Chapter 54, *"He Must Be Made to Please Something Else"*

On the following day, Tuesday, the Boncassens went, and then there were none of the guests left but Mrs. Finn and Lady Mabel Grex,—with of course Miss Cassewary. **The political gathering had dispersed itself. Mr. Moreton had gone back to his duties at Gatherum, and even Mr. Warburton had been relieved from his duties.** The Duke had especially asked both Mrs. Finn and Lady Mabel to remain, the former, through his anxiety to show his repentance for the injustice he had formerly done her, and the latter in the **special** hope that something might be settled as soon as the crowd of visitors should have gone. He had never spoken quite distinctly to Mabel. He had felt that the manner in which he had learned his son's purpose,—that which once had been his son's purpose,—forbade him to do so. But he had so spoken **to her** as to make Lady Mabel **herself** quite aware of his wish. He would not have told her how sure he was that Silverbridge would keep no more race-horses, how he trusted that Silverbridge had done with betting, how he believed that the young member would take a real interest in the House of Commons, **and much more of the same kind,** had he not intended that she should take **some** [a] special interest in the young man. And then he had spoken about the house in London. It was to be made over to Silverbridge as soon as Silverbridge should marry. And there was Gatherum Castle. Gatherum **no doubt** was rather a trouble than otherwise. He had ever felt it to be so, but had nevertheless always kept it open perhaps for a month in the year. His uncle had always resided there for a fortnight at Christmas. When Silverbridge was married it would become the young man's duty to do something of the same kind. Gatherum was the White Elephant of the family, and Silverbridge must enter in upon his share of the trouble. He did not know that in saying all this he was offering his son as a husband to Lady Mabel, but she understood it as thoroughly as though he had spoken the words **plainly**.

But she knew the son's mind **as well as she did the father's** [also]. He had indeed himself told her all his mind. "Of course I love her best of all," he had said. **No doubt he had done so then, and she had perceived that his love had in no degree diminished.** When he told her of it she had been so overcome that she had wept in her despair;—had wept in his presence. She had declared to him her secret,—that it had been her intention to become his wife, **if she could compass it.** [and] Then he had rejected her! **And since that, though they had been frequently together here at Matching, he had not said a word from which she could get encouragement.** It had all been shame, and sorrow, and disappointment to her. And she could not but remember that there had been a moment when she might have secured him by a word. A look would have done it;

a touch of her finger on that morning. She had known then that he had intended to be in earnest,—that he only waited for **such** encouragement **as she might easily have given him**. She had not given it because she had not wished to grasp too eagerly at the prize,—and now the prize was gone! She had said that she had spared him;—but then she could afford to joke, thinking that he would surely come back to her. **But this American had crossed his path, and hers, and now all the world was a blank to her.**

It was indeed a sad blank. She had begun her world with so fatal a mistake! When she was quite young, when she was little more than a child but still not a child, she had given all her love to a man whom she soon found that it would be impossible she should ever marry. He had offered to face the world with her, promising to do his best to smooth the rough places, and to soften the stones for her feet. But she, young as she was, had felt that both he and she belonged to a class which could hardly endure poverty with contentment. The grinding need for money, the absolute necessity of luxurious living, had been pressed upon her from her **very** childhood. She had seen it and acknowledged it, and had told him, with precocious wisdom, that that which he offered to do for her sake would be a folly for them both. She had not stinted the assurance of her love, but had told him that they must both turn aside and learn to love elsewhere. He had done so, with too complete a readiness**,—with a sincerity which was hardly gratifying to her.**[!] She had dreamed of a second love, which should not**, however,** obliterate the first,—**of something which might satisfy her aspirations for a home and a position, but** which might still leave to her the memory of the romance of her early passion. Then this boy had come in her way**;—for when he had first come across her path, he had been little more than a boy.**[!] With him all her ambition might have been satisfied. She desired high rank**,** and great wealth**, and all that fashion could give her**. With him she might have had it all. And then, too, though there would always be the memory of that early passion, **though that romance, she thought, would never die out of her heart,** yet she could in another fashion love this youth. He was pleasant to her, and gracious;—and she had told herself that if it should be so that this great fortune might be hers, she would atone to him fully for that past romance by the wife-like devotion of her life. The cup had come within the reach of her fingers, but she had not grasped it. Her happiness, her triumphs, her great success had been there, present to her, and she had dallied with her fortune. There had been a day on which he had been all but at her feet, and on the next he had been **altogether** prostrate at the feet of another. He had even dared to tell her so,—saying of that American that "of course he loved her the best!"

Over and over again since that she had asked herself whether there was no chance. **She must put up with things now which she had once thought she could**

never have endured. Though he had loved that other one best she would take him if it were possible. When the invitation came from the Duke**, though Mary had told her that Miss Boncassen would be there,** she would not lose a chance. She had told him that it was impossible that he, the heir to the Duke of Omnium, should marry an American**, and she almost thought that she had told him the truth**. All his family, all his friends, all his world would be against him. And then he was so young,—and, as she thought, so easily led. He was lovable and prone to love;—but surely his love could not be very strong, or he would not have changed so easily**, straying from her to this American girl as a bee strays from one flower to another**. **She hoped now that his affections might not be strong, that he might be prone to change, so that in his vacillations he might come back to her.**

She did not hesitate to own to herself that this American was very lovely. She too, herself, was beautiful. She too had a reputation for grace, loveliness, and feminine high-bred charm. She knew all that, but she knew also that her attractions were not so bright as those of her rival. She could not smile or laugh and throw sparks of brilliance around her as did the American girl. Miss Boncassen could be graceful as a nymph in doing the awkwardest thing! When she had pretended to walk stiffly along, to some imaginary marriage ceremony, with her foot stuck out before her, with her chin in the air, and one arm akimbo, Silverbridge had been all afire with admiration. Lady Mabel understood it all. The American girl must be taken away,—from out of the reach of the young man's senses,—and then the struggle must be made. **Then all the family, all the friends, all the world must combine to teach him how impossible it was that he should marry an American,—and an American so meanly born.**

Lady Mabel had not been long at Matching before she learned that she had **very** much in her favour. She **soon** perceived that the Duke himself had no suspicion of what was going on, and **she perceived also** that he was strongly disposed in her favour. She unravelled it all in her own mind **as well as she knew how**. There must have been **some accord,** some agreement**,** between the father and the son, when the son had all but made his offer to her. More than once she was half-minded to speak openly to the Duke, **to tell him what she feared and what she hoped,—**to tell him all that Silverbridge had said to her and all that he had not said, and to ask the father's help in scheming against that rival. But she **did not quite dare to do it. She** could not find the words with which to begin. And then, might he not despise her, and despising her reject her, were she to declare her desire to marry a man who**, as she knew,** had given his heart to another woman? And so, when the Duke asked her to remain after the departure of the other guests, **and seemed to signify that her time would then come,** she decided that it would be best to bide her

time. **Of course she would remain.** The Duke, as she assented, kissed her hand, and she knew that this sign of grace was given to his intended daughter-in-law. **Surely among them they might be too strong for that boy!**

In all this she half confided her thoughts and **half confided** her prospects to her old friend, Miss Cassewary. "That **creature** [girl] has gone at last," she said to Miss Cass **in her own room on that Tuesday morning**.

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"Don't be moral, Cass. She is a snake in my sense. **I have not a word to say against her character.** She has got her weapons and of course it is natural enough that she should use them. If I want to be Duchess of Omnium, why shouldn't she?"

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"Because you have enough of the old school about you to like conventional falsehood **and make-believe proprieties**. This young man did in fact ask me to be his wife. Of course I meant to accept him,—but I didn't. Then comes this convict's granddaughter."

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"You know what I mean. Had he been a convict it would have been all the same. I take upon myself to say that had the world been informed that an alliance had been arranged between the eldest son of the Duke of Omnium and the daughter of Earl Grex,—the world would have been **quite** satisfied. Every unmarried daughter of every peer in England would have envied me,—**and perhaps some of the young men might have envied him.** But it would **all** have been *comme il faut*."

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"But what would be the feeling as to the convict's granddaughter? **Looking all round it don't you know that such a thing ought not to be?**"

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"He shall do what he pleases, but he must be made to [be] please[d with me] **something else**." So much she said to Miss Cassewary; but she did not divulge any plan. **Indeed at that moment her plans were hardly formed.** The Boncassens had just gone off to the station, and Silverbridge was out shooting **with one or two gentlemen of the neighbourhood**. If anything could be done here at Matching, it must be done quickly, as

Silverbridge**, no doubt,** would soon take his departure. **That which had attracted him was gone, and it could hardly be expected that he would remain.** She did not know it, but, in truth, he was remaining in order that he might, as he said, "have all this out with the governor."

She tried to realise for herself some plan[,]**,—something that might be done at once.** But when the evening came nothing was fixed **as yet**. For a quarter of an hour, just as the sun was setting, the Duke joined her in the gardens,—and then spoke to her more plainly than he had ever spoken before. "Has Silverbridge come home?" he asked.

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"**I hope you may do so.** I sincerely hope you may. There is nothing I wish for Mary so much as that she should have a sister. And there is no one whom I would be so glad to hear her call by that name as yourself." How could he have spoken plainer? **Lady Mabel looked up into his face blushing,—with a purposed blush, and, without speaking a word, had thus told him that she also wished that it might be so.**

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"The Duke was in his study two minutes ago," said Mrs. Finn.

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"To Cornwall!" said Miss Cassewary **and Mrs. Finn together**. "Why to Cornwall?" asked Lady Mabel. But Mary, connecting Cornwall with Frank Tregear, held her peace.

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"I did not know that he could afford that kind of thing," said the Duke with a frown on his brow.

"**Of course his father will have to see to that.** Years ago there used to be always a Tregear in for Polpenno," said Silverbridge.

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"I don't know anything about it," said Silverbridge; "but as he has asked me to go I think I ought to do it." The Duke, who was by no means the man to make light of the political obligations of friendship, raised no objection**, and the question of the journey was thus settled**.

"I wish," said he, "that something could have been arranged between you and Mabel before you went." The young man stood in the gloom of the dark room aghast. This was certainly not the moment for explaining everything to his father. "I have set my heart very much upon it**. I had her here because of what you said to me**, and you ought to be gratified by knowing that I quite approve your choice."

All that had been years ago,—in last June[;]**. It had occurred under an altogether different set of human circumstances,**—before Mrs. Montacute Jones's garden-party, before that day in the rain at Maidenhead, before the brightness of Killancodlem **had shone upon him**, before the glories of Miss Boncassen had been revealed to **his eyes** [him]. **But how could he now, at this moment, make all that intelligible to his father?** "There is no time for that kind of thing now," he said weakly.

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"I must dress now, sir;—but I will tell you all about it when I get back from Cornwall. I will come back direct to Matching, and will explain everything." So he escaped**, leaving the Duke altogether in doubt as to what there might be to be explained**.

It was clear to Lady Mabel that there was no opportunity now for any scheme. **Whatever there might be to be done,** whatever might be possible**,** must be postponed till after this Cornish business had been completed. Perhaps it might be better so. She had thought that she would appeal to himself, **that she would throw herself upon his mercy,** that she would tell him of his father's wishes, of her love for him,—of the authority which he had once given her for loving him,—and of the absolute impossibility of his marriage with the American. She thought that she could do it, if not efficiently at any rate effectively. But it could not be done on the very day on which the American had gone. **There must be some interval.**

It came out in the course of the evening that he was going to assist Frank Tregear in his canvass. The matter was not spoken of openly, as Tregear's name could hardly be mentioned **before the Duke and Lady Mary together**. But everybody knew it, and **the matter** [it] gave occasion to Mabel for a few words apart with Silverbridge**, which words could be spoken in confidence but without any reference to their own peculiar affairs**. "I am so glad you are going to him," she said in a little whisper.

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"The greatest good in the world. Your name will go so far! It will be everything to him to be in Parliament. **He will do well there, and that will force your father to respect him."**

"I hope he'll succeed. We'll make a good fight for it at any rate."

Then there was a pause. "And when are we to meet again?" she said.

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On the following morning the Duke **sent for** [proposed to] Lady Mabel **and proposed to her** that she should stay at Matching for yet another fortnight,—or even for a month if it might be possible. **It would be a great kindness, he said, to Lady Mary.** Lady Mabel, whose father was still abroad, was not sorry to accept the invitation.

Chapter 55, *Polpenno*

Polpenno was a borough on the northern coast of Cornwall as to which most politicians were agreed that it ought to have been abolished by some Reform Bill. It had been spared, so the Tories said, at the first Great Reform Bill, because at that time it was under the influence of that mighty Whig nobleman the Earl of Camborne. As certain small boroughs certainly were spared, apparently in the interests of magnates both on one side and on the other, the allegation in this respect may not improbably have been true. At the second Reform Bill it was still spared because when that moderate measure became law, no existing borough was sent out actually into the cold. Polpenno at that time returned but one member, and that one it retained.

But there had been changes since the days in which the old Earl of Camborne had been so powerful. He had always sent up to Parliament some Liberal selected by himself,—choosing his member just as though there had never been a whisper of reform in the county of Cornwall. But there had come other earls less efficient, and there had been sales of property, and gradually the Camborne interest had dwindled. But still there had been something of a Camborne interest, and the Liberals had at any rate retained their hold on the borough down to the present date. There had been a rapid succession of members, and various contests. It was thought by many that a good deal of money had been spent at Polpenno, and that certainly Sir Simon Carstairs, the late member, who had once been Lord Mayor of London and certainly had no special connection with Cornwall, had paid

very dear for his whistle. Poor Sir Simon had now died suddenly, and it was immediately decided that there should be another struggle. Mr. Carbottle, coming whence nobody knew, or recommended by whom very few understood, was on his way down from London very soon after the death of Sir Simon. But it was known that Mr. Carbottle was a man of means. It was soon whispered about that he had made a large fortune in the indigo trade, and that he did not very much care what he spent so that he could get into Parliament.

Polwenning, the seat of Mr. Tregear, Frank's father, was close to [the borough of] Polpenno,—so close that the gates of the grounds opened into the town. **Many years ago the Tregears had owned many houses in the little borough, and had professed almost as strong an interest as the Camborne family had afterwards consolidated.** As Silverbridge had told his father, many of the Tregear family had sat for the borough. Then there had come changes, **and the Camborne interest had been consolidated. Since those days strange Conservatives had been brought down,—as Sir Simon and Mr. Carbottle were brought,—but they had never succeeded** [and strangers had made themselves welcome by their money]. When the vacancy now occurred a deputation waited upon Squire Tregear and asked him to stand. The deputation would guarantee that the expense should not exceed—a certain limited sum. Mr. Tregear for himself had no such ambition. His eldest son was abroad and was not at all such a man as one would choose to make into a member of Parliament. After much consideration in the family, Frank was invited to present himself to the constituency. Frank's aspirations in regard to Lady Mary Palliser were known at Polwenning, and it was thought that they would have a better chance of success if he could write the letters M.P. after his name. Frank acceded, and as he was starting wrote to ask the assistance of his friend Lord Silverbridge. At that time there were only nine days more before the election, and Mr. Carbottle, the Liberal candidate, was already living in great style at the Camborne Arms.

Mr. and Mrs. Tregear and an elder sister of Frank's, who **now** quite acknowledged herself to be an old maid, were very glad to welcome Frank's friend. On the first morning of course they discussed the candidates' prospects. "My best chance of success," said Frank, "arises from the fact that Mr. Carbottle is fatter than the people here seem to approve."

"If his purse be fat," said old Mr. Tregear, "that will carry off any personal defect." Lord Silverbridge asked whether the candidate was not too fat to make speeches. Miss Tregear declared that he had made three speeches daily for the last week, and that Mr. Williams, the rector, who had heard him, declared him to be a godless dissenter **in favour of women's rights and republican institutions**. Mrs. Tregear thought that it

would be much better that the place should be disfranchised altogether than that such a horrid man should be brought into the neighbourhood. "A godless dissenter!" she said, holding up her hands in dismay. Frank thought that they had better abstain from allusion to their opponent's religion. Then Mr. Tregear made a little speech. "We used," he said, "to endeavour to get someone to represent us in Parliament, who would agree with us on vital subjects, such as the Church of England and the necessity of religion. Now it seems to be considered ill-mannered to make any allusion to such subjects! **A Turk or a Mohammedan if he had made money enough to be called an enlightened man would be just the member for Polpenno.**" From which it may be seen that this old Tregear was very conservative indeed.

When the old people were gone to bed **the new member of Parliament and the expectant member betook themselves to the servants' hall in order that Silverbridge might smoke his pipe** [the two young men discussed the matter]. "I hope you'll get in," said Silverbridge.

"Well—yes; I suppose I may trust to you for as much as that."

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"**I almost repent what I have done.** Sir Timothy is such a beast," said Silverbridge.

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"Not quite that,—but I declare I do spend my time thinking whether I'd rather sit behind Beeswax or Rattler."

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"Your governor couldn't help himself. A Liberal party[,]**,—what you call a Liberal party,—**with plenipotentiary power, must go on right away to the logical conclusion of **those** [its] arguments. It is only the conservative feeling of the country which saves such men as your father from being carried headlong to ruin by their own machinery. You have read Carlyle's *French Revolution*."

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"But he wants to be a member of Parliament; and, as he hasn't thought much about anything, he is quite willing to lend a hand to communism, radicalism, socialism, chopping people's heads off, or anything else. **These are my ideas,**" **said Tregear, getting up, "and I regard myself as a philanthropic patriot."**

"That's all very well," said Silverbridge, **as he followed his friend,** "but where should we have been if there had been no Liberals? Robespierre and his pals cut off a lot of heads, but Louis XIV and Louis XV locked up more in prison." And so he had the last word in the argument.

But in spite of the repentance which the future head of the Pallisers felt as to the first step which he had taken in political life, he was prepared to do the best he could to assist his friend's canvass. It would be a grand thing that Tregear should be in Parliament. He too thought that, were it to be so, the Duke's opposition might be in some degree softened by the fact, and he was essentially loyal in his nature and fond of action. He was ready to do anything,—except, as he said at Polwenning, to make a speech. And even that he declared himself ready to do if it could be assured to him that there should be such a row that nobody could hear him. The whole of the next morning was spent in canvassing, and the whole of the afternoon. In the evening there was a great meeting at the Polpenno Assembly Room, which at the present moment was in the hands of the Conservative party. Here Frank Tregear made an oration, in which he declared his political convictions. The whole speech was said at the time to be very good; but the portion of it which was apparently esteemed the most, had direct reference to Mr. Carbottle. Who was Mr. Carbottle? Why had he come to Polpenno? Who had sent for him? Why Mr. Carbottle rather than anybody else? **A great man he certainly was, but surely not great enough for Polpenno. This very bad joke, referring to the candidate's personal dimensions, seemed to be very popular.** Did not the people of Polpenno think that it might be as well to send Mr. Carbottle back to the place from whence he had come? These questions, which seemed to Silverbridge to be as easy as they were attractive, almost made him desirous of making a speech himself.

Then Mr. Williams, the rector, followed, a gentleman who had many staunch friends and many bitter enemies in the town. He addressed himself chiefly to that bane of the whole country,—as he conceived them,—the godless dissenters; and was felt by Tregear to be injuring the cause by every word he spoke. **But in such positions a man has to endure the blows, not only of his enemies,—which are generally endurable without much suffering,—but of his friends also; and such blows are sometimes excruciating.** It was necessary that Mr. Williams should liberate his own mind, and therefore he persevered with the godless dissenters at great length,—not explaining, however, how a man who thought enough about his religion to be a dissenter could be godless, or how a godless man should care enough about religion to be a dissenter.

Mr. Williams was heard with impatience, and then there was a clamour for the young Lord. He was the son of an ex-Prime Minister, and therefore of course he could

speak. He was himself a member of Parliament, and therefore **of course he** could speak. He had boldly severed himself from the faulty political tenets of his family, and therefore on such an occasion as this was peculiarly entitled to speak. When a man goes electioneering, he must speak **if he be called for**. At a dinner-table to refuse is possible;—or in any assembly convened for a semi-private purpose, a gentleman may declare that he is not prepared for the occasion**, and there are generally so many anxious for the honour that to escape is not difficult**. But in such an emergency as this, a man,—and a member of Parliament,—cannot plead that he is not prepared. A son of a former Prime Minister who had already taken so strong a part in politics as to have severed himself from his father, not prepared to address the voters of a borough whom he had come to canvass! The plea was so absurd, that he was thrust **off his chair and** onto his feet before he knew what he was about.

It was in truth his first public speech. At Silverbridge he had attempted to repeat a few words **which he had imperfectly learned by rote**, and in his failure had been covered by the Sprugeons and the Sprouts. **There had been no contest at Silverbridge, and everything had been made very easy;** but now he was on his legs in a great room, in an unknown town, with all the aristocracy of the place before him! His eyes at first swam a little, and there was a moment in which he thought he would run away. But, on that morning, as he was dressing, there had come to his mind the idea of the possibility of such a moment as this, and a few words had occurred to him. "My friend Frank Tregear," he began, rushing at once at his subject, "is a very good fellow and I hope you'll elect him." Then he paused, not remembering **very well** what was to come next; but the sentiment which he had uttered appeared to his auditors to be so good in itself and so well delivered, that they filled up a **very** long pause with continued clappings and **such** acclamations. "Yes," continued the young member of Parliament, encouraged by the kindness of the crowd **before him and around him**, "I have known Frank Tregear ever so long, and I don't think you could find a better member of Parliament anywhere." There were **a great** many ladies present and they thought that the Duke's son was just the person who ought to come electioneering among them. His voice was much pleasanter to their ears than that of old Mr. Williams. The women waved their handkerchiefs and the men stamped their feet. Here was an orator come among them. "You all know all about it just as well as I do," continued the orator, "and I am sure you feel that he ought to be member for Polpenno." There could be no doubt about that as far as the opinion of the audience went. "There can't be a better fellow than Frank Tregear and I ask you all to give three cheers for the new member." Ten times three cheers were given, and the Carbottleites outside the door who had come to report what was going on at the Tregear

meeting were quite of opinion that this eldest son of the former Prime Minister**, who had political ideas of his own,** was a tower of strength. "I don't know anything about Mr. Carbottle," continued Silverbridge, who was almost growing to like the sound of his own voice. "Perhaps he's a good fellow too." "No; no; no." "A very bad fellow indeed," was heard from different parts of the room. "I don't know anything about him. I wasn't at school with Carbottle." This was taken as a stroke of the keenest wit, and was received with infinite cheering. Silverbridge was in the pride of his youth, and Carbottle was sixty at the least. Nothing could have been funnier. "He seems to be a stout old party, but I don't think he's the man for Polpenno. **And I don't think you'll return him.** I think you'll return Frank Tregear. I was at school with him;—and I tell you, that you can't find a better fellow anywhere than Frank Tregear." Then he sat down, and I am afraid he felt that he had made the speech of the evening. "We are so much obliged to you, Lord Silverbridge," Miss Tregear said as they were walking home together. "That's just the sort of thing that the people like. So reassuring, you know. What Mr. Williams says about the dissenters is of course true; but it isn't reassuring."

Mr. Williams, who came back with them all to supper, was not quite so well contented. There had been but faint applause after his speech. "I hope, my Lord," said he severely, "that you agreed with the few remarks I ventured to make regarding the religion of this country."

"I'm not sure that all the dissenters are so very bad," said Silverbridge. "There is Lord Drummond, the Prime Minister. He's a Presbyterian." This happened to be a fact,—which would have been explained away at great length by Mr. Williams, who was beginning to show that a Presbyterian in Scotland was not a dissenter, when Mrs. Tregear took them all in to supper.

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"**Perhap**s I ought to say that you did, seeing that you praised me so violently. But, whatever it was, it was well taken. I don't know whether they will elect me; but had you come down as a candidate I am quite sure they would have elected you." Silverbridge was hardly satisfied with this. He wished to have been told that he had spoken **really** well. He did not, however, resent his friend's coldness. "Perhaps after all I did make a fool of myself," he said to himself as he went to bed.

On the next day, after breakfast, it was found to be raining heavily**, and to be raining after such a fashion that they who knew the weather in that part of the world declared that it would rain all day**. Canvassing was of course the business of the hour, and canvassing is a business which cannot **very well** be done indoors. It was**,**

however, very soon decided that the rain should go for nothing. Could an agreement have been come to with the Carbottleites it might have been decided that both parties should abstain, but as that was impossible the Tregear party could not afford to lose the day. As Mr. Carbottle, by reason of his fatness and natural slowness, would perhaps be specially averse to walking about in the slush and mud, it might be that they would gain something; so after breakfast they started with umbrellas,—Tregear, Silverbridge, Mr. Newcomb the curate, Mr. Pinebott the Conservative attorney, with four or five followers who were armed with books and pencils, and who ticked off on the lists of the voters the names of the friendly, the doubtful, and the inimical.

Canvassing under heavy rain in December [Parliamentary canvassing] is not a pleasant occupation. Perhaps nothing more disagreeable, more squalid, more revolting to the senses, more opposed to personal dignity, can be conceived. **And if at all times, so especially is it abominable and degrading in such weather as December.** The same words have to be repeated over and over again in the cottages, hovels, and lodgings of poor men and women who only understand that the time has come round in which they are to be flattered **by,** instead of being the flatterers **of, their superiors**. "I think I am right in supposing that your husband's principles are conservative, Mrs. Bubbs." "I don't know nothing about it. You'd better call again and see Bubbs hissel." "Certainly I will do so. I shouldn't at all like to leave the borough without seeing Mr. Bubbs. I hope we shall have your influence, Mrs. Bubbs." "I don't know nothing about it. My folks at home allays vote buff; and I think Bubbs ought to go buff too. Only mind this; Bubbs don't never come home to his dinner. You must come arter six. And I hope he's to have some'at for his trouble. He won't have my word to vote unless he have some'at." Such is the conversation in which the candidate takes a part, while his cortège at the door is criticizing his very imperfect mode of securing Mrs. Bubbs' good wishes. Then he goes on to the next house, and the same thing with some slight variation is endured again. Some guide, philosopher, and friend, who accompanies him, and who is the chief of the cortège, has calculated on his behalf that he ought to make twenty such visitations an hour, and to call on two hundred constituents in the course of the day. As he is always falling behind in his number, he is always being driven on by his philosopher, till he comes to hate the poor creatures to whom he is forced to address himself, with a most cordial hatred.

It is **altogethe**r a nuisance to which no man should subject himself in any weather. But when it rains there is superadded a squalor and an ill humour to all the party which makes it almost impossible for them not to quarrel before the day is over. To talk politics to Mrs. Bubbs under any circumstances is bad, but to do so with the

conviction that the moisture is penetrating from your greatcoat through your shirt to your bones, **while you hold your umbrella away from you,** [and] **while you feel** that [while so employed] you are breathing the steam from those seven other wet men at the door, is **very bad indeed** [abominable]. To have to go through this is enough to take away all the pride which a man might otherwise take from becoming a member of Parliament. But to go through it and then not to become a member is base indeed! To go through it and to feel that you are probably paying at the rate of a hundred pounds a day for the privilege is most disheartening. Silverbridge, as he backed up Tregear in the uncomfortable work, congratulated himself on the comfort of having a Mr. Sprugeon and a Mr. Sprout who could manage his borough for him without a contest.

Chapter 56, *The News Is Sent to Matching*

There were nine days of this work, during which Lord Silverbridge became very popular and made many speeches. Tregear**, who was really in earnest in his politics,** did not win half so many hearts, or recommend himself so thoroughly to the political predilections of the borough;—but nevertheless **on the ninth day** he was returned. It would probably be unjust to attribute this success chiefly to the young Lord's eloquence. It certainly was not due to the strong religious feelings of the rector. It is to be feared that even the thoughtful political convictions of the candidate did not altogether produce the result. It was that chief man among the candidate's guides and friends, that leading philosopher who would not allow anybody to go home from the rain, and who kept his eyes so sharply open to the pecuniary doings of the Carbottleites that Mr. Carbottle's guides and friends had hardly dared to spend a shilling;—it was he who had in truth been efficacious. In every attempt they had made to spend their money they had been looked into and circumvented. As Mr. Carbottle had been brought down to Polpenno on purpose that he might spend money,—as he had nothing but his money to recommend him, and as he had not spent it,—the free and independent electors of the borough had not seen their way to vote for him. Therefore the Conservatives **of the neighborhood** were very elate with their triumph. **Here and there about the borough vast placards were exhibited declaring the great Conservative reaction which had taken place among the thoughtful men of Polpenno,—a reaction which would no doubt spread itself through all Cornwall and probably communicate itself to the neighboring county!** [There was a great Conservative reaction.] But the electioneering guide, philosopher, and friend, in the humble retirement of his own home,—he was a tailor in the town, whose

assistance at such periods had long been in requisition **and whose time was not given up without some slender remuneration**,—[he] knew very well how the seat had been secured. Ten shillings a head would have **turned three hundred voters to liberalism,—would at any rate have** sent **a great majority** [three hundred] **of them as** true Liberals to the ballot-boxes! The mode of distributing the money **with absolute secrecy** had been arranged; but the Conservative tailor had been too acute, and not a half-a-sovereign could be passed. **Tregear won by one hundred and fifteen votes, and would never have won but for the tailor's sharpness.** The tailor **only** got twenty-five pounds for his work, and that was smuggled in among the bills for printing.

Mr. Williams, however, was **quite** sure that he had so opened out the iniquities of the dissenters as to have convinced the borough. Yes; there had been a great reaction, and he allowed himself to hope that every Salem and Zion and Ebenezer in his large parish would be closed**,—forgetting probably that he would have had no seats in his own church to offer to this bulk of the parishioners who would thus have become converted to his religious views**. **But who is there that would not think it better that the world should remain prayerless, than that it should say its prayers after any fashion but his own?** "It is a great thing for the country," said Mr. Williams **in Mr. Tregear's dining-room on the eve of the departure of the two young men**.

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"I am thoroughly attached to the Church," said Tregear, who knew that friends, even when indiscreet, must be conciliated.

"Any man who wishes to hold the seat for Polpenno," continued the clergyman, "must show that he is in earnest about the Church of the State."

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"I think you have done more for us than anyone else," whispered Miss Tregear to the young Lord. "What you said was so reassuring!" The father before he went to bed expressed to his son, with some trepidation, a hope that all this would lead to no great permanent increase of expenditure. **"I did not like to stand in your way," said the father, "when the offer came. And yet I felt that I was hardly justified."**

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"It was beastly work!" The Duke made another memorandum to instruct his son that no gentleman above the age of a schoolboy should allow himself to use such a word in such a sense. "We had to go about in the rain up to our knees in mud for eight or nine

days, always saying the same thing. And of course all that we said was bosh." Another memorandum,—or rather two, one as to the slang, and another as to the expediency of teaching something to the poor voters on such occasions. "Our only comfort was that the Carbottle people were quite as badly off as us." Another memorandum as to the grammar. The absence of Christian charity did not at the moment affect the Duke. "I made ever so many speeches, till at last it seemed to be quite easy." Here there was a very grave memorandum. Speeches easy to young speakers are generally very difficult to old listeners. "But of course it was all bosh." This required no separate memorandum **but was too probably true**.

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The last sentence gave rise in the Duke's mind to the necessity of a very elaborate memorandum on the subject of amusements generally. **It was becoming, he thought, the great fault of the higher ranks in England to seek the means of expending their energy in useless play rather than in useful labour. Men such as his son could not be idle. Life was not pleasant to them unless they could work hard. To toil was a necessity to them. But, under the dominion of fashion, they sacrificed themselves to employments which could have no beneficial results. His son could not forgive himself because he had not hunted so many days,—as another young man might be angry with himself because he had not read so many hours! In this way the best energies of the country were being wasted. The Duke made a very strong memorandum within his own mind on this subject.**

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"I am a member of the British House of Commons. I have sometimes regarded myself as being one of the most peculiarly unfortunate men in the world, and yet now I have achieved that which all commoners in England think to be the greatest honour within their reach, and have done so at an age at which very few achieve it but the sons of the **most** wealthy and the **most** powerful.

"I now come to my misfortunes. I know that as a poor man I ought not to be a member of Parliament. I ought to be earning my bread as a lawyer or a doctor**, or perhaps as a magistrate a thousand miles up the country in India**. I have no business to be what I am, and when I am forty I shall find that I have eaten up all my good things instead of having them to eat. **You will understand this thoroughly,—you, who have your good things still to come.**

"I have one chance before me. You know very well what that is. Tell her**, unless you feel that you will be breaking confidence by doing so,** that my pride in being a member of Parliament is much more on her behalf than on my own. The man who dares to love her ought at any rate to be something in the world. If it might be,—if ever it may be,—I should wish to be something for her sake. **You will tell her this from me,—if you think you can do so honestly.**

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The first mental memorandum in regard to this came from the writer's assertion that he at forty would have eaten up all his good things. No! He being a man might make his way to good things though he was not born to them. He surely would win his good things for himself. But what good things were in store for her? **Had not everything slipped from her?** What chance of success was there for her? **Oh,—if she also could have been born a man, then too she might have fought her own battle.** But the reflection which was the most bitter to her of all came from her assurance that his love for that other girl was so genuine. Even when he was writing to her there was no spark left of the old romance! Some hint of a recollection of past feelings, some half-concealed reference to the former passion might have been allowed to him! She as a woman,—as a woman all whose fortune must depend on marriage,—could indulge in no such allusions; but surely he need not have been so hard! **There was, however, no hardness in it. It was not that he refrained from the expression of the feeling, but that the feeling itself no longer existed. From his heart all regard for her had been quite banished. She had bade him go and love elsewhere, and he had taken her absolutely at her word. Her memorandum on this matter was at last to the effect that a time should come when she would exact some penalty for his absolute desertion.**

But still there was another memorandum. At the present moment she would do all that he desired as far as it was in her power. She was anxious that he should marry Lady Mary Palliser, though so anxious also that something of his love should remain with herself! She was quite willing to convey that message,—if it might be done without offence to the Duke. **She understood well what Tregear meant when he asked her to convey it,—if she could do so honestly.** She was there with the object of ingratiating herself with the Duke. She must not imperil her favour with the Duke by making herself the medium of any secret communications between Mary and her lover. **Tregear had seen all that and had understood it as well as herself.**

But how should she serve Tregear without risk of offending the Duke? She read the letter again and again, and thinking it to be a good letter she determined to show it to the Duke. **Now that Miss Boncassen was gone,—and Silverbridge gone also,—the Duke devoted some period of his afternoons to Lady Mabel, and instructed her also in the beauty of tenths, and in the hideous deformity of dozens.** "Mr. Tregear has got in at Polpenno," she said on the day on which she and the Duke had received their letters.

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"That is**, no doubt,** natural."

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"Your correspondent talks of breaking confidence. What does he mean?"

"Breaking confidence with you. I certainly shall not do that."

"I think he was right to put that in. It would have been better that he should not have written at all about my daughter. But as he has done so, he was right to put that in."

"What am I to do, Duke?"

Chapter 57, *The Meeting at The Bobtailed Fox*

It was now the middle of December, and matters **had** [were] not **been going on at all comfortably** [comfortable] in the Runnymede country. The Major**,** with **more** [much] pluck **than some had given him the credit of possessing,** had carried on his operations in opposition to the wishes of **the majority of** the resident members of the hunt. The owners of coverts had protested **that they would not preserve foxes for him**, and farmers had sworn that he should not ride over their lands. There had even been some talk among the younger men of thrashing him if he persevered. But he did persevere, and**, as it had happened,** had managed to have one or two good runs. Now it was the fortune of the Runnymede hunt that many of those who rode with the hounds were strangers to the country,—men who came down by train from London **in the morning and went back in the evening**, gentlemen of perhaps no great distinction, who could ride hard, **and were popular enough while they kept the creatures in their proper places,** but as to whom it was thought that as they did not provide the land to ride over, or the fences to be destroyed, **or the crops to be injured,** or the coverts for the foxes, or the greater part of the subscription, they ought not to oppose those by whom all

these things were supplied. But the Major, knowing where his strength lay, had managed to get a party to support him. The contract to hunt the country had been made with him in last March, and was good **at any rate** for one year. Having the kennels and the hounds under his command he did hunt the country; but he did so amidst a storm of contumely and ill-will.

At last it was decided that a general meeting of the members of the hunt should be called together with the express object of getting rid of the Major. The gentlemen of the neighbourhood felt that the Major was not to be borne, and the farmers were very much stronger against him than the gentlemen. It had now become a settled belief among **almost all** sporting men in England that the Major had with his own hands driven the nail into the horse's foot. **The groom, it was said, had confessed so much to a friend who had seen him off in the emigrant ship from Plymouth. Gradually there had come to be very little doubt about the matter; and** was it to be endured that the Runnymede farmers should ride to hounds under a Master who had been guilty of such an iniquity as that? **"He is doing the thing uncommonly well," said some of the hard riders down from London. No doubt! A man who could make ever so many thousand pounds by such a trick as that could afford to do the thing well. But what honest man would choose to participate in the results of such rascality?** *The Staines and Egham Gazette*, which had always supported the Runnymede hunt, declared in very plain terms that all who rode with the **"**Major**,"—for at this time poor Tifto's majority became the subject of many unpleasant remarks,—**were enjoying their sport out of the plunder which had been extracted from Lord Silverbridge. Then a meeting was called for Saturday, the 18th December, to be held at that well-known sporting little inn The Bobtailed Fox**, within a mile and a half of Egham**. **All those who were really** [The] members of the hunt were earnestly called upon to attend. It was,—so said the printed document which was issued,—the only means by which the hunt could be preserved. If gentlemen who were interested did not put their shoulders to the wheel, **and probably also their hands into their pockets, then,—so said the document,—**the Runnymede hunt must be regarded as a thing of the past. One of the documents was sent to the Major with an intimation that if he wished to attend no objection would be made to his presence. The chair would be taken at half-past twelve punctually by that **very** popular and well-known old sportsman Mr. Mahogany Topps.

Was ever the Master of a hunt treated in such a way! His presence not objected to! As a rule the Master of a hunt **never** does [not] attend hunt meetings, because the matter to be discussed is generally that of the money to be subscribed for him, as to which it is as well that he should not hear the pros and cons. But it is presumed that he is

to be the hero of the hour, and that he is to be treated to his face, and spoken of behind his back, with love, admiration, and respect. But now this Master was told that his presence—would be allowed! And then this fox-hunting meeting was summoned for half-past twelve on a hunting day;—when, as all the world knew, the hounds were to meet at eleven, twelve miles off! **This was done with the intention of securing the absence of the hard-riding London men, who though they had no interest in a single acre of land were still members of the hunt.** Was ever anything so base? said the Major to himself **as he read the letter in the seclusion of Tally-ho Lodge**. But he resolved that he would be equal to the occasion. He immediately issued cards to all the members, stating that on that day the meet had been changed from Croppingham Bushes, which was ever so much on the other side of Bagshot, to The Bobtailed Fox,—for the benefit of the hunt at large, said the card,—and that the hounds would be there at half-past one. **There would not after that be much time for hunting on the 18th December; but on such an occasion as this the Major felt that he must be "high-spirited."** Whatever might happen, he must show a spirit. In all this there were one or two of the London brigade who stood fast to him. "Cock your tail, Tifto," said one hard-riding supporter, "and show 'em you ain't afraid of nothing." So Tifto cocked his tail and went to the meeting in his best new scarlet coat, with his whitest breeches, **his gayest waistcoat,** his pinkest boots, [and] his neatest little bows at his knees**, and with his biggest breast-pin in his most gorgeous scarf**. He entered the room with his horn in his hand, as a symbol of authority, and took off his hunting-cap to salute the assembly **generally** with a jaunty air. He had taken two glasses of cherry brandy, and as long as the stimulant lasted would no doubt be able to support himself with audacity.

Two stout young farmers had been placed at the door to prevent any from entering who were not members of the hunt. Their duty was difficult because no one knew exactly who were members and who were not. Anyone who paid, though he paid no more than a five-pound note, was a member. Farmers who paid nothing were supposed to be members. That excellent old sportsman, the parson from Croppingham, was certainly a member, though he had never paid a shilling. The object was to exclude any rough attendants from London who might be able to mount a pair of breeches and a hunting-whip, and, so equipped, might possibly come down to assist the Major. When the time came very few who sought admittance were excluded. On one occasion there was a little noise. "You ain't paid a penny these two years and I'm blowed if you shall go in," said one of the young farmers at the door, and then the impecunious sportsman was thrust rather rudely down the stairs. But this was not the Major's doing. The Major knew that he could

not support his position by such means as that. The Major had one great argument on which he would depend, and his object was to have that supported by a majority of votes. His argument and his appeal would be, he thought, so just that even his enemies would support it.

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Mr. Jawstock was a gentleman **very** well known in the Runnymede country, who had himself been instrumental in bringing Major Tifto into these parts. There is often someone in a hunting country who never becomes a Master of Hounds himself, but who has almost as much to say about the business as the Master himself. Sometimes at hunt meetings he is rather unpopular, as he is always inclined to talk**, and gentlemen who wish to be hunting do not care to be detained by eloquence, however excellent**. But there are occasions on which his services are felt to be valuable,—as were Mr. Jawstock's at present. He was **a gentleman** about forty-five years of age[,] **who** was not much given to riding, **who** owned no coverts himself, and was not a man of wealth; but he understood the nature of hunting, knew all its laws, and was a judge of horses, of hounds,—and of men; and could say a thing when he had to say it. **Therefore the conduct of this matter had been placed in his hands.**

Mr. Jawstock sat on the right hand of Mr. Topps, and a place was left for the Master opposite. The task to be performed was certainly neither easy nor pleasant. It was necessary that the orator should accuse the gentleman opposite to him,—a man with whom he himself had been very intimate,—of iniquity so gross and so mean, that nothing worse can be conceived. "You are a swindler, a cheat, a rascal of the very deepest dye,—a rogue so mean, that it is revolting to be in the same room with you!" That was what Mr. Jawstock had to say. And he said it. Looking round the room, occasionally appealing to Mr. Topps, who on these occasions would lift up his hands in horror, but never letting his eye fall for a moment on the Major, Mr. Jawstock told the **whole** story. **And he told it very well.** "I did not see it done," said he. "I know nothing about it. I never was at Doncaster in my life**, and I don't pay much attention to races**. But you have evidence of what the Jockey Club thinks. The Master of our hunt has been banished from race-courses!" Here there was considerable opposition, and a few short but excited little dialogues were maintained;—throughout all which Tifto restrained himself like a Spartan. **But Jawstock held his own. If not banished from race-courses, he had been banished from this and that special enclosure.** "At any rate he has been thoroughly disgraced," continued Mr. Jawstock, "as a sporting man. He has been driven out of the Beargarden Club." "He resigned in disgust at their treatment," said a friend of the

Major's. "Then let him resign in disgust at ours," said Mr. Jawstock, "for we won't have him here. Cæsar wouldn't keep a wife who was suspected of infidelity, nor will the Runnymede country endure a Master of Hounds who is supposed to have driven a nail into a horse's foot." **When the matter was discussed afterwards it was thought that this little studied peroration might have been spared.**

Two or three other gentlemen had something to say before the Major was allowed to speak,—the upshot of the discourse of all of them being the same. The Major must go. **If he didn't go, nobody should be allowed to ride across the country at all.**

Then the Major got up, and certainly as far as attention went he had full justice done him. **Every word that he said was listened to in silence.** However clamorous they might intend to be afterwards, that amount of fair play they were all determined to accord him. The Major was not excellent at speaking, but he did perhaps better than might have been expected. "This is a very disagreeable position," he said,—"very disagreeable indeed. As for the nail in the horse's foot I know no more about it than the babe unborn. But I've got two things to say, and I'll say what ain't the most consequence first. These hounds belong to me." Here he paused, and a loud contradiction came from many parts of the room. Mr. Jawstock, however, proposed that the Major should be heard to the end **before opinion was expressed on that subject or on any other**. "I say they belong to me," repeated the Major. "If anybody tries his hand at anything else the law will soon set that to rights. But that ain't of much consequence. What I've got to say is this. Let the matter be referred. If that 'orse had a nail run into his foot, and I don't say he hadn't, who was the man most injured? Why, Lord Silverbridge. Everybody knows that. I suppose he dropped well on to eighty thousand pounds**, and I don't think he was best pleased**. I propose to leave it to him. Let him say. He ought to know more about it than anyone **else**. He and I were partners in the horse. His Lordship ain't very sweet upon me just at present. Nobody need fear that he'd do me a good turn. I say leave it to him. **If he says I did it, I'll walk out of the country. As to the hounds we can settle that afterwards. If you'll agree to leave it to Lord Silverbridge,—so will I.**"

In this matter the Major had certainly been **very** well advised. A rumour had become prevalent among sporting circles that Silverbridge had **positively** refused to condemn the Major. It was known that he had paid his bets without delay, and that he had, to some extent, declined to take advice from the leaders of the Jockey Club. The Major's friends were informed that the young Lord had refused to vote against him at the club. Was it not more than probable that if this matter were referred to him he would refuse to give a verdict against his late partner? **Tifto might more probably get**

evidence in his favour from that quarter than from any other. And then how strong would such evidence be!

The Major sat down, put on his cap, and folded his arms akimbo, with his horn sticking out from his left hand. For a time there was general silence, broken, however, by murmurs in different parts of the room. Then Mr. Jawstock whispered something into the ear of the Chairman, and Mr. Topps, rising from his seat, suggested to Tifto that he should retire. "I think so," said Mr. Jawstock. "The proposition you have made **is one that** can be discussed only in your absence." Then the Major held a consultation with one of his friends, and after that did retire. **As he went, very glorious in his pink top boots and white leather breeches, one or two of his adherents attempted to express some applause, but that was quickly stopped by the joint efforts of Mr. Topps and Mr. Jawstock. The poor Major went down to the bar, regaled himself with another glass of cherry brandy, and then sat on horseback disconsolate among his hounds.**

When he was gone the real hubbub of the meeting commenced. There were some there**, and among them Mr. Jawstock,** who **well** understood the nature of Lord Silverbridge's feelings in the matter. "He would be the last man in England to declare him guilty," said Mr. Jawstock. "Whatever my Lord says, he shan't ride across my land," said a farmer in the background. "I don't think any gentleman ever made a fairer proposition,—since anything was anything," said a friend of the Major's, a gentleman who kept livery stables in Long Acre. "We won't have him here," said another farmer,—whereupon Mr. Topps shook his head sadly. "I don't think any gentleman ought to be condemned without a 'earing," said one of Tifto's admirers, "and where you're to get anyone to hunt the country like him, I don't know as anybody is prepared to say." "We'll manage that," said a young gentleman from the neighbourhood of Bagshot, who thought that he could hunt the country himself quite as well as Major Tifto. **Then another Londoner expressed an opinion that fair was fair, and that nothing fairer could be said than Tifto had spoken himself.** "He must go from here; that's the long and the short of it," said Mr. Jawstock. "Put it to the vote, Mr. Jawstock," said the livery-stable keeper. **"That is what it must come to at last."**

Mr. Topps, who had had great experience in public meetings, **and thought that a counting of hands was better than any eloquence in the world for hurrying a meeting to a decision, and who was aware, moreover, that if the matter were protracted much longer his lunch would interfere most prejudicially with his dinner,** hereupon expressed an opinion that they might as well go to a vote. No doubt he was right if the matter was one which must sooner or later be decided in that manner. **In an assembly of Britons who ever knew an opinion to be swayed by any amount of**

eloquence? Very much may be said, and the speakers may take great delight in what they say;—but the gentlemen who vote all vote at last as they would have voted had not a speech been made. So it would be, no doubt, on this occasion.

Mr. Jawstock looked round the room trying to calculate what might be the effect of a show of hands. The majority was with him; but he was well aware that of this majority some few would be drawn away**, not in favour of Tifto, but in favour of** [by] the apparent justice of Tifto's proposition. And what was the use of voting? Let them vote as they might, it was out of the question that Tifto should remain Master of the hunt. But the Chairman had acceded, and on such occasions it is difficult to go against the Chairman. **Therefore with much doubting Mr. Jawstock proposed to take the votes of the meeting.**

Then there came a show of hands,—first for those who desired to refer the matter to Lord Silverbridge, and afterwards for Tifto's direct enemies,—for those who were anxious to banish Tifto out of hand, without reference to anyone. **Here again there was squabbling; one man was alleged to have held up two hands, and another to have attempted to oblige both parties by holding up the same hand twice.** At last the matter was settled. To the great annoyance of Mr. Jawstock and the farmers the meeting voted that Lord Silverbridge should be invited to give his opinion as to the innocence or guilt of his late partner.

The Major's friends carried the decision out to him as he sat on horseback, as though he had altogether gained the battle and was secure in his position as Master of the Runnymede hunt for the next dozen years. But at the same time there came a message **with compliments** from Mr. Mahogany Topps. It was now half-past two, and Mr. Topps **ventured to** express[ed] a hope that Major Tifto would not **attempt to** draw the country **round** on the present occasion. The Major, thinking that it might be as well to conciliate his enemies, rode solemnly and slowly home to Tally-ho Lodge in the middle of his hounds.

Chapter 58, *The Major Is Deposed*

When Silverbridge undertook to return with Tregear to London instead of going off direct to Matching, it is to be feared that he was simply actuated by a desire to postpone his further visit to his father's house. He had thought that Lady Mabel would surely be gone before his task at Polpenno was completed**; but, while he was there, he learned from Tregear that she was still at Matching, and likely to stay for yet a few**

days longer. As soon as he should again find himself in his father's presence he would at once declare his intention of marrying Isabel Boncassen. **He had postponed this too long, and now it must be done.** But he could not see his way to doing it **at all** while Lady Mabel should be in the house. **He had understood that Lady Mabel was to spend Christmas with a brother of Miss Cassewary's who was a clergyman. As he did not leave Polwenning till the 16th December he might still avoid her if he could find excuses for staying a week in London. It was on this account chiefly that he agreed to return thither with the newly elected member. "I suppose you will find Mabel still at Matching," said Tregear as they were on their journey up to town.**

"I thought she was going to Stogpingum." Stogpingum was the name of the Rev. Mr. Cassewary's parish.

"**I suppose she will sooner or later, but** I think you will find **her** [Mabel still] at Matching[," said Tregear on their way up]. ["]She will wait for you, I fancy."

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"You are much thicker with her than I ever was. **You correspond with her.** You went to see her at Grex,—when nobody else was there."

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"Next door to it," said Silverbridge, half jealous of the favours shown to Tregear**, though he did not now want to have any favours shown to himself**.

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"Then I am **very,** very sorry for Mabel," said Tregear. This was uttered solemnly, so that Silverbridge found himself debarred from making any flippant answer. He could not altogether defend himself. **But then neither could she have defended herself. She had not blushed, and been soft and gentle to him, when he had said soft words to her.** He had been quite justified, he thought, in changing his mind, but he did not like to own that he had changed it so quickly.

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Up in town Silverbridge **found a few friends and** spent two or three days pleasantly enough, while a thunderbolt was being prepared for him, **of which at the time he knew nothing;—**or rather, in truth, two thunderbolts. During these days he was **very** much with Tregear; and though he could not speak freely of his own matrimonial projects[,]**,—though he did not dare to say anything of Isabel Boncassen because of**

Mabel Grex,—still he was brought round to give some sort of assent to the engagement between Tregear and his sister. **No doubt** this new position which his friend had won for himself did in some degree operate on his judgment. It was not perhaps that he himself imagined that Tregear as a member of Parliament would be worthier **to be his brother-in-law than before**, but that he fancied that such would be the Duke's feelings. The Duke had declared that Tregear was nobody**,—was nothing**. That could hardly be said of a man who had a seat in the **British** House of Commons;—certainly could not be said by so staunch a politician as the Duke. **Silverbridge at any rate gave in his adherence.**

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"Major Tifto was present **at that meeting** and requested that your Lordship's opinion should be asked as to his guilt. I do not know myself that we are warranted in troubling your Lordship on the subject. I am, however, commissioned by the majority of the gentlemen who were present to ask you whether you think that Major Tifto's conduct on that occasion was of such a nature as to make him unfit to be the depositary of that influence, authority, and intimacy which ought to be at the command of a Master of Hounds.

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Mr. Jawstock, when he had written this letter **in obedience to what was called the sense of the meeting**, was proud of his own language, but still felt that the application was a very lame one. Why ask any man for an opinion, and tell him at the same time that his opinion might probably not be taken! And yet no other alternative had been left to him. The meeting had decided that the application should be made; but Mr. Jawstock was well aware that let the young Lord's answer be what it might, the Major would not be endured as Master **of Hounds** in the Runnymede country. Mr. Jawstock felt that the passage in which he explained that a Master of Hounds should be a depositary of influence and intimacy was good;—but yet the application **as a whole** was lame, **and was, he thought, hardly fair to Lord Silverbridge** [very lame].

Lord Silverbridge as he read it **alone in the morning-room of his club became red in the face, and** thought that it was very unfair. It was a most disagreeable thunderbolt. Then he opened the second letter, of which he well knew the handwriting. It was from the Major. Tifto's letters were very legible, but the writing was **stiff and** cramped, showing that the operation had been performed with difficulty. Silverbridge had hoped that he might never receive another epistle from his late partner**,—but now that this epistle had come he was bound to read it**. **It was dated from Tally-ho**

Lodge on the 19th December,—which day was a Sunday; but it was written in the evening, and during the morning the Major had been up to London and had received advice from his friends. The letter[,] **itself was, indeed** [as follows, had been]**,** drawn out for Tifto in rough by the livery-stable keeper in Long Acre. **It was as follows:**

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"I venture respectfully to appeal to your Lordship for an act of justice. Nobody has more of a true-born Englishman's feeling of fair play between man and man than your Lordship; and as you and me have been a good deal together and your Lordship ought to know me pretty well **by this time**, I venture to appeal to your Lordship for a good word.

"All that story from Doncaster has got down into the country where I am M.F.H." **The livery-stable keeper had particularly pressed upon the Major the expediency of using the talismanic initials. It is possible, however, that some imperfectly educated reader may not know that the words indicated are Master of Foxhounds.** "Nobody could have been more sorry than me that your Lordship dropped your money. Would not I have been prouder than anything to have a horse run in my name win the race! Was it likely I should lame him? Anyways I didn't; and I don't think your Lordship thinks it was me. Of course your Lordship and me is two now;—but that don't alter the facts.

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There was something in this letter which the Major himself did not quite approve. There was an absence of familiarity about it which annoyed him. **There was no bounce,—barring that little allusion to the glory he would have had in winning the race, which had been inserted in compliance with his earnest prayers.** He would have liked to call upon his late partner to declare that a more honourable man than Major Tifto had never been known on the turf. But he felt himself to be so far down in the world that it was not safe for him to hold an opinion of his own, even against the livery-stable keeper[!]**; and therefore he copied exactly the document which his friend had prepared for him.**

Silverbridge **when he had read the two letters** was for a time in **great** doubt whether he should answer **them** [the letters] at all, and if so how he should answer them. In regard to Mr. Jawstock and the meeting at large, he regarded the application as an impertinence. **It was clear to him that they had no right to send to him for a character of their Master of Hounds.** But as to Tifto himself he vacillated much between pity, contempt, and absolute condemnation. Everybody had assured him that the man had certainly been guilty. The fact that he had made bets against their joint horse,—

bets as to which he had said nothing till after the race was over,—had been admitted by himself. **He hardly doubted now but that Tifto was a rascal.** And yet it was possible that the man might not be **a rascal,—not** such a rascal as to be unfit to manage the Runnymede hounds. Having himself got rid of Tifto, he would have been glad that the poor wretch should have been left with his hunting honours. But he did not think that he could write to his late partner any letter that would preserve those honours for him.

It was at Tregear's advice **that** he referred the matter to Mr. Lupton**, who was kind enough to come up to London to see Lord Silverbridge on the subject**. Mr. Lupton was of opinion that both the letters should be answered, but that the answer to each should be very short. "There is a prejudice about the world just at present," said Mr. Lupton, "in favour of answering letters. **I don't always see the reason of it myself, but one very often has to do what other people think right.** I don't see why I am to be subjected to an annoyance because another man has taken a liberty. But it is better to submit to public opinion. Public opinion thinks that letters should be answered**, and therefore you had better answer them**." Then Mr. Lupton dictated the answers.

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"I am obliged to decline any further correspondence with you on this subject,—and perhaps I had better say, on any other.

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Poor Tifto, when he got this very curt epistle **from his late noble friend**, was broken-hearted. He did not dare to show it. Day after day he told the livery-stable keeper that he had received no reply, and at last asserted that his appeal had remained altogether unanswered. Even this he thought was better than acknowledging the rebuff which had reached him. As regarded the meeting which had been held,—and any further meetings which might be held,—at The Bobtailed Fox, he did not see the necessity, as he explained to the livery-stable keeper, of acknowledging that he had written any letter to Lord Silverbridge. **The desired inference had of course been made by the hunt, and he might keep his peace.**

He did keep his peace,—with the consent of the livery-stable keeper;—but the letter to Mr. Jawstock was of course brought forward. Another meeting at The Bobtailed Fox was convened. But in the meantime hunting had been discontinued in the Runnymede country. The Major with all his pluck, with infinite cherry brandy, could not do it. Men who had a few weeks since been on very friendly terms, and who had called each other **Jones and Brown,—or perhaps** Dick and Harry**,—**when the squabble first

began, were now talking of "punching" each other's heads. Special whips had been procured by men who intended to ride, and special bludgeons by the young farmers who intended that nobody should ride **over their land** as long as Major Tifto kept the hounds. It was said that the police would interfere **and that anybody who trespassed would be arrested**. It was whispered that the hounds would be shot,—though Mr. Topps, Mr. Jawstock, and others declared that no crime so heinous as that had ever been contemplated in the Runnymede country. The difficulties **at any rate** were too many for poor Tifto, and the hounds were not brought out again **after that day on which they had been kept standing for two hours in the cold on the little green before The Bobtailed Fox** [under his influence].

A second meeting was summoned, and an invitation was sent to the Major similar to that which he had before received;—but on this occasion he did not appear. Nor were there many of the gentlemen down from London. **They had fought their fight, and had made up their minds among themselves that they were beaten.**

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But there was no opposition. Mr. Jawstock read the young Lord's note, and declared that it was quite as much as he expected. **He had never thought well of applying to Lord Silverbridge, and had written the letter only on the instructions of the meeting.** He considered that the note, short as it was, must be decisive. Major Tifto, in appealing to Lord Silverbridge, had agreed to abide by his Lordship's answer, and that answer was now before them. Mr. Jawstock ventured to propose that Major Tifto should be declared to be no longer Master of the Runnymede Hounds. The parson from Croppingham seconded the proposition, and Major Tifto was formally deposed **from his high position**.

Then, however, came the great difficulty,—as Mr. Jawstock soon perceived. There is nothing so dangerous to meddle with as a pack of hounds. It is very well for an enterprising man to put himself forward, to make speeches, to show that he knows all about it, and to take quite a leading part, when he is sure that he has a tower of strength behind him in the shape of a real Master who can and will pay for everything. But when a country has got rid of its Master then the eloquent gentleman who knows all about it is expected to put his hand in his pocket. In such emergencies the hand must often go very deep.

"One thing was quite impossible." So said Mr. Topps. The Runnymede country had not been without a pack of hounds since his father was a little boy and couldn't be so left now.

"The country must be hunted of course," said the parson from Croppingham, who, however good he might be to ride, was unfortunately not able to give assistance in the way of money.

"I shall be glad to do anything," said the young man from Bagshot, blushing deeply.

"I suppose we must have a committee," said Mr. Jawstock. And there was a committee, which consisted at last of Mr. Topps, Mr. Jawstock, and the young gentleman. Among them they had to buy the Major's horses, and to pay the Major one hundred and fifty pounds for his interest in the hounds, and to hire a huntsman,—the young man from Bagshot being found on trial to be inefficient for the duty, which is in truth one of the most difficult operations that a man can have to learn. Mr. Topps and Mr. Jawstock had many consultations, and before the season was over had, I fear, spent more money than they had intended. The new huntsman, too, did not at first know the country. He had been hired at a cheap rate,—having not been found to be quite sober in his last place. All of which was so inconvenient, that before the season was over some of the Runnymede men were heard to say that though Tifto was undoubtedly a rascal, they wished that he were back again among them at Tally-ho Lodge.

Poor Tifto in the meantime had skulked away, no one quite knew whither.

Chapter 59, *"No One Can Tell What May Come to Pass"*

Having thus, with the assistance of Mr. Lupton, got through the troubles of his correspondence, Lord Silverbridge returned to Matching. He made his journey with a heavy heart, knowing well that Lady Mabel was still there. He did not leave London till the 24th, the eve of Christmas Day, and he knew that even then she would not have taken her departure. The visit to Stogpingum had been postponed. That he had learned from Tregear.

[Then Lord Silverbridge necessarily went down to Matching, knowing that he must meet Mabel Grex.] Why should she have **postponed** [prolonged] her visit? No doubt it might be very pleasant for her to be his father's guest at Matching, but she had been there above a month! **It certainly had not been intended that she should stay so long when she first came.** He could understand that his father should ask her to remain. His father**,—who must, Lord Silverbridge thought, be very blind to things around him,—**was still brooding over that foolish communication which had been made to him

on the night of the dinner at the Beargarden. His father was still **thinking that he should soon be able** [intending] to take Mabel to his arms as a daughter-in-law. But Lady Mabel herself knew that it could not be so! The whole truth had been told to her **very precisely**. Why should she remain at Matching for the sake of being mixed up in a scene the acting of which could not fail to be disagreeable to her? **That she should still hope, after all that had passed, to win her way to be his wife did not seem to be possible to him. He could not imagine that she would take further trouble in making any such attempt.**

He found the house very quiet and nearly empty. Mrs. Finn was there with the two girls, and Mr. Warburton had come back. Miss Cassewary had **already** gone to **her** [a] brother's house. Other guests to make Christmas merry there were none. As he looked round at the large rooms he reflected that he himself was there only for a special purpose. It was his duty**, his very disagreeable duty,** to break the news of his intended marriage to his father. As he stood before the fire, thinking how best he might do this, it occurred to him that a letter from a distance would have been the ready and the simple way. But then it had occurred to him also, when at a distance, that a declaration of his purpose face to face was the simplest and readiest way. **The truth is that when you have to be flogged there is no pleasant way of receiving the lashes. The flogging had to be endured, and thus he was at Matching for the sake of undergoing it.** If you have to go headlong into the water you should take your plunge without hesitating. So he told himself, making up his mind that he would have it all out **with his father** that evening.

At dinner Lady Mabel sat next to his father, and he **sat between Mrs. Finn and his sister. As he did so he** could watch the special courtesy with which the Duke treated the girl whom he was so desirous of introducing to his house. Silverbridge could not talk about the election at Polpenno because all conversation about Tregear was interdicted in the presence of his sister. He could say nothing as to the Runnymede hunt and the two thunderbolts which had fallen on him **in London**, as Major Tifto **and his sins** was not a subject on which he could expatiate in the presence of his father. He asked a few questions about the shooting[,]**,—which had been altogether neglected in his absence,—**and referred with great regret to his absence from the Brake country**, in which Phineas was reported to have been doing great things under the auspices of Lord Chiltern**. **"He and I once had an adventure there out hunting,—before we were married," said Mrs. Finn. Then she told the adventure,—how they had both been left behind in a wood by all the hunt because Mr. Finn's horse had refused to jump**

a fence; but Silverbridge cared but little for the story, giving all his ears to the conversation between his father and Lady Mabel.

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"If so he would have to spare me altogether," said Mabel **laughing**, "for I must meet my father in London in the middle of January."

"Could you not put **off Stogpingum** [it off] to another year?"

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"Grex is very old, and very wild,—and very uncomfortable. **Nobody can live there and it looks as though it were devoted to ghosts.** But I love it dearly. Matching is the very reverse of Grex."

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"I did not mean that. I think one likes a contrast. But I must go[,] **to Stogpingum,—**say on the first of January, if it were only to pick up Miss Cassewary. **You don't know what Miss Cassewary has been to me.**"

"I have the greatest possible respect for Miss Cassewary," said the Duke.

It was certain, therefore, that she was going on the first of January. How would it be if he put off the telling of his story for yet another week, till she should be gone? Then he looked around and bethought himself that the time would hang very heavy with him. And his father would daily expect from him a declaration exactly opposed to that which he had to make. **During the whole week he would be thrust together with Mabel, with whom he could now find no possible subject that would be common to both of them.** He had no horses to ride**, and had become sick of shooting at Matching**. As he went on listening he almost convinced himself that the proper thing to do would be to go back to London and thence write to his father **a letter that should be explanatory and conclusive**. **At any rate** he made no confession to his father on that night.

On the next morning there was a heavy fall of snow, but nevertheless everybody managed to go to church. The Duke, as he looked at Lady Mabel tripping along over the swept paths in her furs and short petticoats and well-made boots, thought that his son was a **very** lucky fellow to have the chance of winning the love of such a girl. No remembrance of Miss Boncassen came across his mind as he saw them close together. It was so important that Silverbridge should marry and thus be kept from further follies! And it was so momentous to the fortunes of the Palliser family generally that he should marry well! **There were so many girls about, said the Duke to himself, from an**

alliance with whom he himself would recoil. In so thinking it did not occur to him that the granddaughter of an American labourer might be offered to him. **The girls who were present to his mind were perhaps a little too fast, too fond of admiration, perhaps too old, unattractive in manner, and, not improbably, of birth if not ignoble, still not sufficiently ennobled.** A young lady fit to be Duchess of Omnium was not to be found everywhere. But this girl, he thought as he saw her walking briskly and strongly through the snow, with every mark of health about her, with every sign **and certainty** of high breeding, very beautiful, exquisite in manner, gracious as a goddess, was fit to be a duchess! **She wanted but one thing, money; and to that one thing he was indifferent.** Silverbridge at this moment was walking close to her side,—in good looks, in gracious manner, in high breeding **at any rate** her equal,—in worldly gifts infinitely her superior. Surely she would not despise him! Silverbridge at the moment was expressing a hope that the sermon would not be very long.

After lunch Mabel came suddenly behind the chair on which Silverbridge was sitting and asked him to take a walk with her. **He inquired whether** [Was] she **was** not afraid of the snow**.**[?] "Perhaps you are," she said laughing. "I do not mind it in the least." **Of course he went with her. She looped up her petticoats, he put on a pair of knickerbockers, and away they went.** When they were but a few yards from the front door, she put her hand upon his arm, and spoke to him as though she had arranged the walk with reference to that special question, "And now tell me all about Frank."

She had arranged everything **with this intention**. She had a plan before her now, and had determined in accordance with that plan that she would say nothing to disturb him on this occasion. If she could succeed in bringing him into good humour with herself, that should be sufficient for to-day. "Now tell me everything about Frank! **Of course there are reasons why nothing can be said in there.**"

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"What did he say?" ["He spoke well?"]

"All manner of things. You wouldn't care to hear."

"**It is just what I should care to do. If I were a man and could go to places of that sort myself, then perhaps I shouldn't care. But he spoke well?"**

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"That's just what it was not. It was all a crammer. But it did as well. **As for being true, when you say a thing like that who is to know the difference? Nobody contradicts you.**"

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When Tregear and the election had been sufficiently discussed, they **got round** [came] by degrees to Major Tifto and the two thunderbolts. Silverbridge, **when he felt that no disagreeable allusions were to be made,** when he perceived that nothing was to be said about Isabel Boncassen or his own freedom in the matter of love-making, was not sorry to have a friend from whom he could find sympathy for himself in his own troubles. **Tregear was always a little hard with him about Tifto. Mr. Lupton had been extremely useful; but he had been perhaps somewhat sententious and dictatorial. To his father he had not dared to speak about that correspondence. But** with some encouragement from Mabel the whole story was told. "Was it not a great impertinence?" she asked.

"It was an awful bore. What could I say? I was not going to pronounce judgment against the poor **wretch** [devil]. I dare say he was good enough for Mr. Jawstock."

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"He had not been my servant. It was such a letter. I'll show it you when we get in;— asking whether **poor** Tifto was fit to be the—'depositary of the intimacy of the Runnymede hunt'! And then Tif's letter! I almost wept over that."

"**What could he say to you?** How could he have had the audacity to write at all?"

"He said that 'him and me had been a good deal together.' Unfortunately that was true. **I do feel a pity for him. And** even now I am not quite sure that he lamed the horse himself."

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"Percival knows nothing about it**,—nor anybody else for the matter of that**. Three of the gang ran away, and he stood his ground. That's about all we do know."

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In this way there came up between the two something like a renewal of confidence, and this was done altogether without reference to the subject which was nearest to the hearts of each of them. Silverbridge had feared that he would be asked about Miss Boncassen, and had therefore wished to avoid Lady Mabel's company; but when he found that no unpleasant allusions were to be made he

enjoyed his walk well enough. "Mind you show me Mr. Jawstock's letter," she said as she entered the house,—"and the unfortunate Major's."

"Poor Tifto!"

Lady Mabel was content with her afternoon's work. When they had been at Matching before the Polpenno election, there had apparently been no friendship between them,—at any rate no confidential friendship. Miss Boncassen had been there, and he had had neither ears nor eyes for anyone else. But now something like the feeling of old days had been restored. She had not done much towards her great object**, certainly**;—but then she had known that nothing could be done **towards her great object** till he should again be in good humour with her. **There could be no chance for her till they should be on intimate terms of friendship,—and that she thought she had achieved.**

As Christmas fell on a Saturday, there were two church-going days together, to the disgust of Lord Silverbridge, who was not carried by the ladies to hear the second service without some trouble. On **that day, and** [the Sunday,] the Monday[,] and the Tuesday**, he** [they were] again **found himself thrown** together **with Mabel**. In some of these interviews Silverbridge described the Polpenno people, and told her how Miss Tregear had been reassured by his eloquence. He also read to her the **whole** Jawstock and Tifto correspondence, and was complimented by her as to his prudence and foresight. "To tell the truth I consulted Mr. Lupton," he said, not liking to take credit for wisdom which had not been **altogether** his own. Then they talked about Grex, and Killancodlem, about Gerald and the shooting, about Mary's **unconquerable** love for Tregear, and about the work of the coming session. On all these subjects they were comfortable and confidential,—Miss Boncassen's name never having been as yet so much as mentioned **since his return to Matching**.

But still the real work was **all** before her. She had **never ventured to think that she could bring** [not hoped to bring] him round to kneel once more at her feet by such gentle measures as these. She had not dared to dream that he could in this way be **brought** [taught] to forget the past autumn and all its charms. She knew well that there was something very difficult before her. But, if that difficult thing might be done at all, these were the preparations which must be made for the doing of it.

It was arranged that she should leave Matching on Saturday, the first day of the new year. Things had gone on in the manner described till the Thursday had come. The Duke had been impatient but had restrained himself. He had seen that they were much together and that they were apparently friends. He too told himself that there were two more days, and that before the end of those days everything might be pleasantly settled. **It was a matter in which it was so hard for a father to interfere!**

During the last four or five days it had become a matter of course that Silverbridge and Mabel should walk together in the afternoon. He himself had felt that there was danger in this,—not danger that he should be untrue to Isabel, but that he should make others think that he was true to Mabel. But he excused himself **to himself** on the plea that he and Mabel had been intimate friends,—were still intimate friends, and that she was going **away** in a day or two. Mary, who watched it all **without saying a word**, was sure that misery was being prepared for someone. She was **well** aware that by this time her father was anxious to welcome Mabel as his daughter-in-law. She strongly suspected that something had been said**, that some agreement had been made** between her father and her brother on the subject. But then she had Isabel Boncassen's direct assurance that Silverbridge was engaged to her! Now when Isabel's back was turned, Silverbridge and Mabel were always together. **The Duke, however, was almost satisfied. Surely the matter would now be settled.**

On the Thursday after lunch they were again out together. It had become so much a habit that the walk repeated itself without an effort. It had been part of Mabel's scheme that it should be so. During all this morning she had been thinking of her scheme. It was all but hopeless. So much she had declared to herself. But forlorn hopes do sometimes end in splendid triumphs. **Men will face almost certain death, and then live as heroes for many after years**. That which she might gain was so much! And what could she lose? The sweet bloom of her maiden shame? That, she told herself, with bitterest inward tears, was already gone from her. Frank Tregear at any rate knew where her heart had been given**, and that, having been given, it had never been recovered**. Frank Tregear knew that having lost her heart to one man she was anxious to marry another. He knew that she was willing to accept the coronet of a duchess as her consolation **for that early misfortune**. That bloom of her maiden shame, of which she quite understood the sweetness, the charm, the value[—]**,—its ineffable superiority to all other feminine charms,—**was gone when she had brought herself to such a state that any human being should know that, loving one man, she should be willing to marry another. **She had fought all that out with Miss Cass, who knew quite as much as did Frank Tregear.** The sweet treasure was gone from her. Its aroma was fled. It behoved her now to be ambitious, cautious,—and if possible successful.

When first she had so resolved, success seemed to be easily within her reach. Of all the golden youths that crossed her path no one was so pleasant to her eye, to her ear, to her feelings generally as this Duke's young heir. There was a coming manliness about him which she liked,—and she liked even the slight want of present manliness. Putting aside Frank Tregear she could go nearer to loving him than any other man she had ever

seen. **She could feel sure that** with him she would not be turned from her duties by disgust, by dislike, or dismay. She could even think that the time would come when she might really love him. Then she had all but succeeded. She might **certainly** have succeeded altogether had she been but a little more prudent**,—in some slight degree better acquainted with the game which she was playing**. But she had allowed her great prize to escape from her fingers.

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To do this she must indeed bid adieu to the sweet bloom of her maiden shame! But had she not done so already when, by the side of the brook at Killancodlem, she had declared to him plainly enough her despair at hearing that he loved that other girl? Though she were to grovel at his feet she could not speak more plainly than she had spoken then. **She had coyed it with him a little when he had first come to her, meaning that he should not think that his suit was to be too easily won, meaning to use a fair girl's privilege of perversity for a day or two;—and then, when the other fair girl had come between them, she had told her story all too plainly.** She could not tell her story now more plainly than she had done then; but,—though the chances were small,—perchance she might tell it more effectively.

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"There are so many slips in such things," she said laughing. "You may get a letter from your constituents that will want all the day to answer. Or your father may have a [political] communication to make to me. **You can't think how many political secrets he has taught me. I am beginning to tremble in my shoes lest he should make me a Liberal.** But at any rate come." So they went to the seat.

It was a spot in the park from whence there was a **fine** distant view over many lands, and low beneath the bench, which stood on the edge of a steep bank, ran a stream which made a sweeping bend in this place, so that a reach of the little river might be seen both to the right and to the left. **It was known to be a favourite spot with the Duke himself,—but not in such weather as this. For,** though the sun was shining, the snow under their feet was hard with frost. It was an air such as one sometimes finds in England, and often in America. Though the cold was very perceptible, though water in the shade was freezing at this moment, there was no feeling of damp, no sense of bitter wind. It was a sweet and jocund air, such as would make young people prone to run and skip**, and old people prone to think themselves young. "Now you are here," said**

Silverbridge, "you are not going to sit down with all the snow on the bench?" [said Silverbridge.]

On their way thither she had not **ventured to say** [said] a word that would disturb him. She had spoken to him of the coming session, and had managed to display to him the **great** interest which she took in his parliamentary career. In doing this she had flattered him to the top of his bent. If he would return to his father's politics, then would she **certainly** [too] become a renegade. Would he speak in the next session? She hoped he would speak. And if he did, might she be there to hear him? She was cautious not to say a word of Frank Tregear, understanding something of that strange jealousy which could exist even when he who was jealous did not love the woman who caused it. **She was very clever, and by the time they had reached the spot had certainly made him think that she now, at least, respected him as a man. It had been a ground of complaint with him that she had treated him like a boy.**

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"Some of it, I suppose. I don't think it is all ours. As for that, if one cared for extent of acres **all around**, one ought to go to Barsetshire."

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"And the borough,—for the present."

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"May I tell you something about him?" As she asked the question she was standing very close to **her companion** [him], leaning upon his arm, with her left hand crossed upon her right. Had others been there, of course she would not have stood in such a guise. She knew that,—and he knew it too. Of course there was something in it of declared affection,—of that kind of love which most of us have been happy enough to give and receive, without intending to show more than true friendship will allow at special moments. **Her feelings at the moment were tender to him, and he certainly made no effort to reject them, as they stood there together looking down upon the views.**

"Don't tell me anything about him I shan't like to hear**,**" **said Silverbridge**.

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"You do not know?**" said she, leaning heavily on his arm. "**Oh, Silverbridge, I think you know." Then there came upon him a glimmering of the truth. "You do know." And she stood apart looking him full in the face.

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"Oh, Silverbridge;—oh my loved one. Do not say that to me! Do not kill me at once!" Now she placed her hands one on each arm as she stood opposite to him and looked up into his face. "You said you loved me once. Why do you desert me now? Have you a right to treat me like that? When I tell you that you have all my heart?" The tears were now streaming down her face, and they were not counterfeit tears. **In this prayer that she was making, she was asking for all that she valued in the world, and at this moment she did believe that she loved him.**

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"But there are fitnesses of things which such a one as you cannot disregard without preparing for yourself a whole life of repentance **and sorrow**."

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"I will tell you **all** the truth."

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"If you are unhappy, what must I be? What have I **got** to look forward to? Give me your hand, and say that we are friends."

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After that they entered the house without another word, and Lady Mabel at once went up to her room. She had played her scene, but was well aware that she had played it altogether unsuccessfully.

Chapter 60, *Lord Gerald in Further Trouble*

When Silverbridge got back to the house he was by no means well pleased with himself **in regard to what had passed between him and Lady Mabel**. In the first place it pained him greatly to think that she was unhappy, and that he had **contributed anything to her unhappiness** [made her so]. And then she had told him that he would

not have dared to have acted as he had done, but that her father and brother were careless to defend her. He had replied fiercely that a legion of brothers ready to act on her behalf would not have altered his conduct; but not the less did he feel that he had behaved badly to her. It could not now be altered. He could not now be untrue to Isabel. But certainly he had said a word or two to Mabel which he could not remember without regret. He had not thought that a word from him could have been so powerful. **He remembered well that he had gone away from that interview with a feeling that she had laughed at him, rebuffed him,—almost scorned him. No doubt he had afterwards thought it probable that she might accept him, and, acting on that, had made that indiscreet communication to his father.** Now, when that word was recalled to his memory by the girl to whom it had been spoken, he could not quite acquit himself. **And in truth he was too fond of Mabel to be able to see her sorrow without grieving himself. He was very, very sorry that it should be as it was;—but not on that account could he sever himself from Isabel Boncassen.**

And Mabel had declared to him that she would at once appeal to his father. There was an absurdity in this at which he could not but smile,—that the girl should complain to his father because he would not marry her! But even in doing this she might cause him great vexation. **Of course it was to be expected that he should be the first to communicate his engagement to his father,—and especially as that engagement would imply a change in a declared intention. But** he could not bring himself to ask her not to tell her story to the Duke. He must take all that as it might come. **Even now, at this moment, Mabel might be telling her story. He was, however, strong in his determination that nothing should stand between him and Isabel.**

While he was thinking of all this in his own room**, postponing the disagreeable moment in which he would begin to dress for dinner,** a servant brought him two letters. **The day mail arrived at Matching at this hour, and the letters were generally distributed over the house while people were dressing.** From the first which he opened he soon perceived that it contained an account of more troubles. It was from his brother Gerald, and was written from Auld Reikie, the name of a house in Scotland belonging to Lord Nidderdale's people. **Gerald, while at Crummie-Toddie, had made an engagement to go there for the Christmas, thus postponing his visit to Matching,—not altogether in conformity with his father's wishes. This was Gerald's letter.**

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"Here has been a terrible nuisance. Last night some of the men got to playing cards and Gerald lost a terribly large sum to Percival. I did all that I could to stop it because I saw that Percival was going in for a big thing. I fancy that he got as much from Dolly Longstaffe as he did from Gerald;—but it won't matter much to Dolly; or **at any rate,** if it does, nobody cares. Gerald told me he was writing to you about it, so I am not betraying him.

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The dinner-bell had rung before Silverbridge had come to an end of thinking of this new vexation, and he had not as yet made up his mind what he had better do for his brother. There was one thing as to which he was determined that it should not be done by him,—nor, if he could prevent it, by Gerald. There should be no dealings with Comfort and Criball. The Duke had succeeded, at any rate, in filling his son's mind with a horror of aid of that sort. Nidderdale had suggested that the "straightest" thing would be to go direct to the Duke. That no doubt would be straight,—and efficacious. **That sure fount of love and assistance would certainly pour forth the needed waters at once.** The Duke would not have allowed a boy of his to be a debtor to Lord Percival for a day, let the debt have been contracted how it might. But Gerald had declared against this course,—and Silverbridge himself would have been most unwilling to adopt it. How could he have told that story to the Duke, while there was that other infinitely more important story of his own, which must be told at once**,—which not improbably must be told that very night, which perhaps at that very moment was being told by Mabel Grex**?

In the midst of all these troubles he went down to dinner**, and soon perceived that nothing had been told as yet**. "Lady Mabel," said the Duke, "tells me that you two have been to see Sir Guy's look-out."

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"I had furs on," said Mabel. "What a lovely spot it is, even in this weather." Then dinner was announced. **She knew that** she had not been cold. She could still feel the tingling heat of her blood as she had implored him to love her.

Silverbridge **when he went up to his room** felt that he must write to his brother by the first post. The communication was of a nature that would bear no delay. If his hands had been free he would himself have gone off to Auld Reikie **and have made some arrangement with Percival**. At last he made up his mind**, and sat down to his**

writing-table. The first letter he wrote was neither to Nidderdale nor to Gerald, but to Lord Percival himself.

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"What an ass you have been! But I don't suppose you are worse than I was at Doncaster. I will have nothing to do with such people as Comfort and Criball. That is the sure way to the d——! As for telling Moreton, that is only a polite and roundabout way of telling the governor. He would immediately ask the governor what was to be done. **I think he has orders to pay any amount for me because I am understood to be such an utter donkey;—but I don't think that as yet you are supposed to be bad enough for such treatment.**

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"I suppose Percival won't make any bother about the I.O.U. He'll be a fool if he does. I wouldn't kick him if I were you,—unless he says anything very bad. You would be sure to come to grief somehow. He is a beast**,—and I am very sorry for it on Lady Mab's account**.

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With these letters that special grief was removed from his mind for a while. Looking over the dark river of possible trouble which seemed to run between the present moment and the time at which the money must be procured, he thought that he had driven off this calamity of Gerald's to infinite distance. But into that dark river he must now plunge almost at once. On the next day, **the Friday,** he managed **to be out among the coverts, or in the stables, or about the park the entire day,** so that there should be no walk with Mabel. In the evening he could see that the Duke was uneasy;—but not a word was said to him. On the following morning Lady Mabel took her departure. When she went from the door, both the Duke and Silverbridge were there to bid her farewell. She smiled and was as gracious as though everything had gone according to her heart's delight. "Dear Duke, I am so obliged to you for your kindness," she said, as she put out her cheek for him to kiss. Then she gave her hand to Silverbridge. "Of course you will come and see me in town." And she smiled upon them all,—having courage enough to keep down all her sufferings.

Chapter 61, *"Bone of My Bone"*

"How is it now between you and her?" That was the question which the Duke put to his son as soon as he had closed the door of the study**, to which he had led the way**. Lady Mabel had just been dismissed from the front door on her journey **to Stogpingum**, and there could **therefore** be no doubt as to the "her" intended. **Nor could there be any doubt as to the meaning of the question.** No such question would have been asked had not Silverbridge himself declared to his father his purpose of making Lady Mabel his wife. On that subject the Duke, without such authority, would not have interfered**, even with his son**. But he had been consulted, had acceded, and had encouraged the idea by excessive liberality on his part. He had never dropped it out of his mind for a moment. **He had hardly doubted but that the event would be as he wished.** But when he found that the girl was leaving his house without any explanation, then he became restless and inquisitive. **As soon as she was in truth gone he asked the question which had often before been almost on his tongue.**

Silverbridge was certainly afraid of his father. They say that perfect love casteth out fear. If it be so the love of children to their parents is seldom altogether perfect,—and perhaps had better not be quite perfect. With this young man it was not that he feared anything which his father could do to him, **that he thought that his father would exercise severity,** that he believed that in consequence of the declaration which he had to make his comforts and pleasures would be curtailed or his independence diminished. He knew his father too well to dread such punishment **as that**. But he feared that **what** he **had to say** would make his father unhappy, and he was conscious that he had so often sinned in that way. He had stumbled so frequently! **Though he was apparently thoughtless,** though in action he would **sometimes** [so often] be **absolutely** thoughtless,—yet he understood perfectly the effect which had been produced on his father's mind by his conduct. He had it at heart "to be good to the governor," to gratify that most **constant and** loving of all possible friends, who, as he knew well, was always thinking of his welfare. And yet he had never been "good to the governor";—nor had Gerald;—and to all this was added his sister's determined perversity. **He was afraid that his father had a "bad time of it" with his children, and now he was going to add to these troubles.** It was thus he feared his father.

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The Duke also hesitated for a few moments before he went on with his cross-examination. "I am sorry for that," **he said** [said the Duke, almost hesitating]; "very

sorry. You will understand, I hope, that I should make no inquiry in such a matter unless I had felt myself warranted in doing so by what you had yourself told me in London."

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"As to the property. I am so anxious that you should enjoy all the settled independence which can belong to an English gentleman! I never plough, or sow. I know no more of sheep and bulls than of the extinct animals of earlier ages. I would not have it so with you. I would fain see you surrounded by those things which ought to interest a nobleman in this country. Why is it all over**, as you say,** with Lady Mabel Grex?"

The young man looked imploringly at his father, as though earnestly begging that nothing more might be said about Mabel. **The story as far as Mabel was concerned certainly could not be told.** "I had changed my mind before I found out that she was really in love with me!" He could not say that. He could not **even** hint that he might **have had, might** still have**,** Mabel if he would. The only thing for him was to tell everything about Isabel Boncassen **with as little delay as possible**. He felt that in doing this he must begin with himself. "I have rather changed my mind, sir," he said, "since we were walking together in London that night."

"**Changed your mind!** Have you quarrelled with Lady Mabel?"

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"Certainly tell the truth, Silverbridge. I cannot say that you are bound in duty to tell the whole truth even to your father in such a matter. **There may be secrets.**"

"But I mean to tell you everything. Mabel did not seem to care about me much—in London. And then I saw someone,—someone I liked better." Then he stopped, but as the Duke did not **immediately** ask any questions he plunged on. "It was Miss Boncassen."

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"Yes, sir," said Silverbridge, with a little access of decision**, feeling that the moment was coming in which he would have to adhere to his own purpose in opposition to anything his father would say to him**.

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"Did you go to her, Silverbridge, with such a stipulation as that**;—and did she accept you on those terms**?"

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"I knew that I loved her. What is a man to do when he feels like that? Of course I meant to tell you." The Duke was **standing with his hands behind his back,** [now] looking very black **and unpropitious**. "I thought you liked her, sir."

"Liked her! I did like her. I do like her. What has that to do with it? Do you think I like none but those with whom I should think it fitting to ally myself in marriage? Is there to be no duty in such matters, no restraint, no feeling of what is due to your own name, and to others who bear it? The lad out there who is sweeping the walks can marry the first girl that pleases his eye if she will take him. Perhaps his lot is the happier because he owns such liberty. Have you**, do you think,** the same freedom?"

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"Do you recognise no duty but what the laws impose upon you? Should you be disposed to eat and drink in bestial excess, the laws would not hinder you! Should you lie and sleep all the day, the law would say nothing! Should you neglect every duty which your position imposes on you, the law could not interfere! To such a one as you the law can be no guide. You should so live as not to come near the law,—or to have the law come near to you. From all evil against which the law bars you, you should be barred, at an infinite distance, by honour, by conscience, and nobility. Does the law require patriotism, philanthropy, self-abnegation, public service, purity of purpose, devotion to the needs of others who have been placed in the world below you? The law is a great thing,—because men are poor and weak, and bad. And it is great, because where it exists in its strength, no tyrant can be above it. But between you and me there should be no mention of law as the guide of **your** conduct. Speak to me of honour, of duty, and of nobility; and tell me what they require of you."

Silverbridge listened in silence and with something of true admiration in his heart. **He agreed with his father on his premises,—so as to repent himself of having unfortunately pleaded that the law would allow him to marry Isabel Boncassen; but he did not agree with the deduction which his father had drawn, and which went to show that he, Silverbridge, was debarred by duty, by honour, and by nobility from marrying the girl he loved. And** [But] he felt the strong necessity of declaring his own convictions on **that point** [one special point] here, at once, in this very crisis of the conversation. That accident in regard to the colour of the Dean's lodge had stood in the way of his logical studies,—so that he was unable to put his argument into proper shape; but there belonged to him a certain natural astuteness which told him that he must put in

his rejoinder at this particular point **in the conversation**. "I think I am bound in honour and in duty to marry Miss Boncassen," he said; "and, if I understand what you mean, by nobility just as much."

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"But here we are both of one mind, sir. **Of course I am very sorry if it makes you unhappy.** When I saw how you seemed to take to her——"

"Take to her! Can I not interest myself in human beings without wishing to make them flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone? What am I to think of you? It was but the other day that all that you are now telling me of Miss Boncassen you were telling me of Lady Mabel Grex." Here poor Silverbridge bit his lips and shook his head, and looked down upon the ground **with a thorough feeling of being disconcerted**. This**, as he well knew,** was the weak part of his case. He could not tell his father the whole story about Mabel,—that she had coyed her love, **and that he had misunderstood her,—**[so] that he had been justified in thinking himself **quite** free from any claim in that direction when he had encountered the infinitely sweeter charms of Isabel Boncassen. "You are weak as water!" said the unhappy father.

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"Did you not say exactly the same about Lady Mabel? **When I questioned you, did you not assure me that you knew your own mind? Was it not so?**"

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"Indifferent! What does she think about it now? Does she know of this? How does it stand between you two at the present moment? **How did you regard each other when she went away half an hour ago?**"

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"Then why did you tell her? She could not but have spoken her mind when you told her. There must have been much between you when this was talked of. **I think that I have a right to ask because you had prepared me to accept her as a daughter-in-law.**"

The unfortunate young man was obliged to take some time **for thought** before he could answer this appeal. He had to own that his father had some justice on his side, but at the same time he **was called upon to strengthen himself in his determination to tell** [could reveal] nothing of Mabel's secret.

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"Now I have told you what she said, and I hope **that** you will ask me no further questions about her. I cannot make Lady Mabel my wife;—though for the matter of that, I ought not to presume to think that she would take me if I wished it. **If you had not called me** I had intended to ask you to-day to consent to my marriage with Miss Boncassen."

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"Nearly eight months," said Silverbridge**, trying to make the best of it**.

"What is the difference? It is not the time, but the disposition of the man[!] **with which I have to deal.** I cannot give you my consent. **It seems that** the young lady sees it in the right light, and that will make your escape easy **for you**."

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"She has indicated the cause which will **necessarily** separate you."

"I will not be separated from her," said Silverbridge, who was beginning to feel that he was **being** subjected to tyranny. **That argument as to the law seemed again to have considerable strength in it.** If he chose to marry Isabel, no one could have a right to hinder him**,—and he certainly did choose to do so**.

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"I think of going to Harrington this afternoon." Then the Duke, with further very visible annoyance, asked where Harrington was. **Silverbridge was in the habit of announcing his goings and comings in this sudden way and, as it seemed to his father, without any adequate reason for coming and going. Matching was naturally his home at this time of the year, but he never came to Matching except as a visitor.** It was **now** explained that Harrington was Lord Chiltern's seat, Lord Chiltern being the Master of the Brake Hounds[;—]**. Then the young man had to explain, on being interrogated,** that it was his [son's] purpose to remain six weeks among the Brake hounds, but that he should stay only a day or two with Lord **and Lady** Chiltern. **A great many more questions were asked, and when** [Then] it appeared that Silverbridge intended to put himself up **for the greater part of the time** at a hunting inn in the neighbourhood, [and] the Duke did not at all like the plan. **To his idea an inn was a place at which travellers stayed, under compulsion, when their journeys compelled them to dwell one or more nights upon the road.** That his son should choose to live at

an inn, when the comforts of **a first-class** [an] English country-house were open to him, was distasteful and almost offensive to the Duke. And the matter was not improved when he was made to understand that all this was to be done for the sake of hunting**,—that all the duties and comforts of life were to be made to yield to the prosecution of an amusement**. There had been the shooting in Scotland; then the racing,—ah, alas! yes,—the racing, and the betting at Doncaster! Then**, as it seemed to him,** the shooting at Matching had been made to appear to be the chief reason why he himself had been living in his own house! And now his son was going away to live at an inn in order that **another large portion of the year** [more time] might be devoted to hunting! "Why can't you hunt here at home, if you must hunt?"

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"I thought you wanted woods. Lord Chiltern is always troubling me about Trumpeton Wood. **What is the use of going, when Lord Chiltern himself says that there are no foxes?**"

This **little** breeze about the hunting enabled the son to escape **from his father, however,** without any further allusion to Miss Boncassen. He did escape, and proceeded to turn over in his mind all that had been said**, so that he might judge how far he had done well by his morning's work, and how far evil**. **At any rate,** his tale had been told. A great burden was thus taken off his shoulders. He could **now** tell Isabel so much, and thus free himself from **any injurious** suspicion that he had been afraid to declare his **own** purpose. She should know what he had done, and should be made to understand **also** that he had been **very** firm **in the declaration of his intentions**. He had, he thought, been **very** firm and gave himself some credit on that head. His father, no doubt, had been **very** firm too, but that he had expected. His father had said **a good deal, but could hardly have been expected to say less** [much]. All that about honour and duty had been very good; but this was certain **to all the world**,—that when a young man had promised a young woman he ought to keep his word. And he thought that there were certain changes going on in the management of the world which his father did not quite understand. Fathers never do quite understand the changes which are manifest to their sons. Some years ago it might have been improper that an American girl should be elevated to the rank of an English duchess; but now all that was altered. **He was sure at any rate of this,—that** he would alter it.

He was to leave home that afternoon about three, but before he went he managed to see his sister alone. After leaving his father he made up his mind that

he would now tell her also of his engagement,—so that it might be, as it were, the more strongly riveted. "I have been with the governor this morning," he said.

"I hope there is nothing wrong."

"It seems to me that nothing ever is right. I am always in hot water, and suppose I always shall be. I dare say you know what I had to tell him."

"Indeed I don't."

"Don't you know that I have engaged myself to Isabel Boncassen?" To this she made no reply. "I don't believe that you can have been so blind as not to have seen that."

"She told me," said Mary,—"when we were at Custins together."

"I know she did. But you have kept it very dark."

"It is you that have kept it dark. How could I speak of it to you when you did not tell me? What will papa say?"

"I have just told him. Of course he does not like it. I knew that before. But it has got to be."

"What will she say when she knows that papa will not welcome her? I liked her so much;—but I was afraid there would be difficulties. I fancied once that it would have been Mabel Grex."

"But it won't be Mabel Grex, you see. I am going off now, but I thought that I would tell you first. And there is another trouble,—about Gerald. He has lost a lot of money."

"Gerald!"

"Yes;—why not Gerald as well as another? But don't you whisper a word of that to anybody. It seems to me that everything comes to grief. We are all in the black books now and I don't see how we are ever to get out again. I shall emigrate to the States and set up there as a politician." Then he started on his way to the Brake country.

The Duke spent the rest of that day alone, and was not happy in his solitude. All that Silverbridge had told him was **very** sad to him. He had taught himself to think that he could love Lady Mabel as an affectionate father wishes to love his son's wife. He had set himself to wish to like her **from the moment in which he had assented to his son's proposition**, and had been **altogether** successful. Being most anxious that his son should marry **and settle himself in the world** he had prepared himself to be more than ordinarily liberal,—to be in every way gracious **to the young people**. His children were now everything to him, and **of course** among his children his son and heir was the chief. From the moment in which he had heard from Silverbridge that Lady Mabel was **his**

chosen **one** he had given himself up to considering how he might best promote their interests,—how he might best enable them to live, with that **personal** dignity and splendour which he himself had unwisely despised. That the son who was to come after him should be worthy of the **high** place assigned to his name had been, of personal objects, the **one** nearest to his heart. There had been **many** failures, but still there had **always** been left room for hope. The boy had been unfortunate at Eton;—but how many unfortunate boys had become great men! He had disgraced himself by his folly at college,—but, though some lads will be men at twenty, others are then little more than children. The fruit that ripens the soonest is seldom the best. Then had come Tifto and the racing mania. Nothing **possibly** could be worse than Tifto and race-horses. But from that evil Silverbridge had seemed to be made free by the very disgust which the vileness of the circumstances had produced. Perhaps Tifto driving a nail into his horse's foot had **been a better colleague for him than some interfering young brother nobleman** [on the whole been serviceable]. That apostasy from the **recognised** political creed of the Pallisers had been a **sore** blow,—**very** much more **keenly** felt than the loss of the seventy thousand pounds;—but even under that blow he had consoled himself by thinking that a conscientious, **well-thinking,** patriotic nobleman may serve his country,—even as a Conservative. In the midst of **much of** this he had felt that the surest recourse for his son against evil would be in an early marriage. If he would marry becomingly, then might everything still be made pleasant. If his son would marry becomingly nothing which a father could do should be wanting to add splendour and dignity to his son's life.

In thinking of all this he had by no means regarded his own mode of living **as a proper example for a nobleman to follow** [with favour]. He knew **now very well** how jejune his life had been,—how devoid of other interests than that public service to which he had **in his early youth** devoted himself. He was thinking of this when he told his son that he **himself** had neither ploughed and sowed or been the owner of sheep or oxen. He often thought of this, when he heard those around him talking of those sports which, though he condemned them as the employments of a life, he now regarded wistfully, hopelessly as far as he himself was concerned, as proper recreations for a man of wealth. Silverbridge should have it all, if he could arrange it. **He would have been happy to have talked politics by the hour to the young man, but he would content himself in hoping that that might come gradually. Gradually that would come, if those meaner things could be abolished. He had allowed himself to think that the meaner things were being abolished, and that the better things were coming.** The one thing necessary was a fitting wife;—and the fitting wife had been absolutely chosen**, been chosen** by Silverbridge himself.

It may be conceived, therefore, that he was again unhappy **when he was left to ponder over the last communication that had been made to him**. He had already been driven to acknowledge that these children of his,—thoughtless, reckless though they seemed to be,—still had a will of their own. In all which how like they were to their mother! With her, however, **he had felt that** his word, though it might be resisted, **and even disobeyed,** had never **altogether** lost its authority. When he had declared that a thing should not be done, she had never persisted in saying that she would do it. But with his children it was otherwise. What power had he over Silverbridge,—or, for the matter of that, even over his daughter? **They had proposed to him, the one a daughter-in-law, and the other a son-in-law, altogether against his taste; but he was beginning to be aware that his taste must yield to theirs.** They had only to be firm and he knew that he must be conquered.

"I thought that you liked her," Silverbridge had said to him. How utterly unconscious, thought the Duke, must the young man have been of all that his position required of him when he used such an argument **as that**! Liked her! He did like her. She was clever, accomplished, beautiful, well mannered,—as far as he knew endowed with all good qualities! Would not many **a noble** [an] old Roman**, in the old days,** have said as much for some favourite Greek slave,—for some freedman whom he would admit **not only to his friendship but** to his very heart? But what **noble** old Roman ever dreamed of giving his daughter to the son of a Greek bondsman! Had he done so, what would have become of the name of a Roman citizen? And was it not **as much** his duty to fortify and maintain that higher, smaller, more precious pinnacle of rank on which Fortune had placed him and his children**, that lofty summit of ancestral nobility, by the maintenance of which alone could that democratic progress be safely made which it had been the pride and the business of his life to expedite**?

Like her! Yes! he liked her certainly. He had by no means always found that he best liked the companionship of his own order. He had liked to feel around him the free bustle of the House of Commons. He liked the power of attack and defence in carrying on which an English politician cares nothing for rank. He liked to remember that the son of any tradesman might, by his own merits, become a peer of Parliament. **He liked to see around him, at his own table, such men as Mr. Monk and Phineas Finn.** He would have liked to think that his son should share all these tastes with him. Yes,—he liked Isabel Boncassen. But how different was that liking from a desire that she should be bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh! **But to all that Silverbridge was, alas, impervious!**

Chapter 62, *The Brake Country*

"What does your father mean to do about Trumpeton Wood?" That was the first word **that** [from] Lord Chiltern **spoke to his guest** after he had shaken hands with **him** [his guest]. **Silverbridge had arrived some hours before his host's return from hunting, and had been made welcome by Lady Chiltern.**

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"Well;—your great-uncle! They used to trap the foxes there. There was a fellow named Fothergill who used to come there for shooting. **Then the Duchess interfered and we were nearly right for a year or two.** Now it is worse than ever. Nobody shoots there because there is nothing to shoot. There isn't a keeper. Every scamp **about the place** is allowed to go where he pleases, and of course there isn't a fox in the whole **covert** [place]. My huntsman laughs at me when I ask him to draw it[!] **just for the appearance of the thing.**" As the indignant Master of the Brake Hounds said this the very fire **seemed to** flash[ed] from his eyes.

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"The truth is," pleaded Silverbridge, "my governor knows as much about hunting as I do of financial arrangements."

"You knew something about them, I fancy, last September," said Lord Chiltern. After that the stranger was allowed to go to his own room.

Phineas Finn was staying at Harrington with his **specially** intimate friends the Chilterns, as were also a certain Mr. and Mrs. Maule, both of whom were **much** addicted to hunting,—the lady, whose maiden name had been Palliser, being a cousin to Lord Silverbridge. **They were guests staying in the house, but** on that day also a certain Mr. and Mrs. Spooner dined at Harrington. Mr. and Mrs. Spooner were both very much given to hunting, as seemed to be necessarily the case with everybody admitted to that house. Mr. Spooner was a gentleman who might be on the wrong side of fifty, with a red nose, very uxorious, and submissive in regard to all things but port-wine. His wife was perhaps something more than half his age, a stout, hard-riding, handsome woman**, all whose exterior appanages seemed to be adapted to horse exercise**. **How Mrs. Spooner spent her time when there was no hunting,—during those unfortunate days from the middle of April to the middle of September, at which time she would begin to go out early in the morning with the young hounds,—nobody knew in those parts,**

except perhaps her husband. She had been the penniless daughter of a retired officer,—but yet had managed to ride on whatever animal anyone would lend her. Then Mr. Spooner, who had for many years been part and parcel of the Brake hunt, and who was much in want of a wife, had, luckily for her, cast his eyes upon Miss Leatherside. It was thought that upon the whole she made him a good wife. She hunted four days a week, and he could afford to keep horses for her. She never flirted, and wanted no one to open gates **for her**. Tom Spooner himself was not always **quite** so forward as he used to be; but his wife was always there and **she** would tell him all that he did not see himself. And she was a good housewife, taking care that nothing should be spent lavishly, except upon the stable. Of him, too, and of his health, she was **very** careful, never scrupling to say a word in season when **she thought** he was likely to hurt himself, either among the fences or among the decanters. "You ain't so young as you were, Tom. Don't think of doing it." This she would say to him with a loud voice when she would find him pausing **doubtfully** at a fence. Then she would hop over herself and he would go round. She was "quite a Providence to him," as her mother, old Mrs. Leatherside, would say **when she was anxious to praise her daughter**.

She was hardly the woman that one would have expected to meet as a friend in the drawing-room of Lady Chiltern. Lord Chiltern was perhaps a little rough, but Lady Chiltern was all that a mother, a wife, and a lady ought to be. She probably felt that some little apology ought to be made for Mrs. Spooner **when Lord Silverbridge and she were alone in the dining-room before dinner**. "I hope you like hunting," she said [to Silverbridge].

"**Better than anything;—**best of all things," said he enthusiastically.

"Because you know this is Castle Nimrod in which no[thing] **other subject** is **ever** allowed to interfere **for a moment** with the one great business of life."

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"Quite like that. Lord Chiltern has taken up hunting as his duty in life, and**, being naturally energetic,** he does it with his might and main. Not to have a good day is a misery to him;—not for himself but because he feels that he is responsible **to others. But to have a blank confounds him!** We had one blank last year, and I thought that he never would recover it. It was that unfortunate Trumpeton Wood."

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"She understands him**, I hope**. She is coming too. They have not been married long and he never goes anywhere without her."

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"I hope you will. You know Mr. Finn? He is here. He and my husband are very old friends. And Adelaide Maule is your cousin. She hunts too. And so does Mr. Maule,—only not quite so energetically. **He came into his property last year, and now they have quite a string of horses.** I think that is all we shall have. **I hope you will get on with them;—but I am afraid you will find that it is hunting, hunting, hunting from morning till night.**"

Immediately after that all the guests came in at once[, and a discussion was heard as they were passing through the hall]. **Chiltern and Phineas Finn met in the hall, and while they were there Mr. and Mrs. Spooner arrived. Then Mrs. Maule joined them, and so they were crowding in together. Mr. Maule was not there, but nobody ever waited for him and he seldom appeared till the middle of dinner.** "No;—that wasn't it," Mrs. Spooner was saying loudly **as she entered**. "I don't care what Dick said." Dick Rabbit was the first whip, and seemed to have been much exercised with the matter now under dispute. "The fox never went into Grobby Gorse at all. I was there and saw Sappho give him a line down the bank**, and she is the best bitch in the pack**."

"I think he must have gone into the gorse, my dear," said her husband. "**They always do, and** the earth was open, you know."

"I tell you she didn't. You weren't there, and you can't know. I'm sure it was a vixen by her running. We ought to have killed that fox, my Lord." Then Mrs. Spooner made her obeisance to her hostess. Perhaps she was rather slow in doing this, **as Lady Chiltern was standing up to welcome her,** but the greatness of the subject**, and no want of courtesy,** had been the cause. There are matters so important, that the ordinary civilities of the world should not stand in their way.

"What do you say, Chiltern?" asked the husband **who had been contradicted**.

"I say that Mrs. Spooner isn't very often wrong, and that Dick Rabbit isn't very often right about a fox. **I wasn't there myself.**"

"It was a pretty run **at any rate**," said Phineas.

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"Thirty-two up to Grobby Gorse," asserted Mrs. Spooner **with great authority**. "The hounds never hunted a yard after that. Dick hurried them into the **covert** [gorse], and the old hound wouldn't stick to her line when she found that no one believed her." Then they all went in to dinner.

This was on a Monday evening, and the Brake hounds went out generally five days a week. "You'll hunt to-morrow, I suppose," Lady Chiltern said to **her neighbour,** Lord Silverbridge.

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"You must hunt to-morrow **or you will be held to have disgraced yourself**. Indeed there is nothing else to do. Chiltern has taken such a dislike to shooting-men that he won't shoot **any** pheasants himself. We don't hunt on Wednesdays or Sundays, and then everybody lies in bed. Here is Mr. Maule. He lies in bed on other mornings as well, and **then** spends the rest of his day riding about the country looking for the hounds."

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"Not often I believe;—and then Chiltern has to look after Mrs. Maule,—which is hard, as his own work is quite enough for him."

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"Then you ought to have known better," said Mrs. Spooner. "When a man loses the hounds in that country he ought to go direct to Brackett's Wood. **He is sure to be right then.** If you had come on to Brackett's you'd have seen as good a thirty-two minutes as ever you wished to ride. **Another time always make for Brackett's.**" When the ladies went out of the room Mrs. Spooner gave a parting word of advice to her husband, and to the host. "Now, Tom, don't you drink port-wine. **If you do, your nerves won't be worth so much brown paper to-morrow.** Lord Chiltern, look after him, and don't let him have port-wine."

Then there began an altogether different phase of hunting conversation. As long as the ladies were there it was all very well to talk of hunting as an amusement. Good sport, a fast thirty minutes or so, the delight of leaving a friend in a ditch, or the glory of a stiff-built rail were fitting subjects for a lighter hour. But now the business of the night was to begin. The difficulties, **the animosities,** the enmities, the precautions, the resolutions, the resources of the Brake hunt were to be **brought under discussion** [discussed]. And from thence **not unnaturally** the conversation of these devotees strayed away to the perils at large to which hunting in these modern days is subjected;—not the perils of broken necks and crushed ribs, which can be reduced to an average, and so an end made of that small matter; but the perils from outsiders, the perils from new-fangled prejudices, the perils from more modern sports, **the perils from slighted vanity,** the perils from over-cultivation, the perils from extended population, the perils from

encroaching railroads, the perils from literary ignoramuses, the perils from intruding cads, the perils from indifferent magnates,—the Duke of Omnium, for instance;—and that peril of perils, the peril of decrease of funds and increase of expenditure! The jaunty gentleman who puts on his **one pair of** breeches and **his one pair of** boots, and on his single horse rides out on a pleasant morning to some neighbouring meet, thinking himself a sportsman, has but a faint idea of the troubles which a few staunch workmen endure in order that he may not be made to think that his boots, and his breeches, and his horse, have been **altogether thrown away** [in vain].

A word or two further was at first said about that unfortunate wood for which Silverbridge at the present **moment** felt himself **to be** responsible. **Mr. Spooner declared that in all his memory he had never known anything like it before;—and as he did so he filled a bumper of port. "You've got to think of your nerves, you know," said Maule. Spooner winked his eye, and poked his thumb near his shoulder, thereby intimating the fact that his wife wasn't "here," but "there." Phineas** Finn said that he was sure the Duke would look to it, if Silverbridge would mention it. Chiltern simply groaned. Silverbridge said nothing, remembering how many troubles he had on hand at this moment. Then by degrees the solicitude **of the assembled sportsmen** worked itself round to the cares of a neighbouring hunt. The U.R.U. had lost their Master[,]**,—who had not been regarded as being very much in the way of a Master,—**one Captain Glomax, and had been driven to the necessity of advertising for a successor. "When hunting comes to that," said Lord Chiltern, "one begins to think that it is in a bad way." It may always be observed that when hunting men speak seriously of their sport, they speak despondingly. Everything is going wrong. Perhaps the same thing may be remarked in other pursuits. Farmers are generally on the verge of ruin. Trade is always bad. The Church is in danger. The House of Lords isn't worth a dozen years' purchase. **The constitution has been undermined.** The throne totters. **The Pope of Rome seems to be the only institution which understands how far self-assertion goes towards self-preservation.**

"An itinerant Master with a carpet-bag never can carry on a country," said Mr. Spooner**, speaking with great authority**.

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"It should be someone who has a real stake in the country," replied Mr. Spooner,—"whom the farmers can respect**, a man who is or will be a landlord**. Glomax understood hunting no doubt, but the farmers didn't care for him. If you don't have the farmers with you, you can't have hunting." Then he filled a**nother** [a] glass of port.

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"That was in the Runnymede," said Spooner contemptuously. **The Brake was in the Shires, and men who hunt in the Shires despise those who are outside this Elysium, as the member of a first-rate club at his well-served table despises the poor fellow who is obliged to eat his dinner in a chop-house.**

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"He is the man," said Silverbridge boldly, "who owned Prime Minister with me when he didn't win the Leger last September." **Then Lord Chiltern whistled. "At that time he was Master of the Runnymede Hounds. I think they have got rid of him now."**

"There was a deuce of a row," said Maule. Then Mr. Spooner, who read his ***Land and Water*****, and** *Bell's Life***,** and *Field* very religiously, and who never missed an article in *Bayley's*, proceeded to give them an account of everything that had taken place in the Runnymede hunt. It mattered but little that he was wrong in all his details. Narrations always are. The result to which he came was nearly right when he declared that the Major had been turned off, that a committee had been **formed to buy his horses and his share of the hounds, and that now Messrs. Topps and Jawstock** [appointed, and that Messrs. Topps and Jawstock] had been threatened with a lawsuit **as to the sum of money promised to the Major for hunting the country that season**.

"That comes," said Lord Chiltern solemnly, "of employing men like Major Tifto in places for which they are radically unfit. I dare say Major Tifto knew how to handle a pack of hounds,—perhaps almost as well as my huntsman, Fowler. **Fowler, though he is getting a little slow now, understands hunting I believe as well as any man in England.** But I don't think a country would get on very well which appointed Fowler Master of Hounds. He is an honest man, and therefore would be better than Tifto. **He would not pretend to be what he is not, and therefore would be better than Tifto.** But—it would not do. It is a position in which a man should at any rate be a gentleman. If he be not, all those who should be concerned in maintaining the hunt will turn their backs upon him. When I take my hounds over this man's ground and that man's ground, certainly without doing him any good, I have to think of a great many things. I have to understand that those whom I cannot compensate by money, I have to compensate by courtesy. When I shake hands with a farmer and express my obligation to him because he does not lock his gates, **or destroy the foxes, or make a row about his crops, his fences, and his poultry,** he is **perhaps in some degree** gratified. I don't think any

decent farmer would care much for shaking hands with Major Tifto. If we fall into that kind of thing there must soon be an end of hunting. Major Tiftoes are cheap no doubt; but in hunting as in most other things, cheap and nasty go together. If men don't choose to put their hands in their pockets they had better say so, and give the thing up altogether. If you won't take any more wine, we'll go to the ladies. Silverbridge, the trap will start from the door to-morrow morning precisely at 9.30 a.m. Grantingham Cross is fourteen miles." Then they all left their chairs,—but as they did so Mr. Spooner finished the bottle of port-wine.

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The next morning everybody was ready for a start at half-past nine, except Mr. Maule,—as to whom his wife declared that she had left him in bed when she came down to breakfast **at nine**. "He can never get there if we don't take him," said Lord Chiltern, who was in truth **about** the most good-natured man in the world. Five minutes were allowed him, during which his wife went up to his room. Five minutes more were allowed, and then he came down with a large sandwich in one hand and a button-hook in the other, with which he was prepared to complete his toilet. "What the deuce makes you always in such a hurry?" were the first words he spoke as Lord Chiltern got on the box. The Master knew him too well to argue the point. "Well;—he always is in a hurry," said the sinner, when his wife accused him of ingratitude.

In spite of the lost ten minutes they were at Grantingham Cross by eleven. "Where's Spooner?" asked the Master when he saw Mrs. Spooner without her husband at the meet.

"I knew how it would be when I saw the port-wine," she said in a whisper that could be heard all round **the meet**. "He has got it this time, sharp,—in his great toe. We shan't find at Grantingham. They were cutting wood there last week. If I were you, my Lord, I'd go away to the Spinnies at once."

"I must draw the country regularly," muttered the Master**, as he proceeded to give directions to Fowler, the huntsman**.

The country was drawn regularly, but in vain till about two o'clock. Not only was there no fox at Grantingham Wood, but none even at the Spinnies. **One or two coverts beyond that were equally inauspicious,** and at two **o'clock**, Fowler, with an anxious face, held a consultation with his more anxious Master. Trumpeton Wood lay on their right, and that no doubt would have been the proper draw. "I suppose we must try it," said Lord Chiltern. **Silverbridge was standing by and could not fail to hear what was being said.**

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"I was thinking what I could best do in honour of you," said the Master to Silverbridge;—"whether I would pay you the compliment of drawing your covert, or give you the best chance I can of a run." Silverbridge of course declared that he would prefer the run to the compliment, and so away they went.

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This was very disagreeable. He was not in the least hurt, but it became his duty to run after his horse**; and perhaps of the many troubles which occur to hunting men there is nothing worse than the necessity of running across a ploughed field in top boots**. A very few furrows of that work suffice to make a man think that hunting altogether is a "beastly sort of thing." Mrs. Spooner's horse, who had shown himself to be a little less quick of foot than his own, had known all about the bank and the double ditch, and had, apparently of his own accord, turned down to the right, either seeing or hearing the hounds, and knowing that the ploughed ground was to be avoided. But his rider soon changed his course. She went straight after the riderless horse, and when Silverbridge had reduced himself to utter speechlessness by his exertions, brought him back his steed.

Chapter 63, *"I've Seen 'Em Like That Before"*

If Miss Boncassen had cause to be jealous of any other woman, that woman, after the occurrences recorded in the last chapter, was Mrs. Spooner. "Upon my word," Silverbridge said to Lady Chiltern that evening, "I don't think I ever came across such a thorough brick in all my life."

"Doesn't she ride well?"

"I should think she did! She coached me through the whole run. But I didn't quite like having my horse caught by a woman. Just at that moment I wished she had left me in the ploughed field."

On this occasion **he only stayed** [Silverbridge stayed only] a few days at Harrington, having promised Tregear to entertain him at The Baldfaced Stag**, the hunting inn of which the Duke had so strongly disapproved**. It was here that his horses were standing, and he now intended, by limiting himself to one horse a day, to mount his friend for a couple of weeks. **"I've got five of them," he said when Tregear**

found him, "and we'll see if we can't stretch a point and make four days a week out of them. If the worst comes to the worst we can always hire from the fellow here." It was settled at last that Tregear should ride his friend's horse one day, hire the next, and so on. "I wonder what you'll think of Mrs. Spooner," he said.

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"We used to have hunting down in Cornwall, and thought we did it pretty well. **I suppose we were mistaken."**

"Why shouldn't you hunt in Cornwall?"

"And I have ridden in South Wales, which I can assure you isn't an easy thing to do. But you mustn't expect much from me. **Now that I am a member of Parliament I am bound to preserve my life for the sake of my constituents.**"

They were both out the Monday and Tuesday in that week, and then again on the Thursday without anything special **either** in the way of sport **or of accidents**. Lord Chiltern, who had found Silverbridge to be a young man after his own heart[,]**,—in spite of the hereditary sin accruing to him from Trumpeton Wood,—**was anxious that he should come back to Harrington and bring Tregear with him. But to this Tregear would not assent, alleging that he should feel himself to be a burden both to Lord and Lady Chiltern. On the Friday Tregear did not go out, saying that he would avoid the expense, and on that day there was a good run. "It is always the way," said Silverbridge. "If you miss a day, it is sure to be the best thing of the season. **We killed one fox just at the brook where Chiltern got the cropper;—**an hour and a quarter with hardly anything you could call a check. It is the only very good thing I have seen since I have been here. Mrs. Spooner was with them all through."

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"I wasn't far off. **I remembered the brook well, and when I was thinking whether there was enough left in old Peacock to carry me over, I saw Dick bustle down off his horse and tumble in among the bushes. I wasn't sorry, I can tell you, to hear 'whoo-whoop.'** I wish you had been there."

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Tregear was riding his friend's favourite hunter, a thoroughbred bay horse, very much more than up to his rider's weight, and supposed to be peculiarly good at timber, water, or any well-defined kind of fence, however high or however broad. **"I am not quite so sure of him at those wicked places which require an animal to have three or**

four legs to spare," Silverbridge had said; "but he has never brought me down yet." Tregear had mounted the animal with perfect satisfaction, and in the early part of the day rode him over a few places with great ease. He was a man who liked his amusements as well as another, though he seldom talked about them;—and whatever he did he generally did well. He was in truth a very good horseman, though he never gave himself or obtained from others special credit for the accomplishment. They found at a covert near the kennels, and killed their fox after a burst of a few minutes. **Then** they found again, and having lost their fox, all declared that there was not a yard of scent. "I always know what a west wind means," said Mrs. Spooner.

Then they lunched, and smoked, and trotted about with an apparent acknowledgment that there wasn't much to be done. It was not right that they should expect much after so good a thing as they had had yesterday. At half-past two Mr. Spooner had been sent home by his Providence, and Mrs. Spooner was calculating that she would be able to ride her horse again on the Tuesday,—when on a sudden the hounds were on a fox. It turned out afterwards that Dick Rabbit had absolutely ridden him up among the stubble, and that the hounds had nearly killed him before he had gone a yard. But the astute animal, making the best use of his legs till he could get the advantage of the first ditch, ran, and crept, and jumped absolutely through the pack. Then there was shouting, and yelling, and riding. The men who were idly smoking threw away their cigars. Those who were loitering at a distance lost their chance. But the real sportsmen, always on the alert, always thinking of the business on hand, always mindful that there may be at any moment a fox just before the hounds, had a glorious opportunity of getting "well away." Among these no one was more **ready, more** intent, or, when the moment came, "better away" than Mrs. Spooner.

Silverbridge had been talking to her**, as he very generally did in the hunting field,** and had the full advantage of her care. Tregear was riding behind with Lord Chiltern, who had been pressing him to come with his friend to Harrington **for a few days before they left the country**. As soon as the shouting was heard Chiltern was off like a rocket. It was not only that **like others there** he was anxious to "get well away," but that a sense of duty compelled him to see how the thing was being done. Old Fowler certainly was a little slow, and Dick Rabbit, with the true bloody-minded instinct of a whip, was a little apt to bustle a fox back into covert **with the view of making certain of his death**. And then, when a run commences with a fast rush, riders are apt to over-ride the hounds, and then the hounds will over-run the fox. All of which has to be seen to by a Master who knows his business.

Tregear followed, and being mounted on a fast horse was soon **in as good a place and** as forward as a judicious rider would desire. "Now, Runks, don't you press on and spoil it all," said Mrs. Spooner to the hard-riding objectionable son of old Runks, the vet from Rufford. But young Runks did press on till the Master spoke a word. The word shall not be repeated, but it was efficacious**,—and then young Runks slunk away**.

At that moment there had been a check,—as there is generally after a short burst, when fox, hounds, and horsemen get off together, and not always in the order in which they have been placed here. There is too much bustle **from steady business**, and the pack becomes disconcerted. But it enabled Fowler to get up, and by dint of growling at the men and conciliating his hounds, he soon picked up the scent. "If they'd all stand still for two minutes and be —— to them," he muttered aloud to himself, "they'd 'ave some'at to ride arter. They might go then, and there's some of 'em 'd soon be nowhere."

But in spite of Fowler's denunciations there was, of course, another rush. Runks had slunk away, but by making a little detour was now again ahead of the hounds. And unfortunately there were **perhaps** half-a-dozen with him. **Fowler was in a very bad humour, and** Lord Chiltern was very wrath. "When he's like that," said Mrs. Spooner to Tregear, "it's always well to give him a wide berth. **I get the rough side of his tongue sometimes myself.**" But as the hounds were now running fast it was necessary that even in taking this precaution due regard should be had to the fox's line. "He's back for Harrington bushes," said Mrs. Spooner. **"That's his favourite."** And as she said so, she rode at a bank, with a rail at the top of it perhaps a foot-and-a-half high, with a deep drop into the field beyond. It was not a very nice place, but it was apparently the only available spot in the fence. She seemed to know it well, for as she got close to it she brought her horse almost to a stand and so took it. The horse cleared the rail, seemed just to touch the bank on the other side, while she threw herself back almost onto his crupper, and so came down with **apparently the most** perfect ease. But she, knowing that it would not be easy to all horses, paused a moment to see what would happen.

Tregear was next to her and was intending to "fly" the fence**,—as he had thought she would do before him**. But when he saw Mrs. Spooner pull her horse and pause, he also had to pull his horse. This he did so **effectually** as to enable her to take her leap without danger or encumbrance from him, but hardly so **completely** as to bring his horse to the bank in the same way. It may be doubted whether the animal he was riding would have known enough and been quiet enough to have performed the acrobatic manoeuvre which had carried Mrs. Spooner so pleasantly over the peril. He had some idea of this, for the thought occurred to him that he would turn and ride fast at the jump. But **almost** before he could turn he saw that Silverbridge was pressing on him. It was thus his only

recourse to do as Mrs. Spooner had done**, and get out of the way**. He was too close to the rail, but still he tried it. The horse attempted to jump, caught his feet against the bar, and of course went over head-foremost. This **might have been nothing,** probably would have been nothing, had not Silverbridge with his rushing beast been immediately after them. When the young Lord saw that his friend was down it was too late for him to stop his course. His horse was determined to have the fence,—and did have it. He touched nothing, and would have skimmed in glory over the next field had he not come right down on Tregear and Tregear's steed. There they were, four of them, two men and two horses in one confused heap.

The first person with them was Mrs. Spooner, who was off her horse in a minute. And Silverbridge too was very soon on his legs. He at any rate was unhurt, and the two horses were up before Mrs. Spooner was out of her saddle**, and were standing perfectly quiet on the scene of this disaster**. But Tregear did not move. "What are we to do?" said Lord Silverbridge, kneeling down over his friend. "Oh, Mrs. Spooner, what are we to do?"

The hunt had passed on and no one else was immediately with them. But at this moment Dick Rabbit, who had been left behind to bring up his hounds **who had strayed at the check**, appeared above the bank. "Leave your horse and come down," said Mrs. Spooner. "Here is a gentleman who has hurt himself." Dick wouldn't leave his horse, but was soon on the scene, having found his way through another part of the fence.

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After a while he was got into farmer Tooby's, where that surgeon came who is always in attendance on a hunting field. The surgeon declared that he had broken his collar-bone, two of his ribs, and his left arm. **In point of fact he had been doubled up under the horse.** And then one of the animals had struck him on the chest as he raised himself**, and had given him a very ugly wound**. A little brandy was poured down his throat, but even under that operation he gave no sign of life. "No, missis; he ain't dead," said Dick to Mrs. Tooby; "no more he won't die this bout; but he's got it very nasty. **I must be making for the hounds.**" **They were now not above a mile or two from the kennel, and Dick was desired to send a carriage from Harrington.**

That night Silverbridge was sitting by his friend's bedside at ten o'clock in Lord Chiltern's house. Tregear had spoken a few words, and the bones had been set. But the doctor had not as yet felt himself justified in speaking with that assurance which Dick had expressed. **It was, he said, a very nasty case.** The man's whole body had been bruised by the horse which had fallen on him. The agony of Silverbridge was extreme,

for he knew that it had been his doing. **Nor was it lessened when Tregear, almost in his first conscious moment, gently pressed the fingers of his friend's hand, which was lying on the bed close to his own. The motion was intended to express forgiveness;—but forgiveness itself declares that wrong has been sustained.**

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The two **of them of course** remained at Harrington and their luggage was brought over from The Baldfaced Stag. The accident had happened on a Saturday. On the Sunday there was no comfort. On the Monday the patient's recollection and mind were re-established, and the doctor **ventured to say** [thought] that perhaps, with great care, his constitution would pull him through. On that day the consternation at Harrington was so great that **neither Lord Chiltern nor** Mrs. Spooner **went** [would not go] to the meet. She came over from Spoon Hall, and spent a considerable part of the day in the sick man's room. "It's sure to come right if it's above the vitals," she said, expressing an opinion which had **no doubt** come from much experience. "That is," she added, "unless the neck's broke. When poor old Jack Stubbs drove his head into his cap and dislocated his wertibry of course, it was all up with him." The patient heard this, and was seen to smile.

On the Tuesday there arose the question of family communication. As the accident would **of course** make its way into the papers, a message had been sent **early** on Monday to Polwenning to say that various bones had been broken, but that the patient was upon the whole doing well. Then there had been different messages backwards and forwards, in all of which there had been an attempt to comfort old Mrs. Tregear**,—and perhaps to prevent the coming of the anxious parents**. But on the Tuesday letters were written. Silverbridge, sitting in his friend's room, sent a long account of the accident to Mrs. Tregear, giving a list of the injuries done**, and adding an assurance that in spite of all those injuries, Frank in a couple of months would be himself again**. "Is there anyone else?" asked Silverbridge **when that letter was finished**.

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"And Mabel Grex." Silverbridge nodded assent and again went to the writing-table. He did write to his sister, and in plain words told her everything. "The doctor says he is not now in danger." Then he added a postscript. "As long as I am here I will let you know how he is." **Then he gave a long account of the whole affair to Lady Mabel, confessing entirely his own fault. And after that he wrote a third letter, of which he did not say a word to Tregear. This was to his father,—and it was written**

chiefly with the purpose of letting the Duke know that he had sent tidings of the accident to his sister.

Chapter 64, *"I Believe Him to Be a Worthy Young Man"*

Lady Mary and Mrs. Finn were alone **together at Matching** when the tidings came from Silverbridge **as to Tregear's accident**. The Duke had been absent **for two or three days**, having gone to spend an unpleasant week in Barsetshire. **Gatherum Castle on this Christmas had not been opened, and the Duke had excused to himself this breach of his accustomed hospitality by the recent death of his wife. It was the first Christmas since he had been a widower, and therefore Gatherum was closed,—not at all to the delight of the neighbours. But there were matters of business which he thought required his presence. He had been gone two or three days, and intended to remain in Barsetshire for a week. Mrs. Finn, with whom he was now on more friendly terms than ever, had promised to stay with Mary till his return.**

Mary had taken the opportunity of his absence to discuss her own prospects at full length. "My dear," said Mrs. Finn, "I will not express an opinion. How can I after all that has passed? I have told the Duke the same. I cannot be heart and hand with either without being false to the other." But still Lady Mary continued to talk about Tregear**, and forced her companion to listen to her**.

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"While there is life there is hope," said Mrs. Finn**, saying almost more than she intended**.

"Yes;—while there is life, there is hope. **That is just it.** But one doesn't want to grow old first."

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"I feel very old. What is the use of life without something to make it sweet? **Everything is blank to me now.** I am not even allowed to hear anything that he is doing. If he were to ask me I think I would go away with him to-morrow."

"**That would be to destroy everything.** He would not be foolish enough for that."

"Because he does not suffer as I do. He has his borough, and his public life, and a hundred things to think of. I have got nothing but him. I know he is true;—quite as true

as I am. **I should despise myself if I doubted him for a moment.** But it is I that have the suffering in all this. A man can never be like a girl. Papa ought not to make me suffer like this."

That took place on the Monday. On the Tuesday Mrs. Finn received a letter from her husband giving his account of the accident **in the hunting field**. "As far as I can learn," he said, "Silverbridge will write about it to-morrow." Then he went on to give a by no means good account of the state of the patient. The doctor had declared him to be out of immediate danger, and had set the broken bones**, but had not given a cheerful view of his patient's condition**. **Perhaps, he added,** as tidings would be sent on the next day, she had better say nothing about the accident to Lady Mary. This letter reached Matching on Tuesday and **of course** made the position of Mrs. Finn very disagreeable. She was bound to carry herself as though nothing was amiss, knowing, as she did so, the condition of Mary's lover.

On the evening of that day Lady Mary was more lively than usual, though her liveliness was hardly of a happy nature. "I don't know what papa can expect. I've heard him say a hundred times that to be in Parliament is the highest place a gentleman can fill, and now Frank is in Parliament." Mrs. Finn looked at her with beseeching eyes, as though begging her not to speak of Tregear. **Knowing what she knew, it was impossible for her to speak of him.** "And then to think of their having that Lord Popplecourt there! I shall always hate Lady Cantrip, for **of course** it was her plan. That she should have thought it possible! Lord Popplecourt! Such a creature. **I suppose you have seen him?" Mrs. Finn said that she had seen him. "**Hyperion to a satyr. Isn't it true? **Look on that picture and on this.** Oh, that papa should have thought it possible."

"My dear, I cannot talk about it." Then Lady Mary got up, and walked about the room, beating her hands together. **And** all this time Mrs. Finn knew that Tregear was lying at Harrington with half his bones broken, and in danger of his life!

On the next morning Lady Mary received her letter. **At Matching the letters in the morning were always laid upon the breakfast-table, and on this occasion Mrs. Finn was in the room before her hostess.** There were two lying before her plate when Mary came in [to breakfast], one from her father and the other from Silverbridge. She read that from the Duke first while Mrs. Finn was watching her. "Papa will be home on Saturday," she said. "He declares that the people in the borough are quite delighted with Silverbridge for a member,—and he is quite jocose. 'They used to be delighted with me once,' he says, 'but I suppose everybody changes!' " Then she began to pour out the tea before she opened her brother's letter. Mrs. Finn's eyes were still on her anxiously. "**What will you have? I ought to offer you everything, only I know you will take**

nothing. Though I am a disconsolate female, yet I am hungry. I mean to have some cold pheasant. I wonder what Silverbridge has got to say about the Brake hunt." Then she opened her letter.

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"Killed himself! Not that! It is not so bad as that**,**" **said Mrs. Finn, rising from her chair**.

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"Oh, heavens! I cannot read it. Do you read it. **Read it and tell me.** Tell me all. Tell me the truth. What am I to do? Where shall I go?" Then she threw up her hands, and with a loud scream fell on her knees with her head upon the chair. In the next moment Mrs. Finn was down beside her on the floor**; but the girl had not fainted, and was still sensible to her suffering**. "Read it," she said. "Why do you not read it? If you will not read it, give it to me."

Mrs. Finn did read the letter, which was very short[,]**,—hardly perhaps quite considerate, as dealing with such a subject and written to such a purpose,** but still giving **on the whole** by no means an unfavourable account of the patient. "I am sorry to say he has broken ever so many bones, and we were all very much frightened about him." Then the writer went into details, from which a reader who did not read the words carefully might well imagine that the man's life was still in **imminent** danger.

Mrs. Finn did read it all, and **then** did her best to comfort her friend. "It has been a **very** bad accident," she said, "but it is **quite** clear that he is getting better. Men do so often break their bones, and then seem to think nothing of it afterwards. **He has broken two of his ribs and his arm. Of course that is very bad; but I do not think that such accidents are often fatal.**"

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"I suppose he was riding too close to Mr. Tregear, and that they **both** came down together. Of course it is distressing, but I do not think you need make yourself positively unhappy about it."

"Would not you be unhappy if it were Mr. Finn?" said Mary, jumping up from her knees. "I shall go to him. **I can't stay here.** I should go mad if I were to remain here and know nothing about it but what Silverbridge will tell me."

"I will telegraph to Mr. Finn**, who is staying there**."

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"I don't care now what anybody may say **or what anybody may think**. I choose to be considered as belonging to him, and if papa were here I would say the same." It was of course not difficult to make her understand that she could not go to Harrington, **and that no one would so thoroughly disapprove of such a step as Frank Tregear himself;** but it was by no means **an** easy **thing** to keep her tranquil. She would send a telegram herself. This was debated for a long time **between her and Mrs. Finn**, till at last Lady Mary insisted that she was not subject to Mrs. Finn's authority**, and that if she were driven to do so, she would have herself taken to the post-office at Bridstock and would herself send the telegram from there**. "If papa were here, even then I would send it**,**" **she said**. And she did send it, in her own name, **quite** regardless of the fact pointed out to her by Mrs. Finn, that the people at the post-office would thus know her secret. "It is no secret," she said. "I don't want it to be a secret." **Mrs. Finn knew that it was wrong, but she could not stop it;—and** the telegram went in the following words: "I have heard it. I am so wretched. Send me one word to say how you are." **Matching was seven miles from the nearest telegraph-office, and Harrington was nine; but nevertheless** she got an answer back, with Tregear's own name to it, on that afternoon. "Do not be unhappy. I am doing well. Silverbridge is with me."

That was on the Wednesday. About midday on the Thursday Gerald came home from Scotland. He had arranged his little affair with Lord Percival, not however without some difficulty. Lord Percival had declared that he did not understand **having an** I.O.U.['s] **tendered to him** in an affair of that kind. **That was not the way in which money won at cards should be paid.** He had always thought that gentlemen did not play for stakes which they could not pay at once**, either in cash or by cheques on their bankers**. This was not said to Gerald himself;—or the result would have been **very** calamitous **indeed**. Nidderdale was the go-between, and at last arranged it,—not however till he had pointed out that Percival, having won so large a sum of money from a lad under twenty-one years of age, was very lucky in receiving **such** substantial security for its payment **as that offered by Lord Silverbridge**. **Upon that Lord Percival took himself off with the I.O.U. in his pocket.**

Gerald**, who felt that he ought to have been home much before this time, had stayed away the longer because he knew that he had already caused his father to be angry. Then he** had chosen the period of his father's absence for his return. It was **absolutely** necessary that the story of the gambling debt should be told the Duke in February! Silverbridge had explained that to him, and he had quite understood **that in making use of his father's name and his brother's security he had assented to this**

necessity [it]. He, indeed, would be up at Oxford in February, and, in that case, the first horror of the thing would be left to poor Silverbridge! Thinking of **all** this, Gerald felt that he was bound to tell his father himself. He resolved that he would do so**.**[,] **But still he** [but] was **most** anxious to postpone the evil day. He lingered therefore in Scotland till he knew that his father was **absent** in Barsetshire.

On his arrival he was **immediately** told of Tregear's accident. "Oh, Gerald; have you heard?" said his sister. He had not as yet heard, and then the history was repeated to him. Mary **in telling it** did not **make any** attempt to conceal her own feelings. She was **quite** as open with her brother as she had been with Mrs. Finn.

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"What can I say better? I suppose he will. Fellows always do get over that kind of thing. Herbert de Burgh smashed both his thighs, and now **they say** he can move about again,—of course with crutches."

"I don't know what you mean. I always liked Tregear, and I am very sorry for him. **All the same** if you would take it a little quieter, I think it would be better."

"I could not take it quietly. **I don't mean to take it quietly.** How can I take it quietly when he is more than all the world to me?"

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"Yes,—and so let people think that I didn't care, till I broke my heart! **I don't mean to be like that. And I don't see what business you have to find fault with me.** I shall say just the same to papa when he comes home." After that the brother and sister were not on very good terms with each other for the remainder of the day.

On the Saturday there was a **long** letter from Silverbridge to Mrs. Finn. Tregear was better; but was unhappy because it had been decided that he could not be moved for the next month. This entailed two misfortunes on him;—first that of being the enforced guest of persons who were not,—or hitherto had not been his own friends,—and then his **necessary** absence from the first meeting of Parliament. When a gentleman has been in Parliament some years **and has perhaps been attending regularly for a month or two of the session, then** he may be able to reconcile himself to an obligatory vacation with a calm mind. But when the honours and the glory **and the importance** are new, and the tedium of the benches has not yet been experienced, then such an accident **as this** is felt to be a grievance. **Tregear perfectly understood that he must serve an**

apprenticeship before he could make himself conspicuous as a brilliant or even as a useful member,—and now that very apprenticeship must be delayed! But the young member was out of danger, and was, as Silverbridge declared, in the very best quarters which could be provided for a man in such a position.

Phineas Finn told him all the politics; Mrs. Spooner related to him, on Sundays and Wednesdays, all the hunting **affairs down to the particulars of every find, of every run, of every kill, and of every escape** [details]; while Lady Chiltern read to him light literature, because he was not allowed to hold a book in his hand **or to turn upon his side**. "I wish it were me," said Gerald. "I wish I were there to read to him," said Mary.

Then the Duke came home. "Mary," said he, "I have been distressed to hear of this accident." This seemed to her to be the kindest word she had heard from him for a long time. **She took his hand and, pressing it, looked up into his face.** "I believe him to be a worthy young man. I am sorry that he should be the cause of so much sorrow to you—and to me."

Chapter 65, *"Do You Ever Think What Money Is?"*

"No, sir;—not a shilling of that kind. I have never played before. **I don't know what made me play then.**"

"Does it ever occur to you that going on at that rate you may very soon lose all the fortune that will ever come to you? You were not yet of age and you lost three thousand four hundred pounds at cards to a man whom you probably knew to be a professed gambler!" The Duke seemed to wait for a reply, but poor Gerald had not a word to say. "Can you explain to me what benefit you proposed to yourself **when you sat down to play for such stakes as that?** [when you played for such stakes as that?]"

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"It cannot be that a rational being should consent to risk the money he has himself,—to risk even the money which he has not himself,—without a desire to win that which as yet belongs to his opponents. You desired to win? **You were anxious to win?**"

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"And why? Why did you want to extract their property from their pockets, and to put it into your own? That the footpad on the road should have such desire when, with his pistol, he stops the traveller on his journey, we all understand. And we know what we

think of the footpad,—and what we do to him. He is a poor **debased** creature, who from his youth upwards has had no good thing done for him, uneducated, an outcast **from society**, whom we should pity more than we despise him. We take him, as a pest which we cannot endure, and lock him up where he can harm us no more. On my word, Gerald, I think that the so-called gentleman who sits down with the deliberate intention of extracting **if he can the** money from the pockets of his antagonists, who lays out for himself that way of repairing the shortcomings of fortune, who looks to that recourse as an aid to his means,—**I look upon that man, Gerald, as** [is] worse, much worse, than the public robber! He is meaner, more cowardly, and has I think in his bosom less of the feelings of an honest man. And he probably has been educated,—as you have been. He calls himself a gentleman. He should know black from white. It is considered terrible to cheat at cards."

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"All cheating is terrible,—very terrible. But the man who sits down to play cards with the distinct purpose of winning money, even though he play fairly as the rules go, is to my thinking further removed from the condition of a true gentleman than is the man who cheats from his own. Do you understand me?"

"Not quite," said Gerald, who in truth had not at all understood this last denunciation.

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"Money is the reward of labour," said the Duke, "or rather in the shape in which it **presents itself to** [reaches] you, it is your representation of that reward. You may earn it yourself, or, as is, I am afraid, more likely to be the case with you, you may possess it honestly as prepared for you by the labour of others who have stored it up for you. But it is a commodity of which you are bound to see that the source is not only clean but noble. You would not let Lord Percival give you money."

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"Nor would you take it**, I hope, from anyone but from me**. There is nothing so comfortable as money,—but nothing so defiling if it be come by unworthily; nothing so comfortable, but nothing so noxious if the mind be allowed to dwell upon it constantly. **As a man should use his horse, and not spend his voice in praising him, or his time in fostering him, or his mind in thinking of him,—so it should be with his money.** If he have enough let him spend it freely. If he wants it, let him earn it honestly. Let him

do something for it, so that the man who pays it to him may get its value. But to think that it may be got by gambling, to hope to live after that fashion, to sit down with your fingers **put** almost in your neighbour's pockets, with your eye on his purse, trusting that you may know better than he some studied calculations as to the pips concealed in your hands, praying to the only god you worship that some special card may be vouchsafed to you,—that I say is to have left far, far behind you all nobility, all gentleness, all manhood! Write me down Lord Percival's address and I will send him the money."

The poor lad was too crushed to write the words then, in his father's presence. Whether he had understood all that had been said may be doubted;—but he felt the weight of it if he did not understand it. As he went out to seek pen and ink elsewhere he declared to himself that whatever might be the pleasures of his future life, gambling should not be one of them.

In a few moments he returned to the Duke with Lord Percival's direction written on an envelope. Lord Percival belonged to the Beargarden and the address was given there. Then the Duke wrote a cheque for the money claimed and sent it with a note, as follows:—"The Duke of Omnium presents his compliments to Lord Percival. The Duke has been informed by Lord Gerald Palliser that Lord Percival has won at cards from him the sum of three thousand four hundred pounds. The Duke now encloses a cheque for that amount, and requests that the document which Lord Percival holds from Lord Silverbridge, as security for the amount, may be returned to Lord Gerald." **Though he had expressed very clearly to his own son his opinion of Lord Percival's conduct and his opinion also of his son's folly, he would make no animadversions of any kind in writing on the subject to a stranger.** Let the noble gambler have his prey. He was little solicitous about that. If he could only so operate on the mind of this son,—so operate on the minds of both his sons, as to make them see the foolishness of folly, the ugliness of what is mean, the squalor and dirt of ignoble pursuits, then he could easily pardon past faults. If it were half his wealth, what would it signify if he could teach his children **really** to accept those lessons without which no man can live as a gentleman, let his rank be the highest known, let his wealth be as the sands, his fashion **and popularity** unrivalled?

This happened late on Saturday evening; and the Duke, when he had enclosed the cheque, remained late in his room, walking up and down from corner to corner, thinking of it all. He had that morning, before he had left Gatherum, received a letter from Mr. Monk anxiously begging him to be in his place in Parliament at the beginning of the session so as to take the lead for the Liberal party in the House of Lords. During the last session there had seemed to be so general a

disruption of political affairs that no peers had filled this position with adequate authority. The world generally would have said that the Duke of St. Bungay had been the leader, though he himself would hardly have admitted it. Many things, but chiefly the death of his wife, had precluded our Duke from putting himself sufficiently forward; but now, as Mr. Monk argued, and as Lord Cantrip and the old Duke had both assured him, he was bound to take the first place in his own House. On the receipt of Mr. Monk's letter he had almost made up his mind to assent unconditionally. He was certainly gratified by this strong testimony to his political merits. But the word or two which his daughter had said to him, declaring that she still took pride in her lover's love, and then this new misfortune on Gerald's part, upset him greatly. He almost sickened of politics when he thought of his domestic bereavement and his domestic misfortunes. How completely had he failed to indoctrinate his children with the ideas by which his own mind was fortified and controlled! Nothing was so base to him as a gambler, and they had both commenced their career by gambling. From their young boyhood nothing had seemed so desirable to him as that they should be accustomed by early training to devote themselves to the service of their country **and to fit themselves for such work by thoughtful study**. He saw other young noblemen around him who at eighteen were known as debaters at their colleges, or at twenty-five were already deep in politics, social science, and educational projects. **Hitherto the careers of his boys had been—almost disgraceful. And, though utter disgrace had been warded off, partly by money and in some degree by rank, though Silverbridge after his escapade at Oxford was already in Parliament, and though Gerald had been allowed a second chance at Oxford,** what good would all his wealth or all his position do for his children if their minds could rise to nothing beyond the shooting of deer and the hunting of foxes? There was young Lord Buttercup, the son of the Earl of Woolantallow, only a few months older than Silverbridge,—who was already a junior lord, and as constant at his office, or during the session **as persistent** on the Treasury bench, as though there were **neither** [not] a pack of hounds, or **a deer forest, or** a card-table in Great Britain! Lord Buttercup, too, had already written an article in *The Fortnightly***,—Conservative young Lord as he was,—**on the subject of Turkish finance. How long would it be before Silverbridge would write an article, or Gerald sign his name in the service of the public?

And then those proposed marriages,—as to which he was beginning to know that his children would be too strong for him! Anxious as he was that both his sons**,—that his girl as well as his sons,—**should be permeated by Liberal politics, studious as he had ever been to teach them that the highest duty of those high in rank was to use their

authority**, their wealth, and their power** to elevate those beneath them, still he was hardly less anxious to make them understand that their second duty required them to defend **and fortify** their own position. It was by feeling this second duty,—by feeling it and performing it,—that they would be enabled to perform the first. And now both Silverbridge and his girl were bent upon marriages by which they would depart out of their own order[!]**,—almost as far as it was possible that they should depart.** Let Silverbridge marry whom he might, he could not be other than heir to **all** the honours of his family. But by his marriage he might either support or derogate from these honours. And now, having at first made a choice that was good[,]**,—having proposed to ally himself with a name as noble and as old as any in the kingdom,—**he had altered his mind from simple freak, captivated by a pair of bright eyes and an arch smile; and without a feeling in regard to his family, was anxious to take to his bosom the granddaughter of an American day-labourer!

And then his girl,—of whose beauty he was so proud, from whose manners, and tastes, and modes of life he had expected to reap those good things, in a feminine degree, which his sons as young men seemed so little fitted to give him[!]**,—his girl who could read books and be happy without the excitement of some riotous pleasure, from whose marriage he had been entitled to expect so much, had determined to give herself to a man who could lend no aid in supporting the glories of the house of Palliser.** By slow degrees he had been brought round to acknowledge that the young man was worthy. Tregear's conduct **in all this matter** had been felt by the Duke to be manly. The letter he had written was a good letter. And then he had won for himself a seat in the House of Commons. **He was not an adventurer, as the Duke had at first thought.** When forced to speak of him to his girl he had been driven by justice to call him worthy. But how could he serve to support and strengthen that nobility, the endurance and perpetuation of which should be the peculiar care of every Palliser? **He was a younger son, without any fortune, who, if he married, must take his very means of living from his wife!**

And yet as the Duke walked about his room he **almost acknowledged to himself** [felt] that his opposition either to the one marriage or to the other was vain. Of course they would marry according to their wills**,—unless indeed Silverbridge should again change his purpose, as was not impossible**. **But when all these troubles were so heavy upon him, when he found himself so thoroughly disappointed and crushed in his own household, he could hardly bring himself back to that desire for public service which a few years since had been the mainspring of almost all his actions.**

While acknowledging that it was so, he knew that he was wrong; but he told himself that the steel had been taken out of his heart by the troubles he had endured.

That same night Gerald wrote to his brother before he went to bed[,]**; and as he wrote in an unusually serious frame of mind the letter should be given here.** [as follows:]

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"I was awfully obliged to you for sending me the I.O.U. for that brute Percival. He only sneered when he took it, and would have said something disagreeable but that he saw that I was in earnest. I know he did say something to Nid, only I can't find out what. Nid is an easy-going fellow, and, as I saw, didn't want to have a rumpus. **And Lady Nid would not have liked it.**

"But now what do you think I've done? Directly I got home I told the governor all about it! As I was in the train I made up my mind that I would. I went slap at it. If there is anything that never does any good, it's craning. I did it all at one rush, just as though I was swallowing a dose of physic. I wish I could tell you all that the governor said, because it was really tip-top **sound good sense**. What is a fellow to get by playing high,—a fellow like you and me? I didn't want any of that beast's money. I don't suppose he had any. But one's dander gets up, and one doesn't like to be done, and so it goes on. I shall cut that kind of thing altogether. You should have heard the governor spouting Latin! And then the way he sat upon Percival without mentioning the fellow's name! I do think it mean to set yourself to work to win money at cards,—and it is awfully mean to lose more than you have got to pay.

Chapter 66, *The Three Attacks*

During the following week the communications between Harrington and Matching were very frequent. **Silverbridge was still a guest at Lord Chiltern's house, as was also Tregear, perforce. Phineas Finn was also still staying there. He of course wrote to his wife, as did Silverbridge to his brother and sister.** There were no further direct communications between Tregear and Lady Mary, but she heard daily of his progress**, and did at last succeed in inducing Gerald to send him one word of a message through his brother**. The Duke was conscious of the special interest which existed in his house as to the condition of the young man, but, after his arrival, not a word was spoken for some days between him and his daughter on the subject. Then Gerald

went back to his college, and the Duke made his preparations for going up to town**. At last he had consented to obey Mr. Monk. To do something would at any rate be better than idleness. The session of Parliament would commence on Friday the 11th of February, and it was expedient that he should be in town a few days before that time. Then the day for his departure was settled. He would go on Monday the 31st. Phineas Finn was to be in London about the same time;—but Mrs. Finn agreed to remain at Matching for yet a fortnight with Lady Mary** [and making some attempt at parliamentary activity].

It was by no concert that an attack was made upon him from three quarters at once as he was preparing to leave Matching. On the Sunday morning **before church time,—or rather** during church time**,**[,—]for on that day Lady Mary went to her devotions alone,—Mrs. Finn was closeted for an hour with the Duke in his study. **It was natural enough that she should ask to see him, as she was to be left, not perhaps in charge of his house, but altogether in charge of his daughter. And yet she had been made to understand that, should there come between them any difference of opinion, Lady Mary did not consider herself bound to obey her guardian.** "I think you ought to be aware," she said to the Duke, "that though I trust Mary implicitly and know her to be thoroughly high principled, I cannot be responsible for her, if I remain with her here."

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"I think I may say that she certainly will not do that." Mrs. Finn in saying this did not consider herself bound to tell the Duke that his daughter had threatened even to take this step. "I merely suggest such a thing in order to make you understand that I have absolutely no control over her."

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"Oh, Duke, that goes for very little anywhere. No one can depute authority. It comes too much from personal accidents, and too little from reason or law [to be handed over to others]. **Could any word of yours make Mr. Warburton subject to another, as he is subject to you? Besides I fear——" Then she paused. But the Duke only smiled. It was an expression of countenance which was peculiar to him but which she had known him long enough to understand. It expressed his regret, perhaps sorrow, at what he was hearing. It augured opposition on his part. But it declared at the same time that he would hear what was to be said to him without displeasure.** "Besides I fear**," she continued, "**that on one matter concerning her you and I are not agreed."

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This seemed to the Duke to be not quite so bad as it might have been. Any speculation as to results was very different from an expressed opinion as to propriety. **Had Mrs. Finn told him that according to her views they ought to be allowed to become man and wife, he would have continued to smile indeed, but the smile would have become harder.** Were he to tell the truth as to his own mind[,]**,—which he certainly did not think that he was called upon to do,—**he might perhaps have said the same thing. But one is not to relax in one's endeavours to prevent that which is wrong, because one fears that that wrong may be ultimately perpetrated. "Let that be as it may," he said, "it cannot alter my duty."

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"That you should encounter the burden of **a** [the] duty **in such a matter** binds me to you for ever."

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"If it be so;—if it seems to me that it must be so,—then how can I be anxious to prolong her sufferings?" **The Duke still smiled, but his smile had become much harder.** "She does suffer terribly." Upon this the Duke frowned, but there was more of tenderness in his frown than in **his smile** [the hard smile which he had hitherto worn]. "I do not know whether you see it all." He well remembered all that he had seen when he and Mary were travelling together. "I see it; and I do not pass half an hour with her without sorrowing for her **from the very bottom of my heart**." On hearing this he sighed and turned his face away. "Girls are so different! There are many who though they be genuinely in love, though their natures are sweet **and feminine** and affectionate, are not strong enough to support their own feelings in resistance to the will of those who have authority over them." Had it been so with his wife? At this moment all the former history passed through his mind. "They yield to that which seems **to them** to be inevitable, and allow themselves to be fashioned by the purposes of others. It is well for them often that they are so plastic[.]**, so prone to obedience**! Whether it would be better for her that she should be so, I will not say."

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"But such is not her nature. **In the teeth of all that you have said, in spite of all opposition,** she is as determined as ever."

"I may be determined too**,**" **said the Duke;—but there was doubt in his voice, though his words were meant to be very firm**.

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"If I think so, Duke, **surely** I am justified. Of late I have been with her daily,—almost hourly. I do not say that this will kill her, now—in her youth. It is not often, I fancy, that women die after that fashion**,—none, perhaps, do to whom nature has given the constitution and vitality which she possesses**. But a broken heart may bring the **poor** sufferer to the grave after a lapse of many years. How will it be with you if she should live like a ghost beside you for the next twenty years, and you should then see her die, faded and withered before her time,—all her life gone without a joy,—because she had loved a man whose position in life was displeasing to you? Would the ground on which the sacrifice had been made then justify itself to you? In thus performing your duty to your order would you feel satisfied that you had performed that to your child? **In such a matter I need hardly say that there is very much for you to think of as a father!**"

She had come there determined to say it all,—to liberate her own soul as it were,—but had **very** much doubted the spirit in which the Duke would listen to her **remonstration**. That he would listen to her she was sure,—and then if he chose to cast her out, she would endure his wrath. It would not be to her now as it had been when he accused her of treachery. But, nevertheless, bold as she was and independent, **there was a certain awe mixed with her feelings in regard to him;—**he had imbued her, as he did all those around him, with so strong a sense of his personal dignity, that when she had finished **her speech** she almost trembled as she looked in his face. Since he had asked her how she could justify to herself the threats which she was using he had sat **perfectly** still with his eyes fixed upon her. Now, when she had done, he was in no hurry to speak. He rose slowly and walking towards the fireplace stood with his back towards her, looking down upon the fire. She was the first to speak again. "Shall I leave you now?" she said**, hardly daring to trust her own voice**.

"Perhaps it will be better," he answered. His voice, too, was very low. In truth he was so moved that he hardly knew how to speak at all. Then she rose and was already on her way to the door when he followed her. "One moment if you please," he said almost sternly. "I am under a debt of gratitude to you of which I cannot express my sense in words. How far I may agree with you, and where I may disagree, I will not attempt to point out to you now. **Nor will you expect it.**"

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"But all that you have troubled yourself to think and to feel in this matter, and all that true friendship has compelled you to say to me, shall be written down in the tablets of my memory **as acts of friendship which no efforts on my part can repay**."

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"My **poor** child has at any rate been fortunate in securing the friendship of such a friend." Then he turned back to the fireplace, and she was constrained to leave the room without another word.

She had thought it not improbable that her departure from Matching would be very much expedited by what she had resolved to do. She had determined to make the best plea in her power for Mary; and while she was making the plea had been almost surprised by her own vehemence; but the greater had been her vehemence, the stronger, she thought, would have been the Duke's anger. And as she had watched the workings of his face she had felt, from moment to moment, that the vials of his wrath were about to be poured out upon her. Even when she left the room she almost believed that had he not taken those moments for consideration at the fireplace his parting words would have been different **in their nature**. But, as it was, there could be no question now of her departure. No power was left to her of separating herself from Lady Mary. Though the Duke had not as yet acknowledged himself to be conquered, there was no doubt to her now but that he would be conquered. And she, either here or in London, must be the girl's nearest friend up to the day when she should be given over to Mr. Tregear. **"Where is papa?" Mary asked when she and Mrs. Finn went into lunch together. Mrs. Finn replied that she believed the Duke was busy and that she thought he would have his lunch taken into his own room. Neither of them saw him again that day till dinner-time;—and after dinner he soon disappeared. Yet this was to be his last night at Matching!** That was one of the three attacks which were made upon the **hostile father** [Duke] before he went up to his parliamentary duties.

The second was as follows. Among the letters on the following morning one was brought to him from Tregear. It is hoped that the reader will remember the lover's former letter and the very unsatisfactory answer which had been sent to it. Nothing could have been colder, less propitious, or more inveterately hostile than the reply. **When writing it the Duke had not been as yet at all shaken in his opposition. Tregear had taken it much to heart, though he had been sensible enough hardly to expect anything else. He had written because he had felt that he was bound to do something. If he took no steps whatever towards the accomplishment of his wishes,**

the girl might indeed be true to him and the engagement might remain in force between them, but months,—nay, years,—might go by without bringing them any nearer to each other. He had therefore written his letter to the Duke,—and he had received his reply. As he lay in bed with his broken bones at Harrington he had ample time for thinking over all this. He knew every word of the Duke's distressing note by heart, and had often lashed himself to rage as he had repeated it. But he **was well aware that he** could effect nothing by showing his anger. He must go on and still do something. Since the writing of that letter he had done something. He had got his seat in Parliament**, which he knew could not fail to recommend him in some degree to the Duke**. And he had secured the interest of his friend Silverbridge. This had been partially done at Polwenning; but the accident in the Brake country had completed the work. **Silverbridge, having very nearly killed his friend by his own imprudent riding, had felt himself compelled to make some amends. The consequence was that** the brother had at last declared himself in his friend's favour. "Of course I should be glad to see it," he had said while sitting by Tregear's bedside. "The only thing is that everything does seem to go so against the poor governor. **I shall go back to the other side. It's the only thing I can do for him.**"

Then Tregear made up his mind that he would write another letter **to the Duke**. Personally he was not in the best condition for doing this as he was lying in bed with his left arm tied up, and with straps and bandages all round his body. But he could sit up in bed, and his right hand and arm were free. So he declared to Lady Chiltern his purpose of writing a letter. She tried to dissuade him gently and offered to be his secretary. But when he assured her that no secretary could write this letter for him**,—that the matter was of such a nature that it could not be confided to anyone else,—then** she understood pretty well what would be the subject of the letter. **How such private matters become public nobody knows. But they do become public, and Lady Chiltern was quite aware that her guest aspired to the hand of the only daughter of the Duke of Omnium.** With considerable difficulty Tregear wrote his letter.

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"Your Grace's reply to my last letter was not encouraging, but in spite of your prohibition I venture to write to you again. If I had the slightest reason for thinking that your daughter was estranged from me, I would not persecute either you or her. But if it be true**,— and I know it is true,—**that she is as devoted to me as I am to her, can **you think that** I **am** [be] wrong in pleading my cause? Is it not evident to you that she is

made of such stuff that she will not be controlled in her choice,—even by your will? **And in pleading my cause do I not plead hers also?**

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This coming alone would perhaps have had no effect. The Duke had desired the young man not to address him again; and the young man had disobeyed him. No mere courtesy would now have constrained him to send any reply to this further letter. But coming as it did while his heart was still throbbing with the effects of Mrs. Finn's words, it was allowed to have a certain force. The **only** argument used was **at any rate** a true argument. His girl was devoted to the man who sought her hand. Mrs. Finn had told him that sooner or later he must yield,—unless he was prepared to see his child wither and fade at his side. He had once thought that he would be prepared even for that. He had endeavoured to strengthen his own will by arguing with himself that when he saw a duty plainly before him, he should cleave to that let the results be what they might. **Even though she should die,—he had said to himself then,—he must do his duty.** But that picture of her face withered and worn after twenty years of sorrowing had had **more** [its] effect upon his heart **than his own rapid thought that possibly she might die while he was performing his duty**.

He even made excuses within his own breast in the young man's favour. **Since this was first discussed the young man had certainly bettered his own condition.** He was in Parliament now, and what may not be done for a young man in Parliament? **And then he had heard good things of him. The young man was now a guest at Lord Chiltern's house, and Silverbridge was certainly staunch in his friendship.** Altogether the young man appeared to him in a light different from that through which he had viewed the presumptuous, arrogant, utterly unjustifiable suitor who had come to him, now nearly a year since, in Carlton Terrace**, asking him for his daughter's hand**.

He went **that morning** to breakfast with Tregear's letter in his pocket, and was then **very** gracious to Mrs. Finn, and **very** tender to his daughter. "When do you go, papa?" Mary asked.

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"Certainly. I shall be delighted. **I suppose they'll send my things in the cart. Joseph will be on the box. When shall we see you in town, Mrs. Finn?**"

"Mary and I will go together, I suppose."

"I hope Mary feels how good you are to her. But what does Mr. Finn say to all this?"

"Mr. Finn is like your Grace, I take it;—very full of politics at the present moment. He is thinking a great deal more of Sir Timothy Beeswax than of his wife. If he only loved me as thoroughly as he hates him it would be well. But I suppose we shall all be up by Valentine's Day."

"I will have everything ready for Mary."

"Of course we will write and settle the hour,—and all that. I will bring her to Carlton Terrace myself on the way. As you will be in a hurry I will say good-bye, Duke, now till then." Then the Duke with formal courtesy kissed her hand and again told her, in his daughter's presence, that he felt himself to be under a heavy load of obligation to her. It was thus he bore the second attack. And the third was made as follows.

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"Oh, papa!" And she threw herself onto his breast. He put his arm round her and kissed her,—as he would have had so much delight in doing, as he would have done so often before, had there not been this **terrible** ground of discord **between them**. She was very sweet to him. It had never seemed to him that she had disgraced herself by loving Tregear;—but that a great misfortune had fallen upon her **from which it was impossible that he should relieve her by the only remedy which she would accept**. Silverbridge when he had gone into a racing partnership with Tifto, and Gerald when he had **allowed himself to be lured in to play** [played] for **sums of** money which he did not possess, had—degraded themselves in his estimation. He would not have used such a word **in reference to them**; but such was his feeling. They were less noble, less pure than they might have been, had they kept themselves free from such [stain] **meanness**. But this girl,—whether she should live and fade by his side **as Mrs. Finn had foretold**, or whether she should **consent to** give her hand to some fitting noble suitor,—or even though she might at last become the wife of this man who loved her,—**would be and** would always have been pure. It was **very** sweet to him to have something to caress. Now, in the **comparative** solitude of his life, as years were coming on him, **and as his hair was turning grey,** he felt how necessary it was that he should have someone **to love and** who would love him. **Since he had been alone,** since his wife had left him, he had been debarred from these caresses by the necessity**,—as it had seemed to him the necessity,—**of showing his antagonism to her dearest wishes. It had been his duty to be stern **to her**. In all his words **and actions** to his daughter he had been governed by a conviction that [he] never **for a moment should** [ought to] **he** allow **to be absent from his mind** the duty **which was incumbent on him** of separating her from her lover [to be

absent from his mind]. He was not **at all** prepared to acknowledge that that duty had **now** ceased;—but yet there had crept over him a feeling that as he was half conquered, why should he not seek some recompense in his daughter's love? **He allowed her now to lie for a minute on his shoulder while he pressed her to his heart.** "Papa," she said, "you do not hate me?"

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"Because I am **so** disobedient. Oh, papa, I cannot help it. He should not have come. He should not have been let to come. **But now——**" He had not a word to say to her. **He could not tell her,—**he could not as yet bring himself to tell her,—that it should **all** be as she desired. **He had not told himself so.** Much less could he now argue with her as to the impossibility of such a marriage as he had done on **all** former occasions when the matter had been discussed **between them**. He could only press his arm **more** tightly round her waist, and be silent. "It cannot be altered now, papa. Look at me. Tell me that you love me."

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"**I certainly shall never love Lord Popplecourt.** I never can love anybody else. That is what I wanted you to know, papa."

To this he made no reply, nor was there anything else said upon the subject before the carriage drove up to the railway station. "Do not get out, dear," he said, seeing that her eyes had been filled with tears. "It is not worth while. God bless you, my child. You will be up in London I hope in a fortnight, and we must try to make the house a little less dull for you. **Make the most one can of Mrs. Finn, because she has been very good to you.**"

"You may be sure of that, papa. I am very fond of Mrs. Finn." When left alone he could not but feel that Mary, in declaring her partiality for Mrs. Finn, had expressed a different sentiment in regard to Lady Cantrip. And yet, as he told himself, Lady Cantrip had done her best. It was all that unfortunate Lord Popplecourt!

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Lady Mary, as she was driven home, recovered her spirits wonderfully. Not a word had fallen from her father which she could use hereafter as a refuge from her embarrassments. He had made her no promise. He had assented to nothing. But there had been something in his manner, in his gait, in his eye, in the pressure of his arm,

which **taught** [made] her **at any rate to hope** [feel] that her troubles would soon be at an end.

Chapter 67, *"He Is Such a Beast"*

Lord Silverbridge remained hunting in the Brake country till a few days before the meeting of Parliament, **staying chiefly at Harrington, but also paying a short visit to Spoon Hall**. **Thither he went at the special request of both Mr. and Mrs. Spooner, who made up a grand dinner-party for the occasion. The popularity of our hero among the Brake sportsmen was very great, and by no means the less because of Tregear's accident. It was acknowledged that the horse was a rusher, that Silverbridge was young and ardent, and that his subsequent behaviour to his friend had been perfect. "We shall be so proud if you'll stay two or three days with us," said Mrs. Spooner imploringly. "Spoon Hall is better situated for the meets than any house in the country, and I'll drive you over to all of them myself." Who could resist that? "Chiltern is the best fellow in the world," said Spooner, "and Harrington is a very comfortable house. But he hasn't lived there long enough to have a cellar, and a man doesn't go in for that kind of thing in a house that is not his own. I can give you such a glass of wine as he hasn't got." The lady's offer was perhaps the more tempting of the two; but, between them both, he was tempted. It was all very well when he was there, but he afterwards owned to Lady Chiltern that a certain word of warning which she had spoken to him was true. "I don't know whether Mrs. Spooner doesn't shine most on horseback," Lady Chiltern had said. "You were quite right about her shining," Silverbridge said afterwards. "When she is showing a lead after the hounds she is bright. She doesn't quite know what she's about so well when she's at home." But, on the whole, he had a pleasant time of it, and when he went up to join his father in Carlton Terrace a week before Parliament met, he felt that he was already a martyr to the public service. Who does not know that February is the best month for hunting in the whole year? He at any rate swore that it was so to Lady Chiltern when he complained of his hard fate. "What's the good of having horses?" he said to this new friend. "Of course while it has lasted here nothing could be more jolly. But what with having to be at Matching with the governor, and then going up to this beastly session, you see it comes to so little. I really do think they ought to put off Parliament till the first of April." Lady Chiltern remarked that the grouse were too imperative in August to allow the foxes**

to plead their cause properly in February or March. But Silverbridge seemed to think that if such fellows as Sir Timothy Beeswax stuck to it properly, four months would be quite enough for all that there was to do.

Tregear's grumbling was quite of another kind. He did not say a word before Silverbridge lest he should seem to complain of him who had caused the accident;—but to Lady Chiltern he also poured out his woes. "It does seem hard," he said. "Since I was a boy just going up to school it has been the dream of my life to have a seat in Parliament. And now that I've got it, I can't go there."

"It won't be for long, Mr. Tregear."

"I know that I'm foolishly impatient, and that I must seem to you to be ungrateful in showing it."

"Indeed not that."

"But of course one fancies that the very days when one is laid up will be the most important days of the year. It won't be so, I dare say, but the idea that it may be so makes one fretful."

Had Silverbridge [and had he] been left to himself he would have had another week **or two** in the country and might **not im**probably have overstayed the opening day; but he had not been left to himself. In the last week in January a[n] **very** important despatch reached his hands, from no less important a person than Sir Timothy Beeswax **himself**, suggesting to him that he should undertake the duty of seconding the address in the House of Commons. When the proposition first reached him it **almost** made his hair stand on end. He had never yet risen to his feet in the House **of Commons**. He had spoken at those election meetings in Cornwall, and had found it easy enough. After the first or second time he had thought it **very** good fun. But he knew that standing up in the House of Commons would be different from that. Then there would be the dress! "I should so hate to fig myself out and look like a guy," he **had** said to Tregear, to whom of course he **had** confided the offer that **had been** [was] made to him. Tregear was very anxious that he should accept it. "A man should never refuse anything of that kind which comes in his way," Tregear **had** said.

"It is only because I am the governor's son," Silverbridge **had** pleaded.

"Partly so, perhaps. But if it be altogether so, what of that? Take the goods the gods provide you**, whencesoever they may come**. Of course all these things which our ambition covets are easier to dukes' sons than to others. But not on that account should a duke's son refuse them. A man **should be continuously taking steps upwards, and** when he sees a rung vacant on the ladder should always put his foot there."

"I'll tell you what," said Silverbridge. "If I thought this was all fair sailing, I'd do it. I should feel **pretty** certain that I should come a cropper, but still I'd try it. As you say, a fellow should try. But it's all meant as a blow at the governor. Old Beeswax thinks that if he can get me up to swear that he and his crew are real first-chop hands **at carrying on the government**, that will hit the governor hard. **If it wasn't for that he wouldn't have asked me.** It's as much as saying to the governor,—'This chap belongs to me, not to you.' That's a thing I won't go in for." Then Tregear counselled him to write to his father for advice, and at the same time to ask Sir Timothy to allow him a day or two for consideration. This counsel he took**, and he wrote both to his father and to Sir Timothy**. **The** [His] letter reached his father two days before he left Matching. In answer to it there came first a telegram begging Silverbridge to be in London on the Monday, and then a letter, in which the Duke expressed himself as being **very** anxious to see his son before giving a final answer to the question. Thus it was that Silverbridge had been taken away from his hunting **so soon, a week before the day which he had himself appointed**.

Isabel Boncassen, however, was now in London, and from her **he thought** it [was] possible that he might find consolation. He had written to her soon after reaching Harrington, telling her **in his own phraseology** that he had had it all out with the governor**, and that though he could not say that his father had at once assented to his views, he did not anticipate any prolonged opposition**. "There is a good deal that I can only tell you when I see you," he said. Then he assured her with many lover's protestations that he was and always would be till death altogether her own most loving S. To this he had received an answer by return of post. She would be delighted to see him up in town,—as would her father and mother. They had now got a comfortable house in Brook Street. And then she signed herself his sincere friend, Isabel. Silverbridge thought that it was **rather** cold, and remembered certain scraps in another feminine handwriting in which more passion was expressed. Perhaps this was the way with American young ladies when they were in love. **At any rate he would soon see her, and with that he comforted himself.**

"Yes," said the Duke, "I am glad that you have come up at once as Sir Timothy should have his answer without further delay. **You should take care that it is in his hands early to-morrow.**"

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The Duke, though he had already considered the matter very seriously, nevertheless took a few minutes to consider it again. "The offer," said he, "must be

acknowledged as very flattering. **Under usual circumstances, it certainly would be so.**"

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"None but the brave deserve the fair," said the Duke, slapping his hands upon the table **with unusual briskness**. "Why, if we fail, 'We fail! But screw your courage to the sticking place, And we'll not fail.' What high point would ever be reached, if caution such as that were allowed to prevail? What young men have done before, cannot you do? I have no doubt of your capacity. None."

"Haven't you, sir?" said Silverbridge, considerably gratified **by his father's assurance**,—and also surprised.

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"No doubt with your inexperience it would be unfit that you should be left entirely to yourself. But I would wish you to know,—perhaps I should say to feel,—that the sentiments to be expressed by you were just. **You should at any rate hold the opinions which you are to recommend to others as just and proper.**"

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"Not that necessarily. But you would have to advocate that course in Parliament which Sir Timothy and his friends have taken and propose to take. **In that way you must certainly praise him.**"

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"I needn't of course say what I think about him. **That wouldn't do at all.**"

"I would not have you make any words that you may utter on such an occasion a thing of course. I suppose you do agree with Sir Timothy as to his general policy?" **This was put in the form of a question and certainly required an answer; but Silverbridge had no answer ready.** "On no other condition can you undertake such a duty."

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"I am bound to suppose that they think so, because when the matter was left in their own hands they at once elected a Conservative. You**, at any rate,** need not fear that you will offend them by seconding the address. They will probably feel proud to see

their young member brought forward on such an occasion. As I shall be proud to see my son."

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"Yes, Silverbridge; yes; I should be very proud if it were on the other side. But there is a useful old adage which bids us not cry for spilt milk. You have a right to your opinions, though perhaps I may think that in adopting what I must call new opinions you were a little precipitate. We cannot act together in politics. But not the less on that account do I wish to see you take an active and useful part on that side to which you have attached yourself." As he said this he rose from his seat and spoke with emphasis, as though he were addressing some imaginary Speaker or a house of legislators around him. "I shall be proud to hear you second the address. If you do it as gracefully and as fitly as I am sure you may if you will give yourself the trouble, I shall hear you do it with infinite satisfaction even though I shall feel at the same time anxious to answer all your arguments and to disprove all your assertions. I should be listening no doubt to my opponent;—but I should be proud to feel that I was listening **also** to my son. My advice to you is to do as Sir Timothy has asked you."

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"I believe he has done this only to annoy you." The Duke, who had again seated himself, and was leaning back in his chair, raised himself up, placed his hands on the table before him, and looked his son hard in the face. The idea which Silverbridge had just expressed had certainly occurred to himself. He remembered well all the circumstances of the time when he and Sir Timothy Beeswax had been members of the same government;—and he remembered how animosities had grown, and how treacherous he had thought the man **who was now offering this honour to his son**. From the moment in which he had read the minister's letter to the young member, he had felt that the offer had too probably come from a desire to make the political separation between himself and his son complete. But he had thought that in counselling his son he was bound to ignore such a feeling; and it certainly had not occurred to him that Silverbridge would be astute enough to perceive the same thing.

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"I am glad of that**, at any rate**."

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Of course after that the Duke had no further arguments to use in favour of Sir Timothy's proposition. **"Now that you have explained yourself I think that you are right," he said, "and I am confirmed in my opinion that it was desirable that we should talk this matter over before you arrived at any conclusion. But you should remember two things;—first, that no man should change his side in politics lightly. Such changes are permissible, and are often evidence of honesty; but they are apt to be deleterious to the man himself, and are sometimes taken as showing a vague and vacillating character. And secondly I would have you bear in mind that I have never expected from you such a step. Before you had declared yourself it was fit that I should use my influence to keep you in the path that I thought right. My influence was insufficient. But now I would not raise my little finger to induce you to come back. If conviction brings you back, then I will welcome you with all my heart."**

After that Silverbridge was left alone to write his letter to Sir Timothy, the Duke absolutely refusing to assist his son in the composition. It should never be truly said of him that he had stood between his son and the performance of a public duty because of his own animosity to the existing Leader of the House of Commons. The letter was not at last written with much ease; but when completed it was decisive, explicit, and at the same time courteous. Silverbridge said that he felt the honour very much; that he knew himself to be incompetent, but would not on that account have thought himself justified in opposing the wishes of the Leader of his party; but that as his own political opinions were on certain subjects unfortunately in a state of doubt, he could not venture to undertake a task by which he would feel himself bound to support the Ministry in everything.

"I can trace the Duke's hand in every word of it," Sir Timothy said to Mr. Roby as he showed the letter to that worthy colleague.

Chapter 68, *Brook Street*

Silverbridge had now a week on his hands which he felt that he might devote **with considerable satisfaction** to the lady of his love. It **certainly** was a comfort to him that he need have nothing to do with the address. To have to go, **perhaps** day after day, to the Treasury in order that he might learn his lesson, would have been **very** disagreeable to him. He did not quite know how the lesson would have been communicated, but fancied it would have come from "old Roby," whom he did not love much better than Sir

Timothy. Then the speech must have been composed, and afterwards submitted to someone,—probably to old Roby again, by whom no doubt it would be cut and slashed, and made quite a different speech than he had intended. If he had not praised Sir Timothy himself, Roby,—or whatever other tutor might have been assigned to him,—would have put the praise in **for him**. And then how many hours would it have taken him to learn "the horrid thing" by heart? **The whole week would have been little enough for the work,—which week he was bound to devote to Isabel.** He proudly felt that he had not been prompted by idleness to decline the task; but not the less was he glad to have shuffled the burden from off his shoulders.

Early the next morning he was in Brook Street, having sent a note to say he would call, and having even named the hour. And yet when he knocked at the door, he was told with the utmost indifference by a London footman that Miss Boncassen was not at home;—also that Mrs. Boncassen was not at home;—also that Mr. Boncassen was not at home. When he asked at what hour Miss Boncassen was expected home, the man answered him, just as though he had been anybody else, that he knew nothing about it. **He almost fancied that the man was predetermined not to give him any information.** He turned away in disgust, and **getting into his own private hansom** had himself driven to the Beargarden. **It was then past two, and he proceeded to eat his lunch. After having told Isabel that he would call in Brook Street at two, he had of course expected to lunch there.** In his misery he had recourse to game-pie and a pint of champagne [for his lunch]. "Halloa, old fellow, what is this I hear about you?" said Nidderdale, coming in and sitting opposite to him.

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"You are going to second the address. What **on earth** made them pick you out from the lot of us?"

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"I dare say;—and yet it isn't true. I shouldn't wonder if they ask you." At this moment a waiter handed a large official letter to Lord Nidderdale, saying that the messenger who had brought it was waiting for an answer in the hall. The letter bore the important signature of T. Beeswax on the corner of the envelope, and so disturbed Lord Nidderdale that he called at once for a glass of soda-and-brandy. When opened it was found to be very nearly a counterpart of that which Silverbridge had received down in the country. There was, however, added a little prayer that Lord Nidderdale would at once come down to the Treasury Chambers**, as time was pressing**.

"They must be very hard up," said Lord Nidderdale**,** "**when they apply to me**. But I shall do it. Cantrip is always at me to do something, and you see if I don't butter them up properly." Then having fortified himself with game-pie and a glass of brown sherry he went away at once to the Treasury Chambers.

Silverbridge felt himself a little better after his lunch,—better still when he had smoked a couple of cigarettes walking about the empty smoking-room. And as he walked he collected his thoughts. She could hardly have meant to slight him. No doubt her letter down to him at Harrington**,—if it could be called a letter,—**had been very cold. No doubt he had been ill-treated in being sent away so unceremoniously from the door. But yet she could hardly intend that everything between them should be over. Even an American girl could **hardly** [not] be so unreasonable as that. He remembered the passionate way in which she had assured him of her love. All that could not have been forgotten **so soon,—could not be altogether laid aside**! He had done nothing **to offend her; nothing** by which he could have forfeited her esteem. She had desired him to tell the whole affair to his father, and he had done so. Mr. Boncassen might perhaps have objected. It might be that this American was so prejudiced against English aristocrats as to desire no commerce with them **at all**. **He, Silverbridge, was well aware that** there were not many Englishmen who would not have welcomed him as a son-in-law, but Americans might be different. Still,—still Isabel would hardly have shown her obedience to her father in this way. **He did indeed believe her to be too** [She was too] independent to obey her father **at all** in a matter concerning her own heart. And if he had not been the possessor of her heart at that last interview, then she must have been false indeed! So he got once more into his hansom and had himself taken back to Brook Street.

Mrs. Boncassen was in the drawing-room alone**,—a circumstance which Silverbridge at first regarded as a bad omen**. "I am so sorry," said the lady, "but Mr. Boncassen has, I think, just gone out."

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"Isabel is downstairs;—that is if she hasn't gone out too. She did talk of going with her father to the Museum. She is getting quite bookish**,—is Isabel**. She has got a ticket, and goes there, and has all the things brought to her just like the other learned folks. **Mr. Boncassen says she'll turn out a literary spinster after all.**"

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"My! If she has gone out it will be a pity. **If she'd have known I'm sure she'd've stayed.** She was only saying yesterday she wouldn't wonder if you shouldn't turn up."

"**Well;—no.** Of course I've turned up, Mrs. Boncassen. I was here an hour ago."

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"It was Isabel I wanted to see. Didn't I leave a card? No; I don't think I did. **But I thought she would have expected me.** I felt so—almost at home, that I didn't think of a card."

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"I am sure I don't know, Lord Silverbridge. Isabel is most used to having her own way, I guess. I think when hearts are joined almost nothing ought to stand between them. But Mr. Boncassen does have doubts. He don't wish as Isabel should force herself anywhere **as she won't be welcome**. But here she is and now she can speak for herself." Whereupon not only did Isabel enter the room, but at the same time Mrs. Boncassen most discreetly left it. It must be confessed that American mothers are not afraid of their daughters.

Silverbridge, when the door was closed, stood looking at the girl for a moment and thought that she was more lovely than ever. She was dressed for walking**, with thick boots, and her frock somewhat looped up**. She still had on her fur jacket, but she had taken off her hat. "I was in the parlour downstairs," she said, "when you came in, with papa; and we were going out together; but when I heard who was here, I made him go alone. Was I not good?"

He felt himself at the moment to be, as folks say, all in a quiver. The blood was tingling at his fingers' ends, and he knew that it reached to his face. He had made up his mind as to nothing,—nothing for that special occasion. He had not thought of a word to say, or a thing to do;—but he felt as he looked at her that the only thing in the world worth living for, was to have her for his own. For a moment he was half abashed**, conscious of a certain longing, but unconscious how he might best gratify it**. Then, in the next **moment,** she was close in his arms with his lips pressed to hers. He had been so sudden that she had been unable, **or** at any rate thought that she had been unable, to repress him. **Had it been any other man she might, probably, have been quicker.** "Lord Silverbridge," she said, "I told you I would not have it. You have offended me."

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Whether or no she were offended or he **were** killed he remained with her **nearly** the whole of that afternoon. "Of course I love you," she said. "Do you suppose I should be here with you if I did not, or that you could have remained in the house after what you did just now? I am not given to run into rhapsodies quite so much as you are,—and being a woman perhaps it is as well that I don't. But I think I can be quite as true to you, as you are to me."

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"I will take it for granted that I do. Your mind is to marry me will ye nill ye, as the people say." He answered this by merely nodding his head and getting a little nearer to her. "That is all very well in its way, and I am not going to say but what I am gratified **by your devotion**." Then he did grasp her hand. "If it pleases you to hear me say so, Lord Silverbridge——"

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"Then I shall call you Plantagenet;—only it sounds so horribly historical. Why are you not Thomas or Abraham? But, if it will please you to hear me say so, I am ready to acknowledge that nothing in all my life ever came near to the delight I have in your love." Hereupon he almost succeeded in getting his arm round her waist. But she was strong, and seized his hand and held it. "And I speak no rhapsodies. I tell you a truth which I want you to know and to keep in your heart,—so that you may be always, always sure of it. **There can never be any doubt about that.**"

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"But that marrying will ye nill ye, will not suit me. **It will not suit me even though the choice be between that and not marrying at all. There can be no other marriage for me now, but yet I will not have that.** There is so much wanted for happiness in life."

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"Yes. Even though it be hazardous, I am willing to trust you. If you were as other men are, if you could do as you please as lower men may do, I would leave father and mother and my own country,—**all my friends whom I have known from my youth upwards,—**that I might be your **true** wife. I would do that because I love you**, down to the very bottom of my heart**. But what will my life be here, if they who are your

friends turn their backs upon me? What will your life be, if through all that you continue to love me?"

"That will all come right **very soon**."

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She gently extricated herself, as though she had done so that she might better turn round and look into his face. "Oh, my own one, who can say of himself that it would be so? How could it be so, when you would have all the world**, all your own world,** against you? You would still be what you are,—with a clog round your leg**, indeed,** while at home[.]**,—but still,** in Parliament, among your friends, at your clubs, you would be just what you are. You would be that Lord Silverbridge who had all good things at his disposal,—except that he had been unfortunate in his marriage! But what should I be?" Though she paused he could not answer her,—not yet. There was a solemnity in her speech which made it necessary that he should hear her to the end. "I, too, have my friends in my own country. It is no disgrace to me there that my grandfather worked on the quays. No one holds her head higher there than I do, or is more sure of being able to hold it. I have there that assurance of esteem and honour which you have here. I would lose it all—to do you a good. But I will not lose it to do you an injury."

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"If your father will take me by the hand and say that I shall be his daughter, I will risk all the rest. Even then it might not be wise; but we love each other too well not to run some peril. Do you think that I want anything better**, that I can imagine anything more heavenly** than to preside in your home, to soften your cares, to welcome your joys, to be the mother perhaps of your children,—and to know that you are proud that I should be so? No, my darling. I can see a Paradise;—only, only, I may not be fit to enter it. I must use some judgment better than my own, sounder, dear, than yours. Tell the Duke what I say;—tell him with what language a son may use to his father. And remember that all you ask for yourself you will ask doubly for me."

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"If you do I **at any rate** shall be contented. And now go. I have said ever so much, and I am tired."

"Isabel! Oh, my love." **And he stretched out his arms to her.**

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When he got out into the street it was dark and there was still standing the faithful cab. But he felt that at the present moment it would be impossible to sit still, and he dismissed the equipage. **No; he would not want it again that evening. He would send word to the stables in the morning. He could think nothing now either of cabs or carriages.** He walked rapidly along Brook Street into Park Lane, and from thence to the park, hardly knowing whither he went in the enthusiasm of the moment. He walked back to the Marble Arch, and thence round by the drive to the Guard House and the bridge over the Serpentine, by the Knightsbridge Barracks to Hyde Park Corner. **And as he walked he hardly knew what he was doing in the fury of his love.** Though he should give up everything and go and live in her own country with her, he would marry her. His politics, his hunting, his address to the Queen, his horses, his guns, his father's wealth, and his own rank,—what were they all to Isabel Boncassen? In meeting her he had met the one human being in all the world who could really be anything to him either in friendship or in love. When she had told him what she would do for him to make his home happy, it had seemed to him that all other delights must fade away from him for ever. How odious were Tifto and his race-horses, how unmeaning the noise of his club, how terrible the tedium of those parliamentary benches! He could not tell his love as she had told hers! He acknowledged to himself that his words could not be as her words,—nor his intellect as hers. But his heart could be as true. She had spoken to him of his name, his rank, and all his outside world around him. He would make her understand at last that they were nothing to him in comparison with her. When he had got round to Hyde Park Corner, he felt that he was almost compelled to go back again to Brook Street. In no other place could there be anything to interest him;—nowhere else could there be light, or warmth, or joy! But what would she think of him? **He must at any rate take care that she should not despise him!** To go back hot, and soiled with mud, in order that he might say one more adieu,—that possibly he might ravish one more kiss,—would hardly be manly. He must postpone all that for the morrow. On the morrow of course he would be there. **Then as he thought of the ecstasy of that first embrace he plunged down Constitution Hill.**

But his work was all before him! That prayer had to be made to his father; or rather some wonderful effort of eloquence must be made by which his father might be convinced that this girl was so infinitely superior to anything of feminine creation that had ever hitherto been seen or heard of, that all ideas as to birth, country, rank, or name ought in this instance to count for nothing. He did believe himself that he had found such a pearl, that no question of setting need be taken into consideration. **Set the pearl as you might, it would show itself to be superior to all other pearls that had ever yet been**

found. All this the Duke must be made to see. If the Duke would not see it the fault would be in the Duke's eyes, or perhaps in his own words,—but certainly not in the pearl.

Then he compared her to poor Lady Mabel, and in doing so did arrive at something near the truth in his inward delineation of the two characters. Lady Mabel with all her grace, with all her beauty, with all her talent, was a creature of efforts, or, as it might be called, a manufactured article. She strove to be graceful, to be lively, to be agreeable and clever. Isabel was all this and infinitely more without any struggle. When he was most fond of Mabel, most anxious to make her his wife, there had always been present to him a feeling that she was—old. Though he knew her age to a day,—and knew her to be younger than himself,—yet she was old. Something had gone of her native bloom, something had been scratched and chipped from the first fair surface, and this had been repaired by varnish and veneering. **He knew nothing of that early passion which had made his friend Tregear so dear to her, but, without knowing it, he had felt its effects.** Though he had loved her he had never been altogether satisfied with her. But Isabel was as young as Hebe. He knew nothing of her actual years, but he did know that to have seemed younger, or to have seemed older,—to have seemed in any way different from what she was,—would have been to be less perfect. **He certainly would never have thought of marrying Mabel Grex, if he had, at that time, seen Isabel Boncassen.**

Chapter 69, *"Pert Poppet!"*

A couple of days after the occurrences told in the last chapter, on a Sunday morning,—while Lord Silverbridge was alone in a certain apartment in the house in Carlton Terrace which was called his own sitting-room**, and which was profusely ornamented with whips, foils, sticks, guns, and spurs**,—the name was brought him of a gentleman who was **very** anxious to see him. **He was at the moment not in the best spirits.** He had seen his father and had used all the eloquence of which he was master,—but not quite with the effect which he had desired. His father had been very kind, but he, too, had been eloquent;—and had, as is often the case with orators, been apparently more moved by his own words than by those of his adversary. If he had not absolutely declared himself as irrevocably hostile to Miss Boncassen he had not said a word that might be supposed to give token of assent. **But he had said many words showing the extreme indiscretion of such a marriage.**

Silverbridge, therefore, **on this Sunday morning** was moody, contemplative, and desirous of solitude. Nothing that the Duke had said had **at all** shaken him. He was still sure of his pearl, and quite determined that he would wear it. Various thoughts were running through his brain. What if he were to abdicate the title **and dukedom to Gerald, and go out** and become a republican? He was inclined to think that he could not abdicate, but he was quite sure that no one could prevent him from going to America and calling himself Mr. Palliser **if he chose it**. **Or might it not be well that he should simply threaten to do this, with a conviction that the Duke might thus be brought round to reason?** That his father would forgive him and accept the daughter-in-law brought to him, were he in the first place to marry without sanction, he felt quite sure. What was there that his father would not forgive? But then Isabel would not assent to this. **Isabel required a distinct acceptance from the Duke in person. The hardship was that the Duke, knowing all this, might on that very account remain firm.**

He was turning all this in his head and ever and anon trying to relieve his mind by *Clarissa*, which he was reading in conformity with his father's advice[,]**,—since Macaulay's enthusiasm in India all Liberal statesmen have recommended the reading of *Clarissa,*—**when the gentleman's card was put into his hand. "Whatever does he want here?" he said to himself; and then he ordered that the gentleman might be shown up. The gentleman in question was our old friend Dolly Longstaffe. Dolly Longstaffe and Silverbridge had **for the last year or two** been **intimate;—**intimate as young men are. But they **certainly** were not friends, nor, as far as Silverbridge knew, had Dolly ever set foot in that house before. "Well, Dolly," said he. "What's the matter now?"

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"Oh, come now; that's nonsense. I can get up as early as anybody else. **Don't go and say that, or it will do me a mischief.** I have changed all that for the last four months. I was at breakfast this morning very soon after ten."

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"Oh yes, they are. Think of Glasslough, or Popplecourt, or Hindes! If they knew anything about you that you didn't want to have known,—about a young lady or anything of that kind,—don't you think they'd tell everybody? **I suppose a man may light a cigar here, Silverbridge?" The permission was given and the cigar was lighted. "I have a sort of idea that you wouldn't tell."**

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"I had thought of that too. But you are just the person **that** I must tell. **Nobody else can have anything to do with it.** I want you to help me."

These last words were said in a whisper, and Dolly as he said them had drawn nearer to his friend. Silverbridge remained in suspense, saying nothing by way of encouragement**, but still looking as though he were ready to listen**. Dolly, either in love with his own mystery or doubtful of his own purpose, sat still, looking eagerly at his companion. "What the mischief is it?" asked Silverbridge impatiently.

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"**Well;—I had a deal of difficulty about it.** I'm not what you would have called a marrying sort of man."

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"**I've been horribly cheated. I suppose you've heard that. But still,—**I've made up my mind; and when I say a thing I mean to do it."

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"That's just what I'm coming to. If a man does marry I think he ought to be attached to her." To this, as a broad proposition, Silverbridge was **quite** ready to accede. But, regarding Dolly as a middle-aged sort of fellow, one of those men who marry because it is convenient to have a house kept for them **when they have become tired of bachelor looseness**, he simply nodded his head. **He could not become enthusiastic about the lady of Dolly's heart,—at any rate not till he had heard her name.** "I am awfully attached to her," Dolly went on to say.

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"That kind of thing**, I mean**. When a woman is old it does not much matter who she is. But my one——! She's not old!"

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"Well; I don't know about that. **I shouldn't wonder if she did have something tidy.** But I'm not after her money. Pray understand that. It's because I'm downright fond of her. She's an American."

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"You know her. That's the reason I've come to you. It's Miss Boncassen." A dark frown came across the young man's face**, but with the anger expressed there was mingled much of doubt**. That all this should be said to him was disgusting. That an oaf like that should dare to talk of loving Miss Boncassen was offensive to him. **But in such a crisis he must be careful not to make a fool of himself. Before he ventured to speak he warned himself that as her name was in question he must be very careful. Therefore at the moment he said nothing.** "It's because you know her that I've come to you. She thinks that you're after her." Dolly as he said this lifted himself quickly up in his seat, and nodded his head mysteriously as he looked into his companion's face. It was as much as though he should say, "I see you are surprised; but so it is." **And so he sat, nodding his head for some seconds before he continued his address.** [Then he went on.] "She does; the pert poppet!" This was almost too much for Silverbridge; but still he contained himself**, and in order that he might do so he got up and poked the fire, and altered the position of half-a-dozen things on the chimney-piece**. "She won't look at me because she has got it into her head that perhaps some day she may be Duchess of Omnium! That of course is out of the question."

"Upon my word all this seems to me to be so very[—]**odd,—so** very[,—**], I may say,** distasteful that I think you had better say nothing more about it."

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"But I am. There is nothing I wouldn't do to get her. **Now you've got it all.** Of course it's a good match for her. I've got three separate properties; and when the governor goes off, I shall have a clear fifteen thousand a year."

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"Of course that's nothing to you[,]**. I dare say the Duke allows you as much as that already;** but it is a very tidy income for a commoner. And how is she to do better?"

"I don't know how she could do much worse," said Silverbridge in a transport of rage. Then he pulled his moustache in vexation, angry with himself that he should have allowed himself to say even a word on so preposterous a supposition **as this that had been set before him**. Isabel Boncassen and Dolly Longstaffe! It was Titania and Bottom over again. It was absolutely necessary that he should get rid of this intruder, and he began to be afraid that he could not do this without using language which would be **very** uncivil **indeed**. "Upon my word," he said, "I think you had better not talk about it any more. The young lady is one for whom I have a very great respect**, and I don't like to have her name mentioned in this absurd way**."

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"Or a royal princess**;—anything you can think of that is most absolutely out of your reach**."

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"I don't quite understand **all** this," said the unfortunate lover, getting up from his seat. "Very likely she won't have me. Perhaps she has told you so."

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"But I say that there can be no insult in such a one as me asking such a one as her to be my wife. **She needn't take me, but** to say that she doesn't remember my existence is absurd."

"Why should I be troubled with all this? **Why do you come here? Why do you tell me?**"

"Because I think you're making a fool of her, and because I'm honest. That's why," said Dolly with much energy. There was something in this which partly reconciled Silverbridge to his despised rival. There was a touch of truth about the man, though he was so utterly mistaken in his ideas. "I want you to give over**," said Dolly, "**in order that I may try again. I don't think you ought to keep a girl from her promotion, merely for the fun of a flirtation. Perhaps you're fond of her;—but you won't marry her. I am fond of her, and I shall."

After a minute's pause Silverbridge resolved that he would be magnanimous. "Miss Boncassen is going to be my wife," he said**, drawing himself into some unintended assumption of dignity**.

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"Yes, I shall. I dare say you won't believe me, but I've got such a feeling about me here,"—as he said this he laid his hand upon his heart,—"that if I stayed **here** I should go in for hard drinking. I shall take the great Asiatic tour. I know a fellow that wants to go, but he hasn't got any money. I dare say I shall be off before the end of next month. You don't know any fellow that would buy a half-a-dozen hunters; do you?" Silverbridge shook his head. "Good-bye," said Dolly in a melancholy tone. "I am sure I am very much obliged to you for telling me**;—because you know it puts an end to it all, and settles a fellow**. **I shall see her once more,—once more before I go.** If I'd known you'd meant it, I shouldn't have meddled of course. Duchess of Omnium!"

"Look here, Dolly**," said the object of all this worship when the other man was already at the door**. **"**I have told you what I should not have told anyone, but I wanted to screen the young lady's name."

"It was so kind of you! **I shall never forget it.**"

"Do not repeat it. It is a kind of thing that ladies are particular about. They choose their own time for letting everybody know." Then Dolly promised to be as mute as a fish, and took his departure**, having evidently experienced much mental relief**.

Silverbridge**, when he was alone, walked about his room in anger with himself. He** had felt, towards the end of the interview, that he had been arrogant to the unfortunate man,—particularly in saying that the young lady would not remember the existence of such a suitor,—and had also recognised a certain honesty in the man's purpose, which had not been the less honest because it was so absurd. Actuated by the consciousness of this, he had swallowed his anger, and had told the whole truth. Nevertheless **certain** things had been said which were horrible to him. This buffoon of a man had called his Isabel a—pert poppet! How was he to get over the remembrance of such an offence **as that**? And then the wretch had declared that he was—enamoured! There was sacrilege in the term when applied by such a man to Isabel Boncassen. He had thoughts of days to come, when everything would be settled, when he might sit close to her, and call her by pretty names,—when he might in sweet familiarity tell her that she was a little Yankee and a fierce republican, and "chaff" her about the Stars and Stripes; and then she would lean upon him**,—all those joys being prepared in his mind for the delight of some time yet to come, the picture at present having only been painted by his imagination,—**and **she** would give him back his chaff, and would call him an aristocrat and would laugh at his titles. **And he the while would hold her close in his arms!** As he thought of all this he would be proud with the feeling that such privileges would be his own. And now this wretched man had called her a pert poppet!

There was a sanctity about her,—a divinity **which had greatly grown in his conception since the scene in the drawing-room in Brook Street,—**which **had** made it almost a profanity to have talked about her at all to such a one as Dolly Longstaffe. She was his Holy of Holies, at which vulgar eyes should not even be allowed to gaze. It had been a most unfortunate interview. But this **at any rate** was clear[;]**,—was clear at least to his eyes,—**that, as he had announced his engagement to such a one as Dolly Longstaffe, the matter now would admit of no delay. **He had of course cautioned Dolly Longstaffe to hold his peace, but he was, he told himself, very sure that such a caution would have no effect. In this he was, in truth, unjust to Dolly, who kept the secret like a man and a martyr. But as the conviction implied the expediency of**

despatch in the matter of his desired marriage, he was determined to hold fast by it. He would explain to his father that as tidings of the engagement had got abroad, honour to the young lady would compel him to come forward openly as her suitor at once. If this argument might serve him, then perhaps this intrusion **on the part of Dolly** would not have been altogether a misfortune.

The interview had taken an hour and he was engaged to lunch in Brook Street at two. Unfortunately time did not admit of his rushing to his father with this new argument at once, so as to enable him to declare on his arrival at Mr. Boncassen's house that all impediments had now been happily removed. But still, as he was going to enjoy the happiness of being in her presence, he recovered himself quickly after the departure of his rival, and having put on his frock coat and gloves with something more than his ordinary care, he got into his cab and was taken quickly by the route with which his servant had become already intimately acquainted.

Chapter 70, *"Love May Be a Great Misfortune"*

Silverbridge when he reached Brook Street that day was surprised **and hardly well pleased** to find that a large party was going to lunch there. Isabel had asked him to come[,]**,—when he had seen her only for a moment at the door of the house on the Saturday,—**and he had thought her the dearest girl in the world for doing so. But now his gratitude for that **especial** favour was considerably abated. He did not care just now for the honour of eating his lunch in the presence of Mr. Gotobed, the American minister, whom he found there already in the drawing-room with Mrs. Gotobed, nor with Ezekiel Sevenkings, the great American poet from the far West, who sat silent and stared at him in an unpleasant way. **Nor was he made happy by meeting on this occasion his friend Mr. Lupton.** When Sir Timothy Beeswax was announced, with Lady Beeswax and her daughter, his gratification certainly was not increased. And the last comer,—who did not arrive indeed till they were all seated at the table,—almost made him start from his chair and take his departure suddenly. That last comer was no other than Mr. Adolphus Longstaffe. **Then he understood that mysterious announcement that the loved one was sure to be seen once more.** As it happened he was seated next to Dolly, with Lady Beeswax on the other side of him. Whereas his Holy of Holies was on the other side of Dolly! The arrangement made seemed to him to have been monstrous. He had endeavoured to get next to Isabel; but she had so manoeuvred that there should be a

vacant chair between them. He had not much regarded this because a vacant chair may be **easily** pushed on one side. But before he had **quite** made all his calculations **there was** Dolly Longstaffe [was] sitting there! **There never had been such a "sell" as this since lovers were lovers, since Brook Street had been built, since America had become a country.** He almost thought that Dolly winked at him in triumph,—that very Dolly who an hour ago had promised to take himself off upon his Asiatic travels! **He wished that the man were already there, but had no wishes as to the man's safe return.**

Sir Timothy and the minister kept up the conversation very much between them, Sir Timothy flattering everything that was American, and the minister finding fault with very many things that were English. Now and then Mr. Boncassen would put in a word to soften the severe honesty of his countryman, or to correct the euphemistic falsehoods of Sir Timothy. The poet seemed always to be biding his time **for saying something pungent, but, though he even made preparation with his thumb, the pungent thing did not come**. Dolly ventured to whisper a word to his neighbour. It was but to say that the frost had broken up. But Silverbridge heard it and looked daggers at everyone. Then Lady Beeswax expressed to him a hope that he was going to do great things in Parliament this session. "I don't mean to go near the place," he said, not at all conveying any purpose to which he had really come, but driven by the stress of the moment to say something that should express his general hatred of [everybody] **everything around him**. **"You are not going to accept the Chilterns?" asked Lady B. with intense interest. "I have been staying with them, and I think I shall go back again to-morrow," said Silverbridge. Lady Beeswax told her husband that afternoon that Lord Silverbridge was the most incoherent young nobleman she had ever met. She was very glad that the address was altogether out of his hands**. Mr. Lupton was [there,] on the other side of Isabel, and soon **seemed to be** engaged with her in a pleasant**, increasingly** familiar conversation. Then Silverbridge remembered that he had always thought Lupton to be a most conceited prig. Nobody gave himself so many airs **or thought himself so clever**[,]**,—**or was so careful as to the dyeing of his whiskers. It was astonishing that Isabel should allow herself to be amused by such an antiquated coxcomb **as that**. When they had finished eating they moved about and changed their places, Mr. Boncassen being rather anxious to stop the flood of American eloquence which came from his friend Mr. Gotobed. British viands had become subject to his criticism, and Mr. Gotobed had declared to Mr. Lupton that he didn't believe that London could produce a dish of squash or tomatoes **all the year through**. He was quite sure you couldn't have sweet corn. Then there had been a moving of seats in which the minister was shuffled off

to Lady Beeswax, and the poet found himself by the side of Isabel. "Do you not regret our mountains and our prairies," said the poet;—"our great waters and our green savannahs?" "I think more perhaps of Fifth Avenue," said Miss Boncassen. Silverbridge, who at this moment was being interrogated by Sir Timothy, heard every word of it.

"I was so sorry, Lord Silverbridge," said Sir Timothy, "that you could not accede to our little request **about the address**."

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"I'm sure that's very kind," said Silverbridge, absolutely using a little force as he disengaged himself. Then he at once followed the ladies upstairs, passing the poet on the stairs. "You have hardly spoken to me," he whispered to Isabel. He knew that to whisper to her now, with the eyes of many upon him, with the ears of many open, was an absurdity; but he could not refrain himself. **His heart was so full of her, his thoughts had been so intent upon her, that he was unable to carry himself with that indifference which is expected from a man even in love.**

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There can, I think, be no doubt that, as an opportunity for social gatherings, lunches are a mistake. It may be that nature requires that such a meal should be made; and if so, it is of course convenient that the inhabitants of one and the same house should eat it in company. But it should never become a convivial gathering, and should be partaken only by those who use it as the simple mode of obtaining the nourishment necessary to them. Who has not felt the disagreeable nature of its attributes when other purposes have been intended? When you dine out you know how to get away from your host's house without difficulty. He dictates to you with easy confidence the moment at which you shall leave his dining-room, and when the half-hour of subsequent conversation is over your departure from the precincts of your hostess is as little embarrassing. But who ever knew how to get away from a convivial lunch? What to do, what to say, when to move, and when to go, is always a matter of uneasy thought. At dinner one takes three or four glasses of champagne, and perhaps as many more of claret afterwards. Added to this there may be a little drop of cognac together with an opening and concluding modicum of sherry. And who is the worse for it? Who after it is conscious that either he himself or anyone else has drunk any wine? But when you have taken the very minimum at lunch which the circumstances of the case will allow, when you have passed that unhappy

hour in a continually broken resolve not to eat a morsel, or drink a drop, you feel nevertheless so permeated with strong liquors, so overcome by a sense of victuals through the whole subsequent afternoon, that you do not know what to do with yourself; and when you see others who have gone through the same damnable struggle, you are scandalised by their red faces and uncomfortable grins.

[A convivial lunch I hold to be altogether bad, but the worst of its many evils] **But the worst of it all** is that vacillating **unsteady** mind which does not know when to take its owner off. Silverbridge was on this occasion quite determined not to take himself off at all. As it was only lunch the people must go, and then he would be left with Isabel. But the vacillation of the others was **very** distressing to him. Mr. Lupton went, and poor Dolly got away apparently without a word. But the Beeswaxes and the Gotobeds would not go, and the poet sat staring immovably**, as though that immortality for which his sort sighed was to be found in the permanence of his present abode**. In the meanwhile Silverbridge endeavoured to make the time pass lightly by talking to Mrs. Boncassen. He had been so determined to accept Isabel with all her adjuncts that he had come almost to like Mrs. Boncassen, and would certainly have taken her part violently had anyone spoken ill of her in his presence. **But still it was not easy to talk to her for an hour.**

Then suddenly he found that the room was nearly empty. The Beeswaxes and the Gotobeds were gone; and at last the poet himself, with a final glare of admiration at Isabel, had taken his departure. When Silverbridge looked round, Isabel also was gone. Then too Mrs. Boncassen had left the room **as though but for a moment, going to the door as though she had meant to return, and then escaping** [suddenly]. At the same instant Mr. Boncassen entered by another door, and the two men were alone together. "My dear Lord Silverbridge," said the father, "I want to have a few words with you." **Silverbridge stood bolt upright, and then sat down again.** Of course there was nothing for him but to submit. "You remember what you said to me down at Matching?"

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"That also;—for there is no greater favour that I could do to any man than to give him my daughter. Nevertheless, you were doing me a great honour,—and you did it, as you do everything, with an honest grace that went far to win my heart. I am not at all surprised, sir, that you should have won hers." The young man as he heard this could only blush and look foolish. "If I know my girl neither your money nor your title would go for anything. **I have always felt that manly earnestness with outside grace would prevail with her,—if anything ever did prevail.**"

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"But love, my Lord, may be a great misfortune." As he said this the tone of his voice was altered, and there was a melancholy solemnity not only in his words but in his countenance. "I take it that young people when they love rarely think of more than the present moment. **It is not perhaps natural that they should contemplate all the vicissitudes of a joint life.** If they did so the bloom would be gone from their romance. But others have to do this for them. If Isabel had come to me saying that she loved a poor man, there would not have been much to disquiet me. A poor man may earn bread for himself and his wife[,]**,—the happiest lot which a man can have.** And if he failed I could have found them bread. Nor, had she loved somewhat below her own degree, should I have opposed her. So long as her husband had been an educated man, there might have been no future punishment to fear."

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"But you can't give her a parentage fit for a duchess[;—]**," he continued, not noting the interruption,—"**not fit at least in the opinion of those with whom you will pass your life, with whom,—or **rather** perhaps without whom,—she will be destined to pass her life if she becomes your wife. **It does not matter whether I may think it fit.** Unfortunately it does not suffice that **even** you should think it fit. Though you loved each other as well as any man and woman that ever were brought into each other's arms by the beneficence of God, you cannot **make each other happy,—you at least cannot** make her happy,—unless you can ensure her the respect of those around her."

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"Her conduct,—yes. I think the world, your world, would learn to do that. I do not think it could help itself. But that would not suffice. I may respect the man who **makes** [cleans] my boots**,—or him who cleans them**. But he would be a wretched man if he were thrown on me for society. I would not give him my society. Will your duchesses and your countesses give her theirs?"

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"Yes, yes, yes," said Silverbridge, hardly himself knowing why he became impetuous **at the moment**.

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"I will not say that they are, but I do not know. Having Anglican tendencies I have been wont to contradict my countrymen when they have told me of the narrow exclusiveness of your nobles. **Having come here and been received here with open arms,** having found your nobles and your commoners all alike in their courtesy,—which is a cold word; in their hospitable friendships,—I would now not only contradict but would laugh to scorn any such charge,"—so far he spoke somewhat loudly, and then dropped his voice as he concluded,—"were it anything less than the happiness of my child that is in question."

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"You are a fine fellow. I was going to say that I wished you were an American, so that Isabel need not lose you. But, my boy, I have told you that I do not know how it might be. Of all whom you know, who could best tell me the truth on such a subject? Who is there whose age will have given him experience, whose rank will have made him familiar with this matter, who from friendship to you would be least likely to decide against your wishes, who from his own native honesty would be most sure to tell the truth? **Can you name such a man to whom I may trust for an opinion?**"

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"I do mean your father. **He must know, and,** happily**,** he **seemed to have** [has] taken no dislike to the girl herself. I have seen enough of him to feel sure that he is devoted to his own children."

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"A just and a liberal man;—one I should say not carried away by prejudices!" **Here Silverbridge put up his hand and passed it uneasily backwards and forwards across his head. He did not feel so certain as to that absence of all prejudice on the part of his father.** "Well;—my girl and I have just put our heads together, and we have come to a conclusion. If the Duke of Omnium will tell us that she would be safe **here** as your wife,—safe from the contempt of those around her,—you shall have her. And I shall rejoice to give her to you, not because you are Lord Silverbridge, not because of your rank and wealth; but because you are—that individual human being whom I now hold by the hand."

When the American had come to an end **of what he had to say**, Silverbridge was too much moved **and too deeply concerned** to make **him** any immediate answer. He had an idea in his own mind that the appeal was not altogether fair. His father was **no**

doubt a just man,—just, affectionate, and liberal. But then it will so often happen that fathers do not want their sons to marry those very girls on whom the sons have set their hearts. **In this case there was that additional difficulty about Lady Mabel! He could not tell the story to Mr. Boncassen. He could not explain that before he had really known his own mind he had thought of marrying the daughter of Lord Grex. The story would not have recommended itself to Isabel's father. But if properly understood it would have gone to show that his father might have a reason of his own for opposing this marriage,—which reason, however, would have been a very bad reason. But** he could only say that he would speak to his father again on the subject. "Let him tell me that he is contented," said Mr. Boncassen, "and I will tell him I am contented. **If it does not suit him to come to me, I will willingly go to him. And** now, my friend, good-bye." Silverbridge **asked piteously** [begged] that he might be allowed to see Isabel before he was turned out; but Isabel had left the house in company with her mother.

Chapter 71, *"What Am I to Say, Sir?"*

When Lord Silverbridge left Mr. Boncassen's house **after his lunch banquet on Sunday afternoon,** he was resolved to go to his father without an hour's delay and represent to the Duke exactly how the **whole** case stood. **This he would do with all the powers of supplication which were at his command.** He would be urgent, piteous, submissive, and eloquent. In any other matter he would promise to make whatever arrangements his father might desire**,—or if sacrifices were necessary, whatever sacrifices;—by which latter assurance to himself he intended to signify that he would be ready to tell his constituents that they must either allow him to sit as a Liberal or to vacate the seat**. He would make his father understand that all his happiness depended on this marriage[.]**, that it was everything to him; that, having** [When once] married**,** he would settle down, even at Gatherum Castle if the Duke should wish it;—that as a married man he would not think of race-horses, that he would desert the Beargarden, that he would learn blue-books by heart, and only do as much shooting and hunting as would become a young nobleman in his position. All this he would say as eagerly and as pleasantly as it might be said. But he would add to all this an assurance of his unchangeable intention. It was his purpose to marry Isabel Boncassen. If he could do this with his father's good-will,—so best. But at any rate he would marry her! **How this was to be done in the teeth of what Mr. Boncassen had said to him he had not as yet**

made up his mind; but he had distant ideas of a temporary but prolonged emigration to the United States in case he should be driven to emergencies. He conceived that neither Isabel nor her father would be able to withstand such a test of his love; and he also, perhaps, conceived that a father, with a father's usual weakness, would yield rather than succumb to so great an evil. The system of primogeniture, which is salutary to the prosperity and permanence of the country at large, is sometimes detrimental to the authority of fathers;—a fact of which elder sons become aware at an early age. When a most respectable and very Protestant Irish nobleman had positively refused to pay his son's debts for the third or fourth time, he was reduced to compliance by a threat on his son's part of conversion to the Church of Rome. There was perhaps some malice in this; whereas Silverbridge certainly bore no malice against his father. But he was determined that Isabel Boncassen should be his wife.

On that Sunday afternoon when the fever heat of his love was upon him, he went at once in search of his father; but unluckily the Duke was not to be found. At the house it was only known that he was dining out. On the following morning, though the lover's ardour was not diminished, his discretion was increased. This thing which he had to do was difficult, and he was not now so sure of his eloquence as when he had just left Mr. Boncassen's house. Might it perhaps be better that he should write a letter? He absolutely did write a letter in which, to the best of his abilities, he poured out all his heart and all his wishes. But, when it was written, he found that his father had left town. No notice had been left for him as to the Duke's departure; but the butler had understood from the Duke's own man that the Duke had gone with Mr. Monk down to Longroyston. Now Longroyston was the country seat of the Duke of St. Bungay; and it was manifest to Silverbridge that such a journey at such a time of year to such a place with such a companion could have been made only in reference to political expectations. Under these circumstances he did not send his letter, but again changed his mind, resolving that he would await his father's return.

The world at the time was altogether busy with political rumours; and it was supposed that Sir Timothy Beeswax would do something very clever. It was supposed also that he would sever himself **at any rate** from some of his present companions. On that point everybody was agreed,—and on that point only everybody was right. Lord Drummond, who was the titular Prime Minister, and Sir Timothy had, during a considerable part of the last session, and through the whole vacation, so belauded each other in all their public expressions that it was quite manifest that they had quarrelled.

When any body of statesmen make public asseverations, by one or various voices, that there is no discord among them, not a dissentient voice on any subject, people are apt to suppose that they cannot hang together much longer. It is the man who has no peace at home that declares abroad that his wife is an angel. He who lives on comfortable terms with the partner of his troubles can afford to acknowledge the ordinary rubs of life. Old Mr. Mildmay, who was Prime Minister for so many years, and whom his party worshipped, used to say that he had never found a gentleman who had quite agreed with him all round; but Sir Timothy has always been in exact accord with all his colleagues,—till he has left them, or they him. Never had there been such concord as of late,—and men, clubs, and newspapers now predicted that as a natural consequence there would soon be a break-up.

But not on that account would it perhaps be necessary that Sir Timothy should resign,—or **at any rate** not necessary that his resignation should be permanent. The Conservative majority had dwindled,—but still there was **supposed to be** a majority. It certainly was the case that Lord Drummond could not get on without Sir Timothy. **No one supposed that he would attempt to do so.** But might it not be possible that Sir Timothy should get on without Lord Drummond? If so he must begin his action in this direction by resigning. He would have to place his resignation, no doubt with infinite regret, in the hands of Lord Drummond. But if such a step were to be taken now, just as Parliament was about to assemble, what would become of the Queen's speech, of the address, and of the noble peers and noble and other commoners who were to propose and second it in the two Houses of Parliament? There were those who said that such a trick played at the last moment would be very shabby. But then again there were those who foresaw that the shabbiness would be made to rest anywhere rather than on the shoulders of Sir Timothy. If it should turn out that he had striven manfully to make things run smoothly**, and had only given way at last when his conscience and his loyalty were no longer comfortable;—if it should turn out that anyone was in fault rather than Sir Timothy**;—that the Premier's incompetence, or the Chancellor's obstinacy, or this or that Secretary's peculiarity of temper had done it all;—might not Sir Timothy then be able to emerge from the confused flood, and swim along pleasantly with his head higher than ever above the waters?

In these great matters parliamentary management goes for so much! If a man be really clever and handy at his trade, if he can work hard and knows what he is about, if he can give and take and be not thin-skinned or sore-boned, if he can ask pardon for a peccadillo and seem to be sorry with a good grace, if above all things he be able to surround himself with the prestige of success, then so much will be forgiven him! Great

gifts of eloquence are hardly wanted, or a deep-seated patriotism which is capable of strong indignation. A party has to be managed, and he who can manage it best, will probably be its best leader. The subordinate task of legislation**, if there must be legislation,** and of executive government**,** may well fall into the inferior hands of less astute practitioners. It was admitted on both sides that there was no man like Sir Timothy for managing the House or **for** coercing a party, and there was therefore a general feeling that it would be a pity that Sir Timothy should be squeezed out. He knew all the little secrets of the business;—could **always** arrange, let the cause be what it might, to get a full House for himself and his friends, and empty benches for his opponents,—could foresee a thousand little things to which even a Walpole would have been blind, which a Pitt would not have condescended to regard, but with which his familiarity made him a very comfortable Leader of the House of Commons **for those who chose to go along with him**. There were various ideas prevalent as to the politics of the coming session; but the prevailing idea was **probably** in favour of Sir Timothy.

The Duke was [at Longroyston, the seat of his old political ally the Duke of St. Bungay, and had been] absent from Sunday the 6th till the morning of Friday the 11th, on which day Parliament was to meet. On that morning at about noon a letter came to the son saying that his father had returned and would be glad to see him **if he were disengaged**. Silverbridge too was **of course** going to the House on that day and was not without his own political anxieties. If Lord Drummond remained in, he thought that he must, **at any rate** for the present, stand by the party which he had adopted. If, however, Sir Timothy should become Prime Minister there would be a loophole for escape. There were some three or four besides himself who detested Sir Timothy, and in such case **he thought that** he might perhaps have company in his desertion. All this was on his mind; but through all this he was aware that there was a matter of much deeper moment which required his energies. When his father's message was brought to him**, and he thus heard of his father's return,** he told himself at once that now was the time for his eloquence.

"Well, Silverbridge," said the Duke, "**and** how are matters going on with you?" There seemed to be something in his father's manner more than ordinarily jocund and good-humoured**,—as it might have been had he heard that Sir Timothy had been banished into private life for ever**.

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"I can't be discreet, sir, because I don't know anything about him. **I suppose you have, all of you, been arranging something.**"

"No; indeed. We have been discussing matters which do not as yet seem to admit of any arrangement. So your friend Lord Nidderdale seconds the address."

"Two hours after I had written my refusal he had the offer brought to him in my presence. That was droll."

"I hope you had not told him."

"He had heard all about it. But that would not worry him, sir. He has no conceit of that kind."

"When I heard **afterwards**," said the Duke smiling, "of your being in close conference with Sir Timothy——"

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"What was he talking about?" said Silverbridge. All his preparations, all his eloquence, all his method, now seemed to have departed from him. **He knew that that one peculiar subject must be discussed now, at this moment; but he could not stop to think how he might best word his request. He felt sure that it had been discussed already between his father and Mr. Boncassen. The fact that the American had come out of his way would never have been mentioned to him had there not been some such cause. But he could form no judgment from his father's manner of the result of that conversation.**

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"He had told me that he wanted to see you. **I should have asked you to go to him, but when I inquired for you, you had left town.** What did he say, sir?"

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The [great] subject had come up so easily, so readily[,]**,—this question as to which he had thought that it must be introduced by him with the greatest care,—** that he was almost aghast when he found himself in the middle of it **before it had been introduced at all**. And yet he must speak on the matter, and that at once. **He paused, expecting that his father would probably tell him what reply had been made to Mr. Boncassen; but the Duke seemed to think that it was now his son's turn to make some remark.**

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"The objection came mainly from him; and I am bound to say that every word that fell from him was spoken with **great good sense** [wisdom]."

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"By no means. **He made no request to me of any kind.** He told me his opinion,—and then he asked me a question."

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"If there were **any** probability that his daughter would not be well received as your wife. Then he asked me what would be my reception of her." Silverbridge looked up into his father's face with beseeching, imploring eyes as though everything now depended on the few next words that he might utter. "I shall think it an **unfortunate** [unwise] marriage," continued the Duke. Silverbridge when he heard this at once knew that he had gained his cause. His father had spoken of the marriage as a thing that was to happen**, a thing which, not might be, but which was in the future**. A joyous light dawned in his eyes, and the look of pain went from his brow, all which the Duke was not slow to perceive. "I shall think it an **unfortunate** [unwise] marriage," he continued, repeating his words; "but I was bound to tell him that were Miss Boncassen to become your wife she would also become my daughter."

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"I told him why the marriage would be distasteful to me. Whether I may be wrong or right I think it to be for the good of our country, for the good of our order, for the good of our **own** individual families, that we should support each other by marriage. It is not as though we were a narrow class, already too closely bound together by family alliances. The room for choice might be wide enough for you without going across the Atlantic to look for her who is to **preside over your home, and** be the mother of your children."

"It was she that came. I did not go."

"It is the same. 8 To this Mr. Boncassen replied that he was bound to look solely to his daughter's happiness**,—and to yours, of course, as bound up with hers**."

"Of course it will be, sir."

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"**That is a very strong word.** I like her. I like her very much."

"I am so glad!" **shouted Silverbridge.**

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"Oh, no!" The idea of rejecting Isabel! **Had he not already seen enough of her to know that, go where she might, she would be the chosen companion of all with whom she chose to associate?**

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"I think it will be just the other way up, sir,—among the men. **I don't know what the women may say.**"

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"What am I to say, sir?" exclaimed Silverbridge, almost in despair. "When I love the girl better than my life, and when you tell me that she can be mine if I choose to take her; when I have asked her to be my wife, and have got her to say that she likes me; when her father has given way, and all the rest of it, would it be possible that I should say now that I will give her up? **What would you think of it yourself? Is it not impossible?**"

"My opinion is to go for nothing,—in anything!" The Duke as he said this knew that he was expressing aloud a feeling which should have been restrained within his own bosom. It was natural that there should have been such plaints. The same suffering must be encountered in regard to Tregear and his daughter. In every way he had been thwarted. In every direction he was driven to yield. **In all that he had done he had been tender-hearted, honest, and forbearing. In what had he ever consulted pleasures or even tastes of his own?** And yet now he had **to undergo rebuke,** to undergo deserved rebuke from his own son, because one of these inward plaints would force itself from his lips. Of course this girl was to be taken in among the Pallisers and treated with an **almost** idolatrous love,—as perfect as though "all the blood of all the Howards" were running in her veins. What further inch of ground was there for a fight? And if the fight were over, why should he rob his boy of one sparkle from off the joy of his triumph? Silverbridge was now standing before him abashed by that plaint, inwardly sustained no doubt by the conviction of his great success, but subdued by his father's wailing. "However,—perhaps we had better let that pass," said the Duke, with a long sigh. Then Silverbridge took his father's hand, and looked up in his face. "I most sincerely hope that she may make you a good and loving wife," said the Duke, "and that she may do her duty by you in that not **very** easy sphere of life to which she will be called."

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"**I am bound to say that** what I have seen of her personally recommends her to me," said the Duke. "Some girls are fools——"

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"Who think that the world is to be nothing but **laughing,** dancing, and going to parties."

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"But there is one thing, Silverbridge," said the Duke very gravely, "which I cannot understand. I hope you will give me credit for a desire to make you happy."

"Indeed I do."

"And that you do not think that I would willingly say a word to trouble you. What am I to understand about Lady Mabel?" Upon hearing Lady Mabel's name Silverbridge looked rather blank. "It was you yourself who suggested it."

"I thought I had explained all that, sir."

"It is a pity that you should have spoken to me, as you did last year. I am afraid she will have been made to suffer." There was, however, nothing more to be said upon that less fortunate branch of the subject; and as Silverbridge was dumb the father did not press it.

"And now," said the Duke, looking at his watch, "we might as well have lunch and go down to the House. I will walk with you if you please. It will be about time for each of us." Then the son was forced to go down and witness the somewhat faded ceremony of seeing Parliament opened by three lords sitting in commission before the throne. Whereas but for such stress as his father had laid upon him, he would have disregarded his parliamentary duties and have rushed at once up to Brook Street **with the good news**. As it was he was so handed over from one political pundit to another, was so buttonholed by Sir Timothy, so chaffed as to the address by Phineas Finn, and at last so occupied with the whole matter that he **found himself** [was] compelled to sit in his place till he had heard Nidderdale make his speech. This the young Scotch Lord did so well, and received so much praise for the doing of it, and looked so well in his uniform, **and was altogether so great a man on the occasion,** that Silverbridge almost regretted the opportunity he had lost. **And then, when Mr. Monk got up to give his reasons for not opposing the address at the present moment, following as he did so Sir Timothy, who had been eloquent, good-humoured, and enigmatic,—for up to this moment the expected rupture had not taken place,—Silverbridge heard him to the end. The**

crisis was an interesting one, and Isabel would be more probably at home at half-past six than at half-past five.

At seven the sitting was over, the speeches, though full of interest, having been shorter than usual. They had been full of interest, but nobody understood in the least what was going to happen. "I don't know anything about the Prime Minister," said Mr. Lupton as he left the House with our hero and another not very staunch supporter of the government, "but I'll back Sir Timothy to be the Leader of the House on the last day of the session,—against all comers. I don't think it much matters who is Prime Minister nowadays." **In the evening that was the opinion at most of the political clubs.**

At half-past seven Silverbridge was at the door in Brook Street. Yes; Miss Boncassen was at home. The servant thought that she was upstairs dressing. Then Silverbridge**, who had by this time called at the house often enough to be very well known to all the servants,** made his way without further invitation into the drawing-room. There he remained alone for ten minutes. At last the door opened, and Mrs. Boncassen entered. "Dear, dear, Lord Silverbridge, who ever dreamed of seeing you? I thought all you Parliament gentlemen were going through your ceremonies. Isabel had a ticket, and went down, and saw your father."

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"That might be awkward,—particularly as I doubt whether anybody knows what theatre they are gone to. Can I receive a message for her, my Lord?" This was certainly not what Lord Silverbridge had intended[.]**,—to send the last loving word which was to settle everything between them as a message by her father!** "You know, perhaps, that I have seen the Duke."

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"That is the only message she will want to hear when she comes home. She is a happy girl, and I am proud to think that I should live to call such a grand young Briton as you my son-in-law. **I like all that I have seen of you, sir, and I think that she is a lucky girl.**" Then the American took the young man's two hands and shook them cordially, while Mrs. Boncassen bursting into tears insisted on kissing **his forehead** [him].

"Indeed she is a happy girl," said she; "but I hope Isabel won't be carried away too high and mighty." **Lord Silverbridge as he went away to dine at his club was not quite contented with the results of the evening.**

Chapter 72, *Carlton Terrace*

Three days after this**, on the Sunday afternoon,** it was arranged that Isabel should be taken to Carlton Terrace to be accepted there into the full good graces of her future father-in-law, and to go through the pleasant ceremony of seeing the house in which it was to be her destiny to live as mistress. What can be more interesting to a girl than this first visit to her future home? **Some matter-of-fact critic will say that the first word of assurance from the man who is to give her the home must be much more interesting. No doubt. The man is more than the house,—or ought to be; as heaven is,—or ought to be,—more than earth. But among earthly things, of all mere material comforts, the house to the woman must stand first. It is to be the scene of her joys, her labours, and her troubles. To a man his house is, comparatively, but as a kennel to a dog. It is a convenience and he likes to have it well arranged. But to the woman it is a temple sacred to the gods;—her own temple sacred to her own gods. And then the change to be made is so great,—so sudden! Hitherto she has probably had other shrines, her own sacred places, her own Penates,—which she has shared with her mother; which have grown into her heart, unconsciously, from early years; which she has loved without knowing that she has loved them,—and which now must be her own no longer! These new altars are to be prepared for her with all a lover's care, and are to be doubly dear to her because they are to be given to her by her lover. But everything will be strange to her, and though it is probable that her taste may be consulted, she will be too abashed by the novelty of her position to do much more than assent to all that he proposes. There can be no corner in the house, no closet, no little coign of vantage or of discomfort, no charm of colour, no dark receptacle for hidden properties, which will not have an interest of its own. Every chair and every table has to be a friend,—or perhaps an enemy. There will be no morsel of china, no little gilded ornament, no book, no domestic article with which it will not be her duty and her delight to become familiar. Everything must be of moment, either to please or to displease.**

And now Isabel Boncassen was to make her first visit to the house in Carlton Terrace, which the Duke had already declared his purpose of surrendering to the young couple. She was going among very grand things,—so grand that those whose affairs in life are less magnificent may think that her mind should have soared altogether above chairs and tables, and reposed itself among diamonds, gold and silver ornaments, rich necklaces, the old masters, and alabaster statuary. But dukes and duchesses must sit upon

chairs,—or at any rate on sofas,—as well as their poorer brethren, and probably have the same regard for their comfort. Isabel **at any rate** was not above her future furniture, or the rooms that were to be her rooms, or the stairs which she would have to tread, or the pillow on which her head must rest. She had never yet seen even the outside of the house in which she was to live, and was now prepared to make her visit with as much enthusiasm as though her future abode was to be prepared for her in a small house in a small street beyond Islington.

But the Duke was no doubt more than the house, the father-in-law more than the tables. Isabel, in the ordinary way of society, had already known him **with quite as close an intimacy as will generally take place between a host and one of his younger guests,—for her host had distinguished her by his personal attention** [almost with intimacy]. She, the while, had been well aware that if all things could possibly be made to run smoothly with her, this lordly host, who was so pleasantly courteous to her, would become her father-in-law. But she had known also that he, in his courtesy, had been altogether unaware of any such intention on her part, and that she would now present herself to him in an aspect very different from that in which she had hitherto been regarded. She was well aware that the Duke had not wished to take her into his family,—would not himself have chosen her for his son's wife. She had seen enough to make her sure that he had even chosen another bride for his heir. She had been **quite clever enough** [too clever not] to perceive that Lady Mabel Grex had been not only selected,—but almost accepted as though the thing had been certain. She had learned nearly the whole truth from Silverbridge, who was not good at keeping a secret from one to whom his heart was open. That story had been all but read by her with exactness. "I cannot lose you now," she had said to him, leaning on his arm;—**this had occurred since that evening on which she had so wickedly taken herself off to the theatre with Mrs. Montacute Jones—**"I cannot afford to lose you now. But I fear that someone else is losing you." To this he answered nothing, but simply pressed her closer to his side. "Someone else," she continued, "who perhaps may have reason to think that you have injured her." "No," he said boldly; "no; there is no such person." For he had never ceased to assure himself that in all that matter with Mabel Grex he had been guilty of no treachery. There had been a moment, indeed, in which she might have taken him; but she had chosen to let it pass from her. All of which,—or nearly all of which,—Isabel now saw, and had seen also that the Duke had been a consenting party to that other arrangement. She had reason therefore to doubt the manner of her acceptance. **How could it be that such a one as the Duke of Omnium should receive her into his house with real good-will!**

But she had been accepted. She had made such acceptance by him a stipulation in her acceptance of his son. She was sure of the ground on which she trod and was determined to carry herself, if not with pride, yet with **personal** dignity. There might be difficulties before her, but it should not be her fault if she were not as good a countess, and,—when time would have it so,—as good a duchess as another.

The visit **at last** was made not quite in the fashion which Silverbridge himself had wished. His idea had been to call for Isabel in his cab and take her down to Carlton Terrace. "Mother must go with me," she had said. Then he looked very blank,—as he could look when he was disappointed, as he had looked when she would not talk to him at the lunch, when she told him that it was not her business to entertain him. "Don't be selfish," she added, laughing. "Do you think that mother will not want to have seen the house that I am to live in**, and to feel that she knows something of my whereabouts**?"

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When they arrived Silverbridge was there **to help them out of the carriage**, and led them first of all into the dining-room. "My!" said Mrs. Boncassen, as she looked around her. "I thought that our Fifth Avenue parlours whipped everything,—in the way of city houses."

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"It's a beastly great barrack," said Silverbridge;—"but the best of it is that we never use it. We'll have a cosy little place for Darby and Joan;—you'll see.**"** **Then he at once led her away to her destiny. "**Now come to the governor. I've got to leave you with him."

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"And now let me say some few words to you,—only let there be no bitterness in them to your young heart. When I say that I take you to my heart you may be sure that I do so thoroughly**,—without any inward drawback**. You shall be as dear to me and as near as though you had been all English."

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"I know that you have always been **very, very** good to me."

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"I am glad of that."

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"Why not? Or is it only because you are younger?"
"There is something in that I suppose."
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"Yes," she said, "but the higher you put your foot on the ladder the more constant should be your thought that your stepping requires care. I **almost** fear that I am climbing too high."

Chapter 73, *"I Have Never Loved You"*

It was now nearly the end of February and Silverbridge had [now] been in town three or four weeks[,]**.** [and] Lady Mabel Grex had also been in London all that time, **as he was well aware;** and yet he had not seen her. **They certainly had not parted as enemies, though their last interview had been of such a nature as hardly to admit of an immediate renewal of friendship.** She had told him that she loved him and had asked him plainly to make her his wife. He had told her that he could not **and would not** do so,—that he was altogether resolved to make another woman his wife. Then she had rebuked him, and had demanded from him how he had dared to treat her as he had done. His conscience was clear. He had his own code of morals as to such matters, and had, as he regarded it, kept within the law. But she thought that she was badly treated[,]**;—or at any rate had not scrupled to say that she thought so. And then, when he had told her that he was quite resolved,—that his destiny in regard to marriage was fixed,—she** [and] had declared that she was now left out in the cold for ever through his treachery. Then her last word had been almost the worst of all, "Who can tell what may come to pass?"—showing too plainly that she would not even now give up her hope. **In such circumstances as these, though he was still anxious to regard her as a friend, he could hardly go to see her. Of what could he talk to her,—he whose mind was now full only of Isabel Boncassen?**

But she thought differently,—so differently that before the month was up she wrote to him as follows:

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"Why do you not come and see me? Are friends so plentiful with you, that one so staunch as I may be thrown aside **as unnecessary**? But of course I know why you do not come. Put all that aside,—and come. I **certainly** cannot hurt you**, nor will you hurt me**. I have learned to feel that certain things which the world regards as too awful to be talked of,—except in the way of scandal,—**such as the unfortunate aspirations of unfortunate maidens,** may be discussed and then laid aside just like other subjects. What though I wear a wig or a wooden leg, I may still be fairly comfortable among my companions unless I crucify myself by trying to hide my misfortune. It is not the presence of the skeleton that crushes us,—not even that will hurt us much, if we let him go about the house as he lists. It is the everlasting effort which the horror makes to peep out of his cupboard in which we so vainly try to hide him that robs us of our ease. **When all who know me know all my little troubles, then I think I shall be, not happy, but comfortable.** At any rate come and see me.

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He **very much** wished that she had not written. Of course he must go to her. And though there was a word or two in her letter which angered him, his feelings towards her were kindly. Had not that American angel flown across the Atlantic to his arms he could have been well content to make her his wife. **He would tell himself that over and over again, even now!** But an interview at the present moment could hardly be other than painful. She could, she said, talk of her own misfortunes[,]**,—that is of her disappointed love for himself,—**but the subject would be very painful to him. It was not to him **exactly** a skeleton, to be locked out of sight; but it had been a misfortune, and the sooner that such misfortunes could be **buried and** forgotten the better.

And then he was also angry with her. He knew what she meant about trumpeters. **So at least he told himself.** She had intended to signify that Isabel in her pride had boasted of her matrimonial prospects. Of course there had been trumpets. Are there not always trumpets when a marriage is contemplated magnificent enough to be called an alliance? As for that he himself had blown the trumpets. **Asserting to himself in his own fashion that "secrets are beastly bothers,"** he had told everybody that he was going to be married to Miss Boncassen. Isabel had blown no trumpets. In her own straightforward way she had told the truth to whom it concerned. Of course he would go and see Lady Mabel, but he trusted that for her own sake nothing would be said about trumpets. **He would be very gentle, very courteous, very kind, so long as no word was said imputing fault to Isabel.**

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"**What was it then? And** why [then] did you not come?"

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"That is honest at any rate. You felt that I must be too much ashamed of what I said **when we were last together** to be able to look you in the face."

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"**No;—not exactly, but very nearly.** Any other man would have felt the same, but no other man would be honest enough to tell me so. I do not think that ever in your life you have constrained yourself to the civility of a lie."

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"Do. It was not intended for the partner of your future joys. As I told you then I can talk freely**, at any rate to you, about all that there has been between us**. Why not? We know it,—both of us. How your conscience may be, I cannot tell; but mine is**,—no, not clear; but** clear from that soil with which you think it should be smirched."

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"No such idea has ever crossed my mind. **It is not in my nature to think like that.**"

"But you have never told yourself of the encouragement which you gave me. **You have never said to yourself that it was because you had invited me to love you that I found myself driven to appeal to you when you told me that I was to be—abandoned.** Such condemnation as I have spoken of would have been just if my efforts had been sanctioned by no words, no looks, no deeds from you. Did you give me warrant for thinking that you were my lover?"

He did not know what to say to her. That theory by which he had justified himself **so completely** to himself seemed to fall away from him under her questioning. He could not now remember **what had been** his **very** words to her in those old days before Miss Boncassen had crossed his path; but he did know that **in that very room** he had once intended to make her understand that he loved her. She had not understood him;—or, understanding, had not accepted his words; and therefore he had thought himself free. But it now seemed that he had not been entitled so to regard himself. There she sat, looking at him, waiting for his answer; and he who had been so sure that he had

committed no sin against her, had not a word to say to her. **He could not assert that he had not given her the warrant of which she spoke.**

"I want your answer to that, Lord Silverbridge. I have told you that I would have no skeleton in the cupboard. Down at Matching, and before that at Killancodlem, I appealed to you, asking you to take me as your wife. **Did I not?**"

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"Altogether that! I will have nothing denied that I have done,—nor will I be ashamed of anything. I did do so[,—even after this infatuation]. **And I did it the second time, even after I had heard of this infatuation." Then he scowled at her because by that latter word she alluded to Isabel. But as Isabel was assuredly his own he did not find it necessary to interrupt her by a reproach. "**I thought then**," she continued, "**that one so volatile might perhaps fly back again."

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"You need trouble yourself with no assurances, my friend. Let us understand each other **at any rate as to that** [now]. I am not now supposing that you can fly back again. You have found your perch, and you must settle on it**,—which you will do** like a good domestic barn-door fowl." Again he scowled. If she were too hard upon him he would certainly turn upon her. "No; you will not fly back again now;—but was I, or was I not, justified when you came to Killancodlem in thinking that my lover had come there? **Are you not man enough to answer that for me?**"

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"**Just so.** I see all that. But we cannot both be justified. Did you mean me to suppose that you were speaking to me words in earnest when there,—sitting in that very spot,—you spoke to me of your love?"

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"Did you speak of your love! And now, Silverbridge,—for if there be an English gentleman on earth I think that you are one,—as a gentleman tell me this. Did you not even tell your father that I should be your wife?**" He was struck dumb by the question, but his face gave a true reply. "**I know you did."

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"Men such as you and he, who cannot even lie with your eyelids, who will not condescend to cover up a secret by a moment of feigned inanimation, have many voices**, and each as clear as the others**. He did tell me;—but he broke no confidence. He told me, but did not mean to tell me. Now you also have told me**,—so that all doubt is at an end**."

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"No; no; no!" It was because Isabel had not easily consented to such approaches! **He was sure of that.**

"Trifles such as these will do it;—and some such trifles**, I suppose,** have done it with you. It would be beneath me to make comparisons where I might seem to be the gainer. I **will** grant her beauty. She is very lovely. She has succeeded."

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"But—**at any rate, between you and me,** I am justified and you are condemned. Is it not so? Tell me like a man."

"You are justified **certainly**."

"And you are condemned? When you told me that I should be your wife, and then told your father the same story, **then I** was [I] **still** to think **that** it **was** all **to go for** [meant] nothing! Have you deceived me?"

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"And I fancy you have never known how much you bore about with you. Your modesty has been so perfect that you have never thought of yourself as more than other men. You have forgotten **that you carried with you such a prize of prizes;** that you have had in your hand the disposal to some one woman of a throne in Paradise."

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"But I did. Why should I tell falsehoods now? **Silverbridge,** I have determined that you should know everything,—but I could better confess to you my own sins when I had shown that you too have not been innocent. Not think of it! Do not men think of high titles and great wealth and power and place? And if men, why should not women? Do not men try to get them;—and are they not even applauded for their energy? A woman has but one way to try. I tried."

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"How shall I answer that without a confession which even I am not hardened enough to make? **Nor in confessing all the truth, as I would fain do, can I make you understand quite everything.** [In truth, Silverbridge,] I have never loved you."

He drew himself up slowly before he answered her, and **as he did so he** gradually assumed a look **and attitude** very different from that easy boyish smile **and gait** which were customary to him. "I am glad of that," he said **at last**.

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"You need have none. **I am telling you this in order that you should have none.** It was necessary to me that I should have my little triumph;—**so poor a triumph**! That I should show you that I knew how far you had wronged me. But now I wish that you should know everything. I have never loved you."

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"But I have liked you so well;—so much better than all others! A dozen men**, I suppose,** have asked me to marry them. And though they might be nothing till they made that request, then they became—things of horror to me. But you were not a thing of horror. I could have become your wife, and I think that I could have learned to love you."

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"**No doubt you think so,—and she no doubt thinks so.** I ought to say **that I think** so too; but I have a doubt. I should have liked to be Duchess of Omnium, and perhaps I might have fitted the place better than one who can as yet know but little of its duties or its privileges. I may perhaps think that that other arrangement would have been better even for you."

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"**You can be proud now when I seem to question the perfection of your goddess. I want you to know all that I had determined to do for you.** I should have married you without loving you, but I should have done so determined to serve you with a devotion which no woman who does love you will **perhaps** think necessary. I would have so done my duty that you should never **then** have guessed that my heart had been in the keeping of another man."

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"**Well;—**yes; of course. If there had been no other man, why not you? Am I so hard, do you think, that I can love no one? Are you not such a one that a girl would [naturally] love[,—] **down to the very ground—**were she not preoccupied? **To love a man seems to me to be so naturally the condition of a woman that I am lost in wonder when I see so many who love none.** That a woman should love seems as necessary as that a man should not."

"A man can love too**, I suppose**."

"No;—hardly. He can admire, and he can like, and he can fondle and be fond. He can admire, and approve, and, perhaps, worship. He can know of a woman that she is part of himself, the most sacred part, and therefore will protect her from the very winds. **She can be his Holy of Holies.** But all that will not make love. It does not come to a man that to be separated from a woman is to be dislocated from his very self. A man has but one centre, and that is himself. A woman has two. Though the second may never be seen by her, may live in the arms of another, may do all for that other that man can do for woman,—still, still, though he be half the globe asunder from her, still he is to her the half of her existence. If she really love there is, I fancy, no end of it. To the end of time I shall love Frank Tregear."

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"Who else? **You know enough of me at any rate to be sure that if there be any such man it must be he.**"

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"Of course he is. Why not;—to her or whomsoever else he might like best? He is as true I doubt not to your sister as you are to your American beauty,—or as you would have been to me had fancy held. **I used to think he loved me.** [He used to love me.]"

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"Always;—dear friends. And he would have loved me if a man were capable of loving. [But he could sever himself from me easily, just when he was told to do so.] **He can do better and can be a good husband,—which is what your sister will want. I thought too that I could perhaps make a good wife. When he broke himself from me so easily,—just in compliance with the first word spoken,—and sundered himself from me, just as Messrs. Smith and Brown may go apart from each other when their partnership no longer exists,** I thought that I could **perhaps** do the same. But I cannot. A jackal is born a jackal, and not a lion, and cannot help himself. So is a woman

born—a woman. There are clinging, parasite things which cannot but adhere, though they destroy themselves by adhering. **I have been such a thing.** Do not suppose that I take a pride in it. I would give one of my eyes to be able to disregard him."

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"Yes; time,—that brings wrinkles and rouge pots and rheumatism. Though I have so hated those men as to be unable to endure them, still I want some man's house, and his money**, and his carriages**,—some man's bread **and beef** and wine,—some man's jewels and titles and woods and parks and gardens;—if I can get them. Time can help a man in his sorrow. If he begins at forty to make speeches, or to win races, or to breed oxen, he can yet live a prosperous life. Time is but a poor consoler for a young woman who has to be married. **You will see perhaps now, my friend, that I was not altogether indifferent to your position as an eldest son. But you have escaped.**"

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"**There will be something between us which will not be common to her.** And surely you will not tell your sister!"

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"It is because you are so true that I have dared to trust you. I had to justify myself,—and then to confess. Had I at that one moment taken you at your word, you would never have known anything of all this. 'There is a tide in the affairs of men——!' But I let the flood go by! I shall not see you again now before you are married, but come to me afterwards. **Sometime, I dare say she and I may become friends.**" **Then he took his leave, almost without a word, and walked home, pondering what he had heard.**

Chapter 74, *"Let Us Drink a Glass of Wine Together"*

Silverbridge pondered it all much as he went home**,—so much that for the moment he forgot other things**. **It was Monday and he had intended to go down to the House as soon as he left Belgrave Square; but instead of doing so he turned up by the Duke of York's column to Carlton Terrace.** What a terrible story was this that he had heard! The horror to him was chiefly in this,—that she should yet be driven to marry some man without even fancying that she could love him**;—that she should have**

tried her hand upon him and that she had confessed that she must now seek some other victim, while she was conscious that her heart had been altogether given to Frank Tregear! And this was Lady Mabel Grex, who, on his own first entrance into London life, now not much more than twelve months ago, had seemed to him to stand above all other girls in beauty, charm, and popularity! **Poor Lady Mabel Grex!**

As he opened the door of the house with his latch-key, who should be coming out but Frank Tregear,—Frank Tregear with his arm in a sling **and various outward signs of bandages about him**, but still with an unmistakable look of general **prosperity and** satisfaction. "When on earth did you come up?" asked Silverbridge. Tregear told him that he had arrived **in London** on the previous evening from Harrington. "And why? **I don't suppose** the doctor would [not] have let you come if he could have helped it."

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"And what are you doing here?" **asked Silverbridge.**

"Well;—if you'll allow me I'll go back with you for a moment.**"** **Then they went together into the house. "**What do you think I have been doing?"

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"Yes, I have seen your sister**,—for a moment**. And I have done better than that. I have seen your father. Lord Silverbridge,—behold your brother-in-law."

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"I do. **The Duke has yielded,—not with the very best grace.**"

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"He made me understand by most unanswerable arguments that I had no business to think of such a thing**,—that I have not a leg to stand upon**. I did not fight the point with him,—but simply stood there, as conclusive evidence **that I had a leg** [of my business]. He told me that we should have nothing to live on unless he gave **me** [us] an income**, and that I had no right to expect him to give me anything**. I assured him that I would never ask him for a shilling. 'But I cannot allow her to marry a man without an income,' he said."

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"**I could only shrug my shoulders.** I had just two facts to go upon,—that I would not give her up and that she would not give me up. When I pointed that out he

tore his hair,—in a mild way, and said that he did not understand that kind of thing at all."

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"Of course he did. **When he consented to see me, that I knew was settled.** They say that when a king of old would consent to see a petitioner for his life, he was bound by his royalty to mercy. So it was with the Duke. Then, very early in the argument, he forgot himself, and called her—Mary. I knew he had thrown up the sponge then. **A father never calls his daughter Mary to the man he means to reject.**"

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"He asked me what were my ideas about life in general. I said that I thought Parliament was a good sort of thing,—that I was lucky enough to have a seat, and that I should take lodgings somewhere in Westminster till—— 'Till what?' he asked. 'Till something is settled,' I replied. Then he turned away from me and remained silent**, I suppose for a minute or two**. 'May I see Lady Mary?' I asked. 'Yes; you may see her,' he replied, as he rang the bell. Then when **he had sent his message and** the servant was gone, he stopped me. 'I love her too dearly to see her grieve,' he said. 'I hope you will show that you can be worthy of her.' Then I made some sort of protestation and went upstairs. While I was with Mary there came a message to me, telling me to come to dinner **to-day. Somebody will have to cut my food for me, but I shall come**."

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"But he may perhaps think that a little patience will do us good. You will have to soften him. **I suppose you will be a married man soon.**" Then Silverbridge told all that he knew about himself. He was to be married in May, was to go to Matching for a week or two after his wedding, was then to see the session to an end, and after that to travel with his wife in the United States **through the autumn**. "I don't suppose we shall be allowed to run about the world together so soon as that," said Tregear, "but I am too well satisfied with my day's work to complain. **Only remember this,—if you can put in a good word for me, do.**"

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"Oh dear no;—nor even that he meant to give her anything **further than I have told you**. I should not dream of asking a question about it. Nor when he makes any

proposition shall I think of having any opinion of my own. **I feel, you know, now, the disgrace of being a pauper.**"

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"I don't want him to make it very right."

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"**He will do at any rate as much as she wants.** My chief object, as regards him, is that he should not think that I have been looking after her money. Well; good-bye. I suppose we shall all meet at dinner."

So that was settled. There were two men to be made happy,—himself, and Frank Tregear; and two girls, also, were happy enough now,—his sister and Isabel. He flattered himself that Isabel was happy. But poor Mabel Grex! She could not be happy. She was altogether out in the cold! In the midst of his own joy, and even when startled by the sudden prosperity of his friend Tregear, he could not keep his mind from Mabel Grex. That her plight should be so wretched,—that she whom he had so nearly loved, whom he did regard with so dear a friendship, should be exempt from all their content, should be as it were left out from their festivities,—took away much from the thoroughness of his satisfaction. He and his friend Tregear were the heroes of the day; and it was through Tregear and through him that she had fallen to the ground. He had been wont to tell himself that he had committed no offence against her. But he could no longer comfort himself with that assurance. The very fact that she had found out that he and his father between them had at one time all but settled that she should be his wife seemed to cut that ground from under his feet. Poor Mabel Grex! It was, however, a great comfort to him that Isabel should have intervened just in time. Lady Mabel had many charms,—but there could be only one chief, one best, one loveliest of her sex!

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"I was going there, but I **just** met Tregear **by chance** at the door. **I thought he was still down at Lord Chiltern's."**

"I wish he were."

"Oh, sir!"

"Well;—what would you have me say?"

"He tells me you have accepted him for Mary. **If that be true, is he not better here?**"

"I wish that he had never been here. Do you think that a man can be thwarted in everything and not feel it? **I had set my mind to judge as best I could for the welfare of my children, and they have crossed me in everything.**"

"I thought—you had **quite** reconciled yourself—to Isabel."

"If it were that alone I could do so the more easily because personally she wins upon me. And this man too;—it is not that I find **any** fault with **him** himself."

"**You will find him to be** [He is] in all respects a high-minded gentleman."

"I hope so. **I do believe it.** But yet, had he a right to set his heart there, where he could make his fortune,—having none of his own?"

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"He should have thought of it. A man does not I suppose allow himself to love without any consideration of propriety. **He should have kept aloof from one so circumstanced.** You say that he is a gentleman**."**

"I certainly say that."

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"A gentleman should do more than not think of it. He should think that it shall not be so **with him**. A man should own his means or should earn them. **He should be beholden to no one for his bread.**"

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"Yes; **yes;** I know," said the Duke. "Such a doctrine nowadays is caviare to the general. One must live as others live around one, I suppose. **At any rate** I could not see her suffer. It was too much for me. When I became convinced that this was no temporary passion, no romantic idea which time **and other scenes** might banish, that she was of such a temperament that she could not change,—then I had to give way. **I have always to give way.** Gerald I suppose will bring me some kitchen-maid for his wife."

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"No;—I should not have said it to you. I beg your pardon, Silverbridge. **Isabel is certainly no kitchen-maid.**" Then he paused a moment, turning over certain thoughts within his own bosom. "Perhaps, after all, it is well that a **certain** pride of which I am conscious should be rebuked. And it may be that the rebuke has come in such a form that I should be thankful. I know that I can love Isabel."

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"And this young man has nothing that should revolt me. I think he has been wrong. But now that I have said it I will let all that pass from me. **I have told him that he shall have her, and I have made him welcome to my house.** He will dine with us to-day."

"So he has told me. Of course I shall come as soon as I can get away," said Silverbridge, looking as though he would be unable to neglect his legislative duties even for the sake of sitting by Isabel Boncassen at dinner. "I don't suppose they can be married as soon as we are," he added.

"I know nothing about that," said the Duke, "but I should think not."

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"Papa is so stern with me. Of course he has given way, and of course I am grateful. But he looks at me as though I had done something **wicked;—as though I were** to be forgiven."

"Take the good the gods provide you, Mary. That will all come right **very soon now**."

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"**Well!** That is a matter of opinion. How can I answer about you when I don't quite know whether I have done anything wrong or not myself? I am going to marry the girl I have chosen. That's enough for me."

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"We need not say anything about that. **I've got what I want, and you are to have what you want. Surely that ought to be enough.**"

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"I'll tell you what it is, Mary. You expect too much from him. **Of course** he has not had his own way with either of us, and of course he feels it. **They say that a conqueror always ought to be good-humoured. You are the conqueror here. If you are gentle with him now, he will very soon be gentle with you,—and with Tregear.**"

As Tregear had said, there was quite a family party **dining that day** in Carlton Terrace, though as yet the family was not **absolutely** bound together by family ties. All the Boncassens were there, the father, the mother, and the promised bride. Mr. Boncassen bore himself **perhaps** with more ease than anyone in the company, having at

his command a **certain** gift of manliness which enabled him to regard this marriage exactly as he would have done any other **with which, in regard to his daughter, he might have felt himself satisfied**. **Partly because rank was not much to him as an American, partly perhaps because it was not much to him as a man, he was not confounded by the success of his girl.** America was not so far distant but what he would be able to see **her** [his girl] occasionally. He liked the young man and he believed in the comfort of wealth. Therefore he was satisfied. But when the marriage was spoken of, or written of, as "an alliance," then he would say a hard word or two about dukes and lords in general. On such an occasion as this he **was able to be, and apparently** was**,** happy and at his ease.

So much **perhaps** could not be said for his wife, with whom the Duke**, as he gave her his arm to take her out to dinner,** attempted to place himself on terms of family equality. But in doing this he failed to hide the attempt even from her, and she broke down under it. Had he simply walked into the room with her as he would have done on any other occasion, and then remarked that the frost was **very** keen or the thaw **very** disagreeable, it would have been better for her. But when he told her that he hoped she would often make herself at home in that house, and looked, as he said it, as though he were asking her to take a place among the goddesses of Olympus, she was troubled as to her answer. "Oh, my Lord Duke," she said, "when I think of Isabel living here and being called by such a name it almost upsets me." **He smiled and endeavoured to say something good-natured, but it was too evident that she was "almost upset."**

Isabel had all her father's courage **and sureness of purpose**, but she was more sensitive; and though she would have borne her honours well, was **somewhat** oppressed by the feeling that the weight was too much for her mother. **She had known that a struggle would be necessary to enable her not to seem oppressed, to save her from an appearance of thinking rather of the position of the man she was to marry than of the man himself. No one would have known by her manner that she was not the daughter of some other English magnate, a girl of that class from which Silverbridge might have been expected to choose his wife; but, as it was,** she could not keep her ear from listening to her mother's words or her eye from watching her mother's motions. **There was in this nothing of shame.** She was prepared to carry her mother everywhere. "As other girls have to be taken with their belongings, so must I, if I be taken at all." This she had said plainly enough **both to the Duke and to Silverbridge,—if not in those very words, still in words which were sufficiently intelligible**. There should be no division between her and her mother. But still knowing that her mother was not quite at ease, she was hardly at ease herself.

Silverbridge came in at the last moment **just as the others had taken their seats**, and of course occupied a chair next to Isabel. As the House was sitting, **and as he had not gone down till late**, it was **of course necessary** [natural] that he should come up in a flurry. "I left Phineas," he said, "pounding away in his old style at Sir Timothy. By-the-bye, Isabel, you must come down some day and hear Sir Timothy badgered. I must be back again **I suppose** about ten. Well, Gerald, how are they all at Lazarus?" He made an effort to be free and easy, **and to whisper pleasant things to his sweet neighbour;** but even he soon found that it was an effort.

Gerald had come up from Oxford for the occasion **on purpose** that he might make acquaintance with the Boncassens. He had taken Isabel in to dinner, but had been turned out of **the** [his] place **he was about to occupy** when his brother came in. He had been a little confused by the first impression made upon him by Mrs. Boncassen, and had involuntarily watched his father. "Silver is going to have an odd sort of a mother-in-law," he said afterwards to Mary, who remarked in reply that this would not **much** signify, as the mother-in-law would **generally** be in New York.

Tregear's part was **one** very difficult to play. He could not but feel that though he had succeeded, **though he had been accepted,** still he was as yet looked upon askance. Silverbridge had told him that by degrees the Duke would be won round[,] **to gentleness and gracious courtesy, and** [but] that it was not to be expected that he should swallow at once all his regrets. The truth of this **was so plain that it** could not but be accepted. The immediate inconvenience, however, was not the less felt. **Nothing had on this occasion been said to the Boncassens as to his peculiar position in the family; but of course it was known to them through Silverbridge.** Each and everyone there knew the position of each and everyone;—but Tregear felt it difficult to act up to his. He could not play the well-pleased lover openly, as did Silverbridge. Mary herself was disposed to be very silent. The heart-breaking tedium of her dull life had been removed. Her determination had been rewarded. All that she had wanted had been granted to her, and she was happy. But she was not prepared to show off her happiness before **the Boncassens,—not even before her brothers** [others]. **Though she was proud of her lover, thinking him of course to be superior to all other men who had come in her way, yet** she was aware that she was **still** thought to have done evil by introducing him as her lover into her august family.

But it was the Duke who made the greatest efforts, and with the least success. He had told himself again and again that he was bound by every sense of duty to swallow all regrets. He had taken himself to task on this matter. He had done so even out loud to his son. **He had acknowledged that it was necessary that his pride should be rebuked.**

He had declared that he would "let it all pass from him." But who does not know how hard it is for a man in such matters to keep his word to himself? Who has not said to himself at the very moment of his own delinquency, "Now,—it is now,—at this very instant of time, that I should crush, and quench, and kill the evil spirit within me; it is now that I should abate my greed, or smother my ill humour, or abandon my hatred. It is now, and here, that I should drive out the fiend, as I have sworn to myself that I would do";—and yet has failed?

That it would be done, would be done at last, by this man was very certain**,—and also that it would be done quickly**. When Silverbridge assured his sister that "it would come all right very soon," he had understood his father's character. But it could not be completed quite at once. Had he been required to take Isabel only to his heart, it would have been comparatively easy. **So much indeed had been done.** There are men, who do not seem at first sight very susceptible to feminine attractions, who nevertheless are dominated by the grace of flounces, who succumb to petticoats unconsciously, and who are half in love with every woman merely for her womanhood. So it was with the Duke. He had given way in regard to Isabel with less than half the effort that Frank Tregear was likely to cost him. **And now had not Frank Tregear been at table, had he not felt himself compelled to acknowledge by the man's presence that the man had overcome him, he would have succeeded much better in talking easily with poor Mrs. Boncassen.**

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"I think that we shall beat Cambridge this year to a moral," said Gerald, who was sitting at the round table opposite to his father. Mr. Boncassen, who was next to him, **with the other brother on his right hand,** asked, in irony probably rather than in ignorance, whether the victory was to be achieved by mathematical or classical proficiency. Gerald turned and looked at him**, and then looked round the table**. "Do you mean to say that you have never heard of the University boat-races?"

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"Oh, indeed," said the Duke in a solemn, dry, funereal tone. And then all the little life which Gerald's remark about the boat-race had produced, was quenched at once. The Duke was not angry with Tregear for his little word of defence,—**and had no wish on the occasion to give special honour to American institutions;** but he was not able to bring himself into harmony with this one guest, and was almost savage to him without meaning it.

"I take it," said Mr. Boncassen, "that we are doing our best to copy you in most things." The Duke remarked that the justification of the United States was to be found in their avoidance of what were supposed to be English faults. "Nevertheless it is natural that we should copy even the faults. The healthy country gentleman who decries the fashionable absurdities of the city cannot save himself from their attraction. He ridicules you for dining at eight, but he allows his own hour to be gradually changed from five to six. We are becoming very English in our tastes."

"With a tendency to Parisian proclivities," said Tregear, who could not talk to Mary beside him, and was bound to assert his own position by a word or two now and then.

"I do like Paris," said Mrs. Boncassen.

"I hate it," said Silverbridge. "I never know what to do there."

"It is Paradise upon earth," said Isabel. "If I had my way I would live there always."

"What would you do?" asked her lover.

"Drive up and down the Champs Elysées, and wear the prettiest bonnet that the world could produce."

"The Parisians at any rate would be the gainers," said the Duke, striving to be gallant and pleasant. But even this was said in the same solemn voice, showing so plainly that his mind was elsewhere, and not at ease! He was continually asking himself why Destiny had been so hard upon him as to force him to receive there at his table as his son-in-law a man who was distasteful to him[.]**; why he should be compelled to take this man by the hand and make this man's fortune;—**and he was endeavouring to answer the question, **and to persuade** [taking himself to task and telling] himself that his destiny had done him no injury, **that his daughter had been entitled to please herself,** and that the pride which had been wounded was a false pride. He was making a brave fight; but during the fight he was hardly fit to be the genial **host and to shine as the happy** father and father-in-law of young people who were going to be married to one another. But before the dinner was over he made a great effort. "Tregear," he said,—and even that was an effort, for he had never hitherto mentioned the man's name without the formal Mister,—"Tregear, as this is the first time you have sat at my table, let me be old-fashioned and ask you to drink a glass of wine with me."

The glass of wine was drunk **of course,** and the ceremony afforded infinite satisfaction at least to one person there. Mary could not keep herself from some expression of joy by pressing her finger for a moment against her lover's arm. He,

though not usually given to such manifestations, blushed up to his eyes **as he acknowledged the Duke's courtesy**. But the feeling produced on the company was solemn rather than jovial. Everyone there understood it all. Mr. Boncassen could read the Duke's mind down to the last line. Even Mrs. Boncassen was aware that an act of reconciliation had been intended. "When the governor drank that glass of wine it seemed as though half the marriage ceremony had been performed," Gerald said to his brother that evening **after Tregear had left them**. When **the ceremony was over and** the Duke's glass was replaced on the table, he himself was conscious of the solemnity of what he had done, and was half ashamed of it. **It was not till afterwards that he could comfort himself by the reflection that though he had been perhaps almost ridiculous, still he had been honest and true to his purpose.**

When the ladies had gone upstairs the conversation became political and lively. The Duke could talk freely about the state of things to Mr. Boncassen, and was able gradually to include Tregear in the badinage with which he attacked the conservatism of his son. And so the half-hour passed well. Upstairs the two girls immediately came together, leaving Mrs. Boncassen to chew the cud of the grandeur around her in the sleepy comfort of an arm-chair **near the fire**. "And so everything is settled for both of us," said Isabel.

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"I hope,—I hope there has been nothing wrong,—that he has not been—anything that he ought not to have been."

"**I have known nothing.** It has never been more than a suspicion."

"**I don't think he has quite told me all. Perhaps he ought not to do so. At any rate I never ask him.** And why, when we were at Custins, did you not tell me about yourself?"

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"**I suppose** I can understand that. But is it not joyful that it should all be settled! Only poor Lady Mabel! You have got no Lady Mabel to trouble your conscience." From which it was evident that Silverbridge had not told all.

Upon the whole the evening's entertainment had been useful. There had no doubt been periods in which some of those assembled had found themselves to be uncomfortable; but when it was over, all those who were concerned felt that good results had been achieved.

Chapter 75, *The Major's Story*

By the end of March [Isabel was in Paris, whither she had forbidden her love to follow her.] **there was certainly no one in all the world who did not know both that Lord Silverbridge was going to be married to Isabel Boncassen and also that Frank Tregear had resolved all his difficulties and was to be made happy by the hand of Lady Mary Palliser. At this time Isabel herself was not in London, having gone for a few weeks with other Americans to Paris. She had thought that a short separation from her lover before her wedding would be good for him, and had insisted on absenting herself. He had rebelled and had threatened to follow her; but she at last had had her way, arguing, as she often did, that his time, his unlimited time for having his way, was fast coming.** Silverbridge was therefore reduced to the shifts of a bachelor's life, in which his friends seemed to think that he ought now to take special delight **as he would so soon be deprived of them**. Perhaps he did not take much delight in them. He was no doubt impatient to commence that steady married life for which he had prepared himself. But nevertheless, just at present, he lived a good deal at the Beargarden. Where was he to live? The Boncassens were in Paris, his sister was at Matching with a houseful of other Pallisers, and his father was again deep in politics. **He declared to one or two of his friends, to Tregear, to Lady Mabel Grex, and to Mrs. Finn that the Beargarden was the stupidest place he knew; but still he spent many of his hours there. When a marriage has been arranged there can be no doubt that as far as the man is concerned, it cannot take place too soon.**

Of course he was much in the House of Commons, but that also was stupid. Indeed everything would be stupid till Isabel came back. Perhaps dinner was more comfortable**,—what he would have called less stupid,—**at the club than at the House. And then, as everybody knew, it was a good thing to change the scene. Therefore he dined at the club, and though he would keep his hansom and go down to the House again in the course of the evening, he spent many long hours at the Beargarden. "There'll very soon be an end of this as far as you are concerned," said Mr. Lupton to him one evening as they were sitting in the smoking-room after dinner. **They were at the moment alone, having a corner of the room to themselves.**

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"No;—I was not thinking of Tifto. There were one or two here **at one time** who were quite as bad as Tifto. I wonder what has become of that poor devil."

"I don't know in the least. **I haven't seen him since that horrid day at Doncaster.** You heard of that row about the hounds?"

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"Gone to join those other fellows abroad I should say. Among them they got a lot of money,—as the Duke ought to remember. **There was quite enough for them all to live in what they would think luxury.**"

"He is not with them," said Silverbridge, as though he were in some degree mourning over the fate of his unfortunate friend. **"However it all was done, the poor devil didn't get his share of the plunder."**

*****

"Now it is all done and gone I own to a certain regard for the Major. He was true to me till he thought I snubbed him. I would not let him go down to Silverbridge with me **one day, and then I was angry with him when he asked to be introduced to the governor in the other room there**. I always thought that I drove the poor Major to his malpractices."

At this moment Dolly Longstaffe sauntered into the room and came up to them. It may be remembered that Dolly had **some few weeks since** declared his purpose of emigrating. As soon as he heard that the Duke's heir had serious thoughts of marrying the lady whom he loved **himself**, he withdrew at once from the contest, but, as he did so, he acknowledged **to himself** that there could be no longer a home for him in the country which Isabel was to inhabit as the wife of another man. Gradually, however, better thoughts had returned to him. **He had told himself that a man should never run away.** After all, what was she but a "pert poppet"? He determined that marriage "clips a fellow's wings confoundedly," and so he set himself **to work** to enjoy life after his old fashion. There was perhaps a little swagger as he threw himself into a chair and addressed the happy lover. **"Who do you think I've just seen, Silverbridge?"**

"I have not the least idea."

"I'll give you three guesses; and I'll give Lupton three."

"You are very kind," said Lupton, "but I won't take advantage of your good nature."

"I'll be shot if I didn't meet Tifto at the corner of the street **just now**."

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"Yes, Tifto. He looked awfully seedy, with a greatcoat buttoned up to his chin, a shabby hat and old gloves. **I caught him just under the lamp-post.**"

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The coincidence was declared to be very singular, in that they should have been talking about the man and that he should have been seen just at the same moment. Then nothing further was said **about him. But** [about the man, but] Silverbridge was uneasy and silent. When his cigar was finished he got up saying that he should go back to the House. As he left the club he looked about him as though expecting to see his old friend, and when he had passed through the first street and had got into the Haymarket there he was! The Major came up to him and, touching his hat, asked to be allowed to say a few words. "I don't think it can do any good," said Silverbridge**, walking on quickly**. The man had not attempted to shake hands with him, or affected familiarity; but seemed to be thoroughly humiliated. "I don't think I can be of any service to you, and therefore I had rather decline**,**" **said Silverbridge**.

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Then Silverbridge allowed himself to make an appointment **with the man for the next day**, and an hour was named at which Tifto might call in Carlton Terrace. **He repented himself that he had done so as soon as he was alone, and for a time had almost made up his mind that he would ask some friend, Mr. Lupton, probably, to be present at the interview. But he did not.** He felt that he almost owed some reparation to the wretched man,—whom he had unfortunately admitted among his friends, whom he had used, and to whom he had been uncourteous. **He did not think that there was anything to fear, and at last he resolved to see the Major alone.** Exactly at the hour named the Major was shown into his room.

Dolly had said that he was shabby,—but the man was altered rather than shabby. He still had rings on his fingers and studs in his shirt**sleeves**, and a jewelled pin in his cravat**,—as was to be seen when he opened his greatcoat**;[—]but he had shaven off his moustache and the tuft from his chin, and his hair had been cut short, and in spite of his jewellery there was a hang-dog look about him. "I've got something that I particularly want to say to you, my Lord." **These were his first words as soon as he had seated himself.** Silverbridge would not shake hands with him, but could not refrain from offering him a chair.

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"Yes; **I can say it now,**—but it isn't so very easy to be said. There are some things, though you want to say them ever so, you don't quite know how to do it."

"You have your choice, Major Tifto. You can speak or hold your tongue. **It isn't because I want anything from you that you are here. You understand that.**"

"I know that, my Lord." Then there was a pause, during which Silverbridge sat with his hands in his pockets trying to look unconcerned. "But if you've got it here, and feel it,—as I do,"—the poor man as he said this put his hand upon his heart,—"you can't sleep in your bed till it's out. I did that thing that they said I did."

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"Why, the nail! It was I lamed the horse**,—out of sheer villainy**."

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"I wish to do nothing **at all**. As far as I am concerned the matter is over. It made me sick of horses, and I do not wish **ever** to have to think of it again **if I can help it**."

"Nevertheless, my Lord, I've got to tell it. It was Green who put me up to it. **The man who calls himself Captain Green."**

"We all supposed so."

"He did it just for the plunder**,—that he and Villiers might have an opportunity of robbing you**. As God is my judge it was not for the money I did it."

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"It was the devil got hold of me, my Lord. Up to that I had always been square,—square as a die! I got to think that your Lordship was upsetting **to me,—that you didn't give me just as much credit as you ought to do**. I don't know whether your Lordship remembers, but you did put me down once or twice rather uncommon."

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"I don't say you was, my Lord. But I got a feeling on me that you wanted to get rid of me, and I all the time doing the best I could for the 'orses. I did do the best I could up to that very morning at Doncaster. Well;—it was Green put me up to it**, and arranged it all**. I don't say I was to get nothing; but it wasn't **to say** so much more than I could have got by the 'orse winning. And I've lost pretty nearly all that I did get!" **Lord Silverbridge shrugged his shoulders, not liking to say out loud that thieves can never make a good use of their plunder.** "Do you remember, my Lord,"—and now the Major sank his voice to a whisper,—"when I came up to your bedroom that morning?"

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"Yes, my Lord,—that's true. I ought to have sent your man in first**, but I was so flustered then, I could hardly think of things properly**. I came then**,—to tell your Lordship all about it;—**to confess it all, before it was done."

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"I was in their hands. And then you was so rough with me! **You was rough with me.**"

"I was certainly. I remember it well."

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"Green. **Green.** He's here. He doesn't think that I know, but I could lay my hand on him to-morrow."

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"I'll tell you what I'll do, my Lord. I'll go before any judge or magistrate or police-officer in the country and tell the truth. I won't ask even for a pardon **if they don't like to give it me**. They shall punish me and him too. I'm in that state of mind that any change would be for the better. But he,—he ought to have it heavy."

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"But the club, my Lord? The Jockey Club would take it up at once."

"**Not if I can prevent it.** Look here, Major Tifto. You have come here to confess that you have done me a great injury."

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"Tell me that, and I'll do it though I was to have to be hung for it."

"Hold your tongue about **all this** [it]. Let it be as a thing done and gone. The money has been paid. **The race has been lost.** The horse has been sold. The whole thing has **clean** gone out of my mind and I don't want to have it brought back again. **If I can forgive you, you can forgive the other man, and so let it go round.**"

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"It is a pity, but it cannot be helped. **Look here, Major Tifto;** I will have nothing further to do with it. Of course I cannot bind you, but I have told you my wishes." The

poor wretch was silent, but still it seemed as though he did not wish to go quite yet. "If you have said what you have got to say, Major Tifto, I may as well tell you that my time is engaged."

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"I can't prevent you**, of course**."

"I ain't going to do anything against your Lordship," he said whining. Then Tifto got up from his chair, as though he were going. "I wish I knew what I was going to do with myself."

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"I suppose not, my Lord. I haven't twenty pounds left in all the world. **I have that feeling that if they'd put me in prison it would be a relief.** It's the only thing that wasn't square that ever I did in all my life." **Silverbridge could not help thinking that if this statement was true the delinquent had commenced his anti-squareness by a very strong measure of iniquity.** "Your Lordship couldn't do anything for me I **suppose**. We was very much together at one time, my Lord."

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"Of course I was a villain. But it was only once[;]**, and I was led on by my feelings. I had got to think that you owed me so much!"**

"For being honest?"

"I suppose it was. And your Lordship was so rough to me! I'm not saying but what I was a villain. Think of what I did for myself, by that one piece of wickedness! Master of Hounds! Member of the club! And the horse would have run in my name and won the Leger! And everybody knew as your Lordship and me was together in him! **Think what I must think of myself, Lord Silverbridge! If I could get round any way again I wouldn't mind blacking shoes!**" Then he burst out into a paroxysm of tears and sobbing.

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Till a year or two had passed by Silverbridge told no one of the interview and its results except his brother; and even to him he found himself obliged to make an apology for his ill-judged generosity. "I had been rough to him and I suppose I did drive him to it. I couldn't help being rough because he encroached; but then it was my fault all the same because I had encouraged him. Poor devil! If he can manage

to live on a hundred a year I won't begrudge it him." In process of time Tifto married a publican's daughter under the name of Henry Walker, and, having inherited his father-in-law's business, lived to be able to tell his noble patron that the pension was no longer needed.

Chapter 76, *On Deportment*

Frank Tregear had come up to town at the end of February **on hearing from Lady Mary that he was to be accepted into the family of the Pallisers, and had dined in Carlton Terrace and had been accepted**. **The Duke had drunk a special glass of wine with him and that matter was so far concluded. But he had not then been able to take his place in Parliament. Indeed on leaving Harrington he had done so in opposition to the advice both of the doctor and of Lady Chiltern;—though Lady Chiltern was obliged to acknowledge, when all the circumstances were explained to her, that the reasons for going were very strong indeed**. He remained in London, with an understanding that he was not to see Lady Mary again till the Easter holidays**, which would occur this year about the middle of April**. He was then to pay a visit to Matching, and to enter in, it may be presumed, on the full fruition of his advantages as accepted suitor **for Lady Mary's hand**. All this had been arranged with a good deal of precision,—as though there had still been a hope left that Lady Mary might change her mind. Of course there was no such hope. When the Duke asked the young man to dine with him **in London**, when he invited him to drink that memorable glass of wine, when the young man was allowed, in the presence of the Boncassens, to sit next to Lady Mary, it was of course settled. But the father probably found some relief in yielding by slow degrees. "I would rather that there should be no correspondence till then," he had said both to Tregear and to his daughter. And **of course** they had promised there should be no correspondence. **At that time it wanted only six weeks to Easter, and though the prohibition was felt to be a hardship, it was bearable.** At Easter they would meet. After Easter Mary was to come up to London to be present at her brother's wedding, to which also Tregear had been formally invited; and it was hoped that then something might be settled as to their own marriage. **But as yet no one had dared to ask the Duke a question on that subject.**

On the last day of March, **the very day on which Lord Silverbridge had heard the poor Major's story,** Tregear, with the surgeon's permission, took his seat in Parliament. He was introduced by two leading members on the Conservative side, but

immediately afterwards found himself seated next to his friend Silverbridge on the top bench behind the ministers. The House was very full, as there was a feverish report abroad that Sir Timothy Beeswax intended to make a statement. No one quite knew what the statement was to be; but every politician in the House and out of it thought that he knew that the statement would be a bid for higher power on the part of Sir Timothy himself. **But** if there had been**, as there needs must have been,** dissensions in the Cabinet, the secret of them had been well kept**, for no one seemed quite to know what was to be done**. To Tregear, who was not as yet familiar with the House, there was no special appearance of activity; but Silverbridge could see that there was more than wonted animation. That the Treasury bench should be full at this time was a thing of custom. A whole broadside of questions would be fired off, one after another, like a rattle of musketry down the ranks, when as nearly as possible the report of each gun is made to follow close upon that of the gun before,—with this exception, that in such case each little sound is intended to be as like as possible to the preceding; whereas with the rattle of the questions and answers, each question and each answer becomes a little more authoritative and less courteous than the last. The Treasury bench was ready for its usual responsive firing, **and so** [as] the questioners were of course in their places **here and there**. **But** the opposition front bench was also crowded, and those behind were nearly equally full. There were many peers in the **peers'** gallery, and a general feeling of sensation prevailed. All this Silverbridge had been long enough in the House to appreciate;—but to Tregear the House was simply the House.

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"Beeswax has something special to say. He's not here yet you see. They've left about six inches for him there between Roby and Sir Orlando. You'll have the **honour and glory** [privilege] of looking just down on the top of his head when he does come. I shan't stay much longer after that."

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"Yes, their principles! I believe I have some vague idea as to supporting property and rank and all that kind of thing. **But the more I see of it all, the less I feel it.** I don't know that anybody wants to attack anything."

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"I suppose there is an outside power,—the people, or public opinion, or whatever they choose to call it. And the country will have to go very much as that outside power

chooses. Here, in Parliament, everybody will be as conservative as the outside will let them. I don't think it matters on which side you sit;—but it does matter that you shouldn't have to act with those who go against the grain with you. **I like the other set the best.**"

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"I dare say not**,—but perhaps that may be because I am unable to explain myself**. However here's Sir Timothy. When he looks in that way, all buckram, deportment, and solemnity, I know he's going to pitch into somebody **or do something unhandsome**." At this moment the Leader of the House came in from behind the Speaker's chair and took his place between Mr. Roby and Sir Orlando Drought**, those two gentlemen forcing themselves into smaller spaces in order that room might be made for the great man**. Silverbridge had been right in saying that Sir Timothy's air was solemn**, though perhaps he was carried away by personal feelings when he spoke of buckram and deportment**. When a man has to declare a solemn purpose on a solemn occasion in a solemn place, it is needful that he should be solemn himself. And though the solemnity which befits a man best **on such an occasion** will be that which the importance of the moment may produce, without thought given by himself to his own outward person **or dignity**, still, who is there can refrain himself from some attempt? Who can boast, who that has been versed in the ways and duties of high places, that he has kept himself free from all study of grace, of feature, of attitude, of gait—or even of dress? For most of our bishops, for most of our judges, of our statesmen, our orators, our generals, for many even of our doctors and our parsons, even our attorneys, our tax-gatherers, and certainly our butlers and our coachmen, Mr. Turveydrop, the great professor of deportment, has done much. But there should always be the art to underlie and protect the art;—the art that can hide the art. The really **great and** clever archbishop,—the really potent chief justice, the man who, as a politician, will **absolutely** succeed in becoming a king of men, should know how to carry his buckram without showing it. It was in this that Sir Timothy perhaps failed a little. There are men who look as though they were born to wear blue ribbons**, and who can sit in raised chairs so easily as to make the spectator feel that chairs not raised would be out of place for them**. It has come, probably, from study, but it seems to be natural. Sir Timothy did not impose on those who looked at him as do these men. You could see a little of the paint; you could hear the crumple of the starch and the padding; you could trace something of uneasiness in the would-be composed grandeur of the brow. "Turveydrop!" the spectator would say to himself. But after all it may be a question whether a man be open to

reproach for not doing that well which the greatest man among us,—if we could find one great enough,—would not do at all.

For I think we must hold that true personal dignity should be achieved,—must, if it be quite true, have been achieved,—without any personal effort. Though it be evinced, in part, by the carriage of the body, that carriage should be the fruit of the operation of the mind. Even when it be assisted by external garniture such as special clothes, and wigs, and ornaments, such garniture should have been prescribed **and allotted** by the sovereign or by custom, and should not have been selected by the wearer. In regard to speech a man may study all that which may make him suasive, but if he go beyond that he will trench on those histrionic efforts which he will know to be wrong because he will be ashamed to acknowledge them. It is good to be beautiful, but it should come of God and not of the hairdresser. And personal dignity is a great possession; but a man should struggle for it no more than he would for beauty. Many, however, do struggle for it, and with such success that, though they do not achieve quite the real thing, still they get something on which they can bolster themselves up and be mighty. **As this was what Sir Timothy did he was not perhaps fairly subject to all the scorn which Lord Silverbridge threw upon him.**

Others, older men than Silverbridge, **perhaps** saw **quite** as much as did our young friend, but they were more complaisant and **probably** more reasonable. They, too, heard the crackle of the buckram, and were aware that the last touch of awe had come upon that brow just as its owner was emerging from the shadow of the Speaker's chair;—but to them it was a thing of course. A real Caesar is not to be found every day, nor can we always have a Pitt to control our debates. That kind of thing, that last touch has its effect. Of course it is all paint,—but how would the poor girl look before the gaslights if there were no paint? The House of Commons likes a little deportment on occasions. If a special man looks **very much** bigger than you, you can console yourself by reflecting that he also looks **very much** bigger than your fellows. Sir Timothy probably knew what he was about, and did himself on the whole more good than harm by his little tricks.

As soon as Sir Timothy had taken his seat, **with a certain amount of cheering which also showed that the occasion was a special one,** Mr. Ratler got up from the opposition bench to ask him some question on a matter of finance. The brewers were very anxious about publican licences. Could the Chancellor of the Exchequer say **whether there was any truth in the rumours which suggested that an alteration in regard to the licences would be proposed in the budget** [a word on the matter]? Notice had of course been given, and the questioner had stated a quarter of an hour

previously that he would postpone his query till the Chancellor of the Exchequer was in the House.

Now Sir Timothy rose from his seat, and in his blandest manner began by apologising for his late appearance. He was sorry that he had been prevented by public business from being in his place to answer the honourable gentleman's question in its proper turn. And even now, he feared that he must **for the present** decline to give any answer which could be supposed to be satisfactory. It would probably be his duty to make a statement to the House on the following day,—a statement which he was not quite prepared to make at the present moment. But in the existing state of things he was unwilling to make any reply to any question by which he might seem to bind the government to any opinion. Then he sat down. And rising again not long afterwards, when the House had gone through certain formal duties, he moved that it should be adjourned till the next day. Then all the members trooped out, and with the others Tregear and Lord Silverbridge. "So that is the end of your first day of Parliament," said Silverbridge.

"**The work certainly has so far been neither difficult nor tedious. But** what does it all mean?"

"Let us go to the Carlton and hear what the fellows are saying." **So they went to the Carlton and heard what the fellows were saying.**

On that evening both the young men dined at Mr. Boncassen's house. Though Tregear had been cautioned not to write to Lady Mary, and though he was not to see her before Easter, still it was so completely understood that he was about to become her husband, that he was entertained in that capacity by all those who were concerned in the family. **Isabel professed herself to be very fond of him, and had already desired him to call her by her Christian name,—almost to the dismay of her own lover. "If Mary is to be my sister," she said, "I suppose he is to be my brother. And what is the good of a Christian name if nobody is to use it?" Silverbridge did not quite dare to say that it was intended for his own exclusive use and benefit.**

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"That is most probable," said Silverbridge. **"The House is nearly evenly divided. This majority,—I suppose I ought to say our majority,—melted away at the last election."**

"With us the other party never comes in,—never has a chance of coming in,—except once in four years when the President is elected. **And** that one event**, which is so**

managed by wire-pullers that it hardly shows the real feeling of the country at that moment, binds us all for four years."

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"A secretary may quarrel with the President, or he may have the gout, or be convicted of peculation. **No doubt we change our ministers, but we don't change our policy even though the country should be ever so determined.**"

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"I am not so sure of that. We have had a pretty difficult task, that of carrying on a government in a new country which is nevertheless more populous than almost any old country. The influxions are so rapid that every ten years the nature of the people is changed**; and as they change we have got to fit our institutions to them**. It isn't easy; and though I think on the whole we've done pretty well, I am not going to boast that Washington is as yet the seat of a political Paradise."

"I cannot make your politics out at all," said Silverbridge.

"If you behave yourself well you shall be taught before long," said Isabel.

Chapter 77, *"Mabel, Good-bye"*

When Tregear first came to town with his arm in a sling, and bandages all round him,[—] in order that he might be formally accepted by the Duke,—**when as far as his bones and limbs were concerned, he ought to have remained at Harrington subject to the soft custody of Lady Chiltern,—**he had himself taken to one other house besides the house in Carlton Terrace. **A few days after that dinner** he went to Belgrave Square, **in order that he might** [to] announce his fate to Lady Mabel Grex;—but Lady Mabel Grex was not there. The Earl was ill at Brighton, and Lady Mabel had gone down **with Miss Cassewary** to nurse him. The old woman who came to him in the hall **and whom he had known for many years** told him that the Earl was **supposed to be** very ill;—he had been attacked by the gout, but in spite of the gout, and in spite of the doctors, he had insisted on being taken to his club. Then he had been removed to Brighton, under the doctor's advice, chiefly in order that he might be kept out of the way of temptation. **And** now he was supposed to be very ill**,—very ill** indeed. **The old woman hinted something as to gout in the stomach.** "My Lord is so imprudent," **she** said [the old woman], shaking her old head in real unhappiness. For though the Earl had been a tyrant

to everyone near him, yet when a poor woman becomes old it is something to have even a tyrant to protect her. "My Lord" always had been imprudent. Tregear knew that it had been the theory of my Lord's life that to eat, drink, and die was better than to abstain and live. [Then Tregear wrote to his friend as follows:]

Had he been in fair health, with his leisure at his own command, Tregear would have gone at once to Brighton himself. There had been that between him and Lady Mabel which would have justified that intrusion even in her father's present condition;—but he was afraid of the journey and of the exertion which would attend such a visit, and therefore he wrote to her announcing his own good fortune,—as follows. As soon as his good fortune was fixed he felt it to be imperative on him to announce it, at any rate to her.

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"I am up in town again as you will perceive, although I am still in a **very** helpless condition, and **am** hardly able to write even this letter. I called to-day **in Belgrave Square** and was very sorry to hear so bad an account of your father. Had I been able to travel I should have come down to you. When I am able I will do so if you would wish to see me. In the meantime pray tell me how he is and how you are.

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"Of course this thing will be very much to me. I will not speak now of my love for the girl who is to become my wife. **In that respect I do not know that I am different from any other, and** you might again call me Romeo. Nor do I like to say much of what may now be my pecuniary prospects. **Most certainly** I did not ask Mary to become my wife because I supposed she would be rich. But **as certainly** I could not have married her or anyone else who **was not rich** [had not money]. **I do not know whether you will understand me. My conscience is not quite clear,—and yet when I argue the matter with myself I think that it ought to be clear. I do at any rate so far trust myself as to think that I shall make her a good husband.**

"What are the Duke's intentions I have not the slightest idea, nor shall I ask him. I am to go down to Matching at Easter, and shall **of course** endeavour to have some time fixed. I suppose the Duke will say something about money. If he does not I shall not.

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In answer to this there came a note in a very few words. She congratulated him,—not very warmly,—but expressed a hope that she might see him soon. But she told

him not to come to Brighton. The Earl was better but very cross. She **at any rate** would be up in town before long. **He was to understand that she did not write at length because she would see him soon. There were other notes which passed between them, but still he was desired not to go to Brighton. Then also** towards the end of the month it became suddenly known in London that Lord Grex had died at Brighton. There was a Garter to be given away, and everybody was filled with regret that such an ornament to the peerage**, to the turf, and to society generally** should have departed from them. The Conservative papers remembered how excellent a politician he had been in his younger days, and the world was informed that the family of Grex of Grex was about the oldest in Great Britain of which authentic records were in existence. Then there came another note from Lady Mabel to Tregear. "I shall be in town on the 31st, in the old house, with Miss Cassewary, and will see you if you can come on the 1st. Come early,—at eleven if you can."

On the day named and at the hour fixed he was in Belgrave Square. He had known this house since he was a boy, and could well remember how, when he first entered it **during his holidays**, he had thought with some awe of the grandeur of the Earl**, who was his cousin**. The Earl had then not paid much attention to him, but he had become very much taken by the grace**,** and good nature**, and general attractiveness** of the girl who **at once** had owned him as a cousin**, and who was about a year younger than himself**. "You are my cousin Frank," she had said; "I am so glad to have a cousin." He could remember the words now as though they had been spoken **to him** only yesterday. Then there had quickly grown to be friendship between him and this, as he thought, sweetest of all girls. At that time he had just gone to Eton; but before he left Eton they had sworn to love each other**, still as cousins**. **At that time she had been brought out to the world and should perhaps have known better than to have loved him so well. He was still a boy, though not a boyish boy, and he too ought to have known better.** And so it had been and the thing had grown, till at last, just when he had taken his degree, two matters had been settled between them; the first was that each loved the other irretrievably, irrevocably, passionately; the second**, that all this love was to go for nothing, and** that it was altogether out of the question that they should ever marry each other.

It is but fair to Tregear to say that this last decision originated with the lady. He had told her that he certainly would **marry her, or at any rate would** hold himself engaged to marry her at some future time; but she had thrown this aside at once. "How was it possible," she said, "that two such **creatures as they were** [beings], brought up in luxury, and taught to **expect that they were to** enjoy all the good things of the world,

should expect to live and be happy together without an income?" He offered to go to the bar;—but she asked him whether he **really believed that he would succeed at the bar, and also whether he** thought it well that such a one as she should wait say a dozen years for such **success** [a process]. "When the time comes,**" she said, "**I should be an old woman and you would be a wretched man." She released him,—**said that they would both be released and free;** declared **with apparent gaiety** her own purpose of marrying well; and then, though there had been a moment in which her own assurance of her own love had been passionate enough, she went so far as to tell him that she was heart-whole. "We have been two foolish children, but we cannot be children any longer," she said. "There must be an end of it." **Then she had, laughing, bade him to look for a rich wife, and had declared her purpose of finding for herself a rich husband, "whom," she had said, "I shall love down to the ground."**

What had hitherto been the result of **all** this the reader knows,—and **unfortunately** Tregear knew also. He had taken the privilege given to him, **and had found for himself a rich wife;—**and had made so complete a use of **the privilege** [it] that he had in truth transferred his heart as well as his allegiance. Where is the young man who cannot do so;—how few are there who do not do so when their first fit of passion has come on them at one-and-twenty? And **at first** he had thought that she would do the same. But gradually he found that she had not done so, did not do so, could not do so! When she first heard of Lady Mary she had not reprimanded him,—but she could not keep herself from showing the bitterness of her disappointment. Though she would still boast of her own strength and of her own purpose, **and would speak of the world before her as an oyster which she would still open by a brilliant marriage,** yet it was too clear to him that she was wounded and very sore. She would have liked him to remain single at any rate till she herself were married. But the permission had been hardly given before he availed himself of it. And then he talked to her not only of the brilliancy of his prospects,—which she could have forgiven,—but of his love—his love! **He soon saw his mistake,—or rather that he had been mistaken as to her. As to himself, what he had said was true, and he thought it best that the truth should be known. The woman he loved now was not her, but Lady Mary.**

Then she had refused one offer after another, and he had known it all. There was nothing in which she was concerned that she did not tell him**,—not altogether with his approval**. **He did not wish to divide himself from her, but he did think that if the intercourse were less close it might be better for herself. But she told him everything.** Then young Silverbridge had come across her, and she had determined that he should be her husband. **Tregear would have been well pleased that it should have**

been so, but he had never quite trusted that it would be so. She had been **very** nearly successful,—so nearly that at moments she had felt sure of success. But the prize had slipped from her through her own fault. She knew well enough that it was her own fault. When a girl submits to play such a game as that, she should not stand on too nice scruples. She had told herself this many a time since;—but the prize was gone.

All this Tregear knew, and knowing it almost dreaded the coming interview. **Of course he had sought it, but it was impossible that he should not seek it.** He could not without actual cruelty have avoided her. Had he done so before he could not have continued to do so now, when she was left alone in the world. Her father had not been much to her, but still his presence had enabled her **to be the mistress of a house in London, and** to put herself before the world as being somebody. Now she would be almost nobody. And she had lost her rich prize, while he,—out of the same treasury as it were,—had won his! **It would be difficult indeed to console her, and unreasonable to expect true congratulation.**

The door was opened to him by the same old woman, **by which he judged that the powder-headed footmen were already gone,** and he was shown, at a funereal pace, up into the drawing-room which he had known so well. **Then** he was told that Lady Mabel would be down to him directly. As he looked about him he could see that already had been commenced that work of division of spoil which is sure to follow the death of most of us. Things were already gone which used to be familiar to his eyes, and the room, though not dismantled, had been deprived of many of its little prettinesses and was ugly. **Any stranger entering it would have known that the family had been or was to be disturbed.**

In about ten minutes she came down to him,—with so soft a step **and hand** that he would not have been aware of her entrance had he not seen her form in the mirror. Then, when he turned round to greet her, he was astonished by the blackness of her appearance. **It seemed to him as though the milliner had altered even the colour of her countenance.** She looked as though she had become ten years older since he had last seen her**, and yet he thought that she had never been more handsome**. As she came up to him she was grave and almost solemn in her gait, but there was no sign of any tears. Why should there have been a tear? Women weep, and men too, not from grief, but from emotion. Indeed, grave and slow as was her step, and serious, almost solemn, as was her gait, there was something of a smile on her mouth as she gave him her hand. And yet her face was very sad, **seeming before she spoke a word to declare** [declaring] to him [too plainly] something of the hopelessness of her heart. "And so the Duke has consented," she said. **These were her first words,—referring to the one matter on which he had**

determined that he would say as little as possible. He had told her that in his letter, but, since that, her father had died, and she had been left, he did not as yet know **how far desolate or** how far impoverished, but, he feared, with no pleasant worldly prospects before her. **He certainly did not mean to sing a paean to his own glory. She had once called him Romeo because he had said that he dearly loved the girl whom he was now to marry. He had perceived that he had then made a mistake, and he certainly would not repeat it on this occasion.**

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"It has been very sad;—has it not? Sit down, Frank. You and I have a good deal to say to each other now that we have met. It was no good your going down to Brighton. **Everything was so uncomfortable there!** He would not have seen you, and at last I never left him."

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"It was not Percival's fault. He would not see him. Nor till the last hour or two **had come** would he believe in his own danger. Nor was he ever frightened for a moment,—not even then."

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"Good to me! Well;—he liked my being there. **And he liked to have Miss Cass there. But of course he scolded us always.** Poor papa! It had gone so far with him that he could not be good to anyone. I think that he felt that it would be unmanly not to be the same to the end."

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"When it was suggested he would only ask what good Percival could do him. I did send for him at last, in my terror, but he **was not there in time to** [did not] see his father alive. **And** when he did come he only told me how badly his father had treated him! It was very dreadful!"

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"I am sure you did, and will. After all, Frank, I think that the pious godly people have the best of it**, at any rate** in this world. Let them be ever so covetous, ever so false, ever so hard-hearted, the mere fact that they must keep up appearances, makes them comfortable to those around them. Poor papa was not comfortable to me**;—nor I fear**

will Percival be so. A little hypocrisy, a little sacrifice to the feelings of the world, may be such a blessing!"

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"Yes; it is sad **to have to make such a confession**. But you;—everything is smiling with you! Let us talk about your plans."

But this was what he had determined that he would if possible avoid.

"Another time will do for that. I had come to hear about your own affairs."

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"With Miss Cass**, I suppose**. Two old maids together! I know nothing further. **Both my aunts have asked me to go to them, but as I greatly dislike them both that does not sound comfortable. One is very high church, and the other very low. How could I live with either of them?**"

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"What would you not be justified in asking? Do you not know that I would tell you every secret of my heart,—if my heart had a secret? It seems that I have given up what was to have been my fortune. **It never was much,** [There was] a claim of twelve thousand pounds on Grex. But I have abandoned it."

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"Well**;—what is it**?"

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"No, indeed; why should I,—I who have been preaching that comfortable doctrine of hypocrisy? I will say nothing hard. But I would sooner talk of your good things than of my evil ones. **And so I think would you.**"

"**No;—not so.** I would not**."**

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"**And I remember it,** and I remember that I did not believe you. Now I know it. He has that sort of pluck which enables a man to break a girl's heart,—or to destroy a girl's hopes,—without wincing. He can tell a girl to her face that she can go to the—mischief for him. There are so many men who can't do that,—from cowardice, though their hearts be ever so well inclined. 'I have changed my mind.' There is something

great in the courage of a man who can say that to a woman, in so many words. **The man who can do that will live to be great at last. All men are willing enough,—as far as any feeling of mercy is concerned. All men are willing enough,—though some are too poor-spirited to effect their escape at all.** Most of them when they escape, escape by lies and subterfuges. Or they run away and won't allow themselves to be heard of. They trust to the chapter of accidents, and leave things to arrange themselves. But when a man can look a girl in the face with those seemingly soft eyes, and say with that seemingly soft mouth,—'I have changed my mind,'—though she would look him dead in return if she could, **or kill him in any other way,** still she must admire him."

He hardly dared to ask a question about this, and yet he was obliged to say something. "Are you speaking of Silverbridge now?"

"Of course I am speaking of Silverbridge. I suppose I ought to hide it all and not to tell you. But, as you are the only person I do tell, you must put up with me. **I cannot quite talk even to Cass about all this.** Yes;—when I taxed him with his falsehood **to me**,—for he had been false,—he answered me with those very words. 'I have changed my mind.' He could not lie. To speak the truth was a necessity to him,—even at the expense of his gallantry, **his courtesy,** almost of his humanity."

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"It is horrid to hear you talk like this." She was leaning over from her seat, looking, in black as she was, so much older than her wont, with something about her of that **air of** unworldly serious thoughtfulness which a mourning garb always gives. And yet her words were so worldly, so unfeminine**, as Tregear said, "so horrid"**!

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"I dare say the beggar's daughter loved King Cophetua. When you come to distances such as that, there can be love. The very fact that a man should have descended so far in quest of beauty,—the flattery of it alone,—will produce love. When the angels came after the daughters of men of course the daughters of men loved them. The distance between him and me**, great as it is in all good things,** is not great enough to have produced that sort of worship. There was no reason **open to the world** why Lady Mabel Grex should not be good enough wife for the son of the Duke of Omnium."

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"And therefore I was not struck as by the shining of a light from heaven. **No,** I cannot say I loved him. **I certainly shall not tell you that I loved him.** Frank,—I **was gone** [am] beyond worshipping even a light from heaven."

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"You would have recommended—delicacy, no doubt. You think that women should be delicate let them suffer what they may. **Men are always in favour of hypocrisy and pretence for women.** A woman should not let it be known that she has any human nature in her. I had him on the hip, and for a moment I used my power. He had certainly done me a wrong. He had asked for my love,—and, with the delicacy which you all commend, I had not, at once, grasped at all that such a request conveyed. Then, as he told me so frankly, 'he changed his mind!' Did he not wrong me?"

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"False hopes!" she exclaimed, bursting out almost into anger. "That comes from you so well!"

"What am I to say?"

"**Well;—yes; false hopes! But, though I may call them so, you should not.** He told me that he had changed his mind. I think I loved him then as nearly as ever I did,—because he looked me full in the face. **Well,—**then I told him I had never cared for him, and that he need have nothing on his conscience. **His conscience had been wounded;—** but I doubt whether he was glad to hear it. Men are so vain.**"**

"And so he went?"

"I told him more than that. But I have talked too much of myself. And so you are to be the Duke's son-in-law.**"**

"It seems so."

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"Thousands [perhaps, but] **I should think;—but I do not in the least know.**" I do not think very much about it. I feel that he will provide for her."

"Nor care?"

"And that you, having secured her, can creep under his wing like an additional ducal chick. It is very comfortable. The Duke will be quite a Providence to you. I wonder that all young gentlemen do not marry heiresses;—it is so easy. And you have got your seat in Parliament too! Oh, your luck! When I look back upon it all it seems so hard to me! It was for you,—for you, that I used to be anxious**, thinking it would be so**

hard for you to come with your feet upon the ground. Now it is I who have not an inch of ground to stand upon." Then he approached her and put out his hand to her. "No," she said, putting both her hands behind her back, "for God's sake let there be no tenderness**,—no attempt at that**. But is it not cruel? Think of my advantages at that moment when you and I agreed that our paths should be separate. My fortune then had not been made quite shipwreck by my father and brother. I had before me all that society could offer. I was called handsome and clever. Where was there a girl more likely to make her way to the top? **And what am I now?**"

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"Yes;—because I saw that I could trust him. I told him because I wanted him to be quite sure that I had never loved him. But, Frank, I have put no spoke in your wheel. There has not been a moment since you told me of your love for this rich young lady in which I would not have helped you had help been in my power. Whomever I may have harmed **or tried to harm**, I have never harmed **or tried to harm** you."

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"No, Frank**, no; you are not**. You have done me the terrible evil of ceasing to love me."

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"And should it not have been for you to decide that you **at any rate** would **strive to** wait?"

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"It almost angers me that you should not see the difference. A girl unless she marries becomes nothing, as I have become nothing now. A man does not want a pillar on which to lean**,—or ought not**. A man, when he has done as you had done with me, and made a girl's heart all his own, even though his own heart had been flexible and plastic as yours is, should have been true to her, at least for a while. **I at any rate might have been the first to show that I could make the change.** Did it never occur to you that you owed something to me?"

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"There should have been some touch of chivalry if not of love to make you feel that a second passion should have been postponed**, at any rate** for a year or two. You

could wait without growing old. You might have allowed yourself a little space to dwell—I was going to say on the sweetness of your memories. But they were not sweet, Frank; they were not sweet to you."

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"It is gone; all gone," she said, shaking her head,—"gone from me because I have been so easily deserted; gone from you because the change has been so easy to you. How long was it, Frank, after you had left me **that day**, before you were basking happily in the smiles of Lady Mary Palliser?"

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"I have to defend myself, and I will do so with truth. It was not very long,—as months go; but why should it have been long, whether for months or days? I had to cure myself of a wound**, to cauterise a scar**."

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"And the sooner a man can do that the more manly he is. Is it a sign of strength**, do you suppose,** to wail under a sorrow that cannot be cured,—or of truth to perpetuate the appearance of a woe?"

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"I am speaking of myself now. I am driven to speak of myself by the bitterness of your words. It was you who decided**,—and your decision for the moment crushed me**."

"You accepted **it very** [my decision] easily."

"Because it was based not only on my unfitness for such a marriage, but on yours. When I saw that there would be perhaps some years of misery for you, of course I accepted your decision. **That romance was over.** The sweetness had been very sweet to me."

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"And the triumph of it had been very great. I had been assured of the love of her who among all the high ones of the world seemed to me to be the highest. **There were moments in which I was almost drunk with the idea that Lady Mabel Grex was all my own."**

"What was that to Lady Mary Palliser? But you are hardened now to your own successes."

"Then came your decision. Do you really believe that I could abandon the sweetness, that I could be robbed of my triumph, that I could think I could never again be allowed to put my arm round your waist, never again to feel your cheek close to mine, that I should lose all that **to me for a month or two** had seemed to lift me among the gods, without feeling it?"

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"Of course I felt it. I did not then know what was before me." When he said this she sank back immediately upon her seat. "I was wretched enough**,—very wretched**. **As most of us have to feel, I suppose, at some period of our lives, I felt then as though all my light had gone out.** I had lost a leg and could not walk; my eyes, and must always hereafter be blind; my fitness to be among men, and must always hereafter be secluded. It is so that a man is stricken down when some terrible trouble comes upon him. But it is given to him to retrick his beams."

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"Yes;—and the strong man will show his strength by doing it quickly. Mabel, I sorrowed for myself greatly when that word was spoken,—**sorrowed** partly because I thought that your love could so easily be taken from me.**"**

"No;—no;—no!"

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"Though I hate her she must be **very** good. It was a fine and a brave thing to do. I have done it; but never before the world like that,—have I, Frank? Oh, Frank, I shall never do it again. Go now, and do not touch me. Let us both pray that in ten years we may meet as passionless friends**;—but now you had better go**." He came to her hardly knowing what he meant, but purposing, as though by instinct, **at any rate** to take her hand as he parted from her. But she, putting both her hands before her face, and throwing herself onto the sofa, buried her head among the cushions.

Chapter 78, *The Duke Returns to Office*

That farewell took place on the Friday morning. Tregear as he walked out of the Square **almost felt as though he could never put his feet in those precincts again without sacrilege,—at any rate till the years had passed by of which Mabel had spoken. He** knew now that he had been the cause of a great shipwreck. **All that he had said of himself in that interview had been perfectly true.** At first when that passionate love had been declared,—he could hardly remember whether with the fullest passion by him or by her,—he had been as a god walking upon air. **His triumph had been so great that all consequences had been as nothing to him.** That she who seemed to be so much above him should have owned that she was all his own seemed then to be world enough for him. For a few weeks he lived a hero to himself, **in that world of romance in which the hero is able to dispense for a while with all sublunary things, and** [and was able] to tell himself that for him**, for him perhaps alone,** the glory of a passion **is** [was] sufficient. In those halcyon moments no common human care is allowed to intrude itself. To one who has thus entered in upon the heroism of romance his own daily work, his dinners, clothes, income, father and mother, sisters and brothers, his own street and house are nothing. Hunting, shooting, rowing, Alpine-climbing, **football,** even speeches in Parliament,—if they perchance have been attained to,—all become leather or prunella. The heavens have been opened to him, and he walks among them like a god. So it had been with Tregear. Then had come the second phase of his passion,—**a phase** which is also not uncommon to young men who **venture to** soar high in their first assaults. He was told that it would not do; and was not so told by a hard-hearted parent[,]**,—who after the manner of parents might probably in time cease to be hard-hearted,—**but by the young lady herself**, who clearly had made up her mind**. And she had spoken so reasonably **of his and of her own future life**, that he had yielded, and had walked away **home** with that sudden feeling of a vile return to his own mean belongings, to **his father and mother,** his lodgings, and his income which not a few ambitious young men have experienced. But she had **absolutely** convinced him. Then had come the journey to Italy, and the reader knows all the rest. He certainly had not derogated in transferring his affections **from Lady Mabel Grex to Lady Mary Palliser**,—but it may be doubted whether in this second love he had walked among the stars as in the first. A man can hardly mount twice among the stars. But he had been as eager **in it as in the first**,—and as true. And he had **now** succeeded, without any flaw on his conscience. It had been agreed, when that first disruption took place, that he and Mabel should be friends; and, as to a friend, he had told her of his hopes**, his intentions, and his difficulties**. When first she had mingled something of sarcasm with her congratulations, though it had annoyed him, it had hardly made him unhappy. When she called him Romeo and spoke of herself

as Rosaline, he took her remark as indicating **not** [some petulance rather than] an enduring love **for him, but some petulance on her part that he should so soon have forgotten his for her**. That had been womanly and he could forgive it. **And when she added the assurance,—which perhaps had been womanly also, but which certainly he did not believe,—that she had in truth never loved him, though it had vexed him a little, it did not disturb him much.** He had his other great and solid happiness to support him. Then he had believed that she would soon marry, if not Silverbridge, then some other fitting young nobleman, and that all would be well. But now things were very far from well. **He still possessed the solid rock on which his own fortunes were to be built; but** the storm which was howling round her afflicted him **also** [much].

Perhaps the bitterest feeling of all was that her love should have been so much stronger, so much more enduring than his own. He could not but remember how in his first agony he had blamed her because she had declared that **she could cease to love him** [they should be severed]. He then told himself that such **ceasing** [severing] would be to him impossible, and that had her nature been as high as his, it would have been as impossible to her. Which nature must he now regard as the higher? She had done her best to rid herself of the load of her passion and had failed. But he had freed himself with convenient haste. All that he had said as to the manliness of conquering grief had been **true enough,—**wise enough **at any rate**. But still he could not quit himself of some feeling of disgrace in that he had changed and she had not.

As he walked to his lodgings and sat there, purposeless till the time should come in which he might walk down to the House, he tried to comfort himself with reflecting that Mary was all his own,—that in that matter he had been victorious and **would soon reap the fruit of his victory** [happy];—but **during that** [for an] hour or two he thought more of Mabel than Mary.

When the time came in which he could employ himself he called for Silverbridge **on his way**, and they walked together across the park to Westminster. Silverbridge was gay and full of eagerness as to the coming ministerial statement, but Tregear could not turn his mind from the work of the morning. "I don't seem to care very much about it," he said at last**, "though of course I am anxious to see how these things are done**."

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"I breakfasted with the governor this morning, and I have not seen him in such good spirits since,—well, for a long time." The date to which Silverbridge would have referred, had he not checked himself, was that of the evening on which it had been agreed between him and his father that Mabel Grex should be promoted to the seat of highest

honour in the house of Palliser,—but that was a matter which must henceforward be buried in silence. "He did not say as much but I feel perfectly sure that he and Mr. Monk **between them** have arranged a new government."

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"He is my father,—and as he is going to be your father-in-law I should have thought that you **also** might have been pleased."

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"I don't suppose that one ought to think that what a man may feel about himself once, he will feel for ever."

"I suppose not," said Tregear.

"A man changes his idea. When I have a headache of a morning I swear that I will never smoke another cigar. But I go on afterwards. I believe the governor will like to go back, and if he does I don't think the country could have a better man whether he be Liberal or Conservative."

"I quite agree with that," said Tregear.

All that had to be done in the House of Commons on that afternoon was finished before five o'clock. By half-past five the House, and all the purlieus of the House, were deserted. And yet at four, immediately after prayers, there had been such a crowd that members had been unable to find seats! Tregear and Silverbridge having been early had **both** succeeded **in getting possession of their accustomed places high up behind the ministers**, but those who had been less careful were obliged to listen as best they could in the galleries. The stretching out of necks and the holding of hands behind the ears did not last long. Sir Timothy had not much to say, but what he did say was spoken with a dignity which **certainly** seemed to anticipate future exaltation rather than present downfall. There had arisen a question in regard to revenue,—he need hardly tell them that it was that question in reference to brewers' licences to which the honourable gentleman opposite had alluded on the previous day,—as to which unfortunately he was not in accord with his noble friend the Prime Minister. **It was certainly to be regretted that a matter comparatively small should lead to a disruption, but as matters referring to the revenue of the country had been more especially transferred to his unworthy hands, he would not take blame to himself for not yielding in this matter.** Under the circumstances it was hardly possible that they should at once proceed to business, and he therefore moved that the House should stand adjourned till Tuesday next. That was the whole statement.

Not very long afterwards the Prime Minister made another statement in the House of Lords. As the Chancellor of the Exchequer had very suddenly resigned and had thereby broken up the Ministry, he had found himself compelled to place his resignation in the hands of Her Majesty. Then that House was also adjourned **till the Tuesday**. On that afternoon all the clubs were alive with admiration at the great cleverness displayed by Sir Timothy in this transaction. It was not only that he had succeeded in breaking up the Ministry[,]**,—his determination to do which had been suspected by the political world for weeks,—**and that he had done this without incurring violent disgrace; but he had so done it as to throw all the reproach upon his late unfortunate colleague. It was thus that Mr. Lupton explained it. Sir Timothy had been at the pains to ascertain on what matters connected with the revenue Lord Drummond,—or Lord Drummond's closest advisers,—had opinions of their own, opinions strong enough not to be abandoned; and, having discovered that, he also discovered arguments on which to found an exactly contrary opinion. But as the revenue had been**, as he said,** entrusted specially to his unworthy hands, he was entitled to his own opinion on this matter. "The majority of the House," said Mr. Lupton, "and the entire public, will no doubt give him credit for great self-abnegation." **But then Mr. Lupton was in the habit of making sarcastic remarks.**

All this happened on the Friday. During the Saturday it was considered probable that the Cabinet would come to terms with itself, and that **these** internal wounds would be healed. The general opinion was that Lord Drummond would give way. But on the Sunday morning it was understood that Lord Drummond **at any rate** would not yield. It was reported that Lord Drummond was willing to purchase his separation from Sir Timothy even at the expense of his office. That Sir Timothy should give way **after what he had done** seemed to be impossible. Had he done so it would have been impossible for him to recover the respect of the House. Then it was rumoured that two or three others had gone **or would go** with Sir Timothy. And on Monday morning it was proclaimed that the Prime Minister was not in a condition to withdraw his resignation. On the Tuesday the House met and Mr. Monk announced, still from the opposition benches, that he had that morning been with the Queen. Then there was another adjournment, and all the Liberals knew that the gates of Paradise were again about to be opened to them.

This**, at the close of our story,** is only interesting to us as affecting the happiness and the character of our Duke. He had **now** consented to assist Mr. Monk in forming a government, and to take office under Mr. Monk's leadership. He had had many contests with himself before he could bring himself to this submission. **A letter had been written to him,—it is hoped that the reader may remember it,—by a very old friend, the purport of which from that day to this he had not ceased to turn in his mind.** He

knew that if anything could once again make him contented it would be work; he knew that if he could serve his country it was his duty to serve it; and he knew also that it was only by the adhesion of such men as himself that the traditions of his party could be maintained **and its authority preserved**. But he had been Prime Minister,—and he was sure that he could never be Prime Minister again. There are in all matters certain little, almost hidden, signs, by which we can measure within our own bosoms the extent of our successes and our failures. **A man, if he has been asked to take the lead in some affair, to act as Chairman at some meeting, will know when the duty has been performed, without a word of criticism from without, whether he will again be called on for similar service.** Our Duke's friends had told him**, especially that old Duke of St. Bungay,** that his Ministry had been serviceable to the country;—but no one had ever suggested to him that he would again be asked to fill the place which he had filled. He had stopped a gap**; and that was all**. He would beforehand have declared himself willing to serve his country even in this way; but having done so,—having done that and no more than that,—he felt that he had failed. He had in his soreness declared to himself **again and again** that he would never more take office. He had much to do to overcome **his own scruples before he was able to depart from** this promise to himself;—but when he had brought himself to submit **to the advice of others** he was certainly a happier man.

There was no going to see the Queen. That on the present occasion was done simply by Mr. Monk. But on the Wednesday morning his name appeared in the list of the new Cabinet as President of the Council. He was perhaps a little fidgety, **a little fretful,** a little too anxious to employ himself and to be employed, a little too desirous of immediate work;—but still he was happy and gracious to those around him. "I suppose you like that particular office," Silverbridge said to him **that afternoon**.

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"No, indeed I don't. **Very far from that.** I am **almost** inclined to think that the Premier should always sit in your House. **It is certainly better for the country generally that he should be a commoner.** No, Silverbridge; if I could have my way,—which is of course impossible, for I cannot put off my honours,—I would return to my old place. I would return to the Exchequer **again** where the work is hard and certain, where a man can do, or at any rate can attempt to do, some special thing. A man there, if he stick to that and does not travel beyond it, need not be popular, need not be a partisan, need not be eloquent, need not be a courtier. He should understand his profession, as

should a lawyer or a doctor. If he does that thoroughly he can serve his country without recourse to that parliamentary strategy for which I know that I am unfit."

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"No; no. I wish the title could have passed over my head, Silverbridge, and gone to you at once. I think we both should have been suited better. But these are things which one should not consider. Even in this place I may perhaps do something. **If it be nothing else, I can be loyal.** Shall you attack us very bitterly?"

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"Such changes **as that** should not be made without very much consideration."

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"No,—not to me. But he is very civil to the family **generally**. As long as a Palliser represents the borough Mr. Sprugeon thinks that it does not matter much on which side he may sit. I have had my little vagary and I don't think that I shall change again."

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To this the young man made no direct answer, but took advantage of the allusion to turn from his own projected marriage to that of his sister, and to ask whether anything could as yet be fixed as to its period. "Mary has said nothing to me about it," said the Duke.

"But she has asked me to do so. Frank of course can only urge her, and she can only answer by referring to you. I suppose that delay can do no good."

"I will think about it," said the Duke gravely. Then Silverbridge knew that a day would be fixed at no very distant date.

Chapter 79, *The First Wedding*

As Easter Sunday fell on the 17th April, and as the arrangement of the new Cabinet, with its inferior offices, was not completed till the 6th of that month, there was only just time for the new elections before the holidays. **Indeed it was all holiday up to Easter, though the House did once meet in order that the new ministers might take their new places.** Mr. Monk sat on his bench so comfortably that he hardly seemed ever

to have been off it. And Phineas Finn**, in the few words which he was called upon to say,** resumed the peculiar ministerial tone of voice just as though he had never allowed himself to use the free and indignant strains of opposition. As to a majority,—nothing as yet was known about that. Some few besides Silverbridge might probably transfer themselves to the government. None of the ministers lost their seats at the new elections**, at which indeed but very little effort was made to displace them**. The opposite party seemed for a while to have been paralysed by the defection of Sir Timothy, and men who liked a quiet life were able to comfort themselves with the reflection that nothing could be done this session.

For our lovers this was **very** convenient. Neither of them would have allowed their parliamentary energies to have interfered at such a crisis with his domestic affairs; but still it was well to have time at command. The day for the marriage of Isabel and Silverbridge had been now fixed. That was to take place on the Wednesday after Easter, and was to be celebrated **in some magnificent fashion** by special royal favour in the chapel at Whitehall. All the Pallisers would be there, and all the relations of all the Pallisers, all the ambassadors, and of course all the Americans in London. It would be a "wretched grind," as Silverbridge said, but **still** it had to be done. **One cannot be the heir to a dukedom without paying in some shape for the privilege.** But in the meantime the whole party, including the new President of the Council, were down at Matching. Even Isabel, though it must be presumed that she had much to do in looking after her bridal garments, was able to be there for a day or two. But Tregear was the person to whom this visit was of the greatest importance.

He had been allowed to see Lady Mary in London, but hardly to do more than see her. **Matters had so arranged themselves at that time that he had spent more time with the Duke than with the Duke's daughter.** With her he had been alone for about five minutes, and then cruel circumstances,—circumstances, however, which were not permanently cruel,—had separated them. All their great difficulties had been settled **for them**, and no doubt they were happy. **But** Tregear, though he had been as it were received into grace by that glass of wine, still had not entered into the intimacies of the house. This he felt himself**,—and had felt so strongly that during the six weeks after that, while he remained in town, he hardly even spoke to the Duke**. He had been told that he had better restrain himself from writing to Mary, and he had restrained himself. **She was at Matching and he could not see her.** He had therefore no immediate opportunity of **gradually** creeping into that perfect intimacy with the house and household which is generally accorded to a promised son-in-law.

On this occasion he travelled down alone, **Silverbridge having gone on an earlier day than that fixed for his visit;—**and as he approached the house he, who was not by nature timid **in such conditions**, felt himself to be somewhat cowed. That the Duke should not be cold to him was almost impossible. Of course he was there in opposition to the Duke's wishes. **It was impossible that the Duke should as yet be genial with him. And everyone about the place, with the exception of the one person, would be more or less hostile to him.** Even Silverbridge had never quite liked the match. Of course he was to have all that he desired. Of course he was the most fortunate of men. Of course no man had ever stronger reason to be contented with the girl he loved. But still his heart was a little low as he was driven up to the door.

The first person whom he saw was the Duke himself, who, as the fly from the station arrived, was returning from his walk **and met his guest at the front of the house**. "You are welcome to Matching," he said, taking off his hat with something of ceremony. This was said before the servants, but Tregear was then led into the study and the door was closed. "I never do anything by halves, Mr. Tregear," he said. "Since it is to be so you shall be the same to me as though you had come under other auspices. Of yourself personally I hear all that is good. Consider yourself at home here, and in all things use me as your friend." Tregear endeavoured to make some reply, but could not find words that were fitting. "I think that the young people are out," continued the Duke. "**I saw Silverbridge with Miss Boncassen and his sister about half an hour ago.** Mr. Warburton will help you to find them if you like to go upon the search." The words had been very gracious, but still there was something in the manner of the man which made Tregear find it almost impossible to regard him as he might have regarded another father-in-law. He had often heard the Duke spoken of**,—especially by Silverbridge and even by the Duchess herself,—**as a man who could become awful if he pleased, almost without an effort. He had been told of the man's mingled simplicity, courtesy, and self-assertion against which no **amount of** impudence or raillery could prevail. And now he seemed to understand it. **And yet nothing could have been kinder than the words which had been spoken to him.**

He was not**, however,** driven to go under the private secretary's escort in quest of the young people. Mary had understood her business much better than that. "If you please, sir. Lady Mary is in the little drawing-room," said a well-arrayed young girl to him, as soon as the Duke's door was **well and certainly** [quite] closed. This was Lady Mary's own maid who had been on the look-out **since he had entered the house** [for the fly]. Lady Mary had known all details, as to the arrival of the trains and the length of the journey from the station, and had not been walking with the other young people when the

Duke had intercepted her lover **at the door**. Even that delay she had thought was hard**, though she felt that it was not unfortunate that the first interview should thus be had between her lover and her father**. The discreet maid opened the door of the little drawing-room,—and discreetly closed it instantly. "At last!" she said, throwing herself into his arms.

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"That would be bad news for me, Frank," she said laughing.
"Even though you would forgive me, still I might have been wrong."
"If you had acted as though you thought so I could not have forgiven you."
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"**Or rather my want of money.** A poor man who marries a rich woman will always be suspected."

"Because people are so mean and poor-spirited,—and because they think that money is more than anything else. It should be nothing at all in such matters. I don't know how it can be anything. They have been saying that to me all along,—as though one were to stop to think whether one was rich or poor." Tregear, when this was said, could not but remember that at a time not very much prior to that at which Mary had not stopped to think, neither [for a while] had he and Mabel**, and that the results in that case had not been fortunate**. "I suppose it was worse for me than for you," she added.

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"But it was, Frank; and therefore I ought to have it made up to me now. **Oh, yes, I dare say you will do your best. At any rate you will promise and I must trust you.** It was very bad to be alone here, particularly when I felt that papa always looked at me as though I were a sinner. He did not mean it, but he could not help looking at me like that. **At every glance, he threw you and all your iniquities in my teeth.** And there was nobody to whom I could say a word."

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"Yes; but you were not offending a father who**, though he would not say a word to reproach me,** could not keep himself from looking **at me** [reproaches at you]. I was like a boy at school who had been put into Coventry. And then they sent me to Lady Cantrip."

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"I do believe that if I were a young woman with a well-ordered mind, **which I am not,** I should feel myself very much indebted to Lady Cantrip. She had a terrible task of it**; with no thanks, and nothing to get**. But I could not teach myself to like her. I believe she knew all through that I should get my way at last."

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"Were not you shocked?" This question was not to be answered by any word. "I was," she continued. "It was an awful thing to do; but I was determined to show them all that I was in earnest. **I would not make a speech.** Do you remember how Miss Cassewary looked? **I don't think she can have recovered from it yet.**"

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"That she should have heard all that I had to say about you with **pleasure and** sympathy. If so, I am so sorry."

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"I am sure you have not to me. Poor Mabel! **I almost wish that she and Silverbridge could have come together.** Then they took me to Custins. That was worst of all. I cannot quite tell you what happened there." Of course he asked her,—but, as she had said, she could not quite tell him about Lord Popplecourt **and his suit**. **To her thinking Lady Cantrip's great sin had been in supposing that while one man had been entertained by her as a lover, another could be accepted as a husband.**

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Isabel was the first to go back to London, intent no doubt upon furbelows and flounces. The trousseau for such a wedding is an important matter, and Isabel was not the girl to neglect her duties. Then Silverbridge followed. He too had his own affairs to manage. The Duke and Mary with Tregear and Gerald, who had of course come home for the occasion, did not return to town till the day before the ceremony. And on the morning of that day the Duke [The day before the Duke started for London to be present at the grand marriage he] sent for Frank. "I suppose," said he, "that you would wish that some time should be fixed for your own marriage." To this the accepted suitor of course assented. "But before we can do that something must be settled about—money." Tregear when he heard this **felt that he** became hot all over, and [felt] that he could not restrain his blushes. Such must be the feeling of a man when he finds

himself compelled to own to a girl's father that he intends to live upon her money and not upon his own. "I do not like to be troublesome," continued the Duke, "or to ask questions which might seem to be impertinent."

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"It shall be so received. And now—— But perhaps it will be best that you should arrange all this with my man of business. Mr. Moreton shall be instructed. Mr. Moreton lives near my place in Barsetshire, but is now in London **about this other marriage**. If you will call on him he shall tell you what I would suggest. I hope you will find that your affairs will be comfortable. And now as to the time. **Mary has been told by me that she may fix it. I suppose that you, like Silverbridge, must in some degree conform yourself to Mr. Speaker.**"

The wedding on the next day [Isabel's wedding] was declared by the newspapers to have been one of the most brilliant remembered in the metropolis. There were six bridesmaids, of whom of course Mary was one,—and of whom poor Lady Mabel Grex was equally of course not another. Poor Lady Mabel was at this time with Miss Cassewary at Grex, paying what she believed would be a last visit to the old family home. Among the others were two American girls, brought into that august society for the sake of courtesy rather than of personal love. And there were two other Palliser girls and a Scotch M'Cluskie cousin. The breakfast was of course given by Mr. Boncassen at his house in Brook Street, where the bridal presents were displayed. And not only were they displayed; but a list of them, with an approximating statement as to their value[,]**,— probably given at about four times the true amount,—**appeared in one or two of the next day's newspapers;—as to which terrible sin against good taste neither was Mr. or Mrs. Boncassen guilty. But in these days, in which such splendid things are done on so very splendid a scale, a young lady cannot herself lay out her friends' gifts so as to be properly seen by her friends**, by the breach of which practice, however, friends would be more honoured than by the observance**. Some well-skilled[,] **and** well-paid hand is needed even for that, and hence comes this public information on affairs which should surely be private. In our grandmothers' time **it may be presumed that** the happy bride's happy mother herself compounded the cake **which her guests were to eat for luck**;—or at any rate the trusted housekeeper. But we all know that terrible tower of silver which now stands niddle-noddling with its appendages of flags and spears on the modern wedding breakfast-table. It will come to pass with some of us soon that we must deny ourselves the pleasure of having many young friends, because their marriage presents are so costly.

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"Mother," she said. "It is but ten days across the Atlantic. The years in which you won't come to us we will go to you."

Chapter 80, *The Second Wedding*

November is not altogether an hymeneal month, but it was not till November that Lady Mary Palliser became the wife of Frank Tregear. It was postponed a little perhaps, in order that the Silverbridges,—as they were now called,—might be present. The Silverbridges, who were now quite Darby and Joan, had gone to the States **instead of Scotland** when the session had been brought to a close early in August, and had remained there nearly three months**. Isabel,—she shall be so called in these last few pages, although the reader is well aware that even in such a chronicle as this, young ladies' Christian names should not be treated with freedom after marriage,—**Isabel had **no doubt** taken infinite pleasure in showing her English husband to her American friends, and the American friends had no doubt taken a pride in seeing so glorious a British husband in the hands of an American wife. Everything was new to Silverbridge, and he was happy in his new possession. She too enjoyed it infinitely, and so it happened that they had been unwilling to curtail their sojourn. But in November they had to return, because Mary had declared that her marriage should be postponed till it could be graced by the presence of her elder brother.

The marriage of Silverbridge had been august. There had been a manifest intention that it should be so. Nobody knew with whom this originated. Mrs. Boncassen had probably been told that it ought to be so, and Mr. Boncassen had been willing to pay the bill. External forces had perhaps operated. The Duke **certainly** had simply been passive and obedient. There had however been a general feeling that the bride of the heir of the house of Omnium should be produced to the world amidst a blare of trumpets and a glare of torches. So it had been. But both the Duke and Mary were determined that this wedding should be **very** different. It was to take place at Matching, and none would be present but they who were staying in the house, or who lived around,—such as tenants and dependants. Four clergymen united their forces to tie Isabel to her husband, one of whom was a bishop, one a canon, and the two others royal chaplains; but there was only to be the vicar of the parish at Matching. And indeed there were no guests in the house except the two bridesmaids and Mr. and Mrs. Finn. As to Mrs. Finn Mary had made a

request, and then the Duke **himself** had suggested that the husband should be asked to accompany his wife. **The father had hesitatingly whispered the name of Lady Cantrip, but Mary, though she had replied only by a look, had resisted. The two brothers were of course there,—and the new sister.**

It was very pretty. The church itself is pretty, standing in the park, close to the ruins of the old Priory, not above three hundred yards from the house. And they all walked, taking the broad path through the ruins, going under that figure of Sir Guy which Silverbridge had pointed out to Isabel when they had been whispering there together**, in doubt as to their future happiness**. The Duke led the way with his girl upon his arm. The two bridesmaids followed. Then Silverbridge and his wife, with Phineas and his wife[.]**,—and I grieve to say that** Gerald and the bridegroom accompanied them, belonging as it were to the same party! It was very rustic;—almost improper! "This is altogether wrong, you know," said Gerald. "You should appear coming from some other part of the world, as if you were almost unexpected. You ought not to have been in the house at all, and certainly should have gone under disguise." **But though the circumstances were so unfortunate,—certainly so very un-ducal,—the marriage was solemnised, and Lady Mary became the wife of Frank Tregear.**

There had been presents too on this occasion, **and rich presents,—as was a matter of course.** But they were shown to none except to Mrs. Finn and the bridesmaids,—and perhaps to the favoured servants of the house. At any rate there was nothing said of them in the newspapers. One present there was,—given not to the bride but to the bridegroom,—which he showed to no one except to her. This came to him only on the morning of his marriage, and the envelope containing it bore the postmark of Sedbergh. He knew the handwriting well before he opened the parcel. It contained a small signet-ring with his crest, **a ring such as young men customarily wear,** and with it there were but a few words written on a scrap of paper. "I pray that you may be happy. This was to have been given to you long ago, but I kept it back because of that decision." He showed the ring to Mary and told her it had come from Lady Mabel;—but the scrap of paper no one saw but himself.

Perhaps the matter most remarkable in the wedding was the hilarity**, or, at any rate, the good humour** of the Duke. One who did not know him well might have said that he was a man with very few cares, and who now took special joy in the happiness of his children,—who was thoroughly contented to see them marry after their own hearts **and make themselves happy in their own fashion**. And yet, as he stood there on the altar steps giving his daughter to that new son and looking first at his girl, and then at his married son, he was reminding himself of all he had suffered**, and reflecting how**

seldom it had happened that he to whom so many good things had been given had been allowed to have his own way in the affairs of life.

After the breakfast,—which was by no means a grand repast and at which the cake did not look so like an ill-soldered silver castle as that other construction had done,—the happy couple were sent away in a modest chariot to the railway station, and not above half-a-dozen slippers were thrown after them. They were enough **probably** for luck,—or perhaps there might have been luck even without them, for the wife thoroughly respected her husband, as did the husband his wife. Mrs. Finn, when she was alone with Phineas, said a word or two about Tregear. "When she first told me of her engagement I did not think it possible that she should marry him. **The distance between them was so great.** But after he had been with me I felt sure that he would succeed. **I could not tell him that I thought so, but there was that in his manner which convinced me.**"

"Well, sir," said Silverbridge to the Duke when they were out together in the park that afternoon, "what do you think about him?" **Silverbridge since his marriage seemed even to his father to be much more of a man than he had been before.**

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"I do not know that one ought to be surprised at anything. Perhaps what surprised me most was that he should have looked so high. There seemed to be so little to justify it. But now I will accept that as courage which I before regarded as arrogance. **Who knows, he may live yet to be a much greater man than his father-in-law. I am certainly very glad that he has a seat in Parliament.**"

"It will be my turn next," said Gerald, as he was smoking with his brother that evening. "After what you and Mary have done, I think he must let me have my own way whatever it is."