

Lord and Lady Cantrip were there, and Mr. Monk, and Sir Gregory, his accuser, and the Home Secretary, Sir Harry Coldfoot, with his wife. Sir Harry had at one time been very keen about hanging our hero, and was now, of course, hot with reactionary zeal. To all those who had been in any way concerned in the prosecution the accidents by which Phineas had been enabled to escape had been almost as fortunate as to Phineas himself. Sir Gregory himself quite felt that had he prosecuted an innocent and very popular young member of Parliament to the death, he could never afterward have hoped to wear his ermine in comfort. Barrington Erle was there, of course, intending, however, to return to the duties of his office on the following day, and our old friend Laurence Fitzgibbon, with a newly married wife, a lady possessing a reputed fifty thousand pounds, by which it was hoped that the member for Mayo might be placed steadily upon his legs forever. And Adelaide Palliser was there also—the Duke's first cousin—on whose behalf the Duchess was anxious to be more than ordinarily good-natured. Mr. Maule, Adelaide's rejected lover, had dined on one occasion with the Duke and Duchess in London. There had been nothing remarkable at the dinner, and he had not at all understood why he had been asked. But when he took his leave the Duchess had told him that she would hope to see him at Matching. "We expect a friend of yours to be with us," the Duchess had said. He had afterward received a written invitation, and had accepted it; but he was not to reach Matching till the day after that on which Phineas arrived. Adelaide had been told of his coming only on this morning, and had been much flurried by the news. "But we have quarreled," she said. "Then the best thing you can do is to make it up again, my dear," said the Duchess. Miss Palliser was undoubtedly of that opinion herself, but she hardly believed that so terrible an evil as a quarrel with her lover could be composed by so rough a remedy as this. The Duchess, who had become used to all the disturbing excitements of life, and who didn't pay so much respect as some do to the niceties of a young lady's feelings, thought that it would be only necessary to bring the young people together again. If she could do that, and provide them with an income, of course they would marry. On the present occasion Phineas was told off to take Miss Palliser down to dinner. "You saw the Chilterns before they left town, I know," she said. "Oh yes. I am constantly in Portman Square." "Of course. Lady Laura has gone down to Scotland, has she not—and all alone?" "She is alone now, I believe." "How dreadful! I do not know any one that I pity so much as I do her. I was in the house with her for some time, and she gave me the idea of being the most unhappy woman I had ever met with. Don't you think that she is very unhappy?" "She has had very much to make her so," said Phineas. "She was obliged to leave her husband because of the gloom of his insanity; and now she is a widow." "I don't suppose she ever really—cared for him, did she?" The question was no sooner asked than the poor girl remembered the whole story which she had heard some time back—the

rumor of the husband's jealousy and of the wife's love—and she became as red as fire, and unable to help herself. She could think of no word to say, and confessed her confusion by her sudden silence.

Phineas saw it all, and did his best for her. "I am sure she cared for him," he said, "though I do not think it was a well-assorted marriage. They had different ideas about religion, I fancy. So you saw the hunting in the Brake country to the end? How is our old friend Mr. Spooner?"

"Don't talk of him, Mr. Finn."

"I rather like Mr. Spooner; and as for hunting the country, I don't think Chiltern could get on without him. What a capital fellow your cousin the Duke is!"

"I hardly know him."

"He is such a gentleman—and, at the same time, the most abstract and the most concrete man that I know."

"Abstract and concrete!"

"You are bound to use adjectives of that sort now, Miss Palliser, if you mean to be any body in conversation."

"But how is my cousin concrete? He is always abstracted when I speak to him, I know."

"No Englishman whom I have met is so broadly and intuitively and unceremoniously imbued with the simplicity of the character of a gentleman. He could no more lie than he could eat grass."

"Is that abstract or concrete?"

"That's abstract. And I know no one who is so capable of throwing himself into one matter for the sake of accomplishing that one thing at a time. That's concrete." And so the red color faded away from poor Adelaide's face, and the unpleasantness was removed.

"What do you think of Laurence's wife?" Erle said to him late in the evening.

"I have only just seen her. The money is there, I suppose."

"The money is there, I believe; but then it will have to remain there. He can't touch it. There's about £2000 a year, which will have to go back to her family unless they have children."

"I suppose she's—forty?"

"Well, yes, or perhaps forty-five. You were locked up at the time, poor fellow, and had other things to think of; but all the interest we had for any thing beyond you through May and June was devoted to Laurence and his prospects. It was off and on, and on and off, and he was in a most wretched condition. At last she wouldn't consent unless she was to be asked here."

"And who managed it?"

"Laurence came and told it all to the Duchess, and she gave him the invitation at once."

"Who told you?"

"Not the Duchess—nor yet Laurence. So it may be untrue, you know; but I believe it. He did ask me whether he'd have to stand another election at his marriage. He has been going in and out of office so often, and always going back to the County Mayo at the expense of half a year's salary, that his mind had got confused, and he didn't quite know what did and what did not vacate his seat. We must all come to it sooner or later, I suppose, but the question is whether we could do better than an annuity of £2000 a year on the life of the lady. Office isn't very permanent; but one has not to attend the

House above six months a year, while you can't get away from a wife much above a week at a time. It has crippled him in appearance very much, I think."

"A man always looks changed when he's married."

"I hope, Mr. Finn, that you owe me no grudge," said Sir Gregory, the Attorney-General. "Not in the least; why should I?"

"It was a very painful duty that I had to perform—the most painful that ever befell me. I had no alternative but to do it, of course, and to do it in the hope of reaching the truth. But a counsel for the prosecution must always appear to the accused and his friends like a hound running down his game, and anxious for blood. The habitual and almost necessary acrimony of the defense creates acrimony in the attack. If you were accustomed as I am to criminal courts, you would observe this constantly. A gentleman gets up and declares in perfect faith that he is simply anxious to lay before the jury such evidence as has been placed in his hands. And he opens his case in that spirit. Then his witnesses are cross-examined with the affected incredulity and assumed indignation which the defending counsel is almost bound to use on behalf of his client, and he finds himself gradually imbued with pugnacity. He becomes strenuous, energetic, and perhaps eager for what must, after all, be regarded as success, and at last he fights for a verdict rather than for the truth."

"The judge, I suppose, ought to put all that right?"

"So he does—and it comes right. Our criminal practice does not sin on the side of severity. But a barrister employed on the prosecution should keep himself free from that personal desire for a verdict which must animate those engaged on the defense."

"Then I suppose you wanted to—hang me, Sir Gregory?"

"Certainly not. I wanted the truth. But you, in your position, must have regarded me as a blood-hound?"

"I did not. As far as I can analyze my own feelings, I entertained anger only against those who, though they knew me well, thought that I was guilty."

"You will allow me, at any rate, to shake hands with you," said Sir Gregory, "and to assure you that I should have lived a broken-hearted man if the truth had been known too late. As it is, I tremble and shake in my shoes as I walk about and think of what might have been done." Then Phineas gave his hand to Sir Gregory, and from that time forth was inclined to think well of Sir Gregory.

Throughout the whole evening he was unable to speak to Madame Goesler, but to the other people around him he found himself talking quite at his ease, as though nothing peculiar had happened to him. Almost every body, except the Duke, made some slight allusion to his adventure, and he, in spite of his resolution to the contrary, found himself driven to talk of it. It had seemed quite natural that Sir Gregory—who had in truth been eager for his condemnation, thinking him to have been guilty—should come to him and make peace with him by telling him of the nature of the work that had been imposed upon him; and when Sir Harry Coldfoot assured him

that never in his life had his mind been relieved of so heavy a weight as when he received the information about the key, that also was natural. A few days ago he had thought that these allusions would kill him. The prospect of them had kept him a prisoner in his lodgings; but now he smiled and chatted, and was quiet and at ease.

"Good-night, Mr. Finn," the Duchess said to him; "I know the people have been boring you."

"Not in the least."

"I saw Sir Gregory at it, and I can guess what Sir Gregory was talking about."

"I like Sir Gregory, Duchess."

"That shows a very Christian disposition on your part. And then there was Sir Harry. I understood it all, but I could not hinder it. But it had to be done, hadn't it? And now there will be an end of it."

"Every body has treated me very well," said Phineas, almost in tears. "Some people have been so kind to me that I can not understand why it should have been so."

"Because some people are your very excellent good friends. We—that is, Marie and I, you know—thought it would be the best thing for you to come down and get through it all here. We could see that you weren't driven too hard. By-the-bye, you have hardly seen her, have you?"

"Hardly, since I was up stairs with your Grace."

"My Grace will manage better for you tomorrow. I didn't like to tell you to take her out to dinner, because it would have looked a little particular after her very remarkable journey to Prague. If you ain't grateful you must be a wretch."

"But I am grateful."

"Well, we shall see. Good-night. You'll find a lot of men going to smoke somewhere, I don't doubt."

## CHAPTER LXXV.

### THE TRUMPETON FEUD IS SETTLED.

IN these fine early autumn days spent at Matching the great Trumpeton Wood question was at last settled. During the summer considerable acerbity had been added to the matter by certain articles which had appeared in certain sporting papers, in which the new Duke of Omnium was accused of neglecting his duty to the county in which a portion of his property lay. The question was argued at considerable length. Is a landed proprietor bound, or is he not, to keep foxes for the amusement of his neighbors? To ordinary thinkers, to unprejudiced outsiders—to Americans, let us say, or Frenchmen—there does not seem to be room even for an argument. By what law of God or man can a man be bound to maintain a parcel of injurious vermin on his property, in the pursuit of which he finds no sport himself, and which are highly detrimental to another sport in which he takes, perhaps, the keenest interest? Trumpeton Wood was the Duke's own—to do just as he pleased with it. Why should foxes be demanded from him, then, any more than a bear to be baited, or a badger to be drawn in, let us say, his London dining-room? But a good deal had been said, which, though not perhaps capable of convincing the unprejudiced American or Frenchman, had been regarded as

cogent arguments to country-bred Englishmen. The Brake Hunt had been established for a great many years, and was the central attraction of a district well known for its hunting propensities. The preservation of foxes might be an open question in such counties as Norfolk and Suffolk, but could not be so in the Brake country. Many things are, no doubt, permissible under the law which, if done, would show the doer of them to be the enemy of his species—and this destruction of foxes in a hunting country may be named as one of them. The Duke might have his foxes destroyed if he pleased, but he could hardly do so and remain a popular magnate in England. If he chose to put himself in opposition to the desires and very instincts of the people among whom his property was situated, he must live as a "man forbid." That was the general argument, and then there was the argument special to this particular case. As it happened, Trumpeton Wood was, and always had been, the great nursery of foxes for that side of the Brake country. Gorse coverts make, no doubt, the charm of hunting, but gorse coverts will not hold foxes unless the woodlands be preserved. The fox is a traveling animal. Knowing well that "home-staying youths have ever homely wits," he goes out and sees the world. He is either born in the woodlands, or wanders thither in his early youth. If all foxes so wandering be doomed to death—if poison, and wires, and traps, and hostile keepers await them there instead of the tender welcome of the loving fox-preserver, the gorse coverts will soon be empty, and the whole country will be afflicted with a wild dismay. All which Lord Chiltern understood well when he became so loud in his complaint against the Duke.

But our dear old friend, only the other day a duke, Planty Pall, as he was lately called, devoted to work and to Parliament, an unselfish, friendly, wise man, who by no means wanted other men to cut their coats according to his pattern, was the last man in England to put himself forward as the enemy of an established delight. He did not hunt himself—but neither did he shoot, or fish, or play cards. He recreated himself with blue-books, and speculations on Adam Smith had been his distraction; but he knew that he was himself peculiar, and he respected the habits of others. It had fallen out in this wise. As the old Duke had become very old, the old Duke's agent had gradually acquired more than an agent's proper influence in the property; and as the Duke's heir would not shoot himself, or pay attention to the shooting, and as the Duke would not let the shooting of his wood, Mr. Fothergill, the steward, had gradually become omnipotent. Now Mr. Fothergill was not a hunting man; but the mischief did not at all lie there. Lord Chiltern would not communicate with Mr. Fothergill. Lord Chiltern would write to the Duke, and Mr. Fothergill became an established enemy. *Hinc illæ iræ.* From this source sprung all those powerfully argued articles in *The Field*, *Bell's Life*, and *Land and Water*—for on this matter all the sporting papers were of one mind.

There is doubtless something absurd in the intensity of the worship paid to the fox by hunting communities. The animal becomes sacred, and his preservation is a religion. His irregular destruction is a profanity, and words spoken to his

injury are blasphemous. Not long since a gentleman shot a fox running across a woodland ride in a hunting country. He had mistaken it for a hare, and had done the deed in the presence of keepers, owner, and friends. His feelings were so acute and his remorse so great that, in their pity, they all resolved to spare him; and then, on the spot, entered into a solemn compact that no one should be told. Encouraged by the forbearing tenderness, the unfortunate one ventured to return to the house of his friend, the owner of the wood, hoping that, in spite of the sacrilege committed, he might be able to face a world that would be ignorant of his crime. As the vespere, on the afternoon of the day of the deed, went along the corridor to his room, one maid-servant whispered to another, and the poor victim of an imperfect sight heard the words—"That's he as shot the fox!" The gentleman did not appear at dinner, nor was he ever again seen in those parts.

Mr. Fothergill had become angry. Lord Chiltern, as we know, had been very angry. And even the Duke was angry. The Duke was angry because Lord Chiltern had been violent; and Lord Chiltern had been violent because Mr. Fothergill's conduct had been, to his thinking, not only sacrilegious, but one continued course of willful sacrilege. It may be said of Lord Chiltern that in his eagerness as a Master of Hounds he had almost abandoned his own love of riding. To kill a certain number of foxes in the year, after the legitimate fashion, had become to him the one great study of life—and he did it with an energy equal to that which the Duke devoted to decimal coinage. His huntsman was always well mounted, with two horses; but Lord Chiltern would give up his own to the man, and take charge of a weary animal as a common groom, when he found that he might thus further the object of the day's sport. He worked as men work only at pleasure. He never missed a day, even when cub-hunting required that he should leave his bed at 3 A.M. He was constant at his kennel. He was always thinking about it. He devoted his life to the Brake hounds. And it was too much for him that such a one as Mr. Fothergill should be allowed to wire foxes in Trumpeton Wood! The Duke's property, indeed! Surely all that was understood in England by this time. Now he had consented to come to Matching, bringing his wife with him, in order that this matter might be settled. There had been a threat that he would give up the country in which it was declared that it would be impossible to carry on the Brake Hunt in a manner satisfactory to masters, subscribers, owners of coverts, or farmers, unless a different order of things should be made to prevail in regard to Trumpeton Wood.

The Duke, however, had declined to interfere personally. He had told his wife that he should be delighted to welcome Lord and Lady Chiltern—as he would any other friends of hers. The guests, indeed, at the Duke's house were never his guests, but always hers. But he could not allow himself to be brought into an argument with Lord Chiltern as to the management of his own property. The Duchess was made to understand that she must prevent any such awkwardness. And she did prevent it. "And now, Lord Chiltern," she said, "how about the foxes?"

She had taken care that there should be a council of war around her. Lady Chiltern and Madame Goesler were present, and also Phineas Finn.

"Well, how about them?" said the lord, showing by the fiery eagerness of his eye and the increased redness of the face that though the matter had been introduced somewhat jocosely, there could not really be any joke about it.

"Why couldn't you keep it all out of the newspapers?"

"I don't write the newspapers, Duchess. I can't help the newspapers. When two hundred men ride through Trumpeton Wood, and see one fox found, and that fox with only three pads, of course the newspapers will say that the foxes are trapped."

"We may have traps if we like it, Lord Chiltern."

"Certainly; only say so, and we shall know where we are." He looked very angry, and poor Lady Chiltern was covered with dismay. "The Duke can destroy the hunt if he pleases, no doubt," said the lord.

"But we don't like traps, Lord Chiltern—nor yet poison, nor any thing that is wicked. I'd go and nurse the foxes myself if I knew how—wouldn't I, Marie?"

"They have robbed the Duchess of her sleep for the last six months," said Madame Goesler.

"And if they go on being not properly brought up and educated, they'll make an old woman of me. As for the Duke, he can't be comfortable in his arithmetic for thinking of them. But what can one do?"

"Change your keepers," said Lord Chiltern, energetically.

"It is easy to say—change your keepers. How am I to set about it? To whom can I apply to appoint others? Don't you know what vested interests mean, Lord Chiltern?"

"Then nobody can manage his own property as he pleases?"

"Nobody can—unless he does the work himself. If I were to go and live in Trumpeton Wood, I could do it; but you see I have to live here. I vote that we have an officer of State, to go in and out with the Government—with a seat in the Cabinet or not, according as things go—and that we call him Foxmaster-General. It would be just the thing for Mr. Finn."

"There would be a salary, of course," said Phineas.

"Then I suppose that nothing can be done," said Lord Chiltern.

"My dear Lord Chiltern, every thing has been done. Vested interests have been attended to. Keepers shall prefer foxes to pheasants, wires shall be unheard of, and Trumpeton Wood shall once again be the glory of the Brake Hunt. It won't cost the Duke above a thousand or two a year."

"I should be very sorry indeed to put the Duke to any unnecessary expense," said Lord Chiltern, solemnly, still fearing that the Duchess was only playing with him. It made him angry that he could not imbue other people with his idea of the seriousness of the amusement of a whole county.

"Do not think of it. We have pensioned poor Mr. Fothergill, and he retires from the administration."

"Then it'll be all right," said Lord Chiltern. "I am so glad," said his wife.

"And so the great Mr. Fothergill falls from power, and goes down into obscurity," said Madame Goesler.

"He was an impudent old man, and that's the truth," said the Duchess; "and he has always been my thorough detestation. But if you only knew what I have gone through to get rid of him—and all on account of Trumpeton Wood—you'd send me every brush taken in the Brake country during the next season."

"Your Grace shall, at any rate, have one of them," said Lord Chiltern.

On the next day Lord and Lady Chiltern went back to Harrington Hall. When the end of August comes, a Master of Hounds—who is really a master—is wanted at home. Nothing short of an embassy on behalf of the great coverts of his country would have kept this Master away at present; and now, his diplomacy having succeeded, he hurried back to make the most of its results. Lady Chiltern, before she went, made a little speech to Phineas Finn.

"You'll come to us in the winter, Mr. Finn?"

"I should like."

"You must. No one was truer to you than we were, you know. Indeed, regarding you as we do, how should we not have been true? It was impossible to me that my old friend should have been—"

"Oh, Lady Chiltern!"

"Of course you'll come. You owe it to us to come. And may I say this? If there be any body to come with you, that will make it only so much the better. If it should be so, of course there will be letters written." To this question, however, Phineas Finn made no answer.

## CHAPTER LXXVI.

### MADAME GOESLER'S LEGACY.

ONE morning, very shortly after her return to Harrington, Lady Chiltern was told that Mr. Spooner of Spoon Hall had called, and desired to see her. She suggested that the gentleman had probably asked for her husband, who at that moment was enjoying his recovered supremacy in the centre of Trumpeton Wood; but she was assured that on this occasion Mr. Spooner's mission was to herself. She had no quarrel with Mr. Spooner, and she went to him at once. After the first greeting he rushed into the subject of the great triumph. "So we've got rid of Mr. Fothergill, Lady Chiltern."

"Yes; Mr. Fothergill will not, I believe, trouble us any more. He is an old man, it seems, and has retired from the Duke's service."

"I can't tell you how glad I am, Lady Chiltern. We were afraid that Chiltern would have thrown it up, and then I don't know where we should have been. England would not have been England any longer, to my thinking, if we hadn't won the day. It'd have been just like a French revolution. Nobody would have known what was coming or where he was going."

That Mr. Spooner should be enthusiastic on any hunting question was a matter of course; but still it seemed to be odd that he should have driven himself over from Spoon Hall to pour his