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The Woman in the Alcove

By ANNA KATHARINE GREEN

Author of "The Millionaire Baby," "The Filligree Ball," "The Leavenworth Case," Etc., Etc.

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CHAPTER V.

Superstition.

I had gone upstairs for my wraps—my uncle having insisted on my withdrawing from a scene where my very presence seemed in some degree to compromise me.

Soon prepared for my departure, I was crossing the hall to the small door communicating with the side staircase where my uncle had promised to await me, when I felt myself seized by a desire to have another look below before leaving the place in which were centered all my deepest interests.

A wide landing, breaking up the main flight of stairs some few feet from the top, offered me an admirable point of view. With but little thought of possible consequences, and no thought at all of my poor, patient uncle, I slipped down to this landing and protected by the unusual height of its balustrade, allowed myself a parting glance at the scene with which my most poignant memories were henceforth to be connected.

Before me lay the large square of the

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Designed by Martha Dean.



6725-6726—ONE OF THE NEW SUITS

The new street suits are very trim and attractive and should prove very coming to any wearer. The model shown is in light weight broadcloth of a dark red shade, and set off very attractively by the dainty embroidered collar. The coat is fitted in back and of loose pony shape in front, ending just above the hip-line. The skirt is a nine-piece circular one and of excellent shaping. The top fits perfectly over the hips and hangs with increasing flare. Both coat and skirt are of simple construction and would cause the amateur little trouble in the making. For the medium size the coat requires 1 1/2 yards of 54-inch material, and the skirt 4 1/4 yards of 44-inch goods.

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Street Address
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CAUTION.—Be careful to inclose above illustration and send size of pattern wanted. When the pattern is sent whatever it may be. When in waist measure, 22, 24, 26, or whatever it may be. If a skirt, give waist and length measure. When miss's or child's pattern, write only the figure representing the age. It is not necessary to write "inches" or "years." Patterns cannot reach you in less than three or four days from the date of order. The price of each pattern is 10 cents in cash or postage stamps.

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and thither in unavailing efforts to locate the sound yet ringing in their ears. Not till these various searchers had all come together again, did he let his hand fall and himself awake to the scene about him.

The words he at once gave utterance to were as remarkable as all the rest. "Gentlemen," said he, "you must pardon my agitation. This cry which I do not seek its source—is one to which I am only too well accustomed. I have been the happy father of six children. Five I have buried, and, before the death of each, this same cry has echoed in my ears. I have but one child left, a daughter—she is ill at the hotel. Do you wonder that I shrink from this note of warning, and show myself something less than a man under its influence? I am going home; but, first one word about this stone." Here he lifted it, and bestowed, or appeared to bestow on it, an anxious scrutiny, putting on his glasses and examining it carefully before putting it back to the inspector. "I have heard," said he, with a change of tone which must have been noticeable to everyone, "that this stone was a very superior one, and quite worthy of the fame it bore here in America. But, gentlemen, you have all been greatly deceived in it; no one more than he who was willing to commit murder for its possession. The stone, which you have just been good enough to allow me to inspect, is no diamond, but a carefully manufactured bit of paste not worth the rich and elaborate setting which has been given to it. I am sorry to have a study of precious stones, and I cannot let this bare-faced imitation pass through my hands without a protest. Mr. Ramsdell," this to our host, "I beg you will allow me to utter my excuses, and depart at once. My daughter is worse than I know, as certainly as you have heard of the one superstition of our family. Pray God that I find her alive!"

After this what could be said? Though no one who had heard him, not even my own romantic self, showed any belief in this interpretation of the remarkable sound that had just gone thrilling through the house, yet, in face of his declared acceptance of it as a warning, and the fact that all efforts had failed to locate the sound, or even to determine its source, no other course seemed open but to let the distinguished man depart with the soundness his superstitious fears demanded.

This was in opposition to the inspector's wishes was evident enough. Naturally, he would have preferred Mr. Grey to remain, if only to make clear his surprising conclusions in regard to the diamond which had passed through the hands of some of the best judges in the country, without a doubt having been raised as to its genuineness. With his departure the inspector's manner changed. He glanced at the stone in his hand, and slowly shook his head.

"I doubt if Mr. Grey's judgment can be depended on tonight," said he, and he pocketed the gem as carefully as if his belief in its real value had been but little disturbed by the assertions of this renowned foreigner.

I have no distinct remembrance of how I finally left the house, or of what passed between my uncle and myself on our way home. I was numb with the shock, and neither my intelligence nor my feelings were any longer active. I recall but one impression, and that was the effect made on me by my old home on our arrival there, as of something new and strange; so much so that I had to place myself in a garden in five hours before. But nothing else, vivid in my remembrance till that early hour of the dreary morning, when on waking to the world with a cry I bent my head to the foot-board, bending over me the anxious figure of my uncle. Instantly I found tongue and question after question leaped from my lips: He did not answer them; he could not; but when I grew feverish and insistent, he drew the morning paper, and behind his back, and laid it quietly down within my reach. I felt calmed down in an instant, and when after a few affectionate words he left me to myself, I seized on the sheet and read what so many others were reading at that moment throughout the city.

I spare you the account so far as it coincides with what I have myself seen and heard the night before. A few particulars which had not reached my ears will interest you. The instrument of death found in the place designated by Mr. Durand was one of note to such as had any taste or knowledge of delicate type, long, keen and slender. Not an American product, not even of this century's manufacture, but a relic of the days when deadly thrusts were given in the corners and byways of medieval streets.

This made the first mystery. The second was the as yet unexplained presence on the alcove floor, of two broken coffee cups, which no water nor any other person, in fact, admitted having carried there. The tray, which had fallen from Peter Mooney's hand—the waiter who had been the first to give the signal of murder—had had no cups, only tea. This was a fact proved. But the handles of two cups had been found among the debris—cups which must have been full, from the size of the coffee stain left on the rug where they had fallen.

In reading this I remembered that Mr. Durand had mentioned stepping on some broken pieces of china in his escape from the fatal scene, and struck with this confirmation of a theory which was slowly taking form in my own mind, I passed on to the next paragraph, with a sense of expectation.

The result was a surprise. Others may have been told, I was not, that Mrs. Fairbrother had received a communication from outside only a few minutes previous to her death. A Mr. Fullerton, who had preceded Mr. Durand in his visit to the alcove, owed to having opened the window for her at some call on signal from outside, and taken in a small piece of paper which he saw lifted up from below on the end of a whip handle. He could not see who held the whip, but as Mrs. Fairbrother's entrance he unpinned the note and gave it to her. While she was puzzling over it, for it was apparently far from legible, he took another look out in time to mark a figure rush from below toward the carriage drive. He did not recognize the figure nor would he know it again. As

to the nature of the communication it self he could say nothing, save that Mrs. Fairbrother did not seem to be affected favorably by it. She frowned and was looking very gloomy when he left the alcove. Asked if he had pulled the curtains together after closing the window he said that he had not; that she had not requested him to do so.

This story, which was certainly a strange one, had been confirmed by the testimony of the coachman who had lent his whip for the purpose. This coachman, who was known to be a man of extreme good nature, had seen no harm in lending his whip to a poor devil who wished to give a telegram or some such hasty message to the lady sitting just above them in a lighted window. The wind was fierce and the snow blinding, and it was natural that the man should duck his head, but he remembered his appearance well enough to say that he was either very cold or very much done up with the collar pulled up about his ears. When he came back with the whip he seemed more cheerful than when he asked for it, but had no "thank you" for the favor done him, or if he had, it was lost in his throat and the piercing gasp.

The communication, which was regarded by the police as a matter of the highest importance, had been found in her hand by the coroner. It was a mere scrawl written in pencil on a small scrap of paper.

The first two lines overlapped and were confused. The last one was clear enough. Expect trouble if—

What? Hundreds were asking the question and at this very moment. I should soon be asking it too but first I must make an effort to understand the situation—a situation which up to now appeared to have been Mr. Durand and Mr. Durand only, as the suspected party.

[To be Continued.]

DOUBLOONS

Continued from page thirteen.

badges again to seek for treasure, eh? Did he tell you what he had been doing during the four years?"

"He been captain of anudder dam tramp, sah—beg pardon, Judge."

"What was the name of the ship?"

"I don't know, sah. But he been to Russian ports, sah."

"And how soon were you to go to London?"

"Soon, sah! Oh! Soon! But de captain couldn't settle wiv his owners, sah. I not understand. Then he was ill, sah."

"When did you last see him?"

"Tuesday, Judge; Tuesday afternoon. Two o'clock, sah."

"He was better then?"

"Oh, yes, sah. Plenty better, Judge! Plenty better. He quite cheerful."

"What did he tell you when you last saw him?"

"He said we start soon, sah. He said he take berth next week, sah."

"Do you know if the captain had any friends?"

"He had Massa Coco, sah."

"Yes, but others?"

"No, sah."

"No relatives?"

"The negro paused."

"Yes, sah. He hab relatives."

"He hab a brudder, sah. Free weeks ago I go wiv him to see his brudder, sah. At de Obelisk Hotel, Waterloo road, sah. London, sah. I told all that to the gemmen yesterday. You see, Judge, I was just coming to see de captain Wednesday morning—I lodge in St. James Place, sah—and I sees his corpse, sah. I cry, then, policeman asks me questions. Most rude, 'pertinent policeman, sah."

"Yes, but about the brother. You say the captain saw his brother at the Obelisk Hotel. What passed between them?"

"Don't ask me, Judge. I don't know. But I heard the captain speak berry sharp to his brother."

"Have you seen the brother since?"

"No, sah."

"Any other relatives?"

"Yes, sah. Lady, sah. The captain's daughter, sah. But captain tell me long time, speak to his daughter for long time, because she gone on stage. Hussey, sah! It make de captain very angry. I walking down Kingsway wiv him one day, and he show me her portrait very big on de walls."

"Ah! What was her name?"

"On de portrait, sah?"

"Yes."

At the introduction of this famous name a rustling, uneasy movement passed like a wave across the court, and everybody except the coroner, the policeman and Mr. Varcoe, whom Philip had noticed for the first time, seemed to be suddenly excited and expectant.

An hour ago there had been only one reporter, a youth, at the reporter's table. There were now three. A silence ensued, and the gas sang in the silence.

"Can you throw any light on the death of the captain?" demanded the coroner, in a low voice.

"No, no, Judge! No, I can't from any light," whined the negro.

The coroner glanced at the jury.

"About this treasure?" the foreman inquired.

"Don't ask me! Don't ask Coco!" the negro droned. "Captain never told me nuffin."

But the foreman had at length thought of a mastery query.

"What were you doing on the night of Tuesday?"

"You are not bound to answer that question unless you like," said the coroner.

"Oh! I answer it, Judge," Coco observed, wiping his eyes anew. "I was just asleepin", as I sleep ebbery night. I give my 'dress to de young policeman, sah."

Mr. Varcoe stepped on tip-toe to the coroner's desk, and whispered in his ear.

"The inquiry is adjourned until ten-thirty tomorrow," said the coroner, consulting his watch.

And in an instant he was packing his brown bag.

To be Continued Next Saturday.

A COUGH is often the forerunner of serious pulmonary affections. It is a simple cure within the reach of all in Bickel's Anti-Consumptive Syrup, an old-time remedy, and a recognized remedy which, if resorted to at the inception of a cold, will invariably give relief, and by overcoming the trouble, guard the system against any serious consequences. Price, 25 cents, at all dealers.

THE BERLIN CITIZENS' VACANT LOT FARMS

OVER 1,100 OF THEM ARE NOW IN CULTIVATION.

The visitor to the German capital who is not satisfied with the beaten track of the guide book and the average sightseer may at this season of the year find in Charlottenburg or any other of the outlying districts of the city a spectacle not only unusual and picturesque, but delightful from a sociological standpoint.

One comes across tracts of land lightly below the street level, which are green with regular rows of vegetables or brilliant with beds of flowers. At one end of each garden plot is a simple little hut or a latticed arbor covered with vines. Men are busy with spades, women with rakes, children with sprinkling cans. They sit about a home-made table in the shade and sip their coffee and consume as every genuine Berliner does—enormous quantities of cake. There is an air of contentment about the scene which is doubly refreshing after the sight of the bustling crowds, loaded with lunch baskets, that plod along the hot and dusty roads toward the beer gardens of the Grunewald. These people have no need to seek the open; they enjoy an outing on ground which is theirs.

A number of societies which have at heart the health and welfare of the people are the founders of the philanthropy which offers the workingman living with his family in a stuffy tenement a plot of ground, easy of access, where he can rest from indoor work by an exhibit at the Paris exposition in 1900, where the Ligue Francaise du Coin de Terre et du Foyer demonstrated the work of sixty corporations that have given to French laborers plots of ground upon which they grow their own supply of vegetables and in doing so improve their physical well-being, and add to the few and simple joys of their life.

The German societies leased two tracts of unimproved land near a workingman's district of Charlottenburg, subdivided them into 94 plots, and raffled them off among those who applied for them, families with many children being first considered. In the center of every garden plot was a playground for the little ones.

The societies started the work of preparing the ground, and even furnished fertilizers and seeds. This being done, the plots were taken over and cared for by the families to whose share they had fallen. The enthusiasm and perseverance with which these city dwellers engaged upon their farming was surprising. When it was found advisable to erect some shelter in case of storm or for storing the garden implements, the societies again furnished the lumber and other material, which, according to the skill and the taste of the plot owners, was made into rude huts or graceful arbors. Covered with vines and furnished with rustic seats and tables of their own making, these miniature country houses have become the scene of healthy activity and innocent pleasures.

Instead of crowding into a train or a tram bound for the pleasure resorts in the suburbs, these people place their youngest child, the tot and the baby in a basket in the baby's carriage, and set out early in the morning to spend their holiday in their own garden. There father and mother work or rest, and the children play in the open until late in the evening, when once again the crowds of them returning to their city flats.

Nor is it only on holidays that they resort to their gardens. As soon as the warm weather has set in the wives go there early in the afternoon, the children follow after school hours, and the father joins the family on coming from his work. The principal meal of the family being taken at noon, it is quite possible for the family of a Berlin workingman owning such a garden to spend from five to seven hours daily in the open. When not busy caring for their potatoes, cabbage, cucumbers, and other vegetables, the mothers sit in the shade of the arbors, sewing, while the children romp about.

There is a spirit of emulation among the people which is encouraged by the patrons, who at an annual harvest festival view the results attained and join in the general merry-making. It is their aim not only to promote the physical well-being of the people, but to foster a feeling of neighborliness. Being jointly responsible for the condition of the path leading to the several plots, of the pump or hydrant which furnishes the water supply, and of the wire fence which shuts the whole tract off from the street, there is enough of mutual interest to bring them into close companionship, and stir them to a healthy co-operation. To strengthen this spirit of solidarity and prevent an estrangement among the plot neighbors during the long winter, there is at least one meeting of a social nature on the grounds in the cold season.

The enterprise is fully five years old, but the 94 plots originally given to the people in Charlottenburg have become upward of 1,100 in various parts of Berlin. Extraordinary reasons must prevail if any owner decides to give up his plot. When one of those rare cases occurs there are hundreds of applicants eager to fill the vacancy. The people cling to the bit of ground as if it were a valuable old family place.

THE LOGICAL YOUNG LADY.

Sir Mortimer Durand, at a dinner at Lenox, said of a certain unkind action: "It was a logical action. There was reason behind it. But to be simply logical is not enough. A certain amount of kindness, a unselfishness, must be thrown in or otherwise we are cruel."

"I heard of a reasonable but cruel young lady the other day. A young man proposed to her and met with a flat rejection. He seemed hurt and offended, and at this she expressed surprise. "But," said the young man in a low, reproachful voice, "why did you encourage me if you didn't love me?"

"Encourage you?" cried the young lady. "How did I encourage you?"

"The entire summer," he replied, "you accepted all my invitations to go automobil'ing."

"Oh," she answered, logically, enough, "that was not because I loved you—it was because I loved automobil'ing."—Exchange.

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CLARENCE HAMILTON

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Atlanta Police Department, Atlanta, Georgia.

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