Chapter 27, *Major Tifto and the Duke*

"I beg your pardon, Silverbridge," said the Major, entering the room, "but I was looking for Longstaffe. **He hasn't been here I suppose.**"

"**No; he has not** [He isn't here]," said Silverbridge, who did not **at this moment at all** wish to be interrupted by his racing friend.

"Your father, I believe?" said Tifto. He was **rather** red in the face but was in other respects perhaps improved in appearance by **the** [his] liquor **which he had taken**. In his more sober moments he was not always able to assume that appearance of equality with his companions which it was the ambition of his soul to achieve. **There would be fits and starts,—starts of impudence and fits of putting his tail between his legs.** But a second glass of whisky-and-water would always enable him to cock his tail and bark before the company with all the courage of my lady's pug. "Would you do me the great honour to introduce me to his Grace?"

Silverbridge **was a young man who would not willingly** [was not prone to] turn his back upon a friend**, however** [because he was] low in the world **that friend might be**. He had begun to understand that he had made a mistake by connecting himself with the Major, but at the club he always defended his partner**, and, whenever he met the man there, would always devote a few moments to him**. Though he not unfrequently found himself obliged to snub the Major himself, he **nonetheless** always countenanced the **objectionable** little Master of Hounds, and was true to his own idea of "standing by a fellow." Nevertheless he did not wish to introduce his friend to his father. The Duke saw it all at a glance, and felt that the introduction should be made. "Perhaps," said he, getting up from his chair, "this is Major Tifto**, of whom I have heard**."

"Yes;—my Lord Duke. **That is my name.** I am Major Tifto."

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"I beg ten thousand pardons," exclaimed the Major. "I **certainly** did not intend to intrude."

"I think **that** we had done," said the Duke. "Pray sit down, Major Tifto." The Major sat down. "Though, now I bethink myself, I have to beg your pardon;—that I a stranger should ask you to sit down in your own club."

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"I **had become so immersed in what I was saying to my son, and** am so unused to clubs, that I forgot where I was."

"Quite so, my Lord Duke. I hope you think that Silverbridge is looking well." **This he said as though he were in a manner responsible for his friend's state of health as well as for his stables.**

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"Yes, he did. The Prime Minister, we call him, your Grace,—out of compliment to a certain Ministry which I wish it was going on to-day instead of the seedy lot we've got in. I think, my Lord Duke, that anyone you may ask will tell you that I know what running is. Well;—I can assure you,—your Grace, that is,—that since I've seen 'orses I've never seen a 'orse fitter than him. When he got his canter that morning **after saddling**, it was nearly even betting. Not that I or Silverbridge were fools enough to put on anything at that rate. But I never saw a 'orse so bad ridden **in all my life**. I don't mean to say anything, my Lord Duke, against the man. **I never like to take away a man's character.** But if that fellow hadn't been squared, or else wasn't drunk, or else wasn't off his head, that 'orse must have won,—my Lord Duke."

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"I suppose not, your Grace. **I think I've heard Silverbridge say as much before.** But as I and Silverbridge are together in this matter I thought I'd just let your Grace know that we ought to have had a very good thing. **Though I say it as shouldn't, it is not as though he'd been joined with a man who didn't know what he was doing.** I thought that perhaps your Grace might like to know that."

"Tifto, you are making an ass of yourself," said Silverbridge**, unable any longer to restrain himself**.

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"Very good indeed, my Lord Duke; very good, indeed! Ha, ha, ha. All horses have heads, and all have tails! Heads and tails. Upon my word that is the best thing I have heard for a long time. I will do myself the honour of wishing your Grace good-night. By-bye, Silverbridge." Then he left the room, having been made supremely happy by what he considered to have been the Duke's joke. **To have had a joke made for his express behoof by the Duke of Omnium,—a fact of which he could talk in all societies without lying for the next two years,—was more than consolation to him for his friend's ill nature.** Nevertheless he would remember the snubbing and would be even with Silverbridge some day. Did Lord Silverbridge think that he was going to look after his Lordship's 'orses, and do this always on the square, and then be snubbed for

doing it! **Squareness in such matters is a virtue for which Major Tifto thought that his partner should be willing to pay highly,—even to the amount of being gracious to him in the father's presence. Silverbridge had not regarded the matter in this light;—and it was possible that Silverbridge might be made to pay for his mistake! Such were the feelings with which Major Tifto left the room.**

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"He has not troubled me much. I do not know whether he has troubled you. If you are going down to the House again I will walk with you." **Under these circumstances** Silverbridge of course had to go down to the House again, and they started together. "That man did not trouble me, Silverbridge; but the question is whether such an acquaintance must not be troublesome to you."

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"But I think one ought to be proud of one's friends. **Otherwise there can be no true delight in friendship.**"

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"He understands racing**, and therefore I have got myself, as it were, joined with him**."

"He is the partner of your pleasures then;—the man in whose society **it pleases you** [you love] to enjoy the recreation of the race-course."

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"I thought that a gentleman on the turf would have a trainer for that purpose,—not a companion **whom he would be supposed to treat in terms of equality**. **What** you mean to imply **is** that you can save money by leaguing yourself with Major Tifto?"

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"If you associate with him, not for pleasure, then it surely must be for profit. That you should do the former would be to me so surprising that I must regard it as impossible. That you should do the latter **is,—**is, I think, a reproach." This he said with no **slightest** tone of anger in his voice,—so gently that Silverbridge at first hardly understood **the force of the words**. But gradually all that was meant came in upon him, and he felt himself to be ashamed of himself.

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"Whether he be bad **or not,** I will not say; but I **have seen enough of him to be** [am] sure that you can gain nothing by his companionship."

"I will get rid of him," said Silverbridge, after a considerable pause. "I cannot do so **all** at once, but I will do it."

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"I do not deny that he is entitled to be treated well;—but so also is your groom. Let us say no more about him **at present**. And so it is to be Mabel Grex?"

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"If she should, tell her that I will go to her at once. It will be **very** much to me to have a new daughter;—very much that you should have a wife. Where would she like to live?"

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"I dare say not; I dare say not," said the Duke**, almost chuckling**. "Gatherum is always thought to be dull."

"She wouldn't like Gatherum **at all**, I'm sure."

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"All vanity; and vexation of spirit!" **The money was there and the spending of it did not signify; but why should one have the vexation of spirit?** The Duke no doubt was thinking of certain scenes passed at the great house in question, which scenes had not been delightful to him. "No, I don't suppose she would wish to live at Gatherum. The Horns was given expressly by my uncle to your dear mother, and I should like Mary to have the place."

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"However we can manage all that. **She shall not want for a house.** Carlton Terrace I do not particularly like; but it is a **very** good house, and there you should hang up your hat when in London. **She would find room there for her bonnets also.** When it is settled let me know at once."

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"Lord Silverbridge sat in the House,—or to speak more accurately, in the smoking-room of the House,—for about an hour thinking over all that had passed between himself and his father. He certainly had not intended to say anything about Lady Mab, but on the spur of the moment it had all come out. Now at any rate it was decided for him that he must, in set terms, ask her to be his wife. **He had told the Duke that he had quite made up his mind, and the thing must be done. He was glad that it was so because he was sure that he loved her. Nothing ever was so pretty, so nice, so sweet, as Mabel Grex,—or nobody ever so clever! And then he himself felt that he was a young man who ought to marry.** The scene which had just occurred had made him thoroughly sick of Major Tifto. He must get rid of the Major, and there could be no way of doing this at once so easy and so little open to observation as marriage. **And he felt that without some such strongly operating cause very likely he might not really get rid of Tifto. He was conscious of his own weakness.** If he were but once engaged to Mabel Grex the dismissal of Tifto would be quite a matter of course**;—but, under any other circumstances, there might be a difficulty**. He would see Lady Mabel again on the morrow and ask her in direct language to be his wife. **It would be a great thing for him to be able to plead his father's good-will.**

Chapter 28, *Mrs. Montacute Jones's Garden-Party*

It was known to all the world that Mrs. Montacute Jones's first great garden-party was to come off on Wednesday, 16th June, at Roehampton. Mrs. Montacute Jones, who lived in Grosvenor Place and **who also** had a country-house in Gloucestershire, and a place for young men to shoot at in Scotland, also kept a suburban Elysium at Roehampton, in order that she might give two garden-parties every year. When it is said that all these costly luxuries appertained to Mrs. Montacute Jones, it is to be understood that they did in truth belong to Mr. Jones, of whom nobody **ever** heard much. But of Mrs. Jones,—that is, Mrs. Montacute Jones,—everybody heard a great deal. She was an old lady who devoted her life to the amusement of—not only her friends, but very many who were not her friends. No doubt she was fond of lords and countesses, and **did** work[ed] very hard to get around her all the rank and fashion of the day. It must be acknowledged that she was a worldly old woman. But no more good-natured old woman lived in London, and everybody liked to be asked to her garden-parties. On this occasion there was to be a considerable infusion of royal blood,—German, Belgian, French, Spanish, and of native growth. Everybody who was asked would **be sure to** go, and

everybody had been asked,—who was anybody. **Of course** Lord Silverbridge had been asked, and **of course** Lord Silverbridge intended to be there. Lady Mary, his sister, could not even be asked, because her mother was hardly more than three months dead; but it is **quite** understood in the world that women mourn longer than men.

Silverbridge **in these days** had mounted a private hansom cab in which he could be taken about rapidly,—and, as he said himself, without being shut up in a coffin. In this vehicle he had himself taken to Roehampton, purporting to kill two birds with one stone. He had not as yet seen his sister since she had been with Lady Cantrip. He would on this day come back by The Horns **and call on his way**.

He was well aware that Lady Mab would be at the garden-party **with Miss Cassewary**. What place could be better for putting the question he had to ask **her**? **No place would be better if only she would allow herself to be separated from others and taken apart among some of the walks, as may be so easily done on such occasions. But if she did not intend to accept him, if that half-jocose rejection of a half-jocose offer had been made with a serious purpose, then of course she would not allow herself to be so separated and carried off.** He was by no means so confident as the heir to so many good things might perhaps have been without undue self-confidence**,—or as he probably would become after living a year or two longer in London**.

Entering through the house onto the lawn he encountered Mrs. Montacute Jones, who, with a seat behind her on the terrace, surrounded by flowers, was **prepared to** go[ing] through the immense labour of receiving her guests**, with all the vigour and courage of a British fashionable matron**. "How very good of you to come all this way, Lord Silverbridge, to eat my strawberries."

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"You ought to have said you came to see me, **but you young men of the present day never will condescend to pay a compliment to an old woman** [you know]. Have you **seen** [met] Miss Boncassen yet?"

"The American beauty? No**; but I have heard ever so much about her**. Is she here?"

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"There you are wrong, for there was real downright fun in the way she said it. **Of course you have to remember that she is a republican and an American,—and to remember also that she has heard ever so much about you.** There they are, and I shall

introduce you." Then Mrs. Montacute Jones absolutely left her post for a minute or two, and taking the young Lord down the steps of the terrace did introduce him to Mr. Boncassen, who was standing there amidst a crowd **of new acquaintances**, and to Miss Boncassen the daughter.

Mr. Boncassen was an American **from New York** who had lately arrived in England with the object of carrying out certain literary pursuits in which he was engaged within the British Museum. **Much had been said about his coming, and all in his praise.** He was an American who had nothing to do with politics and nothing to do with trade**, both of which circumstances were in his favour**. He was **also** a man of wealth and a man of letters**, which two other circumstances added so much to his credit, that he was regarded quite as an American phoenix**. And **then** he had a daughter who was said to be the prettiest young woman either in Europe or in America at the present time. **So much had been said about her beauty that Silverbridge had already heard it mentioned with enthusiasm.**

Isabel Boncassen**, who was standing close by her father's elbow when the introduction took place, was certainly a very** [was certainly a very] pretty girl. I wish that my reader would believe my simple assurance **that imagination could conceive no greater perfection of feminine loveliness**. But no such simple assurance was ever believed, and I doubt even whether any description will procure for me from the reader that amount of faith which I desire to achieve. But I must make **some** [the] attempt**, even though I may know that I shall fail**. General opinion generally considered Miss Boncassen to be small, but she was in truth something above the average height of English women. She was slight, without that look of slimness which is **so** common to girls, and especially to American girls. That her figure was perfect the reader must believe on my word, as any detailed description of her arms, legs, bust, and waist, would be **wearisome and** [altogether] ineffective. Her hair was dark brown **in hue** and **sufficiently** plentiful; but it added but little to her charms, which depended **altogether** on other matters. Perhaps what struck the beholder first was the excessive brilliancy of her complexion. No pink was ever pinker, no alabaster whiteness was ever more like alabaster; but under and around and through it all there was a continually changing hue which gave a vitality to her countenance which no fixed colours can **ever** produce. Her eyes, too, were full of life and brilliancy, and even when she was silent her mouth would **be** speak**ing**. Nor was there a fault within the oval of her face upon which the hypercriticism of mature age could set a finger. Her teeth were excellent both in form and colour, but were seen but seldom. Who does not know that look of ubiquitous ivory produced by teeth which are too perfect in a face which is otherwise poor? Her nose at

the base spread a little,—so that it was not purely Grecian. But who has ever seen a nose to be eloquent and expressive, which did not so spread? **And who that has watched noses will deny that a nose may be most eloquent and expressive?** It was, I think, the vitality of her countenance,—the way in which she could speak with every feature, the command which she had of pathos, of humour, of sympathy, of satire, the assurance which she gave by every glance of her eye, every elevation of her brow, every curl of her lip, **every expansion of her nostrils,** that she was alive to all that was going on,—it was all this rather than those feminine charms which can be catalogued **and ticketed** and labelled that made all **who saw her** acknowledge that she was most beautiful.

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"Oh yes,—no doubt," said Silverbridge awkwardly. Then Mr. Boncassen continued his discourse with the **other** gentlemen around him. Upon this our **young** friend turned **of course** to the young lady. "Have you been long in England, Miss Boncassen?"

"Long enough to have heard about you and your father," she said, speaking with no slightest twang**,—which delighted him**.

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"You've been long enough to hear that **then**?"

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"I'd have changed it. But is it not very impudent in me to be finding fault with you **in this way** the first time I have ever seen you? Shall you have a horse at Ascot?"

"There will be something going, I suppose. Nothing that I care about." Lord Silverbridge had made up his mind that he would go to no races with Tifto before the Leger. **And as Tifto would assuredly go to almost all that were run, he could only keep his resolve by staying away.** The Leger would be an affair of such moment as to demand his presence. After that should come the complete rupture between him and Tifto.

Then there was a movement among the elders, and **after a little while** Lord Silverbridge [soon] found himself walking alone with Miss Boncassen. It seemed to her to be quite natural to do so, and there certainly was no reason why he should decline [anything] so pleasant **a way of passing his morning**. It was thus that he had intended to walk with Mabel Grex. It was thus that he still intended to walk with Mabel Grex;—only as yet he had not found her. "Oh, yes," said Miss Boncassen, when they had been

together about twenty minutes; "we shall be here all the summer, and all the fall, and all the winter. Indeed father means to read every book in the British Museum before he goes back."

"He'll have something to do **then**."

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"The lady endeavours to do the same with the lace. That depends on whether people look up or down. Father, however, is a very learned man. You mustn't suppose that I am laughing at him. And he is going to write a very learned book. Only everybody will be dead before it can be half finished." They still went on together, and then he gave her his arm and took her into the place where the strawberries and cream were prepared**,—or in other words one of those magnificent morning banquets which people never can eat because of their breakfasts, but which serve altogether to destroy their subsequent dinners**. As he was going in he saw Mabel Grex walking with Tregear, and she bowed to him pleasantly and playfully. "Is that lady a great friend of yours?" asked Miss Boncassen.

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"Lady Mabel Grex. She is daughter of Lord Grex. That man with her is my particular friend. His name is Frank Tregear, and they are cousins. **Now I've told you all about them.**"

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"Supposing I was in love with her,—which **of course** I am not[,—]**";—he need hardly have said this,—"**do you suppose it would make me jealous to see her with another man?"

"In our country it would not. **We do not think of such things at all.** A young lady may walk about with a young gentleman just as she might with another young lady; but I thought it was different here. Do you know, judging by English ways, I believe I am behaving very improperly **now** in **allowing you to go about with me** [walking about with you] so long. Ought I not to tell you to go away?"

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"As I am going to stay here so long I wish to behave well to English eyes. **There isn't any fault so great as people thinking that it is enough for them to attend to the morals of their own people when they are away from their own country.**"

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"If the difference be very marked they do. For instance I needn't wear a hideous long bit of cloth over my face in Constantinople because I am a woman. **Everyone understands the difference between a Mohammedan and a Christian female.** But when the discrepancies are small then they have to be attended to. So I shan't walk about with you any more."

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"Cannot I take you back as well as Mr. Sprottle**,—if you have to be taken back**? **We will go round by the haycocks once again and then when we find your father we will talk about it.**"

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"Certainly. Father will only be too proud,—and I shall be prouder. Mother will be the proudest of all. Mother very seldom goes out. Till we get a house we are at the Langham. **You know that great American caravansary.** Thank you, Mr. Sprottle. I think we'll go and find father."

Lord Silverbridge **when he was thus dismissed** found himself close to Lady Mabel and Tregear, and also to Miss Cassewary, who had now joined Lady Mabel. He had been **very** much struck with the American beauty, but was not on that account the less anxious to carry out his great plan. It was essentially necessary that he should do so at once, **not only,—though of course chiefly,—for his own happiness, but also** because the matter had been settled between him and his father. He was anxious to assure her that if she would consent, then the Duke would be ready to pour out all kinds of paternal blessings on their heads. "Come and take a turn among the haycocks," he said**, not quite in a whisper, but yet so as to make her understand that the invitation was given specially to her**.

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"And how much she pays for it," suggested Tregear.

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"There isn't anywhere else. What have you done with your American beauty? The truth is, Lord Silverbridge, you ask me for my company when she won't give you

hers any longer." **He looked up at her as though he were really annoyed by her speech.** "Doesn't it look like it, Miss Cassewary?"

"I don't think Lord Silverbridge is the man to forget an old friend for a new one**,**" **said the old lady**.

"Not though the new friend be as lovely as Miss Boncassen?" **asked Lady Mabel.**

"**Upon my word** I don't know that I ever saw a prettier girl," said Tregear.

"I quite admit it," said Lady Mabel. "But that is no salve for my injured feelings. I have heard so much about Miss Boncassen's beauty for the last week, that I mean to get up a company of British females, limited, for the express purpose of putting her down. Who is Miss Boncassen that we are all to be cast on one side for her? **I am not going to stand it, Lord Silverbridge. Good-morning!**"

Of course he knew that she was joking, but he hardly knew how to take her joke. There is a manner of joking which carries with it **a great deal of** [much] serious intention. **Who has not been persecuted by a joke, which can defend itself if attacked by its jocosity, but which nevertheless has carried with it the gravest censure?** He did feel that Lady Mabel was not gracious to him because he had spent half an hour with this new beauty, and he was half inclined to be angry with her. Was it fitting that she should be cross with him, seeing that he was resolved to throw at her feet all the good things that he had in the world? "Bother Miss Boncassen," he said; "you might as well come and take a turn with a fellow."

"Come along, Miss Cassewary," said she. "We will go round the haycocks yet once again." So they turned**. Tregear went off another way,** and the two ladies accompanied Lord Silverbridge.

But this was **by no means** [not] what he wanted. **Miss Cassewary was, no doubt, his very good friend, but** he could not say what he had to say in the presence of Miss Cassewary,—nor could he ask her to take herself off in another direction. **But even that was not the extent of his misfortune. He could not** [Nor could he] take himself off. Now that he had joined himself to these two ladies he **could not escape till he had made** [must make] with them the tour of the grounds. All this made him cross. "These kind of things are a great bore," he said.

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"I hope you two are not going to quarrel," said Miss Cassewary.

"I should have thought that you would be particularly pleased with yourself for coming here to-day**," said Lady Mabel, "**seeing that you have made Miss Boncassen's

acquaintance. To be allowed to walk half an hour alone with the acknowledged beauty of the two hemispheres ought to be enough even for Lord Silverbridge."

"That is nonsense, Lady Mab**;—absolute nonsense**."

"Nothing gives so much zest to admiration as novelty. A republican charmer must be charming **indeed** after all the blasé **well-born** habituées of the London drawing-rooms."

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"But it is so. I **sometimes** feel that people must be sick of seeing me. I know I am very often sick of seeing them. Here is something **quite** fresh,—and not only unlike, but so much more lovely. I quite acknowledge that. I may be jealous, but no one can say that I am spiteful. I wish that some republican Adonis or Apollo would crop up,—so that we might have our turn. But I don't think the republican gentlemen **ever** are equal to the republican ladies? Do you, Lord Silverbridge?"

"I haven't thought **much** about it."

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"Now we've been round the haycocks, and really, Lord Silverbridge, I don't think we have gained much by it. **I quite feel that I haven't made myself pleasant, and you have been as cross as ever you can be.** Those forced marches never do any good. **I dare say I shall meet you somewhere to-night, and then I hope I shall be pleasanter and you better-humoured. Ta, ta.**" And so they parted.

He was thinking with a bitter spirit of the ill result of his morning's work**,—or of the absence of any result,—**when he again found himself close to Miss Boncassen in the crowd of departing people on the terrace. **People were going away and were hurrying through to their carriages. Mr. Sprottle had been sent on in advance, and Miss Boncassen was hanging on her father's arm.** "Mind you keep your word," she said. And then she turned to her father. "Lord Silverbridge has promised to call."

"**Your mother** [Mrs. Boncassen] will be delighted to make his acquaintance."

"We are dining to-day with Sir Oliver Crumblewit, the president of the Phrenological Society. I suppose you don't go there."

"Well; no; I don't think I know Sir Oliver."

"And to-morrow with General Vansinoff, the great Dutch traveller."

"I don't think I know the General either."

"I dare say not. We always go to learned places;—never anywhere else. On the next evening there is a grand meeting of vivisectors. You won't be there I dare say."

"My Lord, you mustn't believe all the nonsense that my girl talks," said the father.

"Oh yes, I do," said Lord Silverbridge cheerfully, as he made his way through the crowd. "At any rate I shall be sure to come and call." Then Miss Boncassen smiled and nodded to him familiarly. At that moment he saw that Lady Mabel was just at his other elbow. She also smiled and nodded, but it seemed to him that there was more of sarcasm than of good humour in her smile.

He got into his cab and was driven off towards Richmond. As he went he began to think of the two young women with whom he had passed his morning. **Of course he was still fully prepared to ask Lady Mabel to be his wife. He assured himself that he was not the man to be put off his intention by the absurd nonsense of a few minutes. But** Mabel had certainly behaved badly to him. Even if she suspected nothing of his object, did she not owe it to their friendship to be more courteous to him than she had been? And if she suspected that object, should she not at any rate have given him his opportunity? **Or could it be possible that she intended him to take what she had before said as a rejection in earnest, and that therefore she would not give him that opportunity? If so,—if he could feel convinced that it were so,—then why should he undergo the annoyance of a more positive repulse? And yet her manner had hardly been such as in that condition of affairs he would have expected!**

Or could it be that she was really jealous of the American girl? No;—that idea he rejected instantly. It was not compatible with the innate modesty of his disposition. But no doubt the American girl was very lovely. Merely as a thing to be looked at she was superior to Mabel. He did feel that as to mere personal beauty she was in truth superior to anything he had ever seen before. And she was clever too;—and good-humoured;—whereas Mabel had been both ill-natured and unpleasant. **Thinking of all this he found himself suddenly at The Horns.**

Chapter 29, *The Lovers Meet*

Lord Silverbridge found his sister alone. **Lady Cantrip, though he had not seen her, had been at the garden-party and had not yet come home.** "I particularly want you," said the brother, "to come up and call on Mabel Grex. She wishes to know you,

and I am sure you would like her. **You ought to know each other because you are cousins.**"

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Nevertheless she was very anxious to know Lady Mabel Grex, of whom she had heard much. A girl if she has had a former love passage says nothing of it to her new lover; but a man is not so reticent. Frank Tregear had perhaps not told her everything, but he had told her something. "I was very fond of her;—very fond of her, **very fond of her,**" he had said. "And so I am still," he had added. "As you are my love of loves, she is my friend of friends." Lady Mary had been satisfied by the assurance, but had become anxious to see the friend of friends. **Nevertheless** she resisted at first her brother's entreaties. She felt that her father in delivering her over **to Lady Cantrip and** to the seclusion of The Horns had intended to preclude her from showing herself in London **at all**. She was conscious that she was being treated with cruelty, **but, like other martyrs,** [and] had a certain pride in her martyrdom. She would obey her father to the letter**, and much beyond the letter**; she would give him no right to call her conduct in question; but he and any other to whom he might entrust the care of her, should be made to know that she thought him cruel. He had his power to which she must submit. But she also had hers,—to which it was possible he might be made to submit. "I do not know that papa would wish me to go," she said.

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"I can't exactly explain," said Silverbridge **awkwardly**, "but he does."

"If you mean to tell me**, Silverbridge,** that Mabel Grex is anything particular to you, and that papa approves of it, I will go all round the world to see her." But he had not meant to tell her **any such thing** [this]. The request had been made at Lady Mabel's instance. When his sister had spoken of her father's possible objection, then he had become eager in explaining the Duke's feeling, not remembering that such anxiety might betray himself. **Just at** [At] that moment Lady Cantrip came in, and the question was referred to her. She did not see any objection to such a visit, and expressed her opinion that it would be a **very** good thing that Mary should be taken out. "She should begin to go somewhere," said Lady Cantrip. And so it was decided. **This was Wednesday.** On the next Friday he would come down early in his hansom cab and drive her up to Belgrave Square. Then he would take her to Carlton Terrace, and Lady Cantrip's carriage should pick her up there and bring her home. He would arrange it all **with Lady Mabel, so that there should be no difficulty about their meeting**.

"What did you think of the American beauty?" asked Lady Cantrip when **all** that was settled.

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"So **we** [I] perceived. You had eyes for nobody else, **Lord Silverbridge.**" [said Lady Cantrip, who had been at the garden-party.]

"Somebody introduced her to me **at once**, and then I had to walk about the grounds with her. That's the kind of thing one always does at those places."

"Just so. That is what 'those places' are meant for, I suppose. But it was not apparently a great infliction." Lord Silverbridge had to explain that it was not an infliction,—that it was a privilege, seeing that Miss Boncassen was both clever and lovely, but that it did not mean anything in particular**, and that he, though he admired her beauty and intellect, did not care very much about her**. **All this he thought it necessary to explain, but as he was not very good at explanation he blundered over it a little.**

When he took his leave he asked his sister to go out into the grounds with him for a moment. This she did almost unwillingly, fearing that he was about to speak to her of Tregear**, and determined if he did so to stand up for her love boldly**. But he had no such purpose on his mind. "Of course you know," he began **as soon as they were alone**, "all that was nonsense you were saying about Mabel."

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"I should not be so imprudent **as that**."

"Girls do make such fools of themselves sometimes. They are always thinking about people being in love. But it is **really** the truth that my father said to me the other day how very much he liked what he had heard of her, **so** [and] that **I am able to say that I know** he would like you to know her." **Nevertheless, in spite of all this, Lady Mary thought it very probable that Lady Mabel Grex might become her sister-in-law.**

On that same evening Silverbridge wrote from the Beargarden the shortest possible note to Lady Mabel, telling her what he had arranged. "I and Mary propose to call in B. Square on Friday at two. I must be early because of the House. You will give us lunch. S." There was no word of endearment,—none even of those ordinary words which people who hate each other use to one another. **He would take his sister to see her because he had promised. In other respects he would be as cold to her as possible till she had shown a willingness to come round.** But he received the next day,

at home, a much more kindly written note from her[:]**,—in which it appeared that she was willing to "come round."**

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"I saw your American beauty last night, and got myself introduced to her. I found her charming. I hope you were not angry because I chaffed you about her."

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"But I'd have a hansom of my own, and go **about** where I pleased. How would you like to be shut up at a place like The Horns?"

"You can go out if you **please, I suppose** [like it]."

"Not like you. Papa thinks it's the proper place for me to live in and so I must live there. I don't think a woman ever chooses how or where she shall live herself. **She has always got to do what some man tells her.**"

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"He was dreadfully cut up about Gerald. And then he is so good! He said more to me about Gerald than he ever did about my own little misfortune at Oxford; but to Gerald himself he said almost nothing. **And** now he has forgiven me **everything** because he thinks I am constant at the House."

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"Not so much as he thinks. I do go there,—for his sake. **But I get so sick of it that I am always running out. I shall never make a real politician. And** he has been so good about my changing sides."

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"I am beginning to think I was quite wrong. **If a fellow means to stick to politics it's all very well that he should have an opinion of his own; but I shall never do that.** What did it matter to me?"

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"Of course it did. And then this affair of yours." As soon as this was said Lady Mary at once hardened her heart against her father. Whether Silverbridge was or was not entitled to his own political opinions,—seeing that the Pallisers had for ages been known as staunch Whigs and Liberals,—might be a matter for question. But that she had a right

to her own lover she thought that there could be no question. **There should at any rate be no question within her own bosom. On that matter she could be as hard as a rock to anything that either father or brother might say to her.** As they were sitting in the cab he could hardly see her face, but he was aware that she was in some fashion arming herself against opposition**,—putting her back up as a cat does when a dog invades her territory**. "I am sure that this makes him very unhappy," continued Silverbridge.

"It cannot **at any rate** be altered," she said.

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"Of course that is possible," said Lady Mary very curtly,—showing plainly by her manner that the subject was one which she did not choose to discuss any further. **And there was no further discussion.**

"It is very good of you to come to me," said Lady Mabel, kissing her new acquaintance. "**I should never have thought of asking it, if your brother had not wished it too.** I have heard so much about you."

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"I, you know, am one of your brother's stern Mentors. There are three or four of us determined to make him a pattern young legislator. Miss Cassewary is another.**"** **Miss Cass had already been introduced to the stranger. "**Only she is not quite so stern as I am."

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"Of course there is an opposing force. There are the race-horses, and the drag, and Major Tifto. No doubt you have heard of Major Tifto." Mary said that she had heard of Major Tifto. "The Major is the Mr. Worldly-Wiseman who won't let Christian go to the strait gate. **Is it not so, Lord Silverbridge?**"

"I don't quite know what you are talking about."

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Then they went to lunch, and Lady Mary did find herself to be happy with her new acquaintances. Her life since her mother's death had been so sad, that this short escape from it was in itself a relief to her. **The sadness had probably come chiefly from its solitariness, but she thought that it had arisen from her father's opposition to her lover.** Now for a while she found herself almost gay. There was an easy

liveliness about Lady Mabel,—a grain of humour and playfulness conjoined,—which made her feel **almost** at home at once. And it seemed to her as though her brother **were quite** [was] at home. He called the girl Lady Mab, and Queen Mab, and once plain Mabel, and the old woman**, whose name Mary had never heard before,** he called Miss Cass. It surely, she thought, must be the case that Lady Mabel and her brother were engaged **to each other**. **But if it were so, why should he not have told her?**

"Come upstairs into my own room,—it is nicer than this," said Lady Mabel, and they went from the dining-room into a pretty little sitting-room with which Silverbridge was very well acquainted. "Have you heard of Miss Boncassen?" **Lady Mabel asked.** Mary said she had heard something of Miss Boncassen's **very** great beauty. "Everybody is talking about her. Your brother met her at Mrs. Montacute Jones's garden-party and was made a conquest of instantly."

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"Then he ought to have been made a conquest of. I should be if I were a man. **Indeed I am as a woman.** I think she is the loveliest person to look at and the nicest person to listen to that I ever came across. We all feel that, as far as this season is concerned, we are **going to be** cut out; but we don't mind it so much because she is a foreigner."

"Americans are not foreigners," suggested Silverbridge. Then there arose a question on that subject which was strongly debated, Miss Cassewary expressing an opinion that Americans are by no means so foreign as Frenchmen and Italians, but, still, are to a certain extent foreign; and Lady Mary holding with her brother that nobody could be a foreigner who did not speak a foreign language. In the middle of this argument, over which the four persons pretended to excite themselves considerably, [Then just as she said this] the door was opened and Frank Tregear was announced.

Everybody there present knew as well as does the reader, what was the connection between Tregear and Lady Mary Palliser. And each knew**, or was nearly certain,** that the other knew it. It was therefore impossible for them not to feel themselves guilty among themselves. The two lovers had not seen each other **since the death of the Duchess,—since, indeed,** [since] they had been together in Italy. Now they were brought face to face in this unexpected manner! And nobody [except Tregear] was [at first] quite sure whether somebody had not done something to arrange the meeting**,—nobody at least except Tregear, who was well aware that his coming at that moment was quite accidental**. Mary might naturally suspect that Lady Mabel had done this in

the interest of her friend Tregear, and Silverbridge could **hardly** not [but] suspect that it was so. Lady Mabel, who had never before met the other girl, could hardly refrain from thinking that there had been some underhand communication **with Tregear**,—and Miss Cassewary was clearly of opinion that there **must have** [had] been some **such** understanding. **Tregear however must have been a hardened hypocrite if his surprise had been assumed.**

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"Nor I, that I should see you," said he. Then of course there was a shaking of hands all round, in the course of which ceremony he came to Mary the last. She gave him her hand, but had not a word to say to him. "If I had known that you were here," he said, "I should not have come; but I need hardly say how glad I am to see you,—even in this way." Then the two girls were convinced that the meeting was accidental; but Miss Cass still had her doubts**, and Silverbridge also as to the possibility of some treachery between Lady Mabel and Tregear**.

Conversation became at once very difficult. Tregear seated himself near, but not very near, to Lady Mary, and made some attempt to talk to both the girls at once. Lady Mabel**, in her flighty way, spoke about various things, but in a manner which clearly** [plainly] showed that she was not at her ease;—whereas Mary seemed to be stricken dumb by the presence of her lover. Silverbridge was so much annoyed by a feeling that **every moment of** this interview was a treason to his father, that he sat cudgelling his brain to think how he should bring it to an end. Miss Cassewary was dumbfounded by the occasion. She was the one elder in the company**. She was the person** who ought to see that no wrong was committed. She was not directly responsible to the Duke of Omnium, but she was thoroughly permeated by a feeling that it was her duty to take care that there should be no clandestine love meetings in Lord Grex's house. At last Silverbridge jumped up from his chair. "Upon my word, Tregear, I think you had better go," said he.

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"I did not mean to doubt it **in the least**," said the old lady. "But as it has occurred, Mabel, don't you think that he had better go?"

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"Certainly not," said Mary, speaking **now** for the first time. "But now he is here——" Then she stopped herself, rose from the sofa, sat down, and then rising again,

stepped up to her lover,—who rose at the same moment,—and threw herself into his arms and put up her lips to be kissed.

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"She has behaved like an angel," said Mabel, throwing her arms round Mary as she spoke, "—like an angel. If there had been a girl whom you loved and who loved you, would you not have wished it? **And** would you not have worshipped her for showing that she was not ashamed of her love?"

Chapter 30, *What Came of the Meeting*

Not a word was said in the cab as Lord Silverbridge took his sister to Carlton Terrace, **nor for some time after their arrival there. He had indeed left her** [and he was leaving her] without any reference to the scene which had **just** taken place, **intending to go at once down to the House;—but** [when] an idea struck him that this would be cruel**, or at any rate harsh**. **So he returned.** "Mary," he said, "I was very sorry for all that."

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"I suppose it was nobody's doing. **It was an accident.** But I am very sorry that it occurred. I think that you should have controlled yourself."

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"No;—if you mean by controlling myself holding my tongue. He is the man I love,—whom I have promised to marry. **In that way I will treat him whenever I see him.**"

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"No,—nor should I. I never did such a thing in my life before. But as he was there I had to show that I was not ashamed of him. **You talk of—'public'!** Do you think I should have done it if you all had not been there? **It was because you were there to see!**" Then again she burst out into tears.

He did not quite know what to make of it. Mabel Grex had declared that she had behaved like an angel**, and Mabel Grex ought to know**. But yet, as he thought of what he had seen, he shuddered with vexation. "I was thinking of the governor," he said.

"**And I have thought of papa too.** He shall be told everything."

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"I cannot help it. He should not treat me as he is doing. Mr. Tregear is a gentleman. Why did he let him come? Why did you bring him? But it is of no use. The thing is settled. Papa can break my heart **if he chooses**, but he cannot make me say that I am not engaged to **marry** Mr. Tregear." **He waited with her till Lady Cantrip's carriage came to take her back to Richmond, and then he walked away to his legislative duties.**

On that night Mary told the whole of her story to Lady Cantrip**;—the story, that is, of her trip to London**. There was nothing that she tried to conceal. "I got up," she said, "and threw my arms round him. **Of course I did.** Is he not all the world to me?"

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"No;—no! Nothing had been planned. **It seemed like it at first because of course I did not expect it. But it was not so.** They are cousins and very intimate and he goes there constantly. **And so he came in.** Now I want you to tell papa all about it."

Lady Cantrip began to think that it had been an evil day for her when she had agreed to take the charge of this very determined young lady; but she consented at once to write **the letter** to the Duke. As the girl was in her hands she must take care not to lay herself open to reproaches **such as those which had fallen to the lot of poor Mrs. Finn**. **She had refused to act the part of a duenna;—but, nevertheless,** as this objectionable lover had either contrived a meeting, or had met the young lady without contriving, it was necessary that the Duke should be informed. "I would rather you wrote it," said Lady Mary. "**I should be sure to write something that he would not like.** But pray tell him that all along I have meant him to know all about it."

Then Lady Cantrip wrote her letter,—not without very great difficulty. Till she seated herself at her table **and searched for her words,** she did not know how **very** great the difficulty would be. It cannot in any circumstance be easy to write to a father as to his daughter's love for an objectionable lover; but the Duke's character added much to the severity of the task. And then that embrace! **How was it to be described?** She knew that the Duke would be struck with horror as he read **any** such **description** [a tale], and she found herself to be struck almost with horror **herself** as she attempted to write it. When she came to the point she found she could not write it. "I fear there was a good deal of warmth shown on both sides," she said, feeling **as she wrote the words** that she was calumniating the man, as to whose warmth she had **in truth** heard nothing. "It is

quite clear **to me**," she added, "that this is not a passing fancy on her part." **Had she dared, she would have advised the Duke to give way at once. It was becoming quite evident to her that the young people would prevail.**

It was impossible that the Duke should be made to understand exactly what had occurred. That Silverbridge had taken Mary up to London he did understand, and that they had together gone to Lord Grex's house. He understood also that the meeting had taken place in the presence of Silverbridge and of Lady Mabel. **It seemed to him at the first glance that everybody concerned must have behaved treacherously to him.** "No doubt it was all an accident," Lady Cantrip wrote. How could it be an accident? **Or, if so, what must he do to prevent a recurrence of such accidents?**

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"What was that for?"

"I wanted her and Lady Mabel Grex to know each other."

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"It was simply an accident[.]**,—which could not be helped, and** such an accident as must occur over and over again,—unless Mary is to be locked up."

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"I only meant **to say** that of course they will stumble across each other in London."

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"Yes;—to live there. Why should I stay here? **What is there to give me any pleasure here?** What good can I do here? Everything I see and everything I hear is a pain to me." The young man of course could not but go back in his mind to the last interview which he had had with his father, when the Duke had been so gracious and apparently so well pleased**,—when he had appeared to be so happily intent on his son's marriage**.

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"So much as that! I knew he had **four or five** [a few] horses there."

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"**Of course** it is different with you**,—now that you are in Parliament**. But a man, let him be who he may, should live within certain means. As for your sister, I think she will break my heart." Silverbridge found it to be quite impossible to say anything in answer to this. "Are you going to church?" asked the Duke.

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"I had thought of going, but my mind is too much harassed. **It is better not to go, than to go and attend to nothing.** I do not see why you should not go."

But Silverbridge, though he had been willing to sacrifice his morning to his father,—for it was, I fear, in that way that he had looked at it,—did not see any reason for performing a duty which his father himself omitted. **When therefore he had escaped from the Duke's presence,—which he did in a half-apologetic manner, as though he was aware that he ought to stay a little longer,—he had his morning before him. He let himself down into the park by a small iron gate which opened into the Mall from the back of the house, and, strolling into the enclosure, began to roam about slowly under the trees.** There were various matters **which required a good deal of thought** [also which harassed him]. **In the first place he was aware that** on the previous evening[,]**,—**after dinner, **at which he had been somewhat liberal with his champagne,—**he had allowed himself to back Prime Minister for the Leger to a very serious amount. **He had both taken the odds against his horse in a good many thousands, and had also laid the odds against another horse to quite as great an extent.** In fact he had plunged, and now stood to lose some twenty thousand pounds on the doings of the last night. And he had made these bets under the **direct** influence of Major Tifto. It was the remembrance of this, after the promise made to his father, **after the assurance given by himself to himself,** that annoyed him the most. He was imbued with a feeling that it behoved him as a man **who had commenced upon life, as one who was called upon by circumstance to fill a great part,** to "pull himself together" as he would have said himself, and to live in accordance with certain rules **of the wisdom of which he himself should be the judge**. He could make the rules easily enough, but he had never yet succeeded in keeping any one of them. He had determined to sever himself from Tifto; and, in doing that, had intended to sever himself from the affairs of the turf generally**,—certainly from betting**. This resolution was not yet a week old. **It was only on the last Tuesday that the Major had intruded himself upon them when he was talking with his father at the Beargarden, and had so thoroughly disgusted him.** It was on that evening that he had resolved that Tifto should no longer be his companion; and now he had to confess to himself that because he had drunk three or four glasses of

champagne he had been induced by Tifto to **wager a great deal more money than he could possibly have of his own to pay!** [make those wretched bets.]

And he had told his father that he intended to ask Mabel Grex to be his wife. **He felt that in that matter he had absolutely committed himself.** He had so committed himself that the offer must now be made. He did not specially regret that, though he wished that he had been more reticent. "What a fool a man is to blurt out everything!" he said to himself. **But he did not reject his purpose.** A wife would be a good thing for him[;]**. He was quite conscious of that himself,** and where could he possibly find a better wife than Mabel Grex? **How thoroughly handsome she had looked when she stood up to take his sister's part!** In beauty she was no doubt inferior to Miss Boncassen. There was something about Miss Boncassen which made it impossible to forget her. But Miss Boncassen was an American, **a stranger,** and on many accounts out of the question. It did not occur to him that he would fall in love with Miss Boncassen; but still it seemed hard to him that this **immediate** intention of marriage should stand in the way of his having a good time with Miss Boncassen for a few weeks. **As he thought of this he almost felt that it was a pity he should be in a hurry.** No doubt there were objections to marriage. It clipped a fellow's wings**, and all that kind of thing**. But then, if he were married, he might be sure that Tifto would be laid aside. It was such a great thing to have got his father's assured consent to a marriage. It meant complete independence in money matters[.]**,—independence so complete that he would never again be driven to write in half-apologetic strains to Mr. Moreton!**

Then his mind ran away to a review of his father's affairs. It was a genuine trouble to him that his father should be so unhappy. Of all the griefs which weighed upon the Duke's mind, that in reference to his sister was**, he thought,** the heaviest. The money which Gerald owed at Cambridge would be nothing if that other sorrow could be conquered. Nor had Tifto and his own extravagance caused the Duke any incurable wounds. If Tregear could be got out of the way, his father, he thought, might be reconciled to other things. **In turning all this over in his mind it did not occur to him that this getting Tregear out of the way might be altogether prejudicial to his sister's happiness. Brothers but seldom feel respect for the love affairs in which their sisters are interested.** He **did feel** [felt] very tender-hearted about his father; but he had no remorse in regard to his sister as he made up his mind that he would speak very seriously to Tregear.

He **was now sitting within the park, on a bench beneath the tree,** [had wandered into St. James's Park], and had lighted by this time half-a-dozen cigarettes one after another[, as he sat on one of the benches]. He was a **very** handsome youth, about

six feet high, with light hair, with his mother's round blue eyes, and with all that aristocratic look which had belonged so peculiarly to the late Duke but which was less conspicuous in the present head of the family **than in any of the Pallisers**. He was a young man whom you would hardly pass in a crowd without observing,—but of whom you would say, after due observation, that he had not as yet put off all his childish ways. He now sat with his legs stretched out, with his cane in his hands, looking down upon the water. He was trying to think. He worked hard at thinking. But the bench was hard and, upon the whole, he was not satisfied with his position. He had just made up his mind that he would look up Tregear[,] **in order that he might express his opinion as to that necessity of "putting an end to all that stuff between him and Mary,"** when Tregear himself appeared on the path before him.

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"**But** what makes you sit there? That I should walk here, which I often do, does not seem to me odd. But that I should find you is marvellous. Do you often come?"

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"Questions to be asked in Parliament? Notices of motions? Amendments in committee, and that kind of thing? **A member of Parliament must have an uneasy time of it.**"

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"Or perhaps Major Tifto has made important revelations **as to the stables at Newmarket**."

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"That was kind **of you**."

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"It can never lead to any good. I mean that there never can be a marriage." Then he paused, but Tregear was determined to hear him out. "It is making my father so miserable that you would pity him if you could **hear** [see] him **talk about it**."

"I dare say I should. When I see people unhappy I always pity them. What I would ask you to think of is this. If I were to commission you to tell your sister that everything between us should be 'given up,'**—as of course I might do,—**would not she

also be so unhappy that you would have to pity her? **What is your honest opinion about that?**"

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"And so will your father. **Whatever the unhappiness may be, people generally do get over it after some fashion. But would his unhappiness be worse than hers?**"

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"And so have I. And so has she. His rights in this matter are very clear and very potential. I am quite ready to admit that we cannot marry for many years to come unless he will provide the money. You are quite at liberty to tell him that I say so**, and to tell her**. **Not but what he knows it, and knows that I know it.** I have no right to ask your father for a penny, and I will never do so. The power is all in his hands. **I shall not attempt to run away with her.** As far as I know my own purposes, I shall not make any immediate attempt even to see her. **Though,—mind,—on that matter I make no promise.** We did meet, as you saw, the other day, by the merest chance. After that do you think that your sister wishes me to give her up?"

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"For young men I suppose equally so. **This** life ought to be a life of self-denial no doubt. Perhaps it might be my duty to retire from this affair, if by doing so I should sacrifice only myself. The one person of whom I am bound to think in this matter is the girl I love."

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"In that way you support each other**, though it must be manifest to anybody that the whole thing is as wrong as it can be**. If it were any other man circumstanced just like you are, and any other girl placed like Mary, you would be the first to say that the man was behaving badly. I don't like to use hard language to you, **whom I always liked better than any other fellow I've known;** but in such a case you would be the first to say of another man—that he was looking after the girl's money."

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"I have to examine myself, and find out whether I am guilty of the meanness which I might perhaps be too ready to impute to another. I have done so, and I am quite sure that I am not drawn to your sister by any desire for her money. **I am certain of**

myself that no man was ever more firmly devoted to a girl, or with a surer singleness of heart and purpose. I did not seek her because she was a rich man's daughter, nor,—because she is a rich man's daughter,—will I give her up. She shall be mistress of the occasion. Nothing but a word from her shall induce me to leave her;—but a word from her, if it comes from her own lips,—shall do so." Then he took his friend's hand in his, and, having grasped it, walked away without saying another word. **Silverbridge remained on the bench yet for another half-hour, hard though it was,—thinking of it all.**

Chapter 31, *Miss Boncassen's River-Party, No. 1*

Twice before the expiration of that June month, and once early in July, did Lord Silverbridge sally forth from his own house, or from the club, or from the House of Commons with the full intention of asking Mabel Grex to be his wife; but on none of the occasions were either Venus or Hymen kind to him. On the first attempt he did not find the lady; on the second he could not at first secure her solitary ear for a moment, and, when he did so, had got into so strong an argument about his sister that it had become impossible to adapt himself to the other matter. "Of course I was very sorry at first that he should have come in," Lady Mabel had said. "But I was glad of it afterwards, because I could see what sort of a girl she was. Of course she will marry him. Cart-ropes won't keep them apart." Then Silverbridge had become angry and had expressed an opinion that they would have to be kept apart, whether by cart-ropes or other means. He had altogether taken his father's part and had become rather violent. "It was monstrous," he had said, "that a girl like that should think that she was going to have her own way!" When there had been this difference between them he had found himself compelled to leave the house without pleading his own cause.

Then he tried again, but on the third attempt Miss Cassewary was with her, and did not leave the room,—as she had done on the former occasion, discreetly though to no purpose. And [Thrice within the next three weeks did Lord Silverbridge go forth to ask Mabel to be his wife, but thrice in vain. On one occasion she would talk on other things. On the second Miss Cassewary would not leave her. On the third] the conversation turned in a very disagreeable way on Miss Boncassen, as to whom **he** [Lord Silverbridge] could not but think that Lady Mabel said some very ill-natured things. It was no doubt true that he, during the last three weeks, had often been in Miss

Boncassen's company, that he had danced with her, ridden with her, taken her to the House of Lords and to the House of Commons, **had even gone to church with her at Westminster Abbey,** and was now engaged to attend upon her at a river-party up above Maidenhead. But Mabel had certainly no right to complain. Had he not thrice during the same period come there to lay his coronet at her feet;—and now, at this very moment, was it not her fault that he was not going through the ceremony?

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"About you and the American beauty?" **Of course Miss Cass heard every word of all this.**

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"If you mean to assert," said Miss Cass, "that the manners of American young ladies are freer than those of English young ladies, it is you**, I think,** that are taking away their characters."

"Because you can't understand that they should differ from ourselves without being bad."

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"Oh, decidedly!" said Miss Cass**, who thought that all such changes were objectionable**.

"And very much for the better. Quite a case of new blood, you know. Pray don't suppose that I mean to object. Everybody who talks about it approves**,—and that is everybody**. I haven't heard a dissentient voice. Only as it has gone so far, and as English people are too stupid, you know, to understand all these new ways,—don't you think perhaps——?"

"No, I don't think. I don't think anything except that you are very ill-natured." Then he got up and, after making formal adieux to both the ladies, left the house. **He certainly had not in this way got any nearer to his object in reference to Mabel Grex.**

As soon as he was gone Lady Mabel began to laugh, but the least apprehensive ears would have perceived that the laughter was **forced and** affected. Miss Cassewary did not laugh at all, but sat bolt upright and looked very serious. "Upon my honour," said the younger lady, "he is the most beautifully simple-minded human being I ever knew in my life."

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"I think he is making a fool of himself. If somebody does not interfere he will go so far that he will not be able to draw back without misbehaving! **Don't you think it would be very bad if he were to marry this American?**"

"Very bad indeed!"

"But it must come to that unless somebody stops him."

"You need not think of that **ever** again," said Lady Mab, jumping up from her seat. "I had thought of it too. But as I told you before, I spared him. He did not really mean it with me;—nor does he mean it with this American girl. Such young men seldom mean. They drift into matrimony. But she will not spare him. **How would it be possible that she should do so?** It would be a national triumph. All the States would sing a pæan of glory. Fancy a New York belle having compassed a duke!"

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"I think it quite possible. As for me I could teach myself to think it best as it is, were I not so sure that I should be better for him than so many others. But **still I should not be very good.** I shouldn't love him **for instance**."

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"He is such a boy. I should always **be** treat**ing** him like a boy,—spoiling him and petting him, but never respecting him. Don't run away with any idea that I should **really** refuse him from conscientious motives, if he were really to ask me. I too should like to be a duchess. I should like to bring all this misery at home to an end. **There can be no girl in all England more in want of a magnificent husband than I am.**"

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"Not exactly;—because he never asked me. **Had I chosen to set my wits to work I could have made him ask me. He almost did it;—but** for the moment I was weak and so I let him have another chance. I shall not have been a good friend to him if it ends in his marrying this Yankee."

Lord Silverbridge went out of the house in a very ill humour,—which however left him when in the course of the afternoon he found himself up at Maidenhead with Miss Boncassen. Miss Boncassen at any rate did not laugh at him. And then she was so pleasant, so full of common sense, and so completely intelligent! "I like you," she had

said, "because I feel that you will not think that you ought to make love to me. There is nothing I hate so much as the idea that a young man and a young woman can't be acquainted with each other, without some such tomfoolery as that." This had exactly expressed his own feeling. Nothing could be so pleasant as his intimacy with Isabel Boncassen**;—but he was quite sure that he had never made love to her, and almost equally sure that he never would**.

Mrs. Boncassen seemed to be a **most** homely person, with **very little** [no] desire either to speak **to anyone else,** or to be spoken to. She went out but seldom, and on those rare occasions did not in any way interfere with her daughter. **It seemed that she completely understood that it was her duty in life to be a sort of upper servant to Isabel.** Mr. Boncassen filled a **much** prouder situation. Everybody knew that Miss Boncassen was in England because it suited Mr. Boncassen to spend many hours in the British Museum. But still the daughter hardly seemed to be under control from the father. She went alone where she liked; talked to those she liked; and did what she liked. **She had a hired carriage at her own disposal and had more than once altogether shocked the Miss Cassewarys of the world by going home from parties alone.** Some of the young ladies**, however, had expressed an opinion** [of the day thought] that there was a good deal to be said in favour of th**is**[e] **practice** [freedom which she enjoyed].

There is however a good deal to be said against it. All young ladies cannot be Miss Boncassens, with such an assurance of admirers as to be free from all fear of **being left alone** [loneliness]. There is a comfort for a young lady in having a pied-à-terre to which she may retreat in case of need. In American circles, where girls congregate without their mothers, there is a danger felt by young men that if a lady be once taken in hand, there will be no possibility of getting rid of her,—no mamma to whom she may be taken and under whose wings she may be dropped. **And in consequence of this danger some young gentlemen are becoming cautious. And that caution on the side of the gentlemen begets the necessity for a correspondingly strong action on the side of the ladies.** "My dear," said an old gentleman the other day walking through an American ball-room, and addressing himself to a girl whom he knew well,—"My dear——" But the girl bowed and passed on, still clinging to the arm of the young man who accompanied her. But the old gentleman was cruel, **tyrannical,** and possessed of a determined purpose. "My dear," said he again, catching the young man tight by the collar and holding him fast. "Don't be afraid; I've got him; he shan't desert you; I'll hold him here till you have told me how your father does." The young lady looked as if she didn't like it, and the sight of her misery gave rise to a feeling that, after all, mammas perhaps may be a comfort **to their daughters in a ball-room**.

But in her present phase of life Miss Boncassen suffered no misfortune of this kind. **There was no need to catch and hold a young man for her.** It had become a privilege to be allowed to attend upon Miss Boncassen, and the feeling of this privilege had **certainly** been enhanced by the manner in which Lord Silverbridge had devoted himself to her. Fashion of course makes fashion. Had not Lord Silverbridge been so very much struck by the charm of the young lady, Lords Glasslough and Popplecourt would not perhaps have found it necessary to run after her. As it was, even that most unenergetic of young men, Dolly Longstaffe, was moved to profound admiration **and had been heard to say that the American beauty was better than all the English pullets that had come out of British eggs**.

On this occasion they were all up the river at Maidenhead. **The party was given by Mr. Boncassen himself, and therefore Mrs. Boncassen also was present. He** [Mr. Boncassen] had looked about for some means of returning the civilities offered to him, and had been instigated by Mrs. Montacute Jones to do it after this fashion. There was a magnificent banquet spread in a summer-house on the river bank**,—so spread that ladies and gentlemen might sit in chairs, if such was their will, or be waited upon with lobster-salad and champagne-cup under the trees**. There were boats, and there was a band, and there was a sward for dancing. There was lawn-tennis, and fishing-rods,—which nobody used,—and better still, long shady secluded walks in which gentlemen might stroll,—and ladies too, if they were kind enough. The whole thing had been arranged by Mrs. Montacute Jones**, who had explained to Miss Boncassen the theory on which her invitations should be sent out**. As the day was fine, as many of the old people had **kindly** abstained from coming, as there were plenty of young men of the best sort, and as nothing had been spared in reference to external comforts, the party promised to be a success. Every most lovely girl in London of course was there,—except Lady Mabel Grex. Lady Mabel was in the habit of going everywhere, but on this occasion she had refused Mrs. Boncassen's invitation. "I don't want to see her triumphs," she had said to Miss Cass.

Everybody went down by railway of course, and innumerable flies and carriages had been prepared to take them to the scene of action. Some immediately got into boats and rowed themselves up from the bridge,—which, as the thermometer was standing at eighty in the shade, was an inconsiderate proceeding. "I don't think I am quite up to that," said Dolly Longstaffe, when it was proposed to him to take an oar. "Miss Amazon will do it. She rows so well, and is so strong!" Whereupon Miss Amazon, not at all abashed, did take the oar; and as Lord Silverbridge was on the seat behind her with the

other oar she probably enjoyed her task. **Miss Boncassen was not in the boat, and therefore neither did Dolly Longstaffe nor Lord Silverbridge remain there long.**

"What a very nice sort of person Lady Cantrip is." This was said to Silverbridge by that generally silent young nobleman Lord Popplecourt**, to whom Silverbridge was by no means peculiarly well inclined**. **The two young men were on the bank together looking at the struggles of other watermen and waterwomen in another boat, and had come together apparently by accident. Silverbridge a moment before had been talking to Mrs. Montacute Jones, who had been singing the praises of Isabel Boncassen, but being cautious as well as old, had declined to come down quite so close to the water's edge. "What a very nice person Lady Cantrip is."** The remark was the more singular because Lady Cantrip was not at the party,—and the more so again because, as Silverbridge thought, there could be but little in common between the **very steady** Countess who had his sister in charge and the young Lord beside him, who was not fast only because he did not like to risk his money.

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"The devil you were. **I didn't know that anybody ever was let in there.** What were you doing at The Horns?"

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"No reason on earth,—only I can't imagine the governor going to Richmond for his dinner**, or, indeed, dining anywhere**."

"I saw him eating his dinner with you at the club the other day."

"Yes; he did that. Well! I am very glad to hear it. I hope you'll get on well with him. **You may take your oath of this. He'll talk as much good sense to you as any man in the kingdom.**"

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"Yes; I dare say," said Silverbridge, turning away into the path where he saw Miss Boncassen standing with some other ladies. **What Popplecourt had said to him did induce him to think a little, but** it certainly did not occur to him [then] that Popplecourt was to be brought forward as a suitor for his sister's hand.

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"Everybody, I should think, must be kind to you**,—everywhere**."

"I do have a good time pretty much;—but nowhere so good as here. I fear that when I get back I shall not like New York **and Newport**."

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"Not a doubt; a judge not only whether it be true, but if true whether expedient,—or even possible. What did I say to you when we first began to know each other **well**?"

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"That I liked knowing you;—that was frank enough;—that I liked knowing you because I knew that there would be no tomfoolery of love-making." Then she paused; but he did not quite know how to go on with the conversation at once, and she continued her speech. "When you condescend to tell me that you are devoted to me, as though that were the kind of thing that I expect to have said when I take a walk with a young man in a wood, is not that the tomfoolery of love-making?" **Then** she stopped and looked at him, so that he was obliged to answer.

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"Yes;—yes. I see. You punish me for my unpremeditated impertinence in suggesting that you are devoted to Lady Mabel, by the premeditated impertinence of pretending to be devoted to me**,—having all along the intention of letting me know that it is pretence**."

"Stop a moment. I cannot follow that." Then she **stood and** laughed. "I will swear that I did not intend to be impertinent."

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"What question, Miss Boncassen?"

"It is altogether about yourself."

"I think you may."

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"Who told you?" he asked.

"**That would only be to make mischief. I was so told.** And I thought your choice was so fortunate, so happy! I have seen no girl here that I admire half so much. She almost **completely** comes up to my idea of what a young woman should be."

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"Now I am sure that if not engaged to her you must be in love with her, or my praise would have sufficed. **One can imagine angels, you know.**"

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There are moments in which stupid people say clever things, obtuse people say sharp things, and good-natured people say ill-natured things. **This young Lord of ours was not stupid or obtuse, and he certainly had not intended to be clever or sharp. He was thoroughly good-natured, and manifestly did not wish to wound his present companion. But the rebuke seemed to her sharp.** "Lord Silverbridge," she said, "I did not expect that from you."

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"I think not. I have been walking with you, and **I think** I had better dance with someone else."

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"I'll be shot if I know what it all means," he said, just as he was parting with her. **"But I will go back to my first assertion and declare again that I am devoted to you." Then he took off his hat, made a bow, and went away in another direction.**

Chapter 32, *Miss Boncassen's River-Party, No. 2*

Lord Silverbridge **soon** made up his mind that as he could not dance with Miss Boncassen he would not dance at all. He was **by no means** [not] angry at being rejected, and when**, soon after,** he saw her stand up with Dolly Longstaffe he felt no jealousy **whatever**. She had refused to dance with him not because she did not like him, but because she did not wish to show that she liked him **too well**. He could understand that **from her manner**, though he had not quite followed all the ins and outs of her little accusations against him. She had flattered him,—without **perhaps** any intention of flattery on her part. She had spoken of his intelligence and had complained that he had been too sharp to her. Mabel Grex when most sweet to him, when most loving, always made him feel that he was her inferior. **He dearly loved Mabel Grex, but with her he felt himself to be hardly more than a boy.** She took no trouble to hide her conviction of his youthfulness. This was anything but flattering. Miss Boncassen, on the other hand, professed herself to be almost afraid of him. **There had been in some sort a tacit**

understanding between them, that she refused to dance with him because she thought too much of him.

"There shall be no tomfoolery of love-making," she had said. But what if it were not tomfoolery at all? What if it were good, genuine, earnest love-making? He certainly was not pledged to Lady Mabel. **Indeed as far as the matter had yet gone, she had rejected him.** As regarded his father there **certainly** would be a difficulty**,—a double difficulty**. In the first place he had been foolish enough to tell his father that he was going to make an offer to Mabel Grex**,—foolish because it was possible that the girl might reject him, and foolish again because he might have cause to change his mind**. And then his father would surely refuse his consent to a marriage with an American stranger. In such case there would be no unlimited income, no immediate pleasantness of magnificent life such as he knew would be poured out upon him if he were to marry Mabel Grex. As he thought of this, however, he told himself that **it would be base indeed to** [he would not] sell himself for money and magnificence**,—especially when the money and magnificence must come at last**. He **at any rate** could afford to be independent, and gratify his own taste. Just at this moment he was of opinion**, after balancing the matter well in his mind,** that Isabel Boncassen would be the sweeter companion of the two.

He had sauntered down to the place where they were dancing and stood by, saying a few words to Mrs. Boncassen**, who was seated on a bench, looking at her daughter**. "Why are you not dancing, my Lord?" she asked.

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"I don't know about that;—polo, you know, for the legs, and lawn-tennis for the arms[,]**. It** is hard work enough."

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It all came through her nose. **Every syllable of it!** And she looked so common! **What a woman to have for a mother-in-law!** What would the Duke say to her, or Mary, or even Gerald? **But then she would probably have been sent back to America before that;—or it might perhaps be better that he should go to New York and be married there.** The father was by no means so objectionable. He was a tall, straight, ungainly man, who always wore black clothes **and seemed to keep himself ready to dine out by simply changing his black tie for a white one**. He had dark, stiff, short hair, a long nose, and a forehead that was both high and broad. Ezekiel Boncassen was the very man,—from his appearance,—for a President of the United States; and there

were men who talked of him for that high office. That he had never attended to politics was supposed to be in his favour. He had the reputation of being the most learned man in the States, and reputation itself often suffices to give a man dignity of manner. He, too, spoke through his nose, but the peculiar twang coming from a man would be supposed to be virile and incisive. From a woman, Lord Silverbridge thought it to be unbearable. But as to Isabel, had she been born **in Belgravia or** within the confines of some lordly park in Hertfordshire, she could not have been more completely free from the abomination.

"I am sorry that you should not be enjoying yourself," said Mr. Boncassen, coming **up** to his wife's relief.

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"Dolly!" ejaculated Mrs. Boncassen**, with peculiar intonation of the strongest kind**.

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"I don't know. I should think not. **A man of that sort generally owes a lot of money.** I don't know anything about his riches, but I can assure you that having had him down here will quite give a character to the day."

In the meantime Dolly Longstaffe was in a state of great excitement. Some part of the character assigned to him by Lord Silverbridge was true. He very rarely did go anywhere, and yet was asked to a great many places. He was a young man,—though not a very young man,—with a fortune of his own and the expectation of a further fortune **from his father**. Few men living could have done less for the world than Dolly Longstaffe,—and yet he had a position of his own. Now he had taken it into his head to fall in love with Miss Boncassen. This was an accident which had probably never happened to him before, and which had disturbed him **very** much. He had known Miss Boncassen a week or two before Lord Silverbridge had seen her, having by some chance dined out and sat next to her **at dinner**. From that moment he had become **greatly** changed, and had gone hither and thither in pursuit of the American beauty. His passion, having become suspected by his companions, had excited their ridicule. **But though he had more than once shown himself to be annoyed he had** nevertheless [he had] persevered;—and now he was absolutely dancing with the lady out in the open air. "If this goes on, your friends will have to look after you, and put you somewhere **where you will be safe**[,]**.**" Mr. Lupton had said **this** to him in one of the intervals of the dance. Dolly had turned round and scowled, and **then** suggested that if Mr. Lupton would mind his own affairs it would be **just** as well for the world at large.

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"It must be a very short turn, **Mr. Longstaffe,**" she said,—"as I am **of course** expected to make myself busy."

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"You have set everything going now**, and it will all go on like clockwork**. They'll begin dancing again without your telling them."

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They were now on a path close to the riverside, in which there were many loungers. **Every now and again Dolly looked behind him to see if there were others close upon their heels;—and there always was another couple close upon their heels.** "Would you mind coming up to the temple?" he said.

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"**I remember now.** It is something built to her memory. Such a view of the river! I was here once before and they took me up there. Everybody who comes here goes and sees Mrs. Arthur de Bever. They ought to have told you."

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"Five minutes will do it all." Then he walked rather quickly up a flight of rural steps **which it was necessary that they should ascend alone**. "Lovely spot; isn't it?"

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"That's Maidenhead Bridge. That's—somebody's place**; I don't know who**. And now I've got something to say to you."

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"Murder you!" said Dolly, throwing himself into an attitude that was intended to express **the most** devoted affection. "Oh, no!"

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"Are you indeed, Mr. Longstaffe? [Isn't it pleasant?]

"I am."

"But is it not pleasant?"

"Haven't the least idea in life**,**" **said Miss Boncassen, looking as though she were, in truth, very much in the dark on the subject**.

"Let me tell you then that it could only be one person. It never was but one person. It never could have been but one person. It is you**, of course**!" Then he put his hand well on his heart.

"Me!" said Miss Boncassen, choosing to be ungrammatical in order that he might be **made the** more absurd.

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"Not in this case, Mr. Longstaffe; because, really, **in honest sober truth,** I entertain no such feeling."

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"I rather think not."

"**Yes you can.** Just let me tell you who I am."

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"I will attribute nothing evil to you, Mr. Longstaffe. Only it is quite out of the question that I should—respond as I suppose you wish me to; and therefore, pray, do not say anything further. **Now I think I will go down to my friends.**"

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"Mr. Longstaffe, I rather fancy that wherever I may be I can make a position for myself. At any rate I shall not marry **a husband** with the view of getting one. If my husband were an English duke I should think myself nothing, unless I was something as Isabel Boncassen. **My name I should have to change; but unless I could be something as having been Isabel Boncassen, I should be quite discontented with myself.**"

When she said this she **certainly** did not bethink herself that Lord Silverbridge would in the course of nature become an English duke. She possibly did not know the fact**, or if she had heard it, she probably was too little acquainted with the intricacies of English rank to bear it in her mind**. But the allusion to an English duke told instantly on Dolly, who **had become quite aware** [suspected] that he had a noble rival. "English dukes ain't so easily got," he said.

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"Mr. Longstaffe,—you must forgive me—if I say—that of all the gentlemen—I have ever met in this country or in any other—you are the—most obtuse." This she brought out in little disjointed sentences, not with any hesitation, but in a way to make every word she uttered more clear to an intelligence which she did not believe to be bright. But in this belief she did some injustice to Dolly**, who was generally sharp enough, though he had failed to understand exactly what she had meant when she told him that it would be nothing to her to marry a duke or a prince**. He was **at any rate** quite alive to the disgrace of being called obtuse, and quick enough to avenge himself at the moment.

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"I like you for that," she replied laughing, "and withdraw the **word 'obtuse'** [epithet] as not being applicable. Now we are quits and can forget and forgive**, and be the very best friends in the world**;—only let there be the forgetting."

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"Then let it be a little dream of your youth,—that you once met a pretty American girl who **when you offered her your love** was **too** foolish **to accept** [enough to refuse] all that you would have given her."

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"I should not know how to set about it."

"**Oh, yes.** Let it be all a dream. I know men like to have had such dreams. And in order that the dream may be pleasant the last word between us shall be kind. Such admiration from such a one as you is an honour,—and I will reckon it among my honours. But **there is no accounting for taste, and** it can be no more than a dream." Then she gave him her hand. "It shall be so;—shall it not?" **In his dilemma he put his hand up under his hat and scratched his head.** [Then she paused.] "It must be so, Mr. Longstaffe."

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"That and no more. Now I wish to go down. Will you come with me? **Yes; I know you will.** It will be better." **Then she put her hand upon his arm, knowing that**

she would have to leave it at the steps, but feeling that in this way she would best re-create a feeling of companionship. "Don't you think it is going to rain?"

Dolly looked up at the clouds. "I wish it would with all my heart**,**" **he said**.

"I know you are not so ill-natured. **Think what a trouble it would be to us.** It would spoil all."

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"No, no. I have spoiled nothing. It will only be a little dream about 'that strange American girl, who really did make me feel queer for half an hour!' **That's the way you'll talk about it next evening.** Look at that. A great big drop. And the cloud has come over us as black as Erebus. Do hurry down." He was leading the way. "What shall we do for carriages to get us to the inn?"

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"It will hold about half of us. And think what it will be to be in there waiting till the **day's** rain shall be over! Everybody has been so good-humoured and now they will be so cross!" **They did hurry down and when they got onto the walk below everyone was now scurrying along towards the summer-house.** The rain was **now** falling in big heavy drops, slow and far between, but almost black with their size. And the heaviness of the cloud which had gathered over them **now** made everything dark.

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It was not only Miss Boncassen who got her feet into a puddle and splashed her stockings. Many did so who were not obliged by their position to maintain good humour under their misfortunes. The storm had come on with such unexpected **force and** quickness that there had been a general stampede to the summer-house. As Isabel had said, there was comfortable room for not more than half of them**, and seats for nothing like that number**. In a **very** few minutes people were crushed who never ought to be crushed. A Countess for whom treble-piled sofas were hardly good enough was **putting up with** [seated on] the corner of a table till some younger and less gorgeous lady could be made to give way **for her**. And the Marchioness was declaring she was as wet through as though she had been dragged in a river. Mrs. Boncassen was so absolutely quelled as to have retired into the kitchen **or back office** attached to the summer-house**, having felt herself unable to encounter the unhappiness of her guests**. Mr. Boncassen, with all his country's pluck and pride, was proving to a knot of gentlemen round him on the verandah, that such treachery in the weather was a thing unknown in his

happier country. Miss Boncassen had to do her best to console the splashed ladies. "Oh Mrs. Jones. Is it not a pity! What can I do for you?"

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"There's somebody smoking," said the Countess angrily. There was a crowd of men smoking out on the verandah**,—of men who could not get into the room**. "I never knew anything so nasty **in my life**," the Countess continued, leaving it in doubt whether [she spoke of] the rain, or the smoke, or the party generally **were the nastiest thing she had ever known**. **Nothing special, however, was done to lessen the nastiness, for the men went on smoking.**

Damp gauzes, splashed stockings, trampled muslins, and features which have perhaps known something of rouge and certainly encountered something of rain may be made, but can only, by supreme high breeding, be made compatible with good humour. To be moist, muddy, rumpled, and smeared, when by the very nature of your position it is your duty to be clear-starched up to the pellucidity of crystal, to be spotless as the lily, to be crisp as the ivy-leaf, and as clear in complexion as a rose,—is it not, O gentle readers, felt to be a disgrace? **It is a disgrace when many see it, even though those many be fellow-sufferers.** It came to pass, therefore, that many now were **surly, and some** very cross. Carriages were ordered under the idea that some improvement might be made at the inn which was nearly a mile distant. Very few, however, had their own carriages; and there was jockeying for the vehicles**, and all the inevitable consequences,—insolence on the part of servants, almost quarrels among the men, and a want of civility among the ladies**. In the midst of all this Silverbridge remained as near to Miss Boncassen as circumstances would admit. "You are not waiting for me," she said.

"Yes, I am. **Why not?** We might as well go up to town together."

"Leave me with father and mother. **We are at any rate bound to bear this misfortune patiently.** Like the captain of a ship I must be the last to leave the wreck."

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"Not at all;—just because there will be no gallantry. **The wretched should always be left in their misery. They like that best.** But come and see us to-morrow and find out whether we have got through it alive."

Chapter 33, *The Langham Hotel*

The Boncassens were still living at the Langham Hotel, and had now resolved to remain there till they should return to town after some short autumn excursion to be made either to Devonshire, or to the Lakes, or to Scotland. His search after knowledge would then keep him in London all through the next winter and probably to the end of the next season. They had large and expensive rooms, and, living after their fashion, were probably more comfortable than they would have been in a hired house. When all their guests had left them after their garden-party, they themselves returned to town by a later train,—thus being the last to leave the ship, as Miss Boncassen had told Lord Silverbridge would be the case. "What an abominable climate," Mrs. Boncassen had said when they were quite alone at Maidenhead.

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"Young men are pretty much the same everywhere, I guess. They never have their wits about them. They never mean what they say because they don't understand the use of words. They are generally half impudent and half timid. When in love they **are as though in a fit,** [do] not at all understand**ing** what has befallen them. What they want, they try to compass as a cow does when it stands stretching out its head towards a stack of hay which it cannot reach. Indeed there is no such thing as a young man, for a man is not really a man till he is middle-aged. But take them at their worst they are a deal too good for us, for they **will probably be** [become] men some day, whereas we must only be women to the end."

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"Nothing on earth, sir,—except the boredom**, which was to be expected**."

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"I didn't seem to feel it much," said the father. "**Of course** one doesn't look to have everything just what one wants always. If I did I should go **out** nowhere;—but my total of life would be less enjoyable. If ever you do get married, Bell, you should remember that."

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"What I say is true. I hope it will have that effect. It had with you, my dear**; and I hope your daughter will follow your footsteps**."

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"Then, my dear, I **didn't know** [never knew] it. **But I think we may go down to the station now.**"

Miss Boncassen, though she had behaved serenely and with **much** good temper during the process of Dolly's proposal, had not **at all** liked it. She had a very high opinion of herself, and was certainly entitled to have it by the undisguised admiration of all that came near her. **Of course at her age, let her say what she might, the admiration of which she thought the most was the admiration of young men. How can it be otherwise with a girl when she knows that it is to be her lot to marry some young man? How can it be otherwise when it is by the eyes of young men that she is most admired? How can it be otherwise when all nature has so ordained it?** Miss Boncassen was not more indifferent to the admiration of young men than are other young ladies. But she was not proud of the admiration of Dolly Longstaffe. She was here among strangers whose ways were unknown to her, whose **position and** rank and **general** standing in the world were **all** vague to her, and wonderful in their dimness. She knew that she was associating with men very different from those at home where **almost all** [young] men **of her acquaintance were** [are] supposed to be under the necessity of earning their bread. At New York she would dance, as she had said, with bank clerks. She was not **at all** prepared to admit that a young London lord was better than a New York bank clerk. Judging the men on their own individual merits she might **probably** find the bank clerk to be the better of the two. But a certain sweetness of the aroma of rank was beginning to permeate her republican senses. The **rich** softness of a life in which no occupation was compulsory had its charms for her. Though she had **told her father that young men do not understand the use of words,—thinking at the moment of some flaws of intelligence displayed by poor Dolly,—**[complained of the insufficient intelligence of young men,] she was alive to the delight of having nothings said to her pleasantly. All this had affected her so strongly that she had**—not reflected, but** almost felt that a life among these English luxuries would be a pleasant life. Like most Americans who do not as yet know this country, she had come **here** with an inward feeling that as an American and a republican she might probably be despised.

There is not uncommonly a savageness of self-assertion about Americans which arises **in fact** from a too great anxiety to be admitted to fellowship with Britons. She had felt this, and **knowing how great had been** [conscious of] the reputation already made by herself in the social life of New York, she had half trusted that she would be well received in London, and had half convinced herself that she would be rejected. She **certainly** had not been rejected. She must **now** have become quite aware of that. **By**

degrees, by very quick degrees, she had dropped [very quickly] the idea that she would be scorned. Ignorant as she had been of English life, she perceived that she had**, almost** at once**,** become **a personage** [popular]. And this had been so in spite of her mother's homeliness and her father's awkwardness. By herself and by her own gifts she had done it. She had found out concerning herself that she had that which would commend her to other society than that of the Fifth Avenue. Those lords of whom she had heard were as plenty with her as blackberries. **And the** young Lord Silverbridge, of whom she was told that of all the young lords of the day he stood first in rank and wealth **and general desirability**, was peculiarly her friend. Her brain was firmer than that of most girls **of her age**, but even her brain was a little turned. She never told herself that it would be well for her to become the wife of such a one. In her more thoughtful moments she **almost** told herself that it would not be well. But still the allurement was strong upon her. Park Lane was sweeter than the Fifth Avenue. Lord Silverbridge was nicer than the bank clerk.

But Dolly Longstaffe was not. She would certainly prefer the bank clerk to Dolly Longstaffe. And yet Dolly Longstaffe was the one among her English admirers who had come forward and spoken out. **I should be misleading the reader altogether were I to leave an impression that the girl expected or desired** [She did not desire] that anyone should come forward and speak out. But it was an annoyance to her that this special man should have done so. **It was a trifle not at all worth talking about. She certainly would not mention it either to her father or mother. But it annoyed her.**

She had asked Lord Silverbridge to see her on the following morning, and perhaps it was this which induced her to decline going with her mother to Westminster Abbey in the afternoon. She pleaded that the heat and general mugginess of the weather kept her in. The weather was generally muggy, but perhaps no injury will be done to her by the suggestion that when she thought of the weather she thought also of Lord Silverbridge. But it must not be supposed that she intended to deceive her mother in regard to the visit of a young man. She would have had no hesitation in saying that he was coming to see her, had she been sure of the fact. Her mind and conscience in the matter were just as they might have been had she been a young man instead of a young woman. Upon the whole she did not want to go to the Abbey, and she made the first excuse which came to her hand.

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Miss Boncassen **certainly** [rather] was disgusted. She had had enough **at any rate** of this English lover. Why should he have come after what had occurred yesterday?

He ought to have felt that he **at any rate** was absolved from the necessity of making personal inquiries. **It would have been well that they should have met as friends when they met by chance, but a forced meeting was assuredly a mistake.** "I am glad to see that you got home safe," she said as she gave him her hand.

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"It should not rain on such days. Mother **is out. She** has gone to church."

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"Just so;—emotions of the heart! That's the very phrase. **I begin to recognise the fact that emotions of the heart may be stronger than—than anything else.**"

She was determined if possible to prevent a repetition of the scene which had taken place up at Mrs. de Bever's temple**, but almost doubted her power**. **There was a force of obstinacy about the man which seemed to her to be hardly compatible with the weakness of his absurdity.** "All my emotions are about my dress," she said **as she thought the matter over**.

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"Well; yes; all. I guess I don't care much for eating and drinking." In saying this she actually contrived to produce something of **that national** [a] nasal twang**, to be free from which had been one of the great labours of her life**.

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"But new things are such ducks! **Don't you think so?**"

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Then she took a prolonged gaze at him, wondering whether he **looked a greater fool than he was or was a greater fool than he looked** [was or was not such a fool as he looked]. **She was almost minded to ask him the celebrated question, but did not quite dare to do it.** "How funny you are," she said.

"A man does not**, I suppose,** generally feel funny after going through what I suffered yesterday. Miss Boncassen,——"

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"Quite,—quite," she said. "I can do it myself for the matter of that." And she rang the bell somewhat violently. Dolly sank back again into his seat, **simply** remarking

in his usual apathetic way that he had intended to obey her behest but had not understood that she was in so great a hurry. "I am always in a hurry," she said. "I like things to be done—sharp," and she hit the table a crack. "Please bring me some iced water." This of course was addressed to the waiter. "And a glass for Mr. Longstaffe."

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"He has got up again," said Dolly, looking leisurely out of the window. "**They do skip about dreadfully this weather.** But as I was saying——"

"I don't think that the water we Americans drink can **do us any** [be] good. It makes **all** the women become ugly so **very** young."

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"It does not signify **in the least**. I don't care which it is. But I won't have it. There!"

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"You have expressed and explained more than enough **already**, and I won't have any more. If you will sit down and talk about something else, or else go away, **just as you please,** there shall be an end of it;—but if you go on, I will ring the bell **and go upstairs** [again]**.**"

"In that case I would only send the waiter after you."

"**Then I should desire him to get you a cab and to see you off the premises.** What can a man gain by going on when a girl has spoken as I have**,—unless it be his object to give annoyance**?" They were both at this time standing up, and he was now **quite** as angry as she was.

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"Very well. If I remember rightly I thanked you for it yesterday. If you wish it, I will thank you again to-day. But it is a compliment which becomes very much the reverse **of a compliment** if it be repeated **once** too often. You are sharp enough to understand that I have done everything in my power to save us both from this trouble. **Now let there be an end of it.**"

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"Just that;—something peculiar to American ladies. They don't like——; well, I don't want to say anything more that can be called fierce. **Only don't provoke me.**"

At this moment the door was again opened and Lord Silverbridge was announced. "Halloa, Dolly;—are you here?" **That was the young Lord's first salutation.**

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"A good deal the worse. I have been explaining all that to Mr. Longstaffe, who has been quite sympathetic with me about my things. **We did get so berained, and bespattered, and bedaubed.**"

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"And if I had the rain would not have come?"
"I think not."
"Then I wish I had danced with you certainly."
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"I am not a good judge**;—but I suppose she sings very well**."

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"He supposes that my American ferocity has never been sufficiently softened for the reception of **such** polite erudition."

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"**Not with me certainly," said Lord Silverbridge. "I have done nothing. But** somebody does seem to have got out of bed at the wrong side."

"I did," said Miss Boncassen. "I got out of bed at the wrong side. I am cross. I can't get over the spoiling of my flounces **yesterda**y. I think you had better both go away and leave me. If I could walk about the room for half an hour and stamp my feet, I should get better." Silverbridge thought that as he had come last, he certainly ought to be left last. Miss Boncassen felt that, at any rate, Mr. Longstaffe should go**, taking the other man with him if the two were so disposed;—but that he at least should go**. Dolly **was of opinion** [felt] that his manhood required him to remain **till Silverbridge should have departed**. After what had taken place he was not going to leave the field vacant for another. **It might be that on reconsideration he should see the wisdom of retiring from his suit,—and the more especially as the lady certainly was ferocious. Or again it might seem to be more in accordance with his own virile persistency to continue his courtship,—mindful that he had heard that ladies will often say "yes"**

after half-a-dozen "noes." To go and to leave the other man there was not in accordance with his principles;—and therefore he made no effort to move.

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"It is hard upon you," said the lady.

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"I told you to come and ask after us all. You have come and asked after us **all** and been informed that we are **all** very bad. What more can I say? You accuse me of getting out of bed the wrong side, and I own that I did."

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"Good-morning," said Silverbridge.

"Good-morning," said Dolly. And then they both left the room together.

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"The truth is you never can tell **where** [what] you **are** [are to do] with those American girls**, or how you ought to treat them**."

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"I will, next time I see her." Then he stepped into his cab **that was waiting for him**, and in a loud voice ordered the man to drive him to the Zoo. But when he had gone a little way up Portland Place, he stopped the driver and desired he might be taken back again to the hotel. As he left the vehicle he looked round for Dolly, but Dolly had certainly gone. Then he told the waiter to take his card **up** to Miss Boncassen, and explain that he had something to say which he had forgotten.

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"Of course I have. You didn't suppose I was going to let that fellow get the better of me. **I had come here to have half an hour of 'good time' as you call it.** Why should I be turned out because he had made an ass of himself!"

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"I dare say not, because you have nothing particular to say. But the principle is the same. Lawyers and doctors and parsons **all** talk of privileged communications. **I**

don't see why [should not] a young lady **should not** have her privileged communications**.**[?]"

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"I hate having things said particularly. Nobody likes conversation so well as I do;—but it should never be **about anything** particular."

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"I did;—that you were, out and away, the finest girl I ever saw in my life. Of course you understand that her two daughters were there, and that as for manners,—unless the rain could be attributed to American **bad** manners,—I did not think anything had gone wrong."

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"There was ever so much more of it. And it ended in her telling me that I was a schoolboy **and that my father ought to look after me**. I found out the cause of it all. A great spout of rain had come upon her daughter's hat, and that had produced a most melancholy catastrophe."

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"Of course I do. It was a deal too good to keep it to myself. 'American manners!' " As he said this he **did** almost succeed[ed] in looking like Lady Clanfiddle.

Chapter 34, *Lord Popplecourt*

There are certain circumstances and occurrences in life,—so common that but few of us escape all contact with them,—in which a certain thing seems very desirable to be done, and when done may seem to be almost equally desirable, but which, in the doing, is not altogether nice. What can seem to be more proper than that a father, anxious for the happiness and prosperity of his daughter, should look about for a fitting husband for her? Or what more friendly act can be performed than assisting a father in such a search? The first was the Duke's position, and the second that of Lady Cantrip. The Duke was strengthened in his conviction of the propriety of his conduct by his vivid remembrances of his wife's history;—and Lady Cantrip also in some degree by her knowledge of the same. Everybody who had

heard anything of the tale was aware from how great an evil Lady Glencora had been saved, when she was separated from that poor wretch Burgo Fitzgerald who had at last destroyed himself with brandy-and-water. They who had interfered had interfered successfully; and unalloyed good,—good apparently unalloyed,—had been the result. Nobody knew whether on that occasion anybody had felt soiled by his or her share in the performance. But now that the matter was in the doing, the soil was felt both by Lady Cantrip and by the Duke.

The mutual assent which leads to marriage should no doubt be spontaneous. Who does not feel that? Young love should spread from its first doubtful, **hesitating,** unconscious spark,—a spark which any **drawn** breath of air may quench or cherish,—till it becomes a flame which nothing can satisfy but the union of the two lovers. No one should be told to love, or bidden to marry, this **young** man or that **young** woman. The theory of this is plain to us all, and till we have sons or daughters whom we feel imperatively obliged to control, the theory is unassailable. But the duty is so imperative! The Duke had taught himself to believe that as his wife would have been thrown away on the world had she been allowed to marry Burgo Fitzgerald, so would his daughter be thrown away were she allowed to marry Mr. Tregear. Therefore the theory of spontaneous love must in this case be set aside. Therefore the spark,—would that it had been no more,—must be quenched. Therefore there could be no union of two lovers;—but simply a prudent and perhaps splendid marriage**, such as had joined him to Lady Glencora M'Cluskie**.

Lord Popplecourt was a man **undoubtedly** in possession of a **very** large estate which was **altogether** unencumbered. His rank in the peerage was not high; but his barony was of **a very** [an] old date,—and, if things went well with him, something higher in rank might be open to him. He had good looks of that sort which recommend themselves to pastors and masters, to elders and betters. He had regular features. He looked as though he were steady. He was neither impatient nor rollicking. Silverbridge was also good-looking;—but his good looks were such as would give a pang to the hearts of **some** anxious mothers of daughters. Tregear was **good-looking too,—no doubt** the handsomest man of the three;—but then he looked as though he had no betters and did not care for his elders. Lord Popplecourt, though a very young man, had once stammered through half-a-dozen words in the House of Lords, and had been known to dine with the "Benevolent Funds**,**" **on behalf both of literature and art**. Lord Silverbridge had declared him to be a fool. **A great many who knew him spoke of him as though he were not a bright young man.** [No one thought him to be bright.] But in the eyes of the

Duke,—and of Lady Cantrip,—he had his good qualities. **Looking about them they could find no one more worthy of the great honour intended.**

But the work was very disagreeable. It was the more hard upon Lady Cantrip because she did not believe in **the work** [it]. If it could be done, it would be expedient. **So far she did believe.** But she felt very strongly that it could not be done. No doubt that Lady Glencora had been turned from her evil destiny; but **at the time** Lady Glencora had been younger than her daughter was now, and possessed of **very much** less character. Nor was Lady Cantrip blind to the difference between a poor man with a bad character, such as that Burgo had been, and a poor man with a good character, such as was Tregear. Nevertheless she undertook to aid the work, and condescended to pretend to be so interested in the portrait of some common ancestor as to persuade the young man to have it photographed, in order that the bringing down of the photograph might lead to something. **This had been rather hard upon Popplecourt, as it entailed on him the necessity of sending a photographer expressly down to his country-house.**

But he took the photograph, and Lady Cantrip said very much to him about his grandmother, who was the old lady in question. "She could," she said, "just remember the features of the dear old woman." She was **by no means** [not] habitually a hypocrite, and she hated herself for what she was doing, and yet her object was simply good,—to bring together two young people who might advantageously marry each other. The mere talking about the old woman would be of no service. She longed to bring out the offer plainly, and say, "There is Lady Mary Palliser. Don't you think she'd make a good wife for you?" But she could not **quite** as yet bring herself to be so indelicately plain. "You haven't seen the Duke since?" she asked.

"He spoke to me only yesterday in the House**, and was recommending what I ought to do**. I like the Duke."

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"I suppose I shall," said Popplecourt. "There isn't **very** much else to do."

"You don't go to races." He shook his head. "I am **very** glad of that," said Lady Cantrip. "Nothing is so bad as the turf. I fear Lord Silverbridge is devoting himself to the turf."

"I am afraid he is a good deal in with that fellow, Tifto."

"That can't be good for him."

"**Well, Lady Cantrip,** I don't think it can be good for any man to have much to do with Major Tifto. I suppose Silverbridge knows what he's about. **He thinks he does, at any rate.**"

Here was an opportunity which might have been used **wisely**. **Lady Cantrip saw it at once and almost made up her mind that she would use it.** It would have been so easy for her to glide from the imperfections of the brother to the perfections of the sister. But she could not bring herself to do it quite at once. She approached the matter however as nearly as she could without making her grand proposition. She shook her head sadly in reference to Silverbridge **and Tifto**, and then spoke of the Duke. "His father is so anxious about him!"

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"I don't know any man who is more painfully anxious about his children. He feels the responsibility so **very** much since his wife's death. There is Lady Mary."

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"All right! Oh yes**; she's all right**. But when a girl is possessed of so many things,—rank, beauty, intelligence, large fortune,——"

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"Perhaps she may. But I know **a great many** more who are too foolish. I am so much obliged to you for **all the trouble you have taken about** the photograph."

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On that occasion the two young people did not see each other. Lady Mary did not come down **from her room**, and Lady Cantrip **actually** lacked the courage to send for her. As it was, might it not be possible that the young man should be induced to make himself agreeable to the young lady without any further explanation? **He had certainly seemed to be alive to the catalogue which had been given of her charms, and especially to that which had been said as to her presumed wealth.** But love-making between young people cannot well take place unless they be brought together. **It was understood that Lady Mary should remain at The Horns while Parliament was sitting and should then be carried somewhither by her father.** There was a difficulty in bringing them together at Richmond. The Duke had indeed spoken of meeting Lord Popplecourt at dinner there;—but this was to have followed the **direct** proposition which Lady Cantrip should make to him. She could not **bring herself to** [yet] make the proposition, and therefore she hardly knew how to arrange the dinner. She was obliged at last to let the wished-for lover go away without arranging anything. When the Duke

should have settled his autumn plans, then an attempt must be made to induce Lord Popplecourt to travel in the same direction.

That evening Lady Cantrip said a few words to Mary respecting the proposed suitor**;—but they were not very successful**. "There is nothing I have such a horror of as gambling," she said.

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"I don't think he does. **He told me he wouldn't.**"

"There's Lord Popplecourt,—quite a young man,—with everything at his own disposal, and a very large estate **indeed**. Think of the evil he might do if he were given that way."

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"He looks to me as though he never would do anything," said Lady Mary. Then the subject was dropped. **Lady Cantrip was woman enough to have liked to say, "Oh yes,—you care for nobody but that odious Mr. Tregear!" That, however, in the present circumstances would have been indiscreet.**

It was a week after this, towards the end of July, **the period at which all legislation seems always to have got itself into such a state of inextricable confusion that outsiders feel that Parliament should not be dissolved at all that year, and when ministers are beginning to see their way through it to rest and rural delights,** that the Duke wrote a line to Lady Cantrip, apologising for what he had done, but explaining that he had asked Lord Popplecourt to dine at The Horns on a certain Sunday. He had, he said, been assured by Lord Cantrip that such an arrangement would be quite convenient. **But the arrangement if not convenient to Lady Cantrip could easily be altered. He was very apologetic, but** it was clear from his letter that he was much in earnest. Of course there was no reason why the dinner should not be eaten. Only the specialty of the invitation to Lord Popplecourt must not be so glaring that he himself should be struck by the strangeness of it. There must be a little party made up**, an explanation made to Popplecourt that it was not at all a dinner-party,—as neither the Duke nor Mary was going into society,—but that he was asked as a particular friend**. Lord Nidderdale and his wife were therefore bidden to come down, and Silverbridge, who at first consented rather unwillingly,—and Lady Mabel Grex, as to whom the Duke made a special request that she might be asked. This last invitation was sent express from Lady Mary, and included Miss Cass. So the party was made up. The careful reader will

perceive that there were to be ten of them**,—a number which would, it was thought, prevent perturbation in the mind of Lord Popplecourt**.

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"I don't suppose he arranged it;—if it is so."

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"So much is thrown upon him now," said Lady Cantrip **in a sad tone**.

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Lady Mabel was surprised by the invitation, but she was not slow to accept it**, and of course she made Miss Cassewary accept it also**. "Papa will be here and will be so glad to meet you," Lady Mary had said. Why should the Duke of Omnium wish to meet her? "Silverbridge will be here too," Mary had gone on to say. "It is just a family party. Papa, you know, is not going anywhere; nor am I." By all this Lady Mabel's thoughts were much stirred, and her bosom somewhat moved. And Silverbridge also was moved by it. Of course he could not but remember that he had pledged himself to his father to ask Lady Mabel to be his wife. **He remembered also well enough how determined he himself had been on the matter. No doubt** he had faltered since. She had been, he thought, unkind to him, or at any rate indifferent. He had surely said enough to her to make her know what he meant; and yet she had taken no trouble to meet him half-way**,—had indeed almost ceased to be kind to him**. And then Isabel Boncassen had intervened. Now he was asked to dinner in a most unusual manner[!]**, and asked apparently on purpose that he might meet Mabel Grex**. **Of course he was much moved.**

Of all the guests invited Lord Popplecourt was perhaps the least disturbed. He was quite alive to the honour of being noticed by the Duke of Omnium, and alive also to the flattering courtesy shown to him by Lady Cantrip. But justice would not be done him unless it were acknowledged that he had as yet flattered himself with no hopes in regard to Lady Mary Palliser. **He was made very proud by the Duke's notice, and began to think that it might be within the scope of his abilities to make a political figure in the country. He was induced by it to look a little down upon such fellows as Nidderdale, Silverbridge, and others who spent their time and their money in going to races. And Lady Cantrip's friendship increased this effect. She evidently regarded him as one of the rising young men of the day. He of course had advantages which those other young men did not possess. He was his own master, was burdened with no**

father, and was the head of his own family. He, when he prepared himself for his journey down to Richmond, thought much more of the Duke than of the Duke's daughter. **He was very keen against Sir Timothy Beeswax, and was quite prepared to give reasons why the Duke should accept office.**

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"I won't fix any time; but if we can't make it suit there'll be the governor's carriage. **He'll bring you up with certain punctuality.**"

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"I suppose so. It's quicker and less trouble than the railway." Then Lord Popplecourt reflected that he would certainly come back with the Duke if he could so manage it, and there floated before his eyes visions of under-secretaryships, all of which might owe their origin to this proposed drive up from Richmond. **We remember a noble duke who boasted in the House of Lords that he had once travelled in the same post-chaise with Sir Robert Peel. Lord Popplecourt's feelings were now of the same kind,—humble and exalted also.**

At six o'clock on the Sunday evening Silverbridge called for Lord Popplecourt **at his mother's house in Grosvenor Place**. "Upon my word," said he, "I didn't ever expect to see you in my cab."

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"Because you're not one of our lot **at all**."

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"If not why on earth does my governor take you up?" **This was not flattering, and Lord Popplecourt held his tongue.** "You won't mind my smoking I dare say." After this there was no conversation between them**; but Silverbridge turned it all over very much in his mind**. **Why on earth should his father or Lady Cantrip want to have Lord Popplecourt down at Richmond?**

Chapter 35, *"Don't You Think——?"*

It was pretty to see the Duke's reception of Lady Mabel**,—whom he remembered to have met before, but only just remembered it**. "I knew your mother

many years ago," he said, "when I was young myself. Her mother and my mother were first cousins and dear friends." He held her hand as he spoke and looked at her as though he meant to love her**,—just as he might have looked at the girl whom he was making welcome to his house and his heart as a future daughter**. Lady Mabel**, who in such matters was very clever, could not but acknowledge this to herself** [saw that it was so]. Could it be possible that the Duke had heard anything;—that he should wish so to receive her? She had told herself and had told Miss Cassewary that though she had spared Silverbridge, yet she knew that she would make him a good wife. If the Duke thought so also, then surely she need **have no further** [not] doubt.

"I **always** knew we were cousins," she said, "and have been so proud of the connection! Lord Silverbridge does come and see us sometimes[.]**;—does he not, Miss Cassewary?" Then the Duke shook hands with the old lady and said a few words by which he showed that he knew something also about her and her belongings.**

Soon after that Silverbridge and Popplecourt came in. If the story of the old woman in the portrait may be taken as evidence of **some** [a] family connection between Lady Cantrip and Lord Popplecourt, everybody there was more or less connected with everybody else. Nidderdale had been a first cousin of Lady Glencora, and he had married a daughter of Lady Cantrip. They were manifestly a family party,—thanks to the old woman in the picture. **The Duke too remembered something about the old woman.** It is a point of conscience **that** among the—perhaps not ten thousand, but say one thousand of bluest blood,—that everybody should know who everybody **else** is. Our Duke, though he had not given his mind much to the pursuit[,]**,—though he had spent his time diligently on other matters,—**had nevertheless learned his lesson. It is a knowledge which the **very** possession of the blue blood itself produces. There are countries **in which the** [with bluer] blood **is bluer** [than our own], **less mixed,** in which to be without such knowledge is a crime.

When the old lady in the portrait had been discussed, Popplecourt **found himself standing opposite** [was close] to Lady Mary. They two had no idea why such vicinity had been planned. The Duke knew of course, and Lady Cantrip. Lady Cantrip had whispered to her daughter that such a marriage would be suitable, and the daughter had hinted it to her husband. Lord Cantrip of course was not in the dark. Lady Mabel had expressed a hint on the matter to Miss Cass, who had not repudiated it. Even Silverbridge had suggested to himself that something of the kind might be in the wind, **remarking to himself at the same time** [thinking] that, if so, none of them knew much about his sister Mary. But Popplecourt himself was divinely innocent. His ideas of marriage had as yet gone no further than a conviction that girls generally were things

which would be pressed on him, and against which he must arm himself with some **thickest** shield. Marriage would have to come, no doubt; but not the less was it his duty to live **at present** as though it were a pit towards which he **was to** [would] be tempted by female allurements. **Against this he was thoroughly on his guard.** But that a net should be spread over him here he was much too humble-minded to imagine.

"Very hot," he said to Lady Mary. **The weather had been hot.**

"We found it **very** warm in church to-day."

"I dare say." **He would not confess that he himself had "skipped" church, not knowing whether the Duke had any strong opinions on the matter.** "I came down here with your brother in his hansom cab. What a very odd thing to have a hansom cab."

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"Particularly if I could drive it myself. Silverbridge does, at night, when he thinks people won't **recognise** [see] him."

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"Oh yes. I call that good fun because it did no harm **to anyone**. He had his lark. The lady was taken where she wanted to go, and she saved her money."

"Suppose he had upset her," said Lord Popplecourt, looking as an old philosopher might have looked when he had found some clinching answer to another philosopher's argument. **The hypothesis was one which Lady Mary had not considered and from the too speedy consideration of which she was now preserved by the announcing of dinner.**

Questions of rank had to be preserved, and Popplecourt, as in duty bound, took Miss Cass out to dinner, but questions of rank enabled Lady Cantrip so to manage matters that Silverbridge should sit next to Lady Mabel, and Popplecourt to Lady Mary. It is a convenience that at dinner-parties ladies and gentlemen should all of them have two sides. "The real cabman might have upset her worse," said Lady Mary **as she took her seat,—having had time to consider the matter**.

"Don't you feel it odd that we should meet here?" said Lord Silverbridge **at the same moment** to his neighbour, Lady Mabel.

"Anything unexpected is**, I suppose,** odd," said Lady Mabel**, not quite knowing what answer to make to such a question**. It seemed to her to be very odd,—unless certain people had made up their minds as to the expediency of a certain event.

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"You don't think I meant it. Oh, Lord Silverbridge, say that you don't think I meant it. You cannot think I would wilfully wound you. Indeed, indeed I was not thinking." It had in truth been an accident**, that allusion to Oxford where, as everyone knew, his career had been unfortunate**. She could not speak aloud because they were closely surrounded by others, but she looked up in his face to see whether he were **still** angry with her. "Say that you do not think I meant it."

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"It is all bosh of course," he said laughing; "but**, somehow,** I do not like to hear the old place named. I have always made a fool of myself. Some men do it and **seem not to** [don't] care about it. But I do it, and yet it makes me miserable."

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"Do you?"

"I look upon them like measles. **It has to be gone through sooner or later.** Only you should have a doctor ready when the disease shows itself**,—or it may become virulent**."

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"Ah;—you must find out that yourself. That sort of feeling which makes you feel miserable **after your escapades**. That is a doctor itself."

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"Or a wife,—if you can find a good one. There are wives, you know, who **only** aggravate the disease. If I had a fast husband I should **only** make him faster by **wanting to** be[ing] fast myself. There is nothing I envy so much as the power of doing half-mad things."

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"But they go **utterly** to the dogs**,—and I don't intend to do that**. **But** we are dreadfully restricted. If you like champagne you can have a bucketful. I am obliged to pretend that I only want a very little. You can bet thousands. I must confine myself to gloves. You can flirt with any woman you please. I must wait till somebody comes,—and put up with it if nobody does come."

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"But I want to pick and choose. **I suppose** a man turns the girls over one after another as one does the papers when one is fitting up a room, or rolls them out as one rolls out the carpets**, till one finds what pleases one's eyes**. **I can fancy that** a very careful young man like Lord Popplecourt might reject a young woman because her hair didn't suit the colour of his furniture. **Of course we know that we are dealt with after this fashion,—unless we have a lot of money.**"

"**I won't answer for Popplecourt, but** I don't think that I shall **ever** choose my wife as I would papers and carpets."

The Duke, who sat between Lady Cantrip and her daughter, did his best to make himself agreeable **and by the end of dinner had worked himself into a good humour, as he had done when he dined with his son at the club**. The conversation had been semi-political,—political to the usual feminine extent, and had consisted chiefly of sarcasms from Lady Cantrip against Sir Timothy Beeswax**, Sir Orlando Drought, and other offending members of the present administration**. "That England should put up with such a man **as Sir Timothy**," Lady Cantrip had said, "**strikes** [is to] me **as being so** shocking! There used to be a feeling **at any rate** in favour of gentlemen." To this the Duke had responded by asserting that Sir Timothy had displayed great aptitude for parliamentary life, **that he** [and] knew the House of Commons better than most men**, and that he was a very dangerous adversary**. He said nothing against his foe, and very much in his foe's praise. But Lady Cantrip **knew very well what she was about and** [perceived that she] had succeeded in pleasing him.

When the ladies were gone the politics became more serious. "That unfortunate quarrel is to go on the same as ever, I suppose," said the Duke, addressing himself to the two young men **present** who had seats in the House of Commons. They were both on the Conservative **or ministerial** side in politics. The three peers present were all Liberals.

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"Sir Timothy, though he did lose his temper, has managed it **very** well," said **the Duke** [Lord Cantrip].

"To keep his position till next February with a majority of a dozen, is to manage it well," said Lord Cantrip.

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"Yes," said Nidderdale, "because he 'owned up**,**' **as we used to say at school**. The fact is if you 'own up' in a genial sort of way the House will forgive anything. If I were to murder my grandmother, and, when questioned about it **in the House**, were to

acknowledge that I had done it——" Then Lord Nidderdale stood up and made his speech as he might have made it in the House of Commons**, addressing the Duke as though he had been the Speaker**. " 'I regret to say, sir, that the **cantankerous** old woman did get in my way when I was in a passion. Unfortunately I had a heavy stick in my hand and I did strike her over the head. Nobody can regret it so much as I do! Nobody can feel so acutely the position in which I am placed! I have sat in this House for many years, and many gentlemen know me well. I think, sir, that they will acknowledge that I am a man not deficient in filial piety or general humanity. Sir, I am sorry for what I did in a moment of heat. **I shall regret it as long as I live.** I have now spoken **at any rate** the truth, and I shall leave myself in the hands of the House.' My belief is I should get such a round of applause as I certainly shall never achieve in any other way. It is not only that a popular man may do it,—like Phineas Finn, **whom everybody thinks a fine fellow because he didn't murder a man in the streets;** but the most unpopular man in the House may make himself liked by owning freely that he has done something that he ought to be ashamed of." Nidderdale's unwonted eloquence was received in good part by the assembled legislators**, and then the ways and customs of the House were discussed at length by the two senior peers for the advantage of their juniors around them**.

"Taking it altogether," said the Duke, "I know of no assembly in any country in which good humour prevails so generally, in which the members behave to each other **with equal courtesy** [so well], in which rules are so universally followed, or in which the President**, Chairman, or Speaker** is so thoroughly sustained by the feeling of the members."

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"Nothing will ever be quite what it used to be. **There will always be changes.**"

"Changes for the worse, I mean. Men are doing all kinds of things, just because the rules of the House allow them. **A few men whom we all could name move the adjournment every day to enable them to do what they oughtn't to do.**"

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"That's just it," said Nidderdale. "The House puts up with anything now. There is a great deal of good feeling **I don't** [no] doubt, but there's no earnestness about anything. **Our party go and come just as Beeswax wants us. If any man has life enough in him to have a little job of his own to get done, he is let to have his own way. The comfort is so very few ever have.**"

"We are better on our side than that," said Lord Cantrip.

"I think you are more earnest than we;—but then you are such horrid bores. And each earnest man is in earnest about something that nobody else cares for. **Go ask anybody whether there isn't a feeling that Home Rule hasn't been the most important matter discussed this session.**"

"Nobody believes in Home Rule," said Silverbridge.

"Nobody does believe in it; but so many gentlemen agree to pretend to believe in it that it assumes a look of reality. Nobody will take the trouble even to pretend to believe about most things that are brought up. I am going to move that arms be put up on the benches, as the chief use of the House is to go to sleep in." This was received with almost solemn disapprobation by the Duke, but was cheered by the younger legislators present. Lord Cantrip only shrugged his shoulders as they all went through to the drawing-room.

It soon came to pass that [When they were in the drawing-room] Lord Popplecourt was again **sitting** [seated] next to Lady Mary. "Where are you going this autumn?" he asked.

"I don't know in the least. Papa has said something about going abroad **somewhere**."

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"Lady Cantrip has asked me to be at Custins in the middle of October. **It is awfully good-natured.** They say it is about the best pheasant-shooting in England."

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"A great deal. I shall be in Scotland on the twelfth. I and Reginald Dobbes have a place together. **He has booked our party to kill more grouse and shoot more deer than any other six guns this year.** I shall get to my own partridges on the first of September. I always **mean to** manage that. Popplecourt is in Suffolk, and I don't think any man in England can beat me for partridges."

"What a slayer of animals you must be."

"Yes, I am rather."

"What do you do with **them** all**, Lord Popplecourt** [you slay]?"

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"The birds are heavier and it answers better. But if I thought you would be at Custins it would be much nicer." Lady Mary**, who did not respond with enthusiasm to**

the compliment, again told him that as yet she knew nothing of her father's autumn movements.

But at the same moment **in another part of the house** the Duke was arranging his autumn movements, or at any rate those of his daughter. Lady Cantrip had told him that the desirable son-in-law had promised to go to Custins, and suggested that he and Lady Mary should also be there. In his daughter's name he promised, but he would not bind himself. Would it not be better that he should be absent? **What personal aid could he lend to the arrangement? Lady Cantrip too would know his own mind on the subject,—did, indeed, know it already. Lady Cantrip pleaded that there might be arrangements to be made as to money. Then he frowned, but added that his lawyer would be prepared with an answer as to that. The arrangements prepared would be such that Lord Popplecourt could not possibly object to them. "The young man, I think, is not indifferent to money," said Lady Cantrip. The Duke asked no question as to Lord Popplecourt's present condition of mind on the subject, not venturing to inquire whether any, and what, communication had been made.** Now that the doing of this thing was brought nearer to him so that he could see and feel its details, he was disgusted by it. And yet it had answered so well with his wife!

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"I dare say. I don't. **But then it is so natural that Lady Cantrip and I should have different ideas about a young man.**"

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"You had a great deal better say, 'poor Popplecourt!'—or 'poor governor!' or 'poor Lady Cantrip!' **Anyone can lead a horse to water, you know.**"

"But a hundred countesses can't make your sister marry a man she doesn't like. **That's what you mean.**"

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"And so linger on for **ten** years," said Lady Mabel reproachfully.

"I say nothing about that. **It is a matter in which I will not meddle or make.** The man is my friend."

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"I never knew anybody yet that was proud of his friends. I like him well enough, but I can quite understand that the governor should object. **We all know that Tregear has got nothing.**"

"Yes, we all know that," said the girl sadly**, who something over twelve months since had been at such infinite trouble to explain to the very man of whom they were talking that she could not marry him on that same ground**.

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"But this is a case of giving somebody else's money. **I know all about it, Lady Mab.** They won't make her give it up by bringing such a young ass as that down here. If my father has persistency enough to **stick to his purpose and** let her cry her eyes out, he'll succeed."

"And break her heart. [Could you do that?]"

"Very likely;—as hearts are broken."

"Could you do that?"

"Certainly not. But then I'm soft. **I'm not persistent.** I can't refuse **when I'm asked.**"

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"I am not in your good books."

"Nobody stands so well in them. You ask me for anything, and see."

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"The Prime Minister."

"I would not introduce you to a partnership with such a man as my friend the Major, else you should have my half of the beast."

"Give me that ring off your finger," she said. He at once took it off his hand. "Of course you know I am in joke. You don't imagine that I would take it from you." He still held it towards her. "Lord Silverbridge, I expect that with you I may say a foolish word without being brought to sorrow by it. I know that that ring belonged to your great-uncle,—and to fifty Pallisers before**, probably**."

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"Of course it would be too big," said he, replacing the ring on his own finger. "But when I talk of anyone being in my good books, I don't mean a thing like that. Don't you know there is nobody on earth I——"; then he paused and blushed, and she sat

motionless, looking at him, expecting, with her colour too somewhat raised,—"whom I like so well as I do you?" It was a **very** lame conclusion. She felt it to be lame. But as regarded him, the lameness at the moment had come **from bashfulness on his part**, from a **certain** timidity which forbade him to say the word "love" even though he had meant to say it.

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"Not that ring; nor a ring at all after I had asked for it in joke. You understand it all**, I am quite sure**. But to go back to what we were talking about, if you can do anything for Frank, pray do. You **say yourself that your sister** [know it] will break her heart. A man of course bears it **all** better, but he does not perhaps suffer the less. It is all his life to him. He can do nothing while this is going on. Are you not true enough to your friendship **for him** to exert yourself **on his behalf** [for him]?" Silverbridge put his hand up and rubbed his head as though he were vexed. "Your aid would **just** turn everything in his favour."

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In another part of the room**,—or rather in another room, for there were two or three opening into each other,—**Lady Cantrip was busy **on the same matter** with Lord Popplecourt. She had talked about pheasants, and had talked about grouse, had talked about moving the address in the House of Lords in some coming session, and the great value of **forming** political alliances early in life, till the young peer began to think that Lady Cantrip was the nicest of women. Then after a short pause she changed the subject. "Don't you think Lady Mary very beautiful?"

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"Quite so," said his Lordship **energetically**.

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"She will have I take it quite a third of it. Whatever I say I'm sure you will take in confidence;—but she is a dear, dear girl; and I am anxious for her happiness almost as though she belonged to me." **Then the Countess got up and moved away.**

Lord Popplecourt went back to town in the Duke's carriage, but was unable to say a word about politics**,—or to listen or even to appear to listen**. His mind was altogether filled with the wonderful words that had been spoken to him. Could it be that Lady Mary had fallen violently in love with him? He would not at once give himself up

to the pleasing idea**.**[,] Having so thoroughly grounded himself in the belief that female nets were to be avoided**, that he must be on his guard against all those matrimonial hooks which would encounter him at every turn in his stream of life, he would not give himself up, freely and at once, even to the allurements of a proposition so delightful as that which had been made to him**. But when he got home **to his own chamber** he did think favourably of it. The daughter of a duke,—and such a duke! So lovely a girl, and with such gifts! And then a fortune which would make a material addition to his own large property! **Though it were a hook, would it not be worth his while to swallow it?**

Chapter 36, *Tally-ho Lodge*

We all know that very clever distich concerning the great fleas and the little fleas **and the lesson which it teaches us** [which tells us] that no animal is too humble to have its parasite. Even Major Tifto had his inferior friend. This was a certain Captain Green,—for the friend also affected military honours. He was a man somewhat older than Tifto of whose antecedents no one was supposed to know anything. **But he could ride a horse, understand something of farriery, and called himself a sporting gentleman.** It was presumed of him that he lived by betting, and it was **always** boasted by those who wished to defend his character that when he lost he paid his money like a gentleman. Tifto during the last year or two had been anxious to support Captain Green, and had always made use of this argument: "Where the d—— he gets his money I don't know;—but when he loses, there it is.["] **No one will say that he was ever welched by Green." It was thus that Tifto had spoken of his friend to Lord Silverbridge.**

Major Tifto had a little "box" of his own in the neighbourhood of Egham, at which he had a set of stables a little bigger than his house, and a set of kennels a little bigger than his stables. It was here he kept his horses and hounds, and himself too when business connected with his sporting life did not take him up to town. It was now the middle of August**. Everybody had left London,** and he **had failed in a little attempt he had made to be taken down to a Scotch shooting. He therefore** had come to Tally-ho Lodge, there to look after his establishments, to make arrangements for cub-hunting, and to prepare for the autumn racing campaign. On this occasion Captain Green was enjoying his hospitality and assisting him by sage counsels **and the lessons of a lengthened experience**. Behind the little box was a little garden,—a garden that was very little; but, still, thus close to the parlour window, there was room for a small table to

be put on the grass-plat, and for a couple of arm-chairs. Here the Major and the Captain were seated about eight o'clock one evening, with convivial good things within their reach. The good things were gin-and-water and pipes. The two gentlemen had not dressed strictly for dinner. They had spent a great part of the day handling the hounds and the horses, dressing wounds, curing sores, and ministering to canine ailments, and had **probably** been detained over their work too long to think of their toilet. As it was they had an eye to business. The stables at one corner and the kennels at the other were close to the little garden, and the doings of a man and a boy who were still at work among the animals could be **inspected and** directed from the arm-chairs on which the two sportsmen were sitting.

It must be explained**, before the matter then under discussion between these gentlemen be touched upon by us,** that ever since the Silverbridge election there had been a growing feeling in Tifto's mind that he had been ill-treated by his partner. This feeling was **greatly** strengthened by the admirable condition of Prime Minister **and the place which the horse held in the betting for the Leger**. Surely more consideration had been due to a man who had produced such a state of things! **Silverbridge, he thought, could hardly know what winning a Leger meant, or he would pay more respect to the man who was preparing for him so great a triumph! Tifto had previously talked magnificently to his friend of his position at the Beargarden and of his intimacy with all the young lords, members of Parliament, and opulent "swells" by whom that aristocratic institution was supported, and the Captain, with a partial belief in these boastings, had once, in a thoughtful moment, suggested that he also would like to be a member of the Beargarden. Tifto knew well how impossible this would be; and indeed looked upon the request as monstrous impertinence. "He hasn't got toggery fit to go to such a place," Tifto said to himself. Nevertheless it was necessary that he should excuse himself after some civil fashion. Though the Captain's clothes were not bright,—with the exception of his red coat, breeches, and boots, which were always decent,—still the Major owed him a little money and in many ways could hardly get on without him. "The truth is," he said, "that Silverbridge and I are going to have a tiff."**

"I wouldn't quarrel with him, but I'd make him pay his way," said the prudent Captain**, who saw at a moment that his aspirations in regard to the club were vain**.

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"The fact is, Tifto, you don't make enough out of it. **You'll excuse me if I speak my mind.**"

"Oh, yes."

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"Why this! Look at that d—— fellow, fretting that 'orse with a switch. If you can't strap a 'orse without a stick in your hand, don't you strap him at all, you— — — — ." Then there came a volley of abuse out of the Captain's mouth, in the middle of which the man threw down the rubber he was using and walked away**, as though he were going for the night, leaving the horse fastened by a headstall to a ring outside the stable**.

"You come back," halloed Tifto, jumping up from his seat with his pipe in his mouth. Then there was a general quarrel between the man and his two masters, in which the man at last was victorious. **The Captain swore that no groom ought to stand over a horse with a stick in his hand, and the man swore that he would not go near such a brute as that without a stick. The matter was compromised at last by** [And] the horse **being** [was] taken into the stable in an unfinished condition. "It's all very well to say, 'get rid of him,' but where am I to get anybody better? It has come to such a pass that now if you speak to a fellow he walks out of the yard. **It all comes of them school-books and suffrage and unions. When a fellow knew that if he didn't do what he was told he'd get a month at the treadmill and a month of starvation when he came out, things were much better attended to. I explained all that to Silverbridge when he first thought about Parliament." These were Tifto's ideas on political economy**.

This brought them back to [They then returned to] the state of affairs as it was between Tifto and Lord Silverbridge **at the present moment**. "What I was saying is this," continued the Captain. "If you choose to put yourself up to live with a fellow like that on equal terms——"

"One gentleman with another[,]**;—**you mean **that**."

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"That comes from not knowing what wages is. I do want wages. If I do a thing I like to be paid for it. You are paid for it,—after one fashion. I **should** prefer the other **fashion**."

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"I'd have it out of him some way **for looking after his affairs**. What's the good of young chaps of that sort if they ain't made to pay? You've got this young swell in tow. **As far as I can hear** he's going to be about the richest man in England;—and what the deuce better are you for it?" **Then the Captain paused, emptied his glass, refilled**

it, and lit his pipe, which had been allowed to extinguish itself in the heat of the argument with the groom. Tifto sat meditating, thinking of the wisdom which was being spoken. The same ideas had occurred to him. The happy chance which had made him intimate with Lord Silverbridge had not yet enriched him. **He owed Lord Silverbridge money, but even that money had never been in his own pocket.** "What is the good of chaps of that sort if they are not made to pay?" The words were wise words. But yet how glorious he had **felt his position to be** [been] when he **had been** [was] elected at the Beargarden, and had entered the club as the special friend of the heir of the Duke of Omnium.

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"Salary and wages **I take it** is **all** one. A salary is a **very** nice thing if **you're only sure that it'll be** [it's] paid regular. I had a salary once myself for looking after a stud of 'orses at Newmarket, only the gentleman broke up and it never went **farther than the first half-year** [very far]."

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"Yes,—that was Marley Bullock. He's abroad somewhere now with nothing a year paid quarterly to live on. I think he does a little at cards **with some of the young English**. He'd had a good bit of money once, but most of it was gone when he came my way."

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"I didn't lose nothing. I didn't have a lot of 'orses under me without getting some[thing] **picking** out of it. **I didn't trust to the salary altogether.**"

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"Very little I should say." **Then there was a pause.** "Don't he put his money on his 'orses?"

"Not very free. **He does bet a little, and** I think he's coming out freer now. **It seems to me his governor stumps up for everything.**"

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"There may be something **made very** [got] handsome out of that," said the Captain, not venturing to allow his voice to rise above a whisper. Major Tifto looked hard at him but said nothing. "Of course you must see your way."

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"Race 'orses are expensive animals,—and races generally is expensive. **There are some who drop a deal of money at it,—and some who pick it up.**"

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"But if I don't keep my mouth shut, somebody'll have my teeth out of my head. **I know that.** Everyone for himself and God for us all**; that's my motto**. I suppose there's a deal of money flying about **with this young Marquis**.**"**

"He ain't a marquis."

"He's a duke's son anyhow. He'll put a lot of money on this 'orse of yours for the Leger if he's managed right. There's more to be got out of that than calling him Silverbridge and walking arm-in-arm. Business is business. I don't know whether I make myself understood."

The gentleman did not quite make himself understood; **and** [but] Tifto **sat for a time** endeavour[ed]**ing** to read the riddle. **Tifto did understand something of the lesson intended to be taught, and determined to profit by it.** He must in some way make money out of his friend Lord Silverbridge. Hitherto he had contented himself with the brilliancy of the connection; but now h**e**[is] **began to find that this was not so glorious as it had at first appeared. His** brilliant friend had taken to snubbing him, and had on more than one occasion made himself **thoroughly** disagreeable. It seemed to him that Captain Green counselled him to put up with **all** that, but counselled him at the same time to—pick up some of his friend's money. **He filled another pipe and another glass of gin-and-water as he thought of this in silence.** He didn't think that he could ask Lord Silverbridge for a salary,—he who was a Master of Foxhounds, and a member of the Beargarden. Then his friend **the Captain** had suggested something about the young Lord's bets. He was endeavouring to unravel all this with a brain that was already somewhat muddled with alcohol, when Captain Green got up from his chair and**,** standing over the Major**,—not quite in a vertical position, for the gin-and-water had had considerable effect upon his legs though none apparently as to intellect,—**spoke his last words for that night as from an oracle. "Square is all very well, as long as others are square to you;—but when they ain't then I say square be d——. Square! What comes of it? Work your heart out, and then it's no good." **After that the Captain made his way off to his bed.**

The Major thought about it much that night, and was thinking about it still when he awoke on the next morning. **It would quite answer his purpose** [He would like] to

make Lord Silverbridge pay for his late insolence. It would answer his purpose to make a little money,—as he told himself,—in any honest way. At the present moment he was in want of money, and on looking into his affairs declared to himself that he had certainly impoverished himself by his devotion to Lord Silverbridge's interests **during the past summer and spring**. At breakfast on the following morning he endeavoured to bring his friend back to the subject. But the Captain was cross, rather than oracular. "Everybody," he said, "ought to know his own business. He wasn't going to meddle or make. What he had said had been taken amiss." This was hard upon Tifto, who had taken nothing amiss. **"But what he would like," said the Captain, "was to get that sixty pounds that was due to him. He had to pay other people, and he couldn't carry on unless other people paid him." This was again hard, because there had been an understanding that this money was not to be asked for until after the Leger had been run.**

"Square be d——!" There was a great deal in the lesson thus enunciated which demanded consideration. Hitherto the Major had fought his battles with a certain adherence to squareness. If his angles had not all been perfect angles, still there had always been an attempt at geometrical accuracy. He might now and again have told a lie about a horse,—but who that deals in horses has not done **as much as** that? He had been alive to the value of underhand information from racing stables, but **what racing man is there** who won't use a tip if he can get it? He had lied about the expense of his hounds, in order to enhance the subscription of his members. **He had enticed young men to play cards with him when they were far gone with wine. But** those were things which everybody did in his line**,—things which he would hardly be ashamed to acknowledge**. But **old** Green had meant something beyond this. **What was it that old Green had meant?**

As far as he could see out in the world at large, nobody was square. You had to keep your mouth shut, or your teeth would be stolen out of it. He didn't look into a paper without seeing that on all sides of him men had abandoned the idea of squareness. Chairmen, directors, members of Parliament, **baronets,** ambassadors,—all the world, as he told himself,—were trying to get on by their wits. He didn't see why he should be more square than anybody else. Why hadn't Silverbridge taken him down to Scotland for the grouse?

Chapter 37, *Grex*

Far away from all known places, in the northern limit of the Craven district, on the borders of Westmorland but in Yorkshire, there stands a large, rambling, most picturesque old house called Grex. The people around call it the Castle, but it is not a castle**, nor is that name ever given to it by the family, who always call the place simply Grex**. It is an old brick building supposed to have been erected in the days of James the First, having oriel windows, twisted chimneys, long galleries, gable ends, a quadrangle of which the house surrounds three sides, terraces, sun-dials, and fishponds. But **unfortunately** it is so sadly out of repair as to be altogether unfit for the residence of a gentleman and his family. It stands not in a park, for the land about it**, very nearly up to the house,** is divided into paddocks by low stone walls, but in the midst of lovely scenery, the ground rising all round it in low irregular hills or fells; and close to it, **within** a quarter of a mile from **the unused outhouses which stand at** the back of the house, there is a small dark lake,—not serenely lovely as are some of the lakes in Westmorland, but attractive by the darkness of its waters and the gloom of the rocks around it.

This is the country seat of Earl Grex,—which however he had not visited for some years. Gradually the place had got into such a condition that his absence **should not be wondered at. Who does not know how one want begets another, till ruin follows upon ruin? An old house always requires care and is always expensive;—but if the work be done continuously the cost may be brought within bounds. But when once the evil has been allowed to grow, then the affair becomes almost hopeless** [is not surprising]. An owner of Grex with large means at his disposal and with a taste for the picturesque to gratify,—one who could afford to pay for memories and who was willing to pay dearly for such luxuries,—might no doubt restore Grex. **But it would be a cheaper work to build a new house, if not as large, yet more commodious. The present owner of Grex had no idea of doing either the one or the other. As the place was entailed he could not sell it; but the entail could not force him to keep the house in repair.** [But the Earl had neither the money nor the taste.]

Lord Grex had latterly never gone near the place, nor was his son Lord Percival **very** fond of looking upon the ruin of his property. But Lady Mabel loved **the place** [it] with a fond love. With all her lightness of spirit she was prone to memories, prone to melancholy, prone at times almost to seek the gratification of sorrow. Year after year when the London season was over she would come down to Grex and spend a week or two amidst its desolation **before she went to enjoy the hospitable luxury of some rich friend's country mansion**. She was now going on to a seat in Scotland belonging to Mrs. Montacute Jones called Killancodlem; but she was **having what she thought to be the greatest luxury of the year in spending what must have been** [now passing] a

desolate fortnight at Grex in company with Miss Cassewary. **The land was let up to the back door. Even** the gardens were let,—and being let of course were not kept in further order than as profit might require. The man who rented them lived in the big house with his wife, and they on such occasions as this would cook **what was needed for** [and wait upon] Lady Mabel. **She had her own maid, for an earl's daughter, even in poverty, must have her own maid. But in truth the ruin of the family was not as yet absolute ruin. There was a handsome house still maintained in Belgrave Square. During the season there was a carriage and horses, and there were servants with white plastered heads. Lady Mabel dressed handsomely. Lord Percival lived luxuriously,—though of his living little was seen either by the father or sister. The old sinner himself always had money for gambling and had now taken himself off to some German baths,—so he said,—with his own valet and a courier. Lady Mabel presumed that he had gone to Monaco. Money could still be made to be forthcoming for such absolute needs as these. But still anyone who saw Grex would say that the family was ruined.**

And now Lady Mabel was at the home of her ancestors, and the faithful Miss Cass was with her. But at the moment and at the spot at which the reader shall see her, Miss Cass was not with her. She was sitting**, at about six o'clock in the afternoon,** on a rock about twelve feet above the lake looking upon the black water; and on another rock a few feet from her was seated Frank Tregear. "No," she said. "You should not have come. Nothing can justify it. Of course as you are here I could not refuse to come out with you. To make a fuss about it would be the worst of all. But you should not have come."

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"**Why not! For you to ask why not! For you to pretend to be thick-headed!"**

"**I do not know that my head is thicker than other people's; but still I say, why not?** Whom does it hurt? It is a pleasure to me. If it be the reverse to you, I will go."

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"That is what I do not understand," said he. "In London where the Earl could bark at me if he happened to find me, I could see the inconvenience of it. But here, where there is nobody but **my particular friend** Miss Cass——"

"There are a great many others. There are the rocks and stones **and walls** and old women;—all of which have ears."

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"Certainly nothing on my part."

"**I don't see what you mean.** There is nothing in the world to me so pleasant as the companionship of my friends."

"Then go after Silverbridge. **He is your friend.**"

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"It is all unmanly," she said, rising from her stone **and standing near him**. "You know that it is so. Friends! Do you mean to say that it would make no difference whether you were here with me or with Miss Cass?"

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"What difference? Why?"

"Because I like you better than Miss Cass."

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"I never heard anything more **far-fetched or more** unjust. You cannot think I desire anything **which may be hurtful or** injurious to you."

"I do think so." She was still standing and spoke now with great vehemence. "I do think so. You force me to throw aside the reticence I ought to keep. Would it help me in my prospects if your friend Lord Silverbridge knew that you were here **with me,—as he probably will know**?"

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"But if he did? Do you suppose that I want to have visits paid to me of which I am afraid to speak **openly**? **What business have you here?** Would you dare to tell Lady Mary that you had been sitting alone with me, out on the rocks at Grex?"

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"I have told her nothing that was not true."

"**I do not care what you have told her.** You have sworn to her no doubt that you love her better than all the world."

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"And you have taken the trouble to come here to tell me that;—to wound me to the core by saying so; to show me that, though I may still be sick, you have recovered,—that is if you ever suffered **anything, and to do me all the harm in your power by being here to say it**. **It is unmanly in both ways,—unmanly, and unworthy of you.** Go your way and let me go mine. I do not want you."

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"**Surely** you know that you are wronging me."

"No! You understand it all though you look so calm. I hate your Lady Mary Palliser. There! But if by anything I could do I could secure her to you I would do it,—because you want it. **But I hate her! Were she married to you I would never see her.**"

"She **would** [will] be your sister-in-law,—probably."

"Never. It will never be so. **But what has that to do with it?**"

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"There again! You are so little of a man that you can ask me why!" Then she turned away, as though she intended to go down to the marge of the lake **by a little path which descended through the rocks**.

But he rose up and stopped her. "Let us have this out, Mabel, before we go," he said. "Unmanly is a heavy word to hear from you, and you have used it **about** a dozen times."

"It is because I have thought it a thousand times. Go and get her if you can **get it**;—but why tell me about it?"

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"So I would,—as I would help you do anything you might want[; but]**, though you ought not to want it.** You can hardly think that after all that has passed I can wish to hear about her."

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"**And have so sworn it that—that——!** Have you ever said that nothing could alter that love?"

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"**Can you attack me in this savage fashion and not** [When you say this do you not] think of yourself?"

"Yes[.]**,—because I have** [But I have] never been false to anyone. You are false to me."

"Have I not offered **half-a-score of times** to face all the world with you**,—whatever it might be**?"

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"We agreed it should be so**,—for both of us**; and you have done the same."

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"Oh,—so unmanly again! Of course I have to marry. Who does not know it? Do you want to see me begging my bread about the streets? **But you!** You have bread[;]**, at any rate;—**or if not you might earn it. If you marry for money——"

"The accusation is altogether unjustifiable**,**" **he said indignantly**.

"Allow me to finish what I have to say. If you marry for money you will do that which is in itself bad, and which is also unnecessary. What other course would you recommend me to take? No one goes into the gutter while there is a clear path open**, though it be ever so narrow**. If there be no escape but through the gutter one has to take it."

"**Then** you mean that my duty to you should have kept me from marrying all my life."

"Not that;—but a little while, Frank; just a little while. Your bloom is not fading; your charms are not running from you. Have you not a strength which I cannot have? Do you not feel that you are a tree, standing firm in the ground**, from which leaves and fruit will come though they may be long in coming**; while I am a bit of ivy that will be trodden in the dirt unless it can be made to cling to something? **Of course I put out my feelers. I have to cling to something.** You should not liken yourself to me, Frank."

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"Good! What is the meaning of good? If you love, it is good to be loved again. It is good not to have your heart torn in pieces. You know that I love you." He was standing close to her, and put out his hand as though he would twine his arm round her waist. "Not for worlds," she said. "It belongs to that Palliser girl. And**, beyond that,** as I have taught myself to think that what there is left of me may perhaps belong to some other one, worthless as it is, I will keep it for him. I love you,—but there can be none of

that softness of love between us. **I am beginning to think that we had better make up our minds to live apart.**" **These last words she spoke with a smile on her lips.** [Then there was a pause, but as he did not speak she went on.]

"I hope not that, Mabel."

"But remember, Frank,—our positions are not equal. You have got over your little complaint. It probably did not go deep with you and you have found a cure. **For aught I know there may be** [Perhaps there is] a **certain** satisfaction in feeling that two young women love you."

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"I had hoped we might both talk rationally, as friends**, of our future hopes**."

"Friends! Frank Tregear, I have been bold enough to tell you I love you; but you are not my friend, and cannot be my friend. If I have before asked you to help me in this mean catastrophe of mine, in my attack upon that poor boy, I **now** withdraw my request. **But I may as well show you this." Then she drew a purse from her pocket, and taking a ring out of it handed it to Tregear.**

"Whence does that come?" he asked.

"Don't you remember the diamond? It is that which Silverbridge always wore and which the old Duke gave him."

"I thought he would never have parted with that."

"He has had the setting altered and has sent it to me. Poor dear fellow! I wish he had kept it. I think we will go back to the house now. **Miss Cass will think, else, that you have drowned me in the lake.**"

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"No; I will have nothing that looks like being ashamed. **Miss Cass shall not be made to think that I have regretted your company.** You ought not to have come, but you need not **tell her that I said so** [run away]." Then they walked back to the house together and found Miss Cassewary on the terrace. "We have been to the lake," said Mabel, "and have been **thinking and** talking of old days. I have but one ambition now in the world." Of course Miss Cassewary asked what the remaining ambition was. "To get **a lot of** money [enough] **by hook and crook and** [to] purchase this place from the ruins of the Grex property. If I could own the house and the lake, and the paddocks about, and have enough income to keep one servant, and bread for us to eat,—of course including you, Miss Cass——"

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"Yes; you would. Frank would come and see us perhaps once a year. I don't suppose anybody else **in the world** cares about the place, but to me it is the dearest spot in the world. **It would lose half its charms if it were well kept and in good repair.**" So she went on in almost high spirits, though alluding to the general decadence of the Grex family, till Tregear took his leave. **He had walked over from Ledburgh, and there he intended to sleep the night, and to return to Kendal on the following morning on his way to Scotland.**

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"I do not know what a mother might have been, but I do not fancy that I could ever have liked an aunt so well."

"And if so,——"

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That same night, after Miss Cassewary had gone to bed, when the moon was high in the heavens and the world around her was all asleep, Lady Mabel again wandered out to the lake, and again seated herself on the same rock. **She knew the place well enough to find her way thither by a fainter light than that which now prevailed.** And there she sat thinking of her past life and trying to think of **her future life for more than an hour** [that before her]. It is so much easier to think of the past than of the future,—to remember what has been than to resolve what shall be! She had reminded him of the offer which he had made and repeated to her more than once,—to share with her all his chances in life**, such as they were, and to make her at any rate equal to himself**. **When she had refused that, many obstacles had occurred to her, any one of which seemed then to be sufficient to induce her to reject this proposal as insane.** She must have consented to run off with him **and get herself married, where and how she did not know**. There would have been almost no income for them. All the world would have been against her. She would have caused his ruin. Her light on the matter had been so clear that it had not taken her very long to decide that such a thing must not be thought of. **"They had been foolish," she said; "but let them not add to their folly."** She had at last been quite stern in her decision**, and he had left her for a while almost in anger**.

Now she was broken-hearted because she found that he had left her in very truth. Oh yes;—she would marry the boy, if she could so arrange it. She thought that she could arrange it. She was to meet him down in Scotland within a week or two from the present time. Mrs. Montacute Jones had managed that. He had all but offered to her a second

time at Richmond. **Nothing but a little encouragement from her would be wanting.** But all that**, if it were arranged,** would not serve to make her happy. She declared to herself that she did not wish to see Frank Tregear again; but still it was a misery to her that his heart should in truth be given to another woman.

Chapter 38, *Crummie-Toddie*

As soon as the session was over the Duke with his daughter started for the Continent. The arrangement was at last made simply because there seemed for the moment nothing else to be done. The Duke in truth did not know how to occupy himself, so much astray was he still in consequence of the death of his wife. When he first entertained the idea of taking Lady Mary to the Continent, it had been with the notion that he would remain there probably for the next twelvemonth,—that being thought at the time to be the medicine most apt to cure her of her love. But other counsels now prevailed, and a different treatment was to be adopted. She was to be taken to Custins in October in order that she might be induced to marry Lord Popplecourt. There was not much danger that she should see Tregear in the intervening two months. But as something had to be done, they went abroad, first to the Tyrol, with a plan of going on from there to the salt-mines and to Vienna. The Duke had asked Lord Gerald to accompany them with his tutor, but Lord Gerald begged that he might join his brother at a Scotch shooting, and as Scotch shooting in August is supposed to be a proper amusement for young lords, and as Lord Gerald was supposed to have passed a few weeks down in Devonshire in a rather exemplary manner, his request was granted, and the tutor was to have leave of absence for a week or two. He was to be taken in as a gentleman-commoner at Lazarus, of which college, as all the world knows, old Dr. Gwynne is still the warden. At Lazarus they think a good deal of birth, and when that story of the races was told it was considered at that exemplary college to have been rather hard that Lord Gerald should not have been allowed to see his brother's horse run for the Derby.

Almost at the last moment Silverbridge and his brother were induced to join Lord Popplecourt's shooting-party in Scotland. The party perhaps might more properly be called the party of Reginald Dobbes, who was a man knowing in such matters. It was he who made the party up. Popplecourt and Silverbridge were to share the expense between them, each bringing three guns **and each making what arrangement he pleased with**

his own adherents. Silverbridge brought his brother and Frank Tregear,—having **absolutely had to** refuse[d] a most piteous petition on the subject from Major Tifto. With Popplecourt of course came Reginald Dobbes, who was, in truth, to manage everything, and Lord Nidderdale, whose wife had graciously permitted him this recreation. **They paid their own shares. Tregear and Lord Gerald no doubt were more fortunate.** The shooting was in the west of Perthshire, known as Crummie-Toddie, and comprised an enormous acreage of so-called forest and moor. Mr. Dobbes declared that nothing like it had as yet been produced in Scotland. Everything had been made to give way to deer and grouse. The thing had been managed so well that the tourist nuisance had been considerably **alleviated** [abated]. There was hardly a potato patch left in the district, nor a head of cattle to be seen. There were no inhabitants remaining, or so few that they could be absorbed in game-preserving or cognate duties. Reginald Dobbes, who was very great at grouse, and supposed to be capable of outwitting a deer by venatical wiles more perfectly than any other sportsman in Great Britain, regarded Crummie-Toddie as the nearest thing there was to a Paradise on earth. Could he have been allowed to pass one or two special laws for his own protection[,]**,—laws which he thought would have been in consonance with perfect practice,—**there might still have been improvement. He would **have** like**d to have had the legal** [the] right to have all intruders thrashed by the gillies within an inch of their lives; and he **thought that there should be** [would have had] a clause in his lease **for such shootings** against the making of any new roads, opening of footpaths, or building of bridges. There was one matter, however, which did rob him of much of his happiness**, and perturbed his mind with a fear of which he hardly liked to speak to his most intimate friends**. He had seen somewhere in print a plan for running a railway from Callender to Fort Augustus right through Crummie-Toddie! If this were done in his time the beauty of the world would be over. Reginald Dobbes was a man of about forty, strong, active, well made, about five feet ten in height, with broad shoulders and greatly developed legs**, of whom his friends were accustomed to boast that he was all muscle**. He was not a handsome man, having a protrusive nose, high cheekbones, and long upper lip; but there was a manliness about his face which redeemed it. **Anyone by looking at him could say, and say truly, that in all that he did he was determined to do it vigorously.** Sport was the business of his life, and he thoroughly despised all who were not sportsmen. He fished and shot and hunted during nine or ten months of the year, filling up his time as best he might with **recreations which he rather despised, such as** bicycling, tennis, polo, and pigeon-shooting. He regarded it as a great duty to keep his body in the firmest possible condition**, and it was a duty which he never neglected**. All his eating and all his

drinking was done upon a system, and he would consider himself to be guilty of **much** weak self-indulgence **if he ever allowed** [were he to allow] himself to break through sanitary rules **in which he had found that he could trust**. But it never occurred to him that his whole life was one of self-indulgence. He could walk his thirty miles with his gun on his shoulder as well now**, at forty,** as he could ten years ago; and being sure of this, was thoroughly contented with himself**, thinking that he had lived better than others around him**. He had a patrimony amounting to perhaps one thousand pounds a year, which he husbanded so as to enjoy all his amusements to perfection. No one had ever heard of his sponging on his friends**, or of his being short of money**. Of money he rarely spoke, sport being in his estimation the only subject worthy of a man's words. Such was Reginald Dobbes, who was now to be the Master of the shooting at Crummie-Toddie.

Crummie-Toddie was but twelve miles from Killancodlem, Mrs. Montacute Jones's highland seat; and it was this vicinity which **probably** first induced Lord Silverbridge to join the party. Mabel Grex was to be at Killancodlem, and, determined as he still was to ask her to be his wife, he would make this his opportunity. Of real opportunity there had been none at Richmond. **How is a man to say what he really means at a dinner-party,—or afterwards in the drawing-room, when everyone is looking at him? He had said as much as he could, but she had not taken it rightly.** Since he had had his ring altered and had sent it to her there had come but a word or two of answer. "What am I to say? You unkindest of men! To keep it or to send it back would make me equally miserable. I shall keep it till you are married and then give it to your wife." This affair of the ring had made him more intent than ever. After that he heard that Isabel Boncassen would also be at Killancodlem, having been induced to join Mrs. Montacute Jones's swarm of visitors. Though he was dangerously devoid of experience, still he felt that this was unfortunate. He intended to marry Mabel Grex**, the marriage having been assented to, as being in all respects fit and proper, by his father**. And he could assure himself that he thoroughly loved her. Nevertheless he liked making love to Isabel Boncassen. He was quite willing to marry and settle down, and looked forward with **perfect** satisfaction to having Mabel Grex for his wife. But it would be pleasant to have a six-months' run of flirting and love-making before this settlement, and he had certainly never seen anyone with whom this would be so delightful as with Miss Boncassen. But that the two ladies should be at the same house was unfortunate. **There were moments as he travelled down in which he almost made up his mind that he would not go over to Killancodlem at all.**

He and Gerald reached Crummie-Toddie late on the evening of August 11th, and found Reginald Dobbes alone. That was on Wednesday. Popplecourt and Nidderdale ought to have made their appearance on that morning, but had telegraphed to say that they would be detained two days on their route. Tregear, whom hitherto Dobbes had never seen, had left his arrival uncertain. **At this very moment he was on his way down to Kendal, thinking much more of his visit to Grex than of Reginald Dobbes and the grouse.** This carelessness on such matters was very offensive to Mr. Dobbes, who loved discipline and exactitude. He ought to have received the two young men with open arms because they were punctual; but he had been somewhat angered by what he considered the extreme youth of Lord Gerald. Boys who could not shoot were, he thought, putting themselves forward before their time. And Silverbridge himself was by no means a first-rate shot. Such a one as Silverbridge had to be endured because from **the nature of** his position and **his** wealth he could facilitate such arrangements as these. It was much to have to do with a man who would not complain if an extra fifty pounds were wanted. But he ought to have understood that he was bound in honour to bring down competent friends. Of Tregear's shooting Dobbes had been able to learn nothing. Lord Gerald was a lad from the Universities; and Dobbes hated University lads. **This was man's work.** Popplecourt and Nidderdale were known to be efficient. They were men who could work hard and do their part of the required slaughter. Dobbes proudly knew that he could make up for some deficiency by his own prowess; but he could not **repair the evil which would be done by** [struggle against] three bad guns. What was the use of so perfecting Crummie-Toddie as to make it the best bit of ground for grouse and deer in Scotland, if the men who came there failed by their own **idleness and** incapacity to bring up the grand total of killed to a figure which would render Dobbes and Crummie-Toddie famous through the whole shooting world? He had, too, been hard at work on other matters. Dogs had **perhaps** gone amiss,—or guns, and he had been made angry by the champagne which Popplecourt caused to be sent down. He knew what champagne meant. Whisky-and-water, and not much of it, was the liquor which Reginald Dobbes loved in the mountains. **In this way he was hardly in a good humour when the two young men arrived.**

"Don't you call this a very ugly country?" Silverbridge asked **almost** as soon as he arrived. Now it **certainly** is the case that the traveller who travels into Argyllshire, Perthshire, and Inverness expects to find lovely scenery; and it was also true that the country through which they had passed for the last twenty miles **before reaching Crummie-Toddie lodge** had been not only bleak and barren, but uninteresting and ugly. It was all rough open moorland, never rising into mountains, and graced by no running

streams, by no forest scenery, almost by no foliage. The lodge itself did indeed stand close upon a little river, and was reached by a bridge that crossed it; but there was nothing pretty either in the river or the bridge. It was a placid black little streamlet, which in that portion of its course was hurried by no steepness, had no broken rocks in its bed, no trees on its low banks, and played none of those gambols which make running water beautiful. The bridge was a simple low construction with a low parapet, carrying an ordinary roadway up to the hall door. The lodge itself was as ugly as a house could be, white, of two stories, with the door in the middle and windows on each side, with a slate roof, and without a tree **or a picturesque outhouse** near it. **To a man whose mind was intent simply on sport, as was the mind of Reginald Dobbes, it seemed a most desirable residence.** It was in the middle of the shooting, and did not create a town around itself as do sumptuous mansions, to the great detriment of that seclusion which is favourable to game. "Look at Killancodlem," he had been heard to say—"a very fine house for ladies to flirt in; but if you find a deer within six miles of it I will eat him first and shoot him afterwards." There was a Spartan simplicity about Crummie-Toddie which pleased the Spartan mind of Reginald Dobbes.

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"What did you expect to find? A big hotel and a lot of cockneys **looking at a lake**? If you come after grouse you must come to what the grouse think pretty."

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"Can you shoot?" he said afterwards to Lord Gerald **just before they were going to bed**.

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"Not what you call very much. I'm not so old as you are, you know. Everything must have a beginning." Mr. Dobbes wished "the beginning" might have taken place elsewhere; but there had been some truth in the remark. **Even he had once been a beginner. He felt as one does with a cabdriver who is too evidently only just learning his business. It is a misfortune for the horse, but the horseman has to learn. Thinking of this Reginald Dobbes went to bed.**

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On the next morning they started at seven[.]**,** Dobbes **having been very eager as to the early hour, having** [had] determined to be cross because, as he thought, the young

men would certainly keep him waiting; and **being in fact** [was] cross because by their punctuality they robbed him of any just cause for **crossness** [offence]. During the morning on the moor they were hardly ever near enough to each other for much conversation, and very little was said. According to arrangement made they returned to the house for lunch, it being their purpose not to go far from home till their numbers were complete. As they came over the bridge and**,** put**ting** down their guns near the door, **wiped the perspiration from their brows,** Mr. Dobbes spoke the first good-humoured word they had heard from his lips. "Why did you tell me such an infernal—— I would say lie only perhaps you mightn't like it."

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"Only forty." And Mr. Dobbes seemed for the moment to be **quite** gratified by his own inferiority. "You are a deuced sight better than your brother."

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"I see all about it," said Dobbes. "Nevertheless when a fellow comes to shoot he shouldn't complain because a place isn't pretty. What you want **I suppose** is a decent house as near as you can have it to your ground. If there is anything in Scotland to beat Crummie-Toddie **in that way** I don't know where to find it. Shooting is shooting, you know, and touring is touring."

Upon that he took very kindly to Lord Gerald, who, even after the arrival of the other men, was second in skill only to Dobbes himself. With Nidderdale, who was an old companion, he got on very well. Nidderdale ate and drank too much, and refused to be driven beyond a certain amount of labour, but was in other respects obedient and knew what he was about. Popplecourt was disagreeable, but he was a fairly good shot and understood what was expected of him. Silverbridge was so good-humoured, that even his manifest faults,—shooting carelessly, lying in bed, and wanting his dinner,—were, if not forgiven, at least endured. But Tregear was an abomination. He could shoot well enough and was active, and when he was at the work seemed to like it;—but he would stay away whole days **in the house** by himself, **reading or writing,** and when spoken to would answer in a manner which seemed to **Reginald** Dobbes to be flat mutiny. "We are not doing it for our bread," said Tregear.

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"Who says I am tired? **It's like the insanity of a man who keeps china cups and saucers and thinks that every moment of life is lost in which he is not looking after cups and saucers.** I came here to amuse myself."

*****

This vexed the governor of Crummie-Toddie much. He had learned to regard himself as the arbiter of the fate of men while they were sojourning under the same autumnal roof as himself. But a defalcation which occurred immediately afterwards was **still** worse. Silverbridge declared his intention of going over one morning to Killancodlem. Reginald Dobbes muttered a curse between his teeth, which was visible by the anger on his brow to all the party. "I shall be back to-night, you know," said Silverbridge.

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"Two or three I should think," said Nidderdale.

Chapter 39, *Killancodlem*

Mr. Dobbes was probably right in his opinion that **a large concourse of people, that** hotels, tourists, and congregations of men **made for purposes of comfort and luxury** are detrimental to shooting. Crummie-Toddie was in all respects suited for sport. Killancodlem, though it had the name of a shooting-place, certainly was not so. Men going there took their guns. Gamekeepers were provided and gillies,—and, in a moderate quantity, game. On certain grand days a deer or two might be shot,—and would be very much talked about afterwards. But a glance at the place would suffice to show that Killancodlem was not intended for sport. It was a fine castellated mansion, with beautiful though narrow grounds, standing in the valley of the Archay River, with a mountain behind and the river in front. Between the gates and the river there was a public road on which a stage-coach ran, with loud-blown horns and the noise of many tourists. A mile beyond the Castle was the famous Killancodlem hotel which made up a hundred and twenty beds, and at which half as many more guests would sleep on occasions under the tables. And there was the Killancodlem post-office half-way between the two. At Crummie-Toddie they had to send nine miles for their letters and newspapers**,—which was done but twice a week when Mr. Dobbes was allowed to have his own way**. At Killancodlem there was lawn-tennis and a billiard-room and dancing every night. The

costumes of the ladies were lovely, and those of the gentlemen, who were wonderful in knickerbockers, picturesque hats, and variegated stockings, hardly less so. And then there were carriages and saddle-horses, and paths had been made hither and thither through the rocks and hills for the sake of the scenery. Scenery! To hear Mr. Dobbes utter the single word was as good as a play. **Killancodlem was near enough to him to be a matter of importance, and he hated the place.** Was it for such cockney purposes as those that Scotland had been created, fit mother for grouse and deer?

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"Good shooting, you know," said Silverbridge**, putting forward his best plea**.

"But you **know you** dare not call an hour your own,—or your soul. Mr. Dobbes and I are sworn enemies. We both like Scotland and unfortunately we have fallen into the same neighbourhood. He looks upon me as the genius of sloth. I regard him as the incarnation of tyranny. He once said there should be no women in Scotland,—just an old one here and there, who would know how to cook grouse. I offered to go and cook his grouse!"

*****

"Killancodlem against Crummie-Toddie for ever," said Miss Boncassen, waving her handkerchief. As a matter of course a messenger was sent back to Crummie-Toddie for the young Lord's wearing apparel**, et cetera**.

The whole of that afternoon he spent playing lawn-tennis with Miss Boncassen. Lady Mabel was asked to join the party, but she refused, having promised**, as she said,** to take a walk to a distant waterfall where the Codlem falls into the Archay. The gentleman in knickerbockers was to have gone with her, and two other young ladies; but when the hour came **for the walk** she was weary, she said,—and she sat almost the entire afternoon looking at the game from a distance. Silverbridge played well, but not so well as the pretty American**, who had made herself very skilful at it**. With them were joined two others somewhat inferior, so that Silverbridge and Miss Boncassen were on different sides. They played game after game, and Miss Boncassen's side always won. **During such occupations there is not in truth much opportunity for conversation. If there be any reality in the game,—as there was on this occasion,—the energies of the players are too fully employed to allow of attention to other things. Hours spent thus give rise to intimacies which lead to moments of more ecstatic bliss;—but the moments are not then.** Very little was said between Silverbridge and Miss Boncassen which did not refer **absolutely** to the game. But Lady Mabel, looking on, told herself

that they were making love to each other before her eyes. And why shouldn't they? She asked herself that question in perfect good faith. Why should they not be lovers? Was ever anything prettier than the girl in her country dress, active as a fawn and as graceful **in every motion,—and apparently as young**? Or could anything be more handsome, more attractive to a girl, more good-humoured, or better bred in his playful emulation than Silverbridge?

"When youth and pleasure meet, To chase the glowing hours with flying feet!" she said to herself over and over again**, trying to take a pleasure from the prettiness of what she saw**.

But why had he sent her the ring? She would certainly give him back the ring and bid him bestow it at once upon Miss Boncassen. Inconstant boy! Then she would get up and wander away for a time and rebuke herself. What right had she even to think of inconstancy? **Inconstancy indeed!** Could she be so irrational, so unjust, **so un-human** as to be sick for his love, as to be angry with him because he seemed to prefer another**, or to be irritated at his fickleness**? Was she not well aware that she herself did not love him;—but that she did love another man? She had made up her mind to marry him in order that she might be a duchess, and because she could give herself to him without any of that horror which would be her fate in submitting to matrimony with one or another of the young men around her **who had been suggested to her**. There might be disappointment **if he escaped her**. **She now felt almost sure that there would be disappointment,—**[If he escaped her there would be] bitter disappointment. **There could be no longer any question of sparing him.** But seeing how it was **with him**, had she further ground for hope? She certainly had no ground for anger!

It was thus, within her own bosom, she put questions to herself. And yet all this before her was simply a game of play in which the girl and the young man were as eager for victory as though they were children **or players of the same sex**. They were thinking neither of love nor love-making. That the girl should be so lovely was no doubt a pleasure to him;—and perhaps to her also that he should be joyous to look at and sweet of voice. But he, could he have been made to tell all the truth within him, would have still owned that it was his purpose to make Mabel his wife. **And Isabel was certainly free from any purpose to make him her husband.**

When the game was over**,** and **the colloquies after the game,—**the propositions made for further matches and the like,—Miss Boncassen said that she would betake herself to her own room. "I never worked so hard in my life before," she said. "And I feel like a navvie. I could drink beer out of a jug and eat bread and cheese. I won't play with you any more, Lord Silverbridge, because I am beginning to think it is unladylike to

exert myself." **And yet he thought, as she went away, that her exercise had only added to her charms.**

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"Pretty well," he said. **"I am half sick of the grouse;—but we should have been stalking to-morrow."**

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"And you,—what have you an eye for? **I say you play better than she does."**

"No."

"Yes,—at the game you were playing at. Will you answer me a question?"

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"I knew you would say so. You are so honest that you could not bring yourself to tell a fib,—even to me about that. Come here and sit down for a moment. **I want to speak to you.**" Of course he sat down by her. "You know**," she said, "**that Frank came to see me at Grex."

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"It was odd," said he in a voice which showed that he was angry. She could hardly explain to herself why she told him this at the present moment. It came partly from jealousy, as though she had said to herself, "Though he may neglect me, he shall know that there is someone who does not";—and partly from an eager half-angry feeling that she would have nothing concealed. **For,—though** there were moments with her in which she thought that she could **do all things politically, that she could** arrange her future life in accordance with certain wise rules over which her heart should have no influence[.]**,—**there were others, many others, in which her feelings completely got the better of her. And now **at this very moment** she told herself that she would be afraid of nothing. There should be no deceit, no lies!

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"Poor Frank! There is no one else who would come to see me at that tumble-down old place. **He looks at it as a kind of pilgrimage, and pilgrimages are sacred, you know;—not to be talked about to anyone."**

"I don't care, you know," said he, not knowing very well what he meant.

"I don't suppose you do. But I have another thing to say to you. You have behaved badly to me."

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"That did **all** very well for me to say in a note. I did not want to send my anger to you over a distance of two or three hundred miles by the postman. But now that we are together you must take it back."

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"You speak as though this were a matter in which **a man like you was to be allowed to** [you can] have **his** [your] own way."

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At Killancodlem they did not dine till half-past eight**, in order, as the lady of the house said, that they might get as much out of the day as was possible**. Twilight was now stealing on these two, who were still out in the garden, all the others having **already** gone in to dress. She looked round**, however,** to see that no other eyes were watching them as she still held the ring. "It is there," she said, putting it on the bench between them**, where he would not touch it**. Then she prepared to rise from the seat so that she might leave it with him.

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"Oh no;—nobody ever dressed so quickly **as I do**. But, Mrs. Jones, will you do me a favour?"

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"I wish it were so," said the match-making old woman.

"Of course he is." This was very imprudent on the part of Lady Mabel, who, had she been capable of clinging fast to her policy, would not now in a moment of strong feeling have done so much to raise obstacles in her own way. "But you will send for it,—won't you; and have it put on his dressing-table to-night?" **This Mrs. Jones promised to do. She even walked across the park herself before dinner, and picked up the ring, and ate her dinner with it safe in her pocket. That evening** when he went to bed Lord Silverbridge found it on his table.

But before that time came he had twice danced with Miss Boncassen, Lady Mabel having refused to dance with him. "No," she said, "I am angry with you. You ought to

have felt that it did not become you as a gentleman to subject me to inconvenience by throwing upon me the charge of that diamond." **She would not any longer speak of it as a ring.** "You may be foolish enough to be indifferent about its value, but as you have mixed me up with it I cannot afford to have it lost."

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"No, sir; it is not mine; nor will it ever be mine. But I wish you to understand that you have offended me." **Then she persisted in refusing to dance with him.**

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"What a question!" **she said laughing.**

"What I mean is don't you think all those conventional rules about men and women are **very** absurd?"

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"He'd take books to any extent, I should say**; but I would not advise you, because he'd want to draw you into a learned correspondence about it**."

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"I'm so glad of that! Well;—if you'll promise that you'll never offer me one, I'll promise that I'll take it when it comes. **I can't say fairer than that;—can I?** But what does all this mean?"

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"**Of course** you have offered somebody a ring and somebody hasn't taken it. May I guess?"

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"I could, you know. **I shouldn't want to have a second try.**"

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"No, Lord Silverbridge;—not at all. Nevertheless we'll have a turn." **And so they went off.**

That night before he went up to his room he had told Isabel Boncassen that he loved her. And when he spoke he **certainly** was telling her the truth. It had seemed to him that Mabel had become hard to him, and had over and over again rejected the

approaches to tenderness which he had attempted to make in his intercourse with her**, and had meant him to understand that she could not love him**. Even though she were to accept him, what would that be worth to him if she did not love him? So many things had been added together! Why had Tregear gone to Grex, and having gone there why had he kept his journey a secret? Tregear he knew was engaged to his sister;—but for all that there was a closer intimacy between Mabel and Tregear than between Mabel and himself. **This also had distressed him.** And surely she might have taken his ring!

And then Isabel Boncassen was so perfect **in every respect**! Since he had first met her he had heard her loveliness talked of on all sides. It seemed to be admitted everywhere that so beautiful a creature had never [before] been seen in London **before,—at any rate not by the eyes of men now living**. There is ever a certain dignity attached to that which is praised by all lips. Miss Boncassen as an American girl,—had she been **merely an American girl, and been** judged to be beautiful only by his own eyes,—might perhaps have seemed to him to be beneath his serious notice. In such a case he might have felt **that he could find no sufficient ground on which to justify** [himself unable to justify] so extraordinary a choice. But there was an acclamation of assent as to this girl[!] **which taught him to think unconsciously that to possess her would be to possess the best thing that was to be had.** Then came the dancing,—the one dance after another; the pressure of the hand, the entreaty that she would not, just on this occasion, dance with any other man, the attendance on her when she took her glass of wine, the whispered encouragement of Mrs. Montacute Jones, the half-resisting and yet half-yielding conduct of the girl. "I shall not dance at all again," she said when he asked her to stand up for another. "Think of all that lawn-tennis. **I am so tired that I can hardly stand.**"

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"I cannot," she said slowly. "**Certainly not to-night.** I have never dreamed of such a thing. I hardly know now whether you are in earnest."

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"Then I will say good-night, and think about it. Everybody is going. We will have our game to-morrow at any rate**, if I am rested**."

When he went to his room he found the ring on his dressing-table**, and as he put it away all regrets as to its return to him seemed to have vanished**.

Chapter 40, *"And Then?"*

On the next morning Miss Boncassen did not appear at breakfast**,—a meal which at Killancodlem made its appearance between ten and eleven o'clock**. Word came that she had been so fatigued by the lawn-tennis **and by the dancing** as not to be able to leave her bed. "I have been to her," said Mrs. Montacute Jones, whispering to Lord Silverbridge, as though he were particularly interested **in the lady's health**. "There's nothing really the matter. She will be down to lunch."

"I was afraid she might be ill," said Silverbridge, who was now hardly anxious to hide his admiration **from others**.

"Oh no;—nothing of that sort; but she will not be able to play **lawn-tennis** again to-day. It was your fault. You should not have made her dance last night." After that Mrs. Jones said a word about it all to Lady Mabel. "I hope the Duke will not be angry with me."

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"I don't suppose he will approve of it, and perhaps he'll say I brought them together on purpose. **It's not my fault that Crummie-Toddie is only twelve miles from Killancodlem.**"

Soon afterwards Mabel asked Silverbridge to walk with her to the waterfall. **Of course he professed himself glad to go.** She had worked herself into such a state of mind that she hardly knew what to do, what to wish, or how to act. At one moment she would tell herself that it was better in every respect that she should cease to think of being Duchess of Omnium. It was not fit that she should think of it. She herself cared but little for the young man, and he,—she would tell herself,—now appeared to care as little for her. **Under such circumstances why should she want to catch him?** And yet—to be Duchess of Omnium! But was it not clear **to her** that he was absolutely in love with this other girl? She had**, at any rate,** played her cards so badly that the game was now beyond her powers**, even though she should wish to win it**. **But** then **there would come** other thoughts [would come]. Was it beyond her powers? Had he not told her in London that he loved her? Had he not given her the ring which she well knew he valued **beyond anything else**? **Had he not come over from the shooting on purpose to see her? For she thought she was aware that he had not known of Miss Boncassen's presence.** Ah;—if she could but have been aware of all that had passed between Silverbridge and the Duke, how different would have been her feelings! And then would it not be so much better for him that he should marry her, one of his own

class, than this American girl, of whom nobody knew anything? **Would it not be well that she should interfere, if only that she might free him from that entanglement?** And then,—to be the daughter of the Duke of Omnium, to be the future Duchess, to escape from all the cares which her father's vices and follies had brought upon her, to have come to an end of all her troubles! Would it not be sweet? **Thoughts such as these forced themselves upon her again and again.**

But she had made her mind up to nothing when she asked him to walk up to the waterfall. There was present to her only the glimmer of an idea that she ought to caution him not to play with the American girl's feelings. She knew herself well enough to be aware that when the time for her own action came, **let her make up her mind as firmly as she might to be strategetical,** her feminine feelings would get the better of her purpose. She could not craftily bring him to the necessity of bestowing himself upon her. Had that been within the compass of her powers, opportunities had not been lacking to her. On such occasions she had always—"spared him**,**" **as she had explained the matter to Miss Cassewary**. And should the opportunity come again, again she would spare him. **She was in truth aware of that.** But she might perhaps do some good,—not to herself, that was now out of the question,—but to him by showing him how wrong he was in trifling with this girl's feelings. **In all of which, though she did not herself know it, there was a germ of spite against the girl.**

And so they started for their walk. He of course would have avoided it had it been possible. When men in such matters have two strings to their bow[,]**,—a state of things which is not uncommon,—**much inconvenience is felt when the two become entangled. Silverbridge no doubt had come over to Killancodlem for the sake of making love to Mabel Grex, and instead of doing so he had made love to Isabel Boncassen. And during the watches of the night, and as he had dressed himself in the morning, and while Mrs. Jones had been whispering to him her little bulletin as to the state of the young lady's health, he had not repented himself of the change. **Though he had loved Mabel he had not found that making love to her was easy or pleasant. She** [Mabel] had been, he thought, so little gracious to him that he would have given up that notion earlier, but for his indiscreet declaration to his father. On the other hand, making love to Isabel Boncassen seemed to him to possess some divine afflatus of joy which made it of all imaginable occupations the sweetest and most charming. She had promised him nothing. She had acceded to no request. She had admitted of no embrace. Indeed he had attempted none unless that touch of the hand might be so called, from which she had immediately withdrawn. Her conduct had been such that he had felt it to be incumbent on him, at the very moment, to justify the touch by a declaration of love. Then she had

told him that she would not promise to love him in return. And yet it had been so sweet, so heavenly sweet!

During the morning he had almost forgotten Mabel. When Mrs. Jones told him that Isabel would keep her room, he longed to ask for leave to go and make some inquiry at the door. **He did not quite dare to do this; but comforted himself by thinking that perhaps the message had come express from her to him.** She would not play lawn-tennis with him. Well;—he did not now care much for that. **There was a game better than lawn-tennis, at which perhaps she might be willing to play.** After what he had said to her she must at any rate give him some answer. **She had told him that she would think about it.** She had been so gracious to him that his hopes ran very high. It never occurred to him to fancy that she might be **still more** gracious because he was heir to the Dukedom of Omnium. She herself was so infinitely superior to all wealth, to all rank, to all **merely** sublunary acquirements, conventions, and considerations, that there was no room for confidence of that nature. But he was confident because her smile had been **so** sweet, and her eyes **so** bright,—and because he was conscious, though unconsciously conscious, of something of the sympathy of love. **In this condition of course he was not very anxious to go to the waterfall with Mabel.**

But he had to go [to the waterfall with Mabel]. **The sweet things of the world must have become very common with him if he had not thought her sweet to look at when they started.** Lady Mabel was always dressed perfectly,—having great gifts of her own in that direction. **But** there was a freshness about her which made her morning costume more charming than that of the evening, and never did she look so well as when arrayed for a walk. **And** on this occasion she had certainly done her best. But he, poor blind idiot, saw nothing of this. The white gauzy fabric which had covered Isabel's satin petticoat on the previous evening still filled his eyes. Those perfect boots, the little glimpses of parti-coloured stockings above them, the looped-up skirt, the jacket fitting but never binding that lovely body and waist, the jaunty hat with its small fresh feathers, all were nothing to him. Nor was the bright honest face beneath the hat anything to him now;—for it was an honest face, though misfortunes which had come had somewhat marred the honesty of the heart.

At first the conversation was about indifferent things,—Killancodlem and **the merits of** Mrs. Jones, Crummie-Toddie and **the tyranny of** Reginald Dobbes. They had gone along the high-road as far as the post-office, and had turned up through the wood and reached a seat whence there was a beautiful view down upon the Archay before a word was said affecting either Miss Boncassen**,** or the ring**, or their own standing in reference to each other**. "You got the ring safe," she said.

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"But if I had, and then repented of my fault in doing so, should you not have been willing to help me in setting myself right with myself? **Do you understand me?"**

"I think I do."

"I am sure you do. Of course, after what had passed, it was a trouble to me when it came. What was I to do? For a day or two I thought I would take it,—not as liking to take it, but as getting rid of the trouble in that way. Then I remembered its value, its history, the fact that all who knew you would want to know what had become of it,—and I felt that it should be given back. There is only one person to whom you must give it."

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"Your wife;—or to her who is to become your wife. No other woman can be justified in accepting such a present**, nor would you be justified in giving it to any other woman**."

"There has been a great deal more said about it than it's worth," said he, not anxious at the present moment to discuss any matrimonial projects with her. "Shall we go on to the Fall?" Then she got up and led the way till they came to the little bridge **looking over** [from] which they could see the Falls of the Codlem below them. "I call that very pretty," he said.

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"Not in the least**;—but it is very lovely, and I think I have got my taste for scenery from being there so much alone**. It is wilder than this, and there are not so many trees; but to my eyes it is very beautiful. I wish you had seen it."

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"That is not likely now," she said. "The house is in ruins**, and nothing is ever done to it**. If I had just money enough to keep it **up** for myself, I think I could live alone there and be **always** happy."

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"Mean to marry! Do persons marry because they mean it? With nineteen men out of twenty the idea of marrying them would convey the idea of hating them[.]**,— almost of murdering them."**

"Dear me! How disagreeable for them!"

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"I suppose I shall,—some day. How very well the house looks from here." It was incumbent upon him at the present moment to turn the conversation **away from the matter of marrying**.

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"**Or mean not to do it.** But you can carry out a purpose. What are you thinking of doing now?"

"Upon my honour, Mabel, that is unfair. **A fellow shouldn't be cross-questioned.**"

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"Certainly **I do** not."

"And that that old woman is going about, talking of it as her doing, pretending to be afraid of your father**'s displeasure**, whereas nothing would **in truth** please her better than to humble a family **standing** so high as yours."

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"Do you think your father would like it? **Looking at it as though the same thing had occurred to any other young man in your own position,** would you think that that other man would be doing well for himself by marrying Miss Boncassen?"

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"Why should anyone be displeased?"

"But you mean it?"

"I do not say what I mean. **It is a sort of question which no man would answer.** I could talk more freely to you than to anyone else, but I won't talk about that even to you. As regards Miss Boncassen I think that any man might marry her**, let him be he who he might,** without discredit. I won't have it said that she can be inferior to me,—or to anybody."

There was a steady manliness in this which took Lady Mabel **rather** by surprise. She was **of course** convinced that he intended to offer his hand to the girl, and now was actuated chiefly by a feeling that his doing so would be an outrage to all English

propriety. **What could she do to prevent it? But** if a word might have an effect it would be her duty to speak that word. "I think you are wrong there, Lord Silverbridge."

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"It is altogether different,—altogether. Frank's wife will be simply his wife. Mine **will be Lady Silverbridge,—and**, should I outlive my father, will be Duchess of Omnium. **She could not be more so, let her have been what she might before.**"

"But your father? I have heard you speak with bitter regret of this affair of Lady Mary's, because it vexes **your father** [him]. Would your marriage with an American lady vex him less?"

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"I am not going to marry her mother. Nor, for the matter of that,**"—added he, remembering himself,—"**am I going to marry her. You are taking all that for granted in a most unfair way."

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"You forget that she is an American, and not like one of us."

"Indeed, indeed, I do not, Lord Silverbridge."

"**At any rate** I will not talk any more about it. We had better go down or we shall get no lunch. **It is two o'clock now.**" Lady Mabel[,] **sighed** as she followed him[,]**. She** tried to make herself believe that all her sorrow came from regret that so fine a scion of the British nobility should throw himself away upon an American adventuress.

The guests were still at lunch when they entered the dining-room, and Isabel was seated close to Mrs. Jones. Silverbridge at once went up to her **and asked after her health**,—and place was made for him as though he had almost a right to be **seated** next to her. Miss Boncassen herself bore her honours **very** well, seeming to regard the little change at table as though it was of no moment. "I became so eager about that game," she said, "that I went on too long. **And then I could not bring myself to give up the dancing.**"

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"**I'm just like a schoolboy who overeats himself. The boy is so strong that he probably is not much the worse. But the third helping and the pudding and the jelly and then the cakes ought to have killed him.** At six o'clock this morning I thought I should never use my legs again."

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"That was it. I could not sleep. Now I begin to hope that sooner or later I shall unstiffen. **But I won't play lawn-tennis again for a long time.**"

During every moment, at every word that he uttered, he was thinking of the declaration of love which he had made to her. But it seemed to him as though the matter had not dwelt on her mind. When they drew their chairs away from the table he thought that not a moment was to be lost before some further explanation of their feelings for each other should be made. Was not the matter which had been so far discussed of vital importance for both of them? **It was to him! He was sure of that.** And, glorious as she was above all other women, the offer which he had made **to her** must have some weight with her. He did not think that he proposed to give more than she deserved, but still[,] **he could not but feel that** that which he was so willing to give was not a little. Or was it possible that she had not understood his **full** meaning? If so, he would not willingly lose a moment before he made it plain to her. But she seemed content to hang about with the other women, and when they **all** sauntered out into the grounds **she** seated herself on a garden-chair with Lady Mabel, and**, within his hearing,—as he stood by,—**discussed with great eloquence the general beauty of Scotch scenery. An hour went on in this way **before he could find his opportunity**. Could it **possibly** be that she knew that he had offered to make her his wife? During this time he went **away** and returned more than once, but still she was there, on the same garden-seat, talking to **Lady Mabel and to others** [those] who came in her way.

Then on a sudden she got up and put her hand on his arm. "Come and take a turn with me," she said. **The motion was so unexpected that he felt his own awkwardness, his own inability to speak at ease, as he did as he was desired.** "Lord Silverbridge,**" she said, "**do you remember anything of last night?"

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"I know a great deal about you. We Americans are an inquiring people, and I have found out pretty much everything." His mind misgave him as he felt she had ascertained his former purpose respecting Mabel. "You," she said, "among young men in England are about the foremost, and therefore,—as I think,—about the foremost in the world. **Nothing can excel your rank and your wealth.** And you have all personal gifts;—youth and spirits and——; well, I will not go on and name the others. You are, no doubt, supposed to be entitled to the best and sweetest of God's feminine creatures."

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"What may happen then I cannot tell, for I want three months also to think of it myself. Till then, good-bye. **And, remember this;—if you change your mind, as I think you ought to do, no one will impute blame to you.**" She gave him her hand and left it in his for a few seconds. He tried to draw her to him; but she resisted him, still smiling. Then she left him**, and when on the following morning he went back to Crummie-Toddie there had not been another word between them**.

Chapter 41, *Ischl*

It may be remembered that the Duke of Omnium did at last find himself compelled by a sense of honour to write a letter of apology to Mrs. Finn in reference to his erroneous and too plainly expressed opinion of her conduct. The apology had not been very ample, but nevertheless the writing of it had been terribly bitter to him. There had been that between them which made the writing of such a letter more painful than it would have been to almost anyone else. There had been obligations between them, but they had all flowed from her to him and his. He had had many doubts respecting her,—regretting, when he so doubted, the intimacy which circumstances had created. Then his doubts would recede, and at such times he had endeavoured to open his heart to her. Now, on this occasion, he had not only doubted but had felt certain,—and had allowed this certainty to work within him to the expression of a most heavy accusation. To whom in such circumstances would not the necessity for an apology be most bitter? But to no one could it be more bitter than to him! He had, however, written it,—not with a free hand or a free heart, but with such thoroughness as his feelings in the moment made possible to him.

She, when she received it, had been contented, acknowledging to herself how great the effort to him must have been. Had she, indeed, so sinned against a friend, she would have knelt at that friend's feet and implored forgiveness in sackcloth and ashes; but she could not expect that from such a nature as his. Nor did she wish it. At the first moment she told herself that the Duke's letter sufficed. Anything like intimate friendship must of course be over. She had said as much as that in her letter to him. Such thoughts as he had entertained respecting her, and such a feeling of injury as had been hot in her bosom, were not compatible with renewed friendship. And the Duchess, whom she had really loved and who had really loved

her, was gone. The Duke had apologised, and there might well be an end of everything between them. But when, as the season rolled on and she knew that he was living in town,—when she was aware that he had resumed his duties in the House of Lords, and was again spoken of as likely to take a part in some new Liberal Ministry,—when he had as it were thus come back to the world, and yet had never paid her the compliment of leaving a card at her door, then she again became sore and told herself that the man's nature had been altered by those three years of ministerial power.

When the apology had reached her, so that there was no longer any ground for absolute quarrel, then she had told the whole story to her husband. He at first was very indignant. What right had the Duke to expect that any ordinary friend should act duenna over his daughter in accordance with his caprices? This was said and much more of the kind. But any humour towards quarrelling which Phineas Finn might have felt for a day or two was quieted by his wife's prudence. "A man," she said, "can do no more than apologise. After that there is no room even for reproach." Former relations need not be re-established. This she said alluding to those former relations which had been so close between herself and the Duchess. But the affair must not be allowed to have any bearing on political matters,—as to which it would be monstrous, she declared, if the public service were made to suffer by reason of private bickerings. She spoke so well that there was no possibility of an answer. But, through the entire session, he was averse to meeting the Duke;—and she too was indignant though her indignation was hidden. *[Much of the first half of this paragraph was reinserted further down, before the paragraph beginning "At dinner the conversation…"]*

After a while there came to be a tacit agreement between them that nothing should be said about the Duke, and for many weeks neither the Duke's name nor that of Lady Mary was mentioned between them. It was **her** [a] custom [with Mrs. Finn] almost every autumn to go off to Vienna, where she possessed considerable property, and there to inspect the circumstances of her estate. Sometimes her husband would accompany her, and he did so **on this occasion** [in this year of which we are now speaking]. One morning in September they were together at an hotel at Ischl, whither they had come from Vienna, when as they went through the hall into the courtyard **to get into a carriage**, they came, in the very doorway, upon the Duke of Omnium and his daughter. The Duke and Lady Mary had just arrived, having passed through the mountains from the salt-mine district, and were about to take up their residence in the

hotel for a few days. They had travelled very slowly, for Lady Mary had been ill, and the Duke had expressed his determination to see a doctor at Ischl.

There is no greater mistake than in supposing that only the young blush. But the blushes of middle-life are luckily not seen through the tan which has come from the sun and the gas and the work and the wiles of the world. Both the Duke and Phineas blushed; and though their blushes were hidden, that peculiar glance of the eye which always accompanies a blush was visible enough from one to the other. The elder lady kept her countenance admirably, and the younger one had no occasion for blushing. She at once ran forward and kissed her friend**, who received her embraces with admirable grace**. The Duke stood with his hat off waiting to give his hand to the lady, and then **with apparent cordiality** took that of his late colleague. "How odd that we should meet here," he said, turning to Mrs. Finn.

"Odd enough to us that your Grace should be here," she said, "because we had heard nothing of your intended coming. **I am here nearly every year.**"

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"And are coming back to dinner? Of course they will dine with us. Will they not, papa?" The Duke said that he hoped they would. To declare that you are engaged at an hotel, unless there be some real engagement, is almost an impossibility. **Phineas would have avoided it if he could, for anger still rankled in his heart. She would not willingly have put herself in the way of them; but accident had now done all that.** There was no escape, and before they were allowed to get into their carriage they had promised they would dine with the Duke and his daughter.

"I don't know that it is especially a bore," Mrs. Finn said to her husband in the carriage. "You may be quite sure **of this,—**that of whatever trouble there may be in it **all**, he has much more than his share."

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At dinner the conversation turned at first on British politics, in which Mrs. Finn was quite able to take her part. Phineas was decidedly of opinion that Sir Timothy Beeswax and Lord Drummond could not live another session. [And on this subject a good deal was said.] **"In the first place," said he, "Beeswax himself is determined to break up everything unless he be put at the head of affairs."**

"How is he to do that? They can't dismiss Drummond like a drunken butler."

"Not like a drunken butler,—but after another fashion."

"What fashion?" asked the Duke.

"If they were all to resign now, and then we were to fail,—as we might fail——"

"I think we should."

"Then they would be recalled in a different form. In such an event Sir Timothy might make his demands. He could hardly do so without a crisis of some sort."

"And he would bring about the crisis with such an object?" asked Mrs. Finn.

"He is clever enough for anything."

"Do you call that cleverness, Mr. Finn?" said the Duke.

"I call it something else also,—of course. But really, Duke, we are getting so used to that something else that it need hardly surprise us. It is a game of chess in which though three or four may play on the same side one will want to have all the honour of winning the game."

"If it be so, then it has become a work no longer fit for gentlemen."

"If the gentlemen desert it what will become of the country? No, Duke; you, I think, will be the last man in England to agree to an idea that the honest men ought to run away from the rogues. If the honest men will only be sufficiently alive to their duty then the rogues will not have a chance."

"But you tell me that in this Sir Timothy will prevail."

"I have not even said that. I think he will fail. But if he does prevail it will be because the second-class men of his party, who are in fact the aristocracy of the country——"

"A part of the aristocracy, Mr. Finn."

"Because they have been too idle to restrain the ambition of a partisan whose diligence has saved them so much trouble. To a fainéant politician,—to one who, though he has all his heart in it, has too many delights in the world or too large a stake of his own to be able to devote himself to party purposes,—such a man as Sir Timothy is a great godsend. It is like having a steward who can manage everything for you. Though you see him growing rich, too rich, you do not begrudge him his plunder because he is such a comfort! I can imagine that there are some to whom Sir Timothy is very comfortable, though I hardly think that Lord Drummond be one of them."

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"And I suppose seemed when you started to be **quite** unnecessary."

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"She did to-day,—a little. **And she is so good about it that she will hardly speak till she is driven to show that she is suffering.**"

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"Had I better send for a doctor from England?" he asked. In answer to this Mrs. Finn expressed her opinion that such a measure was hardly necessary, that the gentleman from the town who had been called in seemed to know what he was about **very well**, and that the illness, lamentable as it was, did not seem to be in any way dangerous. "One cannot tell what it comes from," said the Duke dubiously**,—almost meaning to imply that though "one" might not tell absolutely, "one" might be able to make a very shrewd guess**.

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"**I don't know why they should be.** It must come from something wrong."

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"And therefore one tries to find out the cause. She says that she is unhappy." These last words he spoke slowly and in a **very** low voice. To this Mrs. Finn could make no reply. She did not doubt but that the girl was unhappy, and she knew well why; but the source of Lady Mary's misery was one to which she could not very well allude. "You know all the misery about **that** [the] young man."

"That is a trouble that requires **much** time to cure it," she said,—not meaning to imply that time would cure it by enabling the girl to forget her lover; but because in truth she had not known what else to say.

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"Neither can I. But you are a woman and might know better than I do. It is so hard that a man should be left with a charge, of which from its very nature **and from his own** he cannot understand the duties." Then he paused, but she**, though she taxed herself hard for words to say,** could find **none** [no words] which would suit at the moment. It was almost incredible to her that after what had passed he should speak to her at all as to the condition of his daughter. "I cannot, you know," he said very seriously, "encourage a hope that she should be allowed to marry that man."

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"I felt that you would **certainly** disapprove of it."

"Disapprove of it! How could it be otherwise? Of course you felt that. **If there is to be any propriety in such things, any law, any restraint, I could not but disapprove of it.** There are ranks in life in which the first comer that suits a maiden's eye may be accepted as a fitting lover. I will not say but that they who are born to such a life **as that** may be the happier. They are, I am sure, free from **many** troubles to which they are incident whom Fate has called to a different sphere. But duty is—duty;—and whatever pangs it may cost, duty should be performed. **Is it not so, Mrs. Finn?**"

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"Certainly;—certainly; certainly," he said, re-echoing her word **as though he found some comfort in doing so**.

"But then, Duke, one has to be so sure what duty requires. In many matters this is easy enough, and the only difficulty comes from temptation. **One goes astray because to go astray is pleasant. But** there are cases in which it is so hard to know."

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"There are," said he, still with a low voice but with infinite energy,—"insurmountable [discrepancies] **as those which kept Lazarus apart from the rich man**." **It was an odd illustration for him to use, but it is certain that he did not intend to signify himself or his daughter by the rich man.**

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"You would not have her—break her heart." Then he was silent for a while, turning over in his mind the proposition **in all its hardness** which now seemed to have been made to him. If the question came to that,—should she be allowed to break her heart and die, or should he save her from that fate by sanctioning her marriage with Tregear? If the choice could be put to him plainly by some supernal power **whose word in putting it he could not doubt**, what then would he choose? If duty required him to prevent this marriage, his duty could not be altered by the fact that his girl would avenge herself upon him by dying! If such a marriage were in itself wrong, that wrong could not be made right by the fear of such a catastrophe **as was now presented to his mind**. Was it not often the case that duty required that someone should die? And yet as he thought of it,—thought that the someone whom his mind had suggested **to itself** was the one female creature now left belonging to him,—he put his hand up to his brow and trembled with

agony. **He had to tell himself that duty could not carry him as far as that.** If he knew, if in truth he believed that such would be the result of firmness on his part,—then he would be infirm, then he must yield. Sooner than that, he must welcome this Tregear to his house. But why should he think that she would die? This woman had now asked him whether he would be willing to break his girl's heart. It was a frightful question; but he could see that it had come naturally in the sequence of the conversation which he had forced upon her. **But why should the girl's heart be broken?** Did girls break their hearts in such emergencies? Was it not all romance? "Men have died and worms have eaten them,—but not for love." He remembered it all and carried on the argument in his mind, though the pause was but for a minute. There might be suffering[,] no doubt**, and in such matters there must be suffering**. **Who could hope to live and not suffer?** The higher the duties the keener the pangs! But would it become him to be deterred from doing right because she for a time might find that she had made the world bitter to herself? And were there not feminine wiles,—tricks by which women learn to have their way in opposition to the **experience and** judgment of their lords and masters? He did not think that his Mary was **or could be** wilfully guilty of any dishonest scheme. The suffering he knew was true suffering. But not the less did it become him to be on his guard against attacks of this nature. **How weak would he think another man who should yield in such a case because a girl had a headache!**

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"You would not wish to see her overwhelmed by **continued** sorrow?"

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"I shall never do that to you, Duke. When you talk as you do now you hardly know yourself. You think you could see her suffering and not be moved by it. But were it to be continued long you would give way. Though we know that there is an infinity of grief in this life, still we struggle to save those we love from grieving. If she be steadfast enough to cling to her affection for this man, **if she be of a nature so little prone to change as not to be driven off from it either by absence or by her submission to you,** then, at last, you will have to yield." He looked at her frowning, but did not say a word. "Then it will perhaps be a comfort for you to know that the man himself is **good and** trustworthy and honest."

There was a terrible rebuke in this; but still, as he had called it down upon himself, he would not resent it, even in his heart. "Thank you," he said, rising from his chair. "Perhaps you will see her again this afternoon." Of course she assented, and as the

interview had taken place in his rooms she took her leave. **She felt that she was turned out; but, as he had bidden her come again to Lady Mary, this could not have been done in anger.**

"Of course I will," she said, "and if I can be of service pray command me. Our time is quite our own."

Then he was left alone. This which Mrs. Finn had said to him was all to the same effect as that which had come from Lady Cantrip; only it was said with a higher spirit **and a stronger assurance**. Both the women saw the matter in the same light. There must be a fight between him and his girl; but she, if she could hold out for a certain time, would **certainly** be the conqueror. He might take her away and try what absence would do, or he might have recourse to that specific which had answered so well in reference to his own wife**, and put another lover in her way**; but if she continued to sorrow during absence, and if she would have nothing to do with this other lover,—then he must at last give way! He had declared that he was willing to sacrifice himself,—meaning thereby that if **it were thought that** a lengthened visit to the cities of China or a prolonged sojourn in the Western States of America would wean her from her lover, he would go to China or to the Western States**, clearly bound as his heart might be to the Houses of Parliament at Westminster**. At present his self-banishment had been carried no farther than Vienna **and had not hitherto achieved anything**. During their travels hitherto Tregear's name had not once been mentioned. The Duke had come away from home resolved not to mention it,—and she was minded to keep it in reserve till some seeming catastrophe should justify a **full** declaration of her **settled** purpose. But from first to last she had been sad, and latterly she had been ill. When asked as to her complaint she would simply say that she was not happy. To go on with this through the Chinese cities could hardly be good for either of them. She would not wake herself to any enthusiasm **either** in regard to scenery, costumes, **habits,** pictures, or even discomforts. Wherever she was taken it was all barren to her**. Even her little burst of pleasure at seeing Mrs. Finn only seemed to have been something gained.**

As their plans stood at present they were to return to England so as to enable her to be at Custins by the middle of October. Had he taught himself **to believe or even** to hope that any good could be done by prolonged travelling he would readily have thrown over Custins and Lord Popplecourt. He could not bring himself to trust much to the Popplecourt scheme. **He almost felt that he should despise his girl if she fell into the Popplecourt trap.** But the same contrivance had answered on that former occasion. **And now he did not know what else to do.** When he spoke to her about their plans, she expressed herself quite ready to go back to England. When he suggested those Chinese

cities, her face became very long and she was immediately attacked by paroxysms of headache.

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"Custins is close to the sea," he replied. **"I am told you can see it from the house." Mrs. Finn however had never heard of Custins, or had forgotten it.** "It is Lord Cantrip's place in Dorsetshire. It was partly settled that she was to go there."

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"Why should she not? **No one could possibly have been more kind to her.**"

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"A convent! The house will be full of people."

"As being out of the way."

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"How can I venture to answer that? What she would like best I think would be to return to Matching with you, and to settle down in a quiet way for the winter." The Duke shook his head. That would be worse **even** than travelling **abroad**. She would still have headaches and still tell him that she was unhappy**, till in some outburst of womanly pity he would himself feel disposed to send for the objectionable lover**. "Of course I do not know what your plans are, and pray believe me that I should not obtrude my advice if you did not ask me."

"I know it," he said. "**I know it.** I know how good you are and how reasonable. I know **how much I owe you, and** how much you have to forgive."

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"I did what was best." There was a self-assurance about this which startled him, but he soon recovered himself. "The object being," continued she, "to place the whole matter as it really stood within your knowledge as quickly as possible. ["]**But** why should your Grace go back to that?"

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Then he spoke of his immediate plans. He would at once go back to England by slow stages,—by very slow stages,—staying a day or two at Salzburg, at Ratisbon, at Nuremberg, at Frankfort, and so on. In this way he would reach England about the 10th

of October, and Mary would then be ready to go to Custins by the time appointed. **This, however, must depend in some degree on her health, as at this moment she was still lying ill in her bed. The Finns when they heard all this determined to stay another fortnight at Ischl, as, notwithstanding their renewed intimacy with the Duke, they did not wish to join his party on their return home.**

In a day or two Lady Mary was better**,—or, as she declared herself, quite well**. "It is terrible while it lasts," she said, speaking to Mrs. Finn of her headache, "but when it has gone, then I am quite well. Only,"—she added after a pause,—"only I can never be happy again while papa thinks as he does now." Then there was a party made up before they separated for an excursion to the Hintersee and the Obersee**, two most lovely little lakes within a drive of Ischl,—within a drive, that is, if the carriage be supplemented by ponies for the mountain track**. On this occasion Lady Mary seemed to enjoy herself, **and in truth she did so,** as she liked the companionship of Mrs. Finn. Against Lady Cantrip she never said a word**,—nor could she have said a word with reason**. But Lady Cantrip was always a duenna to her, whereas Mrs. Finn was a friend. While the Duke and Phineas were discussing politics together, thoroughly enjoying the weakness of Lord Drummond [and]**,** the iniquity of Sir Timothy, **and the vanity of Sir Orlando Drought,** which they did with augmented vehemence from their ponies' backs, the two women in lower voices talked over their own affairs. "I dare say you will be happy at Custins," said Mrs. Finn.

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The Duke was so pleasantly excited by the political views expressed by Phineas that he proposed that they should all travel back home together and offered to wait a day or two;—but of this project both Mr. and Mrs. Finn entertained some fears; and it was not carried out.

Chapter 42, *Again at Killancodlem*

Silverbridge stayed a couple of days at Killancodlem and then, as we know, went back to Crummie-Toddie. There he [Silverbridge] remained [at Crummie-Toddie] under the dominion of Reginald Dobbes till the second week of September. Popplecourt, Nidderdale, and Gerald Palliser were there **all the time** [also], very obedient, and upon the whole **very** efficient. Tregear**, who when he was there shot well,** was intractable, occasional, and untrustworthy. He was the cause of much trouble

and of very angry words to Mr. Dobbes**,—which however were seldom spoken before his face**. He would entertain a most heterodox and injurious idea that as he had come to Crummie-Toddie for amusement, he was not bound to do anything that did not amuse him. He could not **be made to** understand that in sport as in other matters there was an ambition, driving a man on to excel always and be ahead of others. **This was a great vexation to** [In spite of this] Mr. Dobbes**,—but still he** had cause for much triumph. It was going to be**, he had just ground for thinking,** the greatest thing ever done by six guns in Scotland. As for Gerald, whom he had **first** regarded as a boy, and who had offended him by saying that Crummie-Toddie was ugly,—he was ready to go round the world for him. He had **thoroughly** indoctrinated Gerald with all his ideas of a sportsman,—even to a contempt for champagne and a conviction that tobacco should be moderated. The three Lords too had proved themselves efficient **guns**, and the thing was going to be a success. But just when a day was of **such** vital importance, when it was **absolutely** essential that there should be a strong party for a drive, Silverbridge found it absolutely necessary that he should go over to Killancodlem.

"She has gone," said Nidderdale. **The whole party was prepared to join with Reginald Dobbes in his remonstrance.**

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"Attraction be ——! I've been here for a fortnight without speaking to a soul but one of you fellows and haven't seen a meal on the table fit for a Christian to sit down to."

"I never had better grub in my life," said Gerald.

"I suppose you'd like to have a French cook," said Dobbes.

"I shouldn't wonder at his going," continued Nidderdale, "if we didn't all know that the American is no longer there. **Of course we understand that attraction;—but** she has gone to—Bath I think they say."

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"My dear boys," said Silverbridge, "you may be quite sure that when I say that I am going to Killancodlem I mean to go to Killancodlem and that no **confounded** chaff about young ladies,—which I think very disgusting,—will stop me. I shall be sorry if Dobbes's roll of the killed should be lessened by a single head, seeing that his ambition sets that way. Considering the amount of slaughter we have perpetrated, I really think that we need not be **so** over-anxious." After this nothing further was said. Tregear, who knew that Mabel Grex was still at Killancodlem, had not spoken.

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"Mrs. Montacute Jones is cut to the heart because you have not been over to see her again and she says that it is lamentable to think that such a man as Reginald Dobbes should have so much power over you. 'Only twelve miles,' she says, 'and he knows that we are here!' I told her that you knew Miss Boncassen was not here **and that she had no right to expect you to come again**.

"But though Miss Boncassen has left us we are a very pleasant party and surely you must be tired of such a place as Crummie-Toddie**, with Mr. Reginald Dobbes for tyrant**. If only for the sake of getting a good dinner once in a way do come over again. I shall be here yet for ten days. As they will not let me go back to Grex I don't know where I could be more happy. I have been asked to go to Custins and suppose I shall turn up there some time in the autumn.

"And now shall I tell you what I expect? I do expect that you will come over to—see me. 'I did see her the other day,' you will say, 'and she did not make herself **very** pleasant.' I know that. How was I to make myself pleasant when I found myself so completely snuffed out by your American beauty? Now she is away, and Richard will be himself again. Do come because in truth I want to see you.

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On receiving this he at once made up his mind to go to Killancodlem, but he could not make up his mind why it was that she had asked him. He **thought he** was sure of two things; sure in the first place that she had intended to let him know that she did not care about him; and then sure that she was **well** aware of his intention in regard to Miss Boncassen. **She had absolutely told him that she was aware of it, and he had almost told her that she was right.** Everybody at Killancodlem had seen it,—to his disgust; but still that it was so had been manifest **to him**. And he had consoled himself[,] **by saying that** [feeling] it would matter nothing should he be accepted. She had made one attempt to talk him out of his purpose. Could it be that she thought it possible a second attempt might be successful? If so, she did not know him.

She had in truth thought not only that this, but that something **also** further than this might be possible. **Or rather she had buoyed herself with hopes in that direction in opposition to her thoughts.** Of course the prize loomed larger before her eyes as the prospects of obtaining it became less. **When alone at Grex she had thought much of her own condition and her prospects.** She could not doubt**,—did not in the least doubt** that he had intended to offer her his hand when he had spoken to her of his love in

London. Then she had stopped him**,**[;]—**she hardly knew why;** had "spared him," as she had told her friend **Miss Cassewary**. Certainly she had then been swayed by some feeling that it would be ungenerous in her to seize greedily the first opportunity he had given her. But he had again made an effort. He surely would not have sent her the ring had he not intended her to regard him as her lover. When she received the ring**, though she was half ashamed of the mock request which she had herself made,** her heart had beat very high. Then she had sent that little note, saying that she would keep it till she could give it to his wife. When she wrote that, she had **certainly** intended that the ring should be her own. And **then** other things pressed upon her mind. Why had she been asked to the dinner at Richmond? Why was she invited to Custins? Little hints had reached her**,—had reached her even from Silverbridge himself,—**of the Duke's good-will towards her. If on that side the marriage were approved, why should she **by her folly** destroy her own hopes?

Then she had seen him with Miss Boncassen, and in her pique had forced the ring back upon him. During that long game on the lawn her feelings had been **sad rather than** very bitter. Of course the girl was the lovelier of the two. All the world was raving of her beauty. And there was no doubt as to the charm of her wit and manner. And then she had no touch of that blasé used-up way of life of which Lady Mabel was conscious herself. It was natural that it should be so. And was she, Mabel Grex, the girl to stand in his way and to force herself upon him, if he loved another? Certainly not,—though there might be a triple ducal coronet to be had. **So she forced the ring back upon him.**

But were there not other considerations? Could it be well that the heir of the house of Omnium should marry an American girl, as to whose humble birth whispers were already **being uttered** [afloat]? As his friend[,]**,—for she was his friend,—**would it not be right that she should tell him what the world would say? As his friend, therefore, she had given him her counsel**;—but with very little avail**.

When he was gone the whole thing **as it came nearer to herself** weighed heavily upon her mind. Why should she lose the prize if it might still be won? To be Duchess of Omnium! She had read of many of the other sex and of one or two of her own who by settled resolution had achieved greatness in opposition to all obstacles. Was this thing **altogether** beyond her reach? To hunt him, and catch him, and marry him to his own injury,—that would be impossible to her. **Not for any reward, not for any prize, would she treat him after that fashion.** She was sure of herself there. But how infinitely better would this be for him! Would she not have all his family with her,—and all the world of England? In how short a time would he not repent his marriage with Miss Boncassen? Whereas, were she his wife, she would so stir herself for his joys, for his

good, **for his improvement,** for his honour, that there should be no possibility of repentance. And he certainly had loved her. **Loved her!** Why else had he followed her, and spoken such words to her? Of course he had loved her! But then there had come this blaze of beauty and had carried off,—not his heart, but his imagination. Because he had yielded to such fascination, **fascination from which no man can altogether escape,** was she to desert him, and also to desert herself? From day to day she thought of it, and then she wrote that letter. She hardly knew what she would do, what she might say; but she would trust to the opportunity to do and say something. **She was successful at any rate in bringing him to Killancodlem.**

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"Of course I did. Do you think I would not **go and** sleep in the stables **myself** and give you up my bed if there were no other **rooms**? It is so good of you to come!"

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Soon afterwards the man in knickerbockers who had made one of the party at lawn-tennis accosted him. "I'm afraid we shan't make up such a game as we had when you were here before."

"I've had enough of that for this year," said Silverbridge.

"Yes;—certainly. That's just what I feel. Only if Miss Boncassen were here——" Then Lord Silverbridge turned on his heel and would not speak to the man in knickerbockers again.

There was **also** there a certain Lady Fawn,—a pretty mincing married woman of about twenty-five, with a husband much older, who liked **very** mild flirtations with **very** mild young men. "I am afraid we've lost your great attraction," she whispered to him.

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"It's quite true, but I'll tell you all about it another time," and so he left her. All these little troubles, his experience in the "House," the necessity of snubbing Tifto, the choice of a wife, and his battle with Reginald Dobbes, were giving him by degrees age and flavour. **There are affairs in life which ripen a man's wits abnormally, as a journey to Calcutta will ripen a hogshead of sherry. He certainly did not like having Miss Boncassen thrown at his head by everybody that spoke to him.**

Lady Mabel had fluttered about him on his first coming and had been very gracious, doing the part of an old friend**,—of one intimate enough to be able to express**

her joy at seeing a friend. "There is to be a big shooting to-morrow," she said, in presence of Mrs. Jones.

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"What a glorious new word," exclaimed Mrs. Jones.

"You may shoot if you like," said Lady Mabel**, explaining**.

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"Then we'll have a walk,—a whole lot of us," she said. **"Can't we make up a sort of picnic, Mrs. Jones?"**

This, however, was not practicable, as the other men were going to shoot; but there remained with them the idea that on the following day there was to be a walk in some direction among the mountains.

In the evening, about an hour before dinner, Silverbridge and Lady Mabel were seated together on the bank of a little stream which ran on the other side of the road **from the house**, but on a spot not more than a furlong from the hall-door. She **no doubt** had brought him there, but she had done so without any definite scheme. She had made no plan of campaign for the evening, having felt relieved when she found herself able to postpone the project of her attack till the morrow. Of course there must be an attack, but how it should be made she had never had the courage to tell herself. The great women of the world, the Semiramises, the Pocahontases, the Ida Pfeiffers, and the Charlotte Cordays, had never been wanting to themselves when the moment for action came. Now**, at this very time,** she was pleased to have this opportunity added to her, this pleasant minute in which some soft preparatory word might be spoken; but the great effort should be made on the morrow.

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"But in truth! I want to find out what you really like. Men are so different! **Of course** you need not pay me any compliment. You know that well enough."

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"But I am fond of **stalking, and fond of** shooting **too**."

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"Too much, if he is subject to Dobbes, as Dobbes likes them to be. Gerald likes it. **But Dobbes, seeing his way to a follower, has flattered Gerald into strict obedience.**"

"Poor boy!"

"It has given him a bent for life. He'll do nothing but shoot now."

"And you?"

"I shall be a jack of all trades."

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"Yes," she said **after pausing**. "Yes,—to Tregear, could I have been as sure of a welcome for him as I was for you. Frank is in all respects the same as a brother to me. That would not have seemed **to be** odd,—I mean to myself."

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"No man likes to take back a thing. It makes him seem to have been awkward and stupid in giving it. **There is a reproach in having to take a present back.**"

"It was the value**,**—**and the fact that it had come from your uncle**."

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"Now that you have fitted it for a lady's finger it should go to your wife. No one else should have it." Upon this he brought the **identical** ring once more out of his pocket and again offered it to her. "No;—anything but that. That your wife must have." Then he put the ring back again. **He certainly would not tell her now that she might take it in that capacity.**

"It would have been nicer for you had Miss Boncassen been here**,**" **she said**. In saying this she followed no plan. It came rather from pique. It was almost as though she had asked him whether Miss Boncassen was to have the ring.

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"My being here is not enough?" This should not have been said, of course, but the little speech came from the exquisite pain of the moment. She had meant to have said hardly anything[.] **just at the time;—**she had intended to be happy with him, just touching lightly on things which might lead to that attack which must be made on the morrow. But words will often lead whither the speaker has not intended. So it was now, and in the soreness of her heart she spoke. "My being here is not enough?"

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"I will at any rate be kind to you," she replied, as she sat upon the bank looking at the running water**, and picking a lily to pieces which she had brought there in her hand**.

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"No; not as yet. She is to take three months to think of it. Of course I love her best of all. **Now you understand.** If you will sympathise with me in that, then I will be as happy with you as the day is long."

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"No, sir, no; no! What did you mean——? But never mind. I have no questions to ask,—not a word to say. Why should I? Only this,—that such a marriage will disgrace your family. To me it is no more than to anybody else. **Of—course—not.** But it will disgrace your family."

Chapter 43, *What Happened at Doncaster*

The Leger this year was to be run on the 14th September, and while Lord Silverbridge was amusing himself with the deer at Crummie-Toddie and at Killancodlem with the more easily pursued young ladies, the indefatigable Major was hard at work in the stables. **As he frequently remarked to his faithful friend Captain Green,** this **did come** [came] a little hard on him. There was the cub-hunting to be looked after, which **of course** made his presence at Runnymede necessary, and then that "pig-headed fellow Silverbridge" would not have the horses trained anywhere but at Newmarket. How was he to be in two places at once? Yet he was in two places almost at once, cub-hunting in the morning at Egham and Bagshot, and sitting on the same evening at the stable-door at Newmarket, with **his pipe in his mouth and** his eyes fixed upon Prime Minister.

Gradually**, but very gradually,** had he and **the** Captain [Green] come to understand each other. And though they did at last understand each other, Tifto would **often** talk as though there were no such correct intelligence **between them**;—when for instance he would abuse Lord Silverbridge for being pig-headed. On such occasions the Captain's remarks would generally be **very** short. "That be blowed!" he would say, implying **thereby** that **all** that state of things between the two partners, in which such complaints might be natural **and perhaps just**, had now been brought to an end. But on

one occasion, about a week before the race, he spoke out a little plainer. "What's the use of your going on with all that before me? It's **all** settled what you've got to do."

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"Ain't it? I thought it was. If it ain't you'll find yourself in the wrong box. You've as straight a tip as a man need wish for, [but] **if you'll only mind your p's and q's. But** if you back out, you'll come to grief. Your money's all on the other way already."

On the Friday before the race Silverbridge **was up in town to take as it were a preparatory canter** [dined with Tifto]**.** At the Beargarden**, which was now almost destitute of customers, he met Tifto and dined with him, the two alone**. On the next morning they went down to Newmarket **together** to see the horse get a gallop, and came back the same evening. During all this time, Tifto was more than ordinarily pleasant **and courteous** to his patron. **No allusion was made to any of the wrongs that had been done him.** The horse and the certainty of the horse's success were the only subjects mooted. "It isn't what I say," repeated Tifto **for the third or fourth time**, "but look at the betting. You can't get five to four against him. They tell me that if you want to do anything on the Sunday, the pull will be the other way. **I've got on as much as I can well manage. But if I did mean to go further I shouldn't wait.**"

"I stand to lose over twenty thousand pounds already," said Silverbridge, almost frightened by the amount **as he thought of what his plight would be if he had to call on Mr. Moreton for such a sum of money**.

"But how much are you on to win?" said Tifto**,—**"**and then look at the chances**. I suppose you could sell your bets for five thousand pounds down."

"I wish I knew how to do it," said Silverbridge. But this was an arrangement which, if made just now, would not suit the Major's views. **Captain Green thought it expedient that his Lordship should yet risk some further sum of money on his favourite horse.**

They went to Newmarket, and there **of course** they met Captain Green. "Tifto," said the young Lord, "I won't have that fellow with us when the horse is galloping."

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"If he's there I'll send the horse in,—that's all." Then Tifto found it best to say a few words to Captain Green**, and the Captain did not obtrude himself**. But the Captain also said a few words to himself. "D—— young fool; he don't know what he's dropping into." Which assertion, if you lay aside the unnecessary expletive, was true to the letter.

Lord Silverbridge was a young fool, and did not at all know into what a mess he was being dropped by the united experience, perspicuity, and energy of the man whose company on the Heath he had **so rudely** declined.

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And then there were various evidences produced of his pace,—how he had beaten that horse, giving him two pounds; how he had been beaten by that, but only on a mile course; the Leger distance was just the thing for Prime Minister; how by a lucky chance that marvellous quick rat of a thing that had won the Derby had not been entered for the autumn race; how Coalheaver was known to have had bad feet**; moreover Coalheaver could not at any time have covered this distance within ten seconds of the time in which Prime Minister would certainly do it**. "He's a stout 'orse no doubt,—is the 'Eaver," said Mr. Pook, **using the new favourite name for that celebrated horse,** "and that's why the betting men have stuck to him. But he'll be nowhere on Wednesday. They're beginning to see it now, my Lord. I wish they wasn't so sharp-sighted."

In the course of the day, however, they met a gentleman who was of a different opinion. He said **somewhat** loudly that he looked on the Heaver as the best three-year-old in England. Of course as matters stood he wasn't going to back the Heaver at even money;—but he'd take twenty-five to thirty in hundreds between the two. **Major Tifto was quite surprised when he found that his friend Silverbridge did not know this gentleman. He had thought that Gilbert Villiers had been known to every racing man in England.** All this ended in the bet being accepted and duly booked by Lord Silverbridge. **"He's done it for a 'edge, my Lord," said Mr. Pook. "Otherwise he'd not be so free. He's been putting a lot on our 'orse, and in this way he gets a turn in his favour. I don't know nothing, you know, my Lord; but that's the way I look at it." So spoke Mr. Pook, who was quite as confident in his horse as he pretended to be.** And in this way Silverbridge added two thousand five hundred pounds to his responsibilities.

But there was worse than this coming. On the Sunday afternoon he went down to Doncaster, of course in company with the Major. He was **quite** alive to the **duty incumbent on him** [necessity] of ridding himself of the Major; but it had been **as it were** acknowledged that that duty could not be performed till after this race had been run. **He was quite determined to be open with the Major after that event. "Whether I race or not," he would say to the Major, "I mean to separate myself from you. I know that you have worked hard for our joint interests, and in our arrangements that shall be considered. But—you must go one way and I another."** As he sat opposite to

his friend on their journey to Doncaster, he thought of this in the train. It should be done immediately on their return to London after the race. But the horse, his Prime Minister, was by this time so dear to him that he intended if possible to keep possession of the animal. **If they won the race there would be ample means to enable him to do so.**

When they reached Doncaster the racing men were all occupied with Prime Minister. The horse and Mr. Pook had arrived that day from Newmarket, via Cambridge and Peterborough**, and the dangers of the journey had been surmounted without an accident**. Tifto, Silverbridge, and Mr. Pook visited him together three times that afternoon and evening;—and the Captain also visited the horse, though not in company with Lord Silverbridge. To do Mr. Pook justice, no one could be more careful. When the Captain came round with the Major[,]**,—to whom the stable was open at all times as being the owner of the horse,—**Mr. Pook was there. But Captain Green did not enter the box,—had no wish to do so, was of opinion that on such occasions no one whose business did not carry him there should go near a horse. His only object seemed to be to compliment Mr. Pook as to his care, skill, and good fortune.

It was on the Tuesday evening that the chief mischief was done. There was a club at which many of the racing men dined, and there Lord Silverbridge spent his evening. He was **considered to be** the hero of the hour, and everybody flattered him. **I fear** it must be acknowledged that his head was turned. They dined at eight and **a good deal of** [much] wine was drunk. No one was **probably** tipsy, but many were elated; and much confidence in their favourite animals was imparted to men who had been sufficiently cautious before dinner. Then cigars and soda-and-brandy **and other "restoratives"** became common, and our young friend was not more abstemious than others. Large sums were named, and at last in three successive bets Lord Silverbridge backed his horse for more than forty thousand pounds. As he was making the second bet Mr. Lupton**, who in a moderate way was a racing man,** came across to him and begged him to hold his hand. "It will be a nasty sum for you to lose, and winning it will be nothing to you," he said. Silverbridge took it good-humouredly, but said that he **quite** knew what he was about. "These men will pay," whispered Lupton; "but you can't be quite sure what they're at." The young man's brow was covered with perspiration. He was smoking quick and had already smoked more than was good for him. "All right," he said. "I'll mind what I'm about." Mr. Lupton could do no more, and retired. Before the night was over bets had been booked to the amount stated, and the Duke's son, who had promised that he would never plunge, **who had been fully determined in his own mind that he would never commit to any folly of that kind,** stood to lose about seventy thousand

pounds upon the race. **What he might stand to win is a matter of no moment to this story.**

While this was going on Tifto sat not far from his patron, but completely silent. During the day and early in the evening a few sparks of the **honour** [glory] which scintillated from the favourite horse flew in his direction. But he was on this occasion **very** unlike himself, and though the horse was to be run in his name had very little to say in the matter. Not a boast came out of his mouth during dinner or after dinner. He was so moody **and apparently absent** that his partner, who was generally anxious to keep him quiet, more than once endeavoured to encourage him. But he was unable to rouse himself. It was still within his power to run straight; to be on the square, if not with Captain Green, at any rate with Lord Silverbridge. But to do so he must make a clean breast with his Lordship and confess the intended sin**, and get his Lordship to take off his hands those bets he had made against the horse**. As he heard all that was being done, his conscience troubled him sorely. With pitch of this sort he had never soiled himself before. He was to have three thousand pounds from Green, and then there would be the bets he himself had laid against the horse,—by Green's assistance! It would be the making of him. Of what use had been all his "square" work to him**, seeing that he was still a poor indebted man**? And then Silverbridge had behaved so badly to him! But still, as he sat there during the evening, he would have given a hand to have been free from the **whole** attempt. He had had no conception before that he could become subject to such misery from such a cause. He would make it straight with Silverbridge this very night,—but that Silverbridge was ever lighting fresh cigars and ever having his glass refilled. It was clear to him that on this night Silverbridge could not be made to understand anything about it. And the deed in which he himself was to be the chief actor was to be done very early in the following morning. At last he slunk away to bed. **He had obeyed Captain Green's behest at any rate in this,—that he himself was completely sober.**

On the following morning, the morning of the day on which the race was to be run, the Major tapped at his patron's door about seven o'clock. Of course there was no answer;—though the knock was repeated **again and again there was no answer**. When young men overnight drink as much brandy-and-water as Silverbridge had done, and smoke as many cigars, they are apt not to hear knocks at their door made at seven o'clock. Nor was his Lordship's servant up,—so that Tifto had no means of getting at him except by personal **and uninvited** invasion of the sanctity of his bedroom. But there was no time, not a minute, to be lost. Now, within this **very five minutes** [minute] that

was pressing on him, Tifto must choose his course. He opened the door and was standing at the young man's head.

"What the d—— does this mean?" said his Lordship angrily, as soon as his visitor had succeeded in waking him. Tifto muttered something about the horse which Silverbridge **altogether** failed to understand. The young man's condition was by no means pleasant. His mouth was **hot and** furred by the fumes of tobacco. His head was aching **sorely**. He was **still** heavy with sleep, and this intrusion seemed to him to be a final indignity offered to him by the man whom he **had** now **learned to** hate[d]. "What business have you to come in here?" he said, leaning on his elbow. "I don't care a straw for the horse. If you have anything to say **why don't you** send my servant[.]**?** Get out!"

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It was about an hour afterwards that Tifto returned, and on this occasion a groom from the stables, and the young Lord's own servant, and two or three other men were with him. Tifto had been made to understand that the news now to be communicated, must be communicated **to his Lordship** by himself, whether his Lordship were angry or not. Indeed, after what had **now** been done his Lordship's anger was not **an affair** of much moment. In his present visit he was only carrying out**, successfully as far as he could judge at present,** the pleasant little plan which had been arranged for him by Captain Green. "What the mischief is up?" said Silverbridge, rising **suddenly** in his bed.

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"Is it much?" asked Silverbridge, jumping still higher in his bed. Then he was told that it was very much,—that the iron had **absolutely** driven itself into the horse's frog, and that there was actually no possibility that the horse should run on that day.

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"Where is Pook?" asked Silverbridge. But Mr. Pook was, alas, still in bed. **Mr. Pook, too, whose habit it had been of late to be with the horse almost at every moment, had enjoyed himself on the previous evening a little too freely.**

It was soon known to Lord Silverbridge as a fact**, long before he was dressed,** that in very truth the horse could not run. Then, sick with headache, with a stomach suffering unutterable things **from yesterday's cigars**, he had, as he dressed himself, to think of his seventy thousand pounds. Of course the money would be forthcoming. **He knew that.** But how would his father look at him? How would it be between him and his father now? After such a misfortune **as this** how would he be able to break that other

matter to the Duke, and say that he had changed his mind about his marriage,—that he was going to abandon Lady Mabel Grex and give his hand **and his prospects** and a future duchess's coronet to an American girl whose grandfather had been a porter?

A nail in his foot! Well! He had heard of such things before. He knew that such accidents had happened. What an ass must he have been to risk such a sum on the well-being and safety of an animal who might any day pick up a nail in his foot! Then he thought of the caution which Lupton had given him. What good would the money have done him had he won it? What more could he have than he now enjoyed **through his father's liberality**? But to lose such a sum of money**;—oh, how terrible was the misfortune**! **How much there had been to lose, and how nearly nothing to gain! He had not calculated before how bad it might be with him!** With all his advantages of wealth he felt himself to be as forlorn and wretched as though he had nothing left in the world before him.

Chapter 44, *How It Was Done*

The story was soon about the town, and was **of course** the one matter for discussion in all racing quarters. About the town! It was about England, about all Europe. It had travelled to America and the Indies, to Australia and the Chinese cities before two hours were over. Before the race was run the **causes of the** accident **were being** [was] discussed and something like the truth **was** surmised in Cairo, Calcutta, Melbourne, and San Francisco. But at Doncaster it was so all-pervading a matter that down to the tradesmen's daughters and the boys at the free-school the town was divided into two parties, one party believing it to have been a "plant," and the other holding that the cause had been natural. It is hardly necessary to say that the ring, as a rule, belonged to the former party. The ring always suspects. It did not behove even those who would win by the transaction to stand up for its honesty**,—except for such as Tifto and Green, whose winnings would of course be secret,—as whatever treatment the horse might have received, the bets would have to be paid**.

The intention had been**,—so the story went,—**to take the horse round a portion of the outside of the course near to which his stable stood. A boy rode him and the groom and Tifto went with him. At a certain spot on their return Tifto had exclaimed that the horse was going lame in his off fore-foot. As to this exclamation the boy and the two men were agreed. The boy was then made to dismount and run for Mr. Pook; and as he started Tifto commenced to examine the horse's foot. The boy saw him raise the off

fore-leg. He himself had not found the horse lame under him, but had been so hustled and hurried out of the saddle by Tifto and the groom that he had not thought on that matter till he was questioned. So far the story told by Tifto and the groom was corroborated by the boy,—except as to the horse's actual lameness. So far the story was believed by all men,—except in regard to the actual lameness. And so far it was true. Then, according to Tifto and the groom, the other foot was looked at, but nothing was seen. This other foot, the near fore-foot, was examined by the groom, who declared himself to be so flurried by the lameness of such a horse at such a time, that he hardly knew what he saw or what he did not see. At any rate then in his confusion he found no cause of lameness, but the horse was led into the stable as lame as a tree. Here Tifto found the nail inserted into the very cleft of the frog of the near fore-foot, and so inserted that he could not extract it till the farrier came. That the farrier had extracted the nail from the part of the foot indicated was certainly a fact.

Then there was the nail. Only those who were most peculiarly privileged **or most nearly interested** were allowed to see the nail. But it was buzzed about the racing quarters that the head of the nail,—an old, rusty, straight, and well-pointed nail,—bore on it the mark of a recent hammer. In answer to this it was alleged that the blacksmith in extracting the nail with his pincers, had of course operated on its head, had removed certain particles of rust, and might easily have given it the appearance of having been struck. But in answer to this the farrier, who was a sharp fellow and quite beyond suspicion in the matter, declared that he had very particularly looked at the nail before he extracted it,—had looked at it with the feeling on his mind that something base might too probably have been done,—and that he was ready to swear that the clear mark on the head of the nail was there before he touched it **with his tools**. And then not in the stable, but lying under the little dung-heap away from the stable-door, there was found a small piece of broken iron bar, about a foot long, which might have answered for a hammer,—a **very old and** rusty bit of iron; and amidst the rust of this was found such traces as **would or** might have been left had it been used in striking such a nail. There were some who declared that neither on the nail nor on the iron could they see anything. And among these was the Major. But Mr. Lupton brought a strong magnifying-glass to bear, and the world of examiners was satisfied that the marks were there.

It seemed however to be agreed that nothing could be done. Silverbridge **himself** would not lend himself at all to those who suspected mischief. He was miserable enough, but in this great trouble he would not separate himself from Tifto. "I don't believe a word of all that," he said to Mr. Lupton**, who took a leading part in the endeavours made to discover the truth**.

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"Mr. Pook may do as he likes, but I will have nothing to do with it. **I won't go near the horse. If I can help it I will never see him again.**"

Then Tifto came to him swaggering. Tifto**, as the reader will understand,** had to go through a considerable amount of acting, for which **perhaps** he was not very well adapted. The Captain would have done it better. He would have endeavoured to put himself altogether into the same boat with his partner, and would have imagined neither suspicion or enmity on his partner's part till suspicion or enmity had been shown. But Tifto, who **of course** had not expected that the matter would be allowed to pass over without some inquiry, began by assuming that Silverbridge would think evil of him. Tifto, who at this moment would have given all that he had in the world not to have done the deed, who now hated the instigator of the deed **with all the bitterness of his heart**, and felt something almost akin to love for **the young gentleman from whom he would now, too probably, be estranged for ever** [Silverbridge], found himself to be forced by circumstances to defend himself by swaggering. "I don't understand all this that's going on, my Lord," he said.

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Before one o'clock, at which hour it was stated nominally that the races would commence, general opinion had formed itself,—and general opinion had nearly hit the truth. General opinion declared that the nail had been driven in wilfully,—that it had been done by Tifto himself, and that Tifto had been instigated by Captain Green. Captain Green**, though a very clever man and endowed with peculiar gifts in this direction,** perhaps overacted his part a little. His intimacy with the Major was well known, and yet, in all this turmoil, he kept himself apart as though he had **little or** no interest in the matter. "I have got my little money on, and what little I have I lose," he said in answer to inquiries. But everyone knew that he could not but have a great interest in a race, as to which the half owner of the favourite was a peculiarly intimate friend of his own. Had he come down to the stables and been seen about the place with Tifto it might **perhaps** have been better. As it was, though he was very quiet, **though he expressed no opinion either in favour of Tifto or against him, early in the day,—at any rate before the Leger was run,—**his name **had been** [was soon] mixed up in the matter. There was one man who asserted it as a fact known to himself that Green and Villiers,—one Gilbert Villiers,—were in partnership together. It was very well known that Gilbert Villiers would win two thousand five hundred pounds from Lord Silverbridge.

Then minute investigation**,—as minute as the circumstances of the day allowed,—**was made into the betting of certain individuals. Of course there would be great plunder, and where would the plunder go? Who would get **all** the money which poor Silverbridge would lose? It was said that one at least of the large bets made on that Tuesday evening could be traced to the same Villiers though not actually made by him. **There would of course be more of this as time went on,—**[More would be learned] when the settling-day should come. But there was quite enough **of it** already to show that there were many men determined to get to the bottom of it all if possible. **Among whom however Silverbridge would take no action.**

There **seemed to come to him** [came upon Silverbridge] in his trouble a keen sense of his position and a feeling of the dignity which he ought to support. He clung during a great part of the morning**,—as soon as he had thrown off the nausea of the last evening's excess,—**to Mr. Lupton. Mr. Lupton was **very** much his senior and they had never been **peculiarly** intimate; but now there was comfort in his society. "I am afraid you are hit heavily," said Mr. Lupton.

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"No, I can't. It is **anything but** [not] a trifle. I must tell my father. He can find the money."

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"And **I think** he will. But I feel at present that I would rather change places with the poorest gentleman I know than have to tell him. I have done with races, Lupton."

"If so, this will have been a happy day for you. A man in your position can hardly make money by it, but he may lose so much! If a man really likes the amusement,—as I do,—and risks no more than what he has in his pocket, that may be very well. **But you, I think, are too excitable for the turf.**"

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Nevertheless he went to see the race run, and everybody seemed to be touched with pity for him. He carried himself well, saying as little as he **possibly** could of his own horse, and taking, or **at any rate** affecting to take, great interest in the race. **When Coalheaver won he congratulated the winner with a pretty grace, and went down to look at the horse when he was stripped.** After the race he managed to see all those to whom he had lost heavy stakes,—having to own to himself as he did so that not one of them was a gentleman to whom he should like to give his hand. To them he explained

that his father was abroad,—that probably his liabilities could not be settled till after his father's return. He however would consult his father's agent and would then appear on settling-day. They were all full of the blandest courtesies. There was not one of them who had any doubt as to getting his money,—unless the whole thing might be disputed on the score of Tifto's villainy. Even then payment could not be disputed unless it was proved that he who demanded the money had been one of the actual conspirators. After having seen his creditors he went away up alone to London. **To Major Tifto he had not spoken a word since the little scene which has been narrated;—but he would have spoken with kindness had Tifto come in his way.**

When in London he went to Carlton Terrace and spent the night there in solitude. **He did not even show himself at the Beargarden.** It had been his plan to join Gerald **and one or two others** for some partridge-shooting at Matching, and then to go yachting till such time as he should be enabled to renew his suit to Miss Boncassen. Early in November**, when if not the entire three months at least ten weeks would have run by,—and he had thought that ten weeks might be allowed to stand for three months,—she with her father would be in London, and then** he would again ask her to be his wife. These had been his plans. But now it seemed that everything was changed. Partridge-shooting and yachting must be out of the question till this terrible load was taken off his shoulders. **So at least he thought at the moment.** Soon after his arrival at the house two telegrams followed him from Doncaster. One was from Gerald. "What is all this about Prime Minister? Is it a sell? I am so unhappy." The other was from Lady Mabel,—for among other luxuries Mrs. Montacute Jones had her own telegraph-wire at Killancodlem. "Can this be true? We are all so miserable. I do hope it is not much!" From which he learned that his misfortune was already known to all his friends. **Probably his father, in Germany, had by this time heard it.**

And now what was he to do? **It was about ten o'clock when he reached his house, and having telegraphed his coming, he found his supper ready for him. As in his misery he had eaten no dinner, this was not thrown away upon him. He ate heartily; but as he jumped up from the table he felt almost ashamed of himself for doing so, and manfully resolved that he would not allow himself a single cigar. Then,** [He ate his supper, and then,] without hesitating for a moment,—feeling that if he did hesitate the task would **certainly** not be done on that night,—he sat down and wrote the following letter:

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"I have just come up from Doncaster. You have probably heard **already by the wire** what has been Prime Minister's fate. I don't know whether any horse has ever been such a favourite for the Leger. Early in the morning he was taken out and picked up a nail. The consequence was he could not run.

"Now I must come to the bad part of my story. I have lost—seventy thousand pounds! It is no use beating about the bush. The sum is something over that. What am I to do? If I tell you that I shall give up racing altogether, I dare say you will not believe me. It is a sort of thing a **young** man always says**, I suppose,** when he wants money. But I feel now I cannot help saying it.

"But what shall I do? Perhaps, if it be not too much trouble you will come up to town and see me. **This will go down to Silverbridge by the day mail to-morrow.** You can send me a word by the wires. **Of course I will wait here for you.**

"You may be sure of this. I shall make no attempt to raise the money elsewhere, unless I find that my father will not help me. You will understand that of course it must be paid. You will understand also what I must feel about telling my father. But I shall do so at once. I only wait till I can hear from you**,—or perhaps see you**. **I am very sorry to give you so much trouble.**

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During the next day two despatches reached Lord Silverbridge **at his father's house in London**, both of them coming as he sat down to his solitary dinner. The first consisted of a short but very civil note.

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"Messrs. C & C beg to offer their apologies for interfering, but desire to inform his Lordship that should cash be wanting to any amount in consequence of the late races they will be happy to accommodate his Lordship on most reasonable terms, at a moment's notice, upon his Lordship's simple bond**, and to any amount**.

"Lord Silverbridge may be **quite** sure of absolute secrecy**, and may rest assured that such a loan as Messrs. C & C propose may be effected without the slightest trouble to his Lordship**.

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The other despatch **consisted of** [was] a telegram from Mr. Moreton, saying that he would be in Carlton Terrace by noon on the following day.

Chapter 45, *"There Shall Not Be Another Word Said About It"*

Early in October the Duke was at Matching with his daughter, and Phineas Finn and his wife were both with them. On the day after they parted at Ischl the first news respecting Prime Minister had reached him,—namely, that his son's horse had lost the race. This would not have annoyed him at all, but that the papers which he read contained some vague charge of swindling against somebody, and hinted that Lord Silverbridge had been a victim. Even this would not have troubled him,—might in some sort have comforted him,—were it not made evident to him that his son had been closely associated with swindlers. **In these narrations, perforce, pity was expressed for Silverbridge. Now he did not wish that his son should be subject to pity.** If it were a mere question of money, that might be settled without difficulty. Even though the sum lost might have grown out of what he might have expected into some few thousands[,]**,—which would in a sense be serious,—**still he would bear it without a word, if only he could separate his boy from bad companions. Then came Mr. Moreton's letter telling the whole.

At the meeting which took place between Silverbridge and his father's agent at Carlton Terrace it was **at last** settled that Mr. Moreton should write the letter. Silverbridge tried and found that he could not do it. He did not know how to humiliate himself sufficiently, and yet could not keep himself from making attempts to prove that according to all recognised chances his bets had been good bets. **But when he read what was written he found that it would not do,—nor, as it seemed, could he write what would do. At last he resigned the attempt in despair to Mr. Moreton.**

Mr. Moreton was **in truth much** better able to accomplish the task. He knew the Duke's mind **on the matter better than the son did, and was able to say more in the young man's favour than the young man could say himself**. A very large discretion had been left in Mr. Moreton's hands in regard to moneys which might be needed on behalf of that dangerous heir!—so large that he had been able to tell Lord Silverbridge that if the money was in truth lost according to Jockey Club rules, it should all be forthcoming on the settling-day,—certainly without assistance from Messrs. Comfort and Criball. The Duke had been**, almost** nervously**,** afraid of such men of business as Comfort and Criball, and from the earliest days of his son's semi-manhood had **endeavoured to be** [been] on his guard against them. Let any sacrifice be made so that his son might be kept clear from **the ready aid of** Comforts and Criballs. **He had not said all this to his son,—though much of it he had said. But** to Mr. Moreton he had

been very explicit. His own pecuniary resources were so great that they could bear some ravaging without serious detriment. It was for his son's character and standing in the world, for his future respectability and dignity that his fears were so keen, and not for his own money. By one so excitable, so fond of pleasure as Lord Silverbridge, some ravaging would probably be made. Let it be met by ready money. **At any rate let it not be resisted by the assistance of the Criballs and Comforts of the metropolis.** Such had been the Duke's instructions to his own trusted man of business, and, acting on these instructions, Mr. Moreton was able to tell the heir that the money should be forthcoming.

Mr. Moreton, after detailing the extent and the nature of the loss, and the steps which he had decided upon taking, went on to explain the circumstances as best he could. He had made some inquiry **himself**, and felt **in his own mind** no doubt that a gigantic swindle had been perpetrated by Major Tifto and others **with the view of extracting a huge sum of money out of the young Lord's pocket**. The swindle had been successful. Mr. Moreton had consulted certain gentlemen of high character **well** versed in affairs of the turf. He mentioned Mr. Lupton among others,—and had been assured **by them** that though the swindle was undoubted, the money had better be paid. It was thought to be impossible to connect the men who had made the bets with the perpetrators of the fraud;—and if **such a man as** Lord Silverbridge were to abstain from paying his bets because his own partner had ruined the animal which belonged to them jointly, the feeling would be against him rather than in his favour. In fact the Jockey Club could not sustain him in such refusal. Therefore the money would be paid. Mr. Moreton, with some expressions of doubt, trusted that he might be thought to have exercised a wise discretion **in this matter**. Then he went on to express his own opinion **very favourably** in regard to the lasting effect which the **whole** matter would have upon the young man. "I think," said he, "that his Lordship is heartily sickened of racing and that he will never return to it."

The Duke was of course very wretched when these tidings first reached him. Though he was a rich man, and of all men the least careful of his riches, still he **could not but feel** [felt] that seventy thousand pounds was a large sum of money to throw away among a nest of swindlers. And then it was excessively grievous to him that his son should **in any way** have been mixed up with such men. Wishing to screen his son, even from his own anger, he was careful to remember that the promise made that Tifto should be dismissed was not to take effect till after this race had been run. There had been no deceit in that. But then Silverbridge had promised that he would not "plunge." There are, however, promises which from their very nature may be broken without falsehood. **If a man says that he will drink nothing and then drinks, he is certainly false. But if**

he confines himself to promising that he will never again drink hard, he may fall into a bout of hard drinking and yet not be subject to the charge of lying. Plunging is a doubtful word, and the path down to it,—like all doubtful paths,—is slippery and easy! If that assurance with which Mr. Moreton ended his letter could only be made true, he could bring himself to forgive [even] this offence**, and could soon learn to forget the money**. The boy must be made to settle himself in life. The Duke resolved that his only revenge should be to press on that marriage with Mabel Grex.

At Coblenz, on their way home, the Duke and his daughter were caught up by Mr. and Mrs. Finn, and the matter of the young man's losses was discussed **by them**. Phineas had heard all about it, and was loud in denunciations against Tifto, Captain Green, Gilbert Villiers, and **one or two** others whose names had reached him. The money he thought should never have been paid. The Duke however declared that the money would not cause a moment's regret, if only the whole thing could be got rid of at that cost. It had reached Finn's ears**,—or rather his eyes, as the information had come by letter,—** that Tifto was already at loggerheads with his associates **as to his share of the plunder**. There was some hope that the whole thing might be brought to light by this means. For all that the Duke cared nothing. If only Silverbridge and Tifto could for the future be kept apart, as far as he and his were concerned, good would have been done rather than harm. While they were in this way together on the Rhine it was decided that very soon after their return to England Phineas and Mrs. Finn should go down to Matching.

When the Duke arrived in London his sons were not there. Gerald had gone back to Oxford, and Silverbridge had merely left an address. **There was a little note too. If his father wished to see him, he would come at once,—either to London or to Matching or elsewhere.** Then his sister wrote him a very short letter. "Papa will be so glad if you will come to Matching. Do come." Of course he came, and presented himself some few days after the Duke's arrival.

He had suffered much since the fatal day. In the first place he had been urged by members of the Jockey Club to take steps to unravel the fraud, whereas, whether there had been fraud or not, he was very anxious to have nothing more to do with the matter. The money had been paid, and his father had been told. He had no more care about the money, though he was very anxious as to his father. Then it was pressed upon him that he should take a leading step in punishing Tifto. Tifto should be expelled from the Beargarden. A representation must be made to the members of the Runnymede hunt, so that he might be deposed from his Mastership. He should be expelled from all race meetings,—and as far as possible from all race-courses. He was not very solicitous as to what they might do to Tifto, but he was

most unwilling to do anything himself. Even yet he did not feel sure that Tifto and the groom had driven the nail into the horse's foot. But his great trouble was the meeting with his father which, [But he dreaded this meeting with his father which, however,] let it be postponed for ever so long, must come at last. In reference to this he made a great resolution,—that he would go instantly **to his father** as soon as he might be sent for. When the summons came he started; but, though he was by courtesy an earl, and by fact was not only a man but a member of Parliament, though he was half engaged to marry one young lady and ought to have been engaged to marry another, though he had come to an age at which Pitt was a great minister and Pope a great poet, still his heart was in his boots, as a schoolboy's might be, when he was driven up to the house at Matching.

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"Fairly well, thank you. Travelling I think agrees with me **on the whole**. I miss, not my comforts, but a certain knowledge of how things are going on which comes to us I think through our skins when we are at home. A feeling of absence **always** pervades me. Otherwise I like it. And you;—what have you been doing?"

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"Of course they were all to have a holiday just at that time. But **I think** Gerald is reading. I fancy that Gerald is clever."

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"Nimrod I fancy got his game in any way that he could compass it. I do not doubt but that he trapped foxes **if there were foxes in those parts**."

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"As for backing, Silverbridge, do not you think that we had better have done with that?" This was said hardly in a tone of reproach, with something even of banter in it; and as the question was asked the Duke was smiling. But in a moment all that sense of joyousness which the young man had felt in singing his brother's praises was expelled. His face fell, and he stood before his father almost like a culprit. "We might as well have it out, about this racing," continued the Duke. "Something has to be said about it. You have lost an enormous sum of money." The Duke's tone in saying this became terribly severe. Such at least was its sound in his son's ears. He **certainly** did not mean to be severe. **He would not have said a word on the subject had he not felt that propriety**

demanded it of him. But when he did speak of that which displeased him his voice naturally assumed that tone of indignation with which in days of yore he had been wont to denounce the public extravagance of his opponents in the House of Commons. **Silverbridge, who had been standing, immediately seated himself, his knees almost giving way beneath him.** The father paused, but the son could not speak at the moment. "And worse than that," continued the Duke; "you have lost it in **about** as bad company as you could have found had you picked all England through."

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"They are gone," said Silverbridge energetically, jumping from his chair as he spoke. "I will never own a horse again, or a part of a horse. I will have nothing more to do with races. You will believe me**;—will you not**?"

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"No; no, I would not have you hamper yourself **in that way for worlds**. Nor shall you bind yourself by any further promises. You have done with racing?"

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"I knew it would. **I knew it would.**"

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Lord Silverbridge was more moved to outward signs of contrition and sorrow by his father's generosity than he would have been by any severity. That his father should forgive so readily and yet himself suffer so deeply, affected the son's feelings so strongly that for a time he could hardly repress his sobs. "And now there shall not be a word more said about it," said the Duke suddenly. **"But I would have you always remember that such a one as you can gain nothing by gambling. Had you won this money, would not the very possession of money so obtained have been a disgrace to you? All money won by gambling should be a reproach;—yet what am I to say of money extracted by such a one as you out of the pockets of such as they? Would it not stink when you handled it?"** Silverbridge in his confusion could make no answer. "There shall not be another word said about it," said the Duke again. "And now, what do you mean to do with yourself immediately?"

"I'll stay here, sir, as long as you do. Finn and Warburton and I have still a few coverts to shoot." **Mr. Warburton had been the Duke's private secretary when the Duke was Prime Minister and was now at Matching.**

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"You speak of it as if it were **a necessary task;** the business of your life,—on which your bread depended."

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"He will be very hard upon you in the way of politics**, I should think**."

"I can answer him better than I can you, sir. **There is I think something to be said about it.** Mr. Lupton said he would come for a day or two. He'll stand to me."

After that his father stopped him as he was about to leave the room. "One more word, Silverbridge. Do you remember what you were saying **to me** when you walked down to the House with me from your club that night?" Silverbridge remembered very well what he had said. He had undertaken to ask Mabel Grex to be his wife, and had received his father's ready approval to the proposition. But at this moment he was **very** unwilling to refer to that matter. "I have thought about it very much since that," said the Duke. "I may say that I have been thinking of it every day. If there were anything to tell me, you would let me know;—would you not?"

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Silverbridge paused a moment, trusting that he might be able to escape the making of any answer;—but the Duke evidently intended to have an answer. "It appeared to me, sir, that it did not seem to suit her," said the hardly-driven young man. **He felt himself to be very hardly driven,—not by his father's pertinacity but by the unfortunate complexity of his own circumstances.** He could not now say that Mabel had shown a disposition to reject his offer, because as they had been sitting by the brook-side at Killancodlem, even he, with all his self-diffidence **and want of knowledge of the world**, had been forced to see what were her wishes. Her confusion, and too evident despair when she heard of the offer **that had been made** to the American girl, had plainly told her tale. He could not now plead to his father that Mabel Grex**, whom he had professed to love so dearly,** would refuse his offer. But his self-defence, when first he found that he had lost himself in love for the American, had **all** been based on that idea. He had done his best to make Mabel understand him. If he had not actually offered to her, he had done the next thing to it. And he had run after her[,]**,—so he told himself,—**till he was ashamed of such running. She had given him no encouragement;—and therefore he had been justified. No doubt he must have been mistaken **as to her intentions**. That he now perceived; but still he felt himself to be justified. It was

impossible that he should explain all this to his father. **He had, however, to say something.** One thing he certainly could not say,—just at present. After his folly **and misconduct** in regard to those heavy bets he could not at once risk his father's renewed anger by proposing to him an American daughter-in-law. That must stand over, at any rate till the girl had accepted him positively. "I am afraid it won't come off, sir," he said at last.

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"I told you when we were speaking of it that I was not **at all** confident."

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"I can't **just** explain it all, sir;—but I fear it won't come off."

Then the Duke, who had been sitting, got up from his chair and with his back to the fire made a final little speech. "We decided just now, Silverbridge, that nothing more should be said about that unpleasant racing business, and nothing more shall be said by me. But you must not be surprised if I am anxious to see you settled in life. No young man could **ever have been** [be] more bound by duty to marry early than you are. In the first place you have to repair the injury done by my inaptitude for society. You have explained to me that it is your duty to have the Barsetshire coverts properly shot, and I have acceded to your views. Surely it must be equally your duty to see your Barsetshire neighbours. And you are a young man every feature of whose character would be improved by matrimony. As far as means are concerned you are almost as free to make arrangements as though you were already the head of the family."

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The next two or three days passed quietly and pleasantly enough,—with a good deal of light political skirmishing in which the Duke took but little part, as Phineas Finn demolished one after another the juvenile arguments of the young deserter. "He'll come back to us, Duke, before long," said Phineas one morning.

"I hope it will not be when we are in power," said the Duke. "Nobody should ever go over to a winning side."

"But I am not a candidate for office," said Silverbridge.

"You don't know what you are. If a young man be asked to take office he cannot always very well refuse. I don't think Sir Timothy will make you an offer."

"I shall have him for my under-secretary some day," said Phineas.

"You must be secretary first before you can have a secretary under you. Sir Timothy means to do wonderful things next session. He'll have quite a new set round him. Perhaps you may be one of them, Silverbridge. You wait till you get to Gatherum and hear what Lupton has to say about it all." This went on till the end of the second week in October, and then the party was broken up. The Duke and Lady Mary started for Custins. Lord Silverbridge went to Gatherum to prepare for his guests,—and Mr. and Mrs. Finn returned to London, whence she was to proceed in one direction, while he went in another to the Barsetshire shooting.

Chapter 46, *Lady Mary's Dream*

When the Duke and his daughter reached Custins they found a large party assembled[,] **there. Lady Cantrip was accustomed to have her house full in October, and after talking the matter over carefully with her husband had resolved that the time had come in which the Duke and his daughter ought to be able to mingle again in the world. The Duchess had now been dead more than six months; and though a widow may be supposed to find it necessary to seclude herself for a longer time than that, a widower is generally thought to be made of stronger fibre. And as for Lady Mary, seeing that she was expected not only to fall in love but to get rid of a former love in order that she might do so, Lady Cantrip felt that further allusions to the girl's mourning would be unnecessary. And there was something of an idea present to the minds both of Lord and Lady Cantrip that they were doing for this restive young woman almost more than friendship required. They both of them felt the greatest regard for the Duke, and Lady Cantrip was really attached to the girl;—but there are limits. The Duke's feeling on the matter of his daughter's unfortunate love had been so strong that he had almost thought that the whole world ought to be moved by it. Some shadow of an idea of this kind made its way into the minds of the Cantrips;—not altogether justly, as the Popplecourt idea had been almost altogether her own. "I'll bring them together, and then they must just settle it among themselves," she said to the Earl. Now she was as good as her word, for Popplecourt was at Custins when the Duke and his daughter arrived**.

The Duke was a little surprised and Lady Mary very much surprised to find such a [and were somewhat surprised at the] crowd. Lord and Lady Nidderdale were there, which might have been expected as they were part of the family. **And** with Lord Popplecourt had come his recent friend Adolphus Longstaffe. That too might have been

natural. Mr. and Miss Boncassen were there also, who at this moment were quite strangers to the Duke; and Mr. Lupton**, who had not yet gone to assist Silverbridge in performing his duty among the Barsetshire coverts**. The Duke also found **a very old friend of his, Lady Rosina de Courcy; and Mr. and Mrs. Grey, who were also old and valued friends; and** Lady Chiltern, whose father-in-law had more than once sat in the same Cabinet with himself and Lord Cantrip; and Mr. Monk, who was generally spoken of as the head of the coming Liberal government, and the Ladies Adelaide and Flora FitzHoward, the still unmarried but not very juvenile daughters of the Duke of St. Bungay. These with a few others **who need not be named made a** [made a] large party, and rather confounded the Duke, who had hardly reflected that discreet and profitable love-making was more likely to go on among numbers, than if the two young people **had been** [were] thrown together **in big desolate rooms** with no other companions than their elders. **The St. Bungay girls, as they were generally called, were gay young women, though they were not clever, and understood the indescribable art of keeping up a chatter about nothing. Mr. Lupton and Lady Chiltern were both very lively people, and Dolly Longstaffe, though he had not often as much to say for himself as on those two last occasions when we saw him in company with Miss Boncassen, nevertheless had a way of his own of adding something to the cheeriness of a party.**

Lord Popplecourt had been made to understand what was expected of him, and after some **little** hesitation had submitted himself to the conspiracy. There would not**, he understood,** be less at any rate than two hundred thousand pounds;—and **then** the connection would be made with one of the highest families in Great Britain. Though Lady Cantrip had said very few words, those words had been expressive; and the young bachelor peer had given in his adhesion. Some vague half-defined tale had been told him,—not about Tregear, as Tregear's name had not been mentioned,—but respecting some dream of a young man who had flitted across the girl's path during her mother's lifetime. "All girls have [such] dreams **of that nature**," Lady Cantrip had suggested. Whereupon Lord Popplecourt said that he supposed it was so. "But a softer, purer, more unsullied flower never waited on its stalk till the proper fingers should come to pluck it," said Lady Cantrip, rising to unaccustomed poetry on behalf of her friend the Duke. Lord Popplecourt accepted the poetry and was ready to do his best to pluck the flower.

It so happened that soon after the Duke's arrival Lord Popplecourt found himself in one of the drawing-rooms with Lady Cantrip and his proposed father-in-law. A hint had been given him that he might as well be home early from shooting, so as to be in the way. As the hour in which he was to make himself specially agreeable, both to the father and to the daughter, had drawn nigh, he became somewhat nervous, and now, at

this moment, was not altogether comfortable. Though he had been concerned in no such matter before, he had an idea that love was a soft kind of thing which ought to steal on one unawares and come and go without trouble. In his case it came upon him with a rough demand for immediate hard work. **This might, for aught he knew, be customary; but** he had not previously thought that he was to be subjected to such labours, and at this moment almost resented the interference with his ease. **He was not sure but that he would have escaped from it if he could.** He was already a little angry with Lady Cantrip, but at the same time felt himself to be so much in subjection to her that he could not rebel.

The Duke himself when he saw the young man was hardly more comfortable. He had brought his daughter to Custins, feeling that it was his duty to be with her; but he would **infinitely** have preferred**, had his conscience permitted it,** to leave the whole operation to the care of Lady Cantrip. He hardly liked to look at the fish whom he wished to catch**,—or to have caught,—**for his daughter. Whenever this aspect of affairs presented itself to him, he would endeavour to console himself by remembering the past success of a similar transaction **in regard to his own wife**. He **often** thought of his own first interview with **her** [his wife],—the first interview **at least** in which he had **uttered a word to her of any moment** [spoken to her seriously]. "You have heard," he had said, "what our friends wish?" She had pouted her lips, and when gently pressed had at last muttered, with her shoulder turned to him, that she supposed it was to be so. Very much more coercion had been used to her then than either himself or Lady Cantrip had dared to apply to his daughter**,—and much harder words spoken**. **Of that he had no doubt.** He did not think that his girl in her present condition of mind would signify to Lord Popplecourt that "she supposed it was to be so." **He knew,—in his heart he knew,—that she would signify quite something else.** Now that the time for **making** the transaction was present he felt almost sure it would never be transacted. But still **as he was there for the purpose** he must go on with it. Were he now to abandon his scheme **in reference to Lord Popplecourt**, would it not be tantamount to abandoning everything **in reference to Mr. Tregear**? So he wreathed his face in smiles,—or made some attempt at it,—as he greeted the young man.

"I hope you and Lady Mary had a pleasant journey abroad," said Lord Popplecourt. Lord Popplecourt, being aware that he had **already** been **adopted or at any rate** chosen as a son-in-law, felt himself called upon to be familiar as well as pleasant. **The Duke hardly realised the feeling. The young man was to him one who, perhaps, might be a son-in-law, but probably would not, and with whom he was already almost prepared to be angry as being a matter of annoyance,—a thorn to him.** "I

often thought of you and Lady Mary, and wondered what you were about**,**" **continued Popplecourt**.

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This was unfortunate, because it recalled Tregear to the Duke's mind**, and set him thinking on the impropriety of allowing young people to converse freely with whomever they might meet**. "We saw very few people whom we knew," said the Duke.

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"He did not beat me by so much," continued Popplecourt. "I think Tregear did the best with his rifle. One morning he potted three. Dobbes was **so** disgusted. He hated Tregear."

"Isn't it **very** stupid,—half-a-dozen men getting together in that way?" asked Lady Cantrip.

"**It depends on how they get on together.** Nidderdale is always jolly."

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"And Gerald is a regular brick." The Duke bowed. "Silverbridge used always to be going off to Killancodlem where there were a lot of ladies. He is very sweet, you know, on this American girl whom you have here**, Lady Cantrip**." Again the Duke winced. "Dobbes is awfully good as to making out the shooting, but then he is a tyrant. Nevertheless I agree with him. If you mean to do a thing you should do it."

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"Nidderdale always says that a man should do a little of everything, and Nidderdale has a great deal of common sense." This of course came from Lady Cantrip.

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"I have seen very little of him**,**" **said the Duke, preparing to escape from this irrational and untoward conversation**.

"I cannot say I do. He thinks so much of himself**, and as far as I can hear he is nobody**. Of course he is very intimate with Silverbridge and that is all that anyone knows of him." The Duke bowed almost haughtily, though why he bowed he could hardly have explained to himself. Lady Cantrip bit her lips in disgust. **Why was the young man such a fool as to go on talking about Tregear?** "He's just the fellow,"

continued Popplecourt, "to think that some princess has fallen violently in love with him." Then the Duke **muttered some excuse and** left the room.

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"I should think not;—a man without any position or a shilling in the world. **I did not say any good of him.**"

"The Duke is peculiar. If a subject is distasteful to him he does not like it to be mentioned. **And though he does not easily take offence he is liable to impressions.** You had better not mention Mr. Tregear." Lady Cantrip as she said this blushed inwardly at her own hypocrisy.

It was of course contrived at dinner that Lord Popplecourt should take out Lady Mary. It is impossible to discover how such things get wind, but there was already an idea prevalent at Custins that Lord Popplecourt had matrimonial views, and that these views were looked upon favourably. **Lady Adelaide FitzHoward had spread this report, and Lady Adelaide knew everything of that kind.** "You may be quite sure of it, Mr. Lupton," **she** [Lady Adelaide FitzHoward] had said. "I'll make you **any** [a] bet **you like** they're married before this time next year."

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"I declare he is very good-looking," said Lady Adelaide.

Lady Chiltern had whispered a suspicion of the same kind **to Mrs. Grey**, and **both of them** had expressed a hope that the lover would be worthy of the girl. **"He is hardly the sort of man," said Mrs. Grey, "that I should have thought her mother's daughter would have chosen." In answer to this Lady Chiltern had explained that Lord Popplecourt had a very large estate entirely at his own command,—that he was reputed to be a careful young man, and that girls situated as was Lady Mary could not quite be allowed to choose for themselves in such matters.**

And **our old friend** Dolly Longstaffe had chaffed his friend Popplecourt on the subject, Popplecourt having laid himself open by indiscreet allusions to Dolly's **very manifest** love for Miss Boncassen. "Everybody can't have it as easily arranged for him as you**, old fellow**,—a duke's daughter and a pot of money without so much as the trouble of asking for it!"

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"That's what it is to be a lord and not to have a father. **Upon the whole fathers are mistakes. I don't want to get rid of mine, but I never could see that he was of**

any good to me. If I hadn't had a father perhaps some feminine swell would have jumped down my throat." Popplecourt tried to show that he was disgusted; but he felt himself all the more strongly bound to go on with his project.

It was therefore a matter of course **to almost everybody assembled** that these should-be lovers would be sent out of the room together. "You'll give your arm to Mary," Lady Cantrip said, dropping the ceremonial prefix **as she gave her instructions to her guest**. Lady Mary of course went out as she was bidden. Though everybody else knew it, no idea of what was intended had yet come across her mind. **Had she been told that she was to be locked up in a dungeon all her life it would have seemed to her a more probable exercise of parental authority than an attempt to make her marry Lord Popplecourt.**

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"Well;—not exactly a salt-mine; but I have coal-mines on my property in Staffordshire **and I suppose it is the same kind of thing**. I'm very fond of coal. I hope you like coal."

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"But which do you think pays best? I don't mind telling you,—though it's a kind of thing I never talk about to strangers;—the royalties from the Blogownie and Toodlem mines go up regularly two thousand pounds every year. **That's better than falling off, you know.**"

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"**Not exactly;—but** he used to be so angry with Silverbridge because Silverbridge would say Crummie-Toddie was ugly."

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"**Not particularly;—**just a plain house on a moor."

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"I do, I know." Lord Popplecourt **when he said this** endeavoured to look as though he intended her to understand that she was the pretty thing which he most particularly liked. She partly conceived his meaning[,]**,—thought it possible that he was endeavouring to attempt some unmeaning and vulgar compliment,—**and was disgusted accordingly. On the other side of her sat Mr. Boncassen, to whom she had

been introduced in the drawing-room,—and who had said a few words to her about some Norwegian poet **equal, as he had declared, either to Homer or Dante**. She turned round to him, and **as he was at the moment disengaged she** asked him some question about the Skald, and so, getting into conversation with him, managed to turn her shoulder to her suitor. On the other side of him sat Lady Rosina de Courcy, to whom, as being an old woman and an old maid **and altogether out of the world**, he felt very little inclined to be courteous. She said a word **to him**, asking him whether he did not think the weather was treacherous. He answered her very curtly, and sat bolt upright, looking forward on the table, and taking his dinner as it came to him. He had been put there in order that Lady Mary Palliser might talk to him, and he regarded interference on the part of that old American as being ungentlemanlike **and not at all the proper thing**. But the old American disregarded him, and went on with his quotations from the Scandinavian bard.

But Mr. Boncassen**, again,** sat next to Lady Cantrip**, who divided her favours equally between him and the Duke on her other hand**. And when at last he was called upon to give his ear to the Countess, Lady Mary was again vacant for Popplecourt's attentions. "Are you fond of poetry?" he asked.

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"They are **so** very unlike."

"Yes;—they are unlike. Or Moore's *Melodies*? I am very fond of 'When in death I shall calm recline.' I think this equal to anything. **We had a great deal of talk about poetry at Crummie-Toddie.** Reginald Dobbes would have it that **it's** [poetry is] all bosh."

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"There was a man there named Tregear who had brought some books." Then there was a pause[.]**; but** Lady Mary**, of course,** had not a word to say. "Dobbes used to declare that he was always pretending to read poetry."

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"I don't know anything of the kind," said Lady Mary, becoming very red **in the face**, "and as he is my brother's most particular friend,—his very friend of friends,—I think you had better not abuse him to me**, Lord Popplecourt**."

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"I don't care who is fond of him. I am very fond of Silverbridge, and I won't hear his friend ill spoken of. I dare say he had some books with him. **It is just what I should expect from what Silverbridge has told me.** He is not at all the sort of a **young** man to go to a place and satisfy himself with doing nothing but killing animals."

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"I have seen him, and of course I have heard a great deal of him from Silverbridge. I would rather not talk any more about him! **I don't like having such ill-natured things said.**"

"What did I say?"

"You were very ill-natured."

"You seem to be very fond of Mr. Tregear," he said **almost** angrily.

"It is no business of yours, Lord Popplecourt, whether I am fond of anybody or not. I have told you that Mr. Tregear is my brother's friend, and that ought to be enough." **Then, for the next half-hour there was almost a quarrel between them so that nothing more was said till the ladies had left the room.**

Lord Popplecourt was a young man possessed of a certain amount of ingenuity. **It was his custom to think over things as they passed, and to make deductions. The process was slow with him and did not always produce correct results. But it required a considerable amount of mental application, and produced a certain sharpness in his character for which among his friends he had credit.** It was said of him that he knew on which side his bread was buttered, and that if you wished to take him in you must get up early. After dinner **that day** and during the night he pondered a good deal on what he had heard**, and putting two and two together in different places made a certain number of fours**. Lady Cantrip had told him there had been a—dream. **Well!** What was he to believe about that dream? Had he not better**, he said to himself,** avoid the error of putting too fine a point upon it, and tell himself at once that a dream in this instance meant a—lover! Lady Mary had already been troubled by a lover! **He was not at all disposed to throw her over on that account.** He was disposed to believe that young ladies often do have objectionable lovers, and that things get themselves right afterwards. Young ladies can be made to understand the beauty of coal-mines almost as readily as young gentlemen. There would be the two hundred thousand pounds; and there was the girl, beautiful, well born, and thoroughly well mannered. **All might come right in spite of the dream,—only that the dream must be made to pass away.** But what if this Tregear and the dream were one and the same? If so, had he not received plenty of evidence **to show him** that the dream had not yet passed away? A remnant of

affection for the dream would not have been a fatal barrier, had not the girl been so fierce with him**,—with him, the dream's rival,—**in defence of her dream. He remembered too what the Duke had said about Tregear, and Lady Cantrip's advice to him to be silent **before his future father-in-law** in respect to this **young** man. **There must have been some reason for such an injunction.** And then do girls generally defend their brothers' friends as she had defended Tregear? He thought not. Putting all these things together, **by eleven o'clock** on the following morning he had come**, not quite to a conviction, but** to an uncomfortable belief that Tregear was the dream**, and that the dream had not as yet been made to vanish**.

Soon after **that hour** he found himself near to Dolly Longstaffe as they were shooting. "You know that fellow, Tregear; don't you?"

"Oh, lord yes. He is **one of the Beargarden men;** Silverbridge[']s pal] **brought him there**."

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"What makes you ask that?"

"Sometimes there are stories about."

Chapter 47, *Miss Boncassen's Idea of Heaven*

It was **very** generally known that Dolly Longstaffe had been heavily smitten by the charms of Miss Boncassen; but the world **at large** hardly gave him credit for the earnestness of his affection. Dolly had never **yet** been known to be in earnest in anything;—but now he was in very truth in love. He had agreed to be Popplecourt's companion at Custins **only** because he had heard that Miss Boncassen would be there. He had thought over the matter with more **painful** consideration than he had ever before given to any subject. He had gone so far as to see his own man of business, **a very peculiar man named Squercum, who had chambers in a little court leading out of Holborn,** with a view of ascertaining what settlements he could make and what income he might be able to spend. He had told himself over and over again that he was not the "sort of fellow" that ought to marry; but it was all of no avail. He confessed to himself that he was completely "bowled over,"—"knocked off his pins"**; and he had almost gone so far as to declare to himself that if the girl would not have him he must take to drinking.**[!]

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"Of course you understand."

"I suppose I do."

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"Well, Mr. Longstaffe, I do not suppose that you have been trying to take me in all this time. **I do not think so ill of you as that.**"

Why should you think ill of me at all? [I hope you do not think ill of me.]

"**Why should you imagine that I do?** I may think well of a great many gentlemen without wishing to marry them."

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"You can make a joke of it, when I——! But I don't think, Miss Boncassen, you at all realise what I feel. **I am in such a condition that if I give it up, I shall give up,—oh, curses, everything.** As to settlements and all that, your father could do what he likes with me."

"My father has nothing to do with it, and I don't know what settlements mean. We never think **of** anything of **that kind** [settlements] in our country. If two young people love each other they go and get married."

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"It's that d—— fellow, Silverbridge," he exclaimed almost crying[.]**,—"a young swell who doesn't mean what he's about, any more than I mean to marry the cookmaid!**" On hearing this Miss Boncassen left the room without speaking another word, and **poor** Dolly found himself alone. He saw what he had done as soon as she was gone. **He had compared the lady to a cookmaid,—implying at any rate that as was the distance between him, Adolphus Longstaffe, and a cookmaid, so was that between the Duke's heir and her, Isabel Boncassen.** After that he could hardly venture to persevere again[—]**,—at any rate not** here at Custins. **For aught he knew she might demand the protection of the whole household against him.** He weighed it over in his mind for a long time, almost coming to a resolution in favour of hard drink. He **certainly** had never felt anything like this before. He was so uncomfortable that he couldn't eat his luncheon, though in accordance with his usual habit he had breakfasted off soda-and-brandy and a morsel of devilled toast. He did not know himself in his changed character**, and did not at all know what to do with himself**. "I wonder whether she understands that I have four thousand pounds a year of my own, and shall have twelve thousand

pounds more when my governor goes!" **He blamed himself that he had not made all that sufficiently clear. But then** she was so headstrong that it was impossible to explain anything to her.

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"What's the meaning of [it] all **that**?"

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"Don't I tell you, I don't want to talk about it. I'm going. I've told Lady Cantrip that my mother wasn't well and wants to see me. **If I'd said that I was going to hang myself it would have been just the same to her.** You'll stop your time out, I suppose."

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"You've got it all square, no doubt. I wish I'd **had** a handle to my name. I never cared for it before."

"I'm sorry you're so down in the mouth **about it**. Why don't you try again? The thing is to stick to 'em like wax. If ten times of asking won't do, go in twenty times." Dolly shook his head despondently. **"I didn't think you were the man to be put down so easily."**

"What can you do when a girl walks out of the room and slams the door in your face? She'll get it hot and heavy before she has done. I know what she's after. She might as well cry for the moon. **Let me know when you've fixed it all and I will meet you wherever you please.**" And so Dolly got into the trap and went to Bridport and slept that night at the hotel at Dorchester.

Lord Popplecourt, though he was able to give such excellent advice to his friend, **explaining to him that in a matter of honest love nothing was so efficient as persistency, and recommending him to "stick like wax,"—which really is the best advice which can be given in such circumstances, though it was not likely to be of service in the present instance,—though he could tell his friend that if ten times had been of no use, yet twenty times might succeed, he** had been able as yet to do very little in his own case. He had been a week at Custins, and had **found no opportunity for saying** [said not] a word to denote his passion. Day after day he had prepared himself for the encounter, but the lady had never given him the opportunity. When he sat next to her at dinner she would be very silent. If he stayed at home on a morning she was not visible. During the short evenings **after the gentlemen had left the dining-room** he could never get her attention. And he made no progress with the Duke. The Duke had

been very courteous to him at Richmond **and during that drive up to London**, but here he was monosyllabic and almost sullen.

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"I dare say. **That is, I'm sure she's all that.**"

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"Not in the least. Anyone who addresses her must be prepared to explain himself fully. Nor **do I think that he** ought [he] to hope to get **very** much encouragement at first. I do not think that Lady Mary will bestow her heart till she is sure she can give it with safety." There was an amount of falsehood in this which was proof at any rate of very strong friendship on the part of Lady Cantrip. **But still Lord Popplecourt could not find the hour for explaining himself fully.**

After a few days Lady Mary **seemed to have become** [became] more intimate with the American and his daughter than with any others of the party **assembled at Custins**. Perhaps she liked to talk about the Scandinavian poets, of whom Mr. Boncassen was so fond. Perhaps she felt sure that her **new** transatlantic friend would not **at any rate** make love to her. Perhaps it was that she **unconsciously** yielded to the various allurements of Miss Boncassen. Miss Boncassen saw the Duke of Omnium for the first time at Custins, and there had the first opportunity of asking herself how such a man as that would receive from his son and heir such an announcement as Lord Silverbridge would have to make him, should she at the end of three months **be pleased to** accept **the** [his] offer **which had been made to her**. She was quite aware that Lord Silverbridge need not repeat the offer unless he were so pleased. **Her answer to him had given him a complete release should he wish to be released.** But she thought **it probable** that he would come again. He had so spoken that she was sure of his love; and had so spoken as to obtain hers. Yes;—she was **very** sure that she loved him. She had never seen anything like him before;—so glorious in his beauty, so gentle in his manhood, so powerful and yet so little imperious, so great in condition, and yet so little confident in his own greatness, so bolstered up with external advantages, and yet **apparently** so little apt to trust to anything but his own heart and his own voice**, his own personal entreaties, his own youth**. **My reader, I fear, will not have by any means so exalted an idea of the young man who had coloured the Dean's house at Oxford and had been cheated out of his money at Doncaster as that entertained by Miss Boncassen;—but then no reader can have had the same opportunity of falling in love with him.** In asking for her love he had put forward no claim but his own love. **He**

had not even looked at her as though he had felt himself to be the son and heir to a duke. She was glad **enough** that he was what he was. She counted at their full value all his material advantages. To be an English duchess! Oh—yes; her ambition understood it all! But she loved him, because in the expression of his love no hint had fallen from him of the greatness of the benefits which he could confer upon her. **Had he been that bank clerk of whom she had once talked to him he could not have spoken of his love with less of self-assurance.** Yes, she would like to be a duchess; but not to be a duchess would she become the wife of a man who should begin his courtship by assuming a superiority.

She had told him to consult his friends before he should come to her again. Now the chances of society had brought her into the company of his nearest friends. She was in the house with his father and with his sister. Now and again the Duke spoke a few words to her, and always did so with a peculiar courtesy. But she was **quite** sure that the Duke had heard nothing of his son's courtship. And she was equally sure that the matter had not reached Lady Mary's ears. She perceived that the Duke and her father would often converse together**, and would generally spend some part of the afternoon in each other's company**. Mr. Boncassen would discuss republicanism generally, and the Duke would explain that theory of monarchy as it prevails in England, which but very few Americans have ever been made to understand. All this Miss Boncassen watched with pleasure**, venturing to entertain some hope that the Duke's natural objections to such a marriage might be made to disappear**. She was still of opinion that it would not become her to force her way into a family which would endeavour to repudiate her**, and to encounter perhaps the ill-will of all those among whom she ought to assume her new rank with grace and ease**. She would not become this young man's wife if all connected with the young man were resolved to reject the contact. But if she could conquer them,—then,—then she thought that she could put her little hand into that young man's grasp with a happy heart. **But they should all know the story of her grandfather, the porter.**

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"They seem to be **very** sensible people," said the Duke. "I don't know when I have met a man with higher ideas on politics than Mr. Boncassen."

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"A nice ladylike girl," said the Duke, "and appears to have been well educated." **After this there was nothing further to be said. Lady Cantrip, though she feared**

something, hardly knew what she feared. But day by day her faith in the Popplecourt cure was becoming weaker and more weak.

It was now near the end of October, and the weather was peculiarly fine. Perhaps in our climate, **especially in the South of England,** October would of all months be the most delightful if something of its charms were not detracted from by the feeling that with it will depart the last relics of the delights of summer. The leaves are still there with their gorgeous colouring, but they are going. The last rose still lingers on the bush, but it is the last**,—the very last**. The woodland walks are still pleasant to the feet, but caution is heard on every side as to the coming winter. **Gentlemen are looking to their top-boots and breeches, and old ladies are already beginning to air their furs.**

The park at Custins, which was spacious, had many woodland walks attached to it, from which, through vistas of the timber, distant glimpses of the sea were caught. **No more charming spot for easy walking would be found in any British county.** Within half a mile of the house the woods were reached, and within a mile the open sea was in sight,—and yet the wanderers might walk for miles without going over the same ground. Here, without other companions, Lady Mary and Miss Boncassen found themselves one afternoon, and here the latter told her story to her lover's sister. "I so long to tell you something," she said.

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"Well; yes; it is,—if you will keep it so. I would rather you should keep it a secret. But I will tell you **anyway. I think you will keep it as a secret, but you shall judge yourself**." Then she stood still, looking into the other's face. "I wonder how you will take it!"

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"I think not," said Miss Boncassen slowly. "I have seen them together and I think not. There might be somebody, though I think not her. But why do I say that? Why do I malign him, and make so little of myself? There is no one else, Lady Mary. **I am sure that when he spoke to me he was in earnest. I did not doubt him, and I do not doubt him;—not in the least.** Is he not true?"

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"Well;—what do you think? What is it probable that such a girl as I would say when such a man as your brother asks her to be his wife? Is he not **the sort of man that** [such a man as] a girl would love?"

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"Is he not handsome as a god?" Mary stared at her with all her eyes. "And sweeter than any god those pagan races knew? And is he not good-tempered, and loving;—and has he not that perfection of manly dash **and indifference** without which I do not think I could give my heart to any man?"

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"Does it not all help? Can you put yourself in my place **and say you would not be lifted off your legs**? Why should I refuse him? No, not for that. I would not take him for that. But if I love him,—because he is all that my imagination tells me that a man ought to be;—if to be his wife seems to me to be the greatest bliss that could happen to a woman;—if I feel that I could die to serve him, that I could live to worship him, that his touch would be sweet to me, his voice music, his strength the only support in the world on which I would care to lean;—what then?"

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"Yes;—it is so. It is after that fashion that I love him. He is my hero;—and not the less so because there is none higher than he among the nobles of the greatest land under the sun. Would you have me for a sister?" Lady Mary could not answer all at once. She had to think of her father;—and then she thought of her own lover. Why should not Silverbridge be **at any rate** as well entitled to his choice as she considered herself to be? And yet how would it be with her father? Silverbridge would in process of time be the head of the family. Would it be proper that he should marry an American?

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"I was thinking of my father**," said Lady Mary**. **"**For myself, I like you **very much**."

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"I told him that he must ask his friends;—that I would not be his wife to be rejected **among** [by] them all. Nor will I. Though it be heaven I will not creep there through a hole. If I cannot go in with my head upright, I will not go even there." Then she turned round as though she were prepared in her emotion to walk back to the house alone. But Lady Mary ran after her, and having caught her put her arm round her waist and kissed her.

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"I will do as I have said," continued Miss Boncassen energetically. "I will do as I have said. **I will tell his father everything. My father's father was a labouring man,—a porter on the quays. I suppose a young man in this country can marry without his father's leave. But** though I love your brother down to the ground, he shall not marry me without his father's consent." Then they returned arm-in-arm close together; but very little more was said between them **on that occasion**.

Chapter 48, *The Party at Custins Is Broken Up*

The message was given to Lady Mary **by the old housekeeper** after so solemn a fashion that she was sure some **disagreeably** important communication was **about** to be made to her. Her mind at that moment had **of course** been filled with her new friend's story. She felt that she required some time to **think of it** [meditate] before she could determine what she herself would wish[;]**. This American girl seemed to her to be a very grand creature. That she was preeminently beautiful everyone allowed. That she was very clever no one could doubt. Every word that she had spoken in telling her own story and in speaking of her love had been, to Mary's thinking, noble and attractive. But then all this would be another trouble to the family,—another sorrow to that heavily burdened head of the family! Mary was by no means sure but that her elder brother, as being her elder brother, owed a peculiar duty to the Pallisers generally in this matter of his marriage. With his great privileges he ought, perhaps, to be alive to his great duties. Would it be well that the mother of the future Duke should be the granddaughter of an American porter? Mary, who was firm as a rock as to her own rights and who was quite resolved that no parental authority, no ducal pride, no family pretensions should separate her from her own lover, was almost disposed to think that her elder brother should in this matter obey her father. Had it been Gerald who was in love with the American it might have been different.** But when she was going to her own room, in order that she might think it over **and make up her mind**, she was summoned to Lady Cantrip. "My dear," said the Countess, "I wish you to do something to oblige me."

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"Can you not guess**, my dear**? Lord Popplecourt is a young nobleman, standing very high in the world, possessed of ample means, **unmarried, but** just in that position in which it behoves such a man to look about for a wife." Lady Mary pressed her lips together, and clenched her two hands**, and prepared herself for fighting**. "Can you not imagine what such a gentleman may have to say?" **But the time for fighting did not seem to her to have come quite yet, and, though** [Then] there was a pause, [but] she made no immediate answer. "I am to tell you, my dear, that your father would approve of it."

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"I don't want to talk about it, Lady Cantrip."

"Of course your papa would be glad to see you properly settled in life."

"I don't think that papa can want to see me married to **another** [a] man when he knows that with all my heart and soul——"

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"When he knows," continued Mary, who would not be put down, "that I love another man with all my heart. What will Lord Popplecourt say if I tell him that? If he says anything to me, I shall tell him. Lord Popplecourt! **He is the very last man in all the world that I should think of.** He cares for nothing but his coal-mines. Of course if you bid me see him I will; but it can do no good. I despise him, and if he troubles me I shall hate him. As for marrying him,—I would sooner die this minute. **Of course you can say that it is all vanity; but I shall never marry anybody unless they let me marry Mr. Tregear.**"

After this Lady Cantrip did not insist on the interview. She expressed her regret that things should be as they were,—explained in sweetly innocent phrases**, of which she perfectly understood the use,** that in a certain rank of life young ladies could not always marry the gentlemen to whom their fancies might attach them, but must, not unfrequently, postpone their youthful inclinations to the will of their elders,—or in less delicate language, that though they might love in one direction they must marry in another; and then expressed a hope that her dear Mary would think over these things and try to please her father. "Why does he not try to please me?" said Mary **as she left the room**. Then Lady Cantrip was obliged to see Lord Popplecourt **also**, a necessity which was a **terrible** [great] nuisance to her. "Yes;—she understands what you mean. But she is not prepared for it yet. You must wait awhile."

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"She is very young;—and so are you, indeed. There is plenty of time! **She has not known you so very long.**"

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"I am not prepared to mention names," said Lady Cantrip, **rather** astonished that he should know so much. "But indeed you must wait."

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"What can I say more? If you think that such a girl as Lady Mary Palliser, the daughter of the Duke of Omnium, possessed of fortune, beauty, and every good gift is to come like a bird to your call, you will find yourself **very much** mistaken. All that her friends can do for you will be done **in your favour**. The rest must remain with yourself." During that evening Lord Popplecourt endeavoured**, and apparently with success,** to make himself pleasant to one of the FitzHoward young ladies, and on the next morning he took his leave of Custins **without saying anything further to Lady Mary beyond the coldest adieu**.

"I will never interfere again in reference to anybody else's child as long as I live," Lady Cantrip said to her husband that night. **"Of course she'll marry this man,"—meaning Tregear,—"and the sooner the Duke gives way the quicker he'll get over the annoyance."**

Lady Mary was very much tempted to open her heart to Miss Boncassen **but could not quite make up her mind to do so**. It would be delightful to her to have a friend; but were she to engage Miss Boncassen's sympathies on her own behalf, she must of course sympathise with Miss Boncassen in return**, and she was hardly prepared to do this at present**. **She would require to hear something on this matter at any rate from her brother before she would do that.** What if, after all, Silverbridge were not devoted to the American beauty! What if it should turn out that he was going to marry Lady Mabel Grex! **Therefore she kept her own secret, though on various occasions she was sorely tempted.** "I wish you would call me Isabel," her friend said to her. "It is so odd;—since I have left New York I have never heard my name from any lips except father's and mother's."

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"I think not. I am sure he never has." But he had, though it had passed by her at the moment without attention. "It all came from him so suddenly. And yet I expected it.

I knew it was coming. But it was too sudden for Christian names and pretty talk **of that kind**. I do not even know what his name is."

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"Oh, how grand!"

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"Plantagenet is very much prettier. I shall always call him Plantagenet. But I recall that. You **won't** [will not] remember that against me**, will you**?"

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"I mean that if,—**which is perhaps impossible,—**if all the grandeurs of all the Pallisers could consent to put up with poor me, if heaven were opened to me with a strait gate, so that I could walk out of our republic into your aristocracy with my head erect, with the Stars and Stripes waving proudly round me till I had been accepted into the shelter of the Omnium griffins,—then I would call him—— **But I need not think about all that, need I?**"

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"I know nothing **on earth** about it. From none of them I should think. There is some story about a Sir Guy who was a king's friend. I never trouble myself about it. I hate aristocracy."

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"Yes," said Mary, full of her own grievances**, of which, however, she was not prepared to speak openly**. "It is an abominable bondage, and I do not see that it does any good at all. **Yet it has to be kept up,**" **she said, thinking of her brother and of future possible difficulties.**

"I think it is so glorious," said the American. "There is no such mischievous nonsense in all the world as equality. That is what father says. What men ought to want is liberty. **An aristocrat should be a real aristocrat,—like your father.**"

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"I hope he does. I think he does. **There!**"

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"But **I know** he can. **What is to hinder him?**"

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"Saying what? That he could not marry me! No indeed! But that under certain circumstances I could not marry him. You don't suppose that I think he would be disgraced? If so I would go away at once, and he should never again see my face or hear my voice. **Indeed, indeed, I think nothing of the kind.** I think myself good enough for the best man God ever made,—if only that best man could love me and I could love him. But if others think differently, and those others are so closely concerned with him, and would be so closely concerned with me as to trouble our joint lives,—then will I neither subject him to such sorrow nor will I encounter it myself."

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"No, dear,—but from the prejudices of an aristocracy. **A thing may be very good, but not perfect.** To tell the truth, Mary, the more difficult a place is to get into, the more the right of going in is valued. If everybody could be a duchess and a Palliser, I should not perhaps think so much about it."

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"So I do. **Do you doubt it?"**

"Oh, no!"

"If you do, you wrong me foully,—and do not in the least understand how it is. I love him entirely. I have said not a word of that to him,—but I do**.**[,] If I know at all what love is**, I love him as a girl ought to love the man she means to marry**. But if you love a star the pride you have in your star will enhance your love. The difficulty,—even the impossibility,—will enhance your love. Though you know that you must die of your love, still you must love your star **the more**."

And yet Mary could not tell her tale in return. She could not show the reverse picture;—that she being a star was anxious to dispose of herself after the fashion of poor human rushlights. It was not that she was **in the least** ashamed of her **own** love, but that she could not bring herself to yield altogether in reference to the great descent which Silverbridge would have to make. **It certainly was true that a future duke ought not to marry the granddaughter of a street porter. It would be as bad as some of those unnatural love affairs which take place in the *Arabian Nights*.**

On the day after this,—the last day of the Duke's sojourn at Custins, the last also of the Boncassens' visit,—it came to pass that **in the afternoon** the Duke and Mr.

Boncassen, with Lady Mary and Isabel, were all walking in the woods together. **It is not impossible that this may have been arranged by the latter young lady with some view to creating an intimacy, or at any rate producing good humour, between herself and her possible future father-in-law.** And it so happened when they were at a little distance from the house, each of the girls was walking with the other girl's father. **Mr. Boncassen was no doubt eloquent, and satisfied Lady Mary's wishes in regard to conversation. But the Duke was much struck, first with the grace and wit of his companion,—and then with her good sense.** Isabel had calculated what she would say to **him** [the Duke] should a time for speaking come to her. She could not tell him of his son's love. She could not ask his permission. She could not explain to him all her feelings, or tell him what she thought of the proper way of getting into heaven. That must come afterwards if it should ever come at all. But there was something that she could tell. "We are so different from you," she said, speaking of her own country.

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"Many people think that if he would only allow himself to be put in nomination **by the New England and eastern Republicans** he might be the next President."

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"And yet his father was a poor labourer who **came over from Holland and** earned his bread among the shipping at New York. That kind of thing would be impossible here."

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"But a Prime Minister can make a duke, and if a man can raise himself by his own intellect to that position, no one will think of his father or his grandfather. The sons of merchants have with us been Prime Ministers more than once, and no Englishmen ever were more honoured among their countrymen. Our peerage is being continually recruited from the ranks of the people, and hence it gets its strength. **Half our peers are men whose grandfathers were commoners.**"

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"There is no greater mistake than to suppose that inferiority of birth is a barrier to success in this country." She listened to this and to much more on the same subject with attentive ears,—not **much** shaken in her ideas as to the English aristocracy in general **by what the Duke said**, but thinking that she was perhaps learning something of his own

individual opinions. If he were more liberal than others, on that liberality might perhaps be based her own **future** happiness and fortune.

He in all this was quite unconscious of the working of her mind. Nor in discussing such matters generally did he ever mingle his own private feelings, his own pride of race and name, his own ideas of what was due to his ancient rank **and to his superior nobility** with the political creed by which his conduct in public life was governed. The peer who sat next to him in the House of Lords, whose grandmother had been a washerwoman and whose father an innkeeper, was to him every whit as good a peer as himself. **If not, how could they be peers?** And he would as soon sit in counsel with Mr. Monk, whose father had risen from a mechanic to be a merchant, as with any nobleman who could count ancestors against himself. But there was an inner feeling in his bosom as to his own family, his own name, his own children, and his own personal self, which was kept altogether apart from his grand political theories. It was a subject on which he never spoke; but the feeling had come to him as a part of his birthright**, not communicated by words from others but yet perfectly understood**. And he conceived that it would pass through him to his children after the same fashion. It was this which made the idea of a marriage between his daughter and Tregear **so** intolerable to him, and which would operate as strongly in regard to any marriage which his son might contemplate. Lord Grex was not a man with whom he would wish to form any intimacy. He was, we may say, a wretched unprincipled old **sinner** [man], bad all round; and such the Duke knew him to be. But the blue blood and the rank were there; and as the girl was good herself he would have been quite contented that his son should marry the daughter of Lord Grex. That one and the same man should have been in one part of himself so unlike the other part,—that he should have one set of opinions so contrary to another set,—poor Isabel Boncassen did not **at all** understand.

As he and his daughter came together at the end of the walk, Isabel having for the moment gone off with her father, the Duke expressed great admiration for the American girl's manners and intellect.

Chapter 49, *The Major's Fate*

The affair of Prime Minister and the nail was not allowed to fade away into obscurity **by the sporting world**. Through **the latter part of** September and **the whole of** October it was made matter for pungent inquiry. The Jockey Club was alive. Mr. Pook was very instant,—with many Pookites **all** anxious to free themselves from

suspicion **and blame**. **Everybody concerned and many who were not at all concerned** [Sporting men] declared that the honour of the turf required that every detail of the case should be laid open **to the light**. But by the end of October, though **almost** every detail had been surmised **and was all but known**, nothing had in truth been discovered. Nobody doubted but that Tifto **and the groom between them** had driven the nail into the horse's foot, and that Green and Gilbert Villiers **between them** had shared the bulk of the plunder. **As to those two gentlemen, there could be no doubt.** They had gone off on their travels together, and the fact that each of them had been in possession of about twenty thousand pounds was **absolutely** proved. But then there is no law against two gentlemen having such a sum of money**, nor even against their winning it on a race-course**. **Nor is there a law to keep such gentlemen from leaving the country after they have won it.** It was notorious that Captain Green and Mr. Gilbert Villiers had enriched themselves to this extent by the failure of Prime Minister. But yet nothing was proved!

And it was notorious that the groom had gone off to Australia,—as people said, with five thousand pounds. Considerable blame was thrown upon the gentlemen who were managing the inquiry because they had not detained the groom. He no doubt could have told everything, and if sufficiently bribed would probably have done so. Some said that he might have been detained by a warrant. But the matter was not brought before the magistrates, and the man went before any sufficient bribe was offered to him. He had left the country, indeed, within a week of the day on which the race was run.

But the Major remained. Which of the culprits had with his own hand hammered the nail no one could take upon himself to decide; but that the Major **must either have done it** [had either himself driven in the nail] or seen it done, all racing men were agreed. He had been out with the horse in the morning and had been the first to declare that the animal was lame. **The boy's evidence, which even he did not dispute, went so far as that.** And he had been with the horse till the farrier had come**,—till indeed the nail had been extracted**. But he had concocted a story for himself. He did not **in the least** dispute that the horse had been lamed by the machinations of Green and Villiers,—**and** with the assistance of the groom. No doubt, he said, these men, who had been afraid to **stay and** face an inquiry, had contrived and had carried out the iniquity. How the **original** lameness had been caused he could not pretend to say. The groom, who was at the horse's head, and who evidently knew how these things were done, might have struck a nerve in the horse's foot with his boot. But when the horse was got into the stable he, Tifto,—so he declared,—at once ran out to send for the farrier. **It was some**

minutes before he had found a messenger,—the boy having been sent for Mr. Pook. During **those** [the] minutes so occupied the operation must have been made with the nail. That was Tifto's story,—and as he kept his ground **and told it himself**, there were some few who believed it.

But though the story was so far good, he had at moments been imprudent, and had talked when he should have been silent. The whole matter had been a torment to him **from the moment in which he had been induced by Green to lend himself to the scheme**. In the first place his conscience made him miserable. As long as it had been possible to prevent the evil he had hoped to make a clean breast of it to Lord Silverbridge **and to confess his intentions**. Up to this period of his life everything had been "square" with him. He had betted "square," and had ridden "square," and had run horses "square." **Even when Silverbridge had been most offensive to him he had been careful of his partner's interests.** He had taken a pride in this, as though it had been a great virtue**, often telling himself that he did for Silverbridge much more than Silverbridge deserved, and regarding himself as almost a miracle of virtue**. It was not without great inward grief that he had deprived himself of the consolations of these reflections. **He was going to do that which would take from him all his squareness!** But when he had approached his noble partner, his noble partner snubbed him at every turn,—and he did the deed.

His reward was to be three thousand pounds**, paid in hard cash by Captain Green**,—and he got his money. The money was very much to him,—would perhaps have been almost enough to comfort him in his misery, had not those other rascals got so much more. When he heard that the groom's fee was higher than his own[,]**,—of which in truth he knew nothing, but such was the rumour which reached him,—**it almost broke his heart. **And** Green and Villiers, men of infinitely lower standing **than himself in the world**,—men at whom the Beargarden would not have looked**, and who had never been regarded as gentlemen**,—had absolutely netted fortunes on which they could live in comfort **for the rest of their lives**! No doubt they had run away while Tifto still stood his ground;—but he soon began to doubt whether to have run away with twenty thousand pounds**, to have gone to some Island of the Blest where every luxury might have been obtained,** was not better than to remain with such small plunder as had fallen to his lot, among such faces as those which now looked upon him! Then when he had drunk a few glasses of whisky-and-water, he said something very foolish as to his power of punishing that swindler Green. **But still there were a few who believed that he had been made a victim, and among those few Lord Silverbridge for a long time was one.**

An attempt had been made **at the first moment** to induce Silverbridge to delay the payment of his bets;—but he**, and Mr. Moreton on his behalf,** had been very eager that they should be paid. **Whatever might be the result it was considered right that he should be extricated from the matter.** Under the joint auspices of Mr. Lupton and Mr. Moreton the horses were sold, **and the bets were paid,** and the **whole** establishment was annihilated,—with considerable loss, but with great despatch. **The Duke when he returned from the Continent was very urgent that there should be no delay** [The Duke had been urgent]. The Jockey Club, and the racing world, and the horsey fraternity generally, might do what**ever** seemed to them good,—so that Silverbridge was extricated from the matter. Silverbridge was extricated,—and the Duke cared nothing **as to what the Jockey Club might do with Messrs. Tifto, Green, Villiers & Co** [for the rest].

But Silverbridge could not get out of the mess quite so easily**, or at any rate not so entirely,** as his father wished. Two questions arose about Major Tifto, outside the **exclusively** racing world, but within the domain of the world of sport and pleasure generally, as to one of which it was **almost** impossible that Silverbridge should not express an opinion. The first question had reference to the Mastership of the Runnymede hounds. In this our young friend was not bound to concern himself. The other affected the Beargarden Club; and as Lord Silverbridge had introduced the Major **to this society**, he could hardly forbear from the expression of an opinion.

In these two matters the Major, wretched as he was, exhibited more pluck than his friends or enemies had expected. There was a meeting of the subscribers to the hunt in the last week of October**,—just before the season commenced**. At that meeting Major Tifto told his story. There he was, to answer any charge which might be brought against him. If he had made **more** money by losing the race **than he would have done by winning it**,—where was it and whence had it come? Was it not clear **to anyone** that a conspiracy might have been made **and carried out** without his knowledge;—and clear also that the real conspirators **in this case** had levanted? He had not levanted! The hounds**, he believed,** were his own**,—at any rate his property in them was greater than that of any other person**. He had undertaken to hunt the country for this season, and they had undertaken to pay him a certain sum of money. He should expect and demand that sum of money. If they chose to make any other arrangement for the year following they could do so. Then he sat down, and **after a little while** the meeting was adjourned,—the secretary having declared that he would not act in that capacity any longer, **and that he would not** [nor] collect the funds. A farmer had also asserted that he and his friends had resolved that Major Tifto should not ride over their fields. On the next day the Major had his hounds out, and some of the London men,

with a few of the neighbours, joined him. Gates were locked **in some places**; but the hounds ran, and those who chose to ride **with the Major** managed to follow them. There are men who will stick to their sport though Apollyon himself should carry the horn**, who will declare that they want hunting and care nothing for the character of the Master so long as he is able to keep his hounds onto a fox**. **They come out for hunting, not for society.** Who cares whether the lady who fills a theatre be or be not a moral young woman, or whether the bandmaster who keeps such excellent time in a ball-room has or has not paid his debts? There were men of this sort who supported Major Tifto;—but then there was a general opinion that the Runnymede hunt would **have to** come to an end unless a new Master could be found.

Then in the first week in November a special meeting was called at the Beargarden, at which Lord Silverbridge was asked to attend. "It is impossible that he should be allowed to remain in the club." This was said to Lord Silverbridge by Mr. Lupton**, who had indeed summoned the society**. "Either he must go or the club must be broken up."

Silverbridge was very unhappy on the occasion. He had at last been reasoned into believing that the horse had been made the victim of foul play**, and had consented to credit Green, Villiers, and the groom with the villainy**; but had persisted in saying that there was no conclusive evidence against Tifto. The matter was argued with him **over and over again**. Tifto had laid bets against the horse; Tifto had been hand and glove with Green; Tifto could not have been absent from the horse above two minutes**, if so long**; the thing could not have been arranged without Tifto**'s connivance**. As he had **been the means of bringing** [brought] Tifto into the club, and had been his partner on the turf, it was his business to look into the matter **and to express himself firmly**. "But for all that," said he, "I'm not going to jump on a man when he's down, unless I feel sure that he's guilty."

Then the meeting was held, and Tifto himself appeared. When the accusation was made **against him** by Mr. Lupton, who proposed that he should be expelled **from the club**, he burst into tears**;—and perhaps no course which he could have pursued would have told more in his favour**. The whole story was repeated,—the nail, and the hammer, and the lameness**, unreal when first declared, and afterwards so dreadfully real**; and the moments **of time** were counted up, and poor Tifto's bets and friendship with Green were made apparent,—and the case was submitted to the club. An old gentleman who had been connected with the turf all his life, and who would not have scrupled, by square betting, to rob his dearest friend of **the** [his] last shilling **he had in the world**,

seconded the proposition,—telling all the story over again. Then Major Tifto was asked whether he wished to say anything.

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Upon this there was a pause, and the club was manifestly of opinion that Lord Silverbridge ought to say something. **But Mr. Lupton, understanding the difficulty, came to his assistance. "The position of Lord Silverbridge in the matter is peculiarly painful," he said. "I do not see why he should be called upon either to defend or to accuse you."**

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"I can explain that," said the Major. "Let me explain that. Everybody knows that I'm a man of small means. I wanted to ['edge. I only wanted to 'edge.] **make my book safe, thinking I was sure to win half the stakes**."

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"I told you before that it was stolen. Green got hold of it**, I have no doubt**. I did win a little. I never said I didn't. **I hedged my bets in that way against the stakes.** But what has that to do with hammering a nail into a horse's foot? I have always been true to you, Lord Silverbridge, and you ought to stick up for me now."

"I will have nothing further to do with the matter," said Silverbridge, "one way or the other," and he walked out of the room,—and out of the club **soon after that**. The affair was ended by a magnanimous declaration on the part of Major Tifto that he would not remain in a club in which he was suspected, and by a consent on the part of the meeting to receive the Major's instant resignation. **The meeting, however, would not dissolve itself till the resignation was written. The letter, as it came from the hand of the unfortunate man, was not a credit to his scholarship.**

After this the Major's name sank for a time almost into forgetfulness. That quarrel in the Runnymede hunt was carried on no doubt with great vehemence, much to the injury of sport in that neighbourhood; but the world generally did not for a time hear very much about it. It came to be acknowledged in the racing world that the terrible crime with which the Major was charged could not be absolutely proved against him; and, though he was debarred from certain race-courses and certain precincts, still he continued to show his face. "If ever there was a fellow infernally treated, I am the man," he would say, till he almost believed the story he told so often on his own behalf. And he wrote sundry letters to his late partner,—as

to which, however, Silverbridge was wise enough to take advice from Mr. Lupton. But through it all there were some who declared that poor Tifto had been more sinned against than sinning.

Chapter 50, *The Duke's Arguments*

The Duke before he left Custins had an interview with Lady Cantrip, at which that lady found herself called upon to speak her mind freely **about Lady Mary**. "I don't think she cares **very much** about Lord Popplecourt," Lady Cantrip said.

"I'm sure I don't know why she should," said the Duke, who **in his own ill humour could be** [was often] very aggravating even to his friends.

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"She ought to do as she is told," said the Duke, remembering how obedient his Glencora had been **when she had been separated from her lover**. "Has he spoken to her?"

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"**I have spoken to her.** I asked her to see him, but she expressed so much dislike that I could not press it. I am afraid, Duke, that you will find it **very** difficult to deal with her."

"I have found it [very] difficult**;—extremely difficult**."

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"Yes;—I have trusted you, and do trust you. **You have been a true friend," said the Duke, remembering how great a debt of gratitude he owed to her. "**I hope you understand that I appreciate your kindness."

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"She is obstinate. **It is impossible to turn her.** Perhaps it would be fairer **to her** to say that she has great firmness of character. It **will no doubt be** [is] within your power to separate her from Mr. Tregear. **I thin**k it would be foreign to her character to—to—leave you, except with your approbation."

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"She will do nothing**, I think,** without your permission. But she will remain unmarried unless she be allowed to marry Mr. Tregear."

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"That you should yield. **If you ask me I must say so.** As regards money you could give them what they want. Let him go into public life. You could manage that for him."

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"What does that matter when the question is one of your daughter's happiness? Everybody tells me that he is clever and well conducted. **Knowing what I do of her character I think that you should give way to her.**"

He betrayed nothing by his face as this was said to him. **He smiled as he heard it, so that Lady Cantrip almost thought that she had prevailed.** But as he got into the carriage he was a miserable man. It is **all** very well to tell a man that he should yield, but **in truth** there is nothing so wretched [to a man] as yielding. Young people and women have to yield,—but for **a man, and** such a man as this, to yield is in itself a misery. **A man, when he has a firm opinion, is of course sure that he is right.** In this matter the Duke was quite certain of the propriety of his judgment. To yield would be not only to mortify himself, but to do wrong at the same time. He had convinced himself that the Popplecourt arrangement would come to nothing. **The young man might be very well in his way, but there were no qualities in him by which the obstinacy of such a girl as his daughter could be overcome.** Nor had he and Lady Cantrip combined been able to exercise over her the sort of power to which Lady Glencora had been subjected **by her pastors and masters. In his case,** if he persevered,—and he still was sure, almost sure, that he would persevere,—his object must be achieved after a different fashion. There must be infinite suffering,—suffering both to him and to her. **Of Tregear's sufferings he of course took no thought.** Could she have been made to consent to marry someone else, terrible as the rupture might have been **to her at the time, still, when the thing was done**, she would have reconciled herself [at last] to her new life. So it had been with his Glencora,—after a time. **There would have been the new house, the new friends, the new interests, and probably children.** Now the misery must go on from day to day beneath his eyes, with the knowledge on his part that he was crushing all joy out of her young life, and the conviction on her part that she was being treated with continued cruelty by her father! It was a terrible prospect **for the coming years**! But if it was manifestly his duty to act after this fashion, must he not do his duty? **Is a man to be**

debarred from doing that which he knows to be right by any feeling that the right course will cause pain to him and to others?

But **would it be right?** If he were to find that by persevering in this course he would doom her to death, or perchance to madness,—what then? If it were right, he must still do it. He must still do it, if the weakness incident to his human nature did not rob him of the necessary firmness. **A man has to act, not only on his own behalf, but as an example to others.** If every foolish girl **who chose to throw away her affections unworthily** were indulged, all restraint would be lost, and there would be an end to those rules as to **rank,** birth**,** and position by which he thought his world was kept straight. **If he were to allow such a marriage, what father could be expected to disallow any marriage in which any daughter might set her foolish heart?**

And then, mixed with all this[,]**,—most illogically mixed with it,—**was his feeling of the young man's arrogance **and craft** in looking for such a match. Here was a man without a shilling**, so to say, with nothing to recommend him,** whose manifest duty it was to go to work **in some manner** so that he might earn his bread, who instead of doing so, had hoped to raise himself to wealth and position by entrapping the heart of an unwary girl! There was something to the Duke's thinking **thoroughly** base in this, and much more base because the unwary girl was his own daughter. **Heavens and earth!** That such a man as Tregear should make an attack upon him and select his rank, his wealth, and his child as the stepping-stones by which he intended to rise **in the world**! What could be so mean as that a man should seek to live by looking out for a wife with money? But what so impudent, so arrogant, so unblushingly disregardful of **all** propriety, as that he should endeavour to select his victim from such a family as that of the Pallisers, and that he should lay his impious hand on the very daughter of the Duke of Omnium? **All this, however,—which would mingle itself with his thoughts and which served to instigate him to firmness,—was most illogical. Seeing that he was prepared to justify himself in condemning his daughter to misery, and if necessary to death, because it was his duty to support his order, surely he could not add any rational strength to that justification by a desire to punish Tregear for arrogance and covetousness!**

But together with all this**, as he travelled home with his daughter to Matching,** there came upon him moments of ineffable tenderness. He felt as though he longed to take her in his arms and tell her, **as he pressed her to his heart,** that if she were unhappy, so would he be unhappy too,—to make her understand that a hard necessity had made this sorrow common to them both. He thought that, if she would only allow it, he could speak of her love as a calamity which had befallen them, as from the hand of Fate,

and not as a fault**; that he could sacrifice all his remaining life to hers, if only he could teach her to believe that what he did, he did from duty**. If he could make a partnership in misery with her, so that each might believe that each was acting for the best, then**, he thought,** he could endure all that might come. But, as he was well aware, she regarded him as being simply cruel to her. She did not **at all** understand that he was **merely** performing an imperative duty. She had set her heart upon a certain object, and having taught herself that in that way happiness might be reached, had no conception that there should be something in the world, some idea of personal dignity, more valuable to her than the fruition of her own desires! And yet every word he spoke to her **at the time** was **tender and** affectionate. He knew that she was bruised, and if it might be possible he would pour oil into her wounds,—even though she would not recognise the hand which relieved her.

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"That's over **of course**. Everybody understands that, sir."

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"I don't like feeling that he has been ill-used **on my account**. They have made him resign the club, and I fancy they won't have him at the hunt. **I don't know what is to become of him.**"

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"Then I think you may be indifferent. From all that I hear I think he must have won money,—which will probably be a consolation to him. **In such a matter such a man as Mr. Lupton probably knows what ought to be done.**"

"I think they have been hard upon him, **all the same,**" continued Silverbridge. "Of course he is not a good man, nor a gentleman, nor possessed of very high feelings. **Of course he was a trouble, and I am very sorry that I ever had anything to do with him.** But a man is not to be sacrificed altogether for that. There are so many men who are not gentlemen, and so many gentlemen who are **very** bad fellows!"

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On the next morning the Duke and Lady Mary went down to Matching**. During the railway journey the Duke occupied himself with his newspapers and parliamentary documents,—blue-books and returns, with the contents of which he thought it necessary that he should be familiar before the next session. But after the**

railway journey there was a drive of seven miles, and as they sat together in the carriage [after leaving the railway] the father endeavoured to make himself pleasant to his daughter. "I suppose we shall stay at Matching now till Christmas," he said.

"He is none the worse for that, Mary. **When a man has taken up politics as the occupation of his life, the subject should always be present to his mind.** I wonder whether Lady Mabel Grex would come."

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Lady Mary thought that she knew a great deal more about that than her father did. **But why was her father so anxious that Silverbridge and Lady Mabel should be brought together, if all that Miss Boncassen had said was true?** "Is he fond of Lady Mabel, papa?"

"Well,—I don't know. There are secrets which should not be told. I think they are very good friends **and, perhaps, if she were at Matching, he would come too**. I would not have her asked unless it would please you."

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"And perhaps we might get the Boncassens to come to us. I did say a word to him about it." Now, as Mary felt, difficulty was heaping itself upon difficulty. "I have seldom met a man in whose company I could take more pleasure than in that of Mr. Boncassen; and the young lady seems to be worthy of her father." Mary was silent, feeling the complication of the difficulties**, and looking about her to see whether there was any way out of them to be found**. "Do you not like her?" asked the Duke.

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"Then let us fix a day and ask them. **I do not think that solitude can be at all good for you.** If you will come to me after dinner with an almanac we will arrange it **all**. Of course you will invite that Miss Cassewary too. **I rather fancy that she has been very good to Lady Mabel. I suppose we shall find Warburton here. Or if not he will come soon.**"

The complication seemed to be very bad indeed. In the first place was it not clear that she, Lady Mary, ought not to be a party to asking Miss Boncassen to meet her

brother at Matching? Would it not be imperative on her part to tell her father the whole story**, rather than allow such a meeting as that to take place at Matching**? And yet how could she do that? **Had it not** [It had] been told to her in confidence, and **did** she **not** remember[ed] what her own feelings had been when Mrs. Finn had suggested the propriety of telling the Duke the story which had been told to her**?**[!] And how would it be possible to ask Lady Mabel to come to Matching to meet Miss Boncassen in the presence of Silverbridge? **Perhaps Silverbridge would not come. Silverbridge was not peculiarly fond of Matching.** If the party could be made up without Silverbridge then things might run smoothly.

As she was thinking of **all** this in her own room, thinking also how **very** happy she could be if one other name might be added to the list of guests, the Duke had gone alone into his library. There a pile of letters reached him, among which **Mr. Warburton had not yet gone to work so as to separate the private wheat from the official chaff. Here, when he had opened two or three which had first attracted him,—one from Mr. Monk, written after that gentleman had left Custins, in which he very anxiously suggested certain political combinations, a second from Mr. Moreton giving in detail the expenditures of Lord Silverbridge in the last twelvemonth, and a third from Lord Chiltern full of trouble about foxes in the Brake country,—a country hunted by his Lordship in which the Duke possessed much property,—when he had opened and read these, he pitched upon a fourth** [he found] one marked "Private," and addressed in a hand which he did not recognise. This he opened suddenly,—with a conviction that it would contain a thorn,—and, turning over the page, found that the signature to it was "Francis Tregear." **Mr. Monk's combinations, his son's follies, and the Brake foxes,—which he despised from the bottom of his heart,—had failed to ruffle the serenity which he had determined to assume on his daughter's behalf; but that** [The] man's name was wormwood to him. He at once felt that he would wish to have his dinner, his fragment of a dinner, brought to him in that solitary room, and that he might remain there secluded for the rest of the evening. But still he must read the letter;—and he read it. **The letter was as follows.**

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"If my mode of addressing your Grace be too familiar I hope you will excuse it. It seems to me that if I were to use one more distant, I should myself be detracting something from my right to make the claim which I intend to put forward. You know what my feelings are in reference to your daughter. I do not**, however,** pretend to suppose that they should have the least weight with you. But**, I think,** you know also

what her feelings are for me. A man seems to be vain when he expresses his **own** conviction of a woman's love for himself. But this matter is so important to her as well as to me, that I **feel myself** [am] compelled to lay aside all pretence. If she do not love me**, even** as I love her, then the whole thing drops to the ground. Then **of course** it will be for me to take myself off from out of your notice,—and from hers, and to keep to myself whatever heart-breaking I may have to undergo. But if**, as I believe,** she be as steadfast in this matter as I am,—if her happiness be fixed on marrying me as mine is on marrying her,—then, I think, I am entitled to ask you**, as her father,** whether you are justified in keeping us apart.

"I know well what are the discrepancies. Speaking from my own feeling I regard very little those of rank. I believe myself to be as good a gentleman as though my father's forefathers had sat for centuries past in the House of Lords. I believe that you would have thought so also had you and I been brought in contact on any other subject **than this**. The discrepancy in regard to money is, I own, a great trouble to me. Having no wealth of my own I wish that your daughter were so circumstanced that I could go out into the world and earn bread for her. I know myself so well that I dare say positively that her money,—if it be that she will have money**, as to which I have never made inquiry**,—had no attraction for me when I first became acquainted with her, and adds nothing now to the persistency with which I claim her hand. **Should I ever be happy enough to receive your sanction to my claim, I should feel disposed to follow any advice you might give me as to my future life.**

"But I venture to ask whether you can dare to keep us apart if her happiness depends**, as I believe it does,** on her love for me. It is now more than six months since I called upon you in London and explained my wishes. **I am sure** you will understand me when I say that I cannot be contented to sit idle, trusting simply to the assurance which I have of her affection. Did I doubt it, my way would be**, not easier, but** more simple. I should feel in that case that she would yield to your wishes, and I should then, as I have said before, just take myself out of the way. But if it be not so, then I am bound to do something,—on her behalf as well as my own. What am I to do? Any endeavour to meet her clandestinely is against my instincts, and would certainly be rejected by her. A secret correspondence would be equally distasteful to both of us. Whatever I do in this matter, I wish you to know that I do it. Therefore it is that I write to you**; pleading my own cause,—and as I believe hers**.

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He read the letter very carefully, and at first was simply astonished by what he considered to be the unparalleled arrogance of the young man. In regard to rank this young gentleman thought himself to be as good as anybody else**,—let that anybody else be what he might**! In regard to money he did**, indeed,** acknowledge some inferiority. But that was a misfortune, and could not **now** be helped! Not only was the letter arrogant;—but the fact that he should dare to write any letter on such a subject was proof of most unpardonable arrogance. The Duke walked about the room thinking of it **in this way** till he was almost in a passion. Then he read the letter again and was gradually pervaded by a feeling of its manliness. Its arrogance remained, but with its arrogance there was a certain boldness **of argument** which induced respect. "Whether I am such a son-in-law as you would like or not, it is your duty to accept me, if by refusing to do so you will render your daughter miserable." That was Mr. Tregear's argument. He himself might be prepared to argue in answer that it was his duty to reject such a son-in-law, even though by rejecting him he might make his daughter miserable. **Though he might be sure of the truth of his own argument, still there was something to be said on the other side, and this young man had said it well.** He was not shaken; but with his condemnation of the young man there was mingled something of respect.

He continued to digest the letter before the hour of dinner, **so that he might revert to his original tenderness,** and when the almanac was brought to him he fixed on certain days. The Boncassens he knew would be free from engagements in ten days' time. **Mr. Boncassen would be then at work in the British Museum; but he had half promised that he would come for a week if he might be allowed to bring a trunk full of books with him.** As to Lady Mabel, he seemed to think it almost certain that she would come. "I believe she is always going about from one house to another at this time of the year," said Mary**, who was aware that the Earl did not himself inhabit the family mansion at Grex**.

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"She promised she would come again, you know. They are at their own place in Surrey. They will come unless they have friends with them. They have no shooting, and nothing brings people together now except shooting. I suppose there are things here to be shot. And be sure you write to Silverbridge." **Mary of course intended to write to Silverbridge; but she was determined to tell her brother that both Lady Mabel and Miss Boncassen had been invited. He must then do as he pleased about coming to meet them.**

Chapter 51, *The Duke's Guests*

"The Duke of Omnium presents his compliments to Mr. Francis Tregear and begs to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Tregear's letter of ——. The Duke has no other communication to make to Mr. Tregear, and must beg to decline any further correspondence." This was the reply which the Duke wrote to the applicant for his daughter's hand. And he wrote it at once, **on the night of the day in which the application had reached him, after he had given his instructions to his daughter as to the invitations to be sent out to their friends, but while his feeling of anger was still hot upon him**. He had acknowledged to himself that Tregear had shown a certain manliness in his appeal; but not on that account was such a man to have all that he demanded! **Let the merits of the letter be what they might, that which was right before was right still.** It seemed to the Duke that there was no alternative between such a note as that given above and a total surrender**,—unless indeed he could reconcile himself to the want of ordinary courtesy which would be displayed by sending no answer at all**.

But the post did not go out during the night, and the note lay hidden in the Duke's private drawer till the morning. There was still that *locus poenitentiae* which should be accorded to all letters written in anger. **Nor was he in a hurry to despatch it on the next morning, feeling that as far as expedition was concerned the post of that evening would answer all necessary purposes.** During the day he thought over it all constantly, not in any spirit of yielding, **not regarding it as possible that he should surrender his daughter to such a claim,** not descending a single step from that altitude of conviction which made him feel that it might be his duty absolutely to sacrifice his daughter,—but asking himself whether it might not be well that he should explain the whole matter at length to **a** [the] young man **who was evidently capable of understanding an argument**. He thought that he could put the matter strongly. It was not by his own doing that he belonged to an aristocracy which, if all exclusiveness were banished from it, must cease to exist. But being what he was, having been born to such privileges and such limitations, **and thinking that the welfare of the country depended much on the preservation of its aristocracy,** was he not bound in duty to maintain a certain exclusiveness? He would appeal to the young man himself to say whether marriage ought to be free between all classes of the community. And if not between all, who was to maintain the limits but they to whom authority in such matters **was** [is] given? So much in regard to rank! And then he would ask this young man whether **as a**

rule he thought it fitting that a young man, whose duty according to all known principles it must be to earn his bread **by his daily work**, should avoid that manifest duty by **looking for** [taking] a wife who could maintain him **in idleness**? As he roamed about his park alone he felt that he could write such a letter as would make an impression even upon a lover. But when he had come back to his study, **and had seated himself with pen and ink before him,** other reflections came to his aid. Though he might write the most appropriate letter in the world[,]**,—a letter which ought so to convince the young man to whom it would be addressed as to put an end to this courtship altogether,—** would there not certainly be a reply? **Did he not know that an opponent, let him be ever so much confounded by an argument, would always argue in reply?** As to conviction, had he ever known an instance of a man who had been convinced by an adversary? Of course there would be a reply,—and replies. And **then** to such a correspondence there would be no visible end. **Though he half wrote his letter, and felt that all that he had said and all that he was about to say was as true as gospel, still he did not dare to say it. It behoved him, above all things, to be secure.** Words when once written remain, or may remain, in testimony for ever. So at last when the moment came he sent off those three lines, with his uncourteous compliments and his demand that there should be no further correspondence.

At dinner **on that day** he endeavoured to make up for this harshness by increased tenderness to his daughter, who was altogether ignorant of the correspondence **between her father and her lover**. "Have you written your letters, dear?" She said she had written them **all**.

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"It is for your sake I wish them to be here. **You ought to have friends of your own age.** I think that Lady Mabel and Miss Boncassen are just such girls as you would like."

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"Is that an objection? According to my ideas it is **very** desirable to become acquainted with persons of various nations. I have heard, no doubt, many stories of the awkward manners displayed by American ladies**,—stories which, I am bound to say, I have never quite believed**. If you look for them you may probably find American women who are not polished. I do not think I shall calumniate my own country if I say the same of English women. It should be our object to select for our own acquaintances

the best we can find of all countries. It seems to me that Miss Boncassen is a young lady with whom any other young lady might be glad to form an acquaintance."

This was a little sermon which Mary was quite contented to endure in silence **if only she could carry her point**. She was, in truth, fond of the young American beauty, and had felt a **real** pleasure in the intimacy which the girl had proposed to her. But she thought it inexpedient that Miss Boncassen, Lady Mabel, and Silverbridge should be at Matching together. Therefore she made a reply to her father's sermon which hardly seemed to go to the point at issue. "She is so beautiful!" she said.

"Very beautiful!" said the Duke. "But what has that to do with it? **Is that an objection?** My girl need not be jealous of any girl's beauty." Mary laughed and shook her head. "What is it then?"

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"I have no doubt he would,—or does, for I am aware that they have met." **This the father said with an easy heart, not at all anxious on that head, remembering his son's confidential communication about Mabel, which had been made to him, as it seemed, but the other day.** "But why should he not admire her?"

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"I fancy that there is no danger in that direction. I think Silverbridge understands what is expected from him." Had not Silverbridge plainly shown that he understood what was expected from him when he selected Lady Mabel? **Had he not given evidence of his understanding by the arguments he had used in defending the choice which he had made?** Nothing could have been more proper, and the Duke had been altogether satisfied. That in such a matter there should have been **such** a change in so short a time did not **seem to him to be possible!** [occur to him.] **And** poor Mary was now completely silenced. She had been told that Silverbridge understood what was expected from him; and of course could not fail to carry home to herself an accusation that she failed to understand what was expected from her. **The Duke had been innocent of any such intention; but Mary was completely silenced. She had no further argument to use against the congregation of the persons whom the Duke had selected.**

When this conversation took place, she had written her letters but had not as yet sent them. Those to Mrs. Finn and to the two young ladies had been easy enough. Could Mr. and Mrs. Finn come to Matching on the 20th of November? "Papa says that you promised to return and thinks this time will perhaps suit you." And then to Lady Mabel: "Do come if you can; and papa particularly says that he hopes Miss Cassewary will come

also. **Pray tell her from me that I do so hope we shall see her.**" To Miss Boncassen she had written **quite** a long letter, but that too had been written very easily. "I write to you instead of your mamma because I know you. You must tell her that, and then she will not be angry. I am only papa's messenger, and I am to say how much he hopes that you will come on the 20th. Mr. Boncassen is to bring the whole British Museum if he wishes." Then there was a little postscript which showed that there was already considerable intimacy between the two young ladies. "We won't have either Mr. L. or Lord P." **But** not a word was said about Lord Silverbridge. There was not even an initial to indicate his name.

But the letter to her brother was **much** more difficult. In her epistles to those others she had so framed her words as if possible to bring them to Matching. But in writing to her brother, she was anxious so to write as to deter him from coming. She was bound to obey her father's commands. He had desired that Silverbridge should be asked to come,—and he was asked to come. But she craftily endeavoured so to word the invitation that he should be induced to remain away. "It is all papa's doing," she said; "and **of course** I am **very** glad that he should like to have people here. I have asked the Finns, with whom papa seems to have made up everything **so as to be more friendly with them than ever**. Mr. Warburton will be here of course and I think Mr. Moreton is coming**, though papa arranges that himself**. He seems to think that a certain amount of shooting ought to be done. Then I have invited Lady Mabel Grex and Miss Cassewary,—all of papa's choosing,—and the Boncassens. **I don't know whether Lady Mabel and Miss Boncassen will get on well together, but they must take their chance.** Now you will know whether the set will suit you. Papa has particularly begged that you will come,—apparently because of Lady Mabel. I don't at all know what that means. Perhaps you do. As I like Lady Mabel **very much**, I hope she will come." **Mary as she read this over thought that it must be effective.** Surely Silverbridge would not run himself into the jaws of the lion. When he heard that he was specially expected by his father to come to Matching in order that he might make himself agreeable to one young lady, he would hardly venture to come, seeing that he would be bound to make love to another young lady! **It was thus that Lady Mary argued with herself when she sent her letter off to the post.**

After this was a lull for a few days at Matching till the answers came,—during which some few additions were made to the party, invited by the Duke himself. He answered Mr. Monk's letter by asking him to come to Matching, and he also wrote to an old political adherent, one Mr. Barrington Erle, begging him also to become one of the guests. Which facts became known very speedily,—in some

occult manner, the nature of which is not at all understood by the world at large,—to the editor of the *People's Banner*, who explained at considerable length in a leading article that the Duke was collecting together at his country seat the future Cabinet which was to walk into power over the prostrate corpses of Sir Timothy Beeswax and Lord Drummond. As the *People's Banner* always rankled with animosity against the Duke, for reasons which it is not now necessary to explain, the article went on to assert that any such attempt on the part of the Duke and his party was simply a sign of arrogance only equalled by the ignorance displayed,—that Sir Timothy was stronger than ever and the Duke weaker,—that the adherence of Mr. Phineas Finn would damn any party, and that Mr. Monk as a popular politician was altogether "played out." All this was expressed in very strong language;—but not the less did the gentlemen named accept the invitations which had been sent to them.

And, to Mary's great horror, all the other invitations were accepted **also**. Mr. and Mrs. Finn were quite at the Duke's disposal. That she had expected. **Mr. and Mrs. and Miss** [The] Boncassen[s] would all come. This was signified in a note from Isabel, which covered four sides of the paper and was full of fun. But under her signature had been written a few words,—not in fun,—words which Lady Mary perfectly understood. "I wonder. I wonder. I wonder!" **Lady Mary well knew the cause of her wondering.** Did the Duke when inviting her know anything of his son's inclinations? Would he be made to know them now, during this visit? And what would he say when he did know them? **There was quite enough in the proposed visit to excite her feelings; and to induce her, as she said, to "wonder."**

That the Boncassens would come was **to Mary** a matter of course; but she had thought that Lady Mabel would **perhaps have refused** [refuse]. She **had taken care to let** [had told] Lady Mabel **know** that the Boncassens had been asked, and to her thinking it had not been improbable that the young lady would be unwilling to meet her rival at Matching. But the invitation was accepted **in a very short note**. **Both Lady Mabel and Miss Cassewary were delighted, and ever so much obliged to the Duke!**

But it was her brother's ready acquiescence which troubled Mary chiefly. He wrote as though there were no doubt about the matter**,—adding very little about the two young ladies**. "Of course there is a deal of shooting to be done," he said, "and I consider myself bound to look after it. There ought not to be less than four guns,—particularly if Warburton is to be one of them. I like Warburton very much, but I think he shoots badly **on purpose** to ingratiate himself with the governor. I wonder whether the governor would get leave for Gerald for a week. He has been sticking to his work like a brick **ever**

since he has been up. If not would he mind my bringing someone? **I haven't anyone I care about, only we can't do it with three guns.** You ask the governor, and let me know. I'll be there on the 20th. I wonder whether they'll let me hear what goes on among them about politics. I'm sure there's not one of them hates Sir Timothy worse than I do. **If they'll give me something good, perhaps I'll rat.** Lady Mab is a brick and I'm glad you have asked her. I don't think she'll come as she likes shutting herself up at Grex. Miss Boncassen is another brick. And if you can manage about Gerald, I will say that you are a third."

This would have been all very well had she not known that secret[.]**;—but knowing it, what was she to think?** Could it be that Miss Boncassen had been mistaken? She was forced to write again to say that her father did not think it right that Gerald should be brought away from his studies for the sake of shooting, and that the necessary fourth gun would be there in the person of Barrington Erle. Then she added: "Lady Mabel Grex is coming, and so is Miss Boncassen." But to this she received no reply. **As the matter stood, he would meet both the girls there on Saturday 20th November.**

Though Silverbridge had written to his sister in his usual careless style, he had considered the matter much. The three months were over**,—the three months at the expiration of which he was to receive his answer from Miss Boncassen**. He had no idea of any hesitation on his part. He had asked her to be his wife, and he was **fully** determined to go on with his suit. Had he ever been enabled to make the same request to Mabel Grex, or had she answered him when he did half make **such a request** [it] in a [serious] manner **to make him think that she had received his proposition with favour**, he would have been true to her. **At present he was quite resolved.** He had not told his father, or his sister, or his friends, as Isabel had suggested. **He had determined that** he would not do so till he should have received some more certain answer from her. But in respect to his love he was prepared to be quite as obstinate as his sister. It was a matter for his own consideration, and he would choose for himself. The three months were over, and it was now his business to present himself to the lady again. **Upon the whole he was glad to have the opportunity of doing so at Matching.**

That Lady Mabel should also be at Matching would certainly be a misfortune. He thought it probable that she, knowing that Isabel Boncassen and he would be there together, would refuse the invitation. Surely she ought to do so. **He had told her what were his intentions. If she was disappointed, that was not his fault. Why had she sent him away when he had shown himself willing to kneel at her feet? It might be that his father would have ground of complaint, but surely she would have none. He**

thought that she would not show herself at Matching. That was his opinion when he wrote to his sister. When he heard afterwards that she intended to be there, he could only suppose that she was prepared to accept the circumstances as they stood.

Chapter 52, *Miss Boncassen Tells the Truth*

Everything was very tranquil at Matching till the 20th. Mr. Warburton arrived, and Mr. Moreton; but their business was with the Duke and they did not disturb Lady Mary's quiet. On the 20th [of the month] all the guests came rattling in [at Matching], one after another**,—some from the north, some from the south, and some from the west**. The Boncassens were the first, but Lady Mabel with Miss Cassewary followed them **very** quickly. Then came the Finns, **who had had to pass through London,** and with them Barrington Erle. **Lastly came** Lord Silverbridge **himself** [was the last]. He arrived by a **late express** [train] which reached the station at 7 p.m., and only entered the house as his father was taking Mrs. Boncassen into the dining-room. He dressed himself in ten minutes, and joined the party as they had finished their fish. "I am awfully sorry," he said, rushing up to his father, "but I thought that I should just hit it."

"There is no occasion for awe," said the Duke, "as a sufficiency of dinner is left **for you**. But how you should have hit it, as you say,—seeing that the train is not due at Bridstock till 7:05, I do not know. **You can hardly drive seven miles, have your things unpacked, and dress for dinner in fifty-five minutes.**"

"I've done it often, sir," said Silverbridge, **walking around the room and then** taking the seat left vacant for him next to Lady Mabel. "We've had a political caucus of the party,—all the members who could be got together in London,—at Sir Timothy's, and I was bound to attend. **I only just got away in time.**"

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"I am not going to tell any of the secrets**, I can assure you**. I have no doubt that there were reporters present, and you will see the whole of it in the papers to-morrow**; but you won't hear a word from me,—unless Mr. Monk has something very good to offer me**."

"I think we can combat Sir Timothy and all his wiles without treachery," said Mr. Monk laughing.

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"But how are you? Think what you have gone through since we were at Killancodlem **together**!"

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"Though upon the whole it has happened very luckily. I have got rid of the accursed horses, and my governor has shown what a brick he can be. **He always was a brick, but** I don't think there is another man in England who would have done as he did."

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"There are **a great deal** fewer who would. When they came into my bedroom that morning and told me that the horse could not run I thought I should have broken my heart. **Such a day I had of it.** Seventy thousand pounds gone!"

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"And the honour and glory of winning the race! And then the feeling that one had been so awfully swindled! Of course I had to look as though I did not care a straw about it, and to go and see the race **run**, with a jaunty air and a cigar in my mouth**,—just as though I were as jolly as a sandboy**. That is what I call hard work."

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"**Well;—**I tried. **And then, after the race, I started off to London by myself.** I wish I could explain to you my state of mind **as I went** [that day]. In the first place the money had to be got. Though it was to go into the hands of swindlers, still it had to be paid. I don't know how your father and Percival get on together;—but I felt **uncommonly** [very] like the prodigal son."

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"I suppose so. I **almost** felt like hanging myself when I was alone **in London** that evening. And now everything is right again."

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"**Everything of that sort, I mean.** I have done with racing at any rate. **I don't think I'd own a horse if all the best animals in England were offered me for nothing.** The feeling of being in the power of a lot of low blackguards is so terrible! I did love the

poor brute so dearly. **I went to see him in his stable when I first heard about the nail, but I have not put my eyes upon him since.** And now what have you been doing?"

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"Why misery! What a question for you to ask! **As you are an old friend, I tell you everything.** Though I love Grex, I am not altogether fond of living alone. And though Grex has its charms they are of a melancholy kind. **I do not know that a half-furnished barrack exactly suits my taste.** And when I think of the state of our family affairs, that is not reassuring. Your father has just paid seventy thousand pounds for you. My father has been good enough to take something less than a quarter of that sum from me;—but still it was all that I was ever to have."

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"Don't they? When I look forward it seems to me that a time will soon come when I shall want it very much. **Altogether my prospects are not comfortable.**"

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"Let us hope so. Only nothing has ever come right with me yet. What **has become of** [is] Frank [doing]?"

"I haven't seen him since he left Crummie-Toddie. **I suppose he is in Cornwall.**"

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"I know nothing about it at all. **It never can come to any good; I am sure of that.**"

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"Yes, you do**;—although we knew each other as children**. And what business have you to interfere?"

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"Don't say that, Lord Silverbridge. You ought to have more mercy on me. **Yes, you ought.** You ought to put up with anything from me,—knowing how much I suffer."

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"Do, do. And now I will try to talk to Mr. Erle." **Mr. Erle was sitting on the other side of her, and her endeavours soon seemed to be crowned with perfect success.**

Miss Boncassen was sitting on the other side of the table, between Mr. Monk and Phineas Finn, and throughout the dinner talked mock politics with the greatest liveliness. Silverbridge when he entered the room had gone round the table and had shaken hands with everyone**, regarding them almost as being his own guests**. But there had been no other greeting between him and Isabel, nor had any sign passed from one to the other. No such greeting or sign had been possible. Nothing had been left undone which she had expected, or hoped**, or even conceived**. But, though she was very lively **in her political badinage with her neighbours**, nevertheless she kept her eye upon her lover and Lady Mabel. Lady Mary had said that she thought her brother was in love with Lady Mabel. Could it be possible? In her own land she had heard absurd stories,—stories which **at the moment** had seemed to her to be absurd,—of the treachery of lords and countesses, of the baseness of aristocrats, of the iniquities of high life in London. But her father had told her that go where she might, she would find people in the main to be very like each other**; and she had believed her father**. It had seemed to her**, in her intercourse with him,** that nothing could be more ingenuous than this young man had been in the declaration of his love. No simplest republican could have spoken more plainly. But now, at this moment, **seeing what she did see,** she could not doubt but that her lover was very intimate with this other girl. Of course he was **at liberty to do as he pleased** [free]. When she had refused to say a word to him of her own love or want of love, she had necessarily **given him that** [left him his] liberty. When she had put him off for three months, of course he was to be his own master. **If he never said another word, neither would she.** But what must she think of him if it were so? And how could he have the courage to **come and** face her in his father's house if he intended to treat her in such a fashion? But of all this she showed nothing **in her face**, nor was there a tone in her voice which betrayed **any want of equanimity** [her]. When she got up to leave the room, she said her last word to Mr. Monk with so sweet a smile that that old bachelor **almost** wished he were **somewhat** younger for her sake.

"If it is considered desirable, sir," said Silverbridge when the ladies were gone, "I'll take my glass and a bottle of wine, and go and sit alone in the billiard-room. I don't want to hear any secrets."

The Duke shook his head. "Is it not a pity that there should be secrets between you and me?"

"What are the secrets?" asked Phineas. "I am sure it is no secret that we all want to get rid of Sir Timothy Beeswax. But we have nothing to do with it. We have only got to wait till our time comes. That there are secrets between him and Lord Drummond, and between him and Lord Ramsden, and him and Sir Orlando, no one can doubt. Very disagreeable secrets I should think they must be. But I don't suppose that we have any secrets."

"I have none," said Mr. Monk.

"Perhaps I rather meant counsels," said the Duke sadly. But after that the conversation turned rather on shooting than on politics. There was very little spoken which even the ingenuity of the editor of the *People's Banner* could have made the subject of sterling political denunciation. Afterward, during the evening, music prevailed. [In the evening after dinner there was music.] It was discovered that Miss Boncassen sang divinely, and both Lady Mabel and Lady Mary accompanied her. Mr. Erle, and Mr. Warburton, and Mr. Monk, all of whom were unmarried, stood by enraptured. But Lord Silverbridge kept himself apart, and interested himself in a description which Mrs. Boncassen gave him of their young men and their young ladies in the States. **He hardly came forward,—**[He] had hardly spoken to Miss Boncassen,—till he offered her sherry or soda-water before she retired for the night. She refused his courtesy with her usual smile, but showed no more emotion than though they two had now met for the first time in their lives.

He had quite made up his mind as to what he would do. When the opportunity should come in his way he would simply remind her that the three months were passed. But **though he was fully resolved as to this, nevertheless** he was shy of talking to her in the presence of Lady Mabel and his father. He was quite determined that the thing should be done**, and done** at once, but he certainly wished that Lady Mabel had not been there. In what she had said to him at the dinner-table she had made him understand that she would be a trouble to him. He remembered her look when he told her she would marry. It was as though she had declared to him that it was he who ought to be her husband. **That look could have meant nothing else.** It referred back to that proffer of love which he had once made to her**,—just as though she had not rejected the proffer**. Of course all this was disagreeable. Of course it made things difficult for him. But not the less was it a thing quite assured that he would press his suit to Miss Boncassen. When he was talking to Mrs. Boncassen he was thinking of nothing else. When he was offering Isabel the glass of sherry he was telling himself that he would find his opportunity on the morrow,—though now, at that moment, it was impossible that he should make a sign. She, as she went to bed, asked herself whether it were possible that

there should be such treachery;—whether it were possible that he should pass it all by as though he had never said a word to her!

During the whole of the next day, which was Sunday, he was equally silent. Immediately after breakfast, on the Monday, shooting commenced, and **though he was in the house for a couple of hours before dinner** he could not find a moment in which to speak. It seemed to him that she purposely kept out of his way. With Mabel he did find himself for a few minutes alone, and was then interrupted by his sister and Isabel. "I hope you have killed a lot of things," said Miss Boncassen.

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On the next morning he dressed himself for shooting,—and then sent out the party without him. He had heard, he said, of a young horse for sale in the neighbourhood, and had sent to desire that it might be brought to him **to be looked at**. And now he found his occasion.

"Come and play a game of billiards," he said to Isabel, as the three girls with the other ladies were together in the drawing-room. She got up very slowly from her seat, and very slowly crept away to the door. Then she looked round as though expecting the other[s] **ladies** to follow her. None of them did follow her. Mary felt that she ought to do so; but, knowing all that she knew, did not dare **to do it**. And what good could she have done by one such interruption **as that**? Lady Mabel would fain have gone too;—but neither did she quite dare. Had there been no special reason why she should or should not have gone with them, the thing would have been easy enough. When two people go to play billiards, a third may surely accompany them. But now, **on this occasion,** Lady Mabel found that she could not stir. Mrs. Finn, Mrs. Boncassen, and Miss Cassewary were all in the room, but none of them moved. Silverbridge led the way quickly across the hall, and Isabel Boncassen followed him very slowly. When she entered the room she found him standing with a cue in his hand. He at once shut the door, and walking up to her dropped the butt of the cue on the floor and spoke one word. "Well!" he said.

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Then she dropped her badinage and answered him seriously **enough**. "I thought I had been honest and straightforward. When I found that you were in earnest at Killancodlem——"

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"Love you! Oh, my darling! No, no, no," she said, as she retreated from him round the corner of the billiard-table, and stood guarding herself from him with her little hands **upon the cushion**. "You ask if I love you. You are entitled to know the truth. From the sole of your foot to the crown of your head I love you as I think a man would wish to be loved by the girl he loves. You have come across my life, and have swallowed me up, and made me all your own. But I will not marry you to be rejected by your people. No;—nor shall there be a kiss between us till I know that it will not be so."

Chapter 53, *"Then I Am as Proud as a Queen"*

During the next day or two the shooting went on without much interruption **either from politics or** from love-making. **In politics there was not in truth very much to be done. The general conclusion among the politicians assembled seemed to be that if sufficient rope were allowed to that chief enemy, Sir Timothy Beeswax, he would probably hang himself, and that therefore it was desirable to give him as much rope as possible. Nothing could be done till the next spring. There was no chance that either Sir Timothy or Lord Drummond would resign till they had encountered the accidents of another session. Should the accidents of the session drive Sir Timothy from his position, then, it was thought, Mr. Monk must be selected as the only person in the House capable of forming a government. In that event the Duke would, if at the moment he found it possible, lend his cooperation to any arrangements that might be made. The meaning of this was that in the event of the party coming into power he would consent to be President of the Council and to fill the office which his old friend the Duke of St. Bungay positively refused to occupy again. In achieving this Mr. Monk, Phineas Finn, and Barrington Erle thought that they had achieved very much. The nucleus of a Liberal Cabinet was again made. There was no doubt that Lord Cantrip would join such a party. Barrington Erle and Phineas Finn, as they walked about the grounds on the second Sunday, previous to their departure on the Monday following, were able to fill up nearly all the important offices. Mr. Monk and the Duke were, perhaps, more intent upon the measures which they thought ought to be proposed to Parliament.**

Such were the political achievements of the Duke's guests, but the love-making was not **quite so** prosperous [all round]. Poor Lady Mary had nothing to comfort her. Could she have been allowed to see the letter which her lover had written to her father[,]**,—could she have been made to know but a few of the words which had**

there been written,—the comfort would have been, if not ample, still very great. **In regard to any matter that is of importance to us, though we may not doubt that the facts are as we desire them to be, still to be assured that they are so is always a comfort.** Mary told herself again and again that she was quite sure of Tregear;—but it was hard upon her that she could not be made certain that her certainty was well grounded. Had she known that Tregear had written, though she had not seen a word of his letter, it would have comforted her **for a time**. But she had heard nothing of the letter**, and nothing of her father's reply**. In June last she had seen him, by chance, for a few minutes, in Lady Mabel's drawing-room. Since that she had not heard from him or of him. That was now more than five months since. **During all those five months she had not heard his name mentioned.** How could her love serve her,—how could her very life serve her, if things were to go on like this? **It might be for years,—or it might be for ever!** How was she to bear it? Thinking of this she resolved, she almost resolved, that she would go boldly to her father and desire that she might be given up to her lover.

Her brother, though **infinitely** more triumphant,—for how could he fail to triumph after such words as Isabel had spoken to him?—still felt his **own** difficulties very seriously. She had imbued him with a strong sense of her own firmness, and she had declared **to him** that she would go away and leave him altogether if the Duke should be unwilling to receive her. He knew **very well** that the Duke would be unwilling. The Duke, **who was not crafty in managing either his family or his political adherents, and** who certainly was not handy in those duties of match-making which seemed to have fallen upon him at the death of his wife, showed by a hundred little signs his anxiety that his son and heir should arrange his affairs with Lady Mabel. These signs were manifest to Mary,—were disagreeably manifest to Silverbridge,—were unfortunately manifest to Lady Mabel herself. They were manifest to Mrs. Finn, who was clever enough to perceive that the inclinations of the young heir **himself** were turned **quite** in another direction. And gradually they became manifest to Isabel Boncassen. The host himself, as host, was courteous to all his guests. They had been of his own selection, and he did his best to make himself pleasant to them all. But he selected two for his peculiar notice,—and those two were Miss Boncassen and Lady Mabel. **But** while he would himself walk, and talk, and argue after his own peculiar fashion with the American beauty,—explaining to her matters political and social, till he **absolutely** persuaded her to promise to read his pamphlet upon decimal coinage,—he was always making awkward efforts to throw Silverbridge and Lady Mabel together. The two girls saw it all and knew well how the matter was,—knew that they were rivals, and knew each the ground on which she herself and on which the other stood. But neither was satisfied with her

advantage, or nearly satisfied. Isabel would not take the prize without the Duke's consent;—and Mabel could not have it without that other consent**, which she feared would be the more difficult to attain**. "If you want to marry an English duke," she once said to Isabel in that anger which she was unable to restrain, "there is the Duke himself. I never saw a man more absolutely in love." "But I do not want to marry an English duke," said Isabel, "and I pity any girl who has any idea of marriage except that which comes from a wish to give back love for love."

Through it all the father never suspected **for a moment** the real state of his son's mind. He was too simple to think it possible that the purpose which Silverbridge had declared to him as they walked together from the Beargarden **to the Houses of Parliament** had already been thrown to the winds. He did not like to ask **directly** why the thing was not settled. Young men, he thought, were sometimes shy, and young ladies not always ready to give immediate encouragement. But, when he saw them together[,]**,—and they often were together,—**he concluded that matters were going in **that** [the right] direction **as he would have them**. It was, however, an opinion which he had all to himself.

During the three or four days which followed **that** [the] scene in the billiard-room Isabel kept herself **as much as she could** out of her lover's way. She had explained to him that which she wished him to do, and she left him to do it. Day by day she watched the circumstances of the life around her, and knew that it had not been done. She was sure that it could not have been done while the Duke was explaining to her the beauty of quints, and expatiating on the horrors of twelve pennies, and twelve inches, and twelve ounces,—variegated in some matters by sixteen and fourteen! He could not know that she was ambitious of becoming his daughter-in-law, while he was opening out to her the mysteries of the **British** House of **Peers** [Lords], and explaining how it came to pass that while he was a member of one House of Parliament, his son should be sitting as a member of another;—how it was that a nobleman could be a commoner, and how a peer of one part of the Empire could sit as the representative of a borough in another part. She was an apt scholar, **intent no doubt on proving to him that however different she might be as to birth, she was in intellect equal to any position that might he offered to her. In this she altogether succeeded** [and succeeded in proving to him her intelligence]. Had there been a question of any other young man marrying her, he would probably have thought that no other young man could have done better. **But, during these days, Isabel never deluded herself into feeling that she was overcoming the one difficulty which stood in her way.**

Silverbridge was **of course** discontented with himself. The greatest misfortune was that Lady Mabel should be there. While she was present to his father's eyes he did not know how to declare his altered wishes. Every now and then she would say to him some little word indicating her feelings of the absurdity of his passion. "I declare I don't know whether it is you or your father that Miss Boncassen most affects," she said. But to this and to other **little** [similar] speeches **of the same kind** he would make no answer. She had extracted his secret from him at Killancodlem, and might use it against him if she pleased. In his present frame of mind he was not **at all** disposed to joke with her upon the subject.

On that second Sunday,—**it having been then decided that** the Boncassens were to return to London on the following Tuesday,—he found himself **by chance** alone with Isabel's father. The American had been brought out at his own request to see the stables **and coach-houses**, and had been accompanied round the premises by Silverbridge, Mr. Warburton, by Isabel **herself**, and by Lady Mary. As they got out into the park the party **had become** [were] divided, and Silverbridge found himself with Mr. Boncassen. Then it occurred to him that the proper thing for a young man in love was to go, not to his own father, but to the lady's father. Why should not he do as others always did? Isabel no doubt had suggested a different course. But that which Isabel had suggested was at the present moment impossible to him. **He might do it when he found himself alone with his father. He might do it when Mabel was gone. At the present moment it was impossible,—and yet it was indispensably necessary that something should be done. He could not allow her to leave Matching without taking some steps towards the declaration of his purpose.** Now at this instant, without a moment's forethought, he determined to tell his story to Isabel's father,—as any other lover might tell it to any other father.

"I am very glad to find ourselves alone, Mr. Boncassen," he said. Mr. Boncassen bowed and showed himself prepared to listen. Though so many at Matching had seen the whole play, Mr. Boncassen had seen nothing of it. **When the young Lord told him that this opportunity for private conversation was very fortunate, his mind was quite a blank as to what might be the subject of conversation.** "I don't know whether you are aware of what I have got to say."

"I cannot quite say that I am, my Lord." **The American was perhaps a little too demonstrative in his title.** "But whatever it is, I am sure I shall be delighted to hear it."

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"Really, Lord Silverbridge, this takes me quite by surprise. **You want to marry my daughter!**"

"Certainly I do."

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"That is quite true. If I were speaking to you or to your father theoretically I should perhaps be unwilling to admit superiority on your side **simply** because of your rank and wealth. I could make an argument in favour of my equality with the best Briton that ever lived,—as would become a true-born republican."

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"He wouldn't be a gentleman," said Silverbridge**, using the argument with which his sister had always supported her cause**.

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"My dear young Lord, **what ought I to say if one of your royal princes were to be imprudent enough to make to me the same offer?** Your father has gone out of his way to be civil to me. Am I to return his courtesy by bringing a great trouble upon him?"

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"Will he continue to be fond of her when he has heard this? What does Isabel say **herself**?"

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"Well;—yes. **I don't mean to boast about it; but** if it were all serene, I think she would consent."

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"Then think of the position in which you are placing her. You are struggling to win her heart." Silverbridge as he heard this assured himself that there was no need for any further struggling in that direction. "Perhaps you have won it**, or at any rate made some impression which cannot be removed without a pang**. And yet she may feel that she cannot **with due regard to her own dignity** become your wife. She may well say to herself that **all** this **that** [which] is offered to her is so great that she does not know how to refuse it; and may yet have to say, at the same time, that she cannot accept it without disgrace. You would not put one that you love into such a position?"

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"Would it be no disgrace that she should be known here, in England, to be your wife, and that none of those of your rank,—of what would then be her own rank,—should welcome her into her new world? **From what you have seen of her, do you think she would bear that easily?**"

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"If your own father refused to welcome her would not others follow suit**, do you think**?"

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"If she were once my wife he could not reject her. Of all human beings he is in truth the kindest and most affectionate. **My father could not be harsh. He might object, but then he would accept her.**"

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That evening the **whole** story was told to Mrs. Boncassen, and the matter was discussed among the family. Isabel in talking to them made no scruple of declaring her own feelings; and though in speaking to Lord Silverbridge she had spoken very much as her father had done afterwards, yet in this family conclave she took her lover's part**,— and in doing so perhaps her own**. "That is all very well, father," she said; "**and** I told him the same thing myself. But if he is man enough to be firm I shall not throw him over,—not for all the dukes in Europe. I shall not stay here to be pointed at. I will go back home. If he follows me, then I shall choose to forget all about his rank. If he loves me well enough to show that he is **really** in earnest I shall not disappoint him for the sake of pleasing his father." To this neither Mr. nor Mrs. Boncassen were able to make any efficient answer. Mrs. Boncassen, dear good woman, could see no reason why two young people who loved each other should not be married at once. Dukes and duchesses were nothing to her. If they couldn't be happy in England, then let them come and live in New York. She didn't understand that anybody could be too good for her daughter. Was there not an idea that Mr. Boncassen would be the next President? And was not the President of the United States as good as the Queen of England? **Mr. Boncassen listened to his daughter without rebuke. It was her affair and not his. When asked his advice he could give it, but that was all.**

Lord Silverbridge when he left Mr. Boncassen wandered about the park **awhile** by himself. King Cophetua married the beggar's daughter. He was sure of that. King Cophetua probably had not a father; and the beggar, probably, was not high-minded. But the discrepancy in that case was much greater. He intended to persevere, trusting much to a belief that when once he was married his father would **surely** "come round." His father always did come round. But the more he thought of it the more impossible it seemed to him that he should ask his father's consent **now** at the present moment. Lady Mabel's presence in the house was an insuperable obstacle. He thought that he could do it if he and his father were alone together, or comparatively alone**, in the house**. He must be prepared for an opposition, at any rate of some days, which opposition would make his father quite unable to entertain his guests while it lasted. **At the present moment the Duke was doing his best to make himself pleasant,—as Silverbridge understood. It would be cruel to disturb him at such a period.**

But as he could not declare his wishes to his father, and **by not doing so was already** [was thus] disobeying Isabel's behests, he must explain the difficulty to her. **He could not allow her to leave Matching without further words between them.** He felt already that she would despise him for his cowardice,—that she would not perceive the difficulties in his way, or understand that he might injure his cause by precipitation. **He had hoped that Mr. Boncassen might assist him, but Mr. Boncassen had only made fresh difficulties.** Then he considered whether he might not possibly make some bargain with his father. How would it be if he should consent to go back to the Liberal party on being allowed to marry the girl he loved? As far as his political feelings were concerned he did not think that he would much object to make **such a** [the] change. **But then he must give up his seat, and his father, he was sure, would not approve of that.** There was only one thing certain,—that he must explain his condition to Miss Boncassen before she went.

He found no difficulty now in getting the opportunity **he desired**. She was equally anxious, and as well disposed to acknowledge her anxiety. After what had passed between them she was not **at all** desirous of pretending that the matter was one of small moment to herself. She had told him that it was all the world to her, and had begged him to let her know her fate as quickly as possible. On that last Monday morning they were in the grounds together, and Lady Mabel, who was walking with Mrs. Finn, saw them pass through a little gate which led from the gardens into the Priory ruins. "It all means nothing," Mabel said with a little laugh to her companion.

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"Don't you think that one always has to be sorry for the young ladies? Young ladies generally have a bad time of it. Did you ever hear of a gentleman who had always to roll a stone to the top of a hill; but it would always come back upon him**, and then he would have to begin again**?"

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"Nobody should have run away with me. I have no idea of going on such a journey except on terms of **perfect** equality,—just step and step alike." Then she took hold of his arm and put out one foot **as though she were going to march away with him**. "Are you ready?"

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"Yes;—as I do; for the same reason; because he would not have his daughter creep in at a hole**, as I told you**. But to your own father you have not ventured to speak." Then he told his story, as best he knew how. It was not that he feared his father, but that he felt that the present moment was not fit. "He wishes you to marry that Lady Mabel Grex," she said. He nodded his head. "And you will marry her?"

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Her hand was in his, and she looked about as though to see that no eyes were watching them. But then, as the thoughts came rushing to her mind, she changed her purpose. "No," she said. "What is it but a trifle! It is nothing in itself. But I have bound myself to myself by certain promises, and you must not ask me to break them. You are as sweet to me as I can be to you, but there shall be no kissing till I know that I shall be your wife. Now take me back. **There were eyes looking at us when you brought me through the gate, and I do not care if they be there to look at us again.**"