

This in due time was told to Marvell, and though it puzzled him some, he was quite ready to obey the order for the sake of the invitation and the glimmer of hope the hearing it gave him.

On the morning of the next day Tobiah said to Virtue, "I expect one to sup to-night," and he bade her make needful preparations.

She made them, but without any spirit or lightness of heart ; very sure was she now that Marvell had gone back to his old allegiance. When the hour of supper approached, Tobiah bade her dress herself ; she did so, donning the snuff-coloured gown the good man had given her at the last Christmas, by which time in her rapid growth she had outgrown the one he gave her before. She did not decorate herself that evening, she had no heart, only folded a white kerchief about her shoulders. But while she stood by her chamber window to fasten the folds she heard a voice in the street. At the sound of it the colour flushed up in her cheeks, and turning about she sighted the rose some child had given her that morning. She took it and put it in her breast, though the roses in her cheeks were pinker still when she came down the steep narrow stairs.

Supper would have been a quiet meal had it not been for Tobiah, neither Virtue nor Marvell had much to say ; but the worthy Dissenter held suitable discourse. When all was done he said, "Before going further I have a word to say to you, concerning a matter whereof I have heard three several accounts. It is touching the affair of your wedding, Richard Marvell."

"Oh !" said Marvell, and "Ah !" said Virtue, and the one went red and the other white. But Tobiah continued without regarding them : "You told me a