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*Mistress Nell*

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ester. "Guilty or not guilty, wench?"

"Not guilty, Sire! Did you ever see the man who was?"

The King laughed despite himself, followed by his ever-aping courtiers.

"I'll plead for the Crown," asserted the grim James, with great vehemence, "to rid the realm of this dancing-Jack."

"Thou hast cause, brother," laughed the King. "Rochester, thou shalt sit by us here."

Rochester sprang, with a contented chuckle, into a chair on the opposite side of the table to that upon which his Majesty was holding his mock-court and seated himself upon its high back, so poised as not to fall. From this lofty bench, with a queer gurgle, to say nothing of a swelling of the chest, and with an approving glance from his Majesty, he added his mite to the all-inspiring dignity of the revellers' court.

"Judge Rochester!" continued the King, slapping him with his glove, across the table. "Judge—of good ale. We'll confer with the cups, imbibe the statutes