

The IMPOSTOR

By MARY SCOTT
(“Helen Gordon”)

This play, “The Impostor,” by Mary Scott, was awarded premier place of those commended by the judge, Mr. Victor Lloyd. Readers will be interested to know that Mary Scott is identical with “Helen Gordon,” the winner of the prize-winning play, that being a pen name adopted by Mary Scott. The literary talent of Mary Scott was called into its latest development by “The New Zealand Dairy Exporter” in its Home Journal pages. After her graduate days Mrs. Scott entered upon married life in the backblocks, giving up all idea of journalistic or literary work, in which she had dabbled while at college. She was, however, inspired by a chance copy of the “Exporter” to realise that in the backblocks life around her—logs and bush and mud—lay an unexploited field, with not a little romance. This was some four years ago, and from that initial inspiration she has embarked upon a wide field of effort. Contributions from her pen under the nom de plume of “Anon” have appeared in the “New Zealand Herald” and “Weekly News,” and in the “Auckland Star” and other papers as M.E.S. Her work has also appeared, in particular, in “Tui’s Annual” and the “Artists’ Annual” under various noms de plume. Her initial inspiration was to portray the heroic life of New Zealand backblocks women. On that theme she has written a novel, which is now under consideration in London. This play, “The Impostor,” totally distinct in character from her winning work, “The Signal,” is a further demonstration of her versatility.

LIST OF CHARACTERS:

MARION NORWOOD MRS. MORTON
BERYL MORTON MRS. ASHMEAD
NORA BENNETT SALLY, the Maid.

SCENE:

The drawing-room of a suburban house. Evidently the people who live here have wealth and position, but also pleasant, homely tastes. There is a table-telephone in one corner, and a large door or French window on to the verandah; also another window and a door leading into the hall of the house.

TIME: A summer afternoon at the present day.

(Mrs. Morton and Mrs. Ashmead are seated in dignified conversation as the curtain rises; they are women in late middle life, both fashionable, both well-preserved. Here the resemblance ends; Mrs. Ashmead is a gentle, kindly soul; Mrs. Morton is what the younger generation irreverently describes as “a holy terror.”)

Mrs. Morton (acidly): Most amazing! A motor accident, you say?

Mrs. Ashmead: Yes, right at the very gate of Sunnymeade. Her steering-gear failed.

Mrs. M. (grimly): In other words, she was speeding.

Mrs. A. (feebly): Oh, no; I’m sure it was some horrid little bolt or screw. . . . You know the things.

Mrs. M. (still more grimly): I know girls. . . . So Wilfrid was smitten at once?

Mrs. A. (defensively): Marion is so charming. . . . Of course, I could not let her go back to be nursed at a boarding-house—for, though she wasn’t much hurt, she was dazed and suffering from shock.

Mrs. M.: So appealing! And you nursed her back to health, and now she is to marry your only son! Well, Elizabeth, you seem to have been busy during my trip to Australia!

Mrs. A. (rather guiltily): I have missed you very much, dear Caroline.

Mrs. M.: It would seem so. But who is she, Elizabeth? Norwood? I don’t seem to know the name.

Mrs. A. (vaguely): Oh, her people live somewhere in the south. An orphan, you know. She has been living with an old uncle—a wealthy autocrat, I fancy. However, they quarrelled and she came north for a trip.

Mrs. M. Alone? Really, these modern girls!

Mrs. A. (hastily): No, Caroline, no. Marion had a chaperone, but she had been called home unexpectedly on the very day of the accident.

Mrs. M.: Most fortunate—for all concerned. And is this all you really know of the girl who is going to marry Wilfrid in a fortnight? Are you content with that, Elizabeth?

Mrs. A. (quite firmly): I am content with Marion.

Mrs. M.: Oh, I don’t deny that she has a certain charm—but modern, very modern! And then Wilfrid is so wealthy! Why, she will be mistress of the largest station in the province—positively an estate!

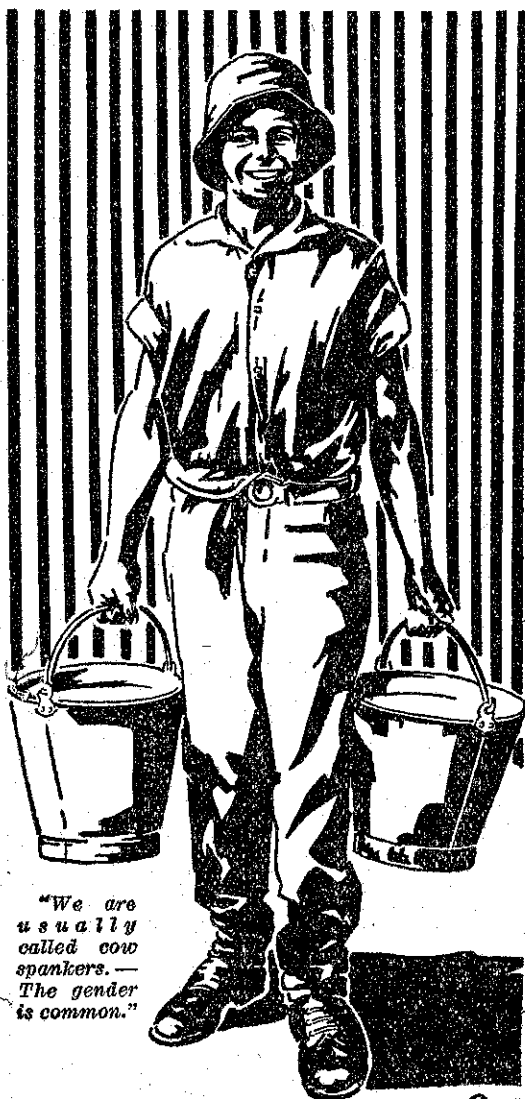
Mrs. A. (hastily): Here come Marion and Beryl. How pretty Beryl is! I suppose her engagement will be the next.

Mrs. M. (with a hauteur that suggests that Marion has spoiled a cherished plan): No doubt. She is much admired. (The girls enter. Marion is young and pretty, but her face is clouded and her manner distraite today. Beryl is so utterly unlike her mother that we can only suppose her to possess a most charming father.) We have been admiring your beautiful wedding-presents, Miss Norwood.

Marion (with obvious constraint): Wilfrid’s really; not mine. They’re all his friends.

Mrs. A. (kindly): Never mind, dear; when you go south for your honeymoon it will be all your friends.

Marion (with an enigmatic smile): Perhaps so. Beryl, the (Continued on page 2.)



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