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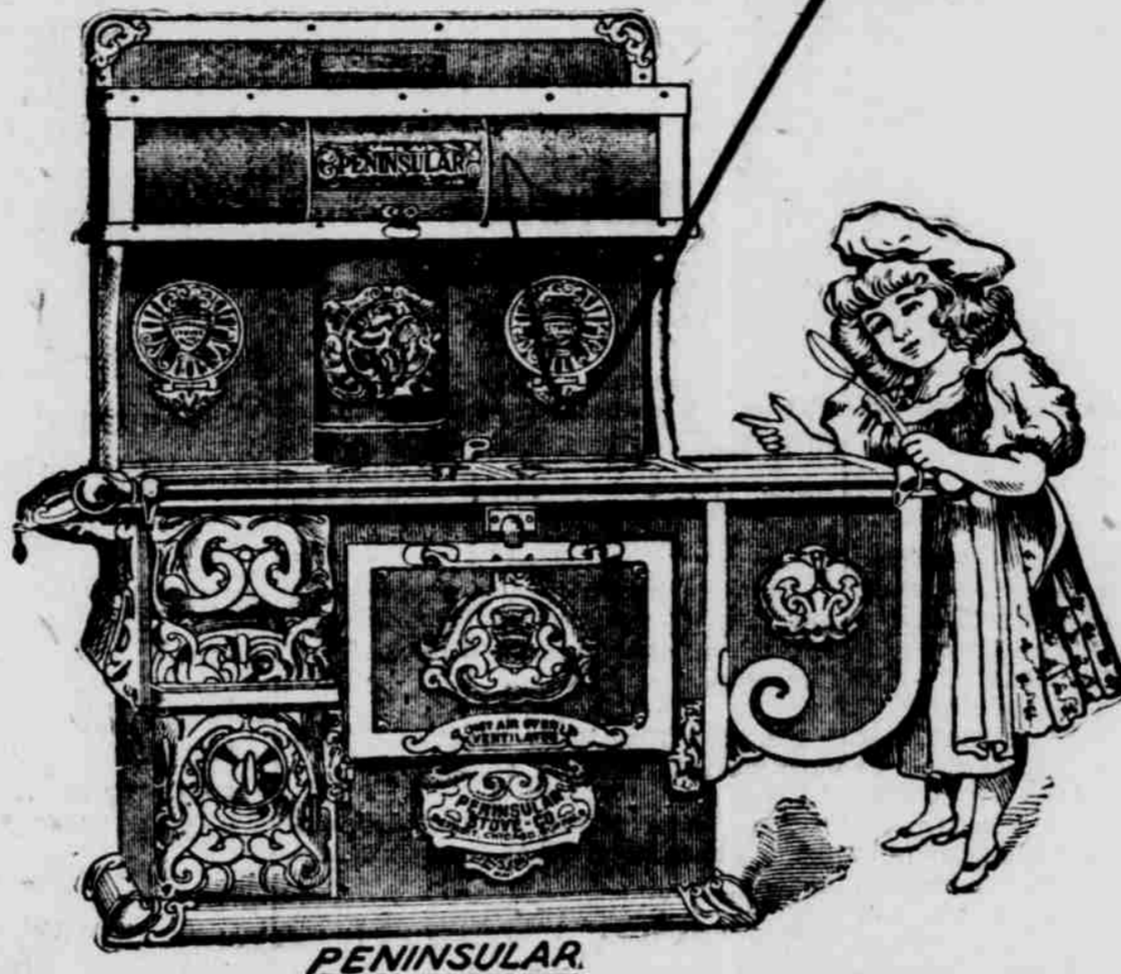
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Mixes the batter for all kinds of cakes in three to five minutes.

Mashes potatoes and other kinds of vegetables.

Send for booklet free.

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MOLDS
CAKE
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MOLDS

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mixes and kneads bread thoroughly in Three Minutes. The hands do not touch the dough. Send for booklet free.

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By ANNA KATHARINE GREEN,
Author of "The Mystery of Agatha Webb," "Lost Man's Lane," Etc.

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CHAPTER I.

FOR a detective whose talents had not been recognized at headquarters, I possessed an ambition which, fortunately for my standing with the lieutenant of the precinct, had not yet been expressed in words. Though I had small reason for expecting great things of myself, I had always cherished the hope that if a big case came my way I should be found able to do something with it—something more, that is, than I had seen accomplished by the police of the District of Columbia since I had had the honor of being one of their number. Therefore, when I found myself plunged, almost without my own volition, into the Jeffrey-Moore affair, I believed that the opportunity had come whereby I might distinguish myself.

It had complications, this Jeffrey-Moore affair; greater ones than the public ever knew, keen as the interest in it ran both in and out of Washington.

This is why I propose to tell the story of this great tragedy from my own standpoint, even if in so doing I risk the charge of attempting to exploit my own connection with this celebrated case. In its course I encountered as many disappointments as triumphs and brought out of the affair a heart as sore as it was satisfied, for I am a lover of women and—

But I am keeping you from the story itself.

I was at the station house the night Uncle David came in. He was always

The detective

called Uncle David, even by the urchins who followed him in the street, so I am showing him no disrespect, gentlemen though he is, by giving him a title which as completely characterized him in those days as did his moody, morose, his quaint attire and the man-

stance with which he kept at his side his great mastiff Rudge.

I had long since heard of the old gentleman as one of the most interesting residents of the precinct. I had even seen him more than once on the avenue, but I had never before been brought face to face with him, and consequently had much too superficial a knowledge of his countenance to determine offhand whether the uneasy light in his small gray eyes was natural to them or simply the result of present excitement. But when he began to talk I detected an unmistakable tremor in his tones and decided that he was in a state of suppressed agitation, though he appeared to have nothing more alarming to impart than the fact that he had seen a light burning in some house presumably empty.

It was all so trivial that I gave him but scant attention till he let a name fall which caused me to prick up my ears and even to put in a word. "The Moore house," he had said.

"The Moore house?" I repeated in amazement. "Are you speaking of the Moore house?"

A thousand recollections came with the name.

"What other?" he grumbled, directing toward me a look as keen as it was impatient. "Do you think that I would bother myself long about a house I had no interest in, or drag Rudge from his warm rug to save some ungrateful neighbor from a possible burglary? No, it is my house which some rogue has chosen to enter. That is," he suavely corrected, as he saw surprise in every eye, "the house which the law will give me, if anything ever happens to that bit of a girl whom my brother left behind him."

Growing some words at the dog, who showed a decided inclination to lie down where he was, the old man made for the door and in another moment would have been in the street, if I had not stepped after him.

"You are a Moore and live in or near that old house?" I asked.

The surprise with which he met this question daunted me a little.

"How long have you been in Washington, I should like to ask?" was his acrid retort.

"Oh, some five months."

His good nature, or what passed for such in this irascible old man, returned in an instant, and he curbed, but not unkindly remarked:

"You haven't learned much in that time. Then, with a nod more ceremonious than many another man's bow, he added, with sudden dignity: 'I am of the elder branch and live in

the cottage fronting the old place. I am the only resident on the block. When you have lived here longer you will know why that especial neighborhood is not a favorite one with those who cannot boast of the Moore blood. For the present, let us attribute the bad name that it holds to—malaria.' And with a significant hitch of his lean shoulders, which set in undulating motion every fold of the old fashioned cloak he wore, he started again for the door.

But my curiosity was by this time roused to fever heat. I knew more about this house than he gave me credit for. No one who had read the papers of late, much less a man connected with the police, could help being well informed in all the details of its remarkable history. What I had failed to know was his close relationship to the family whose name for the last two weeks had been in every mouth.

"Wait!" I called out. "You say that you live opposite the Moore house. 'You can then tell me—"

"But he had no mind to stop for any gossip."

"It was all in the papers," he called back. "Read them. But first be sure to find out who has struck a light in the house that we all know has not even a caretaker in it."

It was good advice. My duty and my curiosity both led me to follow it. Perhaps you have heard of the distinguishing feature of this house. If so, you do not need my explanations. But if, for any reason, you are ignorant of the facts which within a very short time have set a final seal of horror upon this old historic dwelling, then you will be glad to read what has made and will continue to make the Moore house in Washington one to be pointed at in daylight and shunned after dark, not only by superstitious colored folk, but by all who are susceptible to the most ordinary emotions of fear and dread.

It was standing when Washington was a village. It antedates the capitol and the White House. Built by a man of wealth, it bears to this day the impress of the large ideas and quiet elegance of colonial times; but the shadow which speedily fell across it made it a marked place even in those early days. While it has always escaped the hackneyed epithet of "haunted," families that have moved in have as quickly moved out, giving as their excuse that no happiness was to be found there and that sleep was impossible under its roof. That there was some reason for this lack of rest within walls which were not without their tragic reminiscences all must acknowledge. Death had often occurred there, and while this fact can be stated in regard to most old houses, it is not often that one can say, as in this case, that it was invariably sudden and invariably of one character.

A lifeless man, lying outstretched on a certain hearthstone, might be found once in a house and awaken no special comment, but when this same discovery has been made twice, if not twice, during the history of a single dwelling, one might surely be pardoned a distrust of its seemingly homelike appointments and discern in its shadowy, darkening walls the presence of an evil which if left to itself might perish

in the natural decay of the place, but which, if met and challenged, might strike again and make another blot on its thrice crimsoned hearthstone.

But these are old fables which I should hardly presume to mention had it not been for the recent occurrence which has recalled them to all men's minds and given to this long empty and slowly crumbling building an importance which has spread its fame from one end of the country to the other. I refer to the tragedy attending the wedding lately celebrated there.

Veronica Moore, rich, pretty and willful, had long cherished a strange liking for this frowning old home of her ancestors and, at the most critical time in her life, conceived the idea of proving to herself and to society at large that no real ban lay upon it save in the imagination of the superstitious.

So, being about to marry the choice of her young heart, she caused this house to be opened for the wedding cere-

mony— with what result you know. Though the occasion was a joyous one and accompanied by all that could give cheer to such a function, it had not escaped the old time shadow. One of the guests straying into the room of ancient and unhalloved memory, the one room which had not been thrown open to the crowd, had been found within five minutes of the ceremony lying on its dolorous hearthstone dead, and though the bride was spared a knowledge of the dreadful fact till

the holy words were said, a panic had seized the guests and emptied the house as suddenly and completely as though the plague had been discovered there.

This is why I hastened to follow Uncle David when he told me that all was not right in this house of tragic memories.

CHAPTER II.

THOUGH past seventy, Uncle David was a brisk walker, and on this night in particular he sped along so fast that he was half way down H street by the time I had turned the corner of New Hampshire avenue.

His gaunt but not ungraceful figure, merged in that of the dog trotting closely at his heels, was the only moving object in the dreary vista of this most desolate block in Washington.

As I neared the building I was so impressed by the surrounding stillness that I was ready to vow that the shadows were denser here than elsewhere and that the few gas lamps which flickered at intervals down the street shone with a more feeble ray than in

any other equal length of street in Washington.

Meanwhile the shadow of Uncle David had vanished from the pavement. He had paused beside a fence which, hung with vines, surrounded and nearly hid from sight the little cottage he had mentioned as the only house on the block with the exception of the great Moore place; in other words, his own home.

As I came abreast of him I heard him muttering, not to his dog, as was his custom, but to himself. In fact, the dog was not to be seen, and this desertion on the part of his constant companion seemed to add to his disturbance and affect him beyond all known bounds.

I could distinguish these words among the many he directed toward the unseen animal:

"You're a knowing one—too knowing! You see that loosened shutter over the way as plainly as I do; but you're a coward to sink away from it. I don't. I face the thing, and, what's more, I'll show you yet what I think of a dog that can't stand his ground and help his old master out with some show of courage. Creaks, does it? Well, let it creak. I don't mind its creaking, and as I should be to know whose hand— Hello! You've come, have you? This to me. I had just stepped up to him."

"Yes, I've come. Now, what is the matter with the Moore house?"

He must have expected the question, yet his answer was a long time coming. His voice, too, sounded strained, and was pitched quite too high to be natural. But he evidently did not expect me to show surprise at his manner.

"Look at that window over there!" he cried at last. "That one with the slightly open shutter! Watch and you will see that shutter move. There, it creaked! Didn't you hear it?"

A growl—it was more like a moan—came from the porch behind us. Instantly the old gentleman turned and, with a gesture as fierce as it was instinctive, shouted out:

"Be still there! If you haven't the courage to face a blowing shutter, keep your jaws shut and don't let every fellow who happens along know what a fool you are. I declare," he maundered on, half to himself and half to me, "that dog is getting old. He can't be trusted any more. He forsakes his master just when!" The rest was lost in his throat, which rattled with something more than impatient anger.

Meanwhile I had been attentively scrutinizing the house thus pointed out; but to my notice, I had seen it many times before, but as it happened

ed, had never stopped to look at it when the huge trees surrounding it were shrouded in darkness. The black hollow of its disused portal looked out from shadows which acquired some of their somberness from the tragic memories connected with its empty void.

Its aspect was scarcely reassuring. Not that superstition lent its terrors to the lonely scene, but that through the blank panes of window, alternately appearing and disappearing from view as the shutter pointed out by Uncle David blew to and fro in the wind, I saw or was persuaded that I saw a beam of light which argued an unknown presence within walls which had so lately been declared unfit for any man's habitation.

"You are right," I now remarked to the uneasy figure at my side. "Some one is prowling through the house yonder. Can it possibly be Mrs. Jeffrey or her husband?"

"At night and with no gas in the house? Hardly."

The words were natural, but the voice was not. Neither was his manner quite suited to the occasion. Giving him another sly glance and marking how uneasily he edged away from me in the darkness, I cried out more cheerily than he possibly expected:

"I will summon another officer, and we three will just slip across and investigate."

"Not I!" was his violent rejoinder as he swung open a gate concealed in the vines behind him. "The Jeffreys would resent my intrusion if they ever happened to hear of it."

"Indeed!" I laughed, sounding my whistle. Then, soberly enough, for I was more than a little struck by the oddity of his behavior and thought him as well worth investigation as the house in which he showed such an interest: "You shouldn't let that count. Come and see what's up in the house you are so ready to call yours."

But he only drew farther into the shade.

"I have no business over there," he objected. "Veronica and I have never been on good terms. I was not even invited to her wedding, though I live within a stone's throw of the door. No, I have done my duty in calling attention to that light, and whether it's the bulwark of a burglar—perhaps you don't know that there are rare treasures on the bookshelves of the great library—or whether it is the fantastic illumination which frightens fool folks and some fool dogs, I'm done with it and done with you, too, for tonight."

As he said this he mounted to his door and disappeared under the vines, leaving me a curious over the porch of the house. In another moment the rich peal of an organ sounded from within, followed by the prolonged howling of Rudge, who, either from too keen appreciation of his master's music or in utter disapproval of it—no one, I believe, has ever been able to make out which—was accustomed to add this undesirable accompaniment to every strain from the old man's hand. The playing did not cease because of these outrageous discords. On the contrary, it increased in force and volume, causing Rudge's expression of pain or pleasure to increase also. The result can be imagined. As I listened

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