

The Wife's Secret, OR A BITTER RECKONING

By CHARLOTTE M. BRAEME

CHAPTER XIII.

Pauline made an effort to look unlike herself; but hers was an individuality not easily hidden under a large plaid traveling wrap and a plain black bonnet and veil. At any rate, Mr. Daws was not deceived by them, and guessed who his visitor was the moment she was shown into his dusty little private office. He remained standing silent and motionless, with his bright, beaklike eyes watching her from under his heavy brows until she felt almost hysterical.

"I have come with reference to an advertisement in this morning's Times," she began, "I believe you inserted it."

"No," she looked incredulous for a moment, then said: "Then, if you did not, you know who did, and you will favor me with their address."

"What for?"

"I wish to see them."

"Why?"

"Why?" Pauline drew herself up proudly, for she was getting irritated, as she answered, "I think that is my business."

"Not at all! It is ours."

"You will surely not refuse to let me have the address of the person who put that notice in this morning's Times, when I tell you that I came on Sir Geoffrey's behalf, I am, in fact, a relative of his. It says it is for Sir Geoffrey's 'decided advantage.' But how?"

"That's my client's business. Lawyers never reveal their clients' affairs."

"But, if you will neither tell me yourself nor give me your client's address, how can I find out for Sir Geoffrey what the advantage is?"

"Send him here himself."

"He can't come. He is very ill," she told the lawyer.

"Then we must wait until he's well."

"You will absolutely tell nobody but himself what this wonderful advantage is?"

"No one."

Pauline rose from her chair, and they looked steadily at each other for a few seconds. She gathered her energies for her last effort. She placed her hand on the table between them, and leaned forward slightly.

"What is your price for the address I want?"

Daws' eyes glittered. Two thoughts passed through his mind before he answered: "You have shown your fear by the offer of a bribe; and heaven save the Frenchwoman if I betray her, for you will certainly murder her!" Then he spoke:

"The information you ask for is priceless."

"I can give more than you think, perhaps. One hundred pounds!" A pause. "Two hundred—three hundred—four hundred—five!"

"I have answered; it is priceless."

She looked for one instant as if she would spring on him and tear the secret from him; then there came the sullen look of one beaten and baffled, and she turned without another word, went down the rickety stairs, and re-entered the cab which had been waiting for her.

Pauline had counted confidently on making a bargain with Messrs. Daws & Raven. She believed that some unknown person had accidentally found out certain facts of her past life which she had pressing reasons for keeping secret, and she thought she had only to offer them a good price for their silence and the matter would end there. Now that she was once more in her own room, wrapped in a warm dressing gown, and with leisure to think, she began to see that there was something more than the mere greed of gain prompting her unknown adversary.

This fighting in the dark was alarming. If she only knew from what quarter to expect the attack she might be able to make some sort of resistance; as it was, there was nothing to be done but sit down and calmly await the onslaught.

On one point only could she make up her mind—she must hurry on her marriage. Let her once be Jack's wife, and no matter what phantoms should rise from the past to threaten her, she would at least be sure of his love; for she would love him so dearly, she would be so gentle, so winning, that he would not be able to withhold his love from her, even though he should grieve to find her other than he had thought.

And so that evening she got Jack's consent that they should be married a fortnight hence, on the 18th of September, the day after she reached her twenty-fifth year.

CHAPTER XIV.

Ethel was certainly very courageous. She was also strong, young and healthy, and had an unusual amount of self-pride, all of which kept her from giving way under the load of grief that came upon her after Jack's faithless behavior. But she felt her sorrow none the less deeply, and hid it from her father's sight.

Captain Pelling had been away nearly a week on a visit to an old friend, and Ethel was feeling the daily monotony of her life very irksome as she once more set about making her father's coffee.

There were letters on the table, but she did not feel particularly curious about them. As she placed the coffee pot on the table the writing on the envelope next to her own plate caught her eye. The blood rushed to her face, and, with nervous haste she picked up the envelope and opened it. She read the invitation card, and the flush faded slowly, leaving an expression of sorrowful contempt on her face.

"Poor Jack!" she sighed. "I wonder if he thinks a few civilities of this kind will make amends for his conduct in the past? Does he imagine he can repay me for the loss of his love by holding out the hand of friendly patronage? Can he believe it would give me pleasure to spend an evening in watching his attentions to his handsome hostess?" She threw the card from her with an impatient sigh. "How contemptibly foolish it is of me to care so much after all this time! Perhaps dad would like to see his

old home again; and, as it does not really matter much whether I go or not, I will do as he wishes about it."

As she heard her father's step on the stairs she turned as brightly as usual toward him to say, "Good morning." Then she held his envelope behind her playfully, saying: "A thousand guesses, and you will not guess where this letter is from, papa?"

"I shall not make one—so tell me."

"It is an invitation to Mallingford for the seventeenth of this month—from Miss Malling herself, for a ball."

"A ball!" he repeated. "Why in the world should Miss Malling invite me to a ball?" He looked at the envelope curiously, and then said: "It is addressed to 'G. Mallett, Esq.,' and in Jack Dorton's writing! Oh, I begin to understand!" he went on, in a voice of genuine relief, as he took the card from the envelope. "I feared for the moment that Summers had been doing a kindness, as he calls it, and persuaded Pauline Malling to invite her poor relatives to her ball. But this civility is evidently due to Dorton's good nature, and is sent in all good faith, to the Malletts, old friends of mine," as he would say in describing us."

"Who is Summers, papa?"

"Lord Summers is your cousin's guardian."

"Of course—I remember—the kind-looking old man we met at the Exhibition last May."

"Yes. I've been in constant dread ever since that unfortunate meeting that he would seek me out and try to do something for me. That was why I was so annoyed when you told him you copied in the galleries; I thought he might pounce on you and worm our address out of you."

"Do you think he would tell Miss Malling about my copying at the galleries, papa?"

"No doubt of it; he is an inveterate talker."

Ethel had a sudden conviction that Miss Malling had used this information to obtain their address, if Lord Summers had not, and believed she had at last found out to whom she was indebted for her anonymous letter. This belief did not increase her desire to go to Mallingford; but she held to her resolution to leave the decision in her father's hands.

"Do you want to go to the ball?" he asked.

"I don't care one bit about it, if you don't want to go, dad."

"I don't care about the ball, either; but I should like you to see the old place, Ethel. If we were to go to the ball I should most likely run up against some one who would remember me as Geoffrey Malling, and there would be quite a little sensation over my reappearance; but this invitation entitles us to call on Miss Malling, in any case. Send an acceptance, my dear; we can follow it up by an excuse on the morning of the 17th. In the meantime we will run down one day and leave our cards and take a look round just as ordinary strangers, and no one will think we are anything else."

Ethel was glad the question was settled in this way, for she, too, wished to see the old house that should in justice have been her father's. Mr. Mallett opened the other letter and threw it across to her.

"Read it out, Ethel. It's from Pelling. I've talked so much that I've no time to eat."

Ethel read the letter, which ran as follows:

"My Dear Mallett—I send some birds by to-night's train; hope they will arrive all right. I am tired of this place, but can't get away under the promised fortnight. My old friend has taken a wife since I last saw him. Said wife has three sisters at present staying with her; and, as they are all of the genus 'blue-stocking,' my life has been a burden to me since my arrival here. Sport is excellent, but just the least bit monotonous. The house is full of pleasant people—and yet I miss your society more than I could have thought possible; and I am really anxious to get back to our work. Tell Miss Mallett not to forget her promise."

"What promise was that?" Mr. Mallett asked.

"I'm not quite sure what he means, unless—" Ethel blushed slightly.

"Never mind; finish the letter to yourself, my dear, for I must be off directly."

After seeing her father off and finishing the letter, Ethel did not feel altogether happy. She was afraid Captain Pelling had set too high a value on her words, and she tried to recall exactly what she had said when he had called to say good-by. What had really occurred was this. When Ethel put her hand into Pelling's he held it while he said:

"I wish I could flatter myself by believing you would miss me a little while I am away, Miss Mallett; but perhaps it would be a welcome miss, for I know I'm a terrible bore sometimes."

He looked so wistful that Ethel felt quite a thrill of sympathy for him, and, on the impulse of the moment, responded:

"I'm sure I shall miss you, and I shall be glad to see you back again."

And Pelling had left her with a face so glorified with delight that she had feared and wondered continually what such glorification might mean, and had alternately blamed herself for her impulsive words, and him for his misinterpretation of them.

Pauline was rather staggered a couple of days later when she received affirmative replies from Mr. and Miss Mallett; but she was in such a whirl of excitement by this time that so small a peril as a visit from her uncle and cousin passed by unheeded.

It was now the 8th of September, and she was to be married on the 18th. Bette was the only member of the household who had been taken into her mistress' confidence with regard to her approaching marriage, and the vivacious French woman was delighted at the

prospect of going up to town every day between then and the 18th, to see after the piles of newinery indispensable at such a time.

CHAPTER XV.

The 13th of September had come, and to Bette's great discomfiture Messrs. Daws & Raven had not yet discovered Sir Geoffrey's address. Only five days remained to the date of the wedding she had sworn to frustrate.

She had been to town to get some lace for her mistress, and incidentally to interview the lawyers, and was now returning disappointedly to Mallingford. At the station, as she was about entering a conveyance, she heard some one behind her asking for a fly to go to Mallingford Park. She turned to look at the inquirer, and for a moment stood staring at a tall, well-bred looking man, evidently on the wrong side of fifty, with a sweet-faced girl of eighteen on his arm. She recognized the girl as the young lady she had followed from the Museum to her home, and whose name she had discovered from the neighboring trades people by her mistress' orders about two months before. Then she remembered posting a letter to this young lady for her mistress, and next she recalled having seen Dorton's letter to the same person a few days later, and in a plaid fashion without knowing why, she connected their appearance at Mallingford with those letters, and a wild hope sprang up in her heart that this elderly aristocrat and his pretty daughter had come to Mallingford to help on her purpose of preventing Miss Malling's marriage.

Bette was soon deposited at Mallingford House. She made herself presentable, and went down to Miss Malling's boudoir on the ground floor on the pretense of discussing her morning's purchases with her mistress, but really with the determination to hang about the neighborhood of the reception rooms, and witness—if possible, overheard—the interview between Miss Malling and these Malletts.

The windows of the boudoir overlooked a long stretch of the principal drive. When Bette reached the room it was empty. She placed herself to watch for the arrival of the fly from the village. She saw it come up the long avenue and stop at the main entrance. Then she went to the hall and busied herself looking for an imaginary missing shawl among the numberless wraps lying about. The hall porter, for some unknown reason, was not at his post, and an inexperienced footman informed Mr. Mallett that Miss Malling was not at home. Bette, thinking she saw the chance of help from these people gradually slipping away, came forward boldly.

"Are you sure you are right in denying Miss Malling to this gentleman, Philip?" she asked, in a low voice. "I think you have made a mistake. If you will follow me, monsieur, I will see if Miss Malling has returned from her drive."

She took them to the boudoir, stood for a moment in thought, and then flew off to the picture gallery. As she expected, she found Jack and Miss Malling in the deep recess of a window at the far end. She announced:

"Mr. and Miss Mallett in your boudoir, mademoiselle!"

Pauline sprang from her chair and stood glaring at Bette as if she were a messenger from another world. The words "Sir Geoffrey" rose to her lips, but she remembered in time that his individuality was not known to any one but herself, and she checked the name with an effort.

"I am not at home," she told her maid. "I left word to that effect."

"Yes, so they said, mademoiselle; but I happened to be in the hall, and I thought I heard the gentleman ask for Monsieur Dorton; so I offered to see if he was in."

(To be continued.)

What a Holiday Ought to Be.

Gen. Ferdinand W. Peck, the Chicago capitalist, says, according to the New York Globe, that the way the average man spends his annual vacation is all wrong.

"It's only now and then," he said, "that a man finds out what a holiday ought to be. We all think that it means going away from home, drinking more or less and wearing our bodies out by walking, or cycling, or mountain climbing, or something like that. That sort of thing is supposed to be a great rest to a tired man who works with his brains. How a vacation spent in that way could possibly be of benefit to a professional man who has to use his brains I have never been able to understand. Very likely a professional ass might be benefited in that way, but it's all nonsense to say that it rests a lawyer's, or editor's, or author's, or even a politician's brains. In my opinion, the best and most beneficial way in the world for the man who makes his living solely by the use of his gray matter to spend his holidays is simply to do the gentle loaf in some green and shady spot far away from the maddening crowd, and to keep himself in touch with the outside world by having his favorite newspaper mailed to him every day."

Similarity.

"They call these 'dog days,'" remarked the man with the wilted collar and palm-leaf fan.

"Any particular breed of dog?" spoke up the warm-weather wit.

"Yes, I should say 'greyhound.'"

"Why so?"

"They are so long."

All Trouble.

"May I ask what you are looking for?" said the clerk in the ticket office.

"I am looking for trouble," replied the man who was running his finger over the big wall map of the world.

"Looking for trouble?"

"Yes, sir, I am hunting up Russia."

Sensitive Soul.

"There are two mosquitoes stinging in this room and it's making me nervous to the point of insanity."

"I wouldn't let the hum of two little insects affect me that way."

"But, man, they're not stinging in harmony."—Cleveland Leader.

What the world needs is more workers and fewer dreamers.

PULSE of the PRESS

The Mutual Life should be renamed "The McCurdy Living."—Atlanta Journal.

All friends of free government should unite to advise and assist the people of Russia.—Dallas News.

Making Billy Loeb official purveyor of all government news is rather a late adoption of the Russian method.—Pittsburg Post.

Our Audubon societies have now succeeded in getting every sort of bird pretty well protected except the stork.—New York Mail.

President McCall says that there are two sides to the insurance business, but he seems to hate awfully to show the inside.—Atlanta Journal.

Now that "Pat" Crowe is safe in jail, there hardly seems to be any reason for retaining the Omaha police force.—Kansas City Times.

The Czar is handing out pardons as freely as a candidate gives away election cigars. And his object is the same—to win popular favor.—Kansas City Journal.

As we understand it, the public would have been willing to forgive Pat Crowe if only he had kidnapped Mr. John A. McCall or Mr. Richard A. McCurdy.—Atlanta Journal.

Also it should be borne in mind that if irritated too much McCall, McCurdy et al. may decide next time just to let the blighted old country go to the bow-wows.—Indianapolis News.

Robert A. McCurdy says a life insurance company is an eleemosynary institution. This intimates that the policy holder will get his dividends in heaven.—Des Moines News.

Arizona preachers want a clause in the State constitution making prohibition perpetual. At that rate the balance of Arizona probably won't want statehood.—Atlanta Journal.

Goldwin Smith, to encourage matrimony, believes that two votes should be given to every married man. Now what has the woman suffragist to say to that?—Houston Chronicle.

Minneapolis is a well-advertised town, but the recrudescence of Doc Ames is not one of the advertisements to which the thoughtful citizens point with pride.—Duluth News Tribune.

It is no doubt interesting to Mr. Bryan to learn that had he been elected in 1896 or 1900 it would have been a great joke on the companies in which he was insured.—Kansas City Star.

The cotton growers have shown the Wall streeters that they can do something despite the money they have up there. The South is getting to be fine on "showing."—Columbus (Ga.) Ledger.

It is announced that the cashier of the Enterprise Bank at Pittsburg left a confession, and the depositors will at once proceed to feel glad that something is left.—Philadelphia Evening Telegraph.

A Kansas man who invested \$7,500 in a farm cleared up a net profit of \$5,600 in two years. Almost, but not quite, as good as being president of a life insurance company.—Colorado Springs Gazette.

It is important not to forget that the grafter is a grafter, first, last and always, and that he calls himself a Democrat or a Republican merely as a matter of convenience.—Chicago Record-Herald.

An exchange remarks that in all his 80 years of successful life Uncle Russell Sage has never been accused of handing out tainted money to churches and charitable organizations.—Duluth News and Tribune.

Joseph H. Choate tells us that we are working too hard and too fast and doing too much. He would probably be jogging along at the same clip as the rest of us if he needed the money as badly.—Buffalo Times.

Cabinet officers have been instructed by the President not to talk to reporters. And there are four Presidential aspirants in the Cabinet fairly bursting to tell the public the things they are doing. Cruelty could not go to greater length.—Milwaukee News.

The Rev. Dr. Huntington, of New York, says that one is not authorized to assume that there are any "female angels," while the fact is that every man has known one female angel, and many men have known dozens, while no man has ever come across a male angel.—Ozarkville Post.

Paul Morton contends that publicity is the only certain cure for corporation evils. In a few years the newspapers will be printing certificates like this from prominent trust magnates: "The doctors could do nothing for me. I was run down and nearly all in, when chance put me next to a bottle of your celebrated keep-it-before-you-remedy. I do not hesitate to say that it saved my constitution and by-laws."—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Friends of President McCall of the New York Life say he is a poor man and in debt. If that be true, Mr. McCall ought to ask those friends to kick him. He was simply a fool to waste all the money he got.—Birmingham Ledger.

The story that Cole Younger, the ex-bandit, had reformed was premature, and now, alas! is not likely ever to come true. He has secured a street railway franchise and started out to bond and otherwise exploit it.—Portland Oregonian.

FARM AND GARDEN

Ventilating Corn Shocks.

Sometimes a streak of foggy or rainy weather will cause the stacks of corn in the field to mould badly, which may be overcome if a ventilator is used. The ventilator racks are made of rough lumber or, if one has access to the woods, poles could be cut which would answer the purpose quite as well.

This rack is not of necessity used in the field, but can be used near the barn after the stacks have been garnered and in this way a considerable quantity can be stored. It consists of four upright pieces each ten feet long, which are used as corner posts; cross pieces are fastened on all sides six or eight inches from the bottom, these pieces being three feet long; a set of shorter cross pieces is provided for placing at about the middle of the rack and another set near the top, the latter pieces each being eighteen inches long. The illustration shows the construction of this rack clearly.



CORN SHOCK VENTILATOR.

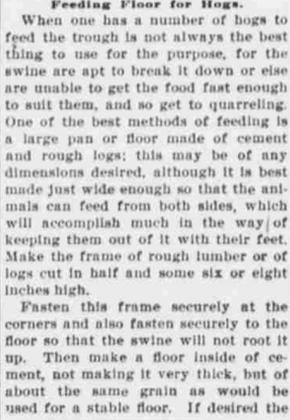
Losses by Insects.

Dr. L. O. Howard, entomologist of the Department of Agriculture, "has just made public some startling statements of the property losses caused by insects. He believes they aggregate over \$300,000,000 a year. The Rocky Mountain locust, or Western grasshopper, in 1874 ate up \$100,000,000 worth of growing crops. The chinchbug alone has eaten \$320,000,000 worth of corn and wheat in the Western States since 1850. As for the mosquito, apart from the losses believed to be due to its pernicious activity in the spread of yellow fever and malaria, it is an immense deprecator of real estate values. A New Jersey newspaper recently estimated that its extermination in that one State alone would add to its real estate valuation not less than \$100,000. It certainly would pay to wage a continuous war of extermination against all these insects."

Feeding Floor for Hogs.

When one has a number of hogs to feed the trough is not always the best thing to use for the purpose, for the swine are apt to break it down or else are unable to get the food fast enough to suit them, and so get to quarreling. One of the best methods of feeding is a large pan or floor made of cement and rough logs; this may be of any dimensions desired, although it is best made just wide enough so that the animals can feed from both sides, which will accomplish much in the way of keeping them out of it with their feet. Make the frame of rough lumber or of logs cut in half and some six or eight inches high.

Fasten this frame securely at the corners and also fasten securely to the floor so that the swine will not root it up. Then make a floor inside of cement, not making it very thick, but of about the same grain as would be used for a stable floor. If desired the



FEEDING FLOOR.

frame may include a board floor over which the cement floor is laid. The edge will prevent the corn from being pushed aside and trampled upon. It is not intended to use this feeding floor for slop or for soft food of any kind, but only for grain, roots and roughage. The illustration shows the plan clearly and any one can easily build such a floor, which, if carefully made, will last for years.

Value of Good Roads.

A careful inquiry it has been found that the average haul of the American farmer in getting his product to market or to the nearest shipping station is twelve miles, and the average cost of hauling over the common country roads is 25 cents a ton per mile, or \$3 a ton for a twelve-mile haul, says Portland Oregonian. An estimate places the total tons hauled at 300,000,000 a year. On the estimate of \$3 a ton for twelve miles this would make the total cost of getting the surplus products of the farm to the local market or to the railroad no less than \$900,000—a figure greater than the operating expenses of all the railroads of the United States. If anything could make an argument for good wagon roads this statement surely may.

Comfort in the Hog House.

In repairing our hog houses we found that a roll of building paper and one of tarred paper were the best investments we had made in some time; the one was used on the walls and the other on the roof so that much more expensive repairs were saved. Then we found it was policy to arrange the sleeping corner in such a way that it was impossible for it to get any of the filth or the wet which the swine gathered during the day. It was placed so that none of the slop got into it and about the only way it got soiled was when the swine trampled through it with their muddy feet. Even then by taking it out into the sun each day it made a good bed for a number of nights. A hog is a strange animal, stubborn, of course, but it will not long miss its bed if the latter is clean and comfortable. Much of the nastiness of hogs is due to the neglect of their owners. We also arrange the sleeping corner so that it is out of the draft, although the house is properly ventilated; as a result there are few if any cases of chills and colds among our swine. All this extra good care means healthy swine. It is not well to work on the plan that if the hogs escape cholera they are doing well.—Exchange.

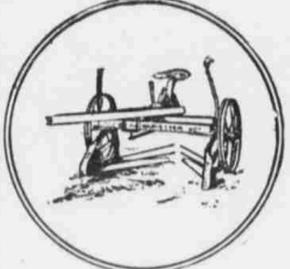
Wintering Fall Calves.

If the calf is worth carrying through the winter it is certainly worth caring for properly and by properly is meant good food and water and proper care. If the calf is strong and healthy it ought to pay well for the best attention that can be given it; first of all it needs a dry, clean place, not warmed by artificial heat, but as warm as lack of draughts in a comfortable stable will make it. The early days of the calf, just after weaning, are of great importance to it and too much care cannot be taken to see that the milk given it is absolutely fresh and pure and fed in proper quantities.

As a rule, the calf will properly take care of eight pounds of milk per day, which amount can be gradually increased until at a month old it is consuming twelve pounds daily. About this time it ought also to become interested in hay and after a while will begin chewing its end. A calf built up in this manner during the winter will be in excellent shape to turn out to pasture in the spring and get most of its living until fall, when you will have a splendid animal, one you will be proud to add to your herd.

Harvesting the Bean Crop.

Formerly beans were pulled by hand, but now the work is done almost exclusively by machinery in the main districts. The bean harvester or cutter, shown here, is a two-wheeled machine, having two long steel blades, so adjusted that as the machine passes over the ground they sweep along just



BEAN HARVESTER.

at or below the surface and cut the bean stalks or pull them up. The blades are set obliquely, sloping backward toward one another.

Proper Storage of Apples.

To decide properly to which kind of storage the grower or buyer shall send his fruit requires the best of judgment, for many factors must be considered in making the choice and upon their just balancing will depend, to quite an extent, the profit or loss in handling the crop. Growers, generally, are more interested in storage this year, probably than usual. To all growers, to those who usually hold more or less of their fruit for winter sale or home use, and to the buyers who must plan for the best keeping of the purchased fruit, the bulletins of the agricultural experiment stations will be of interest and value. One of these discusses critically the factors which influence the keeping quality of apples, as ascertained through many years' experience at the station or by correspondence and interviews with the leading apple handlers of the country. It also gives detailed results of the storage of 165 varieties of apples, in the ordinary temperature room of the station fruit storage house, or in a cold storage building, with notes upon most of the varieties as handled by practical storage men.

Poultry, Truck, Fruit Farming.

Likely there is not another combination which may be taken up by the farmer, which promises better returns on the amount of capital invested, for those who are situated right for it, than poultry raising, gardening and fruit culture. In order that the very best prices may be realized for the product of such a farm, and therefore the greatest possible profit, it is necessary that this be located at or near a thriving city of perhaps not less than 15,000 or 20,000 population. To be sure, a profitable business of this kind can be conducted near a much smaller city than this if there are not too many there that are also engaged in the same business.

Poultry is one of the best paying branches on the farm and is kept fully in keeping with its importance by delegating the work attached thereto to competent help and plenty of it.