

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

was a man who thought that so much was demanded of him in order that his independence might be doubted by none. It was nothing to him, he was wont to say, who called himself Prime Minister, or Secretary here, or President there. But then there would be quite as much of this independence on the Conservative as on the Liberal side of the House. Surely there would be more than two dozen gentlemen who would be true enough to the cherished principles of their whole lives to vote against such a bill as this! It was the fact that there were so very few so true which added such a length to the faces of the country parsons. Six months ago not a country gentleman in England would have listened to such a proposition without loud protests as to its revolutionary wickedness. And now, under the sole pressure of one man's authority, the subject had become so common that men were assured that the thing would be done even though of all things that could be done it were the worst. "It is no good any longer having any opinion upon any thing," one person said to another, as they sat together at their club with their newspapers in their hands. "Nothing frightens any one—no infidelity, no wickedness, no revolution. All reverence is at end, and the Holy of Holies is no more even to the worshiper than the threshold of the Temple." Though it became known that the bill would be lost, what comfort was there in that, when the battle was to be won not by the chosen Israelites to whom the Church with all its appurtenances ought to be dear, but by a crew of Philistines who would certainly follow the lead of their opponents in destroying the holy structure?

On the Friday the debate was continued with much life on the Ministerial side of the House. It was very easy for them to cry Faction! Faction! and hardly necessary for them to do more. A few partot words had been learned as to the expediency of fitting the great and increasing Church of England to the growing necessity of the age. That the CHURCH OF ENGLAND would still be the CHURCH OF ENGLAND was repeated till weary listeners were sick of the unmeaning words. But the zeal of the combatants was displayed on that other question. Faction was now the avowed weapon of the leaders of the so-called Liberal side of the House, and it was very easy to denounce the new doctrine. Every word that Mr. Gresham had spoken was picked in pieces, and the enormity of his theory was exhibited. He had boldly declared to them that they were to regard men and not measures, and they were to show by their votes whether they were prepared to accept such teaching. The speeches were, of course, made by alternate orators, but the firing from the Conservative benches was on this evening much the louder.

It would have seemed that with such an issue between them they might almost have consented to divide after the completion of the two great speeches. The course on which they were to run had been explained to them, and it was not probable that any member's intention as to his running would now be altered by any thing that he might hear. Mr. Turnbull's two dozen defaulters were all known, and the two dozen and four true Conservatives were known also. But, nevertheless, a great many members were anxious to speak. It would be the great debate of

the session, and the subject to be handled—that, namely, of the general merits and demerits of the two political parties—was wide and very easy. On that night it was past one o'clock when Mr. Turnbull adjourned the House.

"I'm afraid we must put you off till Tuesday," Mr. Ratler said on the Sunday afternoon to Phineas Finn.

"I have no objection at all, so long as I get a fair place on that day."

"There sha'n't be a doubt about that. Gresham particularly wants you to speak, because you are pledged to a measure of dis-establishment. You can insist on his own views—that even should such a measure be essentially necessary—"

"Which I think it is," said Phineas.

"Still it should not be accepted from the old Church-and-State party."

There was something pleasant in this to Phineas Finn—something that made him feel for the moment that he had perhaps mistaken the bearing of his friend toward him. "We are sure of a majority, I suppose," he said.

"Absolutely sure," said Ratler. "I begin to think it will amount to half a hundred—perhaps more."

"What will Daubeny do?"

"Go out. He can't do any thing else. His pluck is certainly wonderful, but even with his pluck he can't dissolve again. His Church Bill has given him a six months' run, and six months is something."

"Is it true that Grogram is to be Chancellor?" Phineas asked the question not from any particular solicitude as to the prospects of Sir Gregory Grogram, but because he was anxious to hear whether Mr. Ratler would speak to him with any thing of the cordiality of fellowship respecting the new Government. But Mr. Ratler became at once discreet and close, and said that he did not think that any thing as yet was known as to the Wool-sack. Then Phineas retreated again within his shell, with a certainty that nothing would be done for him.

And yet to whom could this question of place be of such vital importance as it was to him? He had come back to his old haunts from Ireland, abandoning altogether the pleasant safety of an assured income, buoyed by the hope of office. He had, after a fashion, made his calculations. In the present disposition of the country it was, he thought, certain that the Liberal party must, for the next twenty years, have longer periods of power than their opponents; and he had thought also that were he in the House, some place would eventually be given to him. He had been in office before, and had been especially successful. He knew that it had been said of him that of the young debutants of latter years he had been the best. He had left his party by opposing them; but he had done so without creating any ill-will among the leaders of his party, in a manner that had been regarded as highly honorable to him, and on departing had received expressions of deep regret from Mr. Gresham himself. When Barrington Erle had wanted him to return to his old work, his own chief doubt had been about the seat. But he had been bold and had adventured all, and had succeeded. There had been some little trouble about those pledges given at Tankerville, but he would be able to turn them even to the use of

his party. It was quite true that nothing had been promised him; but Erle, when he had written, bidding him to come over from Ireland, must have intended him to understand that he would be again enrolled in the favored regiment, should he be able to show himself as the possessor of a seat in the House. And yet—yet he felt convinced that when the day should come it would be to him a day of disappointment, and that when the list should appear his name would not be on it. Madame Goesler had suggested to him that Mr. Bonteen might be his enemy, and he replied by stating that he himself hated Mr. Bonteen. He now remembered that Mr. Bonteen had hardly spoken to him since his return to London, though there had not in fact been any quarrel between them. In this condition of mind he longed to speak openly to Barrington Erle, but he was restrained by a feeling of pride, and a still existing idea that no candidate for office, let his claim be what it might, should ask for a place. On that Sunday evening he saw Bonteen at the club. Men were going in and out with that feverish excitement which always prevails on the eve of a great Parliamentary change. A large majority against the Government was considered to be certain; but there was an idea abroad that Mr. Daubeny had some scheme in his head by which to confute the immediate purport of his enemies. There was nothing to which the audacity of the man was not equal. Some said that he would dissolve the House—which had hardly as yet been six months sitting. Others were of opinion that he would simply resolve not to vacate his place—thus defying the majority of the House and all the ministerial traditions of the country. Words had fallen from him which made some men certain that such was his intention. That it should succeed ultimately was impossible. The whole country would rise against him. Supplies would be refused. In every detail of Government he would be impeded. But then, such was the temper of the man, it was thought that all these horrors would not deter him. There would be a blaze and a confusion, in which timid men would doubt whether the Constitution would be burned to tinder or only illuminated; but that blaze and that confusion would be dear to Mr. Daubeny if he could stand as the centre figure—the great pyrotechnist who did it all, red from head to foot with the glare of the squibs with which his own hands were filling all the spaces. The anticipation that some such display might take place made men busy and eager; so that on that Sunday evening they roamed about from one place of meeting to another, instead of sitting at home with their wives and daughters. There was at this time existing a small club—so called, though unlike other clubs—which had entitled itself the Universe. The name was supposed to be a joke, as it was limited to ninety-nine members. It was domiciled in one simple and somewhat mean apartment. It was kept open only one hour before and one hour after midnight, and that only on two nights of the week, and that only when Parliament was sitting. Its attractions were not numerous, consisting chiefly of tobacco and tea. The conversation was generally listless and often desultory; and occasionally there would arise the great and terrible evil of a punster, whom every one hated but no one had life enough to put down. But the thing had

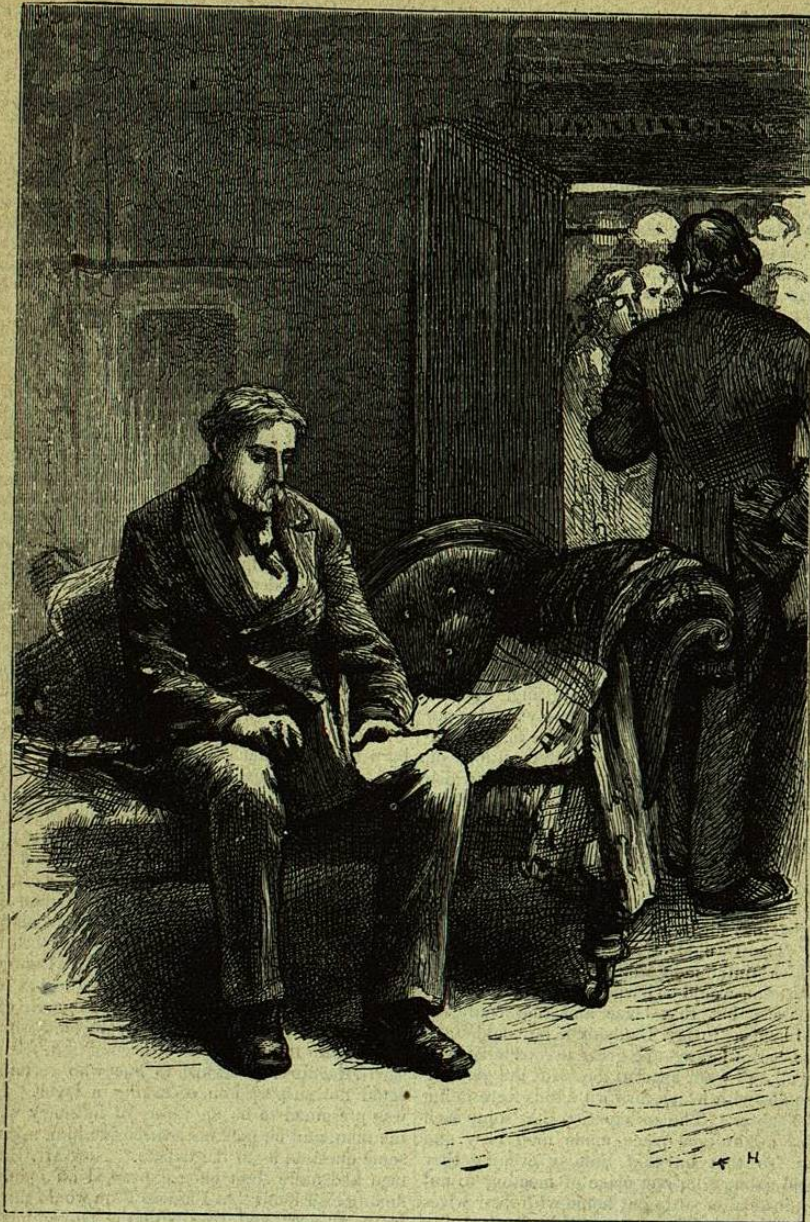
been a success, and men liked to be members of the Universe. Mr. Bonteen was a member, and so was Phineas Finn. On this Sunday evening the club was open, and Phineas, as he entered the room, perceived that his enemy was seated alone on a corner of a sofa. Mr. Bonteen was not a man who loved to be alone in public places, and was apt rather to make one of congregations, affecting popularity, and always at work increasing his influence. But on this occasion his own greatness had probably isolated him. If it were true that he was to be the new Chancellor of the Exchequer—to ascend from demi-godhead to the perfect divinity of the Cabinet—and to do so by a leap which would make him high even among first-class gods, it might be well for himself to look to himself and choose new congregations. Or at least it would be becoming that he should be chosen now instead of being a chooser. He was one who could weigh to the last ounce the importance of his position, and make most accurate calculations as to the effect of his intimacies. On that very morning Mr. Gresham had suggested to him that in the event of a Liberal Government being formed, he should hold the high office in question. This, perhaps, had not been done in the most flattering manner, as Mr. Gresham had deeply bewailed the loss of Mr. Palliser, and had almost demanded a pledge from Mr. Bonteen that he would walk exactly in Mr. Palliser's footsteps; but the offer had been made, and could not be retracted; and Mr. Bonteen already felt the warmth of the halo of perfect divinity.

There are some men who seem to have been born to be Cabinet Ministers—dukes mostly, or earls, or the younger sons of such—who have been trained to it from their very cradles, and of whom we may imagine that they are subject to no special awe when they first enter into that august assembly, and feel but little personal elevation. But to the political aspirant not born in the purple of public life this entrance upon the counsels of the higher deities must be accompanied by a feeling of supreme triumph, dashed by considerable misgivings. Perhaps Mr. Bonteen was reveling in his triumph; perhaps he was anticipating his misgivings. Phineas, though disinclined to make any inquiries of a friend which might seem to refer to his own condition, felt no such reluctance in regard to one who certainly could not suspect him of asking a favor. He was presumed to be on terms of intimacy with the man, and he took his seat beside him, asking some question as to the debate. Now Mr. Bonteen had more than once expressed an opinion among his friends that Phineas Finn would throw his party over, and vote with the Government. The Ratlers and Erles and Fitzgibbons all knew that Phineas was safe, but Mr. Bonteen was still in doubt. It suited him to affect something more than doubt on the present occasion. "I wonder that you should ask me," said Mr. Bonteen.

"What do you mean by that?"

"I presume that you, as usual, will vote against us."

"I never voted against my party but once," said Phineas, "and then I did it with the approbation of every man in it for whose good opinion I cared a straw." There was insult in his tone as he said this, and something near akin to insult in his words.



"PHINEAS FELT THAT HIS EARS WERE TINGLING."

"You must do it again now, or break every promise that you made at Tankerville."

"Do you know what promise I made at Tankerville? I shall break no promise."

"You must allow me to say, Mr. Finn, that the kind of independence which is practiced by you and Mr. Monk, grand as it may be on the part of men who avowedly abstain from office, is a little dangerous when it is now and again adopted by men who have taken place. I like to be sure that the men who are in the same boat with me won't take it into their heads that

their duty requires them to scuttle the ship." Having so spoken, Mr. Bonteen, with nearly all the grace of a full-fledged Cabinet Minister, rose from his seat on the corner of the sofa and joined a small congregation.

Phineas felt that his ears were tingling and that his face was red. He looked round to ascertain from the countenances of others whether they had heard what had been said. Nobody had been close to them, and he thought that the conversation had been unnoticed. He knew now that he had been imprudent in addressing

himself to Mr. Bonteen, though the question that he had first asked had been quite commonplace. As it was, the man, he thought, had been determined to affront him, and had made a charge against him which he could not allow to pass unnoticed. And then there was all the additional bitterness in it which arose from the conviction that Bonteen had spoken the opinion of other men as well as his own, and that he had plainly indicated that the gates of the official paradise were to be closed against the presumed offender. Phineas had before believed that it was to be so, but that belief had now become assurance. He got up in his misery to leave the room, but as he did so he met Laurence Fitzgibbon. "You have heard the news about Bonteen?" said Laurence.

"What news?"

"He's to be pitchforked up to the Exchequer. They say it's quite settled. The higher a monkey climbs— You know the proverb." So saying, Laurence Fitzgibbon passed into the room, and Phineas Finn took his departure in solitude.

And so the man with whom he had managed to quarrel utterly was to be one in the Cabinet, a man whose voice would probably be potential in the selection of minor members of the Government. It seemed to him to be almost incredible that such a one as Mr. Bonteen should be chosen for such an office. He had despised almost as soon as he had known Mr. Bonteen, and had rarely heard the future manager of the finance of the country spoken of with either respect or regard. He had regarded Mr. Bonteen as a useful, dull, unscrupulous politician, well accustomed to Parliament, acquainted with the by-paths and back-doors of official life, and therefore certain of employment when the Liberals were in power; but there was no one in the party he had thought less likely to be selected for high place. And yet this man was to be made Chancellor of the Exchequer, while he, Phineas Finn, very probably at this man's instance, was to be left out in the cold.

He knew himself to be superior to the man he hated, to have higher ideas of political life, and to be capable of greater political sacrifices. He himself had sat shoulder to shoulder with many men on the Treasury Bench whose political principles he had not greatly valued; but of none of them had he thought so little as he had done of Mr. Bonteen. And yet this Mr. Bonteen was to be the new Chancellor of the Exchequer! He walked home to his lodgings in Marlborough Street, wretched because of his own failure— doubly wretched because of the other man's success.

He laid awake half the night thinking of the words that had been spoken to him, and after breakfast on the following morning he wrote the following note to his enemy:

"HOUSE OF COMMONS, April 5, 18—.

"DEAR MR. BONTEEN.—It is matter of extreme regret to me that last night at the Universe I should have asked you some chance question about the coming division. Had I guessed to what it might have led, I should not have addressed you. But as it is, I can hardly abstain from noticing what appeared to me to be a personal charge made against myself with a great want of the courtesy which is supposed to prevail among men who have acted together. Had

we never done so, my original question to you might perhaps have been deemed an impertinence.

"As it was, you accused me of having been dishonest to my party, and of having 'scuttled the ship.' On the occasion to which you alluded I acted with much consideration, greatly to the detriment of my own prospects, and, as I believed, with the approbation of all who knew any thing of the subject. If you will make inquiry of Mr. Gresham, or Lord Cantrip, who was then my chief, I think that either will tell you that my conduct on that occasion was not such as to lay me open to reproach. If you will do this, I think that you can not fail afterward to express regret for what you said to me last night.

"Yours sincerely,

PHINEAS FINN.

"THOS. BONTEEN, Esq., M.P."

He did not like the letter when he had written it, but he did not know how to improve it, and he sent it.

CHAPTER XXXV.

POLITICAL VENOM.

On the Monday Mr. Turnbull opened the ball by declaring his reasons for going into the same lobby with Mr. Daubeny. This he did at great length. To him all the mighty pomp and all the little squabbles of office were, he said, as nothing. He would never allow himself to regard the person of the Prime Minister. The measure before the House ever had been, and ever should be, all in all to him. If the public weal were more regarded in that House, and the quarrels of men less considered, he thought that the service of the country would be better done. He was answered by Mr. Monk, who was sitting near him, and who intended to support Mr. Gresham. Mr. Monk was rather happy in pulling his old friend Mr. Turnbull to pieces, expressing his opinion that a difference in men meant a difference in measures. The characters of men whose principles were known were guarantees for the measures they would advocate. To him—Mr. Monk—it was matter of very great moment who was Prime Minister of England. He was always selfish enough to wish for a Minister with whom he himself could agree on the main questions of the day. As he certainly could not say that he had political confidence in the present Ministry, he should certainly vote against them on this occasion.

In the course of the evening Phineas found a letter addressed to himself from Mr. Bonteen. It was as follows:

"HOUSE OF COMMONS, April 5, 18—.

"DEAR MR. FINN,—I never accused you of dishonesty. You must have misheard or misunderstood me if you thought so. I did say that you had scuttled the ship; and as you most undoubtedly did scuttle it—you and Mr. Monk between you—I can not retract my words.

"I do not want to go to any one for testimony as to your merits on the occasion. I accused you of having done nothing dishonorable or disgraceful. I think I said that there was danger in the practice of scuttling. I think so still, though I know that many fancy that those who

scuttle do a fine thing. I don't deny that it's fine, and therefore you can have no cause of complaint against me. Yours truly,

"T. BONTEEN."

He had brought a copy of his own letter in his pocket to the House, and he showed the correspondence to Mr. Monk. "I would not have noticed it, had I been you."

"You can have no idea of the offensive nature of the remark when it was made."

"It's as offensive to me as to you, but I should not think of moving in such a matter. When a man annoys you, keep out of his way. It is generally the best thing you can do."

"If a man were to call you a liar?"

"But men don't call each other liars. Bonteen understands the world much too well to commit himself by using any word which common opinion would force him to retract. He says we scuttled the ship. Well, we did. Of all the political acts of my life it is the one of which I am most proud. The manner in which you helped me has entitled you to my affectionate esteem. But we did scuttle the ship. Before you can quarrel with Bonteen you must be able to show that a metaphorical scuttling of a ship must necessarily be a disgraceful act. You see how he at once retreats behind the fact that it need not be so."

"You wouldn't answer his letter?"

"I think not. You can do yourself no good by a correspondence in which you can not get a hold of him. And if you did get a hold of him you would injure yourself much more than him. Just drop it." This added much to our friend's misery, and made him feel that the weight of it was almost more than he could bear. His enemy had got the better of him at every turn. He had now rushed into a correspondence as to which he would have to own by his silence that he had been confuted. And yet he was sure that Mr. Bonteen had at the club insulted him most unjustifiably, and that if the actual truth were known, no man, certainly not Mr. Monk, would hesitate to say that reparation was due to him. And yet what could he do? He thought that he would consult Lord Cantrip, and endeavor to get from his late chief some advice more palatable than that which had been tendered to him by Mr. Monk.

In the mean time animosities in the House were waxing very furious; and, as it happened, the debate took a turn that was peculiarly injurious to Phineas Finn in his present state of mind. The rumor as to the future promotion of Mr. Bonteen, which had been conveyed by Laurence Fitzgibbon to Phineas at the Universe, had, as was natural, spread far and wide, and had reached the ears of those who still sat on the Ministerial benches. Now it is quite understood among politicians in this country that no man should presume that he will have imposed upon him the task of forming a Ministry until he has been called upon by the Crown to undertake that great duty. Let the Gresham or the Daubeny of the day be ever so sure that the reins of the State chariot must come into his hands, he should not visibly prepare himself for the seat on the box till he has actually been summoned to place himself there. At this moment it was alleged that Mr. Gresham had departed from the

reticence and modesty usual in such a position as his, by taking steps toward the formation of a Cabinet, while it was as yet quite possible that he might never be called upon to form any Cabinet. Late on this Monday night, when the House was quite full, one of Mr. Daubeny's leading lieutenants, a Secretary of State, Sir Orlando Drought by name—a gentleman who if he had any heart in the matter must have hated this Church Bill from the very bottom of his heart, and who on that account was the more bitter against opponents who had not ceased to throw in his teeth his own political tergiversation—fell foul of Mr. Gresham as to this rumored appointment to the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. The reader will easily imagine the things that were said. Sir Orlando had heard, and had been much surprised at hearing, that a certain honorable member of that House, who had long been known to them as a tenant of the Ministerial bench, had already been appointed to a high office. He, Sir Orlando, had not been aware that the office had been vacant, or that if vacant it would have been at the disposal of the right honorable gentleman; but he believed that there was no doubt that the place in question, with a seat in the Cabinet, had been tendered to, and accepted by, the honorable member to whom he alluded. Such was the rabid haste with which the right honorable gentleman opposite, and his colleagues, were attempting, he would not say to climb, but to rush into office, by opposing a great measure of reform, the wisdom of which, as was notorious to all the world, they themselves did not dare to deny. Much more of the same kind was said, during which Mr. Gresham pulled about his hat, shuffled his feet, showed his annoyance to all the House, and at last jumped upon his legs.

"If," said Sir Orlando Drought—"if the right honorable gentleman wishes to deny the accuracy of any statements that I have made, I will give way to him for the moment that he may do so."

"I deny utterly, not only the accuracy, but every detail of the statement made by the right honorable gentleman opposite," said Mr. Gresham, still standing and holding his hat in his hand as he completed his denial.

"Does the right honorable gentleman mean to assure me that he has not selected his future Chancellor of the Exchequer?"

"The right honorable gentleman is too acute not to be aware that we on this side of the House may have made such selection, and that yet every detail of the statement which he has been rash enough to make to the House may be unfounded. The word, Sir, is weak; but I would fain avoid the use of any words which, justifiable though they might be, would offend the feelings of the House. I will explain to the House exactly what has been done."

Then there was a great hubbub—cries of "Order," "Gresham," "Spoke," "Hear, hear," and the like—during which Sir Orlando Drought and Mr. Gresham both stood on their legs. So powerful was Mr. Gresham's voice that, through it all, every word that he said was audible to the reporters. His opponent hardly attempted to speak, but stood relying upon his right. Mr. Gresham said he understood that it was the desire of the House that he should explain the circumstances in reference to the charge that had

been made against him, and it would certainly be for the convenience of the House that this should be done at the moment. The Speaker of course ruled that Sir Orlando was in possession of the floor, but suggested that it might be convenient that he should yield to the right honorable gentleman on the other side for a few minutes. Mr. Gresham, as a matter of course, succeeded. Rights and rules, which are bonds of iron to a little man, are pack-thread to a giant. No one in all that assembly knew the House better than did Mr. Gresham, was better able to take it by storm, or more obdurate in perseverance. He did make his speech, though clearly he had no right to do so. The House, he said, was aware, that by the most unfortunate demise of the late Duke of Omnium, a gentleman had been removed from this House to another place, whose absence from their counsels would long be felt as a very grievous loss. Then he pronounced an eulogy on Plantagenet Palliser, so graceful and well arranged, that even the bitterness of the existing Opposition was unable to demur to it. The House was well aware of the nature of the labors which now for some years past had occupied the mind of the noble Duke, and the paramount importance which the country attached to their conclusion. The noble Duke, no doubt, was not absolutely debarred from a continuance of his work by the change which had fallen upon him; but it was essential that some gentleman, belonging to the same party with the noble Duke, versed in office, and having a seat in that House, should endeavor to devote himself to the great measure which had occupied so much of the attention of the late Chancellor of the Exchequer. No doubt it must be fitting that the gentleman so selected should be at the Exchequer, in the event of their party coming into office. The honorable gentleman to whom allusion had been made had acted throughout with the present noble Duke in arranging the details of the measure in question; and the probability of his being able to fill the shoes left vacant by the accession to the peerage of the noble Duke had, indeed, been discussed; but the discussion had been made in reference to the measure, and only incidentally in regard to the office. He, Mr. Gresham, held that he had done nothing that was indiscreet—nothing that his duty did not demand. If right honorable gentlemen opposite were of a different opinion, he thought that that difference came from the fact that they were less intimately acquainted than he unfortunately had been with the burdens and responsibilities of legislation.

There was very little in the dispute which seemed to be worthy of the place in which it occurred, or of the vigor with which it was conducted; but it served to show the temper of the parties, and to express the bitterness of the political feelings of the day. It was said at the time that never within the memory of living politicians had so violent an animosity displayed itself in the House as had been witnessed on this night. While Mr. Gresham was giving his explanation, Mr. Daubeny had arisen, and with a mock solemnity that was peculiar to him on occasions such as these, had appealed to the Speaker whether the right honorable gentleman opposite should not be called upon to resume his seat. Mr. Gresham had put him down with a wave of his hand. An affected stateliness can not sup-

port itself but for a moment; and Mr. Daubeny had been forced to sit down when the Speaker did not at once support his appeal. But he did not forget that wave of the hand, nor did he forgive it. He was a man who in public life rarely forgot, and never forgave. They used to say of him that "at home" he was kindly and forbearing, simple and unostentatious. It may be so. Who does not remember that horrible Turk, Jacob Asdrubal, the Old Bailey barrister, the terror of witnesses, the bane of judges, who was gall and wormwood to all opponents. It was said of him that "at home" his docile amiability was the marvel of his friends, and delight of his wife and daughters. "At home," perhaps, Mr. Daubeny might have been waved at, and have forgiven it; but men who saw the scene in the House of Commons knew that he would never forgive Mr. Gresham. As for Mr. Gresham himself, he triumphed at the moment, and exulted in his triumph.

Phineas Finn heard it all, and was disgusted to find that his enemy thus became the hero of the hour. It was, indeed, the opinion generally of the Liberal party that Mr. Gresham had not said much to flatter his new Chancellor of the Exchequer. In praise of Plantagenet Palliser he had been very loud, and he had no doubt said that which implied the capability of Mr. Bonteen, who, as it happened, was sitting next to him at the time; but he had implied also that the mantle which was to be transferred from Mr. Palliser to Mr. Bonteen would be carried by its new wearer with grace very inferior to that which had marked all the steps of his predecessor. Rather and Erle and Fitzgibbon and others had laughed in their sleeves at the expression, understood by them, of Mr. Gresham's doubt as to the qualifications of his new assistant; and Sir Orlando Drought, in continuing his speech, remarked that the warmth of the right honorable gentleman had been so completely expended in abusing his enemies that he had had none left for the defense of his friend. But to Phineas it seemed that this Bonteen, who had so grievously injured him, and whom he so thoroughly despised, was carrying off all the glories of the fight. A certain amount of consolation was, however, afforded to him. Between one and two o'clock he was told by Mr. Rafler that he might enjoy the privilege of adjourning the debate—by which would accrue to him the right of commencing on the morrow—and this he did at a few minutes before three.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

SEVENTY-TWO.

On the next morning, Phineas, with his speech before him, was obliged for a while to forget, or at least to postpone, Mr. Bonteen and his injuries. He could not now go to Lord Cantrip, as the hours were too precious to him, and, as he felt, too short. Though he had been thinking what he would say ever since the debate had become imminent, and knew accurately the line which he would take, he had not as yet prepared a word of his speech. But he had resolved that he would not prepare a word otherwise than he might do by arranging certain phrases in his