

"No fortune!"

"Two or three thousand pounds perhaps."

"Then I look upon it as an act of simple madness, and can only say that as such I shall treat it. I have nothing in my power, and therefore I can neither do you good nor harm; but I will not hear any particulars, and I can only advise you to break it off, let the trouble be what it may."

"I certainly shall not do that, Sir."

"Then I have nothing more to say. Don't ask me to be present, and don't ask me to see her."

"You haven't heard her name yet."

"I do not care one straw what her name is."

"It is Adelaide Palliser."

"Adelaide Muggins would be exactly the same thing to me. My dear Gerard, I have lived too long in the world to believe that men can coin into money the noble blood of well-born wives. Twenty thousand pounds is worth more than all the blood of all the Howards, and a wife even with twenty thousand pounds would make you a poor, embarrassed, and half-famished man."

"Then I suppose I shall be whole famished, as she certainly has not got a quarter of that sum."

"No doubt you will."

"Yet, Sir, married men with families have lived on my income."

"And on less than a quarter of it. The very respectable man who brushes my clothes no doubt does so. But then, you see, he has been brought up in that way. I suppose that you, as a bachelor, put by every year at least half your income?"

"I never put by a shilling, Sir. Indeed, I owe a few hundred pounds."

"And yet you expect to keep a house over your head, and an expensive wife and family, with lady's-maid, nurses, cook, footman, and grooms, on a sum which has been hitherto insufficient for your own wants! I didn't think you were such an idiot, my boy."

"Thank you, Sir."

"What will her dress cost?"

"I have not the slightest idea."

"I dare say not. Probably she is a horse-woman. As far as I know any thing of your life, that is the sphere in which you will have made the lady's acquaintance."

"She does ride."

"No doubt, and so do you; and it will be very easy to say whither you will ride together if you are fools enough to get married. I can only advise you to do nothing of the kind. Is there any thing else?"

There was much more to be said if Gerard could succeed in forcing his father to hear him. Mr. Maule, who had hitherto been standing, seated himself as he asked that last question, and took up the book which had been prepared for his morning's delectation. It was evidently his intention that his son should leave him. The news had been communicated to him, and he had said all that he could say on the subject. He had at once determined to confine himself to a general view of the matter, and to avoid details—which might be personal to himself. But Gerard had been specially required to force his father into details. Had he been left to himself, he would certainly have thought that the conversation had gone far enough. He was inclined, almost as well as his father, to avoid present discomfort. But when Miss Palliser had suddenly—almost suddenly—accepted him; and when he

had found himself describing the prospects of his life in her presence and in that of Lady Chiltern, the question of the Maule Abbey inheritance had of necessity been discussed. At Maule Abbey there might be found a home for the married couple, and—so thought Lady Chiltern—the only fitting home. Mr. Maule, the father, certainly did not desire to live there. Probably arrangements might be made for repairing the house and furnishing it with Adelaide's money. Then, if Gerard Maule would be prudent, and give up hunting, and farm a little himself—and if Adelaide would do her own housekeeping and dress upon forty pounds a year, and if they would both live an exemplary, model, energetic, and strictly economical life, both ends might be made to meet. Adelaide had been quite enthusiastic as to the forty pounds, and had suggested that she would do it for thirty. The housekeeping was a matter of course, and the more so as a leg of mutton, roast or boiled, would be the beginning and the end of it. To Adelaide the discussion had been exciting and pleasurable, and she had been quite in earnest when looking forward to a new life at Maule Abbey. After all, there could be no such great difficulty for a young married couple to live on £800 a year, with a house and garden of their own. There would be no carriage and no manservant till—till old Mr. Maule was dead. The suggestion as to the ultimate and desirable haven was wrapped up in ambiguous words. "The property must be yours some day," suggested Lady Chiltern. "If I outlive my father." "We take that for granted; and then, you know—" So Lady Chiltern went on, dilating upon a future state of squirearchical bliss and rural independence. Adelaide was enthusiastic; but Gerard Maule—after he had assented to the abandonment of his hunting, much as a man assents to being hung when the antecedents of his life have put any option in the matter out of his power—had sat silent and almost moody while the joys of his coming life were described to him. Lady Chiltern, however, had been urgent in pointing out to him that the scheme of living at Maule Abbey could not be carried out without his father's assistance. They all knew that Mr. Maule himself could not be affected by the matter, and they also knew that he had but very little power in reference to the property. But the plan could not be matured without some sanction from him. Therefore there was still much more to be said when the father had completed the exposition of his views on marriage in general. "I wanted to speak to you about the property," said Gerard. He had been specially enjoined to be stanch in bringing his father to the point.

"And what about the property?"

"Of course my marriage will not affect your interests."

"I should say not. It would be very odd if it did. As it is, your income is much larger than mine."

"I don't know how that is, Sir; but I suppose you will not refuse to give me a helping hand if you can do so without disturbance to your own comfort."

"In what sort of way? Don't you think any thing of that kind can be managed better by the lawyer? If there is a thing I hate, it is business."

Gerard, remembering his promise to Lady Chiltern, did persevere, though the perseverance

went much against the grain with him. "We thought, Sir, that if you would consent, we might live at Maule Abbey."

"Oh, you did, did you?"

"Is there any objection?"

"Simply the fact that it is my house, and not yours."

"It belongs, I suppose, to the property; and as—"

"As what?" asked the father, turning upon the son with sharp angry eyes, and with something of real animation in his face.

Gerard was very awkward in conveying his meaning to his father. "And as," he continued—"as it must come to me, I suppose, some day, and it will be the proper sort of thing that we should live there then, I thought that you would agree that if we went and lived there now, it would be a good sort of thing to do."

"That was your idea?"

"We talked it over with our friend, Lady Chiltern."

"Indeed! I am so much obliged to your friend, Lady Chiltern, for the interest she takes in my affairs. Pray make my compliments to Lady Chiltern, and tell her at the same time that though, no doubt, I have one foot in the grave, I should like to keep my house for the other foot, though too probably I may never be able to drag it so far as Maule Abbey."

"But you don't think of living there."

"My dear boy, if you will inquire among any friends you may happen to know who understand the world better than Lady Chiltern seems to do, they will tell you that a son should not suggest to his father the abandonment of the family property, because the father may—probably—soon—be conveniently got rid of under-ground."

"There was no thought of such a thing," said Gerard.

"It isn't decent. I say that with all due deference to Lady Chiltern's better judgment. It's not the kind of thing that men do. I care less about it than most men, but even I object to such a proposition when it is made so openly. No doubt I am old." This assertion Mr. Maule made in a weak, quavering voice, which showed that had his attention been that way turned in his youth, he might probably have earned his bread on the stage.

"Nobody thought of your being old, Sir."

"I sha'n't last long, of course. I am a poor feeble creature. But while I do live I should prefer not to be turned out of my own house—if Lady Chiltern could be induced to consent to such an arrangement. My doctor seems to think that I might linger on for a year or two—with great care."

"Father, you know I was thinking of nothing of the kind."

"We won't act the king and the prince any further, if you please. The prince protested very well, and, if I remember right, the father pretended to believe him. In my weak state you have rather upset me. If you have no objection I would choose to be left to recover myself a little."

"And is that all that you will say to me?"

"Good Heavens! what more can you want? I will not—consent—to give up—my house at Maule Abbey for your use—as long as I live. Will that do? And if you choose to marry a

wife and starve, I won't think that any reason why I should starve too. Will that do? And your friend, Lady Chiltern, may—go—and be d—d. Will that do?"

"Good-morning, Sir."

"Good-morning, Gerard." So the interview was over, and Gerard Maule left the room. The father, as soon as he was alone, immediately lit another cigarette, took up his French novel, and went to work as though he was determined to be happy and comfortable again without losing a moment. But he found this to be beyond his power. He had been really disturbed, and could not easily compose himself. The cigarette was almost at once chucked into the fire, and the little volume was laid on one side. Mr. Maule rose almost impetuously from his chair, and stood with his back to the fire, contemplating the proposition that had been made to him.

It was actually true that he had been offended by the very faint idea of death which had been suggested to him by his son. Though he was a man bearing no palpable signs of decay, in excellent health, with good digestion—who might live to be ninety—he did not like to be warned that his heir would come after him. The claim which had been put forward to Maule Abbey by his son had rested on the fact that when he should die the place must belong to his son; and the fact was unpleasant to him. Lady Chiltern had spoken of him behind his back as being mortal, and in doing so had been guilty of an impertinence. Maule Abbey, no doubt, was a ruined old house, in which he never thought of living—which was not let to a tenant by the creditors of his estate only because its condition was unfit for tenancy. But now Mr. Maule began to think whether he might not possibly give the lie to these people who were compassing his death by returning to the halls of his ancestors, if not in the bloom of youth, still in the pride of age. Why should he not live at Maule Abbey if this successful marriage could be effected? He almost knew himself well enough to be aware that a month at Maule Abbey would destroy him; but it is the proper thing for a man of fashion to have a place of his own, and he had always been alive to the glory of being Mr. Maule of Maule Abbey. In preparing the way for the marriage that was to come he must be so known. To be spoken of as the father of Maule of Maule Abbey would have been fatal to him. To be the father of a married son at all was disagreeable, and therefore when the communication was made to him he had managed to be very unpleasant. As for giving up Maule Abbey—! He fretted and fumed as he thought of the proposition through the hour which should have been to him an hour of enjoyment, and his anger grew hot against his son as he remembered all that he was losing. At last, however, he composed himself sufficiently to put on with becoming care his luxurious furred great-coat, and then he sallied forth in quest of the lady.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## "PURITY OF MORALS, FINN."

MR. QUINTUS SLIDE was now, as formerly, the editor of the *People's Banner*, but a change had come over the spirit of his dream. His

newspaper was still the *People's Banner*, and Mr. Slide still professed to protect the existing rights of the people, and to demand new rights for the people. But he did so as a Conservative. He had watched the progress of things, and had perceived that duty called upon him to be the organ of Mr. Daubeny. This duty he performed with great zeal, and with an assumption of consistency and infallibility which was charming. No doubt the somewhat difficult task of veering round without inconsistency, and without flaw to his infallibility, was eased by Mr. Daubeny's newly declared views on Church matters. The *People's Banner* could still be a genuine *People's Banner* in reference to ecclesiastical policy. And as that was now the subject mainly discussed by the newspapers, the change made was almost entirely confined to the lauding of Mr. Daubeny instead of Mr. Turnbull. Some other slight touches were no doubt necessary. Mr. Daubeny was the head of the Conservative party in the kingdom, and though Mr. Slide himself might be of all men in the kingdom the most democratic, or even the most destructive, still it was essential that Mr. Daubeny's organ should support the Conservative party all round. It became Mr. Slide's duty to speak of men as heaven-born patriots whom he had designated a month or two since as bloated aristocrats and leeches fattened on the blood of the people. Of course remarks were made by his brethren of the press—remarks which were intended to be very unpleasant. One evening newspaper took the trouble to divide a column of its own into double columns, printing on one side of the inserted line remarks made by the *People's Banner* in September respecting the Duke of —, and the Marquis of —, and Sir —, which were certainly very harsh; and on the other side remarks equally laudatory as to the characters of the same titled politicians. But a journalist with the tact and experience of Mr. Quintus Slide knew his business too well to allow himself to be harassed by any such small stratagem as that. He did not pause to defend himself, but boldly attacked the meanness, the duplicity, the immorality, the grammar, the paper, the type, and the wife of the editor of the evening newspaper. In the storm of wind in which he rowed it was unnecessary for him to defend his own conduct. "And then," said he at the close of a very virulent and successful article, "the hirelings of — dare to accuse me of inconsistency!" The readers of the *People's Banner* all thought that their editor had beaten his adversary out of the field.

Mr. Quintus Slide was certainly well adapted for his work. He could edit his paper with a clear appreciation of the kind of matter which would best conduce to its success, and he could write telling leading articles himself. He was indefatigable, unscrupulous, and devoted to his paper. Perhaps his great value was shown most clearly in his distinct appreciation of the low line of public virtue with which his readers would be satisfied. A highly wrought moral strain would, he knew well, create either disgust or ridicule. "If there is any beastliness I ate it is 'ighfaluting," he had been heard to say to his underlings. The sentiment was the same as that conveyed in the "Point de zele" of Talleyrand. "Let's 'ave no d—d nonsense," he said on another occasion, when striking out from a leading

article a passage in praise of the patriotism of a certain public man. "Mr. Gresham is as good as another man, no doubt; what we want to know is whether he's along with us." Mr. Gresham was not along with Mr. Slide at present, and Mr. Slide found it very easy to speak ill of Mr. Gresham.

Mr. Slide one Sunday morning called at the house of Mr. Bunce in Great Marlborough Street, and asked for Phineas Finn. Mr. Slide and Mr. Bunce had an old acquaintance with each other, and the editor was not ashamed to exchange a few friendly words with the law scrivener before he was shown up to the member of Parliament. Mr. Bunce was an outspoken, eager, and honest politician, with very little accurate knowledge of the political conditions by which he was surrounded, but with a strong belief in the merits of his own class. He was a sober, hard-working man, and he hated all men who were not sober and hard-working. He was quite clear in his mind that all nobility should be put down, and that all property in land should be taken away from men who were enabled by such property to live in idleness. What should be done with the land when so taken away was a question which he had not yet learned to answer. At the present moment he was accustomed to say very hard words of Mr. Slide behind his back, because of the change which had been effected in the *People's Banner*, and he certainly was not the man to shrink from asserting in a person's presence aught that he said in his absence. "Well, Mr. Conservative Slide," he said, stepping into the little back-parlor in which the editor was left while Mrs. Bunce went up to learn whether the member of Parliament would receive his visitor.

"None of your chaff, Bunce."  
"We have enough of your chaff, anyhow; don't we, Mr. Slide? I still sees the *Banner*, Mr. Slide—most days—just for the joke of it."

"As long as you take it, Bunce, I don't care what the reason is."

"I suppose a heditor's about the same as a Cabinet Minister. You've got to keep your place; that's about it, Mr. Slide."

"We've got to tell the people who's true to 'em. Do you believe that Gresham'd ever have brought in a bill for doing away with the Church? Never!—not if he'd been Prime Minister till doomsday. What you want is progress."

"That's about it, Mr. Slide."

"And where are you to get it? Did you ever hear that a rose by any other name'd smell as sweet? If you can get progress from the Conservatives, and you want progress, why not go to the Conservatives for it? Who repealed the corn laws? Who gave us 'ousehold suffrage?"

"I think I've been told all that before, Mr. Slide; them things weren't given by no manner of means, as I look at it. We just went in and took 'em. It was hall a accident whether it was Cobden or Peel, Gladstone or Disraeli, as was the servants we employed to do our work. But Liberal is Liberal, and Conservative is Conservative. What are you, Mr. Slide, to-day?"

"If you'd talk of things, Bunce, which you understand, you would not talk quite so much nonsense."

At this moment Mrs. Bunce entered the room, perhaps preventing a quarrel, and offered to usher Mr. Slide up to the young member's room.

Phineas had not at first been willing to receive the gentleman, remembering that when they had last met the intercourse had not been pleasant, but he knew that enmities are foolish things, and that it did not become him to perpetuate a quarrel with such a man as Mr. Quintus Slide. "I remember him very well, Mrs. Bunce."

"I know you didn't like him, Sir."

"Not particularly."

"No more don't I. No more don't Bunce. He's one of them as'd say a'most any thing for a plate of soup and a glass of wine. That's what Bunce says."

"It won't hurt me to see him."

"No, Sir; it won't hurt you. It would be a pity indeed if the likes of him could hurt the likes of you." And so Mr. Quintus Slide was shown up into the room.

The first greeting was very affectionate, at any rate on the part of the editor. He grasped the young member's hand, congratulated him on his seat, and began his work as though he had never been all but kicked out of that very same room by its present occupant. "Now you want to know what I'm come about, don't you?"

"No doubt I shall hear in good time, Mr. Slide."

"It's an important matter; and so you'll say when you do hear. And it's one in which I don't know whether you'll be able to see your way quite clear."

"I'll do my best, if it concerns me."

"It does." So saying Mr. Slide, who had seated himself in an arm-chair by the fireside opposite to Phineas, crossed his legs, folded his arms on his breast, put his head a little one side, and sat for a few moments in silence, with his eyes fixed on his companion's face. "It does concern you, or I shouldn't be here. Do you know Mr. Kennedy, the Right Honorable Robert Kennedy, of Lough Linter, in Scotland?"

"I do know Mr. Kennedy."

"And do you know Lady Laura Kennedy, his wife?"

"Certainly I do."

"So I supposed. And do you know the Earl of Brentford, who is, I take it, father to the lady in question?"

"Of course I do. You know that I do." For there had been a time in which Phineas had been subjected to the severest censure which the *People's Banner* could inflict upon him, because of his adherence to Lord Brentford, and the vials of wrath had been poured out by the hands of Mr. Quintus Slide himself.

"Very well. It does not signify what I know or what I don't. Those preliminary questions I have been obliged to ask as my justification for coming to you on the present occasion. Mr. Kennedy has, I believe, been greatly wronged."

"I am not prepared to talk about Mr. Kennedy's affairs," said Phineas, gravely.

"But, unfortunately, he is prepared to talk about them. That's the rub. He has been ill used, and he has come to the *People's Banner* for redress. Will you have the kindness to cast your eye down that slip?" Whereupon the editor handed to Phineas a long scrap of printed paper, amounting to about a column and a half of the *People's Banner*, containing a letter to the editor, dated from Lough Linter, and signed Robert Kennedy, at full length.

"You don't mean to say that you're going to publish this," said Phineas, before he had read it.

"Why not?"

"The man is a madman."

"There's nothing in the world easier than calling a man mad. It's what we do to dogs when we want to hang them. I believe Mr. Kennedy has the management of his own property. He is not too mad for that. But just cast your eye down and read it."

Phineas did cast his eye down, and read the whole letter; nor, as he read it, could he bring himself to believe that the writer of it would be judged to be mad from its contents. Mr. Kennedy had told the whole story of his wrongs, and had told it well—with piteous truthfulness, as far as he himself knew and understood the truth. The letter was almost simple in its wailing record of his own desolation. With a marvelous absence of reticence, he had given the names of all persons concerned. He spoke of his wife as having been, and being, under the influence of Mr. Phineas Finn—spoke of his own former friendship for that gentleman, who had once saved his life when he fell among thieves, and then accused Phineas of treachery in betraying that friendship. He spoke with bitter agony of the injury done him by the Earl, his wife's father, in affording a home to his wife, when her proper home was at Lough Linter. And then declared himself willing to take the sinning woman back to his bosom. "That she has sinned is certain," he said; "I do not believe she has sinned as some sin; but, whatever be her sin, it is for a man to forgive as he hopes for forgiveness." He expatiated on the absolute and almost divine right which it was intended that a husband should exercise over his wife, and quoted both the Old and New Testament in proof of his assertions. And then he went on to say that he appealed to public sympathy, through the public press, because, owing to some gross insufficiency in the laws of extradition, he could not call upon the magistracy of a foreign country to restore to him his erring wife. But he thought that public opinion, if loudly expressed, would have an effect both upon her and upon her father, which his private words could not produce.

"I wonder very greatly that you should put such a letter as that into type," said Phineas, when he had read it all.

"Why shouldn't we put it into type?"

"You don't mean to say that you'll publish it."

"Why shouldn't we publish it?"

"It's a private quarrel between a man and his wife. What on earth have the public got to do with that?"

"Private quarrels between gentlemen and ladies have been public affairs for a long time past. You must know that very well."

"When they come into court they are."

"In court and out of court! The morale of our aristocracy—what you call the Upper-Ten—would be at a low ebb indeed if the public press didn't act as their guardians. Do you think that if the Duke of — beats his wife black and blue, nothing is to be said about it unless the Duchess brings her husband into court. Did you ever know of a separation among the Upper-Ten that wasn't handled by the Press one way or the other? It's my belief that there isn't a peer among 'em all as would live with his wife con-

stant, if it was not for the Press—only some of the very old ones, who couldn't help themselves."

"And you call yourself a Conservative?"

"Never mind what I call myself. That has nothing to do with what we're about now. You see that letter, Finn. There is nothing little or dirty about us. We go in for morals and purity of life, and we mean to do our duty by the public without fear or favor. Your name is mentioned there in a manner that you won't quite like, and I think I am acting uncommon kind by you in showing it to you before we publish it." Phineas, who still held the slip in his hand, sat silent, thinking of the matter. He hated the man. He could not endure the feeling of being called Finn by him without showing his resentment. As regarded himself, he was thoroughly well inclined to kick Mr. Slide and his *Banner* into the street. But he was bound to think first of Lady Laura. Such a publication as this, which was now threatened, was the misfortune which the poor woman dreaded more than any other. He, personally, had certainly been faultless in the matter. He had never addressed a word of love to Mr. Kennedy's wife since the moment in which she had told him that she was engaged to marry the laird of Lough Linter. Were the letter to be published, he could answer it, he thought, in such a manner as to defend himself and her without damage to either. But on her behalf he was bound to prevent this publicity if it could be prevented—and he was bound also, for her sake, to allow himself to be called Finn by this most obnoxious editor. "In the ordinary course of things, Finn, it will come out to-morrow morning," said the obnoxious editor.

"Every word of it is untrue," said Phineas.

"You say that, of course."

"And I should at once declare myself willing to make such a statement on oath. It is a libel of the grossest kind, and of course there would be a prosecution. Both Lord Brentford and I would be driven to that."

"We should be quite indifferent. Mr. Kennedy would hold us harmless. We're straightforward. My showing it to you would prove that."

"What is it you want, Mr. Slide?"

"Want! You don't suppose we want any thing. If you think that the columns of the *People's Banner* are to be bought, you must have opinions respecting the press of the day which make me pity you as one groveling in the very dust. The daily press of London is pure and immaculate. That is, the morning papers are. Want, indeed! What do you think I want?"

"I have not the remotest idea."

"Purity of morals, Finn—punishment for the guilty—defense for the innocent—support for the weak—safety for the oppressed—and a rod of iron for the oppressors!"

"But this is a libel."

"It's very heavy on the old Earl, and upon you, and upon Lady Laura—isn't it?"

"It's a libel—as you know. You tell me that purity of morals can be supported by such a publication as this! Had you meant to go on with it, you would hardly have shown it to me."

"You're in the wrong box there, Finn. Now I'll tell you what we'll do—on behalf of what I

call real purity. We'll delay the publication if you'll undertake that the lady shall go back to her husband."

"The lady is not in my hands."

"She's under your influence. You were with her over at Dresden not much more than a month ago. She'd go sharp enough if you told her."

"You never made a greater mistake in your life."

"Say that you'll try."

"I certainly will not do so."

"Then it goes in to-morrow," said Mr. Quintus Slide, stretching out his hand and taking back the slip.

"What on earth is your object?"

"Morals! Morals! We shall be able to say that we've done our best to promote domestic virtue and secure forgiveness for an erring wife. You've no notion, Finn, in your mind of what will soon be the extent of the duties, privileges, and influences of the daily press—the daily morning press, that is; for I look on those little evening scraps as just so much paper and ink wasted. You won't interfere, then?"

"Yes, I will—if you'll give me time. Where is Mr. Kennedy?"

"What has that to do with it? Do you write over to Lady Laura and the old lord, and tell them that if she'll undertake to be at Lough Linter within a month this shall be suppressed. Will you do that?"

"Let me first see Mr. Kennedy."

Mr. Slide thought a while over that matter.

"Well," said he at last, "you can see Kennedy if you will. He came up to town four or five days ago, and he's staying at a hotel in Judd Street."

"A hotel in Judd Street?"

"Yes—Macpherson's, in Judd Street. I suppose he likes to keep among the Scotch. I don't think he ever goes out of the house, and he's waiting in London till this thing is published."

"I will go and see him," said Phineas.

"I shouldn't wonder if he murdered you—but that's between you and him."

"Just so."

"And I shall hear from you?"

"Yes," said Phineas, hesitating as he made the promise. "Yes, you shall hear from me."

"We've got our duty to do, and we mean to do it. If we see that we can induce the lady to go back to her husband, we shall abstain from publishing, and virtue will be its own reward. I needn't tell you that such a letter as that would sell a great many copies, Finn." Then, at last, Mr. Slide arose and departed.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### MACPHERSON'S HOTEL.

PHINEAS, when he was left alone, found himself greatly at a loss as to what he had better do. He had pledged himself to see Mr. Kennedy, and was not much afraid of encountering personal violence at the hands of that gentleman. But he could think of nothing which he could with advantage say to Mr. Kennedy. He knew that Lady Laura would not return to her husband. Much as she dreaded such exposure as

was now threatened, she would not return to Lough Linter to avoid even that. He could not hold out any such hope to Mr. Kennedy—and without doing so how could he stop the publication? He thought of getting an injunction from the Vice-Chancellor; but it was now Sunday, and he had understood that the publication would appear on the morrow, unless stopped by some note from himself. He thought of finding some attorney, and taking him to Mr. Kennedy; but he knew that Mr. Kennedy would be deterred by no attorney. Then he thought of Mr. Low. He would see Mr. Kennedy first, and then go to Mr. Low's house.

Judd Street runs into the New Road near the great stations of the Midland and Northern railways, and is a highly respectable street. But it can hardly be called fashionable, as is Piccadilly, or central, as is Charing Cross, or commercial, as is the neighborhood of St. Paul's. Men seeking the shelter of a hotel in Judd Street must probably prefer decent and respectable obscurity to other advantages. It was some such feeling, no doubt, joined to the fact that the landlord had originally come from the neighborhood of Lough Linter, which had taken Mr. Kennedy to Macpherson's Hotel. Phineas, when he called at about three o'clock on Sunday afternoon, was at once informed by Mrs. Macpherson that Mr. Kennedy was "nae doubt at home, but was nae willing to see folk on the Sabbath." Phineas pleaded the extreme necessity of his business, alleging that Mr. Kennedy himself would regard its nature as a sufficient justification for such Sabbath-breaking—and sent up his card. Then there came down a message to him. Could not Mr. Finn postpone his visit to the following morning? But Phineas declared that it could not be postponed. Circumstances, which he would explain to Mr. Kennedy, made it impossible. At last he was desired to walk up stairs, though Mrs. Macpherson, as she showed him the way, evidently thought that her house was profaned by such wickedness.

Macpherson, in preparing his house, had not run into that extravagance of architecture which has lately become so common in our hotels. It was simply an ordinary house, with the words "Macpherson's Hotel" painted on a semicircular board over the doorway. The front-parlor had been converted into a bar, and in the back-parlor the Macphersons lived. The staircase was narrow and dirty, and in the front drawing-room—with the chamber behind for his bedroom—Mr. Kennedy was installed. Mr. Macpherson probably did not expect any customers beyond those friendly Scots who came up to London from his own side of the Highlands. Mrs. Macpherson, as she opened the door, was silent and almost mysterious. Such a breach of the law might perhaps be justified by circumstances of which she knew nothing, but should receive no sanction from her which she could avoid. So she did not even whisper the name.

Mr. Kennedy, as Phineas entered, slowly rose from his chair, putting down the Bible which had been in his hands. He did not speak at once, but looked at his visitor over the spectacles which he wore. Phineas thought that he was even more haggard in appearance and aged than when they two had met hardly three months since at Lough Linter. There was no shaking

of hands, and hardly any pretense at greeting. Mr. Kennedy simply bowed his head, and allowed his visitor to begin the conversation.

"I should not have come to you on such a day as this, Mr. Kennedy—"

"It is a day very unfitted for the affairs of the world," said Mr. Kennedy.

"Had not the matter been most pressing in regard both to time and its own importance?"

"So the woman told me, and therefore I have consented to see you."

"You know a man of the name of—Slide, Mr. Kennedy?" Mr. Kennedy shook his head.

"You know the editor of the *People's Banner*?" Again he shook his head. "You have, at any rate, written a letter for publication to that newspaper."

"Need I consult you as to what I write?"

"But he—the editor—has consulted me."

"I can have nothing to do with that."

"This Mr. Slide, the editor of the *People's Banner*, has just been with me, having in his hand a printed letter from you, which—you will excuse me, Mr. Kennedy—is very libelous."

"I will bear the responsibility of that."

"But you would not wish to publish falsehood about your wife, or even about me."

"Falsehood, Sir! how dare you use that word to me? Is it false to say that she has left my house? Is it false to say that she is my wife, and can not desert me, as she has done, without breaking her vows, and disregarding the laws both of God and man? Am I false when I say that I gave her no cause? Am I false when I offer to take her back, let her faults be what they may have been? Am I false when I say that her father acts illegally in detaining her? False! False in your teeth! Falsehood is villainy, and it is not I that am the villain."

"You have joined my name in the accusation."

"Because you are her paramour. I know you now—viper that was warmed in my bosom! Will you look me in the face and tell me that, had it not been for you, she would not have strayed from me?" To this Phineas could make no answer. "Is it not true that when she went with me to the altar you had been her lover?"

"I was her lover no longer, when she once told me that she was to be your wife."

"Has she never spoken to you of love since? Did she not warn you from the house in her faint struggle after virtue? Did she not whistle you back again when she found the struggle too much for her? When I asked you to the house, she bade you not come. When I desired that you might never darken my eyes again, did she not seek you? With whom was she walking on the villa grounds by the river-banks when she resolved that she would leave all her duties and desert me? Will you dare to say that you were not then in her confidence? With whom was she talking when she had the effrontery to come and meet me at the house of the Prime Minister, which I was bound to attend? Have you not been with her this very winter in her foreign home?"

"Of course I have—and you sent her a message by me."

"I sent no message. I deny it. I refused to be an accomplice in your double guilt. I laid my command upon you that you should not visit my wife in my absence, and you disobeyed,

and you are an adulterer. Who are you that you are to come forever between me and my wife?"

"I never injured you in thought or deed. I come to you now because I have seen a printed letter which contains a gross libel upon myself."

"It is printed, then?" he asked, in an eager tone.

"It is printed; but it need not, therefore, be published. It is a libel, and should not be published. I shall be forced to seek redress at law. You can not hope to regain your wife by publishing false accusations against her."

"They are true. I can prove every word that I have written. She dare not come here and submit herself to the laws of her country. She is a renegade from the law, and you abet her in her sin. But it is not vengeance that I seek. Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord."

"It looks like vengeance, Mr. Kennedy."

"Is it for you to teach me how I shall bear myself in this time of my great trouble?" Then suddenly he changed, his voice falling from one of haughty defiance to a low, mean, bargaining whisper. "But I'll tell you what I'll do. If you will say that she shall come back again, I'll have it canceled, and pay all the expenses."

"I can not bring her back to you."

"She'll come if you tell her. If you'll let them understand that she must come, they'll give way. You can try it at any rate."

"I shall do nothing of the kind. Why should I ask her to submit herself to misery?"

"Misery! What misery? Why should she be miserable? Must a woman need be miserable because she lives with her husband? You hear me say that I will forgive every thing. Even she will not doubt me when I say so, because I have never lied to her. Let her come back to me, and she shall live in peace and quiet, and hear no word of reproach."

"I can have nothing to do with it, Mr. Kennedy."

"Then, Sir, you shall abide my wrath." With that he sprang quickly round, grasping at something which lay upon a shelf near him, and Phineas saw that he was armed with a pistol. Phineas, who had hitherto been seated, leaped to his legs; but the pistol in a moment was at his head, and the madman pulled at the trigger. But the mechanism of the instrument required that some bolt should be loosed before the hammer would fall upon the nipple, and the unhappy wretch for an instant fumbled over the work, so that Phineas, still facing his enemy, had time to leap backward toward the door. But Kennedy, though he was awkward, still succeeded in firing before our friend could leave the room. Phineas heard the thud of the bullet, and knew that it must have passed near his head. He was not struck, however; and the man, frightened at his own deed, abstained from the second shot, or loitered long enough in his remorse to enable his prey to escape. With three or four steps Phineas leaped down the stairs, and, finding the front-door closed, took shelter within Mrs. Macpherson's bar. "The man is mad," he said; "did you not hear the shot?" The woman was too frightened to reply, but stood trembling, holding Phineas by the arm. There was nobody in the house, she said, but she and the two lasses. "Nae doobt the laird's by ordinaire," she said

at last. She had known of the pistol, but had not dared to have it removed. She and Macpherson had only feared that he would hurt himself—and had at last agreed, as day after day passed without any injury from the weapon, to let the thing remain unnoticed. She had heard the shot, and had been sure that one of the two men above would have been killed.

Phineas was now in great doubt as to what duty was required of him. His first difficulty consisted in this—that his hat was still in Mr. Kennedy's room, and that Mrs. Macpherson altogether refused to go and fetch it. While they were still discussing this, and Phineas had not as yet resolved whether he would first get a policeman or go at once to Mr. Low, the bell from the room was rung furiously. "It's the laird," said Mrs. Macpherson, "and if naeboddy waits on him he'll surely be shooting aye of us." The two girls were now outside the bar shaking in their shoes, and evidently unwilling to face the danger. At last the door of the room above was opened, and our hero's hat was sent rolling down the stairs.

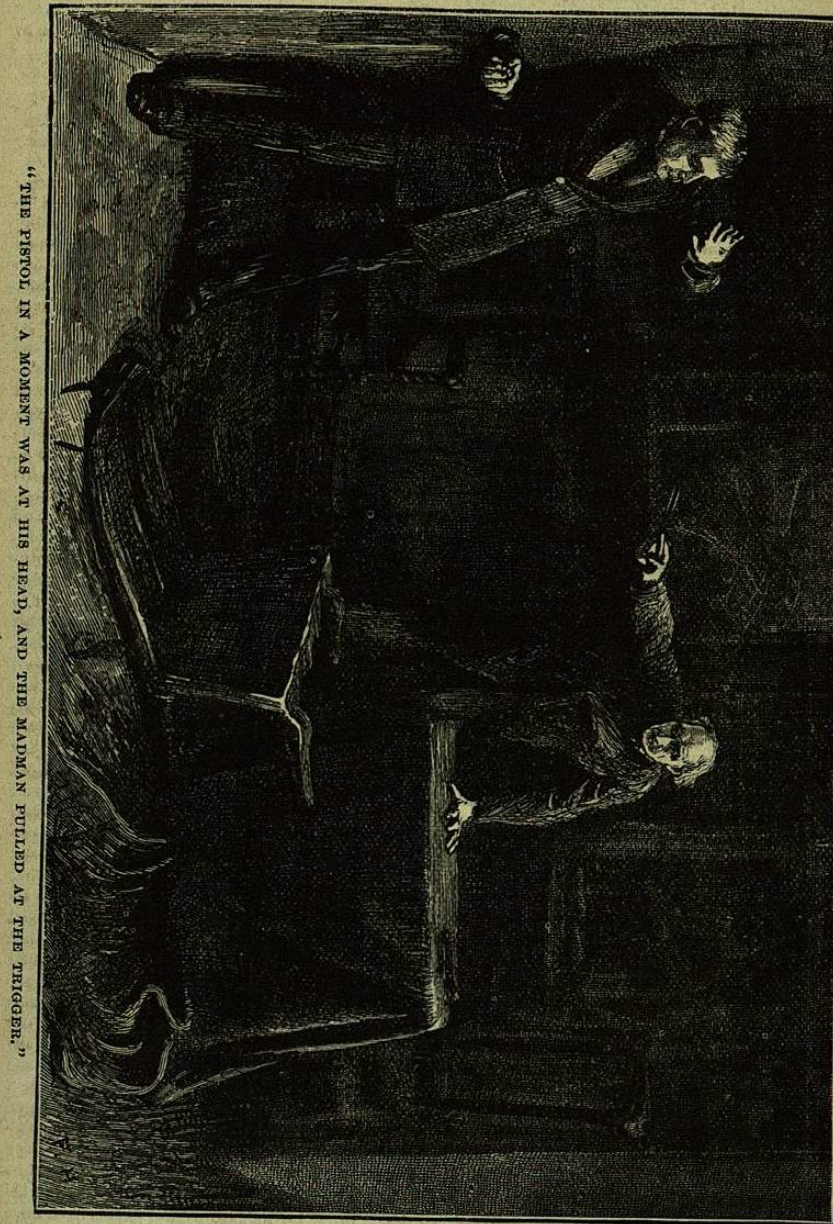
It was clear to Phineas that the man was so mad as to be not even aware of the act he had perpetrated. "He'll do nothing more with the pistol," he said, "unless he should attempt to destroy himself." At last it was determined that one of the girls should be sent to fetch Macpherson home from the Scotch church, and that no application should be made at once to the police. It seemed that the Macphersons knew the circumstances of their guest's family, and that there was a cousin of his in London who was the only one with whom he seemed to have any near connection. The thing that had occurred was to be told to this cousin, and Phineas left his address, so that if it should be thought necessary, he might be called upon to give his account of the affair. Then, in his perturbation of spirit, he asked for a glass of brandy, and having swallowed it, was about to take his leave. "The brandy will be saxeption, Sir," said Mrs. Macpherson, as she wiped the tears from her eyes.

Having paid for his refreshment, Phineas got into a cab, and had himself driven to Mr. Low's house. He had escaped from his peril, and now again it became his strongest object to stop the publication of the letter which Slide had shown him. But as he sat in the cab he could not hinder himself from shuddering at the danger which had been so near to him. He remembered his sensation as he first saw the glimmer of the barrel of the pistol, and then became aware of the man's first futile attempt, and afterward saw the flash and heard the hammer fall at the same moment. He had once stood up to be fired at in a duel, and had been struck by the ball. But nothing in that encounter had made him feel sick and faint through every muscle as he had felt just now. As he sat in the cab he was aware that but for the spirits he had swallowed he would be altogether overcome, and he doubted even now whether he would be able to tell his story to Mr. Low. Luckily perhaps for him, neither Mr. Low nor his wife were at home. They were out together, but were expected in between five and six. Phineas declared his purpose of waiting for them, and requested that Mr. Low might be asked to join him in the dining-room immediately on his return. In this way an hour was allow-

ed him, and he endeavored to compose himself. Still, even at the end of the hour, his heart was beating so violently that he could hardly control the motion of his own limbs. "Low, I have been shot at by a madman," he said, as soon as his friend entered the room. He had determined

"Yes, by Robert Kennedy, the man who was Chancellor of the Duchy—almost within a yard of my head." Then he sat down and burst out into a fit of convulsive laughter.

The story about the pistol was soon told, and Mr. Low was of opinion that Phineas should not



"THE PISTOL IN A MOMENT WAS AT HIS HEAD, AND THE MADMAN PULLED AT THE TRIGGER."

to be calm, and to speak much more of the document in the editor's hands than of the attempt which had been made on his own life; but he had been utterly unable to repress the exclamation.

"Shot at?"

have left the place without calling in policemen and giving an account to them of the transaction. "But I had something else on my mind," said Phineas, "which made it necessary that I should see you at once—something more important even than this madman's attack upon me. He has

written a most foul-mouthed attack upon his wife, which is already in print, and will, I fear, be published to-morrow morning." Then he told the story of the letter. "Slide, no doubt, will be at the *People's Banner* office to-night, and I can see him there. Perhaps when I tell him what has occurred, he will consent to drop the publication altogether."

But in this view of the matter Mr. Low did not agree with his visitor. He argued the case with a deliberation which to Phineas, in his present state of mind, was almost painful. If the whole story of what had occurred were told to Quintus Slide, that worthy protector of morals and caterer for the amusement of the public would, Mr. Low thought, at once publish the letter and give a statement of the occurrence at Macpherson's Hotel. There would be nothing to hinder him from so profitable a proceeding, as he would know that no one would stir on behalf of Lady Laura in the matter of the libel when the tragedy of Mr. Kennedy's madness should have been made known. The publication would be as safe as attractive. But if Phineas should abstain from going to him at all, the same calculation which had induced him to show the letter would induce him to postpone the publication, at any rate for another twenty-four hours. "He means to make capital out of his virtue; and he won't give that up for the sake of being a day in advance. In the mean time we will get an injunction from the Vice-Chancellor to stop the publication."

"Can we do that in one day?"

"I think we can. Chancery isn't what it used to be," said Mr. Low, with a sigh. "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll go this very moment to Pickering." Mr. Pickering at this time was one of the three Vice-Chancellors. "It isn't exactly the proper thing for counsel to call on a judge on a Sunday afternoon with the direct intention of influencing his judgment for the following morning; but this is a case in which a point may be strained. When such a paper as the *People's Banner* gets hold of a letter from a madman, which, if published, would destroy the happiness of a whole family, one shouldn't stick at a trifle. Pickering is just the man to take a common-sense view of the matter. You'll have to make an affidavit in the morning, and we can get the injunction served before two or three o'clock. Mr. Septimus Slope, or whatever his name is, won't dare to publish it after that. Of course, if it comes out to-morrow morning, we shall have been too late; but this will be our best chance." So Mr. Low got his hat and umbrella, and started for the Vice-Chancellor's house. "And I tell you what, Phineas—do you stay and dine here. You are so flurried by all this that you are not fit to go any where else."

"I am flurried."

"Of course you are. Never mind about dressing. Do you go up and tell Georgiana all about it—and have dinner put off half an hour. I must hunt Pickering up, if I don't find him at home." Then Phineas did go up stairs and told Georgiana—otherwise Mrs. Low—the whole story. Mrs. Low was deeply affected, declaring her opinion very strongly as to the horrible condition of things, when madmen could go about with pistols, and without any body to take care against them. But as to Lady Laura Kennedy, she

seemed to think that the poor husband had great cause of complaint, and that Lady Laura ought to be punished. Wives, she thought, should never leave their husbands on any pretext; and, as far as she had heard the story, there had been no pretext at all in the case. Her sympathies were clearly with the madman, though she was quite ready to acknowledge that any and every step should be taken which might be adverse to Mr. Quintus Slide.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

##### MADAME GOESLER IS SENT FOR.

WHEN the elder Mr. Maule had sufficiently recovered from the perturbation of mind and body into which he had been thrown by the ill-timed and ill-worded proposition of his son to enable him to resume the accustomed tenor of his life, he arrayed himself in his morning winter costume, and went forth in quest of a lady. So much was told some few chapters back, but the name of the lady was not then disclosed. Starting from Victoria Street, Westminster, he walked slowly across St. James's Park and the Green Park till he came out in Piccadilly, near the bottom of Park Lane. As he went up the Lane he looked at his boots, at his gloves, and at his trowsers, and saw that nothing was unduly soiled. The morning air was clear and frosty, and had enabled him to dispense with the costly comfort of a cab. Mr. Maule hated cabs in the morning—preferring never to move beyond the tether of his short daily constitutional walk. A cab for going out to dinner was a necessity; but his income would not stand two or three cabs a day. Consequently he never went north of Oxford Street, or east of the theatres, or beyond Eccleston Square toward the river. The regions of South Kensington and New Brompton were a trouble to him, as he found it impossible to lay down a limit in that direction which would not exclude him from things which he fain would not exclude. There are dinners given at South Kensington which such a man as Mr. Maule can not afford not to eat. In Park Lane he knocked at the door of a very small house—a house that might almost be called tiny by comparison of its dimensions with those around it, and then asked for Madame Goesler. Madame Goesler had that morning gone into the country. Mr. Maule, in his blindest manner, expressed some surprise, having understood that she had not long since returned from Harrington Hall. To this the servant assented, but went on to explain that she had been in town only a day or two when she was summoned down to Matching by a telegram. It was believed, the man said, that the Duke of Omnium was poorly. "Oh, indeed! I am sorry to hear that," said Mr. Maule, with a wry face. Then, with steps perhaps a little less careful, he walked back across the park to his club. On taking up the evening paper, he at once saw a paragraph stating that the Duke of Omnium's condition to-day was much the same as yesterday, but that he had passed a quiet night. That very distinguished but now aged physician, Sir Omicron Pie, was still staying at Matching Priory. "So old Omnium is going off the hooks at last," said Mr. Maule to a club acquaintance.

The club acquaintance was in Parliament, and looked at the matter from a strictly Parliamentary point of view. "Yes, indeed. It has given a deal of trouble."

Mr. Maule was not Parliamentary, and did not understand. "Why trouble—except to himself? He'll leave his Garter and strawberry leaves and all his acres behind him."

"What is Gresham to do about the Exchequer when he comes in? I don't know whom he's to send there. They talk of Bonteen, but Bonteen hasn't half weight enough. They'll offer it to Monk, but Monk'll never take office again."

"Ah, yes. Planty Pall was Chancellor of the Exchequer. I suppose he must give that up now?"

The Parliamentary acquaintance looked up at the unparliamentary man with that mingled disgust and pity which Parliamentary gentlemen and ladies always entertain for those who have not devoted their minds to the constitutional forms of the country. "The Chancellor of the Exchequer can't very well sit in the House of Lords, and Palliser can't very well help becoming Duke of Omnium. I don't know whether he can take the decimal coinage question with him, but I fear not. They don't like it at all in the City."

"I believe I'll go and play a rubber of whist," said Mr. Maule. He played his whist, and lost thirty points without showing the slightest displeasure, either by the tone of his voice or by any grimace of his countenance. And yet the money which passed from his hands was material to him. But he was great at such efforts as these, and he understood well the fluctuations of the whist-table. The half crowns which he had paid were only so much invested capital.

He dined at his club this evening, and joined tables with another acquaintance who was not Parliamentary. Mr. Parkinson Seymour was a man much of his own stamp, who cared not one straw as to any difficulty which the Prime Minister might feel in filling the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. There were men by dozens ready and willing, and no doubt able—or, at any rate, one as able as the other—to manage the taxes of the country. But the blue ribbon and the Lord-Lieutenancy of Barseshire were important things—which would now be in the gift of Mr. Daubeny; and Lady Glencora would at last be a duchess—with much effect on Society, either good or bad. And Planty Pall would be a duke, with very much less capability, as Mr. Parkinson Seymour thought, for filling that great office than that which the man had displayed who was now supposed to be dying at Matching. "He has been a fine old fellow," said Mr. Parkinson Seymour.

"Very much so. There ain't many of that stamp left."

"I don't know one," continued the gentleman, with enthusiasm. "They all go in for something now, just as Jones goes in for being a bank clerk. They are politicians or gamblers, or, by Heaven! tradesmen, as some of them are. The Earl of Tyvil and Lord Merthyr are in partnership together working their own mines—by the Lord! with a regular deed of partnership, just like two cheese-mongers. The Marquis of Maltonops has a share in a bitter-beer house at Burton. And the Duke of Discourt, who married old

Ballance's daughter, and is brother-in-law to young George Advance, retains his interest in the house in Lombard Street. I know it for a fact."

"Old Omnium was above that kind of thing," said Mr. Maule.

"Lord bless you—quite another sort of man. There is nothing left like it now. With a princely income, I don't suppose he ever put by a shilling in his life. I've heard it said that he couldn't afford to marry, living in the manner in which he chose to live. And he understood what dignity meant. None of them understand that now. Dukes are as common as dogs in the streets, and a marquis thinks no more of himself than a market-gardener. I'm very sorry the old Duke should go. The nephew may be very good at figures, but he isn't fit to fill his uncle's shoes. As for Lady Glencora, no doubt, as things go now, she's very popular, but she's more like a dairy-maid than a duchess, to my way of thinking."

There was not a club in London, and hardly a drawing-room, in which something was not said that day in consequence of the two bulletins which had appeared as to the condition of the old Duke—and in no club and in no drawing-room was a verdict given against the dying man. It was acknowledged every where that he had played his part in a noble and even in a princely manner, that he had used with a becoming grace the rich things that had been given him, and that he had deserved well of his country. And yet, perhaps, no man who had lived during the same period, or any portion of the period, had done less, or had devoted himself more entirely to the consumption of good things without the slightest idea of producing any thing in return! But he had looked like a duke, and known how to set a high price on his own presence.

To Mr. Maule the threatened demise of this great man was not without a peculiar interest. His acquaintance with Madame Goesler had not been of long standing, nor even as yet had it reached a close intimacy. During the last London season he had been introduced to her, and had dined twice at her house. He endeavored to make himself agreeable to her, and he flattered himself that he had succeeded. It may be said of him, generally, that he had the gift of making himself pleasant to women. When last she had parted from him with a smile, repeating the last few words of some good story which he had told her, the idea struck him that she, after all, might perhaps be the woman. He made his inquiries, and had learned that there was not a shadow of a doubt as to her wealth—or even to her power of disposing of that wealth as she pleased. So he wrote to her a pretty little note, in which he gave to her the history of that good story, how it originated with a certain cardinal, and might be found in certain memoirs—which did not, however, bear the best reputation in the world. Madame Goesler answered his note very graciously, thanking him for the reference, but declaring that the information given was already so sufficient that she need prosecute the inquiry no further. Mr. Maule smiled as he declared to himself that those memoirs would certainly be in Madame Goesler's hands before many days were over. Had his intimacy been a little more advanced he would have sent the volume to her. But he also learned that there was some ro-