# The Bloomfield Times.

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AN INDEPENDENT FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

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## The Bloomfield Times.

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## THE DUTCHMAN'S SERENADE.

Vake, lady, vake, the moon are high,
The twinklin' stars is beamin',
Vhile now and then across the sky,
A mete-or are streamin'.

Vake, lovely von! the sky are clear,
Refreshing is the breezes;
It blows my nose, vhile I sits here,
A fiddlin' 'neath the treeses!

Vake, Sally dear! the bull-frog's note
Are heard in yonder rushes,
And the warbling tree-toad swell his throat,
Singin' in them 'ere bushes?

Vake, Wenus, mine! the vippervill
Sings on the rail-fence yonder,
Vhile the owl pipes forth his hootin'-shrill—
(Vhy don't she vake, I vonder!)

Softly on the grassy lea,
The moon her beams are pourin';
The stars looks down and vinks at me—
(By gum! if Sal ain't snorin'!)

Vake, Sally, vake, and look on me—
Vake, 'Squire Norbin's daughter;
If I'll have you, and you'll have me—
(By George! who throwed that water?)

Oh! cruel Sally! thus to slight—
(Here comes the bull-dog now!)
"Bow-ow! bow-ow!" he's got a bite,
G-e-e-t out! "Bow-ow! bow-ow!"

## MY CHRISTMAS REVENGE.

I DO not think there is any need of explaining how it happened, that I, who when born had expectations of quite a fair fortune, should have found myself, when womanhood came, obliged to earn my daily bread. But so it was; and in one of the large sewing-machine emporiums (no matter which one) of a leading American city, I held a position as a teacher for several years.

My duties were very monotonous; but I used to extract a considerable amount of interest and amusement, while engaged in giving instruction, from learning the histories—and they were very varied—of my scholars. If the proverbial cup of tea unlocks the female tongue, I found that a lesson on the machine, and initiation into the mysteries of setting a needle, winding a bobbin, and regulating a tension, were even more conducive to communication. I do not wish to appear egotistical; but I must confess to quite a power which I seemed to possess of gaining the confidence of my pupils, through my habit of taking an interest in them; also that I was very fond of an "ower true tale;" perhaps some malicious critic would call my propensity by no higher name than female curiosity.

Even now, though time has brought its changes to me, and I no longer haunt the familar places, I often find myself recalling one and another among the many romances and stories in which I figured as an interested and sympathetic listener, and occasionally as unsuspected actor.

The present recollection always comes back to me at the Christmas time; and therefore when the season rolls around again, with its merriment and cheer, its mistletoe and holly, its written and unwritten tragedies and comedies of life, I feel like recounting it to others.

The position of instructress brought me almost entirely in contact with my own sex. Sometimes I had a male pupil—one of a mildly mechanical turn, who would wish to become familiar with the machine, so as to be able to assist some wife or sister; but the instruction-room, as a rule, was usually quite free from frequent visits of the sterner sex.

During the fall of a special year I became conscious, however, that a certain Mr. Harry Lee, a gentleman whom I knew to be an intimate acquaintance of one of my employers, and whose face was quite well known to all in the establishment, began to occasionally drop into my department and looked on during instruction hours. He was very pleasant and gentlemanly in his manners, and gave as an excuse for the interest he took, that he was a born Yankee and therefore very fond of inventions.

Although there were other teachers, I discovered that he lingered most frequently in my vicinity, and seemed more interested in my conversation than that of my companions. I was young at the time, and no doubt had the usual desire of my sex to please. I felt flattered, perhaps, at his respectful attention, and took particular pains to make my observations on "what I knew about sewing-machines," as intelligent as my limited powers permitted. He soon become a frequent visitor, and sometimes when business was dull would linger and converse on other subjects besides the technicalities of the trade. I found that he was well educated, and traveled considerably in his own country, and knew, as they say, "men and things." His intimate friendship with one of the firm prevented any remarks as to the frequency of his visits; and he made the additional apology for possible intrusion, that he was very much at his leisure, and sometimes thought of connecting himself with the business. I must admit that I was quite interested in him, and felt pleased when sometimes he would bring me some favorite book about which we had conversed and exchanged views, or ask my opinion on some magazine article that was engrossing public attention. I had never given a thought to his relations in life—whether he was married or single; he had simply been to me a pleasant episode among my daily labors; and the flash of his blue eyes and his frank smile, when saluting me, I at first considered as merely among the other usual incidents of my daily life.

It was during a somewhat extended conversation, one day, some weeks after our first acquaintance, that the thought flashed across my mind that he had seen trouble and was unhappy in connection with his affections. His opinions of the female sex, I discovered upon probing him a little, were not very enthusiastic or rose-colored. Sometimes, when speaking of marriage and its relations, I thought his remarks rather cynical and bitter; and once or twice he criticised some of my young and fashionable pupils very severely, seeming to have a very poor opinion of them as to their usefulness as probable wives and mothers. I naturally always defended my sex; and once when I laughingly expressed my belief that if I ever should see the woman destined to be his wife, it would no doubt be one of those same pretty, useless, fashionable creatures against whom he railed so bitterly—a look of pain passed across his face, that set me to thinking that I had touched a sore spot in his experience.

We had become very good friends, eventually; indeed, I am afraid that should I confess the truth, we indulged a little in harmless and pleasant flirtation. I know that I was always pleased to see him; and I am sure that he often lingered beside me in a manner savoring a little of devotion. Still this was only on the surface; and I grew more and more certain from a melancholy that often possessed him, that there was some secret connected with his domestic life, of an unhappy character.

At last, from an accidental remark of one of my employers, I discovered the "skeleton in his closet." He was a married man, but separated from his wife. I think that I felt a little pained at the information; and I certainly could not help the coldness of my manner when next I met him. He saw the change, and asked with his eyes for an explanation, though not with his tongue. Had he taken the latter liberty, it is very possible that I might have told him, and then—this story would never have been written! As it was, a few hours thoroughly calmed me; showed me something of the imprudence of which I had been guilty, in making so close an acquaintance with a man about whom I knew literally nothing; and roused all the woman within me, in pride and a dim suspicion of revenge.

That revenge was much nearer than I could possibly have dreamed; and unlike most revenges, no sorrow is entailed by the recollection. But of that anon. Following the discovery, the first thing I did was to enlarge it by ascertaining particulars—how, is a matter of no consequence in connection with the history. What I additionally discovered, however, *is* of consequence.

He had married a petted, wayward, beautiful girl—the only child of wealthy parents who had by injudicious management fostered every weakness of her character. He had formed her acquaintance, and married her after a short courtship, while on a visit to her native town, and after a few months removed to the city where he now made his residence. He had brought her home to the house of his mother, who, with his sister, was of the true New England type. They were thorough-going, practical women, notable housekeepers, slightly Puritanical in their beliefs, and holding very little sympathy with youth and inexperience. The young wife was impulsive, unused to discipline of any kind, careless, ignorant of any habits of industry, but warm-hearted and affectionate. No doubt a very troublesome relative to the staid, methodical women with whom she took up her residence.

Unfortunately for the wife, also, her husband had been taught to look up to his mother and sister as the best of women, and had fondly fancied that when his new treasure came under their control all those little weaknesses of which he had soon become aware after marriage, would be cured by their example and advice. But his sanguine hopes were doomed to early disappointment. Instead of his wife growing docile and yielding, she became more willful and intractable, rebelled with a high spirit against any rule, and looked upon her husband more as a companion with whom to enjoy the amusements of fashionable society, than as a helpmate and friend with whom to pass through the trials and cares of life. Still she had a kind heart and warm affections; and had more love and sympathy been exhibited in connection with efforts to change her habits, and less cold, severe exactions shown on the part of her husband's relatives, the event might have been better for all. At last the usual result followed. Quarrels became of frequent occurrence; estrangement grew up between husband and wife; and it was only a year after their marriage that the young wife, one day, after a passionate outbreak and most unhappy scene with her husband, left his home and returned to that of her parents. Here she was not only received with open arms, but condoled and sympathized with to her great injury—a divorce proposed, and all chance of reconciliation destroyed.

Such was the painful story, as I gathered the particulars—no rare one in the world, I am quite aware, and yet sad enough as embodying the wreck of two lives. Perhaps a knowledge of the whole softened my pride toward Mr. Lee a trifle, though it by no means cured my wounded self-respect or put me more at ease with myself. What more acquaintance might have followed is uncertain; perhaps none whatever, under the changed conditions; nor have I the clearest idea how my revenge would have been accomplished, had I not been favored by new and unexpected circumstances.

It was in the month of December that one very cold and blustering morning a lady was ushered into the instruction-room by one of the salesmen. She was a young and remarkably pretty woman, as I discovered at the first glance, and dressed very becomingly in the prevailing mode. The usual remarks that "she was afraid she would be stupid," and my re-assurance that I had taught pupils from twelve to eighty in age and from Irish Norah to the Hon. Mrs. Highflyer in position, passed between us; and then, after feet were comfortably warmed, and gloves removed, the lesson began. Upon the raising of her veil, as she seated herself, I discovered that her beautiful brown eyes showed traces of recent tears; and several times as the lesson progressed an unconsciously long sigh or sob proved very plainly that she had lately passed through some strong emotion, and that nature was kindly restoring the equilibrium.

In the course of the lesson, that day, she told me that she was married and the mother of a little boy somewhat over a year old. She hinted at trouble in connection with her marriage relations, and of late news that had caused the past night to be spent very unhappily. She seemed low-spirited, and deeply ashamed of her ignorance as regarded all knowledge of sewing or the construction of the simplest garment. I encouraged her—told her that patience and application only were necessary, as she showed very good natural abilities and would learn easily. But she replied sadly that she was afraid that those were virtues she had never cultivated, nor even until lately deemed at all necessary. She assured me that I could form no idea how useless and helpless she had been. She had never liked to sew, and her mother had never wished her to do so, telling her that there plenty of poor people who would be glad to do such labor instead. She hoped I would not laugh at some of her no doubt trifling and silly questions, as she had never even made a garment of any kind in her life—not even a little one for her baby! I laughed good-naturedly; I could not help it; and told her that she took too severe a view of her deficiencies—that there were plenty of other ladies just like her; but she said, smiling a little mournfully in return, that if I knew how bitterly she had lately begun to understand what an uneducated woman in useful matters she was, and how inconvenient she had found the position, I would not wonder at her desire to do better.

This first lesson was succeeded by others, for several days following, during which I learned that she had been married between two and three years; that she had always before her marriage led a gay and luxurious existence, perhaps because she had never known of any other, her parents being fashionable butterflies; that she had passed through a great sorrow, been very sick when her babe was born, and now was just beginning to appreciate some of the realities of life. She confessed that it was when recovering from a sick-bed, and among the new and strange feelings that came with the birth of her babe, that she had awakened to the truth, and listened to the promptings, always before ignored, of her more practical nature. That it was through the advice of a kind friend who had been with her through her sickness, that she had purchased a sewing-machine, the friend believing that it would be a good beginning in her efforts to do something useful.

All this my new pupil did not tell me in so many words, but it was the substance of what I gathered by degrees. I was very much interested (as usual); and one day, as she was leaving, casually remarked that her husband was, no doubt, pleased at her progress in mastering the mystery. Then I heard what I had almost before suspected, as with tears filling her eyes she said that she had no husband in one sense—that she had separated from him—that it was her own fault—an act done by herself in hot anger and rage, but now bitterly repented. She indicated that there were others to blame, but did not excuse herself; and said that she had spent the night previous to the day on which she had taken her first lesson, in great grief from learning that he was very soon to sail for Europe, and the thought that they would then be utterly and forever separated had nearly driven her to distraction.

I felt very sorry—never more so for any human being; her repentance was so sincere and her sorrow so hopeless. A dim suspicion had been creeping through my mind during this last relation, that I had heard a story something akin to this before; and as she was about leaving I reminded her that although we were well acquainted as teacher and pupil, I had never yet heard her name. Apologizing for her remissness, she handed me a card as she left the room. I will not say that I was very much surprised, for I had half guessed the coincidence by intuition,—when I read on the card I held in my hand, "Mrs. Gracie Lee."

Yes, it was Harry Lee's wife who had been my pupil! A great many strange feelings were at work within my breast during the next ten minutes. I had not seen Mr. Lee for some time: he had avoided the instruction-room—a course of conduct for which I had been thankful. I had heard nothing of his intention of going to Europe and felt sure it must be a new project, very suddenly thought of. And why? Had my actions anything to do with it? I felt sorely distressed before I had done thinking out the whole matter: and I might have been even more so had I not possessed a resource always so dear to women and children—that of doing something.

Now the rest of this is going to be very brief. On my bed, that night, the desire to "do something," born of the necessity, took practical shape, and I saw my way to my revenge on Harry Lee. Dickens' Christmas stories were then in the height of their popularity; I had been fascinated by them, and to their influence and that of the approaching holy season perhaps my plans were chiefly due. I hope my imaginary blushes may be spared, when I say that to accomplish it I took occasion to throw myself into Mr. Lee's way (of course by apparent accident), and that within a week I had won him back to the instruction-room and the renewal of our friendly chats, though at such hours (late in the afternoon) that there was no chance of his meeting his wife. That I never labored harder with any pupil than with that willing but nervous little lady, to enable her rapidly to become not only proficient at the machine, but to seem so. Then that I progressed by making an appointment with Mrs. Lee, on some excuse as to my convenience, at four o'clock on the afternoon before Christmas—(Christmas Eve at a very early stage of the anniversary), and meanwhile gained a character for benevolence by telling my companions in teaching that they had better go home early and thus enjoy the gay sights and sounds presented by the streets on that festive season. And then that I crowned the whole by making another appointment with Mr. Harry Lee, for the same place, half an hour later, having in view the necessity of bringing him unexpectedly upon his wife at the very moment when she should be sewing away at the top of her ability.

Once upon a time I kept an extraordinary bug that I had captured, under a glass tumbler, for days, to see the change by which it would become something else. It effected the change one night when I could not see it, and I was left very little wiser than before. And I know not much more about the meeting between Harry Lee and his wife, over the sewing machine, that evening before Christmas; as (confound it!) I felt myself obliged to leave them alone together just at the interesting moment, and they had made it all up before I thought it proper to return!

However, I had my revenge. Mr. Lee (I wish to be understood and believed on this point) never flirted any more with me, however mildly—"never no more." He went to Europe, but a little later, and took his wife, leaving his little son with his notable New England mother, who was sure to take good care of him though she might not permit him to romp too hilariously. They were kind enough to believe that I had been of service to them; and I was the recipient of certain rings, one of which Harry Lee gave me with what I thought was rather a conscious look, and the other of which Gracie Lee gave me with no shamefacedness and a hearty kiss.

I saw them together, and at home, in a pretty new home over which, taught by some mistakes in the past, the wife was sole mistress, apparently very happy, the next Christmas; and I think that Mrs. Lee, under some sort of idea that she owed the recovery of her husband to her sewing-machine, looked upon that useful article as a species of good fairy, and her seat at it as a place of refuge, and always was to be found sewing when things went at all crooked in the household.

My after-acquaintance with them, at all events, showed that the indolent, useless, and self-willed wife had become the busy, useful, and gentle one; and that the husband, who had begun by misunderstanding her, had come fully back to his senses, and grown much wiser as to the quality of the woman with whom he had been intrusted. And something of this, if not all of it, was the result of a little flirtation nipped in the bud, and of My Christmas Revenge.—*Aldine.*

### Why He Couldn't.

Last week in the Court of Sessions at New York, a boy pleaded guilty to the charge of stealing clothes. He had been sentenced to the House of Refuge, and an officer was leading him out. The robbed boy timidly suggested that he wanted the clothes.

"George," said Justice Otterbourg, severely, "you must return the things you stole."

"When?" queried George.

"Have you got them with you?" asked his honor.

"Yes, sir," said George.

"Then return them immediately."

"I can't."

"Why can't you?"

"Cause—"

"Cause what?"

"Cause they're trowsers, and I've got 'em on."

"Sergeant," shouted his Honor, rapping vigorously, "stop the laughing in this court room."

☞ A Gentleman who purchased a box of peaches recently looked around for a boy who would carry them home, and presently he found a ragged lad seated on a bench, eating the last remnant of a pear. The man asked him if he wouldn't like to earn ten cents by carrying the box to such a number and street, and the boy promptly replied that he wouldn't. "Why?" queried the man. "Why?" echoed the boy, "because dad died the other day, and I'm the head of the family, and how'd I look lugging peaches around?"

☞ The daughter of Mr. Sharon, the millionaire, of the west, has just been married at San Francisco. Five thousand dollars were paid to Bishop Allemanny for performing the marriage ceremony.