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You have read in the newspapers about celebrating Armistice Day. You have heard about it in clubs and churches, and on the radio you have listened to the tuneful and stirring music that characterized that period and impelled men to action in the great world conflict. All this in memory of that one day called "The Armistice." On that eventful day there was not a heart in the civilized world that did not offer up a grateful song of praise and thanksgiving that it was "all over over there."

Then I hauled out my old dust-covered dictionary and looked up the definition of the word "armistice." It was "the cessation of hostilities by agreement." And then as usual I tried to apply that definition of "armistice" to some phase of our Eastern Star work. It did not take me long to run my mental finger down the list of promises embodied in our obligation. And here is where I found it--listen-- "That I will not speak # # # toward them." Remember it? There it is in plain English-- an "armistice against gossip."

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My friends, if there was ever an enemy of mankind; if there was ever a war justifiable, it is war against the evil, story telling, gossip tongue. More hearts have been broken, more reputations besmirched, more happiness sacrificed on account of this evil than by any other one cause.

When the candidate bows before the altar, clasps a Bible and repeats that obligation, and as the Worthy Patron says: "We share with you in this solemn obligation," we have entered into an agreement to shun the things that are there forbidden--an armistice against gossip being included.

If we would form the habit when some one approaches us with an evil, or an unkind story respecting a sister or a brother, of just handing them a tablet and pencil, and saying something like this: "I have suddenly lost my hearing. Will you please write your story on this tablet, and sign your name to it. I will read it when I have time!" How many do you think would write out the story and sign their names to it? Not many, I assure you. Not many would be willing to sign their name to the story that they would whisper in a corner or behind a closed door.

"They say," "I've heard" and "Do you know" are the most dangerous people that you have to deal with. It is quite easy to blacken a character, but it is mighty hard to wash it clean and white again, the stains and scars will always remain.

I am reminded of the woman who circulated an evil and untrue story about a neighbor and it spread all over the countryside. When faced with the facts, she thought she would go to the neighborhood priest, confess her sins and get absolution. The old priest listened and said: "Well, we'll take care of that. You go to the market, buy a goose, and bring it to me. But as you walk along, pluck the feathers and down from the goose, and drop them on the highway." The woman thought that looked easy, so she bought the goose, and carefully plucked it, and dropped the feathers as directed. When she reached the old priest, she smilingly presented him with the plump, clean goose and expected to receive complete absolution. But instead, he handed her a bag and said: "Now go back over the same road and pick up every feather and bit of down and bring them to me and I will absolve you." It was a windy day; do you think she succeeded?

Did you ever pick a silver-bowled dandelion, or open a prickly thistle burr, or a milk-weed pod and blow the tiny parachutes into the air and then try to gather them up again? Try it once and see what success you have.

"Boys flying kites haul in their white winged birds,
But you can't do that when you're flying words.
Thoughts unexpressed may sometimes fall back dead,
But God Himself can't kill them when they're said."

Years have passed since the great armistice was signed that closed the World War, but evil speaking and tale bearing still exist among us.

Let us now again renew that part of our obligation which protects the character and reputation of our sisters and brothers, an "Armistice against gossip."