

of colour and light. Four footmen on either side held aloft flaring torches. The flames fell on their liveries of scarlet and gold, and a great crimson coach and its four black horses, harnessed with an abundance of glittering brass. As the three came up the door was flung wide. A blaze of clearer, whiter light shot out, and through it came a woman white and dazzling as the light itself. Her dress was white, and whiter still her shoulders and arms. In the little hollow below her neck one big diamond shone with many coloured flames. Her dark hair hung in ringlets round her temples. She walked with a strange smooth step that bore her sailing on like a swan upon the waters. Behind her was a handsome, lusty fellow in green velvet and a yellow periwig, smiling, mightily pleased with himself.

But Mr. Dane was not pleased. He sprang down and thrust forward to her side, leaving in Mr. Healy's ears the sound of a muttered oath. Mr. Healy, hearing also the scrape of hoofs, turned to find that M. de Beaujeu had reined back to the shadow, whence came the sound of his harsh, scornful laugh. "Now, where is the humour?" Mr. Healy inquired of himself.

"La, Mr. Dane!" cried the lady laughing and giving him her hand. "I go to sing to the King. Is he not blessed?"

"Beyond his deserts, ma'am," said Mr. Dane. "Would I were King!" he sighed amorously. And again Mr. Healy heard the laugh of Beaujeu.

"Then Majesty would be better favoured," said the lady smiling. "Would he not, my Lord Sherborne?" she turned to her cavalier.

"For the body, ma'am, yes. For the brains—oh, God save us!" and my lord handed her in laughing.

"My lord!" cried Mr. Dane, catching at the carriage door.

"Your Majesty—good night!" said my lord. "Go early to bed!" and with that and the laughter of the lady and my lord the carriage rolled away down the hill to Whitehall with the footmen running beside the horses.