

he could not hear music, Allan was seldom out of step since he watched other dancers closely, and he danced well for a boy of his age. He learned physical skills more quickly than did a great many normal children; he swam like a fish, sailed reasonably well, was a good shot, and handled a canoe beautifully. The counselors considered themselves fortunate in having the opportunity to work with Allan, and he was very proud of his achievements.

During his first summer at camp, Allan's behavior was beyond reproach, and he was unanimously voted an honor camper. Last summer he began to indulge in the usual amount of twelve-year-old mischief, since camp was no longer strange to him. He had the distinct advantage of being able to choose what he wanted to "hear." If Allan happened not to want to obey a gesture, he would either turn his head the other way or let the message go in one eye and out the other with a studiedly innocent face—a practice which caused his frustrated counselors to wonder on which side the handicap lay. Though he has not yet learned to talk, Allan is far from mute. He can, and often does, emit a shrill weird sound with which he loved to frighten unsuspecting victims suddenly. Allan adored movies, and always brightened breathtaking moments with a series of odd squeals. Another of his favorite tricks was staring fixedly at people as though something about them was terribly peculiar. That was especially disconcerting, since one had no means of discerning Allan's thoughts.

I think camp must have been a wonderful place for Allan, for the setting was beautiful, and there were many activities in which a deaf person could easily participate. The boy and the camp gained a great deal from each other. Allan always seemed to enjoy himself and never brooded about his misfortune—his attitude earned him much respect from everyone. It seemed so pitiful that a boy with so much talent and intelligence should have had such a handicap; but I have heard that no one is handicapped unless he thinks he is. If this is true, I believe that Allan never will be.

Gossip, an Evil of Society

Cynthia H. White

GOSSIP is an injurious social evil which continues to exist without inhibition and which does more damage than many of the more notorious foibles of humanity. At one time or another, to a marked or an inconsequential degree, most individuals have been guilty of indulging in the odious practice of spreading gossip. I prefer to think, optimistically perhaps, that the majority of those who gossip engage in the practice without the intention of causing real harm. However, there are others who actually enjoy passing along an unsavory account of the behavior of an acquaintance. Whatever be the purpose of the one who gossips, he is committing an act of

which the very slightest result can be injury to himself and insult to his victim; and the most deleterious consequence can be the destruction of that victim's good reputation. We encounter gossip in school, at work, and in the social world; because we become accustomed to it, we are sometimes inclined to accept it, rather than recognize it as the malignant growth it has become. Gossip is unjust; it carries with it a prejudice which does not allow the hearer to judge for himself. However true an item of gossip may be, it is not the duty of any human being to dispense information which may harm another.

A question that arises regarding this matter is: why do we gossip? From observation, I gather that, in some circles, the ability to relate a large number of scandalous incidents is regarded as a social grace. It is certainly not uncommon for a group to gather around a bridge table and, with apparent delectation, discuss each event leading to the recent divorce of a friend, each member of the group taking care not to overlook either the faults of the said friend or those of her erstwhile spouse. After an hour of conversation similar to the example above, the members of the group return to their respective homes, each feeling that she has participated in an entertaining afternoon. A more insidious motive for gossip is the desire to hurt someone by telling libelous stories about him. Surely few people would stoop to so treacherous a practice as this. A third reason for gossip seems to be the misapprehension that, by lowering the standing of another, an individual elevates his own. Perhaps this idea exists in the subconscious, rather than as an actual theory of which an individual is aware. One needs only to consider this idea to know that it is completely fallacious. Taking all of these causes of gossip into consideration, one can understand that gossip is pointless as well as evil.

The conquest by man over malicious gossip is a different assignment, but I believe it would be accomplished if each individual made a sincere effort along the following lines. An excellent principle to follow is: "If you cannot say something good about a person, do not say anything at all about him." (I quote a wise man, my great-grandfather, who was a Quaker.) Those who are parents should teach their children that to gossip is just as wrong as to lie. One should discount the truth of gossip whenever possible, for the person who gossips is not a reliable source of information. Above all, one should never permit oneself to start or repeat gossip, nor should one listen to the rumors told by others. The example set by an individual is much more eloquent than any words he can say. It is the responsibility of every thinking person to attempt, at least in his immediate circle of acquaintances, to eliminate the poisonous habit of gossip.