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TRASK.

MORE OF HIS VILLAINY.

Trask's name has been made odious to the people of Chicago, but his full record can never be made public. At No. 81 Fifth Avenue is a man named William Gibbs, who runs a restaurant at that place. He once fell into Trask's hands, and it was in this way: Some two years ago Mr. Gibbs started up a restaurant on Quincy Street. It was not as successful under his management as he could wish and he concluded to sell it. In fitting it up and getting it into running shape, Mr Gibbs had expended about \$1,000. He advertised the place for sale, and one day subsequently a man named Lincoln walked in. Mr. L. was looking for just such a business; it was just the thing he wanted; just the place and location to a nicety. There was not too much haggling as to price, but Lincoln had no cash. He was a real estate prince. He owned, or claimed to own, a house and a lot on West Erie Street, near Lincoln. The price agreed upon for the restaurant was all right, but there was some trouble about the real estate. The house and lot were incumbered for \$1,100, and Lincoln claimed that it was worth \$2,000, leaving a margin of \$900 in payment for the hash-house. Mr Gibbs had agreed to take \$700 for his good-will, stock, fixtures, etc, and finally an agreement was made that Gibbs was to receive a clear title to his newly-acquired realty. An abstract of title was to be handed him the next day. There was an unreasonable delay in obtaining the papers, and finally one day the man Lincoln came in and asked Gibbs to go with him to Trask's office, as he was a Notary Public, and would act as a third party, who would make out, and in whose hands they could leave the papers until all the articles of agreement were ratified. To this Gibbs assented. Trask pretended to make out a deed, and Mr Gibbs signed a bill of sale, which Trask was to hold, of course. But here is where the rank villainy of the man was brought into play. All this time Mr Gibbs had not seen or received an abstract of title for his examination. He became suspicious. There elapsed a good many days, but no papers were sent to him. He was to sign a certain note, payable in ninety days, which he did, though this, too, was extorted from him. Finally, he obtained an abstract of the title to the property, but it was of no use to him, since it was only up to some ten years ago. Mr. Gibbs didn't want such a document, as it was no good. He told Lincoln and Trask that they had agreed to furnish him with an abstract to date. With that cheek for which Trask is noted, he told Gibbs if he wanted a better abstract that he had better get it himself. After much parlaying they finally agreed to get another abstract if Gibbs would advance the money, which he agreed to do, and did, and never got a return of it. Gibbs was to give possession of his place as soon as everything was satisfactory to all concerned. Lincoln came over and Gibbs took him to the landlord to have the lease transferred, but the owner wouldn't accept the new tenant, but said he would make a new lease, in which Mr. Gibbs should be the one to guarantee the rent.

Here Mr. Gibbs' cashier stepped in and told Mr. Gibbs not to deliver to Lincoln, that he was a fraud, and that he was being swindled out of his restaurant. It seems that a man named Brinkenhoff owned the Erie Street property. He had agreed to trade it to Lincoln for some lands, but Brinkenhoff, finding the lands worthless, refused to give title, so that Lincoln was selling property to which he had no claim, so far as making a transfer was concerned, and he was making a deed for property which he did not own. Considering all the above circumstances, the trade naturally fell through, as Mr. Gibbs supposed. But he didn't know Trask then. Gibbs was left in peace for a few days, but he got wind of the fact that Trask was intending to clean out his place, for which he held a bill of sale, in trust, for which no consideration had ever been given. They came to him to settle, and Trask wanted pay for his action in the premises. He kept the restaurant closed, but one Saturday night Trask's gang secured possession by a trick, and they cleaned the place out during Sunday, before Mr. Gibbs could get out an injunction from the Court, which he was prepared to apply for on Monday morning through Mr. Adolph Moses. The goods were carted to Harris' storehouse on West Van Buren Street, and Lincoln agreed to restore them if Mr. Gibbs would bleed to the tune of \$500, most of which was needed, he said, to pay Trask's charges. Mr. Gibbs didn't feel like being robbed in this way, and replevined his goods. Lincoln then went before Scully and began several attachment suits against Mr. Gibbs, claiming in each case that Mr. Gibbs owed him \$200. In the meantime, Gibbs had commenced several suits for trespass in the higher courts. Upon the issuing of these writs, Trask, Lincoln, and their lawyer came to the restaurant, which was then on Fifth Avenue, near Madison Street, and told Gibbs that they wanted settlement then and there, or they would clean him out. It was the supper hour, and the tables were filled with customers, who were surprised at the commotion caused by the intruders. The Constable happened not to be a tool of the gang. He acted decently and respectably, and, seeing that something was wrong, he told Mr. Gibbs that he would make the attachment, but would allow him to go on by putting in a custodian. Of course Trask and Lincoln demurred to this, but this gave Mr. Gibbs a chance to turn, and the next morning he gave bonds, with Mr. Ludwig Thieben, the crockery man, as surety. When the case was called there was no plaintiff to prosecute, but at a late hour Lincoln was allowed to come in and withdraw his suit. Mr. Gibbs was kept out of possession of the Quincy street premises for months, though he had to pay the rent, but he finally obtained possession by force. As a finale, Mr. Gibbs paid \$100 to Trask, not being able to stand any more litigation, and he agreed to withdraw all the suits, which he did.

NOTES:

\$1 dollar in 1880 would be worth approximately £23 in 2014. Ludwig Thieben owned a crockery & glassware shop at 59 Blue Island Avenue, Chicago.