

The Three Lessons.

There are three lessons I would write—
Three words as with a burning pen,
In tracing of eternal light,
Upon the hearts of men.

Have Hope. Though clouds extrude now,
And gladness hides her face in scorn,
Not thou the shadow from thy brow—
No night but hath its morn.

Have faith. Where'er thy bark is driven—
The calm's depart, the tempest's nigh—
Know this—God rules the host of heaven,
The inhabitants of earth.

Have Love. Not love alone for one,
But man as man thy brother call,
And scatter like the circling sun
Thy charities on all.

Thus grave these lessons on thy soul—
Faith, Hope and Love—and thou shalt find
Strength when life's surges rudest roll,
Light when thou else was blind.

—Schiller

THE PRIVATE SECRETARY.

I had found my hat and was seeking an opportunity of making my escape unobserved, when my friend Willard Fleming caught sight of me.

"Don't go yet, Arthur," he said; "I want you to do me a favor. You saw me with a lady dressed in blue?"

I assented. "A beautiful girl, with dark hair and eyes?"

"The same," he responded. "Her name is Lydia Moreton; beautiful as you say, and what is no less interesting, heiress to half a million. I want you to be introduced to her and form a general idea of her. It is a very important matter."

I started. "What part am I to play in this mysterious drama?" I asked in surprise; "surely you do not propose to adjust your inclination for the lady by what I may think of her after a few moments of acquaintance?"

"I will explain afterward," he replied, "come and see her first."

Very much mystified, I followed him into the conservatory, where I was formally introduced to Miss Moreton. On taking my place beside her, I saw that Fleming had left us to ourselves. I confess I was not displeased, for I found her very charming. We were on good terms immediately, and I was half inclined to be angry with Willard when he returned and took me away from her.

"I envy you," I said. "She is exquisite."

"I am glad you approve," he replied, "but it is by no means settled yet, and that is why I want your help."

"I wish you would not talk in riddles, Willard," I exclaimed. "Tell me what you mean."

"Just this," he said, taking my arm confidentially, "I think I have produced an impression, but she is going away tomorrow, for a year, I shall have no opportunity of following it up. I have gained her permission to correspond with her, and you are going to write my letters for me."

"I?" I replied. "You seriously expect me to correspond with her in your name?"

"Just so," he said. "It is the brightest idea that ever entered my head, too. Now, I write an abominable letter, and in spite of the understanding between us, might do myself more harm than good. You have an especial talent that way. Everybody admires your letters, for you can produce any impression you choose. You have a general impression of her character; that is why I introduced you. If you will undertake the campaign, adding a little more warmth and that sort of thing in each successive letter, we shall capture her before the year is out."

"It strikes me the course you propose is not strictly delicate or honorable," I replied, indignantly. "What will she think of us when she discovers the truth?"

"Oh, never mind that," he returned, carelessly. "After I have made her Mrs. Fleming I'll undertake so pacify her."

I was on the point of refusing positively when Miss Moreton, on her way to her carriage, met us in the hall. She smiled and gave me her hand. What was there in her look, her voice, the touch of her small, gloved palm, that stirred me so? What was the wave of regret that swelled up in my heart as I saw her turn once more to the door and smile back her farewell? I stood in a profound reverie until Fleming plucked me by the arm and said, impatiently:

"Well, what is your decision? Will you write to her?"

In an instant the thought entered my brain that, though she could never be nothing more than a pleasant vision to me, I might at least retain the bitter happiness of holding intercourse with her for a time, even if under another man's name. The temptation was irresistible, and I yielded.

"Yes," I replied, "I will write your letters."

"The thing is done then," he said, rubbing his hands gleefully. "I shall owe you the handsomest wife in America, and a half million, besides."

I turned away with a throb of indignant envy, and left him exulting over his anticipated success. That night I

wrote my first letter to her and signed it Willard Fleming. I put all my strength into it, showing out the conflicting emotions which filled me. I felt that it could not fail to have its effect, for I was writing for myself!—as I should have written had it been my right to address her in my own name. I mailed it two days later, knowing it would reach her shortly after her arrival.

I waited impatiently for her reply. Willard had arranged to have her letters directed to me. After I had read them I was to turn them over to him together with a draft of my answer.

Three weeks later I found an envelope postmarked France, and addressed in a delicate feminine hand lying upon my desk. I tore it open with trembling fingers. It was from Lydia Moreton. In every line of it I detected the effect of the letter I had written her. It was more than kind; it was just upon that neutral ground which lies between friend-ship and something more tender. I read and re-read it. I carried it about with me for several days before I could bring myself to give it to Willard. It seemed as if it had been meant for me. What difference whose name was at the top of it? My words, my feelings, my hopes had drawn it forth. It had been written to me; but alas! I had no right to it.

"Bravo!" cried Willard, to delight, as he read it. "If any one asks me for a private secretary, I shall recommend you above all others. Why, she is half in love with me already."

In love with him! True, it was Willard Fleming she had thought of when writing. Me she had long since forgotten, and I had done my best to destroy my last hope, if I had ever been so foolish as to cherish any.

I went home half resolved to take no further part in the conspiracy, and to let Willard manage his courtship as best he might. But I had not the courage to relinquish the bitter-sweet of my fictitious intercourse with her. Powerfully effected by our first meeting and only meeting, her first letter had completed the mischief. I was in love with her, and I might as well be in love with the moon.

I wrote again, reckless, almost passionately. Under Willard's name I reflected all the feelings which her letter had aroused in me. I made no attempt to disguise my love, but I expressed no hope. It was a sad luxury to imagine her flushing cheeks and brightening eyes as she read my fervid lines.

The letter that came in reply was an additional torture to me. It was very apparent that, far from offending her, my unguarded language had won me a warmer place in her heart. There was a sweet, half confession of tenderness in every word, such as would have been my cue for an open declaration had I been dealing with her honestly.

A paragraph in her letter warned me of the dangerous ground Willard and I were treading upon in our deception. It ran:

"I cannot understand, dear friend, my own feelings when I read your letters. When I met you in New York I thought you one of the common place young men one meets in society, and one I could never have felt any deep interest in, as I knew you then. It seems now as if another person were speaking to me—a man with a warm heart, deep feelings and noble impulses. I cannot reconcile myself that the Willard Fleming I once knew is the Willard Fleming I am now writing to. How have I deceived myself so?"

"Sharp girl!" commented Fleming, when he read this passage. "won't she stare when she knows I never wrote her a line."

The idea of cheating her became every hour more repugnant to me. If I could have understood the whole unhappy business what would I not have given! How she would despise us both when she came to know the truth!

This strange correspondence continued throughout the winter. I could not break the fatal chain I had bound around myself. Every word from her was as precious as life. I could not voluntarily exile myself from her in hatred and contempt. No, the end would come soon enough in the inevitable course of events. The end was nearer than I knew.

There came a letter from her—shall I ever forget it?—which, in its tender outpouring of love, left me no alternative but to make a full declaration and ask her hand—in the name of Willard Fleming. As I finished it I felt a sense of sorrowful relief. The die was cast.

Two weeks later I received her acceptance. She was Willard Fleming's betrothed wife. She had resolved to cut her European tour short by several months and return to America. She confessed she could not be happy now unless near me—alas, not me! but the man who had never offered her one tender word, nor felt one thrill of regard for her, Willard Fleming.

Willard was in high spirits at the prospect of the successful termination of his extraordinary courtship. "I'm much obliged to you, old fellow,"

he said, patronizingly. "You have done splendidly. Why, bless my heart, I don't wonder she came to terms."

Some of your letters read as if you were furiously in love with yourself."

I averted my head and made no reply.

"Matters are in excellent shape," he continued. "There will be no more necessity of letters, and if we keep our secret she will never know anything about it. If she discovers it as I suppose she must alter our marriage, she can help herself."

While he was talking in this way, my heart sank within me with a torturing doubt which now occurred to me for the first time. In my selfish love I had forgotten that I was deliberately putting her in the power of a man with whom she had no sympathy, and whom she did not love. Had I not conspired to bring about the life-long misery of the woman I loved?

It was several days after her arrival before I saw her. Then I was surprised at her appearance. It was not that of a happy betrothed bride. Her face looked worn and pale, and her manner was anxious and sad. I saw, too, that when Willard came near her she involuntarily shrank from him, and I looked at him with an expression of doubt and wonder. It was but too plain that she had an intuition of the deception put upon her. She did not love him, and she could not understand her own feelings. My heart ached for her; I longed to tell the truth; but how could I? However, it proved to be my destiny to undeceive her in the most unexpected manner. Shortly before their marriage there came a rumor that the trustee of her property had defrauded her; risked all in speculation and lost all. The rumor was soon confirmed by Willard himself.

He came into my room looking gloomy and irritable. He flung himself into a chair with an oath.

"Here's a pretty fix," he growled, "Lydia's money is all gone."

"Well," said I, coldly, "the loss of her money has not lessened her value in your eyes, I hope?"

"Hasn't it?" he replied. "I am not the man to marry a woman from sentiment. Do you suppose I would have gone to all that trouble unless I had counted upon her fortune?"

Angry and disgusted as I was with him, I felt a great wave of joy sweep over me.

"You got me into this scrape," he said, brutally, "with your letters. I count on you to extricate me."

"Very well," I returned, quietly; "how do you expect me to effect this laudable purpose?"

"Go and tell her I never wrote those letters, and that I never made any engagement with her."

"I will do it," said I, "not for your sake, but to save her from the meanest of men. Thank God that you have betrayed your true character before it is too late. Now leave this house. I never want to look upon your face again."

Considerably abashed he obeyed without a word, and I prepared to execute my mission with a lighter heart than I had known for many a day.

I sent up my card, and she entered the room with a quick step and anxious face.

"You came from Willard Fleming," she said hurriedly; "he has heard of my misfortune. Tell me, oh, tell me, he has asked to be relieved."

"He has," I replied; "he deserts you in your troubles."

"Thank heaven!" she cried, sitting down and covering her face with her handkerchief. After a moment she became calmer, and looking at me with a smile, continued:

"I find it hard to understand my own mind. When I met Willard Fleming in New York I was not impressed favorably with him. But with his first letter I changed my opinion. As our correspondence continued I learned to love him, for his letters. They were those of a noble, true-hearted man. Yet when I came back I was cruelly disappointed. The man I had loved, the man who wrote those had ceased to be. William Fleming impressed me, as at first as a cold trifling selfish man. I did not love him; I grew to abhor him. I would sooner have died than marry him, yet I had no excuse. He has given me one, but the mystery remains. Has a man two souls or who was it that wrote me those letters?"

"The man stands before you," I replied, in a broken voice; "I wrote those letters."

Then I confessed the whole miserable deception, without sparing my own weakness and folly.

"If love be any excuse," I concluded, "it is all I have to offer. I could not bear to hear from you again. I believe that you were favorably inclined to Willard and I was weak enough to seize the opportunity of pouring out the sorrow and passion that filled my heart under his name. It may be you can not pardon me, but I am grateful that my deception did not bind you fatally to a man you dislike and I despise."

I watched the varying emotions cross her face as I spoke, and with a thrill of joy saw that her look became more gentle, her manner more tender.

"I said," she replied, after a while "that I loved the writer of those letters. I did and do. It has been my chief sorrow to believe my ideal did not exist. 'It does,' she added extending her hands to me with a charming smile; why should I deny it?"

Thus the love, which had run its course through mystery and mistake, found its fruition at last. They say a poet's soul is mirrored in his works; love, the supreme poetry of life, converts our slightest acts into language where-by hearts speak to hearts.

The Girl that Everyone Likes.

She is not beautiful—oh no! Nobody thinks of calling her that. Not one of a dozen can tell whether her eyes are black or blue. If you should ask them to describe her, they would only say: "She is just right," and there it would end. She is a merry hearted, fun-loving, bewitching maiden, without a spark of envy or malice in her whole composition. She enjoys herself and wants everybody else to do the same. She has always a kind word and a pleasant smile for the oldest man or woman; in fact I can think of no thing she resembles more than a sun-beam, which brightens everything it comes in contact with. All pay her marked attention, from rich Mr. Watts, who lives in a mansion on the hill, to negro Sam, the sweep. All look after her with admiring eyes and say to themselves: "She is just the right sort of a girl?"

The young men of the town vie with one another as to who shall show her the most attention; but she never encourages them beyond being simply kind and jolly; so no one can call her a flirt; no, indeed, the young men all deny such an assertion as quickly as she. Girls—wonderful to relate—like her, too; for she never delights in hurting their feelings, or saying spiteful things behind their backs. She was always willing to join in their little plans, and to assist them in any way. They go to her with their love affairs, and she manages adroitly to see William or Peter, and drop a good word for Ida or Jennie, until their little difficulties are all patched up, and everything goes on smoothly again—thanks to her. Old ladies say she is "delightful." The sly wretch—she knows how to manage them. She listens patiently to complaints of rheumatism or neuralgia, and then sympathizes with them so heartily that they are more than half cured. But she cannot always be with us. A young man comes from a neighboring town, after a time and marries her. The villagers crowd around to tell him what a prize he had won, but he seems to know it pretty well without any telling, to judge from his face. So she leaves us, and it is not long before we hear from that place. "She is there the woman that every likes."

—Christian Advocate.

A Mother's Control of Her Sons.

Women who have sons to rear, and dread the demoralizing influence of bad associations, ought to understand the nature of young manhood. It is excessively restless. It is disturbed by vain ambitions, by thirst for action, by longings for excitement, by irresistible desires to touch life in manifold ways.

If you, mothers, lead your sons so that their homes are associated with the repression of natural instincts, you will be sure to throw them in the society that in some measure can supply the need of their hearts. They will not go to the public houses at first for love of liquor—very few people like the taste of liquor; they go for the animated and hilarious companionship they find there, which they discover does so much to repress the disturbing restlessness in their breasts. See to it that their homes compete with public places in attractiveness; open your blinds by day and light bright fires by night; illuminate your rooms; hang pictures upon the wall; put books and papers upon your tables; have music and entertaining games; banish the demons of dullness and apathy that have so long ruled in your household, and bring in mirth and good cheer; invent occupation for your sons; stimulate their ambitions in worthy directions; while you make home their delight, fill them with higher purposes than mere pleasure. Whether they shall pass boyhood and enter upon manhood with refined tastes and noble ambitions depends on you. Believe it possible that, with exertion and right means, a mother may have more control over the destiny of her boys than any other influence whatever.

—Spirits of the Farm.

"Fifty years ago," says Earl Carns, at a meeting of the Church Missionary Society, if a man had been shipwrecked on some of the islands of the Pacific, he would have been killed, cooked and eaten; whereas if a man were shipwrecked there now, he would receive Christian hospitality."

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