

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649392247

The Pharisee and the publican by Edward Bosanketh

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EDWARD BOSANKETH

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THE PUBLICAN**

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BY
EDWARD BOSANKETH
Author of "Tin"

Pharisee and Publican
Edward Bosanketh
1910
1888



BROADWAY PUBLISHING CO.
NEW YORK, BALTIMORE, ATLANTA
1910

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CALIFORNIA

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70 MAD
AVENUE, N.Y.

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CHAPTER I.

Standing at one of the windows of his chambers, gazing meditatively on to the roof of the Temple Church, was a young man of twenty-six, who had just been called to the bar. He was not tall, but was well proportioned and of a healthy hue. The room had rather the appearance of a living room than an office, as there was a piano, and there were curtains of heavy tapestry at the windows. One wall was entirely occupied by books and the others were without pictures, except one photograph of a college eleven and another of a Cambridge social club. The mantelpiece bore a row of "pots" as mementos of former athletic prowess, but was without the conventional mirror, and the writing desk was so neat that it did not seem "open for business." It would have been a mistake to assume this, however, from the fact that Frank East was only just fledged, for, if there was one thing that he really did believe in, it was that

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"order is heaven's first law." The room altogether had an air of elegance and comfort, but seemed to be quite without those trifling additions for the sake of mere ornament which usually come from a woman's hands and which one does not miss in the chambers of a bachelor.

Suddenly a whirlwind seemed to have taken possession of the room and a voice out of the midst of it cried: "So, there y' are again gazing at nothing, for surely ye see nothing new on the roof of that old kirk. Now, here is something new, something from the new worrld, something that passes for humor over there. Did y' ever hear of Arrtemus Warrd? Just listen while I give y' a little of the Amairican accent," and Mr. Malcolm McLean proceeded to read Artemus Ward "Among the Mormons" in a manner which he was convinced was the true Yankee drawl:

"Fellerr citizens and fellerr citizenesses, I feel truly glad to see ye heerr to-night, more especially those who have paid."

"That'll do, McLean," shouted East, "I know that speech by heart, but I'm afraid I can't deliver it with your 'faine Amairican occent.' Where did you acquire that familiarity with the tongue of the daown-easter? In Aberdeen?"

"Ah! So I prepared this little treat for ye all for nothing, did I? I might have spared myself the trouble of getting cheated, then."

"Why, who cheated you? What do you mean?"

"I mean simply this, that on a barrow of books in the street was a large card ohn which was vairy apparent a figure 2 and a small d, signifying that two pence was the price of those books. Ohn the vairy tope was this book, and the idea occurred to me that I would surprise ye with a vairitable eemitection of the writer's own worrds, so I tendered the man twopence, for I had a mind to spend that much on ye, but the rascal pointed to the card and showed me the wecest bit of a mark for a ha'penny that ye can imagine—a vairitable attempt to obtain money by false pretenses. I regret now that I fell into the trap, which cerctainly I would noht have done had I noht the ulterior ohbject in view to surprise ye."

"So you got surprised, instead, but I am none the less so at the manner of it. It will be a lesson to you."

Malcolm McLean had been called to the bar in the same term as East, but lived in the suburbs. As yet he had contented himself with placing his name on East's door, sharing with him the use of the third room, which was furnished as an office, but really spending such time as he could spare from his studies in the library in the sitting room of his friend—for, curious as it may appear, these two were friends. Their exterior was very different, as their course through life had been, but they both looked at the future from the same standpoint and in much the same way. The Scot had all the char-

acteristics of his race and was particularly careful about drawing a right line on all occasions. The detail of its cutting across his territory instead of his opponent's made no difference: the line must be drawn straight. But the Sassenach, as his friend called him, was equally punctilious, though less demonstrative. All kinds of shams and frauds they put far from them, even the suave deceptions of the most polished diplomacy, and this need not surprise the uninitiated for whom tricks and lawyers have been, from time immemorial, associated, for it should be equally possible for an advocate, as for a general, to fool the enemy, though he would not so treat his friend. As a matter of fact, however, the great legal game—no matter what may be done in small arenas—is not so played. Great counsel are sometimes great actors, but they are invariably great men.

Again McLean was possessed by a sudden impulse, and, making a dive for a bundle of papers lying on the desk, he exclaimed: "Hello! East, what have ye heerr? A brief? Upohn my worrdd, it is a brief!"

"Well, it is and it is not. It is a deed of disentail sent me to peruse, but it is very like perusing my own death-warrant."

"So your father wants to disentail ye, does he? Well, I can answeerr for ye that he won't."

"Oh, yes, I know well enough what would be your answer, but I am not sure what mine will be."

"I am: ye'll noht mak' a fule o' yourself"—Mac's accent got a little worse when he became emphatic—"I've seen ye before when ye didn't know your own mind, but if I was by ye, ye very soon found it out."

"Your father is dead, McLean, whilst mine is not only alive but in a hole, and I shall help him out, if I can, but I shall take time to think before I act."

"Ye may well say that my father is dead. Indeed he is, and I vainerate his memory as that of an unnatural parent."

"What! When it is with his guineas that you pay your tailor to-day?"

"No, sir, I pay my tailor, when I indulge in new garments, with my own guineas, few as they are, and fewer than they should have been had he noht married one o' your Sassenach hussies when he was old enough to know better, and to whom he gave what was rightfully mine, sir."

"So I have heard you say before, Mac, and I think you'll believe it yourself some day."

"Well, never mind me, East, ye'll not do this thing, will ye? I have worrk in the library to do that I must be at, but I shall naiver do it while I have this ohn my mind and think that I leave ye heerr studying out a problem that ye're already biased about. Prohmise me this, that ye'll do nothing till I have time to talk to ye."