

The Bloomfield Times.

FRANK MORTIMER,
Editor and Proprietor.

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The Borrowed Trunk,

AND

WHAT WAS IN IT.

CYRUS DURHAM was very busy on a certain afternoon making an omelet.—At least he called it an omelet, but in reality it was nothing more than scrambled eggs. "Omelet" sounded better, but it would not have tasted half so good, especially if Cyrus had had to make one himself.

In order to understand why this young man cooked his own eggs it must be known that he was a medical student in Philadelphia, and the son of a very respectable and by no means ungenerous physician in Maryland, who allowed him for his expenses quite enough to keep him comfortably, even in a large city. But Cyrus, who always had table board on Walnut street for about the first half of every month, had generally been accustomed from necessity to live in a "bachelor hall" style for the remaining portion of the month in his rooms on Sansom street. He was very nicely situated in these rooms, and the high rent he paid for them contributed not a little to his slimmness of purse during those days which immediately preceded the arrival of his monthly remittances. His "study" was on the second floor of what is known in the city of Brotherly love as the "back buildings," and was approached from the long entry by a single flight of short stairs. This room looked out at the side on a pleasant yard, was very well furnished, and was altogether quite too good for a young fellow who ought to have been satisfied with a garret anywhere where he could study unmolested. Back of the large room was a small bedchamber, generally tenanted not only by Cyrus himself, but by any one of his companions who might stay too late studying anatomy—or euche.

Cyrus was bending over his little wood-stove stirring his eggs rapidly lest they should burn, and keeping an eye at the same time on the coffee pot, which, however, had given no signs of boiling. It was only four o'clock, but Cyrus had only a slight lunch, and so wanted an early supper. This power of having his meals when he chose was another advantage of his mode of living. His table was set with a small linen cloth, (the clean side up) a cup and saucer, and a plate. The "omelet" was just done, and Cyrus had given it the last scrape around the pan, when he heard a knock at the door.

"Come in," said he, and the door opened and the knocker entered. Cyrus looked around and dropped on top of the stove the frying pan which he was just lifting off by the long handle. In the doorway stood a young lady, dressed in the loveliest possible traveling suit, with roses in her cheek far

more glowing than the pink lining of her parasol.

"Mr. Durham," said she.

"Why, Miss Birch!" cried Cyrus (with a face redder than any silk a lady would dare use to line her parasol). "I had no idea—I am very glad to see you; take a seat. You must excuse me—bachelor's hall, you know. When did you come?"

Miss Fanny Birch was by no means embarrassed. She had hesitated about calling on Mr. Durham, and would certainly have postponed her visit had she thought she would have found him cooking his dinner, supper, or whatever it was. But she took a seat which Cyrus placed for her, (as far as possible from the stove, but unluckily facing it), and with a little laugh, which was intended to restore her self-possession, and which had a partial success, asked him where he supposed she had come from; and then, without waiting for an answer, proceeded to inform him that she had not come from home, but was just going there (she lived about half a mile from Mr. Durham's place) from her uncle William's, where she had been nearly a month.

"You know," said she, "that he lives in New Jersey, just a little way out of Trenton."

Cyrus did not know it but he did not say so, but asked her if she had a pleasant time. She answered that it was at first, but she became tired as soon as her cousin Emily had been obliged to go back to boarding school. He knew those Connecticut schools always commence their terms right in the finest weather; and did all the students keep bachelor's hall this way?"

Cyrus said the most of them did; at any rate those who liked better and fresher food than they generally got at the boarding houses. Then Miss Fanny remarked that she thought it was a very good way if you only knew how to cook; and didn't he think that whatever was in that pan was all burning up? Cyrus turned round and said he thought it was; and so he took the frying pan, full of blackened and smoking eggs off the fire, and moved the coffee-pot back.

When he sat down again there was a little silence. He knew she had not come to see him simply because they were old friends and neighbors, and he thought it very probable that she had something particular to say, and was wondering how she should say it. He was right. After looking out of the window, and remarking that she should think the people in the next house could look in here, she said:

"Mr. Durham, I guess you wonder why I came to see you. Oh, yes, of course you are glad; but, you see, I left uncle's this morning by the boat, and sent my trunks on home by express, and coming off the boat at Arch street, or somewhere—I have not the slightest idea where—I had my pocket picked, or lost my port-monnaie;—and I didn't know a soul in Philadelphia who could lend me enough to pay my fare in the cars, except you, and I thought I could borrow some of you. I knew you lived in Sansom street, but I had to ring at ever so many houses before I found you at last."

Now, as Cyrus had exactly forty-eight cents in his pocket, this was rather hard on the young man.

"You see," she continued, "that if I take the six o'clock train for Baltimore, I will get there about ten, and I can stay with Mrs. Sinclair to-night. The cars will take me right past her door, and father will send you the money."

"Oh don't mention that," said Cyrus, who looked exactly as if he was returning from the grave of a pair of twins. "But I have not—I think not at least—but that need make no difference.—I'll just step out and get it. Oh, I'm very glad, indeed—no trouble at all—very glad you came to me—just make yourself comfortable here for a few minutes. There's pipe—I mean there's some books perhaps you would like to look

at. I will be back directly. No trouble at all."

So off went Cyrus with his hat on hind part before. As for Miss Fanny Birch, she first wished he hadn't come. But then she thought that she couldn't help it, she had no other place to go to. But she thought of course he'd have money enough for that. What a pity about those eggs—just as black as a crisp! What a funny way of living! I wonder if he calls these things clean? He ought to have somebody to wash those cups and plates for him; but I suppose it wouldn't be bachelor's hall if he didn't do it himself. All those books are full of horrid bones, I expect; I'm sure I don't want to look at them. I should think he did nothing but smoke; pipes everywhere. I wish he'd hurry back. Why, it's six o'clock now. Oh, that clock don't go—I declare, it frightened me. Why don't he keep his clock wound up?"

With thoughts like these Miss Fanny beguiled a part of the time that she was obliged to wait for Cyrus; but at length, tiring of examining the room, she ventured to take up a book, which fortunately proved to be an odd volume of Macaulay, and so she forgot the world in following the fortunes of William of Orange until Cyrus returned.

That poor man had a hard time of it. On reaching the street he stood for a moment in doubt, and then hurried to Wm. Heiskill's boarding house, to try and borrow ten dollars. He knew that five would pay Miss Birch's passage through to her father's, but he could not offer her less than ten. Heiskill was out. Then a quick run round to Walnut street revealed the fact that Seymour "had gone out walking, sir, with Mr. Heiskill." Cyrus knew that there was but little chance of finding any of his student friends at home on such a fine afternoon;—but still he hurried down to Spruce street to see if by chance little Myles was trying to make up for lost time by a trifle of study. But Myles if he happened to be engaged in any work of self-benefit, was not doing it at home.

"Confound it," said Cyrus, "I'll try pious Arnold."

"Pious" Arnold was so called, not on account of any particular religious tendency, but simply because he attended lectures regularly and studied hard in the meantime, refusing all temptation in the way of card parties, excursions, and other diversions.

"Pious" was at home, but was very sorry he could not lend Cyrus a dollar. He had, although he did not say so, twenty-seven dollars in a little black box in his trunk, which was exactly what he owed his landlady at the end of the month, and in declining to part with any of it he did perfectly right, for it is very doubtful if he would have had any of it back in time to sustain his reputation as the best paying student in Jefferson College.

Poor Cyrus was dumbfounded. He knew not another soul to whom he could apply. One of the professors, with whom he had a previous acquaintance through his father, might have helped him out; but he lived over in West Philadelphia, and there was no time to go to him. It was now striking five, and the train started at six. He had nothing to sell. He had lent his watch to help pay for his walnut book-case which was one of the recent ornaments of his room, and he had nothing else on which, at such short notice, he could raise a dollar. He stopped on his way back from Arnold's, again at Heiskill's boarding house; but of course he had not returned. What, in the name of everything that was absurd, was he to do? After some ten minutes of fruitless beating of his brains, he came to the conclusion that he must return to Miss Birch and tell his shameful story, for if Miss Birch had any other way of managing this difficulty it was time that she was about it. So he went to his room.

Miss Fanny arose, but the moment she saw him she knew he had not got the mon-

ey. And so there was no necessity of his telling his story of shame and poverty. She had so much pity for his manifest embarrassment and downheartedness that she said, laughingly:

"There you haven't got the money. All you students spend every cent your fathers send you as soon as it comes, and so you couldn't borrow any. Have no doubt but that it will all come out right. Such things always do."

"That may all be," said Cyrus, "but I do not see how it is to come out right. You might go to a hotel and send home for money."

"Would they not make me pay something as soon as I got there?" she asked, inquiringly.

"Not if you travel like a person who has plenty of money—with plenty of trunks and things."

"But I haven't got any trunks; they are sent by express."

"Oh, as for that," said Cyrus, brightening up immediately, "I could lend you a trunk."

The method of gaining credit seemed so funny to both of them that they laughed as heartily as if there was no such trouble as money in the world. Miss Fanny declared however, that she would not put Mr. Durham to all that trouble; but Cyrus assured her that it was no trouble in the least to him.

"In fact," said he, "it's a splendid idea! Just think of it! Why, I can make money out of you! I have a trunk with books and things that I have packed ready to take with me during vacation, and I should have to send it by express. Now, you can take it right on for me, and it will go as your baggage, and will cost neither of us anything. What do you think of that idea?"

"Perfectly splendid!" cried Miss Fanny. "And how will I go to the hotel with my baggage?"

"Oh, I will arrange that, easily," said Cyrus. "And now you don't know how relieved I feel."

"So do I," said Fanny. "But I knew it would all come out right some way. I wish those eggs were not all burned up, for I would ask you for some of them. I'm awful hungry."

It is astonishing how a common trouble and a common relief accelerates the growth of familiarity. But then Fanny and Cyrus had known each other ever since they were children.

"Oh, I've plenty more!" cried Cyrus.—"Let me cook you some—you won't get anything to eat just the minute you get to the hotel."

And he ran to the little wood-stove, where some embers still remained. Fanny demurred and "declared," but Cyrus persisted; and so a fire was quickly kindled with light wood, and he made fresh coffee, while Fanny took off her gloves and beat up the eggs as well as she could for laughing at Cyrus' funny way of doing things—keeping his ground coffee in a porter bottle, and all that stale bread, as if he ought not to know how much he wanted, exactly, when he bought it.

"But then, you know, I must always be ready for company," said the happy Cyrus; and there was more laughing and some danger of egg splashes on a new traveling dress. When it came to setting out another cup, saucer and plate, Fanny asked, would he please excuse her, but if he would not feel insulted she thought she would rub them off a little, if that was hot water in one of those spigots over there in the corner.—And when the shining queens-ware was placed on the table Cyrus vowed that it had never been so white since it had first been bought.

They had a delightful meal, but no butter. Cyrus couldn't keep butter, he said, in that hot weather. But the bread was Dutch cake with raisins in it, and the coffee, with cream that was just beginning to turn, was capital, and so were the scrambled eggs.

Our friend was as happy as a king. He was so glad that Heiskill and the other fel-

lows had been out when he called, and he only hoped they would not drop in on him on their way back. But there was no danger of that. Miss Fanny seemed to remember that the afternoon was on the wane and rising and declaring that she had never had a nicer supper, "principally because it was so funny," said she must be going, and which was her trunk?

"The smallest of those two yellow ones," said Cyrus; "and we will write your name on a card and tack it on the end, so as to make everything ship-shape."

This was soon done, and then Cyrus went for a hack. He knew a man who "stood" near the college, and who had trusted him before, and who would do it again. Cyrus gave him some private instructions in regard to making it appear that the young lady had just come from the Kensington depot.

"That can be worked," said the man; "The train is just in—about ten minutes now."

So they hurried back. Miss Birch was escorted down, and the man sent up stairs for the trunk. So far so good; but Mrs. Stacey, the landlady, a thoroughly good soul, but a little careful about students, now made her appearance, with a look of anxiety on her face.

"Going to take away your trunks, Mr. Durham?" said she, as soon as the lady was in the carriage.

Cyrus led her back into the hall, and explained that it was only one trunk, and that he was not going to leave the house, and would explain to her in a minute. A thought of all his furniture now came over the good lady's mind, and she retired for the present. The trunk was now strapped on, and at the door of the carriage Cyrus was about to take leave of Miss Fanny, when she remembered the dispatch. Cyrus promised to attend to that (for he had just about money enough); and it was agreed that it had better be sent to her uncle, as her father lived nearly three miles from a station.—Then good-bye was said, and away rolled Fanny to the La Pierre House with Cyrus Durham's heart. Yes, she had it certainly. He had known her and liked her, ever so much, for years; but he had never seen her in the full bloom of young womanhood before. She had never before had such an intimate little bit of sympathetic action with him: she had never before eaten at his table!

When poor Cyrus went back into his room after sending the dispatch, he sat down disconsolately. How dark, dreary, and common looking, was everything!—How disagreeable was that little stove, and how hot; and how stupid were those dirty dishes! One cup, saucer, and plate he put away and vowed he would never wash them. He was not a fool but he was young.

Then he lighted his pipe and sat down to ruminate. There she had sat and talked to him; there she had stood by the table while he was writing her name on the card; and there she had held it against the end of the trunk, while he stuck the tack through the first corner; yes, and there it was still! There was no doubt of it—the card was just where he had tacked it. What did it mean? Oh, that stupid hackman had taken the wrong trunk!

Cyrus had scarcely comprehended the extent of this misfortune when there was a knock at the door, and there entered Heiskill, Seymour, and little Myles. They had just got in from a walk in the country; had a capital dinner at four o'clock, and were now here to go to work, they said, after an afternoon of play. In order to prove this assertion they each lighted a pipe and seated themselves around the room, with their feet upon the highest article of furniture that they could reach.

"What is the matter with Cy?" said little Myles. "What makes him so quiet, and why is he setting here with the room full of the shades of evening, like a miserable tomb?"

Cyrus made some joking answer, and ri-