

# The Wife's Secret, OR A BITTER RECKONING

By CHARLOTTE M. BRAEME

## CHAPTER X.—(Continued.)

She began methodically to remove every article singly, placing them neatly in a heap on the table, after reading or looking at them. Then she turned to the other side, going through it in the same way, and reached the bottom without discovering anything more than is usually to be found in a lady's desk. With a disappointed air, she began to replace the articles, when Miss Malling's address book fell from her shaking hand on to the floor.

She stooped to pick it up as it lay open; and, in doing so, she saw the edge of a photograph peeping from the pocket in the cover. She took it out hurriedly, scattering, as she did so, some dead pressed violets on to the table. She shuddered when she raised the tissue paper, for it was the photograph of a grave!

She went to the dressing table, where the candles were still burning, to read the name of the photographer at the back of the card. The printing was in a language she did not understand; but she guessed it must be Spanish. She turned to the picture again, and in the strong light she could almost make out part of the inscription on the plain headstone. The first name, she was sure, began with the letter "P." In order to assist her, she procured Miss Malling's magnifying glass, and, with the aid of that, she spelled out the name, or as much of it as she could see.

"P-a-u-l-i-n-e" she could clearly trace; then came a blot, followed by "l-i-n-g-d-e-d M-a-y 18—." The remainder of the inscription was undistinguishable.

"I never expected this! The grave of Pauline Malling! Then who is my mistress? An adventuress—a usurper! And I shall have a hand in dethroning her!" She wiped the perspiration from her white, quivering face, placed the photograph in her dress, and locked the desk.

## CHAPTER XI.

Jack was by no means heartless, and his conscience pricked him more often than was pleasant with regard to Ethel Mallett. He wondered a little if she had really ceased to care for him, if she had yet found a successor to him, or if pique alone had led her to offer him his freedom. She had sent him back the little ring he put on her finger when they were so happy together, and, with a strange inconsistency, he carried it about with him continually.

Just about this time Jack began to think that he ought to call in Buckingham street, if only to show his gratitude for Mr. Mallett's many past kindnesses, for the old gentleman had often been able and always willing to do Jack a good turn in past days. Once convinced that he ought to do a thing, Jack did it.

The morrow would be the first of September, and the house was full of people who had been invited to enjoy the abundant sport Mallingford offered. A number of amiable young men were lounging about the corridors and billiard room all day, who talked of nothing but the probable weather on the morrow, the chances for and against good sport, and the respective merits of their own and other men's guns. Jack obtained a few words with Pauline before breakfast, and carried his point.

"I must have several things for to-morrow," he said. "I know you would not wish me to be different from others, and I cannot get what I want without going to town myself."

Pauline would have dearly liked to go with him, for she had a horrible fear that he would find out something if he should call on the Malletts. She was not supposed to know of the existence of such people—for Jack had never spoken of them to her—so he could not well as him not to call on them; and she could not leave her guests without some very serious reason; consequently she was forced to feign a complacency she was far from feeling, as she answered:

"Of course, if you must go, there is nothing more to be said; but you will not stay one half-hour longer than is absolutely necessary? If I don't know where you are, I have such a feeling of unrest and anxiety that life becomes a sorrow for the time being."

There was honest truth in these words, and Jack was flattered and grateful for her love. He kissed the beautiful lips, and promised to be back at the very earliest moment possible.

When Jack was in the train, with a quiet half hour before him for thought, he felt curiously cloyed with the sweets of love, and was ungrateful enough to wish that Pauline would leave the love-making a little more in his hands, and that her affection was of a less assertive character.

Two or three hours later, when he had rushed through the business of the day and stood in the Malletts' sitting room, shaking hands with both father and daughter and exchanging cordial greetings, he felt as if he had been living in a hot house of affections for the past weeks, and had just regained the invigorating open air, where the hardier, healthier class of feelings flourish.

He wondered a little at Mr. Mallett's geniality, knowing nothing of Ethel's generosity in taking the entire responsibility of their separation upon herself, and still less of her father's hope that she had got rid of a nameless nobody just in time to leave the road clear for a suitor more worthy of her in every

way; and Jack felt somewhat piqued that Mr. Mallett should make so light of the whole business.

But he did not let his annoyance appear upon the surface. He told of the success of the paintings for Lord Summers, of his hopes for the future, of the gay life at Mallingford, and impressed his hearers with the fact that he was brimming over with good fortune and happiness.

Ethel did not say much; but she appeared to be quietly interested; and, though she was paler than she used to be, she did not give one the idea of a love-lorn damsel. She sat listening to the conversation, and wondering if her father would touch on the subject of their identity during Jack's visit; but Mr. Mallett did not wish to be made the topic of gossip among Miss Malling's guests, and therefore kept his own counsel.

When Jack was about to leave, Mr. Mallett decided to walk part of the way with him, and accordingly went downstairs first. Jack turned, with the door handle in his hand, to thank Ethel for what she had done—yet hardly to thank her, either.

"I can't go without thanking you for being so candid with me, Ethel," he said. "Of course I was very surprised when I received your letter breaking off the engagement; but equally of course there was nothing for me to do but acquiesce in your wish."

Ethel felt how ungenerous this remark was, seeing that his neglect had led to what had happened; but she would not be driven into reproaching him, and so gave him cause to justify himself. Her feelings were too real to bear dissection, and she avoided the discussion.

"That is all passed," she said, gravely; "better let it rest."

Though she did not say one word in self-defense, there was a world of reproach in the subdued tones of her advice; though her speech was so indifferent, her whole manner asserted her right to be considered more than blameless throughout the affair.

Jack felt miserably small under her calm gaze, and his respect for her was vastly increased by this little passage at arms; and, as he was carried by the afternoon express back to Mallingford Park, he could not shake from his mind the fable of the dog and the shadow.

## CHAPTER XII.

The rain was coming down in torrents, and there was a general expression of disappointment on the men's faces round the breakfast table at Mallingford Park.

"But you know it is really too bad," Cecil Dancesford observed to Miss Malling. "Your head man had fixed to-day for the north end covers, and he says they are the best on the whole estate; and now this rain comes and spoils the whole thing. It is annoying, you must allow."

"Poor creatures—men!" said the Hon. Miss Collins, reflectively. "The comfort of their lives depends upon the one amusement of the hour. Deprive them of that and they are stranded helplessly. Glad I'm a woman!"

"Well, I hope you will have got over the first rush of slaughter by the 17th," Pauline interposed, bringing the conversation back to the original object.

"Why by the 17th?" several asked.

"Because I shall then attain my long-deferred majority, and dear old Lord Summers insists that there will be a big affair on the happy occasion."

"A ball? Delightful!" exclaimed the ladies.

"And I shan't be here!" muttered Cecil.

His attention was suddenly arrested by an advertisement in the Times, which he held in his hand.

"By all that's mysterious!" he exclaimed; and then he sat gazing at the newspaper in mute astonishment.

Bertha Collins leaned across, and looked at the place he was pointing at.

"How extraordinary!" she exclaimed.

"For pity's sake, let us into the mystery!" Pauline said; and Bertha read out the following advertisement:

"Mallingford Park—If this should meet the eye of Sir G. M., he will hear of something to his decided advantage by applying to Messrs. Daws & Raven, 10 Leman street, E. C."

There was general astonishment and various were the surmises as to what it could mean. Jack, glancing at Pauline, was surprised to see her agitated and white to the lips. She motioned to him not to notice it, and fought determinedly with her emotion. The others were too much absorbed by their curiosity to take much heed, and she bore herself as usual until breakfast was finished.

"Will you help Mrs. Sefton and me to finish filling in the cards for the seventeenth?" she asked Jack, as she left the breakfast room.

Jack promised to join them in the boudoir in a quarter of an hour. He did not like to think of Pauline's look. He was a poor struggling artist, who had hitherto lived by the exercise of his unaided talent, and Pauline was a rich, high-born woman, his superior in most things that count in this world; yet he would not make her his wife if he did not believe her life to be spotless and without flaw. This was the idea that haunted him as he recalled her look at the breakfast table. If ever a woman's face expressed suddenly aroused fear, his fiancée's had done so when Bertha Col-

lins read that advertisement in the Times. He went back to the breakfast room before he joined Pauline, read the advertisement again, and copied the address into his note book.

"If I am in the neighborhood with a few moments to spare, I may look them up and see what it means," he decided.

Then he followed the ladies to the boudoir. Pauline, still looking unlike herself, was sitting with Mrs. Sefton. Jack said nothing to them, but went straight to his work of filling in the invitations from the list of names given him. Mrs. Sefton left the room after a time; and Pauline, turning to Jack, put her hand entreatingly on his arm.

"I know what you are going to ask me; but I can't talk about it just now—not to-day. I will tell you to-morrow, or the day after; but don't speak of it now. I ask it as a favor."

Jack felt perplexed. He had expected the moment they were alone together that she would tell him what had caused her disquiet. He felt unhappy and worried, yet he could hardly force her to speak upon a subject that evidently distressed her.

"Of course, I don't want to worry you, darling," he answered; "but I must confess I am curious, and I shall be glad when you can tell me all without distressing yourself."

"Thank you very much, dear. And now I want to ask you if there is any one you would like me to send a card to for this ball?"

Jack flushed as he replied:

"Yes; there are two people I should like you to invite—Mr. Mallett and his daughter. They are everything desirable, or I should not suggest it; and the old gentleman was very kind to me in the days that are gone."

"Was the daughter kind, too, Jack?"—playfully.

Again Jack flushed a little.

"I think you are a bit of a witch," he said, with a laugh. "I may as well tell you, and then there will be no secret in my past for you to find out by and by. Yes, she was kind to me, and once I thought I liked her well enough to make her my wife; but that was before I met you, you siren!"

"You don't think so now?"

"If I did, should I be here?"

The rain continued to pour down steadily, and the scratch, scratch of the busy pens went on without interruption. Pauline finished her list first, and sat back in her chair, with a thoughtful, chastened look on her face which was strangely unlike her usual imperious air. Jack noted it, and thought her more beautiful, if that were possible, although he wondered what had brought about so great a change. He felt a forewarning that this was the little cloud in their sky that would darken the whole heavens.

"At last!" he exclaimed, as he threw down his pen.

"You have been a good boy," Pauline said, with a smile. "We could not have finished them to-day without your help."

"So I shall lose him, after all, if I can not satisfactorily explain this morning's fright?" she reflected, alone in her dressing room. "He will not allow a secret between us. What can I do? If I concoct a lie to account for it, there may be an advertisement in to-morrow's paper that will expose it. Who can want to find Geoffrey Malling after allowing me undisputed possession for the last six years? If they find him, they will tell all, and he will claim his inheritance; they cannot want him for anything else. I must discover how much they know, or how can I fight them? I can't trust another; I must do it myself; and, with these thoughts running through her mind, she crossed to the bell, which Babette promptly answered. "Babette, I want to run up to London this afternoon, and I don't want the whole house to know about it."

Babette's eyes flashed with a quick glance of intelligence; but her lids drooped instantly, and she answered, meekly: "Certainly, mademoiselle."

"If the people see the brougham leaving the house, it will set them wondering; so I want you to run down to the village during luncheon and bring back one of the public flies from the inn there. Tell the man to drive to the stable yard—in fact, you can come back in it; and let it be there by a quarter past three."

"Very good, mademoiselle."

Babette's face gleamed with merriment behind Pauline's back as she left the room.

"So you think you have only to go to Messieurs Daws & Raven and show your pretty face, and maybe a ten-pound note or so, and they will tell you all about the person who sent them that advertisement. But you do not outwit a Frenchwoman so simply, my good friend! Mr. Daws is quite prepared to receive you with politeness, and to tell you that he really knows nothing more than that his client, whom he is not at liberty to name, is anxious to obtain the address of the present Sir Geoffrey; and the girl chuckled grimly as she went along. "That old Daws will hardly risk losing his share of the plunder, even to oblige a sweet, so handsome, so soft-voiced lady as you, madame!" and she laughed again as she pictured the meeting between her mistress and the lawyer. "I wish I could be there to see!"

Pauline stopped to speak to Jack as they crossed the hall after luncheon.

"I shall lie down for the whole afternoon; my head is aching so dreadfully. What will you do with yourself, Jack? A wet day is such a terrible infliction in a country house!"

"I shall work. It's a week to-day since I touched a brush; it will be a grand opportunity. I should advise your taking a good rest while you can get it."

Jack responded, in a matter-of-fact tone. Pauline set her teeth in her underlip and left him, her mind racked with anxiety and fear.

"At all cost I must be in a position to tell him something that will not be contradicted. I must find out how much those people know before to-night."

(To be continued.)

# EX-GOVERNOR OF OREGON

Makes Use of His Family

Pe-ru-na in For Colds



CAPITOL BUILDING, SALEM, OREGON

Peruna is known from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Letters of congratulation and commendation testifying to the merits of Peruna as a catarrh remedy are pouring in from every state in the Union. Dr. Hartman is receiving hundreds of such letters daily. All classes write these letters, from the highest to the lowest.

The outdoor laborer, the indoor artisan, the clerk, the editor, the statesman, the preacher—all agree that Peruna is the catarrh remedy of the age. The stage and rostrum, recognizing catarrh as their greatest enemy, are especially enthusiastic in their praise and testimony.

Any man who wishes perfect health must be entirely free from catarrh. Catarrh is well nigh universal. Peruna is the best safeguard known.

A Letter from the Ex-Governor of Oregon.

The ex-governor of Oregon is an ardent admirer of Peruna. He keeps it continually in the house. In a letter to Dr. Hartman, he says:

State of Oregon,  
Executive Department.

The Peruna Medicine Co., Columbus, O.

Dear Sir—I have had occasion to use your Peruna medicine in my family for colds, and it proved to be an excellent remedy. I have not had occasion to use it for other ailments.

Yours very truly,  
W. M. Lord.

It will be noticed that the governor says he has not had occasion to use Peruna for other ailments. The reason for this is, most other ailments begin with a cold.

Ask Your Druggist for Free Peruna Almanac for 1906.

### Fish that Change Color.

Among the curious observations made by students at the Bermuda Biological Station is that some of the inhabitants of the water there are able to imitate the color of the rocks and reefs among which they swim. The common fish called the grouper possess this power. Its chromatic variability runs through a considerable range of colors. A specimen of the octopus vulgaris, after jerking an oar from the hand of an inquisitive naturalist, escaped pursuit by its ability to imitate the exact shade of any brown or gray neck on which it rested.

### A Light Remedy.

A quack doctor, whose treatment had evidently led to the death of his patient, was examined stercorally by the coroner.

"What did you give the poor fellow?" asked the coroner.

"Ipecacuanha, sir."

"You might just as well have given him the aurora borealis," said the coroner.

"Well, sir, that's just what I was going to give him when he died."

### A New One Needed.

Mr. Nagget—A man is as old as he feels, they say, and I assure you your extravagant ideas make me feel—

Mrs. Nagget—And a woman is as old as she looks. But, thank goodness, I can never be as old as this bonnet of mine looks.—Philadelphia Press.

Don't make indifferent pastry and expect your children to be healthy.

### According to Instructions

A British officer, in his expense list on government service, put down:

"Porter, twopence."

The officer was requested to report to the war office and receive the following explanation:

"While executing public duty refreshments are not chargeable to the nation."

"The item does not represent refreshments," replied the officer, "but a fee to a carrier."

"You should have said portage," was then explained to him.

When the officer had occasion to take a hansom, remembering instructions, he wrote in his account:

"Cabbage, 2 shillings."—Philadelphia Public Ledger.

### Good Advice to a Tramp.

The autumn night was chill. There was a hint of frost in the air. The tramp's collar was turned up and his nose blue with cold.

"I have here 9 cents," he said. "If you will give me one more penny, sir, I can get a bed all to myself."

"No, I can't do that," said the stranger. "But I advise you to ask the gentleman you are to sleep with for an additional penny. He should give it to you gladly."—Minneapolis Journal.

The Baltic sea has more wrecks than any other place in the world, the average being one wreck a day the year round.

# BLOOD POISON THE BLACK FLAG

The black flag is an emblem of horror and dread. When it is hoisted by an army, the order has gone forth that "no quarter" will be given, everything must be destroyed. Helpless women and children, as well as opposing soldiers, meet the same fate, and a trail of desolation, suffering and death is left behind. Contagious Blood Poison is the black flag of the great army of disease. This vile disorder is known as the blackest and most hideous of all human afflictions, overthrowing its victims and crushing out the life. It is no respecter of persons; no matter how pure the blood may be or how innocently the disease is contracted, when this awful virus enters the circulation the hideous, hateful and humiliating symptoms begin to appear, and the sufferer feels that his very presence is polluting and contaminating. Usually the first sign of the disease is a little sore or ulcer, but as the blood becomes more deeply poisoned the severer symptoms are manifested, the mouth and throat ulcerate, the glands in the groins swell, a red rash breaks out on the body, the hair and eyebrows come out, and often the body is covered with copper-colored spots, pustular eruptions and sores. In its worst stages the disease affects the nerves, attacks the bones and sometimes causes tumors to form on the brain, producing insanity and death. Not only those who contract the poison suffer, but unless the virus is driven from the blood the awful taint is handed down to offspring, and they are its innocent victims. Blood Poison is indeed a "black flag." Mercury and Potash, so often used, never can cure the trouble. These minerals merely drive the symptoms away for awhile and shut the disease up in the system, and when they are left off it returns worse than before. This treatment not only fails to cure blood poison but eats out the delicate lining of the stomach and bowels, produces chronic dyspepsia, loosens the teeth and frequently causes mercurial rheumatism to add to the patient's suffering. S. S. S., the great vegetable medicine, is the conqueror of this vile disease. It goes down to the very root of the trouble and cures by cleansing the blood of every particle of the poison. S. S. S. does not hide or cover up anything but clears the entire circulation of the virus and puts the system in good healthy condition. It cures safely as well as certainly, because there is not a particle of mineral in it. We offer a reward of \$1,000.00 for proof that S. S. S. is not purely vegetable. When the blood is purified and strengthened with this

Several years ago I had blood poison and my flesh was in an awful condition. Great sores would break out and nothing I put on them would do any good. My hair and eyebrows fell out and I was "a fright." My mouth was so sore I had to live on milk and water. I took Mercury for a long time and instead of getting better I continued to grow worse and my arms and hands became solid sores. My legs were drawn so I could not walk and I felt that my time was short here if I did not get some relief. I began to use your S. S. S. and it helped me from the start. After taking it awhile the sores all healed, my rheumatism was cured and to-day I am a strong, well man. It got all the mercury out of my system and it cured me sound and well. ADAM SCHNABEL, Evansville, Ind., No. 211 Mary St.

# S.S.S.

PURELY VEGETABLE.

great remedy the symptoms all pass away and no sign of the disease is ever seen again; nor is there left the least trace to be handed down to posterity. Special book with instructions for self-treatment and any medical advice desired will be sent without charge to all who write.

THE SWIFT SPECIFIC CO., ATLANTA, GA.