

LADY BOUNTIFUL.

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

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"I AM THE DRESS-MAKER."

It happened on this very same Saturday that Lord Jocelyn, feeling a little low, and craving for speech with his ward, resolved that he would pay a personal visit to him in his own den, where no doubt he would find him girt with a fair white apron and crowned with brown paper, proudly standing among a lot of his brother workmen—glorious fellows—and up to his knees in shavings.

It is easy to take a cab and tell the driver to go to the Mile End Road. Had Lord Jocelyn taken more prudent counsel with himself he would have bidden him drive straight to Messenger's Brewery; but he got down where the Whitechapel Road ends and the Mile End Road begins, thinking that he would find his way to the Brewery with the greatest ease. First, however, he asked the way of a lady with basket on her arm; it was, in fact, Mrs. Bormalack going a-marketing, and anxious about the price of greens; and he received a reply so minute, exact, and bewildering, that he felt, as he plunged into the labyrinthine streets of Stepney, like one who dives into the dark and devious ways of the Catacombs.

First of all, of course he lost himself; but as the place was strange to him, and a strange place is always curious, he walked along in great contentment. Nothing remarkable in the streets unless, perhaps, the entire absence of anything to denote inequality of wealth and position, so that, he thought with satisfaction, the happy residents in Stepney all receive the same salaries and make the same income, contribute the same amount to the tax collectors, and pay the same rent. A beautiful continuity of sameness; a divine monotony realizing partially the dreams of the Socialist. Presently he came upon a great building which seemed rapidly approaching completion; not a beautiful building, but solid, big, well-proportioned and constructed of real red brick, and without the 'Queen Anne' conceits which mostly go with that material. It was so large and so well built that it was evidently intended for some special purpose; a purpose of magnitude and responsibility, requiring capital; not a factory, because the windows were large and evidently belonged to great halls, and there were none of the little windows in rows which factories must have in the nature of things; nor a prison, because prisons are parsimonious to a fault in the matter of external windows; nor a school—yet it might be a school; then—how should so great a school be built in Stepney? It might be a superior almshouse, or union—yet this could hardly be. While Lord Jocelyn looked at the building, a workman lounged along, presumably an out-of-work man, with his hands in his pockets and kicking stray stones in the road, which is a sign of the penniless pocket, because he who yet can boast the splendid shilling does not slouch as he goes, or kick stones in the road, but holds his head erect and anticipates with pleasure six half-pints in the immediate future. Lord Jocelyn asked that industrious idler, or idle industrious, if he knew the object of the building. The man replied that he did not know the object of the building; and to make it quite manifest that he really did not know, he put an adjective before the word object, and another—that is the same—before the word building. With that he passed upon his way, and Lord Jocelyn was left marveling at the slender resources of our language which makes one adjective do duty for so many qualifications. Presently he came suddenly upon Stepney Church, which is a landmark or initial point, like the man on the chair in the maze of Hampton Court. Here he asked his way, and then, after finding it and losing it again six times more, and being generally treated with contempt for not knowing so simple a thing, he found himself actually at the gates of the Brewery, which he might have reached in five minutes had he gone the shortest way.

'So,' he said, 'this is the property of that remarkably beautiful girl, Miss Messenger. Who could wish to start better? She is young; she is charming; she is queenly; she is fabulously rich; she is clever; she is—ah! if only Harry had met her before he became an ass!'

He passed the gate and entered the courtyard, at one side of which he saw a door on which was painted the word 'Office.' The Brewery was conservative; what was now a hive of clerks and writers was known by the same name and stood upon the same spot as the little room built by itself in the open court in which King Messenger I., the inventor of the Entire, had transacted by himself, having no clerks at all, the whole business of the infant Brewery for his great invention. Lord Jocelyn pushed open the door and stood irresolute; looking about

him, a clerk advanced and asked his business. Lord Jocelyn was the most polite and considerate of men; he took off his hat humbly bowed, and presented his card.

'I am most sorry to give trouble,' he said. 'I came to see—'

'Certainly, my lord.' The clerk, having been introduced to Lord Davenant, was no longer afraid of tackling a title, however grand, and would have been pleased to show his familiarity with the Great even to a Royal Highness. 'Certainly, my lord. If your lordship be so good as to write your lordship's name in the visitors' book, a guide shall take your lordship round the Brewery immediately.'

'Thank you, I do not wish to see the Brewery,' said the visitor. 'I came to see—a young man who, I believe, works in this establishment; his name is Goslett.'

'Oh!' replied the clerk, taken aback. 'Goslett? Can any one,' he asked, generally of the room he had just left, 'tell me whether there's a man working here named Goslett?'

Josephus—for it was the junior's room—knew and indicated the place and man.

'If, my lord,' said the clerk, loath to separate himself from nobility, 'your lordship will be good enough to follow me, I can take your lordship to the man your lordship wants. Quite a common man, my lord—quite. A joiner and carpenter. But if your lordship wants to see him—'

He led Lord Jocelyn across the court, and left him at the door of Harry's workshop.

It was not a great room with benches, and piles of shavings, and a number of men. Not at all; there were racks with tools, a bench, and a lathe; there were pieces of furniture about waiting repair, there was an unfinished cabinet with delicate carved work, which Lord Jocelyn recognized at once as the handiwork of his boy, and the boy himself stood in the room, his coat off and his cuffs up, contemplating the cabinet. It is one of the privileges of the trade that it allows—nay, requires—a good deal of contemplation. Harry turned his head and saw his guardian standing in the doorway. He greeted him cheerfully, and led him into the room, where he found a chair with four legs and begged him to sit down and talk.

'You like it, Harry?'

Harry laughed. 'Why not?' he said. 'You see I am independent, practically. They pay me pretty well according to the work that comes in. Plain work, you see—joiners' work.'

'Yes, yes, I see. But how long, my boy—how long?'

'Well, sir, I can not say. Why not all my life?'

Lord Jocelyn groaned.

'I admit,' said Harry, 'that if things were different I should have gone back to you long ago. But now I can not, unless—'

'Unless what?'

'Unless the girl who keeps me here goes away herself or bids me go.'

'Then you are really engaged to the dress—I mean—the young lady?'

'No, I am not. Nor has she shown the least sign of accepting me. Yet I am her devoted and humble servant.'

'Is she a witch—this woman? Good heavens, Harry! Can you, who have associated with the most beautiful and best-bred women in the world, be so infatuated about a dress-maker?'

'It is strange, is it not? But it is true. The thought of her fills my mind day and night. I see her constantly. There is never one word of love, but she knows already, without that word.'

'Strange, indeed,' repeated Lord Jocelyn. 'But it will pass. You will awake, and find yourself again in your right mind, Harry.'

He shook his head.

'From this madness,' he said, 'I shall never recover—for it is my life. Whatever happens, I am her servant.'

'It is incomprehensible,' replied his guardian; 'you were always chivalrous in your ideas of women. They are unusual in young men of the present day; but they used to sit well upon you. Then, however, your ideal was a lady.'

'It is a lady still!' said the lover, 'and yet a dress-maker. How this can be, I do not know; but it is. In the old days men became the servants of ladies. I know now what a good custom it was, and how salutary to the men. Petit Jehan de Saintré, in his early days, had the best of all possible training.'

'But if Petit Jehan had lived at Stepney—'

'Then there is another thing—the life here is useful.'

'You now tinker chairs, and get paid a shilling an hour. Formerly, you made dainty, carved work-boxes and fans, and pretty things for ladies, and got paid by

their thanks. Which is the more useful life?'

'It is not the work I am thinking of—it is the— Do you remember what I said the last time I saw you?'

'Perfectly—about your fellow-creatures, was it not? My dear Harry, it seems to me as if our fellow-men get on very well in their own way without our interference.'

'Yes—that is to say, No. They are all getting on as badly as possible; and somehow I want, before I go away, to find out what it is they want. They don't know; and how they should get about getting it—if it is to be got—as I think it is. You will not think me a prig, sir?'

'You will never be a prig, Harry, under any circumstances. Does, then, the lady of your worship approve of this—this study of humanity?'

'Perfectly—if this lady did not approve of it, I should not be engaged upon it.'

'Harry, will you take me to see this goddess of Stepney Green—it is there, I believe, that she resides?'

'Yes; I would rather not. Yet—the young man hesitated for a moment—Miss Kennedy thinks that I have always been a workman. I would not undecieve her yet, I would rather she did not know that I have given up, for her sake, such a man as you, and such companionship as yours.'

He held out both his hands to his guardian, and his eyes for a moment were dim.

Lord Jocelyn made no reply for a moment then he cleared his throat and said he must go; asked Harry rather piteously could he do nothing for him at all, and made slowly for the door. The clerk who received the distinguished visitor was standing at the door of the office, waiting for another glimpse of the noble and illustrious personage. Presently he came back and reported that his lordship had crossed the yard on the arm of young man called Goslett, and that on parting with him he had shaken him by the hand, and called him 'my boy.'

Whereat many marveled, and the thing was a stumbling-block; but Josephus said it was not at all unusual for members of his family to be singled out by the great for high positions of trust; that his own father had been church-warden of Stepney, and he was a far-off cousin of Miss Messenger's; and that he could himself have been by this time superintendent of his Sunday-school if it had not been for his misfortunes. Presently the thing was told to the chief accountant, who told it to the chief brewer; and if there had been a chief baker one knows not what would have happened.

Lord Jocelyn walked slowly away in the direction of Stepney Green. She lived there, did she? Oh, and her name was Miss Kennedy; ah! and a man, by calling upon her, might see her. Very good—he would call. He would say that he was the guardian of Harry, and that he took a warm interest in him; and that the boy was pining away—which was not true; and that he called to know if Miss Kennedy as a friend would divine the cause—which was crafty. Quite a little domestic drama he made up in his own mind, which would have done beautifully had it not been completely shattered by the surprising things which happened, as will immediately be seen.

Presently he arrived at Stepney Green and stopped to look about him. A quiet, George-the-Third-looking place, with many good and solid houses, and a narrow strip of garden down the middle. In which of these houses did Miss Kennedy dwell?

There came along the asphalt walk an old, old man—he was feeble, and tottered as he went. He wore a black silk stock and a buttoned-up frock coat. His face was wrinkled and creased. It was, in fact, Mr. Maliphant going rather late (because he had fallen asleep by the fire) to protect the property.

Lord Jocelyn asked him politely if he would tell him where Miss Kennedy lived.

The patriarch looked up, laughed joyously, and shook his head—then he said something inaudibly, but his lips moved; and then, pointing to a large house on the right, he said aloud:

'Caroline Coppin's house it was—she that married Sergeant Goslett. Mr. Messenger, whose grandmother was a Coppin, and a good old Whitechapel family, had the deeds. My memory is not so good as usual this morning, young man, or I could tell you who had the house before Caroline's father; but I think it was old Mr. Messenger, because the young man who died the other day, and was only a year or two older than me, was born there himself.' Then he went on his way, laughing and wagging his head.

'That is a wonderful old man,' said Lord Jocelyn. 'Caroline Coppin's house—that is Harry's mother's house. Pity she couldn't keep it for her son—the sergeant was a thrifty man, too. Here is another native—let us try him.'

This time it was Daniel Fagg, and in one of his despondent moods, because none of the promised proofs had arrived.

'Can you tell me, sir,' asked Lord Jocelyn, 'where Miss Kennedy lives?'

'The 'native,' who had sandy hair and a gray beard, and immense sandy eyebrows,

turned upon him fiercely, shaking a long finger in his face, as if it was a sword.

'Mind you,' he growled, 'Miss Kennedy's the only man among you! You talk of your scholars! Gar!—jealousy and envy. But I've remembered her—posterity shall know her when the Head of the Egyptian Department is dead and forgotten.'

'Thank you,' said Lord Jocelyn, as the man left him. 'I am likely to be forwarded at this rate.'

He tried again.

This time it happened to be none other than Mr. Bunker. The events of the last few weeks were praying upon his mind—he thought continually of handcuffs and prisons. He was nervous and agitated.

But he replied courteously, and pointed out the house.

'Ah!' said Lord Jocelyn, 'that is the house which an old man, whom I have just asked, said was Caroline Coppin's.'

'Old man—what old man?' Mr. Bunker turned pale; it seemed as if the atmosphere itself was full of dangers. 'Ouse was whose? That 'ouse, sir, is mine—mine, do you hear?'

Lord Jocelyn described the old man—in fact, he was yet within sight.

'I know him,' said Mr. Bunker. 'He's mad, that old man—silly with age; nobody minds him. That 'ouse, sir, is mine.'

'Ah! And you,' for Lord Jocelyn now recollected him, 'are Mr. Bunker, are you? Do you remember me? Think, man.'

Mr. Bunker thought his hardest; but if you do not remember a man, you might as well stand on your head as begin to think.

'Twenty years ago,' said Lord Jocelyn, 'I took away your nephew, who has now come back here.'

'You did, you did,' cried Bunker, eagerly. 'Ah, sir, why did you let him come back here? A bad business—a bad business.'

'I came to see him to-day, perhaps to ask him why he stays here.'

'Take him away again, sir—don't let him stay. Rocks ahead, sir!' Mr. Bunker put up hands in warning. 'When I see youth going to capsize on virtue it makes my blood, as a Christian man, to curdle. Take him away.'

'Certainly it does you great credit, Mr. Bunker, as a Christian man; because curdled blood must be unpleasant. But what rocks?'

'A rock—one rock, a woman. In that 'ouse, sir, she lives; her name is Miss Kennedy—that is what she calls herself. She's a dress-maker by trade, she says; and a captivator of foolish young men by nature—don't you go anigh her. She may captivate you, Daniel Fagg made her an offer of marriage, and he's sixty. He confessed it to me. She tried it on with me; but a man of principles is proof. The conjurer wanted to marry her. My nephew, Dick Coppin, is a fool about her.'

'She must be a very remarkable woman,' said Lord Jocelyn.

'As for that boy, Harry Goslett—Bunker uttered the name with an obvious effort—he's further gone than all the rest put together. If it wasn't for her, he would go back to where he came from.'

'Ah! and where is that?'

'Don't you know, then? You, the man who took him away? Don't you know where he came from? Was it something very bad?'

There was a look of eager malignity about the man's face—he wanted to hear something bad about his nephew.

Lord Jocelyn encouraged him.

'Perhaps I know—perhaps I do not.'

'A disgraceful story, no doubt,' said Bunker, with a pleased smile. 'I dreaded the worst when I saw him with his white hands, and his sneerin', flierin' ways. I thought of Newgate and jail-birds—I did, indeed, at once. Oh! prophetic soul. Well, now we know the worst, and you had better take him away before all the world knows it. I sha'n't talk, of course.'

'Thank you Mr. Bunker; and about Miss Kennedy, is there anything against her except that the men fall in love with her?'

'There is plenty against her; but I'm not the man to take away a woman's character. Reports are about her that would astonish you. If all secrets were known, we should find what a viper we've been cherishing. At the end of her year out she goes of my 'ouse—bag and baggage, she goes; and wherever she goes, that boy'll go after her unless you prevent it.'

'Thank you again, Mr. Bunker. Good-morning.'

Angela, just returned from her chapel, was sitting at the window of her work-room, in her usual place; she looked upon the green now and again.

Presently she saw Mr. Maliphant creep slowly along the pavement, and observed that he stopped and spoke to a gentleman. Then she saw Daniel Fagg swinging his arms and gestulating, as he rehearsed to himself the story of his wrongs, and he stopped and spoke to the same man. Then she saw Mr. Bunker walking moodily on his way, and he stopped, too, and conversed with the stranger. Then he turned, and she saw his face.

It was Lord Jocelyn Le Breton, and he was walking with intention toward her own door!

She divined the truth in a moment—he was coming to see the 'dress-maker' who had bewitched his boy.

She whispered to Nelly that a gentleman was coming to see her who must be shown upstairs. She took refuge in the drawing-room, which was happily empty; and she awaited him with a beating heart.

She heard his footsteps on the stairs—the door opened. She rose to meet him.

'You here, Miss Messenger! This is, indeed, a surprise.'

'No, Lord Jocelyn,' she replied, confused, yet trying to speak confidently; 'in this house, if you please, I am not Miss Messenger. I am Miss Kennedy, the—the—'

Now she remembered exactly what her next words would mean to him, and she blushed violently. 'I am the—the dress-maker.'

(To be Continued.)

SOCIAL AWAKENING IN LONDON.

Efforts of the County Council and Individuals on Behalf of the Poor.

Scribner's Magazine has made arrangements for the publication of a series of articles on the poor in great cities, to be written by careful investigators and social students in Europe and America. The first of the series appeared in the April number of the magazine. It is entitled "The Social Awakening in London," and is from the pen of Robert A. Woods. The article, with illustrations, fills over twenty pages of the magazine. Following is an extract which will give an idea of its nature:

The variety of social work in London is, it is true almost endless, and each department has but little relation with the others; yet it would be far from the truth to represent the general social situation as being a mere confused mass of expedients, of turning hither and thither. In fact every year shows in metropolitan life a marked increase in the aggregate result of philanthropic and industrial movements. It is certainly a new and remarkable exhibition of the English power of achievement that, notwithstanding the vastness of the problem and its intangibility and the plausible claims of superficial reform, the steady impulse from the beginning on nearly every side should have been toward attacking the problem at its center, and toward devising broader plans of remedy as rapidly as the working out of any actual results could suggest them.

The governing bodies of London are showing themselves ready to undertake large social schemes based upon previous approved experiments. The county council, by its fair way of treating men working under it, has established a "moral minimum" for wages and a "moral maximum" for hours. It has greatly developed the "lungs" of London—the parks, open spaces and playing fields. In the way of new kinds of municipal administration the council has in charge a very large building enterprise in Bethnal Green, for model tenement houses which shall accommodate several thousands of people, and it has recently voted to assume control of one of the leading tramway lines. The school board requires all of its contractors to comply with trades union conditions as to wages and the length of the working day, and provides dinners for ill-fed children at the schools.

The extensive investments of private capital, for the sake of improving the housing of the working people, have resulted in completely wiping out many unsanitary and criminal quarters. In nearly every part of London one now sees great model tenement houses, constructed after the most recent patterns and sometimes with much architectural beauty. The buildings give a return of 4 or 5 per cent. on the capital. The coffee houses of London, besides being one of the best of temperance measures, have proved advantageous business investments. Even the newest form of people's cafe, tea-toms, are conducted so that expenses are covered. These unique institutions are the creation of Mr. P. R. Buchanan. They combine the features of a coffee house, supplying a variety of good food and non-alcoholic drinks, with those of a club, having numerous facilities for improvement and recreation. The patrons of each tea-to-tum are organized by skilled social workers, who direct their amusement. Mr. Buchanan well illustrates the new type of man now coming forward in England who, with intelligence, means and energy, shall devote himself and his possessions to working out plans for widening the circuit of life for the toiling majority of his countrymen.

Of this same fine public spirit is Mr. Charles Booth, a wealthy merchant, who at the time when feeling was highest went alone to the East End and took lodgings for the sake of making a careful study of the whole situation. Enlisting the aid of some able young students of economics and engaging a regular staff of clerks, he began his great work, in which he is putting together a most painstaking, unbiased and lucid account of the labor and life of the people of London