

LOVE AND LAW.

By the author of 'THE BONNY LOVERS'

CHAPTER XI.—(Continued.)
 "Possession is nine points of the law," I answered. "I am afraid it will be a difficult matter to eject Mr. Branscombe unless we can produce the colonel's will."
 "Which we cannot?"—"Which we cannot at present?"
 "Then nothing can be done?"
 "I fear nothing, excepting to apprise the heir-at-law of the possible existence of the will made in Miss Branscombe's favor, and to warn him that it may any day be brought forward."
 "Humph!" growled the rector. "And if it should never turn up—if, as I begin to suspect, there has been some deep-laid plot—some rascality of which Master Charlie is, as usual, the head and front, what then?"
 "Then," I replied, "Master Charlie will remain in possession."
 "And Nona will be a beggar," said Mr. Heathcote sadly. "Poor child, poor child!"
 "Is Miss Branscombe at Forest Lea?" I ventured to inquire presently.
 "No; she and Miss Elmisle are with us. Mr. Charlie's bachelor establishment was hardly a fitting home for her, and we thought it advisable that she should leave the neighborhood at present—at all events until we had heard your opinion."
 "In the circumstances I should advise Miss Branscombe to retire," I said gravely.
 "Yes, yes, exactly," assented the rector. "In the circumstances—as I now understand them—she must of course leave the neighborhood."
 We drove on for some time after this in silence. I was occupied with rose-colored dreams of a future for the dispossessed heiress—a future which had evidently not entered into the rector's calculations, from the same point of view at all events.
 "If the fellow were not what he is, the poor colonel's original plan would have settled the difficulty," muttered Mr. Heathcote, as he touched up his stout cob. "But he was right—he was right; it would be a sacrifice not to be thought of—not to be thought of."
 As he spoke we were passing the Forest Lea woods, which here swept

she is glad that Charlie is at Forest Lea. And then she asked the inevitable question, which had come to be almost an exasperating one to me—"Any news of the will, Mr. Fort?"
 "None," I answered; "its loss is as great a mystery as ever."
 It was not until we were seated at the dinner table that Nona slipped quietly in, and took a place by Miss Elmisle opposite to mine. There was a consciousness in her manner, a deprecating timidity, as she met my eyes, which confirmed my fears. She was lost to me, and the Gordian knot of the Forest Lea difficulty was cut by her hand, in a way for which I at least ought not to have been wholly unprepared.
 The rector was called away on some parochial business after dinner, and I, not caring to join the ladies in my perturbed condition of mind, slipped out through the open dining room window and wandered about the old-fashioned rectory garden, and presently out into the green lanes, sweet with the perfume of late-blooming honeysuckle and silent in the hush of evening's rest from toil and labor.
 Love and courtship were certainly in the air of that corner of Midshire, and I was always condemned by some malicious fate to be, not an actor in the sweet drama, but a listener and an intruder. For the third time since my introduction to the neighborhood I encountered a pair of lovers.
 They were leaning against a gate, looking into a meadow, hidden from me until I was close upon them by a great tangle of traveler's joy, wreath of a jutting bush of wildbrar rose at the corner of the hedge. It was too late for me to retire when I came upon the couple, so there was nothing for it but a discreet cough, which I had the presence of mind to set up for the emergency. The woman turned hastily at the sound, and to my surprise I saw that it was Woodward, Nona's maid.
 To my surprise, I say, for there was something in the staid settled plainness of the maid's appearance which was incongruous, to my fancy, with lovers and love-making. Decidedly I

secret—nay, with Woodward under his influence, the secret was probably already his. How could I warn Nona—how save her?
 The opportunity was not far to seek. When I entered the drawing-room Miss Branscombe was there alone, save for Mrs. Heathcote's sleeping presence. The rector's wife lay back in her comfortable arm-chair by the fire, blissfully asleep. Nona sat by the tea-table in the opposite corner, her soft-shaded lamp the one spot of light in the room. Her elbow rested on the table, her cheek on her hand, her pale, sweet face grave and sad. The eyes she raised at my entrance fell almost immediately, and a deep flush, painful in its intensity, spread over cheek, neck and brow.
 "You will have some tea?" she said, beginning to arrange her cups with hands which trembled so much that she was forced to desist. Then she folded them resolutely in her lap and looked up at me, making, as I could see, a strong effort at composure. "Mr. Fort," she went on, in almost a whisper, "you are angry with me; and you have been so kind, I am sorry that you cannot forgive me now that everything has come right. And I do want to tell you how thoroughly I understand and thank you for all your kind thought for me, although I am afraid I must have seemed ungrateful in opposing you, and—and—"
 I bowed. I was afraid to trust myself to speak just then. And yet the precious moments were flying! Mrs. Heathcote stirred in her chair.
 "I wish you would believe that this—as things are now, I mean—is the very happiest thing for me, as well as right," she added, bending towards me in her earnestness.
 "I hope you will be very happy," I said, conquered by the sweet humility of her appeal, whilst the words seemed to scorch my heart.
 "I'm am very happy," she answered gently. "Why do you speak in the future? I shall never regret—never. I could never grow to be so sordid, and I should like to be sure that you are not vexed about it. We all owe so much to your kindness in those sad days." The rosy color flamed in her cheeks again. "I should like to feel that we are friends."
 "Why not?" I responded, with uncontrolled bitterness. "It is not for me to prescribe to Miss Branscombe what is for her happiness. It is to be presumed that she is herself the best—in this case, perhaps, the only—judge."
 The blushes faded and left her white as a lily. Something in her look made me feel as if I had struck her a blow.
 "Forgive me," I cried. "Miss Branscombe—Nona"—as she raised her shaking hands and covered her face—"what have I done—what have I said?"
 And then—I do not know how it happened; I have never been able to reduce the next supreme moments to any coherent memory—but her dear head was on my shoulder, my arms were round her as I dropped upon my knees by her side, and without a spoken word I knew that neither Charlie Branscombe nor any other barrier stood between me and my darling. She was mine, and mine only, and the gates of Paradise had opened to me at last.
 (To be continued.)

WHEN HE CAME HOME
 Unconscious of the picture she made, she stood in the doorway of a little reception room that led into the drawing room, her eyes fixed thoughtfully on a man's face in the crowded room beyond.
 Melane had been watching her for some time; in the past two years he had heard much of her social triumphs and charms.
 "Give me a welcome home," he pleaded, crossing the room to where she stood.
 "Of course I will." She lifted her eyes to his. They were very beautiful eyes—a fresh, unsullied nobility of character shone in them.
 "It is a surprise to see you to-night. I thought you were on the other side."
 "So it seems the home folk think," he answered, ruefully. "I've had a beastly cold welcome. Got home an hour ago to find every soul gone. Not a handshake but from one old negro left to keep the place from walking off. I suppose. The lights and the music were so cheery over here, I ventured without an invite, and in this garb, looking down at his traveling suit; "but Mrs. Brown is an old friend."
 "I see," the girl laughed; "your mother doesn't expect you home until next week."
 "You were perfectly oblivious to the fact that I have been watching you for ten minutes and wondering why you were alone and so quiet."
 "I was indulging in a little retrospection. I'm hardly responsible," with a shrug of the fair shoulders; "it's a fault of the age—this picking to pieces of emotions, laying one's heart on a dissecting table and analyzing the why and wherefore of each beat."
 "And was the tall young fellow in there," glancing toward the drawing room, "responsible for it all?"
 She laughed outright. "Isn't it delicious to have you for my mentor

(not that it was so unusual) and she refused to go above, because she hoped 'I love you.' Then he gave her a panny, with some boyish words of affection, and she flushed and asked, 'Am I your little heartsease?' Caro, don't you remember?"
 "I don't remember to have given you any right to ask such questions."
 "But you remember," he persisted.
 She laughed softly. "How they hated me, those other little girls. They called me a mean, stuck-up, snub-nosed thing."
 A little gleam of triumph shone in his eyes. She remembered.
 "Then the mountain party years afterward. You were 16. I was leading your horse, the saddle turned and you fell right into my arms, Caro, and I kissed you."
 The long lashes had curtained her eyes.
 "Have you forgotten?" he whispered.
 "However did you make such love to the senoritas?" she asked, demurely. "You had no reminiscences and youthful follies in common."
 "Don't interrupt, please. I promised to do it all. Then the night I left. I can feel your little fingers soft and warm in mine yet and see the wistfulness in your eyes. You cared then. You can't deny it. Your trembling lips and sweet wet eyes kept me straight over there among so many wild fellows. You told me to make a man of myself and I have worked three hard, honest years for you, dear. I have never loved any other woman."
 She sat still, the color coming and going in her cheeks.
 He leaned toward her, his heart in his face. They were quite hidden by the drapery. A voice cut softly across the low humming that filled the rooms. A woman's voice as she passed with her attendant to the refreshment room. "The pretty blonde who stood against these curtains—she was looking at you with her heart in her eyes," the voice said. "She is young, la petite; she

HANDLING BULLION IN MEXICO
 Robber Who Attacked the Train Had an Unpleasant Surprise.
 The story was told by a mining man who had a good deal of experience in old Mexico, says the New Orleans Times-Democrat. "In the foothills of the Sierra Madre, about sixty miles west of Chihuahua," he said, "is the Santa Rosa gold mine, which was worked very profitably in the early '80s. The only trouble was in getting the bullion to Chihuahua, for the country was infested with all manner of thieves and desperadoes and the trail was a splendid place for a hold up. On one occasion just before a regular shipment of a couple of bricks worth about \$30,000 the superintendent got a tip that the pack train would be attacked, and took the precaution of sending along an extra guard, consisting of six men heavily armed with Winchesters and revolvers. A prospector named Dixon was at the mine and had intended going in with the party, but when he heard the rumor of the trouble he sensibly concluded that he would be safer alone and set off on an old south trail, driving a wretched burro loaded with his camping outfit. His sagacity was applauded when the news came back that the pack train had been ambuscaded in a rocky pass by a large party of Mexican brigands. One of the escorts was wounded at the first volley, and seeing themselves hopelessly outnumbered, the guards abandoned the treasure mule and fled for their lives. Dixon reached Chihuahua all right and chuckled greatly when he heard the story, for he had been chaffed a good deal at the mine for refusing to go with what was considered a perfectly safe escort. I met him several months later and complimented him on his nerve in taking chances. 'The chances were considerably bigger than you suppose,' he replied with a grin. 'That pack mule was loaded with sawdust. The gold bricks were on my burro, under the camp truck.'



"FORGIVE ME," I CRIED. "MISS BRANSCOMBE—NORA."



SHE SANK AMONG THE CUSHIONS.

down to the edge of green turf bordering the road. From one of the gladelike openings two figures emerged in front of our carriage, sauntering slowly along on the grass, too deeply absorbed in conversation apparently to be aware of our approach. One—a slim girlish figure, dressed in black garments, with graceful, fair head bowed like a lily on its stalk—was, as I knew at once, Nona's; and it needed not the rector's impatient exclamation and sudden, quick jerk of the reins to tell me that the slight, almost boyish figure by her side was that of her cousin, Charlie Branscombe.
 In an instant the half-scotched serpent of jealousy was roused again and stung me to the heart. All my old doubts and suspicions rushed back like a flood. Fool that I had been ever to dream of hope in the face of what I had seen and knew.
 There was something of mockery in the elaborate bow, returned by a curt nod, with which Mr. Charles Branscombe greeted the rector; and, as I read it, a gleam of triumph on the handsome fair face in which I recognized the fatal beauty de diable I had heard described.
 A passing glimpse of Miss Branscombe showed me a half-startled, surprised glance of recognition—a swift, shy blush, in return for the grave bow with which I acknowledged hers. The meeting had upset the rector's equanimity as much as it had mine. He spoke no more until we turned in at the rectory gate.
 CHAPTER XII.
 Nona was not in the drawing room before dinner. Miss Elmisle was, and received me with tearful cordiality. "It's a sad change," she whispered, "especially for the dear girl. But she doesn't seem to feel it. I really believe

should not have given Woodward credit for having a sweetheart. Yet there she was, keeping a twilight tryst amongst the clematis and the honeysuckle, like any maid of eighteen. And if anything could have added to my astonishment it was the discovery that the swain whose arm was about her waist, whose head was bent down over hers, was the rector's smart, new groom! There must, I decided, be something more in the middle-aged maid than met the eye, since she had carried off the prize from all her young and pretty rivals. Possibly, I thought, with a little contempt for the passion which had passed—bless the groom and the lady's maid—possibly Plutus had as much to say in the matter as Cupid. Miss Woodward might have savings which the shrewd Londoner had scented. The man overtook me presently, as, lost in the intricacies of stable-yard and back entrance, I was trying to find my way back to the garden and lawn.
 "I beg your pardon, sir," he said, civilly. "That path leads to the kitchen, this"—opening a gate—"will take you to the side entrance into the hall."
 "Thank you," I answered. "Good night."
 "Good night, Mr. Fort."
 I looked up, surprised at the sudden change of tone and manner. The man's eyes met mine.
 "Widdrington!" I had almost exclaimed, but that his hand touched mine on the gate latch and checked the word.
 "You left this in the dog cart this afternoon, sir," he said, handing me a letter. "I picked it up when I cleaned the trap."
 I took the paper from him and passed on with another good night. My mind was in a wild state of alarm; Widdrington was on the track of the

Safe Side.
 The unexpected humor which often tints the grave speech of the Quaker is well illustrated in a little story told of an eminent young physician of Pennsylvania at the time of the civil war. He had determined to serve his country and leave his practice at home, but met with grieved remonstrance from his mother, a sweet-faced Quakeress. "I beseech of thee not to go to this war, my son!" she pleaded, her soft eyes full of tears. "But I do not go to fight, mother," said the doctor, cheerfully. "I am going as a medical man. Surely there is no harm in that."
 "Well, well," said the little mother, doubtfully, "go then, if it must be so." Then suddenly a gleam of loyalty shone through her tears, and she straightened herself and looked bravely up into her tall son's face. "If these finds thee kills more than thee cures," she said, demurely, "I advise thee to go straightway over to the other side, my son!"
 Dickens' Best Novel.
 It is well known among literary people that Charles Dickens considered "David Copperfield" the best of his novels, but occasions when he actually expressed that opinion are so rare that it is worth while to recall an incident which happened while he was in Philadelphia. Mr. Chapin, father of Dr. John B. Chapin, the well-known expert on insanity, was at that time at the head of the blind asylum here. Raised type for the blind was just coming into vogue, and desiring to have one of Dickens' books printed in that way, Mr. Chapin took advantage of an introduction to the great novelist to ask him which of his works he considered the best, and mentioned the reason why he wanted to know. Dickens unhesitatingly answered, "David Copperfield."—Philadelphia Record.
 Candler of a Dublin Surgeon.
 Dr. Candler, an eminent surgeon of Dublin, who died in 1843, was remarkable for his plain dealing with himself. In his fee book he had many such candid entries as the following: "For giving ineffectual advice for deafness, 1 guinea." "For telling him he was no more ill than I was, 1 guinea." "For nothing that I know of except that he probably thought he did not pay me enough last time, 1 guinea."
 Of the world's annual yield of petroleum, 6,000,000,000 gallons, the United States produces one-half.

again! I might as well confess. All winter he has paid me marked attention. Flowers, candies and all the rest, you know, and I have liked him. Two weeks ago the tall, dark girl in there with him came here to visit Lena Wells and I have been coolly dropped. I was trying to find out if I cared, or if it was only wounded pride."
 "Which is it?" he questioned, the eagerness in his voice unmistakable.
 "I am not sure yet," she answered, thoughtfully, "and I could have made such an admission to no other man in the room. Now tell me what you have been doing with yourself these three years."
 "I can't; I am thinking of the fellow in there. Why don't you be perfectly indifferent to him and flirt with some one else?"
 "I don't flirt!" indignantly.
 "I do; outrageously sometimes. You see," apologetically, "a fellow can't help it in Italy. It is as natural as breathing. I'm dying for a flirtation now. I have not made love to a girl since I left the dark-eyed senoritas."
 "If it would make you feel more at home you may make love to me," she said, with sweet graciousness.
 "May I?" eagerly.
 "But I don't promise to respond."
 "That's all right. I'll do it all."
 He drew her into a little curtained cozy corner, beyond the door.
 "Now brace yourself. I'm going to begin."
 She sank among the cushions and lifted her laughing eyes. "It feels like childhood and playing hide-and-seek," she said.
 "It is better than childhood." He gave her a look that splashed her cheeks with color.
 "Once upon a time," he began, "there was a little lover who brought his sweetheart the biggest plums and ripest peaches, and always carried home her books and slate. Did you ever hear of him, Caro?" He leaned toward her.
 But she was turning the rings on her slim fingers, the faintest suggestion of a smile at the corners of her lips.
 "One day in class he missed a word

will learn to shrug her shoulders and laugh as the years go on."
 The girl leaned forward to catch the reply. Her blue eyes black, her cheeks white, the little teeth set relentlessly in the soft redness of her under lip.
 The answer came lightly, after a moment.
 "A man will pass a sweet wild rose if a lily glows and dazzles just beyond."
 The voices were lost in the hum.
 She leaned back, the small hands clinched. He watched her anxiously. Then sensuous, softly swelling waltz melody throbbed in his brain.
 Would she never speak? He dared not.
 Then with a long breath of relief she moved toward him. The delicate beauty of her face shone like a flower in the shadowed nook.
 "Rob," she said, softly, "I'm so glad I know."
 "Know what, dear?" He covered the little fingers as if she had been a child.
 She lifted her eyes in astonishment. "Know that it was wounded pride, of course. What did you think I meant? I would have got over it. No woman with any spirit would have cared for a man after that. But it is such a relief not to care." And she laughed a little light-hearted, childish laugh.
 "Caro, are you sure?" His voice was full of entreaty. "Will you let me teach you to care for me?"
 "It would be useless"—the words had no sting; the voice was soft and low—"perfectly useless, for I have discovered unsuspected territory in my being to-night. Rob, you dear stupid, don't you understand?" She slipped her fingers into his, just as in the old childish days. "I've loved you straight through, but—you were gone so long."
 There was an ecstatic movement of the curtain, then silence; because understanding is enough when people are in love.
 Whistling in Iceland.
 Whistling is said to be regarded as a violation of divine law by Icelanders.

HOBBIES OF ROYALTY.
 Queen Victoria's hobby is gardening, and she is passionately fond of dogs and ponies, her especial favorite being her old black pony Jessie. Her majesty is also a great lover of bullfinches and has several of them, whose pretty tricks and charming piping give her immense pleasure. To insure the safety of the feathered pets it is forbidden for any one in the royal household to have a cat—at least, any one whose apartment is at all near the queen's.
 The princess of Wales has a great liking for lace. Her collection, which has some wonderful specimens, is worth \$250,000. The duchess of York has one of the most interesting collections of postcards on record. It has been contributed to by the sovereigns of every land where postcards are used, the German relations of her royal highness supplying by far the greater number.
 The duke of Edinburgh is an ardent stamp collector, and possesses one of the finest collections in the world. His daughter, the crown princess of Roumania, delights in perfumery bottles, as did her grandmother, the late empress of Russia, who had a unique collection of elaborate and beautiful bottles, which was valued at \$35,000, and was bequeathed to her grandmother.
 The queen of Italy has a peculiar hobby—a collection of gloves, boots and shoes which have been worn at different periods by royal and imperial personages. She has a pair of white slippers and a fan which belonged to Mary, Queen of Scots; also shoes worn by Queen Anne and the empress Josephine. King Humbert takes great pleasure in amateur cooking, at which art he is an adept.
 The empress of Germany is a champion knitter, and uses large wooden needles for the work she does. The queen of Greece spends a good deal of her time in fancy needlework, and is said to be the finest needlewoman among European royalties. The dowager queen of Portugal is fond of shooting and spends much time at her country place on the seaboard at Caldas, where she amuses herself by firing from a high window at bottles placed in the sea for the purpose. She is said to be an excellent markswoman. The empress of Japan is distinguished for her clever manipulation of the koto, a Japanese instrument resembling the zither.
 Natural Bridge of Agate.
 The most valuable natural bridge in the world is to be found in Arizona, lying across a deep chasm forty feet in width. It is a petrified tree about four feet in diameter and about 100 feet in length. "It is pure agate all through and therefore is much more valuable as regards material than any bridge of marble or granite could be. But the most expensive material of which a bridge has ever been built is probably telegraph wire. One was built over the Jhelum river at Kohala, in the Punjab, in the place of a bridge which was swept away in the floods in 1892. A similar bridge was constructed during the first Soufan campaign over the Kohora river for military purposes.
 Six Hundred a Minute.
 What do you think of stamping 600 letters a minute? They are trying a new machine in the Chicago postoffice, and that is its record so far. The exact time is stamped on each letter, together with the cancelling stamp, and if there is any delay in dispatching the letter the blame can be easily located. The machine only requires one operator.