

"Oh, well," said the King; and thrust out his hand to be kissed.

Chris did not know how they got out of the room. They kissed hands again; the old man muttered out his thanks; but he seemed bewildered by the rush of events, and the supreme surprise. Chris, as he backed away from the presence, saw for the last time those narrow royal eyes fixed on him, still bright with amusement and expectancy, and the great red-fringed cheeks creased about the tiny mouth with an effort to keep back laughter. Why was the King laughing, he wondered?

They waited a few minutes in the ante-room for the order that the Archbishop had whispered to them should be sent out immediately. They said nothing to one another—but the three sat close, looking into one another's eyes now and again in astonishment and joy, while Mr. Herries stood a little apart solemn and happy at the importance of the rôle he had played in the whole affair, and disdaining even to look at the rest of the company who sat on chairs and watched the party.

The secretary came to them in a few minutes, and handed them the order.

"My Lord of Canterbury is detained," he said; "he bade me tell you gentlemen that he could not see you again."

Sir James was standing up and examining the order.

"For four?" he said.

"Why, yes," said the secretary, and glanced at the four men.

Chris put his hand on his father's arm.

"It is all well," he whispered, "say nothing more. It will do for Beatrice."