

by a cousin of hers, Miss Anna Green - "The Leavenworth Case". It is her first novel, she has written poetry before. I was interested in it from the beginning. Have you seen any notices of it? I had a letter from Robert Friday evening - all well as usual. Some rowdies had amused themselves by taking our front gate off its hinges, carried it over to the "Poor House" and hoisted it by means of a rope to the top of a tree. It is a pity they could not be made to work as hard at something useful.

Affectionately, your mother
Alice K. Grierson

visit after the others were gone. Mrs Vanvalzah enjoyed the party - thought it one of the pleasantest she ever attended. Mr and Mrs Veck and Mrs Veck's sisters were there, also Mr Hart and his three young sisters, whom he has lately brought from St. Louis, where they have for several years been attending school at a convent - he intends taking them on to El Paso soon. There were also other strangers at the Hop, I believe. Papa says Mr Hart's eldest sister has "taken the veil", and he feels very badly about it. Papa, Harry, George Walker and Gabe Monroe went hunting yesterday, and came home about 10 o'clock, with about 40 squirrels, 2 quail, and an antelope. Harry thinks it is more fun to hunt squirrels than any thing any thing else, he shot eight. Capt Vanvalzah left a pony here for George, a grey one, George rode all the way out, and back, on it yesterday. They went 10 or 12 miles up the North Concho. Cousin Helen spent last evening here - she has Amelia for help, since Lt Gasman went on sick leave. We expect the paymaster and party back tomorrow. I read a book of Mrs. McLaughlen while she was here, written

In the letter to the left and transcribed below, Alice K. Grierson fills in her eldest son, Charlie, on the happenings at Fort Concho. Along with the dancing and hunting and news of Charlie's brothers, Alice mentions a book she was reading. Alice mentions book in many of her letters and had subscriptions to several magazines. She encouraged her family to read and share their impressions. Sort of a long distance book club!

A letter to Charlie from his mother Alice

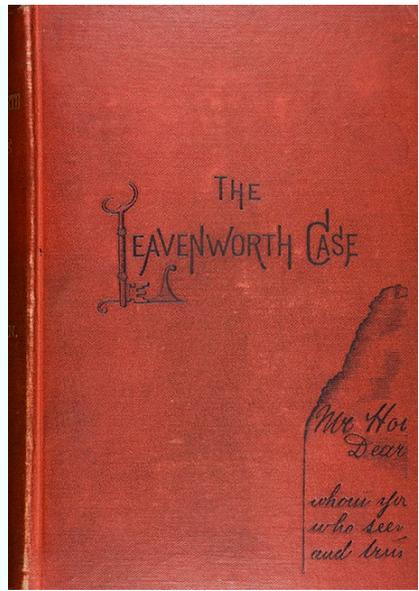
Fort Concho Feb. 2nd 1879

My dear Charlie

We had quite a little snow storm this morning, but the snow melted as soon as it touched the ground, making sticky, bad walking. Gen McLaughlen and party left Thursday morning. There was a large and pleasant hop in the barracks Wednesday evening. Gen McLaughlen went to bed, and Mrs McLaughlen did not go to the hop, as she had a hard headache all day, and was not well enough to dance, and then travel next day - she and I had a good

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Affectionately your mother
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The Leavenworth Case by Anna Katherine Green was a very popular book of the time, selling close to a million copies. The plot revolves around the murder of the wealthy Horatio Leavenworth and the house guests who were suspects. Green's father was a lawyer and she used his knowledge to make an engrossing, believable and highly detailed crime novel. She set her novel in America, an unusual choice as most contemporary writers generally used Europe. Anna Katherine Green was an American novelist and poet, who has been referred to as the "mother of the detective novel." The Leavenworth Case (1878) is frequently listed as the first mystery novel written by an American woman, although The Dead Letter (1866) by Seeley Regester, the male nom de plume for female Metta Victoria Fuller Victor was published earlier. Green would go on to write close to forty books and become a best-selling author. Green is credited with developing the detective series and shaping detective fiction. The Leavenworth Case came out almost ten years before Arthur Conan Doyle would introduce Sherlock Holmes. The Leavenworth Case would be made into a stage play starring Green's husband, Charles Rohlf (they married in 1884) and then later into movies, one in 1923 and the other in 1936. As with much Victorian literature, The Leavenworth Case and other works by Green fell out of favor as the stilted language (to modern ears) and sentimental melodrama lost fans. However, Mrs. Green is being rediscovered and many of her books, including The Leavenworth Case, are being reintroduced as reprints.