

# THE TIMES

## NEW BLOOMFIELD, PA.

# FRIDAY

VOL. XII.

NEW BLOOMFIELD, PA., TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1878.

NO. 7.

### THE TIMES.

An Independent Family Newspaper,

IS PUBLISHED EVERY TUESDAY BY

F. MORTIMER & CO.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE.

(WITHIN THE COUNTY.)

One Year, ..... \$1 25

Six Months, ..... 75

(OUT OF THE COUNTY.)

One Year, (Postage included) ..... \$1 50

Six Months, (Postage included) ..... 85

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### Select Poetry.

#### LIGHT ON THE CLOUD.

There's never an always cloudless sky,  
There's never a vale so fair,  
But over it sometimes shadows lie  
In a chill and songless air.

But never a cloud o'erhanging the day,  
And flung its shadows down,  
But on its heaven-side gleamed some ray,  
Forming a sunshine crown.

It is dark on only the downward side;  
Though rages the tempest loud,  
And scatters its terrors far and wide,  
There's light upon the cloud.

And often, when it traileth low,  
Shutting the landscape out,  
And only the chilly east winds blow  
From the foggy seas of doubt.

There'll come a time, near the setting sun,  
When the joys of life seem few;  
A rift will break in the evening dun,  
And the golden light stream through.

And the soul a glorious bridge will make  
Out of the golden bars,  
And all its priceless treasures take,  
Where shine the eternal stars.

### Mr. Carruthers' Proposal.

"MISS KENT!"

"Mr. Carruthers!"

"Will you marry me?"

"O Mr. Carruthers, I—I—this is so sudden that—that—"

"Answer me yes or no!"

"No, then!" came the reply with some pique.

"All right, don't!" And the rejected suitor, in spite of his hopes being blasted, his heart a desert, etc., didn't say a word about it. He did a more sensible thing; he lit a cigar. She sat with cast down eyes and pressed lips, awaiting his protestations. She expected to hear him vow eternal love, swear to have her or die, and be guilty of a hundred other absurd things. She had determined to do the gentle but firm; to promise him a sisterly love, but to deny him any closer tie. She waited in this state several minutes. The protestations didn't come, however. At last she looked up. Instead of writhing upon the ground with pale, distorted features, he sat calmly smoking. As she gazed he began to whistle; not the soft low bars of some sentimental ditty, but a noisy, rollicking, minstrel-hall melody. She was disgusted. She was chagrined.—

"What sort of a creature is he?" she asked herself. He was incomprehensible. Neither she, nor anybody else, knew enough about him to gossip, even. True, some of the married ladies remembered him as having been their beau fifteen years before. Then, newly graduated from college, rich and handsome, he had been quite a society favorite.— Suddenly he disappeared, no one knew whither. There had been some rumor of a love affair, but nothing definite.— Hearing nothing of him, as the years went by, he drifted entirely out of the memories of the fair maidens who had sighed over him. A few months ago he had reappeared as nurse, protector and travelling companion of poor Fred Langley. Poor Fred had been consul in some African port, where, weakened and debilitated by the fevers of that country, grief and hard work, he had fallen a victim to the scourge which had swept away all the rest of his family, consumption. He had made up his mind to lie beneath the African soil, when he met Frank Carruthers. He did not recognize, in the weather-beaten, reticent man, his jovial, merry friend of bygone years, but Frank knew him, saw the traces of the deadly disease in his

face, heard the hacking cough, and determined to make himself known, and to stand by and do his best to help his old friend in his last trouble. He did so. Through long months of illness he nursed him, and when at last he expressed a wish to be buried amongst the New Hampshire hills, where, six months before his departure he had laid a pretty golden-haired little creature, and a tiny baby, whom he called wife and child, Frank readily assented.

They came home. Fred did not live long after their arrival. As soon as Frank had seen the last rites performed he came back to New York, and settled down to moping. In this laudable occupation he passed the spring months. As soon as summer set in, he posted off to a pretty New England watering-place, known to him in his boyhood. He hoped to find it as retired and deserted as it used to be. It wasn't, however. During his absence civilization had taken gigantic strides. In its course it had embraced the modest little fishing-hamlet of Compton Shoals, beautified it with handsome villas, and, during the summer season, populated it with a giddy crowd of fashionable people.— Frank was surprised, but too lazy to beat a retreat. He repented his laziness, a short time afterward. A whole party of his old friends, with a lot of strangers, came to Compton Shoals, and settled for the summer. There was no escape, so he faced the music. He possessed all the ease of a travelled gentleman, was handsome, rich and talented, but impenetrably reticent. Nor was he at all awkward about it. He had a way of making it seem the most natural thing in the world that he should remain silent. The young people of the party, although admitting his politeness, good looks, etc., kept away from him. "He was so glum," the fellows said. "So uninteresting," the maidens lisped.— Frank was happy. He could smoke his pipe, or rather, cigar, in peace.

There was one exception to the general rule of fair ones. It was Cathie Kent. Unlike most women, she enjoyed keeping her tongue still. There seemed to be some sort of an affinity between Carruthers and herself. They were introduced, and after that were much together. The result recorded above was a perfectly natural one. She sat thinking for a long time, trying to fathom the mystery that clung about this singular individual. She failed. The "singular individual," meanwhile, sat smoking and whistling with imperturbable and musical calmness. It irritated her.

At last he broke the silence.

"Pretty craft," he said, pointing to a beautifully outlined vessel that was sailing by, "Pretty craft. Neat looking ships are handsomer than horses or women. They're like women, though. Fair weather is nice enough, they glide along smoothly; stormy weather comes, they pitch and roll, break to pieces, and leave you to take care of yourself. The fair sex does the same."

"Nonsense," she replied, stoutly, "it isn't so. You men are cowards, or rather fair-weather heroes. When adversity comes, you seek us women for consolation, and we give it to you. We are fools for our pains."

"Know it. You'll never be a fool though. Won't have as good a chance again as you threw away this morning."

"Pah!"

"No, you won't. Mark my words."

"Don't want it."

"Come to think you may, though."

"O!"

"But it won't be legal. Compulsory marriage. Fellow cornered by 'maiden fair.' A hundred pounder pointed at his head. Marry me or die, the demand.— He yields. Paterfamilias Kent gets rid of an unmarriageable daughter. Rejoicing accordingly. Pity the persecuted spouse."

"Sir!"

"Madam!"

"You are insufferably impudent—good morning!"

"Don't hurry. You may stay. Don't want to send you away. Feel good-humored to-day, I can tolerate you.— I'll permit you to remain."

"Thank you for your excessive kindness. I appreciate it. It tries me sorely to be obliged to tear myself away from such refined and polite associations, but, alas, I must!" And with a mock air of

deep distress, she turned and walked away.

It was a long time before Carruthers followed her. He lay with his face downwards, and hidden in his arms, thinking. In spite of his nonchalance and apparent indifference, this rejection had affected him far more than Cathie imagined. At last he arose and went to the hotel, having determined to treat her as before, but never to be betrayed into a renewal of his offer.

No one would ever have dreamed that he cared for her in the least. She didn't believe it herself. They met the same as before, would take their long silent walks upon the sand, having their customary exchange of cutting remarks, and about one half the time she would leave him to his own resources, while she went to the house in a high dudgeon, vowing never to speak to him again. Next day, however, he would join her, and if she acted pettish or dignified, take no notice of her, until she became affable, and then he would set himself elaborately to work to send her flying off at a tangent again.

This couldn't continue always. She finally became so irritated that she would be dignified for two or three days together. Then he wouldn't come near her. In this way a coldness sprang up between the two.

Somehow or other she got into the habit of taking a boat, rowing out quite a distance from the shore, and then idly drifting about, becoming deeply immersed in the pages of some popular novel.

One day, just as she was preparing to embark on her usual excursion, a hand was laid upon her arm. Turning around she saw Frank.

"Excuse me, Miss Cathie," he said, "but it isn't safe for you to go out to-day. Sky looks shaky. You might get drowned."

"Why, the sky has scarcely a cloud in it."

"See the little one off there, near the horizon. Chock full of danger. By-and-by, growing larger all the time, it will burst, and then the dev—the deuce, I mean—will be to pay."

"Nonsense, sir, it's all your fancy.— I'm no nervous idiot. Your interference is officious. I'm perfectly capable of taking care of myself."

"Are you? Glad to hear you say so.— Doubt it, however."

"Sir, you—"

"Good morning!" And lifting his hat he was off before she had time to finish her sentence.

"The insufferable puppy!" she muttered, as she got into the boat; "I'd like to box his ears. He'll be telling me next what I ought to wear. He better not attempt it;" and she emphasized this challenge by sitting down so abruptly and unevenly, that the boat almost tipped over. Cathie had a temper of her own, you see.

Setting vigorously to work, she soon pulled out quite a distance from shore; then, drawing in her oars, she took up her book and commenced to read. Some books are unpleasant, others are thrilling, more are dull, but the book Cathie was perusing belonged to none in this category. It was humorous, witty, frenzied, awe-inspiring. It contained erudite research, intense dramatic situations, a gracefully modelled style, in fact, all the merits that can be found in a work of fiction. The ungrateful public didn't appreciate it, despite all its beauties. It only ran through one edition. Cathie was very much interested.—Interested? rather absorbed—for the sky darkened, the cloud increased, the waves rose, the boat rocked, and yet she read on, unconscious of impending danger. At last there came a peal of thunder, a flash of lightning and a fall of rain. Then the spell of her enchantment was broken. Dropping the book, she gazed about her in a bewildered way. This inactivity lasted but for a moment. She seized the oars and began her desperate struggle for life. She pulled with almost superhuman energy. The little boat flew over the foam-crested waves, dashing the spray with its prow and around her. When near the line of roaring breakers that dashed upon the beach, and which she trusted in Providence to weather, a huge surge came rolling shoreward. It caught the tiny craft in its grasp, whiled it wildly

around, for a few moments, and then turned it bottom upwards. Cathie did not remain in the boat a second after the catastrophe. She probably thought it unsafe. At any rate, whatever her reasons were, she made a hurried and exceedingly unladylike exit. Her head went first and her feet followed after in a direct perpendicular. She was insensible at the time or she probably would not have consigned herself to the arms of eager Neptune in such an indecorous and non-committal manner.

When she came to consciousness, her first impression was, that, still reclining upon the bosom of the mythical god of the sea, she occupied the palace of some deep-sea nabob. The only thing wanting to render this idea obvious was the palace. She was confident that somebody's arms encircled her, and that her head reclined upon somebody's bosom—shirt-bosom. Yes, she felt it was a shirt-bosom, but maybe the gods wore shirts. Why not? It was possible that some one of the deities, more enterprising than the rest, had gone into the business, and Neptune was one of his customers.

She determined to see the face of her companion. It took her some time to get up enough courage to do so. Finally, with one quick glance she accomplished the deed. Could she believe her senses? Hardly, so she looked again. "O, what a fall was there, my countrymen!" All her bright fancies crumbled into dust, for, instead of the awe-inspiring countenance of the amphibious sovereign, she saw the grinning visage of that horrid fellow, Frank Carruthers. She felt fairly heart-sick. Twice this matter-of-fact mortal had destroyed her romance. His first misdemeanor had been on the day that he proposed to her, in not raving and tearing about, at her refusal of his love; the second, to-day, in not being a god. She was angry, and her face showed it so plainly that he saw it.

"Don't seem pleased to see me," he said. "Ought to be. If I hadn't come along in time, you'd been food for the fishes. Like that?"

"No sir, nor do I enjoy your disgusting familiarity. You will release me."

"Not if I know it. Too much trouble in bringing you here. If I let go you'll fall back into the ocean. This ledge we are sitting on is too narrow for two persons. You must stay where you are, you can't help yourself."

She saw the truth of his remark, and submitted to circumstances in a very ungracious manner. Frank saw her dislike to the situation, but said nothing he smiled maliciously, merely.— After they had sat in silence for nearly an hour, Cathie broke the bonds that held their tongues.

"How did you come to rescue me?" she asked. "What brought you out in such a storm as this?"

"Rowing for fun. The storm caught me. Knew this place, so I made for it. Saw you, tossed about in your boat.— Took you for a pretty village girl I'm in love with. Pulled for you. Found out my mistake after I reached you.— Seeing I had gone so far, thought I might as well finish it. Caught you as you came up on a wave, and dragged you into the boat. Then I struck for this place. Reached here in safety.— After considerable gymnastics, got you safely landed. That's the plain unvarnished tale."

"So you took me for a gawky country girl? I would have thanked you for your unintentional kindness, but I can't forgive that."

"Don't. You might feel complimented at the mistake. She's pretty."

"Indeed!"

"Just so!"

"How long shall we have to remain here?"

"Probably until morning."

"O dear, I am tired, cold and hungry!"

"Put your arms around my neck."

"Sir!"

"Put your arms around my neck."

"I won't."

"Then fall into the ocean. I'm going to take mine away from your waist."

Cathie did as she was bid. He drew from his coat pocket a package, which, on being opened disclosed a lot of sandwiches.

"Eat 'em!"

"No, thanks."

"Eat 'em!"

"All right, thank you. They were for the country girl, I suppose."

"Yes, meant to elope. Could set up housekeeping with 'em."

"That's so."

Cathie began to eat and Carruthers to whistle. They did not fall to talking again after she had finished. Presently it grew darker. Night came on rapidly. There was not a star visible; everything seemed shrouded in a pitchy blackness. The storm had been gradually decreasing, and now, although the seas were still very high, a boat could weather them. Frank gave up all hope of deliverance until morning. He told Cathie so. She bore it quite heroically, considering her repugnance to being held in the arms of any gallant except a sea-god or something of that kind.

"Go to sleep," Frank said.

"O, mercy, no indeed, I wouldn't if I could. Don't mention such a thing."

He kept quiet. Yet, in spite of her vigorous disclaimer, by 10 o'clock she was fast asleep, and did not awake until morning.

She was rather ashamed of herself.— He was tired, sleepy and hungry, although he didn't say anything about it. They didn't look extraordinarily handsome as they sat there; she, frowny and untidy, he, white and worn.

"Have I been asleep, I wonder?" she said, blushing. "I didn't mean to!"

"Since 10 o'clock. How awfully you do snore. If I had heard you, without knowing who it was, I should have thought it was some elderly male or female, obesely inclined."

"Indeed, O dear!"

"Thanks."

"What for?"

"You called me 'dear.'"

"I did not!"

"You did. I return the compliment."

"Hark, what's that?"

"Ours; by Jove, somebody is out after us. They're around the corner of the cliff."

"They won't go off and leave us, will they?"

"Not if I can make noise enough for them to hear."

"I'll risk that."

"Thanks!"

"Welcome."

"Boat ahoy!" shouted Frank.

"Where away?" answered a voice.

"Here!"

"Where's here?"

"Come and find out."

"Are you on Comfort Ledge?"

"Don't know. May be that's the name. A lie, if it is."

"I'll be there in a moment."

Frank looked at Cathie triumphantly. She was blushing like a peony.

"What's the matter? He queried.—

"Just see how he will find us?"

"Pshaw, it won't amount to anything. He'll only tell the servants, they their masters and mistresses, masters and mistresses each other. Report will say we are engaged. When I leave, it will say you have been jilted. That's all."

"Isn't that enough?"

"Not half as bad as it would be — for myself, I mean—if it were so."

He didn't have a chance to reply, for just then the boat came up. The fellow in it looked as though he appreciated their relationship. They soon landed.

Cathie immediately went to her room. She did not come out of it for two days. During that time some of her views with regard to persons and things altered. The most thorough change of all was the revision of her sentiments toward Frank. She found out that she loved him. When she again went down stairs she determined to win him back to his former allegiance; but she was disappointed. The bird had flown; whether to North or South, East or West, she could not tell. He had only left a note bidding her good-by. It quite overwhelmed her.

After a good long cry, she packed up her things, and writing to her father, a merchant in New York, telling him she was coming, started. It was fortunate that she did so. Had she stayed in Compton Shoals brooding over her misfortune, it might have soured her temper, weakened her physically, and spoiled all her chances of success in life.

When Cathie reached home she found