LOVE AND LAW.

By the author of "BONNY'S LOVERS."

CHAPTER IV.—(Continued.)

"Is that all?" Miss Branscombe's look seemed to say, and her color came back and the frightened look faded out of her eyes. I wondered what she had dreaded.

Another gravely-eaten dinner was scarcely over when my summons came. Miss Branscombe started to her feet with a suppressed cry, and passed swiftly from the room before me.

"Only Mr. Fort, I was to say." The butler hesitated, looking anxiously at Miss Elmslie. "I beg your pardon, ma'am, but the message was particular."

"Poor dear child!" murmured Miss Elmslie, rising and looking helplessly at me. "What can I do It—it is too late, I am afraid."

"Will you leave it to me?" I said gently. "Perhaps I can persuade Miss Branscombe."

"Yes, yes," she exclaimed, laying her trembling hand on my arm—"you will persuade her."

Those hours of anxious watching and enforced confidence had thrown down the barriers of unconventionality, and made us more intimate than months of ordinary intercourse would have done. Both the elder and the younger lady turned to me in their loneliness and their sorrow; already I had taken my place as a friend with them.

In the corridor outside the sick-room Miss Branscombe was standing in the recess of a window wringing her hands and sobbing pitifully.

"Mr. Fort," she exclaimed, "they will not let me see him! Tell him that I am here—surely they will not be so cruel as to let him die without a word to me at the last! And I was like his own child. I must—oh, I must see him again before——" Sobs choked her voice.

I placed her gently on the window-seat.

"If you will wait patiently for ten minutes, Miss Branscombe," I said, "I will come back for you."

"And Charlie, my cousin," she said—"you will not forget?"

"I have not forgotten," I answered as I left her.

It was soon over. The Colonel had reached a further stage in the dark journey, and the clergyman who sat by his side guided the hand which affixed a tremulous signature to the deed I had drawn up in the morning. It was the Rector and a young footman who witnessed the signature, and then the Colonel spoke—this time in a whisper.

"Now—send her to me. Stand by her—all of you—she will—need it."

There were old friends—old servants there, but it was on my arm that Miss Branscombe leaned as she went to that solemn parting scene—I remembered it afterwards. It was a brief and agonizing farewell, for the sands of life were almost run out, and then the new mistress of Forest Lea was borne insensible from the chamber where all that remained of the brave old Colonel was only the mortal dust—the immortal spirit had fled.

CHAPTER V.

The first stage of my work was accomplished, and I might have returned to town at once, but I did not—I lingered at Forest Lea through the next day. There were seals to affix to all the dead colonel's cabinets and drawers; there were interviews with various personages, and commissions for Miss Elmslie, which filled up my time and gave me an excuse for postponing my departure. The truth was that I could not tear myself away. I had a confession to make to Miss Branscombe which I could not force upon her in the first hours of her sorrow, and which nevertheless must be made. It was not likely that the secret of Col. Branscombe's last will would be kept until the legitimate moment for its revelation; the executor, the rector, must act upon his instructions, one of which was to exclude Mr. Charles Branscombe from the house. I might perhaps, I flattered myself, soften the blow to Miss Branscombe, or at least I might give her an explanation which should mitigate her anger against myself, and account for what I dreaded she would regard as a breach of trust.

But Miss Branscombe remained invisible. Her cousin reported that she was quite overcome by her grief, and would not as yet hear of consolation.

The day, which had been brilliantly fine in the early part, clouded over toward the afternoon, and rain—a gentle, balmy summer rain—fell softly, but without intermission. The change was more in unison with the spirit of the moment and the hushed silence of the darkened house; and as I sat in the library, busied with some writing for Miss Elmslie, the musical rythm of the raindrops, pattering softly down on the laurel and berheris leaves outside the open window, seemed to me like tears shed for a good man's loss.

Miss Elmslie came in and out with a hushed tread, and gave me instructions in a subdued voice, sometimes staying to talk of the dead man upstairs—of his virtues and consistent life, his trials and disappointments—and, at last, in natural sequence, of Charlie, the scapegrace, and of Nona, the child of Col. Branscombe's youngest brother.

"Poor Charlie!" she said, shaking her head. "He was always the one bitter drop in Harold Branscombe's cup. He idolized the boy—such a beautiful angelic-looking creature—he was so like the sister poor Harold loved and never forgot—and he spared neither trouble nor expense in his education. Charlie was to be the heir, to carry on the old name. And Nona—well, he had his hopes and dreams for the dear girl. But Charlie ruined all; he nearly broke poor Harold's heart, and upset all his plans. Nothing could mend the boy; there seems to be a sort of mad fever in his blood—I don't know where he gets it. He's as wild to-day as he was six years ago. Only Nona—in her youth and inexperience, dear child!—clings to the hope of his ever being better. All the rest of us have long since given him up."

"Miss Branscombe is attached to her cousin?" I ventured.

"They have been like brother and sister, you know," Miss Elmslie replied quietly. "Nona cannot give him up. But there is the dinner bell." She seemed glad to change the conversation, I thought.

Miss Branscombe did not appear at the dinner table. The evening was still wet, but close and sultry. Miss Elmslie and I took tea together in the large drawing room, which looked so empty and desolate now; and, while the gentle old lady babbled on of the stories of the house, I sat just behind the lace curtains at the open window, looking out over the lawn toward the encircling belt of shrubbery. It was a dark moonless summer night, and late enough now for the shrubs to show blackly against the pale sky-line.

I had quite lost the thread of Miss Elmslie's somewhat monotonous talk, dreaming as I was of many things, with a pervading sense of vague pain and unrest new to my experience, and due perhaps to the melancholy scenes in which I had just taken part.

Suddenly it seemed to me that a white shadow flitted across the bottom of the lawn toward the trees, and was lost in the darkness. Was it fancy? I wondered, looking intently toward the spot where the figure had disappeared. I was not subject to fancies of this kind, and I at once made up my mind to investigate the phenomenon.

With an excuse to Miss Elmslie, I went to the hall for my overcoat, and, letting myself out by a side door, I made my way cautiously over the grass to the spot where I had seen—or fancied I had seen—the white form appear and disappear.

There was nothing but the shadows and the trees and the patter of the soft-falling raindrops on the green leaves. So my eyes, keen and sure as I had always considered them, had played me false. I turned back toward the house, taking this time one of two or three narrow winding paths within the wood. My footsteps made no sound on the damp grass-grown ground. All at once the perfume of a cigar was wafted toward me. Then I was not alone in the darkness; somebody else had a fancy for an evening airing—one of the gardeners or workmen, no doubt, on his way from some errand at the Hall. But the shrubberies lay in the front of the house, while the servants' offices were all, as I knew, at the back. And, besides, my educated senses told me that that cigar was of the finest quality, not likely to be smoked by any but a connoisseur. The rector was a non-smoker, and no other neighbor would, I knew, have the entree to the shrubbery.

My curiosity was thoroughly roused, and the instinct of my profession enlisted in the discovery of the little mystery.

Presently the sound of subdued voices—a man's and a woman's—reached my ears. Then I had not been fancy-tricked—some assignation of a tender nature had lured the flitting figure hitherward — a maid-servant from the house, no doubt. But the fine Havana? Well, that was no affair of mine; I would not at all events play the eavesdropper.

It was in carrying out this laudable resolve that I turned into another path—a shorter cut to the house, as I believed, in my slight knowledge of the place. It must however have brought me nearer to the lovers, for now the manly voice was so raised that the subject of what appeared to be an angry discussion only just missed meeting my ears, and sobs from the female were distinctly audible. The course of true love was not running smoothly, I concluded, as I retraced my steps. At this moment the sobs ceased and a feminine voice took up the response, pleading, remonstrant, and I was conscious of a sudden shock which brought me to a standstill. The sweet, low tones were familiar to me—they were those of Nona Branscombe.

Nona Branscombe, my ideal of innocence and womanly purity, my impersonation of Una, keeping a clandestine appointment at night—with her uncle's corpse hardly yet cold, too; hoodwinking her chaperon with a pretense of illness and overwhelming grief! Oh, the shame and the pity of it! Oh, the shame and the pity!

I did not stop to ask myself why the blow should be such a crushing one to me—why a doubt of the innocence and goodness of Nona Branscombe should seem to make the world stand still, and plunge my whole outlook into darkness; I hurried blindly back to the house, losing myself half a dozen times among the tortuous shrubbery paths and shaking the raindrops from the laden branches in heavy showers as I went. I had reached the terrace on which the side door by which I had quitted the house opened, my hand was on the lock, when another applicant for admittance glided out of the shadows and stood by my side.

(To be continued.)

"MR. FORT," SHE EXCLAIMED, "THEY WILL NOT LET ME SEE HIM."

DOG IDIOTS.

Graphic Description of the Mongrel That Throng Constantinople.

I never saw so much mud, such unspeakable filthy streets and so many dogs as Constantinople can boast, but nowhere have I seen them described in a satisfactory way—so that you knew what to expect, I mean, says the Woman's Home Companion. In the first place, they hardly look like dogs. They have woolly tails like sheep. Their eyes are dull, sleepy and utterly devoid of expression. Constantinople dogs have neither masters nor brains. No brains because no masters. Perhaps no masters because no brains. Nobody wants to adopt an idiot. They are, of course, mongrels of the most hopeless type. They are yellowish, with thick, short, woolly coats and much fatter than you expect to find them. They walk like a funeral procession. Never have I seen one frisk or even wag his tail. Everybody turns out for them. They sleep, from twelve to twenty of them, on a single pile of garbage, and never notice either men or each other unless a dog which lives in the next street trespasses. Then they eat him up, for they are jackals as well as dogs, and they are no more epicures than ostriches. They never show interest in anything. They are blase. I saw some mother dogs asleep, with tiny puppies swarming over them like little fat rats, but the mothers paid no attention to them. Children seem to bore them quite as successfully as if they were women of fashion.

Nature's Influence on Man.

From the Chicago News: "Nature exercises a wonderful and mysterious influence over men. Certain plants are poisonous to some folks and medicine to others." "Yes, and my husband is always troubled with rheumatism when the grass begins to get tall upon our lawn."

Prompt Reaction.

"Oh, that horrid cat!" exclaimed the tearful young woman. "She has killed my beautiful canary! But the wings don't seem to be injured a bit. They will look swell on my hat, won't they, though?"—Chicago Tribune.

Evidence of Greatness.

From the Chicago Record: "So many great geniuses have been fat men." "Well, sometimes it takes genius to earn three square meals a day."

THE DAISIES KNEW.

One afternoon we sat on the little farmhouse veranda, looking down the road, as city boarders will, as though expecting something to come along and relieve its monotony, when something did come. Over the hill in the late sunshine of 5 o'clock came Pink and Harry, walking and talking, he hatless and smiling, she grave; both desperately interested. Pink held a daisy in her hand.

Within ten yards of the house they seated themselves upon a rock, Pink still twirling the daisy.

I saw that Pink was pulling it to pieces, and that Harry's face grew by turns hopeful and sad. "Not!" I heard him exclaim once, then he reached out and got another flower, which Pink pulled to pieces. "Not!" again, he echoed, as Pink parted her pretty lips and shook her head. "It is all nonsense, anyway," he added. But I could see by Pink's face that she did not agree with him.

"I'll leave it to a mutual friend," said Harry at last, as Pink continued to shake her head. "Come down," calling to me, "and settle the dispute—and my fate," I heard him add.

On a big rock sat Pink with Harry beside her, the daisy petals scattered around her. There was an awkward pause as I stood at the rock. Pink looked at Harry pleadingly, but found no mercy. "It's this way, you see," said Harry, nervously. "I know it isn't—well—you see—the fact is that I have asked Miss Pink to marry me and she has—"

"Asked the daisies," put in Pink, softly.

"And they said," ventured I.

"That he loved me not," almost whispered Pink.

And then the whole plot dawned upon me. These two silly young persons had been trusting their future happiness to the petals of a daisy.

"I picked them off, one by one," said Pink, gathering courage, "and I said: 'He loves me, he loves me not,' and it came out, 'He loves me not.'"

"Try again," I ventured.

"I did try—three times," said Pink.

"And so she has refused me," said Harry, lifting an injured face from the rock on which he was leaning.

There was nothing more to be said, for before I could put in a word Pink sprang up and ran toward the house as fast as she could go and we did not see her again until evening. Then she appeared in a long pink cloak, desperately becoming to her, and walked the veranda for half an hour alone.

Harry spoke to her once, but she hung her head and did not answer him, and there were tears on her lashes.

Of course that sort of thing could not be endured long, so next day Harry, after vainly watching and waiting for Pink to put in an appearance—she breakfasted in her room—sauntered down to the rock and seated himself behind it. Soon there was a rustle, and to the self-same place came Pink, flushed as from crying, and not seeing him at all.

Nevertheless, it was to the same rock that they both called me later to hear a new chapter in the daisy story. Harry held the bunch, and I noticed that he carefully selected a daisy, running over the petals with his fingers. "See how this one comes out," said he; and as he spoke I thought I saw him pull out one of the petals.

"Try this one," said he.

Pink took it, Harry looking on, but I thought he seemed less nervous about results.

Carefully Pink's pretty fingers traveled over the petals, pulling them out as she said: "He loves me; he loves me not"—

"Well," said Harry.

"He loves me," announced Pink.

"What did I tell you?" said Harry.

"But—yesterday!"

"No matter," insisted Harry; "the daisies know—today."

And from their happy faces, when I saw them walking together in the evening on the veranda, I knew that Pink thought so, too.—New York Evening World.

HE LOVES ME.

STRANGE FRIENDS.

Horses as a rule are particularly docile, and so it is not surprising to find instances of friendship between them and smaller animals, though occasionally the choice of their companions is not a little strange. Many are the cases of mutual affection existing between horses and cats, the most famous being that between Godolphin Arab and a black cat, which on the death of his equine friend refused to leave the body, and on being driven away retired to a hayloft, refused food and died of a broken heart.

More strange, however, was a case, the truth of which is vouched for, in which a horse struck up an acquaintance with a hen and displayed immense satisfaction whenever she came into his stall and rubbed against his legs, clucking greeting to her friend.

Dogs and horses generally get on well together, but the following story from Manchester proves that in some cases the friendship is something more than a mere toleration of each other. A carriage horse, accompanied by his stable companion, a retriever dog, to which he was exceedingly attached, was drinking at a trough near the exchange. While the dog was waiting for his friend to finish his draught a large mastiff picked a quarrel with him which ended in a fight. The mastiff, as may be supposed, had the better of the battle, and the retriever was severely bitten. The horse, from the moment he heard his friend's cry, broke from the man who was holding him, hurried to the rescue, and after kicking the mastiff across the street, returned to the trough and finished his drink.

ANIMALS THAT COUNT.

Wonderful Russian Horse That Knows "Up to Twenty-Five."

Dr. Timovieff, a distinguished Russian physician, has computed that crows can count ten, parrots four, dogs twenty-four and cats six. Dr. Timovieff found one horse belonging to a peasant that, when ploughing, always stopped to rest at the twentieth furrow, no more and no less. He also drove after one horse that had been trained to stop for a feed after every twenty-five versts. On a familiar road this made uniform feeding places.

Once, however, on a road this horse had never before traveled, it stopped for food after traveling only twenty-two versts. The doctor watched carefully in returning over the same road, and saw how the horse had made its mistake. In the course of the twenty-two versts, which were all carefully marked by the telegraph company, were three other stones similar to the verst signs. These the horse had seen and counted, being, of course, unable to distinguish them from the others.

Couldn't Be Happy If He Did.

She—Do you think, dear, we shall be really and truly happy in our married life? He—How can we help it, darling, when I shall try so hard to be good to you? Why, it was only yesterday that I insured my life for £5,000 in your favor. Isn't that the best evidence that I am going to make you happy? She (doubtfully)—But suppose you should live?—Spare Moments.

He Filled the Vacancy.

Judge: Mother—"Dear me, Bobby, your teacher tells me you stood at the foot of your class this month." Bobby (blubbering)—"Well, that ain't my fault. They've taken Tommy Tuffnutt out and sent him to the reform school."

MALTA FEVER.

Malta fever takes its name from the fact that it was first studied among the British troops in the Island of Malta. It occurs along the shores and among the islands of the entire Mediterranean sea. In this country it has become of interest from the fact that among the troops returning from Cuba last autumn several cases were found of a disease which closely resembled it. Indeed, it is now believed that Malta fever prevails in the Mediterranean of the western hemisphere as well as in that of the eastern. It occurs in Hongkong, and doubtless also in the Philippine Islands.

Malta fever prevails all the year round, but by far the greatest number of cases occur in summer. It is not believed to be contagious; the specific microbe, as in the case of typhoid fever, is supposed to be conveyed in water.

The early symptoms are like those of any other fever, namely: wakefulness and headache, a large and flabby tongue covered with a thin yellowish fur, loss of appetite, and sometimes nausea, or even vomiting. There is a slight cough, and every night, toward morning, the patient suffers from a profuse perspiration.

After about a week of these symptoms, the fever, which has till now been very slight, begins to rise. It rises a few degrees above the normal, seldom to a dangerous height, and then goes on and on, sometimes for months, until the patience of everybody is exhausted.

The patient does not seem to be very sick; indeed, he often feels fairly well, but the wretched fever continues, now up, now down, and the sufferer loses flesh and strength, and takes on a dirty, sallow look. Occasionally he has rheumatic symptoms, which resemble very closely those of real inflammatory rheumatism. One of the larger joints will suddenly become painful, red and swollen, remain so for a day or two, and then get suddenly well, while another joint begins to suffer in the same way. This may go on indefinitely from joint to joint, till the patient is as weary of the rheumatism as he is of the fever.

Malta fever may last only a few weeks, or it may continue with intervals of apparent freedom for a year, or even two years. Very few people die of the disease. So far as doctors have yet discovered, there is no medicine that will cure or shorten the disease; all that can be done is to nurse the patient and keep up his strength until the fever dies out. Quinine is useless. We shall probably hear more of this tiresome affection during the present summer.

CONCERNING WOMEN.

Probably no woman in England knows so much about women convicts as Adeline, duchess of Bedford. Her grace holds permission from the home secretary to visit prisons in which women are incarcerated for periods of over two years, and she has made excellent use of the great trust imposed in her. She and her colleague, Lady Battersea, do their utmost to give prisoners on their discharge a fair chance of becoming useful and respected members of society. The duchess of Bedford is a handsome woman in the prime of life, and when speaking from the platform the resemblance in voice to her sister, Lady Henry Somerset, is very striking.

Here are five golden rules which should be observed by those who often arrange flowers: Put your flowers in very lightly. Use artistic glasses. Do not use more than two, or at the most three, different kinds of flowers in one decoration. Arrange your colors to form a bold contrast, or, better still, a soft harmony. The aim of the decorator should be to show off the flowers—not the vases that contain them; therefore the simpler ones are far preferable to even the most elaborate. Glasses for a dinner table should be either white, a delicate shade of green, brown or rose color, according to the flowers arranged in them.

Beau Door.

Buffalo Commercial: In old New England farmhouses, in addition to the regular front entrance, it was the custom to have a second outside door opening directly into the front parlor. A knock on this door usually meant that a bashful young man was outside, who wanted to call on the daughter of the family. Now that there are no more bashful young men, a sofa or a chair is usually rolled against the beau door, and callers run the gauntlet of the family entrance.

Overdoing It.

Hicks—It's all right indulging in a little hyperbole when you are making love to a woman; but there's such a thing as overdoing it. Wicks—As for example? Hicks—Why, Dubleupp. He has been married three times, and he told Miss Kwarry the other evening that she was the first woman he ever loved.—Boston Transcript.

A Compliment.

Little Johnny—Mrs. Talkemdown paid a big compliment to me today. Mother—Did she really? Well, there's no denying that woman has sense. What did she say? Little Johnny—She said she didn't see how you came to have such a nice little boy as I was.—Tit-Bits.