

Personalities and Problems

(Concluded from page 9.)

body said or the thing he omitted to say, without any palaver on my part—well I spotted something basically wrong with the thing and decided then and there not to touch it with a ten-foot pole. In these days of many smooth propositions and over-night promotions effected while you wait—like getting your hat cleaned—I consider that's just about necessary. I don't care whether it's called subconscious, or intuition, or just plain experience working out."

Recalling the various things that enter into McGibbon's programme, I asked him casually how he managed to keep one from muddling up another.

"Concentration," he said, tersely; and he whacked the other arm of the chair. "A business mind has to be like a camera lens—shut out all the light it doesn't need for the picture, get the proper focus and concentrate on that one thing till it's got."

"So that when you are working on rubber—"

"I clean forget everything about mines; and when I'm on store organization I shut out boots and shoes and street railway. Otherwise I'd never get through. Business is a series of concentrations and one is a rest from another. I guess it's the good old farm principle that a change of works is as good as a rest."

McGibbon did not deny that he has a certain element of courage in his makeup. He admitted that to be effective as the head of a corporation a man must be on good terms with other men in the system—mentioning one or two able men that he knew who were eternally hindered from getting any further because they were arrogant and dictatorial. He confessed that his own aggressive interest in so many things was somewhat due to the fact that he had never been content with the straight salary idea.

"Some men may be creative on a salary basis," he said. "I never could. I find that a man who never looks further than a salary is handicapped from the start. In organizing a business most of the indifference and perfunctory concern comes from the men who have the mere salary idea. Another bad drag is the man who has so little faith in anything that if he invests a dollar in the morning he wants to get it out in the evening. I call him the quick-return man, and he's a poor coot."

From business the talk ran to politics, in which McGibbon is strongly inter-

ested. He agreed with George E. Foster that too few big business men take any interest in public life. He believed it was time they did; that if the politics of this country is to be kept free from domination of ulterior interests, the big business men will have to take hold of the game—not merely by talking and giving interviews to newspapers, but by taking off their coats and working like a log-bee.

"It's the same as business," he said. "Politics is a game. It must be worked as a game; the bigger and cleaner the better. Politics without studying men is tommyrot. It's academics. Study the other man—that's the main thing."

"What do you think of the present Government?" I asked him, knowing that he had been one of the hard workers in the Conservative ranks, and that he is personally acquainted with the Premier and many of the Cabinet—as well as being a friend of Henri Bourassa.

But on this point he said very little for publication.

"I believe in constructive measures," he said. "I have no use for the obstructionist; or for the man that looks on from the balcony and when a government makes a mistake leans over the rail and says—I told you so. I believe in a measure of compromise, wherever it's necessary. That depends on all the conditions and can't be defined off-hand."

"How about—reciprocity?"

"A year ago," he said, "talking to an Economic Club across the border, I went dead against it."

"On what grounds?"

"Politically?"

"But on economic grounds and two or three years from now—what?"

"I guess," he concluded, "there will be time enough to tell that when the time comes. I'm not exactly a politician. But I have a fondness for public affairs just as I have for business. Politics ought to be a big, clean game."

I got my hat and we took a shot at the Empire. By the time I got down to the door it was evening. Personally I could have kept up the dialogue as long again. So could he. But he expected a man at the house in a very few minutes.

And as I shook hands with this big, grippy young man of constructive practical ideas, I didn't wonder that he had been successful in business—in co-operation with other men.

"The House Where I Was Born"

(Continued from page 16.)

on Jean, a sweet girl of fourteen. The sudden compressing of her lips, and the startled, almost wild, look in her eyes, pained him deeply, but he went on quietly. She did not interrupt; she asked no questions. Teddy, a sturdy lad, ten years of age, was not so well mannered.

"And leave this house?" he demanded, before his father had finished outlining the proposal.

"Teddy," said his mother, reprovingly. "But, Mam" (his pet name for her), "how could we. Why—I—I—"

"Hush," she said, softly.

Teddy rose and walked around the table to his father's side.

"I didn't mean to interrupt, Dad," he said, contritely.

"All right, my boy," his father answered, quietly, and gave the lad an affectionate hug. Then he went on with his explanation. It was to Jean he looked when he had finished. "What do you think, girlie?" he said.

"Don't ask me to-night, Dad."

"To-morrow?"

"Perhaps, Dad. I—I—" and then she stopped, her lips white, though her eyes were telling the man of the emotion she was struggling to repress.

"What about you, Teddy?" he asked.

"It's a hard question, Dad," the boy answered, frankly. "I guess I know how you and Mam feel about it. You were both born there. It's just like this house is to us."

The man nodded, gravely, and then,

with an appearance of gayety, he spoke to Doris, sitting on her mother's knee. "Tot, would you like to live in Daisyville? You know where we go for holidays?"

"All the time, Daddy?"

"Yes, Tot."

"I like this house best of all of 'em," she responded. "It's really the most best, isn't it, Mamma?"

Her mother kissed her, but made no reply.

An hour later, the children having gone to bed, Jack Helliwell and his wife talked it over in his roomy den. And in the end he said: "Our plans go a-glimmering, Lucy. They love this house. I might have thought of that from the first. And childhood is so short, with all its happiness it has many trials and tribulations." He paused, patted his wife's hands, and went on slowly. "This is the age of childhood, the wise people say."

"Parental firmness is a thing of the past," she said, quoting from a widely read magazine.

"It sounds like Aunt Mary," he said, laughing.

"She might have written it, Jack. She lectured me for hours on her last visit, because we treated the children as our equals."

"You never told me that."

"Perhaps I should not have done so now. But what does it matter, Jack; we know."

"Yes, dear heart," he said, "we know."

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