VOL. XV. NEW BLOOMFIELD, PA., TUESDAY, AUGUST 9, 1881. NO. 32.

THE TIMES.

An Independent Family Newspaper,

IS PUBLISHED EVERY TUESDAY BY

F. MORTIMER & CO.

TERMS:

INVARIABLY IN ADVANCE.

$1.50 PER YEAR, POSTAGE FREE.
80 CTS. FOR 6 MONTHS.

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Select Poetry.

A DISTRACTED PARENT.

Five daughters—four of them engaged—
 Good heavens! I shall go mad!
For such a surfeiting of love
 No parent ever had.
The very atmosphere is charged
 With it; no matter where
I go about the house I trip
 Upon some whispering pair.

At evening, when I take my pipe
 And seek a quiet nook
To read the *Evening Times*, or else
 Some new and tempting book,
I ope, perhaps, the parlor door,
 When a familiar sound,
Quite unmistakable, suggests
 It is forbidden ground.

So then more cautiously I turn
 To our reception room:
But lo! again upon my ear,
 From its romantic gloom,
Comes softly, yet with emphasis,
 That warning, when I start
And leave, as Lady Macbeth wished
 Her guests would all depart.

My next resort is then the porch,
 Where roses trail and bloom:
Ha! is it echo that betrays
 The joys of yonder room?
Ah, no! a startled "change of base"
 Reveals the presence there
Of Cupid's votaries, and, alas!
 There's still another pair.

"But sure," I think, "my library
 Will be a safe retreat."
So there at once, with quickened step,
 I take my weary feet.
Vain hope—that warning sound again
 Breaks on my listening ear;
Thank Heaven, my youngest has not yet
 Attained her thirteenth year!

Hark! there she is! and, bless my heart,
 That popinjay, young Lunn,
Is at her side—I do believe
 That she, too, has begun.
Oh, ye who love to sit and dream
 Of future married joys,
Pray Heaven with honest fervor that
 Your girls may all be boys.

Alan Sinclair's Surprise.

MR. ALAN SINCLAIR knitted his brows very perplexedly, as perhaps for the half-dozenth time he read the long, closely-written sheet of paper that lay open before him on the desk.

Then he walked up and down his library several times, that perplexed frown gradually clearing off his handsome forehead, and finally he sent word to his housekeeper, Mrs. Viney, to attend to the matter he had mentioned to her an hour or so before.

Which order given Mr. Sinclair resumed his chair again to think over and definitely decide the plans for the future, which this long, well-filled letter had made necessary.

And the origin of the necessity was that, dying, his old friend and chum, Edward Mayne, had left him—imploring him not to refuse the legacy—his daughter Winnie, a delicate solemn little being, ten years old, utterly friendless, utterly homeless, unless in heaven's mercy, Alan Sinclair's heart was turned in pity towards her.

But to bring a girl, a delicate, sickly, awkward, silent child into the house, for Mr. Mayne had written plainly and frankly about little Winnie. If it had been a boy a wide-awake active boy—who could have been his companion as he grew older, in whose sports and lessons he could have taken a decent share of guardian-like interest, and who might have sometimes, with his tutor, accompanied him on those tours abroad he was so fond of taking.

But a girl, "not at all pretty, or very interesting, shy and old fashioned," Mayne had said, "but good as gold," and he (Sinclair) on the eve of another three years' tour over foreign countries.

Well, he philosophized himself into making the best of it. He telegraphed that Miss Winnie should be ready to accompany the escort he would send to bring her home to Roseleigh, at three that afternoon; and then after a long, serious talk with good motherly Mrs. Viney, who had been housekeeper for his father before him, this highly-favored young gentleman considered the momentous affair settled, dismissed it from his mind as much as possible, and went on with his arrangements for leaving home early on the morrow for that wandering abroad, in which having unlimited means at ready command, he so much delighted.

When his dead friend's child arrived he went to her at once, and the instant he crossed the threshold he met her eyes—great, mournful dark eyes, deep set and bistre-circled, with a look in them that was a strangely mingled one of utter friendliness and sorrow, and necessitious resignation.

She certainly was not pretty in the least, and in her thin, angular figure, propped so awkwardly in a big-cushioned easy chair—in the sallow, peaked face, and short-cut, stubborn light hair, of a nondescript color, and perfectly straight—there was scarcely a promise of future attractiveness.

She arose and courteseyed gravely as Mr. Sinclair advanced, scanning her curiously, and swiftly deciding that she was a hopelessly ugly little soul—even homelier than her father had said—but all alone in the world but for him. And the thought unconsciously lent a bright, sympathetic smile to his greeting.

"And so this is little Winnie who has come to live at Roseleigh, is it?" I hope they took good care of you on the way, and did not allow you to become very tired. You shall have famous times here at Roseleigh," he enthusiastically continued, as he smiled at her solemn, forlorn face. "You know I go abroad to-morrow for awhile, and during my absence I shall want you to enjoy yourself all you can. You will have a nice little pony-carriage, and some big dolls, and lots of fairy tales to read, and some money to buy candies.—Then, after you get stronger, and feel perfectly at home you can have your lessons to learn to be a nice, accomplished young lady. Won't you?"

But instead of an answering smile, the tears gushed from her eyes, and her pale lips quivered piteously.

"Oh, please, Mr. Alan, I don't want anything at all. I don't wish to be any trouble or expense. I think I would rather—please—I would rather die and see papa than anything. And I pray every night I may—soon!"

And then the smile died out of Mr. Sinclair's handsome eyes, and his man's heart felt a pang of pitiful consideration for this patient, odd little waif.

"My child you must not talk like that. If it is heaven's will that you live, you should not repine. You have been sent to me—perhaps to be a very great comfort to us all, Why not try—why not decide you will be? Why not make up your mind you will accept the advantages offered you to grow up into a lovable, lovely, accomplished woman—a blessing wherever you go?"

And not till then was there a particle of animation in the child's face. Then her eyes began to sparkle, and a painful flush struggled with a sallowness in her thin cheeks.

"Could I? Could I be that? And, Mr. Alan, would it please you? Would it repay you?"

Her eagerness was something almost distressing.

"It certainly would, Winnie," he said gravely.

"Then, sir, I'll do it. I'd do anything I can for you; papa made me promise.—I'll do it."

And when Mr. Sinclair bade her good-bye that night, her strange, wierd eyes were glowing eagerly, impatiently.

"I shall begin to-morrow, sir," she said, as he shook hands with her.

"Very well," he laughed; "and send me a letter once a month. And when I come back, in two years, I shall expect to receive a very pleasant welcome from my good little Winnie."

But he did not come back in two years nor in twice two, nor in four times two.

He had delayed his return, now for one reason, now for another; once for a three years' tour to the Holy Land, once to accompany some friends to Australia, and the last two years because he had met his fate at last, and was too deliriously happy with sweet Aura Brian to ever think of coming home.

But eight, nine years after he said good-bye, he was on his own shores again, after such experience as he would rather have died a thousand deaths than have suffered again, and all because of Aura Brian—the fairest, most gracious woman the sun ever shone upon, and the only woman who had ever taught him the difference between fancy and passion.

He had met her at Paris with a party of friends with whom she was traveling abroad—a charming little lady, with eyes like brown diamonds, whose very first glances had their effect upon him.

She was accomplished and refined, and carried just a trifle of gracious haughtiness in her high-bred air that was the one charm Sinclair thought most bewitching in woman. She was very beautiful, fair as a lily-leaf, with bright, golden hair, and—

Alan Sinclair lost his head, his heart, his will, and worshipped Aura Brian as only those men can worship who have lived till middle age with no serious damage previously done their affections.

And Aura Brian reciprocated, and there ensued an engagement, when it seemed to them both that there was heaven on earth whenever they met, so perfectly contented and happy were they in each other—days when Sinclair would wonder if such bliss could last in human hearts, and wondering and half fearing, send up a breathless prayer that he might never fail in keeping his darling's love.

And at last a half dozen or so of the English colony in gay Paris returned home, Sinclair and Aura among them—he eager to show her the home to which he would take her, she equally glad to go with him.

He eager, she glad, until the very last night of the voyage when they were promenading the deck arm-in-arm, talking as lovers talk.

"There is just one thing I am anxious to speak to you about, my darling—something I have heretofore neglected to tell you—and that is, little Winnie Mayne, who lives at Roseleigh, our home. I want to bespeak your kindness and sympathy for her—a plain, reserved, little thing, too old for her years, and entirely friendless but for me—but you and me, Aura. You will help me to be good to her, dear?"

He put the question somewhat anxiously, for there had come a look of surprise and—was it distastefulness on her lovely face?

"Winnie Mayne! You never mentioned her before Alan. And she is to live at Roseleigh with—us?"

Such a grave curious questioning was in her eyes. Somehow it aroused vague dismay in his loving heart.

"With us, my darling. She will be no *de trop* party. She is reserved and very shy. She has no other home.—You would not wish me turn her adrift?"

A pause, strangely ominous, followed.

"Alan," she said, and she lifted her rare, dark eyes to his eager face. "I do not wish you to send her adrift. But, oh, my love, I want you all to myself—all to myself?" and such a thrill of passion flashed into her voice that every nerve in his body thrilled hotly. "If this child—she is no longer a child, remember—eight years makes such a difference—she may have grown up into something that will please you better than I can—oh, Alan, I cannot go to Roseleigh if any other woman has a right there.—Alan, my darling, I am jealous already of her. Take me and let her go."

He was astonished beyond all former experiences of his life. This from Aura—this cold deliberate injustice to a sister woman, and, in the same breath, this thrilling passion that was so inexpressibly sweet to him.

It was a supreme moment to him, looking in the eyes of the woman he loved better than life itself—but not better than right and duty.

And duty forbade him sending the child of charity back to the cold world.

And he knew, despite the pale anguish on her face, that it had come to a choice between this royal woman he worshipped, without whom his life would be a dreary desert, and the grown-up school girl—plain, quiet, as she could only ever be.

And her voice, prompt, low, decisive, rang out like a doom:

"You must chose, Alan. I await your decision."

While in his reply, you would never have recognized the voice so shaken a second before; for the moment of temptation was past, and all Sinclair's grand manliness and anguish of resolution was on his face and in his voice.

"Always remember, in the days to come, when, perhaps, you may regret it, that it was of your own will you sent me from you. For I choose to keep my vow to my dead friend; I choose to do what I know is right, what you know is right. And this is good-bye, my love—my one love—my lost love."

He took her in his arms and kissed her—not passionately, but almost like one kisses the face that will soon be under the coffin lid.

And twenty-four hours later, in the glory of a moonlight night, Sinclair went back alone to Roseleigh—after all those years of absence, after all that passionate happiness, after the wrecking tempest—went back alone, and when he had expected it would be so different.

There was only the reward he felt that he had done it all for duty's sake, for honor's sake, that upheld him in those agonized minutes when he went up the familiar entrance and into the brilliantly illuminated hall, where Mrs. Viney, and the butler, and the servants, were in waiting to welcome him.

And then he went silently on to the library, his own special domain—the room where he had oftenest pictured seeing Aura, his very soul fainting with desperate pain at the sense of utter loneliness that could never leave him again.

And a sweet voice came out of the dimness to him that struck to his very soul, a pair of rare white arms were clinging about his neck, and the dear eyes he so loved were smiling through tears into his face—Aura's own blessed eyes.

"I could not help it," she said, as he folded her to his heart, "I wanted to know if you were as good as I have dreamed you were all these years, since that night I stood just here and promised I would do whatever you said.—Having done that I wanted to see you and so got invited to join a party that I thought would bring me unto your company. The rest you already know. Oh, Alan, Alan, don't you understand?"

And with sudden, almost startled wonder in his heart, he understood then, for the first time, that it was Winnie Mayne—that the two women were one—who had won him.

"And please, we will both stay, mayn't we? We both love you, Mr. Sinclair, and we neither of us will give you up; and oh my love, I will never be jealous again."

And Alan Sinclair bowed his head on her bright hair and thanked heaven for what had come to him.

A Quaker in Westminster Abbey.

AT Westminster Abbey Isaac Hopper paid the customary fee of 2s. 6d. for admission. The doorkeeper followed him, saying:

"You must uncover yourself, sir."

"Uncover myself!" exclaimed the Friend, with an affectation of ignorant simplicity.

"What dost thou mean? Must I take off my coat?"

"Your coat!" responded the man, smiling; "no indeed; I mean you hat."

"And what should I take off my hat for?" he inquired.

"Because you are in church, sir," answered the door-keeper.

"I see no church here," rejoined the Quaker; "perhaps thou meanest the house where the church assembles? I suppose thou art aware that it is the people, and not the building, that constitute a church?"

The idea seemed new to the man, but he merely repeated,

"You must take off your hat, sir."

But the Friend again inquired "What for? on account of these images? Thou knowest Scripture commands us not to worship graven images."

The man persisted in saying that no person could be allowed to pass through the church without uncovering his head.

"Well, friend," rejoined Isaac, "I have some conscientious scruples on the subject; so give me back my money, and I will go out."

The reverential habits of the doorkeeper were not strong enough to compel him to that sacrifice, and he walked away without saying anything more on the subject.

Do Your Work Well.

Judge M——, a well known jurist living near Cincinnati, was fond of relating this anecdote. He had on one occasion to send to the village after a carpenter, and a sturdy young fellow appeared with his tools.

"I want this fence mended to keep out the cattle. There are some unplaned boards—use them. It is out of sight from the house, so you need not take time to make it a neat job. I will only give you a dollar and a half."

The judge went to dinner and coming out, found the man carefully planing each board. Supposing that he was trying to make a costly job of it, he ordered him to nail them on at once just as they were, and continued his walk. When he returned the boards were all planed and a number ready for nailing.

"I told you this fence was to be covered with vines," he said angrily, "I do not care how it looks."

"I do," said the carpenter, gruffly, carefully measuring his work. When it was finished there was no part of the fence as thorough in finish.

"How much do you charge?" asked the judge.

"A dollar and a half," said the man, shouldering his tools.

The judge started. "Why did you spend all that labor on the job, if not for money?"

"For the job, sir."

"Nobody would have seen the poor work on it."

"But I should have known it was there. No; I'll take only a dollar and a half." And he took it and went away.

Ten years afterwards, the judge had the contract to give for the building of several magnificent public buildings. There were many applicants among masterbuilders, but the face of one caught his eye.

"It was my man of the fence," he said. "I knew we should have only good, genuine work from him. I gave him the contract and it made a rich man of him."

It is a a pity that boys were not taught in their earliest years that the highest success belongs only to the man, be he carpenter, farmer, author or artist, whose work is most sincerely and thoroughly done.

A "Naught" would Improve it.

It is related of Dr. Holmes that at a country charitable fair one day he was entreated to furnish a letter for the post office. He seized a sheet of paper and between its folds placed a $1 bank note: turning to the first page he wrote the following:

Dear lady, whosoe'er thou art,
 Turn this poor page with trembling care,
But hush, oh hush, thy beating heart,
 The one thou lovest best will be there.

In obedience to the poet's injunction the page turned disclosed the attractive greenback of the value of one dollar, and to prove the truth of this assertion, he made the following appeal on the opposite page from the bank deposit:

Fair lady, lift thine eyes and tell,
 If this is not a truthful letter,
This is the one thou lovest well,
 And naught (0) would make thee love it better.

Life is going fast; each day we are more surely leaving youth behind us.—Yet men spend their lives in anticipations, determining to be vastly happy at some period when they have time. The present has the advantage over every other—it is our own. Past opportunities are gone, future ones are not yet come. We may lay in a stock of pleasures as we would a stock of luxuries, but if we defer the tasting of them too long, we shall find that both are soured by age.—Let us enjoy to-day, for to-morrow may never dawn.