

MR AND MRS G. SQUIRE.

A London correspondent met Mr and Mrs G. W. Squire, and had a talk with them, the result being the following letter to the "New Zealand Times":—

For the first time in over thirty years Mr and Mrs George W. Squire, of Fairview, near Timaru, are visiting Europe on a holiday tour. Mrs Squire is a native of Aukland, in Pomerania, and is a sister of Otto and Gustave Lilienthal, famous as the pioneers of modern aviation. Leaving Fairview on April 22nd, Mr and Mrs Squire travelled by the Orsova to Naples, where they landed and toured in Italy and Switzerland en route to Berlin. They thoroughly enjoyed their trip, and the fact that Mrs Squire could speak Italian and French as well as English and her native German proved a great convenience in travelling.

"I was specially interested," said Mr Squire this week, "to see the methods of working the land in Italy and along the Rhine in Southern Germany. These were very primitive. For instance, the ploughs which I saw were of an old-fashioned type, being single-furrowed, and consisting mostly of wood.

"The teams consisted of donkeys, mules, or cattle, and very often mixtures. I may mention that I saw rather more women working in the paddocks than men.

"In spite of the methods of tillage, which appear old-fashioned, everything that grew looked well. No doubt the soil was very fertile. As far as I could find out, the land was mostly in the hands of small owners, who made the best of every square foot. Along the Tiber Valley we were interested to observe many bluegum trees.

"During our stay in Germany Mrs Squire and I visited my wife's birthplace in Aukland, in Pomerania, and were present at the unveiling of a memorial plate on the house in which my wife's brother, Otto Lilienthal, was born. The day was Otto Lilienthal's birthday, May 23rd. Otto, you will remember, was killed on August 9th, 1896, while making a gliding flight at Rhinow.

"There are many storks in the north of Germany. Watching these large birds soaring so gracefully is enough to give anyone an inclination to fly. There is a great difference between the flight of storks and albatrosses and that of the machines of Wright, Farman, Bleriot, etc. The storks appear to fly for hours without doing any mechanical work whatever, whereas the machines that I saw at Johannesthal, near Berlin, required about 50 horse power each.

"Gustave Lilienthal, who is still experimenting, assured me that flying is only in its infancy.

"All the cultivated land, as well as the fields and trees that I saw on the Continent looked splendid. It was very curious not to see any fences. I saw very few sheep at all. I noticed that the land was not so well worked in the North as it was in the South. It appears that this is due to most of the land in the North being in large holdings, as well as to a scarcity of working people. I believe that in the North most of the workmen are imported for the season from Poland. I have no doubt that the small holder in the South does his duty better than the owner of a large stretch in the North does.

"The price of meat in Germany is quite enormous. In fact, the shops had much less meat in their windows in Berlin than the London shops had. I saw much more rye than wheat growing in Germany. The rye bread which I tasted was very good.

"I would like to mention that I have come away from Germany with an altered opinion about the country and its people. It is an eye-opener to be on the Continent. As far as I could discover, the general feeling towards the British is much better than I expected. The Germans were very kind and obliging to me. I shall always look back to my visit to Germany with feelings of kindness.

"Good as the Continent may be I shall always prefer New Zealand for farming."

Mr Squire is now in England, staying in Sampford Courtenay, in Devonshire. His wife will remain for some time longer in Berlin, to study bee-keeping. Their eldest son is employed in an engineering business in Berlin. They propose to spend some time on this side of the world, but have no definite programme as yet. Mr Squire will study farming methods here and abroad, and he intends to buy some stud rams to take back to New Zealand with him.