

amusement they had given up nine years ago by mutual consent.

"One more goose, boss!"

"Goo' Lawd! We shall have a 'ole poultry yard soon! Why don't yer bring 'em round in sixes, and make a reduction on the 'arf-dozen?"

"Sure, yez can have this wan for two bob! There's a reduction for yez!"

"Take it, Dan!" this from the "missus."

Same proceeding as before, and three white beauties reposed in the back premises of the Criterion Hotel.

Bill totted it up. He was a bad accountant, but he found an acquaintance in the crowd who was once a bank manager, but was now earning a livelihood by sweeping out the bar and passages of the house, and doing various other odd jobs, for "ten shillings a week and found." What he found wasn't much, but it kept a gin-soaked body above the soil, and a demoralised soul from departing from its earthly troubles before its time. With the aid of this gentleman, and that of a third party, whose hand was steady enough to write, and his education sufficient to count—thus supplying the respective deficiencies of the other two—Bill found his total receipts to be seven shillings.

But the game was not played out yet. At ten o'clock that Saturday night Bill Maclise had completed his half-dozen. Thrice more had Dan Bargle secured a beautiful, white-feathered domestic goose within the dark confines of the hitherto despised poultry yard, and three more needful florins had found their way into Bill Maclise's pocket. Mr. Maclise was happy; Mr. Bargle was delighted; Mrs. Bargle nearly smiled. This was a sign that she was very nearly going to "shout." Dan came to her aid, and a flask of whisky (an eighteen-penny one) was transferred from Bargle to Maclise, besides which two large ham sandwiches, buttered, and with mustard inside, were devoured by the latter astute party. And so the time passed away till a quarter to eleven.

Now much as Bill liked Dan, in the present circumstances, he had no intention of staying

with him till morning. Oh, no! An important engagement compelled him to catch the down train at eleven sharp, and, with much apparent regret and many promises of return, he took his departure, and with it his money and his motherwit.

CHAPTER IV.

SUNDAY morning. A loud and prolonged snore; an abrupt ending to the snore, and a disagreeable grunt. The purple of Saturday night had changed to the grey of Sunday morning. Mr. Bargle was awake. His goddess had seized him by the shoulder and shaken him into as much consciousness as he was capable of.

"Whazzer time?"

"Nine."

"Where's them geese?"

"Geese! Dan Bargle! Geese! Look outer the winder, man! Geese! *What* geese? You've only bought *one* goose, Daniel, *one*! See them two palings ripped off at the back end of the yard, an' the 'ole stopped up wi' a sack? Well, you've bought *one* miserable sample of its kind *six times*, Dan, and you too boozed to see yerself bein' had over yer own bar-counter six separate times, and all by a blatherin' son of an Irish laughin'-jackass, that you fancied you was walkin' round all the mornin'! Ugh! you fat, old, dunderheaded fool, look out of the winder! Serves yer right for not takin' a light with you when you went to shove 'em in!"

Dan obeyed, and turned a shade greyer. There it was sure enough! A solitary goose with a mingled expression of surprise and discontent standing disconsolately in the far corner of the rambling poultry yard.

Dan Bargle said nothing. He covered himself up with the bedclothes, and as his beloved one went down the stairs, she heard one heartrending, soulful sob emerge from the bosom of Daniel Bargle, licensee of the Criterion Hotel, at Maiwhare, Hawke's Bay.