

WANGANUI.

IN all New Zealand there is no more beautiful scenery to be found than that which characterises the Wanganui River, a noble stream, which, after running its tortuous course for a distance of about two hundred miles through scenes of varied and enchanting loveliness, debouches on the west coast of the North Island. Four miles from the river's mouth is situated the pretty little town of Wanganui, past which the broad, deep current—spanned in two places by noble bridges—flows on its seaward way. Native villages and mission settlements, nestling all along the banks in the midst of the loveliest environments imaginable, supply the tourist with a sufficiency of human interest which is varied at intervals by long reaches of silent grandeur where everything conduces to reverent, almost awestruck, admiration of Nature's exquisite handiwork. Until quite recently access to the more distant, and most beautiful reaches could only be had by means of canoes, which had to be poled through the numerous rapids. The journey was therefore both difficult and tedious. Now, however, the requirements of travellers are fully supplied by two capital steamers of special construction, fitted with every modern appliance, which regularly connect with the high road to the Hot Lake district, thus enabling visitors to see sixty miles of river scenery such as is represented in our illustration. Two of these, by the way, are from another stream in the Wanganui district—the Manga-whatu, also celebrated for its beauty. The scene entitled 'Mangaio Junction' shows the entrance of a tributary of the Wanganui, which joins the latter some seventy miles from the mouth, and is typical of the lovely vistas occurring from time to time as its numerous feeders add their quota to the grand stream. The 'Ladder Scene,' which occurs about eighty miles up the Wanganui, is interesting as showing the only means of reaching *terra firma* from the river's brink over several miles of that particular locality. The cliffs are thereabouts very high and precipitous, rising sheer out of the deep still water. Upon the tableland at the top are native plantations and camping grounds, and the ladders—their sole means of reaching their highway, the river—are of native construction. Many cliffs in the vicinity are similarly supplied. The Native Council Houses (wharepunas) shown in the illustration occur at the settlements of Galatea, and Tawhitini on the banks of the Wanganui, and are of comparatively recent date.

THE BACHELOR'S CHRISTMAS EVE.

THE bachelor sat in his easy chair. It was Christmas Eve, the saddest evening in the year to the bachelor, and his brow was furrowed, his eyes were pensive. He was thinking of his sad lot. Gazing intently at the splendid summer sunset, his faithful dog lying drowsily by his side, was thinking of things that were gone, just as the conventional bachelor always does in sketches like these. He was thinking of six pounds that were gone—foolishly expended for Christmas presents for distant relatives who did not care a rap for him, and who never reciprocated. He was thinking how delightful it would be if only one person in the wide world thought enough of him to remember him in the way he used to be remembered when he was a boy. This thought naturally brought to his mind the idea of a wife. How delightful it would be to have her there with him that Christmas Eve, radiant, happy, in ecstasies over the bracelet he had given her! How delighted he would feel when she reciprocated with a pair of slippers or worked braces!

And then the bachelor thought of a fair young girl who lived next door but one, and whom he had often pictured as a possible wife when the day came that he was willing to give up tobacco and billiards for her sweet sake.

The bachelor had sent the sweet young girl a bunch of roses this Christmas Eve. Happy thought! Was it not possible, even probable, that she would remember him with some little token made by her own deft fingers.

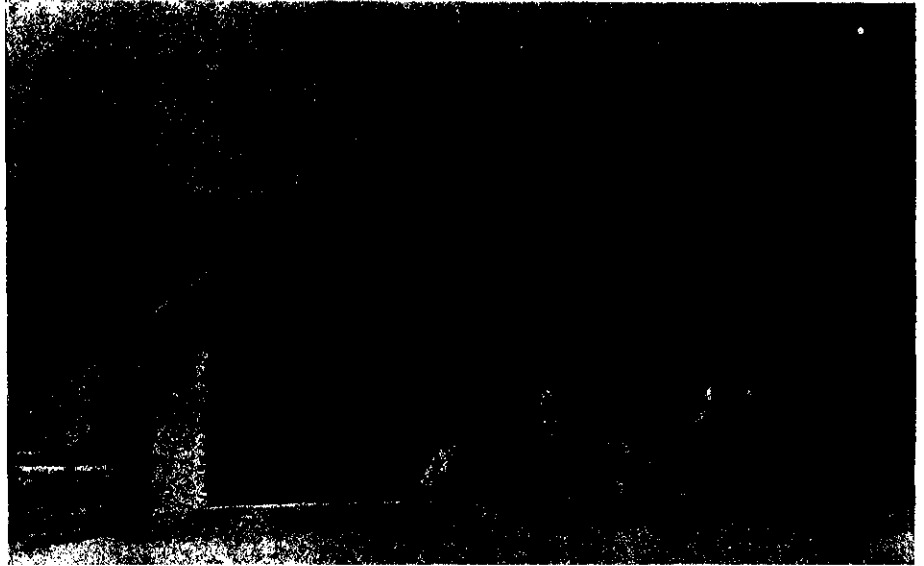
As if in answer with the bachelor's wish there was, a moment later, a soft knock at the door. The bachelor's heart leaped with pleasant anticipation. Ah! it was she, and in her hand she held something. She was accompanied by her portly mamma.

'I came to thank you,' she said with a pretty blush, 'for the beautiful roses, and to give you—'

The bachelor was overcome. 'Oh, thank you,' he said.

To give you a chance to do something good and noble. I am getting up a subscription for a poor married man who has a wife and seven children, and they are all starving. I have put you down for ten shillings.'

The bachelor spent the remainder of his Christmas evening communing with himself.



J. Martin, photo. Wanganui.

Maori House at Alene (Athens), Wanganui River.



J. Martin, photo. Wanganui.

Native Carved House, Wanganui River.