

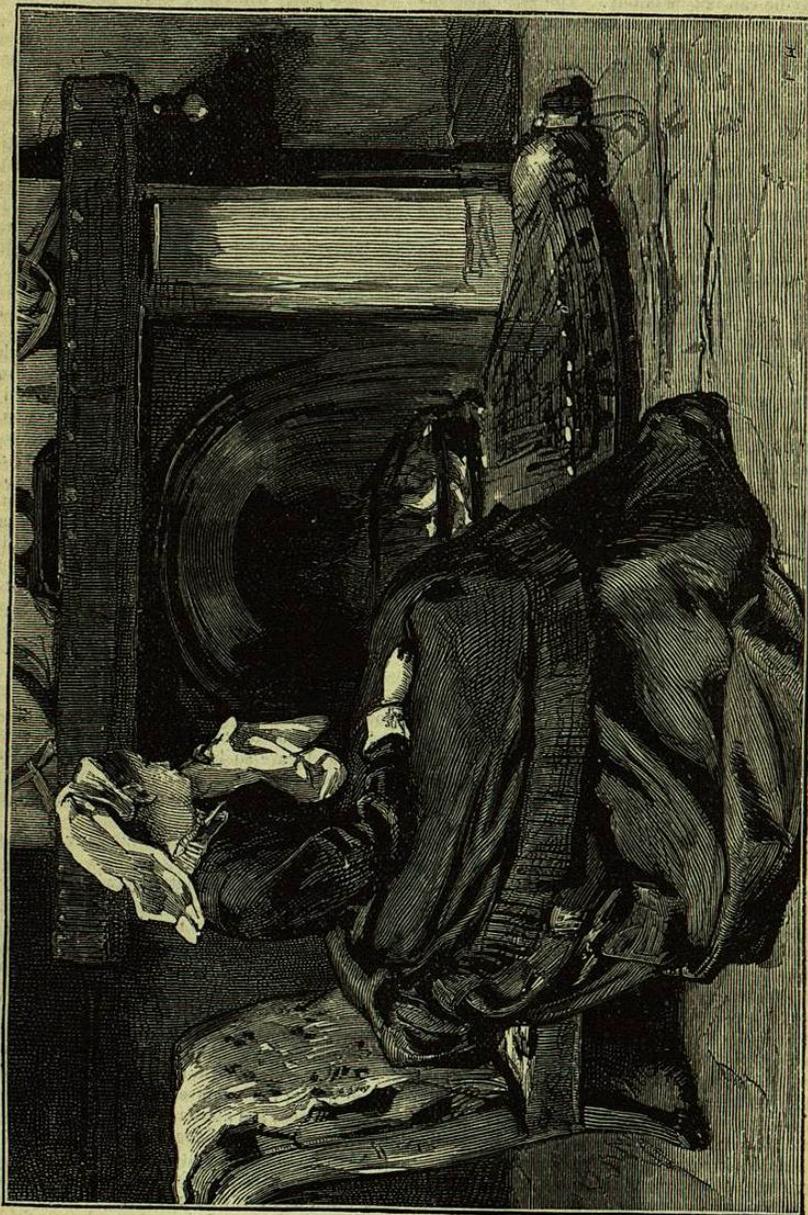
"She is well?"
 "Yes, and most anxious to see you. Will you go to their place in September?"
 He had almost made up his mind that if he went any where in September he would go to Matching Priory, accepting the offer of the Duch-

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

be so, acknowledging to herself that she can not readily "retrick her beams" and again "flame in the forehead of the morning sky" when she has acknowledged her love to a man, been engaged to him, and has then quarreled with him. "You'll see him in London," Lady Chiltern had said to her friend.

"I do not want to see him," said Adelaide, proudly.

"But he'll want to see you, and then—after a time—you'll want to see him. I don't believe in quarrels, you know."

"It is better that we should part, Lady Chiltern, if marrying will cause him—dismay. I begin to feel that we are too poor to be married."

"A great deal poorer people than you are married every day. Of course people can't be equally rich. You'll do very well if you'll only be patient, and not refuse to speak to him when he comes to you." This was said at Harrington after Lady Chiltern had returned from her first journey up to London. That visit had been very short, and Miss Palliser had been left alone at the Hall. We already know how Mr. Spooner took advantage of her solitude. After that Miss Palliser was to accompany the Chilterns to London, and she was there with them when Phineas Finn was acquitted. By that time she had brought herself to acknowledge to her friend Lady Chiltern that it would perhaps be desirable that Mr. Maule should return. If he did not do so, and that at once, there must come an end to her life in England. She must go away to Italy—altogether beyond the reach of Gerard Maule. In such case all the world would have collapsed for her, and she would become the martyr of a shipwreck. And yet the more that she confessed to herself that she loved the man so well that she could not part with him, the more angry she was with him for having told her that, when married, they must live at Boulogne.

The house in Portman Square had been practically given up by Lord Brentford to his son; but nevertheless the old Earl and Lady Laura had returned to it when they reached England from Dresden. It was, however, large, and now the two families—if the Earl and his daughter can be called a family—were lodging there together. The Earl troubled them but little, living mostly in his own rooms, and Lady Laura never went out with them. But there was something in the presence of the old man and the widow which prevented the house from being gay as it might have been. There were no parties in Portman Square. Now and then a few old friends dined there; but at the present moment Gerard Maule could not be admitted as an old friend. When Adelaide had been a fortnight in London she had not as yet seen Gerard Maule or heard a word from him. She had been to balls and concerts, to dinner-parties and the play; but no one had as yet brought them together. She did know that he was in town. She was able to obtain so much information of him as that. But he never came to Portman Square, and had evidently concluded that the quarrel—was to be a quarrel.

Among other balls in London that July there had been one at the Duchess of Omnium's. This had been given after the acquittal of Phineas Finn, though fixed before that great era. "Noth-

ing on earth should have made me have it while he was in prison," the Duchess had said. But Phineas was acquitted, and cakes and ale again became permissible. The ball had been given, and had been very grand. Phineas had been asked, but of course had not gone. Madame Goesler, who was a great heroine since her successful return from Prague, had shown herself there for a few minutes. Lady Chiltern had gone, and of course taken Adelaide. "We are first cousins," the Duke said to Miss Palliser—for the Duke did steal a moment from his work in which to walk through his wife's drawing-room. Adelaide smiled and nodded and looked pleased as she gave her hand to her great relative. "I hope we shall see more of each other than we have done," said the Duke. "We have all been sadly divided, haven't we?" Then he said a word to his wife, expressing his opinion that Adelaide Palliser was a nice girl, and asking her to be civil to so near a relative.

The Duchess had heard all about Gerard Maule and the engagement. She always did hear all about every thing. And on this evening she asked a question or two from Lady Chiltern. "Do you know," she said, "I have an appointment to-morrow with your husband?"

"I did not know; but I won't interfere to prevent it, now you are generous enough to tell me."

"I wish you would, because I don't know what to say to him. He is to come about that horrid wood, where the foxes won't get themselves born and bred as foxes ought to do. How can I help it? I'd send down a whole Gray's Inn Hospital for the foxes if I thought that that would do any good."

"Lord Chiltern thinks it's the shooting."

"But where is a person to shoot if he mayn't shoot in his own woods? Not that the Duke cares about the shooting for himself. He could not hit a pheasant sitting on a hay-stack, and wouldn't know one if he saw it. And he'd rather that there wasn't such a thing as a pheasant in the world. He cares for nothing but farthings. But what is a man to do? Or, rather, what is a woman to do?—for he tells me that I must settle it."

"Lord Chiltern says that Mr. Fothergill has the foxes destroyed. I suppose Mr. Fothergill may do as he pleases if the Duke gives him permission."

"I hate Mr. Fothergill, if that'll do any good," said the Duchess, "and I wish we could get rid of him altogether. But that, you know, is impossible. When one has an old man on one's shoulders one never can get rid of him. He is my incubus; and then, you see, Trumpet Wood is such a long way from us at Matching that I can't say I want the shooting for myself. And I never go to Gutherum if I can help it. Suppose we made out that the Duke wanted to let the shooting."

"Lord Chiltern would take it at once."

"But the Duke wouldn't really let it, you know. I'll lay awake at night, and think about it. And now tell me about Adelaide Palliser. Is she to be married?"

"I hope so—sooner or later."

"There's a quarrel or something—isn't there? She's the Duke's first cousin, and we should be so sorry that things shouldn't go pleasantly with

her. And she's a very good-looking girl, too. Would she like to come down to Matching?"

"She has some idea of going back to Italy." "And leaving her lover behind her! Oh dear, that will be very bad! She'd much better come to Matching, and then I'd ask the man to come too. Mr. Maud, isn't he?"

"Gerard Maule."

"Ah, yes; Maule. If it's the kind of thing that ought to be, I'd manage it in a week. If you get a young man down into a country house, and there has been any thing at all between them, I don't see how he is to escape. Isn't there some trouble about money?"

"They wouldn't be very rich, Duchess."

"What a blessing for them! But then, perhaps, they'd be very poor."

"They would be rather poor."

"Which is not a blessing. Isn't there some proverb about going safely in the middle? I'm sure it's true about money—only perhaps you ought to be put a little beyond the middle. I don't know why Plantagenet shouldn't do something for her."

As to this conversation Lady Chiltern said very little to Adelaide, but she did mention the proposed visit to Matching.

"The Duchess said nothing to me," replied Adelaide, proudly.

"No; I don't suppose she had time. And then she is so very odd—sometimes taking no notice of one, and at others so very loving."

"I hate that."

"But with her it is neither impudence nor affectation. She says exactly what she thinks at the time, and she is always as good as her word. There are worse women than the Duchess."

"I am sure I shouldn't like going to Matching," said Adelaide.

Lady Chiltern was right in saying that the Duchess of Omnium was always as good as her word. On the next day after that interview with Lord Chiltern about Mr. Fothergill and the foxes—as to which no present further allusion need be made here—she went to work and did learn a good deal about Gerard Maule and Miss Palliser. Something she learned from Lord Chiltern—without any consciousness on his lordship's part—something from Madame Goesler, and something from the Baldock people. Before she went to bed on the second night she knew all about the quarrel and all about the money. "Plantagenet," she said the next morning, "what are you going to do about the Duke's legacy to Marie Goesler?"

"I can do nothing. She must take the things, of course."

"She won't."

"Then the jewels must remain packed up. I suppose they'll be sold at last for the legacy duty, and when that's paid, the balance will belong to her."

"But about the money?"

"Of course it belongs to her."

"Couldn't you give it to that girl who was here last night?"

"Give it to a girl!"

"Yes—to your cousin. She's as poor as Job, and can't get married because she hasn't got any money. It's quite true; and I must say that if the Duke had looked after his own relations, instead of leaving money to people who don't

want it and won't have it, it would have been much better. Why shouldn't Adelaide Palliser have it?"

"How on earth should I give Adelaide Palliser what doesn't belong to me? If you choose to make her a present, you can, but such a sum as that would, I should say, be out of the question."

The Duchess had achieved quite as much as she had anticipated. She knew her husband well, and was aware that she couldn't carry her point at once. To her mind it was "all nonsense" his saying that the money was not his. If Madame Goesler wouldn't take it, it must be his; and nobody could make a woman take money if she did not choose. Adelaide Palliser was the Duke's first cousin, and it was intolerable that the Duke's first cousin shouldn't be able to marry because she would have nothing to live upon. It became at last intolerable as soon as the Duchess had taken it into her head to like the first cousin. No doubt there were other first cousins as badly off, or perhaps worse, as to whom the Duchess would care nothing whether they were rich or poor, married or single; but then they were first cousins who had not had the advantage of interesting the Duchess.

"My dear," said the Duchess to her friend, Madame Goesler, "you know all about those Maules?"

"What makes you ask?"

"But you do?"

"I know something about one of them," said Madame Goesler. Now, as it happened, Mr. Maule, senior, had on that very day asked Madame Goesler to share her lot with his, and the request had been—almost indignantly—refused. The general theory that the wooing of widows should be quick had, perhaps, misled Mr. Maule. Perhaps he did not think that the wooing had been quick. He had visited Park Lane with the object of making his little proposition once before, and had then been stopped in his course by the consternation occasioned by the arrest of Phineas Finn. He had waited till Phineas had been acquitted, and had then resolved to try his luck. He had heard of the lady's journey to Prague, and was acquainted, of course, with those rumors which too freely connected the name of our hero with that of the lady. But rumors are often false, and a lady may go to Prague on a gentleman's behalf without intending to marry him. All the women in London were at present more or less in love with the man who had been accused of murder, and the fantasy of Madame Goesler might be only as the fantasy of others. And then if rumor said that Madame Goesler intended to marry Phineas Finn, rumor also said that Phineas Finn intended to marry Lady Laura Standish. At any rate a man can not have his head broken for asking a lady to marry him—unless he is very awkward in the doing of it. So Mr. Maule made his little proposition.

"Mr. Maule," said Madame Goesler, smiling, "is not this rather sudden?" Mr. Maule admitted that it was sudden, but still persisted. "I think, if you please, Mr. Maule, we will say nothing more about it," said the lady, with that wicked smile still on her face. Mr. Maule declared that silence on the subject had become impossible to him. "Then, Mr. Maule, I shall have to leave you to speak to the chairs and

tables," said Madame Goesler. No doubt she was used to the thing, and knew how to conduct herself well. He also had been refused before by ladies of wealth, but had never been treated with so little consideration. She had risen from her chair as though about to leave the room, but she was slow in her movement, showing him that she thought it was well that he should leave it instead of her. Muttering some words, half of apology and half of self-assertion, she did leave the room; and now she told the Duchess that she knew something about one of the Maules.

"That is, the father."

"Yes—the father."

"He is one of your tribe, I know. We met him at your house just before the murder. I don't much admire your taste, my dear, because he's a hundred and fifty years old; and what there is of him comes chiefly from the tailor."

"He's as good as any other old man."

"I dare say—and I hope Mr. Finn will like his society. But he has got a son."

"So he tells me."

"Who is a charming young man."

"He never told me that, Duchess."

"I dare say not. Men of that sort are always jealous of their sons. But he has. Now I am going to tell you something, and ask you to do something."

"What was it the French Minister said? If it is simply difficult, it is done. If it is impossible, it shall be done."

"The easiest thing in the world. You saw Plantagenet's first cousin the other night—Adelaide Palliser. She is engaged to marry young Mr. Maule, and they neither of them have a shilling in the world. I want you to give them five-and-twenty thousand pounds."

"Wouldn't that be peculiar?"

"Not in the least."

"At any rate it would be inconvenient."

"No, it wouldn't, my dear. It would be the most convenient thing in the world. Of course I don't mean out of your pocket. There's the Duke's legacy."

"It isn't mine, and never will be."

"But Plantagenet says it never can be any body else's. If I can get him to agree, will you? Of course there will be ever so many papers to be signed; and the biggest of all robbers, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, will put his fingers into the pudding and pull out a plum, and the lawyers will take more plums. But that will be nothing to us. The pudding will be very nice for them, let ever so many plums be taken. The lawyers and people will do it all, and then it will be her fortune—just as though her uncle had left it to her. As it is now, the money will never be of any use to any body." Madame Goesler said that if the Duke consented, she also would consent. It was immaterial to her who had the money. If by signing any receipt she could facilitate the return of the money to any one of the Duke's family, she would willingly sign it. But Miss Palliser must be made to understand that the money did not come to her as a present from Madame Goesler.

"But it will be a present from Madame Goesler," said the Duke.

"Plantagenet, if you go and upset every thing by saying that, I shall think it most ill-natured. Bother about true. Somebody must have the

money. There's nothing illegal about it." And the Duchess had her own way. Lawyers were consulted, and documents were prepared, and the whole thing was arranged. Only Adelaide Palliser knew nothing about it, nor did Gerard Maule; and the quarrels of lovers had not yet become the renewal of love. Then the Duchess wrote the two following notes:

"MY DEAR ADELAIDE,—We shall hope to see you at Matching on the 15th of August. The Duke, as head of the family, expects implicit obedience. You'll meet fifteen young gentlemen from the Treasury and the Board of Trade, but they won't incommode you, as they are kept at work all day. We hope Mr. Finn will be with us, and there isn't a lady in England who wouldn't give her eyes to meet him. We shall stay ever so many weeks at Matching, so that you can do as you please as to the time of leaving us. Yours affectionately,

G. O.

"Tell Lord Chiltern that I have my hopes of making Trumpeton Wood too hot for Mr. Fothergill—but I have to act with the greatest caution. In the mean time I am sending down dozens of young foxes, all labeled Trumpeton Wood, so that he shall know them."

The other was a card rather than a note. The Duke and Duchess of Omnium presented their compliments to Mr. Gerard Maule, and requested the honor of his company to dinner on—a certain day named. When Gerard Maule received this card at his club he was rather surprised, as he had never made the acquaintance either of the Duke or the Duchess. But the Duke was the first cousin of Adelaide Palliser, and of course he accepted the invitation.

CHAPTER LXX.

"I WILL NOT GO TO LOUGH LINTER."

THE end of July came, and it was settled that Lady Laura Kennedy should go to Lough Linter. She had been a widow now for nearly three months, and it was thought right that she should go down and see the house and the lands, and the dependents whom her husband had left in her charge. It was now three years since she had seen Lough Linter, and when last she had left it she had made up her mind that she would never place her foot upon the place again. Her wretchedness had all come upon her there. It was there that she had first been subjected to the unendurable tedium of Sabbath-day observances. It was there that she had been instructed in the unpalatable duties that had been expected from her. It was there that she had been punished with the doctor from Callender whenever she attempted escape under the plea of a headache. And it was there, standing by the water-fall, the noise of which could be heard from the front, that Phineas Finn had told her of his love. When she accepted the hand of Robert Kennedy she had known that she had not loved him; but from the moment in which Phineas had spoken to her she knew well that her heart had gone one way, whereas her hand was to go another. From that moment her whole life had quickly become a

blank. She had had no period of married happiness—not a month, not an hour. From the moment in which the thing had been done she had found that the man to whom she had bound herself was odious to her, and that the life before her was distasteful to her. Things which before had seemed worthy to her, and full, at any rate, of interest, became at once dull and vapid. Her husband was in Parliament, as had been her father and many of her friends, and, by weight of his own character and her influence, was himself placed high in office; but in his house politics lost all the flavor which they had possessed for him in Portman Square. She had thought that she could, at any rate, do her duty as the mistress of a great household, and as the benevolent lady of a great estate; but household duties under the tutelage of Mr. Kennedy had been impossible to her, and that part of a Scotch Lady Bountiful which she had intended to play seemed to be denied to her. The whole structure had fallen to the ground, and nothing had been left to her.

But she would not sin. Though she could not bring herself to love her husband, she would, at any rate, be strong enough to get out of that other love. Having so resolved, she became as weak as water. She at one time determined to be the guiding genius of the man she loved—a sort of devoted elder sister, intending him to be the intimate friend of her husband; then she had told him not to come to her house, and had been weak enough to let him know why it was that she could not bear his presence. She had failed altogether to keep her secret, and her life during the struggle had become so intolerable to her that she had found herself compelled to desert her husband. He had shown her that he, too, had discovered the truth, and then she had become indignant, and had left him. Every place that she had inhabited with him had become disagreeable to her. The house in London had been so odious that she had asked her intimate friends to come to her in that occupied by her father. But of all spots upon earth Lough Linter had been the most distasteful to her. It was there that the sermons had been the longest, the lessons in accounts the most obstinate, the lectures the most persevering, the dullness the most heavy. It was there that her ears had learned the sound of the wheels of Dr. Macnuthrie's gig. It was there that her spirit had been nearly broken. It was there that, with spirit not broken, she had determined to face all that the world might say of her, and fly from a tyranny which was insupportable. And now the place was her own, and she was told that she must go there as its owner—go there and be potential and beneficent and grandly bland with persons all of whom knew what had been the relations between her and her husband.

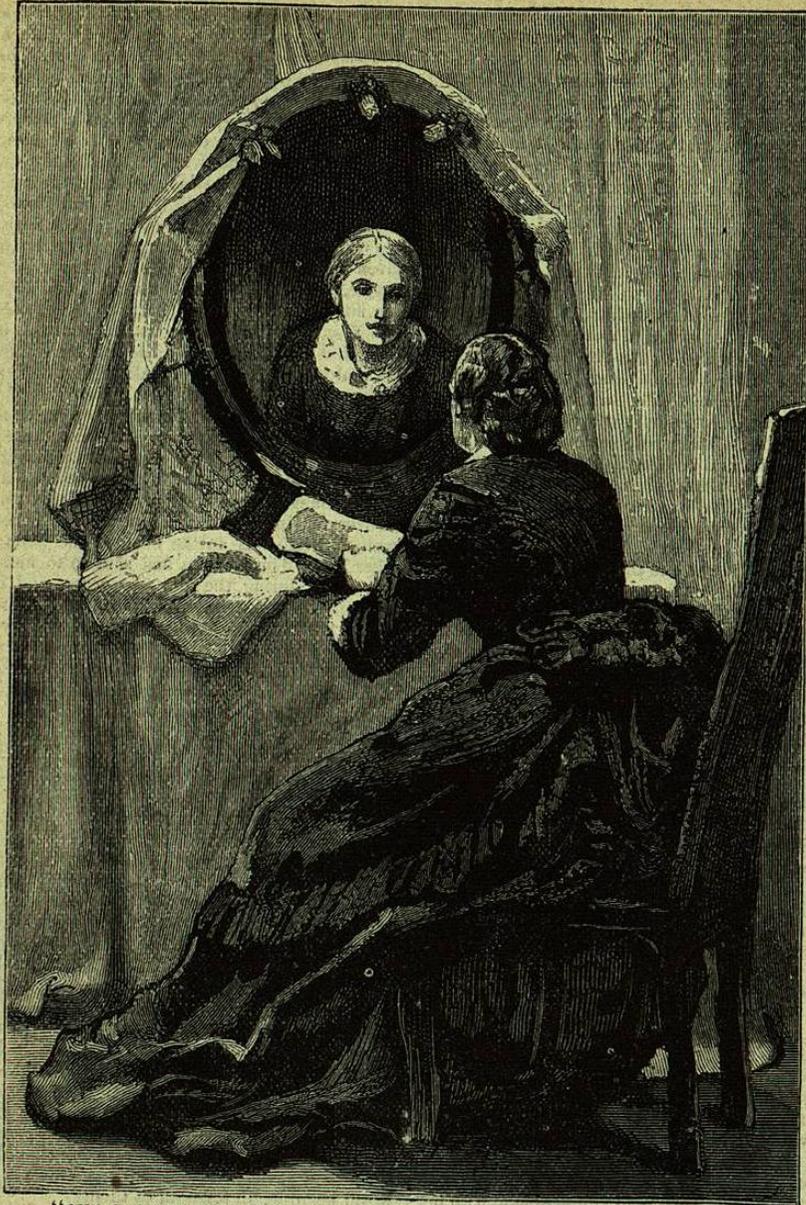
And though she had been indignant with her husband when at last she had left him, throwing it in his teeth as an unmanly offense that he had accused her of the truth; though she had felt him to be a tyrant and herself to be a thrall; though the sermons and the lessons and the doctor had each, severally, seemed to her to be horrible cruelties—yet she had known through it all that the fault had been hers, and not his. He only did that which she should have expected when she married him, but she had done none of that which he was entitled to expect from her. The real fault, the deceit, the fraud, the sin, had

been with her—and she knew it. Her life had been destroyed, but not by him. His life had also been destroyed, and she had done it. Now he was gone, and she knew that his people—the old mother who was still left alone, his cousins, and the tenants who were now to be her tenants, all said that had she done her duty by him he would still have been alive. And they must hate her the worse because she had never sinned after such a fashion as to liberate him from his bond to her. With a husband's perfect faith in his wife, he had, immediately after his marriage, given to her for her life the lordship over his people, should he be without a child, and should she survive him. In his hottest anger he had not altered that. His constant demand had been that she should come back to him, and be his real wife. And while making that demand, with a persistency which had driven him mad, he had died; and now the place was hers, and they told her that she must go and live there!

It is a very sad thing for any human being to have to say to himself, with an earnest belief in his own assertion, that all the joy of this world is over for him; and it is the sadder because such conviction is apt to exclude the hope of other joy. This woman had said so to herself very often during the last two years, and had certainly been sincere. What was there in store for her? She was banished from the society of all those she liked. She bore a name that was hateful to her. She loved a man whom she could never see. She was troubled about money. Nothing in life had any taste for her. All the joys of the world were over, and had been lost by her own fault. Then Phineas Finn had come to her at Dresden, and now her husband was dead!

Could it be that she was entitled to hope that the sun might rise again for her once more, and another day be re-opened for her with a gorgeous morning. She was rich and still young—or young enough. She was two-and-thirty, and had known many women—women still honored with the name of girls—who had commenced the world successfully at that age. And this man had loved her once. He had told her so, and had afterward kissed her when informed of her own engagement. How well she remembered it all! He, too, had gone through vicissitudes in life, had married and retired out of the world, had returned to it, and had gone through fire and water. But now every body was saying good things of him, and all he wanted was the splendor which wealth would give him. Why should he not take it at her hands, and why should not the world begin again for both of them?

But though she would dream that it might be so, she was quite sure that there was no such life in store for her. The nature of the man was too well known to her. Fickle he might be—or rather capable of change than fickle; but he was incapable of pretending to love when he did not love. She had felt that in all the moments in which he had been most tender with her. When she had endeavored to explain to him the state of her feelings at Königstein—meaning to be true in what she said, but not having been even then true throughout—she had acknowledged to herself that at every word she spoke she was wounded by his coldness. Had he then professed a passion for her she would have rebuked



"SHE SAT OPPOSITE THE MIRROR, AND PORED OVER HER OWN FEATURES."

him, and told him that he must go from her, but it would have warmed the blood in all her veins, and brought back to her a sense of youthful life. It had been the same when she visited him in the prison—the same, again, when he came to her after his acquittal. She had been frank enough to him, but he would not even pretend that he loved her. His gratitude, his friendship, his services, were all hers. In every respect he had behaved well to her. All his troubles had come upon him because he would not desert her cause, but he would never again say that he loved her.

She gazed at herself in the glass, putting aside for the moment the hideous widow's cap which she now wore, and told herself that it was natural that it should be so. Though she was young in years, her features were hard and worn with care. She had never thought herself to be a beauty, though she had been conscious of a certain aristocratic grace of manner which might stand in the place of beauty. As she examined herself she found that that was not all gone, but now lacked that roundness of youth which had been hers when first she knew Phineas Finn. She sat opposite the mirror, and pored over her

own features with an almost skillful scrutiny, and told herself at last aloud that she had become an old woman. He was in the prime of life, but for her was left nothing but its dregs.

She was to go to Lough Linter with her brother and her brother's wife, leaving her father at Saulsby on the way. The Chilterns were to remain with her for one week, and no more. Lord Chiltern's presence was demanded in the Brake country, and it was with difficulty that he had been induced to give her so much of his time. But what was she to do when they should leave her? How could she live alone in that great house, thinking, as she ever must think, of all that had happened to her there? It seemed to her that every body near to her was cruel in demanding from her such a sacrifice of her comfort. Her father had shuddered when she had proposed to him to accompany her to Lough Linter; but her father was one of those who insisted on the propriety of her going there. Then, in spite of that lesson which she had taught herself while sitting opposite to the glass, she allowed her fancy to revel in the idea of having Phineas with her as she wandered over the braes. She saw him a day or two before her journey, when she told him her plans as she might tell them to any friend. Lady Chiltern and her father had been present, and there had been then no special sign in her outward manner of the mingled tenderness and soreness of her heart within. No allusion had been made to any visit from him to the North. She would not have dared to suggest it in the presence of her brother, and was now almost as much cowed by her brother's wife. But when she was done, on the eve of her departure, she wrote to him as follows:

"SUNDAY, August 1.

"DEAR FRIEND,—I thought that perhaps you might have come in this afternoon, and I have not left the house all day. I was so wretched that I could not go to church in the morning; and when the afternoon came, I preferred the chance of seeing you to going out with Violet. We two were alone all the evening, and I did not give you up till nearly ten. I dare say you were right not to come. I should only have bored you with my complaints, and have grumbled to you of evils which you can not cure.

"We start at nine to-morrow, and get to Saulsby in the afternoon. Such a family party as we shall be! I did fancy that Oswald would escape it; but, like every body else, he has changed, and has become domestic and dutiful. Not but that he is as tyrannous as ever; but his tyranny is now that of the responsible father of a family. Papa can not understand him at all, and is dreadfully afraid of him. We stay two nights at Saulsby, and then go on to Scotland, leaving papa at home.

"Of course it is very good in Violet and Oswald to come with me—if, as they say, it be necessary for me to go at all. As to living there by myself, it seems to me to be impossible. You know the place well—and can you imagine me there all alone, surrounded by Scotch men and women, who, of course, must hate and despise me, afraid of every face that I see, and reminded even by the chairs and tables of all that is past? I have told papa that I know I shall be back at Saulsby before the middle of the month. He frets, and says nothing; but he tells Violet, and

then she lectures me in that wise way of hers which enables her to say such hard things with so much seeming tenderness. She asks me why I do not take a companion with me, as I am so much afraid of solitude. Where on earth should I find a companion who would not be worse than solitude? I do feel now that I have mistaken life in having so little used myself to the small resources of feminine companionship. I love Violet dearly, and I used to be always happy in her society. But even with her now I feel but a half sympathy. That girl that she has with her is more to her than I am, because after the first half hour I grow tired about her babies. I have never known any other woman with whom I have cared to be alone. How then shall I content myself with a companion, hired by the quarter, perhaps from some advertisement in a newspaper?

"No companionship of any kind seems possible to me—and yet never was a human being more weary of herself. I sometimes wonder whether I could go again and sit in that cage in the House of Commons to hear you and other men speak—as I used to do. I do not believe that any eloquence in the world would make it endurable to me. I hardly care who is in or out, and do not understand the things which my cousin Barrington tells me—so long does it seem since I was in the midst of them all. Not but that I am intensely anxious that you should be back. They tell me that you will certainly be re-elected this week, and that all the House will receive you with open arms. I should have liked, had it been possible, to be once more in the cage to see that. But I am such a coward that I did not even dare to propose to stay for it. Violet would have told me that such manifestation of interest was unfit for my condition as a widow. But in truth, Phineas, there is nothing else now that does interest me. If, looking on from a distance, I can see you succeed, I shall try once more to care for the questions of the day. When you have succeeded, as I know you will, it will be some consolation to me to think that I also helped a little.

"I suppose I must not ask you to come to Lough Linter? But you will know best. If you will do so, I shall care nothing for what any one may say. Oswald hardly mentions your name in my hearing, and of course I know of what he is thinking. When I am with him I am afraid of him, because it would add infinitely to my grief were I driven to quarrel with him; but I am my own mistress as much as he is his own master, and I will not regulate my conduct by his wishes. If you please to come you will be welcome as flowers in May. Ah, how weak are such words in giving any idea of the joy with which I should see you! God bless you, Phineas.

"Your most affectionate friend,

"LAURA KENNEDY.

"Write to me at Lough Linter. I shall long to hear that you have taken your seat immediately on your re-election. Pray do not lose a day. I am sure that all your friends will advise you as I do."

Throughout her whole letter she was struggling to tell him once again of her love, and yet to do it in some way of which she need not be

ashamed. It was not till she had come to the last words that she could force her pen to speak of her affection, and then the words did not come freely as she would have had them. She knew that he would not come to Lough Linter. She felt that were he to do so he would come only as a suitor for her hand, and that such a suit, in these early days of her widowhood, carried on in her late husband's house, would be held to be disgraceful. As regarded herself, she would have faced all that for the sake of the thing to be attained. But she knew that he would not come. He had become wise by experience, and would perceive the result of such coming—and would avoid it. His answer to her letter reached Lough Linter before she did:

"GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET, Monday night.
"DEAR LADY LAURA,—I should have called in the square last night, only that I feel that Lady Chiltern must be weary of the woes of so doleful a person as myself. I dined and spent the evening with the Lows, and was quite aware that I disgraced myself with them by being perpetually lachrymose. As a rule, I do not think that I am more given than other people to talk of myself, but I am conscious of a certain incapability of getting rid of myself what has grown upon me since those weary weeks in Newgate and those frightful days in the dock; and this makes me unfit for society. Should I again have a seat in the House I shall be afraid to get upon my legs, lest I should find myself talking of the time in which I stood before the judge with a halter round my neck.

"I sympathize with you perfectly in what you say about Lough Linter. It may be right that you should go there and show yourself, so that those who knew the Kennedys in Scotland should not say that you had not dared to visit the place; but I do not think it possible that you should live there as yet. And why should you do so? I can not conceive that your presence there should do good, unless you took delight in the place.

"I will not go to Lough Linter myself, although I know how warm would be my welcome." (When he had got so far with his letter he found the difficulty of going on with it to be insuperable. How could he give her any reasons for his not making the journey to Scotland? People would say that you and I should not be alone together after all the evil that has been spoken of us—and would be specially eager in saying so were I now to visit you, so lately made a widow, and to sojourn with you in the house that did belong to your husband. Only think how eloquent would be the indignation of the *People's Banner* were it known that I was at Lough Linter. Could he have spoken the truth openly, such were the reasons that he would have given; but it was impossible that such truths should be written by him in a letter to herself. And then it was almost equally difficult for him to tell her of a visit which he had resolved to make. But the letter must be completed, and at last the words were written.) "I could be of no real service to you there, as will be your brother and your brother's wife, even though their stay with you is to be so short. Were I you I would go out among the people as much as possible, even though they should not receive you cordially at first. Though we have so much of clan-

ship in the Highlands, I think the Highlanders are prone to cling to any one who has territorial authority among them. They thought a great deal of Mr. Kennedy, but they had never heard his name fifty years ago. I suppose you will return to Saulsby soon, and then, perhaps, I may be able to see you.

"In the mean time I am going to Matching." (This difficulty was worse even than the other.) "Both the Duke and Duchess have asked me, and I know that I am bound to make an effort to face my fellow-creatures again. The horrors I feel at being stared at, as the man that was not—hung as a murderer, is stronger than I can describe; and I am well aware that I shall be talked to and made a wonder of on that ground. I am told that I am to be re-elected triumphantly at Tankerville, without a penny of cost or the trouble of asking for a vote, simply because I didn't knock poor Mr. Bonteen on the head. This to me is abominable, but I can not help myself, unless I resolve to go away and hide myself. That I know can not be right, and therefore I had better go through it and have done with it. Though I am to be stared at, I shall not be stared at very long. Some other monster will come up and take my place, and I shall be the only person who will not forget it all. Therefore I have accepted the Duke's invitation, and shall go to Matching some time in the end of August. All the world is to be there.

"This re-election—and I believe I shall be re-elected to-morrow—would be altogether distasteful to me were it not that I feel that I should not allow myself to be cut to pieces by what has occurred. I shall hate to go back to the House, and have somehow learned to dislike and distrust all those things that used to be so fine and lively to me. I don't think that I believe any more in the party—or, rather, in the men who lead it. I used to have a faith that now seems to me to be marvelous. Even twelve months ago, when I was beginning to think of standing for Tankerville, I believed that on our side the men were patriotic angels, and that Daubeny and his friends were all fiends or idiots—mostly idiots, but with a strong dash of fiendism to control them. It has all come now to one common level of poor human interests; I doubt whether patriotism can stand the wear and tear and temptation of the front benches in the House of Commons. Men are flying at each other's throats, thrusting and parrying, making false accusations and defenses equally false, lying and slandering—sometimes picking and stealing—till they themselves become unaware of the magnificence of their own position, and forget that they are expected to be great. Little tricks of sword-play engage all their skill. And the consequence is that there is no reverence now for any man in the House—none of that feeling which we used to entertain for Mr. Mildmay.

"Of course I write, and feel, as a discontented man, and what I say to you I would not say to any other human being. I did long most anxiously for office, having made up my mind a second time to look to it as a profession. But I meant to earn my bread honestly, and give it up, as I did before, when I could not keep it with a clear conscience. I knew that I was hustled out of the object of my poor ambition by that unfortunate man who has been hurried to his fate.

In such a position I ought to distrust, and do partly distrust, my own feelings. And I am aware that I have been soured by prison indignation. But still the conviction remains with me that Parliamentary interests are not those battles of gods and giants as which I used to regard them. Our Gyas with the hundred hands is but a Three-fingered Jack, and I sometimes think that we share our great Jove with the Strand Theatre. Nevertheless I shall go back, and if they will make me a joint lord to-morrow, I shall be in heaven!

"I do not know why I should write all this to you except that there is no one else to whom I can say it. There is no one else who would give a moment of time to such lamentations. My friends will expect me to talk to them of my experiences in the dock rather than politics, and will want to know what rations I had in Newgate. I went to call on the governor only yesterday, and visited the old room. 'I never could really bring myself to think that you did it, Mr. Finn,' he said. I looked at him and smiled, but I should have liked to fly at his throat. Why, did he not know that the charge was a monstrous absurdity? Talking of that, not even you were truer to me than your brother. One expects it from a woman—both the truth and the discernment.

"I have written to you a cruelly long letter; but when one's mind is full, such relief is sometimes better than talking. Pray answer it before long, and let me know what you intend to do. Yours most affectionately,

"PHINEAS FINN."

She did read the letter through—read it probably more than once; but there was only one sentence in it that had for her any enduring interest. "I will not go to Lough Linter myself." Though she had known that he would not come, her heart sank within her, as though now, at this moment, the really fatal wound had at last been inflicted. But, in truth, there was another sentence as a complement to the first, which riveted the dagger in her bosom. "In the mean time I am going to Matching." Throughout his letter the name of that woman was not mentioned, but of course she would be there. The thing had all been arranged in order that they two might be brought together. She told herself that she had always hated that intriguing woman, Lady Glencora. She read the remainder of the letter, and understood it; but she read it all in connection with the beauty and the wealth and the art—and the cunning of Madame Max Goesler.

CHAPTER LXXI.

PHINEAS FINN IS RE-ELECTED.

THE manner in which Phineas Finn was returned a second time for the borough of Tankerville was memorable among the annals of English elections. When the news reached the town that their member was to be tried for murder, no doubt every elector believed that he was guilty. It is the natural assumption when the police and magistrates and lawyers, who have been at work upon the matter carefully, have come to that conclusion, and nothing but pri-

vate knowledge or personal affection will stand against such evidence. At Tankerville there was nothing of either, and our hero's guilt was taken as a certainty. There was an interest felt in the whole matter which was full of excitement, and not altogether without delight to the Tankervillians. Of course the borough, as a borough, would never again hold up its head. There had never been known such an occasion happen in the whole history of this country as the hanging of a member of the House of Commons. And this member of Parliament was to be hung for murdering another member, which, no doubt, added much to the importance of the transaction. A large party in the borough declared that it was a judgment. Tankerville had degraded itself among boroughs by sending a Roman Catholic to Parliament, and had done so at the very moment in which the Church of England was being brought into danger. This was what had come upon the borough by not sticking to honest Mr. Browborough! There was a moment—just before the trial was begun—in which a large proportion of the electors was desirous of proceeding to work at once, and of sending Mr. Browborough back to his own place. It was thought that Phineas Finn should be made to resign. And very wise men in Tankerville were much surprised when they were told that a member of Parliament can not resign his seat—that when once returned he is supposed to be, as long as that Parliament shall endure, the absolute slave of his constituency and his country, and that he can escape from his servitude only by accepting some office under the Crown. Now it was held to be impossible that a man charged with murder should be appointed even to the stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds. The House, no doubt, could expel a member, and would, as a matter of course, expel the member for Tankerville, but the House could hardly proceed to expulsion before the member's guilt could have been absolutely established. So it came to pass that there was no escape for the borough from any part of the disgrace to which it had subjected itself by its unworthy thorn, and some Tankervillians of sensitive minds were of opinion that no Tankervillian ever again ought to take part in politics.

Then, quite suddenly, there came into the borough the tidings that Phineas Finn was an innocent man. This happened on the morning on which the three telegrams from Prague reached London. The news conveyed by the telegrams was at Tankerville almost as soon as in the court at the Old Bailey, and was believed as readily. The name of the lady who had traveled all the way to Bohemia on behalf of their handsome young member was on the tongue of every woman in Tankerville, and a most delightful romance was composed. Some few Protestant spirits regretted the now assured escape of their Roman Catholic enemy, and would not even yet allow themselves to doubt that the whole murder had been arranged by Divine Providence to bring down the scarlet woman. It seemed to them to be so fitting a thing that Providence should interfere directly to punish a town in which the sins of the scarlet woman were not held to be abominable! But the multitude were soon convinced that their member was innocent; and as it was certain that he had been in great peril—