

the truth out," says he wearily. My lady again tittered. There was the pause of a moment while Sunderland sucked in his breath. Then, "Mistress Charlbury, have you ever supposed," Sunderland put his finger-tips together and looked at them, "that M. de Beaujeu might be other than he declares himself?"

"I, my lord? No, indeed!"

"Oh, Delila, Delila!" my lady sighed in monsieur's ear.

"Ah. Never thought that he might be concerned in plots against his Majesty?"

Rose seemed amazed. Then she laughed. "M. de Beaujeu, my lord? Oh, if you knew him! 'Tis a gentleman concerned only with his pleasures and himself!"

"Neatly true, faith," my lady murmured.

"It appears you know him well?" said my lord sharply.

Rose blushed: "I have cause," she said in a low voice.

"Oh, has he wronged you?" the King asked curiously.

"I make no complaint of him, your Majesty."

"Then if you know him well," cried Sunderland, "how do you dare say he is not intent on treason?"

"'Tis because I do know him well that I say it, my lord."

"What?" Sunderland drew down his narrow brows.

"When my lord Sherborne tells us that he spent Wednesday se'nnight and Friday till the small hours plotting with Whigs?"

"It cannot be," Rose murmured: and Sherborne laughed.

"Nay, we have it on my lord Sherborne's word. Do you answer that, Mistress Charlbury?"

The three men stared at her, and she at the ground a moment: then a blush rose swift from her bosom. "I know well why my lord Sherborne should say it," she said. Then looked up defiant: "I know well, my lord!"

"So, ma'am, so. Why?" says Majesty, much interested.

"On those nights M. de Beaujeu was with me." Her voice was clear, and she met Majesty's eyes, but her cheeks flamed.