

Frederick was not visible in the State State of the Company of the Anthology of the State of the Company of the State of the State of the Company of the State of the State of the Company of the Stat

### CHAPTER XXIX.

The round had come full circle. By vari-

man from whom it was designed to wrest

became so strong that his sense or honor and though under ordinary circumstances he would, as his friend Frederick already cited fellow citizens. knew, be perfectly willing to keep his opinions to himself, he was just now under the same necessity for money that Frederick himself had been at that fatal time and must therefore see the color of \$2,500 before the day was out if Frederick desired to have his name out of the Boston papers. argued that the crime had been well enough hidden to make the alterations thus offered an important one.

There was no signature. Sweetwater, affected to an extent he little expected, rescaled the letter, made his excuse to the landlord, and left the house. Now he could see why he had not been allowed to make his useless sacrifice. Another man than himself suspected Frederick, and by a word could precipitate the doom he already saw hung too low above the

"Yet I'll attempt that, too," burst impetuously from his lips. "If I fall, I can but go back with a knowledge of this added danger. If I succeed, why I may still go window. Alas! he did not know how early From some person and from some complications it is useless to attempt flight.' Returning to the club house he had first hie search for Captain Wattles, he asked if that gentleman had yet come in

This time he was answered by an affirmative

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Prepared by E. C. DeWitt & Co., Chicage.

was one column devoted to the wreck of the to the facts which had already been pre-Hesper, and a whole half page to the pro- sented for general consideration. ous chances and a train of circumstances cause and manner of Agatha Webb's death. to strike. As the slow, hesitating strokes for which he could not account he had been Merely noting that his name was mentioned rang out, Sweetwater saw Frederick yield turned from his first intention and was being among the lost, in the first article, he began to a sudden but most profound emotion. The brought back stage by stage to the very spot to read the latter with justifiable eagerness. old fear, which we understand, if Sweetwater he had thought it his duty to fly from. Was The assurance given in Captain Wattles' did not, had again seized the victim of it fate? He began to think so, and no longer letter was true. No lirect suspicion had as Amabel's ambition, and under her eye, so much as dreamed of struggling against it. yet fallen on Frederick. As the lover of which was blazing full upon him now with But he felt very much dazed and walked Amabel Page his name was necessarily men- a fell and steady purpose, he found his away through the now partially deserted tioned, but neither in the account of the in- right hand stealing toward the left in the streets with an odd sense of failure that quest or in the editorials on the subject significant action she expected. Better to poorly compensated him for the hope now could be find any proof that either the public yield than fall headlong into the pit one present within him of seeing his mother or police had got hold of the great idea that word of hers could open. He had not again and being once more Caleb Sweetwater he was the man who had preceded Amabel meant to yield, but now that the moment Sutherlandtown.

He was clearer, however, after a few blocks

to Agatha's cottage. Relieved on this score, had come, now that he must at once and have it at once; and while I know this will ing the wound found in the house clearer, however, after a few blocks

he entered more fully into the particulars forever choose between a course that led not serve to lighten the suspicion I have never-to-be-forgotten woman." and found that though the jury had sat thre wonder over the contents of the letter he days, very little more had come to light involved not only himself, but those dearest held, and how they would affect its recipi- than was known on the morning he made Was it a new danger he was bringing that bold dash into the Hesper. Most of self weaken to the point of clutching at him? Instead of aiding Mr. Sutherland in the witnesses had given in their testimony, whatever would save him from the consckeeping his dangerous secret, was he des- Amabel's being the chief, and though no tined to bring disgrace upon him, not only open accusation had been made, it was evi-by his testimony before the coroner, but by dent from the trend of the question put to from years of self-control were too lately means of this letter, which, whatever it con- the latter that Amabel's connection with the awakened in his breast to sustain him now. tained, certainly could not bode good to the affair was looked upon as criminal and as As stroke after stroke fell on his ear, he felt The fear that he was destined so to do less formal examination, failed to convey action of assent which Amabel awaited with grew upon him rapidly, and the temptation any recognition on her part either of this breathless expectation, when, was it a mirato open the letter and make himself master suspicion or of her own position; yet they cle or only the suggestion of his better naof its contents before leaving town at last were not exactly frank, and Sweetwater saw, ture, the memory of a face full of holy paled before it and he made up his mind a key to the situation), that she was still and with an inner cry of "mother" he threw that before he ventured into the precinets working upon her old plan of saving both his hand out and clutched his father's arm of Sutherlandtown he would know just what herself and Frederick by throwing whatever in a way to break the charm of his own sort of a bombshell he was carrying into the suspicion her words might raise upon the dread and end forever the effects of the Sutherland family. To do this he stopped deceased Zabel. He did not know, and per- intolerable fascination that was working at the first respectable lodging house he haps it was just as well that he did not at upon him. Next minute the last stroke range encountered and hired a room. Calling for this especial juncture, that she was only out and the hour was up which Amabel had hot water-"piping hot," he told them-he biding her time-now very nearly at handsubjected the letter to the effects of steam and that instead of loving Frederick, she and presently had it open. He was not dis- hated him, and was determined upon his no others seemed strangely appropriate, folappointed in its contents, save that they destruction. Reading, as a final clause, that lowed the cessation of these sounds, then were even more dangerous than he had an- Mr. Sutherland was expected to testify soon the witness was dismissed, and Amabel, taktlcipated. Captain Wattles was an old crony in explanation of his position as executor of of Frederick's and knew his record better Mrs. Webb's will, Sweetwater grew very lean toward Mr. Courtney, when Frederick than any one else in the world. From this serious, and, while no change took place in fact and the added one that Frederick had his mind as to his present duty, he decided eyes toward himself with the cry: stood in special need of money at the time that his return must be as unobtrusive as of Agatha Webb's murder, the writer had possible, and his only too timely reappearno hesitation in believing him guilty of the ance on the scene of the inquiry kept secret crime which opened his way to a fortune, till Mr. Sutherland had given his evidence and retired from under the eyes of his ex-

"The sight of me might unnerve him." was Sweetwater's thought, "precipitating affected by his action. the very catastrophe we dread. One look, one word on his part indicative of his inner the crime which has so benefited him, and nothing can save Frederick from the charge That it had been kept out up to this time, of murder. Not Knapp's skill, my silence or Amabel's finesse. The young man will

He did not know, as we do, that Amabel's finesse was devoted to winning a husband for herself, and that, in the event of failure, the action she threatened against her quondam lover would be precipitated that very day at the moment when the clock struck 12. Sweetwater arrived home by the way of Portchester. He had seen one or two persons he knew, but, so far, had escaped rec-The morning light was dimly ognition. devoted head of Mr. Sutherland's son to be breaking when he stole into the outskirts of Sutherlandtown and began to descend the hill. As he passed Mr. Halladay's house he looked up, and was astonished to see a one anxious heart woke during these troublous days. The Sutherland house was dark, but as he crept very close under its overhanging caves he heard a deep sigh uttered over his head, and knew that some one was up here also in anxious expectation of a day that held more than even he antici-

> Meanwhile, the sea grew rosy, and the mother's cottage was as yet far off. Hurry-ng on, he came at last under the eye of more than one of the early risers of Suther-

"What, Sweetwater! Alive and well! Hey, Sweetwater, we thought you lost on the Hesper!"

"Halloo! Home in time to see the pretty amabel arrested!" Phrases like these met him at more than one corner; but he eluded them all, stopping only to put one hesitating question. Was his mother well? Home fears had awakened within him at his near approach to that humble cottage

CHAPTER XXI.

Had Batsy Lived.

water slid into the inconspicuous sent he virtue, was almost appalling in its intensity. ner, it was to find in two faces only any Mr. Sutherland's near presence the feeling signs of eagurness and expeciancy that filled would have risen to outbreak, and many his own breast to suffocation. But as these voices were held in subjection by the refaces were those of Agnes Halliday and membrance of this venerated man's last look, Amabel Page, he soon recognized that his that otherwise would have made themselves own judgment was not at fault, and that notwithstanding outward appearances and place and the authority of the police. the languid interest shown in the now lagging proceedings, the moment presaged an urable grief and humiliation. On every face,

though he might almost as well have not been for the captain was placing sords in the change should be might almost as well have not been for the captain was placing sords in the change should be might almost as well have not bad hitherto sat under the universal gaze

these evidences of suffering which they impulse men and women broke into tumult. ing at that moment the sound of her voice could not understand, more than one de-

met his eye, with that curious slow dipping erisp white frock with an incredulous, almost frighten her, for she rose, and meeting my "I know because I have read it. Before of her dimples which had more than once insulting, smile that at once fixed attention eye with a gaze in which shock and some I put my head into the lion's mouth I think confounded the coroner, and rendered her again on Frederick. He seized the occasion strange and poignant agony totally incom

ceedings of the third day's inquiry into the As the witness sat down the clock began simply to personal unhappiness and one that to him, in disgrace and sorrow, he felt himquences of confession. Moral strength and placing her in a very suspicious light. Her himself yielding beyond recovery, and had replies, however, as under a similar but almost touched his finger in the significant or thought he saw (naturally failing to have pleading rose from the past before his eyes

> set as the limit of her silence. A pause, which to their two hearts if to ing advantage of the movement, was about to leaping with a bound to his feet, drew, all

"Let me be put on my oath. I have estimony to give of the utmost importance in this case." The coroner was astounded; every one

was astounded. No one had expected anything from him, and instinctively every eye turned towards Amabel to see how she was

Strangely, evidently, for the look with which she settled back in her seat was one apprehensions that his son had a hand in which no one who saw it ever forgot, though it conveyed no hint of her real feelings, which were somewhat chaotic, I must own. Frederick, who had forgotten her, now that he had made up his mind to speak, waited for the coroner's reply.

"If you have testimony," said that gentleman after exchanging a few hurried words with Mr. Courtney and the surprised Knapp, 'you can do no better than give it to us at once. Mr. Frederick Sutherland will you take the stand?"

tion had vanished, Frederick started towards Royal Arcanum the place indicated, but stopped before he had taken a half-dozen steps and glanced back at his father, who was visibly suc cumbing to this last shock.

"Go!" he whispered, but in so thrilling a tone it was heard to the remotest corner "Spare me the anguish of of the room. saying what I have to say in your presence. could not bear it. You could not bear it Later, if you will wait for me in one of these rooms, I will repeat my tale in your ears, but go now. It is my last entreaty." There was a silence; no one ventured a dissent, no one so much as made a gesture

Then Mr. Sutherland of disapproval. struggled to his feet, cast one last look around him and disappeared through a door which had opened like magic before him. Then and not till then did Frederick move forward.

The moment was intense. The coroner seemed to share the universal excitement for his first question was a leading one and brought out this startling admission:

"I have obtruded myself into this inquiry and now ask to be heard by this jury, because no man knows more than I do of the nanner and cause of Agatha Webb's death. This you will believe when I tell you that I was the person Miss Page followed into Mrs. Webb's house and whom she heard descend the stairs during the moment she crouched behind the figure of the sleeping

It was more, infinitely more, than any one It was the last day of the inquest, and there had expected. It was not only an to many it bade fair to be the least in- acknowledgment but a confession, and the teresting. All the witnesses who had any- shock, the surprise, the slarm, even, which

thing to say had long ago given in their it occasioned even to those who had never ing more desperate in mind than a sullen these words, this action of hers, seem in- but herself, unknown to that good man from testimony, and when at or near noon Sweet- had much confidence in this young man's intention of having my own way about this credible to you, sirs? Alast alast they will whom it can no longer be kept hidden, had succeeded in obtaining near the coro- Had it not been for the consciousness for and stepped in.

To Frederick it was a moment of immeasevent full of unseen but vital consequence. in every shrinking form, in subdued mur-Frederick was not visible in the great murs and open cries, he read instant and hall, but that he was near at hand soon complete condemnation, and yet in all his one and raise again the drooping courage of the other, he withstood the clamor and on the door, beside which I stood, I had so

edgment must convey to the minds of the noise within his hearing. Yet I had not jury and people here assembled. But if any the courage to retreat. All my hope of rewhich Agatha Webb would be the first to let this hour go by without making my ap-condemn. Dr. Talbot, and you, gentlemen peal, nothing but thame and disaster here declare that Mrs. Webb, in my pres- her down stairs without noise. I could not ence and before my eyes, gave to herself the and so yielding to the impulse of the moblow which has rebbed us all of a most valu- ment, without any realization, I here swear

the large room. In vain the coroner smote counting over a large roll of money.

seem a credible one I shall have to tell my what you are doing. If you want my

had acquired a mockery that drew the eyes hand was thrust convulsively into my breast her attention, or that we were under any them. Give, give!" And my hand went I should have thought of going to her in the took the action, mistook my purpose, and, great strait in which I found myself on that with a heartbroken cry, to save me, me, day, I can hardly say. I knew she had from crime, the worst of which humanity is money in her house; this I had unhappily capable, she caught up a dagger lying only been made acquainted with in an accidental too near her hand in the open drawer way, and I knew she was of kindly disposi- against which she leaned and in a moment tion and quite capable of doing a very un- of fathomless anguish which we who can selfish act. Still, this would not seem to be never know more than the outward seeming reason enough for me to intrude upon her of her life can hardly measure, plunged late at night with a plea for a large loan of against it-I can tell you no more. money had I not been in a desperate condi- blood and Batsy's shrick from the adjointion of mind, which made any attempt seem | ing room swam through my consciousness reasonable that promised relief from the and then she fell, as I supposed, dead upon unendurable burden of a pressing and dis-reputable debt. I was obliged to have also. money, a great deal of money, and I had to have it at once; and while I know this will ing the wound found in the breast of this brought upon myself by my late admissions. The feeling, the pathos, the anguish even, it is the only explanation I can give you for to be found in his tones made this story, leaving the ball at my father's house and strange and incredible as it seemed, appear hurrying down secretly and alone into town for the moment plausible. to the little cottage where, as I had been told early in the evening, a small entertainment was being given, which would insure its being open even at so late an hour I shall speak of her again. What I must as midnight. Miss Page, who will, I am now explain is how the money in Mrs. sure, pardon the introduction of her name Webb's drawer came into my possession into this narrative, has taken pains to de- and how the dagger she had planted in her clare to you that in the expedition she her- breast came to be found on the lawn outself made into town that evening, she followed some person's steps down hill. This have been very soon, I found that the blow is very likely true, and those steps were I had been such a horrified witness to had probably mine, for after leaving the house not yet proved fatal. The eyes I had seen by the garden door, I came directly down close, as I had supposed, forever, were now the main road to the corner of the lane run- open, and she was looking at me with a ning past Mrs. Webb's cottage. Having al- smile that has never left my memory, and ready seen from the hillside the light burn- never will. ing in her upper windows, I felt encouraged to proceed, and so hastened on till I came to the gate on High street. Here I only that you wanted, Frederick? If so, had a moment of hesitation and thoughts you could have had it without crime. There bitter enough for me to recall them at this are \$1,000 on that table and half as much moment came into my mind, making that again in the closet over yonder. Take them

money, I lifted the latch of the front door

"I had expected to find a jovial group of friends in her little ground parlor, or at unknown to me, unknown to any one living least the sound of merry voices and laughter in the rooms above, but no sounds of any sort awaited me; indeed, the house seemed strangely silent for one so fully lighted, and, astonished at this, I pushed the door ajar at my left and looked in. An unexpected and pitiful sight awaited me. Seated at a table set with abundance of untasted food I saw the master of the house with his head sunk forward on his arms, asleep. The expected guests had failed to arrive and he, tired out with waiting, had fallen into a doze at the board.

This was a condition of things for which I was not prepared. Mrs. Webb, whom I wished to see, was probably upstairs, and little desire to wake her husband, of whose mental condition I was well aware, that I could not bring myself to make any loud the courage to retreat. All my hope of re-lief from the many difficulties that menaced me lay in the generosity of this great hearted woman and if out of pusillanimity I peal, nothing but shame and disaster awaited me. Yet how could I hope to lure of the effect which my unexpected presence It was a solemn assertion, but it failed to would have on the noble woman overhead, "Never! She was too good. It's all door I saw standing open before me and calumny! A wretched lie!" broke in unrestrained excitement from every part of the table before which she was sitting

with his gavel; in value the local police en- My look (and it was doubtless not a comdeavored to restore order; the tide was up mon look, for the sight of a mass of money and overswept everything for an instant till at that moment, when money was everysilence was suddenly restored by the sight thing to me, roused every lurking demon in of Amabel smoothing out the folds of her my breast) seemed to appall, if it did not prehensible to me were strangely blended she cried out.

"No, no, Frederick! You don't know money, take it; if you want my life, I will give it to you with my own hand. Don't

stain yours-don't-" I did not understand her. I did not know till without looking at Amabel, whose smile until I thought it over afterward that my of the jury toward her more than once in a way which, taken with my wild mien, during the following recital, "you know, made me look as if I had come to murder and the public generally now know, that her for the money over which she was hovering. I was blind, deaf to everything but that money, and bending madly forward in a sixte of mental intoxication awful enough for me to remember now. I answered her frenzied words by some such broken exclamations as these:

"Give then! I want hundreds-thousands -now, now, to save myself! Disgrace, shame, prison await me if I don't have out toward it, not toward her; but she mis-

"And Batsy?" asked the coroner. "Must have fallen when we did, for I never heard her voice after the first scream. But side. When I came to myself, and that must

"There is no blood on you," she murmured. "You did not strike the blow. Was it money instant, perhaps, the very worst in my life; and let them pave your way to a better life. but they passed, thank God, and with noth- My death will help you to remember." Do

in which Mr. Sutherland was hidden-"that and Marietta Sutherland!"

not when I tell you-" and here he cast one Agatha Webb was my mother. I am Phileanxious, deeply anxious glance at the room mon's son, and not the offspring of Charles (To be Continued.)

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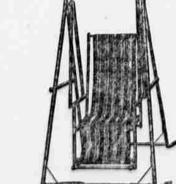
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