

LADY BOUNTIFUL.

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

PROLOGUE.

PART II.—Continued.

The young man sat down, but he did not present the appearance of one inclined to talk over the matter calmly.

'In novels,' said Lord Jocelyn, 'it is always the good fortune of young gentlemen brought up in ignorance of their parentage to turn out, when they do discover their origin, the heirs to an illustrious name; I have always admired that in novels. In your case, my poor Harry, the reverse is the case; the distinction ought to console you.'

'Why was I not told before?'

'Because the boyish brain is more open to prejudice than that of the adult; because, among your companions, you certainly would have felt at a disadvantage had you known yourself to be the son of—'

'You always told me,' said Harry, 'that my father was in the army!'

'What do you call a sergeant in a line regiment, then?'

'Oh! of course, but among gentlemen—I mean—among the set with whom I was brought up, to be in the army means to have a commission.'

'Yes; that was my pardonable deception. I thought that you would respect yourself more if you felt that your father, like the fathers of your friends, belonged to the upper class. Now, my dear boy, you will respect yourself just as much, although you know that he was but a sergeant, and a brave fellow who fell at my side in the Indian Mutiny.'

'And my mother?'

'I did not know her; she was dead before I found you out, and took you from your uncle Bunker.'

'Uncle Bunker!' Harry laughed, with a little bitterness. 'Uncle Bunker! Fancy asking one's uncle Bunker to dine at the club! What is he by trade?'

'He is something near a big Brewery, a Brewery Boom, as the Americans say. What he actually is I do not quite know. He lives, if I remember rightly, at a place an immense distance from here, called Stepney.'

'Do you know anything more about my father's family?'

'No! the sergeant was a tall, handsome, well set-up man; but I know nothing about his connections. His name, if that is any help to you, was—in fact—here Lord Jocelyn assumed an air of ingratiating sweetness—'was—Goslett—Goslett; not a bad name, I think, pronounced with perhaps a leaning to an accent on the last syllable. Don't you agree with me, Harry?'

'Oh! yes, it will do. Better than Bunker, and not so good as Le Breton. As for my Christian name, now?'

'There I venture on one small variation.'

'Am I not, then, even Harry?'

'Yes, yes, yes, you are—now; formerly you were Harry without the aitch. It is the custom of the neighborhood in which you were born.'

'I see! If I go back among my own people, I shall be, then, once more 'Harry?'

'Yes; and shout on penny steamers, and brandish pint bottles of stout, and sing along the streets, in simple abandonment to Acadian joy; and trample on flowers; and break pretty things for wantonness; and exercise a rude but effective wit, known among the ancients as *Fescennine*, upon passing ladies; and get drunk o' nights; and walk the streets with a pipe in your mouth. That is what you would be, if you went back, my dear child.'

Harry laughed.

'After all,' he said, 'this is a very difficult position. I can no longer go about pretending anything; I must tell people.'

'Is that absolutely necessary?'

'Quite necessary. It will be a duce of a business, explaining.'

'Shall we tell it to one person, and let him be the town-crier?'

'That, I suppose, would be the best plan; meantime, I could retire, while I made some plans for the future.'

'Perhaps, if you really must tell the truth, it would be well to go out of town for a bit.'

'As for myself,' Harry continued, 'I suppose I shall get over the wrench after a bit. Just for the moment I feel knocked out of time.'

'Keep the secret, then; let it be one between you and me only, Harry; let no one know.'

But he shook his head.

'Everybody must know. Those who refuse to keep up the acquaintance of a private soldier's son—well, then, a non-commissioned officer's son—will probably let me know their decision, some way or other. Those who do not—' he paused.

'Nonsense, boy; who cares nowadays what a man is by birth? Is not this great

city full of people who go anywhere, and are nobody's sons? Look here, and here—he tossed half a dozen cards of invitation across the table—'can you tell me who these people were twenty years ago—or these—or these?'

'No; I do not care in the least who they were. I care only that they shall know who I am; I will not, for my part, pretend to be what I am not.'

'I believe you are right, boy. Let the world laugh if they please, and have done with it.'

Harry began to walk up and down the room; he certainly did not look the kind of a man to give in; to try hiding things away. Quite the contrary. And he laughed—he took to laughing.

'I suppose it will sound comic at first,' he said, 'until people get used to it. Do you know what he turns out to be? That kind of thing: after all, we think too much about what people say—what does it matter what they say or how they say it? If they like to laugh, they can. Who shall be the town-crier?'

'I was thinking,' said Lord Jocelyn, slowly, 'of calling to-day upon Lady Wimbledon.'

The young man laughed, with a little heightening of his color.

'Of course—a very good person, an excellent person, and to-morrow it will be all over London—there are one or two things,' he went on after a moment, 'that I do not understand from the papers which you put into my hands last night.'

'What are those things?' Lord Jocelyn for a moment looked uneasy.

'Well—perhaps it is impertinent to ask. But—when Mr. Bunker, the respectable Uncle Bunker, traded me away, what did he get for me?'

'Every bargain has two sides,' said Lord Jocelyn. 'You know what I got, you want to know what the honorable Bunker got. Harry, on that point I must refer you to the gentleman himself.'

'Very good. Then I come to the next difficulty—a staggerer. What did you do it for? One moment, sir—for Lord Jocelyn seemed about to reply—one moment. You were rich, you were well born, you were young. What on earth made you pick a boy out of the gutter and bring him up like a gentleman?'

'You are twenty-three, Harry, and yet you look for motives. My dear boy, have you not learned the golden rule? In all human actions look for the basest motive, and attribute that. If you see any reason for stopping short of quite the lowest spur to action, such as revenge, hatred, malice, and envy, suppose the next lowest, and you will be quite safe. That next lowest is—son *altesse*, *ma vanite*.'

'Oh!' replied Harry, 'yet I fail to see how a child of the lowest classes could supply any satisfaction for even the next lowest of human motives.'

'It was partly in this way. Mind, I do not for one moment pretend to answer the whole of your question. Men's motives, thank Heaven, are so mixed up, that no one can be quite a saint, while no one is altogether a sinner. Nature is a leveler, which is a comfort to us who are born in leveling times. In those days I was by way of being a kind of Radical. Not a Radical such as those who delight mankind in these happier days. But I had Liberal leanings, and thought I had ideas. When I was a boy of twelve or so, there were the '48 theories floating about the air; some of them got into my brain and stuck there. Men used to believe that a great time was coming—perhaps I heard a whisper of it; perhaps I was endowed with a greater faculty for credulity than my neighbors, and believed in humanity. However, I do not seek to explain. It may have occurred to me—I do not say it did—but I have a kind of recollection as if it did—one day after I had seen you, then in the custody of the respectable Bunker, that it would be an instructive and humorous thing to take a boy of the multitude and bring him up in all the culture, the tastes, the ideas of ourselves—you and me, for instance, Harry. This idea may have seized upon me, so that the more I thought of it, the better pleased I was with it. I may have pictured such a boy so taught, so brought up, with such tastes, returning to his own people. Disgust, I may have said, will make him a prophet; and such a prophet as the world has never yet seen. He would be like the follower of the Old Man of the Mountain. He would never cease to dream of the paradise he had seen; he would never cease to tell of it; he would be always leading his friends upward to the same levels on which he had once stood.'

'Humph!' said Harry.

'Yes, I know,' Lord Jocelyn went on. 'I ought to have foretold that the education I

prepared for you would have unfitted you for the role of prophet. I am not disappointed in you, Harry—quite the reverse. I now see that what has happened has been only what I should have expected. By some remarkable accident, you possess an appearance such as is generally believed to belong to persons of long continued gentle descent. By a still more remarkable accident, all your tastes prove to be those of the cultured classes; the blood of the Bunkers has, in yourself, assumed the most azure hue.'

'That is very odd,' said Harry.

'It is a very remarkable thing, indeed,' continued Lord Jocelyn, gravely. 'I have never ceased to wonder at this phenomenon. However, I was unable to send you to a public school on account of the necessity, as I thought of concealing your parentage. But I gave you instruction of the best, and found for you companions—as you know, among the—'

'Yes,' said Harry. 'My companions were gentlemen, I suppose; I learned from them.'

'Perhaps. Still, the earthenware pot can not become a brass pot, whatever he may pretend. You were good metal from the beginning. You are now, Harry,' he went on, 'three-and-twenty. You are master of three foreign languages; you have traveled on the Continent and in America; you are a good rider, a good shot, a good fencer, a good dancer. You can paint a little, fiddle a little, dance a great deal, act pretty well, speak pretty well; you can, I dare say, make love as becomes a gentleman; you can write very fair verses; you are good-looking; you have the air noble; you are not a prig; you are not an aesthete; you possess your share of common sense.'

'One thing you have omitted which, at the present juncture, may be more useful than any of these things.'

'What is that?'

'You were good enough to give me a lathe, and to have me instructed in the mysteries of turning. I am a practical cabinet-maker, if need be.'

'But why should this be of use to you?'

'Because, Lord Jocelyn—Harry ran and leaned over the table with a sweet smile of determination on his face—'because I am going back to my people for awhile, and it may be that the trade of cabinet-making may prove a very backbone of strength to me among them—'

'Harry—you would not—indeed, you could not go back to Bunker?' Lord Jocelyn asked this question with every outward appearance of genuine alarm.

'I certainly would. My very kind guardian and patron, would you stand in my way? I want to see those people from where I am sprung; I want to learn how they differ from you and your kin. I must compare myself with them—I must prove the brotherhood of humanity.'

'You will go? Yes—I see you will—it is in your eyes. Go, then, Harry. But return to me soon. The slender fortune of a younger son shall be shared with you so long as I live, and given to you when I die. Do not stay among them. There are, indeed—at least, I suppose so—all sorts and conditions of men. But to me, and to men brought up like you and me, I do not understand how there can be any but one sort and one condition. Come back soon, boy. Believe me—no—do not believe me—prove it yourself; in the social pyramid, the greatest happiness, Harry, lies near the top.'

END OF THE PROLOGUE.

CHAPTER I.

NEWS FOR HIS LORDSHIP.

'I have news for your lordship,' said Mrs. Bormalack, at the breakfast-table, 'something that will cheer you up a bit. We are to have an addition to our family.'

His lordship nodded his head, meaning that he would receive her news without more delay than was necessary, but that at present his mind was wholly occupied with a contest between one of his teeth and a crust. The tooth was an outlying one, all its lovely companions having withered and gone, and it was undefended; the crust was unyielding. For the moment no one could tell what might be the result.

Her ladyship replied for him.

Lady Davenant was a small woman, if you go by inches; her exalted rank gave her, however, a dignity designed for very much larger persons; yet she carried it with ease. She was by no means young, and her hair was thin as well as gray; her face, which was oval and delicately curved, might formerly have been beautiful; the eyes were bright and eager, and constantly in motion, as is often the case with restless and nervous persons; her lips were thin and as full of independent action as her eyes; she had thin hands, so small that they might have belonged to a child of eight, when inclined for vaulting, the narrowest and most sloping shoulders that ever were seen, so sloping that people unaccustomed to her were wont to tremble lest the whole of her dress should suddenly slide straight down those shoulders, as down steps of ice; and strange ladies impelled by this apprehension, had been known to ask her in a friendly whisper if

she could thoroughly depend upon the pins at her throat. As Mrs. Bormalack often said, speaking of her noble boarders among her friends, those shoulders of her ladyship were Quite a Feature. Next to the pride of having at her table such guests—who, however, did not give in to the good old English custom of paying double prices for having a title—was the distinction of pointing to those unique shoulders and of talking about them.

Her ladyship had a shrill, reedy voice, and spoke loudly. It was remarked by the most superficial observer, moreover, that she possessed a very strong American accent.

'At our first boarding-house,' she said, replying indirectly to the landlady's remark, 'at our first boarding-house, which was in Wellclose Square, next to the Board Schools, there was a man who once actually slapped his lordship on the back. And then he laughed! To be sure, he was only a Dane, but the disrespect was just the same.'

'My dear,' said his lordship, who now spoke, having compromised matters with the crust, 'the ignominy of being slapped on the back by a powerful sea-captain is hardly to be weighed in comparison with the physical pain it causes.'

'We are quite sure, however, Mrs. Bormalack,' the lady went on, 'that you will admit none under your roof but those prepared to respect rank; we want no levelers or mischievous Radicals for our companions.'

'It is to be a young lady,' said Mrs. Bormalack.

'Young ladies, at all events, do not slap gentlemen on the back, whether they are noblemen or not,' said his lordship, kindly. 'We shall be happy to welcome her, ma'am.'

This ornament of the Upper House was a big, fat man, with a face like a full moon. His features were not distinctly aristocratic; his cheeks were flabby and his nose broad; also he had a double chin. His long hair was a soft, creamy white, the kind of white which in old age follows a manhood of red hair. He sat in an arm-chair at the head of the table, with his elbows on the arms, as if he desired to get as much rest out of the chair as possible. His eyes were very soft and dreamy; his expression was that of a man who has been accustomed to live in the quieter parts of the world. He, too, spoke with a marked American accent and with slowness, as if measuring his words, and appreciating himself their importance. The dignity of his manner was not wholly due to his position, but in great measure his former profession. For his lordship had not always rejoiced in his present dignity, nor, in fact, had he been brought up to it. Persons intending to become peers of Great Britain do not, as a rule, first spend more than forty years as school-masters in their native town. And just as clergymen, and especially young clergymen, love to talk loud, because it makes people remember that they are in the presence of those whose wisdom demands attention, so old school-masters speak slowly because their words—even the lightest, which are usually pretty heavy—have got to, under penalties.

As soon, however, as he began to 'enjoy the title,' the ex-school-master addressed himself with some care to the cultivation of a manner which he thought due to his position. It was certainly pompous; it was intended to be affable; it was natural, because he was a man of a most kind disposition and an excellent heart, courteous and considerate.

'I am rejoiced, Mrs. Bormalack,' he went on, grandly, and with a bow, 'that we are to be cheered in our domestic circle by the addition of a young lady. It is an additional proof, if any were needed, of the care with which you consider the happiness of your guests.' The professor, who owed for five weeks, murmured that no one felt it more than himself. 'Sometimes, ma'am, I own that even with the delightful society of yourself' ('Oh, my lord, your lordship is too kind,' said Mrs. Bormalack) 'and of the accomplished professor'—here he bowed to the professor, who nodded and spread out his hands professionally, 'and of the learned Mr. Daniel Fagg'—here he bowed to Mr. Fagg, who took no notice at all, because he was thinking of his triangles and was gazing straight before him—and of Mr. Josephus Coppin'—here he bowed to Josephus Coppin, who humbly inclined his head without a smile, 'and of Mr. Maliphant'—here he bowed to Mr. Maliphant, who with a breakfast-knife was trying to make a knobly crust assume the shape of a human head, in fact, the head of Mr. Gladstone, and of Mr. Harry Goslett, who is not with us so much as we could desire of so sprightly a young man; and surrounded as we are by all the gaiety and dissipation and splendor of London, I sometimes suspect that we are not always so cheerful as we might be.'

'Give me,' said his wife, folding her little hands, and looking round her with a warlike expression, as if inviting contradiction, 'give me Canaan City, New Hampshire, for gaiety.'

Nobody combated this position, nor did anybody reply at all, unless the pantomime of the professor was intended for a reply by gesture, like the learned Thaumast. For

with precision and abstracted air, he rolled up a little ball of bread, about as big as a marble, placed it in the palm of his left hand, closed his fingers upon it, and then opened them, showing that the ball had vanished. Then he executed the slightest possible shrug of his shoulders, spread out his hands, and nodded to his lordship, saying, with a sweet smile:

'Pretty thing, isn't it?'

'I hope, sir, that she will be pretty,' said his lordship, thinking of the young lady. 'To look at a pretty face is as good as a day of sunshine.'

'She is a beautiful girl,' Mrs. Bormalack replied with enthusiasm, 'and I am sure she must be as good as she is pretty; because, she paid three months in advance. With a piano, too, which she will play herself. She is a dress-maker by trade, and she wants to set herself up in a genteel way. And she's got a little money, she says; a sweet smile crossed her face as she thought that most of this little money would come into her own pocket.'

'A dress-maker!' cried her ladyship. 'Do tell! I was in that line myself before I was married. That was long before we began to enjoy the title. You don't know, ma'am'—here she dropped her voice—'you don't know how remarkably fond his lordship is of a pretty face; choice with them, too. Not every face pleases him. Oh! you wouldn't believe how particular. Which shows his aristocratic descent; because we all know what his ancestors were.'

'To be sure,' said the landlady, nodding significantly. 'We all know what they were. Rovers to a man—I mean a lord. And as for the young lady, she will be here this evening, in time for tea. Shrimps and Sally Lunn, my lord. And her name is Miss Kennedy. Respectable, if poor; and illustrious ancestors is more than we can all of us have, nor yet deserve.'

Here the professor rose, having finished his breakfast. One might have noticed that he had extremely long and delicate fingers, and that they seemed always in movement; also that he had a way of looking at you as if he meant you to look straight and steady into his eyes, and not to go rolling your eyes about in that frivolous, irresponsible way affected by some people. He walked slowly to the window; then, as if seized with an irresistible impulse to express his feelings in pantomime, or else, it may be, to try an experiment, returned to the table, and asked for the loan of his lordship's handkerchief, which was a large red silk one, well fitted for the purpose. Hew he conveyed a saucer unseen from the table into that handkerchief, and how that saucer got into the nobleman's coat-tail pocket, were things known only to himself. Yet familiarity breeds contempt, and though everybody looked on, nobody expressed delight or astonishment, for this exhibition of magic and spells went on every day, and whenever the professor was among them. He moved about accompanied, so to speak, by a legion of invisible attendants and servants, who conveyed, hid, brought back, uncovered, discovered, recovered, lost, found, rapped, groaned, cried, whistled, sung, moved chairs and tables, and, in fact, behaved as only a troop of well-drilled elves can behave. He was a young man of twenty-five, and he had a great gift of silence. By trade he was a professor of legerdemain. Other professors there are who hold up the light of this science, and hand it down to posterity undimmed; but none with such an ardent love for their work as Professor Climo. For he practiced all day long, except when he was reading the feats of the illustrious conjurers, sorcerers, necromancers, and wizards of old time, or inventing new combinations, traps for the credulous, and contrivances to make that which was not seen like unto that which was. The East End of London is not the richest field for such performers; but he was young, and he lived in hope—very often, when there were no engagements—upon it. At such times he became a simple lodger, instead of a boarder, at Mrs. Bormalack's, and went without any meals.

The situation of this boarding-house, poetically described by his lordship as in the midst of the gaiety of London, was in the far East, in that region of London which is less known to Englishmen than if it were situated in the wildest part of Colorado, or among the pine forests of British Columbia. It stood, in fact, upon Stepney Green, a small strip of Eden which has been visited by few, indeed, of those who do not live in its immediate vicinity. Yet it is a romantic spot.

(To be Continued.)

Bixby (looking up from his paper)—Well, if that isn't disgusting! Here's the German Emperor kissing the Bavarian Prince. If he must kiss some one I don't see why he should kiss a man. Mrs. Bixby—I see nothing wrong in that. I would do it myself.

Progressive Musical Federal Union No. 1623 announces that its former Secretary, Paul Litsche, is no longer authorized to act for the union. Its only authorized business agent is Secretary E. Wildenhain, 85 Fourth street.