

AUTHOR OF 'The Leavenworth Case.' AGATHA WEBB. By ANNA KATHARINE GREEN.

Synopsis of preceding chapters. Just after a bell at the Sutherland mansion Agatha Webb and her servant...

CHAPTER IX.

There was but one topic discussed in the countryside that day, and that was the life and character of Agatha Webb. Her history had not been a happy one...

In Deacon Bratton's cottage the discussion was concerning Agatha's lack of vanity, a virtue not very common at that time among the women of this busy seaport.

"For a woman so handsome," the good deacon was saying, "I think I can safely call her the greatest beauty before who ever trod these streets..."

"I wish you had the help of any one else," said she. "Babies perish in my arms and wither at my breast. I cannot touch it..."

"I have known her for thirty years," her pastor declared, "and never before have I seen her wear a look of real peace. It is wonderful, considering the circumstances..."

"You forget my cloth," said he. The young man smiled. "That is true, Purdon me. I was only anxious to show how strong my conviction was against any such explanation of a crime marked by such contradictory features..."

WILLS CANDY CATHARTIC. "It suffered the tortures of the damned with protruding pills brought on by constipation..."

reputation. When called upon to talk he talked well, but he much preferred listening, and was, as now appeared, the safest repository of secrets to be found in all that region...

"I know, and sad enough it was, too, especially as she and Philemon were both fond of children. Well, well, the ways of Providence are past finding out! And now she is gone, and Philemon—"

"Now, what does that mean? Did you ever hear one say?" "No," was his old wife's answer. "Perhaps she was one of those Calvinist folks who believe babies go to hell if they are not baptized..."

"But her children were all baptized. I've been told so, some of them before she was well out of her bed. 'God be merciful to me, a sinner!' And the child took six weeks old..."

"This was not, for God took him," Farmer White had but one word to say. "She came to me when my Sissy had the smallpox; the only person in town who would enter my doors. More than that; when Sissy was up and about..."

"Here an interruption occurred. The door opened and a slim young man, wearing spectacles, came in. At sight of him they all started." "Well," eagerly inquired Dr. Talbot, "Nothing new," answered the young man, with a consequential air...

"I have but one recollection," he began, "and for the moment got no further, for in turning his head to address his young guest he had allowed his gaze to wander through the open window by which she sat into the garden beyond, where Amabel lifted her face with one of her suggestive looks..."

"I was drinking tea at my house when her sister Sairey came running to tell her news that the baby had left at home wasn't quite right. That was her first child, you know..."

"Well, she didn't enjoy it long. The poor little fellow died young. But I was telling you of the night when she first heard he was ailing. Philemon had been telling a story that day, and we were all laughing when Salvey came in. I can see Agatha now. She always had the most brilliant eyes in the country, but that day they were superbly dazzling..."

Meanwhile, in a small room of the court house, a still more serious conversation was in progress. Dr. Talbot, Mr. Fenion and a certain able lawyer in town by the name of Harvey were in close discussion. The latter had broken the silence of years, and was telling what he knew of Mrs. Webb's affairs. He was a shrewd man of unblemished reputation...

"Well, we will see. And is that all you have to tell us?" "It's not expressive; and they let him go. An hour or so later Detective Knapp made his reappearance..."

SOME LATE INVENTIONS.

An improved razor has a removable blade which can be taken out for sterilizing, the back having a grooved channel into which the blade slides, with a spring catch entering a depression in the shank to lock it in place...

The handle of a new pocket knife is in two parts, joined by the set on which the blade turns, making it possible to open the knife by swinging one side of the handle on the pivot at the working end of the members, with a bolt extending through the joint to fasten it securely...

"The murderer," he said, "I wouldn't presume to say anything about the murder. I'm not the man to sit up any such subject as the murder of a man—or some money—more money than usually falls into my lot..."

"What was it?" I cried. "Who's there and what do you want?" "A trembling voice answered me. 'Let me in,' it said, 'I want to buy something to eat. For God's sake, open the door.'"

"You must be hungry," I began. But the person who had crowded in as soon as the opening was large enough wouldn't let me finish. "Bread! I want bread, or crackers, or anything that you can find easiest, but I offer like a man who had been running on 'Here's money,' and he poked into my hand a bill so stiff it rattled. 'It's more than enough,' he hastened to say, as I hesitated over it, 'but never mind that; I'll come for the change in the morning.'"

"And the money? What about the money?" asked the coroner. "Didn't he come back for the change?" "No, I put it in the till, thinking it a dollar bill. But when I came to look at it in the morning it was a twenty; yes, sir, a twenty!"

"I have, sir. It's been in and out of the twenty times today. I haven't known what to do with it. I don't like to think wrong of anybody, but when I heard that weight of this thing on my conscience. Here's the bill, sir. I wish I had let the old man rap on my door till morning before I had taken it from him."

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