

The Wife's Secret, OR A BITTER RECKONING

By CHARLOTTE M. BRAEME

CHAPTER XXVI.

The weeks slipped by, and the young spring began to send out its forerunners. It had been a mild winter, and the big horse chestnuts in the Mallington woods sent forth their round pale buds quite a fortnight earlier than usual.

A young fellow named Farrington, the son of a friend of Sir Geoffrey's youth, had been among the Christmas visitors at Mallington, and it was soon apparent that he had fallen desperately in love with sweet-faced Ethel. He was a most estimable young man, with a substantial rent roll, and he went to Sir Geoffrey and asked his consent, feeling quite satisfied as to what would be the result.

Then Sir Geoffrey spoke to Ethel, and was astonished on receiving an emphatic refusal, coupled with the declaration that her heart was not her own to bestow. So, Sir Geoffrey, bearing in mind the girl's happy excitement over Pelling's letter, which contained nothing but accounts of Pelling's industry, talent and success, put two and two together and decided that she was still true to her first love. He was a little disappointed that it should be so; but he had married for love himself, and he was not going to attempt to influence his daughter in the selection of her husband.

So a warm invitation was sent to the roaming artists, and Ethel settled down into a beatific state of anticipation; and one soft spring day toward the end of April they arrived.

Sir Geoffrey actually drove over himself to meet them, and Ethel put on her prettiest hat and accompanied him. She did not go on the platform with her father, but sat there watching the few passengers pass by, one and two through the little station door. She wondered what could be keeping them.

At last her father came out, and with him a handsome sun-burnt, broad-shouldered, bearded giant, whom Ethel regarded with no little surprise. Could this self-possessed, courteous creature be Jack—her Jack, whom she used to chide sometimes for his little mistakes, who had often confessed that he owed what little polish he had to his intercourse with her and her father? She was so astonished at the change in the man and his manners that some of her feeling found its way into her face.

"How changed you are!" she had almost said "improved." "You look as if you had enjoyed your winter very much."

"I have; but I hope to enjoy my spring better."

Something in the words jarred Ethel's nice sense of tact. She glanced quickly at him, blushed again, and changed the subject.

"Where's Captain Pelling, papa?" That gentleman stepped forward from behind the pillar of the portico, where, with a strange longing, he had stood watching the eloquent little pantomime of blushes and glances that had just taken place. The girl looked at him for a moment in even greater surprise than she had at Jack. She grew very pale, then extended both hands quickly.

"I am so glad to see you again," she said, "though I am sorry to see you looking so tired. I don't think traveling agrees with you. You must stay at Mallington, and be nursed until you are quite well."

A dusky red—called up perhaps by the warmth of her greeting—suddenly spread over his face, then left it again as colorless as before.

"I am all right," he returned, smiling at the anxious look in her eyes. "I'm as hard as nails; nothing ever ails me."

"We won't argue the question now," she said, with her usual brightness. "Are all your belongings right? Let us get home, then, and have some luncheon; I am absolutely famished. Come, papa."

The three men took their seats in the roomy barouche, and the talk became general. Ethel, leaning back in her corner, and taking mental note of the trouble and suffering written so unmistakably on Pelling's face, did not notice that she in turn was being watched as closely by some one else, who, by the end of the five-mile drive, had come to the conclusion that he had been deceived to Mallington under false pretenses, and had made up his mind to take the first opportunity of ascertaining the truth from her own lips. But the opportunity did not present itself so readily; as he had hoped, and three days passed without a chance of a tête-à-tête. On the fourth, however, things changed. It was the day of the private view at the Academy. Of course Sir Geoffrey, by the right of his old associations, had the entire; so, equally, of course, had Jack as an exhibitor.

The rooms were, as usual, crowded to excess. Jack and Sir Geoffrey were in front, and Ethel was with Pelling. Jack turned suddenly, with his face aglow and his eyes shining, and said, in a proud whisper:

"And do you really love me still? And may I try to redeem my past folly by loving you more than ever?"

CHAPTER XXVII.

Ethel's answer completely staggered Jack.

"There are two questions, and they require two answers," she replied, in a low steady voice. "I do not love you still—not as I did then. And, in my opinion, nothing could repair your past folly. Weakness and faithlessness are just the two failings I could never excuse in a man. They are so supremely feminine!"

"I have been misled," he said, shortly. "Not by me, directly or indirectly."

"Was it not in deference to your wish that Sir Geoffrey invited me to Mallington?"

"Certainly. But may not a young woman wish to see a young man in whom she takes a very warm friendly interest, without the young man repaying her by an offer of marriage? Come—let us be friends. You are not madly in love with me, you know. It was as much pity for my supposed love-lorn state as anything that led you to make this declaration. Now that you see I am not love-lorn, and you have done your duty by me in giving me the chance you thought I was pining for, there is an end of it."

"I don't understand you one bit."

"Of course not. We women pride ourselves on not being understood. It is the only defense we have, the power of hiding our feelings. Come—let us find papa, and we will forget all about this foolish talk, and be just as comfortable together as we were before."

Jack obeyed rather sulkily. It was a change for him to be treated in this light, off-hand way by Ethel, after he had been taught to believe that it was his bounden duty to rescue her from the sloughs of elated affections. But, though he was really very fond of her, and would doubtless have made her an excellent husband, his pride was more deeply touched than his feelings by her refusal, so there was plenty of room for hope that he would quickly recover from the blow.

Pelling looked at them when they at last met, guessed that something had taken place. He could see their evident hurry, but he could not tell how matters had fared with Jack. He believed them to be favorable. If it should prove so, his task would be finished; he would have reunited Ethel to the only man she could ever care for, and he would drown his own heart griefs in the excitement of foreign travel.

The men lingered longer than usual in the dining room that evening, and Ethel found the time hang heavily on her hands. Presently she heard the footsteps of the three cross the hall in the direction of the billiard room, and she was surprised that they had not asked her to mark for them. She felt nervous and anxious, and was tired of being alone. With this feeling upon her, she decided to get a book and for a time at least forget the thoughts which oppressed her.

She went to the library and wheeled the works of her favorite authors. There was only one lamp in the large room, but there was a fire burning in the grate. She was wearing a ruby-colored velvet dress, buttoned up to the throat with large cut steel buttons that glimmered and sparkled coldly from their warm setting. It was made, in defiance of fashion's stern rule, without frill of puffing and fell gracefully and softly about her shapely figure. When she had reached the top of the library steps, the room door opened and Captain Pelling entered. He began to pace in decided agitation up and down the dimly lighted room. Ethel turning round hastily and seeing who it was, uttered a little exclamation of dismay.

"Miss Ethel! I did not see you. Looking for a book? Aren't you afraid of falling? Come down and let me get it for you." He was at the foot of the steps, his hand outstretched to help her. "I'm not at all afraid, thank you; and I have not decided on a book yet."

"Won't you do without your novel reading to-night and let me tell you a tale instead?"

Her heart went out to him as she detected a quiver of painful anxiety in his voice.

"If it is a nice tale and ends happily," she answered, "I like all tales to end happily. Does yours?"

"It depends on what you consider happiness; what to you may seem happiness may to me be the depth of despair. Will you come down and listen?"

Ethel descended from her perch and took the chair he had set for her, he seating himself opposite.

He had recovered from the first pang of disappointment he began to wonder what her refusal meant, and a sudden mad thought came into his head. It was a wild, improbable, unreasonable thought. There were no grounds for it—in fact, all things seemed to point in an opposite direction. Still the thought was in his mind. Shall I tell you what that thought was? He paused for a moment at the point, and then, moving nearer to her, went on, "He thought that, perhaps, in the great tenderness of her heart, this woman had at first pitied him for a certain unhappiness that clouded his life for a time, that possibly she had overrated his efforts on her behalf, and that, between her feelings and pity and gratitude, she was carried a little out of herself and imagined she ought, as a matter of duty, you know, to marry the man she did not really love. Then he said, 'This must not be; I will go and set her mind at rest, and tell her not to worry about me. I shall be all right by and by, and learn in time to be contented without her.'"

"And did he go?"

"Yes, he went."

"And what did the woman say?"

"Ah, that is more than I can tell at present. I have come to ask you to finish the story for me."

"I see," with a smile. "This is how I should finish it. The humble-minded man, who did not think it possible that he could be loved for himself alone, went to the woman and told her he should learn to be contented without her in time, out of her hands, saying, 'But I can never learn to be contented without you, Alec, for I love you very, very dearly.'"

A faint little whisper that sounded like "My own, own love!" floated through the room, and Captain Pelling and Ethel Malling were locked in a close embrace.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"It is very dreadful to have to say it; but I think I began to love you just when it was wrong to do so—on the day you came to tell me you had discovered your wife was living. Then came that unhappy time, and the letters written in Jack's behalf really helped yourself. At last, when I saw you so ill and sorrowful looking, my heart went out to you."

"This will be an awful blow to Jack!"

"Never mind Jack now. Your kindness has made him think himself a paragon. I think it will do him good to find out that he is not so irresistible as he fancied himself."

Presently, after some conversation, Ethel said:

"Papa will wonder what has become of us. We had better go and tell him everything. He will be so pleased."

"Do you think so?" Pelling asked, doubtfully; and Ethel throwing her arms about his neck answered him with kisses.

Of course Sir Geoffrey was delighted. As a man, he thought highly of Captain Pelling. Besides, he had undoubted advantages of birth and position, and would make an excellent master of the household when the present possessor should have gone to rest.

Jack was inclined to be displeased at first; but it was characteristic of the facile nature of the man that he consented to be reconciled, and stayed on right into the summer, making Mallington his headquarters during his trips into the surrounding country to touch up from nature Lord Summers' six pictures. And, as the days lengthened to their longest, Pelling gradually recovered much of his old brightness. Ethel was devoted to him.

Sometimes people, looking at her radiant young beauty and his grave maturity, wondered at the girl's unceasing devotion and admiration. One day some one ventured to say something of the kind to her. Her eyes flashed a little, as she answered:

"You don't know him as he really is—if you did, you would not be surprised."

Alec took her to Paris on their wedding trip, and amid the gayeties of the city they did not forget one day to pay a visit to Pauline's grave. Ethel placed a large wreath of immortelles on the resting place of her unfortunate cousin and turned away with a lump rising in her throat. Husband and wife were both very silent on the way back to their hotel.

They received one visitor before they passed on toward Italy—it was Babette, now Mme. Couronne, of the Boulevard des Italiens. She had invested her five thousand pounds judiciously, and was already becoming rather celebrated as one of the leading modistes of the city. She wished one piece of news to be conveyed to Sir Geoffrey. Messrs. Daws & Haven had made "a flash in the pan" with their two thousand five hundred pounds; they had speculated through a man who was "hammered" the very next settling day, and so lost every penny, and were in a worse plight than ever.

THE JUMEL MANSION.

ONCE THE SCENE OF REVELRY AND MERRYMAKING.

Where Scores of Celebrities Were Entertained, Dined and Wined by One of the Most Fascinating Beauties of Her Time.

To the people who believe with Shakespeare that "all the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players" there is nothing of greater fascination than an old house. Here have been enacted the most charming comedies and the most pitiful tragedies, and oftentimes, as in the case of real actors, breaking hearts have been covered by smiles and mirth while bright, laughing eyes have ached with unshed tears.

One of the most interesting of the many historical mansions in this country is the brave old Jumel house which stands on Washington Heights, in New York, and is known as one of the few remaining vestiges of the old-time architectural splendor of that city. It stands well back from the street and commands a lofty and extensive view, its sole barricade now from an inquisitive public being a high, luxurious box-hedge. The mansion was built in 1758, as a wedding present for Mary Phillips, of Phillipsburg Manor, Yonkers, who became the wife of Colonel Roger Morris. This lady was Washington's first sweetheart and when the Continental forces confiscated the mansion from Mary Phillips' Tory husband a feeling of sentiment stirred the mighty American's heart and he took the house as his headquarters, to prevent its destruction.

When M. Stephen Jumel, a dashing Frenchman, who kept a sailors' findings store on South street and fitted



FAMOUS JUMEL MANSION.

out privateers for the war in Jamaica and San Domingo, married the adventurous Betty Bowen, he bought and fitted up the mansion with a magnificent expenditure, calculated to make the eyes of the plain old Dutch burghers start from their heads. Mistress Betty had lived, to put it mildly, before she met and married the young merchant prince. As Betty Bowen, the rustic beauty had broken the heart and stamped on the pride of many an impressive Massachusetts beau.

To her was born a child which so closely resembled George Washington that for many years was supposed to be his son. In reality, Major Reuben Ballou was the father of Betty Bowen's child. When the baby was 5 weeks old the future haughty Mme. Jumel ran away and left him. She came back several times afterward to claim her little one, but Fredove Ballou, wife of the major, although well aware of the paternity of the child, kept it and would not let the mother so much as see it.

Betty was gloriously lovely, with all the capricious, puzzling waywardness of a little child—a fascinating riddle who charmed Stephen Jumel and for years after they were wed kept him wondering what she would do next. To make his wife happy the wealthy Frenchman imported hangings, furniture and wonderful plate from France. The Jumels entertained lavishly and the household affairs were conducted on a great scale. Once, upon returning from a European trip, the madam brought with her quantities of Napoleonic relics—the dispatch box of the little corporal, the trunk he carried on his campaigns, Josephine's jewels and embroideries and bric-a-brac which had been the property of Marie Antoinette.

Many of these valuable souvenirs are today in the drawing room of Mrs. Julius Caryl, of Washington Heights, the grand-niece of Mme. Jumel. There is in this same room a full-length life-size portrait of Mme. Betty, which was painted in France in the hey-day of her charms. She sits in a great carved chair, dressed in a robe of embossed blue velvet. There are showers of costly lace about the shoulders, and lappets of lace fall from the chestnut hair, carefully bandied and curled in the fashion of those days. The face of Mme. Betty is full of fire and fascination. The eyes are lustrous and of sapphire hue, the expression one of winsome pride and complacent disdain.

The Jumel mansion is packed with history, romance and thrilling mystery. There are dark and blood-curdling secret passages and cupboards and of course there is a ghost chamber and a ghost who walks and walls in the most approved fashion.

In the great banquetting hall every nook and corner tells a tale. In this sumptuous room stood the table which madam never permitted to be disturbed after one of those famous midnight New Year's feasts. After the eating and drinking, the songs and songs and banter were done the table swept with its empty bottles and crumpled flowers just as it was left when the last gay reveler with a toast

to the fair hostess on his lips reeled from its side. The doors were closed until the dawning of the next New Year's feast when the debris was removed and the table freshly spread. Near the narrow door stood a huge carved buffet. It is said that when Jerome Bonaparte, that interesting royal lover and husband of Elizabeth Patterson, dined with Mme. Betty they came arm in arm to this corner and paused. The gallant brother of the mighty Napoleon bowed and motioned madam to lead the way. That lady, ever mindful of what was fit and proper, would not take precedence of a prince and so both, handsome Frenchman and blushing American, stood bowing and curtsying over and over. It is not known how the matter was settled, but next day Mme. Betty ordered a second and larger door cut through the passageway to avoid further like embarrassing situations.

From the cavernous fireplace in the banquet chamber starts a secret passage large enough to hide a grown person. It leads up over a china cupboard and penetrates the ghost chamber overhead, the room in which madam died and in which now on certain nights, it is said, her ghost walks.

In this wonderful old house may be seen the secret passage running parallel to the upper hall, through which when the American forces retreated to Kingsbridge the last man rushed within arm's reach of the British soldiers in the hall, and, climbing out upon the balcony, dropped over the railing and made good his escape.

During the lifetime of Mme. Jumel Prince de Joinville slept in this house, his hostess not knowing him until the next morning as other than a night-ovetaken hunter. Then the maid, who had served the prince with as much courtesy as she could have shown had she known his rank, gave the prince's card to her mistress.

At the age of 60, widowed, but still remarkably lovely, Mme. Jumel married Aaron Burr, then a ruined old man of 78. In the great hall in the mansion is pointed out the exact spot where the fiery Betty caught her aged spouse kissing a pretty maid and, boxing his ears soundly, turned him out of doors.

The Jumel house is now the property of the Daughters of the American Revolution. It is conducted as a free historical museum.

Wandering through the old rooms the visitor sees in imagination the forms of departed heroes and beautiful women, smells the faint odor of June roses and, listening, hears sweet, low laughter, the clank of sword and the whisper of silk.

OLD FLAME OF HOSTESS.

But He Didn't Know It Until a Bad Break Brought It Out.

The sect of the Schwenkfelders, at their annual reunion in Allentown, Pa., were eating their famous feast of bread and apple butter, says the Washington Post. The long table was covered with great plates of fine white bread, great dishes of golden butter, and great bowls of rich brown apple butter.

"No, you are mistaken," said the Rev. A. R. Schorman, of Pandora, O., to a reporter, "if you think this is our idea of a fine banquet. This meal celebrates a historical event—the landing of the Schwenkfelders, and their first meal in the new world. It was a meal composed only of bread and apple butter, for the good reason that there was nothing else to have just then."

Mr. Schorman, as he helped himself to the excellent apple butter, smiled.

"When you accuse us Schwenkfelders of regarding this as a great banquet," he said, "you mistake us and humiliate us. You are like the stranger who visited the home of his boyhood friend. He and his boyhood friend had not seen one another for more than thirty years. Then they met by accident in New York, and the resident took the stranger home to dinner. In the host's handsome house, as they sat in the parlor, the guest said:

"So you are married, John?"

"Dear, dear, yes," John answered. "I am married and have three children. They will be down to welcome you in a few minutes."

"Well, well," said the guest. "It seems strange to think of you as a father." And he sighed.

"By the way," the host began, "didn't you live in Cambridge after you left Chicago?"

"Oh, yes," said the guest. "I lived there for some years."

"Then perhaps you met Miss McWade?"

"The guest gave a loud laugh.

A Little Lesson In Patriotism

Francis Lewis, signer of the Declaration of Independence, was born in Llandaff, Wales, and educated in the city of London.

On coming of age he at once embarked to the American colonies, establishing himself in a commercial business in New York.

At the time when the colonies were in a state of unrest and war seemed the inevitable solution of the difficulties and wrongs of the colonists, Lewis, although aware of the fact that war was certain to wreck his business and to endanger his personal interests, at once threw his lot with that of the revolutionists. He aided their deliberations with his good business judgment. He freely distributed his money to aid their cause. His own house at Whitestone, Long Island, was burned by the British and his wife imprisoned in the city.

Lewis was one of the first to join the Sons of Liberty. He was a member of the New York committee in the first Continental Congress and served on several advisory bodies. He was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

He was commissioner of the board of admiralty, and held several important and honorary offices under the new government. He was a man whose opinion was held in such value by his townsmen that to his influence and example was due the loyalty of many a citizen of New York.

THE STORY OF SANTO DOMINGO.

Area, 18,045 square miles. Population, 500,000; language, Spanish. Population, mixed race of white, Indian and African blood. Slavery introduced in 1502; abolished in 1822.

Chief cities, Santo Domingo, capital; population, 20,000; Puerto Plata, 6,000; La Vega, 6,000; Santiago, 8,000; Samana, 1,500.

Term of President and Vice President (according to the constitution), four years.

Congress, a single house of twenty-four members. State religion, Roman Catholic. Municipal schools, 30; pupils, 8,000; newspapers, 8.

Debt, \$32,000,000 gold; annual revenues, about \$2,000,000. Products, sugar, rum, cacao, tobacco, coffee, tropical fruits, fine woods.

1492—Island discovered by Columbus. 1496—Santo Domingo city founded. 1765—Spain transferred island to French.

1801—French driven out by Toussaint L'Ouverture. 1802—French reoccupied island.

1809—French driven out by English and entire island of Santo Domingo given to Spain. 1822—Haiti succeeded and the two island governments united under President Boyer of Hayti.

1844—Santo Domingo republic separated from Hayti. 1861—Santo Domingo republic ceded by President Santana to Spain.

1865—Spaniards driven out. 1870—Treaty of cession to the United States rejected by the American Senate. 1890—Gen. Ulises Heureaux elected President.

1890—Heureaux assassinated by Ramon Caceres. 1899 to 1905—Presidents Figueroa, Jimenes, Vasquez, Wos y Gil and Morales.

He Waxed Afraid to Try. C. W. Raymond, Chief Justice of the United States Court of Appeals of Indian Territory, was a factory hand at Onarga, Ill., at 90 cents a day, twenty-five years ago. He resolved to become a lawyer, and made application to Henry A. Butzow, the county clerk of his county, for employment. The clerk wrote him that at that time he did not need any further assistance, but that the future might bring a demand for additional help. He closed his letter as follows: "Our work is adding, adding, adding, all day long. Did you ever try it?"

Young Raymond was equal to the occasion, and answered the clerk on a postal card, as follows: "No, I have never tried adding, adding, adding, all day long, but I can try, try, try, and I won't fail."—Success Magazine.

Not a Born Forger. The indorsement of checks is a very simple thing, but, as the following story will show, it, too, has its difficulties:

A woman went into a bank where she had several times presented checks drawn to Mrs. Lucy B. Smith. This time the check was made to the order of Mrs. M. J. Smith—M. J. were her husband's initials. She explained this to the paying teller, and asked what she should do.

"Oh, that is all right," he said. "Just indorse it as it is written there." She took the check, and after much hesitation, said, "I don't think I can make an M like that."

Airy Fiction. "He has wonderful imagination," said Miss Cayenne.

"No. He tells what he is going to do with the money he wins at the races."—Washington Star.