

the thing which he had happened to see than men do who had only heard of it. As soon as he had spoken, he followed Mr. Bonteen down the street, at the distance of perhaps a couple of hundred yards.

"They won't have a row, will they?" said Erle.
 "Oh dear, no; Finn won't think of speaking to him; and you may be sure that Bonteen won't say a word to Finn. Between you and me, Barrington, I wish Master Phineas would give him a thorough good hiding."

CHAPTER XLVII.

WHAT CAME OF THE QUARREL.

On the next morning at seven o'clock a superintendent of police called at the house of Mr. Gresham, and informed the Prime Minister that Mr. Bonteen, the President of the Board of Trade, had been murdered during the night. There was no doubt of the fact. The body had been recognized, and information had been taken to the unfortunate widow at the house Mr. Bonteen had occupied in St. James's Place. The superintendent had already found out that Mr. Bonteen had been attacked as he was returning from his club late at night, or, rather, early in the morning, and expressed no doubt that he had been murdered close to the spot on which his body was found. There is a dark, uncanny-looking passage running from the end of Bolton Row, in May Fair, between the gardens of two great noblemen, coming out among the mews in Berkeley Street, at the corner of Berkeley Square, just opposite to the bottom of Hay Hill. It was on the steps leading up from the passage to the level of the ground above that the body was found. The passage was almost as near a way as any from the club to Mr. Bonteen's house in St. James's Place; but the superintendent declared that gentlemen but seldom used the passage after dark, and he was disposed to think that the unfortunate man must have been forced down the steps by the ruffian who had attacked him from the level above. The murderer, so thought the superintendent, must have been cognizant of the way usually taken by Mr. Bonteen, and must have lain in wait for him in the darkness of the mouth of the passage. The superintendent had been at work on his inquiries since four in the morning, and had heard from Lady Eustace—and from Mrs. Bonteen, as far as that poor distracted woman had been able to tell her story—some account of the cause of quarrel between the respective husbands of those two ladies. The officer, who had not as yet heard a word of the late disturbance between Mr. Bonteen and Phineas Finn, was strongly of opinion that the Reverend Mr. Emilius had been the murderer. Mr. Gresham, of course, coincided in that opinion. What steps had been taken as to the arrest of Mr. Emilius? The superintendent was of opinion that Mr. Emilius was already in custody. He was known to be lodging close to the Marylebone Work-house, in Northumberland Street, having removed to that somewhat obscure neighborhood as soon as his house in Lowndes Square had been broken up by the running away of his wife and his consequent want of means. Such was the story as told to the Prime Minister at seven o'clock in the morning.

At eleven o'clock, at his private room at the Treasury Chambers, Mr. Gresham heard much more. At that time there were present with him two officers of the police force, his colleagues in the Cabinet, Lord Cantrip, and the Duke of Omnium, three of his junior colleagues in the Government, Lord Fawn, Barrington Erle, and Laurence Fitzgibbon, and Major Mackintosh, the chief of the London police. It was not exactly part of the duty of Mr. Gresham to investigate the circumstances of this murder; but there was so much in it that brought it closely home to him and his Government that it became impossible for him not to concern himself in the business. There had been so much talk about Mr. Bonteen lately, his name had been so common in the newspapers, the ill usage which he had been supposed by some to have suffered had been so freely discussed, and his quarrel, not only with Phineas Finn, but subsequently with the Duke of Omnium, had been so widely known, that his sudden death created more momentary excitement than might probably have followed that of a greater man. And now, too, the facts of the past night, as they became known, seemed to make the crime more wonderful, more exciting, more momentous, than it would have been had it been brought clearly home to such a wretch as the Bohemian Jew, Yosef Mealyus, who had contrived to cheat that wretched Lizzie Eustace into marrying him.

As regarded Yosef Mealyus, the story now told respecting him was this. He was already in custody. He had been found in bed at his lodgings between seven and eight, and had, of course, given himself up without difficulty. He had seemed to be horror-struck when he heard of the man's death, but had openly expressed his joy. "He has endeavored to ruin me, and has done me a world of harm. Why should I sorrow for him?" he said to the policeman when rebuked for his inhumanity. But nothing had been found tending to implicate him in the crime. The servant declared that he had gone to bed before eleven o'clock, to her knowledge—for she had seen him there—and that he had not left the house afterward. Was he in possession of a latch-key? It appeared that he did usually carry a latch-key, but that it was often borrowed from him by members of the family when it was known that he would not want it himself, and that it had been so lent on this night. It was considered certain by those in the house that he had not gone out after he went to bed. Nobody, in fact, had left the house after ten; but, in accordance with his usual custom, Mr. Emilius had sent down the key as soon as he had found that he would not want it, and it had been all night in the custody of the mistress of the establishment. Nevertheless, his clothes were examined minutely, but without affording any evidence against him. That Mr. Bonteen had been killed with some blunt weapon, such as a life-preserver, was assumed by the police, but no such weapon was in the possession of Mr. Emilius, nor had any such weapon yet been found. He was, however, in custody, with no evidence against him except that which was afforded by his known and acknowledged enmity to Mr. Bonteen.

So far Major Mackintosh and the two officers had told their story. Then came the united story of the other gentlemen assembled, from hear-

ing which, however, the two police officers were debarred. The Duke and Barrington Erle had both dined in company with Phineas Finn at Madame Goesler's, and the Duke was undoubtedly aware that ill-blood had existed between Finn and Mr. Bonteen. Both Erle and Fitzgibbon described the quarrel at the club, and described also the anger which Finn had expressed against the wretched man as he stood talking at the club door. His gesture of vengeance was remembered and repeated, though both the men who heard it expressed their strongest conviction that the murder had not been committed by him. As Erle remarked, the very expression of such a threat was almost proof that he had not at that moment any intention on his mind of doing such a deed as had been done. But they told also of the life-preserver which Finn had shown them, as he took it from the pocket of his outside coat, and they marveled at the coincidences of the night. Then Lord Fawn gave further evidence, which seemed to tell very hardly upon Phineas Finn. He also had been at the club, and had left it just before Finn and the two other men had clustered at the door. He had walked very slowly, having turned down to Curzon Street and Bolton Row, from whence he made his way into Piccadilly by Clarges Street. He had seen nothing of Mr. Bonteen; but as he crossed over to Clarges Street he was passed at a very rapid pace by a man muffled in a top-coat, who made his way straight along Bolton Row toward the passage which has been described. At the moment he had not connected the person of the man who passed him with any acquaintance of his own; but he now felt sure, after what he had heard, that the man was Mr. Finn. As he passed out of the club Finn was putting on his overcoat, and Lord Fawn had observed the peculiarity of the gray color. It was exactly a similar coat, only with its collar raised, that had passed him in the street. The man, too, was of Mr. Finn's height and build. He had known Mr. Finn well, and the man stepped with Mr. Finn's step. Major Mackintosh thought that Lord Fawn's evidence was—"very unfortunate as regarded Mr. Finn."
 "I'm d—d if that idiot won't hang poor Phineas," said Fitzgibbon afterward to Erle. "And yet I don't believe a word of it."
 "Fawn wouldn't lie for the sake of hanging Phineas Finn," said Erle.

"No; I don't suppose he's given to lying at all. He believes it all. But he's such a muddle-headed fellow that he can get himself to believe any thing. He's one of those men who always unconsciously exaggerate what they have to say for the sake of the importance it gives them." It might be possible that a jury would look at Lord Fawn's evidence in this light; otherwise it would bear very heavily indeed against Phineas Finn.

Then a question arose as to the road which Mr. Bonteen usually took from the club. All the members who were there present had walked home with him at various times, and by various routes, but never by the way through the passage. It was supposed that on this occasion he must have gone by Berkeley Square, because he had certainly not turned down by the first street to the right, which he would have taken had he intended to avoid the square. He had been seen by Barrington Erle and Fitzgibbon to pass that turning.

Otherwise they would have made no remark as to the possibility of a renewed quarrel between him and Phineas, should Phineas chance to overtake him; for Phineas would certainly go by the square unless taken out of his way by some special purpose. The most direct way of all for Mr. Bonteen would have been that followed by Lord Fawn; but as he had not turned down this street, and had not been seen by Lord Fawn, who was known to walk very slowly, and had often been seen to go by Berkeley Square, it was presumed that he had now taken that road. In this case he would certainly pass the end of the passage toward which Lord Fawn declared that he had seen the man hurrying whom he now supposed to have been Phineas Finn. Finn's direct road home would, as has been already said, have been through the square, cutting off the corner of the square, toward Bruton Street, and thence across Bond Street by Conduit Street to Regent Street, and so to Great Marlborough Street, where he lived.

But it had been, no doubt, possible for him to have been on the spot on which Lord Fawn had seen the man; for, although in his natural course thither from the club he would have at once gone down the street to the right—a course which both Erle and Fitzgibbon were able to say that he did not take, as they had seen him go beyond the turning—nevertheless there had been ample time for him to have retraced his steps to it in time to have caught Lord Fawn, and thus to have deceived Fitzgibbon and Erle as to the route he had taken.

When they had got thus far Lord Cantrip was standing close to the window of the room at Mr. Gresham's elbow. "Don't allow yourself to be hurried into believing it," said Lord Cantrip.

"I do not know that we need believe it, or the reverse. It is a case for the police."

"Of course it is; but your belief and mine will have a weight. Nothing that I have heard makes me for a moment think it possible. I know the man."

"He was very angry."

"Had he struck him in the club I should not have been much surprised; but he never attacked his enemy with a bludgeon in a dark alley. I know him well."

"What do you think of Fawn's story?"

"He was mistaken in his man. Remember, it was a dark night."

"I do not see that you and I can do any thing," said Mr. Gresham. "I shall have to say something in the House as to the poor fellow's death, but I certainly shall not express a suspicion. Why should I?"

Up to this moment nothing had been done as to Phineas Finn. It was known that he would, in his natural course of business, be in his place in Parliament at four, and Major Mackintosh was of opinion that he certainly should be taken before a magistrate in time to prevent the necessity of arresting him in the House. It was decided that Lord Fawn, with Fitzgibbon and Erle, should accompany the police officer to Bow Street, and that a magistrate should be applied to for a warrant, if he thought the evidence was sufficient. Major Mackintosh was of opinion that, although by no possibility could the two men suspected have been jointly guilty of the murder, still the circumstances were such as to justify the immediate arrest of both. Were Yosef Mealyus

really guilty, and to be allowed to slip from their hands, no doubt it might be very difficult to catch him. Facts did not at present seem to prevail against him; but, as the Major observed, facts are apt to alter considerably when they are minutely sifted. His character was half sufficient to condemn him; and then with him there was an adequate motive, and what Lord Cantrip regarded as "a possibility." It was not to be conceived that from mere rage Phineas Finn would lay a plot for murdering a man in the street. "It is on the cards, my lord," said the Major, "that he may have chosen to attack Mr. Bonteen without intending to murder him. The murder may afterward have been an accident."

It was impossible after this for even a Prime Minister and two Cabinet Ministers to go about their work calmly. The men concerned had been too well known to them to allow their minds to become clear of the subject. When Major Mackintosh went off to Bow Street with Erle and Laurence, it was certainly the opinion of the majority of those who had been present that the blow had been struck by the hand of Phineas Finn. And perhaps the worst aspect of it all was that there had been not simply a blow, but blows. The constables had declared that the murdered man had been struck thrice about the head, and that the fatal stroke had been given on the side of his head after the man's hat had been knocked off. That Finn should have followed his enemy through the street, after such words as he had spoken, with the view of having the quarrel out in some shape, did not seem to be very improbable to any of them except Lord Cantrip; and then, had there been a scuffle out in the open path, at the spot at which the angry man might have overtaken his adversary, it was not incredible to them that he should have drawn even such a weapon as a life-preserver from his pocket. But, in the case as it had occurred, a spot peculiarly traitorous had been selected, and the attack had too probably been made from behind. As yet there was no evidence that the murderer had himself encountered any ill usage. And Finn, if he was the murderer, must, from the time he was standing at the club door, have contemplated a traitorous, dastardly attack. He must have counted his moments; have returned slyly in the dark to the corner of the street which he had once passed; have muffled his face in his coat; and have then laid wait in a spot to which an honest man at night would hardly trust himself with honest purposes. "I look upon it as quite out of the question," said Lord Cantrip, when the three Ministers were left alone. Now Lord Cantrip had served for many months in the same office as Phineas Finn.

"You are simply putting your own opinion of the man against the facts," said Mr. Gresham. "But facts always convince, and another man's opinion rarely convinces."

"I'm not sure that we know the facts yet," said the Duke.

"Of course we are speaking of them as far as they have been told to us. As far as they go—unless they can be upset and shown not to be facts—I fear they would be conclusive to me on a jury."

"Do you mean that you have heard enough to condemn him?" asked Lord Cantrip.

"Remember what we have heard. The murdered man had two enemies."

"He may have had a third."

"Or ten; but we have heard of but two."

"He may have been attacked for his money," said the Duke.

"But neither his money nor his watch was touched," continued Mr. Gresham. "Anger, or the desire of putting the man out of the way, has caused the murder. Of the two enemies one, according to the facts as we now have them, could not have been there. Nor is it probable that he could have known that his enemy would be on that spot. The other not only could have been there, but was certainly near the place at the moment—so near that, did he not do the deed himself, it is almost wonderful that it should not have been interrupted in its doings by his nearness. He certainly knew that the victim would be there. He was burning with anger against him at the moment. He had just threatened him. He had with him such an instrument as was afterward used. A man believed to be him is seen hurrying to the spot by a witness whose credibility is beyond doubt. These are the facts such as we have them at present. Unless they can be upset, I fear they would convince a jury—as they have already convinced those officers of the police."

"Officers of the police always believe men to be guilty," said Lord Cantrip.

"They don't believe the Jew clergyman to be guilty," said Mr. Gresham.

"I fear that there will be enough to send Mr. Finn to a trial," said the Duke.

"Not a doubt of it," said Mr. Gresham.

"And yet I feel as convinced of his innocence as I do of my own," said Lord Cantrip.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

MR. MAULE'S ATTEMPT.

ABOUT three o'clock in the day the first tidings of what had taken place reached Madame Goesler in the following perturbed note from her friend the Duchess:

"Have you heard what took place last night? Good God! Mr. Bonteen was murdered as he came home from his club, and they say that it was done by Phineas Finn. Plantagenet has just come in from Downing Street, where every body is talking about it. I can't get from him what he believes. One never can get any thing from him. But I never will believe it—nor will you, I'm sure. I vote we stick to him to the last. He is to be put in prison and tried. I can hardly believe that Mr. Bonteen has been murdered, though I don't know why he shouldn't as well as any body else. Plantagenet talks about the great loss; I know which would be the greatest loss, and so do you. I'm going out now to try and find out something. Barrington Erle was there, and if I can find him he will tell me. I shall be home by half past five. Do come, there's a dear woman; there is no one else I can talk to about it. If I'm not back, go in all the same, and tell them to bring you tea.

"Only think of Lady Laura—with one mad, and the other in Newgate!
G. P."

This letter gave Madame Goesler such a blow

that for a few minutes it altogether knocked her down. After reading it once she hardly knew what it contained beyond a statement that Phineas Finn was in Newgate. She sat for a while with it in her hands, almost swooning, and then with an effort she recovered herself, and read the letter again. Mr. Bonteen murdered, and Phineas Finn—who had dined with her only yesterday evening, with whom she had been talking of all the sins of the murdered man, who was her special friend, of whom she thought more than of any other human being, of whom she could not bring herself to cease to think—accused of the murder! Believe it! The Duchess had declared, with that sort of enthusiasm which was common to her, that she never would believe it. No indeed! What judge of character would any one be who could believe that Phineas Finn could be guilty of a midnight murder? "I vote we stick to him." "Stick to him!" Madame Goesler said, repeating the words to herself. "What is the use of sticking to a man who does not want you?" How can a woman cling to a man who, having said that he did not want her, yet comes again within her influence, but does not unsay what he had said before? Nevertheless, if it should be that the man was in real distress—in absolutely dire sorrow—she would cling to him with a constancy which, as she thought, her friend the Duchess would hardly understand. Though they should hang him, she would bathe his body with her tears, and live as a woman should live who had loved a murderer to the last.

But she swore to herself that she would not believe it. Nay, she did not believe it. Believe it, indeed! It was simply impossible. That he might have killed the wretch in some struggle brought on by the man's own fault was possible. Had the man attacked Phineas Finn, it was only too probable that there might have been such result. But murder, secret midnight murder, could not have been committed by the man she had chosen as her friend. And yet, through it all, there was a resolve that even though he should have committed murder, she would be true to him. If it should come to the very worst, then would she declare the intensity of the affection with which she regarded the murderer. As to Mr. Bonteen, what the Duchess said was true enough; why should not he be killed as well as another? In her present frame of mind she felt very little pity for Mr. Bonteen. After a fashion a verdict of "served him right" crossed her mind, as it had doubtless crossed that of the Duchess when she was writing her letter. The man had made himself so obnoxious that it was well that he should be out of the way. But not on that account would she believe that Phineas Finn had murdered him.

Could it be true that the man, after all, was dead? Marvelous reports, and reports marvelously false, do spread themselves about the world every day. But this report had come from the Duke, and he was not a man given to absurd rumors. He had heard the story in Downing Street, and if so, it must be true. Of course she would go down to the Duchess at the hour fixed. It was now a little after three, and she ordered the carriage to be ready for her at a quarter past five. Then she told the servant at first to admit no one who might call, and then to come up and let her know, if any one should come, with-

out sending the visitor away. It might be that some one would come to her expressly from Phineas, or at least with tidings about this affair.

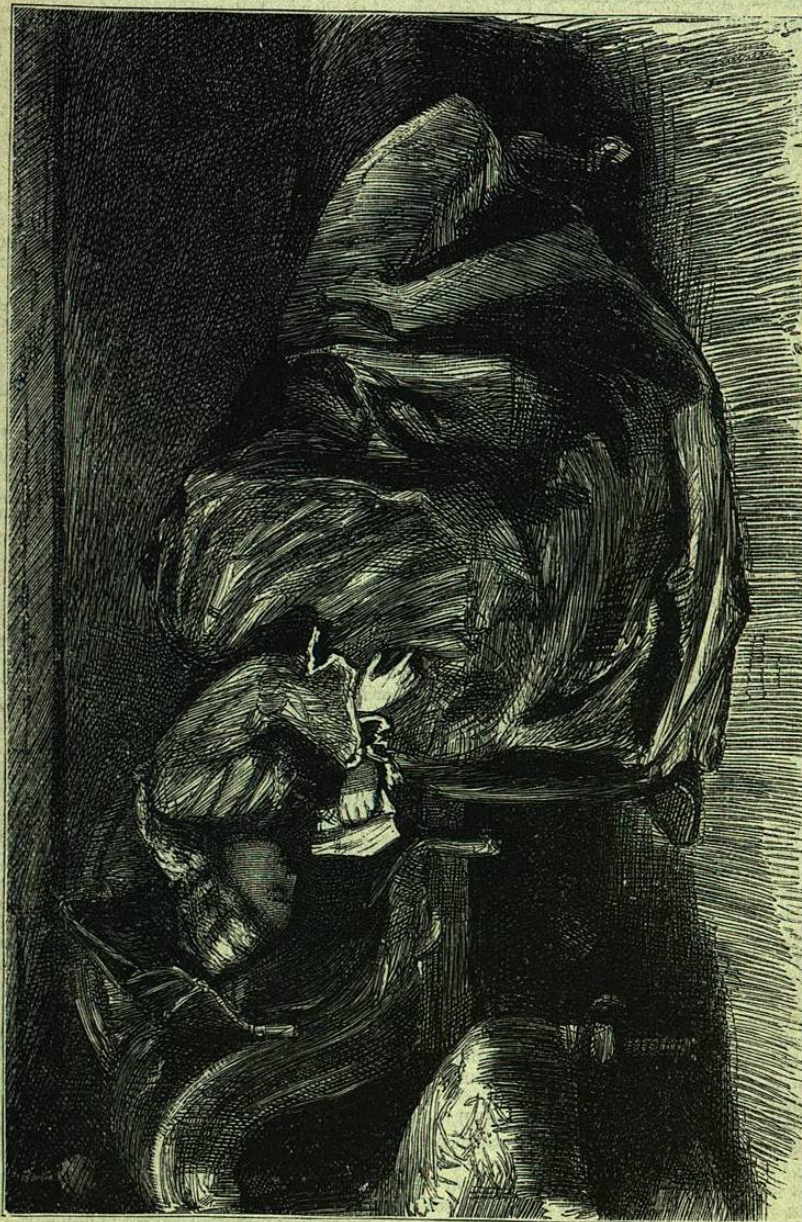
Then she read the letter again, and those few last words in it stuck to her thoughts like a burr. "Think of Lady Laura, with one mad and the other in Newgate!" Was this man—the only man whom she had ever loved—more to Lady Laura Kennedy than to her? or, rather, was Lady Laura more to him than was she herself? If so, why should she fret herself for his sake? She was ready enough to own that she could sacrifice every thing for him, even though he should be standing as a murderer in the dock, if such sacrifice would be valued by him. He had himself told her that his feelings toward Lady Laura were simply those of an affectionate friend; but how could she believe that statement when all the world were saying the reverse? Lady Laura was a married woman—a woman whose husband was still living—and of course he was bound to make such an assertion when he and she were named together. And then it was certain—Madame Goesler believed it to be certain—that there had been a time in which Phineas had asked for the love of Lady Laura Standish. But he had never asked for her love. It had been tendered to him, and he had rejected it! And now the Duchess—who, with all her inaccuracies, had that sharpness of vision which enables some men and women to see into facts—spoke as though Lady Laura were to be pitied more than all others, because of the evil that had befallen Phineas Finn! Had not Lady Laura chosen her own husband, and was not the man, let him be ever so mad, still her husband? Madame Goesler was sore of heart, as well as broken down with sorrow, till at last, hiding her face on the pillow of the sofa, still holding the Duchess's letter in her hand, she burst into a fit of hysteric sobs.

Few of those who knew Madame Goesler well, as she lived in town and in country, would have believed that such could have been the effect upon her of the news which she had heard. Credit was given to her every where for good nature, discretion, affability, and a certain grace of demeanor which always made her charming. She was known to be generous, wise, and of high spirit. Something of her conduct to the old Duke had crept into general notice, and had been told, here and there, to her honor. She had conquered the good opinion of many, and was a popular woman. But there was not one among her friends who supposed her capable of becoming a victim to a strong passion, or would have suspected her of reckless weeping for any sorrow. The Duchess, who thought that she knew Madame Goesler well, would not have believed it to be true, even if she had seen it. "You like people, but I don't think you ever love any one," the Duchess had once said to her. Madame Goesler had smiled, and had seemed to assent. To enjoy the world, and to know that the best enjoyment must come from witnessing the satisfaction of others, had apparently been her philosophy. But now she was prostrate because this man was in trouble, and because she had been told that his trouble was more than another woman could bear!

She was still sobbing and crushing the letter in her hand when the servant came up to tell her that Mr. Maule had called. He was below,

waiting to know whether she would see him. She remembered at once that Mr. Maule had met Phineas at her table on the previous evening, and thinking that he must have come with tidings respecting this great event, desired that he might be shown up to her. But, as it hap-

The reader will perhaps divine the great object. On this day he proposed to ask Madame Goesler to make him the happiest of men—as he certainly would have thought himself for a time had she consented to put him in possession of her large income. He had therefore padded him-



“HOLDING THE DUCHESS'S LETTER IN HER HAND, SHE BURST INTO A FIT OF HYSTERIC SOBS.”

pened, Mr. Maule had not yet heard of the death of Mr. Bonteen. He had remained at home till nearly four, having a great object in view, which made him deem it expedient that he should go direct from his own rooms to Madame Goesler's house, and had not even looked in at his club.

self with more than ordinary care, reduced but not obliterated the grayness of his locks, looked carefully to the fitting of his trowsers, and spared himself those ordinary labors of the morning which might have robbed him of any remaining spark of his juvenility.

Madame Goesler met him more than half across the room as he entered it. “What have you heard?” said she. Mr. Maule wore his sweetest smile, but he had heard nothing. He could only press her hand and look blank, understanding that there was something which he ought to have heard. She thought nothing of the pressure of her hand. Apt as she was to be conscious at an instant of all that was going on around her, she thought of nothing now but that man's peril, and of the truth or falsehood of the story that had been sent to her. “You have heard nothing of Mr. Finn?”

“Not a word,” said Mr. Maule, withdrawing his hand. “What has happened to Mr. Finn?” Had Mr. Finn broken his neck it would have been nothing to Mr. Maule. But the lady's solicitude was something to him.

“Mr. Bonteen has been—murdered!”

“Mr. Bonteen!”

“So I hear. I thought you had come to tell me of it.”

“Mr. Bonteen murdered! No; I have heard nothing. I do not know the gentleman. I thought you said—Mr. Finn.”

“It is not known about London, then?”

“I can not say, Madame Goesler. I have just come from home, and have not been out all the morning. Who has—murdered him?”

“Ah! I do not know. That is what I wanted you to tell me.”

“But what of Mr. Finn?”

“I also have not been out, Mr. Maule, and can give you no information. I thought you had called because you knew that Mr. Finn had dined here.”

“Has Mr. Finn been murdered?”

“Mr. Bonteen! I said that the report was that Mr. Bonteen had been murdered.” Madame Goesler was now waxing angry—most unreasonably. “But I know nothing about it, and am just going out to make inquiry. The carriage is ordered.” Then she stood, expecting him to go; and he knew that he was expected to go. It was at any rate clear to him that he could not carry out his great design on the present occasion. “This has so upset me that I can think of nothing else at present, and you must, if you please, excuse me. I would not have let you take the trouble of coming up, had not I thought that you were the bearer of some news.” Then she bowed, and Mr. Maule bowed; and as he left the room she forgot to ring the bell.

“What the deuce can she have meant about that fellow Finn?” he said to himself. “They can not both have been murdered.” He went to his club, and there he soon learned the truth. The information was given to him with clear and undoubting words. Phineas Finn and Mr. Bonteen had quarreled at the Universe. Mr. Bonteen, as far as words went, had got the best of his adversary. This had taken place in the presence of the Prince, who had expressed himself as greatly annoyed by Mr. Finn's conduct. And afterward Phineas Finn had waylaid Mr. Bonteen in the passage between Bolton Row and Berkeley Street, and had there—murdered him. As it happened, no one who had been at the Universe was at that moment present; but the whole affair was now quite well known, and was spoken of without a doubt.

“I hope he'll be hung, with all my heart,” said Mr. Maule, who thought that he could read the riddle which had been so unintelligible in Park Lane.

When Madame Goesler reached Carlton Terrace, which she did before the time named by the Duchess, her friend had not yet returned. But she went up stairs, as she had been desired, and they brought her tea. But the tea-pot remained untouched till past six o'clock, and then the Duchess returned. “Oh, my dear, I am so sorry for being late. Why haven't you had tea?”

“What is the truth of it all?” said Madame Goesler, standing up with her fists clinched as they hung by her side.

“I don't seem to know nearly as much as I did when I wrote to you.”

“Has the man been—murdered?”

“Oh dear, yes. There's no doubt about that. I was quite sure of that when I sent the letter. I have had such a hunt! But at last I went up to the door of the House of Commons, and got Barrington Erle to come out to me.”

“Well?”

“Two men have been arrested.”

“Not Phineas Finn?”

“Yes; Mr. Finn is one of them. Is it not awful? So much more dreadful to me than the other poor man's death! One oughtn't to say so, of course.”

“And who is the other man? Of course he did it.”

“That horrid Jew preaching man that married Lizzie Eustace. Mr. Bonteen had been persecuting him, and making out that he had another wife at home in Hungary, or Bohemia, or somewhere.”

“Of course he did it.”

“That's what I say. Of course the Jew did it. But then all the evidence goes to show that he didn't do it. He was in bed at the time, and the door of the house was locked up, so that he couldn't get out; and the man who did the murder hadn't got on his coat, but had got on Phineas Finn's coat.”

“Was there—blood?” asked Madame Goesler, shaking from head to foot.

“Not that I know. I don't suppose they've looked yet. But Lord Fawn saw the man, and swears to the coat.”

“Lord Fawn! How I have always hated that man! I wouldn't believe a word he would say.”

“Barrington doesn't think so much of the coat. But Phineas had a club in his pocket, and the man was killed by a club. There hasn't been any other club found, but Phineas Finn took his home with him.”

“A murderer would not have done that.”

“Barrington says that the head policeman says that it is just what a very clever murderer would do.”

“Do you believe it, Duchess?”

“Certainly not—not though Lord Fawn swore that he had seen it. I never will believe what I don't like to believe, and nothing shall ever make me.”

“He couldn't have done it.”

“Well, for the matter of that, I suppose he could.”

“No, Duchess, he could not have done it.”

"He is strong enough, and brave enough."
 "But not enough of a coward. There is nothing cowardly about him. If Phineas Finn could have struck an enemy with a club in a dark passage, behind his back, I will never care to speak to any man again. Nothing shall make me believe it. If I did, I could never again believe in any one. If they told you that your husband had murdered a man, what would you say?"

"But he isn't your husband, Madame Max."
 "No—certainly not. I can not fly at them, when they say so, as you would do. But I can be just as sure. If twenty Lord Fawns swore that they had seen it, I would not believe them. O God! what will they do with him!"

The Duchess behaved very well to her friend, saying not a single word to twit her with the love which she betrayed. She seemed to take it as a matter of course that Madame Goesler's interest in Phineas Finn should be as it was. The Duke, she said, could not come home to dinner, and Madame Goesler should stay with her. Both Houses were in such a ferment about the murder that nobody liked to be away. Every body had been struck with amazement, not simply—not chiefly—by the fact of the murder, but by the double destruction of the two men whose ill-will to each other had been of late so often the subject of conversation. So Madame Goesler remained at Carlton Terrace till late in the evening, and during the whole visit there was nothing mentioned but the murder of Mr. Bonteen and the peril of Phineas Finn. "Some one will go and see him, I suppose," said Madame Goesler.

"Lord Cantrip has been already—and Mr. Monk."

"Could not I go?"

"Well, it would be rather strong."

"If we both went together?" suggested Madame Goesler. And before she left Carlton Terrace she had almost extracted a promise from the Duchess that they would together proceed to the prison and endeavor to see Phineas Finn.

CHAPTER XLIX.

SHOWING WHAT MRS. BUNCE SAID TO THE POLICEMAN.

"We have left Adelaide Palliser down at the Hall. We are up here only for a couple of days to see Laura, and try to find out what had better be done about Kennedy." This was said to Phineas Finn in his own room in Great Marlborough Street by Lord Chiltern, on the morning after the murder, between ten and eleven o'clock. Phineas had not as yet heard of the death of the man with whom he had quarreled. Lord Chiltern had now come to him with some proposition which he as yet did not understand, and which Lord Chiltern certainly did not know how to explain. Looked at simply, the proposition was one for providing Phineas Finn with an income out of the wealth belonging, or that would belong, to the Standish family. Lady Laura's fortune would, it was thought, soon be at her own disposal. They who acted for her husband had assured the Earl that the yearly interest of the money should be at her ladyship's command as soon as the law would allow them so to plan it. Of Robert Kennedy's inability to act for himself there was no

longer any doubt whatever, and there was, they said, no desire to embarrass the estate with so small a disputed matter as the income derived from £40,000. There was great pride of purse in the manner in which the information was conveyed; but not the less on that account was it satisfactory to the Earl. Lady Laura's first thought about it referred to the imminent wants of Phineas Finn. How might it be possible for her to place a portion of her income at the command of the man she loved so that he should not feel disgraced by receiving it from her hand? She conceived some plan as to a loan to be made nominally by her brother—a plan as to which it may at once be said that it could not be made to hold water for a minute. But she did succeed in inducing her brother to undertake the embassy, with the view of explaining to Phineas that there would be money for him when he wanted it. "If I make it over to papa, papa can leave it him in his will; and if he wants it at once there can be no harm in your advancing to him what he must have at papa's death." Her brother had frowned angrily and had shaken his head. "Think how he has been thrown over by all the party," said Lady Laura. Lord Chiltern had disliked the whole affair—had felt with dismay that his sister's name would become subject to reproach if it should be known that this young man was supported by her bounty. She, however, had persisted, and he had consented to see the young man, feeling sure that Phineas would refuse to bear the burden of the obligation.

But he had not touched the disagreeable subject when they were interrupted. A knocking of the door had been heard, and now Mrs. Bunce came up stairs, bringing Mr. Low with her. Mrs. Bunce had not heard of the tragedy, but she had at once perceived from the barrister's manner that there was some serious matter forward—some matter that was probably not only serious, but also calamitous. The expression of her countenance announced as much to the two men, and the countenance of Mr. Low when he followed her into the room told the same story still more plainly. "Is any thing the matter?" said Phineas, jumping up.

"Indeed, yes," said Mr. Low, who then looked at Lord Chiltern and was silent.

"Shall I go?" said Lord Chiltern. Mr. Low did not know him, and of course was still silent.

"This is my friend, Mr. Low. This is my friend, Lord Chiltern," said Phineas, aware that each was well acquainted with the other's name. "I do not know of any reason why you should go. What is it, Low?"

Lord Chiltern had come there about money, and it occurred to him that the impecunious young barrister might already be in some scrape on that head. In nineteen cases out of twenty, when a man is in a scrape, he simply wants money. "Perhaps I can be of help," he said.

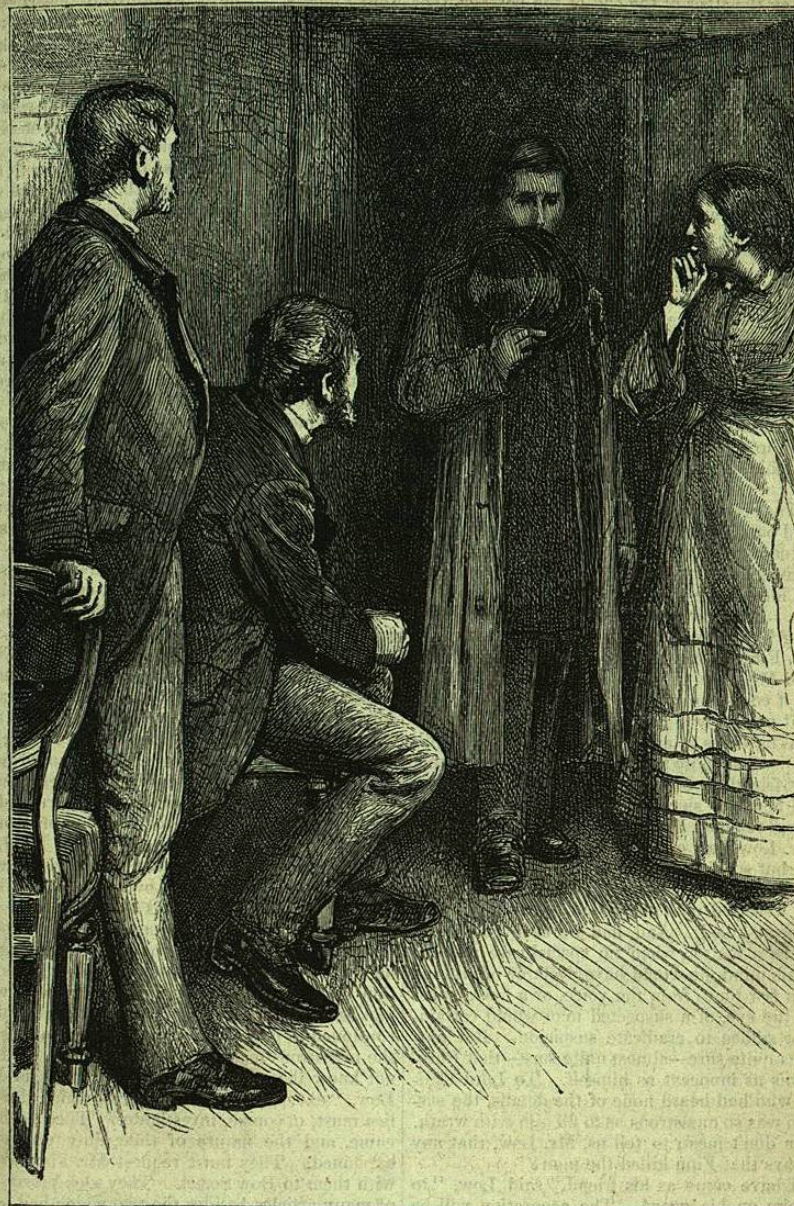
"Have you heard, my lord, what happened last night?" said Mr. Low, with his eyes fixed on Phineas Finn.

"I have heard nothing," said Lord Chiltern.

"What has happened?" asked Phineas, looking aghast. He knew Mr. Low well enough to be sure that the thing referred to was of great and distressing moment.

"You, too, have heard nothing?"

"Not a word—that I know of."



"IS ANY THING THE MATTER?" SAID PHINEAS, JUMPING UP."

"You were at the Universe last night?"

"Certainly I was."

"Did any thing occur?"

"The Prince was there."

"Nothing has happened to the Prince?" said Chiltern.

"His name has not been mentioned to me," said Mr. Low. "Was there not a quarrel?"

"Yes," said Phineas; "I quarreled with Mr. Bonteen."

"What then?"

"He behaved like a brute—as he always

does. Thashing a brute hardly answers nowadays, but if ever a man deserved a thashing he does."

"He has been murdered," said Mr. Low.

* * * * *

The reader need hardly be told that, as regards this great offense, Phineas Finn was as white as snow. The maintenance of any doubt on that matter, were it even desirable to maintain a doubt, would be altogether beyond the doubt of the present writer. The reader has probably perceived, from the first moment of the discovery of the