

The Wife's Secret, OR A BITTER RECKONING

By CHARLOTTE M. BRAEME

CHAPTER X.—(Continued.)

She began methodically to remove every article singly, placing them neatly in a heap on the table, after reading or looking at them. Then she turned to the other side, going through it in the same way, and reached the bottom without discovering anything more than is usually to be found in a lady's desk. With a disappointed air, she began to replace the articles, when Miss Malling's address book fell from her shaking hand on to the floor.

She stooped to pick it up as it lay open; and, in doing so, she saw the edge of a photograph peeping from the pocket in the cover. She took it out hurriedly, scattering, as she did so, some dead pressed violets on to the table. She shuddered when she raised the tissue paper, for it was the photograph of a grave.

She went to the dressing table, where the candles were still burning, to read the name of the photographer at the back of the card. The printing was in a language she did not understand; but she guessed it must be Spanish. She turned to the picture again, and in the strong light she could almost make out part of the inscription on the plain headstone. The first name, she was sure, began with the letter "P." In order to assist her, she procured Miss Malling's magnifying glass, and, with the aid of that, she spelled out the name, or as much of it as she could see.

"P-a-u-l-i-n-e" she could clearly trace; then came a blot, followed by "l-i-n-g-d-i-e-d M-a-y 18—." The remainder of the inscription was undistinguishable.

"I never expected this!" the grave of Pauline Malling! Then who is my mistress? An adventuress—a usurper! And I shall have a hand in dethroning her!"

She wiped the perspiration from her white, quivering face, placed the photograph in her dress, and locked the desk.

CHAPTER XI.

Jack was by no means heartless, and his conscience pricked him more often than was pleasant with regard to Ethel Mallett. He wondered a little if she had really ceased to care for him, if she had yet found a successor to him, or if pique alone had led her to offer him his freedom. She had sent him back the little ring he put on her finger when they were so happy together, and, with a strange inconsistency, he carried it about with him continually.

Just about this time Jack began to think that he ought to call in Buckingham street, if only to show his gratitude for Mr. Mallett's many past kindnesses, for the old gentleman had often been able and always willing to do Jack a good turn in past days. Once convinced that he ought to do a thing, Jack did it.

The morrow would be the first of September, and the house was full of people who had been invited to enjoy the abundant sport Mallingford offered. A number of amiable young men were lounging about the corridors and billiard room all day, who talked of nothing but the probable weather on the morrow, and the chances for and against good sport, and the respective merits of their own and other men's guns. Jack obtained a few words with Pauline before breakfast, and carried his point.

"I must have several things for to-morrow," he said. "I know you would not wish me to be different from others, and I cannot get what I want without going to town myself."

Pauline would have dearly liked to go with him, for she had a horrible fear that he would find out something if he should call on the Malletts. She was not supposed to know of the existence of such people—for Jack had never spoken of them to her—so he could not well as him not to call on them; and she could not leave her guests without some very serious reason; consequently she was forced to feign a complacency she was far from feeling as she answered:

"Of course, if you must go, there is nothing more to be said; but you will not stay one half-hour longer than is absolutely necessary. If I don't know where you are, I have such a feeling of unrest and anxiety that life becomes a sorrow for the time being."

There was honest truth in these words, and Jack was flattered and grateful for her love. He kissed the beautiful lips, and promised to be back at the very earliest moment possible.

When Jack was in the train, with a quiet half hour before him for thought, he felt curiously cloyed with the sweets of love, and was ungratefully enough to wish that Pauline would leave the home-making a little more in his hands, and that her affection was of a less assertive character.

Two or three hours later, when he had rushed through the business of the day and stood in the Malletts' sitting room, shaking hands with both father and daughter and exchanging cordial greetings, he felt as if he had been living in a hot house of affections for the past weeks, and had just regained the invigorating open air, where the hardier, healthier class of feelings flourish.

He wondered a little at Mr. Mallett's generosity in taking the entire responsibility of their separation upon herself, and still less of her father's hope that she had got rid of a nameless nobody just in time to leave the road clear for a suitor more worthy of her in every way; and Jack felt somewhat piqued that Mr. Mallett should make so light of the whole business.

But he did not let his annoyance appear upon the surface. He told of the success of the paintings for Lord Summers, of his hopes for the future, of the gay life at Mallingford, and impressed his hearers with the fact that he was brimming over with good fortune and happiness.

Ethel did not say much; but she appeared to be quietly, kindly interested; and, though she was paler than she used to be, she did not give one the idea of a love-lorn damsel. She sat listening

to the conversation, and wondering if her father would touch on the subject of their identity during Jack's visit; but Mr. Mallett did not wish to be made the topic of gossip among Miss Malling's guests, and therefore kept his own counsel.

When Jack was about to leave, Mr. Mallett decided to walk part of the way with him, and accordingly went downstairs first. Jack turned, with the door handle in his hand, to thank Ethel for what she had done—yet hardly to thank her, either.

"I can't go without thanking you for being so candid with me, Ethel," he said. "Of course I was very surprised when I received your letter breaking off the engagement; but equally of course there was nothing for me to do but acquiesce in your wish."

Ethel felt how ungenerous this remark was, seeing that his neglect had led to what had happened; but she would not be driven into reproaching him, and so gave him cause to justify himself. Her feelings were too real to bear dissection, and she avoided the discussion.

"That is all passed," she said, gravely; "better let it rest."

Though she did not say one word in self-defense, there was a world of reproach in the subdued tones of her advice; though her speech was so indifferent, her whole manner asserted her right to be considered more than blameless throughout the affair.

Jack felt miserably small under her calm gaze, and his respect for her was vastly increased by this little passage at arms; and, as he was carried by the afternoon express back to Mallingford Park, he could not shake from his mind the fable of the dog and the shadow.

CHAPTER XII.

The rain was coming down in torrents, and there was a general expression of disappointment on the men's faces round the breakfast table at Mallingford Park.

"But you know it is really too bad," Cecil Danesford observed to Miss Malling. "Your head man had fixed to-day for the north end covers, and he says they are the best on the whole estate; and now this rain comes and spoils the whole thing. It is annoying, you must allow."

"Poor creatures—men!" said the Hon. Miss Collins, reflectively. "The comfort of their lives depends upon the one amusement of the hour. Deprive them of that and they are stranded helplessly. Glad I'm a woman!"

"Well, I hope you will have got over the first rush of slaughter by the 17th," Pauline interposed, bringing the conversation back to the original object.

"Why by the 17th?" several asked.

"Because I shall then attain my long-deferred majority, and dear old Lord Summers insists that there will be a big affair on the happy occasion."

"A ball? Delightful!" exclaimed the ladies.

"And I shan't be here?" murmured Cecil.

His attention was suddenly arrested by an advertisement in the Times, which he held in his hand.

"By all that's mysterious!" he exclaimed; and then he sat gazing at the newspaper in mute astonishment.

Bertha Collins leaned across, and looked at the place he was pointing at.

"How extraordinary!" she exclaimed.

"For pity's sake, let us into the mystery!" Pauline said; and Bertha read out the following advertisement:

"Mallingford Park—If this should meet the eye of Sir G. M., he will hear of something to his decided advantage by applying to Messrs. Daws & Raven, 16 Leman street, E. C."

There was general astonishment and various were the surmises as to what it could mean. Jack, glancing at Pauline, was surprised to see her agitated and white to the lips. She motioned to him not to notice it, and fought determinedly with her emotion. The others were too much absorbed by their curiosity to take much heed, and she bore herself as usual until breakfast was finished.

"Will you help Mrs. Sefton and me to finish filling in the cards for the seventeenth?" she asked Jack, as she left the breakfast room.

Jack promised to join them in the boudoir in a quarter of an hour. He did not like to think of Pauline's look. He was a poor struggling artist, who had hitherto lived by the exercise of his undoubted talent, and Pauline was a rich, high-born woman, his superior in most things that count in this world; yet he would not make her his wife if he did not believe her life to be spotless and without flaw. This was the idea that haunted him as he recalled her look at the breakfast table. If ever a woman's face expressed suddenly aroused fear, his fiancée's had done so when Bertha Collins read that advertisement in the Times. He went back to the breakfast room before he joined Pauline, read the advertisement again, and copied the address into his note book.

"If I am in the neighborhood with a few moments to spare, I may look them up and see what it means," he decided.

Then he followed the ladies to the boudoir, Pauline, still looking unlike herself, was sitting with Mrs. Sefton. Jack said nothing to them, but went straight to his work of filling in the invitations from the list of names given him. Mrs. Sefton left the room after a time; and Pauline, turning to Jack, put her hand entreatingly on his arm.

"I know what you are going to ask me; but I can't talk about it just now—not to-day. I will tell you to-morrow, or the day after; but don't speak of it now. I ask it as a favor."

Jack felt perplexed. He had expected the moment they were alone together that she would tell him what had caused her disquiet. He felt unhappy and worried, yet he could hardly force her to speak upon a subject that evidently distressed her.

"Of course, I don't want to worry you, darling," he answered; "but I must con-

less I am curious, and I shall be glad when you can tell me all without distressing yourself."

"Thank you very much, dear. And now I want to ask you if there is any one you would like me to send a card to for this ball."

Jack flushed as he replied:

"Yes; there are two people I should like you to invite—Mr. Mallett and his daughter. They are everything desirable, or I should not suggest it; and the old gentleman was very kind to me in the days that are gone."

"Was the daughter kind, too, Jack?"

"Alas!"

"Again Jack flushed a little.

"I think you are a bit of a witch," he said, with a laugh. "I may as well tell you, and then there will be no secret in my past for you to find out by and by. Yes, she was kind to me, and once I thought I liked her well enough to make her my wife; but that was before I met you, siren!"

"You don't think so now?"

"If I did, should I be here?"

The rain continued to pour down steadily, and the scratch, scratch of the busy pens went on without interruption. Pauline finished her list first, and sat back in her chair, with a thoughtful, chastened look on her face which was strangely unlike her usual imperious air. Jack noted it, and thought her more beautiful, if that were possible, although he wondered what had brought about so great a change. He felt a foreboding that this was the little cloud in their sky that would darken the whole heavens.

"At last!" he exclaimed, as he threw down his pen.

"You have been a good boy," Pauline said, with a smile. "We could not have finished them to-day without your help."

"So I shall lose him, after all, if I can not satisfactorily explain this morning's fright!" she reflected, alone in her dressing room. "He will not allow a secret between us. What can I do? If I concoct a lie to account for it, there may be an advertisement in to-morrow's paper that will expose it. Who can want to find Geoffrey Malling after allowing me undisturbed possession for the last six years? If they find him, they will tell all, and he will claim his inheritance; they cannot want him for anything else. I must discover how much they know, or how can I fight them? I can't trust another; I must do it myself; and, with these thoughts running through her mind, she crossed to the bell, which Bertha promptly answered. "Bertha, I want to run up to London this afternoon, and I don't want the whole house to know about it."

Bertha's eyes flashed with a quick glance of intelligence; but her lids drooped instantly, and she answered, meekly: "Certainly, mademoiselle."

"If the people see the brougham leaving the house, it will set them wondering; so I want you to run down to the village during luncheon and bring back one of the public fiars from the inn there. Tell the man to drive to the stable yard—in fact, you can come back in it; and let it be there by a quarter past three."

"Very good, mademoiselle."

Bertha's face gleamed with merriment behind Pauline's back as she left the room.

"So you think you have only to go to Messieurs Daws & Raven and show your pretty face, and maybe a ten-pound note or so, and they will tell you all about the person who sent them that advertisement! But you do not outwit a Frenchwoman so simply, my good friend! Mr. Daws is quite prepared to receive you with politeness, and to tell you that he really knows nothing more than that his client, whom he is not at liberty to name, is anxious to obtain the address of the present Sir Geoffrey; and the girl chuckled grimly as she went along. "That old fellow will hardly risk losing his share of the plunder, even to oblige a sweet, so handsome, so soft-voiced a lady as you, madame!" and she laughed again as she pictured the meeting between her mistress and the lawyer. "I wish I could be there to see!"

Pauline stopped to speak to Jack as they crossed the hall after luncheon.

"I shall lie down for the whole afternoon; my head is aching so dreadfully. What will you do with yourself, Jack? A wet day is such a terrible affliction in a country house!"

"I shall work. It's a week to-day since I touched a brush; it will be a grand opportunity. I should advise your taking a good rest while you can get it."

Pauline set her teeth in her underlip and left him, her mind racked with anxiety and fear.

"At all cost I must be in a position to tell him something that will not be contradicted. I must find out how much those people know before to-night."

(To be continued.)

Common Sight.

"Let us wait and see the lady contortionist," said the bachelor in the side show.

"Wouldn't interest me," replied the benedict. "I see one at home every day."

"At home?"

"Yes; my wife has one of those blouses that button at the back."

Knew What He Wanted.

Wedderly—If there is a woman in this town who is a better cook than my wife I'd like to meet her.

Singleton—Your wife is an expert, eh?

Wedderly—Expert nothing! Didn't I just tell you I was anxious to meet a better cook?

Starting Him Right.

They had been engaged all of ten minutes.

"Horseless carriages and wireless telegraphy may be all right in their way," she said, "but—"

"But what?" he queried, anxiously.

"I don't think much of kissless courtships," she continued.

Where Deafness Is Valuable.

First Floorwalker—Poor old B Jones has completely lost his hearing. I'm afraid he will lose his job.

Second Floorwalker—Nonsense. He's to be transferred to the complaint desk.—Philadelphia Record.

A sign of politeness in Thibet on meeting a person is to hold up the clasped hands and stick out the tongue.

EDITORIALS

OPINIONS OF GREAT PAPERS ON IMPORTANT SUBJECTS

SECRET SOCIETIES IN SCHOOLS.

SECRET societies in high schools and other secondary schools are scathingly criticised in a report to the National Educational Association by a committee appointed to investigate their effects. "Factional, and stir up strife and contention," "snobbish," "dissipate energy and proper ambition," "foster a feeling of self-importance," "expensive and foster habits of extravagance," "weaken the efficiency of the school," "detract interest from study," are some of the grave charges made against these organizations.

The indictment is severe, but not too severe. Children from 13 to 14 to 17 or 18 years of age are not mature enough to derive benefit from organizations of any kind which are not supervised by older persons, but are mature enough to receive from them much harm. They are then at the age when they are prone to imitate all that is bad or foolish in the conduct of adults, and the only way they can be kept from following this tendency is by restricting their opportunity. School secret societies enlarge the opportunity. This is the main reason why pupils fight so stoutly to prevent their suppression. The teachers, who should know their effects best, are practically unanimous in condemning secret societies, and there is no reason to doubt that in doing so they aim at the good of the schools.

The National Educational Association will not abolish school "fraternities" by hearing reports or adopting resolutions. Children are persevering. They are especially persevering when wrong. They are most persevering when they think they are spitting the teacher. Nothing gives the average boy so much unqualified satisfaction as to think he is making the schoolmaster sit up nights and rack his brain over the subject of school government. As long as boys' fathers have clubs and college young men have "frats," high school boys will want "frats," and probably they will usually have them, no matter how often they may be put down. If teachers could enlist the hearty support of parents in the contest the result might be different. The remedy for secret societies and other follies in secondary schools is for parents to tell children to obey their teachers, and, if they disobey, to punish them.—Chicago Tribune.

SUGGESTIONS ON LIFE INSURANCE.

LIFE insurance in New England has for many years been managed with exceptional efficiency and honesty. In New York that kind of management has too often been lacking. Many persons now far advanced in years can recall the time, some thirty years ago, when a number of New York life insurance companies went to the wall. Some of these had many policies outstanding in all parts of the country, and their failure was so complete that the policy holders did not receive a cent. And the well-founded report that the receivers of the defunct companies fattened on the spoils wrung from widows and orphans did not mitigate the anger with which outsiders looked on that carnival of diabolism in the Empire State. It is because the record of New England is in happy contrast with all this that advice from that quarter on the trouble in the Equitable Life of New York has a special interest. A committee of New England policy holders in the Equitable has spoken words of truth and soberness. This committee declares that no matter what may be the result of the various investigations now in process, the policy of the company should be transformed in the future. It believes—and who will deny?—that the company belongs to the policy holders, and should be managed by them; that the surplus should not accumulate beyond the just needs of the society, but should go to the policy holders in the form of reduced premiums or otherwise; that provision should be made by law, if necessary, to prevent a needless surplus; that the funds of the Equitable should be regarded as those of savings banks, and their investment should be surrounded by the same legal safeguards.

THE HELLO GIRL.

HE have all felt at times that the telephone still lacks a great deal to be a perfect machine, that there is inattention, poor connection, needless delay and sometimes almost impudence in the telephone service, but how few ever feel that it is not an automatic machine that they are using, that the voice they hear answering their impatience is not a part of the machine, that there is a personal equation to be considered, a woman away off somewhere in the unidentified "central," who has feelings and self-respect, just as other women have; a woman who will recognize a cross tone just as quickly as if she were visibly present, and a woman entitled to respectful treatment, just as much as if she were in her own home. The fact that you can stand miles away and talk into her ear does not detract from the right to the kind word and civil treatment.—Jersey City Journal.

SKILLFUL HUNTING.

Five minutes of thorough, systematic search for a lost object is often more effectual than half an hour of desultory hunting, which, in its excited flurry, often passes in plain sight the article which it seeks. An example of this principle is often seen in the case of the small boy, who, when the family have scrambled vainly about for the dropped trinket, announces that he will look for it "Indian fashion." He lies quietly down on the floor, and bringing his eye on a level with the carpet, soon spies the missing object. In "A Girl in the Karpachians," Miss Dowie gives another instance of letting brains do the work of the muscles.

The party was riding up a steep mountainside when suddenly the author discovered that she had lost her gold watch. It was an heirloom and much valued; there was nothing to do but to turn back on the trail. About two miles before she had made the discovery her horse had slipped, and she had rolled off. It must have been then that her watch was dropped.

The little party returned on the path, wildly searching here and there. When they reached the place of the tumble there was a grand hunt, which lasted a long time.

Then, tired out and heated, the searchers returned to where the horses were tethered and acknowledged themselves beaten. "I've turned up every fern leaf and grass blade," said one.

"It's no use," exclaimed the author; and she declared she would not look again for all the watches in the world.

A young artist in the party had stayed with the horses while the rest were hunting. Now he announced that it was his turn to try. The others laughed, but they willingly sat down to rest while the young man went off down the hillside. It was not long before they heard a "Hurrah!" and the artist appeared, holding up the watch in triumph.

"I almost always find things," he said. "I search like a dog. I lay down on my face and listened, and I heard the ticking when the watch was a meter away. Then I crawled on my hands and knees until I found it."

ELEVATED RAILWAY.

Any Rate of Speed Can Be Attained with Perfect Safety.

Several of the larger cities in the United States are in need of an elevated railway to accommodate the more densely populated sections which the surface lines are unable to handle. Because of the unsightliness of elevated railways at present in use, their further use has been discontinued in favor of the underground road. An Ohio engineer has invented an elevated railway built on entirely new ideas. This structure is made of a series of individual posts, firmly set



in the ground and imbedded in cement to make them permanently rigid. These posts are formed of a number of tubular sections united at the joints by collars, the latter made with sockets which receive the supporting braces. Upper and lower tracks are supported by these braces, the whole being further braced and supported by a span mechanism. All of the braces, arms and other parts are made of tubes or pipes. The rails are carried on the outer extremities of the horizontal crossarms, and are arranged in parallel pairs one above the other, so that an upper and a lower rail constitute a track for a car. All the central posts are equipped with lateral arms for one or more lines of cars at each side. It is claimed that by this construction it is possible to build an elevated structure which will stand perfectly rigid and which needs no special provision for expansion or contraction in its frame work and track and has tight joints in all temperatures. Furthermore, it occupies the minimum or surface room possible in

that the officials should be prevented from engaging in other business and from using the company's funds to further their private interests.

All of those propositions are manifestly just and undeniably expedient.—Washington Post.

THE POST CARD NUISANCE.

UNITED STATES Judge at Trenton—let us give his name—Judge William M. Lanning, has charged the United States grand jury to look up the matter of sending "flashy" post cards through the mails.

It is high time that some official took notice of this growing evil. Any Chicagoan who walks State street or other avenues of trade must notice that week by week the mailing cards exposed for sale in shop windows are progressing from mere vulgarity to absolute indecency. Some are of a sort that should promptly bring their seller or the man who sends them through the mails before a criminal court. The matter is one of more than ordinary importance. A society exists for the purpose of stopping the sale of indecent books and pictures. But the purchaser of such articles is usually a degenerate seeking them for the gratification of his own vulgar and depraved taste.

Against the evil of the indecent or vulgar post card there is to-day no defense. The purest-minded maiden, the most refined wife, may at any time have delivered to her by the government of the United States a card carrying an indecent suggestion, or a vulgar innuendo, open to all to read, exposing her to the ridicule of all who see it in passing. The Postoffice Department is now doing something to stop this. Let the censorship be rigid.—Chicago Examiner.

THE DECADENCE OF THE DANCE.

DANCING, it seems, is not what it once was and even the waltz has deteriorated. People romp and call it dancing, to the disgust of those whose memories recall the grace and stately dignity of the movements of former times. "To-day," says "Professor" Bowen at the convention of the American Professors of Dancing, "dancing consists mainly of jumps and jerks. Grace and dignity have vanished from it and the two-step is responsible." It is proposed to abolish the odious two-step and bring back the minuet; but this we fear, is as impracticable as it is to bring back the "grace and dignity" that characterized the manners of serious people 100 years ago. The present age is averse to many things that pleased the fathers and grandfathers. It takes life in a hurry and takes its amusements in a touch-and-go spirit. The drama, the poem, the novel—all are said to be decadent. Like manners, they have been abbreviated. The two-step may be sad enough, but it has the merit of being in accord with present tendencies.—Baltimore Sun.

THE HELLO GIRL.

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CALLS IT A GOOD LIKENESS.

Faithful Employee Not Forgotten at End of a Quarter Century.

Jacob Riis, the sociologist, in an address to a workmen's club, praised generously.

"I see a handful of children here," he said. "May they grow up generous. My none of them grow up into such a man as an old banker whom I know. He is a millionaire, and he lives in a palace, but his heart is as hard as steel and as cold as ice."

"One of his men completed the other day his twenty-fifth year of service. For twenty-five years this honest man had worked for the banker faithfully. He and his chief were both poor at the beginning, but where, in the quarter century, the banker had accumulated millions, the faithful, middle-aged bookkeeper had only saved a few hundreds. His salary, you see, was only \$25 a week."

"He didn't think the banker would remember the twenty-fifth anniversary of his engagement, but the old man did. That morning he handed the bookkeeper a sealed envelope."

"George," he said, "to-day ends the twenty-fifth year of your work for me, and you have worked steadily and well. In this envelope is a memento of the occasion."

"The bookkeeper opened the envelope, trembling and eager. Within lay his employer's photograph. That was all."

"In the face of a disappointment so bitter the poor fellow could say nothing."

"Well," asked the banker, "what do you think of it?"

"It's just like you," said the bookkeeper, simply.—New York Tribune.

Photo Earned It.

"What did you get for your mother-in-law joke?"

"A dollar from the editor and a six weeks' visit from my mother-in-law."—Megendorfer Blaetter.

When a woman entertains with an afternoon card party, it is inelegant to call her function a "card party"; the latest is to say she entertained with a "card night."