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W. W. Everitt,

The Mystery of Agatha Webb.

By Anna Katharine Green.

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

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somehow lost the trick of merriment, though it had never acquired that of ill nature. But we did not know Agatha, at least I did not.

"When she learned that she was rich, she looked at first awe struck and then heart pierced. Forgetting me, or ignoring me, it makes no matter which, she threw herself into Philémon's arms and wept, while he, poor faithful fellow, looked as distressed as if he had brought news of a failure instead of triumphant success. I suppose she thought of her buried children and what the money would have been to her if they had lived; but she did not speak of them, nor am I quite sure they were in her thoughts when, after the first excitement was over, she drew back and said quietly, but in a tone of strong feeling to Philémon: 'You meant me a happy surprise, and it shall be so, Philémon. This is heart money. We will use it to make our townfolk happy.' I saw him glance at her dress, which was a purple calico. I remember it because of that look and because of the sad smile with which she followed his glance. 'Can we not afford now,' he ventured, 'a little show of luxury, or at least a ribbon or so for this beautiful throat of yours?' She did not answer him, but her look had a rare compassion in it, a compassion, strange to say, that seemed to be expended upon him rather than upon herself. Philémon swallowed his disappointment. 'Agatha is right,' he said to me. 'We do not need luxury. I do not know how I so far forgot myself as to mention it. That was ten years ago, and every day since then her property has increased. I did not know then, and I do not know now, why they were both so anxious that all knowledge of their good fortune should be kept from those about them, but that it was to be kept was made very evident to me, and, notwithstanding all temptations to the contrary, I have refrained from uttering a word likely to give away their secret. The money, which to all appearance was the cause of her tragic and untimely death, was interest money which I was delegated to deliver to her. I took it to her day before yesterday, and it was all in crisp new notes, some of them twenties, but most of them tens and fives. I am free to say there was not such another roll of fresh money in town.'

"Warn all shopkeepers to keep a lookout of the money they receive," was Dr. Talbot's comment to the constable. "Fresh \$10 and \$20 bills are not any too common in this town. And now about her will. Did you draw that up, Harvey?"

"No, I did not know she had made one. I often spoke to her about the advisability of her doing so, but she always put me off. And now it seems that she had it drawn up in Boston. Could not trust her old friend with too many secrets, I suppose."

"So you don't know how her money has been left?"

"No more than you do."

Here an interruption occurred. The door opened, and a slim young man wearing spectacles came in. At sight of him they all rose.

"Well," eagerly inquired Dr. Talbot.

"Nothing new," answered the young man, with a consequential air. "The elder woman died from loss of blood consequent upon a blow given by a small, three sided, slender blade; the younger from a stroke of apoplexy induced by fright."

"Good! I am glad to hear my instincts were not at fault. Loss of blood, eh? Death, then, was not instantaneous?"

"No."

"Strange!" fell from the lips of his two listeners. "She lived, yet gave no alarm."

"None that was heard," suggested the young doctor, who was from another town.

"Or if heard reached no ears but Philémon's," observed the constable. "Something must have taken him up stairs."

"I am not so sure," said the coroner, "that Philémon is not answerable for the whole crime, notwithstanding our failure to find the missing money anywhere in the house. How else account for the resignation with which she evidently met her death? Had a stranger struck her Agatha Webb would have struggled. There is no sign of struggle in the room."

"She would have struggled against Philémon had she had strength to struggle. I think she was asleep when she was struck."

"Ah, and was not standing by the table! How about the blood there, then?"

"Spook from the murderer's fingers in fright or disgust."

"There was no blood on Philémon's fingers. No. He wiped them on his sleeve."

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"If he was the one to use the dagger against her, where is the dagger? Should we not be able to find it somewhere about the premises?"

"He may have buried it outside. Crazy men are superlatively cunning."

"When you can produce it from any place inside that board fence, I will consider your theory. At present I limit my suspicions of Philémon to the half unconscious attentions which a man of disordered intellect might give a wife bleeding and dying under his eyes. My idea on the subject is—"

"Would you be so kind as not to give utterance to your ideas until I have been able to form some for myself?" interrupted a voice from the doorway.

As this voice was unexpected they all turned. A small man with black dark hair and expressionless features stood before them. Behind him was Abel, carrying a handbag and umbrella.

"The detective from Boston," announced the latter. Coroner Talbot rose.

"You are in good time," he remarked. "We have work of no ordinary nature for you."

The man failed to look interested. But then his countenance was not one to show emotion.

"My name is Knapp," said he. "I have had my supper and am ready to go to work. I have read the newspapers. All I want now are any additional facts that have come to light since the telegraphic dispatches were sent to Boston. Facts, mind you, not theories. I never allow myself to be hampered by other persons' theories."

Not liking his manner, which was brusque and too self important for a man of such insignificant appearance, Coroner Talbot referred him to Mr. Fenton, who immediately proceeded to give him the result of such investigations as he and his men had been able to make, which done, Mr. Knapp put on his hat and turned toward the door.

"I will go to the house and see for myself what there is to see there," said he. "May I ask the privilege of going alone?" he added, as Mr. Fenton moved. "Abel here will see that I am given admittance."

"Show me your credentials," said the coroner. He did so. "They seem all right, and you should be a man who understands his business. Go alone if you prefer, but bring your conclusions here. They may need some correcting."

"Oh, I will return," Knapp nonchalantly remarked and went out, having made anything but a favorable impression upon the assembled gentlemen.

"I wish we had shown more grit and tried to handle this thing ourselves," observed Mr. Fenton. "I cannot bear to think of that cold, bloodless creature hovering over our beloved Agatha."

"I wonder at Carson. Why should he send us such a man? Could he not see the matter demanded extraordinary skill and judgment?"

"Oh, this fellow may have skill. But he is so unpleasant. I hate to deal with folks of such fashlike characteristics. But who is this?" he asked as a gentle tap was heard on the door.

"Why, it's Loton. What can he want here?"

The man whose presence in the doorway had called out this exclamation started at the sound of the doctor's heavy voice and came very hesitatingly forward. He was of a weak, irritable type and seemed to be in a state of great excitement.

"What is it?" cried. "Who's there, and what do you want?"

"A trembling voice answered me. 'Let me in,' it said. 'I want to buy something to eat. For God's sake open the door!'

"I don't know why I obeyed, for it was late and I did not know the voice, but something in the impatient rattling of the door which accompanied the words affected me in spite of myself, and I slowly opened my shop to this midnight customer."

"You must be hungry, I began. But the person, who had crowded in as soon as the opening was large enough, wouldn't let me finish."

"Bread! I want bread or crackers or anything that you can find easiest," he gasped, like a man who had been running. "Here's money." And he poked into my hand a bill so stiff it rattled. "It's more than enough," he hastened to say as he hesitated over it, "but never mind that. I'll come for the change in the morning."

"Who are you?" I cried. "You're not Blind Willy, I'm sure."

"But his only answer was, 'Bread!' while he leaned so hard against the counter that I felt it shake."

"I could not stand that cry of 'Bread,' so I groped about in the dark and found him a stale loaf, which I put into his arms with a shout: 'There! Now tell me what your name is.'"

"But at this he seemed to shrink into himself, and muttering something that might pass for thanks he stumbled toward the door and rushed hastily out. Running after him, I listened eagerly to his steps. They went up the hill."

"And the money? What about the money?" asked the coroner. "Didn't he come back for the change?"

"No. I put it in the till, thinking it a dollar bill. But when I came to look at it in the morning it was a 20. Yes, sir, a 20!"

This was startling. The coroner and the constable looked at each other before again looking at him.

"And where is that bill now?" asked the former. "Have you brought it with you?"

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FLIGHT OF A BULLET

HOW AN ARMY OFFICER SOLVED A SHOOTING MYSTERY.

He Surprised the Detectives by Working Out the Trajectory of the Missile and Locating the Spot From Which It Was Fired.

Some of the detectives were chatting together at headquarters the other night and spinning yarns to pass away an idle half hour or so, and one who had been holding forth on the peculiar ways in which the source of bullet shots coming from an unseen direction were traced told the following story:

"I was down in Hot Springs, Ark., once when a very peculiar accident happened to a policeman there. He was, more properly speaking, an applicant for admission on the force and was undergoing a physical examination. They had him standing up against the wall and had just adjusted the measuring machine to take his height when, zip, Mr. Policeman clapped his hands to his right eye and fell all in a heap. He was picked up almost unconscious, and an examination disclosed the fact that he had been hit just above the eye by a partially spent bullet, which had fallen to the floor with him."

"We doctored him up and found him only slightly hurt, but everybody was wondering where in the world that bullet had come from. No shot had been heard, and no shooting affray had been reported all that day, but there was a young army officer at the reservation there who was pretty well known as an engineer in the artillery arm of the service. He heard of the queer happening and became interested in the case. He came down to headquarters next day and had a talk with Chief—"

"and the upshot of it was that he was given permission to work on the affair, as he said he was sure he could locate the exact spot whence the shot came."

"The first thing he did was to examine the measuring machine, and he found it just as it was left when the prospective policeman had been bowled over, so he had him get under the bar again and stand just as he had stood the day before. When he had rigged up his own machine, he got the exact altitude of the place where the ball struck and the direction of the bullet in the wound. I can't give you the technical description, but he worked at his instruments and worked at his pen and finally told us he was going to ascertain the trajectory of the bullet in its flight. He weighed the bullet and measured it also to a hair's breadth and planted his machine so that his needle would be exactly in the spot where the wound would have been in the policeman's head had he stood there. I forgot to say the bullet had evidently come through the window opposite, and outside was a perspective of house tops, with the ridge of mountains away to the back of them."

"Of course we were all mighty curious and a whole lot skeptical, but the military chap kept his mouth shut and worked away nearly all day. Finally toward dusk he jumped up and put on his coat and told the chief to follow him. You can wager we all did, and those fellows who were on duty in the morning were because they couldn't go."

"Do you see that tall house behind the waterworks?" said the officer.

"Yes," said we.

"Well, do you see the white house to the right? Now do you see the edge of that shanty lying up under the hillside about half way up?"

"We saw it and told him so."

"All right," said he; "that's where the bullet came from. If it didn't, I'll set up the dinner down at the Park House."

"Well, you may believe we all struck the door pretty quick, even if some of us did doubt him, for we wanted to get that dinner. It took us half an hour to make the place, having to do a deal of twisting about, and at last we came to the shanty. The shanty belonged to an old fellow who was a unique fellow and lived there all alone, and he was suspected of being a stocking full of gold hidden somewhere, but none of us was prepared for the sight we beheld when the chief opened the door. There was the old fellow lying prone on the floor and moaning faintly. We went up and examined him, and there was blood all over his clothes and a bullet hole in his neck."

"The army chap felt sorry, I guess, but he didn't look it, but we all set about bringing the old fellow around, and when we had removed him down the hillside to a neighbor's house he rallied all right under the physician and told us his tale. He said he had been set upon by 'Big Mike,' a notorious gambler and desperado of the Springs, who had been away to the races at Memphis and had come back broke just a couple of days before."

"The old man said he had found him in his shanty rummaging among the mattresses and when discovered had drawn a revolver and let him have it. The first shot missed, but the second put a ball through the muscles of the old man's neck, and he was almost dead from loss of blood when we found him. To corroborate the old man's story a .34 caliber Colt revolver was found in the bushes outside, and this was the same caliber as the ball that had hit the policeman. The army chap didn't set up the dinner that night, but the chief did, and you can put it down that we didn't make any more fun of that West Point graduate and his mathematical instruments and trajectories after that. He owned the whole town, or would have if he'd wanted to."

An Exchange of Gifts.

When Sir Richard F. Burton, in 1893, was sent on a special mission to his majesty Gelele, king of Dahomey, he bore with him, among other gifts from Queen Victoria, a richly embossed silver pipe with amber mouthpiece. The king told Burton that he liked his old red clay and wooden stem pipe better than the new one, and that if Queen Victoria wished really to please him she would send him a carriage and a pair of horses and a white woman. The king's return presents to the British queen consisted of native pipes and tobacco for her own smoking, loin cloths for her majesty to change while traveling and an umbrella to be held over her head while drinking. These gifts, however, never reached the queen, having been lost in transit."

In Speeches With Nature.

Simmons—Why do you poets persist in writing such dismal stuff about sunsets? Timmins—My dear boy, did I never strike your alleged mind that a sunset is one of those affairs that cast a gloom over the entire countenances?—Indianapolis Press.

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