

# THE POSTMAN NEVER PASSES

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

IT was such an intriguing advertisement in the personal column of the daily paper—"the postman never passes." I imagined a lonely consumptive, friendless and perhaps condemned. So I answered it—I was only seventeen, the romantic age.

I received a reply about ten days later, a reply that quickly dashed away my preconceived ideas. He was a bush-whacker, a hundred miles from nowhere and an Englishman without friends or relations in New Zealand. Some years later he told me that he received about sixty-five replies to his advertisement. Five of them he sold to his less adventurous camp mates for a shilling each, and all the others he answered! But after a few weeks only two of us kept up the correspondence with him.

And what a correspondence! Jim was a Cockney with no educational advantages but that of an inquiring mind, and he wrote to me on every possible subject from love to Einstein. After eighteen months he wrote that he was coming to Wellington, and would I meet him? Mother, of course, said it was impossible to continue such a haphazard and unconventional acquaintance. But equally of course, I went. No, I'm sorry to disappoint romanticists, I didn't marry Jim. But what a lot of happiness and interest my friendship based on that casual advertisement brought me.

A COUPLE of years later when I was in a country township for a brief holiday I ran into Jim. I hadn't heard from him for several months. He greeted me riotously and drove me out to lunch (?) at his camp. Lunch consisted of fish and chips and chocolate biscuits seasoned with a spate of endless conversation.

Then he offered to take me to a "real" country dance in the evening. I was thrilled and ready and waiting for him at seven o'clock. I was young enough not to care about the broken springs of the Ford, and the drive was typical of Jim. Thirty miles under a harvest moon beside a winding silver thread of river and Jim lecturing me

all the way about Spiritualism, which was his latest enthusiasm. But oh the embarrassment of the beginning of that dance. Jim, with his usual casualness, had forgotten to tell me that it was a "hard-up" dance. I had dressed so carefully in a white georgette evening dress with long trailing points and a silver lame girdle. And Jim calmly ushered me into a hall full of strangers in patched denims and faded overalls. But they were a jolly crowd and took my georgette as a joke. I resigned myself to the fact that it would have to be sent to the cleaners anyway and set out to enjoy the fun. The fun, by the way, included a supper of baked potatoes and boiled saveloys.

It was half-way through the evening when I met Aubrey. He was one of the few men in lounge suits and was sorry for my "different" frock. After our third dance he told me that he was just recovering from appendicitis and had been in bed when the boys pulled him out and insisted on his putting in an appearance.

"I didn't want to stay," he said, "but then I met you!" And I blushed at that like a school-girl.



IT was after three o'clock when I climbed into bed, infinitely weary and with only one clear recollection of the evening—Aubrey's blue eyes smiling into mine as we danced.

"Another ship that has passed," I thought regretfully, too regretfully for my peace of mind.

But the next evening Jim arrived, a smiling Jim with Aubrey in tow "to take me to the pictures." And then—well a few days later my holiday was over and I returned home quite sure that that pleasant episode was over.

Yet the next week brought a box of chocolates, then a letter, and then Aubrey himself in Wellington. And now? Well, my small son, Aubrey Junior, is very proud of being "just like Daddy." So perhaps that old postman who "never passed" was only another alias for that ever changeable, ever present Master Dan Cupid.

## "IT'S A GREAT LIFE"

"THE In-Laws," which has been heard regularly from 12B, is coming to an end, and its place will be taken, on January 2, by a new feature "It's a Great Life." This is an Australian production written by Lynn Foster, and featuring Betty Sutton and James Raglan, both well known in radio in Australia. Raglan has also played in several Australian films.

"It's a Great Life" concerns the adventures of a young married couple. Jimmie and Betty Beresford, and their six-months'-old baby. Through an accident, the young husband loses his job but, grimly proclaiming that it is still "a great life," they set out to make a living farming.

Their farm they have never seen before, and the house turns out to be nothing more than a tumbledown shed. Finding, however, that their property is on the main road, they convert the farmhouse into a garage and petrol station. When the new venture is ready, they discover that a rival garage is being built across the road, and so begins a series of human and amusing adventures.

This new morning tea session starts from 12B on January 2, and will be heard every week day morning at 10.30.

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