

Patty's Business Experience.

BY MAUD HUMPHREYS.

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"Is it as bad as that?" asked Mrs. Constance Wilson in dismay.

"Every bit as bad," responded Patty, with a brave attempt at cheerfulness. "When it is all over, I will have perhaps \$500 and the furniture."

"Dear me," thought Mrs. Wilson, "and every one thought Mr. Norris was such a fine business man." But she did not express the thought. She knew the girl's loyalty to her dead father.

"Patty," she finally exclaimed in triumph, "there are the Van Allen girls going abroad. Their father is a widower. He wants a companion for them. You know the continent like a guidebook, and you'd be useful. They're new to this sort of things, you know."

Patricia Norris drew herself up very straight.

"Connie, don't suggest impossible things. I positively refuse to take a position that savors of charity. I'm going straight into the business world and work—really work."

Mrs. Wilson affected a cheerful acquiescence which she did not feel.

"I'm going home now, my dear, and think this over. You'll hear from me tomorrow. And of course you'll succeed, whatever you undertake."

Mrs. Wilson had been Patty's governess in the days when such a thing as financial uncertainty seemed far removed from the Norris mansion. Now she was manuscript reader for a big publishing concern. When she reached her dimly lighted bedroom, third story, back, in a noisy boarding house, she drew forth a small bankbook and studied it carefully. As a result of long reflection she dispatched the following note to Patty:

My Dear Girl—Before we do anything else we must find a home. I am sick unto death of boarding. Shall we have a little flat together, a cunning apartment, with what you want of your dear old things as furnishings? Then we'll find you the position. But first a home—for your sake and mine. Save me from the fate of a hall bedroom, my dear. It is the chance I have dreamed of for years.

Three weeks later Mrs. Wilson caught Patty frowning at her across a dinner table that was homelike and dainty.

"Connie, there's absolutely nothing left for me to do. The tins are hung straight in the kitchen, and I've tried the bric-a-brac in every conceivable position. I'm not to be put off any longer. I want a job."

There was mirth in the tone, but it rang false. "Job" from the lips of Patricia Norris! Nevertheless that same evening they faced the situation together, Mrs. Wilson had seen this coming and was prepared.

"There is absolutely nothing open in our offices, as I had hoped, Patty, and the only schools where I would have influence are supplied with teachers that never marry or die." She surveyed the girl through a veil of unshed tears. "You've a regular Gibson figure, my dear, and such lovely fluffy hair"—She broke off disconnectedly. Patty laughed.

"Connie, do stick to the text. Shall I go forth as an artist's model?"

Mrs. Wilson clasped her hands tightly.

"Not exactly that, but I heard of something to-day, Patty, that you could do—so well."

"Name it," responded Patty, but with an odd sinking sensation in her heart.

"At Schermerhorn's they want a—a model to show off their imported suits, and you're the very—Oh, Patty, don't look at me like that—I've tried so hard to get something better."

In a second the girl's soft arms were round her neck.

"Connie, behave yourself! Of course I shall take it and be properly grateful. How much?"

"Only \$12.50 a week, but you wouldn't have got that much, only that I told the head of the department what a—a beauty you were."

"Flatterer!" answered Patty, with a laugh that sounded more like a sob.

So did Patricia Norris make her entry into the business world. It was not hard work, and she never wearied of handling the beautiful wraps and frocks. Her statuesque beauty set them off to perfection, and the head of the department approved of her because she

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"never got gay" nor wasted the time of other employees by chatting with them, as her predecessor had done. In fact she held herself aloof from the other girls in the shop. It was an odd, unreasoning pride that they could not understand. If the girls who thought her proud had known how she envied them, they might have felt differently. They worked with their hands, and she—just posed. It was not brain that earned her salary, but a mere bauble of physical perfection.

And she resented most of all the quiet, searching glances of a young fellow who seemed to be in the cashier's department. Once when she went to draw her salary he stood near the window and handed forth the envelope without even asking her name. She flushed slightly, and after that his compelling glance called forth a stiff little bow when they came face to face.

One noon when she was threading her way through a stream of cable cars and grays she was almost run down, and the gray-eyed young man from the cashier's department reached her before the policeman. Two nights later when she and Mrs. Wilson indulged in the extravagance of tickets for a fashionable playhouse, they emerged upon a sudden rainstorm.

"Oh!" wailed Mrs. Wilson, "my new bonnet!"

Just then someone arrayed in a long coat and balancing a comforting umbrella reached their side. It was the young man from Schermerhorn's.

"Come back into the lobby, Miss Norris, while I call a hansom for you."

"A hansom, Patty! He said a hansom!" exclaimed Mrs. Wilson, almost tearfully.

"What will it cost?"

"I don't know," snapped Patty nervously, "not as much as a new bonnet."

A few moments later he escorted them to the waiting hansom, raised his hat gravely, looked just once into Patty's brown eyes and away they whirled in the blackness of the night.

At their apartment Mrs. Wilson, covering her beloved coiffeur of chiffon and roses with a handkerchief, rushed into the hall, leaving Patty to settle the bill. The latter was strangely silent until they were brushing their hair, when she suddenly burst forth in wrath:

"It is bad enough, Connie, to rail in public over a ruined hat, but to bewail the price of a hansom is unforgivable."

"Why—why?" grasped Mrs. Wilson.

"He paid the hackman, that's all," groaned Patty, and she threw herself face downward in her pillows, murmuring, "He needn't think that just because he saved my life he can pay my hack fare."

And yet inconsistently she took a strange pleasure in recalling the look in his dark gray eyes when he leaned forward.

A month later Mrs. Wilson came home radiant.

"There's an opening, Patty, dear, in our office, and you must take it quick. There are dozens of applications, but I have the promise!"

And the next day Patty handed in her resignation to Schermerhorn & Co., to take effect on Saturday. With the last day came word that Mr. Frawley would like to see Miss Norris before she left. For once she relaxed the rule and asked one of the girls who Mr. Frawley was.

"Oh, he's the company," responded the girl carelessly.

After drawing her last pay envelope Patty crossed to the main office and was ushered into a smaller room. The ubiquitous young man of the gray eyes rose to receive her.

"Mr. Frawley has sent for me," she began with just the suggestion of a flush in her cheeks.

"I am Mr. Frawley," replied he, and the gray eyes danced at her confusion.

"I wanted to tell you, Miss Norris, that while we regret to lose your valuable services we are glad to know you are securing a position better suited to—er—your tastes and abilities. I trust you will not forget—us?"

The gray eyes were looking most pleadingly into hers. The flush crept closer and closer to the soft brown hair.

"I am afraid I've been very rude sometimes, Mr. Frawley," she murmured in a low voice. "But you know it was all so new to me, and I felt—oh, I can't tell you just how I did feel!"

"I think I understand, Miss Norris. I—hope I shall see you again. May I?"

"We live at the Jerome apartments, Mrs. Wilson and I—and we are always home Tuesday evenings."

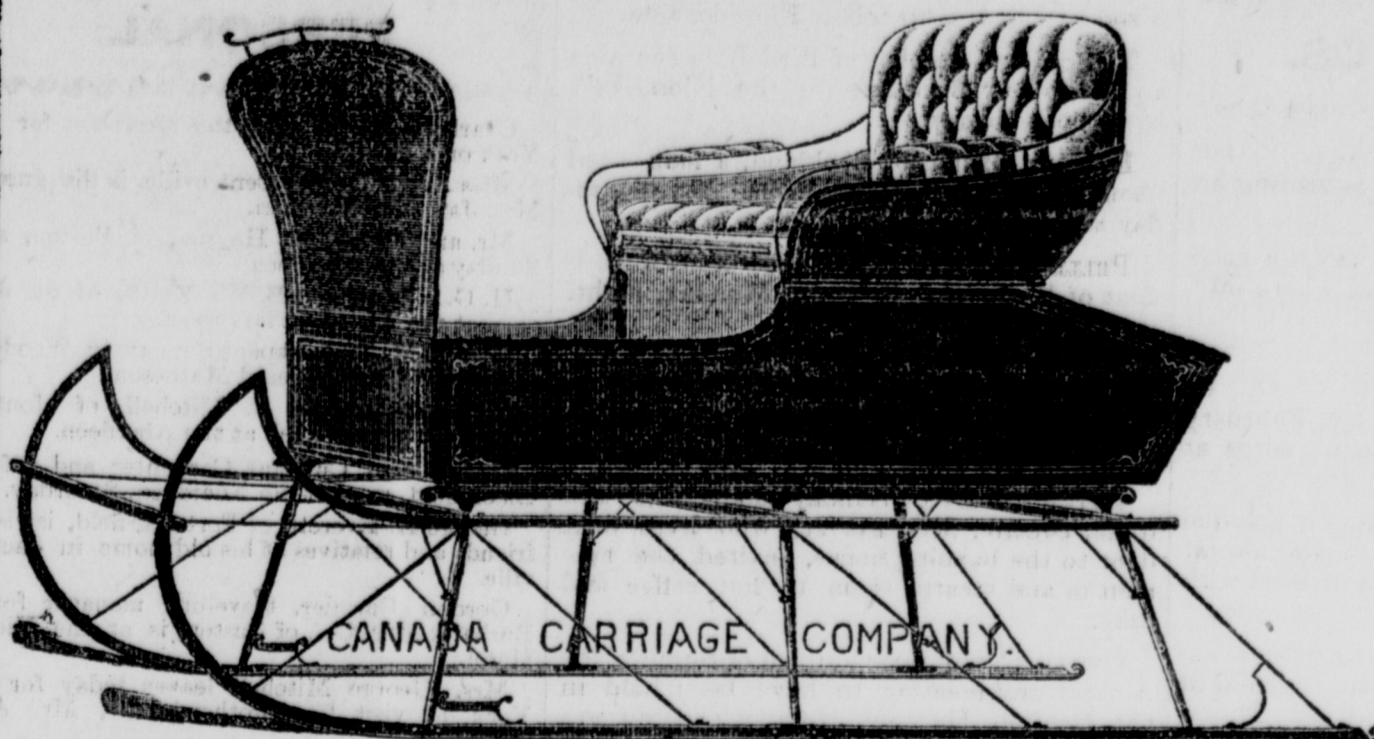
The gray eyes thanked her eloquently, and she walked rapidly from the office.

That night at the dinner table Mrs. Wilson rambled on happily: "I really don't think it has hurt you, dear. You had to gain business experience somehow—and!"

"No," replied Patty absently. "It has done no harm," but she was thinking not of the experience, but of the glad light in the gray eyes when she had told him he might call.

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NOV. 20, 1901.

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The Wanting Adjective.

A school inspector was examining a class in grammar and trying to explain the relations of adjectives and nouns by a telling example.

"Now for instance," said he, "what an I?" That was an easy question, and all the children shouted:

"A man!" and then looked around triumphantly, as much as to say, "Ask another."

"Yes; but what else?" said the inspector. This was not so easy, but after a pause a boy ventured to suggest:

"A little man."

"Yes; but there is something more than that." This was a poser for the youngsters, but, after a moment's puzzled silence, an infant phenomenon almost leaped from his seat in his eagerness, and cried to the inspector: "Please, sir, I know—an ugly little man!"—[Tit-Bits.

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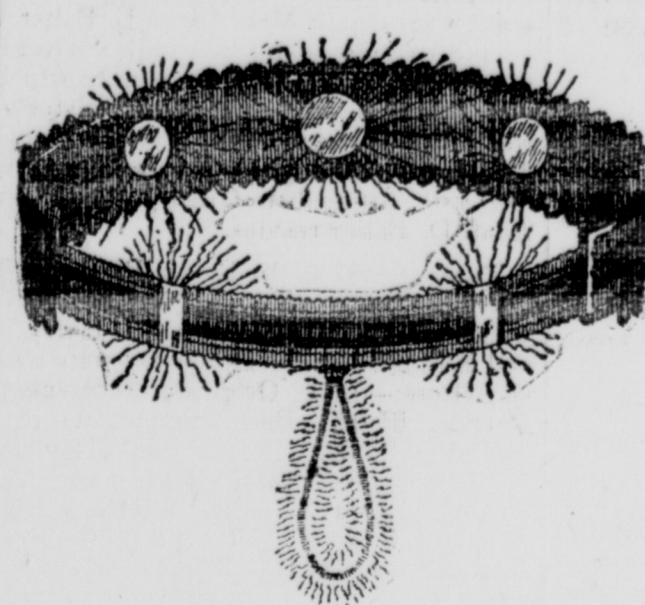
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Thoughtless Friend: "I suppose so. How do you manage to get rid of it all?"

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A Pity.—Cassidy: "Phewer are yez goin' in that new suit?" Casey: "O'm goin' to ask old man Flannigan for his daughter's hand." Cassidy: "Th' devil! Ut seems a pity to ruin a new suit that way."—Puck.

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