

The Bloomfield Times.

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Editor and Proprietor.

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BY

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SUBSCRIPTION TERMS.

ONE DOLLAR PER YEAR!
IN ADVANCE.

"DEAD BROKE."

A Story of Fashionable Life.

"HE IS dead broke."
"How much does he owe?"
"One week, to-morrow, over the month," said the clerk, examining the ledger.
"Whew!" whistled the landlord. "Has he no friends to pay for him?"
"Plenty of friends now, but let them find out that he is broke and they'll be off like a covey of birds."
"I must see him;" and the hotel proprietor, walking out upon the piazza, approached a young man leaning against one of the front pillars.
"Mr. Watson, your bill, I see, is in arrears one week over the settlement day. Why is it?"
The young man flushed at first, as if in anger; then a smile overspread his handsome face. "I know I am a delinquent Major Snow, but I can't pay at present."
"Do you expect money soon?"
"Well, really I don't know who should send me anything from their surfeit of cash."
"Then I am to understand that you are not only unable to pay, but do not expect to be able?"
"Undoubtedly, Major."
"Sorry, Watson, for you have been a favorite of the season, and I don't like to turn you out before the break up nor will I. If you can give up your suit of rooms and take up with one suited to your circumstances, I will let you remain the future."
"You are very good, Major, and I guess I'll have to consent."
So the baggage of Watson was lifted and taken from the elegant suit on the second floor to a little seven by fourteen room on the fifth floor.
How quickly it became known that the change had been made!

Every servant in the house betrayed the knowledge in the absence of the usual deference paid to the possessors of 'parlors,' at dinner, the "boy," who had been only too eager to anticipate Mr. Watson's wants suddenly became oblivious to those wants, and only answered them after repeated orders. The cashier and register clerk, always so obsequious, grew dignified and indifferent. Only the urbane Major preserved a kindly greeting for the guest too poor to pay his bill, and remaining by sufferance.
"Queen" thought the hotel proprietor. "He certainly had money enough when he came for he deposited a cool five thousand in the safe. He hasn't been fast, I am certain, and his habits have been so good that the young bloods have rather played off from him. But he has been a favorite. Not a belle in the room but would have dropped her best friend for his attendance. Hang me if I can understand it."

Watson hailing from Baltimore, had been a season guest at the Cascade. Friends he had in plenty. He was courteous, well-bred, good-looking, intelligent, and, apparently, rich—what more could be asked? Among the ladies he had moved quite a prince; and many were the gossamer webs woven as toils to capture him, but to all he proved a very incorrigible recusant—he would not be any one's prize.

The exquisite charm of voice, manner and sentiment, the beauty of person, the elegance of attire—all were agreeable to him, deeply so, for he seemed to enjoy them all immensely; but not the brilliant poetess, Miss Mountjoy, nor the coy and artless Miss Dumain, nor the rattle-headed young Miss Lambert, nor the haughty, elegant, and exclusive Miss Percy, nor the very rich Miss Oromanes, appeared to command him. He was to all alike, the agreeable companion, the candid friend, the shrewd resistant of all arts to lead him into love's labyrinthine.

How would all these beauties of the salon receive the announcement sure to be made of his "altered circumstances," as the Major expressed it?

Evidently Mr. Watson was not indifferent. He still frequented the piazzas and parlors, giving every friend, male or female ample opportunity to "cut his acquaintance," or otherwise to express themselves. It was somewhat curious to note the progress of his decline, not his fall, for Watson had that in his character and construction which, even in poverty and trial would preserve him from a sacrifice of personal dignity and self-reliance. But that he was on the decline became to him a sorrowful fact.

Sorrowful, did we say? That is, judging by the usual standards of human felicity or misery. To lose one's friends, to behold your position in society gradually slipping away, to realize that no longer you are held in coveted consideration by a chosen few, is ordinarily a source of sorrow. Meantime how keenly the knife cut to the quick of his sensibilities; for, while every acquaintance was given full facilities for doing the disagreeable office of giving the "cold shoulder," the Baltimorean appeared like an interested spectator, and was as unmoved, when passed by a supposed friend without the slightest notice, as if he were a newspaper reporter, anxious to see the act and note the fact.

Into the parlors during the evening he particularly pressed his way. If a bevy of gay fellows surrounded Miss Mountjoy, he worked his way to the circle, and at last, received from that lady of Sappho-like lips his discharge. She did most gracefully and crushingly turn her back upon him not three days after his removal from the second floor.

Miss Dumain he sought, confident that one so artless would certainly be above the hollow-hearted crowd, and still give him her kindly greeting. Vain conception! The artless girl was coy indeed, and when at length he cornered her, it was to his discomfiture. She suddenly turned and forced her way past him, without even one of her downcast glances. On the contrary, her eyes were fixed fully on his face, and plainly said, "Sir, we are strangers."

Next he tried rattle-headed Miss Lambert and she rattled on quite as usual; but Watson soon discovered that the rattle was not for him.

Strangely enough, the proud and exclusive Miss Percy unbent somewhat from her lofty carriage, and gave him a welcome but over it all was a shadow—a fear, apparently, which made Miss Percy shy rather than haughty; and Watson began to catch glimpses of a character beneath all that conventional veil which he had not expected to find.

Of course the wealthy Miss Oromanes would scorn his further friendly relations. Her rooms were near his own second floor apartments; she daily, all the season, had encountered him in his walks through the long corridor, and must have been one of the first to learn of his fallen fortunes. Indeed, he half surmised that her dressing-maid had made special inquiry into his case, seeing her confidential confab with the floor-stewardess, and room-girls. So Watson with a reserve or pride not entertained with others, kept apart from Miss Oromanes.

On that third evening of his changed fortunes, when the Sappho of the Cascades

annihilated him, greatly to the pleasure of the young "bloods" around her, Watson wandered away at length upon the piazzas; then up through the long deserted halls, restless, thoughtful, digesting the notes which he had been taking of human nature, and trying to fix the relative value of a man without money. It was the crystalline truth he was learning—not the truth in mere solution, sometimes clear, sometimes opaque, but always thin, but the precipitated, hard, angular, clear-cut crystals of experience, mined in unexpected places.—Had he remained upon the second floor, never would he have obtained the gems; the mere solution would only have repaid his keenest search. But the migration to the upper spaces had given him a wondrous lens; his horizon was so immeasurably extended that, barring the fact that his bill was unpaid, he was the happier because wiser, for the upward reverse.

Suddenly, in his solitary promenade, he confronted the heiress. She was walking arm in arm with young Evans, of her "set," in confidential communication it would appear, else why should they have been in that long hall alone? asked Watson as with a glance, he took in the situation. The meeting was a surprise to both parties, and the inclination of both men was to pass without recognition. Evans, indeed, frowned; Watson flushed in anger, and with head erect bore down and passed his enemies, like a suspended or cashiered officer of the line, conscious of his soldiery qualities, but equally conscious of his "altered circumstances."

Too high he held his head, in fact, for he caught no soft glance from the lady's eye and trod so firmly upon the trail of her elegant evening dress as to cause a perceptible cracking of seams at the skirt plaits. Evans turned with a sudden anger.

"Dolt!" he hissed.
Watson passed on, staying to make no apology, but he heard the lady say;
"Fie, it is nothing;" and he was conscious, too, that she was looking at him wonderingly.

An hour later Watson was down on the piazza again, evidently on the quest for some person, and he found his man ere long. Evans was the gentleman wanted.—Going up to him Watson said:

"Mr. Evans, what was the word you used at the time I trod on the trail of Miss Oromanes' dress?"

"I said dolt, sir! and I say it again. We have hitherto supposed you to be a gentleman, and now learn that you cannot pay your bills; and he laughed half in scorn and half in humor of the fact so opportunely given him to crush another.

The hot blood flew to Watson's face; his hands were clenched as if to strike; but, by a strong effort, he mastered his passion.

"Evans, no gentleman ever would have uttered that sentence. Only a coward would fling another's poverty in his face. Miss Oromanes, educated as she has been, to give virtue to wealth, might find in my inability to pay my hotel bill a justification for dropping my acquaintance, but I doubt if ever she would have countenanced incivility. I owe her an apology for my seeming rudeness, and will give it to her, but you I hold in too supreme contempt even to exchange more words with you. Hereafter do not speak to me, for if you do I will slap your face, even in the presence of the ladies," and the speaker went his way to his attic room.

This scene overheard by several gentlemen and ladies, was soon the talk of the rooms. Evans being a recognized leader of a very aristocratic circle soon convened others of the set; and Major Snow was, ere long, summoned to be informed that he must "clear out Watson"—Evans offering to pay the delinquent's bill.

And the news flew throughout the parlors and promenades that Major Snow was to give Mr. Robert Watson, of Baltimore, his walking papers in the morning.

An observer of the scene between the

two gentlemen on the piazza was Miss Oromanes. Having at once retired to her room to repair the accident to her skirt, the lady donned another dress, and, to enjoy half an hour undisturbed, stole out upon the pleasant weather promenade. She thus was a witness of what transpired.—She, too, retired in evident excitement, to her rooms; and when her maid, half an hour later, brought the house-news that the Major was to clear Watson out in the morning, the heiress, with perfect deliberation, but with brightened color in her cheeks, and a clear sparkle in her beautiful eyes, sat down to her desk, and indited the following note:

"Major Snow will please take no action in the matter of the difference between Mr. Watson and Mr. Evans. I overheard every word that passed between the gentlemen, and I fully justify Mr. Watson.—Were it not an insult to him, I would offer to become responsible for any amount which he may now be able to pay; but I know that he is a thorough gentleman, and would equally scorn to wrong you or to leave your house at the dictation of others.

"I am, sir, yours,
"HELENE OROMANES."

This the maid was told to place in the Major's hands at once. The maid had not far to go, for she met the proprietor advancing up the stairway. He glanced at the billet and laughed; then paused and said:
"No use of my trip up five pair of stairs Mr. Robert Watson has the freedom of this house for the next five seasons."

And down stairs he went again, while the open-eared maid, having lost not a word returned to her mistress to find her absorbed in penning another note. This was written with great care and many pauses. It was finally finished and read as follows:

"Mr. Watson will please excuse the boldness of the note; but having been a witness to the meeting between yourself and Mr. Evans on the piazza, I feel it incumbent on me to say that I fully justify your proceeding and your words. I ask no apology from you. Indeed, it will be painful to receive it. Believe me, I am exceedingly pained at the inference you have drawn, namely: that I could find a justification in dropping your acquaintance in the fact of your temporary embarrassment. Alas for my riches, if they compel me to bear such imputations on my sense and motives

"I am, sir, yours very sincerely,
"HELENE OROMANES."

This missive the maid bore to the 5th story. It found the romantic Robert in bed; but the letter was flung in over the door ventilator.

"A letter for Monsieur Watson from my lady," said a voice at the door; and Watson sprang up as the envelope floated down to his feet.

"A note from my lady?" what on earth did that mean? Another rumpus brewing of course! Turning on the gas he read—astonished, pleased delighted, as the rich color mounting to his temples testified.—And then, foolish man, he kissed the note.

So very preposterous for one in his circumstances!

Many were the guests who "turned out" fully two hours before their usual 10 o'clock breakfast the next morning, in order to see Mr. Robert Watson depart. To their surprise there was Watson, cheerful and content, arm in arm with Miss Oromanes, and Major Snow looking on admiringly. To Evans and his set it was a declaration of war; but who would dare to take up arms against the spirited heiress to a million? They all retired, resolved to let events take their course.

And they did take their course, of course. In three days' time a magnificent equipage drove to the stand, and Watson soon appeared with the beautiful Miss Oromanes for his companions in the morning drive.
"Whose equipage is that?" demanded

Evans of the Major, who had escorted his guests to the carriage.

"Oh, that's Watsons, to be sure!" was the reply.

"Watson's be hanged! Say Major, has he paid his bill?" asked Evans maliciously.

"Paid his bill? Lord bless you, he is rich enough to buy out this whole concern, and to hire you and me for call boys!"

"Explain yourself, then, sir!" demanded Evans irately. "Did you not inform the guests that he could not pay his bill, and that you had sent him up stairs out of his second floor suit?"

"Not I! Some of the clerks may have said something, to which others added more; but I really thought too much of the gentleman to mention the matter to any one. Now it turns out that it was all a little game of his own."

"Little game? What object could he have had in playing such hide and seek?" demanded Evans again, in tones peremptory.

"Well, in part, I suppose, to test the value of friendship in general, and the power of money in particular—both of which I have no doubt he has done to his entire satisfaction. Ha-ha-ha! What do you think about it, Mr. Evans?"

"Think about it! Why, that it was—

it was—"

"What?"

"Why, a very artful dodge—nothing less."

"Capital dodge, that's a fact, seeing that as a poor man, he won Miss Oromanes, and—"

"Now, what do you mean?" fairly shouted Evans in his excitement.

"Mean? That before ten o'clock on the morning of the day when he was to have had his walking papers, by your orders, he was dead in love with the heiress, and—"

"And what, sir?"

"And she dead in love with him."

"It's false, I know!" cried the man, now white in the face from some inexplicable emotion.

"False, eh? Going off in that carriage together to the preacher's looks like it, don't it?"

"Good heavens!"

The Major's conjecture was premature, as he well knew; but the shot had struck Evans to the heart, and he fairly staggered to a seat. Evans had played a long and deep game to win the heiress. He had long been her recognized suitor—he had discounted her possessions in his gay life, and the result was—*he* was dead-broke!

He left the watering place that day.

Importance of Punctuation.

The importance of putting marks of punctuation in the right place, is illustrated by the following example:

"Lord Palmerston then entered; on his head, a white hat; upon his feet, large but well-polished boots; upon his brow, a dark cloud; in his hand, his faithful walking-stick; in his eye a meaning glare; saying nothing, he sat down."

With a slight change in punctuation, we find him a very singular man indeed:

"Lord Palmerston then entered on his head; a white hat upon his feet; large but well-polished boots upon his brow; a dark cloud in his hand; his faithful walking-stick in his eye; a meaning glare saying nothing. He sat down."

In the following as punctuated, we count eight different individuals:

"The persons inside the coach were Mr. Miller, a clergyman, his son; a lawyer; Mr. Angels; a foreigner; his lady; and a little child."

The number is reduced to five, and the meaning of the sentence entirely changed, by arranging the names in parts, thus:—

"The persons inside the coach were Mr. Miller, a clergyman; his son, a lawyer; Mr. Angels, a foreigner; his lady, and a little child."

☞ A hand-to-mouth existence—that of a dentist.