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"Why, I remember with my other razor I always had to throw away a blade after a couple of shaves. Now, I simply take it and give it a few turns on the strop and it's as good as ever."

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Auto-Strop Building, Toronto, Canada

Auto-Strop Safety Razor

The Promoter's Wife

Continued from Page Ten

honesty. For that was what I was doing; questioning the honesty of my boy's father.

"Now see here, Barbara! I may have done some things that old fogies like Powers call 'crooked.' But they aren't up in modern business methods. I don't MAKE anyone give me money. I give them stock with the understanding that there is a risk; it may turn out well, probably will. But they all understand, or ought to, that they are taking a chance. I wish you would not butt in to my affairs. You have enough to do to run the house and take care of the boy."

"I read about that promoter—his name was Carter, the other day. They have arrested him because he sold all wells, stock in them, when he didn't even own the land. It has frightened me terribly, 'Neill!'"

"I would not plead with him to do right just because it was right, and because I believed in him—not yet. I would try other things first."

"The cases are not similar at all. My deals are all right." Yet even as he answered, he flushed painfully.

"We have been extravagant, Neill. I know we haven't run any bills you don't intend to pay; but there are a lot of them, some of them for big amounts. Can't we economize a little?"

"And give people the right to think I am hard up! I guess not. Now see here, Bab. You attend to your own affairs, and give me the same privilege. I shall forget that I have a sweet, pretty wife soon, and think only that I have a meddlesome person named Bab who won't mind her own business." He kissed me, laughing, then changed the subject. Again I had accomplished absolutely nothing.

MR. FREDERICK APPEARS PROMPTLY AS HE PROMISED

CHAPTER LXXIX.

To have Neill turn me off with a laugh seemed almost more than I could bear. Suddenly I burst into tears, sobbing unrestrainedly. He was at once penitent.

"Poor girl, people have talked to you until you are unnerved," he said trying to calm me. "Come Bab, don't give way like that!"

"But I can't bear to have people say things about you! I just can't live if they keep saying you are dishonest, that you spend your time with women who are—not nice; and that you spend money that doesn't belong to you. Why Neill I would rather live on a crust than have you, my husband, do these things. You are smart and clever. It isn't necessary for you to do wrong to make a living. Do promise me, dear, that you will do different."

"All right, I will promise to be more careful," and with that I had to be content. Neill was quick tempered. If pushed too far he invariably rebelled. Then we would quarrel, and I would have accomplished nothing; less than nothing, for after we quarreled he always remained away; sulking for a day or two, and was altogether hard to manage. But when not crossed he was the easiest going person in the world.

I laid awake long after he slept. My life was becoming a problem, the living of it, I mean. Had I not so passionately loved my husband, loved him, faults and all, I think perhaps it might have been easier for me. But it seemed so dreadful to doubt him; so unwisely to question his integrity. I had always thought him so upright, so honest; and had so carried myself toward him.

He had turned me off when I spoke of being economical. Had said it would hurt him if people knew we were retrenching. I could not understand why cutting out extravagance should make people doubt one but then I knew very little of business, so probably Neill was right.

I again thought of that sheaf of unpaid bills down stairs. I would

ask Neill in the morning to leave me a lot of signed checks and I would fill them out and pay every cent we owed.

In the morning when I proposed doing so to Neill, he objected.

"I don't care to use so much ready money just now. Pay a few of the smaller ones if you like and let the others go. It won't hurt them to wait a while. I expect they all robbed us anyway."

"Oh, I don't think so, Neill, really I don't! We had the very best of everything, the most expensive. You mustn't talk as if people were cheats."

"Yet you listen to people who so designate me." A trifle bitterly.

"Not if I can help it, dear! and you know I don't believe you ever meant to wrong anyone—you have been led into these big schemes by older men."

"Well I must be off—I'll call you if anything happens I can't get home to dinner."

"Please don't let anything happen." I urged as I kissed him good bye.

I watched him swing down the street. He usually walked part of the way to the office in the morning, said he needed the exercise. How handsome he was, and how young he looked in his well fitting clothes. He was slender, yet broad of shoulder, and I never saw him in the street that I did not compare him to other men to their disadvantage.

When he passed out of sight I justified myself about a few household tasks until such time as I might expect Mr. Frederick. He came promptly at eleven, as he had promised.

"You always keep your word, do you not?" I asked.

"Always if possible. To what do you refer?"

"Your promptness in keeping appointments."

"Oh, not to be prompt in that respect is ungrateful! especially when the appointment is with a lady."

"I forgot to ask you about Mr. Powers the other day. Did you see him?" I queried when we were seated in the library.

"Yes—I was with him some little time."

"What did he say? Does he really think Neill is doing wrong, that his business isn't all that it should be?"

"One question at a time please." Then soberly: "I will tell you as nearly as I can remember just what MR. POWERS LOOKS UP PROPERTIES NEIL ADVISES

CHAPTER LXXX.

"Did I not think I could help you. I should hesitate to distress you as I must." Mr. Frederick resumed gravely. "But I do think I can. So I must make things plain to you. Your husband when he first decided to promote big schemes, did not, I am sure, intend to be dishonest either with himself or his clients. But the lure of big business caught him. Easy money—it is very hard to make big fortunes in natural channels, hard, and a slow proposition. He was very young. When he saw how easily people bite when they think they can make big money with little; how quickly and eagerly they swallowed any idea that promises big returns, he commenced to look around for properties which he could handle to his advantage—in this way. Properties in which there was of course an element of risk for the client, none for him. From that it was but a step to simply imagining he had something to sell. None of the people who put in their money ever investigated; they were satisfied to get the big interest he paid them, and then to live on the promise of immense profits. It was a temptation. Forbes succumbed to it. I had been suspicious of some of his deals for some time; but when I found he had associated himself with Connor and Tearie I was sure of it. I tried to make him get out from under that combination when I talked to him the other day. I told him all I knew, and I could prove every word I said. They are two sharpers. If trouble came the brunt of it would fall on your husband. There are slick, and always manage to slide out from under. Of course, Mr. Forbes didn't believe me, thinks me an old woman for meddling; I expect. Although I tried to be as tactful as possible because I want to be your friend and—his." I smiled a little as I recalled that Neill had called him an "old woman" when speaking of him.

"I talked to Neill last night. I volunteered."

"What did he say?"

"He laughed away my fears. Told me, kindly, of course, to look after the house and the baby. That he would attend to his business."

"I'm sorry he wouldn't be serious with you. I had hoped great things if he were—if he would listen to you. He is so young that he will be forgiven in time if he stops short now, but if he goes on I am afraid there is nothing but trouble ahead for him."

"What can I do? I am so ignorant of business, have trusted him so implicitly—trust him now," I added. Not to this man whom I knew, cared enough for me to try to straighten

out the tangle of our lives would I own that I had lost faith. "Trust him as being honest himself, even if he has been led astray by others." It was only a half declaration of faith. But I had to say something.

"Yes—I know. But—pardon my bluntness—you must not let your faith in him—your love," he hesitated over the word, "blind you to the necessity of recognizing his danger—and yours. Now to get back to Powers, he talked frankly with me. He like others recognizes Forbes' ability, his cleverness. He said many complimentary things about him. But he also said that he feared for his future. That he had become mixed up with many shady transactions,

that he personally knew of cases where he, Forbes, had misrepresented matters to people to get them to invest—"

"Not knowingly misrepresented, I am sure," I interrupted, my face burning.

"I am afraid he did," his voice serious, but kind. "At least he took no pains to see if what he promised could be done; or if even he had the properties he claimed were to turn out such a bonanza. He has sent out prospectus which pictured in glowing language the land containing oil wells, etc., they—the company—promised to own. Upon investigation there are no such lands even—that is they do not own them, or they are

worthless."

"Who investigated?" I was anxious to learn all I could, yet I understood very little of all I was told. One reason my lack of business knowledge, the other the fight in my mind to believe in Neill; my refusal in face of all I was told—to believe he was really dishonest.

"I have—I did it for your sake. I was afraid things were not as they should be when I was before. Very much afraid. I took pains to look up several of the advertised properties—and didn't find them as represented." Then after a minute: "Powers too took pains to look Forbes up. I don't want to hurt you, but he did it at his wife's request."

CHAPTER LXXX.

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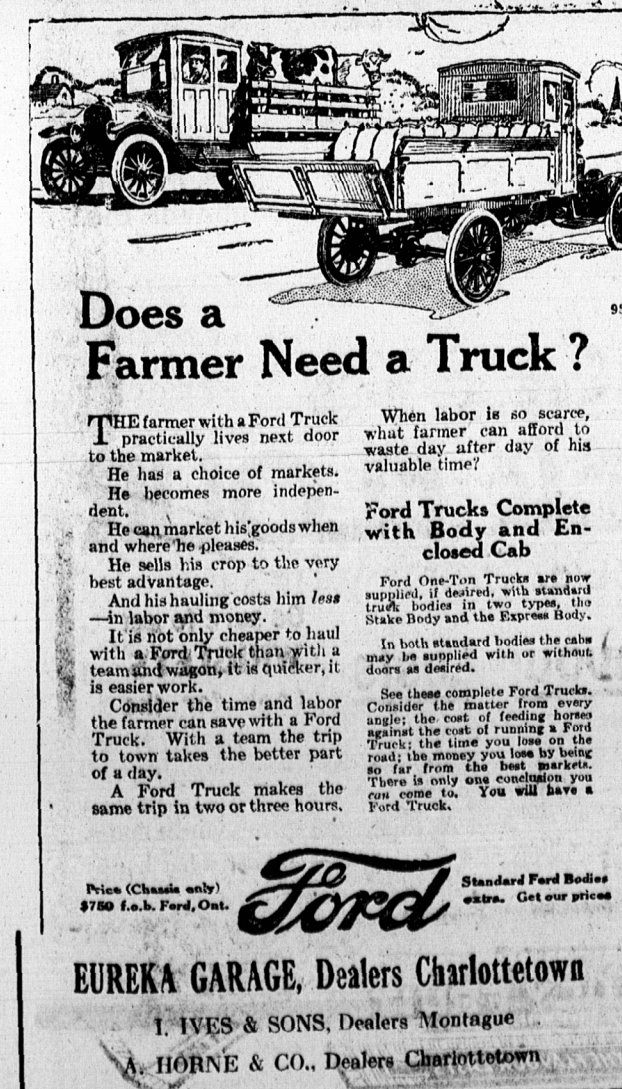


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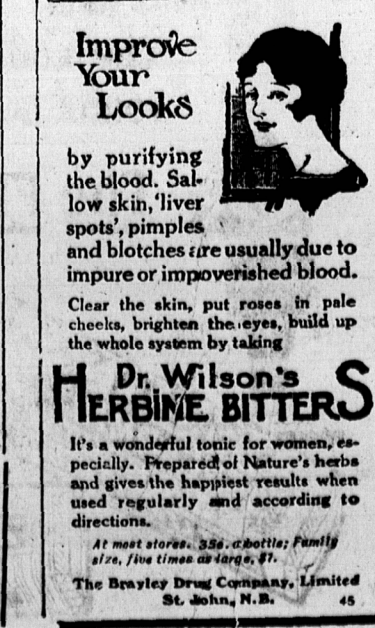
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