THE TIMES.

An Independent Family Newspaper,

F. MORTIMER & CO.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE.
(WITHIN THE COUNTY.

One Year. \$1.25
Six Months. 15

(OUT OF THE COUNTY.

One Year. (Postage included) \$1.50
Six Months. (Postage included) \$5

Invariably in Advance!

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Select Poetry.

THE NEAREST DRAUGHT.

As the lone dove to far Palmyra flying From where her native founts of Antioch gleam,

Weary, exhausted, thirsty, panting, sighing, Lights sadly at the desert's bitter stream—

So the worn soul, along Life's wayside faring, Love's pure, congental spring unfound, unquaffed.

Suffers, recoils, then helpless and despairing Of what it would, descends and sips the nearest draught.

THE SILENT WIFE.

BEEN up in the country?" I queried, as I met my friend Burner in the street a few days since. I hadn't seen him for some time, and he looked sunburnt and rough, as if he had been exposed to the country sun. He informed me that he had, and that he had been to visit Tim Somers, a mutual friend of ours, who had moved away from town two years before. After inquiries concerning his visit and his enjoyment during the warm months, conversation reverted to our old friend.

"I never was more surprised in my life," said Burner, "than I was to see him in the depot at Ramshead. I had quite forgotten that he was located there."

I informed him that I had also forgotten it, though I believed his wife's relatives were living there.

"His wife's—yes, yes," continued Burner, "singular woman that; did you know her?"

"Yes," I replied; "she is a little, bustling, talkative thing, full of fun and chat, and making her house merry by the music of her voice. Nice little woman."

Burner looked at me a moment, and burst into a laugh, to my great wonderment. I requested him, in a tone of chagrin, to inform me what the deuce he was laughing at.

"Talkative!" said he, when he could checkrein his cachinatory colt; "I found her anything but that, I tell you. I never knew the lady when she lived in town, but a more taciturn body I never saw than I found her."

"Indeed!" I remarked; "then there

must have been a change, truly.' "I met Somers in the depot," continued Burner, "and he was very glad to see me, inquiring after the old friends, and you with the rest. Through all his joy, however, I saw that there was a vein of sadness; and when I alluded to his family he appeared embarrassed, and disposed to change the subject. I had no object in view in visiting Ramshead, other than the change of scene, and did not intend to remain there but a day or two: but seeing Somers led me think that it would not be a bad thing to tarry there awhile, seeing that there was a beautiful pond of water in the vicinity, as I had seen from the cars as I came along, and a deep wood denoting game. Somers used to be great on those things, you know. I hinted at our former sporting practices, and mentioned my half resolution to stay; but, instead of manifesting an interest in the subject, he sighed deeply, and replied:

"Burner, I haven't taken a pole in my hand, nor put a gun to my shoulder, for five long years, and I never shall again."

I looked at him with astonishment, but I know that he was sincere. I fancied that I saw a tear in his intelligent eye, and my heart drew stronger towards him than ever. I then quite resolved to stay, and ordered the porter of the hotel to carry my baggage—my valise and gun—up to the house, which

was close by. My rod-cane I carried in my hand. Taking Somers on my arm, we follwed the porter, and a few moments later found us seated in my room with a little rummer claret negus between us an excellent lubricator for a dusty day.

"Well, now, are you prospering, Somers?" I replied, wishing to penetrate, if possible, the mystery that enshrouded him, deeming that it might be some business difficulty in which he was involved.

"Doing capitally," he replied; "haven't lost a dollar since I came here. People have nick-named me 'Lucky Tom.' How wrongly people judge in measuring men."

"What do you mean by that?" said I, as I saw the cloud creep over his face, as you have, while standing on the mountains, seen a shadow fitting across the meadow.

"I mean, said he, "that in measuring us they take but one feature into the account, and upon that base a hypothesis of happiness, or luck, as the case may he"."

"Are you not happy?" I asked, in a tone calculated to win his confidence. "I am far from it," he replied; "in-

"I am far from it," he replied; "indeed, a more miserable man is not to be found in these paris," "In what regard?"

"My wife is dumb," he almost sobbed, in answer to my question.

"Dumb?" I repeated, and thinking to rally him, said in a jocular manner,

"Well, that is a very singular thing to be sad for; I know many husbands who would be too happy to have such a calamity happen to them. Burn says: 'An auld wife's tongue's a freckles matter,' and there's no contention in a house where perpetual silence is the bond of unity!"

I saw that he was hurt, and hastened to remedy the evil I had done. Taking him by the hand, I said:

"Tim, I assure you I would not wound your feelings willingly. I am no less your friend than I ever was, and no less worthy your confidence. Now I wish you to tell me the cause of your trouble, that I may share it with you, or possibly alleviate it."

He hesitated a few moments, and then said, with considerable emotion:

"Well, Burner, old friendship is stirring within me, and I shall do at its prompting that which I thought nothing could wring for me. You remember how happy I was. There was not a man in the world who had more friends, true friends, than I had. My home was a happy one—my wife pleasant, my children handsome and intelligent. You never say my wife, Burner?"

My name, in the connection, sounded like an imprecation upon his wife, and the Burner a wrathful expletive—" burn her." Somers continued:

"When we moved up here things went on in pretty much the same pleasant way until there came to the village a lady whom I had formerly known, and about whom and me there had been a little gossip in old days. Our acquaintance was renewed, and I visited her several times; made no concealment of my intimacy with her, and invited my wife to accompany me, but she declined. She wished to make no new acquaintances, she said. There was a frequent visitor to my house-a relative of my wife's - who poisoned ber ears with suspicious that it was not right between May Brennon and myself. She repeated the old gossip, with additions, spoke of my visits to Miss Brennon, and hinted at criminality, as that nasty-minded class always will, who, having small virtues of their own; and depraved fancies, conjure up impure conceits regarding their neighbors, imputing lasciviousness and wrong where the strictest purity might not see occasion to blush. I was returning home one summer evening, on foot, having spent the day in business at a town a few miles from this, when, by a strange chance, a short distance from town, I met Miss Brennon. It was a pure accident that brought us together, and she turned back with me, taking my arm. We walked slowly, as the weather was warm, and stopped a moment on the rustic bridge yonder to look down into the stream and say a few pleasant words about old times. I saw some one pass by us as we stood there, but was indifferent as to whom it might be, and bidding

my companion good-bye, I went home,

as happy as a lord, in anticipation of meeting there that I loved so well. I met with a cold reception. My bane was sitting with my wife in counsel, and I read judgment on the face that had too many times lately turned unkindly towards me.

So you've come, Mr. Hypocrite, have you? was the first salutation.

"Certainly, my dear, I have come," I replied, "though I can scarcely see the reason for the application of the name to me."

"You cannot! You have just left that vile creature, on whose account and in whose company you have all day been absent from your home! You cannot!"

I have been away all day on business," said I, as calm as Socrates, "I was returning home and encountered Miss Brennon. We walked together a little way, and then I left her for my pleasant home, and certainly did not expect such a reception."

"You did not," said she sneeringly,
"but you are found out, sir. You stood
upon the bridge with your arm around
the strumpet's waist and kissed her."

I felt aroused at this. I can bear any attack upon myself but the reflection upon Miss Bennon was too much for me, who knew her pure character and exalted worth.

"It is a falsehood!" I shouted, and your informant is a malicious and malignant falsifier!"

The relative gathered herself up to go, but before she went I gave her a lesson on lying and tale-bearing that she has not forgotten yet. She has never crossed my door since. As soon as she was gone I turned to my wife and said:

"As for you, madam, if you cannot make a better use of your tongue, you had better never speak again."

I was heated, in a passion, and scarcely knew what I said, but the unkind words entered into her soul. I left the house and did not return for a long time, I found her calmly and undisturbedly sitting where I had left her, but she spoke not. She arose and performed such duties as were required of her, but she did not speak. In vain I addressed her; she made no reply. I grew alarmed. I begged her to speak to me, but not one word would she deign me. It has continued thus ever since. Not one word has she uttered to me or any one. My home is dismal as a tomb, or I would have invited you there."

He ceased his story, and I told him how much interested I had been in it. "But," said I, "have you tried no remedy to cure this disease, for disease it must be?" He told me that he had not. "Then," said I, "take me home with you, and if I don't cure her, strike the spurs from my heel as an unworthy knight."

I went home with the poor fellow, and found things pretty much as he had represented. I was introduced to the mistress of the mansion, who received me with a profound bow.

"A delightful home, madam, this of yours," said I, glancing admiringly out of the window. I looked towards her as though expecting a reply. She merenodded her head.

"Are there many such in the vicinity among the hills?" I persisted, looking her in the face.

She colored as though she were confused. I found out subsequently that I was the first stranger that he had dared to bring home for several years. I saw by her organism that she was not naturally a bad woman, divined at once that she had vowed perpetual silence at the unkind words of her husband, and that it only needed but a single word to break the spell that rested upon her.

I continued my engineering, making all manner of domestic enquiries regarding the children, of whom she appeared very fond, but could not elicit a word from her. I next alluded to her husband and our old acquaintance, and in the course of my remarks made some reflections in a playful way upon the slight blemish in one of his eyes—the only fault in his really handsome face. I saw a feeling like chagrin flit across her brow, and a moment after, when I praised him, a pleased expression effaced the cloud.

"Aha!" said I to myself, "here are pride and affection, at any rate; these springs have not dried up, and I think that language may yet be unsealed." A day passed, but nothing transpired save maneuvers. I have never tried so hard to make myself attractive as on this occasion, and felt that I had succeeded when on the second morning she greeted me with a smile and extended her hand to me as I came from my chamber. I chatted and rattled on about the town and its splendors, told of new improvements, changing fashions, crinoline and lovely bonnets, all of which was listened to with evident interest. Still she would not speak, confound it! I trembled for my spurs. Something must be done.

"Mrs. Somers," said I very suddenly,
"will you allow me to look at the palm
of your hand ?"

She extended her hand very readily, and I gazed upon it as though I were a wizard engaged in some trick of necromancy, involving the fate of the household. Looking in her face, I relinquished her hand and sighed deeply. She appeared surprised, and seemed as if expecting me to say something.

"You may well be surprised at my conduct," I said, "but your surprise would be overwhelming could I dare to tell you the motive of it. I cannot do this without compromising others. I may say, however, that in your hand I discern a power that may be employed for immense good. There are lines in it that meet and diverge, and come near together again without meeting. There is a mystery!" I looked at the hand again, rubbed my forehead, as though I were much perplexed, and went out abruptly. I saw her face depicted in the glass as I passed out, and it bore the expression of great wonder.

'How far is it to the top of Rattlesnake Hill, Somers?' I asked at dinner time, as we sat at the table.

"About fifteen miles; why?" he replied and asked.

"Because I am going there to-night. I must be there precisely at midnight. I am going to gather a charm from the old Rattler's cave, through which I hope to obtain a treasure that will compensate for all trouble and danger."

"You cannot go," said he, anxiously, "the way is one of peril. It is full of ravines and pitfalls, and the serpents are very numerous."

I saw that his wife shared in his uneasiness, and her looks said "don't go," plainer than words could speak.

"So much the better for my purpose," said I; "were it not attended with danger, that which I seek would be valueless. I shall go; and more than this, I shall walk!"

Somers and his wife exchanged looks, which I interpreted to mean: "Well, isn't he a queer one !" and after a few moments at the table I left the house, telling Somers that I should be back by morning. I accordingly struck out for Rattlesnake Hill, accompanied by his uttered blessing and his wife's inarticulate benison; but when I reached the first brook, I made my cane into a jointed fishing rod, and indulged in the finest sport. The trout never bit with more avidity; and having caught a good string, I carried them to a farmhouse not far away, and had them cooked for my supper. Late in the evening, I returned to my friend Somers, and enjoyed a fine night's rest upon the haymow. At day-light I aroused the family by knocking at the door, but I greeted them with a simple shake of the hand, gazing abstractedly at Mrs. Somers. She looked troubled.

"Somers," said I, "please leave me a moment with your wife. It is a matter you may sometime know, but not at present. Have you not heard of my wonderful developments as a seer?"

He said he had not, but, without explaining, I pushed him out and closed the door. I knew that he would listen, however.

"Mrs. Somers," said I, "my mysterious movements are fast growing to a climax. I last night plucked a dragon's tongue from the mouth of rattlesnake's den; I laughed with the midnight echoes, and stood face to face with the darkness, in order to gain what I sought. Your hand, please; thank you. The lines are brought nearer together, and it needs but one word of yours in response to an incantation that I shall utter, to make my mystic charm complete, You must say Yes, or all is as nought."

I looked wildly as I spoke, and I saw that she was, as it were, spell-bound. "And this is my incantation," I continued, "you swear that you hate Tim Somers"—

"No !" she almost shricked.

Poor Tim had been listening. Fearing harm to his wife from my supposed lunacy, and hearing the question I had put, and the response, he rushed in, frantic with joy, clasped her in his arms, klassed her over and over again, and jumped about the room with the wildness of a madman. She did not seen to comprehend what she had done for an instant, but when she remembered that she had spoken, and divined the meaning of my cabalistic efforts, she came near fainting with her emotion.

"Thank God! the spell is broken!" she said, "the bideous spell that has bound me to silence and sorrow so

long."
"The mystical word having been spoken," said I, "that has brought the diverging lines together, I am free to tell what I sought at midnight, on Rattle-snake Hill."

"What was it ?" they both asked in a breath.

"A woman's tongue?" I replied; "and since I have found it, never allow any trifling cause to silence it again."

My theory was correct as to her not speaking. She had vowed perpetual silence, and had kept her vow until brought to utter one word by stratagem, which had unsealed her tongue again .-The children were delighted and ran all around the neighborhood telling everybody that their mother could talk, and everybody rushed in to ascertain what it meant. For a time it seemed as though anarchy and confusion had become installed on Tom Somers hearthstone, to make up the silence that had so long brooded there; but he bore it all goodhumoredly. I left them a week afterwards, the happlest couple you ever saw, and my midnight excursion to Rattlesnake Hill was often alluded to.

"Did you really go there?" Mrs. Somers asked, the morning before 1 came away.

"No!" said I, imitating her emphatic accent of the same monosyllable in reply to my incantation, and we had a grand laugh about it; Tim Somers swearing my seership was the best ever known, and my magic had wrought a happier effect than that of all the fairies he had ever seen exhibited at the museum.

"Good bye," said Burner, as he finished his story, and he left well satisfied with the manner in which he had spent his vacation.

Why She Wanted a Divorce.

An Irish matron enters a lawyer's office: "Is this the place, sur, where people git divorces?"
"Yes, occasionally we engage in that

kind of business. What can we do for you, madam ?"

"Faith, sur, I'd loike to git a divorce

from me husband, Patrick."

"What is the matter with Patrick.

madam?"
"Shure and Pathrick gits dhrunk,

"That's bad. But I hardly think that alone will be a sufficient cause.— Have you no other complaint?"

"Indade I have, sur; Pathrick bates me."
"Yes, yes, I see. That adds cruelty

to drunkenness. But, madam, you do not seem to suffer much in your appearance from Patrick's cruelty. I think you must find a stronger reason before

the Court will grant you a divorce."
"Well, sur, besides all that, I fear, sur, that Pathrick isn't true to me."

"Ah! now, madam, you begin to talk business. What reason have you for thinking that Patrick is unfaithful to you?"

"Well, sur, I may say that it's meself that that has a sthrong suspicion that Pathrick is not the father of me last choild."

A Raleigh. N. C. negro invited two of his friends to accompany him to a swamp-pasture at night, where a neighbor had a fat helfer. They went, found a helfer, killed her, divided the meat and went home. Next day the negro found that his cow was missing, and that in the darkness an unfortunate mistake had been made. But when he went to his friends to get pay for the beef they refused to pay him, wherefore he mourns sore.