

LOVE AND LAW.

By the author of "BONNY'S LOVERS."

CHAPTER XII.—(Continued.)

"Nona, my dear child, are you there? The lamp is very dim, is it not? I don't see you," called the sleepy voice of Mrs. Heathcote, waking me from a rapturous dream of wonderment and joy. And at the same moment the Rector entered, full of apologies for his long absence.

"I couldn't get away," he explained, with quite unnecessary elaboration. "These poor things like to talk out all their troubles, and they are very long-winded. You can't cut them short—to do that would be to ruin your reputation for sympathy. Nona, my dear, let us have some tea, if you please. I am afraid it is the Dean's tea—full of pernicious tannin by this time. It is a quarter to ten o'clock"—taking out his watch. "Why?"—staring round him in bewilderment—"what has become of the child? I could declare I saw her sitting there in her black gown when I came in. What queer trick have my eyes played me now?"

"Miss Branscombe has just left the room," I said, coming to the front; "and, Mrs. Heathcote—Mr. Heathcote—will you both give me your good wishes. I—we—I—that is—Miss Branscombe—Nona—"

The Rector was staring at me open-mouthed as I floundered awkwardly through my speech. Mrs. Heathcote's womanly instincts were quicker. I saw it in her face, and, crossing over to her side, took her hand in mine.

"She has made me the happiest fellow in the world," I said. "Won't you congratulate me?"

"You—you!" exclaimed the Rector, red in the face with astonishment, as the truth flashed upon him. "The Dickens; I thought it was that scamp Charlie!"

"So did I," I could not help saying; and then we all laughed heartily together.

Miss Elmslie came in in the midst of our mirth. Mr. Heathcote hastened to explain.

"My dear Miss Elmslie, have you been as blind as the rest of us? Here has Fort been making his running whilst we have been watching the other horse!"

"What do you mean?" asked she. "That I am going to ask you to receive me into the family, Miss Elmslie," I put in. "Nona is willing to be

of-livery hat round and round in his hands.

"I thought it might be of consequence, sir," he commenced respectfully. Then, as I closed the door on the girl, he came close to me and whispered—"It's all right. I've been over to Colonel Egerton's, and shall have the warrant the first thing in the morning."

"The warrant?" I echoed, aghast. "Yes; prompt action is the only thing," responded the brisk detective. "The arrest will be made before ten o'clock."

"Arrest!" Fortunately my back was turned to the light, and Widdrington could not see my scared face. "Surely this is an extreme measure!"

"Extreme!" answered the detective. "It's the only course, if we are to lay hands on the will at all. Afterwards it can be hushed up by the family—refusal to prosecute and so on. But intimidation is the only line at present, and in the circumstances the will we must have. She doesn't know where it is—of that I am sure. It has not been made way with—criminals seldom do that sort of thing; it shuts the door behind them, you see. We'll put on the thumbscrew, and it will come out, never fear"—with an odious chuckle.

CHAPTER XIII.

I sat down, faint and dizzy. There stood the detective, eager, triumphant, and no doubt utterly astonished and disappointed at my want of appreciation of his success.

"The charge is for concealing," he went on. "I thought it better to take that line."

"I suppose so," I assented dully. I was ransacking my brains for a way of escape. My darling in the clutches of this harpy of the law! It was intolerable—impossible! A wild idea of bribing him—of throwing myself upon his mercy, crossed my half-distracted mind. Something must be done.

"I have telegraphed for more men," said Widdrington—"half a dozen of them in case of resistance, you know. They can come down by the night mail."

An army of constables against one poor little trembling woman! What on earth was the man thinking of?

"He'll probably show fight," went on

what we've got to do is to make him hand it over. But"—breaking off in his rapid explanation—"I told you all this in the letter I gave you this evening. Didn't you read it? Bless my soul! You haven't dropped it?"—as I rummaged fruitlessly in one pocket after another. "You haven't lost it?"

"It's not here! No, I did not read it. Stay—I may have left it in the drawing-room; wait here whilst I see, I will be back directly."

Mrs. Heathcote and Miss Elmslie had not yet retired. Lights were full on in the drawing-room, contrary to the virtuous early habits of the household, and the two ladies were seated side by side on a couch by the fire, discussing over and over again the wonderful surprise of the evening.

"What is it?" asked Mrs. Heathcote, rising to assist my search. "A letter? No, there is no letter here. Eliza must have seen it if it had been left on the tea-table, and she never takes letters or papers away—the Rector has trained her too well for that. No, it is certainly not here. I hope it was not important. But you will be sure to find it upstairs or in the study. Have you looked there?"

Widdrington was awaiting me impatiently when I returned. "It is gone," I admitted ruefully. "I came straight from the garden to the drawing-room, and from there here. I must have dropped it."

"Then the whole thing's blown—ruined," cried the man, clapping on his hat, and making for the door. "There's not a minute to be lost."

My letter was gone—there was no doubt about it. A second and calmer search through my pockets confirmed the fact. I had entirely forgotten the paper, attaching no importance to it at the moment, regarding it as simply a ruse on the detective's part to attract my attention; and subsequent events had entirely driven the whole circumstance out of my mind. I had doubtless dropped the missive—with all its important revelation—in the garden or hall.

I opened the window of my bedroom, which looked over the lawn and garden path by which I had returned to the house. A man's figure—Widdrington's—was just vanishing through the gate. He had evidently been searching over the ground, so that no efforts of mine were needed. I wondered what success he had had. Probably he found the missing letter, and all fear of miscarriage to his plans was over.

I sat up late into the night, writing and reading. Sleep, in the tumult of my mind, was out of the question. I had to think over and realize the wonderful and blissful change which had come into my life. Nona, my peerless treasure, was mine—my own. And the cloud which had overshadowed her—even in my most loyal thought—had dimmed the rapturous joy of my betrothal.

I had almost forgotten Widdrington in the floodtide of my happiness, but, when I descended to the breakfast-room the next morning, I was abruptly recalled to the subject of last night's interview. On my plate lay a note marked—"Delivered by hand." It contained only these words—

"Gone. Disappeared last night. Letter not found."

Later in the day the detective's intelligence was confirmed by the Rector. Mr. Charles Branscombe had gone from Forest Lea, leaving no address behind him. The two or three female servants remaining in charge either knew or would tell nothing. Charlie had always a fascinating influence on their class and set; as Widdrington had said, there was something of a feudal devotion in their loyalty to him. They no doubt thought his case a hard one, and they would not betray him.

Mr. Heathcote's new groom had also disappeared—summoned to London by the dangerous illness of his father, the household believed.

To be continued.

WOMEN'S CLUB

And the Reason for Their Rapid Growth of Late Years.

It was at a woman's club, after the meeting, and when the hum and buzz of feminine voices were intermingled with the clatter of spoons and temporarily hushed by the mouthfuls of ice cream, that the following conversation took place between two women, one of whom was an ardent club woman, as could easily be seen by the string of medals and insignia which ornamented the front of her bodice, while the other was just the ordinary everyday woman. "My dear," said the club woman, grabbing her companion's hand, I must be going. I am due to a meeting of the daughters of Lafayette Post, and then I must drop in for a moment and see Mrs. Blank about our next meeting and the topic for discussion." "How do you find time for all these clubs and what does your husband say to all this running about?" "Ten years ago it was I who sat at home and waited till between 5 and 6 for him to come home. 'Mala nous avons change tout cela,' he sits home and waits for me now. I have been out since 9 this morning and I am just looking like a tramp now. Well, he does not seem to mind it; he is just as good and dear as he can be. He heard you know, and I never had any children. But good bye; I shall see you again at the 'Justicia,' shall I not?" Is this the solution of the abnormal growth of women's clubs. We heard, you know, and I never had any children." Is it the lack of motherhood which has driven her into the clubs?

Twenty-five years ago the United States supplied 15 per cent of the world's coal consumption; now it supplies 25 per cent.

TALMAGE'S SERMON.

"CHRISTIANITY AS A DELUSION"—THE SUBJECT.

From the Text, Ezek. xli, 21, as Follows: "He Made His Arrows Bright, He Consulted with Images, He Looked in the Liver."

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Two modes of divination by which the king of Babylon proposed to find out the will of God: He took a bundle of arrows, put them together, mixed them together, then pulled forth one, and by the inscription on it decided what city he should first assault. Then an animal was slain, and by the lighter or darker color of the liver, the brighter or darker prospect of success was inferred. That is the meaning of the text, "He made his arrows bright, he consulted with images, he looked in the liver." Stupid delusion! And yet all the ages have been filled with delusions. It seems as if the world loves to be hoodwinked, the delusion of the text only a specimen of the vast number of delusions practiced upon the human race. In the latter part of the last century Johanna Southcote came forth pretending to have divine power, made prophecies, had chapels built in her honor, and one hundred thousand disciples came forward to follow her. About five years before the birth of Christ, Apollonius was born, and he came forth, and after five years being speechless, according to tradition, he healed the sick, and raised the dead, and preached virtue, and, according to the myth, having deceased, was brought to resurrection. The Delphic Oracle deceived vast multitudes of people; the Pythoness seated in the temple of Apollo uttering a crazy jargon from which the people guessed their individual or national fortunes or misfortunes. The utterances were of such a nature that you could read them any way you wanted to read them. A general coming forth to battle consulted the Delphic Oracle, and he wanted to find out whether he was going to be safe in the battle, or killed in battle, and the answer came forth from the Delphic Oracle in such words that if you put the comma before the word "never" it means one thing, and if you put the comma after the word "never" it means another thing just opposite. The message from the Delphic Oracle to the general was, "Go forth, returned never in battle shalt thou perish." If he was killed, that was according to the Delphic Oracle; if he came home safely, that was according to the Delphic Oracle.

So the ancient auguries deceived the people. The priests of those auguries, by the flight of birds, or by the intonation of thunder, or by the inside appearance of slain animals, told the fortunes or misfortunes of individuals or nations. The sibyls deceived the people. The sibyls were supposed to be inspired women who lived in caves and who wrote the sibylline books afterward purchased by Tarquin the Proud. So late as the year 1829, a man arose in New York, pretending to be a divine being, and played his part so well that wealthy merchants became his disciples and threw their fortunes into his keeping. And so in all ages there have been necromancies, incantations, witchcrafts, sorceries, magical arts, enchantments, divinations and delusions. The one of the text was only a specimen of that which has been occurring in all ages of the world. None of these delusions accomplished any good. They deceived, they pauperized the people, they were as cruel as they were absurd. They opened no hospitals, they healed no wounds, they wiped away no tears, they emancipated no serfdom.

Admiral Farragut, one of the most admired men of the American navy, early became a victim of this Christian delusion, and seated not long before his death at Long Branch, he was giving some friends an account of his early life. He said: "My father went down in behalf of the United States government to put an end to Aaron Burr's rebellion. I was a cabin boy and went along with him. I could gamble in every style of gambling. I knew all the wickedness there was at that time abroad. One day my father cleared everybody out of the cabin except myself and locked the door. He said: 'David, what are you going to do? What are you going to be?' 'Well,' I said, 'father, I am going to follow the sea.' 'Follow the sea! and be a poor, miserable, drunken sailor, kicked and cuffed about the world, and die of a fever in a foreign hospital.' 'Oh, no!' I said, 'father, I will not be that. I will tread the quarter-deck and command as you do.' 'No, David,' my father said, 'no, David, a person that has your principles and your bad habits will never tread the quarter-deck or command.' My father went out and shut the door after him, and I said then: 'I will change; I will never swear again; I will never drink again; I will never gamble again.' And gentlemen, by the help of God, I have kept those three vows to this time. I soon after that became a Christian, and that decided my fate for time and for eternity."

Another captive of this great Christian delusion. There goes Saul of Tarsus on horseback at full gallop. Where is he going? To destroy Christians. He wants no better play spell than to stand and watch the hats and coats of the murderers who are massacring God's children. There goes the same man. This time he is a fool. Where is he going now? Going on the road to Oeta to die for Christ. They tried to whip it out of him; they tried to scare it out of him; they thought they would give him enough of it by putting him into a windowless dungeon and keeping him on small diet, and denying him a cloak, and howling at him through the street; but they could not freeze it out of him, and they could not sweat

it out of him, and they could not pound it out of him, so they tried the surgery of the sword, and one summer day in 66 he was decapitated. Perhaps the mightiest intellect of the 6,000 years of the world's existence hoodwinked, cheated, enjailed, duped by the Christian religion.

Ah! that is the remarkable thing about this delusion of Christianity—it overpowers the strongest intellects. Gather the critics, secular and religious, of this century together, and put a vote to them as to which is the greatest book ever written, and by large majority they will say "Paradise Lost." Who wrote "Paradise Lost"? One of the fools who believed in the Bible—John Milton. Benjamin Franklin surrendered to this delusion, if you may judge from the letter that he wrote to Thomas Paine, begging him to destroy the "Age of Reason" in manuscript, and never let it go into type; and writing afterward, in his old days: "Of this Jesus of Nazareth I have to say that the system of morals he left, and the religion he has given us are the best things the world has seen or is likely to see." Patrick Henry, the electric champion of liberty, was enslaved by this delusion, so that he says: "The book worth all other books put together is the Bible." Benjamin Rush, the leading physiologist and anatomist of his day, the great medical scientist—what did he say? "The only true and perfect religion is Christianity." Isaac Newton, the leading philosopher of his time—what did he say? That man, surrendering to this delusion of the Christian religion, cried out: "The sublimest philosophy on earth is the philosophy of the gospel." David Brewster, at the pronunciation of whose name every scientist of the world over uncovers his head—David Brewster saying, "Oh, this religion has been a great light to me—a very great light all my days." President Thiers, the great French statesman, acknowledging that he prayed when he said: "I invoke the Lord God, in whom I am glad to believe." David Livingstone, able to conquer the lion, able to conquer the panther, able to conquer the savage, yet conquered by this delusion, this hallucination, this great swindle of the ages, so when they find him dead they find him on his knees. William E. Gladstone, the strongest intellect in England, unable to resist this chimera, this fallacy, this delusion of the Christian religion, went to the house of God every Sabbath, and often at the invitation of the rector read the prayers to the people. If those mighty intellects are overborne by this delusion, what chance is there for you and for me?

The cannibals in south sea, the bushmen of Terra del Fuego, the wild men of Australia, putting down the knives of their cruelty, and clothing themselves in decent apparel—all under the power of this delusion. Judson and Doty and Abeel and Campbell and Williams and the three thousand missionaries of the cross turning their backs on home and civilization and comfort, and going out amid the squalor of heathenism to relieve it, to save it, to help it, toiling until they dropped into their graves, dying with no earthly comfort about them, and going into graves with no appropriate epitaph, when they might have lived in this country, and lived for themselves, and lived luxuriously, and been at last put into brilliant sepulchers. What a delusion!

Yes, this delusion of the Christian religion shows itself in the fact that it goes to those who are in trouble. Now, it is bad enough to cheat a man when he is well and when he is prosperous; but this religion comes to a man when he is sick, and says: "You will be well again after a while; you are going into a land where there are no coughs and no pleurisies and no consumptions and no languishing; take courage and bear up." Yes, this awful chimera of the gospel comes to the poor and it says to them: "You are on your way to vast estates and to dividends always declarable." This delusion of Christianity comes to the bereft and it talks of reunion before the throne, and of the cessation of all sorrow. And then, to show that this delusion will stop at absolutely nothing, it goes to the dying bed and fills the man with anticipations. How much better it would be to have him die without any more hope than swine and rats and snakes! Shovel him under! That is all. Nothing more left of him. He will never know anything again. Shovel him under! The soul is only a superior part of the body, and when the body disintegrates the soul disintegrates. Annihilation, vacancy, everlasting blank obliteration! Why not present all that beautiful doctrine to the dying, instead of coming with this hoax, this swindle of the Christian religion, and filling the dying man with anticipations of another life, until some in the last hour have clasped their hands, and some have shouted, and some have sung, and some have been so overwrought with joy that they could only look ecstatic. Palace gates opening, they thought—diamond coronets flashing, hands beckoning, orchestras sounding. Little children dying actually believing they saw their departed parents, so that although the little children had been so weak and feeble and sick for weeks they could not turn on their dying pillow, at the last, in a paroxysm of rapture uncontrollable, they sprang to their feet and shouted: "Mother, catch me; I am coming."

The strong conclusion of every reasonable man and woman is that Christianity, producing such grand results, cannot be a delusion. A lie, a cheat, a swindle, a hallucination cannot launch such a glory of the centuries. Your logic and your common sense convince you that a bad cause cannot produce an illustrious result; out of the womb of such a monster no such angel can be born. There are many

who began with thinking that the Christian religion was a stupid farce who have come to the conclusion that it is a reality. Why are you in the Lord's house today? Why did you sing this song? Why did you bow your head in the opening prayer? Why did you bring your family with you? Why, when I tell you of the ending of all trials in the bosom of God, do there stand tears in your eyes—not tears of grief, but tears of joy such as stand in the eyes of homesick children far away at school when some one talks to them about going home? Why is it that you can be so calmly submissive to the death of your loved one, about whose departure you once were so ardent and so rebellious? There is something the matter with you. All your friends have found out there is a great change. And if some of you would give your experience you would give it in scholarly style, and others giving their experience would give it in broken style, but the one experience would be just as good as the other. Some of you have read everything. You are scientific and you are scholarly, and yet if I should ask you, "What is the most sensible thing you ever did?" you would say: "The most sensible thing I ever did was to give my heart to God."

But there may be others who have not had early advantages, and if they were asked to give their experience they might rise and give such testimony as the man gave in a prayer meeting when he said: "On my way here tonight I met a man who asked me where I was going. I said, 'I am going to a prayer meeting.' He said, 'There are a good many religions, and I think the most of them are delusions; as to the Christian religion, that is only a notion—that is a mere notion, the Christian religion.' I said to him: 'Stranger, you see that tavern over there?' 'Yes,' he said, 'I see it.' 'Don't you see me?' 'Yes, of course I see you.' 'Now, the time was when everybody in this town knows if I had a quarter of a dollar in my pocket I could not pass that tavern without going in and getting a drink; all the people of Jefferson could not keep me out of that place; but God has changed my heart, and the Lord Jesus Christ has destroyed my thirst for strong drink, and there is my whole week's wages, and I have no temptation to go in there; and, stranger, if this is a notion, I want to tell you it is a mighty powerful notion; it is a notion that has put clothes on my children's backs, and it is a notion that has put good food on our table, and it is a notion that has filled my mouth with thanksgiving to God. And, stranger, you had better go along with me; you might get religion, too; lots of people are getting religion now.'"

Well, we will soon understand it all. Your life and mine will soon be over. We will soon come to the last bar of the music, to the last act of the tragedy, to the last page of the book—yes, to the last line and to the last word, and to you and to me it will either be midnight or midnight!

TRICK CAMERA.

Disguised as a Wicker Basket Used to Photograph Fortifications.

New Orleans Times-Democrat: "A traveling photo salesman showed me a very ingenious trick camera the other day," said a local dealer. "It was a box about six inches square, set inside of what seemed to be an ordinary wicker lunch basket. When desired the box could be pushed down through the basket, so that its top was on a level with the wicker bottom. The top of the box was also covered with wicker, and the basket would then appear to be perfectly empty, the camera protruding meanwhile from the under side. An upward push would restore it to its original position and the lens worked through a small hole near the end. The contrivance was evidently of foreign manufacture, and the salesman told me it had been made especially for an agent who was sent to take pictures of fortifications on the French frontier. According to his story, which is a little romantic, but which I have no reason to doubt, the spy would saunter out, dressed as a tourist and carrying the lunch basket on his arm. When an officer came along he would push down the box and show him that the basket was perfectly empty. It never occurred to the guards to turn the thing upside down, or it would have been promptly confiscated. The present owner carries it around as a curio, and it is certainly the oddest little machine I ever laid eyes on. As far as I know, it is the only camera in the world that is mounted on a disappearing carriage."

Photographs of Postmasters.

Chicago Record: Postmaster Gordon has presented to the Chicago post-office a collection of photographs of the postmasters of Chicago, accompanied by a biographical sketch of each. The only photograph missing is that of Jonathan Nash Bailey, Chicago's first postmaster, who, as far as can be learned, never sat for a picture. The pictures are thirteen by eleven inches in size, and, with the sketches, fill a frame five and one-half by seventeen feet. The art work is sepia, and the frame is made of mahogany from the old postoffice. The first postmaster of Chicago was appointed in 1831. In the 65 years since 22 men have filled the place, including the present incumbent. A majority of them have been military men, and several prominently identified with the newspaper business.

The Smallest Dwarf.

The smallest man who ever lived was the dwarf Bebe, born in France in 1749. He was just twenty inches high and eight pounds in weight when full grown.

More depends on your inletting than on God's outpouring.



"SHE HAS MADE ME THE HAPPIEST FELLOW IN THE WORLD," I SAID.

my wife—will you let me be your cousin?"

"Is this true?" she exclaimed in breathless wonder. "Oh, I was never so glad of anything in my life"—clapping her hands. "Receive you? Of course I will. I must go to the dear child at once."

"It's the most satisfactory way out of all our difficulties," Mr. Heathcote declared, when I had laid my position fully before him. "It has relieved my mind of a great load of anxiety. I could not have borne to see the dear girl married to that other fellow. And now I suppose we must give up Forest Lea. I am sorry about the old place, too. If the will—"

"Let it go," I said, hastily, recalled to the remembrance of all the trouble involved in that unhappy subject.

"Mr. Tillot would like to speak to you, sir," announced a maid, as I crossed the hall, bed-room candlestick in hand.

"Who on earth is Mr. Tillot?" I inquired.

"It's the groom, sir. He wants to see you about a letter he found in the dog-cart, he says."

"Oh, yes—all right! Where is he?" I remembered then that I had never read the letter; it had passed completely out of my mind since thrusting it into my pocket before my explanation with Nona.

"He is waiting in the study, sir. He said he was sorry to disturb you so late."

"Just so—which is the study?" The girl conducted me to the door. It was open, and "Mr. Tillot" was standing just within, turning his out-

the detective.

"He? Who?" I stammered.

"Why, the criminal!" answered Widdrington.

"The—the criminal!" I repeated after him blankly.

The man gave me a quick critical look. That I had been dining, and dining not wisely, but too well, was evidently the conclusion he arrived at. Nothing else could account for my intense stupidity.

"The criminal—Mr. Charles Branscombe," he emphasized. "It's a clear case, and an uncommon clever game, too. Personation of his cousin, Miss Branscombe—wonderful likeness at all times—fair hair, slight figure—like a girl's—no hair on face—no wonder you were taken in"—meaningly. "Lady's maid in the plot, supplied all the right-out, etc., and gave the tip into the bargain. Uncommonly well managed. Astonishing how the young fellow gets over the women—they're all ready to go down on their knees and to sell their souls for him—every one of them. As for this one—"

"Woodward?" I ejaculated, beginning to recover from my stupefaction, and to see daylight through the whole thing.

"Yes," returned the ex-groom, with a wink. "Young woman soft on the sex generally, you see—didn't watch much counting to be the whole cat out of the bag—as much as she know. Knows nothing about the will; she believed Mr. Branscombe only wanted to look at it, she says. He told her so, and she thought it hard lines that he was not allowed to go to the house or to be at his uncle's funeral. She never supposed that he wanted to get hold of the will altogether. And now