

# Lady Blanche Farm

## A Romance Of The Commonplace



By **Francis Parkinson Keyes**  
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### CHAPTER X—Continued

David's remark about the daily grind of housework gave Paul his first cue to helpfulness. Mary began to find the kitchen fire built and the teakettle boiling when she came down stairs in the morning, the wood box filled, the furnace tended faithfully day and night, the porches and paths kept free from snow. On Monday mornings he appeared to empty wash-tubs and hang out clothes. At his invitation, Myra agreed to do all the baking for both houses until "things got straightened out." Violet undertook the mending, and Jane actually gave up a meeting of the Foreign Missionary society to finish the weekly sweeping. And when, in spite of all this relief, Mary paid for her long strain and quietly crumpled up in a heap on the floor one afternoon when Algy was out of danger, and Sylvia's grave was hidden with snow, Paul picked her up and laid her on the bed, loosening her dress and taking off her shoes as he called for help. Jane, fortunately, was in the house and undressed her while he went downstairs to telephone for Doctor Wells and to get a hot-water bottle and a hot stimulant ready. And when he saw that it was her inability to care for the boys that was worrying her more than anything else, he turned his attention mainly to them. It would have been hard to discover anyone more stupid and awkward in dealing with a little child than Paul was, but he did what he could. He did better than he realized and his reward was greater than he expected. The first time that the children fell upon him, almost simultaneously, with hugs and kisses, was when he came in with two small wooden snow shovels—"to use them now." As he hugged and kissed them in return, his embarrassment was equaled only by the inner glow of contentment that permeated his being. Mary, up again for the first time, came in to find them thus occupied. The inner glow of contentment changed to a leaping flame as Paul looked at her and saw the expression of surprise and gratitude on her pale face.

"You're awfully good to those children," she said softly.

"They're great kids. I never knew before how much fun a kid is. I thought they were horrid little nuisances," returned Paul apologetically.

Mary sat down beside him. "Blanche and Phillip are coming home for Christmas," she said. "Isn't that nice? Cousin Violet has a letter saying they'll surely be here the twenty-fourth, and of course she's perfectly delighted."

"That is good news! Got any more?"

"I don't know whether you'll call it good or not—but Austin Gray is going to France. I think that's much the best thing he can do, really. He says it's only a matter of months now before the United States will be in the war, too. He's going over as an ambulance driver, but he says he can get transferred to the real job later on if we do. He was just here to see you. I went downstairs for a minute just as he came in, but I didn't know you were here, so he didn't wait. He asked me to invite you to go to New York with him, after Christmas. He'll be there for a fortnight, at least, making final arrangements."

"New York?"

"Yes. Wouldn't you like to go? I thought you were crazy to get away from Hamstead."

"I'm not quite so crazy as I used to be."

"No, you're getting fairly sane!" said Mary with a little laugh that made his heart leap, "and—just as kind and thoughtful as you can be. But you ought to go. It'll be wonderful for you! And I'm sure you'd be a comfort to Austin, too. He must think so, or he wouldn't have asked you. You'll go, won't you, Paul?"

"Yes, of course. Especially if you think I'd better. Mary, wait a minute—" but she was gone.

After that, for the first time since they had "made up," Paul saw that she was avoiding him again. The fact gave him fresh food for thought. She was willing to be his cousin, his friend, his companion. She was grateful far beyond his deserving for the little he had been able to do to serve her. She had forgiven him freely for all he had done to hurt her. But more than that she could not and would not do and be.

Paul was now, for the first time in his life, deeply in love, and perhaps for that reason, daily going deeper—going deeper of all because he felt it to be absolutely hopeless. Well, he must hide it as best he could. That startled look must not come into

Mary's eyes again. He must accept the bitter knowledge that she regarded his love as something to fear, as part of his punishment. When Blanche and Phillip arrived, he took Blanche's statements of what she thought of him—it was the first time she had seen him since the engagement had been broken—so quietly that she was frightened.

Phillip was less surprised than she had expected, when she told him about it. He had been watching his brother-in-law closely and had come to the conclusion that he had either misjudged the boy at first, or that the latter had improved somewhat during the last few months.

"Let Paul alone, honey," he said. "He looks to me like a man who is working out his own salvation."

Paul, with the rest of the village, was glad to have his sister and brother-in-law at home; glad not only because he was fond of them, but be-



And Blanche Curling Up in His Arms Like a Contented Kitten.

cause it was easier, in their presence to keep from saying the things he was longing to say to Mary—to keep, as he was longing still more, from touching her. Time, mercifully, softens everything—lovers' quarrels and children's sufferings and even the thought of the Valley of the Shadow. Austin was finding his solution. Algy, thin but thriving, was in his high chair at the table once more. Phillip and Blanche, radiantly happy, were with them again. After Christmas day dinner, while the two little boys took their naps, Violet went to lie down, Seth to smoke his pipe, and Cousin Jane to help Myra, loaned for the occasion, with the dishes. The four young people were left alone together. And, as the door closed behind the last retreating elder, Phillip suddenly snatched up Blanche and kissed her, announcing that he was so full of joy and dinner mixed, that he'd got to let off steam, some way, that very minute. And Blanche, curling up in his arms like a contented kitten, smiled and kissed him back. They settled down in the big winged chair before the fire together—

Over their unconscious heads, Paul looked at Mary. Then he crossed to where she stood, and the expression on his face was unmistakable. Before he could speak, she fled from the room.

Paul went after her. She had almost reached the stairs. He stepped in front of her.

"See here, Mary," he said, "I can stand almost anything you want to do or say and I know I deserve it. But please don't look at me that way. I can't stand it."

"Well, don't look at me the way you did then."

"I'll try not to. I'm trying not to, all the time. I only thought—it's Christmas day—that perhaps you could, just once—I won't ask you again for a long time. . . ."

It is unfortunately true that many naturally sweet-tempered women, if they are also clever, take refuge, when they are hurt or frightened, in flippancy or sarcasm. It is to be hoped that they do not know how deeply they can wound with these weapons. But whether they do or not, Mary was no exception to this rule.

"Why should you care about it so much?" she quoted scathingly. "A kiss doesn't mean anything."

Paul stepped to one side, leaving the passage upstairs clear for her. She went by him swiftly, her head up. Then, on the landing, she turned and came still more swiftly down.

"That wasn't fair," she said. "Please forgive me, Paul."

"No," he said slowly. "It wasn't fair, and it wasn't kind of you to remind me of it. But what I said was

true. There are some kisses that don't mean anything in almost every fellow's life. They drink too much sometimes, too. I'm sorry, but it's so. But that doesn't mean they're hopeless drunkards and degenerates. There hasn't been anything to drink, or any of that kind of kisses for me in a long time. You know that, and you know why, too. And you ought to know that it would mean more than anything in the world to me if I could kiss you again."

Paul had learned a good many valuable lessons in the last months. Mary learned one now. The boy was humble, but he was not abject. If he had a right to demand nothing else from her, he deserved and demanded, at least, fair play and respect.

"When you go to New York—" she began.

"You'll let me kiss you good-by?"

This was not at all what Mary had intended to say. She hesitated a minute, and then, in spite of herself, she nodded. Then she leaned forward and touched his cheek with her lips, so lightly that it seemed merely as if a flower had brushed it.

"The telephone is ringing," she said, over her shoulder and left him to answer it as she fled.

"I wonder if Mary and Paul are really going to make up, after all?" Phillip asked Blanche, a few days later.

"Oh, I hope not—even if he is my brother! You wouldn't want her to marry him now that she's got such a splendid chance?"

"Splendid chance?"

"Yes. Of getting Mr. Hamlin. Why if she took Paul, even if he was good enough for her, which of course he isn't, she'd be buried in Hamstead all the rest of her life!"

"Well, I shouldn't mind being buried in Hamstead, with someone I loved," Phillip said. "What do you say about starting in to fix up the little law office for ourselves this spring after all? I know you didn't care much for the idea when I first suggested it. But I'd enjoy the work immensely, and I can probably get off for a month next summer."

"Oh, Phillip, couldn't we go somewhere else? There's plenty of time for that! I'm crazy to see Bar Harbor or Newport."

"All right, honey, just as you prefer," he said quietly.

He left Hamstead with the growing certainty that Paul and Mary were "really making up." Violet shared this certainty and ran up several new bills on the strength of it. Mary came in and out of her house again as if nothing had ever happened. She helped with the preparations for Paul's departure for New York, with energy and interest. Austin had decided to go by way of Boston and they were therefore leaving on the morning train instead of the midnight. And when Paul came downstairs ready to start, he found Mary, and not Seth, waiting in the little old sleigh, to take him to the station.

She had, as Violet often remarked, "no style to her," in this morning she had even less than usual. It was bitterly cold, and she had on an old fur coat of her mother's, worn and shabby and out-of-date, a knitted hood of red wool, and red wool mittens. But Paul thought he had never seen her look half so lovely. She had seemed, since Christmas, so much less tired than for a long time, so much like his old playmate, his old sweetheart.

Mary drove, and they rode along, talking of trivial things, laughing often, until they had almost reached the village. Then Paul put his arm around her and laid his hand over hers.

"You promised me," he said softly.

Mary turned her face to his exactly as she might have done ten years before. Paul had meant about everything else, that this embrace should be gentle, reverent even, and he did not for one minute forget this. But he had not reckoned on its proving so utterly impossible to keep all traces of the passion that was surging through him from his lips, and when he felt the cold, soft cheek growing suddenly warm beneath them, involuntarily he sought her mouth. Instead of drawing away from him, as he instantly feared she might do, she returned his kiss. For one heavenly moment they clung to each other. Then he bent over and kissed the little red mittens holding the reins.

"You dear girl," he murmured. "My own dear Mary—" and suddenly seeing tears in her eyes, he exclaimed, "I didn't hurt you, did I, darling? I wouldn't have, for the world!"

"No—Oh, no!"

"What is it then, sweetheart?"

"Hush! You mustn't call me that," she whispered. "I didn't realize, when I promised, that you wanted that kind of a kiss. I thought it was just for—a proof that we were friends again—for always."

"We are friends again for always. And that's all I did expect. But of course this was the kind I wanted, even if—"

"It wasn't fair."

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean to, on my word of honor. But you kissed back!" he ended exultantly.

"I know I did. That's what wasn't fair. I—couldn't seem to help it. You were so—so you meant it so!"

"I'm glad you see that now," he said quietly. But his heart was singing.

#### Boston's Short Street

There are few shorter streets in the world than Franklin avenue, in Boston. Some 35 feet long. It connects Brattle street with Cornhill, in downtown Boston. Little more than a glorified alley, Franklin avenue nevertheless is designated by a shiny name plate like the city's longer thoroughfares.

## New Raincoats Are Irresistible

By **CHERIE NICHOLAS**



There's something more than May flowers which the warm spring showers are bringing forth these days—it's raincoats! Not just ordinary stereotyped raincoats in the usual somber blacks, grays, blues and brown. If they were, this we are telling you wouldn't be news. The raincoats we are talking about are real news—the most gorgeous affairs that ever went stepping out into a spring-time downpour.

These handsome waterproof garments convey the message that the day of the homely merely utilitarian raincoat is no more. From now on the raincoats we will be wearing will show themselves to be both style-minded and beauty-conscious. To be assured of this, it is only necessary to take a look at the perfectly charming types in the illustration. These models are among the newest of the new.

The stunning highland plaid cape-coat with its hat to match as shown to the right in the picture is enough to tempt any weather man to keep on sending showers indefinitely. Not only is this raincoat a treat to the eye but the fact that it has no bothersome sleeves to crumple up the dress beneath makes it a joy to wear. And the umbrella, well we leave it to you, if it is not just too smart-looking for words.

The full length cape to the left will be welcomed by those who are looking for a rain protection that is easy to throw on and off. It can be worn either with the check side out or the reverse, rubberized white broadcloth.

The hat, made jockey cap fashion and the umbrella completes a perfect rainy day outfit.

But, see what else in the way of a swanky raincoat a spring or summertime shower is apt to coax out into the open. We are referring to the all-white model centered in this group. The smart set are going in for the white raincoat for all they are worth. They are usually made of a zephyr weight poplin or crepe de chine and are as dainty as the summery dresses they top. This model is sleeveless and can be comfortably slipped over another coat. Wide shoulders and voluminous sleeves underneath mean nothing to this raincoat. The white hat of matching poplin not only protects but it also flatters.

Another model which we cannot refrain from mentioning is of black and white check rubberized silk. There is a little visored cap and an umbrella to match and, listen to this, the whole combination is lined with red. Examine the handle of the umbrella and you will discover it is hollowed out into a sort of pocket with a snap cover—keep your taxi fare handy in it.

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### SMART THREE-PIECE

By **CHERIE NICHOLAS**



Here is one of those practical suits we are hearing about so much these days—has a jacket for medium-mild days, also a full-length topcoat for traveling or motoring or when the thermometer chances to take a drop. One of its stylish "stunts" is to be made of the same cloth in contrasting color—brown cheviot for the skirt and topcoat with the identical cheviot in an old gold tone for the jacket. The golden pean d'ange shantung hat with its yellow, gold and brown velvet flowers makes a pleasing complement.

#### Pleated Skirts

Pleated skirts have wedged their way back into favor again. And a new style of evening dress that is sure to attract more and more attention as the season advances is made of chiffon or other very sheer material with finely pleated skirt attached to a closely draped hip yoke.

### SPORTS OUTFIT FOR COUNTRY WEEK-END

Sport clothes for first country week-ends begin to be an important wardrobe item right now. To allow for vagaries in the weather they must be good and warm. Materials should be dark so you can leave town by train or car in the main outfit of the week-end, leaving plenty of room in your bag for dinner pajamas, extra sweaters, walking shoes and the rest.

A particularly satisfactory sort of costume comprises skirt, cape and sweater, or cape and suit. A lovely one which I saw recently was of hand-knitted fabric in a mustard and black and white plaid. The cape of this was three-quarter length, amply cut with a tailored collar. The skirt of the same knit was tailored with extra fullness introduced in pressed plaits. The sweater was mustard colored and high necked. With this a slouch felt hat of the mannish persuasion would look well, with ghillies, pigskin gloves and a pigskin purse.

A variation is the one-piece dress with a cape in contrasting material, lined with the dress material. In dark shades this looks smart either in town or in the country, if the dress is sufficiently simple.

#### Spread at Shoulder Line

#### Flutter and Impressive

It has been something of a surprise to those who thought that the winged silhouette, the wide shoulder, had blown itself out to the moment of collapse, to discover that certain Paris couturiers have increased the influence to such an extended degree that it suggests an airplane silhouette.

That Schiaparelli should do something extreme in this direction is not surprising. Her development of this width at-top into a fashion which juts out over the arms to a degree that gives reason to its indication as "shoulder trays" makes clear the arresting character of this fashion.

#### Casaquin Type of Blouse

#### Is Meeting With Favor

The casaquin type of blouse receives greater attention. Separate swaggar coats in fancy fabrics are strongly indorsed. Goggles in novelty fabrics, are the leading accessory. Costume jewelry makes a new bid for attention. Dresses with related long coats, jackets or capelets—often contrasting in fabric and color, are extensively shown.

## "Slavery" Really Boon to New Guinea Native

Though to us the working of blacks for less than a dollar a month smacks of slavery under another name, to the New Guinea native it represents wealth obtainable in no other way.

His culture is that of the neolithic Stone age. It requires a long period of careful and expert labor to fashion and polish a stone ax or adze. Such an implement, primitive though it may be, is of incalculable worth to an owner. Even though the careful labor required to fell and shape trees into canoes, shields or other carvings with it is of the most arduous and tedious nature, it serves the purpose nevertheless.

The young man sees years stretching ahead, before—through learning the craft and fashioning his own implements or by seizing them in raids upon his enemies—he will acquire a sufficient stock wherewith to purchase and maintain a wife.

For two months' work among the whites he may acquire a steel hand ax or an adze; for three months' pay, an ax or a mattock; for two weeks' endeavor, a butcher knife or a dagger. A shilling will purchase a brilliant loin cloth of red, green or orange cloth—finery unknown to the interior villages.

With the proceeds of his three-year term of labor, he may return to his village while still in his teens and be the richest man in it. His steel implements and his acquired knowledge of how to use them will enable him to perform many times the amount of work that could be attained by the best artisan in his tribe with stone implements.—Hal G. Everts in the Saturday Evening Post.



## POISON in Your bowels!

Poisons absorbed into the system from souring waste in the bowels, cause that dull, headachy, sluggish, bilious condition; coat the tongue; foul the breath; sap energy, strength and nerve-force. A little of Dr. Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin will clear up trouble like that, gently, harmlessly, in a hurry. The difference it will make in your feelings over night will prove its merit to you.

Dr. Caldwell studied constipation for over forty-seven years. This long experience enabled him to make his prescription just what men, women, old people and children need to make their bowels help themselves. Its natural, mild, thorough action and its pleasant taste commend it to everyone. That's why "Dr. Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin," as it is called, is the most popular laxative drugstore sell.

### DR. W. B. CALDWELL'S SYRUP PEPSIN A Doctor's Family Laxative

## Large Pimples on Face Twelve Years Healed by Cuticura

"I was troubled with pimples all over my face, neck, back and arms. They were hard, large and red, and hurt when I touched them. They festered and scaled over and at times I could hardly stand to have my clothes touch my back and arms. I could get no rest or sleep and was in that condition about ten or twelve years.

"I read an advertisement for Cuticura Soap and Ointment and sent for a free sample of each. I purchased more and after using two cakes of Cuticura Soap and two twenty-five cent boxes of Ointment I was healed." (Signed) Mrs. Marsha Nevils, R. 6, Box 125, LaGrange, Texas, July 26, '32. Cuticura Soap 25c. Ointment 25c and 50c. Talcum 25c. Sold everywhere. One sample each free. Address: "Cuticura Laboratories, Dept. R, Malden, Mass."—Adv.

#### Nature's Beneficence To be busy is the greatest foe of grief.—Exchange.

## GIRL TO WOMAN

EVERY mother knows those anxious years when her daughter is becoming a woman. The wise mother makes a confidant of her child, advises her as to her physical well-being

and watches carefully for any symptom that will indicate that her daughter's health is not all it should be. Read what Mrs. Edward Wheeler of Tridolphus, W. Va., says: "When I was a growing girl I was subject to colds. I lost much strength, my system became very weak, I felt tired, my appetite was poor and I had nervous headaches. Mother gave me Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription and in a short time I felt so much stronger and more active, was relieved of frequent colds and since then I have been in very good health."

Write Dr. Pierce's Clinic, Buffalo, N. Y.