

LADY BOUNTIFUL.

A STORY WITH A MORAL FOR SOCIAL THEORISTS TO ACT UPON.

CHAPTER XLVIII.—Continued.

'So,' said Lord Jocelyn, 'the dress-maker has relented, has she? Why, that is well. And am I to give my consent? My dear boy, I only want you to be happy. Besides, I am quite sure and certain that you will be happy.'

'Everybody is, if he marries the woman he loves,' said the young man, sententially. 'Yes—yes, if he goes on loving the woman he has married. However, Harry, you have my best wishes and consent, since you are good enough to ask for it. Wait a bit.' He got up and began to search about in drawers and desks. 'I must give your fiancée a present, Harry. See—here is something, good. Will you give her, with my best love and good wishes, this? It was once my mother's.'

Harry looked at the gaud, set with pearls and rubies in old-fashioned style.

'Is it not,' he asked, 'rather too splendid for a—poor people in our position?'

Lord Jocelyn laughed aloud.

'Nothing,' he said, 'can be too splendid for a beautiful woman. Give it her, Harry, and tell her I am glad she has consented to make you happy. Tell her I am more than glad, Harry. Say that I most heartily thank her. Yes, thank her. Tell her that—Say that I thank her from my heart.'

As the day drew near the girls became possessed of a great fear. It seemed to all as if things were going to undergo some great and sudden change. They knew that the house was secured to them free of rent; but they were going to lose their queen, that presiding spirit who not only kept them together, but also kept them happy. In her presence there were no little tempers, and jealousies were forgotten. When she was with them they were always on their best behaviour. Now it is an odd thing in girls, and I really think myself privileged, considering my own very small experience of the sex, in being the first to have discovered this important truth—that, whereas to boys good behavior is too often a gene and a bore, girls prefer behaving well. They are happiest when they are good, nicely dressed, and sitting all in a row with company manners. But who, when Miss Kennedy went away, would lead them in the drawing-room? The change, however, was going to be greater than they knew or guessed; the drawing room itself would become before many days a thing of the past, but the Palace would take its place.

They all brought gifts; they were simple things, but they were offered with willing and grateful hearts. Rebekah brought the one volume of her father's library which was well bound. It was a work written in imitation of Hervey's 'Meditations,' and dwelt principally with toms, and was therefore peculiarly appropriate as a wedding present. Nelly brought a ring which had been her mother's, and was so sacred to her that she felt it must be given to Miss Kennedy; the other girls gave worked handkerchiefs, and collars, and such little things.

Angela looked at the table on which she had spread all her wedding presents; the plated tea-pot from Mrs. Bormalack; the girls' work; Nelly's ring; Rebekah's book; Lord Jocelyn's bracelet. She was happier with these trifles than if she had received in Portman Square the hundreds of gifts and jeweled things which would have poured in for the young heiress.

And in the short fortnight she thought for everybody. Josephus received a message that he might immediately retire on the pension which he would have received had he been fortunate in promotion and been compelled to go by ill-health: in other words, he was set free with three hundred pounds a year for life. He may now be seen any day in the Mile End Road or on Stepney Green, dressed in the fashion of a young man of twenty-one or so, walking with elastic step, because he is so young, yet manifesting a certain gravity, as becomes one who attends the evening lectures of the Beaumont Institute in French and arithmetic, and takes a class on the Sabbath in connection with the Wesleyan body. After all, a man is only as old as he feels; and why should not Josephus, whose youth was cruelly destroyed, feel young again, now that his honor has been restored to him?

On the morning before the wedding, Angela paid two visits of considerable importance.

The first was to Daniel Fagg, to whom she carried a small parcel. 'My friend,' she said, 'I have observed your impatience about your book. Your publisher thought that, as you are inexperienced in correcting proofs, it would be best to have the work done for you. And here, I am truly happy to say, is the book itself.'

He tore the covering from the book, and seized it as a mother would seize her child.

'My book!' he gasped, 'my book!' Yes, his book; bound in sober cloth, with an equilateral triangle on the cover for simple ornament. 'The Primitive Alphabet, by Daniel Fagg!' My book!

Angela explained to him that his passage to Melbourne was taken, and that he would sail in a week; and that a small sum of money would be put into his hands on landing; and that a hundred copies of the book would be sent to Australia for him, with more if he wanted them. But she talked to idle ears, for Daniel was turning over the leaves and devouring the contents of his book.

'At all events,' said Angela, 'I have made one man happy.'

Then she walked to the Trinity Almshouse, and sought her old friend, Captain Sorensen.

To him she told her whole story from the very beginning, begging only that he would keep her secret till the next evening.

'But, of course,' said the sailor, 'I knew, all along, that you were a lady born and bred. You might deceive the folk here, who've no chance, poor things, of knowing a lady when they see one—how should they? But you could not deceive a man who's had his quarter-deck full of ladies. The only question in my mind was why you did it.'

'You did not think that what Bunker said was true—did you, Captain Sorensen?'

'Nay,' he replied. 'Bunker never liked you; and how I am to thank you enough for all you've done for my poor girl—'

'Thank me by continuing to be my dear friend and adviser, said Angela. 'If I thought it would pleasure you to live out of this place—'

'No, no,' said the captain, 'I could not take your money; any one may accept the provision of the asylum and be grateful.'

'I knew you would say so. Stay on, then, Captain Sorensen. And as regards Nelly, my dear and fond Nelly—'

It needs not to tell what she said and promised on behalf of Nelly.

And at the house the girls were trying on the new white frocks and white bonnets in which they were to go to the wedding. They were all bride-maids, but Nelly had the post of honor.

CHAPTER XLIX.

'UPROUSE YE THEN, MY MERRY, MERRY MEN!'

At nine in the morning Harry presented himself at the house, no longer his own, for the signing of certain papers. The place was closed for a holiday, but the girls were already assembling in the show room, getting their dresses laid out, trying on their gloves, and chattering like birds up in the branches on a fine spring morning. He found Angela sitting with an elderly gentleman—none other than the senior partner of the firm of her solicitors. He had a quantity of documents on the table before him, and as Harry opened the door he heard these remarkable words:

'So the young man does not know—even at the eleventh hour?'

What it was he would learn, Harry cared not to inquire. He had been told that there was a secret of some sort which he would learn in the course of the day.

'These papers, Horry,' said his bride, 'are certain documents which you have to sign, connected with that little fortune of which I told you.'

'I hope,' said Harry, 'that the fortune, whatever it is, has all been settled upon yourself absolutely.'

'You will find, young gentleman,' said the solicitor, gravely, 'that ample justice—generous justice—has been done you. Very well, I will say no more.'

'Do you want me to sign without reading, Angela?'

'If you will so far trust me.'

He took the pen and signed where he was told to sign, without reading one word. If he had been ordered to sign away his life and liberty, he would have done so blindly and cheerfully at Angela's bidding. The deed was signed, and the act of signature was witnessed.

So that was done. There now remained only the ceremony. While the solicitor, who evidently disliked the whole proceeding, as irregular and dangerous, was putting up the papers, Angela took her lover's hands in hers, and looked into his face with her frank and searching look.

'You do not repent, my poor Harry?'

'Repent?'

'You might have done so much better: you might have married a lady—'

The solicitor, overhearing these words, sat down and rubbed his nose with an unprofessional smile.

'Shall I not marry a lady?'

'You might have found a rich bride: you might have led a lazy life, with nothing to do, instead of which—oh, Harry, there is

still time! We are not due at the church for half an hour yet. Think. Do you deliberately choose a life of work and ambition—with—perhaps—poverty?'

At this point the solicitor rose from his chair and walked softly to the window, where he remained for five minutes looking out upon Stepney Green, with his back to the lovers. If Harry had been watching him, he would have remarked a curious tremulous movement of the shoulders.

'There is one thing more, Harry, that I have to ask you.'

'Of course you have only to ask me, whatever it is. Could I refuse you anything, who will give me so much?'

Their fingers were interlaced, their eyes were looking into each other. No; he could refuse her nothing.

'I give you much? Oh, Harry! what is a woman's gift of herself?'

Harry restrained himself. The solicitor might be sympathetic; but, on the whole, it was best to act as if he were not. Law has little to do with love; Cupid has never yet been represented with the long gown.

'It is a strange request, Harry. It is connected with my—my little foolish secret. You will let me go away directly the service is over, and you will consent not to see me again until the evening, when I shall return. You, with all the girls, will meet me in the porch of the Palace at seven o'clock exactly. And, as Miss Messenger will come too, you will make your—perhaps your last appearance—my poor boy—in the character of a modern English gentleman in evening-dress. Tell your best man that he is to give his arm to Nelly: the other girls will follow two and two. Oh, Harry, the first sound of the organ in your Palace will be your own Wedding March: the first festival in your Palace will be in your own honor. Is not that what it should be?'

'In your honor, dear, not mine. And Miss Messenger? Are we to give no honor to her who built the Palace?'

'Oh, yes—yes—yes!' She put the question by with a careless gesture. 'But any one who happened to have the money could do such a simple thing. The honor is yours because you invented it.'

'From your hands, Angela, I will take all the honor that you please to give. So am I doubly honored.'

There were no wedding bells at all: the organ was mute: the parish church of Stepney was empty: the spectators of the marriage were Mrs. Bormalack and Captain Sorensen, besides the girls and the bridegroom, and Dick, his best man. The captain in the Salvation Army might have been present as well; he had been asked, but he was lying on the sick-bed from which he was never to rise again. Lord and Lady Davenant were there; the former sleek, well contented, well dressed in broadcloth of the best; the latter agitated, restless, humiliated, because she had lost the thing she came across the Atlantic to claim, and was going home, after the splendor of the last three months, to the monotonous levels of Canaan City. Who could love Canaan City after the West End of London! What woman would look forward with pleasure to the dull and uneventful days, the local politics, the chapel squabbles, the little gatherings for tea and supper, after the enjoyment of a carriage and pair and unlimited theatres, operas, and concerts, and footmen, and such dinners as the average American, or the average Englishman either, seldom arrives at seeing, even in visions? Sweet content was gone; and though Angela meant well, and it was kind of her to afford the ambitious lady a glimpse of that great world into which she desired to enter, the sight—even this Pisgah glimpse—of a social paradise to which she could never belong destroyed her peace of mind, and she will for the rest of her life lie on a rock deploring. Not so her husband: his future is assured; he can eat and drink plentifully; he can sleep all the morning undisturbed; he is relieved of the anxieties connected with his Case; and, though the respect due to rank is not recognized in the States, he has to bear none of its responsibilities, and has altogether abandoned the Grand Manner. At the same time, as one who very nearly became a British peer, his position in Canaan City is enormously raised.

They, then, were in church. They drove thither, not in Miss Messenger's carriage, but with Lord Jocelyn.

They arrived a quarter of an hour before the ceremony. When the curate who was to perform the ceremony arrived, Lord Jocelyn sought him in the vestry and showed him a special license by which it was pronounced lawful, and even laudable, for Harry Goslett, bachelor, to take unto wife Angela Messenger, spinster.

And at sight of that name did the curate's knees begin to tremble, and his hands to shake.

Angela Marsden Messenger, is it then? he asked, 'the great heiress?'

'It is none other,' said Lord Jocelyn. 'And she marries my ward—here is my card—by special license.'

'But—but—it is a clandestine marriage?'

'Not at all. There are reasons why Miss Messenger desires to be married in Stepney. With them we have nothing to do. She has, of late, associated herself with many works of benevolence, but anonymously. In fact, my dear sir—here Lord Jocelyn looked profoundly knowing—my ward, the bridegroom, has always known her under another name, and even now does not know whom he is marrying. When we sign the books we must, just to keep the secret a little longer, manage that he shall write his own name without seeing the name of the bride.'

This seemed very irregular in the eyes of the curate, and at first he was for referring the matter to the rector, but finally gave in, on the understanding that he was to be no party to any concealment.

And presently the wedding-party walked slowly up the aisle, and Harry, to his great astonishment, saw his bride on Lord Jocelyn's arm. There were cousins of the Messengers in plenty who should have done this duty, but Angela would invite none of them. She came alone to Stepney; she lived and worked in the place alone; wanted no consultation or discussion with the cousins; she would tell them when all was done; and she knew very well that so great an heiress as herself could do nothing but what is right, when one has time to recover from the shock, and to settle down and think things over.

No doubt, though we have nothing to do with the outside world in this story, there was a tremendous rustling of skirts, shaking of heads, tossing of curls, wagging of tongues, and uplifting of hands the next morning when Angela's cards were received, and the news was in all the papers. And there was such a run upon interjections that the vocabulary broke down, and people were fain to cry to one another in foreign tongues.

For thus the announcement ran:

'On Thursday, March 20th, at the Parish Church, Stepney, Harry, son of the late Samuel Goslett, Sergeant in the 120th Regiment of the Line, to Angela Marsden, daughter of the late John Marsden-Messenger, and granddaughter of the late John Messenger, of Portman Square and Whitechapel.'

This was a pretty blow among the cousins. The greatest heiress in England, who they had hoped would marry a duke, or a marquis, or an earl at least, had positively and actually married the son of a common soldier—well, a non-commissioned officer—the same thing. What did it mean? What could it mean?

Others, who knew Harry and his story, who had sympathy with him on account of his manly qualities—who owned that the obscurity of his birth was but an accident, shared with him by many of the most worthy, excellent, brilliant, useful, well-bred, delightful men of the world—rejoiced over the strange irony of Fate which had first lifted this soldier's son out of the gutter, and then, with apparent malignity, dropped him back again, only, however, to raise him once more far higher than before. For, indeed, the young man was now rich—with his vats and his mash-tubs, his millions of casks, his Old and his Mild and his Bitter, and his Family at nine shillings the nine-gallon cask, and his accumulated millions, 'beyond the potential dream of avarice.' If he chose to live more than half his time in Whitechapel, that is no concern of anybody's; and if his wife chooses to hold a sort of court at the abandoned East, to surround herself with people unheard of in society, not to say out of it, why should she not? Any of the royal princess might have done the same thing if they had chosen and had been well advised. Further, if, between them, Angela and her husband have established a superior Aquarium, a glorified Crystal Palace, in which all the shows are open, all the performers are drilled and trained amateurs, and all the work actually is done for nothing; in which the management is by the people themselves, who will have no interference from priest or parson, rector or curate, philanthropist or agitator; and no patronage from societies, well-intentioned young ladies, meddling benevolent persons and officious promoters, starters, and shovers-along, with half an eye fixed on heaven and the remaining eye and a half on their own advancement—if, in fact, they choose to do these things, why not? It is an excellent way of spending their time, and a change from the monotony of society.

Again, it is said that Harry, now Harry Messenger, by the provision of old John Messenger's will is the president, or the chairman, or the honorary secretary in fact, the spring and stay and prop of a new and most formidable Union or Association, which threatens, unless it be nipped in the bud, very considerable things of the greatest importance to the country. It is, in fact, a League of Workingmen for the promotion and advancement of their own interests. Its prospectus sets forth that, having looked in vain among the candidates for the House of Commons for any representative who had been in the past, or was likely to be in the future, of the slightest use to them in the House; having found that neither Con-

servatives, nor Liberals, nor Radicals have ever been, or are ever likely to be, prepared with any real measure which should in the least concern themselves and their own wants; and fully recognizing the fact that in the debates of the House the interests of labor and the duties of Government toward the laboring classes are never recognized or understood—the workmen of the country hereby form themselves into a General League or Union, which shall have no other object whatever than the study of their own rights and interests. The question of wages will be left to the different unions, except in such cases where there is no union, or where the men are inarticulate (as in the leading case, now some ten years old, of the gas stokers), through ignorance and drink. And the immediate questions before the union will be, first, the dwelling houses of the workmen, which are to be made clean, safe, and healthy; next, their food and drink, which are to be unadulterated, pure and genuine, and are to pass through no more hands than are necessary, and to be distributed at the actual cost price without the intervention of small shops; next, instruction, for which purpose the workmen will elect their own school boards, and burn all the foolish reading books at present in use, and abolish spelling as a part of education, and teach the things necessary for all trades; next, clothing, which will be made for them by their own men working for themselves, without troubling the employers of labor at all; next, a newspaper of their own, which will refuse any place to political agitators, leaders, partisans, and professional talkers, and be devoted to the questions which really concern workingmen, and especially the question of how best to employ the power which is in their hands, and report continually what is doing, what must be done, and how it must be done. And lastly, emigration, so that in every family, it shall be considered necessary for some to go, and the whole country shall be mapped out into districts, and only a certain number be allowed to remain.

Now, the world being so small as it is, and Englishmen and Scotchmen being so masterful that they must needs go straight to the front and stay there, it can not but happen that the world will presently—that is, in two generations, or three at the most—be overrun with the good old English blood; whereupon till the round earth gets too small, which will not happen for another ten thousand years or so, there will be the purest, most delightful, and most heavenly Millennium. Rich people may come into it if they please, but they will not be wanted: in fact, rich people will die out, and it will soon come to be considered an unhappy thing, as it undoubtedly is, to be born rich.

'Whose daughters ye are,' concluded the curate, closing his book, 'as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.'

(To be Continued.)

POOR, MAD KING OTTO!

His Lot Infinitely Worse Than That of His Meanest Subject.

Rumors that the mad King of Bavaria is failing rapidly in physical health have directed attention recently on the Continent to the habits and misfortunes of this most pitiable of European sovereigns. The violence of his insanity and its curious manifestations are being discussed at length by dailies outside of Germany, and all the details of his wild, dark life are being laid bare with relentlessly painstaking care.

King Otto, of Bavaria, is the brother of King Louis of Bavaria, who drowned himself several years ago. He is of the same remarkable physical development as his brother, tall and broad and muscular, with a tremendous reach of arm and an immense stride. His hair is long, shaggy, and uncombed. His unkempt beard reaches below his waist. He dresses in black broadcloth, of which he gets a new suit every week, for he has such a strong idiosyncrasy against napkins and towels and handkerchiefs that he refuses to carry or use any of them, and makes his coat tails and sleeves do for all three. Only occasionally, when his 60-year old nurse, Mme. Marie, approaches him, does a gleam of intelligence cross his blurred features. Sometimes he devotes hours to disjointed discussions of all sorts of questions with purely imaginary persons. He then gesticulates furiously, and often becomes beside himself with rage over the suppositions obtuseness of his opponent. Twice weekly he sinks into a state of almost unbroken lethargy. During such a fit he smokes cigarettes constantly, sometimes as many as a hundred a day. With every cigarette he uses a whole box of matches, for, having lighted his cigarette, he carefully sets off with the match all the matches.

All the doors of the magnificent apartments of the crazy monarch are on the ground floor, and the doors in them are always kept wide open, because a closed door throws the king into the wildest fury. He throws himself on the floor with all violence, and without touching knob or latch beats it with his fist and head, and finally falls on the floor before it in a fit. The King refuses to go near water, even for the purpose of bathing. He is terrified by the sight of an open carriage, and cannot by any means be persuaded to enter one for a drive. At table King Otto eats pretty much as other high-born Germans do. He consumes vast quantities of champagne and speaks during the meal only to shout for more wine.