

The Free Press' Short Story

THE MODERN RUTH

By HELEN LEIGH SPRUELL

RUTH FARRELL swung down the street with an exultant lift of her fine shoulders. At Main Street, Bret Harrison fell in step with her as usual, and she turned a radiant face to him. "I've had another raise, Bret," she informed him. "The boss gave me quite a boost, and she said she liked my work very much. I've been copying some rather difficult briefs for A. I. Barton, the attorney, and he was pleased with them; so he told Miss Sims, and the raise followed." She stuck her thumbs under her armpits, and strutted laughingly, as she said, "The Sims and Farrell Letter Shop!"

"Well, it may come, and perhaps some time it will be the Farrell Letter Shop," answered Bret. "I think you're doing splendidly. Let's celebrate with supper at the Marion."

"Can we afford that?" asked Ruth, knowing that Bret's earnings were small. He was in those free lean days of a civil engineer's career.

"This is no time for economical notions," he answered resolutely. "Let's go, you rising young business woman!"

"That was their last fun together for several weeks. Bret caught only a few glimpses of Ruth, who was working overtime and studying nights to make more rapid progress at the shop. Bret himself was studying continuously on his own line of work, but there were nights when he wanted recreation from his labor, and usually he found Ruth occupied. The girl was getting her first taste of business, and it thrilled her tremendously. The little letter shop was her world; every new customer was a conquest, a new country taken, every pleased customer, a contented colony."

"Miss Sims," she said one morning to her employer, a lean, shrewd business woman of middle age, who was as meticulous and severe in her correct clothes as one of her steel filing cases, "do you think we could carry a stock of special greeting cards as a side line? We could put up some clever posters in the shop and run small but individual advertisements in the newspapers."

"Why, I don't know, Ruth," returned the older woman slowly, weighing the matter as she answered.

"Some correspondence I did for the manager of the Frank Printery gave me the idea," said Ruth. "You remember I wrote some letters for him a week ago. There was more discussion later, and when Miss Sims decided that a line of greeting cards would be advantageous to the shop, Ruth felt a glow of satisfaction: the business was expanding, and she had a part in it!

She told Bret about the cards on the way home that night, and he was almost as enthusiastic as Ruth. When they had talked over affairs at the shop, he began outlining his own plans. "This town is rather overrun with engineers," he explained. "Makes it harder for a fellow like me to get East, and there is a chance that the firm will send me to South America on a big deal."

"South America?" cried Ruth. "Would you like that?"

"It would be the opportunity of a lifetime for me," answered Bret gravely.

They had reached Ruth's home, where they parted. Nothing else was said about the South American project for months, and Ruth almost forgot about it; but Bret did not. He continued his efforts to please the firm, and concentrated on the preliminary plans for a system of waterworks at Boone, a small near-by town. He made careful and accurate surveys. While he was not in charge of the work, but only the assistant to a more experienced man, he exerted himself to give Barton complete satisfaction.

Barton encouraged his young assistant and gave him sound advice that Bret was sensible enough to absorb and follow. There were, Barton believed, considerable possibilities for the youth because of his willingness to be taught. "I tell you, Sir," he said, while talking to Ralston Cooper, the head of the firm, "that capacity to take instruction and advice is only too rare in any man, old or young." Cooper, who had handled a number of men in his work, nodded his head. He began to study young Harrison from time to time, while the engineer was unconscious of it.

While Cooper was coming to notice Bret, Miss Sims was leaning more and more upon her assistant. Ruth's rapid and accurate typewriting, her speed at shorthand, and her charm and deference pleased customers of the letter shop. The special day greeting card sales were heavy, and that fact also gave the woman confidence in the girl's growing business acuteness. The volume of work became heavier as the months went by, and the letter shop became better known. Another girl was employed in the office to take care of telephone calls and to do straight typing. The more important customers were handled by Miss Sims and Ruth. Ruth it was who suggested to the unimaginative Cora Sims, that the shop offer a mail service to authors and advertise more frequently in newspapers and magazines.

It was fascinating to the girl to watch the results of their careful advertising. Business increased steadily; another girl was employed, and then another. Additional rates in salary were given Ruth, who put the extra money each week into a savings account she was nourishing for a special purpose. No one else knew the purpose of that savings account.

for which Ruth sometimes went without a tempting pair of smart slippers. She had small feet, and she liked to dress them well.

A raise also went to Bret, and that raise went into a savings fund for a purpose. Bret kept strictly to himself. "Mr. Cooper is getting to be very nice to me," Ruth, he told the girl one Saturday afternoon when both were off work and had hiked to the country.

"You please him," answered Ruth. "Just like you please Sister Sims. I wonder why she never married?"

"Why, she never has said anything about it, of course," replied Ruth. "I've often wondered myself—Sims looks severe, but she isn't. I think she is good to me because she has no children of her own, and no relatives."

This conversation came back to Ruth several months later when Miss Sims amazed and delighted her by offering the girl a partnership in the letter shop. "I have been saving my money for a business of my own," explained Ruth, "but I have only a few hundred dollars, Miss Sims."

"This is my idea, Ruth," answered Miss Sims. "I'm interested in your development, and I won't always feel able to run this shop alone. I'm getting older. I know I can train you to run the shop, and you'll be more interested if you are one of the firm. So far as money is concerned, we can arrange your salary to take care of that. It really will not amount to more than several hundred dollars, because the equipment is small in this line of work."

Impulsively Ruth threw her arms around the older woman's neck. "You are so good to me," she said, her blue eyes brightened by sudden tears.

When Ruth left the shop that evening, she looked around with a proprietary air at the tasteful furniture, the typewriter desks with their machines neatly covered, the attractive cream-colored curtains blending with the tan walls. She straightened a chair, and then went flying down the steps to meet Bret. In her excitement, she did not notice any change in him. She did not see that his eyes were brilliant, his hands tense.

"Oh, Bret," she cried, "it is 'Sims and Farrell.' I've been offered a partnership!"

Bret stood very still for a moment; then he spoke slowly. "And I've been offered the direction of a bridge project in South America."

"South America! And you're going?" All the joy was gone from Ruth's voice; her tones were strangely in contrast to the buoyant notes of a few minutes before.

"Can't you go with me, Ruth?" he asked.

Ruth groped for an answer. Since she was fourteen, it had been understood that she would one day marry Bret, her childhood playmate and friend. It had always seemed vague and far away, however, a "some day" proposition. There was her beloved letter shop with the sign, "Sims and Farrell," to be painted on the door to-morrow! "I can't, Bret," she faltered. "When you come back—"

"It will be at least two years," he said.

"Two years! But there's my shop!" She hesitated, a miserable aching weighing down and surmounting the feeling of joy that had filled her a short time before.

Bret said nothing, and they walked home enveloped in silence. The triumphal feeling each had experienced upon his promotion was gone. The girl went to bed to stare long hours in the dark, while Bret walked the streets a long time before he felt he could go to bed at all.

When Ruth went down to work the next day, a Ruth whose head ached and whose heart was torn between love and ambition, her dull eyes encountered a freshly painted sign on the letter shop door. The pride that the girl had felt the evening before was gone now, and she almost glared at the letters. Miss Sims, who was most affable that morning, saw the change in her young partner, but said nothing.

Bret was waiting for Ruth that afternoon. The two automatically fell into step, but there was no vivacity in their walk. "I'm sailing Saturday," said Bret. Ruth repeated dully "Saturday? Must you go? Can't you stay here?"

"And clean up your shop?" said Bret, trying to laugh. "It is an opportunity I must take, much as I dislike it, Ruth. I had hoped to make a success of it so that you would be proud of me. I have been saving money for months, for us."

When they reached Ruth's home, the girl tried to pull herself together and talk a few minutes of trivial matters. Her companion said nothing. "Bret, you aren't listening. What are you thinking about?"

"Ruth," he said, soberly. "The Ruth of the Bible, the great-grandmother of David."

"That was all he would volunteer. When Ruth went into the house, she hurried to the table, picked up her Bible, and began reading the book of Ruth. A paragraph caught and held her; it brought back the day when she and Bret had learned the words together in Sunday School, and had marked them as significant on account of the story, and on account of the name of Ruth she bore. The words stood out

in great letters on her mind: "... for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

"Where thou lodgest, I will lodge, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if I ought but death part thee and me."

The loving words of Ruth to Naomi repeated themselves in her brain until she felt she should reel. Thinking of them, Ruth reached a decision.

She walked quickly into the shop the following morning, determined to speak to Miss Sims as soon as possible. "Miss Sims," she said, "I can't accept the partnership. I'm going to South America with Bret. I like my work, and I'm fond of you and of this shop, but he comes first."

"Why, Ruth, whatever will I do without you?" The severe Miss Sims talked like a helpless child. "What will you do among those South Americans?"

Ruth explained the entire situation to her, and told how she had wavered between her work and Bret. "I see, I see," answered Cora Sims. A shadow darkened her middle-aged face. "You have made a wise decision, I believe. If I had been as wise, I should not be alone to-day. I was selfish; and love comes before self. I think you have been very sensible, Ruth, and you will be happier, I believe, than a business success ever could have made you. There is no happiness in money alone."

"I don't know whatever I'll do without you," she concluded. "You must come to see me often when you return to America."

"I'd love to," cried Ruth. Then she sat down and wrote out the words of the ancestress of Jesus, and sent them to Bret.

SLATS' DIARY BY ROSS PARQUEAR

Friday—They are a new family moved into Mr. Crunches property with just cum from Germany and they got a little boy one 4 yrs. old and he can talk German all redly. The funny part of it is that he learnt German before he learnt Canady so I guess he must be pretty smart.

Saturday—Mrs. Gillem's Sister got back home last night from her trip over into Washington country and she says it must be a loan some road because they seen the same fellow they hit in the morning when they cum home last nite.

Sunday—well today when the fire alarm rung and they see the fire was out at the school House me and Jake got incouraged but cum to find out it was just a pile of trash out of the athletic field.

Munday—I told Jane I lost my 1/2 a dollar today and it wood be kind 1/2 becuz we had intended to go to the Lon late and she sed Dont let that worry you I feel offie sorry for you losing yure 1/2 a dollar and I will think of you if I dont see you. Meby she thinks I am not a going to the Lon late, well I have a Noshum to not go with her.

Tuesday—Mrs. Gillem sed when she got married to her husband the entire Ceremony opey tuk a minit and a 1/2. Pa sed he fell out of a Up stares winder once in less time than that.

Wednesday—Ole man Crunch has been deaf for several yrs. and yesterday he got wired up with a new fangle thing to make him hear and he lissened to the raddio his nite and this morning he throwed away his new fangle thing to make him hear.

Thursday—I went down to Unkie Hens this morning and he lent me his gun and he sed if you see enny thing let it have both Barrels and I seen a big black Snake and slung the hole gun at him. and retired to the house very recently.

When Asthma Comes do not despair. Turn at once to the help effective—Dr. J. D. Kellogg's Asthma Remedy. This wonderful remedy will give you the aid you need so sorely. Choking ceases, breathing becomes natural and without effort. Others, thousands of them have suffered from you suffer, but have wisely turned to this famous remedy and ceased to suffer. Get a package this very day.

WEALTH OF ANIMAL LIFE

One might imagine that with the opening up of all parts of the world to commerce a time is approaching when all the species of the world will be known, writes G. K. Noble in Natural History. That time, however, will probably never come. There are some 470,000 distinct species of insects recorded to-day and there probably live as many more which have not been captured and properly defined. Still, it is not the abundance of unknown forms which will provide occupation for the systematist for many years, but the complex nature of the species itself. America, for example, was well known geographically seventy-five years ago, but at that time only 220 kinds of mammals were known. To-day more than 2,500 forms have been described from the same area. One of the principal reasons for this increase is the recognition that a species is composite, consisting of many strains, some of which may be isolated geographically and hence are worthy of a sub-specific designation.

Be at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let every year find you a better man.—Franklin.

HELP MAKE YOUR TOWN THE RIGHT SORT OF TOWN

The following editorial from The Perth Expositor should be of interest and inspiration:

"Some towns are wonderful places in which to live, but poor places in which to make a living."

Other towns are good places in which to make a living, but poor places in which to live, says Edson G. Walte, in his weekly talk on business.

The ideal town is the town that makes itself a good place in which to live, and make a living.

A town without payrolls has a hard time keeping step with progress and prosperity.

Citizens should patronize home industries and help to build payrolls, for what helps to build the industries of the home town helps all.

The business of a town cannot go ahead when the initiative and enterprise of its business men are hampered by distrust and lack of support of its citizens.

A town cannot go ahead when its citizens spend their money in some other city, keeping money from circulating at home.

Money spent at home builds the home town—money spent away from home builds some other town. Progressive citizens think of the home town first.

When you spend your money in some other town, that town gets the money and your town suffers. When you spend your money in your home town, it stays at home, and works to keep your town healthy.

A GOOD REMEDY

Ted: "My feet burn like the dickens; do you think a mustard bath would help?"

Ned: "Sure! There's nothing better than mustard for hot dogs!"

COMING ALONG

Minister (to Mrs. Jones): "That's a fine big boy you've got; he'll do for a policeman-some day."

Mrs. Jones (proudly): "He will that; he nearly did for one yesterday."

EVERY package of Kellogg's Corn Flakes is sold with the personal guarantee of W. K. Kellogg: "Kellogg's Corn Flakes must more than satisfy you with their flavor, crispness and freshness. If they aren't the very best corn flakes you ever tasted, return the empty red-and-green package and we will gladly refund your money."

With such a guarantee, it is no wonder that for 25 years Kellogg's Corn Flakes have been considered the standard of value.

When substitutes are offered you, remember it is seldom in the spirit of service. Demand the genuine. Made by Kellogg in London, Ontario.

Guaranteed



Sharpening... Razor Blades and Business

Recently we purchased, in Acton, a small contraption for sharpening safety razor blades. The thing looked all right and it was very reasonably priced, and the local salesman demonstrated the idea very well. We took it home and tried it out on a blade. It didn't work very well. We tried it on another, and there wasn't any noticeable improvement when the razor went to work on the stubble. We threw it to one side in disgust.

The other day we tried the apparatus on another blade. It helped some. We have kept on trying it, and have come to the conclusion it's not so bad.

Maybe!

That's what you have been doing with advertising. If it didn't sharpen your business with the first trial, you quit trying. Maybe you had a poor blade to work on. Perhaps you didn't get your message right in the advertisement.

There is no Doubt!

That the principle of newspaper and printed publicity is correct if properly used. The largest and most successful institutions in the world use this method, not once a week, but every day in every week. They use both newspapers and printed catalogues and circulars continuously to secure the customers that rightfully belong to the merchants in the smaller communities.

Like Razor Blade Sharpeners Advertising has to be used Continuously and with a Skill that comes by Practise to be Effective