

AUTHOR OF 'The Leavenworth Case,' BY ANNA KATHARINE GREEN.

AGATHA WEBB.

By ANNA KATHARINE GREEN.

Summary of Proceeding Chapters.

After a full and complete summary of the preceding chapters, the author resumes the story of Agatha Webb's life...

more reason than I seem to feel as never before... I had done to him my two lives... For the first time I realized to the full that but for me he might have been happy and you the respected husband of the one grand woman to be found in Port-

at a great cry, and staggering back, eyed both her father and himself in a frenzy of indignation that was all the more unaccountable from the superhuman effort which she hitherto made to suppress...

Some pain. My load I can bear, but his—Come and see me, John; and tell James our house is open to him. We have all done wrong, and are caught in our web of mis-

head in his hands, ventured to look up and say: "Do you wonder that I endeavored to keep this secret, bought at such a price and sealed by the death of her I thought my mother and of her who really was Gesteimer, Mr. Sutherland really loved his wife and honored her memory. To tell him, as I shall have to within the hour, that the child she placed in his arms twenty-five years ago was an alien, and that all his love, his care, his disappointment and his sufferings had been lavished on the son of a neighbor, requires greater courage than to face doubt on the faces of my fellow-townsmen, or anything, in short, but absolute arraignment on the charge of murder. Hence my silence, hence my indecision, till this woman here"—he pointed

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The letter that followed this was very short: Dear James: The package of letters has been received. God help me to bear this shock to all my hopes and the death of all my girlish delusions...

It was a weak plea and merited no reply, but the silence was so dreadful and lasted so long that I felt that I must either be terrified. Raising my head, for I had not dared to look any of them in the face, I cast one glance at the group before me and dropped my head again, started. Only one of the three was looking at me, and that was Agatha. The other two had their heads turned aside and I thought, or rather the passing fancy took me, that they shrank from meeting her gaze with something of the same shame and dread I was myself suffering for there as if the words were speaking to me...

The next letter was in Agatha's handwriting. It was dated some months later and was contained in a small envelope and was addressed to others in the whole packet. Could Philemon once have told why? Were these blotted lines the result of his tears falling fast upon them, tears of forty years ago, when he and she were young and love had been doubtful? Was the sheet so yellowed and so stained because it had been worn in his breast and folded and unfolded so often? Philemon, thou art in thy grave, sleeping sweetly at last by the side of the one so idolized, but those marks of feeling still remain indelibly connected with the words that gave thee birth.

Dear Philemon—You are gone for a day and a night only, but it seems a lengthened absence to me, meriting a little letter. You have been so good to me, Philemon, ever since that dreadful hour following our marriage. I feel that I am not doing you wrong and that God did not deal with me so harshly when he cast me into your arms. Yesterday I tried to tell you this when you almost kissed me at parting, but I was afraid it was a momentary sentimentality and so kept still. But today such a warm and sparkling joy has come into my heart that I think that tomorrow the house will be bright again, and that in place of the empty wall opposite me at table I shall see your kindly and forbearing face. I know that the heart I had thought impregnable has begun to yield, and that daily gentleness and a boundless consideration from one who had excuse for bitter thoughts and recrimination is doing what all of us thought impossible a few short months ago.

O, I am so happy, Philemon, so happy to love where there is no thought of a dreadful memory of a father dying with harsh words in his ears, and the knowledge that you, my husband yet not my husband, are bearing ever about you yet echoes of words that in another nature would have turned tender into scorn. I could be merry again, and sing as I go about the house, making it pleasant and comfortable against your speedy return. As it is, I can but lay my hand softly on my heart, as its beatings grow too impetuous and say, God bless my absent Philemon and help him to forgive me! I forgive him and love him as I never thought I could.

Dear Philemon: You will have my hand, though I have told you that my heart does not go with it. It is hard to understand such persistence, but if you are satisfied to take a woman of my strength against her will, then God have mercy upon you, for I will be true to you.

"Displeasable!" was all that came from her lips, at which I shuddered and groped about for the handle of the door. But she would not let me go. Subduing with grand self-restraint the emotions which had hitherto availed too high in her breast for either speech or action, she thrust out one arm to stay me and said in short, compressed sentences: "I have seen this thing done. You say you took the money, yet it was James who was sent to collect it; or so my father says." Here she tore her looks from me and cast one glance at her father. What she said I cannot say, but her manner changed and with some slight change of tone she said to me, and with nearly as much emotion, "I am waiting to hear what you have to say," she exclaimed, laying her hand on the door as to leave me no opportunity for escape. I bowed and attempted an explanation. "Agatha," said I, "the commission now gives James and me to do the hand-down to perform it, but it was on the day when he was accustomed to write to you and he was not easy in his mind, for he feared he would miss sending you his usual letter."

And then I told the story you know so well; how I took the money and how I found out my guilty secret and told me that you had taken my crime on yourself, and how afterwards my virtue was not equal to assuming the responsibility for the crime. "John," she said—she was under a violent restraint—"why do you come now?" I cast my eyes at Philemon. He was standing just as before with his eyes turned away. There was discouragement in his attitude, mingled with a certain grand patience. Seeing that she was better able to bear her loss than either James or myself, I went to her face when he began to speak. "Mr. Gilchrist dropped slightly," he was a very sick man, and the scene had been a trying one. "If I did," was his low response, "it was but lately. You were engaged then to Philemon. Why break up this second marriage?" "I am not," she said, "I am not a very sick man, and the scene had been a trying one. "If I did," was his low response, "it was but lately. You were engaged then to Philemon. Why break up this second marriage?"

Dear John: I am going to be married. My father exacts it and there is no good reason why I should not give him this final satisfaction. At least, I do not think there is, but if you or your brother differ from me, say so to my father, for I will be true to him. My father is worse. He fears that if we wait till Tuesday he will not be able to see us. I am ready to abide by your pleasure. AGATHA.

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Dear James: When you read this I will be far away, never to look in your face again unless you bid me. Brother, brother, I meant it for the best, but God was not with me and I have made four hearts miserable without giving help to any one. When I read Agatha's letter—the last, for

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