CHAPTER XXVII.

CLASSES AGAINST MASSES.

FINDING General Ance completely knocked up by his journey, I persuaded him to stay with the Dremans, instead of going with his party to see Zimera, and thence proceeding home.

He was sitting in the arbour overlooking the Voa. The duchess sat opposite his easy chair. He had taken the child's advice and asked Duke Dreman to help him, but the help offered was of so thorough a character as to make him pause before accepting it.

The two boys, each with a small wooden wheelbarrow, were busy in the garden searching for snails, which they sold to their mother. This was one of the many ways their father encouraged them to be industrious, and to rely on their own energy for an extra supply of toys or other things dear to children's hearts.

"I cannot gainsay Duke Dreman's arguments," said General Ance, "but I feel that as my forefathers have always stood with the kingly party, I should also stand or fall with it."

"This is only a prejudice, or, let us say, a sentimental idea. Do you not hold that duty is imperative before anything?" replied the duchess.

"Yes; and it is my duty to uphold my party that makes me feel I should shut my eyes to the personal gain that would accrue to me by deserting them."

"We have many duties, but when two clash we must obey the higher."

"So far, I hold with you."

"Man's first duty is to the woman who gives him her love and her life, and to the children who bless their union; as her first duty"—the woman's words lingered and her big brown eyes softened—"and her chiefest joy is with them. Man's second duty is to his fellow-man. Is that not so?"

"That is so, dear duchess," said Ance, dreamily; "and when a man is away from the object of his first duty, he most often remembers she is his chiefest joy, even when he experiences a superlative kindness such as I now enjoy."

The duchess, by a smile, acknowledged this courteous appreciation of her hospitality, and proceeded, "Then you must admit
that, for the sake of a sentimental feeling, you are not justified
in ruining your future, on which that of your wife and children
depends, because King Edward is either too obstinate or too
foolish to see that, by fighting against the inevitable, he is plun-
ing his country into civil war and bringing destruction on his
own head. You admit, and everything points to the fact, that
monarchy must give way to Republicanism; therefore, if you assist
the king, and so enable him to do more harm in the ineffectual
struggle to support his position, you violate your second duty as
well as your first, and only for the sake of a sentiment.

"My reason upholds your words, but my feelings are against
them."

"Though feeling is stronger with a woman than with a man,
even she must sacrifice it to reason."

"I must return to Gurla at any cost," said Ance, uneasily;
"and if the king cannot be persuaded to do the right, I shall do
my duty to my country for the sake of my king and myself, for,
if he opposes by force the wish of the people, he will die by their
righteous anger. With Duke Dreman's assistance, I hope to be
able to prevent a rupture, and establish peace and progress."

"The duke—my husband—will always help in a righteous
cause."

"Father," said Vernon, "will never help me to gather snails;
he says I am able to get them without him, so if he helped me I
should get lazy."

"I want your father's help to enable me to do something I
cannot do alone. Do you think he will give it to me, Vernon?"

"I think so," said the boy, with conviction.

"Verney and I are partners," said Novel, anxious to say some-
thing. "Count the snails, mother dear."

"Help me, my boys," said the mother. And the snails were
separately counted by the elder and then by the younger boy,
first from the separate barrows and then together, after which
the number of farthings each earned separately and together were
counted up, so that the boys for pastime had a lesson in
arithmetic.

"In disestablishing a monarchy," said General Ance, "all who
benefit by it have to be counted amongst its supporters. These
include all holders or possible inheritors of hereditary titles and
those they can influence; for such titles, like a monarchy, are
only created to establish a certain family in a favoured position,
irrespective of their fitness or their unfitness, and so maintain
them in a drone-like state on the labours of the workers in the
community."

"But even so," replied the duchess, "they are in such a helpless
minority that, directly the people see what is for the general good,
they must go without a struggle. From the ranks of the people
there will be some timid and some brainless seceders, while from
the monarchical ranks to the army of progress will come all those who are wise leaders of men, all those who see the wisdom of going with the times, and all those who are strong or good enough to uphold what is right.”

“All that is so, but the struggle remains to be made. There are so many conflicting interests in question that I fear a civil war cannot be averted.”

“As the change must come, fears will only tend to increase, or bring on the war you dread. By facing the inevitable boldly, half its dangers are overcome.”

“This also I admit. I only fear to bring on disaster by a false move.”

“If you are afraid,” said Vernon, who had been listening, “you will never learn to swim.”

General Ance smiled. “I shall not fear, Vernon.”

“Then,” said the child, “you will be all right.”

On Duke Dreman’s return we heard that the first batch of prisoners had been shown Zimera, and started on their journey home.

“They wanted very much,” he said, “to learn if I would advocate giving Gurla the same assistance to join the Commonwealth of Undara that had been given Ura to join Zara, but I told them that, personally, I would be guided by circumstances, as I thought the Parliament would be.”

“All this,” said Ance, “points to the fact of a general dissatisfaction with kings as they are, and a desire for a change.”

“And this desire has been quickened since they have seen the fruits and realized the power of our government,” said the duke, proudly.

Hardly had the last of the prisoners returned to Gurla when an embassy from King Edward, under the presidency of General Ance—who had, by this, quite recovered from his wounds—arrived at Zara with a proposal to the Parliament of Undara, asking them to assist in establishing their leading laws at Gurla, and to assist the king in restoring tranquility to his kingdom. Before arrangements could be made to officially receive this embassy, another arrived from Gurla, under the care of William Moran, a Progressive leader, to ask Parliament to receive Gurla into the Commonwealth of Undara, and appoint a dictator to establish their Constitution, and then take such steps for the election of parliamentary representatives in the united legislative assemblies as should be necessary.

The Senators and House of Titles again met in the Great Hall, where I had seen and addressed them shortly after my arrival at Zara, and where they had only since met on some few memorable occasions. Again the auditorium was crowded with an interested and intelligent number of men and women. Duke Dreman, in the Presidential chair, was very little changed, only
a careful observer would detect that the temples were barer of hair, and the manner changed from that of the keen, anxious alertness of a succeeding man to the sedate alertness of a successful one. When the formal business was disposed of, General Ance appeared at the bar of the chamber, and with a cold and polished manner commenced to address the legislators. He stated that he felt certain the late war was equally a source of sorrow in Undara as in Gurla, that the defeated were hasty and ill-advised in their disastrous assault they now clearly saw, but felt their conquerors would be generous as they were strong. He went on to point out that through the war, and the sedition actively preached by a band of professional agitators, great discontent and trouble had been created throughout the land of Gurla, seeing which the king and parliament had deputed him to wait on the President and Parliament of Undara, and ask them to appoint a commission to visit Gurla, and there take action to establish the Undara laws in connection with the present monarchical government.

The address, though a brilliant oratorical effort, awoke no enthusiasm. The audience were all educated and intellectual, and so saw the fallacy of trying to establish wise laws in a country labouring under an oligarchy that wanted to keep for a favoured few all the good things in the State.

When Ance retired, William Moran took his place, and the complete difference in the two men was strikingly shown. Moran, short and stout, was carelessly dressed, and rough as Ance was polished. The energy shown in his quick movements bubbled over at every chance, in impassioned speech and rough gestures. His brown eyes gleamed in a strong hairy face, and his voice, strong as a bull's, made the great hall echo with his words.

"I come," he said, "from the people of Gurla, who are against all wars, and the past disastrous one in particular, which was a king's fight and not a people's fight."

In a flood of wrathful eloquence he compared the laws of Undara with those of Gurla, much to the detriment of the latter.

"We want," he said, "only equal rights for all, so that every man may occupy a position according to his energy and ability, and not according to his birth." He ended up his stirring speech by asking, "Let the votes of every man of full age be taken for or against the federation of Gurla with Undara, under all the laws of the latter. Such a vote will show that, with the exception of the interested few, the people of Gurla are in favour of equitable laws and are tired of the oppression of monarchy. Take, therefore—I, on behalf of the people of Gurla, implore you—such a vote, and if it results as I predict, bring us under your laws and let all Fregida be united under the laws of Undara."

This speech touched the hearts of the hearers, and we all felt that the man's mission would bear the fruit of success.
In the evening the men met. Moran held out his hand, “I wish we had you with us, General. The people may be guided, but cannot be driven. By joining the progressive party you can shield your own section and help us.”

“I hope,” replied Ance, “to guide the people for their good, but to do this I must establish the king and crush treason.”

It was decided, after much discussion, to send a portion of the army to Gurla, and to take a plebiscite in favour of bringing it under the laws of Undara in their entirety, or modified by those of the established monarchy.

Before Ance returned home he called on the Duke and Duchess Dreman. “I think, General,” said the duchess, “that you have succeeded both in your mission and your wish to avert any civil strife in your country. Both you and William Moran have succeeded in getting your request granted, if you can prove it is wished by the country, as you assert. One of you must be mistaken, but in either case peace will be maintained and progress established.”

“I have every hope that things will result as you think, and if so, I am satisfied.”

“The result,” said Duke Dreman, “will certainly be to establish peace. Cula Dero will go in charge of the soldiers, and will crush any rebellion as ruthlessly as he crushed the invading army.”

In a very short time a strong force, under the charge of General Dero, were marching to Gurla, accompanied by those appointed to take the plebiscite, amongst whom I was one. The march to Gurla was without incident worthy of note. On arriving we were received by both parties with equal cordiality, and entered the barracks which had been prepared for the soldiery amidst music and every sign of welcome.

In the evening, by invitation, General Dero and I visited General Ance at the R—— Club, an institution founded for the use of the more exclusive senior members of the army, and which included amongst its members Princes Arthur and Valentine. The former was a young man whose chief interest seemed to be in keeping his waistcoat and cuffs in exactly their proper position; the latter was a nondescript young man, who had either arrived at the conclusion that he couldn’t do anything of note if he tried, or else that it was beneath his dignity to do anything unusual if he could. All the members were dressed in black suits in universal use for evening wear in the Middle Globe, and the dead level of their dull monotony was horrible to gaze on, after the bright costumes that allowed individual character to charmingly appear at Undara. The libraries and other rooms were attended by a number of waiters, who came when any of the bells, placed on the tables in all directions, were rung. These were instead of the indexes that, in the Undara libraries, enabled any book, of
which the name or author was named, to be found in a moment. I noticed also that when anything was done with, the person using it put it carelessly down for the waiters to return to its place. By these means the clubmen cultivated dependence, laziness, and selfishness, to a wonderful degree. As we sat smoking and chatting, a number of waiters stood solemnly by, ready at our beck to move a chair, go for a book, or do our slightest bidding, thus spending a useless existence to make others as utterly lazy as nature would permit.

"Have you decided on the mode of taking the plebiscite?" asked Prince Arthur, politely.

"Yes," said Cula, "as soon as arrangements can be made. In every town in Gurla one or more commissioners will be appointed to receive voting papers for two consecutive days."

"What an awful trouble," said the Prince.

"I understood," said Ance, "that it would be compulsory on every man to record his vote."

"So it will be. Against every man who does not record his vote a warrant will issue, committing him to goal for three days."

"I suppose," said Prince Valentine, "you will except men like us?"

"No!" replied Cula. "I except no man from the king downwards."

The prince's eyeglass dropped, and General Ance's big blue eyes opened wide. Cula, in his ignorance of privileged institutions, regarded it as absurd that any one should be allowed to escape his civic duties, and believed the higher the position, the more scrupulously the duty should be performed. When the momentary suspense subsided, Ance asked, "Is a visit to the voting booth necessary?"

"No; any voter who wishes, may sign a voting paper in the presence of two householders, and send it instead of attending."

As the election approached, the excitement was intense, each side, though confident of victory, doing their best to deserve it. General Ance worked for his party with a wisdom that forgot nothing and left nothing undone. Rents were remitted, houses repaired at every suggestion of the tenants, donations lavishly bestowed, purchases profusely made, and an unknown familiar courtesy took the place of the empty superiority so distantly observed by the privileged classes. Every day added to the popularity of the party so wisely and energetically led by Ance; meanwhile Moran, with haggard face and flashing eyes, rallied his forces, confirming the doubters and occasionally gaining over an opponent. The prisoners, who had been shown the inner working of Undara, to a man worked for the party of progress, and aided by a number of men brought from Ura, preached in favour of the Undara laws in their entirety, with a positiveness that carried conviction to the minds of the hearers.
of work and plenty for all was held up to the industrious, and a picture of Pentona drawn for the thieves and loafers, that made them smile with satisfaction. Ance's party—personally, he never preached fallacy—pointed out the prosperity caused by the king and nobles employing carriage builders, gardeners, waiting men and women, and a host of other workers. Where, they asked, will these people go for a living if we are deposed? Builders, florists, servants, and a host of others will be thrown out of work, and forced to compete with other trades, all of which are now over-manned, and so wages will be forced down, and the condition of the labourers be made worse than ever. Our actions have made trade thrive and everything prosperous, we will continue this state if you vote for us and the Undara laws. The lavish expenditure continued, in every way the king's party worked with energy, largely under the generalship of General Ance.

"We will succeed," he said, with triumph on his placid face, "and it will be better for Gurla that we do. Republicanism is the only possible government when all men are educated in mind and manner, but till then, monarchy is best. Gurla is not yet ripe for a change. Undoubtedly we will succeed."

Meanwhile, Moran and his party had been active. The monarchy, and hereditary aristocracy who are its foundation, he argued, spend money freely, but how is it gained? By making you work long hours for short pay. How do they spend it? By dressing in silk and laces, riding in carriages, and having men and women to wait on them, while you dress in rags, trudge home tired after your day's work, and the mothers of your children, unassisted, toil at their housework while the baby cries in the cradle. If these people have to work, instead of living in idleness, and their servitors are at liberty to assist in the work of the world, what will result? Your fields will be better tilled, and so more fruitful; you will have many things beyond your present means, and your hours of labour will be shortened, so that you can cultivate your minds and be intelligent human beings, instead of mere machines. What is the difference between the wealthy and the working classes? Only this. The first have leisure to use their brains, and so become—as a class—cleanly and temperate in their minds and bodies, considerate of each other in everything for the general good, and by cultivating self-respect and self-control at all times and in all things, live what they call the higher existence, when they should call it the more favoured existence. The working class, who toil long hours in penury, so that a favoured few can live slothful, pampered existences, have no time to cultivate their brains, nature demanding rest, when their toil is over, and cannot always be cleanly, as cleanliness necessitates changes of clothes, and time to wash floors, and do the work of cleansing. The pangs of want force them to
intemperance in times of plenty—the starved wolf gorges till he can hardly move, when the chance offers, and any appetite when starved, longs for repletion. They cannot be always considerate when impelled by penury; or a meal for two has to be shared by six. Consideration is a growth of competency. Self-respect is hard to keep in company with hunger, and the dead weariness of overwork, with all its consequent unpleasantnesses, and the unhealthy surroundings of both. When the working-man is given leisure to cultivate himself, he will be the superior of all others, for his calling is the most natural and the healthiest—health and happiness are twin sisters—the healthy brain comes to greatest perfection in the healthiest body—other things being equal—therefore, the working man with fewest wants and fewest cares, will be a model for every one in all good things.

"See," said William Moran, his coat the while open to the breeze; his hair bristling with excitement; his eyes flashing and his splendid voice reaching as distinct to the uttermost member of the crowd who listened to his words, as it was to those beside him—"see the working man in Undara, he is only different from the lawyer or statesman in being more robust. In all else he is his equal. Sir Diso Rota—who brought news of the army to that monarch who, having sent our loved ones to their death, now asks us to continue him and his in their idle influence for evil—was a toiler who studied the earth and the substances his muscles moved, and so devised means to render them more beneficial while less noxious. Upward he climbed, the steps he used being gifts to humanity in the shape of useful inventions, so that his progress benefited others no less than himself. Many there are such as he in Undara, and many such will be in Gurla when we have joined Undara. What Zara has done for Ura, Undara can do for Gurla; if you feel that you are not fit for freedom such as our neighbours have, vote for a continuation of our slavery."

The man's pluck and energy lent itself to the multitude till they thought his thoughts, quoted his words, and felt the fever of a great ambition.

On the first day of the polling each party expressed and probably felt certain of victory. Carriages, bands, feasts, orations, and many other things, all attracted the citizens in their various ways. The king and nobles in their splendid equipages, with gaudy military surroundings, attracted the gaze of all, but excited feelings widely different in various people. To some they seemed the obsolete continuance of the only state of things possible when might was right, and a king fought for his throne as a lion for his lair. Then, when a king becomes weak and governs badly, he was deposed by some able general or distant relative, or perchance had his head cut off. In these days, when rulers can neither be deposed nor beheaded, no matter how unfit they are for their position, surely it is time the head of the State was
chosen for worth, not birth, and periodically passed the approving vote of the people, or gave way to a better man. Others, principally those interested, and women—every woman who is not plain nurses the possibility of joining the hereditary aristocracy by marriage, and so for ever providing for her descendants in laziness—regarded the gaudy procession as one ordained by heaven to be maintained at the expense of the vulgar worker, toiling contentedly in that state of misery to which heaven had appointed him. What a cruel conservatism heaven is according to some people!

At the end of the first day nearly all the votes were recorded, and each side commenced to proclaim their certainty of victory, which only proved how many people run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. The second day went slowly, the few voters who had not voted being brought to the poll by their friends. General Ance and William Moran appeared everywhere. The former calm, soldierly, and ready with composed mien but hawk-like vision, turning where possible everything in his party favour; the latter tornado-like, with flashing eyes and hollow cheek, ceaselessly orated, cheered or urged his party on to increased exertions. As the poll finally closed, cheer and counter cheer echoed in the air, and the streets became blocked with a murmuring multitude. The result could not be declared for some time. The crowd became quieter. I was talking to Moran at its outskirts. A man passing said,—

"Milly is waiting for you at the corner, Moran."

Still we talked on; then another said,—

"Your daughter is looking for you yonder."

"All right," said Moran; "I'll go to her in a minute."

Several more messages were delivered to the same purport, and the same answer given. At last I noticed a healthy round-faced maiden walking slowly and timidly towards us. She was evidently the daughter spoken of, whom some of the passers had informed of her father's position. Presently she slid her hand into his. Involuntarily their hands clasped, and, looking down, he took her up in his arms and kissed her.

"Put me down, father dear, you are too tired to nurse me."

Putting her down, their hands again clasped.

"This is my Milly, Doctor Frank. She's the best little woman in a house that ever was—the tidiest and the kindest."

The child smiled, pleased at her father's praise.

"Go home, father, mother wants you to have your tea. Take the gentleman, and I'll bring you the news."

"All right, Milly, I will." And off we walked, leaving the little maid gazing after us with wistful eyes.

After a sharp ten minutes' walk we came to a small cottage in a well-cared-for garden. The noise of the gate opening and closing brought out two little girls, who rushed out to welcome their
On entering the cottage, I found a small, tidy, neatly-furnished room, by the window of which stood a sofa, and in a corner a baby’s cot. A pale woman, with a sweet, worn face, came to meet her husband, whose kisses, under my eyes, she shyly received, while for a moment she held his hand. We sat down, and she left us.

“I have five daughters, Doctor Frank, the eldest of whom came for us, and the youngest is asleep in the cradle.”

He went over and kissed a baby face that lay quiet and sleeping. As he sat down on the sofa, two little girls came and sat on his knees. My presence made them a little shy.

“Have we won, father?” the eldest child presently inquired.

“I hope so, dear, but we don’t know yet.”

His wife came in with the supper. Fresh omelettes, hop-tea and scones. Everything was nice, but the niceness was kept within the most economical limits. The cottage was such as I should imagine probable amongst the high-class workers of the Middle Globe. As we commenced to eat, the wife said,—

“He never takes spirits. I think he ought. He has had very little sleep, and it would do him good.”

Intoxicants of all sorts were largely used at Gurla, especially amongst the poorest classes, very much to their misery and debasement.

“Spirits would sometimes do me good when I am tired out, but I preach total abstinence, so I must practise it at any cost.”

“Why do you so preach?”

“Because intoxicants are the main factor in debasing the working classes.”

“I think,” said his wife, “he should take some as medicine. He had only four hours’ sleep last night, and has not averaged four for the last week.”

The man’s eyes were bright and active, but his cheeks were pale and hollow, and evidently only excitement and energy kept him up.

“Listen!” He held up his hand. We heard rapid footsteps of someone running. The gate was thrown open. He rose, and as he went to the door, it was thrown open.

“We’ve won! we’ve won!” Milly, flushed and panting, held out a paper to her father. Seizing it, he sat on the sofa to read it, for the twilight of evening was deepening to dusk.

“King, 108,259; progress, 189,603; majority, 81,344. We have conquered. Hurrah!”

“But,” I said, “you must wait for the returns from Bulla, and all the little towns, before you are certain.”

“We will get a double majority in all of them. I only feared we might be too far behind in Gurla, which is largely kept up by the monarchical expenditure, for us to catch up by our outside majorities.”
"Well, I am glad you succeeded; General Dero will do all you want now to quickly bring about the federation."

I turned to Mrs. Moran. "I met General Dero the first night after I was rescued from starvation in the snow; he was then unmarried, and—"

I was interrupted by a sound, half snore half sigh. Moran had leant back and had gone to sleep. Milly turned out the light and pulled down the blind. Mrs. Moran loosened her husband’s collar and shirt-band, while two of the little girls took off his boots. I motioned them to go on, and finished my supper in silence. Quietly mother and daughter glided about, till in a few minutes the sleeping man was made comfortable on the sofa and covered with a rug.

"He is tired out," said his wife, in a low voice. "I know you will excuse him. He has worked so hard."

I looked at his face, from which the excitement had vanished. It was utterly wearied and worn. His mouth opened, and, slightly turning, he commenced to snore. When there was work to do he had done it; now he had conquered, surely he deserved rest. I kissed the children, bade his wife good-bye, and left him sleeping.