

# Phineas Finn



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# VOLUME 1

## CHAPTER 1. PHINEAS FINN PROPOSES TO STAND FOR LOUGHSHANE

Dr. Finn, of Killaloe, in county Clare, was as well known in those parts,—the confines, that is, of the counties Clare, Limerick, Tipperary, and Galway,—as was the bishop himself who lived in the same town, and was as much respected. Many said that the doctor was the richer man of the two, and the practice of his profession was extended over almost as wide a district. Indeed the bishop whom he was privileged to attend, although a Roman Catholic, always spoke of their dioceses being conterminant. It will therefore be understood that Dr. Finn,—Malachi Finn was his full name,—had obtained a wide reputation as a country practitioner in the west of Ireland. And he was a man sufficiently well to do, though that boast made by his friends, that he was as warm a man as the bishop, had but little truth to support it. Bishops in Ireland, if they live at home, even in these days, are very warm men; and Dr. Finn had not a penny in the world for which he had not worked hard. He had, moreover, a costly family, five daughters and one son, and, at the time of which we are speaking, no provision in the way of marriage or profession had been made for any of them. Of the one son, Phineas, the hero of the following pages, the mother and five sisters were very proud. The doctor was accustomed to say that his goose was as good as any other man's goose, as far as he could see as yet; but that he should like some very strong evidence before he allowed himself to express an opinion that the young bird partook, in any degree, of the qualities of a swan. From which it may be gathered that Dr. Finn was a man of common-sense.

Phineas had come to be a swan in the estimation of his mother and sisters by reason of certain early successes at college. His father, whose religion was not of that bitter kind in which we in England are apt to suppose that all the Irish Roman Catholics indulge, had sent his son to Trinity; and there were some in the neighbourhood of Killaloe,—patients, probably, of Dr. Duggin, of Castle Connell, a learned physician who had spent a fruitless life in endeavouring to make head against Dr. Finn,—who declared that old Finn would not be sorry if his son were to turn Protestant and go in for a fellowship. Mrs. Finn was a Protestant, and the five Miss Finns were Protestants, and the doctor himself was very much given to dining out among his Protestant friends on a Friday. Our Phineas, however, did not turn Protestant up in Dublin, whatever his father's secret wishes on that subject may have been. He did join a debating society, to success in which his religion was no bar; and he there achieved a sort of distinction which was both easy and pleasant, and which, making its way down to Killaloe, assisted in engendering those ideas as to swanhood of which maternal and sisterly minds are so sweetly susceptible. "I know half a dozen old windbags at the present

moment," said the doctor, "who were great fellows at debating clubs when they were boys." "Phineas is not a boy any longer," said Mrs. Finn. "And windbags don't get college scholarships," said Matilda Finn, the second daughter. "But papa always snubs Phinny," said Barbara, the youngest. "I'll snub you, if you don't take care," said the doctor, taking Barbara tenderly by the ear;—for his youngest daughter was the doctor's pet.

The doctor certainly did not snub his son, for he allowed him to go over to London when he was twenty-two years of age, in order that he might read with an English barrister. It was the doctor's wish that his son might be called to the Irish Bar, and the young man's desire that he might go to the English Bar. The doctor so far gave way, under the influence of Phineas himself, and of all the young women of the family, as to pay the usual fee to a very competent and learned gentleman in the Middle Temple, and to allow his son one hundred and fifty pounds per annum for three years. Dr. Finn, however, was still firm in his intention that his son should settle in Dublin, and take the Munster Circuit,—believing that Phineas might come to want home influences and home connections, in spite of the swanhood which was attributed to him.

Phineas sat his terms for three years, and was duly called to the Bar; but no evidence came home as to the acquirement of any considerable amount of law lore, or even as to much law study, on the part of the young aspirant. The learned pundit at whose feet he had been sitting was not especially loud in praise of his pupil's industry, though he did say a pleasant word or two as to his pupil's intelligence. Phineas himself did not boast much of his own hard work when at home during the long vacation. No rumours of expected successes,—of expected professional successes,—reached the ears of any of the Finn family at Killaloe. But, nevertheless, there came tidings which maintained those high ideas in the maternal bosom of which mention has been made, and which were of sufficient strength to induce the doctor, in opposition to his own judgment, to consent to the continued residence of his son in London. Phineas belonged to an excellent club,—the Reform Club,—and went into very good society. He was hand in glove with the Hon. Laurence Fitzgibbon, the youngest son of Lord Claddagh. He was intimate with Barrington Erle, who had been private secretary,—one of the private secretaries,—to the great Whig Prime Minister who was lately in but was now out. He had dined three or four times with that great Whig nobleman, the Earl of Brentford. And he had been assured that if he stuck to the English Bar he would certainly do well. Though he might fail to succeed in court or in chambers, he would doubtless have given to him some one of those numerous appointments for which none but clever young barristers are supposed to be fitting candidates. The old doctor yielded for another year, although at the end of the second year

he was called upon to pay a sum of three hundred pounds, which was then due by Phineas to creditors in London. When the doctor's male friends in and about Killaloe heard that he had done so, they said that he was doting. Not one of the Miss Finns was as yet married; and, after all that had been said about the doctor's wealth, it was supposed that there would not be above five hundred pounds a year among them all, were he to give up his profession. But the doctor, when he paid that three hundred pounds for his son, buckled to his work again, though he had for twelve months talked of giving up the midwifery. He buckled to again, to the great disgust of Dr. Duggin, who at this time said very ill-natured things about young Phineas.

At the end of the three years Phineas was called to the Bar, and immediately received a letter from his father asking minutely as to his professional intentions. His father recommended him to settle in Dublin, and promised the one hundred and fifty pounds for three more years, on condition that this advice was followed. He did not absolutely say that the allowance would be stopped if the advice were not followed, but that was plainly to be implied. That letter came at the moment of a dissolution of Parliament. Lord de Terrier, the Conservative Prime Minister, who had now been in office for the almost unprecedentedly long period of fifteen months, had found that he could not face continued majorities against him in the House of Commons, and had dissolved the House. Rumour declared that he would have much preferred to resign, and betake himself once again to the easy glories of opposition; but his party had naturally been obdurate with him, and he had resolved to appeal to the country. When Phineas received his father's letter, it had just been suggested to him at the Reform Club that he should stand for the Irish borough of Loughshane.

This proposition had taken Phineas Finn so much by surprise that when first made to him by Barrington Erle it took his breath away. What! he stand for Parliament, twenty-four years old, with no vestige of property belonging to him, without a penny in his purse, as completely dependent on his father as he was when he first went to school at eleven years of age! And for Loughshane, a little borough in the county Galway, for which a brother of that fine old Irish peer, the Earl of Tulla, had been sitting for the last twenty years,—a fine, high-minded representative of the thorough-going Orange Protestant feeling of Ireland! And the Earl of Tulla, to whom almost all Loughshane belonged,—or at any rate the land about Loughshane,—was one of his father's staunchest friends!

Loughshane is in county Galway, but the Earl of Tulla usually lived at his seat in county Clare, not more than ten miles from Killaloe, and always confided his gouty feet, and the weak nerves of the old countess, and the stomachs of all his domestics, to the care of Dr. Finn. How was it possible that Phineas should stand for Loughshane? From whence was the money to come for such a contest? It was a beautiful dream, a grand idea, lifting

Phineas almost off the earth by its glory. When the proposition was first made to him in the smoking-room at the Reform Club by his friend Erle, he was aware that he blushed like a girl, and that he was unable at the moment to express himself plainly,—so great was his astonishment and so great his gratification. But before ten minutes had passed by, while Barrington Erle was still sitting over his shoulder on the club sofa, and before the blushes had altogether vanished, he had seen the improbability of the scheme, and had explained to his friend that the thing could not be done. But to his increased astonishment, his friend made nothing of the difficulties. Loughshane, according to Barrington Erle, was so small a place, that the expense would be very little. There were altogether no more than 307 registered electors. The inhabitants were so far removed from the world, and were so ignorant of the world's good things, that they knew nothing about bribery. The Hon. George Morris, who had sat for the last twenty years, was very unpopular. He had not been near the borough since the last election, he had hardly done more than show himself in Parliament, and had neither given a shilling in the town nor got a place under Government for a single son of Loughshane. "And he has quarrelled with his brother," said Barrington Erle. "The devil he has!" said Phineas. "I thought they always swore by each other." "It's at each other they swear now," said Barrington; "George has asked the Earl for more money, and the Earl has cut up rusty." Then the negotiator went on to explain that the expenses of the election would be defrayed out of a certain fund collected for such purposes, that Loughshane had been chosen as a cheap place, and that Phineas Finn had been chosen as a safe and promising young man. As for qualification, if any question were raised, that should be made all right. An Irish candidate was wanted, and a Roman Catholic. So much the Loughshaners would require on their own account when instigated to dismiss from their service that thorough-going Protestant, the Hon. George Morris. Then "the party,"—by which Barrington Erle probably meant the great man in whose service he himself had become a politician,—required that the candidate should be a safe man, one who would support "the party,"—not a cantankerous, red-hot semi-Fenian, running about to meetings at the Rotunda, and such-like, with views of his own about tenant-right and the Irish Church. "But I have views of my own," said Phineas, blushing again. "Of course you have, my dear boy," said Barrington, clapping him on the back. "I shouldn't come to you unless you had views. But your views and ours are the same, and you're just the lad for Galway. You mightn't have such an opening again in your life, and of course you'll stand for Loughshane." Then the conversation was over, the private secretary went away to arrange some other little matter of the kind, and Phineas Finn was left alone to consider the proposition that had been made to him.



To become a member of the British Parliament! In all those hot contests at the two debating clubs to which he had belonged, this had been the ambition which had moved him. For, after all, to what purpose of their own had those empty debates ever tended? He and three or four others who had called themselves Liberals had been pitted against four or five who had called themselves Conservatives, and night after night they had discussed some ponderous subject without any idea that one would ever persuade another, or that their talking would ever conduce to any action or to any result. But each of these combatants had felt,—without daring to announce a hope on the subject among themselves,—that the present arena was only a trial-ground for some possible greater amphitheatre, for some future debating club in which debates would lead to action, and in which eloquence would have power, even though persuasion might be out of the question.

Phineas certainly had never dared to speak, even to himself, of such a hope. The labours of the Bar had to be encountered before the dawn of such a hope could come to him. And he had gradually learned to feel that his prospects at the Bar were not as yet very promising. As regarded professional work he had been idle, and how then could he have a hope?

And now this thing, which he regarded as being of all things in the world the most honourable, had come to him all at once, and was possibly within his reach! If he could believe Barrington Erle, he had only to lift up his hand, and he might be in Parliament within two months. And who was to be believed on such a subject if not Barrington Erle? This was Erle's special business, and such a man would not have come to him on such a subject had he not been in earnest, and had he not himself believed in success. There was an opening ready, an opening to this great glory,—if only it might be possible for him to fill it!

What would his father say? His father would of course oppose the plan. And if he opposed his father, his father would of course stop his income. And such an income as it was! Could it be that a man should sit in Parliament and live upon a hundred and fifty pounds a year? Since that payment of his debts he had become again embarrassed,—to a slight amount. He owed a tailor a trifle, and a bootmaker a trifle,—and something to the man who sold gloves and shirts; and yet he had done his best to keep out of debt with more than Irish pertinacity, living very closely, breakfasting upon tea and a roll, and dining frequently for a shilling at a luncheon-house up a court near Lincoln's Inn. Where should he dine if the Loughshaners elected him to Parliament? And then he painted to himself a not untrue picture of the probable miseries of a man who begins life too high up on the ladder,—who succeeds in mounting before he has learned how to hold on when he is aloft. For our Phineas Finn was a young man not without sense,—not entirely a windbag. If he did this thing the probability was that he might become

utterly a castaway, and go entirely to the dogs before he was thirty. He had heard of penniless men who had got into Parliament, and to whom had come such a fate. He was able to name to himself a man or two whose barks, carrying more sail than they could bear, had gone to pieces among early breakers in this way. But then, would it not be better to go to pieces early than never to carry any sail at all? And there was, at any rate, the chance of success. He was already a barrister, and there were so many things open to a barrister with a seat in Parliament! And as he knew of men who had been utterly ruined by such early mounting, so also did he know of others whose fortunes had been made by happy audacity when they were young. He almost thought that he could die happy if he had once taken his seat in Parliament,—if he had received one letter with those grand initials written after his name on the address. Young men in battle are called upon to lead forlorn hopes. Three fall, perhaps, to one who gets through; but the one who gets through will have the Victoria Cross to carry for the rest of his life. This was his forlorn hope; and as he had been invited to undertake the work, he would not turn from the danger. On the following morning he again saw Barrington Erle by appointment, and then wrote the following letter to his father:—

*Reform Club, Feb., 186--.*

My dear Father,

I am afraid that the purport of this letter will startle you, but I hope that when you have finished it you will think that I am right in my decision as to what I am going to do. You are no doubt aware that the dissolution of Parliament will take place at once, and that we shall be in all the turmoil of a general election by the middle of March. I have been invited to stand for Loughshane, and have consented. The proposition has been made to me by my friend Barrington Erle, Mr. Mildmay's private secretary, and has been made on behalf of the Political Committee of the Reform Club. I need hardly say that I should not have thought of such a thing with a less thorough promise of support than this gives me, nor should I think of it now had I not been assured that none of the expense of the election would fall upon me. Of course I could not have asked you to pay for it.

But to such a proposition, so made, I have felt that it would be cowardly to give a refusal. I cannot but regard such a selection as a great honour. I own that I am fond of politics, and have taken great delight in their study—"Stupid young fool!" his father said to himself as he read this)—and it has been my dream for years past to have a seat in Parliament at some future time. ("Dream! yes; I wonder whether he has ever dreamed what he is to live upon.") The chance has now come to me much earlier than I have looked for it, but I do not think that it should on that account be thrown away. Looking to my profession, I find that many

things are open to a barrister with a seat in Parliament, and that the House need not interfere much with a man's practice. ("Not if he has got to the top of his tree," said the doctor.)

My chief doubt arose from the fact of your old friendship with Lord Tulla, whose brother has filled the seat for I don't know how many years. But it seems that George Morris must go; or, at least, that he must be opposed by a Liberal candidate. If I do not stand, some one else will, and I should think that Lord Tulla will be too much of a man to make any personal quarrel on such a subject. If he is to lose the borough, why should not I have it as well as another?

I can fancy, my dear father, all that you will say as to my imprudence, and I quite confess that I have not a word to answer. I have told myself more than once, since last night, that I shall probably ruin myself. ("I wonder whether he has ever told himself that he will probably ruin me also," said the doctor.) But I am prepared to ruin myself in such a cause. I have no one dependent on me; and, as long as I do nothing to disgrace my name, I may dispose of myself as I please. If you decide on stopping my allowance, I shall have no feeling of anger against you. ("How very considerate!" said the doctor.) And in that case I shall endeavour to support myself by my pen. I have already done a little for the magazines. Give my best love to my mother and sisters. If you will receive me during the time of the election, I shall see them soon. Perhaps it will be best for me to say that I have positively decided on making the attempt; that is to say, if the Club Committee is as good as its promise. I have weighed the matter all round, and I regard the prize as being so great, that I am prepared to run any risk to obtain it. Indeed, to me, with my views about politics, the running of such a risk is no more than a duty. I cannot keep my hand from the work now that the work has come in the way of my hand. I shall be most anxious to get a line from you in answer to this.

Your most affectionate son,  
Phineas Finn.

I question whether Dr. Finn, when he read this letter, did not feel more of pride than of anger,—whether he was not rather gratified than displeased, in spite of all that his common-sense told him on the subject. His wife and daughters, when they heard the news, were clearly on the side of the young man. Mrs. Finn immediately expressed an opinion that Parliament would be the making of her son, and that everybody would be sure to employ so distinguished a barrister. The girls declared that Phineas ought, at any rate, to have his chance, and almost asserted that it would be brutal in their father to stand in their brother's way. It was in vain that the doctor tried to explain that going into Parliament could not help a young barrister, whatever it might do for one thoroughly established in his profession; that Phineas, if successful at Loughshane,

would at once abandon all idea of earning any income,—that the proposition, coming from so poor a man, was a monstrosity,—that such an opposition to the Morris family, coming from a son of his, would be gross ingratitude to Lord Tulla. Mrs. Finn and the girls talked him down, and the doctor himself was almost carried away by something like vanity in regard to his son's future position.

Nevertheless he wrote a letter strongly advising Phineas to abandon the project. But he himself was aware that the letter which he wrote was not one from which any success could be expected. He advised his son, but did not command him. He made no threats as to stopping his income. He did not tell Phineas, in so many words, that he was proposing to make an ass of himself. He argued very prudently against the plan, and Phineas, when he received his father's letter, of course felt that it was tantamount to a paternal permission to proceed with the matter. On the next day he got a letter from his mother full of affection, full of pride,—not exactly telling him to stand for Loughshane by all means, for Mrs. Finn was not the woman to run openly counter to her husband in any advice given by her to their son,—but giving him every encouragement which motherly affection and motherly pride could bestow. "Of course you will come to us," she said, "if you do make up your mind to be member for Loughshane. We shall all of us be so delighted to have you!" Phineas, who had fallen into a sea of doubt after writing to his father, and who had demanded a week from Barrington Erle to consider the matter, was elated to positive certainty by the joint effect of the two letters from home. He understood it all. His mother and sisters were altogether in favour of his audacity, and even his father was not disposed to quarrel with him on the subject.

"I shall take you at your word," he said to Barrington Erle at the club that evening.

"What word?" said Erle, who had too many irons in the fire to be thinking always of Loughshane and Phineas Finn,—or who at any rate did not choose to let his anxiety on the subject be seen.

"About Loughshane."

"All right, old fellow; we shall be sure to carry you through. The Irish writs will be out on the third of March, and the sooner you're there the better."

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## CHAPTER 2. PHINEAS FINN IS ELECTED FOR LOUGHSHANE

One great difficulty about the borough vanished in a very wonderful way at the first touch. Dr. Finn, who was a man stout at heart, and by no means afraid of his great friends, drove himself over to Castlemorris to tell his news to the Earl, as soon as he got a second letter from his son declaring his intention of proceeding with the business, let the results be what they might. Lord Tulla was a passionate old man, and the doctor expected that there would be a quarrel;—but he was prepared to face that. He was under no special debt of gratitude to the lord, having given as much as he had taken in the long intercourse which had existed between them;—and he agreed with his son in thinking that if there was to be a Liberal candidate at Loughshane, no consideration of old pill-boxes and gallipots should deter his son Phineas from standing. Other considerations might very probably deter him, but not that. The Earl probably would be of a different opinion, and the doctor felt it to be incumbent on him to break the news to Lord Tulla.

"The devil he is!" said the Earl, when the doctor had told his story.

"Then I'll tell you what, Finn, I'll support him."

"You support him, Lord Tulla!"

"Yes;—why shouldn't I support him? I suppose it's not so bad with me in the country that my support will rob him of his chance! I'll tell you one thing for certain, I won't support George Morris."

"But, my lord—"

"Well; go on."

"I've never taken much part in politics myself, as you know; but my boy Phineas is on the other side."

"I don't care a ---- for sides. What has my party done for me? Look at my cousin, Dick Morris. There's not a clergyman in Ireland stauncher to them than he has been, and now they've given the deanery of Kilfenora to a man that never had a father, though I condescended to ask for it for my cousin. Let them wait till I ask for anything again." Dr. Finn, who knew all about Dick Morris's debts, and who had heard of his modes of preaching, was not surprised at the decision of the Conservative bestower of Irish Church patronage; but on this subject he said nothing.

"And as for George," continued the Earl, "I will never lift my hand again for him. His standing for Loughshane would be quite out of the question. My own tenants wouldn't vote for him if I were to ask them myself.

Peter Blake"—Mr. Peter Blake was the lord's agent—"told me only a week ago that it would be useless. The whole thing is gone, and for my part I wish they'd disenfranchise the borough. I wish they'd disenfranchise the whole country, and send us a military governor.

What's the use of such members as we send? There isn't one gentleman among ten of them. Your son is welcome for me. What support I can give

him he shall have, but it isn't much. I suppose he had better come and see me."

The doctor promised that his son should ride over to Castlemorris, and then took his leave,—not specially flattered, as he felt that were his son to be returned, the Earl would not regard him as the one gentleman among ten whom the county might send to leaven the remainder of its members,—but aware that the greatest impediment in his son's way was already removed. He certainly had not gone to Castlemorris with any idea of canvassing for his son, and yet he had canvassed for him most satisfactorily. When he got home he did not know how to speak of the matter otherwise than triumphantly to his wife and daughters. Though he desired to curse, his mouth would speak blessings. Before that evening was over the prospects of Phineas at Loughshane were spoken of with open enthusiasm before the doctor, and by the next day's post a letter was written to him by Matilda, informing him that the Earl was prepared to receive him with open arms. "Papa has been over there and managed it all," said Matilda.

"I'm told George Morris isn't going to stand," said Barrington Erle to Phineas the night before his departure.

"His brother won't support him. His brother means to support me," said Phineas.

"That can hardly be so."

"But I tell you it is. My father has known the Earl these twenty years, and has managed it."

"I say, Finn, you're not going to play us a trick, are you?" said Mr. Erle, with something like dismay in his voice.

"What sort of trick?"

"You're not coming out on the other side?"

"Not if I know it," said Phineas, proudly. "Let me assure you I wouldn't change my views in politics either for you or for the Earl, though each of you carried seats in your breeches pockets. If I go into Parliament, I shall go there as a sound Liberal,—not to support a party, but to do the best I can for the country. I tell you so, and I shall tell the Earl the same."

Barrington Erle turned away in disgust. Such language was to him simply disgusting. It fell upon his ears as false maudlin sentiment falls on the ears of the ordinary honest man of the world. Barrington Erle was a man ordinarily honest. He would not have been untrue to his mother's brother, William Mildmay, the great Whig Minister of the day, for any earthly consideration. He was ready to work with wages or without wages. He was really zealous in the cause, not asking very much for himself. He had some undefined belief that it was much better for the country that Mr. Mildmay should be in power than that Lord de Terrier should be there. He was convinced that Liberal politics were good for Englishmen, and that Liberal politics and the Mildmay party were one and the same thing. It would be unfair to Barrington Erle to

deny to him some praise for patriotism. But he hated the very name of independence in Parliament, and when he was told of any man, that that man intended to look to measures and not to men, he regarded that man as being both unstable as water and dishonest as the wind. No good could possibly come from such a one, and much evil might and probably would come. Such a politician was a Greek to Barrington Erle, from whose hands he feared to accept even the gift of a vote. Parliamentary hermits were distasteful to him, and dwellers in political caves were regarded by him with aversion as being either knavish or impractical. With a good Conservative opponent he could shake hands almost as readily as with a good Whig ally; but the man who was neither flesh nor fowl was odious to him. According to his theory of parliamentary government, the House of Commons should be divided by a marked line, and every member should be required to stand on one side of it or on the other. "If not with me, at any rate be against me," he would have said to every representative of the people in the name of the great leader whom he followed. He thought that debates were good, because of the people outside,—because they served to create that public opinion which was hereafter to be used in creating some future House of Commons; but he did not think it possible that any vote should be given on a great question, either this way or that, as the result of a debate; and he was certainly assured in his own opinion that any such changing of votes would be dangerous, revolutionary, and almost unparliamentary. A member's vote,—except on some small crotchety open question thrown out for the amusement of crotchety members,—was due to the leader of that member's party. Such was Mr. Erle's idea of the English system of Parliament, and, lending semi-official assistance as he did frequently to the introduction of candidates into the House, he was naturally anxious that his candidates should be candidates after his own heart. When, therefore, Phineas Finn talked of measures and not men, Barrington Erle turned away in open disgust. But he remembered the youth and extreme rawness of the lad, and he remembered also the careers of other men.

Barrington Erle was forty, and experience had taught him something. After a few seconds, he brought himself to think mildly of the young man's vanity,—as of the vanity of a plunging colt who resents the liberty even of a touch. "By the end of the first session the thong will be cracked over his head, as he patiently assists in pulling the coach up hill, without producing from him even a flick of his tail," said Barrington Erle to an old parliamentary friend.

"If he were to come out after all on the wrong side," said the parliamentary friend.

Erle admitted that such a trick as that would be unpleasant, but he thought that old Lord Tulla was hardly equal to so clever a stratagem.

Phineas went to Ireland, and walked over the course at Loughshane. He called upon Lord Tulla, and heard that venerable nobleman talk a great deal of nonsense. To tell the truth of Phineas, I must confess that he wished to talk the nonsense himself; but the Earl would not hear him, and put him down very quickly. "We won't discuss politics, if you please, Mr. Finn; because, as I have already said, I am throwing aside all political considerations." Phineas, therefore, was not allowed to express his views on the government of the country in the Earl's sitting-room at Castlemorris. There was, however, a good time coming; and so, for the present, he allowed the Earl to ramble on about the sins of his brother George, and the want of all proper pedigree on the part of the new Dean of Kilfenora. The conference ended with an assurance on the part of Lord Tulla that if the Loughshaners chose to elect Mr. Phineas Finn he would not be in the least offended. The electors did elect Mr. Phineas Finn,—perhaps for the reason given by one of the Dublin Conservative papers, which declared that it was all the fault of the Carlton Club in not sending a proper candidate. There was a great deal said about the matter, both in London and Dublin, and the blame was supposed to fall on the joint shoulders of George Morris and his elder brother. In the meantime, our hero, Phineas Finn, had been duly elected member of Parliament for the borough of Loughshane.

The Finn family could not restrain their triumphings at Killaloe, and I do not know that it would have been natural had they done so. A gosling from such a flock does become something of a real swan by getting into Parliament. The doctor had his misgivings,—had great misgivings, fearful forebodings; but there was the young man elected, and he could not help it. He could not refuse his right hand to his son or withdraw his paternal assistance because that son had been specially honoured among the young men of his country. So he pulled out of his hoard what sufficed to pay off outstanding debts,—they were not heavy,—and undertook to allow Phineas two hundred and fifty pounds a year as long as the session should last.

There was a widow lady living at Killaloe who was named Mrs. Flood Jones, and she had a daughter. She had a son also, born to inherit the property of the late Floscabel Flood Jones of Floodborough, as soon as that property should have disembarrassed itself; but with him, now serving with his regiment in India, we shall have no concern. Mrs. Flood Jones was living modestly at Killaloe on her widow's jointure,—Floodborough having, to tell the truth, pretty nearly fallen into absolute ruin,—and with her one daughter, Mary. Now on the evening before the return of Phineas Finn, Esq., M.P., to London, Mrs. and Miss Flood Jones drank tea at the doctor's house.

"It won't make a bit of change in him," Barbara Finn said to her friend Mary, up in some bedroom privacy before the tea-drinking ceremonies had altogether commenced.



"Oh, it must," said Mary.

"I tell you it won't, my dear; he is so good and so true."

"I know he is good, Barbara; and as for truth, there is no question about it, because he has never said a word to me that he might not say to any girl."

"That's nonsense, Mary."

"He never has, then, as sure as the blessed Virgin watches over us;—only you don't believe she does."

"Never mind about the Virgin now, Mary."

"But he never has. Your brother is nothing to me, Barbara."

"Then I hope he will be before the evening is over. He was walking with you all yesterday and the day before."

"Why shouldn't he,—and we that have known each other all our lives?

But, Barbara, pray, pray never say a word of this to any one!"

"Is it I? Wouldn't I cut out my tongue first?"

"I don't know why I let you talk to me in this way. There has never been anything between me and Phineas,—your brother I mean."

"I know whom you mean very well."

"And I feel quite sure that there never will be. Why should there? He'll go out among great people and be a great man; and I've already found out that there's a certain Lady Laura Standish whom he admires very much."

"Lady Laura Fiddlestick!"

"A man in Parliament, you know, may look up to anybody," said Miss Mary Flood Jones.

"I want Phin to look up to you, my dear."

"That wouldn't be looking up. Placed as he is now, that would be looking down; and he is so proud that he'll never do that. But come down, dear, else they'll wonder where we are."

Mary Flood Jones was a little girl about twenty years of age, with the softest hair in the world, of a colour varying between brown and auburn,—for sometimes you would swear it was the one and sometimes the other; and she was as pretty as ever she could be. She was one of those girls, so common in Ireland, whom men, with tastes that way given, feel inclined to take up and devour on the spur of the moment; and when she liked her lion, she had a look about her which seemed to ask to be devoured. There are girls so cold-looking,—pretty girls, too, ladylike, discreet, and armed with all accomplishments,—whom to attack seems to require the same sort of courage, and the same sort of preparation, as a journey in quest of the north-west passage. One thinks of a pedestal near the Athenaeum as the most appropriate and most honourable reward of such courage. But, again, there are other girls to abstain from attacking whom is, to a man of any warmth of temperament, quite impossible. They are like water when one is athirst, like plovers' eggs in March, like cigars when one is out in the autumn.

No one ever dreams of denying himself when such temptation comes in the way. It often happens, however, that in spite of appearances, the water will not come from the well, nor the egg from its shell, nor will the cigar allow itself to be lit. A girl of such appearance, so charming, was Mary Flood Jones of Killaloe, and our hero Phineas was not allowed to thirst in vain for a drop from the cool spring.

When the girls went down into the drawing-room Mary was careful to go to a part of the room quite remote from Phineas, so as to seat herself between Mrs. Finn and Dr. Finn's young partner, Mr. Elias Bodkin, from Ballinasloe. But Mrs. Finn and the Miss Finns and all Killaloe knew that Mary had no love for Mr. Bodkin, and when Mr. Bodkin handed her the hot cake she hardly so much as smiled at him. But in two minutes Phineas was behind her chair, and then she smiled; and in five minutes more she had got herself so twisted round that she was sitting in a corner with Phineas and his sister Barbara; and in two more minutes Barbara had returned to Mr. Elias Bodkin, so that Phineas and Mary were uninterrupted. They manage these things very quickly and very cleverly in Killaloe.

"I shall be off to-morrow morning by the early train," said Phineas.

"So soon;—and when will you have to begin,—in Parliament, I mean?"

"I shall have to take my seat on Friday. I'm going back just in time."

"But when shall we hear of your saying something?"

"Never, probably. Not one in ten who go into Parliament ever do say anything."

"But you will; won't you? I hope you will. I do so hope you will distinguish yourself;—because of your sister, and for the sake of the town, you know."

"And is that all, Mary?"

"Isn't that enough?"

"You don't care a bit about myself, then?"

"You know that I do. Haven't we been friends ever since we were children? Of course it will be a great pride to me that a person whom I have known so intimately should come to be talked about as a great man."

"I shall never be talked about as a great man."

"You're a great man to me already, being in Parliament. Only think;—I never saw a member of Parliament in my life before."

"You've seen the bishop scores of times."

"Is he in Parliament? Ah, but not like you. He couldn't come to be a Cabinet Minister, and one never reads anything about him in the newspapers. I shall expect to see your name, very often, and I shall always look for it. 'Mr. Phineas Finn paired off with Mr. Mildmay.' What is the meaning of pairing off?"

"I'll explain it all to you when I come back, after learning my lesson."

"Mind you do come back. But I don't suppose you ever will. You will be going somewhere to see Lady Laura Standish when you are not wanted in Parliament."

"Lady Laura Standish!"

"And why shouldn't you? Of course, with your prospects, you should go as much as possible among people of that sort. Is Lady Laura very pretty?"

"She's about six feet high."

"Nonsense. I don't believe that."

"She would look as though she were, standing by you."

"Because I am so insignificant and small."

"Because your figure is perfect, and because she is straggling. She is as unlike you as possible in everything. She has thick lumpy red hair, while yours is all silk and softness. She has large hands and feet, and—"

"Why, Phineas, you are making her out to be an ogress, and yet I know that you admire her."

"So I do, because she possesses such an appearance of power. And after all, in spite of the lumpy hair, and in spite of large hands and straggling figure, she is handsome. One can't tell what it is. One can see that she is quite contented with herself, and intends to make others contented with her. And so she does."

"I see you are in love with her, Phineas."

"No; not in love,—not with her at least. Of all men in the world, I suppose that I am the last that has a right to be in love. I daresay I shall marry some day."

"I'm sure I hope you will."

"But not till I'm forty or perhaps fifty years old. If I was not fool enough to have what men call a high ambition I might venture to be in love now."

"I'm sure I'm very glad that you've got a high ambition. It is what every man ought to have; and I've no doubt that we shall hear of your marriage soon,—very soon. And then,—if she can help you in your ambition, we—shall—all—be so—glad."

Phineas did not say a word further then. Perhaps some commotion among the party broke up the little private conversation in the corner. And he was not alone with Mary again till there came a moment for him to put her cloak over her shoulders in the back parlour, while Mrs. Flood Jones was finishing some important narrative to his mother. It was Barbara, I think, who stood in some doorway, and prevented people from passing, and so gave him the opportunity which he abused.

"Mary," said he, taking her in his arms, without a single word of love-making beyond what the reader has heard,— "one kiss before we part."

"No, Phineas, no!" But the kiss had been taken and given before she had even answered him. "Oh, Phineas, you shouldn't!"

"I should. Why shouldn't I? And, Mary, I will have one morsel of your hair."

"You shall not; indeed you shall not!" But the scissors were at hand, and the ringlet was cut and in his pocket before she was ready with her resistance. There was nothing further;—not a word more, and Mary went away with her veil down, under her mother's wing, weeping sweet silent tears which no one saw.

"You do love her; don't you, Phineas?" asked Barbara.

"Bother! Do you go to bed, and don't trouble yourself about such trifles. But mind you're up, old girl, to see me off in the morning."

Everybody was up to see him off in the morning, to give him coffee and good advice, and kisses, and to throw all manner of old shoes after him as he started on his great expedition to Parliament. His father gave him an extra twenty-pound note, and begged him for God's sake to be careful about his money. His mother told him always to have an orange in his pocket when he intended to speak longer than usual. And Barbara in a last whisper begged him never to forget dear Mary Flood Jones.

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### CHAPTER 3. PHINEAS FINN TAKES HIS SEAT

Phineas had many serious, almost solemn thoughts on his journey towards London. I am sorry I must assure my female readers that very few of them had reference to Mary Flood Jones. He had, however, very carefully packed up the tress, and could bring that out for proper acts of erotic worship at seasons in which his mind might be less engaged with affairs of state than it was at present. Would he make a failure of this great matter which he had taken in hand? He could not but tell himself that the chances were twenty to one against him. Now that he looked nearer at it all, the difficulties loomed larger than ever, and the rewards seemed to be less, more difficult of approach, and more evanescent. How many members were there who could never get a hearing! How many who only spoke to fail! How many, who spoke well, who could speak to no effect as far as their own worldly prospects were concerned! He had already known many members of Parliament to whom no outward respect or sign of honour was ever given by any one; and it seemed to him, as he thought over it, that Irish members of Parliament were generally treated with more indifference than any others. There were O'B----- and O'C----- and O'D-----, for whom no one cared a straw, who could hardly get men to dine with them at the club, and yet they were genuine members of Parliament. Why should he ever be better than O'B-----, or O'C-----, or O'D-----? And in what way should he begin to be better? He had an idea of the fashion after which it would be his duty to strive that he might excel those gentlemen. He did not give any of them credit for much earnestness in their country's behalf, and he was minded to be very earnest. He would go to his work honestly and conscientiously, determined to do his duty as best he might, let the results to himself be what they would. This was a noble resolution, and might have been pleasant to him,—had he not remembered that smile of derision which had come over his friend Erle's face when he declared his intention of doing his duty to his country as a Liberal, and not of supporting a party. O'B----- and O'C----- and O'D----- were keen enough to support their party, only they were sometimes a little astray at knowing which was their party for the nonce. He knew that Erle and such men would despise him if he did not fall into the regular groove,—and if the Barrington Erles despised him, what would then be left for him?

His moody thoughts were somewhat dissipated when he found one Laurence Fitzgibbon,—the Honourable Laurence Fitzgibbon,—a special friend of his own, and a very clever fellow, on board the boat as it steamed out of Kingston harbour. Laurence Fitzgibbon had also just been over about his election, and had been returned as a matter of course for his father's county. Laurence Fitzgibbon had sat in the House

for the last fifteen years, and was yet well-nigh as young a man as any in it. And he was a man altogether different from the O'B-----s, O'C-----s, and O'D-----s. Laurence Fitzgibbon could always get the ear of the House if he chose to speak, and his friends declared that he might have been high up in office long since if he would have taken the trouble to work. He was a welcome guest at the houses of the very best people, and was a friend of whom any one might be proud. It had for two years been a feather in the cap of Phineas that he knew Laurence Fitzgibbon. And yet people said that Laurence Fitzgibbon had nothing of his own, and men wondered how he lived. He was the youngest son of Lord Claddagh, an Irish peer with a large family, who could do nothing for Laurence, his favourite child, beyond finding him a seat in Parliament.

"Well, Finn, my boy," said Laurence, shaking hands with the young member on board the steamer, "so you've made it all right at Loughshane." Then Phineas was beginning to tell all the story, the wonderful story, of George Morris and the Earl of Tulla,—how the men of Loughshane had elected him without opposition; how he had been supported by Conservatives as well as Liberals;—how unanimous Loughshane had been in electing him, Phineas Finn, as its representative. But Mr. Fitzgibbon seemed to care very little about all this, and went so far as to declare that those things were accidents which fell out sometimes one way and sometimes another, and were altogether independent of any merit or demerit on the part of the candidate himself. And it was marvellous and almost painful to Phineas that his friend Fitzgibbon should accept the fact of his membership with so little of congratulation,—with absolutely no blowing of trumpets whatever. Had he been elected a member of the municipal corporation of Loughshane, instead of its representative in the British Parliament, Laurence Fitzgibbon could not have made less fuss about it. Phineas was disappointed, but he took the cue from his friend too quickly to show his disappointment. And when, half an hour after their meeting, Fitzgibbon had to be reminded that his companion was not in the House during the last session, Phineas was able to make the remark as though he thought as little about the House as did the old-accustomed member himself.

"As far as I can see as yet," said Fitzgibbon, "we are sure to have seventeen."

"Seventeen?" said Phineas, not quite understanding the meaning of the number quoted.

"A majority of seventeen. There are four Irish counties and three Scotch which haven't returned as yet; but we know pretty well what they'll do. There's a doubt about Tipperary, of course, but whichever gets in of the seven who are standing, it will be a vote on our side. Now the Government can't live against that. The uphill strain is too much for them."

"According to my idea, nothing can justify them in trying to live against a majority."

"That's gammon. When the thing is so equal, anything is fair. But you see they don't like it. Of course there are some among them as hungry as we are; and Dubby would give his toes and fingers to remain in." Dubby was the ordinary name by which, among friends and foes, Mr. Daubeney was known: Mr. Daubeney, who at that time was the leader of the Conservative party in the House of Commons. "But most of them," continued Mr. Fitzgibbon, "prefer the other game, and if you don't care about money, upon my word it's the pleasanter game of the two."

"But the country gets nothing done by a Tory Government."

"As to that, it's six of one and half a dozen of the other. I never knew a government yet that wanted to do anything. Give a government a real strong majority, as the Tories used to have half a century since, and as a matter of course it will do nothing. Why should it? Doing things, as you call it, is only bidding for power,—for patronage and pay."

"And is the country to have no service done?"

"The country gets quite as much service as it pays for,—and perhaps a little more. The clerks in the offices work for the country. And the Ministers work too, if they've got anything to manage. There is plenty of work done;—but of work in Parliament, the less the better, according to my ideas. It's very little that ever is done, and that little is generally too much."

"But the people—"

"Come down and have a glass of brandy-and-water, and leave the people alone for the present. The people can take care of themselves a great deal better than we can take care of them." Mr. Fitzgibbon's doctrine as to the commonwealth was very different from that of Barrington Erle, and was still less to the taste of the new member. Barrington Erle considered that his leader, Mr. Mildmay, should be intrusted to make all necessary changes in the laws, and that an obedient House of Commons should implicitly obey that leader in authorising all changes proposed by him;—but according to Barrington Erle, such changes should be numerous and of great importance, and would, if duly passed into law at his lord's behest, gradually produce such a Whig Utopia in England as has never yet been seen on the face of the earth. Now, according to Mr. Fitzgibbon, the present Utopia would be good enough,—if only he himself might be once more put into possession of a certain semi-political place about the Court, from which he had heretofore drawn £1,000 per annum, without any work, much to his comfort. He made no secret of his ambition, and was chagrined simply at the prospect of having to return to his electors before he could enjoy those good things which he expected to receive from the undoubted majority of seventeen, which had been, or would be, achieved.

"I hate all change as a rule," said Fitzgibbon; "but, upon my word, we ought to alter that. When a fellow has got a crumb of comfort, after waiting for it years and years, and perhaps spending thousands in elections, he has to go back and try his hand again at the last moment, merely in obedience to some antiquated prejudice. Look at poor Jack Bond,—the best friend I ever had in the world. He was wrecked upon that rock for ever. He spent every shilling he had in contesting Romford three times running,—and three times running he got in. Then they made him Vice-Comptroller of the Granaries, and I'm shot if he didn't get spilt at Romford on standing for his re-election!"

"And what became of him?"

"God knows. I think I heard that he married an old woman and settled down somewhere. I know he never came up again. Now, I call that a confounded shame. I suppose I'm safe down in Mayo, but there's no knowing what may happen in these days."

As they parted at Euston Square, Phineas asked his friend some little nervous question as to the best mode of making a first entrance into the House. Would Laurence Fitzgibbon see him through the difficulties of the oath-taking? But Laurence Fitzgibbon made very little of the difficulty. "Oh;—you just come down, and there'll be a rush of fellows, and you'll know everybody. You'll have to hang about for an hour or so, and then you'll get pushed through. There isn't time for much ceremony after a general election."

Phineas reached London early in the morning, and went home to bed for an hour or so. The House was to meet on that very day, and he intended to begin his parliamentary duties at once if he should find it possible to get some one to accompany him; He felt that he should lack courage to go down to Westminster Hall alone, and explain to the policeman and door-keepers that he was the man who had just been elected member for Loughshane. So about noon he went into the Reform Club, and there he found a great crowd of men, among whom there was a plentiful sprinkling of members. Erle saw him in a moment, and came to him with congratulations.

"So you're all right, Finn," said he.

"Yes; I'm all right,—I didn't have much doubt about it when I went over."

"I never heard of a fellow with such a run of luck," said Erle. "It's just one of those flukes that occur once in a dozen elections. Any one on earth might have got in without spending a shilling."

Phineas didn't at all like this. "I don't think any one could have got in," said he, "without knowing Lord Tulla."

"Lord Tulla was nowhere, my dear boy, and could have nothing to say to it. But never mind that. You meet me in the lobby at two. There'll be a lot of us there, and we'll go in together. Have you seen Fitzgibbon?"

Then Barrington Erle went off to other business, and Finn was



congratulated by other men. But it seemed to him that the congratulations of his friends were not hearty. He spoke to some men, of whom he thought that he knew they would have given their eyes to be in Parliament;—and yet they spoke of his success as being a very ordinary thing. "Well, my boy, I hope you like it," said one middle-aged gentleman whom he had known ever since he came up to London. "The difference is between working for nothing and working for money. You'll have to work for nothing now."

"That's about it, I suppose," said Phineas.

"They say the House is a comfortable club," said the middle-aged friend, "but I confess that I shouldn't like being rung away from my dinner myself."

At two punctually Phineas was in the lobby at Westminster, and then he found himself taken into the House with a crowd of other men. The old and young, and they who were neither old nor young, were mingled together, and there seemed to be very little respect of persons. On three or four occasions there was some cheering when a popular man or a great leader came in; but the work of the day left but little clear impression on the mind of the young member. He was confused, half elated, half disappointed, and had not his wits about him. He found himself constantly regretting that he was there; and as constantly telling himself that he, hardly yet twenty-five, without a shilling of his own, had achieved an entrance into that assembly which by the consent of all men is the greatest in the world, and which many of the rich magnates of the country had in vain spent heaps of treasure in their endeavours to open to their own footsteps. He tried hard to realise what he had gained, but the dust and the noise and the crowds and the want of something august to the eye were almost too strong for him. He managed, however, to take the oath early among those who took it, and heard the Queen's speech read and the Address moved and seconded. He was seated very uncomfortably, high up on a back seat, between two men whom he did not know; and he found the speeches to be very long. He had been in the habit of seeing such speeches reported in about a column, and he thought that these speeches must take at least four columns each. He sat out the debate on the Address till the House was adjourned, and then he went away to dine at his club. He did go into the dining-room of the House, but there was a crowd there, and he found himself alone,—and to tell the truth, he was afraid to order his dinner. The nearest approach to a triumph which he had in London came to him from the glory which his election reflected upon his landlady. She was a kindly good motherly soul, whose husband was a journeyman law-stationer, and who kept a very decent house in Great Marlborough Street. Here Phineas had lodged since he had been in London, and was a great favourite. "God bless my soul, Mr. Phineas," said she, "only think of your being a member of Parliament!"

"Yes, I'm a member of Parliament, Mrs. Bunce."

"And you'll go on with the rooms the same as ever? Well, I never thought to have a member of Parliament in 'em."

Mrs. Bunce really had realised the magnitude of the step which her lodger had taken, and Phineas was grateful to her.

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## CHAPTER 4. LADY LAURA STANDISH

Phineas, in describing Lady Laura Standish to Mary Flood Jones at Killaloe, had not painted her in very glowing colours. Nevertheless he admired Lady Laura very much, and she was worthy of admiration. It was probably the greatest pride of our hero's life that Lady Laura Standish was his friend, and that she had instigated him to undertake the risk of parliamentary life. Lady Laura was intimate also with Barrington Erle, who was, in some distant degree, her cousin; and Phineas was not without a suspicion that his selection for Loughshane, from out of all the young liberal candidates, may have been in some degree owing to Lady Laura's influence with Barrington Erle. He was not unwilling that it should be so; for though, as he had repeatedly told himself, he was by no means in love with Lady Laura,—who was, as he imagined, somewhat older than himself,—nevertheless, he would feel gratified at accepting anything from her hands, and he felt a keen desire for some increase to those ties of friendship which bound them together. No;—he was not in love with Lady Laura Standish. He had not the remotest idea of asking her to be his wife. So he told himself, both before he went over for his election, and after his return. When he had found himself in a corner with poor little Mary Flood Jones, he had kissed her as a matter of course; but he did not think that he could, in any circumstances, be tempted to kiss Lady Laura. He supposed that he was in love with his darling little Mary,—after a fashion. Of course, it could never come to anything, because of the circumstances of his life, which were so imperious to him. He was not in love with Lady Laura, and yet he hoped that his intimacy with her might come to much. He had more than once asked himself how he would feel when somebody else came to be really in love with Lady Laura,—for she was by no means a woman to lack lovers,—when some one else should be in love with her, and be received by her as a lover; but this question he had never been able to answer. There were many questions about himself which he usually answered by telling himself that it was his fate to walk over volcanoes. "Of course, I shall be blown into atoms some fine day," he would say; "but after all, that is better than being slowly boiled down into pulp."

The House had met on a Friday, again on the Saturday morning, and the debate on the Address had been adjourned till the Monday. On the Sunday, Phineas determined that he would see Lady Laura. She professed to be always at home on Sunday, and from three to four in the afternoon her drawing-room would probably be half full of people. There would, at any rate, be comers and goers, who would prevent anything like real conversation between himself and her. But for a few minutes before that he might probably find her alone, and he was most

anxious to see whether her reception of him, as a member of Parliament, would be in any degree warmer than that of his other friends. Hitherto he had found no such warmth since he came to London, excepting that which had glowed in the bosom of Mrs. Bunce. Lady Laura Standish was the daughter of the Earl of Brentford, and was the only remaining lady of the Earl's family. The Countess had been long dead; and Lady Emily, the younger daughter, who had been the great beauty of her day, was now the wife of a Russian nobleman whom she had persisted in preferring to any of her English suitors, and lived at St. Petersburg. There was an aunt, old Lady Laura, who came up to town about the middle of May; but she was always in the country except for some six weeks in the season. There was a certain Lord Chiltern, the Earl's son and heir, who did indeed live at the family town house in Portman Square; but Lord Chiltern was a man of whom Lady Laura's set did not often speak, and Phineas, frequently as he had been at the house, had never seen Lord Chiltern there. He was a young nobleman of whom various accounts were given by various people; but I fear that the account most readily accepted in London attributed to him a great intimacy with the affairs at Newmarket, and a partiality for convivial pleasures. Respecting Lord Chiltern Phineas had never as yet exchanged a word with Lady Laura. With her father he was acquainted, as he had dined perhaps half a dozen times at the house. The point in Lord Brentford's character which had more than any other struck our hero, was the unlimited confidence which he seemed to place in his daughter. Lady Laura seemed to have perfect power of doing what she pleased. She was much more mistress of herself than if she had been the wife instead of the daughter of the Earl of Brentford,—and she seemed to be quite as much mistress of the house.

Phineas had declared at Killaloe that Lady Laura was six feet high, that she had red hair, that her figure was straggling, and that her hands and feet were large. She was in fact about five feet seven in height, and she carried her height well. There was something of nobility in her gait, and she seemed thus to be taller than her inches. Her hair was in truth red,—of a deep thorough redness. Her brother's hair was the same; and so had been that of her father, before it had become sandy with age. Her sister's had been of a soft auburn hue, and hers had been said to be the prettiest head of hair in Europe at the time of her marriage. But in these days we have got to like red hair, and Lady Laura's was not supposed to stand in the way of her being considered a beauty. Her face was very fair, though it lacked that softness which we all love in women. Her eyes, which were large and bright, and very clear, never seemed to quail, never rose and sunk or showed themselves to be afraid of their own power. Indeed, Lady Laura Standish had nothing of fear about her. Her nose was perfectly cut, but was rather large, having the slightest possible tendency to be aquiline. Her mouth also was large, but was full

of expression, and her teeth were perfect. Her complexion was very bright, but in spite of its brightness she never blushed. The shades of her complexion were set and steady. Those who knew her said that her heart was so fully under command that nothing could stir her blood to any sudden motion. As to that accusation of straggling which had been made against her, it had sprung from ill-natured observation of her modes of sitting. She never straggled when she stood or walked; but she would lean forward when sitting, as a man does, and would use her arms in talking, and would put her hand over her face, and pass her fingers through her hair,—after the fashion of men rather than of women;—and she seemed to despise that soft quiescence of her sex in which are generally found so many charms. Her hands and feet were large,—as was her whole frame. Such was Lady Laura Standish; and Phineas Finn had been untrue to himself and to his own appreciation of the lady when he had described her in disparaging terms to Mary Flood Jones. But, though he had spoken of Lady Laura in disparaging terms, he had so spoken of her as to make Miss Flood Jones quite understand that he thought a great deal about Lady Laura.

And now, early on the Sunday, he made his way to Portman Square in order that he might learn whether there might be any sympathy for him there. Hitherto he had found none. Everything had been terribly dry and hard, and he had gathered as yet none of the fruit which he had expected that his good fortune would bear for him. It is true that he had not as yet gone among any friends, except those of his club, and men who were in the House along with him;—and at the club it might be that there were some who envied him his good fortune, and others who thought nothing of it because it had been theirs for years. Now he would try a friend who, he hoped, could sympathise; and therefore he called in Portman Square at about half-past two on the Sunday morning. Yes,—Lady Laura was in the drawing-room. The hall-porter admitted as much, but evidently seemed to think that he had been disturbed from his dinner before his time. Phineas did not care a straw for the hall-porter. If Lady Laura were not kind to him, he would never trouble that hall-porter again. He was especially sore at this moment because a valued friend, the barrister with whom he had been reading for the last three years, had spent the best part of an hour that Sunday morning in proving to him that he had as good as ruined himself. "When I first heard it, of course I thought you had inherited a fortune," said Mr. Low. "I have inherited nothing," Phineas replied;—"not a penny; and I never shall." Then Mr. Low had opened his eyes very wide, and shaken his head very sadly, and had whistled.

"I am so glad you have come, Mr. Finn," said Lady Laura, meeting Phineas half-way across the large room.

"Thanks," said he, as he took her hand.

"I thought that perhaps you would manage to see me before any one else was here."

"Well;—to tell the truth, I have wished it; though I can hardly tell why."

"I can tell you why, Mr. Finn. But never mind;—come and sit down. I am so very glad that you have been successful;—so very glad. You know I told you that I should never think much of you if you did not at least try it."

"And therefore I did try."

"And have succeeded. Faint heart, you know, never did any good. I think it is a man's duty to make his way into the House;—that is, if he ever means to be anybody. Of course it is not every man who can get there by the time that he is five-and-twenty."

"Every friend that I have in the world says that I have ruined myself."

"No;—I don't say so," said Lady Laura.

"And you are worth all the others put together. It is such a comfort to have some one to say a cheery word to one."

"You shall hear nothing but cheery words here. Papa shall say cheery words to you that shall be better than mine, because they shall be weighted with the wisdom of age. I have heard him say twenty times that the earlier a man goes into the House the better. There is much to learn."

"But your father was thinking of men of fortune."

"Not at all;—of younger brothers, and barristers, and of men who have their way to make, as you have. Let me see,—can you dine here on Wednesday? There will be no party, of course, but papa will want to shake hands with you; and you legislators of the Lower House are more easily reached on Wednesdays than on any other day."

"I shall be delighted," said Phineas, feeling, however, that he did not expect much sympathy from Lord Brentford.

"Mr. Kennedy dines here;—you know Mr. Kennedy, of Loughlinter; and we will ask your friend Mr. Fitzgibbon. There will be nobody else. As for catching Barrington Erle, that is out of the question at such a time as this."

"But going back to my being ruined—" said Phineas, after a pause.

"Don't think of anything so disagreeable."

"You must not suppose that I am afraid of it. I was going to say that there are worse things than ruin,—or, at any rate, than the chance of ruin. Supposing that I have to emigrate and skin sheep, what does it matter? I myself, being unencumbered, have myself as my own property to do what I like with. With Nelson it was Westminster Abbey or a peerage. With me it is parliamentary success or sheep-skinning."

"There shall be no sheep-skinning, Mr. Finn. I will guarantee you."

"Then I shall be safe."

At that moment the door of the room was opened, and a man entered with quick steps, came a few yards in, and then retreated, slamming the