

sitting. If only there was a wireless that he could fiddle with to get some swing to break the monotony.

In the morning he mentioned to the boss that when he next went into town he would want a cheque, as he was considering buying a wireless. The boss suggested he see a certain person who lived about a mile down the road whom he'd heard had a set for sale. Henry decided to make inquiries about this second-hand set before buying a new one in town.

After dinner he rode the old farm bike down to the address given, about half a mile over the railway-line to a little grey house behind a high macrocarpa hedge with a red wooden gate.

A young woman answered his knock, and on hearing the reason for his visit invited him inside. The set was a good one, better than Henry had expected, but probably, thought Henry, more expensive than he'd expected. She told him how much she was asking for it, and Henry left, saying that he would think it over.

Back in his hut that night he pulled at his pipe and thought how he could manage to buy this wireless. No longer could he stand these nights just watching the pine logs burn.

The next night he again went down to see about the wireless, and suggested paying so much down and the balance at the end of the month. The woman agreed, but wondered whether he would be willing to do some work around the place for her in payment for the amount to be left owing. There were trees in the orchard to be pruned and a small plot of ground to be dug. This suited Henry, so he took the wireless back with him that night, with the arrangement made that he would spend his spare time in the middle of the day working in her garden.

The fire was warmer and the room seemed brighter with the wireless going, and Henry was pleased with the bargain.

He started pruning the trees the next day. The sun was out and the garden, being sheltered from the wind by the thick macrocarpa, was warm even though patches of snow remained in shady places. Miss Williams had shown him what she wanted done, only four or five days' work, so soon it would be finished, and the wireless really his.

Came the sixth day and Henry was filling his pipe watching the last of the rubbish slowly burn away.

"Tea is ready, Henry," came a voice from the kitchen window.

"Right-o, Hilda, I'll be there," Henry answered. He raked the half-burnt rubbish into the centre of the bonfire, then strolled over to the house.

As they sipped their tea and ate still warm tea cakes, Henry said, "Those macrocarpas on the north side would be better cut down a few feet to let in the sun."

"Yes," said Hilda, "but I don't feel like tackling it myself."

"Well, I was going to say that I'm doing nothing much up there once I'm rid of the cows, so if you liked I could come down and fix them for you."

"Oh, no, I couldn't let you do that."

"Don't be silly; I'll start on them to-morrow."

A week passed and the macrocarpas were all cut down. Henry was having his tea with Hilda and feeling disappointed that after to-day there seemed little excuse for coming down here. He didn't like to suggest more work requiring a man round the place. Then Hilda looked up from her tea and said, "You know, I've missed that wireless since I sold it to you; I think I'll have to get another one next time I'm in town."

"Why did you sell it in the first place?" said Henry.

"Oh, I was so sick of just sitting by the fire listening to the jolly thing—sometimes I'd almost feel like throwing things at it—but now it's gone I find the silence lonely."

They talked a long time over tea that afternoon. The cows weren't milked till late and Henry's tea had to be put in the oven.

But it wasn't so very far from Hilda's house to the dairy, and, as Henry's boss said, if Henry could be there on time in the morning he didn't much mind where he slept. And Henry doesn't have to think up new jobs as an excuse to go down to that grey house behind the macrocarpas, his wife thinks them up for him.