

at all at such a time; as also for bidding his brother "not to let poor Nell starve"; but for myself I cannot understand such blame at all. If ever there were two poor souls who needed care and forgiveness it was those two women, Mrs. Nell and Her Grace.

All his natural sons were there—all except the Duke of Monmouth whose name never passed his lips from the beginning of his sickness to the end—and these too he recommended to his brother—the three sons of the Duchess of Cleveland, and the rest. I do not wonder that he left out His Grace of Monmouth: it seems to me very near prophetic of what was to fall presently, when the Duke was to revolt against his new Sovereign and suffer the last penalty for it, at his hands. But His Majesty blessed all the rest of his children one by one, drawing them down to him upon the bed—they weeping aloud, as I heard.

A very strange scene followed this. One of the Bishops fell down upon his knees, and begged him, who was the "Lord's Anointed"—(and anointed too, lately, in a fashion the Bishop never dreamed of!)—to bless all that were there, since they were all his children, and all his subjects too. The Bedchamber was now full from end to end; and all the company fell together upon their knees. His Majesty raising himself in bed, first begged the pardon of all in a loud voice for anything in which he had acted contrary to the interests of his country or the principles of good government; and then, still in a loud voice, pronounced a blessing on them all. Then he fell back again upon his pillows.

So that night went slowly by. The dogs were still in the room, whining from time to time, as Mr. Chiffinch told me afterwards—(for it was thought better that I myself, as one so deeply involved in what had lately passed should not be present)—and one of the little dogs sought repeatedly to leap upon the bed, but was prevented; and at last was carried away, crying. Again and again first one Bishop and then another begged him to receive the sacrament; but he would not: so they prayed by him instead, which was all they could do.

At about six o'clock, when dawn came, he begged that the curtains of his bed might be drawn back yet further,