

# The Independent.

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, JANUARY 7, 1886.

## LOVE NOW!

BY GRACE DENIO LITCHFIELD.

You will love me the day I lie dying.  
Oh! love me then living,  
While yet from a full heart replying,  
I give to your giving.

What gain hath my lifetime of loving,  
If you pass it all by  
To give me back treble my loving  
In the hour I die?

All anguish, all maddest adoring,  
Will be vain in that day.  
Though you knelt to me then with implored,  
What word could I say?

Oh! love me, then, now, that it quicken  
My heart's failing breath.  
Why wait till to love is to sicken  
At the coldness of death?

LONDON, ENGLAND.

# The Independent.

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1885.

## LITTLE DELIA'S SHOES.

A STORY FOR GIRLS.

BY GRACE DENIO LITCHFIELD.

It was a bitterly cold day late in December, and little Delia Hadley was the only passenger in the one horse car winding its slushy way through the lower part of New York. She sat, huddled in a corner, drawing her scarlet cloak closely around the poor, deformed shoulders, whose sad curves were not wholly hidden even by the wealth of soft brown hair that fell, in loose curls, half way down to her waist. She was evidently an old friend of the driver's, who, after making sundry comical grimaces at her through his glass door, gave the reins a twist around the brake wheel, and came inside.

"Cold; aint it, little un?" he said cheerily, slapping his arms noisily across his

breast. " Didn't think as you'd be out today. And where's the babies?"

" It's too cold for them," answered Delia, smiling up into his big, ugly face. " Mother kept them in, with Tommy."

" An' taint too cold for you; eh? Nice August weather; aint it? Most brings out the skeeters; don't it? Feel em biting my ears now." And Mr. Dobbs began rubbing those red and sizable features as regardlessly as if they belonged to some one else; for it is odd, but it usually makes all the difference in the world in our treatment of a thing, whether it is ours or our neighbor's.

Delia laughed.

" Well it's always summer at our Mission House, you see, Mr. Dobbs, 'cause there's always a Lily there."

" Eh?" inquired Mr. Dobbs. " Oh! That's Miss Lily Henderson; is it? Her as teaches you down there? Oh! I see. Flowers all the year round. Very good.

contrive to secure the new shoes for herself? She sat pondering and planning for a long time, and finally crept to her mother's side and gently pulled her dress.

"Well?" asked Mrs. Hadley impatiently without pausing.

"Look!" said Delia softly, holding out her hand. The gold piece shone like a little sun in the tiny palm.

Mrs. Hadley glanced round, scarcely lifting her head, and at the unwonted sight dropped her work abruptly. "Well, I never! Where did you get that?" she asked, in surprise.

"I—I—Miss Lily gave it to me," said Delia faintly, dropping her head guiltily. "She gave it to me to buy a pair of new shoes with."

"Miss Lily?" repeated Mrs. Hadley. "Bless me! It's five dollars. She gave you all that for a pair of shoes; did she? So you've been complaining to her, I suppose, that you couldn't get shoes at home?"

"No, no!" cried Delia eagerly, lifting her head. "Indeed I never said a word to her; but"—the pretty head drooped again—"anybody could see I needed them, Mother."

Mrs. Hadley sighed. "A body needn't look far to see the wants of the poor folks; and there are worse things to do without than a pair of whole shoes. See here, Delia! You'll have to give me that money. I can't be buying shoes for my children while there's a penny owing to others; and there's just five dollars more left on your poor Aunt's coffin that I've been racking my brains to try to scrape together. The living can shift for themselves; but to bury them decently is all we can do for the dead. Give it here, child!"

Delia's hand closed spasmodically over her threatened treasure."

"It's mine!" she said, with a sob rising. "It's mine, Mother!"

Mrs. Hadley drew the shrieking child toward her by both wrists. She did not mean to be rough, but her tight grasp hurt, and Delia gave a stifled cry, half of pain, half of alarm.

"Yours. Is it? And who pays for your clothes? Who pays for the food that keeps you alive? Who pays for the roof over your head?"

"You do," stammered the child.

"And what work do you do? What do you earn toward your living?"

"Nothing."

"And when are you ever going to begin? What do you expect to do for yourself?"

"I don't know."

"Then don't you ever again say any-

thing is yours till you have done something to earn it. Give me that money. I'll be bound your Miss Lily would rather I was an honest woman, and paid my lawful debts, than that I dressed my girls like fine ladies; and your shoes'll hold together as good bit yet."

Delia dropped the coin into her Mother's lap without another word, and moved silently away, while the momentarily suspended wheel of the machine instantly resumed its labor, with an almost human vindictiveness in its whirr, whirr, whirr, that goaded the child beyond endurance. It seemed to be saying: "There, there, there, I told you so, I told you so," over and over again, louder and louder every moment. Poor Delia! It was very hard. She had told a lie; and it had not served her purpose any better than the truth. The money was gone; and now neither Tommy nor she could go new-shod to the Christmas tree. It was very, very hard!

Mrs. Hadley went out late that afternoon to pay off the last installment of the debt that rankled on her conscience. It was dark when she returned, and Delia was sitting on the floor with her little sisters, telling them fanciful stories in her soft, plaintive voice, interrupted occasionally by skeptical comments from Tommy, who was fighting manfully against the absorbing interest inspired in him by the tales.

"Taint true, not one bit of it," he was saying, as his mother came in. "Leastways I never seen flowers like that, with women in the hearts of 'em."

Mrs. Hadley shut the door sharply and sat down.

"Delia, come to me directly," she said, in a very harsh voice.

The child obeyed instantly, putting little Eliza gently out of her lap.

"Yes, Mother."

"I met Miss Henderson in the street as I came out from settling with Mr. Dunford and I stopped to thank her for giving you that money, and to explain what I had done with it, and she said she had never given you the money at all. Do you hear? She said she had never given the money at all. Now what I want to know is how you came by those five dollars you brought in this morning?"

Delia looked up at her Mother helplessly. She was speechless with shame and misery.

"Where did you get the money?" continued Mrs. Hadley, shaking her a little, as if to rouse her to speech. "Do you hear me?"

"I—I found it," gasped Delia, trembling from head to foot.

Mrs. Hadley bent over her.

"Delia, did you steal it?" she hissed.

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The child broke into horrified sobs. "Oh! no! Oh! Mother, how could you think I would? I found it; indeed I did; it wasn't anybody's; and so I thought it was mine."

"And you found it in Miss Lily's purse, I suppose. You know very well where to look. You've told me often enough how she lets you rummage in her bureau drawer. A fine story that, her giving it you for shoes! And now you want me to believe you didn't know whose the money was! You stole it, Delia!"

Delia stopped sobbing all in a moment. "Oh! Mother," she said: "Do you think I could be so wicked? Do you think I could? I found it on the floor of the post-office, all under the torn papers and things, and there was a gentleman said it was mine since I found it; and I did so want it for my shoes; and I thought you would let me have it for that if I said Miss Lily gave it to me, and Oh! Mother, Mother! how could you think I'd do such a thing as to steal it? Oh! how could you think I would?"

"There's many things a liar may do besides tell lies, and there's no trusting the word of one as can speak two ways," replied Mrs. Hadley harshly. "Go get your cloak and hood."

Delia turned deathly white. "Are you going to take me to jail?" she whispered.

"I am going to have this cleared up tonight," replied the mother. "I've brought you up as a respectable child; and do you think I can sleep, not knowing but what you're a thief as well as a liar? Come along. Put that shawl around you. I've no extra three cents to spare on myself, and you must walk instead of riding when you go with me. Tommy, keep the children quiet, and see to the kettle; will you?"

It was quite dusk when Mrs. Hadley reached the Mission House with little Delia; but the schoolroom was a blaze of light, in the center of which sat Miss Lily Henderson, with gay ribbons and bits of bright silks and scraps of gold and silver paper scattered all over and about her, till she looked like a living rainbow. She was singing softly to herself as she sat there working with deft white fingers, and in the light streaming down over her bent head her hair sparkled and gleamed as if its threads had been drawn through liquid gold. She turned when the door opened, and then rose and came forward, a faint, questioning look lurking under the friendliness of her smile. Ah! what a beautiful, dainty, hot-house Lily to find blooming in these plain Mission House surroundings!

"Good evening, Mrs. Hadley. I am working for my Christmas tree; but won't

you come in? Do you want anything of me? Oh! my little Delia," she added brightly, catching sight of the child, and holding out her hand. "Why, you look frozen through, my poor pet. Come to the stove."

Delia stood looking at her with entranced eyes. This tall, slender, graceful girl, with the lily-pure face, was the embodiment of a delicious dream to her. Ah! how she loved this lovely lady! A warm light flashed into the great, hungry brown eyes she lifted to her teacher's face; but she did not move from her place by the door.

"Yes, Miss; you can do much for me," said Mrs. Hadley, bluntly, her sharp, hard voice contrasting with Lily's like a file with a silver bell. "You can tell me whether or not my girl here stole those five dollars from your purse."

"What! Stole them from my purse? Delia?" cried Lily, in greatest amazement. "Oh! never!"

"Maybe not, Miss," replied Mrs. Hadley, quietly. "But I must know, if you please. She said you gave her the money to buy shoes with. That was a lie. Now she says she found the piece at the post-office. Maybe one lie's as good as another; but I'd sleep the easier for knowing positive the money didn't mayhap come out of your purse instead of out of the street. It's a deal likelier place to find gold pieces, Miss; and I would like to know, if you please."

Delia kept her fascinated eyes on the young lady's face, the drawn lines about her mouth relaxing somewhat as she gazed; but she neither moved nor spoke. Lily looked down at her in the greatest trouble, clasping and unclasping her white hands, on which a cluster of diamonds flashed like incarnate sunlight.

"But, Mrs. Hadley, I am sure she did not. Delia would not take a penny from my purse or any one's purse, if she were starving."

"I would like just to know it, please, Miss," reiterated Mrs. Hadley. "I'm an honest woman as would rather see my child dead before me for lack of bread to her mouth than know she had taken a penny's worth as wasn't hers to buy herself a crumb with. You'll oblige me, Miss, if you'll look in your purse and see. That's what I came for. I'm sorry to put you to any trouble; but our characters is all we poor folks has; and it's ill we can afford to lose that. Would you look in your purse, please, Miss?"

"But—but what good will that do?" faltered Lily. "I never know what's in my purse. Five or ten dollars, more or less. I never keep close accounts."