

more. More than ever he seemed to himself a man in a fairy tale. "And damnable well 'twill serve our turn," said Beaujeu suddenly. "Good night."

"Oh, good night to you," cried Healy, staring at the shut door. Then took off his wig and scratched his head. "Will you tell me now," says he to his pipe, "am I real?"

## CHAPTER X

### MR. WHARTON

ON the next night Mr. Wharton had a little party of Whigs: Mr. Edward Russell, the Earl of Twyford, the Earl of Laleham, and Mr. Jack Dane—and Mr. Wharton zealously passed the wine and they debated gravely, thus:

"Tom Wharton, you rogue, who's the woman in the black mask?" cried the Earl of Twyford.

"Which of 'em?" says Wharton coolly. "Here? Or in Mulberry Garden? Or the fat dame of Fetter Lane? Or——"

"Fie! Think of Jack Dane's moralities. Grafton saw you by Turnham Green."

Mr. Wharton laughed easily, "Oh, that!" He shook his head. "Find your own women, Harry. Mine are dear."

"Zounds, they get so little of you, they're devilish greedy to your successors. Jim Bellasyse is cleaned by your little brown wench from Whetstone Park."

Mr. Russell drank off his wine. "What Jim ever saw in that natural the devil can tell."

"Humph! Just a woman." Mr. Wharton explained, "But the devil doubtless knows very well."

"Meaning that you do," cried Twyford.

"Mellow your wit, Harry," Mr. Wharton laughed and passed the bottle.

The Earl of Twyford drank a bumper, and, turning up his eyes to heaven: "Now, Tom Wharton," says he piously, "no