

# The Bloomfield Times.

FRANK MORTIMER,  
Editor and Proprietor.

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BY

FRANK MORTIMER.

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## Lindsey's Wedding:

—OR—

THE TWENTIETH OF DECEMBER.

I WAS only her father's housekeeper, Marian Douglass—Aunt Manny she used to call me—a decent Scotch body, and old-time nurse to Lindsey's mother.—Mrs. Walton had been Scotch. It was from thence that the girl got her name and her bonny yellow hair.

Colonel Walton was rich, and Lindsey was his heiress, but when she was little, a fair-faced bairn, slumbering in her tiny cot, I used to shed tears of pity over her, for "he's but poor that's ill loved," as they used to say in the old country, and no one on earth loved Lindsey when she was a child but her old Aunt Manny. But, as she grew older, I used to tremble, looking at her. Her cheeks took on a hue like the sunset, her blue eyes grew more and more winsome, and then her hair was a glory about her when she was scarce fourteen.

Her father was always surly with her. He had hoped that the child would have been a boy—it was Jeanies only one—and when he found that it was a daughter which God had given him, he glowered on the little sleeping face, turned away, and it is true for me that he did not know his own child, two years later, when he met her in the porch walking with a servant.

"Who's little one have you there?" he asked Nan.

"Your own, sir," straightway answered the honest girl.

He gazed a moment on the little pink face—then offered the child his hand—but she would not take it; and he shrugged his shoulders and went away.

It was just after this that we came to Larch Lanes to live, the new country seat which Colonel Walton had named after his old English home.

There were beautiful grounds to it. The larches grew everywhere, sometimes in long rows with wild grapevines lacing them together. Only the undergrowth was kept out, and the shade was beautiful. But the garden was highly cultivated. A great deal of the ornamental shrubbery was foreign. There was a double row of graceful French poplars along the terrace, and below lay the whole smiling garden, a great web of color. At the south end was a summer-house, all open, and the pillars twined with vines—roses, jasmine and clematis. Here Lindsey used to sit for hours with her book and her dog. He was no blinking little Blenheim, but an enormous great wolf mastiff whom Lindsey had adopted when he was a mendicant puppy, and cherished into the most magnificent proportions.—The two were inseparable. She would sit upon his back and ride down the garden path as if he were a pony.

She was a happy girl. I don't think until she was twenty, that she ever thought she had a trouble—excepting the loss of her father's love, if that can be lost, which was never gained.

Her life after all was not a lonely one, for she studied a great deal, having several masters from the city, and then she was very popular in the neighborhood among the young folks. Both at Grassmere and the Willows were large families of merry girls who were rather led by Lindsey. The few young men she knew admired her exceedingly, but Lindsey kept all lovers at a distance until Ben Arundel came. He made his appearance first as a visitor at the Willows. There Lindsey met him.

It was beautiful to see them so fond of each other, two young people, all in all to each other, and life all before them. For myself I was heartily glad that Lindsey's wedding was coming in my day, for I was near sixty when my darling's twentieth birthday came and I could not bear the thoughts of dying and leaving her alone in the world, for I loved her well, and although she was a beautiful, wealthy young girl, and I an ugly old woman, we were much to each other. Many a sweet little secret she told me that summer after Ben began coming often to Larch Lanes, and the sweetest of all was that she loved him.

"Well, my lass," I said stroking her sunny head that lay upon my knees, "I'm well pleased with this. Ben is gude, and 'gude folks are scarce—take care of one,' the old proverb says, you know."

After awhile I asked her if she had told her father.

"No, not yet," she answered.

"Then tell him soon—to-morrow," I said.

"Maybe I will," she replied, dreamily.

You see I had no thought but that Colonel Walton would consent to their being married immediately. But he said:

"I have no objection to the young man, but you can't be married now."

Lindsey did not venture to ask why.—She came to me, looking a little serious, and asked me what I suspected was the reason her father should wish to delay the wedding. She knew well enough, poor child that it was not because of his fondness for her.

My heart sank. I had a foreboding, then that all would not be well for my treasure. After I went to bed I could not sleep for the dull roaring of the sea which I never had minded before.

When Lindsey told Ben, he said cheerily:

"Well, ask him again in a month."

The two did not mind; they were so happy together. It was only foolish old Aunt Manny who feared trouble. But I was that bad with my presentiment that I used to turn away and cry when I saw the two frolic among the larches, or nestled up to each other in the porch in the moonlight murmuring their fondness.

The Arundels were of the best families in the State, but they were not as wealthy as they had been. Ben had little beside his profession, but I don't think that would really have obstructed the marriage. The difficulty came of Colonel Walton's evil ways.

One evening he brought company home with him from the city to pass the night.—When the carriage came up from the landing, I saw that the colonel had two men with him. One was a large, florid-faced man, with a boisterous laugh; the other was an elegant, polished gentleman, with a diamond on his hand, and singular eyes of light hazel. He carried a light cane with a fawn's head of pure gold at the top, and very soon Jack the coach man told me, that this last was Ross Guthrie, of Guthrie Falls, the richest landholder in the county. The other was Major Southly of the cavalry.

Though it was near nine o'clock, the colonel ordered supper, and sent to the cellar for wine.

Meanwhile I knew the gentlemen were

playing cards in the drawing-room, and talking very freely over their wine. Lindsey was a little excited, and had such a beautiful color that I was only too glad to remember that her father seldom desired her attendance at table when he brought company out to supper—as he had done once or twice before. For I especially disliked the looks of those two men.

Lindsey watched the peaches with white roses, and trailed scarlet honeysuckle vines from the little silver vases, and sent Tip in with them, and then said, yawning:

"That's all I can do for you, Aunt Manny. I'll go to bed now, I believe;" for it was past ten o'clock.

Just then Tip came back and said that the colonel wanted Miss Lindsey to make her appearance at supper.

"O, Aunt Manny," she exclaimed, "I don't want to!"

I did not speak for a moment, but stood wiping a little ashes from the silver coffee urn, and trying to think what could be done. I think I would have sent in word that she was ill if I had not been ashamed to let the clear eyes of my darling see me descend to an untruth.

"But you will have to go if your father has sent for you," I said finally.

I saw her go in, and heard the softening of the men's voices. There was no more boisterous laughter. I confess that I stole up into the chamber over the dining-room, and listened to the sounds which rose from below, hoping to get a hint of how things were going. Lindsey hardly spoke, but I knew how gracefully she was presiding at the board, how like an angel she looked with her sweet eyes and falling hair.

When she came up I ran out to her.

"How have you enjoyed the evening, my dear?"

"O, it has been very tiresome! I am sleepy," she answered, and went into her room. After ten minutes there wasn't a stir there; the child was sound asleep.

There were meals to be served for those men for a week. The colonel seemed to have given himself a vacation from business. They went to the city, but came out at all hours, riding, driving, or hunting. They made up a yacht party, and took Lindsey with them, sailing.

Meanwhile I detected something strange about the colonel. He had lost flesh, and went out of sight of his guests, his manner fell from one of excitement to one of gloom and impatience. I had known him long, and I knew that something was wrong with him.

One day Lindsey burst into the china closet where I was cleaning silver, and exclaimed:

"That Major Southly has been making love to me!"

"Hush, my dear!" I answered closing the door, for she had spoken quite loud in her excitement.

"Gently, gently, my dear. You are inconveniently pretty, Lindsey," I said trying to smile. "You must not be too hard on the poor gentleman."

"He is not a gentleman, Aunt Manny; he is a wealthy sensualist, a libertine! It is an insult to be admired by him!"

I was astonished at the girl.

"I wish they were all gone," she said wearily. "I am tired of so much excitement. Father does not look well either.—Have you noticed it Aunt Manny?"

I said that I had.

"If my father only knew I loved him," she added, sadly, "I think it would be a comfort to him, though I am not a boy." Poor dear! The old yearning over her which I had felt when she was a baby, came up strong within me. To be sure she had Ben, but the passion of an enthusiastic young man is not like the affection of a mother or father. And these, as I have said, Lindsey had never known. Only I knew what a pure, strong heart my darling had, and I never believed that if her father had known he would have appreciated it.

Major Southly's attentions were the beginning of Lindsey's trouble. He actually

persecuted her with them. His want of tact was astonishing to me, who had observed from afar off Ben's graceful manners whereby Lindsey's love had been won. The major's persistence was insolent.

Finally Lindsey had to shut herself up or complain to her father. She chose the latter, though I had the feeling that it was not the wisest way. I almost suspected that the major's audacity had some groundwork we did not know.

It was so. The colonel heard Lindsey's appeal with evident dissatisfaction, and no sympathy.

"Do you mean to say that Major Southly's attentions are disagreeable to you?" He asked coldly.

"Yes sir. I can give him no encouragement, and his persistency annoys me."

"This is hardly what I looked for," he replied. "To tell the truth, I was in hopes you would throw over that young doctor for this gentleman. I would very much prefer to see you Major Southly's wife."

"Why, sir?"

"Principally because he is a very wealthy man. In fact, Lindsey, I need his help. I am afraid that I shall go down without it."

"Become bankrupt?" she faltered.

"Precisely."

There was a moment's impressive silence. Perhaps each was thinking how much the daughter owed to the father. The colonel could not have thought it was much, but Lindsey was morbid on the subject of her father's love.

"Father, if it were not for Ben," she moaned, at length.

I think some comprehension of the struggle within that young bosom must have penetrated the man's selfishness as he looked at the girl's face, for he said, hastily:

"Well, well! I insist upon nothing. It is true that I have not much claim upon your affections, Lindsey. Go, now. I will speak to Major Southly on this subject."

She arose, but hesitated, for her tender heart was melting within her. In spite of all, Lindsey loved her father, and it was the one passion of her life to win his heart. There was a great struggle within, and, after all, the words would not be spoken. Trembling from head to foot, she left the room. It was as if she had wished to leap off a precipice, and an instinct of self-preservation held her back.

It was on the seventh sad night of these men's stay that the tragedy occurred. On the evening following Lindsey's interview with her father, I saw the colonel walking with Major Southly in the garden. The moon was up; I could see that the colonel looked badly and talked eagerly, and that the Major was far from gracious. As I sat at my window, wishing, for my darling's sake, that I could know the import of their conversation, I heard Lindsey trip along the piazza below. I looked out and saw her just going down the steps.

"Lindsey!" I called.

She looked up.

"Is that you, Aunt Manny? I left my Dante, which Ben gave me, down in the summer-house. I am going down to get it."

"Not in those slippers, Lindsey," I answered. "The grass is drenched with dew."

"But it will be ruined if it stays out all night," she answered.

"Then change your shoes, or send a servant for it," I said.

She did neither, for just then Ben came up the path, and she quite forgot the book.

I have never been satisfied that I went solely for the book. I was certainly full of desire to know what those men were talking of—or rather to know if it concerned Lindsey.

I put a shawl around me and went down. The dew drops sparkled on the flowers, and a whippoorwill was plaintive among the larches.

I went on until I came to the summer-house. There I found the volume, and when I had taken possession of it, I stop-

ped and listened. The two men had paused just beyond a clump of shrubbery near me, and I could hear, distinctly, every word that they said.

"Do you threaten me?" exclaimed the colonel, in a voice of intense passion, "do you threaten me?"

"You may call it what you like," replied the other, coolly. "I will either have the girl or the money."

"I have told you Southly—"

"You have told me nothing that makes a song's difference, either one way or the other! Your word doesn't amount to a rush in this case; you are perfectly helpless. I loaned you the money when I bid for the girl. If you have no power to make her marry me, the money must be refunded to-night, and I start for Washington to-morrow."

I saw stately Colonel Walton shrink under these words as if they were lashes.

"Southly," he said, in a broken voice, "give me a week longer."

"Curse you! I will not give you another day!"

There was a cry, a flash, a groan—something fell heavily among the shrubbery. An involuntary cry for help rose to my lips but I stifled it, for a horrible fear came over me. As I looked through the vines I saw only one of the men standing—the other lay quite stiff at his feet.

A cloud had passed over the moon. It drifted away and showed the man who was standing to be Colonel Walton. I knew what he had done when I saw his face. He had killed the other.

In spite of my horror, my first impulse was to go to his side, for he was Lindsey's father, and in great grief. He raised his clenched hand to heaven with a groan I shall never forget, and then his head sank upon his breast and he stood like a statue.

All was so still! The whippoorwill called plaintively; that was the only sound save the sighing of the wind in the larches. The scene was first in light and then in shadow as the clouds drifted over the moon. Something rose in my weak old throat as if I were suffocating, while I waited.

It was strange, but I never doubted that the man was dead. Into that awful silence Hope never intruded. It was a moment of utter despair, and I felt that the man who stood there, in the dreadful stillness would gladly have cursed God and died.

A rabbit bounded through the grass. He started, and looked around, wildly, as if a hand had been laid upon him in arrest. The agony of guilt shook him, as he bent over the body. He examined it for a moment, then raised himself and looked around eagerly. He seemed to deliberate something in his mind. It was probably what should be done with the corpse.

[CONCLUDED NEXT WEEK.]

Couldn't Make a Speech.

WASHINGTON never made a speech. In the zenith of his fame he once attempted it, failed, and gave it up confused and abashed. In framing the Constitution of the United States, the labor was almost wholly performed in committee of the whole, of which George Washington was day by day the chairman; but he made but two speeches during the convention, of very few words each, something like one of Grant's speeches. The convention, however, acknowledge the master spirit; and historians affirm that had it not been for his personal popularity and the thirty words of his first speech, pronouncing it the best that could be united upon the people. Thomas Jefferson never made a speech. He couldn't do it. Napoleon, whose executive ability is almost without a parallel, said that his greatest difficulty was in finding men of deeds rather than words. When asked how he maintained his influence over his superiors in age and experience, when commander-in-chief of the army of Italy, he said, "By reserve." The greatness and goodness of a man is not measured by the length of his speeches, or their number.