

Literature.

NELLIE THE DANGEROUS.

"Very well; wait till she comes, girls that is all," quoth I, amidst general flutterings and feminine cries of indignation. It was the cosy old home at Newbury, cold enough, too, we found it there, but Mrs. Haydn only kept up the better fires, and we had a better excuse for gathering about them.

There was Lou and Vivia—and I need not say to any friend of theirs, after that, that Doctor Guy, and Philip also, were every evening in our horizon, and my respectful self, Belle Stanley and Otto Winstanley. It was just after dinner, and we were all in the library; Vivia was sitting near me, as I think the little puss was fond of doing, reading out to me here, and there, a line from "Geraldine's Courtship" that happened to please her, and occasionally casting a side glance over at Philip, who looked half jealous; Lou was teaching Dr. Guy to crochet, with the drollest little pursed up face imaginable; Belle and Otto were playing chess, and also, if I am not much mistaken, flirtation; Mrs. Haydn and Polly were doing over a couple of neighbors' characters; and I, having read Nellie Middleton's letter, had brought down on myself a general storm of indignation for warning them to look out—the men for their hearts, the girls for their lovers; in reply to which I made the answer with which this story commences, and was put down by Belle Stanley, who, I think, has small notion of having Otto interfered with.

"Girls, Mr. Martial is simply teasing us. I have seen Nellie Middleton. Last winter Victor Mellen showed her to me at church and asked me if I didn't think she was a 'stunner.' I told him if 'stunner' meant pretty, no. She has no particular complexion, (Belle's pink and white cheeks were her forte), and I am sure she is as stiff as a ramrod."

So I contented myself with quoting to Vivia, "Whom the gods wish to destroy, they first make mad."

And Vivia said softly, "Dear Mr. Martial, is she really so pleasing?"

"She really is."

"Do you like her?"

"Yes; I can't help it."

"Why, is she so beautiful?"

"Not so very beautiful; or rather, that is not her chief attraction. She is very lively, but I think what makes her so irresistible is her appreciativeness."

"I don't understand."

"My dear child, Nellie Middleton is not a coquette—at least, in the ordinary acceptance of the term. She has an exceeding desire to be liked, to be petted; to be something more than a mere acquaintance of those whom she admires. She is a general favorite among women, unless they chance to be jealous of her—though how she manages that, doubtless you will be better able to understand than I; but with men, she has the art of finding out the thing in which you especially desire to shine, and to appreciate you in that thing. For instance, keen little thing that she is, she discovered what my wife don't know yet, that I am not very proud of my scribbling—think it, in fact, very poor stuff indeed; but I like to be considered as a man of fine taste and keen perceptions and sympathies. It didn't take Nellie more than three times to find that, and she is always appealing to those supposed qualities. I knew her perfectly all the time she was playing with me; that it is only her way of making herself agreeable; that she isn't overwhelmingly anxious for my approval; that she isn't occupied when away from me in picturing to herself all my good and winning qualities; and yet I like it. When she is looking at me in her soft, appealing way, she can twist me round her finger."

Vivia gave a little sigh.

"And you say she is coming this afternoon."

"Yes; she will be here at supper."

Notwithstanding indignation and protestations of disbelief in Nellie's power, I think the girls were a little uneasy. Belle truly looked superb; her bright golden hair and brilliant complexion contrasting with the deep blue of her dress.

Vivia nestled up to Philip closer than usual, and I am quite sure I heard her whisper as I passed through the music room, "Do you think you will always love me, Philip?"

Only Lou, saucy child as she is, disdained to be uneasy—stood firm in her belief in her own attractions and bright faith.

Nellie was invisible till the evening. Then she came, dressed simply enough in black—a very pretty girl, fair but not blonde, with brown hair, brushed away from the wide, calm forehead; gray, cheerful eyes, and a face in general outline of feature not altogether unlike that of Marie Stewart.

She was quiet, almost silent. The girls looked at one another as who should say, "Is this the paragon whom we were to dread?" and arched brows and pursed-up mouths in pretty contempt at me, not seeing as I did, that Nellie was simply taking their gauge and a survey of her position.

She felt instinctively a certain standoffishness assumed toward her by the feminine element, and set herself to combat it; found in less than a week a hundred ways of being useful and entertaining.

She was skilful in devising ways in which to afford the girls tete-a-tetes with

their respective "particulars;" behaved, in short, more like a grandmother than a belle of twenty; won them all over, even including Belle, who seemed to like her grudgingly and under protest, and then was ready for action.

During her week of quiescence there had been, though she had appeared unconscious of the fact, masculine observers. They had found that she was not only lovely but after that piquant fashion which depends much on expression and keeps you studying it.

She sang sweetly, played well, conversed delightfully, had a keen eye and soft touch; grew on you in short; strengthened her hold upon you day by day.

One thing however puzzled me—an unusual timidity, in Nellie, and Otto Winstanley's almost incomprehensible conduct.

He had joined in none of the conversation anticipatory of her arrival; and when she was presented, there was a start and sudden paleness on Nellie's part, and a sudden dark unslapping color and feeling to his face, as he muttered something about a previous acquaintance.

I think no one else observed this or the fact that his indolent flirtation with Belle glowed with sudden and unaccountable ardor since Nellie's arrival. Perhaps, also, no one else remarked that he certainly treated Miss Middleton with downright rudeness and neglect, or thought to ask themselves if a man was apt to be rude and neglectful toward a sweet and winning girl to whom he was perfectly indifferent.

But be that as it might, two slow weeks went by, and I saw no more clearly into the mystery than I had done at first. But one evening came Nellie, and sat down beside me in the twilight.

She sat very still, looking even paler than usual, and I caught myself pitying her, but being at a loss how to manifest it, I remained silent.

Presently she heaved a little sigh, which gave me an excuse for asking what was the matter.

"Oh, nothing; only I am tired—not physically, but mentally. This is a very unsatisfactory life. Don't you think so?"

"That depends."

"Well, I have found it so. The only things worth having are out of one's reach. Walls of paper, barriers of air, separate more indissolubly than brass and adamant. Energy can conquer matter, but what human will is strong enough to do battle with pride and prejudice?"

"You are right in general, but I don't know how you would apply all this."

"I believe I have not applied it."

"I beg your pardon?"

After that we were silent, and Otto strolled in, and giving me a brief nod, sat down and began playing with Jup the terrier.

Having a vague idea that Nellie might be inclined to be more specific with him than me, I made Mrs. Polly do someone a good turn, for one of the few times in her life—and getting up a fiction about being wanted, left them alone.

What afterwards occurred I have from the best authority—Nellie herself.

They sat in the fast growing twilight, memories busy at the heart of each; pride struggling with a feeling that, during those weeks had fast been growing too strong for it. Nellie with bowed head and swimming eyes; Otto watching her, with face softening in spite of himself.

Suddenly Nellie rose, with an air of desperation; and brushing past Otto went over to the piano.

As she reached it something rang out sharply—a click as of something metallic that had struck on the marble hearth.

Nellie exclaimed. Otto stooped to pick up something that shone in the red firelight just at his feet. She moved forward as if to prevent him; stood then as if paralyzed, as he held up the ring—a simple little thing—only a plain gold circle, bearing some words engraved on it, hanging from a chain attached to a hook, like a watch guard.

Otto looked alternately at it and Nellie, who stood by him, crimson and speechless.

"You have kept this all the time, Nellie?"

Nellie was silent.

"Why did you keep it?"

"I wanted something to wear on the chain, and I don't carry my watch."

Oh! I thought perhaps you cared something for it, after all."

"You thought differently when we were last together."

"I had reason."

"That is your assertion."

"Answer, then. I ask you to judge yourself. Had I not reason? Would not any man have been justified in being incensed and outraged at your conduct?"

"I was very young, very thoughtless. I never dreamed that you really cared. It was pleasant to talk and flirt, and I liked to vex you, for the pleasure of the reconciliation."

"A strange pleasure, that was pleased with the pain it inflicted on what it loved best. A strange thoughtlessness, that permitted me no freedom, but claimed an unbounded liberty for yourself."

"You have said all those things once!" returned Nellie, with some dignity.

"And it was painful enough to hear them once."

"I had no intention of reproaching you," answered Otto; "for out of the bitterness of the heart the mouth spoke. It is so miserable to look at you, and think what might have been, and how we are

hopelessly separated."

"Otto," said Nellie timidly, "don't you think we might be friends? You need not treat me quite as an enemy. If you have suffered, so do I; and you cannot think what a pain it is to see the eyes that once were my light look so coldly at me. It makes me wretched. Let us, at least, be friends."

Otto looked at her earnestly, took her hand, drew her towards him. Half unconsciously she sank down on the little stool at his feet, her head close to his hand, that following its old habitude, began to stroke the soft bright hair. Presently,—

"No!" said Otto, firmly. "We can never be friends."

"You are unforgiving."

"Very. I will not abate an atom of my just rights. I must and will have you for my wife as you once promised me to be, or nothing. Mere cool friendship will not satisfy me."

"And I was very obstinate," concluded Nellie, archly, "as that was precisely why I came, knowing that he was here."

I have their cards before me now. And now am going to whisper in the ear of the public what I then thought—

Nellie dropped that ring on purpose.

TEMPERANCE COLU MN.

Contributed by the I. O. G. T.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND TEMPERANCE.

Mr. Lincoln was a Temperance man, not from an influence due to the enthusiasm aroused by some temperance orator; his attitude was a conviction within. All the influences surrounding him in childhood and young manhood were of a character to induce him to drink. In later years, referring to the drinking customs of that period, he said:

"When all, such of us as have reached the age of maturity, first opened our eyes upon the stage of existence, we found intoxicating liquors recognized by everybody, repudiated by nobody. It commonly entered into the first draught of the infant, and the last draught of the dying man. From the sideboard of the parson down to the ragged pocket of the houseless loafer it was constantly found. Physicians prescribed it for this, that, and the other disease; government provided it for soldiers and sailors; and, to have a rolling or raising, a husking or "hoe-down," anywhere about, without it, was positively insufferable. So, too, it was everywhere a respectable article of manufacture and of merchandise.

The making of it was regarded as an honorable livelihood, and he who could make most was the most enterprising and respectable. Large and small manufactories of it were everywhere erected, in which all the earthly goods of their owners were invested. Wagons drew it from town to town, boats bore it from clime to clime, and the winds wafted it from nation to nation; and merchants bought and sold it by wholesale and retail with precisely the same feelings on the part of the seller, buyer, and bystander, as are felt at the selling and buying of ploughs, beef, bacon, or any other of the real necessities of life. Universal opinion not only tolerated, but recognized and adopted, its use."

No reader of the Bible ever imbibed its spirit or learned the lessons it taught more fully than did Lincoln. Its truths appealed to his reason, and especially to his experience. Its declaration as to the effects of strong drink were fully confirmed by the condition of those about him who used liquor. Before he had ever tasted liquor he resolved to always totally abstain from its use. This was a courageous decision to make in that day, much more so indeed than it would be to-day. He even refused to sell liquor in his store at New Salem, and when his partner insisted on the plea that its sale would draw custom, he retired from the business rather than consent. His unflinching practice, of his temperance principles attracted attention, and when he was grown, some of his associates determined to make him break his resolution. In order to get him to take at least one drink of liquor, they declared that he could not lift a full barrel of whiskey, and take a drink out of the bung-hole. Lincoln accepted the challenge, lifted the barrel above his head took a mouthful of the liquor and set the barrel down upon the ground. At once the shout was raised, "Well, Abe, you've taken a drink of whiskey for once in your life, and broken your pledge!" But the sentence was scarcely completed before he spit the liquor out of his mouth, and quietly said, "And I have not done so, now."

A more astute politician than Mr. Lincoln America has not produced, and a greater temptation never came to any mere politician than came to Mr. Lincoln the day after his nomination to the Presidency by the Republican National Convention, which met in the "Wigwam" in Chicago in 1860. It occurred in connection with the visit of the committee appointed by the convention to notify Mr. Lincoln of his nomination. A number of the citizens of Springfield, know Mr. Lincoln's total-abstinence habits, and believing that in all probability he would have no liquors in the house, called upon him and suggested that perhaps some members of the committee would be in need of some refreshment, wine, or other liquors. "I haven't any in the house," said Mr. Lincoln. "We will furnish them," said the visitors. "Gentlemen,"

replied Mr. Lincoln, "I cannot allow you to do what I will not do myself. Some Democratic citizens, however, who felt that Springfield had been honored by the nomination, sent several baskets of wine to Mr. Lincoln's house, but he returned them, thanking the senders for their intended kindness. After the formal ceremonies connected with the business of the committee had passed, Mr. Lincoln remarked that as an appropriate conclusion to an interview so important and interesting, he supposed good manners would require that he should furnish the committee something to drink, and opening the door, he called out: "Mary! Mary!" A girl responded to the call, to whom Mr. Lincoln spoke in an undertone. In a few minutes the maid entered bearing a large tray containing several glass tumblers and a large pitcher and placed it upon the centre table. Mr. Lincoln then rose and gravely, addressing the distinguished gentlemen, said: "Gentlemen, we must pledge our mutual healths in the most healthy beverage God has given to man. It is the only beverage I have ever used or allowed in my family, and I cannot conscientiously depart from it on the present occasion; it is pure Adam's ale from the spring." And taking a tumbler he touched it to his lips, and pledged them his highest respects in a cup of cold water.

A few months later he started on his journey to Washington to take his seat as President of the United States. In a number of the cities, his visit was honored with grand banquets, at which wine was served, but of which he never partook. On one occasion being urged to take a glass of wine, he replied: "For thirty years I have been a temperance man, and I am too old to change." It is declared that actions speak louder than words. The cause of temperance would possibly have been victorious had the action of all temperance men been as consistent and as persistent against liquor traffic as their utterances have been. But when men's acts and words are in accord, great is their power. Such were Abraham Lincoln's. He not only abstained from the use of intoxicating liquors, but he was bold in publicly advocating total abstinence.—D. O. Thompson in Methodist Review.

Quick and Slow Cooking.

One great mistake cooks make is to how fast certain articles should be cooked. For instance meat is always tough even though it falls from the bones, if boiled hard. For soup it should be put to cook in cold water and heated so slowly that it will not come to a boil in less than an hour, and then it should boil very gently. When one wishes the flavor all to stay in the meat it should be put to cook in boiling water and allowed to boil a few minutes, and then set back where it will just simmer. Meat should not be salted until nearly done. Potatoes should boil briskly the first five minutes and then boil more slowly the remainder of the half hour. Beans, peas, and corn should boil hard till done. Green vegetables should generally be cooked in salted water to best retain their flavor. This is particularly true of onions and cabbage. One reason that young cooks pay so little attention to the above rule is that they think the difference is only in the flavor and that isn't much. But the greatest loss is in the value. And that we may have all the nutrition certain foods possess we must give them the treatment they require.

Churning Sweet and Sour Cream.

It is well known that the churnability of cream depends largely on its handling during ripening. Sour cream churns more easily than sweet cream. The reason for this may be that the presence of lactic acid has some effect on the surface tension of fat globules. Since sour cream churns more rapidly than sweet cream, it will not do to mix creams of unusual ripeness just before churning. The sour cream would churn first and the sweet cream would be left as buttermilk. If it is necessary to mix cream of unequal ripeness, it should be done at least 12 hours before churning, and the mixture should be thorough. It is important to stir the cream while it is ripening for a similar reason. If the temperature of cream is not exactly alike throughout, as is nearly always the case, the warmer parts ripen more rapidly, and unless the cream is occasionally stirred it does not ripen uniformly. This leads to heavy losses of fat in the buttermilk. If cream has been handled exactly as it should be, the churn may be stopped when the butter is in granular form without loss of fat in the buttermilk, but if the cream is not uniformly ripened the churn cannot be stopped at this point without considerable loss.

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