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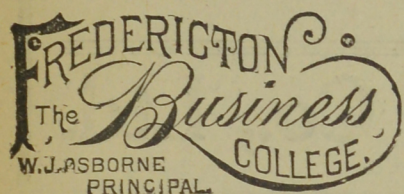
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# CY WHITTAKER'S PLACE

"The inspection showed that the  
claim was likely to be even better  
than they thought, so, after some bar-  
gaining, the deal was completed. They  
sold out for \$75,000, and it was the  
best trade father ever made. He's so  
proud of his judgment and foresight  
in making it that I wonder he never  
told you the story."

"He never did. When was this?"

"In '54. What?"

"I didn't speak. The date seemed  
kind of familiar to me, that's all.  
Seem's as if I heard it recent, but I  
can't remember when. Seventy-five  
thousand, hey? Well, that wasn't so  
bad, was it? With that for a nest egg,  
no wonder Heman's managed to hatch  
a pretty respectable brood of dollars."

"Oh, the whole seventy-five wasn't  
his, of course. Half belonged to his  
partner. But the poor devil didn't live  
to enjoy it. After the articles were  
signed and before the money was paid  
over he was taken sick with a fever  
and died."

"Hey? He did? With a fever?"

"Yes, but he left a pretty good leg-  
acy to his heirs, didn't he? For a com-  
mon sailor or second mate—I believe  
that's what he was—\$37,500 is doing  
well. It must have come as a big  
surprise to them. The whole sum was  
paid to Atkins, who—What's the  
matter with you?"

Captain Cy was leaning back in his  
chair. He was as white as the table-  
cloth.

"Are you ill?" asked the congress-  
man anxiously. "Take some water.  
Shall I call?"

The captain waved his hand.

"No, no," he stammered. "No! I'm  
all right. Do you—for the Lord's sake  
tell me this! What was the name of  
this partner that died?"

Mr. Everdean looked curiously at his  
friend before he answered.

"Sure you're not sick?" he asked.

"Well, all right. The partner's name?  
Why, I've heard it often enough. It's  
on the deed of sale that father has  
framed in his room at home. The old  
gentleman is as proud of that as any-  
thing in the house. The name was—  
was—"

"For God sake," cried Captain Cy.

"Don't say 'twas John Thayer, 'cause  
if you do I shan't believe it."

"That's what it was—John Thayer.  
How did you guess? Did you know  
him? I remember now that he was  
another down easter, like Atkins."

The captain did not answer. He  
clasped his forehead with both hands  
and leaned his elbows on the table.  
Everdean was plainly alarmed.

"I'm going to call a doctor," he be-  
gan, rising. But Captain Cy waved  
him back again.

"Set still," he ordered. "Set still, I  
tell you! You say the whole seventy-  
five thousand was paid to Heman, but  
that John Thayer signed the bill of  
sale afore he died as half partner and  
your dad's got the original deed and—  
and—he remembers the whole busi-  
ness?"

"Yes, he's got the deed—framed. It's  
on record, too, of course. Remembers?  
I should say he did! He'll talk for a  
week on that subject if you give him  
a chance."

The captain sprang to his feet. His  
chair tipped backward and fell to the  
floor. An obsequious waiter ran to  
right it, but Captain Cy paid no at-  
tention to him.

"Where's my coat?" he demanded.

"Where's my coat and hat?"

"What ails you?" asked Everdean.

"Are you going crazy?"

"Goin' crazy? No, no! I'm goin' to  
California. When's the next train?"

### CHAPTER XX.

THE Hon. Heman Atkins sat in  
the library of his Washington  
home before a snapping log  
fire reading a letter. Mr. At-  
kins had, as he would have expressed  
it, "served his people" in congress for  
so many years that he had long since  
passed the hotel stage of living at the  
capital. He rented a furnished house  
on an eminently respectable street, and  
the polished doorplate bore his name in  
uncompromising characters.

The library furniture was solid and  
dignified. Its businesslike appearance  
impressed the stray excursionist from  
the Atkins district when he or she vis-  
ited the great man in whose affairs we  
felt such a personal interest. Particu-  
larly impressive and significant were  
a map of the district hanging over the  
congressman's desk and an oil paint-  
ing of the Atkins mansion at Bayport,  
which, with the iron dogs and urns  
conspicuous in its foreground, occupied  
the middle of the largest wall space.

The cheery fire was very comforting  
on a night like this, for the sleet was  
driving against the windowpanes, the  
sidewalks were ankle deep in slush,  
and the wet, cold wind from the Po-  
tomac was whistling down the street.

Somewhere about the house an un-  
fastened shutter slammed in the gusts.  
Mr. Atkins should have been extremely  
comfortable as he sat there by the fire.  
He had spent many comfortable win-  
ters in that room. But now there was  
a frown on his face as he read the let-  
ter in his hand. It was from Simpson  
and stated, among other things, that  
Cyrus Whittaker had been absent from  
Bayport for over two weeks and that  
no one seemed to know where he had  
gone. "The idea seems to be that he  
started for Washington," wrote Tad,  
"but if that is so it is queer you haven't  
seen him. I am suspicious that he is  
up to something about that harbor  
business. I should keep my eye peeled  
for him."

Alicia, the Atkins' hopeful, rustled  
into the room.

"Papa," she said, "I've come to kiss  
you good night."

Her father performed the ceremony  
in a perfunctory way.

"All right, all right," he said. "Now  
run along to bed and don't bother me;  
there's a good girl. I wish," he added  
testily to the housekeeper, who had fol-  
lowed Alicia into the room—"I wish  
you'd see to that loose blind. It makes  
me nervous. Such things as that  
should be attended to without specific  
orders from me."

The housekeeper promised to attend  
to the blind. She and the girl left the  
library. Heman reread the Simpson  
letter. Then he dropped it in his lap  
and sat thinking and twirling his eye-  
glasses at the end of their black cord.  
His thoughts seemed to be not of the  
pleasantest. The lines about his  
mouth had deepened during the last  
few months. He looked older.

The telephone bell rang sharply. Mr.  
Atkins came out of his reverie with a  
start, arose and walked across the  
room to the wall where the instrument  
hung. It was before the days of the  
convenient desk phone. He took the  
receiver from his hook and spoke into  
the transmitter.

"Hello!" he said. "Hello! Yes, yes!  
Stop ringing. What is it?"

The wire buzzed and purred in the  
storm. "Hello!" said a voice. "Hello,  
there! Is this Mr. Atkins' house?"

"Yes; it is. What do you want?"

"Hey? Is this where the Hon. He-  
man Atkins lives?"

"Yes, yes, I tell you! This is Mr. At-  
kins speaking. What do you want?"

"Oh! Is that you, Heman? This  
is Whittaker—Cy Whittaker. Under-  
stand?"

Mr. Atkins understood. Yet for an  
instant he did not reply. He had been  
thinking as he sat by the fire of cer-  
tain persons and certain ugly though  
remote possibilities. Now, from a  
mysterious somewhere, one of these  
persons was speaking to him. The  
hand holding the receiver shook mo-  
mentarily.

"Hello! I say, Heman, do you un-  
derstand? This is Whittaker talkin'."

"I—er—understand," said the con-  
gressman slowly. "Well, sir?"

"I'm here in Washin'ton."

"I have been informed that you were  
in the city. Well, sir?"

"Oh, knew I was here, did you? Is  
that so? Who told you? Tad wrote,  
I suppose, hey?"

The congressman did not reply im-  
mediately. This man, whom he dis-  
liked more than any one else in the  
world, had an irritating faculty of put-  
ting his finger on the truth. And the  
flippancy in the tone was maddening.

Mr. Atkins was not used to flippancy.  
"I believe I am not called upon to  
disclose my source of information," he  
said, with chilling dignity. "It ap-  
pears to have been trustworthy. I pre-  
sume you have phoned me concern-  
ing the appropriation matter. I do not  
recognize your right to intrude in that  
affair, and I shall decline to discuss  
it. Yes, sir; to my people, to those  
who have a right to question, I am  
and shall always be willing to explain  
my position. Good night."

"What! Hello! Hold on a minute.  
Don't get mad, Heman. I only want-  
ed to say just a word. You'll let me  
say a word, won't you?"

To be Continued)

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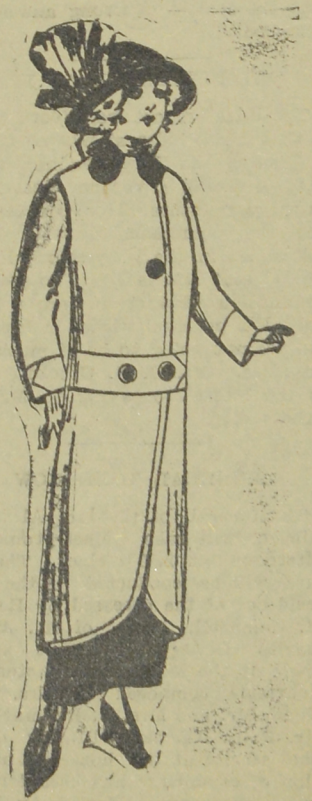
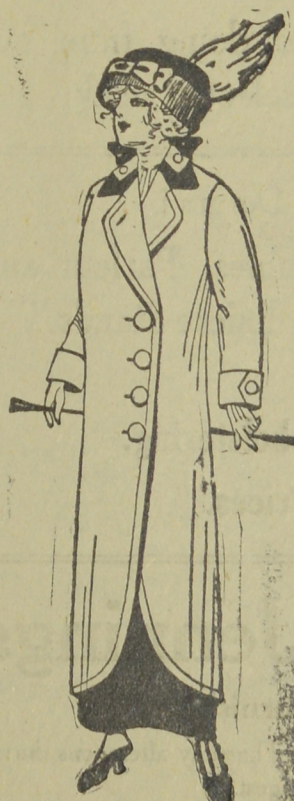
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