

# Fighting Life's Battle;

OR, LADY BLANCHE'S BITTER PUNISHMENT

## CHAPTER XXII.—(Cont'd)

He was silent for a moment, then he said, almost to himself:

"Lord Norman would refund her private fortune."

She heard him and turned upon him almost fiercely.

"Mr. Morrel, let us understand each other," she said. "If you think of asking any favor from Lord Norman, cast aside the idea at once. I would rather die than accept a crust of bread from him," her voice grew thick and heavy. "Put all thought of Lord Norman out of your mind. Think of me as simply Floris Carlisle; penniless, of you like—but beholden to no man."

He looked at her as she stood erect in front of the fire, and his thoughts went back to the evening long ago when she had written her note of defiance to Lord Norman's offer.

He shook his head. "Think what might be done in that quarter," he commenced, but she interrupted him.

"Mr. Morrel, you are my lawyer, not his—"

"Certainly!"

"Then I forbid you—f forbid you, remember—to communicate with him. Let happen what may; let them sell the house over my head—the very chair I have sat upon; let them do what they will and can, but do not think I will permit you to apply to Lord Norman!"

"My dear young lady," he pleaded—"a lovers' quarrel."

"Yes," she said, with a wild, despairful smile, "it is a lovers' quarrel, if you like, Mr. Morrel; but it will last a lifetime!"

The poor man did not know what to say or do.

He had been comforting himself with the reflection that although the Carlisle estate had disappeared, it mattered little, seeing that she was to marry Lord Norman and become Countess of Norman; and now she had said that it was not to be.

He got up as bewildered and flustered as even he had been in his life. "May I ask, Miss Carlisle," he said, "what you intend to do?"

She looked at him vaguely.

"I do not know yet," she said, speaking as bravely as she could; "but I will let you know as soon as I know myself. At any rate, I must leave here," and she looked round with a sigh.

Mr. Morrel drew a long breath.

"Miss Carlisle," he said, "I am an old man, or nearly so, and—I have no one to consider but myself. If—if you will allow me to offer you any assistance—I have been connected with your family for many years, and have reaped substantial benefit from the connection—I say if you will allow me to offer you—"

Floris put out her hand. For the first time her eyes filled with tears.

"No, no!" she said. "I—I cannot accept that. I am young and strong—oh, I am very strong!—and I can fight my own way. There are so many things a woman can do now, and I shall find something. But I am very grateful—very. I—I—will you go now, please? I am feeling tired and upset."

He took up his hat and held out his hand.

"Good-bye, Miss Carlisle. I should feel very much obliged if you would write to me if you want any assistance. I—e—bless my soul, this is very sad!" and blowing his nose he got out of the house.

When one is suffering from two such sorrows as had befallen Floris, one does not think much of a third. It would seem as if the human soul were capable of so much misery and no more; and that when the limit has been passed, all that happens afterward is borne in a happy-go-lucky frame of mind that may be despair or the indifference of actual exhaustion.

Floris had thought that she would be permitted to live on the rest of her life in the seclusion of the cottage; but if it was not to be, well, it was not to be, and there was an end of it.

The wide world lay before her, helpless and friendless, and she faced it with a touch of old pride of self-reliance which had always distinguished her.

Over the falseness of her lover and the death of her mother she had

shed many tears, but over the loss of her money she had scarcely expended a sigh.

Mr. Morrell, who came down almost daily, was astounded at the calmness she displayed.

Over and over again he begged her to try and think if there was not some friend to whom she could apply for help, some relation to whom she could go; but Floris always shook her head with a faint smile.

"I have no one to whom I could apply," she said. "As to friends—" she thought of Lady Betty with a sigh.

She could not go to her. She could not hold any communication with her, for if she did so she might be brought in contact with Lord Norman, and that would be worse than death by starvation. There were friends in Worthing, old friends of her mother, who would have helped her, but Floris had persistently refused to see them. They were all dying of curiosity to know why the engagement had been broken off, and they would ask questions and torture her beyond endurance.

"No," she told him, "there was no friend of whom she could ask assistance."

"I think you are very—excuse me, Miss Carlisle—very proud!" said poor Mr. Morrel, in despair, and Floris had looked at him absently.

"Am I?" she said, with the same faint smile. "Perhaps I am. I used to be proud, at least they used to call me so, and perhaps I am so still. But I am not afraid, I am young and strong, and there must be something in the big world for me to do."

"Yes," he assented. "You are young—I don't know about strong, and you are—" he was going to say "beautiful," but stopped him self in time with his dry little cough.

"I cannot go as a companion again," said Floris, with a trace of sudden color on her face. "They would want references, and I cannot give those."

The lawyer looked distressed. He knew nothing of what had happened up in the Highlands; something dreadful it must have been, he thought, to bring about so sudden and complete a separation between her and Lord Norman, and to make her so determined to hold no communication with her recent friends.

"I don't see what you are to do; indeed I don't," he said, in sad perplexity.

"There must be something," responded Floris.

"If you only allow me to be your banker—" he stammered—"I mean until brighter days—"

But Floris shook her head.

"No, no," she said. "I cannot do that. You know I cannot; though I am very, very grateful. If—if I could find some work out of England," she murmured.

The little lawyer caught at once at the suggestion.

"But why out of England, my dear young lady?" he asked.

Floris' eyes drooped, and her lips quivered.

"Because I would like to leave England—forever, if I could," she said, quietly. "How long may I remain here—at the cottage, I mean?"

"Only a fortnight at the utmost," he said, reluctantly.

"So soon?" she said, sadly.

"You could remain altogether, if you liked," he responded. "If you would allow me, I would be glad to purchase the cottage and—advance you enough money to start a school. I am sure—with something approaching eagerness—that you would soon be able to repay me."

But Floris shook her head as decidedly as ever.

"You must not think of that, Mr. Morrel."

"Eyes if I could accept your kindness, it would be thrown away; I am not cut out for a school-mistress. I don't know enough to teach half the things girls require now-a-days. Besides; no; I could not do that. There must be something else, surely. Do you think—I know how good you are, and how anxious you are to help me—do you think I could see some of the foreign newspapers? There might be an advertisement which I could answer."

Mr. Morrel nodded almost energetically, and seized on the idea eagerly. At each visit he had become more interested in the beautiful young girl who seemed so friendless and helpless in the midst of her sorrow.

Only a fortnight! It was not long in which to find a niche for herself—a few feet of standing room in this vast world, so crowded and jostled!

A week passed, during which she did not go outside the house, excepting into the garden, in which she walked with drooping head and listless step, thinking over the past, which seemed so long ago and yet was so recent.

People called, people who would have been glad to help her, but she shrank from seeing them, and they were told one and all by the little servant that Miss Carlisle was too unwell to see any one.

At the end of the week Mr. Morrel came down, and Floris saw by his face that he had something to communicate.

He put a small bundle of papers on the table as she shook hands, and nodded curtly, as he scrutinized her face through his glasses.

"You are looking better, Miss Carlisle," he said, in his sharp fashion. "That's right! I was almost afraid to come down, your pale face so—so upset me! But there, we'll hope things are taking a turn, eh? You are still resolved to go out and seek your fortune, like a female Whittington?" and he smiled.

"I don't want to be a Lord Mayor of London, if that is what you mean!" she said; and there was a touch of her old naivete in the reply that made him laugh and nod with satisfaction.

"Very good, very good, indeed! Well, if you are still resolved, I think I have heard of something that might suit you."

And he began to untie the tape around his bundle.

Floris' face flushed slightly; hope, which springs eternal in the human breast came to her.

"It was a very curious thing," he said, sorting his papers methodically; "but life is made up of curious things. Talk of fiction being stranger than reality! It's downright nonsense! I assure you, my dear Miss Carlisle, that a lawyer meets with far stranger things in the course of his professional experience than any of you young ladies read in your novels."

"I dare say," said Floris, smiling. "Have you discovered that I am the long-lost daughter of an earl who is longing to claim me, or has an uncle in the East Indies, of whom I have never heard, left me an enormous fortune?"

He laughed; he was immensely pleased to see her in this frame of mind, little guessing how much of it was really affected, so that his kind heart should not be distressed by the continual spectacle of her sorrow!

"No, no!" he said, "I wish it was. But this is what it is. By the way, do you know anything about flowers?"

Floris opened her great, sorrowful eyes with faint astonishment. "Botany and that kind of thing?" he explained.

Floris shook her head.

"No; I am afraid not."

"Hem!" he muttered, rather discouraged; then he brightened up again.

"But that doesn't matter, I think," he said, briskly.

"After all, you could soon learn—"

"Learn botany, the science of flowers!" exclaimed Floris, almost inclined to think that the incessant worry on her behalf had turned the little man's brain.

"Yes," he said, slowly; "why not? Nothing very difficult in it, I should think, for a clever young lady like yourself."

"I am about the stupidest girl, Mr. Morrel, that even your professional experience ever met with," she said, with a smile.

He smiled and chuckled.

"I don't believe there is anything you couldn't learn," he said, confidently.

"You haven't told me why you asked me if I understand flowers," said Floris, bringing him back to the point.

"This is the reason," he said, settling himself in his chair. "When you spoke to me the other day of wanting to get out of England, and trusting there might be some advertisements in the foreign newspapers. I thought there was a good idea in the suggestion, so I went to a friend in London, who knows all about the Continent and speaks half a dozen languages, and got him to hunt through some of the papers, and he laid his hand on the bundle on the table."

"Well, my friend sent me around one or two advertisements that he thought might suit, and I looked over them. Most of them were for

English governesses. I didn't think they would suit you."

Floris sighed. "I am so fearfully ignorant!" she said.

"Exactly—no, no, I don't mean that! Well, there was one that was not for a governess, but a very strange advertisement. I'll read it to you."

He took up the paper and read aloud:

"Wanted, an English lady to assist a lady in the preparation of a book on botany and the management of rare flowers."

The advertiser requires a good copyist, and not necessarily a lady fully acquainted with botany. Address X. Y. Florence."

Floris' heart sank, and she sighed.

"Now wait a moment," he said, holding up his hand. "I thought it might suit you, so I wrote and got particulars before I troubled you with it."

Floris' eyes glanced upon him gratefully.

"And the particulars were satisfactory. Here they are," and he took up a letter and read it.

"You see she wants a young lady, a lady by birth, and she is more particular about that, and that the young lady should write a good hand, than that she should be skilled in plants."

"Now, you are a lady by birth, Miss Carlisle, and if you will allow me to say to you, you write a remarkable hand!"

"Well?" said Floris, eagerly.

"Well, I wrote and told her so, and asked for more particulars and references, of course. The references came, and I found them extremely satisfactory. I then gave her some few particulars respecting yourself, and, in short, I accepted the situation for you on condition of your agreement. The salary is not a large one, but there will be a comfortable home, and Florence is a beautiful place, I am told. Never was out of England myself, and don't want to be!" he jerked in, "but still, it's a beautiful place, and most ladies are fond of flowers, why—"

Floris' eyes filled.

"You have been very good to me, Mr. Morrel. When you asked me the other day whether I had any friends, I ought to have replied, 'Yes; one very, very kind and true one!' And have you really got the situation for me?"

"Yes," he said, huskily; "that is, if you like to take it. You shall look over the papers and decide. The work will not be hard; you will have to do some copying and write from dictation—I should buy a work on botany and study it on the journey, if I were you—and from what I hear, I think you would find Mrs. Sinclair a very nice lady. Now don't say a word, but look over the letters while I take a cup of tea."

Floris took the letters to a side table and read them.

As Mr. Morrel had said, they were satisfactory. The salary was not large, but ample for her poor wants, and there would be a comfortable home.

But the greatest attraction in the offer for her was the fact that, if she accepted, she could get away from England.

Florence, too! How often she had read of it and longed to see it! Florence! A pang shot through her heart for a moment, as she remembered that it was one of the places Lord Norman had often talked of taking her to when they were married—when they were married—Alas, alas!

Mr. Morrel, who was watching her, saw her lip quiver.

"There, there," he said. "Don't think any more about it if you don't like the idea. Something else will be sure to turn up."

Floris rose and went up to him. "Nothing could turn up better than this," she said.

"Then you will go?" he said.

She hesitated a moment.

"It is a long way from England!" he said.

"Ah, that is the greatest inducement to me!" she responded. "Yes, I will go, Mr. Morrel."

And so unconsciously she drew the chain that bound her to the past a link closer.

All unknown to herself, and unguessed at, there awaited her at Florence the most eventful chapter of her life's history!

(To be continued.)

"Yes," said the warder, "he was the coolest and most thoughtful convict who ever broke gaol. He left behind him a note to the governor of the prison, beginning: 'I hope you will pardon me for the liberty I am taking.'"

Guest—"Hey, waiter, how long will my steak be?" Waiter—"The average length is about four inches, sir."

## About the Farm

### VALUABLE COWS RUINED.

There is no period in the life of a cow when she requires and should receive more attention than at the time of freshening owing to the fact that she is so susceptible to complication of diseases such as milk fever, retention of the afterbirth, stoppage or paralysis of the bowels, mammitis or inflammation of the udder and many other diseases.

Among these mentioned perhaps the retention of the afterbirth is the most common and while it does not necessarily terminate fatally it is exceedingly successful in ruining a cow as a profit-producer. The afterbirth is oftentimes retained owing to the fact that the cow has been given cold water at the time of freshening, or permitted to freshen in a cold, damp stable, or out in the rain when the weather is unfavorable.

When the afterbirth is retained it should not be removed by main force owing to the fact that parts will remain. These parts are converted into matter which set up an intense inflammation, causing a catarrhal condition of the genital organs. The animal absorbs the pus which forms from the retained parts and the absorbing of such decomposed tissue upsets the entire system of the animal. This pus is excreted from the system to some extent from the kidneys, bowels, and udder, thus rendering the milk from a cow that has retained her afterbirth unfit for human food.

Cows thus afflicted should be given a dry, clean, well ventilated box stall. A blanket should be placed upon them in cold weather. They should be given ground oats, bran, good clover or alfalfa hay, plenty of water with the chill taken from it and such medicine as will have a tendency to ripen and expel the afterbirth. The genital organs should be washed out with an antiseptic solution and in this way a cow which has retained her afterbirth will soon be put in a strong, healthy, profitable condition, whereas if she was neglected she would be ruined as a profit producer.

### THE HERD HEADER.

It seems difficult for all to grasp the full meaning, in dollars and cents, of a good sire in the herd. Some having one cow which is much better than the others look to her to work any improvement which may be brought about.

Where this idea of improvement by means of the cow is general any interest in the pure-bred sire of the best breeding is overlooked.

The old maxim that the bull is half the herd, though oft repeated, fails to come home with its full sized force. Failing to recognize this truth in breeding accounts for the inferior stock noticed in practically all selections.

The cow of high quality and large production is a great factor in bringing about any desired improvement, provided she is bred to a high-class bull. By using an indifferent sire on her, practically all is lost and no advancement is brought about. Improving the herd by means of a single cow is, at best, a slow process. On the other hand the effect of a good bull is a noticeable improvement in all the resulting stock. In other words he counts for half the herd.

Just as soon as we realize the full-sized meaning of the value of good sires, will we experience the advancement desired in the herds of this country. Money expended in a suitable sire, while it may seem a large sum and out of proportion to the merits of the herd on which he is to be used, will soon be paid back many fold in the improvement wrought in the stock. It takes but little progeny from even a high-priced sire to pay large returns for money invested. Reverses in breeding are common enough even when the best sires are used. One cannot afford to overlook the necessity of using only the best sires that are obtainable.

### KNEW WHAT WAS WANTED.

Miserly—"So that woman doctor charged you \$2 a visit. Well, what did she say?"

His wife—"Said I stayed indoors too much. Here's her prescription." Miserly (reading it)—"For external use only. One nice walking dress. One new hat. One pair gloves to match. Apply every afternoon between three and five."

A bumblebee in the bush is better than two in the hand!