

The Bloomfield Times.

FRANK MORTIMER, }
Editor and Proprietor.

AN INDEPENDENT FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

Terms: IN ADVANCE
One Dollar per Year.

Vol. V.

New Bloomfield, Pa., January 10, 1871.

No. 2.

The Bloomfield Times.

Is Published Weekly,

At New Bloomfield, Penn'a.

BY

FRANK MORTIMER.

SUBSCRIPTION TERMS.

ONE DOLLAR PER YEAR!
OR 10 CENTS PER MONTH,

IN ADVANCE.

HOW SHALL WE MEET.

How shall we meet in our future home?
As we parted here on earth?
Will the spirit carry its loves and hates
Into the heavenly birth?
Will the heart be moved, in a world of bliss,
By the feelings that stirred its depths in this?

When we meet the lost ones, face to face,
In the light of that better shore,
Will the creak'ring cares of this changeable life
And its harassing doubts be o'er?
Then, Father above! speed on the day
When the mists of earth shall be cleared
away!

Year after year our round we tread,
In a spirit of sad unrest,
Striving to hold, with clinging clasp,
The phantom joy to our breast;
Heaping dust o'er hopes that have died,
And smiling above the graves we hide.

Father divine! oh teach us how
To patiently wait thy will;
To bear the burdens upon us laid
And trust in thy goodness still;
Till death shall the pearly gates undo,
And swing them aside to let us through.

Judge Gordon's Will.

The Mysterious Disappearance.

CONCLUDED.

The shadow of gloom spread over his face; and his very attitude was that of the deepest dejection. Those who observed it fancied this mood was assumed to hide the expression of his triumphant delight.

Greatham cast upon him a look of most malignant hatred, muttered something about "blood not being near so thick as water now-a-days," and abruptly departed. Britton went out to nurse his moody gloom in solitude.

When Helen was alone with her aunt, for the first time her self-control gave way. The gathering storm of emotion overcame her.

"O Aunt Mary," she cried, "how could he be so cruel?" And a fit of violent hysterics ensued.

As soon as I read the Journal's version of the Greysville affair, I flung myself out of my linen pen-wiper into a seedy broadcloth, and went for the major. I found him at his office, in his favorite attitude, chair tipped back and feet elevated to a high desk, smoking.

He was the last person you would have picked from a crowd as the best detective in New England, with his frank and generous face, unsuspecting blue eyes, "half fellow" ready smile. But the Major possessed two distinct natures—the jovial, convivial society side, which everybody saw and enjoyed, and his business nature, which he kept locked up for his own use. He greeted me:

"How are you, old fellow? Come in, how d'ye do. Sit down and smoke. Going down the harbor? Glorious day for it. I'll go down with you."

"Too busy," I replied. "I came on business this time."

"O, confound business! That contemptible little Budget has swallowed you up. You were quite a fellow before you were so foolish as to get hold of that. You don't really expect to make anything out of it, do you now?"

"Make anything out of it! The circulation has more than doubled already."

"O yes, but it don't pay for itself, and you work day and night. You'd better sell out. Here am I, with all the sins of the whole city on my shoulders, don't begin to work as you do. Duce take these editors! I can't get through my cigar without two or three of them dropping down on me. I'll bet my hat you are fishing for an item."

"It's a shocking bad one, but you've lost it, major. I then told him my story, and my suspicions concerning my midnight visitor, feeling all the while that the chief was

more interested in the graceful spirals of smoke he blew gently toward the ceiling, than he was in my narrative.

When I concluded he made no response, apparently absorbed in regretful contemplation of the cigar he had meanwhile reduced to its lowest terms, and which he now dropped lingeringly into the spittoon. He then carefully let himself down from his elevation, put on his coat, locked his desk, donned his hat, grasped his stout cane, and motioned me out.

When we were in the street he merely suggested that he thought Mr. Wilkinson knew something about the matter he did not choose to tell, and we must look him up and persuade him to divulge. Then he went on to tell me his boyish rollicking way, about his last excursion into the wilderness. I forgot where, laughing and cracking his jokes as though the murder of young Britton was farthest possible from his thoughts, as I presume it was, until we reached the Gordon mansion. We were quickly admitted, when I sent up my name.

Helen Gordon looked still more fragile and pale in her home dress than when I saw her in the morning. She looked half frightened when I introduced Major Keene, but his cordial frankness and gentle courtesy quite reassured her.

"I am a friend of Mr. Johns, Miss Gordon," he said, with more suavity of manner than I gave him credit for; "and when he told me you were somewhat distressed about Mr. Britton's fate, I thought I would offer my services. We have resources that may expedite a solution of the mystery, though I presume it would all be right in time. The finding of a boat adrift is very slight evidence that a man is killed or drowned. I will send to Greysville tonight and find out the facts of the case as they stand."

A gleam of hope shone in her face, then faded, as he spoke.

"In the meanwhile," he continued, "if you will give me some information about the missing men—it seems there are two who are lost—it might help forward our investigation."

"O anything I can tell you—anything I can do to help to find out the truth—I will be too glad to do."

"Have you photographs of the two young men?"

"Yes, of Frank; but no, he took it away again to have it reset. I never had a picture of Ed, Mr. Britton."

"Then you can describe them."

"Yes sir. Frank is tall and slender, with chestnut hair and auburn beard—"

"Heavy whiskers something like mine;"

"He is about Mr. John's height. His eyes are brilliant, and he is called quite a handsome young man."

The major cast an inquiring look toward me, and I nodded. This description answered well for Wilkinson.

"And Mr. Britton?" he resumed.

Miss Gordon's eyes which had looked into his before, now drooped a little.

"He was a little taller and stouter than Cousin Frank, with dark brown eyes and hair, and a more serious countenance."

"Not so good looking as the other?"

"Perhaps you would think not."

Miss Gordon doubtless thought she was giving a picture easy to recognize of the two men, but I saw, by the good-humored shrug of the major's shoulders, that he was of a different opinion.

"Can I see a copy of your father's will?" he asked.

"O, can it be that dreadful will?" she moaned, involuntarily.

I suggested that Mr. Blake could furnish that.

The major then drew a little nearer Miss Gordon. "May I venture to inquire"—his manner was extremely gentle—and respectful—"if either of these young men was a suitor for your hand? I regret the necessity of annoying you with such questions."

"It is no annoyance, I assure you," very sweetly. "It is no secret, I presume that Cousin Frank wished to marry me. Indeed of late, he has quite persecuted with his attentions."

"And you—quarreled?"

"Something very much like it, I suppose."

"How long since?"

"Perhaps little more than a week."

"You would not wish to give me the details?"

"I have not the least objection. I had never encouraged his addresses, you see, though he insists to the contrary. He was my cousin, and I had treated him as one, for I am no coquette. I had once before

told him that I never could cherish any different sentiments for him, and I desired him never again to allude to the subject. The last time I saw him he grew somewhat rude, and accused me of beguiling him with false hopes. Perhaps I retorted with some warmth, and then he charged me with caring for another.

Now her voice faltered a little, and her eyes fell.

"Mr. Britton, perhaps," suggested the major.

"Yes sir, Mr. Britton. Frank accused him of being an unprincipled adventurer, and exerting a criminal influence over my father to induce him to make a will in his favor. Such a base cruel falsehood! I fear I treated Frank with all the scorn I felt. I told him to leave me, for he was not worthy to take the name of Edward Britton on his lips. And indeed I do not think Edward was ever guilty of an ungenerous or unworthy thought or action."

Now, indeed, I saw how beautiful she could be; her delicate complexion, all flushed with changing bloom, and the love of her life shining through her eyes in an exalted and wistful glow.

"I do think," she added, "that Frank really thought I cared more for Edward than for a brother. But I know they have met and quarreled. But O Major Keene, do not tell me his blood is on Frank's hands."

She was violently agitated, and the major was really quite tender in his efforts to reassure her.

Then he asked for some specimen of Greatham's penmanship, which Miss Gordon procured—a weak effeminate hand, totally unlike John Wilkinson's heavy strokes—and then we went away.

When we were again in the street the major thought fit to inform me that the landlord of the Mountain House at Greysville had come to him in a state of great excitement about the mystery and begged him to clear it up, not only for the honor of his house, but for the personal interest he had felt for Britton, whom he had taken quite a fancy to, notwithstanding his extremely silent and melancholy manner.

"I thought it was some unfortunate love affair," said the honest countryman, "and some young fellows take such things hard, so I didn't bother him a quizzing of him, but made believe I didn't take no notice as how he couldn't sleep and went off nights on the lake; but kinder let him go on just as he liked, and he used to come home just before daylight, and look pale and beat out as a ghost at breakfast."

"Pretty shrewd old chap," added the Major, lighting a cigar.

He had learned from the same source that Greatham arrived at the Mountain House in the Wednesday's stage, and inquired for Britton, who was then absent, but returned about nine o'clock, and went immediately to his room. Greatham soon followed him there, when Mr. Stover the landlord heard loud words, the angry voice evidently Greatham's. The landlord went toward the room and heard him say:

"So after playing the d—with an imbecile old man, and inducing him to disinherit his own flesh and blood, you still mean to carry out your infernal plot, and marry the heiress, I suppose?"

Britton replied calmly, "I shall not marry the heiress; but I decline to hold any further communication with you on the subject."

"By the powers, but you shall, though," cried Greatham. "Do you think I will be robbed by a contemptible villain of a coward, and keep silence. I will publish your villainy over the country. Not marry her, indeed! Of course you won't, if you can marry more money elsewhere. I would turn hangman myself and give you your dues, before you shall marry her."

"Will you leave my room?" said Britton.

"When I get ready. Some folks can't bear to hear the truth, but I mean you shall hear what people think of you."

"Don't tempt me too far, Frank Greatham, or by—I will not answer for the consequences."

Here Mr. Stover thought fit to interfere, informing them they were disturbing the house, and bowing Greatham out of the room, he threw back the taunt, "You will hear from me again."

About midnight a belated traveller, who had missed the way, inquired for Greatham. As the landlord lighted him up to bed, he met Britton coming down, looking pale and haggard, with his boating cloak on his arm. He remarked that he would be back to breakfast.

Soon after Greatham stole softly out.

The landlord recognized him by the moonlight as he went down the road to the lake.

Major Keene briefly concluded that if John Wilkinson travelled the direct line from Greysville, he must have taken the six o'clock morning train from that place in order to reach here at night; and since the boat with Britton's cloak was not discovered until eight o'clock, and no man by the name of Wilkinson had been stopping at Greysville, suspicion began to gather closely about the mysterious Wilkinson.

Major Keene went to New York that night, on his track, established himself in that city and opened communication with the police force there. He was soon on the trail of Wilkinson, who he was sure was hiding in New York.

The chief of police there, however, differed from him in this opinion. It appeared that a man calling himself "Walsingham," with dark eyes and auburn beard, had embarked in Liverpool on the same day that Wilkinson arrived at New York.

The New York chief was positive that he was the right man, but Major Keene was bent on hunting down another, and soon came upon the track of a John Wilkinson, who had engaged lodgings at an obscure boarding-house. This man appeared to shun observation, and looked warily about him when he entered the house. His eyes were dark and piercing, and he had a heavy reddish brown beard.

The major walked up to his room one day to arrest him, when to his dismay, he found the fugitive had escaped through the roof, leaving behind a carpet bag which contained nothing that gave any clue to his identity except a somewhat faded photograph of Helen Gordon. This the major triumphantly displayed to the New York chief, who winked a little doubtfully, but immediately ordered a pursuit, which resulted in the arrest of a man with bushy auburn beard, on board a small craft just getting under way for Halifax.

All the information the prisoner vouchsafed with regard to himself was the name of "John Wilkinson."

Three days after his departure I received from the major the following despatch:

"Johns: I have the bird, but he won't divulge. Meet me at the depot and identify him."

I met them at the depot, and at once recognized my mysterious visitor, more cadaverous and melancholy than ever. He affected not to remember me; and preserved his unswerving reticence to the last.

At the major's suggestion, I despatched to Miss Gordon requesting her presence at the office, not knowing any one else who would be likely to know Greatham.

She arrived soon after we did, looking flushed and excited, not knowing why she was summoned.

Her name had been mentioned before the prisoner, who sat wrapped in his moody silence.

Miss Gordon came forward exclaimed impulsively:

"O Major Keene, what is it? Have they found Edward?" She could not say the "body."

At the sound of her voice the prisoner started up and exclaimed:

"Helen!"

She looked wildly round, gazed at him bewildered, then cried "Edward, O Edward!" reached her arms to him, and swooned on his breast.

Somewhat in the melee, the auburn beard had disappeared, and a stern but handsome face with trim-cut dark brown whiskers, was looking anxiously at the white face on his arm.

For once in his life, the major was most dreadfully compounded. He spilt water over Miss Gordon, upset the table and a stove, and looked frightened.

As soon as the lady showed signs of recovering, Britton, for we had no doubt it was he, addressed the major, dryly:

"I presume sir, I am no longer to be considered under arrest for my own murder?"

"Hang it, no!" cried the furious major. "You need not have made all this trouble, though."

Britton retorted something about not interfering with the course of the law, but I did not quite hear, as his head was bent earnestly over Miss Gordon, who was now sobbing hysterically.

As we appeared to be somewhat *de trop*, the major drew me into an inner room.

"Confound my luck!" he exclaimed, sinking into a chair in an attitude of despair. "I'd rather have given five thousand dollars than this had happened, Johns! That rascal deserves hanging for serving

me such a villainous trick. The New York chief will blow all over creation. Thunder and guns! My reputation is ruined. Don't you put this in the Budget. Thought it don't matter much, as nobody reads it. What the deuce did the blackguard mean by his hang-dog skulking? I believe he has been sheep-stealing any way."

The major was excited.

"You're a smart detective if you can't see through the fellow," I said, not sorry to take revenge upon him for spoiling a nice series of murder trial sensations, for the Budget. "It's plain as the nose on your face; only it is a pity you have blocked his little game."

"Out with it, I shall resign to-morrow."

"Well, then, it appears that this magnanimous young rascal was too generous to restore Miss Gordon's property by marrying her and making everybody happy—some people enjoy being miserable—and as he could only restore it in one other way he chose this alternative and resolved to die for her. Or what is much the same, appear to die. He set his boat adrift upon the lake and made his way to the city, inserted the intelligence of his death in the most popular sheet of the town and proceeded to secrete himself. The scheme would have proved a complete success but for your untimely and obnoxious interference. Now this plan has failed I think he will accept the other alternative."

"Confound the scamp, of course he will!"

"But if this is Britton, where is Greatham, and what is he hiding for?"

"Ah my amateur detective is now at fault," said the major brightening up a little. "Allow me to enlighten him. Mr. Frank Greatham sailed for Liverpool on the day after the Greysville tragedy. The man who arrived at the Mountain House late at night was the sheriff come to settle a little account with this young man on behalf of his creditors. He wisely thought discretion the better part of valor, and quietly absconded, took the Greysville stage eight miles below the Mountain House, and discreetly left the country. There's an item for the Budget."

The major had conducted his case with so much secrecy that no one but the chief of police could know the real enormity of his blunder, and as he was a man of honor, he never revealed it. Major Keene soon after resigned his office, with the satisfaction of knowing that this was the only official mistake he ever made, which was not so bad, since the wrong man was not hung. He began to feel reconciled to the situation, when he came out of the ante-room and looked upon the glowing faces of the happy pair, who had been so suddenly translated from the depths of despair to the very pinnacle of bliss.

They were so absorbed in the unutterable worship of each other's gaze that our entrance was unnoticed. Britton was saying: "Why, Helen, don't you know I have always loved you?"

And she leaning nearer and looking archly into his face, replied:

"How could you expect me to know it, when you never told me, Edward?"

A consumptive cough from the major brought them to their senses, and checked a mutual impulse toward some warmer demonstration.

Britton received us with gentlemanly courtesy and expressed his gratitude for the major's prompt interference in his behalf, in terms of good-natured raillery.

I drew him aside to invoke his secrecy upon the major's blunder, and he replied with some little haughtiness that he comprehended the situation.

Miss Gordon was all aflush with tremulous happiness and could only cling to the strong arm of her friend, who was now so much nearer than a brother.

A minute description of the wedding festivities would no doubt be highly acceptable to my female readers of tender years; but that sort of thing does not come within the sphere of my prosaic pen, but a glowing account may be found in the Budget of that date, done by my irrepressible female reporter, who is quite *à fait* in all the unpronounceable and incomprehensible chivalric of Parisian bridal toilet.

Mr. and Mrs. Britton are pleased to consider the major and me their most particular friends, and we often dine with them in a quiet but magnificent way.

But if we want to see the major in a furious passion, we ask him if he ever knew a man by the name of Wilkinson.

A snuff-taker's nose, genteely blown, is a musical snuff box.