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Business Isn't Everything

BY BESS McREE DAVIS.

PART II.

"I had decided to surprise Alice by getting there earlier than we had planned. This means that I can't go for her, at all. She's waited three years for me to make good; she had faith in me when others didn't; she loves me and I—oh my God!"

Up and down, hands clenched, teeth gritted, while his old friend followed him with eyes full of sorrow.

"What's the use trying any more? What's the use of anything? I went straight, I did all I could, and see where I am! I'll have to give her up. I can't make her keep on waiting—waiting. It's hell!"

Mrs. Mercer went to him, laid her hand on his arm and led him, unresisting, to the dining room. "I know! Life's that way. Keep up your courage, boy! You're young and strong. It's not as if you had no more left in you. It will be all right. Come and eat. You'll feel better then."

She made hot coffee for him and waited on him, tempting him with this and that.

He put his arm around her thin shoulders as they went back to her sitting room. "You've been a mother to me for months," he said huskily. "I've never seen you when you were 'down'; you always see a bright side. How can you?"

She looked up into the sober young face where disillusion reigned and smiled at him, patting his hand.

"I've beeing thinking what is best to do," she said. "You go to Mr. Hunter. He lends money. Tell him your misfortune. You've a winning way with you, Brooks. Tell him about Alice. Ask him to let you have enough to go after her. You're young and have a good job. She had rather be with you, sharing little, than waiting. I know."

Eagerness leaped to his face, but he hesitated. "I've always said I wouldn't go back until I could 'show' those doubters who said I was too irresponsible to make good; that I'd not marry a girl and give her nothing but hardships. And I'm not going!"

"Does Alice love you?" she asked gently.

"She does, God bless her!" he said and his eyes softened.

"Don't let pride stand in the way of your happiness, then. There's no woman on earth who really loves, who hadn't rather be with her man, skimping, than do without him with the prospect of ease at the end of empty years. The scoffers needn't know about it," she urged.

He cupped her face in his big work-rough hand and looked deep into her eyes. "You'd put spirit in a dead man," he said. "I'm convinced because I want to be. I'll go to Mr. Hunter right now," and he was off like a skyrocket, out into the rain and darkness.

Mrs. Mercer sat and thought of him, this big-hearted, lovable youth who had laughed his way into her affections and kept his place there by his warm consideration of her. Always tracking her about her work, helping her if he could, making her smile at his nonsense if there was nothing he could do, lightening her burdens by his very sunniness.

Too bad to put bitterness in that light heart! To let worry and disappointment rub the upward curl from his gay mouth; to see heartache and despairing hopelessness in those blue eyes. She sighed and shook her head.

A scant half hour had passed before he returned; glancing quickly at his face, she read failure there.

"Mr. Hunter," he said stonily, "has no excess of the milk of human kindness. He said he'd have been asking favors now if he had listened to every hard luck tale he heard. As I had nothing to mortgage but my strength, no bond except my word, he couldn't see his way clear to lending me anything."

Mrs. Mercer moistened her lips and swallowed hard.

"Furthermore, it isn't 'good business to let people have anything without first-rate collateral' and it isn't wise 'to go in debt just to get married.' It ended by my telling him to go to hell. I couldn't help it, Little Lady, he was so smug and self-satisfied. I'm beaten."

He bowed his head against the back of the chair on which he sat astride and was very, very still. Mrs. Mercer stood staring. Her eyes looked like those of a helpless animal that is being tortured. Her face, suddenly old and deeply wrinkled, puckered like a child's when about to cry. Then—she jerked up her head, spread out her hands where were the prints of her nails and came close to him. Laying one arm across his shoulders, her fingers threaded the damp masses of his hair. She gave a little laugh that was sweet and certain.

"Well, I'll be your bank! I'll lend you the money. You shall go after Alice at once, as you'd planned, and pay me back when you can. I trust you, if Mr. Hunter doesn't."

He whirled around upon her, gazing at a face glorified by love and faith. "Take your hard-earned money that you've slaved for? I couldn't, Mrs. Mercer! It wouldn't be right!"

"Why not? Isn't Alice waiting? Hasn't she everything ready? She's waited long enough. It's no fault of yours that you haven't the money. I want you to be happy, for I love you, boy, just as I loved the little boy I had, long ago."

"But . . . . but, Mrs. Mercer!" he stammered. "It wouldn't be right. You need that money for something, surely. I'd be depriving you; I'd feel like a rascal."

But even as he protested, hope was coming back to his eyes, new life to his face.

"Listen, Brooks, I'm past the age where disappointments mean so much. I've had my day. I've had my love. I want you to take the money and be happy. I can wait, much better than you can. It doesn't matter about me. It does about you and the girl who loves you."

He saw in those courageous eyes sincerity, earnest purpose, love; and he took in his strong hands those frail hands that had toiled. He kissed them and laid them against his cheek and she felt on them a moisture that did not come from his rain-touched hair.

'I'll take it, lady dear, because it's a love gift. You know what it means to me. I'll never forget what you've done, nor will Alice."

Several hours later, she went with him to the train and before the throng of hurrying tourists he took her in his arms and kissed her. She stood outside the window, smiling up into his countenance, once more the animated, enthusiastic Brooks.

"Anybody would know that you're going after a bride!" she said gaily.

He grinned delightedly. "We'll be back in two weeks. I'll wire you. Be sure to meet us. If there's anyone in the world Alice need be jealous of, it's you! Good-bye!"

She waved until he was out of sight; then the flush that had made her look younger by years faded; her lips took on their patient sweetness; she was once more the worn-out little machine with nothing ahead of her but unceasing toil—and the dreaded spectre in the near distance!

Quietly the Little Gray Lady entered Mr. Hunter's office and wasted no words in trivialities. "I told you I'd be prompt; the option is up. I'm sorry but I can't buy the place," she said in a firm voice. "I . . . hope that the other person still wants it."

He looked at her keenly. Under the scrutiny she colored, as if a mind reader were baring her secrets to the unsympathetic gaze of critics.

"Why can't you?" he demanded. "The season's been fine. You told me you had almost enough."

"Yes," she admitted. "I made enough but I . . . I . . . somebody needed it worse than I did and I lent it."

"And cut yourself out of the thing you wanted worse than anything in the world!" he chided curtly. "What sort of business is that? That's why you women never get anywhere, financially. You are taken in by some beggar."

She lifted her head proudly. "It was mine to give, if I chose. I made it. To me it means just going on as I used to; to—the other person it means keeping faith in human goodness."

He compressed his lips. "And to me it means . . .?"

"I'm really very sorry about that," she hurried. "I know it's the last of the season but I hoped, for your sake, that someone would still want the house. I don't see why not—it's such a dear little place." Her chin quivered.

"Under the circumstances, I feel justified in insisting that you take it. You led me to believe . . ."

"But, Mr. Hunter, I can't! I'd love to but . . . well, I just haven't the money. And by the time I've made some more or the other is paid back, the house will not be for sale. I've just lost it, that's all!"

Mr. Hunter searched among the papers on his desk then reached into his pocket and pulled out a letter. "Don't see why I put that thing there—might have burnt a hole in my pocket, it's such a hot one. I have a letter here from a man named Brooks Young. Know him?" His eyes searched her face.

She started and nodded. "He's a fine boy."

Mr. Hunter made a wry face. "Maybe so. Didn't impress me that way, especially when he turned upon me like a wildcat and consigned me to the infernal regions when I refused to lend him money. Hot-headed, seems to me."

Mrs. Mercer smiled faintly and condoned, "He was in trouble, and he's young. Youth doesn't stop to think twice when it is in pain. I was young once."

"Well, maybe you're right. Anyway, he laid me on the coals. Told me if I'd give my head a vacation and let my heart run things awhile, I'd be more human. Thanked God that there's at least one person in the world who acts according to the dictates of love and charity and not business principles. He called her his Little Lady. Know her?"

Mrs. Mercer's face burned; she dropped her glance to trembling hands that fumbled a handkerchief.

"Never was so dumbfounded in my life. It hurts my pride," he went on. "I don't let anybody put one over on me, of any kind. If a woman can . . . here, Mrs. Mercer! Talk aside, I respect you for what you did, though it was blamed poor business."

"Business isn't everything," she said mildly, surprised at the expression in his eyes.

"Well, maybe not. Anyhow, I insist upon you taking that house. You want it and—there's something I don't just 'get' but I want you to have it. You're not the only fellow who can be magnanimous. I resent being called a cold-hearted clod!"

"He's such an impetuous boy and so very plain spoken," she murmured.

Her eyes shone with a great light; her face looked like the break of day. Mr. Hunter glanced at her and away quickly, clearing his throat with a queer sort of sound. There was a throbbing silence that seemed hours long to one of them.

"We'll make the terms easy to suit you. A trifle down. Pay the rest as you can. And I won't press you if you're hard up at any time. Oh, you needn't thank me—the other buyer changed his mind."

(The End.)

Minard's Liniment used by Physicians.

Mystery of the Ocean's Bed.

Scientists are greatly interested at the present time in what has been called the Bay of Biscay Mystery. The bed of the bay, which has always been considered nearly 14,000 feet down, is now only 120 feet down!

The accuracy of this supposed discovery is to be tested, for two big points are at issue. Have previous soundings been correct, or have some strange disturbances, probably connected with the recent earthquake in Japan, so altered the earth's crcust that a mountain as high as Mont Blanc has suddenly risen from the ocean bed?

The latter suggestion seems unlikely, and yet it may not be untrue. An English vessel five years ago reported depths of 500 and 600 feet where charts showed over 4,000, so there is certainly a possibility that the bed of the Bay of Biscay may have risen!

The latest movement in the ocean's bed has just been reported by an American professor. The Hawaiian Islands, in the Pacific Ocean, are gradually being pushed upwards, and within a generation may comprise a high dry territory as large as Japan.

As some of the earth's surface has been thrown or deposited above the sea-level, it follows that some land should also have disappeared.

During the recent heavy storms which swept accross the world, a little island town in Portuguese West Africa disappeared beneath the sea. The place canished as if by magic. Survivors who happened to be in boats at the time were thought to be mad when they told the story of how the sea suddenly heaved mountains high, and closed over the island.

A Far Way Back.

A party of Americans was being conducted over a very famous building in London.

"That particular arch," explained the guide, "goes back to William the Conqueror."

"What for?" asked a member of the party. 'Won't it fit?"

Wrote a Mouthful.

The boss recently received a letter from one of his clerks who was on a wedding trip: "I am sitting by the Niagara Falls drinking it all in."

An Effect of Sunspots.

Sunspots affect the levels of tropical lakes, making them higher.

The value of the crop taken from the hop fields of British Columbia during the year 1924 is estimated to be $317,159, the yield being 813,228 pounds. Five hundred and seven acres of land were under crop.

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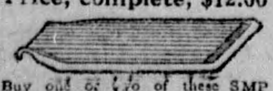

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HOW would you like to earn extra money without leaving your home—without neglecting your other duties? Not by canvassing or selling, but in a pleasant, private way - right in your own home!

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With a simple hand knitting machine you knit wool socks for me. I pay you cash for the knitting—so much a pair—and I keep you supplied with the yarn that you use. I sell the socks my workers knit to wholesale firms here in Toronto—Hundreds of thousands of pairs. I have immediate sale for every pair that I can possibly get.

Experience Unnecessary

Each worker learns from a set of simple, clear instructions. They work as much or as little as they please, filling in the hours that best suit their convenience. Of course the more socks they knit the larger their pay-cheque.

These Workers Are Happy With Their Earnings

I have over one thousand letters in my office written by men and women who are only too glad to tell others of their success. I only wish that I could print them all for you to read! Think how pleased Mrs. George Poole of Ontario must be that she sent me her name four years ago. Here is part of her last letter: "I have had my machine over four years, since taking up the work I have never been without money. As we live three miles from town I have always wanted a car, and now I have one which my Auto Knitter is paying for. Last winter I cleared $525.00." And part of a very interesting letter from Mrs. James Shaw, also of Ontario, reads as follows: "We have had our machine three years. Last fall from October until two days before Christmas, it brought me in $400.00." While most of my workers are women, hundreds of men find it profitable to turn their spare time into dollars. Listen to Mr. Arlington Fraser, who lives in a small Ontario town: "I was a little afraid of starting as I had never seen a knitting machine, but with the help of the instructions it was easy. I have only had the machine five months and I have made $325.00 in my spare time." When you read these simply written records of what others are doing, is there any reason why you cannot do the same?

Beautiful Booklet Free

My beautiful booklet giving full information about Auto Knitting is free. It is illustrated with photographs and letters of those who are making a great success of this Home-Earning plan. I would like very much to send you a copy. I know you will be surprised to learn how valuable your spare time is.

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T. W. Chadburn, President,
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