

# Fighting Life's Battle;

OR, LADY BLANCHE'S BITTER PUNISHMENT

## CHAPTER III. (Con'd.)

Floris had started with a sudden movement, and her face had flushed, then turned pale.

"You are tired! I forgot that you had traveled some distance today. Pray forgive me! My story will keep till some other time!" and he half rose.

"No, no!" said Floris, in a very low voice. "I am not tired, I am not, indeed! Pray go on! I am very much interested, my lord."

He was silent for a moment and then resumed.

"Yes, an old lady and her daughter. I asked how the result of the trial would affect them, and was told that they would be nearly ruined. That is to say, that in addition to losing the estate we had been squabbling over, they would have to pay their own costs of the last trial. I asked the amount, and learned that it was five thousand pounds."

Floris sat perfectly motionless, but her fingers clasped each other so tightly that where they met the flesh went whiter than snow.

"I was startled and perplexed and upset. I am not an impulsive man, but I acted on an impulse of the moment, and requested my lawyers to tell the other side that I should consider it an honor if they would permit me to pay their clients' costs. I am sure you are tired," he broke off, as Floris leaned back and put her fan up to her face.

"No," she answered, almost curtly; "please go on."

"Well, the lawyers wouldn't accept the money without consulting their clients, and so—and so—" he paused, as if he were coming to a part of the story which was not pleasant in the telling—"one of them went down to make the offer. Now, you are a woman, what do you think was the answer?"

"I cannot guess. You must tell me, please," murmured Floris.

He was silent for a moment, then with his eyes fixed thoughtfully on the glass, he said:

"They refused. It was an unkind thing to do. It was as if I had insulted them and they had raised their small hands and struck me. I say 'they,' but in reality it was the daughter, the girl. The mother would have accepted, but the daughter refused emphatically, sternly, and scornfully. If you want to know how scornfully, read this," and he drew a sheet of note-paper from his waistcoat pocket.

Floris turned her eyes toward it, but did not offer to take it.

"I will read it," he said, "so that you may understand exactly how I feel."

"A Carlisle demands justice, not charity, and having received the former, has no desire to become the recipient of the latter, even though it should be at the hands of the Earl of Norman."

"That was her reply to my offer. It struck me like a blow! If it had come from a man I should have put it in the fire, shrugged my shoulders, and forgotten it. But from a young girl! I cannot forget it, though I have tried hard to do so. I have thought of her so much during the last week, since I got this note, that she has become part and parcel of my life. I am, as it were, under a spell. Her scornful eyes are always resting on mine, inspiring me with the intense longing to try and soften them; her voice rings in my ears, so that I am possessed with a restless desire to hear her utter some kinder words, more fitting to her sweet, girlish lips. In short, from thinking about her, I have grown to love her—to love a thing of aerial imagination, a woman whom I have never seen and probably never shall see, who, if I met her, would turn from me as from one who had done her a great wrong and inflicted a heavy insult! Now, please, do you not even pity me?"

Floris sat silent, her face hidden by the fan, which fluttered to and fro slowly, as if moved by a machine, her eyes downcast, her lips quivering with the shame and torture of her situation.

"You do not? I am sorry. Somehow I expected your sympathy, and that is why I told you my story. I have told it to no one else, and shall not tell it. But it is quite a true one, and the fascination, the spell under which I am held is so great that I am going to try strong measures to get rid of it. In a mind diseased—no, I will not say diseased—possessed by such a delu-

sion, illusion, charm, spell, whichever you like to call it, there is no cure like change of scene. Therefore, you understand, though my cousin never will, nor I shall never tell her, why I have ordered my yacht and am off to the Mediterranean. I am going to take the vision of Floris Carlisle out with me, and drop it, with the memory of it, in the blue sea, in the hope that it will sink, and sink, and rise to haunt me no longer. As for the note, I will keep that to remind me when I am old and gray, and on the verge of the grave, that I once loved a girl whom I had never seen, and whose only words addressed to me were the written ones of scorn—contempt!"

There was a subtle music in his voice that rang deep down in Floris' heart and made her tremble.

She tried to rise and had succeeded in making an effort, when Lady Pendleton flitted toward them.

"My dear Bruce, how kind of you to stay! And what have you two been talking about?" with her head on one side.

"I have been giving Miss—this young lady—an account of the various fishes and shells to be found within the Mediterranean circle, my dear Betty," he answered, instantly, and with calm gravity.

"Really? I didn't know you knew anything about them, or anything else that was useful. It is very good of you to listen to him, my dear," to Floris. "And now, Bruce, about this fancy fair. You must stay for it! I must have you down among the patrons. See how well your name would read! 'Patrons: H. R. H. the Prince of Wales, etc., etc.—all the royal family,' you know—and then 'the Right Honorable, the Earl of Norman—'"

Floris' head sank lower. Yes, his name was Norman! But why, oh, why had she not known it before? Why did they call him Bruce?

"I'll think it over and let you know in the course of two or three months, Betty," he said, rising. Lady Pendleton shrieked.

"Two or three months! Why, the fair is next week! You are the most provoking of men, Bruce; now isn't he, Miss Carlisle?"

The name was spoken at last. He was looking for his opera hat while she had been speaking, but at the sound of the name he stopped and turned, and swiftly, but slowly round upon them.

"What on earth is the matter? Why do you look at her like that? Why, Bruce, you have grown quite pale; hasn't he, dear?"

"What name did you say?" he asked, his eyes fixed upon Floris' downcast face with its closely shut lips and white brow, wrinkled under her burden of shame and confusion.

"What name? Whose name? Miss Carlisle! This young lady's name is Miss Floris Carlisle," and she laid her hand on Floris' arm.

## CHAPTER IV.

Carlisle! Lord Bruce Norman stood with his hat in his hand, his eyes fixed on Floris' face, his own almost stern with the shock of surprise the name had caused him.

As for Floris, she tried to meet the intent gaze with a calm, steadfast regard, but her eyes drooped, and her face grew flushed.

"Why, yes! And why not? What is the matter with you both?" demanded Lady Pendleton, volubly. "You look as if you had seen a ghost, Bruce, and you, Miss Carlisle, as if you had been caught doing something especially naughty!"

Lord Norman was one of the first to recover.

With a grim smile he took his eyes off the beautiful, downcast face, and turned them to his cousin with a kind of pitying amazement.

"Don't be alarmed, Betty," he said, quietly; "I didn't know that I had caught the name rightly. I think I will go now," and he gave her his hand, his eyes wandering again to Floris' face, pale and proud once more.

"Now mind, Bruce!" exclaimed Lady Pendleton, clinging to his hand and covering a yawn with her fan at the same time. "You are to come to-morrow, and help us with your valuable suggestions about the fancy fair costumes; isn't he, my dear?"

"I will not promise," he said, abruptly. "Good-night."

He held his hat in his hand, looking to see if Floris would extend

her hand, but she merely inclined her head, and with a very low but stern bow he left them together.

Lady Pendleton dropped into a chair with a little laugh and looked at the door through which he had passed.

"Dear Bruce! Isn't he handsome, my dear? Not dollified, you know—I hate your pretty men—but right down handsome."

"Why do you call him Bruce—and not Lord Norman?" asked Floris, almost abruptly.

"Because we always called him Bruce while his father was alive, and can't get out of the way now, my dear," said Lady Pendleton. "We used to be playmates. I was always a favorite of his. Perhaps—" she sighed, then laughed.

"But he was so poor and Sir Edward was so pressing. You've no idea what a good fellow my husband is, my dear!" quickly—"the very best in the world! And now, goodnight. Shall I come up to show you your room?"

But Floris would not permit this, and assuring her ladyship that she could find the way by herself, went to her own room.

When she fell asleep, after hours of wakefulness, it was but to dream that Lord Bruce stood before her, the fatal sheet of paper in his hand, the dark eyes fixed reproachfully upon her.

Lord Norman descended the steps, and stood for a moment looking absently out at the quiet street, but when a cab pulled up, he shook his head, and strode off with the air of a man too restless to sit quiet. He passed out into Park Lane and down beside the railings, and crossed the road into Oxford street.

Then he paused, half resolved to go to his club, but turned westward instead, and reaching a quiet street beyond the marble arch, rang the bell of one of the houses which, palatial in size, was divided into sets of chambers.

Ascending to his own suite, he opened the door with his key, and entered a luxuriantly decorated and furnished sitting-room.

The rays of the lamp, standing on the sandal-wood table; fell upon Persian hangings and Fez china, on delicately-indaid Chippendale chairs, and tapestry-covered lounges.

For some time he walked to and fro, his brows knit, his dark eyes flashing with the intensity of his thoughts; then he drew the sheet of note-paper from his pocket, and held it over the lamp, as if he had suddenly arrived at some decision. But as the paper began to curl and turn brown with the heat he drew it away.

"No, I cannot! What is the good of burning it when the girl's face, and her voice, and the very turn of her head, possess and haunt me! How beautiful she is! How beautiful!"

With a sigh he turned out the lamp and went into the next room. It was the dressing-room, between the sitting-room and bedchamber, and was dimly lit by a shaded lamp, held in the hands of a Venus Aphrodite.

There was a couch and a couple of chairs, besides the inevitable bath, and Lord Norman was taking off his coat, when suddenly from the couch there rose a man.

Lord Norman started, and stood perfectly motionless. With a yawn the man stretched himself and stood upright, and, in doing so, presented, in form and feature, an almost perfect copy of Lord Norman himself. Excepting that the earl was in evening dress and the man in a well-worn suit of serge, the resemblance in figure was almost complete.

Lord Norman did not start, but stood as if turned to stone. The awakened man yawned, and stared vacantly for a moment, then, rubbing his eyes, exclaimed:

"Is that you, Bruce?"

"Raymond!" exclaimed Lord Norman, sternly. "What brings you here? Why have you come?"

The man called Raymond laughed out loud.

"That means a long story; and you hate long stories, don't you? You always did! I've come from Australia. Why have I come? Because I'd nowhere else to go! Where should I go, but to my old friend, Bruce Norman?" and the visitor smiled with ineffable satisfaction, as if he had answered the question completely.

"How did you make your way in here?" Norman asked.

"I told your man—capital valet you've got, Bruce!—that I was your brother, and, convinced by the likeness that I spoke the truth, he let me in!"

"Listen to me, Raymond," said Lord Norman, regarding him gravely, and almost sternly; "if any one were told that I found you lying here in one of my rooms at midnight, they would conclude that, as you are no relation of mine, there was some tie of friendship or interest between us, would they not? Beyond the fact that we were schoolfellows, that we spent some foolish youthful days together, and

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## About the Farm

### RESULTS FROM FERTILIZERS.

The twenty-first annual report of the Dominion Experimental Farms contains valuable data from Dr. Saunders in regard to manures and commercial fertilizers. It is pointed out that the experimental plots at the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, for the testing of different kinds of fertilizers, as applied to wheat, barley, oats, corn and roots, are conducted on lines similar to those which have been in existence for over 65 years at Rothamsted, England. They are reported upon for the 20th consecutive season,

that you are said to resemble me, what claim have you upon me?"

"None at all!" responded the other, after a moment's pause.

"Did I ever say that I had?"

"Acts speak more plainly than words sometimes. Why are you here in my rooms at midnight?"

"For the best of all possible reasons, my dear Bruce! because I haven't anywhere else to go. I'd go to a hotel if I could, but I haven't a penny. Of course, if I am unwelcome I will go. I don't care to be told twice. You are looking well—and yet slightly worried; that comes of being a noble, you see! Now, if you were simple Oscar Raymond, you would look as careless as I do. Goodnight," and he took up his hat, a soft felt, much the worse for wear, and moved toward the door.

"Wait," said Lord Norman, following him. "I am sorry that I spoke harshly to you; but when I saw you so unexpectedly, I remembered one or two similar visits that you had paid me in the old days; I could not forget that I had given you a large sum of money to enable you to leave the country, and—"

"I ought to have stopped there," Raymond finished for him. "So I ought. But, upon my word, Bruce, five years of stone-breaking is sufficient for any man—"

Lord Norman looked at the white hands significantly.

"When I say stone-breaking, of course I speak figuratively. If I haven't been stone-breaking, I have been doing things equally unpleasant."

"Well, I will give you some money," said Lord Norman. "I don't ask you to leave England again, but I do trust that your visits to me will be few and far between."

As he spoke—not unpleasantly, but with a grave smile—he went to a cabinet, and, unlocking a drawer, took out some money, and without counting it laid it on the table.

Raymond's dark eyes gleamed for a moment in a peculiar fashion, which transformed his handsome face into anything but a pleasant one; then, with a sudden laugh, he took up the money and dropped it into his coat pocket.

"Thanks!"

Lord Norman turned to the cabinet and took out a decanter and a glass and some biscuits.

As he did so his sleeve knocked down an ivory box, and a pack of cards fell out. While he was filling the glass with wine, Raymond's eyes were fixed on the cards, and the same gleam which had shone a them before now lit them up.

Slowly he drank the wine and set the glass down, then he stooped and picked up the cards, and in an absent kind of way began to shuffle them.

"Do you remember the ecarte we used to have, Bruce?"

Lord Norman nodded.

"You used to play a good game—almost as good as I did. It is some months since I touched a card."

He glanced at the clock, and turned his face, with a smile of peculiar winningness, half playful, half mournful, to Lord Norman's.

"Bruce, let us have one game! Just for auld lang syne! Humor the returned wanderer upon whom you have lavished your gold—by trying to win it back again!" and he laughed a soft, musical laugh that few would have been able to withstand.

(To be continued.)

and much instructive information may be derived by Canadian farmers from a careful study of the tables. These show, for each of the wheat, barley and oat crops, the yields of grain and straw for the season of 1907, and the average yields for 19 and 20 years of wheat, and for 18 and 19 years of barley and oats, from applications of barnyard manure and of artificial fertilizers. The experiments were made on 19 plots of one-tenth of an acre each, as compared with two plots which have been unmanured from the beginning. The exceptionally unfavorable character of the season of 1907 is reflected in the yields, these being lower than the average on almost every plot. Thus, in the case of wheat, one unmanured plot gave only 5 bushels 40 pounds, as compared with a twenty-year average of 11 bushels 39½ pounds. It is interesting to note, too, that this average yield of wheat on the unmanured plot is nearly 1½ bushels less than that from the unmanured plot at Rothamsted, which is a little over 13 bushels for a period of 63 years. The best results are shown from the use of barnyard manure, the yield from which of wheat, upon the average of 20 years, is practically double that of the unmanured plot. Of the two barnyard-manure plots, the manure is on one plot applied fresh, and on the other in a well-rotted condition. The average yields from the two plots are about the same, the fresh-dung plot showing, however, a slight advantage of about 9 or 10 pounds per acre. But as the quantities applied are of the same weight and as dung in the process of rotting loses weight to the extent of about 60 per cent., there is, evidently, in the long run, a decided economy in the application of dung in the fresh condition.

A feature of the barley experiments is the evidence adduced in favor of common salt. This, applied annually at the rate of 300 pounds per acre, gave, in 1907, a yield of 32 bushels 44 pounds, the average yield for 19 years being 21 bushels 33 pounds. In the oat plots, it is noticeable that, in 1907, the yield from the rotted-dung plot was 64 bushels 4 pounds, as compared with 51 bushels 6 pounds from the fresh-dung plot; but on the average of 19 years, the fresh-dung plot gave a yield larger than the rotted-dung plot by nearly three bushels. Evidently, the special character of the season of 1907 was more favorable that year to the influence of the rotted dung, as in previous years, the yield from the fresh-dung plot has been the greater.

### LIVE STOCK NOTES.

Pulverized charcoal should be set where the fowls can partake of it whenever desired. Besides improving the lustre of the plumage it is a conditioner that has few equals. It also is an absorbent, taking up many of the detrimental gases in the intestines.

Wheat bran is a cheap warm weather food. Old hogs do well on it mixed with water. It is good for growth, or to keep an animal along in a healthy condition, which is all that is necessary with breeding sows. They do not need fattening; the more fat the worse it is for them. It does not cost so much per ton as middlings, and besides, the bulk of manure is about twice as much.

There is nothing that so certainly indicates the enterprise and thrift of a farmer, or the lack of these essentials, as the condition of his team. If the work horses are strong, well kept and well groomed it is safe to set their owner down as a successful husbandman; but if the horses are thin, unkempt, and unfit for the strain put upon them, one may look for their corollary in broken-down fences, poorly tilled fields and decaying farm buildings. These conclusions do not always follow, but the exceptions are no greater than are needed to prove the rule. A team strong enough to do with ease the work required of it, costs no more for maintenance than one unfit for its tasks.

Grandma—"Ah, my dear, the men now are not what they were fifty years ago." Ethel—"Well, granny, you know fifty years will change any man."