

The Woman In the Alcove

By ANNA KATHARINE GREEN.

Author of "The Millionaire Baby," "The Filigree Ball," "The House in the Mist," "The Amethyst Box," Etc.

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CHAPTER XI—(Continued.)

"No Miss Van Arsdale, you would not work more intelligently, and you know it. But you have the natural curiosity of one whose very heart is bound up in this business. I could not say what you ask, but I won't say I want you to work with quiet confidence, which you would not do if your mind were taken up with doubts and questions. Miss Van Arsdale, our surprise of yours was correct. A man was sent that night to the Ramsdell house with a note from Miss Grey. We know this because he boasted of it to one of the bellboys before he went out, saying that he was going to have a glimpse of one of the sweetest parties of the season. It is also true that this man was Mr. Grey's valet, an old servant who came over with him from England. But what adds weight to all this and makes us regard the whole affair with suspicion is the additional fact that this man received his dismissal the following morning and was not seen since by any one we could reach. This looks bad to begin with, like the suppression of evidence, you know. Then Mr. Grey has not been the same man since that night. He is full of care, and this care is not entirely in connection with his daughter, who is doing very well and bids fair to be up in a few days. But all this would be nothing if we had not received advice from England which proved that Mr. Grey's visit here has an element of mystery in it. There was every reason for his remaining in his own country, where a political crisis is approaching, yet he crossed the water, bringing his only daughter with him. The explanation as volunteered by the one who knew him well was this: 'The only reason he desired to see or acquire some precious object for his collection could have taken him across the ocean at this time, nothing else rivaling his interest in governmental affairs. This would be nothing if a letter similar to the one mentioned in this article had not been sent part of a collection of books belonging to a cousin of his whom he often visited. This letter had been written for some time, stolen, as the owner declared, by some unknown person. All this looks bad enough, but when I tell you that a week before the fatal ball at Mr. Ramsdell's, Mr. Grey made a tour of the jewelers on Broadway and, with the pretext of buying a diamond for his daughter, entered into a talk about famous stones, ending always with some question about the Fairbrother gem, you will see that his interest in that stone is established and that it only remains for us to discover if that interest is a guilty one. I cannot be sure of this, but you have your own eyes to make your experiment and see. Only do not count too much on his suppression. If he is the deep, cold criminal you imagine, the cry which started us all at a certain critical instant was raised by himself and for the purpose you suggested. None of the sensitiveness often shown by a man who has been surprised into crime will be his. Relying on his reputation and the prestige of his great name, he will, if he thinks himself under fire, face every shock unshaken.'"



"This is your patient."

"I see, I understand. He must be sure himself all alone; then, the natural man may appear. I thank you, inspector. That idea is of inestimable value to me, and I shall act on it. I do not say immediately; not on the first day, and possibly not on the second, but as soon as opportunity offers for my doing what I have planned with any chance of success. And now, advise me how to circumvent my uncle and aunt, who must never know of my undertaking I have committed myself to."

"Inspector Dalzell spared me another fifteen minutes, and this last detail was arranged. Then he rose to go. As he turned from me he said: 'Tomorrow?'"

"And I answered with a full heart, but a voice clear as my purpose: 'Tomorrow.'"

CHAPTER XII.

"THIS is your patient. Your new nurse, my dear. What did you say your name is? Miss Ayers?"

"Yes, Mr. Grey, Alice Ayers."

"Oh, what a sweet name!"

This expressive greeting, from the patient herself, was the first heart-sting I received, a sting which brought a flush into my cheek which I would fain have kept down.

"Since a change of nurse was necessary I am glad they sent me one like you," the feeble but musical voice went on, and I saw a wasted but eager hand stretched out.

In a whirl of strong feeling I expected to take it. I had not counted on such a reception. I had not expected any bond of congeniality to spring up between this high feeling English girl and myself to make my purpose hateful to me. Yet as I stood there looking down at her bright, if wasted, face I felt that it would be very easy to love so gentle and cordial a being and dreaded raising my eyes to the restlessness at my side lest I should see something in him to hamper me and

make this attempt, which I had undertaken in such loyalty of spirit, a misery to myself and ineffectual to the man I had hoped to save by it. When I did look up and catch the first beams of Mr. Grey's keen blue eyes fixed inquisitively on me, I neither knew what to think nor how to act. He was tall and firmly knit and had an intellectual aspect altogether. I was conscious of regarding him with a decided feeling of awe and found myself forgetting why I had come there and what my suspicions were, suspicious which had carried hope with them, hope for my- self and hope for my lover, who would never escape the opprobrium, even if he eluded the punishment, of this great crime, were this the only other person who could possibly be associated with it. I found to be the fine, clear souled man he appeared to be in this my first interview with him.

Receiving very soon that his apprehensions in my regard were limited to a few lines I should not feel at ease in my new home under the scrutiny of a processer of my accustomed habits. I saw that their attraction, I saw that all the doubts of myself and the steps of both father and daughter with that sweet confidence which my position there demanded.

The result both gratified and grieved me. As a nurse entering on her first case I was happy. As a woman with an ulterior object in view verging on the audacious and unspokeable, I was wretched and regretful and just a little shaken in the conviction which had hitherto held me.

"I was therefore but poorly prepared to meet the ordeal which awaited me, when, a little later in the day, Mr. Grey called me into the adjoining room and, after saying that it would afford him great relief to go out for an hour or so, asked if I were afraid to be left alone with my patient.

"Oh, no, sir," I began, but stopped in secret dismay. I was afraid, but not on account of her condition—rather on account of my own. What if I should be led into betraying my feelings on finding myself under no other eye than her own? What if the temptation to probe her poor sick mind should prove stronger than my duty toward her as a nurse?

My tones were hesitating, but Mr. Grey paid little heed. His mind was too fixed on what he wished to say himself.

"Before I go," said he, "I have a request to make—I may as well say a caution to give you. Do not, I pray, either now or at any future time, carry over any one else to carry news—papers into Miss Grey's room. There are just now too alarming. There has been a murder, a dreadful murder in this city. If she caught one glimpse of the headlines or saw so much as the name of Fairbrother—which which is a name she knows, the result might be very harmful to her. She is not only extremely sensitive from illness, but from temperament. Will you be careful?"

"I shall be careful."

It was such an effort for me to say these words, to say anything in the state of mind into which I had been thrown by his unexpected allusion to this subject, that I unfortunately drew his attention to myself, and it was with what I felt to be a glance of doubt that he added with decided emphasis:

"You must consider this whole subject as a forbidden one in this family. Only cheerful topics are suitable for the sickroom. If Miss Grey attempts to introduce any other, stop her. Do not let her talk about anything which will not be conducive to her speedy recovery. These are the only instructions I have to give you. All others must come from her physician."

I made some reply with as little show of emotion as possible. It seemed to satisfy him, for his face cleared as he kindly observed:

"You have a very trustworthy look for one so young. I shall rest easy while you are with her, and I shall expect you to be always with her when I am not—every moment, mind. She is never to be left alone with gossiping servants. If a word is mentioned in her hearing about this crime, which seems to be in everybody's mouth, I shall feel forced, greatly as I should regret the fact, to blame you."

This was a heart stroke, but I kept up bravely, changing color perhaps, but not to such a marked degree as to arouse any deeper suspicion in his

eyes. I had, been wounded in my amour propre.

"She shall be well guarded," said I. "You may trust me to keep from her all avoidable knowledge of this crime."

He bowed, and I was about to leave his presence when he detained me by remarking, with the air of one who felt that some explanation was necessary:

"I was a, the ball where this crime took place. Naturally it has made a deep impression on me and would on her if she heard of it."

"Assuredly," I murmured, wondering if he would say more and how I should have the courage to stand there and listen if he did.

"It is the first time I have ever come in contact with crime," he went on with what in one of his reserved nature seemed a hardly natural insistence. "I could well have been spared the experience. A tragedy with which one has been even thus remotely connected produces a lasting effect upon the mind."

"Oh, yes; oh, yes!" I murmured, edging involuntarily toward the door. Did I not know? Had I not been there, too—little I, whom he stood gazing down upon from such a height, little realizing the fatality which united us and, what was even a more overwhelming thought to me at the moment, the fact that of all persons in the world the shuffling little being into whose eyes he was then looking was perhaps his greatest enemy and the one person, great or small, from whom he had the most to fear?

But I was no enemy to his gentle daughter and the relief I felt at finding myself thus cut off by my own promise from even the remotest communication with her on this forbidden subject was genuine and sincere.

But the father? What was I to think of the father? Alas! I could have but one thought, admirable as he appeared in all lights save the one in which his no evident connection with this crime had placed him. I spent the hours of the afternoon in alternately watching the sleeping face of my patient, so sweetly calm in its repose, or so it seemed, for the mind beneath to harbor such doubts as were shown in the warning I had ascribed to her, and vain efforts to explain by any other hypothesis than that of guilt, the extraordinary evidence which linked this man of great affairs and the loftiest repute to a crime involving both theft and murder.

Was it the struggle end that night. I was renewed with still greater confidence the next day, as I witnessed the glance which from time to time passed between the father and daughter—glances full of doubt and question on both sides, but not exactly such doubt or such question as my suspicions called for. Or so I thought, and spent another day or two beating my very much over my duty, when, coming unexpectedly upon Mr. Grey one evening, I felt all my doubts revive in view of the extraordinary expression of dread—I might with still greater truth say fear—which informed his features and made them, to my unaccustomed eyes, almost unrecognizable.

He was sitting at his desk in reverie over some papers which he seemed not to have touched for hours, and when, at some movement I made, he started up and met my eye, I could swear that his cheek was pale, the firm carriage of his body shaken, and the whole man a victim to some strong and secret affliction he vainly sought to hide. When I ventured to tell him what I wanted, he made an effort and pulled himself together, but I had seen him with his mask off, and his usually calm visage and self-possessed mien could not again deceive me.

My duties kept me mainly at Miss Grey's bedside, but I had been provided with a little room across the hall, and to this room I retired very soon after this for rest and a necessary understanding with myself.

For, in spite of this experience and my now settled convictions, my purpose required whetting. The indescribable charm, the extreme refinement and nobility of manner observable in both Mr. Grey and his daughter were producing their effect. I felt guilty—constrained. Whatever my convictions, the impetus to act was leaving me. How could I recover it? By thinking of Anson Durand and his present disreputable position.

Anson Durand! Oh, how the feeling surged up in my breast as that name slipped from my lips on crossing the threshold of my little room! Anson Durand, whom I believed innocent, whom I loved, but whom I was betraying with every moment of hesitation in which I allowed myself to indulge! What if the Hon. Mr. Grey is an eminent statesman, a dignified, scholarly, and to all appearance, high-minded man? What if my patient is sweet, dove-eyed and affectionate? Had not Anson qualities as excellent in their way, rights as certain, and a hold upon myself superior to any claims which another might advance? Drawing a much crumpled little note from my pocket, I eagerly read it. It was the only one I had of his writing, the only letter he had ever written me. I had already reread it a hundred times, but as I once more repeated to myself its well known lines, I felt my heart grow strong and fixed in the determination which had brought me into this family.

Restoring the letter to its place, I opened my grip-sack and from its innermost recesses drew forth an object which I had no sooner in hand than a natural sense of disquietude led me to glance apprehensively, first at the door, then at the window, though I had locked the one and shaded the other. It seemed as if some other eye besides my own must be gazing at what I held so gingerly in hand; the walls were watching me, if nothing else, and

the sensation this produced was so exactly like that of guilt (or what I imagined to be guilt), that I was forced to repeat once more to myself that it was not a good man's overthrow I sought, or even a bad man's immunity from punishment, but the truth, the absolute truth. No name could equal that which I should feel if, by any overcredulity now, I failed to save the man who trusted me.

The article which I held—have you guessed it?—was the stiletto with which Mrs. Fairbrother had been killed. It had been entrusted to me by the police for a definite purpose. The time for testing that purpose had come, or so nearly come, that I felt I must be thinking about the necessary ways and means.

Unwinding the folds of tissue paper in which the stiletto was wrapped, I



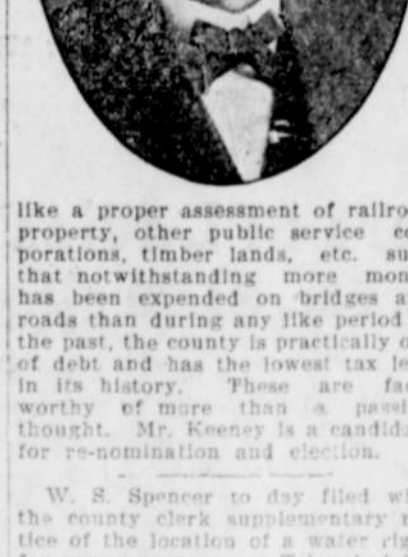
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MARRIED.

At Walla Walla, Wash., March 18, 1908, W. H. Eaton, of this city, and Mrs. M. Meeker, of Walla Walla. They have arrived here and will make Eugene their home. Mr. Eaton's many friends are tendering congratulations.

BEN F. KEENEY.
Lane County Assessor.

Whose official record is one of which he is not ashamed, having especially distinguished himself as the first Assessor of Lane County has ever elected, that has made anyone



like a proper assessment of railroad property, other public service corporations, timber lands, etc. such that notwithstanding more money has been expended on bridges and roads than during any like period of the past, the county is practically out of debt and has the lowest tax levy in its history. These are facts worthy of more than a passing thought. Mr. Keeney is a candidate for re-nomination and election.

W. S. Spencer, a day filed with the county clerk supplementary notice of the location of a water right for power purposes on Triangle lake, west of Eugene. Spencer is at the head of the Pacific Light and Power company, which proposes to build a big electric plant at the lake and transmit electricity to Eugene, Junction and other towns in the upper valley. C. P. Houston is the local representative of the company.

A. W. Gilbert, of Eugene, today began suit in the circuit court against A. H. Hinkson to recover \$100 and costs of suit, alleged to be due for services in procuring a locator for the southwest quarter of section 14, township 26, south of range 6 west, which before the locator filed upon it, was vacant government land. A. M. Gilbert was the locator which the plaintiff alleges he secured and it is alleged that the defendant received \$400 for locating him. Williams & Bean are the attorneys for the plaintiff.

Dr. W. O. Prosser was called to Jasper yesterday to attend Mrs. Hills, who lives across the ferry, and who fell and severely injured her hip. The doctor left her resting easily, although the injury is painful and will keep her indoors for quite a while.

ARMORY BILL PENDING AT JUNE ELECTION

Referring to the bill passed by the last legislature to appropriate \$25,000 a year for four years to build armories for the National Guard of the State, which will be submitted to the people for approval or rejection at the coming election, it seems pertinent to inquire if the people understand the terms of the bill and the necessity that exists for this appropriation. The increase of values in the State is such that it is almost impossible for companies, outside of Portland, where a fine armory has been provided by Multnomah county, to find decent housing for the amount allotted by the State for company expenses. Many armories now used are mere barns, wholly unfitted for their purpose. The United States government is now furnishing nearly all of the military equipment for the State troops, amounting annually to more than fifteen thousand dollars and every captain is responsible under his bond, for over \$2,000 of U. S. property which he has no means of properly caring for, and which when lost, either he or the State will have to pay for; a great deal of this property has already unaccountably disappeared, for under these circumstances to hold an officer financially responsible for all the property issued him and yet provide him no adequate means of protecting or caring for it does not seem to the lay mind to be right or just. The money provided for in this bill is more of a loan than an outright appropriation as it provides that rent shall be paid to the State by each company for use of the Armory. The companies to be provided with armories under this act are now paying about \$5000 a year in rents which will in about thirty years time return the whole amount to the state treasury. It is the policy of the Military Board that every town where a company exists the ground shall be provided for by the citizens of that town and when completed the building and ground will belong to the state and increase in value with the increase of population and business, so that in the end, the State will lose nothing and may make money on the transaction. The way in which the money is provided, \$25,000 a year, makes it an appreciable tax which no person can possibly feel, while the benefit to the state will be enormous.

The State Militia is not only a school for instruction in the military art and preparation for war, but it is one of the very best schools for good citizenship. There is hardly a citizen in the State but what would have been benefitted and his character improved by the instruction received in a term in the State Guard. To the rising generation this kind of schooling is of immense value, besides this, the defense of the country must rest on the people. When these buildings are completed they will greatly benefit the state guard. The armories will be their homes, their military club rooms where they not only receive drill, but can hold their games and athletic exercises and social functions, so necessary to keep up interest and enthusiasm in the unpaid military forces. Congress will never provide a sufficient army to relieve them from that necessity and our people should take the same pride the Swiss do in seeing to it that every man holds his military duty as a sacred trust, and that every emergency that may arise, and the National Guard is the only place to do it. Instead of hampering and discouraging the men who are patriotic enough to give their time to this preparation and so make themselves of inestimable value to the community when trouble does come, the people should encourage and aid them in every possible way.

In the report of the Adjutant General of the United States Army to the Secretary of War the following in reference to Armories is here copied:

"It is evident that to obtain and maintain a high degree of efficiency in the militia, provision must be made for the housing and comfort of the troops, as well as for their equipment and instruction. The Militia of the several states and territories and of the district of Columbia has been armed and equipped and has been provided with ammunition, clothing, and tentage by the federal government, and at the last session of Congress provision was made for the equipment, construction, and maintenance of shooting galleries and ranges. In view of all this, it does not appear to be unreasonable to expect the States to provide facilities for the training of the militia and for the care and preservation of the arms, uniforms, and equipments furnished by the general government."

HOBBS EAT HAY SOAKED WITH BOOZE

Martin McLaughlin of Hammond, Or., near Fort Stevens, is bringing suit against the Astoria Columbia River railroad for the cash value of 56 gallons of whiskey which was let out of the barrel during transportation from Portland to Hammond. McLaughlin contends that the barrel was smashed by rough handling. The railroad company maintains that the barrel was defective. At any rate, the booze was lost—56 gallons of it.

According to one story the barrel was tossed from the freight car onto a couple of bales of hay. When the barrel hit the hay the bottom smashed in and the hay was drenched with \$2.25 whiskey. During the following night the hoboes gathered from far and near like the swarms of crawfish around a carcass and not only lapped up all the booze, but ate all the hay. In consequence, McLaughlin wants damages.

ATTEMPTED HOLDUP AT THE HOTEL GROSS

(From Friday's Daily Guard.)

A lone highwayman attempted to hold up F. C. Parker, night clerk at the Hotel Gross, this morning shortly before 3 o'clock. Parker was in the office, standing near the stove, talking to another man, when suddenly the front door of the office was thrown open and there stood a rough-looking character with a red bandana over his face. He had a pistol in his hand and ordered the clerk to throw up his hands, but Parker, instead of complying, put his hand in his coat pocket and pointing toward the highwayman as though he had a gun in his pocket, said, "Don't do anything like that." The earnestness of Parker's manner evidently frightened the would-be hold-up artist, and he fled out the door and down the street.

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OREGON LOSES AT BOTH EUGENE AND SEATTLE

(From Friday's Daily Guard.)

Two University of Oregon debating teams went down to defeat last night at Seattle and Eugene, landing lowest honors in the interstate tourney by convincing one judge in Eugene. The question was, "Resolved, That the present laws relating to the admission of Chinese immigrants into the territory of the United States be extended to the Japanese." In the debate at Eugene the University of Idaho trio won by showing that, while the Japanese should be excluded, the Chinese law is not the fit instrument.

After Nicholas opened the debate for Oregon the visitors sprung their surprise upon the local collegians, who seemed unable to cope with the argument. Bond, the Oregon leader, put up some good rebuttal, but the negative case was too strong. Oregon, by the turn of the argument, was put altogether on the defensive, which in case of an affirmative team, is usually a losing position.

Oregon's case stated that the presence of the Japanese in this country provoked lawlessness, and that their continued admission was a menace socially and industrially, and that the extension of the Chinese exclusion law is the proper method of remedy.

Idaho admitted all but the last, and maintained that the Chinese exclusion law is a failure and cited the difficulty of keeping Chinese out on the borders. Secondly, that the extension of the Chinese law to all American territory works a hardship upon the Hawaiian and other islands, whose source of labor is solely Japanese. Third, that the law itself is unjust and illegal through the methods of examination of immigrants. Fourth, that the Japanese are regulating emigration to the United States, and during such regulation the last few months few Japanese have entered American territory. Fifth, that American commercial interests in Asia will be endangered. Sixth, that the United States, by extending the Chinese exclusion act insults the brown man, and that war would be likely to result.

The Idaho team backed up the argument with a huge mass of evidence, which, while partly refuted, could not be satisfactorily overthrown.

Oregon was represented by Jess Bond, leader; W. C. Nicholas and Walter Eaton; Idaho by R. O. Jones, J. D. Mathews and B. D. Mudgett. The judges were Professor Prideox of Willamette University; President Crooks, of Albany College, and Judge Kraemer, of Portland.

The decision of two to one was generally admitted to be just by the good-sized audience present in Villard hall.

IDAHO CHAMPIONS

Idaho is champion for the second time by beating both Oregon and Washington. Washington gets second place in the league and Oregon third. Oregon won out last year by equally as decisive a victory, Idaho being champion the year before by one vote, each institution winning a debate.

UNANIMOUS DECISION FOR WASHINGTON

Seattle, Wash., March 26.—Because of their ability in meeting their opponents' arguments and in setting up a good constructive case, the team debating for the University of Washington and favoring the exclusion of the Japanese from this country on the same basis as the Chinese are now excluded, won a unanimous decision from the team representing the University of Oregon in the triangular interstate debate tonight.

IDAHO WON FROM WASHINGTON AT MOSCOW

Moscow, Idaho, March 26.—By a unanimous decision of the three judges Idaho tonight won from Washington in the tri-state university debate, supporting the affirmative on the question of Japanese exclusion. The opinion expressed by two judges, McFee and Fowler, was that the debate was won by the rebuttal of Holman, of Idaho, who contended that Japanese laborers are unnecessary and harmful to the laboring industries of the United States—that their continued immigration would create unsolvable race problems because the Japanese are unsimilative.

GOLDEN WEST

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