

The Wife's Secret, OR A BITTER RECKONING

By CHARLOTTE M. BRAEME

CHAPTER XVIII.—(Continued.)

Jack's feelings at that moment were not enviable. He had always looked upon Lord Summers' commission as a direct proof of his own ability. It was a decided damper to his good opinion of himself to discover that it was due to his patron's interest in Ethel Mallett.

"As you do not seem to have been very glad to hear of the engagement, perhaps you will be better pleased to hear that it is at an end."

"Indeed!"

"Yes; and I think you should know that Miss Mallett took the initiative in breaking it off."

"I am surprised! I thought she was very fond of you. But there is no accounting for women's actions."

And then Lord Summers turned to his other neighbor and threw himself into a discussion upon the drainage of land, thus tacitly dismissing the other subject; but Jack was conscious that he was not held blameless in the matter—nor indeed did he feel so.

One point in the conversation had roused his curiosity—Lord Summers' remark as to the name of "Mallett," being assumed. He would have liked to pursue the subject, but as things were, he had no right to feel curious.

Later in the evening Miss Mallett and her guardians were chatting confidentially, and the subject of the mysterious advertisement was introduced.

"Have you any notion what they could mean?" he asked.

"Not the smallest," she answered. "It is curious Sir Geoffrey never saw them."

"But he may have, without our knowing it."

"True. But don't you think that the motive, whatever it was, must have affected the whole family, and that, if he had been found, we should have been mixed up in it?"

"Possibly, but not necessarily. If I had known where Geoffrey was I should certainly have insisted upon his sifting the matter. Indeed, at one time I thought of investigating it myself; but your uncle was always so touchy about any one's interfering in his affairs that I thought it better to let it alone."

For a moment there was a fixed look of fear on Pauline's face; but Lord Summers was too much taken up with his subject to notice it.

"Good-looking fellow, Dornton," he remarked, carelessly, with a glance at where Jack was carrying on the usual war of words with Bertha Collins.

"Very," Pauline answered, shortly. "Made quite a long stay with you. Been here since the beginning of July, has he not?"

"I forget exactly when he came."

In spite of this apparent indifference, Lord Summers felt satisfied that things were in an unsatisfactory state, and he wished fervently that, in his anxiety to benefit the future husband of his old friend's daughter, he had been prompted to do anything rather than send him down to this particular neighborhood.

Sunday evening was rather a quiet time at Mallingford, and the house was wrapped in darkness earlier than usual. But the lamps in Miss Mallett's boudoir burned on steadily, for Jack and his fiancée were having their last confidential chat before their marriage. The next morning Jack was to leave for London to obtain the special license and see after sundry small matters, and he would not return until late on Tuesday afternoon.

"I suppose we must say good-by to-night, as I shall most likely start before you are down," Jack said.

"Yes—but not just yet! Don't be in a hurry to leave me, Jack," Pauline answered, with a touch of pleading in her voice. She knelt on the thick white rug at his feet, and added, "I would get up to give you a parting salute if I were not afraid that Lord Summers would hear of it."

"My dear, there is no need," Jack said, calmly. "At the same time, I don't understand your dread of Summers. Surely you may do as you choose in so small a matter?"

"I don't think I understand it myself, Jack; yet I feel it. My life is full of dread just now."

CHAPTER XIX.

It was rather annoying to Pelling that just now, when he was anxious to make the most of his chance with Ethel, her father's absence prevented his carrying out his design. He fretted and fumed impatiently over Mr. Mallett's letter—telling of his enforced absence for a week—when he first received it; and then, seeing the uselessness of replying, he set about making plans for relieving Ethel's loneliness.

He wrote her a letter, telling her he regretted now more than ever that he had neither mother nor sisters, not even a stray aunt, as, if he had, he would press them into play propriety, and carry her off a prisoner to spend the week at the Wigwam. Then he made appointments at the publisher's, always taking care to arrive before her, and generally, after putting her into a cab, returning for a last ten minutes' chat with Mr. Bramwell before starting himself.

Then there was usually either a letter—on business, of course—or a novel by the morning post; and later on in the day would arrive a box of lovely loose blossoms or a basket of late grapes and peaches. So Ethel was always being pleasantly reminded that her happiness was the chief object of one person's life, and the knowledge comforted her exceedingly.

Meanwhile Mr. Mallett was having rather a hard time of it. He arrived in Paris on Sunday morning, and the wedding was to take place on the following Wednesday. This gave him but three clear days to get to the obscure Spanish town—of which he did not even know the whereabouts—hunt up the evidence of his niece's death, and telegraph the news in time to stop the ceremony.

After a weary two days' struggle with railway officials and time tables, he reached Madrid on Tuesday in the cool

blush of the early morning, very fagged, but determined to go on. He had made a friend of the guard, glad to find some one who spoke French—for his Spanish was doubtful from long disuse—and on the arrival of the train they went off together to the inquiry office to find out means to reach the obscure town of Villa Silencio.

The station master, half asleep, and wholly angry at being routed out of bed at such an early hour in the morning, at first denied all knowledge of a place of that name; but, when the guard reminded him that such things as reference books of the railway routes were issued for his especial enlightenment, his manner changed, and he proceeded to do his best on Mr. Mallett's behalf.

"It is here, you see," he said in Spanish, putting his fat finger on a spot in the map. "Senor cannot leave Madrid until half past nine; he will then have two hours' railway ride, and then an hour and a half by coach over the very best of roads."

Mr. Mallett looked at his watch. It was a quarter to six; he would have time for three hours' rest. Thanking the friendly guard for his good services, he tossed his small bag and rug on the nearest back-carriage and drove off to a hotel.

At one o'clock Mr. Mallett, feeling as if his sense had been shaken out of him by the last hour over that never-to-be-forgotten road, found himself standing in the market place of Villa Silencio, with the hot midday sun beating down on him, feeling more completely alone and helpless than he ever remembered to have felt before.

"I am afraid I made a mistake in coming myself," he said to the market clock, as he stood in front of it. "You see a man of fifty-seven is not so quick and apt in adapting himself to circumstances as a younger man would be."

For two or three minutes Mallett stood listening to the distant rumbling of the coach wheels, and great as had been his suffering during the drive, he almost wished himself back again on the awful machine, instead of here in this death-like place.

He shook off the dreary feeling of uncertainty that possessed him, and crossed to a deserted looking house on the shady side of the square, where a sign board from which all vestige of paint had long since passed away hung over the door, seeming to denote a house of entertainment.

He pushed open the door and it swung to behind him without noise. He was in a large stone-flagged room which occupied the whole depth of the house, the opposite end opening on to a crazy veranda crumbling under the weight of luxuriant creepers, through which there were glimpses of a weed-grown inclosure beyond. He stamped up and down the stone floor, and shouted until the stones echoed his voice. At the end of ten minutes a sallow face, surrounded by turbulent masses of frizzy black hair, leaned over the hand rail of the stairs that led up to the next floor. In about five minutes the sallow face and frizzy hair reappeared, and the woman began to apologize profusely.

Mr. Mallett stood politely silent, hat in hand, until she seemed to have ended her speech, when he presented the envelope given him by Babette, with the name and address of the photographer of the gravestone.

The talkative lady took it over to the light and spelled it out laboriously, and then turned again to Mr. Mallett, and rattled off another little incoherent speech, interspersed with numberless ejaculations of astonishment. Seeing at last that he did not understand a word of what she was saying, she pointed to the address in her hand, and said slowly in Spanish:

"My father."

Mr. Mallett understood that, for pointing in his turn to the envelope, he asked: "Where?"

She smiled pleasantly, motioned to him to reseat himself, and went upstairs looking once or twice over her shoulder to nod and smile at him reassuringly. Could it be that the man he was in search of was here in this house? He could hear an animated conversation going on somewhere in the rooms above, and he recognized the voice of the woman and the tones of a man.

Presently there came to him an elderly Spaniard, with something of the dandy still clinging to him in the faded waxed mustaches and perfumed hair. Still, the signs of decay that abounded throughout the place showed themselves even here in the ancient fop's frayed jacket and well-worn shoes. To Mr. Mallett's surprise and relief he at once opened the conversation in passable French.

"Monsieur wishes to see me? He has evidently come a long way for that purpose. I am charmed, flattered and abashed all at one time—charmed and flattered to receive any one who comes a distance to pay homage to art."

He put his hand on his heart and bowed with the air of a prince. His belief that Mr. Mallett had come to visit and compliment art in his person was so evidently genuine that the sensitive gentleman felt almost unhappy to have to deceive him; but time was pressing. He had none for the observance of unnecessary politeness. He took the little photograph from his pocketbook and held it toward Castellan.

"I believe you took that picture. Now, I want you to tell me where the grave of which this is a picture is to be found, how you came to take the photograph, whom you took it for, and any other circumstances you can remember in connection with it."

The Spaniard leaned forward with his hands on his knees to look at the photograph, but he did not attempt to touch it. He stared at it earnestly while Mr. Mallett was speaking, and, when he had finished, he looked up with a scared face as he answered:

"I said something was wrong about that affair at the time, and now my

words are coming to pass. I did not like the job, I can assure you; I have an antipathy to graves and coffins and all that reminds one of death, and I would not have taken that picture for untold gold, but that I was enslaved by the beauty of the lady who asked me to do it. Monsieur has not seen such another—tall, shapely, with eyes, hair and skin perfect, and her voice soft and sweet like a silver bell. She coaxed me to do it against my will, and I crept into the village graveyard one morning at 3 o'clock with my camera, before even the busy sisters were out of their cells, and took the picture for her. You may see how imperfect the picture is, how many blemishes it has, and you must not judge of my usual work by it, for my hand shook with fear—" The soul of the artist was ousting the shade of the aristocrat.

"Never mind the blemishes, Senor Castellan," interrupted Mr. Mallett. "The photograph is good enough for my purpose. I want you now to tell me the name of the lady who gave you the order, the name of the convent where the grave is, with directions for getting there."

Castellan's hands went up in dismay. "You cannot get there! It would be sacrilege. No man is permitted to enter the gates but on two days in the week, for a couple of hours at visiting time, you understand, when the holy sisters are all shut in their cells at prayers."

"Still I must get to see that grave before sunset to-night, and I will give two hundred francs to any one who will help me."

"Two hundred francs! It is a large sum here in Villa Silencio. There is a servant woman who does the errands for the convent ladies, with whom I am acquainted, who might be induced—" He paused thoughtfully.

"That is settled then. And now how far is it, and how are we to get there?" Mr. Mallett asked, rising briskly from his chair.

Castellan motioned him back to his seat. "You must leave this to me entirely, monsieur. One ill-considered step might balk your plan, and rob the servant and me of our reward. It must be done during vespers, if at all; and in the meantime I must see this woman and make my plans. It is now two, and if I might advise refreshment and rest before we start on our expedition, monsieur would be more fitted for it."

"One moment," said Mr. Mallett, as Castellan rose to call his daughter to their guest. "Tell me the name of the convent before you go."

"It is called the Convent of the Holy Assumption, and it is but five minutes' walk from here."

"And the name of the lady who ordered that photograph?"

"Ah, that I never knew! My accomplice managed all the business part of the affair, as she will do now, and the lady's name was never mentioned."

Senor Castellan went through the front door into the market place, pausing on the threshold, with his fingers on his lips, to say:

"Until six and a quarter then, au revoir."

(To be continued.)

THE SAVING MOTIVE.

American Young People's Methods of Entertaining Are Saved by It.

The girls are missionaries' daughters. Their parents are Americans, but Helen and Belle were born in Asia, and never visited the land of their fathers and mothers until a year or so ago. They have been attending school, but they have seen a good deal of social life, too, and now that they are preparing to return to the East, their friends have been curious to know what impressions they are taking home.

"I wasn't pleased at first," says Helen, the elder and more sedate. "The first thing I noticed here was the extraordinary habit the young men have of forcing food upon one. It seemed that their idea of entertaining a girl was to buy her something to eat. Any little outing at any time of day was made an excuse for luncheon, and if you consented to lunch, you were expected to eat enough for a full dinner."

"I puzzled over this until I happened to recall the wicked old saying that 'The way to a man's heart is through his stomach,' and then I fancied I understood. 'Nice things to eat are all they think about,' said I to myself, and so they take it for granted that an elaborate meal will please a girl."

"Then Helen turned cynic," Belle interrupted, with a ripple of laughter. "No, not just then," Helen continues. "But I began to notice what manner of entertainment the girls offered their friends, and I found that girls who were popular seemed to encourage young men to talk about themselves. Of course I reasoned backward then, as I had in the other instance. The girls were egotists, I argued, else they would not have ministered to the conceit of persons they wished to please. That did make me cynical."

"Since the young men were gluttonous, and since the girls were egotists, Helen wanted to know what hope there was for the United States!" Belle explains.

"Exactly. I was very gloomy about it for a while. Belle brought me to my senses," Helen adds, with an affectionate glance at her cousin. "She got impatient, I suspect. She asked me one day how it was that these 'greedy' young men were so anxious to spend money for other people, and why these 'vain and conceited' girls were so willing to let their friends' affairs take the conspicuous place."

"I couldn't answer that question—until at last it dawned upon me that I had never been getting below the surface. The underlying truth was that the young man offered you luncheon because he was a generous man; and the girl who encouraged her friends to talk about themselves was showing herself large-minded and unselfish. Possibly some of the talk seemed a little coarse; but the important thing was that the motives were sound and sweet."—Youth's Companion.



Hoe Attachment.
American agricultural implements are known the world over as the best procurable, especially for saving time. This is true both as to the large appliances used on farms and the smaller garden implements. A Texas farmer is the inventor of a hoe attachment applicable to hand weeding or garden hoes of various forms and sizes. The attachment consists of a cutting blade, which is designed to be used in detaching clinging vines and runners from the growing plants. The improved device comprises a weeding blade of the usual form, and connected to the handle by a shank which curves upward. Extending from the shank is a cutting blade, curved away from the handle and shank.

In using the implement the cutting blade is forced forward or away from the operator by a pushing motion, and by its peculiar form and position is very convenient for severing vines, runners, creepers and similar plant life from the stalks of the growing and valuable plants. The implement will also be found very convenient for chopping corn, or thinning cotton and

other plants, and will also be found very useful in working corn and similar crops, upon which vines and creepers are liable to be found, and whose removal is generally attended with much labor and annoyance. The cutting blade being made integral with the shank will not be a cumbersome or objectionable addition to the hoe.

Amateur Mushroom Growing.
The Cornell experiment station has undertaken to tell amateurs how they may grow mushrooms for profit in a small way in old stables, available cellars and similar out-of-the-way places. The fundamental requisite is a dark room of uniform temperature, that is, one that does not go below 55 degrees or above 65 degrees, Fahrenheit. Considerable success was obtained in growing mushrooms in boxes under benches in a greenhouse, and under benches in a basement of the college buildings.

The beds, spawned Nov. 23, and covered with dirt a week later, produced the first of the crop Jan. 1, though the regular pickings did not begin until a week later. The boxes contained about 90 square feet of surface and yielded at the rate of 2 pounds of mushrooms for each square foot.

A word of warning is included not to attempt to grow mushrooms in the cellar of a dwelling, as the odors arising from the compost in the beds is sure to permeate the living apartments, despite the best efforts to prevent it.

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a joint in a convenient place with the cross bar at the bottom. Simply use the arms on which to hang the different parts of the harness. If this arrangement is not easy to put in operation, then use hooks fastened to the ends of stout ropes, but arranging some way so that the ropes may be looped back over a hook or nail during the time they are not in use, so there will be no danger of any one being injured by them. The illustration shows both plans plainly. They are entirely practical and the use of either of them will add greatly to the long life of the harness.—Exchange.

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Bolted Timber.
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Fighting Weeds.
There is nothing which hold to the soil with such pertinacity as weeds. It is probable that the Egyptians are to-day fighting the same weeds which they were trying to exterminate by the aid of the Israelites when they were in bondage. We must always bear this in mind, that we manure and cultivate all the weeds we do not destroy. Eternal vigilance is the price we pay for the extermination of weeds.

Stall and Feed Rack.
When one is financially able to have the stalls which combine all the conveniences they are very desirable, but the average farmer must put up with much less. The ideal stall has a space between feed rack and gutter of eight feet and is five feet wide. A feed rack is arranged so that the animal may get at the hay or roughage easily, yet not waste a great deal of it. At one end of the feed rack is a feed box sufficiently large so that the cow can get her mouth to it without striking her horns. The sides of this stall consist of a fence with three wide boards and runs up four or five feet high, according to the ideas of the owner. At the rear there is stapled to the floor

a piece of 2x4 material to keep the bedding in place and the animal from stepping back into the gutter. The idea of the fencelike sides is to insure ventilation, and if any two animals are inclined to quarrel they can be separated by having an empty stall between or by building up higher the dividing fence. The illustration shows the idea perfectly.

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There is nothing which hold to the soil with such pertinacity as weeds. It is probable that the Egyptians are to-day fighting the same weeds which they were trying to exterminate by the aid of the Israelites when they were in bondage. We must always bear this in mind, that we manure and cultivate all the weeds we do not destroy. Eternal vigilance is the price we pay for the extermination of weeds.

An Ideal Stall.
When one is financially able to have the stalls which combine all the conveniences they are very desirable, but the average farmer must put up with much less. The ideal stall has a space between feed rack and gutter of eight feet and is five feet wide. A feed rack is arranged so that the animal may get at the hay or roughage easily, yet not waste a great deal of it. At one end of the feed rack is a feed box sufficiently large so that the cow can get her mouth to it without striking her horns. The sides of this stall consist of a fence with three wide boards and runs up four or five feet high, according to the ideas of the owner. At the rear there is stapled to the floor

a piece of 2x4 material to keep the bedding in place and the animal from stepping back into the gutter. The idea of the fencelike sides is to insure ventilation, and if any two animals are inclined to quarrel they can be separated by having an empty stall between or by building up higher the dividing fence. The illustration shows the idea perfectly.

Cuts Down the Weeds.
very useful in working corn and similar crops, upon which vines and creepers are liable to be found, and whose removal is generally attended with much labor and annoyance. The cutting blade being made integral with the shank will not be a cumbersome or objectionable addition to the hoe.

Amateur Mushroom Growing.
The Cornell experiment station has undertaken to tell amateurs how they may grow mushrooms for profit in a small way in old stables, available cellars and similar out-of-the-way places. The fundamental requisite is a dark room of uniform temperature, that is, one that does not go below 55 degrees or above 65 degrees, Fahrenheit. Considerable success was obtained in growing mushrooms in boxes under benches in a greenhouse, and under benches in a basement of the college buildings.

The beds, spawned Nov. 23, and covered with dirt a week later, produced the first of the crop Jan. 1, though the regular pickings did not begin until a week later. The boxes contained about 90 square feet of surface and yielded at the rate of 2 pounds of mushrooms for each square foot.

A word of warning is included not to attempt to grow mushrooms in the cellar of a dwelling, as the odors arising from the compost in the beds is sure to permeate the living apartments, despite the best efforts to prevent it.

Protecting the Harness.
Every farmer appreciates that the expense for harnesses and for harness repairs is considerable during the year, hence should be pleased at the suggestion of some plan which will enable him to keep the harness in good condition. A harness should always be hung up. Here is a simple plan. Make three letter T's of strong but light lumber and especially making the cross bar strong. Fasten these to