

Fighting Life's Battle;

OR, LADY BLANCHE'S BITTER PUNISHMENT

CHAPTER V.—(Cont'd.)

"Yes, the attention you got. Especially from Bruce! I never knew him so attentive. As a rule he is quiet too savage—a perfect boor! I've known him to sit for an hour and not open his lips, and then get up and go away. I do hope he won't go on that stupid yachting excursion until after the fair! Of course, you will help me at my stall! You will create quite a sensation, my dear, and that will be so nice."

Floris laughed shortly. "Why do you laugh, my dear? Are you laughing at me?"

"Certainly not, your ladyship," said Floris. "But—but I was wondering whether it would not be rather out of place for a companion to make a sensation."

As she spoke the maid came in, with the slightest apology for a knock.

"Lord Norman's in the drawing room, miladi."

Lady Pendleton uttered a little cry of delight.

"So soon! My dear, he has come to say that he will stay over for the fair! I thought that he would! Oh, dear, and I'm not dressed! Do go down and see him now, Floris! Tell him I have a headache—caused by his obstinacy last night."

"Perhaps he will wait until you are dressed," said Floris, in a low voice, "or call again later in the day, Lady Pendleton?"

"Wait till I am dressed!" exclaimed her ladyship with a laugh. "Not he! He wouldn't wait for an empress."

Floris still stood by the window, with Josine looking from one to the other in respectful silence.

"Will you not write him a note?" suggested Floris.

Her ladyship laughed again. "He would scarcely read it! My dear, you don't know Bruce. He is one of the most trying of men. No, you go down and see what you can do with him; please do, and secure him for the fair."

Floris went out of the room and down the stairs. She paused for a moment at the drawing-room door, and the flush gave place to a cold paleness that lent an air of pride and reserve to her sweet, beautiful face.

Lord Norman was sitting across a chair, his arms folded on the back. He was dressed in a riding suit of broad check, and held a whip in his hand.

"Well, Betty," he said, without looking round, "have I roused you from your slumbers sweet and deep?"

Getting no answer he turned his head and saw Floris standing in the middle of the room, the sunlight falling upon her fresh young loveliness, and lighting up streaks of gold in her brown hair.

He sprang to his feet, dropping his whip, and went toward her.

"I beg your pardon," he murmured. "I thought—"

"Lady Pendleton has a headache," my lord, and has not yet left her room," said Floris, and in her effort to seem perfectly self-possessed, her voice sounded cold and repellent.

"I am very sorry," he said.

Then he stood switching his leg with his whip for full a minute.

"I will tell her ladyship," said Floris, and she half turned to the door.

"One moment, Miss Carlisle," he said. "I—" he stopped, and his dark eyes flashed toward her face—"I am favored by chance in thus seeing you so soon—and alone."

Floris stood calm and cold as a statue, but with a heart that fluttered in her bosom like an imprisoned bird.

"I will avail myself of the opportunity which chance has given me, Miss Carlisle, to beg your pardon."

"My pardon?" said Floris.

"Your pardon," he repeated; "and I do beg it most humbly. Last night, in complete ignorance of your name and identity, I made a statement, moved by an impulse which was too strong for my control, that must have sounded in your ears like an impertinence. Miss Carlisle, I humbly beg your pardon!"

Floris raised her eyes for a moment to look at him, then dropped them again.

"It is granted, my lord," she said, coldly. "It was my fault; I ought to have stopped you: I ought

to have told you who and what I was."

"My foe—the woman I have, all unintentionally ruined," he murmured.

"No, my lord, you have done me no injury. If we have suffered, it is through the law."

There was a moment's silence, during which he stood looking at her and ticking his whip restlessly, then Floris raised her eyes.

"Her ladyship requested me to ask you, Lord Norman, if you would remain in England and assist her in the fancy fair?" she said, reluctantly.

He turned toward her.

"Are you interested in this affair? Do you care whether I remain for it, or are you simply the mouth-piece of Betty?"

"It is a matter of perfect indifference to me, my lord, whether you remain or stay," she replied, haughtily.

"Oh, I know that!" he rejoined, nastily. "You misunderstand me! I know that my presence must be hateful to you, and that if you could have your wish you would never see me again. I am quite cognizant of your feelings toward me, alas! But for the fair's sake, would you wish me to stay, Miss Carlisle?"

"I know nothing about it," said Floris.

"Then please tell Betty that I don't care a fig for her fair; that I won't have anything to do with it, and that if she uses my name I will never forgive her," he said, morosely.

"Very good, my lord," she said, and turned to leave him.

He waited until she had reached the door, then spoke her name.

"Wait," he said; "I have changed my mind. You can tell her that I will do what she wants in this fool's business, and she may stick my name, if it's of any use to her, all over the place. Is that any better, Miss Carlisle?"

"I have no doubt that Lady Pendleton will think it much the better answer to her message," said Floris, with perfect self-possession.

"Good-morning, my lord."

"One moment more, please," he said, reluctant to let her go. "I think you said last night that you were fond of music?"

Floris inclined her head. She did not remember saying it; but as it was true she let the assertion pass.

"I have bought a box for the opera for Betty and you," he said. "Will you tell her that I will call for her soon after dinner?"

Floris bowed, without a word of thanks.

He strode toward her and held out his hand.

"In token of your forgiveness, will you shake hands, Miss Carlisle? I have noticed with more pain than I can describe that you have hitherto refused to do so."

Floris extended her soft, white hand slowly, and he took it and held it firmly grasped in his, so firmly that she could not withdraw it.

Lord Norman got on his horse and clattered down the street. He got the best box he could that was vacant, then rode to Covent Garden and purchased a couple of very handsome bouquets.

Directing these to be sent to his rooms, he turned his horse in the direction of Eaton place, and as he neared it, the cloud on his face by no means lightened.

A groom took his horse round to the stable, and a footman, in answer to his inquiry for Lady Blanche, at once admitted him and passed him on to another, who showed him upstairs into a small drawing-room.

Lady Blanche, in her riding habit, was seated at a table writing a letter. She did not rise as he came in, and merely smiled as she held out her hand.

"It was very good of you to come so early," she said, in her soft, low voice, which if he had loved her, would have made him turn and take her in his arms, so inviting and caressing was it.

"Oh, I have nothing else to do," he said. "What did you want me for, Blanche?"

"Well, for one thing to ask you about the Lynches. They have asked us to Ballyfloe for the first fortnight in the autumn. I would not give an answer until I knew whether you were going, because

—well, the reason is too obvious. Are you not immensely flattered, sir?"

"Very," he said, forcing a smile, and feeling uncomfortable and guilty. "My dear Blanche, don't throw the responsibility on me! You might not enjoy yourself, and then what remorse would fall to my lot!"

"Oh, I shall enjoy myself," she said, "especially if you come down."

He beat a tattoo on the window with his whip.

"Then of course I will go down to Ballyfloe."

"How kind of you, Bruce!" she murmured.

He bit his lips. He had just one beautiful woman, who could find not one gracious word for him, and here was another who thanked him for nothing at all. And yet in his heart he felt as if he would rather have had the one gracious word from Floris than the sweetly-voiced thanks of Lady Blanche, and cursed himself for a fool because it was so.

"And what is the other thing?" he asked, more genially.

"Oh, it is about this fancy fair of the duchess's, Bruce. She has asked me to take a stall. Would you go if you were me?"

"My dear Blanche," he protested, with a laugh, "how can I possibly tell what I should really do if I were you? Go I suppose?"

"Very well, I will go. And, Bruce, you won't mind helping me, will you?"

"I should be very glad, Blanche, but I have promised to perform the same vague office for Lady Betty."

She did not relax her smile, but her white eyelids dropped over the brown eyes for an instant.

"Really! Well, I must look out for some one else."

"Were you going for a ride?" he asked, getting away from the very awkward subject.

"Yes, and you are riding, too! Do you mean to come with me, Bruce?"

"If you will allow me," he said.

She looked pleased, and, crossing the room, rang the bell and ordered her horse. As she did so she saw something sticking in the lining of his hat.

It was the box ticket, which, after the manner of forgetful men, he had placed in this conspicuous position. She bent forward and looked at it, then came back to him.

"Are you going to the Crown-brilliant to-night, Bruce?"

"No," he replied. "I am tired of the Crown-brilliant. They always have twice as many as the rooms will hold; last time I was nearly suffocated."

"Come and dine and spend the evening with us, then," she said.

"I can't Blanche, to-night; I have an engagement."

"I am sorry," she said sweetly.

"The horse, my lady," announced the servant.

Lord Norman went for his hat; but Lady Blanche begged him to wait for a moment.

"I have forgotten a note I want to write," she said, and in her slow, graceful manner she sat down and wrote a line or two, declining the Crown-brilliant, and on half a sheet of paper scribbled, "Get a box at the opera for to-night."

"I am quite ready now," she said, and as they passed out she handed the note and the paper to the footman.

The park was full as they entered the ring, and hate flew off the men lounging over the rails as the two passed.

They walked and cantered round the ring of tan for an hour, she bowing to the endless string of friends and acquaintances, he noticing no one, then, with a sigh, she said:

"You must not stay any longer, Bruce! You want to go to your club for lunch! It is very good of you to have come with me; I know how you hate this kind of thing!" He started slightly.

"Nonsense!" he said, but all the same he turned his horse at once.

As they rode down Eaton place, a man, who had been lounging at the corner smoking a cigar, looked up and stared at them, then, as they came abreast of him, he put up his hand as if to arrange his hat more comfortably, and, in doing so, completely hid his face.

Neither of them saw him, and if Lord Norman had done so, he would not have recognized Oscar Raymond.

It was Floris' first experience of theatre going, and her heart beat fast with curiosity and excitement; but amid it all she could not help noticing the calm, masterful way with which Lord Norman escorted them through the crowded entrance in the foyer.

Two attendants ushered them into their box, the overture was just beginning, and dazzled and excited, Floris leaned forward and gazed fixedly at the stage. As she did so,

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a score of opera glasses were leveled at the box, and Lady Betty smiled significantly at Lord Norman.

"I told you so," she whispered, leaning back to him. "I knew she would create a sensation! She is the most beautiful girl here, Bruce!"

He frowned, and, as if by accident, drew the outer curtain so that it screened Floris. The opera commenced, and all Floris' eyes and soul were concentrated on the stage.

The sad, miserable story of human frailty and human suffering developed itself, and amid the most intense silence, Neilsson sang her great song.

As she had finished, a tremendous uproar of applause arose, and Floris, moved beyond herself, raised her bouquet and threw it, with a passionate gesture, at Neilsson's feet. It was done on the impulse of the moment; the next she looked round almost with affright, but Lord Norman bent over her with a smile.

"That was nicely done," he said. "See! she is smiling up at you!"

Floris bent over the box and met the great prima donna's smile, and her heart seemed to stand still. Then a huge wave of remorse swept over her, she had thrown away the flowers he had given her.

Almost as if he had read the thought he said:

"You could not have applied them to a better use, Miss Carlisle. Besides, they were your own to do as you wish with."

The curtain drew up on the last act, and Floris was bending forward to catch the first notes of the music when, suddenly, some person entered the box exactly opposite their own.

She would not have noticed the fact, but at the moment she saw Lady Betty lean back and catch at Lord Norman's arm, and heard her whisper gently in a startled voice:

"Bruce! Look! There is Blanche!"

Then Floris turned her eyes from the stage to the opposite box, and saw a beautiful face with dark brown velvety eyes fixed, with almost fierce, scornful scrutiny, upon her.

(To be continued.)

About the Farm

ARSENICALS AND LIME-SULPHUR WASH.

Lead arsenate is becoming more and more popular as an insecticide. There are several good reasons why it should, but it is still an unsettled point as to whether it is wise to mix it with the lime-sulphur wash. Results obtained from the mixture have not been uniform; in some cases the foliage has been badly burned, while in others no injuries have been observed.

Prof. O. S. Watkins, of the University of Illinois, has done considerable work on this subject, and, while his investigations are not completed, he is discouraging the mixing of these two materials as much as possible. Dr. W. M. Scott, of the Bureau of Plant Industry, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, states that lead arsenate may be used with self-boiled lime-sulphur washes for spraying apples, but he found, in his experiments, that the fruit and foliage were badly burned when applied to the peach.

J. K. Haywood, of the Bureau of Chemistry, Washington, states: "We have made a study of the reactions which occur on mixing these two compounds, and have found that there is always more or less decomposition, some lead sulphide and calcium arsenate being formed. When heated, all of the lead is converted into the sulphide. The calcium arsenate is somewhat soluble, unless an excess of lime is present, in which case it is rendered insoluble. The lead sulphide formed, being insoluble, would remove some of the sulphur from the solution, but this amount would be relative-

ly small, and would probably not materially lessen its efficiency. It would appear, therefore, that these materials could be used together with safety, in the presence of an excess of lime, in all cases where they can be used individually."

It will be noticed that Dr. Scott states that the lead arsenate may be mixed with the self-boiled lime-sulphur wash for spraying apple trees. In this case there would be an abundance of lime, and this conclusion would agree with the findings of Haywood, in that the excess of lime would prevent the arsenate from coming into solution. It is quite probable that if the lead arsenate were mixed with home-boiled lime-sulphur washes there would also be a sufficient excess of lime to insure the insolubility of the calcium arsenate, and thus make safe mixture for spraying purposes, especially for the apple.

Lead arsenate is used presumably in this mixture, because of the qualities which have made it so popular as an insecticide. It is evident that, when mixed with the lime-sulphur wash, it is not lead arsenate which goes on the tree, but calcium arsenate; at least, a very large proportion of the lead arsenate would be changed into calcium arsenate. This being true, it would appear as though it would be much more economical to mix white arsenic, dissolved in washing soda (sodium arsenite) with the lime-sulphur wash. This is commonly done with the Bordeaux mixture, and the lime present in the Bordeaux is sufficient to insure the insolubility of the arsenic. I do not think that this mixture would be safe on the more tender foliage, but it would probably be suitable for spraying apples. We intend to experiment with the mixture this summer, and should be glad to hear from anyone who has tried it.

In the case of mixing Paris green and the lime-sulphur wash, the Paris green appears to be entirely broken up, some of the arsenic going into solution as arsenic sulphide, part of the copper, also, goes into solution, the remainder being rendered insoluble as sulphide. The presence of an excess of lime in this case does not entirely render the arsenic insoluble. The use of Paris green with lime-sulphur wash, therefore, would seem to be of doubtful expediency. From what has been said, it is evident that the use of the arsenicals with lime-sulphur wash is still in the experimental stages. Probably the arsenate of lead, in the presence of an excess of lime, may be safe for spraying apples. Paris green cannot be recommended, and the use of white arsenic dissolved in washing soda should not be tried, except experimentally.—R. Harcourt, Ontario Agricultural College, in Farmer's Advocate.

CLEAN POTATOES FOR SEED.

Clean, sound seed is most desirable for all farm crops. Sometimes it is difficult to procure potatoes that are entirely free from scab. The spores of this pest can be killed either with formaldehyde in solution, or with formaldehyde and potassium permanganate. For treating in a small way, the seed can be placed in burlap sacks and soaked for two hours in a solution made of 1 pound of formalin (40 per cent. solution of formaldehyde) to 30 gallons of water.

For treating larger quantities, crate the potatoes and place them in a tight box or room. Place 24 ounces of potassium permanganate in a sufficiently large vessel, and on this pour four pints of formalin solution. This is enough for a room of 1,000 cubic feet capacity. Formaldehyde gas is liberated, and kills the fungus. The room should be closed, and the potatoes left exposed for 36 to 48 hours. The sprouting power of the seed is not injured.

Every boy should learn to write, and as a man he should learn when not to write.

Occasionally an astute person will make no attempt to see himself as others see him, because he prefers to let well enough alone.

A man never realizes what a small potato he really is until he hears in a roundabout way what the girl whom she could have married but didn't think of him.