

# LADY BOUNTIFUL.

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

## CHAPTER XXVI.—Continued.

That a gentleman should suppose possible at eight o'clock in the evening, was a thing so utterly inconceivable that Campion could for the moment suggest nothing. She only stared. Presently she ventured to suggest that his lordship might get up again.

'Get up, Timothy, get up this minute!' Her ladyship shook and pushed him till he opened his eyes and lifted his head. 'Don't stop to ask questions, but get up right away.' Then she ran back to the door. 'Miss Campion!'

'Yes, my lady.'

'I don't mind much about myself, but it might not look well for his lordship not to seem to know things just exactly how they're done in England. So please don't tell the servants, Miss Campion.'

She laid her hand on the maid's arm, and looked so earnest, that the girl felt sorry for her.

'No, my lady,' she replied. And she kept her word, so that though the servants all knew how the noble lord and his lady had been brought from Stepney Green, and how his lordship floundered among the plates at lunch, and eat up half a loaf with afternoon tea, they did not know that he went to bed instead of dressing for dinner.

'And, Miss Campion,' she was now outside the door, holding it ajar, and the movements of a heavy body hastily putting on clothes could be distinctly heard, 'you will please tell me, presently, what time they do have things.'

'Yes, my lady.'

'Family prayers now? His lordship will lead, of course, a thing he is quite used to, and can better do than most, having always—' here she stopped, remembering that there was no absolute necessity to explain the duties of a village school-master.

'There are no family prayers, my lady, and your ladyship can have dinner or any other meal at any time you please.'

'His lordship's time for meals will be those of his brother peers.'

'Yes, my lady. Breakfast at ten?'

'Ten will do perfectly.' It was two hours later than their usual time, and her husband's sufferings would be great. Still, everything must give way to the responsibilities of rank.

'Will your ladyship take luncheon at half past one, and tea at half past five, and dinner at eight?'

'Yes; now that we know them, these hours will suit me perfectly. We do not in our country take tea before dinner, but after it. That is nothing, however. And supper?'

'Your ladyship can have supper whenever you want it,' replied the maid. She hesitated for a moment and then went on. 'It is not usual for supper to be served at all.'

'Oh! then we must go without.'

By this time her husband was dressed, and, obedient to instruction, he had put on his new dress-coat, without, however, making any alteration in the rest of his morning garments. The effect, therefore, when they descended to the drawing-room, would have been very startling, but for the fact that there was nobody to see it.

If luncheon was a great meal, dinner was far more magnificent and stately; only there were two footmen instead of one, and his lordship felt that he could not do that justice to the dinner which the dinner deserved, because those two great hulking fellows in livery watched him all the time. After dinner they sat in the great drawing-room, feeling very magnificent, and yet uncomfortable.

'The second dinner,' said his lordship in a half whisper, 'made me feel, Clara Martha, that we did right to leave Canaan City. I never before knew what they meant by enjoying a title, and I don't think I ever thoroughly enjoyed it before. The red mullet was beautiful, and the little larks in paper baskets made me feel a lord all over.'

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE SAME SIGNS.

'This he has done for love!'

When Angela returned to her dress-making, it was with these words ringing in her ears, like some refrain which continually returns and will not be silenced.

'This he has done—for love!'

It was a great deal to do—a great deal to give up; she fully realized, after her talk with Lord Jocelyn, how much it was she had given up—at her request. What had she herself done, that she asked, in comparison? She had given money—anybody could give money. She had lived in disguise, under false pretences, for a few months; but she never intended to go on living in the East End, after she had set her Association on a firm basis. To be sure, she had been drawn on to consider schemes and could not retire until these including the Palace of Delight,

were well started. But this young man had given up all, cheerfully, for her sake. Because she was a dress-maker, and lived at Stepney, he would be a workman and live there as well. For her sake he had given up forever the life of ease and culture, which might have been, among the gentlefolk to whom he belonged; for her sake he left the man who stood to him in loco parentis; for her sake he gave up all things that are dear to young men, and became a servant. And without a murmur. She watched him going to his work in the morning, cheerful, with the sunshine ever in his face—in fact, sunshine lived there—his head erect, his eyes fearless, not repenting at all of his choice, perhaps hopeful that in the long run those impediments spoken of might be removed. In that hope he lived. Should that hope be disappointed—what then? Only to have loved, to have sacrificed so much for the sake of love, Angela said to herself, thinking of something she had read, was enough. Then she laughed, because this was so silly, and the young man deserved to have some reward.

Then, as a first result of this newly acquired knowledge, the point of view seemed changed. Quite naturally, after the first surprise at finding so much cultivation in a workman, she regarded him, like all the rest, from her own elevated platform. In the same way he, from his own elevation, had been, in a sense, looking down upon herself, though she did not suspect the fact. One might pause here, in order to discuss how many kinds of people did consider themselves on a higher level than their neighbors. My own opinion is that every man thinks himself on so very high a platform as to entitle him to consider the greater part of mankind quite below him; the fact that no one else thinks so has nothing to do with it. Any one, however, can understand how Angela would at first regard Harry, and Harry the fair dress-maker. Further, that, whatever acquaintance or intimacy grew up between them, the first impression would always remain, with the mental attitude of a slight superiority in both minds, so long as the first impression, the first belief as to the real facts, was not removed. Now that it was removed, Angela, for her part, could no longer look down; there was no superiority left, except in so far as the daughter of a Whitechapel brewer might consider herself of finer clay than the son of a sergeant in the Army, also of Whitechapel origin.

All for love of her!

The words filled her heart; they made her cheeks burn and her eyes glow. It seemed so great and noble a thing to do; so grand a sacrifice to make.

She remembered her words of contempt when, in a shame-faced, hesitating way as if it was something wrong, he had confessed that he might go back to a life of idleness. Why, she might have known—she ought to have known—that it was not to an ignoble life among ignoble people that he would go. Yet she was so stupid.

What a sacrifice to make! And all for love of her!

Then the flower of love sprung up and immediately blossomed, and was a beauteous rose, ready for her lover to gather and place upon his heart. But as yet she hardly knew it.

Yet she had know all along that Harry loved her. He never tried to conceal his passion. 'Why,' she said to herself, trying to understand the meaning of the sudden change in herself, 'why, it only seemed to amuse me; the thing was absurd; and I felt pity for him, and a little anger because he was so presumptuous; and I was a little embarrassed for fear I had compromised myself with him. But it wasn't absurd at all; and he loves me, though I have no fortune. Oh! Heaven! I am a she-Dives, and he doesn't know it, and he loves me all the same.'

She was to tell him the 'impediments' were removed. Why, they were removed already. But should she tell him? How could she dare to tell him? No girl likes to do her own wooing; she must be courted; she must be won. Besides—perhaps—but here she smiled—he was not so very much in love, after all. Perhaps he would change; perhaps he would grow tired and go home and desert her; perhaps he would fall in love with some one else. And perhaps Angela, the strong-minded student of Newnham, who would have no love or marriage, or anything of the kind in her life, was no stronger than any of her sisters at the approach of Love the Unconquered.

She came back in the evening after that dinner. Her cheek had a new color upon it; there was a new smile upon her lips; there was a new softness in her eyes.

'You look so beautiful this evening,' said Nelly. 'Have you been happy while you were away?'

'I have heard something that has made me happier,' said Angela. 'But you, dear Nelly, have not. Why are your cheeks so pale, and what is the meaning of the dark lines under your eyes?'

'It is nothing,' the girl replied, quickly. 'I am quite well.' But she was not. She was nervous and preoccupied. There was something in her mind.

Then Harry came, and they began to pass the evening in the usual way, practicing their songs, with music, and the little dance, without which the girls could not have gone away happy. And Angela, for the first time, observed a thing which struck a chill to her heart, and robbed her of half her joy.

Why had she never before observed this thing? Ah! ignorant maiden, despite the wisdom of the schools. Hypatia herself was not more ignorant than Angela, who knew not that the chief quality of the rose of love in her heart was to make her read the hearts of others. Armed with this magic power, she saw what she might have seen long before.

In the hasty glance, the quick flush, the nervous trembling of her hands, poor Nelly betrayed her secret. And by those signs the other girl, who loved the same man, read that secret.

'Oh! selfish woman!' said Angela's heart. 'Is your happiness to be bought at such a cost?'

A girl of lower nature might have been jealous. Angela was not. It seemed to her no sin in Nelly that she thought too much of such a man. But she pitied her. Nor did she, as some women might have done, suspect that Harry might have trifled with her feelings. She knew that he had not. She had seen them together day after day; she knew what his bearing had always been toward her, frank, courteous, and brotherly. He called her by her Christian name; he liked her; her presence was pleasant; she was pretty, sweet, and winning. No; she did not suspect him. And yet, what could she say to the poor girl? How comfort her? How reconcile her to the inevitable sorrow?

'Nelly,' she whispered at parting, 'if you are unhappy, my child, you must tell me what it is.'

'I can not,' Nelly replied. 'But oh! do not think about me, Miss Kennedy; I am not worth it.'

Perhaps she, too, had read them same signs and knew what they meant.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### HARRY FINDS LIBERTY.

Mention has been made of the Stepney Advanced Club, where Dick Coppin thundered, and burning questions were discussed, and debates held on high political points, and where more ideas were submitted and more projects set forth in a single year than in all the rest of London in two years. The members of the Advanced Club were mostly young men, but there was a sprinkling among them of grizzled beards who remembered '48 and the dreams of Chartism. They had got by this time pretty well all they clamored for in their by-gone days, and when they thought of this, and remembered how everything was to go well as soon as the five points of the Charter were carried, and how everything still remained in the same upside-down, topsyturvy, one-sided, middle-headed perverseness, just as if those points had not been carried, they became sad. Nevertheless, the habit of demanding remained, because the reformer is like the daughter of the horse-leech, and still cries for more. Yet they had less confidence than of old in the reformer's great nostrum of destruction. The younger men, of course, were quite sure, absolutely sure, that with a little more upsetting and down-pulling, the balance would be set right, and a beautiful straight level of universal happiness would be reached.

Angela heard, from time to time, of the meetings of this Club. Harry told her how his cousin Dick had surpassed himself, how they were going to abolish Crown, Church, and House of Lords, with landlordism, lawyers, established armies, pauperism, Divesdom, taxes, and all kinds of things which the hateful Tory or that pitiful creature the moderate Liberal considers necessary for the welfare of the State. And she knew that Harry went there and spoke occasionally, and that he had made in a quiet way some sort of mark among the members. One evening, about this time, she met Dick Coppin returning from his work, in which, unlike his cousin, he did not disdain the apron nor the box of tools.

'There's going to be a debate on Sunday,' he said, half shyly and half boastfully, 'at the Club. It's on the abolition of the House of Lords. I am going to speak, and if you like to come, you and one or two of the girls, I'll pass you in, and you will hear a thing or two that will open your eyes.'

'That is very good of you, Mr. Coppin. I always like to have my eyes opened. Will there be many speakers?'

'There will be me,' he replied, with simple grandeur. 'I don't think, when I've said my say, that there will remain much more to be said by anybody. Cousin Harry may

get up, perhaps—his face assumed a little uneasiness—but no, I don't think he will find any holes in me. I've got the facts; I've gone to the right quarter to get 'em. No; he can't deny my facts.'

'Very well, Mr. Coppin. Perhaps we will go to hear you. But be very sure about your facts.'

Angela said nothing about the proposed debate or her intention of being present, but she learned from Harry that there really was going to be a field night, and that Dick Coppin was expected to come out in more than his usual strength. The informant said nothing about his own intentions. Indeed, he had none, but he was falling into the habit of spending an hour or two at the Club on Sunday evening before finishing off with the girls; sometimes he spoke, but oftener he listened and came away silent, and reflected. The Advanced Club offered ample material for one who knows how to reflect. Humanity is a grand subject, and, in fact, is the only subject left for an epic poem. But perhaps the action would drag. Here, Harry saw, was a body of men, old and young, all firmly persuaded that things were wrong, that things might be made better, yet casting about blindly for a remedy, and crying aloud for a leader. And those who desired to lead them had nothing to offer but a stone instead of bread. The fact that this young man did listen and reflect shows how greatly he was changed from him whom we first met in the prologue. Regular hours, simple living, reasonably hard work, strengthened his nerves for anything; he was harder; the men with whom he talked were rougher, and the old carelessness was gone. He kept his gaiety of heart, yet it was sobered; he felt responsible. He knew so much more than the men around him that he felt a consuming desire to set them right, but could not, for he was tongue-tied; he had not yet found liberty, as the old preachers used to say; when he felt most strongly that the speakers were on a false track he spoke most feebly; he wanted to be a prophet, and there were only confused ideas, blurred perceptions to work upon. Now the first steps toward being a prophet—which is a most laudable ambition—is to see quite clearly one's self and to understand what one means. He could set a man right as to facts, he could shut up a speaker and make the Club laugh, but he could not move them. As yet Harry was only in the position occupied during a long life by the late prophet of Chelsea, inasmuch as he distinctly perceived the folly of his neighbors but could teach no way of wisdom. This is a form of prophetic utterance which has never possessed much weight with the people; they want direct teaching and a leader who knows what he means and whither he would conduct them, if it be only in the direction of one of those poor old worn-out panaceas once warranted to guarantee universal happiness, like the ballot-box. Not that Harry grew miserable over his failure to prophesy, not at all; he only wished for words of wisdom and power, and sat meanwhile with his hands in his pockets and his hat pulled over his eyes like a minister in the House of Commons, while the members of the Club poured forth their frothy declamation, each louder than his predecessor, trying to catch the applause of an assembly which generally shouted for the loudest. The times might be out of joint, but Harry felt no inspiration as to the way of setting them right; if a thing came to him he would say it, if not, he would wait. The great secret about waiting is that while a man waits he thinks, and if he thinks in solitude and waits long enough, letting words lie in his brain and listening to ideas which come upon him, sometimes singly and slowly, sometimes in crowds like the fancies of a wakeful night, there presents itself an idea at last which seizes upon him and holds him captive, and works itself out in his brain while he mechanically goes on with the work, the rest, the toil, and the pleasure of his daily life. Solitary work is favorable to meditation; therefore, while Harry was shaping things at his lathe undisturbed by no one his brain was at work. And a thought came to him which lay there dimly perceived at first, but growing larger daily till it filled his head and drew unto itself all his other thoughts, so that everything he saw, or read, or heard, or meditated upon, became like a rill or rivulet which grows to swell a great river. And it was this thought, growing into shape at last, which he proclaimed to the members of the Advanced Club on the night of their great debate.

It was not a large Hall, but it was perfectly filled with people; chiefly they were men and young men, but among them were a good many women and girls. Does it ever occur to the 'better class' that the work of woman's emancipation is advancing in certain circles with rapid strides? That is so, nevertheless; and large, if not pleasant, results may be expected in a few years therefrom. It must be remembered that for the most part they start perfectly free from and trammels of religion. It has been stated that the basis of all their philosophy is, and always will be, the axiom that every one

must get as much as possible for herself out of the rather limited ration of Pleasure supplied to Humanity. Whether that is true I know not. Angela watched these women with curiosity; they were mostly young, and some of them were pretty, and there was absolutely nothing to show that they thought different from any other women. Some of them had brought their work; some were talking; they were not excited by the prospect of the coming debate; they expected, in fact, nothing more than they had already heard over and over again. There was too much gas, the atmosphere was already heavy and the walls already shiny, before the meeting began. On the platform was a chair for the chairman, with a table and a hammer, and a decanter of water and a glass. Angela sat far back against the door, with captain Sorensen and Nelly. She was silent, wondering at these people and why they should trouble themselves about the House of Lords, and whether they never felt any desire at all for the religion which brings joy and happiness to so many suffering lives. Presently she saw Harry walk slowly up the middle aisle and take a place, for there was no chair, on the steps which led to the platform. She was so far back that he could not see her, for which afterward she was glad.

The chairman, a man stricken in years, with grey hair and a grizzled beard, and one of those ex Chartists of whom we have spoken, took the chair, hammered the table, and opened the debate. He was a man of great reputation, having been all his life an Irreconcilable, and he was suspected of being a Socialist, and was certainly a Red Republican. He began in the usual way by stating as an axiom that the people can do no wrong; that to trust the destinies of a Nation to the People is to insure its greatness; that Manhood is the only rank;—and so forth, all in capital letters with notes of admiration. The words were strong, but they produced no effect, because the speech had been made before a great many times, and the people knew it by heart. Therefore, though it was the right thing to say, and the thing expected of a chairman, nobody paid any attention.

The discussion, which was all one-sided, then began. Two or three young men rose one after the other; they were listened to with the indulgence which is always accorded to beginners. None of them made a point, or said a good thing, or went outside the theories of untaught, if generous, youth, and their ignorance was such as to make Angela almost weep.

Then Dick Coppin mounted the platform, and advanced, amid the plaudits of the expectant audience. He ran his fingers through his coarse, black hair, straightened himself up to his full height of five feet six, drank a little water, and then, standing beside the chairman's table, with his right hand resting upon it when he was not waiting it about, he began, slowly at first, but afterward with fluent speech and strong words, and a ringing voice, the harangue which he had so carefully prepared. Of course, he condemned the House of Lords tooth and nail; it must be destroyed root and branch; it was a standing insult to the common sense of the nation; it was an effete and worn-out institution, against which the enlightenment of age cried out aloud; it was an obstruction to Progress; it was a menace to the people; it was a thing of the Past; it was an enemy of the workingman; it was a tyrant who had the will but not the power to tyrannize any longer; but it was a toothless old wolf who could bark but could not bite. Those free and enlightened men sitting before him, members of the Advanced Club, had pronounced its doom—therefore, it must go. The time had come when the nation would endure no longer to have a privileged class, and would be mocked no more by the ridiculous spectacle of hereditary legislators.

He pursued this topic with great freedom of language and a great eloquence of a rough and uncultivated kind; his hearers, getting gradually warmed, interrupted him by those plaudits which go straight to the heart of the born orator, and stir him to his strongest and his best.

Then he changed his line and attempted to show that the families which compose the Upper House are themselves, as well as their Institution, worn out, used up, and lost to the vigor which first pushed them to the front. Where were now their fighting men? he asked. Where were their orators? Which among them all was of any real importance to his Party? Which of them had in modern times done anything, proposed anything, or thought of anything for the advancement of knowledge or the good of the people? Not one able man, he said, among them; luxury had ruined and corrupted all; their blood was poisoned; they could drink and eat; they could practice their luxurious habits, which he enumerated with fidelity, lest there should be any mistake about the matter; and then they could go to the House reeling into it drunk with wine, and oppose the Will of the People.

(To be Continued.)