

thusiastic eloquence. The reward offered to him was the thing which in all the world he liked best. It was suggested to him that he should again have within his reach that Parliamentary renown which had once been the very breath of his nostrils. We all know those arguments and quotations antagonistic to prudence with which a man fortifies himself in rashness. "None but the brave deserve the fair;" "Where there's a will there's a way;" "Nothing venture, nothing have;" "The sword is to him who can use it;" "Fortune favors the bold." But on the other side there is just as much to be said. "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush;" "Look before you leap;" "Thrust not out your hand further than you can draw it back again." All which maxims of life Phineas Finn revolved within his own heart, if not carefully, at least frequently, as he walked up and down the long pier of Kingston Harbor.

But what matters such revolvings? A man placed as was our Phineas always does that which most pleases him at the moment, being but poor at argument if he can not carry the weight to that side which best satisfies his own feelings. Had not his success been very great when he before made the attempt? Was he not well aware at every moment of his life that, after having so thoroughly learned his lesson in London, he was throwing away his hours amidst his present pursuits in Dublin? Did he not owe himself to his country? And then, again, what might not London do for him? Men who had begun as he began had lived to rule over Cabinets and to sway the Empire. He had been happy for a short twelvemonth with his young bride—for a short twelvemonth—and then she had been taken from him. Had she been spared to him he would never have longed for more than Fate had given him. He would never have sighed again for the glories of Westminster had his Mary not gone from him. Now he was alone in the world; and though he could look forward to possible and not improbable events which would make that future disposition of himself a most difficult question for him, still he would dare to try.

As the first result of Erle's letter Phineas was over in London early in August. If he went on with this matter, he must, of course, resign the office for holding which he was now paid a thousand a year. He could retain that as long as he chose to earn the money, but the earning of it would not be compatible with a seat in Parliament. He had a few thousand pounds with which he could pay for the contest at Tankerville, for the consequent petition which had been so generously suggested to him, and maintain himself in London for a session or two should he be so fortunate as to carry his election. Then he would be penniless, with the world before him as a closed oyster to be again opened, and he knew—no one better—that this oyster becomes harder and harder in the opening as the man who has to open it becomes older. It is an oyster that will close to again with a snap, after you have got your knife well into it, if you withdraw your point but for a moment. He had had a rough tussle with the oyster already, and had reached the fish within the shell. Nevertheless, the oyster which he had got was not the oyster which he wanted. So he told himself now, and here had come to him the chance of trying again.

Early in August he went over to England, saw Mr. Molescroft, and made his first visit to Tankerville. He did not like the look of Tankerville; but nevertheless he resigned his place before the month was over. That was the one great step, or rather the leap in the dark—and that he took. Things had been so arranged that the election at Tankerville was to take place on the 20th of October. When the dissolution had been notified to all the world by Mr. Daubeny an earlier day was suggested; but Mr. Daubeny saw reasons for postponing it for a fortnight. Mr. Daubeny's enemies were again very ferocious. It was all a trick. Mr. Daubeny had no right to continue Prime Minister a day after the decided expression of opinion as to unfitness which had been pronounced by the House of Commons. Men were waxing very wroth. Nevertheless, so much power remained in Mr. Daubeny's hand, and the election was delayed. That for Tankerville would not be held till the 20th of October. The whole House could not be chosen till the end of the month—hardly by that time—and yet there was to be an autumn Session. The Ratlers and Bon-teens were at any rate clear about the autumn Session. It was absolutely impossible that Mr. Daubeny should be allowed to remain in power over Christmas, and up to February.

Mr. Molescroft, whom Phineas saw in London, was not a comfortable counselor. "So you are going down to Tankerville?" he said.

"They seem to think I might as well try."

"Quite right—quite right. Somebody ought to try it, no doubt. It would be a disgrace to the whole party if Browborough were allowed to walk over. There isn't a borough in England more sure to return a Liberal than Tankerville if left to itself. And yet that lump of a legislator has sat there as a Tory for the last dozen years by dint of money and brass."

"You think we can unseat him?"

"I don't say that. He hasn't come to the end of his money, and as to his brass, that is positively without end."

"But surely he'll have some fear of consequences after what has been done?"

"None in the least. What has been done? Can you name a single Parliamentary aspirant who has been made to suffer?"

"They have suffered in character," said Phineas. "I should not like to have the things said of me that have been said of them."

"I don't know a man of them who stands in a worse position among his own friends than he occupied before. And men of that sort don't want a good position among their enemies. They know they're safe. When the seat is in dispute every body is savage enough; but when it is merely a question of punishing a man, what is the use of being savage? Who knows whose turn it may be next?"

"He'll play the old game, then?"

"Of course he'll play the old game," said Mr. Molescroft. "He doesn't know any other game. All the purists in England wouldn't teach him to think that a poor man ought not to sell his vote, and that a rich man oughtn't to buy it. You mean to go in for purity?"

"Certainly I do."

"Browborough will think just as badly of you as you will of him. He'll hate you because he'll

think you are trying to rob him of what he has honestly bought; but he'll hate you quite as much because you try to rob the borough. He'd tell you, if you asked him, that he doesn't want his seat for nothing any more than he wants his house or his carriage-horses for nothing. To him you'll be a mean, low interloper. But you won't care about that."

"Not in the least, if I can get the seat."

"But I'm afraid you won't. He will be elected. You'll petition. He'll lose his seat. There will be a commission. And then the borough will be disfranchised. It's a fine career, but expensive; and then there is no reward beyond the self-satisfaction arising from a good action. However, Ruddles will do the best he can for you, and it certainly is possible that you may creep through."

This was very disheartening, but Barrington Erle assured our hero that such was Mr. Molescroft's usual way with candidates, and that it really meant little or nothing. At any rate, Phineas Finn was pledged to stand.

CHAPTER II.

HARRINGTON HALL.

PHINEAS, on his first arrival in London, found a few of his old friends, men who were still delayed by business, though the Session was over. He arrived on the 10th of August, which may be considered as the great day of the annual exodus, and he remembered how he, too, in former times had gone to Scotland to shoot grouse, and what he had done there besides shooting. He had been a welcome guest at Lough Linter, the magnificent seat of Mr. Kennedy, and, indeed, there had been that between him and Mr. Kennedy which ought to make him a welcome guest there still. But of Mr. Kennedy he had heard nothing directly since he had left London. From Mr. Kennedy's wife, Lady Laura, who had been his great friend, he had heard occasionally; but she was separated from her husband, and was living abroad with her father, the Earl of Brentford. Has it not been written in a former book how this Lady Laura had been unhappy in her marriage, having wedded herself to a man whom she had never loved, because he was rich and powerful, and how this very Phineas had asked her to be his bride after she had accepted the rich man's hand? Thence had come great trouble, but nevertheless there had been that between Mr. Kennedy and our hero which made Phineas feel that he ought still to be welcomed as a guest should he show himself at the door of Lough Linter Castle. The idea came upon him simply because he found that almost every man for whom he inquired had just started, or was just starting, for the North; and he would have liked to go where others went. He asked a few questions as to Mr. Kennedy from Barrington Erle and others who had known him, and was told that the man now lived quite alone. He still kept his seat in Parliament, but had hardly appeared during the last Session, and it was thought that he would not come forward again. Of his life in the country nothing was known. "No one fishes his rivers or shoots his moors, as far as I can learn," said Barrington Erle. "I suppose he

looks after the sheep and says his prayers, and keeps his money together."

"And there has been no attempt at a reconciliation?" Phineas asked.

"She went abroad to escape his attempts, and remains there in order that she may be safe. Of all hatreds that the world produces a wife's hatred for her husband, when she does hate him, is the strongest."

In September Finn was back in Ireland, and about the end of that month he made his second visit to Tankerville. He remained there for three or four days, and was terribly disgusted, while staying at the "Yellow" inn, to find that the people of the town would treat him as though he were rolling in wealth. He was soon tired of Tankerville, and as he could do nothing further, on the spot, till the time for canvassing should come on, about ten days previous to the election, he returned to London, somewhat at a loss to know how to bestir himself. But in London he received a letter from another old friend, which decided him:

"My dear Mr. Finn," said the letter, "of course you know that Oswald is now master of the Brake hounds. Upon my word, I think it is the place in the world for which he is most fit. He is a great martinet in the field, and works at it as though it were for his bread. We have been here looking after the kennels and getting up the horses since the beginning of August, and have been cub-hunting ever so long. Oswald wants to know whether you won't come down to him till the election begins in earnest."

"We were so glad to hear that you were going to appear again. I have always known that it would be so. I have told Oswald scores of times that I was sure you would never be happy out of Parliament, and that your real home must be somewhere near the Treasury Chambers. You can't alter a man's nature. Oswald was born to be a Master of Hounds, and you were born to be a Secretary of State. He works the hardest and gets the least pay for it; but then, as he says, he does not run so great a risk of being turned out."

"We haven't much of a house, but we have plenty of room for you. As for the house, it was a matter of course, whether good or bad. It goes with the kennels, and I should as little think of having a choice as though I were one of the horses. We have very good stables, and such a stud! I can't tell you how many there are. In October it seems as though their name were legion. In March there is never any thing for any body to ride on. I generally find then that mine are taken for the whips. Do come and take advantage of the flush. I can't tell you how glad we shall be to see you. Oswald ought to have written himself, but he says—I won't tell you what he says. We shall take no refusal. You can have nothing to do before you are wanted at Tankerville."

"I was so sorry to hear of your great loss. I hardly know whether to mention it or to be silent in writing. If you were here, of course I should speak of her. And I would rather renew your grief for a time than allow you to think that I am indifferent. Pray come to us."

"Yours ever most sincerely,

"VIOLET CHILTERN.

"HARRINGTON HALL, Wednesday."

Phineas Finn at once made up his mind that he would go to Harrington Hall. There was the prospect in this of an immediate return to some of the most charming pleasures of the old life, which was very grateful to him. It pleased him much that he should have been so thought of by this lady—that she should have sought him out at once, at the moment of his reappearance. That she would have remembered him he was quite sure, and that her husband, Lord Chiltern, should remember him also was beyond a doubt. There had been passages in their first lives which people can not forget. But it might so well have been the case that they should not have cared to renew their acquaintance with him. As it was, they must have made close inquiry, and had sought him at the first day of his reappearance. The letter had reached him through the hands of Barrington Erle, who was a cousin of Lord Chiltern, and was at once answered as follows:

"FOWLER'S HOTEL, JERMYN STREET, October 1.

"MY DEAR LADY CHILTERN,—I can not tell you how much pleasure the very sight of your handwriting gave me. Yes, here I am again, trying my head at the old game. They say that you can never cure a gambler or a politician; and though I had very much to make me happy till that great blow came upon me, I believe that it is so. I am uneasy till I can see once more the Speaker's wig, and hear bitter things said of this 'right honorable gentleman,' and of that noble friend. I want to be once more in the midst of it; and as I have been left singularly desolate in the world, without a tie by which I am bound to aught but an honorable mode of living, I have determined to run the risk, and have thrown up the place which I held under Government. I am to stand for Tankerville, as you have heard, and I am told by those to whose tender mercies I have been confided by B. E. that I have not a chance of success.

"Your invitation is so tempting that I can not refuse it. As you say, I have nothing to do till the play begins. I have issued my address, and must leave my name and my fame to be discussed by the Tankervillians till I make my appearance among them on the 10th of this month. Of course I had heard that Chiltern has the Brake, and I have heard also that he is doing it uncommonly well. Tell him that I have hardly seen a hound since the memorable day on which I pulled him out from under his horse in the brook at Wissindine. I don't know whether I can ride a yard now. I will get to you on the 4th, and will remain, if you will keep me, till the 9th. If Chiltern can put me up on any thing a little quieter than Bonebreaker, I'll go out steadily, and see how he does his cubbing. I may, perhaps, be justified in opining that Bonebreaker has before this left the establishment. If so, I may perhaps find myself up to a little very light work.

"Remember me very kindly to him. Does he make a good nurse with the baby?

"Yours, always faithfully,

"PHINEAS FINN.

"I can not tell you with what pleasure I look forward to seeing you both again."

The next few days went very heavily with

him. There had, indeed, been no real reason why he should not have gone to Harrington Hall at once, except that he did not wish to seem to be utterly homeless. And yet were he there, with his old friends, he would not scruple for a moment in owning that such was the case. He had fixed his day, however, and did remain in London till the 4th. Barrington Erle and Mr. Ratler he saw occasionally, for they were kept in town on the affairs of the election. The one was generally full of hope; but the other was no better than a Job's comforter. "I wouldn't advise you to expect too much at Tankerville, you know," said Mr. Ratler.

"By no means," said Phineas, who had always disliked Ratler, and had known himself to be disliked in return. "I expect nothing."

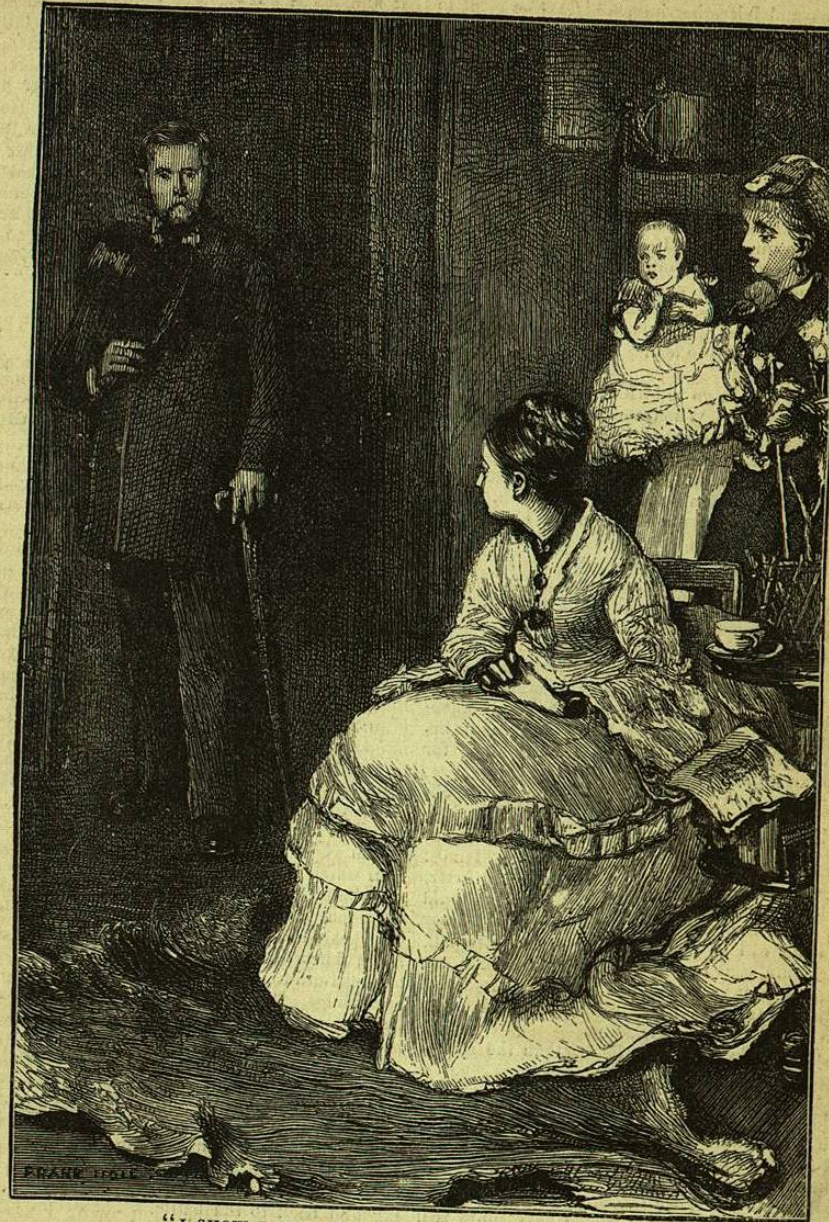
"Browborough understands such a place as Tankerville so well! He has been at it all his life. Money is no object to him, and he doesn't care a straw what any body says of him. I don't think it's possible to unseat him."

"We'll try at least," said Phineas, upon whom, however, such remarks as these cast a gloom which he could not succeed in shaking off, though he could summon vigor sufficient to save him from showing the gloom. He knew very well that comfortable words would be spoken to him at Harrington Hall, and that then the gloom would go. The comforting words of his friends would mean quite as little as the discourtesies of Mr. Ratler. He understood that thoroughly, and felt that he ought to hold a stronger control over his own impulses. He must take the thing as it would come, and neither the flatterings of friends nor the threatenings of enemies could alter it; but he knew his own weakness, and confessed to himself that another week of life by himself at Fowler's Hotel, refreshed by occasional interviews with Mr. Ratler, would make him altogether unfit for the coming contest at Tankerville.

He reached Harrington Hall in the afternoon about four, and found Lady Chiltern alone. As soon as he saw her he told himself that she was not in the least altered since he had last been with her, and yet during the period she had undergone that great change which turns a girl into a mother. She had the baby with her when he came into the room, and at once greeted him as an old friend—as a loved and loving friend who was to be made free at once to all the inmost privileges of real friendship, which are given to and are desired by so few. "Yes, here we are again," said Lady Chiltern; "settled, as far as I suppose we ever shall be settled, for ever so many years to come. The place belongs to old Lord Gunthorpe, I fancy, but really I hardly know. I do know that we should give it up at once if we gave up the hounds, and that we can't be turned out as long as we have them. Doesn't it seem odd to have to depend on a lot of yelping dogs?"

"Only that the yelping dogs depend on you."

"It's a kind of give and take, I suppose, like other things in the world. Of course he's a beautiful baby. I had him in just that you might see him. I show Baby, and Oswald shows the hounds. We've nothing else to interest any body. But nurse shall take him now. Come out and have a turn in the shrubbery before Oswald comes back. They're gone to-day as far



"I SHOW BABY, AND OSWALD SHOWS THE HOUNDS."

as Trumpeton Wood, out of which no fox was ever known to break, and they won't be home till six."

"Who are 'they?'" asked Phineas, as he took his hat.

"The 'they' is only Adelaide Palliser. I don't think you ever knew her?"

"Never. Is she any thing to the other Pallisers?"

"She is every thing to them all; niece and grandniece, and first cousin and granddaughter. Her father was the fourth brother, and as she

was one of six, her share of the family wealth is small. Those Pallisers are very peculiar, and I doubt whether she ever saw the old duke. She has no father or mother, and lives, when she is at home, with a married sister, about seventy years older than herself, Mrs. Attenbury."

"I remember Mrs. Attenbury."

"Of course you do. Who does not? Adelaide was a child then, I suppose. Though I don't know why she should have been, as she calls herself one-and-twenty now. You'll think her pretty. I don't. But she is my great new

friend, and I like her immensely. She rides to hounds, and talks Italian, and writes for the *Times*."

"Writes for the *Times*!"
"I won't swear that she does, but she could. There's only one other thing about her. She's engaged to be married."

"To whom?"
"I don't know that I shall answer that question, and indeed I'm not sure that she is engaged. But there's a man dying for her."

"You must know, if she's your friend."
"Of course I know; but there are ever so many ins and outs, and I ought not to have said a word about it. I shouldn't have done so to any one but you. And now we'll go in and have some tea, and go to bed."

"Go to bed!"
"We always go to bed here before dinner on hunting days. When the cubbing began Oswald used to be up at three."

"He doesn't get up at three now."
"Nevertheless we go to bed. You needn't if you don't like, and I'll stay with you, if you choose, till you dress for dinner. I did know so well that you'd come back to London, Mr. Finn. You are not a bit altered."

"I feel to be changed in every thing."
"Why should you be altered? It's only two years. I am altered because of Baby. That does change a woman. Of course I'm thinking always of what he will do in the world; whether he'll be a Master of Hounds or a Cabinet Minister or a great farmer—or perhaps a miserable spendthrift, who will let every thing that his grandfathers and grandmothers have done for him go to the dogs."

"Why do you think of any thing so wretched, Lady Chiltern?"

"Who can help thinking? Men do so. It seems to me that that is the line of most young men who come to their property early. Why should I dare to think that my boy should be better than others? But I do; and I fancy that he will be a great statesman. After all, Mr. Finn, that is the best thing that a man can be, unless it is given him to be a saint and a martyr and all that kind of thing—which is not just what a mother looks for."

"That would only be better than the spendthrift and gambler."

"Hardly better, you'll say, perhaps. How odd that is! We all profess to believe when we're told that this world should be used merely as a preparation for the next, and yet there is something so cold and comfortless in the theory that we do not relish the prospect even for our children. I fancy your people have more real belief in it than ours."

Now Phineas Finn was a Roman Catholic. But the discussion was stopped by the noise of an arrival in the hall.

"There they are," said Lady Chiltern; "Oswald never comes in without a sound of trumpets to make him audible throughout the house." Then she went to meet her husband, and Phineas followed her out of the drawing-room.

Lord Chiltern was as glad to see him as she had been, and in a very few minutes he found himself quite at home. In the hall he was introduced to Miss Palliser, but he was hardly able to see her as she stood there a moment in her

hat and habit. There was ever so much said about the day's work. The earths had not been properly stopped, and Lord Chiltern had been very angry, and the owner of Trumpeton Wood, who was a great duke, had been much abused, and things had not gone altogether straight.

"Lord Chiltern was furious," said Miss Palliser, laughing, "and therefore, of course, I became furious too, and swore that it was an awful shame. Then they all swore that it was an awful shame, and every body was furious. And you might hear one man saying to another all day long, 'By George, this is too bad.' But I never could quite make out what was amiss, and I'm sure the men didn't know."

"What was it, Oswald?"
"Never mind now. One doesn't go to Trumpeton Wood expecting to be happy there. I've half a mind to swear I'll never draw it again."

"I've been asking him what was the matter all the way home," said Miss Palliser, "but I don't think he knows himself."

"Come up stairs, Phineas, and I'll show you your room," said Lord Chiltern. "It's not quite as comfortable as the old 'Bull,' but we make it do."

Phineas, when he was alone, could not help standing for a while with his back to the fire thinking of it all. He did already feel himself to be at home in that house, and his doing so was a contradiction to all the wisdom which he had been endeavoring to teach himself for the last two years. He had told himself over and over again that that life which he had lived in London had been, if not a dream, at any rate not more significant than a parenthesis in his days, which, as of course it had no bearing on those which had gone before, so neither would it influence those which were to follow. The dear friends of that period of feverish success would for the future be to him as—nothing. That was the lesson of wisdom which he had endeavored to teach himself, and the facts of the last two years had seemed to show that the lesson was a true lesson. He had disappeared from among his former companions, and had heard almost nothing from them. From neither Lord Chiltern nor his wife had he received any tidings. He had expected to receive none—had known that in the common course of things none was to be expected. There were many others with whom he had been intimate—Barrington Erle, Laurence Fitzgibbon, Mr. Monk, a politician who had been in the Cabinet, and in consequence of whose political teaching he, Phineas Finn, had banished himself from the political world: from none of these had he received a line till there came that letter summoning him back to the battle. There had never been a time during his late life in Dublin at which he had complained to himself that on this account his former friends had forgotten him. If they had not written to him, neither had he written to them. But on his first arrival in England he had, in the sadness of his solitude, told himself that he was forgotten. There would be no return, so he feared, of those pleasant intimacies which he now remembered so well, and which, as he remembered them, were so much more replete with unalloyed delights than they had ever been in their existing realities. And yet here he was, a welcome guest in Lord Chiltern's house, a welcome guest in Lady Chiltern's drawing-

room, and quite as much at home with them as ever he had been in the old days.

Who is there that can write letters to all his friends, or would not find it dreary work to do so even in regard to those whom he really loves? When there is something palpable to be said, what a blessing is the penny post! To one's wife, to one's child, one's mistress; one's steward, if there be a steward; one's gamekeeper, if there be shooting forward; one's groom, if there be hunting; one's publisher, if there be a volume ready or money needed; or one's tailor occasionally, if a coat be required—a man is able to write. But what has a man to say to his friend, or, for that matter, what has a woman? A Horace Walpole may write to a Mr. Mann about all things under the sun, London gossip or transcendental philosophy; and if the Horace Walpole of the occasion can write well, and will labor diligently at that vocation, his letters may be worth reading by his Mr. Mann, and by others; but, for the maintenance of love and friendship, continued correspondence between distant friends is naught. Distance in time and place, but especially in time, will diminish friendship. It is a rule of nature that it should be so, and thus the friendships which a man most fosters are those which he can best enjoy. If your friend leave you and seek a residence in Patagonia, make a niche for him in your memory, and keep him there as warm as you may. Perchance he may return from Patagonia, and the old joys may be repeated. But never think that those joys can be maintained by the assistance of ocean postage, let it be at never so cheap a rate. Phineas Finn had not thought this matter out very carefully, and now, after two years of absence, he was surprised to find that he was still had in remembrance by those who had never troubled themselves to write to him a line during his absence.

When he went down into the drawing-room he was surprised to find another old friend sitting there alone. "Mr. Finn," said the old lady, "I hope I see you quite well. I am glad to meet you again. You find my niece much changed, I dare say?"

"Not in the least, Lady Baldock," said Phineas, seizing the proffered hand of the dowager. In that hour of conversation which they had had together Lady Chiltern had said not a word to Phineas of her aunt, and now he felt himself to be almost discomposed by the meeting. "Is your daughter here, Lady Baldock?"

Lady Baldock shook her head solemnly and sadly. "Do not speak of her, Mr. Finn. It is too sad! We never mention her name now." Phineas looked as sad as he knew how to look, but he said nothing. The lamentation of the mother did not seem to imply that the daughter was dead; and, from his remembrance of Augusta Boreham, he would have thought her to be the last woman in the world to run away with the coachman. At the moment there did not seem to be any other sufficient cause for so melancholy a wagging of that venerable head. He had been told to say nothing, and he could ask no questions. But Lady Baldock did not choose that he should be left to imagine things more terrible than the truth. "She is lost to us forever, Mr. Finn."

"How very sad!"

"Sad, indeed! We don't know how she took it."

"Took what, Lady Baldock?"
"I am sure it was nothing that she ever saw at home. If there is a thing I'm true to, it is the Protestant Established Church of England. Some nasty, low, lying, wheedling priest got hold of her, and now she's a nun, and calls herself—Sister Veronica John!" Lady Baldock threw great strength and unction into her description of the priest. But as soon as she had told her story a sudden thought struck her. "Oh, laws! I quite forgot. I beg your pardon, Mr. Finn; but you're one of them!"

"Not a nun, Lady Baldock." At that moment the door was opened, and Lord Chiltern came in, to the great relief of his wife's aunt.

CHAPTER III.

GERARD MAULE.

"Why didn't you tell me?" said Phineas that night after Lady Baldock was gone to bed. The two men had taken off their dress-coats, and had put on smoking-caps—Lord Chiltern, indeed, having clothed himself in a wonderful Chinese dressing-gown—and they were sitting round the fire in the smoking-room; but though they were thus employed and thus dressed, the two younger ladies were still with them.

"How could I tell you every thing in two minutes?" said Lady Chiltern.

"I'd have given a guinea to have heard her," said Lord Chiltern, getting up and rubbing his hands as he walked about the room. "Can't you fancy all that she'd say, and then her horror when she'd remember that Phineas was a Papist himself?"

"But what made Miss Boreham turn nun?"
"I fancy she found the penances lighter than they were at home," said the lord. "They couldn't well be heavier."

"Dear old aunt!"
"Does she never go to see Sister Veronica?" asked Miss Palliser.

"She has been once," said Lady Chiltern.
"And fumigated herself first so as to escape infection," said the husband. "You should hear Gerard Maule imitate her when she talks about the filthy priest."

"And who is Gerard Maule?" Then Lady Chiltern looked at her friend, and Phineas was almost sure that Gerard Maule was the man who was dying for Adelaide Palliser.

"He's a great ally of mine," said Lady Chiltern.

"He's a young fellow who thinks he can ride to hounds," said Lord Chiltern, "and who very often does succeed in riding over them."

"That's not fair, Lord Chiltern," said Miss Palliser.

"Just my idea of it," replied the Master. "I don't think it's at all fair. Because a man has plenty of horses, and nothing else to do, and rides twelve stone, and doesn't care how he's sworn at, he's always to be over the scent, and spoil every one's sport. I don't call it at all fair."

"He's a very nice fellow, and a great friend of Oswald's. He is to be here to-morrow, and you'll like him very much. Won't he, Adelaide?"

"I don't know Mr. Finn's tastes quite so well as you do, Violet. But Mr. Maule is so harmless that no one can dislike him very much."

"As for being harmless, I'm not so sure," said Lady Chiltern. After that they all went to bed.

Phineas remained at Harrington Hall till the 9th, on which day he went to London, so that he might be at Tankerville on the 10th. He rode Lord Chiltern's horses, and took an interest in the hounds, and nursed the baby. "Now tell me what you think of Gerard Maule," Lady Chiltern asked him the day before he started.

"I presume that he is the young man who is dying for Miss Palliser."

"You may answer my question, Mr. Finn, without making any such suggestion."

"Not discreetly. Of course, if he is to be made happy, I am bound at the present moment to say all good things of him. At such a crisis it would be wicked to tinge Miss Palliser's hopes with any hue less warm than rose-color."

"Do you suppose that I tell every thing that is said to me?"

"Not at all; but opinions do ooze out. I take him to be a good sort of a fellow; but why doesn't he talk a bit more?"

"That's just it."

"And why does he pretend to do nothing? When he's out he rides hard; but at other times there's a ha-ha, lackadaisical air about him which I hate. Why men assume it I never could understand. It can recommend them to nobody. A man can't suppose that he'll gain any thing by pretending that he never reads, and never thinks, and never does any thing, and never speaks, and doesn't care what he has for dinner, and, upon the whole, would just as soon lie in bed all day as get up. It isn't that he is really idle. He rides and eats, and does get up, and I dare say talks and thinks. It's simply a poor affectation."

"That's your rose-color, is it?"

"You've promised secrecy, Lady Chiltern. I suppose he's well off?"

"He is an eldest son. The property is not large, and I'm afraid there's something wrong about it."

"He has no profession?"

"None at all. He has an allowance of £800 a year, which in some sort of fashion is independent of his father. He has nothing on earth to do. Adelaide's whole fortune is four thousand pounds. If they were to marry, what would become of them?"

"That wouldn't be enough to live on?"

"It ought to be enough—as he must, I suppose, have the property some day—if only he had something to do. What sort of a life would he lead?"

"I suppose he couldn't become a Master of Hounds?"

"That is ill-natured, Mr. Finn."

"I did not mean it so. I did not, indeed. You must know that I did not."

"Of course Oswald had nothing to do, and of course there was a time when I wished that he should take to Parliament. No one knew all that better than you did. But he was very different from Mr. Maule."

"Very different, indeed."

"Oswald is a man full of energy, and with no touch of that affectation which you described.

As it is, he does work hard. No man works harder. The learned people say that you should produce something, and I don't suppose that he produces much. But somebody must keep hounds, and nobody could do it better than he does."

"You don't think that I meant to blame him?"

"I hope not."

"Are he and his father on good terms now?"

"Oh yes. His father wishes him to go to Saulsby, but he won't do that. He hates Saulsby."

Saulsby was the country-seat of the Earl of Brentford, the name of the property which must some day belong to this Lord Chiltern; and Phineas, as he heard this, remembered former days in which he had ridden about Saulsby Woods, and had thought them to be any thing but hateful. "Is Saulsby shut up?" he asked.

"Altogether, and so is the house in Portman Square. There never was any thing more sad or desolate. You would find him altered, Mr. Finn. He is quite an old man now. He was here in the spring for a week or two—in England, that is; but he staid at a hotel in London. He and Laura live at Dresden now, and a very sad time they must have."

"Does she write?"

"Yes, and keeps up all her interest about politics. I have already told her that you are to stand for Tankerville. No one—no other human being in the world—will be so interested for you as she is. If any friend ever felt an interest almost selfish for a friend's welfare, she will feel such an interest for you. If you were to succeed, it would give her a hope in life."

Phineas sat silent, drinking in the words that were said to him. Though they were true, or at least meant to be true, they were full of flattery. Why should this woman of whom they were speaking love him so dearly? She was nothing to him. She was highly born, greatly gifted, wealthy, and a married woman, whose character, as he well knew, was beyond the taint of suspicion, though she had been driven by the hard sullenness of her husband to refuse to live under his roof. Phineas Finn and Lady Laura Kennedy had not seen each other for two years, and when they had parted, though they had lived as friends, there had been no signs of still living friendship. True, indeed, she had written to him, but her letters had been short and cold, merely detailing certain circumstances of her outward life. Now he was told by this woman's dearest friend that his welfare was closer to her heart than any other interest!

"I dare say you often think of her?" said Lady Chiltern.

"Indeed I do."

"What virtues she used to ascribe to you! What sins she forgave you! How hard she fought for you! Now, though she can fight no more, she does not think of it all the less."

"Poor Lady Laura!"

"Poor Laura, indeed! When one sees such shipwreck, it makes a woman doubt whether she ought to marry at all."

"And yet he was a good man. She always said so."

"Men are so seldom really good. They are so little sympathetic. What man thinks of

changing himself so as to suit his wife? And yet men expect that women shall put on altogether new characters when they are married, and girls think that they can do so. Look at this Mr. Maule, who is really over head and ears in love with Adelaide Palliser. She is full of hope and energy. He has none. And yet he has the effrontery to suppose that she will adapt herself to his way of living if he marries her."

"Then they are to be married?"

"I suppose it will come to that. It always does if the man is in earnest. Girls will accept men simply because they think it ill-natured to return the compliment of an offer with a hearty 'No.'"

"I suppose she likes him?"

"Of course she does. A girl almost always likes a man who is in love with her—unless, indeed, she positively dislikes him. But why should she like him? He is good-looking, is a gentleman, and not a fool. Is that enough to make such a girl as Adelaide Palliser think a man divine?"

"Is nobody to be accepted who is not credited with divinity?"

"The man should be a demi-god, at least in respect to some part of his character. I can find nothing even demi-divine about Mr. Maule."

"That's because you are not in love with him, Lady Chiltern."

Six or seven very pleasant days Phineas Finn spent at Harrington Hall, and then he started alone, and very lonely, for Tankerville. But he admitted to himself that the pleasure which he had received during his visit was quite sufficient to qualify him in running any risk in an attempt to return to the kind of life which he had formerly led. But if he should fail at Tankerville, what would become of him then?

CHAPTER IV.

TANKERVILLE.

THE great Mr. Molescroft himself came over to Tankerville for the purpose of introducing our hero to the electors and to Mr. Ruddles, the local Liberal agent, who was to be employed. They met at the Lambton Arms, and there Phineas established himself, knowing well that he had before him ten days of unmitigated vexation and misery. Tankerville was a dirty, prosperous, ungainly town, which seemed to exude coal-dust or coal-mud at every pore. It was so well recognized as being dirty that people did not expect to meet each other with clean hands and faces. Linen was never white at Tankerville, and even ladies who sat in drawing-rooms were accustomed to the feel and taste and appearance of soot in all their daintiest recesses. We hear that at Oil City the flavor of petroleum is hardly considered to be disagreeable, and so it was with the flavor of coal at Tankerville. And we know that at Oil City the flavor of petroleum must not be openly declared to be objectionable, and so it was with coal at Tankerville. At Tankerville coal was much loved, and was not thought to be dirty. Mr. Ruddles was very much begrimed himself, and some of the leading Liberal electors, upon whom Phineas Finn had already called, seemed to be saturated with the product of the district. It would not, however,

in any event be his duty to live at Tankerville, and he had believed from the first moment of his entrance into the town that he would soon depart from it, and know it no more. He felt that the chance of his being elected was quite a forlorn hope, and could hardly understand why he had allowed himself to be embarrassed by so very unprofitable a speculation.

Phineas Finn had thrice before this been chosen to sit in Parliament—twice for the Irish borough of Loughshane, and once for the English borough of Loughton; but he had been so happy as hitherto to have known nothing of the miseries and occasional hopelessness of a contested election. At Loughton he had come forward as the nominee of the Earl of Brentford, and had been returned without any chance of failure by that nobleman's influence. At Loughshane things had nearly been as pleasant with him. He had almost been taught to think that nothing could be easier than getting into Parliament if only a man could live when he was there. But Loughton and Loughshane were gone, with so many other comfortable things of old days, and now he found himself relegated to a borough to which, as it seemed to him, he was sent to fight, not that he might win, but because it was necessary to his party that the seat should not be allowed to be lost without fighting. He had had the pleasant things of Parliamentary adventure, and now must undergo those which were unpleasant. No doubt he could have refused, but he had listened to the tempter, and could not now go back, though Mr. Ruddles was hardly more encouraging than Mr. Molescroft.

"Browborough has been at work for the last three days," said Mr. Ruddles, in a tone of reproach. Mr. Ruddles had always thought that no amount of work could be too heavy for his candidates.

"Will that make much difference?" asked Mr. Molescroft.

"Well, it does. Of course he has been among the colliers—when we ought to have been before him."

"I came when I was told," said Phineas.

"I'd have telegraphed to you if I'd known where you were. But there's no help for spilled milk. We must get to work now—that's all. I suppose you're for disestablishing the Church?"

"Not particularly," said Phineas, who felt that with him, as a Roman Catholic, this was a delicate subject.

"We needn't go into that, need we?" said Mr. Molescroft, who, though a Liberal, was a good Churchman.

Mr. Ruddles was a Dissenter, but the very strong opinion which Mr. Ruddles now expressed as to the necessity that the new candidate should take up the Church question did not spring at all from his own religious convictions. His present duty called upon him to have a Liberal candidate if possible returned for the borough with which he was connected, and not to disseminate the doctrines of his own sect. Nevertheless, his opinion was very strong. "I think we must, Mr. Molescroft," said he; "I'm sure we must. Browborough has taken up the other side. He went to church last Sunday with the Mayor and two of the Aldermen, and I'm told he said all the responses louder than any body else. He dined with the Vicar of Trinity on Monday. He