

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

memory. There should be nothing written; he had tried that before in old days, and had broken down with the effort. He would load himself with no burden of words in itself so heavy that the carrying of it would incapacitate him for any other effort.

After a late breakfast he walked out far away, into the Regent's Park, and there, wandering among the uninteresting paths, he devised triumphs of oratory for himself. Let him resolve as he would to forget Mr. Bonteen, and that charge of having been untrue to his companions, he could not restrain himself from efforts to fit the matter after some fashion into his speech. Dim ideas of a definition of political honesty crossed his brain, bringing with them, however, a conviction that his thought must be much more clearly worked out than it could be on that day before he might venture to give it birth in the House of Commons. He knew that he had been honest two years ago in separating himself from his colleagues. He knew that he would be honest now in voting with them, apparently in opposition to the pledges he had given at Tankerville. But he knew also that it would behoove him to abstain from speaking of himself unless he could do so in close reference to some point specially in dispute between the two parties. When he returned to eat a mutton-chop at Great Marlborough Street at three o'clock, he was painfully conscious that all his morning had been wasted. He had allowed his mind to run revel, instead of tying it down to the formation of sentences and construction of arguments.

He entered the House with the Speaker at four o'clock, and took his seat without uttering a word to any man. He seemed to be more than ever disjoined from his party. Hitherto, since he had been seated by the judge's order, the former companions of his Parliamentary life—the old men whom he had used to know—had to a certain degree admitted him among them. Many of them sat on the front Opposition bench, whereas he, as a matter of course, had seated himself behind. But he had very frequently found himself next to some man who had held office and was living in the hope of holding it again, and had felt himself to be in some sort recognized as an aspirant. Now it seemed to him that it was otherwise. He did not doubt but that Bonteen had shown the correspondence to his friends, and that the Ratlers and Erles had conceded that he, Phineas, was put out of court by it. He sat doggedly still at the end of a bench behind Mr. Gresham, and close to the gangway. When Mr. Gresham entered the House he was received with much cheering; but Phineas did not join in the cheer. He was studious to avoid any personal recognition of the future giver-away of places, though they two were close together; and he then fancied that Mr. Gresham had specially and most ungraciously abstained from any recognition of him. Mr. Monk, who sat near him, spoke a kind word to him. "I sha'n't be very long," said Phineas; "not above twenty minutes, I should think." He was able to assume an air of indifference, and yet at the moment he heartily wished himself back in Dublin. It was not now that he feared the task immediately before him, but that he was overcome by the feeling of general failure which had come upon him. Of what use was it

to him or to any one else that he should be there in that assembly, with the privilege of making a speech that would influence no human being, unless his being there could be made a step to something beyond? While the usual preliminary work was being done, he looked round the House, and saw Lord Cantrip in the peers' gallery. Alas! of what avail was that? He had always been able to bind to him individuals with whom he had been brought into close contact; but more than that was wanted in this most precarious of professions, in which now, for a second time, he was attempting to earn his bread.

At half past four he was on his legs in the midst of a crowded House. The chance—perhaps the hope—of some such encounter as that of the former day, brought members into their seats, and filled the gallery with strangers. We may say, perhaps, that the highest duty imposed upon us as a nation is the management of India; and we may also say that in a great national assembly personal squabbling among its members is the least dignified work in which it can employ itself. But the prospect of an explanation—or otherwise of a fight—between two leading politicians will fill the House; and any allusion to our Eastern empire will certainly empty it. An aptitude for such encounters is almost a necessary qualification for a popular leader in Parliament, as is a capacity for speaking for three hours to the reporters—and to the reporters only—a necessary qualification for an Under-Secretary of State for India.

Phineas had the advantage of the temper of the moment in a House thoroughly crowded, and he enjoyed it. Let a man doubt ever so much his own capacity for some public exhibition which he has undertaken, yet he will always prefer to fail—if fail he must—before a large audience. But on this occasion there was no failure. That sense of awe from the surrounding circumstances of the moment which had once been heavy on him, and which he still well remembered, had been overcome, and had never returned to him. He felt now that he should not lack words to pour out his own individual grievances were it not that he was prevented by a sense of the indiscretion of doing so. As it was, he did succeed in alluding to his own condition in a manner that brought upon him no reproach. He began by saying that he should not have added to the difficulty of the debate—which was one simply of length—were it not that he had been accused in advance of voting against a measure as to which he had pledged himself at the hustings to do all that he could to further it. No man was more anxious than he, an Irish Roman Catholic, to abolish that which he thought to be the anomaly of a State Church, and he did not in the least doubt that he should now be doing the best in his power with that object in voting against the second reading of the present bill. That such a measure should be carried by the gentlemen opposite, in their own teeth, at the bidding of the right honorable gentleman who led them, he thought to be impossible. Upon this he was hooted at from the other side with many gestures of indignant denial, and was, of course, equally cheered by those around him. Such interruptions are new breath to the nostrils of all orators, and Phineas enjoyed the noise. He repeated his assertion that it would

be an evil thing for the country that the measure should be carried by men who in their hearts condemned it, and was vehemently called to order for this assertion about the hearts of gentlemen. But a speaker who can certainly be made amenable to authority for vilipending in debate the heart of any specified opponent, may with safety attribute all manner of ill to the agglomerated hearts of a party. To have told any individual Conservative—Sir Orlando Drought, for instance—that he was abandoning all the convictions of his life, because he was a creature at the command of Mr. Daubeny, would have been an insult that would have moved even the Speaker from his serenity; but you can hardly be personal to a whole bench of Conservatives—to a bench above bench of Conservatives. The charge had been made and repeated over and over again, till all the Orlando Droughts were ready to cut some man's throat—whether their own, or Mr. Daubeny's, or Mr. Gresham's, they hardly knew. It might probably have been Mr. Daubeny's for choice, had any real cutting of a throat been possible. It was now made again by Phineas Finn—with the ostensible object of defending himself—and he for the moment became the target for Conservative wrath. Some one asked him in fury by what right he took upon himself to judge of the motives of gentlemen on that side of the House of whom personally he knew nothing. Phineas replied that he did not at all doubt the motives of the honorable gentleman who asked the question, which he was sure were noble and patriotic. But unfortunately the whole country was convinced that the Conservative party as a body was supporting this measure unwillingly, and at the bidding of one man; and, for himself, he was bound to say that he agreed with the country. And so the row was renewed and prolonged, and the gentlemen assembled, members and strangers together, passed a pleasant evening.

Before he sat down Phineas made one allusion to that former scuttling of the ship—an accusation as to which had been made against him so injuriously by Mr. Bonteen. He himself, he said, had been called impractical, and perhaps he might allude to a vote which he had given in that House when last he had the honor of sitting there, and on giving which he resigned the office which he had then held. He had the gratification of knowing that he had been so far practical as to have then foreseen the necessity of a measure which had since been passed. And he did not doubt that he would hereafter be found to have been equally practical in the view that he had expressed on the hustings at Tankerville, for he was convinced that before long the anomaly of which he had spoken would cease to exist under the influence of a Government that would really believe in the work it was doing.

There was no doubt as to the success of his speech. The vehemence with which his insolence was abused by one after another of those who spoke later from the other side was ample evidence of its success. But nothing occurred then or at the conclusion of the debate to make him think that he had won his way back to Elysium. During the whole evening he exchanged not a syllable with Mr. Gresham—who, indeed, was not much given to converse with those around him in the House. Erle said a few good-

natured words to him, and Mr. Monk praised him highly. But in reading the general barometer of the party as regarded himself, he did not find that the mercury went up. He was wretchedly anxious, and angry with himself for his own anxiety. He scorned to say a word that should sound like an entreaty; and yet he had placed his whole heart on a thing which seemed to be slipping from him for the want of asking. In a day or two it would be known whether the present Ministry would or would not go out. That they must be out of office before a month was over seemed to him the opinion of every body. His fate—and what a fate it was!—would then be absolutely in the hands of Mr. Gresham. Yet he could not speak a word of his hopes and fears even to Mr. Gresham. He had given up every thing in the world with a view of getting into office; and now that the opportunity had come—an opportunity which if allowed to slip could hardly return again in time to be of service to him—the prize was to elude his grasp!

But yet he did not say a word to any one on the subject that was so near his heart, although in the course of the night he spoke to Lord Cantrip in the gallery of the House. He told his friend that a correspondence had taken place between himself and Mr. Bonteen, in which he thought that he had been ill-used, and as to which he was quite anxious to ask his lordship's advice. "I heard that you and he had been tilting at each other," said Lord Cantrip, smiling.

"Have you seen the letters?"

"No; but I was told of them by Lord Fawn, who has seen them."

"I knew he would show them to every news-monger about the clubs," said Phineas, angrily.

"You can't quarrel with Bonteen for showing them to Fawn, if you intend to show them to me."

"He may publish them at Charing Cross if he likes."

"Exactly. I am sure that there will have been nothing in them prejudicial to you. What I mean is that if you think it necessary, with a view to your own character, to show them to me or to another friend, you can not complain that he should do the same."

An appointment was made at Lord Cantrip's house for the next morning, and Phineas could but acknowledge to himself that the man's manner to himself had been kind and constant. Nevertheless, the whole affair was going against him. Lord Cantrip had not said a word prejudicial to that wretch Bonteen; much less had he hinted at any future arrangements which would be comfortable to poor Phineas. They two, Lord Cantrip and Phineas, had at one period been on most intimate terms together; had worked in the same office, and had thoroughly trusted each other. The elder of the two—for Lord Cantrip was about ten years senior to Phineas—had frequently expressed the most lively interest in the prospects of the other; and Phineas had felt that in any emergency he could tell his friend all his hopes and fears. But now he did not say a word of his position, nor did Lord Cantrip allude to it. They were to meet on the morrow in order that Lord Cantrip might read the correspondence; but Phineas was sure that no word would be said about the Government.

At five o'clock in the morning the division took

place, and the Government was beaten by a majority of 72. This was much higher than any man had expected. When the parties were marshaled in the opposite lobbies, it was found that in the last moment the number of those Conservatives who dared to rebel against their Conservative leaders was swelled by the course which the debate had taken. There were certain men who could not endure to be twitted with having deserted the principles of their lives, when it was clear that nothing was to be gained by the party by such desertion.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

## THE CONSPIRACY.

On the morning following the great division Phineas was with his friend, Lord Cantrip, by eleven o'clock; and Lord Cantrip, when he had read the two letters in which were comprised the whole correspondence, made to our unhappy hero the following little speech: "I do not think that you can do any thing. Indeed, I am sure that Mr. Monk is quite right. I don't quite see what it is that you wish to do. Privately—between our two selves—I do not hesitate to say that Mr. Bonteen has intended to be ill-natured. I fancy that he is an ill-natured, or at any rate a jealous, man; and that he would be willing to run down a competitor in the race who had made his running after a fashion different from his own. Bonteen has been a useful man—a very useful man; and the more so perhaps because he has not entertained any high political theory of his own. You have chosen to do so—and undoubtedly when you and Monk left us, to our very great regret, you did scuttle the ship."

"We had no intention of that kind."

"Do not suppose that I blame you. That which was odious to the eyes of Mr. Bonteen was to my thinking high and honorable conduct. I have known the same thing done by members of a Government perhaps half a dozen times, and the men by whom it has been done have been the best and noblest of our modern statesmen. There has generally been a hard contest in the man's breast between loyalty to his party and strong personal convictions, the result of which has been an inability on the part of the struggler to give even a silent support to a measure which he has disapproved. That inability is no doubt troublesome at the time to the colleagues of the seceder, and constitutes an offense hardly to be pardoned by such gentlemen as Mr. Bonteen."

"For Mr. Bonteen personally I care nothing."

"But of course you must endure the ill effects of his influence, be they what they may. When you seceded from our Government you looked for certain adverse consequences. If you did not, where was your self-sacrifice? That such men as Mr. Bonteen should feel that you had scuttled the ship, and be unable to forgive you for doing so—that is exactly the evil which you knew you must face. You have to face it now, and surely you can do so without showing your teeth. Hereafter, when men more thoughtful than Mr. Bonteen shall have come to acknowledge the high principle by which your conduct has been governed, you will receive your reward. I suppose Mr. Daubeny must resign now."

"Every body says so."

"I am by no means sure that he will. Any other Minister since Lord North's time would have done so, with such a majority against him on a vital measure; but he is a man who delights in striking out some wonderful course for himself."

"A Prime Minister so beaten surely can't go on."

"Not for long, one would think. And yet how are you to turn him out? It depends very much on a man's power of endurance."

"His colleagues will resign, I should think."

"Probably; and he must go. I should say that that will be the way in which the matter will settle itself. Good-morning, Finn; and take my word for it, you had better not answer Mr. Bonteen's letter."

Not a word had fallen from Lord Cantrip's friendly lips as to the probability of Phineas being invited to join the future Government. An attempt had been made to console him with the hazy promise of some future reward—which, however, was to consist rather of the good opinion of good men than of any thing tangible and useful. But even this would never come to him. What would good men know of him and of his self-sacrifice when he should have been driven out of the world by poverty, and forced probably to go to some New Zealand or back Canadian settlement to look for his bread? How easy, thought Phineas, must be the sacrifices of rich men, who can stay their time, and wait in perfect security for their rewards! But for such a one as he, truth to a principle was political annihilation. Two or three years ago he had done what he knew to be a noble thing; and now, because he had done that noble thing, he was to be regarded as unfit for that very employment for which he was peculiarly fitted. But Bonteen and Co. had not been his only enemies. His luck had been against him throughout. Mr. Quintus Slide, with his *People's Banner*, and the story of that wretched affair in Judd Street, had been as strong against him, probably, as Mr. Bonteen's ill word. Then he thought of Lady Laura, and her love for him. His gratitude to Lady Laura was boundless. There was nothing he would not do for Lady Laura—were it in his power to do any thing. But no circumstance in his career had been so unfortunate for him as this affection. A wretched charge had been made against him which, though wholly untrue, was, as it were, so strangely connected with the truth, that slanderers might not improbably be able almost to substantiate their calumnies. She would be in London soon, and he must devote himself to her service. But every act of friendship that he might do for her would be used as proof of the accusation that had been made against him. As he thought of all this he was walking toward Park Lane, in order that he might call upon Madame Goesler according to his promise. As he went up to the drawing-room he met old Mr. Manle coming down, and the two bowed to each other on the stairs. In the drawing-room, sitting with Madame Goesler, he found Mrs. Bonteen. Now Mrs. Bonteen was almost as odious to him as was her husband.

"Did you ever know any thing more shameful, Mr. Finn," said Mrs. Bonteen, "than the attack made upon Mr. Bonteen the night before last?" Phineas could see a smile on Madame Goesler's

face as the question was asked; for she knew, and he knew that she knew, how great was the antipathy between him and the Bonteens.

"The attack was upon Mr. Gresham, I thought," said Phineas.

"Oh yes, nominally. But of course every body knows what was meant. Upon my word, there is twice more jealousy among men than among women.—Is there not, Madame Goesler?"

"I don't think any man could be more jealous than I am myself," said Madame Goesler.

"Then you're fit to be a member of a Government, that's all. I don't suppose that there is a man in England has worked harder for his party than Mr. Bonteen."

"I don't think there is," said Phineas.

"Or made himself more useful in Parliament. As for work, only that his constitution is so strong he would have killed himself."

"He should take Thorley's mixture—twice a day," said Madame Goesler.

"Take! he never has time to take any thing. He breakfasts in his dressing-room, carries his lunch in his pocket, and dines with the division bell ringing him up between his fish and his mutton-chop. Now he has got their decimal coinage in hand, and has not a moment to himself, even on Sundays!"

"He'll be sure to go to heaven for it—that's one comfort."

"And because they are absolutely obliged to make him Chancellor of the Exchequer, just as if he had not earned it—every body is so jealous that they are ready to tear him to pieces!"

"Who is every body?" asked Phineas.

"Oh, I know. It wasn't only Sir Orlando Drought. Who told Sir Orlando? Never mind, Mr. Finn."

"I don't in the least, Mrs. Bonteen."

"I should have thought you would have been so triumphant," said Madame Goesler.

"Not in the least, Madame Goesler. Why should I be triumphant. Of course the position is very high—very high indeed. But it's no more than what I have always expected. If a man gives up his life to a pursuit, he ought to succeed. As for ambition, I have less of it than any woman. Only I do hate jealousy, Mr. Finn." Then Mrs. Bonteen took her leave, kissing her dear friend, Madame Goesler, and simply bowing to Phineas.

"What a detestable woman!" said Phineas.

"I know of old that you don't love her."

"I don't believe that you love her a bit better than I do, and yet you kiss her."

"Hardly that, Mr. Finn. There has come up a fashion for ladies to pretend to be very loving, and so they put their faces together. Two hundred years ago ladies and gentlemen did the same thing with just as little regard for each other. Fashions change, you know."

"That was a change for the worse, certainly, Madame Goesler."

"It wasn't of my doing. So you've had a great victory."

"Yes; greater than we expected."

"According to Mrs. Bonteen, the chief result to the country will be that the taxes will be so very safe in her husband's hands! I am sure she believes that all Parliament has been at work in order that he might be made a Cabinet Minister. I rather like her for it."

"I don't like her or her husband."

"I do like a woman that can thoroughly enjoy her husband's success. When she is talking of his carrying about his food in his pocket she is completely happy. I don't think Lady Glencora ever cared in the least about her husband being Chancellor of the Exchequer."

"Because it added nothing to her own standing."

"That's very ill-natured, Mr. Finn; and I find that you are becoming generally ill-natured. You used to be the best-humored of men."

"I hadn't so much to try my temper as I have now, and then you must remember, Madame Goesler, that I regard these people as being especially my enemies."

"Lady Glencora was never your enemy."

"Nor my friend—especially."

"Then you wrong her. If I tell you something, you must be discreet."

"Am I not always discreet?"

"She does not love Mr. Bonteen. She has had too much of him at Matching. And as for his wife, she is quite as unwilling to be kissed by her as you can be. Her Grace is determined to fight your battle for you."

"I want her to do nothing of the kind, Madame Goesler."

"You will know nothing about it. We have put our heads to work, and Mr. Palliser—that is, the new Duke—is to be made to tell Mr. Gresham that you are to have a place. It is no good you being angry, for the thing is done. If you have enemies behind your back, you must have friends behind your back also. Lady Cantrip is to do the same thing."

"For Heaven's sake, not."

"It's all arranged. You'll be called the ladies' pet, but you mustn't mind that. Lady Laura will be here before it's arranged, and she will get hold of Mr. Erle."

"You are laughing at me, I know."

"Let them laugh that win. We thought of besieging Lord Fawn through Lady Chiltern, but we are not sure that any body cares for Lord Fawn. The man we specially want now is the other Duke. We're afraid of attacking him through the Duchess because we think that he is inhumanly indifferent to any thing that his wife says to him."

"If that kind of thing is done, I shall not accept place even if it is offered me."

"Why not? Are you going to let a man like Mr. Bonteen bowl you over? Did you ever know Lady Glen fail in any thing that she attempted? She is preparing a secret with the express object of making Mr. Ratler her confidant. Lord Mount Thistle is her slave, but then I fear Lord Mount Thistle is not of much use. She'll do any thing and every thing, except flatter Mr. Bonteen."

"Heaven forbid that any body should do that for my sake."

"The truth is that he made himself so disagreeable at Matching that Lady Glen is broken-hearted at finding that he is to seem to owe his promotion to her husband's favor. Now you know all about it."

"You have been very wrong to tell me."

"Perhaps I have, Mr. Finn. But I thought it better that you should know that you have friends at work for you. We believe—or rather,

the Duchess believes—that falsehoods have been used which are as disparaging to Lady Laura Kennedy as they are injurious to you, and she is determined to put it right. Some one has told Mr. Gresham that you have been the means of breaking the hearts both of Lord Brentford and Mr. Kennedy—two members of the late Cabinet—and he must be made to understand that this is untrue. If only for Lady Laura's sake, you must submit."

"Lord Brentford and I are the best friends in the world."

"And Mr. Kennedy is a madman—absolutely in custody of his friends, as every body knows; and yet the story has been made to work."

"And you do not feel that all this is derogatory to me?"

Madame Goesler was silent for a moment, and then she answered, boldly, "Not a whit. Why should it be derogatory? It is not done with the object of obtaining an improper appointment on behalf of an unimportant man. When falsehoods of that kind are told, you can't meet them in a straightforward way. I suppose I know with fair accuracy the sort of connection there has been between you and Lady Laura." Phineas very much doubted whether she had any such knowledge; but he said nothing, though the lady paused a few moments for reply. "You can't go and tell Mr. Gresham all that; nor can any friend do so on your behalf. It would be absurd."

"Most absurd."

"And yet it is essential to your interests that he should know it. When your enemies are undermining you, you must countermine, or you'll be blown up."

"I'd rather fight above-ground."

"That's all very well, but your enemies won't stay above-ground. Is that newspaper man above-ground? And for a little job of clever mining, believe me that there is not a better engineer going than Lady Glen—not but what I've known her to be very nearly 'hoist with her own petard,'" added Madame Goesler, as she remembered a certain circumstance in their joint lives.

All that Madame Goesler said was true. A conspiracy had been formed, in the first place at the instance of Madame Goesler, but altogether by the influence of the young Duchess, for forcing upon the future Premier the necessity of admitting Phineas Finn into his Government. On the Wednesday following the conclusion of the debate—the day on the morning of which the division was to take place—there was no House. On the Thursday, the last day on which the House was to sit before the Easter holidays, Mr. Daubeny announced his intention of postponing the declaration of his intentions till after the adjournment. The House would meet, he said, on that day week, and then he would make his official statement. This communication he made very curtly, and in a manner that was thought by some to be almost insolent to the House. It was known that he had been grievously disappointed by the result of the debate—not probably having expected a majority since his adversary's strategy had been declared, but always hoping that the deserters from his own standard would be very few. The deserters had been very many, and Mr. Daubeny was majestic in his wrath.

Nothing, however, could be done till after Easter. The Ratlers of the Liberal party were very angry at the delay, declaring that it would have been much to the advantage of the country at large that the vacation week should have been used for constructing a Liberal Cabinet. This work of construction always takes time, and delays the business of the country. No one can have known better than did Mr. Daubeny how great was the injury of delay, and how advantageously the short holiday might have been used. With a majority of seventy-two against him, there could be no reason why he should not have at once resigned, and advised the Queen to send for Mr. Gresham. Nothing could be worse than his conduct. So said the Liberals, thirsting for office. Mr. Gresham himself did not open his mouth when the announcement was made; nor did any man, marked for future office, rise to denounce the beaten statesman. But one or two independent members expressed their great regret at the unnecessary delay which was to take place before they were informed who was to be the Minister of the Crown. But Mr. Daubeny, as soon as he had made his statement, stalked out of the House, and no reply whatever was made to the independent members. Some few sublime and hot-headed gentlemen muttered the word "impeachment." Others, who were more practical and less dignified, suggested that the Prime Minister "ought to have his head punched."

It thus happened that all the world went out of town that week, so that the Duchess of Omnium was down at Matching when Phineas called at the Duke's house in Carlton Terrace on Friday. With what object he had called he hardly knew himself; but he thought that he intended to assure the Duchess that he was not a candidate for office, and that he must deprecate her interference. Luckily—or unluckily—he did not see her, and he felt that it would be impossible to convey his wishes in a letter. The whole subject was one which would have defied him to find words sufficiently discreet for his object.

The Duke and Duchess of St. Bungay were at Matching for the Easter—as also was Barrington Erle, and also that dreadful Mr. Bonteen, from whose presence the poor Duchess of Omnium could in these days never altogether deliver herself. "Duke," she said, "you know Mr. Finn?"

"Certainly. It was not very long ago that I was talking to him."

"He used to be in office, you remember."

"Oh yes; and a very good beginner he was. Is he a friend of your Grace's?"

"A great friend. I'll tell you what I want you to do. You must have some place found for him."

"My dear Duchess, I never interfere."

"Why, Duke, you've made more Cabinets than any man living."

"I fear, indeed, that I have been at the construction of more Governments than most men. It's forty years ago since Lord Melbourne first did me the honor of consulting me. When asked for advice, my dear, I have very often given it. It has occasionally been my duty to say that I could not myself give my slender assistance to a Ministry unless I were supported by the presence of this or that political friend. But never

in my life have I asked for an appointment as a personal favor; and I am sure you won't be angry with me if I say that I can not begin to do so now."

"But Mr. Finn ought to be there. He did so well before."

"If so, let us presume that he will be there. I can only say, from what little I know of him, that I shall be happy to see him in any office to which the future Prime Minister may consider it to be his duty to appoint him."

"To think," said the Duchess of Omnium afterward to her friend Madame Goesler—"to think that I should have had that stupid old woman a week in the house, and all for nothing!"

"Upon my word, Duchess," said Barrington Erle, "I don't know why it is, but Gresham seems to have taken a dislike to him."

"It's Bonteen's doing."

"Very probably."

"Surely you can get the better of that?"

"I look upon Phineas Finn, Duchess, almost as a child of my own. He has come back to Parliament altogether at my instigation."

"Then you ought to help him."

"And so I would, if I could. Remember I am not the man I used to be when dear old Mr. Mildmay reigned. The truth is, I never interfere now unless I'm asked."

"I believe that every one of you is afraid of Mr. Gresham."

"Perhaps we are."

"I'll tell you what. If he's passed over, I'll make such a row that some of you shall hear it."

"How fond all you women are of Phineas Finn."

"I don't care that for him," said the Duchess, snapping her fingers—"more than I do, that is, for any other mere acquaintance. The man is very well, as most men are."

"Not all."

"No, not all. Some are as little and jealous as a girl in her tenth season. He is a decently good fellow, and he is to be thrown over because—"

"Because of what?"

"I don't choose to name any one. You ought to know all about it, and I do not doubt but you do. Lady Laura Kennedy is your own cousin."

"There is not a spark of truth in all that."

"Of course there is not; and yet he is to be punished. I know very well, Mr. Erle, that if you choose to put your shoulder to the wheel you can manage it; and I shall expect to have it managed."

"Plantagenet," she said the next day to her husband, "I want you to do something for me."

"To do something! What am I to do? It's very seldom you want anything in my line."

"This isn't in your line at all, and yet I want you to do it."

"Ten to one it's beyond my means."

"No, it isn't. I know you can if you like. I suppose you are all sure to be in office within ten days or a fortnight?"

"I can't say, my dear. I have promised Mr. Gresham to be of use to him if I can."

"Every body knows all that. You're going to be Privy Seal, and to work just the same as ever at those horrible two farthings."

"And what is it you want, Glencora?"

"I want you to say that you won't take any

office unless you are allowed to bring in one or two friends with you."

"Why should I do that? I shall not doubt any Cabinet chosen by Mr. Gresham."

"I'm not speaking of the Cabinet; I allude to men in lower offices, lords, and under-secretaries, and vice-people. You know what I mean."

"I never interfere."

"But you must. Other men do continually. It's quite a common thing for a man to insist that one or two others should come in with him."

"Yes. If a man feels that he can not sustain his own position without support, he declines to join the Government without it. But that isn't my case. The friends who are necessary to me in the Cabinet are the very men who will certainly be there. I would join no Government without the Duke; but—"

"Oh, the Duke—the Duke! I hate dukes—and duchesses too. I'm not talking about a duke. I want you to oblige me by making a point with Mr. Gresham that Mr. Finn shall have an office."

"Mr. Finn!"

"Yes, Mr. Finn. I'll explain it all if you wish it."

"My dear Glencora, I never interfere."

"Who does interfere? Every body says the same. Somebody interferes, I suppose. Mr. Gresham can't know every body so well as to be able to fit all the pegs into all the holes without saying a word to any body."

"He would probably speak to Mr. Bonteen."

"Then he would speak to a very disagreeable man, and one I'm as sick of as I ever was of any man I ever knew. If you can't manage this for me, Plantagenet, I shall take it very ill. It's a little thing, and I'm sure you could have it done. I don't very often trouble you by asking for any thing."

The Duke, in his quiet way was an affectionate man and an indulgent husband. On the following morning he was closeted with Mr. Bonteen, two private secretaries, and a leading clerk from the Treasury for four hours, during which they were endeavoring to ascertain whether the commercial world of Great Britain would be ruined or enriched if twelve pennies were declared to contain fifty farthings. The discussion had been grievously burdensome to the minds of the Duke's assistants in it, but he himself had remembered his wife through it all. "By-the-way," he said, whispering into Mr. Bonteen's private ear as he led that gentleman away to lunch, "if we do come in—"

"Oh, we must come in."

"If we do, I suppose something will be done for that Mr. Finn. He spoke well the other night."

Mr. Bonteen's face became very long. "He helped to upset the coach when he was with us before."

"I don't think that that is much against him."

"Is he—a personal friend of your Grace's?"

"No—not particularly. I never care about such things for myself; but Lady Glencora—"

"I think the Duchess can hardly know what has been his conduct to poor Kennedy. There was a most disreputable row at a public-house in London, and I'm told that he behaved—very badly."