

FOR HIS SAKE.
Hold closer still my hand, dear love,
Nor fear its touch will soil thine own;
No pain is cleaner now than this,
So free from earth stain has it grown.
Since last you held it clasped so close,
And with it held my life and heart;
For my heart beats but in your smile,
And life were death, we two apart.

I loved you so, and you? Ah, well!
I have no word or thought of blame;
And even now my voice grows low
And tender, whispering your name.
You gauged my love by yours—that's all,
I do not think you understand;
There is a point you men can't reach,
Up the white height of womanhood.

You love us—so at least you say,
With many a tender smile and word;
You kiss us both on mouth and brow
Till all our hearts within is stirred;
And having, unlike you, no see,
No other interest at stake,
We give our best, and count that death
Is blessed, when suffered for your sake.

NORTON BLAKE'S DILEMMA.

I.
"Is it true, Norton? Is your uncle really dying?"

The speaker's eyes were sparkling, her cheeks flushed, her fingers toying with the white robes of a baby upon her knee, her intonation that of elated triumph.

Words and manner struck Norton Blake sharply. He threw down the telegram with a short "Yes."

"Are you sorry?" Mrs. Blake asked in tart surprise. "Why, you've wished, a thousand times, I were mistress of the Court, and now there's my baby. Shan't I feel proud when I see him in velvet knickerbockers riding about that beautiful park on a white pony?"

Norton regarded her with amazement—her speech sounded so utterly heartless.

"Sorry!" he repeated slowly. "Surely, Myra, you forget that my uncle has filled a father's place to me from my childhood."

"Oh no, I don't," she retorted with a disagreeable laugh; "nor the filial respect you have always shown him. Also, I remember your many aspirations that Providence would allow the same—a calamity—to end this miserable concealment. Really, Norton, you have neither courage to face the consequences of your own actions, nor to grip the deliverance Fortune sends you."

With a muttered imprecation, Norton Blake left the room. Experience had taught him the futility of arguing with his wife; but through the ensuing long journey he had leisure in which to ponder over and debate the truth of her words. The sudden shock of his relative's danger had acted upon his moral consciousness like a douche of cold water on the physical organization of a drunkard, recalling him to himself, but stinging him with a sense of his own degradation.

Treated by his uncle with an indulgence shown by few parents, he had sipped at school and scraped through college. He was no prodigy—neither gained nor drank; yet his fatal propensity of snatching the moment's pleasure, leaving care for the morrow, had blighted the sunny prospects of a life whose crowning folly he was too cowardly to avow.

During a long vacation—supposed by his uncle to be passed with a tutor in Scotland—he met, at a fashionable watering-place, a girl—woman, rather—whose blue-eyed, golden-haired charms and practiced graces had bewitched and captivated his youthful fancy. His superior in years and knowledge of the world, but beneath him in birth and education, she was too keenly alive to the social advantages derivable from an alliance with the heir of an old and wealthy county family to let him slip through her fingers. By artifice, cajolery, and threats of appealing to the elder Mr. Blake—the best thing which could have happened to him, had he but known it—she accomplished her purpose, and he married her. His college life had ended, and, fearing lest his rash act should be discovered, he persuaded his uncle that a continental tour was the fitting interlude between it and setting down to the active duties of life.

The couple were at Heidelberg when the news of Mr. Blake's illness arrived. It behooved some latent good in Norton's character that, although these things might have been supposed to solve his difficulties, they awakened in his breast but a feeling of sorrowful remorse, leavened, perhaps, by satisfaction that, owing to the season being winter, and the tender age of her child, his wife was debarred from accompanying him to England.

As the first misery lessened came the remembrance of a forgotten complication in his affairs. Mr. Blake's household numbered another besides his nephew. This was the orphan daughter of an old fellow-officer, to whom Mr. Blake had given the shelter of his home and the affection of a father.

That Norton and Helen Venne should be united—so sharing equally the wealth and station he must in time resign—was his dearest wish. A tacit understanding to that effect had existed for some time. No definite promises had been exchanged, but Norton knew what was expected of him on his return.

Also that her wife was alive when he reached the Court, the disclosure of his marriage would certainly follow by disinherited; were he dead, it would deprive Helen of home and fortune. Whichever way he looked he saw nothing but trouble ahead. How he cursed his weak, infatuated folly as the train whirled him through the dark night, the howling wind and dreary, up-piled snow!

II.
Night's silence brooded over the

Court as Norton drew up to the familiar door. Only a watch-dog's baying broke the stillness. Brilliant moonbeams silvered the sharp snow-crystals covering lawn and flower-beds; ruddy freights from within touched with iridescent tints those clustered on window-sill and pane. So had he seen the old house wrapped in its snow mantle on many a winter night. Its unchanged beauty awakened a yearning pain as for something unvalued before, whose loss brought shame, remorse, misgiving.

The warmth rushed out to meet him as the heavy door opened. More redly fell the freight on the oaken panelled hall than on the snow without. It flickered softly on Helen's burnished head as she greeted him with outstretched hands, tender, shining, welcoming eyes, cheeks carmined with pleasure.

Her loveliness struck him like a revelation. The touch of her hands made him shiver. Imagination placed beside her the figure of the woman whom he had made his wife. He turned aside with a gesture of dismay—an inward groan.

"He is alive—he is, indeed!" Helen said eagerly, mistaking his movement, thinking Norton feared her uttering the grim "Too late!" "He heard the wheels; you must go to him without delay. He has watched for your coming, oh, so anxiously!"

The doctor came out of the sick room as Norton approached it. He had known Norton from boyhood, so understood somewhat of the anxiety he had caused Mr. Blake.

"Your uncle longs to see you," he said, laying his hand impressively upon the young man's arm. "But I cannot allow you to enter his room unless you assure you can control your feelings. Remember the least excitement may—may must—be fatal. Gain-say him in nothing. Let him die in peace."

A choking sensation rose in Norton's throat as he passed to the bedside. The gray head lay motionless upon the pillow, but the dimming eyes flooded with affection, fastened on his face—the feeble fingers clasped his lovingly.

"You have come at last!" he murmured, trying to lay his hand on Norton's bowed head, as he knelt beside the bed. "What has kept you from me so long—my boy, my son?"

Norton muttered something unintelligible, the realization of his deceit bowing his head yet lower. With a sudden gathering together of his energies, Mr. Blake roused himself, and, unheeding any reply, continued:

"You are my heir, Norton. I have left everything to you—everything! Even Helen have I trusted to you. But now, lying here, I misdoit if I have acted wisely by her. Promise, by all you hold most sacred, that you will make Helen and her interest the first and chief consideration of your life."

A warning pressure from the doctor's fingers and Norton promised. Sincerely, too; indeed he felt a sense of relief that the pledge exacted was one he could accept. He would make Helen's well-being the study of his life.

"It can be done but in one way," resumed the old man with dangerous excitement, "in the making of her your wife. You will fulfil the wish of my heart—ratify the tacit bond between you? Oh, Norton, say you will—do not deny me the only thing I ask!"

Again the warning pressure as the doctor vainly tried to soothe his patient. Norton hesitated. What could he say—what do? The color mounted to his brow, his lips trembled.

"Say something for heaven's sake!" whispered the doctor with energy. "Pacify him in some way—any way—or I cannot answer for the consequences."

Once more Norton's fatal weakness paralyzed his will. Through his home-ward journey he had persuaded himself that nothing should induce him to let his uncle die ignorant of his true position, his offenses forgiven as unknown. Disinherited, pain, ignominy, were better faced than that! So he had told himself—and now?

"Promise, Norton, promise!" The shrill voice rang piercingly imperative, the dying eyes looked up with a pleading agony, the thin hands clatched at his as if they would ring from him more than life itself, and Norton promised.

"Bring Helen! Where is Helen?" Mr. Blake cried in feverish impatience. "Let me hear her promise too. Only then can I rest in peace."

Helen came. She drew near to the bed with an expression of calm repose, of tranquil strength, on her beautiful face. Quickly this changed to one of shrieking awestruck reserve, as she glanced from the dying man to those of her—as she believed—lower set in a white look of pain and fear. Looking wonderingly from one to the other, the poor girl faltered out the promise required of her. Mr. Blake holding in his a hand of each as the words were spoken.

It was to Helen but the sealing vow—unuttered, indeed, but long existent. No doubt of Norton's truth or honor assailed her. Yet, looking up into his pale, drawn face, a vague pain struck coldly to her heart, so joyless, so despairing, were the eyes that met her own.

"Succ dimittis!" the sick man murmured, and sank back upon his pillows faint and exhausted.

III.
To the amazement alike of doctor and friends, Mr. Blake rallied from the stupor into which he fell after his interview with Norton, drank the draught prescribed for him, sank into a calm slumber, and awoke so much improved that hope whispered anew that recovery was possible. Time proved hope right. After many fluctuations between life and death, danger gradually retreated; health dawned once more.

Through the week of convalescence the same imperious mandate wielded its iron sway. No excitement, no thwarting was on any account to be permitted.

Morning by morning Norton Blake rose from his bed, vowing that, at all risks, he would before night disclose the fact of his marriage to Helen and his uncle. Evening always found him forsown. Gradually the stifled con-

science yielded to the fascination of the hour—allowed himself to drift aimlessly down the stream of circumstances.

Alas! the seductions of the moment were all too sweet, the flowery path only too alluring. Vainly honor spoke, and duty called, he was deaf and blind to aught but fear. Only when a letter from his wife arrived—coating, pleading, threatening—did his cheeks pale, and terror gnaw his breast. Helen's clear brow grew, sometimes, a furrow of perplexity as she saw the strange handwriting on the missive lying by his plate at breakfast-time, and noted his futile efforts to conceal the effects of its unwelcome appearance.

"Guileless by nature, and singularly unversed in the world's deceits, Helen trusted Norton with the whole-heartedness of one who, estimating others by herself, scorned to see spot or blemish in those she loved. Norton saw, too late, what he had thrown away so recklessly—what infinite capacities of lifelong happiness he had blotted out forever."

Yet no thought of sparing her crossed his mind. If any remembrance of the anguish surely awaiting Helen momentarily disturbed him, he quieted it by reflecting that chance often solves time's riddles in a manner equally unexpected and pleasant, and, unfortunately for all, chance was his fetter.

So the year budded into spring, and the charmed dream neared its end. Letters from Heidelberg became more imperative in tone, demands for money more urgent. Nor were threats for following Norton to England, and discovering for herself the cause of her husband's detention, lacking on the part of Mrs. Blake.

The master of the Court was intent upon accomplishing his nephew's marriage. Helen was busy making her bridal preparations—the wedding day itself all but fixed. Norton alone was listless, preoccupied, depressed. A horrible fear, a terrible foreboding of calamity, had taken possession of him. The bright sunshine, the singing of birds, the scent of violets, the upturned, placid primrose stars, made him faint and sick. Night and day he pondered over a way of escape, but none presented itself as feasible. He literally dared not encounter his uncle's wrath or Helen's scorn. Nothing remained to him but flight—flight from a danger he was too cowardly to face.

IV.
But two days remained before that fixed for the wedding. The court was thronged with guests, and gay with merry voices, badinage and jest. In the ivy-draped windows lights were beginning to twinkle as Norton Blake walked homeward, wrapped in bitter—almost frenzied—musings. So abstracted was he, that he scarcely noticed a station fly which, entering through the lodge-gates, slowly passed him in the dusk. Neither did he remark a face which, peering through the glass, swiftly recognized him, and as quickly disappeared into the recesses of the vehicle. As he wearily mounted the last step to the door he became aware of a strange hubbub of scurrilous in the hall. His eyes fell on a blue-eyed, blonde-haired fellow he knew too well—his ears were pierced by a high pitched voice only too familiar. There, too, stood Gretchen, the maid—even her stolid German gleam stirred to interest as she presented her white-robed bundle to the astonished visitors and servants whose progress across the hall, or chatting by its wide fireplace, had been arrested to ascertain the cause of the tumult.

Norton saw it all as in a vivid photograph. He heard his wife's shrill voice exclaiming, with a toss of her flaxen head, and the sarcastic laugh which jarred his nerves so acutely:

"Oh, there's no mistake—none whatever, I assure you!" said Mrs. Norton Blake, and this was all she said. I have every proof of what I assert. I passed my husband in the avenue. In a few minutes he will be here to corroborate my statement. Gretchen, robe baby's veil, and let Mr. Blake see how closely he resembles his father."

The old man had tottered into the hall to see what the occasion meant. Norton saw his face harden into a terrible sternness of disbelief as he confronted the intruder. He saw the whitening of Helen's lips and the defiant anguish in her eyes.

The great door still stood open. The fly waited, with its piled up luggage, below the terrace steps. Norton pressed yet closer into the shadow of the portico, and caught his breath as he heard his wife's next words:

"My husband's continued absence was so unaccountable," she continued, with again the harsh laugh she fancied so fascinating, "that I determined to ascertain for myself the cause of his detention. I hope my advent is not utterly inconvenient, but Norton—dear, easy fellow!—will be delighted with the pleasant surprise I have planned for him."

Norton waited to hear no more. He slunk noiselessly down the steps, sped swiftly through the gardens and fled away in the darkness of coming night.

Hidden away among the glades of the park lay a placid, hazel-fringed meadow. Feathered arches waved over lilies spread their broad leaves and silver cups upon its still waters.

But the morrow's sunbeams, pasting the fragrant larch-plumes with slender, shining fingers, fell on something which the spreading lily-leaves tried pitifully to conceal. From the yellow hazel catkins the dew dropped like tears upon the dead face of a man whose body drifted under the shelter of the bank, and that dead man was Norton Blake.

Out of his dilemma he had found a road; but whether that of suicide, or that, in his bewilderment he had wandered unwittingly to the mere, missed his footing in the darkness, and slipped into its treacherous depths, it was an impossibility to determine.

A gamekeeper, going his early rounds, found him in the pool. He was carried back to the Court, and "Death by misadventure" was the verdict at the inquest. "Death through selfish weakness" would have been a truer one.

Mr. Blake never recovered the shock and disappointment of his nephew's death. He sank into dotage, and for many tedious years Helen—a sad-eyed, prematurely-aged woman—was his devoted guardian.

The only bright thing in her life was Norton's little son, whom—humiliated, frightened and subdued by the dreadful result of her manoeuvre—Mrs. Blake had consented to relinquish and leave in Mr. Blake's charge, on the condition that his future should be provided for.

On an allowance, also supplied by Mr. Blake, she returned to the associates of her early life, and soon remarried—to the no little satisfaction of others besides poor stricken Mr. Blake and his dear adopted daughter.

General Forrest's Stake.

From the Nashville American.
I was sitting in a room in the Maxwell House with General N. B. Forrest, several years before his death.

"General Forrest," I asked, "it has often been said that previous to the war you were a terror at the poker table. How much did you ever win on one hand?"

"He replied: 'I have played a few heavy games and many a light one. In New Orleans on one hand I won \$47,000.'"

"And what did you hold?"

"Three kings and two nines."

I have always regretted I didn't ask him what his opponent held, but I did not. He told the following story, his eyes filling with tears during its recital: "When my wife and I went to Memphis after the close of hostilities we had \$7.20, not a cent more or less. We spent one entire afternoon ransacking an old portfolio hoping to find some old uncollected account or 'I. O. U.' which I might realize. There wasn't a thing. I said to my wife: 'Rhoda, you have always been against me and poker; I never played a game since I first knew you that your absent face was not a haunting rebuke over one shoulder. Now I have been invited to Sneed's to dinner to-night and I know there'll be cards. If you'll give me your blessing this once, my dear, I feel mighty sure I can come home a richer man.'"

"Said she: 'Forrest, we've got along without that, so far as I have known, and by the Lord's help we'll still go on without it.'"

"Yes, said I, but the Lord has been slow of late, and seems to be getting slower; what d'ye say to this one time?" She never consented, but she didn't oppose it very strong, and I wouldn't go over the \$7.20. It was just as I expected. Four tables were running at Sneed's and I won enough at fifty-cent ante to go in at a higher table later on. Well, sir, I won—and I won right along from the first—I just dropped the money into my hat on the floor, and when we broke up at daylight I put my hat on with the money in it, without counting it over, and went home. As I came near to my house I caught a glimpse from the outside of my wife's white figure waiting right where she had waited all night, pale and anxious, and when I went in I just took off my hat and emptied \$1,500 in her lap. I felt sorry for her, she couldn't bless that night's doings; but, sir,—it was a great relief to me."

Another Story of the Battle of Shiloh.

It was at the home of the late W. H. Cherry, at Savannah, Tennessee, that General Grant made his quarters just before the battle of Shiloh. "The Federal chieftain," says the Nashville American, "was sitting at the breakfast table of Mr. Cherry when the first cannon of that eventful contest was fired. The general was a little late in leaving his apartment that morning and presented his apologies, therefore to Mrs. Cherry, remarking that he had not retired as early as usual that night before and consequently had the headache. Though a battle was known to be imminent, neither the general nor his staff expected it to be that day and they sat down calmly to a breakfast which was destined never to be completed. Mrs. Cherry, a lady of great refinement and culture, was extending the courtesies of her home in a manner which by its unfeigned, seemed to have won upon the respect of the former chief. He occupied a seat immediately to her right, his staff arranged around him. Mrs. Cherry poured out a cup of coffee which the general received and placed in front of him with a thank you, madam." He was in the act of raising it to his lips, when the boom of a cannon was heard in the distance.

The cup was for a moment poised in air, while the general half turning his head and exclaiming, "What's that?" seemed to be listening intently. The words were hardly uttered before the ominous sound was repeated. The general sprang to his feet. "Gentleman the ball has opened. We must be going," he exclaimed. And in five minutes he, his staff and orderlies were aboard the small steamer anchored at the foot of the hill, and steaming up the Tennessee."

Oliver Wendell Holmes celebrated his 76th birthday at Marblehead, Mass. In a pleasant conversation with a newspaper correspondent relative to the event, he said: "I do not think there is much to be said about the occasion, for I am only 76. Now, when a man gets to be 80 he is a public benefactor, for then he is an encouragement to men of 70 or 75. A long row of men 80 years of age form a sort of tail-board fence separating younger men from the chilly blast. Yes, I consider living to a great age the cheapest and easiest benefaction a man can make. Gladstone is, I believe, within four months of my age, and Barnum quite near it. When men get over 75 all differences are set aside."

Lincoln on the Battlefield.

Mrs. General Custer in the Chicago Tribune.
Our Minister to the Argentine Republic has been telling me of a scene which has as yet been unpublished. Being the personal friend of the late President of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, he asked the official to tell him the truth regarding an accusation against the President during the dark days of our war. A newspaper paragraph went the rounds attributing to Mr. Lincoln a want of solemnity in singing a frivolous song at the very outposts of our advance pickets.

Mr. Garrett, who accompanied Mr. Lincoln on many a journey to the front, gave the true version of the story from which the garbled account had been first evolved. General McClellan sent for the President in a critical hour, and he responded by starting at once. They had no sooner alighted from the car on reaching headquarters than Secretary Stanton approached General McClellan and brusquely addressed him by saying: "Why are you delaying an advance? What keeps you from hurrying this army on to the foe?" "I have asked the President and you to come personally," said the General, "that you might see for yourself the necessity of reinforcements, the depleted ranks of our army, the broken condition to which the last engagement has reduced us." Meanwhile the dead and wounded were being carried from the battlefield. The lantern of the men as they moved among the slain shone out like fireflies as they progressed. As one stretcher was passing Mr. Lincoln he heard the voice of a lad calling to his mother in agonizing tones. His great heart filled. He forgot the crisis of the hour. His very being concentrated itself in the cries of the dying boy. Stopping the carriers he knelt, and bending over him asked: "What can I do for you, my poor child?" "Oh, you will do nothing for me," he replied; "You are a Yankee. I cannot hope that my messages to my mother will ever reach her." Mr. Lincoln's tears, his voice full of the tenderest love, convinced the boy of his sincerity and he gave his good-bye words without reserve. The president directed them copied and ordered that they be sent that night, with a flag of truce, into the enemy's lines. He only told the soldier who he was to convince him that his word would be obeyed, and when told that time was precious, as the distant outposts must yet be visited, he rose reluctantly, and entered the ambulance. With sobs and tears he turned to Mark Lemon, his friend, and said: "Mark my heart is breaking. Sing me some thing; sing the old song I love, 'Oft in the Stilly Night.'"

The Aurora Borealis.

From the Literary World.
What is the Aurora Borealis? many men have asked and asked in vain. Scientific personages have been much interested in the matter. It was as a participant in the work of the international Polar Research Expedition that Herr Tromholt visited the most distant parts of the European continent. His task was to take observations of the remarkable phenomenon known as the Aurora Borealis, or Northern Lights, and principally in conjunction with the Norwegian station at Bossekop, in Finnmark, and the Finnish one at Sodankyla, in the very heart of the wilds of Finland, to effect measurements for determining the height of the phenomenon above the earth's crust. Science, he owns, is still at fault; but in answer to popular hypotheses, it can declare that the Aurora Borealis is not sunshine reflected from the ice fields of the Arctic regions, nor the reflection of sunshine on the surface of the sea, nor the reflection of sun rays in ice crystals suspended in the upper strata of the air. Further, science tells us that the Aurora Borealis is of electrical nature, and closely related to the magnetic forces of the earth. While our author was at his post every night the Aurora Borealis appeared; at any rate, there was not a single observation when it was absent. Sometimes it filled the whole sky; often its displays were confined to insignificant and faint phenomena, low in the north, just like those observed in Southern Scandinavia; but sometimes they obtained a magnificence which defied description. He came to the conclusion that the great many different forms might certainly be reduced to a few simple ones. In most instances the Aurora forms belts, or zones, which stretch across the earth in the direction of the magnetic east-west, which zones are formed by a conglomeration of thin sheets of luminous matter, ranged one behind the other, their direction being parallel with the inclination needle. The luminous matter in these sheets is even, or diffuse, or divide into streamers. The red color in the lower edge of these bands often, and becomes remarkable changes, and becomes crimson, or purple, or pink, or red, or ochre or violet. The light, however, is weaker than was to be expected.

Too Much for a Bass.

A bat flew into the billiard room of an hotel at Greenwood Lake the other evening, and was knocked down by one of the players who struck it with a billiard cue. It fluttered behind some wine-cases, and was not found until next morning, when one of the boys pulled it from its hiding-place and tossed it into a boat, in which Coffair, the guide, who was about to cross the lake. A fisherman occupying the stern seat had aside his tackle and picked up the bat to examine it. He found that one of the creature's wings was broken, and in turning it over got his finger too close to its mouth. At an instant, four needle-like teeth were driven into his finger-tip, and with an exclamation of pain and anger he shook the bat loose and cast it out on the surface of the lake. As the man entered the boat, he started about to watch it, and his passenger sucked his finger and muttered a few deep-drawn imprecations.

Suddenly, with a swirl and splash, a magnificent bass, fully eighteen inches long, engulfed the bat in his capacious jaws and shot full length out of the water. "Served him right," said the victim of the creature's teeth, and, turning to the guide, he asked: "What's the matter with getting some more bats for bait?"

Before the guide could answer the bat rose to the surface, crushed, but still gasping. Coffair smiled as he said: "I thought that a black bass was hog enough to eat almost anything, but I guess a bat is a little too strong even for a bass."—Philadelphia Times.

That Descending Dove.

A New Haven, Conn., dispatch says: "While the Rev. Mr. Clark was preaching in East Haven Congregational Church, and had finished the prayer preceding the sermon, a dove alighted upon the center gallery, in full view of the congregation, and began cooing. When he had finished his prayer the dove perched on the gallery railing opposite the chrysalis. When he read the first chapter of St. John's Gospel at the thirty-second verse—'Knew the spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode above him'—the dove flew to the desk and perched upon the open page of the Bible. The pastor's text was from the fourth verse. It then settled upon the platform below the pulpit during the sermon. At the conclusion the pastor engaged in sacramental services and closed the Bible. The bird thrice stepped from the book and on again, and then nestled by its side. When he had concluded the pastor referred to the interruption and coincidence, and said that the winged visitor might be taken as emblematical of the spirit of the church. Then the bird perched upon the pastor's head. The effect was electrical, and many ladies were in tears. The pastor took the dove and held it to his breast and gave the benediction. It was Stephen Bradley's pet dove which had followed his sister to church. The rest of the family had tried to drive the little thing back, but it followed the young lady in, and flew by the way of the gallery stairs. Much comment is made in East Haven, and it is regarded as almost miraculous.—Albany Express.

Sidewalk vendors in Chicago pay \$100,000 a year to property owners. Steps are to be taken to compel the payment of these revenues to the city.