

Sealy









Survey camp
late 1860s

cover
Survey camp (detail)
Alford Forest, Ashburton
c. 1866

endpapers
detail of page 31

Cased ambrotype of
Sealy at the age of
18 or 19

Edward Percy Sealy



The brighter and happier past

Edward Percy Sealy was born on 23 August 1839,¹ the second son of Julia and Thomas Henry Sealy.² His family was of old lineage and, it appears, some social standing.³ Sealy's father was born in 1811, at Alstone Lawn, a grand residence in Cheltenham.⁴ An author of modest repute, T. H. Sealy edited *The Archaeological Magazine of Bristol, Bath, South-Wales, and the South-Western Counties*, and founded a newspaper, *The Great Western Advertiser*, which is said to have brought him significant financial losses.⁵ His best-known work was *The Porcelain Tower*, a collection of Chinese stories, originally published by Richard Bentley in 1841, and reprinted several times.⁶

On 19 October 1837, T. H. Sealy married Julia Verity at Coity, Bridgend.⁷ Sealy's elder brother, Henry John, was born on 1 August 1838, and his younger brother, William George, on 14 February 1841.⁸ It seems likely that Sealy's mother died in 1843.⁹ Certainly, the death of T. H. Sealy in 1848 made orphans of the three brothers.¹¹ All, however, was not to be tragedy. One of their father's younger sisters, Anna Maria, took charge of the children.¹² To all appearances, she provided them with a most happy upbringing. In later years, writing to Maria, Sealy would remark:

*My earliest and happiest recollections are connected with you & the dear old days at Chew Magna when we were so much to one another, & sometimes even here so many thousand miles away the mere aroma of a flower will bring back such a tide of recollection faint tho it may be that I forget the present & the future to wish that the brighter & happier past could return once more.*¹³

Leading to something better

On 16 September 1858, Sealy embarked for New Zealand, voyaging on the *Clontarf*, in the company of his brother, Henry.¹⁴ The vessel arrived at Lyttelton on 5 January 1859.¹⁵ Though they were to travel on to Hawke's Bay, the brothers were delayed for nearly a month, due to desertion by several members of the crew of the *Clontarf*.¹⁶ They made the most of their time in Canterbury, however, exploring parts of Banks Peninsula,¹⁷ and travelling on foot to Rangiora, some 21 miles north of Lyttelton.¹⁸ Eventually, they continued to Ahuriri, where they took up with their father's youngest sibling, Henry Bowman Sealy,¹⁹ who had property in the district, and who engaged in sheep farming at Patoka, north of Napier.²⁰

It seems likely that H. B. Sealy, who had been resident in New Zealand for several years, played some part in encouraging the brothers to try their fortunes in the Colony. It is also possible that he helped to stimulate Sealy's interest in photography. In August 1848, H. B. Sealy had advertised his services as a portrait and landscape photographer in Wellington.²¹ Four years later, he had given a lecture on photography at the Mechanics' Institute there.²²

Whether his uncle was practicing photography when Sealy arrived in Hawke's Bay remains unclear. In any case, Sealy would not himself take up photography for several years, and that far to the south, in Canterbury. For the present, he and his brother carried out farming work on and around their uncle's holdings at Patoka, ultimately buying into the farm, when H. B. Sealy was struck by rheumatism.²³

While in Hawke's Bay, Sealy made the acquaintance of the surveyor O. L. W. Bousfield, who apparently encouraged both him and his brother to take up surveying. By September 1859, in addition to shepherding, Sealy was carrying out survey work for Bousfield at Pakiaka, under a sort of apprenticeship arrangement.²⁴ Henry, meanwhile, had left Hawke's



Edward Percy Sealy

Bay for Otago, on a reconnaissance to the goldfields. While his brother dreamt of 'El Dorado', Sealy thought that surveying might pan out better, commenting, 'I have a very good appointment not so much to be valued for its present emoluments as for the prospect it affords of leading to something better.'²⁵

Returning to the house of bondage

By April 1860, the three Sealys had sold their property at Patoka to a Mr Worgan.²⁶ With their uncle ensconced at Napier, and their 'pleasant prospects of flocks and herds nipped in the bud',²⁷ Sealy and his brother turned to fulltime survey work. Such work meant renouncing the comforts of the house, and taking to a tent for long periods of time, a particularly unpleasant situation when the weather took a turn for the worst, as Sealy explained to another of his father's younger sisters, Hester Grevile:

*Living in a tent with ones clothes all wet, blankets all damp, & not unfrequently a pool of water in the middle of the Tent you can easily imagine the existing state of affairs to be anything but enlivening.*²⁸

Discomforts notwithstanding, Sealy entered the survey department in Hawke's Bay in 1861.²⁹ In the spring of that year, Henry returned to the Otago goldfields, and made his way to Gabriel's Gully,³⁰ where gold had been discovered in May.³¹ His prospecting career was, however, unsuccessful, and he spent most of the remainder of the year at Dunedin, engaged in menial work.³² In 1862, he spent two months working with a survey team at Tuapeka, before reuniting with Sealy in Hawke's Bay.³³

Later in the year, Sealy himself headed to the South Island, where he would remain, with some interruptions, for the rest of his life.³⁴ His destination was Canterbury, to which he had contemplated returning for some time, the 'field for enterprize' being larger, and the wages rumoured to be higher.³⁵ Quite alone in his new environment, Sealy renewed an old acquaintance, visiting J. B. A. Acland, with whom he had voyaged on the *Clontarf*, at Mount Peel.³⁶ E. R. Chudleigh, who was working at the station, made reference to Sealy in his diary entry for 1 December, observing, 'He stammers dreadfully and like other stammerers will not be helped.'³⁷

Though he considered the move south a wise one from a 'pecuniary point of view',³⁸ Sealy was not without reservations about his decision. He missed his friends and family in the north, and he found the culture of Canterbury stultifying. In April 1863, he confessed:

*I should not be sorry to return to Hawkes Bay. One reason for this is, that that settlement being younger and less advanced in civilization than this place the condition of Society is more primitive and less artificial than here, and having been for such a long time unfettered by the formalities of conventional intercourse I do not much admire returning to the house of Bondage.*³⁹

A valuable and potent ally

If Sealy had harboured hopes of a more comfortable life in Canterbury, he was, at first, disappointed. January 1864 found him 'working in one of the large swamps with wh the Canterbury plain is so well stocked'.⁴⁰ By this time, Henry too was in the South Island, and carrying out survey work. Though he was no doubt cheered by his brother's proximity, Sealy remained unimpressed by Canterbury. The Province he considered less lovely than Hawke's Bay, and the settlers he described as 'a sordid & money grubbing lot'.⁴¹ A year later, however, he had become quite accustomed to his life in the south, and had little desire to return to Hawke's Bay, where relations with Māori had, in some measure, deteriorated.⁴²

Sealy maintained a lively correspondence with family and friends in England. In February 1865, he wrote to his aunt, Maria, requesting that she follow the example of another relative in sending him any portrait photographs that she could procure.⁴³ In another letter, he explained, 'The next best thing I suppose to seeing our Friends is to see their portraits.'⁴⁴ Cheap and easy to obtain and transmit, the carte de visite had evidently emerged as an excellent tool for keeping in touch with developments back home, helping to further close the gap between Britain and its southern counterpart.

So enthused was Sealy by the promises of photography that he decided to try his hand at the art. Around the middle of 1865, when in Christchurch, he bought a 'photographic outfit', for the not inconsiderable sum of £54.⁴⁵ He also took lessons from a photographer based in the city,⁴⁶ possibly James Elsbee, who undoubtedly photographed Sealy at about

that time,⁴⁷ and who is known to have offered both tutelage and equipment.⁴⁸ In August 1865, Sealy wrote:

I have now however discovered a valuable and potent ally, photography to wit, by means of wh I shall hope to render my letters of some value to their recipients when I have become totally bankrupt in all other resources.⁴⁹

With the letter, Sealy enclosed copies of his early attempts at photography, including a view of his present survey camp, and another showing a runholder's hut, or 'whare'.⁵⁰ For such buildings, which were quickly being replaced by more substantial houses, he confessed 'a lingering preference and regard'.⁵¹ Of his 'maiden productions' Sealy was rather disparaging, though he maintained that lack of experience was not entirely to blame.⁵² He could do better, were he to have access to superior supplies, and were he not tent-bound.⁵³

Another problem was the poverty of scenery worthy of depiction.⁵⁴ This Sealy hoped to remedy by making 'short excursions into the hills'.⁵⁵ Around the end of August 1865, an opportunity presented itself to visit Alford Forest.⁵⁶ Sealy took with him 'the Baby', as his camera was known about camp, and took photographs of bush, gorge and mountain.⁵⁷ His career as an alpine photographer had, in earnest, begun.

Camera for company

By March 1866, Sealy was trialling the tannin process,⁵⁸ an early form of dry plate photography,⁵⁹ as an alternative to the usual wet plate method. The chief advantage of the tannin process was that it radically reduced the weight of his photographic equipment, permitting Sealy to travel to areas not otherwise accessible.⁶⁰ The disadvantages of the process were several. Not only were the dry plates difficult to prepare, develop and fix, they also required a long exposure time, resulting in a higher failure rate than for wet plates.⁶¹ Notwithstanding, Sealy's early experiments met with some success. Following another trip to Alford Forest, he commented, 'Of 7 dry plates I took up with me 4 have turned out very decent negatives wh is a very fair proportion.'⁶²

Sealy's first major alpine excursion came in April 1866, with a trip to the glaciers at the head of the Ashburton River, some distance from his camp at Mount Somers.⁶³ He set out with a small party of local runholders, with the express intention of taking

photographs of both glaciers and mountains.⁶⁴ Sealy was delighted by the scenery, and especially by the glaciers, of which he wrote enthusiastically:

At one point we came to a number of pinnacles of ice rising from 10 to 20 feet above the surrounding field and of the most fantastic shapes you can possibly imagine – We walked amongst a perfect forest of these for some distance quite lost in admiration of their beauty and the delicate blue colour for wh glacier ice is so remarkable.⁶⁵

The expedition was productive of just one photograph, the camera having been blown over upon the first attempt, and so a second trip was planned for May.⁶⁶ This time, Sealy travelled to the glaciers of the Rangitata River, accompanied by six men, including J. B. A. Acland and Percy Cox.⁶⁷ Again, the photography was unsuccessful, but Sealy was struck anew by the splendour of the glacier, and especially by an ice cavern, which he thought one of the most wonderful things he had ever seen.⁶⁸ The trip was also rewarding from a scientific perspective. Searches for gold came to naught, but geological specimens were collected, and new plant varieties discovered.⁶⁹ Galvanised by his experiences, Sealy dreamed of future explorations:

There is nothing I should enjoy more than to take a trip of two or three months duration amongst these mountains with my Camera for Company as some of the mountain peaks we saw upon this occasion must have been fully equal in Beauty to any in the European Alps.⁷⁰

In June 1866, Sealy travelled to Napier, visiting H. B. Sealy and his wife, O. L. W. Bousfield, and other old friends.⁷¹ The trip also allowed him to fulfil an ambition to photograph Hawke's Bay.⁷² He took views of Napier, the surrounding country, and, perhaps most interestingly, a Māori village, 'Pah Whakairo' ('carved village').⁷³ Upon his return to Canterbury, Sealy sent copies of both North and South Island scenes to England, along with a series of descriptions that betrayed a growing confidence in his abilities:

No 1 was taken about a mile from where the stream emerges from the Bush and shews you the open river bed with the dense forest on either hand and Mount Somers in the distance – This last feature it is, that



Frances Sarah Sealy

*lends a beauty to the view & indeed induced me to take it. The photograph is very successful in giving a just idea of the distance (about 5 miles) between the point of view and the mountain itself.*⁷⁴

Certain really useful and practical results

In April 1867, Sealy made his first trip to the Mount Cook district, visiting the Mueller and Hooker Glaciers.⁷⁵ His companions on the excursion were his assistant and pupil, Mr Ball, an unnamed former Digger, and ‘a half caste fellow of the name of Jim’, whom he had met at a local run.⁷⁶ The latter Sealy was especially pleased to have as an assistant, as ‘he had been living for some time in the neighbourhood & knew the run of the Country very well’.⁷⁷ Sealy was greatly impressed by Mount Cook, writing, ‘No painting drawing or engraving that I have ever seen of any mountain has given me such a complete idea of grandeur & sublimity as did the view of Mount Cook.’⁷⁸ Again, however, he appears to have been particularly captivated by the glaciers, writing of them in detail:

*Fancy a regular Sea of ice many hundred feet in depth filling up a large valley following its windings like a river and ending with an abrupt face almost a wall from beneath wh a good sized river is gushing with tremendous force – You must not suppose that all this ice is however clear & visible, on the contrary it pushes before it & carries on its surface an immense mass of debris from the mountains wh overlies the ice for a distance for some miles from the terminal face of the glacier & from beneath wh the ice only occasionally crops out even then very dirty & soiled by the contact. It is as though an army of a million giants had been engaged ever since the creation in tumbling masses of the mountains, titanic rocks varying in size from a cathedral to an egg down into the valley beneath – Even the very ice seems unable to bear the immense burden laid upon it as over the whole surface of the moraine you come upon immense hollows & pits, great cracks chasms & fissures, occasioned probably by caves having been hollowed out in the ice by the action of water & the whole then sinking & falling in – Even as you walk over it constant groans rumblings crackings & reports testify to the internal agitation of the labouring mass.*⁷⁹

Sealy took various views, using, by necessity, dry plates.⁸⁰ He was disappointed that those photographs he had thought most promising proved to be unsuccessful, and that the successful plates were underwhelming.⁸¹ As ever, he sent prints to England, resolving to do better in future.⁸² Despite his initial pessimism, Sealy’s various alpine activities turned out to be pioneering. In October 1867, he was able to write proudly:

*My recent expeditions have not been without certain really useful and practical results, since the photographs and altitudes I obtained together with the rough Surveys I made besides affording information relative to Country previously unexplored have been of some use to the Provincial Geologist [Dr Julius von Haast] & will appear in due Course in a geological work upon the Canterbury Province wh he is now preparing.*⁸³

Although he dearly desired to return to the mountains,⁸⁴ Sealy made no further such excursion in 1867 or 1868. He continued to take views, if somewhat sporadically, and even entertained the notion of turning ‘peripatetic photographer’.⁸⁵ In March 1868, Sealy visited Castle Hill, a sheeprun on the Canterbury side of the West Coast Road. There, he took five photographs, as runholder J. D. Enys noted in a diary entry.⁸⁶ That same year, and likely around the same time, Sealy travelled over the West Coast Road, still under construction,⁸⁷ taking a series of views showing bridges, cuttings, telegraph lines, and the like.⁸⁸

In November 1868, in a letter to Maria, Sealy wrote of his continued scientific endeavours,⁸⁹ a subject of no small interest to his aunt, who was evidently something of a natural history enthusiast in her own right.⁹⁰ In particular, Sealy described a collection of fossils that he had found while working on the Greta River, and had later given to Dr Julius von Haast for the Canterbury Museum:

*It proved to be a better collection than the one already in the Museum as a great many of the [Kinds?] I furnished were entirely new and I also sent some Saurian Bones wh are very valuable – I have just recd a letter thanking me for the contribution and intimating that I am elected member of the Philosophical Society.*⁹¹

Impossible to realise in words

In January 1869, Sealy wrote in a letter that he had not taken any photographs for nine months. This, he explained, was due to a profusion of survey work.⁹² However, once he had completed the bulk of his current workload, within about six weeks, he would take his annual holiday.⁹³ Sealy was undecided as to what he would do with his long-awaited break, although he had tentative plans to accompany Julius Haast to Mount Cook, and he was eager to photograph the northwestern face of the mountain.⁹⁴

A month later, Sealy confirmed that he would indeed take a second excursion to the Mount Cook district, writing, ‘I have settled with Dr Haast that we start for Mount Cook on the 10th of March. We intend to be 3 weeks away and to spend a fortnight at the mountain.’⁹⁵ (Sealy would later, it appears, confuse the order of his second and third trips.⁹⁶) In the event, Haast was prevented from engaging in much activity by an attack of rheumatism, and Sealy was left to explore the Tasman Glacier with one Thomas Stafford.⁹⁷ The excursion seemingly produced several photographs,⁹⁸ including the first view ever taken of Mount Darwin.⁹⁹

On 8 February 1870, an art exhibition opened at the Canterbury Museum, Christchurch.¹⁰⁰ Sealy was on the General Committee,¹⁰¹ and 21 of 44 photographs on display were his.¹⁰² Sealy’s contributions included ‘Mount Elie de Beaumont and Tasman Glacier’, ‘Mount Darwin, from Tasman Glacier’, ‘Mount Cook from Mueller Glacier’, ‘Mount Sefton, Moorhouse Range’, and ‘Mount Tasman and Hochstetter Glacier’, as well as various views taken in the Rakaia Gorge and on the West Coast Road.¹⁰³ Of the exhibition Sealy wrote, ‘Considering the youth & limited resources of the Province [it] was a great success, & this was admitted freely even by those who had most opposed the idea as being in advance of the times.’¹⁰⁴

In the autumn of 1870, Sealy made a third trip to the Mount Cook district, accompanied by his chainman, Harry, and his cook, Charley.¹⁰⁵ He first visited the glaciers at the head of the Macaulay River, but was disappointed by their meagre scale and appearance.¹⁰⁶ Sealy then travelled to the Classen and Godley Glaciers, writing of the former, ‘I think I give the palm to this Classen Glacier as the most perfect & beautiful specimen of a glacier I have ever seen.’¹⁰⁷

With camera in tow, Sealy and Harry attempted to reach a low glacial saddle, later to be called Sealy's Pass,¹⁰⁸ which was situated near the head of the Godley.¹⁰⁹ The two men had to turn back, due to a turn in the weather, but a second attempt, some days later, and this time without camera, was successful.¹¹⁰ Sealy wrote of the view from the top:

*Had I been looking into one of the vast craters wh we are told exist upon the moons surface I should have felt that the scene was no more impossible to realise in words and just as difficult to connect with ones ordinary experience of life.*¹¹¹

Having taken with him 30 dry plates, Sealy was disappointed that 'only a dozen turned out successfully & those not by any means the best views being merely those taken about the Camp and up the Rivers'.¹¹² Consequently, he resolved both to abandon the use of dry plates, and to return to the Godley Glacier.¹¹³

In March 1871, Sealy took a second trip to the Rangitata Glaciers, with 'a large party of Friends',¹¹⁴ including two women.¹¹⁵ This excursion, which seems to have resulted in no photographs of glacier or mountain,¹¹⁶ was to be his last alpine adventure.

Others will only follow

By December 1871, Sealy's health was showing signs of fragility, such that his doctor advised him against returning to fieldwork.¹¹⁷ Some time later, he developed an illness, which apparently lasted many weeks.¹¹⁸ He convalesced at the home of the Sanderson family, and was attended to in particular by the eldest child, Frances Sarah.¹¹⁹ Though Sealy initially maintained that he regarded Frances 'too much from the brotherly point of view to be at all spoony in the same quarter',¹²⁰ the two were shortly to get engaged.¹²¹

Sealy's protracted illness evidently left him somewhat debilitated.¹²² In May 1872, in a letter to Maria, he wrote of breathlessness, heart palpitations, rheumatism, eye troubles, and a liver complaint that purportedly manifested itself as a 'constant pain between the shoulder blades'.¹²³ These ailments he took as warning that it was time to 'give up a rough life & take some easier occupation'.¹²⁴

By autumn 1873, Sealy had moved to Timaru,¹²⁵ where his brother had long been based,¹²⁶ and was working towards the construction of a house.¹²⁷

He took on both private and contract survey work,¹²⁸ and was soon joined in the latter by Henry.¹²⁹ Despite ongoing ill health,¹³⁰ Sealy was, quite suddenly, doing decidedly well for himself. In April 1873, he wrote of his good fortune:

*To shew how much better I shall do now that I am no longer a Govt Servant – I have been a month out of office and have not even touched my Contract work but have taken over £100 during the month for private work chiefly selecting land on commission.*¹³¹

Sealy's successes were not limited to his survey work; his photography was also attracting attention. Earlier in 1873, he had received a silver medal for a selection of alpine views submitted to the Vienna Exhibition.¹³² Sealy surmised that the prize, the highest received by a New Zealander in the Fine Arts department,¹³³ had stimulated interest in his work.¹³⁴ He had made sales of prints and an album, and had received orders for further materials.¹³⁵ His hopes for the future ran high:

*I propose establishing agencies in Melbourne Sydney Chch Timaru & Dunedin & shall employ a man to do the printing for me as I can employ my own time more profitably, by this means I may bring the sale up to £800 or £1000 a year.*¹³⁶

These dreams were never to come to fruition. Perhaps interest in Sealy's work ran dry. Perhaps his fragile health prevented him from taking more of the alpine photographs for which he was known. Perhaps competition from other photographers overwhelmed him. More likely, his priorities simply changed. On 13 October 1873, Sealy married Frances Sanderson.¹³⁷ The couple settled down at their home, Southerndown, in Timaru,¹³⁸ and started a family, which would grow to include five daughters and one son.¹³⁹

In December 1874, Sealy assisted with photographic observations of the Transit of Venus, a project he undertook with some reluctance.¹⁴⁰ A little over a year later, views of his, ostensibly all old, were included in the Philadelphia Exhibition of 1876.¹⁴¹ Photography, it appears, had come to play a reduced role in his life. No longer an alpine explorer, Sealy could nevertheless take considerable pride in his past achievements. This Maria pointed out to him, asserting, 'Whatever future artists may accomplish, you have gained the first glories, and others will only follow in your track.'¹⁴²

By far the best photographer

The last three decades of Sealy's life seem to have been largely without incident. A notable exception came in February 1876, when Sealy and his brother were embroiled in a small scandal over the use, for personal advantage, of information gained while working in the same building as the Timaru Land Office.¹⁴³ Survey work eventually gave way to farming. Sealy was an early proponent of cooperation in South Canterbury, and he occupied various positions within the Farmers' Co-operative Association over the course of twenty years.¹⁴⁴ His interest in alpine activities evidently endured in some measure, and he was elected a vice-president of the New Zealand Alpine Club in 1891.¹⁴⁵

On 30 October 1903, Edward Percy Sealy died, at the age of 64.¹⁴⁶ His obituary in the *Timaru Herald* was full of the usual praise heaped on early settlers, telling of courage, determination, education, and respectability.¹⁴⁷ One might today be tempted to criticise him for his part in the carving up of New Zealand for colonial consumption. Sealy, however, pushed beyond the bounds of stereotype. Although he was decidedly a son of the British Empire, he does not appear to have harboured notions of racial superiority. As an amateur scientist, he frowned upon ignorance, abhorring attitudes not based on experience and reason. In response to a criticism of Māori by a fellow Briton, he wrote:

*It often raises my ire to hear a person who has travelled hurriedly thro' the Country and judges perhaps from the few miserable specimens of the native race met with in Canterbury running the Maories down as a race, and expressing views hastily formed & based upon prejudice, with all the authority & confidence of an Oracle.*¹⁴⁸

Ultimately, Sealy had a keen interest in the world around him, together with an equally keen sense of its value. It was surely this sensibility that led him to take such remarkable photographs. Dr Alfred Charles Barker, probably the best known of the early South Island photographers, reserved for Sealy the highest praise, commenting, 'He is by far the best photographer out here.'¹⁴⁹ It is quite fantastic to remember that many of the views that Sealy took, and, in his own estimation, some of the best, failed to produce prints.



Endnotes

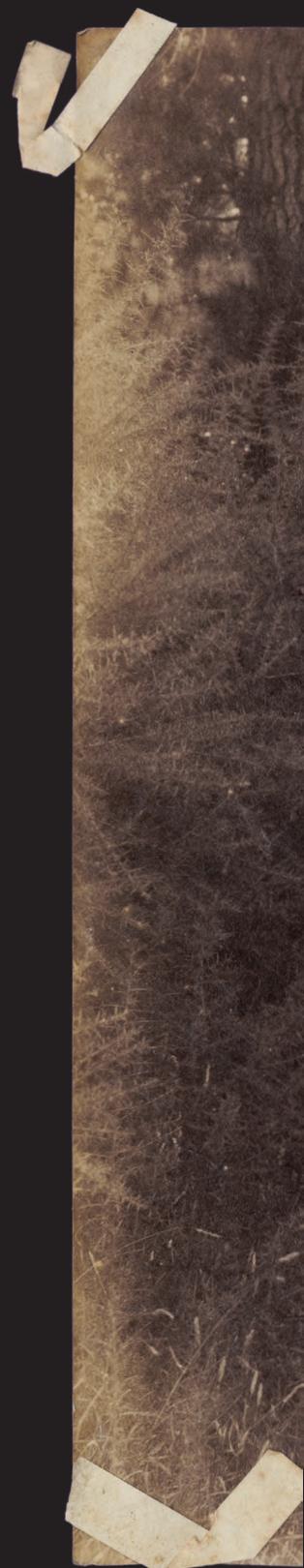
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Ascent Of Sealy's Pass, 1870

From a letter written by Edward Percy Sealy to his aunt, Anna Maria Sealy, Coldstream Station, Rangitata, 22 April 1870:

By 11 o'clock we [Sealy and his chainman, Harry] were within ½ a mile of the top and I now congratulated myself that we had not endeavoured to get on upon the previous occasion as I found that this remaining half mile was the most difficult & only really dangerous part of the whole distance. We were now fairly in the neck of the pass wh was about ½ a mile wide between two descending mountain slopes on either hand and filled probably to the depth of many hundred feet with snow most of wh had drifted thro' from the Westward this having by its own weight become consolidated & partly turned to ice formed what is technically called nevé. The whole of this nevé was closely intersected by crevasses most of wh having been drifted over by loose snow were partially or entirely invisible. In some places a small vent would shew an enormous crevasse beneath with the snow overhanging in a wreath & nothing in the world to warn you of the insecurity & treacherous nature of the surface. In others a depression in the surface of a few inches the margin of wh was indicated by a slight crack gave notice of a chasm below but a great many must have existed of wh there was no outward & visible sign atall. For such travelling as this we should have been three or four in number & tied together with a rope. As it was there was no help for it so I took the lead myself giving Harry my aneroid & compass &c & instructing him that in case of my going down he was to send a few of the biggest stones down after me & then make the best of his way back to Camp as all idea of rescue with the means at his command wd have been absurd. We got along without mishap to the summit treading almost on tiptoe over the worst parts & certainly the view that we now obtained fully repaid us for all our trouble & risk & was at once the wildest & the most magnificent I ever saw or dreamed of in my life. We were standing as you will now understand midway on the saddle between the Keith Johnstone Range on the left hand and an isolated mountain called Mount Petermann on the other. The former was continued towards the Westward in a wall of slaty Rock wh descended to the glacier beneath in a precipice at least 3000 feet in depth. On the other side the Spurs of Mount Petermann less abrupt and therefore covered with snow & ice formed a sort of frame or setting to the general view. Beneath us was a huge glacier descending towards the West Coast not in a gradual slope like that we had just ascended but by a sudden fall wh made it appear to be leaping over a precipice. Immediately opposite was a magnificent Alpine peak a perfect mass of snow and ice flanked on one side by the glacier upon wh we looked down & on the other by another large glacier wh united itself with the former at the base of the mountain. On either side of this mountain but still further back we could catch glimpses of range behind range extending towards the sea & covered with the almost tropical vegetation wh characterises the Scenery of the West Coast. Heavy masses of cloud wh rested about half way up the mountains but upon wh we also looked down hid the western ocean from our view and by only half revealing the intervening landscape imparted an appearance of vagueness & unreality to the whole wh added much to the wildness of the scene. Altogether it was one wh I shall never forget & cannot describe. Had I been looking into one of the vast craters wh we are told exist upon the moons surface I should have felt that the scene was no more impossible to realise in words and just as difficult to connect with ones ordinary experience of life.







Eastern Spit
Napier, Hawke's Bay
June 1866



Palisade
Hawke's Bay
June 1866



'Pah Whakairo'
Hawke's Bay
June 1866



Survey camp
Alford Forest, Ashburton
February 1866



Trees
late 1860s



Jimmy Robinson's
Alford Forest, Ashburton
1865



Tutaekuri River
Hawke's Bay
June 1866



Percy Cox and family
Mount Somers Station, Ashburton
c. 1870



Samuel Butler's hut
Mespotamia Station, Rangitata River
May 1866



Canyon
c. 1870



Snow
late 1860s



Hut
Alford Forest, Ashburton
c. 1866



Hut
Stour Creek, Ashburton
c. 1866



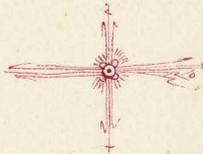
Stocking Glacier
Mount Cook district
c. 1869



Sealy's Pass and Mount Petermann
Mount Cook district
1870

A

Above me are the Alps,
The palaces of Nature, whose vast walls
Have pinnacled in clouds their snowy scalps
And throned Eternity in icy halls
Of cold sublimity, where forms and falls
The avalanche — the thunderbolt of snow!
All that expands the spirit, yet appals,
Gather around these summits, as to show,
How earth may pierce to Heaven,
— yet leave vain man below.



Byron.



Head of the great Tasman Glacier, with Hochstetter Dome and Mount Darwin
Mount Cook district
March 1869



Two views in the Southern Alps
c. 1869



Michael Campbell and family
Mesopotamia Station, Rangitata River
c. 1871







Gully
Hoon Hay, Christchurch
late 1860s



Otira Gorge
West Coast Road
c. 1868



On the great Tasman Glacier
Mount Cook district
March 1869



Mueller Glacier and Basin
Mount Cook district
1867



Two views of J. D. Enys's station
Castle Hill
1868







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Picnic (detail)
early 1870s

endpapers
detail of page 18

back cover
'Kohais' (detail)





