

LADY BOUNTIFUL.

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

CHAPTER XLIII.

OH, MY PROPHETIC SOUL!

Harry thought nothing about the papers which were found among the notes that evening, because he was wholly engaged in the contemplation of a man who had suddenly gone back thirty-five years in his life. The gray hairs, thin at the top and gone at the temples, were not, it is true, replaced by the curly brown locks of youth, though one thinks that Josephus must always have been a straight-haired young man. But it was remarkable to hear that man of fifty-five talking as if the years had rolled backward, and he could take up the thread of life where he had dropped it so long ago. He spoke of his evening lectures and his Sunday school with the enthusiasm of a boy. He would study—work of that sort always paid: he would prepare his lessons for the school beforehand, and stand well with the superintendent; it was good for men in business offices, he said, to have a good character with the superintendent. Above all, he would learn French and book-keeping, with mensuration, gauging, and astronomy, at the Beaumont Institute. All these things would come in useful, some time or other, at the Brewery; besides, it helps a man to be considered studious in his habits. He became, in fact, in imagination a young man once more. And because in the old days, when he had a character to earn, he did not smoke tobacco, so now he forgot that former solace of the day, his evening pipe.

'The Brewery,' he said, 'is a splendid thing to get into. You can rise; you may become—ah! even chief accountant; you may look forward to draw over a thousand a year at the Brewery, if you are steady and well conducted, and get a good name. It is not every one, mind you, gets the chance of such a service. And once in, always in. That's the pride of the Brewery. No turning out; there you stay, with your salary always rising, till you die.'

In the morning, the exultation of spirits was exchanged for a corresponding depression. Josephus went to the Brewery, knowing that he should sit on that old seat of his no longer.

He went to look at it: the wooden stool was worn black; the desk was worn black; he knew every cut and scratch in the lid at which he had written so many years. There were all the books at which he had worked so long; not hard work, nor work requiring thought, but simple entering and ticking off of names, which a man can do mechanically—on summer afternoons, with the window open and an occasional bee buzzing in from Hainault Forest, and the sweet smell of vats and the drowsy rolling of machinery—one can do the work half asleep and never make a mistake. Now he would have to undertake some different kind of work, more responsible work: he would have to order and direct: he would have a chair instead of a stool, and a table instead of a desk. So that he began to wish that he had in the old days gone further in his studies—but he was always slow at learning—before the accident happened, and to wonder if anything at all remained of the knowledge he had then painfully acquired after all these years.

As a matter of fact, nothing remained. Josephus had become perfectly, delightfully, inconceivably stupid. He had forgotten everything, and could not learn no new thing. Pending the decision of Miss Messenger, to whom the case was referred, they tried him with all sorts of simple work—correspondence, answering letters, any of the things which require a little intelligence. Josephus could do nothing. He sat like a helpless boy and looked at the documents. Then they let him alone, and for awhile he came every day, sat all day long, half asleep, and did nothing, and was much less happy than when he had been kept at work from nine o'clock in the morning till six o'clock at night.

When Harry remembered the packet of papers placed in his hand—which was on the following morning—he read them. And the effect of his reading was that he did not go to work that morning at all.

He was not a lawyer, and the principal paper was a legal instrument, the meaning of which it took him some little time to make out.

'Hum—hum—um—why can't they write plain English? I give to my said trustees, John Skelton and Benjamin Bunker, the three freehold houses as follows: that called No. 29 on Stepney Green, 45 in Beaumont Square, and 23 in Redman's Row, upon trust to apply the rents and income of the same as in their absolute discretion they may think fit for the maintenance, education, and benefit of the said Caroline, until she be twenty-one years old, or until she marry, and to invest from time to time the accumulations of such rents and income as

is hereinafter provided, and to apply the same when invested in all respects as I direct concerning the last above-mentioned premises. And when the said Caroline shall attain the age of twenty-one, or marry, I direct my said trustees to pay to her the said rents and income and the income of the accumulation of the same, if any, during her life, by four equal quarterly payments for her sole and separate use, free from the debts and engagements of any husband or husbands she may marry; and I direct that on the death of the said Caroline my said trustees shall hold and stand possessed of all the said premises for such person or persons and in such manner in all respects as the said Caroline shall by deed or will appoint. And in default of such appointment and so far as the same shall not extend upon trust—and so on—and so on.'

Harry read this document with a sense, at first of mystification. Then he read it a second time, and began to understand it.

'The houses,' he said, 'my mother's houses, are hers, free from any debts contracted by her husband; they are vested in trustees for her behalf; she could not sell or part with them. And the trustees were John Skelton and Benjamin Bunker. John Skelton—gone to Abraham's bosom, I suppose. Benjamin Bunker—where will he go? The houses were tied up—settled—entailed.'

He read the document right through for the third time.

'So,' he said, 'The house at No. 29 Stepney Green. That is the house which Bunker calls his own; the house of the Associated Dress-makers; and it's mine—mine.' He clinched his fist and looked dangerous. 'Then the house at 23 Redman's Row, and 45 Beaumont Square. Two more houses. Also mine. And Bunker, the perfidious Bunker, calls them all his own! What shall be done to Bunker?'

'Next,' he went on, after reading the document again, 'Bunker is a fraudulent trustee, and his brother trustee too, unless he has gone dead. Of that there can be no doubt whatever. That virtuous and benevolent Bunker was my mother's trustee—and mine. And he calmly appropriates the trust to his own uses—Uncle Bunker! Uncle Bunker! I knew from the beginning that there was something wrong. First, I thought he had taken a sum of money from Lord Jocelyn. Then I found out that he had got possession of houses in a mysterious manner. And now I find that he was simply the trustee. Wicked Uncle Bunker!

Armed with his precious document, he put on his hat and walked straight off, resolution on his front, toward his uncle's office. He arrived just when Mr. Bunker was about to start on a daily round among his houses. By this frequent visitation he kept up the hearts of his tenants, and taught them the meaning of necessity; so that they put by their money and religiously paid the rent. Else—

'Pray,' said Harry, 'be so good as to take off your hat, and sit down and have five minutes' talk with me.'

'No, sir,' said Bunker, 'I will not. You can go away, do you hear? Be off; let me lock my office and go about my own business.'

'Do take off your hat, my uncle.'

'Go, sir, do you hear?'

'Sit down and let us talk—my honest—trustee!'

Mr. Bunker dropped into a chair. In all the conversations and dramatic scenes made up in his own mind to account for the possession of the houses, it had never occurred to him that the fact of his having been a trustee would come to light. All were dead, except himself, who were concerned in that trust; he had forgotten by this time that there was any deed; by ignoring the trust he simplified, to his own mind, the transfer of the houses; and during all these years he had almost forgotten the obligations of the trust.

'What do you mean?' he stammered.

'Virtuous uncle! I mean that I know all. Do you quite understand me? I mean really and truly all. Yes: all that there is to know—all that you hide away in your own mind and think that no one knows.'

'What—what—what do you know?'

'First, I know which the houses are—I my houses—my mother's houses. The house in Stepney Green that you have let to Miss Kennedy is one; a house in Beaumont Square—do you wish to know the number?—is another; and a house in Redman's Row—and do you want to know the number of that?—is the third. You have collected the rents of those houses and paid those rents to your own account for twenty years and more.'

'Go on. Let us hear what you pretend to know. Suppose they were Caroline's houses, what then?' He spoke with an attempt at

bounce; but he was pale, and his eyes were unsteady.

'This next. These houses, man of probity, were not my mother's property to dispose of as she pleased.'

'Oh! whose were they, then?'

'They were settled upon her and her heirs after her; and the property was placed in the hands of two trustees: yourself, my praiseworthy; and a certain John Skelton, of whom I know nothing. Presumably he is dead.'

Mr. Bunker made no reply at all. But his cheek grew paler.

'Shall I repeat this statement, or is that enough for you?' asked Harry. 'The situation is pretty, perhaps not novel: the heir has gone away, probably never to come back again; the trustee, sole surviving, no doubt receives the rents. Heir comes back. Trustee swears the houses are his own. When the trustee is brought before a court of law and convicted, the judge says that the case is one of peculiar enormity, and must be met by transportation for five-and-twenty years; five—and—twenty—years, my patriarch! think of that, in uniform, and with short hair.'

Mr. Bunker said nothing. But by the agitation of his fingers it was plain that he was thinking a great deal.

'I told you,' cried Harry, 'I warned you, some time ago, that you must now begin to think seriously about handcuffs and prison, and men in blue. The time has come now, when, unless you make restitution of all that you have taken, action will be taken, and you will realize what it is that people think of the fraudulent trustee. Uncle Bunker, my heart bleeds for you.'

'Why did you come here?' asked his uncle, piteously. 'Why did you come here at all? We got on very well without you—very well and comfortable, indeed.'

This seemed a feeble sort of bleat. But, in fact, the Bunker's mind was for the moment prostrated. He had no resistance left.

'I offered you,' he went on, 'twenty-five pounds—to go. I'll double it—there. I'll give you fifty pounds to go, if you'll go at once. So that there will be an end to all this trouble.'

'Consider,' said Harry, 'there's the rent of Miss Kennedy's house—sixty-five pounds a year for that; there's the house in Beaumont Square—fifty for that; and the house in Redman's Row at five-and-twenty at least; come to a hundred and forty pounds a year, which you have drawn, my precious uncle, for twenty-one years at least. That makes, without counting interest, two thousand nine hundred and forty pounds. And you want to buy me off for fifty pounds!'

'Not half the money—not half the money!' his uncle groaned. 'There's repairs and painting—and bad tenants; not half the money.'

'We will say, then,' lightly replied his nephew, as if nine hundred were a trifle, 'we will say two thousand pounds. The heir to that property has come back; he says, "Give me my houses, and give me an account of the discharge of your trust." Now—Harry rose from the table on which he had been sitting—let us have no more bounce; the game is up. I have in my pocket—here,' he tapped his coat-pocket, 'the original deed itself. Do you want to know where it was found? Behind a safe at the Brewery, where it was hidden by your brother-in-law, Bob Coppin, with all the country notes which got Josephus into a mess. As for the date, I will remind you that it was executed about thirty-five years ago, when my mother was still a girl and unmarried, and you had recently married her sister. I have the deed here. What is more, it has been seen by the chief accountant at the Brewery, who gave it me. Bunker, the game is up.'

He moved toward the door.

'Have you anything to say before I go? I am now going straight to a lawyer.'

'What is the—the—lowest—oh! good Lord!—the very lowest figure that you will take to square it? Oh! he merciful; I am a poor man, indeed a very poor man, though they think me warm. Yet I must scrape and save to get along at all.'

'Two thousand,' said Harry.

'Make it fifteen hundred. Oh! fifteen hundred to clear off all scores, and then you can go away out of the place; I could borrow fifteen hundred.'

'Two thousand,' Harry repeated. 'Of course, besides the houses, which are mine.'

'Besides the houses? Never. You may do your worst. You may drag your poor old uncle, now sixty years of age, before the courts, but two thousand besides the houses? Never!'

He banged the floor with his stick, but agitation was betrayed by the nervous tapping of the end upon the oil-cloth which followed the first hasty bang.

'No bounce, if you please.' Harry took out his watch. 'I will give you five minutes to decide; or, if your mind is already made up, I will go and ask advice of a lawyer at once.'

'I can not give you that sum of money,' Bunker declared; 'It is not that I would

not; I would if I could. Business has been bad; sometimes I've spent more than I've made; and what little I've saved I meant always for you—I did, indeed. I said, I will make it up to him. He shall have it back with—'

'One minute gone,' said Harry, relentlessly.

'Oh! this is dreadful. Why, to get fifteen hundred I should have to sell all my little property at a loss! Give more time to consider, only a week or so, just to look round.'

'Three minutes left,' said Harry the hardened.

'Oh! oh! oh!' He burst into tears and weeping of genuine grief, and shame, and rage. 'Oh, that a nephew should be found to persecute his uncle in such a way! Where is your Christian charity? Where is forgiving and remitting?'

'Only two minutes left,' said Harry, unmoved.

'Then Bunker fell upon his knees; he groveled and implored pardon; he offered one house, two houses, and twelve hundred pounds, eighteen hundred pounds.'

'One minute left,' said Harry.

Then he sat down and wiped the tears from his eyes, and in good round terms—in Poplar, Limehouse, Shadwell, Wapping, and Ratcliffe Highway terms—he cursed his nephew, and the houses, and the trust, and all that therein lay, because, before the temptation came, he was an honest man, whereas now he should never be able to look Stepany in the face again.

'Time's up,' said Harry, putting on his hat.

In face of the inevitable, Mr. Bunker showed an immediate change of front. He neither prayed, nor wept, nor swore. He became once more the complete man of business. He left the stool of humiliation, and seated himself on his own Windsor chair before his own table. Here, pen in hand, he seemed as if he were dictating rather than accepting terms.

'Don't go,' he said. 'I accept.'

'Very good,' Harry replied. 'You know what is best for yourself. As for me, I don't want to make more fuss than is necessary. You know the terms?'

'Two thousand down; the three houses; and a complete discharge in full of all claims. Those are the conditions.'

'Yes, those are the conditions.'

'I will draw up the discharge,' said Mr. Bunker, 'and then no more need be any the wiser.'

Harry laughed. This cool and business-like compromise of felony pleased him.

'You may draw it up if you like. But my opinion of your ability is so great, that I shall have to show the document to a solicitor for his approval and admiration.'

Mr. Bunker was disconcerted. He had hoped—that is, thought—he saw his way; but never mind. He quickly recovered and said, with decision:

'Go to Lawyer Pike, in the the Mile End Road.'

'Why? Is the Honorable Pike a friend of yours?'

'No, he isn't; that is why I want you to go to him. Tell him that you and I have long been wishing to clear up these accounts, and that you've agreed to take two thousand with the houses.' Mr. Bunker now seemed chiefly anxious that the late deplorable scene should be at once forgotten and forgiven. 'He said the other day that I was nothing better than a common grinder and oppressor. Now, when he sees what an honorable trustee I am, he will be sorry he said that. You can tell everybody if you like. Why, what is it? Here's my nephew comes home to me and says, Give me my houses. I say, Prove your title. Didn't I say so? How was I to know that he was my nephew? Then the gentleman comes who took him away, and says, He is your long-lost nephew; and I say, Take your houses, young man, with the accumulations of the rent hoarded up for you. Why, you can tell everybody that story.'

'I will leave you to tell it, Bunker, your own way. Everybody will believe that way of telling the story. What is more, I will not go out of my way to contradict it.'

'Very good, then. And on that understanding I withdraw all the harsh things I may have said to you, nephew. And we can be good friends again.'

'Certainly, if you like,' said Harry, and fairly ran away for fear of being called upon to make more concessions.

'It's a terrible blow!'

The old man sat down and wiped his forehead. 'To think of two thousand down! But it might have been much worse. Ah! it might have been very, very much worse. I've done better than I expected, when he said he had the papers. The young man's a fool—a mere fool. The houses let for one hundred and fifty pounds a year, and they have never been empty for six months together; and the outside repairs are a trifle, and I've saved it all every year. Ha! now a hundred and fifty pounds a year for twenty years and more, at compound interest only five per cent., is close on five thousand pounds. I've calculated it out often enough to know. Yes, and I've made five per cent. on it, and sometimes six and seven, and

more, with no losses. It might have been far, far worse. It's come to seven thousand pounds if it's a penny. And to get rid of that awful fear and that devil of a boy with his grins and his sneers at two thousand pounds, why, it's cheap, I call it cheap. As for the houses, I'll get them back, see if I don't.'

(To be Continued.)

John L. Sullivan.

'In all my life I have never seen so magnificent a specimen of muscular development, and indeed I do not think another such man is living today.' That was what Dr. George F. Shradly said to John L. Sullivan a few days ago in the presence of a New York World reporter. It has been said that John had dissipated till he was no longer the man he had been, and not fit for the fight that has been arranged with Jim Corbett. Sullivan had a desire to see what a medical expert's judgment on this point would be, so he asked for a thorough examination from the physician who had watched Garfield's long struggle with death and also attended General Grant in his last illness. The verdict was as above.

It sets one to thinking. Here is perhaps the one perfect or nearly perfect specimen of physical manhood in America. If there is another so nearly perfect in the world his existence is not known. For twelve years or more Sullivan has done about as he pleased in the matter of eating and drinking. Drinking orgies that would have killed other men have been common in his experience. In eating he devours twice as much food as ordinary men, taking just what his appetite dictates, except when in training. Then he straightens up for the time and diets as rigidly as a despotic, till he gets his tremendous thighs and sinews in running order. He is now about thirty years old, yet shows no sign of breaking physically, even with his irregular life. It is a marvel such as modern times has not seen.

Yet this splendid animal, the one perfect specimen of physical manhood in the world, is—a prize fighter. Many a bright schoolboy of twelve is his superior in mental development, though of late years he is able to talk and think more intelligently than formerly, showing that even his brain is capable of a development. Yet he knows when to stop work, and in that respect the prize fighter may give a lesson to the preacher. He says, speaking of his bodily training:

I go on till I feel that I have had enough. Then I stop for awhile, and go on when I feel strong again. I do not believe in violent exercise. A little bag pummeling is better than a good deal of it.

Rope skipping is the best thing to gain wind, he says. If now a man could be who should have such a body as Sullivan and an intellect in proportion, what a glorious creature he would be.

Petroleum for Fuel.

The value of petroleum as fuel in navy work has been signally proved in the full speed trials made at Spezia with the Italian ironclad San Martino, in which both petroleum and coal were used. The maximum speed obtained with coal was 9 miles an hour, while that reached with the oil was 13 miles an hour. Experiments have also been made under the auspices of the English Admiralty with block petroleum in a torpedo boat, the object being to ascertain its actual value as a fuel.

The great objection that experts have hitherto had to liquid petroleum is that it would require specially constructed boilers in which to burn it, which could be provided only at enormous cost, while it would also necessitate the construction of special tanks for storage purposes. It has been found that block petroleum is much more powerful as a heat-giving agent than coal, and it is possible with it to attain a speed averaging over three knots an hour more than would have been attained with ordinary fuel. The discovery of a cheap and effective method of solidifying petroleum will be a prize of such value that many chemists are now engaged in experiments and researches with that object in view. As is well known, the agitation of petroleum with soap produces an emulsion having more or less jellylike consistency. The same result can be brought about by agitating the oil with water and ground saponaria bark.

Chemists have also tried the effects of soaps made from various oils, making the soaps in contact with the petroleum by saponifying a vegetable or animal fat with either caustic soda, sodium, aluminate or sodium silicate. The oils, etc., used embraced linseed, rape, cotton, lard oil, suet, tallow, cocoanut oil and castor oil. The best results were obtained with the last two oils. Sodium aluminate and silicate were found to answer better than caustic soda as saponifiers.

When Judge —, of Bridgeport, was on the bench that broken-backed imp of sin known as Jake, who sells lottery tickets, was brought before him for that offence. He was convicted and in sentencing him his honor said: 'I'll give you the full benefit of the law, Jake, for I have been buying six tickets from you every month for the last ten months and the devil a cent I won.