



# THE TIMES.

An Independent Family Newspaper,

IS PUBLISHED EVERY TUESDAY BY

F. MORTIMER & CO.

## TERMS:

INVARIABLY IN ADVANCE.

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

To subscribers residing in this country, where we have no postage to pay, a discount of 25 cents from the above terms will be made if payment is made in advance.

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## On a Fool's Errand.

IT HUNG above the chimney-piece in the whitewashed parlor of the little Carolina country inn—the portrait of a young girl, in a simple dress and straw hat, with her hands full of cherry branches laden with fruit. It was a southern face with a dark rich bloom of coloring, and a passionate, half-shy half-coquettish expression which fascinated me at the first glance; and the more I looked at that beautiful face, and met the gaze of the dark eyes always bent down upon me and following my motions, the more fascinated I became, until one day I awoke suddenly to the consciousness that I was actually in love with a picture!

Who was the original, I now began to wonder? It was clearly a portrait, and the painting still so fresh that it could have been taken but within a few years past. For some time I hesitated to make the inquiry for I felt ashamed of my own folly, and had a guilty fear of its being discovered and exposing me to ridicule. But one day, finding my good-natured landlady seated on the piazza just outside the parlor window, shelling peas, I ventured to remark, with an assumed air of indifference, that was a pretty picture and well-executed.

"Is it?" she answered, glancing up over her spectacles. "Well, I dare say it is, though I ain't much of a judge of pictures. 'Pears to me, she's too peart and sassy-lookin', and's got a temper of her own, or I'm mistaken. She might favor my boss's r Ebed's daughter, Barbery—a fine, bouncin, gal, who had always more beaux on a Sunday than most gals have in a year, and come to pick out the wust o' the lot, after all."

"Do you know whose portrait it is?" I inquired.

"Well, I can't say I do. We found it here with the rest o' the furnitur', when we come from Gates county a while ago. You see"—brightening into interest—"the new railroad spilled our old place in Gates for a tavern-stand; and as me and my old man was used to that business, we had to root up and look out for another. And jest then old Davis, who kept this place, died, and all he left had to go for debt; and we concluded to lease the tavern, furnitur' an all, jest as it stood. That's how we found the pictur' here; but whose it is, we don't know."

"Perhaps Mr. Davis had a daughter?" "Bless you, no! He was a lonesome old bachelor, with only half a dozen servants to help him to keep tavern and look after things. Now I think of it," she added, quickly, "I did hear one of them, old Dorkey, say something about that pictur' when he was down here one day not long ago. If anybody knows whose it is, it's likely to be Dorkey; but he's moved away six miles up the river to a little clearing of his own, where he's sot down to raisin' peanuts and watermelons for the market."

"Would you believe that his wife—a smart, steady, drivin' sort o' woman she was, and worth an ordinary dozen o' her kind—kept house and managed half the business for old Davis? I would have been glad to keep her, for we're gettin' a good run o' custom here, which bears a little too hard on my shoulders, considerin' I'm not so young as I used to be. If 'Mandy hadn't hopped along jest about that time, I don't skeersely know how I should a-got along. She was old Davis' cousin, and come a long distance to pay him a visit, jest in time to find him dead; and she agreed to stay awhile and help me a

little for her board. She's mighty spry and smart. Don't you agree with me, Mr. Courtenay? And such a store as she sets on you! Why, she says your'e a perfect gentleman; and it was she as briled the partridges for your supper last night with her own hand. And that reminds me," concluded Mrs. Bowling, bustling up, "that I'd better be seen' after dinner, now that these peas are shelled."

I turned from the open window, and lay down on the old horse-hair sofa facing the picture. I tried to read a newspaper, but the black eyes over the chimney-piece smiled down at me, and the corners of the rich red lips curved downward in a sort of sarcastic mockery, until I dropped the paper and fell into a reverie, fancying that painted form before me a reality.

Who was it? and was she still living—and unmarried? Perhaps Dorkey could tell me; and I resolved to seek him out on the morrow.

Just as I made this resolve, the door opened and Miss 'Mandy made her appearance on a righting and dusting errand.

I suppressed my indignation on seeing her wrap an old "dusting rag" around her broom, and with it daub and smear over the face of my divinity above the mantlepiece. I fancied she did it with a special spite toward the fresh loveliness which, by contrast, rendered her own scraggy form, sawy face, and deep-set, dark-circled eyes yet more unattractive.

"La, Mr. Courtenay," she exclaimed, turning and affecting to become aware of my presence; "who'd have expected to find you shut up here? Reading?—Well, you are a literary character; only I'm afraid it ain't good for you, if you came to these parts for your health.—The piney woods is a powerful aid of the lungs. You ought to walk about 'emore, and drink the tar-spring water.—I make a pint of going to the tar-spring every day or two, and won't object to showing you the way for once, if you'd choose to go along with me and little black Prue. I take Prue along for want of more congenial company," added Miss 'Mandy, with a pensive simper.

I felt a little startled. More than once of late I had fancied that Miss 'Mandy treated me with a favor which she vouchsafed no other man in whose company I had beheld her. I had observed that she had somewhat smartened her dress, appearing in ear-rings and a pink neck ribbon, and that to-day her hair was twisted into innumerable little wiry rings and spirals above her forehead.

She had offered to make me turpentine tea and pine-cone cordial, as being beneficial to the general health, and here she was actually endeavoring to inveigle me into a lonely walk through the pines at the sentimental hour of twilight.

I hinted how delighted I should be to some time avail myself of her kind offer. To-day I had business which would take me to a distance. And, before Miss 'Mandy had time to complete her dusting of the parlor, I was on my way to Dorkey's.

I found the old man seated lazily in front of his log cabin, surveying with an air of satisfaction his pigs and chickens, and his patches of peanuts and water-melons, while his accomplished wife artistically moulded a pot of freshly-churned butter. They received me with great politeness; and, after some preliminary talk, I inquired about the picture.

"Well, sar," said Dorkey, thoughtfully, "I can't igitactly say who dat pictur's meant for. I neber saw anybody like it, nor nigh so han'some.—But dat pictur' was made—leeme see," putting his knuckles to his bald forehead—"but leetle more'n four years ago, by a painter-gen'leman as was stoppin' at Marse Davis' tavern for sake ob his heal. He had conption, but de piney wood cured him. 'Pears to me he guv ole Marse Davis dat pictur' when he went 'way; an' I heered marse say 'twas powerful like, 'cep not so han'some as Rosey. Dat was wot he call her—Rosey," concluded Dorkey with emphasis.

My heart gave a glad little throb.—The picture was painted only four years ago, and Rosey must now be in the full bloom of her youth and beauty.

"And are you sure, Dorkey, that you

do not know who this Miss Rosey was?"

"Sho's death, sah. Neber heered 'bout her 'cep' dat onct, and do' know no more 'bout her dan de man in de moon—ef dar is any man up dar," he added, meditatively.

Passing over this astronomical point, I inquired the name of the artist who had painted the picture.

"His name? Well, I done enmost forgot it. He came roun' to my cabin onct an' made a pictur' o' my pigs and chickens. Say, Clo," he called, to his wife—"say, ole woman! wot de name o' dat gen'leman come to my cabin onct and took my pigs and chickens?"

"Neber heer o' no gen'leman stealin, yo' pigs an' chickens," responded Chloe, with dignity.

"Oh, sho! You knows well nuff wot I means," returned the master of the house impatiently.

"Ef you meens de gen'lemen wot painted your stock," retorted Chloe, with strong emphasis, and an air of infinite superiority "his name was Rooster."

"Rooster?" I repeated, vainly searching my memory for the name of some artist resembling this euphonious appellation.

Suddenly a light flashed upon me.

"Was it Royster?"

"Jes so, sar—jes so! Dat's de berry name!"—and Dorkey cast a triumphant glance at his mortified better-half. "She think she mighty smart woman, sar," he whispered, "but she don't know eb'ry-ting. He, he!"

Leaving them to settle this difference of opinion as they might, and declining the hospitable offer of a watermelon, while I slipped something into Chloe's hand as a soothing of her wounded feelings, I returned to my tavern-lodgings.

It was sunset and they were milking the cows in the little meadow-patch through which my path lay, and I caught sight of Miss 'Mandy leaning pensively on the rail-fence, with a bunch of flowers in her hand, which I felt sure were intended for me. Fortunately she had not perceived me, and I evaded the snare and slipped through the orchard unobserved.

That night I wrote to Mr. Guy Royster, artist, and in precisely ten days therefrom received his answer.

My letter, he said, had followed him about in his autumnal wanderings among the Virginia mountains, which accounted for the delay in answering.—The picture regarding which I inquired had been copied by himself, some four or five years previous, from an original portrait, belonging to Mr. Davis, at whose inn he was at that time staying. Mr. Davis had allowed him to keep the original, which was the work of his old friend and preceptor, a distinguished artist. It was a portrait of a member of the Tyrell family, of Marsden county. This was in brief all that he could tell me in regard to the picture in which I took so much interest.

"The Tyrells, of Marsden county." The words seemed to present so direct a clue that, with a sort of romantic enthusiasm, at which I have since marveled, I resolved to follow it up. It was but a ride of forty miles to Marsden county—a region famous for partridge-shooting; and on this pretext I went thither.

It was easy to find the old family seat of the Tyrells—grand-looking still, though the picture of neglect and decay. A few of the old slaves still clung to the place, and spoke with affectionate pride and regret of their former owners, who had all passed away.

Twenty years ago, they said, there had been old massa and missis, and young Marse Harry, and Miss Lilly and Miss Lucia. Miss Lilly married and went North, where she died of grief for the loss of her husband. Next Miss Lucia died in New Orleans of yellow fever, and old massa and missis soon followed. Marse Harry had been wild-like, and never lived on the plantation; and it was now hardly a month since they had heard of his death; and what was going to happen next, or who the place was now to belong to, they could not tell.

"What became of Miss Rosey?" I said, at a venture.

"Miss Rosey? Oh, you means Missis Brown's darter—Missis Brown as was housekeeper to ole missus. Well, she and her mother lived here till Marse

Harry come home from college; and she was a mighty purty young creeter den, and powerful sp'ill by her moder, and ole massa and missis, too. She looked too high, and want to marry our Marse Harry, and he was just dat wild 'bout her. So ole massa an' him had some words 'bout it; and on his death-bed ole marse made him promise neber to marry her. So he went 'way, an' neber come back; and Missis Brown and Miss Rosey dey went 'way, too, an' we neber heered nuffin' 'bout 'em sence."

"Did Miss Rosey have her portrait taken while she was here?"

An old woman who had been nurse in the family, answered this question.—Old marse had a "painter gentleman" to come and take the portraits of each of the family, and among the rest, Miss Rosey's because she was so pretty.

"But she warn't no great lady, Miss Rosey warn't—leastways not a real lady like her young missis, what had de Tyrell blood in dar veins," she added proudly. "An' she neber could get ober it, her tryin' to worm herself into dar family and settin' ole marse and Marse Harry ag'in each oder."

I returned slowly to the old farmhouse at which I had engaged a night's lodging. Disappointed at the result of my search, I made one more attempt, by inquiring of my host, at supper, if he could tell me what had become of the Tyrells' former housekeeper, Mrs. Brown and her daughter, Rosey.

The farmer looked up at me with sudden interest.

"I suppose you're on the same errand that Mr. Walters was—that lawyer's agent that was along here a week ago," he said. "He wanted to find Miss Rosey, and he put a notice in the papers that there was something to her advantage. You haven't found her yet, it seems, sir. Well, now, it's a quar' thing that Mr. Harry Tyrell should have willed all his property to her. She'll be a rich woman; for though the estate's been neglected, it's valuable still, and could easily bring a fortune under proper management."

Before I left Marsden county, I got from my entertainer the address of Mr. Walters. Through him, if successful, I might yet find the fair object of my search.

I had now a double inducement; for the fair Rosey was an heiress, and also, as appeared from her retaining the name of Brown, yet unmarried. And so, elate and full of hope, I returned to my old quarters among the health-giving "piney-woods," where Mrs. Bowling welcomed me with a motherly kindness, and the assurance that my brief jaunt must have done me "a power of good," judging from my brightened looks.

After our early supper, I repaired to the little parlor, and seating myself on the sofa, gazed long at the beautiful, coquettish face on the wall opposite.

At least twenty years had elapsed since that portrait was taken. "Rosey" was now probably a tall, graceful woman—of say thirty-five or thereabouts.

Well, at that age many women are more beautiful and attractive than in their youth, and I—why, I was myself nearly thirty. No great difference after all.

And just here Miss 'Mandy came in, with some gay knitting in her hand, seated herself in a low rocking-chair, facing me, and exactly beneath the portrait.

I glanced from her thin sawy visage to the blooming face above, involuntarily contrasting the two. Then a sudden idea occurred to me. Dorkey had heard Mr. Davis mention Rosey, and Miss 'Mandy, being Davis' kinswoman, might know something about her. So I said:

"Miss 'Mandy, did you ever know a young lady by the name of Rosey Brown?"

She looked up quickly, and pursed her lips into a demure smile.

"Why, Mr. Courtenay, what do you want of Rosey Brown?"

"Oh, I have heard of her," I said, convinced that I was again on the track, and proceeding cautiously. "She was engaged once—to Mr. Harry Tyrell."

"That was a long time ago. Rosey's no doubt forgot all about him before this. He was a weak, no-account sort of a chap," she added, coolly, as she turned "a round" in her knitting.

"What has become of Miss Brown?" I ventured to inquire.

"Well she ain't very far away from here."

"Not far from here."

"Miss 'Mandy broke into a laugh.

"Why, Mr. Courtenay, you don't really mean to say that you don't know that I'm Rosey Brown, and that's my portrait?"

I could do nothing but stare at her incredulously.

"To-be-sure, time and trouble and fever and ague, do change a person," proceeded the lady, in a depreciating tone; "but I thought anybody could see the likeness."

I looked up, and, sure enough, there now dawned upon my perception a ghost-like resemblance between the two faces. But how could I otherwise have ever suspected it?"

"They used to call me Rosey for a pet name," proceeded Miss Brown, coquettishly, "because they said I looked so blooming. But it came to be awkward in time, so I dropped it in time for my real name of Amanda. Why, Mrs. Bowling and all of 'em could have told you that I was Rosey Brown, and I'm sure I thought everybody knew the portrait was mine."

I was too much shocked to reply. Here had I been searching for weeks for the original of that picture, only to find her where I had first seen her—under the picture itself. And now that she was found, my dream of romance vanished; nor could even the thought of her newly-added golden charms revive my interest in Miss Rosy Brown.

How she received her change of fortune I do not know, for I left the "piney woods" inn before the news reached her, doing her good turn to communicate her whereabouts to Mr. Walters; and so my romantic trip about a picture remained to me "A Fool's Errand."

## Mr. Griffin's Smart Dog.

THE Omaha Bee, says: There is a dog on the corner of Brancorff street and Willow avenue, Council Bluffs, which recently displayed such marked detective ingenuity as to certainly merit notice, if not a star. This sagacious animal belongs to M. O. Griffin. It seems that Mr. Griffin was awakened in the night recently by the barking of his dog in the yard. He got up, took his revolver, and went down there.—Not seeing or hearing anybody, Mr. Griffin repaired to his room and retired. But still Leo kept up his growling and barking something louder than before.—Mr. Griffin again arose, went down stairs, and stepped out into the yard, with revolver in hand. The dog approached him, licked his hand, and then ran and leaped over the fence. The dog apparently meant his master to follow him. This Mr. Griffin did. He followed the dog to the cellar door of his store and found that an entrance had been effected by breaking the hasp off the same. Mr. Griffin entered the cellar, and notwithstanding he missed nothing, he knew some one had been in the cellar and had tried to get into the store above. At this Leo was satisfied and ceased barking for the night. The next morning Mr. Griffin's attention was called to loud barking by Leo. He stepped to the front of his store. The dog had stopped a man on the sidewalk and would not allow him to pass. The gentleman-at-large told Mr. Griffin that if he didn't take care of his dog he would shoot him. At this juncture Mr. Griffin invited him inside and there took the liberty of accusing him of breaking into his store the night before. The man said he was insulted by such base insinuations, and started for the door, when Leo followed him out and kept up his barking. Mr. Griffin was so sure that he was not mistaken that he reported the case to Police Headquarters. The man was arrested and taken before Squire Burke, where he confessed that the dog had found him out, and that he had tried to break into the store, but Leo had kept him from accomplishing his purpose. He remarked that he would leave Council Bluffs immediately and go over to Omaha, where he did not believe that the dogs could be so highly educated.

He who buys what he does not want will soon want what he cannot buy.