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NO. 3.

THE MYSTERY OF AGATHA WEBB.

By ANNA KATHARINE GREENE,

Author of "The Leavenworth Case," "Lost Man's Lane," "Hand and Ring," Etc., Etc.

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SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

In order that new readers of THE ENQUIRER may begin with the following installment of this story, and understand it just the same as though they had read it all from the beginning, we here give a synopsis of that portion of which has already been published. The story opens with the close of a ball after daylight in the morning. While the guests are leaving the house Frederick Sutherland dashes out frantically and disappears in the woods on the other side of the road. Agatha Webb is found upstairs murdered. The body of Batsy, the cook, is found hanging from a window. Philemon Webb, Agatha's husband, is discovered sitting before a dining table asleep, with a smear of blood on his coat sleeve. Philemon being charged with the murder, his mind, already feeble gives way completely. All Agatha Webb's money has been taken. Miss Page, standing on the lawn, points to a spot of blood on the grass. Frederick Sutherland, who has been a wild fellow, promises his father to reform; also to give up Amabel Page, whom he has been expecting to marry. Miss Page tells Frederick that she followed him on the night of the murder and saw him secrete \$1,000 in a hollow tree. She declares that she shall either marry her or she will proclaim him a murderer. She is about to leave him and the town when she is held as a witness. The past life of Agatha Webb. Six children have been born to her and all died in infancy. It is learned that the money taken from Agatha Webb was all in new bills. A storekeeper produces one of them that a strange man with a flowing beard gave him the night of the murder. The problem now is to find the man with the long beard. Suspicion falls on the Zabel brothers. Frederick visits the hollow tree and finds the money gone. Knapp, detective, and Abel, with the coroner, visit the Zabel brothers. They are obliged to break into the house and find both brothers dead. A spot of blood is found on the clothing of one of the Zabels, and a miniature of Agatha Webb when a young girl is lying on James Zabel's breast. The party visit the hollow tree and find both brothers dead. A spot of blood is found on the clothing of one of the Zabels, and a miniature of Agatha Webb when a young girl is lying on James Zabel's breast. The party visit the hollow tree and find both brothers dead. A spot of blood is found on the clothing of one of the Zabels, and a miniature of Agatha Webb when a young girl is lying on James Zabel's breast.

CHAPTER XXI. HAD BATSY LIVED.

It was the last day of the inquest, and to many it bade fair to be the least interesting. All the witnesses who had anything to say had long ago given in their testimony, and when at or near noon Sweetwater slid into the inconspicuous seat he had succeeded in obtaining near the coroner it was to find in two faces only any signs of eagerness and expectancy that filled his own breast to suffocation. But as these faces were those of Agnes Halliday and Amabel Page he soon recognized that his own judgment was not at fault and that notwithstanding outward appearances and the languid interest shown in the now lagging proceedings the moment presaged an event full of unseen but vital consequence.

Frederick was not visible in the great hall; but that he was near at hand soon became evident from the change Sweetwater now saw in Amabel; for, while she had hitherto sat under the universal gaze with only the faint smile of conscious beauty on her inscrutable features, she roused as the hands of the clock moved toward noon and glanced at the great door of entrance with an evil expectancy that startled even Sweetwater, so little had he really understood the nature of the sessions laboring in that venous breast.

Next moment the door opened, and Frederick and his father came in. The air of triumphant satisfaction with which Amabel sank back into her seat was as marked in its character as her previous suspense. What did it mean? Sweetwater, noting it and the vivid contrast it offered to Frederick's air of depression, felt that his return had well timed.

Sutherland was looking very feeble. As he took the chair offered him change in his appearance was apparent to all who knew him, and there were those who did not know him. Startled by these evidences of suffering which they could not understand and dared not interpret, even to themselves more than one devoted friend stole furtive glances at Frederick to see, too, were under the cloud which seemed to envelop his father almost beyond recognition.

Frederick was looking at Amabel, his erect head and determined aspect—like a conspicuous figure in the room. She who had called up in this session and alone comprehended it all, smiled, as she met his eye, with lenient slow dipping of her dimpled cheek had more than once confounded the coroner and rendered her at once admiration and abhorrence of the old who for so long a time had had opportunity of watching her.

Frederick whom this smile conveyed a hope as well as a last threat, lay away as soon as possible, but before her eyes had fallen

your presence. I 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 of disapproval. Then Mr. Sutherland 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 intruded myself into this inquiry and now ask to be heard by this jury because no man knows more of I do of the manner 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 Philemon."

It was more, infinitely more, than any one there had expected. It was not only an acknowledgment, but a confession, and the shock, the surprise, the alarm even, which it occasioned even to those who had never had much confidence in this young man's virtue, was almost appalling in its intensity.

Had it not been for the consciousness of Mr. Sutherland's near presence the feeling would have risen to outbreak, and many voices were held in subjection by the remembrance of this venerated man's last look, that otherwise would have made themselves heard in despite of the restrictions of the place and the authority of the police.

To Frederick it was a moment of immeasurable grief and humiliation. On every face, in every shrinking form, in subdued murmurs and open cries he read instant and complete condemnation, and yet in all his life from boyhood up to this hour, never had he been so worthy of their esteem and consideration. But, though he felt the iron enter his soul, he did not lose his determined attitude. He had observed a change in Amabel and a change in Agnes, and if only to disappoint the vile triumph of the one and raise again the drooping courage of the other he withstood the clamor and began speaking again before the coroner had been able to fully restore quiet.

"I know," said he, "what this acknowledgment must convey to the minds of the jury and people here assembled, but if any one who listens to me thinks me guilty of the death I was so unfortunate as to have witnessed, he will be doing me a wrong which Agatha Webb would be the first to condemn. Dr. Talbot and you, gentlemen of the jury, in the face of God and man, I here declare that Mrs. Webb in my presence and before my eyes gave to herself the blow which has robbed us all of a most valuable life. She was not murdered."

It was a solemn assertion, but it failed to convince the crowd before him. As by one impulse men and women broke into tumult. Mr. Sutherland was forgotten, and cries of "Never! She was too good! It's all calamity! A wretched lie!" broke in unrestrained excitement from every part of the large room. In vain the coroner smote with his gavel; in vain the local police endeavored to restore order; the tide was up and overswept everything for an instant till silence was suddenly restored by the sight of Amabel smoothing out an incredulous, almost insulting, smile that at once fixed attention again on Frederick. He seized the occasion and spoke up in a tone of great resolve.

"I have made an assertion," said he, "before God and before this jury. To make it seem a credible one I shall have to tell my story from the beginning. Am I allowed to do so, Mr. Coroner?"

"You are," was the firm response.

"Then, gentlemen," continued Frederick, still without looking at Amabel, whose smile had acquired a mockery that drew the eyes of the jury toward her more than once during the following recital, "you know, and the public generally now know, that Mrs. Webb has left me the greater portion of the money of which she died possessed. I have never before acknowledged to any one, not even to the good man who awaits this jury's verdict on the other side of that door, that she had reasons for this, good reasons, reasons which up to the very evening of her death I was myself ignorant of, as I was ignorant of her intentions in my regard; or that I was the special object of her attention, or that we were under any mutual obligations in any way. Why, then, I should have thought of going to her in the great strait in which I found myself on that day I can hardly say. I knew she had money in her house. This I had unhappily been made acquainted with in an accidental way, and I knew she was of a kindly disposition and quite capable of doing a very unselfish act. Still this would not seem to be reason enough for me to intrude upon her late at night with a plea for a large loan of money had I not been in a desperate condition of mind, which made any attempt seem reasonable that promised relief from the unendurable burden of a pressing and disreputable debt."

"I was obliged to have money—a great deal of money—and I had to have it at once, and, while I know this will not serve to lighten the suspicion I have brought upon myself by my late admissions, it is the only explanation I can give you for leaving the ball at my father's house and hurrying down secretly and alone into town 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 as midnight. Miss Page, who will, I am sure, pardon the introduction of her name into this narrative, has taken pains to declare to you that in the expedition she herself made into town that evening she followed some

person's steps down hill. This is very likely true, and those steps were probably mine, for after leaving the house by the garden door I came directly down the main road to the corner of the lane running past Mrs. Webb's cottage. Having already seen from the hillside the light burning in her upper windows, I felt encouraged to proceed and so hastened on till I came to the gate on High street. Here I had a moment of hesitation, and thoughts bitter enough for me to recall them at this moment came into my mind, making that instant perhaps the very worst in my life. But they passed, thank God, and with nothing more desperate in mind than a sullen intention of having my own way about this money I lifted the latch of the front door and stepped in."

"I had expected to find a jovial group of friends in her little ground parlor or at least hear 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 up stairs, and while I might summon her by a sturdy rap on the door, beside which I stood, I had so little desire to wake her husband, of whose mental condition I was well aware, that I could not bring myself to make any loud noise within his hearing. Yet I had not the courage to retreat. All my hope of relief from the many difficulties that menaced me lay in the generosity of this great-hearted woman, and if out of pusillanimity I let this hour go by without making my appeal, nothing but shame and disaster awaited me. Yet how could I hope to lure her down stairs without noise? I could not, and so yielding to the impulse of the moment, without any realization, I

here swear, of the effect which my unexpected presence would have on the noble woman overhead, I slipped up the narrow staircase, and, catching at that moment the sound of her voice calling out to Batsy, I stepped up to the door I saw standing open before me and confronted her before she could move from the table before which she was sitting, counting over a large roll of money.

"My look (and it was doubtless not a common look, for the sight of a mass of money at that moment, when money was everything to me, roused every lurking demon in my breast) seemed to appal, if it did not frighten, her, for she rose, and meeting my eye with a gaze in which shock and some strange and poignant agony totally incomprehensible to me were strangely blended, she cried out:

"No, no, Frederick! You don't know what you are doing. If you want my 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 until I thought it over afterward that my hand was thrust convulsively into my breast in a way which, taken with my wild mien, made me look as if I had come to murder her for the money over which she was hovering. That money, and, bending madly forward in a state 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 them. Give, give! And my hand went out toward it, not toward her; but she mistook the action, mistook my purpose, and, with a heartbroken cry, to save me, me, from crime, the worst crime of which humanity is capable, she caught up a dagger lying only too near her hand in the open drawer against which she leaned, and in a moment of fatuous anguish, which we who can never know more than the outward seeming of her life can hardly measure, plunged against it and—I can tell you to move. Her blood and Batsy's shriek from the adjoining room swam through my consciousness, and then she fell, as I supposed, dead upon the floor, and I, in scarcely better case, fell also."

"This, as God lives, is the truth concerning the wound found in the breast of this never-to-be-forgotten woman."

The feeling, the pathos, the anguish even, to be found in his tones made this story, strange and incredible as it seemed, appear for the moment plausible.

"And Batsy?" asked the coroner.

"Must have fallen when we did, for I never heard her voice after the first scream. But I shall speak of her again. What I must now explain is how the money in Mrs. Webb's drawer came into my possession and how the dagger

she had planted in her breast came to be found on the lawn outside. When I came to myself, and that must have been very soon, I found that the blow I had been such a horrified witness to had not yet proved fatal. The eyes I had seen close, as I had supposed, forever, were now open, and she was looking at me with a smile that has never left my memory and never will.

"There is no blood on you," she murmured. "You did not strike the blow. Was it money only that you wanted, Frederick? If so, you could have had it without crime. There are \$1,000 on that table and half as much again in the closet over yonder. Take them and let them pave your way to a better life. My death will help you to remember." Do those words, this action of hers, seem incredible to you, sirs? Alas, alas! they will not when I tell you"—and here he cast one anxious, deeply anxious, glance at the room in which Mr. Sutherland was hidden—"that, unknown to me, unknown to any one living but herself, unknown to that good man from whom it can no longer be kept hidden, Agatha Webb was my mother. I am Philemon's son and not the offspring of Charles and Marietta Sutherland!"

TO BE CONTINUED.

Miscellaneous Reading.

A CENTURY POEM
The following poem by Edward Markham was read at the Labor union dinner in New York on New Year's eve:

I
We stand here at the end of mighty years,
And a great wonder rushes on our hearts,
Where cities rose and blossomed into dust,
While shadowy lines of kings were blown to air—
What was the purpose brooding on the world,
Through the large leisure of the centuries?
And what the end—Failure or Victory?

II
Lo, man has laid his sceptre on the stars,
And sent his spell upon the continent.
The heavens confess their secrets, and the stones,
Silent as God, publish their mystery.
Man calls the lightning from their secret place
To crumple up the spaces of the world,
And snatch the jewels from the flying North,
The wild white smoking horses of the sea,
Are startled by his thunders. The world Powers
Crouch round to be the lackeys of the king.

III
His hand has torn the veil of the Great Law,
The law that was made before the world's—before,
That far first whisper on the ancient deep;
The law that swings Arcturus on the North,
And huris the soul of man upon the way.
But what avail, O builders of the world,
Unless ye build a safety for the soul?
Man has put harness on Leviathan
And looks in his incorrigible jaws;
And yet the perils of the street remain.

IV
Out of the whirlwind of the cities rise
Lean Hunger and the Worm of Misery,
The heart break and the cry of mortal tears.

V
But mark, the bugles blowing on the peaks;
And hark, a murmur as of many feet,
The cry of captains, the divine alarm.
Look—the last son of Time comes hurrying on,
The strong young Titan of Democracy;
With swinging step he takes the open road.
In love with the winds that beat his hairy breast,
Baring his sunburnt strength to all the world,
He casts his eyes around with Jovian glance—
Searches the tracks of old tradition; scans
With rebel heart the books of pedigree;
Peers into the face of Privilege and
"Why are you halting in the path of man?
Is it your shoulder bears the human load?
Do you draw down the rains of the sweet heaven,
And keep the green things growing?—
Back to hell!"

VI
We know at last the future is secure;
God is descending from Eternity,
And all things, good and evil, build the road.
Yes, down in the thick of things, the men of greed,
Are trumping the inhospitable clay.
By wondrous toils the men without the dream,
Led onward by a something unawares,
Are laying the foundation of the dream,
The Kingdom of fraternity foretold.

000. That is, while the North was practically stationary between 1891 and 1899 in the amount of cotton which it manufactured, the South much more than doubled its own manufactures of that staple. And the South has only just made a beginning in this branch of industry.

In the production of coal and the manufacture of iron and steel the South has made great advances in the last few years, and here, too, only a beginning has been made. Birmingham, Anniston and Chattanooga are getting to be known all over the world for the quality and the quantity of their iron and steel manufactures, and the South is making the world's prices for iron and steel.

Socially, too, the South is making exceedingly creditable gains. Since 1865 the Southern States have expended over \$400,000,000 for the public school education of her children, blacks and whites alike, although the white population pay four-fifths of the taxes. Illiteracy among whites and blacks is declining in the South. The attractions of that section to settlers from the Northern States and from Europe are steadily increasing. That section will undoubtedly make a greater growth in population, in industries, and in general social advancement in the next 10 years than it has scored in the last 10. Horace Greeley's injunction of 40 years ago needs some modification: "Go South, young man; go South."—Leslie's Weekly.

A "TEMPERANCE MEASURE."
Can Good People Give Their Support To Such an Inquiry?
A month or two ago, we mentioned the record-breaking sales at the Chester dispensary, amounting to \$530 in one day. Last Monday those figures were just doubled, we have learned, the sales amounting to \$1,060. On Saturday the filthy lucre handed in was \$940, making \$2,000 for two consecutive days. On Monday, we have been told, the sales would have been considerably greater had not the larger packages been exhausted, so that the money taken in was limited by the capacity for handing out liquor in the smaller packages to the crowds that were pressing and clamoring for it. Thus the dispensary is fulfilling its mission; it is raking in the shekels, and furnishing liquor to everybody that wants it, either to drink or resell. Surely good people who were deluded into the belief that the institution was a temperance measure can no longer fall to see their egregious mistake. When about one-third of the profits of three dispensaries bring to a city more revenue than a score of high license saloons, where is the advantage in the dispensary, except as a money maker?

Good people who persist in giving their support to such an inquiry will probably not open their eyes to the ruinous tendency of the traffic until they are aroused some night by a youthful son falling into their door drunk, one, perhaps, whom they had never suspected of tasting liquor. The day will come when many a father, standing at the grave of a drunken son, will take up the lamentation of David over Absalom; when the mother will lament with bitter and useless tears that she did not protest more positively against the course of her short sighted husband in accepting a solution of the liquor question offered by life-long liquor men; when thousands of sisters, then perhaps the wives of drunkards, and doomed to lives of sorrow, will bemoan their lost opportunities to make their condemnation of the liquor business heard by every young man of their acquaintance.

Reader, if you do not wish to reproach yourself for giving aid to the increase of drunkenness, hear a warning voice. Does some one tell you that this writer is prejudiced against the dispensary? If you think that is a sufficient reason for rejecting the truth we tell you, we can only regret that it will furnish you no comfort when the evil day comes and sorrow worse than death enters your home.—Chester Lantern.

WITHOUT HANDS OR FEET.
Remarkable Achievements of a Man Who is Full of Grit.
Some time ago Secretary Root sent a man to the Philippines to make some confidential observations. He made the investigations, returned to this country, prepared and submitted his reports. These reports so pleased the secretary that he wrote a personal letter of congratulation to the confidential agent. The man who made these reports was M. J. Dowling, of Minnesota. So far there is nothing remarkable about this story; but there is about Dowling. He has neither hands nor feet. Some 25 years ago he was a boy and was caught in one of the great blizzards which occasionally sweep over the Northwestern country. He was badly frozen, and though he battled bravely to save himself, both feet and hands had to be amputated. This was pretty hard for a boy; but he was full of true grit. As soon as the stumps healed he determined to go to Milwaukee to secure artificial limbs. The only way he could travel was by being laid upon the seat of a car, where he did not move during the entire journey. The conductor punched the ticket which was tied to him, thinking what hard luck the boy was in. Then he forgot the boy and the train journeyed on for miles and miles, stopped at a station for dinner and again went on. Late in the afternoon the conductor felt full of remorse because he had given no further thought to the boy without hands or feet. He wept, and he begged the boy to go to him. "Do you want anything, boy?" he asked. "I want nothing," said the boy. "I want to go home."

Remarkable Industrial Progress Made in the Cotton States in the Last Decade.
The expansion of the South in the next ten years is reasonably certain to be greater proportionately as well as absolutely than it has been in the decade just ended. In several of the states of the South are immense deposits of coal and iron, the possession of which determines in a large degree a community's industrial standing in a country or in the world. Of course its cotton product is immeasurably greater than that produced by all the rest of the world in the aggregate, and even here there are opportunities for almost unlimited growth. Of the 14,000,000 bales of cotton produced in the entire world, the Southern States contribute a little over 75 per cent. The country is breaking all records these days in its exportation of domestic merchandise, and this, in a great degree, is caused by the enormous shipments of cotton, which furnish the largest single item in the value of the country's exports. Cotton prices at the present time are higher than the average of any recent year, the product is larger, and as a consequence the South is prosperous.

But the South has been learning to utilize some of its cotton product at home. While the Northern States in 1891 manufactured 2,027,000 bales of cotton, and the South 613,000 bales, our takings of the North were 2,217,000 in 1899, and those of the South were 1,411,000.

TRUSTS MAKE PEACE.—The following is published in the Chicago Tribune of yesterday morning: Private advices have reached Chicago that the war between the great sugar and coffee trusts, which has cost these trade rivals approximately \$25,000,000, is to be brought to a close. Negotiations have been closed in New York and Chicago whereby the Arbuckle will nominally give up sugar refining and become dictators in the coffee trade; Henry O. Havemeyer and the sugar trust will practically give up the coffee roasting plants, with which an effort was made to crush John Arbuckle, and handle only the sugar business.

There is no practical sympathy here with the agitation that England free itself from dependence on American cotton. While the British newspapers are insisting that "relief must be found from the danger of starvation at the hands of foreign gamblers by securing a source of supply within the empire's control," trade authorities view such talk with ridicule. They declare that John Bull can never do without the cotton that is grown in Dixie.

J. R. Hune, a prominent member of the London Cotton Exchange, and an Anglo-American dealer of thirty years standing, said to The Daily News correspondent today:

"It's all 'tommyrot,'" that talk about planting India, the Sudan and Cape Colony with cotton to take the place of the staple now imported from the United States. It has been often tried and just as often has proved a failure. For cleanliness, strength and brilliant whiteness, the Yankee product cannot be duplicated. We are yearly becoming more dependent than ever on it.

"In such countries as Egypt, China, Japan and India, where more or less cotton is grown, mills have gone up which have completely absorbed the local crop. Even in the United States the extension of the manufacturing industry has operated to curtail the amount available for export.

"We must simply live in the hope that between Providence and the American planter the annual yields will be sufficient to supply the demands of the English market. We do not desire to look elsewhere for our supply, and we could not if we would."—London Cable to Chicago News.

TO SIDETRACK BRYAN.
Executive Committee is in Favor of a New Candidate.
The anti-Bryan movement in the Democratic party is gaining momentum and will probably gain more after the Democratic senators and representatives in congress have returned from their holiday vacation. After the election there was a disposition to let Mr. Bryan drop without further consideration. It was supposed that he was buried so deep under the adverse majority that he would not be able to crawl out; but it appears that his speech at the recent dinner at Lincoln and the announcement of his newspaper have excited considerable alarm among Democratic leaders throughout the country, who suspect that he intends to secure a third nomination if possible, and they would like to put a stop to his plans and extinguish his hopes before he goes any farther.

A carefully prepared statement and an analysis of the vote for presidential electors at the last November election, will be submitted to the Democratic national committee at its meeting next month for the purpose of convincing the Bryan idolators that their candidate is weaker than his party, and that instead of strengthening it, he dragged it down at the last election, and is likely to do an even heavier weight at the next. The vote in each state is shown in detail to prove that he ran behind the rest of the ticket almost everywhere. In the few states and congressional districts that gave Democratic majorities, as well as in the Republican strongholds. It is also contended that a candidate who cannot carry his own precinct, ward, town, county, congressional district, or state, ought not to be nominated.

A majority of the Democratic national committee are opposed to the renomination of Mr. Bryan. They were opposed to his renomination last year, but advocated it because they believed he was strong with the people. These figures are expected to convince them of their error in that particular and persuade them that he ought to be turned down.—W. E. Curtis in Chicago Record.

A SOUTH AFRICAN JOKE.—Tommy Atkins had taken a Boer prisoner, and the two getting on well, and about the prospect of the war, Tommy said to the Boer: "You say you are a Boer, Tommy?" "Yes, I am," said the Boer. "You are a Boer, Tommy?" "Yes, I am," said the Boer. "You are a Boer, Tommy?" "Yes, I am," said the Boer.