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The Effects of a Club Breakfast

By EDWARD T. STEWART

Dowling left his sleeping room at his club and went downstairs to breakfast. Scanning the menu, he saw, what he had seen every morning, that if he ordered a breakfast made up of different dishes he would have enough for half a dozen persons and at a great cost, so he gave his usual order, "Oatmeal and coffee." He ate a quarter of the oatmeal and left the table unsatisfied, muttering anathemas against the management for not serving a different kind of breakfast.

"I'm going into bachelor quarters," he said to himself, "and keep a cook." Going to his office by a different route from the usual one, he passed a house on which was a sign, "To Let." It was a dainty edifice and would furnish him with just about the room he needed. Pushing the bell button, the summons was answered by a woman just as dainty as the house. She was in mourning. Dowling told her he was thinking of taking a house and was invited inside. After he had been informed as to the number of rooms, rental, etc., he remarked:

"I wonder that you can bear to part with such a pleasant little home." Tears stood in the lady's eyes as she replied that she had been married a year before and her husband had died soon after the expiration of the honeymoon. She had not been able to tear herself away from the home in which she had been so happy and would not do so now, but she had found living alone unprofitable.

"The rental would be satisfactory to me," said Dowling. "May I look through the premises?"

The widow led him from the living room to the dining room. On the table was a breakfast that made his mouth water—a dish of fruit, a silver of bacon, an omelet, with a little parsley to garnish it, and slices of toast. The coffee urn was of artistic shape, and the cups were Dresden china.

"I was just sitting down to breakfast when you called," said the lady.

"Isn't it an elaborate breakfast for one person?" asked Dowling.

"I eat little or nothing between breakfast and dinner," was the reply.

Dowling looked longingly at the viands.

"Madam," he said, "I have just breakfasted at my club. I have had my first course of oatmeal and am ready for the rest. If you will permit me to finish the meal here of these viands I will rent your house at the price you ask, with a liberal bonus."

The widow, seeing the hungry look on Dowling's face, assented and, setting a plate for him, seated herself before the coffee urn. There was no beautiful supply for a healthy man of thirty, but everything was so delicious that the quality made up for the lack of quantity.

"I supposed," she said, "that a club table comprised every delicacy, no matter how costly."

"No matter how costly" is correct," replied Dowling. "As to delicacy, you have been misinformed."

Dowling spent an hour at the table, but the principal part of it was in chatting with the widow. When he arose to go he said that he would call again in the evening with a lease and the transaction would be completed.

"But you have not seen the upper part of the house," said the lady.

"I've seen the breakfast room and eaten in it," replied Dowling. "With such a delightful lower story those above cannot need an examination."

"When will you require possession?" "That depends."

The widow would have asked "On what?" had not Dowling's look betrayed what was in his mind. She dared not go further, for his expression said plainly, "Just as soon as you will consent to remain with me here in wedlock."

Dowling called in the evening with a blank lease, which he filled in and signed, and the widow signed it, and then he handed her a check for the first month's rent, with an additional \$10.

"What's the \$10 for?" Dowling didn't like to say that it was for the breakfast, so he said that it was to bind the bargain.

"I suppose," said the lady ruefully, "that I must move out of once."

"Remain as long as you like."

"The terms did not suit the widow at all. She had no idea of remaining in her house while receiving rent for it, so she handed back the check. Dowling persuaded her to let the lease stand, payment of rent to begin when possession was given.

Meanwhile he spent most of his evenings calling on his landlady and within a fortnight proposed to her. She spent a week looking up his credentials, then threw off her mourning for her first husband and began work on a trousseau for the second. The lease that had been drawn up between them was torn up, and a document was drawn by an attorney to take its place. In marrying the widow relinquished a portion of the property left her by her husband. But Dowling was wealthy, and his wife retained the house in which he had found her.

When the invitation list for the wedding was prepared it was found that the pair had many mutual friends.

After the wedding Dowling was invited to breakfast with a friend at the club.

"Thank you very much," said Dowling. "I can get a better breakfast at home. It was a club breakfast that forced me out of club life."

How a Debt Was Collected

By WILLIAM CHANDLER

Among the strange people in the world the strangest to me are those who consider it their duty to give largely, but who in transactions of a business nature are inordinately mean.

Such characters are common among rich men, whose motive usually is to make something, even out of their donations—men who don't hide their light under a bushel. But Miss Euphemia Baxter was not at all such a person. Few knew of her charities. She supported an old woman for years who had been an intimate friend of her mother's. At the same time she beat her laundress down to starvation prices. She lived in a hall bedroom herself and spent a lot of money fixing up a home for an invalid aunt. It was the furniture to go into this home that I sold Miss Baxter.

Falling in sending out my regular collector, I thought I would try a woman. She came away after a tongue skirmish that decided her never to undertake such a task again.

I had a salesman, Frank Emery, in my employ, a good looking young fellow with one of the pleasantest smiles I ever saw on a man's face. Where other persons would scowl he would smile. He was invaluable as a salesman, especially since most of my customers were women. One of the other clerks used to say of him, "One of Frank's smiles sells a washstand, another sells a bureau, and when he shows his side grinders it means a whole bedroom set."

One day Frank said to me, "Mr. Ruggles, what'll you give me if I collect your debt from Miss Baxter?"

"I don't think any one can collect it, Frank," I replied. "I fancy the lady went in debt for it and has never been able to stop giving long enough to accumulate the amount of the bill. You can't squeeze blood out of a turnip."

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Mr. Ruggles. I didn't have any vacation last summer. The dull season is on now, and you can best spare me. Give me a few weeks' vacation and I'll see if I can get your money."

I acceded to his terms and, giving him a statement of the account—\$142—sent him off to collect the debt in any way he might be able. The boys said that he'd get it in installments, giving a smile for each installment.

Three weeks passed before I heard a word from my collector. Then one day he came into the store, smiled and handed me the amount of Miss Baxter's indebtedness. I asked him how he had managed it, but he did not seem inclined to tell me. Indeed, he looked rather serious about it. This surprised me, for I had never known him to look serious about anything. But I got the story out of him piece-meal.

He had gone to Miss Baxter and told her he had heard that she was a tender hearted person. Would she kindly interest herself to get him employment? He was hungry and shabby (he wore a castoff suit), and he was not very strong. He could not do manual labor.

Quite likely it was the smile that did the business. Miss Baxter gave him the wherewithal to get something to eat while she was hunting a job for him. He put away the money, and she found plenty of jobs. But either they required too much strength or Frank was especially unfitted for them. He kept accepting donations from day to day, the lady having hard work to induce him to do so and only under promise that he should be permitted to return them as soon as she found a position for him. He very soon cleaned her out of all the ready money she possessed, after which she began to sacrifice what few valuables she owned, finally pawning her winter coat, which she greatly needed.

I declined to take money achieved in this way, which appeared to be a great relief to Frank. Having started out to collect the debt in his own peculiar way, he was bound to follow the matter to the bitter end. He managed to preserve his equanimity till the lady gave up her winter coat for his benefit. That broke him up. I told him to return the money to Miss Baxter. He said that could only be done in some roundabout manner, but it would be done.

Before the next season opened one of my competitors offered Frank better pay than I was giving him, and I was obliged to double his salary. Instead of giving me a single smile when I told him of the raise, smiles seemed to bubble out all over him.

"It's not on my own account alone, Mr. Ruggles," he said, "that I rejoice. I am engaged, and this raise enables me to marry."

"Who is the lady, Frank?" I asked.

"Miss Euphemia Baxter."

"Great Scott!" I exclaimed. "You don't mean it?"

"I do. The truth is that while I was getting money out of her to pay her debt to you I was getting sweet on her. At last, instead of trying to collect the debt, I was testing her to see how far she would sacrifice herself for me."

"Have you confessed that you were deceiving her?"

"You bet I haven't, and I never will. I've got the money she gave me yet. I'm trying to find a way to give it to her to help her with the trousseau."

"Hope you'll succeed. Make out a list of articles you'll need to furnish a house and they shall be my wedding gift."

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"Frauenlob."

The light cruiser Frauenlob was one of the most oddly named warships afloat. An early meliorator, Henry of Neissen, sang the charms of womanhood so assiduously that he came to be known as Frauenlob, and on his death in 1318 his body was carried in state by women to his grave in Mayence cathedral. When first it was decided to build a German fleet the women of Germany raised a large contribution toward its cost by special collections among themselves. To commemorate their efforts a cruiser launched in 1853 was called Frauenlob, and the name has since been borne by five other warships.—London Chronicle

The mission fathers brought the olive and the date from the Mediterranean regions and gave California one of its most important crops.

Magnets in Needle Factories.

In factories where needles are made the grindstones throw off great quantities of minute steel particles, although the dust is too fine to be perceptible to the eye. Breathing the dust shows no immediate effect, but gradually sets up irritation, usually ending in pulmonary consumption, and formerly almost all the workmen died before the age of forty. Ineffective attempts were made to screen the air by gauze or linen guards for nose and mouth. At length the use of the magnet was suggested, and now masks of magnetized steel wire are worn by workmen and, effectually remove the metal dust before the air is breathed.—London Telegraph.

Discarded the Baton.

At a concert in Moscow a number of years ago Safonoff, the famous Russian conductor, found as he mounted the conductor's rostrum that he had forgotten his baton. Two hours later his servant ran breathless into the hall with the missing baton; but, as Safonoff afterward explained, "a great reform had by then been accomplished. He had managed so well with his hands as a substitute that he determined never to use an unpliant bit of wood again. "I discovered," he said, "that I had ten sticks instead of one, and the players discovered it was impossible for them to be lazy, so carefully had they to watch those ten sticks."

The Life of Trade.

The proprietors of two rival livery stables, situated alongside each other in a busy street, have been having a lively advertising duel lately.

The other week one of them stuck up on his office window a long strip of paper bearing the words:

"Our horses need no whip to make them go."

This bit of sarcasm naturally caused some amusement at the expense of the rival proprietor, but in less than an hour he neatly turned the tables by pasting the following retort on his own window:

"True. The wind blows them along!"—London Tit-Bits.

PROMPT DECISIONS.

Learn to act promptly. In the affairs of this life a prompt decision is often more important than a right decision. One man makes up his mind and acts, it may be wrongly, but if so he finds out his mistake, corrects and retrieves it before another man has acted at all. It is possible to waste a great amount of time by thinking and still more by talking over actions. Learn to act promptly.

Poor Service.

"Somehow I can never think of a bright thing to say until the occasion has gone by."

"Same here! My trains of thought are always late too."—Toronto Telegram.

No News "Scoops" in Japan.

What is known as a "scoop" in America does not exist in Japan. If one newspaper has a particularly choice item of news it communicates it to other papers. What is the use of being selfish? After all, it is the editorial opinion that counts, but even in this there is an exchange of "courtesy," because it is a common thing for one paper to remark that the other "commented editorially as follows yesterday."—Archie Bell in World's Outlook.

Much Wood Flour Used.

More than 20,000 tons of wood flour, valued at \$300,000, are used annually in the United States in two widely different industries, the manufacture of dynamite and the manufacture of inland linoleum. Wood flour is also used in making composition flooring, oatmeal paper and in several other industries. It forms one of the means by which the huge waste product of our lumber mills is beginning to find some better means of disposal than the burner.—Tree Talk.

Good Points of the Arabs.

Travelers ascribe to the Arabs many virtues, says a bulletin of the National Geographic society. They are a proud and earnest people, sharp witted, courageous, temperate and hospitable, but when wronged are bloodthirsty and vengeful. One of their most striking characteristics is their great love for poetry. The children of the nomads as well as the offspring of the fellahs are early taught to read, write and calculate, as might be expected of the descendants of that race which gave us our Arabic numerals.

Ephemeral.

"Pop?"

"Well, Bertram?"

"What does ephemeral mean?"

"Ephemeral, my son, means something that comes and stays but a short time, then passes from the memory of man."

"Oh, I know—just like a hired girl!"—Youngstown Telegram.

Swayed by a Bell's Tones.

The Church of St. Nicaise, in the city of Rheims, is surrounded with pillars. When a certain bell in the tower is rung the top of one pillar always sways to the extent of seven inches on each side, although the base is immovable, and the stones are so firmly cemented as to seem like a solid piece of masonry. Notwithstanding that each of the four bells is about the same distance from the trembling pillar none of the others has the slightest effect on it.

THE BEST GIFTS.

You can give, no matter how poor you may be. There are many gifts that are in the power of all to bestow. The best thing to give your enemy, if you have one, is forgiveness, to an opponent tolerance, to a friend your heart, to your child a good example, to a father deference, to a mother conduct that will make her proud of you, to yourself respect, to all men charity.