A SUMMER TRAGEDY

BY JEAN KATE LUDLUM

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It seemed pitifuly unkind when I was old enough to feel the slum of fortune, for my comrades and friends—my brothers more than anyone—to nickname me "Sorrel" because of the color of my hair!

For years this was a sore subject to me. Many a "crying spell" have I had owing to that and the laughter of my thoughtless companions. Everyone called me Sorrel. My own name, Ethel, was so seldom spoken I failed to answer it when heard!

We went up to the country early that summer, for it was unusually warm and I was restless for the free life and exercise to which I owed my perfect health.

"I shall have Sidney Burnett up this summer," Tom declared as decidedly as I, in the laying of plans. "He was awfully good to me, you know, when I was down in the dumps that time at college, and during our summering together last summer."

The weather was divine; for the first two weeks we simply reveled in the freedom and open life. Then Tom's friend came, and I liked him from the first because he had been so good to Tom. He was big and broad-shouldered and stern at times, with his clear gray eyes searching one's soul, and no smiling of the mouth under the brown mustache.

Inez was my special chum at school, and when we parted the day after graduation she promised me a month at the end of summer, and she did not forget. We corresponded, of course, and I told her of Tom's friend along with the rest of my brothers, and of our pleasant life in the old country house, so that when she came she knew our routine pretty thoroughly. But in her letters not a hint did she give that she and Tom and Tom's friend were not strangers!

She was a beautiful girl, tall and willowy, with large, soft black eyes and an abundance of black hair always becomingly arranged, and I did not wonder that Tom and Tom's friend started when they saw her, for I had simply told them of her as Inez, my chum at school, and I met her at the station and brought her home in my dogcart while they were off on the hills, and coming in late to dinner, their eyes fell upon her, cool, quiet, beautiful, sitting opposite me, and they started visibly, paling a trifle. Then Tom bit his lip and Mr. Burnett frowned and the stern expression came around his mouth, each bowing with cold politeness in recognition of the introduction, as she lifted her magnificent eyes straight to theirs for one brief minute, smiling softly, murmuring in her exquisite voice how odd it was that they should meet again this summer in their summering! Neither smiled in answer, though I wondered how they could remain so stolidly cold to her.

"Why didn't you tell me you knew them?" I demanded half angrily, as we stood in the shadows of the piazza vines.

She laughed lightly, her laughter like music in the soft silence as she said, tapping my cheek with the deep red rose in her hand:

"It isn't a tragedy, Sorrel; don't look so cross at me! They helped make last summer pass pleasantly, that is all. Only, my dearest," and there was an inscrutable tone in her voice, her black eyes burning into mine through the dusk, "don't lose your heart to your brother's friend. Great Mogul as he is, he isn't worthy that!" and she laughed again.

Tom's friend was unusually gay, treating my beautiful Inez as doubtless he would have treated any casual acquaintance in the house of a friend, while Dick and Ned tried their wits upon her, appearing to adore her mutually from the first; and I was too hopelessly healthy to degenerate at once into a "lovelorn maiden," and with spirits happy and heart strong I set my wits against hers, astonishing even myself with my brilliance. For with the heart of a healthy girl I believed I loved Inez truly, and if Tom's friend—but there I always ended. I never allowed more minute reasoning.

The month was nearly over when suddenly the web of mystery tangled for me and then as suddenly broke. We were out on a canter through the hills, the boys, Tom's friend, my friend and I, and my fiery chestnut, Katahdin's blood being up, we dashed on and away from the others recklessly, thoughtlessly, delightfully, my hair becoming undone, tumbling down over my shoulders in all its heavy weight of color. Then, with a merry thought of my inhospitality of winning the race so far ahead, I wheeled Katahdin and rode back more sedately.

The turf was soft and thick and my horse made no noise save the dead crush of the grass as we passed so slowly back, when presently beside a wood flanking a deep embankment, the sound of voices came to my ears, and I drew rein to call if it were any of our party. But at that instant the voice of Tom's friend stirred the quiet air and my voice was hushed, not in idle curiosity, but stunned by sudden knowledge.

"You say it is nothing to me if you choose to come here to visit your friend! Your friend!" Was it scorn of her or of me in his voice? I felt myself turning to stone, yet could only listen. "Is there aught of her to compare with you that you should call her that? After last summer—I answer you frankly—I do not see how you could descend to coming here. How you could dare to come! You knew perfectly well whom you would meet, whom you must see day after day, and with the memory we three have ..."

Whether I turned deaf or blind or both, I scarcely knew. That I struck my horse cruelly with the whip, I remember, and the mad rush of wind past my face, whipping my hair, as he dashed infuriated out of the path, wheeled, poised for an instant on the embankment, and then leaped! He was thoroughly trained for the field, or I think we would both have been instantly killed; but he only stumbled in gaining his footing, and threw me dashing off unharmed himself.

I tell it as though I knew it, but this is as it was told me later. In reality, I was incapable of thought or feeling; only the sound of that scornful voice without the words it uttered deadened all else. I fainted when I was thrown, striking a stump with my head, and would have been killed, they said, but for my heavy, loosened hair.

It was two weeks later that I regained my senses, and not until I was stronger did I learn how ill I had been, how near to death's door, and how it was only my hair that saved me in the fall. Inez had gone, they told me evasively, when I asked for her, and Tom's friend would have gone to one of the houses in the village had they listened to any such nonsense. But when I was strong enough to be carried down to the parlor and set among a pile of cushions in my favorite lounging chair beside the cheery wood fire on the hearth—for the days were chilly—Tom's friend came to me. Everyone had unaccountably left the room, and I was alone when he entered. I held out my hand gravely, without a word, and although he took it as gravely he also stooped and touched my hair with his lips.

Sound of Voices Came to My Ears.

And then, like a silly child, I was sobbing on his shoulder and he was telling me the story I had waited so long to hear.

Then I told him how my accident had occurred, and he in turn told me something of my school friend I had never dreamed.

Inez—my beautiful Inez—had lured my brother on during their summering a year before, and had then laughed at him in her soft, low, musical voice when he made known his heart, and it had gone hard with him at first; but she treated a mutual friend of theirs in the same way, only he had not Tom's pride—and a pistol bullet was easiest, he said, and sooner over, and that had turned my Tom's infatuation to hatred of the beautiful girl-woman, who also tried her arts on this brave friend of his without success.

"Tom was too noble for her!" his friend finished frankly, "and I had not met you then, Sorrel, but her treachery kept me safe! I had not met you, my sweet little girl, without whom the house is dark and silent."

"And without my hair!" I added presently, with an attempt at sauciness, but there were tears in my eyes as well. "A poor little 'strawberry blonde' to match with her exquisite beauty!"

"Don't!" he said imperatively. "You are not to speak so of yourself, Sorrel—it isn't respectful to me; and if it hadn't been for your hair—"

"If it hadn't been for my hair—" I added, taking up the pause. But we never finished the sentence.

So I was engaged ere I "came out," though I would not listen to a wedding under two years, nor would mother and the rest. As for Inez, I have never seen her from that day, for she returned to her home in Spain. And I am certain that Tom has no pain in the memory of their summer, save the recollection of the sad little tragedy of the ending of a life under her falsity, for Tom never loved her in spite of her exquisite beauty—he could not love such a woman!

AND HE WONDERED.

She—I intend to share all your cares, dear.

He—But, my pet, I have no cares.

She—I mean, dear, after we are married.

To keep a race horse costs $2,500 a year.

SONGS OF A GENERATION AGO.

In the Majority of Them the Heroines Always Passed Away.

It may not be generally known that Fanny Crosby, now spoken of only as a hymn writer, used to drop into weekday verse, supplying words for songs more popular in their day than are any of the new things heard by music lovers of these later years, the New York Post.

The matron who is now being "centured again in her girlie" will, if she has a good memory, recall a doleful song that her Charlie and his rivals used to ask for when she were ringlets and broad-brimmed gypsy hats: "In the Hazel Dell My Nellie's Sleeping," the words of which were written by Fanny Crosby, under a pen name. This same matron had not been married long enough to give up her music when "Rosalie, the Prairie Flower" (words by the same author) had all sentimental young people weeping because "she" was "gone."

It was the fashion in those days for song heroines to die young, and Miss Crosby wasn't any more murderously inclined than other song writers. At that time "Sweet Alice," under her slab of granite so gray, was still popular, and listeners were informed that "Gentle Annie" wouldn't come any more because she was "gone too," though "Fair Eulalie" appeared sometimes as a spirit robed in white.

We had not long given up weeping at "Little Blossom's" tomb when "Sweet Belle Mahone" went to wait for her lover (captious critics had it that she waited in vain) at heaven's gate. While "Katie Darling" was still being mourned for the angels began to clear the way for "Nellie Gray's" faithful affianced to join her up above. "Kate Darling" had probably a longer season of bellship than any other dead girl, but she was closely followed by Miss Crosby's "Rosalie."

The little beauty, "Belle Brandon," was another young person of the "Prairie Flower" genus, but in spite of her early grave she was never so popular as were some of her rivals.

To be sure, the old songs were somewhat niminy-piminy and they were doleful to a degree, but, nevertheless, they were what the young people cried for in those days and they were doubtless unobjectionable. The words were all more or less of the "Mary in Heaven" order of verse, and surely Burns was at his best when he lay on the grass, watching "yon lingering star" and dreaming of one without the memory of whom he had, perhaps, never been a true poet.

Not According to Creed.

It often takes the mirror of another's opinion to show up the inconsistencies of practice. The idea that gloom should be associated with death in the mind lighted by the hopeful torch of Christianity seemed a strange thing to the young Indian girl mentioned in a book on "The Indian Life."

"Mem-sahib," asked she, "why do you wear those sad colors? I don't like them."

"I am in mourning, Lattoo. It is the custom of English ladies."

"But black is the color of night, mem-sahib, and yet you believe that when you die you go to heaven at once. Then why not be glad for your friends who die, and wear colors such as we see in birds and flowers, and falling water when the sun shines? God doesn't make your colors. Ah, well, Christians are strange people."—Youth's Companion.

Heat Tests of Clothing.

An interesting experiment, made in June by a physician, proved conclusively that for the sake of coolness only white should be worn in hot weather.

The physician spread out in an intense sunshine a large piece of white cloth, another of dark yellow, another of light green, another of dark green, another of blue and another of black.

Then, with the help of six thermometers, he made the following table of the various heats which each color received from the sunlight: White, 100 degrees; dark yellow, 140 degrees; light green, 155 degrees; dark green, 168 degrees; blue, 198 degrees; black, 208 degrees.

Thus the physician proved that in July or August the man in white is a little less than twice as cool as the man in blue and a little more than twice as cool as the man in black.

Carpet of Ivory.

The carpet, at a distance, seemed of cream-colored silk, but as the Indian merchant unrolled it, it rattled slightly, for it was a carpet of ivory.

"An ivory carpet," said the sallow and thin dealer. "It does not belong to me, but to a certain rajah. He has commissioned me to sell it to one of your millionaires, whose wealth and liberality are world-renowned."

The carpet, though very heavy, was quite flexible. It glistened like satin. It was eight feet long and six feet wide.

"Over 6,000 pounds of tusks were required for this carpet," said the Indian. "Only the finest parts could be used. The strips were shaven singularly thin. See how flexible they are."

"But three such carpets exist, and they all belong to India. The largest and best is in the treasury of the Maharajah of Boroda."

Treasures of Herculaneum.

What is in Herculaneum? Archaeologists have long believed that its treasures would prove far more interesting, numerous and valuable than those unearthed at Pompeii if they could only be reached. But they are also more difficult to uncover, and hence more expensive. Public interest in Europe has been directed to the matter sufficiently to have Sig. Rava, minister of public instruction in Italy, prepare a bill providing $100,000 for the purpose of removing houses forming the modern town of Resina, which is located above Herculaneum, and an appropriation of $3,000 a year for actual excavation work.

At the Theater.

"So that's the actress who was kidnaped the other night?"

"Yes."

"I can understand the management's putting up such a job, but why did they permit her to be brought back?"

UNCLE HAD THE FORMULA.

Probably Knew as Much About Water as Did Fellow Townsmen.

"I was down in a little town the other day," said a commercial traveler, "where a new system of waterworks had just been installed. All the drinking water for the town was pumped in from an artesian well on the outskirts. The inhabitants were immensely proud of their new water, and at every place I stopped I was urged to take a drink of it, being assured at the same time with great impressiveness that it had been 'analyzed and found to be half hydrogen.' This mystic expression seemed to have a strange fascination for most of the citizens.

"Finally I stopped at the town pump in the middle of the square in front of the county courthouse, and as I worked the pump handle I thought I would find out what an old negro leaning against a tree nearby would say.

"'Uncle,' I said, 'is this good water?'

"'Sho!' he replied, with enthusiasm. 'Wy, sah, dat water is done been scan'lyzed an' found ter be ha'f hyraphoby, sahr!'"

NOT TO BE TAKEN LITERALLY.

Colored Deacon's Prayer a Wonder of Poetic Imagery.

"Between emotionalism and formalism in religion," says a Washington clergyman, "there is a golden mean—a reflection that came to me recently upon the conclusion of my remarks to a colored congregation in Richmond. "I had invited an aged deacon to offer prayer. 'Oh, Lord,' prayed he, 'gib dis pore brudder de eye of de eagle, dat he spy out sin afar off. Glue his hands to de gospel plow. Tie his tongue to de line of truf. Nail his yere to de gospel pole. Bow his head way down between his knees, oh Lord, an' fix his knees way down in some lonesome, dark and narrer valley, where prayer is much wanted to be made. 'Noint him wif de kerosene-ile of salvashun, an' set him on fire!'"

NOT WHAT HE MEANT.

"I am delighted to see you! It seems good to see old faces again."

"You mean thing."

A Lost Art.

A Richmond housekeeper had occasion many times to employ a certain odd character of the town known as Aunt Cecilia Cromwell.

The old woman had not been seen in the vicinity of the house for a long time until recently, when the lady of the house said to her:

"Good morning, Aunt Cecilia. Why aren't you washing nowadays?"

"It's die way, Miss Annie," replied Aunt Cecilia, indulgently, "I's been out o' wuhk so long dat now when I could wuhk I finds I's done lost mah taste fo' it."—Lippincott's.

Knew What Was Coming to Him.

A man who died recently in the north of England and had been living a dishonest life, under the cloak of religion, wishing to pose as a good man to the last, said to those around him:

"All is bright before me."

"Aye," said one of those present, whom he had swindled out of a sum of money, "an' in abeaut ten minnits theau'll be near enoof to see th' blaze!"

The Only Way.

Cassidy—Ah! well, no wan kin prevint wat's past an' gone.

Casey—Yes could if ye only acted quick enough.

Cassidy—Go 'long, man! how could yer?

Casey—Stop it before it happens.

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SORRY HE SPOKE.

Hubby—Just look at that idiot, Fitzjones, what a charming, amiable wife he has—seems to me all the biggest fools get hold of the prettiest women!

Wifey—You're right, nobody knows that better than I do.

Not for That Kind of Fire.

The Edmonton firemen are complaining about people sending in alarms from the new boxes by trying to post letters in them. A young fellow was noticed the other day gazing lovingly at a letter as he stood on the street corner. After fondling it for a moment, he went up to a fire alarm box and tried to get it inside. A passer-by, who had been watching him, however, intervened: "I know your heart's on fire," he observed, "but I think you had better use the box at the next corner."

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The readers of this paper will be pleased to learn that there is at least one dreaded disease that science has been able to cure in all its stages, and that is Catarrh. Hall's Catarrh Cure is the only positive cure now known to the medical fraternity. Catarrh being a constitutional disease, requires a constitutional treatment. Hall's Catarrh Cure is taken internally, acting directly upon the blood and mucous surfaces of the system, thereby destroying the foundation of the disease, and giving the patient strength by building up the constitution, and assisting nature in doing its work. The proprietors have so much faith in its curative powers that they offer One Hundred Dollars for any case that it fails to cure. Send for list of testimonials.

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A Nonbeliever.

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"I'm surprised to hear you say that," rejoined the physician.

"Well," continued the old lady, "I've got good grounds for my nonbelief. My brother was vaccinated when he was a boy and two weeks later he fell out of a tree and was killed."

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GREAT SCHEME.

"Are you still troubled by your neighbor's chickens?" asked one man of another.

"Not a bit," was the answer. "They are kept shut up now."

"How did you manage it?"

"Why, every night I put a lot of eggs in the grass very carefully, and every morning, when my neighbor was looking, I went out and brought them in."

What Are We Coming To?

"Is the room disinfected?"

"Yes, mother, and I have sterilized the curtains, deodorized the furniture, septicized all the fixtures, vaporized the air, washed my lips in an antiseptic solution and—"

"Have you septicized the mistletoe?"

"Thoroughly, mother; everything is done. Arthur is waiting now in the hydrogen room."

"Then you may go in and let him kiss you, dear."—Lippincott's.

Money the New Yorker's God.

An aged man familiar with the people of the metropolis says that nothing seems to astonish a New York man as much as to find some desired purpose which cannot be accomplished by money.

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