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house.

## The Mystery of Agatha Webb.

BY ANNA KATHARINE GREEN.

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 corner 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 Hall-  
iday and Amabel Page he soon recog-  
nized that his own judgment was not  
at fault and that notwithstanding out-  
ward appearances and the languid in-  
terest shown in the now lagging pro-  
ceedings 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 Ama-  
bel; for, while she had hitherto sat un-  
der 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 en-  
trance with an evil expectancy that  
startled even Sweetwater, so little had  
he really understood the nature of the  
passions laboring in that vaporous  
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  
been well timed.

Mr. Sutherland was looking very fee-  
ble. As he took the chair offered him  
the change in his appearance was ap-  
parent to all who knew him, and there  
were few there who did not know him.  
And startled by these evidences of suf-  
fering which they could not understand  
and feared to interpret, even to them-  
selves, more than one devoted friend  
stole uneasy glances at Frederick to  
see if he, too, were under the cloud  
which seemed to envelop his father al-  
most beyond recognition.

But Frederick was looking at Ama-  
bel, and his erect head and determined  
aspect made him a conspicuous figure  
in the room. She who had called up  
this expression and alone comprehended  
it fully, smiled, as she met his eye,  
with that curious slow dipping of her  
dimples which had more than once con-  
founded the corner and rendered her  
at once the admiration and abhorrence  
of the crowd who for so long a time  
had had the opportunity of watching her.

Frederick, to whom this smile con-  
veyed a last hope as well as a last  
threat, looked away as soon as possi-  
ble, but not before her eyes had fallen  
in their old, inquiring way to his hands,  
from which he had removed the ring  
which up to this hour he had invari-  
ably worn on his third finger. In this  
glance of hers and this action of his  
began the struggle that was to make  
that day memorable in many hearts.

After the first stir occasioned by the  
entrance of two such important per-  
sons and possible witnesses the crowd  
settled back into its old quietude under  
the corner's hand. A tedious witness  
was having his slow say, and to him a  
full attention was being given in the  
hope that some real enlightenment  
would come at last to settle the ques-  
tions which had been raised by Ama-  
bel's incomplete and unsatisfactory tes-  
timony. But no man can furnish what  
he does not possess, and the few final  
minutes before noon passed by with-  
out any addition to the facts which  
had already been presented for general  
consideration.

As the witness sat down the clock  
began to strike. As the slow, hesitat-  
ing strokes rung out Sweetwater saw  
Frederick yield to a sudden but most  
profound emotion. The old fear, which  
we understand if Sweetwater did not,  
had again seized the victim of Ama-  
bel's ambition, and under her eye,  
which was blazing full upon him now  
with a fell and steady purpose, he  
found his right hand stealing toward  
the left in the significant action she  
expected. Better to yield than fall  
headlong into the pit one word of hers  
could open. He had not meant to  
yield, but now that the moment had  
come, now that he must at once and  
forever choose between a course that  
led simply to personal unhappiness and  
one that involved not only himself, but

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those dearest to him, in disgrace and  
sorrow, he felt himself weakened to the  
point of clutching at whatever would  
save him from the consequences of  
confession. Moral strength and that  
tenacity of purpose which only comes  
from years of self control were too  
lately awakened in his breast to sus-  
tain him now. As stroke after stroke  
fell on the ear he felt himself yield-  
ing beyond recovery and had almost  
touched his finger in the significant ac-  
tion of assent which Amabel awaited  
with breathless expectation when—  
was it miracle or only the suggestion  
of his better nature?—the memory of a  
face full of holy pleading rose from the  
past before his eyes, and with an inner  
cry of "Mother!" he threw his hand  
out and clutched his father's arm in a  
way to break the charm of his own  
dread and end forever the effects of  
the intolerable fascination that was  
working upon him. Next minute the  
last stroke rang out, and the hour was  
up which Amabel had set as the limit  
of her silence.

A pause, which to their two hearts  
if to no others, seemed strangely ap-  
propriate, followed the cessation of  
these sounds, then the witness was dis-  
missed, and Amabel, taking advan-  
tage of the movement, was about to  
lean toward Mr. Courtney, when Fred-  
erick, leaping with a bound to his feet,  
drew all eyes toward himself with the  
cry:

"Let me be put on my oath. I have test-  
imony to give of the utmost impor-  
tance in this case."

The corner was astounded; every  
one was astounded. No one had ex-  
pected anything from him and instinc-

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tively every eye turned toward Ama-  
bel to see how she was affected by his  
action.

Strangely, evidently, for the look  
with which she settled back in her seat  
was one which no one who saw it ever  
forgot, though it conveyed no hint of  
her real feelings, which were some-  
what chaotic.

Frederick, who had forgotten her,  
now that he had made up his mind to  
speak, waited for the corner's reply.  
"If you have testimony," said that  
gentleman, after exchanging a few hur-  
ried words with Mr. Courtney and the  
surprised Knapp, "you can do no bet-  
ter than give it to us at once. Mr.  
Frederick Sutherland will you take the  
stand?"

With a noble air from which all  
hesitation had vanished, Frederick  
started toward the place indicated, but



"Let me be put on my oath. I have test-  
imony to give of the utmost impor-  
tance."

stopped before he had taken a half  
dozen steps and glanced back at his fa-  
ther, who was visibly succumbing to  
this last shock.

"Go!" he whispered, but in so thril-  
ling a tone it was heard to the remotest  
corner of the room. "Spare me the an-  
guish of saying what I have to say in  
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 warning."

There was a silence; no one ventur-  
ed 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 disap-  
peared through a door which had open-  
ed like magic before him. Then and  
not till then did Frederick move for-  
ward.

The moment was intense. The cor-  
ner seemed to share the universal ex-  
citement, for his first question was a  
leading one and brought out this start-  
ling admission:

"I have intruded myself into this in-  
quiry and now ask to be heard by this  
jury because no man knows more than  
I do of the manner and cause of Aga-  
tha Webb's death. This you will be-  
lieve when I tell you that I was the  
person Miss Page followed into Mrs.  
Webb's house and whom she heard de-  
scend the stairs during the moment she  
crouched behind the figure of the sleep-  
ing Philomena."

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 subjec-  
tion by the remembrance of this ven-  
erated 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 im-  
measurable grief and humiliation. On  
every face, in every shrinking form, in  
subdued murmurs and open cries he  
read instant and complete condemna-  
tion, and yet in all his life from boy-  
hood 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 speak-  
ing again before the corner had been  
able to fully restore quiet.

"I know," said he, "what this ac-  
knowledgegment must convey to the  
minds of the jury and people here as-  
sembled, 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 Aga-  
tha Webb would be the first to con-  
demn. Dr. Talbot and you, gentlemen  
of the jury, in the face of God and  
man, I have declared 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 calumny! A  
wretched lie!" broke in unrestrained  
excitement from every part of the large  
room. In vain the corner smote with  
his gavel; in vain the local police en-  
deavored to restore order; the tide was  
up and overswept everything for an in-  
stant till silence was suddenly restored  
by the sight of Amabel smoothing out  
the folds of her crisp white frock with  
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 begin-  
ning. Am I allowed to do so, Mr. Cor-  
ner?"

"You are," was the firm response.  
To be Continued.

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I am improving every day. I notice if I cut or scratch myself the sore will  
heal up. I hope you will not stop treating me as long as there is a sign of  
that terrible disease. I am more afraid of it than death. I believe you have  
the right medicine for the disease. I feel so thankful to you for the good you  
have done me; I was a perfect wreck when I came to you, and was on the  
verge of suicide. To make a sure thing I would like to continue a while  
longer, so that it will not return. Very respectfully yours, Mrs. L.S.

CASE NO. 248,083. May 11, 1899. W. M. G.

I am happy to say that your medicines helped my trouble more than any  
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Your treatment has helped me wonderfully. Nov. 18, 1899.

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