

it up, the English lords who sat within reach disdaining to touch it. Then Lord Portland made a long arm, and taking the paper with Dutch phlegm and deliberation opened it.

"Have I your Majesty's leave?" he said; and the King nodding peevishly, "This is not his Grace's handwriting," the Dutch lord continued, pursing up his lips, and looking dubiously at the script before him.

"No, but it is his signature!" Smith retorted, fiercely. And so set was he on this last card he was playing, that his eyes started from his head, and the veins rose thick on his hands where they clutched the table before him.

"It is his hand at foot. That I swear!"

"Truly, my man, I think it is," Lord Portland answered, coolly. "Shall I read the letter, sir?"

"What is it?" asked the King, with irritation.

"It appears to be a letter to the Duke of Berwick, at the late Bishop of Chester's house in Hogsden Gardens, bidding him look to himself, as his lodging was known," Lord Portland answered, leisurely running his eye down the lines as he spoke.

It was wonderful to see what a sudden gravity fell on the faces at the table. This touched some home. This was a hundred times more likely as a charge than that which had fallen through. Could it be that after all the man had his Grace on the hip? Lord Marlborough showed his emotion by a face more than commonly serene; Admiral Russell by a sudden flush; Godolphin by the attention he paid to the table before him. Nor was Smith behindhand in noting the effect produced. For an instant he towered high, his stern face gleaming with malevolent triumph. He thought that the tables were turned.

Then, "In whose hand is the body of the paper?" the King asked.

"Your Majesty's," Lord Portland answered, with a