

In the autumn of 1716, an unwonted visitor appeared at St. Germain's, and requested the honour of a presentation to the queen-mother, as Mary Beatrice was called there. This was no other than the young marquess of Wharton, the son of one of the leaders of the revolution of 1688. He had been sent to finish his education in republican and Calvinistic principles at Geneva, and, out of sheer perversity, broke from his governor, travelled post to Lyons, whence he sent a present of a valuable horse to the chevalier de St. George, with a request to be permitted to pay his homage to him. The exiled prince sent one of his equerries to conduct him to his little court at Avignon, where he gave him a flattering reception, invested him with the order of the Garter, and admitted him into the number of his secret adherents. Wharton then proceeded to St. Germain's to pay his court to queen Mary Beatrice.¹ Information of Wharton's presentation to the widowed consort of James II. having been conveyed to lord Stair, that statesman made a point of expostulating with him very seriously on his proceedings, as likely to have a ruinous effect on his prospects in life, and earnestly recommended him to follow the example of his late father, the friend and counsellor of William III. Wharton made a bitterly sarcastic retort; for he had wit at will, and used that dangerous weapon, as he did all the other talents which had been entrusted to him, with a reckless disregard to consequences. Wharton was a character made up of selfisms,—a spoiled child of fortune, whose whim had been a law both to himself and all around him. He had never felt the necessity of caution, a quality in which villains of high degree are often found deficient. His apparent artlessness, at first, inspired confidence in those who did not perceive the difference between candour and audacity. The captivating manners and brilliant accomplishments of this young nobleman made a very agreeable impression on the exiled queen and her little court; but he was, in reality, a false diamond of the same class as Bolingbroke, equally devoid of religion, moral worth, or political honour, and proved, ultimately, almost as mis-

¹ Life of Philip, duke of Wharton.