Lady Blanche Farm

A Romance of the Commonplace

By Frances Parkinson Keyes

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SYNOPSIS

Motoring through Vermont, Philip Starr, young Boston architect, meets, in unconventional fashion, Blanche Manning, girl of seventeen, with whom he is immediately enamored. In conversation, he learns something of her family history, It being a long distance to Burlington, Starr's destination, Blanche suggests, the village of Hamstead not boasting a hotel, that he become, for the night, a guest of her cousin, Mary Manning. Mary receives Philip with true Vermont hospitality, and he makes the acquaintance of her cousin Paul, recognized as her fiance. Starr finds Mary is acquainted with Gale Hamlin, noted Boston architect, in whose office Philip is employed. He informs her of his desire to win Blanche for his wife. She is sympathetic, and tells him of an old family superstition concerning the "Blanches" of the Manning family. Paul Manning is inclined to be dissipated, not realizing Mary's true worth. Mary's reproaches for his undue "conviviality" are badly received by Paul, and the girl begins to have misgivings as to the wisdom of the alliance. Starr's disclosure of the fact that he is the son of a Congregational minister, and of his financial standing, establish him in the Manning family's regard.

CHAPTER V-Continued

It was, unfortunately, Moses who answered the rap at the knocker. His mouth was full of stolen sweets-he had eaten up almost the entire contents of Mary's box of candy-and he had no eye for style. He was not impressed by the appearance of the strange man. Moreover, his own appearance could hardly have warranted the hope that he might create a favorable impression himself. The day being warm, and Mary otherwise occupled, he had surreptitiously removed most of his clothing-in fact, everything except a pair of ankle ties. which had no connection with modesty and were retained simply because the hemp carpet in the front hall was rough.

"Hello," he said.

"Er-hello," said the stranger, his face twitching slightly. "Does Miss Mary Manning live here?"

"Mary? Yes. She's out in the back garden, killing potato bugs . . . that way," said Moses, with a wave of the hand, indicating the direction which the stranger should take.

"Thank you very much," said the man, his mouth still twitching, walking off in the direction indicated.

Mary, hearing footsteps, straightened up quickly from the task over which she was bent, and turned a deep crim-

"Mr. Hamlin!" she exclaimed, in great confusion. "Oh, you must excuse me! When did you come?"

"Just now, from Boston," he said. laughing and shaking hands. "I understand you are more cordial to guests from that locality than you once gave me to understand you were likely to be. I have had the pleasure of-er-meeting one of your small brothers, and he told me I should probably find you here. Aren't you glad to see me?"

"Moses! Oh, what dreadful thing was he doing this time? Yes, of course I am, but-" her flush growing deeper every minute.

"This time I came because Philip Starr asked me to. Naturally, I didn't tell him how glad I was of an excuse. He thinks I'm doing it entirely out of friendship to him-only, it's great luck, for me, that he happened to fall in love with your cousin. It'll get Hannah and me into touch with you again-Philip is a young man of unusual thoroughness, promptness and decision, as you may have gathered in your glimpse of him-qualities which, unfortunately, are not often found in one who is also an artist and an idealist. Moreover, he possesses a very fine sense of honor. He seems to be in a tremendous hurry, but didn't think it right to press his suit until he had been more thoroughly introduced. I was instructed that as soon as this formality, through me, had been accomplished, I was to telegraph him at Burlington, and he would return here -unless, of course, it seemed absolutely hopeless for him to do so."

"Is there any reason why it should be hopeless?"

"None in the world." "Then come over and meet Cousin

"All right," replied Gale Hamlin with twinkling eyes. "But remember that afterwards I'm coming back here to see you!"

Two days later, Philip stood in the white-paneled north parlor of Violet Manning's house, waiting for Blanche to come down to him. The room was unlighted, and it was beginning to grow dark

The door opened and Blanche came in. Philip took a step towards her. and held out his arms. She walked straight into them.

"Lady Blanche-you little white flower-Oh, my darling!" was all he said, and covered her lifted face with his kisses.

CHAPTER VI

Philip Starr would never have dreamed of considering his comfortable income a fortune. But it loomed large in the eyes of Lady Blanche farm, and soon in those of all the country side, for in the general rejoicing at the good luck which had be-

consciously or unconsciously-by many persons. Violet herself was largely responsible for this. She went about among her neighbors scattering her good news as she went,

"Of course, Blanche is very young, and it breaks my heart to think of parting with her," she said, sighing and wiping away a few tears. "But I couldn't bring myself to stand in the way of the true happiness of one of my children for selfish reasons. That's never been my way. Of course Blanche is too innocent about worldly things and too much in love to think of the material side at all, but we older ones know that can't be overlooked altogether, Philip can do everything for her. Yes, her ring is lovely, isn't it? You seldom see such pure, white diamonds. And he's given her a pendant, too-a diamond star! Wasn't that a pretty thought, and so clever! Philip is clever, unusually so. He says the name she's going to have, Blanche Starr, is a poem just in itself. No, Philip won't hear of a long engagement, so I'm going to take Blanche to Boston right away, to buy her trousseau, and see caterers and stationers and so on. I guess I can show his fashionable friends that I know how things should be done, even if I do live in the country !- They're going to California on their wedding trip-of course Philip would have taken Blanche to Europe if this tiresome war hadn't been going on, Blanche is going to keep a maid, and



"Lady Blanche-You Little White Flower."

have a motor, right from the beginning. Of course, all Philip's friendsand he has thousands of them-will entertain for her and give her a beautiful time. Philip is charming, and that's so rare in a man! He is so thoughtful and pleasant always, I friend. The lawyer, Moses, had a simply adore him myself.

There was not a single flaw in the crystal. Violet could purr on for hours. In fact Hamstead grew a little tired of so much perfection and so much purring.

Nevertheless, in spite of some expressions of disparagement, Mrs. Elliott and all Hamstead with her. flocked to see the trousseau, and then the presents, and, in early August, to the wedding. During the two months and a half that had elapsed since his first appearance there, Philip had spent every Sunday and holiday at Lady Blanche farm, and, as Mrs. Elliott said, had been so "pleasantspoken" that he had become cordially liked in the village; and, in turn, he had come to have a very warm and real affection for many of his new friends and relatives. Only twice had his dream of perfect happiness been shaken; and he tried to dismiss both of these episodes from his mind as

Left alone for a time one rainy morning, he had decided to explore the little, abandoned law office. He had been thinking what fun it would be to restore it, and put it in order for Blanche and himself to occupy when they came to Hamstead to visit. It contained a cellar and two large, semicircular rooms, one above the other. and a small one with a little attic over it in the rear. He sat in one of the dilapidated chairs, pulled up a shaky table, and drew plans and sketches. Under his swift pencil, the tiny place became transformed. There was the living room, bright with white paint and a landscape paper, and shining brasses, with Lady Blanche's portrait over the mantel, her desk in one corner, her harpsichord in another. and her gate-legged mahogany table in the center of the room; there was the chamber, with her four-posted bed -one of her hand-woven linen sheets serving for a counterpane-her bureau with its crystal lusters for Blanche, her low-boy for his own dressing table, her long gilt-framed mirror, and the sampler she had stitched, on the flowered walls instead

of pictures. He spent a long time over his pleasant task. Then, finding that Blanche, who had promised to join him there, was still nowhere in sight, he picked up some of the musty books lying on the table, and began to look through

They were mostly law books, with a few interesting marginal notes that the second Moses Manning had made; but Philip knew little or nothing about law, and did not understand them. The third volume that he opened, less bulky than the others, proved to be a county history, written by a local clergyman early in the Nineteenth fallen Blanche, it was augmented- century. The Connecticut valley had

been settled by men of no slight callber, and their subsequent Revolutionary record was noteworthy. Philip read on with increasing interest. which grew greater still when he reached that portion of the history devoted mainly to the Manning family. Here were Moses Manning's fine war service-the trip to France-and here. too, was the Countess Blanche! The story of the great chests that came over the sea. And, at last, came the date of the twins' birth, and, a few pages farther on, that of Lady Blanche's death. But between these dates was something that Philip had

not yet heard . . And the Lady Blanche, being very weak after her long travail, was sorely spent, for she was a female elegantly formed, but not sturdy, or of sound health. She lay in great pain, and ever and anon she sank into a stupor from which none could rouse her, nor did she regard my exhortation, or the lamentations of her afflicted husband. But suddenly she did speak in a loud voice, saying, 'Since I must die, neither shall any other woman in this village who beareth twins survive her cruel labor; and though I perish, there shall be, in every generation, a Blanche Manning on this farm, who shall have not only my name, but in whom my person shall also be seen again. And she shall wed for love, being hotly wooed, even as I was wooed, by a stranger. But because I have suffered, for all my love, in this unfriendly, cold country, and because he who swore to love me best has not saved me from anguish, but hath shown his love to be but selfishness, since he hath failed me when I most did need him-therefore, I say, she shall not love for long. Within five years of her marriage either she or her husband shall die, and die with the bitter knowledge that neither riches nor passion nor high romance, nay, not even all three together, suffice to make that great thing called love unless there be other things, which my lover hath not given me, added unto them. And, in the hour of their death. I will appear unto those who die, and comfort them, for the manner of their passing shall be lonely and grievous altogether.'

"And thereat," went on the chronicler, "she lay back upon her bed in peace, and did not speak again. And we marveled greatly that one so gentle should seek, in her last moments. to lay a curse upon her innocent descendants."

Philip closed the book, shivering, and angry and ashamed because he was shivering. That silly old superstition-what did it amount to! But -had it amounted to anything? He began, involuntarily, to recall the histories of other members of the Manning family. The countess' girl-twin -the second Blanche-had married a Virginian, a classmate of her brother's at Harvard, who was shot, after they had had only a few radiant months together, in a duel with the man who had once been his best daughter named Blanche, who went west in a prairie schooner on her honeymoon, and was never heard of again after she passed the Alleghenies. And the lawyer's eldest son had a daughter who-but that story was too dreadful, and contained shame as well as tragedy. Feeling as if his throat were being clutched, and as if he could not shake himself free of the hand that choked him, Philip sprang to his feet to see an apparition standing in the doorway.

Blanche also had been spending her time that rainy morning by making an excursion into the past. Her mother had felt it a good opportunity for them to go through some of the chests carefully stowed away in the attic in search of treasures to add to her trousseau and they had found a tiny iron-bound trunk, thrust far under the enves and forgotten, full of the countess' clothes; Blanche had carried them down to her bedroom and tried them on. They, fitted her as if they had been made for her.

"Couldn't I keep one of them on, and surprise Philip?"

"I think it would be lovely! And you can do your hair like hers in the portrait, and wear that white brocade dress that she had it painted in-you'd be the living image of her!"

Accordingly, after a careful study of the famous picture. Blanche did her hair, with Violet's help, high on her head, powdered it, laced herself into the stiff, magnificent gown that had been the countess' wedding dress, and went out to join Philip.

The startled, almost terrified cry that escaped him when he saw her frightened her almost out of her senses. She ran to him, and put her arms around him, trembling, too. "What is it?" she exclaimed.

"Nothing-nothing. . . . How lovely you look! . . . Are those some of the first Blanche's clothes?" "Yes. Don't you think they're

Philip! What's the matter?"

pretty?" "Beautiful, darling. You-you're very like her, aren't you? Like her picture, of course, I mean."

"Yes-but I don't see why you seem so upset, even if I am. I thought it would please you to see me dressed up like this!"

Philip forced a laugh, "I'm not upset," he said pleasantly. "You startled me a little, that's all. You're-you're enough to startle any man, you're so lovely. I want a kiss-and I want to consult you about something. And then he told her of his scheme for fixing up the little office,

To his surprise, she did not respond to him with enthusiasm. At first she looked a little bored. Then she interrupted him with a petulance which shocked him.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Lavish Use of Shirring and Tucking Just

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



THERE is a vast amount of shirring, tucking, and we might add, braiding going on in the realm of costume design today. Every once in a while creators of our styles-beautiful do just that-delee into the past for inspiration.

This time research among fashions of yore has caused creators of our styles-beautiful to feel a strong urge to shirr or tuck or braid not only in a trimming way, but according to news from Paris some of the most successful frocks in late collections are either shirred or tucked or braided from head to foot.

The heavy sheers and chiffons which are so enthusiastically exploited for general daytime wear, respond beautifully to these treatments. The effectiveness of allover shirring is convincingly illustrated in the model shown to the left in the picture. In gray, in the new string shade, in black, navy or any of the fashionable colors, for that matter, this costume would be as successfully outstanding. Not only does it carry all the feminine graces but it is thoroughly practical and wearable.

this jacket suit of shirred heavy sheer. For instance the blouse shown gives it a tailored look thus tuning the costume to the practical hours of the day. Substitute for this tailored satin blouse a frilly affair of lace, or match-

OR SWELL TOQUES

IT'S FINE BRIMS

ing pastel tint and this lovely ensemble takes on the air of a most beguiling afternoon costume which is on its way to a bridge party, perhaps, or tea at some fashionable rendezvous or a musicale, a matinee or any of the smart gatherings where guests are expected to dress pictorially to the occasion.

You'll love the other frock here pictured. Every one does at very first glimpsing. It is of tucked black chiffon. Its apparent simplicity is positively baffling for it is really ultra sophisticated so far as high style is concerned. The white organdie accents at neckline and sleeves are to be expected, for organdie furbelows have become a passion with fashion's followers this season. The hat is in milan. This fine straw is outstanding in latest millinery showings.

Used in a trimming way shirring and tucking are also immensely popular. Particularly do the smartest blouses show generous and decorative groups of shirrings. Then, too, the fanciful little wraps mostly of taffeta or velvet, which are more in evidence than ever, are largely a matter of intricate and novel shirrings.

As has been mentioned before, this revival of quaint trimming treatments It makes quite a difference as to has also brought braiding into fashion what sort of a blouse is worn with again. So much so, that many charming net evening dresses are designfully braided with soutache in self color, if not the entire frock then at least the sleeves and yoke and probabl a cape effect of some sort. @. 1932, Western Newspaper Union.

WHAT ANNA WAS A professor was telling to more

or less eager ears the facts about Boccaccio and the indiscreet Anna

The class was fulled by his gentle version of the affair, until he was about to close, when he said: "Anna was, you must know, a-well-if I may lapse into the extreme modern vernacular"-his eyes at this point gleamed wickedly and the class sat up-"she was," continued the professor boldly, "what I can only call -a firt!"-Tit-Bits Magazine.

USES HIS HEAD



"I slipped, Miss Sharpe, but never fell from the balloon."

"What kept you in the air, Mr. Sapp-using your head?"

Seasoning

A sixth-grade teacher had placed a long list of words on the board, planning to teach and interpret the word "synonyme" "What is a synonym?" she asked.

All members of the class looked somewhat puzzled, but finally one hand went up. "Well, Alicita, what is a synonym?"

continued the teacher. "It's what we sprinkle on the top of coffee cake," was the answer .- Indianapolis News.

Time for Insurance

Old Man Doolittle was past ninety when he thought it was time for him to take out some life insurance. The agent told him the company couldn't accept such a risk as that-a man over ninety years of age

"Well," squenked the old gentleman, "if you look up your figures you'll find that mighty few people die after the age of ninety."

Going In for Beauty Housewife-I don't like the looks

of that codfish. Storekeeper-Well, If you want looks, why don't you buy a goldfish?-Pathfinder Magazine.

Modern Problem

Susan-Tom is going to give up smoking for me. Sarah-How old-fashioned.

Susan-No, not that. He says we can't both afford it.

Saving 'Em

O'Flaherty-Now, you've been fighting again. You've lost your two front Son-No, I ain't, pop; I got 'em in

IN ALL LINES

me pocket.



Wifte-Women are to be found, let me tell you, in all kinds of business! Hubby-Quite true-including all hose that are not their own.

A Glad Time

Blank (meeting niece on street)-Well, my dear, back in town, eh? Having a good time-lots going on, what?

Niere-Oh, uncle, absolutely hectic ! I've just been to a "lecture funcheon," a "reading circle tea" and now I'm off to an "uplift party."-London l'unch.

Scratchy

"What was the most difficult part of the civil service exam you took at the "Writing with the post office pens."

"O Promise Me"

Hubby (reading)-Yknow, I don't like all this metaphorical stuff. I wonder what exactly this writer feller means by "gems of thought?"

Wife-Oh, something like that ring you're always promising to buy me .-Sydney Bulletin.

Long Account

Junior-1 owe all I have to one woman, Sophomore-Your mother?

Junior-No, my landlady. - Long

If you like brims, fine. If you prefer toques, swell. If you lean to tailored sallors, that's all right. If you yeam for floppy and romantic hats,

Because the millinery mode of the mement is so flexible that you may appear in practically any style that your conscience dictates, and still be You may wear shallow crowns, or

deep ones. You may wear berets or wide capeline hats. You may wear severe sallors or Turkish fezzes. It's all agreeable to the style dictators. For they're presenting models

in every one of these groups. And each one is new, they say, and correct. The new high-back tricorne toques are smart-especially one of black felt with a stitched cuff of black silk shantung, a self-bow and a scroll-patterned

For your sports things, you'll want one of the new casual brimmed hats of ballibuntl.

Women Now Have Yen for Fancy Striped Suitings

Men's wear houses are surprised to see how many of their fancy striped men's suitings are ordered for women's suits. Hairline flannels and pinhead checks with plain companions are best sellers for the tailored spring suit. In these, mannish oxfords and other grays are strong.

Worsted twill is another mannish woolen type that is being sponsored. Crisp, springy and ideal for tailoring. worsted twill renches its heights in that old-fashioned tan tone most closely associated with twills of the past.

Milliners Are Stressing Colored Ribbon Trimming

Milliners are emphasizing multicolor ribbon trimmings, often in crude combination, such as yellow, vivid green and black, or else a combination like orange, green and pavy. Talbot combines pale gray with tur-

quoise (both of which colors are high style favorites), using this combination for one of her high-crowned directoire sailors.

Tiny crin horsehair veils and tortolse shell motifs are among the smart millinery trimmings.

ULTRA CHIC "LINES" By CHERIE NICHOLAS

To the uninitiated this evening wrap made of cherry colored matelasse velvet may seem a bit quaint but to those who know, it is an ultra modern fashion. It qualifies as such in that firstly it is the new finger-tip length. Secondly its full sleeves are crinoline lined so as to give the broad-shouldered look which style leaders say we must have. Thirdly its collarless neckline buttons close up about the throat which obeys the latest edict of fashion. Lastly but of outstanding significance is the fact that the velvet of which it is made is the very new matelasse type which is sort of crinkly surfaced. The handsome jeweled buttons also convey an important style message. With the younger set particularly this type of wrap is meeting