

A COMMONPLACE TRAGEDY

CHAPTER I.

THE sun shone high in the blue heavens; the soft, fragrant air, heavy with the scent of roses and carnations, stirred the creepers on the low, white house, sighing faintly through the trees at the bottom of the velvety-terraced lawns which sloped down to the edge of the miniature lake, shimmering in the hot July sunshine. Through the trees walked stilly a tall, broad-shouldered specimen of the stronger sex, with a long, military stride, whistling carelessly as he skirted the lake and disappeared into the tangled wood path. As he passed out of sight a woman came slowly up the green terraces, pausing, as she reached the top, to glance back at the retreating figure in the distance; then she turned away, with a little impatient gesture, gathering the soft folds of her gray dress together as she mounted the wide, shallow steps and sauntered slowly along the shadowy shrubby path, where the leafy branches met overhead, forming a natural avenue of cool, delicious shade. She sat down wearily on the rustic seat at the far end of the mossy path, resting her head against the old tree at her back, the dark, shadowy background throwing into strong relief the slight gray figure, with the small head proudly erect, crowned with masses of golden brown hair, curly and soft, forming a dark setting for the pale face, out of which shone those glorious, dark-gray eyes, with a deep violet tinge in them, just now filled with an overpowering weight of weariness and agony of disappointment.

"He never cared," she said to herself; "are his eyes so blinded that he cannot see the truth for himself?"

Her bosom heaved under the soft, silky folds of her cool, gray dress; her hands were tightly clasped before her. Suddenly her whole attitude changed and relaxed, and she resumed her old careless posture; a maid came down the path, with a silver salver in her hand, on which reposed a card. "The woman glanced at the name inscribed thereon—'Lord Berrington.'"

"I will come in," she said, and the maid returned to the house.

She sat motionless for an instant, then rose quickly, as if some sudden determination had seized her. A scornful smile curved her red lips as she walked into the cool, shadowy drawing room, through the open French window. As she entered a man advanced quickly to meet her; he seized both her hands in his, saying passionately—

"Ruth, I have come for my answer. What is it to be?"

She turned away her head for an instant, and looked out into the sunlit garden, down to the dark, shady wood, with the lake dancing in the hot sunshine; then she looked back into the dark, handsome face of the man before her.

"It is to be—yes," she said in her clear, cool voice, with no trace of emotion; but she shuddered involuntarily as she was clasped in her lover's arms. That was the first act of the tragedy.

CHAPTER II.

The curtain rises on the second act. Ruth, Lady Berrington, whose unemotional, tragic beauty has taken the world of fashion by storm, is seated in her flower-scented boudoir; she has not altered much during the last two years; her beauty is still as marvelous as ever, unspotted by all the turmoil of a London season, where the world has bowed down to the new beauty. At first, to her unsophisticated mind, the intoxicating whirl of ceaseless gaieties was at once pleasant and novel, but now she is heartily tired of it; she is filled with intense, mad longings to revisit the old home in the quiet, peaceful country—the old-fashioned garden, the tangled wood, and the lake, glistening under a cloudless, dazzling sky—how it all comes back to her, a flood of bitter memories. A warm breeze steals in at the open windows, blowing out the long, filmy curtains, and bearing a whiff of mignonette from the flower-filled balcony.

The door opens and a man enters. At the sight of him Ruth rises, with a suppressed cry, pale to the very lips. She holds out her hand.

"Capt. Tremayne," she says, "this is indeed a surprise! I had no idea that you had returned."

The visitor holds her hand in his, letting his eyes rest on the pale, lovely face for a moment; then they both sit down.

He is the first to speak. "I only arrived in England a few days ago, and, being in town, I seized the first opportunity to call on you, for the sake of 'old lang syne.'"

Ruth smiles and slowly unfolds her feather fan; the heat is terrific.

"You are very kind," she says; "and I am more than pleased to see you. Two years have passed since we last met; am I much altered?"

She looks straight at him inquiringly, and the look sends a hot thrill through his whole being.

"You are more beautiful," he says, slowly. "This seriously spoken speech causes a little ripple of light laughter to break from Ruth, as she slowly fans herself. 'You have grown complimentary during your two years' absence on foreign

service," she says lightly, but her eyes drop as they meet his.

"Is it actually so long since I spent that long, delightful day at Pens Court? Do you remember the lake and the walk in the woods?"

"Remember?" her voice thrills with some strong, hidden emotion, "as if I should ever forget the—"

She checks herself hurriedly. "And now you are married?" he remarks, irrelevantly. "I was a coward then."

"A coward? Why?"

She disregards his first remark. "Why?" he asks fiercely, "because I was afraid to speak—because I knew you feared poverty—that you sought a brilliant alliance—"

She stops him with a sudden, imperious gesture, her eyes blazing with a passionate light.

"Silence! You malign me. I never sought this 'brilliant alliance.'" (Scornfully.) "What has it brought me, but—"

She breaks off abruptly, and, with a sudden movement, pulls back her loose-hanging sleeve, revealing an ugly, livid bruise on the fair white arm; then, with a bitter smile, she lets the sleeve fall again, and turns toward the window. He starts to his feet, his handsome face dark with passion.

"Ruth," he cries, seizing her hands in his fiercely, "it was all a horrible mistake; my cowardice has brought you to this. My darling, you love me?"

She does not move; a shiver runs through her—a shiver of mortal agony.

"Ruth, speak! Tell me you love me!" "You hurt me," she says, faintly, striving to free herself from his firm grasp. She raises her agonized eyes to his, and then she is clasped in his arms. For one instant she lies passive, then frees herself with a wrench.

"Leave me," she says, "unsteadily; 'why do you come, now that it is too late—too late! You must go. Good-bye.'"

She holds her hand in dismissal and farewell.

His passion completely overmasters him as he looks upon her, pale and sorrow-stricken.

"I will not go," he cries vehemently; "Ruth, you do not, you cannot mean it. For your own sake—"

He advances quickly, but she repels him.

"For my own sake and yours, go—"

And then he knows that all is ended. With one farewell look he leaves her, and goes out of the room, while she sinks wearily into her chair, a dull, aching pain tearing at her heartstrings.

CHAPTER III.

Time slips by insensibly. A new beauty has usurped Lady Berrington's position in society, from which she has now withdrawn herself. Her husband is dead—killed himself in the hunting field—and she is free to come and go as she will. The great town is shrouded and empty, and she has flown to the restful quietude of Pens Court, the home of her childhood, which she had bought back as a home for herself in her lonely widowhood. Then wild hopes fill her heart. Now that she knows she is really free, Maurice will surely come to her—she must know. These hopes are strengthened when, at a dinner party, she hears the familiar name mentioned. He is coming to stay with some distant neighbors—ah! it is to be near her he is coming at last. As each day passes she waits feverishly for his coming; and still he comes not. As each long summer day wanes she whispers, "To-morrow he will come," and to-morrow passes, and still he comes not. Then one evening, as she sits peacefully under the cedar trees on the green lawns, resting in the cool evening air, full of sweet, faint perfume from the glowing flower beds on the velvety turf, a maid appears from the house.

"A gentleman in the drawing room, my lady," she says; "he gave no name."

Ruth, with a wild hope, rises slowly and walks over the lawn, her black dress sweeping over the grass, her pale cheeks tinged with a pink color as she mounts the shallow steps and enters the cool, shadowy room, full of flowers and delicious perfumes wafted in on the evening air.

A man is standing with his back toward her, but as her dress sweeps over the soft carpet he turns and faces her. A quivering smile flashes into her sweet, gray eyes, and she holds out both hands with a little glad cry.

"Ah, Maurice! At last, at last!" "Something in his unresponsive attitude strikes a cold chill to her heart; has he forgotten?"

"I could not pass your neighborhood without looking you up, Lady Berrington," he says, easily. "How lovely this place is! Are you living here altogether?"

Ruth feels that her throat and lips are parched and dry, but she answers him with an effort.

"Yes; I could not endure that dreary townhouse—after—"

"Yes, yes," he says, hastily; "after your terrible bereavement; you are fortunate to have been able to secure the old place in time; I am paying a flying visit to the Carews, at Marsh Hall; you know them, of course?"

"Very slightly—then—you do not stay long?"

"Not long. There are many preparations to be made before April" (with a

smile) "before my wedding—you have not heard? Juliet Carew will be my wife in a few months' time; may I ask for your congratulations for 'old lang syne?'"

The blood rushes to a wild flood to Ruth's head, leaving her sick and cold—everything swims before her tired eyes—she must speak. She makes an effort.

"I hope—I sincerely trust—you may be happy," she says, a little unsteadily; "I must call on Miss Carew."

"You are very kind," he says, with his happy smile. "How familiar this place seems. Our days of flirtation are at an end. Lady Berrington; ah, one does foolish things in the heyday of youth, but you showed yourself to be a wise woman."

Ruth smiles. Has he forgotten all? "Yes," she says, with bitterness; "we look back with contemptuous pity on such follies in maturer years."

When he is gone she stands on the terrace in the deepening twilight, the cool, soft air fanning her hot, flushed cheeks; the fern owl in the distance, with its curious whirr, alone breaks the stillness; a bat flaps heavily overhead; a belated bee booms past, hurrying homeward. Then she goes slowly, wearily, into the old familiar room; a sharp, sudden pain clutches her heart, she catches blindly at the mantelpiece, an ashen grayness overspreading the lovely face. With a little gasping cry she falls prone to the ground; blood rushes to her lips and stains the delicate lace on her bosom. A chill monning wind sweeps round the house, dying away in the distance with a wild sobbing wail, as of a soul in mortal agony passing through the fiery furnace of affliction.

The doctor says "Failure of the heart's action, and hemorrhage," but does science always fathom such mysteries? Does it take into account broken hearts? Perhaps not—Waverley.

CAUGHT IN A STAMPEDE.

Champion Steer-Tyer Takes Desperate Chance for Life.

Two years ago, when the cowboys of northeastern Arizona came together to find out who was the "best man" in various ways, James Evans won the steer-tying championship by roping, throwing and tying a vicious steer in twenty-four seconds. But in a recent round-up the champion did a more remarkable thing, by which, says the Kansas City Star, he saved his own and another man's life.

While he and some companions were camping for the night on a high tableland, which ended a few miles away in an abrupt drop of two hundred feet, a storm swept through the mountains. Made nervous by the lightning, the herd of fifteen hundred cattle stampeded in the direction of the precipice. Evans and his men mounted hurriedly, and circling to the front of the maddened cattle, tried with whips and revolver-shots to turn them back.

In the dense blackness of the night Evans' horse missed his footing and went down in a heap, one leg in a gopher-hole. The horse of a cowboy named Davis, running close behind, stumbled over Evans' horse, and Davis, too, came to earth and lay still, unconscious.

Fifty yards away came the herd, and a short flash of lightning showed Evans the situation. The swiftly moving sea of cattle reached one hundred yards each way. Unable to arouse Davis, and never thinking of leaving his disabled comrade, Evans took the only chance of saving both. He emptied his own revolver and his companion's into the center of the herd, cutting a breach in the front of the mass. Then throwing the inanimate form of Davis over his shoulder, he awaited his opportunity.

As one of the leaders brushed by, Evans, with one movement, put the body of Davis across the shoulders of the steer, and mounted, also. Vainly the animal leaped, bucked and side-jumped. With his legs wrapped tightly around the body of his mount, Evans drove his spurs deep in, and held himself and Davis in place.

The steer, wild with rage, agony and fright, rapidly left the herd in the rear, and veering to the right in a furious gallop, carried his riders out of danger. Then Evans rolled off the back of his strange rescuer, and a half-hour later, when his cowboys turned the herd at the rim of the canon, and rode back to look for the foreman and Davis, they found them both unconscious. The weary steer, with his sides covered with blood, lay exhausted a short distance away.

The outfit ordered a medal for Evans, and the steer was pensioned for life on the best alfalfa in the valley.

An Urgent Case.

When the doctor's telephone rang late one night he went to the instrument himself and received an urgent appeal from two fellow-practitioners to come down to the club for a quiet game.

"Emly, dear," he said, turning to his wife, "I am called out again, and it appears to be a very serious case, for there are two doctors already in attendance."—New York Times.

Blast Furnaces in Britain.

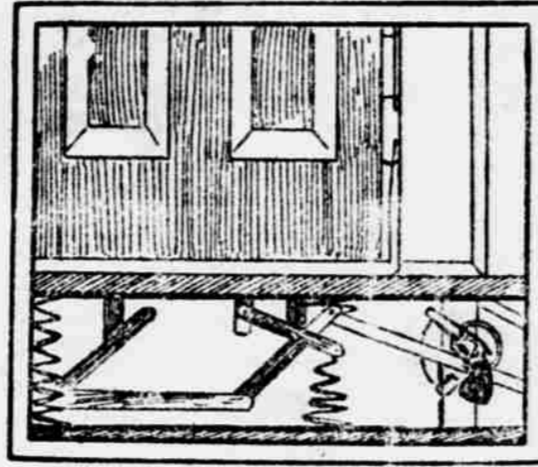
The number of blast furnaces in course of erection Dec. 31 in Great Britain was 70. Of this number 11 were in Scotland, 10 in West Staffordshire, 8 in Cleveland, 8 in South Cumberland, 7 in South Wales and 6 in Derbyshire.

About all you can do with people who hate you is to conclude they have had taste.

Honestly now, if you were in the other fellow's shoes, could you do any better?

NEW FOE TO THE BURGLAR.

The device shown in the accompanying drawing does not look vicious enough to combat successfully with a burglar until you notice the wicked little gun way down in the corner of the picture. It is the hidden foe against which the burglar has no power to fight. The use of the electric current, with its numerous wires and switches, is already quite common as a protective agency, but the appearance may become disarranged or the strength of the batteries diminish and the alarm prove ineffective just at the time when it is needed. With this device there is the one movable platform and trigger-operating mechanism, complete in itself and sure to give an alarm as soon as the platform is depressed by the weight



TRAP FOR A BURGLAR.

of a person stepping on it. The device is rendered operative by throwing the oblique bars into a vertical position, which drops the horizontal bar against the support beneath and carries any weight on the platform above. Arrangement may be made to regulate this alarm by the opening of an inside door, thus throwing it out of action when a member of the family desires to pass out across the platform. The gun may be pointed so as to injure an intruder or only to sound an alarm, as preferred, and the apparatus will be of practical value in railway mail and express cars and for banks, as well as private houses.

MELBA OUTWITS HERO.

Lord Wolseley Did Not Know Who Sincer Was, and She Retorted.

Field Marshal Lord Wolseley, hero of campaigns, has met defeat in an engagement of wits. He has, according to a special cable dispatch from London to the New York Evening Journal, been vanquished by a woman. The victor in the little dinner table tilt was Mme. Melba and the scene of the occurrence the house of a member of the British aristocracy.

Mme. Melba at this dinner was seated at the right of Lord Wolseley, who was at the right of the hostess of the evening. Lord Wolseley at the beginning of the dinner asked of the hostess: "Who is the lady at my right?" "Why, that is Mme. Melba?" "Who is this Mme. Melba?" "Is it possible that your lordship does not know the great singer?" "Oh, yes. Born in Australia, I believe." And with that the general applied himself to the course then served. After a few minutes he turned to the prima donna, greeted her pleasantly and said:

"You are an Australian, I believe, madam. I know a great deal about your country. My brother lives in Melbourne."

"And pray, sir, what is the name of your brother?" the singer naively inquired.

"Goodness! Why, his name is the same as mine—Wolseley," answered the surprised officer.

"Who is Wolseley? I do not recall that name," Mme. Melba explained.

"Why, I am General Wolseley," replied the astonished officer.

"Wolseley? Wolseley? Wolseley?" whispered the singer as if appearing to refresh her memory. And then the general applied himself again to the food. He had learned his lesson.

A Pretty Broad Hint.

An anecdote is told of one of the smaller South American republics which illustrates the methods which are adopted when it comes to a question of making war. The "navy" of the particular power referred to consists of a single, old-fashioned, side-wheel steamer, armed with one gun. In time of peace she is engaged in hauling freight up and down the river which runs close to the capital. At the outbreak of one of the periodical wars, not so very long ago, the President of the republic took charge of the steamer and started up stream on a recruiting expedition, leaving his senior general in charge of the military preparations at the capital. A couple of days later the steamer returned, and some seventy miserable looking natives, each firmly bound with a strong rope, were marched off and turned over to the general, with a note from the President which read:

"Dear General: I send you herewith seventy volunteers. Please return the ropes at once."

Rather Unpromising.

An Englishman walking through a certain part of Scotland with rod and reel came upon a tiny loch which, he thought, held out promise of good sport. Patiently he fished for three hours, moving steadily from spot to spot along the borders of the little pond, but no success came to him. At last he accosted a boy who had stood for ten minutes watching him with mingled surprise and curiosity on his face.

"My little lad," said the Englishman, "can you tell me whether there are any fish in this pond?"

"If there be any they must be very few ones, sir," returned the boy, "for there was nix water here until it rained yesterday!"

Poorly?

"For two years I suffered terribly from dyspepsia, with great depression, and was always feeling poorly. I then tried Ayer's Sarsaparilla, and in one week I was a new man."—John McDonald, Philadelphia, Pa.

Don't forget that it's "Ayer's" Sarsaparilla that will make you strong and hopeful. Don't waste your time and money by trying some other kind. Use the old, tested, tried, and true Ayer's Sarsaparilla. \$1.00 a bottle. All druggists.

Ask your doctor what he thinks of Ayer's Sarsaparilla. He knows all about this grand old family medicine. Follow his advice and we will be satisfied. J. C. AYER CO., Lowell, Mass.

Not Much.

"I wish to ask you something, Miss Millie," said Archey with trembling voice and wabbling chin. "Why don't you dare to ask it?" the maiden said demurely. "Because I can see no in your eyes." "In both of them?" "Ye-es." "Well, don't you—don't you know two negatives are equivalent to an—how dare you sir! Take your arm from around my waist, instantly!" But he didn't.

Condemned in Missouri and Confiscated in New York.

Judge Clarke of St. Louis has convicted and fined heavily a number of grocers for selling baking powder containing alum.

The week before the Health Department of New York seized a quantity of stuff being sold for baking powder which they found was made from alum mixed with ground rock, and dumped it into the river. The Health Authorities are thus taking effective means to prevent the introduction into our markets of injurious substitutes in place of wholesome baking powders.

As alum costs only two cents a pound, there is a great temptation for those manufacturers who make substitutes and imitation goods, to use it. Alum baking powders can be detected by the health authorities by chemical analysis, but the ordinary housekeeper, whose assistance in protecting the health of the people is important, cannot make a chemical examination. She may easily know the alum powders, however, from the fact that they are sold at from ten to twenty cents for a pound can, or that some prize—like a spoon or glass, or piece of crockery, or wooden ware—is given with the powder as an inducement.

As the people continue to realize the importance of this subject and consumers insist on having baking powder of established name and character, and as the health authorities continue their vigorous crusades, the alum danger will, it is hoped, finally be driven from our homes.

Belts and Their Buckles.

The greatest number of belts are shaped, and white calf and patent leather are among the best. The harness buckle is the buckle for these belts. Occasionally there is a buckle that is covered. Some of the belts have buckles on either side of the front and open at one of them. Suede and velvet belts are studded with metal.

Mrs. Winslow's SOOTHING SYRUP for children teething, softens the gums, reduces inflammation, allays pain, cures wind colic. 25¢ bottle.

If the whole earth was reduced to a level table land its height would be 20 feet above sea level.

DON'T SPOIL YOUR CLOTHES.

Use Red Cross Ball Blue and keep them white as snow. All grocers, 5¢ a package.

In some of the farming districts of China pigs are harnessed to small wagons and made to draw them.

Lost His Rheumatism By the use of a bottle of St. Jacobs Oil.

SERGEANT JEREMIAH MAHER, of Ardcaith, Royal Irish Constabulary, says: "My friend, Mr. Thomas Hand, has been a great sufferer from rheumatism in the back and joints for the last four years, during which time he has employed many different methods of treatment, but obtained no relief whatever, and for the last two years has been unable to walk without a stick, and sometimes two sticks, and was in great pain constantly. I induced him to procure a bottle of St. Jacobs Oil, which he applied with the most astonishing and marvellous effects. Before he had finished using the contents of the first bottle he could walk readily without the aid of a stick, and after a few applications from the second bottle he was free from pain, and has been ever since, and although fifty years of age and a farmer, he can walk and work without experiencing any pain or difficulty whatever."

WOLSELEY'S CREATIVE COMPOUND, the great remedy which makes people well; it is made from the formula of an eminent London physician. Send to St. Jacobs Oil, Ltd., Baltimore, Md., for a free sample bottle.

THE HOUSEHOLD

Crisp Waffles.

The average waffle served in the North is brown, tender and palatable, but has not the crispness considered essential by a good Southern cook. These directions, if followed to the letter, give most delicious results: Cream the yolks of two eggs, then stir in two teaspoonfuls of cold boiled hominy, two teaspoonfuls of butter and a small one of salt. Sift two scant cups of flour with two teaspoonfuls of baking powder, and have ready two teaspoonfuls of milk, to mix all to a smooth batter. Add the stiffly beaten whites at the last. Do not wet the flour until the irons are greased and getting hot. For unless these are very hot when used all will be ruined. The hominy should be smooth and well boiled.

Oranges in Sirup.

Score the oranges all over in imitation of some ornamental design, representing basket-work or trellis-work, and then simmer them in water until nearly done through. They must next be put into cold water for twenty-four hours, changing the water every three hours. At the end of this time they should be drained in a sieve for several hours, then placed in an earthen pan and covered with a hot sirup made by boiling three pounds of sugar and one quart of water for five minutes. For three successive days let the sirup be boiled up and skimmed, and when nearly cold pour back upon the oranges; after the last time the oranges may be put away in jars, and used for dessert when required.

Apple Mold.

Put two cups of water and two cups of sugar in a saucepan over the fire, stir until the sugar dissolves; then boil up and skim. Put in a pound of apples, pared and cut into halves and cook until tender and clear. Add the juice of two lemons and the yellow part of the rind of one, chopped off this so as not to get any of the bitter white part. Press through a sieve and while they are hot add half a package of gelatine dissolved in cold water. Set on ice and whisk until cool; then stir in the whites of four eggs beaten to a stiff froth. As soon as it begins to thicken turn into a mold, and set on ice to harden. Make a vanilla or orange sauce with the four egg yolks and serve with the pudding.

Coffee Cake.

Two teaspoonfuls of sugar, one of butter; add one teaspoonful of molasses, one large cup of strong coffee, four eggs beaten, five teaspoonfuls of sifted flour; sift one teaspoonful of baking powder and half a teaspoonful of baking soda with the flour, one pound each of raisins and currants, quarter of a pound of sliced citron, two teaspoonfuls each of cloves and cinnamon, and one teaspoonful each of allspice and grated nutmeg. Bake one hour and a half.

Celery with Cream Sauce.

Three heads of celery, one pint of milk, butter the size of an egg, flour to thicken and salt to season. Wash and scrape the celery, cut into pieces one inch long, and simmer in salted water for half an hour. Make a cream sauce of the milk thickened with flour with butter and salt for seasoning. Add the celery, from which the water has been drained, and serve in a heated dish.

Caramel Coffee.

Coffee made with a suspicion of caramel is liked as an after dinner or luncheon coffee by some people. It is made by putting a couple of tablespoonfuls of lump sugar in a small saucepan and allowing it to color almost black without burning. When the coffee, say about four tablespoonfuls has been put in the heated percolator, add the caramel and pour on the boiling water.

Grated Apple Pudding.

Grate six large, juicy apples and beat in a grating cup of powdered sugar, the grated peel of a lemon or orange, half a cup of sifted, whole wheat biscuit crumbs and the beaten yolks of six eggs. Last of all fold in carefully the whites of the eggs beaten to a froth. Turn into a buttered baking dish, sprinkle chopped nuts over the top and bake in a quick oven until set.

Frozen Custard.

Three quarts cream, eighteen eggs, two pounds sugar, vanilla to taste. Heat two quarts of the cream in a double boiler over a quick fire; beat eggs to a light froth with sugar, and add the hot cream slowly, stirring constantly. As soon as a coating is formed on the spoon, add the remaining quart of cream, and stir until solid. Strain and freeze.

Scrambled Tomatoes.

Stew five or six good-sized tomatoes and let them cool. Beat separately the yolks and whites of six eggs. Add to the yolk one cup milk, pepper and salt; then beat in the whites and tomatoes. Turn into a pan of hot butter and stir until well cooked. Serve on buttered toast.

Baked Smelts.

Wash thoroughly, dry in a cloth, arrange in a flat baking dish after buttering both fish and dish. Season with salt and pepper and cover with bread or cracker crumbs. Place a piece of butter on each fish and bake twenty minutes. Garnish with parsley.