

The Bloomfield Times.

FRANK MORTIMER,
Editor and Proprietor.

AN INDEPENDENT FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

Terms: IN ADVANCE
One Dollar per Year.

Vol. IV.

New Bloomfield, Pa., November 15, 1870.

No. 46.

The Bloomfield Times.

Is Published Weekly,

At New Bloomfield, Penn'a.

BY

FRANK MORTIMER.

CAUGHT IN HIS OWN TRAP.

BY WALTER HERNH.

“WELL, a nice situation this, for a young man! Twenty-three years old to-day, and a nice birthday present I've got! Leave of absence from Mr. Blake's store for an indefinite period; its not my fault, that's one comfort, its Mr. Blake's, for having a son, and that son's fault for being expelled from college, and forcing his father to take him into his store at once, in order to keep him under his own eye. So here I am, with nothing to do, no expectations, fifty dollars cash capital, my board bill fortunately paid a week in advance,—and—a new suit of clothes to be paid for. The man will be here to-night, by appointment. I meant to pay him, but as his bill would leave me with only twenty dollars, I'll hate to break my word, but I can't help it. When I promised, I had a salary of fifteen hundred a year, enough for a quiet fellow like me, and now—! But heigh-ho! Hal Chester, “never despair,” that's what your father used to tell you, and don't you forget it now, just because you're in a fog. It will clear off soon.” Hal Chester, as his numerous friends loved to call the honest, genial fellow, having come to this philosophical conclusion, ceased to pace his little room, and throwing himself upon the sofa, gazed thoughtfully into the grate, as though he expected to find in the dancing flames, a solution of all his difficulties.

If such was his object, he was not very successful, judging from the exclamation that suddenly rose to his lips.

“Yes, I am in a fix! No situation, no money to speak of, and a bill to pay! and that's not the worst of it after all! I'm in love too. By Jove! a nice fellow you are to pop the question. What! would you take that darling little May from her rich father's home, and bring her to yours? Yours? why, you have none, and no money to buy one either. No, no, Hal, have patience; little May loves you, and will wait till you can gain her father's consent, which will not be until you can support her; so go to work. Be up and doing.” A few moments more, and the young man was acting upon his own advice, he was up and doing. With Mr. Blake's letter of recommendation in his pocket, he entered store after store, office after office.

Evening came, and he returned to his lodgings, feeling jaded, weary, and well-nigh disheartened, for all his efforts had been in vain. “So no one wants a clerk,” he muttered, “well I must do something. To-morrow I'll try for a driver's or porter's situation, anything, so its honest.” The tea bell rang, and he went down to the table. Contrary to his usual custom, he returned to his own room after the meal was concluded, instead of adjourning to the parlor with the rest of the boarders.

Removed from observation, he again threw himself upon the sofa, thought profoundly for ten minutes, and then,—dropped off into a light slumber, in which dreams of his gentle May “filled his heart with joy.”

From this blissful state he was aroused by a knocking at his room door, and still but half-awake to the realities around him, he admitted his visitor.

“Well, sir,” said the latter, smiling blandly, “I've brought my little bill, as you told me, not that I'm in a hurry for it, but you see I always come when I am told.”

“To tell you the truth, Badger,” said the young man, the color mounting to his cheeks,

for he was not up to “putting off” a creditor. “To tell you the truth, I wish I had not told you. I can only pay you ten dollars on your bill just now. I have lost my situation since I saw you, and must husband my little stock until—” His explanation was suddenly interrupted. The tradesman to whom he spoke, had never before supplied him with clothing, and experience having taught him that young men generally, are more liberal in promise than in performance, he broke angrily in—

“Until, until! that's what you young fellows always say! I might have known better than to trust you, but I thought you had an honest face,—the more fool I!”

“Come, my good fellow,” said Hal, quietly, “no more of that, or I shall have to put you out of that door, quicker than you came in. Here are ten dollars; the rest I will pay you as soon as I can spare it.”

“And that'll be never,” muttered the man, and pausing with his hand on the door knob, he added, “If you don't pay me in full in two weeks, I'll have you in court for it, that's all.”

“There's an insolent fellow for you!” exclaimed Chester, as his visitor disappeared. “But I can't blame him. I've no doubt he has been cheated many a time, by youngsters like me.”

Early on the following morning, the young man started forth to visit an old friend of his father's, with whose family (consisting of one daughter), he himself had been on terms of intimacy from childhood.

Mr. Graham was a wealthy merchant, a good-natured, whole-souled man, who dearly loved a joke,—so dearly indeed, that it mattered not to him, even though the laugh were at his own expense,—he joined in it as heartily as another. Being the man he was, we cannot wonder that Hal Chester should bend his steps towards his office, for advice,—even had there existed no other attraction to draw him there, but—(let it in your ear, reader), Mr. Graham was May's father.

That young Chester regarded him with esteem, as his late father's friend, Mr. Graham well knew;—that there was yet a more potent reason for such a feeling, he did not suspect. The good old gentleman suffered under the proverbial blindness of parents, else the strong affection that united his only child, and the penniless young man,—could not have escaped his observation.

He gave Hal Chester a cordial greeting, as he entered his office, and the latter at once laid before him the state of his affairs.

“I wish I could give you a clerkship, myself,” said Mr. Graham, as the young man concluded. “I certainly would if I had the shadow of an excuse for dismissing any one of those I already have. But I have not.”

“I would not have you do such a thing Mr. Graham. All I ask is that you will use your influence among your friends. I must get employment of some kind very soon.”

“Well, I'll help you to the full extent of my ability. But if you want my advice, it is this, Hal Chester,—you are a nice young man,—handsome and have brains if you have not money. What's to prevent your marrying a fortune? Run off with some heiress, man, make a bold push and you are bound to win.”

Mr. Graham threw himself back in his chair and laughed, while the young man watched him eagerly, with a curious expression on his face.

“What, sir?” he exclaimed, “would you advise me to do such a thing? Run off with a young lady without her father's consent?”

“Ha! ha! why, of course I would! If only you can get the chance, that's all! Do you find the lady, my boy, and I'll find means to help you carry her off to the minister.”

“Well, but,” said Chester, the curious expression deepening on his face, while he affected to laugh,—“Let us suppose the young lady found, and that she is ready to

run off with me,—what would be the after consequences? what would her father say to us? Think you, sir, would any man forgive a penniless young man for marrying his heiress,—clandestinely?”

“Why, of course he would! People always get resigned to what they cannot help. I know that from experience. It would be the best stroke of fortune that ever chanced you, my boy, just such an opportunity as this.

The young man looked down in profound thought, and after a moment's hesitation, said:

“Well, sir, since you think such a chance to better my fortunes should not be neglected, I will try what I can do. In truth, sir, I have a lady in view, and if once assured of her father's forgiveness, I believe I should have little difficulty in persuading her to take a drive to the minister's with me. If I can get her consent, sir, will you use all your influence with him, for he will be disappointed, I fear. He intends his daughter to marry a rich man; you know him, personally, sir.”

“Ha! do I? who is he?”

“He is a merchant, that is all I can tell you at present; remember that I have no right to betray the lady.”

“Your're right,” exclaimed Mr. Graham. “And I can tell you this much: whoever he is, he ought to be proud of having you for a son-in-law. Just go ahead and win. I'll help you; you shall go off in my carriage and after it is done, I'll soothe the old father, and I promise that he will take you into his business before many months are over;—else more fool he. Ho! ho! what a glorious joke it will be! Faith, my boy, I'd help you, if only for the sake of the fun, let alone your own.”

Had not Mr. Graham been so much tickled at the idea of the joke he hoped he would be able to play on some one,—he must surely have been startled, at the strange look that flashed from Hal Chester's eyes. The young man was no dissembler, and had his old friend been at all suspicious of the true state of affairs, he must have betrayed himself.

Dreading lest he should do so, Chester now bid the merchant adieu, the latter calling after him—“Don't forget to come to me if you succeed, I want to have a hand in the joke. And hark, ye my boy, if you “do the deed in a week, I'll pay your tailor's bill.”

The young man did not at once return to his boarding house; his thoughts were in too great a tumult to permit him to settle down anywhere. And no wonder.

Here was an opportunity given him, of making the girl he loved his own,—and that too, with her father's knowledge and assistance!

True, Mr. Graham did not know that it was his own daughter of whom Chester spoke, else, doubtless, his advice would have been different.

It was this point upon which all Chester's doubts were now centered. He was sorely troubled as to whether it would be honorable to take advantage of the counsel so unwittingly given.

He resolved to leave it all to May Graham, and he was soon seated at her side.

As nearly as possible, he related the interview between her father and himself, giving their conversation word for word.

When he had concluded, there was some moments silence, and then May spoke, the color coming and going in her fair cheeks.

“Hal, I think we ought to act upon our father's advice. It may seem an unmaidenly thing for me to say it, but I can see our way clear if we use the opportunity he has so unconsciously offered us. He will be angry at first, but I know him well. After his burst of astonishment is over, if you manage well, he will enjoy the joke, you know he will do, or stand anything for the sake of a ‘good joke,’ even though it is at his own expense.”

“Then your advice is—?” and Hal Chester bent a loving gaze upon the fair girl

beside him; the color mounted to her cheek, as she said, laughingly,—“Yes it is.”

Never mind what the young man did then, gentle reader,—it is neither your concern or mine.

All was arranged between them, and when Chester again entered his little room, it was with a lighter heart than he had possessed for many a long day.

The next morning he repaired to Mr. Graham's, and informed him of the success of his project. That gentleman rubbed his hands with delight. “My carriage shall be at your door, then, at the time you appoint, seven o'clock, you say?—all right; but when am I to see the lady, eh, Chester?”

“I hope very soon, sir,” was the slowly spoken reply, for Hal did not feel comfortable in the part he was playing toward the kind old gentleman.

“Where do you go after the ceremony?”

“No, sir, I think not. To tell the truth, I do not feel quite satisfied about what I am to do? Is it right?—what will her father think of me?”

“Think of you? He ought to be proud to have such a spunky daughter and son-in-law. Your're sure he would't let you marry her?”

“Yes, sir, I'm sure. Although I never asked him, I know he expects her to marry some one who is rich,—and that would break her heart and mine.”

“Then push ahead, boy! ‘Hearts before purses,’ that's what I say, and I'm a practical man, too.”

“You really think I would do right, then—to secure the lady without her father's consent?”

“Yes, I really do. But you have not told me yet, where you are going first.”

“I do not know certainly yet, sir. I want her father to know it as soon as possible, and think of going to his house at once.”

“You're a trump, Chester,” exclaimed Mr. Graham, clapping the young man on the shoulder, “that's the right course, do that, and you'll have nothing to be ashamed of! Well, good-bye.”

The shades of evening were falling upon the great city as a lady, heavily veiled, was ushered into the parlor of Hal Chester's boarding-house.

She had not long to wait, in a moment the latter gentleman joined her, and directly afterwards a carriage drove up to the door.

Drawing the veil yet more closely around her, that her father's coachman might not recognize her, May Graham entered the vehicle, while Chester mounted the box.

A short drive brought them to the house of the minister, who with his wife and a friend of Hal's stood ready to receive them.

The ceremony was performed without delay; the solemn words pronounced,—“Those whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.”

The young couple did not tarry long at the parsonage, for, although they were justified in the course they had taken, by Mr. Graham's own words, there still lingered in their hearts an uneasiness that prompted them to seek an interview with him at as early an hour as possible.

The old gentleman was sitting alone in his parlor.

“Very strange, this,” he muttered; “May's gone out to tea without telling me beforehand. She don't know what she's missed. Ho! ho! what a glorious joke Hal Chester is playing on some one now! Yes, I came home early, to tell May, for she likes a joke as well as I. Well, well, she'll be home before long, and then I'll tell her. Who can that be stopping at the door?”

It was too dark for him to recognize his own carriage, and he was totally unprepared when his young friend entered the room, a lady clinging to his arm.

“Why, Hal,” exclaimed Mr. Graham, when he had sufficiently mastered his sur-

prise to speak, “How is this? Has your father-in-law refused you admittance, that you come to me?”

“No, sir,” said Hal, huskily, for he dreaded the scene before him, “No, sir, but you have always been my good friend, and I came to you, first of all. Let me present to you, my wife, Mrs. Chester.”

Mr. Graham bowed, and begged the lady to be seated, an invitation, with which her increasing agitation, rendered a hasty compliance scarcely a matter of choice.—Her husband stood at her side in a painful uncertainty, how to announce to Mr. Graham the real state of affairs?

“Well, sir, I have done as you advised me. I have married this lady without her father's knowledge; do you still think me right?”

“To be sure, I do! ‘Hearts before purses,’ always.”

Young Chester extended his hand to his companion.

“Then you can forgive me,” he said, “Mr. Graham, let me once more present to you my wife, formerly Miss Mary Graham. May, take off your veil.”

With uplifted hands, and eyes wild with amazement, Mr. Graham staggered back.

For several moments he stood thus, when he burst out, “Mr. Chester, sir! this is nice conduct for an honorable man! No, no, Mrs. Chester, keep off, I don't want your arms around me—that's over and gone. A dutiful daughter you are! What do you mean by such conduct, sir, I say?”

May looked around at her husband and nodded, and replied very quietly.

“I meant to follow your advice, sir. To ‘make a bold push and win,’ to ‘run off with an heiress’—”

“Run off with an heiress, yes, sir. I see your motive,” interrupted the old man, angrily; “and what do you expect to gain by it, sir? If you think you'll get a cent from me, you're mistaken!”

“I think you'll forgive us. ‘People always get resigned to what they can't help, I know that from experience.’” “You see, sir,” and Chester's eyes twinkled,—“I thought it ‘would be the best stroke of fortune that ever chanced me.’ Besides, Mr. Graham, I relied upon you for help to gain my father-in-law's forgiveness. Remember you promised he ‘should take me into his business before many months are over, else the more fool he.’ You promised to aid me, ‘if only for the sake of the joke, let alone my sake,’ and then, too, I thought that ‘Hearts before purses’—”

“Stop, stop, that's enough! I can't stand any more,” gasped the old gentleman, breaking out into a hearty laugh. “I am conquered, beaten by my own weapons, my own words. I had better be resigned, as I can't help myself. I can't afford to lose my daughter, I'd rather keep her, even with the addition of an impudent son. Oh! here he broke forth into another fit of merriment. “But you young ones were sly foxes! Well, well, this is the most glorious joke I ever heard.”—*Weekly Age.*

Old Relics.

When the new bridge was built, a year or two ago, over the Thames, at Blackfriars, London, they tried in vain to find the foundation stone of the old structure, and have at last succeeded, after digging forty feet under the bed of the river. The contents of the stones were in an oak chest. This bore a metal plate inscribed as follows:

On the last day of October, in the year 1760, in the beginning of a most auspicious reign of George III, Sir Thomas Chitty, Knight, the Lord Mayor, laid the first stone of this bridge, undertaken by the Common Council of London, in the height of an extensive war.

The bridge for the public accommodation and ornament of the city, Robert Mylne being the architect, and that there may remain to posterity a monument of this city's affection for the man who, by the strength of his genius, the steadiness of his mind, and a kind of happy contagion of his probity and spirit, under the divine favor and fortunate auspices of George the Second, recovered, augmented, and secured the British empire in Asia, Africa, and America, and restored the ancient reputation and influence of his country amongst the nations of Europe, the citizens of London have unanimously voted this bridge to be inscribed with the name of William Pitt.

Beneath the stone were found a guinea, a half-guinea, a crown, a half-crown, a shilling, two sixpences, 31 half pence, and a farthing. The stone and everything else at present found have been removed to Spring Gardens for safe keeping.