The

Filigree Ball

By ANNA KATHARINE GREEN,

Author of "The Mystery of Agatha Webb," "Lost Man's Lane," Etc.

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CHAPTER I—Several mysterious deaths have occurred in the Moore house in Washington. It is vacant. Uncle David Moore, a prospective heir, a widower recluse, lives across the street. His niece, Veronica Moore, in a fit of caprice opens the house to celebrate her wedding with Francis Jeffrey. A supposed guest is found lying dead in the fatal room before the ceremony was finished. When the story opens, the house is again empty, and Uncle David notifies the police that a light is seen there at night. II—A detective goes with Uncle David and after a view from the outside concludes that there is someone in the house. Summoning aid, he enters, while Uncle David retires within his own home and begins playing the organ. The detective finds the body of a woman on the floor in front of a settee which has played a part in previous tragedies. A pistol is attached to her wrist by a ribbon. III—In an upstairs room the detective finds burned matches, candles, a rich wrap lying with the bridal bouquet and a handkerchief marked "Veronica," with dust upon it. On a mantel are finger marks in the dust, and a picture on the wall has recently been dusted. IV—Veronica's half sister, Cora Tuttle, is strangely affected on the scene of the tragedy. The dead woman's watch had fallen and stopped at 7:13. Jeffrey comes in with a note from his wife saying she did not love him as she thought. Miss Tuttle evidently loves him. V—Uncle David takes the news calmly. He has candles in the house, although it is lit by gas. VI—Jeffrey had courted penniless Miss Tuttle, then turned to Veronica. VII and VIII—The detective finds some gilt metal filings left behind in the house after all "clews" had been officially removed. Jeffrey's finger marks are seen to correspond with those found in the dust in the rooms.

CHAPTER VIII.

LET me repeat. The person who had left the marks of his presence in the upper chamber of the Moore house was not the man popularly known as Uncle David. Who, then, had it been? But one name suggested itself to me—Mr. Jeffrey.

It was not so easy for me to reach this man as it had been for me to reach his singular and unimaginative uncle. In the first place, his door had been closed to every one since his wife's death. Neither friends nor strangers could gain admittance there unless they came vested with authority from the coroner. And this, even if I could manage to obtain it, would not answer in my case. What I had to say and do would better follow a chance encounter. But no chance encounter with this gentleman seemed likely to fall to my lot, and finally I swallowed my pride and asked another favor of the lieutenant. Would he see that I was given an opportunity for carrying some message or of doing some errand which would lead to my having an interview with Mr. Jeffrey? If he would I stood ready to promise that my curiosity should stop at this point and that I would cease to make a nuisance of myself.

I think he suspected me by this time, but he made no remark, and in a day or so I was summoned to carry a note to the house in K street.

Mrs. Jeffrey's funeral had taken place the day before, and the house looked deserted. But my summons speedily brought to the door a neat looking but very nervous maid, whose eyes took on an unmistakable expression of resistance when I announced my errand and asked to see Mr. Jeffrey. The expression would not have struck me as peculiar if she had raised any objection to the interview I had solicited. But she did not. Her fear and antipathy consequently sprang from some other source than her interest in the man most threatened by my visit. Was it, could it be, on her own account? Recalling what I had heard whispered about the station concerning a maid of the Jeffreys who always seemed on the point of saying something which never really left her lips, I stopped her as she was about to slip upstairs and quietly asked:

"Are you Loretta?"

The way she turned, the way she looked at me, as she gave me a short affirmative and then quickly proceeded on her way, convinced me that my colleagues were right as to her being a woman who had some cause for dreading police interference. I instantly made up my mind that here was a mine to be worked and that I knew just the demure little soul best equipped to act the part of miner.

In a moment she came back, and I had a chance to note again her pretty but expressionless features, among which the restless eyes alone bespoke character or decision.

"Mr. Jeffrey is in the back room upstairs," she announced. "He says for you to come up."

"Is it the room Mrs. Jeffrey used to occupy?" I asked, with open curiosity, as I passed her.

An involuntary shudder proved that she was not without feeling. So did the quick disclaimer:

"No, no! Those rooms are closed. He occupies the one Miss Tuttle had before she went away."

"Oh, then, Miss Tuttle is gone?"

Loretta disdained to answer. She had already said enough to cause her to bite her lip as she disappeared down the basement stair. Decidedly the boys were right. An uneasy feeling followed any conversation with this girl. Yet, while there was slyness in her manner, there was a certain frank honesty visible in it, too, which caused me to think that if she could ever be made to speak her evidence could be relied on.

Mr. Jeffrey was sitting with his back to the door when I entered, but turned as I spoke his name and held out his hand for the note I carried. He appeared to shrink from observation and shifted uneasily as long as I stood in front of him, though he said nothing and did not lift his eyes from the letter he was perusing till he heard me step back to the door I had purposely left open and softly closed it. Then he glanced up with a keen if not an alarmed look, which seemed an exaggerated one for the occasion—that is, if he had no secret to keep.

"Do you suffer so from drafts?" he asked, rising in a way which in itself was a dismissal.

I smiled an amused denial, then, with the simple directness I thought most likely to win me his confidence, entered straight upon my business in these plain words:

"Pardon me, Mr. Jeffrey, I have something to say which is not exactly fitted for the ears of servants." Then as he pushed his chair suddenly back I added reassuringly: "It is not a police matter, sir, but an entirely personal one. It may strike you as important, and it may not. Mr. Jeffrey, I was the man who made the unhappy discovery in the Moore mansion which has plunged this house into mourning."

This announcement startled him and produced a visible change in his manner. His eyes flew first to one door and then to another, as if it were he who feared intrusion now.

"I beg your pardon for speaking on so painful a topic," I went on as soon as I saw he was ready to listen to me. "My excuse is that I came upon a little thing that some night which I have

Securing an imprint of Jeffrey's hand

not thought of sufficient importance to mention to any one else, but which it may interest you to hear about."

Here I took from a book I held a piece of blotting paper. It was white on one side and blue on the other. The white side I had thickly chalked, though this was not apparent. Laying down this piece of blotting paper, chalked side up, on the end of a large table near which we were standing, I took out an envelope from my pocket and, shaking it gently to and fro, remarked:

"In an upper room of the Moore house—you remember the southwest chamber, sir?"

Ah, didn't he! There was no mistaking the quick emotion, the shrinking and the alarm with which he heard this room mentioned.

"It was in that room that I found these."

Tipping up the envelope, I scattered over the face of the blotter a few of the glistening particles I had collected from the place mentioned.

He bent over them, astonished; then, as was natural, brushed them together in a heap with the tips of his fingers and leaned to look again just as I breathed a heavy sigh which scattered them far and wide.

Instinctively he withdrew his hand, whereupon I embraced the opportunity of turning the blotter over, uttering meanwhile the most profuse apologies. Then, as if anxious not to resent my misadventure, I let the blotter lie where it was, and, pouring out the few remaining particles into my palm, I held them toward the light in such a way that he was compelled to lean across the table in order to see them. Naturally, for I had planned the distance well, his finger tips, white with the chalk he had unconsciously handled, touched the blue surface of the blotter now lying uppermost and left their marks there.

I could have shouted in my elation at the success of this risky maneuver, but managed to suppress my emotion and to stand quite still while he took a good look at the filings. They seemed to have great and unusual interest for him, and it was with no ordinary emotion that he finally asked:

"What do you make out of these, and why do you bring them here?"

My answer was written under his hand, but this it was far from my policy to impart. So, putting on my friendliest air, I returned, with suitable respect:

"I don't know what to make of them. They look like gold, but that is for you to decide. Do you want them, sir?"

"No," he replied, starting erect and withdrawing his hand from the blotter. "It's but a trifle—not worth our attention. But I thank you just the same for bringing it to my notice."

And again his manner became a plain dismissal.

This time I accepted it as such without question. Carelessly restoring the piece of blotting paper to the book from which I had taken it, I made a bow and withdrew toward the door. He seemed to be thinking, and the deep furrows which I am sure had been lacking from his brow a week previous became startlingly visible. Finally he observed:

"Mrs. Jeffrey was not in her right mind when she so unhappily took her life. I see now that the chance in her dates back to her wedding day; consequently any little peculiarity she may have shown at that time is not to be wondered at."

"Certainly not," I boldly ventured, "if such peculiarities were shown after the fright given her by the catastrophe which took place in the library."

His eyes, which were fixed on mine, flashed, and his hands closed convulsively.

"We will not consider the subject," he muttered, resetting himself in the chair from which he had risen.

I bowed again and went out. I did not dwell on the interview in my own mind, nor did I allow myself to draw any conclusions from it till I had carried the blotter into the southwest chamber of the Moore house and carefully compared the impressions made on it with the marks I had scratched on the surface of the mantelshelf. This I did by laying the one over the other after having made holes where his finger tips had touched the blotter.

The holes in the blotter and the marks outlined upon the shelf coincided exactly.

(To be continued.)

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The pleasant to take and harmless One Minute Cough Cure gives immediate relief in all cases of Coughs, Croup and LaGrippe because it does not pass immediately into the stomach, but takes effect right at the seat of trouble. It draws out the inflammation, heals the lungs and cures permanently by enabling the lungs to contribute pure life-giving and life-sustaining oxygen to the blood and tissues. One Minute Cough Cure is pleasant to take and it is good alike for young and old. Sold by Metzger's drug store.

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Bishop Satterlee, Dr. Hamlin and other Washington clergymen are loud in denouncing the fashion of Sunday afternoon social entertainments in that city. These functions had their origination in the home of Secretary Robeson, while Grant was president.

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Dr. Bergin, Pana, Ill., writes: "I have used Ballard's Snow Liniment; always recommended it to my friends as I am confident there is no better made. 'It is a dandy for burns.' Those who live on farms are especially liabel to many accidental cuts, burns, bruises, which heal rapidly when Ballard's Snow Liniment is applied. It should always be kept in the house for cases of emergency." 25c, 50c, $1.00 bottles. Sold by Schuh Drug Co.

Tatooing Caused Blood Poison.

Through tattooing on his right arm a sketch of a young woman's head a Crewe workman met his death by blood poisoning. The outline was drawn with copying ink pencil.

$3.00 St. Louis and Return Via Mobile and Ohio Railroad.

Tickets will be sold for all morning and noon trains leaving Cairo April 28th, good for return to and including May 2nd, 1904, (five days in St. Louis) enabling you to be at opening of World's fair. For tickets and particulars apply to J. H. Jones, ticket agent, Central Union station, Cairo.

$3.00 Cairo to St. Louis and Return Thursday, April 28, Via Mobile & Ohio Railroad.

Tickets will be sold for regular trains on the 28th, limited to return on all regular trains to and including May 2, 1904.

John M. Beall, Asst. G. P. A., St. Louis

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There has been a steady decrease in the number of births in Germany during the last few decades. From 1870 to 1880 the number of births was 40.7 for every 1,000 inhabitants; during the following decade it fell to 38.3 and from 1891 to 1900 it was not more than 37.4 or about as much as during the 70s.

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DeWitt's Witch Hazel gives instant relief from Burns, cures Cuts, Bruises, Sores, Eczema, Tetter and all abrasions of the skin. In buying Witch Hazel Salve it is only necessary to see that you get the genuine DeWitt's and a cure is certain. There are many cheap counterfeits on the market, all of which are worthless, and quite a few are dangerous, while DeWitt's Witch Hazel Salve is perfectly harmless and cures. Sold by Metzger's drug store.

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12:35 p. m Chicago Mid-day Special, arriving in Chicago, 10:50 p. m.

2:20 p. m. Daily St. Louis Limited, arriving in St. Louis at 7:36 p. m, connecting at Union Station for Kansas City, Omaha, Denver, San Francisco and all points west.

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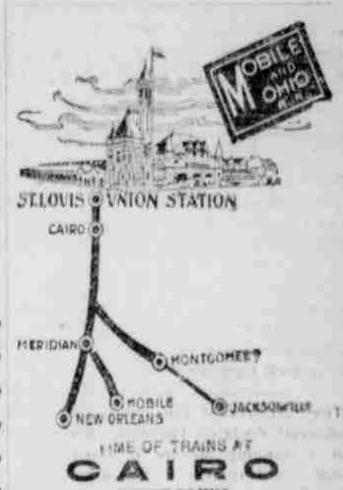

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