

The Bloomfield Times.

FRANK MORTIMER,
Editor and Proprietor.

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A CALIFORNIA WEDDING.

"IT WAS in the summer of '60 we lived over in the canon; there were thirty of us in the gang, and we had four cabins with a store house, which was general property. We all worked hard through the week, and on Sunday did our washing and caught our house work up a little. I suppose we would have been called a hard set, but we were not any rougher than men generally get living off by themselves for a year or two.

"Eight of us camped together, and each of us had as distinct an individuality as though we represented different nations.—Somehow he had all acquired a sobriquet which was acknowledged to be characteristic, and we were called by it in camp to the complete ignoring of our real names.

"There was Hal Winterton, a southerner and a fierce Secessionist; we called him "South Carolina." Dave Austin, a Connecticut man, and a regular sell, we christened him "Nutmegs." "Dandy" stuck to Charley Champin, for he was a natural fop. Then there was Ed Simpson, a genuine "Aunt Betty;" you'd know his name at the first glimpse without my saying a word.—Otis Allen would faint if he jammed his finger or had a sight of blood; he was "Our Baby." Jack Cumming was a wag, and he certainly deserved his cognomen of "Jack the Wicked." Jim Woodruff was known all over the country by the appellation of the 'Judge,' and 'your humble servant,' from his black eyes, swarthy complexion and jety locks, perhaps something, too, in my manner, was styled "Senor."

"Well, we were a good natured set of fellows, always making allowance for each other's peculiarities, and never having any friction in the camp. Sometimes I used to think we joked "Aunt Betty" and "Our Baby" rather unmercifully, but a word from our "Judge," would straighten us out at once.

"If one was sick we all took turn about in watching and nursing, but the "Judge" was the one who knew just what to do, and was always near to do it. Tender and patient as a woman, we all honored him and held him a little higher in our estimation than we did any one else at the camp.

"I forgot to tell you, that a month before and when "Dandy" and "Aunt Betty" were not of our number, we had in their place Will Browning, who was equal to two men any day. Good to work and good to play, smart as need be, and true to the core. I think most any of us would have been glad to have gone with Will when he went over the mountains, but he said "No; stay where you are boys; you are doing well, and if I find anything better, I will let you know at once. Then come, all hands of you, and it will be a jolly time when we get together again."

"You know it wasn't the pleasantest traveling in the world to get around two years ago.

"We hadn't a word from Will though he had been gone a long time. Several letters had come for him, but, of course, we could not forward them, having no idea of his whereabouts, and we had come to the conclusion that he would walk in upon us some time, dead broke, and cured of his roving disposition. We had finished work one day; sopped off our "three B's," as we called our beans, bacon and bread; the table stood just where we had left it, for you know miners are not very fastidious in their notions. We were sitting on a long bench which went across one end of our cabin, talking over the day's work and speculating on what the boys were doing over to the left of us, when all at once a woman stood in our cabin door.

"Now a woman in those days was a curiosity with bucks here among the hills and there were men in our camp, even, who hadn't set eyes on one for better than two years. She stood still, just looking at

us. I don't know what the rest thought, but "Aunt Betty," said afterwards, that "it seemed like a warning to some of us," and he was "wondering whose time had come." The "Judge" sat on the edge of the bench and he arose and took off his hat. One after another followed his example slowly, each one getting up in turn and taking off his hat. We must have looked comical for we all had on woolen shirts, with our sleeves rolled up and collars turned back. Our pants were tied around our waists, and tucked in no careful manner into our rubber boot legs. Add to our costume, eight faces unshaven and unshorn for weeks, and you can catch some idea of our general appearance.

"The pale light of our sputtering candle added to the weirdness of the scene, and when "Jack the wicked" murmured, "To your knees, boys, at once," I guess we were all more than half inclined to obey. The Judge recovered himself quickest, and advanced toward the door. "I wish to see my brother, Will Browning. I heard he was here," said about the most musical voice I ever heard.

"He was here months ago," answered the Judge, "but we do not know where he is now. How did you come, and where are your friends?"

"I came through the valley and shadow of death, I should think, for I am nearly dead with fatigue and hunger, and for friends I have the gloomiest old teamster you ever saw; though I thought it rare good luck when I found him, and he engaged to take me up here to Will. I paid him every cent of money I had, and I have not had a mouthful for days but bacon and bread. Is there any hotel within a short distance? If not, perhaps there is some good woman who would let us stay with her until I can get word to Will.

"I guess every man bugged to himself the thought that she would be obliged to stop with us awhile; even the Judge did not look very sorry, though he professed to feel dreadfully for her dilemma.

"He said, and I am sure his full rich voice must have seemed a tower of strength to her: "Will is a dear friend of ours, and if you will kindly allow us the honor of protecting his sister until he can be communicated with, we shall be under great obligations to you. We must look very odd to you, but we all claim to be gentlemen, and I assure we can and will make you comfortable."

"She had a perplexed look on her face when the Judge told her there was no woman living near, but she was mistress of the situation in a moment, and said demurely, though with a sly sparkle, "O, I shall be comfortable enough, but shan't I be troubling you terribly?"

"Every one spoke at once, 'No trouble—not the least.' And then Dandy said, "Judge, if you were to introduce us to the lady, perhaps she would feel more at ease with us."

"The Judge must have been awfully smitten at first sight, or he would not have been guilty of introducing us by our camp titles. As it was he said, gravely, "Miss Browning allow me to introduce to you Will's friend, Mr. South Carolina." He advanced as he was called, and in the most chivalric manner, bowed over the lady's extended hand. "This is Mr. Nutmeg, another friend of your brother's."

"He bowed stiffly, and looked everywhere but at her.

"Aunt Betty, did you know Will? believe you didn't; but he will be a friend all the same to you, Miss Browning."

"You can bet your life on that every time," said Aunt Betty, and we were all ready to split by that time, the Judge looked so dignified doing the honors of the occasion in such a happy manner, as he no doubt thought.

"He continued, 'This is Mr. Dandy;' I wish you could have seen the bowing and scraping. By that time the lady had taken in the drollery of the thing, and when the Dandy bowed so profoundly, she swept him a courtesy that liked to have finished him on the spot.

"Senor and Will were sworn allies; we used to call them David and John then."

"She smiled and asked, "Which are you?" And for the first and only time in my life I did not know what to say, but stammered out, "Either ma'am." There was something like a snicker from our company, but the Judge had no eyes or ears for any one but her; so he kept on; and with a wave of the hand, presented "Our Baby." The great, big, six-footed fellow looked for all the world as though he would put up a lip and cry, until Miss Browning said:—

"How do you do dear? Can he talk?" and then he blurted out, "My name is Otis Allen."

"Jack got the start of them, and stepping in front of them, said, in tragic tones, "Jack, the Wicked, known all over the Pacific coast for my diabolical acts—and let me assist our friend—this is the Judge, who is the terror of all evil doers, and the protector of distressed innocents, wherever and whenever they have the good fortune to fall into his hands."

"Yes," said Judge, with the most imperturbable gravity; and now you know us all, and must consider us your obedient servants."

"She laughed a low, rippling laugh, and said: "Yes, I am sure I know you all, now, and I should like to shake hands all around; it would give me a sort of home feeling, and you would feel better acquainted with me, I guess."

"She began with the judge, and he looked, while he held her hand, as though he had been translated.

"She has got an awful lot of magnetism about her, I tell you, my arm and hand thrills now when I think of that first hand clasp. We hadn't a chair in the cabin, but we gave her out our best three-legged stool. She took off her jaunty hat and sack, and each one of us sprang to take them. She didn't seem to notice us, but left them lying in her lap. She told us she had some baggage a little way from the house, she had left it there so as to walk in upon Will unannounced, but instead of finding dear old Will, she had stumbled upon such a lot of friends.

"Can you give me something real good to eat?" and she glanced at the table with its dirty dishes and the scanty remains of our supper.

"The table was cleared off in a jiffy; a plate was washed, and a can of chicken opened. Aunt Betty made a cup of tea, and another stirred up some flapjacks, and one of us thought to scour a knife and fork by running them into the ground several times. Oh, there were lively times for a few minutes, you'd better believe. Only the Judge—he never moved, but looked right at her. She did not seem to notice him, but watched our operations with great interest.

"While she ate—and the quaintness of her surroundings did not effect her appetite—we all stood round and waited upon her. I guess never a day while she lived with us, but what she laughed about her first meal there.

"We partitioned her off a bedroom in one corner, putting up some blankets, and all but the Judge and Aunt Betty went into the store house to sleep for awhile.

"You'd think that when we got there we should be likely to talk over the wonderful event, but we didn't; not a word was spoken concerning it. But I reckon there was considerable thinking done in that place that night.

"By light we were all up and pacing in front of the cabin. The teamster had given notice of the charge he had left with us, and all the other boys were over to learn how things were. There wasn't a stroke of work done in camp that day, and not much for a week.

"Then the Judge called us together and told us it wouldn't do; we were getting demoralized; that Miss Browning was unhappy, because she felt she had interrupted our arrangements, and we must come right down to steady day's work after that." Well, we tried, but we could never get back to the old times. There was a good deal of rivalry among us, and some cutting things were said. The Judge sent letters in every direction for Will, but three weeks had passed without a word in reply. We had all in turn offered to accompany Miss Browning to San Francisco, but she knew no one there; Will would be sure to come before long, and would be so disappointed if she should leave; besides, had she not eight of the best brothers in the world? She would stay awhile longer, and she would help to cook and mend for us, so as not to burden us too much. She had a few new books she had brought for Will, and would read to us evenings. We came up an hour earlier than usual, and our table was always ready for us, and it had many an extra touch that none but a woman would have thought of. We were a silent set of men through the day; but each did his best when we got home.—Stories, were told, songs sung, and with her reading we were all entranced. She called us by the names which were first given her, and over so many times she went through with the introduction, acting out all the parts. It seemed funnier to her

than it did to us. She talked with South Carolina about the beauties of the Southern sky, and of the flowers and trees which eclipse anything of the North. To Nutmeg, she praised New England, and she had some favorite topic to discuss with each of us.

"Of course we were all in love with her, but none dare boast of having received any sign of preference from the lady. We had all proposed to her once, and some of us had a dozen times. She just made light of it; said we were crazy, and did not know what we were about, but she came to believe, after a while, that we did.

"There was open war. We all acted like madmen, except the Judge; he would not answer any of our taunts, but was most pleasant to all. Yet he grew to look real careworn, and every time he met any of us alone he would say he hoped Will would come soon. He talked to us about keeping the peace, and appealed to our honor as men, and our love for our old comrade.—She herself had a quiet talk with each one. I don't know how she managed it, but she left the impression upon us all that we were likely to be accepted if we behaved ourselves and kept quiet; but it was no go—we couldn't.

"One evening she refused to sit down with us at the table, and so little was eaten. She walked up and down the room a few times and then she said emphatically, "I am going off. I don't know where, but I must go away; this is getting unbearable. I cannot meet one of you but what I am importuned to marry you. Don't you know, gentlemen, I cannot marry you all, and if I choose to show one bit of pleasure in the society of any one, the rest are all angry. Now I ask you what I shall do; Will doesn't come, and I am all alone. I do wish you'd drop this nonsense and behave yourselves. Why won't you."

"She looked from one to another, and finally asked of Jack, "Come, you own to being wicked, and you've been one awful tease; won't you reform, and then all the rest will?"

"Aunt Betty said—"If you care for any of us make it known, and then the rest shall behave, or—there will be a row."

"That is just it; you will fight any way, you are getting so savage. In being lovers I am afraid you have forgotten to be gentlemen."

"Wasn't that a stinger for us? But we didn't feel it then as we have since. We all promised we would not say a word after her decision was made known to us. And each may have felt a little elated, thinking he was likely to be chosen.

She sat down and put her face on her arm, but it was only for a minute. Then she said, "I shall ask for two days to think of it. Next Sunday there will be a wedding here, and a supper afterward, which we will all help to prepare. If any one speaks to me on the subject between this and that time his doom is sealed for certain."

"There was an oldish man over the next cabin who had seemed to have a kind of fatherly care over Kate. And I might as well say here that all of the thirty who were not married had offered themselves to her and been peremptorily refused.

"Well, Kate, and the old man, Howe, had a long talk together, and then he went off and did not get back until Sunday, and he brought a minister with him. There was some kind of service in the afternoon out under the trees, but none of us paid much attention. Our eyes were all for Kate, and she was crying softly all the time. When it was over she took the preacher's arm and talked with him some time. They went into the cabin and we all followed. Mean, wasn't it? But we didn't see it in that light then.

"The man took a Bible from his pocket, and said, 'This lady informs me that you have all promised to abide quietly by her decision, and to dwell in peace and harmony together. For her sake you cannot object to come here, one by one and take an oath which I shall dictate. It is that you each reiterate your promise with a hand on this sacred book.'

"We advanced and received it as solemnly as though it was to be the last of our lives. Then he told us that Miss Browning was very much attached to us all, but of course could not marry but one, and we must bear our disappointment like men.

"She went and stood beside him. I thought she would faint, but she did not. We all arose, when the minister said, 'Let us pray.' When he was part through, the Judge sat down, completely overcome by

his feelings. I am free to say that it was the longest prayer I ever heard. If the minister had been suspended between heaven and that other place, as we were, he would have had fewer words, I am sure.

"When it was over, he said, 'I am here to solemnize marriage between Catherine E. Browning (he must have felt an inward chuckle over the torture he was inflicting, for he paused, well, maybe only a minute, but it seemed a whole hour,) and James A. Woodruff. If any of you know cause or just impediment why these two persons should not be joined in holy matrimony you are to declare it now, or else forever hold your peace.'

"Jim had not stirred a step. The minister took his hand then, and placed him beside the bride. He waked up then, and I guess the look he gave, satisfied her, for her face cleared up like a summer sky after the rain.

"The brief service was soon over that made the Judge a happy Benedict, and us, perhaps, bachelors for life.

"Jim looked up earnestly at us. 'Boys, I do not deserve this happiness as much as either of you; but it has fallen to me, and I will do my best to make her happy. Will you not wish us God speed?' and he held out his hand. Each one of us was man enough to walk up and take it, and the little brown hand that had been given to Jim.

"Then we had supper. There wasn't much eaten, yet we all lived through it; but none of us have felt much like hankering after weddings since, I reckon."

A LARGE FOOT.

ONE day, near the close of the late civil war, the two armies were confronting each other, and exchanging artillery compliments as opportunity offered.—A Lieutenant Smith, in the performance of his duty, was engaged in managing the gun of which he had charge. He was ordered to direct his fire upon a rebel battery, and had loaded his piece, and was just ready to discharge it, when the rebels, with a disregard of the properties of life most painful to contemplate, turned their fire directly upon him. Like a prudent man and a good officer Smith incontinently fled, and shelved himself in a bomb-proof. Now, you know, Smith is rather tall, and much space is required for the accommodation of his person. But by dint of hard squeezing he stowed himself away, shielding every part of his body except one foot: there was no help for it—that had to remain exposed. General Lee, reconnoitering the works of the Union army, cast a glance upon the position occupied by Smith's gun. After gazing a moment, he seemed to see something that attracted his close scrutiny.

"Hand me a field-glass," said he to a soldier standing by.

Through the glass he looked long and earnestly, and at last, lowering the glass, said, sadly:

"I can't make it out."

The soldier took the glass, squinted at the mysterious object, and said, rather contemptuously, "That? why, that's a man's foot!"

"What?" cried the General.

"A man's foot," repeated the soldier.

"You don't mean that any mortal man has a foot like that?" exclaimed the venerable chieftain.

"Certainly I do, General; he's one of the new recruits they're sending down by thousands."

The General sighed deeply, and rode away, exclaiming:

"If the United States are sending forward men with feet like that, and bodies of proportionate size, the Confederacy must go down!"

The next day, Lee's army was surrendered.

A nervous man, whose life was made miserable by the clattering of two blacksmiths, prevailed upon both of them to remove by the offer of a liberal compensation. When the money was paid down, he kindly inquired what neighborhood they intended to remove to. "Why, sir," replied Jack, with a grin on his phiz, "Tom Smith moves to my shop, and I move to his."

Josh Billings says he has known a mule to be a good mule for six months so as to get a chance to kick somebody.

The Japanese have but one newspaper, published once a month, in the shape of a stitched pamphlet of about 100 pages.