

# The Bloomfield Times.

FRANK MORTIMER,  
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## The Bloomfield Times.

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## Fred's Courtship.

MR. FREDERICK GRANDISON, on leaving college with high honors, took up his abode with his Uncle Philip, and for five years led the most quiet and studious life imaginable.

Uncle Philip, who was a wealthy old bachelor, proposed making Frederick his heir. Relying on the bounty of his excellent relation, the young man neglected to make himself master of any profession—preferring to devote his time and talents to the gratification of his literary tastes, which induced him to explore the dusky realms of the classics, as well as the brighter regions of modern poetry and philosophy. Yet Frederick was not so much a book-worm, as to be altogether dead to the pleasures of society. As an ardent lover of beauty he sought it, and admired it when found, whether in books, in nature, or in the human mind.

Frederick required that others should sympathize in the enthusiasm of his soul. This necessity it was, rather than his love of natural beauty, which first interested him in the character of little Rose Addison, the only child of a poor widow, who occupied, rent free, one of his uncle's cottages.

Rose, at that time, was only fourteen; simple in her manners, pure-minded as an infant, full of vitality; mirthful, sympathetic, a perfect charm of feminine beauty.

Frederick observed her scrupulous neatness; her cheerful morning songs, which soared to heaven like the lark's, thrilled his soul; her taste in the cultivation of flowers delighted him; and surprising her one day, as she wept and laughed over the pages of a favorite poet of his own, he was drawn towards her irresistibly. Of course, her bewitching beauty had nothing to do with the interest with which he was inspired!

Rose's beautifully simple nature was spread out before our hero, like a pure and spotless page, inviting his hand to write.—Frederick saw his power. He trembled, even whilst he rejoiced at it. Well was it for Rose that the handsome, engaging man, whom she so much admired, had a soul of the noblest aspirations, a heart of truest honor!

Frederick resolved to devote himself to the development of all that was pure and bright and good in her nature. He became too deeply engaged in his task to care for other society than hers. As her teacher, her guide, her friend, he obtained the most perfect influence over her; he moulded her character at his will; he saw her grow up, a beautiful, noble-minded woman; of all his studies, it was in her that he took most interest and delight. He selected her books; he taught her music, French and Italian; and more than all, he instructed her in the actualities and the highest duties of life.

Uncle Philip was by no means displeased to see his nephew thus engaged. He still looked upon Rose as a "pretty little girl," even when she had arrived at the maturity of eighteen. He thought it very kind in Frederick to lend her books, and be her teacher. Uncle Philip was a benevolent man himself, and he was glad to see his nephew benevolent also.

But Uncle Philip had not the most distant suspicion that Frederick could design

to make his protegee his wife. Even when the old gentleman was contemplating the array of female beauties and charms with which the village and vicinity abounded, and wondering within himself, who would make Frederick the best companion, poor Rose never once entered his calculations.

Now Uncle Philip was a man of strange notions; and as wilful an old fellow, withal, as you may meet in a twelvemonth. Somehow he took it into his head that the noble old mansion of his fathers needed a star of female beauty, to make it the sunny abode of perfect happiness. The old bachelor should have felt this necessity forty years before! He might have had a complete constellation of fair daughters around him, in his old age!

But Uncle Philip could look out for others much better than for himself. He was determined to do the "right thing" for Frederick. Accordingly, one fine morning, he said to his promising nephew:

"What a life this is, Fred!"

Fred was thinking about Rose.

"Peaceful, happy, dear uncle—"

"Peaceful! happy?" echoed Uncle Philip, making a very bad face. "I say, Fred, look at me!"

"You are looking finely this morning, uncle. Your countenance is smooth and fresh as at sixteen! I believe, uncle," said Frederick, "it is your habitual good humor, and continual flow of benevolent feelings—"

"Bah! I say, look at me! Haven't you eyes?" demanded the old gentleman.—"Don't you see how withered I am, before my time?"

"Withered, uncle?" repeated Frederick, surveying the old bachelor's goodly proportions, with a merry twinkle in his eye.—"I'll wager you weigh more to-day than you ever did before in your life! Two hundred, if you weigh a pound."

"Bloated, boy, bloated! that's it! I am a miserable old fellow."

"Miserable! you—"

"All the consequence, you see, of living an old bachelor," said Uncle Philip, trying to look unusually grave. "You see how bitterly I am repenting, don't you? Of course you do; and I advise you take warning from my wretched fate."

Frederick held his sides with laughter.—Uncle Philip scowled.

"It is no laughing matter, and I desire you will be serious," said the old bachelor.

"Look you boy, I have taken it into my head, to marry you off."

"Ho!"

"You needn't open your eyes so! It's time you bettered your condition—"

"Dear uncle," said Fred, "I do not know how I can. Living in the sunshine of your bounty, I am perfectly contented."

"Are you? I am not though! Look you here—what comfort are you to me? What do I get for indulging you in laziness?"

Frederick winced; Uncle Philip had touched a tender point.

"You are no comfort to me at all! But I mean you shall be, if I keep you. You shall get married. You shall bring here a lady young and handsome, that I can look at sometimes, to take the edge off my teeth, after enduring the sight of our cross housekeeper! We want some one to make music for us—some one to cheer this old house with the melody of a sweet, silver voice—some one to make it light and bright with the radiance of her smiles—"

Fred laughed again. He had never known his relative so eloquent and poetic before.

"Now, what?" growled the old bachelor.

"You! ha! ha! You are so romantic, dear uncle!"

"Romantic! I don't know that I was ever so sensible in my life! I am in good earnest, anyhow. I say, you shall get married!"

Fred smiled; thought of Rose. He gave his uncle his hand, with a just-as-lie-as not sort of a look, which changed, with re-

markable suddenness, when the bachelor added:

"And I've picked you out a wife—"

"No!"

"Yes, I have."

"Now, Uncle, I think, by good right—"

"I ought to choose for you!" said Uncle Philip. "You care no more for one woman than another. Then let my experience and taste dictate for you. You will admire my choice. In the first place, I have looked for beauty. Of course, you desire your wife to be beautiful?"

"Yes, faltered Frederick, "but—"

"And spirited?"

"Certainly; provided—"

"And intelligent?"

"Undoubtedly; yet—"

"And accomplished?"

"Of course; but, sir—"

"And rich?"

"O, as to that," cried Frederick, whose mind was on Rose, "I think wealth of no consequence, whatever."

"Then leave my house this instant!" exclaimed the bachelor. "If wealth is of no consequence to you, I will make somebody else my heir, who can appreciate benefits."

"But in a wife," begun Fred.

"Riches never come amiss. You must get a rich wife if you can; if you cannot, that alters the case. Now I have picked out for you a lady who possesses all the excellent qualities I have named. Beautiful spirited, intelligent, accomplished, rich—what more could you wish?"

"To love her, at least—"

"If you cannot love Miss Pendleton, you are not capable of loving any fine woman!"

"Miss Pendleton?" echoed Frederick aghast.

"She is the woman to make you a good wife!" pursued Uncle Philip, rubbing his hands. "Go and offer yourself to her as soon as you please. She will have you. Despatch!"

And the old gentleman turned on his heel, leaving Frederick overwhelmed with amazement and dismay. Frederick knew his uncle too well, to hope for an easy escape from the consequences of his decision.

"Marriage! Miss Pendleton!" he said to himself. "Fearful to contemplate!—no! no! I'll elope with Rose! That won't do, though! Uncle never would forgive me.—If I had the least bit of property to call my own, it would be different; but to disobey the old gentleman in so outrageous a manner, would be to turn myself out of doors penniless—Miss Pendleton! ugh!"

Now the bride Mr. Grandison had chosen for his nephew was actually a very beautiful and accomplished lady. Frederick ought to have been able to love her, no doubt; but he did not, he could not, he would not! However, had not Uncle Philip ordained that he should lay siege to her heart, and offer her his hand?

Frederick thought about it two days.—Uncle Philip supposed he was waiting for a new suit from the tailor. Rose saw him plunged in trouble, and was very unhappy. Fred had never concealed from her anything before. It was impossible for him now to keep her long in ignorance of the cause of his perplexity.

Two sleepless nights the young man passed, revolving in his mind what course to pursue to satisfy his uncle, without sacrificing his own feelings. The third night the young man—who as we shall see, had some knowledge of human nature—conceived a luminous idea. Long before morning all his plans were laid, and he was sleeping soundly, dreaming of Rose.

On the following day, Fredrick made an early visit at the cottage of the Widow Addison.

"My dear Rose," said he, "I am going away; I shall not see you again—until tomorrow."

Rose looked sad; then she smiled.

"Ah, how you startled me!" she said.

"It sounds so solemn: 'I am going away; I shall not see you again'—but—until tomorrow makes another thing of it. You

will tell me where you are going, of course?"

"Would you believe it?" replied Frederick,

"I am going to court Miss Laura Pendleton. You have heard of her? She comes to our church sometimes, and you may have seen her."

Rose looked very seriously at Uncle Philip's nephew.

"What jest is this?" she asked, smiling again.

"What jest? Do you think there is anything out of the way in my courting Miss Pendleton? I shall pay her my addresses, and offer her my hand. Ha! what is the matter with my Rose? Tears?"

"O," said she, in a trembling voice, hiding her face, "you have been very kind—like a brother to me—and when you are married, I shall have—no teacher any longer!"

"Dear Rose," said Fredrick, in the tenderest tone, "is this all?"

No reply. Rose was a red Rose; her face was burning.

"Say you love me, Rose, and that you would die of jealousy, if I should marry Miss Pendleton," exclaimed Frederick, passionately.

He pressed her hand. She withdrew it and turned away to conceal her emotion. Frederick's arm glided about her waist.

"Mr. Frederick," she said, bursting into tears, "I never thought you could trifle with anybody's feelings in this way!"

"Rose, dearest Rose!" said the young man, in the most tender and earnest manner, "forgive me. I had no intention to trifle with your feelings—for I love you! My whole heart is yours!"

The "shock of exquisite pleasure" this confession produced, brought another flood of tears to the bright blue eyes of Rose.

"Ah," said she, timidly, "what can I believe? You contradict yourself! If you love me, how can you offer yourself to Miss Pendleton?"

"I love you to please myself," replied Frederick. "I offer myself to Miss Pendleton, to please my uncle."

Rose shrank from him, with a reproachful look, and rejoined:

"I thought you were a man of principle and honor!"

"You misunderstand me, Rose. I shall offer myself to Miss Pendleton. I must obey my uncle."

Rose cast down her eyes sadly.

"But I swear never to marry unless"—Frederick invaded her lap, and made a conquest of her beautiful hand—"this is the reward of my true love! You or nobody Rose shall be my wife."

Rose raised her eyes hopefully.

"You speak in riddles," she murmured.

"To be plain, then, my uncle's will is a mountain of adamant. He ordains that I shall offer myself to Miss Pendleton. I shall obey him; she will refuse me. Then I am free, and by degrees, I can bring him to think favorably of you."

Rose was very thoughtful. Frederick kissed her eyes.

"But if Miss Pendleton should not refuse you?" she said.

"Depend upon it, she will!"

"But—but—if you should forget that you were courting her in fun, and fall in love with her in earnest—"

"Ha! Ha! jealous already, my Rose! But fear, nothing. I have known you too long and too well; you are too much in my heart for me to forget you."

Then Frederick told Rose all about Miss Pendleton, to convince her how utterly impossible it was for him to fall in love with her; and then consoling and assuring his protegee, he bade her an affectionate adieu and set out half an hour after to pay his first visit to Miss Laura Pendleton. Mr. Frederick did not for some reason make his appearance in as good style as he might have done, although he knew the fine lady his uncle had selected for his bride was the very pink of country aristoc-

racy and fashion. Indeed, Frederick had said to his uncle's ostler:

"Harness me the black pony in the old chaise. Don't stop to curry him, for I am in a hurry. And mind you don't hint to the old gentleman that I have gone off in this style; and here is something for you to buy tobacco with."

I fancy that when Mr. Frederick arrived at Mr. Pendleton's elegant residence, he created a sensation. A curly black pony that looked as though he had lately boarded in a potato patch, and had never known the touch of curry-comb or card; an ancient harness that showed the industry, economy and ingenuity of some queer old save-penny and stood still in need of repair; a dilapidated chaise which might have served any practising country physician a quarter of a century; a lashless whip-stock and knotted lines. Such was the establishment which moved slowly up the magnificent avenue, in full view from the drawing room windows of the Pendleton mansion!

Very slowly and awkwardly, Frederick got out of the old chaise. You can imagine Miss Laura's dismay when her visitor was announced. In company with a couple of friends—a young lady and gentleman of fashion—she had been laughing at the ludicrousness of Frederick's "equipment," as she called it, as it moved up the avenue!

The young man entered the parlor with the most perfect nonchalance in the world neglecting to remove his hat until he had saluted Miss Pendleton and her friends. Then he threw himself on an elegant sofa, in a rather careless manner, and declining to trouble anybody with his hat, placed it on the floor! Without appearing to observe the consternation of Miss Pendleton or the emotion of her friends he then offered a few observations about the weather, and made a tangle of his nose muffling its sonorous tones in the folds of a flaming red handkerchief, which he afterwards tossed into his hat.

Meanwhile the accomplished and aristocratic Miss Laura had enjoyed a survey of Mr. Frederick's style of dress. His coat was of fine material, and graceful cut; but it had evidently come in contact with the uncurried hide of the little black pony twice or thrice too often, for its beauty. His waistcoat was of rich satin; but by some carelessness, the lowest or first button was mated with the second button-hole; thus producing a sad disarrangement in the tailor's design. The cleanliness of Frederick's linen indicated scrupulous care in his uncle's housekeeper; but one wing of the dickey drooped sadly, while the other side stood proudly erect, in all the majesty of starch. His cravat was awkwardly twisted into a bow-knot; and imagine, in addition to the beauties of costume, one extremity of a pair of very fine pantaloons lodged on the top of a "lack-lustre" boot, and you may have some idea of Mr. Frederick's appearance.

Now our hero—thanks to Rose, his protegee was little known in society; and enjoying the reputation of being a student and a man of talent, he could act with success the part he had undertaken, sooner than any other man. His carelessness of personal appearance, was looked upon as the result of studious habits. Having foreseen this he had not been mistaken in judging that he would be treated with more deference than any mere clown. His uncle's wealth and influence might also have had some effect in causing Miss Laura to tolerate in him what she could not have endured from any other person. In perfect keeping with the character he had assumed was Fred's conversation. Instead of indulging in fashionable talk, he discoursed learnedly on old books by obscure authors, whose names not one modern reader in a thousand ever heard! In short he played the role of slipshod philosopher to a degree of perfection which argued an imitative talent, and a knowledge of human nature no one suspected him of possessing.

Frederick dined with the Pendletons that day, and having inspired Miss Laura with an utter abhorrence of all students, rode home in the evening, well satisfied with the sensation he had produced—as he candidly assured his uncle.

[CONCLUDED NEXT WEEK.]