

The Bloomfield Times.

FRANK MORTIMER,
Editor and Proprietor.

AN INDEPENDENT FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

Terms: IN ADVANCE.
One Dollar per Year.

Vol. IV.

New Bloomfield, Pa., August 2, 1870.

No. 31.

The Bloomfield Times.

Is Published Weekly,

At New Bloomfield, Penn'a.

BY

FRANK MORTIMER.

SUBSCRIPTION TERMS.

ONE DOLLAR PER YEAR!
IN ADVANCE.

THE UNTRIED GOVERNESS.

A Step-Daughter's Experience.

"I GIVE my daughter Julia three years. You understand? If she makes a good match within that period, well; if not, I have done with her. I wash my hands of her completely." Mrs. Muciller gently chafed her left hand with her right, arranged her rings, and replaced her fingers upon the lace handkerchief in her lap, as though the operation were completed.

"Amplly sufficient, my dear Mrs. Muciller, for a young lady who doubtless inherits her mother's tact for improving a favorable opportunity;" and Mrs. Sharing took a comprehensive glance at the drawing-room of Braithfield Villa.

"At least," Mrs. Muciller said, in reply to Mrs. Sharing's remark, "I can rely on Julia's discretion. She is not likely to be betrayed into an undesirable match. My daughter is not flighty, like some girls."

When Mrs. Sharing had taken her leave, Mrs. Muciller thought a few minutes, and then touched the bell.

"Send Miss Noddy to me," she said to the servant.

Nora Cray, for that was Miss Noddy, can hardly be described as a relation of Mrs. Muciller, being nothing more than a kind of connection—in fact, a step-daughter, the child of her first husband, to be precise.—She was a little thing of her age, which was quite two-and-twenty. She had smooth brown hair, neatly dressed, but rather odd-looking, as it actually showed the shape of the back of the little head, without any chignon at all to improve it. She had bright brown eyes too; but you could not say she was pretty. Her's was a plain face, but good-tempered and pleasant to look upon. She came to the drawing-room, in answer to Mrs. Muciller's summons, in a print dress, not fashionable or new, though neat and becoming, and her hands white with flour.

"Noddy what are you doing, to come into the drawing-room in that state?"

"Pies," said Noddy laconically, and smiling.

"You might have waited till you had finished your work," said Mrs. Muciller, "as I wish to speak to you on something of importance."

"They said you wanted me directly, so I came," Noddy explained.

"Very well; as you are here, you may remain; but please, don't sit down, or you will be sure to soil the chairs with your floury hands. I need not remind you, Noddy," Mrs. Muciller said, with a smooth and rather pretty lip, "that I have sought to discharge the onerous and unthankful office of step-mother to you in two families to the best of my ability. You have too much good sense to feel hurt at not having been placed on a precise equality here with my daughter Julia. You well know that, had your poor father, Mr. Cray, still lived, you would in all probability have been required to take at least as active a share in household duties as you have done with me. You have, therefore, no reason, nor, I feel sure, any desire for complaint on that score. But it is needful that I should inform you that the time has arrived for a change in

our mutual relations. You are aware Julia returns to-morrow from finishing her education. It is my intention to make great personal and pecuniary sacrifices, with a view to her advancement in life. You will therefore see it to be your duty at once to look out for a situation as governess in some respectable family. I will not hurry you for a few weeks, and I shall do my best meantime to help you find such a situation; but I name three months as the time at which our present connection should cease."

"O, dear!" said Noddy, her usually cheerful face becoming quite blank—"I'm sure I'm not fit for a governess. I don't know near enough to teach."

"Perhaps not. No one does. What of that? You are quite as competent as many young ladies I know who go out. No girl is expected to be competent in her first place. You learn at your first situation what you want to teach at the second. It is the same in all business. Now, let us see what we can say in the advertisement—French, German, Italian, and the usual accomplishments, I suppose; that is the customary thing."

"But I scarcely know a word of French, not a syllable of German, and can't even understand an Italian song," objected Noddy; "and as to accomplishments, I can only play hymn tunes, as you call them, on the piano."

"Very well, Miss; and pray, what of that? Nobody will ask you for more, will they? You will go with young children first; you can teach them English, and spelling, and that, and what little French you know, and their notes on the piano; and if their parents wish for more, you can tell them it is not advisable so overfill little heads too soon; can't you?"

"But I should be so ashamed," pleaded Noddy; "please don't say all that, for indeed I couldn't teach at all when it was found out how ignorant I was of all I had professed; and people would despise me when they found me out."

"Nonsense; nobody will find you out.—Why, how do you think I began as a drawing-mistress? The same as other people do. I bought my specimens of a lady artist and always took care to bring my pupils drawings home to be corrected by the same lady. My drawings were admired, so were those of my pupils, and I obtained a connection. I forget what became of the artist; but you may be sure she never came to any good. You see she had a certain order of talent for production, while I possessed the superior ability to render her commodity marketable. As to advertising anything short of what I have told you, it would be useless; every governess does the same, for the reason that every other governess does so too. If people believe it, that is their affair; mine just now is to get you a situation; and when I have done so I shall consider myself relieved from farther responsibility."

Noddy went back to her pies; but a heavy heart won't make light pastry, and Noddy's wouldn't rise.

The next day Julia returned—a tall showy blonde of eighteen, with the languid air of completion which a finishing school so successfully imparts. Julia Muciller was an accomplished girl; she had learned all the last new tricks of musical execution and showed peculiar facility in the performance of pieces of the Bubbings of Morn and Dribblings at Eve order. These she could rattle through with an air of easy superiority to the instrument, to the music, and even to her audience, as though such trifling feats of sleight-of-hand were the most easy accomplishments in the world, as perhaps they are when once you know the trick. She was on singing terms with most of the gushing song of flimsy sentiment of the day. She could paint groups of impossible flowers, chatter boarding-school French, embroider in beads and wool, dance, and read novels on the sofa. In a word, Julia was finished.

Poor Noddy's little heart quite sank

when she was admitted of evenings to the drawing-room (when there was no company) to hear the rehearsal of Miss Muciller's accomplishments, for it made her despair more than ever of being able to lay even the groundwork for such a display. But the advertisement was already sent to a weekly paper, spite of all Noddy's entreaties, detailing her proficiency; and so she could see nothing to be done but to borrow some of Julia's early school-books, and try in spare moments, to gain a little knowledge of what she was expected to teach. It was with some difficulty that she could even do this, for Mrs. Muciller did not like to see her reading, observing that her duty was to devote her mind exclusively to household affairs, and there would be plenty of time for study when she went to her first situation. "You have only to keep yourself one lesson in advance of your pupils," Mrs. Muciller said, "and you are safe. It is very strange if a grown person of average ability cannot manage to compete with children to that extent." So Noddy would get up early, and get all her dusting done and manage to make an hour at least for study before breakfast.

Within a week of Julia's return from school, Mrs. Muciller received this letter by afternoon post:

LONDON, June 27, 18—.

"DEAR MRS. MUCILLER—You will be surprised to hear I am just home from Bombay—more so, perhaps, to learn I'm tired of India, and mean to settle in England. I shall run down and pay you a visit in a day or two, and shall probably stay till you turn me out, as your cool, country scenery will be a relief to eyes that still have the glare of the Indian sun in them. Don't put yourself out of the way. You need not reply, as I shall not be in London after to-morrow.

Yours,
FRANK GEOGEGAN."

"Well, that's cool," said Julia.

"It certainly is," said Mrs. Muciller; "but he must come. In the first place, he is a nephew of the late Mr. Muciller, and I suppose fancies he has some right in his uncle's house. In the next place, I am not disposed to dispute the point, for he has been making a deal of money in India in connection with a reclamation of Land Company. He must have turned a pretty penny, or he would not think of setting down yet. Those Geogegans are a money-making family, and always were, and not satisfied with a little. I should have invited him myself had I known him to be in England. I consider his visit highly desirable. You must look your best, Julia, when he comes."

Julia languidly smiled obedience. "But he does not say when he is coming, mamma."

"No; just like the Geogegans; always thoughtless. However, we need not trouble about that to-day, as it is time for you to dress for Mrs. Sharing's croquet party."

So Julia rang the bell for Noddy to come and do her hair.

On the 28th of June being the anniversary of Coronation Day, is kept holiday at most country places. Both Mrs. Muciller's servants had hurried to get their work done early; and as "their people," to wit, Mrs. Muciller and her daughter (for Noddy did not count) were going out, they were given the afternoon as a holiday.

It was a real treat to Noddy to get a spare afternoon all to herself, with no work to do, and no one to find fault with her. She made up her mind she would spend the time in trying how to learn to teach music. So she went to the piano in the drawing-room, and began at the beginning of her Piano-forte Tutor, and went slowly on till she came to the scales, which she commenced practicing.

It being very hot, all the doors and windows of the house were thrown open to get the breeze, and the fragrant breath swept in through the hall-door, and along the passage, and to the drawing-room, bearing the scent of roses and jasmine to Noddy, as she sat there practicing scales. It is rather monotonous work but her whole

mind was in it. She was indeed so absorbed in her occupation that if a person had come up the gravel-path, and across the lawn, and straight into the room where she was, it is doubtful if she would have noticed it. Of course, it would be unlikely; but I say if a person had done so (the piano was at the farthest end, in the shadow of the large room,) Noddy was so preoccupied that it is not probable she would have observed the intrusion. She had been grinding away at the F minor scale, up and down and up—one and two and three and four, and one and two and—

"O bother!" said Noddy, flinging her hands on her lap, "what an awful little goose you are! You haven't a bit of gumption, nor a mite of common sense. As to being a governess, and can't play scales, you must be a noodle to think of it—a dreadful noodle!"

"You're about right there!" said an unmistakable masculine voice from somewhere by the door. Noddy started as if she had been shot; then she blushed red and hot at being surprised. But the owner of the voice walked boldly into the room. Noddy being left in sole charge of Braithfield Villa, and seeing an entire stranger march in like this, did not like the look of it. His looks were nothing to provoke a dislike, be it said—a tall, fine-bronzed man of thirty, with a tawny moustache and handsome sunburned features. She resolved to challenge him.

"What do you want?" she said, brusquely.

"You," said he—"you are Miss Muciller, I imagine?"

"No; I am Noddy—Nora Cray, that is," she stammered, correcting herself. "Please what is it?"

"Cray?" the stranger said, "Cray? any relation to Mrs. Muciller?"

"Yes."

"O, I think I know, then. So you are Miss Cray, eh? You will see who I am from this card; and as you have not offered me a seat, I'll take one, after shaking hands with you." He held out his hand frankly, and Nora could not refuse it.

"I don't know who you are," said Noddy. The stranger had lounged himself on the sofa.

"Then, perhaps, you'll look and see."

"Mr. Frank Ge-Ge-Geog-a-gan?" asked Nora, puzzled.

"Ga-gan, if you don't mind. It's spelt heathenish, but it reads easy. You've heard of your cousin, Frank Geogagan, in India, surely? That is, he might have been your cousin, if Mrs. Muciller's marriages had not mixed the relationships so confoundedly."

"No," said Nora.

He whistled. "Didn't Mrs. Muciller tell you I was coming?"

Nora did not wish to expose the precise state of things between herself and her step-mother, and did not choose to tell an untruth; so she replied: "Mrs. Muciller received a letter just before she went out this afternoon, but she was hurried, and I did not know its contents. So you are expected, then?"

"I said I was coming, but not exactly when."

"That's awkward, said Noddy.

"Why?"

"Because we are not prepared to receive you. Mrs. Muciller would have been home, and Julia, had they expected you to arrive to-day."

"You are very plain."

"You are not complimentary," retorted Noddy.

"I didn't refer to your looks; but I wonder if you would insist on my saying they were anything different?"

"You can say what you please," said Noddy; "it is a guest's privilege."

"Well, you are the coolest little baggage of a cousin to welcome any one home from abroad one could well expect to find. Are you not glad to see me?"

"Well, not particularly," said Noddy. "How should I be, never having seen you

or heard of you before? Besides, you come at an awkward time, when nobody is at home. And for aught I know, you may be an impostor, and have watched your opportunity to enter the house when it is unprotected. I don't think you are that, though, you are not polite enough. But one never knows."

"Upon my word, you are not flattering. Still, at any rate, I think you might have offered me some refreshment, as I have just come off a journey."

"I am very sorry," said Noddy; "but Mrs. Muciller has taken the keys with her. I can only offer you a cup of tea or coffee, and some bread and butter. Everything else is locked up."

As Mr. Frank seemed to think that would do very well indeed, Noddy went out to prepare it, and presently returned with a tray of tea and coffee and a single cup.

"Two cups, please," said Mr. Frank.—Nora was not generally accustomed to take her meals with the family. She was certain Mrs. Muciller would not like this arrangement, but divining a refusal might prove embarrassing, she brought a second cup, and joined Mr. Geogagan at tea. When they had finished, Mr. Geogagan said he should walk up to the station to arrange about his luggage being sent, and on his return he should insist on Noddy giving him some music. In five minutes he walked Mr. Frank again, clamorous for his music. Now, Noddy was never in the habit of playing for anybody's amusement but her own, and was quite certain if Mrs. Muciller heard of her taking the liberty of playing to please a visitor, it would be considered a deadly offence. Moreover, she expected Mrs. Muciller to arrive every minute.

But Mr. Frank insisted with such vehemence that a refusal seemed like palpable affectation; so Noddy risked the consequences and began to play Mozart's *Ah! Perdon!* She had only got half-way through it, when Mrs. Muciller and Julia appeared at the window. Noddy shut up the piano, threw down her music, and fled.

"What impertinence!" ejaculated the widow. She was so fairly astounded at Noddy's barefaced impudence, as to be betrayed into making this remark aloud,—and Frank Geogagan heard it. She had the tact, however, at once to divine it, and to correct her mistake. "What impertinence, Mr. Frank, of you, to be sure, to come and take us all by surprise without a warning! However, we must try and overlook it, as it is your first offence. I'm sure I hope it will not be the last. We are delighted to receive you, although, had you told us when to expect you, we might have given you a better reception."

"Well," said Mr. Frank (but he detected the artifice), "I thought I told you pretty exactly. I said 'in a day or two,' if I remember rightly, and I came in 'a day' instead of 'two,' to show my anxiety to pay my earliest respects to my aunt and her daughter,—for I presume this is Julia?"—Julia made a most finished reverence, and offered her hand in the most approved style. Julia was well and carefully dressed for the croquet party. "That is fortunate, at any rate," Mrs. Muciller thought. We might have been surprised at greater disadvantage. So much depends upon first impressions."

A few interchanges of courtesies from the ladies, with commonplaces from Mr. Frank, and Mrs. Muciller and her daughter retired to remove their bonnets,—if the little bits of flowers and lace adorning their hair might be so designated. Mrs. Muciller took this opportunity of administering a severe rebuke to Noddy upon her boldness, forwardness, and presumption in attempting to entertain their visitor in a manner so unbecoming.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

To preserve a friend, honor him when present, praise him when absent, and assist him cordially in time of need.