

The Wife's Secret, OR A BITTER RECKONING

By CHARLOTTE M. BRAEME

CHAPTER I.

I know how silly it is of me to fret over this separation of a few weeks, Jack, but I'm suffering from that most feminine of all feminine ailments—a presentiment. I have a horrible dread that you will not come back to me just the same as you leave me."

Jack Dornton knew this was all very foolish. He loved pretty Ethel Mallett very dearly; so, instead of putting his thought into words, he kissed the tearful face and lovingly comforted her with vows of eternal constancy.

"You know I needn't stay down there until the pictures are finished," he said. "As soon as I have the sketches well forward, I shall come back and complete the larger pictures from them at home; and, though I shall be working very hard, that will not prevent you from coming every day to watch my progress and cheer me up for an hour or so in the afternoon."

Ethel smiled—it was rather a pitiful attempt—and turned resolutely to the breakfast table.

"It was good of you to think of coming to breakfast with us, so that we might see the last of you before starting," she said bravely, as she busied herself with the coffee cups. Mr. Mallett came down a few moments later, and breakfast was got through with due decorum, in deference to "papa's dislike to emotion."

Shortly after the meal Jack was tramping away—his portmanteau in one hand and a portable easel in the other. He had been engaged to Ethel Mallett for two months, and they were to be married as soon as he could provide a suitable home for her. A fortnight after he had obtained the reluctant consent of Mr. Mallett to this arrangement, a certain Lord Summers, attracted by two water colors of Jack's in a fashionable gallery, had found him out and offered him a liberal commission to execute a series of six pictures, the subjects to be selected from the immediate neighborhood of his lordship's place in Exbridgeshire. Jack had jumped at the offer, seeing that it would enable him to place little Ethel in a home of her own two months sooner than he anticipated.

So here he was, after a two hours' run, hard at work in the woods of Mallingford, skillfully and rapidly filling in the leading features of Mallingford House and its surroundings. While his fingers were thus busy, he was recalling the conversation he had had with Lord Summers upon the place of his first subject.

"Would you wish me to begin with Summerfield?" Jack had asked, when taking his final instructions from his Lordship.

"No; I should like to be at Summerfield myself when you are there. I think you had better make Mallingford House your first subject. It is about ten miles from Summerfield, and you can work your way toward there. I shall be down by the last week of July, and hope to have the pleasure of showing you some hospitality."

Jack bowed his thanks.

"You will be delighted with Mallingford," his lordship went on. "It is a noble place, and I have a rather peculiar interest in the property. The late owner, Sir Paul Malling, was a most eccentric man, with a very exalted notion of his own importance as head of the house. He had never married, and was mortally offended with his brother Geoffrey because he took unto himself a wife at the age of thirty-eight without first consulting him. Poor Paul! He was a great friend of mine; but I'm bound to confess that he was of a most forgiving disposition. Would you believe it, Mr. Dornton? He was so unjust as to disinherited Geoffrey and leave the whole of his property to his only sister's only child, Pauline Luffon. This will confirmed his reputation for eccentricity, for he made even her inheritance conditional; first, upon her taking the name of Malling, and, secondly, upon her not marrying under the age of twenty-five without her guardian's approval and consent. A very awkward thing for the guardian. I am that not-to-be-envied person. So, you see, should the young lady in question happen to fall in love with some poor beggar of a fellow, I could not consistently give my consent, and she would have to give up either her love or her position as owner of Mallingford, one of the finest seats in the county."

"In which case?" Jack said, interrogatively.

"In which case the disinherited brother would have his own. But I am glad to say that my charming ward will be twenty-five in September and will then be in a position to please herself in her choice of a husband—for which I am devoutly thankful, as it relieves me of a serious responsibility."

"I can quite understand that."

"I was in hopes at first that I should not be called upon to exercise my guardianship at all. When Sir Paul died, Pauline was away with her father in Italy. He was a sad reprobate, and spent his time chiefly in gambling houses, leaving his thieftous girl among all kinds of people. Well, as fate willed, this Luffon died just a month before Sir Paul, and, though we made every effort to find his daughter, we could obtain no tidings of her. We traced the father and daughter to Naples, where the former died; but after that we could hear nothing of her. We sent out agents, we advertised, we did everything we could. At last, after five months of fruitless inquiry, and just as we were losing heart, and wondering whether we should not begin to hunt up poor Geoffrey, she appeared suddenly at my solicitors' offices. She looked wretchedly ill, said she had been working her heart out as a teacher of English at a Spanish school, and had only recently seen one of our advertisements. She was nineteen then—and that is nearly six years ago."

And now, as Jack Dornton stood in the shady wood, with the noisid sun making little patches of white here and there

wherever it could pierce the thick foliage above, and with a buzzing of insects in his ears, he was weaving all sorts of romantic fancies concerning the owner of all the beauty surrounding him.

CHAPTER II.

From behind the bole of a large tree Jack Dornton was being narrowly scanned by a young lady, who seemed well pleased with the inspection. She watched him at work for some minutes with a decided look of admiration in her eyes. She turned from her survey presently, and stooping down, crept away slowly among the brushwood, making a detour with the evident intention of reaching the spot again.

In the meantime Jack, stretching himself after his spell of work, noticed a small natural mound covered with soft velvety grass. The more he looked the stronger became the temptation to take ten minutes' rest. He yielded at last, and found the mound an excellent pillow.

Before he had enjoyed two of the allotted ten minutes' rest, his open pocket, containing a portrait of Ethel, dropped from his hand, and a myriad of gnats buzzed and whizzed in happy freedom round his head. Jack Dornton was fast asleep.

At that moment a woman came gliding by in full view of the easel. She was a woman of surpassing loveliness, tall, stately, with mass of golden plaits coiled round and round her head, full melting brown eyes and ripe red lips, a skin rivaling the peach in its delicate coloring, and a carriage queenly in its every movement. Her dainty capricious gown, cunningly made to "more express than hide her form," trained carelessly among the ivy roots and brambles behind her. Her simple straw hat she carried in her hand, and her whole air suggested the pretty "maiden meditation fancy free."

She gave a well-feigned start when she had come well in view of Jack's easel. It was not pleasant to watch the swift change that came over the beautiful face as she marked the vacant seat and thought herself alone. It revealed unmistakably the defects of her character as indicated in the cruel little curves at the corners of the mouth, which were generally concealed beneath the pretty confiding smile that from long practice had become habitual with her.

Advancing cautiously, she glanced around, and soon discovered Jack's whereabouts. She went quickly to the easel, and critically examined the morning's work. Turning aside, she remarked to herself, "With such decided talent and such an appearance, he would be sure to succeed if he were properly taken up." She then walked on tip toe to Jack, and scrutinized him quite as critically as she had scrutinized his work, and evidently with as much approval. Then her quick eye detected the open pocket by his side.

She looked carefully at the sleeper and having assured herself of the soundness of his slumbers, went down upon her knees by his side, the better to examine the portrait.

She started visibly when her eyes fell upon the sweet face smiling at her from the tiny trinket. She rose quickly and walked away a few yards.

"So she is this landscape painter's 'village maiden'!" she muttered vindictively. "Surely there is some fatality in his coming here! I can't be mistaken. It is the same insipid babyishly pretty face that Lord Summers pointed out to me in the park the other day. And she loves this Apollo, does she? And perhaps he thinks he loves her. Well, we shall see what we shall see!"

There was a significant glitter in her fine eyes, and an instantaneous tightening of the red lips seemed to tell of a hard, cruel heart beneath the fair exterior. But the expression of her face changed as if by magic when Jack rolled over on to his side and showed signs of waking. She had posed gracefully before the easel, and awaited him.

"I believe I've been asleep," he murmured drowsily, raising himself on one elbow, when his eyes fell upon the dazzling loveliness of the girl so earnestly regarding his picture; and in the first glimpse of Pauline Malling, Jack's senses and artistic perceptions were alike roused, and, springing to his feet he went toward the easel.

"I beg your pardon for the liberty I have taken in examining your picture," murmured the woodland nymph melodiously. "I hope I did not disturb you. May I be allowed to continue my inspection?"

Jack, hardly awake even yet, muttered something about "too much honor."

"You are Mr. Dornton, are you not?" she continued, still looking at the picture, and giving Jack time to pull himself together. "Lord Summers told me he was going to ask you to make a picture of my house."

It was Miss Malling then, and no woodland nymph, after all. Jack felt disappointed, though he could not tell why. "I suppose you will remain here for some days. May I offer you a little hospitality during your stay? The village inns are, I believe, wretchedly uncomfortable, and I should not like a friend of my guardian's to be driven to their shelter while I am at home. We are two lonely women just now, and but dull company. I fear; but we will do our best to make you comfortable for this week at least. Next week I am off again until the end of the season, and shall have to leave you to the mercies of the servants. Say you will come."

"Thank you very much," Jack began hesitatingly; "but I did not anticipate—in fact, I made no preparation—"

"Is that the only difficulty?" she interrupted gently. "Pray don't let that stand in the way. Mrs. Sefton and I will shut our eyes to the enormity of a morning coat at dinner, and will promise to think no less of you on that account. We dine at half past seven, so that we may have an hour or two of those lovely summer evenings in the gardens."

Jack raised his soft felt hat, and watched her graceful figure as she glided away down the dim leafy vista of the wood. He wished that she had stayed longer, that he might still be looking into her glorious eyes, watching the ever changing lights that came and went as rapidly as scudding clouds across a summer sky. When at last a curve in the path hid her from view he turned again to his work with a heavy sigh, wishing it was already half past seven.

CHAPTER III.

"Now you are to consider yourself quite at home, Mr. Dornton," Miss Malling said, as she rose from the table. "Stay and meditate here in solitude, or come out on the terrace, as suits your inclination."

The moon came out by and by, throwing from behind a curtain of tender gray clouds a soft, silvery, shimmering light over the landscape.

After Mrs. Sefton had gone indoors, Pauline led the conversation in a manner that quite entranced her companion. The witchery of the evening, the beauty of the woman, and the spell of her fascinations wrought upon Jack's impressionable nature, and his dreams that night were of lovely women with golden hair and liquid brown eyes.

A week later, Jack Dornton stood at the breakfast room window, apparently absorbed in the calm, radiant beauty of the scene before him; yet his breast was torn with conflicting passions.

Pauline Malling was returning to town by the midday train, and the pain that her proposed departure had caused him had also opened his eyes to the hateful truth that he had been unfaithful to his little Ethel's memory.

"What a blind fool I have been," he told himself, wrathfully. "To stay here day after day, and not see my own danger! Miss Malling has been very kind and gentle; but I dare say she looks upon me as belonging to a very inferior class to her own; and I, to show my gratitude, must return her womanly kindness by presuming to fall in love with her! Apart from my supreme conceit with regard to Miss Malling, I have behaved shamefully to Ethel." He went on; and a flush of self-condemnation crept over his handsome face. "I've been away from her a whole week, and only one short note have I sent her."

He seated himself at the writing table in the window and seized a pen. He nibbled the penholder, as if in expectation of receiving inspiration from the act. Before he had quite made up his mind as to the wording of his overdue love letter he heard a rustle at the door, and Miss Malling entered in her elegant traveling costume.

"How I shall miss your pleasant little morning chats, Mr. Dornton"—with a gentle sigh—"our happy sketching expeditions, and our delightful evenings!"

"You cannot miss them as I shall," Jack returned.

"You think not?" raising her eyes slowly to his and dropping her voice mournfully. "That shows how little you know and appreciate your gain in possessing the hearty love and esteem of a few true friends, instead of the monotonous adulation of a horde of mere fashionable acquaintances. You cannot understand, because you have never experienced it, how the emptiness of our lives sometimes palls upon us butterflies, and what we would give at such times to have a real object in life; how we long for the affection of one disinterested creature."

Here Jack would have precipitated himself boldly into the yawning chasm she had so conveniently opened for him, but for the entrance of Mrs. Sefton, who proceeded to dispense the comforts of the breakfast table in her own inimitable manner. The carriage was at the door before the meal was properly over.

"Good-by, Mr. Dornton," said Pauline, as she stood with one dainty foot upon the step. "I shall hope to find you here when I return; and I fear," she continued, again lowering her voice dangerously. "I shall not be able to endure much of London's vapour society after the intellectual intercourse we have enjoyed lately. I shall be back in a fortnight. You will not forget me in that time?"

(To be continued.)

Fickleness of Woman.

Gray—Hello, Smith, old boy! And so you are married, eh?

Smith—That's what the parson told me.

Gray—And, of course, you are happy?

Smith—Well, I don't know about that. To tell the plain, unvarnished truth, I'm just a little bit disappointed.

Gray—I'm sorry to hear that. What's the trouble?

Smith—Well, you see, during the courtship stunt she used to tell me how strenuously she loved me, but we had no sooner got spliced than she gave up her \$10 a week job as typewriter thumper. That goes to show how much you can bank on a woman's love.

What He Was Afraid of.

Rounder—Is it true that you are engaged to that young widow?

Gayboy—Not at the present writing. We were engaged, but I broke it off.

Rounder—Aren't you afraid she will take it to heart?

Gayboy—No, but I'm afraid she will take it to court.

Told in Confidence.

The Caller—The man who wrote that poem you printed yesterday didn't know what he was writing about.

The Editor—Of course not. Otherwise it wouldn't have been poetry.

Putting Him Wise.

Her Father—What are you and young Shortleigh going to live on in case you marry?

His Daughter—Well, if you must know, papa, go look in the mirror.

Strenuous Hint.

Husband—Let me see, how long has it been since Uncle John was here?

Wife—Oh, it must be several years. He was here the week after I got my last new bonnet.—Detroit Tribune.

Quite Likely.

Little Willie—Say, pa, what does this paper mean by "ties of blood?"

Pa—Must be a new shade of red neckties, my son.



New Apron for Milking.

The average man on the farm does all sorts of work, hence his clothing is generally full of odors which, as they would be absorbed by the milk, makes it desirable that he be dressed especially for the work while milking. A new idea for a milking apron is here given with exact dimensions for the man of average build. This apron is fifty-two inches down the center of the front; one-half of top in front, seven



APRON FOR MILKING.

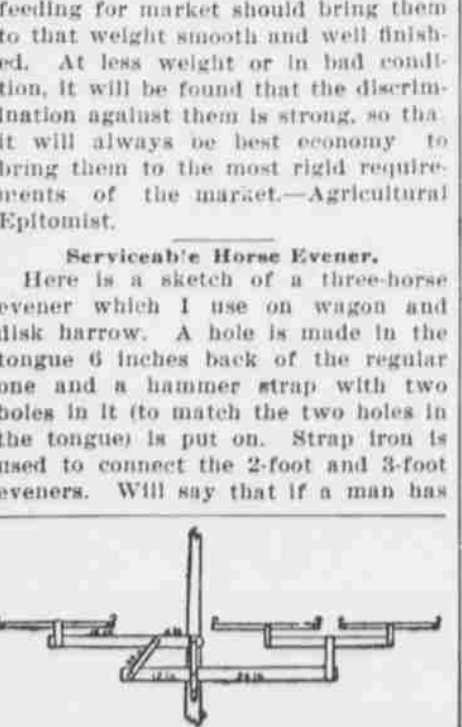
inches; one-half of hip measure, twenty-five inches; length of extension at back, thirteen inches; suspender, thirty inches. Leg at lower edge 14 inches wide. To make the apron cut it from blue denim or heavy unbleached muslin, with center of front on fold of goods and piece out the extra width on sides. Silt the center of front to within twelve inches of the waistline, being careful not to get this slit too high or it will not protect the front of the trousers. Bind the edges neatly all around with cotton braid or a bias strip of the goods. Make two straps to hold the apron snugly around the trousers leg, making the straps of ample size to slip over the foot and leg or else arrange so that it can be buttoned at one side. Button the back edges to hold apron around hips and fasten suspenders at front and back. For a large man two full lengths of goods, each one and one-half yards long by thirty-six inches wide will be required. In the illustration the side view shows exactly one-half of the apron and from the illustration any housewife can cut and make this apron.—Indianapolis News.

Feeding Hogs.

A hog fed at fair profit until it reaches 200 pounds will give less profit with each additional pound, and a point can be reached at which further feeding can be done only at a loss. A reliable authority says that a certain amount of food being required to make a gain on a hog of 70 pounds to make the same gain, 14 per cent more with one of 125 pounds, 22 per cent more on hogs of 225 pounds, and 70 per cent more on those weighing 325 pounds. The tests upon which these figures are based were not official, but it is a well-known fact that with increase of age more feed is required to effect a gain than at earlier age. But the light weights, those under 200 pounds, cannot be so well handled at packeries, and hence those who are feeding for market should bring them to that weight smooth and well finished. At less weight or in bad condition, it will be found that the discrimination against them is strong, so that it will always be best economy to bring them to the most rigid requirements of the market.—Agricultural Epitomist.

Serviceable Horse Evener.

Here is a sketch of a three-horse evener which I use on wagon and disk harrow. A hole is made in the tongue 6 inches back of the regular one and a hammer strap with two holes in it (to match the two holes in the tongue) is put on. Strap iron is used to connect the 2-foot and 3-foot eveners. Will say that if a man has



THREE-HORSE EVENER.

four horses it is best to use them all on the disk harrow.—F. Ames, in Farm Progress.

Fitting the Collar.

The horse collar is made over a form while wet and suits the taste of the maker. Then why not make the collar fit the form of the neck that is to wear it? To do this, select a collar that will fit as nearly as possible the horse it is intended for. On an evening thoroughly wet cloths enough to wrap it up, leaving the collar in that condition all night. It need not be a new one, an old one may be treated the same way. In the morning, and while wet and soft, put the collar on the horse, adjust it properly; also the hames and hame tugs, and work the horse moderately during the day, when the collar will dry and adjust exactly to the form of the neck of the horse whose collar it must be right along. If by getting fatter

or leaner the shape of the neck is changed, a reshaping of the collar is advisable, which can be done as in the first place.

Treating Winter Wheat for Seed.

In each of six years, experiments have been conducted at the Ontario Experiment farms in treating winter wheat in different ways to kill the stinking smut, and the results have been very satisfactory. Untreated seed produced an average of 3.6 per cent of smut in the crop of last year and 9.3 per cent of smut in the crop of this season. Seed wheat which was immersed for twenty minutes in a solution made by adding one pint of formaldehyde (formalin) to forty-two gallons of water produced an average yield of grain per acre of fifty bushels in 1904 and 50.8 bushels in 1905, and that which was untreated produced only 46.6 bushels, and forty-three bushels per acre for the corresponding two years, thus making an average saving of nearly six bushels per acre. The treatment here mentioned was easily performed, comparatively cheap, effective in killing the smut spores, and instrumental in furnishing the largest average yield of wheat per acre of all the treatments used.

Cleaning Up for Winter.

Gather the crops clean. Such as are gathered for sale can be properly stored away and then go over the field again, gathering up the odds and ends which often make more than one wagon load and representing several good feeds for some of the stock. If one can turn swine or sheep into the field to clean up it can generally be done with profit. Any plants with tops like asparagus may be mowed and thousands of weeds thus destroyed if the tops are burned. Then the fields are in better condition for the manure when it is time to supply it. The weakening meadow may be braced up by the top dressing of manure put on late, the corners can be cleaned out, the tools be taken under cover and cleaned, preparatory to being painted later on. Breaks in fences and leaks in roofs can be repaired. There are plenty of things to look after and the doing of them means money saved or earned in every case. Try it.

Trough for Fowls.

Almost anyone who has tried feeding cornmeal to chickens has had difficulty in doing it satisfactorily. The latest idea seems to be to feed it dry. The trough shown herewith is designed for feeding dry meals, either



FOR FEEDING DRY MEAL.

indoors or out, and for chickens as well as hens. The flat edge pieces, shown clearly in the cross-section prevent the meal from being thrown out of the trough, while the roof prevents rain wetting the meal or fowls getting into the trough.

Pruning Raspberries.

After the fruiting season is over is a good time to cut out the old wood and leave nothing but this year's growth of canes. The canes that bear fruit this year will not bear fruit another year, consequently they should be removed, and the sooner this is done after the fruit has been picked the better. If they are cut out at that time, the plant food taken up by the roots, all goes into the young wood, thereby inducing more vigorous growth. This method is not to be recommended, however, for sections where there is much danger of winter-killing.

Straining the Milk.

Milk should always be strained and cooled by dipping, stirring and surrounding by cold water, immediately after milking. It should always be aired where the air is pure, at least fifty feet or more if possible from any swill barrel, hogpen, hog yard, feed trough, barnyard, milking yard or dusty road. Two or three thicknesses of cheesecloth make a good strainer. Cloth strainers should always be thoroughly washed, then boiled and hung in a pure atmosphere to dry.

Home-Grown Ration.

In a test made at the New Jersey station a home-grown ration made up of thirty-six pounds of cowpea silage and ten pounds of crimson clover hay, with six pounds of corn and cob meal, costing 16.57 cents per cow per day, produced as much milk and butter as a ration in which two-thirds of the protein was supplied by dried brewers' grains and cottonseed meal costing 17.15 cents.

Poultry Pickings.

Disinfectants are cheaper than disease. Keep pure, fresh water always within reach. To avoid disease, it is better to breed away from it. Fowls in confinement, to do well, need a variety of food. When chickens have bred disease, look out for large lice. The falling off of the rooster's comb shows him to be in bad health. In selecting a location for a poultry yard, choose a light, sandy soil. Manure piles are good for the production of gapes in chickens. Do not condemn a breed simply because a few fowls do not come up to your expectations. The guinea-fowl is a greater forager and destroys many insects that other fowls will not touch.



THE PUBLIC EYE

Robert H. McCurdy, who testified before the Insurance Investigating committee in New York, that from 1893 until the present time he has received hundreds of thousands of dollars in commissions, is the general manager of the Mutual Life and also is a trustee of the institution. His father is its president. The younger McCurdy began his insurance career in 1881, after his graduation from Harvard, in the Metropolitan agency of the Mutual Life, and five years later he was made superintendent of the foreign department. In 1903 he was chosen general manager. Mr. McCurdy was born in New York City, May 29, 1859. Besides his position in the Mutual Life he is a director of the Astor National Bank, of the Windsor Trust Company, and of the Casualty Company of America, and also is connected with other financial and business corporations.

Waldo Story, the Boston-London sculptor, who is to execute a statue of the late Sir William Vernon Harcourt for the House of Commons, is the first American to be thus honored.

Francis Kossuth, under whose leadership the condition parties in Hungary are said to be desirous of effecting or organizing in opposition to Austrian control, is a son of the celebrated revolutionist, Louis Kossuth. For years he has been an influential leader of the Hungarian independent party and the champion of popular rights. Formerly he was a civil engineer, but abandoned that profession to enter politics, and for a long time has been a thorn in the flesh of the government. On several occasions it has been reported that Francis Kossuth would be made premier. For a time in 1849 the elder Kossuth was governor of Hungary, which had declared its independence, but he was compelled to flee from his native country and lived in exile many years.

Gen. G. W. Mindil, United States appraiser of diamonds that come into New York, declares that they have advanced 50 per cent in value in ten years, and that the increase will continue.

William Caryl Ely, who has been elected president of the reorganized American Street and Interurban Railway Association, is a citizen of Buffalo and well known as a business lawyer. He served in the New York Assembly from 1883 until 1885, and was the Democratic nominee for Speaker. In 1891 he also was honored with the Democratic nomination for justice of the Supreme Court. He was one of the promoters of the Niagara Falls Power Company and of the Buffalo and Niagara Falls Electric Railway. Mr. Ely was born at Middlefield, N. Y., in 1854, and is a graduate of Cornell. In 1882 he was admitted to the bar. He is a Mason.

The late Gen. Sherman was one of the men that haunted the cloakroom of the House and Senate for a good story.

Dr. Victor Nilson of Minneapolis has been chosen to edit the new monthly musical journal of the American Union of Swedish Singers.

Charles Evans Hughes, who was nominated for Mayor of Greater New York by the Republican city convention, is a lawyer whose achievements for years have kept him in the public eye. Just now he is attorney for the Armstrong commission of the New York State Legislature, which is investigating the methods of the big life insurance companies, and it was under his direction that the commission has been able to bring out so much evidence of how the public's money is juggled for the benefit of the officers and their friends. Mr. Hughes was born at Glens Falls, N. Y., April 11, 1862.

The late Hermann Nothnagel, the famous surgeon, wrote an essay some years ago in which he endeavored to prove that the moment of dying was in most cases absolutely painless. His own death evidently confirmed this doctrine.

Rev. G. W. McPherson, one of the best known evangelists of New York City, plans the building of a great evangelistic hall seating 5,000 persons and having in connection with it a training school for evangelists.



CHARLES E. HUGHES.