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An Interesting Story.

A LESSON FROM LIFE.

BY A. W. LINCOLN.

How much of human suffering can be traced in the countenance of a person. The expression of the eyes often reveals some hidden secret of the heart. Sadness was pictured upon the face of Edith May, as she sat in the deepening twilight, at the close of a sultry summer day.

She murmured to herself, "Oh, how I have at times wished to lie down and rest; to sleep that last sleep which has no awakening. There are moments when I have this retainable desire, to fly from my own existence, when all past reminiscences crowd upon me.— The parting, the last look and the last words of endearment from my loved one are engraved upon my memory."

She took from a box a letter, and after pressing it to her lips, she carefully unfolded it, reading aloud—

"SACRAMENTO, Oct. 6th, 1872.

"EDITH, DARLING MINE:—My hand is tremulous, and my brain confused, when I endeavor to give utterance to my feelings in this lowly and tedious separation. As I gaze into the dim future, which seems so long ere I can again enfold thee to my bosom, despair takes possession of me, and I am utterly miserable. Still, dear Edie, in all of my darkness and gloom, a little silver ray lights up the best assurance that you love me, and that your faithful heart, so trusting and true, has entwined itself around my life.

"I am yearning, beloved Edie, for one word from you. Write to me, darling, without reserve, and tell me your every thought and feeling; and, oh, tell me if this painful separation is as painful to you as to myself.

"I believe that, in this parting, our trust in each other will become strengthened, and may the loving influence of a devoted heart shield you from all the rude storms of sorrow and despondency during my absence. God is with us both, through Him I bless you, and in Him I place my trust.

"Thine ever,

"CHARLES W. SCOTT.

"Edith May, Macon, Ga."

"Oh, so hard," said she, "absent one year, and this dear, dear letter is all I have to treasure. When I think of the space that intervenes between us, it adds ten-fold to my loneliness; but when I think of the long, weary months of separation that roll between us, my soul is filled with anguish, and never until now, have I realized the depth of my affection."

Edith was an only daughter of Judge May. At an early age she was left motherless, and the Judge adopted a daughter as a companion for her.

Edith May was not beautiful, but she possessed a bright and intelligent mind, while generous and lofty emotions dwelt within her. The expression of her deep blue eyes was filled with tenderness, and ever ready to yield in sympathy. She loved Charles Scott, and she had always felt that they were united by destiny; yet during his long silence, dark forebodings oppressed her.

Leona, the adopted daughter, was very brilliant. She was endowed with personal beauty, and she had a peculiar gracefulness of manner which rendered her very prepossessing. She was amiable and pleasing, and a universal favorite. Yet she was a vain coquette, and trifled with one suitor after another, casting them away regardless of their fate.

She was not destitute of penetration, and she knew that Edith loved Scott, and she became in heart her rival, for she had long cherished the hope of winning him to herself.

Among her many acquaintances was one named Willis Danvers. He was a poet and in taste and feeling assimilated with her romantic life. But love had never vibrated upon the chords of his heart until he knew Leona. Although she was a woman without much character, she was his ideal of true loveliness.

He declared his passion, and offered his hand and was accepted; still he had many doubts in regard to her sincerity.

Willis lived in a confiding and absorbing love; while Leona was only bound to him by the sympathies of attraction.

One day he called to take her to ride, but finding her absent from home, he invited Edith to accompany him, which she did.

When Leona returned Edith said, "My dear sister, I have to thank you for a pleasant ride. I took your seat by the side of Willis, not expecting to fill your place, but hoping to allay in

part the disappointment of Willis, when he learned that you had forgotten your engagement."

"I did not forget my engagement; I did not wish to go, and I am very glad that you accompanied him." And she laughed with triumph as she wondered to herself how Scott would receive this intelligence.

A short period after this occurrence Leona joined Edith in her room, saying, "I have a secret to communicate to you. Will you swear to keep it?"

"I bind myself by no oath, my sister, if you cannot trust my promise."

"Well, may I tell you?"

"Certainly, my dear, if you desire to do so, and your disclosure shall remain a secret with me."

"I am betrothed," whispered Leona.

"This is no secret; I have long suspected the same."

"Why don't you ask me to whom?" continued Leona.

"Willis Danvers, of course," returned Edith.

"Oh, no. Charles Scott is the man."

Edith paled and sank into a chair, while Leona continued—

"I have no desire to inflict suffering upon you, and I hope you will be calm, and not take too much to heart matters that we are powerless to change. You always called me cold, and deemed me a heartless coquette. Edith, you misjudge me. I am not not the cold nature that I appear; my love is a part of my life. I have loved Chas. Scott since I first met him, with an intensity that I can no longer conceal. And our love is mutual."

"Impossible!" said Edith, shuddering.

Edith had a proud spirit, and she felt grossly insulted, as well as stunned, by the shock of this revelation; yet she remained calm, until the door was closed upon her, and she was alone, when she gave vent to her feelings and a paroxysm of grief burst from her, and tears fell thick and fast, like dripping rain.

"Alas," sobbed she, "I have felt that Leona loved Scott; now I am sure of it. And Charles Scott, whom I have deemed so true and honorable; he whom I have trusted with such unwavering faith, has deceived me, and shamefully wronged the heart that is all his own. Had he confessed all, I would have released him with my blessing, for I would not be an obstacle in the path of his future happiness. I was too trusting to doubt them for a moment."

"Merciful heaven! help me and grant me power to sustain myself in my hour of trial; give me strength to pass this ordeal. I could leave the bright and beautiful world without a pang; but to live a life of darkness and solitude, sorrowing all my days, is worse than death. For the dread of death is relieved by bright visions of eternity, while dead affection withers to decay, like the flower which fades to bloom no more."

The day following, Willis came to see Edith, and his pale face told the sad tale of a discarded lover.

His light brown hair was carelessly thrown back, revealing his pale, marble-like brow and his liquid blue eyes wore an expression of sadness, yet the same genial smile played upon his thin lips as usual, as he gave Edith a sweet little poem on "Friendship," saying, "I must live for that alone; as friendship develops out of love, it becomes a spiritual bond of companionship. I come to you, Edith, in the friendliness of a brother, where there is no waste of loving words, and where every thought vibrates in kindness and sympathy, pure and unselfish. Edith, my love, life has faded into oblivion. I had realized the dearest wish of my anticipation; I had found the ideal of my life-dream, and I painted her in my visions as one who was pure enough to mingle with the angels of a beautiful world. I had found the star of my love, and placed it in the cloudless heavens of eternal bliss. But like the bright spirits from the higher realms she vanished, and I awoke from the bright vision, to find myself alone, and no echo answers back to the heart that is enshrouded in the sombre shades of mourning, for one loved, though lost."

Edith had expected this, and she poured out her heart-felt sympathy.— She knew the pain that such a blow inflicted, and it cost her an effort to restrain her tears.

"This is very wrong in Leona," said she; "she should not have promised

her affections when she had no heart to give you. Yet the lesson of life's disappointments we all must learn. I have almost doubted the existence of anything true, and thought it an impossibility for friendship to exist, but I bless Heaven that I am enabled to see that my doubts are against truth, for I appreciate your friendship, and as a brother and sister, we will endeavor to look kindly upon those who have wronged us so deeply, and we will throw the beautiful veil of charity over their destiny."

After several months, Charles Scott returned to Macon.

Leona met him on the street with joy beaming from her eyes. He approached her, and expressed much pleasure at meeting her, yet seemed very melancholy, and unresponsive to her smiles of greeting; for the power of association still clung to his memory, and he could not banish Edith from his mind.

"Leona, were I to live a century, I can never pass such an ordeal again.— When you communicated to me the sad intelligence, that Edith loved another, I saw in imagination a grave; she, the joy of my life, was dead to me, and buried from my heart. I saw another open grave, and I long to nestle in the bosom of mother Nature, and sleep in forgetfulness of the past. Distance and separation were hard enough to endure, still I lived in the gleaming hope of her love-cheering words, which always threw a magic spell around me, and came like thoughts from heaven. But your words came instead, and folded the draping clouds of distrust around my life, and my heart was isolated, and I could only seek that Help which never fails us."

Leona was silent; she did not respond to his lamentations, but she earnestly pressed him to accompany her home. He refused the invitation, having other engagements to fulfil, but promising to visit her the same evening, they parted.

As she reached the house, she ran to Edith, dizzy with excitement, exclaiming:

"Charles has come; I met him, and he is going to spend the evening with me."

Edith had schooled her affections and had acknowledged the fickleness of his heart, and was resigned; yet as she heard this news, a feeling of sadness oppressed her with a leaden weight.

Evening came, and Leona dressed herself in exquisite taste, looking very lovely in her azure blue silk, so becoming to her delicate complexion, with soft dewy pearls woven in her auburn hair. She was radiant, and revealed in raptures at the expectation of receiving Charles Scott.

After completing her toilette, she turned to Edith and remarked, carelessly:

"How simple you are dressed, always in black; only I notice that, for a change, you have placed a white japonica in your black hair. Shall you see Charles?"

"Certainly, if he asks for me," replied Edith, and as she answered all of the animation in her eyes faded away.

Charles Scott made his appearance and Leona met him at the door, her face wreathed in smiles as she welcomed him. He had not more than seated himself, when he, in an embarrassed voice, inquired for Edith.

As Leona went in pursuit of her sister, she said to herself:

"I have nothing to fear, for Edith's affected coolness will reassure him that the old flame has died out, which will prove my words true in his opinion."

Edith entered the room, looking as white as a lily, yet her sweet, childish face gave evidence of pleasure at meeting him. After a few casual remarks were exchanged, they were surprised by the entrance of Willis Danvers.

"Welcome home, my dear fellow," he exclaimed; and as he shook hands warmly, he remarked:

"You are but little changed, apparently."

"I have only grown old several years in experience," returned Charles.

As the gentlemen were engaged in conversation, Leona betrayed an air of restlessness, while her face wore a malicious expression, and was flushed with excitement.

Edith feigned indifference to all around her. Whatever her feelings

might have been, she kept them all within herself.

Willis realized Edith's unpleasant position, and seated himself beside her, hoping to disengage her mind from past associations. He playfully commenced kissing her in a free and brotherly manner; he plucked the japonica from her hair, and fastened it in the bosom of his vest, which was evident proof to Charles, (who was watching them,) that Leona's words were true, that Edith loved Willis; for his freedom assured him that they were lovers.

As Leona witnessed this demonstration of freedom on the part of Willis, she was much pleased, for it aided her in carrying out her stratagem, and she felt safe.

After an evening of mingled emotions of pain and pleasure, the little group separated for the night.

As the gentlemen passed out together, both suffered under the embarrassment of the present state of affairs, each believing the other engaged to the one they had previously claimed their own. Neither mentioned the painful subject, and both were blindfolded by the artful stratagem of Leona.

Time passed on; Willis was very kind to Edith, hoping in a measure to fill the vacancy in her lone heart, and to forget his own sorrow in ministering to her.

There was no place so pleasant to Charles as the beautiful home of Edith. Not only had the place a charm for him, but he longed to revel in her presence, though she was lost to him forever. So he became a frequent visitor, and Leona entered his health.

Charles Scott was very wealthy. He had been reared in luxury from childhood, yet was utterly destitute of that aristocratic pride that many would assume under the same circumstances.

Personally he was handsome. He was of dark complexion, and the outline of his features denoted a very marked character.

His dark eyes were large and penetrating, shaded by long lashes, giving a pensive expression; his lips were slightly compressed, and denoted a firm determination to accomplish any object that he might desire.

One day he strolled out in the shaded grove, where he was wont to go in days gone by.

He passed along the winding pathway under the moaning trees, till he came to a laughing brooklet, where he seated himself on a moss-grown rock. The air was filled with nature's music, and there was no mortal sound to break the sacred spell.

He sat some time gazing into the thick shrubbery when he beheld a form, and soon discovered Edith with a book in her hand.

Deep commotions were stirred within his soul as he approached her.

"Why are you companionless in this secluded dell?" he asked.

She looked up, and a sunbeam stole over her countenance as she remembered the time when last they met there.

"Do I intrude?" queried Charles.

"Oh, do not go from me," she returned; "for your presence reminds me of an early dream; I hope we are friends, if estranged in heart."

"I should sincerely regret it, were there any ill-nature entertained in the heart of either," said Charles; "for whether we have acted right or wrong, we must be governed wisely, and desire the future happiness of each other.— Past confidence entrusted to either cannot be recalled. My prayer is that your life may be pleasant as you float on into the far realm of abode of love, and that your pure heart may never be blighted by the sad lesson of disappointed hopes."

"Charles! What mean you? Pray, explain yourself."

"Edith, I would not give offence," returned Charles; "I referred to your engagement; Willis is indeed best."

"False! Oh, heaven! how false!"

"One word," hurried Charles, "if you would not distract me."

"I am not engaged," said she, firmly, and with an emphasis that could not be misunderstood; "my heart is free, and as stainless as the snow."

And looking heavenward through blinding tears, she said:

"Father, forgive those who have so deeply wronged me."

Charles wound his arms around her, and was about to draw her nearer, when she shrank from him, crying, "Release me!"

"Oh, tell me, Edie, dearest of my life, answer me this: Why have you discarded me? Have you forgotten the deep devotion of other days, and which still lives within my soul?"

"You love my sister," said she.

"By the hopes of Heaven, I swear that I never loved but thee; I am not guilty of the stain that you place upon me; my life-dream was centered in you, and my heart is unchanged. Oh, believe me, my Edie, and trust me still."

"My sister's own words confirm my statement."

"Is this possible, that Leona is such a—"

"Hush!" broke forth Edith; "speak not a harsh word against her."

"Alas! 'Tis now that I can account for the pallor of thy sweet face, which, like a snow-drop, stands out pure from all treachery and deceit."

"Distrust me never," clasping her in his arms, he said, "Come nearer, my little dove, and find thine ark of safety within my soul. And now, tell me, darling, if you love me still?"

"Yes," she answered, firmly; and he sealed her lips with loving caresses.

The lovers were again united, and the same evening, when the little group were assembled at the house of Judge May, all, save one, were made happy in the knowledge of restored affection.

"Willis, I thought you had won my treasure from me," said Charles.

"A great mistake," replied Willis.

"And I believed you engaged to Leona," added Edith.

"A double mistake," said Charles. Leona pleaded forgiveness, adding: "This has been a lesson for life to me."

Poetry.

FOR THE LADIES.

BY A LADY.

I am writing to the ladies,
Of the fashions as they go,
And if they mean to follow them
I would really like to know!
It is getting to be the fashion
For all to have their will,
And if they are opposed at all
To petition for a bill.

It has got to be the fashion,
If you are married to a man
With a pocket full of money,
To get it if you can;
And if he won't let you have it
To do with as you like,
Tell the people he abuses you
And scold you day and night.

If he should chance to grumble
About your talking so,
Tell him you won't be scolded
By any man you know,
Tell him that you will follow
In your mother's footsteps still,
But will go a little farther,
And sue him for a bill.

And now for a petition
To some lawyer that you know,
And charge him with severity,
Just as the fashions go,
Be sure place an injunction
On all that he can claim,
And tell him when you've done it
He is all the one to blame.

Now make a proposition,
That if he to you will give
A certain amount of money,
You will go home with him to live;
But if he will not do it,
Be revenged on him you will;
You will do your best to ruin him,
Get all and get a bill.

There is Livingston and Heaton,
To help you they're the men;
And Ashbel Peck sits waiting
To wield the ready pen;
While Heath will do the grinning,
To give dignity to the scene,
And then they're sure of winning
As all before has been.

Now would it not be better
To let such fashions be,
And do the very best you can
To live in peace and harmony?
Let patience be a virtue,
Let love your bosom fill,
And remember, in His own good time,
God will give you all a bill.

And now I say to one and all,
Don't follow such a course,
For 'tis a shame and a disgrace
To sue for a divorce.
There is a better fashion
To follow if you will;
Honor and respect your husbands,
And not sue them for a bill.

Selected Miscellany.

From the Maryland Union.

GOSSIPING.

BY NELLY MARSHALL MCAFEE.

Under the guise of respectability Society indulges in many petty sins; but, among them all there is not one so contemptible, and so shameful in its nature, or so harrowing in its consequences as the pernicious habit of gossiping.

"In fact there is nothing makes me so much grieved As that abominable tittle-tattle, Which is the curl so much eschewed by human cattle!"

How many hearts that once beat high with hope and happiness have

been crushed as low as the common dust upon which we tread, by a few, brief, trifling words uttered sometimes in thoughtlessness, but oftentimes in malice! How many domestic sanctuaries have been invaded—how much happiness has been destroyed forever through the disgusting machinations of evil-minded gossips!

This sin prevails in every walk of life. To envy and jealousy alone it undoubtedly owes its existence. There are so many individuals in this world whose minds are narrow, and whose capabilities are limited. They are always angry when they are dealing with them in so niggardly a manner, and they are forever filled with spite towards those more gifted than themselves, and therefore seek every opportunity to blacken the characters of their intended victims by the most artful insinuations, and the boldest persiflage.

The more stainless the reputation, the greater their zeal. The loftier the mark, the higher their ambition to strike the white center of the target. It is a matter neither of consideration nor care to them that upon tender and sensitive natures their wounds are always mortal.

They are worse than murderers. The latter aim only at the destruction of physical existence, the former seek to kill the soul, to crush fibres of the heart, and wither up every good impulse, and destroy all trust in human nature. Pity or compunction are unknown emotions in their range of feelings. They know full well that their crime is not punishable by law—and therefore their most virulent attacks of opprobrium are ever directed against those natures that are refined and delicate enough to shrink from publicity.

Like red-lipped Lamias they "whistle down to things unseen." What is hidden in darkness they endeavor to draw out and display in the most garish glare of light; if the victim writhes they laugh and jeer at his torment, and no matter what secret may be hidden in a soul's solemn sanctuary—they seek to remove the veil from the sacred altar, and are triumphant in the defilement.

The splendor of virtue, or nobleness, or heroism, they toil to tarnish with an untrusting perseverance worthy a better cause. And wherever they chance upon a happy household—where

"Joy is duty, and love is laid," and life is full of sunny comfort and hearts are light with cheer, they never rest contented until they have at least striven to determine its foundation.

How much truer, nobler and better women would be if they struggled to attain a higher level of education, and devoted to intellectual pursuits, just the hours they usually fritter away in idle talk! *Idle talk!* This is a kind of gossip quite distinct from the other, because less dangerous and harmful in its effects, but its influence is almost equally deleterious upon the minds of those who indulge in it. Idleness is its parent, and if it be fostered much it usually degenerates into the darkest species. How many women that each of us know neglect their domestic duties to watch the movements of some envied neighbor; to mark her going-out, and coming-in, her attire, her purchases, her very gait upon the street, and to pry into every action that could by any stretch of the most vivid imagination be supposed to wear an air of mystery. With what unctious delight the first and faintest intimation is seized that can be seized as a source of alimony; and how minutely in all its bearings is the subject discussed with every "nearest and dearest" one of "ten thousand friends," who of course repeat the story again and again each one unfortunately gaining and giving additional particulars with every repetition until at the last the originators can not trace the faintest resemblance to their pristine conceptions.

Innocent women upon whose fame no breath of scandal ever before rested, have more than once had the cup of shame and humiliation forced to their lips by this very scandal-mongering process. And they have drunk it in the bitterness of spirit, and although they turn from the gossips in loftiest scorn doubt not they were none the less wounded in their profoundest and tenderest feelings. God help these proud and sensitive natures, upon which slander fastens relentlessly its poisonous and terrible fangs!

Is it not strange that women so debauched in their prerogative as to indulge in mischievous gossip when there is so much noble work in the world to which they might turn their attention, and as reward bring honor and distinction to their sex? Kindness, gentleness, forbearance, those are the social qualities expected in woman. And yet with what different and appalling ones we too often meet. And upon what petty matters we find their interest culminating.

Their conversations instead of glowing with high and elevated thoughts consists of nothing but senseless satirical chatter about this or that neighbor's affairs. And how soon if an attempt is made to engage their attentions and discuss ennobling themes, how soon does the daring innovator upon their social customs find he or she has soared beyond their comprehension.

We would not have it understood that we are speaking of the sex otherwise than generally, and not particularly. Though there are some we all know of whom better things might be expected—but, who alas! delight in nothing so much as gossip. Let these but find a more gifted sister, possessing a high-toned and sensitive nature that painfully vibrates at every unsympathetic touch, and mind that despises their aimless mode of life—and oh! what malicious joy will they attack her in her most vulnerable point, deride the talent which they cannot hope to complete, and mock at the tender womanliness which they do not possess. Her offence is that she has dared to shine with a light superior to their own, and matters not how unjustly she may be treated. Not being as weak and false as they are makes her amenable to punishment, and they relentlessly inflict it.

From the tongue of the gossip no human being is safe! Even the most sacred relationship is sometimes powerless to silence her. It is not always the stranger who suffers. Often, father, mother, brother and sisters, husband and children are afflicted just as well.

Nor are the women alone in discussing other people's business. There are also small-minded, narrow-souled men who are weak and cowardly enough to find amusement and entertainment in a similar occupation. It is to be devoutly hoped that their number is small, for of all despicable created beings, a male gossip is the most to be shunned and religiously and pertinaciously avoided and abhorred.

The sphere of action with women is limited, and though their resort to such a method of diversion is utterly reprehensible, that man with his varied interests, his out-of-door life, his constant pursuits and the thousand and one things suggested by the progressive age, that man should find delicate and trivial and contemptible amusement can only be explained by ascribing his taste to some incurable intellectual defect.

Gossiping in a glance seems trifling in its nature, and is apparently unworthy strict attention—but doubt not that it is *mere injurious in its effects upon the social system of the enlightened world than many sins which are committed as "venial" in the calendar of moral crimes and infractions on the laws according to the statutes of our State and country.*

It lowers the standing of morality; it creates dissensions, it propagates family and neighborly feuds, and it awakes bitterness and animosity in even the gentlest natures. Not only does it inflict sorrow upon the victims—but with its malignant influence it utterly debases the soul of all its votaries.

Common sense convinces us of this. For is it not natural to suppose if a person cherishes envious and uncharitable feelings, and views mankind with jealous distrust, and mistakes good for evil, and continually suspects wrong, is that man morally affected? Does he not daily sink lower in the scale of virtue? Is he not prone to judge others by the workings of his own heart? and when he finds there nothing but hatred and malice—does he not unjustly condemn the neighbor whom he esteems "no better than himself?"

Oh! if the women—the brave true women of the land would only band together to banish this sin from their midst, and never allow the tongue of the gossip to be heard at their firesides. If they would only compel those around them to deal gently with the refined and the sensitive, and to be tender with all their own sex who are cast out upon the world like solitary waifs, and whose spirits are often humbled by the might of poverty, some of whom were perhaps once unused to labor, but who with change of circumstance are forced to toil for even the bread they eat. The voice of the gossip, when more favored by fortune, mocks at the anguish of such—treats with scorn all exhibitions of perseverance and energy, and finally stabs their reputations in the dark with false and cruel blows. It is this voice which should be silenced.— It is the heart that throbs beneath it that should be taught to realize this great sin its own daily commits and to "mend its ways" in humble contrition, lest the "dark days" come upon it, in turn, when it too will learn to "Curse the social lies that wraps us from the living truth!"

"What a nuisance!" exclaimed a gentleman at a concert, as a young boy in front of him kept talking in a loud voice to a lady by his side. "Did you refer to me, sir?" threateningly demanded the boy. "Oh, no; I meant the musicians there, who keep up such a noise with their instruments that I can't hear your conversation," was the stinging reply.

"What are you about, my dear," said his mother to a little boy, who was idling about the room and casting furtive glances at a gentleman who was paying a visit. "I am trying mamma to steal papa's hat out of the room without letting the gentlemen see it, for papa wants him to think that he is out."