

bury. A physician who had charge of the royal retorts and crucibles happened to be present. He had no lancet, but he opened a vein with a penknife. He was laid on his bed, where, during a short time, the Duchess of Portsmouth hung over him with the familiarity of a wife. But the alarm had been given. The queen and the Duchess of York were hastening to the room. The favourite concubine was forced to retire to her own apartments. Those apartments had been thrice pulled down and thrice rebuilt by her lover to gratify her caprice. Several fine paintings, which properly belonged to the queen, had been transferred to the dwelling of the mistress. The sideboards were piled with richly-wrought plate. In the niches stood cabinets, the masterpieces of Japanese art. On the hangings, fresh from the looms of Paris, were depicted, in tints which no English tapestry could rival, birds of gorgeous plumage, landscapes, hunting matches, the lordly terrace of St. Germain's, the statues and fountains of Versailles. In the midst of this splendor, purchased by guilt and shame, the unhappy woman gave herself up to an agony of grief, which, to do her justice, was not wholly selfish.

And now the gates of Whitehall, which ordinarily stood open to all comers, were closed; but persons whose faces were known were still permitted to enter. The antechambers and galleries were soon filled to overflowing, and even the sick-room was crowded with peers, privy counsellors, and foreign ministers. All the medical men of note in London were summoned. So high did political animosity run, that the presence of some Whig physicians was regarded as an extraordinary circumstance. One Roman Catholic whose skill was then widely renowned, Doctor Thomas Short, was in attendance. Several of the prescriptions have been preserved. One of them is signed by fourteen doctors. The patient was bled largely. Hot iron was applied to his head. A loathsome volatile salt, extracted from human skulls, was forced into his mouth. He recovered his senses: but he was evidently in a situation of extreme danger.

The queen was for a time assiduous in her attendance. The Duke of York scarcely left his brother's bedside. The primate and four other bishops were then

in London. They remained at Whitehall all day, and took it by turns to sit up at night in the king's room. The news of his illness filled the capital with sorrow and dismay; for his easy temper and affable manners had won the affection of a large part of the nation, and those who most disliked him preferred his unprincipled levity to the stern and earnest bigotry of his brother.

On the morning of Thursday, the fifth of February, the London Gazette announced that his Majesty was going on well, and was thought by the physicians to be out of danger. The bells of all the churches rang merrily, and preparations for bonfires were made in the streets; but in the evening it was known that a relapse had taken place, and that the medical attendants had given up all hope. The public mind was greatly disturbed; but there was no disposition to tumult. The Duke of York, who had already taken on himself to give orders, ascertained that the city was perfectly quiet, and that he might without difficulty be proclaimed as soon as his brother should expire.

The king was in great pain, and complained that he felt as if a fire was burning within him; yet he bore up against his sufferings with a fortitude which did not seem to belong to his soft and luxurious nature. The sight of his misery affected his wife so much that she fainted, and was carried senseless to her chamber. The prelates who were in waiting had from the first exhorted him to prepare for his end. They now thought it their duty to address him in a still more urgent manner. William Sancroft, archbishop of Canterbury, an honest and pious, though narrow-minded man, used great freedom. "It is time," he said, "to speak out; for, sir, you are about to appear before a Judge who is no respecter of persons." The king answered not a word.

Thomas Ken, bishop of Bath and Wells, then tried his powers of persuasion. He was a man of parts and learning, of quick sensibility and stainless virtue. His elaborate works have long been forgotten, but his morning and evening hymns are still repeated daily in thousands of dwellings. Though, like most of his order, zealous for monarchy, he was no sycophant. Before he became a bishop, he had maintained the honor of his gown by