

STORIES OF THE NEWS.

VII.

BECAUSE HE WAS JILTED.

Why Peter Smith Attempted to Take His Own Life at No. 2291 Third Avenue.

He Was Lying at the Point of Death at the Harlem Hospital Last Night.

Peter Smith was lying at the point of death in the Harlem Hospital last night from the effects of a pistol-shot wound inflicted by himself with suicidal intent.

This man shot himself because he was jilted.

Here is his story:

Several months ago a couple calling themselves Mr. and Mrs. Edward Van Merter applied for board at No. 321 East One Hundred and Twenty-first street, in this city. The woman was good-looking and was apparently about thirty years of age. The man was not bad looking, but a certain swaggering way he had did not help to make the impression the landlady had of him more favorable.

He worked, he said, at Steers Mills, near

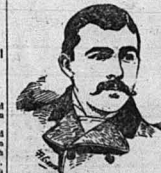
by, and although his employment appeared to be steady he was always behindhand in paying his rent.

The woman, whom he called Violet, seemed to be very fond of him. Sometimes, when he had been drinking, he would say harsh things to her. She stood it all, however, and seemed to be more demonstrative than ever to him afterwards. The people in the house knew of these scenes, but they were of such frequent occurrence that finally they happened without attracting any particular attention. "It's only those people upstairs," every one said.

One day a tall, good-looking man came to live in the same house with the couple. His name was Peter Smith, and he worked at John L. Stroud's oyster house on Third

avenue, near One Hundred and Twenty-fifth street. He appeared to be a very quiet fellow, and, as he didn't drink up his salary, he always had a dollar or two in his pockets, and his ways made him exceedingly popular with the people in the house.

Van Merter and his wife took a special liking to him. When Van Merter was not home the woman, Violet, would contrive to meet Smith and make herself agreeable to him. One day she told him that she did not love her husband, Van Merter, never had loved him, and when he drew away from her she pleaded with tears in her eyes, and begged him to say nothing to any one.



PETER SMITH.

who is desperately wounded at the Harlem Hospital.

Pretty still, she gradually insinuated her way into Smith's heart and pocketbook. He tried to fight off the affection; he felt that was growing towards her and stopped seeing her. Van Merter, who, Smith's friends now say, was continually "borrowing" money from him, began to miss him when his own money was short. It used to be so con-

venient to get a few dollars from Smith, or get his wife to do it; so one day the woman called at Smith's place of business. She pleaded with him to give her money.

When she found him apparently abhorred and firm in his refusal she broke down, or appeared to, and told him she loved him. She offered to leave Van Merter and go with him, but Smith refused. He considered Van Merter his friend, and to steal the affections of a friend's wife was more than he was capable of. He was immovable, and said plainly that he would not do as she asked.

Finally he agreed to call as before and not absent himself as he had been doing. Things went on usual until one day, when Van Merter sent Violet to Brooklyn, telling her to spend the day there, and giving her a dollar or so to spend. When she returned at night she found her room deserted. Van Merter was nowhere to be found, and the little furniture of the place even had disappeared also. Then Violet visited Smith again.

"You have always been generous," she pleaded; "do not desert me now. I have no place to put my head."

Smith thought for several moments without speaking, and then putting on his hat he bade her follow him, and they passed out into the street.

The next day saw Violet installed in a comfortable room, neatly furnished, but alone. Weeks went on, Smith continuing to support the woman. Her establishment was enlarged, and Smith, whose salary had been raised, began to talk of what their plans would be when she got a divorce and he got money enough together for them to marry.

Sundays and days when Smith could get away from his business he and Violet would go on excursions to pretty little suburban

towns where property was cheap and stroll about looking at the pretty cottages with their trim lawns and little gardens with flowers growing about. It was really a pleasure to think of living out in the country and they need not wait so long after the divorce and marriage, either, because a little money could be paid down and the place secured.



VIOLET VAN MERTER.

In the mean time nothing had been heard of Van Merter. Once or twice Smith fancied he saw him near the house where the woman was living. He said nothing the first time because he didn't want to frighten Violet. Finally he felt positive one evening and ran after the man who he thought came out of the house.

The fellow eluded him and he told Violet about it. She changed color and started when he told her his suspicions. He thought it might

Smith's eyes kept him up until the

small hours of the night, and he often worked overtime, generally leaving his own home in the neighborhood of 10 in the morning and returning at 3 the following morning. Never a suspicion crossed his mind that Violet and Van Merter were in league to defraud him of his money.

The woman's household expenses began to increase, but he only chided her and told her that she was putting off the wedding day, for at the rate she was going on his savings would soon melt away and leave them both in a bad way. She only laughed and told him he was worrying without cause. Smith thought everything over and felt very badly.

What could he do?

He loved this woman very much, and he hoped to make her his wife when he could legally do so. He would try and persuade her gradually that she was at fault. He would work harder. Perhaps his savings could be put in some speculation that would make quick, favorable returns. He tried and lost.

One evening he finished his work a little earlier than usual and determined to call on Violet to talk about the divorce proceedings. He rang the bell at the door, but there came no answer. A queer feeling came over him. An indescribable sense of something going to happen, as though an emptiness surrounded him everywhere. It almost took his breath away.

One of the tenants finally opened the door and he stumbled up the stairs to the apartments of his future wife.

All was dark.

The gas, which was usually a guide to him ascending the stairs, was unlighted. He stumbled over a chair.

"Violet, Violet," he called.

There was no answer.

Striking a match and getting a light he

saw the floor littered about with traps and wearing apparel as though some one had been packing a trunk. A few glances showed him that her things had been taken away. Her trunk was gone. So was she.

He sat down and sobbed like a baby. It was all clear as day now to him.

The man he saw those nights was Van Merter. He remembered the startled look she gave him when he told her that he had seen him hanging about. That night he did not sleep, but paced the floor in an agony of sorrow and rage. He cursed and raved like a madman. He was out of his mind.



EDWARD VAN MERTER.

The next day he took to drink. For two weeks he poured liquid fire into veins that never knew its potency before. The result came later.

A week ago a man applied for a room at

the Washington Lodging-House, No. 2291 Third avenue. He paid a week's rent in advance and came and went quietly enough, even although sometimes his step was shaky and his movement unsteady. Friday afternoon last he entered the place, nodded to the clerk and went to his room.

About five minutes afterwards the report of a revolver was heard, and when Peter Smith's door was burst open he was found lying in the middle of the room unconscious, while a stream of blood trickled from a wound just above his heart, where a pistol bullet had entered. The revolver was clutched in his hand, and on a table near by was a note hastily scribbled, as follows:

HIS FAREWELL NOTE.

Good-by to all my friends. I have been betrayed by a woman. Her lover worked at Steers Mills. His name is Edward Van Merter. He and his woman put up a job on me for the last year. I hope on my dying bed that he may not be permitted to do the same to others.

John L. Stroud, for whom I have worked for two years, is one of the best men alive. I have a brother and a sister in Baltimore. Her name is Julia K. Smith.

I hope you will tell her of my death, as I am tired of living and have nothing to live for.

John and Rose Hurley are friends of mine. They live at No. 340 East One Hundred and Twenty-first street. Please tell them I am dead. They will know the reason why. Good-by.

PETER SMITH.

The ambulance surgeon bent over the wounded man. "It's a terrible wound," he said. "He has one chance in ten to live. And that chance is fading."

Peter Smith is dying at the Harlem Hospital because he was jilted by a woman.

Speedy Coal-Shovelers.

Messers, Donohue and Reagen are out with a challenge to any two coal-shovelers in the Nineteenth Ward to shovel a load of coal for a wager of \$25. Men and money can be seen at No. 501 East Sixty-second street, known as the Red House.