and he found himself without his original capital. He had been trained only as a "gentleman", and had no profession, and so was forced to make his own way. For three years he was Wardens Clerk and Clerk to the Magistrate's Court at Hokitika, and then began rising in the legal world, in which he had had no previous training. Eventually he became Registrar of the University of New Zealand, of the Collegiate Union and Board of Governors of Canterbury College, and of the Supreme Court. In 1881 he was admitted to the bar as a barrister and solicitor to the Supreme Court, and now at last was once again in a position to fulfil his apparent ambition of founding an estate. He began acquiring land in Ashburton, formed the Clarewell estate, built a large

19 Elmslie, J.G., John Elmslie 1831-1907, Christchurch, 1963, p.51.

house, and had "arrived". Unlike the Loughnan and Helmore estates, Clarewell was inherited by the eldest son, in the English gentry tradition.

Three Ashburton landed families were founded by fortunes won in the engineering industry - the Wrights, the Holmeses, and the Whites. Edward George Wright, a middle class man, began his career as an engineer with works in Rome, Woolwich and Birmingham in the 1850s. In 1857 he was appointed New Zealand agent for British iron works, and then became Director of Harbour Improvements in Napier. He built a lighthouse in Wellington, and then moved to Canterbury, where he set up a firm of engineers and constructed, amongst other works, the Rangitata bridge. Part of the payment for this bridge was in the form of a large grant of land in the Gawler Downs of Ashburton County, and Wright soon began to acquire other tracts of land, until by the 'nineties he was firmly established as a landed magnate with an estate called Surrey Hills in the downs, and another called Windermere on the plains. He built his main homestead at Windermere, and although he never relinquished his engineering interests, became primarily a landowner.

The two branches of the Holmes family, of gentry antecedents, built up similar fortunes through tunnel and railway contracting. D.G. Holmes was established as a landowner by the financial assistance of his uncle, George Holmes, who ran the family business, and the John Holmeses enjoyed similar advantages. Both branches became primarily landowning families, and founded lines that still remain in Ashburton today. The Whites intended to found a permanent family, but their line failed, as did that of the Wrights,

through lack of sons. William White II began his career as the contractor for the Southbridge and Pleasant Point railways, and was then taken into partnership by his father in a merchant and engineering firm, called William White and Co. The death of his father in 1885 left William II as sole proprietor of the family business, and by this time it had very wide ramifications, including shipping, timber-milling, coal-mining, and other interests. During the previous twenty years, the family had also been acquiring landed estates as opportunities arose, and by the 'nineties the family had become primarily a landed one. Having won a great fortune, William White now "was at liberty to develop his properties, and to devote time to other personal affairs". Langley, his Ashburton estate, was his favourite property, and he spent a great deal of time and money in residence there, improving and beautifying it, until it was ready to be handed on to his son, Leonard, who had been brought up with "great expectations" as a future landed proprietor. Leonard died childless, and so the White family failed to transmit this inheritance so carefully built up.

William Spence Peter built up his original fortune in the mining industry before he invested it in an Ashburton estate. His father was an industrialist, and Peter was able to found a mining business in South and Western Australia in the 1850s. By 1856, he sold out of these with sufficient profit to sail to New Zealand and purchase the Anama estate in the Ashburton downs, where he set himself up as a landed magnate. Another landowner, H.W. Packer, founded his fortune as a partner in the Albion Brewery, and always retained considerable interests in the business world even after he

had acquired an estate and a farm. Peter Cunningham began his Canterbury career as an accountant, gained a partnership in a grain exporting firm, and eventually set up on his own as a grain merchant. At the summit of his career he was believed to be worth some £300,000. This fortune was reduced by later reverses, but Cunningham was always very wealthy, and a great deal of his money was invested in land, including an Ashburton estate on which some of the grain he exported was grown. Cunningham preferred town life, and never became a landed gentleman in the fullest sense. A contrast was C.F. Todhunter, who built up a fortune with a timber firm in Christchurch, and later a brewery, and in 1890 sold out his interests and invested the profits in an Ashburton estate called Westerfield, thus founding a landowning family which remains till the present.

All these men were more or less "gentlemen" when they arrived; the careers of two or three others show a more spectacular rise in status. The Ballantyne family was founded by John Ballantyne, the publican's son. Ballantyne was given a sound education in his home, and sufficient capital to set himself up as a draper in Selkirk. He and his brothers emigrated to Australia in the 1850s, and he built up his position until, disliking the Australian climate, he moved to Christchurch in 1872, when he had sufficient substance to be described as a "businessman" by the Lyttelton Times.²⁰ No longer a mere "shopkeeper", Ballantyne bought his way into the drapery firm of Dunstable House, which soon became "Ballantyne's". After seven more

20 Lyttelton Times, 18 April 1872.

years, this establishment was housed in an imposing three-storeyed edifice in Christchurch, and was the centre of a retailing chain of considerable value. Ballantyne was able to fulfil his ambitions and purchase a country estate. He had always dreamed of doing this, and while in Australia had often toured about the countryside searching for a property. Now he bought Thirlstane in Ashburton county, built his homestead, and began to indulge in the horse and sheep breeding and other occupations appropriate to a landowner.

William Strange was another proprietor of a large drapery business who went in for landowning, and bought the Riversdale estate on the Ashburton river. He failed, however, to found a permanent family. In contrast was the story of David Morrow, the yeoman farmer's son who founded a family which still owns large Ashburton properties. David Morrow early showed a propensity for mathematics and "figures". His father placed him as an apprentice in a general store in Downpatrick, and then as a traveller for a Belfast firm. He married a merchant's daughter, and his prospects began to rise; but the death of his young wife and her child in 1863 decided him to leave Ireland and make a fresh start in "the colonies". He spent three years attached to a firm in Melbourne and then, having heard encouraging reports about New Zealand's climate and prospects, sailed for Canterbury in 1866. There he carefully capitalised on his advantages. He wrote to his wife's family, the Bassetts, and persuaded his brother and sister-in-law, the Samuel Kennedy Bassetts, to come out and join him as partners in an ironmongery and farm implements firm called Morrow and Bassett. The Bassetts were people of substance, and their support and Morrow's

astuteness meant that the firm flourished. The Bassetts built a mansion in Avonside which they called Tyrella, and Morrow lived with them there and began moving in more "elevated" social circles.

Morrow was now in a position to take a second wife; he returned to Ireland for a visit, and proposed marriage to another merchant's daughter, a Miss Bailie. He thus gained another valuable source of support. On their honeymoon a fortune-teller, so legend has it, prophesied wealth and a large family - both of which were fulfilled. Morrow brought his first wife's niece, Prudence Bassett, back with him to New Zealand; she provided another tie with the well-to-do Bassetts. On this same trip he executed another coup in his well-ordered career; he and his party travelled through America on the way back to New Zealand, and there Morrow successfully negotiated for the sole rights over the sale of McCormick binders in New Zealand. He ordered 800 of these machines immediately, and thus was able literally to "cash in" on the wheat bonanza that was sweeping Canterbury and Otago. By 1881, Morrow was a rich man. He and Samuel Bassett sold out their shares in Morrow and Bassett in favour of a nephew, Thomas Bassett, and although Morrow retained many business interests for the rest of his life, he now became primarily a landowner. His plan was to acquire a sheep farm, and accordingly he bought a 6,000 acre estate of stony light soil in the Gawler Downs, which he named Montalto, after the great country seat near his father's farm in Ireland. This name more than anything else in probably the best indication of Morrow's ambitions - to become a landed magnate, in the British tradition. His wealth, earned

through trade, had been transmuted into a landed estate.²¹

All these men pursued their careers very much according to patterns long established in British society, following a well-beaten path to social respectability. In British societies²²

"The merchant who wanted to metamorphose himself into a country gentleman was not necessarily a man anxious to forget his humble origin ... he might want a modest estate where he could send his family for the summer months and go himself for weekends if he could not leave his business for longer. For these people, investment in land did not mean that they wanted to turn farmer and run their estates at a profit - though of course this type of newly landed gentry was common too - but that they hoped for an old age of ease and quiet comfort, and to bring up their families in country surroundings."

Many of the men mentioned above were instances of this type of "Indian Summer" or "old age" gentry - the Elmslies, Loughnans, Helmores, and the like - and as such, often had little stake in the local affairs of the county, and limited their residence to short periods, or kept their sons or salaried men as managers on their newly-acquired estates. More, however, became full-fledged gentry, entering fully into all the ramifications of such a rank.

Another group of men entered landowning by way of the intermediate stage of cadetship or managing of other men's estates. This group tended to number fewer absentees in its ranks. The most dramatic example is to be found in the

21 Amongst the collection of letters, journals and other papers, including material transcribed or compiled by Elizabeth Bailie Morrow Davidson, now held by Mrs J.V. Morrow Jacobson of Christchurch; henceforth referred to as Morrow MSS. This excerpt is from notes compiled on the family history by E.B.M. Davidson.

22 Mitchell, R.J., and Leys, M.D.R., A History of the English People, London, 1967, pp. 502-503.

career of Duncan Cameron, the county's nouveau riche par excellence. Of unknown origins, Cameron's first position in Canterbury was as manager of Winchmore station, then being leased by the Harts to Robert Park. He had then been made manager by George Gould of his Springfield station, a little further up the Ashburton river than Winchmore. After some years, Cameron had proved his worth to Gould, and persuaded him to go into partnership with his former manager. Cameron was able to put up £1,700, carefully saved from his salaries and other sources, to pay for this partnership, and so "laid the foundations for one of the largest fortunes made out of land in Canterbury."²³ After the death of Gould ended the partnership, Cameron was able to put up £65,000 in cash to buy up the Goulds' share, and so acquired complete control of this magnificent 18,000 acre estate which was worth almost £300,000 on his death. By dint of Mrs Cameron's social climbing abilities, and his own sheer wealth, Cameron was able to promote his family from a very obscure status to social respectability.

Less spectacular, and less jarring to the social order, were the careers of other men who began as managers. Capt. W.McN. Lyttleton arrived in New Zealand in 1863, and was manager of Clydevale estate in Otago for twelve years before his father financed his purchase of Rokeby. A.Macintosh Clark lost his early capital in several unsuccessful speculations in estates, and was then made manager of several stations by the Bank of New Zealand, as its Station Supervisor. This enabled him to restore his position, and by 1890 he

23 Macdonald, "Biographies."

owned the 35,000 acre Blackford estate in Ashburton county, as well as three other estates elsewhere. T.E. Upton began his career on the land as a cadet for Sir Frederick Broome at Steventon, in the next county,²⁴ after which period of light-hearted preparation he was appointed manager of Sir John Cracroft Wilson's Ashburton estate of Cracroft. He was with Wilson for sixteen years before he purchased Sherwood. E.S. Coster began as a cadet at Fernside in Ashley county, and in the 1870s he and his brother freeholded 8,000 acres near Rakaia to found the Somerton estate. The McIlraiths began as managers for the Deanses at Homebush before they bought Culverden in the Amuri. In 1872 they acquired Auchenflower, their Ashburton estate, and after some years finally settled on it, and built a large brick house there. Alexander McIlraith was manager for a time for Samuel Bealey on his Haldon estate.

By the 'nineties all these men were securely established on their Ashburton estates. They had "arrived", had elaborated a life style based on that of British gentry, had reinforced their status with the education of their sons, and the many other features of their life style. Most seem to have been in sound financial positions, and the future of their families seemed assured. Already in fact, sons of the first generation of the Canterbury gentry were beginning to inherit their father's estates, and confirm their family's fortunes. The death of William White II in the 'nineties found him with three sons each ready to inherit one of his father's estates. William III and Henry each inherited a good property outside Ashburton county, while Leonard, the second son, was left Langley. He had already been manager there for many years and had been manager of another of his father's

estates, Esebury, near Southbridge, as soon as he had completed his education. At Esebury, Leonard had learned to oversee men, and to run a farm. He was able to take over Langley and run it at a peak of efficiency.

Some of the Holmes estates were already in their third generation of ownership. Bought originally by George Holmes, they had been left to his relations, John and David Gordon on his death. D.G. Holmes by the 'nineties had consolidated his estates around his main property of Holmeslee. John Holmes had appointed managers to his Ashburton properties, and established his seat at Bangor, in Selwyn county. At his death in 1879, Bangor and the Ashburton estates passed to his son, John Alexander Holmes; John II, although not born in New Zealand, had been brought up in the colony, and to all intents and purposes was a New Zealander. Nearby, the estate of Rokeby passed to another man who had spent all but his first childhood years in New Zealand - Westcott Lyttleton. The death of his father Westcott McNab Lyttleton, in the 'nineties meant that Rokeby was bequeathed to the two Lyttleton sons, one of whom, established in a lucrative medical practice in Melbourne, waived his share in favour of the elder son, Westcott. Similarly, the death of the Rev. C.R. Mackie meant that Lavington passed to his two sons, Charles Norris, and Charles Strickland Mackie. At the beginning of the 'nineties the splendid estate of Lagmhor, belonging formerly to John McLean, was made over to McLean's nephew, G.A. Maclean Buckley, whose youth and manhood had all been spent in New Zealand. The 'nineties also saw the transference of Coldstream by John Studholme I to his eldest son, John II.

Younger sons were also being provided for. Edward, the second son of John Grigg of Longbeach, was given almost 3,000 acres of his father's estate at the end of this period, called it Akaunui, built himself a brick mansion, and began to play the role of squire of Eiffelton. At the same time, the elder son, John, was being groomed to inherit Longbeach itself. Matthew Ingle Browne II had inherited his father, Matthew Ingle Browne I's estate of Highbank, and the eldest son of William Spence Peter had taken over Anama after his father's death.

It seemed that secure estates had been founded. New county families had arisen on the plains of Ashburton, and already a second generation was beginning to transmit the inheritance which had in most cases been carefully built up for an unborn posterity. The attitudes of the English gentry were flourishing vigorously, and a secure way of life seemed to have been founded.

II GENTLEMEN AND THEIR LADIES

1. The Character of the Large Landowners

The daughter of one Ashburton landowner believed the typical member of this class possessed the

"close instincts of the English county gentleman, his bringing up of (his sons) in English ways ... With nurseries, and coming in for dessert, and cricket-balls already in their little hands, and an English public school in prospect by and by. Like ... everyone else, (he) was setting out to raise an English county family on the Plains ..."25

To be an "English county gentleman" seems to have been the aim of most of Ashburton's large landowners. In deeds

25 Lancaster, *Promenade*, p.434.

and papers the words "Gentleman" or "Esquire" were appended to their names, and the pattern of their life style was set by those amongst their ranks who were brought up in the portraited halls of county families. The character and appearance of these men was that of a race of squires. Men such as William Frederick Maclean Buckley,²⁶

"a very big, hearty man, a perfect John Bull in appearance, very likeable, belonging to the age of Tory Squires. He ate and drank on a gargantuan scale"

or his brother, George A. Maclean Buckley, who was "tall, handsome, able, with great personal attraction."²⁷ A neighbour, D.M. Moorhouse of Shepherds Bush, was described as²⁸

"a big jovial man with a jolly laugh and a fine singing voice. He and his descendants were big in every way - big features, big hands and feet, generous, good natured."

John Cathcart Wason was "Big and strong and handsome", stood six feet six inches tall, and was "very much the gentleman", with polished, suave manners.²⁹

These men were gentry by birth, but the newcomers in Ashburton society cultivated the same manner. E.G. Wright³⁰

"with his handsome, stately figure might be taken for a Doctor of Divinity in easy circumstances, or one of Her Majesty's Judges a trifle unbent ... He has a fine, sensitive and intellectual face ... a good forehead, aquiline nose, grey hair neatly brushed and parted, ending on either side the head in a cluster of neat curls ... Mr Wright has a melodious and cultivated voice ..."

26 Macdonald, "Biographies."

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

29 Scotter, W.H., Ashburton, Christchurch, 1972, p.72.

30 Guardian, 5 September 1892.

But in spite of his being "genial, affable",

"there was always underlying that pleasant surface an impenetrable reserve, which even his closest friends failed to break down."³¹

This reserve could be found in most of the men of this group. The role of large landowner, with all its surface gloss of manners and squire-ish hospitality, was essentially a lonely one. Men of the time spoke of South Island landowners as possessing "private baronies",³² and to some extent this attitude was reflected in their characters. Each stood alone, a patriarch without peers for several miles, and to this simple physical distance was added the preference for independence, individualism, and "decent" propriety characteristic of the nineteenth century educated classes. An English gentleman preserved a distance from his fellows, beneath the public-school camaraderie, and county society was not the place for intellectual agonisings. Some dispensed even with a squire's jollity. David Morrow, for example, was an aloof, stern, patriarchal man, "straight as a die", and only relaxed with women and children.

In general, however, the "genial" tone prevailed, although often mixed with an element of pomposity which found its worst excess in the newcomers such as Sir William Steward. This uneasy draper's son exhibits in extreme and vacillating forms all the contrary elements in the characters of the large landowners. He was "a handsome - even an aristocratic looking man"³³ notable for his "kind

31 Ashburton Mail, 14 August 1902.

32 An example of this sort of exaggerated conceit is contained in H.D. Lloyd's Newest England, New York, 1900; on p.171 he calls the North Otago estate of Elderslie "this private barony".

33 Macdonald, "*Biographies*".

and gentle ways",³⁴ but mixed with this³⁵

"a considerable habitual and acquired dignity, a vast sonorousness, much amiability ... a conscious predilection for the sounded utterances of Sir William Jewkes Steward and an unaffected and genuine admiration for the erudition displayed in his more recondite and written rulings (in Parliament). He has not quite risen to the burden of an honour to which he was not born, but he still does his conscientious best to be impressive..."

Most of these men led ample, public lives, and ordered their private existences as though they too were open to scrutiny. Their daily lives were marked by a careful, orderly routine. Most landowners spent much of their time at writing desks, handling business, accounts, correspondence, and the like. Behind even the "colourful and sporting" Max Friedlander was an astute, careful businessman, and most landowners probably resembled the Rev. Dr Elmslie who, behind a "very courteous manner" concealed the habits of "a very punctual and tidy man. His desk was never littered with papers ... and his books (were) in their proper places in the bookcases that lined his study walls".³⁶ C.F. Todhunter was "a widely-read and well informed man (who) had a splendid memory",³⁷ and it was these characteristics that enabled them to maintain control of the political arena for so long before the 'nineties, and afterwards for men such as Frederick de Cartaret Malet to be appointed as Government nominee to the Bank of New Zealand Board by the Seddon Government - a tribute to his ability, for de Cartaret Malet had "not the slightest leaning towards Liberalism".³⁸

34 Guardian, 17 July 1896.

35 Scotter, Ashburton, p.90.

36 Elmslie, Elmslie, p.15.

37 Macdonald, "Biographies."

38 Ibid.

Not all, of course, commanded such gifts. William Campbell Walker was notable as³⁹

"a man of a certain tangled disorder - a sort of masculine Ophelia grown old. He speaks briefly yet with a certain loose-lipped tremulousness which is ineffective".

His salient characteristics were "an enthusiastic appreciation of the romantic literature of France, and a nice taste in its vintages".⁴⁰

Some degree of eccentricity was not incompatible, however, with nineteenth-century notions of "breeding", which allowed latitude for the much-lauded "individuality" of the age. But in general "breeding" was a cult which imposed a strait-jacket of conventions on men, marking them off as "gentlemen". Men of the "old school", such as W.C. Walker, whose "manners were perfect"⁴¹ and the imposing J. Cathcart Wason, inherited this breeding along with their pedigrees. T.E. Upton was another who "retained the manner of the conventional English country gentleman".⁴² Others had to acquire it. Elmslie, the yeoman's son, eventually earned an accolade as⁴³

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid. Others erred in opposite directions; J.C. Helmore is reputed to have carried carefulness too far, and developed an eccentric fear that he was always going to be robbed; it is said that he had the grounds of his house draped with alarm wires attached to a bell in his bedroom, and always kept a loaded pistol under his pillow. Whenever he heard a suspicious noise he would fire this pistol wildly into the air.

41 Scotter, *Ashburton*, p. 75.

42 Ibid, p.178.

43 Christchurch Press, 21 July 1907.

"one of God's own knights of chivalry ... For the lady of the manor, for the student, for the shy schoolgirl, for the serving-maid he had the same kind, fatherly smile, the same beautiful, helpful courtesy".

His main faults were held to be⁴⁴

"intolerance with the things that he held to be wrong, and impatience when kept waiting. But his voice was never harsh and his temper was always under control."

But not even the constraints of breeding were always adequate to keep ruffled gentlemen's tempers in order, as pride and dignity are not easily compatible with politesse. A newspaper article of 1893, headed luridly, "MR WRIGHT M.H.R. FINED - A RAILWAY TRAVELLERS" QUARREL", informed Ashburton that E.G. Wright had been charged and found guilty of assault on a railway carriage. Wright had found the aisle obstructed by another traveller's gladstone bag and rugs, had asked for them to be removed and, when this was refused, spoke to the offender "in a very ungentlemanlike manner". Mutual vituperation had followed until Wright "kicked the bag violently", struck the other twice on the face, and gave his opponent his card.⁴⁵

More common, however, were men like the Alingtons, "pleasant, easy-going men less interested in farming than in the church, local affairs and sport".⁴⁶ Their mental attitudes reflected this personal "easiness". Most were omnivorous readers, with broad, wide-ranging interests, mingled with opinions firmly held at bottom, but often disguised by a sort of drifting conservatism. Conventional religion usually played a more or less important role.

44 Elmslie, *Elmslie*, p.16.

45 *Guardian*, 11 February 1893.

46 Scotter, *Ashburton*, p.64.

David Morrow, for example, possessed a strong faith which was active at least in a worldly sense, and which was quiet and unostentatious in his personality. This somewhat austere man enjoyed dabbling in the "Jewish Question", and thought a great deal about British Israelism. He believed in temperance, and allowed no alcohol in his houses. John Ballantyne and Duncan Cameron shared the same opinions, together with the earnest, deep faith held by Morrow.

But these men were members of the Presbyterian minority in the gentry, and were all parvenus. An enthusiastic appreciation of drink was far more common amongst the Anglican majority, who generally despised "dog-in-the-manger" moralising, as was best exemplified by I.R.C. Cunninghame-Graham, one of their number. Cunninghame-Graham embraced a boundless liberalism in the best Whig tradition of his family. He dreamed of a revitalised New Zealand, of an end to dummyism, he belonged to the Temperance League, and also wrote⁴⁷

"I believe women possess, on the whole, as much, if not more, tact and discrimination as men; and when they possess voting powers will help to keep out of Parliament some of those who by their rude manners and mode of address, accompanied by long-winded speeches, occasionally turn the House into a bear garden."

Such attitudes were anathema to most of the large landowners, and would have been mocked ruthlessly by such men as the "extremely conservative and overbearing" F. de Cartaret Malet, who never gave "more liberal minded" men an adequate hearing,⁴⁸ or John Studholme, with his

47 Guardian, 28 July 1893.

48 Macdonald, "*Biographies*."

"almost chivalric attachment to his order, like aristocracy ... The belief that squatters are a different order, essentially of a higher nature, a more perfect mould."⁴⁹

More typical, perhaps, than either the faithful Presbyterian Cameron, the liberal "faddist" Cunningham-Graham, or the Tory de Cartaret Malet, was George Hart - Anglican, tolerant, conservative, well-read, and considered by Sewell to be "quiet and intelligent".⁵⁰ Certainly all were interested in politics. The period was a confusion of alternative political theories and the landowners, as the heirs of the conservative political tradition, tended to cling to its attitudes and assumptions. The eminent Liberal politician, William Pember Reeves, spent a period as cadet on Lowcliffe estate in Ashburton county, and there expressed his developing liberal views to two members of the gentry. He said he believed that no man should be allowed to buy more than 1,000 acres of land, and then wrote⁵¹

"They rolled in their chairs, and chuckled, and laughed, and made allusions about Tiberius Gracchus."

The gentry politicians of the county generally accepted this conservative stance without question. Its most ardent proponent was the vigorous J.A. Holmes, the darling of such men as de Cartaret Malet and Studholme. Holmes sneered at manifestoes appended with "the well known signature of Mr Cunninghame-Graham",⁵² and thundered against liberal measures in such terms as "this iniquitous Bill", labelled

49 Canterbury Times, 17 November 1877.

50 Macdonald, "*Biographies*."

51 P.D. vol. 79, p.530.

52 Guardian, 13 September 1893.

the Land for Settlements Bill "a gross attempt to destroy security of tenure of lands", an attack on "rights and liberties", and an illustration of the maxim "that the gods deprive of reasons those whom they wish to destroy."⁵³

A more compromising conservatism was probably characteristic of the gentry, articulated by men such as E.G. Wright, J. Cathcart Wason, and W.C. Walker, all of whom were prepared to compromise with liberalism. Walker, as did most of the gentry, feared the "hungry democrats", but believed that the men of his class were "not extremists taken as a whole".⁵⁴ Wright was a member "of the Conservative party, (but) he was not a blind supporter,"⁵⁵ and Wason possessed a squire's concern for the poor that led him to support liberal measures at times.

Outright Liberals were very rare in gentry ranks. Cunninghame-Graham was noisy but ineffective with his quasi-religious belief that "the profit of the earth is for all; the king himself is served by the fold".⁵⁶ The other notable gentleman-Liberal was Sir William Steward, and he was often merely laughable - a type of

"the Hebraistic, Philistine, hole-in-the-corner outlook of many English Liberals - Bible students with a craving for forbidden fruit and a craving for legality."⁵⁷

He was too fond of lengthy speeches with little substance, but crowded with such rhetorical flourishes as "Justice is eternal!"⁵⁸ to win the support of thoughtful, conservative

53 Ibid., 16 September 1893.

54 Ballance Papers, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington; W.C. Walker to Ballance, 24 October 1889.

55 Mail, 14 August 1902. 56 Guardian, 11 July 1892.

57 Ash, G.G., "Ideas of Society and State in the New Zealand of 1890", M.A. Thesis, University of Canterbury, 1962, p.165.

58 P.D., 168, p.448.

Ashburton landowners. Most of them were not concerned with grand new designs for society. They were men with a stake in the country, and naturally opposed anything that threatened their position, their land, and the families they were raising.

The creation and preservation of a "heritage" was a very real preoccupation of these men and goes a long way to explain their conservatism. Most Ashburton landowners had probably bought their estates with at least one eye on their future sons - William White is a notable example of this - and it must not be forgotten that they were almost all Englishmen, with Englishmen's concepts of land and class. It was for these motives that they so often gave their new estates the names of evocative British country seats; Hart's naming of Winchmore, the Stracheys' of Ashwick, Chapman's of Acton, and so on reflect a desire to recreate the halls of their ancestors. It is interesting to note how few estates were given Maori names, which could have none of the impressive connotations of the names "Corwar", "Sherwood", "Buccleuch", and "Coldstream".

These attitudes meant that sons, and particularly eldest sons, were accorded a lavish and careful attention, while their sisters were left to play the role of comforters to their parents, and potential stock on the marriage exchange. Sons were given imposing family names which stressed the length and nobility (if it existed) of ancestry, and seemed to give proof of its continuance. Daughters were given romantic, "pretty" names, unrelated to family history. Some sons were given their father's name: John Studholme, John Grigg, and Westcott Lyttleton are three examples.

Others were given a full genealogical panoply, such as the sons of C.J. Harper, who had allied himself in marriage with the Cracroft Wilsons, and called his sons Henry John Cracroft Harper and Charles Godfrey Cracroft Harper, while his daughter was called Cecilia Jane. Parvenus played the same game, perhaps a little excessively. Sir William Steward had married the daughter of the old baronetcy family of Whitefoord, and named his sons Caleb Whitefoord Courtney Steward and Vernon William Whitefoord Steward, and even his daughter was not spared, and was given the name Gertrude Wilhelmina Whitefoord Steward. The sons of W.C. Walker were given old family names such as Loch Ramsay, and Dundas, those of C.P. Cox were given Sandford and Cleave, while T.E. Upton favoured the family names of Tichborne and Bramley for his sons. Daughters had to be content with such names as Hermione or Carlotta (Hawdon), Lucy or Florence (Studholme), Athole, Emma or Helen (Murray-Aynsley).

In some cases, it is possible that the birth of sons was the cause of the purchase of estates. The birth of a son and heir, called John Finlay, to David Morrow in 1878 persuaded him to establish his country estate, and later in that year he bought 6,000 acres of land, commissioned an architect to design a large country house of poured concrete, and began to employ men to fence, plant, and lay out grounds on the property. His choice of a name for the estate is significant too. Montalto was the name of the Kerr family's country seat at Ballynahinch, one of the great mansions of Ireland. His wife's family was related to the Kerr's and he possibly named his property Montalto in order to indicate that he was founding a new dynasty to equal that of the Kerrs. Morrow

wanted daughters too, and when news arrived of the birth of his first daughter, he "threw up his hat to show his delight."⁵⁹ It is significant, however, that he commissioned no architects to commemorate this birth. Sons could transmit an inheritance, while the best daughters could do was to marry another landowner's son, and contract valuable new alliances.

2. Alliances by Marriage.

Marriage patterns are as important as the education of sons in revealing gentry homogeneity, and in showing the few dozen landed families to have been a nearly endogamous group. Marriages were contracted within a very limited circle - habit and training were such that it was difficult for members of the upper class to look outside their own or equal groups in search for a partner. The crime of mesalliance was real, and ensured snobbish censure. Marriage served many purposes - it forged links with other gentry families, it introduced new sources of wealth and authority into a family, it extended a family's ability to influence "affairs", and it transformed daughters from expensive drones into valuable allies. Such ambitions and designs were generally veiled with the "decency" of sentiment, for they were Victorians, but the analysis of marriage patterns shows clearly that marriage was vital in extending family contacts.

Mesalliance could, and did occur, but only as a recognisably unwise and unsettling step. It had been

59 Morrow MSS,

family notes by E.B.M. Davidson.

permissible at an earlier time, before the new men had risen to the dignity of a landed estate, but once they had gained their new status they were just as vigorous as the older families in attempting to gain "good" matches. Low expectations at the beginnings of careers had led several men to marry within, rather than above their station.

H.W. Packer had married a Miss Wheeler in 1866, and although her father was a "gentleman", he was only a bourgeois from Mickleton, Gloucestershire. John Grigg, while still engaged in founding his fortune in the North Island, married the daughter of a man in similar circumstances in Auckland. John Ballantyne, when still a shopkeeper, had married Sarah Ann Thorne, the daughter of Richard Thorne of Williton, a prosperous Devonshire farmer. But the greatest embarrassment to "good" society in the county appears to have been Duncan Cameron's wife. He had married her in his days of obscurity, when she had been a Miss Hunter, a yeoman's daughter in Scotland. Now, when Cameron was one of the county's greatest magnates, Mrs Cameron's manners and accent, and her energetic social climbing, brought down upon her the sarcasm of the old gentry's wives. One ended a little diatribe about Mrs Cameron by saying "She is dreadfully vulgar."⁶⁰

Such past lapses were generally overlooked, however, and as they rose in wealth, the new gentry acquired most of the ways of the old families. More unsettling were mesalliances contracted by established gentry families. In most nineteenth-century British rural societies "unseemly" marriages were seen as "perhaps the greatest threat to the

60 Studholme MSS, undated letter from Mrs J. Studholme II to Mrs J. Studholme I.

established order".⁶¹ One English county in the period was scandalised by the marriage of a duke to an actress who had been born in a country lane.⁶² Ashburton at least witnessed no such spectacular instances of mesalliance, but there were many subtler examples, which would have been startling to the more caste-conscious women who in general were the most ardent proponents and arrangers of "matches". Capt. John Henry Murray-Aynsley, son of the Mount Hutt family with its aristocratic antecedents, married the daughter of a Scottish doctor, and entered that profession himself. D.G. Holmes committed a similar lapse when he married a Miss Deamer, daughter of a Christchurch medical practitioner. George Hart's son, whose mother had been a Kenison-James, married Ellen Grace Sherring, the daughter of the manager of the bank in Ashburton - this brought mesalliances nearer home, and represented a growing intermarriage between notables and gentry that both the Hart and the Cox families were beginning. Other members of the gentry unsettled the pattern of marriage alliances by remaining single all their life - Leonard White of Langley, and John McLean of Lagmhor are examples.

Such "lapses" were, however, uncommon. The gentry group was a tight circle, and took marriage seriously. When David Morrow returned to Ireland looking for a bride, intrigues within the circle of family connections finally settled upon Elizabeth Bailie for him. Finally, with approbation on all sides of the arrangement, a marriage was

61 Hill, Sir F., "Squire and Parson in Early Victorian Lincolnshire"; *History*, U.K., Vol. 58, No.194, October, 1973, p.339.

62 Ibid.

contracted, and Morrow took his new bride and the advantages of all her wealthy connections, back with him to New Zealand.⁶³

The marriage game was indeed taken seriously. One young Ashburton lady, after finding that she had "sat and chatted gracefully" with a distinguished man she wished to "snare", but had produced a very bad impression on him, "gave one scream and went off into hysterics".⁶⁴ It involved endless intrigue and speculation amongst the women of the county. One year, for instance, a letter arrived from one station lady to another in the county, with whom she was connected by marriage and "interest". She wrote of a third landed gentlemen's lady, who had just carried off a coup in the marriage stakes,⁶⁵

"the marriage of her girls will greatly strengthen their influence ... The Barker clique are charmed with the connection, and no wonder, for (her mansion) combines just now everything that can make a house attractive - sport of various kinds, tennis, a splendid table and pretty girls ... no wonder they are run after and they are. And I do not think it wise to have an open rupture with them, they would just make people believe what they chose about us."

Most households employed the lures of sports, tennis, and a splendid table to find husbands and wives of the "right" class for their children, whether they were pretty or not. Mrs Cameron excelled at the game. She was a "vivacious, sociable woman and had social ambitions. In particular she was determined that her two daughters should make 'good' marriages."⁶⁶ Consequently, the Camerons entertained on a

63 Morrow MSS, family notes by E.B.M. Davidson.

64 Guardian 26 January 1895.

65 Studholme MSS, letter from Alice Moorhouse at Shepnerds Bush to Mrs J. Studholme I, 22 November 1888.

66 Macdonald, "Biographies."

lavish scale, and the house and hermitage were always full of eligible bachelors. Men were often as interested in the game as their wives were. A.E. Peache noted with satisfaction one summer⁶⁷

"One of Con's (his daughter, Constance) young men came up to stay the day before Christmas. She had numerous admirers. The favourite one at present is the son of a great racing man but I do not know if anything will come of it."

There were three main sources of "acceptable" admirers: the English gentry, the local gentry, and other upper class families belonging to church, military, mercantile, or official groups. For the most part, it was the older generation that found spouses amongst the English gentry. Edward Chapman, for example, had married Emmeline Fereday, daughter of a Staffordshire squire, and George Hart had married Julia Kenison-James, from another such landed family. John Studholme I had found his bride in the person of Lucy Ellen Sykes Moorhouse, daughter of the Moorhouses of Knottingley Park in Yorkshire, and who sent their sons to settle in Canterbury. Cyril Goodricke Hawdon's wife was Mary Charlotte Georgiana, the eldest daughter of Richard Strachey of Ashwick Grove, Somerset, and the father of the Ashburton Stracheys. Another Burkes wife was Jane Seymour, who married William Spence Peter of Anama. Her family hailed from Ballymore Castle, in Galway. In addition, some of the children of the Ashburton gentry found themselves spouses from the English upper classes on their tours "Home", or while they were completing their English educations. One such was G.A. Maclean Buckley, whose marriage was reported in 1891 in a local county newspaper:⁶⁸

67 Gray, *Quiet Hills*, p.186.

68 Guardian 25 February 1891

"Mr G.A. McLean Buckley, of Lagmhor, second son of Mr George Buckley, was married at Slough, England, on December 13, to Miss Mabel Gertrude Warren, second daughter of Mr F.R. Warren, of Upton Park, Slough."

Such marriages earned the fullest approval of county society. Mrs John Studholme II, herself an Englishwoman, complimented the new Mrs Maclean Buckley in a letter to her "Mater", in which she praised her as

"so nice and English and quite a lady, isn't she?"⁶⁹

Most of the younger Ashburton landed families found sons - and daughters-in-law amongst their own ranks, however, or in the gentry of other South Island counties. There was a good deal of inter-marriage amongst the gentry families of the county. Edward Mallaby Goodwin of Cracroft, for example, married in 1892 Sophia Elmslie, daughter of the Elmslies of Cardendale. A daughter of T.H. Potts at about the same time married Edward Dobson of Ilesworth. By the 'nineties this sort of inter-marriage had taken place over two generations. C.J. Harper had married Sir John Cracroft Wilson's granddaughter in 1867, when her father managed Cracroft, and Henry John Cracroft Harper, their elder son, married Helen Rachel, the daughter of A.E. Peache of Mt Somers. Marriage of cousins was not uncommon. John Holmes II, for instance, married his uncle's only child, Gertrude Isabella Holmes. This marriage, incidentally, made Holmes his uncle's heir, and presumably such possibilities entered into the planning of the match.

Marriage into gentry groups outside the county was also very important for establishing links with prominent families in other districts, and also was a result of the

69. Studholme MSS, Mrs J. Studholme II to Mrs J. Studholme I, 6 November 1899.

extensive social mingling that occurred amongst the provincial gentry in its frequent visits to Christchurch. The second Harper son, for example, found his wife by this means. She was the daughter of a wealthy landed magnate in North Canterbury, Reginald Blunden. Three of the children of John Studholme I married Canterbury gentry: John II took as his second wife the daughter of Sir Charles Bowen of Middleton Grange; the second son, William Paul Studholme, married the daughter of H.F. Gray of Waiora Station, North Canterbury; and a daughter, Lucy Ellen, married in 1894 William Barton, who owned White Rock Station in North Canterbury, and a town house called Fareham. Her sister, Florence May, had married into the English gentry. Mrs C.F. Todhunter was the daughter of the Hon. Edward Dobson, and sister of Edward Dobson of Isleworth. T.H. Potts had married one of the Misses Phillips of Rockwood and The Point estates in Selwyn county, Anne Elizabeth Moorhouse was linked by Bishop Harper in a ceremony at the Acland's church at Mount Peel to William Barker Howell, a wealthy South Canterbury landowner, and A. Macintosh Clark married Alice, daughter of W.A. Low of St Helens station in the Amuri county.

Parvenus followed the same marriage pattern - indeed, a good match was sometimes a means of making new riches socially respectable. The Ohinemuri Chisnalls, of yeoman origins, succeeded in enrolling a full register of elevating connections. William Chisnall married Marian Gardiner, daughter of the owners of Purau estate on Banks Peninsula, while Anne Chisnall became Mrs J. Macfarlane of Coldstream estate and various other North Canterbury properties. Sarah

Chisnall became Mrs Valpy, wife of a prominent Otago landed magnate, and mistress of Glenorchy station. Only one sister, Elizabeth, married a man not a large landowner, and her husband was a clergyman. Sir William Jewkes Steward of Barford managed to contract an elevating marriage with the daughter of C. Whitefoord, a magistrate and landowner in a large way in Ashley county. Steward revealed his pleasure at this connection by constantly making references to the nobility and ancestry of the Whitefoords in the columns of his newspaper, the Ashburton Guardian.⁷⁰ This indicates his snobbish interest in his marriage, and is particularly illuminating when it is remembered that Steward posed as a Liberal.

Liaisons with upper class families in other callings were also numerous. Connections with merchant families occurred. The Rev. John Elmslie, for example, married in an apparently very worldly fashion when he took Jeannie Harper Anderson as his wife - she was the daughter of the wealthy engineering and entrepreneurial family, and an heiress. Two of the Ballantyne sons married daughters of a prominent Dunedin mercantile family, the Haynes family, while Catherine Ballantyne was married to Charles Gould, son of George Gould, another wealthy merchant. There were also many connections with church families, most of which were heavily involved in landowning as well. William Elmslie married a daughter of the Rev. W.H. Gaulter, a Dunedin clergyman, and the Peter family of Anama later married into the same family. Elizabeth Thorne Ballantyne also married a clergyman, as did

70 Guardian in 1891 includes several such examples.

Alice Moorhouse, daughter of B.M. Moorhouse. Multiple connections with families of the clergy were not unknown. Archdeacon James Wilson, owner of Valetta, provided daughters for two other members of the Ashburton gentry - Beatrice married Frederick de Cartaret Malet, and Margaret married William Campbell Walker. Bishop Harper's family became intricately entangled with the landed gentry by numerous connections. One example was the marriage of C.P. Cox to Sarah Shephard, one of the bishop's daughters. Other gentry married into less prominent Anglican clergy. Lily Eleanor Cox married the Rev. H.T. Purchas, while a son of Edward Chapman, William Palmer Chapman, married a daughter of the Rev. J. Raven, who owned Oakleigh estate in Selwyn county. Some Ashburton gentry married into English clerical families. John Studholme I married the daughter of the Archbishop of York, and Beatrice Anne Sibella de Cartaret Malet married firstly the son of the Dean of Chichester, and secondly the son of Sir George Harper, himself the son of Bishop Harper.

Alliances were also formed with military and other families. One of F. de Cartaret Malet's sons married the daughter of Admiral R.F. Stopford of Surrey, and a second married Gwendoline Marriett a'Beckett, the eldest daughter of a banker. One son of C.F. Todhunter married the daughter of Colonel Pemberton-Pigott, the second married into a landed family, the Newtons, while his daughter, Ellen Todhunter, married Sir James Thomson, an eminent Anglo-Indian at Madras. The third son of J. Studholme I married Eliza Hersey Wauchope, daughter of Major-General R.A. Wauchope. Peter Combe Cunningham, son of P. Cunningham, found his wife

from amongst the daughters of Colonel Babington of Opawa. And Mrs D. Cameron's aspirations were answered when her eldest daughter married one retired officer, by whom she bore a son, now Sir Duncan Sandys, a prominent British Conservative leader. Evelyn Cameron Sandys then divorced this first husband, and contracted a second marriage with another military man, a Colonel Cusler. Her sister, Mildred, married yet another officer, Major Stannas.

Another important source of brides was to be found among Australian heiresses. Both the Coster brothers married in this way. Edward Stafford Coster married Agnes Cecil Henty, and his brother John Lewis Coster, married her sister, Ellen Henty. Both of these women came with ample endowments, and were the daughters of the very rich Hon. S.G. Henty, a Victorian squatter. John Cathcart Wason was another landowner who married a rich Australian. He selected Alice Seymour Bell, daughter of Edward Bell, a prominent South Australian squatter.

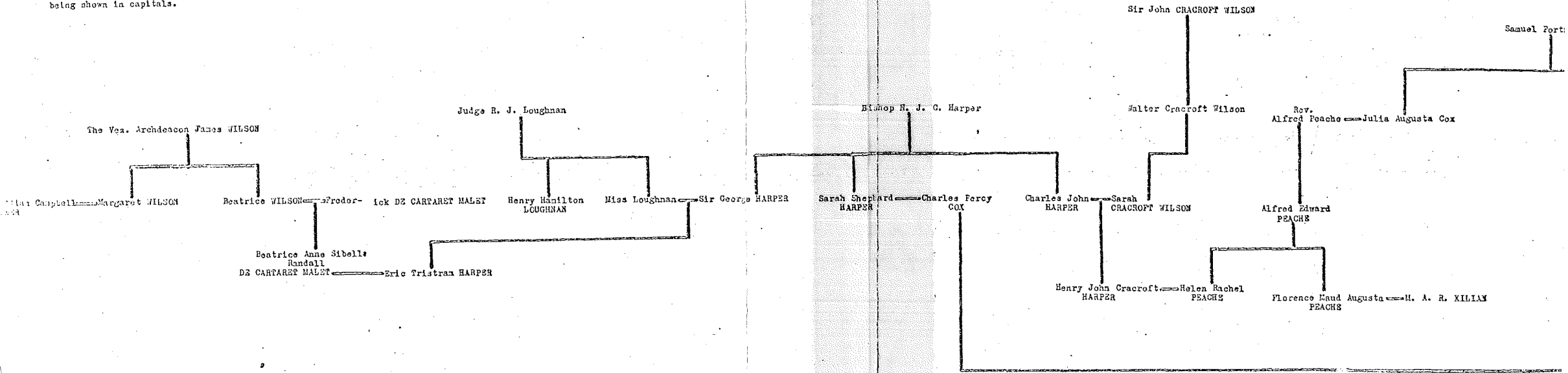
By such means Ashburton landed families forged ever-widening connections with wealth and influence. For old families, such marriages confirmed their status, and for the newcomers, elevated matches gave them certain acceptance. By this means, parvenu families seem to have gained complete inclusion in the gentry class. The Morrow family can serve as an example. From the start, David Morrow had married judiciously. Firstly to Madelina Bassett, whose family was wealthy, and then to Elizabeth Bailie, who came from an ancient gentry family. The Bailies were an old Irish "untitled aristocracy" family with extensive noble and baronetage connections, descended originally from Hugh de

Baliol, Baron of Hiche in Essex.⁷¹ Elizabeth Bailie's father was a merchant, her uncle a tea planter in India, and she had been brought up largely in her grandparents' country house in Ireland. Morrow saw his children married equally well. After the usual education by governesses and in seminaries for the girls, and boarding schools for the boys, they all made "good" marriages. Of the daughters, Madelina married Robert, son of Robert Rainey of Finch House, near Christchurch, Elizabeth married a large landowner, and the youngest married a clergyman. Of the sons, typical marriages were those of Robert William, who married the daughter of the new owner of Barford (after Sir William Steward sold that estate after the 'nineties). and David James, who married that daughter of another Ashburton landowner, Duncan Cameron.

By the 'nineties an intricate, constantly expanding network of alliances by marriage had thus been built up, linking the gentry and other upper class groups together tightly, until the landed oligarchy was almost an extended family. Complex lines of relationship and connection had been formed, as is shown in Figure 2, which shows how nine sample families in the county were all interconnected by marriage. The incidence of mesalliance was slight, and the enthusiasm with which such new families as the Morrows, Camerons, and Ballantynes participated in the practice of intra-class marriage seems to show once again the prevalence of values set by the majority of "old" gentry families. In addition, it shows that the group of landed gentry was almost endogamous.

71 Bailie, G.A., A History and Genealogy of the Family of Bailie, Augusta, Georgia, U.S.A., 1902.

Fig. 2. Showing some examples of the inter-relationships and inter-connections of the landed gentry. Families with estates in Ashburton county are indicated by their surnames being shown in capitals.



3. The Station Lady.

Respectable Victorian society saw woman primarily as a helpmeet to her husband; she took her husband's name, she made over all her property to him on their marriage, and her role was to comfort, soothe, and breed heirs. Educated men stressed the vital role of women in their society; one landowner, for example, considered the "keen insight ... and civilising influence of women"^{79b} to be the most important single element in the rural community. This gave rise to a society in which "gallantry" played a large part and in which a gentle segregation generally kept the sexes at a level of amiable politeness with one another. Each sex expected the other to play its role, and so long as this was so, society retained its assurance and its stability. Ashburton landed gentlemen wanted their wives to supervise their households and make them into homes, to raise their children and to fulfil the "social contract" by diligent and "feminine" interest in the neighbourhood, the poor, and the afflicted. Such attitudes are reflected in David Morrow's letter of proposal to Eliza Bailie:

"My dear Miss Bailie,

Kindly pardon the liberty I have taken thus to address you, for I am sure this will be a surprise when you read it and I ask for so much. I want nothing less than yourself as a special prize to take with me to New Zealand, if I can but get your consent and your Father's. My time in this country is fast passing away on me and if I am to gain you for a prize I must let no time be lost.

I want you to say that you will come to New Zealand with me (no fun this time). I now ask you with all sincerity and affection to come with me as my little loving wife and make a home for me happy as I am sure you would, and it will ever be by my constant and careful study to find out what will make you happy and content, and will see that you want for nothing that I am able to procure to make your home a comfortable one. Now dear Miss Bailie will you kindly think this over and if you believe I can make you happy do come and I will do all I

79b Unacknowledged quotation from Ash,

"Ideas of Society," p.142.

can that you may never regret your going to New Zealand with me.

I will thank you to let me know at your convenience or I will go Ballynahinch for your answer to what I ask if you let me know when. I do sincerely hope you will make up your mind to come. If possible say 'yes' or let me say it for you.

Again forgive the liberty I take in writing as above but I do so much wish to have you away with me and if I want to succeed must ask you for a great deal - for nothing less than your good self will do me.

With kind regards I am
Dear Miss Bailie
Yours faithfully
David Morrow
Downpatrick."⁷²

It was sentiments such as these that coaxed some of the county ladies of Ashburton across the seas from their British halls, rectories, and town houses to take up the new role of "station lady" in New Zealand. They found differences in conditions in their new country. Servants were fewer in number, large numbers of workers were employed directly on their husband's estates, rather than tenant farmers as in Britain, and there was little organised charity. This meant novel situations, and the need for a more active role than was common amongst the daughters and wives of the British educated classes. It meant a return to a domestic life more similar to eighteenth century than to nineteenth century England. It meant that county ladies were not only "fine" ladies, but also many became used to performing light tasks in the kitchen. The baking of cakes, pastries, and other such confectionaries was often perfected as an art by well-to-do women. In short, a species of "station lady" grew up, at the centre of the life of each estate.

72 Morrow MSS, this letter of 21 June 1877 has been transcribed by E.B.M. Davidson.

Part of this convention required "ladies" to be ignorant of the grosser aspects of country life. Thirty years earlier, Lady Barker had only once visited the woolshed during her regime as station lady in the next county, and requirements appear to have changed little by the 'nineties. A daughter of Westcott Lyttleton wrote that Lady Calthorpe

"was perhaps the only lady on the Plains who went more than once in the season to the shearing-shed."⁷³

The "once in a season" referred to was the custom on stations by which the "quality" from the "big house" made a tour of inspection of the shearing shed, after which the men would be given a dance or feast of some sort. It was at such functions that women displayed another of their functions - that of nobless oblige. A devotion to family, church, and charity, were the principal requirements of the Canterbury lady.

Most Ashburton landowners' wives appear to have accepted this role without question, and to have played it with some grace. Mrs Elmslie, for example, although a well-travelled, educated woman, "quick witted and apt",⁷⁴ "gave up all her time to her family, her home, and to the work of the Church",⁷⁵ and was "utterly and sweetly contented" in marriage.⁷⁶ The servants were said to have been devoted to her, she "loyally supported" her husband "in every way possible", and

"was quiet and unassuming, and kept an orderly and happy home ... She played a hymn on the old harmonium at family worship, morning and evening, year in and year out - while (the father) led the singing, and ended with a prayer,"

73 Lancaster, *Promenade*, pp.441-442.

74 Elmslie, *Elmslie*, p.54. The quotations given here were written by a descendant of the Elmslies, and are not contemporary. Family memoirs are, naturally, fallible.

75 Ibid, p.53.

76 Ibid, p.54.

And yet she "possessed great gifts of personality and intelligence". The requirements of hospitality also occupied her. Like most of these women she loved a ball, was fond of riding, and "led a desperately busy life, but was always ready to give a sincere and charming welcome to all who came." The highest praise of the age was accorded to Mrs Elmslie when she was called "always calm and serene".⁷⁷

Another "station lady" in this mould was Mrs William White, remembered for her "reserved and retiring temperament", her "warm heart", and the value of her friendship. In addition, like most station ladies, she was "a great lover of nature" - schooled in the traditions of romantic literature and art.⁷⁸ She initiated extensive plantings in the grounds of Langley and elsewhere on the estate. Mrs Murray-Aynsley was another fond of her gardens, and particularly of her roses - and a byword for hospitality in Canterbury, with her lavish entertainments at Riverlaw, the Murray-Aynsley's Banks Peninsula house, and Mount Hutt, in Ashburton.⁷⁹ Mrs D.G. Holmes was another "lover of nature". At her instructions the parterre at Holmeslee was transformed into a maze of formal flower beds. She was also a strong supporter of the church.⁸⁰

The station lady could exercise a benevolent maternal care of young bachelor landowners in the neighbourhood. One wrote to Mrs J. Studholme I,⁸¹

77 Ibid, pp.59-60.

78 White, "Records", p.11.

79 Macdonald, "Biographies."

80 Ibid.

81 Studholme MSS, letter from L. Walker of Four Peaks to Mrs J. Studholme I., undated.

"I got your kind note of Thursday last, yesterday; it having been sent on from the Club. I came back here on Friday. Many thanks for your kind offer to take me in and nurse me, which sounds very tempting. I was very seedy for a couple of days with liver, but am better since I came down here."

He then begins to gossip, beginning by "I never knew Lady Gore Browne ...". Station ladies were, of course, enthusiastic exchangers of news, with their male as well as their female acquaintance. Another of their occupations was to carry out numerous "kind offices" to their married children, and to maintain the ties of family. Mrs Studholme was constantly sending parasols, gowns, veils, a silk cape, and the like to her son and daughter-in-law after they moved into Coldstream in the 'nineties. On one occasion she sent them a piano, and she frequently posted them cheques and small "surprises". Station ladies, with their "tact and affection", modified the distance and reserve of their husbands,⁸² or guarded their moral welfare and looked after "propriety". John Ballantyne's wife, for example, although a quiet, retiring woman, steadfastly refused to let him smoke "the noxious weed" in the homestead at Thirlstan e, and he had a smokingroom erected at some distance from the house so as to respect her sensibilities.

There were other aspects to the lives of station ladies, however. Not all remained tranquil and in the background, and on at least one the strain of the role exacted a toll of weariness and fatalism; Mrs Moorhouse wrote to Mrs Studholme from a highland lodge in Scotland where she and her husband were resting, and lamented to "My dear Ellen" her "old age and

82 Elmslie, *Elmslie*, p.16.

stupidity". She protested at all

"the work I have to do, all the Societies, Committees and Meetings, of one sort and another more than I can manage, and I get so weary at night, that I cannot often do what I would from sheer fatigue ... when we get old, we feel what we have lost, and how soon the night will come, whence no man can probe."⁸³

Younger women, however, did not yet feel this "fatigue". Many of the county ladies struck out vigorously in directions unacceptable to the definition of station lady. Some, for instance, became energetic businesswomen. The ideal lady knew nothing of such things, and when the Misses Wilson inherited their father's Valetta estate, for example, they relied completely upon the business ability of their brother-in-law, F. de Cartaret Malet, "in keeping their estate in good order."⁸⁴ Mrs Westcott Lyttleton III brought in her brother, Louis Wood, to run Rokeby when her husband died in 1898.

Others, however, were competent, even pushing business-woman, who thrived in an atmosphere of intrigue. One letter to Mrs Studholme from a Christchurch legal firm, dealing with a mortgage and the sale of securities, involves three parties, all of whom were women - Mrs Studholme, Mrs Moorhouse, and Mrs Rhodes of the Grange.⁸⁵ Sometimes wives were given nominal control of estates or other affairs as means of legal evasion. The transference of title and interest in Greta Peaks from J. Studholme I to his wife in 1892 was example of this, as also was the conveyance to her of all moneys owed to

83. Studholme MSS, letter from Mary Moorhouse to Mrs J. Studholme I, 14 August 1899. The societies, etc. she refers to were apparently in Britain.

84 Macdonald, "Biographies."

85 Studholme MSS, 26 July 1899.

Studholme by his brother.⁸⁶ But at other times, their business interests were their own, and money given them was their own. In 1896, for example, T.C. Moorhouse transferred £1,000 to his sister as an outright gift, for her investment.⁸⁷ A letter from the brother-in-law of Mrs J. Studholme I in 1894 commends her for her business ability, and her wise handling of the funds he had placed at her disposal.⁸⁸

Some station ladies also mixed a lively interest in politics with their fondness for domestic matters. Athole, one of the Murray-Aynsley daughters, showed her interest in gentry politicking by adding to a letter to Sir John Hall that⁸⁹

"George (her brother) says if only he were able to get into Methven he would go and speak to Stone; he does not understand how McLachlan can get much support in this district (the latter was the "radical" candidate for the electorate, and Stone his campaign organiser in Methven. Sir John Hall was a conservative candidate) unless it is that they do not know him, but surely they have brains enough to see the folly of supporting an unknown and untried man against one known and tried. George doesn't seem to believe in the report of the 150 voters for McLachlan ..."

Women were given the vote in this period, and this further stimulated interest in politics. Increasing numbers of upper class women were also becoming well educated. In most Ashburton country houses the early education of the children had been under the supervision of Mamma, assisted

86 Ibid, 20 August 1889, signed in the presence of the coachman and gardeners at Merevale.

87 Ibid, a letter from T.C. Moorhouse to Mrs J. Studholme I speaks of this, 11 March 1886.

88 Ibid, letter from P. Studholme of Crinkle House, Ireland, to Mrs J. Studholme I, 26 April 1894.

89 Hall Papers, letter from Athole Murray-Aynsley to Sir John Hall, 23 November 1890.

by governesses and tutors. Sons and daughters began with the same treatment, learning their first lessons in the schoolroom of the homestead. But while sons soon began to ascend the familiar ladder of governess to prep school, prep school to Christ's College or an English public school, and then possibly to university, daughters were usually educated far more superficially. There were many "ladies' seminaries", board-schools where girls were given an education in literature, geography, history, music, the arts, and sometimes a little maths and science. While the education of boys presented few quandries, that of girls was rather different. The Peaches were typical in the constant dilemma about the relative merits of education at private schools, or at home under a governess. The problem occupied a deal of time for them in the early 'nineties, until finally, after having sent out various feelers to boarding schools, a new governess was engaged, and as she was "most competent and well qualified", the idea of sending the two eldest girls to Christchurch was dropped.

The Peache children were taught in a "very large room, with a fireplace and verandah", connected with the house by a long passageway. Later in the 'nineties, this earlier decision was reversed, and it was decided to send the girls to a Christchurch seminary.⁹⁰

By the 'nineties, this conventional system of girls' education was not necessarily superficial, a mere acquisition of "accomplishments". The three Morrow daughters began their education in the schoolhouse at Montalto, and their governess was Jessie Mackay, who was emerging in this period as a poet

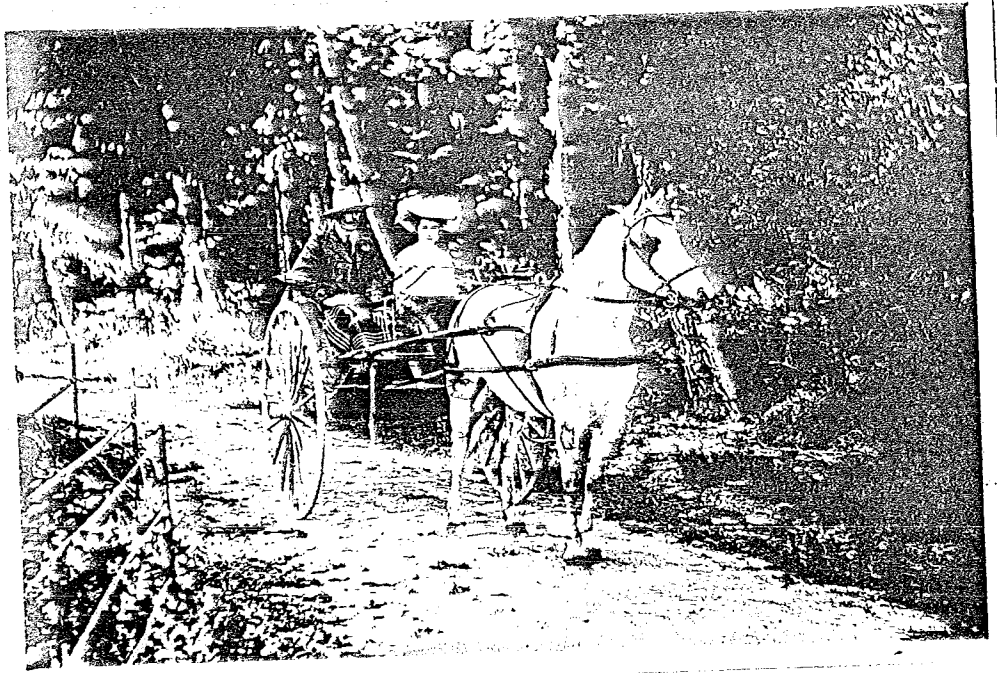
90 Gray, *Quiet Hills*, p.157.

and "New Woman". Afterwards the Morrow girls were sent to Avonside College, an expensive boarding school for girls in Christchurch. Their teachers there included Charles Hogg, an Oxford Wrangler. While one of the Morrow girls was "mad on horseback riding", and neglected her studies, the other two were diligent, studious girls. One studied medicine, and gained a B.A. at Canterbury College, while the other was "quite literary", and wrote short stories.⁹¹ Margaret Todhunter, later Lady Thomson, was another one of these "advanced" young women, who gained her M.A. at Canterbury College after having been educated at a boarding school in England.⁹²

Such an education system was producing a crop of distinguished, intelligent women, cultivated, well-travelled, and often enthusiastic participants in the cult of the "New Woman" which was being formulated in the 'nineties. Some shuttled backwards and forwards between New Zealand and Europe, dabbling in culture and the beau monde. They were not content with the role of "station lady". Constance Peache was one of these young women. Her parents sent her to Europe to study painting and gain a "finish", and she later exhibited and sold some of her paintings at exhibitions in Christchurch. Alice Moorhouse, daughter of B.M. Moorhouse I, gained a doctorate in medicine, and eventually married a headmaster of Christ's College. Mrs Maclean Buckley founded

91 For most of this information I am indebted to Mrs J.V. Morrow Jacobsen, who was a child in the 1890s while her sisters were in their teens. Mrs Jacobsen was the daughter "mad on riding", Madeline was the B.A., and Elizabeth was "quite literary".

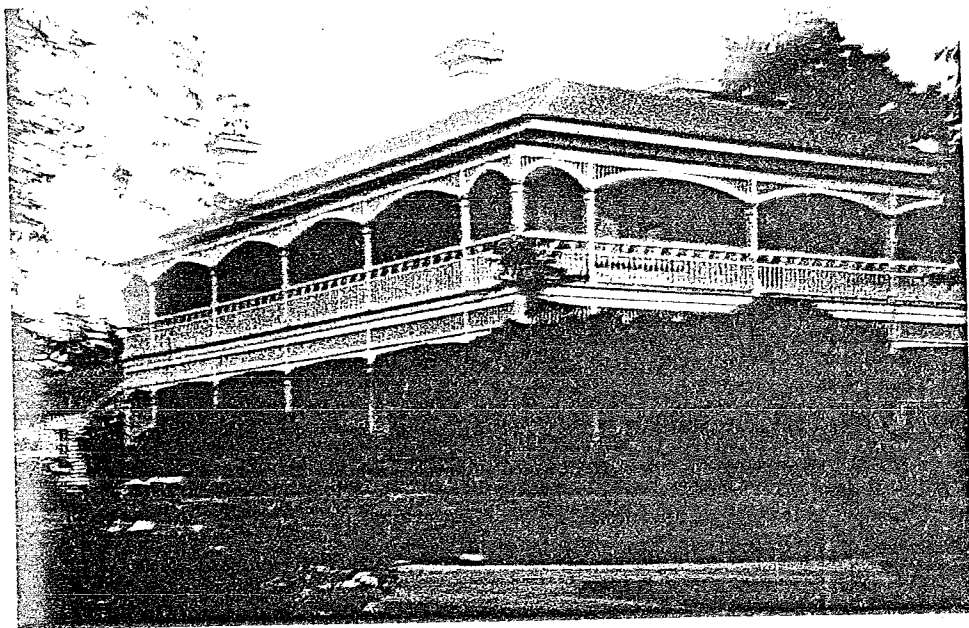
92 It is significant that several girls from Ashburton landed families were educated at Canterbury College, but very few boys.



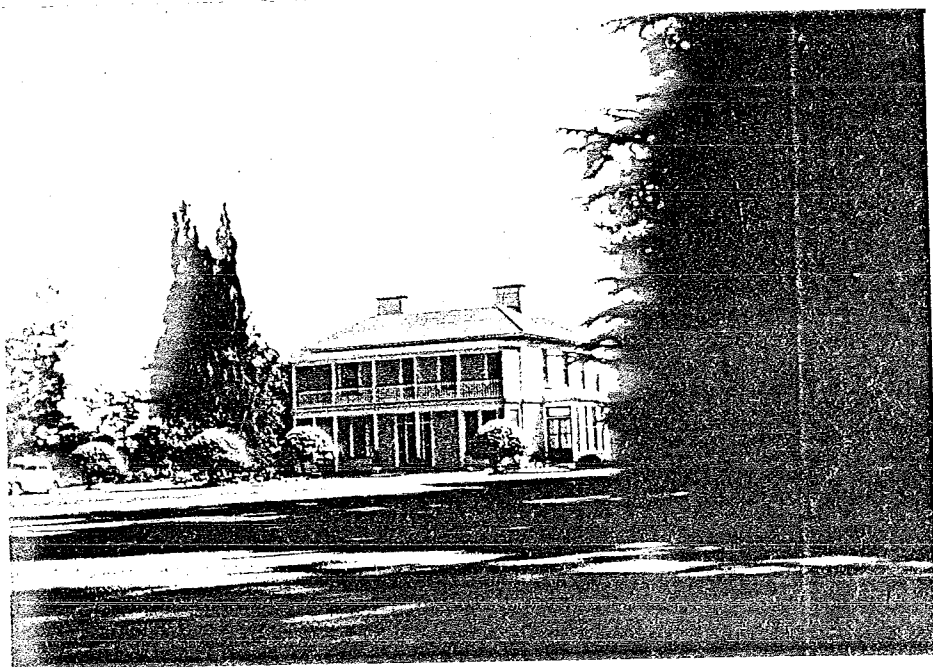
(Mrs J.V.Jacobson)
 9. COUNTRY LIFE. James and Elizabeth Morrow in a gig in the "wilderness" garden at Montalto.



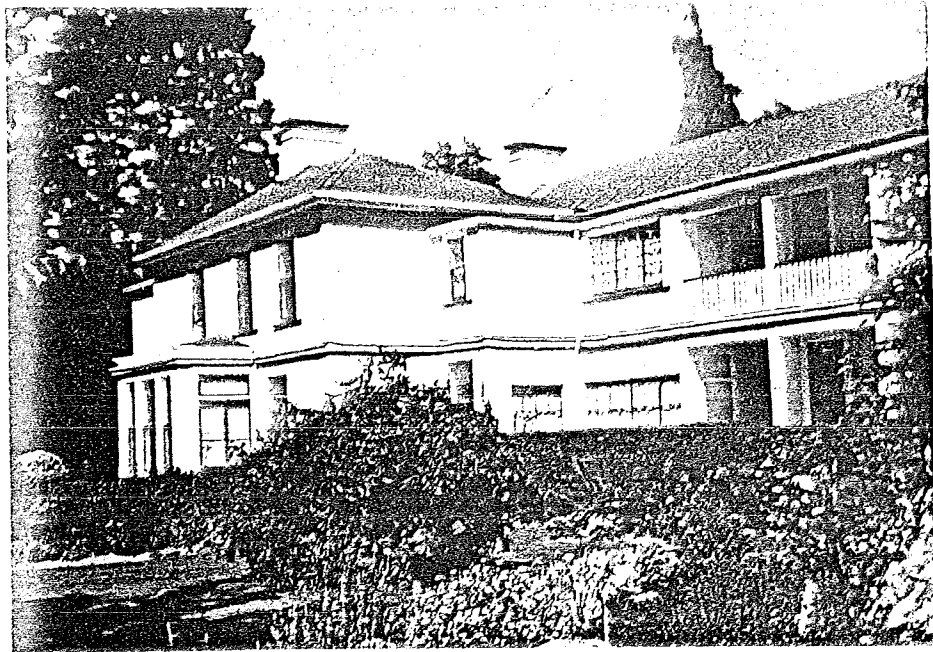
(Alexander Turnbull Lib.)
 10. LAWN TENNIS. A Barraud print depicting lawn tennis on a Canterbury country estate.



11. HOLMESLEE. A homestead built in the regency-colonial canon on the estate of D.G. Holmes, near Rakaia.



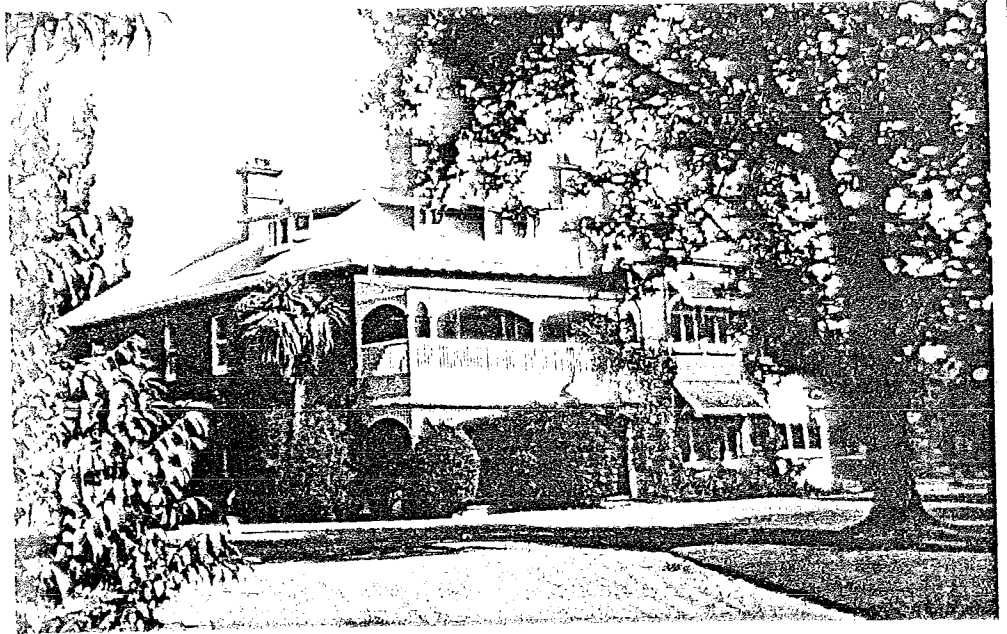
12. LAGMHOR. The entrance front of G.A. Mclean Buckley's "canon" homestead near Tinwald. Croquet lawn in front.



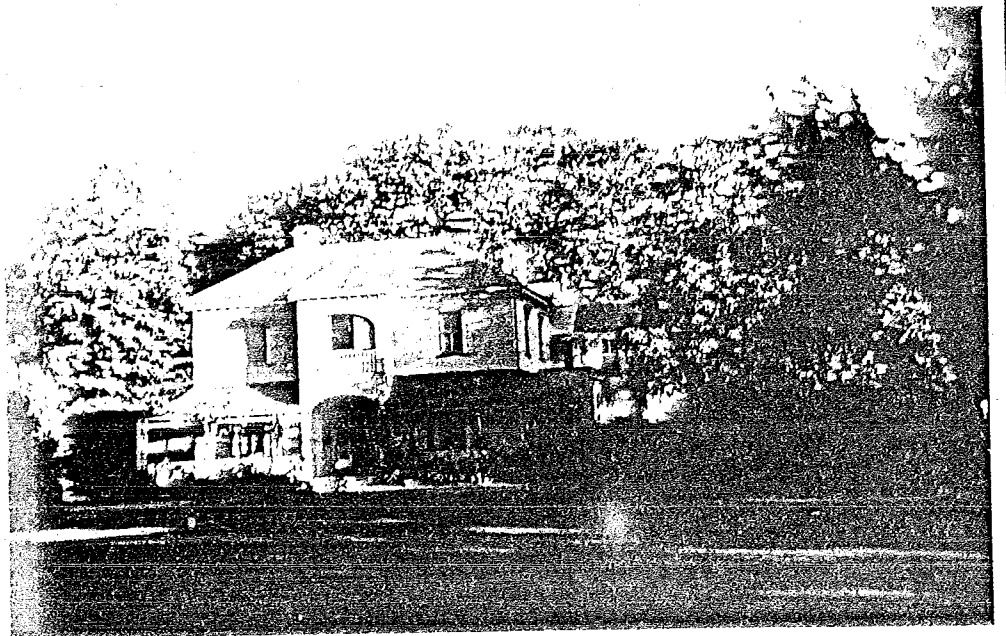
13. LAGMHOR. The garden front, seen from a small Greek revival gazebo.



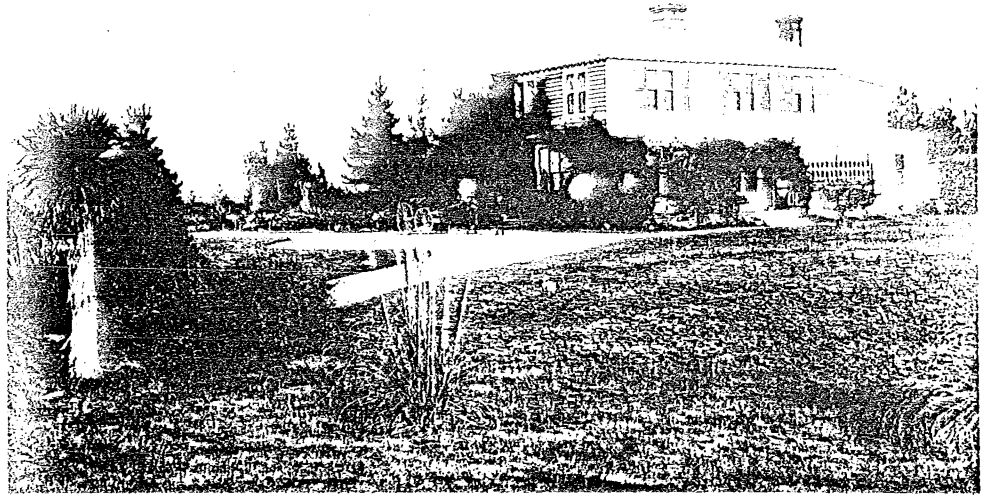
14. LAGMHOR. The main formal lawn.



15. AKAUNUI. The "canon" style homestead built of Longbeach brick on E. F. J. Grigg's estate near Eiffelton, c. 1897.

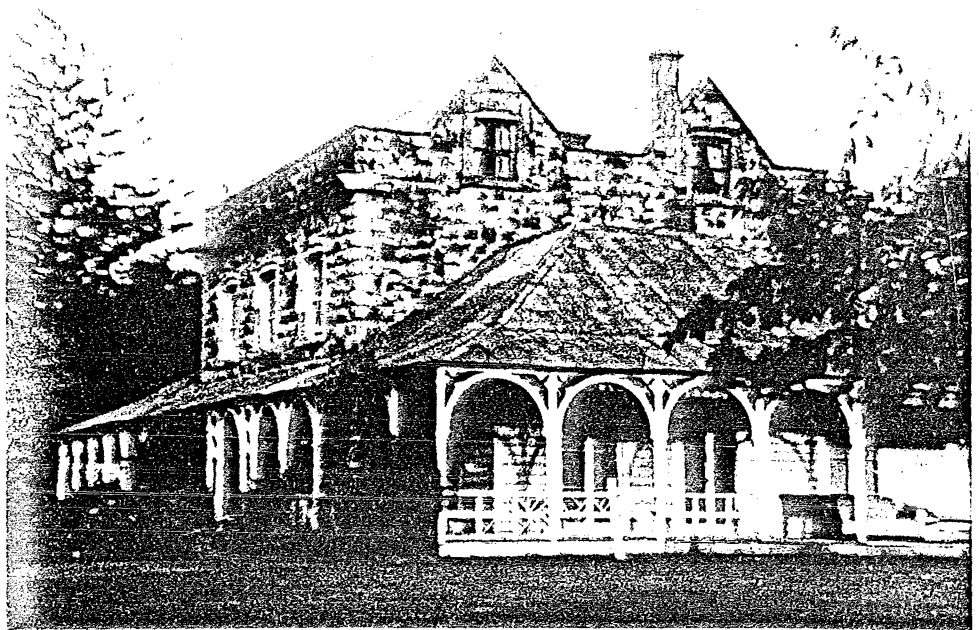


16. WINDERMERE. The entrance front of E. G. Wright's main country homestead, near Hinds.



(J. Tait)

17. HACKTHORNE. A view of the first wing of C.J. Harper's country homestead soon after it was built, c.1880. Taken from the bank of a stream running through the grounds. Harper stands beside the carriage.



18. CHINETAHI. The absentee landowner, T.H. Potts's country homestead near Governors Bay.



19. SPRINGFIELD. The entrance front of D. Cameron's colonial-baronial mansion near Methven.



20. LONGBEACH. The entrance front seen across a formal parterre. A Queen Anne brick house built for J. Grigg in the late 1880s.

and became President and Patron of the Ashburton Ladies' Liederkrantz.⁹³

Nor was this confident, cultured woman of the world limited to the younger generation. Not all the older ladies of the county were merely "stainless matrons". Caroline Todhunter, for example, while she was still a Miss Dobson, studied at London University, and was "a cultured and widely-read woman, who had travelled considerably and was much interested in many educational and charitable causes."⁹⁴ These were poised, upper-class women of affairs, who could be shrewd businesswomen, as was Mrs J. Studholme I, and yet earn such epithets as "handsome and so charming", as the Archbishop of York's lady called Mrs Studholme.⁹⁵

But for the most part, Ashburton ladies remained of the "blushing" variety. Daughters, sisters and wives were there primarily to supervise servants and make a "home", as were Alexandrine, Sophia, and Jessie Elmslie, who dutifully lived with their brother William at Cardendale to run his household, or Miss White, who laboured to assist her father in writing articles for newspapers, and tended to his correspondence.⁹⁶ The birth of daughters meant the birth of potentially valuable alliances to extend a family's influence and connections, such as those of the Loughnan girls, one of whom married the Count de la Pasture of St Helens and Glynn Wye, North Canterbury stations, a second Sir George Harper,

93 Guardian, 17 May 1895.

94 Press, Obituary of Mrs C.F. Todhunter, July 1932.

95 Studholme MSS, letter from Mrs J. Studholme II to Mrs J. Studholme II, 14 February 1898.

96 White, "Records", p.54.

and a third W. Wood Rice. They were presented to the marriage market at expensive "coming out" balls, usually only after an elder sister had been safely married off. Florence Peache, for example, only "came out" at a ball after her elder sister had married a wealthy North Canterbury landowner.⁹⁷ Many more shared the fate of Sarah Helen and Alice Jane Ballantyne, who watched their two sisters make good marriages, and then remained unmarried permanently. The incidence of spinsterhood amongst the gentry appears to have been high; two of the four Moorhouse daughters also never married, and there are other examples. Such women occupied an ambivalent position, dependent upon their male relatives, and deriving their rank only from being "So-and-so's daughter". Death made many rich in later life, such as the Misses Wright, daughters of E.G. Wright, who used some of their father's fortune to build a large house in beautiful grounds near Ashburton, which they called Coniston. But in a society that judged women by their husbands, this was never as satisfactory as its outward comfort suggested.

Women were always, in the final analysis, adjuncts to men. It was in male heirs that the integrity of estates was vested, and it was for sons that Ashburton landowners wished. Wives could be bypassed in wills in favour of cousins, nephews, or brothers, if there were no sons. An example is the will of J.S. Coster, who died without issue. All his landed estate was bequeathed to his brother, Edward Stafford Coster, while "my dear wife Ellen" received the comparatively modest settlement of £10,000 in cash. Another £3,110 were

97 Gray, *Quiet Hills*, p.179.

settled on various friends, sisters, a nephew, and a godson. Furniture, carriages, horses, and the large residence of Compton were also left to Mrs Coster, but dynastic preferences were revealed by the fact that the crested family plate, which was left temporarily to the widow, was to pass to the brother on her death or remarriage.⁹⁸ To J.S. Coster, his brother and "the family" were more important than his wife.

98 This information is contained in the copy of the will of J.S. Coster held by the Registry of Lands & Deeds, Christchurch. *Folio reference, 1W4223.*

CHAPTER III

THE GENTRY AS 'HIGH FARMERS'

I. AGRICULTURE AND PASTORALISM.

1. The Estates.

In 1882 there were forty-three privately-owned freehold estates in Ashburton county of over 2,500 acres in area or £15,000 in value. The total acreage of these forty-three properties was 272,000, and the total value £1,428,000. The average area of these estates was some 6,600 acres, and the average value £33,000.¹ Similarly detailed statistics are not available for the 'nineties, but it seems probable that the figures were substantially the same. Comparisons between the freehold estates of over 10,000 acres in 1892, and the same properties in 1882 (see Appendices I and II) indicate that acreages were slightly smaller, and values slightly larger. There is also a slight increase in numbers of estates under the direct control of finance companies; in 1882 a bank owned one small estate, and a loan company a large property of 12,000 acres. By 1895 these two had increased to seven - the "death toll" of the long depression - and the Moorhouses had lost Shepherd's Bush to a finance company, the well-known estates of Acton and Buccleugh were in similar hands, and banks and mortgage companies held other estates at Ealing, Mayfield, Winslow, and Hinds. (see Appendix III) For the most part, however, the estates of the county remained in private hands.

1 A Return of the Freeholders of New Zealand (see Appendix I).

The size and scale of farming operations on these forty-five or so estates varied considerably. On the larger estates it was common to see, "twenty or thirty teams groomed and led out from the stables every morning, and a dozen ploughs or reapers and binders and a hundred or more men working in one great paddock".² An estate could be seen as the counterpart of a bigger than average factory in Christchurch, where labour forces performed standardised tasks for wages, and organisation of the force and tasks was complex, requiring significant delegation of authority, and usually the restriction of the owner's or master's close supervision of all aspects. The Weekly Press said of J. Cathcart Wason:^{2b}

"He has always held that a farm is in every sense of the term a manufactory."

This attitude was common, and landowners approached farming as a business. The lesser estates were naturally less distinct from large farms, and operated on a more modest scale.

The two largest landholding families who owned estates in Ashburton county were the Studholmes and the Rhodeses. Robert Heaton Rhodes held the 3,500 acre Chatmos estate near Winslow, and Lowcliffe, of 11,000 acres. These two properties were a mere fragment of Rhodes's estates which were scattered through the eastern grasslands of New Zealand, and this meant that the Rhodes family never became active in Ashburton life. The death of R.H. Rhodes in 1884 meant that his Ashburton properties were run by his trust. More significant was the great Coldstream estate,

2 Scotter, Canterbury, p.98.

2b Weekly Press, 26 November 1886, p. 44.

easily the largest single holding in Lowlands Ashburton. It comprised some 55,000 acres, which was held under several titles, including 18,800 acres of freehold and 2,700 acres of leasehold held by John Studholme II, and the remainder, roughly 34,000 acres, still held as pastoral leasehold by John Studholme I. In 1891 this land grazed over 28,000 sheep and 400 pigs, while 4,000 acres were cropped in wheat, oats, and winter crops, and in the stables twenty teams of horses were housed to draw the ploughs. Four reaping machines were kept permanently on the estate.³ In 1892 the 18,000 freehold acres of the estate were worth nearly £60,000 and the entire station covered some nine miles square.

The bulk of Coldstream was a sheep run, however, much of it on lighter soils, or still swamp. The intractable nature of the country had prevented freeholding and closer settlement, but by 1895 the Studholmes were beginning to sell off the grazing land to small men. They were incapable of developing this land - a result of their too-extensive commitments in North Island land speculations. These factors made Coldstream something of an anomaly in the Ashburton lowlands, most of which were now freeholded, and the estate can be seen as the last remnant of an earlier, purely pastoral phase in the county. There was another big enclave of pastoralism further up the Rangitata river, in the shape of E.M. Goodwin's Cracroft station. Goodwin had bought Cracroft from the executors of Sir John Cracroft Wilson in 1886, and in that year, the property had comprised

3 Studholme MSS,

Paddock Minute Book 1890-1891.

some 17,000 acres, of which only 2,000 were freehold, and the remainder still a leasehold run comprising the lightest, stoniest, poorest land in the county. The property was running some 18,000 sheep on paddocks that were still largely open tussock grassland. Goodwin had paid only £14,500 for the 2,000 acres of freehold, stock, improvements, leasehold right, and "goodwill", and being a wealthy man, purchased the entire leasehold over the next few years, and carried out considerable improvements, most notably the close fencing of the station.

In the mid 'nineties, this once great run ceased to be anything more than a mere middle-sized estate, as Goodwin sold off 11,000 acres of Cracroft in small farms, which were quickly snatched up, and then consolidated the estate around the 6,000 acres that remained. By 1896, however, there were only 4,000 sheep being grazed on this land, which is a good indication of the soil's lightness, and how under-developed it still was. In the next eight years, with the sowing of English grasses and better techniques, this number was to be doubled. Throughout the 'nineties, Cracroft remained essentially a large open sheepwalk, a small run rather than a typical lowlands estate.

At the opposite end of the scale was the Grigg family's rich Longbeach estate. In 1893, of its 15,000 acres some 1,100 were cropped in turnips, 1,100 in rape, 4,600 in wheat, 280 in barley, and 2,100 in oats. It normally carried 35,000 sheep on pastures that had been repeatedly sown with

English grasses, and the flocks were mainly Shropshire Downs, Leicesters, and Border Leicesters, compared with the ubiquitous Merino on Cracroft and, to a lesser extent, Coldstream. Longbeach sold from the permanent flock some 12,000 fat lambs and wethers every year, and in addition a further 20,000 wethers would be bought annually for fattening and sale to the London market. In addition, 400 cattle were fattened annually, and between 1,500 and 2,000 pigs.

Other estates rivalled Longbeach. D. Cameron's estate of Springfield consisted of 16,200 acres of good grain-growing and stock-raising land, and was worth almost £100,000 in 1892. Springfield exceeded even Longbeach in its wheat acreage, and frequently 5,500 acres were harvested - a record which the Cyclopedia⁷ claimed had "seldom if ever been beaten by one landowner in the Southern Hemisphere." An additional 1,200 acres were cropped in oats, 2,000 in turnips, and 400 in Cape Barley, 26,000 sheep grazed, and 120 draught horses were retained on the estate for farm work. G.A. Maclean Buckley's estate of Lagmhor was another great station, sprawling over 18,000 acres from the Ashburton to the Hinds, heavily cropped along the riversides, grazed on the interfluve, and worth £145,000. Comparable properties, although less well farmed, were the Valetta estate, Anama with its flock of 25,000 on 19,000 freehold acres, and lowlands estates with high country runs attached, such as Mount Hutt and Blackford.

7 Cyclopedia, p.862.

Smaller, but still above the acreage of the average estate, were such stations as D.G. Holmes's Holmeslee estate, worth £57,000 in 1883. Holmeslee had been built up in 1872 by the purchase of land from the Rokeby and Lavington stations, and by 1877 had been enclosed with eighteen miles of fences. By 1882 it was being watered by races running from the foothills above Methven (Holmeslee being near Rakaia), and up to 2,500 acres of wheat and 800 of turnips were being grown annually by the 'nineties, together with a flock of 8,000 sheep, and another of 6,000 at Mount Harding, Holmes's second estate in the county. The land which once comprised the 5,000 acres of Holmeslee today supports some twenty small farms.

Further up the Rakaia was a similar estate, M.I. Browne's Highbank, of over 9,000 freehold acres, worth £51,000 in 1882. Situated on the south bank of the Rakaia below the Upper Rakaia bridge, and only $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the railway at Methven, 3 miles from Cairnbrae, and $3\frac{1}{2}$ from Lyndhurst, it was well served with transport links. The land was open, level, very even, and of good quality. The soil, resting on clays and loams, was generally of a fair depth, and good. The whole estate was cultivated, and by 1895 was almost entirely in English grasses, enclosed by hawthorn and gorse hedges. Water-races ran through every section of the estate, and enabled it to support a flock of 17,000. The Acton estate, on the south bank of the Lower Rakaia, was another comparable property; it comprised 8,000 acres of freehold, and in 1894 was carrying 10,000 crossbred ewes, 3,000 crossbred hoggets, and 3,000 fat sheep. Since the 1893 shearing the estate had turned off 16,000 fat sheep.

and lambs.⁸

An "average" estate was Maronan, which comprised 6,000 freehold acres on the north bank of the Hinds. All but 2,000 acres were in grass pastures, the remainder being under cultivation. A flock of 10,000 sheep was grazed on the property. D. Morrow's Montalto estate, on light stony ground, was given over entirely to stock-raising, and in the 1895-96 season he grazed 14,000 sheep on the property. Rather larger was Alford, which in 1886 consisted of 10,400 acres of freehold, 1,000 acres of Education Reserve, and 3,500 acres of leasehold run in the foothills - totalling 14,800 acres. Enclosure by gorse hedges was extensive, though 4,700 acres were still unploughed tussock, 3,500 in English grasses, 1,500 in turnips, and 720 in grain. Stock included 10,000 crossbreds, 8,000 merinos, and "a nice little lot of pure bred Lincoln ewes and some Canowie rams," together with 100 cattle. By 1890 the acreage of unploughed tussock had all been cultivated.⁹

The smaller estates presented much the same picture. M. Friedlander's Kolmar was a fair example. Situated on the Rakaia-Methven railway, it adjoined Lyndhurst and Urrall townships, and comprised 4,500 acres, of which 1,700 were in wheat and oats in 1896 and the rest in English grasses. It had been carefully farmed since Friedlander had bought it in 1879, and yielded good crops of wheat, oats, and turnips. With its "Big House", dwelling-houses for the worker, granaries, implement and wool sheds, stables, sheep-yards and dips,

8 Guardian, 1 December 1894.

9 Weekly Press, 13 August 1886, p.18.

extensive plantations "nicely grown", and close fencing and watering, Kolmar was to some extent a "model" small estate. When cut up and sold, it became twenty-one small farms.

Mayfield estate, also of 4,500 acres, was less diversified, being given over largely to grazing, with some cropping of turnips and other root crops. The smaller Langley, of 3,200 acres on the lower Rakaia, run in conjunction with the 1,000 acre Top Place near Chertsey, was a well-run estate, with extensive cropping.

Another such property was Waimarama, the 4,100 acre estate of J. Deans. This estate, supervised by a manager, but regularly scrutinised by Deans, was worth about £30,000, and large numbers of sheep, principally wethers, were fattened on it annually - largely on red clover. These sheep did so well that Thomas Borthwick, to whom carcasses were consigned for sale in England, wrote to Deans on one occasion "suggesting that as the last shipment, had averaged 105lb, it would suit the British market better if he could send lighter weights".¹⁰ The estate normally carried 5,000 ewes, 250 cattle, and in a good season fattened up to 10,000 sheep and lambs. A fine herd of Berkshire pigs was a notable asset on this well-farmed property.

Most of these estates were cut up into large paddocks of 200 to 300 acres, divided by gorse hedges or post-and-wire fences, and grew grass, wheat, oats, kale, rape, and turnips.¹¹ Estates on light or stony ground remained pastoral properties, although most had been cultivated and sown in English grasses -

10 Deans, J., Pioneers on the Port Cooper Plains, Ch.Ch., 1964, p.128.

11 As is shown by the Springfield sale map issued by the auctioneers in 1909, a copy of which is kept in the Canterbury Museum Archives.

such properties were Montalto, Thirlstane, Cracroft, and Highbank. Other estates, more favoured by topography, had been able to take advantage of farming advances, and had developed a form of intensive mixed farming on a very large scale. Such differences can be shown by a study of the numbers of horses stabled on properties, or by the numbers of men employed, as straight pastoralism required no draught horses, and only employed large numbers of men at seasonal intervals.

Horse figures are complicated somewhat by the widespread practice of breeding horses for purposes other than farm work. Longbeach, as the mixed estate par excellence, maintained a very large horse population, totalling some five hundred. But it is probable that only about half of these were used for farm work, the remainder being blood horses for sale or racing. Springfield, another of the greatest estates, retained about two hundred horses. Coldstream, on the other hand, although excelling all other properties in acreage, kept only some twenty teams of horses for farm work, and another dozen or so as hacks and carriage horses. Highbank, although almost entirely pastoral, kept seventy-five horses, and it seems likely that most of these were being bred by M.I. Browne for non-agricultural purposes.¹² The number of horses kept by the Chisnalls at Ohinemuri fluctuated in the 'nineties from thirty to seventy, and most of these were blood horses, as not much of the estate's light land was cropped. A twelve-stalled stable at Ohinemuri housed the hacks and carriage horses. At Waimarama, a fertile property of about the same acreage as Ohinemuri, thirty horses were kept, and almost all

12 Guardian, 16 May 1896.

of these were used purely for farm work, as the estate was heavily cropped, and many permanent teams were needed. Alford kept forty horses, mostly for farm work, as Herring was no breeder or racing man.

Newspaper advertisements of clearing sales provide more detailed information as to the use of horses. In 1894, A.F. Somerville sold all his agricultural plant at The Terraces, near Methven as a result of the apparently permanent drop in grain prices. Of the total of seventeen farm horses offered for sale, nine were draught mares and geldings, one a brood mare, two draught yearling fillies, three saddle and harness cobs, and one a thoroughbred mare with foal.¹³ In 1895, M. Friedlander sold over eighty horses as part of a new retrenchment policy, and most of these were breeding horses, including fifty colts and fillies, and a stallion and three more colts. In addition, he sold twelve saddle and harness horses, and fifteen draught horses. It is only to be expected, however, that he would sell off his breeding stock rather than farm horses.¹⁴ In the same month, the Harts of Winchmore offered much of their agricultural plant for sale, and this included twenty-one draught horses, five light trap and saddle horses, and four brood mares. Farm carts were sold at the same time; seven farm drays, one portable whare, on dog cart, a tip cart, and a spring dray.¹⁵ Such figures would seem to be typical for a middle-sized estate on fair,

13 Ibid. 3 April 1894. Somerville was preparing to concentrate on pastoralism, especially on his new North Island station.

14 Ibid. 3 January 1895. Friedlander was retrenching in order to come to the aid of the family business house.

15 Ibid. 2 January 1895. This sale was part of the execution of G. Hart's will.

variable land. Most estates kept thirty to fifty or seventy horses, of which a good proportion were likely to be breeding or racing stock. At ploughing and harvesting seasons, most landowners probably augmented these numbers by employing contractors with their own teams.

There seems to have been greater variation in the numbers of men employed on the estates, and seasonal fluctuations mean that most figures must remain estimates. Longbeach was the largest single employer of labour. It employed well over one hundred permanent workers and staff, and in addition to these an English visitor at the time noted that¹⁶

"Mr Grigg does at least one-third of his work by contract. Most of the farm work in New Zealand is done by contract. The contractor is generally a small farmer who has saved enough money to buy the necessary horses and implements, and who supplements his own farming by earning money in this way."

Seasonal labour was employed on an equally large scale, and at certain times of the year, hundreds of men worked in the great paddocks of the estate. At one harvest, for instance, fifty teams and drays belonging to the estate, as many others as could be hired in the district, and four hundred men were employed in harvest work alone.¹⁷ Springfield could rival Longbeach, as it maintained a permanent staff of one hundred men, and took up to three hundred in the harvest season.

Most estates numbered their men in dozens rather than hundreds, however. Lagmhor, where agricultural operations were being extended in the late 'nineties, came to rival Springfield and Longbeach in the period, and employed two or

16 Harper, B., Wind in the Tussocks, Dunedin 1972, pp.37-38.

17 Guardian, 7 February 1893.

three hundred men at harvest time. In addition, Lagmhor hired the labour of one hundred and fifty shearers every year, and similar numbers would have been required on Longbeach, Springfield, Anama, Mount Hutt, Corwar, and other such holdings. But Coldstream, another giant in acreage, employed only forty permanent workers, with a further thirty taken on at shearing, and twenty more at harvest. C.G. Hawdon kept a permanent staff of about thirty-five at Westerfield, and of these ten or so were usually contract workers.¹⁸

J.C. Wason seems to have employed fifty or so permanent men at Corwar, but further up the river, M.I. Browne needed to employ only fifteen men permanently, with large-scale seasonal requisitions for shearers on his wool-growing estate of Highbank. This figure is gained, however, from information about the estate just before sale to the state, and it is possible that manpower had been reduced heavily already.¹⁹

The Murray-Aynsleys' estate of Mount Hutt was a mixed high-country and plains station, including 7,000 freehold acres and 14,000 sheep. It is uncertain how many men were employed on it in the 'nineties, but in 1903, after it had been reduced to 3,500 acres, it still employed twelve men permanently, and thirty seasonal workers. It seems reasonable to estimate that this number would have been roughly twenty-five in the early 'nineties, when there was not only twice as much freehold, but also a large run attached. As an indication of the numbers of men needed for a small estate,

18 Amongst the collection of letters, journals, diaries and other papers held by Mr J.R. Todhunter, Cleardale, Methven, henceforth referred to as Todhunter MSS. This information provided by Weekly Returns of Occupations and Wages.

19 Guardian, 13 February 1896.

however, the 1903 figures are valuable.²⁰ Most estates probably employed from a dozen to thirty or forty men on a permanent basis, with at least as many again hired seasonally, and a good deal of supplementary contract labour.

Many Ashburton estates formed only a part of landowners' widely-ramifying holdings. Most of the county's landed gentlemen owned more than one property within its borders, even if only a property like the small forty-acre block that G.A. Maclean Buckley owned at Alford Forest (presumably for timber milling purposes.) At least one, W.McN. Lyttleton of Rokeby, rented a second estate, in this case the 4,200 acre freehold estate near Winchmore, owned by E.B. and R. Millton, large North Canterbury landowners.²¹ E.G. Wright possessed two large Ashburton estates, Windermere, his favourite, and Surrey Hills, in the Gawler Downs. On these two properties he depastured over 16,000 sheep. M. Friedlander owned several properties in the county other than the 4,500 acre Kolmar, including Ardagh, of 2,550 acres (which annually fattened 4,000 to 5,000 sheep and lambs, in addition to cropping 1,000 acres in wheat, oats, and turnips), Dundas, near Seafield, and Roxburgh, a "model estate" at the junction of Bowyer and Taylor streams.²² D.G. Holmes divided his interest between Holmeslee and Mount Harding, both estates of 5,000 acres.

Several men also owned extensive holdings outside the county. The case of the Rhodes's estates has already been mentioned, and comparable to them were the runs of the

20 Cyclopedia, p.801.

21 Guardian, 16 August 1892.

22 Ibid, 19 August 1895.

Studholmes. J. Studholme I owned Opuha Gorge, The Point, Greta Peaks, and four other stations in other parts of the country, all of which totalled some six or seven hundred thousand acres. In addition, he and his son and wife had interests in other family holdings, such as Kakahu, and Te Waimate, and they owned a rubber plantation in Fiji. W.S. Peter owned Southland and Otago estates, including Glencoe, Oahunga, and Akitio stations. Many Ashburton landowners repeated this pattern, though on a more modest scale. T.E. Upton of Sherwood leased a farm of 760 acres on the Hawkins river, in Selwyn county, and presumably farmed this in conjunction with his 5,000 acre estate in Ashburton.²³

J. Cathcart Wason acquired the Craig estate across the Rakaiia river from Corwar, while in 1893 E.M. Goodwin of Cracroft also bought Rockwood station, a high country run in the Selwyn county. John Holmes, who owned the fertile Viewmount estate near Methven, whose 2,850 acres were "famous for the quality of its sheep", and also produced up to fifty bushels of wheat to the acre,²⁴ had inherited a Selwyn estate. This was Bangor, of 5,000 acres carrying 10,000 sheep and cropping 1,000 acres annually, and it was Holmes's main residence. In addition, he speculated in land outside Canterbury, and in 1883 bought the 19,000 acre Waihaopanga estate in Otago for £83,000.²⁵

Not all ranged so far. A.M. Clark, who owned Blackford, possessed three estates in all, and depastured 8,000 sheep on

23 Registry of Lands & Deeds, Ch.Ch., 117D465, T.E. Upton and F. Russell leasing from Springfield Coal Company Ltd.

24 Scotter, Ashburton, p. 167.

25 Macdonald, "Biographies".

his Ashburton estate, together with 21,000 on his two properties in Geraldine county. H.W. Packer's holdings in 1890 included his Rangitata estate of 3,800 acres, Rudd Farm of 2,300 acres in the Ashley Valley, Stockgrove of 1,200 acres in Waipara county, and a small farm of 92 acres at Southbrook. W. White had acquired a similar tally of properties in mid and north Canterbury, and in 1890 H.H. Loughnan owned, in addition to 7,000 sheep in Ashburton county, 21,000 in Geraldine county, and 25,000 in Waimate county. Some men acquired lands even further south than this. J.A. and A.D. McIlraith, who owned the 3,000 acre Auchenflower estate, worth £75,000, bought a property of 1,300 acres at Glentunnel, in Selwyn, and then acquired an estate of 2,400 acres near Mataura, in Southland.²⁶ B.M. Moorhouse II, of Shepherds Bush, bought another Southland estate, called Fiery Creek. Established South Island landowners also found a profitable field for investment and land aggregation in the "frontier" regions of the North. In Hawkes Bay, four Ashburton landowners made "profitable speculations"²⁷ in sheep stations - W.S. Peter of Anama, R.H. Rhodes of Lowcliffe, W. White of Langley, and J. Studholme I of Coldstream. One Ashburton landowner, A.F. Somerville, in time became such a successful land purchaser in the North Island that he sold his Ashburton estates and took up permanent residence in an imposing homestead he built on his Makarika station near Aorangi, on the East Coast. Henry, the youngest son of William White, was eventually settled on his father's large estate near Gisborne.

26 Ibid.

27 Campbell, M.D., "The Evolution of Hawkes Bay Landed Society 1850-1914", Ph.D. Thesis, Victoria University, 1967, p.29.

Such widespread landholding ramifications, together with the "colonising" of North Island and Southland "frontiers" by Ashburton landed capital, indicate a certain amount of surplus wealth in the case of at least some landowners, and it now remains to be seen to what extent this could be spent in the county, in the form of enlarging existing estates. Were Ashburton estates growing or contracting in the early 'nineties? A good deal of evidence indicates that many landowners were expanding their holdings. G.P. Lennon (after analysing land purchases in part of Ashburton county), concludes that in 1890 many landowners were buying up land, and paying cash for it.²⁸ These purchasers included C.J. Harper of Hackthorne, who took up six lots totalling about 300 acres, C.G. Hawdon of Westerfield, who also took up about 300 acres in three lots, R. Strachey of Maronan, who bought 1,600 acres in other people's names, J. McLean of Lagmhor, and W. Postlewaithe, a prominent landed gentleman in Geraldine county. Bigger purchases were made by F. de Cartaret Malet, who at that time was busy with the consolidation of his Clarewell estate, and who bought a total of as many as 2,600 acres, mostly acquired through "dummies", such as "Miss Lohse" appears to have been. Another large buyer was W. de B. Wilson "gentleman", who acquired 3,800 acres and attempted to establish a new estate. In addition to these gentry, cockatoo farmers took up many smaller sections.

Other evidence for the expansion of gentry holdings can be found elsewhere in the county in the early 'nineties. One

28 Lennon, G.P., "Land Settlement in Canterbury During 1890", M.A. Thesis, University of Canterbury, 1963.

example is the purchase of a section, only half an acre, in Ashburton borough. This was acquired by J.C.N. Grigg in 1891, for £200.²⁹ Another small purchase was made by A.E. Peache of Mount Somers, who bought twenty-five acres of land adjacent to his estate for £300.³⁰ More extensive were the 1885 purchases of J. Cathcart Wason, who in that year made three large purchases of crown lands adjacent to his Corwar estate, totalling 3,700 acres.³¹ In 1889 D. Morrow purchased 7,300 acres of Crown leasehold to add to his Montalto estate. Other purchases were made from private individuals. It seems that Lagmhor was spreading "fungus-like" (to use the terminology of the time) over small farms around it. So much so that the manager, D. McLean, was moved to write in defence of it. He described the surrounding cockatoo farms as being unimproved, and under-farmed until added to Lagmhor estate, when "upwards of a pound an acre" would be spent in improving them, "this, too, after the lands had been held up by the original owners for twenty years without a penny being spent on them." McLean asserted that many settlers on deferred payment sold to Lagmhor, and³²

"they were only too glad to find a purchaser who took no mean advantage of them. In no case has Mr (John) McLean asked anyone to sell land to him, but almost every day he is asked by holders to take land off their hands."

There appears, then, to have been considerable acquisition of land, both from private and Crown hands, by men with

29 Lands & Deeds, 132D364, purchase by J.C.N. Grigg, 1891.

30 Ibid., 136D326, purchase by A.E. Peache from Hon.J.B.A. Acland and C.R. Blakiston, 1893.

31 Ibid., purchase by J. Cathcart Wason from Crown, 1885.

32 Guardian, 17 November 1890.

already established estates. On the other hand, however, there is also a good deal of evidence for sales of land from existing properties. In 1891 the first of these sales took place when E. Herring sold 1,200 acres of Alford - fertile wheat and turnips land, cut up into six farms.³³ This was part of the policy of the company of Yorkshire farmers who owned Alford, however, their intention being to improve the estate and sell off blocks periodically. In the same year, the Peter family put up 4,200 acres of Anama for sale in twenty-eight small farms, ranging from ten-acre lots for labouring men, to 100 and 250 acre lots for farmers with some capital. This sale was intended to "establish a nice little knot of farming population in that locality", but its more important purpose was to rationalize money legacies for daughters.³⁴ This was a common reason for land sales.

In March 1892 two blocks of Corwar were offered for public sale. Wason's motives for this are uncertain, and it can be classed as a genuine reduction of an estate. In the same month, the trustees of R.H. Rhodes's estate of Lowcliffe (9,900 acres), and Chatmos (2,700 acres) put them up for sale either as single estates, or separate blocks. This was presumably for the same reasons as the Peter sale, but in this case offers failed to reach the reserve prices, and the estates were withdrawn from the market.³⁵ In August of the same year two more estates came up for sale and subdivision. The Millton estate of 4,200 acres was successfully sold in ten farms. Subdivision was judged by the Guardian to be "more

33 Ibid, 28 September 1891.

34 Ibid, 1 August 1891 and 28 September 1891.

35 Ibid, 5 March 1892.

in accord with the spirit of the times",³⁶ but this property was only an outlying estate, presumably a speculation, of a North Canterbury landed family. Buccleuch, of 7,900 acres, was one of the county's few "company estates", and was being sold as a smaller estate, together with a number of farms.³⁷ This was consistent with the general policies of finance companies which found themselves landowners.

In 1893 there were two major sales from estates. The run attached to Alford was cut up into farms and sold, leaving the central estate intact, once again in accordance with the owners' avowed policy.³⁸ In addition, the Singletree station was advertised for sale. This was an example of complicated financial manoeuvring, as this apparent "sale" was in effect merely the sale of a mortgage. The real owner of the estate had mortgaged it to the Colonial Investment Company of Dunedin, which now offered the "equity of redemption" for sale. It failed, however, to reach the reserve price, and was withdrawn.³⁹ The mortgage was finally transferred to Andrew MacFarlane, a local landowner, but the 2,400 acre estate remained intact, and in the hands of its former owners.

There were no major sales of estate lands in 1894 and 1895. In 1896 another 7,000 acres of Alford were offered for lease in small farms, with an option of purchase. Once again, this was Alford policy.⁴⁰ Kolmar was sold in small farms in the same year, but this was a result of financial difficulties

36 Ibid, 10 October 1892.

37 Ibid, 16 August 1892.

38 Ibid, 15 February 1893.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid, 8 February 1896.

in the Friedlander family's business and commercial interests, and not of farming troubles. In the same year, the government used its powers of compulsion to purchase Highbank, and acquired 3,800 of Corwar offered for sale by J. Cathcart Wason.

On the whole, there appears to have been more buying than selling. Large landowners were adding piecemeal to their estates in many cases, and there is not a correspondingly large process of sale. Most of the land sales occurring were a result of deaths and the need to readjust family holdings, or were from the estates of companies or absentees. The sales of land from Corwar seem to have been the only instance of large-scale public sale of parts of an estate belonging to a member of the "legitimate" gentry. At the same time, at least some Ashburton gentry, such as the Griggs, Studholmes, J. Cathcart Wason, and the Whites, were selling off small farms out of their estates to former workers. But in general, the estates of the landed gentry seem to have been stable. Many were growing, in fact, and where cases of fragmentation and sale occur, they are generally carried out by "marginal" people. Those Ashburton landowners who were committed to their estates, lived on them, farmed them, and were "gentry" in the fullest sense, appear not to have been selling.

2. The Agrarian Revolution.

The 'nineties were marked by four main developments in farming practice on the large estates, all of which amounted to something approaching an "agrarian revolution" which was proceeding vigorously before any liberal legislation could be brought to bear. These developments were the decline of grain,

the development of mixed farming (encouraged by the growth of refrigeration), the increase of "improvements" to estates, and the application of science to farming. Wheat, grown in immense acreages in the 1870s and 1880s, had been the means by which many runholders had converted their properties into freehold estates; "individuals were known to purchase land in Canterbury at the current fixed price of £2 an acre and make a net profit of £5 an acre on their first crop."⁴¹ In a "normal" year, with prices at 3/- per bushel, a Canterbury landowner could expect to make a clear profit of 36/- per acre through the better years of the 1880s, and in comparison with South Africa and Australia - even Victoria and Tasmania - this was a very lucrative return indeed.⁴²

But by the 'nineties, large acreages, enormous grain paddocks, contract labour prices, and cropping rather than farming had depleted soil fertility. This was combined indirectly with the inexperience of largely upper-class Englishmen in direct farming, and had caused the profitability of grain-growing to steadily deteriorate on most estates. The continued slump of grain prices in overseas markets exacerbated this process. The result was that the "bonanza" years were well and truly over. By 1894 A.F. Somerville, as has already been noted, was selling his agricultural

41 Sinclair, K., A History of New Zealand, London, 1969, p.156.

42 Canterbury, Its Resources and Progress, Ch.Ch., 1889. This is possibly not an unbiased source. But it was generally accepted at the time that New Zealand was markedly more fertile than Australia. The Evening Post, 23 February 1883, made this assertion, and pointed out that New Zealand had nearly as much land under cultivation as all the other Australasian colonies put together. Its average wheat yield was also the highest, being 22½ bushels per acre. Tasmania's average was 18 3/4, New South Wales 14½, Victoria 9½, and South Australia 4½.

implements in a "great clearing sale" at The Terraces, "relinquishing grain growing and reducing farming operations."⁴⁴

But this was uncommon. The trend appears to have been towards diversification, rather than a complete abandonment of cropping. Oats, barley, root crops, and new leaf crops, such as rape and kale, began to supplement wheat. Throughout the 'nineties there seems to have been no spectacular decline in wheat growing on the estates, and the total wheat acreage for Ashburton county changed only from 71,000 acres in 1890 to 62,000 acres in 1896.⁴⁵ Lagmhor's wheat acreage began to grow greatly in the 'nineties, until it rivalled Longbeach and Springfield, as has been pointed out above; in the 'nineties, after "the wheat had been threshed, there would be a long line of stacks of threshed straw along the eight miles from Ashburton to the homestead."⁴⁶ But this was as exceptional as developments at The Terraces. Most estates seem to have maintained roughly their old acreages of wheat. In 1892, a press correspondent could still write the traditional enthusiastic report of the harvest at Longbeach where⁴⁷

"harvesting operations were in full swing ... before the rain stopped work. In one paddock on Longbeach there were one hundred and thirty-seven men, forty-seven teams, and three traction engines at work at one time. This will give some idea of the magnitude of harvest operations.."

44 Guardian, 9 March 1894.

45 N.Z. Statistics, 1890 and 1896. The acreage of oats increased in the period from 47,000 to 57,000 and of turnips and rape from 41,000 to 46,000.

46 Peninsula and Plain, The History and Geography of Banks Peninsula and the Canterbury Plains, Ch.Ch., p.86.

47 Guardian, 22 January 1892.

The great grain storage sheds at Lyndhurst railway station, where Friedlander of Kolmar and Cameron of Springfield stored their wheat before shipment (the latter in a shed able to store 90,000 bushels),⁴⁸ still appear to have been fully used. Most estates seem to have continued to grow a few hundred acres of wheat, as on Sir William Steward's Barford or E. Herring's Alford, or one or two thousand, as on D.G. Holmes's Holmeslee, or J. Cathcart Wason's Corwar. The decline of the profitability of wheat was real, but it seems to have stimulated a greater interest in other crops rather than an abandonment of wheat. Wheat-growing continued to be on an ample scale, and to be a major source of the income of the gentry.

Intensification occurred mainly in the development of growing sheep for meat as well as wool. Refrigeration, which had been promoted and developed by the gentry,⁴⁹ opened out wide economic horizons to them. Just as Canterbury and the other southern provinces were particularly favoured for the production of wheat, so too, with their relative fertility and plentiful spring fodder they were better suited to produce meat from sheep than their rivals in the Southern Hemisphere, namely Australia, and South Africa, and increasingly Argentina. To take advantage of this, some gentry began to concentrate on producing fat lambs and this affected breeding and management. Gradually the two staples of the South Island, the "Golden Fleece" and the "Golden Grain", were being supplemented by mutton, and the change involved new crops of turnips and other feed.

48 Macdonald, "*Biographies*."

49 Particularly prominent in the development of the freezing industry were J. Grigg, who organised the formation of the Canterbury Frozen Meat Company, J. Studholme, H.P. Murray-Aynsley, and D. Morrow.

The Griegs' 15,000 acre Longbeach estate provides a large-scale example of this new intensification. In 1882 it supported 13,000 sheep, all of which were raised for their fleeces, and cropped about 5,000 acres. By 1893, the same acreage was still being cropped, but the number of sheep carried was up to 35,000, in addition to which there were several stud flocks and herds. In one season, Longbeach bought 80,000 sheep and lambs for fattening and shipment to London. In a speech in March, 1894, John Grigg "formally deposed wheat growing from the first place in the agricultural system. Mutton, lamb and wool were taking its place ..."⁵⁰ The mixed farming of the twentieth century was coming into existence on the estates, promoted energetically by the more active and interested gentry in a search for better profits and better farming. Leonard White was one such "improver". He experimented with techniques to increase production on Langley and sought new sale outlets. He was one of the first of the large landowners to export his grain privately, and later turned his estate over to more intensive meat-fattening agriculture. He was a Corriedale enthusiast, and rapidly began to earn a reputation for his sale of Corriedale breeding stock from Langley to "the Platte country" in Argentina. His neighbour, W.L. Allan, of Acton, was turning off 16,000 fat sheep annually by 1893.

Gentry from non-agricultural backgrounds often worked to diversify their farming interests too. D. Morrow, who had never cropped Montalto, began breeding sheep for meat in the

50 Scotter, Canterbury, p. 79.

mid-1880s, and by 1888 was winning cups from the Agricultural and Pastoral Association for his fat sheep. He also took up the breeding and grazing of pigs on Montalto, grazing them in a free-range system in paddocks rather than fattening them in sties, on the English model. He also acquired a herd of Jersey cattle, mostly for breeding purposes, and held an annual bull sale at Tattersal's, from his stud. M. Friedlander was another "improver", and his various estates and farms were all farmed at a high pitch. At Kolmar he employed "judicious rotation of crops and careful maintenance of fertility", and alternated grains with roots. Friedlander's stock "at the Addington yards have always fetched the best prices, mostly always topping the fat sheep market." The estate was of 4,500 acres, of which 1,700 were cropped, and the rest in English grasses. The land had "been well farmed, and every bit of it has had to do duty, so that it is in good heart and free from weeds."⁵¹ Kolmar ran over five sheep to the acre, and produced thirty bushels of wheat to the acre. Another of Friedlander's properties, Roxburgh, was judged "incomparably superior to any other place within many miles"⁵² by the Guardian, and proved Friedlander's considerable skill as a farmer both of sheep and crops.

Hand-in-hand with this new intensification and diversification went the need for greater "improvement" of estates. "Improvements" were of two types - direct improvements to the land itself, and improvements of a secondary nature, such as fencing, buildings, and so on,

51 Guardian, 18 July 1896.

52 Ibid., 21 January 1889.

which promoted the efficiency of the estate as an agricultural unit. Many of the former type were related to water, as most of the Ashburton lowlands had originally either an excess or a lack of water. Some estates required irrigation, others drainage. The Longbeach estate was not drained systematically and on a large scale, until the 1880s, when the Griggs gained complete control of the estate, and began to appreciate the requirements of mixed farming. During the same period, some 5,000 acres of Coldstream were drained by means of a complex system of ditches, and were made into fertile cropping and fattening land. William Strange's 3,000 acre Riversdale estate had been mostly swamp before drainage began, and some parts of the property were kept in their natural condition for flax cultivation. Most of the gentry with marshy properties seem to have made use of flax to extend their income, and a flaxmill flourished at Winchester. The manager of Lagmhor wrote in 1890 that

"All the original Lagmhor estate has been ploughed several times, except where good crops of flax were growing ... The flax so saved is at present yielding a return of about £4 an acre, besides giving employment to many men in preparing the fibre for market. The Lagmhor estate is thoroughly fenced, with fences in some instances that cost £132 per mile. The property has been drained where required, some of the drains costing as much as £1 per chain."⁵³

A. McFarlane of Glenara drained the extensive Springburn Swamp in the period, and also profited from flax sales in the process. R.H. Rhodes's Lowcliffe was systematically drained in the late 1870s and 1880s, and the process was described by W.P. Reeves, a cadet there. On his arrival, much of the estate consisted of swamps, small streams with "sweet and

53 Ibid., 17 November 1890.

clear" water, and land covered with "tall flax, toe-toe, rushes and small bushes, green and beautiful in the sunlight". It was transformed into land where "rich pastures covered the surface".⁵⁴

Larger areas of land were dry, and lacked regular watercourses. By the 'nineties an extensive system of water-races throughout the county provided adequate watering for stock, but many properties needed a more intensive system of direct irrigation, to boost production on otherwise fertile soils. The gentry, particularly Cameron of Springfield, and Reed of Westerfield, had led the way in the development of the water-race system. By 1880, Cameron had some forty miles of races on Springfield. Irrigation was seen as the next major means of farmlands improvement. A son of Wright of Windermere, E.F. Wright, was a vigorous advocate of irrigation in Ashburton, based upon observations he had made during a tour of America. C.J. Harper often spoke in the county council in favour of irrigation, and it was his encouragement, and the support of other large landowners in the council, that enabled the first systematic irrigation scheme to be set up in the county. This was the Ashburton Irrigation Farm, established in 1886, to make tests of the practicability of irrigation methods.

W.L. Allan of Acton was also moving into irrigation. After a trip to Italy and Switzerland, to study methods used there, Allan introduced "wild flooding" irrigation on 400 acres of Acton, doubled the production of wheat from seven to

54 These quotes from Reeves appear, unannotated, in K. Sinclair's William Pember Reeves, Oxford, 1965, p.41.

fourteen bushels per acre, and made "a perfect oasis" from land once dry and underused.⁵⁵ But irrigation failed to make much headway, and even Allan's experiments came as late as 1895.

Some of the poorest land, in the high interfluves and the Gawler Downs, was not only dry, but also littered with stones and rubble. Improvement of these pastures was brought about by a painstaking operation called "stone-picking", only possible in those decades of cheap labour. On properties such as J. Ballantyne's Thirlstane, and D. Morrow's Montalto, the land was good and healthy for stock, but constituted some of the stoniest parts of Canterbury. One Thirlstane paddock was called "Stony Ninety Acres". Large gangs of men were employed at a shilling a day on these estates to "pick stones" from the paddocks, and pile them laboriously into the heaps that still dot the farmscape of the area. Trees were then planted in clumps and groves on these stone heaps.

Tree-planting was a major method of "improvement", being important as a means of providing shelter for stock and men, and also for "taming" the landscape, acting as windbreaks, and making the countryside more "British" in appearance. By the 'nineties there were hundreds of miles of mature plantations stretching across the county, and landowners concentrated their activities on varying and completing this pattern. J. Elmslie strove to make his Cardendale estate into a replica of the British countryside by planting mixed deciduous and coniferous trees at "picturesque" intervals,

55 Scotter, Ashburton, p. 103.

with considerable success.⁵⁶ The Whites planted extensively on Langley, "in the hope that Langley might grow in beauty to resemble its English namesake."⁵⁷ They united their tree planting with the growing of many miles of sod and gorse hedges on the estate. Tree planting was stimulated by the Forest Tree Planting Encouragement Act, 1871, which granted two acres of Crown land to any landowner who planted one acre in trees. The Whites took advantage of this, as did at least one other, J. Cathcart Wason. Having planted 250 acres (the maximum allowable), he "brought a law action to secure a second grant".⁵⁸ The Lombardy poplars, oaks, walnuts, pines, and other exotic trees planted by Wason on Corwar were in maturity by the 'nineties, evidence of Wason's outstanding enthusiasm for tree planting.

Wason was one of the greatest planters among the gentry, but all followed this lead to greater or lesser extents. When Thomas Harrison acquired the 2,500 acre Hackthorne estate he planted forty acres of new trees to supplement the existing plantations on the property, and many miles of hawthorn hedges and oaks on Westerfield were evidence of C.G. Hawdon's vigour as an improver. The previous owner of the estate had planted an oak at every chain along the road to Valetta, and these had attained a good height by the 'nineties. J. Studholme II preferred Australian trees, and beyond the English grounds of his house at Coldstream long plantations of Australian gums were planted to supplement the

56 Elmslie, *Elmslie*, p.51.

57 White, "Records", p.60.

58 Stewart, "Landscape Evolution", p.59.

more usual pines. Morrow varied the landscape by planting trees in varying groves and lines, and interspersing single trees in the middle of the paddocks, to create an overall park-like impression. The Moorhouses at Shepherds Bush already enjoyed naturally park-like vistas of native forest trees, but were large-scale planters nevertheless. They complemented the indigenous trees on their estate with exotic plantations. On many estates, tree-planting was a useful means of employment for men during off-seasons. It was by this means that 20,000 to 30,000 trees were planted annually on Alford, and by 1886 there were 85 acres of plantations on the estate; oaks, ashes, blue gums, wattles, poplars, larches, sycamores, silver birches, and elms, in addition to the ubiquitous pines.

The second field of improvements was that of amenities on the estates. Roading was important, and when road boards failed to act quickly enough, at least one landowner, J. Studholme, was prepared to call for tenders for "scooping shingle from one side to the centre of road, and otherwise improving same along about 80 chains on Crow's Road" in 1890.⁵⁹ In addition, each estate contained at its centre a "village" or "township" of farm buildings, workers' quarters, yards and storage tanks and barns which required constant addition and maintenance. Many estates required two or more such nuclei, and included "home station" and "outstation" or "outstations". One such was Langley, which had as its centre, that which the local people called "the Langley township".⁶⁰ It included

59 Guardian, 3 July 1890.

60 White, "Records", p. 61.

two granaries, mens' quarters, carpenters' and blacksmiths' shops, and implement sheds. There were stables for the six teams of six horses used for agricultural work, stalls and loose-boxes to accommodate the twelve hacks and carriage horses attached to the White establishment, and other lesser buildings. An outstation was maintained at Top Place, near Chertsey, where there was additional stabling and men's quarters. Outstations were necessary because the size of most estates meant that men and horses would waste a good deal of working time simply coming to and from the home station and the outer paddocks.

Alford's home station buildings and improvements were detailed in one newspaper report as consisting of stables, feed house, harness room, implement shed, carpenter's shop, smithy, carriage house, a small bacon curing house, granary, chaff house containing appliances for cutting chaff and rushing oats, a water-wheel built on a creek that ran through the property, a large shed for the draught horses, and a woolshed.⁶¹

On Springfield, the home station was called the "middle stables", to distinguish it from the outer stables, a few miles distant, each of which was surrounded by plantations. Highbank was organised to include three outstations, each consisting of men's quarters and stabling, with the main buildings at the home station. When the Thirlstane estate of J. Ballantyne was subdivided by the state in 1910, its outstation buildings included a five-roomed cottage, farm

61 Weekly Press, 13 August 1886.

outbuildings, a twelve-stalled stable, granary, seven-roomed cottage, four-roomed cottage, shed, stable, seven-roomed cottage, stable, harness and chaff room, blacksmith's shop, tool shed, cart-shed, men's quarters, swaggers' hut, a large woolshed, and a grain store. Montalto was also divided into three sub-stations, each of which included stables, quarters, and a full-time men's cook. A full dray would regularly arrive from Mayfield with supplies for each outstation, which was sheltered by broad plantations. Seven four-horse teams were stabled at each outstation. Coldstream, in spite of its size, maintained only one outstation. This was a cropping outstation near Hinds, but as most of the cropping work was done on Coldstream by contract labour, no other was needed.

Some of the home stations were beginning to acquire the appearance, as well as the title, of "village". On Longbeach, "the Buildings" and "the Quarters" together comprised an impressive array situated on a grassy, tree-shaded terrace behind the grounds of the homestead. Many of the farm buildings were being replaced in brick at the time, and they added an air of permanence and substance - particularly the flour mill, and the large two-storeyed brick building which housed unmarried labourers. Another large building, built in stone, was the stables. There, blood and carriage horses, harness, and the Grigg carriages were kept. With men, wives, children, waggons, horses, dogs, and the regular arrival of the mail coach from Ashburton, the home station at Longbeach presented a bustling, prosperous scene. By 1891 some £41,000 had been spent on improvements on Longbeach, and Sir Charles Bowen eulogised "the estate - its village of

employees' cottages, its church and school.."62 On Waimarama, the homestead, out-buildings, quarters, stables, granary and even the pig sties were all built of solid poured concrete. The McIlraiths had all their home station buildings on Auchenflower erected in triple brick.

There were at least three attempts to establish more formal villages on Ashburton estates. J. Cathcart Wason laid out the village of Barrhill. He bounded it with avenues of English trees, sold village lots to his workers and tradesmen, and erected solid concrete public buildings, in collaboration with the Mackies and Alingtons, other local gentry. Barrhill came to include about fifteen two-storeyed cottages, a bakery, smithy, post office, store, "inn", library, school, teacher's residence, church, and a vicarage site and glebe. It is uncertain how "feudal" the intention was, but it is certain that the names Wason chose - Corwar for his estate and Barrhill for his village - were both closely associated with the manor and village of his family in Britain. Another example of this possibly "feudal" spirit was found on Westerfield, where an attempt had been made to cut up the estate into small farms, leased to tenant farmers on the English model. This had been successfully achieved on at least one other Canterbury estate, Green Hayes, near Temuka. A number of tenants had been successfully established on the Westerfield freehold, and a village and home station had been laid out, including a three-storey flour mill, built at a cost of £3,000. A village had also been laid out on the 5,000 acre Sherwood estate in 1880.

62 Stevens, P.G.W., John Grigg of Longbeach, Christchurch 1952, p.60. This is to be expected of Bowen, who was a strong believer in the Wakefield ideal.

Aided by the railway, it had become modestly successful by the 'nineties, and centred upon smithy, railway station, and church, the last built by the landowner, T.E. Upton.

Along with this "improving" spirit, and the development of mixed farming, went a new scientific interest, as the county's gentry changed from exploiters of the soil to gentlemen farmers. The demand for agricultural information was growing throughout the southern provinces. Lincoln Agricultural College was from 1885 entitled to award Diplomas in Agriculture. In 1896 it was allowed by the University of New Zealand to grant a degree of Bachelor of Science in Agriculture - the first college in the southern hemisphere to do so. For a fee of £60 per annum, landed gentlemen could send their sons to Lincoln and expect them to leave knowing something useful about the operation of their fathers' estates. G. Hart of Winchmore sent his son George, to study at Lincoln. But the college was still largely a drinking and social establishment, rather than a serious institution to improve agriculture. It produced no graduates in the 'nineties. Increasing scientific interest was evident in other ways, however. In 1878 the Ashburton branch of the Agricultural and Pastoral Association had held its first "show" in Ashburton town, and throughout the countryside rising subscription lists of magazines such as the Country Journal, and Weekly Press, promoting new and "progressive" methods, testified to the changing spirit of the times.

This spirit was shown in the interest and enthusiasm which so many landowners showed in new developments. E.G. Wright of Windermere wrote to a fellow landowner in 1891

discussing the sowing of clover and rape to improve pastures, saying, "from my own observation that less clover and more rape will be advantageous". He speculated on the use of sulphur dips for sheep, in which he reserved judgement, saying he would wait until he got the opinion of a third party (Thomas Dowling, owner of Swyncombe station, Marlborough). "I have requested him to give his opinion as his experience extends over many years."⁶³ It was the gentry, "a few landowners on large estates", who were enabled by "a combination of capital, initiative, and suitable soils"⁶⁴ to embrace new developments in the fields of mechanisation and crop rotation. By the 'nineties, for example, the practice of alternating grass pastures with the sowing of grain crops was widespread on gentry estates. Sometimes the gentry actively sponsored invention, albeit on a very modest scale, as when J. Grigg offered a prize of £5 at the Ashburton A & P Show for the best implement for removing twitch from ploughed land.⁶⁵ In 1896 the Elmslies' gave a paddock at Cardendale for a demonstration of the new Buckeye Reaper and Binder. At the end of the trial, both W.P.S. Elmslie and E.M. Goodwin of Cracroft bought a machine each.⁶⁶ P. Kellock of Maronan, Grigg's son-in-law, was actively interested in new and more scientific farming methods, and imported the first Ryeland sheep to New Zealand. A.E. Peache of Mount Somers was a "businesslike and progressive"⁶⁷

63 Hall Papers, 1891, Letter from E.G. Wright to Sir John Hall, 7 February 1891.

64 Stewart, "Landscape Evolution", p.48.

65 Guardian, 2 October 1894.

66 Ibid., 21 January 1896.

67 Acland, L.G.D., The Early Canterbury Runs, Ch.Ch., 1946, p.32

gentleman farmer, as was T.E. Upton. Both E.G. Wright and L. White experimented with viticulture. Attempts to grow cotton were made on the Singletree estate. W.S. Peter of Anama has been called a "scientific sheep-farmer",⁶⁸ and J. Cathcart Wason, in spite of his dandified manners, "was an expert farmer."⁶⁹

The new scientific interest found its most energetic outlet in the improvement of animal breeding. This occupation united a new curiosity with a long-standing gentleman's interest. Sheep breeding was flourishing in the county by the 'nineties, and the New Zealand Flock Book of 1895 included several Ashburton gentry in its pages.⁷⁰

68 Scotter, Ashburton, p. 66.

69 Ibid, p. 72.

70 The New Zealand Flock Book, Council of the New Zealand Sheep Breeders' Association, Christchurch 1895. J. Grigg of Longbeach is, as is to be expected, a frequent name. He owned a flock of 105 Lincoln ewes, which he had built up by buying directly from Lincolnshire, from the flock on the neighbouring Riversdale estate locally, and from the Hon. M. Holmes, of Awamoa estate, North Otago. In 1891 he had been able to sell a large number of his pure-bred Lincolns to Sir George Clifford, of Stonyhurst, North Canterbury. In addition, Grigg owned 600 English Leicester ewes registered in the flock book, and 600 Shropshire Down ewes.

J. Studholme II owned 260 Lincolns inherited from his father on Coldstream, and other pedigree Lincoln flocks were to be found on M. Friedlander's Kolmar, the Rhodes family's Lowcliffe, and on Lagmhor, whose flock had originated on the North Otago estate of Elderslie. Friedlander also held a flock of 22 Hampshire Downs on Kolmar, while W.McN. Lyttleton ran Shropshire Downs on Rokeby, together with the only flock of pure-bred Merinos registered in the county.

Other Ashburton gentry listed included J.A. and A.D. McIlraith, with Shropshire Downs and Romney Marsh flocks at Auchenflower, J. Ballantyne with English Leicesters on Thirlstane, as also had D. Morrow on Montalto. T.E. Upton ran Shropshire Downs on Sherwood, as did P. Cunningham on his Dromore estate. Acton raised Border Leicesters.

A good deal of sheep-breeding went on that was not registered in the Flock Book. Leonard White "endeavoured to improve stock-breeding in New Zealand - he was a large importer of valuable stud stock from England and Scotland - Langley property and stud becoming well-known in New Zealand, Argentina, and Australia, owing to the long list of awards, shields and championships won in the show rings."⁷¹ In addition, there was considerable interest in breeding cattle, pigs, and, of course, horses. J. Deans of Waimarama was an energetic promoter of better breeding. Within this field "his main interest was undoubtedly his herd of Shorthorn cattle. No expense was spared to improve them by use of the best procurable sires ... Second to these was his Southdown flock, and he was the first to realise their value in the breeding of fat-stock for the British market. His Lincoln sheep, Clydesdale horses and Yorkshire pigs were also dear to his heart, but the Shorthorns always took first place."⁷² A.F. Somerville bred Berkshire pigs at The Terraces, and Leonard White bred Shorthorn cattle, and won many show successes.⁷³

The gentry can be seen, then, to have included many men who were actively interested in good farming, attempting to boost production, and improve yields, breeds and techniques. They altogether played an active, leading role in the "revolution" which was transforming the agriculture of the region from the purely exploitative, double-staple system to modern mixed farming. By no means all, of course, were of

71 White, "Records", p.63.

72 Deans, Pioneers, p.128.

73 Macdonald, "Biographies".

this type. W.C. Walker, for example, was a notoriously bad farmer, and ruined the Valetta estate by his incompetence and lack of concern. C.P. Cox was another who seems to have completely lacked practical ability, no matter how fluent and educated he was. After failing to succeed with the potentially rich Mount Somers estate, he was unable to make his new property provide more than an adequate income. And even the estates of good "high farmers" were still often under-developed, for lack of knowledge or because the landowner had overreached his ability to develop the land efficiently. Such incidence of underdevelopment is not spectacular, but it does confirm accusations that the large landowners were incapable of utilising their estates with complete efficiency to some extent. In August, 1890, for example, of 18,700 acres of freehold land on Coldstream, 10,500 acres remained in the native tussock, 1,600 still was swamp, 700 let or unused, and only 5,900 sown in English grasses.⁷⁴ This seems a very high incidence of under-cultivation, but the Studholmes were the county's most extreme case of "over-reaching", and when J. Studholme II settled on the estate cultivation was speedily intensified.

Another example of undercultivation was the case of the Millton estate which, when it was sold in 1892, was only two-thirds in English grasses, the remainder being native tussock. But this was also an absentee estate, as Coldstream was in 1890. W.McN. Lyttleton who had leased it for some years, had taken care to grow only two grain crops on the

74 Studholme MSS,

Paddock Minute Book.

land, so as not to deplete its fertility - evidence of careful farming. A third example of under-development was in the Hekeao Settlement of 1898, in which 2,200 acres were taken from the Peter family's Anama estate for subdivision into small farms. The land was "good, level, and undulating agricultural and pastoral land, with a depth of seven inches to ten inches of good black soil, with a subsoil of deep loamy clay on a shingle formation ...⁷⁵ potentially rich. The Peters had enclosed it thoroughly, with gorse and wire hedges, and it was well-served by metalled roads. Watering was good, with the Hinds river and natural streams well supplemented by a system of water races. But a good deal of the land was still in a native state. Substantial acreages of oats and turnips had been grown, and where English grasses had been planted, they had flourished, but two complete sections were in their native state and had never been ploughed, and there were some areas of undrained swamp, and of rushes, toi-toi, and rough feed. Other examples of this under-development could be given.

But once again such examples seem to show that it was absentees, or other exceptional cases, who were unable to develop their land intensively. The Peters and Studholmes, for example, were over-extended. The Peters held large Southland estates, and the Studholmes owned many Canterbury and North Island properties. The men whose Ashburton estate was their main property, and who were committed to it, seem to have been good, progressive farmers for the most part. It seems unlikely that small men could have done as much in such

75

"The Hekeao Settlement, Particulars, Terms and Conditions,"
Canterbury Settlements, Wellington, 1878.

a short time in transforming the face of the plains.

3. Farm Management and Operation.

On most estates the day-to-day supervision of farm work was in the hands of a manager or overseer. These men came from a variety of backgrounds. By the 'nineties it was not uncommon for a son or a poor relation to be made station manager. J. Elmslie made his eldest son, William, manager of Cardendale, after having first trained him for the business by sending him as a cadet to Acton, and then to Springfield. By means of this careful preparation, Elmslie's son was enabled eventually to become a wealthy gentleman farmer in his own right in the county. D. Morrow, who originally intended to leave Montalto to the eldest of his sons, and set the rest up in business or professions, was persuaded by the second to give him a position on the estate, and so Montalto was run by two managers - the first son supervising the sheepfarming, and the second the agricultural and other work. W. Lyttleton made his brother-in-law, Louis Wood, manager of Rokeby.

It was more common, however, to employ a man already qualified - a new immigrant, perhaps, who had been a farmer, or some local cockatoo who showed business and farming acumen. Promotion from among the ranks of the common labourers may have occurred too, although no examples can be found. J. Ballantyne, although he was interested in farming, and particularly horses, employed a permanent manager on Thirlstane, and provided him with a "villa-style" residence called The Staple - an interesting allusion to the wool that was the estate's wealth. J. Deans appointed a

man from a farming background, Samuel Goodwin, to manage and oversee Waimarama, and several of Goodwin's sons also worked for the Deanses, illustrating the preference that family had for employing old and reliable servants. Even small estates on which the proprietor was in residence seem to have usually employed managers; E. Chapman's modest Drayton estate was supervised by William Dunford as overseer.

The manager of an estate, particularly of the larger properties, enjoyed some status, and was often a "gentleman", mixing on terms of near-equality with the gentry. Company estate managers were generally accepted in homestead drawing-rooms, and at least one, W.L. Allan, was a very prominent member of the gentry. G. Hart employed a "gentleman", Matthew Stitt, as his station manager on Winchmore estate at a salary of £200 a year, and in addition employed one of his sons, J.R. Hart, as financial manager of the estate, with a similar salary. Stitt owned Cairnbrae Farm near Methven.⁷⁶ Men of this calibre were highly-prized; T.H. Dowding, the Studholme's manager on Coldstream, was a vigorous, progressive farmer, highly respected by his employers, and remembered as an excellent stock and cropping overseer. Their arrival and departure on estates seems usually to have entailed some ceremony; when the manger of Longbeach, T.W. Hocken, resigned his position there in 1890 to join the "drift north" and set himself up as an independent farmer, a "very pleasing affair took place at the Longbeach homestead", where the employees of the estate presented him with a "valuable gold watch", "with gold chain and compass pendant,

76 Lands & Deeds, Will of George Hart,
416678,

as a farewell keepsake." In addition, he was presented with "a silver teapot from the Misses Grigg and a field glass from Mr J.C.N. Grigg. Mr Tout, (the new manager) spoke of the good feeling which had always existed between Mr Hocken (the departing manager) and the large number of employees under him on the estate, and expressed the good wishes they all felt for the departing manager, and hopes for his future success in life in the North Island."⁷⁷ On another occasion, the departing manager and his wife on the Rhodeses' Lowcliffe estate were presented with a "beautiful marble drawing-room clock" by the employees of the property, who gave them the following address:⁷⁸

"Dear Sir and Madam, - We, the undersigned employees of the Lowcliffe estate, learn with regret that you are about to sever your connection with the estate. Before departing, we ask you to accept ... a small token of the esteem in which we have held Mr and Mrs Brodie. - We remain, dear sir and madam, respectfully yours ..."

Although some of the smaller estates kept managers, it was probably more common for the lesser gentry to dispense with them, particularly on estates that had little or no agricultural work, with its corresponding need for mass labour. In such cases, the landowner himself would "do the rounds" personally, supervise the paddocks every day, and often lend a hand, if not set an example. This involved no loss of status, as in the nineteenth century "no English gentleman was ever afraid to soil his hands cutting down a tree or setting to at harvest with his workmen - agriculture was always the avocation of the gentry ... he could break a horse

77 Guardian, 4 July 1890.

78 Ibid., 2 August 1892. "Mr Brodie's initials were not given.

or doctor a sheep without endangering his status."⁷⁹ After landowners' sons returned home from school, they commonly "knocked about" the station for a few years, helping or hindering with farm work, enjoying their father's liquor, and calling on the local gentry's daughters. Others were groomed for more positive careers, or sent to work on another landowner's estate as a "cadet".

Cadets, like managers, occupied an ambivalent status between full-blooded gentleman and workman, and although able to "call" at the houses of the local gentry, were seldom invited to formal social occasions, until they acquired more material substance. They were neither fish nor fowl, and generally seemed to have learnt little, and been of little practical use on a station. Unfortunately, many estates, such as Springfield and Highbank, were frequently encumbered with several cadets at any one time.

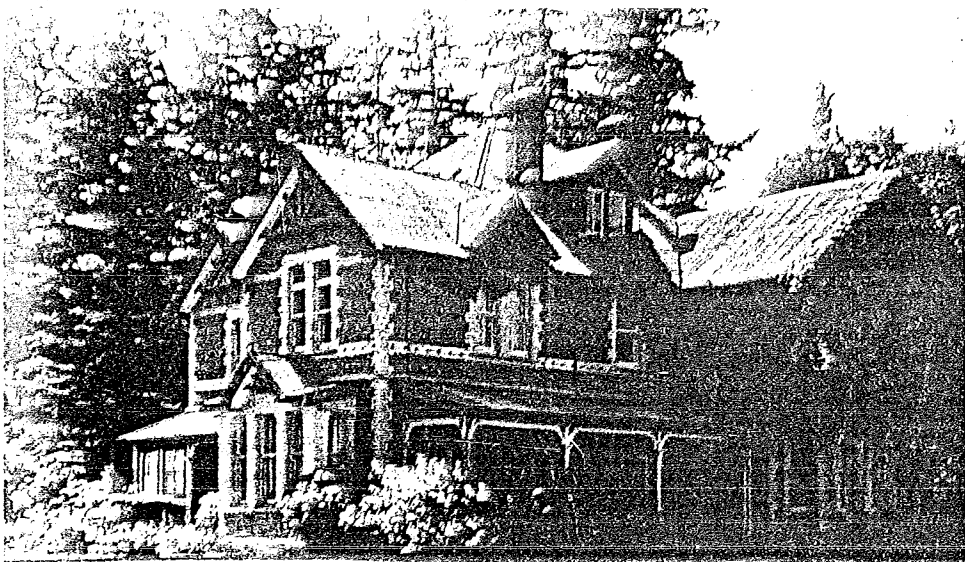
Below cadets and managers were "the men", from as few as a dozen, to hundreds. As has already been pointed out, the landless poor constituted the largest social class in the county. Most of them worked on the estates of the gentry, where they were arranged in a wage-based hierarchy dependent upon skill and experience. A man could arrive on a station and begin as a common labourer with £40 a year, or a shepherd at the same rate, then rise to a position as field foreman, or head shepherd, with £70 a year. After this he might save enough to buy his own small farm, or become promoted further to overseer, or manager, at possibly £150 or £200 a year. This process of promotion was by no means inevitable, of

79 Altick, R.D., Victorian People and Ideas, New York, 1973, pp.82-83.

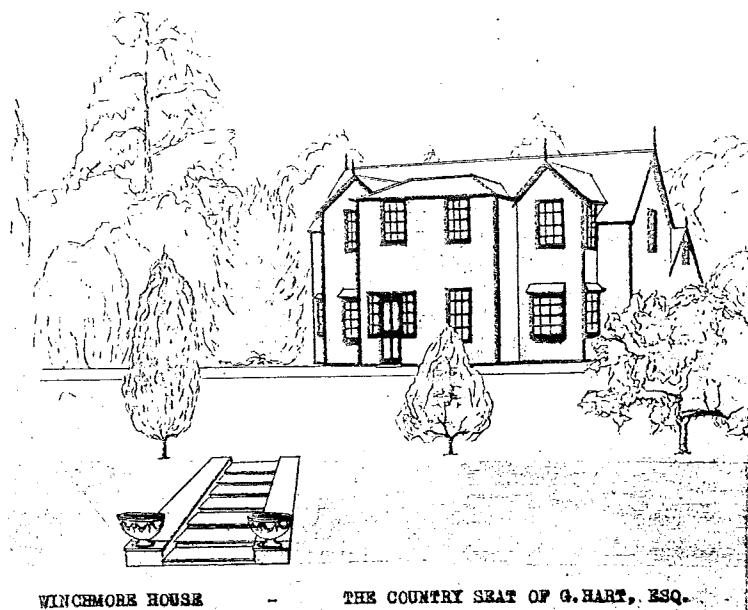
course, and nor did all men aim to leave wage-labouring if they possibly could. The Whites of Langley received long service from many of their men. "Old Line", the head gardener spent a lifetime with the family. W. Street, was overseer and manager of Langley for almost half a century, and J. Scott, was head of fencing gangs and "rouseabouts" for thirty-six years. The station system offered plenty of scope for the fulfilment of modest ambitions, and adequate reward, combined with a security denied many independent small farmers.



21. REDCASTLE. The absentee landowner, J. McLean's Queen Anne homestead in North Otago. Built of brick, the house overlooked a formal balustraded parterre.



22. HOMEBUSH. Another absentee's homestead, this was the main country house of J. Deans of Waimarama.



23. WINCHMORE. An aquatint of G. Hart's homestead near Allanton.



BARRHILL CHURCH.

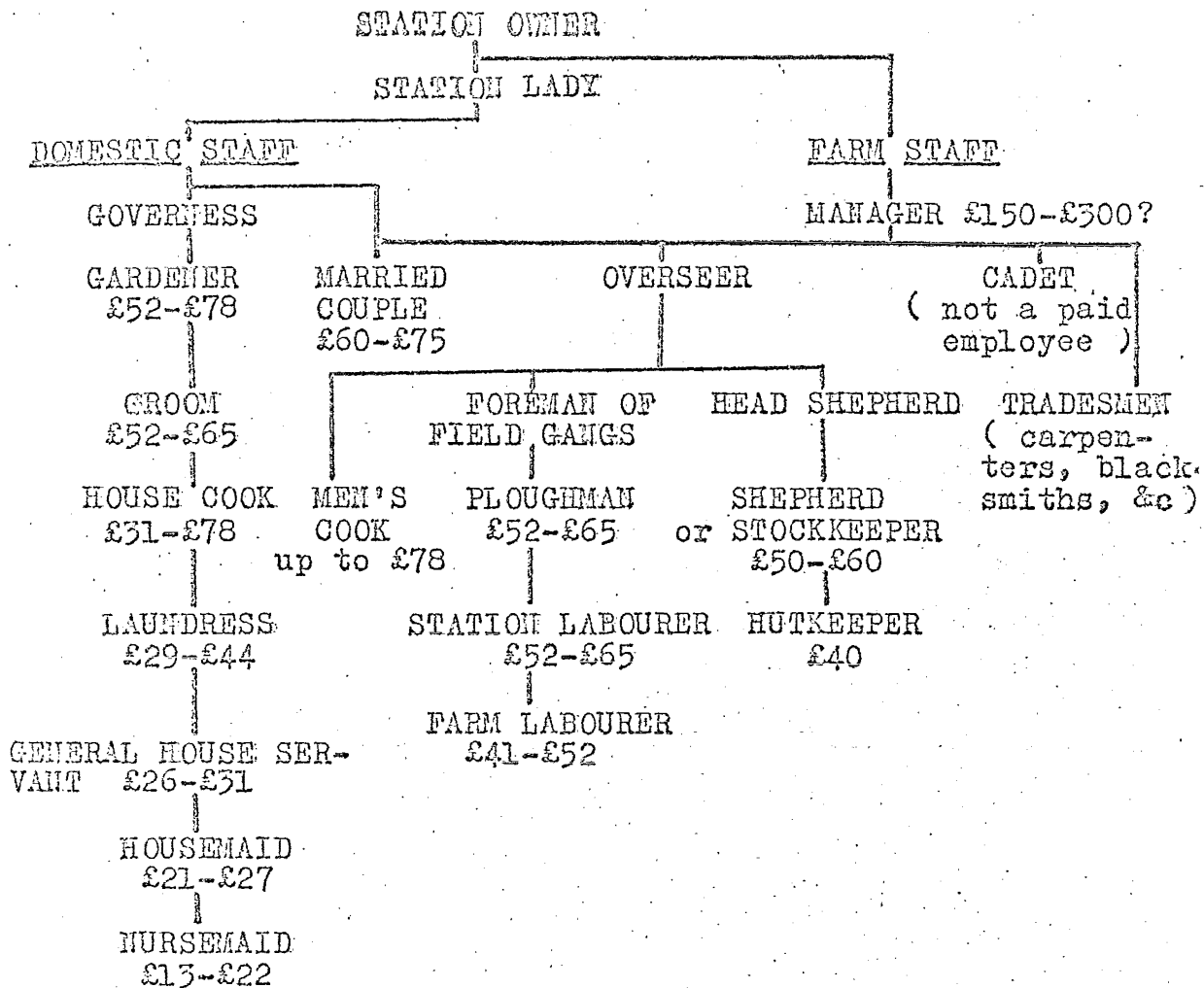
A CANTERBURY FARM.

SOME VIEWS OF CORWAR, MR. J. CATHCART WASON'S ESTATE, RAKAIA.

(Weekly Press)

24. NOBLESSE OBLIGE. The small church built in the village of Barrhill on J. Cathcart Wason's estate.

Figure 1: Showing the hierarchy of employees and employers on lowlands estates. Definite wages quoted are those given as averages for 1892.



All above wages include board.

SEASONAL LABOUR

REAPER . 35/- to 40/- per week
 MOWER 35/- to 40/- per week
 THRESHER 10/- to 20/- per 100 bushels
 SHEEP WASHER 6/- per day
 SHEARER 15/- to 18/- per 100 sheep

Without board.

A detailed diagram of the station hierarchy is given in Figure . This shows that there was plenty of scope for promotion on an estate.

Wages seem to have been fairly uniform throughout the county, but of equal importance to the worker were his housing and living conditions. Many of the employees of the large estates were casual labourers. They lived away from the property in villages or isolated cottages, and when a station labourer married, he was generally provided with a separate cottage on the estate. The quarters of single men saw the greatest variation, and the greatest scandal when inspectors came to call under the Liberal government. Springfield had a particularly bad reputation. Especially bad were its outstations, where the quarters were very poor, meals bad and irregular, and where wet weather found men confined to cramped and leaking quarters, overcrowded, without any escape, and "surrounded by a sea of mud."¹ Government inspectors decided in 1895 that the quarters on the Peters' Anama were of inferior standard, and must be rebuilt. F. Peter unsuccessfully disputed this decision in court. During the trial a witness had abused the quarters at Springfield. This elicited a letter to the Guardian in reply from D. Cameron, and another from a group of ex-workers on Springfield, testifying that the quarters at Springfield were "first-class", and ending by declaring that "Springfield, Longbeach, Alford, and Montalto stations are four of the best ...".²

1 Thompson, "Farm Labourers" , p.11.

2 Guardian, 3 December 1895.

Longbeach was almost proverbial for the quality of its quarters. Many were built solidly of brick and tiles, and there were neat rows of cottages for married men, gardens, and a pleasant setting. Corwar was similarly appreciated. At Coldstream, the Studholmes were careful of their men's needs, and made sure that the quarters were solid and weatherproof, with a substantial brick-built cookhouse and dining-room, and tidy cottages for the married men. A long wooden barracks housed the single men. It was shaded by a wide verandah, and divided into private compartments. The manager lived in a large fifteen-roomed house of two storeys. A reporter noted that on Langley, "Mr White erected the most substantial buildings and the men's quarters, with baths &c., are models ..."¹ The farm buildings on nearby Acton were reported to be all "clean and neat, and in the men's quarters you could with pleasure have an agricultural show banquet."² On Alford there was a "rather palatial looking residence" for the single men on the estate, in which "all the rooms are lofty, well ventilated and particularly clean. Water is laid on in pipes." The appearance of these quarters was thought to "stamp" E. Herring "as a kind-hearted, thoughtful man."³

Conditions were not everywhere so rosy. For every humanitarian, careful landowner there was an indifferent, careless counterpart. When the landowner⁴

"asserted his position as master in an offensive manner, and tried to make as much money as possible, regardless of how the 'men' fared, huts were apt to be 'mere shells of cabins', bare walls and ceilings with no bunks, provisions or comforts of any kind,

¹ White, "Records", quoted and unannotated, p.64.
² Guardian, 7 December 1894.
³ Weekly Press, 13 August 1886, p.13.
⁴ Crawford, Sheepmen, p.127.

and conditions generally bad. But where he tried to make life as pleasant as possible for his fellow workers, huts had stout walls, bunks, fireplaces, cupboards, and all sorts of comforts."

Even on the best estates, food was seldom appetising. On most stations the worker was fed tea and damper in the morning, tea and chops for dinner, and tea and damper for "smokos" and supper. They generally ate heavily (mutton, tea and flour were cheap enough), but not particularly well, with monotonous, ill-balanced, and often poorly-cooked diet. It was rumoured that on some properties, men were employed for food only. This provoked one rich farmer, William Morrow from Dorie (no relation to the gentry Morrows of Montalto) to ask the Guardian editor to

"kindly allow me space in your columns to correct an erroneous statement, circulated by some evil disposed person, that I have men working for me for their food. I may say that I have not, or ever had men working on such terms. I may say I do not approve of the system of employing men for a paltry pittance so I think it must be their own story they are circulating and not mine." ¹

Other scandals travelled through the county from time to time. When William White began feeding his horses on Langley with bunches of grapes produced on the estate's over-prolific vinery, there were no doubt mutterings heard about how the horses ate better than the men.² It was generally accepted in the county that workers on the estates were poorly fed in comparison with those on the larger cockatoo farms, where the farmer's wife was generally responsible for the men's food. Men on stations' complained at the absence of potatoes, vegetables sauces, pickles, jams and butter. Longbeach, once again, was probably amongst the best estates in this respect. The workers

¹ Guardian, 15 November 1892.

² White, "Records", p.55.

were normally fed mutton, but if visitors were staying at the "Big House", or at Christmas, pork or beef was distributed. Ample time was allowed for meals. The station bell rang at 6.30 am for all those who breakfasted in the cookhouse to rise for breakfast, again at 7.00 for ordinary workmen to rise, at 7.30 for the manager to come around and give his orders for the day, and at 8.00 for tradesmen to be at their work. A bell at noon signalled lunch, and work resumed a full hour later. Ordinary farm workers left off at 5.00 pm. An English observer wrote in 1893 that "the men seem very contented".¹ The workers were paid every six months, and the daughter of one wrote²

"when we wanted meat we went to the storeman who gave us a ticket to the butcher. The ticket was returned to the storeman and the amount, along with the cost of groceries, put on our account."

This system was similar to that used for peons on the haciendas and ranchos of Latin America, but it is unlikely that landowners made much profit, if any. Certainly the cost of maintaining such large establishments was high - food consumption on Longbeach alone was sufficient to equal that of a sea going ship. Each week the station bakers produced one thousand 4lb loaves, and the butchers were kept busy slaughtering some 150 sheep a week for home consumption.

Married couples enjoyed some independence and comfort. One such couple were employed on an estate in a position of some small responsibility, the management of a dairy of sixty milch cows. "Mr and Mrs M'Guinness ... are about as likely a couple as I have ever had the pleasure of meeting." They were

¹ Country Journal, Sept. 1893, p.393.

² Weekly News, Auckland, 8 May 1967, an article by "A.M.C.", who was raised on Longbeach.

assisted in their work by two boys, who were paid 10/- weekly, with rations.

"M'Guinness has 25s per week and his rations and £10 extra for harvest money. His wife has 12s per week as well as rations. Their cottage is rent free and firing given in. The rations of man and wife consist of the following:-

Fresh meat, 28lb per week, or if less be used money in place.

Tea, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb per week.

Sugar, $3\frac{1}{2}$ lb per week.

Bread, 20lb per week.

Milk, ad libitum.

Mrs M'Guinness has made and packed away as much as 760lb of butter in a week. She looks the picture of health, and hard work seems to suit her." ¹

The living conditions of contract and casual workers were, however, extraneous to the concerns of the landowner. He only paid wages in cash or kind, and did not need to provide quarters for these men. Many were small farmers, who spent off-seasons doing the many jobs of a large estate - chaff cutting, hoeing turnips and mangolds, potato picking, chopping wood, cleaning drains and water races, cutting hedges, grubbing gorse, ploughing - and many others were landless men. For the large landowner, contracting for casual labour was a perfect opportunity to enjoy the advantages of an English-style tenancy, but without the disadvantages of that system - its long term, and legal formality and its making-over of direct control of land to the tenant. An Ashburton landowner could ease the responsibilities of direct farming of an estate by letting large portions of it to small farmers on a year-to-year basis, or by contracting for men to carry out much of the agricultural work without having to provide housing, rations, and so on.

¹ Country Journal,

Sept. 1893, p.393.

The attractiveness of this contracting system meant that a very large proportion of all farm work on Ashburton estates was done by men not attached to the property in any formal sense. In one year, chosen randomly, some 42% of men employed in one month on the Lagmhor estate were contractors.¹ Numerous advertisements crowded the columns of the Ashburton newspapers informing potential contractors of openings on the various estates. One day in 1891, for example, M. Friedlander advertised for tenders to transport 5,000 sacks of oats from Dundas estate to Chertsey township.² A year later, he was asking for contractors to stook and stack about 1,000 acres of wheat, and stook about 1,000 more acres of wheat and oats, on Kolmar.³ In the same week, contractors were asked to harvest 350 acres of wheat on Steward's Barford, 170 acres of oats and 59 of wheat on Lagmhor, and cut with string binders 450 acres of wheat and oats on Fairfield estate.⁴ Short term tenants were also called for. In one week in 1894, C.P. Murray-Aynsley advertised that 200 acres of Mount Hutt would be let to a tenant for one year, to grow a white crop.⁵ Four days later, 300 acres of Selma estate were offered to a tenant for cropping, and other contracting jobs advertised included the cleaning of drains on Lagmhor, and the cutting of new drains for seventy chains on T. Dowling's Woolmers estate near Mount Somers.

¹ The year was 1909, when there were 25 permanent employees and 18 contractors employed on the greatly-reduced Lagmhor estate. From Lagmhor Letter Book, in possession of Mr J. Blair, Ashburton.

² Guardian, 21 January 1891.

³ Ibid., 8 January 1892.

⁴ Ibid., 2 January 1892.

⁵ Ibid., 6 July 1894.

The terms offered to contractors were far from lucrative, and it is difficult to see how many made much profit for their time. D. Morrow let 100 acres as a wheat farm one year, and the rent charged was 20/- per acre, plus one half of the production (22 bushels per acre) as an extra rent in kind.¹

Another entry in the accounts book of Montalto records the financial dealings with two partner contractors, David Kerr and Arthur Wilson, who were employed up to 1896. The work they carried out included ploughing and grubbing, discing turnips for 2/- an acre, and ploughing at 8/- an acre a 95 acre plot belonging to Mrs Morrow. Their total wages amounted to £378, earned over several years. However, in the same period, they made substantial payments to the Morrrows. These included such items at £43 for over 500 bags of chaff and half a gallon of castor oil, £17 for foodstuffs bought from the estate stores, and many other such items, the whole totalling £311. This meant a total clear profit of only £67.²

4. Farming Routine.

Apart from management and labour, many other matters preoccupied the gentleman farmer. There was, of course, always the weather. In a letter of 1892, D. Cameron wrote to another landholder with a typical lament over ³

"heavy loss to our crops owing to the heavy rains. I have now about 1,800 acres of wheat in stook and 500 acres of oats, over the half of this wheat has been cut after the first week's rain, most of the oats have also been cut since. A very great amount of damage has been done as matters stand now."

1 From Accounts Book of D. Morrow, Montalto, in possession of Mr E. Morrow, Wakare, Montalto.

2 Ibid, 1896.

3 Hall Papers, 1892, D. Cameron to Sir John Hall, Springfield, 20 July 1892.

It was an ill wind, however, as Cameron was able to praise the beneficial effect of "the continuous Nor'west winds that prevailed for about four or five days afterwards." Fire was another problem, both accidental (as was most common), or as a result of incendiarism, which periodically broke out in the county. The manager of Lagmhor wrote to G.A.Maclean Buckley's insurance company one day,¹

"I regret to say, that a fire took place in the harvest field on Lagmhor Estate yesterday - the actual damage would not exceed £20 Stg. Fortunately by most strenuous exertions on the part of the men it was got under control, and a terrible fire averted. Had a norwester been blowing they could not have saved. The wind was from the norEast. Notwithstanding that the men are constantly warned never to smoke in the harvest field this fire was started by one of the binder drivers lighting his pipe on the machine and dropping the match. I don't think it necessary to send your (assessor) down. The area burnt about 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres that was in Stook."

The rabbit menace was beginning to become apparent in the 'nineties, and began to absorb some of the gentry's time in preparatory measures. In 1895 a "rabbit conference" of gentry and farmers met to consider the problem in the county. They included E.G. Wright, who chaired the meeting, A.E. Peache, V.F. Musgrave, D.Cameron, F.Peter, D.F. Knight, D.Morrow, and J. Harrison.² And there were also problems of litigation. In 1890, for example, M. Friedlander was involved in a costly and protracted dispute with a Christchurch "money lender" who had extended a lien on one of Friedlander's tenants. It was necessary to take the matter to court before the landlord's rights could be redressed.³

¹ Lagmhor Letter Book,
N.Z. Insurance Co, *undated*.

H.Ford to the Manager,

² Guardian, 14 August 1895.

³ *Ibid.*, 17 July 1890.

The day-to-day routine of the estates is shown in the scattered station journals and work reports which have managed to survive the last eighty years. An overseer's report on the "General Working of Lagmhor Estate as from Dec 20th to Jany 20th" reads as follows;¹

"Regret to say that a serious drought beginning early December with continuous NorWest winds and great heat, burnt up the pastures, and all rape Kale and root crops are at a stand still, and further, damaged the cereal crops.

On the general average they have not filled well and this is complained of all through the county.

The teams have been working in Fitzgeralds Paddock; through the growth of weeds caused through the October rains the land required a great deal of cultivation before it could be drilled. The harvest will be general here in a few days. Caterpillars have made their appearance on some of the wheat but I hope not to do us any serious damage.

The Wool 133 Bales shipped in the Tongariro and should be in time for the March sales in London.

We have had a little rain on the 18th and 20th Inst. enough to help the Kale and will also do some good to the pastures.

In a month from now we should be well through with the harvest."

A.E. Peache's estate of Mount Somers provides a good illustration of a fairly typical station of the time. In 1890 this station included some 5,170 acres of freehold, and carried 10,000 sheep. These sheep were almost entirely half and quarter-bred, with only a small number of merinos in the flock. Draft sheep numbering 1,200 to 1,700 were sold every year. The homestead, $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the railway and village, was built on a planted rise, was of two storeys flanked with verandahs and contained twelve main rooms and "offices". The "quarters" comprised a five-roomed shepherd's cottage, a four-roomed men's house, a shearers' house with accommodation for fourteen men,

¹ Lagmhor Letter Book.

and a woolshed for eight shearers. There were also a chaff house, water wheel, chaff cutter, oats crusher, sawmill, two stables, a carriage house, harness house, smithy, sheep yards, stock yards. The estate was divided into twenty-one paddocks. 1,500 acres were ploughed and planted in English grasses, and the remainder was in tussock grass, with English grasses sown through it. The land was all downland or hillslopes, and so not suitable for the growing of grain. Early experiments had failed, and the station was now devoted entirely to sheep-rearing. Twenty acres of native bush and fifteen acres of English trees grew on the estate, and "also numerous small patches of native bush ... affording excellent shelter for sheep and other stock, and also greatly adding to the natural beauty of the property."¹

The musterers on the station were paid 50/- a week, with no allowance for time coming and going. They were to work on Sundays if required, but were paid an additional 10/- in that case.² Permanent workers on the estate were few in number, owing to its purely pastoral nature, and included a head shepherd, two farm hands, a second shepherd, and several extra men employed as labourers from the village. Three farm drays and a waggon were used in the operation of the estate.

Entries in the Mount Somers journal throughout the 'nineties illustrate the careful control of the estate by its owner, A.E. Peache, who was his own manager. In 1892 he bought another 1,300 acres, which raised his total to 7,000 freehold acres of freehold land. In 1893 a large workshop with a loft

¹ Gray, *Quiet Hills*, pp.93-96.

² *Ibid.*, p.98.

and another stable were built, and later a new sheep-dip. Carpenters from the village were employed. In 1893, Peache estimated the value of his estate at £20,000, which made it of rather less value than the average estate. In November of the same year one of the workers' houses was burnt down, and a swagger who had stayed the night was held responsible. Soon afterwards a notice appeared in the local newspaper in which Peache advertised that he would no longer allow swaggers to stay the night at his station.¹

In 1894, in an attempt to stimulate the workers' efficiency, a shearing competition was introduced at Mount Somers. Prizes of £1 and 10/- were offered for the two best shearers. In the same year, a pigeon house was built. In June, 1895, Peache wrote, "I suppose a turn must come and we all hope that it may be soon. In the meantime we have all reluctantly reduced wages and every kind of expenditure."² In spite of this gloomy note, constant improvements on the estate had continued, and a new homestead had been erected in 1892.

Throughout June and July of 1895, A.E. Peache was vigorously organising the other landowners in the Ashburton Gorge area, and waiting on the local bodies, in order to gain support for a scheme to build a rabbit-proof fence across the plains to the sea. This was an attempt to prevent the rabbits from Southland and Otago moving north into the county. In February of 1896 the old water-wheel collapsed and a new one ordered. In September a new cookhouse was built at a cost of £200, with

1 Ibid., p.117.

2 Ibid., p.130.

an oven large enough to bake twenty-eight loaves at a time and so satisfy the voracious appetites of the workers.

A smaller estate was Westerfield, which, after the sale of large areas as two separate estates in 1890, was only 2,524 acres - the minimum size according to my definition of "estate". It was owned by C.F. Todhunter in partnership with C.H. Dowding, formerly Studholme's manager on Coldstream. Situated "ten miles from Ashburton on a first rate road and two miles from the Westerfield station on the Mt Somers railway,"¹ the estate consisted of "about 1,500 acres (of) strong land above the terrace, the balance being exceptionally good river bed".² Todhunter and Dowding paid £17,500 for the estate in 1890. Of this, £12,000 was covered by a mortgage, which Todhunter had arranged to cover five years at 6%. Another £5,000 were paid for stock and plant.³

Improvements to the estate were detailed in an insurance policy taken out in 1890. They included the homestead, worth £1,800 (Peache's new two-storeyed mansion at Mount Somers cost £1,500), another brick dwelling-house, a gardener's cottage, an entrance lodge, shearers' cottage, men's quarters, stables, coach house, carpenters' shed and loft, a seed loft, cowshed, stable for draft horses, woolshed, and slaughter house. Other items covered by the insurance policy included two private carriages, three farm drays, two ploughs, seed drill, roller, stripper, station tools, and cart harness.⁴

- 1 Todhunter MSS, from a letter written by C.F. Todhunter to his brother, 4 September 1890.
- 2 Ibid., from a letter written by C.F. Todhunter to E. Menlove, Windsor Park, North Otago, 2 December 1890.
- 3 Ibid., letter of 4 September 1890.
- 4 Todhunter MSS, Insurance policies nos. 24271 and 24272 quoted in letter book.

By January 1896 the flock of sheep on Westerfield numbered 6,000. These included 17 Shropshire rams, 579 cross-bred ewes, 1077 half-bred ewes, 459 2/4 tooth ewes, 2079 two-tooths, mixed sexes, 1632 lambs, and 128 fat sheep. Another 1,300 sheep were bought in February ($\frac{3}{4}$ bred lambs) to bring the flock up to 7,300. In addition to grazing, this small mixed estate grew crops of wheat, oats, turnips, and rape. As an indication of the income of the property, it was expected in 1895 to make a gross earning of £3,500 for the year's grain crop. This was at a time when wheat prices were at their lowest level for the entire depression, as were oats and barley.¹

The number of workers on the property varied, as was usual, but seems to have averaged about ten. The Westerfield journal mentions permanent employees, such as Byrne, Wright, Horn, Farrelly, Carter and Loy, as well as various contractors such as Collison and Johnson, and in addition makes vague references to "mates", "boys", and so on. Seasonal labour was hired in addition, and it was quite common, as on most of the smaller estates, for the son and brother of the owner to do various jobs about the station, supervising and sharing the work of the men. The men worked up tremendous appetites, which were satisfied in the usual country way - with abundant

^{Auckland,}
 1 Lloyd Pritchard, M.F., An Economic History of New Zealand to 1939, 1970, p.161. Wheat prices were in a three-year trough which represented the rock bottom for the depression. Wool and mutton prices were also low. The continued profitability of Westerfield even in this very bad year is significant, as it indicates that large estates were able to weather the depression and continue to be economic.

rations of meat, bread, and tea. In five days, for example, rations of meat alone were as follows: for some of the workers - Byrne 6lb, Collison 9lb, Carter 12lb, Loy 14lb, and Johnson 20lb! At the "Big House", C.F. Todhunter and Mrs Todhunter, C.H. Dowding, B.E. Todhunter, several children, and the domestic staff consumed between them some 89lb of fresh mutton.

The estate journal sheds light on the detailed routine life of Westerfield, the social amusements of the family in the "Big House" as well as the steps in the endless cycle of farm work which occupied the lives of the workers, and most of those of the masters. Typical passages of daily station work run as follows:

"17 February 1896: Fine hot day. H.Horn working for Collison grubbing, Farrelly and Carter after sheep all day. Wright and Byrne fencing, Bob shepherding and fencing.

20 February: C.F.T. (Todhunter) at 'Horsley Down' (sheep) sale.

24 February: Fine fresh morning. Ben and Carter chaining Mill Farm River bed for fencing. Bob mending fences. Wright harrowing after rape. Byrne cutting posts for fencing. H.Horn working for Collison. Farrelly went away this morning. Bob doing his work.

25 February: C.F.T. at Tinwald market - sheep a little better.

26 February: B.E.T. (Todhunter's brother) started on daisy cart to meet lambs from 'Horsley Down' - he goes up by Upper Rakaia Bridge and will try to make T. Phillips' Point (an estate in Selwyn county) tonight.

27 February: Collison's teams grubbing Yarrow paddock and part of woodside stubbles.

6 March: Collison's team ploughing in Park. Johnson's two teams ploughing in Woodside. Loy, Wright, Carter, Bob, Byrne, H.Horn and Farrelly all crutching and dipping lambs after doing other necessary work. Loy worked with a mate - fencing, etc.

2 April: Heavy rain all day. The gardener, Lovett and Horn mending sacks in Shearers' Hut. Carter and Farrelly round sheep. Loy and mate not working. Byrne B.E.T. working at station accounts. /not working. C.F.T. out shooting with a visitor, Wilfred Stead, with small success - 1 duck and a few hares.

12 December: Two boys started work pulling wild

turnips in Woodside."¹

The business of operating estates occupied much time, of course. Conscientious landowners found themselves hard pressed for time. A.E. Peache wrote in an harrassed moment, "I lead a busy life as with all the work on the station, book-keeping and correspondence, there are not many idle moments..."² Travel associated with business also took up many hours weekly. The Todhunters at Westerfield were inveterate trippers, and in February, 1896, the station diary includes the following instances:³

- 5th: C.F.T. (Todhunter) came down from Ch.Ch.
- 7th: B.E.T. (Todhunter) to Ch.Ch. by train from Westerfield.
- 12th: C.F.T. went to Ch.Ch.
- 14th: C.F.T. returned from Ch.Ch.
- 19th: C.F.T. went to Ch.Ch.
- 21st: C.F.T. returned from Ch.Ch.

The gentry were also frequently travelling in to Ashburton borough for business, shopping, and local politics. They stayed at the Somerset when there, and on one day in 1894, the Guardian noted that guests at that hotel included J.C.N. Grigg of Longbeach, "Mr Hutton" from Longbeach (in-law of the Griggs), W. Lyttleton of Rokeby, J. Studholme of Merevale, G. Gould of Christchurch (connected with several Ashburton families, formerly partner in Springfield), W.F. Maclean Buckley (brother of Buckley of Lagmhor), and M. Stitt (manager of Hart's Winchmore).⁴

1 All above quotes and information from the "New Zealand Rough Diaries" for 1896 and 1892 (actually 1895), Todhunter MSS.

2 Gray, Quiet Hills, p.111.

3 Todhunter MSS, 1896 Rough Diary.

4 Guardian, 7 April 1894.

These journal excerpts and reports give a clear picture of day-to-day station management at the time. The owner was generally a careful man, busy in maintaining and improving his estate, concerned with shearing competitions, sheep sales, such minor matters as pigeon-houses, acquiring more land and stock if he could, husbanding his resources, and complaining about prices. There were some lazy and indifferent gentleman farmers. But the majority, ranging from John Grigg of Longbeach, with his massive operations on the "finest farm in the world", to A.E. Peache and C.F. Todhunter on their modest estates, seem to have been of a more diligent and industrious mould. Their estates were their livelihood, and whether squire-ish amateurs or hard-headed efficiency experts they generally brought interest and competence to the running of their estates. Workers' conditions might often be bad, but this could not be equated with bad farming. Prices were low, but this probably encouraged better farming and new intensification of the estates, careful management being necessary to make them pay.

II. THE INCOME OF THE GENTRY

1. Income From Farming

Before discussing finances, some basis of comparison must be established to lend meaning to figures. It was earlier suggested that a simple multiplication of 'nineties figures by twenty-five would give a rough equation with figures of the 1970s. Probably more useful, is a comparison with the

earnings of the upper landed classes of Britain. In 1861 the British Parliament discussed the endowment of landed estates to newly-created English nobles, to enable them to keep up their rank at a suitable level. It was suggested that "a baronet's qualification might be fixed at £500 a year, a peer's at £2,000!"¹ A country squire would earn anything from rather less than £500 a year to one or two, sometimes more, thousand. By the 'nineties, an English baronet's income would be from £1,000 a year upwards, and a nobleman's from £4,000 upwards.

Only fragmentary evidence remains to calculate the Ashburton gentry's income, and to enable comparisons to be made. Figures from the period are difficult to come by, and even the passage of eighty years has not made Ashburton landed families readier to discuss their forbears' finances. Elementary calculations based upon yields and contemporary prices are enlightening. Springfield exported 52,000 bushels of wheat at 6/- a bushel in one year, thus earning £15,600.² Deducting 20/- a quarter for shipment, wages, and other expenses, this would leave a net profit of £9,100. Throughout the 'nineties, 3/- was the average price, however, and Springfield was one of the county's largest estates. The Country Journal of 1893 (a year of bad prices) reported the Longbeach crop for export to be 170,200 bushels of wheat; "this wheat can be shipped to England at a cost of about 20s per quarter", and could be sold at 27s, meaning that "the profit even at present low prices would be a large one."³ The profit of 1893 would have been,

1. Thompson, F.M.L., English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century, London, 1963, p.62.

2. Scotter, Canterbury, p.97.

3. Country Journal, September 1893, p.390.

in fact, £7,500 - and that in one of the most depressed years of the century. It was possible to reduce overheads and increase profit further; in 1896, 30,000 bushels of Longbeach wheat of that year's crop were sold at the Winslow railway station to a Sydney buyer at 3/3 a bushel, thus saving Grigg shipping costs.¹ Such figures meant that even a comparatively small estate, such as Kolmar, might earn lucrative profits from its wheat fields alone; Kolmar usually grew about 1,700 acres of wheat, and produced 30 bushels to the acre. With a crop of about 51,000 bushels, and a net profit, after exporting, of perhaps 7/- a quarter, this would earn some £2,200 clear. Such profits enabled Longbeach to pay some £4,000 annually to New Zealand Railways for transporting costs, and for the workers on the estate to save £5,000 between them each year. The average wheat yield of the time was about twenty bushels per acre (steadily increasing throughout the decade, incidentally), and a poorish, very small estate like Barford, was probably earning a few hundred pounds every year from wheat sales,² after expenses had been deducted.

Sheep also produced ample profits. In an average year a station such as Mount Somers, with a low ratio of sheep to the acre in comparison with estates on the plains proper, could earn A.E. Peache £3,000 a year. His expenses of £950 left £2,050 remainder as clear profit - thus representing a 13% return on the value of the estate.³ And as times were bad, Peache could economise, like a good businessman, with such measures as sending his wool bales directly to New York

1 Guardian, 29 February 1896.

2 If Barford grew 400 acres in most years (which it appears to have done), at 15 bushels per acre this would give a product of 750 quarters, worth perhaps £300 clear profit.

3 Gray, Quiet Hills, p. 116.

for scouring, on the Wave Queen, and then on to London for sale, as he decided to do in December 1890. In 1888 the clip of 102 bales of wool from J. Deans's Waimarama earned him £1,428, in addition to which this smallish estate returned considerably more for its fattened wethers, wheat, pigs, and beef.¹ In 1892, A.F. Somerville's manager at The Terraces, sold 1,000 fat sheep at 18/6 a head, thus earning him £925.² In 1888, D. Cameron shipped 9,800 frozen lambs directly to England, and these possibly earned him as much as £10,000.³

The estates produced other sources of income too. Sales of flax on marshy estates could earn £4 an acre,⁴ so that an estate with only 100 acres still in swamp could be earning £400 to supplement sales of wheat, wool, and meat. Many Ashburton estates bred horses for sale. In October, 1890, J. Grigg "sent by rail from Ashburton a long train of horses for shipment to India. The horses have all been selected with a view to meet the Indian demand, not only for cavalry remounts, but for generally useful light horses."⁵ Few landowners could supply a whole train of horses, but more typical was E. Herring's sale of eight horses, bred on Alford, to the Indian Army, in 1891.⁶ Horses could earn incomes by being used for stud purposes also. In 1890, M. Friedlander's

1 Deans, Pioneers , p.116.

2 Guardian, 1 June 1892.

3 Macdonald, "Biographies."

4 Guardian, 17 November 1890.

5 Ibid, 8 October 1890.

6 Ibid, 24 August 1891.

manager and groom-in-charge were advertising the services of two of his stud stallions on Kolmar.¹ Pigs could be equally remunerative - herds were built up quickly, and their high fertility ensured large profits. J. Grigg began his styer by buying 300 pigs for £300. Within the first twelve months he had sold off fat pigs to the value of £1,500, leaving 600 porkers for the next season's breeding. In the second year he was able to sell fat pigs to the value of £3,500, and 700 porkers were kept over. In the third year he was able to sell 3,000 fat pigs, realising £5,500 profit.² Rents were another income source, and in one year, D. Morrow earned £100 rent, plus wheat worth about £50 as payment in kind on 100 acres let to tenants.³

Major expenses included transport costs, labour, commissions, and insurance charges. The complete balance sheet of one Ashburton estate in one year has survived intact - that of Coldstream in 1888 - and from this and the fragmented evidence dealt with above, a rough picture of the profitability of estates can be drawn. The main expenses of Coldstream in 1887-1888 were as follows:

£1139	cheques drawn
£1049	wages for casual and contract workers
£ 836	wages for permanent estate workers
£ 519	new stock (sheep, cattle, horses)
£ 437	taxes
£ 386	railways
£ 402	corn and wool expenses
£ 319	rent
£ 317	seed
£ 300	management
£ 240	stores
£ 178	improvements and fencing
£ 628	miscellaneous (inc. voluntary clergy's stipend, insurance, cow house rebuilding, implements, grain, manures, sheep dip)

£6,750 total expenses

¹ Ibid, 11 October 1890.

² These figures are contained in an unidentified newspaper clipping in the Financial Journal of D. Morrow. in possess-

In the same year, receipts earned by the estate were:

£5422 wool (423 bales)
 £2045 sale of surplus stock (sheep, cattle, horses, pigs)
 £1911 frozen meat
 £ 521 skins, tallow, and fat
 £ 291 miscellaneous
£10,190 total income.

This gave, after all expenses, a clear income to J. Studholme of £3,440, income from grain sales brought this up to £4,481. Coldstream was worth about £60,000, and in this year of rather poorer than usual prices, he had earned a return of over 7% on the value of the estate.¹ The incomplete financial records of C.F. Todhunter's Westerfield suggest a clear income of about £1,800 in 1892, or almost exactly 10% return on the estate's value.² It has already been pointed out that A.E. Peache earned over £2,000, or 13% return on Mount Somers. From these disconnected pieces of information, it seems likely that Ashburton gentry could count on an annual return of from 5% to 10%, even 13% on the value of their estates. The smallest estates falling within the classification would earn from £750 to £1,500 annually by this reckoning, the average estate from £1,700 to £3,300 annually, and the largest, such as Springfield and Longbeach, from £5,000 to £10,000 in the case of the former, and from £8,000 to 16,000 in the latter. In other words, the incomes of the Ashburton gentry could be roughly equated with those of the squires, baronets, and lesser and middle nobility of England.

1 Studholme MSS, Paddock Minute Book. Receipts for wheat were not itemised in this account. It is significant that taxes paid accounted for only about 7% of the station expenses.

2 Todhunter MSS.

2. Other Financial Factors.

There were other sources of income available to supplement that from the tilling and grazing of the land. Many of the gentry received rents in the form of mortgage payments from small farmers who were indebted to them. In some cases, Ashburton gentry acted as mortgagees for members of their families. In 1896, for example, G.A. Maclean Buckley and his brother, St. John Maclean Buckley, a North Otago landowner, extended a mortgage of £10,000 to their brother, W.F. Maclean Buckley, on part of his Dunsandel estate. Another £5,200 was added to this mortgage the next year.¹ The two mortgagees charged their brother interest payments on this combined sum. In 1892, C.J. Harper acquired a mortgage over his brother, Sir George Harper, and his partner, on a small estate on an island in the "Courtenay" river.² When J. Studholme I and his brother, M. Studholme, dissolved their partnership, M. Studholme became mortgaged for £400,000 to his brother. The interest payments on this, together with the gradual repayment of the capital were a large source of income.

Motives in dealings between members of families were mixed, however, and full profit-making presumably was not one of them. Extending mortgages to small farmers was another matter, and could contribute a substantial return for investments. Gentry who had a toehold in the legal and business worlds were particularly energetic in this respect, and F. de Cartaret Malet was mortgagee for many small farmers, including a Tai Tapu farmer for £3,750, another on the south bank of the Waimakariri for £800, P. Ryan of Broadfields farm for £200, a Moeraki

¹ Lands & Deeds, 140D893, and 143D312.

² Ibid., 135D18.

farmer's widow for £250, a Heathcote property for £800, and an Ellesmere farm for £1,900. In addition, a 100 acre farm near Lincoln was mortgaged to Mrs de Cartaret Malet for £1,500.

The interest charged on these mortgages was usually 8% or 8½%, which meant that investment in mortgages was as remunerative

as farming.¹ Other mortgagees were J. Studholme I, William Strange of Riversdale, J.C.N. Grigg, John Holmes, D. Morrow, H. McIlraith, and G. McRae of Stronschrubie.² This list is by no means complete. The station lady, as has already been

noted, could also find herself the holder of mortgages, as did Mrs J. Studholme I, who in 1896 had mortgages to the value of £30,000 transferred to her by J.B.A. Acland and C.G. Tripp.³ Mortgages were extended to local small farmers, and to others throughout the province.

Land speculations were another source of income, although a more difficult one to assess, and not, of course, a regular income producer. Several Ashburton landowners made "profitable speculations" in North island land.⁴ Others appear to have profited when several thousand acres of county land were offered for sale by the Crown in 1890. And when necessary, useful sums of money could be made by selling off a block of land from an estate, as was done by R.S. Strachey in 1894, when he sold 94 acres of Maronan for £750,⁵ and by W.McN. Lyttleton, who sold 822 acres of Rokeby one year for £11,000.⁶ Another source of income for one section of the gentry was from clergy's stipends. The Rev. Dr. J. Elmslie of Cardendale, for example, was offered

1 Ibid., 123D646, 125D716, 134D237, 134D766, 136D643, 137D239, 138D535.

2 Ibid., 129D446, 140D498, 137D255, 139D23, 131D610, 124D603, 129D159, 134D184.

3 Studholme MSS, Letter to Mrs J. Studholme I, 14 December 1896.

4 Campbell, "Landed Society", p. 29.

5 Lands & Deeds, 137D731.

a stipend of £700 annually by his Presbyterian parish, and Anglican clergy generally received substantially more.¹

Several of the gentry earned supplementary incomes this way.

Far more important was income earned from involvement with the world of business and commerce, centred upon Christchurch. One of the features that distinguished the gentry clearly from the groups below it was its semi-urban nature. Strong ties linked the gentry with the "metropolis" of Canterbury. A substantial proportion of the gentry had begun their careers in business, and all retained extra-landed interests after they had acquired estates. Many landowners without previous business experience entered the commercial world too, particularly in ventures related to the frozen meat industry, and others tried to diversify their economic strength by exploiting the industrial or mining potential of their estates. In some cases, it is difficult to decide whether a man was primarily a landowner or a businessman, and the clear-cut distinction between farmer and "middleman" or "the money interest" seen at a lower level of rural society was not apparent among the gentry.

Christchurch capitalists had always been ready to invest in land. R.C.J. Stone has found that landed estates in the Auckland province, as high-value securities, "could in effect create a fresh store of capital to sustain the activities of an entrepreneur."² Auckland businessmen tried to establish country estates in the same way as Christchurch "merchant princes" like Morrow, Ballantyne, and Strange. An intractable

1 Elmslie, *Elmslie* . . . , p.24.

2 Stone, R.C.J., *Makers of Fortune, Auckland*, 1973, p.134.

countryside meant that such ventures failed in the north, when they could succeed in the south. But in a colony, with limited investment outlets, it was natural for a strong cross-fertilisation between urban and rural capital to occur.

Many examples can be quoted. H.P. Murray-Aynsley of Mount Hutt, for example, had extensive shipping as well as landed interests, and was chairman of directors of the Grey River Coal Company. J.L. Coster was the virtual founder of the New Zealand Shipping Company, was its first manager, and was also for a time manager of the Bank of New Zealand, in addition to owning an estate near Rakaia. J. Studholme was another landowner with shipping interests, being a director of the N.Z. Shipping Coy, and was also an exporter of rubber from his Fijian rubber plantation, and invested substantially in the mining industry, as did his son and wife. In 1891-92, J. Studholme II bought 2,600 shares in various Australian mining companies.¹ At periodic intervals one of the Studholme family would cross the Tasman to review the mining situation, and tend to their investments. William White was involved in shipping in another way - he operated steamboats, such as the Swamp Hen, on Lake Ellesmere and the adjacent waterways. In addition to this, he was a contractor, timber mill owner, merchant, and financier.

J. Grigg was an example of a landowner who developed some small industry on his own estate. A large kiln was built at Eiffelton in 1889, a steam-driven mixing machine installed, and the production of bricks and tiles from Longbeach clay begun.

¹ Studholme MSS, Share Certificates 1891-92 of J. Studholme II.

The bricks and tiles were used on the estate for buildings and to line drains, and large quantities were also sold to local farmers, and on the open market. Grigg was always ready to expand the economic potential of his estate, and this was the motive behind his employing a permanent hand for some time to comb the sea beach, in the hope of finding gold or other precious metals.¹ He also constructed four threshing mills on Longbeach, and their services were available (at a price) to the local cockatoos. In the world of big business, Grigg was one of the strongest promoters of the frozen meat industry, and was a major shareholder and chairman of directors of the Canterbury Frozen Meat Company from 1882-1900. Studholme was another director of this company, and diversified his interests by running a boiling-down factory at Kaiapoi.

J. Ballantyne and his neighbour, D. Morrow, both retained important business interests after they became landowners. Ballantyne had sold out his controlling share of Dunstable House when the assets were worth £65,000, but remained considerably involved in the business from the distant Ashburton rus. When Dunstable House was rebuilt in 1893 as a three-storey building "in the Italian Renaissance style with pedimented windows at regular intervals, heavy cornice, and balustrading above"², Ballantyne was still a major shareholder. In the 'nineties, Ballantyne advanced large sums to his sons to set them up as shareholders in the business, and charged a good rate of interest to them. Morrow's interests were more closely linked with agriculture. Seven capitalists founded the

1 From a typescript. Dunlop, A.R., "History of Ashburton", Ashburton, 1928. No page numbers.

2 Sayers, C.H., "The History of Canterbury as Expressed in its Buildings", M.A. Thesis, Canterbury University, Ch.Ch. 1932.

Christchurch Meat Company, and Morrow, who bought a quarter of all the shares, was the largest. He became manager of the Meat Company, and was also involved with the International Harvester Company, together with many other concerns. Evidence of Morrow's wealth is the fact that he doubled his landholdings in Ashburton county immediately after buying his shares in the Meat Company. P. Cunningham was another Ashburton landowner who invested in the Christchurch Meat Company, and was managing director from 1891 onwards. This provided him with an annual honorarium of £500 - another source of income to the gentry. Cunningham was also a director with E.G. Wright and others in a Christchurch investment company.

E.G. Wright had many financial interests. He was chairman of the Blackball Coal Company and Christchurch Gas Company, owned a quarry at Hoon Hay, was one of Canterbury's largest railway contractors, and earned £400 a year from tolls on the Selwyn River Bridge for ten years. J. Cathcart Wason owned a boiling-down factory. H.W. Packer was a director of a Christchurch hotel company, the Christchurch Tramway Company, owned the Metropolitan Hotel completely, and a railway siding. George Hart was chairman of the directors of the Canterbury Meat Export Company, and W. Strange owned a large Christchurch drapery firm. F. de Cartaret Malet was managing director of the Lyttelton Times from 1891 to 1893, and was also chairman of directors of the Bank of New Zealand and the Christchurch Meat Company at various times. M. Friedlander had been involved with his family firm, and after having to sell Kolmar

and at least all the stock on Roxburgh, he was rewarded by becoming head of Friedlander and Company. He had also established the Kolmar Brick and Pipe works, attempting to repeat Grigg's success on Longbeach. J. Deans owned a brick works too, on his Homebush estate in Selwyn county. Westcott Lyttleton was a director of the New Zealand Farmers' Co-operative Association.

Another prominent landowner, Sir William Steward, supplemented the income from Barford with various business interests. He owned the Ashburton Guardian and Mail in the 'nineties, amongst other firms, and also dabbled in speculations. In 1885, for example, he had been involved in what was thought a "shady deal" with the Waimate Gorge District Railway Company, in which he had bought and sold some of the company's debentures at a considerable profit - said to be some £10,000. The Waimate Gorge Railway scandal had been carried into Parliament, where Steward, who was a member, had been under very unfavourable scrutiny. The House ended a long and controversial debate on the scandal by resolving that Steward "had done nothing disgraceful but that such business transactions were undesirable".¹ Sir William remained unabashed, and continued to speculate with profit. C.P. Cox was perennially involved, less successfully, in a wide range of speculations, from a land and estate agency in Ashburton, to dredging on the West Coast, and exporting.

More respectable profits were available elsewhere. A.E. Peache was able to supplement his income with mining and quarrying interests on his Mount Somers estate.

¹ P.D., vol. 55, p. 441.

He formed a partnership with J.B.A. Acland, and C.G. Tripp, landowners in the next county, and they together owned a coal mine and tramway near Mount Somers village, which was leased. In addition, Peache owned the Buxton Lime Kilns, which he had opened in 1888, and which "gave a great fillip to local industry and employed a number of men from the village."¹ He also owned a lime-burning kiln, which he leased to E.G. Wright's son. Along with these three large lime kilns went all the necessary buildings and tramways - the latter linking the kilns with the Mount Somers coal mine and railway. Peache wrote with evident satisfaction in the early 'nineties that "the kilns are leased to good tenants for ten years at £200 per annum with Royalties added when the output exceeds a certain amount."² In 1891 he purchased a coal pit, which enabled him to save money on middlemen. At the same time his small quarry on the estate was producing good building stone profitably, and employing three men. J. Deans owned a coal mine as well as his brick works.

Whenever new opportunities to invest surplus capital arose the gentry were able to do so. They were playing an important part in the development of new industries both in Canterbury and in Westland, diversifying production on their estates if possible, and actively promoted new ventures for the "development" of the county. When a list of provisional directors of a new railway was drawn up, all were landed gentry: H. and J.A. McIlraith, J. Cathcart Wason, H.P. Murray-Aynsley, C.S. Alington, N. Mackie, Charles Reed, and E. Chapman.

1 Gray, *Quiet Hills*, p.81.

2 Ibid., p.95.

When the Rakaiia and Ashburton Forks Railway Company was finally formed, its directors were George Gould (then still partner in Springfield), E.S. Coster of Somerton, G.Hart of Winchmore, and D.G. Holmes of Holmselee - all gentry.

Mortgages were another important factor in the financial situation of the gentry. A large number of gentry were not only the mortgagees of small farmers, but were themselves subject to mortgages to banks, finance companies, and English capitalists or friends. I.R.C. Cunninghame-Graham, for example, mortgaged Winterslow in three successive increments from 1873 for £9,000 payable to the New Zealand Trust and Loan company, and to W. Harris of the Elms, Rowden Hill, Wiltshire. In 1888 Cunninghame-Graham had remitted £514 of this, and thus released a meagre 66 acres from mortgage. The remainder of his estate remained encumbered.¹ In 1890, R. Strachey mortgaged 300 acres of his estate to the Union Fire and Marine Insurance Company of New Zealand for £12,200, and when he made the property over to his son, Richard Sholto Strachey, in 1895 he transferred the "equity of redemption" to him.² Many, if not most, large landowners were subject to similar mortgages, and mortgage interest payments were a large item on most station budgets.

But for the gentry mortgage was not the inflexible burden it was for the small farmer. Most cockatoos appear to have taken on only one mortgage, and then spent a lifetime struggling to repay it. The gentry, on the other hand, generally seem to have manipulated mortgages as a means of raising liquid

1 Lands & Deeds, 122D488.

2 Ibid., 139D878.

assets for re-investment, to attain calculated ends, or to pursue other financial manoeuvrings. The turnover of gentry mortgages appears to have been high, with a good deal of transferences of "equities of redemption". Some gentry took out only one mortgage in a year of financial stringency, and then carefully repaid it over a period of years. In 1889, for example, George Hart completely discharged the mortgage to the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Company on Winchmore.¹ A few others found themselves unable to keep up payments, apparently, and their estates fell into the hands of the mortgagees. Cunninghame-Graham's Winterslow, and the Moorhouses' Shepherds Bush are examples of this. But for the most part, the large landowners seem to have manipulated mortgages skilfully, and borne the burden of indebtedness lightly. The estates were, after all, large businesses, and businesses on this scale generally operate on overdrafts. A speedy rate of mortgage turnover indicates a healthy business rather than the reverse. The intricate Studholme finances are a good example of this. There can be no doubt that the Studholme family was making a great deal of money from its landed interests, in spite of the steady drain of the North Island properties, and yet their mortgage involvement was very heavy. In 1878, for example, 796 acres of Coldstream were mortgaged to an English capitalist (probably a friend of Studholme's) for £15,000. In 1888 this particular mortgage was discharged, but on the following day the 796 acres were re-mortgaged for £20,000

¹ Ibid., 128D25.

to the New Zealand Trust and Loan Company.¹ J. Studholme I then transferred the "equity of redemption" over this land to his son, J. Studholme II, for a nominal charge of ten shillings.² Later in the 'nineties, J. Studholme I mortgaged another 220 acres of Coldstream to his son, "John Studholme the Younger of Coldstream ... Gentleman," for £6,000.³ There were many other complicated mortgage arrangements. In 1891, the £20,000 was repaid to the N.Z. Trust and Loan Company, and in the same year another £15,000 mortgage at 6% was repaid to "Miles and Spicer". Soon after, J. Studholme II took out a mortgage of £35,000, due for repayment in 1898, to the Public Trustee. In 1893, a section near Hinds was mortgaged to the Union Bank.⁴

Other landowners executed these intricate financial steps on varying scales. The example of the Singletree estate has already been touched upon. This small estate of 2,406 acres near the Alford Forest village had been mortgaged to a finance company based in Dunedin. Half of the estate was in English grasses, and the other half cropped, and its annual income was well over £1,000. The terms of mortgage were re-negotiated in 1893. The Dunedin firm arranged to sell the "equity of redemption", and the owner transferred it to a neighbour, A. McFarlane, of Glenara. McFarlane provided a more favourable interest rate to his neighbour and enabled all obligations to the Dunedin firm to be discharged.⁵

1 Ibid., 124D483.

2 Ibid., 123D897.

3 Ibid., 143D696.

4 Studholme MSS, Paddock Minute Book.

5 Guardian, 16 December 1893, and 17 January 1894.

There was at least one case of this sort of manoeuvring leading to disaster. At the beginning of the decade, W. de Burton Wilson, "Gentleman", began to found an Ashburton estate. He bought 1,200 acres for £6,200, and in mid-October 1890 consolidated this into the Maranui estate by buying more land worth £13,100. He mortgaged the latter and another 400 acres to the A.M.P. Association for £14,000, and his 7,500 sheep to the Bank of Australasia for £1,000. Within several months he had made withdrawals of up to £2,500 from the bank. Wilson also owed an old debt of £1,500 to an Ashburton merchant, and later took out yet another loan, using his father, a wealthy Ellesmere landowner as a guarantor for £3,200. But in time Wilson owed the merchant £3,000 unsecured, and without means to pay. The Bank of Australasia had in the meantime made a demand for repayment, and took possession of the estate. Wilson declared bankruptcy. He managed to extricate something from his ruin by suing for restitution of his sheep and wool on their value "on the ground that the deeds were given subject to a condition or defeasance not written on the same paper ...". The Ashburton District Court declared the stock mortgage and wool lien void, and charged costs against the bank.¹

But in general, mortgages do not appear to have been invidious to the gentry, and were even useful means of retaining capital liquidity. Three examples to demonstrate the range of transactions can be given from contiguous estates

¹ Ibid., 8 April 1891, 11 January 1891, and 12 March 1891.

along the Rakaiia river. The Browne family estate of High-bank was completely unencumbered with mortgages. It was purchased by M.I. Browne I for cash, and passed to his son, M.I. Browne II, in 1891 without any debts attached.¹

Further down the river was A.F. Somerville's The Terraces estate. In 1886 Somerville had taken out a mortgage, and soon discharged it. This was followed by a second mortgage in 1891, a third later in the same year, and a fourth a few years later. All were discharged within five years of being taken out.² The third estate was Corwar, owned by J. Cathcart Wason. Like Somerville, Cathcart Wason periodically took out mortgages, discharged them, re-adjusted them, and sometimes remortgaged the same blocks. All the time, however, he appears to have remained master of the situation, and his solvency not threatened.³

Analysis of mortgage proceedings recorded in the Nominal Index (see Appendix V) confirms this picture. Of 26 cases involving mortgages, the gentry were mortgagees in 22, and were mortgagors only in 4. Of these 4 cases, one involves the discharge of a mortgage. While this is by no means an exhaustive sample (the Nominal Index is very incomplete), it can serve as a random selection. It shows that, far from being crippled with a burden of debt, the landed gentry of the county were much more often in a position to advance loans for interest on the properties of the small cockatoo farmers. The gentry were far more often creditors

1 Lands & Deeds, 105D93.

2 Ibid., 105D71.

3 Ibid., 109D167, 112D287, 112D256.

than debtors. The figure also indicates the substantial involvement in finance and business of many of the landed gentry.

Other facts point to the conclusion that the gentry were more than solvent. The long depression failed to undermine gentry prosperity seriously, and by manipulating mortgages the gentry could continue to operate profitably. Although prices were declining steadily, "the value of output per sheep rose considerably during the nineteenth century - more than enough to offset the decline in wool price. Wool production per sheep averaged about $\frac{3}{4}$ d per year in the late 'fifties. In 1881, through the breeding of heavier yielding cross-breds, the value had risen to 4/6d. This was subsequently supplemented by earnings from the meat export trade."¹ Although prices dropped, the "minimum economic" flock of sheep cited by Horsfield as 3,000 or 4,000 in an earlier period shrank considerably. It has already been pointed out that a group of well-to-do small farmers existed, with flocks of several hundred or one or two thousand sheep. If these men could flourish then the large landowners unquestionably did so.

The balance sheets of Coldstream show this; between 1872 and 1890 the income of the estate, after all expenses, never dropped below £3,100. It was at its peak in 1872-73, when the total income was £6,600, but even as late as 1888-89 a balance of £5,100 was recorded. The balance was below

¹ Horsfield, *Economic Viability*, p. 97.

£4,000 only four times (1875-76, 1883-84, 1884-85, and 1886-87), and was usually from £4,500 to £5,000.¹ It has already been noted that the gentry continued to purchase land throughout the depression, and usually paid cash. In 1885 J. Cathcart Wason bought about 2,000 acres "in fee simple", and the purchases of M.I. Browne and A.F. Somerville in the same period were also made for cash. This appears to have been common. Lennon's conclusion that in general the large landowners were still buying up land, possessed ample cash to do it, and that depression only hit the small farmers with any rigour, seems confirmed by Ashburton experience.²

Taxation was relatively innocuous, and raw incomes were only lightly touched by the government. Prior to 1892, direct taxation consisted of a property tax of only a penny in the pound, along with which were stamp duties. The Liberal government instituted the Land and Income Assessment Act in 1892 which replaced this with a new system which included an ordinary and graduated land-tax, the graduated tax being designed to penalise estate-owners, beginning as it did when the value of a property exceeded £5,000. Mortgages were not deductible in calculating this tax. In addition a new graduated income tax was introduced which, applicable only to incomes over £300 a year, struck only at the better-off classes. This "new regime" aroused growls of protest from the gentry of Ashburton. John Holmes wrote an "incomplete" list of the taxes borne by landowners for publishing in the Guardian, and these included the Property

1 Studholme MSS, Paddock Minute Book.

2 Lennon, "Land Settlement", p. 213.

Tax (at last 1/- per £ of income), County and Road Board taxes, equal to the first, water race taxes, sheep taxes, customs duties on dutiable articles consumed by themselves and their employees, stamp duties, and probate and other testamentary duties.¹ Grigg also complained that, after years devoted to creating Longbeach out of an "impassable swamp" (by now a catch-phrase in the county), he was punished with a graduated tax. The next government valuation of his estate would force him to pay £1,100 a year in taxes, he claimed.²

But these taxes were only "severe" in contrast with what had been before. In comparison with twentieth century taxation they were moderate indeed, and although they skimmed a little of the cream, left plenty behind. Basic incomes remained substantially the same, even after the imposition of the new taxes. The continued wealth of the landed gentry does not seem to have been seriously impaired by depression and Liberalism. Most seem to have continued to enjoy not only prosperity but real wealth. In addition to all their varied incomes, some could call upon the resources of English connections to reinforce them. In 1892, for example, the Studholmes had £20,000 settled on them by Paul Studholme, squire of Crinkle, in King's County, Ireland, as evidence of his "natural love and affection". Soon after, "in consideration of the natural love and affection" of John Studholme's sisters, they each settled lesser sums on the Ashburton family

1 Guardian, 5 July 1892.

2 Ibid., 16 July 1891.

3 Studholme MSS, *Paddock Minute Book*.

In 1896 a brother-in-law of Studholme settled another £1,000 on the family.¹

Although information is far from complete, it appears that the landed gentry earned incomes ranging from £1,000 to £10,000 and more from their various interests, could generally count on a return of from 5% to 13% on the value of their landed estates, and continued to earn substantial profits throughout the depression. At least one wife of an Ashburton landowner could afford to write to her mother-in-law,²

"The mail is just off so I write very hurriedly to thank you very much for sending us that cheque, which we were horrified at and very ungratefully put in the fire!"

1 Ibid., letter from T.C. Moorhouse to Mrs J. Studholme I, 11 March 1896.

2 Ibid., letter from Mrs J. Studholme II to Mrs J. Studholme I 16 February 1900.

CHAPTER IV

THE PUBLIC ROLE OF THE GENTRY1. POLITICAL SERVICE

Since the abolition of the provinces, the Colony of New Zealand had seen a proliferation of institutions of local and colonial government, and by the 'nineties, Ashburton county supported a complex hierarchy of "local bodies". At the top was constituted the county council, responsible for most of the functions of local government.

The county was also divided into various electorates, or parts of electorates, contributing members to the colonial House of Representatives in Wellington. Some of its gentry were members of the Legislative Council, the colony's upper house. Enclosed by the county was a politically independent borough, whose borough council and mayor were nonetheless important influences in "county" affairs. At a lower level, various local jurisdictions existed side by side with the county government.

Road boards were rating authorities, responsible for roading, bridges, and other related matters. School committees dealt with the local administration of the Education Acts. Justiceships of the peace handled summary law in the whole

area, and two military districts were incorporated within the broader South Canterbury military region. In addition, numerous pressure groups proliferated as the peculiar New Zealand phenomenon of "democracy by pressure group" began to grow up. Domain boards, hospital boards, temperance committees, and other such groups all possessed quasi-political significance. New Zealand in the 'nineties was becoming one of the "most governed" countries in the world.

Throughout the nineteenth century, this political order had grown in an ad hoc fashion. It was dominated by the gentry, although, as will be seen below, the lower the political level, the less the involvement and influence of the gentry. Gentry impact was strongest in the colonial and provincial level, weakest at the level of the subdivided county.

1. Colonial and Provincial Politics

Ashburton county's parliamentary representation up to 1896 was almost completely in the hands of the landed gentry. The Ashburton electorate, created in 1881, was the preserve of E.G. Wright and W.C. Walker in alternate terms up to 1896, with one exception, and the Wakanui electorate, which existed from 1881 to 1887, was represented first by J. Cathcart Wason, and later briefly by J. Grigg. Coleridge electorate, in existence from 1866 to 1887, was represented in turn by Sir John Cracroft Wilson, J. Karlake Karlake,

the Rev. W.J.G. Bluett, J. Cathcart Wason, G. Hart, E.G. Wright, and D. McMillan. All but the last were landowners and members of the gentry group. Of the eleven men who represented various parts of the county before 1896, only three were not members of this landed "oligarchy". They were J. Ivess, an Ashburton newspaper editor who represented Wakanui for two two-year terms, D. McMillan, a rich farmer, and J. McLachlan, the bête noire of the gentry, who managed to gain the Ashburton electorate on the votes of small farmers in 1893. In other words, nine of the county's M.H.R.s were gentry, one (Ivess) was probably a "notable", and McLachlan's "gate crashing" term came only at the very end of the period.

During the existence of the provincial system, Ashburton's representation at Christchurch had also been a gentry prerogative. Ashburton's councillors had been Sir John Cracroft Wilson, W.C. Walker, W.S. Peter, and J. Studholme I. Other Ashburton gentry had been M.P.C.s for electorates elsewhere. George Hart, for example, had been a member of the Wellington Provincial Council from 1853 to 1861, was Speaker for two years, and in 1867 was called to Moorhouse's executive in Canterbury. C.J. Harper had been Member for Sefton for three years at the very end of the provincial period.

This meant that a sizeable portion of the gentry group resident in Ashburton in the 'nineties had had political

experience, and had participated in government at the highest levels in the colony. They were mostly "gentlemen politicians" of the "old school", fond of turning Latin phrases, averse to public campaigning for votes (even after the jolt caused by Grey's stumping in the "seventies), and originated from the British ruling classes, with their ideology of service and duty to govern. These attitudes had been reinforced in the county by the comparatively splendid isolation of the gentry, who until the later 'eighties, formed the only substantial group possessing both the leisure and education, and the financial means, to "dabble" in government. At least ten of the forty-five or so large landowners of the 'nineties had been M.H.R.s at some time in the past few decades. Some had represented or still represented, electorates outside Ashburton county. J. Holmes represented a Christchurch electorate for two terms in the 1880s, H.P. Murray-Aynsley was Lyttelton M.H.R. from 1875 to 1879, and William White II was another Christchurch M.H.R. in the 1880s. J.L. Coster represented another urban seat, Heathcote, from 1884 to 1886. For these men, politics remained of secondary interest. For Sir William Steward, however, they were a guiding passion. This gimcrack Don Quixote of politics represented the South Canterbury electorates of Waitaki and Waimate for a total of thirty-four years. Steward was a Liberal poseur and he

flourished politically in the 'nineties, eventually becoming Speaker, and finally being "kicked upstairs" to the Legislative Council.

Other Ashburton landowners were energetic politicians. J. Cathcart Wason's politics were those of a paternalistic Tory, and he was elected to the colonial parliament for three terms on this platform: for Coleridge in the late 'seventies, for Wakanui from 1881 to 1882, and for Selwyn at the end of the 'nineties. Walker of Valetta also had a distinguished political career, beginning as an M.P.C. in the Provincial period, and later becoming an M.H.R. in Wellington. He advanced under the Liberal government to the rank of Minister of Education, and finally ended as Speaker to, and a Member of the Legislative Council. E.G. Wright never attained such honours, as he refused to adjust to Liberalism. But he served three terms in Parliament as M.H.R. for Ashburton, and one more for Coleridge, and during that period became identified as the voice of conservative Ashburton. He had been offered a cabinet post by Whitaker in 1882, but refused it.

Other gentry served in a more abortive fashion. J. Grigg had a term in Parliament, but found it a frustrating, compromising business, and retired to the seclusion of his country estate. G. Hart was M.H.R. for Coleridge for one term, but seems also to have disliked political life, and abandoned it. Others were attracted by political service, but failed to gain sufficient support.

I.R.C. Cunninghame-Graham is perhaps the most marginal example, as he stood as a candidate for Rangitata in 1893, and failed to win more than a handful of votes. His programme was radical, left-wing, and unacceptable in rural New Zealand. Ashburton landowners were also substantially represented in the Legislative Council, where no fewer than three of the gentry could defend the position of their class and county. They were an incongruous collection, however, including the sedate, reactionary W.S. Peter, the elegantly vague W.C. Walker, and the romantic, bombastic Steward.

The gentry not only offered many of its members as candidates for political service, it also rallied vigorously behind those who advanced appropriately conservative views, and pushed their interests at election times. Politicking was one of the best-loved sports in county society, and the active support of "friends" from the gentry seems to have been regarded as of vital importance to election success. After the 1893 election, E.G. Wright regarded "the apathy of over-confident friends" as the chief cause of his failure that year.¹ It was usual for neighbours and friends amongst the gentry to conduct the local campaign to persuade or pressure the workers on their estates to vote the "right" way, and to organise political meetings amongst the local cockatoo farmers, where the candidate would sit at the head, flanked by the local gentry.

¹ Rolleston Papers, 1893, [2 December 1893.
E.G. Wright to W. Rolleston,

When Sir John Hall contested part of Ashburton county in 1890, for example, almost all the large landowners in that area vigorously supported him. W.L. Allan of Acton seems to have felt a squire-ish obligation towards the township and locality of Dorie, and on the eve of the election wrote to Hall that a successful meeting had been held there under his patronage to canvass for support, and that¹

"I think we shall have for our man 90 to 100 votes - this is Dorie, Kyle, and part of Pendarves."

Allan ended his letter by declaring exuberantly that "Dorie is for Sir John ...". T.E. Upton wrote from Sherwood homestead to say that "at Lauriston we all pulled together."² He appears to have collaborated with D. Cameron and probably P. Drummond in championing Hall's cause in the Lauriston village and district, and Cameron also wrote to Hall to discuss the election, inform him of his own efforts in the district, and ending with the friendly words, "Hoping we shall carry the day and with best wishes."³ On 15 December in the same year, when Hall was making his post-election tour of the county, another of these letters with "Springfield" embossed in a rich scarlet at the head congratulated Hall and informed him that Cameron and his family "shall be very pleased to see you here and hope you will arrange to stay overnight at Springfield."⁴

The Murray-Aynsleys delighted in this sort of hospitable, friendly, family-like politicking too. Many letters travelled from Mount Hutt to The Terrace, Hall's estate

1 Hall Papers, 1890, to Sir John Hall, 29 November 1890. W.L. Allan

2 *Ibid.*, T.E. Upton to Sir J. Hall, 9 December 1890.

3 *Ibid.*, D. Cameron to Sir J. Hall, 13 November 1890.

4 *Ibid.*, D. Cameron to Sir J. Hall, 15 December 1890.

near Hororata in the next county. In one, for example, Athole Murray-Aynsley vigorously abused McLachlan, the "poor man's candidate", and pressed Hall to stay at Mount Hutt while campaigning in Methven.¹ Politics were important to the gentry, and most seem to have been eager to take an active role, including the ladies. They were also an expensive activity. The responsibility for hiring rooms, providing suppers, banquets, flags and bunting, and even transporting some of the poor and infirm to polling places - often station homesteads - seems to have fallen largely on the landowners. On at least one occasion, electoral expenses for E.G. Wright's campaign came to £700, paid entirely out of his own pocket.² The gentry were diligent at organising their local farming communities into supporting bodies for the conservative candidates. In 1891, a supporters' dinner was held in the Waterton Hotel for E.G. Wright, where "representative farmers of the district" were presided over by the local gentry. J.C.N. Grigg was chairman of the dinner, and "read a letter from his father, John Grigg, Esq., in which he expressed his hearty sympathy...". The "usual loyal and patriotic toasts" were drunk, and a good deal of speech-making was interspersed with heavy drinking.³

But these tactics did not always work. McLachlan horrified the gentry by gaining the Ashburton seat in 1893, in spite of all their organisation and efforts. In 1890

1 Ibid, Athole Murray-Aynsley to Sir John Hall, 23 November 1890.

2 Ashburton Mail, 14 August 1902.

3 Guardian, 2 January 1891.

W.L. Allan could write to Sir John Hall and grumble that ¹

"Things did not go at Rakaiā as we expected - a lot of Orangemen who professed to be working for you were all the time working for the opposition. We have proof of this because about 30 of the last men that voted professed to be for you and the first 30 voting papers that were taken out of the Box were all for McLachlan."

There were often also two or more gentry members contesting a single seat, especially before the Liberal ascendancy of the 'nineties, and this led to situations where support could be split. When this happened, gentry solidarity could degenerate to acrimony and personal vendettas. A public dispute in the newspaper columns of the county occurred in 1892, beginning with a controversy over leasehold "thirds", and ending with a barrage of virulent letters.² E.G. Wright's short temper began this row by pointing out that

"It is a notorious fact that Mr Harper (C.J. Harper of Hackthorne) and his friends did their utmost to keep me out of Parliament at the last election, alleging (very justly) that I should put a stop to their nefarious designs upon these 'thirds' which they were seeking to appropriate in lieu of payment out of their own pockets for ordinary rates.

For barefaced audacity in the way of misrepresentation, Mr C.J. Harper has few equals..."

A tart reply from F. Peter of Anama came to the defence of his friend, Harper, and called Wright "silly" and "letting his temper get the mastery." Wright replied by saying that it "is somewhat amusing to find the youthful Mr Peter put forward to the rescue of the astute Mr Harper." Peter replied to this patronising with more sarcasm.³

¹ Hall Papers, 1890,
to Sir J. Hall, 6 December 1890.

W.L. Allan

² The "thirds" were crown lands, leased by large landowners. Wright believed that Harper and his friends were attempting to acquire the freehold of these lands by practices of dubious legality.

³ This controversy took place in the Guardian from 18 Oct.

At the same time, a running verbal battle was being fought in the same newspaper between J. Holmes and I.R.C. Cunninghame-Graham over political matters, but this was rather more polite, and confined itself to theory. This sort of rivalry was largely a vestige from earlier days. In the 'nineties it was usual for the gentry to rally behind a single man from their ranks, and put him forward as a conservative opponent to the Liberal government.

Once the favoured candidate was returned, the friends, family and "interest" amongst the gentry that had backed him began to ask for favours. The gentry petitioned their friends in parliament for varying reasons, selfish and unselfish. Naturally, the members were not always to fulfil their promises on the husting. William Steward's words were liberal and reformist, but he was a capitalist and snob beneath them. In a letter to the premier (Ballance) in 1891, he outlined his reasons for begging the grant of a knighthood, and they represent an ingenious defence of snobish. Firstly, Steward argued, a knighthood would "increase my prestige in the House and strengthen my chance of election for a second term" as Speaker, secondly "it has always been my ambition to win honours for my wife's sake - as she is the only one of her family who married a poor man" (Steward managed to more than remedy this defect in time), and "in the third place every Speaker before me has been knighted and I do not see why the record should

be broken". He signed himself "very sincerely", and mentioned that "no doubt ... I lay myself open to charges of indelicacy."¹

Most used their own or their friends' political influence a little more deftly, to serve a wide range of interests. In 1893, J. Studholme wrote to "My dear Rolleston" asking him to help Studholme's attempts to have his titles to native land in the North Island validated and the letter ended on the following confidential note:²

"Relying on you doing all you can to get my grievous wrong put right,

believe me,
Yours Sincerely,
John Studholme."

In 1890, J.A. McIlraith asked a favour of Sir John Hall. He began his letter by mentioning that he had to³

"thank you for copy of your speech which I have read carefully and I quite agree with the greater part of it.

I am now going to ask a great favour of you ...".

McIlraith had to pay £50 a year for a siding right in Christchurch railway station, "which I look upon as a great imposition", as he was paying more, per tonnage, than a neighbour. He asked Hall to use his influence to arrange that rates be paid by tonnage, not at an absolute flat rate. On another occasion, Peter Drummond of Lyndhurst estate near Urral wrote to Hall and said,⁴

"I am very much obliged to you for the trouble you have taken on my behalf, re site for grain store at Urral, and I wish to thank you for the same."

- 1 Ballance Papers, W.J. Steward to J. Ballance,
2 November 1871.
- 2 Rolleston Papers, 1893, J.
Studholme to W. Rolleston, 2 April 1893.
- 3 Hall Papers, 1890, J.A. McIlraith
to Sir J. Hall, 6 August 1890.
- 4 Ibid., 1891, P. Drummond to Sir J. Hall,
15 September 1891.

On other occasions, motives were less selfish. The example has already been quoted of a group of gentry asking for rent relief and improved water supply for the poor village settlers at South Rakaia, and it also seems to have been common for large landowners to act as patrons for the sons of local farmers or labourers, and help them gain better jobs and promotion in the public service. At other times, the gentry were able to use their political authority for a mixture of ends - public service, national "good", and self-interest. This urbane confusion of motives was best seen in the Canterbury Land Board, which was comprised of men of property, and included two Ashburton landowners, W.C. Walker and G. Hart. G.P. Lennon has found that, although the Land Board generally favoured the interest of large landowners, this was by no means inevitable, and blatant malpractice was eschewed.¹ Ties of friendship, inter-marriage, education, and interest bound the members of the gentry closely together, and it was natural that these same forces should influence their political lives. The public service of the gentry formed a primary link between locality and government, and could at least sometimes enable the grievances of the poorer people of a district to be speedily redressed. They fulfilled the need for a respected and expert "local advocate" in Wellington.

1. Lennon, *"Land Settlement,"* p. 23.

2. Local Government.

The highest level of local government was the county council, and this was a traditional scene of gentry participation in politics. From the year of its creation until 1908, the Ashburton County Council was chaired only by landed gentlemen (namely W.C. Walker, E.G. Wright, and C.J. Harper), with the exception of the brief two-year term of an Ashburton merchant notable, Hugo Friedlander, brother of the landowner. Rank-and-file membership was more mixed, and of the twenty-four men who had been members of the council, only fourteen were gentry, the remainder being the auctioneers, merchants, and rich farmers, designated "notables" in this account. As this latter group grew larger and more influential through the 'nineties and early in the twentieth century, the disproportionate gentry influence tended to decline, but nevertheless the gentry continued to lead the council by virtue of their long experience in political and community affairs, and the tradition of popular leadership they had built up in rural society. The position of chairman of the county council was a very demanding one, as it embraced most of the functions of a chief executive, as well as a chairman. This meant that only the large landowners had sufficient means and leisure to fill the post. No "notable" could equal the careers of E.G. Wright, who had been a council member since 1883, chairman for one term, and was also involved in colonial politics, or W.C. Walker, member and

chairman in turns from 1877 to 1893 and also a politician at a higher level. E.S. Coster was a member of the council for a total of fourteen years, and C.J. Harper was member and chairman from 1884 to 1917, with one break. A large number of the gentry were involved in the county council for shorter periods, and once elected tended to serve for two or more terms, unlike the "notables".

For purposes of rating and local public works, the county was subdivided into Road Boards, numbering nine by 1894, and ranging in size from the tiny Anama board which covered the Gawler Downs to the enormous chunk of high country and foothills that comprised the Mount Somers board area. The degree of gentry dominance differed according to the social structure of the area. Wakanui, for example, was an area of many small farms, with only the occasional smaller estate, such as Friedlander's Dundas, and its politics had always been in the hands of rich farmers and interested merchants from nearby Ashburton town. Anama, on the other hand, consisted of a handful of large estates, with a sprinkling of dependent small farms along the river banks, and consequently was a preserve of the gentry - C.J. Harper, W.S. Peter, W.C. Walker, E.G. Wright, and D. Morrow. This latter case was most typical until the very late 'nineties, and even areas which included numerous and prosperous small farmers often retained a gentry leadership at this level. The South Rakaiia Road Board of 1874-9, years in which cockatoos were thriving in the area,

consisted of J. Cathcart Wason as chairman, and E.S. Coster C.N. Mackie, W.H. Alington, and D.G. Holmes - all gentry - as members.

Almost all the gentry served at least one term on a road board, and many served on several. To some extent, gentry interest in the road boards was a result of their wish to keep roading costs down. More roads tended to benefit small farmers rather than the large landowners. A. McFarlane served no less than twenty-five years on the Mount Somers and Mount Hutt boards, D. Cameron was long-serving member of the same boards, and chairman of the latter for a term, and C.J. Harper was a member of the Rakaia, Rangitata, Anama, and Upper Ashburton boards, and chairman of the last-named. W.C. Walker was a member or chairman of the Mount Somers board for twenty-five years, E. Chapman was a member of the Ashburton, and a chairman of the Mount Hutt boards, and E.S. Coster was member or chairman of the South Rakaia and Mount Hutt boards for twenty-one years. Some of the gentry served on boards outside Ashburton county, representing their landed interests elsewhere; J.A. McIlraith, for example, spent terms as chairman of three road boards in the next county - the Malvern, the South Malvern, and the East Malvern boards. At the same time, his brother represented their Ashburton interests by serving for twelve years on the South Rakaia Road Board.

The other fragmented local jurisdictions were generally ignored by the landed gentry. School committees were almost entirely overlooked. Although the gentry were active patrons of education at a higher level they had little interest in local schools. It was the better sort of farmer who generally led the school committees, and two examples can serve. In 1890, the Tinwald School Committee consisted of "Messrs Doherty, Smith, Redmayne, Gudsell, and Sam Corrigan" - all cockatoo farmers.¹ In the same year, the Wakanui committee included "Messrs Stewart, G. Cole, D. Leddy, G. Tait, J. Brown, and C. Hill," none of whom was a large landowner.² A slight exception was found in Mount Somers, where gentry such as W.S. Peter and C.P. Cox occasionally sat on the local school committee, but this was unusual. Other boards and committees were generally the same. One exception was the Tinwald Domain Board, which in 1892 included four members, of whom three were gentry (J. Grigg, W.C. Walker, and E.G. Wright), and one was a rich farmer (H. Gates).³

Pressure groups, which were coming to form an important part of New Zealand's political system, often saw the gentry playing an active and leading role, depending on the cause. J. Holmes was an ardent organiser, and tried to form a pressure group to combine "all farmers and landowners, great and small" in "an alliance" of interests.⁴

1 Guardian, 7 July 1890.

2 Ibid., 8 July 1890.

3 Ibid., 9 January 1892.

4 Ibid., 14 June 1892.

This was on the model of the Farmers' Union, formed in October, 1890 among the rural interest in Otago and Southland. But when the temperance movement began to organise itself in Ashburton, a distinctly unsympathetic gentry took no part in its leadership. None of the speakers or leaders of a large temperance demonstration that took place in the borough in 1891 was a large landowner¹. But when the cause was "right", the gentry could assume immediate leadership, and employ their wide connections and influence to exert pressure in high places in a way impossible for others. In 1893, for example, a public meeting was held in the road board office in Methven "to consider the steps to be taken to secure an alteration in the evening train to Christchurch". It was a prosaic matter, but of some importance to the local community. "Mr D. Cameron, Springfield" was automatically elected to the chair, and informed the meeting that he would write personally to Sir John Hall and E.G. Wright, who would push the matter with the railway commissioners. This was typical gentry-led pressure politicking, and in this case was a matter of vital concern to the small farmers of the area.² The gentry, although more than ready to combine with their friends in pushing the interests of their own class, were also prepared to use their authority and influence to aid other groups in the rural community. Whenever "connections" with Christchurch or Wellington were of primary importance, the gentry were called upon to act as intermediaries

1 Ibid., 14 April 1891.

2 Ibid., 23 January 1893.

between capital and county.

II COMMUNITY SERVICE

1. Church, Military and Law.

It is generally held that social ethics and institutions, rather than personal "salvation" were the more important aspects of religion in the nineteenth century. "Religion", as witnessed in the "fanaticism" or "immoderation" of dissent, converting zeal, and the much-frowned-upon enthusiasm of Cunninghame-Graham, was regarded as "improper" by most of the gentry. But a seemly interest in the affairs of "the Church" (be it Anglican or Presbyterian) as part of the larger good government and harmonious regulation of society, was widespread and universally acclaimed. This meant that while the gentry were seldom "good Christians", they were almost to a man "good Churchmen", and their ladies followed suit. They might attend church only irregularly, but they endowed it generously, baptised, married, and were buried according to its rites. They willingly helped to pay stipends to vicars or ministers, usually accepted them as social equals, and gave frequent monetary gifts to embellish the little wooden "Colonial Gothic" churches of the county.

The Anglican preponderance amongst the gentry is very marked (figure 1). Of forty-five large landowners whose religious affiliation is known, no fewer than thirty-six or 80%, were active supporters of the Church of England.

Three were Anglican clergy, and others came from clerical families. The Presbyterian church accounted for another eight landowners, and Roman Catholicism was the religion of one - H.H. Loughnan. These three were the "establishment" denominations of the British world. Loughnan's Catholicism was of the old English gentry, not the new Irish labourer's variety, and the county's Presbyterians generally adhered to the established church of their native Scotland. Amongst the gentry there was not a single dissenter - Methodist, Wesleyan, Baptist, or the like. In terms of religious affiliation, the county establishment was, then, very "Establishment". It is possible that the pressure to conform to this religious respectability had in fact converted a few former dissenters to Anglicanism. The Griggs of Longbeach, for example, seem to have been Methodists in England and Auckland, but once they gained their new status in Canterbury, became staunch Anglicans. M. Friedlander, a Frenchman from Alsace, can hardly have been Anglican when he arrived in the country, but certainly he and his wife were generous supporters of that church; perhaps Friedlander had originally been Lutheran or some other variety of Protestant, and found the Anglican church the nearest equivalent.

There were four parishes of the Anglican church in the county at the beginning of the decade, located at Windermere, Chertsey, Tinwald, and in the borough.

Figure 1: Showing the known religious affiliation of landowners listed in Figure 1, Chapter II.

1	Rev. Albert Edward Alington,	Anglican
i	John Ballantyne,	Presbyterian
ii	Duncan Cameron,	Presbyterian
2	Edward Chapman,	Anglican
3	Edward Stafford Coster,	Anglican
4	John Lewis Coster,	Anglican
5	Charles Percy Cox,	Anglican
6	Ivan Rankin Colineus Cunninghame-Graham,	Anglican
iii	John Deans	Presbyterian
7	Edward Dobson,	Anglican
8	William Chisnall,	Anglican
iv	Rev. John Elmslie,	Presbyterian
9	Max Friedlander,	Anglican
10	John Grigg,	Anglican
11	George William Hart,	Anglican
12	Cyril Goodricke Hawdon,	Anglican
13	Joseph Cornish Helmore,	Anglican
14	David Gordon Holmes,	Anglican
15	John Alexander Holmes,	Anglican
16	Charles John Harper,	Anglican
a	Henry Hamilton Loughnan,	Roman Catholic
v	Alexander Duncan McIlraith,	Presbyterian
vi	James Archibald McIlraith,	Presbyterian
vii	Andrew McFarlane,	Presbyterian
17	Frederic de Cartaret Malet,	Anglican
18	Col. George Alexander Maclean Buckley,	Anglican
19	Rev. Charles Richard Mackie,	Anglican
20	Capt. Hugh Percy Murray-Aynsley,	Anglican
viii	David Morrow,	Presbyterian
21	Benjamin Michael Moorhouse,	Anglican
22	Capt. Westcott McNab Lyttleton,	Anglican
23	Alfred Edward Peache,	Anglican
24	William Spence Peter,	Anglican
25	Arthur Fownes Somerville,	Anglican
26	Alexander Strachey,	Anglican
27	Richard Strachey,	Anglican
28	Col. John Studholme,	Anglican
29	William Strange,	Anglican
30	Sir William Jewkes Steward,	Anglican
31	Charles Franklyn Todhunter,	Anglican
32	Thomas Everard Upton,	Anglican
33	William Campbell Walker,	Anglican
34	John Cathcart Wason,	Anglican
35	Ven. Archdeacon James Wilson,	Anglican
36	Edward George Wright,	Anglican

36 Anglican, 8 Presbyterian, 1 Roman Catholic.

Churches elsewhere were built in the 'nineties, usually at the instigation of the gentry. Most of the gentry also supported one of the Christchurch parishes, where they had their town houses, and many were keen churchmen, who became actively involved in church government. F. de Cartaret Malet's town parish was St. Peter's, Riccarton, where he was vicar's churchwarden, and in addition he supported the Ashburton church, was an executor of the Church Property Trustees, and a member of the Synod of the Christchurch Diocese and of the Steering Committee. Sir William Steward was a staunch supporter of Anglicanism, and acted as vestryman at St. Stephen's, Ashburton. E. Chapman was instrumental in establishing the Anglican church at Methven, J.L. Coster was a vestryman in the fashionable Opawa parish of Christchurch, and H.P. Murray-Aynsley and H.W. Packer were members of the Diocesan Synod, along with de Cartaret Malet.

The Presbyterian church was less worldly, but just as "respectable". One of the gentry was also a Presbyterian cleric (Elmslie), and in the 'nineties there were more Presbyterian manses in the county than Anglican vicarages - a reflection of the greater number of Scots and Presbyterians amongst the farmers than amongst the gentry. These manses were located in the borough, at Rakaia, Methven, Flemington, Springburn, Mayfield, Hinds, and Wakanui. The Presbyterian gentry were as energetic in church affairs as their Anglican

neighbours; possibly more so. D. Cameron had presided over the foundation of the first Presbyterian church in the county, D. Morrow was a Presbyterian elder, and a leader of Knox Church, in Christchurch, and the little church at Mayfield, and J. Ballantyne was a devout churchman, who organised his own church on his Thirlstane esate, and was unusually tolerant of all denominations.

Apart from participation in, or leadership of, church administration, the most time-consuming aspect of the gentry's involvement in social religion was in the Sunday schools. These were operated by both "establishment" churches, and were devoted to the teaching of the catechism to children of local farmers and labourers. Sunday schools were often the favourite charity of station ladies, who not only gave "treats" to the children, but also taught themselves in some cases. Mrs Elmslie was a tireless teacher of Sunday schools, but as a cleric's wife, this was expected of her. More typical of the non-clerical gentry were the efforts of the Grigg ladies on Longbeach. Mrs J.C.N. Grigg and one of the Misses Grigg took Sunday school every week when the family was "in residence" at the esate, and in addition, Mrs Grigg acted as organist in the church services, and she and her daughters decorated the church each year for harvest thanksgiving. Every year, a Sunday school picnic was given in the grounds of the "Big House", organised games and races would be started by J. Grigg, the house servants would serve a tea on the lawn, and a

"lolly scramble" would take place, with J.C.N. Grigg scattering sweets for the children. The same sort of thing occurred elsewhere in the county, but personal involvement of men was less common. In 1891, for example, the local gentry were generous with money for the Mount Somers "Sabbath School" prize giving. E.Herring, Mrs W.C. Walker, and W.S. Peter made cash or book donations for prizes, but did not bother to attend the prize-giving in person.¹

Generosity on a larger scale occurred frequently when the gentry financed the construction of, or addition to, Church buildings. The church was an integral and vital part of social order, and the gentry were prepared to accord it generous support. E.G. Wright regularly made large donations to the church, and it was "through the liberality of Mr E.G. Wright (that) a pretty little church and parsonage were built at Windermere."² Wright seems to have planned an English manorial establishment at Windermere, as the ten acres he gave for the church glebe and vicarage were nestled in a corner of the grounds of his country house, enclosed on either side by avenues approaching the homestead. Wright was buried, along with other members of the family, in the churchyard, and the parson was regularly entertained at the homestead. A small village grew up around this nucleus, but failed to outlast the coming of the motor-car.

The same spirit moved other men. A church similar to the one at Windermere was established at Sherwood, and another small village grew up around it, near the grounds

1 Ibid., 27 January 1891.

2 Press, 2 November 1882.

200

of T.E. Upton's house. The Wasons, Mackies and Alingtons collaborated in building a substantial church and vicarage at Barrhill, between their three estates, and the Griggs built a church in the grounds of Longbeach, where J. Grigg acted as vicar's warden.¹ A.E. Peache combined with other local gentry to found, build and finance a new church and vicarage at Mount Somers. G.A. Maclean Buckley erected an Anglican church on his estate at the end of the decade, to serve the local community. The church established on Thirlstane by J. Ballantyne has already been mentioned (p.234). Christchurch Cathedral benefitted from the generosity of Ashburton landowners. R.H. Rhodes of Lowcliffe and Chatmoss and his brothers gave the 200 feet high tower and spire, and paid for eight of the ten peal of bells, and Archdeacon J. Wilson of Valetta erected the northern porch.

A second "pillar of society" supported strongly by the gentry was the military. Most shared a great love of military colour and "dash", and showed it by their support for the volunteers groups of the province. The two men most active in this field were G.A. Maclean Buckley and J. Studholme II, both of whom rose to the rank of colonel in the First World War. Maclean Buckley raised his own unit of cavalry from amongst the men on his estate and local small farmers during the Boer War, actively patronised local

¹ Most of these "squire's" churches were the centres of parochial districts, rather than parishes.

military groups in peace time, and later in life was honoured with a C.B.E. and D.S.O. for his military contribution. Studholme gained his first rank in the local Volunteers, and he contributed money, arms, and horses. He was one of "Massey's Cossacks" in 1913, and was made Colonel of the Ashburton Mounted Rifles when they took part in the Palestinian Campaign.

Other Ashburton gentry became officers in the volunteers too. Sir William Steward was as active in this as in other fields, and took part in the formation of the Christchurch Guards, in which he was given the rank of captain. Afterwards, Steward almost single-handedly raised the Oamaru, Hampden and Otepopo Rifles in North Otago, and was made a major in the North Otago Military District. Being fond of titles, he had himself called "Major Steward" before he gained his knighthood, which eclipsed the older dignity. H.P. Murray-Aynsley was a Captain in the Volunteers, as was H.W. Packer, and W. White II held the rank of lieutenant in the Christchurch Yeomanry Cavalry. Those gentry who did not actively participate generally gave money, and the Boer War particularly was the occasion of a good deal of belligerent talk and contribution of horses and cash. This promotion of military matters was shared by the wives of the gentry. In 1890, a parade of the Scottish Rifles was held in Christchurch, and gave an example of a station lady's benevolence;¹

"after the parade Lieutenant MacBean announced

¹ Weekly Press, 17 October 1890.

that Mrs Cunningham would place ten guineas to the funds of the corps, to be spent in prizes for shooting or good attendance. Three hearty cheers were given for Mrs Cunningham. It may be mentioned that this is not by any means the first instance of this lady's generosity to the corps."

P. Cunningham was another notable benefactor, and also held the quasi-military rank of Commodore of the Lyttelton Regatta in one year.

Summary law was also an important field of gentry service. The role of a J.P. was still important in the period, as he was responsible for a good deal of local justice, and presided over Police Court sessions. Thirteen members of the gentry were justices in the 'nineties,¹ and the sort of legal matter that they were concerned with is shown by the report of one sitting in 1894:²

"At the Police Court yesterday - before Messrs T.E. Upton and A.E. Peache, J.P.s - William Burns was sent to gaol for seven days for drunkenness, one month for resisting Constable Jackson, and one month for destroying the constable's watch - the sentence to be cumulative. - John Blake, alias Kelly the Rake, was sentenced to one month for vagrancy, Joseph Sloane and William O'Brien each to seven days' imprisonment for drunkenness."

2. Patronage.

The wealth, status, and connections of the gentry group meant that, in a pre-welfare state society, personal patronage was of great financial importance. Its members tended to assume positions of often nominal leadership over a wide range of educational, health, and sporting associations and clubs. They contributed moneys,

¹ In addition to these, there were twenty non-gentry J.P.s in the county in 1896 - most of them merchants, professional men, and some rich farmers. Guardian, 1 June 1896.

² Guardian, 20 December 1894.

prizes, honorary banquets, and the like. Although the gentry was not involved in education at the local level of the school committees, its members were often involved in higher education as patrons. The board of governors of Ashburton High School was largely a "notable" stronghold, but its chairman in the 'nineties was E.G. Wright, and C.P. Cox, J. Cathcart Wason, and W.C. Walker were all members of the board. E.G. Wright was also a member of the North Canterbury Board of Education - a useful springboard into politics.

More important than the Ashburton High School was Christ's College, one of the most important institutions supported by large Canterbury landowners. Fellows of Christ's College in the 'nineties included seven of the Ashburton gentry - J.C.N. Grigg, J. Grigg, J. Studholme, W.C. Walker, E. Dobson, Archdeacon J. Wilson, and G.H.N. Helmore. Tertiary education interested the gentry too; W.C. Walker and F. de Cartaret Malet were both members of the Board of Governors of Canterbury College, and the latter was chairman of the board from 1885 to 1895. De Cartaret Malet was also a member of the Board of Governors of the Agricultural College at Lincoln. The indomitable Sir William Steward was another landowner involved in the patronage of educational institutions, and was a member at various times of the Ashburton and Waimate high school boards, and of the South Canterbury Education Board.

Less ostentatious acts of patronage also occurred; after the death of J. Elmslie, Mrs Elmslie founded the Elmslie Memorial Wing at Knox College, in Dunedin, and established a trust fund to supply it with books.

The plethora of local clubs, boards, societies and associations were also under the patronage of the gentry in most cases. Some were benevolent, such as the Ashburton Hospital Committee, of which W.C. Walker was patron, but most were social or cultural bodies. In 1891, for example, E.G. Wright was offered and accepted the position as patron of the Ashburton Swimming Club,¹ and in 1893 this office was taken over by Sir William Steward.² In the same year, the Rakaia Swimming Club, under the patronage of D.G. Holmes, elected as its officers W.L. Allan, J. Cathcart Wason, W. McN. Lyttleton, and one merchant (C.A. C. Hardy).³ The Ashburton Caledonian Society in 1893 elected J. Cathcart Wason as president, and as vice-presidents elected J.C.N. Grigg and offered a second place to W.McN. Lyttleton. The latter was unable to accept, because of his many other involvements in local affairs, and so G.A. Maclean Buckley was elected in his stead.⁴ Maclean Buckley was a great sportsman, and patronised many sporting bodies in the county, such as the rifle club, the cycling and athletic club (to which he presented three medals, and had J. Cathcart Wason made honorary member.)⁵

1 Ibid., 21 January 1891.

2 Ibid., 7 October 1893.

3 Ibid., 1 November 1893. Hardy was a Rakaia merchant, who was elected M.H.R. for Selwyn in 1899, and represented it till 1911. An example of a "notable".

4 Ibid., 16 May 1893.

5 Ibid., 3 October 1894.

the golf club, model yacht club, and the Tinwald Racing Club.

But there was plenty of room for others. E.G. Wright was president of the Ashburton Racing Club, being elected in 1896, C.F. Todhunter vice-president of the Tinwald Racing Club in the same year, and while G.A. Maclean Buckley was president of the Ashburton Acclimatization Society in 1896, the vice-presidents were J. Cathcart Wason and W.McN. Lyttleton. J.C.N. Grigg formed his own bicycle club, called the Ariel Club, to enter into friendly competition with the club under Maclean Buckley's patronage. The members of these clubs were not from the gentry group, and the patrons did not ride in them, but they arranged "runs", donated prizes, and entertained them at their country houses. On one occasion "a most sumptuous luncheon was provided" by Grigg for the club he patronised.¹ Cricket clubs were similarly organised, and the Rakaia Cricket Club of 1895, for example, was patronised by D.G. Holmes, and included as its officers W.McN. Lyttleton, J. Cathcart Wason, and W.L. Allan.² Gentry ladies patronised more esoteric societies. Mrs G.A. Maclean Buckley joined E.G. Wright in patronising the Ashburton Art Society in 1894.³

Patronage extended into less formal social institutions too. The nineteenth-century habit of holding great banquets on various pretexts was indulged heavily in Ashburton county, and the gentry usually took the chair.

1 Ibid., 17 December 1894.

2 Ibid., 28 August 1895.

3 Ibid., 20 December 1894.

When Hugo Friedlander went to Europe for a holiday in 1892, a great feast was held for him in the borough. Seventy-five guests sat down to table, and the newspaper columnist noted the names of the gentry present - W.C. Walker, J. Grigg, R.W. Hart, and C. Hart - along with those of some "notables". Most of the diners were middle-class, well-to-do farmers, merchants, professional men, and the like, and it is interesting to notice that most of the apologies read came from gentry - Sir William Steward, C.J. Harper, P. Cunningham, D. Cameron, E.S. Coster, D. Morrow, and W. Chisnall.¹ Another of these banquets took place in Mount Somers in 1891, to honour John Hood, an old settler and local figure.²

"Host Felton had had the old 'long room' transformed into a nicely decorated and well lighted banquet hall, and the tables were tastefully laid out and contained every requirement for a most excellent repast."

W.C. Walker occupied the chair, on his right sat John Hood, the guest of honour, and on his left were the gentry - A.E. Peache and E.G. Wright - and some of the local rich farmers. It was a good example of the paternalistic society that many of the gentry liked to believe in, and toasts were drunk to "the agricultural and pastoral interests", "the Queen and the Royal Family", "the mercantile interests", "the ladies", and so on. Mrs Walker, Mrs Peache and Mrs Wright were not present.

Of particular interest to the gentry were the Agricultural and Pastoral Associations. Probably all were members of one or more of these associations, and at the local level, officials tended to be a mixture of gentry

1 Ibid., 20 July 1892.

2 Ibid., 8 July 1891.

and well-to-do farmers. The Ashburton Association of 1890 was presided over by a "notable", only one of its vice-presidents was a member of the gentry (J. Studholme II) and of its twenty-four man committee, there were only three landed gentlemen - J.C.N. Grigg, W.F. Somerville, and D. Cameron. But the Canterbury A. and P. Association, which ran the Metropolitan Show, was completely dominated by large landowners, and of these, many were Ashburton gentry. They included L. White, W.C. Walker, D. Cameron, G. Hart, J.A. Holmes, and P. Cunningham, all of whom were committee members at various times, and the last of whom was chairman in 1883. Cunningham was noted for his liberal philanthropy, and gave many valuable prizes to the Canterbury A. & P. Association. In a typical year such as 1890, the Committee included four Ashburton gentry - J. Grigg, P. Cunningham, H.P. Murray-Aynsley, and J. Deans.

3. "Noblesse Oblige" in the Local Community.

At the beginning of the 'nineties the only legal provisions for relief and state philanthropy were contained in the Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act (1885), which was called "the Poor Law" at the time.² Conservative opinion thought that under the "Poor Law", "pauperism had been given a legalised recognition",³ as it established a class of "state paupers" chargeable on the consolidated funds and the rates. One writer "whose sympathy was entirely with the land-owners", reflected the attitudes of

1 Ibid, 31 October 1890.

2 Weekly Press, 14 November 1890.

3 The Monthly Review, Vol. I, March 1889, Wellington. "The Poor Law in New Zealand", p.129.

the gentry when he argued that they were the best agents for charitable relief, and could deal most effectively with pauperism.¹ The "Poor Law", on the other hand, established a "cumbersome machinery"² which landowners criticised for its costliness. They also believed it excluded "the element of charity in the way of benevolence or love, based on philosophic precepts or religious belief."³

It was said by conservative opinion that⁴

"The state has no duty to alleviate the sorrows of the poor. If it once advances beyond its duty it will work interminable wrongs on the community."

Most of the Ashburton gentry probably held such beliefs. The Poor Law was inadequate anyway, and the conservative ideal was the the landowners had a duty, noblesse oblige - to dispense all charity, philanthropy, and good works in the rural community. This concept was one of the cornerstones of British Tory ideas of agrarian harmony, and as most of the Ashburton gentry originated from the British upper classes, they appear to have believed in its ideals. A.E. Peache summed them up when he wrote,⁵

"I do not think that a rich man should look upon giving to charity as a duty, as I think it should be one of the greatest pleasures of a wealthy man."

The Presbyterian gentry held similar tenets; John Elmslie "always gave money to beggars", but once wrote,⁶

"These poor people are altogether beyond the reach of human aid. 'Tis only the grace of God alone that can effect the needed change."⁷

1 Ibid, P.340.

2 Ibid, p.129.

3 Ibid, p.134.

4 Ibid, p.135.

5 Gray, *Quiet Hills* , p.171.

6 Elmslie, *Elmslie* , p.16.

The upper-class philosophical position was, in short, that poverty was a necessary part of the human condition, unavoidable, and that it was the duty of the wealthy and privileged to alleviate some of poverty's harshness with judicious charity. The Ashburton gentry would find a need for manifestations of this oblige¹ at two levels - on their own estates, amongst the workers and servants, and in the local community.

Oblige on the estates often fitted conveniently in with the need to develop an esprit de corps amongst the workers and "people", and it can never be clear which was the uppermost motive. Many aspects of life on the gentry estates can be seen as part of a deliberate policy to serve these two ends. Firstly, most estates organised forms of group recreation for the men and women they employed. It was common for an estate to field a cricket team, which would play against the teams of neighbouring estates, and would be provided with teas and the like by the "family". Cadets could play an energetic role in this field, as W.P. Reeves did while he was cadet on Lowcliffe, and organised a cricket team to play Coldstream.² Small orchestras or bands were formed amongst the men on estates, as at Longbeach and Lagmhor. On Lagmhor the manager formed the "Lagmhor Highlanders", who toured the district performing at farmers' concerts and dances. The station year was punctuated with various holidays which were generally patronised and paid for by the gentry. Boxing

¹ The word oblige, from the term nobless oblige, is used here as a convenient means of shorthand. The term is used to mean the traditional moral obligation of large landowners to serve the wider community.

² Sinclair, Reeves, p. 45.

Day on Coldstream was celebrated when the family was in residence by "mild dissipations for the men", in the form of a cricket match, followed by lunch in the grounds of the house, and a Christmas tree next day for the children on the estate.¹

Balls were held annually to celebrate harvest home, shearing, or some other occasion, and all the estate workers, wives, local farmers and labourers would be invited to attend. On Longbeach, no fewer than four balls were held annually for "the people", including a harvest home ball, bachelors' ball, and spinsters' ball held in the oats loft, and the most important "monster ball", held in the woolshed. The Griggs provided many of the trappings of their own private balls on these occasions, such as "pretty invitations" elaborately made, and all the girls were given "a little printed book, with a fancy ribbon and a list of the dances. A big room was done up for a sit-down supper and a band of four came out from Ashburton."² Hundreds of people would dance, and toast their patrons. On Longbeach, they thanked "the kindness of the Misses Grigg who gave a large quantity of the choice flowers" that decorated the rooms.³ The workers' balls at Lagmhor were a similarly ostentatious display of oblige. Almost two hundred danced at one held in the woolshed in 1896. Unusually, Maclean Buckley and the manager's wife personally lead off the waltz. Later in the evening she played "a sonata

1 Studholme MSS, 27 November 1898, Mrs J. Studholme II to Mrs J. Studholme I.

2 Weekly News, 8 May 1967.

3 Guardian, 30 December 1890.

descriptive of Tennyson's poem 'The Brook'" for the workers.¹ Another very large bachelors' ball was that held annually on Coldstream.

At the end of the shearing season, it was usual on many estates for the shearing gangs and shepherds to "serenade the House", and be treated to barrels of beer in the quarters afterwards. W.McN. Lyttleton's daughter, Edith described this "great and dignified rite". The gentry dressed formally and sitting on long Island chairs on the verandah "among the little tables with their whisky-glasses, (and) the starry jasmine flowers", looked out on the semi-circle of men on the lawn. They were separated from them by "the curtains of the roses", and were "tolerantly smiling" at "the awkward bulks of the shuffling men." The station lady had "all her diamonds on to do honour to her men", and the daughters "had to listen indoors behind drawn curtains".² This romantic pastoral picture is perhaps as much a reflection of what the gentry wished to see, as of what actually occurred.

There were many less spectacular ways of discharging oblige on the estates. Mrs. J. Studholme II took the wives of some of the men on Coldstream into her dining room for two hours every Thursday afternoon and read to them. She also ran a Sunday school class amongst the estate children, and her husband operated a lending library for the men.³ On Longbeach the children walked to school three miles away at the nearest township, Waterton, and

1 Ibid, 5 September 1896.

2 Lancaster, Primerade, pp.444-445.

3 Studholme MSS, J. Studholme II to Mrs J. Studholme I, 9 September 1897.

if the weather were bad, the Griggs would send out light carts to bring them home. When "the family had sufficient fruit for their own use, Mrs Grigg went to all the cottages and told the people to gather fruit for themselves", and whenever a new baby was born in one of the cottages, the Grigg ladies were "the first to visit it and would always bring some gift".¹ When G. Hart died in 1895, he made careful provisions in his will that a farm let to a widowed tenant be not sold until her death, and that she retain the use of the farm free of rent, together with insurance of at least £500 to be paid for her by Hart's trustees.² Some landowners carried care for their men beyond their days of useful labour, as a careful correspondence between Maclean Buckley's manager on Lagnhor and the matron of the Ashburton Hospital over an old and sick worker shows.³

It was common for large landowners to sell farms from their estates to set up workers on their properties as independent small farmers, and while economic motives doubtless added weight to the benevolent impulse, such gentry as J. Cathcart Wason, J. Studholme II, and J. Grigg seem to have acted primarily from their large sense of social welfare and belief in oblige. In this way, Studholme settled some twenty of his men on small farms on Coldstream. On one occasion in 1895 a gathering of 160 permanent employees of Longbeach gave Grigg "as hearty cheers as was ever heard on Longbeach" and called him

1 Weekly News, 8 May 1967.

2 Lands & Deeds, Will of George Hart, 1895.

3 Lagnhor Letter Book, H. Ford to the Matron, Ashburton Hospital, *undated*.

"one of the most generous employers of labour in New Zealand" - and on this occasion he had just announced a wage reduction for them all of 12½%.¹

The gentry often succeeded in building up a strong sense of community, and in fulfilling what they saw as their obligations to their "people". The ladies were kindly and gentle, or tried to be, and the men seem to have fostered a patriarchal sort of regime, "firm but just". E.G. Wright, for example, liked to be thought of as a good, generous man, but also "could be 'merciless' towards incompetence".² Although D. Cameron's men's quarters were of rather dubious reputation, it was said that he never turned away a man, and was known as "Father" Cameron to the poor.³ There was often a strong identification with "the family", and interest in its doings. When a son and heir was born to the Studholmes, Mrs Studholme wrote that "the people ... take such an interest and pride in the child."⁴ On small estates, where there was often no manager or overseer, this bond between family and men could be close and long-lasting. On the Chisnall's estate of Ohinemuri, William Chisnall was always "Boss" or master, and a descendant liked to believe that "his men respected him and he them. They would do anything for him or for our family." On such estates the old, trusty worker became almost part of the family. The domestic staff were included. On Ohinemuri Mrs Chisnall's lady's maid was with her for twenty years, and eventually

1 Guardian, 26 April 1895.

2 Scotter, Ashburton, p.160.

3 Macdonald, "Biographies".

4 Studholme MSS, Mrs J. Studholme II to Mrs J. Studholme I, dated only "Coldstream, Thursday night."

married another employee, George, who had arrived as "a young fellow looking for work", and had risen to become shepherd in charge.¹

Charity to wandering labourers and swaggers was an important part of the discharge of oblige on estates. In 1889 Wairarapa county issued a questionnaire and found that in one week the thirty largest landowners had given 78 dinners, 227 teas, 218 breakfasts, and sleeping accommodation in bunks or otherwise to 226 swaggers. It was noted that "meat is often cooked hot for the occasion, with bread or potatoes, or both, and tea is almost always given at every meal." Several of these benefactors said these figures were abnormally low that week. It was thought certain that some of them would not have dared to refuse accommodation, "for fear of ulterior serious results" such as incendiarism, or "from fear of the loss of political support at elections", but most acted primarily from charitable motive.² This was typical of all the rural counties of southern New Zealand.

There were many opportunities for the discharge of oblige in the community at large too, as the localities naturally looked to the large landowners for social aid and relief. It has already been pointed out that the gentry could exert political pressure to redress local grievances. An example occurred in 1891, when E.S. Coster joined with E.G. Wright to press for the provision of a water supply for the village settlers at South Rakaia.³

1 Notes on the Chisnall family of Ohinemuri written to the author by Mr D.D.G. Chisnall, Ohinemuri, Ashburton, henceforth called Chisnall Notes.

2 The Monthly Review, vol. cit., pp.131-133.

3 Hall Papers, 1891,

to Sir J. Hall, 12 February 1891.

The example of Coster, W.McN. Lyttleton and W.L. Allan pressing for rent relief has already been given. In the same year, W.L. Allan showed another aspect of oblige when he wrote to Sir John Hall from Acton and asked if he could find a place in the Wellington Harbour Board for a farmer's boy called Richards from Allan's "village" of Dorie. Allan spoke of him in these words,¹

"He is a splendid young fellow - you will see him when he delivers this letter to you - his face is an index to his character. He is fit and able for any sort of work ... As I said before, if you can do anything for him without putting yourself to much trouble you will oblige all the Dorie people."

A simple charity seems to have been dispensed in many cases. Mrs Elmslie, a clergyman's wife, instructed her servants to give tea and bread-and-butter in the mornings to old people and derelicts who called at the back door of the house, and a descendant of the Elmslies claims that "they went off singing her praises as they tottered down the drive to face again their pathetic lives of chance."² The station lady was expected to act in this way. Mrs D. Morrow's daughter wrote of her that "all her life she was touched with those less fortunate than herself". Mrs Morrow's popularity with the poor was evidently shown by the numbers in which they attended her wedding.³ Linen and shirts would be given to charitable organisations (as by Mrs W.C. Walker to the Ashburton Hospital);⁴ or bunches of cut flowers from country house

1 Ibid, W.L. Allan to Sir J. Hall, 27 July 1891.

2 Elmslie, *Elmslie*, p.61.

3 Morrow, MSS.

4 Guardian, 13 February 1891.

grounds and gardens would be sent to decorate local gatherings (as was "very generously" done by the Holmes ladies for the annual harvest home ball held by the South Rakaia Working Men's Club¹). More systematic charity occurred, as when Mesdames Maclean Buckley and M. Friedlander organised the Ashburton Anglican Dorcas Society, to relieve or at least mitigate the condition of the local poor.² Men were involved in charitable bodies at a higher level. H.W. Packer was one of the founders of the Christchurch Benevolent Aid Society, and gave to it liberally and often. A committee of "ladies" ran an orphanage at Addington, and one of the most active was Mrs H.P. Murray-Aynsley. W.C. Walker was Official Visitor of the Sunnyside Mental Asylum, and at the same time as he was appointed to this position, T.E. Upton gave books and reviews to the Ashburton Hospital for the use of the patients.³ A more significant involvement was that of W. White II, who was for six years a member of the Canterbury Charitable Aid and Hospital Boards, and spent a three year term as Chairman of the Hospital Board. His son, Leonard, spent some of the "great wealth"⁴ he earned from Langley in furnishing a ward in St. George's Hospital in memory of his parents.

The practice of holding mass entertainments in the formal grounds of the country homesteads was the largest single manifestation of gentry philanthropy. This was common amongst the gentry in the 'nineties, and was a

1 Ibid, 11 April 1893.

2 St. Stephens Church Magazine, Ashburton, /1897. 15 October

3 Guardian, 2 April and 6 April 1892.

4 Macdonald, "Biographies".

social custom directly descended from the fêtes champêtres given by the English gentry to their tenantry. It could take various forms. In December, 1890, the Camerons held a "Gala Day" at Springfield, to which all the farmers and labourers and their families in the Methven and Lyndhurst districts were invited. Three hundred sat down to a feast in a "shady part of the grounds". This was followed by sports and games, including cricket, Aunt Sally, and a race to catch a pig, won by a young Methvenite. "Mr Gates' band from Ashburton" played, and from time to time the music was relieved by bagpipe performances. A "sumptuous" tea was served at 5.00, after which "Father Christmas" held "a levee in a shady nook in the woods", gifts were given to all, photographs were taken in front of the imposing east wing of the house, and dancing to the music of the band took place on the lawn until dusk. The Camerons presided over all these "festivities", but no other gentry were present, as was usual on these occasions, when one of the "Old Families" entertained the "lesser folk" of the district.¹

Most estates seem to have held this sort of "Gala". Another occurred on Acton in December 1894, to mark the anniversary of Canterbury. The Allans invited the people of Dorie, St. Andrew's and Rosendale, carted them to the estate in the great work drays and waggons of the property, and "spared no pains to make the picnic a red letter day to all." After the usual feast on the lawn

¹ Guardian, 31 December 1896.

the afternoon was spent in races and games.¹ It was also customary for landowners to hold these functions for large groups of workpeople from the borough. The Ashburton Woollen Mills employees and their families were regularly invited to enjoy the shady grounds and lakes of gentry homesteads. In 1893, for example, "Messrs Todhunter and Dowding were kind enough to throw their grounds open ... without restriction" at Westerfield, and six drays and "expresses" brought well over a hundred people to be received "very heartily" by C.H. Dowding. "Mr Brodley's" band played at this "pic-nic", and there was dancing in a large decorated room. In addition, "all the buildings on the estate (except the house, of course) were placed at the disposal of the visitors, who were allowed to wander at their own sweet will through the beautiful and well kept grounds."² The Herrings frequently made their grounds at Alford available for workers' parties from the borough, as well as for the local farmers' "Galas". A newspaper correspondent believed the grounds of "Windermere, the estate of Mr E.G. Wright, M.H.R.," to be amongst the best in the county "for the purposes of a rural fête."³

E.G.Wright, as a politician landowner, was one of the most generous of the rural patrons. This was part of a politician's need to "meet the people" and woo their votes. One summer he provided an excursion for two

1 Ibid, 24 December 1894.

2 Ibid, 6 March 1893.

3 Ibid, 15 February 1892.

thousand Ashburton people by special trains to Sharplin Bush, where they picnicked at Sharplin's Mill, and spent a day wandering amongst the trees. The Wright family did not bother to attend this in person, but Wright personally supervised the boarding of the trains at the Ashburton railway station.¹ The Griggs were also to the fore in this field. They held fêtes and picnics in their grounds at Longbeach several times every year, as on one occasion in 1891 when the people of Waterton were entertained.²

"The day being beautifully fine a very large number of children with their parents were at an early hour seen to be making their way down to the beautiful grounds of Mr Grigg of Longbeach, kindly lent by that gentleman for the occasion. Mr Grigg also dispatched a two-horse conveyance to Waterton for the purpose of conveying those of the parents and children who had no other means of getting thither. At about twelve o'clock the scene in the grounds was a very pretty one, the white dresses of many of the little holiday-makers contrasting in a pleasing manner with the verdure all around."

A picnic meal was eaten by the people "seated on the grass under the shade of the trees", after which they strolled "down the many shady walks" while others sailed on the lakes. The Misses Grigg were actively involved with the children, games were played, tea was taken at 4.30, and prizes distributed. Miss Hetty Grigg was called on to present the prizes, and this "was done in a very pleasing manner, after which cheers were given for Mr Grigg (who was unavoidably absent) and the Misses Grigg for their kindness." Altogether there were 150 people present. Within ten days one March, two such fêtes were held in the county - one at Lagmhor, for

1 Ibid., 30 January 1892.

2 Ibid., 10 January 1891.

workers from the borough, and the other at Longbeach, for people from Winslow.¹ The Drummonds held an annual concert and ball on their Lyndhurst estate for the local farm families, and if they could not be present, another of the gentry, such as "Mr Alington", would preside over the "festivities".²

More active "sport" days were also provided by the gentry. D.G. Holmes annually sponsored the Methven New Years' Sports on his Mount Harding estate, but neither he nor any of the gentry ever seem to have attended, although one year Murray-Aynsley ran a horse, Juveno, in a race.³ The Holmeses also patronised the South Rakaiia Boxing Day sports which occurred annually in the township, and through most of the 'nineties, D.G. Holmes was president of the committee of gentry who ran them. Other members of the committee were E.S. Coster, T.E. Upton, W.L. Allan, and W.McN. Lyttleton. Clerks, judges, starters, and so on were farmers or local tradesmen.⁴ It was the custom at these sports days for the trophies to be presented by "Mrs Holmes, the wife of our respected President Mr D.G. Holmes of Holmeslee, who is always to the front in local matters."⁵ Other ladies took a less strenuous part in such events. One year at the Mount Somers annual sports, "plenty of fruit was kindly supplied by Mesdames Peache and Peter", but neither of these ladies or any of their families

1 Ibid, 6 March and 16 March 1891.

2 Ibid, 23 December 1892.

3 Ibid, 6 January 1893.

4 Ibid, 27 September 1890.

5 Ibid, 9 January 1891.

cared to be present in person.¹ It was more common for the gentry to patronise from afar, it seems. The men organised committees, or patronised them, as Sir John Hall and Sir William Steward did for the Chertsey Annual Easter Sports,² but active participation was rare. An exception was G.A. Maclean Buckley, an ardent organiser and promoter of "beneficial" sporting associations, who regularly presented expensive trophies to cycling, swimming, athletic and other clubs, and personally inaugurated the annual Ashburton to Lagmhor road race.

This attractive picture of an extensive spirit of oblige, with its workers' balls, visiting of cottages, care of widow tenants, rural fêtes in homestead grounds, sports days, presentations, trophies, and reading to workers' wives in dining-rooms is not, of course, the complete picture. It was what the landowners chose to see themselves. This ethos was reflected in the romantic writings of Edith Lyttleton, who portrayed a humane, integrated rural community, led by a benevolent gentry, free from snobbishness and other iniquities. But all the diligent reporting by Sir William Steward's county newspapers of "Galas" and "fêtes" can be matched with obscure items that seem to indicate dark patches in the bright picture. The "land question" with all its ramifications, was one of the great political debates of the time, and this must have been both a symptom and a cause of social disruption and tension in the rural community. Conditions of employment on the estates

1 Ibid, 23 March 1892.

2 Thompson, "Farm Labourers" , pp.15-16.

certainly led to overt protest, and "provided a fertile field for chronic discontent which would erupt into the open as soon as the men were provided with some means of expressing their views."¹ This occurred politically in the elections of 1890 and 1893, and reached a climax in the Canterbury farm labourers' dispute of 1907-8. The foundation of the Farm Labourers' Union in 1903 is significant, and it is interesting to note that its first president was the head ploughman on one of the Deans estates. He spoke of "scandalous" conditions, poor wages, and outright exploitation on Canterbury estates. He originated from landlord-ridden Ireland. Scotter has judged "the treatment of labourers on many of the estates" in the 1880s and 1890s to be the cause of strong feeling against the gentry. The labour troubles of 1890 struck a powerful chord of sympathy at least amongst the men on one of J.A. McIlraith's properties, so much so as to force him to discharge twelve of them from his employ. He grumbled to a fellow landowner that he had engaged another twelve men,

"every one of which signed an Agreement to go to work, but were seduced by the Moral persuasion of the other Men, who told them a parcel of Lies so as to get them to leave. These twelve men were all willing to work had they not been induced by the Discharged Men to leave. Now surely these discharged men have done and are an Injury ..."

Other social problems disturbed the serenity of the gentry and damaged rural harmony. Poaching on gentry estates seems to have been common and increasing - no

1 Ibid, pp.25-26.

2 Scotter, Ashburton, p.93.

3 Hall Papers, 1890,

doubt as a means of supplementing incomes made meagre by the long depression. Notices such as the following appeared in the newspapers:

"£20 REWARD

In consequence of the amount of Poaching going on in the Creeks on the Lagmhor Estate, the above reward will be paid to anyone giving information that will lead to a conviction.

From this date No One will be permitted to FISH in the Creeks on the Lagmhor Estate."

"NOTICE

- All persons found Trespassing in pursuit of game or otherwise on the Riversdale Estate on and after this date will be prosecuted." 1

"NOTICE

All Persons found trespassing on the Coldstream Estate with Dogs or Guns will be prosecuted.

John Studholme, Jun." 2

Sheep stealing occurred from time to time. In January 1891, for example, over a hundred sheep were stolen from Alford estate while being held in a paddock for slaughter. The Guardian noted: "We understand that sheep stealing has become so general in the district that owners are seriously considering the desirability of forming a Protection Association."³ Thefts continued and in time the Ashburton Sheep Farmers Mutual Protection Society was formed by gentry and large farmers, and began to advertise rewards for information about "any person guilty of SHEEP STEALING in the Ashburton County."⁴ It seems to have met little response. Another social crime, and one that sent the gentry and rich farmers into near-hysterical panic, was incendiarism. A particularly bad spate of incendiarism broke out across the county in 1892, beginning in April that year when⁵

"Some dastardly individual has it appears been

1 Ibid., 25 June 1891.

2 Ibid., 12 January 1891.

3 Ibid., 9 March 1894.

firing stacks on the property of Mr W.M. Lyttleton. Our Rakaiā correspondent says that about a fortnight ago one stack out of three standing in a clump was fired, and the others were only saved by hard work. Again on Sunday night another stack, also one of a clump of three, was set fire to."

W.McN. Lyttleton promptly offered a reward in the newspaper columns for information about possible incendiarists. A week later, three stacks of wheat on a large farm near Winchmore mysteriously erupted into flames.¹ In May, a spectacular fire occurred on the Springfield estate,² and on the Hackthorne estate of C.J. Harper, on the latter of which three hundred sacks of wheat were burnt. It was later found that the Hackthorne fire had been started by two croppers on the estate, but the mood of panic grew. More fires occurred, and by August, a scapegoat was found. Under the headline, "ALLEGED INCENDIARISM", the Guardian reported,³

"At the R.M. Court this morning ... Joseph Coleman was charged with having on Saturday, August 20th, wilfully set fire to a stack of oaten sheaves at Highbank, the property of M.Ingle Browne."

The accused was a former employee on the Highbank estate, but unfortunately for Ingle Browne, he was discharged for lack of evidence.

The panic continued into 1893. In February, four stacks of grain were destroyed by fire on L. White's Langley estate, and the newspaper darkly noted that this was "beyond doubt the work of incendiarists." A farmer nearby had been similarly afflicted.⁴ The fear

1 Ibid., 9 May 1892.

2 Ibid., 31 May 1892.

3 Ibid., 25 August 1892.

4 Ibid., 4 February 1893.

reached a peak soon after. On February 20th it was reported that¹

"Mr Donald Cameron, Clunes (a rich farmer, almost "gentry"), had thirteen stacks of wheat burned on Saturday night. Three stacks were in small groups in different parts of a large paddock, so that incendiarism is certain, and it appears as if more than one fire raiser had been at work."

The day after, a spectacular fire occurred in South Canterbury, in which the large stone mansion on J. Douglas' Waihao Downs estate was "completely gutted" by a widely-discussed fire, and startling rumours as to the cause circulated.² Several more stack fires and other "fire raising" incidents occurred speedily afterwards on various Ashburton estates and large farms (eg. on G.W. Leadley's farm), on 11 March four hundred bushels of wheat were destroyed on a large farm, and soon afterwards a thatched building on Highbank estate, containing sacks of wheat and grass seed, was burnt to the ground.³

But after this climax, the spate of incendiarism and suspected incendiarism ended temporarily. In April, three stacks of grain were burned on the Lowcliffe estate,⁴ and incendiarism was spoken of again, but it was not until 1896 that the panic revived again, this time set off by a fire that destroyed a substantial building on Coldstream - containing two bedrooms and a storeroom and wine cellar, including "a choice selection of Australian wines that had been laid down by Mr Studholme together with a cask of superior whisky he had brought

1 Ibid., 20 February 1893.

2 Ibid., 21 February 1891.

3 Ibid., 27 March 1893.

4 Ibid., 8 April 1893.

from the Old Country."¹ Once again the newspapers were full of talk of "incendiarism" and "fire raisers".

The prevalence of this sort of mood indicates the failures of oblige as clearly as descriptions of fêtes indicate its successes. A state of arcadian tranquility, lubricated by good will and gentry condescension, had never existed elsewhere, and was just as impossible a situation in nineteenth-century Canterbury. Too often relations between the gentry and the middle and lower groups in the rural society were marked by tension, class antagonisms, and self-interest. The frequency of litigation in the county was evidence of this. The gentry would wrestle with farmers or merchants over matters that could be better settled by mutual accord and the sort of social leadership they spoke of but often failed to practice. It was self-interest by large landowners that caused a mill owner to drag C.F. and B.E. Todhunter and C.H. Dowding into the Timaru Supreme Court in 1893 and sue them for £3,000. These three were charged with having erected dams in the stream that fed the Westerfield Mill. They also, it was said, "broke down the banks, and destroyed other works, blocked up the channel and otherwise diverted the stream, thus cutting off the water ...". The Todhunters claimed that the millowner had himself interfered with the course of the creek, and had impeded the natural drainage of their land, causing it to be

1 Ibid., 21 July 1896.

flooded and waterlogged.¹ Whatever the justice of the case, it was clearly a break-down in rural relations and this sort of conflict was too common for the gentry to be given credit for anything more than the partial fulfillment of their own ideas of oblige.

III METROPOLITAN CONNECTIONS

1. Christchurch in Canterbury.

One of the main features that distinguished the landed gentry from the social groups below it in the rural community was its links with the city. From the beginning, the southern provinces had centred upon their capitals, and by the 'nineties Christchurch was not only the social and political focus of the wool and wheat stations that spread across the Canterbury plains and high country, but also was in many respects the primate city of the whole of the upper South Island. It drew the sons of wealthy men from as far afield as the North Island's East Coast for education and "finish". Christchurch and Canterbury were now the equals of Dunedin and Otago, and for a brief period the two regions and their capitals still enjoyed preeminence in New Zealand. Christchurch was seen at the time as the focus of considerable wealth and culture, the "Mayfair of the South", and the epitome of "civilised" living in the colony. The city's mansions, theatres, colleges, clubs, avenues, racecourses and drawing-rooms seemed the attainment of a balanced, "Old World" society. A poet

1 Ibid, 21 September 1893.

of the time called Christchurch the city whose¹

"eyes
 Are quiet with a student's reverie;
 And in the hair that clouds her dreaming face
 There lurks the fragrance of some older place,
 And memories awake to die again,
 As, confident and careless, glad and sorrow-free
 She waits, queen of the margeless golden plain."

This romantic, conventionalised picture is contrasted with Wellington, "rudely fashioned", and "arrogant" Auckland, in which "there shine the strength and passion of the North", and Dunedin, a "gleaming city", which "hears the Siren South for ever call". The poetry is insipid, but it reflects sentiments real in the New Zealand of the 'nineties, in which Christchurch was seen as the centre of learning, wool-kings, and colonial ton.

The city was laid out on the gridiron pattern inherited ^{from} other colonial cities, with long straight streets relieved by terraces winding alongside the Avon river, and intersecting High and Victoria streets. The oldest and central part of the city was crowded with two, three or four storeyed "Italianate" and neo-classical buildings in brick, stone and masonry, and was bounded by wide avenues on all sides, a large park on the west, and was encircled by suburbs of "villas" in gardens, with "villages" dotted further out in the surrounding countryside. Observers constantly stressed the "settled" and "old world" look of the city, and it probably was one of the most finished cities in Australasia. There were many parks, squares and public gardens, and the river banks of the Avon were lined with weeping willows of allegedly romantic origins (to do with Napoleon's grave

¹ Alexander, W.F., and Currie, A.E., New Zealand Verse,

and Akaroa). Many small bridges of stone with elaborate cast-iron railings crossed the river. The stamp of Mountfort, and wool and wheat cheques had provided the city with an abundance of amenities, and public buildings usually designed in heavy masonry Gothic styles - examples were the Supreme Court, Christs College, Canterbury College, the law library, Provincial Chambers, museum, school of art, the Normal School, Sacred Heart Monastery, the "Lunatic Asylum", and many other large and small "edifices". The railway station was "Renaissance", and the new City Council Chambers were red brick "Queen Anne". Religion was amply provided for with two bishops' palaces, the Anglican cathedral, seat of the Primate of New Zealand, and a good many lesser churches. Many were built in imposing interpretations of the "Colonial Gothic" form of architecture, rendered in wood - including St Michaels and All Angels, and Holy Trinity, Avonside.

The city was noted for its boating on the Avon (punts and other light craft could be hired at Cambridge Terrace and Fitzgerald avenue), its pleasure steamers that plied the Avon and Heathcote's lower reaches, its green open spaces and trees, its cricket at Lancaster Park, its polo grounds at Hagley, its statuary, including one by Woolner, the "decided flavour of High Churchism"¹, and its settled air. It was gas-lit, and supplied by artesian water. Extensive drainage systems had almost ended the old dangers of "Christchurch fever", arising from "miasmas" from the swamps and marshes on which the

1 Picturesque Atlas, p. 625.

city had been built. Four daily papers kept the public better-informed than today. A varying number of weeklies were also published. Three theatres presented constant performances, an opera house and three Assembly Ballrooms attracted the patronage of the well-to-do, and citizens and visitors were frequently inspired to praise¹

"the thoroughly English look of the place. In the outskirts are clumps of exotic trees, pleasant hedgerows, charming country lanes, next cottages with plots of garden, and cultivated flowers; within the city limits - which, by the way, are belted with trees - churches and schools that look just as if they had been lifted bodily out of some English town and quietly dropped down here along with their Old World surroundings. Nothing is here to suggest pronounced colonial peculiarities."

It is not the truth of these statements which is important, but the insistence with which they were stressed. Christchurch probably inspired a greater sense of civic pride and identification than any other city in New Zealand, with the possible exception of Dunedin. To be a Cantabrian was to be a citizen of Christchurch. The two, province and capital, were strongly linked.² And the gentry were possibly the main human agent of that link. To the gentry, "town" was Christchurch, and "down to town" was almost as much their home as "up country".

The links were dual: social and business. Christchurch was the meeting-ground for the wealthy of the province, and had a reputation for social exclusiveness and snobism. This inspired one of its journals, Society, to claim that

"In all the colonies south of the line, a more

1 Ibid., p.624.

2 Contemporary historians have always noted the importance of this link, summed up by one of the early writers as follows: "The link between the two is the fact that the gentry are held of the University of Cambridge."

thoroughly snobbish community cannot be found than that which inhabits the City of the Plains." 1

Another writer professed to believe that "in Christchurch the people who form the best 'set' are probably more exclusive than the smart folks in London!"² It was a potent myth, and although Wellington possessed viceroyalty and Parliament, and Auckland was beginning to eclipse them in size, the southern cities continued to enjoy the epithets of "more civilised", "more exclusive", and so on. The belief was that the "wool kings" of the southern provinces gave them an "aristocracy" lacking in the north.

Although Christchurch could not aspire to the éclat of London's West End or the Faubourg de Saint Germain in Paris, it was a large and wealthy city by any but the most modern standards. By the 'nineties it was richer and probably more sophisticated than the Athens of Pericles, the London of Shakespeare, and the Charleston of John C. Calhoun, and its people seem to have been aware of the fact. It was a confident, finished city, supporting a life at the top of some pomp and style, and believed itself to be the "nicest" city in Australasia, and possibly the Southern Hemisphere. The city was recognised as New Zealand's centre of education, and in its new maturity supported a wide range of institutions; colleges, a museum, cathedral, clubs, racecourses, theatres and churches. Most thought of it as the most "English" of Australasian cities.

2 (cont. p.266)

had its centre and most vigorous life in Christchurch". He sees the city as the province's "taproot". Introduction to A History of Canterbury, Vol. III, p. xx.

1 Society, an edition of 1883 contained this quote. Files

To the landed gentry of Ashburton county, Christchurch was an important "metropolis". They knew London, Paris, and Melbourne, but few appeared to think of Christchurch as anything less than very consequential.

The business and political affairs that drew the landed gentry to Christchurch have already been discussed. Most landowners had business interests, and those who did not, would need to "go down to town" at regular intervals to contact their agents and lawyers, attend sales, and possibly supervise shipment of their wool bales or sacks of wheat. The many Ashburton landowners who occupied positions on boards and other administrative bodies in the metropolis, as well as those few who represented urban electorates from time to time, would all need to be regularly commuting between town and country. Each individual landowner would be drawn by several ties. An extreme example was the case of J. Deans, whose interests in land, business and local affairs embraced several counties and the city. His biographer has noted that¹

"his close supervision of Riccarton, Homebush and Waimarama and of the coal and brick business did not leave him much spare time, but he was chairman of the Christchurch Drainage Board for some years, a director of the Canterbury Frozen Meat Company and chairman at his death. He was a member of the committee of the Canterbury A&P Association and president in 1887, the year in which the new Showgrounds at Addington were opened. He took his fair share of local body work, and was also a member of the Canterbury College Board of Governors. In line with the family tradition he was a staunch member of the Presbyterian Church, an elder of St Andrew's Parish Church for many years, and one of the Church Property Trustees."

2 (cont. p.267)

d'Avigdor, E.G., Antipodean Notes, London, 1888, p.178.

This constant travel between town and country made it convenient, even necessary, for a large proportion of Ashburton gentry to join one of the metropolitan clubs. There were three - the Christchurch Club, the Canterbury Club, and the Federal Club - all based upon the gentlemen's clubs of Britain. They were expensive to join, limited membership by recommendation procedures and provided comfortable rooms for landowners to use while they were in town. Unlike the English clubs they had no political affiliations, but all inclined towards conservatism. The Christchurch Club, favoured by the most Tory, was the most "exclusive". It was not only the "senior club of New Zealand", but also was "senior to the majority of London clubs." The Club entertained the most eminent people in the colony, and all professed to be "impressed by its atmosphere and by the spacious dignified rooms" of its Italianate building overlooking shady Latimer Square.¹ The Canterbury Club was housed in a building that combined neo-classical and tudor elements, and overlooked the Avon from Cambridge Terrace. The Federal Club was in "genteel" Papanui. Ashburton gentry who were members of the Christchurch Club included J. Cathcart Wason, J.C. Helmore, E. Chapman, E.S. Coster, W.S. Peter, G. Hart, A. Strachey, B.M. Moorhouse II, and F. de Cartaret Malet, and those who were members of the Canterbury Club included C.F. Todhunter, P. Cunningham, E.G. Wright, William Palmer Chapman, (E. Chapman's son), and G.H. Alington.

¹ Macdonald, G.R., The Christchurch Club, a History, Christchurch 1956, preface.

2. Town Houses and High Society

By the 'nineties it was common for a member of the Ashburton gentry to own a town house in addition to his place in the country, and several families in fact preferred to spend most of their time at their town houses, and became virtually absentees. The town houses around Christchurch differed from those of European and British cities. Instead of being in the heart of the city, or concentrated in one or two conspicuous enclaves the mansions of Christchurch were dotted around the central city in a wide belt of suburbs, and interspersed with the "villas" of the middle classes. Wealthy peoples' town houses were designed to look like country houses. Surrounded by grounds of several acres, including lawns, trees, shrubberies, ponds and statuary, they were approached by avenues and gravel sweeps. Houses often were the centre of small "model" farms, with dairy, coach house, stabling, and so on arranged as though on a rural property. They were suburban mansions rather than town houses, and were found in a belt from one to five miles out from the city, and encircling it completely. There were growing concentrations in the "best" suburbs. Linwood, Avonside, and Opawa consisted mostly of large wooden and brick houses nestled on "willow-clad" reaches of the Avon and Heathcote rivers, where the well-to-do would promenade on Sunday afternoons. But these older areas were being eclipsed in the 'nineties by Riccarton,

Merivale, Papanui, and the newly-growing Fendalton. In that decade, whenever a new mansion was built in Christchurch, it was usually along Papanui or Riccarton Road, Bealey Avenue, or some subsidiary street - many of which were still hedgerowed country lanes. Sumner and the hill slopes were also becoming popular, and Hurst Seager and his followers were beginning to clad these areas with Marseilles-tiled "Queen Anne" houses that came to rival the north-west.

The Morricks owned a typical Christchurch town house. Called Dalriada, it was situated in five acres of landscaped formal grounds in Papanui, and amongst the domestic staff employed were a head gardener and cowman. The house was built of wood, with mock stone quoining, contained two-storeys, with a higher level of attics for servants and was flanked by graceful verandahs and finished in the vaguely classical "canon" style. It was notable for its imposing grand stairway. Nearby was E.G. Wright's town house, a similar place, called Eversleigh, and set in eleven acres of grounds in Springfield Road, Papanui. In Webb Street, off Papanui Road, J.A. Holmes had his very large house. The Griggs kept a Papanui house, a large brick pile called Finglas, and E. Chapman's town house, Midlothian, was situated in grounds off Office Road, also in Papanui.

Others of the Ashburton gentry preferred Merivale. This suburb was, in fact, named after Merevale, the town house of the Studholmes. A gabled wooden house set in thirty acres of grounds, it had been the Christchurch house

of J. Studholme I ever since his arrival in Canterbury. For most of the 'nineties it was found more convenient to rent a house nearer the city, and from 1892 to 1896 the de Cartaret Malets leased Merevale as their town house, after which the Camerons of Springfield took it over. J. Studholme II eventually bought Middleton Grange, a rambling "Old English" style house off Riccarton Road as his town place. P. Cunningham's Merivale town house was typical. He had bought it in 1878 for £7,500, it contained twenty-one main rooms, and included over fifteen acres of grounds. W.C. Walker had a town house nearby, and after 1890 spent most of his time there. The Moorhouses preferred to be closer in to the city, and owned a town house in Oxford Terrace, near Bishops-court. The Whites occupied a conventional two-storeyed double-verandahed, gabled mansion in Lincoln Road. R.H. Rhodes's family lived in Elmwood, one of the largest of Christchurch houses, which also gave its name to a suburb in time, and the Murray-Aynsleys inhabited Riverlaw, set in park-like grounds and a farm on the banks of the Heathcote. At this time, the Murray-Aynsleys were considering plans for a great three-storeyed brick mansion to replace the older house. The Peaches were fond of Sumner, and kept a house there, although this was only rented. The Ballantynes owned a house in Sumner too, and divided their year equally between it, Thirlstane, and their house in Timaru. The Elmslies,

a clerical family, spent most of their time in the Manse of St. Paul's, but in addition they kept a "cottage" in a Port Hills valley, and there was a substantial house on their Cardendale estate, where some of the family were always in residence.

Five of the gentry were so attracted by the city life that they spent very little time in the country, and became absentees. H.W. Packer inherited his father's house, Somerfield, at the foot of the hills and on the banks of the Heathcote. It was surrounded by a small farm of 132 acres, and so combined the advantages of town and country life, and became Packer's main residence. J.L. Coster spent most of his time at Compton, his house in Opawa, and J.C. Helmore lived mostly in Millbrook, his big brick house set in fifty acres of grounds along the banks of the Avon. Millbrook was designed so that the drawing-rooms looked out across Hagley Park to the Port Hills. A. Macintosh Clark preferred to live on a small estate he owned near Temuka, called Riverslea, but also kept a town house. An exceptional absentee was T.H. Potts and his family. He owned a large high country station in Ashburton county and also a small lowlands estate, but had completely abandoned these to the management of his sons. He had taken up permanent residence at Ohinetahi, situated on a carefully landscaped farm of 600 acres in Governors Bay. This was fairly near Christchurch, but not in it. The house was of two and a half storeys, built in stone,

with long dormered wooden wings on either side, all surrounded by wide verandahs onto which French doors opened. A fine curved staircase of Baltic pine with mahogany hand-rails climbed to the staterooms of the first floor, and all the rooms were high, light, airy, and delicately plastered. In this place the Pottses enjoyed all the perquisites of absentee life, and became famous for lavish parties and balls, and an unstinting hospitality. The diary of E.R. Chudleigh contains numerous mentions of visits to Ohinetahi, when everyone "boated, rode and danced. Easter Monday we danced from 8 till 6 in the morning."¹

E.H. d'Avigdor summed up the life lived in these town houses in the period, when he wrote,²

"they have reproduced near the city the memories of the old country; the historical names of some of the oldest county mansions are transferred to picturesque wooden houses situated on the lovely willow-clad banks of the Avon, surrounded by roses and hydrangeas ... Here, in drawing rooms overlooking smooth lawns, you take a cup of afternoon tea; the surroundings are so homelike that it takes no imagination to fancy yourself within fifty miles of London. The Graphic and the latest magazines strew the tables; there are Japanese fans and blue China on the walls; the ladies are dressed as only English ladies can dress; the men come in from cricket in their flannels; or from Christchurch in their town clothes ... On Sundays the whole family attends the village church, which is as homely and home-like as tall trees and green grass can make a new building. The whole course of life is an almost exact copy of that pursued by an English family at home."

For the Ashburton gentry who only came to town for short stays, or for the social "season", there was a constant social coming and going. In this city, hospitality was almost a ruling passion, and an English baronet's son wrote⁴

"There is much more going on in the city at all

times than in an English town of the same size; and of an afternoon, English-built carriages, well-horsed and well-appointed, drive in from a circle of ten miles and beyond."

There was a constant round of activities occurring in "high society", both public and private, to entertain gentry who had come "down to town". Croquet, archery, and tennis parties were held, men played polo and cricket while the ladies watched, whist was played with a vengeance at card parties. Luncheons, balls, race meets, concerts, soirées musicales, and drawing-room afternoons, all catered for social appetites. Comings and goings amongst "high society" were diligently reported in social columns in all the newspapers, and the weekly magazine Society contained "candour, spice and scandal"¹ of interest to the upper classes, as well as serious comment on social, political and cultural events. It was particularly fond of sensational gossip relating to the clergy. Ashburton gentry were often travelling "down to town" to taste of these fleshpots, and their diaries are full of such entries as this written by A.E. Peache,²

"Self and Ida in Christchurch. Gave a dinner party for the Carrons and Arthur Longden. Also stood theatre for party. Dinner with 2 bottles champagne."

2 (cont. p.274)
d'Avigdor, Notes, pp.60-61.

4 Kennaway, L.J., Crusts - A Settlers Fare Due South, London, 1874, p.225.

1 Review of Society in Press,
31 July 1971.

2 Gray, Quiet Hills, pp.126-127. Diary entry of 8 February 1895.

Constant professional theatre was provided by touring English, European and Australian companies. Opera was staged in the Opera House, which seated three thousand spectators, and in the Theatre Royal. From time to time plays were staged by local professional companies, such as The Land of the Moa, which toured New Zealand with great success, and also travelled overseas. This play was typical of the drama of the time - a scenic and dramatic spectacular rather than serious drama, it included a staging of the Tarawera eruption, the use of live horses, the reproduction of the Pink and White Terraces, a real waterfall, and stage directions calling for such spectacles as a bridge being blown up.¹

The highlight of the social year in Canterbury was the social "season" which began in spring with Carnival Week, and lingered on till as late as March. The "November Week gaieties"² caused thousands of country people to flock into Christchurch every year. In 1896 for example, the Guardian estimated that 1,200 people from Ashburton alone had gone to the metropolis for Carnival Week.³ It attracted all classes, and George Chamier, writing in the 'nineties, described the excitement of the annual exodus from the countryside with the landed gentry in "showy four-in-hand(s), with company of friends on the box and swell groom in attendance" bowling "gracefully through the crowded

1 Leitch Walker, G., "The Land of the Moa", Manuscript in the Mitchell Library, Sydney.

2 Gray, ^{Quist Hill} p. 191, quote from A.E. Peache.

3 Guardian, 13 November 1896.

thoroughfares to 'put up' at the club, or at some suburban villa", and merchants, business men, store-keepers, and farmers, in gigs and carts, and trooping men on foot. He described the troops of horsemen; "the flash young swells in shooting-jackets, boots and breeches, with turban-shaped hats and long white puggaries flapping behind, on prancing and well-groomed steeds." More came by rail. Carnival Week was "a week's dissipation for the rich; a lively outing for the commonality, with much reckless gambling among all classes."¹

Chamier described the procession of gentry carriages passing through a country town en route for Christchurch and the "season", and the town might well have been Ashburton. They included one family "in a family carriage of patriarchal dimensions, and a long retinue of poor relations on horseback following". Another family included "the ladies elaborately dressed for the fashionable gathering, reclining gracefully under the shade of their lace parasols, while the boys escorted as cavaliers". A third family, "with stately mien" drove "a carriage and pair and servants in livery". A fourth, consisted of "a heavy dragoon of fifty, on the retired list, with a gay young bride of eighteen, who seemed inclined for active service", driving "a park phaeton". All headed for Christchurch, where the "fine town houses were lit up for balls and parties .. all the place was agog."²

1 Chamier, G., A South Sea Siren, Auckland, 1970 (first published 1895), pp.196-7.

2 Ibid., pp.197,198.

The raisons d'être of Carnival Week consisted of three days of racing, and two of the Metropolitan Show. The New Zealand Cup and New Zealand Derby were run, and caused "the Christchurch world of fashion"¹ to flock to Riccarton. There they crowded colourful stands and carriages, jostled one another, and looked out across the racecourse to the mountains forty miles distant. Incidental to these events was a constant social round, supplemented by the most active theatrical and operatic season in the year. The Guardian noted in 1896 that coming attractions for Carnival Week that year would include the Pollard Opera Company performing at the Theatre Royal, the Godfrey Opera Company at the Opera House, and Probasco's Circus for those of less "elevated" taste.² The social season also provided an unequalled marriage market for the daughters of landowners who had just "come out". Chamier described their palpitations.³

"The ladies were in a mighty flutter over the event. For weeks previously they had been arduously engaged in trimming their brightest feathers for the gorgeous display when the grand stand reflected all the beauty and fashion of the province. It had been a hard task for the bewildered dress makers, harder still for the overworked sewing girls, who had stitched themselves weary and ill in the desperate efforts to have all this finery ready in time; doubtless, also, even among the gaily attired belles of the season, there had been no lack of bickerings and repinings, bitter tears shed, and much galling disappointment over these splendid preparations - this parade of vanity. Yet there were only smiles visible on the auspicious day, and all looked bright and charming for the festive occasion."

1 Picturesque Atlas, p.628.

2 Guardian, 26 October 1896.

3 Chamier, Siren, pp.195-196.

Canterbury "high society" in the period certainly lavished its money on a "conspicuous consumption" unequalled ever since in New Zealand. They indulged their appetites in the feasting that their associations and committees sponsored, as is shown by the menu for the Show Day Dinner of 1890, when the gentry dined on boned turkey and truffles, galantines of chicken and veal, Quail à la Parisienne, French Raised Pies à la Aspic, Fowls à la Bechamel, Mayonnaise of Lobster, Macedons of grapes, Maraschino Jelly, Italian Cream, and many more good things.¹ But the private society centred upon the town houses of the gentry, bands of servants, and virtually untaxed incomes, exceeded even this in scale and cost. During the "season", unremitting social activity took up all the waking hours of visiting gentry, if they so chose.

At the very beginning of the 1890 "season" the P. Cunningham's gave a ball. One of the social columnists reported:²

"A large ballroom was built for the occasion, adjoining the conservatory. It was prettily draped and decorated with a profusion of ferns and pot plants. The conservatory, filled with choice plants in full bloom, was open to the ball room, adding greatly to the fairy-like effect of the whole; but what I think I admired most of all was a very large willow tree, just outside, which had been draped all round and hung with Chinese lanterns, making a most exquisite lounge, and the view from it through the conservatory to the ballroom beyond was one of the prettiest imaginable. Two highlanders in full national costume stood at the door to usher in the guests, and a couple of pipers were in attendance. Before the dancing began there was music ... (duets on violin and piano etc.). At the close of this part of the entertainment, some little

1 Rolleston Papers, 1890, Menu for Canterbury A. & P. Show, November 1890.

2 *Wellington Press*, 10 October 1890.

boys prettily dressed, went among the guests with silver salvers full of programmes."

Two hundred guests moved amongst the "spacious and well-lit rooms", (including the Governor, Lord Onslow), and were welcomed by "the pipers of the Scottish Rifles (who) played as the carriages were arriving." Guests were received in the dining-room by Mr, Mrs and Miss Cunningham, then ushered into a drawing-room, which had been transformed into a concert-room, "where a great musical treat was provided", after which they could move into the conservatory, ballroom, and "willow lounge". Dancing began at 10.00pm, and lasted until 3.00am. A "superb" supper was served in the billiard-room, and "even the menu cards were works of art".

Society matrons vied with one another in the splendour of their entertainments. It was "the vogue" to admire the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and to hold balls where the guests were required to dress in those styles, and servants were periwigged. Masquerade balls were also popular. One "out-of-season" masquerade ball was given by a leading hostess in 1890, for example. One of the Murray-Aynsley girls appeared as "night, or starlight", J.C. Helmore in "artillery uniform", J. Studholme in "very handsome court dress", Mrs Studholme as a "fisher boy", and so on. The evening included "some very pretty singing. Quadrilles were performed, the dancers all being dressed in seventeenth century costumes, with powder and patches, and dancing with somewhat of the old fashioned courtly grace with which the costume is associated". One of the Misses Helmore was included

amongst these dancers.¹

Weddings were often held "in town", and were centred upon the spacious town houses. "Billets", embossed and capped with coats of arms and other heraldic devices circulated about the province. One was sent to "Mr, Mrs and Miss Studholme" inviting them to attend the wedding of Marion Florence, daughter of M.Scott Campbell and Mrs Scott Campbell, to E.A.P. Harper, at St Paul's, Papanui, "and afterwards at Delce" (the Scott Campbell's town house).² At other times, more "exclusive" functions would be held, such as the "small select gathering" one evening at the Studholme's town house to entertain the Duke of Manchester.³ Tennis parties were popular, followed by dances. One was held at Ilam, late in the "season" of 1890, and "was a most lovely one" and "delightful"; the guests included detachments of Helmores, Studholmes, and Wynn-Williamses.⁴ Visits by the vice-regal party often occurred in the "season" too, and set the gentry scrambling for invitations. In 1895,⁵

"On Tuesday of last week Lord and Lady Onslow gave a dinner party, where the following guests were present:- Colonel and Mrs Gordon, Mr and Mrs Murray-Aynsley and Miss Aynsley, Mr and Mrs Palmer, Mr and Mrs Michael Campbell, Mrs and Miss Cowlshaw, Mr and Mrs Wilson, Mr and Mrs Jukais Scott, Mr A. Rhodes and Mr Fenwick."

"On Thursday there was a reception held at Government House in the afternoon, when between

1 Ibid., 1 August 1890.

2 Studholme MSS, 5 April 1899.

3 Richards, *Chudleigh*, p. 295.

4 Weekly Press, 3 January 1890.

5 Ibid., 29 October 1891.

three and four hundred people made their bow to Lady Onslow."

The governor's social was no less important than his political role in the colony, and this fact was usually grasped by governors, who made frequent tours of the provincial capitals.

Other social events provided lesser highlights to the "season". The Lyttelton Regatta took place in the beginning of January, and attracted thousands of people every year. In 1893 the Regatta included a mock naval battle in the harbour, in which an old trading brig was attacked and sunk - a spectacle "viewed with interest by many thousands of sightseers". On shore were merry-go-rounds, swing boats, shooting galleries, and bunting and lanterns. Steam launch trips were available, rowing and sailing races took place, and land sports were run. Subscribers to the regatta were taken for a cruise on the flagship, "Star of Austria", listened to a band playing on board, promenaded, and were regaled with a cold luncheon and afternoon tea. The Regatta ended with an elaborate fireworks display in the evening and a procession of illuminated boats and ships.¹ The Heathcote Regatta was another annual event, and reviews were frequently held. One year E.R. Chudleigh wrote,²

"Cox (C.P. Cox) and I joined in a carriage and pair and went to the Review. Took the young ones right in amongst the soldiers. They screamed with delight and fright combined."

1 Lyttelton Times, 3 January 1893.

2 Richards, Chudleigh, p. 285, 2 April 1880.

The next night they went to a masquerade ball, the following day visited a warship in harbour, and attended another ball in the evening. On the next day, they "Pulled Mrs Cox and Ruth up the Avon as far as the Helmores and played a few games of tennis."

In a typical week during the "season", two operas were performing, both very popular and talked about, along with a Liedertafel "Gemischter Abend." An afternoon garden party took place at Thorrington, at the foot of the hills, where two hundred guests, including the Murray-Aynsleys, Helmores, "Miss Moorhouse", "the Misses Cunninghams" and other Ashburton gentry, ate ices and listened to music. The day after, the Hon. Mrs Parker provided afternoon tea after the polo match.¹ In one week of the 1893 "season", it is possible through the social columns to trace most of the movements of H.P. Murray-Aynsley's eldest daughter. On the Monday she attended a large afternoon party held by Miss Rhodes at Elmwood, spent the next day in travel, and on Wednesday was staying at The Terrace, Sir John Hall's estate near Hororata, where she was one of the bridesmaids at the wedding of Sir John and Lady Hall's daughter to the son of F. Cracroft Wilson, a large landowner near Culverden. There were almost three hundred people at this wedding celebration, and all were invited to the ball held in the homestead in the evening. Gifts to the couple included interestingly, a silver salver presented by the tenant farmers on the Cracroft Wilson's Culverden and Cashmere

1 Canterbury Times, 8 December 1892.

estates, and a table of inlaid woods presented by the station labourers employed by Sir John Hall. The next day, Thursday, saw Miss Murray-Aynsley attending a "charming evening" at Strowan, the sprawling Colonial Gothic mansion of G.G. Stead, in Papanui. On Friday her presence was noted at a "small and early" dance, with only fifty guests, held by the de Cartaret Malets, where the ballroom was kept cool by setting aside the adjoining drawing rooms for conversation and resting. On Saturday Miss Murray-Aynsley joined the fashionable crowd at the polo grounds, and took tea there.¹

This demanding social round faded out in late February and early March. Its demise was sadly noted in such passages as,²

"Mrs C. Clark gave a garden party last Thursday at her residence, Thorrington, which I think will be the last of the season."

Guests at this party had included Miss A. Moorhouse and the indefatigable Miss L. Murray-Aynsley.

From time to time the attractions of a rival provincial capital would challenge those of Christchurch during the "season", and draw some gentry families away to participate. The 1889-90 Christchurch season, for instance, had to compete with Dunedin, which was staging an exhibition. A Christchurch columnist noted that³

"Many of our Christchurch folk are in Dunedin,

1 Weekly Press, 2 February 1893.

2 Ibid., 9 March 1893.

3 Ibid., 17 January 1890.

in which 'delerious city' a fresh outburst of gaiety is now impending ... Dunedin has certainly taken the wind out of our Christchurch sails this summer as far as amusement is concerned."

A vice-regal visit to Dunedin had been staged to coincide with the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition, and the Studholmes and Harts were amongst the families that travelled south to join in the balls, receptions, levees, military sports, regatta, tennis parties, garden parties and so on that the social column mentioned. The Countess of Onslow gave "afternoon at homes" at Fernhill, and on the last one,¹

"As may be imagined all the world and his wife, were there, in fact, Lady Onslow had asked nearly everybody who had called at Government House, and of course the "list" included a great many whom she had been unable to ask to the balls ... Amongst the great number of those present were Lord and Lady Onslow, Mr Walrond, Lord Cranley, and Ladies Dorothy and Gwendoline, Miss Constable, Lord Carrington, Captain French, A.D.C., Admiral Lord Charles Scott, Mr Fitzgerald, and Mr Le Pullen, - Mrs Rupert Clarke, Miss Clarke, Miss Godfrey, Miss Kimbell and Miss Ronalds, the Misses Webster, Mrs Williams, the Misses Cargill, Mrs and Miss Studholme, etc., etc."

A masquerade ball was held next day at Government House, and J. Studholme appeared in "Court Dress", Mrs Studholme as "Queen Elizabeth in velvet dress and train, and a hoop", and Miss Studholme as "music". Soon after a ball was held, attended by six hundred people, followed the next day by a garden party for four hundred at Montecillo, a mansion on the outskirts of Dunedin.²

This expensive social life, with its hundreds of guests filling the drawing rooms and ballrooms of the great town houses, indicates the confidence and wealth

1 Ibid, 24 January 1890.

2 Ibid, 31 January 1890.

of the large landowners in the period. It was a conspicuous consumption lacking in modern New Zealand. It was possibly also the raison d'être of the gentry. They saw social pleasures and the enjoyment of wealth as the reward, if not the reason, for their long months of rural "exile".

CHAPTER V

WAY OF LIFE1. Country Seats

The centres of life for the landed gentry were the country houses with which the county was dotted. These houses were called homesteads in common parlance, and when the English pretensions of the gentry were uppermost, were spoken of as country seats. The Handbook for Travellers, which was compiled in 1893, contained many entries such as this one for the Rangitata district:

"There are several pleasant country seats in the neighbourhood." 1

These houses were surrounded with gardens and parklands, and were the most complete and deliberate manifestation of the gentry's desire to recreate an English aristocratic life-style. There were two distinct architectural traditions which Ashburton country houses inherited. The first, and most common, had gained the ascendancy in the 1870s, and in the conservative Ashburton countryside of the 'nineties, it still remained the strong canon of domestic architecture. The style was directly traceable to the traditions of Georgian and Regency England, and sharing their features of classical proportions, rectangular shapes, hipped roof lines, and cornice mouldings and detailing borrowed from neo-classical styles.

1 Pennefather, F.W., A Handbook for Travellers in New Zealand, London, 1893, p.105.

The typical house was two or two-and-a-half storeyed, "with large lofty rooms well lit by double-hung windows",² and its rather austere neo-classical lines were relieved by broad verandahs, and intricately detailed pillars, doors, window mouldings and cornices. They borrowed the plan from Regency England, the verandah from India, and the French window from southern U.S.A. and the West Indies. The mild climate called for high ceilings and large windows. A large front wing with airy, spacious rooms housed the family and provided rooms for entertainment, while to the rear and sides were one or more smaller wings with lower ceilings, small cramped rooms, narrow staircases, and an absence of architectural decoration; these were devoted to the servants and "offices", as kitchens, pantries, wash-houses, storerooms, and the like were called. These simple, elegant white houses, "solid yet graceful"³, housed most of the gentry families of the South Island, as well as a good many prosperous farmers, and numerous well-to-do bourgeois families in the towns.

E.G. Wright's house, Windermere, was typical of this style. It was situated on his 2,300 acre estate one mile from the little Windermere township and railway station, and was one of the "pleasant county seats" in the Rangitata district. Windermere summarised all

Hendry, J.A., "Architecture to 1900"; A History of Canterbury, Vol. II, Christchurch, 1971, p.488.

3 Ibid., p.482.

the clichés in the colonial architectural canon. The west or garden wing was the centre of the house, and presented an imposing Italianate facade to the carriage-drive. It was flanked on three sides by wide verandahs and tracery, and in the centre of the west front a half-tower and elaborately-balustraded balcony jutted forwards. French doors opened from all the main public rooms onto verandahs, and wisteria hung from the verandah pillars. Two gabled wings extended behind the west wing, and these were divided into offices and servants rooms. The two back wings half enclosed a courtyard, around which were storerooms and stabling on the other sides, and this area was shielded from the gaze of the quality by a long garden wall which also marked off the formal gardens and park. Windermere contained twenty-six rooms.

Holmeslee, the country house of D.G. Holmes, was another example of the style. Built on a green-turfed terrace, the house was approached from the carriage drive by means of a broad flight of steps, flanked by ornamental urns. Holmeslee came in time to consist of a central block of two storeys, with a one-storey wing on one side containing the billiards room, and an enclosed courtyard formed by kitchen, former dairy, cake-house, storerooms, and fuel room at the rear. The central block was surrounded by tall bay windows and double-tiered verandahs with ornate

pillars and balustrades. The central wing of the house was bisected by a broad main hallway running to the centre on both floors, linked by a massive stairway. From the ground floor hall doors opened into a high, almost square drawing-room with two bay windows, deep cornices, carved fireplace and carved ceiling. There were also a library, dining-room (with eighteen feet long dining table), study, morning-room, and billiards room. On the upper storey were six large bedrooms, all of which opened by means of french doors onto the verandahs. The house contained about twenty rooms.

The number of rooms in gentry houses ranged from twelve to over thirty, with most containing about twenty. Westerfield was an example of the smaller houses. Situated on one of the smallest estates in the county, it was a house "Most substantially built regardless of cost",¹ and contained twelve main rooms. The Moorhouses' house at Shepherds Bush contained sixteen main rooms, and was designed so that every room could open onto a verandah. E.S. Coster's Somerton was a large mansion with well over twenty rooms, as was Archdeacon J. Wilson's Valetta.

But the regular, Georgian-based canon was never totally dominant, and the love of gables, steeper roof pitches, and other features derived originally from Early English styles, and developed in a colonial form in the Canterbury of the 1850s and 1860s, often provided

1 Todhunter MSS, C.F. Todhunter to E. Menlove,
2 December 1890.

a variation in stern neo-classical regularity. W. Chisnall's Ohinemuri was an example of this type of house. The regular rectangular line of the frontage was broken up by gables, repeated on other sides, which eliminated the usual four-square hipped roof line. Otherwise it presented little variation. There were two storeys, painted white, "like others of the times".¹ It contained comfortable rooms, a circular staircase, with "offices" at the back. D.D.G. Chisnall writes that "one was proud of one's home", and that it "looked quite impressive" in its heyday. Other homesteads further illustrated the style - O.J. Harper's Hackthorne on the banks of the Hinds, G. Hart's Winchmore on the Ashburton, Sir Thomas Tancred's Ashburton homestead lower down on the same river, and A.E. Peache's Mount Somers.

Mount Somers was rebuilt in 1892, to replace the old twelve-roomed house. Peache's papers record the problems of building a country house. The decision to build had been made after frustrations concerning the old house had steadily mounted.

"20 April 1890: I scarcely know how we will manage in this old house through the winter, having a new baby and a nurse to look after her. We seem to be packed like sardines.

2 May 1890: I don't know, I am sure, whether we shall be able to stay in this house through the winter. It is not only that it is too small, but it is getting so old and fearfully rotten ... Ida and I have the two newest rooms in the house, a bedroom and a dressing room ... If I could hear of a house that I could rent near Christchurch or Timaru I think I should

¹ Chisnall, "Notes".

take it and send the family there for the winter.
7 July 1890: I ... am thinking of rebuilding
the house here." 1

Once this decision to build was taken, work progressed speedily. An Ashburton architect, R. Bird, was engaged to draw up plans. In time, work began on this site, and in March 1890 the Peache family moved out of the old house to stay at Archdeacon Wilson's Valetta until the new house was completed, taking with them the nurse, governess, cook, and a boy to do the milking and gardening. While the move was being made, the three Misses Peache stayed with the Peter family of Anama.

After eight months of work the new house was finished in the middle of October, and the family moved from Valetta at the end of that month. Building was still incomplete, with interior decorations unfinished, paving stones still unlaid, and the conservatory under construction. Peache recorded wearisomely that an unwelcome visitor arrived for lunch "and stuck to us like a leech till past 9pm. - a great nuisance as I was busy doing things in the house and Ida was very tired!" 2 The finished building "was a huge house and ... used to be filled with laughter and singing", as one descendant remembered.³ It was not long before even this new house was inadequate, and soon A.E. Peache was noting the addition to the homestead of "two good upstairs rooms over the drawing room and my smoking-room study".

1 Gray, *Quiet Hills*, pp.89-90.

2 Ibid., p.107.

3 Ibid., p.208.

The old kitchen was also pulled down and replaced by a "larger one with three servants' bedrooms above." ¹

By no means all houses conformed to this conventional style. An unusual variant was the homestead on the McIlraiths' 3,400 acre Aucheflower estate overlooking the Rakaia river. The architectural style of this house copied "that style which Mr J. McIlraith noticed while he was in Berlin", ² regular, with the usual semi-Georgian proportions, but all treated with intricate East German detailing which, especially in the form of cast-iron decoration, gave the house something of the air of a junker country house. The house was constructed of brick, which was unusual, and was built to last with the walls four layers thick. The manager's residence and the station buildings on the estate were all in a similar style.

There were several other brick country houses, and all but one, E. Grigg's Akaunui, departed from the canon, and showed a greater propensity for the picturesque. The mansion house on W. Strange's Riversdale estate, for instance, combined colonial verandahs and bay windows with steep gables and ivied walls, and a turreted gothic tower in the centre - all directly inspired by English manor house architecture. Riversdale was built of Longbeach brick, and its walls were a good two feet thick.

Longbeach, with almost forty rooms, was built on a

1 Ibid, p.196.

2 Cyclopedia, p.487.

scale of baronial splendour, and was an "imposing two-storeyed structure of brick with stone facings - built in the style of many of the old British ancestral homes", and "beautified by creeping vines".¹ The main part of the house was laid out in a great 'L', and its main frontages presented a mass of turrets, towers, bay windows, numerous gables, finials, verandahs, tudor-ish bargeboards and gable timbering, tall chimneys, and an imposing main entrance framed by a great brick-pillared porte-cochere. Sprawling out behind this main part of the house was a jumble of lower ceilinged servants' rooms and offices. The house was roofed with that latest importation from Europe - the Marseilles tile.

Springfield homestead showed a similar eye for the picturesque and the baronial. Although built of wood, this house of about thirty rooms reconciled English country house features with the newer colonial architecture. The house had grown from an original two-storeyed residence built in the 1860s, to which were added a second, grander wing in the 1870s, and an even larger front wing in the 1880s. This gave the house the imposing frontage it had formerly lacked - a long, rather blank wall without verandahs, and with only a little of the usual classical decoration about windows and cornices. This central portion was

¹ Brown, J., *History of Ashburton, Dunedin, 1940*, p.6.

skilfully offset by oriel half-towers formed at both ends by double-storeyed bow windows and another half-tower over the main entrance. Steeply-pitched roof lines, and projecting gables over the half-towers, were decorated by bargeboards and half-timbering picked out in dark colours. This unusual combination of Early English with the Georgian-based local canon was effective and successful, and has been obscured today by the monotone colour scheme which had obliterated the original half-toning. In addition to the thirty-roomed main house, there was a hermitage set apart in the grounds, designed with dormers and verandahs to look like an estate cottage. This provided pleasant rooms for summer days, or for guests when the main house was full.

Most of the country houses were built of wood, and a few of brick. Others were constructed in the "poured concrete" that enjoyed a brief vogue in the 1870s and early 1880s. This technique consisted of the erection of wooden moulds, into which concrete was poured to form very solid, thick walls. The concrete surface was then generally finished by the application of stucco or other plasters to form classical trimmings, cornices, mock stone quoining, pilasters, and the like. The final product was pleasing, elegant and substantial. Montalto was built this way, with walls twelve inches thick, delicate finishing designed to imitate carved stone work, and flanked by broad verandahs. Corwar, a

large mansion overlooking the Rakaiia, was built of poured concrete, as were Waimarama and parts of Mount Hutt. E.M. Goodwin erected a big stone house called Hayton, but this was on a newly-acquired estate in South Canterbury. He soon abandoned Cracroft in preference for Hayton. When E. Grigg built a new mansion on his Akaunui estate in the 'nineties, every smallest detail of this two-and-a-half storeyed mansion was substantial and "finished". Longbeach brick was used, and it was coped and moulded in decorative fashions. The twenty-two room house was shaded by tasteful white verandahs and conservatories.

Contemporary with the classical style could be found houses which were representative of an entirely opposite stream of architecture in nineteenth-century New Zealand. This style, established in the 1840s, had continued virtually unchanged for half a century, and although largely eclipsed by the Georgian-based canon for most large houses in the 'nineties, was still favoured for the homesteads on the smaller estates, and on some of the larger. It was a style that owed a good deal to the Romantic predilection for the cottage ornee - a large, gentlemanly interpretation of "picturesque" architecture - and also to the nineteenth century concept of the "villa". Villa architecture descended directly from the country houses of the Roman patrician, as they were being uncovered in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and generally

centred upon a courtyard, surrounded by a 'U' shaped or rectangular house, flanked by shaded verandahs. These influences, combined with local climate, created a local style equally as distinctive as the canon, and equally satisfying in its aesthetic appeal.¹

These villa houses were generally one or one-and-a-half storeyed buildings, with a low broken-up profile, generally surrounding a courtyard at the rear. Rambling and spacious, decked out with verandahs and the "cottage" trimmings of gables, heavily-fretted bargeboards, bay and bow windows, and the like, they sprawled across trim lawns with an often chaotic layout. Wings were added here and there as after-thoughts, and contributed to the "picturesque" look made complete by ivy, vines, stained-glass windows and other such devices. Anama was a good example, with its dormers, verandahs, and high gables, and I.R.C. Cunninghame-Graham's Winterslow homestead, which centred upon an enclosed brick-paved courtyard like an English manor house, was another. In addition to Windermere, E.G. Wright maintained another country house and domestic staff at Surrey Hills, where the homestead was of the villa variety. Maronan, Buccleugh, and Alford were villas, and F. de Cartaret Malet's rather pompous twenty-two roomed house on the Clarewell estate, was 'U' shaped around a courtyard.

Two-storeyed wings were often either the nucleus or additions to such houses, as at Drayton homestead. The big house at Mount Hutt is another example, with a two-storeyed wing of poured concrete flanked by low

rambling wings of wood, and strung about with verandahs. Although giving the impression of organic growth, Mount Hutt was actually "well-planned, well-built, well-placed", and overlooked a green sunken garden "surrounded by ornamental shrubberies and plantations for shelter."¹ At J. Ballantyne's Thirlstane homestead, an interesting variation to the villa house was the addition of two deck cabins from a ship, the "Elginshire" which were integrated into the structure of the house and provided a smoking-room and study.

The new homestead at Coldstream was built in the late 1890s to house the newly-wed J. Studholme II and his wife, and was built in the villa tradition. When completed it contained thirty-two rooms, and was set out in a way so as to present a varied and broken-up silhouette. The garden frontage, overlooking a sunken garden, comprised a one-and-a-half storeyed central portion, with an upper row of dormers and a verandah, and was flanked on one side by a two-storeyed section with high gables, and on the other by a high-pitched single storeyed wing. Sprawling out behind and from the sides of this axis of the house were other wings with varied roof lines. The house, built of heart rimu, was designed by the Christchurch architect, J.C. Maddison. The main room, called "The Hall" in best baronial fashion, measured

¹ (page 297)

The Indian bungalow also had some influence. Most foreign influences were transmitted via Australian colonial architectures as it had developed early in the nineteenth century. Freeland, J.M. Architecture in Australia, Mentone, Victoria, 1968.

¹ Cyclopedia, p. 301.

forty-five feet by twenty. It was surmounted by a high arched ceiling of dark-stained timbering, and included a chapel.

A few years earlier another newly-married gentry couple rebuilt their homestead, but on rather different lines. In May, 1891 the social column in a Christchurch newspaper noted: "I believe Mr and Mrs G. Maclean Buckley are to arrive as soon as their house is finished at Lagmhor."¹ It was completed not long after, and the Maclean Bucleys settled in. Their new homestead, containing twenty-four rooms, and built on the same scale as Coldstream, was firmly in the canon style. Long, regular, elegant, with neo-classical trimmings, and shaded by double-storeyed verandahs, this 'T' shaped stuccoed mansion had nothing whatever to do with the villa or English manor. It was not until the turn of the century that the two streams were to be harmoniously reconciled, and were to produce such perfect houses of their kind as the second Langley homestead - a skilful blending of classical colonnades with gables, half-timbering, and dormer treatment of the upper storey, and thought by W. White to be one of the most beautiful country houses in Canterbury.²

These country houses were furnished with a sumptuousness and heaviness that modern taste would seldom accept, but with a costliness and desire for the "best" that was typical of the gentry group.

1 Weekly Press, 1 May 1891.

2 White, "Records", p.63.

The furnishings that were imported from England and Europe were generally the least satisfactory to modern aesthetics, while those bought in New Zealand were lighter and less ornate. By the last years of the century New Zealand furniture had clearly become different from that fashionable in Britain. It was lighter, and still influenced by Regency traditions. When English furniture was used, it was often of the antique variety, from earlier periods such as that of the Regency.

The furnishings of Springfield reflected the "baronial" tendency of the country houses; they were a profusion of intricately carved dark woods, rich tapestries, heavy and ornate carpets, misty romantic paintings, and Chippendale furniture, including such pieces as an ivory inlaid table in one drawing-room, and a grand piano made of dark woods. Heavy brocade and damask drapes hung over double arched doorways linked the series of drawing rooms. In contrast to this baronial magnificence were the decorations of places such as Holmeslee, where the accent was on the lightness, deftness and simple elegance characteristic of the Regency. Light, pale colours contrasted with the sombre darkness of Springfield. Perhaps this reflected the difference in outlook between the nouveaux riche Camerons, and the old Anglo-Irish gentry Holmeses.

Other houses combined different styles in different rooms. The Deanses furnished Waimarama simply, as it was little more than a shooting box. But they decorated

their main house, Homebush, in eighteenth century French style in some rooms, and nineteenth century English in others. Louis Quatorze furnishings, shipped in at great expense, jostled Sheraton. Their Riccarton town house, on the other hand, was unrestrained baronial, complete with antlered hall. Coldstream included an English drawing-room which J. Studholme II considered "the most refined and pretty drawing room in the district",¹ decorated with English porcelain, while the dining room was an exuberant French salon, in reds and golds, hung with eighteenth century French tapestries, and containing delicately wrought furnishings. The hall was imposing, baronial, and lined with high bookshelves. Even the smaller country houses displayed the same love of costly finish; Montalto's drawing and state rooms were plastered with moulded friezes, cornices and pilasters, or panelled, and lined with textiles such as velvet, chintz, or damask, or with block-printed wallpapers often in basso relievo. The doorknobs were all of cut crystal and gilt, and there were damask bell-pulls in every room.

The gentry hung these richly papered or brocaded walls with large, heavily-framed paintings, or small gilded cameos. Tastes varied; the paintings exhibited at the 1889-90 South Seas Exhibition included some lent by Ashburton landowners and farmers, which normally decorated their drawing-rooms. They included W. Higg's An Ashburton "Cockatoo's" Home, donated by a prosperous

¹ Studholme MSS, Mrs J. Studholme II to Mrs J. Studholme I, 9 September 1897.

Wakanui farmer, J. Cochran. Another well-to-do yeoman, E. Gates of Grove Farm, Tinwald, contributed a second Higgs painting, Milford Sound. The superior financial resources of the gentry were represented by paintings contributed by W. Campbell Walker, which were two works by C.F. Barraud, entitled Ashburton Gorge and Alford Forest. The paintings hung in Coldstream homestead are a typical selection, indicating the taste of the gentry. They include a portrait commissioned from G. Lindauer, romantic interpretations of New Zealand and English landscapes by J.B.C. Hoyte and other members of the "picturesque" school, still-lives, portraits, animals, (such as hunting dogs and horses), all of great size, in gilded baroque frames. The popularity of New Zealand painters is significant, as the painters of the time interpreted local landscape through British eyes. The resultant misty, romantic works portrayed an epicine countryside calculated to resemble the British Isles. New Zealand art of the time reflected the ambience of the "Old World" that the educated classes aspired to recreate. Statuary in various forms embellished the country houses too, either in the form of marble busts, as at Coldstream, or of Greek maidens in demure postures as at Springfield.

Other New Zealand artists were in demand. The gentry commissioned or bought paintings by J. Gully and C.F. Goldie, or portraits and landscapes by the wellknown Canterbury painters such as Richmond Beetham, Thornhill Cooper, J.M. Madden, and G.F. Fodor-- the

last of whom specialised in paintings of bloodstock horses. These roomy, expensively-furnished country houses had come to contain a life-style as close to that of the English gentry as the inhabitants could aspire.

2. Gardens, Grounds and Parks.

Having built their country residences, and furnished them appropriately, Ashburton landowners had then proceeded to beautify their surroundings to approximate more closely the English estates which were their model. Siting of houses was all-important. The flat topography of most of the lowlands part of the county required some sort of alleviation. This was usually provided by ornamental water, teamed with the maximum imaginative use of what slopes and other natural features offered themselves to the creative talents of landowners and their gardeners. Lakes were dug, or muddy hollows tidied, natural streams and other water courses adorned with willows, grassy banks, and garden seats. Artificial water races were treated similarly. Fish, ducks and other water-fowl, and carved pieces of statuary were liberated to increase the attractions, and garden walks devised to follow stream courses or cross them by means of rustic bridges.

"Views" were all-important, and often gaps in tree-lines were engineered to provide glimpses of open fields. If slopes and hillocks were available, then

all their possibilities would be exploited to the utmost, and grounds oriented to provide pastoral views from drawing-room windows. The homestead at Langley was situated "on a natural rise overlooking the whole estate",¹ and on Auchenflower,²

"The mansion house was situated on the top of the terrace overlooking the Rakaia, with a fine view of the great Canterbury Plains, and the snowy Southern Alps in the distance."

Neighbouring estate houses enjoyed similar views. Further inland, M. Ingle Browne's Highbank was situated in romantic withdrawal amongst artificial woods on the crest of a high terrace of the Rakaia, and afforded similar views. A few miles away, Corwar homestead, an imposing house set amongst the usual "noble" trees and "spacious" lawns, also topped the river bluffs of the Rakaia, and from the upper storey windows it was possible to gain vistas across the plains to the sea.

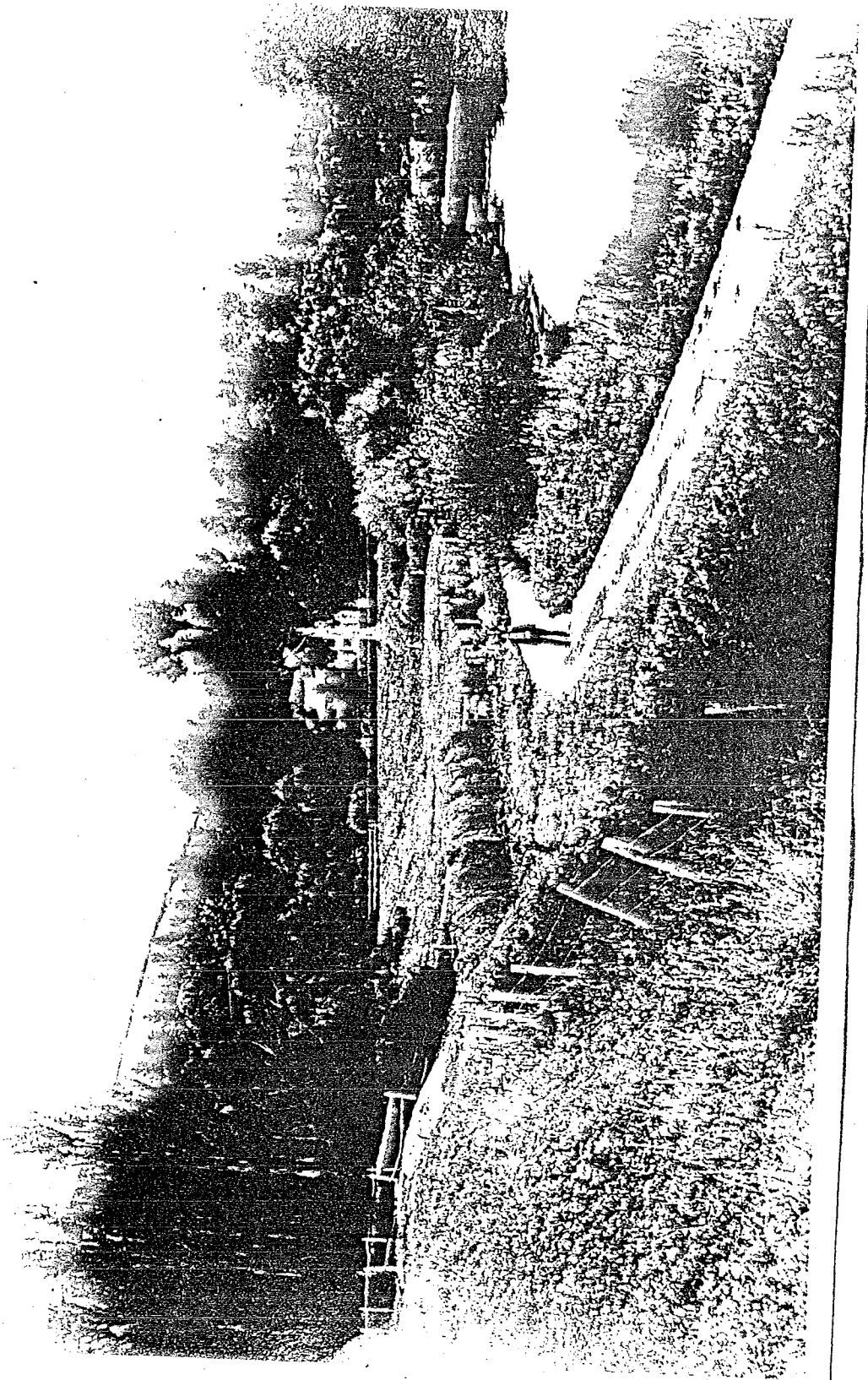
Elsewhere, river banks were utilised to similar effect, but only the Rangitata could provide terracing as spectacular as the Rakaia. The Moorhouses' homestead at Shepherds Bush was on the banks of the Rangitata, and set amongst "a glorious natural park",³ covered with "shrubbery, palms, pines and forest trees, along which one one side rushed the turbulent Rangitata in a confusion of waterfalls, whirlpools and cascades."⁴ Winterslow homestead possessed quieter views from its less dramatic location beside Taylor's Stream. Riversdale was built on a terrace, and overlooked the lower

1 White, "Records", p.64.

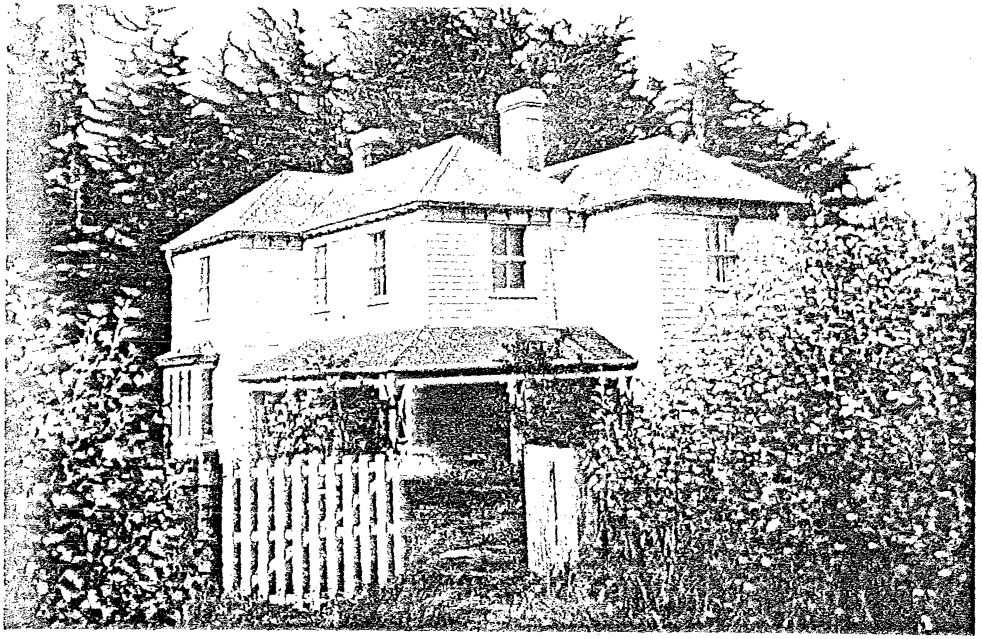
2 Cyclopedia, p.487.

3 Harper, B.O., The Kettle on the Fuschia, Wellington 1967, p.25.

4 Macdonald. "Biographies."



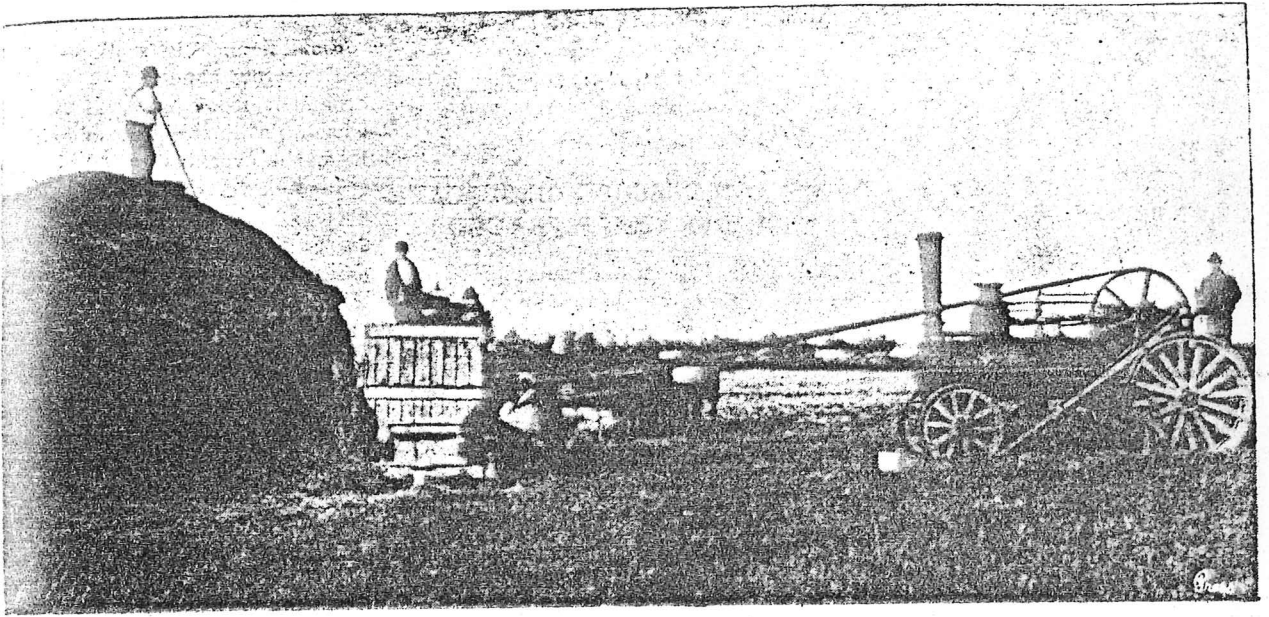
(Canterbury Museum)
25. PASTORAL SCENE. H.P.Murray-Aynsley's suburban estate of Riverlaw, in the 'nineties. Situated on the Heathcote river, near Christchurch. Farm labourer standing in lane.



26. FARMHOUSE OF A PROSPEROUS SMALL FARMER. The homestead of the Blee family, near Waterton.



27. COTTAGERS. The Hunt family, dressed in their Sunday best, outside their thatched cob cottage near Ashburton. (Canterbury Museum)



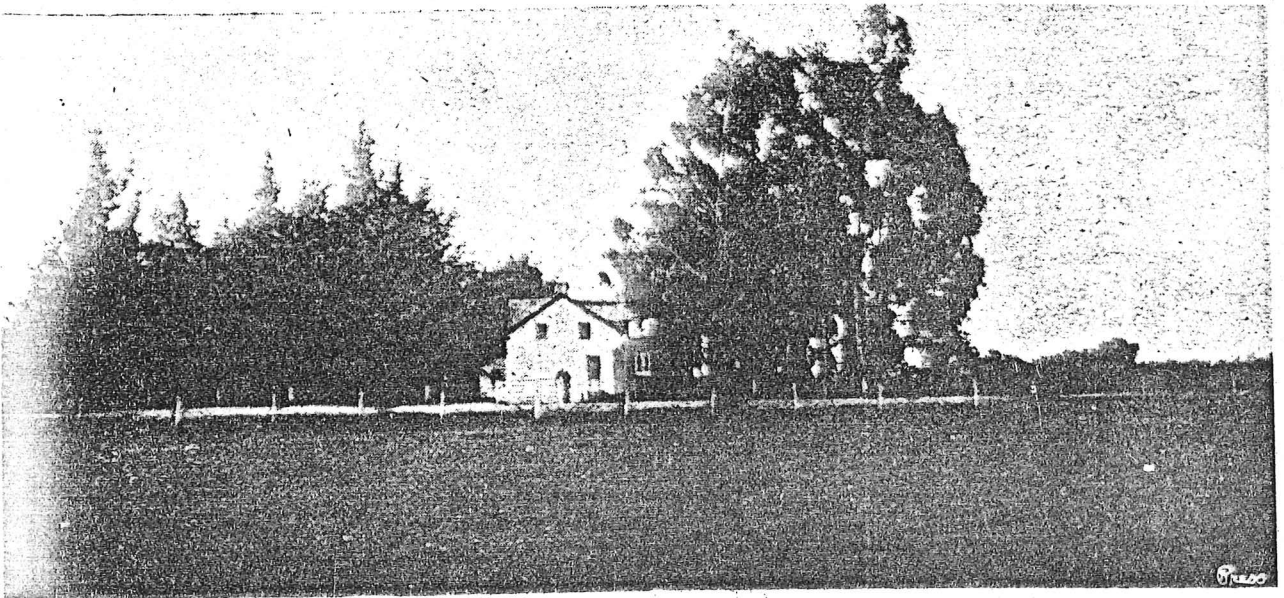
CHAFF-CUTTING.

A CANTERBURY FARM.

SOME VIEWS OF CORWAR, MR. J. CATHCART WASON'S ESTATE, RAKAIA.

28.

(Weekly Press)



THE MEN'S QUARTERS.

29.

(Weekly Press)

Scanners Note: The pagination in the original thesis moves directly from 307 to 312. (There are no intervening pages.)

reaches of the Ashburton which lay across wide lawns and fields. Mount Somers was built on a hillock, as was Mount Hutt, while¹

"Holmeslee House was situated on a natural eminence in the midst of the plain, and commanded a fine view of the surrounding countryside."

Nearby, Rokeby was situated at the foot of a natural rise, which had been planted in woodlands, and provided a pleasant view of a wooded slope reflected in the waters of an artificial lake.

In addition to the beautification of lakes and streams, and the ennoblement of views, the country houses were surrounded by all the requirements of genteel existence. Carefully turfed and trimmed lawns were laid down for croquet, tennis, and strolling; orchards and greenhouses coaxed apricots, oranges and grapes to grow. The temperate climate was naturally favourable to strawberry, apple, plum and cherry. Fanciful summer-houses, gazebos, and other such "follies" provided interesting features in gardens, as did arbours, covered walkways, rose gardens, avenues, ornamental ponds, and the like. All varieties of trees flourished in the local climate, and where there had been nothing but tussock, flax and cabbage trees forty years previously, elms, walnuts, oaks, firs, Montereys and Mariposas, magnolias, ti-trees, pungas, willows, and many other varieties shaded country house lawns. D'Avigdor wrote of Canterbury homesteads: 2

"solidly built and they have very English-looking gardens, except that the flowers you would expect to see in a greenhouse are growing

1 Cyclopedia, p.789.

2 d'Avigdor, Notes, p.213.

in the open, and the wattle trees, with their blaze of yellow blossom, and their rich, sensuous smell, grow as they never attempt to in their native land; and weeping willows line the river-bank and weep much better than they do in dear old England."

The usual lay-out of grounds centred upon a parterre or formal garden. This was elevated if possible, and consisted of flat lawns, intricate flowerbed arrangements, ornamental stone-work, small flights of steps, and urns. The formal garden was bordered either by a slope or by the sweep of a gravel carriage drive. Beyond it a "wilderness" garden would be laid out, consisting of woods and shrubberies, with walks formed through them, and perhaps an avenue or two affording vistas. Beyond this again was the "park", comprising the home paddocks, usually better planted than most of the estate, and provided with styles for strollers. A good example of this arrangement were the thirty-acre grounds at Longbeach. In the 1890s, after passing through the carriage gateway, one drove up a gravel drive which passed between two large artificial lakes. Swans and pleasure boats sailed on these. The prospect then opened out to show the great house in the centre of a broad parterre, around the foot of which the carriage drive curved until it climbed up to the porte cochere. Shallow flights of steps led down from the parterre to walks leading into the wilderness garden of thick groves and plantations. An ornamental stream flowed through the grounds. A wide avenue faced north-

ward, and provided beautiful views of the snow-capped Alps.

Springfield was surrounded by fifty acres of grounds, and was approached by a semi-circular drive with two formal gateways. This drive curved through the wilderness garden and then burst dramatically open to provide a prospect of the main frontage of the house. The parterre included tennis and croquet lawns. One frontage with verandahs overlooked a formal rose garden, another an orchard, and to the rear was a natural stream, which had been dammed to form ornamental ponds, shaded by willows. A swimming pool was a recent innovation. Around these grounds were groves of oaks and chestnuts, and thicker plantations beyond. The grounds on the neighbouring Winchmore estate were similarly laid out, with a semi-circular carriage drive entering through twin gates, formal parterre in front of the house, stream behind, two tennis courts, clumps of trees merging into thick wilderness garden, and a high hedge delimiting the entire grounds. Coldstream was built on a high parterre which fell steeply down to a sunken garden, with reflecting lakes at the foot, and formal lawns studded with park trees beyond. At the opposite end of the formal garden was a dormered cottage-style house, beyond which the view closed in thick plantations. From the entrance front of the homestead formal lawns opened directly onto landscaped parkland, with a long vista to the mountains. Sheep grazed within sight of the drawing-room.

Windermere was approached by two formal avenues, with carriage drives down the centre. These afforded glimpses of the lake, before they turned suddenly to reveal the house. J.A. Holmes's house was surrounded by two hundred acres of oak and other deciduous woodlands. The forty-five acres of grounds which enclosed Montalto included a beautiful larch avenue. In the grounds of Clarewell, where a large artificial lake including a planted island had been formed, de Cartaret Malet enjoyed sailing on a small yacht, smoking cigars the while. A writer noted that at Holmeslee "the grounds are laid out and planted with great taste, and the avenue runs down to the main road. Excellent taste has been exhibited also in laying out the garden and orchard."¹ An English writer listed the charms of Acton as including, "a well laid out and beautifully kept flower garden, a fine orchard in perfect order ... a small lake, extensive and well-kept plantations, a tennis court, and altogether everything which even a fastidious town gentleman could desire."²

Another writer described Alford as situated "within an enclosure of tall deciduous trees, while inside these again are many choice and well grown trees and shrubs of different varieties. In front is a large and well kept lawn and a number of flower beds." The house was described as "a well-appointed, well built, exceedingly comfortable and pleasant looking place of abode, and

¹ Cyclopedia, p. 789.

² Guardian, 1 December 1894.

the trees that surround it not only afford shelter on all sides, but add very considerably to the effect of a charming country residence." There was a "very pretty artificial lake", containing three islands, and on it two pleasure boats were kept.

"Leading from the house through an avenue of trees is a broad walk or carriage drive, and through the entrance gateway and an opening in the trees is obtained a view of a most lovely and enchanting bit of mountain scenery ... At different times of the year this mountain scenery presents many beautiful phases, but it must be seen on a clear winter's morning to be viewed in its very perfection of loveliness." ¹

Two orchards were kept at Alford, an ornamental stream ran through the grounds, and the banks of the lake and islands in it were studded with weeping willows. At Lagmhor a birch avenue approached the homestead grounds from one side, and an oak avenue, with an entrance lodge and gateway, swept up from another. Artificial waterways flowed through the grounds, and the house was probably surrounded by more lawns for croquet, tennis, golf, polo, and aesthetics than any other in the county. Even the smallest estates supported large grounds. At Ohinemuri, the house was surrounded by eight acres of formal grounds, with park beyond, and Westerfield was famous for the beauty of its grounds and lakes.

At every other country house in the county the pattern was repeated. As the Wason's, Todhunters, Maclean Buckleys, and Murray-Aynsleys drove up their tree-lined avenues, past gates and lodges, they entered shady grounds, spacious homesteads, and a tranquil, easy world sheltered from the outside. It was the

¹ Weekly Press, 13 August 1886.

nearest approximation to upper-class British country life that this colonial gentry could attain. The presiding genius was often the station lady, who recalled English parterres, and who supervised the recreation of these within the thick belts of pines and gums planted originally to provide shelter against the norwester. By the 'eighties and 'nineties, thanks to the rapid growth of exotic trees in New Zealand, most homestead grounds had matured. They were an important anchor of the gentry's "British"ness.

3. Social Life.

Chamier spoke of country life in nineteenth century Canterbury as one in which "genial sociability generally prevailed", and in which "a multitude of social gaieties" occupied much of the time of the gentry. He noted that,¹

"Parties, picnics, and concerts were got up on the spur of the moment; friends would 'drop in' uninvited, and sometimes a whole troop of young people would make a raid on some unsuspecting neighbour and take the house by storm, when the rooms would have to be cleared for a dance on the shortest possible notice. Riding parties were especially in vogue, as everyone rode in those days, and the open character of the country offered every inducement for that bracing exercise. It was a sort of patriarchal existence in modern life ... with the charm of civilised society..."

The landowners of the period "valued the life of the small community, enriched as it was by its well-understood relationships, its cricket and racing clubs, its shared claret, burgundy and red kaludah, and by that "keen insight ... and civilising influence of women'." ²

1 Chamier, *Siren*, pp.105-6.

2 Ash, "Ideas of Society" p.142: referring to Sir John Hall.

At the same time, there was an artificiality and brittleness to this life, where people "strove after social distinction, and gave themselves aristocratic airs. They aped the Parisian fashions, kept up artificial appearances, practised Old-World foibles, and got monstrously into debt."¹ It was a society of juxtaposed hospitality and frigidity of customs. Many of the gentry families were praised for the former. It was de rigeur to entertain fellow gentry frequently. The Griggs were noted for their "free, open-handed hospitality",² the Elmslies were reputed to have "had a sincere love of hospitality",³ W.S. Peter was called "generous-hearted and genial in disposition", and his home "was sought by the cultured",⁴ and the Moorhouses were spoken of as people "with whom for generous kindness and hospitality, few could compare. It was a real treat to pass away time in such a lovely locality and with such friends."⁵ But the same people observed a strict formality of conduct in which conventions "were observed and any deviation from the orthodox was frowned upon." It was generally "impossible for moral lapses and irregular affairs to occur in the social set without gossiping and eyebrow lifting."⁶

1 Chamier, *Siren* ., p.197.

2 Brown, *Ashburton* , p.9.

3 Elmslie, *Elmslie* ., p.61.

4 Dunlop, "Ashburton".

5 Macdonald, "Biographies".

6 Rolleston, R., William and Mary Rolleston, Wellington, 1971, p.124.

Such conventional behaviour was reflected in dress and etiquette. The gentry usually "dressed punctiliously, the women wearing out their old ball dresses for dinner at home and the men changing into dinner jackets."¹ J. Deans of Waimarama was "an unusual mixture of modern ideas and extreme conservatism" who wore the same, highly formal dress in all circumstances, but on the other hand "was always ready to adopt the very latest in farming methods and farming machinery."² A.E. Peache appears to have been fastidious in his dress. He had his riding breeches made to order in London, and ensured that his shirts were the best quality available. His biographer notes that in his papers "there are several letters of complaint to his tailor about his suits, patterns of tweed submitted to him being 'too loud a check', and annoyance that his instructions to put bone buttons on his coats had been disregarded."³ J.L. Coster was always immaculately dressed, and wore a silk hat and frock coat with silk handkerchief in his pocket. He also drove an elegant brougham.⁴ Ladies described their dress in letters; one wrote:⁵

"I am more and more delighted with my dainty green muslin which I am going to wear at a party at Longbeach on Wednesday. I have trimmed a becoming green straw hat with some of the cream lace ... and black ostrich plumes."

1 Ibid., p.123

2 Deans, *Pioneers*, p.125.

3 Gray, *Quiet Hills*, p.119.

4 Macdonald, "Biographies".

5 Studholme MSS, Mrs J. Studholme II to Mrs J. Studholme I, dated 4 February (no year given).

Formality combined with an open-handed, generous hospitality to their own kind, marked the social customs of the gentry. The strongest thread in the weave of social intercourse was "visiting", or "calling" on other gentry families. This often became extended over days or even weeks. Calling was active amongst both sexes, although the narrow formality of the institution as practised in Christchurch drawing-rooms, with cards and regulated times, was eschewed in the country. Visiting was often impromptu, and often dragged out into several days. At most hours of the day brightly painted carriages or groups of well turned out riders would clatter down the dusty roads to "drop in" on neighbouring gentlefolk. The assiduity of the visiting instinct is revealed by their transport. In September, 1890, C.G. Hawdon's estate possessed three carriages - one large state carriage with a retractable hood, seating six, a smaller two-seater carriage, and a single-seated Abbot buggy.¹ The Chisnalls kept a more modest establishment at Ohinemuri, including a gig, and a large four-in-hand which seated nine in comfort, and was "very stylish".² The Wrights owned two carriages at Windermere, as did the de Cartaret Malets at Clarewell. Amongst the Whites' carriages at Langley was a smart hooded phaeton.³ J. Ballantyne possessed a stable of fine carriage horses, and always insisted that his coaches be driven at a speed of at

1 Guardian, 12 September 1890.

2 Chisnall, "Notes".

3 White, "Records", p.64.

least twelve miles an hour. Most families seem to have maintained two establishments of vehicles, one in town, and one in the country, as did the Morrrows at Montalto and Dalriada. The Peaches, on the other hand, usually hired a landau when they were in town. The roads in the county were good by contemporary standards, but accidents in carriages occasionally occurred, as when "Mr Donald McLean and Brackshaw, the groom who was driving him, met with a rather serious accident" one evening when returning from Ashburton to Lagmhor. "Some part of the harness" gave way, the carriage overturned, and "Mr McLean fell on his head and was rendered insensible for some time."¹

The gentry families employed these carriages to keep up an intimate contact with one another, meeting, talking, walking, playing, eating, and drinking with one another. The degree of class homogeneity was strong. The long list of visitors and callers entertained by the Peache family of Mount Somers shows this. One day in 1890 a letter arrived from C.G. Tripp, a landowner in a neighbouring county, inviting the Peaches to spend a weekend there.² Soon after, the family drove up country to visit Mount Possession station, and picked cherries in their host's orchard. A few days afterwards, "Mr Mathias stayed" for a night.³ When the family moved down to stay at Valetta, there was a large number of visitors,

1 Guardian, 1 February 1892.

2 Gray, Quiet Hills, p.103.

3, Ibid., p.104. Mathias' initial is uncertain, but he was one of the sons of Archdeacon O. Mathias, a prominent "squatter parson".

including the Harpers from Hackthorne, Vernon Musgrave (a high country landowner), the Camerons of Springfield, the Peters of Anama, the Stracheys from Maronan, and G.A. Maclean Buckley from Lagmhor - all large landowners!

They returned to Mount Somers, where visitors included F.B. Dennis and Miss Dennis, Aubrey Cox, Vernon Musgrave, Beauchamp Lane, Miss Ford, W.P. Kellock, J. Grigg, F. de Cartaret Malet, "Captain Greenstreet", J. Brabazon, the Lascelles with their children and servants, H. Tripp, Percy Cox, and many others, almost all of whom can be identified as members of large landowning families, mostly in Ashburton county.^{1a} Some of the Peaches' guests are unidentifiable; two interesting entries in the station diary show that, although "open house" was religiously pursued, it was not always accompanied by an internal grace. On 30 May, 1893, a diary entry reads, "Bald headed old R___ and his jabbering old Dutch arrived this evening ...". After a comfortable stay of four days, the guests departed, and Peache noted, "That vulgar old brute R___ and his old hag of a wife left this morning, thank goodness."²

Duncan Cameron's problems with visitors seem to have been more wearying. He was one of the few Ashburton landowners who had risen from complete obscurity to great wealth and prominence, and this rise had resulted largely from his care, astuteness, and long

¹ Ibid., p.106.

^{1a} Ibid., pp.111,121,125,159,144. "Capt. Greenstreet" is unidentifiable, but was a friend of de Cartaret Malet, and possibly C.H. Greenstreet, former owner of Ringwood estate, Ashburton Forks.

hours of personal supervision of farm work. These habits continued with him. His problem arose from his wife, who was a "vivacious, sociable woman and had social ambitions."¹ She shared the obscurity of her husband's origins, and having entered the gentry, was determined to become a leading hostess. A biographer remembered staying at Springfield in the period.¹

"There would be ten or twelve visitors staying in the house and dinner was an affair; everyone had to change and men put on white shirts. Duncan Cameron would come in from the harvest field exhausted, being then an old man, and change into his dinner jacket. As the meal progressed one could see his head nodding and nodding and finally fall with a jerk which would wake him. He would look round surreptitiously to see if he had been caught out."

In spite of these strains, the visiting pattern flourished. The papers of C.F. Todhunter of Westerfield reveal a busy life of visiting and being visited. One letter to his brother, for instance, mentions that "Hatfield arrived here last evening; you can rely on his getting much entertained during your absence."² Edward Dobson of Ilesworth came to stay for a few days at the same time. Both men were of unequivocal social status. Entries taken from the 1896 diary can provide further illustration:

"30th Jan., Mr and Mrs Arthur Somerville (of The Terraces, near Methven) called.
3rd March, F.de C. Malet (of Clarewell), and T.T. Ford called. (Ford was from Mrs Peache's family, of Ringwood, near Christchurch.)
22nd November, Fine day. Mr and Mrs Harper (of Hackthorne) came to dinner. M(argaret) E(llen) T(odhunter) and R(obert) T(odhunter) went for a drive in the morning.

1 Macdonald, "Biographies".

2 Todhunter MSS, Letter Book, C.F. Todhunter to B.E. Todhunter, 18 February 1891.

26th November, Mr and Mrs Buckley (of Lagmhor) called in the afternoon. Buckley announced that he, Musgrave, and Lascelles are to leave for Patagonia on 24th Dec. ...

12th December, Mrs Harper and small boy here.

17th December, M.E.T., A(nne) G. T(odhunter), and Miss Randall (who was staying at Westerfield) went to Mrs Harper's in afternoon.

18th December, Miss T(odhunter), Miss A.G.T. and Miss Randall went to Lagmhor. Nobody at home.

20th December, Cécil Williams and F. Claridge called in afternoon. Miss T., A.G.T. and Miss R. to Church in afternoon.

22nd December, Edgar Stead (of Ilam) arr. with C.F. T(odhunter) from Ashburton.

23rd December, Mrs Harper and two boys here." 1

In all the homesteads across the county, this activity was repeated. The W. Chisnalls of Ohinemuri, one writer noted, "had joyous weekend gatherings of friends and neighbours" staying at their house.² Mrs J. Elmslie was an enthusiastic caller, and "when visiting friends in the country she rode there and back on horse-back, carrying her evening clothes in a valise in front of the saddle."³ One day A. Strachey "took a party of friends for a long drive" in his four-horse carriage, and drove to the Harpers' in the course of it, where there was a garden party.⁴ Mrs J. Studholme II frequently wrote letters such as the following:

"We have scarcely been without visitors for many weeks, and shall not be alone for some time to come; it all helps to make the place very cheerful and bright and now I have such nice servants ..." 5

Another time she noted that "the Airey-Watsons have just left us and look a good deal better,"⁶

1 Ibid., N.Z. Rough Diary, 1896.

2 Brown, *Ashburton*, p.117.

3 Elmslie, *Elmslie*, p.53.

4 *Weekly Press*, 21 November 1890.

5 Studholme MSS, Mrs J. Studholme II to Mrs J. Studholme I, 14 February 1898.

6 Ibid., 16 February 1900.

(they had been staying at Coldstream to benefit their health), and another letter mentions that their friend, "Colonel Dalgety is here, enjoying the garden which is looking quite lovely just now."¹

In 1890, Athole Murray-Aynsley wrote to "My dear Sir John" Hall, from Mount Hutt, saying that,²

"We were all disappointed that you did not pay us a visit on Saturday, even if you had not stayed the night we should have been so glad if you had come in to lunch. We thought we would be sure to see something of you, for Mother and I were at the homestead all day and the girls had afternoon tea on the Island, so when you did not turn up here and they were late coming home we concluded that you had at least been entertained by them, and were very sorry to find they had only seen the buggy in the distance.

Mother says she hopes however you will come in to lunch on your way to or from Methven if you pass this way. We cannot unfortunately get a letter to you before you leave Hororata on Tuesday but we shall hope to see you sometime when you pass."

Hospitality was extended to the clergy. The Wrights at Windermere regularly entertained their parson, the Rev. E.H. Wyatt. The diary of the Rev. Henry Williams mentioned a three-day stay with the Griggs at Longbeach in the winter of 1882. He was met at the railway station by J. Grigg in a carriage, and wrote:³

"We had a ten-mile drive in the dark with a sharp air in our faces, but not unpleasant. We got to Longbeach at 6.30. There were such a lot of ladies that I felt quite staggered at first, but found they nearly all belonged to the family. Mrs Grigg was very pleasant and did not allow the conversation to flag, so we got along very nicely."

1 Ibid., 10 December 1899.

2 Hall Papers, 1890, Athole Murray-Aynsley to Sir John Hall, 23 November 1890.

3 Stevens, *Grigg, P.*, the year is 1882.

The diary of E.R.Chudleigh contains similar passages showing how a good deal of the life of the landed gentry was whiled away in the houses of neighbours. One Autumn he recorded,¹

"May 10th. Went to the ball (held by a family in the next county) and enjoyed it.

May 15th. Went to Mount Peel (J.B.A. Acland's estate in Geraldine county). Mrs Percy Cox is staying here during the holidays. She had Ruth, Lilly, Emily Sandford and baby (the Cox party was from Ashburton). Of the Acland children Johnny, Mary, Henry, Harry, Bessie, Emily, and may be more; two Miss Pennys; Mr Hare and his brother; Ben Moorhouse (of Shepherds Bush); Henry Blakiston; Alex Hatfield; a young Williams; Mytton the manager and Miss Neuth the Acland's governess and myself not to mention many that came and went every day.

May 16th. Mrs Tripp turned up. More fun.

May 17th. Much fun indeed.

May 18th. Notwithstanding many inches of snow Mrs Cox and Mr Hare with 8 of the girl children started for Ch.Ch. in driving snow. 18 miles to the Rangitata station.

June 4th. Enys and I went to the Ashburton. We drive to Griggs (Longbeach) tomorrow.

June 5th. Went as far as Longbeach road by train and then drove ten miles in a dogcart.

June 6th. A perfect deluge; no moving out of the house."

With twenty-four people staying together in a country house, more arriving daily for visits, and all enjoying "much fun indeed", life for hosts and hostesses must have been strenuous, but certainly justifies generalisations that have been made about the scale of hospitality in landed families. It was also common for gentry families to make "driving tours" through the countryside, and stay for a day or two with several gentry families in turn. For instance, a few years after the period being dealt with in this work, the Peaches went

¹ Richards, *Chudleigh*, the year is 1878, pp.268-9.

on a driving tour of five days, staying at the country houses of other landowners on the way. On the first night they were at Mount Hutt, after driving 25 miles in a leisurely fashion, and stopping for afternoon tea with friends on the way. On the second day they lunched at The Point estate of the Phillips family in the next county, and slept at Haldon, 23 miles from Mount Hutt. On the third day they drove to Racecourse Hill, sixteen miles away, where they spent another night and on the fourth day drove thirty miles back towards home, and stayed the night at Blackford. Finally, after a long period of "fine, bright" days, the weather broke, and they drove the 26 miles back to Mount Somers in showery rain.¹

Another year, Mrs J. Studholme I wrote that²

"We went last week a little tour of calls and slept at Lagmhor where the Buckleys were very nice and hospitable."

Mrs Alice Moorhouse wrote from Shepherds Bush on another occasion,³

"I had such a nice holiday at the time of Emmy's wedding (one of the Moorhouse girls). I went to stay with everyone I know down south ..."

She went on to hope that her correspondent's (Mrs Studholme's) children were coming to stay at Shepherds Bush for the Christmas holidays, as (she wrote) "I expect Walter McAlpine for half the holiday". In addition, she hoped, "Tom Wigley will bring all his family up to us for Christmas", and

"we expect the Peters also as Mrs Peter and

1 Gray, *Quiet Hills*, p.196.

2 Studholme MSS, Mrs J. Studholme II to Mrs J. Studholme I, 6 November 1899.

her two younger daughters have gone to stay with her mother in Australia. Mary and I were over at the Charles Harpers' about a week ago; we stayed the night and she wanted Mary to go and stay a little while with her as she will help her with her singing ... Edward has been in Christchurch for the races ..."

After their marriage, the Elmslies went on a tour of rural districts in North Canterbury, staying with the J. Macfarlanes at Coldstream (near Rangiora), the D. Rutherfords at Leslie Hills, the J. Douglas family at Broomfield (near Amberley), the Walter Macfarlanes at Kaiwara, and the Rev. and Mrs William Campbell at Waiiau Manse.¹

In addition to this intimate linkage by means of visiting and calling, more formal social contacts linked the gentry group together. Dances, evening concerts, charades, croquet parties and the like were supplemented by traditional rural parties such as picnics, riding parties, hunts, and coursing. Dinners were an indispensable means of social intercourse and, after visiting, the most frequently indulged.

Meals al fresco were just as popular - especially on festive occasions. On Christmas Day, 1892, for example, the Todhunter family took advantage of the "Fine hot day" to eat the usual Christmas dinner in the orchard, where they also took their tea later in the day.² The Peaches went further afield for their Christmas dinner in 1895, when they drove to Wright's Hill with the Peter family from Anama and enjoyed a

3 (p.327) Ibid., Alice Moorhouse to Mrs J. Studholme I
22 November 1889.

1 Elmslie, *Elmslie*, p.53.

2 Todhunter MSS, N.Z. Rough Diary, 1892.

picnic. Picnics were also popular without any particular excuse. The Peaches often picnicked at local beauty spots with friends, at the river, Alford Forest, or in the hills. On one of these picnics, being held by the Herrings at Alford, A.E. Peache drove with his wife and sons in one carriage, the daughters in a second, and "four young men on horseback" as outriders.¹

Other outdoor activities were popular. The Moorhouses frequently gave tennis parties at Shepherds Bush. One March, E.R. Chudleigh's diary noted that,²

"Mrs Acland, Agnes, Ruth and myself drove to the Moorhouses where there was a large gathering of over 40 people, cricket and lawn tennis and dancing. Mable Potts (daughter of T.H. Potts) and I versus Agnes and Mr Waid. We conquered."

He also mentioned on 7 July that³

"Mabel and I rode to Shepherds Bush. We found five Miss Moorhouses and Miss Peter there and we had endless games of tennis and then rode back home again to Mt Peel. The day was glorious and we were all very bright."

Croquet parties occurred frequently, and in one letter a station lady mentioned that "several croquet parties" were coming up in the near future in the neighbourhood, and that she was herself "going to give a little croquet party next week."⁴

Musical functions were another popular diversion. A.E. Peache wrote in a letter, "I drove the three girls over to a concert at Anama last week."

1 Gray, *Quiet Hills*, p.173.

2 Richards, *Chudleigh*, p.276.

3 Ibid, p.300.

4 Studholme MSS, Mrs J. Studholme II to Mr J. Studholme I, 18 February 1900.

After the concert, the family drove the seven miles back to Mount Somers, arriving home at 1.00am, "which was rather late for the girls."¹ The Studholmes held musical soirees at Coldstream, and one time Mrs Studholme wrote,²

"I expect we shall have about 90 people, Mrs Rich (of Lowcliffe), Ted Grigg (of Akaunui), and Dorothy Rolleston will I hope be singing and a few local celebrities. If Jack's (Studholme) cold is better he will sing one and make his debut."

In addition to formal evening concerts, impromptu musical evenings were often got up, in an age when it was necessary for every "finished" woman to possess some competence in music. Many men prized music too, and most could find some common musical ground. Whether it was a Mozart sonata or a popular song from "The Mikado".

Other entertainments occurred. For one period, it seems that the main entertainment was charades, "which were very popular. Some evenings the (Peaché) family drove to Anama where they all took part in the amusement, and sometimes the Peter family came to Mount Somers and performed there."³ At other times, a whole chain of receptions would be set in action when some distinguished visitor or another arrived in the county and made a progress through the homes of the gentry. In February, 1893, for instance, the social column of the Weekly Press

1 Gray, Quiet Hills, p. 123.

2 Studholme MSS, Mrs J. Studholme II to Mrs J. Studholme I, "Coldstream Thursday night".

3 Gray, Quiet Hills, p. 126.

noted that Lord and Lady Hopetoun with Lord Northesk and Mr Ralstoun made a tour of the county. Lord Hopetoun was later Governor General of Australia. The party stayed first with the Griggs at Longbeach, where "Mr Grigg will be able to show his guests a harvest scene such as they never saw before".¹ Lady Hopetoun was met by the Cathcart Wason's carriage and "then proceeded to Corwar", while the remainder of the suite travelled to Springfield, where they were entertained by the Camerons. They finally met together at Corwar, "where they were entertained by Mr and Mrs Wason." Some days later, after a similar progress through neighbouring counties, "Mr and Mrs John Deans, of Riccarton, entertained Lord and Lady Hopetoun and several of their friends at a sumptuous luncheon on Wednesday, after which sightseeing was again resorted to."² Whenever a viceregal party travelled through the country, the same reception by the gentry occurred. In 1890, for example, the Griggs entertained the Governor and his suite at Longbeach for four days,³ and again in 1894, when "His Excellency the Governor, Lady Glasgow, Lady Augusta Boyle, Miss Wauchope, and Captain Clayton ... will be the guests of Mr John Grigg, Longbeach, probably until Thursday."⁴ In 1898, the Studholmes were debating whether to entertain the Duke

1 Guardian, 10 February 1893.

2 Weekly Press, 23 February 1893, and Guardian, 13 February 1893.

3 Guardian, 30 September 1890.

4 Ibid., 29 January 1894.

and Duchess of York on their projected tour of Australasia. Mrs J. Studholme II wrote that her mother "knows the Duchess pretty well ... I think she is rather heavy and stuck up but he very easy to entertain."¹

But above all, the gentry loved to dance and hold balls. S. Crawford in her Sheep & Sheepmen of Canterbury painted a picture of how a landed gentleman transformed himself into,²

"the evening exquisite of the nineteenth century - to adopt an eccentric collar and white tie, to adorn himself with a pair of 8¼ white kid gloves - to engage himself for a galop - to 'believe the next dance was his waltz' - to talk quadrille talk - to walk arm in arm nowhere, and appear radiantly happy about nothing and more than this to rush with ices, and eat and drink rolled turkey, champagne and ornamental jelly and game pie and tipsy cake, and lobster salad."

Race days, hunts, regattas, and sports meetings almost always ended in balls which "amongst the social set, were perhaps the most popular form of entertainment."³ One year the Guardian noted that the August hunt ball held in Ashburton was "the ball of the season". One hundred dancers, including "the youth and beauty of the place" danced in masquerade costumes until 4.00am. The "scene was a brilliant one", and dances included "the graceful French cotillon, which has taken quite a hold in Ashburton." The Buckleys of Lagmhor were generous hosts, and often provided balls and dances for the gentry. The social climax of the Lagmhor year was

1 Studholme MSS, Mrs J. Studholme II to Mrs J. Studholme I, 12 June 1898.

2 Crawford, Sheepmen, p.113.

3 Rolleston, Rolleston, p.24.

was the annual harvest ball, when the carriages of guests would be lit by blazing stacks of straw along eight miles of road from the homestead. A dangerous, but "picturesque" practice. Other gatherings were frequently held. One was described by a social correspondent in 1893.¹

"Last Thursday Mr and Mrs G.A.M. Buckley entertained a number of their friends at Lagmhor. The invitations were for tennis in the afternoon and dancing in the evening. Unfortunately it was showery all day, so tennis had to be postponed."

At the ball in the evening "the musicians sat in a perfect little bower of evergreens. Mr Fleming's music, was as usual, perfect."

On another occasion it was reported that,²

"Last Monday afternoon Mrs Studholme gave the first of a series of dancing afternoons. It was a fine day and the rooms were crowded. There was some very enjoyable singing. Mrs Burn sang two Italian songs very sweetly indeed; Mrs Haslam also was in good voice. Mr T. Acland sang a very pretty song quite new to me, and of which I could not catch the name, in his usual finished style. Mr H. Reeves also sang, and when the music was over we all went to the dining-room and danced. It is a lovely room for a good spin, it is so long and the floor perfection. We danced in our hats and bonnets, our jackets and, no, not parasols, we put them out of sight first, but we did not discard our muffs. It is odd what fun there is in this daylight, or rather twilight dancing, for the rooms were not brightly lit, and no one, unless they took some trouble to ascertain, could tell how often one danced with the same partner ..."

A less flattering picture was painted by Edith Lyttleton, who described an evening party held at

1 Weekly Press, 28 August 1893. "Mr Fleming's" initial is unknown.

2 Ibid., 25 July 1890.

"Bendemeer" (actually her father's Rokeby) in the 'nineties. Guests include the "nasty old witch" Lady Lovel, with "fat raddled cheeks and her simpering at the young fellows over a fan of purple feathers", the austere Sir Peregrine Lovel who "put up his eye-glasses with an air", "a lean enveloping Emily", a "pink, cushiony Linda", a "Sophia rushing with footstools and cushions", and¹

"Too many young people; too much noise and colour; far too much Darien in saffron silk and diamonds, laughing, joking, pervading everything ... None of this generation knew how to behave in the presence of their elders, thought Peregrine, staring aloofly at flushed faces, white shoulders, black sleeves crushing together round the piano where (his grandson) was going to sing ..."

The local gentry also travelled into neighbouring counties from time to time to attend social events. In January, 1893, a "most delightful dance was given by Mrs (Sarah) Elworthy of Pareora, on the 5th, when over 100 persons were present." Some families, such as the Whites of Langley, and the Studholmes of Coldstream, had travelled down from Ashburton for this occasion.²

The wealthy and well-bred of the county also met to honour the great turning-points in one another's lives, weddings and funerals. The social columns reported two such events in one month. The first was when³

"Mr J.C.N. Grigg and his bride returned from

1 Lancaster, *Promenade*, pp.462-63.

2 *Weekly Press*, 12 January 1893.

3 *Weekly Press*, 1 May 1891.

their honeymoon on Friday last. They were met at the Ashburton station by a number of friends, and a four-in-hand being in waiting, they were driven to Longbeach, and on their arrival home were accorded a most hearty welcome. The occasion was celebrated in the evening by a ball ... The room was prettily decorated with evergreens &c., and illuminated with Chinese lanterns while over the seats occupied by Mr and Mrs Grigg was the word 'Welcome' in a nicely designed motto."

Representatives of most of the gentry families of the district graced the ballroom floor to celebrate and toast this, the second John Grigg.

Soon after, there was a long obituary of the Hon. W. Spence Peter, M.L.C., of Anama, with a description of his funeral. A special train brought mourners from Ashburton borough, and almost all of those listed in the newspaper were gentry: B.M. Moorhouse II, Major W.J. Steward, J. Grigg, J.C.N. Grigg, J. Studholme, Colonel J. Studholme II, the Hon. W.C. Walker, G.P. Murray-Aynsley, A.Acland, D.Morrow, G.A. Maclean Buckley, E.Herring, "Mr Moorhouse", A.Harrison, C.J. Harper, C.M. Strachey, E.F. Wright, and A.McFarlane.¹ The death of "the late Mrs Jane Peter (relict of the Hon. W.S. Peter) of Anama" occurred four years later, and attracted similar attention. A special train brought mourners to her funeral, which was "attended by a very large number of the friends of the family". In addition to the gentry, "almost every resident of Alford Forest and the neighbourhood, where Mrs Peter was much beloved and respected" followed the funeral cortege which left

1 Ibid, 29 May 1891.

Anama homestead in mid-afternoon and travelled through the autumn countryside to Mount Somers village, where Mrs Peter was buried.¹ Weddings were celebrated with a similar state. When W.S. Elmslie married at Cardendale, his bride was attended by eight maids, and he by eight men.² Ashburton gentry were often represented at weddings outside the county, as in 1890, when G.E. Rhodes, one of the sons of R.H. Rhodes of Lowcliffe and Chatmos, married at Beverley, a country house near Timaru. Bishop Harper presided, J.C.N. Grigg was best man, and one of the "Master Wrights" of Windermere was a page boy.³

"The young couple left for Winchester in the afternoon, and spend their honeymoon in the North Island, and afterwards go for a trip to England and the continent ... I hear the happy couple intend to spend a year in England, before settling down on their estate (Meadowbank, in Ellesmere)."

This long period of travel after a wedding was typical.

The public school and colonial sporting traditions were strong amongst the gentry. This meant that the pleasures of a vigorous outdoor life were an important means of social contact. If balls, the endless round of visiting, concerts, and the like provided the gentry with indoors society, the prospect of an open, sunny countryside, rolling hills and mountains in the high country, clear rivers and forests full of game, and wide homestead lawns enticed landowners and their

1 Guardian, 9 February 1895.

2 Elmslie, Elmslie ..., p.55.

3 Weekly Press, 28 November 1890.

families to games and sports. The Ashburton gentry was enthusiastically and determinedly a sporting one. They imported polo from India, rugby, cricket and tennis from England, croquet from France, shooting and hunts from the West Country, horse racing from everywhere, and interspersed them with a good deal of riding, walking, driving, and boating.

Equestrian activities were probably the most popular and of these the hunt and races were the most organised and sociable occasions. Hunts took place regularly, either impromptu, or as the result of organised Hunt Club efforts. At all of them "there were the hounds and the hunts and the square topped hats; the huntsman, the station owner, and the owner of the little farm well-tilled."¹ An English squire, Weston Cracroft, had written in his diary some decades earlier that he found "great social value in the hunting field. It cemented old friendships and made new ones, and squire and tenant met on equal terms for once."² This was true also for Ashburton hunts. Gentry and "cockatoos" mixed together in their red jackets, and were trailed by carriages bearing the aged, weak, literary, and feminine. Officers of the Hunt Club Steeplechase in 1890 included J. Grigg as President, G.H. Alington, D.McLean, and W.C. Walker as Vice-Presidents, along with two "notables",

1 Brown, *Ashburton*, p.342.

2 Hill, "Lincolnshire", p.340.

and as Stewards W.P. Chapman, G.A. Maclean Buckley, and four farmers. Patrons were the Hon. John McLean, then owner of Lagmhor, and Matthew Stitt, the Harts' manager at Winchmore.¹ This indicates the importance of hunting as a means of contact between the various rural groups. Other hunts occurred as on the sunny winter day in 1890 when "Mr E. Saunders brought his popular pack to Rakaia," and in the "balmy air and genial sun", fifty people rode to hounds across the Acton estate.²

During the hunting season (which took place in winter, and so did not clash with the summer "season" in town), the gentry readily provided their estates for hunting. They served refreshments on an ample scale before and afterwards, and often crowned the day with a ball. The social columns mention two hunts at Winchmore within two months in the winter of 1891; the first occurred in June, and was reported thus:³

"The most popular meet of the season is the 'Winchmore' Hunt, and it certainly looked like it on Saturday last. The weather was warm and sunshiny, and some forty or fifty people must have arrived at Winchmore before twelve o'clock, where they sat down to a delicious lunch laid outside, in front of the house, Mr and Mrs R.W. Hart being most indefatigable in their attentions to the visitors."

After the gentry had dined, they were joined by a number of farmers, took to their horses, and spent the afternoon riding across the countryside to the

1 Guardian, 7 July 1890.

2 Guardian, 6 August 1890.

3 Weekly Press, 5 June 1891.

accompaniment of the usual hallooing and the baying of hounds.

The Harts obviously enjoyed these events, for they opened their estate to further depredations in August, when "The last hunt of the season took place at Winchmore, ... and judging by the crowd one would think that all Ashburton had met there, the day was bright and sunshiny ... At one o'clock, lunch was partaken of, and then a start was made for the hunt. Among the ladies riding were Mrs Upton (of Sherwood) on Rajah; Misses Grigg (2), etc... A number of ladies also followed in vehicles, noticeably Mrs Buckley, Mrs Steward, Mrs Davison, Miss Davison, Miss Steward, etc." Hunts were frequently held at Lagmhor too. One in 1890 sported "a fairly numerous field of horsemen, and a large party of ladies drove out in vehicles. Mr and Miss Buckley entertained the visitors at luncheon" and provided an after-hunt dinner.¹ In the winter of 1892, a mild one, A.E. Peache rode down from Mount Somers at least once to join one of the Lagmhor hunts, riding Jessie, "who was very fidgety and not jumping well."² In the same year, the hounds met on the Longbeach estate, where 120 people were "cordially entertained by Mr and Mrs J.C.N. Grigg". Grigg led the hunt, and was "splendidly mounted" ... "Mr W. Chisnall's four-in-hand, two carriages and pairs, and dozens of other vehicles lined the roads, and among the

1 Ibid., 23 July 1890.

2 Gray, *Quiet Hills*, p.106.

spectators were Mrs J.C.N. Grigg, and Mrs Chisnall with large parties, Mrs Buckley ... and many others."¹ Another regular host of hunts was M. Friedlander, who ran them on his Kolmar and Dundas estates.

A typical hunt was described in 1890:²

"'Hark, Forward!' is the cry. Along an open plantation they travel now, the music of the pack ringing pleasantly through the trees. On still they move, through the park-like fields of Somerton, with a score of bold riders eagerly expecting a kill, but alas! a check comes, and the quarry is lost in a large wheat field. Another hare is soon started and we are off again, over timber, now skirting two or three clumps of trees, down a dry gully, on to the Methven road, along it a short distance, then a check. It is getting late so the huntsman has reluctantly to call the hounds off. The return to the township is pleasant in the gloaming as we 'ride our hunt o'er again', discussing our personal adventures."

Races vied with the hunts in popularity. Many of the gentry bred racehorses, and competed with one another on the county's racecourses or at Christchurch and Timaru to win laurels (and usually to make a profit on the side). By the 'nineties the sport was highly organised. No longer run informally on private estate courses, racing was now controlled by clubs. The Ashburton Trotting Club, Tinwald Racing Club, and Ashburton Racing Club organised meets which were run on properly laid-out courses. Like the Hunt Club they were dominated by large landowners, but also had many officials from the farming and mercantile communities. At the time of the 1890 Ashburton Racing Club spring meet, its president was E.G. Wright, and

1 Guardian, 25 June 1892.

2 Weekly Press, 4 July 1890.

its vice-president J. Grigg.

The club meets attracted all the "wealth and fashion" of the county and town, and were assiduously reported in the social columns on such occasions as the May 1891 "Race Week in Ashburton" reported in the Weekly Press, with its account of who was there, and what was worn by the gentry and "notables".¹ Even more than the hunts, the races were big events that drew all social groups to participate and mingle in discreet contact, jostling one another, but maintaining barriers. A collector of Ashburton anecdotes wrote that then "the races were an event that brought the County to the Town to spend their money, on backing their horses and feasting at Host Shearman's afterwards" (Shearman's Somerset Hotel was the Clarendon of Ashburton).² Also popular were, "what aristocratic Ashburton calls the 'Powlow' sports".³ This sport also drew its members from gentry and farmers. G.A. Maclean Buckley patronised the local Polo Club. Harriers met in the county as in a June 1894 meet at C.J. Harper's Hackthorne, where all were "most hospitably entertained at luncheon by Mr and Mrs Harper."⁴ Coursing was beginning in the 'nineties, and its advent was sponsored by the gentry. The new Methven Coursing Club was presided over by C.P. Murray-Aynsley, and

1 Ibid., 1 May 1891.

2 Brown, Ashburton, p.343.

3 Guardian, 8 April 1895.

4 Ibid., 4 June 1894. Harriers was an equestrian sport in this case, similar to a hunt.

D. Cameron was vice-president. The first meeting was held by the Murray-Aynsleys at Mount Hutt.¹ The Griggs at Longbeach, the Friedlanders at Dundas, and the Maclean Buckleys at Lagmhor also sponsored coursing meets. Another equestrian activity was the sponsoring of horse-handling demonstrations, such as that in 1890 when "Professor Lichtwark held a class at the homestead at Acton."² A more demure activity was the formation of riding parties on estates. This occurred frequently at Montalto, where all the Morrow children rode Arab ponies.

Shooting was strictly a gentleman's sport (except for peaching), and in the province the most select bastion of this pastime was the Canterbury Rabbit Club. This comprised a small coterie of the great landowners who went out together on shooting trips, entertained vice-royalty and each other, and generally set the shooting ton in Canterbury. Among the names inscribed in the Club members' and visitors' book are to be found some of those of the Ashburton gentry: W.C. Walker, H.P. Murray-Aynsley, J. Deans, J. Studholme, A.E. Peache, J. Cathcart Wason, G. Hart, C.P. Cox, and A.D. McIlraith.³ A far wider range of game than rabbits was, of course, shot. Amongst those licensed in one year to shoot cock pheasants in Canterbury, for example, were included H.P. Murray-Aynsley, J. Deans,

¹ Ibid., 9 June and 3 July 1891.

² Ibid., 29 December 1890.

³ Members' and Visitors' Book, of the Canterbury Rabbit Club, 1874-1882, held in the Canterbury Public Library Christchurch.

J. Cathcart Wason, and J. Studholme.¹ Shooting was popular amongst the gentry, and could be either highly organised, with large parties, picnics, carriages, and ladies, or consist of nothing more than one man and his dog, tramping through a marsh on an estate, with gun in hand on a frosty autumn day. John Deans of Waimarama was particularly fond of shooting, and was "a first-class shot both with rifle and shotgun, and spent many happy days at Homebush and Waimarama shooting wild cattle and pigs, ducks, pukeko and hares."²

The duck-shooting season from April to June was the main period of large-scale shooting activity, but other game abounded. Although pheasants had become somewhat scarce by the 'nineties, and partridges were now almost extinct, hares and water-fowl were abundant, and wild pigs could usually be found in the hills. The "call of the wild" lured most landowners away from the tame comforts and regulated pleasures of homesteads, hunts and races. The papers of A.E. Peache and C.F. Todhunter made frequent references to shooting in entries such as:³

"20 April 1893. Drove up to Mesopotamia with George Buckley and McLean for some shooting. Very wet and got up 6.30pm., just in time to find our way across the river.

21 April. Shot Hakatere Swamp. Saw a lot of swamp hens but only bagged 7. No ducks."

Numerous other outdoors pursuits occupied this sporting gentry, their number limited only by the

1 Birds, Beasts and Fishes, Lamb, R.C., Christchurch, 1964 p.166.

2 Deans, Pioneers, p.126.

3 Gray, Quiet Hills, p.111.

ingenuity of the participants. Col. Buckley was partial to sailing, and had a boat built for sailing down the Ashburton river from his homestead to the borough. It would be launched in the South Ashburton and sailed down to the bridge near the town, where Lindsay, Buckley's carrier, would wait for his master to arrive, and convey the boat back to Lagmhor. In later years, Buckley spent much of his time yachting in the Mediterranean. The 'nineties saw the beginning of golf in the county, and in 1894 A.E. Peache noted in a letter that some "of our neighbours on a Station here are taking (golf) up and I dare say I may come in for a game before long and may become as keen about it as others."¹ In winter many enjoyed ice-sports whenever possible. In general, only the inland part of the county was cold enough in winters to provide a good thickness of ice on lakes and ponds, but a few hours' drive placed all within reach of such sports as skating. A typical entry in the Peache papers reads, "Skating on the Water Wheel Dam."² Some of the gentry were not interested in sports. William White had been debilitated by an attack of the "Christchurch Fever" when he had settled in the province, and ever since had shunned horseback riding and other active pursuits. But most, like his son, Leonard White, were energetic sportsmen, fond of billiards, rowing, cricket, and polo, and the

1 Ibid., p.122.

2 Ibid., p.134.

associations they formed in the pursuit of these sports were an important part of the network of social contact that linked the gentry together.

4. Domestic Life

Servants seemed indispensable to genteel existence in the nineteenth century, and were another means by which the gentry could be distinguished from other rural groups. While well-to-do farmers' wives would employ a woman to help in the kitchen, and perhaps another to do heavy cleaning work, the station lady felt she required rather more of a domestic establishment.

This is not to say, however, that Ashburton gentry had at their disposal the small armies of domestic staff which families of similar rank and wealth employed in England. Even in the depressed early 'nineties, a mediocre servant-girl could demand and receive wages of some £25 a year, when in England she would not be paid a third or quarter of that. At Westerfield, the C.F. Todhunters paid their cook, one Mrs Johnson, some £35 a year, which seems normal, and she was assisted by two boys who worked in the kitchen.¹ The wages demanded by valets, butlers, and other domestic eminences placed them beyond the convenient means of all but the most affluent of the local gentry. This meant that Ashburton gentry households

1 Todhunter MSS, N.Z. Rough Diary 1896.

resembled those of the French provincial nobility in the eighteenth century, rather than of the English aristocracy in the nineteenth. Like the French nobility, the South Island landed family made do with two or three house servants, a gardener, a boy or two to do odd jobs, and often a nurse and governess or tutor.¹ Only the wealthiest families had staffs running into two figures. At Springfield, Mrs D. Cameron kept seven or eight maids, and employed a total domestic staff in house and grounds of about fifteen.² There was a domestic staff of about a dozen at Longbeach, where Mrs J. Grigg employed five maids, five gardeners, and two men. There was a staff of four maid servants, together with gardeners, coachman, and boys, at Coldstream. At Lagmhor three gardeners tended the grounds, as was fairly common. Smaller estates had more modest establishments. Mrs D. Morrow at Montalto employed only a cook, maid, nurse, governess, and coachman, together with one gardener, who was assisted by boys. Mrs F. de Cartaret Malet employed a staff of eight at Clarewell, including three maids, three gardeners, a coachman, and another man. The Peache family, always frugal, employed the bare minimum allowable for respectability. Their permanent establishment included only five servants -

1 Forster, R., The Nobility of Toulouse in the Eighteenth Century, Baltimore 1960 is a detailed study of the French provincial nobility; in its life-style and attitudes, this class can be found to be comparable with the Ashburton gentry in many respects.

2 Studholme MSS, Mrs J. Studholme II to Mrs J. Studholme I, 6 November 1899.

a cook-maid, nurse, governess, boy and gardener.

Relations between mistresses and servants appear to have varied. A descendant of the J. Elmslies considered that their family servants showed "faithful devotion" to their exemplary mistress.¹ But this is perhaps just another reflection of what the gentry or their descendants, wished to see, rather than reality.

Certainly the turn-over of domestic staff, especially female servants, appears to have been high. There was a constant demand for wives from the cockatoo farmers that surrounded the estates, and in addition, conditions for domestic staff were often poor. At Rokeby, for example, Mrs W.McN. Lyttleton's maids were housed in narrow little attic quarters above the kitchens, and this appears to have been commonplace. A letter to a newspaper from "A Servant" makes other complaints:²

"Allow me space in your columns to speak about the way in which servants on stations are treated. I am myself a servant. I am on a station. There are neither locks nor keys to the doors. I think it is time something was done to prevent registry offices from sending respectable girls to such places. We have informed the masters and mistress of the house about their doors being unlocked, but they only laughed at it. I have been insulted on two occasions by drunken men allowed on the premises. The master and mistress go away from their home a week at a time, and leave us unprotected."

The attitudes of masters and mistresses were as variable as those of their servants, of course. There is no "typical" gentry family, but an "average" can be found somewhere between the two extreme gentry types

1 Elmslie, *Elmslie*, p.60.

2 *Guardian*, 21 July 1896.

portrayed by Chamier. On one hand he described a family, the Ceruleans, who could well have been the Loughnans. Their family head was¹

"the Honourable Alfred Dionysus Cerulean, Member of the Legislative Council, a prominent politician, a wealthy squatter, and a pillar of the Roman Catholic Church. In fact he built a chapel almost entirely for his own use, and that of his family, although he would send round his carriage of a Sunday to gather in a more humble congregation. He lived in a big house and in a large way; he drove a grand four-in-hand drag, and his Irish dependants, by whom he was surrounded, called him "a great man entirely".

Mrs Cerulean was My Lady Bountiful; the patroness of all good people and all good works. She was very delicate and rather too exquisite; reserved, prim, and pious. She did not mix with the vulgar herd, nor associate much with heretics, but dispensed charities and encouraged humble worth."

On the other hand was Commodore Wylde and his lady, who²

"held a small sheep run in the vicinity of Mount Pleasance, but it did not belong to him; there was also a lien on the sheep, a mortgage on the house, and a bill-of-sale on the furniture, while the very clothes he stood in had never been paid for ...

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that in consequence of this chronic state of impecuniosity the Wylde's confessed to straitened circumstances, practised economy, or countenanced retrenchment in any form. Quite the reverse.

They lived in good style and managed to keep up appearances, which was essential to maintaining all that was left them - their credit."

A common feature to almost all gentry families, was, however their size. Large families were the norm, for all social groups in nineteenth-century New Zealand. J. Ballantyne's wife bore him thirteen children of which most survived, and was the largest single

1 Chamier, *Siren*, p.106.

2 Ibid., pp.27-28.

family in the county gentry. Many families included five or more children, and of these there appears to have been an undue preponderance of girls, which did not augur well for the future of some estates which thus lacked a male heir. Soon after their marriage, most station ladies began a steady sequence of confinements. These increased their dependence on servants, and were a major event in domestic station life. Mrs J. Studholme II wrote anxiously that¹

"My nuse has thrown me over but I hope to hear of a good one soon. I am staying here for the event and S. Maude of Ashburton is to attend me."

She added that "we are of course hoping for a future owner of Coldstream but I think the little person will receive a warm welcome whether a boy or girl." It was part of estate management as well as social duty for landowners to marry and raise heirs, and only a very few of Ashburton's gentry managed to resist the social pressure. Leonard White and A.D. McIlraith never married.

But they were very exceptional, and most gentry families not only supported large nuclear families, but often maintained members of the extended family. The landed families had a reputation for "open house", and this seems to have been borne out in fact. William White was prodigally generous, and ran to considerable expense in providing for members of his extended family. After an English tour in 1886, for example, he brought

¹ Studholme MSS, Mrs J. Studholme II to Mrs J. Studholme I, 14 February 1898.

his favourite sister back with him to live in his town house, together with her large collections of china, furniture and thousands of books. She was a woman of "wit and intellect", and he built her a wing on his house where she entertained in a private suite of drawing rooms.¹ A brother of Mrs D. Morrow, W.J. Bailie, came out from Ireland to stay at Montalto for reasons of health, and his original visit of a few months lasted for the rest of his life.

The day-to-day routine of life on the estates was generally a rhythmic, orderly one.

W. White spent most of his time writing - correspondence, newspaper articles, and business, in which he was aided by his daughter; and in addition "endeavoured to occupy himself, not altogether successfully with his large vinery and his billiard-table."² D. Morrow was usually fully occupied with business, but when in the country liked to take long walks of twelve miles or more around the estate, in company with his dog. He was also a voracious reader. On Thirlstane, the Ballantynes went for long family rides over the estate. J. Ballantyne would ride in front, on a chestnut mare with white socks, together with Mrs Ballantyne, on "Maggie", a Shetland. Ballantyne was very fond of family life, and this seems to have been common.

1 White, "Records", p.57.

2 Ibid., pp.54-55.

The Morrrows frequently sent large cases of fruit from their orchard at Montalto to friends in the city, and small gestures like this reinforced links of society and marriage. More important was the perpetual flow of correspondence that travelled about the county. The telephone was known of, but not yet introduced into Ashburton. The first telephone line in the county was established in 1896, when Lagmhor and Windermere homesteads were connected. As the decade progressed, a few other gentry families acquired telephones, but it was impossible to gain connections in more remote country districts. Nor had the motor car made any impact as yet. Letter-writing still remained the principal agent of social intercourse. Members of the gentry families were constantly writing letters to friends and relations, issuing invitations, informing them of their doings, with social chat, and family gossip. Athole Murray-Aynsley was a prolific correspondent. She intertwined political letters with a leaven of gossip, as in one letter of 1890, with which she ends,¹

"Will you give my love to Lady Hall and Mildred please, and will you tell Midge I thank her for her letter and will write soon. George is getting on well and hopes to be back by Christmas. Mother stays in town till Friday."

The Morrrows kept up an intimate family correspondence during their frequent partings. D. Morrow, while at Montalto one summer, wrote to his wife, then at

¹ Hall Papers, 1891, Athole Murray-Aynsley to Sir John Hall, 7 December 1891.

Dalriada, their town house,¹

"My dearest Lizzie,

I finished shearing on Monday and have got done with clearing up all the wool. I have got one load away to Timaru but the waggon has never returned for another load. I have sent Jim to telegraph to see about them. I can't get home till I get all the work away. Our drays are carting the dirty wool to the scouring works and will finish that tomorrow. Jim has earned his first money amount £2/10/-, which I will give him a cheque for same. Madelina and all are well, (this refers to his daughter staying with him at Montalto). I am going all round the place today for the first time since I started shearing. As soon as I get all the good wool away, I will be home. Madelina also. There is nothing new here. Trusting you and all the little ones are well. Trusting God will bless and take care of you and them. I am dearest Lizzie with love to all

Your loving husband,
D. Morrow."

This letter indicates that Morrow expected his wife to be interested and informed in matters of station routine. Most of the Morrow family correspondence was in the same tenor. The Morrow children also wrote to "Dear Father". In 1892 he received the following letter:²

"I hope you are getting your Sheep all shorn and That you will soon be back To us again. The boys have got the weeding nearly done. Mother has finished Johnny's stockings. We got some lime for Bob's fowls and they are laying well. I remain your loving daughter,
Madelina B. Morrow."

A good deal of the Studholme family's correspondence has been preserved, and shows the wide range of connections by letter. There are numerous embossed notes in feminine hands, concluding with "best regards" and other friendly expressions. These letters include such information as, "We will all come, with pleasure, on

1 Morrow MSS, 12 January 1898.

2 Ibid., 6 January 1892.

Wednesday the afternoon before the races",¹ and "We shall be delighted to go to you on Wednesday ..."² There are letters from sons to "My dear old Mother", or "Pater", signed "always your loving son",³ and talking about visits to Melbourne to look after mining shares, races, country friends, weather, and projected journeys. Letters between in-laws ensured good family relations. A typical one, with "Coldstream" printed at the letter-head, was from Mrs J. Studholme II to her mother-in-law:⁴

"Dearest Mater,

Jack and I are hoping so much that you and Flo' will come and spend Christmas with us here ... The first meeting of the Ashburton New Racing Club is to be on January 2nd and I shall drive and take a good-sized luncheon and hope to get a few people to come from Ch.Ch. so that would be rather fun for us all to go to. ... If you could come down for Christmas we could come down together from Ch.Ch. on our return from Akaroa a day or two before. I believe Pater will still be north will he not?"

She went on to describe the weather, doings on the estate, and then her young son, who "looked so sweet in the little silk frock you gave him and on Thursday he wore it at his first tea party which he gave to the neighbouring babies. He already shows a strong penchant for the fair sex ..."

Letters from friends and acquaintances were an important social link. Mrs J. Studholme I was sent

1 Studholme MSS, Rose St Barbe Haslam to Mrs J. Studholme I, 27 July 1898.

2 Ibid, Milly P. Campbell to Mrs J. Studholme I, 28 July 1898.

3 Ibid, A. Studholme to Mrs J. Studholme I, 24 June 1900

4 Ibid, Mrs J. Studholme II to Mrs J. Studholme I, 27 November 1898.

a long gossipy letter from Mrs Sarah M. Elworthy informing her of the Elworthy's return to their Holme estate in South Canterbury.¹ Men maintained the same sort of correspondence, not always with a mention of business or politics. A letter from A.D. McIlraith to Sir John Hall reveals the tenor of rural life at the time.² McIlraith was staying at an estate he owned near Hall's and wrote to thank Hall for an offer "to send the brougham to take me to the Railway Station when I go to town." McIlraith thanked Hall, "and should the weather be rough I will gladly accept it."

"I intend to go down on Friday after noon, but if the weather continues like the last few days, can manage very well in the buggy. If not I would be glad if Tom (coachman) can take us to Coalgate as the days being short, that will be better for him getting back, but should the weather come rough and wet, I will not try it till the first fine day after.

The trip to Barrhill and coursing was too much for me, and as Dr Deamer was in the neighbourhood, I got him to come and see me; since then I have had Dr Meadows and I believe he is the best of the lot. He would not give me medicine and told me not to take any more for a time at any rate, to eat apples, biscuits, porridge, etc. - and so far his advice is coming out well. I was out for a drive yesterday and just going again today."

There was more to country life than the exchange of compliments, and discussion of servants, illness, weather and travel. The gentry formed a highly literate group, and a good deal of time was devoted to writing for business or pleasure. Sinclair judged that Canterbury's "early colonial gentry, with their public school or university background, their Latin tags and

1 Ibid, Sarah M. Elworthy to Mrs J. Studholme I, October 16th (no year given).

2 Hall Papers, 1892, A.D. McIlraith to Sir John Hall, 22 June 1892.

cultivated English speech" had developed "a lively tradition of writing gentlemanly occasional verse."¹ Some Ashburton gentry helped shape this tradition. A.E. Peache spent much of his time at his desk, writing long letters, journals, diaries, indulging in the drawing-up of complex "inventions" and, probably writing poetry. William Chisnall of Ohinemuri enjoyed writing verses, and Sir William Steward of Barford not only wrote them, but actually got three volumes of his poetry published. He wrote under the nom-de-plume of "Justin Aubrey", and his volumes of poetry included Carmina Varia (1867), Rhyme of the Mapourika (1903), and Vision of Aorangi (1906). As can be gathered from the titles, they were all of a reflective, consciously "New Zealand" nature, with liberal dashes of "local colour" laid on to emphasise or illuminate English thoughts. As such, they were probably typical of most of the efforts of these gentleman-poets. Some of Steward's verses taken from his poem, Christmas at the Antipodes, illustrate this.²

"When all the land is verdant
 With a waving sea of wheat,
 And the sweet breath of the clover
 Is the incense of his feet.
 A joyous, merry Christmas -
 A Christmas fair and young,
 Whose praises by the poets
 Of the South Land shall be sung!
 Lo! the miles of sun-kissed plain,
 Summer-clad with budding grain,
 and lo! the rolling leagues of green,
 Pasture-lands the hills between."

1 Sinclair, New Zealand , p.77.

2 Alpers, O. J. T., The Jubilee Book of Canterbury Rhymes, Christchurch 1900, p.49.

If nothing else, such poetry reveals the prevalence of the romantic sensibility of the first colonists in the gentry. Writing was not always so consciously "literary"; T.H. Potts of Hakatere wrote books on naturalism on which, as an enthusiastic amateur, he became an acknowledged expert in New Zealand. He did fine work identifying and naming native birds and plants, and his volumes, including Out in the Open, Breeding Habits of New Zealand Birds, and Recent Changes in the Fauna of New Zealand testified to the continuing valuable role that liberally-educated gentlemen were still playing in science.

Landowners' ladies were often of a literary turn, too. Some took a passive role, such as Mrs A.E. Peache whose granddaughter remembered that she "read avidly, books on every subject under the sun, and in turn studied Palmistry, Crystal Gazing, British Israelism, Astrology, and the Theory of Relativity. On all these subjects she could be most amusing in her comments."¹ Quasi-intellectual concerns such as most of these were sufficient to satisfy the curiosity of the county women of the older generation, but the daughters of the gentry were beginning to gain higher educational levels. It was considered indispensable for upper-class young women to acquire a few accomplishments, and these usually included drawing and painting, sketching and music.

¹ Gray, Quiet Hills, p.207.

A.E. Peache wrote in 1894 that his daughter, Constance,¹

"always gets up at 6 o'clock and practises for an hour on the piano and then Zoe and Florence follow her. They are fond of drawing and painting and are all doing something for their mother for Christmas presents."

This sort of upbringing was being found constricting. The only member of the gentry to write published novels was Edith Lyttleton, and in her books she describes the mores of her gentry background, and her violent reaction to what she believed was the "ethos" of her class. During the 'nineties, this outwardly respectable young woman was observing and analysing Ashburton landed "society", and writing stories for the Otago Daily Times, the New Zealand Magazine, and the Bulletin. They were collected in 1904 in the volume Sons O'Men. She wrote under the pseudonym of "G.B. Lancaster". A modern critic, Joan Stevens has judged her as never quite escaping from her upbringing as a "nice young girl", and her viewpoint remained "feminine and aristocratic". In her writings she strove to be frank, and often succeeded only in being "turgid".¹ She could not escape the Victorian upper-class tradition of romanticism and arcadianism, and some of her prose is reminiscent of Steward's poetry. In one passage she describes autumn on the plains in the 'nineties:

"June weather hesitating yet on the edge of winter. Ploughland, straw-stacks, the harsh

¹ Ibid, p.125.

sweetness of gorse blossom exhaled a faint ecstasy, tintured with wood-smoke, where men were burning grubbed gorse roots in the next paddock ..."

Poplars planted twenty years earlier,

"were a row of golden candlesticks before the flaming altar of the West; Nature making her own oblation to her God ..."¹

Music was another outlet for the artistic sensibilities of the gentry. Many men sang or played. A daughter of D. Morrow wrote that²

"Pater ... had a beautiful singing voice, deep and full of tone then ... One lovely anthem he used to sing here was: In Thee Oh Lord, In Thee do I Put my Trust."

Musical concerts were held by the Morrrows to display such talents. H.H. Loughnan was a skilful cello player, and joined the Christchurch Harmonic Society and the Musical Union. Eventually he was made secretary of the Harmonic Society. Another Ashburton landowner, H.W. Packer, was secretary of the same society for a time, and was another active musician. Most of the gentry took their music less seriously, although Mrs Alice McLean devoted a great deal of time on Lagmhor to compiling what she called The Lagmhor Song Book. In this she included many of the songs sung by the shepherds and men on the estate, including such pieces as "The Piper's Bonnet", "Lady Nellie Wemyss' Jig", and "Belle of Claremount".³

Painting and sketching appear to have been popular

1 Lancaster, *Promenade*, p.451.

2 Morrow MSS, notes compiled by E.B.M. Davidson.

3 A copy of the "Lagmhor Song Book" is held at the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

with both sexes, and it was common to commission painters to take portraits. The Rev. J. Elmslie, a modest man, was persuaded to have his portrait painted by a rising young artist, Sidney Thompson. Elmslie "disliked the tedious business of these sittings", but duly hung the great life-size painting in his house.¹

5. Holidays

Gentry families were constantly on the move. They had the advantages of leisure, money (or at least plenty of credit), and connections, and their educated sensibilities seem to have required them to refresh themselves by roaming the islands of New Zealand, the Pacific, and periodically to visit the Europe of their, or their parents' youth. It was not necessary to travel very far for a change. Seaside resorts were a popular choice for a short holiday. Caroline Bay at Timaru, was fast becoming "a remarkably fashionable and popular seaside resort"² where the well-to-do could savour the sea air and indulge in a little salt-water bathing. A guide book noted that,³

"Bathing-machines, both for ladies and gentlemen are always ready."

The Peaches and Ballantynes preferred Sumner,⁴

"a charming little watering-place, full of attractions for holiday-making and vacation spending folk ... who have a few idle days to

1 Elmslie, *Elmslie*, p.70.

2 *Canterbury Times*, quoted in Scotter, *Canterbury*, Vol. III,

3 Pénéfather, *Handbook*, p.106.

[plate ?]

4 *Pictorial Atlas*, p.630.

enjoy in the warm and pleasant summer months (when the scene was judged) to make up a characteristically lightsome and sunny picture of a watering-place in the season."

Seaside resorts were not always satisfactory.

In 1892, D. Cameron of Springfield wrote,¹

"Mrs Cameron and the children are at Moeraki and from her letters they seem to have had a fair share of the rain there as well."

Families which owned several estates could spend holidays on one or the other as a break in their routine. The Deans family spent every January at Waimarama, near Methven. They would travel in the grand manner from Homebush, in the neighbouring county. A special railway carriage provided their transport, including one compartment for the family, and one for their baggage, and railway trucks were used to convey the carriage and horses. At Waimarama the family spent "many happy summer days ... with picnics and other forms of amusement."² The Elmslies maintained a more modest holiday establishment in a valley of the Cashmere Hills, near Christchurch. There, (situated in six acres of grounds) they built a holiday cottage called Glenrowan, and travelled frequently to it for short holidays. Others travelled for their health. Mrs Peache made several trips to Dunedin to consult doctors and relax, leaving her children in the care of nurse and governess at Mount Somers, and whenever the Peache family travelled, it was usually with an eye on her health.

1 Hall Papers, 1892,
20 July 1892.

D. Cameron to Sir John Hall

2 Deans, *Pioneers*, p. 117.

Whether people travelled for health or pleasure, there was considerable mobility. This was not confined to the gentry group, as the late 'nineties witnessed the first "tourist revolution" in New Zealand, and in the period some scenic places could be reached by coach which are no longer accessible. The high country was acquiring a new romantic appeal, and some Ashburton landowners fled into it from the dusty plains. They could stay at new accommodation houses and lodges. At Castle Hill a limestone built hotel, furnished to look like a Scottish highland lodge, attracted people wishing for quiet holidays. Others drove in coachloads through mountain passes to savour beauty spots, admire, sketch, and recuperate. The adventurous could travel to the Hermitage, at the foot of Mount Cook, and facilities at Hanmer were becoming popular.

The splendid mountain scenery of what were called the "Southern Cold Lakes" were very popular. Seasoned travellers extolled the beauties of steamer rides on Wanaka or Wakatipu, the comforts of Pembroke, the spectacles in the Kawerau Gorge, the deep solitude of Te Anau and Manapouri, and the Westland glaciers. Passenger liners made cruises through the sounds of Marlborough and Fiordland, and watercolours of the Remarkables over Queenstown sold well. The tourist boom of the late 'nineties, although confined only to the wealthier classes, was sufficient to revive the

fortunes of a number of small towns. Queenstown was called,¹

"a most picturesque little town, bulwarked at its back and sides by towering and sombre mountains and smiled or frowned upon in front by the ample waters of the lake."

Walks along the Esplanade were popular, while the more energetic struck out for Ben Lomond. The waterfall at Skipper's was widely sketched, and tourists enjoyed strolling about on the decks of lake boats. Horseback expeditions travelled into the mountains to take tourists to the Diamond Lakes, Lennox Falls, Mount Judah, Lake Harris, and even through to Martin's Bay, on the Tasman Sea.

The southern gentry also patronised North Island resorts. People took the waters at the Rotorua hot springs, admired Whakarewarewa, looked curiously at Maori villages, saw the desolation where the Pink and White Terraces had been, sailed up the Wanganui, met the Governor in Wellington, and roamed about the subtropical inlets of Northland. The Peaches spent their 1895 holiday in the North Island, and followed this beaten tourist track. Others went further afield, and included some of "the Islands" in a northern trip, or a side run to Australia. Fiji was an object of great interest at the time, while Tahiti, Norfolk Island and New Caledonia had charms for others.

¹ Picturesque Atlas , p.653.

In 1892, A.D. McIlraith of Auchenflower made a tour of Fiji and Australia, and then went on to the ultimate goal of all landowners - Britain.

The trip "Home" was a constant preoccupation in gentry life. Older people wished to maintain ties with their homeland, be reunited with families left behind them, and to revisit the scenes of their early life. Young people were taken to be given the "polish" that only contact with the metropolitan society could presumably give, and regarded "Home" as the centre of western civilisation. Imperialist New Zealand of the 'nineties insisted upon the superiority of the Motherland over all other civilisations. Parents who had chosen to leave the homeland felt a new nostalgia for it in their "exile" and imparted this nostalgia to their children. A generation of New Zealanders had grown up who, like the planters of colonial Virginia and Carolina, New Spain, or nineteenth century Russia's aristocracy, derived the roots of their higher culture from another country. The myth of a romantic, tamed, rural England (or Scotland) was passed down from parent to child. It fed gentry arcadianism. Sons of Ashburton gentlemen, born and bred in New Zealand, called themselves "Britons", or "English gentlemen". It was necessary to maintain close links with Britain to keep the vitality of this "forever English" feeling.

The first saloons and staterooms of what George Hart called "the magnificent floating hotels of the New Zealand Shipping Company,"¹ were frequently occupied by Ashburton gentry. They travelled to see one another off at Lyttelton, scrambled to be presented at Court, roamed the British countryside with sketch-pads in hand and usually made brief sallies to "the Continent". A.E. Peache travelled to England several times, and in 1888 took Mrs Peache and his two eldest daughters with him. While there, he executed pen-and-ink sketches of scenery. The social column of the Weekly Press noted in January 1891 that,²

"Mr and Mrs A. Strachey will soon be returning to England, as they talk of leaving by the Tongariro. I heard the other day that they may return at no very distant period, and build a nice residence on their property here."

Mrs J. Elmslie, while still a Miss Anderson, had "travelled" extensively with their father", to gain "finish".³ The whole Elmslie family travelled to Europe in 1898, sailing on the Gothic, and returning on the Ionic. While in Britain, friends were anxious that the eldest daughter of the Elmslies be presented to Queen Victoria, but neither of the parents "felt inclined to fall in with this plan".⁴ This is an interesting exception to the usual behaviour of the

1 Hart, Leaves , p.7.

2 Weekly Press, 27 January 1891. It is significant that the Stracheys are spoken of as "returning" to England.

3 Elmslie, Elmslie , p.53.

4 Ibid., p.67.

gentry, and shows that perhaps not all clamoured for social distinction.

A variety of routes were available. Most common was the route via India and the Red Sea, but the Pacific and American route was often chosen. When three Ashburton landowners, G.A. Maclean Buckley, V. Musgrave, and E.C. Lascelles, travelled together to Europe on the Rimuwhaka in 1896, they travelled via the Straits of Magellan. W.C. Walker made a point of visiting South America, and wrote a letter from Valparaiso noting that¹

"We arrived here last Saturday 33 days from Wellington. You know how little incident there is on a voyage in these Southern latitudes - so you won't be astonished at my not having anything to tell of the 33 days excepting that we were very lucky in our vessel and skipper and had a very pleasant time of it."

Walker had a lively interest in the geography, architecture, and social life of the place. He sent his correspondent six photographs of the Cordillera, which he judged "fair specimen of the art", and noted that the policemen, called "Vigilantes", "give a foreign appearance to the place" with their military uniforms. The language of Chile he considered "a perfect Babel ... we are making a mixture of French Latin and Spanish do duty till we get acclimatised." In 1894, Walker left for another trip to Britain, but this time he took a more direct route.

The North American route was favoured by others.

¹ Von Haast Papers, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, W.C. Walker to J. von Haast, 1 November 1867.

When D. Morrow brought his bride back from Britain he travelled via the United States, and visited the Niagara Falls,^a Chicago Exposition, and Honolulu. The Morrors returned to Britain several times, and it was usual to make a sort of pilgrimage to Northern Ireland on these visits. On one visit, Morrow erected an expensive monument to his parents in the family graveyard. Another time, he planted a tree in the grounds of Dunsford, his family's property in Ulster. The Ballantynes travelled via North America on several occasions too. The diary of Josiah Ballantyne, one of J. Ballantyne's sons, details one of these trips. Josiah first went alone to Sydney, and his diary contains entries such as:¹

"Sunday 30th April. Went to Scotch Church on Church Hill Revd. Gilchrist in the afternoon to the Cathdral and heard "Safe in the Arms of Jesus" played beautifully, in the even. to York St. (church).

Monday 1 May. Got 2 letters from Pa and 2 from Ma."

The Ballantynes were one of the most serious, religious families among the Ashburton gentry, and this is reflected in the diary.

Josiah eventually joined his father and a Dunedin financier, J. Haynes, to travel to Europe. As they passed through the Pacific, Josiah noted the populations of the various islands they passed,

¹ These and subsequent entries^{1878-1879,} are contained in the Diary of Josiah Ballantyne, a typescript copy of which is held by P.A.B. Richards, Christchurch.

inspected the public buildings in Honolulu, and drew a sketch of Kandavu Island from the south-west. When they disembarked at San Francisco, a suite was taken in the Palace Hotel - one of the city's most "select" and expensive. Josiah toured around with a Colonel Brazier, and "I enjoyed his society much." They looked at jewelry shops, visited Cliff House, drank a "sherry cobbler", watched seals on the rocks through opera glasses, played cricket with "Mr Smith of Invercargill" on the beach, and "Wrote to Ma". Later, he toured the churches of the city, appraised organs and choirs, and visited the botanical gardens.

The Ballantyne party then travelled to Chicago. En route, Josiah was curious about the Indians, buffalos, and Mormons. In Chicago they stayed in the Palmer Hotel, considered the "most elite" in the city, and made visits to pork curing establishments in addition to more conventional sights, concerts, and parks. After Chicago, they proceeded to Niagra³, where they considered the sulphur springs "something wonderful". After Niagra³ they travelled to Philadelphia for the Exhibition, where they noticed George and Charles Gould's signatures in the register book. From New York they sailed with 42 other first-class passengers on the City of Chester to Scotland.

Most Ashburton gentry families participated in this regular travelling to and from Europe. Britain was, of course, the primary object. The F. de

Cartaret Malets were great travellers, and made one of several trips to Britain in 1894. The John Holmeses made at least two European trips in the 'nineties; in 1891,¹

"Mr and Mrs John Holmes and Miss Holmes arrived in Wellington yesterday morning in the Ruapehu, from London. Mr Holmes' health has considerably improved during his trip to England."

They made another trip to Britain in 1893.

William White had made at least two trips to Britain in the 'eighties, but seems to have preferred to remain sedentary in the 'nineties, and was by then an old man. The D. Camerons, together with a large contingent of daughters and servants, travelled to Britain for an extended visit in the 'nineties, and the C.F. Todhunters spent two lengthy periods in Britain for the education of their children. Margaret Todhunter, a daughter, remained in England to stay with her uncle at Campions, a country house near Shenley. Most visited France, Germany, and Italy during these trips, as did W.L. Allan on his 1892 tour.

This mobility amongst the gentry reinforced the essential "English-ness" of the group. Constant contact with Britain gave them a degree of metropolitan sophistication uncommon among other social groups in New Zealand. Most maintained intimate family and personal ties with Britain. The Studholmes were one of the clearest examples of this. Many of the formative

¹ Guardian, 10 September 1891.

experiences of the younger generation of Studholmes occurred in England. All received some of their education there, and spent long periods staying with relatives in the homeland. In 1897, Florence Studholme was staying with in-laws, the Archbishop of York and his family, and wrote in a letter that she was learning to ride a bicycle, which "is a delightful sensation and is just as much a craze as ever."¹ Family members commented to one another in their letters on the family's propensity for travel. A niece wrote to Mrs J. Studholme I one year,²

"Fancy! you being out in the Southern Hemisphere again - it is rather lovely tho' for you being all by yourself over here - You are the most wonderful traveller I know."

On another occasion, J. Studholme II wrote to his mother, then en route to Europe again,³

"We have steadily stuck here (Coldstream) since you left. It is quite a luxury to me to be able to stop in one place and Aline is in no hurry to move and is daily getting fonder of the place."

Gentry mobility meant that there was usually a small "colony" of wealthy Canterbury families in London where they visited one another, and compared notes. An Ashburton man wrote to Sir William Steward from London in 1895, and said,⁴

"I get numerous callers from New Zealand. Mr Wason (of Corwar) is here now, but returns in a few days. Mr C. Percy Cox is here too, as well as Mr Edward Wright."

1 Studholme MSS, , Florence Studholme to Mrs J. Studholme I, 30 April 1897.

2 Ibid., to Mrs J. Studholme I, 27 March 1898.

3 Ibid., J. Studholme II to Mrs J. Studholme I, 9 September 1897.

All three men were Ashburton gentry. In addition, F. Courage, future son-in-law of A.E. Peache, and a large North Canterbury landowner, visited, together with G.D. Greenwood, another North Canterbury runholder. J. Holmes had only recently left for "the Continent."

In Britain, the Ashburton gentry were usually treated as the equals of the English gentry and aristocracy. They possessed large wealth, and were accorded appropriate status. In addition, most possessed connections with the British upper classes. Daughters were generally presented at court, and families stayed at country seats. In one year, Mary Moorhouse wrote about her English and Scottish tour to Mrs J. Studholme I. She was then at a lodge in Scotland, having¹

"had a busy spring and summer, we have stayed twice at Lambeth Palace with the Archbishop of Canterbury ... and since then we were a fortnight at Euston Hotel last month ...

We are enjoying our rest in this quiet lovely place very much. James prefers it to any place we have stayed at, and says the air here does him more good than going to Switzerland, for which he is now too old."

Even gentry families with obscure origins found that on their return to Britain their status was higher than that of the relatives they had left behind. Australasian sheepfarmers were accorded some of the status given to West Indian planters and Indian Nabobs in earlier generations. When Elizabeth, daughter of D. Morrow, travelled in Britain, she visited humble

¹ Studholme MSS, , Mary L. Moorhouse to Mrs J. Studholme I, 14 August 1899.

relations in Northern Ireland, but in England and Scotland was given the entree to many aristocratic social functions. At Edinburgh, for example, she drank tea beneath "very fine" chandeliers at an "At Home" with the Presbyterian Moderator of Scotland and the Marchioness of Aberdeen. Another day she attended Lord Kinnair's garden party, held to celebrate his inauguration as Lord High Commissioner. In other cities she was treated with similar distinction. Acceptance by the British ruling class reinforced gentry distinction, and strengthened its affinities to the traditions of that class. The self-confidence of the colonial gentry was confirmed by its metropolitan contacts. Few other New Zealanders travelled so extensively, or were able to "name-drop" so convincingly. The prestige of trips "Home" lent distinction to the wealthy landowners in colonial New Zealand society.

CHAPTER VI

CHANGING TIMESI. POLITICAL AND SOCIAL FLUX IN THE 1890s1. Change From Above

W. Pember Reeves was the first substantial historian of the 'nineties generation. His judgement on the period was that it saw the overthrowing of the old landowners' oligarchy by a "plebian and democratic regime",¹ whose "crude energy"² caused a liberal revolution to occur. This revolution, looked upon³

"with suspicion, alarm, contempt, or anger by a large class of wealthy and influential New Zealanders",

profoundly altered New Zealand society, and created the modern small-farming democracy. This revolutionary view of New Zealand history has since fallen into discredit, to be replaced by one of slow evolution caused by many factors apart from the political. But to many men and women of the time, without the benefit of historical hindsight, there did indeed seem to be a revoltuion occurring.

There had been several abortive attempts at the liberalisation of landholding and other social reforms ever since Grey's ministry, but 1890 saw an unusual

1 Reeves, W.P., The Long White Cloud, 1st ed., London, 1898.

combination of several "democratic" elements which alarmed the "oligarchy", and gave rise to an atmosphere of crisis. The recent franchise reform, which gave all men one vote, meant that the 1890 election would be a severe trial for "oligarchy". At the same time, the "Exodus" of population to Australia and the North Island was causing widespread alarm throughout the South. The economic depression had reached a new trough,¹ staple prices continued to fall, and the Sweating Commission had just begun to reveal "old world" conditions of employment in the towns. Labour disputes and strikes in 1890 seemed a tangible manifestation of social breakdown, and the coincidental renewal of pastoral leases caused tension and nervousness amongst high country sheepfarmers. The exaggerated rhetoric of the times, employing slogans and concepts of class struggle imported from British and American sources, helped to compound the sense of unrest.

The election at the end of 1890 came at the end of this unsettling year. The Liberal party gained power with a "socialistic" policy of social reform, labour legislation, and the breakup of large estates

¹ In 1890, prices for wheat, oats, barley, and wool fell lower than in previous years. Mutton prices were up slightly, but frozen meat was still relatively unimportant, especially to the small farmers. Lloyd Pritchard, *Economic History*, p.161.

to permit settlement of small farmers. The Liberal press confirmed the belief in a revolution. Reeves, in the Lyttelton Times, proclaimed that the¹

"strong party of Liberals ... will leave a mark upon New Zealand history which no succeeding Conservative triumphs will be able to efface."

The Liberals themselves were fired with revolutionary ardour. W. Montgomery, a "gentleman-Liberal", enthused in 1891 that the New Zealand Liberal movement was one of²

"the advance agents among governments in the upheaval taking place among the different nations."

In this heady atmosphere, conservative men could be forgiven for believing that "civilised" government and society was being threatened.

A revolution did not take place, of course. Frustrations, compromises, and confused aims regarding land tenure were manifest among the Liberals throughout the 'nineties. The Liberal party was a very diverse grouping, and most of its members were essentially moderate, middle-class men, not concerned with revolutionising society, but merely with readjusting its composition along lines of greater "equity". They legislated slowly and carefully, and their avowed aim was not to humble the rich, but to raise the poor.

After the election orations had died down, and

1 Lyttelton Times, 26 September 1890.

2 Ballance Papers,
Montgomery to Ballance, 1 June 1891.

W. Mont-

the Liberal government attempted to formulate a programme, there was no immediate change in county society. The first legislative impact that change of government had on the county was the Land and Income Tax Act of 1891. Ballance's aims with this legislation had been to place a heavier weight of taxation on the estates, and relieve the burden on small and middle farmers. The long-term hope was that the tax would encourage voluntary "bursting up" of the estates. Apart from the strident protests of the gentry in the county, there was no perceptible effect on the landholding pattern in the county. The estates were forced to pay somewhat heavier taxes, but their finances could bear it, and no-one appears to have been induced by the Act to sell off land. The small and middling farmers of the county benefited, of course, and it was their newly-won support that ensured the election of a Liberal candidate in the next election.

The legislation of 1892 was even less significant. The Lands for Settlements Act of that year provided an allowance of a mere £50,000 per annum to be spent on the repurchase of landed estates. This was simply a gesture. Once again the practical effect of the Act was minimal. Certainly no land was purchased in the county by the Crown in that year, and the only effect the Act can have had was

psychological. This seemed to be the beginning of the radical legislation the gentry feared. The year 1893 was a renewed shock to conservatives. The Cheviot Hills "coup" was psychologically significant and the Liberals now began borrowing to finance estate repurchase and small-farmer settlement on a large scale. They were also able to cash in on the popularity won amongst the farming community by the 1891 Act.

The extension of the franchise to women in 1893 was important, as women probably favoured the Liberal party - if only in gratitude. A solid electoral victory followed, and in Ashburton the election of McLachlan as M.H.R. was a shock to the gentry. The Liberal government formed in 1891 had been uncertain and divided. The second Liberal ministry was a far more coherent threat to the gentry. Its new vigour and corresponding unpleasantness, was symbolised by the vulgar energy of Seddon. Ballance had at least been a "gentleman", but the gentry group now saw themselves being ruled by a rabble.

Under the second Liberal government, real changes in the local community began to appear. Substantial legislation now began to exert direct and indirect pressures on large landowners. The 1894 Advances to Settlers Act and Land For Settlements Act provided a more generous annual sum for the purchase of estates,

for the compulsory re-purchase of estates if necessary, and a source of cheap and abundant credit for small men to finance new farms. At the same time, other controversial legislation, including the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, and the Factories Act, seemed to add substance to the picture of legislated revolution. Rising prices, overseas loans, and a new general prosperity after 1895 were probably more important factors in reinvigorating social mobility in the colony, but to the gentry of the time, the new movement was a result of "socialistic" government. The options which faced vacillating land-owners appeared to be either attempting to hold on, at the cost of hostile government policies apparently designed to wreck the gentry, or to sell out gracefully, cut losses, and make off with a profit in ready money.

In 1896, Liberal policies became physical reality in the county. The 10,000 acre Highbank estate, formerly the property of M. Ingle Browne and then of M. Ingle Browne II, was offered to the government for subdivision into seventy-five small lots and farms. The Brownes were paid almost £60,000 for the estate, and were able to retire comfortably, but in a wider sense, some of the gentry professed to regard the Highbank sale as a disaster. The rest of the local community appeared to see the sale as almost the beginning of a new age in the county. The local press was enthusiastic, and when sections on Highbank were

ballotted on 26 June, 1896, both local and metropolitan newspapers described the scene. The ballot was held on the porch of the Town Hall at Rakaiā, and the crowd of over a thousand people was "the largest by far that has ever been seen in the place".¹ The number of applications for sections totalled 3,400 and the ballot was surrounded with an air of festivity. Most of the crowd consisted of "farmers, mechanics and labourers, with their wives and daughters"¹ but also included prominent bankers, merchants, commission agents, lawyers, and some members of the gentry.

Other state settlements were to follow. In 1898, the Peter family sold 2,300 acres of Anama to the Crown for almost £11,000. This formed the Hekeao Settlement, and was cut up into fifteen small farms. Twelve years from 1898 to 1910, passed before another settlement occurred. This was the Ruapuna Settlement, comprising the 4,400 acres of the Ballantynes' former Thirlstane estate. Thirlstane was sold for £40,000, and formed into fifteen small farms. Three other estates were acquired under the Lands For Settlements Act. Valverde was purchased in 1912, and cut up into eleven small farms, Avenel was taken in two blocks in 1912 at a price of £53,000 and cut up into twenty-six small farms, and Strathmore was acquired in 1913. As late as the First World War

¹ Lyttelton Times, 27 June 1896.

then, there had only been six cases of direct government intervention in the county's landholding pattern. Six estates (or in the case of Hekeao, only part of an estate) had been replaced by 145 smallholdings. Some of these small properties proved uneconomic, and were merged with neighbouring farms, but within the narrow confines of the government settlements, a revolution had certainly been worked. Six gentry families had withdrawn to a Christchurch or European retirement, and had been replaced by vigorous farming communities.

The same phenomenon occurred throughout the county, without direct government pressure. Taxation, as has been seen, was not an undue strain, and although it was now much easier for small men to acquire capital to buy up smallholdings, they could not force the gentry to sell. But sell they did. It has already been noted that not long after the ballotting of Highbank, J. Cathcart Wason offered 3,800 acres of Corwar for sale to the Crown. Other landowners followed suit, and all, without exception, began to sell off blocks of their estates in private deals with smallmen. In 1890 there had been about forty-five large freehold estates in the county. By 1906, only six remained, and only two of these (Longbeach and Surrey Hills) were left in 1914. This revolution in landholding occurred in years of rising

prices, economic prosperity, political stability, and without much direct government pressure.

An attempt to decide why the gentry abdicated must now be made.

2. Gentry Response to Liberalism.

The gentry regarded 1890 as a year of drift into crisis. Their orderly vision of a stratified colonial society was being challenged as never before, it seemed. All the gentry - conservative and "Liberal" - seem to have shared this belief. The former were gloomy and divided. The latter, excited and hopeful. Steward said at the time,¹

"The pilot (Atkinson) is leaving the ship ... There is a crew more or less disorganised, and, speaking of the Government party, I think they are half inclined to be mutinous. They have ... no one to take the lead."

Exaggerated oratory was the order of the day, and a Liberal newspaper crowed that²

"The Conservative class ... trembles when (it) sees the fact that the people is the depository of power."

Not all the gentry were dyed-in-the-wool Tories, of course, and the gentry politicians, fighting for political "credibility", generally flirted with one or another principle of Liberalism - hoping, no doubt, to take out the sting by a very partial compromise. All of the large county land-owners who stood for election in 1890 made some sort

¹ P.D., vol. 67, p. 38.

² Lyttelton Times, 10 June 1890.

of attempt to capture the broad base of support, and proposed moderately "populist" measures. E.G. Wright was personally a deeply conservative man. He wanted to consolidate New Zealand society, not alter it. He wanted a stratified agrarian society governed benevolently by educated men "fully alive to the interests of the working class in New Zealand".¹ He used ingenious arguments to promote this. He opposed the land tax, for example, as he claimed it would block further settlement by small farmers, and their well-being.² The important issue of the age, he declared was the settlement of "an industrious population" in the countryside. This need not entail revolution, but merely the extension of the existing social system.³

Other gentry politicians not merely attempted to compromise with Liberalism, but embraced it with apparent completeness. One provincial newspaper noted on the verge of the 1890 election the existence of politicians,⁴

"Born in the lap of luxury, brought up in exclusive social circles, educated to regard themselves as superior beings,"

who nevertheless broke "through all conventional barriers and sprang into political existence as the most thorough-going of New Zealand democrats." One of these men was W.C. Walker, son of a titled aristocrat, and imbued with paternal ideas of social reform. He was a close associate of the Liberal leader, Ballance.

1 Guardian, 6 December 1890.

2 Ashburton Mail, 11 November 1890.

3 Press, 20 November 1890.

4 Temuka Leader, 8 November 1890.

In 1889 he wrote to Ballance from his library in Valetta homestead,¹

"My dear Ballance,

I see you are on the warpath shortly at Napier; so I write you a line wishing you good luck. Not that I think you will require your friends at a distance to help you for you will have by all one has heard a very sympathetic and enthusiastic audience who are obliged to put up with dross from their own public men and therefore relish all the more substantial provender when set down before them."

Walker cautioned and advised moderation to Ballance. He was a Liberal "by conviction", and never toed party lines. He reminded Ballance that he must at all costs avoid arousing the ire of large landowners in southern New Zealand, "who are not extremists taken as a whole."² His own political career showed integrity and a readiness to extract sound principles from either side. In 1890, he was opposed to the Atkinson government, but would not support any extension of taxation on landowners.³ Steward and Cunninghame-Graham adopted more radical stances. The former always remained a pragmatic politician, more interested in oratory and personal gain than real service of ideals, and the latter was an utter failure in politics. Although Cunninghame-Graham was not taken seriously either by the electorate or the gentry, his opinions seem to have reflected the opposite side of the gentry conscience. Most were still confident in their conservatism, but as

1) Ballance Papers,
Ballance, 24 October 1889.
3 Guardian, 15 November 1890.

W.C. Walker to
2) *Ibid.*

the 'nineties progressed, more and more must have begun to feel doubts and hesitations. Graham had concluded that,¹

"In these times rich men should stand aside .. and should rest satisfied with their share of the good things of this life, and not seek to acquire Parliamentary influence in addition."

He had come to believe that to be wealthy was to be guilty of a crime against society.

Even the most Tory of the Ashburton gentry were prepared to compromise. F. de Cartaret Malet, normally an intransigent conservative, nevertheless maintained a strong connection with the Liberal newspaper, the Lyttelton Times, of which he was managing director. But in spite of the readiness of the gentry to compromise, or not to take political affiliations too seriously, 1890 forced most of them to take a firm stance. There seems to have been less internal politicking within the gentry in this year, and colonial politics were changing in their nature, and forcing the gentry to change with them. The days of fluid political divisions, and "parties" based upon ad hoc alliances of men with similar ideas, finally ended in 1890-91. Within the county there was a strong awareness of this. For the first time, politics had become unashamedly "class" politics. In Ashburton the usual handful of gentry offered themselves for election, but a disturbing new element

¹ Ibid., 4 December 1890.

appeared. Two energetic cockatoo farmers stumped the county. J. Brown, a Wakanui farmer, stood for the Ashburton electorate, and advertised himself as,¹

"The Poor Man's Friend, the Liberal and Independent Candidate."

In the northern half of the county, J. McLachlan opposed Sir John Hall. McLachlan was a loud, outspoken, democratic man, a demagogue who regarded private schools as "an outrage" to society, and thought the conservative government "corrupt" and "aristocratic".² Neither of these men gained a parliamentary seat, but their appearance startled and dismayed many of the gentry. It was impossible for an harmonious agrarian order, led benevolently by a landed gentry, to survive the class attacks and personal abuse introduced by Brown and McLachlan.

After the election, the gentry response was divided between thankfulness that neither of the "poor man's friends" gained power, and shock that a Liberal government had taken power in Wellington. D. Cameron was more relieved at the former than concerned at the latter. He wrote to Hall,³

"I cannot tell you how pleased I was at the result of the election. I think about 45 of my men voted on our side, and only a few against us. Although we were in a minority at Methven still it is a wonder it was not worse with such opponents as Harry Stone and his gang." (Stone was McLachlan's Methven agent).

1 Ibid., 4 December 1890.

2 Press, 22 November 1890.

3 Hall Papers, 1890,

D. Cameron to Hall, 15 December 1890.

The Murray-Aynsleys felt "hearty congratulations" at the local victory for conservatism. Only one of the working force at Mount Hutt voted,¹

"but he did his duty and voted like a man, and on Saturday morning expressed his satisfaction at the result of the poll. We have all come to the conclusion that if women had had the franchise this election the result of the polling for the labour candidates would have been different."

W.L. Allan congratulated Hall on his victory, and noted that²

"Moorland did good work for you at Rakaiia and so did Hardy (these men were farmers). Our Dorie people I am pleased to say all went straight."

T.E. Upton wrote from Sherwood,³

"Allow me to congratulate you on your return as our Member. I only wish it had been by a larger majority. Still in these times of one man one vote I suppose we must be content."

He ended by expressing vague fears that in the future the colony would be governed by incompetent "uneducated men".

For the moment, however, the traditional deference paid to the large landowner had saved the county for the gentry. It was only a temporary grace, but the gentry now began to entertain delusions that, even in these benighted times, deferential democracy could be preserved. Some hoped for a strong alliance of the "rural interest" - farmers and small towns - led by the gentry, to act as a block to the radicalism

[7 December 1890.

- 1) *Ibid.*, Athole Murray-Aynsley to Hall,
- 2) *Ibid.*, W.L. Allan to Hall, 6 December 1890.
- 3) *Ibid.*, T.E. Upton to Hall, 8 December 1890.

of the city. Immediately after the 1890 election, at a complimentary dinner held by the small farmers of Waterton, E.G. Wright spoke of this. He noted that he¹

"had been very largely supported by the Ashburton farmers, but neither could he overlook the fact that he had been supported by all classes of the community, and more especially by the working men. He was pleased to say that there had not been a workman in his own employ but had worked for him in the election and bent his whole energies to secure his return."

It is interesting that Wright stressed the importance even of the landless workers to the "rural interest". Most gentry politicians seem to have included only the farmers and large landowners.

Wright then elaborated his ideal of an alliance of all classes of the rural community.

"the day was gone by when (the small farmer) was spoken of derisively as a Cockatoo, but he was spoken of respectfully now as a Farmer."

He stressed the need of all landowners to unite in order to maintain "good government", and protect the agrarian interest, upon which "no injury should be inflicted ... by any other class of people." He wound up by prophesying Liberal "crudities", such as Land Tax, unless the countryside realised its true affiliation.¹

During the brief years of Ballance's government, the gentry strove to achieve this rural alliance.

¹ Guardian, 2 January 1891.

The Few Liberal gentry watched developments in Wellington with cautious interest. W.C. Walker welcomed graduated taxation of land, as being¹

"bold enough for the extreme men and ought to satisfy the country constituencies which at all events in the South are cautious enough. It is fair to all interests ..."

This commentary would have been anathema to most of the gentry, who now seemed to have come to the conclusion that their whole life style was at stake. The clash of opinions between Liberal and conservative gentry reached its high point in a public debate between I.R.C. Cunningham-Graham and J.Holmes. This debate helped Holmes emerge as the leading spokesman of the conservative opinions of Ashburton gentry in the middle 'nineties. Holmes spoke of the "impending spoliation" of the rural gentry by graduated land taxation, and believed that by this tax the Liberals were "grossly infringing the principles of honest Liberalism that taxation should be based upon equality of sacrifice."² Conservatives were often to claim the mantle of "true" liberalism in the 'nineties and relate the Liberals to "socialism", "radicalism", and "populism".

Holmes argued subtly in favour of a rural alliance. The Liberals, he suggested, proposed to destroy the great landowners and then, having removed

1 Ballance Papers,
to Ballance, 18 June 1891.

W.C.Walker

2 Guardian, 14 June 1892.

the strongest supporters of the agrarian interest, would penalise the small farmers. Their tendency was "hostility to all landowners, great and small."

Therefore, Holmes argued, all landowners should unite¹

"to defeat those anti-Liberal schemes of the Socialist party whose moral code is summed up in the cant phrase that 'private property is public robbery' - that is their euphemistic mode of saying 'Hang honesty; let robbery reign'"

Holmes steadily inveighed against "unjust and oppressive taxation."² He saw this as the beginning of the destruction of civilisation, and wrote,³

"What would this plunder of the minority by the majority result in? It would be the introduction into legislation of the destructive elements of force and fraud in place of reason and equity and would soon cause not only the bursting up of large estates but the bursting up of civilised society ..."

He repeatedly attempted to distinguish between "true Liberalism and the plundering, blundering socialism of the present time, which tries to mask its evil and repulsive face under the cloak of Liberalism." The single tax on land, and all its associated daemons, was not "the panacea for all social ills", but a device to plunder the countryside for the political advantage of "these wretched scribblers in the Christchurch papers."⁴ Holmes hoped to turn the class politics of the time into a simple conflict between city and country, with the latter holding the advantage, and under the traditional leadership of the gentry.

1 Guardian, 1 4 June 1892.

2 Ibid., 22 June 1892.

3 Ibid., 5 July 1892.

4 Holmes presumably meant the Lyttelton Times and Canterbury Times.

This was the consolidated gentry position .
 Cunninghame-Graham verbalised the pricks of conscience that threatened the "integrity" of this position. He attempted to speak moderately, as a foil to Holmes' enspirited oratory. He pointed out that Holmes' stance for all its polish, was conservative and anti-democratic. Holmes was never prepared to concede the one-man-one-vote principle, which he considered "subversive", and Cunninghame-Graham argued that the large landowners were not interested in forwarding farmers' interests, but only in preserving their oligarchy. Liberalism did not wish to destroy large estates, but merely to reduce them, and prevent them from dominating the countryside.¹ He wrote, "these huge overgrown estates ... are only social cancers amongst us, eating up the vitals of the colony."² Graham firmly believed in the liberalism of the Liberals, their moderate intentions, and desire for equity. He pointed out that a government could not be said to be opposed to the rural interest when it relieved one third of farmers from all land tax, imposed it only very slightly on another third, and only penalised rich farmers and the landed magnates. These facts made Holmes' work harder.

Cunninghame-Graham dismissed the gentry's hope of a rural alliance. He wrote, in the usual rhetorical style,³

"the big landowners wish the small farmers to help them to turn the present Government

1 Ibid., 18 June 1892.

2 Ibid., 28 June 1892.

3 Ibid., 11 July 1892.

out, and abolish the progressive tax, which incommodes them not a little it seems; but really the remedy lies in their own hands, which is to unbend somewhat, and sell off a portion of their properties."

The alternative, Graham believed, was violent social revolution, anarchism, and the collapse of the "civilisation" the landowners prized so highly. Another possibility was the depopulation of the South; Cunninghame-Graham reported in 1892 that thirty families had left the neighbourhood of Ashburton for the North Island in the previous eighteen months.¹

Fear of depopulation was an important political factor of the time, largely overlooked by gentry politicians. The lure of cheap lands in the North Island "frontier" attracted many small farmers in the South, and gave rise to fears that unless the large estates were broken up, the "drift north" would grow in magnitude. In certain districts of Ashburton, the population from 1891 to 1896 showed a decline (although there was a net growth over the whole county).² The Lyttelton Times wrote in 1893 that³

"the flower of our (Canterbury's) manhood

1 Scotter, Ashburton, p.93.

2 Some examples of districts with declining populations are as follows:

District	1891 pop.	1896 pop.
Ashton	115	104
Coldstream	70	65
Flemington	157	106
Waterton	269	235
South Rakaia Village Settlement	282	255

The population of Ashburton county in 1891 was 9,501. By 1896, this had grown to 10,820. "Depopulation" was, therefore, only very partial. N.Z. Census Returns, 1891 and 1896, Wellington, 1892 and 1897.

3 Lyttelton Times, 19 December 1893.

has for more than a decade been steadily squeezed out of the district and driven to the North Island or across the ocean to seek employment or a share of the soil."

This was an exaggeration, but it was a common belief. McLachlan was to be a prolific speaker on this subject, so dear to the heart of many Ashburton farmers, and declared in 1894 that¹

"it is a cruel wrong to perpetrate upon the families in Otago and Canterbury that the sons and daughters should be forced to go across Cook Strait to get land to settle upon."

He concluded, along with many others, that the only way to redress this was by confiscating large estates.

The gentry's dream of an agrarian alliance gained some reality in 1892. In May of that year, a meeting of Canterbury landowners in Christchurch resolved to form a league called the Farmers and Country Settlers' League, for the protection of the rural interest. Ashburton gentry played an important role. Of the vice-presidents of the League, two were Ashburton magnates - J. Grigg, and J.A. Holmes. Committee members included D.Cameron, P.Drummond, J.Ballantyne, D.G.Holmes, W.White, L.White, and H.Friedlander. This very gentry dominance, however, weakened the League's wider appeal. Cunninghame-Graham pointed out that the League's claim to represent the entire rural interest was extremely flimsy, as of all the fifty-two committee members, only one could possibly be called a small farmer.²

1 P.D., vol. 83, p.655.

2 Guardian, 18 June 1892.

When an Ashburton Land League was formed in July of the same year, this error was avoided, and the gentry adopted a very low profile. This indicates that the gentry had a more sympathetic understanding of matters at the local level, and a better rapport with the farming community. The canvassing and organisation of the meeting which gave rise to the League had been under gentry guidance. P. Drummond was very active, and C.J. Harper chaired the meeting. But when a local committee of managements was formed, the gentry seem to have been consciously excluded. Of fifteen members J. Grigg was the only gentry representative, and his great popularity and stainless reputation would make this token representation acceptable to the farmers. G.W. Leadley, the farmer "notable" par excellence, assumed leadership of the League. He was a rich farmer with a flock of over 1000 sheep on his Wakanui farm, but by no means "gentry". He was a tough and energetic advocate of the small and middle farmers' interests. He sarcastically noted that Cunninghame-Graham "ought to be well up on the subject" of land monopoly, as he was a large landowner himself.¹

By the time the 1893 election approached, the gentry seem to have had some new confidence. They believed that they would retain the support of the farming community. J. Cathcart Wason contested the

¹ Ibid, 27 July 1892.

election in the northern half of the county, and expressed this faith when he said,¹

"They (the farmers) at any rate will, I am convinced, aid me in fighting this battle against the socialistic nonsense of the present day."

Throughout this campaign the gentry showed themselves to be over-confident and out of touch with the real feeling of the rural community. They permitted themselves to lapse into internal faction, and made large errors of judgement. Cathcart Wason, for example, while speaking at a public meeting, said the Liberal government²

"came into existence like an obnoxious mushroom on a manure heap."

This tactless remark was greeted by a loud hissing uproar. He clumsily attacked the graduated land tax as "a thorough penal tax", "made so burdensome as to stop enterprise". But the great majority of the farming community welcomed the land tax which fell only on large proprietors, and the gentry would have been wiser to have tactfully forgotten it during their campaign.

The result was the "disaster" of 1893. The farming community voted solidly for the Liberal candidates, and the gentry were tumbled from what they had regarded as secure positions. E.G. Wright had come to see the Ashburton electorate almost as his own "Old Sarum" and the shock of defeat - his friends',

1 Ibid, 22 November 1893.

2 Ibid, 11 October 1893.

as well as his own - led him to write to W. Rolleston,¹

"I feel so intensely disgusted at your defeat that I can hardly express myself in polite language.

That yourself and Scobie (Mackenzie) should have been defeated causes me more regret than the loss of my own election, which is chiefly due to the apathy of over-confident friends, and to my own carelessness."

He showed a lack of political grasp when he wrote that "the female franchise and the prohibition racket have been no doubt the main factor in bringing about this result." He ended on a note of false optimism.

"The only consolation I have is the assurance that Stout will burst up Seddon's party."

The "ultimate abomination" had at last occurred - not only was there a Liberal government in power in Wellington, but now Ashburton itself was in Liberal hands. John McLachlan became Ashburton's M.H.R.. He was one of the new small farmer politicians, and everything the gentry feared. A carelessly-dressed stocky, unpolished man, he was described by the Guardian as a "farmer and might have stepped out of his market trap into his place in the House."² He scandalised Ashburton society by spitting in public, and it embarrassed the gentry that their county should be represented by someone so "low". McLachlan was fiercely opposed to anything smacking of wealth, privilege, or gentry oligarchy, and appealed to the farmers of the county with the words,³

"If you want a man to represent you send a man of your own class."

¹ Rolleston Papers, 1893,
E.G. Wright to Rolleston, 2 December 1873.

McLachlan spoke the language of class. When he spoke in favour of the Land for Settlements Bill in 1894, he made reference to one Ashburton landowner having just "built a most palatial residence on his estate". He went on to ask the government to¹

"strain every nerve to reacquire some of these estates, and allow the sons and daughters of the settlers the option of having a piece of (the) land ... especially in my part of the country."

The small farmers were no longer prepared to accept automatically the leadership of the gentry. McLachlan's political opponents, E.G. Wright, J. Studholme, and J. Cathcart Wason, unwisely "showed their resentment at having to accept defeat from one they despised."²

After 1893, the gentry politicians became more muted. None began selling out immediately, but their political activity diminished considerably. Newspaper columns seldom carried letters or articles by gentry politicians now, and there was a slight but noticeable increase in "notable" participation in local bodies at the expense of the gentry. There seems to have been a new mood of pessimism. Sir William Steward might greet Liberal government enthusiastically, and even suggest that the Legislative Council be elected rather than nominated,³ but in August 1894, he sold his Barford estate and withdrew to town life.

1 P.D., vol. 23, p.655. The "palatial residence" was the Griggs' new house on Longbeach.

2 Scotter, Ashburton, p.162.

3 Guardian, 31 August 1894.

By the time of the 1896 election, the gentry candidates adopted a much more subdued approach. Holmes's fiery Toryism was absent in that year, and a circumspect Cathcart Wason stumped the county in search of votes. Wason's platform of that year showed considerably more tact than the hiss-provoking campaign of 1893. He was now prepared to accept the purchase and subdivision of estates, and only quibbled about the terms of ownership. He wanted freehold small farms, which he considered "more generous", and "more in accord with our ideas of freedom and freemen." This was an obvious attempt to appear as a farmers' advocate. He safely criticised the "semi-socialistic legislation that had been passed and was now threatened". He believed this had aggravated "the evil" of unemployment. He proposed that large estates be cut up into largish farms, which would employ much labour, and alleviate unemployment. The cities were too large, and exerted undue influence, and their development, he thought, should be limited "for the proportion of country population". He ended by concluding that what was needed was¹

"a sound Government policy, which left people alone as much as possible. It was individualism which had made England the mightiest and most prosperous country in the world at the present time. It was the same thing which would make New Zealand a prosperous and happy country."

1 Ibid, 2 November 1896.

This sort of platform was far more appealing to rural electors than the previous offer of benevolent gentry leadership. Wason had abandoned a "gentro-centric" policy in favour of one with broad appeal, but of course in the process he abandoned the educated landowner's ability to offer something distinctive. The offer was now merely a diluted and reluctant concession to Liberalism, in order to gain the votes of the whole rural community.

II. THE DEMISE OF THE GENTRY

1. The Gentry Achievement

In the late 'nineties the gentry began to lose prominence. Several began to sell off their estates and disappear to England. Others held on in the county, retaining rapidly shrinking estates which were mostly just large farms by 1914. Their life-style came to merge with that of their neighbouring farmers.

But the gentry's life-style had never been merely "English". They had attempted to recreate many of the trappings of English gentry, but in the process a new colonial social group had grown up that made a vital contribution to New Zealand society. Landowners adorned their "country seats" with English ware, and transferred to the new Zealand context the landed gentleman's mode of living, including the hunt, the well stocked cellar of wine and whisky, the library, and the vast dinners. They brought with them to New

Zealand a pattern of life which had taken centuries to evolve amongst the wealthy in Europe, and had been enabled, by a lucky combination of climate, land, staples and finance, to reproduce it for a brief period more or less completely in the South Island.

At Longbeach, Springfield, Mount Hutt, Coldstream and Lagmhor a way of life fashioned after originally English concepts was in full swing. Gentry dabbled in the arts and accomplishments. Some sent sons "Home" to Oxford and Cambridge, and a few to the new South Island universities. Families journeyed to the Northern mineral springs, and travelled abroad. The theatre and a gay social life attracted them to Christchurch, where many kept town houses and stayed for the duration of the "season" which culminated in Carnival Week. Amidst the pushing vigour of a new society, a small group of large landowners had grown up to rival the gentry of Britain or the provincial aristocracy of France. Political opponents attacked this group as being an alien excrescence on the mainstream of New Zealand's development into a small man's democracy.

But the gentry had been invaluable throughout the colonial period. The role of the gentry was to act as intermediaries between metropolitan Britain and colonial New Zealand in social, financial and political fields. The gentry placed the colony in

a direct, personal relationship with Britain. Although southern New Zealand was part of a wider "Australasia" experience, extensive inter-colonial links never grew up. The primary link was directly with the metropolitan society. The Ashburton gentry looked directly to Britain, and their hierarchy of loyalties appears to have been: county, province, colony, Britain. The gentry travelled extensively, but very few bothered to make more than cursory stop-offs in Australia and other colonies. "Home" was the principal tie, and the colonies seem often to have regarded themselves as competitors for metropolitan favours. The Ashburton gentry would speak of themselves as "English gentlemen", "Britons", perhaps "colonials", but never "Australasians", and seldom even "New Zealanders". A few of Ashburton's large landowners had spent formative periods in Australia before settling in Canterbury, but the great majority had come directly from Britain and preferred to retain this direct contact through their lives.

This fact enabled the gentry to play a role of vital importance in the development of New Zealand. The extensive connections of family, capital, and "interest" which held the gentry to Britain were largely absent in other social groups in colonial New Zealand. They had access to a good deal of private and family capital, which could be invested in

the colony by their agency. Many of them had received the education and upbringing of the experienced British ruling classes, and were able to discharge this understanding for the colony's benefit. Large landowners possessed sufficient leisure, affluence, education, and connections to attend to government, and contributed a disproportionately large number of M.H.R.s in the colonial period.

In economic terms the gentry were important too. The family and private capital that most large landowners had access to in Britain enabled them to keep their finances afloat during the long period of low prices, and even to invest in improvements. It was the large estates that pioneered modern mixed farming in Canterbury and other parts of the south, and were able to inaugurate reforms on a far larger and more effective scale than small farms. Without the existence of large gentry estates, the colony would certainly have suffered more from a lack of capital, and an inability to introduce new agricultural practices except with agonising slowness. The southern gentry were also an important source of capital for wider dissemination throughout New Zealand. Western Southland, the West Coast, and most of the North Island were all pioneer districts in the 'nineties, and were benefitting from investments and speculations by southern landowners and businessmen.¹

¹ (page 401 for notes)

The gentry usually possessed a sense of mission. They felt themselves part of the British movement to spread "civilisation" and "progress". They were able to hasten this movement in a way that would have proven difficult for a rough and ready small man's democracy. And by the 'eighties and 'nineties they were proud of their success. George Hart wrote²

"Let us remember that we here, as well as our brethren in other parts of the Colony are engaged in the greatest work a people can do, viz., the laying the foundations of a nation which is yet to rise up in this Greater Britain of the South, and like the Pilgrim Fathers who have preceded us, take heart and have courage."

This pride and optimism were indeed based on a substantial achievement. In a few decades, the grasslands of the south had come to support a complex society in which all the forms of British civilisation had been reproduced more or less completely. This achievement was due at least in part to the station system and the gentry that it was able to support.

1 Many examples of this can be found. Ashburton landowners who invested in North Island land, for example, included J. Studholme, W.S. Peter, W.White, R.H.Rhodes, and A.F. Somerville. Peter also invested in Southland estates, as did J.A. and A.D. McIlraith, and B.M. Moorhouse. Investment in mining and other extractive industries in the West Coast involved H.P. Murray-Aynsley, who was chairman of directors of the Grey River Coal Company, and others, notably E.G. Wright, and J. Studholme.

2 Hart, Leaves , pp.51-52.

The North Island had been settled earlier than the South, but by the 'nineties, lacking a staple, it was still retarded. Wool and the wool kings had helped provide New Zealand with a "heartland", a sound economic base, and a rapid maturity.¹

2. The Fate of the Gentry: Disappearance or Embourgeoisement?

Nineteenth century New Zealand society was fragmented and inchoate. One of the most distinctive features of the south in that period was its small gentry group of large landowners. This had unquestionably disappeared by World War One, in Ashburton county at least. Reeves had claimed that,²

"The Government's aim was not to abase the rich but to raise the general condition of the people and to add to the sum of human happiness."

But in raising the "general condition of the people", the foundation of the gentry, the great estates, was destroyed. If the story of New Zealand's social development in the twentieth century is the

1 This suggestion of a "heartland" region in New Zealand has been made by W.J. Campbell. He writes: "Hazardous though such a generalization is, one may perhaps affirm that a fairly homogeneous cultural region extends from the South Island (excluding Southland-East Otago and Westland) up the eastern half of the North Island as far as Wairoa. With some trepidation, one might also call this huge region the heartland region ..." Campbell, W.J., New Zealand, New Jersey, 1965, p.75.

2 Lyttelton Times, 4 June 1890.

successful embourgeoisement of almost all its disparate classes and groups, then it must be decided whether the gentry simply lost its nineteenth-century distinctiveness and became absorbed into the New Zealand middle classes. This can be studied in some detail, by looking at each gentry family separately. There are two distinct groups - those that disappeared from the prominent landowning group, and those that remained.

Several of the county's families simply sold up and returned to Britain. It has been suggested that many landowners wished to do this in any case, from the beginning of colonisation, but in the case of the Ashburton gentry, all who did in fact moved only at the end of the 'nineties. J. Cathcart Wason sold up Corwar, apparently disillusioned with the way New Zealand seemed to be developing, and retired to Britain, where he bought a Scottish country estate and was eventually returned as a Conservative M.P. G.A. Maclean Buckley sold off Lagmhor as small farms from the end of the decade onwards, and took his family to Britain permanently. Buckley is an interesting example, as he was not an Englishman, but had been born in Canterbury. Britain was Wason's homeland, but it was not Buckley's, and the fact that he retired there is an indication of how "English" attitudes had been communicated to the New Zealand-born generation. The Murray-Aynsleys sold Mount Hutt

in 1898, and soon after, most of the family retired to Britain. The Lyttletons, who had already been represented at Rokeby by three generations, sold out in 1908, and the family moved to Britain. The Stracheys abandoned their Ashburton estates at the end of the 'nineties, to return to England.

D.Cameron sired only daughters, both married Englishmen and retired to Britain upon the death of their father. Cameron's grandson, Sir Duncan Sandys, later became a prominent Conservative politician in Britain. This group of families is a minority.

Two families sold their estates and the sons made careers in the armed forces. Of the two sons of P. Cunningham, the elder became a major in the Indian Army, and was awarded an O.B.E., and the younger became an officer in the British Army. T.E. Upton's son, R.H.B. Upton, became an army officer, and died at Johannesburg in the Boer War. Most of the sons of C.P. Cox made careers for themselves in the commercial world, as bank managers. One son, A.P. Cox, became professor of English and History at various universities in India, and Inspector of Schools. K.S. Cox bought a farm in the North Island. When E.G. Wright died in 1902, he had still managed to retain the bulk of his estates. His heirs were three sons and several daughters. The daughters received cash settlements, the younger

sons large farms, and the eldest son, D.G. Wright, the fine estate of Windermere. Unfortunately, however, the heirs disputed the inheritance amongst themselves, and squandered large sums in litigation. The Windermere estate was finally ruined through the "senseless dissipation" of D.G. Wright.¹

J. Ballantyne's Thirlstane estate was sold off in 1899, as he had no son who was willing to attempt to carry it on into the new century. Leonard White and A.D. McIlraith had no children to whom they could bequeath their Langley and Auchenflower estates, and so they were cut up and sold. The will of George Hart typifies the disposition of estates by those who had heirs. His wife, who had an independent income, was bequeathed all the household appurtenances, and was given an annual legacy of £200 to supplement her own fortune. All the landed estate at Winchmore was to be sold and converted to money to be invested. One third of the income from this investment was to go to Mrs Hart in her lifetime, and the capital was to be kept in trust for the sons and daughters. The daughters' money was to be kept in trust throughout their lifetimes, and the interest paid to them as an annual income. The eldest son, R.W. Hart, was given favoured clauses, including the right to reside in the mansion at Winchmore free of rent for as long as he chose. The trustees were instructed to postpone the

¹ Macdonald, "Biographies"

sale of the estate as long as it was possible to do so. They were enabled to let farms on the estate, or farm it directly themselves. In this case, the heirs were to be paid annual shares of the estate's profits. Hart empowered his¹

"said Trustees to manage conduct and carry on my Sheepfarming and grazing business and for that purpose to occupy and use my freehold estate at Winchmore in the County of Ashburton .. and (they) shall employ any Agents Overseers Servants mechanics workmen and other persons whomsoever in or about this freehold estate business and premises ..."

The trustees were encouraged to improve the estate, buildings and plantations.

This will, written in 1895, indicated much of the gentry's state of mind. There was a preference for retaining estates, and for a degree of primogeniture. Many Ashburton families tried to hold on to their land as long as possible. All sold off much of their land as a matter of course, but most tried to retain something. The Grigg family remained at Longbeach, selling land off to small farmers, but still retaining an estate of over 10,000 acres by 1914.

J.C.N. Grigg²

"contrived to maintain the standard which gave the estate its reputation. There was never an untidy fence and never a poverty stricken beast on Longbeach, for all work was carried out in the most exacting manner and with the hearty co-operation of a picked staff."

This was very exceptional. The Studholmes managed to retain only a few thousand acres, and this

¹ *Lands and Deeds, Will of George Hart, 1895.*

² Scotter, Ashburton, p.168.

was more than most. Of J. Studholme I's sons, the elder inherited Coldstream, the middle son became a barrister, and eventually an English squire and J.P. in Devon, while the third son was given a high country run. J. Studholme II had three sons, of whom, the eldest, John Morton Rangabe Studholme, was educated at Oxford, and became an army officer. The second son, Richard Home Studholme, gained an M.A. at Cambridge, married a daughter of the Bishop of Bunbury and bought an estate called Pembroke in Surrey. The third son, Derek Skene Studholme, was educated at the Royal Navy College, Dartmouth, and at Cambridge, and inherited Coldstream.

This method of settling children was the sought after pattern; one son, usually the eldest, inheriting as much of the family estate as it was thought possible to retain, the other sons being settled in professions or with smaller properties, and the daughters being married to advantage and receiving cash settlements. F. de Cartaret Malet had three sons and one daughter. The eldest son, Leonard de Cartaret Malet, married an admiral's daughter and inherited a reduced Clarewell. The second and third sons became a colonel and major respectively in the Indian Army, and the daughter married the Dean of Chichester's, and secondly Sir George Harper's son. The Elmslies' Cardendale estate was not large enough to provide land for all the sons, and was

sold. Most of the sons entered professions, while W.P.S. Elmslie, the eldest son, was settled on a small Ashburton estate. The daughters were married to advantage; two married clergymen's sons who became Dunedin bankers and financiers, and another two married landowners. Alexa Elmslie married Fortescu, son of Col. F.G. Dalgety of Grasmere station, and Sophia Elmslie married E.M. Goodwin, of Cracroft.

The Goodwin family remained in landowning, but the Cracroft estate was sold in 1897, and a smaller more compact estate was acquired called Hayton, near Salisbury in South Canterbury. W.C. Walker managed to settle one of his sons as a large sheepfarmer, but the others entered professions. One, William James Dundas Walker, was by 1921 a professional actor in London - an interesting fate for the son of a lairdly man. The Harper family continued to flourish.

C.J. Harper had two sons, and both became large landowners. Charles Godfrey Cracroft Harper inherited a substantial portion of Hackthorne, and Henry John Cracroft Harper bought a sheep farm near Waimate.

D. Morrow had intended to leave Montalto to his eldest son, and set up the others in professions. But they all preferred to farm, and after eventually Morrow cut up the estate into four large farms, and gave one to each son. The four Chisnall sons each gained large farms. The eldest inherited Ohinemuri, much

reduced, two bought sheep farms in Marlborough province, and the fourth bought a farm called Dudley House near Yaldhurst. Several other families remained in farming. The Deanses had cut up Waimarama by 1901, and leased it in small farms to tenants, but they continued to be large landowners in other areas. D.G. Holmes had two sons, one of whom inherited a reduced Holmeslee, and the other a smaller Mount Harding. The Somervilles became a flourishing sheepfarming family in the North Island, and the Todhunters continued in a big way in Ashburton. Of the Chapman sons, two became farmers on a large scale in South Canterbury. The third a medical doctor, L.R.C.P. and L.R.C.S., died with a wealthy practice at Nice, and the fourth became a major in the Indian Army.

The four sons of J.C. Helmore were all settled in the usual way. The eldest took over his father's legal business, speculated in land, gained the rank of captain in the New Zealand Army, and married a run-holder's daughter. The second son became a merchant, and also managed the family estate in Ashburton county. After this was sold, he speculated in South American land, and died at Santa Cruz. The third son bought an estancia in Argentina, which he called Santa Euphemia, and the fourth son became a large sheepfarmer, and owned Cascade station in North

Canterbury. The Peter family, after some of its land was sold off to provide for daughters, and more was taken by the Government, divided up the remainder of the Anama estate into large sheep farms for several of the sons. Another became a sheep farmer in Geraldine county. C.J. Peter lived at Anama homestead and continued to dispense the family's traditional hospitality.

If many families disappeared, then many also managed to remain, although with substantially smaller properties and incomes. Fewer and fewer could keep servants, and after World War One, the big houses so extravagantly built in earlier years began to decay. Fire and neglect took their toll. Corwar was razed in a spectacular fire early in the century, Somerton burnt down about 1910, Auchenflower was demolished in the 1930s, as was Mount Somers three decades later. Longbeach was destroyed by fire, and replaced by a more modest house in keeping with the near-servantless 1930s. The old elan had disappeared, and the tight cohesiveness of the gentry "family" was dispersed. Around the turn of the century, gentry sons were being "farmed out" into the professions or business, with favoured ones receiving inheritances of one, two, or three thousand acres of land. In two decades, the elaborate, apparently permanent gentry oligarchy, based upon great freehold estates, had almost completely disappeared. Some legacy or "genteel" aura still

surrounds large sheepfarmers, and a vague mythology of "the Old Families" persists in the county. Names like Studholme, Grigg, Morrow and Ballantyne still mean something, but no longer would Ashburton farmers automatically give their votes to these names for their own sakes. By 1952, of forty-seven gentry families of the 'nineties, only twelve, or roughly one-quarter, still held land in the county. All were rather above the average size, but their sheep flocks were small fractions of those held by their forbears. (See figure 1)

No single reason can be given to explain this rapid disappearance of a distinct social group. Economic pressures favoured the estates rather than discouraged them. The estates broke up in a time of rising prices, when it was in the interests of large landowners to hold on as long as possible for even greater wealth than they had already acquired through the "depressed" 'eighties and 'nineties. It has been argued that the large landowners had only been waiting for "better times" to sell off their estates, which were economic burdens to them.¹

1 This opinion, put forward by Reeves in the 'nineties, has since become part of traditional New Zealand economic history. J.B. Condliffe summarised the belief when he wrote: "The land was locked up in large stations that were unprofitable, even when organised as extensive wool producing units, and were still more unprofitable when viewed in relation to the opportunities of the new mixed farming after refrigeration. Until their finances could be readjusted no progress was possible. Many stations were for sale, but at prices commensurate with the mortgages." Condliffe, J.B., New Zealand in the Making, London, 1930, p. 143.

But the evidence is that the estates were showing handsome profits, lubricated by family capital and financial expertise, and it seems unlikely that the gentry who were firstly businessmen, would have abandoned their investments at the beginning of a curve of upward growth - certainly not for economic reasons.

Nor were political and legislative pressures adequate. The graduated land tax was not critical. It was a burden, but it could be borne by large estates without undue strain. Compulsory purchase was only of very limited application in the county, and the gentry showed by their attempts to settle sons on at least a portion of their estates that most were not "fly by nighters". Many of the indications are that at least some of the gentry wanted to found permanent dynasties, on the English and Scottish models they admired. They certainly imitated many of the features of these models. Business to them was a means to an end, not the end itself. Most had dreamed of founding country seats to pass down the generations. Neither economic forces, nor political ones, could prevent them from doing so.

Social pressures seem a likelier explanation. The large landowners in the 'nineties began to panic, and then passed on to a profound gloom. All that they had worked for was now being attacked on all sides, not only by the "wretched scribblers", but

FIGURE ISHOWING GENTRY FAMILIES PRESENT IN ASHBURTON COUNTYIN THE 1890s AND IN 1952

(comparing Figure 1, Chapter II, with the Return of Sheepowners, 1952, Government Printer, Wellington, 1953)

	1890s		1952
1	Alington		-
2	Ballantyne	1	Ballantyne
3	Cameron		-
4	Browne		-
5	Chapman	2	Chapman
6	Chisnall	3	Chisnall
7	Coster		-
8	Cox		-
9	Cunningham		-
10	Cunningham-Graham		-
11	Deans		-
12	Dobson		-
13	Drummond	4	Drummond
14	Elmslie		-
15	Friedlander		-
16	Goodwin		-
17	Grigg	5	Grigg
18	Hart		-
19	Hawdon		-
20	Helmore		-
21	Holmes	6	Holmes
22	Harper	7	Harper
23	Loughnan		-
24	McIlraith		-
25	McFarlane	8	McFarlane
26	Malet		-
27	Maclean Buckley		-
28	Mackie		-
29	Morrow	9	Morrow
30	Moorhouse		-
31	Murray-Aynsley		-
32	McNab Lyttleton		-
33	Packer		-
34	Peache	10	Peache
35	Peter		-
36	Somerville		-
37	Strachey		-
38	Studholme	11	Studholme
39	Strange		-
40	Steward		-
41	Todhunter	12	Todhunter
42	Upton		-
43	Walker		-
44	Wason		-
45	Wilson		-
46	White		-
47	Wright		-

also from within their own ranks. There appears to have been a sort of "crisis of confidence" amongst the gentry. The press, the people, and the new Liberal government were all talking very loudly about "bursting up the great estates". The government began to pass measures that seemed "socialistic" and to be about to bring all this talk into practical reality. The whole concept of a rural gentry was antiquated and mocked as such. The gentry were constantly hearing themselves labelled as "sham aristocracy", "squattocracy", or "social pests", in the common misinterpretation of Reeves's phrase. The gentry, many of whom must have themselves doubted their "right" to disproportionate wealth, were under heavy social pressure. Most had a strong sense of public duty and social service, and while this pressure only steeled the nerve of a few such as Holmes, most appeared to have become doubtful and vacillating, as did Wason.

In addition to the pushing of social pressure was the tugging of economic lures. Prices were beginning to rise, and it was now possible for a landowner to sell his estate at a good price, and retire on the profits to a town life in Christchurch or Britain. This must have acted as a positive and strong inducement. Retirement in luxury was an easy alternative to remaining on an estate, battling against penalties the government would presumably impose, and managing farm finances and

intractable work forces. Rising prices would mean greater profitability year after year, and the possibility of missing out on these new good times must have pained these acute businessmen-farmers. But whisky, whist, and a retirement to some mansion in Merivale was not a dismaying prospect.

It began to seem inevitable that the government would destroy the large estates, if not by intolerable economic pressures, then by outright compulsory purchase. In this social and intellectual climate, the gentry appear to have concluded that the only way to salvage something from the disaster was to sell immediately, with profit, before the government acted compulsorily. It was the anticipation of a revolution, rather than the reality of one, that persuaded the gentry to abandon their estates. After 1893 they had assumed that they were defeated, and concentrated their energies on salvaging what they could. Some, such as Wason, Maclean Buckley, and the Murray-Aynsleys, abandoned the sinking ship altogether. Others found new fields in commerce or the army. Many attempted to hold homestead blocks and preserve something of what they had built up.

There was another important divisive factor. Primogeniture had never been accepted in New Zealand and although many Ashburton landowners attempted

to bequeath their main estates intact to eldest sons, in practice, this usually failed. The values of the younger generation were coming to differ from those of their parents, and it was increasingly common for estates to be subdivided amongst sons, as was done by the Morrors and Peters. Daughters often took portions too, or were given cash settlements raised by the selling of some of an estate. But the increasing frequency of this sort of fragmentation of estates is noticeable only in the 'nineties and after. The changing values of a younger generation were to a large extent a reflection of the changing social values in the wider society.

The large landowners had lost their old confidence and distinctiveness. There were to be plenty of rich farmers in the twentieth century, but no gentry. There is more agrarian wealth in Ashburton county than ever before, but it is evenly spread now among farms ranging in size from one to several hundred acres. The gentry has disappeared, and so too has the "peasantry" of very small farmers, dependent on part-time labour on the estates. The pyramid social structure of the 'nineties has been replaced by a broadly affluent middle class, and "cockatoos" have become "cookies".

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APPENDICES TO FIGURES - CHAPTER I

Figure 1: sources AJHR, 1895, N.Z. Statistics, 1895.
1895 figures are given.

<u>County</u>	<u>Sheep</u>	<u>Flocks over 4,000</u>	<u>Number of sheep in flocks over 4,000</u>
Ashburton	882,000	52	582,000
Selwyn	751,000	35	404,000
Mackenzie	469,000	26	422,000
Waitaki	622,000	25	465,000
Vincent	412,000	10	350,000

NB: These five counties were selected because of their roughly similar areas, viz.,

Ashburton	2,540 sq.m.
Selwyn	2,597
Mackenzie	2,537
Waitaki	2,333
Vincent	2,684

Their topographies were very different, an important contributing factor in land settlement patterns.

Figure 2: utilising figures above.

Figure 3: source: NZS 1896.

<u>County</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total pop.</u>
Ashburton	6,027	4,793	10,820
Selwyn	15,627	14,463	30,090
Mackenzie	875	639	1,514
Waitaki	4,824	4,052	8,876
Vincent	2,608	1,482	4,090

Figure 4: utilising figures above.

Figure 5: " " "

Figure 6: source: NZS 1896.

<u>County</u>	<u>Acres of land Cultivated</u>
Ashburton	630,000
Selwyn	455,000
Mackenzie	73,000
Waitaki	324,000
Vincent	91,000

Figure 7: Source: Return of the Freeholders of New Zealand 1882 (1884).

Figure 8: Source: AJHR 1896, Return of Sheepowners of 1951 and 1952, Gvt Printer, 1953.

Figure 9: Sources: AJHR 1896, H23.
& 10:

In 1895 there were 52 flocks of over 4,000 sheep in Ashburton County. There was a total

of 712 flock owners in the County which meant that those owning over 4,000 sheep were 7.3% of the total. These 7.3% flock owners possessed some 581,900 sheep out of the County total of 882,100 sheep, or 66%.

In 1952 there were 21 flocks of over 4,000 sheep, out of a total of 1,234 flock owners, or 1.7%. These 21 flocks comprised 159,700 sheep out of a total of 1,243,800 in the county, or some 13%.

CHAPTER II

Figure 1: Information largely taken from Macdonald Biographies, Canterbury Museum, op.cit.

APPENDIX I

ASHBURTON ESTATES IN 1882

(taken from A Return of the Freeholders of N.Z., 1882)

All estates of over 2,500 acres or over £15,000 in value are shown.

	<u>Owner</u>	<u>Acreege</u>	<u>Value</u>
1	Brown, J.T.,	4,302	£ 17,607
2	Browne, M.I., "Highbank"	9,260	£ 50,936
3	Bullock, T.,	2,971	£ 25,000
4	Chamberlain Bros., (also owned estates in Selwyn and Ashley. Total landed estate of 8,533 acres, worth £48,590).	2,808	£ 16,848
5	Chatmos Co., "Chatmos"	3,494	£ 17,000
6	Coster, E.S., and J.L., "Somerton"	7,996	£ 80,000
7	Cox, C.P.,	3,632	£ 10,000
8	Dawson, A.,	2,504	£ 15,055
9	Garrick, C., & Hill,	3,018	£ 5,433
10	Gerard, W., "Snowden" (also owned 10,000 acres, worth £30,000 in Selwyn)	2,953	£ 7,500
11	Gould, G., and Cameron, D., "Springfield"	18,125	£ 95,513
12	Grigg, J., "Longbeach"	15,823	£137,839
13	Hale, B.,	2,837	£ 10,221
14	Hart, G., "Winchmore"	4,822	£ 22,972
15	Hawdon, C.G., "Westerfield"	8,117	£ 56,821
16	Helmore, J.C.,	4,676	£ 11,159
17	Holmes, D.G., and J., "Holmeslee"	11,699	£ 57,812
18	Lee, E.J., "Sherwood"	2,835	£ 16,800
19	Lowcliffe Co., "Lowcliffe"	10,805	£ 54,025
20	McLean, J., "Lagmhor" (also owned estates in Otago. Total value of all estates was £210,426, acreage 41,025)	18,370	£145,343
21	Maltby, T.C.,	2,560	£ 6,160
22	Milton, W.N., (also owned an estate in Ashley)	4,226	£ 12,675
23	Morrow, D., "Montalto"	6,351	£ 15,877
24	Murray-Aynsley, H.P., "Mount Hutt"	7,078	£ 42,265
25	McIlraith, A.D., and J.A., "Broompark"	3,349	£ 20,094
26	McIlraith, H., "Auchenflower"	4,173	£ 27,917

APPENDIX I (Cont.)

27. McKerrow, R.S., and Mann, J.,	4,306	£ 21,531
28. Moorhouse, A., "Shepherds Bush"	5,291	£ 16,600
29. Peache, A.E., "Mount Somers"	3,953	£ 15,210
30. Peter, Hon. W.S., "Anama"	17,984	£ 54,094
31. Roberts, G., (also owned Selwyn estates)	9,123	£ 29,018
32. Rule, W.H.,	2,951	£ 12,629
33. Strachey, A., "Maranui"	2,418	£ 18,452
34. Strachey, R., "Hackthorne"	3,094	£ 18,200
35. Studholme, J., "Coldstream"	19,240	£ 58,290
36. Wason, J.Cathcart, "Corwar"	5,226	£ 31,359
37. Watt, McG.,	5,499	£ 13,840
38. White, W., "Langley"	3,351	£ 26,111
39. Wilkin, R., and Carter, J., "Grove"	2,141	£ 20,099
40. Wilson, Ven. Archdeacon J., "Valetta"	5,163	£ 19,557
41. Wright, E.G., "Windermere"	13,526	£ 39,787
42. Alford Co., "Alford"	10,216	£ 40,864
43. Fairfield Estate, "Fairfield"	3,923	£ 14,476
44. N.Z. Loan & Mercantile Co.,	12,401	£ 51,820
45. Colonial Bank of New Zealand	2,592	£
Total of the first 43 estates above:		
	272,389	£1,428,089
Average:	6,567	£ 33,211

Some families possessed smaller properties, but were accepted as members of the gentry. Some held remnants of old leasehold runs in addition to the freehold property registered in 1882, while others held estates outside Ashburton county. Three examples are:

46. Lyttleton, W.McN., "Rokeby" (held several thousand leasehold acres in addition)	2,124	£ 14,840
47. Mackie, Rev.C., "Lavington" (estate comprising four farms and the freehold homestead block of "Lavington" run, together with leasehold)	1,820	£ 18,225
48. Packer, H.W., (also owned an estate of 3,700 acres in Ashley, a farm in Selwyn, and town properties, worth a total of £109,259)	2,312	£ 9,848

APPENDIX II(A)

ASHBURTON ESTATES OF OVER 5,000 ACRES IN 1890

(taken from A.J.H.R., 1890, H22A)

<u>Owner & Estate</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Approx. impr.val</u>
1. Browne, M.I., "Highbank"	9,401	£ 50,000
2. Gerard, W., "Snowden"	6,173	£ 9,000
3. Grigg, J., "Longbeach"	16,554	£180,000
4. Harper, C.J., "Hackthorne"	7,287	£ 24,000
5. Hawdon, C.G., "Westerfield"	6,500	£ 51,000
6. Holmes, D.G., "Holmeslee"	7,117	£ 47,000
7. Holmes, J., "Viewmount"	5,359	£ 26,000
8. Moorhouse, B.M.(Est.), "Shepherds Bush"	5,289	£ 11,000
9. Morrow, D., "Montalto"	6,345	£ 12,000
10. McLean, J., "Lagmhor"	18,533	£122,000
11. Peter, W.S., "Anama"	18,022	£ 38,000
12. Studholme, J., "Coldstream"	17,278	£ 65,000
13. Wason, J. Cathcart, "Corwar"	5,226	£ 36,000
14. Watt, McG.,	5,153	£ 9,000
15. Wilson, Rev.J.(Est.), "Valetta"	5,458	£ 15,000
16. Wright, E.G., "Windermere"	8,423	£ 21,000
<u>"BANKS, CORPORATIONS & FIRMS"</u>		
17. Bank of New Zealand, "Cracroft"	5,592	£ 8,000
18. Lowcliffe Estate, "Lowcliffe"	9,758	£ 39,000
19. Mount Hutt Estate, "Mount Hutt"	9,055	£ 30,000
20. Alford Estate, "Alford"	8,458	£ 29,000
21. N.Z.&A. Land Co., "Acton"	16,297	£ 85,000
22. N.Z. Loan & Mercantile Co., "Springfield"	16,200	£ 83,000
23. Gould & Cameron, /		
Total value of estates:		£1,015,000

' These three estates are the only properties listed in the hands of mortgage holding financial organisations. Lowcliffe belonged to the estate of R.H. Rhodes, Mount Hutt to a Murray-Aynsley family combination, Alford to a group of Yorkshire farmers, and Springfield to a businessman and farmer in partnership.

APPENDIX II(B)

ASHBURTON ESTATES OF OVER 10,000 ACRES IN 1892

(taken from A.J.H.R., 1892, B20a)

<u>Owner & Estate</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Value</u>
1. Cameron, D., "Springfield"	16,198	£ 97,000
2. Grigg, J., "Longbeach"	15,310	£156,000
3. Harper, C.J., "Hackthorne"	11,735	£ 41,000
4. Peter, W.S., "Anama"	18,256	£ 42,000
5. Studholme, J., "Coldstream"	17,917	£ 59,000
6. Wilson, Rev.J., (est.), "Valetta"	10,191	£ 42,000
7. Wright, E.G., "Windermere"	12,860	£ 44,000

APPENDIX II(C)

ASHBURTON ESTATES OF OVER 10,000 ACRES IN 1903

(taken from A.J.H.R., 1903, B20)

1. Cameron, D., "Springfield"	16,716	£116,000
2. Grigg, J.C.N., "Longbeach"	15,567	£134,000
3. Holmes, D.G., "Holmeslee"	10,039	£ 71,000
4. Rhodes, R.H., (Est.) "Lowcliffe"	11,354	£ 80,000
5. Studholme, J., II, "Coldstream"	11,048	£ 47,000
6. Wilson, Rev.J., (Est.) "Valetta"	10,002	£ 49,000
7. Wright, E.G., "Windermere"	12,888	£ 50,000
8. Maclean Buckley, G.A., "Lagmhor"	24,017	£133,000
9. Gerard, W., "Snowden"	28,592	£ 47,000

APPENDIX II(D)

ASHBURTON ESTATES OF AN UNIMPROVED VALUE OF
£50,000 AND UPWARDS IN 1906

(taken from A.J.H.R., 1906, H30B)

<u>Owner & Estate</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Impr. Value</u>
1. Cameron, D., "Springfield"	12,061	£117,000
2. Grigg, J.C.N., Longbeach"	12,807	£126,000
3. Holmes, D.G., (Est.) "Holmeslee"	10,035	£ 92,000
4. Holmes, J.A., "Viewmount"	6,123	£ 67,000
5. Maclean Buckley, G.A., "Lagmhor"	18,686	£137,000
6. Wilson, Rev. J., (Est), "Valetta"	10,433	£ 64,000
7. Wright, E.G., (Est), "Windermere"	12,870	£ 62,000

APPENDIX III

ESTATE SHEEP FLOCKS IN 1895

(taken from Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives, Wellington, 1896, pp.93-97. H23; Flock figures on April 30, 1895). Only flocks of over 4,000 are shown.

<u>Owner & Estate or Area</u>	<u>Sheep No.</u>
1. Ballantyne, John, "Thirlstane"	7,752
2. Bank N.Z. Estates Coy., "Singletree" and Ealing	8,143
3. Browne, M.I., "Highbank"	16,617
4. Cameron, D., "Springfield"	26,454
5. Cunningham, P., Dromore	4,650
6. Deans, J., "Waimarama"	7,896
7. Dowding, C.H., and Todhunter, C.F. "Westerfield"	5,354
8. Drummond, P., "Rosedale"	4,100
9. Friedlander, M., "Kolmar"	5,520
10. Gardiner, J., Rakaia	4,134
11. Grigg, J., "Longbeach"	17,136 (an unusual year; 1896 figure of 33,292 more normal)
12. Hart, G., "Winchmore"	5,550
13. Henderson, David, Methven	4,035
14. Holmes, D.G., "Mount Harding" "Holmeslee"	6,100 7,780
15. Holmes, D.G. & J., "Viewmount"	6,327
16. Holmes, J., Methven,	13,242
17. Knight, D.F., Mount Somers	6,000
18. Lyttelton, W.M., "Rokeby"	4,083
19. Macfarlane, A., "Glenara"	4,940
20. McIlraith, J. & A., "Auchenflower"	6,019
21. McLean, Hon.J., "Lagmhor"	24,904
22. McLennan and Syme, Methven	13,250
23. Miles & Co., Bushside	8,080
24. Morrow, David, "Montalto"	13,517
25. Murray-Aynsley, J.P. "Mount Hutt"	14,393
26. National B.N.Z., Mayfield	7,495
27. N.M.&A. Co. of N.Z., Lim., "Shepherds Bush"	7,600

28.	N.Z. Alford Estate, Co., Ltd., "Alford"	12,263
29.	N.Z. & A. Loan Co., "Acton"	11,769
30.	N.Z.L. & M.A. Co., "Buccleuch"	9,700
31.	N.Z. Trust & Loan Co., Winslow	9,200
32.	Peache, A.E., "Mount Somers"	10,000
33.	Peter, Hon. W.S., "Anama"	24,150
34.	Rhodes, R.H., (Est.) "Chatmos"	5,653
	"Lowcliffe"	8,553
35.	Somerville, A.F. (nr Methven) Westerfield & "The Terraces"	7,014
36.	Strachey, Alexander, "Barford"	4,250
37.	Strachey, Richard, "Maronan"	10,410
38.	Studholme, J., "Coldstream"	20,409
39.	Union Bank, Hinds	5,400
40.	Wason, Sir J.C., "Corwar"	13,199
41.	White, Leonard, "Langley"	7,191
42.	Wilson, Rev.J., "Valetta"	9,520
43.	Wright, E.G., "Windermere" & Gawler Downs"	16,086

High Country Flocks over 4,000

44.	N.Z.L. & M.A. Co., "Hakatere"	23,874
	"Mount Possession"	23,421
45.	Garard, W., "Double Hill"	38,897
46.	Harrison, J., "Clent Hills"	19,570
47.	Dalgety & Co., "Lake Heron"	10,853
48.	Dunbar, Peter, Lake Heron	6,000
	Total of the 48 flocks above:	578,443
	Total no. of sheep in Ashburton county:	882,086
	Proportion of Ashburton sheep in flocks over 4,000	66%

Lowlands Flocks over 2,500

49.	Adair, R.M., Seafield	3,625
50.	Batty, Joseph, Cairnbrae	2,463
51.	Cameron, Duncan, "Clunes"	3,535
52.	Capon Bros., Winchmore	3,174
53.	Chapman, E., "Drayton"	3,632
54.	Chisnall, W., "Ohinemuri"	2,556
55.	Copland, James, Chertsey	2,929
56.	Coskerie, James	3,020
57.	Digby, M.C.,	3,687

58.	Doig, Peter, Chertsey	2,840
59.	Jones, P.,	2,614
60.	Mawson, T. & J., Westerfield, "Oak Flat"	2,987
61.	McClelland & Co., Methven	3,342
62.	Morland, Thomas, Rakaia	3,990
63.	Orr, Alexander, Methven	2,780
64.	Orr, Hohn	2,500
65.	Rule, W.H.	2,854
66.	Smith, W.T., Stavely	2,520
67.	Strange, W., "Riversdale"	3,360

Total of the flocks above: 637,031

Proportion of Ashburton sheep in flocks
over 2,500:

(67 farms of a total of 838,

OR about 8% of the farms of the county
sustained about 73% of the sheep.)

ALSO, about 6% of the holdings of the county
sustained about 66% of the sheep.

APPENDIX V

EXAMPLES OF MORTGAGE TRANSACTIONS

Showing all mortgage transactions recorded in the Nominal Index of the Lands and Deeds Registry, Christchurch, entered into by Ashburton landowners from 1888 to 1897.

Ashburton Landowner as Mortgagee

1. 1888 Mrs Beatrice de Cartaret Malet on G.B. Woodman's farm.
2. 1888 D. Morrow on R.W. Walter's farm.
3. 1889 F.de Cartaret Malet on Dr.W.H. Symes' farm, Heathcote.
4. 1890 H.McIlraith & another on W.Graham's farm.
5. 1891 D.Morrow & two others on J.S.Manson's farm.
6. 1890 J.Studholme on farms in Amuri and Mandeville.
7. 1892 F. de C. Malet & another on Tod's and Rennie's farm.
8. 1892 J.Holmes on C.Deal's farm.
9. 1892 F. de C. Malet on a Tai Tapu farm.
10. 1892 C.J. Harper & another on George Harper & T.W. Maude's farm.
11. 1893 F. de C. Malet & another on H.Garland's farm.
12. 1893 F. de C. Malet on P.Ryan's farm.
13. 1893 F. de C. Malet on A.C. Gray's farm.
14. 1893 J.C.N. Grigg & another on W.Anderson's farm.
15. 1894 F. de C. Malet on Moeraki farm.
16. 1894 J.C.N. Grigg & another on C.King's farm.
17. 1895 D. Morrow on a farm.
18. 1896 J.C.Helmore on H.Wright's farm.
19. 1896 G.A.Maclean Buckley & another on brother's estate, Dunsandel.
20. 1896 W.Strange & 2 others on farm of Mrs E.A.Richards.
21. 1897 G.A.Maclean Buckley on brother's estate, Dunsandel.
22. 1897 J. Studholme II on father's estate, Coldstream.

Ashburton Landowner as Mortgagor

1. 1888 I.R.C. Cunninghame-Graham to N.Z. Trust & Loan Co., & Wm. Harris Harris Esq.
2. 1888 J.Studholme II given equity of redemption of Coldstream estate.
3. 1889 G.Hart discharges mortgage on Winchmore.
4. 1895 R.Sholto Strachey given equity of redemption on Maronan estate.