

# LADY BOUNTIFUL.

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

## CHAPTER X.—Continued.

Harry spent the morning with the papers spread before him, arranging the Case, Lord Davenant, now undisturbed, slept quietly in his arm-chair. Her ladyship left them alone.

About half past twelve the sleeping claimant awoke and rubbed his eyes. 'I have had a most refreshing slumber, Mr. Goslett,' he yawned; 'a man who is married wants it. Sometimes it is what we shall do when we get the title confirmed; sometimes it's why we haven't made out our Case yet; sometimes it's why I don't go and see the queen myself; sometimes it is how we shall crow over Aurelia Tucker when we are established in our rights... but, whatever it is, it is never a quiet night. I think, Mr. Goslett, that if she'd only hold her tongue and go to sleep, I might make headway with that Case in the morning.'

'It seems straightforward enough,' said Harry. 'I can draw up the thing for you without any trouble. And then you must find out the best way to bring your claim before the House of Lords.'

'Put it into the Post-Office, addressed to the queen,' suggested the Claimant.

'No—not quite that, I think,' said Harry.

'There's only one weak point in the Case.'

'I knew you'd find out the weak point. She won't allow there's any weak point at all. Says it's clear from beginning to end.'

'So it is, if you make an admission.'

'Well, sir, what is that admission? Let us make it at once, and go on. Nothing can be fairer; we are quite prepared to meet you half-way with that admission.'

His lordship spoke as if conferring an immense advantage upon an imaginary opponent.

'I do not mind,' he said, 'anybody else finding out the weak point, because then I can tackle him. What vexes me, Mr. Goslett, is to find out that weak point myself. Because then there is nobody to argue it out with, and it is like cold water running down the back, and it keeps a man awake.'

'As for your admission—' said Harry, laughing.

'Well, sir, what is it?'

'Why, of course, you have to admit, unless you can prove it, that this Timothy Clitheroe Davenant, Wheelwright, was the Honorable Timothy Clitheroe Davenant, only son of Lord Davenant.'

His lordship was silent for awhile.

'Do you think, sir, that the queen will see this weak point?'

'I am quite sure that her advisers will.'

'And do you think—hush, Mr. Goslett, let us whisper—do you think that the queen will refuse to give us the title because of this point? Hush! she may be outside. He meant his wife, not her majesty.'

'A Committee of the House of Lords most undoubtedly may refuse to consider your claim proved.'

His lordship nodded his head in consideration of this possibility. Then he laughed gently and rubbed his hands.

'It will be rough at first. That is so, for certain, sure. There would be sleepless nights. And Aurelia Tucker would laugh. Clara Martha would—' he shuddered.

'Wal, if we've to go home without our title, I should be resigned. When a man is sixty years of age, sir, and, though born to greatness, not brought up accordin' to his birth, he can't always feel like settin' in a row with a crown upon his head; and though I wouldn't own up before Clara Martha, I doubt whether the British Peers would consider my company quite an honor to the Upper House. Though a plain citizen of the United States, sir, is as good as any lord that lives.'

'Better,' said Harry. 'He is much better.'

'He is, Mr. Goslett, he is. In the land where the Bird of Freedom—'

'Hush, my lord. You forget that you are a British Peer. No spread-eagle for you, Lord Davenant sighed.

'It is difficult,' he said, 'and I suppose there is no more loyal citizens than us of Canaan City.'

'Well, how are we to connect this Wheelwright with the Honorable Timothy who was supposed to be drowned?'

'There is his age, and there is his name. You've got those, Mr. Goslett. And then, as we agreed before, we will agree to that little admission.'

'But if everybody does not agree?'

'There is also the fact that we were always supposed to be heirs to something in the country.'

'I am afraid that is not enough. There is this great difficulty. Why should a young Englishman, the heir to a title and a great property, settle down in America and practice a handicraft?'

'Wal, sir, I can't rightly say. My grandfather carried that secret with him. And

if you'll oblige me, sir, you'll tell her ladyship that we are agreed upon that little admission which makes the connection complete. It will be time enough to undeceive her when the trouble comes. As for Aurelia Tucker, why—' here he smiled sweetly. 'If I know Clara Martha aright, she is quite able to tackle Aurelia by herself.'

This was the way in which the conduct of the Great Davenant case fell into the hands of a mere workman.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE FIRST DAY.

Angela's genteel place of business, destined as it was to greatness, came into the world with little pomp and no pretense. On the day appointed the workgirls came at nine, and found a brass plate on the door and a wire blind in the windows, bearing the announcement that this was the 'Dress-maker's Association.' This information gave them no curiosity, and produced no excitement in their minds. To them it seemed nothing but another artifice to attract the attention of a public very hard to move. They were quite used to these crafty announcements; they were cynically incredulous of low prices; they knew the real truth as to fabrics of freshness unlasting and stuffs which would never wear out; and as regards forced sales, fabulous prices, and incredible bargains, they merely lifted the eyelids of the scoffers and went into the work-room. Whatever was written or printed on bills in the window, no difference was ever made to them. Nor did the rise and fall of markets alter their wages one penny. This lack of interest in the success of their work is certainly a drawback to this metier, as to many others. Would it not be well if workmen of all kinds were directly interested in the enterprise for which they toiled out their labor?

If you have the curiosity to listen to the talk of workgirls in the evenings when they walk home, or as they journey homeward slowly in the crawling omnibus, you will be struck by a very remarkable phenomenon. It is not that they talk without stopping, because that is common to youthful woman in every rank. It is that in the evening they are always exasperated. They snap their lips, they breathe quick, they flash their eyes, they clench their fingers, and their talk is a narrative of indignation full of 'sezee,' 'sezi' and 'seshie'—mostly the last, because what 'she' said is generally the cause of all this wrath. A philosopher, who once investigated the subject, was fortunate enough to discover why workgirls are angry at eventide. He maintains that it means nothing in the world but nagging; they all, he says, sit together—forewomen, dress-makers, improvers, and apprentices—in one room. The room, whether large or small, is always close, the hours are long; as they sit at their work, head bent, back bent, feet still, they gradually get the fidgets. This is a real disease while it lasts. In the work-room it has got to last until the time to knock off. First it seizes the limbs, so that the younger ones want to get up and jump and dance, while the other ones would like to kick. If not relieved, the patient next gets the fidgets in her nerves, so that she wriggles in her chair, gets spasmodic twitchings, shakes her head violently, and bites her thread with viciousness. The next step is extreme irritability: and this is followed by a disposition on the part of the forewoman to find fault, and by a determination on the part of the workgirls not to be put upon, with an intention of speaking up should the occasion arise. Then comes nagging, which is, in fact, nothing but fidgets translated into English Prose. Some forewomen are excellent translators. And the end is generally exasperation, with fines, notices to leave, warnings, chequiness, retorts, accusations, charges, denials, tears, fault-finders, sneers, angry words, bitter things, personal reflections, innuendoes, disrespect, bullying, and every element of a Row Royal. Consequently, when the girls go home they are exasperated.

We know how Angela proposed to prevent the outbreak of this contagious disorder by ventilation, exercise, and frequent rests.

She took her place among the girls, and worked with them, sitting beside Nelly Sorensen, who was to have charge of the work-room. Rebekah, with Miss Messenger's magnificent Order on her mind, sat in the show-room waiting for visitors. But none except Mrs. Bormalack, accompanied by her ladyship, who stepped over to offer their congratulations and best wishes, and to see what Miss Messenger was going to have.

At eleven o'clock, when the first two hours' pull is beginning to be felt by the younger hands, Angela invited everybody to rest for half an hour. They obeyed with some surprise, and followed her with con-

siderable suspicion, as if some mean advantage was going to be taken of them, some trick 'sprung' upon them.

She took them into a kind of court, which had been the back garden, paved with asphalt and provided with nets, rackets, and all the gear for lawn tennis. She invited them to play for half an hour. It was a fine morning in early September, with a warm sun, a bright sky, and a cool breeze—the very day for lawn tennis. The girls, however, looked at the machinery and then at each other, and showed no inclination for the game. Then Angela led the way into the great glass room, where she pointed out the various bars, ropes, and posts which she had provided for their gymnastic exercises. They looked at each other again, and showed a disposition to giggle.

They were seven girls in all, not counting Rebekah, who remained in the show-room; and Nelly, who was a little older than the rest, stood rather apart. The girls were not unhealthy-looking, being all quite young, and therefore not as yet ruined as to complexion by gas and bad air. But they looked dejected, as if their work had no charms for them—indeed, one can hardly imagine that it had—they were only surprised, not elated, at the half hour's recreation; they expected that it would be deducted from their wages, and were resentful.

Then Angela made them a speech. She said, handling a racket to give herself confidence, that it was highly necessary to take plenty of exercise in the open air; that she was sure work would be better done and more quickly done if the fingers did not get too tired; therefore, that she had had this tennis-court prepared for them and the gymnasium fitted up, so that they might play in it every day. And then selecting Nelly and two others, who seemed active young creatures, she gave them their first lesson in lawn tennis.

The next day she gave a lesson to another set. In a few days tennis became a passion with the girls. The fashion spread. Lawn tennis is not an expensive game: shortly there will be no bit of square garden or vacant space in Stepney but will be marked out into its lawn tennis courts.

The gymnasium took longer to become popular. Girls do not like feats of strength; nor was it until the spell of wet weather last October, when out-door games became impossible, that the gymnasium began to attract at all. Then a spirit of emulation was set up, and bodily exercises became popular. After becoming quite sure that no deduction was made on account of the resting time, the girls ceased to be suspicious, and accepted the work—something like enthusiasm. Yet Miss Kennedy was their employer; therefore, a natural enemy—therefore, gifts from her continued, for some time, to be received with doubt and suspicion. This does not seem, on the whole, a healthy outcome of our social system; yet such an attitude is unfortunately common among workgirls.

At half past eleven they all resumed work.

At one o'clock another astonishment awaited them.

Miss Kennedy informed them that one of the reforms introduced by her was the providing of dinner every day, without deducting anything from their wages. Those to whom dinner was, on most days, the mockery of a piece of bread and butter, or a bun, or some such figment and pretense of a meal, simply gasped, and the stoutest held her breath for awhile, wondering what these things might mean.

Yes, there was dinner laid for them upstairs on a fair white cloth; for every girl a plentiful dish of beef with potatoes and other good things, and a glass of Messenger's Family Ale—that at eight and six the nine-gallon cask;—and bread a discretion. Angela would have added pudding, but was dissuaded by her forewoman, on the ground that not only would pudding swallow up too much of the profits, but that it would demoralize the girls. As it was, one of them, at the mere aspect and first contemplation of the beef fell a-weeping. She was lame, and she was the most dejected among them all. Why she wept, and how Angela followed her home, and what that home was like, and why she and her mother and her sisters do now continually praise and pray for Angela, belong to another story, concerned with the wretchedness and misery which are found at Whitechapel and Stepney, as well as in Soho and Marylebone and the back of R-gent Street. I shall not write many chapters of that story, for my part.

Truly a most wonderful workshop. Was ever such an association of dress-makers? After dinner they frolicked and romped, though as yet in an untaught way, until two, when they began work again.

Miss Kennedy then made them another speech.

She told them that the success of the enterprise depended in great measure upon their own industry, skill, and energy; that that were all interested in it, because they were to receive, besides their wages, a share

in the profits; this they only partly understood. Nor did they comprehend her scheme much more when she went on to explain that they had the house and all the preliminary furniture found for them. But they saw in some vague way that here was an employer of a kind very much unlike any they had ever before experienced, and they were astonished and excited.

Later on, when they might be getting tired again, they had a visitor. It was no other than Captain Sorensen. He said that by permission of Miss Kennedy he would read to them for an hour, and that, if she permitted and they liked, as he was an old man with nothing to do, he would come and read to them often.

So this astonishing day passed on. They had tea at five, with another half hour's rest. As the evening was so fine, it was served in the garden.

At seven they found that it was time to strike work—an hour at least earlier than at any other house. What could these things mean?

And then fresh marvels. For when the work was put away, Miss Kennedy invited them all to follow her upstairs. There she formally presented them with a room for their own use in the evening if they pleased. There was a piano in it; but, unfortunately, nobody could play. The floor was polished for dancing, but then no one could dance; and there was a table with games upon it, and magazines and illustrated papers. In this room, Miss Kennedy told them, they could sing, dance, play, read, talk, sit, or do anything else in reason, and within the limits of modest recreation. They might also, on Saturday evenings, bring their friends, brothers, and so forth, who would also be expected to behave within the limits of modesty and good breeding. In short, the place was to be a drawing-room, and Angela proposed to train the girls by example and precept into a proper feeling as regards the use of a drawing-room. There was to be no giggling, no whispering in corners, nor was there to be any horseplay. Good manners lie between horseplay on the one hand and giggling on the other.

The kind of evening proposed by their wonderful mistress struck the girls at first with a kind of stupefaction. Outside, the windows being open, they could hear the steps of those who walked, talked, and laughed on Stepney Green. They would have preferred to be among that throng of idle promenaders; it seemed to them a more beautiful thing to walk up and down the paths than to sit about in a room and be told to play. There were no young men. There was the continual presence of their employer. They were afraid of her; there was also Miss Hermitage, of whom also they were afraid; there was, in addition, Miss Sorensen, of whom they might learn to be afraid. As for Miss Kennedy, they were the more afraid of her because, not only did she walk, talk, and look like a person out of another world, but, oh! wonderful! she knew nothing—evidently nothing—of their little tricks. Naturally one is afraid of a person who knows nothing of one's wicked ways. This is the awkwardness in entertaining angels. They naturally assume that their entertainers stand on the same elevated level as themselves; this causes embarrassment. Most of us, like Angela's shopgirls, would, under the circumstances, betray a tendency to giggle.

Then she tried to relieve them from their awkwardness by sitting down to the piano and playing a lively galop.

'Dance, girls,' she cried.

In their early childhood, before they went to school or workshop, the girls had been accustomed to a good deal of dancing. Their ball-room was the street; their floor was the curbstone; their partners had been other little girls; their music the organ-grinder's. They danced with no step, such as came by nature; but their little feet struck true and kept good time. Now they were out of practice; they were grown big, too; they could no longer seize each other by the waist and caper round and round. Yet the music was inspiring; eyes brightened, their heels became as light as air. Yet, alas! they did not know the steps.

Angela stopped playing and looked round her. The girls were crowded together.

Rebekah Hermitage sat apart at the table. There was that in her face which betokened disapproval, mingled with curiosity, for she had never seen a dance, and never, except on a barrel-organ, heard dance music. Nelly Sorensen stood beside the piano, watching the player with the devotion which belongs to the disciple who loves the most. Whatever Miss Kennedy did was right and sweet and beautiful. Also, whatever she did filled poor Nelly with a sense of humiliation, because she herself felt so ignorant.

'Rebekah! Nelly!' cried Angela. 'Can you not help me?'

Both shook their heads.

'I can not dance,' said Rebekah, trying to show a little scorn or, at least, some disapprobation. 'In our Connection we never dance.'

'You never dance?' Angela forgot for the moment that she was in Stepney, and

among a class of girls who do not dance.

'Do you sing?'

'If any is merry,' replied Rebekah, 'let him sing hymns.'

'Nelly, can you help me?'

She, too, shook her head. But, she said, 'her father could play the fiddle. Might he come?'

Angela begged her to invite him immediately, and on her way to ask Mr. Goslett, at Mrs. Bormalack's, to bring his fiddle too. Between them they would teach the girls to dance.

Then she sat down and began to sing. First she sang 'By the Banks of Allan Water,' and then 'The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington,' and next 'Drink to Me only with Thine Eyes'—sweet and simple ditties all. Then came Captain Sorensen, bearing his fiddle, and happy to help, and while he played, Angela stood all the girls in a row before her, headed by Nelly, and gave them their first lesson in the giddy dance.

Then came Harry Goslett, and at the sight of his cheerful countenance and at the mere beholding how he bowed to Miss Kennedy, and asked to be allowed, and put his arm round her waist and whirled her round in a galop, their hearts were lifted up, and they longed no more for Stepney Green. Then he changed Miss Kennedy for Nelly; and though she was awkward at first, she soon fell into the step, while Miss Kennedy danced with another; and then Mr. Goslett with another, and so on till all had had a practical lesson. Then they ceased altogether to long for the jeet of the gallant 'prentice; for what were jests to this manly, masterful seizure by the waist, this lifting almost off the feet, this whirl round and round to the music of the fiddle which the brave old captain played as merrily as any bo's'n's mate or quartermaster of an East Indianman? In half an hour the feet of all but one—the one who, poor girl, was lame—felt that noble sympathy with the music so readily caught up by those intelligent organs, and—they could dance. Perhaps for the first time in the annals of Stepney, her daughters had learned to dance.

The rest would be easy. They tried a quadrille, then another galop. Harry endeavored to do his duty, but there were some who remarked that he danced twice, that second galop, with Nelly Sorensen, and they were jealous. Yet it was only an unconscious tribute paid to beauty. The young fellow was among a bevy of dress-makers; an uncommon position for a man of his bringing up. One of them, somehow, was to all appearance, and to any but perhaps the most practiced eye, a real genuine lady—not a copy at all; the other was so graceful and sweet that she seemed to want but a touch to effect the transformation. As for the other girls, they were simple young persons of the work-room and counter—a common type. So common, alas! that we are apt to forget the individuality of each, her personal hopes, and her infinite possibilities. Yet, however insignificant is the crowd, the individual is so important.

Then he was interested in the dark-eyed girl who sat by herself at the table, looking on anxiously at an amusement she had always heard of as 'soul-destroying.' She was wondering why her ears were pleased with the playing, and why her brain was filled with strange images, and why it was so pleasant to watch the girls dancing, their eyes aglow and their cheeks flushed.

'Do not tempt me,' she said, when Harry ventured to invite her, too, to join the giddy throng. 'Do not tempt me—no—go away!'

Her very brusqueness showed how strong was the temptation. Was she, already, giving way to the first temptation?

Presently, the evening was over, the girls had all trooped noisily out of the house, and Angela, Captain Sorensen, Nelly, and the young workman, were walking across the Green in the direction of the Almshouse.

When Angela got home to the Boarding-House the dreariness of the evening was in full blast. The boarders were sitting in silence, each wrapped in his own thoughts. The professor lifted his head as she entered the room, and regarded her with thoughtful eyes, as if appraising her worth as a clairvoyante. David Fagg scowled horribly. His lordship opened his mouth as if to speak, but said nothing. Mr. Maliphant took his pipe out of his mouth, and began a story. 'I remember,' he said, 'the last time but one that he was ruined—he did not state the name of the gentleman—the whole town was on fire, and his house with them. What did he do? Mounted his horse and rode around, and bought up all the timber for twenty miles around. And see what he's worth now!' When he had told this story he relapsed into silence. Angela thought of that casual collection of unsympathetic animals put into a cage and called a 'Happy Family.'

(To be Continued.)

Ottawa has now 16 labor unions, with prospects of the establishment of several more.

An unsuccessful attempt was made on Tuesday to rob Paymaster Abbott, of the Rideau canal, of \$3,000.