

LOVE AND LAW.

By the author of "BONNY'S LOVERS"

CHAPTER IX.

She was seated in the breakfast room, and alone, when I entered it the next morning. She was pale and subdued, but the languor had gone from her manner, and an unmistakable crimson dyed the pure ivory of her cheek as she greeted me. Now, then, the explanation was coming.

"I—I want to speak to you, Mr. Fort," she said hurriedly, with her eyes on the ground. "I—I wish to consult you professionally."

I bowed and waited patiently. What was coming? Miss Branscombe turned to the window and back again.

"It is—about the will," she went on. "I want you to tell me what I can do—legally—to alter it? I know that my dear uncle—flatteringly—has made me his heir."

"You will believe, Miss Branscombe," I could not help saying, "that I had no power, even had I the wish, to alter this?"

"Yes," she said, with another blush. "I believe it. I ought not to have asked it of you. But now what can I do? I want to give Forest Lea to my cousin."

"That is impossible," I replied.

"Impossible—how? It is mine, is it not?"

"Yes, but it cannot be alienated—that is, it belongs to you and your heirs."

"I can make my cousin my heir. I can execute a deed of gift," Mr. Charlie had instructed her well!

"I believe not. I must look over the will again to be quite sure, but I think—I fancy—by its terms, you have no power to make a deed of gift. Will you let me have the will?"

"I?" The surprise was well feigned. "If not real." "The will?"

"Yes; it is in the black bag which you exchanged by mistake for your own yesterday," I explained boldly. It was possible that she had not yet dis-

"My cloak!" she exclaimed, and, examining the volume, "This is mine, too; but I have not seen either of them for some days. And this bag I never saw in my life."

I bowed. What else was left me? It was evidently Miss Branscombe's pleasure to ignore the occurrence of yesterday, and how could I press it on her? She was exceedingly displeased; she rang the bell for her maid.

"Will you take these away?" she said to the woman, pointing to the cloak and the book.

"And the bag," I suggested with a persistency which was as stupid as it was useless.

The woman looked at the Gladstone, then at her mistress, and then at me.

"Shall I give it to Austin, or take it to your room, sir?" she asked civilly.

My eyes were fixed upon Miss Branscombe. She stood, her slight figure still drawn up in dignified silence, and her face turned away, as if she had no more to do with the subject.

The maid waited. She was a small, dark woman, just past her first youth, with, as I noticed now, a certain keenness of expression beneath the well-trained civility of her manner—a person of experience, I could judge. A quick conviction came to me as my eyes met hers—this woman was in the secret, whatever it might be. She was Nona's confidante and assistant. Nona was indeed helpless in the hands of her unscrupulous cousin and this artful Abigail.

"Shall I give it to Austin, sir?" repeated Woodward, and at that moment Miss Elmslie entered the room.

"What is it?" she exclaimed. "Your bag? Oh, I am so glad you have found it, Mr. Fort! How did it get back?"

"Unfortunately, this is not my lost property, Miss Elmslie," I explained. "It is—the lady's."



"MY CLOAK!" SHE EXCLAIMED.

covered the substitution—just possible—and in her presence my faith was capable of any stretch.

Her eyes—fixed full upon me—expressed nothing but the most unqualified amazement.

"That—I exchanged—yesterday?" she repeated slowly. "What do you mean, Mr. Fort?"

I had made the plunge; I was bound to go on.

"When you left the carriage at Molton Junction yesterday," I replied, "you took with you my Gladstone bag in place of your own. You have not discovered the mistake, evidently. I will restore you your own property; it is up to you."

"Stay," she said, as I was about to leave her. "I have not the least idea what you mean. I was not at Molton Junction yesterday; I have no black bag. Mr. Fort, why do you speak so strangely? I do not understand you."

Her nervousness had disappeared; she was simply astonished, not as yet indignant—that was to come presently.

"I hardly know, Miss Branscombe," I replied, "what you wish me to say. If it were not for the bag, which, as you must see, it is imperative I should recover, I should not allude to our meeting of yesterday."

"Our meeting!"—and now her tone was tinged with hauteur, and she drew herself up with a dignity which set well on her. "We met here, last evening, for the first time since my uncle's death. No, not for the first time," she corrected herself hastily, as the remembrance of that rencontre at the side door evidently recurred to her, and a deep flush mounted to her white forehead. "It was our first meeting yesterday, and I know nothing of a black bag, or of my uncle's will."

"Allow me," I said quietly, as I left the room. In a couple of minutes I returned with the cause belli—the Gladstone—in one hand and her dust cloak and book in the other.

"You left these," I said, presenting the last-mentioned articles, "behind you in the carriage."

"How odd!" she ejaculated, turning it around and examining it curiously. "Have you opened it?"

"No; my key does not fit, and I have hesitated to break it open. I hoped to restore it to the owner."

"You will have to open it, will you not, unless you get some news of your bag soon? There may be an address—information inside."

"Exactly!" I hailed the idea. Hitherto I had been so fully occupied with the certainty that the Gladstone belonged to Miss Branscombe that I had not thought of this simple proceeding.

"If you have a bunch of keys in the house I might try them after breakfast, and, failing that, I could find a locksmith somewhere, I suppose?" I glanced at Miss Branscombe as I spoke; she showed no consciousness.

"Oh, yes, at Ilminton! You can leave the bag there and go, Woodward," directed Miss Elmslie. "Nona, my child, how pale you are! Let me give you a cup of coffee; you should not have come down to breakfast. I was surprised, when I passed your room, not to find you. Here, dearest, drink this, and let me see a little more color in your cheeks."

Miss Branscombe obeyed so far as putting the proffered cup to her lips went, but I observed that throughout the meal she only played with her food, and she did not address a single word to me. She resented the want of tact I had shown in regard to what, I was now convinced, had been an accidental and—to Miss Branscombe—an awkward meeting. She was evidently determined to ignore the whole matter, and, but for the paramount consideration of the missing will, I must of course have followed her lead. But with that in the question, and Colonel Branscombe's funeral fixed for the morrow, what was to be my next step?

CHAPTER X.

The good old Colonel was laid to rest in the family vault, and the neighboring gentry who assembled to pay the last token of respect to the

man who had died so honorable a place among them were duly received at the Lea, and left it again with little gratification of their curiosity as to the next owner.

I had made searching investigations at Molton. I had exhausted every means at my command in the unsuccessful attempt to trace the missing will. I lingered at Forest Lea for an opportunity of making one more effort toward inducing Miss Branscombe to solve the mystery of which she undoubtedly held the key. It came—the opportunity—upon me suddenly, and, strange to say, by Miss Branscombe's own action.

It was the day after the funeral, and I was gloomily pondering the awkwardness of the situation, when a shadow across the French window, which stood open disturbed my meditations. I looked up to find Miss Branscombe, alone, looking in upon me. I rose instantly.

"You have something to say to me. Will you not come in?" I said impulsively, answering a certain appeal in the wistful eyes—they looked larger than ever out of the pale, sad face.

She came in at once and stood on the mat just within the door.

"Mr. Fort," she said, "you are going away tomorrow. Cousin Emma tells me. Have you found the will?"

"No," I answered; "it is still missing."

"It was in the bag which you lost?" she asked.

"Yes," I returned, briefly.

"But there is generally more than one copy of a will, is there not?"

"Generally; but in this case there had not been time to make another copy."

"If it should not be found, what will be done?"

"I can hardly tell; there are two or three courses open. But it must be found, Miss Branscombe—I tried to speak severely. 'It is incredible that such an important document should be accidentally missing for any length of time, and in the face of the efforts I am making to recover it.'"

"But if it should be really lost, then I cannot inherit my uncle's estates? Is it not so, Mr. Fort?"

"In that case," I admitted, "there would be—ahem—difficulties."

Never was a man in a more painful position. Here was I, under the eyes of the woman I loved, forced either to play her hand—which was showed, in her simplicity, all too plainly—or to perjure myself in order to save her. My lawyer-like tact and presence of mind utterly deserted me.

"The will must be found, Miss Branscombe," I repeated weakly. "Its suppression amounts to—feloony!"

My voice faltered as I uttered the veiled threat; I felt like a brute—with that pathetic glance full on me, too, and the droop of the young figure in its clinging black garments, telling so eloquently of past and present suffering, straight to my heart. My darling—how could I torture her? She bore my last stroke without a change of countenance; she could not well be paler, it is true, but the eyes still looked unflinchingly into mine. My brutal insinuation—as I now felt it to be—had passed her by.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

AN ECCENTRIC MAN.

The progressive corporation of Bath has just placed a commemorative tablet upon the house in Lansdown crescent once occupied by William Beckford, one of the strangest characters who ever spent his declining years in the renowned English city of the hot springs. His tomb and monument are such conspicuous objects on the heights of Lansdown and the most casual visitor can hardly avoid becoming familiar with some of the eccentricities of this great dilettante.

Beckford, who is best known as the author of the Arabian tale "Vathek" (written in one sitting of three days and two nights), claimed descent from the Saxon kings. He inherited vast wealth and expended it in the most lavish fashion, building a wonderful house at Fonthill, in Wiltshire, which cost over a million. Presently the evil days came—vast sums lost in Jamaica through depreciation in the value of his estates and lawsuits resulting therefrom led Beckford to sell Fonthill at a ridiculous price and to retire to Bath broken in health and fortune.

Here he spent the rest of his days a recluse, shut up with his books and fancies. One commodious house would not suffice to hold his treasures, so on either side were purchased, one being connected with a covered way on the second floor, which can still be seen. His passion for building unassuaged, Beckford erected a great tower on the hill a mile above his house wherein to study, and when he died his remains were laid above the ground at the foot in a granite sarcophagus, which was prepared during his lifetime. The property was then sold for a tea garden, but his daughter, the duchess of Hamilton, repurchased it and to save it from desecration gave it to the rector of Walcot as a cemetery. The tower has just been repaired and it is once more possible to enjoy the wonderful view from the summit, which is 950 feet above sea level.

Boys of the Olden Time.

Boys have always been boys. There is no doubt that Shem and Ham pitched coppers or played jackstraws on the shady side of the ark, while Noah, who couldn't find them, had to feed the stock himself, or that David held up two fingers to Jonathan when he saw him across the block and that they therewith went in swimming in the Jordan against the express prohibition of their mothers.—*Minneapolis Journal.*

SHE GAVE THE NEWS.

MME. CABANAL KNEW BOMBARDMENT WAS GOING ON.

Had a Well Organized Staff—Nine Husbands in the Spirit World to Supply Her with Information—Who Can Explain How These Things Happen.

In the cafe of the hotel the conversation at one of the tables turned upon the newly awakened interest all over the country in physical phenomena, caused by the appointment of several committees composed of well known scientists, to study and report upon these matters, says the New York Telegraph. Said one plain-spoken old philosopher, as he replaced his glass upon the table, emitting the sound of cracked ice and the odor of mint: "That's all rot. People allow altogether too much weight to the indorsement of these fake spiritualists by college professors and other students—men whose severe scientific training has blunted their good, sound horse sense." "You're right," added a well known bookie; "these highly educated folks are often the easiest marks for the 'con men.' We all remember Hungry Joe's easy 'touch' of Oscar Wilde and Prof. Leidy's hearty indorsement of the Keely motor."

One of the party, who had for many years been a special correspondent for one of the New York dailies, was asked if he had ever had any strange experiences with the occult during his travels. He smiled—with the others—and said: "Until Prof. Hyslop of Columbia College told the other day of the startling communications he recently received from the spirit world through Mrs. Piper, the Boston medium, using her as a long-distance telephone and her fingers as the transmitter and receiver, I was at a loss to understand some remarkable phenomena that came under my observation in Anam, several years ago, when following the French army during its war with the Black Flags of Tonkin. In Haiphong, the chief port of Tonkin, was a small hotel, kept by a French woman—Mme. Cabanal—who had lived there ever since the French occupation, ten or twelve years previously, and it was she who seemed to be possessed of powers somewhat akin to those claimed for this great Boston medium. Two days after the commissaire-general, the civil governor of the French possessions in Anam, had left Haiphong with the entire French fleet, to make what he called a 'demonstration' along the coast, telling the newspaper correspondents that he would neither bombard any cities nor behold any mandarins. I was sitting with Mme. Cabanal and others under the portico of the hotel, when she suddenly remarked:

"They are bombarding Hue now!"

"What do you mean by now?" I asked.

"Just at this moment," she replied.

"But the commissaire-general told me he would not bombard any cities," said I.

"Mme. Cabanal only shrugged her shoulders and replied: 'They have killed nearly a thousand natives already and have themselves sustained no loss to speak of—one man injured; that is all.'"

"Hue, the capital of Anam, a fortified city on the Chinese plain—that is, with well built works, but obsolete guns, weakly defended—was several hundred miles away, and there existed none of the modern means of quick communication in those days in Anam, so I paid little attention to Mme. Cabanal's advance news, though she told me I might cable it to my newspaper as authentic.

"A few days later the fleet returned to Haiphong, and I learned that the very day and hour my landlady gave me that information the bombardment was in progress. The French fleet had drawn up in line of battle beyond the range of the old smoothbore guns in the forts protecting the Anamese capital, and poured a deadly fire upon the defenseless city beyond the walls, killing, it was given out officially, about 800 men, women and children. The only casualty on board the French vessels was an injury to his knee sustained by a young sailor boy acting as a powder monkey, who tripped and fell during the engagement while running across the deck of the vessel with a loaded shell. Mme. Cabanal's information was absolutely correct, and if I had then as much faith in her occult powers, or her good judgment, whichever it was, as I had later on I would have cabled her news and scored a feat.

"It must be that she, too, was a long-distance telephone, for a number of times after that, during my stay at the Hotel du Tonkin, this remarkable lady gave me valuable news which it seemed absolutely impossible she could have obtained through ordinary channels. I can well understand that if she really did receive her information from departed servants the service would be good, for this unfortunate creature had buried nine husbands, who fell victims to the pestiferous climate of the Red river delta, and was a widow when I knew her. A conspicuous instance of human long-distance telegraphy of more recent date was the information given me by Major Pond last summer, long before any vessel or news had come down from Baffin's bay and Smith sound, that Lieut. Peary has not succeeded in getting as far north as he expected that season. About three weeks later authentic news came by way of St. John's, N. F., that the Windward, Lieut. Peary's expeditionary ship, had been caught by early ice and was frozen in, so that her return for supplies would be impossible. I had not thought of Major Pond's information

FRIGHT MADE HIS HAIR WHITE.

Can of Explosive Was Getting Ready While He Was at Sea.

"Nitroglycerin, sir; high-explosives accomplished it," said a well-dressed man with a youthful face and snow-white hair to a chance acquaintance.

"But your face is not scarred. It would seem that an explosion—"

"An impending explosion it was. Two years ago I was one of the most successful well-shooters in America. I could make the oil loosen up where others had failed. The secret lay in the explosives I employed. I made them myself, and had the business down fine. "At that time I went to New York to figure on a big blasting contract that would have made me a pile. I failed to make the arrangements, and the very day the negotiations fell through I started suddenly for England on a similar mission.

"Is there such a thing as high explosives ripening?" asked the Englishman I was accompanying on the second day of our voyage.

"The question brought me to my feet and caused an exclamation of horror to escape my lips. Many explosives undergo a ripening process, which adds greatly to their destructive power, at the same time decidedly increasing the danger of handling them. That made by me was of this character, indeed twenty-five days after it was compounded it was almost certain to explode of its own volition, so to speak.

"Now, on the upper shelf of the check room of my New York hotel I had left a large grip containing a 20-pound can of this compound, the ripening of which meant destruction and death.

"For an hour I was, almost in a state of frenzy, freely denouncing myself as a multi-murderer. In vain I drew an awful picture of the devastation that would overwhelm a certain New York hotel in exactly seventeen days, and called upon the captain to put his ship about. He promised to transfer me to a west-bound steamer if the opportunity presented itself, but fortune failed me, and I was obliged to cross the ocean.

"On the morning of the twenty-fifth day of the life of my ripening high explosive I sprang from a carriage and rushed into the hotel.

"No relieved murderer ever experienced greater joy than I did as I saw the last of the terrible fluid disappear in a catch basin. Ten minutes later I started back from the mirror of the hotel bar, where I had gone for a 'bracer,' in absolute dismay. My jet black hair had turned white as snow."—*Chicago Chronicle.*

LIKE BANQUO'S GHOST.

Question of Conductors and Pennies to the Fore Again.

It was in a suburban trolley last Sunday that the question of the conductor's reluctance to receive pennies in change came up again, says the New York Herald. This penny question is like Banquo's ghost and will not down. A woman passenger had given the conductor a nickel and five pennies for two fares. "I would rather change \$5 for you, madam, than take those pennies," the conductor said, in a grumbling yet perfectly respectful tone. "Why?" asked the woman. "Because the company will not take them from us. That is the only objection I have to railroading. We must turn in nickels or silver when our work is done." "But why do you not sometimes give those pennies to men? You always palm them off on women." "Well, the women always seem to keep them specially for us. Now, if the public could only know what a trial they are to us sometimes they might understand our reluctance to take them. For instance, one of the extras, a man who had been out of work for a long time, after making the number of trips required of him, found he had fifteen pennies among his change. He did not have a cent belonging to himself, and there was no money at home, and the pay that was coming to him at the office for his week's work was needed by his wife and children for bread. They would not take the pennies at the office, and he could not draw his pay until his fares were accounted for. When, after considerable trouble, he got three nickels for fifteen pennies and returned to the company's office it was closed, and he had to go home without his pay."

ARISTOCRATS IN TRADE.

The duke of Northumberland, the heir of all the Percys, with a direct descent from one of William I's favorites, has a reputation for excellent butter, says Tit-Bits, and the ducal brand is in great demand within a radius of many miles from Lyon House, Brentford.

The most noble the marquis of Ripon has an ideal dairy at his seat, Studley Royal; and its products, yellow butter and delicious cream, are sold in two dairy shops, one in Leeds and the other at Ripon.

Another marquis still better known in the world of trade is Lord Londonderry, whose coal is as unimpeachable as his family escutcheon. Time was when the earl of Hardwicke, as Viscount Royston, was a cigar merchant. He has now transferred his energies to Capel Court and is half stock broker and half newspaper owner.

The earl of Harrington supplements his income from 13,000 acres by the profits of a green grocery shop at Charing Cross, to which the fruits and vegetables grown at his Derby seat, Elvaaston Castle, find their way.

The earl of Ranfurly has for many years been an active and successful fruit grower at Moldura, Victoria. His farm there is the envy and pride of the fruit colony, and its condition is due very largely to the earl's own personal work on it.

The seventeenth earl of Caithness has been literally nursed as a farmer, and is prouder of his American ranch, covering over twenty square miles, the fruit of his years of hard work, than of his earl's coronet.

The last earl of Seafield was a ballif and small farmer in New Zealand, and his successor, the young earl of today, is also engaged in industrial pursuits at Oamaru.

The late Viscountess Hampden, when he was released from the exacting post of speaker of the house of commons, turned his attention to milk and butter, and his Glynde dairy was noted for its excellence.

Lord Rayleigh, the great scientist and brother-in-law to Mr. A. J. Balfour, takes as much interest in milk as in argon and the dolings of the Royal society.

Why Not a Man?

"What are you thinking about?" she asked, during a lapse in the conversation.

"I was wishing," he replied, drawing closer, "that I might be turned into a lip-biting bug for about five minutes."

"But why a bug?" she inquired innocently.

And then, of course.—*Philadelphia North American.*

Following Health Rules.

Housekeeper—"You don't look as if you had washed yourself for a month."

Tramp—"Please, mum, th' doctors say th' proper time to bathe is two hours after a meal, and I haven't had anything you can call a meal for six weeks."—*Tit-Bits.*

NATIONAL PRIDE.

It is now almost two full centuries since England and Scotland were united, in 1707, under the name of Great Britain. Yet up to the present time the world continues to employ the familiar terms English queen, English army, and so on, with no mention of Scotland. This slight has often been commented upon by Scotchmen, but never perhaps more happily than at Trafalgar. Two Scotchmen, messmates and bosom cronies, from the same little clachan, happened to be stationed near each other, when the now celebrated signal was given from the admiral's ship: "England expects every man to do his duty. No a word of puir auld Scotland on this occasion!" dolefully remarked Geordie to Jock. Jock cocked his eye a moment, turning to his companion, "Man, Geordie," said he, "Scotland kens weel eneuch that nae bairn o' hers needs to be tellt to do his duty—that's just a hint to the Englishers."

No Disturbance.

Mrs. Goffrequent—"Your husband goes out a good deal, doesn't he?"

Mrs. Seldom-Home—"Yes, but we always have seats next to the central aisle, and it never disturbs anybody."

Senator Chandler of New Hampshire besides writing most of the editorials in the Concord Monitor, reads a good deal of copy, and makes up the paper on his managing editor's day off.