

very glad that the case went as it did at Durham," said Mr. Ratler.

"And so am I," said Mr. Roby. "Browborough was always a good fellow."

"Not a doubt about it; and no good could have come from a conviction. I suppose there has been a little money spent at Tankerville."

"And at other places one could mention," said Mr. Roby.

"Of course there has; and money will be spent again. Nobody dislikes bribery more than I do. The House, of course, dislikes it. But if a man loses his seat, surely that is punishment enough."

"It's better to have to draw a check sometimes than to be out in the cold."

"Nevertheless, members would prefer that their seats should not cost them so much," continued Mr. Ratler. "But the thing can't be done all at once. That idea of pouncing upon one man and making a victim of him is very disagreeable to me. I should have been sorry to have seen a verdict against Browborough. You must acknowledge that there was no bitterness in the way in which Grogram did it."

"We all feel that," said Mr. Roby, who was, perhaps, by nature a little more candid than his rival, "and when the time comes no doubt we shall return the compliment."

The matter was discussed in quite a different spirit between two other politicians. "So Sir Gregory has failed at Durham," said Lord Cantrip to his friend, Mr. Gresham.

"I was sure he would."

"And why?"

"Ah—why? How am I to answer such a question? Did you think that Mr. Browborough would be convicted of bribery by a jury?"

"No, indeed," answered Lord Cantrip.

"And can you tell me why?"

"Because there was no earnestness in the matter—either with the Attorney-General or with any one else."

"And yet," said Mr. Gresham, "Grogram is a very earnest man when he believes in his case. No member of Parliament will ever be punished for bribery as for a crime till members of Parliament generally look upon bribery as a crime. We are very far from that as yet. I should have thought a conviction to be a great misfortune."

"Why so?"

"Because it would have created ill-blood, and our own hands in this matter are not a bit cleaner than those of our adversaries. We can't afford to pull their houses to pieces before we have put our own in order. The thing will be done; but it must, I fear, be done slowly—as is the case with all reforms from within."

Phineas Finn, who was very sore and unhappy at this time, and who consequently was much in love with purity and anxious for severity, felt himself personally aggrieved by the acquittal. It was almost tantamount to a verdict against himself. And then he knew so well that bribery had been committed, and was so confident that such a one as Mr. Browborough could have been returned to Parliament by none other than corrupt means! In his present mood he would have been almost glad to see Mr. Browborough at the tread-mill, and would have thought six months' solitary confinement quite inadequate to the offense. "I never read any thing in my life that

disgusted me so much," he said to his friend, Mr. Monk.

"I can't go along with you there."

"If any man ever was guilty of bribery, he was guilty!"

"I don't doubt it for a moment."

"And yet Grogram did not try to get a verdict."

"Had he tried ever so much he would have failed. In a matter such as that—political and not social in its nature—a jury is sure to be guided by what it has, perhaps unconsciously, learned to be the feeling of the country. No disgrace is attached to their verdict, and yet every body knows that Mr. Browborough had bribed; and all those who have looked into it know, too, that the evidence was conclusive."

"Then are the jury all perjured," said Phineas.

"I have nothing to say to that. No stain of perjury clings to them. They are better received in Durham to-day than they would have been had they found Mr. Browborough guilty. In business, as in private life, they will be held to be as trustworthy as before; and they will be, for aught that we know, quite trustworthy. There are still circumstances in which a man, though on his oath, may be untrue with no more stain of falsehood than falls upon him when he denies himself at his front-door though he happen to be at home."

"What must we think of such a condition of things, Mr. Monk?"

"That it's capable of improvement. I do not know that we can think any thing else. As for Sir Gregory Grogram and Baron Boulby and the jury, it would be waste of powder to execrate them. In political matters it is very hard for a man in office to be purer than his neighbors, and when he is so, he becomes troublesome. I have found that out before to-day."

With Lady Laura Kennedy, Phineas did find some sympathy; but then she would have sympathized with him on any subject under the sun. If he would only come to her and sit with her, she would fool him to the top of his bent. He had resolved that he would go to Portman Square as little as possible, and had been confirmed in that resolution by the scandal which had now spread every where about the town in reference to himself and herself. But still he went. He never left her till some promise of returning at some stated time had been extracted from him. He had even told her of his own scruples and of her danger—and they had discussed together that last thunder-bolt which had fallen from the Jove of the *People's Banner*. But she had laughed his caution to scorn. Did she not know herself and her own innocence? Was she not living in her father's house, and with her father? Should she quail beneath the stings and venom of such a reptile as Quintus Slide? "Oh, Phineas," she said, "let us be braver than that." He would much prefer to have staid away, but still he went to her. He was conscious of her dangerous love for him. He knew well that it was not returned. He was aware that it would be best for both that he should be apart. But yet he could not bring himself to wound her by his absence. "I do not see why you should feel it so much," she said, speaking of the trial at Durham.

"We were both on our trial—he and I."

"Every body knows that he bribed and that you did not."

"Yes; and every body despises me and pats him on the back. I am sick of the whole thing. There is no honesty in the life we lead."

"You got your seat, at any rate."

"I wish with all my heart that I had never seen the dirty wretched place," said he.

"Oh, Phineas, do not say that."

"But I do say it. Of what use is the seat to me? If I could only feel that any one knew—"

"Knew what, Phineas?"

"It doesn't matter."

"I understand. I know that you have meant to be honest, while this man has always meant to be dishonest. I know that you have intended to serve your country, and have wished to work for it. But you can not expect that it should all be roses."

"Roses! The nosegays which are worn down at Westminster are made of garlic and dandelions!"

CHAPTER XLV.

SOME PASSAGES IN THE LIFE OF EMILIUS.

THE writer of this chronicle is not allowed to imagine that any of his readers have read the wonderful and vexatious adventures of Lady Eustace, a lady of good birth, of high rank, and of large fortune, who, but a year or two since, became almost a martyr to a diamond necklace which was stolen from her. With her history the present reader has but small concern, but it may be necessary that he should know that the lady in question, who had been a widow with many suitors, at last gave her hand and her fortune to a clergyman whose name was Joseph Emilius. Mr. Emilius, though not an Englishman by birth—and, as was supposed, a Bohemian Jew in the earlier days of his career—had obtained some reputation as a preacher in London, and had moved, if not in fashionable circles, at any rate in circles so near to fashion as to be brought within the reach of Lady Eustace's charms. They were married, and for some few months Mr. Emilius enjoyed a halcyon existence, the delights of which were, perhaps, not materially marred by the necessity which he felt of subjecting his young wife to marital authority. "My dear," he would say, "you will know me better soon, and then things will be smooth." In the mean time he drew more largely upon her money than was pleasing to her and to her friends, and appeared to have requirements for cash which were both secret and unlimited. At the end of twelve months Lady Eustace had run away from him, and Mr. Emilius had made overtures, by accepting which his wife would be enabled to purchase his absence at the cost of half her income. The arrangement was not regarded as being in every respect satisfactory, but Lady Eustace declared passionately that any possible sacrifice would be preferable to the company of Mr. Emilius. There had, however, been a rumor before her marriage that there was still living in his old country a Mrs. Emilius when he married Lady Eustace; and, though it had been supposed by those who were most nearly concerned with Lady Eustace that this report had been unfounded and malicious, nevertheless, when the man's claims became so

exorbitant, reference was again made to the charge of bigamy. If it could be proved that Mr. Emilius had a wife living in Bohemia, a cheaper mode of escape would be found for the persecuted lady than that which he himself had suggested.

It had happened that since her marriage with Mr. Emilius Lady Eustace had become intimate with our Mr. Bonteen and his wife. She had been at one time engaged to marry Lord Fawn, one of Mr. Bonteen's colleagues, and during the various circumstances which had led to the disruption of that engagement, this friendship had been formed. It must be understood that Lady Eustace had a most desirable residence of her own in the country—Portray Castle in Scotland—and that it was thought expedient by many to cultivate her acquaintance. She was rich, beautiful, and clever; and though her marriage with Mr. Emilius had never been looked upon as a success, still, in the estimation of some people, it added an interest to her career. The Bonteens had taken her up, and now both Mr. and Mrs. Bonteen were hot in pursuit of evidence which might prove Mr. Emilius to be a bigamist.

When the disruption of conjugal relations was commenced, Lady Eustace succeeded in obtaining refuge at Portray Castle without the presence of her husband. She fled from London during a visit he made to Brighton with the object of preaching to a congregation by which his eloquence was held in great esteem. He left London in one direction by the 5 P.M. express train on Saturday, and she in the other by the limited mail at 8.45. A telegram, informing him of what had taken place, reached him the next morning at Brighton while he was at breakfast. He preached his sermon, charming the congregation by the graces of his extempore eloquence—moving every woman there to tears—and then was after his wife before the ladies had taken their first glass of sherry at luncheon. But her ladyship had twenty-four hours' start of him—although he did his best; and when he reached Portray Castle the door was shut in his face. He endeavored to obtain the aid of blacksmiths to open, as he said, his own hall door—to obtain the aid of constables to compel the blacksmiths, of magistrates to compel the constables—and even of a judge to compel the magistrates; but he was met on every side by a statement that the lady of the castle declared that she was not his wife, and that therefore he had no right whatever to demand that the door should be opened. Some other woman—so he was informed that the lady said—out in a strange country was really his wife. It was her intention to prove him to be a bigamist, and to have him locked up. In the mean time she chose to lock herself up in her own mansion. Such was the nature of the message that was delivered to him through the bars of the lady's castle.

How poor Lady Eustace was protected, and, at the same time, made miserable by the energy and unrestrained language of one of her own servants, Andrew Gowran by name, it hardly concerns us now to inquire. Mr. Emilius did not succeed in effecting an entrance; but he remained for some time in the neighborhood, and had notices served on the tenants in regard to the rents, which puzzled the poor folk round Portray Castle very much. After a while Lady

Eustace, finding that her peace and comfort imperatively demanded that she should prove the allegations which she had made, fled again from Portray Castle to London, and threw herself into the hands of the Bonteens. This took place just as Mr. Bonteen's hopes in regard to the Chancellorship of the Exchequer were beginning to soar high, and when his hands were very full of business. But with that energy for which he was so conspicuous Mr. Bonteen had made a visit to Bohemia during his short Christmas holidays, and had there set people to work. When at Prague he had, he thought, very nearly unraveled the secret himself. He had found the woman whom he believed to be Mrs. Emilius, and who was now living somewhat merrily in Prague under another name. She acknowledged that in old days, when they were both young, she had been acquainted with a certain Yosef Mealyus, at a time in which he had been in the employment of a Jewish money-lender in the city; but, as she declared, she had never been married to him. Mr. Bonteen learned also that the gentleman now known as Mr. Joseph Emilius of the London Chapel had been known in his own country as Josef Mealyus, the name which had been borne by the very respectable Jew who was his father. Then Mr. Bonteen had returned home, and, as we all know, had become engaged in matters of deeper import than even the deliverance of Lady Eustace from her thralldom.

Mr. Emilius made no attempt to obtain the person of his wife while she was under Mr. Bonteen's custody, but he did renew his offer to compromise. If the estate could not afford to give him the two thousand a year which he had first demanded, he would take fifteen hundred. He explained all this personally to Mr. Bonteen, who condescended to see him. He was very eager to make Mr. Bonteen understand how bad even then would be his condition. Mr. Bonteen was, of course, aware that he would have to pay very heavily for insuring his wife's life. He was piteous, argumentative, and at first gentle; but when Mr. Bonteen somewhat rashly told him that the evidence of a former marriage and of the present existence of the former wife would certainly be forth-coming, he defied Mr. Bonteen and his evidence, and swore that if his claims were not satisfied, he would make use of the power which the English law gave him for the recovery of his wife's person. And as to her property, it was his, not hers. From this time forward, if she wanted to separate herself from him she must ask him for an allowance. Now, it certainly was the case that Lady Eustace had married the man without any sufficient precaution as to keeping her money in her own hands, and Mr. Emilius had insisted that the rents of the property which was hers for her life should be paid to him, and on his receipt only. The poor tenants had been noticed this way and noticed that, till they had begun to doubt whether their safest course would not be to keep their rents in their own hands. But lately the lawyers of the Eustace family, who were not, indeed, very fond of Lady Eustace personally, came forward for the sake of the property, and guaranteed the tenants against all proceedings until the question of the legality of the marriage should be settled. So Mr. Emilius—or the Reverend Mealyus, as every body now called him—went to law; and Lady Eustace went to

law; and the Eustace family went to law; but still, as yet, no evidence was forth-coming sufficient to enable Mr. Bonteen as the lady's friend to put the gentleman into prison.

It was said for a while that Mealyus had absconded. After his interview with Mr. Bonteen he certainly did leave England and made a journey to Prague. It was thought that he would not return, and that Lady Eustace would be obliged to carry on the trial which was to liberate her and her property in his absence. She was told that the very fact of his absence would go far with a jury, and she was glad to be freed from his presence in England. But he did return, declaring aloud that he would have his rights. His wife should be made to put herself into his hands, and he would obtain possession of the income which was his own. People then began to doubt. It was known that a very clever lawyer's clerk had been sent to Prague to complete the work there which Mr. Bonteen had commenced. But the clerk did not come back as soon as was expected, and news arrived that he had been taken ill. There was a rumor that he had been poisoned at his hotel; but, as the man was not said to be dead, people hardly believed the rumor. It became necessary, however, to send another lawyer's clerk, and the matter was gradually progressing to a very interesting complication.

Mr. Bonteen, to tell the truth, was becoming sick of it. When Emilius, or Mealyus, was supposed to have absconded, Lady Eustace left Mr. Bonteen's house, and located herself at one of the large London hotels; but when the man came back, bolder than ever, she again betook herself to the shelter of Mr. Bonteen's roof. She expressed the most lavish affection for Mrs. Bonteen, and professed to regard Mr. Bonteen as almost a political god, declaring her conviction that he, and he alone, as Prime Minister, could save the country, and became very loud in her wrath when he was robbed of his seat in the Cabinet. Lizzie Eustace, as her ladyship had always been called, was a clever, pretty, coaxing little woman, who knew how to make the most of her advantages. She had not been very wise in her life, having lost the friends who would have been truest to her, and confided in persons who had greatly injured her. She was neither true of heart or tongue, nor affectionate, nor even honest. But she was engaging, she could flatter, and could assume a reverential admiration which was very foreign to her real character. In these days she almost worshiped Mr. Bonteen, and could never be happy except in the presence of her dearest darling friend, Mrs. Bonteen. Mr. Bonteen was tired of her, and Mrs. Bonteen was becoming almost sick of the constant kisses with which she was greeted; but Lizzie Eustace had got hold of them, and they could not turn her off.

"You saw the *People's Banner*, Mrs. Bonteen, on Monday?" Lady Eustace had been reading the paper in her friend's drawing-room. "They seem to think that Mr. Bonteen must be Prime Minister before long."

"I don't think he expects that, my dear."

"Why not? Every body says the *People's Banner* is the cleverest paper we have now. I always hated the very name of that Phineas Finn."

"Did you know him?"

"Not exactly. He was gone before my time;

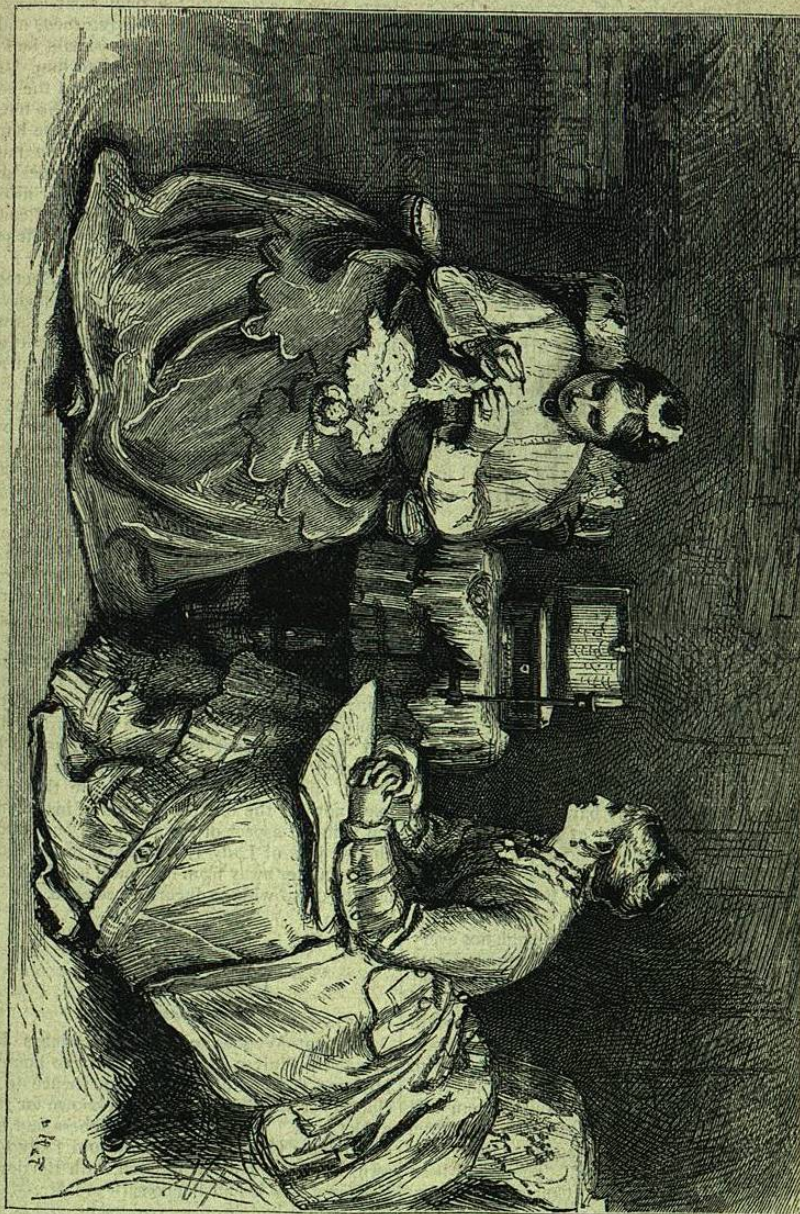
but poor Lord Fawn used to talk of him. He was one of those conceited Irish upstarts that are never good for any thing."

"Very handsome, you know," said Mrs. Bonteen.

"And is it true that it was he who got Mr. Bonteen so shamefully used?"

"It was his faction."

"I do so hate that kind of thing," said Lady Eustace, with righteous indignation; "I used to



"I ALWAYS HATED THE VERY NAME OF THAT PHINEAS FINN."

"Was he? I have heard it said that a good many ladies admired him."

"It was quite absurd; with Lady Laura Kennedy it was worse than absurd. And there was Lady Glencora, and Violet Effingham, who married Lady Laura's brother, and that Madame Goesler, whom I hate, and ever so many others."

hear a great deal about Government and all that when the affair was on between me and poor Lord Fawn, and that kind of dishonesty always disgusted me. I don't know that I think so much of Mr. Gresham after all."

"He is a very weak man."

"His conduct to Mr. Bonteen has been out-

rageous; and if he has done it just because that Duchess of Omnium has told him, I really do think that he is not fit to rule the nation. As for Mr. Phineas Finn, it is dreadful to think that a creature like that should be able to interfere with such a man as Mr. Bonteen."

This was on Wednesday afternoon—the day on which members of Parliament dine out—and at that moment Mr. Bonteen entered the drawing-room, having left the House for his half-holiday at six o'clock. Lady Eustace got up, and gave him her hand, and smiled upon him as though he were indeed her god. "You look so tired and so worried, Mr. Bonteen."

"Worried! I should think so."

"Is there any thing fresh?" asked his wife.

"That fellow Finn is spreading all manner of lies about me."

"What lies, Mr. Bonteen?" asked Lady Eustace. "Not new lies, I hope."

"It all comes from Carlton Terrace." The reader may perhaps remember that the young Duchess of Omnium lived in Carlton Terrace. "I can trace it all there. I won't stand it if it goes on like this. A clique of stupid women to take up the cudgels for a coal-heaving sort of fellow like that, and sting one like a lot of hornets! Would you believe it?—the Duke almost refused to speak to me just now—a man for whom I have been working like a slave for the last twelve months!"

"I would not stand it," said Lady Eustace.

"By-the-bye, Lady Eustace, we have had news from Prague."

"What news?" said she, clasping her hands.

"That fellow Pratt we sent out is dead."

"No!"

"Not a doubt but what he was poisoned; but they seem to think that nothing can be proved. Coulson is on his way out, and I shouldn't wonder if they served him the same."

"And it might have been you!" said Lady Eustace, taking hold of her friend's arm with almost frantic affection.

Yes, indeed. It might have been the lot of Mr. Bonteen to have died at Prague—to have been poisoned by the machinations of the former Mrs. Mealyus, if such really had been the fortune of the unfortunate Mr. Pratt. For he had been quite as busy at Prague as his successor in the work. He had found out much, though not every thing. It certainly had been believed that Yosef Mealyus was a married man, but he had brought the woman with him to Prague, and had certainly not married her in the city. She was believed to have come from Cracow, and Mr. Bonteen's zeal on behalf of his friend had not been sufficient to carry him so far East. But he had learned from various sources that the man and woman had been supposed to be married, that she had borne the man's name, and that he had taken upon himself authority as her husband. There had been written communications with Cracow, and information was received that a man of the name of Yosef Mealyus had been married to a Jewess in that town. But this had been twenty years ago, and Mr. Emilius professed himself to be only thirty-five years old, and had in his possession a document from his synagogue professing to give a record of his birth, proving such to be his age. It was also ascertained that Mealyus was a name common at Cracow, and that there were very

many of the family in Galicia. Altogether the case was full of difficulty, but it was thought that Mr. Bonteen's evidence would be sufficient to save the property from the hands of the cormorant, at any rate till such time as better evidence of the first marriage could be obtained. It had been hoped that when the man went away he would not return, but he had returned, and it was now resolved that no terms should be kept with him and no payment offered to him. The house at Portray was kept barred, and the servants were ordered not to admit him. No money was to be paid to him, and he was to be left to take any proceedings at law which he might please, while his adversaries were proceeding against him with all the weapons at their disposal. In the mean time his chapel was of course deserted, and the unfortunate man was left penniless in the world.

Various opinions prevailed as to Mr. Bonteen's conduct in the matter. Some people remembered that during the last autumn he and his wife had staid three months at Portray Castle, and declared that the friendship between them and Lady Eustace had been very useful. Of these malicious people it seemed to be, moreover, the opinion that the connection might become even more useful if Mr. Emilius could be discharged. It was true that Mrs. Bonteen had borrowed a little money from Lady Eustace, but of this her husband knew nothing till the Jew in his wrath made the thing public. After all, it had only been a poor £25, and the money had been repaid before Mr. Bonteen took his journey to Prague. Mr. Bonteen was, however, unable to deny that the cost of that journey was defrayed by Lady Eustace, and it was thought mean in a man aspiring to be Chancellor of the Exchequer to have his traveling expenses paid for him by a lady. Many, however, were of opinion that Mr. Bonteen had been almost romantic in his friendship, and that the bright eyes of Lady Eustace had produced upon this dragon of business the wonderful effect that was noticed. Be that as it may, now, in the terrible distress of his mind at the political aspect of the times, he had become almost sick of Lady Eustace, and would gladly have sent her away from his house had he known how to do so without incurring censure.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE QUARREL.

On that Wednesday evening Phineas Finn was at the Universe. He dined at the house of Madame Goesler, and went from thence to the club in better spirits than he had known for some weeks past. The Duke and Duchess had been at Madame Goesler's, and Lord and Lady Chiltern, who were now up in town, with Barrington Erle, and—as it had happened—old Mr. Maule. The dinner had been very pleasant, and two or three words had been spoken which had tended to raise the heart of our hero. In the first place, Barrington Erle had expressed a regret that Phineas was not at his old post at the Colonies, and the young Duke had re-echoed it. Phineas thought that the manner of his old friend Erle was more cordial to him than it had been lately, and even that comforted him. Then it was a de-

light to him to meet the Chilterns, who were always gracious to him. But perhaps his greatest pleasure came from the reception which was accorded by his hostess to Mr. Maule, which was of a nature not easy to describe. It had become evident to Phineas that Mr. Maule was constant in his attentions to Madame Goesler, and, though he had no purpose of his own in reference to the lady, though he was aware that former circumstances—circumstances of that previous life to which he was accustomed to look back as to another existence—made it impossible that he should have any such purpose, still he viewed Mr. Maule with dislike. He had once ventured to ask her whether she really liked "that old padded dandy." She had answered that she did like the old dandy. Old dandies, she thought, were preferable to old men who did not care how they looked; and as for the padding, that was his affair, not hers. She did not know why a man should not have a pad in his coat, as well as a woman one at the back of her head. But Phineas had known that this was her gentle raillery, and now he was delighted to find that she continued it, after a still more gentle fashion, before the man's face. Mr. Maule's manner was certainly peculiar. He was more than ordinarily polite, and was afterward declared by the Duchess to have made love like an old gander. But Madame Goesler, who knew exactly how to receive such attentions, turned a glance now and then upon Phineas Finn, which he could now read with absolute precision. "You see how I can dispose of a padded old dandy directly he goes an inch too far." No words could have said that to him more plainly than did these one or two glances; and, as he had learned to dislike Mr. Maule, he was gratified.

Of course they all talked about Lady Eustace and Mr. Emilius. "Do you remember how intensely interested the dear old Duke used to be when we none of us knew what had become of the diamonds?" said the Duchess.

"And how you took her part," said Madame Goesler.

"So did you, just as much as I; and why not? She was a most interesting young woman, and I sincerely hope we have not got to the end of her yet. The worst of it is that she has got into such—very bad hands. The Bonteens have taken her up altogether. Do you know her, Mr. Finn?"

"No, Duchess; and am hardly likely to make her acquaintance while she remains where she is now." The Duchess laughed and nodded her head. All the world knew by this time that she had declared herself to be the sworn enemy of the Bonteens.

And there had been some conversation on that terribly difficult question respecting the foxes in Trumpet Wood. "The fact is, Lord Chiltern," said the Duke, "I'm as ignorant as a child. I would do right if I knew how. What ought I to do? Shall I import some foxes?"

"I don't suppose, Duke, that in all England there is a spot in which foxes are more prone to breed."

"Indeed. I'm very glad of that. But something goes wrong afterward, I fear."

"The nurseries are not well managed, perhaps," said the Duchess.

"Gypsy kidnapers are allowed about the place," said Madame Goesler.

"Gypsies!" exclaimed the Duke.

"Poachers!" said Lord Chiltern. "But it isn't that we mind. We could deal with that ourselves if the woods were properly managed. A head of game and foxes can be reared together very well, if—"

"I don't care a straw for a head of game, Lord Chiltern. As far as my own tastes go, I would wish that there was neither a pheasant nor a partridge nor a hare on any property that I own. I think that sheep, and barn-door fowls do better for every body in the long-run, and that men who can not live without shooting should go beyond thickly populated regions to find it. And, indeed, for myself, I must say the same about foxes. They do not interest me, and I fancy that they will gradually be exterminated."

"God forbid!" exclaimed Lord Chiltern.

"But I do not find myself called upon to exterminate them myself," continued the Duke. "The number of men who amuse themselves by riding after one fox is too great for me to wish to interfere with them. And I know that my neighbors in the country conceive it to be my duty to have foxes for them. I will oblige them, Lord Chiltern, as far as I can without detriment to other duties."

"You leave it to me," said the Duchess to her neighbor, Lord Chiltern. "I'll speak to Mr. Fothergill myself, and have it put right." It unfortunately happened, however, that Lord Chiltern got a letter the very next morning from old Doggett telling him that a litter of young cubs had been destroyed that week in Trumpet Wood.

Barrington Erle and Phineas went off to the Universe together, and as they went the old terms of intimacy seemed to be re-established between them. "Nobody can be so sorry as I am," said Barrington, "at the manner in which things have gone. When I wrote to you, of course I thought it certain that, if we came in, you would come with us."

"Do not let that fret you."

"But it does fret me—very much. There are so many slips that of course no one can answer for any thing."

"Of course not. I know who has been my friend."

"The joke of it is that he himself is at present so utterly friendless. The Duke will hardly speak to him. I know that as a fact. And Gresham has begun to find something is wrong. We all hoped that he would refuse to come in without a seat in the Cabinet; but that was too good to be true. They say he talks of resigning. I shall believe it when I see it. He'd better not play any tricks, for if he did resign, it would be accepted at once." Phineas when he heard this could not help thinking how glorious it would be if Mr. Bonteen were to resign, and if the place so vacated, or some vacancy so occasioned, were to be filled by him!

They reached the club together, and as they went up the stairs, they heard the hum of many voices in the room. "All the world and his wife are here to-night," said Phineas. They overtook a couple of men at the door, so that there was something of the bustle of a crowd as they entered. There was a difficulty in finding places in which to put their coats and hats, for the accommodation of the Universe is not great. There was a knot of men talking not far from

them, and among the voices Phineas could clearly hear that of Mr. Bonteen. Ratler's he had heard before, and also Fitzgibbon's, though he had not distinguished any words from them. But those spoken by Mr. Bonteen he did distinguish very plainly. "Mr. Phineas Finn, or some such fellow as that, would be after her at once," said Mr. Bonteen. Then Phineas walked immediately among the knot of men and showed himself. As soon as he heard his name mentioned, he doubted for a moment what he would do. Mr. Bonteen when speaking had not known of his presence, and it might be his duty not to seem to have listened. But the speech had been made aloud, in the open room—so that those who chose might listen; and Phineas could not but have heard it. In that moment he resolved that he was bound to take notice of what he had heard. "What is it, Mr. Bonteen, that Phineas Finn will do?" he asked.

Mr. Bonteen had been—dining. He was not a man by any means habitually intemperate, and now any one saying that he was tipsy would have maligned him. But he was flushed with much wine, and he was a man whose arrogance in that condition was apt to become extreme. "In vino veritas!" The sober devil can hide his cloven hoof; but when the devil drinks, he loses his cunning and grows honest. Mr. Bonteen looked Phineas full in the face a second or two before he answered, and then said, quite aloud, "You have crept upon us unawares, Sir."

"What do you mean by that, Sir?" said Phineas. "I have come in as any other man comes."

"Listeners, at any rate, never hear any good of themselves."

Then there were present among those assembled clear indications of disapproval of Bonteen's conduct. In these days, when no palpable and immediate punishment is at hand for personal insolence from man to man, personal insolence to one man in a company seems almost to constitute an insult to every one present. When men could fight readily, an arrogant word or two between two known to be hostile to each other was only an invitation to a duel, and the angry man was doing that for which it was known that he could be made to pay. There was, or it was often thought that there was, a real spirit in the angry man's conduct, and they who were his friends before became perhaps more his friends when he had thus shown that he had an enemy. But a different feeling prevails at present—a feeling so different that we may almost say that a man in general society can not speak even roughly to any but his intimate comrades without giving offense to all around him. Men have learned to hate the nuisance of a row, and to feel that their comfort is endangered if a man prone to rows gets among them. Of all candidates at a club a known quarreler is more sure of black-balls now than even in the times when such a one provoked duels. Of all bores he is the worst; and there is always an unexpressed feeling that such a one exacts more from his company than his share of attention. This is so strong that too often the man quarreled with, though he be as innocent as was Phineas on the present occasion, is made subject to the general aversion which is felt for men who misbehave themselves.

"I wish to hear no good of myself from you,"

said Phineas, following him to his seat. "Who is it that you said—I should be after?" The room was full, and every one there, even they who had come in with Phineas, knew that Lady Eustace was the woman. Every body at present was talking about Lady Eustace.

"Never mind," said Barrington Erle, taking him by the arm. "What's the use of a row?"

"No use at all; but if you heard your name mentioned in such a manner you would find it impossible to pass it over. There is Mr. Monk; ask him."

Mr. Monk was sitting very quietly in a corner of the room with another gentleman of his own age by him, one devoted to literary pursuits and a constant attendant at the Universe. As he said afterward, he had never known any unpleasantness of that sort in the club before. There were many men of note in the room. There was a foreign Minister, a member of the Cabinet, two ex-members of the Cabinet, a great poet, an exceedingly able editor, two earls, two members of the Royal Academy, the president of a learned society, a celebrated professor, and it was expected that Royalty might come in at any minute, speak a few benign words, and blow a few clouds of smoke. It was abominable that the harmony of such a meeting should be interrupted by the vinous insolence of Mr. Bonteen, and the useless wrath of Phineas Finn. "Really, Mr. Finn, if I were you I would let it drop," said the gentleman devoted to literary pursuits.

Phineas did not much affect the literary gentleman, but in such a matter would prefer the advice of Mr. Monk to that of any man living. He again appealed to his friend. "You heard what was said?"

"I heard Mr. Bonteen remark that you or somebody like you would in certain circumstances be after a certain lady. I thought it to be an ill-judged speech, and as your particular friend I heard it with great regret."

"What a row about nothing!" said Mr. Bonteen, rising from his seat. "We were speaking of a very pretty woman, and I was saying that some young fellow generally supposed to be fond of pretty women would soon be after her. If that offends your morals you must have become very strict of late."

There was something in the explanation which, though very bad and vulgar, it was almost impossible not to accept. Such at least was the feeling of those who stood around Phineas Finn. He himself knew that Mr. Bonteen had intended to assert that he would be after the woman's money, and not her beauty; but he had taste enough to perceive that he could not descend to any such detail as that. "There are reasons, Mr. Bonteen," he said, "why I think you should abstain from mentioning my name in public. Your playful references should be made to your friends, and not to those who, to say the least of it, are not your friends."

When the matter was discussed afterward it was thought that Phineas Finn should have abstained from making the last speech. It was certainly evidence of great anger on his part. And he was very angry. He knew that he had been insulted, and insulted by the man whom of all men he would feel most disposed to punish for any offense. He could not allow Mr. Bonteen to have the last word, especially as a certain

amount of success had seemed to attend them. Fate at the moment was so far propitious to Phineas that outward circumstances saved him from any immediate reply, and thus left him in some degree triumphant. Expected Royalty arrived, and cast its salutary oil upon the troubled waters. The Prince, with some well-known popular attendant, entered the room, and for a moment every gentleman rose from his chair. It was but for a moment, and then the Prince became as any other gentleman, talking to his friends. One or two there present, who had perhaps peculiarly royal instincts, had crept up toward him so as to make him the centre of a little knot, but otherwise conversation went on much as it had done before the unfortunate arrival of Phineas. That quarrel, however, had been very distinctly trodden under foot by the Prince, for Mr. Bonteen had found himself quite incapacitated from throwing back any missile in reply to the last that had been hurled at him.

Phineas took a vacant seat next to Mr. Monk—who was deficient, perhaps, in royal instincts—and asked him in a whisper his opinion of what had taken place. "Do not think any more of it," said Mr. Monk.

"That is so much more easily said than done. How am I not to think of it?"

"Of course I mean that you are to act as though you had forgotten it."

"Did you ever know a more gratuitous insult? Of course he was talking of that Lady Eustace."

"I had not been listening to him before, but no doubt he was. I need not tell you now what I think of Mr. Bonteen. He is not more gracious in my eyes than he is in yours. To-night I fancy he has been drinking, which has not improved him. You may be sure of this, Phineas, that the less of resentful anger you show in such a wretched affair as took place just now, the more will be the blame attached to him, and the less to you."

"Why should any blame be attached to me?"

"I don't say that any will, unless you allow yourself to become loud and resentful. The thing is not worth your anger."

"I am angry."

"Then go to bed at once, and sleep it off. Come with me, and we'll walk home together."

"It isn't the proper thing, I fancy, to leave the room while the Prince is here."

"Then I must do the improper thing," said Mr. Monk. "I haven't a key, and I mustn't keep my servant up any longer. A quiet man like me can creep out without notice. Good-night, Phineas, and take my advice about this. If you can't forget it, act and speak and look as though you had forgotten it." Then Mr. Monk, without much creeping, left the room.

The club was very full, and there was a clatter of voices, and the clatter round the Prince was the noisiest and merriest. Mr. Bonteen was there, of course, and Phineas as he sat alone could hear him as he edged his words in upon the royal ears. Every now and again there was a royal joke, and then Mr. Bonteen's laughter was conspicuous. As far as Phineas could distinguish the sounds no special amount of the royal attention was devoted to Mr. Bonteen. That very able editor, and one of the Academicians, and the poet, seemed to be the most honored, and when the Prince went—which he did when

his cigar was finished—Phineas observed with inward satisfaction that the royal hand, which was given to the poet, to the editor, and to the painter, was not extended to the President of the Board of Trade. And then, having taken delight in this, he accused himself of meanness in having even observed a matter so trivial. Soon after this a ruck of men left the club, and then Phineas rose to go. As he went down the stairs Barrington Erle followed him with Laurence Fitzgibbon, and the three stood for a moment at the door in the street talking to each other. Finn's way lay eastward from the club, whereas both Erle and Fitzgibbon would go westward toward their homes. "How well the Prince behaves at these sort of places!" said Erle.

"Princes ought to behave well," said Phineas.

"Somebody else didn't behave very well—eh, Finn, my boy?" said Laurence.

"Somebody else, as you call him," replied Phineas, "is very unlike a prince, and never does behave well. To-night, however, he surpassed himself."

"Don't bother your mind about it, old fellow," said Barrington.

"I tell you what it is, Erle," said Phineas.

"I don't think that I'm a vindictive man by nature, but with that man I mean to make it even some of these days. You know as well as I do what it is he has done to me, and you know also whether I have deserved it. Wretched reptile that he is! He has pretty nearly been able to ruin me—and all from some petty feeling of jealousy."

"Finn, my boy, don't talk like that," said Laurence.

"You shouldn't show your hand," said Barrington.

"I know what you mean, and it's all very well. After your different fashions you two have been true to me, and I don't care how much you see of my hand. That man's insolence angers me to such an extent that I can not refrain from speaking out. He hasn't spirit enough to go out with me, or I would shoot him."

"Blankenberg, eh?" said Laurence, alluding to the now notorious duel which had once been fought in that place between Phineas and Lord Chiltern.

"I would," continued the angry man. "There are times in which one is driven to regret that there has come an end to dueling, and there is left to one no immediate means of resenting an injury."

As they were speaking, Mr. Bonteen came out from the front-door alone, and, seeing the three men standing, passed on toward the left, eastward. "Good-night, Erle," he said; "good-night, Fitzgibbon." The two men answered him, and Phineas stood back in the gloom. It was about one o'clock, and the night was very dark. "By George, I do dislike that man!" said Phineas. Then, with a laugh, he took a life-preserver out of his pocket, and made an action with it as though he were striking some enemy over the head. In those days there had been much garroting in the streets, and writers in the Press had advised those who walked about at night to go armed with sticks. Phineas Finn had himself been once engaged with garroters—as has been told in a former chronicle—and had since armed himself, thinking more probably of