

THE PROMOTER'S WIFE

BY JANE PHELPS

NEIL TELLS BARBARA MORE ABOUT HIS BUSINESS

CHAPTER XXIX.

What in the world did Mr. Ray mean when he said I was asking a good deal for a promoter's wife? I asked.

"What did you say to him to call for a remark like that?" "I said I was more anxious to see the workings of the mines in which you were interested, than I was in seeing the people of Mexico."

"What brought up the subject?" "There was a frown on Neil's face—the kind of look I had learned to dread."

"And you told him—" "That I hoped to go with you if you went again," I interrupted.

"Rayburn is all right, but he is apt to think things. Be very careful what you say to him."

"Think things—what do you mean?" "Oh, nothing in particular. He prides himself upon his skill in reading character, and sometimes he is pretty shrewd in getting information from people without the one he is talking to, realizing he is pumping them."

"This conversation had taken place in the car on the way home from Blanche Orton's dinner. Neil did not appear sleepy, and seemed inclined to talk after we reached home. So we went into the library, where, in spite of all I could say, he took another drink—his 'nightcap' he called it."

"Suddenly I thought: 'This is a good time to urge him to tell me about his business.' So I commenced:

"Neil, please tell me how you sell the mines you get hold of? That is what you do, isn't it?" "I don't sell mines at all. I sell stock shares."

"But it is mining stock?" "Yes, naturally."

"But just how do you go about it? Do you do it by mail? I saw such a stack of circulars and addressed envelopes the day I was down at the office—the day you were not there."

"We do a lot by mail. Occasionally we get hold of some rich man, he has hesitated, and land him for a few thousand shares."

"And does that mean that people who are not rich buy mining stock?" "It means that people who want to be rich buy it." Then: "By the way, Bab, I am going to bring a prospective customer home to dinner tomorrow night. Look your prettiest. Better wear that dress. We will be alone but I want you to make a good impression. And that is a running gown."

"I thought it was too, until I saw Mrs. Orton's."

"You couldn't wear the same clothes Blanche does. You aren't the type."

"But why? She looked so wonderfully—well, different, I was quite out of conceit with my dress."

"Don't be foolish. Blanche can wear those things; you couldn't!" "I'd like to try," I pouted. "You admire her immensely, don't you?" "She's a very clever woman. But we were talking of tomorrow night. She is a fine fellow, and is rotten with money. I want to interest him in this new deal. It will mean a killing if I do."

"In what way will it be a killing?" "I am almost ashamed to say that I questioned Neil with more confidence because he had taken another drink. Liquor seemed always to make him talkative. I didn't want him to take it, had objected; but so long as he paid no attention, I would try to turn it to advantage. I so wanted to know what Mr. Fredericks referred to when he said others would suffer from Neil's business methods even if he did not."

"Why, because he'll take stock of course—a big block of it."

"But if the mine is worth what you ask, and you had to pay for it, how can you make a killing if he doesn't buy the stock?" "Oh, let's go to bed. You make yourself attractive to him, and let me attend to the rest."

NEIL TELLS BARBARA A GOOD FRONT GOES A LONG WAY

I was definitely conscious of the possibility that, because of this faith in Mrs. Orton's ability, he might eventually think her necessary to him. Hitherto my happiness had been almost perfect because of my trust in Neil's loyalty.

I regarded the ordinary form of jealousy as unnecessary, and indeed dishonorable toward Neil—toward my love for him. To me, such forms of jealousy were an insult. But could Neil, more than another, permanently control his heart if this woman made him think she was necessary to his success?

Success was Neil's God. If it would make for that success, would he sacrifice me?

I asked myself this question, but refused myself an answer. When I married Neil, although 23 years old, I never had cared for anyone else; never had had the slightest idea of what an all-absorbing love meant to a woman. But now I knew to the fullest extent. Was I also to know the unhappiness which sometimes comes to women who love

All day I thought and thought and thought. Neil's friend had said that he was fortunate to be able to "enlist the interest of two women," and then he had called Blanche Orton "clever and—dangerous." Then he had said it was easy to read the character of a woman of her sort: "Charming, fascinating, unscrupulous—when it suits them."

Did it suit Blanche Orton to be unscrupulous? And was there something in her relation with Neil that warranted that remark?

In spite of my anxiety, the day passed swiftly. Neil had asked for an elaborate menu for the dinner; and there were flowers to get, and other things to occupy me. I was all dressed when he came in. Dressing exactly as I had been the night before, pearls and all. And I should have no rival at this dinner. Blanche Orton, in her snaky costume, would not eclipse me. It raised my spirits, in a way, that this was so; and when Neil again complimented me, and told me I looked sweet enough to eat, I felt quite satisfied with myself and with my appearance.

Mr. Scott came quite promptly, and I was surprised that Neil should have been so particular, should have gone to so much trouble for him. He was a short, swarthy man, badly dressed although in evening clothes—"Open-faced clothes," he facetiously called them, later, on, when the wine Neil had given him made him feel more at ease. His English was poor and ungrammatical; his voice halted frequently when he tried to express himself.

"He needs his money. He hasn't any other attractions," I said to myself. But Neil had wanted me to entertain him, so I tried to forget his unattractive personality, and to be as interesting as I could. That I was succeeding, and that Neil was pleased, was evident by his quick appreciative glance in my direction.

We had coffee in the library—coffee and liquors. Both Mr. Scott and Neil became talkative.

"You're a slick one, Forbes, so I'm told," Mr. Scott remarked. "But you or anyone else will have to get up early in the morning to put any thing over on me. I am sure your deal is on the square, and I'll take that block of stock."

They excused themselves and went to the desk and talked of checks and shares for about ten minutes. Then Neil gave him some stock certificates—at least that was what they called them—and he gave Neil a check.

After he left, Neil laughed rather sarcastically and said: "The fool! he's dead easy."

"What do you mean, Neil? And why were you so anxious to entertain such a man lavishly?" "A good front goes a long way with some people." I tried to get him to say more, but without success. I went to bed, once more with a feeling that all was not right; but also feeling helpless to change anything.

TWO CODES—ONE FOR A MAN, ANOTHER FOR A WOMAN

CHAPTER XXXI. The next morning at breakfast I recurred to the subject: "You and I are partners, dear. I would do anything in the world to help you. But you must tell me things, let me understand what you are doing, if I am to be of use. I stay out and lunch with her. I was nothing loath, and we fixed upon Sherry's as the place where we could see more people we knew."

The head waiter, who knew us both, gave us a very nice table on the balcony, looking out upon the Avenue. We ordered and were waiting to be served, when, hearing a loud voice objecting to being given a certain table, I turned. To my surprise, the owner of the objecting voice proved to be Mr. Scott.

once to talk of something else. He had met Lorraine Morton; he thought she was looking particularly well—anything but the one thing about which I was curious.

Neil never had taken me into his confidence upon subjects that were of interest to him. I believed that the lightest, as well as the heaviest anxieties, the smallest as well as the greatest pleasures, should be equally shared by husband and wife. Yet, after three years of married life, I had accomplished nothing. Practically, I knew no more of his affairs than I did the day the dear old minister at home had married us.

I recalled with dissatisfaction that never had he talked to me of the many little details which surely would have been of interest to me. His attitude always had been: "I've made the money, I shall make more as we need it. Your wants are anticipated, what more can you possibly demand of me?"

Many women are fated to spinsterhood, and properly. But I had been constituted by nature to be some man's wife; the repository of his secrets, his helpmate. It was, therefore, with a shock that I discovered how little I meant in Neil's life; how little I really knew of him. I was usually in love with Neil, and I was correspondingly anxious that he love me unstintingly. That he was eternally busy, his mind and thoughts occupied with these "deals," as he called them, seemed to me a matter for complaint. Yet I rarely complained. I had learned that was not the way to hold his love. I adored him, I adored living with him in our beautiful home. I fancied there was here an atmosphere which I found nowhere else. I couldn't explain the difference; I could only feel it.

Neil, at times, was voluble and witty. Under the spell of his animated conversation, worries and anxieties seemed to vanish. I had begun to understand that he might have a wonderful attraction for other women, as well as for me. The thought was far from being either pleasant or comforting.

I knew Neil well enough to know that he would brook no divided allegiance on my part. I thought he should realize that I held the same ideas, was swayed by the same emotions; yet I knew he did not, could not appreciate that this was so. He was Neil. I was some one else.

Girls! Use Lemons! Make a Bleaching, Beautifying Cream

The juice of two fresh lemons strained into a bottle containing three ounces of orchard white makes a whole quart pint of the most remarkable lemon skin beautifier at about the cost one must pay for a small jar of the ordinary cold cream.

Care should be taken to strain the lemon juice through a fine cloth so no lemon pulp gets in, then this lotion will keep fresh for months. Every woman knows that lemon juice is used to bleach and remove such blemishes as freckles, sallowness and tan and is the ideal skin softener, smoother and beautifier.

Just try it: Get three ounces of orchard white at any pharmacy and two lemons from the grocer and make up a quart pint of this sweetly fragrant lemon lotion and massage it daily into the face, neck, arms and hands. It naturally should help to soften, freshen, bleach and bring out the roses and beauty of any skin. It is simply marvelous to smoothen rough, red hands.

Blanche Orton was his companion. They were finally seated to please him, but to my disappointment, where I could neither see nor hear them. I own frankly that I should have been glad to hear what they were talking of.

Why should they be together? Neil had said nothing of their knowing each other. Did he know it? If he did it was strange that he had not invited Mr. and Mrs. Orton to dinner the night before. No, I concluded he knew nothing of it. Just then I turned again toward where they were seated, and saw—Neil come in and join them!

Lorraine had not seen him. Should I tell her, or should I say nothing? I was positive that Neil had not seen us; that he would not, if I decided to go without letting him know I was there. But why should I act as if either of us were doing something we wanted to keep secret?

I called the waiter. "Did you see Mr. Forbes, the gentleman who just sat down over at that corner table?" "Yes, madam! I know Mr. Forbes quite well. I often wait upon him."

"Tell him, please, that his wife would like to speak to him."

The garrulous waiter immediately crossed to Neil. He looked surprised but rose and came over at once. "Mrs. Orton has no need of two escorts, you come over here with us," I said, after he had spoken to Lorraine.

"That's impossible, much as I should enjoy it. I can't even ask you and Lorraine to join us. We are talking business today."

For the first time I noticed that he had an anxious look; the lines in his face were unusually prominent.

"But I thought you had finished with Mr. Scott!" I would not mention Blanche.

"Not by a good deal. He was told something this morning that seems to have upset him considerably. It is up to me to undo the mischief. Excuse me now, I must run back."

Lorraine told him to run along and be a good little boy and not flirt with Blanche Orton. I added: "Be sure you remember."

But while we ate, only one thing occupied my thoughts: Why was Blanche Orton with them?

BARBARA ASKS NEIL FOR THE SAME CONFIDENCE HE GIVES BLANCHE

CHAPTER XXXIII. That night Neil came home in rare good humor. I noticed at once that he had been drinking—not much, but enough to make him a bit more talkative than he otherwise would have been. My heart sank, as it always did when he drank. "I was so afraid it might grow upon him. It seemed to me he came home more and more often with the smell of it clinging to him."

"How did Blanche Orton happen to be with you and Mr. Scott this noon?" The question was as casual as I could make it.

Obviously, my question jarred. "She wanted to talk to him," he said coldly.

I wanted Neil's confidence so badly that these half—no, not even half—confidences, hurt me cruelly. "I am wondering what about. Surely she can have nothing in common with that man?"

"Like a woman—want to know everything?" I drew in a sharp little breath. His words, his tone, stabbed me. In spite of my burning curiosity, I said:

"In a wife, Neil, as well as a woman," I spoke with all the dignity

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I could command. Curious as I was, I would not let him think it was simply jealous, vulgar curiosity that had prompted my questions. And it was not, I felt that it was my right as his wife to know these things about which he was so secretive.

Now—although I had firmly decided in my mind only a few hours before that all the innuendoes, all the hints I had heard, all that Mr. Fredericks had told me, were emanations of minds incapable of doing what Neil could do, and untrue—now my doubts returned in full force. Doubts of both kinds—of his business, and of his relation with Blanche Orton.

I stole an annoyed glance at Neil. Presently he lurched forward a bit in his chair, then straightened himself with an obvious effort to disguise from me what I already knew; that he had been drinking.

"Don't look at me like that, Bab! what's got into you tonight?"

"Nothing, Neil. But something has gone into you. Please, dear, don't drink. I am afraid. Afraid for you and—for me."

"Nonsense! I only take a couple after I am through at the office. It braces me up. I shan't 'end in the gutter' like the story books say, so don't worry."

"Neil, won't you take me into your confidence?" I begged. "I don't like to feel that my sex, and my power to amuse you, and my home-making ability are the only links between us. It is an insult to my intelligence. Perhaps I might not understand things all at once; perhaps I could be of no help or assistance to you. But I should be so much happier, Neil, if I felt you were making me your confidante, that you let me share all your life instead of only a part of it." Women are doing many things now-a-days, Neil. They are successful in business and in the professions. It shows that it is not brain power that has been our lack, or the reason we have not competed with men long ago. I have read of women who have been the inspiration of the men they married—who have given them ideas which made for success. How do you know but that I might be such a woman? You see, Neil dear you, don't give me a chance."

Instead of answering immediately, he looked at me through half-closed lids a moment. Then:

"You say you might give me ideas that would make for my success. Am I not successful enough to please your ladyship? What do you want that I do not provide? Don't you have as much or more, than any of the young women who have been married scarcely four years, and whose husbands are but thirty years old? It seems to me that if you stop to think, you will not find it necessary to make the plea to help me, a cover for what is just plain curiosity. Once more I ask, Bab: what do you want that I do not provide?"

"The same confidence you give to Blanche Orton."

STERN REMINDERS OF RHEUMATISM

Cold or Wet Weather May Start the Pains, But the Trouble is in the Blood

Every rheumatic sufferer should realize that rheumatism is rooted in the blood and can only be cured by a treatment that will cleanse the blood of the rheumatic poisons. The old-time belief that rheumatism was caused by cold, damp weather, is now exploded. Such weather conditions may start the aches and pains, but is not the real cause. Liniments and outward applications may give temporary relief, but cannot cure the trouble, because they do not reach its source in the blood. The sufferer from rheumatism who experiments outward applications is only wasting valuable time and good money in depending upon such treatment, the trouble still remains, and it is all the time becoming more firmly rooted—harder to cure when the proper treatment is applied. Treat this disease through the blood and you will soon be rid of the pains and tortures. As a cure for rheumatism Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are unequalled. They act directly on the impure, weak blood; they purify and strengthen it, and so root out the cause of rheumatism. Mr. D. Lewis, postmaster at Escumiac, N. B., says: "I was attacked with rheumatism, which settled in my elbow, shoulder and knee joints, and at times caused me great suffering. The trouble was particularly severe last spring and I decided to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. After taking the pills for some time the rheumatic pains and stiffness in the joints disappeared and I have not since had any return of the trouble."

If you are suffering from rheumatism, or any trouble due to poor blood and weak nerves, you will find a cure in a fair use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. You can procure these pills through any medicine dealer, or by mail at 50 cents a box or six boxes for \$2.50 from The Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

A Dry, Sweet Smoke The Wellington THE UNIVERSAL PIPE TRADE MARK A Wellington Pipe makes your tobacco do its very best. The well catches the moisture. The top-opening bit sends the clean, dry smoke up, away from your tongue. The WDC triangle trademark shows that you have a piece of genuine French briar.

PLANT WELL-BRED SEEDS Vegetables are like cows—the better the breed, the better the results. This year, in particular, insure results by planting McDonald's TESTED SEEDS. It is the truest economy to pay enough to get seeds that will give you large crops of finest Vegetables. McDonald's Tested Seeds assure this.

Gold Soap You notice the size of the cake of Gold Soap when the grocer hands it to you. It is the biggest as well as the best cake of laundry soap for the money. You can't doubt it is bigger when you hold it in your own hand. You will not doubt that it is better when you use it. So remember the name, and ask for it.

Gold Soap The Big Good Laundry

HERCULES Leather-Chain Trace A harness is as strong as the trace—no stronger. The trace takes the strain and the strongest trace is the best. The Hercules is a flat shaped trace, strong as steel, flexible as leather, tough and unbreakable, made of steel chain covered with heavy leather neatly finished in turned and rounded edges strongly attached. Powerful heel chain and either clip or bolt piece at harness end; one and one-half inch solid leather billet. Does not chafe the horses and is tremendously satisfactory. If you don't have the Hercules Trace on your heavy harness, don't wait order a set NOW. If your dealer does not have it, order from us direct. We will ship same day, on receipt of price. \$15 PER SET