

"What reason can you give for this attack?" William asked sharply.

"He was jealous, I think, because I was with his cousin, whom I believe he cherishes some affection for."

Sir Leslie spoke then for the first time.

"We are wandering from the point, sire," he said harshly, "let us put to this young man a single question; are you a follower of that fellow Stuart or do you deny him?"

Sir Michael ignored him entirely, and turned his eyes again to the slightly worried face of the King.

"If Your Majesty has any more questions to ask of me, I will be pleased to answer," said he quite coolly.

King William thought some time before he replied rather deliberately and sadly, "I fear me, Sir Michael, that Sir Leslie is right, and I fear that I must ask of you if you are a follower of James Stuart, the claimant of the British crown. Think well before you answer, sir, for I honor veracity with all my heart, and should I exact a promise of fidelity to the English Crown from you, I would be pleased to spare you."

Sir Michael with bowed head began to speak, but before he could pronounce two words, there was a scuffle at the door and an airy muffled figure burst in, bringing with it some of the sunshine and perfumed fragrance of the great out-of-doors.

"Such a time to convince the guards to let me in," said a cheerful, decidedly feminine voice. "Now," it went on, "I can answer your question, King William. Sir Michael O'Connor is a peaceful Irish country-gentleman, who has taken up arms for neither party in our civil strife, no matter how his sympathies may be. What Sir Leslie heard as a condemning fact was but an idle jest. More than that, I can prove what I say. First, let me explain why I did not come at first and save all this trouble. I hoped there would be no trial, that Sir Michael would be dismissed as soon as he conversed with you. But when the trial came I had to help get Sir Leslie off from home; then, of course, mother had to be quieted, and I feared I was late by the time I had slunk off and got here. Now for my proof. This paper, Your Majesty, should suffice," she handed William a folded document.

He read slowly, then his face beamed.

"Miss X!" he exclaimed.

"Cousin!" admonished Sir Leslie.

"Darling," said Sir Michael.

"Now, sire," went on Nora, in her business like way, for it was indeed our image, "for a little further explanation. The night before last, dressed as a boy I followed James Stuart from a house in St. Patrick's Place to a dark alley. He was with two gentlemen dressed as Hessian Hussars. Evidently they heard me, for they turned into a dark alley, wheeled and surprised me. There was a brief skirmish and I—I was slightly wounded in the side. They tossed me over a wall into a sluggish stream that flows among the wharves to the sea. The cold water revived me and I climbed out