

THE LOST DESPATCH

terror. "I give you my word Nancy will henceforth be loyal to our Government."

"Seems to me you are promising a good deal," said Lincoln, dryly.

"You *will* let me?"—eagerly.

"Die in her stead? No."

"And you are right," declared Nancy, as Goddard stooped over her to hide his bitter disappointment. "I will not accept such a sacrifice."

"'Greater love hath no man,'" quoted Lincoln softly. "You have warm friends, Nancy. Doctor Boyd was with me at noon. He told me that your father on his death-bed made you swear that you would do your utmost to assist the Confederacy. Is that so?"

"Yes." Nancy raised her head bravely and met unflinchingly the gaze of the saddest eyes she had ever seen in human head. "But it was not only that, Mr. President. Like all loyal Virginians, I loved and believed in the Cause."

"As I believe in *my* Cause, Nancy. Suppose we leave Cause and effect to our Maker; He knows and will not judge our errors harshly, for God is love. The fighting is practically over. Dear child, are you willing to trust to me to heal the war-hurt, and to accept the protection of the