

'Oh, child!' he murmured gently, tenderly. 'Child, my child!'

'For months, though I kept myself hidden from your sight, I have been your next-door neighbor,' she continued. 'The mother of the three girls with whom you have been making friends—yes, they are yours, too. Can you realise that?'

He could realise nothing yet—staring from her to the empty chair and back again. Content to realise nothing save that there was Adele, here beside him, her hand on his. That his daughter's loving eyes gazed into his, that her loving face beamed upon him.

He could realise nothing but that the heart in his bosom suddenly woke to life and warmth, and sent the blood with new vigor through his frame; that the chill and the cold had left him; that all was well with him, and that here, here sat Adele.

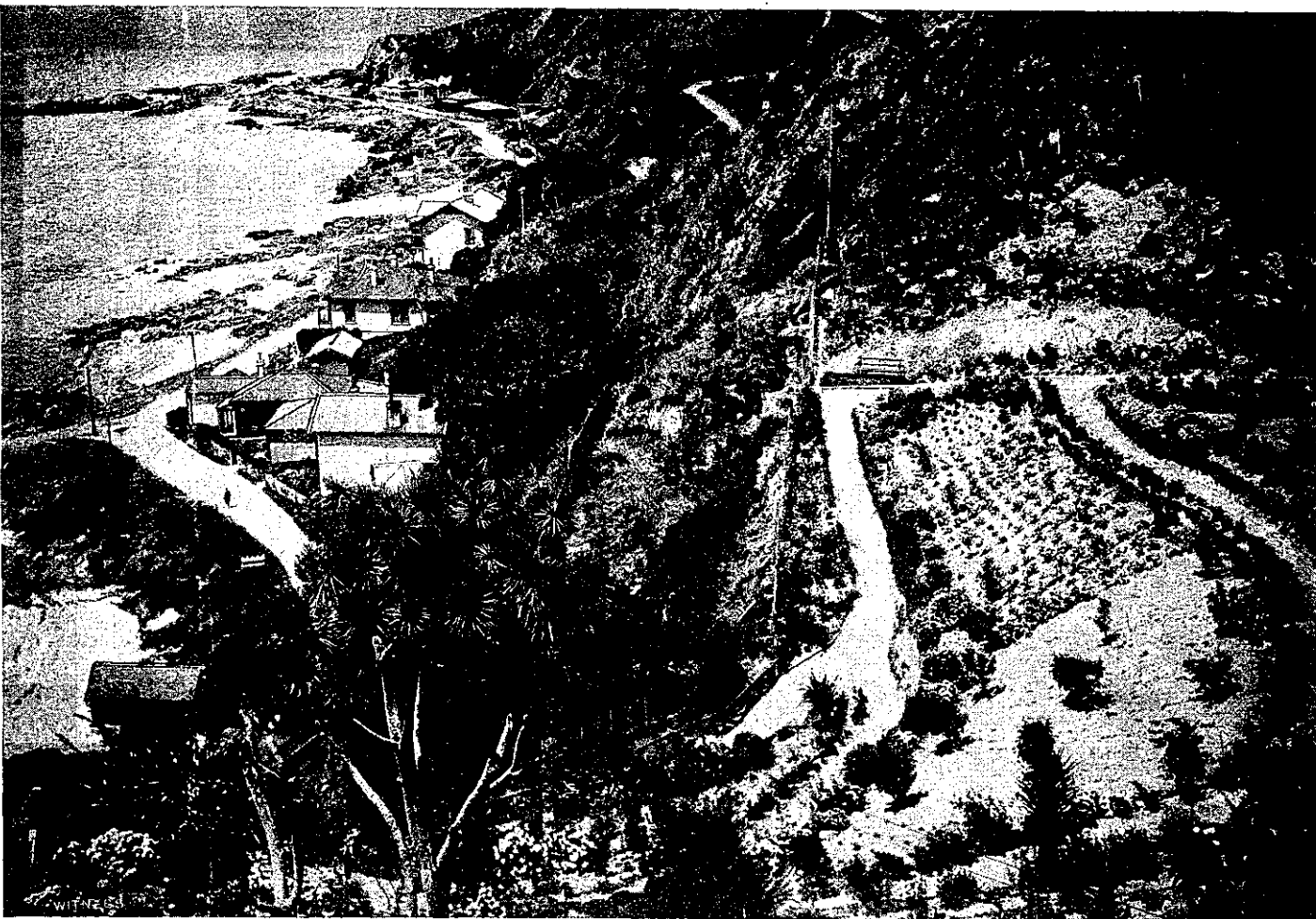
THE JUGGLER

Behind the great window of the luxurious club-house a man looked out at the stream of humanity that passed in two hurrying currents before him. He was comfortable in the big easy chair, and he felt a very slight twinge of pity for these bustling persons.

Why did these throngs seem in a hurry, and why did they all carry burdensome parcels. The bundles meant that Christmas Day was near. There were gifts in those parcels, foolish gifts, no doubt, for people who would throw them a glance and cast them aside. There was a man actually pushing his way through the crowd with a tree on his shoulder—a Christmas tree, of course. How very childish it all seemed.

A servant came into the room and turned on the lights. The man at the window looked around.

'Not many of the members here to-night, Robert?'



KARAKA BAY, one of the loveliest residential spots around Wellington.

And with that new life welling within him he responded to it. His three pretty neighbors came, and with them their father, a grey-haired man now, with the stamp of years well spent upon his countenance—a good husband, a true man, a useful, noble man, devoted to his wife and children. Gordon Raymond advanced to him, both hands outstretched—hands that asked forgiveness, and all was well between them from that hour. The meal began once more, Stephen, smiling and happy, hovering about the table. And Gordon Raymond yielded to the spirit of Christmas, and talked and laughed as he had not done in years, as he had never thought to do again in all the years that remained to him.

And surely, surely, not even the kind-hearted Bob Windthrop was happier among his loved ones than the 'poor, lonely, rich old man' who dined with his daughter that Christmas day—whose loneliness was, from that day on, forever a thing of the past.—*Extension.*

WANTED KNOWN—That Bill-heads, Circulars, Cards, Programmes, and General Printing of every description are executed at the *Tablet* Office. Moderate rates.

'No, sir. It's nearing Christmas, sir. Quite a number of the gentlemen go out of town.'

'True. I had forgotten.'

Another footfall caught his ear.

'Ah, Durham!'

The newcomer dropped into an easy chair.

'Began to think I had the club all to myself,' he said. 'Painfully dull, isn't it?'

'Yes. Evidently a general exodus. Why are you left behind?'

'I'm a man without a home just now. My people are in England, you know. For twenty-seven years my wife and I have eaten our Christmas dinner together, and I'm blue when I think of dining without her. You don't understand that, do you?'

'No,' the man at the window replied; 'I don't.'

'Didn't give me credit for so much sentiment, perhaps!'

'To tell you the truth,' said the man at the window, 'it surprises me.'

'I'm quite sure I'm not ashamed of it,' laughed Durham. 'Money grubbing hasn't entirely ossified me. But why are you lingering here, Minturn? No home?'

The man at the window laughed.

'I call this a pretty comfortable home,' he answered.