

The Bloomfield Times.

FRANK MORTIMER,
Editor and Proprietor.

AN INDEPENDENT FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

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One Dollar per Year.

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BY FRANK MORTIMER.

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The Reason Why.

Somebody—a crusty old bachelor, of course—inquires why, when Eve was manufactured of a spare rib, a servant was not made at the same time to wait on her?—Somebody else, a woman we imagine, replies in the following strain: Because Adam never came whining to Eve with a ragged stocking to be darned, collar string to be sewed on, or a glove to mend "right away, quick now!" Because he never read the newspapers until the sun got down behind the palm trees, and then stretching out, yawned, "Aint supper most ready, my dear?" Not he. He make the fire and hung the kettle over it himself, we venture; and pulled the radishes, peeled the potatoes and did everything else he ought to do. He milked the cows, fed the chickens, and looked after the pigs, himself, and he never brought home a half a dozen friends to dinner when Eve hadn't any fresh pomegranates. He never stayed out till late at a political meeting, hurrahing for an out and out candidate, and then scolded because poor Eve was sitting up and crying inside the gates. He never played billiards, rolled ten pins, and drove fast horses, nor choked Eve with tobacco smoke. He never loafed around corner groceries while Eve was rocking little Cain's cradle at home.—In short, he didn't think she was especially created for the purpose of waiting on him and wasn't under the impression that it disgraced a man to lighten a new wife's cares a little. That's the reason Eve did not need a hired girl, and with it was the reason that her fair descendants did."

Not so Bad.

Macready's handwriting was curiously illegible, and especially when writing orders of admission to the theater. One day at New Orleans, Mr. Brougham obtained one of these from him for a friend. On handing it to the gentleman the latter observed that if he had not known what it purported to be, he would never have suspected what it was. "It looks more like a prescription than anything else," he added.
"So it does," said Mr. Brougham, "let us go and have it made up."
Turning into the nearest drug store, the paper was given to the clerk, who gave it a careless glance and then proceeded to get a phial ready, and to pull out divers boxes.—With another look at the order, down came a tincture bottle, and the phial was half filled. Then there was a pause. The gentlemanly attendant was evidently puzzled. At last he broke down completely, and rang for his principal, an elderly and severe looking individual, who presently emerged from the inner sanctum. The two whispered together an instant, when the old dispenser looked at the document, and with an expression of pity for the ignorance of his subordinate, boldly filled the phial with some apocryphal fluid, and duly corked and labelled it. Then handing it to the gentleman who were waiting, he said with a bland smile, "cough mixture and a very good one. Fifty cents if you please."

Poetical Selections.

A MOTHER'S PRAYER.

BY ABBY SAGE.

THE flowers are shut and bowed with dew,
The trees stand hushed, and tall, and dim,
As in the soft and tender light,
Two children sing their evening hymn.

One singer's clustering locks are dark,
And one has locks of golden hue;
One looks through black and flashing eyes,
The other's eyes are sweetest blue.

Then joining hands in loving clasp,
They mingle dark and golden hair,
As bending at their mother's knee,
They each repeat an evening prayer.

One asks that o'er her little bed,
The angels' gentle watch may keep;
The youngest lisps, in reverent tone,
His "Now I lay me down to sleep."

Deep in her heart the mother prays,
While tear drops dim her lifted eyes;
The listening angels gathered near
May hear her voiceless prayer arise.

She knows how weak are earthly ties,
The mother's love, how poor and frail—
And for her helpless little ones,
She seeks the love which cannot fail.

She prays that, with His fondest care,
The tender Father up in Heaven,
May help her guide to noble ends,
The precious lives His love has given.

Thus from that hushed and holy hour,
Their softened spirits drink repose,
Till gently round their blending forms,
The deeper shades of evening close.

My First Patient.

A DOCTOR'S STORY.

AN ORPHAN, almost from birth, at an age before my recollection, my grandfather, a man of large property, had died intestate, and to me, as the lineal heir, the property had fallen. In the belief that this property was mine, I had grown up to manhood, a gay, light-hearted, impulsive fellow, who had never seen aught of life but a bright, easy side. The only touch of the practical there was about me was a passion for the study of medicine, and this I had pursued to a really considerable extent, for the mere love of it.

One day, as I was rummaging among some old papers in the library, I happened to pull out from a corner where it had lain undisturbed for many a year, a paper, yellow and worn with age. I unfolded it with idle curiosity.

There at the end, was the signature, firm and bold, of my grandfather, and above it my eyes read the words that made my brain spin like a top, for it was the last will and testament of William Launce, and it gave and bequeathed all his property, not to me, but to Alicia Orton, a person whose very name and existence were hitherto unknown to me.

The shock was a severe one in every way, but most of all my pride was touched. I had lived on what was not my own all my days. Could I live another hour without giving up this property to its rightful owner? I was young and impulsive with a full share of that pride which had always been a leading trait of the Launces, and I thought less of what a mighty change this involved for me than of dispossessing myself of that which was never mine.

But who and where was this Alicia Orton? Who would know? Grandfather's lawyer was dead, the witnesses were dead. "Bah!" I said, impatiently, "Everybody is dead.—No, wait, there is old Aunt Rhoda, she may know." And locking the will carefully in the drawer where I had found it, I went in search of this individual.

I found her knitting, smoking, and working with equal vigor in the full enjoyment of undisturbed possession of that chaotic region, her own room.

At sight of me a smile of delight spread

over her broad dusky face, whose color was finely set off by the snowy whiteness of her kinky hair.

"Well, bress de Lord!" she said joyously, "ef here aint my boy, a comin' to see me in my own room, de room he gib me all for myself. Set down, chile. Well, there, clair for it, the chairs is poofy much occupied. 'Tis 'mazin' how things gets heaped up with me clarin' up all the time. Yis, honey, jist turn dem tings rite out on de floor. Dey aint much 'count—jist a few stockings I was gwine to cut over for Nancy's chil'en."

"Aunt Rhoda," I said, as soon as I could get in a word, "do you know, or did you ever know a person by the name of Alicia Orton?"

"Lord, massy, yes! Well, no, not 'zactly eider, but I know about de moder ob her, she dat was Margaret Reeves, an married a Orton, but orter 'married your grandfather, an' I'll say dat ef I am talkin' to you. But dar de Lord, 'knows yo aint no ways to blame, so don't yer trouble yerself, honey," said she, with the rambling garrulity of old age.

"Ought to have married my grandfather? Why?" I said, trying to bring her back to that head of her discourse.

"Why? Hadn't a man orter marry a gal when he hangs around her a year or two, and gets her so she aint no eyes nor nothin' for nobody but him? His folks beat I am out of it, yer see. Nobody neber was good enough for de Launces dem days. But he repented on it, 'pend on dat. He never took no comfort wid de woman he married, and neber was like himself arterward. But yer aint in no wise to blame 'bout it, ef she was yer grandmother, honey."

Poor old aunt Rhoda! She had always a soft place in her heart for her boy, as she always called me big and little."

I began to see through this matter. My grandfather had willed his property to the child of his old sweetheart as an atonement. There was something of spite mingled with this more Christian-like spirit, I thought afterwards, when aunt Rhoda explained his cruel and complete ignoring of me, by informing me that he never manifested the slightest fatherly feeling for his own son my father, seeming only to regard him as the child of the wife he hated.

"Do you know where this Alicia Orton is now?" I said again.

"Wal, no; yis, p'raps I do. 'Pears now I head Nancy say somethin' about a Miss Orton that was teachin music to Miss Price's chil'en, when she was down to Fairbank's on a visit. Nancy," she said, elevating her voice to a higher key, "what was that music teachin' Orton's fust name?"

And from some invisible quarter came back the fateful reply:

"Alicia."

"Aunt Rhoda," I said, "this place, and all I have so long thought was mine, is this Alicia Orton's. I have discovered today, that grandfather left a will and by that will every dollar of this property is given to her."

The good old creature's aged eyes filled with tears, and she rocked herself back and forth in a state of great dismay and sympathy.

"Don't yer neber say nothin' 'bout it, honey, neber. He hadn't no right to will his property 'way from his own blood that way. I neber see sich a topsy-turvy world as dis is. I 'clare for it I'm glad I'm 'most down to Jordan's shore. Dat's what your grandfather wanted to tell 'em an' couldn't, whar dat ar was. He had a stroke you see, an' neber could speak or lift a finger arter it, an' all the time a tryin' to, three days an' nights. He was an awful close communioned kind of man. Neber told nobody nothin'. Dey asked him (his lawyer man died jist before he did yer see) of dar was any will, an' some thought he meant yes, an' some no, but dey neber found none, so nobody don't know nothing

'bout it, an, don't you, honey. My 'vice is, jist say nothin' 'bout it. You've had it so long, and you ought to have it any way.—Blood is blood, 'member dat, my boy.

"Aunt Rhoda," I said, feeling very chivalrous and strong to do and dare, "do you suppose I'd live a day longer on what is another's? I'd starve first, there is not much danger of that. If a young girl can get her own living I should think that I might."

Yis, chile, but yer see that yer warn't brought up to it. Make's all the difference in de world, dat does," said aunt Rhoda, with a dubious shake of the head.

But I paid little attention to her croaking and a feverish haste possessed me to divest myself of my unlawful riches. I could scarcely bear the air I breathed, the food I ate, the house I lived in. I communicated the discovery of the will at once by letter to Miss Orton, and commenced settling up matters as fast as possible preparatory to going to the West which was then a popular El Dorado. I thought that I had knowledge enough to set up for a physician there.

I did not wish to stay and meet my successor. It did not seem to me that I could face her, for I had a strange unreasonable feeling of shame at having kept her property from her so long. She answered my letter in a womanly yet business-like style, begging me in a delicate manner to consider the old place my home and remain there as usual.

In return for this I wrote a cold, proud, letter declining the offer, and pledging my word that I would as soon as possible make up the value of the only piece of property I had sold.

Then I disposed of my guns, fishing apparatus, and a number of other expensive articles which I did not see that a woman could have any use for and started, cutting myself adrift from all my old moorings and setting myself afloat on the world's untried sea, as ignorant of its shoals and deeps as a man could well be.

I settled in a Western town, and waited, till hope deferred, pride, disappointment and hard fare wrought such a change in me that many an hour I sat doubting my own identity. "This way madness lies," and so at last I came to the rash resolve to leave a world which made me despise myself for my inability to conquer.

One doesn't often come to suicide all at once except in love affairs, I think. The idea had haunted and dogged me for weeks. First it was a thought whose entrance into my heart shocked me, and was shown out in high haste. Then, material objects began to haunt and tempt me. I got afraid of my little medicine case—there were certain little bottles there that took on a strange fascination. Sometimes the gleam of a knife in a shop window would give me a turn—"there's a short cut to death" I'd think. Get on, get on, for the love of Heaven—Launcelet Launce! Then the times grew harder and I never crossed a bridge but I whispered, "drowning is an easy death to die. A little plunge and all is over." Set your foot quick on the firm shore, Launcelet Launce, or never upon the firm shore shall you set your foot again!

Well, I wrestled with and fought it for a while, then I dallied with it, and then I hugged it, and here I was an able-bodied man, and all that, and about to kill myself because I couldn't get bread to put in my mouth. You despise me? So should I in your place.

I suppose hunger made me a little light-headed. At any rate, the strongest feeling I had as I sat over my last stick of wood, with my pistol in hand, was that it really was a most stupendous joke, that I should be freezing and starving and about to take my own life. The idea of dining off Sevres and silver one New Years day, and committing suicide the next for want of a crust!—To be sure neither Sevres nor silver was my own but I had been laboring under the mistake of supposing them to be so all my life so the effect was the same.

I had a strange feeling at the moment of being not one, but three—the me of olden time, the me of latter days and the me contemplating these two former personnels, as one might a couple of his own photographs.

"You were a gay, debonnaire sort of fellow," I said, turning to one of these, "and a merry dance you made of life, and if I were to introduce you to this," turning to the other, "It would be somewhat after this fashion, self to self's ghost."

In that hour which one would naturally have supposed to be a solemn one, I was rather possessed of a feeling of strange bizarreness, and I laughed at fancy, while I examined my pistol with a touch almost caressing.

At this moment a most remarkable thing happened—a most uncommon and unusual thing. My office bell rang.

I had waited so long in vain for this same event to occur that I had half a mind to treat it disdainfully, with contempt at this eleventh hour. But after all when one plays at balance with life and death, each one should have a fair field and no favor, so I laid my pistol by with a whispered "Wait!" and answered the summons.

I recognized the porter of the Darley House as I opened the door.

"Ye'es wanted at the house," he said, in his broad Irish brogue, "there's a grand leddy sint for ye'es."

"Very well, Tim," I answered as nonchalantly as if "grand leddies," were in the habit of sending for Doctor Launce at all hours, "I'll be along directly."

As I stepped back into my room for my overcoat, the pistol shining on the shelf seemed somehow very different from what it had a few moments before. I even was conscious of a little shudder as I glanced that way, and as I walked along over the crisp snow, the keen, bracing air seemed to rouse and awaken me as if from a nightmare.

But if I had any visions of achieving a professional reputation from the difficulty of this providential case of mine, they were dissipated at once as I entered one of the parlors of the Darley House and saw before me my patient. Never was the seal of perfect health more plainly set on lip and cheek, or displayed in the full flowing of a woman's figure than in hers who awaited me, half reclined on a deep luxuriant arm-chair.

Doubtless my face betrayed my astonishment, for, dismissing the servant on some trifling errand she said, the roses deepening in her cheeks, and a shade of embarrassment perceptible in her voice, despite her assured coolness:

"You are right Doctor Launce. I am no more sick than you are. And yet for reasons that I cannot explain, but which I assure you are not in the slightest degree reprehensible, I wish to appear so. If you will only treat me as nearly as possible as you would if I were afflicted with violent pneumonia, I will be so very, very much obliged."

The large, soft, brown eyes looked pleadingly full into mine, and the rich voice was full of entreaty as she proffered this singular request.

I hesitated a little, more from astonishment than anything else.

"I pledge you my word you shall never regret it," she said, "no!" she added a little proudly.

Just then the servant re-entered. A well simulated expression of pain crossed her fair face and she quickly put her hand to her side.

There was no time for further consideration; I accepted the situation.

The pain is almost constant now, is it not?" I said gravely. Then seating myself at the table, and remarking that I quite frequently put up my own prescription, I prepared a potion supposed to be very powerful, but of course perfectly simple and harmless.

A little gleam of pleasure in her eye did