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Vol. IV.

DURHAM, N. C., SEPTEMBER 8, 1875.

No. 31

Late to Church.
Along the road, on either side,
The elder boughs are budding,
The meadow lands a rosy tide
Of clover bloom is flooding;
The sunny landscape is so fair,
So sweet the blossom-scented air,
That when I went to church to-day
I could but choose the longest way.
Louf sang the bobolinks, and around
The milk-weed flower the bees were
humming,
I sauntered on, but soon I found
Behind me there was some one coming.
I did not turn my head to see,
And yet I know who followed me,
Before Tom called me: "Kitty! stay,
And let me share with you the way!"
We did not mind our steps grew slow,
Or notice when the bell stopped ring-
ing,
Or think of being late, but, lo!
When we had reached the church, the
singing
Was over and the prayer was done,
The sermon fairly was begun!
Should we go in, should we stay out,
Press, boldly on, or turn about?
Tom led the way, and up the aisle
I followed—all around were staring—
And here and there I caught a smile;
I tried to think I was not caring;
And yet I blushed, I know, and showed
A face that like a poppy glowed.
For every one seemed saying: "Kate,
We all know why you are so late!"
Another Sunday, come! what will,
I mean to be at church in season;
But to regret this morning still,
I trust I never shall have reason;
For should I wear a wedding dress
A year from now, perhaps you'll guess
What Tom said to me when, to-day,
We walked to church the longest way!

Selected Story.

THE SERPENT BRACELET.

Stoneleigh Hall lifted itself a high
pile of gray, uncompromising masonry
against a dull sky. On the right, bare
hills arose, their ruggedness scarcely
mellowed by distance; and on the left
a wide stretch of marshy flats, with the
river crawling sluggishly through. For
the rest, there was only the broad turn-
pike road, narrowing in gray perspective
and a smoky cloud with a tongue of
flame visible here and there where the
tallest chimneys pierced it, to indicate
the position of the town.
Henry Lawrence, riding slowly along
the road, gazed wistfully towards the
Hall, and half checked his horse as he
came opposite the avenue gates. Return-
ing a few hours later, through the duski-
ness of early night, he found the win-
dows of the Hall all aglow with ruddy
light. There was no hesitation in his
manner now, as he rode immediately to
the stables, and himself attended to the
comfort of his horse. Evidently he was
perfectly at home with the place and its
surroundings.
Having accomplished this task, he
turned towards the house, but stopped
midway up the path. A tiny red spark
gleamed at him from the midst of the
dead leaves sown in sodden heaps;
and stooping he assured himself of the
actuality of the thing which struck
him with a sudden chill. Only a cigar,
yet holding its heart of fire, which
told that it had but a moment before
left the lips of the smoker. In an in-
stant he had the evidence of this mute
witness, and shut his heart against the
reasonings and palliations a less jealous
nature might have entertained. Cap-
tain Stoneleigh never smoked. There-
fore an intruder had been upon the
grounds; and who so likely as the man
on whom he had lavished all the bitter-
ness of his hate, George St. Mark?
Into a spacious room, with a great
fire blazing on the hearth, cumbered
with heavy old furniture, and occupied
by two persons—Capt in Stoneleigh
dozing in his great chair, and Louise,
his youngest daughter, crouched upon
an ottoman, building up air-castles and
fancying their outlines pictured in the
glowing embers. They both started as
Henry Lawrence entered, and gave him a
cordial welcome.

"Where is Eliza?" he asked.
At the instant she appeared upon the
threshold, rendering a reply, superfluous.
"Henry! I scarcely expected you to-
night. The wind has risen almost to a
gale, papa. I pity any poor creature
obliged to be out.
"Necessity, which knows no law, can-
not be expected to finch where inclina-
tion delights to venture. Even this
searching blast does not preclude the
possibility of clandestine amours, I
find."
"You are tired and chilled, and conse-
quently cross," Louise announced.
"You shall have neither wine and sugar-
cake to put you in a good humor." And
on hospitable thoughts intent, she flitted
away.
Captain Stoneleigh was doing again,
and Henry drew Eliza imperatively
aside.
"Are you deceiving me again? He
has been here to-night I know."
"Who has been here, Mr. Lawrence?
and in what manner have I ever deceiv-
ed you?"
"George St. Mark," he said, ignoring
the latter part of her query. "You will
not deny it?"
"I never deny the truth," she said
coldly.
"And this is woman's faith!" he
said.
"Man's injustice, rather," she retort-
ed. "Henry, will you never trust me?
Must you always imagine mountains of
intrigue where not a shadow of actual
intercourse exists?"
"Can I think?" he demanded.
"You assured me yesterday that you
were scarcely acquainted with that man,
and I believed you in the face of direct
evidence. This evening I have discov-
ered what a wretched man I have been."
Louise, sitting in with the woe and
sorrow, and to this momentary
retreat. Almost simultaneously
Henry entered, and, after a passing
salutation with Henry, he
of general assembly,
have been mistaken.
Their forms, which were
identical, and both possessed
blonds hair; but Eliza's waved and
glinted, while Miss Gresham's hair was
straight, and of a dead, changeless hue.
"Bye-and-bye, Henry rose to depart,
and the captain came out of his nap to
see his drawing on his gloves.
"You are not going away to-night?"
he cried out, in astonishment. "Don't
think of it?"
"I regret the necessity which will not
permit of my encroaching upon your hos-
pitality this time.
Louise followed him to the door.
"Have you been quarreling with El-
iza?" she asked.
"and if I have, little Lou?"
"she is so sensitive, she will not brook
complaint. Don't tell the death-knell
to your own happiness."
Eliza looked into the hall undecidedly
and then came swiftly toward them.
"Let us part friends," she said, exten-
ding her hand. "I could not sleep
to-night if I thought you had gone away
a stray."
"Forgive me if I judged you rashly,
Eliza."
"This once, yes. But you must trust
me fully."
He stooped over the hand he held,
and, doing so, noted the bracelet on her
wrist. A coiled serpent, with quivering
golden scales, and emerald eyes. He had
seen her wear it a hundred times before,
but to-night it impressed him unpleas-
antly.
"what an ugly ornament, Eliza! I
don't like it."
"Then, in token of future submission,
I will not wear it again."
The holidays were celebrated with all
manner of festivities at Stoneleigh Hall.
Henry Lawrence had been urged to take
up his abode there for the time, but de-
clined, preferring to ride to and fro from
his own place, situated in the vicinity.
They had been having tableaux at the
Hall, and Henry's part in the perform-
ance ending, he made preparations for a
quiet withdrawal. The next night was
to witness the conclusion of these gayer-
ties, which were to culminate in a mas-

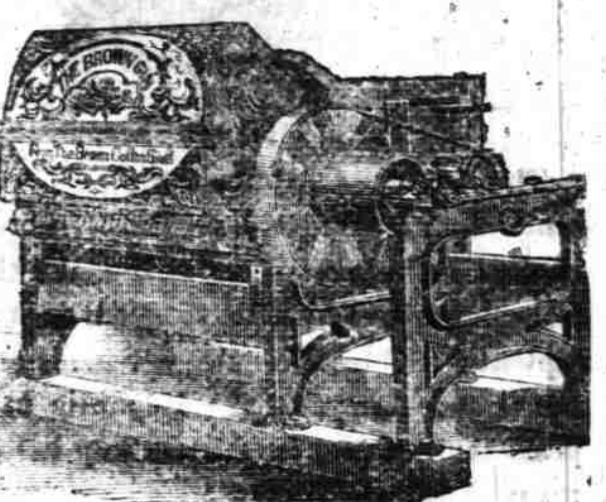
querade ball, and he wisely resolved to
preserve all surplus animation for that
occasion. He looked about him for El-
iza to utter a parting word, but not see-
ing her, he went disappointed out into
the moonlight. There was a light snow
on the ground, and between the inter-
stices of the shrubbery he caught the
flutter of a lady's garment. Two figures
paced across his view to and fro along
the half-obscured path. He drew back
into the denser shadow. A moment more
and the two parted, the lady coming hur-
ricly towards the house. There was no
mistaking that figure, the blonde hair
floating loosely about her neck as he had
seen it in the shrubbery in the table-
aux. As if to dispel any lingering
doubt he might entertain, she passed a
second to make sure she was not observ-
ed from the windows; a gust of wind
tore at her mantle, and on the bare arm
disclosed he caught the glint of the gold-
en scales and gleam of the green eyes be-
longing to the serpent bracelet.
This, then, was the regard of a woman
for her voluntarily given promise! He
strode freely down the garden path, hop-
ing to overtake her companion and make
sure of his identity also. In this he was
disappointed, but by the gate picked up
a scrap of paper, twisted and half burn-
ed and smothering it out, read in the
moonlight—"George St. Mark." There
was little rest for Henry Lawrence that
night. The jealous fiend held possession
over him again, and every nerve and
sinew quivered beneath his acute
torture.
With the early dawn he went out
upon the downs, at first walking with
all the impetus given by his restless spir-
it, and afterwards more steadily as he
brought himself to calmly survey his po-
sition. Out of the chaos of his tumultu-
ous impulses he deduced but one deci-
sion. He would never succumb, the
crushed victim of a designing coquette,
as some were at the ball that night.
The impetus he fancied that
a sharp gust across the path kept a
chase him, and as he turned the shrub-
bery revealed to him the moon, just
above the uncertain light as he
stood peering at the hill, from which the
sounds of argument were distinctly
waited to him. Below, every window
gave forth a volume of reflected light;
and above, a single ruddy light burned
steadily behind a gable pane. Sudden-
ly this last was removed, but after a mo-
ment replaced; this was repeated three
successive times, and then disappeared.
Henry's jealous intuitions received
this phenomenon as a token intended for
other eyes than his, and remembering
his resolution, he passed in. The ante-
room was quite dark, and as he entered,
he heard the rustle of garments, and felt
some one brush swiftly past him. A
second later, Louise appeared in the
door-way with a light, and carrying her
domino in her hand.
"Ah, little Lou," he said, sorrowful-
ly, "are you, too, leagued in this deceit?"
"You know, then? Be generous—do
not expose them!"
"Do not fear," he answered, bitterly.
"If a word could change the fact, I would
not utter it."
He drew her hand through his arm,
and went below, where the crowd in its
mingling of grotesque costumes carried
him forcibly on its tide as it ebbed and
flowed through the wide drawing-rooms.
He was surprised at his own fortitude
in bearing the blow, and philosophically
calculated his chance of dealing a coun-
ter thrust. Why not use the same
weapon as a foil?
Louise had left him; but he sought
her out again.
"Where you ever in love, Lou?"
"Not seriously," she laughed.
"How much do you care for me?"
"More than for any other man I know
except papa." She had caught his drift
already. "You are not plotting another
elopement for to-night?"
"You have ready wit, little mouse."
"but the necessity does not exist in
your case. It will never do."
"Listen to me, Lou. I cannot bear
that Eliza shall triumph over the woman
she will suppose her faithlessness has
inflicted. I will be true and tender to-
ward you, if you will trust your future
with me. Think of my humiliation oth-
erwise, and consent."

"It is eleven now. Give me an hour
to think of it."
Midnight came, and with it a genera-
l rush for the supper rooms. Louise
Stoneleigh and Henry Lawrence were
alone in the deserted saloon.
"Well!" he asked.
"If you do not retract within five min-
utes, I shall comply with your request."
He had it on his lips to assure her of
his inflexible resolve, but the expres-
sion was checked unuttered.
There was the slight bustle of an an-
nival, and a second later he faced his
niece, George St. Mark. Clinging to
his arm, his new made bride, was not
Eliza, but Miss Gresham.
The news struck the house with
electric speed, and instant confusion
reigned.
"do you wish your answer now?"
whispered Louise, mischievously, in Hen-
ry's ear.
"for Heaven's sake, don't betray my
folly! It was all owing to the bracelet."
"The bracelets, you mean. They
were fac-similes."
Henry's mistake was productive of at
least one good result. It cured him
of his grounds' jealousy, and more-
over proved the contested point that a
woman can keep a secret, for Louise did
not divulge her knowledge until his
own and Eliza's wedding-day.

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