

The CALL OF THE COUNTRY AN EASTER STORY By HELEN B. ANDERSON CONSECON, ONTARIO

It was not a fascinating scene that greeted Donald Fraser's vision as he stood gazing from a window of his farm home, one evening early in March. Meadows, brown and sere, furrowed fields, black and sodden, stretched away toward the lake which still lay sleeping beneath its blanket of ice. Beyond the lake, in the hazy light of the spring twilight, rose the sand-banks, which even in the dullness of the March dusk, seemed to allure and beckon beyond the narrow confines of the country community.

Donald had loved it all, this quiet country scene, when first he came two years ago, to make his home in this rural spot. At that time, however, the fields were green and glowing, and the trees, now gaunt and grey, were clothed in rustling leaves, their cooing murmurs luring bright birds to shade and shelter. In the haven of his farm home, he had found peace and rest. He had been a brilliant student at college, and in spite of associations with wild companions had graduated with honors. But it seemed for a time as if the demon druid, would hold him in its power, gradually destroying his physical and mental energies. Former friends deserted him and only his mother and sweetheart remained. When the mother, whom he dearly loved, but to whom he had brought great pain, was snatched away by the hand of Death, Donald felt within him the stirrings of conscience and a desire to redeem the past. With these renewed desires, he naturally turned to her who had promised to be his wife, but she spurned him with the words, "Be a man." In his heart he could not blame her. Her words stung his proud spirit, and with his heart still sore from the loss of his mother, he resolved to "be a man" and free himself from the chains with which the habit of drink had bound him. Leaving old associations he turned his face to the country, where he purchased a fine farm and where he found quiet and content and where he won a victory over the foe that had almost destroyed his manhood.

But in spite of his growing self-respect and his love for his work, there were times when the longing for the congenial companionship of cultured people would grow intense, and the quiet of the country life seemed unbearable in its monotony. The trusty couple, Mary and Tim O'Fagan, who looked after the comfort of his home, were kind and dependable, but tonight, as his gaze wandered over the barren countryside the old longing for former friends, even for her who had spurned him, returned with renewed force. As he was meditating, the telephone rang. He turned quickly glad of any break in the monotony. It was the young minister, Rev. Mr. Myers, who called.

"Is that Mr. Fraser?" "It is," answered Donald. "This is Rev. Mr. Myers speaking. The Community Club is preparing a concert for the evening of Good Friday and would very much like your assistance with the singing. Will it be possible for you to help us?" "I shall be delighted," answered Donald, surprised at the eagerness in his own voice.

"Thank you," returned the parson. "Mrs. Myers has invited the committee to meet tonight at the parsonage. May we expect you about 8.30?" "I shall endeavor to be prompt," Mrs. Myers, agreed Donald. When he had hung up the receiver, he noticed Mrs. O'Fagan casting eager and excited glances in his direction. "Well?" said Donald, smiling interrogatively at the plump, little matron. "Is it going out, ye are?" asked the motherly little woman. "Oh, and it's you will be the glad boy this night. Here you have been 'tendin' only to your books and your work without a livin' soul to cheer ye but me and Tim and the pets of the farm. An' it's now ye'll be the foinest lookin' lad at the club, and the girls will be givin' ye the sweetest glances."

Donald's face clouded. His recent eagerness for youthful companionship had vanished and left him the old feeling of loneliness that had made his country life lonely and his mood introspective and hopeless. "Now," bustled Mrs. O'Fagan shrewdly noting his change of expression, and fearing he would repeat his promise. "I must hurry and prepare your clothes. Ye'll be wearin' your new suit with the green tie. I'll get 'em ready" and off she bustled.

In spite of misgivings as to the wisdom of his hasty decision, Donald was at the parsonage in due time, where he was accorded a warm welcome by the pastor and his wife. The members of the committee, consisting of eight young men and maidens had already arrived, and to his surprise he found the company cheering and congenial. Miss Astor, the teacher, seemed a general favorite, and the moving spirit of the company. To Donald, unaccustomed to the society of young women for so long, her face held a great attraction. Her soft, but brilliant brown eyes, and the brown of her hair reflecting tints of gold, were beautiful, and her voice and manner bespoke refinement of both mind and spirit. Plans were soon arranged for the coming concert and duets and quartettes were sung, Donald's fine tenor blending harmoniously with the splendid soprano, alto and bass voices in the various numbers. The evening was but a counterpart for many to follow. As the weeks wore on, Donald found himself greatly interested in the affairs of the Community Club, while the brown eyes and kindly expression of Margaret Astor were displacing the image of that other Margaret so long enshrined in his memory. His step became more elastic and his eye more hopeful. Tim and Mary had many a secret consultation concerning their young master's changed appearance and his unusual interest in social life. "It's doin' him a world of good, the blessed boy," said motherly Mary, confidentially to Tim, "and it's the little brown-eyed school teacher or bless her sweet heart, that is workin' the change. But not a word of this to Donald," she cautioned Tim. "For, like the rest of his kind, at one word were hinted to him, he'd go back to his old dull life." And so Tim and Mary very wisely kept their own counsel.

A visit to the sugar-bush, the conveyance being a lumbering farm wagon, over rough farm lanes, was among the many social functions enjoyed by the club. The grey, gaunt trees of the woods, the ground soft with its carpet of leaves, the stillness, the smell of fresh earth, the spring sun sending its warmth through a network of leafless branches, the squirrel's rustling tread, the ruddy fire, the steaming spout, together formed a pretty background, for the picture of bright animated youth that filled the quiet wood with mirth and music. It, to Donald, Miss Astor had been attractive amid home surroundings, was doubly pleasing in the freedom of the out-of-doors.

Light of love of that first Easter morning shone down through the years, bringing joy and hope to many a troubled heart. The pastor's sermon, based on the text, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here; He is risen," fell forcibly upon Donald's heart. He had been seeking the living, a living love where love was dead, a living past where the past was gone forever. As he listened, hope came again to his heart, and when was sung his mother's favorite Easter hymn "Up from the grave He Arose," the errors of the past seemed melted away and his heart throbbled with a new hope.

The following day, Miss Astor was leaving to spend the holidays at her home some hundred miles distant. As they drove to the station in Donald's new car, he said, "I have much that I wish to speak of this morning, Miss Astor. In the woods that day, you asked me of my early life. Do you still desire to hear of it?" She raised her eyes quickly to his face. "Not if it is painful to you," she protested. "Then you have heard?" he questioned. "Yes," she agreed reluctantly, "as one always hears of one's neighbor in country places."

In her eyes he read understanding and sympathy and this encouraged him to begin the story of his life, sparing himself not at all in the recital. He watched, as he spoke, for coldness and aversion in the face of his audience, but nothing but the kindest concern was revealed. Gaining courage he proceeded: "It was a glad day that called me to the country and to you, Margaret, for already you must know that I love you. Can you overlook the past, and trusting one for the future, love me ever so little?" Her face flushed rose beneath his gaze, her eyes fell, to be raised for one brief moment, revealing to him the light of a wonderful love. He needed no other answer, and as his hand closed over both her own, their lips met in a silent pledge.

On Donald's return, Mary, noting his happy face, remarked to Tim, "There'll be no fear now; ye may tease the laddie all ye like about 'the brown eyes of her' but he'll never go back to the old lonely life again." And Mary was right.

It was while they, apart from the others, were enjoying the delicious meal, that Donald remarked, "I had no notion, until a few weeks ago, that there was such enjoyment in country life. What the boys of the city miss, lacking the enjoyment of this sugaring out!" "And had you always lived in town?" asked Margaret. "Yes, until two years ago. It seemed at first a punishment to come, but it seems now a great blessing." "Yes," she agreed, "I too love the country. It is all the life I have known except for the months spent at school and college."

Here they were interrupted by a call that the wagon and horses were ready. A rough but merry drive brought them to their homes. Donald, in spite of his thirty years, was as enthusiastic as a boy that night in recounting to Tim and Mary the delights of sugaring off in the woods. Tim, whose eyes were twinkling with suppressed merriment, was about to interject some joking remark concerning "the brown eyes of her" when Mary, watching her husband apprehensively, trod on his foot by way of distraction, causing the intended jesting remark to be replaced by an astonished and painful cry of "Oh!" But Donald was too preoccupied to mentally reviewing the sylvan delights to note anything unusual in a wife clumsily trodding on her husband's toes.

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Good Entertainment at Shannville

The people in Shannville and vicinity had the pleasure of witnessing an unusually good amateur entertainment Friday night, April 1st, under the auspices of Shannville Lodge A.O.U.W. The Lodge intend to put on a number of similar entertainments for the purpose of developing the Home Talent and affording wholesome pleasure to the young people of the district. As the popularity of the entertainments continues the Lodge may have to restrict the attendance to institutions, but will endeavour to include all friends during the course of the season. W. C. Mikel, K. C. Past Grand Master of the A.O.U.W., acted as chairman.

The first part of the programme consisted of a selection by the amateur orchestra of Bridge Street Methodist Church of Belleville. This organization, though formed only three months ago displays remarkable ability and talent. Some of the songs were the leading musical organization in the district before long.

Mr. E. Smith, a young entertainer, displayed an exceptional capacity and was well received by the audience. Miss Pearl Taylor rendered a vocal selection so creditably that she was compelled to return. The audience showed a desire to listen all night. Sid Fitzgerald and Harry Fuller on the guitar and mandolin, and Arnold Mitchell's humorous recitations pleased everybody.

A drama entitled "A Perplexing Situation" showed that Shannville possesses dramatic ability equal to any community of its size. All did well, but the pantomime acting of Miss B. Clazie, Miss E. Grass, Miss M. Hill, Miss Lucy Macdonald, and Miss J. H. Smith, was particularly without speaking to earn 75 cents each from their father (Mr. C. Leavens) under the tantalizing questions of A. Clazie as Uncle Phippas, D. Hill as John's young man, J. H. Smith as the ruttar and mandolin, Bell as Health Officer and Mrs. N. Brown as a friend of the family, displayed real acting capacity. Mrs. J. Vandervoort's rendering of Mrs. No. 10, a humorous part, pleased the audience and the Canadian boy, G. G. M., of the Belleville, took a liking to the Canadian boy, and when he went to study science and dentistry in the university at Ann Harbor, Mich., their interest in the drama was not lessened.

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WIVES FAME, FORTUNE, BRIDE: HEADS BIG BRITISH CONCERN; CAMPBELLFORD BOY MAKES GOOD

The Peterboro Examiner says: It is not such a very far cry from the plain pie desk of a prairie school teacher to the solid mahogany barricade of the business mogul; from a dental student, whose future appeared to be mapped out as steadily as a church sexton's; or from earnings of but a few hundred dollars a year to an income of four figures, judging by the rapid climb in the English business world of J. Harry Smith, of Campbellford. This one-time country school teacher and dental student is now General Manager of Road Guides, Ltd., a strong English company with headquarters in old London—and he is only yet in his twenties. Some folks say he has been lucky, others concede he was always a "go-getter," and that perseverance and steadfastness of purpose, coupled up with a vocal selection so creditably that she was compelled to return. The audience showed a desire to listen all night. Sid Fitzgerald and Harry Fuller on the guitar and mandolin, and Arnold Mitchell's humorous recitations pleased everybody.

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Mr. Harry Smith was greatly interested in this guide for motorists and he clearly saw its possibilities. The drums of war were sounding, however, and in 1916, giving up his studies, he enlisted in the Royal Flying Corps, going overseas, where he saw almost continuous service in France and England as pilot until the armistice was signed. During his air fighting he "bagged" no less than nine German airplanes and one balloon, and the squadron to which he was attached had the distinction of bringing down "Reichtoffen," the famous German ace who displayed a skill and daring that was the admiration and envy of friend and foe alike.

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HAROLD NEWTON MUST DO 2 YEARS IN KINGSTON PEN.

Youth Found Guilty Two Weeks Ago of Entering Roy's Brewery OTHER CHARGES Cummins, His Associate Goes to Ontario Reformatory For a Spell

Harold Newton, who was found guilty a couple of weeks ago on charges of breaking and entering Roy's brewery premises and a number of business places and stealing sums of money in several towns, was today sentenced by Judge Roche to a term of two years in Kingston Penitentiary.

His associate, James Cummins, goes to the Ontario Reformatory for a term of not less than three months and not more than two years less one day on like charges. Mr. W. Carlew represented the crown, Mr. E. J. Butler, and Mr. C. A. Payne the accused.

Belleville Teacher Wins Honor at Boston

Mr. W. F. Ashley, 117 Victoria Avenue, received word today that his son, Mr. Fred A. Ashley, formerly principal of the Belleville Business College, and now head of the commercial department of the Everett (Mass.) High School, had been elected to the Beta Chapter of the Delta Ma Delta Society and thus brought honor to his alma mater. Mr. W. F. Ashley, who is well known here, has been away from Belleville about ten years, four of which he spent in Philadelphia and the past six in Everett, which is just outside Boston.

Registration Shows More Activity Here

Registration at the three city booths speeded up somewhat yesterday and today, no less than six fifty voters getting their names placed on the list for Murney, Foster and Samson Wards on Friday.

The registration to two-thirty this afternoon showed Foster, Samson and Murney, 210; Ketcheson, Baldwin and Bleecker Wards, 190; Coleman Ward, 75; a total of 475.

Officers will remain open tonight for registration as follows: City Hall—Foster, Samson and Murney Ward, from seven to ten o'clock. Col. Lazier's Office, for Ketcheson, Baldwin and Bleecker Wards, from 7.30 to 9.30. R. W. Adams' Office, Coleman Ward, from 8.00 to 10.00 p.m.

RAN "DIVORCE MILL;" FAKIR HAS DISAPPEARED

NEW YORK, April 2.—The Westchester County grand jury in considering the case of a man who is alleged to have conducted a fake "divorce mill" from an office in New York City, this man, whose present whereabouts are not known, is said to have forged names of the Supreme Court Judges to decrees of divorce and in some cases even to have forged and filed the minutes of divorce proceedings, which, actually never saw the light in a court's eyes.

The Westchester authorities decline to estimate the number of fake divorcees this man has proc