

# The Bloomfield Times.

FRANK MORTIMER, }  
Editor and Proprietor.

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## THE BLOOMFIELD TIMES

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BY

FRANK MORTIMER.

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## The Haunted House.

BY ARTHUR L. MESERVE.

CONCLUDED.

"SO I say," replied the other, emphatically; "we've too good a thing here to be blown on if we can help it."

"You are right there, Jim; but let us go down. The rest of the boys will be along soon."

I held my breath as the two villains passed along to the cellar door, which I had left standing open, and descended the stairs leaving the old kitchen again in total darkness.

What was their errand below? I asked myself this question, and at once resolved that I would find out if possible. Noislessly I glided out from the closet and felt my way along the cellar door, where I paused and listened. A faint light came up from below, and the hum of distant voices.

Silently I descended the stairs. When I reached the bottom I found myself in total darkness. The light had disappeared, and the hum of voices had ceased.

What had become of them? It seemed as though the earth had opened and swallowed them up.

Suddenly I heard a sound above my head—others of the gang were crossing the kitchen floor towards the entrance to the cellar, and in a moment more they would be coming down upon me.

Hastily I crept in beneath the stairs, knocking over the basin of paint, with one hand and dashing its contents over my hands and face. Once under the stairs there was plenty of room, and I drew myself up into as small a compass as possible against the wall, and with my hand upon my revolver, waited for what the next moment would bring forth.

Tramp, tramp, above my head, sounded the footsteps, and by them I was assured that three more had entered the cellar, and were groping their way about in the darkness. Suddenly a voice exclaimed impatiently:

"Why don't the boys show the light?—I shall break my neck over something that may be lying about here."

"Give the signal and they will show it?" said another.

A sharp, short whistle cut the air like a knife, and it had not died away before a door in the wall, which had escaped my notice on my previous visit, was thrown open and a bright light flashed out, revealing a room of considerable dimensions beyond, in which were tables and benches ranged about. The light was too brilliant to proceed from a tallow candle, for it lighted up the cellar without revealing the forms of the three men distinctly; had either of them chanced to have turned their heads they must have seen me crouching beneath the stairs. But as luck would have it they did

not, but passed at once into the further apartment, closing the door behind them, leaving me in darkness more profound than before.

Thrice was this repeated, and I had seen ten men enter the secret chamber. Then came a long interval, which convinced me at last, that they had all arrived who would be there that night. I reflected upon what should be my next move.

To attempt to pry any further into their mysteries that night, I thought, would avail me nothing and it might get me into difficulties. I had learned enough already to forever lay the ghost in the haunted house, and to bring a pack of villains to justice. That they were a gang of base coiners and counterfeiters, I had not the least doubt, and I felt that it would be my duty to unearthen them to the authorities.

I felt considerable interest in the discoveries I had made, and I knew that I should be the lion of Wicklow for the next seven days at least. People would say to one another:

"There goes the man who laid the ghost," and I should be an object of interest to the young ladies in the church the next Sabbath. At that moment I felt myself quite a hero, but it suddenly occurred to me that I should remember the old adage, "not to crow until you are out of the woods." I had forgotten that.

I now came back to my immediate surroundings, and reflected on what I should do next. Should I remain where I was, and see them emerge from their den and take their departure, or should I leave at once, and return to Tom's mother, while the coast was clear?

I decided upon the latter, and was about to crawl out from my hiding-place, when I heard footsteps again in the kitchen. More of them were coming, so I shrank back into my corner to witness their descent.

The foot steps went round the room and at last came to the cellar door, where they paused for a moment, while a light as from a lantern flashed down the stairs. Then the footsteps began slowly to descend. I counted them one by one until they reached the bottom, and the new-comer stood close to, but with his back towards me.—In one hand he carried a common lantern, and as he moved away from the foot of the stairs, I thought that his figure looked very familiar.

He held the lantern up as he went round, and from his motions I could not help deciding that he was a stranger to the spot, and not a member of the gang beyond the wall. At last his steps brought him close to a door, through which I had seen the members of the gang pass, and at this instant his face was turned by chance for a moment toward me, and I plainly saw his features. It was my friend Tom Jones.

I hardly checked myself in time to prevent giving utterance to an exclamation of surprise at beholding him, for I had not supposed that he had returned. But here he was in the flesh, and I knew his errand at once. His mother had told him where I had gone, and he had come in search of me.

I was about to call out to him in a low tone, but before I could do so he had seen the door, and, evidently with the intention of effering, he placed his hand upon the latch and finding it fastened gave it a violent shake. It produced no result, so he gave it another, and the next moment it flew open, revealing nothing but a dark void beyond.

Taking a step forward, despite the low warning I gave him, he held his lantern out, that its light might show his way, but in a moment more it was dashed from his hands and all was total darkness.

"Villains, unhand me," I heard Tom cry; then there was a short struggle, followed by a blow and a heavy fall, and then all was still.

Poor Tom! Had they taken his life? and I close by, without lifting a hand to prevent it? I heard the door shut with a clang and then all was still.

What should I do? Should I fly to his assistance, and with my simple arm combat the whole gang and try to save his life? or should I make the best of my way out of the accursed spot, and run to the village and give the alarm? For a moment I was undecided. Either way it seemed that Tom's life was at stake.

At last I formed the resolution to go for help, and was just edging my way out from beneath the stairs, when the door of the secret apartment was again thrown open, and the brilliant light which I had seen before flashed out.

Hastily I fell back against the wall, fearing that I should be discovered; and there I lay holding my breath, while three or four of the gang went peering about the cellar and up through the house seeking for any companions which Tom might have brought with him. At last they were apparently satisfied that he had come alone, and returned to their den, leaving me undiscovered.

No sooner was the door shut than, having changed my mind as to the course of procedure, I emerged from my hiding-place and crept noiselessly up the stairs, across the kitchen, out into the open air.

Here, in the thick shrubbery which grew close to the house, I secreted myself, and there remained motionless, until I counted as many leave the house as I had seen enter the cellar. Then when I had given them a chance to get well clear of the premises, I re-entered the house, and hastened down to the cellar to hear if possible the fate of Tom. I carried with me a rusty iron bar which I had stumbled upon outside, with which I meant to break in the door, could I not open it in any other manner.

Feeling my way to the door, which I tried and found securely fastened, I placed my ear to the crevice and listened intently. At first I heard nothing, and then a sound fell upon my ear which I was sure was a groan.

"Tom," I cried, through the crevice, "you are not dead, I hope?"

Another groan and then a faint voice said:

"Not quite; can't you get to me?"

My only answer was a blow upon the door with that bar; till at last the bolt was broken, the door swung back, and I rushed into the secret chamber.

"Tom, where are you?" I cried.  
"Here," said a voice, at my feet; and reaching down I encountered the face of Tom, which in another moment I should have put my foot on.

"Thank God that you are alive, Tom; but are you much hurt?" I cried, searching for his hand, that I might give it a friendly pressure.

"Some, I am afraid; my head don't feel just right yet. You must find my hand there. The villains have fastened them behind me, and my legs are bound too."

The rascals! but they shall suffer for this," I said, as with my pocket-knife I set Tom free, and then helped him upon his feet, where for a minute he was unable to stand alone, his head was so dizzy.

"Lead me out of this room. The air is stifling. Get me out beneath the stars and I shall feel better."

"Lean on me and I will soon get you there, Tom," I replied; and half supporting him, I led him out through the cellar, up over the stairs, through the kitchen, and soon had him out where the cool air could bathe his brow and bring him fairly to himself again.

In a little time he had in a measure recovered his strength, and we had set out for home.

"Did you recognize any of them, Tom?" I said, as we went along.

"No, not one," he replied. "It was not light enough."

"Why did they bind you hand and foot? Do you remember what they said about it?"

"Yes, plainly. They tried to make me take a horrid oath that I would never reveal

what I had discovered of their hiding-place, but I refused to do it. Then they told me that I should never leave the place alive until I had taken the oath, and that they would starve me to do it or to death. So they bound me and left me there till you came."

Then, in return I told him of what I had witnessed, and by that time we were at his mother's.

It was past midnight, and the good woman was fearfully frightened. Tom had come home sooner than he had promised, and had gone at once to the haunted house for me. She had watched anxiously for our return, and when, at last we did present ourselves, she was frightened more than ever. Tom's face and clothes were covered with blood, which had flowed from the wound in his head, while I presented an equally gory appearance on account of the red paint with which I was plentifully besprinkled.

Leaving Tom to acquaint his mother with the details of our adventures, I made my way to the village, and soon had the proper officers alert to their duty; for I knew if we wanted to make a haul we must do it before they would have a chance to return to see their prisoner. Quietly we proceeded to the old house, and there found that which I had expected to find, namely tools, plates and presses of a gang of counterfeiters, and a large amount of spurious currency, which they had already to send to their agents in various parts of the country.

It was near morning when we got round to call upon my old friend the driver, and it must be confessed that we somewhat surprised that worthy when we accommodated him with a pair of bracelets. When he saw me he was convinced that I was in reality a detective, and that I already knew all; so he made a clean breast of it and implicated all of his companions, whereby we were enabled to secure the whole gang, and thus break up a combination which extended over a large area of territory to which no clue had before been obtained.

It was daylight when I got back to Tom's mother's, and I found that neither of them had been abed, so anxious were they to know how it all turned out, and when I had told my story they were of one mind, that I had done a good night's work, which conclusion I also concurred in.

I stayed at Wicklow until the villains had their examination and had been carried away to jail, and I was all the lion I had imagined I should be. Old ladies would stop to look at me in the street, and so would the boys; but the young ladies, I must confess, though it hurts my vanity to do so, only gave me a look, and then their eyes followed some other better-looking fellow who chanced to be going by.

I hear from Tom quite often now. He says the ghost no longer walks in the haunted house, and that the blood-stain retains its dark hue from one year's end to another. When it changes its spots again I will make another trip to Wicklow.

### Remarkable Conduct of a Horse.

A recent French paper records an extraordinary punishment inflicted by a horse on its master for an act of brutality by the latter towards one of the animal's stable companions. A carrier named R—, at no time tender in his treatment of his four-footed servants, returned one night in a state of semi-intoxication from Moamant to Givors. The man's natural barbarity was at this time aggravated by the drink he had taken, and being dissatisfied with the efforts of one of the horses—a poor hack which had almost served its time—he decided that the animal was no longer worth his feed, and resolved to put an end to it. For that purpose he tied the poor brute to a tree, and taking a massive lever used in moving goods, he struck the animal several violent blows on the head, until the unfortunate brute sank to the ground insensible.

The master, thinking the animal was dead, left it on the spot, intending to remove the body next day. The horse, however, recovered its senses a short time after, found its way home, and entered the courtyard at daybreak. Its arrival was welcomed by the neighing of its companions in the stable, which noise awakened the master, who was now furious at having failed in his cruel purpose. He tied up the animal afresh and again commenced to shower blows on its head. This act of brutality was committed in sight of the two horses in the stable; at length one of them, a young animal, became so frantic with rage that he broke his halter, and rushing on the man seized him in his jaws, and after shaking him violently, threw him down and trampled on him with such fury that had not the man's cries brought some persons to his aid the master would certainly have been killed.

### A Warning to Sick Wives.

THE *Matteawan Herald* says that just in the outskirts of Poughkeepsie, lives a man by the name of Warren, who, for years, has enjoyed a plurality of wives, to the disgust of the neighborhood. Warren many years ago married a young lady and for years they lived in perfect harmony, but one day she sickened and she and her friends supposed she would die.

At this crisis she became anxious about the welfare of her husband and busied herself in selecting her successor, who was to share with Warren the joys of matrimonial bliss. This difficulty she at last overcame by selecting a woman she thought worthy to follow in her footsteps.

Once settled in her mind, she desired the twain to be made one flesh, even before her death, that she might be made happy in her last moments. They were accordingly married by her bedside, and the sick woman having her heart's wish gratified turned over to die, but it was not so to be, for she, much to the astonishment of all parties, rapidly grew better, and soon recovered her health, only to find her husband given to another.

This was more than the woman bargained for, but the two females fixed up the matter, and it was agreed that they would live in harmony in the same house, and thus they lived for years. Both women raised a family of children; one had six and the other five. Some of these children are grown up men and women at the present time.

About six months ago the women quarrelled and the husband was called on to settle the difficulty, and he espoused the cause of the youngest wife and it was determined on by the two to get the old wife out of the house, which has speedily accomplished, and she is now doing housework in the neighborhood, while the second wife enjoys the bed and board that was once hers.

The *Herald*, published at Honesdale, Wayne County, says:

"At or near Beach Pond, this county, there lives a German who may safely claim to be the champion wretch of this vicinity. His wife died some time since, and he made her a coffin himself of rough hemlock boards, in which he placed some straw, upon which he placed the corpse, entirely naked, then dug a grave and carried his dead with as little ceremony as one would a dog. A few weeks ago a little son of his four or five years old, died, and he interred him in the same manner. Some days after he was buried a pair of shears was missed from the house, and could not be found.—Finally this monster remembered dropping them in the straw of his little boy's coffin while he was working at it, and he forthwith exhumed, opened it, found the shears, and coolly re-interred the box and its decaying contents!"

The above is pretty hard to believe, but as it is in print we are bound to believe that it is true if it is strange.