

LADY BOUNTIFUL.

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

CHAPTER XXXV.

"THEN WE'LL KEEP COMPANY."

After the celebrated debate on the abolition of the Lords, Dick Coppin found that he took for the moment a greatly diminished interest in burning political questions. He lost, in fact, confidence in himself, and went about with hanging head. The Sunday evening meetings were held as usual, but the fiery voice of Dick the Radical was silent, and people wondered. This was the effect of his cousin's address upon him. As for the people, it had made them laugh, just as Dick's had made them angry. They came to the Hall to get these little emotions, and not for any personal or critical interest in the matter discussed; and this was about all the effect produced by them.

One evening the old Chartist who had taken the chair met Dick at the Club. 'Come out,' he said, 'come out and have a crack while the boys wrangle.'

They walked from Redman's Lane, where the Club stood, to the quiet side pavement of Stepney Green, deserted now because the respectable people were all in church; and it was too cold for the more numerous class of those who can not call themselves respectable. The ex-Chartist belonged (like Daniel Fagg) to the shoemaking trade in its humbler lines. The connection between leather and Socialism, Chartism, Radicalism, Atheism, and other things detrimental to old institutions, has frequently been pointed out, and need not be repeated. It is a reflecting trade, and the results of meditation are mainly influenced by the amount of knowledge the meditations bring with it. In this respect the Chartist of thirty years ago had a great advantage over his successors of the present day, for he had read. He knew the works of Owen, of Holyoake, and of Cobbett. He understood something of what he wanted, and why he wanted it. The proof of which is that they have got all they wanted, and we still survive.

When next the people make up their minds that they want another set of things they will probably get them, too.

'Let us talk,' he said. 'I've been thinking a bit about that chap's speech the other night—I wanted an answer to it.'

'Have you got one?'

'It's all true what he said—first of all, it's true. The pinch is just the same. Whether the Liberals are in or the Tories, Government don't help us. Why should we help them?'

'Is that all your answer?'

'Wait a bit, lad—don't hurry a man. The chap was right. We ought to co-operate and get all he said, and a deal more; and once we do begin, mind you, there'll be astonishment—because you see, Dick, my lad, there's work before us. But we must be educated—we must all be got to see what we can do if we like. That's chap's clever now, though he looks like a swell.'

'He's got plenty in him. But he'll never be one of us.'

'If we can use him, what matter whether he is one of us or not? Come to that—who is 'us'? You don't pretend before me that you call yourself one of the common workmen, do you? That does for the Club; but, between ourselves, why, man! you and me, we're leaders. We've got to think if for 'em. What I think is—make that chap draw up a plan, if he can, for getting the people to work together—for we've got all the power at last, Dick. We've got all the power. Don't forget when we old 'uns are dead and gone who done it for you.'

He was silent for a moment. Then he went on:

'We've got what we wanted—that's true; and we seem to be no better off—that's true, too. But we are better off, because we feel that every man has his share in the rule of the nation. That's a grand thing. We are not kept out of our vote—we don't see, as we used to see, our money spent for us without having a say. That's a very grand thing, which he doesn't understand, nor you neither, because you are too young. Every-thing we get, which makes us feel our power more, is good for us. The chap was right; but he was wrong as well. Don't give up politics, lad.'

'What's the good if nothing comes?'

'There's a chance now for the working-man, such as he has never had before in history. You are the lad to take that chance. I've watched you, Dick, since you first began to come to the Club—there's life in you, Lord! I watch the young fellows one after the other. They stamp and froth, but it comes to nothing. You're different—you want to be something better than a bellows; though your speech the other night came pretty high to the bellows kind.'

'Well, what is the chance?'

'The House, Dick. The workingmen will send you there, if you can show them that you've got something in you. It isn't

froth they want—it's a practical man, with knowledge. You go on reading, go on speaking, go on debating. Keep it up. Get your name known; don't demean yourself. Get reported, and learn all that there is to learn. Once in the House, Dick, if you are not afraid—'

'I shall not be afraid.'

'Humph! Well, we shall see. Well, there's your chance. A workingman's candidate—one of ourselves. That's a card for you to play; but not so ignorant as your mates. Eh? Able—if you want—to use the swell's sneerin' talk—so's to call a man a liar, without sayin' the words. To make him feel like a fool and a whipped cur, with just showing your white teeth! Learn them ways, Dick—they'll be useful.'

'But if'—said the young man, doubtfully—'if I am to keep on debating, what subjects shall we take up at the Club?'

'I should go in for practical subjects. Say that the Club is ready to vote for the abolition of the Lords and the Church, and reform of the Land Laws when the time comes. You haven't got the choice of subjects that we had. Lord! what with rotten boroughs and the black Book of Pensions, and younger sons, and favoritism in the service, why our hands were full.'

'What practical subjects?'

'Why, them as your cousin talked about. There's the wages of the girls—there's food and fish and drink. There's high rent—there's a world of subjects. You go, and find out all about them. Give up the rest for a spell, and make yourself master of all these questions. If you do, Dick, I believe your fortune is made.'

Dick looked doubtful—it seemed disheartening to be sent back to the paltry matter of wages, prices, and so on, when he was burning to lead in something great. Yet the advice was sound.

'Sometimes I think, Dick,' the old man went on, 'that the workingman's best friend would be the swells, if they could be got hold of. They've got nothing to make out of the artisan. They don't run factories, nor keep shops. They don't care, bless you, how high his wages are. Why should they? They've got their farmers to pay the rent; and their houses, and their money in the Funds. What does it matter to them? They're well brought up, most of them—civil in their manner, and disposed to be friendly if you're neither stand-offish nor familiar; but know yourself, and talk accordin'.'

'If the swells were to come to us, we ought to go to them—remember that, Dick. Very soon there will be no more questions of Tory and Liberal; but only what is the best thing for us. You play your game by the newest rules. As for the old ones, they've seen their day.'

Dick left him; but he did not return to the Club. He communed beneath the stars, turning over these and other matters in his mind.

'Yes, the old man was right. The old indignation times were over. The long list of crimes which the political agitator could bring against King, Church, Lords, and Commons thirty, forty, fifty years ago are useless now. They only serve to amuse an audience not to criticize.'

He was ashamed of what he had himself said about the Lords. Such charges are like the oratory of an ex-Minister on the stump—finding no accusation to reckless to be hurled against his enemies.

He was profoundly ambitious. To some men, situated like himself, it might have been a legitimate and sufficient ambition to recover by slow degrees and thrift, and in some trading way, the place in the middle class from which the Coppins had fallen. Not so to Dick Coppin—he cared very little about the former greatness of the Coppins, and the position once occupied by Coppin the builder (his father), before he went bankrupt. He meant secretly something very much greater for himself. He would be a Member of Parliament—he would be a workingman's Member. There have already been half a dozen workingmen's Members in the House, their success has not hitherto been marked, probably because none of them have shown that they know what they want—if, indeed, they want anything. Up to the last few days Dick simply desired in the abstract to be one of them; only, of course, a red-hot Radical—an Irreconcilable.

Now, however, he desired more. His cousin's words and the Chartist's words fell on fruitful soil. He perceived that to become a power in the House one must be able to inform the House on the wants—the programme of his constituents—what they desire, and mean to have. Dick always mentally added that clause, because it belonged to the class of speech in which he had been brought up—and we mean to have it. You accompany the words with a flourish

of the left hand, which is more effective than the right for such purposes. They don't really mean to have it, whatever it may be. But with their audiences it is necessary to put on the appearance of strength before there arises any confidence in strength. Disestablishers of all kinds invariably mean to have it, and the phrase, is, perhaps, getting played out.

Dick went home to his lodgings and sat among his books, thinking. He was a man who read. For the sake of being independent, he became a teetotaler—so that, getting good wages, he was rich. He would not marry, because he did not want to be encumbered. He bought such books as he thought would be useful to him, and read them, but no others. He was a man of energy and tenacity, whose chief fault was the entire absence as yet of sympathy and imagination—if these could be supplied in any way, Dick Coppin's course would be assured. For with them would come play of fancy, repartee, wit, illustration, and the graces as well as the strength of oratory.

He went on Monday evening to see Miss Kennedy. He would find out from her, as a beginning, all that she could tell him about the wages of women.

'But I have told you,' she said; 'I told you all the first night you came here—have you forgotten? Then, I suppose, I must tell you again.'

The first time he was only bored with the story, because he did not see how he could use it for his own purposes—therefore he had forgotten the details.

She told him the sad story of woman's wrongs, which go unredressed while their sisters clamor for female suffrage and make school boards intolerable by their squabbles. The women do but copy the men; therefore, while the men neglect the things that lie ready to their hand and hope for things impossible, under new forms of Government, what wonder if the women do the like? This time Dick listened, because he now understood that a practical use might be made out of the information. He was not a man of highly sensitive organization, nor did he feel any indignation at the things Angela told him, seeing that he had grown up among these things all his life, and regarded the inequalities of wages and work as part of the bad luck of being a woman. But he took note of all, and asked shrewd questions and made suggestions.

'If,' he said, 'there's a hundred women asking for ten places, of course the government'll give them to the cheapest.'

'That,' replied Angela, 'is a matter of course as things now are. But there is another way of considering the question. If we had a Woman's Trade Union, as we shall have before long, where there are ten places, only ten women should be allowed to apply, and just wages be demanded!'

'How is that to be done?'

'My friend, you have yet a great deal to learn.'

Dick reddened and replied rudely, that if he had he did not expect to learn it from a woman.

'A great deal to learn,' she repeated, gently. 'Above all, you have got to learn the lesson which your cousin began to teach you the other night, the great lesson of finding out what you want and then getting it for yourselves. Governments are nothing; you must help yourselves; you must combine.'

He was silent. The girl made him angry, yet he was afraid of her because no other woman he had ever met spoke as she did or knew so much.

'Combine,' she repeated. 'Preach the doctrine of combination; and teach us the purposes for which we ought to combine.'

The advice was just what the other color had given.

'Oh! Mr. Coppin'—her voice was as winning as her eyes—were kind and full of interest—you are clever; you are persevering; you are brave; you have so splendid a voice; you have such a natural gift of oratory, that you ought to become—you must become—one of the leaders of the people.'

Pride fell prone, like Dagone, before these words. Dick succumbed to the gracious influence of a charming woman.

'Tell me,' he said, reddening, because it was humiliating to seek help of a girl, 'tell me what I am to do.'

'You are ambitious, are you not?'

'Yes,' he replied, coldly, 'I am ambitious. I don't tell them outside,' he jerked his thumb over his shoulder to indicate the Advance Club, 'but I mean to get into the 'Ouse—I mean the House.' One of his little troubles was the correction of certain peculiarities of speech common among his class. It was his cousin who first directed his attention to this point.

'Yes; there is no reason why you should not get into the House,' said Angela. 'But it would be a thousand pities if you should get in yet.'

'Why should I wait, if they will elect me?'

'Because, Mr. Coppin, you must not try to lead the people till you know whether you would lead: because you must not pretend

to represent the people till you have learned their condition and their wants; because you must not presume to offer yourself till you are prepared with a programme.'

'Yet plenty of others do.'

'They do; but what else have they done?'

'Only tell me—then—tell me what to do. Am I to read?'

'No; you have read enough for the present. Rest your eyes from books; open them to the world; see things as they are. Look out of this window. What do you see?'

'Nothing; a row of houses; a street; a road.'

'I see, besides, that the houses are mean, dirty, and void of beauty; but I see more. I see an organ player; on the curbstone the little girls are dancing; in the road the ragged boys are playing. Look at the freedom of the girl's limbs; look at the careless grace of the children. Do you know how clever they are? Some of them, who sleep where they can and live where they can, can pick pockets at three, go shop-lifting at four, plot and make conspiracies at five; see how they run and jump and climb.'

'I see them. They are everywhere. How can we help that?'

'You would leave these poor children to the Government and the police. Yet I think a better way to redeem these little ones is for the workingmen to resolve together that they shall be taken care of, taught, and apprenticed. Spelling, which your cousin says constitutes most of the School Board Education, does not so much matter. Take them off the streets and train them to a trade. Do you ever walk about the streets at night? Be your own police and make your streets clean. Do you ever go into the courts and places where the dock laborers sleep? Have a committee for every one such street or court, and make them decent. When a gang of roughs make the pavement intolerable, you decent men step off and leave them to the policeman, if he dares interfere. Put down the roughs yourselves with a strong hand. Clear out the thieves' dens, and the drinking shops; make roughs and vagabonds go elsewhere. I am always about among the people; they are full of sufferings which need not be; there are a great many workers—ladies, priests, clergymen—among them trying to remove the suffering. But why do you not do this for yourselves? Be your own almoners. I find everywhere, too, courage and honesty, and a desire for better things. Show them how their lot may be alleviated.'

'But I don't know how,' he replied, humbly.

'You must find out, if you would be their leader. And you must have sympathy. Never was there yet a leader of the people who did not feel with them as they feel.'

This saying was too hard for the young man, who had, he knew, felt hitherto only for himself.

'You say what Harry says. I sometimes think—' he stopped short, as if an idea had suddenly occurred to him. 'Look here, is it true that you and Harry are keeping company?'

'No, we are not,' Angela replied, with a blush.

'Oh! I thought you were. Is it off, then?'

'It never was—more—than it is at present, Mr. Coppin.'

'Oh!' he looked doubtful. 'Well,' he said, 'I suppose there is no reason why a girl should tell a lie about such a simple thing. He certainly was a remarkably rude young man. Either you are, or you ain't. That's it, isn't it? And you ain't?'

'We are not,' said Angela, with a little blush, for the facts of the case were, from one point of view, against her.

'Then if you are not—I don't care—though it's against my rules, and I did say I would never be bothered with a woman—... Look here—you and me will—'

'Will what?'

'Will keep company,' he replied, firmly.

'Oh! I know; it's a great chance for you—but then, you see, you ain't like the rest of 'em, and you know things, somehow, that may be useful—though how you learned 'em, nor where you came from, nor what's your character—there—I don't care, we'll keep company!'

'Oh!'

'Yes; we'll begin next Sunday. You'll be useful to me, so that the bargain is not all one side.' It was not till afterward that Angela felt the full force of this remark. 'As for getting married, there's no hurry; we'll talk about that when I'm a member. Of course it would be silly to get married now.'

'Of course,' said Angela.

'Let's get well up the tree first. Lord help you! How could I climb, to say nothing of you, with a round half dozen o' babies at my heels?'

'But, Mr. Coppin,' she said, putting aside these possibilities, 'I am sorry to say that I can not possibly keep company with you. There is a reason—I can not tell you what it is—but you must put that out of your thoughts.'

'Oh!' his face fell, 'if you won't, you won't. Most girls jump at a man who's in good wages and a temperance man, and sought after, like me. But—there—if you won't, there's an end. I'm not going to waste my time cryin' after any girl.'

'We will remain friends, Mr. Coppin?'

She held out her hand.

'Friends? what's that? We might have been pals—I mean partners.'

'But I can tell you all I think; I can advise you in my poor way still, whenever you please to ask my advice, even if I do not share your greatness. And believe me, Mr. Coppin, that I most earnestly desire to see you not only in the House, but a real leader of the people, such a leader as the world has never yet beheld. To begin with, you will be a man of the very people.'

'Ay!' he said, 'one of themselves!'

'A man not to be led out out of his way by flatterers.'

'No,' he said, with a superior smile, 'no one, man or woman, can flatter me.'

'A man who knows the restless unsatisfied yearnings of the people, and what they mean, and has found out how they may be satisfied.'

'Ye—yes,' he replied, doubtfully, 'certainly.'

'A man who will lead the people to get what is good for themselves and by themselves, without the help of Government.'

And no thunders in the Commons? No ringing denunciation of the Hereditary House? Nothing at all that he had looked to do and to say? Call this a leadership? But he thought of the Chartist and his new methods. By different roads, said Montaigne, we arrive at the same end.

(To be Continued.)

Side Lights on the Labor Problem.

A little amusement is to be got once in a while out of the vexed question of labor and wages. A New York employer, whose operations are on the northern edge of the city, says that English speaking men seldom apply to him for work, and he believes that he has never received an application from a native born American. Italians come to him in droves, and they are good natured and philosophical when employment is denied them. A dozen or more came to him one day with an interpreter. 'Tell these men,' he said to the interpreter, 'that I cannot employ any of them.' The interpreter translated the announcement, and none of the men showed any disappointment. One laughed and said something which the interpreter translated. 'He says,' the interpreter said, 'that's all right, he likes to stand around and see your men work, and maybe by and by you have a job.' Not so cheerful under disappointment was a newly engaged clerk at Belfast, Me. A shopkeeper paid him four dollars for the first week. At the end of the second week the lad was surprised when he received only three dollars, and he asked the reason of the cut down. 'Why,' replied the shopkeeper, 'you know more about the business now, and the work must come easier to you.' The clerk, fearing a continued application of that unique theory, resigned.

Languages Containing the Greatest Number of Words.

The English far exceeds any other modern language in the number of words it contains. The words in the English language have, during the latter half of the present century, increased with great rapidity, and the latest dictionaries, such as the Oxford published under the editorship and direction of Dr. Murray, contain no less than 250,000 words. The four modern languages having the next largest number of words are the German with 80,000 words, the Italian with 45,000, the French with 30,000, and the Spanish with 20,000 words. Of Eastern tongues, Arabic is far the richest in vocabulary. Chinese has 10,362 characters which are combined into 49,030 compound words; Tamil, spoken in Southern India, 67,452; Turkish, 22,530; that of Hawaii, one of the South Sea Islands, 15,500; Zulu-Kaffirs, Coleho found, had 8 words; and the natives of New South Wales possessed only 2,200. As to number of persons speaking the West languages, it is estimated that over 109 millions of people now speak the English language, ever 60 millions the German, 41 millions the French, 41 millions the Spanish and 30 millions the Italian language. Professor Max Muller has calculated that the close of the next two centuries will be in the world: People speaking the—

Italian language..... 53,370,

French language..... 75,571,

German language..... 157,480,

Spanish language..... 505,286,

English language..... 1,837,286

James W. Kennedy, the well-known man and strong man, who won the Gazette medal for lifting the 1,030 dumbbell, recently beat the record for with harness, at Lynn, Mass. Keen lift was 3,242 pounds.