

# Fighting Life's Battle;

OR, LADY BLANCHE'S BITTER PUNISHMENT

## CHAPTER IV.—(Con'd.)

Lord Norman, with a shrug of his shoulders, dropped into a chair beside the little table.

The game proceeded. Raymond chatted and Lord Bruce replying now and again in indifferent monosyllables; and the luck, which had smiled on the earl from the beginning, remained faithful until one solitary sovereign stood beside Raymond's elbow.

"That last!" he exclaimed. "Let us see whether it will follow the others, or call them back!"

Strange to say, the luck seemed to change, and game after game fell to Raymond. His face grew flushed, his eyes sparkled. A pile of gold and notes stood on the spot where the solitary sovereign had stood, and Lord Norman, with a smile, rose to fetch some more money from the cabinet.

As he did so he happened to glance in the small mirror over the mantel, and saw something that made him turn crimson and then pale and stern.

He said nothing, however, but brought some notes and gold from the cabinet and returned to his seat.

The game proceeded and reached a point at which the first man who scored would win.

Raymond held the cards in his hand, and looked up suddenly.

"Bruce," he said, "this must be our last game! What do you say now, double or quits?"

Lord Norman nodded, and with a dexterous movement Raymond swept his pile of money into the middle of the table.

"Double or quits!" he said! "By heavens, if I win this I will swear never to play another game—until the next opportunity!" and he laughed. "Are you ready? It is your deal! Now I mean to play my very best."

"Just so," said Lord Bruce, "but before we begin, hadn't we better see whether all the kings are in the pack!" and very quietly, but with terrible strength, he seized Raymond's arm, forced it up, and took the king of diamonds from his sleeve.

There was a moment's awful silence, as the two men looked into each other's eyes; like the reflection of one face, so alike were they in features, but fearfully unlike in expression.

Slowly Lord Norman got up. "Raymond, you were once a gentleman—or I would throw you out of the window. Go!" and he pointed to the door.

Raymond got up slowly, and as if with difficulty, and moistened his lips.

"Bruce, I swear to you that—this is the first time!"

Lord Norman then smiled, a cold awful smile.

"Oh, do not think that I am about to deprive you of your booty, sir. You forget that I could not take it back," and he pointed to the heap of money—"you have touched it!"

Raymond stretched out his trembling hands and drew the heap toward him, then with a sudden gesture of renunciation he raised his dark eyes with the sinister gleam in them.

"No! I will not take it. But some day, perhaps, Lord Norman, you will wish that I had! I always hated you, but, before Heaven, I never hated you as I hate you tonight! Take care, or I shall pay you back for that insult! Take care lest the cheat, whose very touch you deem defilement, prove clever enough to win his revenge!"

Without another word the detected cheat passed out.

Lord Norman stood musing grimly for a few minutes. It was quite impossible to sleep in his present mood, and he thought he would take a turn in the now quiet streets. As he passed westward, he came to a large house standing at the corner of a square. The house was the town residence of the Duchess of Cliefeden, and a ball was in progress. There was just time to look in, and with a listless step he entered, passed through the crowd of footmen, who recognized him and made way with respectful alacrity, and ascended the stairs. The immense saloon was still crowded, though the ball was drawing to a close, and Lord Norman could only make his way slowly through the throng

of dancers and the knots of people chatting and laughing together.

He found the duchess at last. Her grace was looking very sleepy and rather bored, and she almost frowned as Lord Norman came up.

"Aren't you ashamed to come near me?" asked her grace.

"I am. Quite!" he said, quietly.

"And I have come to tell you so." He remained for a few minutes, until he had won her forgiveness for his late appearance, then wandered on again.

"If you are looking for Lady Blanche you will find her in the south anteroom. At least she was there five minutes ago," said her grace; and he went to the anteroom leading to the grand staircase.

Seated on an ottoman was a very beautiful woman, just past girlhood. She was very fair, with thick, silken hair that was almost the color of pure gold, its brightness being relieved by eyes of dark velvety brown, that at certain times were almost black, and eyebrows of rich auburn. In addition to her grace and her beauty, Lady Blanche was possessed of that rarest gift in woman—an exquisite voice, capable of arresting the attention and keeping it as closely fixed while she spoke as if the hearer were under a spell. She was an heiress in her own right, with houses and lands enough to make the penniless sons go wild with longing. They thronged round her, and tried their hardest to win her, but to one and all she had only one answer—the soft, clear monosyllable—

"No!"

Lord Norman stood at the entrance of the anteroom, looking at the group within. They made quite a picture, the little circle of men—young and old—with the beautiful woman in the center, leaning back, with her face moving to and fro listlessly, her dark eyes fixed dreamily on the ground, the colorless cheeks swept by the long, black lashes.

Suddenly she raised her eyes and saw Lord Norman standing in the doorway; it would be too much to say that she blushed, but the faintest of all possible colors flickered in her cheeks, and her eyes grew softer and lighter for a moment before they were lowered to the ground again.

Lord Norman advanced to the group, and the man who had been bending over her and endeavoring to engage her attention, looked up, saw who it was, and with a shrug of resignation at once straightened himself and made room.

Lord Bruce changed greetings with some of the men, then sank down beside Lady Blanche, and in a few minutes the little circle of courtiers, like jackals at the appearance of the lion, quietly vanished.

"Where have you been, Bruce?" she asked.

"I dined at Lady Betty's," he replied.

"Yes, I know," she said, with a smile. "But since? It is nearly three."

"I have been to my rooms." Slowly the dark eyes were raised to his face, rested there for a second or two, as if they were reading every line in it, then the soft voice murmured listlessly:

"Has Lady Betty found a companion yet?"

He leaned back and looked round the room carelessly, too carelessly by far, before he answered:

"Yes."

"Ah, yes, I remember! Mr. Parks told me. A remarkably pretty girl, with black eyes."

"No, they are gray," he said, and in that short speech he had told her all she had been quietly angling for. Her eyes dropped, but not before a swift light had shone in them, and the fan closed and fell, feather-like, in her lap. He had noticed this girl so particularly as to remember the exact color of her eyes.

Unknown, unguessed at by all, there lay hidden behind that calm, placid exterior, a latent passion, which burned within her heart as the fire beneath an Iceland geyser. The fire glowed fiercely at this moment, fed by the oil of jealousy, but there was no trace of emotion in the soft, equal voice, as, rising, she said:

"Will you find papa, Bruce? I would like to go now!"

He got up and gave her his arm, and hunted for Lord Seymour, whom they found yawning in a corner, evidently just awakened from a nap, and with the old peer grumbling drowsily at their heels, they went down to the hall.

With extreme care and gentleness he arranged the fur cloak round the white shoulders, and put her into the carriage.

"You will come and see me tomorrow, Bruce?" she said.

"Yes, of course. Good-night," he replied, and turned away.

The carriage door closed, and the over-fed, fidgety horses sprang forward so suddenly that they nearly knocked down a man who was crossing the road at the moment. The coachman, with a carefully suppressed oath, pulled up short, and the man got to the pavement. As he did so, Lady Blanche looked out to see what was the matter, and the man caught a glimpse of her face, upon which the light from the windows was now streaming. In an instant Raymond, for it was he, recognized the original of a portrait which he had seen in Lord Norman's room. More than that he had caught in the dark eyes and colorless face, a look of passionate jealousy which Lady Blanche had suppressed while Lord Norman had been with her.

It was not much for a man to work upon as a leverage for doing a fellow-mortal an injury, but Oscar Raymond was not an ordinary man, and it was enough for him.

With a smile and a nod, he crossed the road, and, setting off at a jog trot, followed the carriage to Lord Seymour's house, in Eton place.

## CHAPTER V.

Floris was just finishing dressing on this her first morning "in service," and the breakfast bell was clanging through the house, when she heard a knock at her door, and a strong voice, with a decidedly French accent, requesting permission to enter.

Floris opened the door, and saw a tall, thin French girl, with small dark eyes, that instantly fixed themselves on Floris' face, and just as quickly sought the ground again.

"Pardon, mam'selle, I am her ladyship's maid. Her ladyship's"—she paused just a second—"compliments,"—Lady Pendleton had said "love"—and would mam'selle kindly attend at milord's breakfast table? Miladi is unwell."

"Certainly," said Floris. "Will you tell her ladyship that I am sorry she is unwell, please?"

The girl bowed and Floris hurried downstairs. She was late; and it was a bad beginning; but she had slept but little, and that restlessly. The French maid made a pretense of following her, then she stole back to the bedroom, and with deliberate carelessness made a complete examination of the wardrobe, and every article of Floris' which she had left unsecured.

"Ah, yes!" she murmured. "A fine lady, but poor. No rings, no bracelets, no rich dresses; but, beautiful, and miladi will think her an angel! Bah! I shall hate her! I know it! I feel it! Something tells me that Mam'selle Carlisle and Josine will be at daggers drawn. We shall see!" and with a shrug she arranged a wisp of her black, coarse hair in the glass, and left the room.

Floris hurried downstairs to the breakfast-room. A footman was carrying in some hot dishes, and Sir Edward was seated at the table with the Times—containing a fell report of his last night's speech—and a heap of letters.

He rose as she entered, and his weary face lightened for a moment at the vision of fresh, young beauty, and his eyes rested upon the simple cotton dress, that fitted so admirably, with an expression of vague admiration and satisfaction.

"Lady Pendleton is unwell this morning, but no doubt they have told you," he said, as if anxious to avoid any unnecessary words.

"Yes," said Floris, with ready tact; "I am very sorry. Coffee, Sir Edward?"

Sir Edward glanced at her approvingly. Had his wife at last got a treasure? At any rate, a girl with such a face, and such ready tact as to condense a question into two words, must be worth having.

She gave him his coffee, and took some bacon in exchange, and Sir Edward ate his breakfast, looked over his speech, opened his letters, and penciled drafts of the answers in the corner for his secretary to amplify.

Presently he pushed the letters from him, and took up his cup, regarding her attentively.

"I hope you are—that you will be comfortable with us, Miss Carlisle," he said.

"I am sure that I shall, sir," she answered.

He knocked his spoon against his cup thoughtfully, with a preoccupied air.

"If there is anything you require—but my wife will see to that—I meant to say, that if you want anything in the shape of reading, please get what you want from the library. Here is the key."

It was a great concession, if Floris had only known it.

A servant came to the door.

"The brougham, Sir Edward."

He jumped up with the alacrity of a clerk making a dash for his train or bus, and commenced to bundle his letters into a dispatch case with one hand, while he took up his coffee cup with the other.

Floris rose.

"Will you let me put them in for you?" she said, quietly, and neatly and quickly she packed them in orderly fashion in the case.

"Thank you, thank you!" said Sir Edward. "I've a committee meeting this morning at eleven, another at one, and—thank you!" and with a final glance of surprised satisfaction, he seized the case from Floris, his hat and cane from the servant, and hurried out.

The next question now arose, what was she to do next? It occurred to her that she would go up and ask Low Lady Pendleton was. She went and knocked at her ladyship's door, softly, and received the response of "Come in."

"It is I, Lady Pendleton," she said, thinking that she might have mistaken her for the maid.

"Come in. Yes, I knew it was you, my dear; I knew by your knock. All the rest of them hammer," said her ladyship.

She was sitting up in bed, wrapped in an elaborate dressing-robe, with a cup of chocolate by her and a French novel face downward on the satin coverlet.

"Are you better?" asked Floris.

"Yes, it was only a headache. I hope you enjoyed yourself last night, and weren't too tired! I am sure you ought to be very gratified—it was enough to make you vain, my dear."

"To make me vain?" queried Floris.

(To be continued.)

## About the Farm

### COST OF KEEPING A COW.

In Hoard's Dairyman, Burton W. Potter gives his idea on the method of reckoning the cost of keeping a cow per year. Mr. Potter produces some very good arguments in support of his views, but I believe that his method of calculation is not the best one to follow.

By his plan the profit or loss of the entire farm is carried down and placed to the account of the dairy herd. It is a fact that on no farm are profits the same on the various lines of work. Perhaps there are not many farms so operated as not to have a loss on some things. By the plan outlined by Mr. Potter, it is impossible to know exactly which things are producing profit and which loss.

A man may be a very successful grower of grain and forage crops and yet a poor dairyman. His farm operations as a whole may be yielding a profit, but the dairy herd may not be contributing to that profit. On the other hand, the herd may be the source of profit, and the other operations of the farm, of loss. Hence it is essential to know, at least approximately, the cost of producing the various products that make up the output of a dairy farm. No line of animal husbandry that will not pay market value for the food consumed should be followed. Essential as is manure to maintenance of soil fertility, we should not be obliged to take it into account in order to get market price for our grain and forage.

The successful dairy farmer must be a broad gauged man. He must be as skillful at maintaining the fertility of his soil and producing bounteous crops of feed stuffs as he is at breeding, feeding or caring for the dairy herd. This makes it necessary for him to be a student of all the various branches of farming; and the best incentive to study is a calculation of profit and loss. Hence the best method is to charge the cow for what she consumes at market price. This is easy enough on hay and grain but more difficult with ensilage. However, by making an estimate of the yield of corn per acre, one can come reasonably close to the value of the crop.

Cost of production should be determined for all farm products. It is not enough to know that we have a margin of profit on our

farm work as a whole. To be most successful we should know what is paying and what is not. It is the only ground upon which we can base calculations. A knowledge that we are losing on a certain operation will lead to bettering the methods employed or dropping that particular branch out entirely. The men who are counting the costs are endeavoring to increase the profits as well as to cut out the losses. There is no incentive to increased activity all along the line equal to an array of figures showing the cost of farm operations.

I am aware that the argument will be brought up by many that all this keeping of accounts and figuring, means a lot of labor and that the practical man cannot afford it. Now the fact is that the man who does not know where he is, is not practical at all. He can better afford to do this than anything else he does. Many men unwittingly lose enough each year to go a long way toward paying a bookkeeper. But a bookkeeper is not needed. A little careful figuring will demonstrate the facts of farm operations in such a way as to be a revelation to the ordinary farmer. To fail to figure on these operations is "penny wise and pound foolish." Take time enough to count the cost.

### FEEDING THE ORPHAN FOAL.

In the event of the death of the dam at foaling time, the youngster may, by judicious management, be successfully raised by hand. The best substitute for mare's milk is cow's milk, but it must be remembered that the milk of the average cow is much richer in fat than that of the mare, and is deficient in sugar. To correct these conditions, the milk of a freshly-calved cow should be used; always the milk of the same cow, and, if practicable, of a cow whose milk is not rich in fat, and to this add one-fifth of warm water, adding to each pint of that a heaping tablespoon of white granulated sugar, and be always sure to feed it at blood heat. The colt should be fed little and often. If we study the colt when with its mother, we will find that it sucks from ten to a dozen times a day. Therefore, give him half a teacupful every hour at first, and gradually increase the quantity, while feeding less frequently, until he is fed six times a day, and then four times. The best way to teach the foal to drink is by means of a rubber nipple on the spout of a teapot. If scours occur, a little lime-water, warmed, should be added to the milk. To prepare lime-water, slake a lump of lime by pouring a little water on it; then add water and stir. Let this settle for several hours, and the clear water on top is the lime-water to be used. The foal should be kept in a loose box, well bedded, and may be taught to drink from a pail when a month old, and to eat ground oats and bran. When let out to pasture, it should be stabled at night, or protected from rains.

### NOISY AFRICAN NATIVES.

Laughter is Seldom Heard in the Uproar.

Among the African natives there can be nothing done without noise, according to William B. Clarke, who has travelled extensively in Africa.

"It is simply appalling, the rush, the roar, the chatter and the bustle, like Bedlam let loose," Mr. Clarke said. "The principal object of conversation is said to be money, and the hubbub, bawling and uproar in all sorts of tones from shrill and screaming to gruff and growling, accompanied by all sorts of gesticulations with tongue, head and feet, are beyond description.

"It is rather odd, but laughter is almost never heard in this uproar, and as for whistling, it is a lost art. If there are any quarrels they are not to be heard in public, although when a company of natives gets to carry on an animated conversation it appears to the observer as if the next act would be a melee.

"In addition to these natural sounds there are others of an artificial character that are equally familiar to the traveler. Such is the noise of the drums called tom-toms, which are beaten on every occasion, and a kind of pipe about eighteen inches long, with holes like those of a flute, and breathed through in a way that produces a variety of notes of a wild, discordant character. A frightful noise is made by the kaffa men blowing on a big shell."

It was so cold in Denmark in 1403 that the wolves could not stay there, and crossed to Jutland on the ice.