

the man in the street, he really meant that he thought that there must be identity, because he believed from other reasons that Mr. Finn was the man in the street. Mr. Bonteen had been murdered; according to Lord Fawn's thinking, had probably been murdered by Mr. Finn. And it was also probable to him that Mr. Bonteen had been murdered by the man in the street. He came thus to the conclusion that the prisoner was the man in the street. In fact, as far as the process of identifying is concerned, his lordship's evidence is altogether in favor of the prisoner. The figure seen by him we must suppose was the figure of a short man, and not of one tall and commanding in his presence, as is that of the prisoner."

There were many other points on which Mr. Chaffanbrass insisted at great length; but chiefly, perhaps, on the improbability—he might say impossibility—that the plot for a murder so contrived should have entered into a man's head, have been completed and executed, all within a few minutes. "But under no hypothesis compatible with the allegations of the prosecution can it be conceived that the murder should have been contemplated by my client before the quarrel at the club. No, gentlemen; the murderer had been at his work for days. He had examined the spot and measured the distances. He had dogged the steps of his victim on previous nights. In the shade of some dark doorway he had watched him from his club, and had hurried by his secret path to the spot which he had appointed for the deed. Can any man doubt that the murder has thus been committed, let who will have been the murderer? But, if so, then my client could not have done the deed." Much had been made of the words spoken at the club door. Was it probable—was it possible—that a man intending to commit a murder should declare how easily he could do it, and display the weapon he intended to use? The evidence given as to that part of the night's work was, he contended, altogether in the prisoner's favor. Then he spoke of the life-preserver, and gave a rather long account of the manner in which Phineas Finn had once taken two garroters prisoner in the street. All this lasted till the great men on the bench trooped out to lunch. And then Mr. Chaffanbrass, who had been speaking for nearly four hours, retired to a small room and there drank a pint of port-wine. While he was doing so Mr. Sergeant Birdbolt spoke a word to him, but he only shook his head and snarled. He was telling himself at the moment how quick may be the resolves of the eager mind—for he was convinced that the idea of attacking Mr. Bonteen had occurred to Phineas Finn after he had displayed his life-preserver at the club door; and he was telling himself also how impossible it is for a dull, conscientious man to give accurate evidence as to what he had himself seen—for he was convinced that Lord Fawn had seen Phineas Finn in the street. But to no human being had he expressed this opinion; nor would he express it, unless his client should be hung.

After lunch he occupied nearly three hours in giving to the jury, and of course to the whole assembled court, the details of about two dozen cases, in which apparently strong circumstantial evidence had been wrong in its tendency. In some of the cases quoted, the persons tried had

been acquitted; in some, convicted and afterward pardoned; in one, pardoned after many years of punishment; and in one the poor victim had been hung. On this he insisted with a pathetic eloquence which certainly would not have been expected from his appearance, and spoke, with tears in his eyes—real, unaffected tears—of the misery of those wretched jurymen who, in the performance of their duty, had been led into so frightful an error. Through the whole of this long recital he seemed to feel no fatigue, and, when he had done with his list of judicial mistakes about five o'clock in the afternoon, went on to make what he called the very few remarks necessary as to the evidence which on the next day he proposed to produce as to the prisoner's character. He ventured to think that evidence as to character of such a nature, so strong, so convincing, so complete, and so free from all objection, had never yet been given in a criminal court. At six o'clock he completed his speech, and it was computed that the old man had been on his legs very nearly for seven hours. It was said of him afterward that he was taken home speechless by one of his daughters, and immediately put to bed, that he roused himself about eight, and ate his dinner and drank a bottle of port in his bedroom, that he then slept—refusing to stir, even when he was waked, till half past nine in the morning, and that then he scrambled into his clothes, breakfasted, and got down to the court in half an hour. At ten o'clock he was in his place, and nobody knew that he was any the worse for the previous day's exertion.

This was on a Tuesday, the fifth day of the trial, and upon the whole, perhaps, the most interesting. A long array of distinguished persons—of women as well as men—was brought up to give to the jury their opinion as to the character of Mr. Finn. Mr. Low was the first, who, having been his tutor when he was studying at the bar, knew him longer than any other Londoner. Then came his countryman, Laurence Fitzgibbon, and Barrington Erle, and others of his own party who had been intimate with him. And men, too, from the opposite side of the house were brought up, Sir Orlando Drought among the number, all of whom said that they had known the prisoner well, and from their knowledge would have considered it impossible that he should have become a murderer. The last two called were Lord Cantrip and Mr. Monk, one of whom was, and the other had been, a Cabinet Minister. But before them came Lady Cantrip, and Lady Chiltern, whom we once knew as Violet Effingham, whom this very prisoner had in early days fondly hoped to make his wife, who was still young and beautiful, and who had never before entered a public court.

There had, of course, been much question as to the witnesses to be selected. The Duchess of Omnium had been anxious to be one, but the Duke had forbidden it, telling his wife that she really did not know the man, and that she was carried away by a foolish enthusiasm. Lady Cantrip, when asked, had at once consented. She had known Phineas Finn when he had served under her husband, and had liked him much. Then what other woman's tongue should be brought to speak of the man's softness and tender bearing? It was out of the question that Lady Laura Kennedy should appear. She did

not even propose it when her brother, with unnecessary sternness, told her it could not be so. Then his wife looked at him. "You shall go," said Lord Chiltern, "if you feel equal to it. It seems to be nonsense, but they say that it is important."

"I will go," said Violet, with her eyes full of tears. Afterward, when her sister-in-law besought her to be generous in her testimony, she only smiled as she assented. Could generosity go beyond hers?

Lord Chiltern preceded his wife. "I have," he said, "known Mr. Finn well, and have loved him dearly. I have eaten with him and drunk with him, have ridden with him, have lived with him, and have quarreled with him; and I know him as I do my own right hand." Then he stretched forth his arm with the palm extended.

"Irrespectively of the evidence in this case, you would not have thought him to be a man likely to commit such a crime?" asked Sergeant Birdbolt.

"I am quite sure, from my knowledge of the man, that he could not commit a murder," said Lord Chiltern; "and I don't care what the evidence is."

Then came his wife, and it certainly was a pretty sight to see as her husband led her up to the box and stood close beside her as she gave her evidence. There were many there who knew much of the history of her life—who knew that passage in it of her early love—for the tale had, of course, been told when it was whispered about that Lady Chiltern was to be examined as a witness. Every ear was at first strained to hear her words; but they were audible in every corner of the court without any effort. It need hardly be said that she was treated with the greatest deference on every side. She answered the questions very quietly, but apparently without nervousness. "Yes; she had known Mr. Finn long and intimately, and had very greatly valued his friendship. She did so still, as much as ever. Yes; she had known him for some years, and in circumstances which she thought justified her in saying that she understood his character. She regarded him as a man who was brave and tender-hearted, soft in feeling and manly in disposition. To her it was quite incredible that he should have committed a crime such as this. She knew him to be a man prone to forgive offenses, and of a sweet nature." And it was pretty, too, to watch the unwonted gentleness of old Chaffanbrass as he asked the questions, and carefully abstained from putting any one that could pain her. Sir Gregory said that he had heard her evidence with great pleasure, but that he had no question to ask her himself. Then she stepped down, again took her husband's arm, and left the court amidst a hum of almost affectionate greeting.

And what must he have thought as he stood there within the dock, looking at her and listening to her? There had been months in his life when he had almost trusted that he would succeed in winning that fair, highly born, and wealthy woman for his wife; and though he had failed, and now knew that he had never really touched her heart, that she had always loved the man whom, though she had rejected him time after time because of the danger of his ways, she had at last married, yet it must have been pleas-

ant to him, even in his peril, to hear from her own lips how well she had esteemed him. She left the court with her veil down, and he could not catch her eye; but Lord Chiltern nodded to him in his old pleasant familiar way, as though to bid him take courage, and to tell him that all things would even yet be well with him.

The evidence given by Lady Cantrip and her husband and by Mr. Monk was equally favorable. She had always regarded him as a perfect gentleman. Lord Cantrip had found him to be a man devoted to the service of his country—modest, intelligent, and high-spirited. Perhaps the few words which fell from Mr. Monk were as strong as any that were spoken. "He is a man whom I have delighted to call my friend, and have been happy to think that his services have been at the disposal of his country."

Sir Gregory Grogan replied. It seemed to him that the evidence was as he had left it. It would be for the jury to decide, under such directions as his lordship might be pleased to give them, how far that evidence brought the guilt home to the prisoner. He would use no rhetoric in pushing the case against the prisoner; but he must submit to them that his learned friend had not shown that acquaintance with human nature which the gentleman undoubtedly possessed in arguing that there had lacked time for the conception and execution of the crime. Then, at considerable length, he strove to show that Mr. Chaffanbrass had been unjustly severe upon Lord Fawn.

It was late in the afternoon when Sir Gregory had finished his speech, and the judge's charge was reserved for a sixth day.

CHAPTER LXIV.

CONFUSION IN THE COURT.

ON the following morning it was observed that before the judges took their seats Mr. Chaffanbrass entered the court with a manner much more brisk than was expected from him now that his own work was done. As a matter of course, he would be there to hear the charge, but, almost equally as a matter of course, he would be languid, silent, cross, and unenergetic. They who knew him were sure, when they saw his bearing on this morning, that he intended to do something more before the charge was given. The judges entered the court nearly half an hour later than usual, and it was observed with surprise that they were followed by the Duke of Omnium. Mr. Chaffanbrass was on his feet before the Chief Justice had taken his seat, but the judge was the first to speak. It was observed that he held a scrap of paper in his hand, and that the barrister held a similar scrap. Then every man in the court knew that some message had come suddenly by the wires. "I am informed, Mr. Chaffanbrass, that you wish to address the court before I begin my charge."

"Yes, my lud; and I am afraid, my lud, that I shall have to ask your ludship to delay your charge for some days, and to subject the jury to the very great inconvenience of prolonged incarceration for another week—either to do that or to call upon the jury to acquit the prisoner. I venture to assert, on my own peril, that no jury

can convict the prisoner after hearing me read that which I hold in my hand." Then Mr. Chaffanbrass paused, as though expecting that the judge would speak; but the judge said not a word, but sat looking at the old barrister over his spectacles.

Every eye was turned upon Phineas Finn, who up to this moment had heard nothing of these new tidings—who did not in the least know on what was grounded the singularly confident—almost insolently confident—assertion which Mr. Chaffanbrass had made in his favor. On him the effect was altogether distressing. He had borne the trying week with singular fortitude, having stood there in the place of shame hour after hour, and day after day, expecting his doom. It had been to him as a lifetime of torture. He had become almost numb from the weariness of his position and the agonizing strain upon his mind. The jailer had offered him a seat from day to day, but he had always refused it, preferring to lean upon the rail and gaze upon the court. He had almost ceased to hope for any thing except the end of it. He had lost count of the days, and had begun to feel that the trial was an eternity of torture in itself. At nights he could not sleep, but during the Sunday, after mass, he had slept all day. Then it had begun again, and when the Tuesday came he hardly knew how long it had been since that vacant Sunday. And now he heard the advocate declare, without knowing on what ground the declaration was grounded, that the trial must be postponed, or that the jury must be instructed to acquit him.

"This telegram has reached us only this morning," continued Mr. Chaffanbrass. "Mealyus had a house-door key made in Prague. We have the mould in our possession, and will bring the man who made the key to England." Now, my lud, the case in the hands of the police, as against this man Mealyus, or Emilius, as he has chosen to call himself, broke down altogether on the presumption that he could not have let himself in and out of the house in which he had put himself to bed on the night of the murder. We now propose to prove that he had prepared himself with the means of doing so, and had done so after a fashion which is conclusive as to his having required the key for some guilty purpose. We assert that your ludship can not allow the case to go to the jury without taking cognizance of this telegram; and we go further, and say that those twelve men, as twelve human beings with hearts in their bosoms and ordinary intelligence at their command, can not ignore the message, even should your ludship insist upon their doing so with all the energy at your disposal."

Then there was a scene in court, and it appeared that no less than four messages had been received from Prague, all to the same effect. One had been addressed by Madame Goesler to her friend the Duchess—and that message had caused the Duke's appearance on the scene. He had brought his telegram direct to the Old Bailey, and the Chief Justice now held it in his hand. The lawyer's clerk who had accompanied Madame Goesler had telegraphed to the governor of the jail, to Mr. Wickerby, and to the Attorney-General. Sir Gregory, rising with the telegram in his hand, stated that he had received the same information. "I do not see," said he,

"that it at all alters the evidence as against the prisoner."

"Let your evidence go to the jury, then," said Mr. Chaffanbrass, "with such observations as his ludship may choose to make on the telegram. I shall be contented. You have already got your other man in prison on a charge of bigamy."

"I could not take notice of the message in charging the jury, Mr. Chaffanbrass," said the judge. "It has come, as far as we know, from the energy of a warm friend—from that hearty friendship with which it seemed yesterday that this gentleman, the prisoner at the bar, has inspired so many men and women of high character. But it proves nothing. It is an assertion. And where should we all be, Mr. Chaffanbrass, if it should appear hereafter that the assertion is fictitious—prepared purposely to aid the escape of a criminal?"

"I defy you to ignore it, my lud."

"I can only suggest, Mr. Chaffanbrass," continued the judge, "that you should obtain the consent of the gentlemen on the other side to a postponement of my charge."

Then spoke out the foreman of the jury. Was it proposed that they should be locked up till somebody should come from Prague, and that then the trial should be recommenced? The system, said the foreman, under which Middlesex juries were chosen for service in the City was known to be most horribly cruel—but cruelty to jurymen such as this had never even been heard of. Then a most irregular word was spoken. One of the jurymen declared that he was quite willing to believe the telegram. "Every one believes it," said Mr. Chaffanbrass. Then the Chief Justice scolded the jurymen, and Sir Gregory Grogan scolded Mr. Chaffanbrass. It seemed as though all the rules of the court were to be set at defiance. "Will my learned friend say that he doesn't believe it?" asked Mr. Chaffanbrass. "I neither believe nor disbelieve it; but it can not affect the evidence," said Sir Gregory. "Then send the case to the jury," said Mr. Chaffanbrass. It seemed that every body was talking, and Mr. Wickerby, the attorney, tried to explain it all to the prisoner over the bar of the dock, not in the lowest possible voice. The Chief Justice became angry, and the guardian of the silence of the court bestirred himself energetically. "My lud," said Mr. Chaffanbrass, "I maintain that it is proper that the prisoner should be informed of the purport of these telegrams. Mercy demands it, and justice as well." Phineas Finn, however, did not understand, as he had known nothing about the latch-key of the house in Northumberland Street.

Something, however, must be done. The Chief Justice was of opinion that, although the preparation of a latch-key in Prague could not really affect the evidence against the prisoner—although the facts against the prisoner would not be altered, let the manufacture of that special key be ever so clearly proved—nevertheless the jury were entitled to have before them the facts now tendered in evidence before they could be called upon to give a verdict, and that therefore they should submit themselves, in the service of their country, to the very serious additional inconvenience which they would be called upon to endure. Sundry of the jury altogether disagreed with this, and became loud in their anger. They

had already been locked up for a week. "And we are quite prepared to give a verdict," said one. The judge again scolded him very severely; and as the Attorney-General did at last assent, and as the unfortunate jurymen had no power in the matter, so it was at last arranged. The trial should be postponed till time should be given for Madame Goesler and the blacksmith to reach London from Prague.

If the matter was interesting to the public before, it became doubly interesting now. It was of course known to every body that Madame Goesler had undertaken a journey to Bohemia—and, as many supposed, a roving tour through all the wilder parts of unknown Europe—Poland, Hungary, and the Principalities, for instance—with the object of looking for evidence to save the life of Phineas Finn; and grandly romantic tales were told of her wit, her wealth, and her beauty. The story was published of the Duke of Omnium's will, only not exactly the true story. The late Duke had left her every thing at his disposal, and it was hinted that they had been privately married just before the Duke's death. Of course Madame Goesler became very popular, and the blacksmith from Prague who had made the key was expected with an enthusiasm which almost led to preparation for a public reception.

And yet, let the blacksmith from Prague be ever so minute in his evidence as to the key, let it be made as clear as running water that Mealyus had caused to be constructed for him in Prague a key that would open the door of the house in Northumberland Street, the facts as proved at the trial would not be at all changed. The lawyers were much at variance with their opinions on the matter, some thinking that the judge had been altogether wrong in delaying his charge. According to them, he should not have allowed Mr. Chaffanbrass to read the telegram in court. The charge should have been given, and the sentence of the court should have been pronounced if a verdict of guilty were given. The Home Secretary should then have granted a respite till the coming of the blacksmith, and have extended this respite to a pardon, if advised that the circumstances of the latch-key rendered doubtful the propriety of the verdict. Others, however, maintained that in this way a grievous penalty would be inflicted on a man who, by general consent, was now held to be innocent. Not only would he, by such an arrangement of circumstances, have been left for some prolonged period under the agony of a condemnation, but, by the necessity of the case, he would lose his seat for Tankerville. It would be imperative upon the House to declare vacant by its own action a seat held by a man condemned to death for murder, and no pardon from the Queen or from the Home Secretary would absolve the House from that duty. The House, as a House of Parliament, could only recognize the verdict of the jury as to the man's guilt. The Queen, of course, might pardon whom she pleased, but no pardon from the Queen would remove the guilt implied by the sentence. Many went much further than this, and were prepared to prove that, were he once condemned, he could not afterward sit in the House even if re-elected.

Now there was unquestionably an intense desire—since the arrival of these telegrams—that

Phineas Finn should retain his seat. It may be a question whether he would not have been the most popular man in the House could he have sat there on the day after the telegrams arrived. The Attorney-General had declared—and many others had declared with him—that this information about the latch-key did not in the least affect the evidence as given against Mr. Finn. Could it have been possible to convict the other man, merely because he had surreptitiously caused a door-key of the house in which he lived to be made for him? And how would this new information have been received had Lord Fawn sworn unreservedly that the man he had seen running out of the mews had been Phineas Finn? It was acknowledged that the latch-key could not be accepted as sufficient evidence against Mealyus. But nevertheless the information conveyed by the telegrams altogether changed the opinion of the public as to the guilt or innocence of Phineas Finn. His life now might have been insured, as against the gallows, at a very low rate. It was felt that no jury could convict him, and he was much more pitied in being subjected to a prolonged incarceration than even those twelve unfortunate men who had felt sure that the Wednesday would have been the last day of their unmerited martyrdom.

Phineas in his prison was materially circumstanced precisely as he had been before the trial. He was supplied with a profusion of luxuries, could they have comforted him, and was allowed to receive visitors. But he would see no one but his sisters—except that he had one interview with Mr. Low. Even Mr. Low found it very difficult to make him comprehend the exact condition of the affair, and could not induce him to be comforted when he did understand it. What had he to do—how could his innocence or his guilt be concerned—with the manufacture of a paltry key by such a one as Mealyus? How would it have been with him and with his name forever if this fact had not been discovered? "I was to be hung or saved from hanging according to the chances of such a thing as this! I do not care for my life in a country where such injustice can be done." His friend endeavored to assure him that, even had nothing been heard of the key, the jury would have acquitted him. But Phineas would not believe him. It had seemed to him as he had listened to the whole proceeding that the court had been against him. The Attorney and Solicitor General had appeared to him resolved upon hanging him—men who had been, at any rate, his intimate acquaintances, with whom he had sat on the same bench, who ought to have known him. And the judge had taken the part of Lord Fawn, who had seemed to Phineas to be bent on swearing away his life. He had borne himself very gallantly during that week, having, in all his intercourse with his attorney, spoken without a quaver in his voice, and without a flaw in the perspicuity of his intelligence. But now, when Mr. Low came to him, explaining to him that it was impossible that a verdict should be found against him, he was quite broken down. "There is nothing left of me," he said at the end of the interview. "I feel that I had better take to my bed and die. Even when I think of all that friends have done for me, it fails to cheer me. In this matter I should not have had to depend on friends. Had not she

gone for me to that place, every one would have believed me to be a murderer."

And yet in his solitude he thought very much of the marvelous love shown to him by his friends. Words had been spoken which had been very sweet to him in all his misery—words such as neither men nor women can say to each other in the ordinary intercourse of life, much as they may wish that their purport should be understood. Lord Chiltern, Lord Cantrip, and Mr. Monk had alluded to him as a man specially singled out by them for their friendship. Lady Cantrip, than whom no woman in London was more discreet, had been equally enthusiastic. Then how gracious, how tender, how inexpressibly sweet had been the words of her who had been Violet Effingham! And now the news had reached him of Madame Goesler's journey to the Continent. "It was a wonderful thing for her to do," Mr. Low had said. Yes, indeed! Remembering all that had passed between them, he acknowledged to himself that it was very wonderful. Were it not that his back was now broken, that he was prostrate and must remain so, a man utterly crushed by what he had endured, it might have been possible that she should do more for him than ever she had yet done.

CHAPTER LXV.

"I HATE HER!"

LADY LAURA KENNEDY had been allowed to take no active part in the manifestations of friendship which at this time were made on behalf of Phineas Finn. She had, indeed, gone to him in his prison, and made daily efforts to administer to his comfort; but she could not go up in the court and speak for him. And now this other woman, whom she hated, would have the glory of his deliverance! She already began to see a fate before her which would make even her past misery as nothing to that which was to come. She was a widow—not yet two months a widow; and though she did not and could not mourn the death of a husband as do other widows—though she could not sorrow in her heart for a man whom she had never loved, and from whom she had been separated during half her married life—yet the fact of her widowhood and the circumstances of her weeds were heavy on her. That she loved the man with a passionate devotion of which the other woman could know nothing she was quite sure. Love him! Had she not been true to him and to his interests from the very first day in which he had come among them in London with almost more than a woman's truth? She knew and recalled to her memory over and over again her own one great sin—the fault of her life. When she was, as regarded her own means, a poor woman, she had refused to be this poor man's wife, and had given her hand to a rich suitor. But she had done this with a conviction that she could so best serve the interests of the man in regard to whom she had promised herself that her feeling should henceforth be one of simple and purest friendship. She had made a great effort to carry out that intention, but the effort had been futile. She had striven to do her duty to a husband whom she disliked—but even in that she had failed. At one time she

had been persistent in her intercourse with Phineas Finn, and at another had resolved that she would not see him. She had been madly angry with him when he came to her with the story of his love for another woman, and had madly shown her anger; but yet she had striven to get for him the wife he wanted, though in doing so she would have abandoned one of the dearest purposes of her life. She had moved heaven and earth for him—her heaven and earth—when there was danger that he would lose his seat in Parliament. She had encountered the jealousy of her husband with scorn—and had then deserted him because he was jealous. And all this she did with a consciousness of her own virtue which was almost as sublime as it was ill-founded. She had been wrong. She confessed so much to herself with bitter tears. She had marred the happiness of three persons by the mistake she had made in early life. But it had not yet occurred to her that she had sinned. To her thinking the jealousy of her husband had been preposterous and abominable, because she had known—and had therefore felt that he should have known—that she would never disgrace him by that which the world called falsehood in a wife. She had married him without loving him, but it seemed to her that he was in fault for that. They had become wretched, but she had never pitied his wretchedness. She had left him, and thought herself to be ill-used because he had ventured to reclaim his wife. Through it all she had been true in her regard to the one man she had ever loved, and though she admitted her own folly and knew her own shipwreck, yet she had always drawn some woman's consolation from the conviction of her own constancy. He had vanished from her sight for a while with a young wife—never from her mind—and then he had returned a widower. Through silence, absence, and distance she had been true to him. On his return to his old ways she had at once welcomed him and strove to aid him. Every thing that was hers should be his—if only he would open his hands to take it. And she would tell it him all—let him know every corner of her heart. She was a married woman, and could not be his wife. She was a woman of virtue, and would not be his mistress. But she would be to him a friend so tender that no wife, no mistress, should ever have been fonder! She did tell him every thing as they stood together on the ramparts of the old Saxon castle. Then he had kissed her, and pressed her to his heart—not because he loved her, but because he was generous. She had partly understood it all—but yet had not understood it thoroughly. He did not assure her of his love—but then she was a wife, and would have admitted no love that was sinful. When she returned to Dresden that night she stood gazing at herself in the glass, and told herself that there was nothing there to attract the love of such a man as Phineas Finn—of one who was himself glorious with manly beauty; but yet for her sadness there was some cure, some possibility of consolation, in the fact that she was a wife. Why speak of love at all when marriage was so far out of the question? But now she was a widow and as free as he was—a widow endowed with ample wealth; and she was the woman to whom he had sworn his love when

they had stood together, both young, by the falls of the Linter! How often might they stand there again, if only his constancy would equal hers?

She had seen him once since Fate had made her a widow; but then she had been but a few days a widow, and his life had at that moment been in strange jeopardy. There had certainly been no time then for other love than that which the circumstances and the sorrow of the lover demanded from their mutual friendship. From that day, from the first moment in which she had heard of his arrest, every thought, every effort of her mind, had been devoted to his affairs. So great was his peril, and so strange, that it almost wiped out from her mind the remembrance of her own condition. Should they hang him, undoubtedly she would die. Such a termination to all her aspirations for him whom she had selected as her god upon earth would utterly crush her. She had borne much, but she could never bear that. Should he escape—but escape ingloriously—ah, then he should know what the devotion of a woman could do for a man! But if he should leave his prison with flying colors, and come forth a hero to the world, how would it be with her then? She could foresee and understand of what nature would be the ovation with which he would be greeted. She had already heard what the Duchess was doing and saying. She knew how eager on his behalf were Lord and Lady Cantrip. She discussed the matter daily with her sister-in-law, and knew what her brother thought. If the acquittal were perfect, there would certainly be an ovation, in which was it not certain to her that she would be forgotten? And she heard much, too, of Madame Goesler. And now there came the news, Madame Goesler had gone to Prague, to Cracow—and where not?—spending her wealth, employing her wits, bearing fatigue, openly before the world on this man's behalf—and had done so successfully. She had found this evidence of the key, and now because the tracings of a key had been discovered by a woman, people were ready to believe that he was innocent, as to whose innocence she, Laura Kennedy, would have been willing to stake her own life from the beginning of the affair!

Why had it not been her lot to go to Prague? Would not she have drunk up Esil or swallowed a crocodile against any she-Laertes that would have thought to rival and to parallel her great love? Would not she have piled up new Ossas had the opportunity have been given her? Woman-like, she had gone to him in her trouble, had burst through his prison doors, had thrown herself on his breast, and had wept at his feet. But of what avail had been that? This strange female, this Moabitish woman, had gone to Prague, and had found a key—and every body said that the thing was done! How she hated the strange woman, and remembered all the evil things that had been said of the intruder! She told herself over and over again that had it been any one else than this half foreigner, this German Jewess, this intriguing, unfeminine upstart, she could have borne it. Did not all the world know that the woman for the last two years had been the mistress of that old doting Duke who was now dead? Had any one ever heard who was her father or who was her mother? Had it not always been declared of her that she was a pushing, dangerous, scheming creature? And then she was old

enough to be his mother, though by some Medean tricks known to such women she was able to postpone not the ravages of age, but the manifestation of them to the eyes of the world. In all of which charges poor Lady Laura wronged her rival foully—in that matter of age especially, for, as it happened, Madame Goesler was by some months the younger of the two. But Lady Laura was a blonde, and trouble had told upon her outwardly, as it is wont to do upon those who are fair-skinned and, at the same time, high-hearted. But Madame Goesler was a brunette—swarthy, Lady Laura would have called her—with bright eyes and glossy hair and thin cheeks, and now being somewhat over thirty, she was at her best. Lady Laura hated her as a fair woman who has lost her beauty can hate the dark woman who keeps it.

"What made her think of the key?" said Lady Chiltern.

"I don't believe she did think of it. It was an accident."

"Then why did she go?"

"Oh, Violet, do not talk to me about that woman any more, or I shall be mad."

"She has done him good service."

"Very well—so be it. Let him have the service. I know they would have acquitted him if she had never stirred from London. Oswald says so. But no matter. Let her have her triumph. Only do not talk to me about her. You know what I have thought about her ever since she first came up in London. Nothing ever surprised me so much as that you should take her by the hand."

"I do not know that I took her specially by the hand."

"You had her down at Harrington."

"Yes, I did. And I do like her. And I know nothing against her. I think you are prejudiced against her, Laura."

"Very well. Of course you think and can say what you please. I hate her, and that is sufficient." Then, after a pause, she added, "Of course he will marry her. I know that well enough. It is nothing to me whom he marries—only—only—only, after all that has passed, it seems hard upon me that his wife should be the only woman in London that I could not visit."

"Dear Laura, you should control your thoughts about this young man."

"Of course I should—but I don't. You mean that I am disgracing myself."

"No."

"Yes, you do. Oswald is more candid, and tells me so openly. And yet what have I done? The world has been hard upon me, and I have suffered. Do I desire any thing except that he shall be happy and respectable? Do I hope for any thing? I will go back and linger out my life at Dresden, where my disgrace can hurt no one." Her sister-in-law, with all imaginable tenderness, said what she could to console the miserable woman; but there was no consolation possible. They both knew that Phineas Finn would never renew the offer which he had once made.

CHAPTER LXVI.

THE FOREIGN BLUDGEON.

In the mean time Madame Goesler, having accomplished the journey from Prague in considerably less than a week, reached London with the blacksmith, the attorney's clerk, and the model of the key. The trial had been adjourned on Wednesday, the 24th of June, and it had been suggested that the jury should be again put into their box on that day week. All manner of inconvenience was to be endured by various members of the legal profession, and sundry irregularities were of necessity sanctioned to this great occasion. The sitting of the court should have been concluded, and every body concerned should have been somewhere else, but the matter was sufficient to justify almost any departure from routine. A member of the House of Commons was in custody, and it had already been suggested that some action should be taken by the House as to his speedy deliverance. Unless a jury could find him guilty, let him be at once restored to his duties and his privileges. The case was involved in difficulties, but in the mean time the jury, who had been taken down by train every day to have a walk in the country in the company of two sheriff's officers, and who had been allowed to dine at Greenwich one day and at Richmond on another, in the hope that white-bait with lamb and salad might in some degree console them for their loss of liberty, were informed that they would be once again put into their box on Wednesday. But Madame Goesler reached London on the Sunday morning, and on the Monday the whole affair respecting the key was unraveled in the presence of the Attorney-General, and with the personal assistance of our old friend, Major Mackintosh. Without a doubt the man Mealyus had caused to be made for him in Prague a key which would open the door of the house in Northumberland Street. A key was made in London from the model now brought which did open the door. The Attorney-General seemed to think that it would be his duty to ask the judge to call upon the jury to acquit Phineas Finn, and that then the matter must rest forever, unless further evidence could be obtained against Yosef Mealyus. It would not be possible to hang a man for a murder simply because he had fabricated a key—even though he might possibly have obtained the use of a gray coat for a few hours. There was no tittle of evidence to show that he had ever had the great-coat on his shoulders, or that he had been out of the house on that night. Lord Fawn, to his infinite disgust, was taken to the prison in which Mealyus was detained, and was confronted with the man, but he could say nothing. Mealyus, at his own suggestion, put on the coat, and stalked about the room in it. But Lord Fawn would not say a word. The person whom he now saw might have been the man in the street, or Mr. Finn might have been the man, or any other man might have been the man. Lord Fawn was very dignified, very reserved, and very unhappy. To his thinking he was the great martyr of this trial. Phineas Finn was becoming a hero. Against the twelve jurymen the finger of scorn would never be pointed. But his sufferings must endure for his life—might probably imbitter his life to the very end. Looking into

his own future from his present point of view, he did not see how he could ever again appear under the eye of the public. And yet with what persistency of conscience had he struggled to be true and honest! On the present occasion he would say nothing. He had seen a man in a gray coat, and for the future would confine himself to that. "You did not see me, my lord," said Mr. Emilius, with touching simplicity.

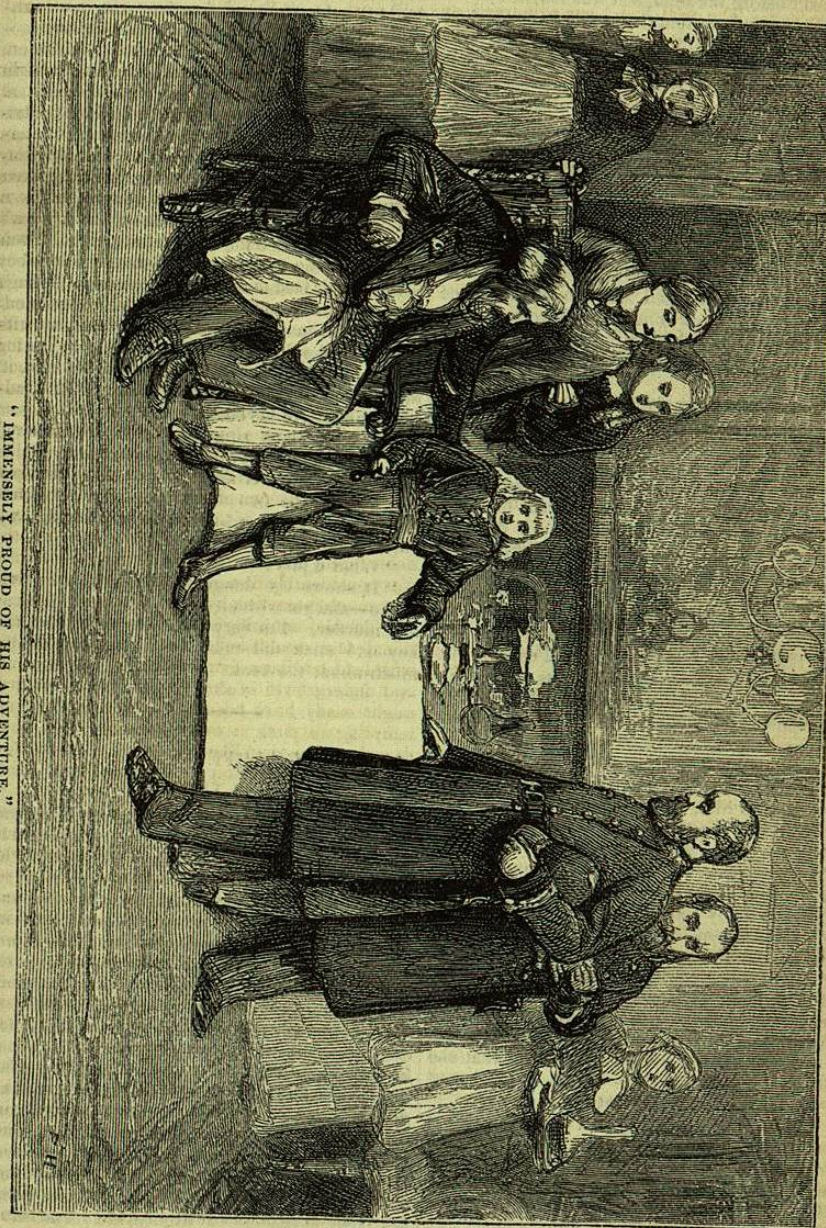
So the matter stood on the Monday afternoon, and the jury had already been told that they might be released on the following Tuesday—might, at any rate, hear the judge's charge on that day, when another discovery was made more wonderful than that of the key. And this was made without any journey to Prague, and might, no doubt, have been made on any day since the murder had been committed. And it was a discovery for not having made which the police force generally was subjected to heavy censure. A beautiful little boy was seen playing in one of those gardens through which the passage runs with a short loaded bludgeon in his hand. He came into the house with the weapon, the maid who was with him having asked the little lord no question on the subject. But luckily it attracted attention, and his little lordship took two gardeners and a coachman and all the nurses to the very spot at which he found it. Before an hour was over he was standing at his father's knee, detailing the fact with great open eyes to two policemen, having by this time become immensely proud of his adventure. This occurred late on the Monday afternoon, when the noble family were at dinner, and at the same time very much interested, by the occurrence. But on the Tuesday morning early there was the additional fact established that a bludgeon loaded with lead had been found among the thick grass and undergrowth of shrubs in a spot to which it might easily have been thrown by any one attempting to pitch it over the wall. The news flew about the town like wild-fire, and it was now considered certain that the real murderer would be discovered.

But the renewal of the trial was again postponed till the Wednesday, as it was necessary that an entire day should be devoted to the bludgeon. The instrument was submitted to the eyes and hands of persons experienced in such matters, and it was declared on all sides that the thing was not of English manufacture. It was about a foot long, with a leathern thong to the handle, with something of a spring in the shaft, and with the oval loaded knot at the end cased with leathern thongs very minutely and skillfully cut. They who understood modern work in leather gave it as their opinion that the weapon had been made in Paris. It was considered that Mealyus had brought it with him, and concealed it in preparation for this occasion. If the police could succeed in tracing the bludgeon into his hands, or in proving that he had purchased any such instrument, then—so it was thought—there would be evidence to justify a police magistrate in sending Mr. Emilius to occupy the place so lately and so long held by poor Phineas Finn. But till that had been done there could be nothing to connect the preacher with the murder. All who had heard the circumstances of the case were convinced that Mr. Bonteen had been murdered by the weapon lately discovered, and not

by that which Phineas had carried in his pocket—but no one could adduce proof that it was so. This second bludgeon would no doubt help to remove the difficulty in regard to Phineas, but would not give atonement to the shade of Mr. Bonteen.

He must have studied his conduct so as to have it ready for such an occasion, thinking that it might some day occur. But with all his presence of mind he could not keep the tell-tale blood from mounting.

"You don't know any thing about it, Mr.



"IMMENSELY PROUD OF HIS ADVENTURE."

Mealyus was confronted with the weapon in the presence of Major Mackintosh, and was told its story—how it was found in the nobleman's garden by the little boy. At the first moment, with instant readiness, he took the thing in his hand, and looked at it with feigned curiosity.

Mealyus?" said one of the policemen present, looking closely into his face. "Of course you need not criminate yourself."

"What should I know about it? No; I know nothing about the stick. I never had such a stick, or, as I believe, saw one before." He did

it very well, but he could not keep the blood from rising to his cheeks. The policemen were sure that he was the murderer—but what could they do?

"You saved his life, certainly," said the Duchess to her friend on the Sunday afternoon. That had been before the bludgeon was found.

"I do not believe that they could have touched a hair of his head," said Madame Goesler.

"Would they not? Every body felt sure that he would be hung. Would it not have been awful? I do not see how you are to help becoming man and wife now, for all the world are talking about you." Madame Goesler smiled and said that she was quite indifferent to the world's talk. On the Tuesday after the bludgeon was found the two ladies met again. "Now we know that it was the clergyman," said the Duchess.

"I never doubted it."
"He must have been a brave man for a foreigner—to have attacked Mr. Bonteen all alone in the street, when any one might have seen him. I don't feel to hate him so very much after all. As for that little wife of his, she has got no more than she deserved."

"Mr. Finn will surely be acquitted now."

"Of course he'll be acquitted. Nobody doubts about it. That is all settled, and it is a shame that he should be kept in prison even over to-day. I should think they'll make him a peer, and give him a pension, or at the very least appoint him secretary to something. I do wish Plantagenet hadn't been in such a hurry about that nasty Board of Trade, and then he might have gone there. He couldn't very well be Privy Seal, unless they do make him a peer. You wouldn't mind, would you, my dear?"

"I think you'll find that they will console Mr. Finn with something less gorgeous than that. You have succeeded in seeing him, of course?"

"Plantagenet wouldn't let me, but I know who did."

"Some lady?"

"Oh yes—a lady. Half the men about the clubs went to him, I believe."

"Who was she?"

"You won't be ill-natured?"

"I'll endeavor, at any rate, to keep my temper, Duchess."

"It was Lady Laura."

"I supposed so."

"They say she is frantic about him, my dear."

"I never believe those things. Women do not go frantic about men in these days. They have been very old friends, and have known each other for many years. Her brother, Lord Chiltern, was his particular friend. I do not wonder that she should have seen him."

"Of course you know that she is a widow."

"Oh yes; Mr. Kennedy had died long before I left England."

"And she is very rich. She has got all Lough Linter for her life, and her own fortune back again. I will bet you any thing you like that she offers to share it with him."

"It may be so," said Madame Goesler, while the slightest blush in the world suffused her cheek.

"And I'll make you another bet, and give you any odds."

"What is that?"

"That he refuses her. It is quite a common

thing nowadays for ladies to make the offer and for gentlemen to refuse. Indeed, it was felt to be so inconvenient, while it was thought that gentlemen had not the alternative, that some men became afraid of going into society. It is better understood now."

"Such things have been done, I do not doubt," said Madame Goesler, who had ventured to avert her face without making the motion apparent to her friend.

"When this is all over we'll get him down to Matching, and manage better than that. I should think they'll hardly go on with the session, as nobody has done any thing since the arrest. While Mr. Finn has been in prison legislation has come to a stand-still altogether. Even Plantagenet doesn't work above twelve hours a day, and I'm told that poor Lord Fawn hasn't been near his office for the last fortnight. When the excitement is over they'll never be able to get back to their business before the grouse. There'll be a few dinners, of course, just as a compliment to the great man; but London will break up after that, I should think. You won't come in for so much of the glory as you would have done, if they hadn't found the stick. Little Lord Frederick must have his share, you know."

"It's the most singular case I ever knew," said Sir Simon Slope that night to one of his friends. "We certainly should have hanged him but for the two accidents, and yet neither of them brings us a bit nearer to hanging any one else."

"What a pity!"

"It shows the danger of circumstantial evidence—and yet without it one never could get at any murder. I'm very glad, you know, that the key and stick did turn up. I never thought much about the coat."

CHAPTER LXVII.

THE VERDICT.

ON the Wednesday morning Phineas Finn was again brought into the court, and again placed in the dock. There was a general feeling that he should not again have been so disgraced; but he was still a prisoner under a charge of murder, and it was explained to him that the circumstances of the case and the stringency of the law did not admit of his being seated elsewhere during his trial. He treated the apology with courteous scorn. He should not have chosen, he said, to have made any change till after the trial was over, even had any change been permitted. When he was brought up the steps into the dock after the judges had taken their seats there was almost a shout of applause. The crier was very angry, and gave it to be understood that every body would be arrested unless every body was silent; but the Chief Justice said not a word, nor did those great men the Attorney and Solicitor General express any displeasure. The bench was again crowded with members of Parliament from both Houses, and on this occasion Mr. Gresham himself had accompanied Lord Cantrip. The two Dukes were there, and men no bigger than Laurence Fitzgibbon were forced to subject themselves to the benevolence of the under-sheriff.

Phineas himself was pale and haggard. It was observed that he leaned forward on the rail of the dock all the day, not standing upright, as he had done before; and they who watched him closely said that he never once raised his eyes on this day to meet those of the men opposite to him on the bench, although heretofore throughout the trial he had stood with his face raised so as to look directly at those who were there seated. On this occasion he kept his eyes fixed upon the speaker. But the whole bearing of the man, his gestures, his gait, and his countenance were changed. During the first long week of his trial his uprightness, the manly beauty of his countenance, and the general courage and tranquillity of his deportment had been conspicuous. What-ever had been his fears, no mark of fear had disfigured his countenance. He had for once condescended to the exhibition of any outward show of effrontery. Through six weary days he had stood there, supported by a manhood sufficient for the terrible emergency. But now it seemed that, at any rate, the outward grace of his demeanor had deserted him. But it was known that he had been ill during the last few days, and it had been whispered through the court that he had not slept at nights. Since the adjournment of the court there had been bulletins as to his health, and every body knew that the confinement was beginning to tell upon him.

On the present occasion the proceedings of the day were opened by the Attorney-General, who began by apologizing to the jury. Apologies to the jury had been very frequent during the trial, and each apology had called forth fresh grumbling. On this occasion the foreman expressed a hope that the Legislature would consider the condition of things which made it possible that twelve men all concerned extensively in business should be confined for fourteen days because a mistake had been made in the evidence as to a murder. Then the Chief Justice, bowing down his head and looking at them over the rim of his spectacles with an expression of wisdom that almost convinced them, told them that he was aware of no mistake in the evidence. It might become their duty, on the evidence which they had heard and the further evidence which they would hear, to acquit the prisoner at the bar; but not on that account would there have been any mistake or erroneous procedure in the court, other than such error on the part of the prosecution in regard to the alleged guilt of the prisoner as it was the general and special duty of jurors to remedy. Then he endeavored to reconcile them to their sacrifice by describing the importance and glorious British nature of their position. "My lord," said one of the jurors, "if you was a salesman, and hadn't got no partner, only a very young un, you'd know what it was to be kept out of your business for a fortnight." Then that salesman wagged his head, and put his handkerchief up to his eyes, and there was pity also for him in the court.

After that the Attorney-General went on. His learned friend on the other side—and he nodded to Mr. Chaffanbrass—had got some further evidence to submit to them on behalf of the prisoner who was still on his trial before them. He now addressed them with the view of explaining to them that if that evidence should be such as he believed, it would become his duty on behalf of

the Crown to join with his learned friend in requesting the court to direct the jury to acquit the prisoner. Not the less on that account would it be the duty of the jury to form their own opinion as to the credibility of the fresh evidence which would be brought before them.

"There won't be much doubt about the credibility," said Mr. Chaffanbrass, rising in his place. "I am not a bit afraid about the credibility, gentlemen, and I don't think that you need be afraid either. You must understand, gentlemen, that I am now going on calling evidence for the defense. My last witness was the Right Honorable Mr. Monk, who spoke as to character. My next will be a Bohemian blacksmith named Praska—Peter Praska—who naturally can't speak a word of English, and, unfortunately, can't speak a word of German either. But we have got an interpreter, and I dare say we shall find out without much delay what Peter Praska has to tell us." Then Peter Praska was handed up to the rostrum for the witnesses, and the man learned in Czech and also in English was placed close to him, and sworn to give a true interpretation.

Mealyus the unfortunate one was also in court, brought in between two policemen, and the Bohemian blacksmith swore that he had made a certain key on the instructions of the man he now saw. The reader need not be further troubled with all the details of the evidence about the key. It was clearly proved that in a village near to Prague a key had been made such as would open Mr. Meager's door in Northumberland Street, and it was also proved that it was made from a mould supplied by Mealyus. This was done by the joint evidence of Mr. Meager and of the blacksmith. "And if I lose my key," said the reverend gentleman, "why should I not have another made? Did I ever deny it? This, I think, is very strange." But Mr. Emilius was very quickly walked back out of the court between the two policemen, as his presence would not be required in regard to the further evidence regarding the bludgeon.

Mr. Chaffanbrass, having finished his business with the key, at once began with the bludgeon. The bludgeon was produced, and was handed up to the bench, and inspected by the Chief Justice. The instrument created great interest. Men rose on tiptoe to look at it even from a distance, and the Prime Minister was envied because for a moment it was placed in his hands. As the large-eyed little boy who had found it was not yet six years old, there was a difficulty in perfecting the thread of the evidence. It was not held to be proper to administer an oath to an infant. But in a roundabout way it was proved that the identical bludgeon had been picked up in the garden. There was an elaborate lawyer's plan produced of the passage, the garden, and the wall, with the steps on which it was supposed that the blow had been struck, and the spot was indicated on which the child had said that he had found the weapon. Then certain workers in leather were questioned, who agreed in asserting that no such instrument as that handed to them had ever been made in England. After that two scientific chemists told the jury that they had minutely examined the knob of the instrument with reference to the discovery of human blood—but in vain. They were, however,