

Lady Blanche Farm

A Romance of the Commonplace

By Frances Parkinson Keyes

WNUN Service
Copyright by Frances Parkinson Keyes

CHAPTER I

"I've swallowed," said Philip Starr to himself, "about two bushels of dust. Don't they ever oil their roads in Vermont, I wonder? I'm sure I can't make Burlington tonight anyway—it must be somewhere over on the other side of the map."

He interrupted his own train of thought by laughing aloud, and brought his motor to a stop beside the powdery highway which he had been mentally condemning.

"Irish, cropping out as usual," he said, grinning, as he locked the car, "or maybe I'm still dippy—typhoid bugs die hard. Anyway, I'm going to see if this brook doesn't wind far enough from the road somewhere soon for me to get into it, without being arrested in the process."

He rolled under the barbed-wire fence, and scrambled into the underbrush of the woods that skirted the road.

He was right; the little brook, twisting and turning, wound farther and farther into the woods; it foamed into a tiny waterfall, widened to a small pool, ideal for a swim! But, pulling off his coat and jerking at his collar, the man stopped short and stared ahead of him, wondering if he were suddenly losing his senses.

On the edge of the pool, just beyond the waterfall, was a girl, her face turned from him, her white feet and ankles gleaming through the clear water of the brook. She had on a soft, short, close-fitting white garment, and her bare arms were raised above her head, half-covered with the masses of shining hair that fell about her like a golden cloud.

Philip had been whistling. He stopped abruptly. The girl shook her hair, dropped her arms, and turned around. Then after one startled second, in which Philip saw that her eyes were as blue as the shining sky which dappled the woods with its light, she smiled with entire friendliness.

"How do you do?" she asked pleasantly.

"I'm very well—that is, I'm not well at all. I've just had typhoid fever," Philip stammered. Then, thinking what an asinine thing that was to say, he went on, realizing all the time that he was not becoming less asinine.

"That's why I'm here—trying to get better, you know."

"I see," said the girl, with the same serene pleasantness. "I'm sorry. Did you walk all the way from wherever you came?"

Philip laughed. "No, I motored. I left Boston early this morning, but I got so tired and so dirty and so hot that I—"

"Left your motor by the side of the road, and followed the brook to take a swim. And now I'm here first, spoiling it all. What a pity! I'll go—"

"Oh, please don't! I don't think you're spoiling anything particularly," Philip stammered again. "In fact you—you rather add—to the place—and I thought it was the prettiest place I had ever seen, anyway."

The girl put up her hands, and began drying her hair again. "Won't you sit down?" she asked. "You must be pretty tired."

Philip complied with this suggestion, feeling it to be an agreeable one, and, utterly at a loss as to what to say or do next, waited for the girl to make the next move. At last, as she continued to dry her hair in silence, he burst out, "Is one apt to run across—persons—like you—beside Vermont brooks? Perhaps you're not a person at all? Perhaps you're a dryad—or a nymph—or something like that?"

"I wish I were," she said, and the least shadow of discontent seemed to have crept into her voice. "I don't remember much about dryads and nymphs. My cousin Mary knows all about them. She'd have her nose in a book half the time, if she didn't have so much else to do. She and mother and Cousin Jane are all housecleaning today—that's why I ran away. I'd have had to help if I'd stayed at home. You'd never believe there was so much in a house, until you got it all out in the front yard! And Paul is so lazy he never helps half as much as he might, and Mary has to stop right in the middle of everything and chase up the children, and Cousin Jane goes off to prayer meeting—and oh, it's all plenty had enough to make anyone want to be a nymph and live in a brook, where life is just one perpetual bath, and there can't possibly be anything to houseclean!"

"Well, if you're not a nymph, and you don't live in a brook, would you think I were awfully rude if I asked what your name is and where you live?"

"My name is Blanche Manning. I live on Lady Blanche farm."

"Lady Blanche farm?" echoed Philip. "What a pretty name!"

"Yes—there's quite a pretty story about it, too. Would you like to hear it?"

"Very much."

"All right—my hair's dry now. I'll go and dress and you can have your swim. I've got some lunch with me—where my clothes are—enough for two, I guess. I'll come back."

It was more than half an hour later

before he heard her returning. He had bathed and dressed hurriedly, and was sitting, greatly refreshed and tremendously hungry, but growing extremely anxious to have her return. At last she called:

"Hoo-oo-oo."

"Hoo-oo-oo," he answered.

"What's your name?"

"Philip Starr."

"Well, Mr. Philip Starr, is it all right for me to come?"

"Yes, I've been ready ages. Do hurry."

She reappeared, still all in white. She did not, he noticed quickly, look very different now than when in the white bathing suit—of course he had by this time realized that this was what the slip had been. She stopped on the bank, a forgotten difficulty suddenly occurring to her.

"We're on opposite sides. We'll have to walk up a little way. There's a shallow place where I can get across on the stones."



Philip Had Been Whistling. He Stopped Abruptly.

"I guess you've run away before. You seem to know the lay of the land pretty well."

"Oh, yes. Cousin Jane thinks mother has let Paul and me both grow up awful shirkers. Only he just loaf, and I run."

"I see. Well, I'm surely glad you ran this time. Is Paul your brother?"

"Yes. He's twenty—the same age as my cousin Mary. They're sort of half engaged. He's fond of her, but not nearly as fond of her as she is of him. He likes to have a good time with other girls, too, and, for all Mary can see, there isn't another boy in the world except Paul. He's perfectly sure of her, and it makes him careless. I shouldn't like to be engaged that way."

"Don't worry, you won't be. How old are you?"

"Seventeen. It's a nice age."

"It certainly is. Are you going to be seventeen long?"

"Almost a year."

Philip Starr could not remember when he had laughed so often. He leapt across the stepping stones, and took the box of lunch from Blanche.

"I meant to come over on your side."

"Of course. But I meant to help you across."

"I hadn't thought of that."

"Well, I had," said Philip abruptly. "I've been thinking of it for some minutes. It's a very pleasant thought to dwell on."

She looked at him with the same slightly startled expression as when she had first discovered him, but it faded again just as quickly. She put out both her hands and he swung her lightly across, so easily that she could hardly believe she was over.

For some minutes they ate in satisfied silence. "Do you mind if I smoke," Philip asked, when the last delicious crumb was gone, "while you tell me that story—about Lady Blanche farm, you know?"

"Oh, yes—have you ever been in the Connecticut valley before?"

"I'm sorry to say I haven't."

"Well, it was mostly settled—around Hamstead, anyway—by men who came up the river from Massachusetts, not long before the Revolution. We all belong to the Daughters of the American Revolution, she interrupted herself with a touch of pride. "They nearly all had big farms, and built big houses, and prospered; then they married each other's children, and have kept on living here ever since—the descendants have, I mean. We're nearly all cousins—third or fourth or fifth—in Hamstead. It would be pleasant if it weren't so dead dull. Once in a long time we have a picnic or a dance, or go to the movies in Wallacetown. That's about all, and always the same people—nice but tedious. That's why it's such a tremendous relief to meet someone I don't know at all."

Philip laughed, aware that he was feeling strangely warm and comfortable inside at the inference that she might be having illusions or thrills about him.

"Thank you—where does Lady Blanche come in?"

"Oh, she came in right after the Revolution. My great-great-grandfather, Col. Moses Manning, was a friend of Lafayette's. He went back to France with Lafayette, to visit him, and was presented at court. Lady Blanche was a countess who lived on the next estate. She was very young and lovely and sweet, and he fell in love with her."

"I don't want to intrude—"

"Mary wouldn't feel that you were intruding. She'll be only too thankful to have the chance to make you comfortable. That is, that's the way I think she'll feel about it. At any rate, we better go down there and see!"

"Eccentric man, wasn't he?" murmured Philip.

"Do you think so? Oh, you're laughing at me! You think I am awfully silly and countrified and—"

"You precious kid!" exclaimed Philip, sitting bolt upright in alarm; and then, as the startled look came into the blue eyes again, he went on very quickly and gently. "Excuse me. I didn't mean to be rude—or fresh. But I've been pretty sick, and it's a long time since I have laughed, or felt able to laugh. Please go on about the little French countess. Did she fall in love with him, too?"

"Oh, yes! Head over heels! At first sight, too! Just like a story!"

"Such things do happen."

"Yes, I suppose so," said the present Blanche, a trifle hurriedly. "—once in a great while, and ever so long ago, of course. So they were married, although her family wasn't very enthusiastic about her going across the sea to an unknown wilderness—but as all the rest of them were guillotined not long after, she was better off than they were, anyway. Of course Colonel Moses brought her to Hamstead to live. She had a fortune in her own right, and a wonderful trousseau—great boxes and chests of linen and lace and clothes and silver and jewels and books, and she had furniture sent, too, from the chateau. And my great-great-grandfather built her a big brick house—the handsomest one anywhere around here—and—"

"It's a lovely story. What happened next?"

"The rest of it isn't so lovely. It's rather sad. The other farmers' wives in Hamstead didn't care for Lady Blanche. I think they were a little jealous of her because she was so much richer and more beautiful than they were, and she couldn't talk English well enough to make them understand that she wasn't haughty and cold, as they thought, but just as gentle and lonely and anxious to be friendly as she could be. And—for a long time, she didn't have any children. That was considered almost a disgrace. In those days, it seems!"

"What was the end of the story?" Philip asked, gently.

"When she had been married about five years, she had twins—a boy and a girl. She wasn't strong, like most of the pioneer women. She died."

"Moses Manning never got over it," Blanche went on, after a long pause. "He didn't marry a second time, the way most of the settlers did, when their wives died—some of them three or four times! And he never called his place anything but Lady Blanche farm, after that—it's never been called anything else, ever since. When the twins, Moses and Blanche, grew up, he built them each a house on his own place, and as the boy wanted to be a lawyer, he built a little office connected with the big brick house, for him. They both married—the children of other pioneers—and had large families, and inherited Lady Blanche's fortune, of course. The houses have never gone out of the family. Mother and Paul and I live in one—the big brick one—and Cousin Jane Manning, who's never married, in another, and Cousin Seth and his children in the third. Of course the fortune's been divided up so many times that it isn't very large any more, but it's enough to make us comfortable, and give us a good education, if we want it. Paul and I didn't specially, and Mary, who loves books, had to give up going to boarding school when she was almost ready for college, because her mother died, and there wasn't anyone else to look after her father and the little boys. All the other families in Hamstead have kept on feeling that the Mannings are a little different from the rest of them. We wish they wouldn't—all except mother—I think she rather likes it—but they do! And there's always one Blanche in each generation. There's a queer superstition about that—"

"What is it?"

"Oh, I can't tell you! You'd think it was awfully conceited and—fresh—and—"

"I wouldn't—please—"

But the girl, laughing, shook her head, and got to her feet. "Have you any idea what time it is?" she asked.

"No, I haven't. I don't care what time it is. And I won't tease you to tell me about the superstition now, if you don't want to—that is, if you'll promise to tell me some other time. You—you'll do that, won't you?"

The girl hesitated, and, for the first time, blushed. Then she smiled.

"Where were you thinking of going?" she asked, "before you decided to have a swim and left your motor beside the road?"

"To Burlington, to visit some friends who have a big summer place near there. But I can't get there tonight, now, can I?" he asked, pleading in his voice.

"I don't believe you can, very well. I suppose you're not familiar with the roads?"

"Familiar! I'm not even on speaking terms with them! And there are hardly any guide-posts to introduce us!" he smiled, and, as he did so, he could see the lovely rosy color spreading over the girl's face again. "What's the name of the hotel in Hamstead?" he asked abruptly.

"There isn't any hotel. But probably—it's so late, and you've been ill, and everything—Mary would take you in."

"I don't want to intrude—"

"Mary wouldn't feel that you were intruding. She'll be only too thankful to have the chance to make you comfortable. That is, that's the way I think she'll feel about it. At any rate, we better go down there and see!"

"I don't want to intrude—"

"Mary wouldn't feel that you were intruding. She'll be only too thankful to have the chance to make you comfortable. That is, that's the way I think she'll feel about it. At any rate, we better go down there and see!"

"I don't want to intrude—"

"Mary wouldn't feel that you were intruding. She'll be only too thankful to have the chance to make you comfortable. That is, that's the way I think she'll feel about it. At any rate, we better go down there and see!"

"I don't want to intrude—"

"Mary wouldn't feel that you were intruding. She'll be only too thankful to have the chance to make you comfortable. That is, that's the way I think she'll feel about it. At any rate, we better go down there and see!"

"I don't want to intrude—"

"Mary wouldn't feel that you were intruding. She'll be only too thankful to have the chance to make you comfortable. That is, that's the way I think she'll feel about it. At any rate, we better go down there and see!"

"I don't want to intrude—"

"Mary wouldn't feel that you were intruding. She'll be only too thankful to have the chance to make you comfortable. That is, that's the way I think she'll feel about it. At any rate, we better go down there and see!"

"I don't want to intrude—"

"Mary wouldn't feel that you were intruding. She'll be only too thankful to have the chance to make you comfortable. That is, that's the way I think she'll feel about it. At any rate, we better go down there and see!"

"I don't want to intrude—"

"Mary wouldn't feel that you were intruding. She'll be only too thankful to have the chance to make you comfortable. That is, that's the way I think she'll feel about it. At any rate, we better go down there and see!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Big Vogue in Promise for Cape-Suit

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



A SUIT'S the thing! This spring song of fashion is being chorused in accents loud and clear throughout every style center far and near. Indeed, some of the knowing ones go so far as to predict the coming spring will prove about the most important suit season we have experienced for a decade or more.

The exciting thing about the new suits is that they are to have capes. Not that suits are to go jacketless, no, indeed! The real news is that in addition to the usual jacket, the smartest tailored suits include capes, short, long or medium length made of the very selfsame material.

What's more, some of the newest many-piece costumes even go so far as to throw in for good measure a full-length coat of the identical tweed or material or whatever the weave which fashions the rest of the outfit. Now, ask we you, is this not "going some" in the direction of being practical when it comes to a four-piece ensemble which is a whole wardrobe in itself capable of being interchanged to tune in with whatsoever brand of weather fleckle spring may have in store for us?

With this assortment of cape, jacket, long topcoat and skirt all of one material at hand, one need not wait for the calendar to announce that spring is here, in order to don the new suit. Wear it now and show the world how well-versed you are in regard to what constitutes midseason chic. You are supposed to work the combination in

this wise—for immediate wear, the wool skirt with its colorful blouse is to be topped with the full-length coat throwing the cape casually about one's shoulders as a sure protection from any icy blasts which winter may have left in its trail. Come milder days, then doff the long coat in favor of the jaunty hip-length jacket, still retaining the cape. To appreciate the look of casual swank which this trio of jacket, skirt and cape achieves, we refer you to the handsome outfit posed to the right in the illustration. The material for this stunning three-piece is flecked tweed. When warmish spring days arrive the skirt with the cape sans jacket or coat will prove a perfect joy in the wearing. The cape-and-skirt costume is a favorite theme for spring, part of its lure being the invitation it extends to a flattering blouse to complete the trio. Be sure to note the hat which tops this costume. It is one of the new high "boxy" turbans of co-sack influence which Paris is launching for spring.

Another happy inspiration is the new and lovely cape-suits done in pastels. The model to the left is such. It is tailored of pale blue cheviot in a diagonal weave, with buttons to match. The bag, which is a soft felt hat zipped together, is also blue and the designer has stitched a derby hat with a flaring brim of deeper blue taffeta to complete the color harmony. By the way, taffeta is about the smartest thing going this season for millinery and accessories of all sorts.

© 1932 Western Newspaper Union.

CHILD'S WARDROBE

LATEST SHOES HIDE SIZE OF YOUR FOOT



Actually, they tell us that women are wearing shoes from a size to a size and a half longer than they were a decade ago. But the new shoes for spring are so artfully designed that they make the foot look inches shorter.

The tendency toward a higher cut is more marked than ever in this new footwear, with many versions of the oxford and the monk's shoe in evidence. Toes are rounder, and heels cupped to give a shorter effect to the foot.

Sports shoes are smartly sturdy, and calf, the ideal material for this type of shoes, is promised more importance than usual for spring wear with tweeds and woolsens. Buckskin, and other suede-finished leathers, also promise to hold good for the coming season.

Velvet Enters Field of Collar and Cuff Fashions

Collars and cuffs, always ready to take to the latest whim, are doing a neat series of velvet tricks, using as their trimming bits of copper, steel and semi-precious stones. Bow ties tipped with copper are in the Schiaparelli manner, and copper disks through which the ties protrude and fasten in a bow, are matched for purses and shoe trims.

Nothing is more satisfactory, however, than the collar-and-cuff set of isinglass, colored to contrast with the costume or left in its natural transparent nature. It soils but it's such a grand feeling to take a small brush or washrag and a little warm soap and water and wash 'em clean as a whistle in less time than it takes to tell it!

How to Change Necklines of Last Season's Dress

Women who have last season's dresses with low necklines will want to change them if possible, so caplets with stand-up collars, starched linen plastrons deep and wide enough to hide a cutout V, knitted yokes and cuffs, are some of the items which suggest themselves for the purpose.

LITTLE SPRUCE GUM USED

As a gum-chewing nation, America has gone soft, boasts the only survivor of what once was a leading industry in Maine, the making of spruce gum. The Indians taught settlers the value of the gum from the spruce tree. But moderns turned many years ago to flavored gums that chew with less exertion. The spruce gum crop in Maine used to total 150 tons yearly. This was worth \$300,000. Now, however, the harvest amounts to four to six tons.

Do this for Your Child in TWO WEEKS

How to rid any boy or girl of sluggishness or constipation and build a big appetite.

The trouble with children who will not eat is usual *stasis*. The symptoms are a tongue that's always coated, bad breath, poor color, dull eyes that are often a bilious yellow. No appetite, no ambition—even for play. Hard to get to sleep, hard to wake in the morning.

There's an absolute remedy for this condition. It gives listless youngsters the appetite and energies of a young animal! They eat! They gain! They keep well!

It's not the stomach, but the bowel condition that keeps children from eating. But the trouble is in the lower bowel—the colon. California syrup of figs is the only "medicine" that is needed to stimulate the colon muscles. The very next day, your child is eating better and feeling better. Keep on with the syrup of figs a few days and you will see amazing improvement in appetite, color, weight and spirits.

Any drug store has the real California syrup of figs, all bottled, with directions. Nature never made a nicer acting or nicer tasting laxative. (It is purely vegetable.) Remember California syrup of figs when sickness, a cold or any upset has clogged a child's bowels.

WARNING: Even when it's something to give children, some stores will try to substitute. So be sure the bottle says CALIFORNIA Syrup of Figs.

Interesting Part Hidden

You generally hear but half the truth and the other half is more interesting.

Found ANSWER TO UGLY PIMPLES

ONCE SHE HATED HERSELF! EVEN when she knew that unattractive, pimply skin was hurting her popularity she could find nothing that helped—until a friend hinted "constipation" and advised MR. Tablets (Nature's Remedy). They toned and strengthened the entire circulatory tract—aid her system of poisons—wastes thoroughly, naturally. Soon skin blotches vanished, pale cheeks glowed again. Try this safe, dependable, all-vegetable laxative and corrective tonight. Non-habit-forming. At all drug stores. **N. TO-NIGHT TOMORROW ALRIGHT!**

"TUMS" Quick relief for acid indigestion, heartburn. Only 10c.


WITH THE DYNAFILTER
Price \$1.50
Hold permanently for 3 years

SOLVE YOUR RADIO PROBLEMS
220 volt, 60 cycle power. Separate sections. Adds greater power. Saves current and tubes. Improves sensitivity. Simple and quickly attached to antenna post on any battery or electric set. Full directions. Satisfaction guaranteed. Mail order. Filled, Check, Money Order or Cash. C. O. D.

THE RANCO COMPANY
16 Boquet Street - Dorchester, Mass.

Rheumacide
Indicated as an Alternative in the Treatment of
RHEUMATIC FEVER, GOUT, Simple Neuralgia, Muscular Aches and Pains
At All Drugstores
Jas. Baily & Son, Wholesale Distributors
Baltimore, Md.

Kidneys bother you?
Heed promptly bladder irregularities, getting up at night and nagging backache. They may warn of some disordered kidney or bladder condition. Users everywhere rely on **Doan's Pills**. Fraised for more than 50 years by grateful users the country over. Sold by all druggists.



DOAN'S PILLS
A DIURETIC FOR THE KIDNEYS

