

LADY BOUNTIFUL.

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

CHAPTER XVII.

WHAT LORD JOCELYN THOUGHT.

The subject of Angela's meditations was not where she thought him, in his own bedroom. When he left his adviser, he did not go in at once, but walked once or twice up and down the pavement, thinking. What he had promised to do was nothing less than to reverse, altogether, the whole of his promised life; and this is no light matter, even if you do it for love's sweet sake. And Miss Kennedy, being no longer with him, he felt a little chilled from the first enthusiasm. Presently he looked at his watch; it was still early; only half past ten.

'There is the chance,' he said. 'It is only a chance. He generally comes back somewhere about this time.'

There are no cabs at Stepney, but there are tramways which go quite as fast, and besides, give one the opportunity of exchanging ideas on current topics with one's traveling companions. Harry jumped into one, and sat down between a bibulous old gentleman, who said he lived in Fore Street, but had for the moment mislaid all his other ideas, and a lady who talked to herself as she carried a bundle. She was rehearsing something dramatic, a monologue, in which she was 'giving it' to somebody unknown. And she was so much under the influence and emotion of imagination, that the young man trembled lest he might be mistaken for the person addressed. However, happily, the lady so far restrained herself, and Aldgate was reached in peace. There he took a hansom and drove to Piccadilly.

The streets looked strange to him after his three months' absence; the lights, the crowds on the pavements, so different from the East End crowd; the rush of the carriages and cabs taking the people home from the theatre, filled him with a strange longing. He had been asleep; he had had a dream; there was no Stepney; there was no Whitechapel Road—a strange and wondrous dream. Miss Kennedy and her daniels were only a part of this vision. A beautiful and delightful dream. He was back again in Piccadilly, and all was exactly as it always had been.

So far all was exactly the same, for Lord Jocelyn was in his chamber, and alone.

'You are coming back to me, Harry?' he said, holding the young man's hand; 'you have had enough of your cousins and the worthy Bunker. Sit down, boy. I heard your feet on the stairs. I have waited for it a long time. Sit down and let me look at you. To-morrow you shall tell me all your adventures.'

'It is comfortable,' said Harry, taking his old chair and one of his guardians' cigarettes. 'Yes, Piccadilly is better, in some respects, than Whitechapel.'

'And there is more comfort the higher up you climb, eh?'

'Certainly, more comfort. There is not, I am sure, such an easy-chair as this east of St. Paul's.'

Then they were silent, as becomes two men who know what is in each other's heart, and wait for it to be said.

'You look well,' said Harry, presently. 'Where did you spend the summer?'

'Mediterranean. Yacht. Partridges.'

'Of course. Do you stay in London long?'

And so on. Playing with the talk, and postponing the inevitable, Harry learned where everybody had been, and who was engaged, and who was married, and how one or two had joined the majority since his departure. He also heard the latest scandal, and the current talk, and what had been done at the Club, and who had been blackballed, with divers small bits of information about people and things. And he took up the talk in the old manner, and fell into the old attitude of mind quite naturally, and as if there had been no break at all. Presently the clock pointed to one, and Lord Jocelyn rose.

'We will talk again to-morrow, Harry, my boy, and the day after to-morrow, and many days after that. I am glad to have you back again.' He laid his hand on the young man's shoulder.

'Do not go just yet,' said Harry, blushing and feeling guilty, because he was going to inflict pain on one who loved him. 'I can not talk with you to-morrow.'

'Why not?'

'Because—sit down again and listen—because I have made up my mind to join with my kith and kin altogether, and stay among them.'

'What? Stay among them?'

'You remember what you told me of your motive in taking me. You would bring up a boy of the people like a gentleman. You would educate him in all that a gentleman can learn, and then you would send him

back to his friends, whom he would make discontented, and so open the way for civilization.'

'I said so—did I? Yes; but there were other things, Harry. You forget that motives are always mixed. There was affection for my brave sergeant and a desire to help his son; there were all sorts of things. Besides, I expected that you would take a rough kind of polish only—like nickle, you know, or pewter—and you turned out real silver. A gentleman, I thought, is born, not made. This proved a mistake. The puddle blood would show, I expected: which is prejudiced, you see, because there is no such thing as puddle blood. Besides, I thought you would be stupid and slow to pick up ideas, and that you would pick up only a few; supposing, in my ignorance, that all persons not 'born,' as the Germans say, must be stupid and slow.'

'And I was not stupid?'

'You? The brightest and cleverest lad in the whole world—you stepped into the place I made for you as if you had been born for it. Now tell me why you wish to step out of it.'

'Like you, sir, I have many motives. Partly, I am greatly interested in my own people; partly, I am interested in the place itself and its ways; partly, I am told, and I believe, that there is a great deal which I can do there—do not laugh at me.'

'I am not laughing, Harry; I am only astonished. Yes, you are changed; your eyes are different, your voice is different. Go on, my boy.'

'I do not think there is much to say—I mean, in explanation. But of course I understand—it is a part of the thing—that if I stay among them I must be independent. I could no longer look to your bounty, which I have accepted too long. I must work for my living.'

'Work? And what will you do?'

'I know a lot of things, but somehow they are not wanted at Stepney, and the only thing by which I can make money seems to be my lathe. I have become a cabinet-maker.'

'Heavens! You have become a cabinet-maker? Do you actually mean, Harry, that you are going to work—with your hands—for money?'

'Yes, with my hands. I shall be paid for my work; I shall live by my work. The puddle blood, you see.'

'No, no,' said Lord Jocelyn, 'there is no proof of puddle blood in being independent. But think of the discomfort of it.'

'I have thought of the discomfort. It is not really so very bad. What is your idea of the life I shall have to live?'

'Why,' said Lord Jocelyn, with a shudder, 'you will rise at six; you will go out in working-clothes, carrying your tools, and with your apron tied round and tucked up like a missionary bishop on his way to a confirmation. You will find yourself in a work-shop full of disagreeable people, who pick out unpleasant adjectives and tack them on to everything, and whose views of life and habits are—well, not your own. You will have to smoke pipes at a street corner on Sundays; you tobacco will be bad; you will drink bad beer—Harry! the contemplation of the thing is too painful.'

Harry laughed.

'The reality is not quite so bad,' he said. 'Cabinet-makers are excellent fellows. And as for myself, I shall not work in a shop, but alone. I am offered the post of cabinet-maker in a great place where I shall have my own room to myself, and can please my own convenience as to my hours. I shall earn about tenpence an hour, say seven shillings a day, if I keep at it.'

'If he keeps at it,' murmured Lord Jocelyn, 'he will make seven shillings a day.'

'Dinner in the middle of the day, of course,' Harry went on, with a cheerful smile. 'At the East End everybody stokes at one. We have tea at five and supper when we can get it. A simpler life than yours.'

'This is a programme of such extreme misery,' said Lord Jocelyn, 'that your explanations are quite insufficient. Is there, I wonder, a woman in the case?'

Harry blushed violently.

'There is a woman, then?' said his guardian, triumphantly. 'There always is. I might have guessed it from the beginning. Come, Harry, tell me all about it. Is it serious? Is she—can she be—at Whitechapel—a lady?'

'Yes,' said Harry, 'it is quite true. There is a woman, and I am in love with her. She is a dress-maker.'

'Oh!'

'And a lady.'

Lord Jocelyn said nothing.

'A lady,' Harry repeated the words to

show that he knew what he was saying.

'But it is no use. She won't listen to me.' 'That is more remarkable than your two last statements. Many men have fallen in love with dress-makers; some dress-makers have acquired partially the manners of a lady; but that any dress-maker should refuse the honorable attentions of a handsome young fellow like you, and a gentleman, is inconceivable.'

'A cabinet-maker, not a gentleman. But do not let us talk of her, if you please.'

Then Lord Jocelyn proceeded, with such eloquence as was at his command, to draw a picture of what he was throwing away compared with what he was accepting. There was a universal feeling, he assured his ward, of sympathy with him; everybody felt that it was rough on such a man as himself to find that he was not of illustrious descent; he would take his old place in society, all his old friends would welcome him back among them, with much more to the same purpose.

It was four o'clock in the morning when their conversation ended and Lord Jocelyn went to bed sorrowful, promising to renew his arguments in the morning. As soon as he was gone, Harry went to his own room and put together a few little trifles belonging to the past which he thought he should like. Then he wrote a letter of farewell to his guardian, promising to report himself from time to time, with a few words of gratitude and affection. And then he stole quietly down the stairs and found himself in the open street. Like a school-boy he had run away.

There was nobody left in the streets. Half past four in the morning is almost the quietest time of any; even the burglar has gone home, and it is too early for anything but the market-garden carts on their way to Covent Garden. He strode down Piccadilly and across the silent Leicester Square into the Strand. He passed through that remarkable thoroughfare, and by way of Fleet Street, where even the newspaper offices were deserted, the leader-writers and the editor and the sub-editors all gone home to bed, in St. Paul's. It was then a little after five, and there was already a stir. An occasional footfall on the principal streets. By the time he got to the Whitechapel Road there were a good many up and about, and before he reached Stepney Green the day's work was beginning. The night had gone and the sun was rising, for it was six o'clock and a cloudless morning. At ten he presented himself once more at the accountant's office.

'Well?' asked the chief.

'I am come,' said Harry, 'to accept Miss Messenger's offer.'

'You seem pretty independent. However, that is the way with you workingmen nowadays. I suppose you don't even pretend to feel any gratitude?'

'I don't pretend,' said Harry, hotly, 'to answer questions outside the work I have to do.'

The Chief looked at him as if he could, if he wished, and was not a Christian, annihilate him.

'Go, young man,' he said presently, pointing to the door, 'go to your work. Rudeness to his betters a workingman considers due to himself, I suppose. Go to your work.'

Harry obeyed without a word, being in such a rage that he could not speak. When he reached his work-shop, he found waiting to be mended an office stool with a broken leg. I regret to report that this unhappy stool immediately became a stool with four broken legs and a kicked-out seat.

Harry was for the moment too strong for the furniture.

Not even the thought of Miss Kennedy's approbation could bring him comfort. He was an artisan; he worked by the piece; that was nothing. The galling thing was to realize that he must now behave to certain classes with a semblance of respect, because now he had his 'betters.'

The day before he was a gentleman who had no 'betters.' He was enriched by this addition to his possessions, and yet he was not grateful.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PALACE OF DELIGHT.

There lies on the west and south-west of Stepney Green a triangular district, consisting of an irregular four-sided figure—what Euclid beautifully calls a trapezium—formed by the Whitechapel Road, the Commercial Road, Stepney Green and High Street, or Jamaica Street, or Jubilee Street, whichever you please to call your frontier. This favored spot exhibits in perfection all the leading features which characterize the great Joyless City. It is, in fact, the heart of the East End. Its streets are mean and without individuality or beauty; at no season and under no conditions can they ever be picturesque; one can tell without inquiring, that the lives led in those houses are all after the same model, and that the inhabitants have no pleasures. Everything that goes to make a city, except the means of amusement, is to be found here. There are

churches and chapels—do not the blackened ruins of Whitechapel Church stand here? There are superior 'seminaries' and 'academies,' names which linger here to show where the yearning after the genteel survives; there is a Board School, the e is the great London Hospital, there are almshouses, there are even squares in it—Sidney Square and Bedford Square, to wit—but there are no gardens, avenues, theatres, art galleries, libraries, or any kind of amusement whatever.

The leading thoroughfare of this quarter is named Oxford Street, which runs nearly all the way from the New Road to Stepney Church. It begins well with some breadth, a church and a few trees on one side, and almshouses with a few trees on the other. This promise is not kept; it immediately narrows and becomes like the streets which branch out of it, a double row of little two-storied houses, all alike. Apparently they are all furnished alike; in each ground-floor front there are the red curtains and the white blind of respectability, with the little table bearing something, either a basket of artificial flowers, or a big Bible or a vase, or a case of stuffed birds from foreign parts, to mark the gentility of the family. A little further on, the houses begin to have small balconies on the ground floor, and are even more genteel. The streets which run off north and south are alike unto it but meaner. Now, the really sad thing about this district is that the residents are not the starving class, or the vicious class, or the drinking class; they are well-to-do and thriving people, yet they desire no happiness, they do not feel the lack of joy, they live in meanness and are content therewith. So that it is emphatically a representative quarter and a type of the East End generally, which is for the most part respectable and wholly dull, and perfectly contented never to know what pleasant strolling and resting-places, what delightful interests, what varied occupation, what sweet diversions there are in life.

As for the people, they follow a great variety of trades. There are 'traveling drapers' in abundance; it is, in fact, the chosen quarters of that romantic following; there are a good many stevedores, which betrays the neighborhood of docks; there are some who follow the mysterious calling of herbalists, and I believe you could here still buy the materials for those now forgotten delicacies, saloop and tansy pudding. You can, at least, purchase medicines for any disease under the sun if you know the right herbalist to go to. One of them is a medium as well; and if you call on him, you may be entertained by the artless prattle of the 'spirits,' of whom he knows one or two. They call themselves all sorts of names—such as Peter, Paul, Shakespeare, Napoleon, and Byron—but in reality there are only two of them, and they are bad actors. Then there are cork-cutters, 'wine merchants,' engineers—it seems rather a grand thing for a wine merchant, above all other men, to want an engineer; novelists do not want engineers—sealing-wax manufacturers, workers in shellac and zinc, sign painters, heraldic painters, coopers, makers of combs, iron hoops, and sun-blinds, pewterers, feather-makers—they only pretend to make feathers; what they really do is to buy them, or pluck the birds, and then arrange the feathers and trim them; but they do not really make them—ship modelers, a small but haughty race; mat-dealers, who never pass a prison without using bad language, for reasons which many who have enjoyed the comforts of a prison will doubtless understand. There are also a large quantity of people who call themselves teachers of music. This may be taken as mere pride and ostentatious pretense, because no one wants to learn music in this country, no one ever plays any music, no one has a desire to hear any. If any one called and asked for terms of tuition, he would be courteously invited to go away, for the professor would be engaged, or he would be out of town. In the same way, a late learned professor of Arabic in the University of Cambric was reported always to have important business in the country if an Arab came to visit the colleges. But what a lift above the stevedores, pewterers, and feather pretenders to be a professor of music!

Angela would plant her Palace in this region, the most fitting place, because the most dreary; because here there exists nothing, absolutely nothing, for the imagination to feed upon. It is, in fact, though this is not generally known, the purgatory prepared for those who have given themselves up too much to the enjoyment of roses and rapture while living at the West End. How beautiful are all the designs of nature! Could there be, anywhere in the world, a more fitting place for such a purgatory than such a city? Besides, once one understands the thing, one is further enabled to explain why these grim and somber streets remain without improvement. To beautify them would seem, in the eyes of the pious and religious people, almost flying in the face of Providence. And yet, not really so; for it may be argued that there are other places also fitted for the punishment of these purgatorial

souls—for instance, Hoxton, Bethnal Green, Battersea, and the Isle of Dogs.

Angela resolved, therefore, that on this spot the Palace of Joy should stand. There should be for all who chose to accept it, a general and standing invitation to accept happiness and create new forms of delight. She would awaken in dull and lethargic brains a new sense, the new sense of pleasure; she would give them a craving for things of which as yet they knew nothing. She would place within their reach, at no cost whatever, absolutely free for all, the same enjoyments as are purchased by the rich. A beautiful dream. They should cultivate a noble discontent; they should gradually learn to be critical; they should import into their own homes the spirit of discontent; they should cease to look upon life as a daily up-rising and a down-sitting, a daily mechanical toil, a daily rest. To cultivate the sense of pleasure is to civilize. With the majority of mankind the sense is undeveloped, and is chiefly confined to eating and drinking. To teach the people how the capacity of delight may be widened, how it may be taught to throw out branches in all manner of unsuspected directions, was Angela's ambition. A very beautiful dream.

She owned so many houses in this district that it was quite easy to find a place suitable for her purpose. She discovered upon the map of her property a whole four square block of small houses, all her own, bounded, north, south, east, and west by streets of other small houses, similar and similarly situated. This site was about five minutes west of Stepney Green, and in the district already described. The houses were occupied by weekly tenants, who would find no difficulty in getting quarters as eligible elsewhere. Some of them were in bad repair; and what with maintenance of roofs and chimneys, bad debts, midnight fittings, and other causes, there was little or no income derived from these houses. Mr. Messenger, indeed, who was a hard man, but not unjust, only kept them to save them from the small owner like Mr. Bunker, whose necessities and greed made him a rack-rent landlord.

Having fixed upon her site, Angela next proceeded to have interviews—not on the spot, where she might be recognized—with lawyers and architects, and to unfold partially her design. The area on which the houses stood formed a pretty large plot of ground, ample for her purpose, provided that the most was made of the space and nothing wasted. But a great deal was required; therefore she would have no lordly staircases covering half the ground, nor great anterooms, nor handsome lobbies. Everything, she carefully explained, was to be constructed for use and not for show. She wanted, to begin with, three large halls: one of them was to be a dancing-room, but it might also be a children's play-room for wet weather: one was to be used for a permanent exhibition of native talent, in painting, drawing, wood and ivory carving, sculpture, leather-work and the like, everything being for sale at low prices; the last was to be a library, reading and writing-room. There was also to be a theatre, which would serve as a concert and music-room, and was to have an organ in it. In addition to these there were to be a great number of class rooms for the various arts, accomplishments, and graces that were to be taught by competent professors and lecturers. There were to be other rooms where tired people might find rest, quiet, and talk—the women with tea and work, the men with tobacco. And there were to be billiard-rooms, a tennis-court, a racket court, a five-court, and a card-room. In fact, there was to be space found for almost every kind of recreation.

She did not explain to her architect how she proposed to use this magnificent place of entertainment; it was enough that he should design it and carry out her ideas: and she stipulated that no curious inquirers on the spot should be told for what purpose the building was destined, nor who was the builder.

One can not get designs for a palace in a week; it was already late in the autumn, after Harry had taken up his appointment, and was busy among the legs of stools, that the houses began to be pulled down and the remnants carted away. Angela pressed on the work; but it seemed a long and tedious delay before the foundations were laid and the walls began slowly to rise.

(To be Continued.)

The Leadville Herald gives the following good story in regard to New England's favorite basso: A somewhat sacreligious, but at the same time amusing story is told of Philip Phillips, the sweet singer. He wrote Myron W. Whitney, of Boston, asking him if he would aid him in some service of sacred song, and seemingly, as if to give him a half smothered hint that no sordid pecuniary consideration should be expected or desired, the writer signed himself 'Philip Phillips, singing for Jesus.' The implication meant to be given was taken, and in reply Mr. Whitney wrote his terms, and asking if the Lord was not fully as able to pay his price as was a poor human, he signed himself 'Myron W. Whitney, singing for stamps.'