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## BLANCHE;

OR,

## THE FIREMAN'S BRIDE.

BY WILLIE E. PAROR.

"I do not love him, father, and therefore cannot marry him. Surely you would not have me wed with one whom I hardly respect, and for whom I do not entertain the slightest affection."

Blanche Dubois bit her pretty lip as she ended, and placed her little foot firmly on the floor in the parlor, where she stood facing her parent.

"Love, Blanche, nonsense. There is no such a thing now a days. The humbug of undying love and unending affection has long since exploded. It might flourish in Acadia, and may be a prominent element in the realms of the poet located in the air but nothing else. There is no thing real and substantial in it. It is all hush and non-sense, fit only for sentimental maidens of sixteen, or thereabouts, who have only seen the world through the medium of romances, in which Bourgeois swears he will die for Belinda, and Belinda vows she can never be separated from her devoted Bourgeois. I am a-hamed of you, Blanche, that you indulge in such an exploded notion as love."

Mr. Dubois paused to watch the effect of his words. Blanche paled and grew red by turns as he spoke, and then answered.

"Did you ever love?"

"The question was a home thrust. It was a moment or two before the reply came."

"Have you any more ridiculous questions to ask? If so, I will answer them in a lump."

"No, father, until you answer this one, I will ask no other. When you married my mother, was it for love of her or the money she brought to you on the day of her wedding?"

"Mr. Dubois's face flushed with ill-concealed anger, as he answered,

"Blanche you are impatient."

"But there came no denial, and Blanche read in his countenance enough to substantiate the charge her heart had made. Was this the cause, she thought, of the early fading away of my loving and beloved mother? Even now I can recollect how agitated she appeared whenever her husband, was in her presence; as if she felt his cruelty and his indifference, though they were not framed in words. But her father was now angry. She saw this. It added conviction to her suspicions. Yet it would not do to anger him still more, by touching upon the chord she had so gently sounded, and which had awakened so harsh a response."

"Father!"

"Well, daughter."

"I did not mean to offend. Forgive me."

"I will Blanche. But as you love me, do not touch upon the subject again."

"And as you love me, father, do not speak to me of the marriage with Arthur Grey."

"Nay, now your silly mood comes on again. But hear me, Blanche. As my daughter you must do my bidding, and when I say that on next Christmas-Eve you will be the bride of Arthur Grey, I mean what I say."

"No father, you do not."

Mr. Dubois, unused to contradiction in matters of business, was somewhat astonished at this retort. He looked Blanche in the face for a moment. He saw there a fixidity of purpose which surprised him. What could it mean? Usually Blanche had yielded to all his motives. Why not in this case? Did she love another? He scouted the idea, and yet felt that there was some reason as yet unknown to him that made Blanche so firmly settled in her obstinacy.

"But I do, Blanche Dubois, and you will live to see it. What do you mean by this conduct? Have I not ever been a kind parent to you?"

"Yes."

"Have I not indulged you in every wish?"

"Yes."

And now when I have your happiness in view, why are you so contradictory and so obstinate?"

"I am neither the one nor the other, father," was the calm reply.

"But you are when you refuse to be the bride of a man as rich and respected as Arthur Grey."

"Arthur Grey is rich; true. He is respected for his richness, nothing more. He has the heart of a stone, and is as much of a man as the untutored savage. Nay, he is less than a savage; for an Indian can love, but he never. Father, I cannot marry him."

Once, twice, and the third time, Mr. Dubois paced the parlor, as his daughter's words fell upon his ear. Then he spoke again.

"You love another?"

A blush covered the cheeks of Blanche up to her temples. Mr. Dubois needed no other reply; but Blanche spoke:

"I do."

"You do!" he replied, started into astonishment.

"Yes father, I do."

"And who is it, pray?"

"Gerard Cole."

If Mr. Dubois was astonished before, he was thunderstruck with surprise now. The aristocratic merchant lifted up his hands in horror at the very thought of his daughter condescending even to utter the name of such a nobody, mechanic, and fireman, as Gerard Cole.

Despite her position, Blanche Dubois could not be amused at the wonder depicted upon the countenance of her father, as she mentioned the name of the one she loved. Such a suspicion had never entered the middle of the wealthy man. At last he found his tongue again.

"Blanche Dubois, breathe that name again and you are no daughter of mine. To think that you could stoop so low as even to notice such a person as this Cole, is a disgrace to you and your family. The daughter of a millionaire in love with a mechanic and a fireman! Preposterous!"

Mr. Parsy Dubois thought so; but his pretty daughter Blanche saw nothing preposterous in it. True Gerard Cole was a fireman, but she thought that an honor, instead of a badge of ignominy. They were a noble body of men; ever ready to sacrifice their own health, happiness, ease, and life, in saving the property and lives of their fellows. Where duty called them, there they went, regardless of the danger and the labor. But besides all this, Gerard Cole was no common mechanic. He has already won fame as an inventor, and his genius had been acknowledged by men of science, and his future was looked forward to with interest by those who labor to advance the interests of the human race. That her father knew this, Blanche had no doubt. He had often mentioned the name, but never daughter's. How he could call Gerard Cole a "nobody" when conscious of his genius, Blanche could not understand. The pride of birth and wealth had not crushed her heart over with the scales that enshrouded the heart of her father, whose only offerings were at the idol's shrine.

Her eyes, as yet, had not been dazzled by the glitter of station and the pomp and circumstance of wealth. Hence she could not see or feel as her father felt and saw.

"Gerard Cole a 'nobody,' and why?" she felt constrained to ask.

"Does he move in the circles in which you do?"

Blanche confessed he did not.

"Is he rich and respected?"

"Rich he is not, in this world's good; but he is rich in genius—riches which do not take to themselves wings and fly away. Respected he may not be by those who shine in circles of fashion, but by those who reverence true worth and who honor talent, even though found in the bosom of a mechanic, he is respected and esteemed."

Blanche paused. She felt that she had entered into quite a defence for Gerard. Perhaps in her eagerness to controvert her father, she had transgressed the bounds of maidenly modesty. But a moment's thought exonerated her from the charge, and she waited whatever reply her father had to make.

"It is useless for you to continue in your strain of communication, Blanche. I tell you that you must obey me. Arthur Grey has spoken to me upon the subject, and my decision has been given him. He comes to-night to hear it from your own lips. See to it, that it conforms with mine or you go forth to the world my daughter no longer. Your love for Gerard Cole is as ridiculous as your ideas of wealth and respectability. I will have none of it. Understand me for this conversation—already extended beyond reason, must never be renewed again. The duty you owe to your father is one not to be lightly cast aside. The child owes an obedience to the parent which no other consideration can outweigh. And your duty is made plain. Remember that you act in accordance with it!"

Mr. Dubois moved toward the door. Blanche fell at his feet and cried as she clasped his hands.

"And is there no other way? Must love be sacrificed to duty? Oh! father, please, pause before you consign me to a worse than living death."

But Mr. Dubois released his hands and, as he raised her up and bid her stand aside, added,

"I study your happiness in what I do. Your life is a bubble that will soon break. Your duty should make you love to yield to the wishes of your father, to whom you owe life, station, and power."

Blanche Dubois is alone in her own room.

In her hand is the miniature of a young man whose high forehead and clear eyes betoken genius and strength of mind. On the table by her side is a package of letters tied with a blue ribbon.

The miniature is the likeness of Gerard Cole, and the package of letters are those she has received from him from time to time.

She is weighing the chances. Will Love triumph, or will duty conquer?

She is repeating the final words of her

father Listen, 'The child owes an obedience to its parents which no other consideration can outweigh,' she repeats.—Is it so? And as she slowly repeats the sentence, there comes up before her a vision of a white face, and a feeble hand, and an eye fast closing in death. The face and the hand, and the eye, are now only to be seen in the picture memory presents but the pencil of a master painter could not present it more vividly or distinctly.

She is holding—as in that terrible hour—the feeble hand of her mother in her own. She is in an attitude of listening. 'My child,' she heard it now, as she heard it then, 'obey your parents.' And when I am gone, he alone will be left to guard and cherish you.'

Blanche's head falls upon her breast. Are there tears upon the miniature? If so, they betoken the struggle going on in the bosom of the maiden. The contest is between Love and Duty, and both are powerful.

Which shall conquer?

Lower and still lower bends the head of Blanche. To tears are added sobs—such sobs as only a heart rent by hope and fear, and passion and despair, can evoke. She sees before her two roads.—One, the beams of love shine upon; but over it hangs a father's curse and a mother's dying invocation disregarded. The other, the hand of duty is outstretched to lead her on, but love, and hope, and happiness shed not their beams upon it. All seems dark, and desolate, and dreary.—Do you wonder that the tears fall, or that sobs are uttered? Many such a battle has been fought; and some have triumphed over duty, and some have won a victory over love.

And such a victory as the last, is that of Blanche Dubois's.

Stern-faced Duty banishes the smiling face of Love.

The conflict is over.

Blanche takes up her pen to write to Gerard Cole. She dashes away the tears that will fall, lest they leave upon the paper she writes on, tokens of the agony she feels. When finished it reads as follows:

"GERARD:—I return to you your likeness and your letters. You will do the same with mine. I bid you farewell, and may God bless you; but we can never meet as we have met, or be as we have been. Do not ask why. Enough to know that a sense of duty demands a sacrifice of love, of hope, and of joy, and I have laid the offering upon the altar; not perhaps, with tearless eye, or a heart that does not ache; but a stern sense of duty buoyed me up, and the billows sorrow do not wholly overwhelm me."

"Your future will be a glorious one. I feel it I know it, I am proud of it. Go on in the path you have chosen, and though I do not ask you to forget me, cease to think of me other than a bright star, whose glory is now forever eclipsed. Have charity, and believe that, had I the shaping of my own destiny, this letter would not be written. But the mould is in other hands than my own, and I yield to a decree I cannot annul. BLANCHE."

Gerard Cole received the letter, the miniature and the package. He read the letter, and then crushing down the agony that settled in his bosom, he complied with her request. Accompanying the packet was a note. It was very brief.—It was as follows:

"LADY BLANCHE:—Necessity knows no law. I obey your wishes, though in doing so my heart is crushed. If in the dark path of duty in which you have now entered, there should ever come a sunny gleam, link it with the name of one who long loved, and still deeply and sincerely loves you. EVER

GERARD COLE."

Blanche read it, and crumpled it tightly in her trembling hands, for a moment ere she consigned it to the flames. Once reading was all sufficient. It was engraven in memory, never to be obliterated. The paper soon crumbled to ashes and as Blanche gazed, she said:

"And so the flames died out, Oh, father!—oh, mother! If you knew how cruel the fate was to which the act consigns me, you would not seek my happiness in this way."

But the mother could not, and the father would not bear. What had he to do with such a silly thing as love or affection? To him it was synonymous with all that was trivial and simple.

Arthur Grey is kneeling at the feet of Blanche. He has come to receive her decision, having already obtained that of her father. The one was favorable; the other—of course—must be so too.

"Mr. Grey, I consent to be your wife."

Is it Blanche who speaks? How changed in tone from the Blanche confronting her father and avowing her love for Gerard Cole.

"Thanks, Blanche."

The old man of the world could say no more. He may have read in her manner much that made him wonder. But if so he did not express it. Like Mr. Dubois, love was to him talked of, but never felt. He married, for position—nothing else. In all the circle of his acquaintance there was no more eligible match than the one about to be consummated.—Had there been, a Blanche would not have been asked to be his bride. She would bring him influence and wealth, and he cared little for the heart he trod upon in order to obtain it. In truth, he was a man after Mr. Dubois's own heart, and—so the father reasoned a most acceptable son-in-law. What Blanche thought

or felt, had nothing to do with it. She only had to obey. And this she was doing when she said to Arthur Grey, 'I will be your wife.'

She yielded to the embrace she could not avoid, though his very presence was well nigh repulsive to her.

So it went abroad that on the coming Christmas Eve, Blanche Dubois would be the bride of Arthur Grey. Many envied her the seeming good fortune for the bridegroom was one much sought after by managing mothers and scheming guardians.

It came to the ears of Gerard Cole, and it astonished him. It is true, he expected something of the kind and was partly prepared for it. But still the blow left. However his heart did not fail him, though he was wretched in the extreme.

At last the eventful evening came.

The guests were all assembled in the brilliantly lighted parlors of the dwelling of Mr. Dubois. The clergyman was present, and soon the door opened, admitting the happy pair. But stay, did we enter happy? We recall it. There was satisfaction in the demeanor of Arthur Grey—that was all. There the calmness of despair in the attitude of Blanche—nothing more.

Hark!

"One! two! three!"

"What does it mean? cry the guests, and their host quiets them by saying, 'it is nothing but the alarm of fire somewhere.'"

True, it is an alarm.

One, two, three!

Again the alarm is struck. Nearer and nearer comes the sound of the engines, and the voices of the firemen ring clear and distinct above the rumbering of the machines.

"It must be near by," says one, and the answer comes in the cry of the servant, 'The house is on fire, the house is on fire!' and nothing more is heard save the screams of the guests, and trampling of feet as they hasten to flee from the burning dwelling.

In less time than it takes us to write it, the room where the ceremony was to be performed is filled with smoke, and 'save yourself,' is each one's cry as he hurries towards the door.

First to endeavor to escape is the cowardly Arthur Grey. He thinks not of Blanche, who has fallen in a swoon to the floor;—no; he deems his life too precious to waste it in attempt to save another, and perhaps he lost himself; nor does he consider himself safe until he is beyond the burning dwelling in the open air.

The guests are all safe, but where is Blanche? Mr. Dubois seeks her among those who have escaped, but does not find her. In an agony of doubt he meets Mr. Grey and asked him for his bride. But Mr. Grey cannot answer. He is only conscious that he left Blanche in the room, when he turned to save his own precious life. The truth flashes upon the mind of the distracted father. She is still in the burning dwelling and will inevitably be lost. Do you wonder that he rushed up to where a band of gallant firemen are endeavoring to stay the progress of the flames and cries out,

"My child, my child! she is in the back parlor. Save her, and name your own reward."

They listen, and he that holds the pipe relinquishes it to the hands of another, and rushes madly into the flame-enveloped dwelling. Yes, madly for the venture is one few would make. The horror-struck witnesses of the noble self-sacrificing deed say each to the other, he is lost, he is lost; and for a few moments, an intense anxiety prevails. Then scorched and blackened and begrimed, he re-appears, having in his arms the form of Blanche. She is still unconscious.

One long, loud shout of joy, heralded the appearance of the noble man who saved the maiden from the terrible death to which she seemed doomed.

In a little time she recovered, and then her father sought her preserver and asked his name and his reward.

It was Gerard Cole.

His reward?

One month later, a new company assembled beneath the roof that sheltered Blanche and her father.

There had been a new betrothal, and now there was a happy bridal. And the one who stood by the side of Blanche was not Arthur Grey, but the nobody, the Mechanic, the Fireman.—Gerard Cole.—N. Y. Atlas.

Corn Crops at the West.

According to the Louisville Courier the present crop of corn throughout Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois and Tennessee, will be the largest ever grown. The planting rather late, but the summer has been unusually favorable, causing the crop to mature rapidly, with no danger of damage by the early frost.

The political campaign in Illinois, is growing very violent. Senator Trumbull recently charged that Mr. Douglas, before breaking with the Administration, was in conspiracy to force slavery on Kansas, and Mr. Douglas, having pronounced this false, Mr. Trumbull has reiterated the charge. Personal feelings are evidently becoming much inflamed.

A queer genius being asked why he did not attend the funeral of his wife replied—"that he could not leave his shop and that it was always better to attend to business before pleasure."

From The N. Y. Tribune.

It is now the policy of the Democratic politicians and journalists to belittle the agitation at the South for the revival, under the sanctions of law and public opinion, of the African Slave-Trade with our ports, just as the same politicians would, ten years ago, have scouted as an abolition lie any suggestion that the Missouri Restriction would be one day attacked and overturned. But in fact the Missouri Restriction and our laws declaring the African Slave-Trade piracy rested on the same basis, and were upheld by the same line of argument, and the fall of the former renders that of the latter exceedingly probable. As to the popular sentiment in either case, there can be no doubt that the North in 1848, regarded the Missouri Restriction with quite as profound and universal a devotion as now buttresses the Federal prohibition of the Slave-Trade, while the number at the South who earnestly desire the re-opening of the Slave-Trade is immeasurably greater than ever asked for or dreamed of the repeal of the Missouri interdict of Slavery Extension prior to Mr. Douglas's move in 1854. The very reason adduced, even so late as by Col. Orr a few days since for Southern appreciation of and gratitude for Mr. Douglas's Nebraska measure—namely, that, if it gave the South no actual territory, it nevertheless removed an invidious distinction, an odious and degrading imputation on their "peculiar institution"—is a far stronger reason for repealing the anti-Slave-Trade laws than for repealing the Missouri Restriction. The latter was in its origin substantially a division of the unoccupied area of the Union between Free and Slave Labor, and as such was fairly regarded as a compromise; but there is no pretense of compromise about the laws declaring the importation of slaves an act of piracy—for they necessarily imply that Slavery is *per se* a wrong and an outrage, which Governments are bound to forbid, resist and punish. The stupidest negro in the rice swamp of Carolina will comprehend instinctively that to hang the captain and mates, and imprison the seamen, of the captured slaver just brought into Charleston by a National vessel, and liberate her cargo of Africans, will be to admit that he ought not to be held in Slavery.

Under the policy of the founders of the Republic, the fatal contradiction thus given by our anti-Slave-Trade laws to the fundamental assumption of Slavery was by no means so palpable. When Washington, Jefferson, Madison and their contemporaries treated Slavery as an undoubted evil, and a flagrant contradiction to the fundamental basis of our Republic, but nevertheless an evil which Time must be allowed to overcome, they logically forbade the extension of that evil, and confined it to the soil in which its roots were already firmly imbedded. "Give time," they fairly urged, "for the principles of American Liberty to work out their legitimate results, and Slavery will pass away, as serfdom died out as the deer, the Indians, vanish before the steadily advancing footsteps of civilized man." This view was grateful to conservatives, and to men of tender conscience but large appetite for luxury and none at all for labor, who dreaded future damnation but were loth to surrender the present profits of slaveholding.

Thus half a century glided quietly away, and Louisiana, Florida, Texas, were successively acquired with Slavery already established therein, so that pretends for acquiescence and downy pillows for delicate consciences were still available.

But when the bold step of opening free territory to Slavery was resolved on, the old apologies, the old opiates, would no longer serve. It was necessary now to affirm that Slavery was either a positive, unmixable good, or else an affair of climate and industrial adaptation, with no moral character whatever, but to be cherished or rejected in any State as local reasons should suggest. Now negro inferiority, negro subordination as a Divine ordinance, negro development under the rule and discipline of white owners and gravitation toward the lowest barbarism when left to themselves, became necessary assumptions, without which the Nebraska policy could not logically be defended. "Popular Sovereignty"—the inalienable right of each community, each sovereign State, to make such laws as it should deem best—was of course affirmed and built upon.

So far, all went smoothly; but the fatal necessity wherewith un-sound though plausible promises tend to damaging conclusions could not be evaded. At once, the earnest and ardent Pro-Slavery zealots, to whom the Presidential aspirants had held out Popular Sovereignty as a bait, jumped at it with hearty zeal, and began to make a use of it not designed by its authors. "Yes," they said, "let us have more Slave Territory; but let us also have more slaves to render that territory available. Let us have Popular Sovereignty; but let this imply the right to bring new slaves from Africa into a Slave State as well as the right to send our born slaves into the territories and prepare them to become Slave States." What answer do the champions of the Nebraska bill and the Dred Scott decision make to this demand? Or rather, what answer can they make that will not admit the rightfulness of fresh importation of slaves whenever any State shall see fit? We can imagine none that is not either an assent, or a denial of the premises on which they rest their justification of the Nebraska bill.

Hence we are not surprised to find in *The Southern Cultivator* for August an elaborate argument in favor of re-opening the African Slave-Trade, by its editor, Dr. Daniel Lee, formerly a Whig in Buffalo and an American editor in Rochester, N. Y. The Dr. seems to have got bravely over the radicalism of his greener days and thus expatiates:

"The most striking features and apparent defects, in Southern agricultural labor, have their origin not in the nature of negro Slavery, but in legislative restrictions and prohibitions, by which this system of productive industry was tied down in 1808, and finally made piracy by an act of Congress! It was gratuitously assumed by Mr. Jefferson, Dr. Franklin, and other eminent patriots of the Revolution, that the curse of an offended Deity rested on this system of labor; and to fulfill, or at least give the semblance of truth to this sinister vaticination, the five great powers of Europe, every Administration from that of Washington to the present inclusive, the literature and the clergy of the civilized world, have combined their best efforts for the last half century."

"Truth and the God of truth have alone been adequate to defeat the Anti-Slavery purposes of the leading Governments of the civilized world since they pronounced the trade in African negroes a crime, and affixed thereto the outlawing and death penalty awarded to pirates.—It was assumed at the close of the Revolution that laboring white men were better than African, whether slaves or free, to develop the agricultural resources of the whole continent, and that negroes were a curse to the country. It was in this spirit, at a time when twelve of the thirteen original States held slaves, that the famous Ordinance of 1787, introduced into the Continental Congress by Mr. Jefferson, was passed, which the Free States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin have since been formed. Instead of allowing Southern planters to go into the markets of the world to purchase negro laborers on the best terms they could find, the supply of these laborers was rudely cut off, as though to buy a slave for agricultural purposes was one of the worst of crimes. This fanatical dictation has ever kept the supply of planting operatives at the South far below what it would have been had this great industrial interest been wisely permitted to regulate its operations by the just and natural laws of trade. By despotically setting aside these salutary laws of supply and demand, our tillage processes have been carried on to great disadvantage; and one of the most obvious effects has been a continuous effort to make the most of a comparatively little labor by extending it over too much surface of soil."

There are three or four pages of the *Cultivator* in this vein, but we need not quote them to show the drift of the article. We desire only to show that the purpose of re-opening the Slave-Trade is seriously entertained by a strong and rapidly increasing party at the South, and that the arguments they use cannot be answered without self conviction by any logical advocate of the Nebraska bill. Here is one more passage, with which we must close:

"If to buy or sell the labor of apprentices for life is immoral, then it should be at once discontinued; but it is not wrong, the advantages to accrue therefrom should be not less available in Africa than in Virginia. The Slave Trade is either carried altogether too far for our credit and interest, or not far enough to do anything like justice to our system of agricultural industry. Either give it a fair chance to live, and grow with the commerce and influx of Europeans, or else carry out the Anti-Slavery policy of the founders of the Republic. The former is the wiser course of the two; and it is one which is most likely to prevail."

If that be not as full of cogency as an egg is of meat we are greatly mistaken.—How long can a majority be expected to hold out against it in a Slave State, and especially in a young, thinly-peopled, negro-buying Slave State?

Murdoch the tragedian, had a fight a day or two ago, on his farm in Cincinnati, with an eagle, which was flitting in his farm yard, and wished to appropriate to his own use a calf, having first plucked out the animal's eyes. The bird of Jose met the hero of the buskin, and, in the fight the tragedian got worsted and had to retreat. His son, a lad of nine years, with the spirit of a yankee boy, went to his father's aid, and laid the imperial bird out with a shot from a fowling piece. He measured six feet two inches from tip to tip of his wings, and will be preserved as a memento of Master James' prowess.

Run away last night, my wife, Bridget Coole. She has a tight neat body, and has lost one leg. She was riding behind the priest of the parish through Fermoy; and as we never was married, I will pay no debts she does not contract. She lisp with one tooth, and is always talking about fairies, and is of no use but to the owner.

Phelim Coole, his X mark.

IDLENESS—A hungry wolf is not more dangerous to a flock of sheep, nor a cat to a mouse, than an idle man is to the industry of a neighborhood.