

Awful Crimes by Powerful Men

The Commoner does not, as a rule, publish news items relating to murders, suicides, or scandals, but New York's most talked about tragedy of recent years is associated with conditions concerning which all men must be apprised in order that society may be protected.

Stanford White was a wealthy architect of New York City. He had risen high in his profession and had come to rank as one of the world's great architects. Harry Thaw is the younger son of the Pittsburg family of millionaires. Several years ago, young Thaw, in spite of the protests of his relatives, married Evelyn Nesbitt, who had been an actress. Without going into details, it may be explained that Thaw claims that prior to his marriage, Stanford White had ruined his wife's life when she was a child of fourteen. While White was sitting at a table in a garden theatre, and during the progress of the play Thaw approached and shot him to death. Thaw was immediately placed under arrest. A number of New York's best lawyers have been retained for his defense and "emotional insanity" will be the plea.

Although young Thaw has not been without serious faults of his own he seems to have the sympathy of the public, and Anthony Comstock of the society for the prevention of vice, shows very clearly that he is friendly to the young prisoner. Comstock says he was consulted by Thaw long ago and was informed of some of Stanford White's habits and warned to do something to protect society against the man who, while occupying an exalted position in his profession, seems to have gone below the level of the brute in his private life. It is impossible to tell the story of White's crimes. Suffice it to say that his purpose in life seemed to be to make children his prey, to ruin the future of young girls, and to break the hearts of fathers and mothers.

If the White affair was an individual case, it would not be of such widespread interest, but it is claimed by one newspaper that this case will "develop into the most atrocious scandal of the decade, disclosing as it now seems certain to do, what is New York's greatest sin." This newspaper explains: "It is the sin of a thousand girls, as weak as they are beautiful, debauched and ruined by men of great minds, of wealth, of many a legitimate achievement, who have for years traded on the seeming immunity of their social position, their wealth and their position in society. The

district attorney's office also has begun an investigation into the lives and revels of rich and prominent New Yorkers who have always believed themselves beyond the law. Fully a score of men, who have never known the slightest fear of investigation, are now on the grill. So powerful is this clique that hints of coming trouble of a seriousness absolutely fatal to their reputations were rushed to them by paid emissaries, some of whom are even in the employ of the county of New York. There promises to be an exodus to Europe, which will surpass that which has followed the development of the life insurance scandal. As the authorities probe deeper into the private life of White they no longer marvel that he was shot last Monday night. The investigation already has shown that there is an organized band of rich club men and artists who make victims of young girls of the stage, of the shops and of the poorer homes."

Many skeletons in the homes of our "captains of industry" are being exposed these days. A United States senator, a millionaire himself and the head of at least one great corporation, is being sued by a woman who claims that she was secretly married to this senator and that he broke his promise to her. The editor of a magazine, famous for its pleas for the protection of "national honor" was sued for divorce and the testimony revealed that the man who pretended to have so much concern for the national honor had little or no concern for his own. W. Ellis Corey, president of the steel trust, is now being sued for divorce on the ground that he deserted his wife who, during his days of poverty, helped him to lay the foundation for his success. Augustus Hartje is a Pittsburg "captain" who has brought down upon himself the denunciations of many of his townsmen because of the awful accusations he has preferred against his wife, accusations which it is claimed, and by many believed, based upon purchased testimony. It is known that the negro whose statements reflecting upon Mrs. Hartje the husband made public, has confessed that he had told a monstrous falsehood concerning the woman.

These are but a few instances of the many revelations that are being made concerning the private lives of some of those who have insisted that they possess a monopoly upon the intelligence, patriotism and morality of the nation even as they possess a monopoly upon the nation's wealth.

What Men Will Do For Gold

Ogden Armour is said to have lost his temper when the Paris correspondent for a New York newspaper interviewed him about the packing house revelations. Mr. Armour said: "I say that no sane man, nobody with the slightest knowledge of the packing trade as it is conducted in Chicago, can believe the horror stories in the newspapers. Surely no intelligent person can even imagine that men like myself, who have their entire fortunes invested in the packing business are fools. They can not suppose that we are deliberately trying to wreck our own business, to throw away everything we possess, by poisoning the consumers of our products. Any man who will think calmly and intelligently about the situation for five minutes can see how absurd all this clamor is."

It does seem strange that men having their entire fortune invested would act as the packers have acted; but the proofs concerning packing house conditions are convincing. No one believes that these men tried to ruin their own business. They, like other men who, since the beginning of the great American trust era, have grown fat with gold, have become reckless in their greed. Indeed, the only way to account for some of the things done by these monopolists is that in their chase for the dollar they have gone mad.

When democrats talked about putting "the dollar before the man," republicans sneered and pretended they did not understand the meaning of the phrase. The meat consumers who have been fed on poisoned food, the insurance policyholders whose money has been embezzled and the countless thousands of victims of trust greed, know now what is meant when one is accused of putting "the dollar before the man."

The fact is that the people have submitted

so long and patiently to these abuses that the great trust magnates imagined they would submit forever. The people have been blind for so long that the trust magnates imagined their eyes would never be opened. Eight years ago a general in the United States army charged and proved that these same packers were feeding the American soldiers upon poisoned meat. It was difficult for some people to understand why these men engaged in such discreditable work, but those who had investigated knew that, however forceful the packers were in denying the foul deeds, they were guilty of the things charged against them by General Miles.

There is no accounting for the things done by men gone mad. Among all the machinations or doings of afflicted men none is deeper or more difficult of comprehension than the methods of those whose lives seem devoted to the search for wealth. "The love of money has caught the world in a frenzy and nothing counts against it," says Daniel E. Finn, one of the police magistrates of New York City. Judge Finn has seen all sorts of criminals, and of this greed for gold he says:

"It kills the love of home and family; it makes repulsive, ugly, slimy things out of men and women who seem fair enough to look at, until you hear them open their mouths in a yawn that has only money for its theme and you see that the only motive that is propelling the living thing is the unholy, rapacious, vulture-like desire to gain a dollar or two or to keep from letting one go.

"The insolence of people who feel the power of money they possess, gotten by foul or fair means, is as bad in its way as the lack of decency on the part of those poor creatures who are trying to get it by any of the means that

have as incidents in the getting of it frequent appearance in the police court.

"The insolence of money goes to turn the socialistic spirit of the ignorant into anarchy.

"The man with money and the power that it gives him, who uses it to do good things in modesty, is about one to a hundred of the other kind.

"The man with the automobile and the insolence of a new fortune, who shouts 'Hi! Hi!' at the pedestrian, tries to break a policeman when he's arrested for speed-law infringement and shows his contempt for people in court, is one of the best cartoons on the insolence and growing aristocracy of money that any man could create.

"The world follows the fashion because so few individuals can think of themselves, and it's the fashion to reverence the man who gets the money. Reverence for the man who gets the money leads to the utter obliteration of human feelings.

"The tragedies and barbaric incidents of history are done over and over, again and again, in New York City daily, and are as much greater in their settings and dramatic interest as a Broadway production of today is greater than one of Tony Pastor's burlesques on the Bowery forty years ago.

"The tragedies of children whose lives are sold to shame by parents is a common one.

"The degradation of the home for money comes up as regularly as the drunks.

"If it were poverty alone that was responsible for this it would not be so bad, but in many cases it is for love of luxury."

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"UNDER A LINCOLN DATE LINE"

The Sioux City (Iowa) Journal, the Providence (Rhode Island) Journal, the St. Louis Republic and several other newspapers recently printed a dispatch under a Lincoln, Neb., date, in which dispatch statements were made, purporting to come from "a very close friend and confidential adviser of Mr. Bryan." This "very close friend and confidential adviser" was represented as describing certain plans which it was alleged Mr. Bryan had made for the presidential campaign of 1908. The "very close friend and confidential adviser" made several observations, more or less startling. Several republican papers have already commented upon this alleged interview—which comments were intended to be to Mr. Bryan's disadvantage—without undertaking to investigate as to the accuracy of the statements, and wholly ignoring the fact that the interview was so constructed as to at once suggest to any trained newspaper man its utter unreliability.

The newspaper correspondents of the city of Lincoln have always stood high in their profession and The Commoner would be loath to believe that any of them had been guilty of this cheap fake; but it was a fake and the statements purported to have been made by "a very close friend and confidential adviser of Mr. Bryan" were so absurd that even if Mr. Bryan had in the city of Lincoln an implacable enemy, he would not have cared to stand sponsor for those statements.

Every newspaper correspondent in Lincoln denies the authorship of the dispatch referred to. Unquestionably some one wrote it; and in writing it some one perpetrated one of the baldest fakes ever palmed off on decent newspapers.

It would be too great a task to undertake to correct all the falsehoods told of a public man, and The Commoner has no intention of acquiring the habit of defending Mr. Bryan from the misrepresentations of dishonest and unscrupulous writers. But whatever treatment Mr. Bryan may receive at the hands of correspondents elsewhere, there is one place where he has the right to confidently depend upon fair treatment; that place is the city of Lincoln where the people know Mr. Bryan and understand his characteristics and methods thoroughly; that place is Lincoln where the newspaper men have, as a rule, been among Mr. Bryan's most intimate and best loved friends. If there be among that number—so long regarded by Mr. Bryan and the community generally as high and honorable men—one who for the sake of a few paltry dollars would concoct falsehoods to the disadvantage of his neighbor, he owes no apology to Mr. Bryan who is secure from injury at his hands.

But to the high and honorable profession he has entered only to disgrace he owes the final service rendered by the men of old who sang: "True patriots all, for be it understood we left our country for our country's good."

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