

THE CASE OF MRS. LINCOLN.

We refer to this case with no purpose of grieving the friends of the lady or of pandering to curiosity, but simply to explain that in all the painful proceedings Mrs. LINCOLN has been treated in the kindest and gentlest manner by her own personal friends, and that from the beginning to the end she maintained her dignity and character as a lady. For several years after the assassination of her husband, Mrs. LINCOLN was pursued by a mental picture of the dreadful scene. She could not shake it off. She courted solitude, denied herself to all visitors and friends, and became a victim to hysteria, accompanied by various apprehensions, of which destitution, poverty, and absolute want were the more violent. A gentleman of this city, one of the warmest personal friends of her husband, succeeded in obtaining an interview, and then free access to her at all times. During a period of more than a year, during which he visited her mainly at her special request, she never failed to begin the interview with a minute detail of the events of that fatal Friday on which her husband was murdered. This same story was repeated at every interview, and almost in the exact words each time. It had engrossed her mind to the exclusion of all other things past and present, except the gloomy apprehension that she was reduced to want. At last, he proposed that she leave the hotel, and buy a house, furnish it, and receive friends, and have some cares to divert her mind. She at last consented, and he states that during the few months in which the house was purchased, and she was engaged in furnishing it, and thus had active employment, she was comparatively happy, and had shaken off the terror and wretchedness which had previously afflicted her. But when this business was completed, when there was nothing more to be done, her home again became a sort of prison, and she relapsed into all the old gloom, despondency, and terror. Acting under these combined influences, she did many things which were surprising, if not painful, to her friends. She had an aversion for companionship and acquaintance; she closed all means of social approach; she lived within the seclusion of her rooms, suffering and enduring the ever present horror of the one terrible event. At times she would grow restless, and suddenly change her residence; but wherever she went the relief was temporary, the relapse inevitable. Under this intense strain, her mind gradually became unbalanced, and year after year she has required more and more the vigilant care of her friends.

Her condition, and what was to be done for her, have been long and carefully considered, and her mental weakness and eccentricities during the last few months became so alarming that some preventive action became necessary. She had among other things become possessed of the idea that Chicago was on fire, and she had withdrawn the bonds and other securities in which her funds were invested from the vaults of the Fidelity Deposit Company, and carried them on her person, feeling thus prepared for instant flight. There was reason to apprehend that in her restless, troubled state of mind she might receive personal injury, and at last, when longer delay would really be cruelty and neglect of duty, her son was compelled to the painful proceeding which, under the laws of this State, must precede any detention or restraint for insanity. All the old personal friends of Mr. LINCOLN were consulted. The Hon. ISAAC N. ARNOLD was appointed her counsel. The Hon. LEONARD SWARTT assumed the even more delicate task of representing the Sheriff and executing the process of the Court. It is needless to say that the duty of arresting her, of conveying her to the court-room, of communicating to her the character and necessity for the proceedings, and the proposed disposal of her person under restraint, was performed in the most delicate manner, requiring, however, persistent firmness, great patience, and personal kindness. Her peculiar condition of mind was evidenced by many ingenious pretexts to postpone, delay, or evade action; but these being met with kindness and candor, she yielded to her friends, and submitted to the decree of the judicial inquiry.

We refrain from publishing the details of

her arrest by Mr. SWETT, and the subsequent arrangements for her departure to the place of detention. It is sufficient to say that throughout the trying scenes she was keenly sensitive, was fully conscious of her position, and skillful in her means to evade the execution of the judgment; but there was no violence, no denunciation, no reproaches. Throughout the whole business she displayed the amiability of a cultivated lady.

We close this brief explanation of the causes leading to this proceeding, and of the circumstances attending it, by repeating that it had long been foreseen by her intimates; that it was postponed as long as affectionate regard could do so with safety to herself, and that the result will satisfactorily explain to all many things in the past which were as painful and distressing to her friends and the friends of her husband as they were surprising to those uninformed of the peculiar circumstances.