

changed every five years. So Mr. Finn is the favorite again?"

"He is a friend whom I like. I may be allowed to have a friend, I suppose."

"A dozen, my dear; and all of them good-looking. Good-by, dear. Pray come to us. Don't stand off and make yourself disagreeable. We sha'n't be giving dinner-parties, but you can come whenever you please. Tell me at once; do you mean to be disagreeable?"

Then Madame Goesler was obliged to promise that she would not be more disagreeable than her nature had made her.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE WORLD BECOMES COLD.

A GREAT deal was said by very many persons in London as to the murderous attack which had been made by Mr. Kennedy on Phineas Finn in Judd Street, but the advice given by Mr. Slide in the *People's Banner* to the police was not taken. No public or official inquiry was made into the circumstance. Mr. Kennedy, under the care of his cousin, retreated to Scotland; and, as it seemed, there was to be an end of it. Throughout the month of March various smaller bolts were thrust both at Phineas and at the police by the editor of the above-named newspaper, but they seemed to fall without much effect.

No one was put in prison; nor was any one ever examined. But, nevertheless, these missiles had their effect. Every body knew that there had been a "row" between Mr. Kennedy and Phineas Finn, and that the "row" had been made about Mr. Kennedy's wife. Every body knew that a pistol had been fired at Finn's head; and a great many people thought that there had been some cause for the assault. It was alleged at one club that the present member for Tankerville had spent the greater part of the last two years at Dresden, and at another that he had called on Mr. Kennedy twice, once down in Scotland, and once at the hotel in Judd Street, with a view of inducing that gentleman to concede to a divorce. There was also a very romantic story afloat as to an engagement which had existed between Lady Laura and Phineas Finn before the lady had been induced by her father to marry the richer suitor. Various details were given in corroboration of these stories. Was it not known that the Earl had purchased the submission of Phineas Finn by a seat for his borough of Loughton? Was it not known that Lord Chiltem, the brother of Lady Laura, had fought a duel with Phineas Finn? Was it not known that Mr. Kennedy himself had been, as it were, coerced into quiescence by the singular fact that he had been saved from garroters in the street by the opportune interference of Phineas Finn? It was even suggested that the scene with the garroters had been cunningly planned by Phineas Finn, that he might in this way be able to restrain the anger of the husband of the lady whom he loved. All these stories were very pretty; but, as the reader, it is hoped, knows, they were all untrue. Phineas had made but one short visit to Dresden in his life. Lady Laura had been engaged to Mr. Kennedy before Phineas had ever spoken to her of his love. The

duel with Lord Chiltem had been about another lady, and the seat at Loughton had been conferred upon Phineas chiefly on account of his prowess in extricating Mr. Kennedy from the garroters—respecting which circumstance it may be said that as the meeting in the street was fortuitous, the reward was greater than the occasion seemed to require.

While all these things were being said Phineas became something of a hero. A man who is supposed to have caused a disturbance between two married people, in a certain rank of life, does generally receive a certain meed of admiration. A man who was asked out to dinner twice a week before such rumors were afloat would probably receive double that number of invitations afterward. And then to have been shot at by a madman in a room, and to be the subject of the venom of a *People's Banner*, tends also to Fame. Other ladies besides Madame Goesler were anxious to have the story from the very lips of the hero, and in this way Phineas Finn became a conspicuous man. But Fame begets envy, and there were some who said that the member for Tankerville had injured his prospects with his party. It may be very well to give a dinner to a man who has caused the wife of a late Cabinet Minister to quarrel with her husband; but it can hardly be expected that he should be placed in office by the head of the party to which that late Cabinet Minister belonged. "I never saw such a fellow as you are," said Barrington Erle to him. "You are always getting into a mess."

"Nobody ought to know better than you how false all these calumnies are." This he said because Erle and Lady Laura were cousins. "Of course they are calumnies; but you had heard them before, and what made you go poking your head into the lion's mouth?" Mr. Bonteen was very much harder upon him than was Barrington Erle. "I never liked him from the first, and always knew he would not run straight. No Irishman ever does." This was said to Viscount Fawn, a distinguished member of the Liberal party, who had but lately been married, and was known to have very strict notions as to the bonds of matrimony. He had been heard to say that any man who had interfered with the happiness of a married couple should be held to have committed a capital offense.

"I don't know whether the story about Lady Laura is true."

"Of course it's true. All the world knows it to be true. He was always there; at Lough Linter, and at Saulsby, and in Portman Square after she had left her husband. The mischief he has done is incalculable. There's a Conservative sitting in poor Kennedy's seat for Dunross-shire."

"That might have been the case any way."

"Nothing could have turned Kennedy out. Don't you remember how he behaved about the Irish land question? I hate such fellows."

"If I thought it true about Lady Laura—"

Lord Fawn was again about to express his opinion in regard to matrimony, but Mr. Bonteen was too impetuous to listen to him. "It's out of the question that he should come in again. At any rate, if he does, I won't. I shall tell Gresham so very plainly. The women will do all that they can for him. They always do for a fellow of that kind."

Phineas heard of it—not exactly by any repetition of the words that were spoken, but by chance phrases, and from the looks of men. Lord Cantrip, who was his best friend among those who were certain to hold high office in a Liberal Government, did not talk to him cheerily—did not speak as though he, Phineas, would, as a matter of course, have some place assigned to him. And he thought that Mr. Gresham was hardly as cordial to him as he might be when they met in the closer intercourse of the House. There was always a word or two spoken, and sometimes a shaking of hands. He had no right to complain. But yet he knew that something was wanting. We can generally read a man's purpose toward us in his manner, if his purposes are of much moment to us.

Phineas had written to Lady Laura, giving her an account of the occurrence in Judd Street on the 1st of March, and had received from her a short answer by return of post. It contained hardly more than a thanksgiving that his life had not been sacrificed, and in a day or two she had written again, letting him know that she had determined to consult her father. Then on the last day of the month he received the following letter:

"DRESDEN, March 27, 18—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—At last we have resolved that we will go back to England—almost at once. Things have gone so rapidly that I hardly know how to explain them all, but that is papa's resolution. His lawyer, Mr. Forster, tells him that it will be best, and goes so far as to say that it is imperative on my behalf that some steps should be taken to put an end to the present state of things. I will not scruple to tell you that he is actuated chiefly by considerations as to money. It is astonishing to me that a man who has all his life been so liberal should now in his old age think so much about it. It is, however, in no degree for himself. It is all for me. He can not bear to think that my position should be withheld from me by Mr. Kennedy while I have done nothing wrong. I was obliged to show him your letter, and what you said about the control of money took hold of his mind at once. He thinks that if my unfortunate husband be insane, there can be no difficulty in my obtaining a separation on terms which would oblige him or his friends to restore this horrid money.

"Of course I could stay if I chose. Papa would not refuse to find a home for me here. But I do agree with Mr. Forster that something should be done to stop the tongues of ill-conditioned people. The idea of having my name dragged through the newspapers is dreadful to me; but if this must be done one way or the other, it will be better that it should be done with truth. There is nothing that I need fear—as you know so well.

"I can not look forward to happiness any where. If the question of separation were once settled, I do not know whether I would not prefer returning here to remaining in London. Papa has got tired of the place, and wants, he says, to see Saulsby once again before he dies. What can I say in answer to this, but that I will go? We have sent to have the house in Portman Square got ready for us, and I suppose we shall be there about the 15th of next month.

Papa has instructed Mr. Forster to tell Mr. Kennedy's lawyer that we are coming, and he is to find out, if he can, whether any interference in the management of the property has been as yet made by the family. Perhaps I ought to tell you that Mr. Forster has expressed surprise that you did not call on the police when the shot was fired. Of course I can understand it all. God bless you.

"Your affectionate friend, L. K."

Phineas was obliged to console himself by reflecting that if she understood him, of course that was every thing. His first and great duty in the matter had been to her. If in performing that duty he had sacrificed himself, he must bear his undeserved punishment like a man. That he was to be punished he began to perceive too clearly. The conviction that Mr. Daubeny must recede from the Treasury Bench after the coming debate became every day stronger, and within the little inner circles of the Liberal party the usual discussions were made as to the Ministry which Mr. Gresham would, as a matter of course, be called upon to form. But in these discussions Phineas Finn did not find himself taking an assured and comfortable part. Laurence Fitzgibbon, his countryman—who in the way of work had never been worth his salt—was eager, happy, and without a doubt. Others of the old stagers, men who had been going in and out ever since they had been able to get seats in Parliament, stood about in clubs, and in lobbies and chambers of the House, with all that busy, magpie air which is worn only by those who have high hopes of good things to come speedily. Lord Mount Thistle was more sublime and ponderous than ever, though they who best understood the party declared that he would never again be invited to undergo the cares of office. His lordship was one of those terrible political burdens, engendered originally by private friendship or family considerations, which one Minister leaves to another. Sir Gregory Grogan, the great Whig lawyer, showed plainly by his manner that he thought himself at last secure of reaching the reward for which he had been struggling all his life; for it was understood by all men who knew any thing that Lord Weazeling was not to be asked again to sit on the Wool-sack. No better advocate or effective politician ever lived; but it was supposed that he lacked dignity for the office of first judge in the land. That most of the old lot would come back was a matter of course.

There would be the Duke—the Duke of St. Bungay, who had for years past been "the Duke" when Liberal administrations were discussed, and the same Duke whom we know so well; and Sir Harry Coldfoot, and Legge Wilson, Lord Cantrip, Lord Thrift, and the rest of them. There would, of course, be Lord Fawn, Mr. Ratler, and Mr. Erle. The thing was so thoroughly settled that one was almost tempted to think that the Prime Minister himself would have no voice in the selections to be made. As to one office, it was acknowledged on all sides that a doubt existed which would at last be found to be very injurious—as some thought, altogether crushing—to the party. To whom would Mr. Gresham intrust the financial affairs of the country? Who would be the new Chancellor of the

Exchequer? There were not a few who inferred that Mr. Bonteen would be promoted to that high office. During the last two years he had devoted himself to decimal coinage with a zeal only second to that displayed by Plantagenet Palliser, and was accustomed to say of himself that he had almost perished under his exertions. It was supposed that he would have the support of the present Duke of Omnium—and that Mr. Gresham, who disliked the man, would be coerced by the fact that there was no other competitor. That Mr. Bonteen should go into the Cabinet would be gall and wormwood to many brother Liberals; but gall and wormwood such as this have to be swallowed. The rising in life of our familiar friends is, perhaps, the bitterest morsel of the bitter bread which we are called upon to eat in life. But we do eat it; and after a while it becomes food to us—when we find ourselves able to use, on behalf, perhaps, of our children, the influence of those whom we had once hoped to leave behind in the race of life. When a man suddenly shoots up into power, few suffer from it very acutely. The rise of a Pitt can have caused no heart-burning. But Mr. Bonteen had been a hack among the hacks; had filled the usual half dozen places; had been a Junior Lord, a Vice-President, a Deputy Controller, a Chief Commissioner, and a Joint Secretary. His hopes had been raised or abased among the places of £1000, £1200, or £1500 a year. He had hitherto culminated at £2000, and had been supposed with diligence to have worked himself up to the top of the ladder, as far as the ladder was accessible to him. And now he was spoken of in connection with one of the highest offices of the State! Of course this created much uneasiness, and gave rise to many prophecies of failure. But in the midst of it all no office was assigned to Phineas Finn; and there was a general feeling, not expressed, but understood, that his affair with Mr. Kennedy stood in his way.

Quintus Slide had undertaken to crush him! Could it be possible that so mean a man should be able to make good so monstrous a threat? The man was very mean, and the threat had been absurd as well as monstrous; and yet it seemed that it might be realized. Phineas was too proud to ask questions, even of Barrington Erle, but he felt that he was being "left out in the cold," because the editor of the *People's Banner* had said that no Government could employ him; and at this moment, on the very morning of the day which was to usher in the great debate which was to be so fatal to Mr. Daubeny and his Church Reform, another thunder-bolt was hurled. The "we" of the *People's Banner* had learned that the very painful matter to which they had been compelled by a sense of duty to call the public attention, in reference to the late member for Dunross-shire and the present member for Tankerville, would be brought before one of the tribunals of the country, in reference to the matrimonial differences between Mr. Kennedy and his wife. It would be in the remembrance of their readers that the unfortunate gentleman had been provoked to fire a pistol at the head of the member for Tankerville—a circumstance which, though publicly known, had never been brought under the notice of the police. There was reason to hope that the mystery might

now be cleared up, and that the ends of justice would demand that a certain document should be produced which they—the "we"—had been vexatiously restrained from giving to their readers, although it had been most carefully prepared for publication in the columns of the *People's Banner*. Then the thunder-bolt went on to say that there was evidently a great move among the members of the so-called Liberal party, who seemed to think that it was only necessary that they should open their mouths wide enough in order that the sweets of office should fall into them. The "we" were quite of a different opinion. The "we" believed that no Minister for many a long day had been so firmly fixed on the Treasury Bench as was Mr. Daubeny at the present moment. But this at any rate might be inferred—that should Mr. Gresham, by any unhappy combination of circumstances, be called upon to form a Ministry, it would be quite impossible for him to include within it the name of the member for Tankerville. This was the second great thunder-bolt that fell—and so did the work of crushing our poor friend proceed.

There was great injustice in all this—at least so Phineas thought—injustice not only from the hands of Mr. Slide, who was unjust as a matter of course, but also from those who ought to have been his staunch friends. He had been enticed over to England almost with a promise of office, and he was sure that he had done nothing which deserved punishment, or even censure. He could not condescend to complain—nor, indeed, as yet, could he say that there was ground for complaint. Nothing had been done to him. Not a word had been spoken—except those lying words in the newspapers, which he was too proud to notice. On one matter, however, he was determined to be firm. When Barrington Erle had absolutely insisted that he should vote upon the Church Bill in opposition to all that he had said upon the subject at Tankerville, he had stipulated that he should have an opportunity in the great debate which would certainly take place of explaining his conduct—or, in other words, that the privilege of making a speech should be accorded to him at a time in which very many members would no doubt attempt to speak, and would attempt in vain. It may be imagined—probably still is imagined by a great many—that no such pledge as this could be given, that the right to speak depends simply on the Speaker's eye, and that energy at the moment in attracting attention would alone be of account to an eager orator. But Phineas knew the House too well to trust to such a theory. That some preliminary assistance would be given to the traveling of the Speaker's eye in so important a debate he knew very well; and he knew also that a promise from Barrington Erle or from Mr. Ratler would be his best security. "That will be all right, of course," said Barrington Erle to him on the evening of the day before the debate; "we have quite counted on your speaking." There had been a certain sullenness in the tone with which Phineas had asked his question, as though he had been laboring under a grievance, and he felt himself rebuked by the cordiality of the reply. "I suppose we had better fix it for Monday or Tuesday," said the other. "We hope to get it over by Tuesday, but there is no knowing. At any rate you sha'n't be thrown over." It was almost

on his tongue—the entire story of his grievance, the expression of his feeling that he was not being treated as one of the chosen; but he restrained himself. He liked Barrington Erle well enough, but not so well as to justify him in asking for sympathy.

Nor had it been his wont in any of the troubles of his life to ask for sympathy from a man. He had always gone to some woman—in old days to Lady Laura, or to Violet Effingham, or to Madame Goesler. By them he could endure to be petted, praised, or, upon occasion, even pitied. But pity or praise from any man had been distasteful to him. On the morning of the 1st of April he again went to Park Lane, not with any formed plan of telling the lady of his wrongs, but driven by a feeling that he wanted comfort, which might perhaps be found there. The lady received him very kindly, and at once inquired as to the great political tournament which was about to be commenced. "Yes, we begin to-day," said Phineas. "Mr. Daubeny will speak, I should say, from half past four till seven. I wonder you don't go and hear him."

"What a pleasure! To hear a man speak for two hours and a half about the Church of England. One must be very hard driven for amusement! Will you tell me that you like it?"

"I like to hear a good speech."

"But you have the excitement before you of making a good speech in answer. You are in the fight. A poor woman shut up in a cage feels there more acutely than any where else how insignificant a position she fills in the world."

"You don't advocate the rights of women, Madame Goesler."

"Oh no. Knowing our inferiority, I submit without a grumble; but I am not sure that I care to go and listen to the squabbles of my masters. You may arrange it all among you, and I will accept what you do, whether it will be good or bad—as I must; but I can not take so much interest in the proceeding as to spend my time in listening where I can not speak, and in looking when I can not be seen. You will speak?"

"Yes, I think so."

"I shall read your speech, which is more than I shall do for most of the others. And when it is all over, will your turn come?"

"Not mine individually, Madame Goesler."

"But it will be yours individually; will it not?" she asked, with energy. Then gradually, with half-pronounced sentences, he explained to her that even in the event of the formation of a Liberal Government, he did not expect that any place would be offered to him. "And why not? We have been all speaking of it as a certainty."

He longed to inquire who were the all of whom she spoke, but he could not do it without an egotism which would be distasteful to him. "I can hardly tell; but I don't think I shall be asked to join them."

"You would wish it?"

"Yes; talking to you, I do not see why I should hesitate to say so."

"Talking to me, why should you hesitate to say any thing about yourself that is true? I can hold my tongue. I do not gossip about my friends. Whose doing is it?"

"I do not know that it is any man's doing."

"But it must be. Every body said that you

were to be one of them if you could get the other people out. Is it Mr. Bonteen?"

"Likely enough. Not that I know any thing of the kind; but as I hate him from the bottom of my heart, it is natural to suppose that he has the same feeling in regard to me."

"I agree with you there."

"But I don't know that it comes from any feeling of that kind."

"What does it come from?"

"You have heard all the calumny about Lady Laura Kennedy."

"You do not mean to say that a story such as that has affected your position?"

"I fancy it has. But you must not suppose, Madame Goesler, that I mean to complain. A man must take these things as they come. No one has received more kindness from friends than I have, and few perhaps more favors from fortune. All this about Mr. Kennedy has been unlucky—but it can not be helped."

"Do you mean to say that the morals of your party will be offended?" said Madame Goesler, almost laughing.

"Lord Fawn, you know, is very particular. In sober earnest, one can not tell how these things operate; but they do operate gradually. One's friends are sometimes very glad of an excuse for not befriending one."

"Lady Laura is coming home?"

"Yes."

"That will put an end to it."

"There is nothing to put an end to except the foul-mouthed malice of a lying newspaper. Nobody believes any thing against Lady Laura."

"I'm not so sure of that. I believe nothing against her."

"I'm sure you do not, Madame Goesler. Nor do I think that any body does. It is too absurd for belief from beginning to end. Good-by. Perhaps I shall see her when the debate is over."

"Of course you will. Good-by, and success to your oratory." Then Madame Goesler resolved that she would say a few judicious words to her friend, the Duchess, respecting Phineas Finn.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE TWO GLADIATORS.

THE great debate was commenced with all the solemnities which are customary on such occasions, and which make men think for the day that no moment of greater excitement has ever blessed or cursed the country. Upon the present occasion London was full of clergymen. The specially clerical clubs—the Oxford and Cambridge, the Old University, and the Athenaeum—were black with them. The bishops and deans, as usual, were pleasant in their manner and happy-looking, in spite of adverse circumstances. When one sees a bishop in the hours of the distress of the Church, one always thinks of the just and firm man who will stand fearless while the ruins of the world are falling about his ears. But the parsons from the country were a sorry sight to see. They were in earnest with all their hearts, and did believe—not that the crack of doom was coming, which they could have borne with equanimity if convinced that their influence

would last to the end—but that the Evil One was to be made welcome upon the earth by Act of Parliament. It is out of nature that any man should think it good that his own order should be repressed, curtailed, and deprived of its power. If we go among the cab-drivers or letter-carriers, among butlers or gamekeepers, among tailors or butchers, among farmers or graziers, among doctors or attorneys, we shall find in each set of men a conviction that the welfare of the community depends upon the firmness with which they—especially they—hold their own. This is so manifestly true with the Bar that no barrister in practice scruples to avow that barristers in practice are the salt of the earth. The personal confidence of a judge in his own position is beautiful, being salutary to the country, though not unfrequently damaging to the character of the man. But if this be so with men who are conscious of no higher influence than that exercised over the bodies and minds of their fellow-creatures, how much stronger must be the feeling when the influence affects the soul! To the outsider, or layman, who simply uses a cab, or receives a letter, or goes to law, or has to be tried, these pretensions are ridiculous or annoying, according to the ascendancy of the pretender at the moment. But as the clerical pretensions are more exacting than all others, being put forward with an assertion that no answer is possible without breach of duty and sin, so are they more galling. The fight has been going on since the idea of a mitre first entered the heart of a priest—since dominion in this world has found itself capable of sustentation by the exercise of fear as to the world to come. We do believe—the majority among us does so—that if we live and die in sin we shall after some fashion come to great punishment, and we believe also that by having pastors among us, who shall be men of God, we may best aid ourselves and our children in avoiding this bitter end. But then the pastors and men of God can only be human—can not be altogether men of God; and so they have oppressed us and burned us and tortured us, and hence come to love palaces and fine linen and purple, and, alas! sometimes mere luxury and idleness. The torturing and the burning, as also, to speak truth, the luxury and the idleness, have among us been already conquered, but the idea of ascendancy remains. What is a thoughtful man to do who acknowledges the danger of his soul, but can not swallow his parson whole, simply because he has been sent to him from some source in which he has no special confidence, perhaps by some distant lord, perhaps by a Lord Chancellor whose political friend has had a son with a tutor? What is he to do when, in spite of some fine linen and purple left among us, the provision for the man of God in his parish or district is so poor that no man of God fitted to teach him will come and take it? In no spirit of animosity to religion he begins to tell himself that Church and State together was a monkish combination, fit perhaps for monkish days, but no longer having fitness, and not much longer capable of existence in this country. But to the parson himself—to the honest, hard-working, conscientious priest who does in his heart of hearts believe that no diminution in the general influence of his order can be made without ruin to the souls of men—this opinion, when it becomes dominant, is as

though the world were in truth breaking to pieces over his head. The world has been broken to pieces in the same way often; but extreme Chaos does not come. The cabman and the letter-carrier always expect that Chaos will very nearly come when they are disturbed. The barristers are sure of Chaos when the sanctity of Benches is in question. What utter Chaos would be promised to us could any one with impunity contemn the majesty of the House of Commons! But of all these Chaoses there can be no Chaos equal to that which in the mind of a zealous Oxford-bred constitutional country parson must attend that annihilation of his special condition which will be produced by the disestablishment of the Church. Of all good fellows he is the best good fellow. He is genial, hospitable, well-educated, and always has either a pretty wife or pretty daughters. But he has so extreme a belief in himself that he can not endure to be told that absolute Chaos will not come at once if he be disturbed. And now disturbances—ay, and utter dislocation and ruin—were to come from the hands of a friend! Was it wonderful that parsons should be seen about Westminster in flocks with “Et tu, Brute!” written on their faces as plainly as the law on the brows of a Pharisee?

The Speaker had been harassed for orders. The powers and prowess of every individual member had been put to the test. The galleries were crowded. Ladies' places had been balloted for with desperate enthusiasm, in spite of the sarcasm against the House which Madame Goesler had expressed. Two royal princes and a royal duke were accommodated within the House in an irregular manner. Peers swarmed in the passages, and were too happy to find standing-room. Bishops jostled against lay barons with no other preference than that afforded to them by their broader shoulders. Men, and especially clergymen, came to the galleries loaded with sandwiches and flasks, prepared to hear all there was to be heard should the debate last from 4 P.M. to the same hour on the following morning. At two in the afternoon the entrances to the House were barred, and men of all ranks—deans, prebends, peers' sons, and baronets—stood there patiently waiting till some powerful nobleman should let them through. The very ventilating chambers under the House were filled with courteous listeners, who had all pledged themselves that under no possible provocation would they even cough during the debate.

A few minutes after four, in a House from which hardly more than a dozen members were absent, Mr. Daubeny took his seat with that air of affected indifference to things around him which is peculiar to him. He entered slowly, amidst cheers from his side of the House, which no doubt were loud in proportion to the dismay of the cheerers as to the matter in hand. Gentlemen lacking substantial sympathy with their leader found it to be comfortable to deceive themselves, and raise their hearts at the same time, by the easy enthusiasm of noise. Mr. Daubeny having sat down and covered his head, just raised his hat from his brows, and then tried to look as though he were no more than any other gentleman present. But the peculiar consciousness of the man displayed itself even in his constrained absence of motion. You could see that he felt himself to be the beheld of all be-

holders, and that he enjoyed the position—with some slight inward trepidation lest the effect to be made should not equal the greatness of the occasion. Immediately after him Mr. Gresham bustled up the centre of the House amidst a roar of good-humored welcome. We have had many Ministers who have been personally dearer to their individual adherents in the House than the present leader of the Opposition and late Premier, but none, perhaps, who has been more generally respected by his party for earnestness and sincerity. On the present occasion there was a fierceness, almost a ferocity, in his very countenance, to the fire of which friends and enemies were equally anxious to add fuel—the friends in order that so might these recreant Tories be more thoroughly annihilated, and the enemies that their enemy's indiscretion might act back upon himself to his confusion. For, indeed, it never could be denied that, as a Prime Minister, Mr. Gresham could be very indiscreet.

A certain small amount of ordinary business was done, to the disgust of expectant strangers, which was as trivial as possible in its nature—so arranged, apparently, that the importance of what was to follow might be enhanced by the force of contrast. And to make the dismay of the novice stranger more thorough, questions were asked and answers were given in so low a voice, and Mr. Speaker uttered a word or two in so quick and shambling a fashion, that he, the novice, began to fear that no word of the debate would reach him up there in his crowded back seat. All this, however, occupied but a few minutes, and at twenty minutes past four Mr. Daubeny was on his legs. Then the novice stranger found that though he could not see Mr. Daubeny without the aid of an opera-glass, he could hear every word that fell from his lips.

Mr. Daubeny began by regretting the hardness of his position, in that he must, with what thoroughness he might be able to achieve, apply himself to two great subjects, whereas the right honorable gentleman opposite had already declared, with all the formality which could be made to attach itself to a combined meeting of peers and commoners, that he would confine himself strictly to one. The subject selected by the right honorable gentleman opposite on the present occasion was not the question of Church Reform. The right honorable gentleman had pledged himself with an almost sacred enthusiasm to ignore that subject altogether. No doubt it was the question before the House, and he himself—the present speaker—must unfortunately discuss it at some length. The right honorable gentleman opposite would not, on this great occasion, trouble himself with anything of so little moment. And it might be presumed that the political followers of the right honorable gentleman would be equally reticent, as they were understood to have accepted his tactics without a dissentient voice. He, Mr. Daubeny, was the last man in England to deny the importance of the question which the right honorable gentleman would select for discussions in preference to that of the condition of the Church. That question was a very simple one, and might be put to the House in a very few words. Coming from the mouth of the right honorable gentleman, the proposition would probably be made in this form: “That this House does think that I ought to be

Prime Minister now, and as long as I may possess a seat in this House.” It was impossible to deny the importance of that question; but perhaps he, Mr. Daubeny, might be justified in demurring to the preference given to it over every other matter, let that matter be of what importance it might be to the material welfare of the country.

He made his point well; but he made it too often. And an attack of that kind, personal and savage in its nature, loses its effect when it is evident that the words have been prepared. A good deal may be done in dispute by calling a man an ass or a knave—but the resolve to use the words should have been made only at the moment, and they should come hot from the heart. There was much neatness and some acuteness in Mr. Daubeny's satire, but there was no heat, and it was prolix. It had, however, the effect of irritating Mr. Gresham—as was evident from the manner in which he moved his hat and shuffled his feet.

A man destined to sit conspicuously on our Treasury Bench, or on the seat opposite to it, should ask the gods for a thick skin as a first gift. The need of this in our national assembly is greater than elsewhere, because the differences between the men opposed to each other are smaller. When two foes meet together in the same chamber, one of whom advocates the personal government of an individual ruler, and the other that form of State which has come to be called a Red Republic, they deal, no doubt, weighty blows of oratory at each other, but blows which never hurt at the moment. They may cut each other's throats if they can find an opportunity; but they do not bite each other like dogs over a bone. But when opponents are almost in accord, as is always the case with our Parliamentary gladiators, they are ever striving to give maddening little wounds through the joints of the harness. What is there with us to create the divergence necessary for debate but the pride of personal skill in the encounter? Who desires among us to put down the Queen, or to repudiate the National Debt, or to destroy religious worship, or even to disturb the ranks of society? When some small measure of reform has thoroughly recommended itself to the country—so thoroughly that all men know that the country will have it—then the question arises whether its details shall be arranged by the political party which calls itself Liberal, or by that which is termed Conservative. The men are so near to each other in all their convictions and theories of life that nothing is left to them but personal competition for the doing of the thing that is to be done. It is the same in religion. The apostle of Christianity and the infidel can meet without a chance of a quarrel; but it is never safe to bring together two men who differ about a saint or a surplice.

Mr. Daubeny, having thus attacked and wounded his enemy, rushed boldly into the question of Church Reform, taking no little pride to himself and to his party that so great a blessing should be bestowed upon the country from so unexpected a source. “See what we Conservatives can do. In fact, we will conserve nothing when we find that you do not desire to have it conserved any longer. ‘Quo nimium reris Graiâ pandetur ab arbe.’” It was exactly the reverse of the complaint which Mr. Gresham was about to

make. On the subject of the Church itself he was rather misty, but very profound. He went into the question of very early Churches, indeed, and spoke of the misappropriation of endowments in the time of Eli. The establishment of the Levites had been, no doubt, complete; but changes had been effected as circumstances required. He was presumed to have alluded to the order of Melchisedec, but he abstained from any mention of the name. He roamed very wide, and gave many of his hearers an idea that his erudition had carried him into regions in which it was impossible to follow him. The gist of his argument was to show that audacity in Reform was the very backbone of Conservatism. By a clearly pronounced disunion of Church and State the theocracy of Thomas à Becket would be restored, and the people of England would soon again become the faithful flocks of faithful shepherds. By taking away the endowments from the parishes, and giving them back in some complicated way to the country, the parishes would be better able than ever to support their clergymen. Bishops would be bishops indeed, when they were no longer the creatures of a Minister's breath. As to the deans not seeing a clear way to satisfy aspirants for future vacancies in the deaneries, he became more than usually vague, but seemed to imply that the bill which was now, with the leave of the House, to be read a second time contained no clause forbidding the appointment of deans, though the special stipend of the office must be matter of consideration with the new Church Synod.

The details of this part of his speech were felt to be dull by the strangers. As long as he would abuse Mr. Gresham men could listen with pleasure, and could keep their attention fixed while he referred to the general conservatism of the party which he had the honor of leading. There was a raciness in the promise of so much Church destruction from the chosen leader of the Church party, which was assisted by a conviction in the minds of most men that it was impossible for unfortunate Conservatives to refuse to follow this leader, let him lead where he might. There was a gratification in feeling that the country party was bound to follow, even should he take them into the very bowels of a mountain, as the pied piper did the children of Hamelin; and this made listening pleasant. But when Mr. Daubeny stated the effect of his different clauses, explaining what was to be taken and what left—with a fervent assurance that what was to be left would, under the altered circumstances, go much further than the whole had gone before—then the audience became weary, and began to think that it was time that some other gentleman should be upon his legs. But at the end of the Minister's speech there was another touch of invective which went far to redeem him. He returned to that personal question to which his adversary had undertaken to confine himself, and expressed a holy horror at the political doctrine which was implied. He, during a prolonged Parliamentary experience, had encountered much factious opposition. He would even acknowledge that he had seen it exercised on both sides of the House, though he had always striven to keep himself free from its baneful influence. But never till now had he known a statesman proclaim his intention of depending upon faction, and upon faction alone, for the

result which he desired to achieve. Let the right honorable gentleman raise a contest on either the principles or the details of the measure, and he would be quite content to abide the decision of the House; but he should regard such a raid as that threatened against him and his friends by the right honorable gentleman as unconstitutional, revolutionary, and tyrannical. He felt sure that an opposition so based, and so maintained, even if it be enabled by the heated feelings of the moment to obtain an unfortunate success in the House, would not be encouraged by the sympathy and support of the country at large. By these last words he was understood to signify that should he be beaten on the second reading, not in reference to the merits of the bill, but simply on the issue as proposed by Mr. Gresham, he would again dissolve the House before he would resign. Now it was very well understood that there were Liberal members in the House who would prefer even the success of Mr. Daubeny to a speedy re-appearance before their constituents.

Mr. Daubeny spoke till nearly eight, and it was surmised at the time that he had craftily arranged his oratory so as to embarrass his opponent. The House had met at four, and was to sit continuously till it was adjourned for the night. When this is the case, gentlemen who speak about eight o'clock are too frequently obliged to address themselves to empty benches. On the present occasion it was Mr. Gresham's intention to follow his opponent at once, instead of waiting, as is usual with a leader of his party, to the close of the debate. It was understood that Mr. Gresham would follow Mr. Daubeny, with the object of making a distinct charge against Ministers, so that the vote on this second reading of the Church Bill might in truth be a vote of want of confidence. But to commence his speech at eight o'clock, when the House was hungry and uneasy, would be a trial. Had Mr. Daubeny closed an hour sooner, there would, with a little stretching of the favored hours, have been time enough. Members would not have objected to postpone their dinner till half past eight, or perhaps nine, when their favorite orator was on his legs. But with Mr. Gresham beginning a great speech at eight, dinner would altogether become doubtful, and the disaster might be serious. It was not probable that Mr. Daubeny had even among his friends proclaimed any such strategy, but it was thought by the political speculators of the day that such an idea had been present to his mind.

But Mr. Gresham was not to be turned from his purpose. He waited for a few moments, and then rose and addressed the Speaker. A few members left the House—gentlemen, doubtless, whose constitutions, weakened by previous service, could not endure prolonged fasting. Some who had nearly reached the door returned to their seats, mindful of Messrs. Roby and Ratler. But for the bulk of those assembled the interest of the moment was greater than the love of dinner. Some of the peers departed, and it was observed that a bishop or two left the House; but among the strangers in the gallery hardly a foot of space was gained. He who gave up his seat then gave it up for the night.

Mr. Gresham began with a calmness of tone which seemed almost to be affected, but which

arose from a struggle on his own part to repress that superabundant energy of which he was only too conscious. But the calmness soon gave place to warmth, which heated itself into violence before he had been a quarter of an hour upon his legs. He soon became even ferocious in his invective, and said things so bitter that he had himself no conception of their bitterness. There was this difference between the two men—that whereas Mr. Daubeny hit always as hard as he knew how to hit, having premeditated each blow, and weighed its results beforehand, having calculated his power even to the effect of a blow repeated on a wound already given, Mr. Gresham struck right and left and straightforward with a readiness engendered by practice, and in his fury might have murdered his antagonist before he was aware that he had drawn blood. He began by refusing absolutely to discuss the merits of the bill. The right honorable gentleman had prided himself on his generosity as a Greek. He would remind the right honorable gentleman that presents from Greeks had ever been considered dangerous. "It is their gifts, and only their gifts, that we fear," he said. The political gifts of the right honorable gentleman, extracted by him from his unwilling colleagues and followers, had always been more bitter to the taste than Dead-Sea apples. That such gifts should not be bestowed on the country by unwilling hands, that reform should not come from those who themselves felt the necessity of no reform, he believed to be the wish not only of that House, but of the country at large. Would any gentleman on that bench, excepting the right honorable gentleman himself—and he pointed to the crowded phalanx of the Government—get up and declare that this measure of Church Reform, this severance of Church and State, was brought forward in consonance with his own long-cherished political conviction. He accused that party of being so bound to the chariot wheels of the right honorable gentleman, as to be unable to abide by their own convictions. And as to the right honorable gentleman himself, he would appeal to his followers opposite to say whether the right honorable gentleman was possessed of any one strong political conviction.

He had been accused of being unconstitutional, revolutionary, and tyrannical. If the House would allow him, he would very shortly explain his idea of constitutional government as carried on in this country. It was based and built on majorities in that House, and supported solely by that power. There could be no constitutional government in this country that was not so maintained. Any other government must be both revolutionary and tyrannical. Any other government was a usurpation; and he would make bold to tell the right honorable gentleman that a Minister in this country who should recommend her Majesty to trust herself to advisers not supported by a majority of the House of Commons would plainly be guilty of usurping the powers of the State. He threw from him with disdain the charge which had been brought against himself of hankering after the sweets of office. He indulged, and gloried in indulging, the highest ambition of an English subject. But he gloried much more in the privileges and power of that House within the walls of which was centred all that was salutary, all that was effi-

acious, all that was stable in the political constitution of his country. It had been his pride to have acted during nearly all his political life with that party which had commanded a majority, but he would defy his most bitter adversary, he would defy the right honorable gentleman himself, to point to any period of his career in which he had been unwilling to succumb to a majority when he himself had belonged to the minority.

He himself would regard the vote on this occasion as a vote of want of confidence. He took the line he was now taking because he desired to bring the House to a decision on that question. He himself had not that confidence in the right honorable gentleman which would justify him in accepting a measure on so important a subject as the union or severance of Church and State from his hands. Should the majority of the House differ from him and support the second reading of the bill, he would at once so far succumb as to give his best attention to the clauses of the bill, and endeavor with the assistance of those gentlemen who acted with him to make it suitable to the wants of the country by omissions and additions as the clauses should pass through committee. But before doing that he would ask the House to decide, with all its solemnity and all its weight, whether it was willing to accept from the hands of the right honorable gentleman any measure of reform on a matter so important as this now before them. It was nearly ten when he sat down; and then the stomach of the House could stand it no longer, and an adjournment at once took place.

On the next morning it was generally considered that Mr. Daubeny had been too long and Mr. Gresham too passionate. There were some who declared that Mr. Gresham had never been finer than when he described the privileges of the House of Commons; and others who thought that Mr. Daubeny's lucidity had been marvelous; but in this case, as in most others, the speeches of the day were generally thought to have been very inferior to the great efforts of the past.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE UNIVERSE.

BEFORE the House met again the quidnuncs about the clubs, on both sides of the question, had determined that Mr. Gresham's speech, whether good or not as an effort of oratory, would serve its intended purpose. He would be backed by a majority of votes, and it might have been very doubtful whether such would have been the case had he attempted to throw out the bill on its merits. Mr. Ratler, by the time that prayers had been read, had become almost certain of success. There were very few Liberals in the House who were not anxious to declare by their votes that they had no confidence in Mr. Daubeny. Mr. Turnbull, the great Radical, and, perhaps, some two dozen with him, would support the second reading, declaring that they could not reconcile it with their consciences to record a vote in favor of a union of Church and State. On all such occasions as the present Mr. Turnbull was sure to make himself disagreeable to those who sat near to him in the House. He