

wrote poetry. The only one I can remember ended with '... the rattle of the milk-pails—and you!' Oh, I was very fond of Ethel. I used to fret when I went back to New Plymouth to my mother, away from Waitara where I'd been so happy."

It must have been an emotional time for the adolescent Daisy. She confesses to being "terribly in love" with both the Freeling boys as well. "They were both grown up," she says, "but I was always in love with somebody very much older than myself. My husband was very much older than me, too. I never liked the young ones. I was rather frightened of them."

City-bred Daisy was also rather frightened of cows—an uncomfortable syndrome for a Taranaki resident. But when the boys challenged her—the new chum—to learn the art of milking, she stilled her cringing nerves and tossed at them defiantly the statement, "Of course I can milk!" The boys brought her a one-legged milking stool, a bucket, and a serene-looking milch cow named Lorna Doone. Out in the paddock, without benefit of cowbails, Daisy addressed herself to the animal's unpromising teats.

"But the boys knew what Lorna Doone would do," says Aunt Daisy. "She looked round at me with her mild eyes; and, as soon as I began to milk, she just walked on. Left me! Left me sitting there on my one-legged stool."

Her luck with cows was consistent. Taranaki was then covered with hoardings advertising Sykes' Red Drench, a potent physic for cattle. The hoarding depicted, in raw colours, an enormous blown cow—"all swollen up and looking dreadful"—surrounded by a mournful group of gaithered farmers. It bore the legend, in letters a foot high, **POOR DAISY! I MIGHT HAVE SAVED HER!** Poor Daisy Taylor's pupils and fellow teachers took up the refrain with no counterfeited glee.

WHILE Daisy traipsed across the damp green paddock after the elusive Lorna Doone, a man about ten years older than she looked wearily at his baking, dehydrated segment of Victoria's Mallee country. In a clipped, English accent, he uttered a florid Australian swear-word. He had just bid good-day to a Methodist clergyman who had called to solicit contributions for the Harvest Festival. "Damn it all!" he had replied, "don't you know there's a drought round here? I've never seen a harvest!"

Frederick Basham had been born in London, and educated at Chigwell Grammar School in Essex, the school at which the William Penn who gave his name to Pennsylvania had been educated. He entered his uncle's estate agency, but was not a notable success. He had little idea of the value of money and his uncle was frequently obliged to pay his debts. He committed no offences. He simply spent too much money.

Finally, like many a well-heeled Englishman of his day, uncle seized on the obvious way out. "We'll send him abroad," he said, "to Australia." So Fred Basham was given a farm in Victoria with some money to carry on with, and the family washed their hands of him.

The young Englishman never did have much luck with real estate. After four years of drought, when the local storekeepers could extend their credit no farther, he sold his worthless land and went to Tasmania. When the opportunity came to enter civil engineering, Fred Basham seized it. He spent some years in Hobart learning his new calling under the kindly eye of Mr Grove, his

employer, before he felt able to branch out on his own. He then applied for a job in New Zealand, as assistant to New Plymouth's Borough Engineer, W. E. Spencer, and was duly appointed. The Borough set him to work designing new public baths at the New Plymouth breakwater.

Casting about for accommodation, Frederick Basham settled upon a boarding establishment called Chatsworth House. There, on the first morning, he was seated at breakfast immediately opposite a young schoolteacher named Daisy Taylor. The two English people coolly looked each other over. He was dark, handsome, moustachioed. She was pretty, blonde and petite. They disliked each other on sight.

(To be continued)

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