

Fighting Life's Battle;

OR, LADY BLANCHE'S BITTER PUNISHMENT

CHAPTER XXI.—(Cont'd)

Lady Blanche shuddered as if a chill had passed over her.

"Bad men's blessings are good mon's curses," says the Spanish proverb, and she felt as if she had been banned.

Drawing her shawl around her she went into the house, and the first person her gaze fell upon was Lady Betty, sitting pale and anxious over the fire, her hands clasped, her brows knitted.

She looked up as Lady Blanche entered, and tried to smile, but there were traces of tears in her eyes, and a most cruel triumph filled Lady Blanche's heart.

"This woman," she thought, "triumphed over me a short time ago. She helped Floris Carlisle to rob me of my lover. Now it is my hour of triumph. They are parted forever, and I shall win him back."

With this flow of unholy satisfaction within her bosom, she went to bed and slept the sleep of an innocent child, for the simple reason that the awful excitement she had undergone had resulted in complete exhaustion.

The morning came, and Lady Blanche glided down to the breakfast-room.

There were half a dozen persons at the table, and Lady Betty among them.

She looked pale, and anxious, and worried, but she flushed as Lady Blanche came up to her and greeted her with a sweet, sympathetic smile.

"Have you heard from Miss Carlisle?" she asked.

Lady Betty shook her head. It seemed as if she could scarcely find courage to say "No."

"Really?" murmured Lady Blanche with well-feigned surprise. "How very strange!"

"No, it is not strange at all!" retorted Lady Betty. "I did not expect to hear until to-night. She—she may not have had time to write yet."

"I should have thought she would have sent a postcard," suggested Lady Blanche, smoothly. "We all are very curious and anxious, but not so anxious as you, I dare say, my dear!"

"No," retorted Lady Betty; "I dare say not!"

A few minutes afterward she arose and went to her room.

Josine was standing with an open letter in her hand, and wiping her eyes.

"What's the matter now?" asked Lady Betty, irritably.

"Oh, miladi, I have had bad news. My only brother, miladi! And I have not seen him for years!"

"Oh!" said Lady Betty. "And of course you want to go at once, is that it?"

Josine looked hurt and wounded.

"Ah, no, miladi, not at once. I would not be so ungrateful as to leave you so suddenly. I have written to tell them to let me know if he gets worse. If he doesn't I shall not want to go, but if he does"—and she sobbed.

"Very well," said Lady Betty. "I hope for your sake as well as mine that he will get better."

Josine dropped a courtesy.

"And—may I ask what news miladi has had from Mademoiselle Carlisle. Pardon, miladi, if I presume too much."

It is scarcely necessary to say that she had very carefully examined the letter-bag.

"There is no news," said Lady Betty, with a sigh.

Josine held up her hands with an expression of dismay and shrugged her shoulders.

"Ah, but that is bad!" she muttered between her teeth.

"Hold your long tongue!" exclaimed Lady Betty, peremptorily, "and leave the room."

The morning wore away. Some of the party went out riding, others played tennis or wandered about the grounds, but on all there seemed to rest a cloud of expectation and disquietude, and everybody looked forward to the return of the hunting expedition.

A heavy weight hung upon Lady Betty's spirits, and she seemed to count the hours that must elapse before she must see Bruce and tell him of Floris's sudden disappearance.

Luncheon came and went, and the dinner hour approached.

If the hunting party made good traveling it would return before dusk, and Lady Betty was standing on the terrace looking toward the road when she saw a horseman appear in the distance.

He was riding very hard and evidently urging his tired horse at its utmost speed.

Her heart misgave her, she knew not why, and, like most women of her temperament, she looked around for help and company; and at the moment, as if she, too, had been watching—as indeed she had—Lady Blanche glided through the window and stood by her side.

"Who is that coming?" said Lady Betty, in an agitated voice.

"It is some messenger," she said, very quietly.

"Something happened!" gasped Lady Betty.

Lady Blanche smiled contemptuously.

"Why should you think so?" she said. "Sir Joseph has sent one of the men on in advance to tell them to put off the dinner for an hour—that is all."

Lady Betty tried to smile.

"I wish I had your nerves, Blanche," she said, almost spitefully.

"It isn't a question of nerves, but of common sense," retorted Lady Blanche, coldly. "What could have happened?"

"I don't know; we shall soon learn," answered Lady Betty, grimly.

The man rode fearfully hard, and soon passed into the road leading to the house; and they saw that the horse was covered with foam and nearly exhausted.

One or two others, attracted and alarmed by the sight of the horse, had joined them on the terrace, and as the man rode up and flung himself out of the saddle almost at their feet, one of the gentlemen ran down the steps to him.

It was Donald.

"A letter for Lady Pendleton," he said, hoarsely; he was nearly exhausted as the poor beast he had ridden.

"Give it to me!" exclaimed Lady Betty, snatching it.

The rest drew away from her, all but Lady Blanche, who remained where she stood at her side.

Lady Betty tore the envelope open, and glanced at the scrap of paper inside, then staggered against the balustrade with a faint cry.

Lady Blanche, without the slightest hesitation, took the letter from her hand and read it.

She did not stagger as Lady Betty had done; no cry escaped her lips; but they all noticed that she turned white to the lips, a deathly white, awful to see and remember.

For a moment she stood as if turned to stone, her eyes distended and fixed on vacancy, her fingers clutching the scrap of paper.

For a moment only, then she looked around and in a low, hard voice, so unlike her usual smooth tones, said:

"Lord Norman has met with an accident; he is in great danger!"

There was a murmur of alarm and sympathy as the group gathered around Lady Blanche.

With a piteous cry Lady Betty held out her hand.

"Give me the letter! Oh! what shall I do? Poor Bruce! Poor Bruce! I can't read it!" she sobbed. "Will some one—"

One of the gentlemen took it from her trembling hand and read it aloud.

Sir Joseph had written a few lines only, saying that Lord Norman had met with a serious accident, and that one or both of the medical men who were staying in the house was to come on to Scarfross with the necessary things.

He added in a postscript: "I need not exhort you to be careful not to alarm Miss Carlisle!"

As those words were read out, Lady Betty groaned and put her hands before her face.

"Oh! what is to be done?" she wailed. "Do you think he is killed?—no, not killed or they would not send for a doctor! Where is Dr. Greene?"

Some one set off to find the young doctor, who was playing tennis, and came bounding on to the terrace alert and ready witted.

"What is to be done?" panted Lady Betty, who like most of her

class, was thrown into a complete state of helpless despair.

Suddenly a shiver ran through Lady Blanche's frame, and, as if she had recovered from an awful stupor, she turned to Dr. Greene.

"There is no time to lose," she said, in a low, hard voice. "Will you start at once, Dr. Greene? I will see that a conveyance follows you with anything you may order."

He glanced at her white, set face approvingly.

"I will write a list of what I shall require," he said. Then, turned and looked around. "This Scarfross is a mere hut, quite solitary in the hills, is it not?—I mean there is not likely to be any women-folk who could nurse Lord Norman?"

"It is simply a rough, hat-like place, in a perfect wilderness," some one quickly answered.

"Very well, then," he said, decisively: "some one you can rely upon had better come on after me in the carriage," he said, and ran off.

Lady Blanche stood for a moment as if collecting all her mental and physical strength; then she went down the terrace and round to the stables.

There she found a couple of grooms wiping down Donald's poor horse, and trying to make him comfortable; and seated on an upturned barrow was Donald himself.

The appearance of the "grand lady" in their midst flustered the men somewhat. She went up to Donald quickly.

"Will you tell me how the accident happened?" she asked.

Donald took off his glengarry, and told her in his rough, guttural, broken English:

"It was all for the lad's sake, me leddie; he gave his life—if so be the laird dies—for the young boy! Poor boy, he's almost daft over it, and well-nigh broken-hearted! It was a noble thing to do, me leddie, and a sore sight to see so grand a man laying broken and bleeding. It's a strange thing, too, me leddie, that Lord Bruce had a warning the night before. He could not sleep, and came to me to know if he could ride back here. Strange that were, now!" and Donald shook his head gravely, feeling convinced that Lord Bruce had received a direct "warning."

Lady Blanche listened with lowered lids and tightly-set lips. "And—and do you think he will die?" she asked hoarsely, each word leaving her white lips as if it hurt her.

Donald shook his head.

"He's sort hurt," he said, grimly.

Lady Blanche put her hand to her heart as if she had received a dagger thrust; then she looked at the old man's rugged face with a fixed determination.

"Donald," she said, "a doctor—Dr. Greene—is going to ride out to Scarfross at once, and a carriage is to follow. Will you see about the horses? And, Donald, will you see that a lady's saddle is put upon one?"

"And what for?" he demanded, staring at her.

"For me," she said, gently.

"For the leddies!" he exclaimed. "But it's no possible you'll be thinking of riding through the dark night to Scarfross?"

"I am not only thinking of it, but I mean to do it," she said, calmly. "I am a good rider, and strong," she said. "If Dr. Greene can go, I can go! The night is not dark. Lord Norman is lying there without a woman near him—"

"Say no more, leddie," said the old man, doggedly. "I'll saddle a horse for ye, and what's more, I will ride back to Scarfross too."

Lady Blanche went back to the house without a word, and reaching her room threw herself on her knees beside the bed and hid her face in her hands.

And this was her triumph, was it? It was for this that she had plotted and schemed, that the man she loved should be dying, dying in a hut in the wilderness. Dying!

Oh, Heaven, if he should die before she could reach him, before she could see his face, touch his hand once more!

With a cry of despair she rose and began putting on her habit with feverish haste.

She had scarcely got it on than there came a knock at the door, and Lady Betty entered the room without ceremony.

"Have you ordered the carriage, Blanche?" she said, then she stopped and stared at her. "Why have you got your habit on? Where are you going?"

"I am going to Scarfross," said Lady Blanche, coldly.

"To Scarfross? Why?" demanded Lady Betty. "Why should you go?"

"Because it pleases me," returned Lady Blanche, haughtily,

but with a dangerous gleam in her eyes.

Lady Betty looked at her jealously.

"There is no occasion for you to go," she said. "I am going—"

"What is that to me?" said Lady Blanche, turning on her suddenly, with white face and flashing eyes. "What is it to me whether you are going or not! I am going!"

"But you cannot ride—in the night!" said Lady Betty. "Why not come in the carriage?"

"In the carriage!" scornfully. "Do you know how long it will take? Do you think I should keep sane while it dragged its way along! No, I am going to ride. I would walk if there was no other way. What is it to me who else is going. I am nearest him—"

Lady Betty's eyes filled.

"You forget Floris, Blanche," she said, kindly.

Lady Blanche winced as if she had been struck, then her face crimsoned and her lips parted as if for sudden breath.

"Floris—Floris Carlisle!" she said, with suppressed scorn and vehemence. "Yes! she may be nearer to him than I am. You taunt me with that, do you! Where is she, then? Why is she not here? Perhaps you do not know—but, yes you do, as well as I! She has deserted him. And it is I—I who have loved him all through—who will go to him now!"

And speechless—for what could she say? Lady Betty crept crying from the room.

(To be continued.)

HEALING IN OLD TIBET.

Used Methods 1,500 Years Ago That are in Practice To-day.

The ancients, priests and savants of Tibet, were skilful physicians when almost the whole of Europe was overrun by ignorant savages or semi-civilized barbarians.

The Russian Government recently received a petition from the Siberian Buddhists requesting that medical schools should be established among them in which the ancient Tibetan art of healing should be taught. In consequence of this strange petition the Medical Academy of St. Petersburg has been making investigations concerning the claims of the ancient Tibetan art of healing.

A Tibetan hand-book of medicine which was known and used about 1,200 years ago, and even then was regarded as an "ancient" and venerated source of knowledge, was used as material for the investigation. The Russian Academicians have thus made the astonishing discovery that this book described drugs and cures which European physicians "discovered" many hundreds of years afterward.

Thus the doctors of Tibet so many centuries ago were not only acquainted with the secrets of the entire human anatomy—how many bones there are in the human body, etc., the principal nerves, namely, ninety-nine—but knew that the skin contained eleven million pores. According to this venerable book, "the heart is king of all the organs and the support of life." "Sickness in general originates owing to the evil and ignorance of human beings, especially owing to their inability to overcome their passions, which disturb the healthy nourishing of the human organs. All evil thoughts also have a harmful influence on the heart and liver."

The physicians of Tibet 1,500 years ago employed the same means of diagnosing the condition of a sick person as the physicians of the present day—they felt the patient's pulse, looked at his tongue, etc. Among the "remedies" which they recommended were not only vegetarian diet, baths, compresses, but also massage and cupping. What is more remarkable is that physicians who did not keep their instruments quite clean were severely punished. The ancient Tibetans were in this respect extremely modern. The old Tibetan medicine book prescribes that healthy persons should "lead an orderly, sensible manner of life, avoid all excesses and irregularities, also conscientiously cherish, keep clean, both soul and body."—Pall Mall Gazette.

PAT'S RETORT COURTEOUS

Quite recently a warship found it necessary to call for a few hours at a military port on the coast of Ireland. Tommy Atkins, meeting a full bearded Irish tar in the street a couple of hours later, said: "Pat, when are you going to place your whiskers on the Reserve List?"

"When you place your tongue on the Civil List," was the Irish sailor's reply.

A girl doesn't like to be called a flirt unless she isn't.

About the Farm

CARE OF FARM MANURES.

It is desirable to consider the sources of loss and means for preventing loss, for, it is estimated that from 75 to 85 per cent. of the fertility removed by the crop may be returned in properly cared for manure.

One source of loss is leaching. When the manure is thrown from the stable and exposed to the rain, all the soluble parts of the manure are washed out and pass off in the drainage water. Manure may lose most of its fertilizing value in this way.

Another source of loss is the heating of the manure pile. When the manure pile heats, nitrogen, the most valuable part of the manure, passes off in the form of ammonia. It is this compound that gives heating manure its peculiar odor. The heating of the manure pile may be largely controlled. Hot fermentation of manure is produced by the action of minute organisms (bacteria) which require a liberal supply of air for their activity. If the manure is compacted so as to exclude the air, fermentation cannot take place very rapidly and the temperature cannot rise very high. If the manure pile is under cover water may be added to the pile to help exclude the air and keep the temperature down. But care must be taken not to add enough to waterlog it. With the air excluded, other kinds of bacteria, which work in the absence of air, effect the decomposition with little or no loss of nitrogen. The manure should be compacted while fresh, as hot fermentation may set up in a few hours.

The main reason why horse manure heats more rapidly than cow manure is that it is more porous, thus admitting of a freer circulation of atmosphere. Cow manure contains more water, which also keeps the temperature down.

The escape of ammonia may be prevented by sprinkling gypsum on the layers of the manure pile as it is being formed. Acid phosphate and kalmi are sometimes used for this purpose, but it is said that these materials injure the hoofs of the animals, so they should not be used in the stalls, but only in the manure heap.

The greatest loss is in letting the liquid manure go to water. The liquid manure contains a little more fertility than the solid manure and it is more available. Yet few farmers make any effort to save it.

The most economical plan for handling manure on the average farm is to use plenty of bedding to absorb the liquid manure, and to allow the liquid to accumulate until there is sufficient to justify hauling, when it should be taken directly to the field where it is to be used and scattered. A manure spreader is a good investment. If straw is used for bedding it should be cut up into small lengths, as this greatly increases its absorptive power, and leaves the manure in better condition for handling and rapid decay in the soil.

When large applications of manure must be used, as in the case of gardeners, it is necessary to let the manure rot before using. This is best done under cover by observing the precautions to prevent heating.

Where large numbers of cattle are fed in open sheds, the manure may be allowed to accumulate all winter without any serious damage.

It has long been observed that manure is beneficial out of all proportion to the amount of actual plant food contained. This is due to the humus it adds to the soil and to the large numbers of beneficial bacteria introduced into the soil. Plant growth is dependent upon the action of bacteria in the soil. Among the most important are the bacteria of decay. These the manure introduces in enormous numbers. It is a good practice just before turning under green crops, to spread a little manure over the ground, no matter how thinly, to introduce these bacteria, that there may be an ample supply for the decay of the green crop.

Fertilizers containing nitrate of soda should not be applied with fresh manure or immediately following it, as the presence of fresh manure promotes denitrification.

Norwegian Crullers.—One cupful of sugar, one teaspoonful of butter, four eggs, four tablespoons sweet cream, one tablespoonful of brandy, a little salt. Beat yolks and whites separately, also beat cream. Flour enough to roll thin. Cut in any shape and fry in hot lard.