

# 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 is 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 at 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. 'Mais 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. We board 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 woman's clubs, "We board, 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 30 per cent.

# LOVE AND LAW.

By the author of BONNY'S LOVERS

CHAPTER XIII.—(Continued.)

The Rector was the only person excepting myself cognizant of Mr. Widdrington's failure and discoveries. I felt very small in the worthy person's presence. I had for the second time been outwitted by a woman, and it was on account of my careless blundering that the whole work had to begin over again.

"Don't tell the ladies," advised the Rector; "keep it from them as long as you can. Miss Elmslie is the veriest gossip, good little soul as she is, and, as we have just proved, a man's foes are those of his own household; the very walls have ears, and a bird of the air shall carry the matter!" continued Mr. Heathcote, losing all control of himself in the heat of quotation. "If Widdrington is to recover the trail we must be silent as mice."

"His groom get-up was capital," I remarked; "it completely took me in."

"Yes," said the Rector complacently. "I think we did that rather well. But I did not expect to blind you. When I found you had not recognized Widdrington as soon as you arrived I kept up the joke, you know."

"It is hardly fair, is it," I demurred, "to keep Miss Branscombe in the dark? I believe she would be discreet."

"Of course you do!" laughed Mr. Heathcote. "You would be a sorry lover if you did not believe that and everything else that is good of her."

"It may be necessary to put her on her guard against the lady's maid," I suggested.

"Yes, it may. I hardly know what course to adopt with regard to the woman," said the Rector thoughtfully, "or how Widdrington has left matters with her. It seems to me important to retain her; she may help us, if she will. Well, with regard to Nona, you must use your own discretion. Fort; I can-

and her eyes gleamed with anger. She rested one hand upon the table, clenching and unclenching the other as she spoke.

"I have a few questions to ask you, sir," she commenced, in a significant, quiet tone—"questions I should like answered."

"I am at your service," Miss Woodward," I responded, putting my papers together with an airy assumption quite at variance with my real feelings.

"I want to know," she went on, "if you think it is the action of a gentleman to set a spy upon a respectable young woman, to deceive her by false promises and lies and shameful, double-faced ways and tricks, to get out of her all he wants to know—all for your information, sir—she was becoming somewhat involved—and for your pay. I suppose? Is this a gentleman's action, I ask you?"

"If you mean," I began.

"I mean," she interrupted, "that I have always heard you lawyers are as cunning as Satan himself. But I never could have believed that a gentleman like you, so pleasant-spoken and straightforward as you seemed, could have been guilty of such a trick!"

"As what?" I asked. "I am not aware of any conduct on my part of which you have a right to complain, Miss Woodward. I rather thought, do you know, that things were the other way about—that I had some cause of complaint against you."

"That fellow, Tillott—or whatever his name is," she said, with bitter contempt—"was your spy, was he not? Didn't you send him down to hunt out your business?"

"I did not know of his being here until last night," I answered truthfully, if a little evasively.

"But he was your spy," she persisted, "and you didn't care how he

not? It was in his handwriting, and we were almost man and wife; I had a right to read his letters. And it's well I did! What have you to say to that, sir?"

"Nothing," I answered. "Only the law might have something to say, you know, to your taking possession of a letter addressed to another person." I was gaining courage as her reckless temper placed her in my power. I should advise you to be a little more prudent, Miss Woodward."

"I don't care that for the law," she cried violently, snapping her fingers in my face. "The law says nothing to a woman being deceived and insulted, and cheated with false promises."

"Oh, yes it does!" I said. "There is such a thing as breach of promise—only I am afraid you are hardly in a position to avail yourself of the law." My spirits had so far revived that I was able to try a little intimidation now. "You see, by your own confession, you have made yourself amenable to the law in one—if not in two instances."

"I tell you I don't care," she cried; "and I'm glad of what I did. I had my revenge. I upse; all your fine plans—and his. You were neither of you a match for a woman from beginning to end."

"That is quite true," I assented, humbly; "you were very clever, Miss Woodward. I don't think I ever heard of a cleverer trick. I give you great credit for your splendid management, and, if you will allow me to say so, I think your talents are quite wasted in your present position as a lady's maid. I should really advise you to turn your attention to, say, the female detective line. I think I can perhaps be of use to you in that sort of a career if you decide on it."

CHAPTER XV.

I was determined that she should not remain in her present post about Nona, and deemed it advisable to manage her resignation as quietly as possible. A designing, vindictive woman, burning with a sense of injury, and capable of the elaborate dissimulation she had already practiced, was certainly not fit for attendance on my guileless, tender Nona. Miss Woodward must leave the Rectory before my own departure.

"The authorities at Scotland Yard," I suggested, "will, I think, most probably be glad of your assistance. I can perhaps arrange the matter."

"Do you think that I will be beholden to you for anything?" she burst out. "Do you think I will let you lay another trap for me? No, I'm not sunk so low as that comes to!"

"It might be worth your while," I said carelessly, "to think over my offer. I am afraid—after what has passed—the Rectory will not be either a pleasant or a safe home for you"—meaningly.

"And do you think," she cried, "that I'm going to take my warning to leave from you? You are not my master. It was not engaged by you, and it's not for you to dismiss me."

"All that is quite true," I assented; "nevertheless it may be as well for you to think over what I have said, Miss Woodward. Miss Branscombe will, I know, be as anxious as I am myself to avoid any unnecessary scandal or exposure before the other servants. And she has been a kind mistress; you would not, I am sure, wish to give her unnecessary pain or distress."

"Miss Branscombe is a thousand times too good for—for those who have got her," announced Miss Woodward. "As sweet a young lady as ever trod the earth, she is, and abov' all the mean tricks that seem all right to lawyers, no doubt. And if things had gone as they should have gone we might have seen her in her own proper place, with as real a gentleman as she is a lady."

(To be continued.)

DOUBLE EAGLE.

As It Appeared on the Arms of Russia and Austria.

The eagle, as an emblem of authority, is so old that it would be impossible to clearly trace its origin. It is found upon the most ancient sculptures that have yet been discovered, and was no doubt one of the very oldest of the totems, or tribe signs. The early Persian empire appears to be the first which adopted it as an imperial emblem. Among the Greeks the eagle was the emblem of Jove. The Romans also adopted the eagle as their standard, and so it became the token of Roman dominion. When Constantine became emperor he adopted the double-headed eagle as the insignia of his authority over east and west. When the German empire came into being in the twelfth century this emblem was revived as being that of the Holy Roman empire, and Rudolph of Hapsburg adopted it as his imperial arms. It appeared in the Russian imperial arms in the sixteenth century, when Czar Ivan Basilovitch married Princess Sophia, niece of the eleventh Constantine, and the last of the Byzantine emperors.

About Necks.

The array of necks presented for inspection at a theater is various. All sorts and conditions of necks are there, and there is as much variety in them as there is in the faces above them. Scraggy necks should, if surmounting good shoulders, have a discreet ribbon round them; black velvet or white tulle are the most becoming things for the complexion. Pearls on a white throat are really exquisite; for dusky necks the most becoming stones are emeralds or rubies. When the bones at the base of the throat are too intrusive on the attention they may be coerced into submission and concealment by a narrower ribbon tied low with a pendant.



"I HAVE A FEW QUESTIONS TO ASK YOU, SIR."

not advise. Perhaps we may hear something from Widdrington to-day or to-morrow. He has left us in a terrible mess at present; but no doubt he couldn't help it. The failure must have been a blow to him. There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip, you know."

CHAPTER XIV.

Before I left the rectory I had to endure an interview, quite unsought, and—I think I may add—quite undesired on my part, painful and embarrassing as it was to me.

Woodward—Widdrington's deserted and betrayed lady-love—her face pale, her eyes lurid with suppressed fury, entered the rector's study, where I had established myself in order to write letters for the afternoon post, and demanded a hearing.

I must here confess to a weakness to which I have always been, and am still, a prey—I am morally afraid of an angry woman. I can face any number of furious men, my spirits indeed rising at the prospect of a fray, but before an angry woman I am an arrant coward.

My feelings therefore can be imagined when the lady's maid advanced upon me. There was no mistaking the expression of her whole person as she closed the door and approached me. At the first glance I thought of the words—"Earth holds no demon like a woman scorned."

Innocent factor as I was in the "scorning" of this particular woman, why should I have to bear the brunt of her demoniacal fury? This was the question which shook my craven soul as I braced myself up as well as I could for the encounter.

Miss Woodward planted herself on the opposite side of the writing-table, facing me. I was glad that at that moment of the intervening breadth of leather-covered mahogany. She was a little woman of a dark complexion. Her thick well-marked brows met on her forehead, giving a look of determination—a sinister look, I thought at that moment—to her thin, sharp-featured face. Her face was always somewhat colorless, but it was lividly pale now.

got at what you wanted to know so long as he did get at it. You didn't care if he lied and deceived, and made a poor woman ashamed to hold up her head again. It was all for your money."

"My good girl," I remonstrated, "I am really very sorry; but I am not responsible for Mr. Tillott's conduct."

"It was you who tempted him," she persisted—"who set him on me! Oh, it was the meanest, basest thing! He was to have married me—our names are up at the registry-office in Ilminster. I can have the law of him for false statement, and that's what I mean to do! Tell me his address—it's the least you can do for a woman you have helped to insult and mislead."

"Who put up the names?" I asked, beginning to feel that Mr. Widdrington had gone to unwarrantable lengths indeed.

"I did," she answered, "a fortnight ago—the time would be out next week. He wouldn't let me give notice to Miss Branscombe, and we were to have been married on the sly, because his friends in London were such grand people, and he would tell them afterwards, he pretended—the false traitor!"

"Then, if you gave the names, I am afraid you cannot make Mr. Tillott responsible for any statement you have yourself made at the office," I said.

"It is a vile, shameful trick!" she panted.

"Yes, it is too bad," I assented, sympathetically. "But how did it happen that you, with all your experience, allowed yourself to be so taken in?"

"I never suspected him for a minute," she replied, softening under my sympathy. "I never supposed that men could be so wicked. And I don't believe now that he would if he hadn't been put up to it. I found his letter to you, telling you how your scheme had all succeeded, and then I knew how a gentleman could demean himself"—with renewed contempt.

"You found a letter?" I asked.

"Yes."

"And you read it?"

"Yes"—shortly and sharply. "Why



"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"—clasping 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. Tillott 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. Tillott?" 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. Tillott" 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 rig-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 want much courting to let the whole cat out of the bag—as much as she knew. 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