# WALTER BESANT

## ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS OF MEN: AN IMPOSSIBLE STORY

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**Besant W.**

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# Содержание

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## PREFACE

The ten years' partnership of myself and my late friend Mr. James Rice has been terminated by death. I am persuaded that nothing short of death would have put an end to a partnership which was conducted throughout with perfect accord, and without the least difference of opinion. The long illness which terminated fatally on April 25th of this year began in January of last year. There were intervals during which he seemed to be recovering and gaining strength; he was, indeed, well enough in the autumn to try change of air by a visit to Holland; but he broke down again very shortly after his return: though he did not himself suspect it, he was under sentence of death, and for the last six months of his life his downward course was steady and continuous.

Almost the last act of his in our partnership was the arrangement, with certain country papers and elsewhere, for the serial publication of this novel, the subject and writing of which were necessarily left entirely to myself.

The many wanderings, therefore, which I undertook last summer in Stepney, Whitechapel, Poplar, St. George's in the East, Limehouse, Bow, Stratford, Shadwell, and all that great and marvellous unknown country which we call East London, were undertaken, for the first time for ten years, alone. They would have been undertaken in great sadness had one foreseen the end. In one of these wanderings I had the happiness to discover Rotherhithe, which I afterward explored with carefulness; in another, I lit upon a certain Haven of Rest for aged sea-captains, among whom I found Captain Sorensen; in others I found many wonderful things, and conversed with many wonderful people. The "single-handedness," so to speak, of this book would have been a mere episode in the history of the firm, a matter of no concern or interest to the general public, had my friend recovered. But he is dead; and it therefore devolves upon me to assume the sole responsibility of the work, for good or bad. The same responsibility is, of course, assumed for the two short stories, "The Captain's Room," published at Christmas last, and "They Were Married," published as the summer number of the *Illustrated London News*. The last story was, in fact, written after the death of my partner; but as it had already been announced, it was thought best, under the circumstances, to make no change in the title.

I have been told by certain friendly advisers that this story is impossible. I have, therefore, stated the fact on the title-page, so that no one may complain of being taken in or deceived. But I have never been able to understand why it is impossible.

*Walter Besant.*

United Universities' Club, *August 19, 1882*.

# PROLOGUE. – Part I

It was the evening of a day in early June. The time was last year, and the place was Cambridge. The sun had been visible in the heavens, a gracious presence, actually a whole week – in itself a thing remarkable; the hearts of the most soured, even of landlords and farmers, were coming to believe again in the possibility of fine weather; the clergy were beginning to think that they might this year hold a real Harvest Thanksgiving instead of a sham; the trees at the Backs were in full foliage; the avenues of Trinity and Clare were splendid; beside them the trim lawns sloped to the margin of the Cam, here most glorious and proudest of English rivers, seeing that he laves the meadows of those ancient and venerable foundations, King's, Trinity, and St. John's, to say nothing of Queen's and Clare and Magdalen; men were lazily floating in canoes, or leaning over the bridges, or strolling about the walks, or lying on the grass; and among them – but not – oh! not with them – walked or rested many of the damsels of learned Newnham, chiefly in pairs, holding sweet converse not neglecting the foundations of the Christian faith and other fashionable topics, which ladies nowadays handle with so much learning, originality, dexterity, and power.

On mind and art,
And labor and the changing mart,
And all the framework of the land:

We have, however, to do with only one pair, who were sitting together on the banks opposite Trinity. These two were talking about a subject far more interesting than any concerning mind, or art, or philosophy, or the chances of the senate-house, or the future of Newnham: for they were talking about themselves and their own lives, and what they were to do each with that one life which happened, by the mere accident of birth, to belong to herself. It must be a curious subject for reflection in extreme old age, when everything has happened that is going to happen, including rheumatism, that, but for this accident, one's life might have been so very different.

"Because, Angela," said the one who wore spectacles and looked older than she was, by reason of much pondering over books and perhaps too little exercise, "because, my dear, we have but this one life before us, and if we make mistakes with it, or throw it away, or waste it, or lose our chances, it is such a dreadful pity. Oh, to think of the girls who drift and let every chance go by, and get nothing out of their lives at all – except babies" (she spoke of babies with great contempt). "Oh! it seems as if every moment were precious: oh! it is a sin to waste an hour of it."

She gasped and clasped her hands together with a sigh. She was not acting, not at all; this girl was that hitherto rare thing, a girl of study and of books; she was wholly possessed, like the great scholars of old, with the passion for learning.

"Oh! greedy person!" replied the other with a laugh, "if you read all the books in the University library, and lose the enjoyment of sunshine, what shall it profit you, in the long run?"

This one was a young woman of much finer physique than her friend. She was not short-sighted, but possessed, in fact, a pair of orbs of very remarkable clearness, steadiness, and brightness. They were not soft eyes, nor languishing eyes, nor sleepy eyes, nor downcast, shrinking eyes; they were wide-awake, brown, honest eyes, which looked fearlessly upon all things, fair or foul. A girl does not live at Newnham two years for nothing, mind you; when she leaves that seat of learning, she has changed her mind about the model, the perfect, the ideal woman. More than that, she will change the minds of her sisters and her cousins; and there are going to be a great many Newnhams, and the spread of this revolution will be rapid; and the shrinking, obedient, docile, man-reverencing, curate-worshipping maiden of our youth will shortly vanish and be no more seen. And what will the curate do then, poor thing? Wherefore let the bishop look to certain necessary changes in the marriage service;

and let the young men see that their own ideas change with the times, else there will be no sweethearts for them. More could I prophesy, but refrain.

This young lady owned, besides those mentioned above, many other points which will always be considered desirable at her age, whatever be the growth of feminine education (wherefore, courage, brothers!). In all these points she contrasted favorably with her companion. For her face was sunny, and fair to look upon; one of the younger clerical dons – now a scanty band, almost a remnant – was reported to have said, after gazing upon that face, that he now understood, which he had never understood before, what Solomon meant when he compared his love's temples to a piece of pomegranate within her locks. No one asked him what *he* meant, but he was a mathematical man, and so he must have meant something, if it was only trigonometry. As to her figure, it was what a healthy, naturally dressed, and strong young woman's figure ought to be, and not more slender in the waist than was the figure of Venus or Mother Eve; and her limbs were elastic, so that she seemed when she walked as if she would like to run, jump, and dance, which, indeed, she would have greatly preferred, only at Newnham they "take it out" at lawn tennis. And whatever might be the course of life marked out by herself, it was quite certain to the intelligent observer that before long Love the invincible – Love that laughs at plots, plans, conspiracies, and designs – would upset them all, and trace out quite another line of life for her, and most probably the most commonplace line of all.

"Your life, Constance," she went on, "seems to me the most happy and the most fortunate. How nobly you have vindicated the intellect of women by your degree!"

"No, my dear." Constance shook her head sadly. "No: only partly vindicated our intellect; remember I was but fifth wrangler, and there were four men – men, Angela – above me. I wanted to be senior."

"Everybody knows that the fifth is always as good as the first." Constance, however, shook her head at this daring attempt at consolation. "At all events, Constance, you will go on to prove it by your original papers when you publish your researches. You will lecture like Hypatia; you will have the undergraduates leaving the men and crowding to your theatre. You will become the greatest mathematician in Cambridge; you will be famous for ever. You will do better than man himself, even in man's most exalted level of intellectual strength."

The pale cheek of the student flushed.

"I do not expect to do better than men," she replied humbly. "It will be enough if I do as well. Yes, my dear, all my life, short or long, shall be given to science. I will have no love in it, or marriage, or – or – anything of that kind at all."

"Nor will I," said the other stoutly, yet with apparent effort. "Marriage spoils a woman's career; we must live our life to its utmost, Constance."

"We must, Angela. It is the only thing in this world of doubt that is a clear duty. I owe mine to science. You, my dear, to – "

She would have said to "Political Economy," but a thought checked her. For a singular thing had happened only the day before. This friend of hers, this Angela Messenger, who had recently illustrated the strength of women's intellect by passing a really brilliant examination in that particular science, astonished her friends at a little informal meeting in the library by an oration. In this speech she went out of her way to pour contempt upon Political Economy. It was a so-called science, she said – not a science at all: a collection of theories impossible of proof. It treated of men and women as skittles, it ignored the principal motives of action, it had been put together for the most part by doctrinaires who lived apart, and knew nothing about men and less about women, and it was a favorite study, she cruelly declared, of her own sex, because it was the most easily crammed and made the most show. As for herself, she declared that for all the good it had done her, she might just as well have gone through a course of æsthetics or studied the symbols of advanced ritualism.

Therefore, remembering the oration, Constance Woodcote hesitated. To what Cause (with a capital C) should Angela Messenger devote her life?

"I will tell you presently," said Angela, "how I shall begin my life. Where the beginning will lead me, I cannot tell."

Then there was silence for a while. The sun sank lower and the setting rays fell upon the foliage, and every leaf showed like a leaf of gold, and the river lay in shadow and became ghostly, and the windows of Trinity Library opposite to them glowed, and the New Court of St. John's at their left hand became like unto the palace of Kubla Khan.

"Oh!" sighed the young mathematician. "I shall never be satisfied till Newnham crosses the river. We must have one of these colleges for ourselves. We must have King's. Yes, King's will be the best. And oh! how differently we shall live from the so-called students who are now smoking tobacco in each other's rooms, or playing billiards, or even cards – the superior sex!"

"As for us, we shall presently go back to our rooms, have a cup of tea and a talk, my dear. Then we shall go to bed. As regards the men, those of your mental level, Constance, do not, I suppose, play billiards; nor do they smoke tobacco. Undergraduates are not all students, remember. Most of them are nothing but mere pass-men who will become curates."

Two points in this speech seem to call for remark. First, the singular ignorance of mankind, common to all women, which led the girl to believe that a great man of science is superior to the pleasures of weaker brethren; for they cannot understand the delights of fooling. The second point is – but it may be left to those who read as they run.

Then they rose and walked slowly under the grand old trees of Trinity Avenue, facing the setting sun, so that when they came to the end and turned to the left, it seemed as if they plunged into night. And presently they came to the gates of Newnham, the newer Newnham, with its trim garden and Queen Anne mansion. It grates upon one that the beginnings of a noble and lasting reform should be housed in a palace built in the conceited fashion of the day. What will they say of it in fifty years, when the fashion has changed and new styles reign?

"Come," said Angela, "come into my room. Let my last evening in the dear place be spent with you, Constance."

Angela's own room was daintily furnished and adorned with as many pictures, pretty things, books, and *bric-à-brac* as the narrow dimensions of a Newnham cell will allow. In a more advanced Newnham there will be two rooms for each student, and these will be larger.

The girls sat by the open window: the air was soft and sweet. A bunch of cowslips from the Coton meadows perfumed the room; there was the jug-jug of a nightingale in some tree not far off; opposite them were the lights of the other Newnham.

"The last night!" said Angela. "I can hardly believe that I go down to-morrow."

Then she was silent again.

"My life," she went on, speaking softly in the twilight, "begins to-morrow. What am I to do with it? Your own solution seems so easy because you are clever and you have no money, while I, who am – well, dear, not devoured by thirst for learning – have got so much. To begin with, there is the Brewery. You cannot escape from a big brewery if it belong to you. You cannot hide it away. Messenger, Marsden & Company's Stout, their XXX, their Old and Mild, their Bitter, their Family Ales (that particularly at eight-and-six the nine-gallon cask, if paid for on delivery), their drays, their huge horses, their strong men, whose very appearance advertises the beer, and makes the weak-kneed and the narrow-chested rush to Whitechapel – my dear, these things stare one in the face wherever you go. I am that brewery, as you know. I am Messenger, Marsden & Company, myself, the sole partner in what my lawyer sweetly calls the Concern. Nobody else is concerned in it. It is – alas! – my own Great Concern, a dreadful responsibility."

"Why? Your people manage it for you."

"Yes – oh! yes – they do. And whether they manage it badly or well I do not know; whether they make wholesome beer or bad, whether they treat their clerks and workmen generously or meanly,

whether the name of the company is beloved or hated, I do not know. Perhaps the very making of beer at all is wickedness."

"But – Angela," the other interrupted, "it is no business of yours. Naturally, wages are regulated by supply and – "

"No, my dear. That is political economy. I prefer the good old English plan. If I employ a man and he works faithfully, I should like that man to feel that he grows every day worth to me more than his marketable value."

Constance was silenced.

"Then, beside the brewery," Angela went on, "there is an unconscionable sum of money in the funds."

"There, at least," said her friend, "you need feel no scruple of conscience."

"But indeed I do; for how do I know that it is right to keep all this money idle! A hundred pounds saved and put into the funds mean three pounds a year. It is like a perennial stream flowing from a hidden reservoir in the hillside. But this stream, in my case, does no good at all. It neither fertilizes the soil nor is it drunk by man or beast, nor does it turn mills, nor is it a beautiful thing to look upon, nor does its silver current flow by banks of flowers or fall in cascades. It all runs away, and makes another reservoir in another hillside. My dear, it is a stream of compound interest, which is constantly getting deeper and broader and stronger, and yet is never of the least use, and turns no wheels. Now, what am I to do with this money?"

"Endow Newnham; there, at least, is something practical."

"I will found some scholarships, if you please, later on, when you have made your own work felt. Again, there are my houses in the East End."

"Sell them."

"That is only to shift the responsibility. My dear, I have streets of houses. They all lie about Whitechapel way. My grandfather, John Messenger, bought houses, I believe, just as other people buy apples, by the peck, or some larger measure, a reduction being made on taking a quantity. There they are, and mostly inhabited."

"You have agents, I suppose?" said Constance unsympathizingly. "It is their duty to see that the houses are well kept."

"Yes, I have agents. But they cannot absolve me from responsibility."

"Then," asked Constance, "what do you mean to do?"

"I am a native almost of Whitechapel. My grandfather, who succeeded to the brewery, was born there. His father was also a brewer: his grandfather is, I believe, prehistoric: he lived there long after his son, my father, was born. When he moved to Bloomsbury Square he thought he was getting into quite a fashionable quarter, and he only went to Portman Square because he desired me to go into society. I am so rich that I shall quite certainly be welcomed in society. But, my dear, Whitechapel and its neighborhood are my proper sphere. Why, my very name! I reek of beer; I am all beer; my blood is beer. Angela Marsden Messenger! What could more plainly declare my connection with Messenger, Marsden & Company? I only wonder that he did not call me Marsden-&-Company Messenger."

"But – Angela – "

"He would, Constance, if he had thought of it. For, you see, I was the heiress from the very beginning, because my father died before my birth. And my grandfather intended me to become the perfect brewer, if a woman can attain to so high an ideal. Therefore I was educated in the necessary and fitting lines. They taught me the industries of England, the arts and manufactures, mathematics, accounts, the great outlets of trade, book-keeping, mechanics – all those things that are practical. How it happened that I was allowed to learn music I do not know. Then, when I grew up, I was sent here by him, because the very air of Cambridge, he thought, makes people exact; and women are so prone to be inexact. I was to read while I was here all the books about political and social economy. I have also learned for business purposes two or three languages. I am now finished. I know all the

theories about people, and I don't believe any of them will work. Therefore, my dear, I shall get to know the people before I apply them."

"Was your grandfather a student of political economy?"

"Not at all. But he had a respect for justice, and he wanted me to be just. It is so difficult, he used to say, for a woman to be just. For either she flies into a rage and punishes with excess, or she takes pity and forgives. As for himself, he was as hard as nails, and the people knew it."

"And your project?"

"It is very simple. I efface myself. I vanish. I disappear."

"What?"

"If anybody asks where I am, no one will know, except you, my dear; and you will not tell."

"You will be in – "

"In Whitechapel, or thereabouts. Your Angela will be a dressmaker, and she will live by herself and become – what her great-grandmother was – one of the people."

"You will not like it at all."

"Perhaps not; but I am weary of theories, facts, statistics. I want flesh and blood. I want to feel myself a part of this striving, eager, anxious humanity, on whose labors I live in comfort, by whom I have been educated, to whom I owe all, and for whom I have done nothing – no, nothing at all, selfish wretch that I am!"

She clasped her hands with a fine gesture of remorse.

"O woman of silence!" she cried; "you sit upon the heights, and you can disregard – because it is your right – the sorrows and the joys of the world. But I cannot. I belong to the people – with a great big P, my dear – I cannot bear to go on living by their toil and giving nothing in return. What a dreadful thing is a she-Dives!"

"I confess," said Constance coldly, "that I have always regarded wealth as a means for leading the higher life – the life of study and research – unencumbered by the sordid aims and mean joys of the vulgar herd."

"It is possible and right for you to live apart, my dear. It is impossible, because it would be wrong for me."

"But – alone? You will venture into the dreadful region alone?"

"Quite alone, Constance."

"And – and – your reputation, Angela?"

Angela laughed merrily.

"As for my reputation, my dear, it may take care of itself. Those of my friends who think I am not to be trusted may transfer their affection to more worthy objects. The first thing in the emancipation of the sex, Constance, is equal education. The next is – "

"What?" for Angela paused.

She drew forth from her pocket a small bright instrument of steel, which glittered in the twilight. Not a revolver, dear readers.

"The next," she said, brandishing the weapon before Constance's eyes, "is – the LATCH-KEY."

# PROLOGUE. – Part II

The time was eleven in the forenoon; the season was the month of roses; the place was a room on the first floor at the Park-end of Piccadilly – a noisy room, because the windows were open, and there was a great thunder and rattle of cabs, omnibuses, and all kinds of vehicles. When this noise became, as it sometimes did, intolerable, the occupant of the room shut his double windows, and immediately there was a great calm, with a melodious roll of distant wheels, like the buzzing of bees about the marigold on a summer afternoon. With the double window a man may calmly sit down amid even the roar of Cheapside, or the never-ending cascade of noise at Charing Cross.

The room was furnished with taste; the books on the shelves were well bound, as if the owner took a proper pride in them, as indeed was the case. There were two or three good pictures; there was a girl's head in marble; there were cards and invitations lying on the mantel-shelf and in a rack beside the clock. Everybody could tell at the first look of the room that it was a bachelor's den. Also because nothing was new, and because there were none of the peacockeries, whims and fancies, absurdities, fads and fashions, gimcrackeries, the presence of which does always and infallibly proclaim the chamber of a young man; this room manifestly belonged to a bachelor who was old in the profession. In fact, the owner of the chambers, of which this was the breakfast, morning, and dining-room, whenever he dined at home, was seated in an armchair beside a breakfast-table, looking straight before him, with a face filled with anxiety. An honest, ugly, pleasing, rugged, attractive face, whose features were carved one day when Dame Nature was benevolently disposed, but had a blunt chisel.

"I always told him," he muttered, "that he should learn the whole of his family history as soon as he was three-and-twenty years of age. One must keep such promises. Yet it would have been better that he should never know. But then it might have been found out, and that would have been far worse. Yet, how could it have been found out? No: that is ridiculous."

He mused in silence. In his fingers he held a cigar which he had lit, but allowed to go out again. The morning paper was lying on the table, unopened.

"How will the boy take it?" he asked; "will he take it crying? Or will he take it laughing?"

He smiled, picturing to himself the "boy's" astonishment.

Looking at the man more closely, one became aware that he was really a very pleasant-looking person. He was about five-and-forty years of age, and he wore a full beard and mustache, after the manner of his contemporaries, with whom a beard is still considered a manly ornament to the face. The beard was brown, but it began to show, as wine-merchants say of port, the "appearance of age." In some light, there was more gray than brown. His dark-brown hair, however, retained its original thickness of thatch, and was as yet untouched by any streak of gray. Seeing that he belonged to one of the oldest and best of English families, one might have expected something of that delicacy of feature which some of us associate with birth. But, as has already been said, his face was rudely chiselled, his complexion was ruddy, and he looked as robust as a plough-boy; yet he had the air of an English gentleman, and that ought to satisfy anybody. And he was the younger son of a duke, being by courtesy Lord Jocelyn Le Breton.

While he was thus meditating, there was a quick step on the stair, and the subject of his thoughts entered the room.

This interesting young man was a much more aristocratic person to look upon than his senior. He paraded, so to speak, at every point, the thoroughbred air. His thin and delicate nose, his clear eye, his high though narrow forehead, his well-cut lip, his firm chin, his pale cheek, his oval face, the slim figure, the thin, long fingers, the spring of his walk, the poise of his head – what more could one expect even from the descendant of all the Howards? But this morning the pallor of his cheek was flushed as if with some disquieting news.

"Good-morning, Harry," said Lord Jocelyn quietly.

Harry returned the greeting. Then he threw upon the table a small packet of papers.

"There, sir, I have read them; thank you for letting me see them."

"Sit down, boy, and let us talk; will you have a cigar? No? A cigarette, then? No? You are probably a little upset by this – new – unexpected revelation?"

"A *little* upset!" repeated the young man, with a short laugh.

"To be sure – to be sure – one could expect nothing else; now sit down, and let us talk over the matter calmly."

The young man sat down, but he did not present the appearance of one inclined to talk over the matter calmly.

"In novels," said Lord Jocelyn, "it is always the good fortune of young gentlemen brought up in ignorance of their parentage to turn out, when they do discover their origin, the heirs to an illustrious name; I have always admired that in novels. In your case, my poor Harry, the reverse is the case; the distinction ought to console you."

"Why was I not told before?"

"Because the boyish brain is more open to prejudice than that of the adult; because, among your companions, you certainly would have felt at a disadvantage had you known yourself to be the son of a – "

"You always told me," said Harry, "that my father was in the army!"

"What do you call a sergeant in a line regiment, then?"

"Oh! of course, but among gentlemen – I mean – among the set with whom I was brought up, to be in the army means to have a commission."

"Yes: that was my pardonable deception. I thought that you would respect yourself more if you felt that your father, like the fathers of your friends, belonged to the upper class. Now, my dear boy, you will respect yourself just as much, although you know that he was but a sergeant, and a brave fellow who fell at my side in the Indian Mutiny."

"And my mother?"

"I did not know her; she was dead before I found you out, and took you from your Uncle Bunker."

"Uncle Bunker!" Harry laughed, with a little bitterness. "Uncle Bunker! Fancy asking one's Uncle Bunker to dine at the club! What is he by trade?"

"He is something near a big brewery, a brewery boom, as the Americans say. What he actually is, I do not quite know. He lives, if I remember rightly, at a place an immense distance from here, called Stepney."

"Do you know anything more about my father's family?"

"No! The sergeant was a tall, handsome, well set-up man; but I know nothing about his connections. His name, if that is any help to you, was, was – in fact" – here Lord Jocelyn assumed an air of ingratiating sweetness – "was – Goslett – Goslett; not a bad name, I think, pronounced with perhaps a leaning to an accent on the last syllable. Don't you agree with me, Harry?"

"Oh! yes, it will do. Better than Bunker, and not so good as Le Breton. As for my Christian name, now?"

"There I ventured on one small variation."

"Am I not, then, even Harry?"

"Yes, yes, yes, you are – now; formerly you were Harry without the H. It is the custom of the neighborhood in which you were born."

"I see! If I go back among my own people, I shall be, then, once more 'Arry?"

"Yes; and shout on penny steamers, and brandish pint bottles of stout, and sing along the streets, in simple abandonment to Arcadian joy; and trample on flowers; and break pretty things for wantonness; and exercise a rude but effective wit, known among the ancients as Fescennine, upon

passing ladies; and get drunk o' nights; and walk the streets with a pipe in your mouth. That is what you would be, if you went back, my dear child."

Harry laughed.

"After all," he said, "this is a very difficult position. I can no longer go about pretending anything; I must tell people."

"Is that absolutely necessary?"

"Quite necessary. It will be a deuce of a business, explaining."

"Shall we tell it to one person, and let him be the town-crier?"

"That, I suppose, would be the best plan; meantime, I could retire, while I made some plans for the future."

"Perhaps, if you really must tell the truth, it would be well to go out of town for a bit."

"As for myself," Harry continued, "I suppose I shall get over the wrench after a bit. Just for the moment I feel knocked out of time."

"Keep the secret, then; let it be one between you and me only, Harry; let no one know."

But he shook his head.

"Everybody must know. Those who refuse to keep up the acquaintance of a private soldier's son – well, then, a non-commissioned officer's son – will probably let me know their decision, some way or other. Those who do not – " He paused.

"Nonsense, boy; who cares nowadays what a man is by birth? Is not this great city full of people who go anywhere, and are nobody's sons? Look here, and here" – he tossed half a dozen cards of invitation across the table – "can you tell me who these people were twenty years ago – or these – or these?"

"No: I do not care in the least who they were. I care only that they shall know who I am; I will not, for my part, pretend to be what I am not."

"I believe you are right, boy. Let the world laugh if they please, and have done with it."

Harry began to walk up and down the room; he certainly did not look the kind of a man to give in; to try hiding things away. Quite the contrary. And he laughed – he took to laughing.

"I suppose it will sound comic at first," he said, "until people get used to it. Do you know what he turns out to be? That kind of thing: after all, we think too much about what people say – what does it matter what they say or how they say it? If they like to laugh, they can. Who shall be the town-crier?"

"I was thinking," said Lord Jocelyn slowly, "of calling to-day upon Lady Wimbledon."

The young man laughed, with a little heightening of his color.

"Of course – a very good person, an excellent person, and to-morrow it will be all over London. There are one or two things," he went on after a moment, "that I do not understand from the papers which you put into my hands last night."

"What are those things?" Lord Jocelyn for a moment looked uneasy.

"Well – perhaps it is impertinent to ask. But – when Mr. Bunker, the respectable Uncle Bunker, traded me away, what did he get for me?"

"Every bargain has two sides," said Lord Jocelyn. "You know what I got, you want to know what the honorable Bunker got. Harry, on that point I must refer you to the gentleman himself."

"Very good. Then I come to the next difficulty – a staggerer. What did you do it for? One moment, sir" – for Lord Jocelyn seemed about to reply. "One moment. You were rich, you were well born, you were young. What on earth made you pick a boy out of the gutter and bring him up like a gentleman?"

"You are twenty-three, Harry, and yet you ask for motives. My dear boy, have you not learned the golden rule? In all human actions look for the basest motive, and attribute that. If you see any reason for stopping short of quite the lowest spurs to action, such as revenge, hatred, malice, and envy, suppose the next lowest, and you will be quite safe. That next lowest is —*son altesse, ma vanité*."

"Oh!" replied Harry, "yet I fail to see how a child of the lowest classes could supply any satisfaction for even the next lowest of human motives."

"It was partly in this way. Mind, I do not for one moment pretend to answer the whole of your question. Men's motives, thank Heaven, are so mixed up, that no one can be quite a saint, while no one is altogether a sinner. Nature is a leveller, which is a comfort to us who are born in levelling times. In those days I was by way of being a kind of Radical. Not a Radical such as those who delight mankind in these happier days. But I had Liberal leanings, and thought I had ideas. When I was a boy of twelve or so, there were the '48 theories floating about the air; some of them got into my brain and stuck there. Men used to believe that a great time was coming – perhaps I heard a whisper of it; perhaps I was endowed with a greater faculty for credulity than my neighbors, and believed in humanity. However, I do not seek to explain. It may have occurred to me – I do not say it did – but I have a kind of recollection as if it did – one day after I had seen you, then in the custody of the respectable Bunker, that it would be an instructive and humorous thing to take a boy of the multitude and bring him up in all the culture, the tastes, the ideas of ourselves – you and me, for instance, Harry. This idea may have seized upon me, so that the more I thought of it, the better pleased I was with it. I may have pictured such a boy so taught, so brought up, with such tastes, returning to his own people. Disgust, I may have said, will make him a prophet; and such a prophet as the world has never yet seen. He would be like the follower of the Old Man of the Mountain. He would never cease to dream of the paradise he had seen: he would never cease to tell of it; he would be always leading his friends upward to the same levels on which he had once stood."

"Humph!" said Harry.

"Yes, I know," Lord Jocelyn went on. "I ought to have foretold that the education I prepared for you would have unfitted you for the rôle of prophet. I am not disappointed in you, Harry – quite the reverse. I now see that what has happened has been only what I should have expected. By some remarkable accident, you possess an appearance such as is generally believed to belong to persons of long-continued gentle descent. By a still more remarkable accident, all your tastes prove to be those of the cultured classes; the blood of the Bunkers has, in yourself, assumed the most azure hue."

"That is very odd," said Harry.

"It is a very remarkable thing, indeed," continued Lord Jocelyn gravely. "I have never ceased to wonder at this phenomenon. However, I was unable to send you to a public school on account of the necessity, as I thought, of concealing your parentage. But I gave you instruction of the best, and found for you companions – as you know, among the – "

"Yes," said Harry. "My companions were gentlemen, I suppose; I learned from them."

"Perhaps. Still, the earthenware pot cannot become a brass pot, whatever he may pretend. You were good metal from the beginning."

"You are now, Harry," he went on, "three-and-twenty. You are master of three foreign languages; you have travelled on the Continent and in America; you are a good rider, a good shot, a good fencer, a good dancer. You can paint a little, fiddle a little, dance a great deal, act pretty well, speak pretty well; you can, I dare say, make love as becomes a gentleman; you can write very fair verses; you are good-looking, you have the *air noble*; you are not a prig; you are not an æsthete; you possess your share of common sense."

"One thing you have omitted which, at the present juncture, may be more useful than any of these things."

"What is that?"

"You were good enough to give me a lathe, and to have me instructed in the mysteries of turning. I am a practical cabinet-maker, if need be."

"But why should this be of use to you?"

"Because, Lord Jocelyn" – Harry ran and leaned over the table with a sweet smile of determination on his face – "because I am going back to my own people for a while, and it may be that the trade of cabinet-making may prove a very backbone of strength to me among them – "

"Harry – you would not – indeed, you could not go back to Bunker?" Lord Jocelyn asked this question with every outward appearance of genuine alarm.

"I certainly would. My very kind guardian and patron, would you stand in my way? I want to see those people from where I am sprung: I want to learn how they differ from you and your kin. I must compare myself with them – I must prove the brotherhood of humanity."

"You will go? Yes – I see you will – it is in your eyes. Go, then, Harry. But return to me soon. The slender fortune of a younger son shall be shared with you so long as I live, and given to you when I die. Do not stay among them. There are, indeed – at least, I suppose so – all sorts and conditions of men. But to me, and to men brought up like you and me, I do not understand how there can be any but one sort and one condition. Come back soon, boy. Believe me – no – do not believe me – prove it yourself: in the social pyramid, the greatest happiness, Harry, lies near the top."

# CHAPTER I.
# NEWS FOR HIS LORDSHIP

"I have news for your lordship," said Mrs. Bormalack, at the breakfast-table, "something that will cheer you up a bit. We are to have an addition to our family."

His lordship nodded his head, meaning that he would receive her news without more delay than was necessary, but that at present his mind was wholly occupied with a contest between one of his teeth and a crust. The tooth was an outlying one, all its lovely companions having withered and gone, and it was undefended; the crust was unyielding. For the moment no one could tell what might be the result.

Her ladyship replied for him.

Lady Davenant was a small woman, if you go by inches; her exalted rank gave her, however, a dignity designed for very much larger persons; yet she carried it with ease. She was by no means young, and her hair was thin as well as gray; her face, which was oval and delicately curved, might formerly have been beautiful; the eyes were bright and eager, and constantly in motion, as is often the case with restless and nervous persons; her lips were thin and as full of independent action as her eyes; she had thin hands, so small that they might have belonged to a child of eight, when inclined for vaunting, the narrowest and most sloping shoulders that ever were seen, so sloping that people unaccustomed to her were wont to tremble lest the whole of her dress should suddenly slide straight down those shoulders, as down a slope of ice; and strange ladies, impelled by this apprehension, had been known to ask her in a friendly whisper if she could thoroughly depend upon the pins at her throat. As Mrs. Bormalack often said, speaking of her noble boarders among her friends, those shoulders of her ladyship were "quite a feature." Next to the pride of having at her table such guests – who, however, did not give in to the good old English custom of paying double prices for having a title – was the distinction of pointing to those unique shoulders and of talking about them.

Her ladyship had a shrill, reedy voice, and spoke loudly. It was remarked by the most superficial observer, moreover, that she possessed a very strong American accent.

"At our first boarding-house," she said, replying indirectly to the landlady's remark, "at our first boarding-house, which was in Wellclose Square, next to the Board Schools, there was a man who once *actually* slapped his lordship on the back. And then he laughed! To be sure, he was only a Dane, but the disrespect was just the same."

"My dear," said his lordship, who now spoke, having compromised matters with the crust, "the ignominy of being slapped on the back by a powerful sea-captain is hardly to be weighed in comparison with the physical pain it causes."

"We are quite sure, however, Mrs. Bormalack," the lady went on, "that you will admit none under your roof but those prepared to respect rank; we want no levellers or mischievous Radicals for our companions."

"It is to be a young lady," said Mrs. Bormalack.

"Young ladies, at all events, do not slap gentlemen on the back, whether they are noblemen or not," said his lordship kindly. "We shall be happy to welcome her, ma'am."

This ornament of the Upper House was a big, fat man, with a face like a full moon. His features were not distinctly aristocratic; his cheeks were flabby and his nose broad; also he had a double chin. His long hair was a soft, creamy white, the kind of white which in old age follows a manhood of red hair. He sat in an arm-chair at the end of the table, with his elbows on the arms, as if he desired to get as much rest out of the chair as possible. His eyes were very soft and dreamy; his expression was that of a man who has been accustomed to live in the quieter parts of the world. He, too, spoke with a marked American accent and with slowness, as if measuring his words, and appreciating himself

their importance. The dignity of his manner was not wholly due to his position, but in great measure to his former profession. For his lordship had not always rejoiced in his present dignity, nor, in fact, had he been brought up to it. Persons intending to become peers of Great Britain do not, as a rule, first spend more than forty years as schoolmasters in their native town. And just as clergymen, and especially young clergymen, love to talk loud, because it makes people remember that they are in the presence of those whose wisdom demands attention, so old schoolmasters speak slowly because their words – even the lightest, which are usually pretty heavy – have got to be listened to, under penalties.

As soon, however, as he began to "enjoy the title," the ex-schoolmaster addressed himself with some care to the cultivation of a manner which he thought due to his position. It was certainly pompous; it was intended to be affable; it was naturally, because he was a man of a most kind disposition and an excellent heart, courteous and considerate.

"I am rejoiced, Mrs. Bormalack," he went on grandly, and with a bow, "that we are to be cheered in our domestic circle by the addition of a young lady. It is an additional proof, if any were needed, of the care with which you consider the happiness of your guests." The professor, who owed for five weeks, murmured that no one felt it more than himself. "Sometimes, ma'am, I own that even with the delightful society of yourself" ("O my lord, your lordship is too kind," said Mrs. Bormalack) "and of the accomplished professor" – here he bowed to the professor, who nodded and spread out his hands professionally – "and of the learned Mr. Daniel Fagg" – here he bowed to Mr. Fagg, who took no notice at all, because he was thinking of his triangles and was gazing straight before him – "and of Mr. Josephus Coppins" – here he bowed to Josephus Coppins, who humbly inclined his head without a smile – "and of Mr. Maliphant" – here he bowed to Mr. Maliphant, who with a breakfast knife was trying to make a knobly crust assume the shape of a human head, in fact the head of Mr. Gladstone – "and of Mr. Harry Goslett, who is not with us so much as we could desire of so sprightly a young man; and surrounded as we are by all the gayety and dissipation and splendor of London, I sometimes suspect that we are not always so cheerful as we might be."

"Give me," said his wife, folding her little hands and looking round her with a warlike expression, as if inviting contradiction – "give me Canaan City, New Hampshire, for gayety."

Nobody combated this position, nor did anybody reply at all, unless the pantomime of the professor was intended for a reply by gesture, like the learned Thaumast. For, with precision and abstracted air, he rolled up a little ball of bread, about as big as a marble, placed it in the palm of his left hand, closed his fingers upon it, and then opened them, showing that the ball had vanished. Then he executed the slightest possible shrug of his shoulders, spread out his hands, and nodded to his lordship, saying, with a sweet smile:

"Pretty thing, isn't it?"

"I hope, sir, that she will be pretty," said his lordship, thinking of the young lady. "To look at a pretty face is as good as a day of sunshine."

"She is a beautiful girl," Mrs. Bormalack replied with enthusiasm, "and I am sure she must be as good as she is pretty; because she paid three months in advance. With a piano, too, which she will play herself. She is a dressmaker by trade, and she wants to set herself up in a genteel way. And she's got a little money, she says;" a sweet smile crossed her face as she thought that most of this little money would come into her own pocket.

"A dressmaker!" cried her ladyship. "Do tell! I was in that line myself before I married. That was long before we began to enjoy the title. You don't know, ma'am" – here she dropped her voice – "you don't know how remarkably fond his lordship is of a pretty face; choice with them, too. Not every face pleases him. Oh! you wouldn't believe how particular. Which shows his aristocratic descent; because we all know what his ancestors were."

"To be sure," said the landlady, nodding significantly. "We all know what they were. Rovers to a man – I mean a lord. And as for the young lady, she will be here this evening, in time for

tea. Shrimps and Sally Lunn, my lord. And her name is Miss Kennedy. Respectable, if poor; and illustrious ancestors is more than we can all of us have, nor yet deserve."

Here the professor rose, having finished his breakfast. One might have noticed that he had extremely long and delicate fingers, and that they seemed always in movement; also that he had a way of looking at you as if he meant you to look straight and steady into his eyes, and not to go rolling your eyes about in the frivolous, irresponsible way affected by some people. He walked slowly to the window; then, as if seized with an irresistible impulse to express his feelings in pantomime, or else, it may be, to try an experiment, returned to the table, and asked for the loan of his lordship's pocket-handkerchief, which was a large red silk one, well fitted for the purpose. How he conveyed a saucer unseen from the table into that handkerchief, and how that saucer got into the nobleman's coat-tail pocket, were things known only to himself. Yet familiarity breeds contempt, and though everybody looked on, nobody expressed delight or astonishment, for this exhibition of magic and spells went on every day, and whenever the professor was among them. He moved about accompanied, so to speak, by a legion of invisible attendants and servants, who conveyed, hid, brought back, uncovered, discovered, recovered, lost, found, rapped, groaned, cried, whistled, sang, moved chairs and tables, and, in fact, behaved as only a troop of well-drilled elves can behave. He was a young man of twenty-five, and he had a great gift of silence. By trade he was a professor of legerdemain. Other professors there are who hold up the light of this science, and hand it down to posterity undimmed; but none with such an ardent love for their work as Professor Climo. For he practised all day long, except when he was reading the feats of the illustrious conjurers, sorcerers, necromancers, and wizards of old time, or inventing new combinations, traps for the credulous, and contrivances to make that which was not seen like unto that which was. The East End of London is not the richest field for such performers; but he was young, and he lived in hope – very often, when there were no engagements – upon it. At such times he became a simple lodger, instead of a boarder, at Mrs. Bormalack's, and went without any meals.

The situation of this boarding-house, poetically described by his lordship as in the midst of the gayety of London, was in the far East, in that region of London which is less known to Englishmen than if it were situated in the wildest part of Colorado, or among the pine forests of British Columbia. It stood, in fact, upon Stepney Green, a small strip of Eden which has been visited by few, indeed, of those who do not live in its immediate vicinity. Yet it is a romantic spot.

Two millions of people, or thereabouts, live in the East End of London. That seems a good-sized population for an utterly unknown town. They have no institutions of their own to speak of, no public buildings of any importance, no municipality, no gentry, no carriages, no soldiers, no picture-galleries, no theatres, no opera – they have nothing. It is the fashion to believe that they are all paupers, which is a foolish and mischievous belief, as we shall presently see. Probably there is no such spectacle in the whole world as that of this immense, neglected, forgotten great city of East London. It is even neglected by its own citizens, who have never yet perceived their abandoned condition. They are Londoners, it is true, but they have no part or share of London; its wealth, its splendors, its honors exist not for them. They see nothing of any splendors; even the Lord Mayor's show goeth westward: the city lies between them and the greatness of England. They are beyond the wards, and cannot become aldermen; the rich London merchants go north and south and west; but they go not east. Nobody goes east; no one wants to see the place; no one is curious about the way of life in the east. Books on London pass it over; it has little or no history; great men are not buried in its church-yards, which are not even ancient, and crowded by citizens as obscure as those who now breathe the upper airs about them. If anything happens in the east, people at the other end have to stop and think before they can remember where the place may be.

The house was old, built of red bricks with a "shell" decoration over the door. It contained room for about eight boarders, who had one sitting-room in common. This was the breakfast-room, a meal at which all were present; the dining-room – but nobody except his lordship and wife dined

at home; the tea-room – but tea was too early for most of the boarders; and the supper-room. After supper tobacco was tolerated. The boarders were generally men, and mostly elderly men of staid and quiet manners, with whom the evening pipe was the conclusion and solace of the day. It was not like the perpetual incense of the tap-room, and yet the smell of tobacco was never absent from the room, lingering about the folds of the dingy curtain, which served for both summer and winter, clinging to the horsehair sofa, to the leather of the chairs, and to the rusty table-cloth.

The furniture was old and mean. The wall-paper had once been crimson, but now was only dark; the ceiling had for many years wanted whitewashing badly; the door and windows wanted painting; the windows always wanted cleaning; the rope of one of the blinds was broken; and the blind itself, not nearly so white as it might have been, was pinned half-way up. Everything was shabby; everything wanted polishing, washing, brightening up.

A couple of arm-chairs stood, when meals were not going on, one on either side of the fireplace – one being reserved for his lordship, and the other for his wife; they were, like the sofa, of horsehair, and slippery. There was a long table covered by a faded red cloth; the carpet was a Brussels once of a warm crimson, now worn threadbare; the hearth-rug was worn into holes; one or two of the chairs had broken out and showed glimpses of stuffing. The sideboard was of old-fashioned build, and a shiny black by reason of its age; there were two or three hanging shelves filled with books, the property of his lordship, who loved reading, the mantel-shelf was decorated by a small collection of pipes; and above it hung the portrait of the late Samuel Bormalack, formerly a collector in the great brewing house of Messenger, Marsden & Company.

His widow, who carried on the house, was a comfortable – a serenely comfortable woman, who regarded the world from the optimist's point of view. Perfect health and a tolerably prosperous business, where the returns are regular though the profits are small, make the possessor agree with Pope and Candide that everything is for the best in this best of all possible worlds. Impossible not to be contented, happy, and religious, when your wishes are narrowed to a tidy dinner, a comfortable supper with a little something hot, boarders who pay up regular, do not grumble, and go to bed sober; and a steady hope that you will not get "something," by which of course is meant that you may not fall ill of any disagreeable or painful disease. To "get something" is one of the pretty euphemisms of our daily speech.

She had had one or two unlucky accidents, such as the case of Captain Saffrey, who stayed two months, and drank enough beer to float a three-decker, and then sailed away, promising to pay, and would have done so – for he was an honest man – but had the misfortune to fall overboard while in liquor. But her present boarders seemed most respectable, and she was at ease.

Of course, the persons of greatest consideration among them were the noble pair who enjoyed the title. Rank is respected, if you please, even at the East End of London, and perhaps more there than in fashionable quarters, because it is so rare. King John, it is true, had once a palace at Stepney; but that is a long time to look back upon, and even the oldest inhabitant can now not remember to have been kicked by the choleric monarch. Then the Marquis of Worcester had once a great house here, what time the sainted Charles was ripening things for a row royal. That house is gone too, and I do not know where it used to stand. From the time of this East End marquis to the arrival of Lord and Lady Davenant, last year, there have been no resident members of the English aristocracy, and no member of the foreign nobility, with the exception of a certain dusky Marquis of Choufleur, from Hayti, who is reported on good authority to have once lived in these parts for six months, thinking he was in the politest and most fashionable suburb of London. He is further said to have carried on with Satanic wildness in Limehouse and the West India Dock Road of an evening. A Japanese, too, certainly once went to a hotel in America Square, which is not quite the East End, and said he was a prince in his own country. He stayed a week, and drank champagne all day long. Then he decamped without paying the bill; and when the landlord went to the embassy to complain, he thought it was the ambassador himself, until he discovered that all Japanese are exactly alike. Wherefore he desisted

from any further attempt to identify the missing prince for want of the missing link, namely, some distinctive feature.

The illustrious pair had now been in the house for six weeks. Previously they had spent some time in Wellclose Square, which is no doubt well known to fashionable readers, and lies contiguous to St. George's Street. Here happened that accident of the back-slapping so frequently alluded to by her ladyship. They were come from America to take up an old family title which had been in abeyance for two or three generations. They appeared to be poor, but able to find the modest weekly sum asked by Mrs. Bormalack; and in order to secure her confidence and good-will, they paid every week in advance. They drank nothing but water, but, to make up, his lordship ate a great deal, especially at breakfast, and they asked for strange things, unknown to English households. In other respects they gave no kind of trouble, were easily satisfied, never grumbled, and were affable. For their rank they certainly dressed shabbily, but high social station is sometimes found coupled with eccentricity. Doubtless Lord Davenant had his reasons for going about in a coat white at the seams and shiny at the back, which, being made of sympathetic stuff, and from long habit, had assumed the exact shape of his noble back and shoulders, with a beautiful model of his illustrious elbows. For similarly good and sufficient reasons Lady Davenant wore that old black gown and those mended gloves and – but it is cruel to enumerate the shortcomings of her attire.

Perhaps on account of this public character, the professor would rank in the house after his lordship. Nothing confers greatness more quickly than an unabashed appearance upon a platform. Mr. Maliphant, however, who had travelled and could relate tales of adventure, might dispute precedence with him. He was now a carver of figure-heads for ships. It is an old and honorable trade, but in these latter days it has decayed. He had a small yard at Limehouse, where he worked all by himself, turning out heads in the rough so that they might be transformed into a beauteous goddess, or a Saucy Poll, or a bearded Neptune, as the owners might prefer. He was now an old man with a crumpled and million-lined face, but active still and talkative. His memory played him tricks, and he took little interest in new things. He had a habit, too, which disconcerted people unaccustomed to him, of thinking one part of the reminiscence to himself and saying the rest aloud, so that one got only the torso or mangled trunk of the story, or the head, or the feet, with or without the tail, which is the point.

The learned Daniel Fagg, wrapt always in contemplation, was among them but not of them. He was lately arrived from Australia, bringing with him a discovery which took away the breath of those who heard it, and filled all the scholars and learned men of Europe with envy and hatred, so that they combined and formed a general conspiracy to keep him down, and to prevent the publication of his great book, lest the world should point the finger of scorn at them, and laugh at the blindness of its great ones. Daniel himself said so, and an oppressed man generally knows his oppressor. He went away every morning after breakfast, and returned for tea. He was believed to occupy the day in spreading a knowledge of his discovery, the nature of which was unknown at the boarding-house, among clergymen and other scholars. In the evening he sat over a Hebrew Bible and a dictionary, and spoke to no one. A harmless man, but soured and disappointed with the cold reception of his great discovery.

Another boarder was the unfortunate Josephus Coppin, who was a clerk in the great brewing-house of Messenger, Marsden & Company. He had been there for forty years, being now fifty-five years of age, gray and sad of face, because, for some reason unknown to the world, he was not advanced, but remained forever among the juniors at a salary of thirty shillings a week. Other men of his own standing were chief brewers, collectors, and chief accountants. He was almost where he had started. The young men came and mounted the ladder of promotion, passing him one after the other; he alone remained upon the rung which he had reached one day, now thirty years bygone, when a certain thing happened, the consequences of which were to keep him down, to ruin his prospects, to humiliate and degrade him, to sadden and embitter his whole life. Lastly, there was a young man, the

only young man among them, one Harry Goslett by name, who had quite recently joined the boarding-house. He was a nephew of Mr. Coppin, and was supposed to be looking for a place of business.

But he was an uncertain boarder. He paid for his dinner but never dined at home; he had brought with him a lathe, which he set up in a little garden-house, and here he worked by himself, but in a fitful, lazy way, as if it mattered nothing whether he worked or not. He seemed to prefer strolling about the place, looking around him as if he had never seen things before, and he was wont to speak of familiar objects as if they were strange and rare. These eccentricities were regarded as due to his having been to America. A handsome young man and cheerful, which made it a greater pity that he was so idle.

On this morning the first to start for the day's business was Daniel Fagg. He put his Hebrew Bible on the book-shelf, took out a memorandum-book and the stump of a pencil, made an entry, and then counted out his money, which amounted to eight-and-sixpence, with a sigh. He was a little man, about sixty years of age, and his thin hair was sandy in color. His face was thin, and he looked hungry and underfed. I believe, in fact, that he seldom had money enough for dinner, and so went without. Nothing was remarkable in his face, except a pair of very large and thick eyebrows, also of sandy hue, which is unusual, and produces a very curious effect. With these he was wont to frown tremendously as he went along, frightening the little children into fits; when he was not frowning he looked dejected. It must have been an unhappy condition of things which made the poor man thus alternate between wrath and depression. There were, however, moments – those when he got hold of a new listener – in which he would light up with enthusiasm as he detailed the history of his discovery. Then the thin, drawn cheek would fill out, and his quivering lips would become firm, and his dejected eyes would brighten with the old pride of discovery, and he would laugh once more, and rub his hands with pride, when he described the honest sympathy of the people in the Australian township where he first announced the great revelation he was to make to the world, and received their enthusiastic cheers and shouts of encouragement.

Harry Goslett was his last listener, and, as the enthusiast thought, his latest convert.

As Daniel passed out of the dining-room, and was looking for his hat among the collection of hats as bad as was ever seen out of Canadian backwoods, Harry Goslett himself came downstairs, his hands in his pockets, as slowly and lazily as if there was no such thing as work to do or time to keep. He laughed and nodded to the discoverer.

"Oho! Dan'l," he said; "how are the triangles? and are you really going back to the lion's den?"

"Yes, Mr. Goslett, I am going back there! I am not afraid of them; I am going to see the head of the Egyptian department. He says he will give me a hearing; they all said they would, and they have. But they won't listen; it's no use to hear unless you listen. What a dreadful thing is jealousy among the learned, Mr. Goslett!"

"It is indeed, my prophet; have they subscribed to the book?"

"No! they won't subscribe. Is it likely that they will help to bring out a work which proves them all wrong? Come, sir, even at your age you can't think so well of poor humanity."

"Daniel" – the young man laid his hands impressively upon the little man's shoulders – "you showed me yesterday a list of forty-five subscribers to your book, at twelve shillings and sixpence apiece. *Where is that subscription-money?*"

The poor man blushed and hung his head.

"A man must live," he said at length, trying to frown fiercely.

"Yes, but unpleasant notice is sometimes taken of the way in which people live, my dear friend. This is not a free country; not by any means free. If I were you, I would take the triangles back to Australia, and print the book there, among your friends."

"No!" The little man stamped on the ground, and rammed his head into his hat with determination. "No, Mr. Goslett, and no again. It shall be printed here. I will hurl it at the head of the so-called scholars here, in London – in their stronghold, close to the British Museum. Besides"

– here he relaxed, and turned a pitiful face of sorrow and shame upon his adviser – "besides, can I forget the day when I left Australia? They all came aboard to say good-by. The papers had paragraphs about it. They shouted one after the other, and nobblers went around surprising, and they slapped me on the back and said, 'Go, Dan'l,' or 'Go, Fagg,' or 'Go, Mr. Fagg,' according to their intimacy and the depth of their friendship – 'Go where honor and glory and a great fortune, with a pension on the Queen's civil-list, are waiting for you.' On the voyage I even dreamed of a title; I thought Sir Daniel Fagg, knight or baronet, or the Right Reverend Lord Fagg, would sound well to go back to Australia with. Honor? Glory? Fortune? where are they? Eight-and-sixpence in my pocket; and the head of the Greek department calls me a fool, because I won't acknowledge that truth – yes, TRUTH – is error. Laughs at the triangles, Mr. Goslett!"

He laughed bitterly and went out, slamming the door behind him.

Then Harry entered the breakfast-room, nodding pleasantly to everybody; and without any apology for lateness, as if breakfast could be kept about all the morning to suit his convenience, sat down and began to eat. Jonathan Coppin got up, sighed, and went away to his brewery. The professor looked at the last comer with a meditative air, as if he would like to make him disappear, and could do it, too, but was uncertain how Harry would take it. Mrs. Bormalack hurried away on domestic business. Mr. Maliphant laughed and rubbed his hands together, and then laughed again as if he were thinking of something really comic, and said, "Yes, I knew the sergeant very well; a well set-up man he was, and Caroline Coppin was a pretty girl." At this point his face clouded and his eyes expressed doubt. "There was," he added, "something I wanted to ask you, young man, something" – here he tapped his forehead – "something about your father or your mother, or both; but I have forgotten – never mind. Another time – another time."

He ran away with boyish activity and a schoolboy's laugh, being arrived at that time of life when one becomes light of heart once more, knowing by experience that nothing matters very much. There were none left in the room but the couple who enjoyed the title.

His lordship sat in his arm-chair, apparently enjoying it, in meditation and repose; this, one perceives, is quite the best way of enjoying an hereditary title, if you come to it late in life.

His wife had, meanwhile, got out a little shabby portfolio in black leather, and was turning over the papers with impatience; now and then she looked up to see whether this late young man had finished his breakfast. She fidgeted, arranged, and worried with her papers, so that any one whose skull was not six inches thick might have seen that she wanted to be alone with her husband. It was also quite clear to those who thought about things, and watched this little lady, that there may be meaning in certain proverbial expressions touching gray mares.

Presently Harry Goslett finished his coffee, and, paying no attention to her little ladyship's signals of distress, began to open up conversation on general subjects with the noble lord.

She could bear it no longer. Here were the precious moments wasted and thrown away, every one of which should be bringing them nearer to the recognition of their rights.

"Young man," she cried, jumping up in her chair, "if you've got nothing to do but to loll and lop around, all forenoon, I guess we hev, and this is the room in which we do that work."

"I beg your pardon, Lady Davenant – "

"Young man – Git – "

She pointed to the door.

# CHAPTER II.
# A VERY COMPLETE CASE

His lordship, left alone with his wife, manifested certain signs of uneasiness. She laid the portfolio on the table, turned over the papers, sorted some of them, picked out some for reference, fetched the ink, and placed the penholder in position.

"Now, my dear," she said, "no time to lose. Let us set to work in earnest."

His lordship sighed. He was sitting with his fat hands upon his knees, contented with the repose of the moment.

"Clara Martha," he grumbled, "cannot I have one hour of rest?"

"Not one, till you get your rights." She hovered over him like a little falcon, fierce and persistent. "Not one. What? You a British peer? You, who ought to be sitting with a coronet on your head – you to shrink from the trouble of writing out your case? And such a case!"

He only moaned. Certainly he was a very lethargic person.

"You are not the carpenter, your father. Nor even the wheelwright, your grandfather, who came down of his own accord. You would rise, you would soar – you have the spirit of your ancestors."

He feebly flapped with his elbows, as if he really would like to take a turn in the air, but made no verbal response.

"Cousin Nathaniel," she went on, "gave us six months at six dollars a week. That's none too generous of Nathaniel, seeing we have no children, and he will be the heir to the title. I guess Aurelia Tucker set him against the thing. Six months, and three of them gone already, and nothing done! What would Aurelia say if we went home again, beaten?"

The little woman gasped, and would have shrugged her shoulders, but they were such a long way down – shoulders so sloping could not be shrugged.

Her remonstrances moved the heavy man, who drew his chair to the table with great deliberation.

"We are here," she continued – always the exhorter and the strengthener of faith – "not to claim a title, but to assume it. We shall present our case to Parliament, or the Queen, or the House of Lords, or the Court of Chancery, or whosoever is the right person, and we shall say, 'I am Lord Davenant.' That is all."

"Clara Martha," said her husband, "I wish that were all we had to do. And, on the whole, I would as soon be back in Canaan City, New Hampshire, and the trouble over. The memoranda are all here," he said. "Can't we get some one else to draw up the case?"

"Certainly not. You must do it. Why, you used to think nothing of writing out a Fourth of July speech."

He shook his head.

"And you know that you have often said, yourself, that there wasn't a book written that could teach you anything up to quadratic equations. And self-raised, too!"

"It isn't that, Clara Martha. It isn't that. Listen!" he sank his voice to a whisper. "*It's the doubt.* That's the point. Every time I face that doubt it's like a bucket of cold water down my back."

She shivered. Yes: there was always the doubt.

"Come, my dear," she said presently; "we must get the case drawn up, so that any one may read it. That is the first thing – never think of any doubt."

He took up one of the loose papers, which was covered with writing.

"Timothy Clitheroe Davenant," he read with a weary sigh, "died at Canaan City, New Hampshire, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety-four. By trade he was a wheelwright. His marriage is recorded in the church-register of July 1, 1773. His headstone still

stands in the old church-yard, and says that he was born in England in the year one thousand seven hundred and thirty-two – it does not say where he was born – and that he was sixty-two years of age at the day of his death. Also, that long time he bore – "

"Yes, yes, but you needn't put that in. Go on with your case. The next point is your own father. Courage, my dear; it is a very strong case."

"The case *is* very strong." His lordship plucked up courage, and took up another paper. "This is my father's record. All is clear: Born in Canaan City on October 10, 1774, the year of Independence, the eldest son of the aforesaid Timothy Clitheroe Davenant, wheelwright, and Dinah, his wife – here is a copy of the register. Married on May 13, 1810, which was late in life, because he didn't somehow get on so fast as some, to Susanna Pegley, of the same parish. Described as carpenter – but a poor workman, Clara Martha, and fond of chopping yarns, in which he was equalled by none. He died in the year 1830, his tombstone still standing, like his father's before him. It says that his end was peace. Wal – he always wanted it. Give him peace, with a chair in the veranda, and a penknife and a little bit of pine, and he asked for no more. Only that, and his wife wouldn't let him have it. His end was peace."

"You all want peace," said his wife. "The Davenants always did think that they only had to sit still and the plums would drop in their mouths. As for you, I believe you'd be content to sit and sit in Canaan City till Queen Victoria found you out and sent you the coronet herself. But you've got a wife as well as your father."

"I hev," he said, with another sigh. "Perhaps we were wrong to come over – I think I was happier in the schoolroom, when the boys were gone hum. It was very quiet there, for a sleep in the afternoon by the stove. And in summer the trees looked harnsome in the sunlight."

She shook her head impatiently.

"Come," she cried. "Where are the 'Recollections' of your grandfather?"

He found another paper, and read it slowly.

"My grandfather died before I was born. My father, however, said that he used to throw out hints about his illustrious family, and that if he chose to go back to England some people would be very much surprised. But he never explained himself. Also he would sometimes speak of a great English estate, and once he said that the freedom of a wheelwright was better than the gilded chains of a British aristocrat – that was at a Fourth of July meetin'."

"Men talk wild at meetin's," said his wife. "Still, there may have been a meanin' behind it. Go on, Timothy – I mean my lord."

"As for my father, it pleased him, when he could put up his feet and crack with his friends, to brag of his great connections in England. But he never knew rightly who they were, and he was too peaceful and restful a creature to take steps to find out."

"Waitin' for King George," observed his wife. "Just what you would be doin', but for me."

"That's all the recollection. Here comes my own declaration:

"'I, Timothy Clitheroe Davenant, make affidavit on oath, if necessary – but I am not quite clear as to the righteousness of swearing – that I am the son of the late Timothy Clitheroe Davenant, sometime carpenter of the City of Canaan, New Hampshire, U. S. A., and Susanna his wife, both now deceased; that I was born in the year of grace one thousand eight hundred and fifteen, and that I have been for forty years a teacher in my native town.' That is all clean and above-board, Clara Martha; no weak point so far, father to son, marriage certificates regularly found, and baptism registers. No one can ask more. 'Further, I, the above-named Timothy, do claim to be the lawful and legitimate heir to the ancient barony of Davenant, supposed to be extinct in the year 1783 by the death of the last lord, without male issue.' Legally worded, I think," he added with a little proud smile.

"Yes: it reads right. Now for the connection."

"Oh! the connection." His lordship's face clouded over. His consort, however, awaited the explanation, for the thousandth time, in confidence. Where the masculine mind found doubt and

uncertainty, the quick woman's intellect, ready to believe and tenacious of faith, had jumped to certainty.

"The connection is this." He took up another paper, and read:

"'The last Lord Davenant had one son only, a boy named Timothy Clitheroe. All the eldest sons of the house were named Timothy Clitheroe, just as all the Ashleys are named Anthony. When the boy arrived at years of maturity he was sent on the Grand Tour, which he made with a tutor. On returning to England, it is believed that he had some difference with his father, the nature of which has never been ascertained. He then embarked upon a ship sailing for the American Colonies. Nothing more was ever heard about him; no news came to his father or his friends, and he was supposed to be dead.'"

"Even the ship was never heard of," added her ladyship, as if this was a fact which would greatly help in lengthening the life of the young man.

"That, too, was never heard of again. If she had not been thrown away, we might have learned what became of the Honorable Timothy Clitheroe Davenant." There was some confusion of ideas here, which the ex-schoolmaster was not slow to perceive.

"I mean," he tried to explain, "that if she got safe to Boston, the young man would have landed there, and all would be comparatively clear. Whereas, if she was cast away, we must now suppose that he was saved and got ashore somehow."

"Like Saint Paul," she cried triumphantly, "on a piece of wreck – what could be more simple?"

"Because," her husband continued, "there is one fact which proves that he *did* get ashore, that he concluded to stay there, that he descended so far into the social scale as to become a wheelwright; and that he lived and died in the town of Canaan, New Hampshire."

"Go on, my dear. Make it clear. Put it strong. This is the most interesting point of all."

"And this young man, who was supposed to be cast away in the year one thousand seven hundred and fifty-four, aged twenty-two, was exactly the same age as my grandfather, Timothy Clitheroe Davenant, who *bore the same name*, which is proved by the headstone and the church-books."

"Could there," asked his wife, springing to her feet, "could there have been two Englishmen – ?"

"Of the same illustrious and historic surname, both in America?" replied her husband, roused into a flabby enthusiasm.

"Of the same beautiful Christian name? – two Timothys?"

"Born both in the same year?"

The little woman with the bright eyes and the sloping shoulders threw her arms about her husband's neck.

"You *shall* have your rights, my dear," she said; "I will live to see you sitting in the House of Lords with the hereditary statesmen of England. If there is justice in the land of England, you shall have your rights. There is justice, I am sure, and equal law for poor and rich, and encouragements for the virtuous. Yes, my dear, the virtuous. Whatever your faults may be, your virtues are many, and it can't but do the House of Lords good to see a little virtue among them. Not that I hold with Aurelia Tucker that the English House of Lords are wallowers in sin; whereas, Irene Pascoe once met a knight on a missionary platform and found he'd got religion. But virtue you can never have too much of. Courage, my lord; forget the carpenter, and think only of the nobleman, your grandfather, who condescended to become a wheelwright."

He obediently took up the pen and began. When he seemed fairly absorbed in the task of copying out and stating the case, she left him. As soon as the door was closed, he heaved a gentle sigh, pushed back his chair, put his feet upon another chair, covered his head with his red silk pocket-handkerchief – for there were flies in the room – and dropped into a gentle slumber. The carpenter was, for the moment, above the condescending wheelwright.

# CHAPTER III.
# ONLY A DRESSMAKER

Harry Goslett returned to the boarding-house that evening, in a mood of profound dejection; he had spent a few hours with certain cousins, whose acquaintance he was endeavoring to make. "Hitherto," he said, writing to Lord Jocelyn, "the soil seems hardly worth cultivating." In this he spoke hastily, because every man's mind is worth cultivating as soon as you find out the things best fitted to grow in it. But some minds will only grow turnips, while others will produce the finest strawberries.

The cousins, for their part, did not as yet take to the new arrival, whom they found difficult to understand. His speech was strange, his manner stranger: these peculiarities, they thought in their ignorance, were due to residence in the United States, where Harry had found it expedient to place most of his previous years. Conversation was difficult between two rather jealous workmen and a brother artisan, who greatly resembled the typical swell – an object of profound dislike and suspicion to the working-classes.

He had now spent some three weeks among his kinsfolk. He brought with him some curiosity, but little enthusiasm. At first he was interested and amused; rapidly he became bored and disgusted; for as yet he saw only the outside of things. There was an uncle, Mr. Benjamin Bunker, the study of whom, regarded as anybody else's uncle, would have been pleasant. Considered as his own connection by marriage – Benjamin and the late Sergeant Goslett having married sisters – he was too much inclined to be ashamed of him. The two cousins seemed to him – as yet he knew them very little – a pair of sulky, ill-bred young men, who had taken two opposite lines, neither of which was good for social intercourse. The people of the boarding-house continued to amuse him, partly because they were in a way afraid of him. As for the place – he looked about him, standing at the north entrance of Stepney Green – on the left hand, the Whitechapel Road; behind him, Stepney, Limehouse, St. George's in the East, Poplar and Shadwell; on the right, the Mile End Road, leading to Bow and Stratford; before him, Ford, Hackney, Bethnal Green. Mile upon mile of streets with houses – small, mean, and monotonous houses; the people living the same mean and monotonous lives, all after the same model. In his ignorance he pitied and despised those people, not knowing how rich and full any life may be made, whatever the surroundings, and even without the gracious influences of art. Under the influence of this pity and contempt, when he returned in the evening at half-past nine, he felt himself for the first time in his life run very low down indeed.

The aspect of the room was not calculated to cheer him up. It was lit with a mean two-jet gas-burner; the dingy curtain wanted looping up, the furniture looked more common and mean than usual. Yet, as he stood in the doorway, he became conscious of a change.

The boarders were all sitting there, just as usual, and the supper cloth was removed; Mr. Maliphant had his long pipe fixed in the corner of his mouth, but he held it there with an appearance of constraint, and he had let it go out. Mr. Josephus Coppin sat in the corner in which he always put himself, so as to be out of everybody's way; also with a pipe in his hand unlighted. Daniel Fagg had his Hebrew Bible spread out before him, and his dictionary, and his copy of the Authorized Version – which he used, as he would carefully explain, not for what schoolboys call a crib, but for purpose of comparison. This was very grand! A man who can read Hebrew at all inspires one with confidence; but the fact is the more important when it is connected with a discovery; and to compare versions – one's own with the collected wisdom of a royal commission – is a very grand thing indeed. But to-night he sat with his head in his hands, and his sandy hair pushed back, looking straight before him; and Mrs. Bormalack was graced in her best black silk dress, and "the decanters" were proudly placed upon the table with rum, gin, and brandy in them, and beside them stood the tumblers, hot water, cold water, lemons, and spoons, in the most genteel way. The representative of the Upper House,

who did not take spirits and water, sat calmly dignified in his arm-chair by the fireplace, and in front of him, on the other side, sat his wife, with black thread mittens drawn tightly over her little hands and thin arms, bolt upright, and conscious of her rank. All appeared to be silent, but that was their custom, and all, which was not their custom, wore an unaccustomed air of company manners which was very beautiful to see.

Harry, looking about him, perplexed at these phenomena, presently observed that the eyes of all, except those of Daniel Fagg, were fixed in one direction; and that the reason why Mr. Maliphant held an unlighted pipe in his mouth, and Josephus one in his hand, and that Daniel was not reading, and that his lordship looked so full of dignity, and that ardent spirits were abroad, was nothing less than the presence of a young lady.

In such a house, and, in fact, all round Stepney Green, the word "lady" is generally used in a broad and catholic spirit; but in this case Harry unconsciously used it in the narrow, prejudiced, one-sided sense peculiar to Western longitudes. And it was so surprising to think of a young lady in connection with Bormalack's, that he gasped and caught his breath. And then Mrs. Bormalack presented him to the new arrival in her best manner. "Our youngest!" she said, as if he had been a son of the house – "our youngest and last – the sprightly Mr. Goslett. This is Miss Kennedy, and I hope – I'm sure – that you two will get to be friendly with one another, not to speak of keeping company, which is early days yet for prophecies."

Harry bowed in his most superior style. What on earth, he thought again, did a young lady want at Stepney Green?

She had the carriage and the manner of a lady; she was quite simply dressed in a black cashmere; she wore a red ribbon around her white throat, and had white cuffs. A lady – unmistakably a lady; also young and beautiful, with great brown eyes, which met his own frankly, and with a certain look of surprise which seemed an answer to his own.

"Our handsome young cabinet-maker, Miss Kennedy," went on the landlady – Harry wondered whether it was worse to be described as sprightly than as handsome, and which adjective was likely to produce the more unfavorable impression on a young lady – "is wishful to establish himself in a genteel way of business, like yourself."

"When I was in the dressmaking line," observed her ladyship, "I stayed at home with mother and Aunt Keziah. It was not thought right in Canaan City for young women to go about setting up shops by themselves. Not that I say you are wrong, Miss Kennedy, but London ways are not New Hampshire ways."

Miss Kennedy murmured something softly, and looked again at the handsome cabinet-maker, who was still blushing with indignation and shame at Mrs. Bormalack's adjectives, and ready to blush again on recovery to think that he was so absurd as to feel any shame about so trifling a matter. Still, every young man likes to appear in a good light in the presence of beauty.

The young lady, then, was only a dressmaker. For the moment she dropped a little in his esteem, which comes of our artificial and conventional education; because – Why not a dressmaker? Then she rose again, because – What a dressmaker! Could there be many such in Stepney? If so, how was it that poets, novelists, painters, and idle young men did not flock to so richly endowed a district? In this unexpected manner does nature offer compensations. Harry also observed with satisfaction the novel presence of a newly arrived piano, which could belong to no other than the new-comer; and finding that the conversation showed no signs of brightening, he ventured to ask Miss Kennedy if she would play to them.

Now, when she began to play, a certain magic of the music fell upon them all, affecting every one differently. Such is the power of music, and thus diverse is it in its operation. As for his lordship, he sat nodding his head and twinkling his eyes and smiling sweetly, because he was in imagination sitting among his peers in the Upper House with a crown of gold and a robe of fur, and all his friends of Canaan City, brought across the Atlantic at his own expense for this very purpose, were watching

him with envy and admiration from the gallery. Among them was Aurelia Tucker, the scoffer and thrower of cold water. And her ladyship sat beating time with head and hand, thinking how the family estates would probably be restored, with the title, by the Queen. She had great ideas on the royal prerogative, and had indeed been accustomed to think in the old days that Englishmen go about in continual terror lest her Majesty, in the exercise of this prerogative, should order their heads to be removed. This gracious vision, due entirely to the music, showed her in a stately garden entertaining Aurelia Tucker and other friends, whom she, like her husband, had imported from Canaan City for the purpose of exhibiting the new greatness. And Aurelia was green with envy, though she wore her best black silk dress.

The other boarders were differently affected. The melancholy Josephus leaned his head upon his hand, and saw himself in imagination the head-brewer, as he might have been, but for the misfortune of his early youth. Head-brewer to the firm of Messenger, Marsden & Company! What a position!

Daniel Fagg, for his part, was dreaming of the day when his discovery was to be received by all and adequately rewarded. He anticipated the congratulations of his friends in Australia, and stood on deck in port surrounded by the crowd, who shook his hand and cheered him, in good Australian fashion, as Daniel the Great, Daniel the Scourge of Scholars, Daniel the Prophet – a second Daniel. The professor took advantage of this general rapture or abstraction from earthly things to lay the plans for a *grand coup* in legerdemain – a new experiment, which should astonish everybody. This he afterward carried through with success.

Mrs. Bormalack, for her part, filled and slowly drank a large tumbler of hot brandy-and-water. When she had finished it she wiped away a tear. Probably, stimulated by the brandy, which is a sentimental spirit, she was thinking of her late husband, collector for the brewery, who was himself romantically fond of brandy-and-water, and came to an early end in consequence of overrating his powers of consumption.

Mr. Maliphant winked his eyes, rolled his head, rubbed his hands, and laughed joyously, but in silence. Why, one knows not. When the music finished, he whispered to Daniel Fagg. "No," he said, "this is the third time in the year that you have asked leave to bury your mother. Make it your grandmother, young man." Then he laughed again, and said that he had been with Walker in Nicaragua. Harry heard this communication, and the attempt to fill up the story from these two fragments afterward gave him nightmare.

Miss Kennedy played a gavotte, and then another, and then a sonata. Perhaps it is the character of this kind of music to call up pleasant and joyous thoughts; certainly there is much music, loved greatly by some people, which makes us sad, notably the strains sung at places of popular resort. They probably become favorites because they sadden so much. Who would not shed tears on hearing "Tommy Dodd"?

She played without music, gracefully, easily, and with expression. While she played Harry sat beside the piano, still wondering on the same theme. She, a Stepney dressmaker! Who, in this region, could have taught her that touch? She "wistful to establish herself in a genteel way of business"? Was art, then, permeating downward so rapidly? Were the people just above the masses, the second or third stratum of the social pyramid, taught music, and in such a style? Then he left off wondering, and fell to the blissful contemplation of a beautiful woman playing beautiful music. This is an occupation always delightful to young Englishmen, and it does equal credit to their heads and to their hearts that they never tire of so harmless an amusement. When she finished playing, everybody descended to earth, so to speak.

The noble pair remembered that their work was still before them – all to do: one of them thought, with a pang, about the drawing of the case, and wished he had not gone to sleep in the morning.

The clerk in the brewery awoke to the recollection of his thirty shillings a week, and reflected that the weather was such as to necessitate a pair of boots which had soles.

The learned Daniel Fagg bethought him once more of his poverty and the increasing difficulty of getting subscribers, and the undisguised contempt with which the head of the Egyptian department had that morning received him.

Mr. Maliphant left off laughing, and shook his puckered old face with a little astonishment that he had been so moved.

Said the professor, breaking the silence:

"I like the music to go on, so long as no patter is wanted. They listen to music if it's lively, and it prevents 'em from looking round and getting suspicious. You haven't got an egg upon you, Mrs. Bormalack, have you? Dear me, one in your lap! Actually in a lady's lap! A common egg, one of our 'selected,' at tenpence the dozen. Ah! In your lap, too! How very injudicious! You might have dropped it, and broken it. Perhaps, miss, you wouldn't mind obliging once more with 'Tommy, make room for your uncle' or 'Over the garden wall,' if you please."

Miss Kennedy did not know either of these airs, but she laughed and said she would play something lively, while the professor went on with his trick. First, he drew all eyes to meet his own like a fascinating constrictor, and then he began to "palm" the egg in the most surprising manner. After many adventures it was ultimately found in Daniel Fagg's pocket. Then the professor smiled, bowed, and spread out his hands as if to show the purity and honesty of his conjuring.

"You play very well," said Harry to Miss Kennedy, when the conjuring was over and the professor returned to his chair and his nightly occupation with a pencil, a piece of paper, and a book.

"Can you play?"

"I fiddle a little. If you will allow me, we will try some evening a duet together."

"I did not know – " she began, but checked herself. "I did not expect to find a violinist here."

"A good many people of my class play," said Harry, mendaciously, because the English workman is the least musical of men.

"Few of mine," she returned, rising, and closing the piano, "have the chance of learning. But I have had opportunities."

She looked at her watch, and remarked that it was nearly ten o'clock, and that she was going to bed.

"I have spoken to Mr. Bunker about what you want, Miss Kennedy," said the landlady. "He will be here to-morrow morning about ten on his rounds."

"Who is Mr. Bunker?" asked Angela.

They all seemed surprised. Had she never, in whatever part of the world she had lived, heard of Mr. Bunker – Bunker the Great?

"He used to be a sort of factotum to old Mr. Messenger," said Mrs. Bormalack. "His death was a sad blow to Mr. Bunker. He's a general agent by trade, and he deals in coal, and he's a house agent, and he knows everybody round Stepney and up to the Mile End Road as far as Bow. He's saved money, too, Miss Kennedy, and is greatly respected."

"He ought to be," said Harry; "not only because he was so much with Mr. Messenger, whose name is revered for the kindred associations of beer and property, but also because he is my uncle – he ought to be respected."

"Your uncle?"

"My own – so near, and yet so dear – my uncle Bunker. To be connected with Messenger, Marsden & Company, even indirectly through such an uncle, is in itself a distinction. You will learn to know him, and you will learn to esteem him, Miss Kennedy. You will esteem him all the more if you are interested in beer."

Miss Kennedy blushed.

"Bunker is great in the company. I believe he used to consider himself a kind of a partner while the old man lived. He knows all about the big brewery. As for that, everybody does round Stepney Green."

"The company," said Josephus gloomily, "is nothing but a chit of a girl." He sighed, thinking how much went to her and how little came to himself.

"We are steeped in beer," Harry went on. "Our conversation turns for ever on beer; we live for beer; the houses round us are filled with the company's servants; we live *by* beer. For example, Mrs. Bormalack's late husband – "

"He was a collector for the company," said the landlady, with natural pride.

"You see, Miss Kennedy, what a responsible and exalted position was held by Mr. Bormalack." (The widow thought that sometimes it was hard to know whether this sprightly young man was laughing at people or not, but it certainly was a very high position, and most respectable.) "He went round the houses," Harry went on. "Houses, here, mean public-houses; the company owns half the public-houses in the East End. Then here is my cousin, the genial Josephus. Hold up your head, Josephus. He, for his part, is a clerk in the house."

Josephus groaned. "A junior clerk," he murmured.

"The professor is not allowed in the brewery. He might conjure among the vats, and vats have never been able to take a practical joke; but he amuses the brewery people. As for Mr. Maliphant, he carves figure-heads for the ships which carry away the brewery beer; and perhaps when the brewery wants cabinets made they will come to me."

"It is the biggest brewery in all England," said the landlady. "I can never remember – because my memory is like a sieve – how much beer they brew every year; but somebody once made a calculation about it, compared with Niagara Falls, which even Mr. Bunker said was surprising."

"Think, Miss Kennedy," said Harry, "of an Entire Niagara of Messenger's Entire."

"But how can this Mr. Bunker be of use to me?" asked the young lady.

"Why!" said Mrs. Bormalack. "There is not a shop or a street nor any kind of place within miles Mr. Bunker doesn't know, who they are that live there, how they make their living, what the rent is, and everything. That's what made him so useful to old Mr. Messenger."

Miss Kennedy for some reason changed color. Then she said that she thought she would like to see Mr. Bunker.

When she was gone Harry sat down beside his lordship and proceeded to smoke tobacco in silence, refusing the proffered decanters.

Said the professor softly:

"She'd be a fortune – a gem of the first water – upon the boards. As pianoforte-player between the feats of magic, marvel, and mystery, or a medium under the magnetic influence of the operator, or a clairvoyant, or a thought-reader – or – " Here he relapsed into silence without a sigh.

"She looks intelligent," said Daniel Fagg. "When she hears about my discovery she will – " Here he caught the eye of Harry Goslett, who was shaking a finger of warning, which he rightly interpreted to mean that dressmakers must not be asked to subscribe to learned books. This abashed him.

"Considered as a figure-head," began Mr. Maliphant, "I remember – "

"As a dressmaker, now – " interrupted Harry. "Do Stepney dressmakers often play the piano like – well, like Miss Kennedy? Do they wear gold watches? Do they talk and move and act so much like real ladies, that no one could tell the difference? Answer me that, Mrs. Bormalack."

"Well, Mr. Goslett, all I can say is, that she seems a very proper young lady to have in the house."

"Proper, ma'am? If you were to search the whole of Stepney, I don't believe you could find such another. What does your ladyship say?"

"I say, Mr. Goslett, that in Canaan City the ladies who are dressmakers set the fashions to the ladies who are not; I was myself a dressmaker. And Aurelia Tucker, though she turns up her nose at our elevation, is, I must say, a lady who would do credit to any circle, even yours, Mrs. Bormalack. And

such remarks about real ladies and dressmakers I do not understand, and I expected better manners, I must say. Look at his lordship's manners, Mr. Goslett, and his father was a carpenter, like you."

# CHAPTER IV.
# UNCLE BUNKER

"My uncle!"

It was the sprightly young cabinet-maker who sprang to his feet and grasped the hand of the new-comer with an effusion not returned.

"Allow me, Miss Kennedy, to present to you my uncle, my uncle Bunker, whose praise you heard us sing with one consent last night. We did, indeed, revered one! Whatever you want bought, Miss Kennedy, from a piano to a learned pig, this is the man who will do it for you. A percentage on the cost, with a trifling charge for time, is all he seeks in return. He is generally known as the Benevolent Bunker; he is everybody's friend; especially he is beloved by persons behindhand with their rents, he is – "

Here Mr. Bunker drew out his watch, and observed with severity that his time was valuable, and that he came about business.

Angela observed that the sallies of his nephew were received with disfavor.

"Can we not," pursued Harry, regardless of the cloud upon his uncle's brow – "can we not escape from affairs of urgency for one moment? Show us your lighter side, my uncle. Let Miss Kennedy admire the gifts and graces which you hide as well as the sterner qualities which you exhibit."

"Business, young lady," the agent repeated, with a snort and a scowl. He took off his hat and rubbed his bald head with a silk pocket-handkerchief until it shone like polished marble. He was short of stature and of round figure. His face was red and puffy as if he was fond of hot brandy-and-water, and he panted, being a little short of breath. His eyes were small and close together, which gave him a cunning look; his whiskers were large and gray; his lips were thick and firm, and his upper lip was long: his nose was broad, but not humorous; his head was set on firmly, and he had a square chin. Evidently he was a man of determination, and he was probably determined to look after his own interests first.

"I want," said Angela, "to establish myself in this neighborhood as a dressmaker."

"Very good," said Mr. Bunker. "That's practical. It is my business to do with practical people, not sniggerers and idle gigglers." He looked at his nephew.

"I shall want a convenient house, and a staff of workwomen, and – and some one acquainted with business details and management."

"Go on," said Mr. Bunker. "A forewoman you will want, of course."

"Then, as I do not ask you to give me your advice for nothing, how are you generally paid for such services?"

"I charge," he said, "as arranged for beforehand. Time for talking, arranging, and house-hunting, half-a-crown an hour. That won't break you. And you won't talk too much, knowing you have to pay for it. Percentage on the rent, ten per cent. for the first year, nothing afterward; if you want furniture, I will furnish your house from top to bottom on the same terms, and find you work-girls at five shillings a head."

"Yes," said Angela. "I suppose I must engage a staff. And I suppose" – here she looked at Harry, as if for advice – "I suppose that you *are* the best person to go to for assistance."

"There is no one else," said Mr. Bunker. "That is why my terms are so low."

His nephew whistled softly.

Mr. Bunker, after an angry growl at people who keep their hands in their pockets, proceeded to develop his views. Miss Kennedy listened languidly, appearing to care very little about details, and agreeing to most expensive things in a perfectly reckless manner. She was afraid, for her part, that her own ignorance would be exposed if she talked. The agent, however, quickly perceived how ignorant

she was, from this very silence, and resolved to make the best of so promising a subject. She could not possibly have much money – who ever heard of a Stepney dressmaker with any? – and she evidently had no experience. He would get as much of the money as he could, and she would be the gainer in experience. A most equitable arrangement, he thought, being one of those – too few, alas! – who keep before their eyes a lofty ideal, and love to act up to it.

When he had quite finished and fairly embarked his victim on a vast ocean of expenditure, comparatively, and with reference to Stepney and Mile End customs, he put up his pocketbook and remarked, with a smile, that he should want references of respectability.

"That's usual," he said: "I could not work without."

Angela changed color. To be asked for references was awkward.

"You can refer to me, my uncle," said Harry.

Mr. Bunker took no notice of this proposition.

"You see, miss," he said, "we don't know you, nor where you come from, nor what money you've got, nor how you got it. No doubt it is all right, and I'm sure you look honest. Perhaps you've got nothing to hide, and very likely there's good reasons for wanting to settle here."

"My grandfather was a Whitechapel man by birth," she replied. "He left me some money. If you must have references, of course I could refer you to the lawyers who managed my little affairs. But I would rather, to save trouble, pay for everything on the spot, and the rent in advance."

Mr. Bunker consented to waive his objection on payment of a sum of ten pounds down, it being understood and concluded that everything bought should be paid for on the spot, and a year's rent when the house was fixed upon, paid in advance; in consideration for which he said the young lady might, in subsequent transactions with strangers, refer to himself, a privilege which was nothing less than the certain passport to fortune.

"As for me," he added, "my motto is, 'Think first of your client.' Don't spare yourself for him; toil for him, think for him, rise up early and lie down late for him, and you reap your reward from grateful hearts. Lord! the fortunes I have made!"

"Virtuous Uncle Bunker!" cried Harry with enthusiasm. "Noble, indeed!"

The good man for the moment forgot the existence of his frivolous nephew, who had retired up the stage, so to speak. He opened his mouth as if to say something in anger, but refrained, and snorted.

"Now that we've settled that matter, Mr. Bunker," the girl said without noticing the interruption, "let us talk about other matters."

"Are they business matters?"

"Not exactly; but still – "

"Time is money; an hour is half-a-crown." He drew out his watch, and made a note of the time in his pocketbook. "A quarter to eleven, miss. If I didn't charge for time, what would become of my clients? Neglected; their interests ruined; the favorable moment gone. If I could tell you of a lady I established two years ago in one of the brewery-houses and what she's made of it, and what she says of me, you would be astonished. A grateful heart! and no better brandy-and-water, hot, with a slice of lemon, in the Whitechapel Road. But you were about to say, miss – "

"She was going to begin with a hymn of praise, Uncle Bunker, paid in advance, like the rest. Gratitude for favors to come. But if you like to tell about the lady, do. Miss Kennedy will only charge you half-a-crown an hour. I'll mark time."

"I think, young man," said Mr. Bunker, "that it is time you should go to your work. Stepney is not the place for sniggerin' peacocks; they'd better have stayed in the United States."

"I am waiting till you have found me a place, too," the young man replied. "I too would wish to experience the grateful heart. It is peculiar to Whitechapel."

"I was going to say," Angela went on, "that I hear you were connected with old Mr. Messenger for many years."

"I was," Mr. Bunker replied, and straightened his back with pride. "I was – everybody knows that I was his confidential factotum and his familiar friend, as David was unto Jonathan."

"Indeed! I used to – to – hear about him formerly a great deal."

"Which made his final behavior the more revolting," Mr. Bunker continued, completing his sentence.

"Really! How did he finally behave?"

"It was always – ah! for twenty years, between us, 'Bunker, my friend,' or 'Bunker, my trusted friend,' tell me this, go there, find out that. I bought his houses; I let his houses; I told him who were responsible tenants; I warned him when shooting of moons seemed likely; I found out their antecedents and told him their stories. He had hundreds of houses, and he knew everybody that lived in them, and what their fathers were and their mothers were, and even their grandmothers. For he was a Whitechapel man by birth, and was proud of it."

"But – the shameful behavior?"

"All the time" – he shook his head and looked positively terrible in his wrath – "all the time I was piling up his property for him, houses here, streets there, he would encourage me in his way. 'Go on, Bunker,' he would say, 'go on. A man who works for duty, like yourself, and to please his employers, and not out of consideration for the pay, is one of a million;' as I certainly was, Miss Kennedy. 'One of a million,' he said; 'and you will have your reward after I am gone.' Over and over again he said this, and of course I reckoned on it, and only wondered how much it would tot up to. Something, I thought, in four figures; it couldn't be less than four figures." Here he stopped and rubbed his bald head again.

Angela caught the eyes of his nephew, who in his seat behind was silently laughing. He had caught the situation which she herself now readily comprehended. She pictured to herself this blatant Professor of Disinterestedness and Zeal buzzing and fluttering about her grandfather, and the quiet old man egging him on to more protestations.

"Four figures, for certain it would be. Once I asked his advice as to how I should invest that reward when it did come. He laughed, miss. Yes, for once he laughed, which I never saw him do before or after. I often think he must be sorry now to think of that time he laughed. Yah! I'm glad of it."

So far as Angela could make it, his joy grew out of a persuasion that this particular fit of laughter was somehow interfering with her grandfather's present comforts, but perhaps she was wrong.

"He laughed," continued Mr. Bunker, "and he said that house property, in a rising neighborhood, and if it could be properly looked after, was the best investment for money. House property, he said, as far as the money would go."

"And when he died?" asked the listener, with another glance at Harry, the unsympathetic, whose face expressed the keenest enjoyment.

"Nothing, if you please; not one brass farthing. Hunks! Hunks!" He grew perfectly purple, and clutched his fist as if he would fain be punching of heads. "Not one word of me in his will. All for the girl: millions – millions – for her; and for me who done his work – nothing."

"You have the glow of virtue," said his nephew.

"It seems hard," said Angela quickly, for the man looked dangerous, and seemed capable of transferring his wrath to his nephew; "it seems hard to get nothing if anything was promised."

"It seems a pity," Harry chimed in, "that so much protesting was in vain. Perhaps Mr. Messenger took him at his word. What a dreadful thing to be believed!"

"A Hunks," replied Mr. Bunker; "a miserly Hunks."

"Let me write a letter for you," said Harry, "to the heiress; we might forward it with a deputation of grateful hearts from Stepney."

"Mind your own business," growled his uncle. "Well, miss, you wanted to hear about Mr. Messenger, and you have heard. What next?"

"I should very much like, if it were possible," Angela replied, "to see this great brewery, of which one hears so much. Could you, for instance, take me over, Mr. Bunker?"

"At a percentage," whispered his nephew, loud enough for both to hear.

"Messenger's brewery," he replied, "is as familiar to me as my own fireside. I've grown up beside it. I know all the people in it. They all know me. Perhaps they respect me. For it was well known that a handsome legacy was promised and expected. And nothing, after all. As for taking you over, of course I can. We will go at once. It will take time; and time is money."

"May I go too?" asked Harry.

"No, sir; you may not. It shall not be said in the Mile End Road that an industrious man like myself, a worker for clients, was seen in working-time with an idler."

The walk from Stepney Green to Messenger & Marsden's Brewery is not far. You turn to the left if your house is on one side, and to the right if it is on the other; then you pass a little way down one street, and a little way, turning again to the left, up another – a direction which will guide you quite clearly. You then find yourself before a great gateway, the portals of which are closed; beside it is a smaller door, at which, in a little lodge, sits one who guards the entrance.

Mr. Bunker nodded to the porter and entered unchallenged. He led the way across a court to a sort of outer office.

"Here," he said, "is the book for the visitors' names. We have them from all countries; great lords and ladies; foreign princes; and all the brewers from Germany and America, who come to get a wrinkle. Write your name in it, too. Something, let me tell you, to have your name in such noble company."

She took a pen and wrote hurriedly.

Mr. Bunker looked over her shoulder.

"Ho! ho!" he said, "that is a good one! See what you've written."

In fact, she had written her own name – Angela Marsden Messenger.

She blushed violently.

"How stupid of me! I was thinking of the heiress – they said it was her name."

She carefully effaced the name, and wrote under it, "A. M. Kennedy."

"That's better. And now come along. A good joke, too! Fancy their astonishment if they had come to read it!"

"Does she often come – the heiress?"

"Never once been anigh the place; never seen it; never asks after it; never makes an inquiry about it. Draws the money and despises it."

"I wonder she has not got more curiosity."

"Ah! It's a shame for such a property to come to a girl – a girl of twenty-one. Thirteen acres it covers – think of that! Seven hundred people it employs, most of them married. Why, if it was only to see her own vats, you'd think she'd got off of her luxurious pillows for once, and come here."

They entered a great hall remarkable at first for a curious smell, not offensive, but strong and rather pungent. In it stood half-a-dozen enormous vats, closed by wooden slides, like shutters, fitting tightly. A man standing by opened one of these, and presently Angela was able to make out, through the volumes of steam, something bright going round, and a brown mess going with it.

"That is hops. Hops for the biggest brewery, the richest, in all England. And all belonging to a girl who, likely enough, doesn't drink more than a pint and a half a day."

"I dare say not," said Angela; "it must be a dreadful thing indeed to have so much beer, and to be able to drink so little."

He led the way upstairs into another great hall, where there was the grinding of machinery and another smell, sweet and heavy.

"This is where we crush the malt," said Mr. Bunker – "see!" He stooped, and picked out of a great box a handful of the newly-crushed malt. "I suppose you thought it was roasted. Roasting, young lady," he added with severity, "is for stout, not for ale!"

Then he took her to another place and showed her where the liquor stood to ferment; how it was cooled, how it was passed from one vat to another, how it was stored and kept in vats, dwelling perpetually on the magnitude of the business, and the irony of fortune in conferring this great gift upon a girl.

"I know now," she interrupted, "what the place smells like. It is fusel oil." They were standing on a floor of open iron bars, above a row of long covered vats, within which the liquor was working and fermenting. Every now and then there would be a heaving of the surface, and a quantity of the malt would then move suddenly over.

"We are famous," said Mr. Bunker; "I say *we*, having been the confidential friend and adviser of the late Mr. Messenger, deceased; we are famous for our Stout; also for our Mild; and we are now reviving our Bitter, which we had partially neglected. We use the artesian well, which is four hundred feet deep, for our Stout, but the company's water for our ales; and our water rate is two thousand pounds a year. The artesian well gives the ale a gray color, which people don't like. Come into this room, now" – it was another great hall covered with sacks. "Hops again, Miss Kennedy; now, that little lot is worth ten thousand pounds – ten – thousand – think of that; and it is all spoiled by the rain, and has to be thrown away. We think nothing of losing ten thousand pounds here, nothing at all!" – he snapped his fingers – "it is a mere trifle to the girl who sits at home and takes the profits!"

He spoke as if he felt a personal animosity to the girl. Angela told him so.

"No wonder," he said; "she took all the legacy that ought to have been mine: no man can forgive that. You are young, Miss Kennedy, and are only beginning business; mark my words, one of these days you will feel how hard it is to put a little by – work as hard as you may – while here is this one having it put away for her, thousands a day, and doing for it – nothing at all."

Then they went into more great halls, and up more stairs, and on to the roof, and saw more piles of sacks, more malt, and more hops. When they smelt the hops, it seemed as if their throats were tightened; when they smelt the fermentation, it seemed as if they were smelling fusel oil; when they smelt the plain crushed malt, it seemed as if they were getting swiftly but sleepily drunk. Everywhere and always the steam rolled backward and forward, and the grinding of the machinery went on, and the roaring of the furnaces; and the men went about to and fro at their work. They did not seem hard worked, nor were they pressed; their movements were leisurely, as if beer was not a thing to hurry; they were all rather pale of cheek, but fat and jolly, as if the beer was good and agreed with them. Some wore brown paper caps, for it was a pretty draughty place; some went bareheaded, some wore the little round hat in fashion. And they went to another part, where men were rolling barrels about, as if they had been skittles, and here they saw vats holding three thousand barrels; and one thought of giant armies – say two hundred and fifty thousand thirsty Germans – beginning the loot of London with one of these royal vats. And they went through the stables, where hundreds of horses were stalled at night, each as big as an elephant, and much more useful.

In one great room, where there was the biggest vat of all, a man brought them beer to taste; it was Messenger's Stout. Angela took her glass and put it to her lips with a strange emotion – she felt as if she should like a quiet place to sit down in and cry. The great place was hers – all hers; and this was the beer with which her mighty fortune had been made.

"Is it," she asked, looking at the heavy foam of the frothing stout, "is this Messenger's Entire?"

Bunker sat down and drank off his glass before replying. Then he laid his hands upon his stick and made answer, slowly, remembering that he was engaged at half-a-crown an hour, which is one halfpenny a minute.

"This is not Entire," he said. "You see, Miss Kennedy, there's fashions in beer, same as in clothes; once it was all Cooper, now you never hear of Cooper. Then was it all Half-an-arf – you

never hear of any one ordering Half-an-arf now. Then it was Stout. Nothing would go down but Stout, which I recommend myself, and find it nourishing. Next Bitter came in, and honest Stout was despised; now, we're all for Mild. As for Entire, why – bless my soul! – Entire went out before I was born. Why, it was Entire which made the fortune of the first Messenger that was – a poor little brewery he had, more than a hundred years ago, in this very place, because it was cheap for rent. In those days they used to brew Strong ale, Old and Strong; Stout, same as now; and Twopenny, which was small beer. And because the Old ale was too strong, and the Stout too dear, and the Twopenny too weak, the people used to mix them all three together, and they called them 'Three Threads;' and you may fancy the trouble it was for the pot-boys to go to one cask after another, all day long, because they had no beer engines then. Well, what did Mr. Messenger do? He brewed a beer as strong as the Three Threads, and he called it Messenger's Entire Three Threads, meaning that here you had 'em all in one, and that's what made his fortune; and now, young lady, you've seen all I've got to show you, and we will go."

"I make bold, young woman," he said, as they went away, "to give you a warning about my nephew. He's a good-looking chap, for all he's worthless, though it's a touch-and-go style that's not my idea of good looks. Still, no doubt some would think him handsome. Well, I warn you."

"That is very good of you, Mr. Bunker. Why do you warn me?"

"Why, anybody can see already that he's taken with your good looks. Don't encourage him. Don't keep company with him. He's been away a good many years – in America – and I fear he's been in bad company."

"I am sorry to hear that."

"You saw his sniggerin', sneerin' way with me, his uncle. That doesn't look the right sort of man to take up with, I think. And as for work, he seems not to want any. Says he can afford to wait a bit. Talks about opening a cabinet-makin' shop. Well, he will have none of my money. I tell him that beforehand. A young jackanapes! A painted peacock! I believe, Miss Kennedy, that he drinks. Don't have nothing to say to him. As for what he did in the States, and why he left the country, I don't know; and if I were you, I wouldn't ask."

With this warning he left her, and Angela went home trying to realize her own great possessions. Hundreds of houses; rows of streets; this enormous brewery, working day after day for her profit and advantage; and these invested moneys, these rows of figures which represented her personal property. All hers! All her own! All the property of a girl! Surely, she thought, this was a heavy burden to be laid upon one frail back.

# CHAPTER V.
# THE CARES OF WEALTH

It is, perhaps, a survival of feudal customs that in English minds a kind of proprietorship is assumed over one's dependents, those who labor for a man and are paid by him. It was this feeling of responsibility which had entered into the mind of Angela, and was now firmly fixed there. All these men, this army of seven hundred brewers, drivers, clerks, accountants, and the rest, seemed to belong to her. Not only did she pay them the wages and salaries which gave them their daily bread, but they lived in her own houses among the streets which lie to the right and to the left of the Mile End Road. The very chapels where they worshipped, being mostly of some Nonconformist sect, stood on her own ground – everything was hers.

The richest heiress in England! She repeated this to herself over and over again, in order to accustom herself to the responsibilities of her position, not to the pride of it. If she dwelt too long upon the subject her brain reeled. What was she to do with all her money? A man – like her grandfather – often feels joy in the mere amassing of wealth; to see it grow is enough pleasure; other men in their old age sigh over bygone years, which seem to have failed in labor or effort. Then men sigh over bygone days in which more might have been saved. But girls cannot be expected to reach these heights. Angela only weakly thought what an immense sum of money she had, and asked herself what she could do, and how she should spend her wealth to the best advantage.

The most pitiable circumstance attending the possession of wealth is that no one sympathizes with the possessor. Yet his or her sufferings are sometimes very great. They begin at school, where a boy or girl, who is going to be very rich, feels already set apart. He loses the greatest spur to action. It is when they grow up, however, that the real trouble begins. For a girl with large possessions is always suspicious lest a man should pretend to love her for the sake of her money; she has to suspect all kinds of people who want her to give, lend, advance, or promise them money; she is the mere butt of every society, hospital, and institution; her table is crowded every morning with letters from decayed gentlewomen and necessitous clergymen, and recommenders of "cases;" she longs to do good to her generation, but does not know how; she is expected to buy quantities of things which she does not want, and to pay exorbitant prices for everything; she has to be a patron of art: she is invited to supply every woman throughout the country who wants a mangle, with that useful article; she is told that it is her duty to build new churches over the length and breadth of the land: she is earnestly urged to endow new Colonial bishoprics over all the surface of the habitable globe. Then she has to live in a great house and have troops of idle servants. And, whether she likes it or not, she has to go a great deal in society.

All this, without the least sympathy or pity from those who ought to feel for her, who are in the happy position of having no money. Nobody pities an heiress; to express pity would seem like an exaggerated affectation of virtue, the merest pedantry of superiority; it would not be believed. Therefore, while all the world is agreed in envying her, she is bemoaning her sad fate. Fortunately, she is rare.

As yet, Angela was only just at the commencement of her troubles. The girls at Newnham had not spoiled her by flattery or envy; some of them even pitied her sad burden of money; she had as yet only realized part of the terrible isolation of wealth; she had not grown jealous, or suspicious, or arrogant, as in advancing years often happens with the very rich; she had not yet learned to regard the whole world as composed entirely of money-grabbers. All she had felt hitherto was that she went in constant danger from interested wooers, and that youth, combined with money-bags, is an irresistible attraction to men of all ages. Now, however, for the first time she understood the magnitude of her possessions, and felt the real weight of her responsibilities. She saw, for the first time, the hundreds

of men working for her; she saw the houses whose tenants paid rent to her; she visited her great brewery, and she asked herself the question, which Dives no doubt frequently asked – What she had done to be specially set apart and selected from humanity as an exception to the rule of labor? Even Bunker's complaint about the difficulty of putting by a little, and his indignation because she herself could put by so much, seemed pathetic.

She walked about the sad and monotonous streets of East London, reflecting upon these subjects. She did not know where she was, nor the name of any street; in a general way she knew that most of the street probably belonged to herself, and that it was an inexpressibly dreary street. When she was tired she asked her way back again. No one insulted her; no one troubled her; no one turned aside to look at her. When she went home she sat silently, for the most part, in the common sitting-room. The boarding-house was inexpressibly stupid except when the sprightly young mechanic was present, and she was even angry with herself for finding his society pleasant. What could there be, she asked, in common between herself and this workman? Then she wondered, remembering that so far she had found nothing in her own mind that was not also in his. Could it be that two years of Newnham had elevated her mentally no higher than the level of a cabinet-maker?

Her meditation brought her, in the course of a few days, to the point of action. She would do something. She therefore wrote a letter instructing her solicitors to get her, immediately, two reports, carefully drawn up.

First, she would have a report on the brewery, its average profits for the last ten years, with a list of all the employees, the number of years' service, the pay they received, and, as regards the juniors, the characters they bore.

Next she wanted a report on her property at the East End, with a list of her tenants, their occupations and trades, and a map showing the position of her houses.

When she had got these reports she would be, she felt, in a position to work upon them.

Meantime, Mr. Bunker not having yet succeeded in finding a house suitable for her dressmaking business, she had nothing to do but to go on walking about and to make herself acquainted with the place. Once or twice she was joined by the idle apprentice, who, to do him justice, was always ready to devote his unprofitable time to these excursions, which his sprightliness enlivened.

There is a good deal to see in and about Stepney, though it can hardly be called a beautiful suburb. Formerly it was a very big place, so big that, though Bethnal Green was once chopped off at one end and Limehouse at the other, not to speak of Shadwell, Wapping, Stratford, and other great cantles, there still remains a parish as big as St. Pancras. Yet, though it is big, it is not proud. Great men have not been born there or lived there; there are no associations. Stepney Green has not even got its Polly, like Paddington Green and Wapping Old Stairs; the streets are all mean, and the people for the most part stand upon that level where respectability – beautiful quality! – begins.

"Do you know the West End?" Angela asked her companion when they were gazing together upon an unlovely avenue of small houses which formed a street. She was thinking how monotonous must be the daily life in these dreary streets.

"Yes, I know the West End. What is it you regret in your comparison?"

Angela hesitated.

"There are no carriages here," said the workman; "no footmen in powder or coachmen in wigs; there are no ladies on horseback, no great squares with big houses, no clubs, no opera-houses, no picture-galleries. All the rest of life is here."

"But these things make life," said the heiress. "Without society and art, what is life?"

"Perhaps these people find other pleasures; perhaps the monotony gets relieved by hope and anxiety, and love, and death, and such things." The young man forgot how the weight of this monotony had fallen upon his own brain; he remembered, now, that his companion would probably have to face this dreariness all her life, and he tried in a kindly spirit to divert her mind from the thought of it.

"You forget that each life is individual, and has its own separate interests; and these are apart from the conditions which surround it. Do you know my cousin, Tom Coppin?"

"No: what is he?"

"He is a printer by trade. Of late years he has been engaged in setting up atheistic publications. Of course, this occupation has had the effect of making him an earnest Christian. Now he is a captain of the Salvation Army."

"But I thought – "

"Don't think, Miss Kennedy; look about and see for yourself. He lives on five-and-twenty shillings a week, in one room, in just such a street as this. I laughed at him at first; now I laugh no longer. You can't laugh at a man who spends his whole life preaching and singing hymns among the Whitechapel roughs, taking as a part of the day's work all the rotten eggs, brickbats, and kicks that come in his way. Do you think his life would be less monotonous if he lived in Belgrave Square?"

"But all are not preachers and captains in the Salvation Army."

"No: there is my cousin Dick. We are, very properly, Tom, Dick, and Harry. Dick is, like myself, a cabinet-maker. He is also a politician, and you may hear him at his club denouncing the House of Lords, and the Church, and monarchical institutions, and hereditary everything, till you wonder the people do not rise and tear all down. They don't, you see, because they are quite accustomed to big talk, and it never means anything, and they are not really touched by the dreadful wickedness of the peers."

"I should like to know your cousins."

"You shall. They don't like me, because I have been brought up in a somewhat different school. But that does not greatly matter."

"Will they like me?" It was a very innocent question, put in perfect innocence, and yet the young man blushed.

"Everybody," he said, "is bound to like you."

She changed color and became silent, for a while.

He went on presently.

"We are all as happy as we deserve to be, I suppose. If these people knew what to do in order to make themselves happier, they would go and do that thing. Meantime, there is always love for everybody, and success, and presently the end – is not life everywhere monotonous?"

"No," she replied stoutly; "mine is not."

He was thinking at the moment that of all lives a dressmaker's must be one of the most monotonous. She remembered that she was a dressmaker, and explained:

"There are the changes of fashion, you see."

"Yes, but you are young," he replied, from his vantage-ground of twenty-three years, being two years her superior. "Mine is monotonous when I come to think of it. Only, you see, one does not think of it oftener than one can help. Besides, as far as I have got I like the monotony."

"Do you like work?"

"Not much, I own. Do you?"

"No."

"Yet you are going to settle down at Stepney."

"And you, too?"

"As for me, I don't know." The young man colored slightly. "I may go away again soon and find work elsewhere."

"I was walking yesterday," she went on, "in the great, great church-yard of Stepney Church. Do you know it?"

"Yes – that is, I have not been inside the walls. I am not fond of church-yards."

"There they lie – acres of graves. Thousands upon thousands of dead people, and not one of the whole host remembered. All have lived, worked, hoped much, got a little, I suppose, and died. And the world none the better."

"Nay, that you cannot tell."

"Not one of all remembered," she repeated. "There is an epitaph in the church-yard which might do for every one:

"'Here lies the body of Daniel Saul —
Spitalfields weaver; and that is all.'

That is all."

"What more did the fellow deserve?" asked her companion. "No doubt he was a very good weaver. Why, he has got a great posthumous reputation. You have quoted him."

He did not quite follow her line of thought. She was thinking in some vague way of the waste of material.

"They had very little power of raising the world, to be sure. They were quite poor, ill-educated, and without resource."

"It seems to me," replied her companion, "that nobody has any power of raising the world. Look at the preachers and the writers and the teachers. By their united efforts they contrive to shore up the world and keep it from falling lower. Every now and then down we go, flop – a foot or two of civilization lost. Then we lose a hundred years or so until we can get shoved up again."

"Should not rich men try to shove up, as you call it?"

"Some of them do try, I believe," he replied; "I don't know how they succeed."

"Suppose, for instance, this young lady, this Miss Messenger, who owns all this property, were to use it for the benefit of the people, how would she begin, do you suppose?"

"Most likely she would bestow a quantity of money to a hospital, which would pauperize the doctors, or she would give away quantities of blankets, bread, and beef in the winter, which would pauperize the people."

Angela sighed.

"That is not very encouraging."

"What you could do by yourself, if you pleased, among the working-girls of the place, would be, I suppose, worth ten times what she could do with all her giving. I'm not much in the charity line myself, Miss Kennedy, but I should say, from three weeks' observation of the place and conversation with the respectable Bunker, that Miss Messenger's money is best kept out of the parish, which gets on very well without it."

"Her money! Yes, I see. Yet she herself – " She paused.

"We working men and women – "

"You are not a working-man, Mr. Goslett." She faced him with her steady, honest eyes, as if she would read the truth in his. "Whatever else you are, you are not a working-man."

He replied without the least change of color:

"Indeed, I am the son of Sergeant Goslett, of the – th Regiment, who fell in the Indian Mutiny. I am the nephew of good old Benjamin Bunker, the virtuous and the disinterested. I was educated in rather a better way than most of my class, that is all."

"Is it true that you have lived in America?"

"Quite true." He did not say how long he had lived there.

Angela, with her own guilty secret, was suspicious that perhaps this young man might also have his.

"Men of your class," she said, "do not as a rule talk like you."

"Matter of education – that is all."

"And you are really a cabinet-maker?"

"If you will look into my room and see my lathe, I will show you specimens of my work, O thou unbeliever! Did you think that I might have 'done something,' and so be fain to hide my head?"

It was a cruel thing to suspect him in this way, yet the thought had crossed her mind that he might be a fugitive from the law and society, protected for some reason by Bunker.

Harry returned to the subject of the place.

"What we want here," he said, "as it seems to me, is a little more of the pleasure and graces of life. To begin with, we are not poor and in misery, but for the most part fairly well off. We have great works here – half a dozen breweries, though none so big as Messenger's; chemical works, sugar refineries, though these are a little depressed at present, I believe; here are all the docks; then we have silk-weavers, rope-makers, sail-makers, match-makers, cigar-makers; we build ships; we tackle jute, though what jute is, and what to do with it, I know not; we cut corks; we make soap, and we make fireworks; we build boats. When all our works are in full blast, we make quantities of money. See us on Sundays, we are not a bad-looking lot; healthy, well-dressed, and tolerably rosy. But we have no pleasures."

"There must be some."

"A theatre and a music-hall in Whitechapel Road. That has to serve for two millions of people. Now, if this young heiress wanted to do any good, she should build a Palace of Pleasure here."

"A Palace of Pleasure!" she repeated. "It sounds well. Should it be a kind of a Crystal Palace?"

"Well!" It was quite a new idea, but he replied as if he had been considering the subject for years. "Not quite – with modifications."

"Let us talk over your Palace of Pleasure," she said, "at another time. It sounds well. What else should she do?"

"That is such a gigantic thing that it seems enough for one person to attempt. However, we can find something else for her – why, take schools. There is not a public school for the whole two millions of East London. Not one place in which boys – to say nothing of girls, can be brought up in generous ideas. She must establish at least half a dozen public schools for boys and as many for girls."

"That is a very good idea. Will you write and tell her so?"

"Then there are libraries, reading-rooms, clubs, but all these would form part of the Palace of Pleasure."

"Of course. I would rather call it a Palace of Delight. Pleasure seems to touch a lower note. We could have music-rooms for concerts as well."

"And a school for music." The young man became animated as the scheme unfolded itself.

"And a school for dancing."

"Miss Kennedy," he said with enthusiasm, "you *ought* to have the spending of all this money! And – why, you would hardly believe it – but there is not in the whole of this parish of Stepney a single dance given in the year. Think of that! But perhaps – " He stopped again.

"You mean that dressmakers do not, as a rule, dance? However, I do, and so there must be a school for dancing. There must be a great college to teach all these accomplishments."

"Happy Stepney!" cried the young man, carried out of himself. "Thrice happy Stepney! Glorified Whitechapel! Beautiful Bow! What things await ye in the fortunate future!"

He left her at the door of Bormalack's, and went off on some voyage of discovery of his own.

The girl retreated to her own room. She had now hired a sitting-room all to herself, and paid three months in advance, and sat down to think. Then she took paper and pen and began to write.

She was writing down, while it was hot in her head, the three-fold scheme which this remarkable young workman had put into her head.

"We women are weak creatures," she said with a sigh. "We long to be up and doing, but we cannot carve out our work for ourselves. A man must be with us to suggest or direct it. The College of Art – yes, we will call it the College of Art; the Palace of Delight; the public schools. I should think

that between the three a good deal of money might be got through. And oh! to think of converting this dismal suburb into a home for refined and cultivated people!"

In blissful revery she saw already the mean houses turned into red brick Queen Anne terraces and villas; the dingy streets were planted with avenues of trees; art flourished in the house as well as out of it; life was rendered gracious, sweet, and lovely.

And to think that this result was due to the suggestion of a common working-man!

But then, he had lived in the States. Doubtless in the States all the working-men – But was that possible?

# CHAPTER VI.
# A FIRST STEP

With this great programme before her, the responsibilities of wealth were no longer so oppressive. When power can be used for beneficent purposes, who would not be powerful? And beside the mighty shadow of this scheme, the smaller project for which Bunker was finding a house looked small indeed. Yet was it not small, but great, and destined continually to grow greater?

Bunker came to see her from day to day, reporting progress. He heard of a house here or a house there, and went to see it. But it was too large; and of another, but it was too small; and of a third, but it was not convenient for her purpose; and so on. Each house took up a whole day in examination, and Bunker's bill was getting on with great freedom.

The delay, however, gave Angela time to work out her new ideas on paper. She invoked the assistance of her friend the cabinet-maker with ideas; and, under the guise of amusing themselves, they drew up a long and business-like prospectus of the proposed new institutions. First, there were the High Schools, of which she would found six – three for boys and three for girls. The great feature of these schools was to be that they should give a liberal education for a very small fee, and that in their play-grounds, their discipline, and, as far as possible, their hours, they were to resemble the great public schools.

"They must be endowed for their masters' and mistresses' salaries, and with scholarships; and – and – I think the boys and girls ought to have dinner in the school, so as not to go home all day; and – and – there will be many things to provide for each school."

She looked as earnest over this amusement, Harry said, as if she were herself in possession of the fortune which they were thus administering. They agreed that when the schools were built, an endowment of £70,000 each, which would yield £2,000 a year, ought to be enough, with the school fees, to provide for the education of five hundred in each school. Then they proceeded with the splendid plan of the new college. It was agreed that learning, properly so called, should be entirely kept out of the programme. No political economy, said the Newnham student, should be taught there. Nor any of the usual things – Latin, Greek, mathematics, and so forth – said the young man from the United States. What, then, remained?

Everything. The difficulty in making such a selection of studies is to know what to omit.

"We are to have," said Harry, now almost as enthusiastic as Angela herself, "a thing never before attempted. We are to have a College of Art. What a grand idea! It was yours, Miss Kennedy."

"No," she replied, "it was yours. If it comes to anything, we shall always remember that it was yours."

An amiable contest was finished by their recollecting that it was only a play, and they laughed and went on, half ashamed, and yet both full of enthusiasm.

"The College of Art!" he repeated; "why, there are a hundred kinds of art; let us include accomplishments."

They would; they did.

They finally resolved that there should be professors, lecturers, or teachers, with convenient class-rooms, theatres and lecture-halls in the following accomplishments and graces: Dancing, but there must be the old as well as the new kinds of dancing. The waltz was not to exclude the minuet, the reel, the country dance, or the old square dances; the pupils would also have such dances as the *bolero* and the *tarantella*, and other national jumperies. Singing, which was to be a great feature, as anybody could sing, said Angela, if they were taught. "Except my Uncle Bunker!" said Harry. Then there were to be musical instruments of all kinds. Skating, bicycling, lawn tennis, racquets, fives, and all kinds

of games; rowing, billiards, archery, rifle-shooting. Then there was to be acting, with reading and recitation; there were to be classes on gardening, on cookery, and on the laws of beauty in costume.

"The East End shall be independent of the rest of the world in fashion," said Angela; "we will dress according to the rules of Art!"

"You shall," cried Harry, "and your own girls shall be the new dressmakers to the whole of glorified Stepney."

Then there were to be lectures, not in literature, but in letter-writing, especially in love-letter writing, versifying, novel-writing, and essay-writing; that is to say, on the more delightful forms of literature – so that poets and novelists should arise, and the East End, hitherto a barren desert, should blossom with flowers. Then there was to be a Professor of Grace, because a graceful carriage of the body is so generally neglected; and Harry, who had a slim figure and long legs, began to indicate how the professor would probably carry himself. Next there were to be Professors of Painting, Drawing, Sculpture and Design; and lectures on Furniture, Color, and Architecture. The arts of photography, china painting, and so forth were to be cultivated; and there were to be classes for the encouragement of leather-work, crewel-work, fret-work, brass-work, wood and ivory carving, and so forth.

"There shall be no house in the East End," cried the girl, "that shall not have its panels painted by one member of the family; its woodwork carved by another, its furniture designed by a third, its windows planted with flowers by another."

Her eyes glowed, her lips trembled.

"You *ought* to have had the millions," said Harry.

"Nay, you, for you devised it all," she replied. She was so glowing, so rosy red, so soft and sweet to look upon; her eyes were so full of possible love – though of love she was not thinking – that almost the young man fell upon his knees to worship this Venus.

"And all these beautiful things," she went on, breathless, "are only designed for the sake of the Palace of Delight.

"It shall stand somewhere near the central place, this Stepney Green, so that all the East can get to it. It shall have many halls," she went on. "One of them shall be for concerts, and there shall be an organ; one of them shall be for a theatre, and there will be a stage and everything; one shall be a dancing-hall, one a skating rink, one a hall for lectures, readings and recitations; one a picture gallery, one a permanent exhibition of our small arts. We will have our concerts performed from our School of Music; our plays shall be played by our amateurs taught at our School of Acting; our exhibitions shall be supplied by our own people; the things will be sold, and they will soon be sold off and replaced, because they will be cheap. Oh! oh! oh!" She clasped her hands, and fell back in her chair, overpowered with the thought.

"It will cost much money," said Harry weakly, as if money was any object – in dreams.

"The college must be endowed with £30,000 a year, which is a million of money," Angela replied, making a little calculation. "That money must be found. As for the palace, it will require nothing but the building, and a small annual income to pay for repairs and servants. It will be governed by a board of directors, elected by the people themselves, to whom the Palace will belong. And no one shall pay or be paid for any performance. And the only condition of admission will be good behavior, with exclusion as a penalty."

The thing which she contemplated was a deed the like of which makes to tingle the ears of those who hear it. To few, indeed, is it given to communicate to a whole nation this strange and not unpleasant sensation.

One need not disguise the fact that the possession of this power, and the knowledge of her own benevolent intentions, gave Angela a better opinion of herself than she had ever known before. Herein, my friends, lies, if you will rightly regard it, the true reason of the feminine love for power illustrated by Chaucer. For the few who have from time to time wielded authority have ever been persuaded that they wielded it wisely, benevolently, religiously, and have of course congratulated themselves

on the possession of so much virtue. What mischiefs, thought Elizabeth of England, Catharine of Russia, Semiramis of Babylon, and Angela of Whitechapel, might have followed had a less wise and virtuous person been on the throne!

It was not unnatural, considering how much she was with Harry at this time, and how long were their talks with each other, that she should have him a great deal in her mind. For these ideas were certainly his, not hers. Newnham, she reflected humbled, had not taught her to originate. She knew that he was but a cabinet-maker by trade. Yet, when she involuntarily compared him, his talk, his manners, his bearing, with the men whom she had met, the young Dons and the undergraduates of Cambridge, the clever young fellows in society who were reported to write for the *Saturday*, and the Berties and the Algies of daily life, she owned to herself that in no single point did this cabinet-maker fellow compare unfavorably with any of them. He seemed as well taught as the last-made Fellow of Trinity who came to lecture on Literature and Poetry at Newnham; as cultivated as the mediæval Fellow who took Philosophy and Psychology, and was supposed to entertain ideas on religion so original as to amount to a Fifth Gospel: as quick as the most thorough-going society man who has access to studios, literary circles, musical people, and æsthetes; and as careless as any Bertie or Algie of the whole set. This it was which made her blush, because if he had been a common man, a mere Bunker, he might, with his knowledge of his class, have proved so useful a servant to her; so admirable a vizier. Now, unfortunately, she felt that she could only make him useful in this way after she had confided in him; and that to confide in him might raise dangerous thoughts in the young man's head. No: she must not confide in him.

It shows what a thoughtful young person Angela was, that she would blush all by herself only to think of danger to Harry Goslett.

She passed all that night and the whole of the next day and night in a dream over the Palace of Delight and the college for educating people in the sweet and pleasant things – the College of Art.

On the next morning a cold chill fell upon her, caused I know not how; not by the weather, which was the bright and hot weather of last July; not by any ailment of her own, because Angela owned the most perfect mechanism ever constructed by Nature; nor by any unpleasantness in the house, because, now that she had her own room, she generally breakfasted alone; nor by anything in the daily papers – which frequently, by their evil telegrams and terrifying forebodings, do poison the spring and the fountain-head of the day; nor by any letter, because the only one she had was from Constance Woodcote at Newnham, and it told the welcome news that she was appointed Mathematical Lecturer with so much a head for fees, and imploring Angela to remember her promise that she would endow Newnham with a scholarship. Endow Newnham! Why, she was going to have a brand-new college of her own, to say nothing of the high schools for boys and girls. Perhaps the cause of her depression was the appearance of Bunker, who came to tell her that he had at last found the house which would suit her. No other house in the neighborhood was in any way to compare with it; the house stood close by, at the southwest corner of Stepney Green. It was ready for occupation, the situation was as desirable as that of Tirzah the Beautiful; the rent was extremely low, considering the many advantages; all the nobility and gentry of the place, he declared, would flock around a dressmaker situated in Stepney Green itself; there were rooms for show-rooms, with plenty of other rooms and everything which would be required; finally, as if this were an additional recommendation, the house *belonged to himself*.

"I am ready," he said, with a winning smile, "to make a sacrifice of my own interests in order to oblige a young lady, and I will take a lower rent from you than I would from anybody else."

She went with him to "view" the house. One looks at a picture, a horse, an estate, a book, but one "views" a house. Subtle and beautiful distinction, which shows the poetry latent in the heart of every house agent! It was Bunker's own. Surely that was not the reason why it was let at double the rent of the next house, which belonged to Angela herself, nor why the tenant had to undertake all the repairs, paper, and painting, external and internal, nor why the rent began from that very day,

instead of the half-quarter or the next quarter-day. Bunker himself assured Miss Kennedy that he had searched the whole neighborhood for a suitable place, but could find none so good as his own house. As for the houses of the Messenger property, they were liable, he said, to the demands of a lawyer's firm, which had no mercy on a tenant, while, as for himself, he was full of compassion, and always ready to listen to reason. He wanted no other recommendation than a year's rent paid in advance, and would undertake to execute, at the tenant's cost, the whole of the painting, papering, whitewashing, roofing, pipes, chimneys, and general work himself; "whereas, young lady," he added, "if you had taken one of those Messenger houses, you cannot tell in what hands you would have found yourself, nor what charges you would have had to pay."

He shook his fat head, and rattled his keys in his pocket. So strong is the tendency of the human mind to believe what is said, in spite of all experience to the contrary, that his victim smiled and thanked him, knowing very well that the next minute she would be angry with herself for so easily becoming a dupe to a clumsy rogue.

She thanked him for his consideration, she said, yet she was uneasily conscious that he was overreaching her in some way, and she hesitated.

"On the Green," he said. "What a position! Looking out on the garden! With such rooms! And so cheap!"

"I don't know," she replied; "I must consult some one."

"As to that," he said, "there may be another tenant; I can't keep offers open. Take it, miss, or leave it. There!"

While she still hesitated, he added one more recommendation.

"An old house it is, but solid, and will stand forever. Why, old Mr. Messenger was born here."

"Was he?" she cried, "was my – was Mr. Messenger actually born here?"

She hesitated no longer. She took the house at his own price; she accepted his terms, extortionate and grasping as they were.

When the bargain was completed – when she had promised to sign the agreement for a twelvemonth, pay a year in advance, and appoint the disinterested one her executor of repairs, she returned to Bormalack's. In the doorway, a cigarette in his mouth, lounged the idle apprentice.

"I saw you," he said, "with the benevolent Bunker. You have fallen a prey to my uncle?"

"I have taken a house from him."

"The two phrases are convertible. Those who take his houses are his victims. I hope no great mischief is done."

"Not much, I think."

The young man threw away his cigarette.

"Seriously, Miss Kennedy," he said, "my good uncle will possess himself of all the money he can get out of you. Have a care."

"He can do me no harm, thank you all the same. I wanted a house soon, and he has found me one. What does it matter if I pay a little more than I ought?"

"What does it matter?" Harry was not versed in details of trade, but he knew enough to feel that this kind of talk was unpractical. "What does it matter? My dear young lady, if you go into business, you must look after the sixpences."

Miss Kennedy looked embarrassed. She had betrayed herself, she thought. "I know – I know. But he talked me over."

"I *have* heard," said the practical man, looking profoundly wise, "that he who would save money must even consider that there is a difference between a guinea and a sovereign; and that he shouldn't pay a cabman more than twice his fare, and that it is wrong to pay half-a-guinea for Heidsieck Monopole when he can get Pommery and Greno at seven-and-sixpence."

Then he, too, paused abruptly, because he felt as if he had betrayed himself. What have cabinet-makers to do with Pommery and Greno? Fortunately, Angela did not hear the latter part of the speech.

She was reflecting on the ease with which a crafty man – say Bunker – may compass his ends with the simple – say herself.

"I do not pretend," he said, "to know all the ropes, but I should not have allowed you to be taken in quite so readily by this good uncle. Do you know – " His eyes, when they were serious, which was not often, were really good. Angela perceived they were serious now: "Do you know that the name of the uncle who was indirectly, so to speak, connected with the Robin Redbreasts was originally Bunker? He changed it after the children were dead, and he came into the property."

"I wish you had been with me," she said simply. "But I suppose I must take my chance, as other girls do."

"Most other girls have got men to advise them. Have you no one?"

"I might have" – she was thinking of her lawyers, who were paid to advise her if required. "But I will find out things for myself."

"And at what a price! Are your pockets lined with gold, Miss Kennedy?" They certainly were, but he did not know it.

"I will try to be careful. Thank you."

"As regards going with you, I am always at your command. I will be your servant, if you will accept me as such."

This was going a step further than seemed altogether safe. Angela was hardly prepared to receive a cabinet-maker, however polite and refined he might seem, as a lover.

"I believe," she said, "that in our class of life it is customary for young people to 'keep company,' is it not?"

"It is not uncommon," he replied, with much earnestness. "The custom has even been imitated by the higher classes."

"What I mean is this, that I am not going to keep company with any one; but, if you please to help me, if I ask your advice, I shall be grateful."

"Your gratitude," he said with a smile, "ought to make any man happy!"

"Your compliments," she retorted, "will certainly kill my gratitude; and now, Mr. Goslett, don't you really think that you should try to do some work? Is it right to lounge away the days among the streets? Are *your* pockets, I may ask, lined with gold?"

"I am looking for work. I am hunting everywhere for work. My uncle is going to find me a workshop. Then I shall request the patronage of the nobility and gentry of Stepney, Whitechapel, and the Mile End Road. H. G. respectfully solicits a trial." He laughed as if there could be no doubt at all about the future, and as if a few years of looking around were of no importance. Then he bowed to Angela in the character of the Complete Cabinet-maker. "Orders, madame, orders executed with neatness and despatch. The highest price given for second-hand furniture."

She had got her house, however, though she was going to pay far too much for it. That was a great thing, and, as the more important schemes could not be all commenced at a moment's notice, she would begin with the lesser – her dressmaker's shop.

Here Mr. Goslett could not help her. She applied, therefore, again to Mr. Bunker, who had a registry office for situations wanted. "My terms," he said, "are five shillings on application and five shillings for each person engaged."

He did not say that he took half a crown from each person who wanted a place and five shillings on her getting the place. His ways were ways of pleasantness, and on principle he never spoke of things which might cause unpleasant remarks. Besides, no one knew the trouble he had to take in suiting people.

"I knew," he said, "that you would come back to me. People will only find out my worth when I am gone."

"I hope you will be worth a great deal, Mr. Bunker," said Angela.

"Pretty well, young lady. Pretty well. Ah! my nephews will be the gainers. But not what I might have been if it had not been for the meanness, the – the – Hunxiness of that wicked old man."

"Do you think you can find me what I want, Mr. Bunker?"

"*Can* I?" He turned over the leaves of a great book. "Look at this long list; all ready to better themselves. Apprentices anxious to get through their articles, and improvers to be dressmakers, and dressmakers to be forewomen, and forewomen to be mistresses. That is the way of the world, young lady. Sweet contentment, where art thou?" The pastoral simplicity of his words and attitude were inexpressibly comic.

"And how are you going to begin, Miss Kennedy?"

"Quietly at first."

"Then you'll want a matter of one or two dressmakers, and half a dozen improvers. The apprentices will come later."

"What are the general wages in this part of London?"

"The dressmakers get sixteen shillings a week; the improvers six. They bring their own dinners, and you give them their tea. But, of course, you know all that."

"Of course," said Angela, making a note of the fact, notwithstanding.

"As for one of your dressmakers, I can recommend you Rebekah Hermitage, daughter of the Rev. Percival Hermitage. She cannot get a situation, because of her father's religious opinions."

"That seems strange. What are they?"

"Why, he's minister of the Seventh-Day Independents. They've got a chapel in Redman's Row; they have their services on Saturday because, they say – and it seems true – that the Fourth Commandment has never been abolished any more than the rest of them. I wonder the bishops don't take it up. Well, there it is. On Saturdays she won't work, and on Sundays she don't like to, because the other people don't."

"Has she any religious objection," asked Angela, "to working on Monday and Tuesday?"

"No; and I'll send her over, Miss Kennedy, this evening, if you will see her. You'll get her cheap, because no one else will have her. Very good. Then there is Nelly Sorensen. I know she would like to go out, but her father is particular. Not that he's any right to be, being a pauper. If a man like me or the late Mr. Messenger, my friend, chooses to be particular, it's nothing but right. As for Captain Sorensen – why, it's the pride after the fall, instead of before it. Which makes it, to a substantial man, sickenin'."

"Who is Captain Sorensen?"

"He lives in the asylum along the Whitechapel Road, only ten minutes or so from here. Nelly Sorensen is as clever a work-woman as you will get. If I were you, Miss Kennedy, I would go and find her at home. Then you can see her work and talk to her. As for her father, keep him in his right place. Pride in an almshouse! Why, you'd hardly believe it; but I wanted to put his girl in a shop where they employ fifty hands, and he wouldn't have it, because he didn't like the character of the proprietor. Said he was a grinder and an oppressor. My answer to such is, and always will be, 'Take it or leave it.' If they won't take it, there's heaps that must. As old Mr. Messenger used to say, 'Bunker, my friend,' or 'Bunker, my only friend,' sometimes, 'Your remarks is true wisdom.' Yes, Miss Kennedy, I will go with you to show you the way." He looked at his watch. "Half-past four. I dare say it will take half an hour there and back, which with the last quarter of an hour's talk, we shall charge as an hour's time, which is half a crown. Thank you. An hour," he added, with great feeling; "an hour, like a pint of beer, cannot be divided. And on these easy terms, Miss Kennedy, you will find me always ready to work for you from sunrise to sunset, thinking of your interests, even at meals, so as not to split an hour or waste it, and to save trouble in reckoning up."

# CHAPTER VII.
# THE TRINITY ALMSHOUSE

From Stepney Green to the Trinity Almshouse is not a long way; you have, in fact, little more than to pass through a short street and to cross the road. But the road itself is noteworthy; for, of all the roads which lead into London or out of it, this of Whitechapel is the broadest and the noblest by nature. Man, it is true, has done little to embellish it. There are no avenues of green and spreading lime and plane trees, as, one day, there shall be; there are no stately buildings, towers, spires, miracles of architecture – but only houses and shops, which, whether small or big, are all alike mean, unlovely, and depressing. Yet, in spite of all, a noble road.

This road, which is the promenade, breathing-place, place of resort, place of gossip, place of amusement, and place of business for the greater part of East London, stretches all the way from Aldgate to Stratford, being called first Whitechapel Road, and then the Mile End Road, and then the Stratford Road. Under the first name the road has acquired a reputation of the class called, by moralists, unenviable. The history of police courts records, under the general heading of Whitechapel Road, shows so many free fights, brave robberies, gallant murders, dauntless kickings, cudgellings, pummellings, pocket-pickings, shop-liftings, watch-snatchings, and assaults on constables, with such a brave display of disorderly drunks, that the road has come to be regarded with admiration as one of those Alsatian retreats, growing every day rarer, which are beyond and above the law. It is thought to be a place where manhood and personal bravery reign supreme. Yet the road is not worthy this reputation; it has of late years become orderly; its present condition is dull and law-abiding, brilliant as the past has been, and whatever greatness may be in store for the future. Once out of Whitechapel, and within the respectable regions of Mile End, the road has always been eminently respectable; and as regards dangers, quite safe, ever since they built the bridge over the river Lea, which used now and again to have freshets, and at such times tried to drown harmless people in its ford. Since that bridge was built, in the time of Edward I., it matters not for the freshets. There is not much in the Bow Road when the stranger gets there, in his journey along this great thoroughfare, for him to visit, except its almshouses, which are many; and the beautiful old church of Bow, standing in the middle of the road, crumbling slowly away in the East End fog, with its narrow strips of crowded church-yard. One hopes that before it has quite crumbled away some one will go and make a picture of it – an etching would be the best. At Stratford the road divides, so that you may turn to the right and get to Barking, or to the left and get to Epping Forest. And all the way, for four miles, a broad and noble road, which must have been carved originally out of No Man's Land, in so generous a spirit is it laid out. Angela is now planting it with trees; beneath the trees she will set seats for those who wish to rest. Here and there she will erect drinking-fountains. Whitechapel Road, since her improvements begun, has been transformed; even the bacon shops are beginning to look a little less rusty; and the grocers are trying to live up to the green avenues.

Angela's imagination was fired by this road from the very first, when the idle apprentice took her into it as into a new and strange country. Here, for the first times she realized the meaning of the universal curse, from which only herself and a few others are unnaturally exempted; and this only under heavy penalties and the necessity of finding out their own work for themselves, or it will be the worse for them. People think it better to choose their own work. That is a great mistake. You might just as well want to choose your own disease. In the West End, a good many folk do work – and work pretty hard, some of them – who need not, unless they please; and a good many others work who must, whether they please or no: but somehow the forced labor is pushed into the background. We do not perceive its presence: people drive about in carriages, as if there were nothing to do; people

lounge; people have leisure; people do not look pressed or in a hurry, or task-mastered, or told to make bricks without straw.

Here, in the East End, on the other hand, there are no strollers. All day long the place is full of passengers, hasting to and fro, pushing each other aside, with set and anxious faces, each driven by the invisible scourge of necessity which makes slaves of all mankind. Do you know that famous picture of the Israelites in Egypt? Upon the great block of stone, which the poor wretches are painfully dragging, while the cruel lash goads the weak and terrifies the strong, there sits one in authority. He regards the herd of slaves with eyes terrible from their stony gaze. What is it to him whether the feeble suffer and perish, so that the Pharaoh's will be done? The people of the East reminded Angela, who was an on-looker, and had no work to do, of these builders of pyramids: they worked under a taskmaster as relentless as that stony-hearted captain or foreman of works. If the Israelites desisted, they were flogged back to work with cats of many tails; if our workmen desist, they are flogged back by starvation.

"Let us hope," said Harry, to whom Angela imparted a portion of the above reflection and comparison – "let us hope the Pharaoh himself means well and is pitiful." He spoke without his usual flippancy, so that perhaps his remark had some meaning for himself.

All day long and all the year round there is a constant fair going on in Whitechapel Road. It is held upon the broad pavement, which was benevolently intended, no doubt, for this purpose. Here are displayed all kinds of things: bits of second-hand furniture, such as the head of a wooden bed, whose griminess is perhaps exaggerated, in order that a purchaser may expect something extraordinarily cheap. Here are lids of pots and saucepans laid out, to show that in the warehouse, of which these things are specimens, will be found the principal parts of the utensils for sale; here are unexpected things, such as rows of skates, sold cheap in summer; light clothing in winter; workmen's tools of every kind, including, perhaps, the burglarious jimmy; second-hand books – a miscellaneous collection, establishing the fact that the readers of books in Whitechapel – a feeble and scanty folk – read nothing at all except sermons and meditations among the tombs; second-hand boots and shoes; cutlery; hats and caps; rat-traps and mouse-traps and bird-cages; flowers and seeds; skittles; and frames for photographs. Cheap-jacks have their carts beside the pavement, and with strident voice proclaim the goodness of their wares, which include in this district bloaters and dried haddocks, as well as crockery. And one is amazed, seeing how the open-air fair goes on, why the shops are kept open at all.

And always the same. It saddens one, I know not why, to sit beside a river and see the water flowing down with never a pause. It saddens one still more to watch the current of human life in this great thoroughfare and feel that, as it is now, so it was a generation ago, and so it will be a generation hence. The bees in the hive die, and are replaced by others exactly like them, and the honey-making goes on merrily still. So, in a great street, the wagons always go up and down; the passengers never cease; the shopboy is always behind the counter; the work-girl is always sewing; the workman is always carrying his tools as he goes to his work; there are always those who stay for half a pint, and always those who hurry on. In this endless drama, which repeats itself like a musical box, the *jeune premier* of to-day becomes to-morrow the lean and slippered pantaloon. The day after to-morrow he will have disappeared, gone to join the silent ones in the grim, unlovely cemetery belonging to the Tower Hamlets, which lies beyond Stepney, and is the reason why on Sundays the "frequent funeral blackens all the road.

"One can moralize," said Harry one day, after they had been exchanging sentiments of enjoyable sadness, "at this rate forever. But it has all been done before."

"Everything, I suppose," replied Angela, "has been done before. If it has not been done by me, it is new – to me. It does not make it any better for a man who has to work all the days of his life, and gets no enjoyment out of it, and lives ignobly and dies obscurely, that the same thing happens to most people."

"We cannot help ourselves." This time it was the cabinet-maker who spoke to the dressmaker. "We belong to the crowd, and we must live with the crowd. You can't make much glory out of a mercenary lathe nor out of a dressmaker's shop, can you, Miss Kennedy?"

It was by such reminders, one to the other, that conversations of the most delightful kind, full of speculations and comparisons, were generally brought up short. When Angela remembered that she was talking to an artisan, she froze. When Harry reflected that it was a dressmaker to whom he was communicating bits of his inner soul, he checked himself. When, which happened every day, they forgot their disguises for a while, they talked quite freely, and very prettily communicated all sorts of thoughts, fancies, and opinions to each other; insomuch that once or twice a disagreeable feeling would cross the girl's mind that they were perhaps getting too near the line at which "keeping company" begins; but he was a young workman of good taste, and he never presumed.

She was walking beside her guide, Mr. Bunker, and pondering over these things as she gazed down the broad road, and recollected the talk she had held in it; and now her heart was warm within her, because of the things she thought and had tried to say.

"Here we are, miss," said Mr. Bunker, stopping. "Here's the Trinity Almshouse."

She awoke from her dream. It is very odd to consider the strange thoughts which flash upon one in walking. Angela suddenly discovered that Mr. Bunker possessed a remarkable resemblance to a bear. His walk was something like one, with a swing of the shoulders, and his hands were big and his expression was hungry. Yes, he was exactly like a bear.

She observed that she was standing at a wicket-gate, and that over the gate was the effigy of a ship in full sail done in stone. Mr. Bunker opened the door, and led the way to the court within.

Then a great stillness fell upon the girl's spirit.

Outside the wagons, carts, and omnibuses thundered and rolled. You could hear them plainly enough; you could hear the tramp of a thousand feet. But the noise outside was only a contrast to the quiet within. A wall of brick with iron railings separated the tumult from the calm. It seemed as if, within that court, there was no noise at all, so sharp and sudden was the contrast.

She stood in an oblong court, separated from the road by the wall above named. On either hand was a row of small houses containing, apparently, four rooms each. They were built of red brick, and were bright and clean. Every house had an iron tank in front for water; there was a pavement of flags along this row, and a grass lawn occupied the middle of the court. Upon the grass stood the statue of a benefactor, and at the end of the court was a chapel. It was a very little chapel, but was approached by a most enormous and disproportionate flight of stone steps, which might have been originally cut for a portal of St. Paul's Cathedral. The steps were surmounted by a great doorway, which occupied the whole west front of the chapel. No one was moving about the place except an old lady, who was drawing water from her tank.

"Pretty place, ain't it?" asked Mr. Bunker.

"It seems peaceful and quiet," said the girl.

"Place where you'd expect pride, ain't it?" he went on scornfully. "Oh yes! Paupers and pride go together, as is well known. Lowliness is for them who've got a bank and money in it. Oh, yes, of course. Gar! The pride of an inmate!"

He led the way, making a most impertinent echo with the heels of his boots. Angela observed, immediately, that there was another court beyond the first. In fact, it was larger: the houses were of stone, and of greater size; and it was if anything more solemnly quiet. It was possessed of silence.

Here there is another statue erected to the memory of the founder, who, it is stated on the pedestal, died, being then "Comander of a Shipp" in the East Indies, in the year 1686. The gallant captain is represented in the costume of the period. He wears a coat of many buttons, large cuffs, and full skirts; the coat is buttoned a good way below the waist, showing the fair doublet within, also provided with many buttons. He wears shoes with buckles, has a soft silk wrapper round his neck, and a sash to carry his sword. On his head there is an enormous wig, well adapted to serve the purpose

for which solar toupées were afterward invented. In his right hand he carries a sextant, many sizes bigger than those in modern use, and at his feet dolphins sport. A grass lawn covers this court, as well as the other, and no voice or sound ever comes from any of the houses, whose occupants might well be all dead.

Mr. Bunker turned to the right, and presently rapped with his knuckles at a door. Then, without waiting for a reply, he turned the handle, and with a nod invited his companion to follow him.

It was a small but well-proportioned room with low ceiling, furnished sufficiently. There were clean white curtains with rose-colored ribbons. The window was open, and in it stood a pot of mignonette, now at its best. At the window sat, on one side, an old gentleman with silvery white hair and spectacles, who was reading, and on the other side a girl with work on her lap, sewing.

"Now, Cap'n Sorensen," said Mr. Bunker, without the formality of greeting, "I've got you another chance. Take it or leave it, since you can afford to be particular. I can't; I'm not rich enough. Ha!" He snorted and looked about him with the contempt which a man who has a banker naturally feels for one who hasn't, and lives in an almshouse.

"What is the chance?" asked the inmate meekly, looking up. When he saw Angela in the doorway he rose and bowed, offering her a chair. Angela observed that he was a very tall old man, and that he had blue eyes and a rosy face – quite a young face it looked – and was gentle of speech and courteous in demeanor.

"Is the chance connected with this young lady, Mr. Bunker?"

"It is," said the great man. "Miss Kennedy, this is the young woman I told you of. This young lady" – he indicated Angela – "is setting herself up, in a genteel way, in the dressmaking line. She's taken one of my houses on the Green, and she wants hands to begin with. She comes here, Cap'n Sorensen, on my recommendation."

"We are obliged to you, Mr. Bunker."

The girl was standing, her work in her hands, looking at Angela, and a little terrified by the sight of so grand a person. The dressmakers of her experience were not young and beautiful; mostly they were pinched with years, troubles, and anxieties. When Angela began to notice her, she saw that the young work-girl, who seemed about nineteen years of age, was tall, rather too thin, and pretty. She did not look strong, but her cheeks were flushed with a delicate bloom; her eyes, like her father's, were blue; her hair was light and feathery, though she brushed it as straight as it would go. She was dressed, like most girls of her class, in a frock of sober black.

Angela took her by the hand. "I am sure," she said kindly, "that we shall be friends."

"Friends!" cried Mr. Bunker, aghast. "Why, she's to be one of your girls! You *can't* be friends with your own girls."

"Perhaps," said the girl, blushing and abashed, "you would like to see some of my work." She spread out her work on the table.

"Fine weather here, cap'n," Mr. Bunker went on, striking an attitude of patronage, as if the sun was good indeed to shine on an almshouse. "Fine weather should make grateful hearts, especially in them as is provided for – having been improvident in their youth – with comfortable roofs to shelter them."

"Grateful hearts, indeed, Mr. Bunker," said the captain quietly.

"Mr. Bunker" – Angela turned upon him with an air of command, and pointed to the door – "you may go now. You have done all I wanted."

Mr. Bunker turned very red. "He could go!" Was he to be ordered about by every little dressmaker? "He could go!"

"If the lady engages my daughter, Mr. Bunker," said Captain Sorensen, "I will try to find the five shillings next week."

"Five shillings!" cried Angela. "Why, I have just given him five shillings for his recommendation."

Mr. Bunker did not explain that his practice was to get five shillings from both sides, but he retreated with as much dignity as could be expected.

He asked, outside, with shame, how it was that he allowed himself thus to be sat upon and ordered out of the house by a mere girl. Why had he not stood upon his dignity? To be told he might go, and before an inmate – a common pauper!

There is one consolation always open, thank Heaven, for the meanest among us poor worms of earth. We are gifted with imaginations; we can make the impossible an actual fact, and can with the eye of the mind make the unreal stand before us in the flesh. Therefore, when we are down-trodden, we may proceed, without the trouble and danger of turning (which has been known to bring total extinction upon a worm), to take revenge upon our enemy in imagination. Mr. Bunker, who was at this moment uncertain whether he hated Miss Kennedy more than he hated his nephew, went home glowing with the thought that but a few short months would elapse before he should be able to set his foot upon the former and crush her. Because, at the rate she was going on, she would not last more than that time. Then would he send in his bills, sue her, sell her up, and drive her out of the place stripped of the last farthing. "He might go!" He, Bunker, was told that he might go! And in the presence of an inmate. Then he thought of his nephew, and while he smote the pavement with the iron end of his umbrella, a cold dew appeared upon his nose, the place where inward agitation is frequently betrayed in this way, and he shivered, looking about him suddenly as if he was frightened. Yet what harm was Harry Goslett likely to do him?

"What is your name, my dear?" asked Angela softly, and without any inspection of the work on the table. She was wondering how this pretty, fragile flower should be found in Whitechapel. O ignorance of Newnham! For she might have reflected that the rarest and most beautiful plants are found in the most savage places – there is beautiful botanizing, one is told, in the Ural Mountains; and that the sun shines everywhere, even, as Mr. Bunker remarked, in an almshouse; and that she herself had gathered in the ugliest ditches round Cambridge the sweetest flowering mosses, the tenderest campion, the lowliest little herb-robert.

"My name is Ellen," replied the girl.

"I call her Nelly," her father answered, "and she is a good girl. Will you sit down, Miss Kennedy?"

Angela sat down and proceeded to business. She said, addressing the old man, but looking at the child, that she was setting up a dressmaker's shop; that she had hopes of support, even from the West End, where she had friends; that she was prepared to pay the proper wages, with certain other advantages, of which more would be said later on; and that, if Captain Sorensen approved, she would engage his daughter from that day.

"I have only been out as an improver as yet," said Nelly. "But if you will really try me as a dressmaker – O father, it is sixteen shillings a week!"

Angela's heart smote her. A poor sixteen shillings a week! And this girl was delighted at the chance of getting so much.

"What do you say, Captain Sorensen? Do you want references, as Mr. Bunker did? I am the granddaughter of a man who was born here and made – a little – money here, which he left to me. Will you let her come to me?"

"You are the first person," said Captain Sorensen, "who ever, in this place, where work is not so plentiful as hands, offered work as if taking it was a favor to you."

"I want good girls – and nice girls," said Angela. "I want a house where we shall all be friends."

The old sailor shook his head.

"There is no such house here," he said sadly. "It is 'take it or leave it' – if you won't take it, others will. Make the poor girls your friends, Miss Kennedy? You look and talk like a lady born and bred, and I fear you will be put upon. Make friends of your servants? Why, Mr. Bunker will tell you

that Whitechapel does not carry on business that way. But it is good of you to try, and I am sure you will not scold and drive like the rest."

"You offended Mr. Bunker, I learn, by refusing a place which he offered," said Angela.

"Yes: God knows if I did right. We are desperately poor, else we should not be here. That you may see for yourself. Yet my blood boiled when I heard the character of the man whom my Nelly was to serve. I could not let her go. She is all I have, Miss Kennedy" – the old man drew the girl toward him and held her, his arm round her waist. "If you will take her and treat her kindly, you will have – it isn't worth anything, perhaps – the gratitude of one old man in this world – soon in the next."

"Trust your daughter with me, Captain Sorensen," Angela replied, with tears in her eyes.

"Everybody round here is poor," he went on. "That makes people hard-hearted; there are too many people in trade, and that makes them mean; they are all trying to undersell each other, and that makes them full of tricks and cheating. They treat the work-girls worst because they cannot stand up for themselves. The long hours, and the bad food, and the poisonous air – think a little of your girls, Miss Kennedy. But you will – you will."

"I will, Captain Sorensen."

"It seems worse to us old sailors," he went on. "We have had a hardish life, but it has been in open air. Old sailors haven't had to cheat and lie for a living. And we haven't been brought up to think of girls turning night into day, and working sixteen hours on end at twopence an hour. It is hard to think of my poor girl – " He stopped and clinched his fist. "Better to starve than to drive such a mill!" He was thinking of the place which he had refused.

"Let us try each other, Nelly," she said, kissing her on the forehead.

The captain took his hat to escort her as far as the gate.

"A quiet place," he said, looking round the little court, "and a happy place for the last days of improvident old men like me. Yet some of us grumble. Forgive my plain speech about the work."

"There is nothing to forgive, indeed, Captain Sorensen. Will you let me call upon you sometimes?"

She gave him her hand. He bowed over it with the courtesy of a captain on his own quarter-deck. When she turned away she saw that a tear was standing in his eyes.

"Father!" cried Nelly, rushing into his arms, "did you ever see anybody like her? Oh! oh! do you think I really shall do for her?"

"You will do your best, my dear. It is a long time, I think, since I have seen and spoken with any one like that. In the old days I have had passengers to Calcutta like her; but none more so, Nelly – no, never one more so."

"You couldn't, father." His daughter wanted no explanation of this mysterious qualification. "You couldn't. She is a lady, father;" she looked up and laughed.

"It's a funny thing for a real lady to open a dressmaker's shop on Stepney Green, isn't it?"

Remark, if you please, that this girl had never once before, in all her life, conversed with a lady; using the word in the prejudiced and narrow sense peculiar to the West End. Yet she discovered instantly the truth. Whence this instinct? It is a world full of strange and wonderful things; the more questions we ask, the more we may; and the more things we consider, the more incomprehensible does the sum of things appear. Inquiring reader, I do not know how Nelly divined that her visitor was a lady.

# CHAPTER VIII.
# WHAT HE GOT BY IT

A dressmaker's shop, without a dressmaker to manage it, would be, Angela considered, in some perplexity, like a ship without a steersman. She therefore waited with some impatience the promised visit of Rebekah Hermitage, whom she was to "get cheap," according to Mr. Bunker, on account of her Sabbatarian views.

She came in the evening, while Angela was walking on the Green with the sprightly cabinet-maker. It was sunset, and Angela had been remarking to her companion, with a sort of irrational surprise, that the phenomena coincident with the close of the day are just as brilliantly colored and lavishly displayed for the squalid East as for the luxurious West. Perhaps, indeed, there are not many places in London where sunset does produce such good effects as at Stepney Green. The narrow strip, so called, in shape resembles too nearly a closed umbrella or a thickish walking-stick; but there are trees in it, and beds of flowers, and seats for those who wish to sit, and walks for those who wish to walk. And the better houses of the Green – Bormalack's was on the west, or dingy side – are on the east, and face the setting sun. They are of a good age, at least a hundred and fifty years old; they are built of a warm red brick, and some have doors ornamented with the old-fashioned shell, and all have an appearance of solid respectability, which makes the rest of Stepney proud of them. Here, in former days, dwelt the aristocracy of the parish; and on this side was the house taken by Angela for her dressmaking institution, the house in which her grandfather was born. The reason why the sunsets are more splendid and the sunrises brighter at Stepney than at the opposite end of London, is, that the sun sets behind the great bank of cloud which forever lies over London town. This lends his departure to the happy dwellers of the East strange and wonderful effects. Now, when he rises, it is naturally in the East, where there is no cloud of smoke to hide the brightness of his face.

The Green this evening was crowded: it is not so fashionable a promenade as Whitechapel Road, but, on the other hand, it possesses the charm of comparative quiet. There is no noise of vehicles, but only the shouting of children, the loud laughter of some *gaillard* 'prentice, the coy giggle of the young lady to whom he has imparted his last merry jape, the loud whispers of ladies who are exchanging confidences about their complaints and the complaints of their friends, and the musical laugh of girls. The old people had all crept home; the mothers were at home putting their children to bed; the fathers were mostly engaged with the evening pipe, which demands a chair within four walls and a glass of something; the Green was given up to youth; and youth was principally given up to love-making.

"In Arcadia," said Harry, "every nymph is wooed, and every swain – "

He was interrupted by the arrival of his uncle, who pushed his way through the crowd with his usual important bustle, followed by a "young person."

"I looked for you at Mrs. Bormalack's," he said to Angela reproachfully, "and here you are – with this young man, as usual. As if my time was no object to you!"

"Why not with this young man, Mr. Bunker?" asked Angela.

He did not explain his reasons for objecting to her companion, but proceeded to introduce his companion.

"Here she is, Miss Kennedy," he said. "This is Rebekah Hermitage; I've brought her with me to prevent mistakes. You may take her on my recommendation. Nobody in the neighborhood of Stepney wants a better recommendation than mine. One of Bunker's, they say, and they ask no more."

"What a beautiful, what an enviable reputation!" murmured his nephew. "Oh, that I were one of Bunker's!"

Mr. Bunker glared at him, but answered not; never, within his present experience, had he found himself at a loss to give indignation words. On occasion, he had been known to swear "into shudders"

the immortal gods who heard him. To swear at this nephew, however, this careless, sniggering youth, who looked and talked like a "swell," would, he felt, be more than useless. The boy would only snigger more. He would have liked knocking him down, but there were obvious reasons why this was not to be seriously contemplated.

He turned to the girl who had come with him.

"Rebekah," he said with condescension, "you may speak up; I told your father I would stand by you, and I will."

"Do not, at least," said Angela, in her stateliest manner, "begin by making Miss Hermitage suppose she will want your support."

She saw before her a girl about two- or three-and-twenty years of age. She was short of stature and sturdy. Her complexion was dark, with black hair and dark eyes, and these were bright. A firm mouth and square chin gave her a pugnacious appearance. In fact, she had been fighting all her life, more desperately even than the other girls about her, because she was heavily handicapped by the awkwardness of her religion.

"Mr. Bunker," said this young person, who certainly did not look as if she wanted any backing up, "tells me you want a forewoman."

"You want a forewoman," echoed the agent, as if interpreting for her.

"Yes, I do," Angela replied. "I know, to begin with, all about your religious opinions."

"She knows," said the agent, standing between the two parties, as if retained for the interests of both – "she knows, already, your religious opinions."

"Very well, miss." Rebekah looked disappointed at losing a chance of expounding them. "Then, I can only say, I can never give way in the matter of truth."

"In truth," said the agent, "she's as obstinate as a pig."

"I do not expect it," replied Angela, feeling that the half-a-crown-an-hour man was really a stupendous nuisance.

"She does not expect it," echoed Mr. Bunker, turning to Rebekah. "What did I tell you? Now you see the effect of my recommendations."

"Take it off the wages," said Rebekah, with an obvious effort, which showed how vital was the importance of the pay. "Take it off the wages, if you like; and, of course, I can't expect to labor for five days and be paid for six; but on the Saturday, which is the Sabbath-day, I do no work therein, neither I, nor my man-servant, nor my maid-servant, nor my ox, nor my ass."

"Neither her man-servant, nor her maid-servant, nor her ox, nor her ass," repeated the agent solemnly.

"There is the Sunday, however," said Angela.

"What have you got to say about Sunday now?" asked Mr. Bunker, with a change of front.

"Of all the days that's in the week," interpolated the sprightly one, "I dearly love but one day – and that's the day – "

Rebekah, impatient of this frivolity, stopped it at once.

"I do as little as I can," she said, "on Sunday, because of the weaker brethren. The Sunday we keep as a holiday."

"Well – " Angela began rather to envy this young woman, who was a clear gainer of a whole day by her religion; "well, Miss Hermitage, will you come to me on trial? Thank you; we can settle about deductions afterward, if you please. And if you will come to-morrow – that is right. Now, if you please to take a turn with me, we will talk things over together; goodnight, Mr. Bunker."

She took the girl's arm and led her away, being anxious to get Bunker out of sight. The aspect of this agent annoyed and irritated her almost beyond endurance; so she left him with his nephew.

"One of Bunker's!" Harry repeated softly.

"You here!" growled the uncle, "dangling after a girl when you ought to be at work! How long, I should like to know, are we hard-working Stepney folk to be troubled with an idle, good-for-nothing

vagabond? Eh, sir? How long? And don't suppose that I mean to do anything for you when your money is all gone. Do you hear, sir? do you hear?"

"I hear, my uncle!" As usual, the young man laughed; he sat upon the arm of a garden-seat, with his hands in his pockets, and laughed an insolent, exasperating laugh. Now, Mr. Bunker in all his life had never seen the least necessity or occasion for laughing at anything at all, far less at himself. Nor, hitherto, had any one dared to laugh at him.

"Sniggerin' peacock!" added Mr. Bunker fiercely, rattling a bunch of keys in his pocket.

Harry laughed again, with more *abandon*. This uncle of his, who regarded him with so much dislike, seemed a very humorous person.

"Connection by marriage," he said. "There is one question I have very much wished to put to you. When you traded me away, now three-and-twenty years ago, or thereabouts – you remember the circumstances, I dare say, better than I can be expected to do —*what did you get for me?*"

Then Bunker's color changed, his cheeks became quite white. Harry thought it was the effect of wrath, and went on.

"Half a crown an hour, of course, during the negotiations, which I dare say took a week – that we understand; but what else? Come, my uncle, what else did you get?"

It was too dark for the young man to perceive the full effect of this question – the sudden change of color escaped his notice; but he observed a strange and angry light in his uncle's eyes, and he saw that he opened his mouth once or twice as if to speak, but shut his lips again without saying a word; and Harry was greatly surprised to see his uncle presently turn on his heel and walk straight away.

"That question seems to be a facer; it must be repeated whenever the good old man becomes offensive. I wonder what he *did* get for me?"

As for Mr. Bunker, he retired to his own house in Beaumont Square, walking with quick steps and hanging head. He let himself in with his latch-key, and turned into his office, which, of course, was the first room of the ground-floor.

It was quite dark now, save for the faint light from the street-gas, but Mr. Bunker did not want any light.

He sat down and rested his face on his hands, with a heavy sigh. The house was empty, because his housekeeper and only servant was out.

He sat without moving for half an hour or so; then he lifted his head and looked about him – he had forgotten where he was and why he came there – and he shuddered.

Then he hastily lit a candle, and went upstairs to his own bedroom. The room had one piece of furniture, not always found in bedrooms; it was a good-sized fireproof safe, which stood in the corner. Mr. Bunker placed his candle on the safe, and stooping down began to grope about with his keys for the lock. It took some time to find the keyhole; when the safe was opened, it took longer to find the papers which he wanted, for these were at the very back of all. Presently, however, he lifted his head with a bundle in his hand.

Now, if we are obliged to account for everything, which ought not to be expected, and is more than one asks of scientific men, I should account for what followed by remarking that the blood is apt to get into the brains of people, especially elderly people, and, above all, stout, elderly people, when they stoop for any length of time; and that history records many remarkable manifestations of the spirit world which have followed a posture of stooping too prolonged. It produces, in fact, a condition of brain beloved by ghosts. There is the leading case of the man at Cambridge, who, after stooping for a book, saw the ghost of his own bed-maker at a time when he knew her to be in the bosom of her family eating up his bread-and-butter and drinking his tea. Rats have been seen by others – troops of rats – as many rats as followed the piper, where there were no rats; and there is even the recorded case of a man who saw the ghost of himself, which prognosticated dissolution, and, in fact, killed him exactly fifty-two years after the event. So that, really, there is nothing at all unusual in the fact that Mr. Bunker saw something when he lifted his head. The remarkable thing

is that he saw the very person of whom he had been thinking ever since his nephew's question – no other than his deceased wife's sister; he had never loved her at all, or in the least desired to marry her, which makes the case more remarkable still; and she stood before him just as if she was alive, and gazed upon him with reproachful eyes.

He behaved with great coolness and presence of mind. Few men would have shown more bravery. He just dropped the candle out of one hand and the papers out of the other, and fell back upon the bed with a white face and quivering lips. Some men would have run – he did not; in fact, he could not. His knees instinctively knew that it is useless to run from a ghost, and refused to aid him.

"Caroline!" he groaned.

As he spoke the figure vanished, making no sign and saying no word. After a while, seeing that the ghost came no more, Mr. Bunker pulled himself together. He picked up the papers and the candle and went slowly downstairs again, turning every moment to see if his sister-in-law came too. But she did not, and he went to the bright gas-lit back parlor, where his supper was spread.

After supper he mixed a glass of brandy-and-water, stiff. After drinking this he mixed another, and began to smoke a pipe while he turned over the papers.

"He can't have meant anything," he said. "What should the boy know? What did the gentleman know? Nothing. What does anybody know? Nothing. There is nobody left. The will was witnessed by Mr. Messenger and Bob Coppin. Well, one of them is dead, and as for the other – " [he paused and winced] – "as for the other, it is five-and-twenty years since he was heard of, so he's dead, too; of course, he's dead."

Then he remembered the spectre and he trembled. For suppose Caroline meant coming often; this would be particularly disagreeable. He remembered a certain scene where, three-and-twenty years before, he had stood at a bedside while a dying woman spoke to him; the words she said were few, and he remembered them quite well, even after so long a time, which showed his real goodness of heart.

"You are a hard man, Bunker, and you think too much of money; and you were not kind to your wife. But I'm going too, and there is nobody left to trust my boy to, except you. Be good to him, Bunker, for your dead wife's sake."

He remembered, too, how he had promised to be good to the boy, not meaning much by the words, perhaps, but softened by the presence of death.

"It is not as if the boy was penniless," she said; "his houses will pay you for his keep, and to spare. You will lose nothing by him. Promise me again."

He remembered that he had promised a second time that he would be good to the boy; and he remembered, too, how the promise seemed then to involve great expense in canes.

"If you break the solemn promise," she said, with feminine prescience, "I warn you that he shall do you an injury when he grows up. Remember that."

He did remember it now, though he had quite forgotten this detail a long while ago. The boy had returned; he was grown up; he could do him an injury, *if he knew how*. Because he only had to ask his uncle for an account of those houses. Fortunately, he did not know. Happily, there was no one to tell him. With his third tumbler Mr. Bunker became quite confident and reassured; with his fourth he felt inclined to be merry, and to slap himself on the back for wide-awakedness of the rarest kind. With his fifth, he resolved to go upstairs and tell Caroline that unless she went and told her son, no one would. He carried part of this resolution into effect; that is to say, he went to his bedroom, and his housekeeper, unobserved herself, had the pleasure of seeing her master ascending the stairs on his hands and feet – a method which offers great advantages to a gentleman who has had five tumblers of brandy-and-water.

When he got there, and had quite succeeded in shutting the door – not always so easy a thing as it looks – Caroline was no longer visible. He could not find her anywhere, though he went all round the room twice, on all-fours, in search of her.

The really remarkable part of this story is, that she has never paid a visit to her son at all.

Meantime, the strollers on the green were grown few. Most of them had gone home; but the air was warm, and there were still some who lingered. Among them were Angela and the girl who was to be her forewoman.

When Rebekah found that her employer was not apparently of those who try to cheat, or bully or cajole her subordinates, she lost her combative air, and consented to talk about things. She gave Angela a great deal of information about the prospects of her venture, which were gloomy, as she thought, as the competition was so severe. She also gave her an insight into details of a practical nature concerning the conduct of a dressmakery, into which we need not follow her.

Angela discovered before they parted that she had two sides to her character: on one side she was a practical and practised woman of work and business; on the other she was a religious fanatic.

"We wait," she said, "for the world to come round to us. Oh! I know we are but a little body and a poor folk. Father is almost alone; but what a thing it is to be the appointed keepers of the truth! Come and hear us, Miss Kennedy. Father always converts any one who will listen to him. Oh, do listen!"

Then she, too, went away, and Angela was left alone in the quiet place. Presently she became aware that Harry was standing beside her.

"Don't let us go home yet," he said; "Bormalack's is desperately dull – you can picture it all to yourself. The professor has got a new trick; Daniel Fagg is looking as if he had met with more disappointment; her ladyship is short of temper, because the case is getting on so slowly; and Josephus is sighing over a long pipe; and Mr. Maliphant is chuckling to himself in the corner. On the whole, it is better here. Shall we remain a little longer in the open air, Miss Kennedy?"

He looked dangerous. Angela, who had been disposed to be expansive, froze.

"We will have one more turn, if you please, Mr. Goslett." She added stiffly, "Only remember – so long as you don't think of 'keeping company.'"

"I understand perfectly, Miss Kennedy. 'Society' is a better word than 'company;' let us keep that, and make a new departure for Stepney Green."

# CHAPTER IX.
# THE DAY BEFORE THE FIRST

Mr. Bunker, *en bon chrétien*, dissembled his wrath, and continued his good work of furnishing and arranging the house for Angela, insomuch that before many days the place was completely ready for opening.

In the mean time, Miss Kennedy was away – she went away on business – and Bormalack's was dull without her. Harry found some consolation in superintending some of the work for her house, and in working at a grand cabinet which he designed for her: it was to be a miracle of wood-carving; he would throw into the work all the resources of his art and all his genius. When she came back, after the absence of a week, she looked full of business and of care. Harry thought it must be money worries, and began to curse Bunker's long bill; but she was gracious to him in her queenly way. Moreover, she assured him that all was going on well with her, better than she could have hoped. The evening before the "Stepney Dressmakers' Association" was to open its doors, they all gathered together in the newly furnished house for a final inspection – Angela, her two *aids* Rebekah and Nelly, and the young man against whose companionship Mr. Bunker had warned her in vain. The house was large, with rooms on either side the door. These were showrooms and workrooms. The first floor Angela reserved for her own purposes, and she was mysterious about them. At the back of the house stretched a long and ample garden. Angela had the whole of it covered with asphalt; the beds of flowers or lawns were all covered over. At the end she had caused to be built a large room of glass, the object of which she had not yet disclosed.

As regards the appointments of the house, she had taken one precaution – Rebekah superintended them. Mr. Bunker, therefore, was fain to restrict his enthusiasm, and could not charge more than twenty or thirty per cent. above the market value of the things. But Rebekah, though she carried out her instructions, could not but feel disappointed at the lavish scale in which things were ordered and paid for. The show-rooms were as fine as if the place were Regent Street; the workrooms were looked after with as much care for ventilation as if, Mr. Bunker said, work-girls were countesses.

"It is too good," Rebekah expostulated, "much too good for us. It will only make other girls discontented."

"I want to make them discontented," Angela replied. "Unless they are discontented, there will be no improvement. Think, Rebekah, what it is that lifts men out of the level of the beasts. We find out that there are better things, and we are fighting our way upward. That is the mystery of discontent – and perhaps pain, as well."

"Ah!" Rebekah saw that this was not a practical answer. "But you don't know yet the competition of the East End, and the straits we are put to. It is not as at the West End."

The golden West is ever the Land of Promise. No need to undeceive; let her go on in the belief that the three thousand girls who wait and work about Regent Street and the great shops are everywhere treated generously, and paid above the market-value of their services. I make no doubt, myself, that many a great mercer sits down, when Christmas warms his heart, in his mansion at Finchley, Campden Hill, Fitz John's Avenue, or Stoke Newington, and writes great checks as gifts to the uncomplaining girls who build up his income.

"She would learn soon," said Rebekah, hoping that the money would last out till the ship was fairly launched.

She was not suspicious, but there was something "funny," as Nelly said, in a girl of Miss Kennedy's stamp coming among them. Why did she choose Stepney Green? Surely, Bond Street or Regent Street would be better fitted for a lady of her manners. How would customers be received and orders be taken? By herself, or by this young lady, who would certainly treat the ladies of Stepney

with little of that deferential courtesy which they expected of these dressmakers? For, as you may have remarked, the lower you descend, as well as the higher you climb, the more deference do the ladies receive at the hands of their trades-folk. No duchess sweeps into a milliner's showroom with more dignity than her humble sister at Clare Market on a Saturday evening displays when she accepts the invitation of the butcher to "Rally up, ladies," and selects her Sunday piece of beef. The ladies of Stepney and the Mile End Road, thought Rebekah, looked for attentions. Would Miss Kennedy give it to them? If Miss Kennedy herself did not attend to the showroom, what would she do?

On this evening, after they had walked over the whole house, visited the asphalted garden, and looked into the great glass-room, Angela unfolded her plans.

It was in the workroom. She stood at the head of the table, looking about her with an air of pride and anxiety. It was her own design – her own scheme; small as it was, compared with that other vast project, she was anxious about it. It *had* to succeed; it *must* succeed.

All its success, she thought, depended upon that sturdy little fanatical seventh-day young person. It was she who was to rule the place and be the practical dressmaker. And now she was to be told.

"Now," said Angela, with some hesitation, "the time has come for an explanation of the way we shall work. First of all, will you, Rebekah, undertake the management and control of the business?"

"I, Miss Kennedy? But what is your department?"

"I will undertake the management of the girls" – she stopped and blushed – "*out of their work-time*."

At this extraordinary announcement the two girls looked blankly at their employer.

"You do not quite understand," Angela went on. "Wait a little. Do you consent, Rebekah?"

The girl's eyes flashed and her cheeks became aflame. Then she thought of the sudden promotion of Joseph, and she took confidence. Perhaps she really was equal to the place; perhaps she had actually merited the distinction.

"Very well, then," Miss Kennedy went on, as if it was the most natural thing in the world that a humble workwoman should be suddenly raised to the proud post of manager. "Very well; that is settled. You, Nelly, will try to take care of the workroom when Rebekah is not there. As regards the accounts – "

"I can keep them, too," said Rebekah. "I shall work – on Sundays," she added with a blush.

Miss Kennedy then proceeded to expound her views as regards the management of her establishment.

"The girls will be here at nine," she said.

Rebekah nodded. There could be no objection to that.

"They will work from nine till eleven," Rebekah started. "Yes, I know what I mean. The long hours of sitting and bending the back over the work are just as bad a thing for girls of fifteen or so as could be invented. At eleven, therefore, we shall have, all of us, half an hour's exercise."

Exercise? Exercise in a dressmaker's shop? Was Miss Kennedy in her senses?

"You see that asphalt. Surely some of you can guess what it is for?" She looked at Harry.

"Skittles?" he suggested frivolously.

"No. Lawn tennis. Well! why not?"

"What is lawn tennis?" asked Nelly.

"A game, my dear; and you shall learn it."

"I never play games," said Rebekah. "A serious person has no room in her life for games."

"Then call it exercise, and you will be able to play it without wounding your conscience." This was Harry's remark. "Why not, indeed, Miss Kennedy? The game of lawn tennis, Nelly," he went on to explain, "is greatly in vogue among the bloated aristocracy, as my cousin Dick will tell you. That it should descend to you and me and the likes of us is nothing less than a social revolution."

Nelly smiled, but she only half understood this kind of language. A man who laughed at things, and talked of things as if they were meant to be laughed over, was a creature she had never before

met with. My friends, lay this to heart, and ponder. It is not until a certain standard of cultivation is reached that people do laugh at things. They only began in the last century, and then only in a few *salons*. When all the world laughs, the perfection of humanity will have been reached, and the comedy will have been played out.

"It is a beautiful game," said Angela – meaning lawn tennis, not the comedy of humanity. "It requires a great deal of skill and exercises a vast quantity of muscles; and it costs nothing. Asphalt makes a perfect court, as I know very well." She blushed, because she was thinking of the Newnham courts. "We shall be able to play there whenever it does not rain. When it does, there is the glass-house."

"What are you going to do in the glass-house?" asked Harry; "throw stones at other people's windows? That is said to be very good exercise."

"I am going to set up a gymnasium for the girls."

Rebekah stared, but said nothing. This was revolutionary indeed.

"If they please, the girls can bring their friends; we will have a course of gymnastics as well as a school for lawn tennis. You see, Mr. Goslett, that I have not forgotten what you said once."

"What was that, Miss Kennedy? It is very good of you to remember anything that I have said. Do you mean that I once, accidentally, said a thing worth hearing?"

"Yes: you said that money was not wanted here so much as work. That is what I remembered. If you can afford it, you may work with us, for there is a great deal to do."

"I can afford it for a time."

"We shall work again from half-past eleven until one. Then we shall stop for dinner."

"They bring their own dinner," said Rebekah. "It takes them five minutes to eat it. You will have to give them tea."

"No: I shall give them dinner too. And because growing girls are dainty and sometimes cannot fancy things, I think a good way will be for each of them, even the youngest, to take turns in ordering the dinner and seeing it prepared."

Rebekah groaned. What profits could stand up against such lavish expenditure as this?

"After an hour for dinner we shall go to work again. I have thought a good deal about the afternoon, which is the most tedious part of the day, and I think the best thing will be to have reading aloud."

"Who is to read?" cried Rebekah.

"We shall find somebody or other. Tea at five, and work from six to seven. That is my programme."

"Then, Miss Kennedy," cried her forewoman, "you will be a ruined woman in a year."

"No" – she shook her head with her gracious smile – "no, I hope not. And I think you will find that we shall be very far from ruined. Have a little faith. What do you think, Nelly?"

"Oh, I think it beautiful!" she replied, with a gaze of soft worship in her limpid eyes. "It is so beautiful that it must be a dream, and cannot last."

# Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.