

The Wife's Secret, OR A BITTER RECKONING

By CHARLOTTE M. BRAEME

CHAPTER XXVI.

The weeks slipped by, and the young spring began to sound out its fore-runners. It had been a mild winter, and the big horse chestnuts in the Mall and the 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 Mallingford, 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, hearing in mind the girl's happy excitement over Pelling's letter, which contained nothing but accounts of Dornton'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 young man, 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 ones and twos through the little station door. She wondered what could be keeping them.

At last her father came out, and with him a handsome sm-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 Mallingford, 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 by Mallingford 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:

"Pelling, it's on the line!"

Pelling pressed forward and shook him stealthily by the hand. Ethel saw the movement and for a moment wished she was a man to inspire such a friendship as existed between these two; then she offered her congratulations warmly and sincerely.

The other two passed on, leaving Ethel with Jack to take note of the points of the picture. Jack, seizing the opportunity bent his head and whispered:

"Do you remember my water-color of last year?"

"To be sure," she answered, without any sign beyond a slight increase of color that the memory was a disquieting one.

"How much has happened since then that I could wish undone?"

"And I, also."

"Do you mean that?"

"Why should I say it unless I did?" Jack looked excited. It was an awkward place to make an avowal of love, certainly, but he would not lose the opportunity she had given him. He leaned forward and pointed out some flaw in a picture before them, without in the least knowing what he was saying, then whispered close to her ear:

"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 Mallingford?"

"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 slough of delighted 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 flurry, 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 steps to a certain shelf that held 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 ascended from her perch and took the chair he had set for her, he was seating himself opposite.

"It is a very short story," he began, as he turned up the lamp and stirred the fire. Then he went on: "Once on a time two men loved one woman. They both loved her dearly, but, of course, they could not both marry her. Now it happened that the one she loved offended her very grievously, and the one she did not love tried to ingratiate himself through the favored one's offense. But the cause of offense was suddenly removed, and then the unloved one said to himself, 'Her heart is bound up in this man; she will never know happiness, but as his wife, she does not love me. I will devote my life to making her happy by bringing them together.' Well, he did. He helped the favored man to make him more worthy of her. It was the one dream, the one ambition of his life, to see them united. Of course there were times when he felt that he could never know happiness without her himself. He was a selfish beggar at the best; but he really did do all he could for the man she loved. Imagine then his astonishment when the man whom he had thought she loved came to him one day and said, 'It has been all a mistake on your part; she does not care for me at all.' Think what a disappointment it was to the poor wretch who had been working to bring them together at the sacrifice of his own feelings! When

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 haughty-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 content without her in time, upon which the woman rose up and held out her hands, saying, 'But I can never learn to be contented without you. Alas, 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 undoubtedly 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 conciliated, and stayed on right into the summer, making Mallingford 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 unswerving devotion and attachment. 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."

Also 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 modesties of the city. She wished one piece of news to be conveyed to Sir Geoffrey. Messrs. Daws & Raven 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.

"They wanted me to join in the same speculation," added Mme. Couronne, "with no money your father had been so generous as to insist upon my accepting; but you have a proverb, 'A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush,' and I kept my money under my own management, as madame sees, with good result."

Erect, white-haired Sir Geoffrey is never so happy as when he is walking out with toddling Geoffrey Malling Pelling, who is to carry on the old family name, by and by. Captain Pelling is everything that a country gentleman should be; and, in spite of the many calls on him, he is always able to spend plenty of time in his wife's society. The pleasure these two find in each other's company is as strong to-day as it was on their wedding tour, and it is likely to increase rather than diminish, for it is a union founded on the most lasting of all foundations—a deep mutual respect and an impressive faith.

THE END.

What's the Use?

"Do you ever get discouraged?" asked the intimate friend.

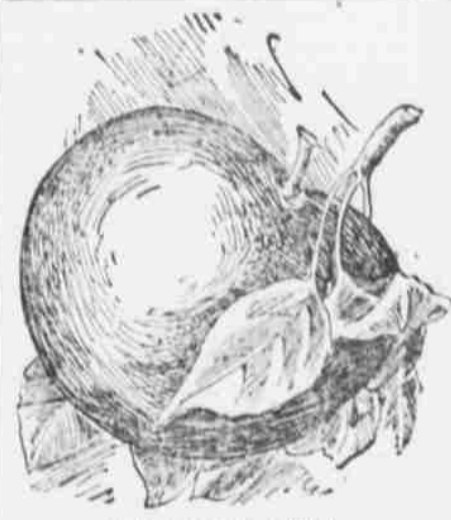
"No," answered Mr. Comstock, "I don't. I know that if it comes to the worst I can let my hair grow long, show a band of religious enthusiasts the only true path to heaven, and live without work in the finest house in the colony."—Detroit News.

Statistics compiled by the various automobile trade associations show that there are about 53,000 motor cars in use in this country, the first cost of which aggregated \$70,000,000.



The Walker Apple.

First shown in any quantity at the Pan-American Exposition, at Buffalo, the Walker apple has since been tried in various sections and found all that was claimed for it. Its exceedingly attractive appearance makes it valuable as a market sort, and it has the added merit of being of fair quality, although not by any means a first-class apple in this respect. In size it is a little above the medium, and in color is particularly attractive, being striped with brilliant red. Under test it proves to be only a fair bearer, but



NEW WALKER APPLE.

This may be improved as the trees grow older. Mention of the variety is made simply because it is a promising one and seems worthy of general test.—Indianapolis News.

The Corner of the Pen.

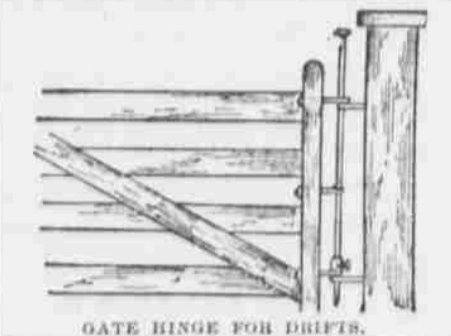
There is no doubt but what the more fresh air the swine get even during the winter the better they feel, so instead of confining them to the house, arrange one corner or end of the yard so that they may still be out of doors and yet be protected from storm. An excellent way of doing this is to select a space as large as necessary, facing the south, and build it up with gravel, so that it is several inches higher than the surrounding soil; then there will be little danger of its getting damp. With old boards build a rough low structure, covering roof and cracks with corn stalks. Not a fancy house, costing considerable, but simply a crude, rough structure which will be practically waterproof and comfortable. Let the swine have a portion of the corn on the ear fed in this retreat, and they will be happy and quiet willing to stay out of doors most of each day unless the weather is unusually cold; as a result one will have a cleaner main house, which is worth considerable.

Adulterated Milk.

The ordinary methods of milk adulterations are easily detected by expert examiners. It is reported that a French chemist, Dr. Quesneville, has made some experiments that point to the probability that for some time there has been practiced a form of deception in milk adulteration which has escaped the attention of health officers. In a paragraph in the Birmingham Daily Mail it is explained that the deficiency of fats, whether due to the poverty of the milk or the extraction of fats, has been covered by the addition of foreign greasy matter. Dr. Quesneville found that "benzene would dissolve foreign fats without affecting the natural fats in milk," and thus by examining the samples which have passed the ordinary test he discovered such substances as pork dripping and cocoanut butter.

Snowdrift Gate Hinge.

This is a gate hinge of my invention. It can be used on any kind of gate. The rod should be made of 1-inch iron. The four eyes of 3/4-inch iron. The eyes in the top of gate should be 16 or 18 inches apart. This



gate can be raised and opened over snowdrifts. The collar with thumb screw will hold the gate as wanted. The hangings can be made by any blacksmith.—W. G. Freed.

Angora Mutton.

G. I. Thompson of the Bureau of Animal Industry says a considerable number, but not many thousands, of cross bred Angoras find their way to stock centers, such as Chicago, Kansas City, Omaha, Buffalo and New York, and are sold there to the packing houses, if in good condition. They are purchased at a price slightly under that paid for sheep, and are disposed of in the carcass, and sometimes in canned form, as sheep mutton. These goats are usually some that have served a good purpose in clearing up brushwood, and becoming fat on it, are worth more as slaughter animals than to sell to some other person for brush clearing.

Cover for Sheep.

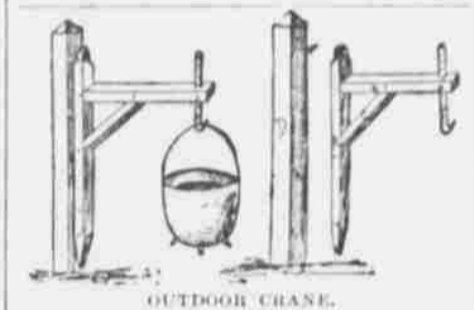
Old experienced sheep raisers realize the importance of providing cover for animals on the range or in the yards so arranged that the sheep can get under cover quickly in the event of sudden storms which are likely at this season of the year. A structure of this kind should be more than a roof—it should be deep so that the sheep can get far enough under that the storm can not possibly reach them. It should also be a hooded shed, that is, some provision should be made for a low front which will break the storm. If this is not feasible a good way is to build up a straw stack or a stack of corn stalks in the open in front of the open part of the shed, but several feet away so that the sheep will not feel they are penned to yet can readily get in by going around the stack on either side. The floor of this shed should be dry at all times and it is an excellent plan to have more or less roughage in it which the sheep may munch over to keep them happy and contented. It is not intended that this shed be more than a place for cover in the event of storm. The barn or stable should be the regular home and arranged for comfort. The shed, as described, for nothing will pull a sheep down more quickly than exposure to a storm.

Farmer and Commercial Methods.

If the man whose life is spent on the farm would use his brains as well as his hands, he would find results much more profitable than at present. It is all well enough to understand what is necessary in farm operations, but of what avail is it if plans are not carefully laid and as carefully executed? There is a city business man who was brought up on a farm and is now spending some of his city earned money at the old homestead. Largely, as a matter of sentiment, he bought the old homestead, and after a time used it for a summer home, leasing the land on the share plan. One summer, being at the farm considerably, he noticed the rather slipshod methods of operation, and the next year took charge of the farm himself, engaging the necessary help to do the work. Then he looked carefully over the place and planned just what he would do with it. He had no trouble after his help discovered that his knowledge was not wholly theoretical. The farm is making some money, solely as a farm, and will make more in the years to come. It is run as a business proposition, and every detail of its handling carefully considered. The commercial rules applied to farming will bring success.

An Outdoor Crane.

The illustration shows a crane for an outdoor fireplace. For upright post a, use scantling 3x4 inches, 3 1/2 feet long. For beam b use scantling 3x4 inches, 3 feet long. For brace c, use scantling 2x4 1/2 inches, 20 inches long. For post d, use swing crane to, can use any ordinary post 7x7 inches, 8 feet long. Set post three feet in ground, bore hole through post six inches from top end for upper hinge, 3 1/2 feet lower



bore another hole for lower hinge, and the post is ready to swing crane to.—Exchange.

Warm Foods for Cows.

The average dairy cow does not require warm mashes of any kind, and it is generally considered best to let the animal do her own grinding of grain and in its usual state, although there can be no objection to the occasional mash nor to any mixed grain moistened and fed quite warm, but simply as an appetizer and a change from the regular rations. Warm braff mashes are used to advantage with cows just after calving, particularly if oil meal or some other laxative is used in connection with it. It is often advantageous to moisten the roughage given the stock, and we have had them eat corn stover, which they would not touch dry, by steaming it for a few hours and feeding it while quite warm. We believe thoroughly in an occasional change which will furnish variety, even though there may be no appreciable or direct benefit.

Topping Rye and Clover.

To an inquiry how to fertilize a field of rye sowed last fall, intended to be seeded also with clover in the early spring, Dr. C. W. Woods recommended at a recent meeting the application of four hundred pounds of muriate of potash. This application was intended to encourage the clover that was to be sown rather than the rye. If it was preferred to grow a larger crop of rye rather than the clover, he would recommend a dressing of nitrate of soda.

Seed Farming.

There are at the present time more than six hundred seed farms in the United States—farms that is to say, devoted to the production of vegetable, field crop and flower seeds to be sold to farmers and gardeners. Some of these plantations are very extensive, comprising as much as one thousand acres.

Dairy Notes.

Milk from uninspected herds should not be sold to the public. As an extra and yet prudent precaution, pasteurization of all cream should be obligatory.



- 1005—St. Peter's church, Westminster, dedicated by Edward the Confessor.
 - 1170—Thomas a'Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, assassinated in the cathedral.
 - 1278—Injunction issued by Primate of England against public prayer by little girls on Christmas day.
 - 1377—Wickliff divulged his opinion on the Pope's mandate.
 - 1535—Society of Jesuits founded by Ignatius Loyola.
 - 1532—Catherine von Bora, wife of Martin Luther, died.
 - 1591—Pope Innocent X. died.
 - 1594—Expulsion of the Jesuits from Paris.
 - 1601—Kinsale, Ireland, surrendered to the English.
 - 1652—First newspaper sanctioned in Russia.
 - 1691—Earl of Argyll imprisoned for high treason.
 - 1694—Mary, Queen of England, died of smallpox.
 - 1709—Empress Elizabeth of Russia born. Died on this date in 1761.
 - 1714—George Whitefield born.
 - 1737—Singular rising and sinking of land noticed at Scarborough, England.
 - 1765—James Francis Edward, the Pretender, son of James II. of England, died.
 - 1773—Meeting at Philadelphia declared that the Polly, with a cargo of tea, should not land.
 - 1806—Russians entered Bucharest.
 - 1809—William E. Gladstone born.
 - 1812—American warship Constitution captured British ship Java.
 - 1813—Fire in Buffalo, N. Y., destroyed 100 houses.
 - 1814—Schroener Carolina blown up in Mississippi by the British.
 - 1818—Emperor Alexander of Russia granted right to peasants to engage in manufacturing.
 - 1828—Procession of free negroes in Philadelphia escorting an African prince returning to Liberia.
 - Rowland Stephenson, British banker and member of Parliament, embezzled \$1,000,000.
 - 1831—Hereditary peerage abolished in France.
 - 1834—First reformed British Parliament dissolved.
 - 1835—Battle of Tampa Bay.
 - 1837—Imperial palace at St. Petersburg burned.
 - 1845—Texas admitted to the Union.
 - 1846—Constitutional charter of New Zealand granted.
 - 1854—Thomas W. Dorr, leader of Dorr's Rebellion, died.
 - 1857—Bombardment and capture of Canton, China, by English and French forces.
 - 1859—Lord Macaulay died, aged 59.
 - 1870—Marshal Prim executed at Madrid.
 - 1874—Alphonso XII., father of the present ruler, proclaimed King of Spain.
 - 1876—Great railroad accident at Ashstahala, Ohio.
 - 1884—Severe earthquake felt in Austria and Spain.
 - 1894—Ex-Senator James G. Fair died. Several killed in the burning of the Delavan house, Albany, N. Y.
 - 1899—Extradition treaty between United States and Brazil ratified. E. V. Smalley, celebrated journalist, died.
 - 1900—Mrs. Isabel A. Mallon (Huth Ashmore), author, died. Senator Justin S. Morrill of Vermont died, aged 89.
- WONDERFUL OKLAHOMA CROPS.**
- In One County Alone They Will Exceed in Value \$10,000,000.
- It is only a few years since the world was looking on at the rush of settlers into the newly opened lands of Oklahoma. No one then dreamed that one county alone of the new territory would produce in 1905 crops in value to exceed \$10,000,000. This is the record of Greer county, the southwest county of Oklahoma, for this year.
- The cotton crop now on hand the cars or ready to leave the county is about 65,000 bales, worth \$60 a bale. This, with the value of the cotton seed at \$16 a ton, amount to \$4,420,000. The oat crop is worth fully \$3,000,000. The corn and kafir yield is worth another \$3,000,000.
- These leading crops, therefore, exceed in value \$10,000,000. Besides these there is half a million bushels of wheat, great quantities of garden truck, cattle, hogs, horses, poultry, dairy products and broom corn.
- In a Frenzy.**
- Just as the collection had been taken up by old Deacon Snuff one of the members was observed to be dancing around the pew and wildly pulling his hair.
- "What am de trouble wid Bruddah Sparks?" whispered the parson.
- "Frenzied finance, pawson," whispered the deacon; "frenzied finance."
- "Frenzied finance?"
- "Sho'. He thought he done dropped a penny in de collection, en now he's done discombobed et was a dime."