

# The Bloomfield Times.

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## The Bloomfield Times.

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## A Hasty Marriage.

SOME years ago there lived at Leemonth, England, one Edgar Walton. His father held a situation in the Leemonth Dockyard, and Edgar was in hopes of obtaining a similar appointment. He was engaged to the daughter of one of his father's friends, and it was agreed that the marriage should take place as soon as he could obtain a permanent situation, with a salary adequate to the support of the family. The prospect of the young people seemed unclouded, and many were the day-dreams in which they revelled as they wandered through the meadows in the long summer evenings, and talked of their future happiness. Some months had thus passed by when, on his return from a short distance, Edgar found his hopes fulfilled; he was appointed to the charge of a body of convicts proceeding to New South Wales, and on his arrival there he was to fill a post similar to that of his father at Leemonth.

Away he ran immediately in high spirits to tell his Alice of his good luck, and to warn her to make preparations for departure. Short time indeed was given for this purpose; the ship sailed within forty-eight hours; they would be married on the morrow, and the next afternoon they would bid adieu to their homes and go forth to seek their fortune in a new land. He ran, full of glee, into the well-known house, called for Alice, and was told she had gone to spend a week with some relations in the country. All his joy vanished at once. It would take some time to communicate with her, for her to come down to Leemonth; if she did not arrive in time, and he were forced to go alone, how sad a termination would this be to all his bright hopes. However, all was done that could be suggested. Letters were written to go by the morning's post to the families she was to visit, and one of her relations was sent off to find her, if possible, that no chance might be lost. Then Edgar returned to make preparations for the voyage.

In the meantime, Alice, little knowing how much her presence was required at Leemonth, was talking over her future plans, and taking counsel with relatives as to her outfit. She had heard that Edgar was in hopes of soon obtaining an appointment, and she felt in unusual spirits, and was merrily laughing with her cousins when her uncle arrived and brought the news of Edgar's summons. Everything was in confusion immediately. Boxes were corded, a hurried adieu was taken, and she was away. All speed was made, but several delays could not be avoided. At length, however, they reached Leemonth, but only to learn that Edgar's ship had sailed some hours.

She was too late—he had gone, and perhaps they might never meet again on earth. The disappointment was very bitter, but she bore it. She wiped away a few tears, and then returned to her father's house; but her cheek was very pale and her voice trembled as she spoke. Thus for a week did sadness hang over the family. Then, as they were sitting in silence one evening, in burst a friend, his face radiant with excitement—he showed them a newspaper paragraph—Edgar's ship had been obliged to put into Pitchton Roads through a stress of weather. There was still a chance. This news was almost more difficult to bear than the previous disappointment; but Alice rose quietly and packed her trunk, though several times the throbbing of her heart forced her to stop. Again another journey had to be performed under the same excitement as before—feverishly watching the course of the smoke, the bending of the trees, to see if the wind still blew from the west; every lost moment

becoming agony—every delay seeming to occupy whole hours—and ever before her eyes the ship with her sails just opening to the breeze. At length they reached the end of their journey.

She heard, as if in a dream, her father's voice asking, "Is the Vixen still in the bay?"

She heard the answer, "Yes yonder she lies in the roads." The words rang in her ears as she fainted away.

Edgar had endured a mental trial of no light nature; he had experienced all the sickness of hope deferred; he had passed through the bitter struggle between love and duty; he had seen the dreams of his youth fade away; he had spent a week in brooding over his loss; and now his hopes were unexpectedly re-awakened. The heart might well long for peace after such excitement. But now visions of quiet happiness stole over his mind as he sat in the vestry of Pitchton Church, waiting until he could see the clergyman. It seemed all so strange to him, he could scarcely believe it was true. Alice had not arrived above an hour before, but sometimes it seemed as if they had never been parted, and sometimes he would start from his reverie, fancying that he might have been dreaming all that had occurred, and still she might be far away. But as time passed, and the sound of the organ reverberated around, and the voices of the singers as they rose and fell bore words of promise in his heart, his doubts and fears seemed to vanish, and his heart swelled with thankfulness and hope.

At length the service ended, and Edgar told his story in a few words to the clergyman, and begged that the marriage service might be performed immediately; but as there was no license that was impossible. The clergyman explained this to him; but feeling much interested in his success, he took him to the surrogate's, to try if a license could be obtained there; but on the question being asked, the surrogate declared he could not grant it, suggesting, however, that the registrar might be able to assist him. To him, however, it was too late to go until the next day, as he lived at some distance, so Edgar returned to the ship.

In the course of the evening he went on board a frigate at anchor there, and saw the chaplain, who promised to perform the marriage service the next morning without requiring a license—it not being necessary on board ship. At length he thought all his troubles were over, and he allowed his hopes free scope for action.

The next morning the bridal party appeared, and every one was of the opinion that a handsome couple had never been seen at Pitchton. Proud of his bride, and exulting in his success, Edgar ascended to the deck of the frigate, where again he was doomed to disappointment. The chaplain found the act dispensing with a license on board ship did not apply to the case of a vessel lying in the roadstead. This was an insuperable difficulty, and the only remaining resource was for Edgar to make application for a license to the registrar. So he borrowed a gig and set off instantly.

Meanwhile, Alice was asked to stay at the rectory, where no means were left untried to alleviate her anxiety; but nothing could induce her to leave the large drawing-room window that overlooks the sea.

The house stands within a stone's throw of the water, and from which you can see the whole sweep of the bay. On the other side the coast stretches away for many a mile, dotted here and there with white houses, its hills flushed with a rosy color when the sun sinks low, its lazy outline gradually melting into the distance. Not far from the house is the anchorage; and there, within a mile of Alice, lay the Vixen transport, and still nearer the frigate. To this it was that Alice looked most earnestly, for the master of the transport had promised not to sail while the other remained in the bay.

Lower sank the sun; the shadows grew longer; the clouds became flushed with a rosy light; then their colors became fainter, and deadened into a sombre gray; the ships were less distinctly seen, but the song of the sailors, as they got up their anchors, was heard on board some of them, a few put to sea and glided away into the thickening night. Alice elinched her hands still more tightly, and her cheek grew paler, and whenever a step was heard in the hall she would turn suddenly to the door, then quickly turn seaward again. Thus she sat when the shades of evening had blotted out the Vixen from the view, and the tall masts of the frigate could scarcely be seen through the darkness.

May we never have to pass through such a trial as this! Like the musical string overstrained and broken, the mind wound up to too great a pitch of excitement, may yield to the pressure, its rich melodies are gone forever; it is dead to all external impulses; to the hand that of old called forth its music, it will respond no more. We cannot tell what such excitement is unless we have passed through a similar ordeal; but we may form, by comparison, some faint idea of it; we are, perhaps, awaiting a companion with whom we have settled to make some excursion; as the time for starting approaches, how restless we move about—looking every moment at the clock—asking again and again how much more time there is—eagerly scanning every new comer, and all for some trifling cause, which will be forgotten a month hence. Then think what would be the agony of excitement if all our prospects of happiness and success in life depended upon that expected arrival.

Meantime Edgar had driven as fast as possible to the town where the registrar resided, full of fears that he might be from home; but he found him, obtained the license, and now his difficulties seemed to clear away. He had come depressed with anxiety; he returned buoyant with hope. The gray road and shadowy hedges disappeared, and in their stead the wide meadow lands of Australia seemed to spread around him, and in the distance rose his future home, bathed in the moonlight. A loud shout awoke him from his reverie, and he heard some one call to him, "Your ship is going round the bend."

The Vixen had sailed, though the frigate still lay at anchor. Edgar, almost frantic, rushed to the rectory for Alice, and then back to Pitchton. There the people were all excitement; they had not learned to appreciate the polish of selfishness; conventionalism had not yet petrified their sympathies; there was as much bustle as if the two strangers had been their oldest friends. A boat was got out of harbor, sails were bent, provisions enough to stock a fleet were volunteered all sides, sailors enough to man a frigate offered their services; and Edgar, having hurried on board with Alice, they set sail amid the tears of the women and the good wishes of the men.

For a night and day they pursued the hopeless chase, nor did they return to Pitchton until every chance had vanished. Edgar was a ruined man; his appointment was lost, and with it all his hopes of success in life. The little property which had belonged to him he had sold, and invested all his money in his outfit, or on stock which was now on its way to the other side of the world. But, at all events, he had not lost his bride. So, instead of sitting down to lament his misfortunes, he determined to bear them as best he might, and be married forthwith. So the next day the ceremony was performed, and half the town attended; and the rector gave a wedding breakfast, and the banker's wife made Alice a handsome present, and everybody did what he could to dissipate the air of melancholy which would have attended the marriage. Edgar then left for London, carrying from Pitchton many good wishes but having little hope himself.

But the rector wrote to the Home Office, mentioning the peculiarity of the circumstances, and representing that Edgar had been ashore on leave, and that the transport sailed before the frigate, contrary to the express promise of the master. In a few days an answer was received, stating that in consequence of Edgar's good character, a situation of equivalent value had been provided for him, with compensation for his losses.

So, in due time, the young couple were reaping the fruits of their energy and perseverance, and realizing in Australia the pictures of happiness they had often conjured up at home. To those who despond under difficulties and are ready to yield to the suggestions of despair, this true history may perhaps speak words of encouragement.

One day Hiron went to see Voltaire, but did not find him at home. In order to excite his ire, he wrote on the door, "Old Villain." Two days afterward he met the author of the "Henriade" in the street.

"I was at your house," he said to Voltaire with a sneer, "but did not find you at home."

"I know" replied Voltaire! "you left your name on the door."

Great occasions of serving God present themselves but seldom, and little ones frequently. Now he that is faithful in that which is little also is faithful in much.

## LAWYER TEMPLE'S PLOT.

OLD WALTER KILBORNE died and left a fortune that aggregated nearly a million. The gloomy old house which had been the family residence for many a year, stood in one of the down town streets that had once been the site of the fashionable residences of New York city. But the wealthy had long ago removed to the avenues, leaving the perverse old millionaire to hold his own among the growing business of the once aristocratic thoroughfare. A bunch of black crapes still hung on the bell knob, four days after the funeral, when a bent, wily looking man pulled it. Being admitted, he was shown into the dingy room which Mr. Kilborne had in his life used as an office. This bent and wily looking man was Lawyer Whitmore.

"Good morning," said the lawyer, as Robert, a grandchild of the dead millionaire, a young man who showed plainly enough the marks of rough social usage, entered and extended his hand rather listlessly.

"Good morning," was the reply. "Well."

"Well?" echoed the lawyer.

"You got my note?"

"Asking me to meet you here? Yes; what do you want?"

"You drew my grandfather's will?"

"I did, two days before he died."

"What were its contents?"

"I have no right to tell you," and Mr. Whitmore tried to look severe. "It is with the Surrogate now, and you will know its contents on Thursday, when it will be officially opened. I couldn't think of violating my official—"

"Not unless you are paid for it," interrupted the young man. "I understand that perfectly well, and will be plain and brief with you. As you are aware, myself and my cousin Myra are the only living relatives of my grandfather. We have been brought up here in this house together, and each hates the other as much as possible. Now, I've no idea how the property is left, and I want to know. I am willing to pay for the knowledge in advance of the opening of the will, and you have it to sell."

The lawyer assented with a cool nod of his head.

"Then name your price," continued Robert.

"One thousand dollars."

"I haven't so much."

"A note for a month will do."

The document was quickly written out, signed by the young man, and transferred to the lawyer's pocket.

"The will," then said Mr. Whitmore, "is a strange one—as strange as the man who made it—but he would listen to no advice, and I had nothing to do but carry out his wishes. He leaves all his property to Myra Kilborne."

"D—n him!" hissed Robert.

"Hold," said the lawyer, "until you hear the conditions. He leaves all his property to Myra, as I said before, on condition that she shall immediately sign an agreement to, within a year, become your wife. If she shall decline to fulfil this condition, the property belongs to you. The only other point is, that in case Myra is married to anybody before the will is opened, she gets the property the same as if she marries you. But that provision, of course is of no consequence, as she is not likely to marry before day after to-morrow, which will be the Thursday on which the document is to be opened."

Here the lawyer stopped and looked into his companion's face as if expecting an expression of displeasure. He was disappointed, however, for Robert seemed rather satisfied than otherwise.

"It pleases me well enough," he said, "for I half expected to be cut off unconditionally. You see, I've been rather fast, and the old man disliked it, while Myra's gentle ways and attention to his wants won his regard. She is completely bound up in her lover, Harry Periton, who is hundreds of miles away just now; and I don't believe she would give him up for the fortune a dozen times over. Even if she should consent to marry me, I wouldn't be so badly off with the property almost under my control."

The lawyer here arose, bade his unscrupulous patron good day and went out. But as he did so, had his ears been younger, he might have caught the sound of rustling skirts fleeing up the stairway—those same skirts enveloping the pretty form of Myra Kilborne, who had heard every word of the interview by listening at the door.

"So, so," she mused, when she had reached her own room and thrown herself

into the chair, "I am to buy the fortune by selling myself. I won't do it. I would not give up Harry for fifty times a million. Robert can take the money, and much good may it do him."

Yet, notwithstanding her conclusive decision, Myra could not relinquish without a pang the fortune to which she had always looked forward as her certain portion. Her grandfather had always seemed to regard her with affection, and she had not dreamed that in his will he could impose such a distasteful restriction.

"If Harry was only here," she thought, "there would not be any trouble, because we could get married before Thursday. What shall I do? I wish I had somebody to advise me. And I can have—a lawyer is what I want. They are up to all sorts of tricks, so they say."

Without a moment's delay she dressed herself for the street and went out. She knew no lawyer, but walked until she came to a building upon which she had often noticed an array of legal signs. Passing up stairs, and selecting a name from the lot that chanced to strike her most favorably, she entered a well furnished office. A middle aged man sat alone writing at a desk.

"Is Mr. Temple in?" ask Myra.

"Yes," said the man, looking up at his pretty visitor, and motioning her to take a seat, "that is my name."

"I have come for some legal advice—some advice on a matter of the greatest importance to me, and—"

"If I am to aid you," said the lawyer kindly, "you must speak frankly and unreservedly, which you may do in the utmost confidence."

Thus encouraged, Myra told him the whole story of the will, the manner in which she had obtained information, and her feelings in the matter.

"Of course," she concluded, "I want to retain the fortune, but not at the price stipulated in the will. Can you help me?"

Mr. Temple sat for a while in deep thought—so long in fact, that Myra got fidgety with waiting. At last his face brightened with an idea, and he at once imparted it to his fair client. For an hour they were in close consultation.

That day and the next passed, and Thursday came. The will was to be read in the Surrogate's office; at twelve o'clock, a carriage drove up to the Kilborne residence. In it were Mr. Temple and two of his intimate friends. The former alighted and entered the house. In a moment he reappeared with Myra. She acted a little nervous, but seemed reassured by the presence of the lawyer, who helped her into the carriage, and all were taken away. They proceeded to the residence of a clergyman, where they were evidently expected, as they were shown promptly into the parlor. The reverend gentleman entered, and the lawyer stepped forward with Myra.

"We are the couple sir."

The marriage ceremony of the Episcopal church was performed, a certificate was made out, the two friends signed it as witnesses, and the quartette were soon again seated in the carriage.

"Drive on to the Court House," said Mr. Temple to the driver.

The Surrogate, the clerk, Robert Kilborne, Lawyer Whitmore, and a few others were in the surrogate's office when the "wedding party" returned. It was just twelve o'clock. The will was read and Robert turned rather superciliously to Myra for her decision.

"Will you sign the agreement to marry me?" he asked.

"No," she replied.

"Then you resign the property to me?" and a gleam of triumph shot from her eyes.

"No!"

"That will provide," said Mr. Temple, "that she shall take the fortune if married at the time of its opening. She is married to me, and here is the certificate. The ceremony was performed an hour ago."

On the same day proceedings were instituted by Mr. Temple on behalf of Myra to obtain a divorce for himself. "Abandonment" was the ground. A few days later Harry returned, and before the day appointed for his marriage to Myra she had obtained a divorce from Mr. Temple. The latter was one of the jolliest of the guests.

"If it hadn't been for you—" began the grateful bride.

"Stop!" interrupted Mr. Temple. "I am to put it all in my bill. For the will suit so many dollars; for the divorce suit, so many more dollars—you see I am the one to be grateful after all."

But no bill for legal services was ever paid with a better grace.