

# Fighting Life's Battle;

OR, LADY BLANCHE'S BITTER PUNISHMENT

## CHAPTER XII.—(Cont'd)

The door opened and Lady Blanche entered. As he turned, she laid a bank note on the table and pointed to it.

"Take it," she said, in a low voice. "When you need more—"

"I shall not hesitate to ask you for it, my lady. Our interests are mutual. No war—even such a little comedy of an affair as this—can be carried on without money."

He took up the note. It was one for fifty pounds, and his eyes glistened.

"Josine must have a large slice of this," he said, musingly. "Good-day, Lady Blanche. You will find that your confidence in me has not been misplaced."

That evening Josine, having received permission to visit "an aged grandmother who was sick," went to spend an hour or two with her friend, the landlady of the "Three Pigeons." She passed through the public or coffee-room with her usual noiseless, quick step, very much like the tread of a self-possessed cat, and entered the little parlor at the farther end.

As she did so she shot a glance toward the compartment nearest the parlor, and a faint smile of satisfaction gleamed in her black eyes as she saw an old white-haired gentleman, with spectacles, seated at a table, diligently perusing a Parisian newspaper.

He looked up as she passed, and raised his hat, sweeping it earthward in the French fashion; and Josine just inclined her head; but, to make up for this curt acknowledgment of his courteous salute, she made a sharp, swift gesture with her long, thin, supple hand.

His quick eyes caught it, and he nodded as he resumed his paper; but after a few minutes he laid it down, and with a slow and listless manner he entered the little parlor in which sat Josine and the landlady, the latter of whom greeted him with a smile and a shrug of the shoulders, as if she were greeting an eccentric but harmless old man with whom it was pleasant to have a chat.

The old gentleman sat down and began to talk about the latest foreign news, speaking in French, Josine listening in silence, the landlady uttering the usual ejaculation. Presently she rose to attend to some customers, and the old gentleman dropped the news of the day abruptly and leaned over to Josine.

"Well, mademoiselle?" he said. "Speak in English," said Josine. "There is not one, or few, who understand it."

"True. You are always discreet," he said, with a beautiful French accent. "Have you what I want?"

Josine regarded him with a cunning look in her black eyes, then her head dropped on one side, musingly.

"Have I got what you want? I don't know. Last time we met, you asked me to procure some specimens of handwritings."

"And you have got them?" he said.

"And I have got them," she assented.

"Ah, thanks. A million thanks!" he murmured, holding out his hand. "Wait a minute," she said, with a short nod, "you have not got them yet!"

He looked at her for a moment, then he took some sovereigns from his pocket, counted out ten and laid them on the table, covering them with his hand.

"See!" he said, with a smile. "Exchange is a practice of all not say letters, any scrap of paper bearing the handwritings of Lady Pendleton and Miss Carlisle, the two friends I have heard you mention—and this little bagatelle is yours."

"Put five more sovereigns, monsieur, and they are yours," she said.

He added them slowly, and lifted his hand.

Josine pushed the letters across to him with one set of fingers, and clutched the money with the other. He laughed softly at her eagerness, and unfolded the papers. There were three; a scrap of memorandum written by Lady Pendleton, a short note from Lord Norman, containing a few lines accepting an invitation, and a copy of some song verses in Floris' handwriting.

He glanced at them with a face from which every trace of expres-

sion had vanished, then he put them in his pocket, and nodded.

"Thanks. I am now satisfied. I shall study these specimens and make my notes—"

He stopped, for a broad grin spread itself over Josine's face.

"Oh, do not trouble to play the comedy out, monsieur," she said. "It is of no consequence to me what you want them for. You have them; I have the good money. We are quits—for the present. For the present! Shall I be too rash if I prophesy that it will not be long before monsieur requires my assistance again?"

He looked at her, then he got up and stood silent and smiling.

"Mademoiselle is observant," he said, with a bow. "Yes, it may be; and if I should, mademoiselle will give me her valuable aid?"

"No," said Josine, showing all her teeth. "I will sell it to you, though."

"Ah, but that is the same," he said, and with a sweep of his hat, he stole out.

Josine sat and watched him for a moment, then her eyes gleamed.

"Observant! One need not be so exceedingly observant to remark that for an old man, so very white-headed an old man, monsieur has very bright eyes, and hands—bah! hands white and smooth as a man's of five and twenty!"

## CHAPTER XIII.

The Lynches of Ballyfloe were extremely popular people.

Sir Joseph had started in life as an errand boy in a merchant's office; had, by the usual process, developed into a full-blown merchant himself, and, by a happy venture in jute or cotton—some said tallow—had succeeded in making a pile which rumor put at a round million.

Ballyfloe was one of the finest estates in Scotland. The house was a magnificent one, built by a great Scotch lord, and so added to and improved by Sir Joseph that it had become a palace. In addition to a deer forest and trout streams, the Lynches had a wonderful French cook, and a famous library of books and gallery of pictures, so that the net was constructed to catch and hold all sorts of fish; and no one considered himself happy unless he could look forward to a fortnight in the autumn at Ballyfloe.

This particular party had been organized to meet Lord Bruce, who was a special favorite with Sir Joseph, and comprised some of the best known of the best set—lords and ladies, painters and poets—and the arrival of Lord Bruce's betrothed was looked forward to with the keenest interest.

Bruce, of course, traveled down with them, and after a journey which Floris thought so short as to seem one of a few miles only, they reached the nearest station to Ballyfloe. Here they found a magnificently-appointed carriage with an outrider, and a fourgon for the luggage.

After a short drive they arrived at the house. The carriage door was thrown open, and down the lane of servants Sir Joseph marched himself to hand the ladies out.

"I am very delighted to see you," he said, with a stiff bow, and a pleasant smile on his simple yet shrewd face. "Lord Norman, I hope the ladies are not used! Lady Pendleton, it was extremely kind of you to honor me. My wife is very anxious to see you, Miss Carlisle," and with a lady on each side of him, the man who had commenced life by lighting an office fire and dusting desks, led them into the magnificent hall.

Here they were met by Lady Lynch, a pleasant little body, who seemed as homely amid her grand surroundings as if she were in a suburban semi-detached villa.

"And this is Miss Carlisle?" she said, looking up at Floris as she held her hand. "My dear, I am very glad to see you. Lord Bruce is a very old friend of my husband's and of mine. I don't think there is any one my husband thinks so highly of, or looks up to more than his lordship, and I hope you will like us. We will do all we can to make your stay with us pleasant to you—oh, yes, for our own sakes, so that we may induce you to come again."

Floris' eyes filled, and she pressed the large hand, which was as soft as it's owner's heart.

"I am sure I shall be very happy, Lady Lynch," she said, "and I am very glad to come."

"Thank you, my dear! And now you shall go to your rooms."

From hall to hall and corridor to corridor they were led with almost royal state to their apartments—apartments such as Floris had never even imagined—and were told that they had an hour in which to prepare for dinner.

In the drawing-room Floris and Lady Betty were soon surrounded; it was generally understood that Floris was to be the lady to be specially honored this autumn at Ballyfloe, and the worldlings were eager to pay their homage.

Another girl might have been rendered vain, might have been in danger of having her head turned, by the attention and adulation lavished upon her; but, as usual, Floris received and often parried it with her simple, unassuming modesty.

Presently from the other end of the room entered Lady Blanche.

She was splendidly dressed, as usual—with greater care perhaps than usual—and as she glided toward them many a glance of admiration was directed toward her.

With a sweet smile, that was almost childlike in its gladness, she came up to the group and kissed Floris.

"I am so glad you have come!" she murmured. "We have all been expecting you so eagerly."

It was not until the dinner—a grander banquet than any that in all past ages had merited the name—had commenced, that Floris noticed that Lady Blanche was not looking so well as when she had seen her for the first time in her box at the opera.

There was a look of thoughtfulness almost amounting to care in the eyes, and a strange, proud smile on the lips that Floris had thought incapable of expressing aught but complete and perfect repose.

Once during the dinner, as she was listening to Lord Norman, who was talking to Lady Glenloona, Floris looked up and caught Lady Blanche's eyes fixed on her face with a curious expression.

It was not one of dislike exactly, but rather one of close watchfulness. Of course, it instantly changed to a smile, but that the look had actually shone in her dark eyes Floris felt assured.

Some one else noticed it also, for as the ladies trooped off to the drawing-room, Floris felt Lady Betty's fan on her arm, and heard her whisper:

"How strange she looked tonight—Blanche, I mean!"

"Strange?" said Floris.

"Yes," said Lady Betty, pulling her down to an ottoman. "I have never seen her look like that. Do you know I'm afraid Blanche is up to mischief!"

"Aren't you inclined to be unjust to Lady Blanche?" Floris said, gently. "You don't like her, you know—"

"No, I don't. We never could get on," assented Lady Betty, "and I am always suspicious of her; but I dare say I am unjust—oh, I've no doubt I am. After all, what mischief can she do?" and she looked at Floris, thoughtfully.

Floris shook her head.

"What indeed!" she said, laughing. "One would think, hearing us talk, that she was a naughty schoolgirl in perpetual danger of playing some trick or other."

"Hem!" said Lady Betty. "Hush!" here she comes, and she got up to make room for Lady Blanche.

If there had been any malice in the glance which Floris had met across the dinner table, her manner atoned for it now, if it did not entirely wipe out all remembrance of it.

Under the influence of the rare smile and the soft, dulcet voice, Floris found herself lulled into a belief that the beautiful creature could not possibly be guilty of anything approaching deceit, and she was in that state of mind when the door opened and the gentlemen entered.

She saw Lord Norman look around and discover her, and then come across the room with the directness of, and the speed of an arrow from a bow.

"Well?" he said. "You two talking scandal?"

"We have been having a charming chat," said Lady Blanche, "so nice and absorbing that we had quite forgotten you."

"All right," he said, "then I'll go away again."

"No, you need not do that," she said; "you can sit down and talk to Floris. I am going to play," and with a slow, graceful ease she glided to the piano and commenced playing.

"It is awfully warm," he said.

"Let us go into the conservatory; we can hear Blanche's waltz just as well there. What a crowd it is! People come and go here as if it were open house for all the world."

He drew her arm through his, and they made their way into the large glasshouse, which ran the whole length of one end of the room.

There, leaning against a marble statue of Venus, he stood and looked down at her, talking to her in that softened voice which is the best medium for love's confidences; and Floris, with half-closed eyes, sat and listened, forgetful of the world outside, even of the little world so near them.

Suddenly while she was sitting there, she heard a strange sound behind her, the sound as of some one trying to open a window.

For a moment or two she paid no attention to it, and it was Lord Norman who remarked it.

"There is an awful draught all of a sudden," he said. "Some one has opened a window."

And she turned and walked some steps behind her.

(To be continued.)

## About the Farm

### FOR AND ABOUT POULTRY.

A good insecticide can be made by putting a pint of kerosene in a gallon of whitewash.

One good breed of chickens on a farm is worth more than ten different breeds.

When mud and slush cover the chicken lot and pens great care must be taken to avoid rheumatism among the fowls. A little straw thrown on the floor and over the yards may hinder serious trouble in the flock.

Pulverized charcoal should be set where the fowls may partake of it when desired. Besides brightening the plumage it is a conditioner that has few equals.

Unless checked in time chicken lice will multiply with almost incredible rapidity. A hundred will increase to a million if not eradicated before they get a good start.

Learn to profit by your mistakes. If you made a mistake last year try not repeat it. Success in the poultry business is largely due to avoiding past mistakes and the mistakes of others.

A spoonful of kerosene should always be kept in the drinking water at this time of the year. Many diseases are held in check in this way. The fowl gets a little of the oil every time it gets a drink.

The chicken crop is considered by the average poultry raiser as a small issue, hardly worthy of consideration or deserving of thoughtful attention, and, true to the law of compensation, fowls under such management yield no more profit than is commensurate with what has been accorded them.

In speaking of the droppings as an indicator of the health of the flock, the dropping should be of consistency to hold their shape, but should not be solid. In color they should be dark, tapering off into greyish and white. If the droppings are dark with red splashes of mucous in them feed less meat.

If the droppings are soft or pasty and yellowish or brownish, feed more meat and less starchy food. In case of greenish, watery diarrhoea you should investigate the sanitary conditions and the water supply.

### DANISH BUTTER.

A Scottish farmer, who has made a study of dairy conditions in Denmark, gives the following as the chief reasons why Danish butter is uniform and good:

1. The cows receive roots all winter and thus the butter is soft and not hard and dry, as when fed on hay and cakes alone.

2. The milk when it comes into the factory must be pasteurized to 185 degrees F. and by this means turnips and other flavors are got rid of.

3. The cream is cooled to about 64 degrees F. and a starter of lactic acid used. The cream is only kept for 24 hours. Thus it will be seen that when the starter is there and the cream only kept for a short period, no bad flavors can raise.

4. The barrels the day before being used are steamed, and the inside receives a coating of moist lime, which is washed off next day before the butter is put in and after washing, the barrels are rubbed with salt. Thus the odor from the wood is to a large extent prevented and does not flavor the outside of the butter.

The paper which lines the barrels is steeped in salt water for two

days before use; also the churns, butter workers and cream tubs are coated with moist lime after the cream has been washed off. This is allowed to remain on for about ten minutes, when it is washed off with boiling water.

All barrels have printed on the outside, "Danish Butter" along with the registered number of the dairy it came from, so that if there were any complaints they could be traced right back to the dairy the butter came from.

### FLY-SCREENED MILK.

"Screen your dairies against flies" is the warning which has been sent out to the dairymen who send milk to the district of Columbia, U. S. A., by Health Officer W. C. Woodward.

Concerning the screening of dairies the letter says:

"The department considers that under the above section all dairy rooms are required to be effectually screened against flies. Flies whose habits cause them to visit places where filth abounds, such as manure piles and other accumulations of refuse are known to carry not only small particles of refuse or filth on their bodies and legs, but also to carry other contaminating matter such as germs which cause disease. Thus by excluding the flies from your dairy you remove a source of contamination by dirt and disease germs, both of which are liable to alter unnecessarily the quality of your milk."

### WHEN J. B. GETS ANXIOUS.

Naval Scares Have Thrown John Bull Into Fits.

The present naval scare is not the only one that has startled John Bull out of the usual state of placid equanimity he maintains in regard to such matters.

Indeed, his 1809 attack of the jumps is but a flea-bite by comparison with that of 1884, when, owing to the exposures of a certain evening newspaper, he became suddenly convinced that his vaunted supremacy in ships and guns existed on paper only.

His alarm and anger upon that occasion knew no bounds, culminating, some six months afterwards, in his kicking out of office the Government responsible, and this notwithstanding the fact that large and important additions to the Navy had been authorized in the meantime.

Precisely ten years later another similar revelation led to the founding of the Navy League.

One of the earliest naval scares, occurred in 1652, when the Dutch Admiral Van Tromp sailed through the Straits of Dover with a broom at his masthead, to denote that he had swept the English from the seas. The rough-and-ready insolence of the proceeding stirred men's blood, and in a trice battle-ships were building in every suitable port and inlet from John o' Groat's to Land's End, while inland forest and dell rang unceasingly with the sound of innumerable axes being laid to the roots of the sturdy oaks that were to furnish timber for the new English Navy, destined presently to destroy that belonging to Holland, and its too presumptuous commander along with it.

Another big naval scare, due to our then crack battleship, the Captain, having turned turtle in the Bay of Biscay, occurred in 1870. It resulted in the introduction of a new type of vessel, the Monarch, whose reserve of equilibrium was 16 to 1 as compared with that of the Captain class. This was obviously going to the other extreme.

But such, unfortunately, is the usual result of these popular panics. This one gave us ships shaped like cheese-boxes, as safe as they were slow, and withal tremendous "coal-eaters."

Fortunately for us we were not at war while they held the seas.—Pearson's Weekly.

### HAD ALL THE SYMPTOMS.

The learned hobo was dispensing knowledge for the benefit of his less enlightened companion.

"Have you ever been bitten by a dog?" he asked.

"Many's de time," replied the unenlightened one.

"Are you not afraid of hydrophobia?"

"Nix on de hydro."

"Tis a curious disease. When a person contracts hydrophobia the very thought of water makes him sick."

"Is dat on de level? Youse ain't stringin' me?"

"It is a scientific fact."

"Den I bet I've had it all my life, an' never knowed yot was de matter wid me!"

A male gossip is nearly always looking for a job.