

She wished she had been born a boy,
so she decided to do a man's work—and this is
the story of

Kate Gleason's Adventures in a Man's Job

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SHE sat on the horse block and looked eagerly up and down the street. It was May and the trees were budding; lilacs waving above her head were about to burst into sweet-scented bloom. But the chubby short-skirted little figure on the horse block recked nothing of these. Her dimpled hands beat an impatient tattoo at her sides. Aha! Her plump body swelled out like a pouter pigeon's as she took a deep breath. A boy had come into sight, a rather tattered boy with many freckles and riotous red hair fraying out under a disreputable cap. She waited, palpitating, until he was exactly abreast, striding along unconscious of the fat little girl on the horse block.

"Hi," she yelled, "you don't dast fight my brother Tom!"

At the shrill challenge the red-headed boy turned, looked at the grinning, impertinent face as again she taunted:

"You don't dast fight my brother Tom!"

"Who says I can't?"

"I says so."

"Ah, you ain't got no brother Tom. You ain't—"

"Tom! Tom!" she screamed.

The boy started. In direct response there came from a shed in the back of the yard a tall, lanky boy, a boy as big as he was, whose fists were already doubled.

"You don't dast fight my brother Tom. Here's Tom! You don't dast fight my brother Tom, you—"

The red head swallowed, threw back his shoulders, clenched his own fists and sailed in. With a long "Ah" of pure enjoyment, the little girl settled herself on the block to watch.

It was a good fight. The whistling stranger was quick and vigilant. But in the end he picked himself out of the dust of the Rochester street and went his way. The victor dusted his hands and retired to the shed with a single sentence to his adorer:

"Good for you, Kate; get me another."

At once she settled down, looking right and left for the next victim. It was a pact. She was not yet four years old, but her big brother, Tom Gleason, had agreed to teach her to read, if she would sit on the horse block and challenge any boy passing to fight. Tom had paid his half. Already she knew her letters and was 'way in the First Reader. This morning she had come out under Tom's instructions to stop any

boy as big as he or bigger, and she was paying her debt.

Thus, before she was four years old, Kate Gleason was managing a fourteen-year-old pugilist. At eleven she did her first half-day's work on the books at her father's tool shop. At twenty-five she was secretary and treasurer and sales manager of a rapidly growing gear factory that continued to grow into the now famous Gleason Works, of Rochester, New York. A little later she started her countryside by developing a magnificent estate and living upon it, all alone, in an unusual and beautiful house modeled after the Spanish "Alhambra." In 1915 she resigned from her position in the Gleason Works, although she retained her financial interest, and since then she has been what she terms, "A lucky rover over the face of the earth."

THE roving has been accompanied by a bit of labor. She built, and a part of the time managed, eight factories in East Rochester. For three years she was president of the National Bank there. She designed and constructed over a hundred homes in that city, built a golf course, a clubhouse, and an apartment house. She went to California to complete her study of the architecture of small homes, purchased several hundred lots in Sausalito and built a number of houses there. In France she purchased two war-torn castles, and is reconstructing them, and has opened, as an A. E. F. Memorial, a library and motion picture theatre for the people of Septmont.

Last year she began the most extensive development she has as yet projected, in the sea islands at Beaufort, South Carolina. Near that town she has purchased land with twelve miles of ocean beach, including an entire island, which she purposes to use for the raising of turkeys.

Kate Gleason has the Midas touch. In every business operation, save one, she has made a profit, so that in addition to her record of achievement she has the

distinction of being one of the world's multi-millionaires, with the credit of making every penny of her own fortune

You never heard of her? That's not surprising, unless you are an engineer or are interested in machine tools and gears. But in all probability the gears in your car were cut on a Gleason Gear Planer, and any man who has to use those little indispensable of modern machinery in his business knows the name "Gleason."

A few years ago the head of a well-known machine company was visiting the Ford Automobile Works at Detroit and was being taken about by Henry Ford.

In a room of gear planers Ford stopped. "There," he said, pointing to them, "is the most remarkable machine work ever done by a woman. That machine is a marvel. And Kate Gleason invented it."

"I hate to spoil a good story," the visiting manager replied; "but it was William Gleason, Kate's father, who invented that machine, and her brothers James and Andrew and their associates who perfected it. Kate is a wonderful business woman, and she handled the financial and selling end of the plant."

"Is that so?" asked Ford. "Well, I always heard she did it all."

Two years later the same manager again visited the Ford plant and was again taken about by Mr. Ford. And when they approached the gear planers Ford stopped and said:

"There is the most remarkable work ever done by a woman—"

The visiting manager gave up. On his return to Rochester he called on Miss Gleason.

"I've done my best for you, Kate," he said. "But a good yarn is like the brook. It goes on forever."

AS WE sat before the great hearth in her lovely home at Clones and talked over this incident, Kate Gleason shook her head.

"All through business those yarns have been my greatest asset and my greatest peril," she said. "Before I began work I was often in the society of my mother's friends, who were ardent suffragists, and some of them warned me that men would be my business enemies. I went into a man's field, that of machine-tool making, but found the exact opposite. From the time I began to work men stretched forth helping hands to (Continued on page 168)

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me; men talked to each other about me and spread my fame far and wide, and"—here she began to laugh—"men were so eager to give me due credit that they set their imaginations working, and told yarn after yarn about things I had never done. Nobody could stop those yarns. They were a wonderful help in selling; but they were monstrously unfair to my father and brothers.

"One day I went to a shop that used our machine tools, and while there I noticed a loud squeaking from one of the planers. I investigated. I found that the two fingers that controlled the reverse were too close, causing the belts to squeak. I reported this to Father and he sent a man to put on a new set of fingers.

"The yarn that arose from that simple act thrived and grew into a wonderful tale. Father had visited the shop a short time before I did. He also noticed the squeak, but as it did not impair the work forgot to send the new fingers until I reminded him. The owner of the mill began spreading the story of how Old Man Gleason himself, the inventor of the machine, had been there and never fixed that noise, and then his girl came along and fixed it in two minutes.

"Soon I was credited with carrying a tool bag and wearing overalls. As a matter of fact, I never have worn overalls and never will wear them, but *that* tale spread all over the country. I met it everywhere I went to sell and," here her eyes grew droll, "I contradicted it every time I heard it, and still they believed it! Incidentally, it brought two hundred letters containing proposals of marriage!

"**R**ead them—did you ask?" she burst into hearty laughter. "I should say I did! I am not married. I have never married, but I have received enough proposals from those absurd yarns to satisfy any woman. Many of them are unforgettable. In pouring forth his impassioned request one writer concluded: "Miss Gleason, you will make no mistake in marrying me. I am pure as the dew at dawn."

"I am sentimental, as you will find out, but I have never approved of the dew at dawn; it is a bit chill. Another ardent letter stated that the writer was a friend of the ex-Kaiser's, who then was not an 'ex.' It ran:

"My mother has taught me that I must realize my life to the full. But I cannot do this without marriage. If only you, Miss Gleason, will help me thus to realize it! But if, for any reason, you feel you cannot, will you not pass this letter along to one of your friends?"

She rocked with merriment. And now you have met the real Kate Gleason, a handsome, stalwart, robust woman with magnificent white hair, a woman of great gifts, of great achievements, who lives heartily and candidly; a woman whose abundant vitality and rollicking humor is finely matched by her great mental ability.

"I am what the world calls a success," she said frankly. "I have done what I set out to do, and much more. And," her irrepressible laughter bubbled over, "here I am, and what do I want now? I want to

go where people want me, and work for them! That is why I went to France, that is why I am working in Beaufort.

"My girlish ambitions were fiercely personal. I felt keenly that girls in this world were accorded second place, and I resented being second. My grandmother always wanted my brothers to take her about; she thought little of me. Friends and neighbors used to watch me, and shake their heads and remark:

"She should have been a boy." They were justified, for I was trying my best to be as nearly a boy as I could. I wore my hair short and straight in a day when girls wore long curls or braids. I played with the boys. They didn't want me, but I earned my right.

"If we were jumping from the shed roofs I chose the highest spot; if we vaulted fences I picked the tallest. I was husky and able, and to this I added a bit of recklessness that carried me through. It took just that added bit of daring to outdo the rest. I carried that lesson into business. A bold front, determination, and the willingness to risk more than the crowd, plus some common sense, and hard work, wins out.

"**M**Y BROTHER Tom, the born fighter and the most tender nurse a girl ever had, died at twenty. I was then eleven. Young as Tom was, he was my father's right hand in the business. I was next, and my two brothers, James and Andrew, were younger. One afternoon soon after Tom's death as I was coming into the house from school I heard my father say:

"Oh, if Kate had *only* been a boy! It was bad enough to have the neighbors say that. But Father! I almost worshiped Father. That I should fail him in anything was not to be endured.

"The next Saturday I walked down to the shop, mounted a stool and demanded work. Father smiled and gave me some bills to make out. From that time on I worked regularly.

"When I was fourteen I decided that I could do the bookkeeping. So I acted. Father backed me up then, as he backed me up all his life. At the close of the day he handed me one dollar, my first pay. I had no pocket, so I tucked it in my dress, and lost it on the way home. My mother and grandmother made a terrible fuss.

"Lost your first pay!" they wailed. "Oh, Kate!"

"Oh, what's the matter?" I protested. "I can soon make another dollar." It was later that I learned to count every penny and to know the real value of money earned.

"Although I was young, I was a great big girl and looked much older. Mother thought it wise for me to learn something of the business, after Tom went, 'just,' as she said, 'in case something happened.' That 'something,' of course, was the death of my father, upon whom we depended. He lived to the hale and hearty age of almost ninety, and was active and vital to his end.

"However, their apprehension served my purpose well. At fourteen, I got up at

four A. M. and studied, went to school at eight, got out at one, went home to dinner, then to the office, worked until six, went home, ate supper, and went to bed. The neighbors used to expostulate with Mother, and when she wanted me to go to dancing school, I rebelled.

She told me Jim, my younger brother, was so shy that I must go to stir him up a bit; I found later she had told Jim I was so uncouth I must be made more civilized, and so we each endured it for the other, both hating it with all our hearts."

THE Gleason Works of that day consisted of a small machine shop that employed about a dozen men. William Gleason, its head, was an inventor and became one of the best known machine-tool designers in the world. Under his training Kate developed rapidly. She finished high school at sixteen and then entered Cornell University. A man was engaged at a "tremendous salary, eleven hundred dollars a year," to take over her part of the work. Before the year ended, her father wrote her he could not get along without her help. She must give up college and return at once.

"That was my first big sorrow," she said, "and my heart broke utterly. I took Father's letter out on the campus and sat under a tree where I thought no one would find me, and wept and wept. I had planned to finish the engineering course. I was the only woman in it, and it meant so much.

"As I sat there one of my friends who had been a pal saw me and came to me. He asked what was the matter. When I sobbed that I had to leave, he choked up and said brokenly that he was awfully sorry, but that just at present he couldn't be more than a brother to me. My tears stopped. I tried to convince him that I was crying at leaving college, but he attributed that statement to my maidenly modesty, and in the end I walked off furious, if broken-hearted.

"Twice in my life I have gone down into the depths of despair because the way I wanted to go was suddenly shut off from me. Both times the way I *had* to go was the best possible way for me. Take this leaving of college: Since I was nine I had been reading books on machines and engineering; my one year had given me the essentials of the profession. The rest I could do, and did do, for myself. My fierce determination to equal the young men I left at college served as a spur, and I worked with every bit of energy I possessed.

"As far as I could see, our business was about the worst in the world. There were alternate periods of inflation and depression that were utterly beyond our control. We made just as good tools at any time; but in boom years when orders rolled in we had to extend our plant facilities to get out the work, and to do this we borrowed money. Then bad times came, and we found ourselves with notes due and no work to bring in money to pay them.

"**I** ARGUED that I ought to get out on the road and sell, but Father was not willing. However, things grew worse and worse and at last he agreed to let me try. I decided to go after a particular order, one for which there were sure to be many competitors. Father was so afraid experienced salesmen would laugh at me that he

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suggested I go early and tell people I was going to the town for an exhibition that was being held there.

When I arrived at the plant, I found a new manager, a young man who had just arrived. It was his first order as well as mine, and he was more scared of me than I of him. And, naturally, as I sensed his timidity I grew bolder. It ended with his giving me the entire order. Father had thought we *might* get a part—for ten thousand dollars' worth of tools! Triumphant I marched home with two lessons learned:

"There is no sense in being scared of anyone; he may be more scared of you than you of him."

"It pays to be first in any field, if you can."

"When I started selling, I believed that, as a woman, I would suffer many disadvantages. I soon discovered I was wrong. But there was one disadvantage I never managed to get over. Men salesmen would ask a prospective customer to lunch, dinner, theatre, or some kind of entertainment. By all the known laws of my day I could not do this. On one trip to Cleveland I was greatly downcast. The owner of a certain factory had been lunched and dined by every salesman there except me.

"I was low in my mind, but I determined not to give up, and the next day I breezed in with a good yarn and got the order. I got it on the sheer merit of the machine I was selling. The only fight a woman has against this luncheon-dinner business is to ignore it, and keep steadily at the job itself."

From the beginning Kate Gleason was a good saleswoman.

"Most people were curious to see me," she said. "Our agents had talked about me, and when I traveled I found the story of Kate Gleason helping her father in the machine shop had preceded me, and it helped. Susan B. Anthony, who was a great friend of my mother, had impressed one fact upon me while I was growing up:

"Any advertising is good," she said. "Get praise if possible, blame if you have to. But never stop being talked about."

"I have come to believe that absolutely. In those early days I was a freak; I talked of gears when a woman was not supposed to know what a gear was. It did me much good. For, no matter how much men disapproved of me, they were at least interested in seeing me, one distinct advantage I had over the ordinary salesman. I dealt wholly with men—no women were then running factories and foundries."

THE Gleason works were increasing. Part of this Kate Gleason credits to the family efforts, part, she says frankly, was due to a business boom. Three years after she started there were a hundred and twenty-five men working in place of the original dozen and the business gained steadily until the panic of 1893. Then the bottom dropped out of the tool business along with everything else.

The Gleasons had extended their facilities and were under great obligations.

"As I was in charge of selling and finance I did my best to get orders, and did get some," she said. "But no orders could save us unless I could induce the banks to accept customers' notes to pay our notes. As I tried to persuade bank officers to extend our credits I began to appreciate what feminine charm might do.

I thought of all the wives of all the great adventuresses and wished I could learn some to use on the bank executives.

"Every sales trip made me bluer than ever. There were so many salesmen hunting orders that we were like a lot of hungry crows fighting about a small mess of corn.

"On one trip during panic time I visited Plainfield, New Jersey, and the head of a tool company there, sympathizing with me about dull times, said:

"Anyone who can make a living out of the machine-tool business could make a fortune out of anything else."

"That hit me hard. All the way home I thought of our business, and the one thing that held hope was our gear planing machine, which was then a very small part.

"Father," I said, on my return, "We have to get out of this machine-tool business. Now, how about gears? They wear out much quicker than tools. We could sell the same people year after year. Nobody has such a machine as yours!" Father was always ready to listen to me and give my ideas a chance. So he went to work on the perfecting of his machine, and I began to try to get more gear orders.

"I fell ill that year and the doctor ordered Atlantic City. But as there were no orders there, I got together two hundred dollars, and decided to visit manufacturers in England, Scotland, France, and Germany.

"Three days before I sailed I mentioned my going to a salesman from Brown and Sharpe. He was aghast.

"But—do you know anyone there?" he asked.

"I said I did not. I sold people in America whom I did not know, so why not abroad? He shook his head, went back and told his firm, and they sent me a sheaf of letters of introduction. This firm was larger than ours, and in the same line. On my return, knowing what those letters had done for me, I sent them a check as commission on my orders. They returned it to me. That is one of the many times men have gone out of their way to lend me a helping hand.

I WAS so hard up that I had just one dress to wear every day of that trip—a black cashmere. Owing to my limited funds I traveled on a cattle ship and I was the only woman passenger. There were fourteen men, and they ran a stop watch to measure their turns in promenading the deck with me. Naturally, I was feeling pretty good. But the purser spoiled it all for me. He told a story of a time when, after six months in the Congo without sight of a white woman, his major's wife got on the return steamer and he found her beautiful beyond words. But a few days later some young English girls boarded the ship, and he suddenly saw that the major's wife wore a wig and had false teeth. The moral was obvious. I said good-by to my fourteen ship admirers, got my letters, and prepared to work for orders. I was fortunate enough to bring some back from the best firms in Scotland, England, France, and Germany, and that was the beginning of a real foreign business for us.

"Shortly after this trip I began to consider my clothes. Apparently, everybody else had been considering them for some time; but to me dress had seemed of little importance. But when one of my

former teachers, and even Miss Anthony, chided me about my appearance, I decided to try a change. So I went in for extremely feminine attire. I had my hair dressed and wore violets on my muff, and had some soft, frivolous gowns made. This attention to dress repaid me well. Some of my customers spoke to me twenty years after about a certain dress or hat that I wore when I made a sale. I learned to value clothes, to love clothes, and to use clothes.

"In 1900 we arranged for an exhibit at the Paris Exposition. We were pushing our gear planers, and this exhibit had cost us much thought and money. Our Paris agents wired us that we had been given space under a stair in a dark corner, and that they could do nothing. I had intended going over later, but I sailed at once. I found a dozen other protesting firms in that dark spot. One Swedish firm had called to its aid the Minister to France. But I slipped back to my hotel, put on my prettiest frock, and the most feminine, laciest hat you ever saw, and went boldly to the general manager's office. There were many exhibitors waiting there, but I was admitted right away. I sympathized with the manager. I told him I did not see how he endured the complaints of the exhibitors, and the abuse and the great strain of his position. I encouraged him to talk and I listened long to his tale of woe and consoled with him all along. *I asked nothing.*

"In the end he inquired about my exhibit, and when I mentioned its location he rose at once, took me out and offered me a choice of nine of the best places in the building. The other American exhibitors kindly helped me to move, and the remaining denizens of the dark corner watched open-mouthed.

"Now," said the general manager. "If anyone tells you to move again, stand by your exhibit with guns." I thanked him. But I knew better. I stood by with my lace hat."

FIVE years after Kate Gleason had urged her father and brothers to turn their attention to gears and gear planing machines, the Gleasons had discontinued tool making. The new venture was a success. The automobile was just beginning to look practical. There was a great future in sight.

With prosperity, Kate Gleason decided upon a home of her own. When she was nine years old she had read Bulwer-Lytton's "Leila, or The Siege of Granada." The word picture of the Alhambra so stirred her childish imagination that she decided to have a home just like that. She sent for plans and pictures of the Alhambra, but she was dismayed at the building price.

"At this time," she said, with her blue eyes sparkling, "I was in the throes of a theory that made it impossible for anyone to own a home worth more than fifteen thousand dollars. But we humans can always adjust our theories to the terms of our desires, and I decided that my Alhambra was absolutely essential, and that any expense was justified. So I built Clones, named for my mother's birthplace in Ireland, and many a good time we have had here."

From the moment I had halted in the doorway and looked with wonder up the

stone steps railed with red silken ropes and listened to the drip, drip of water running down the stair arms into tiny pools at each landing. I had marveled at this unique dwelling. The patio with its fountains and vaulted glass roof, beneath which grew palms thirty feet tall, the rock gardens, the huge living-room with its great fireplace, and its Spanish chimney for burning charcoal in a huge brass-hooded brazier; the suite that is Miss Gleason's very own, to which she climbs a sublimated wooden stepladder and then draws it up after her, and stays as she wills, secure from all interruption, were like parts of a dream from another world. Through the arched windows, however, stretched a thoroughly contradictory vista of American rolling fields and woodlands.

"I've enjoyed building beyond most other things I have done," said Kate Gleason. "Before I built this place our business had far outgrown its plant, so we decided to enlarge it. When we set out to plan the buildings, I remembered that Father had remarked, on his return from a trip abroad, about the vastness and emptiness of some of the cathedrals. 'What a chance for a traveling crane!' he had exclaimed.

"Now a cathedral is usually built on lines that are exactly right for traveling cranes, so I sent for photographs and plans of cathedrals, and we selected the one at Pisa as having the lines best adapted to our plans. Our present foundry building is modeled after this cathedral, even to the string course over which the vines climb. The office building we decided to model after the Pan-American Building at Washington."

After twenty years these buildings are among the show places at Rochester. They are beautiful, substantial, and efficient. Within their walls Kate Gleason worked happily for a dozen years. With the development of the automobile, the camera, and all modern machinery, the gear business continued to prosper.

"Kate," said her brother, James Gleason, who is the president of the Gleason works, "was one first-class salesman and one grand entertainer. She could spin a marvelous yarn. Many a time I've heard Father give one snort at a yarn of Kate's, and then give way to helpless laughter."

But as the Gleason works became more and more successful, the family, united by great mutual need, began to suffer grave differences of opinion.

"The differences," said Miss Gleason candidly, "were those that almost invariably come to a successful business when the drudgery of selling and hiring or borrowing money or making drawings can be passed on to others, and the founders have not enough to do. It seemed to me that my experience would make it easier for me to go into a totally different line of business than it would be for my brothers, who, up to that time, had specialized on the shop end of the work. It was heart-breaking, because it meant leaving Father and all the friends I loved. The break came in 1913, and fortunately a job developed that kept me in the machine business for almost two years longer.

This job began in January, 1914, when Kate Gleason had the distinction of being the first woman appointed receiver by a bankruptcy court. She was made manager

as well, and took over a machine-tool shop which was in such bad shape that it was supposed to pay about ten cents on the dollar. The stock was turned over as worthless. The debts were one hundred and forty thousand dollars. She took charge January 1st, 1914. By August 1st, 1915, the debts were paid in full, the stock had been returned to the stockholders, and the plant was a going concern. This was before the orders generated by the World War had become large enough to aid. By 1917, the old management had made a million dollars.

In the year 1914 Miss Gleason received a second honor. In recognition of her work in gear design, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers unanimously elected her a member, the first woman to join their numbers.

WITH the great need for efficient workers developed by the World War it was not likely that a woman of Miss Gleason's abilities would be allowed to retire from business. When she built her palace at Clones she had employed workmen from East Rochester. They, and business men from that town, sought to interest her in its upbuilding. She assisted in financing, and personally helped to plan eight factories there, factories which, like all the buildings she has been interested in, are trim, smart, well-lighted places that any town might be proud to own. While she was at work on these, the president of the First National Bank at East Rochester was called to war service, and the directors made Miss Gleason president, the first woman to become the president of a national bank in this country.

"But I was no great shakes as a bank president," said Kate Gleason. "The fact that the bank was more prosperous when I resigned than when I was made president was due mainly to circumstances."

The bank at East Rochester had loaned to a local builder a sum of money with which to finance the construction of a number of modest homes. The builder did not complete the houses, and, as bank president, in order to make the bank loan good, Kate Gleason tried to get someone to complete them. No one would undertake the job, so she finished them herself and paid the loan. While building these houses she became greatly interested in home construction, and decided to demonstrate that a neat, substantial, concrete house could be built at low cost. To finance her building in addition to her many thousands she had already invested in East Rochester, she had to borrow. The banks promised the loans, and then failed her. She put up her Gleason stock as collateral, and at one time owed six hundred thousand dollars on demand notes.

Around this time Rochester and East Rochester thought Kate Gleason was done for, and Kate Gleason herself was a pretty anxious woman. Every penny she had was pledged, and she still needed more money to complete the houses. Rescue came from an unexpected quarter. Some years before she had helped a young woman start in business in New York City. This young woman, now flourishing in her own line, went to her banker.

"Miss Gleason started me," she said. "You have to help me to save Miss Gleason."

Through their efforts there came to Rochester a visitor, the head of the loan department of one of the largest insurance companies. He went over the houses and returned to his company. The morning after Miss Gleason received a wire:

"Your homes are the best we have as yet seen. Your loan is granted."

The houses were saved; the stock was saved. Kate Gleason triumphantly finished over a hundred attractive homes. In three years the mortgage loan and the six hundred thousand dollars were paid off entirely.

Other building followed, a golf course, a clubhouse, and apartment houses. But Miss Gleason's interest is in building modest homes calculated to stand, she says, "at least a hundred years." To this end she traveled and studied architecture in this country and in France.

Three months each fall she spends in her home at Septmont, France. Near this is the library and motion picture theatre she has established, and maintains as a memorial to the first division A. E. F. Three thousand American soldiers were killed, and seven thousand wounded at or near this spot, in the successful endeavor to take the road and the railroad to Soissons. In the spring and summers she is at Clones with her work at Rochester and East Rochester, and in the winters she is at the new work at Beaufort, South Carolina.

"I want to tell you," Kate Gleason said, "the things I live by." She recited slowly the lines by Owen Meredith:

"The man who seeks one thing in life and but
one
May hope to achieve it before life is done.
But he who seeks all things wherever he goes,
Only reaps from the hopes which around him he
sows,
A harvest of barren regrets.

"I wanted one thing—to demonstrate that a business woman can work as well as a man. And this is my guide." She pushed toward me one of the curious and comfortable Moorish chairs, and I read a carving on the back.

"*Possum solo*" ("I can, if I will").