

The Bloomfield Times.

FRANK MORTIMER,
Editor and Proprietor.

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BY

FRANK MORTIMER.

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IN ADVANCE.

THOSE EARLY YEARS.

BY M. L. MATHEWSON.

THOSE early years! those early years!
Of childish hopes and childish tears;
How sweet their cherished mem'ry seems
Of guileless hours and fairy dreams,
When erst a child in careless glee,
I sported round my mother's knee.

Those olden lays! those olden lays!
The joys of those other days;
How oft their mem'ry o'er me steals,
And youthful dreams of life reveal,
When o'er my eye of earnest blue
No cawking care its shadow threw.

Those buried loves! those buried loves!
Time's fading treasure aptly proves;
Whate'er my change, as life decays,
The thoughts of those far happier days,
Shall cling, through grief and gloom,
Till I shall rest within the tomb!

A Young Man's Adventures.

CONCLUDED.

IT appeared to me that Edith was about
to qualify her dislike with some other
term.

"Why don't you like him?" I asked,
rather impudently I own, but her very
frankness encouraged me.

"O! I can't say," she answered, indiffer-
ently. "Who can account for a woman's
likes or dislikes? Old lawyer Butler said a
strange thing to me one day. 'Ira thinks
of taking his brother Alfred in as partner,'
said he, 'and you just put a flea in your
sister's ear, and prevent it.' He would not
explain, but I know he thinks Alfred is not
over scrupulous. He thinks he ought to
have a share in the money that has been
made, though he never raised a finger to
do it."

I began to think that Miss Edith Nones
was a long-headed young lady, and not to
be made a fool of. It rather dampened my
hopes when I reflected that rich as I felt
myself with my five thousand—minus about
five hundred—she was worth five times as
much as I was. I began to wish that her
fortune might be spirited away in some
mysterious manner so as not to be a bar
between us. I was young then, as I have
said—generous and romantic to a degree.
I have since learned that money does not
seriously interfere either with love or hap-
piness.

In this desultory conversation the time
passed pleasantly away, and we arrived at
our journey's end without further accident.
I went with Edith to the residence of Mr.
Briscoe, an elegant mansion, delightfully
situated on rising ground near the Lacka-
wana River. Mrs. Briscoe received me
very cordially, glancing with a peculiar
smile at Edith as she introduced me. I
must explain the cause of this at the risk
of being thought vain; but, hang it! in these
days of looking-glasses a man cannot help
knowing how he looks. I was a pretty
fair specimen of manhood, with my Scottish
blood strongly marked in form and feature.
My old grandmother—a McGregor—always
said I looked like a portrait of Sir William
Wallace, which she had seen in her young
days in Edinboro'; but she was rather par-
tial, and I was her particular pet.

The glance that Mrs. Briscoe bestowed
upon her sister said, as plainly as a glance
could—

"Edith, you have brought along your
beau."

And as her eyes again wandered to my
face, I rather thought she approved her
sister's choice. This strengthened the
good opinion that I had already formed of
her—an opinion which I shall hold to the
last. A more thoroughly good and womanly
woman than Hermina Briscoe never breath-
ed upon the earth. There was a great simi-
larity between the sisters—Mrs. Briscoe
looking more matronly, but scarcely any
older—they had the same wealth of black

hair, pale, regular features, and dark gray
eyes. Both were of medium height, nei-
ther too tall nor too short. Mr. Briscoe was
not at home. He had gone to Philadelphia
to cash some heavy drafts, intending to
make some important alterations in the
mine, and wishing to place the money in
the local bank so as to have it ready when
wanted for use. It was quite a large sum—
nearly ten thousand dollars. They spoke
of it as a mere trifle, and I began to realize
that though my five thousand was a large
sum in my eyes, in other eyes it might ap-
pear quite insignificant.

We grew very sociable together, and I
felt quite at home. Edith took me out for
a walk through the town, which I
thought quite a thriving place. The next
day she promised to take me into the mine.
We had a delightful evening, devoted al-
most entirely to music. Both sisters were
accomplished performers upon the piano,
and had voices of much power, well culti-
vated. When I retired to the neat little
chamber allotted to me, which was up one
flight, and overlooked the river and the coal
hills, I felt no inclination to sleep, but sat a
long time by the window thinking of Edith.
It appeared to me that heaven, in the very
outset of my career, had thrown this gentle
being in my way, to save me from an idle
and dissolute life and make a man of me.
I went to bed at last, to toss about and
dream of her by fits and starts, until morn-
ing.

I was up by daylight, and took a long
ramble "over the hills and far away" be-
fore breakfast. I am a great walker, and
always take a good deal of pleasure in ro-
ving through sylvan scenery. We inspect-
ed the mine, as agreed upon, descending in-
to the bowels of the earth, where the grim
miners glided about, with their little lamps
fastened to their hats, looking like fire-flies
in the gloom. I shall not attempt to de-
scribe it; I have not the space, and it
might not prove interesting if I did. This
used up the forenoon, and we returned to
the house with a good appetite for dinner.

As we drew near we observed Mrs. Briscoe
conversing with a gentleman upon the ver-
anda.

"I do believe there's that odious Alfred
Briscoe!" exclaimed Edith, vexatiously.

"Why odious?" I asked covertly.

She reddened a little as she turned away
her eyes from mine.

"I may as well tell you," she returned,
"for you will find it out soon enough now.
He does me the honor to pay court to me,
and wishes to marry me."

"The deuce he does?" I exclaimed, un-
guardedly.

She turned her eyes full upon me with an
arch expression. It was my turn to color
then.

"Don't be alarmed," she said, demurely;
"I don't intend to have him."

I felt immeasurably relieved at this de-
claration, and my face showed it, and she
smiled again. I have often thought since
what a strange pair of lovers we were. We
did all our courting with the eyes, and
seemed to have tacitly accepted each other
at the first glance. I looked curiously at
Alfred Briscoe as we drew near, but his
back was towards us, and I could not see
his face. Mrs. Briscoe, who saw us, evi-
dently told him we were coming, for he
turned quickly around.

"Thunder!" I exclaimed, involuntarily,
and stopping short.

"What's the matter?" cried Edith, turn-
ing to me, and very much astonished at
this singular epithet, which was about as
near as a man could come to swearing in
a lady's presence.

"I stepped upon a stone, and I do be-
lieve I have sprained my ankle," I answer-
ed, as I stooped down and pretended to ex-
amine the injured member. "No, it's all
right—only gave it a twist."

I tried my best to collect myself and ap-
pear calm, but my brain was all in a whirl,
and I was so astonished that I hardly knew
what I was about. The recognition had
been mutual, and he looked very bilious
as his eyes met mine. It would have been
hard to say which was the most astonished
man of the two. This gentleman convers-
ing with Mrs. Briscoe was Parks, the sharp-
er I had knocked down in the supper-rooms
in New York. It was not a pleasant meet-
ing upon either side. He certainly never
expected to meet me there, and I certain-
ly never expected to meet him. And this
was Alfred Briscoe. The initials A. B.
upon the stone of his ring were no longer
a mystery.

I never felt more awkward in my life, but
I knew my best plan was to meet the affair
boldly, and treat him as an entire stranger.
If he chose to bring up the matter, it would

be more to his discredit than mine. By
the time we reached the veranda I had be-
come quite cool and collected. There was
not the slightest apparent sign of recogni-
tion, unless it was perhaps just a quiver of
the eyelids, as we were presented to each
other. No one would have imagined for a
moment that we had ever met before. I
could not help thinking what a consummate
pair of hypocrites we both were. There
was one thing, however, I prided myself
upon; experienced man of the world as he
was, I, a stripling, a mere tryo in life's
mysteries, was his equal in coolness and
self-possession.

Treating me with the most marked con-
sideration and respect outwardly, he took
every occasion, covertly, to make me appear
in a ridiculous light before the ladies, fling-
ing little quiet sarcasms at me in a way
that could not be resented, without making
me appear unreasonably hot-headed and
sensitive. I rather enjoyed this keen en-
counter of our wits, for I gave him as
good as he sent, as it proved he was annoy-
ed at Edith's evident liking for my society.
The ladies had no suspicion of the ill-feeling
existing between us. Edith looked a little
surprised at one or two of his sneers, and
seemed disposed to resent them. She more
than suspected this man's true character,
and respect for her sister's feelings alone
made her treat him with common politeness.
He could not influence her against me—that
was one comfort.

Mrs. Briscoe received a telegram from
her husband, stating that he would be home
by the evening train.

"He will be here by nine o'clock to-
night," she said. "He always walks up
from the depot."

I remarked that I thought it a risk to
run, he having so much money about him,
his house being in the outskirts of the
town, and some portions of the way quite
lonely. I had observed that in my walks
about the place.

"O, there is no danger," she answered,
lightly.

"Is he armed?" I asked.

"He never carried a weapon in his life,"
she returned. "Do you?"

"Not exactly," I made answer. "I
have one—though I do not carry it about
me—an heirloom in our family, a relic of
the olden time—a Scottish dirk that be-
longed to a namesake of mine, Malcom
McVeigh, a corporal in the celebrated High-
land Regiment, known as the 'Black
Watch,' that was so distinguished at the
battle of Dettingen. I have it up stairs in
my carpet-bag now."

The ladies expressed a desire to see it,
and I went for the dirk, and brought it
down for their examination. Alfred Briscoe
was present when this conversation
took place, and he examined the dirk criti-
cally. After their curiosity was satisfied,
I carried it back to my chamber.

I stopped awhile to making some changes
in my apparel, intending to take a long
walk after dinner. Returning down stairs,
I found Edith alone in the parlor, looking,
I thought out of sorts, as if something had
ruffled the natural serenity of her temper.

"What's the matter?" I asked, taking a
place beside her on the sofa.

"I've settled it," she cried, petulantly.

"I've settled it for good and all!"

"Have you? Well, I am glad to
hear that; but what have you settled?"

She smiled, and her good humor came
back again.

"Mr. Alfred Briscoe proposed to me, ten
minutes ago, and I rejected him."

"And he vows vengeance, I presume?"

"O, no—he would never dare to threaten
me. Covertly he would do me mischief if he
could. It is a great disappointment to him,
I know, as he is very anxious to have the
spending of my money."

"Edith, I wish you did not have any
money," I cried, suddenly.

"Why?" she demanded, in surprise.

"Because I don't wish to be accused of
mercenary motives—don't you see?"

"But why should you be?"

"Well—I have been thinking—for some
little time—that I—should like to marry
you myself."

"Well, Malcom?"

"But the confounded money makes it
look as if it wasn't love that swayed me,
entirely and purely."

"I think we can get over that difficulty,"
she said, quietly. "After we are married
I will give it away."

"To whom?" I asked.

"To you, dear," she said, with a most
provoking smile.

My only reply was to clasp her in my
arms and steal a kiss from her smiling lips.
As I raised my head after this agreeable

operation, I saw a white face glaring in up-
on me through the open window. Alfred
Briscoe, standing upon the veranda, had
witnessed this little episode of love. The
man's face was livid with passion as he
glared upon me, and the very demon of
murder flashed from his sunken eyes. The
moment he found himself observed he slunk
away, like a baffled serpent that has coiled
itself for a spring. But I did not fear the
black looks of Alfred Briscoe. I was full
of youth and strength, and knew that I
could snap him to pieces like a pipe-stem.—
I did not let Edith know that we had been
watched; I thought it would only need-
lessly annoy her, and perhaps alarm her
fears for my safety, and felt very confident
of being able to take care of myself."

We were soon summoned to dinner. Al-
fred Briscoe was there, more amiable and
agreeable than ever, full of light sayings,
and witty to a degree. He appeared to be
in the most exuberant spirits, but ever and
anon his eyes rested upon me with an ex-
pression which seemed to say:
"Just you wait until I get a chance at
you."

And I made up my mind that if I ever
had occasion to hit him again, to put him
in the doctor's hands for a lengthy period.

I started out for a long ramble after din-
ner, and walked quite a distance, lost my
way, and got back to town about half-past
eight in the evening. I had cut a small
branch of a tree to serve as a walking-
stick, and was quietly trudging along a
path through the woods, which a country-
man had told me would lead me out upon
the road near Mr. Briscoe's house, when I
heard distinctly and sharply the cry of
"Murder!"

I stopped appalled; my blood chilled, and
the next moment I bounced quickly for-
ward. A dozen paces brought me into the
road, where I saw a man down in the dust,
and another bending over him, his arm
raised, and the blade of a knife gleaming
in the starlight. He sprang to his feet as
he heard my steps, with the knife raised in
a threatening manner. With one vigorous
sweep of my cudgel I struck the knife from
his hand, and he wheeled suddenly about,
plunged into the bushes by the roadside,
with the speed of light, and was out of
sight in an instant. I thought it useless to
attempt to follow him.

Stooping down to pick up the knife
which I saw glistening in the road, my eye
fell upon a smaller object which I secured
first. I just noticed that it was a ring, and
thrust it into my vest pocket. I next se-
cured the knife, which to my utter amaze-
ment proved to be my own dirk—the one
which I had shown the ladies that very day.
The blade was stained with blood. I wiped
it upon an old letter I chanced to have in
my pocket, and hastened to the assistance
of the wounded man, who now moaned
feebly, and gave other signs of returning
consciousness.

I raised him from the ground; he was a
slight-built man, and by no means heavy.
He was not so badly hurt after all. He
had warded off the assassin's blow with
his right arm, which had an ugly gash up-
on it, and was bleeding profusely. The
force of the blow had felled him to the
ground, where his head had come in con-
tact with a stone, that had stunned him
for the moment and left him powerless. A
second blow would have been fatal. I had
arrived just in time to save his life. I
bound up his wound as well as I could with
my pocket handkerchief to stop the flow
of blood, and asked him if he felt strong
enough to walk to the center of the town,
where we could get a surgeon to dress his
wound.

"My house is close by," he said, "and
I would rather try to reach that, and then
send for a surgeon."

It flashed upon me all at once.

"It is possible that you are Mr. Ira Briscoe?" I cried, quickly.

"That is my name," he answered.

"Is your ten thousand dollars safe?"
was my next interrogatory.

"Yes," he replied. "That money was
the cause of this murderous assault, no
doubt; but I can't imagine how it was
known I had so much money about me."

I explained to him how I knew it, and
who I was. The suspicion I had entertain-
ed of the perpetrator of the crime was fast
becoming a certainty. I was sure to detect
him, as I had the test of his guilt in my
pocket. Despite Mr. Briscoe's remonstran-
ces, I took him on my broad shoulders, as
you have seen one boy carry another, and
in this way we soon reached the house.

The ladies were filled with consternation
at our appearance, and Alfred Briscoe was
loud in his denunciations of the cowardly

assassin, but I thought his face grew livid
when he found that I had defeated the
murderer's intent. He hastened off after a
surgeon, and to put the police on the track
of the assassin. He had been very eager in
his inquiries as to whether I would be able
to recognize and identify the assassin. I
told him I was afraid not, as the night was
not clear, and as the man's face appeared
to be muffled in crape, I had not been able
to distinguish a feature, but I did not say
any thing about the ring I had in my pocket.
While Alfred Briscoe was making these
inquiries, I noticed that his right hand
was bandaged, and I asked him what
was the matter with it. He seemed very
ill at ease as he replied that he had fallen
that evening, coming down stairs, and had
sprained it.

After we had got Mr. Briscoe comforta-
bly to bed, I left him to the care of his
wife, and followed Edith into the parlor.

"Who could possibly have committed
this deed?" she asked.

"Alfred Briscoe," I replied.

"His own brother?" she exclaimed, in-
credulously. "You cannot mean it?"

"I most certainly do," I answered.—

"And here's the proof." I took the ring
from my pocket, a seal ring, with a blood
stone, engraven with the letters A. B.—

"This ring I struck from the assassin's
finger, when I knocked the knife from his
hand; and that knife was my own dirk." I
produced that also. "See Edith, the arch
design of the villain. He stole the dirk
from my room, and used it as the instru-
ment of murder, in order to fasten the
crime upon me; but by one of those spe-
cial interpositions of Providence, I was the
one ordained to frustrate his murderous in-
tent, and having saved Mr. Ira Briscoe's
life, I cannot very well be charged with an
attempt to take it. The money Mr. Briscoe
had upon his person was the main ob-
ject of the deed, no doubt; but he thought
it would be a capital chance to get me out
of the way at the same time."

Edith was very much surprised at these
revelations, and when I asked her opinion
upon the subject said decidedly that it was
my duty to acquaint Mr. Ira Briscoe with
the truth. When he became convalescent
from his wound, I did so. He was greatly
shocked at this discovery of his brother's
unnatural crime, but I could see that he
was disposed to deal leniently with him.

"You are about to enter our family as
Edith's husband—so my wife tells me," he
said, "and our honor will be yours. We
must not let the world know our family
disgrace. Give me the ring—leave my
brother to me, and forget all about it."

I did so.

Edith and I had been married two years,
and I was studying law in New York, when
the senior of our firm had a murder
case. Arthur Parks was charged with the
murder of Francis Shirley. They were
brother gamblers, partners in iniquity, and
had quarrelled over the division of some
spoils obtained from a dupe, and the pistols
had been drawn, and Shirley was killed—
killed sure enough this time, for he had
survived the glass tumbler thrown by Wal-
ter Brainerd. Our senior lost his case, and
Arthur Parks (Alfred Briscoe) was sent to
Sing Sing for twenty years.

Although your Dutchman may not
be so sharp and quick-witted as some of
his neighbors, he is very likely to appreci-
ate the proprieties of life, and many a wick-
ed wag who would fain make sport of his
innocent and unwary nature, has found
himself non-plussed by the blunt humor of
the Teuton's cumbersome repartee.

A youth in Dubuque, Iowa, who has
a turn for practical joking, recently
tried to impose upon an honest lager-
beer vender, by leading a mule into a sal-
oon, and taking him up to the bar as if for
a drink. Myneer looked steadily at the
pair for a few moments, as if collecting his
stray wits, and then broke out as follows:

"See here, Vynce, I know what dis is
here, your own brudder, but he can be one
you call a minor—he ish too much young
to drink his glass lager—it is not the law
in no place, nor not mit my saloon. He
look like you; you may be one family, as
you call it, but if you ever bring dat young
man brudder here again, I will shus tell
you old father jacksass of you both. Now
you shus go along mit yourself."

The young man and the mule just went
along.

He is but half prepared for the jour-
ney of life who takes not with him that
friend that will forsake him in no emer-
gency—who will divide his sorrows, in-
crease his joys, lift the veil from his heart,
and throw sunshine amid the darkest
scenes.