



Women and the Home

Radio is the slender wire that brings the world and its affairs into the tiny kitchens and living rooms which hitherto had isolated so many housekeepers in the performance of their duties

—Margaret Bondfield

WHEN I BEGAN TO FARM

(Written for "The Listener" by "Mary")

I WAS a woman, and I had a family of three young children. I was determined to make a home for them. (This all happened a long time ago.)

The section I had drawn by Government Ballot was covered with standing bush, so for a few years I worked, and with the money I saved I had some of the bush felled and burned. Then, I bought grass seed and had some of the land sown.

Men who had drawn land got assistance from stock agents to improve their land. The agents would not help me. As I was a woman, they feared that I would not stick the hard years ahead.

Then the Government informed me that I must reside on my property or forgo all claim to it. I had only sixty pounds cash, so I had a tent pitched and set out to do the best I could.

A Bad Neighbour

My neighbour on one side was named Adams, and on the other side was Bell. These two were at enmity before I took up residence in the district.

Adams was indeed a bad neighbour. He used to turn his cattle on to my property to graze. I had no fences. Bell was short of feed and offered to pay me for the grass; I was pleased to accept his offer.

Adams was very annoyed when he became aware that Bell had the grazing of my land.

Bell erected a gate across the road at each end of my section to keep his cattle from wandering away. On the gates he placed this notice: "BE SURE AND CLOSE THIS GATE." The gates were a source of annoyance to Adams, who now had a man to deal with instead of a defenceless woman.

More Messages on the Gate

One day, when Adams was passing through the gate nearest to him, he decided to vex Bell, so he wrote under the notice:

"This is a public road. Why close the gate?"

When Bell saw this he replied: "To keep thieves and robbers out." Adams knew that this was meant for him so he wrote the query:

"Who stole the bag of sugar from—?" It happened that Bell knew of thefts committed by Adams, so he wrote:

"Why doesn't the one who wrote the above, sign his name and not be the cur

he always was? Who stole the box of tea from—?"

Other settlers who passed through the gate were amused at the bickering between Adams and Bell. In those quiet days of pioneers it was considered good fun.

One settler, with a sense of humour,



"Sometimes, when the clouds seemed ever so black, I would think of Adams and Bell . . ."

decided he would join the fun, so he wrote:

"Those who wrote the above have written it well;

Someday they'll both be writing in hell."

There was no more writing on the gate after that.

Worse to Follow

Although Adams and Bell were bad friends before they began writing on the gate, they were much worse after it.

Adams decided he had to defeat Bell, so he turned his stock on to the road and left the gate open so that they could still wander on to my land. At first Bell did not suspect Adams, but when the gate was continually left open Bell resolved to catch the offender.

Bell secreted himself in a clump of small bushes, then waited and watched. About two-and-a-half hours later Adams rode along the road, opened the gate and was about to ride away when Bell left his hiding-place and called to Adams: "So it is you who leave the gate open?"

Adams, although taken by surprise, replied, "Well, it's a public road." He gave a grin which made Bell furious.

"I have permission to have this gate on the road and don't you interfere with it!" blazed Bell.

"But it doesn't open on to your property," countered Adams.

"I pay for the grazing, so you keep out!" shouted Bell, now red in the face with fury.

"You didn't pay for the timber you stole from Mrs. Smith," countered Adams.

"You—you," stammered Bell. "You've no right to interfere with what I do. You were darned glad to get my sons to help you when your sheep were calving."

Challenge to Fight

This was too funny for Adams, so he roared with laughter. Evidently, Bell did not notice his mistake in saying that sheep calved, and he believed that Adams was laughing at him.

So infuriated was Bell that he decided to fight Adams. Bell tried to pull his shirt off without removing his braces. This of course added to Adams's merriment.

It was at this stage that another neighbour, old Joe, came into sight.

"Here is old Joe," announced Adams. Perhaps he will help you to remove your braces so that you can get your shirt off, but I'd advise you to have more sense and keep it on."

The arrival of old Joe, who was a friend of Adams, caused Bell to pause, so he took the advice given and kept his shirt on.

After a few uncomplimentary remarks, Adams and old Joe turned to go. Bell, shaking with rage and dripping with perspiration went home; but he forgot to close the gate.

The Skies Brightened

I had many a good laugh over the incident. Sometimes, when the clouds seemed ever so black, I would think of Adams and Bell.

Spring came along, so I decided to make a garden. I cut rails from young saplings and fenced off a fair sized piece of ground.

I was busy erecting my fence one day, when a stock agent came along. He was surprised to see the work that I was doing and said that I deserved to get some help. He told his firm about it, and they decided to give me some assistance. No one will ever know the joy I felt when they wrote me saying that in view of the fact that I was working so hard and trying to get along, they were prepared to let me have the material to fence my property with. I cried with joy.

After I had got my fence up I approached the Government for the loan of money to buy cattle with. Because I had made some improvements they let me have enough money to buy nearly one hundred head of cattle. I had begun my farm and I was happy.

These Should Interest You:

Talks prepared by the A.C.E. Home Science Tutorial Section, University of Otago:

"Controlling Household Pests": Monday, December 9, 1YA 3.30 p.m., 2YA 3 p.m., 3YA 2.30 p.m.

"Recipes for Summer": Wednesday, December 11, 4YA 3.15 p.m.

"Christmas Preparations": Thursday, December 12, 1YA 3.30 p.m., 3YA 2.30 p.m.; Friday, December 13, 2YA 3 p.m.

"Holiday Routine": Friday, December 13, 4YA 3.15 p.m.

From The ZB Stations

"The Home Decorating session," by Anne Stewart, 10 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7.30 p.m. Saturdays from all ZB stations

"Thea at the Piano," 2 p.m. Sunday, December 8 1ZB

The Hit Parade, 3 p.m. Tuesday, December 10, 2ZB

"A Song for Mother" 11 a.m. Tuesday, December 10, 3ZB

"Radio Matinee" 2.30 p.m. Sunday, December 8, 4ZB

Announcer's Programme, 9 p.m. Monday, December 9, 2ZA

"Fashions": Ethel Early. Tuesday, December 10, 3YA 11.15 a.m.

"The Dental Needs of a Child," by a Dentist. Wednesday, December 11, 3YA 7.10 p.m.

"Choosing Books for People": Miss M. J. Powell. Wednesday, December 11, 2YH 8 p.m.

"Just Jumble Sales": Major F. H. Lampen. Thursday, December 12, 2YA 10.45 a.m.

"Speaking Personally: Listen Ladies," by Phyllis Anchor. Thursday, December 12, 3YA 11 a.m.

"Some Remarkable Women I Have Met": Mrs. Vivienne Newson. Saturday, December 14, 1YA 11 a.m.

"A Few Minutes with Women Novelists: Mrs. Gaskell," by Margaret Johnston. Saturday, December 14, 2YA 10.45 a.m.