

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. Whatever 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,

of opinion that the man might very readily have been killed by the instrument without any effusion of blood at the moment by the blows. This seemed to the jury to be the less necessary, as three or four surgeons who had examined the murdered man's head had already told them that in all probability there had been no such effusion. When the judges went out to lunch at two o'clock the jury were trembling as to their fate for another night.

The fresh evidence, however, had been completed, and on the return of the Court Mr. Chaffanbrass said that he should only speak a very few words. For a few words he must ask indulgence, though he knew them to be irregular. But it was the speciality of this trial that every thing in it was irregular, and he did not think that his learned friend the Attorney-General would dispute the privilege. The Attorney-General said nothing, and Mr. Chaffanbrass went on with his little speech, with which he took up the greatest part of an hour. It was thought to have been unnecessary, as nearly all that he said was said again—and was sure to have been so said—by the judge. It was not his business—the business of him, Mr. Chaffanbrass—to accuse another man of the murder of Mr. Bonteen. It was not for him to tell the jury whether there was or was not evidence on which any other man should be sent to trial. But it was his bounden duty in defense of his client to explain to them that a collection of facts tending to criminate another man—which when taken together made a fair probability that another man had committed the crime—rendered it quite out of the question that they should declare his client to be guilty. He did not believe that there was a single person in the court who was not now convinced of the innocence of his client; but it was not permitted to him to trust himself solely to that belief. It was his duty to show them that, of necessity, they must acquit his client. When Mr. Chaffanbrass sat down the Attorney-General waived any right he might have of further reply.

It was half past three when the judge began his charge. He would, he said, do his best to enable the jury to complete their tedious duty, so as to return to their families on that night. Indeed, he would certainly finish his charge before he rose from the seat, let the hour be what it might; and though time must be occupied by him in going through the evidence and explaining the circumstances of this very singular trial, it might not be improbable that the jury would be able to find their verdict without any great delay among themselves. "There won't be any delay at all, my lord," said the suffering and very irrational salesman. The poor man was again rebuked, mildly, and the Chief Justice continued his charge.

As it occupied four hours in the delivery, of which by far the greater part was taken up in recapitulating and sifting evidence with which the careful reader, if such there be, has already been made too intimately acquainted, the account of it here shall be very short. The nature of circumstantial evidence was explained, and the truth of much that had been said in regard to such evidence by Mr. Chaffanbrass admitted; but nevertheless it would be impossible—so said his lordship—to administer justice if guilt could never be held to have been proved by circumstantial

evidence alone. In this case it might not improbably seem to them that the gentleman who had so long stood before them as a prisoner at the bar had been the victim of a most singularly untoward chain of circumstances, from which he would have to be liberated, should he be at last liberated, by another chain of circumstances as singular; but it was his duty to inform them now, after they had heard what he might call the double evidence, that he could not have given it to them as his opinion that the charge had been brought home against the prisoner, even had those circumstances of the Bohemian key and of the foreign bludgeon never been brought to light. He did not mean to say that the evidence had not justified the trial. He thought that the trial had been fully justified. Nevertheless, had nothing arisen to point to the possibility of guilt in another man, he should not the less have found himself bound in duty to explain to them that the thread of the evidence against Mr. Finn had been incomplete—or, he would rather say, the weight of it had been, to his judgment, insufficient. He was the more intent on saying so much, as he was desirous of making it understood that, even had the bludgeon still remained buried beneath the leaves, had the manufacturer of that key never been discovered, the great evil would not, he thought, have fallen upon them of punishing the innocent instead of the guilty—that most awful evil of taking innocent blood in their just attempt to punish murder by death. As far as he knew, to the best of his belief, that calamity had never fallen upon the country in his time. The administration of the law was so careful of life that the opposite evil was fortunately more common. He said so much because he would not wish that this case should be quoted hereafter as showing the possible danger of circumstantial evidence. It had been a case in which the evidence given as to character alone had been sufficient to make him feel that the circumstances which seemed to affect the prisoner injuriously could not be taken as establishing his guilt. But now other and opposing circumstances had been brought to light, and he was sure that the jury would have no difficulty with their verdict. A most frightful murder had no doubt been committed in the dead of the night. A gentleman coming home from his club had been killed—probably by the hand of one who had himself moved in the company of gentlemen. A plot had been made—had probably been thought of for days and weeks before—and had been executed with extreme audacity, in order that an enemy might be removed. There could, he thought, be but little doubt that Mr. Bonteen had been killed by the instrument found in the garden, and if so, he certainly had not been killed by the prisoner, who could not be supposed to have carried two bludgeons in his pocket, and whose quarrel with the murdered man had been so recent as to have admitted of no preparation. They had heard the story of Mr. Meager's gray coat, and of the construction of the duplicate key for Mr. Meager's house door. It was not for him to tell them on the present occasion whether these stories, and the evidence by which they had been supported, tended to affix guilt elsewhere. It was beyond his province to advert to such probability or possibility; but undoubtedly the circumstances might be taken by them as an assistance, if assistance were needed, in coming to a consideration on the

charge against the prisoner. "Gentlemen," he said at last, "I think you will find no difficulty in acquitting the prisoner of the murder laid to his charge;" whereupon the jurymen put their heads together, and the foreman, without half a minute's delay, declared that they were unanimous, and that they found the prisoner not guilty. "And we are of opinion," said the foreman, "that Mr. Finn should not have been put upon his trial on such evidence as has been brought before us."

The necessity of liberating poor Phineas from the horrors of his position was too urgent to allow of much attention being given at the moment to this protest. "Mr. Finn," said the judge, addressing the poor broken wretch, "you have been acquitted of the odious and abominable charge brought against you, with the concurrence, I am sure, not only of those who have heard this trial, but of all your countrymen and countrywomen. I need not say that you will leave that dock with no stain on your character. It has, I hope, been some consolation to you in your misfortune to hear the terms in which you have been spoken of by such friends as they who came here to give their testimony in your behalf. It is, and it has been, a great sorrow to me to see such a one as you subjected to so unmerited an ignominy; but a man educated in the laws of his country, as you have been, and understanding its constitution fundamentally, as you do, will probably have acknowledged that, great as has been the misfortune to you personally, nothing more than a proper attempt has been made to execute justice. I trust that you may speedily find yourself able to resume your place among the legislators of the country." Thus Phineas Finn was acquitted, and the judges, collecting up their robes, trooped off from the bench, following the long line of their assessors, who had remained even to that hour to hear the last word of the trial. Mr. Chaffanbrass collected his papers, with the assistance of Mr. Wickerby, totally disregarding of his junior counsel, and the Attorney and Solicitor General congratulated each other on the successful termination of a very disagreeable piece of business.

And Phineas was discharged. According to the ordinary meaning of the words, he was now to go about his business as he pleased, the law having no farther need of his person. We can understand how in common cases the prisoner discharged on his acquittal—who probably in nine cases out of ten is conscious of his own guilt—may feel the sweetness of his freedom and enjoy his immunity from danger with a light heart. He is received probably by his wife or young woman, or perhaps, having no wife or young woman to receive him, betakes himself to his usual haunts. The interest which has been felt in his career is over, and he is no longer the hero of an hour; but he is a free man, and may drink his gin-and-water where he pleases. Perhaps a small admiring crowd may welcome him as he passes out into the street, but he has become nobody before he reaches the corner. But it would not be so with this discharged prisoner, either as regarded himself and his own feelings, or as regarded his friends. When the moment came he had hardly as yet thought about the immediate future—had not considered how he would live, or where, during the next few months.

The sensations of the moment had been so full, sometimes of agony and of others of anticipated triumph, that he had not attempted as yet to make for himself any schemes. The Duchess of Omnium had suggested that he would be received back into society with an elaborate course of fashionable dinners; but that view of his return to the world had certainly not occurred to him. When he was led down from the dock he hardly knew whither he was being taken, and when he found himself in a small room attached to the court, clasped on one arm by Mr. Low and on the other by Lord Chiltern, he did not know what they would propose to him, nor had he considered what answer he would make to any proposition. "At last you are safe," said Mr. Low.

"But think what he has suffered," said Lord Chiltern.

Phineas looked round to see if there was any other friend present. Certainly among all his friends he had thought most of her who had traveled half across Europe for evidence to save him. He had seen Madame Goesler last on the evening preceding the night of the murder, and had not even heard from her since. But he had been told what she had done for him, and now he had almost fancied that he would have found her waiting for him. He smiled first at the one man and then at the other, and made an effort to carry himself with his ordinary tranquillity. "It will be all right now, I dare say," he said. "I wonder whether I could have a glass of water?" He sat down while the water was brought to him, and his two friends stood over him, hardly knowing how to do more than support him by their presence.

Then Lord Cantrip made his way into the room. He had sat on the bench to the last, whereas the other two had gone down to receive the prisoner when acquitted, and with him came Sir Harry Coldfoot, the Home Secretary. "My friend," said the former, "the bitter day has passed over you, and I hope that the bitterness will soon pass away also." Phineas again attempted to smile as he held the hand of the man with whom he had formerly been associated in office.

"I should not intrude, Mr. Finn," said Sir Harry, "did I not feel myself bound in a special manner to express my regret at the great trouble to which you have been subjected." Phineas rose and bowed stiffly. He had conceived that every one connected with the administration of the law had believed him to be guilty, and none in his present mood could be dear to him but they who had from the beginning trusted in his innocence. "I am requested by Mr. Gresham," continued Sir Harry, "to express to you his entire sympathy, and his joy that all this is at last over." Phineas tried to make some little speech, but utterly failed. Then Sir Harry left them, and he burst out into tears.

"Who can be surprised?" said Lord Cantrip. "The marvel is that he should have been able to bear it so long."

"It would have crushed me utterly long since," said the other lord. Then there was a question asked as to what he would do, and Mr. Low proposed that he should be allowed to take Phineas to his own house for a few days. His wife, he said, had known their friend so long and so inti-

mately that she might perhaps be able to make herself more serviceable than any other lady, and at their house Phineas could receive his sisters just as he would at his own. His sisters had been lodging near the prison almost ever since the committal, and it had been thought well to remove them to Mr. Low's house, in order that they might meet their brother there.

"I think I'll go to my—own room—in Marlborough Street." These were the first intelligible words he had uttered since he had been led out of the dock, and to that resolution he adhered. Lord Cantrip offered the retirements of a country house belonging to himself within an hour's journey of London, and Lord Chiltern declared that Harrington Hall, which Phineas knew, was altogether at his service. But Phineas decided in favor of Mrs. Bunce, and to Great Marlborough Street he was taken by Mr. Low.

"I'll come to you to-morrow—with my wife," said Lord Chiltern, as he was going.

"Not to-morrow, Chiltern. But tell your wife how deeply I value her friendship." Lord Cantrip also offered to come, but was asked to wait a while. "I am afraid I am hardly fit for visitors yet. All the strength seems to have been knocked out of me this last week."

Mr. Low accompanied him to his lodgings, and then handed him over to Mrs. Bunce, promising that his two sisters should come to him early on the following morning. On that evening he would prefer to be quite alone. He would not allow the barrister even to go up stairs with him, and when he had entered his room, almost begged his weeping landlady to leave him.

"Oh, Mr. Phineas, let me do something for you!" said the poor woman. "You have not had a bit of anything all day. Let me get you just a cup of tea and a chop."

In truth, he had dined when the judges went out to their lunch—dined as he had been wont to dine since the trial had been commenced—and wanted nothing. She might bring him tea, he said, if she would leave him for an hour. And then at last he was alone. He stood up in the middle of the room, stretching forth his hands, and putting one first to his breast and then to his brow, feeling himself as though doubting his own identity. Could it be that the last week had been real—that every thing had not been a dream? Had he in truth been suspected of a murder, and tried for his life? And then he thought of him who had been murdered, of Mr. Bonteen, his enemy. Was he really gone—the man who the other day was to have been Chancellor of the Exchequer—the scornful, arrogant, loud, boastful man? He had hardly thought of Mr. Bonteen before during those weeks of his own incarceration. He had heard all the details of the murder with a fullness that had been at last complete. The man who had oppressed him, and whom he had at times almost envied, was indeed gone, and the world for a while had believed that he, Phineas Finn, had been the man's murderer!

And now what should be his own future life? One thing seemed certain to him. He could never again go into the House of Commons, and sit there, an ordinary man of business, with other ordinary men. He had been so hacked and hewed about, so exposed to the gaze of the vulgar, so mauled by the public, that he could never-

more be any thing but the wretched being who had been tried for the murder of his enemy. The pith had been taken out of him, and he was no longer a man fit for use. He could nevermore enjoy that freedom from self-consciousness, that inner tranquillity of spirit, which are essential to public utility. Then he remembered certain lines which had long been familiar to him, and he repeated them aloud, with some conceit that they were apposite to him:

"The true gods sigh for the cost and pain,
For the reed that grows nevermore again,
As a reed with the reeds in the river."

He sat drinking his tea, still thinking of himself—knowing how infinitely better it would be for him that he should indulge in no such thought—till an idea struck him, and he got up, and drawing back the blinds from the open window, looked out into the night. It was the last day of June, and the weather was very sultry, but the night was dark, and it was now near midnight. On a sudden he took his hat, and feeling, with a smile, for the latch-key, which he always carried in his pocket—thinking of the latch-key which had been made at Prague for the lock of a house in Northumberland Street, New Road—he went down to the front-door. "You'll be back soon, Mr. Finn, won't you, now?" said Mrs. Bunce, who had heard his step, and had remained up, thinking it better, this the first night of his return, not to rest till he had gone to his bed.

"Why should I be back soon?" he said, turning upon her. But then he remembered that she had been one of those who were true to him, and he took her hand and was gracious to her. "I will be back soon, Mrs. Bunce, and you need fear nothing. But recollect how little I have had of liberty lately. I have not even had a walk for six weeks. You can not wonder that I should wish to roam about a little." Nevertheless she would have preferred that he should not have gone out all alone on that night.

He had taken off the black mourning coat which he had worn during the trial, and had put on that very gray garment by which it had been sought to identify him with the murderer. So clad, he crossed Regent Street into Hanover Square, and from thence went a short way down Bond Street, and by Bruton Street into Berkeley Square. He took exactly the reverse of the route by which he had returned home from the club on the night of the murder. Every now and then he trembled as he passed some figure which might be that of a man who would recognize him. But he walked fast, and went on till he came to the spot at which the steps descend from the street into the passage—the very spot at which the murder had been committed. He looked down it with an awful dread, and stood there as though he were fascinated, thinking of all the details which he had heard throughout the trial. Then he looked around him, and listened whether there were any step approaching through the passage. Hearing none and seeing no one, he at last descended, and for the first time in his life passed through that way into Bolton Row. Here it was that the wretch of whom he had now heard so much had waited for his enemy—the wretch for whom during the last six weeks he had been mistaken. Heavens! that men who had known him should have believed

CHAPTER LXVIII.

PHINEAS AFTER THE TRIAL.

TEN days passed by, and Phineas Finn had not been out of his lodgings till after daylight, and then he only prowled about in the manner described in the last chapter. His sisters had returned to Ireland, and he saw no one, even in his own room, but two or three of his most intimate friends. Among those Mr. Low and Lord Chiltern were the most frequently with him, but Fitzgibbon, Barrington Erle, and Mr. Monk had also been admitted. People had called by the hundred, till Mrs. Bunce was becoming almost tired of her lodger's popularity, but they came only to inquire—because it had been reported that Mr. Finn was not well after his imprisonment. The Duchess of Omnium had written to him various notes, asking when he would come to her, and what she could do for him. Would he dine, would he spend a quiet evening, would he go to Matching? Finally, would he become her guest and the Duke's next September for the partridge shooting? They would have a few friends with them, and Madame Goesler would be one of the number. Having had this by him for a week, he had not as yet answered the invitation. He had received two or three notes from Lady Laura, who had frankly explained to him that if he were really ill she would of course go to him, but that as matters stood she could not do so without displeasing her brother. He had answered each note by an assurance that his first visit should be made in Portman Square. To Madame Goesler he had written a letter of thanks—a letter which had, in truth, cost him some pains. "I know," he said, "for how much I have to thank you, but I do not know in what words to do it. I ought to be with you telling you in person of my gratitude; but I must own to you that for the present what has occurred has so unmanned me that I am unfit for the interview. I should only weep in your presence like a school-girl, and you would despise me." It was a long letter, containing many references to the circumstances of the trial, and to his own condition of mind throughout its period. Her answer to him, which was very short, was as follows:

"The reed that grows nevermore again
As a reed with the reeds by the river."

He felt sure that never again would he enter that room, in which, no doubt, all those assembled were now talking about him.

As he returned home he tried to make out for himself some plan for his future life—but interspersed with any idea that he could weave were the figures of two women, Lady Laura Kennedy and Madame Max Goesler. The former could be nothing to him but a friend, and though no other friend would love him as she loved him, yet she could not influence his life. She was very wealthy, but her wealth could be nothing to him. She would heap it all upon him if he would take it. He understood and knew that. Taking no pride to himself that it was so, feeling no conceit in his love, he was conscious of her devotion to him. He was poor, broken in spirit, and almost without a future—and yet could her devotion avail him nothing?

But how might it be with that other woman? Were she, after all that had passed between them, to consent to be his wife—and it might be that she would consent—how would the world be with him then? He would be known as Madame Goesler's husband, and have to sit at the bottom of her table—and be talked of as the man who had been tried for the murder of Mr. Bonteen. Look at it in which way he might, he thought that no life could any longer be possible to him in London.

"PARK LANE, Sunday.
"MY DEAR MR. FINN,—I can well understand that for a while you should be too agitated by what has passed to see your friends. Remember, however, that you owe it to them as well as to yourself not to sink into seclusion. Send me a line when you think that you can come to me, that I may be at home. My journey to Prague was nothing. You forget that I am constantly going to Vienna on business connected with my own property there. Prague lies but a few hours out of the route.
"Most sincerely yours,
"M. M. G."

His friends who did see him urged him constantly to bestir himself, and Mr. Monk pressed him very much to come down to the House. "Walk in with me to-night, and take your seat as though nothing had happened," said Mr. Monk.

"But so much has happened."

"Nothing has happened to alter your outward position as a man. No doubt many will flock round you to congratulate you, and your first half hour will be disagreeable; but then the thing will have been done. You owe it to your constituents to do so." Then Phineas for the first time expressed an opinion that he would resign his seat—that he would take the Chiltern Hundreds, and retire altogether from public life.

"Pray do nothing of the kind," said Mr. Monk. "I do not think you quite understand," said Phineas, "how such an ordeal as this works upon a man, how it may change a man, and knock out of him what little strength there ever was there. I feel that I am broken, past any patching up or mending. Of course it ought not to be so. A man should be made of better stuff—but one is only what one is."

"We'll put off the discussion for another week," said Mr. Monk.

"There came a letter to me when I was in prison from one of the leading men at Tankerville, saying that I ought to resign. I know they all thought that I was guilty. I do not care to sit for a place where I was so judged, even if I was fit any longer for a seat in Parliament." He had never felt convinced that Mr. Monk had himself believed with confidence his innocence, and he spoke with soreness, and almost with anger.

"A letter from one individual should never be allowed to create interference between a member and his constituents. It should simply be answered to that effect, and then ignored. As to the belief of the towns-people in your innocence, what is to guide you? I believed you innocent with all my heart."

"Did you?"

"But there was always sufficient possibility of your guilt to prevent a rational man from committing himself to the expression of an absolute conviction." The young member's brow became black as he heard this. "I can see that I offend you by saying so; but if you will think of it, I must be right. You were on your trial, and I, as your friend, was bound to await the result—with much confidence, because I knew you, but with no conviction, because both you and I are human and fallible. If the electors at Tankerville, or any great proportion of them, express a belief that you are unfit to represent them because of what has occurred, I shall be the last to recommend you to keep your seat; but I shall be surprised indeed if they should do so. If there were a general election to-morrow, I should regard your seat as one of the safest in England."

Both Mr. Low and Lord Chiltern were equally urgent with him to return to his usual mode of life, using different arguments for their purpose. Lord Chiltern told him plainly that he was weak and womanly, or, rather, that he would be were he to continue to dread the faces of his fellow-creatures. The Master of the Brake Hounds himself was a man less gifted than Phineas Finn, and therefore hardly capable of understanding the exaggerated feelings of the man who had recently been tried for his life. Lord Chiltern was affectionate, tender-hearted, and true, but there were no vacillatory fibres in his composition. The balance which regulated his conduct was firmly set, and went well. The

clock never stopped, and wanted but little looking after; but the works were somewhat rough, and the seconds were not scored. He had, however, been quite true to Phineas during the dark time, and might now say what he pleased. "I am womanly," said Phineas. "I begin to feel it. But I can't alter my nature."

"I never was so much surprised in my life," said Lord Chiltern. "When I used to look at you in the dock, by G— I envied you your pluck and strength."

"I was burning up the stock of coals, Chiltern."

"You'll come all right after a few weeks. You've been knocked out of time—that's the truth of it."

Mr. Low treated his patient with more indulgence; but he also was surprised, and hardly understood the nature of the derangement of the mechanism in the instrument which he was desirous of repairing. "I should go abroad for a few months if I were you," said Mr. Low.

"I should stick at the first inn I got to," said Phineas. "I think I am better here. By-and-by I shall travel, I dare say—all over the world, as far as my money will last. But for the present I am only fit to sit still."

Mrs. Low had seen him more than once, and had been very kind to him, but she also failed to understand. "I always thought that he was such a manly fellow," she said to her husband.

"If you mean personal courage, there is no doubt that he possesses it—as completely now, probably, as ever."

"Oh yes; he could go over to Flanders and let that lord shoot at him, and he could ride brutes of horses, and not care about breaking his neck. That's not what I mean. I thought that he could face the world with dignity; but now it seems that he breaks down."

"He has been very roughly used, my dear."

"So he has—and tenderly used too. Nobody has had better friends. I thought he would have been more manly."

The property of manliness in a man is a great possession, but perhaps there is none that is less understood, which is more generally accorded where it does not exist, or more frequently disallowed where it prevails. There are not many who ever make up their minds as to what constitutes manliness, or even inquire within themselves upon the subject. The woman's error, occasioned by her natural desire for a master, leads her to look for a certain outward magnificence of demeanor, a pretended indifference to stings and little torments, a would-be superiority to the bread-and-butter side of life, an unreal assumption of personal grandeur. But a robe of State such as this, however well the garment may be worn with practice, can never be the raiment natural to a man; and men, dressing themselves in women's eyes, have consented to walk about in buckram. A composure of the eye, which has been studied; a reticence as to the little things of life; a certain slowness of speech, unless the occasion call for passion; an indifference to small surroundings—these, joined, of course, with personal bravery, are supposed to constitute manliness. That personal bravery is required in the composition of manliness must be conceded, though of all the ingredients needed it is the lowest in value. But the first re-

quirement of all must be described by a negative. Manliness is not compatible with affectation. Women's virtues, all feminine attributes, may be marred by affectation, but the virtues and the vice may coexist. An affected man, too, may be honest, may be generous, may be pious—but surely he can not be manly. The self-conscious assumption of any outward manner, the striving to add, even though it be but a tenth of a cubit to the height, are fatal, and at once banish the all but divine attribute. Before the man can be manly the gifts which make him so must be there, collected by him slowly, unconsciously, as are his bones, his flesh, and his blood. They can not be put on like a garment for the nonce, as may a little learning. A man can not become faithful to his friends, unsuspecting before the world, gentle with women, loving with children, considerate to his inferiors, kindly with servants, tender-hearted with all—and at the same time be frank, of open speech, with springing, eager energies—simply because he desires it. These things, which are the attributes of manliness, must come of training on a nature not ignoble. But they are the very opposites, the antipodes, the direct antagonism, of that staring, posed, bewhiskered, and bewigged deportment, that nil-admirari, self-remembering assumption of manliness, that endeavor of twopence half-penny to look as high as threepence, which, when you prod it through, has in it nothing deeper than deportment. We see the two things daily, side by side, close to each other. Let a man put his hat down, and you shall say whether he has deposited it with affectation or true nature. The natural man will probably be manly. The affected man can not be so.

Mrs. Low was wrong when she accused our hero of being unmanly. Had his imagination been less alert in looking into the minds of men, and in picturing to himself the thoughts of others in reference to the crime with which he had been charged, he would not now have shrunk from contact with his fellow-creatures as he did. But he could not pretend to be other than he was. During the period of his danger, when men had thought that he would be hung—and when he himself had believed that it would be so—he had borne himself bravely without any conscious effort. When he had confronted the whole court with that steady courage which had excited Lord Chiltern's admiration, and had looked the bench in the face as though he at least had no cause to quail, he had known nothing of what he was doing. His features had answered the helm from his heart, but had not been played upon by his intellect. And it was so with him now. The reaction had overcome him, and he could not bring himself to pretend that it was not so. The tears would come to his eyes, and he would shiver and shake like one struck by palsy.

Mr. Monk came to him often, and was all but forgiven for the apparent defection in his faith. "I have made up my mind to one thing," Phineas said to him at the end of the ten days.

"And what is the one thing?"

"I will give up my seat."

"I do not see a shadow of reason for it."

"Nevertheless I will do it. Indeed, I have already written to Mr. Ratler for the Hundreds. There may be and probably are men down at Tankerville who still think that I am guilty.

There is an offensiveness in murder which degrades a man even by the accusation. I suppose it wouldn't do for you to move for the new writ?"

"Ratler will do it, as a matter of course. No doubt there will be expressions of great regret, and my belief is that they will return you again."

"If so, they'll have to do it without my presence."

Mr. Ratler did move for a new writ for the borough of Tankerville, and within a fortnight of his restoration to liberty Phineas Finn was no longer a member of Parliament. It can not be alleged that there was any reason for what he did, and yet the doing of it for the time rather increased than diminished his popularity. Both Mr. Gresham and Mr. Daubeny expressed their regret in the House, and Mr. Monk said a few words respecting his friend, which were very touching. He ended by expressing a hope that they soon might see him there again, and an opinion that he was a man peculiarly fitted by the tone of his mind and the nature of his intellect for the duties of Parliament.

Then at last, when all this had been settled, he went to Lord Brentford's house in Portman Square. He had promised that that should be the first house he would visit, and he was as good as his word. One evening he crept out, and walked slowly along Oxford Street, and knocked timidly at the door. As he did so he longed to be told that Lady Laura was not at home. But Lady Laura was at home—as a matter of course. In those days she never went into society, and had not passed an evening away from her father's house since Mr. Kennedy's death. He was shown up into the drawing-room in which she sat, and there he found her—alone. "Oh, Phineas, I am so glad you have come."

"I have done as I said, you see."

"I could not go to you when they told me that you were ill. You will have understood all that."

"Yes; I understand."

"People are so hard and cold and stiff and cruel that one can never do what one feels one's self to be right. So you have given up your seat?"

"Yes—I am no longer a member of Parliament."

"Barrington says that they will certainly reelect you."

"We shall see. You may be sure, at any rate, of this—that I shall never ask them to do so. Things seem to be so different now from what they did. I don't care for the seat. It all seems to be a bore and a trouble. What does it matter who sits in Parliament? The fight goes on just the same. The same falsehoods are acted. The same mock truths are spoken. The same wrong reasons are given. The same personal motives are at work."

"And yet of all believers in Parliament you used to be the most faithful."

"One has time to think of things, Lady Laura, when one lies in Newgate. It seems to me to be an eternity of time since they locked me up. And as for that trial, which they tell me lasted a week, I look back at it till the beginning is so distant that I can hardly remember it. But I have resolved that I will never talk of it again. Lady Chiltern is out, probably."

"Yes; she and Oswald are dining with the Baldocks."

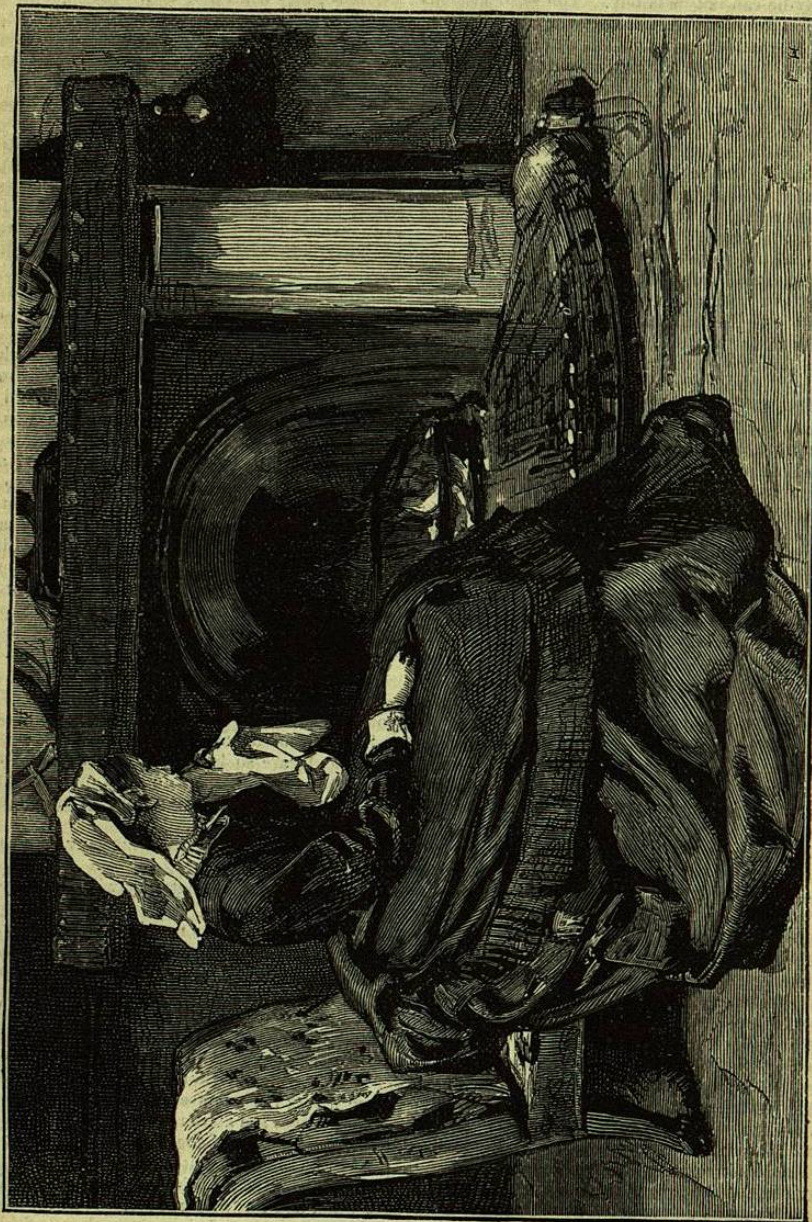
"She is well?"
 "Yes, and most anxious to see you. Will you go to their place in September?"
 He had almost made up his mind that if he went any where in September he would go to Matching Priory, accepting the offer of the Duch-

grooves of society. "I think not; I am hardly as yet sufficiently master of myself to know what I shall do."

"They will be much disappointed."

"And you—what will you do?"

"I shall not go there. I am told that I ought



"SHE SAT WEeping ALONE."

ess of Omnium; but he did not dare to say so to Lady Laura, because she would have known that Madame Goesler also would be there. And he had not as yet accepted the invitation, and was still in doubt whether he would not escape by himself instead of attempting to return into the

to visit Lough Linter, and I suppose I shall. Oswald has promised to go down with me before the end of the month; but he will not remain above a day or two."

"And your father?"

"We shall have him at Saulsby. I can not

look it all in the face yet. It is not possible that I should remain all alone in that great house. The people all around would hate and despise me. I think Violet will come down with me; but of course she can not remain there. Oswald must go to Harrington because of the hunting. It has become the business of his life. And she must go with him."

"You will return to Saulsby?"

"I can not say. They seem to think that I should live at Lough Linter; but I can not live there alone."

He soon took his leave of her, and did so with no warmer expressions of regard on either side than has here been given. Then he crept back to his lodgings, and she sat weeping alone in her father's house. When he had come to her during her husband's lifetime at Dresden, or even when she had visited him at his prison, it had been better than this.

CHAPTER LXIX.

THE DUKE'S FIRST COUSIN.

OUR pages have lately been taken up almost exclusively with the troubles of Phineas Finn, and, indeed, have so far not unfairly represented the feelings and interest of people generally at the time. Not to have talked of Phineas Finn from the middle of May to the middle of July in that year would have exhibited great ignorance or a cynical disposition. But other things went on also. Moons waxed and waned; children were born; marriages were contracted; and the hopes and fears of the little world around did not come to an end because Phineas Finn was not to be hung. Among others who had interests of their own there was poor Adelaide Palliser, who we last saw under the affliction of Mr. Spooner's love, but who before that had encountered the much deeper affliction of a quarrel with her own lover. She had desired him to free her—and he had gone. Indeed, as to his going at that moment there had been no alternative, as he considered himself to have been turned out of Lord Chiltern's house. The red-headed lord, in the fierceness of his defense of Miss Palliser, had told the lover that under such and such circumstances he could not be allowed to remain at Harrington Hall. Lord Chiltern had said something about "his roof." Now when a host questions the propriety of a guest remaining under his roof, the guest is obliged to go. Gerard Maule had gone; and, having offended his sweetheart by a most impolite allusion to Boulogne, had been forced to go as a rejected lover. From that day to this he had done nothing, not because he was contented with the lot assigned to him—for every morning, as he lay on his bed, which he usually did till twelve, he swore to himself that nothing should separate him from Adelaide Palliser—but simply because to do nothing was customary with him. "What is a man to do?" he not unnaturally asked his friend Captain Boodle at the club. "Let her out on the grass for a couple of months," said Captain Boodle, "and she'll come up as clean as a whistle. When they get these humors there's nothing like giving them a run." Captain Boodle undoubtedly had the reputation of being very great in council on such matters; but it must not

be supposed that Gerard Maule was contented to take his advice implicitly. He was unhappy, ill at ease, half-conscious that he ought to do something, full of regrets—but very idle.

In the mean time Miss Palliser, who had the finer nature of the two, suffered grievously. The Spooner affair was but a small addition to her misfortune. She could get rid of Mr. Spooner—of any number of the Spooners—but how should she get back to her the man she loved? When young ladies quarrel with their lovers, it is always presumed, especially in books, that they do not wish to get them back. It is to be understood that the loss to them was nothing. Miss Smith begs that Mr. Jones may be assured that he is not to consider her at all. If he is pleased to separate, she will be, at any rate, quite as well pleased—probably a great deal better. No doubt she has loved him with all her heart, but that will make no difference to her if he wishes—to be off. Upon the whole, Miss Smith thinks that she would prefer such an arrangement, in spite of her heart. Adelaide Palliser had said nothing of the kind. As Gerard Maule had regarded her as a "trouble," and had lamented that prospect of "Boulogne" which marriage had presented to his eyes, she had dismissed him with a few easily spoken words. She had assured him that no such troubles need weigh upon him. No doubt they had been engaged—but, as far as she was concerned, the remembrance of that need not embarrass him. And so she and Lord Chiltern between them had sent him away. But how was she to get him back again?

When she came to think it over, she acknowledged to herself that it would be all the world to her to have him back. To have him at all had been all the world to her. There had been nothing peculiarly heroic about him, nor had she ever regarded him as a hero. She had known his faults and weaknesses, and was probably aware that he was inferior to herself in character and intellect. But nevertheless she had loved him. To her he had been, though not heroic, sufficiently a man to win her heart. He was a gentleman, pleasant-mannered, pleasant to look at, pleasant to talk to, not educated in the high sense of the word, but never making himself ridiculous by ignorance. He was the very antipodes of a Spooner, and he was—or rather had been—her lover. She did not wish to change. She did not recognize the possibility of changing. Though she had told him that he might go if he pleased, to her his going would be the loss of every thing. What would life be without a lover—without the prospect of marriage? And there could be no other lover. There could be no further prospect should he take her at her word.

Of all this Lord Chiltern understood nothing, but Lady Chiltern understood it all. To his thinking the young man had behaved so badly that it was incumbent on them all to send him away, and so have done with him. If the young man wanted to quarrel with any one, there was he to be quarreled with. The thing was a trouble, and the sooner they got to the end of it the better. But Lady Chiltern understood more than that. She could not prevent the quarrel as it came, or was coming; but she knew that "the quarrels of lovers are the renewal of love." At any rate the woman always desires that it may