

# The Bloomfield Times.

FRANK MORTIMER, }  
Editor and Proprietor. }

AN INDEPENDENT FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

Terms: IN ADVANCE  
One Dollar per Year.

Vol. V.

New Bloomfield, Pa., Tuesday, May 30, 1871.

No. 22.

## The Bloomfield Times.

Is Published Weekly.

At New Bloomfield, Penn'a.

BY

FRANK MORTIMER.

SUBSCRIPTION TERMS.

ONE DOLLAR PER YEAR!  
60 Cents for 6 Months; 40 Cents  
for 3 Months.

IN ADVANCE.

### JUDGE HARLOW'S HELP.

THERE was a young lawyer by the name of John Harlow practising law in New York twenty odd years ago. His father lived not very far from my father. John had graduated with honors, had studied law, and had the good fortune to enter immediately into a partnership with his law preceptor, Ex-Gov. Blank. So eagerly had he pursued his studies that for two years he had not seen his country home. I think one reason why he had not cared to visit it was that his mother was dead, and his only sister was married and living in Boston. Take the "women-folks" out of a house, and it never seems much like home to a young man.

But now, as Thanksgiving Day drew near, he resolved to give himself a brief release from the bondage of books. He told his partner that he wanted to go home for a week. He said he wanted to see his father and the boys, and his sister, who was coming home at that time, but that he specially wanted to ride old Bob to the brook once more, and to milk Cherry again, just to see how it felt to be a farmer's boy.

"John," said the old lawyer, "be sure you fix up a match with some of those country girls; no man is fit for anything till he is well married, and you are now able, with economy, to support a wife. Mind you get one of those country girls. These paste and powder people here aren't fit for a young man that wants a woman."

"Governor," said the young lawyer, laying his boots gracefully up on top of a pile of law books, as if to encourage reflection by giving his head the advantage of the lower end of the inclined plane, "Governor, I don't know anything about city girls. I have given myself to my books. But I must have a wife that is literary, like my self,—one that can understand Emerson, for instance."

The old lawyer laughed. "John," he answered, "the worst mistake you can make is to marry a woman just like yourself in taste. You don't want to marry a woman's head, but her heart."

John defended his theory, and the Governor only remarked that he would be cured of that sooner or later, and the sooner the better.

The next morning John had a letter from his sister. Part of it ran about thus:—

"I've concluded, old fellow, that if you don't marry you'll dry up and turn to parchment. I'm going to bring home with me the smartest girl I know. She reads Carlyle, and quotes Goethe, and understands Emerson. Of course she don't know what I am up to, but you must prepare to capitulate."

John did not like Amanda's assuming to pick a wife for him, but he did like the prospect of meeting a smart girl, and he opened the letter again to make sure that he had not misunderstood. He read again, "understands Emerson." John was pleased. Why? I think I can divine. John was vain of his own abilities, and he wanted a woman that could appreciate him. He would have told you that he wanted congenial society. But congenial female society to an ambitious man whose heart is yet untouched is only society that, in some sense, understands his own greatness and admires his wisdom.

In the old home they were looking for the son. The family proper consisted of the father, good Deacon Harlow, John's two brothers, ten and twelve years old, and Huldah, the "help." This last was the daughter of a neighboring farmer, who was poor and hopelessly rheumatic, and most of the daughter's hard earnings went to eke out the scanty subsistence at home. Aunt Judith, the sister of John's mother, "looked after" the household affairs of her brother-in-law, by coming over once a week and helping Huldah darn and mend and make, and by giving Huldah such advice as her inexperience was supposed to require. But now Deacon Harlow's daughter had left her husband to eat his turkey alone in Boston,

and had brought her two children home to receive the paternal blessing. Not that Mrs. Amanda Holmes had the paternal blessing chiefly in view in her trip. She had brought with her a very dear friend, Miss Janet Dunton, the accomplished teacher in the Mt. Parnassus Female Seminary. Why Miss Janet Dunton came to the country with her friend, she could hardly have told. Not a word had Mrs. Holmes spoken to her on the subject of the matrimonial scheme. She would have resented any allusion to such a project. She would have repelled any insinuation that she had ever dreamed that marriage was desirable under any conceivable circumstances. She often declared, sentimentally, that she was wedded to her books, and loved her leisure, and was determined to be an old maid. And all the time this sincere Christian girl was dying to confer herself upon some worthy man of congenial tastes; which meant in her case, just what it did in John Harlow's—some one who could admire her attainments. But sensitive as she was to any imputation of a desire to marry, she and Mrs. Holmes understood one another distinctly.

Mrs. Holmes and her friend arrived twenty-four hours ahead of John, and the daughter of the house had already installed herself as temporary mistress by thoughtlessly reversing, and turning inside out all the good Huldah's most cherished arrangements. All the plans for the annual festival that wise and practical Huldah had entertained were vetoed, without a thought that this young girl had been for a year and a half in actual authority in the house, and might have some feeling of wrong in having a guest of a week overturn her plans for the next month. But Mrs. Holmes was not one of the kind to think of that.—Huldah was hired and paid, and she never dreamed that hired people could have any interest in their work or their home other than their pay and their food. But Huldah was patient, though she confessed that she had a feeling that she had been rudely "trampled all over." I suspect she had a good cry at the end of the first day. I cannot affirm it, except from a general knowledge of women.

When John drove up in the buggy that the boys had taken to the depot for him, his first care was to shake hands with the deacon, who was glad to see him, but could not forbear expressing a hope that he would "shave the hair off his upper lip." Then John greeted his sister cordially, and was presented to Miss Dunton. Instead of sitting down, he pushed right on into the kitchen, where Huldah, in a calico frock and a clean, white apron, was baking biscuit for tea. She had been a schoolmate of his, and he took her hand cordially as she stood there, with the bright Western sun half-glorifying her head and face.

"Why, Huldah, how you've grown!" was his first word of greeting. He meant more than he said, for though she was not handsome, she had grown exceedingly comely as she developed into a woman.

"Undignified as ever!" said Amanda, as he returned to the sitting-room.

"How?" said John. He looked bewildered. What had he done that was undignified? And Amanda Holmes saw well enough that it would not do well to tell him that speaking to Huldah Manners was not consistent with dignity.—She saw that her remark had been a mistake, and she got out of it the best way she could, by turning the conversation.

The next day the ladies could get no good out of John Harlow. He got up early and milked the cow. He cut wood and carried it in for Huldah. He rode old Bob to the brook for water. He did everything that he had been accustomed to do when a boy, finding as much pleasure in forgetting that he was a man, as he had once found in hoping to be a man. The two boys enjoyed his society greatly, and his father was delighted to see that he had retained his interest in the farm life, though the deacon evidently felt an unconquerable hostility to what he called "that scrub brush on the upper lip." I think if John had known how strong his father's feeling was against this much cherished product he would have mowed the crop and grazed the field closely until he got back to the city.

John was not insensible to Janet Dunton's charms. She could talk fluently about all the authors most in vogue, and the effect of her fluency was really dazzling to a man not yet cultivated enough to see how superficial her culture was.—For all her learning floated on top. None of it had influenced her own culture.—She was brimming full of that which

she had acquired, but it had not been incorporated into her own nature. John did not see this, and he was infatuated with the idea of marrying a wife of such attainments. How she would dazzle his friends! How the Governor would like to talk to her! How she would shine in his parlors! How she would delight people as she gave them tea and talk at the same time.

Before the end of the week he began to feel a warmer feeling for Miss Janet. It was not in the nature of things that John should walk and talk with a pleasant girl a week, and not feel something more than his first interested desire to marry a showy wife. His heart began to be touched, and he resolved to bring things to a crisis as soon as possible. He therefore sought an opportunity to propose. But it was hard to find. For though Mrs. Holmes was tolerably ingenious, she could not get the boys or the deacon to pay any regard to their hints. Boys are totally depraved on such questions anyhow, and always manage to stumble in where any privacy is sought. And as for the deacon, it really seemed as though he had some design in intruding at the critical moment.

I do not think that John was seriously in love with Miss Dunton. If he had been he would have found some means of communicating with her. A thousand spies with sleepless eyes all round their heads cannot keep a man from telling his love somehow, if he really has a love to tell.

There is another fact which convinces me that John Harlow was not yet very deeply in love with Janet. He was fond of talking with her of Byron, and Milton, of Lord Bacon and Emerson, i. e., as I have already said, he was fond of putting his own knowledge on dress parade in the presence of one who could appreciate the display. But whenever any little thing released him for the time from conversation in the sitting-room, he was given to slipping out into the old kitchen, where sitting on a chair that had no back, and leaning against the chimney-side, he delighted to talk to Huldah. She could not talk much of books, but she could talk most charmingly of anything that related to country life, and could ask John many questions about the great city. In fact, John found that Huldah had come into possession of only such facts and truths as could be reached in her narrow life, but that she had assimilated them, and thought about them, and that it was more refreshing to hear her original and piquant remarks about the topics she was acquainted with, than to listen to the tireless stream of Janet Dunton's ostentatious erudition. And he found more delight in telling the earnest and hungry-minded girl about the great world of men, and the great world of books, than in talking to Janet, who was, in the matter of knowledge, a little *blase*, if I may be allowed the expression. And then to Huldah he could talk of his mother, whom he had often watched moving about that same kitchen. When he had spoken to Janet of the associations of the old place with his mother's countenance, she had answered with a quotation from some poet, given in a tone of empty sentimentality. He instinctively shrank from mentioning the subject to her again; but to Huldah it was so easy to talk of his mother's gentleness and sweetness. Huldah was not unlike her in these respects, and then she gave him the sort of sympathy that finds its utterance in a tender speech—so much more tender than any speech can be. He observed often during the week that Huldah was depressed. He could not exactly account for it, until he noticed something in his sister's behavior toward her that awakened his suspicion. As soon as opportunity offered he inquired of Huldah, affecting at the same time to know something about it.

"I don't want to complain of your sister to you, Mr. Harlow—"

"Pshaw! call me John, and as for my sister, I know her faults better than you do. Go on, please."

"Well, it's only that she told me that Miss Dunton wasn't used to eating at the same table with *servants*, and when one of the boys told your father, he was mad and came to me, and said, 'Huldah, you must eat when the rest do. If you stay away from the table on account of these city snobs I'll make a fuss on the spot.' So to avoid a fuss I have kept on going to the table."

John was greatly vexed with this.—He was a chivalrous fellow, and he knew how such a remark must wound a person who had never learned that domestic

service had anything degrading in it.—And the result was just the opposite of what his sister had hoped. John paid more attention than ever to Huldah Manners because she was the victim of oppression.

The evening before Thanksgiving Day the ladies were going to make a visit.—It was not at all incumbent on John to go, but he was seeking an opportunity to carry off the brilliant Miss Dunton, who would adorn his parlors when he became rich and distinguished, and who would make so nice a head-piece for his table. And so he had determined to go with them, trusting to some fortunate chance for his opportunity.

But, sitting in the old "best room," in the dark, while the ladies were getting ready, and trying to devise a way by which he might get an opportunity to speak with Miss Dunton alone, it occurred to him that she was at the time in the sitting-room waiting for his sister. To step out to where she was, and present the case in a few words, would not be difficult, and it might all be settled before his sister came down stairs. The fates were against him, however. For just as he was about to act on his thought he heard Amanda Holmes' abundant dresses sweeping down the stairway. He could not help hearing the conversation that followed:

"You see, Janet, I got up this trip tonight to keep John from spending the evening in the kitchen. He hasn't a bit of dignity, and would spend the evening romping with children and talking to Huldah if he took it into his head."

"Well," said Janet, "one can overlook everything in a man of your brother's culture. But what a queer way your country servants have of pushing themselves. Wouldn't I make them know their places!"

And all this was said with the kitchen door open, and with the intention of wounding Huldah.

John's castles tumbled. The erudite wife alongside the silver tea-urn faded out of sight rapidly. If knowledge could not give a touch of humane regard for the feelings of a poor girl toiling dutifully and self-denyingly to support her family, of what account was it?

Two minutes before he was about to give his life to Janet Dunton. Now, there was a gulf wider than the world between them.

He slipped out of the best room by the outside door and came in through the kitchen. The neighbor's sleigh that was to call for them was already at the door, and John begged them to excuse him.—He had set his heart on helping Huldah make mincepies, as he used to help his mother when a boy. His sister was in despair, but she did not say much. She told John that it was time he was getting over his queer freaks. And the sleigh drove off.

For an hour afterwards John romped with his sister's children and told stories to the boys and talked to his father.—When a man has barely escaped going over a precipice he does not like to think too much about it. John did not.

At last the little children went to bed. The old gentleman grew sleepy, and retired. The boys went into the sitting-room and went to sleep, one on the lounge and one on the floor. Huldah was just ready to begin her pies. She was deeply hurt, but John succeeded in making her more cheerful. He rolled up his sleeves and went to rolling out the pastry. He thought he had never seen a sweeter picture than the young girl in clean dress and apron, with her sleeves rolled above her elbows. There was a statuesque perfection in her well-rounded arms. The heat of the fire had flushed her face a little, and she was laughing merrily at John's awkward blunders in pie-making. John was delighted, he hardly knew why. In fixing a pie-crust his fingers touched hers, and he started as if he had touched a galvanic battery. He looked at Huldah and saw a half-painful expression on her flushed face.

For the first time it occurred to him that Huldah Manners had excited in him a feeling a thousand times deeper than any thing he had felt towards Janet, who seemed to be now in another world.

For the first time he realized that he had been more in love with Huldah than with Janet all the time. Why not marry her? And then he remembered what the Governor had said about marrying a woman's heart and not her head.

He put on his hat and walked out,—out, into the darkness, and drizzling rain, and the slush of melting snow, fighting a fierce battle. All his pride and all his cowardly vanity were on one side, all the irresistible torrent of his love on the other.

er. He walked away into the dark wood pasture, trying to cool his brow, trying to think, and (would you believe it?) trying to pray, for it was a great struggle, and in any great struggle a true soul always finds something very, like prayer in his heart.

The feeling of love may exist without attracting the attention of its possessor. It had not occurred to John that he could love or marry Huldah. Thus the passion had grown all the more powerful for not being observed, and now the unseen fire had at a flash appeared as an all-consuming one.

Turning back he stood without the window, in the shadow, and looked through the glass at the trim girl at work with her pies. In the modest restful face he read the story of a heart that had carried great burdens patiently and nobly. What a glorious picture she was of warmth and light, framed in modesty. To his heart at that moment, all the light and warmth of the world centered in Huldah. All the world besides was loneliness and darkness and drizzle and slush. His fear of his sister and of his friends seemed base and cowardly. And the more he looked at this vision of the night this revelation of peace and love and light, the more he was determined to possess it. You will call him precipitate. But when all a man's nobility is on one side and all his meanness on the other, why hesitate? Besides, John Harlow had done more thinking in that half-hour than most men do in a month.

The vision had vanished from the window and he went in and sat down. She had, by this time, put in the last pie, and was sitting with her head on her hand. The candle flickered and went out, and there was only the weird and ruddy fire-light. I cannot tell you what words passed between John and the surprised Huldah who had thought him already betrothed to Miss Dunton. I cannot tell what was said in the light of that fire; I don't suppose Harlow can tell that story himself.

Huldah asked that he should not say anything about it till his sister was gone. Of course John saw that she asked it for his sake. But his own cowardice was glad of the shelter.

Next day a brother of John's (whom I forgot to mention before) came home from college. Mrs. Holmes' husband arrived unexpectedly. Aunt Judith, with her family, came over at dinner-time, so that there was a large and merry party. Two hearts, at least, joined in the deacon's thanksgiving prayer with much fervor. At the table the dinner was much admired.

"Huldah," said Janet Dunton, "I like your pies. I wish I could hire you to go to Boston. Our cook never does so well."

John saw the well-aimed shaft hidden under this compliment, and all his manhood rallied. As soon as he could be sure of himself he said:

"You cannot have Huldah; she is already engaged."

"How's that?" said Aunt Judith.

"O! I've secured her services," said John.

"What?" said Mrs. Holmes, "engaged your—you—your help before you engaged a wife?"

"Not at all," said John; "engaged my help and my wife in one. I hope that Huldah Manners will be Huldah Harlow by Christmas."

The deacon dropped his knife and fork and dropped his lower jaw and stared.

"What! How! What did you say John?"

"I say, father, that this good girl Huldah is to be my wife."

"John!" gasped the old man, getting to his feet and reaching his hand across the table, "you've got plenty of sense if you do wear a moustache? God bless you my boy; there ain't no better woman here nor in New York nor anywhere than Huldah. God bless you both. I was afraid you'd take a different road through."

"Hurrah for our Huldah and our John," said George Harlow, the college boy, and his brothers joined him. Even the little Holmes children hurrahed.

Here the Judge stopped.

"Well," said Irene, "I don't think it was very nice in him to marry the 'help,' do you father?"

"Indeed, I do," said the Judge, with emphasis.

"Did she ever come to understand Emerson?" asked Anna, who detested the Concord philosopher because she could not understand him.

"Indeed I don't know," said the Judge; "you can ask Huldah yourself."

"Who? what? You don't mean that mother is Huldah?"

It was a cry in concert.

"Mother was a little red in the face behind the copy of Whittier she was affecting to read."