



The Wife's Secret, OR A BITTER RECKONING

By CHARLOTTE M. BRAEME

CHAPTER V.—(Continued.)

Pauline had not much soul, and she did not really care much for music as music; but she liked the pleasant, soothing effect it had upon her. So she went to the opera two or three times a week and in the intervals whispered scandal, ate ices, drank coffee, or dozed gracefully behind the curtains of her box. This evening Mrs. Seton and she were scarcely settled in their seats before Lord Summers begged admission.

The good-natured old gentleman looked rather worried, as he took the chair behind Pauline and exchanged civilities with both ladies.

"I have had a visit from Bennoir this afternoon, Pauline," his lordship began. "The poor boy is terribly upset by your refusal."

"He will get over it."

"But, my dear girl, have you no heart at all? To my knowledge this is the seventh most satisfactory offer you have refused. I dare say you have had quite as many of which I have heard nothing. I begin to think you are heartless."

"Perhaps you are right," she said, indifferently. "But you must allow there are two sides to the question. On the one hand, you ask why I do not marry. I answer your question by asking, on the other, 'Why should I marry?' I do not love these men who propose to me. I am my own mistress; I have everything I wish for—and I am happy as I am."

"There is the estate, you know, to think of. The succession lies between you and your Cousin Ethel, the sweet-faced child I pointed out to you the other day. If you die unmarried, the estate will revert to her children at your death. Of course, there is nothing against that. But I am sensitive about the trust imposed on me by my old friend, Sir Paul. As I read it, his will lays the whole responsibility of this question of succession on my shoulders. In other words, he leaves me the power to pick and choose a fitting head for the House of Malling. Now, in the event of your not marrying, the next heir will be the offspring of this Ethel and her artist husband, Mr. Dornton."

Pauline had kept herself well under control, but she could not avoid an exclamation as Lord Summers put this point before her.

"That Mr. Dornton, to whom you have been kind, is engaged to your cousin, you know. Well, he is a very nice young man—clever, well looking, nice manners and all that; but I don't think Sir Paul would have chosen him as the perpetrator of the Malling family."

"Why not?" The question was put quickly—almost, it seemed, in spite of herself.

"Well, it seems to me that the question answers itself. Who is he? What is he? Whence comes he? Who are his people? What were his father and grandfather? Of course he will make an excellent husband for poor little Ethel, for he is bound to come to the front."

"Do you know, whenever you talk of that child, I fancy you regard me as an interloper? I am sure your sympathies are with her."

"Not at all—not at all! You are too sensitive. I am glad to know that Geoffrey's child is not likely to suffer hardship. This Dornton seems a manly, honorable young fellow, and will take good care of that pretty little creature. I should not like to think that my old friend's daughter was fated to spend her life in copying from the old masters of the Kensington Museum, as she told me she does now."

It was well for his lordship's opinion of his ward's disposition that she was sitting with her face turned toward the stage during his kindly little speech. He was a shrewd old man, and had he seen the hatred and malice in her eyes when he spoke of Ethel, his previous judgment of her character might have been considerably shaken.

The next day Miss Malling drove to the Kensington Museum, taking Babette with her. It was a students' day, and the visitors made the round of the galleries in quietness, Pauline stopping in apparent interest by the side of every lady student. At last she found what she sought. She passed on until she reached a quiet corner, and then beckoned Babette to her side.

"You see that very young girl in the gray dress with her holland apron? That is the person whose address I want. Keep her in sight until she leaves; follow her home, get her address, and then go to some of the shops close by and find out her name."

"Mademoiselle does not even know her name?"

"I know her real name, but not the one she is going by just now. Whatever you do, don't miss her."

Miss Malling returned to her carriage, feeling that she had accomplished a good afternoon's work.

CHAPTER VI.

"I'll not give way! If I stay away one day, I shall want to do it again, and then my copy will not be finished."

Ethel uttered this aloud, though she was alone, evidently with the idea that merely hearing the words would, perhaps, strengthen her waning resolution.

Poor child! Her head ached, and her eyes looked quite pathetic with the heavy circles round them; but she refused to pity herself, and resolutely plunged her head into a large basin of water, rubbed

her hair half dry, and started for the museum.

Though her head still ached a good deal, the copy made fair progress, and there was no sign of neglect or hurry in the work, her t. robbing temples notwithstanding.

She always wore a hat with a rather large brim, when copying, to save her eyes from the light from above, and at the same time shut out most of the room and its occupants from her view, so that her attention was not so liable to wander from her work.

She was engaged on a difficult patch of shadow and she sighed as she realized the difference between her shadow and that of the old master. At that moment her father echoed the sigh, and followed it up by:

"Too solid—altogether too solid, my child!"

"I know it as well as you do, dad," she said, plaintively; "but how am I to alter it?"

"Suppose we leave the shadow for today, and go out into the sunshine for an hour or two?"

"Now, dad, don't tempt me to desert the post of duty. If you knew what a struggle I had with myself before I started this morning, how I longed to stay at home and 'coddle' instead of facing my work like a woman."

"Leave the painting for a few moments, dear; I want to introduce you to Captain Pelling. My daughter!"

Ethel plucked off her unbecoming head-gear as she turned to face the unknown visitor. She was greatly surprised at the introduction, her father having kept her in strict seclusion since she left school a year before.

"I taught Captain Pelling the rudiments of sketching before he went on an expedition to Central Africa three or four years ago, and he is so delighted with his own efforts that he wanted to carry me right away to Wimbledon at once, to see and praise them."

"That is scarcely a truthful statement, Miss Mallett," put in Captain Pelling with a smile. "I don't want praise, but judgment. The expedition I went out with is going to publish the result of our investigations, and they want some of my sketches to illustrate the work. When I saw Mr. Mallett in Piccadilly I thought, 'Here is the man who will tell me honestly if I dare to allow them to be published,' and I pounced upon him. And now I have obtained two judges in the place of one. My trap is waiting outside, and I trust you will let me take you both down to my little box. My house-keeper will find us something to eat, and in the cool of the evening we can go quietly through my little pictures and arrange them together."

Ethel looked puzzled. Mr. Mallett could hardly conceal the surprise he felt at the adroit manner in which his late pupil had managed to include "the child," Ethel glanced at her rather worn but prettily made dove-colored gown and her bibbed holland apron.

"I am not in presentable order," she began.

"But you will see no one but the house-keeper and the present company. Show yourself superior to such considerations, Miss Mallett. It will be a positive favor to me, for they are hurrying the preparations forward, and I should not like to be the cause of delaying the publication of the book."

"Very well; I will come. But papa will tell you I am of no use in a case of this sort."

Ethel leaned back in the well-cushioned phaeton and listened lazily to the conversation between the two men, her father sharing the back seat with the groom.

Captain Pelling's horses traveled well, and the breeze blowing right in her face Ethel gradually lost the depressing pain in her head and began to feel interested in the places they were passing.

When at last the horses stopped at a tiny cottage, consisting of all appearances entirely of bay windows and creeper covered porch, and looking tinner still by comparison with the gigantic elm trees that surrounded it, she had a slight tinge of pink in her cheeks, and the dark rings had nearly disappeared from round her eyes.

A pleasant middle-aged woman came to the hall door, and Captain Pelling handed Ethel over to her at once.

"Give Miss Mallett a cup of especially good tea, Mrs. Crichton, and make her lie down until a quarter of an hour before dinner. Above all, don't let her talk; she has had a bad headache"—Ethel looked at him in mute surprise—"and it will return if she exerts herself before she dines."

Mr. Mallett looked amused; but the captain, supremely unconscious of having said or done anything unusual, led the way through the long, low hall and out at a glass door at the end.

"This way, miss," and Mrs. Crichton opened the door, through which she was followed by Ethel.

CHAPTER VII.

It was the loveliest room the young girl had ever seen. The walls were a subdued stone green, the curtains and general decorations were of the same color, artistically touched up here and there with gold. There was a soft old-looking Persian rug that covered the whole floor, except a few inches by the walls. The floor of the windows were bare, save for some exquisite specimens of skins which Ethel did not even know

the names. Each of these windows was tastefully and luxuriously furnished. There were two very fine paintings on the walls, and the whole room was littered most picturesquely with valuable curiosities brought home by Captain Pelling.

Ethel looked round her with a sense of supreme delight. Mrs. Crichton mistook the look, and apologized for the general untidiness of the room.

"You see, miss, Captain Pelling took the house only three weeks ago. He don't allow Martha or me to touch his wonderful curiosities, so I am obliged to put up with this dreadful state of things. You will find this couch more comfortable for a rest than either of those small ones. If you will allow me, I will throw this light woolen shawl over your feet. Let me raise your pillow the least bit. There"—after carefully arranging it, "that is more comfortable. I will bring the tea in a few minutes."

How good the tea was, and how enjoyable the great quietness and peace seemed to Ethel after the distracting roar and rattle of the London streets!

Captain Pelling came through the window by-and-by and was surprised to see Ethel lying there. He had expected Mrs. Crichton would take her to her own sanctum. He stood irresolute for a moment just inside the window, and then crossed the room to look more closely at his pretty young guest.

"She's as pretty as a picture, and as good as gold, if I know anything about physiognomy. She has a trouble of some sort, poor little child! I should like to kiss those tears away. I wonder what she's worrying about. Perhaps Mallett is hard up; he seems a careless soft of a fellow. I'll see if I can't help them a bit in that direction, anyway."

This was a genuine red-letter day for Ethel. She was so intensely interested in the Captain's description of his travels that for the time she was drawn out of herself and her own affairs. Mr. Mallett, too, was heartily pleased. And Pelling was equally satisfied with his guests. When the evening was over, he was surprised to find how well he had talked, and he felt convinced that successful conversation as often depends on the quality of the listener as of the talker.

There was not much progress made in the ostensible purpose of the visit, seeing that the "little sketches"—which turned out to be rather good specimens of their class—led the way to so much description that they looked only at some half dozen before they came to one that created a diversion which lasted until they started for home.

The Captain had been holding forth on the pluck and fidelity of a native servant at whose portrait they were looking, when Ethel said:

"I wonder you did not persuade him to come to England with you. Your relatives would have worshiped him in their gratitude for having saved your life so often."

"I have not one relative in the world, Miss Mallett," answered the Captain gravely.

Ethel's glance was full of sympathy.

"I beg your pardon," she put in hastily; "I am sorry I made the remark."

"Don't be sorry. I'm very glad. I often long to talk a little about myself. You can't believe what an awful feeling it is to know that there is not one person in the world who is sufficiently interested in you to care for your private concerns."

"Decidedly unpleasant," murmured Mr. Mallett.

"You'll hardly believe, Mallett, that this is the most domesticated evening I've spent for the last six years. Jolly hard, when you consider that I am naturally fond of home and all that kind of thing! I was just getting weary of the loneliness of this place, but your being here to-night has changed the whole aspect of affairs. It looks so homelike to see you sitting there as if you belonged to the place, Miss Mallett. To-morrow night I shall fancy I see you still there, and be reconciled for a time at least."

"You should marry—best recipe in the world for loneliness!" Mr. Mallett observed, laughingly.

"Tried it, and found it a failure."

"Eh!" Mr. Mallett sat upright and stared into his host's face. "I beg your pardon, Pelling, if I have said anything unpleasant."

"Not at all—in fact, if I shouldn't bore you so horribly as to prevent your ever taking compassion on me again, I should like to tell you about my marriage. Sometimes I think it must all have been a dream, it seems so unreal."

He sat for a moment gazing absently into the garden, which was beginning to look dim and shadowy in the summer twilight, as if he were calling up the past from its gloomy depths. Ethel felt a shiver of superstitious awe pass over her, and the movement seemed to bring back the captain from the momentary reverie into which he had fallen.

(To be continued.)

Those Heartless Creditors.

"No! I can't afford to work for \$5,000 a year."

"Can't! And why not?"

"Because it would be too good a thing for my creditors. They'd take it all away from me."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Verdict of Judge Lynch.

"How did the trial of the alleged horse thief end?" asked the stranger from the effete east.

"Oh, in the usual manner," replied the landlord of the Arizona village inn. "The defendant was left in suspense."

In Hard Luck.

The Judge—Have you anything to offer the court before sentence is passed on you?

The Prisoner—No, your honor; I had \$12, but my lawyer appropriated it.

SORES THAT DO NOT HEAL

Whenever a sore or ulcer does not heal, no matter on what part of the body it may be, it is because of a poisoned condition of the blood. This poison may be the remains of some constitutional trouble; the effect of a long spell of sickness, which has left this vital stream polluted and weak, or because the natural refuse matter of the body, which should pass off through the channels of nature, has been left in the system and absorbed into the circulation. It does not matter how the poison became entrenched in the blood, the fact that the sore is there and does not heal is evidence of a deep, underlying cause. There is nothing that causes more discomfort, worry and anxiety than a festering, discharging old sore that resists treatment. The very sight of it is abhorrent and suggests pollution and disease; besides the time and attention required to keep it clean and free from other infection. As it lingers, slowly eating deeper into the surrounding flesh, the sufferer grows morbidly anxious, fearing it may be cancerous. Some of those afflicted with an old sore or ulcer know how useless it is to expect a cure from salves, powders, lotions and other external treatment. Through the use of these they have seen the place begin to heal and scab over, and were congratulating themselves that they would soon be rid of the detestable thing, when a fresh supply of poison from the blood would cause the inflammation and old discharge to return and the sore would be as bad or worse than before. Sores that do not heal are not due to outside causes; if they were, external treatment would cure them. They are kept open because the blood is steeped in poison, which finds an outlet through these places. While young people, and even children, sometimes suffer with non-healing sores, those most usually afflicted are persons past middle life. Often, with them, a wart or mole on the face inflames and begins to ulcerate from a little rough handling; or a deep, offensive ulcer develops from a slight cut or bruise. Their vital energies and powers of resistance have grown less, and circulation weaker, and perhaps some taint in the blood, which was held in check by their stronger constitutions of early life, shows itself. It is well to be suspicious of any sore that does not heal readily, because the same germ that produces Cancer is back of every old sore and only needs to be left in the circulation to produce this fatal disease.

I have had a crippled foot all my life, which compelled me to use a brace. By some unaccountable means this brace caused a bad Ulcer on my leg, about six years ago. I had good medical attention, but the Ulcer got worse. I was induced to try S. S. S., and am glad to say it cured me entirely, and I am convinced that it saved my leg for me. I have, therefore, great faith in S. S. S. and gladly recommend it to all needing a reliable blood medicine.
Bristol, Va.—Tenn. W. J. CATE.

There is only one way to cure these old sores and ulcers, and that is to get every particle of the poison out of the blood. For this purpose nothing equals S. S. S. It goes down to the very bottom of the trouble, cleanses the blood and makes a permanent cure. S. S. S. enriches and freshens the circulation so that it carries new, strong blood to the diseased parts and allows the place to heal naturally. When this is done the discharge ceases, the sore scabs over and fills in with healthy flesh, and the skin regains its natural color. Book on Sores and ulcers and any medical advice desired will be furnished without charge.

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Naturally.

Patient—Well, doctor, do you think I'm getting well all right?

Doctor—Oh, yes; you still have a good deal of fever, but that doesn't trouble me.

"Of course not. If you had a fever it wouldn't trouble me."—Le Journal Amusant.

Propheesied Teddy's Greatness.

More entertaining, perhaps, and equally interesting, are the anecdotes which are told about our President by the Minkwitz family. Frau Fischer distinctly recollects that once she prophesied the future greatness of young Teddy. She says: "One day I had a conversation with Mrs. Roosevelt, who said to me, 'I wonder what is going to become of my Teddy?' I replied, 'You need not be anxious about him. He will surely be one day a great professor, or, who knows, he may become even President of the United States.' Mrs. Roosevelt rebuked me. She said such a thing was impossible, and asked how I could have struck upon such an absurdity. But, perhaps on account of my impulsive remark, I have since continually watched Theodore Roosevelt's career, and have always been glad when he has made a step forward in the world."—From "Roosevelt's German Days," in Success Magazine.

Provided a woman be well-principled, she has dowry enough.—Plautus.

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