

# The Bloomfield Times.

FRANK MORTIMER,  
Editor and Proprietor.

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## The Bloomfield Times.

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FRANK MORTIMER.  
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### BETTER THAN GOLD.

Better than grandeur, better than gold,  
Than rank and titles a thousand fold,  
Is a healthy body, a mind at ease,  
And simple pleasures that always please;  
A heart that can feel for a neighbor's woe  
And share his joy with a genial glow,  
With sympathies large enough to enfold  
All men as brothers, is better than gold.

Better than gold is a conscience clear,  
Though toiling for bread in a humble sphere,  
Doubly blest with content and health,  
Untried by the lusts and cares of wealth;  
Lowly living and lofty thought  
Adorn and ennoble a poor man's cot,  
For mind and morals, of Nature's plan,  
Are the genuine test of a gentleman.

Better than gold is the sweet repose  
Of the sons of toil when their labors close;  
Better than gold is the poor man's sleep,  
And the balm that drops on his slumbers deep;  
Bringing sleeping draughts to the downy bed,  
Where luxury pillows his aching head;  
His simpler opiate labor deems  
A shorter road to the land of dreams.

Better than gold is a thinking mind,  
That in a realm of books can find  
A treasure surpassing Australian ore,  
And live with the great and good of yore,  
The sage's lore and the poet's lay,  
The glories of empires past away,  
The world's great drama will thus unfold,  
And yield a pleasure better than gold.

Better than gold is a peaceful home,  
Where all the fabled charities come,  
The shrine of love and the heaven of life,  
Hallowed by mother, or sister, or wife;  
However humble the home may be,  
Or tried with sorrow by Heaven's decree,  
The blessings that never were bought or sold,  
And centre there are better than gold.

### WHO STOLE THE DIAMONDS?

IT WAS a strange scene—and yet there was nothing startling about it. I could not tell why my eyes were riveted to the spot. Probably, I said to myself, it can only be accounted for by some occult psychological reason, and I will simply watch and endeavor not to wonder. My library is situated in the third-story back-room of an ordinary-built house in the neighborhood of the Heights, and it is there I spend hour after hour in work and study—sometimes, as the light fades from the sky, drawing near the window with my book or writing, and semi-occasionally glancing at the backs of the houses opposite. The house whose garden joins ours has always been an object of interest to me, ever since I moved into the neighborhood, on account of an old gentleman who was to be seen in his library at almost any hour of the day. He seemed to be an indefatigable worker, and was generally at his post long before I was. This old gentleman grew to be very entertaining to me, and I came to miss him very much when for any reason he was absent from his library. The time above alluded to was early in the evening in the latter part of February. My neighbor had gone from bookcase, to bookcase, and drawer to drawer, arranging and putting away, and at last I noticed or thought I saw him lock the drawers of his desk and put the key in his pocket. Soon after I heard the ring of their tea-bell, and watched until the old gentleman walked slowly out of the room. What was the reason that even then I could not withdraw my gaze? There was nothing particularly inviting in the apartment, now that its occupant had gone, but still I could not help looking. The gas was burning very dimly, and I could just make out the different articles of furniture, assisted a little by the light of a very pleasant grate fire. As I watched, a figure clad in white came swiftly in at a door at the right. A cold, nervous tremor took full possession of me. Not that I felt there was anything supernatural about the vision. I knew better—for I immediately recognized the form and dress of a lady I had noticed in the garden only an hour or two before; but I did not know that her presence in that room at that particular time meant mischief and woe unutterable. I know that her feet made no noise as she moved hastily about, going over exactly the same ground which the old gentleman had traveled only a few moments previous. Drawer after

drawer she ransacked—lifting lids, examining pigeon-holes; and finally, after a second spent in looking over the contents of the old gentleman's desk, I saw her grasp what appeared to me to be a small box or casket close and lock the drawer, and then waving her hands aloft, with a singularly triumphant gesture, hurry from the room. That this young woman had been guilty of theft I was perfectly aware; also, I felt sure that she was some relative of the proprietor of the mansion; and more than all did I realize that the fearful consequences of this work would react upon an innocent and formerly highly esteemed member of the household. How did I know this? Perhaps I reasoned from cause and effect without really being aware that such was the case. Perhaps, having been let to see this strange performance, I was peculiarly acted upon as to the result. However that might be, it seemed that the troubled future of that family was thoroughly daguerre-typed upon my heart. After a while the old gentleman entered the library, followed by an elderly lady I took to be his wife; then a young gentleman—I had often noticed him before—and last of all the lady in white, with a wide scarlet sash and neck-ribbon. Soon after a young woman, whom I had also often seen in the garden, apparently the governess, as she always had a little curly-headed boy by her side, entered, leading the urchin; for the sole purpose, it would seem, of bidding them all good-night. The old gentleman took him in his arms and caressed him for a while, and after a short frolic with each one he was led off by the governess. Then the young gentleman drew the shades and I saw no more that night. It was some time before I could sufficiently banish the occurrence to sleep, and the first thought upon waking the next morning was the strange scene of the previous evening. My first glance at my neighbor's library was sufficient to assure me that the theft was discovered. The old gentleman with his hands clasped behind him, paced slowly up and down the apartment. His wife, assisted by the young woman who had ransacked every nook and corner the night before, went through the farce of examination. The old man was evidently too grieved and stunned to join in the search. During the forenoon the young governess entered, having to all appearance been sent for, for the purpose of questioning. For a moment she stood, it appeared to me, in silent wonderment; then advanced quickly to the centre of the room and confronted the old gentleman. The little boy ran into the library, and caught her by the hand. The owner of the white robe—this morning she was dressed in a white merino wrapper faced with cherry, and cherry trimmings—arose from her chair by the library table and with an imperious gesture, perfectly observable from my distance even, drew the child away from the side of his companion. Then the poor girl hid her face in her handkerchief, and left the room. It was plain then as the sun at mid-day. The governess had been accused of the theft.

What was my duty in the premises? When I took into consideration that I had not heard a word spoken, did not even know what had been stolen, and had only the pictures of the different scenes to rely on for proof, my position was a very peculiar one, to say the least. It was certainly a very delicate business to call at that strange house, and describe to the proprietor what I had seen. All day long I wondered what course it was best to pursue—all the while so utterly uncomfortable that work of any description was quite out of the question. Just at evening I was summoned to the parlor to meet a gentleman friend. I noticed immediately that he was in great agitation.

"I called," said he, "in behalf of a young lady friend of mine who is in great trouble. She has neither relatives or acquaintances in the city. Can you—will you give her shelter for a few days until the storm of abuse blows over, and she can again hold up her poor head?" My thoughts immediately flew to the house of my neighbor, and I asked—"Does she live over there?" pointing in the direction. "And is she the victim of a terrible accusation? Charged with stealing isn't she?"

"Good heavens! yes," he replied. "How did you know? I hadn't the slightest idea that it had got to be common talk. I am afraid it will kill her!"

"I have not heard a syllable," I answered; "not one. I have simply guessed, that's all; and I know she is innocent, and perhaps my boy, I can help prove it."

"God grant it!" said he fervently. "But how did you suspect? Who could have hinted at such a thing?"

"I tell you again that I have not heard a word—no one has hinted. Go for your friend, and I will do all that lies in my power to comfort and help her."

An hour after Miss Hastings—for that was the name of the governess—sat in my room, the most abject picture of misery I ever looked upon in my life. Her eyes were swollen with weeping; and when I welcomed her to my home, and assured her of sympathy and love, it seemed as if the child's heart would break.

"Oh," she sobbed, I had such a pleasant home until she came. Old Mr. Demming was so kind to me, and so thoughtful of me; and Mrs. Demming, too, did everything in the world that woman could do for my comfort; and, then, my darling little Fred, and his papa. And now, just to think they all think me a thief! and I have loved them so! Merciful Father, how could they?"

By degrees I succeeded in getting at the whole story.

Little Fred was Mr. Demming's grandson; and little Fred's papa was a widower, and Miss Hastings was employed to take exclusive charge of the widower's little son.

"But who is she?" I asked, with a shudder. "The woman that always dresses in white, with cherry-scarlet trimmings?"

"Then you have seen her?" she inquired, looking up quickly.

"Yes, I have seen her. What relation is she to the Demmings?"

"Mr. Demming is her great-uncle, and he had the care of her education. She has been in Europe for the last three years, traveling with a distinguished professor and his wife. It seems that Mr. Demming has had charge of some jewels which were left in trust for her until she should become of age. The day of her arrival he brought them home from the safe at the office, to see how she would like the jewels reset, intending to have them ready for her at the expiration of the time, which was only three months. For the last two days they have been consulting about it, apparently unable to come to any decision. I was called on yesterday to give my opinion, and when told what they desired of me, this is what Mr. Demming said: 'Now, let's hear what little Lottie suggests.' He always called me 'little Lottie' from the moment of my entering the house. I laughed, and said: 'little Lottie thinks that if she owned these jewels she should be very careful how she let them lie round the house long.'

"That's so," said grandpa Demming, "but I have got a little tuck-away corner where they are safe enough in the daytime; of course, I don't leave them down here nights." "That's all I know about it," continued the poor child, with a fresh burst of tears. "We talked a little about the settings, and this morning I was told the diamonds were gone." "Where were you," I asked, "while the family were at tea?" "I was at tea, also," she replied. "One of our servants was quite ill, and I went down long before it was time for the tea bell to ring and toasted bread. Then Mrs. Demming had a lame wrist, and she asked me to pour the tea."

"Did you leave the dining-room," I inquired, "for any reason, during the tea hour?" "Not for a moment."

"What dress did you wear last evening?" "This one," she replied, glancing down at her dark alpaca and bursting into tears. "What is the name of this niece?" "Clara Mason."

"And you were sure those were her jewels?" "Positive."

What would induce a woman to steal her own property, I wondered. There might be, I thought, some desperate reason for obtaining possession of it before the specified time. Some lover in the case it might be—or some debt, or crime, which she must cancel or have exposed. Just then Mr. Cleaveland and a young Mr. Demming were announced.

"I can not see him," groaned the heart-broken child. "I can not see him."

But I knew it was best she should; and so I invited them to our private sitting-room. I found that the grief was not all hers. The young man's face bore traces of deep suffering, and it was with the utmost effort that he could keep from breaking down as he greeted her.

"Lottie," said he, "you know I do not believe in this horrid story. I know you as well as you know yourself. Father don't believe it either; but of course he doesn't know what to do with Clara's story."

"What is her story?" I inquired.

"Oh," he replied, wearily, "Clara swears that last evening about nine o'clock, as she was passing along the hall on her way to her room, the hall door stealthily opened, and that Lottie crept in, covered with her waterproof, although the night was very fair—and that she, Clara, stepped back into a passage-way, and as she did so, Lottie removed her wrappings, and said in a hoarse whisper—'Thank Heaven! no one has seen me.'"

"Were you out last evening?" I inquired of the terror-stricken girl.

"No," she moaned. "I remained in Fred's room until he fell asleep, and then I read till late, expecting to have a chance of bidding Mr. Demming good-night." Here the child blushed to the roots of her hair, and the whole story was told.

"Could Clara have manufactured this terrible story, or did she see some one enter and imagine it was Lottie? It seems to me this terrible suspense will kill me," said poor Demming.

"If you will come with me—both of you—round to your house, Mr. Demming, I think I can not only exonerate this little girl here, but can place the crime where it belongs. In other words, my dear sir, I know who stole those jewels."

Had I weighed the probable effect of my words before I uttered them, I should not have been so abrupt; for Lottie tipped over as dead as a log on the sofa, and Mr. Demming, in his fright and relief, came mightily near tipping in the same manner.

An hour after, we entered the Demming mansion. Lottie was now calm and self-possessed, while my coward heart seemed inclined to walk quite out of its surroundings.

We were shown into the front parlor. The old gentlemen entered.

"Father, I have brought Lottie round," said the young man; "and I am going to have her skirts cleared from this horrible suspicion before another fifteen minutes rolls over my head."

"God grant it!" ejaculated the venerable gentleman fervently. "Poor little Lottie," he continued, "we have all loved her so dearly from the beginning. We must clear her—of course we must. Don't cry, little girl," as she again broke down under his caressing language. It was evident that the governess had made for herself a very warm and tender nest in the old man's heart.

"Father," said the young man, "this lady Mrs.—, has decided information in regard to our trouble. Ma and Clara are in the library—let's go in there."

He led the way, and we all followed, the old man bringing up the rear.

"Fred tells me," said the latter, "that this lady"—pointing to me—"has something to say on the subject under discussion."

Mr. Demming couldn't help being parliamentary even at this critical time.

"Was the bag containing the jewels in this desk?" I asked, placing my hand on the article of furniture.

"It was," replied Mr. Demming.

"Did any of the members of your family know exactly where you did keep them?" "No," he answered. "I never would lock them up until everybody had left the room."

"That accounted for the rummaging."

"This is all I have to say," I continued.

"Last evening at precisely half-past six, I saw a lady dressed in white, with a scarlet sash and neck-ribbon, enter this apartment, open the different drawers and doors of these bookcases, and then—"

"You lie!" screamed the girl in white. "You lie! you lie! You know you lie! you bad woman—you fiend in human shape!"

"And then," I continued I saw her open the desk, search it awhile, and finally take out a bag which she held aloft for a moment and then run out of the room."

"You—you—you"—said the culprit, trying to reach the place where I sat. Her uncle caught her in his arms and laid her on the sofa in a perfect paroxysm of rage and despair.

They remembered that Clara was ten minutes late at the tea table; and one part of the story fitted into the other so perfectly that there was not the slightest loop-hole for her to crawl out of.

Lottie did not go back with me. I left her with little Fred in her lap, Grandpa Demming beside her, and little Fred's pa at her feet, and the old lady hovering near. I have an invitation to a wedding next week.

It was found out afterwards that Clara Mason stole the jewels, as I suspected, to enrich her lover, who was, of course, a scamp.

### NOBODY'S DAUGHTER.

A CORRESPONDENT of the Cincinnati Chronicle assures the verity of the following highly romantic story, which, while in the full flavor of the choicest old style fiction, has still to find its solution in modern fact:

In the dusk of an evening of last winter, when they were just lighting the gas in the stores of a city supposed to be St. Louis, there entered a certain fashionable jeweller's establishment a pale, slender, very shabbily dressed girl, apparently about 15 years old, who timidly asked a clerk in charge if he would not buy from her a much tarnished small bracelet, which she rather stealthily exhibited. Carelessly noting the soiled general look of the article the clerk at first gave a sharp refusal; but, happening to have his attention incidentally attracted by the antique setting of some ornament in the bracelet, and next discovering that said ornament was a valuable ruby, with a monogram inside, he sternly refused to let the would-be seller or her ware leave the store until his employer should have arrived. Consequently, when the jeweller came in from his dinner he found the girl crying with terror, awaiting him in his private office, and the clerk holding her in custody for suspected theft.—Examining the bracelet closely, he became convinced that it was foreign both in manufacture and ownership; and this conviction, added to the pleading manner and innocent look of the terrified girl, induced him to credit the latter's tearful protestations of honesty. By a skillful admixture of paternal kindness of tone with admonitions to a full explanation for her own good, the golden merchant presently persuaded the alarmed young creature into such disclosure of her history as he had little anticipated.

The girl described herself as the daughter of a "great lady" in Europe, from whom, some four years ago, she was removed by her uncle, who placed her on board a ship at night, in care of a man never seen by her before. She knew not why this was done. It came upon her without a moment's warning, and to all her protests and questions a command for silence was the only response. On the ship she came to this country, vigilantly guarded by her strange, wholly incommunicative custodian, who, after their landing in New York, hurried her to the Western city, delivered her there to the charge of an obscure and poor family, evidently advised of her arrival beforehand, and then disappeared, to be seen of her no more.

Upon her arm when she left home was the bracelet. Her reason for attempting to sell it was that the people having the care of her were too poor to provide her with decent clothing, and had not objected to her sale of the bracelet in the interest of her wardrobe.

While scarcely inclined to credit this curious and unsatisfactory story, the jeweller felt sufficiently interested in the girl to make inquiries about her of the people with whom she lived. They verifying all that she had told him, though stubbornly refusing to add an explanatory word thereto, he took the mysterious young exile into his own home as a nursemaid for his children, and placed her bracelet in one of the show cases of his store as a curiosity.

So the affair rested until a few days ago, when the bracelet produced a new scene.—A priest, lately despatched by his ghostly superiors in Europe to some duty in America, had left his watch at the jeweller's for the usual rectification after a sea voyage, and when calling to receive it, again noticed the bracelet in the show-case, and asked the privilege of inspecting it more closely. His request being granted, and the bauble placed in his hand, he was seized with an agitation too powerful to be repressed, and after a moment's pause, solicited an immediate private interview with the jeweller.

What passed during that interview can be only vaguely inferred, for one of its effects, it appears, was to commit the jeweller also to the secrecy heretofore involving all others concerned with the bracelet. At the close of the interview the priest accompanied the merchant to his private residence; from whence, after an hour's pause, priest and girl came forth together, to enter a private carriage, and drive—it is not known whither. So ends all of the story that can be known at present; the general reader's ingenuity and powers of imagination being conveniently left at liberty to devise the solution most agreeable to his, or her, sense of the logic of romance and poetic justice, and the most obvious induction from the facts revealed.