

severely for not allowing the poor woman to take her tonic constantly. Had he done so the final tragedy might never have happened. Needless to say the lady never knew what she had done. The fact that Mary Coombe had been a drug victim under treatment did not come out at the inquest. The coroner was sensible but he was a sensible man and a very kind one. He hardly needed the logical arguments of Miss Estlin or the heart-broken entreaties of Esther to convince him that knowledge of this fact was not for the benefit of the public. The only legally necessary information was the cause of death and that was simple enough. It was understood, too, for given a tendency to sleeplessness and the excitement incident to a wedding, what was more natural than that the excited bride should have sought relief in her customary sleeping draught.

The mistake, the taking of a lethal dose, was one of such mistakes are, inexplicable. Did her hand slip? Had she miscounted the number of tablets? Had she, in her nervous state, deliberately risked a large dose whose danger she did not realise? These questions would never be answered. She had been alone in the room, nor was there a thread of evidence upon which to hang a theory. Esther, the nurse, Jane, Dr. Landar (poor man!) had noticed nothing out of the ordinary when they had parted from her that last day. Aunt Amy's evidence was not taken. No one thought to question her and she volunteered no information. Of all the household at the Elms she was least disturbed by the tragedy, but, naturally, one does not expect a mentally weak to realise sorrow like ordinary people. This exemption was, as many did not fail to notice, one of their compensations. So in this, as in all other things, Aunt Amy did not matter. She was