

he departed for a long tramp about seven o'clock in the evening.

It was Saturday, and he knew there would be the usual harvest at the Criterion. Bill had not got a "stiver," as he termed it, but his national pride came to the rescue, he thought of his motherwit. Surely there

with a lot of geese in his swag, without causing remark. Motherwit, the Irishman's inheritance, came to the aid of William Maclise.

CHAPTER II.

A HOT, depressing Saturday night; about twenty thirsty tongues outside the Criterion; a short man, purple-faced and stout, behind the bar, assisted by a high, angular-faced, wooden image, the one-time bride of the purple-faced one. Dan's face was pale grey in the morning, red all the afternoon, and developed a richer, if less permanent, hue as the evening wore on. Mrs. Bargle's complexion was made of faster colour, and preserved its tawny brown throughout the rounds of the clock.

Dan descends through the trap-door into the cellar, and, re-appearing with a bottle under each arm, looking like a waratah blossom on the point of bursting, he is greeted by the familiar features of Bill Maclise.

"Evenin', boss! Want any geese?"

Now Mr. Bargle had not a heart of kauri. A preference for crookedness of method is merely a fad in many people, and is not always allied to an unamiable nature, and he had been hauling in the cash hand-over-fist all the evening. Besides, he had cleaned out Bill's pockets that very afternoon, and then spurned him, on principle, when he was in indigent circumstances. This was merely business. He could now afford to be generous and make up for his recent lack of justice.

Dan's face was shining with the genial glow of the various "shouts" provided for him by his roystering clients during the evening; so Dan Bargle *did* want geese, he wanted any quantity of geese—but he wanted them cheap.

Bill had not much to lose, but he had all the gold mines in New Zealand to gain, Waihi included, and Dan took advantage of this circumstance to patronise Mr. William Maclise, Goose Merchant, to the extent of half-a-crown; he also "chucked in" a pint of beer, to show that there was no suspicion of malice between them on account of his business-like behaviour a few hours before,



"WANT ANY GEESSE?"

must be some means of regaining a portion, however small, of his squandered fortune.

While he was sitting by the roadside, ruminating on the injustice of things in general, a sound of "quack! quack!" caused a happy thought to strike him. He had heard it the day before, three miles away. Geese, Christmas geese! Young, tender, beautiful geese; goslings ready for slaughter; white geese with pink bills and gentle voices. It was a gold mine! But he couldn't live on raw goslings, however tender. Neither could he go promenading about Maiwhare