

# Fighting Life's Battle;

## OR, LADY BLANCHE'S BITTER PUNISHMENT

### CHAPTER XVI.—(Cont'd)

There was a basket of flowers on the table, and Lady Blanche was making a faint pretence of arranging them, but her whole attitude was eloquent of impatience and deep-rooted anxiety.

At the sight of her Floris drew back with a long breath of fear and doubt.

At every step Josine was making good her words, was producing evidence of the truth of her story.

"Is mademoiselle satisfied so far?" she whispered, close in Floris's ear. "Here is Lady Blanche, as I promised she would be, waiting—waiting for whom? We shall see! Hush!"

As she spoke Floris heard a man's footstep approaching the room from the other side.

Her heart gave a great bound of dread and doubt, then seemed to stand still, for the door opened and Lord Norman, as she thought, entered hurriedly and went up to Lady Blanche.

Floris uttered a cry; for a moment she did not move, she simply stood as if turned to stone, and gazed into the dusky room. Then she staggered and would have fallen, but Josine caught her with one hand, and with the other, with all a Frenchwoman's ready wit, dashed her handkerchief in a fountain and held it to Floris' forehead.

As he entered, Lady Blanche started and turned toward him. "Have you come back? Oh, why did you?" she murmured, and her voice was so low and tremulous that Floris could scarcely catch it.

"Yes, I have come back," she heard him say, huskily, as if he were laboring under great excitement. "I said that I would do so. Why are you so surprised to see me? Did you think I should break my word, Blanche?"

"I hoped you would not come," she faltered.

"And you are not glad to see me? Ah, Blanche, you will not fail me! Think of all I am risking for your sake, my good name and fame, my very honor! Come, Blanche, tell me that you are steadfast!" and he put his hand on her arm pleadingly.

Lady Blanche shrank slightly. Floris noticed it with a vague wonder.

"Blanche! dear Blanche! there is no time to lose!" he went on, still in the husky voice which Floris scarcely recognized as Bruce's. "The horses are waiting, all is arranged! Why are you not ready? You promised me that you would be ready to start!"

"Bruce, I cannot!" she panted, with a sudden gesture of despair. "I cannot do it. You ask too much. Oh, Bruce! think what all this means. Think of the scandal and—think of her. Poor girl! my—my heart bleeds for her! No, Bruce, I cannot do it. I love you, and you know it; but you ask too much! You must marry Floris Carlisle, Bruce! It is too late to draw back now!"

"Too late!" he echoed. "It is not too late! You speak only of yourself and her. You do not think of me. Do you forget that you are bidding me ruin my whole life? That you are sending me to marry a girl I do not love, whom I shall learn to hate? Come, Blanche, I cannot endure this life of deceit any longer! There must be an end to it sooner or later, and this is the best end. The world may talk let it! You and I don't care for the world! and as to Floris, she will soon learn to forget me. Heaven may send her a better man; it might do that easily enough, goodness knows! Come, Blanche, get your things, everything is ready."

"No, no, no!" she panted. "I will not, I cannot! Go back, Bruce, go back and rejoin the party; make any excuse you like for your absence! I will not go with you. I cannot! I was wrong and wicked to promise! But, thank Heaven, it is not too late! Go back, Bruce! We—we shall always be friends. You—you will be happy with her, poor girl!"

"Is this your last word?" he demanded, drawing back and looking at her, his face still turned from Floris.

"Yes, my last, Bruce," faltered Lady Blanche.

He stood for a moment as if pondering on some way to shake her

resolution, then suddenly Lady Blanche seized his arm.

"Bruce! There is some one coming! Go, go at once! If the servants see you here—"

With a smothered oath the man who was so like Lord Norman that even Floris could not in the dim light distinguish between them, seized his hat and whip and strode from the room; and Lady Blanche, almost as if she had suddenly grown suspicious of listeners, glided to the curtains and let them fall over the opening.

The little comedy—or tragedy—was over.

### CHAPTER XVII.

With slow, weary steps Floris made her way to her room, Josine following her, and shrank exhausted upon the bed.

That there had been any foul play she never suspected for a moment. The resemblance between Oscar Raymond and Lord Norman was so close that it had deceived many of Lord Norman's intimate friends in broad daylight, and the room in which the little comedy had been enacted was but dimly lighted.

"Will mademoiselle permit me to get her a glass of water?" Josine inquired, in a low voice.

Floris shook her head.

"How soon—can I leave?" she asked, painfully.

Josine pricked up her ears, and glanced at the clock.

"There is the afternoon mail," she said. "But will not mademoiselle wait and see Lady Pendleton?"

"No, no!" responded Floris, with a shudder. "I wish to see no one. I wish to go before they return—at once. Will you?"—she hesitated; she hated asking this girl to do anything for her, for she loathed her with a loathing that was unaccountable to her—"will you see if I can do so?"

Josine stole out of the room and went swiftly to Lady Blanche's, and with a slight knock she entered.

Lady Blanche was seated at her table with her proud head bowed in her hands.

Hearing Josine's step, she started and rose up, facing her with angry indignation.

"How dare you come here—!" she began, then her voice failed and her eyes drooped before the cool, black ones. "Well?" she asked, gloomily.

Josine smiled and shrugged her shoulders.

"It is all right, miladi; we have succeeded capitally. Ah, but miladi should have been an actress! She almost deceived Josine, much less the poor Miss Carlisle."

Floris, left alone, sat for some minutes in the same half-stupefied condition. At present she could scarcely grasp all that had happened; but with every minute it was growing upon her, and she was learning to realize that her lover, the man she had loved—alas! still loved—had adored, had looked up to as something more than human—was false, unutterably false and base, and that he had been guilty of treachery so vile as to be almost inconceivable.

Like a lost soul thrust from paradise, she groped in the darkness of her misery, and could see no ray of light or hope; all her future lay dark, dark before her!

"If I could die now," she murmured—"if I had died last night, before I knew of this! But no, I shall not die, I shall live and suffer—suffer! There will be no forgetfulness for me; all my life I shall carry this sorrow with me; all my life will be embittered by the memory of these few short, happy weeks! Oh, Bruce! Bruce! if you had but left me alone—if you had but had mercy on me. But you had none. Heaven knows I avoided you. I did not, as other women had done, set a snare for your love. A hundred times I fought against it; but you had no mercy; you taught me to love you, and now it is too late to unlearn that lesson. Oh, Bruce, may Heaven forgive you—may Heaven deal more kindly with you than you have dealt with me!"

And with this prayer in her wounded heart, she rose, and in dull, numbed fashion, began mechanically to collect her clothes.

A few minutes afterward Josine

"Ah, that is better!" she said, encouragingly. "Mademoiselle is recovering! So, so! But mademoiselle must rest—Josine will see to the packing for her."

And, with noiseless readiness, she began to fill the large imperial.

Floris sank on to the bed and watched her with listless apathy.

"There!" said Josine with a gesture of satisfaction. "All is ready! And now"—she left the room and returned almost immediately with a glass of wine—"mademoiselle must drink this, just to please poor Josine!" she pleaded, as Floris refused it with a shake of the head.

"Ah, but yes; mademoiselle must not count too much on her strength! Supposing she should break down and have to be carried back! Ah, but that would be dreadful!"

Floris stretched out her hand for the glass with a shudder.

Josine watched her as she drank the wine and then, and not till then, drew the telegram from her pocket.

"See, mademoiselle!" she said, smoothly. "This has just come; I hope it is not bad news!"

Floris took it apathetically, and opened it, then started up with a wild cry.

"Heavens, mademoiselle! What is it?" exclaimed Josine, with admirably feigned anxiety.

"My mother!" gasped poor Floris. "My mother is ill—dying! quick! I must go at once!"

Josine held up her hands, with a French oath, and hurried forward with Floris' jacket and hat.

"Tut! tut! but that is bad news! But it may not be that the poor lady is dying. Oh, mademoiselle makes too much of it; she sees the worst."

"Read!" panted Floris. "It says 'Come at once! Come at once, and I am hundreds of miles away! Oh, Heaven! what shall I do? What shall I do? Quick! or I shall go mad!'"

"Yes, yes!" exclaimed Josine, genuinely anxious, for she dreaded lest some one should return, and a 'scene' be the result. "Yes, yes! but for the love of Heaven, be calm, mademoiselle! It may not be so bad; and think, it was impossible for mademoiselle to leave earlier! Ah, but I am so sorry!"

Floris scarcely heard her. With feverish eagerness she hurried on her things, and made straight for the door.

Josine caught up her own cloak and bonnet, which she had brought in with her.

"And Lady Pendleton—the message?"

"Give her this!" panted poor Floris, throwing the telegram on the table. "Tell her—I will write." And almost like one distraught, she made her way into the hall.

The footmen and hall porter stared at her white face, and hurried to the door, Josine finding time, as she followed, to whisper:

"Bad news. Mademoiselle is summoned home!"

The brougham door was shut with a bang and the pair of horses dashed toward the station.

Floris shrank into a corner and sat with clasped hands and closed eyes, and Josine was too wise to utter a word.

Presently the train came up. It was an express from the far north, and several passengers got out to stretch their legs for a moment or two.

Josine had taken a first-class ticket and found an empty compartment.

Floris got in, and would have gone without a word, but Josine leaned forward and said, with a quiver in her voice, which might have been due to remorse, but was more probably caused by excitement:

"Good-bye, mademoiselle! You—you—will not forget your promise to poor Josine?"

Floris looked at her vaguely, then she shook her head and turned away.

"I will not forget. No!" she said.

The guard blew his whistle, and Josine stepped back.

As she did so a gentleman rushed out of the station with a sandwich in his hand, and had almost passed Josine on his way to his carriage when he saw her and stopped short.

"Josine!" he exclaimed. "Is that you?"

Josine—her nerves were getting unstrung—uttered a cry.

"Milord Clifford!" she cried, turning pale.

"Time's up, my lord!" said the guard, who knew Bertie well.

"All right," he said; "one moment."

Then he turned to Josine.

"Are you going up to town? You had better get in!"

"No, no! It is mademoiselle!" returned Josine, with agitation.

"Mademoiselle?" he repeated. "Who?" and he went to the window and there saw Floris.

With a sudden pallor he looked from her to Josine.

"It is Miss Carlisle!" he said. "And she is going up to London alone!"

"We really must be starting, my lord!" said the guard coming up again.

"Yes, yes!" said Josine, hurriedly. "Alone, milord!"

"Why?" he demanded, with a troubled frown.

Josine bit her lip.

"Go, milord!" she said. "The train will start without you."

He opened the door of Floris' carriage, nodded to the guard, and as the train started, jumped in.

Josine stood looking after the train with a bewildered stare for quite a minute. Then a curious expression gradually crept into her black eyes. An idea was developing itself in her acute brain.

Floris and Lord Clifford, who had been her lover, leaving Ballyfloe together! Surely that fact would fit into the plot.

With a smile on her lips she nodded approvingly, then turned and slowly went back to the brougham.

But she paused there and returned to the station and accosted the sleepy porter.

"Did you see that gentleman who accompanied the young lady who departed just now, sir?" she asked with smooth politeness.

The man stared at her. Oh, yes, he had seen him.

"Well, that was a great personage, sir. It was Milord Clifford," said Josine, with an air of importance.

"Oh, was it?" said the man, grimly. "Well lord or no lord, he hadn't any business to keep the train waiting."

"Certainly not!" said Josine. "Good-morning, sir."

Then she returned to the brougham.

"Parbleu!" she murmured. "It is likely that Milord Norman will not believe poor Josine. So! my friend the porter will bear witness that Miss Carlisle went off with Milord Clifford! Bah! but Miladi Blanche is not so clever as I think her if she cannot make something of that!"

(To be continued.)

## About the Farm

### PUMPKINS AS COW FEED.

In all of the Eastern States where pumpkins are extensively grown they are used for cow feed in the late fall and early winter months, and as long as they can be kept without deterioration. Possibly they could be kept all winter under proper conditions of storage, but they are such a bulky food that a very large place is required to store enough of them to last a large herd through the winter months. They are not only hollow inside, but their round shape makes them space-consumers in storage. I regard the pumpkin as equivalent to silage for feed, but when we have the problem of feeding many cows it is much easier to build a silo that will hold several tons of silage than to build a receptacle for several tons of pumpkins, writes Mr. J. P. Fletcher. Moreover, the pumpkins must be cold enough to prevent them from decaying, for the air will get into any receptacle in which they can be placed.

With silage the temperature makes little difference if it does not reach the point where it freezes. I have found in the feeding of pumpkins that we can feed about forty pounds per day per cow to advantage, and with some cows the milk production will be greatly increased. I have, however, had occasional cows where the effect of feeding pumpkins was to cause the cows to lay on fat and decrease their milk production. There are very few experiments to which we can point relative to the value of feeding pumpkins. In one experiment that I have in mind that was a gain of six per cent. more milk when pumpkins were fed than before they were admitted into the ration. There is no better place to plant pumpkin seed than in the corn field. The corn field, or a proportion of it, is just the place for them. Seeds placed in alternate hills of the same row of corn will give ample room for the growth of the vines, and they will usually bear well. The great advantage about feeding pumpkins is that the men who have no silos can feed them, and nearly all men who keep cows have no silos.

It is well understood that to give plenty of milk a cow must have

succulent food. Grass meets the need from late spring to early fall, and silage in the winter months. But can a farmer or a dairyman having from one to ten cows only afford a silo, and what is the smallest silo that will prove practical? This question has been propounded by a contemporary, and a contributor. Mr. Edward Van Alstyne has tried to answer it. It will probably be too late to build a silo—at least it—by the time this article is read. Nevertheless, this is not the last year in which such things are needed, and Mr. Van Alstyne's suggestions should be remembered. They are:

"This question comes to me again as it has many times before. Its answer, like many others of like nature, depends largely on the man. For some with one cow it would be a practical thing to sink a molasses hoghead in the ground and fill it with cut corn. Its practicability would depend upon the amount of roughage available, and the lack of other succulent foods, as well as the means at hand for growing the corn, and putting it into the silo. Now these same principals obtain in every case up to ten cows. After that in any case where corn will grow, and the silage milk can be sold. I believe it is not a question, 'Can I afford a silo?' but 'Can I afford not to have one?' The average feeding season is about five months, or 150 days. The ordinary cow will eat about forty pounds of silage daily, or three tons in this period; ten cows mean thirty tons. A round silo twenty feet deep (I do not believe it wise to have one of less depth), and twelve feet across would hold thirty-eight tons, allowing for settling, would mean just about thirty tons actual. One the same height and fourteen feet in diameter would hold fifty tons, about forty actual after settling. This would cost but a trifle more to build, and would hold enough more for a longer season, more cows or summer feeding, either of these certainly a practical thing."

### BRISTLES.

The hog lots should be dry. Burn over the feeding places at least once a year.

Hogs should have plenty of clean water to drink, and their feeding troughs should be kept clean.

Dry meal can be fed in shallow troughs; hogs chew it well.

When the little pigs are weaned, put the sow out of their hearing for a while.

Take care not to allow food to sour in the pig troughs. Feed just what the pigs will eat up clean; if any remains clean it out.

Charcoal, sulphur and salt should be kept in every pen and hog lot, as they are correctives and are relished by the hogs.

Breed for utility every time. Too many of our so-called professional breeders have become cranky upon certain fancy points and loose sight of everything else in their efforts to stamp uniformity of markings in their herds.

Every farmer should have a few well bred hogs as they are waste savers.

Feed the young pigs whole oats on a platform in an enclosure by themselves.

Lice take the life right out of hogs. They can not grow; they cannot take a minute's comfort with them. Spray, if you can't dip. Even an old broom dipped in spraying solution is better than nothing.

### THE WHISKY DUTY.

#### Less Drunkenness and Crime in Scotland.

The new British whiskey duty is having a striking effect in reducing drunkenness and crime in Scotland, as is shown by returns produced in the House of Commons last week by the Lord Advocate. The Budget resolutions raising the duties on whiskey were passed on April 29. During the two following months of May and June, the lessened consumption following on the rise in price brought down the apprehension for drunkenness in Scotland from 4,361 in May, 1908, to 2,965 in May, 1909—a fall of 32 per cent.—and from 4,404 in June, 1908, to 2,872 in June, 1909—a fall of 34 per cent. The commitments to prison fell from 1,578 in May, 1908, to 1,138 in May, 1909, a decline of 28 per cent., and from 1,742 in June, 1908, to 1,134 in June, 1909, a falling off of 34 per cent. So marked and sudden a reduction in drunkenness appears to be almost unparalleled in the history of the country, and can only be traceable to the rise in the price of liquor.

### SMALL PRACTICAL SILO.

Unless you have more spare time than you know what to do with it's foolish to try to convince a fool that he is foolish.