

Parliament. Then Mr. Finn is very good-looking, and has been popular—which is all in his favor. And we shall have such evidence on the score of character as was never before brought into one of our courts. We shall have half the Cabinet. There will be two dukes." Madame Goesler, as she listened to the admiring enthusiasm of the attorney while he went on with his list, acknowledged to herself that her dear friend, the Duchess, had not been idle. "There will be three Secretaries of State. The Secretary of State for the Home Department himself will be examined. I am not quite sure that we mayn't get the Lord Chancellor. There will be Mr. Monk—about the most popular man in England, who will speak of the prisoner as his particular friend. I don't think any jury would hang a particular friend of Mr. Monk's. And there will be ever so many ladies. That has never been done before, but we mean to try it." Madame Goesler had heard all this, and had herself assisted in the work. "I rather think we shall get four or five leading members of the Opposition, for they all disliked Mr. Bonteen. If we could manage Mr. Daubeny and Mr. Gresham, I think we might reckon ourselves quite safe. I forgot to say that the Bishop of Barchester has promised."

"All that won't prove his innocence, Mr. Wickerby." Mr. Wickerby shrugged his shoulders. "If he be acquitted after that fashion, men then will say—that he was guilty."

"We must think of his life first, Madame Goesler," said the attorney.

Madame Goesler when she left the attorney's room was very ill-satisfied with him. She desired some adherent to her cause who would with affectionate zeal resolve upon washing Phineas Finn white as snow in reference to the charge now made against him. But no man would so resolve who did not believe in his innocence—as Madame Goesler believed herself. She herself knew that her own belief was romantic and unpractical. Nevertheless, the conviction of the guilt of that other man, toward which she still thought that much could be done if that coat were found and the maker of a secret key were present, was so strong upon her that she would not allow herself to drop it. It would not be sufficient for her that Phineas Finn should be acquitted. She desired that the real murderer should be hung for the murder, so that all the world might be sure—as she was sure—that her hero had been wrongfully accused.

"Do you mean that you are going to start yourself," the Duchess said to her that same afternoon.

"Yes, I am."

"Then you must be very far gone in love, indeed."

"You would do as much, Duchess, if you were free as I am. It isn't a matter of love at all. It's womanly enthusiasm for the cause one has taken up."

"I'm quite as enthusiastic—only I shouldn't like to go to Prague in June."

"I'd go to Siberia in January if I could find out that that horrid man really committed the murder."

"Who are going with you?"

"We shall be quite a company. We have got a detective policeman, and an interpreter

who understands Greek and German to go about with the policeman, and a lawyer's clerk, and there will be my own maid."

"Every body will know all about it before you get there."

"We are not to go quite together. The policeman and the interpreter are to form one party, and I and my maid another. The poor clerk is to be alone. If they get the coat, of course you'll telegraph to me."

"Who is to have the coat?"

"I suppose they'll take it to Mr. Wickerby. He says he doesn't want it—that it would do no good. But I think that if we could show that the man might very easily have been out of the house—that he had certainly provided himself with means of getting out of the house secretly—the coat would be of service. I am going, at any rate, and shall be in Paris to-morrow morning."

"I think it very grand of you, my dear; and for your sake I hope he may live to be Prime Minister. Perhaps, after all, he may give Plantagenet 'his Garter.'"

When the old Duke died, a Garter became vacant, and had, of course, fallen to the gift of Mr. Gresham. The Duchess had expected that it would be continued in the family, as had been the Lieutenancy of Bassetshire, which also had been held by the old Duke. But the Garter had been given to Lord Cantrip, and the Duchess was sore. With all her radical propensities and inclination to laugh at dukes and marquises, she thought very much of Garters and Lieutenancies; but her husband would not think of them at all, and hence there were words between them. The Duchess had declared that the Duke should insist on having the Garter. "These are things that men do not ask for," the Duke had said.

"Don't tell me Plantagenet, about not asking. Every body asks for every thing nowadays."

"Your every body is not correct, Glencora. I never yet asked for any thing, and never shall. No honor has any value in my eyes unless it comes unasked." Thereupon it was that the Duchess now suggested that Phineas Finn, when Prime Minister, might perhaps bestow a Garter upon her husband.

And so Madame Goesler started for Prague with the determination of being back, if possible, before the trial began. It was to be commenced at the Old Bailey toward the end of June, and people already began to foretell that it would extend over a very long period. The circumstances seemed to be simple; but they who understood such matters declared that the duration of a trial depended a great deal more on the public interest felt in the matter than upon its own nature. Now it was already perceived that no trial of modern days had ever been so interesting as would be this trial. It was already known that the Attorney-General, Sir Gregory Grogam, was to lead the case for the prosecution, and that the Solicitor-General, Sir Simon Slope, was to act with him. It had been thought to be due to the memory and character of Mr. Bonteen, who when he was murdered had held the office of President of the Board of Trade, and who had very nearly been Chancellor of the Exchequer, that so unusual a task should be imposed on these two high legal officers of the Government. No doubt there would be a crowd of juniors with them, but it was understood that Sir Gregory

Grogam would himself take the burden of the task upon his own shoulders. It was declared every where that Sir Gregory did believe Phineas Finn to be guilty—but it was also declared that Sir Simon Slope was convinced that he was innocent. The defense was to be intrusted to the well-practiced but now aged hands of that most experienced practitioner Mr. Chaffanbrass, than whom no barrister, living or dead, ever rescued more culprits from the fangs of the law. With Mr. Chaffanbrass, who quite late in life had consented to take a silk gown, was to be associated Mr. Sergeant Birdbolt, who was said to be employed in order that the case might be in safe hands should the strength of Mr. Chaffanbrass fail him at the last moment; and Mr. Snow, who was supposed to handle a witness more judiciously than any of the rising men; and that subtle, courageous, eloquent, and painstaking youth, Mr. Golightly, who now, with no more than ten or fifteen years' practice, was already known to be earning his bread and supporting a wife and family.

But the glory of this trial would not depend chiefly on the array of counsel, nor on the fact that the Lord Chief Justice himself would be the judge, so much as on the social position of the murdered man and of the murderer. Noble lords and great statesmen would throng the bench of the court to see Phineas Finn tried, and all the world who could find an entrance would do the same to see the great statesmen and the noble lords. The importance of such an affair increases like a snow-ball as it is rolled on. Many people talk much, and then very many people talk very much more. The under-sheriffs of the City, praiseworthy gentlemen not hitherto widely known to fame, became suddenly conspicuous and popular, as being the dispensers of admission to seats in the court. It had been already admitted by judges and counsel that sundry other cases must be postponed, because it was known that the Bonteen murder would occupy at least a week. It was supposed that Mr. Chaffanbrass would consume a whole day at the beginning of the trial in getting a jury to his mind—a matter on which he was known to be very particular—and another whole day at the end of the trial in submitting to the jury the particulars of all the great cases on record in which circumstantial evidence was known to have led to improper verdicts. It was therefore understood that the last week in June would be devoted to the trial, to the exclusion of all other matters of interest. When Mr. Gresham, hard pressed by Mr. Turnbull for a convenient day, offered that gentleman Thursday, the 24th of June, for suggesting to the House a little proposition of his own with reference to the English Church establishment, Mr. Turnbull openly repudiated the offer, because on that day the trial of Phineas Finn would be commenced. "I hope," said Mr. Gresham, "that the work of the country will not be impeded by that unfortunate affair." "I am afraid," said Mr. Turnbull, "that the right honorable gentleman will find that the member for Tankerville will on that day monopolize the attention of this House." The remark was thought to have been made in very bad taste, but nobody doubted its truth. Perhaps the interest was enhanced among politicians by the existence very generally of an opinion that though Phineas Finn had murdered Mr. Bonteen,

he would certainly be acquitted. Nothing could then prevent the acquitted murderer from resuming his seat in the House, and gentlemen were already beginning to ask themselves after what fashion it would become them to treat him.

Would the Speaker catch his eye when he rose to speak? Would he still be "Phineas" to the very large number of men with whom his general popularity had made him intimate? Would he be cold-shouldered at the clubs, and treated as one whose hands were red with blood? Or would he become more popular than ever, and receive an ovation after his acquittal?

In the mean time Madame Goesler started on her journey for Prague.

CHAPTER LVIII.

THE TWO DUKES.

It was necessary that the country should be governed, even though Mr. Bonteen had been murdered; and in order that it should be duly governed it was necessary that Mr. Bonteen's late place at the Board of Trade should be filled. There was some hesitation as to the filling it, and when the arrangement was completed people were very much surprised indeed. Mr. Bonteen had been appointed chiefly because it was thought that he might in that office act as a quasi House of Commons deputy to the Duke of Omnium in carrying out his great scheme of a five-farthing penny and a ten-pennied shilling. The Duke, in spite of his wealth and rank and honor, was determined to go on with his great task. Life would be nothing to him now unless he could at least hope to arrange the five farthings. When his wife had bullied him about the Garter, he had declared to her, and with perfect truth, that he had never asked for any thing. He had gone on to say that he never would ask for any thing; and he certainly did not think that he was betraying himself with reference to that assurance when he suggested to Mr. Gresham that he would himself take the place left vacant by Mr. Bonteen—of course retaining his seat in the Cabinet.

"I should hardly have ventured to suggest such an arrangement to your Grace," said the Prime Minister.

"Feeling that it might be so, I thought that I would venture to ask," said the Duke. "I am sure you know that I am the last man to interfere as to place or the disposition of power."

"Quite the last man," said Mr. Gresham.

"But it has always been held that the Board of Trade is not incompatible with the Peerage."

"Oh dear, yes."

"And I can feel myself nearer to this affair of mine there than I can elsewhere."

Mr. Gresham, of course, had no objection to urge. This great nobleman, who was now asking for Mr. Bonteen's shoes, had been Chancellor of the Exchequer, and would have remained Chancellor of the Exchequer had not the mantle of his nobility fallen upon him. At the present moment he held an office in which peers are often temporarily shelved, or put away, perhaps, out of harm's way for the time, so that they may be brought down and used when wanted, without having received crack or detriment from that in-

dependent action into which a politician is likely to fall when his party is "in" but he is still "out." He was Lord Privy Seal—a lordship of state which does carry with it a status and a seat in the Cabinet, but does not necessarily entail any work. But the present lord, who cared nothing for status, and who was much more intent on his work than he was even on his seat in the Cabinet, was possessed by what many of his brother politicians regarded as a morbid dislike to pretenses. He had not been happy during his few weeks of the Privy Seal, and had almost envied Mr. Bonteen the realities of the Board of Trade. "I think upon the whole it will be best to make the change," he said to Mr. Gresham. And Mr. Gresham was delighted.

But there were one or two men of mark—one or two who were older than Mr. Gresham probably, and less perfect in their liberal sympathies—who thought that the Duke of Omnium was derogating from his proper position in the step which he was now taking. Chief among these was his friend the Duke of St. Bungay, who alone perhaps could venture to argue the matter with him. "I almost wish that you had spoken to me first," said the elder Duke.

"I feared that I should find you too strongly opposed to my resolution."

"If it was a resolution."

"I think it was," said the younger. "It was a great misfortune to me that I should have been obliged to leave the House of Commons."

"You should not feel it so."

"My whole life was there," said he who, as Plantagenet Palliser, had been so good a com-moner.

"But your whole life should certainly not be there now, nor your whole heart. On you the circumstances of your birth have imposed duties quite as high, and I will say quite as useful, as any which a career in the House of Commons can put within the reach of a man."

"Do you think so, Duke?"

"Certainly I do. I do think that the England which we know could not be the England that she is but for the maintenance of a high-minded, proud, and self-denying nobility. And though with us there is no line dividing our very broad aristocracy into two parts, a higher and a lower, or a greater and a smaller, or a richer and a poorer, nevertheless we all feel that the success of our order depends chiefly on the conduct of those whose rank is the highest and whose means are the greatest. To some few, among whom you are conspicuously one, wealth has been given so great, and rank so high, that much of the welfare of your country depends on the manner in which you bear yourself as the Duke of Omnium."

"I would not wish to think so."

"Your uncle so thought. And, though he was a man very different from you, not inured to work in his early life, with fewer attainments, probably a slower intellect, and whose general conduct was inferior to your own—I speak freely, because the subject is important—he was a man who understood his position and the requirements of his order very thoroughly. A retinue almost royal, together with an expenditure which royalty could not rival, secured for him the respect of the nation."

"Your life has not been as was his, and you have won a higher respect."

"I think not. The greater part of my life was spent in the House of Commons, and my fortune was never much more than the tenth of his. But I wish to make no such comparison."

"I must make it, if I am to judge which I would follow."

"Pray understand me, my friend," said the old man, energetically. "I am not advising you to abandon public life in order that you may live in repose as a great nobleman. It would not be in your nature to do so, nor could the country afford to lose your services. But you need not, therefore, take your place in the arena of politics as though you were still Plantagenet Palliser, with no other duties than those of a politician—as you might so well have done had your uncle's titles and wealth descended to a son."

"I wish they had," said the regretful Duke.

"It can not be so. Your brother perhaps wishes that he were a duke, but it has been arranged otherwise. It is vain to repine. Your wife is unhappy because your uncle's Garter was not at once given to you."

"Glencora is like other women, of course."

"I share her feelings. Had Mr. Gresham consulted me, I should not have scrupled to tell him that it would have been for the welfare of his party that the Duke of Omnium should be graced with any and every honor in his power to bestow. Lord Cantrip is my friend, almost as warmly as are you; but the country would not have missed the ribbon from the breast of Lord Cantrip. Had you been more the Duke, and less the slave of your country, it would have been sent to you. Do I make you angry by speaking so?"

"Not in the least. I have but one ambition?"

"And that is—"

"To be the serviceable slave of my country."

"A master is more serviceable than a slave," said the old man.

"No, no; I deny it. I can admit much from you, but I can not admit that. The politician who becomes the master of his country sinks from the statesman to the tyrant."

"We misunderstand each other, my friend. Pitt and Peel and Palmerston were not tyrants, though each assumed and held for himself to the last the mastery of which I speak. Smaller men, too, have been slaves, have been as patriotic as they, but less useful. I regret that you should follow Mr. Bonteen in his office."

"Because he was Mr. Bonteen."

"All the circumstances of the transfer of office occasioned by your uncle's death seem to me to make it undesirable. I would not have you make yourself too common. This very murder adds to the feeling. Because Mr. Bonteen has been lost to us, the Minister has recourse to you."

"It was my own suggestion."

"But who knows that it was so? You and I and Mr. Gresham, and perhaps one or two others."

"It is too late now, Duke; and, to tell the truth of myself, not even you can make me other than I am. My uncle's life to me was always a problem which I could not understand. Were I to attempt to walk in his ways I should fail utterly, and become absurd. I do not feel the disgrace of following Mr. Bonteen."

"I trust you may at least be less unfortunate."

"Well—yes. I need not expect to be murdered in the streets because I am going to the Board of Trade. I shall have made no enemy by my political success."

"You think that—Mr. Finn—did do that deed?" asked the elder Duke.

"I hardly know what I think. My wife is sure that he is innocent."

"The Duchess is enthusiastic, always."

"Many others think the same. Lord and Lady Chiltern are sure of it."

"They were always his best friends."

"I am told that many of the lawyers are sure that it will be impossible to convict him. If he be acquitted I shall strive to think him innocent. He will come back to the House, of course."

"I should think he would apply for the Hundreds," said the Duke of St. Bungay.

"I do not see why he should. I would not in his place. If he be innocent, why should he admit himself to be unfit for a seat in Parliament? I tell you what he might do: resign, and then throw himself again upon his constituency." The other Duke shook his head, thereby declaring in his opinion that Phineas Finn was in truth the man who had murdered Mr. Bonteen.

When it was publicly known that the Duke of Omnium had stepped into Mr. Bonteen's shoes, the general opinion certainly coincided with that given by the Duke of St. Bungay. It was not only that the late Chancellor of the Exchequer should not have consented to fill so low an office, or that the Duke of Omnium should have better known his own place, or that he should not have succeeded a man so insignificant as Mr. Bonteen. These things, no doubt, were said, but more was said also. It was thought that he should not have gone to an office which had been rendered vacant by the murder of a man who had been placed there merely to assist himself. If the present arrangement were good, why should it not have been made independently of Mr. Bonteen? Questions were asked about it in both Houses, and the transfer, no doubt, did have the effect of lowering the man in the estimation of the political world. He himself felt that he did not stand so high with his colleagues as when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer; not even so high as when he held the Privy Seal. In the printed lists of those who attended the Cabinets his name generally was placed last, and an opponent on one occasion thought, or pretended to think, that he was no more than Postmaster-General. He determined to bear all this without wincing, but he did wince. He would not own to himself that he had been wrong, but he was sore—as a man is sore who doubts about his own conduct; and was not the less so because he strove to bear his wife's sarcasms without showing that they pained him.

"They say that poor Lord Fawn is losing his mind," she said to him.

"Lord Fawn! I haven't heard any thing about it."

"He was engaged to Lady Eustace once, you remember. They say that he'll be made to declare why he didn't marry her if this bigamy case goes on. And then it's so unfortunate that he should have seen the man in the gray coat! I hope he won't have to resign."

"I hope not, indeed."

"Because, of course, you'd have to take his place as Under-Secretary." This was very awkward; but the husband only smiled, and expressed a hope that if he did so he might himself be equal to his new duties. "By-the-bye, Plantagenet, what do you mean to do about the jewels?"

"I haven't thought about them. Madame Goesler had better take them."

"But she won't."

"I suppose they had better be sold."

"By auction?"

"That would be the proper way."

"I shouldn't like that at all. Couldn't we buy them ourselves, and let the money stand till she chooses to take it? It's an affair of trade, I suppose, and you're at the head of all that now." Then again she asked him some question about the Home Secretary, with reference to Phineas Finn; and when he told her that it would be highly improper for him to speak to that officer on such a subject, she pretended to suppose that the impropriety would consist in the interference of a man holding so low a position as his was. "Of course it is not the same now," she said, "as it used to be when you were at the Exchequer." All which he took without uttering a word of anger, or showing a sign of annoyance. "You only get two thousand a year, do you, at the Board of Trade, Plantagenet?"

"Upon my word, I forget. I think it's two thousand five hundred."

"How nice! It was five at the Exchequer, wasn't it?"

"Yes; five thousand at the Exchequer."

"When you're a Lord of the Treasury it will only be one, will it?"

"What a goose you are, Glencora! If it suited me to be a Lord of the Treasury, what difference would the salary make?"

"Not the least; nor yet the rank, or the influence, or the prestige, or the general fitness of things. You are above all such sublunary ideas. You would clean Mr. Gresham's shoes for him, if—the service of your country required it." These last words she added in a tone of voice very similar to that which her husband himself used on occasions.

"I would even allow you to clean them, if the service of the country required it," said the Duke.

But, though he was magnanimous, he was not happy, and perhaps the intense anxiety which his wife displayed as to the fate of Phineas Finn added to his discomfort. The Duchess, as the Duke of St. Bungay had said, was enthusiastic, and he never for a moment dreamed of teaching her to change her nature; but it would have been as well if her enthusiasm at the present moment could have been brought to display itself on some other subject. He had been brought to feel that Phineas Finn had been treated badly when the good things of Government were being given away, and that this had been caused by the jealous prejudices of the man who had been since murdered. But an expectant Under-Secretary of State, let him have been ever so cruelly left out in the cold, should not murder the man by whom he has been ill-treated. Looking at all the evidence as best he could, and listening to the opinions of others, the Duke did think that Phineas had been guilty. The murder had clearly been committed by a personal enemy, not by a

robber. Two men were known to have entertained feelings of enmity against Mr. Bonteen, as to one of whom he was assured that it was impossible that he should have been on the spot. As to the other, it seemed nearly equally manifest that he must have been there. If it were so, it would be much better that his wife should not display her interest publicly in the murderer's favor. But the Duchess, wherever she went, spoke of the trial as a persecution, and seemed to think that the prisoner should already be treated as a hero and a martyr. "Glencora," he said to her, "I wish that you could drop the subject of this trial till it be over."

"But I can't."

"Surely you can avoid speaking of it."

"No more than you can avoid your decimals. Out of the full heart the mouth speaks, and my heart is very full. What harm do I do?"

"You set people talking of you?"

"They have been doing that ever since we were married; but I do not know that they have made out much against me. We must go after our nature, Plantagenet. Your nature is decimals. I run after units." He did not deem it wise to say any thing further, knowing that to this evil also of Phineas Finn the gods would at last vouchsafe an ending.

CHAPTER LIX.

MRS. BONTEEN.

At the time of the murder Lady Eustace, whom we must regard as the wife of Mr. Emilius till it be proved that he had another wife when he married her, was living as the guest of Mr. Bonteen. Mr. Bonteen had pledged himself to prove the bigamy, and Mrs. Bonteen had opened her house and her heart to the injured lady. Lizzie Eustace, as she had always been called, was clever, rich, and pretty, and knew well how to ingratiate herself with the friend of the hour. She was a greedy, grasping little woman, but, when she had before her a sufficient object, she could appear to pour all that she had into her friend's lap with the prodigality of a child. Perhaps Mrs. Bonteen had liked to have things poured into her lap. Perhaps Mrs. Bonteen had enjoyed the confidential tears of a pretty woman. It may be that the wrongs of a woman doomed to live with Mr. Emilius as his wife had touched their hearts. Be that as it might, they had become the acknowledged friends and supporters of Lady Eustace, and she was living with them in their little house in St. James's Place on that fatal night.

Lizzie behaved herself very well when the terrible tidings were brought home. Mr. Bonteen was so often late at the House or at his club that his wife rarely sat up for him; and when the servants were disturbed between six and seven o'clock in the morning, no surprise had as yet been felt at his absence. The sergeant of police who had brought the news sent for the maid of the unfortunate lady, and the maid, in her panic, told her story to Lady Eustace before daring to communicate it to her mistress. Lizzie Eustace, who in former days had known something of policemen, saw the man, and learned from him all that there was to learn. Then, while the sergeant

remained on the landing-place, outside, to support her, if necessary, with the maid by her side to help her, kneeling by the bed, she told the wretched woman what had happened. We need not witness the paroxysms of the widow's misery, but we may understand that Lizzie Eustace was from that moment more strongly fixed than ever in her friendship with Mrs. Bonteen.

When the first three or four days of agony and despair had passed by, and the mind of the bereaved woman was able to turn itself from the loss to the cause of the loss, Mrs. Bonteen became fixed in her certainty that Phineas Finn had murdered her husband, and seemed to think that it was the first and the paramount duty of the present Government to have the murderer hung, almost without a trial. When she found that, at the best, the execution of the man she so vehemently hated could not take place for two months after the doing of the deed, even if then, she became almost frantic in her anger. Surely they would not let him escape! What more proof could be needed? Had not the miscreant quarreled with her husband, and behaved abominably to him but a few minutes before the murder? Had he not been on the spot with the murderous instrument in his pocket? Had he not been seen by Lord Fawn hastening on the steps of her dear and doomed husband? Mrs. Bonteen, as she sat enveloped in her new weeds, thirsting for blood, could not understand that further evidence should be needed, or that a rational doubt should remain in the mind of any one who knew the circumstances. It was to her as though she had seen the dastard blow struck, and with such conviction as this on her mind did she insist on talking of the coming trial to her inmate, Lady Eustace. But Lizzie had her own opinion, though she was forced to leave it unexpressed in the presence of Mrs. Bonteen. She knew the man who claimed her as his wife, and did not think that Phineas Finn was guilty of the murder. Her Emilius—her Yosef Mealyus, as she had delighted to call him since she had separated herself from him—was, as she thought, the very man to commit a murder. He was by no means degraded in her opinion by the feeling. To commit great crimes is the line of life that comes naturally to some men, and was, as she thought, a line less objectionable than that which confines itself to small crimes. She almost felt that the audacity of her husband in doing such a deed redeemed her from some of the ignominy to which she had subjected herself by her marriage with a runaway who had another wife living. There was a dash of adventure about it which was almost gratifying. But these feelings she was obliged, at any rate for the present, to keep to herself. Not only must she acknowledge the undoubted guilt of Phineas Finn for the sake of her friend, Mr. Bonteen, but she must consider carefully whether she would gain or lose more by having a murderer for her husband. She did not relish the idea of being made a widow by the gallows. She was still urgent as to the charge of bigamy, and should she succeed in proving that the man had never been her husband, then she did not care how soon they might hang him. But for the present it was better for all reasons that she should cling to the Phineas Finn theory, feeling certain that it was the bold hand of her own Emilius who had struck the blow.

She was by no means free from the solicitations of her husband, who knew well where she was, and who still adhered to his purpose of reclaiming his wife and his wife's property. When he was released by the magistrate's order, and had recovered his goods from Mr. Meager's house, and was once more established in lodgings, humbler, indeed, than those in Northumberland Street, he wrote the following letter to her who had been for one blessed year the partner of his joys, and his bosom's mistress:

"3 JELLYBAG STREET, EDGWARE ROAD, May 26, 18—.

"DEAREST WIFE,—You will have heard to what additional sorrow and disgrace I have been subjected through the malice of my enemies. But all in vain! Though princes and potentates have been arrayed against me—the princes and potentates had, no doubt, been Lord Chiltern and Mr. Low—"innocence has prevailed, and I have come out from the ordeal white as bleached linen or unsullied snow. The murderer is in the hands of justice, and though he be the friend of kings and princes"—Mr. Emilius had probably heard that the Prince had been at the club with Phineas—"yet shall justice be done upon him, and the truth of the Lord shall be made to prevail. Mr. Bonteen has been very hostile to me, believing evil things of me, and instigating you, my beloved, to believe evil of me. Nevertheless, I grieve for his death. I lament bitterly that he should have been cut off in his sins, and hurried before the judgment-seat of the great Judge without an hour given to him for repentance. Let us pray that the mercy of the Lord may be extended even to him. I beg that you will express my deepest commiseration to his widow, and assure her that she has my prayers.

"And now, my dearest wife, let me approach my own affairs. As I have come out unscorched from the last fiery furnace which has been heated for me by my enemies seven times hot, so shall I escape from that other fire with which the poor man who has gone from us endeavored to envelop me. If they have made you believe that I have any wife but yourself, they have made you believe a falsehood. You, and you only, have my hand. You, and you only, have my heart. I know well what attempts are being made to suborn false evidence in my old country, and how the follies of my youth are being pressed against me—how anxious are proud Englishmen that the poor Bohemian should be robbed of the beauty and wit and wealth which he had won for himself. But the Lord fights on my side, and I shall certainly prevail.

"If you will come back to me, all shall be forgiven. My heart is as it ever was. Come, and let us leave this cold and ungenial country and go to the sunny south; to the islands of the blessed"—Mr. Emilius during his married life had not quite fathomed the depths of his wife's character, though, no doubt, he had caught some points of it with sufficient accuracy—"where we may forget these blood-stained sorrows, and mutually forgive each other. What happiness, what joys can you expect in your present mode of life? Even your income—which in truth is my income—you can not obtain, because the tenants will not dare to pay it in opposition to my legal claims. But of what use is gold? What can purple do for us, and fine linen, and rich jewels, without love and

a contented heart? Come, dearest, once more to your own one, who will never remember aught of the sad rupture which enemies have made, and we will hurry to the setting sun, and recline on mossy banks, and give up our souls to Elysium."

As Lizzie read this she uttered an exclamation of disgust. Did the man, after all, know so little of her as to suppose that she, with all her experiences, did not know how to keep her own life and her own pocket separate from her romance? She despised him for this, almost as much as she respected him for the murder.

"If you will only say that you will see me, I will be at your feet in a moment. Till the solemnity with which the late tragical event must have filled you shall have left you leisure to think of all this, I will not force myself into your presence, or seek to secure by law rights which will be much dearer to me if they are accorded by your own sweet good-will. And in the mean time I will agree that the income shall be drawn, provided that it be equally divided between us. I have been sorely straitened in my circumstances by these last events. My congregation is of course dispersed. Though my innocence has been triumphantly displayed, my name has been tarnished. It is with difficulty that I find a spot where to lay my weary head. I am ahungred and athirst; and my very garments are parting from me in my need. Can it be that you willingly doom me to such misery because of my love for you? Had I been less true to you, it might have been otherwise.

"Let me have an answer at once, and I will instantly take steps about the money if you will agree. Your most truly loving husband,

"JOSEPH EMILIUS.

"To LADY EUSTACE, wife of the Rev. JOSEPH EMILIUS."

When Lizzie had read the letter twice through she resolved that she would show it to her friend. "I know it will re-open the flood-gates of your grief," she said; "but unless you see it, how can I ask from you the advice which is so necessary to me?" But Mrs. Bonteen was a woman sincere, at any rate, in this, that the loss of her husband had been to her so crushing a calamity that there could be no re-opening of the flood-gates. The grief that can not bear allusion to its causes has generally something of affectation in its composition. The flood-gates with this widowed one had never yet been for a moment closed. It was not that her tears were ever flowing, but that her heart had never yet for a moment ceased to feel that its misery was incapable of alleviation. No utterances concerning her husband could make her more wretched than she was. She took the letter and read it through. "I dare say he is a bad man," said Mrs. Bonteen.

"Indeed he is," said the bad man's wife.

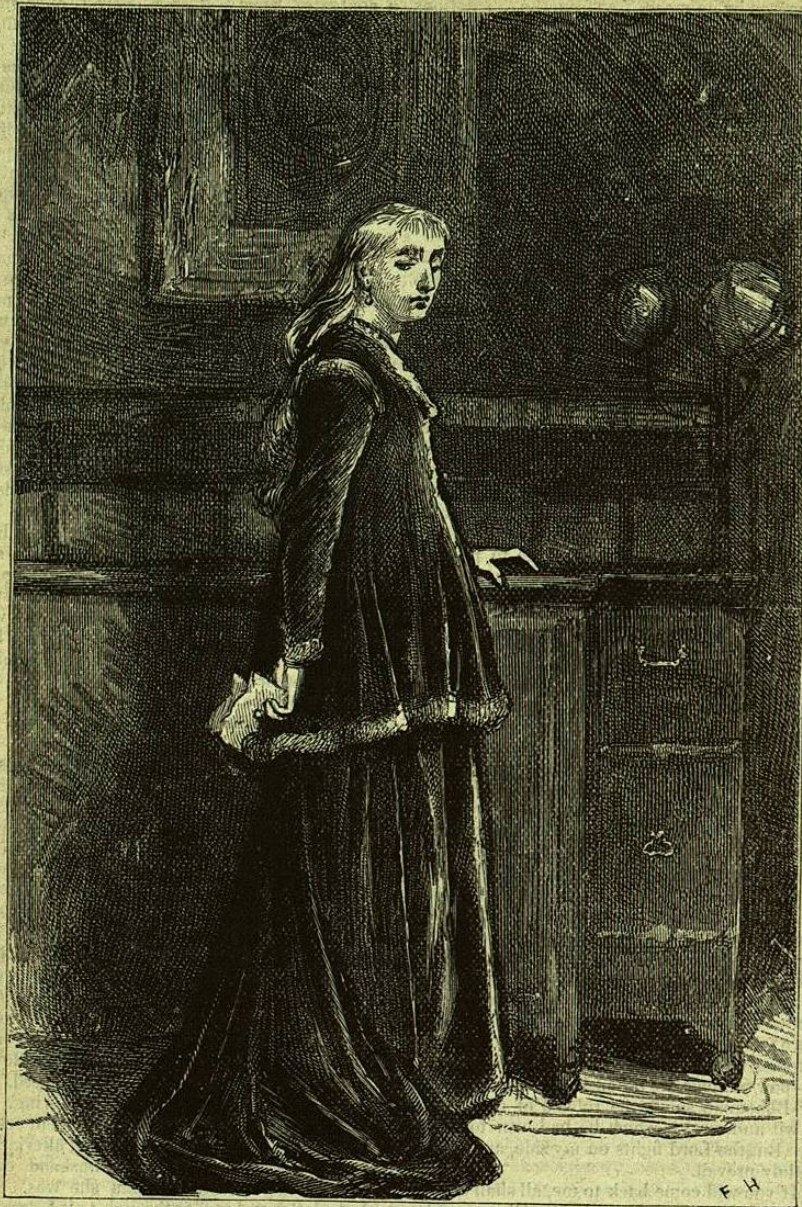
"But he was not guilty of this crime."

"Oh no; I am sure of that," said Lady Eustace, feeling certain at the same time that Mr. Bonteen had fallen by her husband's hands.

"And therefore I am glad they have given him up. There can be no doubt now about it."

"Every body knows who did it now," said Lady Eustace.

"Infamous ruffian! My poor dear lost one always knew what he was. Oh that such a creature should have been allowed to come among us!"



"SHE WAS STILL HOLDING HER HUSBAND'S LETTER OPEN IN HER HAND."

"Of course he'll be hung, Mrs. Bonteen."
 "Hung! I should think so! What other end would be fit for him? Oh yes, they must hang him. But it makes one think that the world is too hard a place to live in, when such a one as he can cause so great a ruin."
 "It has been very terrible."
 "Think what the country has lost! They tell me that the Duke of Omnium is to take my husband's place; but the Duke can not do what he did. Every one knows that for real work there was no one like him. Nothing was more certain

than that he would have been Prime Minister—oh, very soon. They ought to pinch him to death with red-hot tweezers."
 But Lady Eustace was anxious at the present moment to talk about her own troubles. "Of course Mr. Emilius did not commit the murder."
 "Phineas Finn committed it," said the half-maddened woman, rising from her chair. "And Phineas Finn shall hang by his neck till he is dead."
 "But Emilius has certainly got another wife in Prague."

"I suppose so. He said it was so, and he was always right."

"I am sure of it—just as you are sure of this horrid Mr. Finn."

"The two things can't be named together, Lady Eustace."

"Certainly not. I wouldn't think of being so unfeeling. But he has written me this letter, and what must I do? It is very dreadful about the money, you know."

"He can not touch your money. My dear one always said that he could not touch it."

"But he prevents me from touching it. What they give me only comes by a sort of favor from the lawyer. I almost wish that I had compromised."

"You would not be rid of him that way."

"No, not quite rid of him. You see, I never had to take that horrid name because of the t. e. I suppose I'd better send the letter to the lawyer."

"Send it to the lawyer, of course. That is what he would have done. They tell me that the trial is to be on the 24th of June. Why should they postpone it so long? They know all about it. They always postpone every thing. If he had lived, there would be an end of that before long."

Lady Eustace was tired of the virtues of her friend's martyred lord, and was very anxious to talk of her own affairs. She was still holding her husband's letter open in her hand, and was thinking how she could force her friend's dead lion to give place for a while to her own live dog, when a servant announced that Mr. Camperdown, the attorney, was below. In former days there had been an old Mr. Camperdown, who was vehemently hostile to poor Lizzie Eustace; but now, in her new troubles, the firm that had ever been true to her first husband had taken up her case for the sake of the family and her property—and for the sake of the heir, Lizzie Eustace's little boy; and Mr. Camperdown's firm had, next to Mr. Bonteen, been the depository of her trust. He had sent clerks out to Prague—one who had returned ill—as some one had said, poisoned, though the poison had probably been nothing more than the diet natural to Bohemians. And then another had been sent. This, of course, had all been previous to Madame Goesler's self-imposed mission, which, though it was occasioned altogether by the suspected wickednesses of Mr. Emilius, had no special reference to his matrimonial escapades. And now Mr. Camperdown was down stairs. "Shall I go down to him, dear Mrs. Bonteen?"

"He may come here if you please."

"Perhaps I had better go down. He will disturb you."

"My darling lost one always thought that there should be two present to hear such matters. He said it was safe." Mr. Camperdown, junior, was therefore shown up stairs to Mrs. Bonteen's drawing-room.

"We have found it all out, Lady Eustace," said Mr. Camperdown.

"Found out what?"

"We've got Madame Mealyus over here."

"No!" said Mrs. Bonteen, with her hands raised. Lady Eustace sat silent, with her mouth open.

"Yes, indeed; and photographs of the registry of the marriage from the books of the syn-

agogue at Cracow. His signature was Yosef Mealyus, and his handwriting isn't a bit altered. I think we could have proved it without the lady; but of course it was better to bring her, if possible."

"Where is she?" asked Lizzie, thinking that she would like to see her own predecessor.

"We have her safe, Lady Eustace. She's not in custody; but, as she can't speak a word of English or French, she finds it more comfortable to be kept in private. We're afraid it will cost a little money."

"Will she swear that she is his wife?" asked Mrs. Bonteen.

"Oh yes; there'll be no difficulty about that. But her swearing alone mightn't be enough."

"Surely that settles it all," said Lady Eustace. "For the money that we shall have to pay," said Mr. Camperdown, "we might probably have got a dozen Bohemian ladies to come and swear that they were married to Yosef Mealyus at Cracow. The difficulty has been to bring over documentary evidence which will satisfy a jury that this is the woman she says she is. But I think we've got it."

"And I shall be free!" said Lady Eustace, clasping her hands together.

"It will cost a good deal, I fear," said Mr. Camperdown.

"But I shall be free! Oh, Mr. Camperdown, there is not a woman in all the world who cares so little for money as I do. But I shall be free from the power of that horrid man who has entangled me in the meshes of his sinful life." Mr. Camperdown told her that he thought that she would be free, and went on to say that Yosef Mealyus had already been arrested, and was again in prison. The unfortunate man had not, therefore, long enjoyed that humbler apartment which he had found for himself in Jellybag Street.

When Mr. Camperdown went, Mrs. Bonteen followed him out to the top of the stairs. "You have heard about the trial, Mr. Camperdown?" He said that he knew that it was to take place at the Central Criminal Court in June. "Yes; I don't know why they have put it off so long. People know that he did it—eh?" Mr. Camperdown, with funeral sadness, declared that he had never looked into the matter. "I can not understand that every body should not know it," said Mrs. Bonteen.

CHAPTER LX.

TWO DAYS BEFORE THE TRIAL.

THERE was a scene in the private room of Mr. Wickerby, the attorney, in Hatton Garden, which was very distressing indeed to the feelings of Lord Fawn, and which induced his lordship to think that he was being treated without that respect which was due to him as a peer and a member of the Government. There were present at this scene Mr. Chaffanbrass, the old barrister, Mr. Wickerby himself, Mr. Wickerby's confidential clerk, Lord Fawn, Lord Fawn's solicitor—that same Mr. Camperdown whom we saw in the last chapter calling upon Lady Eustace—and a policeman. Lord Fawn had been invited to attend, with many protestations of regret as to the trouble thus imposed upon him, because the very important nature of the evidence about to be given