

# The Bloomfield Times.

FRANK MORTIMER,  
Editor and Proprietor.

AN INDEPENDENT FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

Terms: IN ADVANCE  
One Dollar per Year.

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## The Bloomfield Times.

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BY

FRANK MORTIMER.

SUBSCRIPTION TERMS.

ONE DOLLAR PER YEAR!  
60 Cents for 6 Months; 40 Cents  
for 3 Months,  
IN ADVANCE.

### THE GOVERNESS' SECRET.

I AM QUITE sure," said my wife, "that the best plan will be to advertise."  
"I have no objection," I replied, "if you think answering advertisements is of no use."

"If we advertise we can make our own terms, and shall have a variety to choose from. See," said she, "this is the kind of thing I should like:

"WANTED, in a quiet and highly respectable family, residing in the country, a young lady competent to undertake the entire education of three little girls. Salary liberal. Comfortable home. Address A. B., New Rochelle."

"Now," resumed my wife, in a complacent tone of voice, after reading this paragraph aloud, "I think that is the very thing; only those who like quiet and the country will answer."

Will the reader believe that within two days after the insertion of our advertisement in the *Times* we had no less than one hundred and seventy replies! How to wade through them was a complete puzzle to us. The "reduced ladies" we destroyed at once, resolved to have a well-trained governess, or none at all. How were we to choose, between the orphan daughters of clergymen, the children of once opulent bankers, of barristers long since deceased, or of doctors who had never been successful?

"Oh Harry," sighed my wife, "I am almost sorry we advertised at all. There must be one hundred and sixty-nine people disappointed; it makes me quite sad to think of them. Only fancy what hopes have followed each one of these letters!"  
I shared my wife's feelings, and felt regret something like remorse as I rang the bell, and ordered John to remove the torn fragments of one hundred and sixty of these hope-laden epistles.

"Governesses must be more plentiful than footmen," I heard him remark to the butler, who passed him in the hall.

I reserved ten of the letters, attracted by the writing and general style. One amongst these particularly pleased me; it was written in a clear, ladylike hand, firm and legible, the letters well-rounded, nothing angular or affected, neither flourishes nor out-of-the-way curves. I liked the clear good sense shown in every line. There was no long dissertation on family matters, no pathos of having to earn her bread as she best could. The letter contained nothing but a simple statement of her capabilities, her terms, and references. I liked the sensible, business-like sentences. We therefore decided upon answering this letter; and, on receiving satisfactory replies from the referees, we finally engaged Miss Porson.

My family had lived at New Rochelle for many years. The property had descended from father to son; and few held a more honorable position in the county than we Fernes. We were not famous for great riches or great deeds; but, heaven be thanked, dishonor had never come near us.

I was the only child of my parents, and they both died before I attained my majority. I married when I was twenty-one, and I believe it would have been impossible to have found two people in this world happier than my wife and myself.

We had three children, aged respectively six, eight, and ten. We had not cared to trouble them much about lessons and books; but they were growing older now; and as my wife determined they should never go to school, but should have a governess at home, I, like a well-trained husband, submitted with resignation.

I never knew a kinder-hearted woman than my wife; it was her distinguishing characteristic. It amused me to see the preparations made for our governess, and the pretty rooms that were arranged for her use.

The nearest railway station was more than five miles distant from our house; so at the appointed time the carriage was sent

to meet Miss Porson. I was from home on the day she arrived, but my pleasing impression of her, taken from her letter, was more than realized, when I saw her. She was not beautiful in the strict meaning of the word; but her fair, calm face was full of truth and intelligence; her graceful movements and gentle manner completed her charm. There was something, too, in her face which I cannot well express. It was as though a cloud of suffering had passed over her, and shadowed the radiance of her youth. She had a sweet, patient smile, but I never heard her laugh as the really happy do.

We found her not only highly accomplished, but also thoroughly well educated. She was well versed in literature, and her judgment was as sound as her thoughts were clear. Miss Porson proved a valuable acquisition to our small circle.

Mine was by no means one of those families where the governess is treated as a dependent and inferior. On the contrary, she was looked upon by every member of the household with the greatest respect and attention. The children soon became devotedly attached to her; my wife looked upon her as a most valued friend; and amongst all our acquaintances, she was most deservedly popular. I also saw good qualities in her that are somewhat rare. I never heard the faintest approach to a false or an equivocating word from her lips; and, no matter how severely she was tried, I never knew her patient sweetness of temper to fail.

One thing seemed to me strange: Miss Porson never spoke of her past life or of her friends. There were no reminiscences of parents or sisters; all her thoughts seemed centred in the present.

One evening—I have remembered it since—after a very cheerful dinner party, a young lady, one of our guests, was kind enough to sing some of her best songs for our amusement. It was a beautiful summer night, and the drawing-room windows were thrown open, that we might enjoy the delicious fragrance of the flowers.

Miss Maitland had a magnificent voice, soft, and full of a most indescribable pathos. She sang that most beautiful of melodies, Beethoven's "Adelaide;" the wild, mournful, but most lovely music, moved me strangely. Miss Porson was sitting near an open window, and as the music filled the room, I caught one glimpse of her face, that I have never forgotten. I never saw such intensity of misery in any human countenance before. That calm, fair face was quivering with inexpressible anguish; her hands were clasped convulsively; there was a far-off yearning look in her eyes I could not bear to see. I went to her immediately, and asked if she were ill. She did not hear me at first; but when she did so, a crimson flush covered her face.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Ferne," she said, "no, I am not ill. I used to sing that song long ago; and I suppose I was thinking of that time. Pray excuse me; I do not often forget myself."

Indeed she did not.

Three years after this my happiness was made complete by the birth of a son and heir. He grew fast, and was a fine sturdy little fellow. The incident I am about to relate took place when he was two years old.

Miss Porson and my wife were out one morning walking in the shrubbery. They returned through a small iron gate, which brought them to the side of the house. Happening quite accidentally to look upward, Miss Porson was horror-struck to see little Harry standing outside one of the windows, on a narrow stone balcony, not two feet in width. He was standing quite still, gazing intently into the room he had left, apparently quite overcome by the grandeur of his performance. Miss Porson touched my wife's arm. A shriek, a sound from within, and my darling boy would, in turning to look at them, have been dashed to the ground.

and, opening the door quietly, had gone so silently to the window, that the child had neither seen nor heard her. She did not speak until she had, unseen by him, grasped him tightly. One expression of fear, one heedless sound, and my boy would inevitably have been killed. We immediately took him to his mother, who was speechless with terror. It grieves me even now to think how she suffered.

The nurse, through whose negligence the child was so nearly lost, was sent away; but many months passed ere we forgot the peril our little Harry had been in.

That incident endeared Miss Porson more than ever to us. We admired her disinterestedness so much, for she positively refused to accept a valuable ring which my wife wished to present to her.

We were at breakfast one morning, when, amongst the letters in the post-bag, we found a pretty perfumed envelope with a crest upon it. I gave it to my wife with a smile; it was from her favorite friend, Mrs. Emily Tenryhn; a fashionable and certainly beautiful little widow, young and wealthy, full of whim and caprice; not the least strange of which was her sudden refusal to pass a month with us in our seclusion. The chambers were prepared, for the lady brought with her a maid of little less importance than herself.

Emily was an old schoolfellow of my wife's, and notwithstanding a difference of some years in their respective ages, there existed between them a warm and devoted attachment. Whenever my wife could tear herself from the fascinations of New Rochelle, it was to visit her friend; and whenever the lady grew tired of variety and flattery, and the weary ways of the world, she would seek refuge at our home.

We had not seen Emily for five years. She had made a long stay on the Continent; so long, that we began to think she would pass the rest of her life there. But the pretty pink envelope contained a pink note, stating that she was quite worn out with fatigue, and was longing for a few quiet weeks with her ever dearest Laura.

My wife was delighted, and dwelt long upon the many and endearing charms of her friend. I liked Emily very much, but I never shared my wife's raptures. I knew and admitted all the good qualities of her ladyship; but I could not forget that she, a young and lovely girl of eighteen, had married an old man of seventy, who had nothing to recommend him but position and wealth.

At his death which happened four years after their marriage, she had the whole of his property. I could not call her mercenary, for she had a kind, generous heart; still I know no one better able to take care of herself than Mrs. Tenryhn.

"Coming on Tuesday," said my wife; "it is short notice; but as she wants quiet, she will not care about having any one invited to meet her the first week."

"No," I replied laughing. "You will require a week for the Continental adventures; slain knights, extinguished barons, and despairing counts, are not so easily disposed of."

"Now, Charles," said my wife, "that is not fair, you know. Emily is not a coquette. She cannot help being admired and sought after. She likes telling me about her lovers, because she knows it amuses me."

To please Laura I declared my conviction of her friend's amiability, and she went on rejoicing in her preparations.

The important Tuesday came, and brought with it our fair and fascinating guest, gay and animated as ever, and not one whit less lovely. Well, it was pleasant after all to see Emily again. Her traveling carriage was fairly stocked with presents; the children revelled in Parisian dolls with foilets *recherche* enough for the Imperial Court of France. My little son staggered beneath the weight of a Noah's ark of surpassing beauty. Emily well knew how to gain the hearts of children.

The first week of her visit passed quietly enough; it was, in fact, one long conversation. During the second we became more animated; drives and picnics broke the usual routine. Then we went to a few solemn dinner-parties; after which Emily declared we must have a merry evening and get up a charade.

The day before our entertainment we were all together in the library. Emily was arranging some charade dresses, the children helping her in a state of bewildered delight, quiet Miss Porson doing all the practical part of the business.

"I want a small piece of white elastic to finish this," cried Emily; and there was an immediate rush of children to the work-basket. None could be found.

"I think I have some in my writing-desk," said Miss Porson. "I was using it this morning, and saved all there was left."

"Shall I fetch your box Miss Porson?" said my eldest girl; "that will save both time and trouble."

The child was soon back, and Miss Porson found what she wanted; but as she stretched out her hand to give the elastic to Emily, by some accident the box was upset and all its contents strewn upon the ground.

The children ran to assist; a little parcel rolled to my feet; it was a small pair of baby shoes and a tiny golden curl. I picked them up, and should perhaps never have thought about them but for the deadly palor of Miss Porson's face.

"Oh Miss Porson," cried my little Clara, "what pretty shoes! Were those Harry's once?"

"No my dear," said the governess, in a strange low voice; "they belonged to a little girl I used to know years ago, who is dead now."

There was a general silence, during which Miss Porson wrapped up the little blue shoes and the golden curl, and then left the room. I saw Emily give a curious look at my wife; but Laura who had not seen the little treasures, only said, "Some former pupil of Miss Porson's, I suppose. She is very affectionate."

The charades were a great success; and during the excitement and gaiety which followed, this little incident was quite forgotten.

It was very seldom that Miss Porson received a letter, but one particular morning I handed her a large envelope, directed in a bold, masculine hand. I thought she trembled as she received it; and I felt sure, when we all met at dinner, that her calm face bore the trace of recent tears.

After dinner Emily showed my wife a large and handsome portmanteau, which she had purchased in Paris. It had a peculiar and very ingenious fastening, which puzzled us all. I succeeded in opening it, and casually noticed that it was full of bank-notes.

"Do you not think that it is a very unsafe way in which to keep so much money, Emily?" I asked, perhaps rather rudely.

"Yes," she replied, carelessly. "I do not generally do so; but there are some notes of a large amount there, and I want them changed. There is a twenty dollar note I shall keep for a curiosity; I had such a queer little adventure with it. I will tell you, Laura, it will amuse you."

I laid the portmanteau down on the table by Emily, and thought no more of it.

The next morning while I was dressing, a message came from Emily to ask if she could speak to me for a few minutes before breakfast in the library. Amused and yet astonished, I complied with her request. To my surprise Emily looked very pale and grave.

"Mr. Ferne," she began, "I have something very unpleasant to say to you. Do you remember the portmanteau I showed Laura last evening?"

"Yes," I replied, melancholically.

"Well," she continued; "I am sorry to say it is gone. I was careless enough to leave it in the drawing-room last evening, together with a bracelet. I was talking to Laura, and the bracelet, which is a very valuable diamond one, hurt me. It is rather too tight. I took it off and laid it by the portmanteau, intending to take them both up into my room with me. I suppose I must have been very much engrossed by what Laura was saying, for I quite forgot all about them until my maid asked me this morning where the bracelet was."

"They must both be in the drawing-room," I replied; "it is impossible that they can be lost. Have you been there?"

"Yes, I went at once," she replied; "apparently it has never been entered since we left it last evening; it is not arranged or dusted yet. Will you come with me?"

I went, feeling quite sure that I should find both purse and bracelet; but, after a long and careful search, I could discover no trace of either.

"Have you made any inquiries?" I asked of Emily.

"No, I came to you at once," she replied. "I asked Mary, the upper housemaid, whose duty it is to see to the room, if she had been there, and she said she had been too busy."

"Did Laura carry them up-stairs and take them into her room for you?" I suggested.

"No," she replied, "we went together, and Laura came with me into my dressing-room. She had nothing in her hands but a letter of mine that I had given her to read."

"It seems strange," said I; "but, depend upon it, we shall find them. It is utterly impossible that they can be lost. I will go and ask Laura if she can throw any light upon the mystery."

My wife was as much surprised and puzzled as we were. She remembered Emily taking off the bracelet, but had not noticed what she did with it. I summoned Emily's maid, the housekeeper, and the housemaid, but I could not find any clue to them. One thing only was quite clear—money and bracelet had both disappeared.

I felt as convinced of the honesty of my servants as I did of my own. Most of them had been with me for many years; the butler had been with my father before me; the footman came a page when he was twelve years old; as housekeeper had been my father's favorite maid. For each one of them I could answer as for myself.

No one could have entered the house. The drawing-room windows opened on to the lawn, but the shutters that secured them were well fastened, and those shutters were properly closed when we went into the room. Besides, if thieves had broken in, they must have left some trace; but not a thing was out of order, and not so much as a silver spoon was missing.

I gave strict orders that no one should either leave or enter the house, and then, after hastily swallowing some hot coffee, I galloped down to the railway station, and telegraphed to New York for a detective.

It happened most fortunately that the celebrated Mr. Rivers came immediately with an assistant.

Nothing could clear up the mystery. The servants, one and all, requested that search should be made in their rooms. I do not believe there was a box or drawer, or hardly one inch of the old house, that escaped a thorough scrutiny by the keen-eyed detective.

"I can make nothing of it yet, sir," said he. "The servants seem a thoroughly honest set. Have I seen every one in the house?"

"With the exception of Mrs. Ferne, Mrs. Tenryhn, and Miss Porson," I replied.

"Don't think it a liberty, sir," said he. "but I should be glad if you could manage for me to see the lady and Miss Porson. It is all in the way of business. Many queer things come to light that no one would dream of."

Mrs. Tenryhn and Miss Porson are in the library now," I said. "Come with me, and we will try if we can ascertain the numbers of the notes."

Those keen dark eyes flashed over the beautiful, agitated face of Emily, and over the calm, fair features of Miss Porson, and then the detective looked more hopelessly puzzled than ever.

"Can you tell me," he asked of Emily, "the exact sum in the purse, and the numbers of the notes?"

"There were eight notes for one hundred dollars, and three for twenty dollars," she replied. "I do not know the number; but my agent in New York, who sent them to me, does, no doubt. There was a twenty dollar note of which I remember the number, from a particular circumstance; it was 333, and dated June 4th, 185—"

"It would be better to telegraph at once to the New York agent," said the detective to me, "in order to know the numbers, and stop payment of the notes."

We did so, and the search continued with unabated vigor. Handbills were printed describing the lost valuables, and offering a large reward for their discovery.

Mr. Rivers was in despair when, on the third day, there came a long letter from Emily's agent, containing a full list and description of the bank-notes, with the fatal news that they had been changed at a certain bank the morning after the robbery.

That was a clue, and Mr. Rivers went to New York to follow it.

We ascertained first if any one had gone on that morning from our station by the mail-train to New York. There had not been a single passenger.

"It has been magic," said the detective to me, as he bade me good-by; "no one in the house has done it; every face there is honest—not the look of a thief amongst them. No one out of the place can have done it, for they could not get in. Good-by, sir. If it takes twenty years, I will find it out yet." Concluded next week.