

"Do you marvel that I am come to you?" said she. "I have taken back my pledge for to-night. 'Twas for your father's sake, poor gentleman, and not for mine own, that I pledged my word at first. Did you not know the reason?"

Then she told me, how that when my father had come to Itchen Abbas, upon the day when Sir Harry had refused my suit, he had come with intent to borrow monies to pay his gripe of a Jew. There were old affairs, it appeared, betwixt Mr. Nettlestone and Sir Harry, which (in a word) had left Sir Harry straitly bound to my father. Nevertheless, Sir Harry bluffed and swore, making oath that he would never part with so much as a groat unless Mr. Nettlestone pledged his honour that I, Roger Nettlestone, should totally resign Elizabeth. This my father did willingly; whereupon Sir Harry, to make all sure, called Elizabeth, and told her the whole matter, and required her pledge also. What could she do but give her promise?