

CHAPTER XV.-(Continued.) She laughed and said I had learnt in the school of Catherine de Medici to make pretty speeches, and I must flatteries, neatly turned though they were. Or perhaps Walsingham him self had taught me my lesson?

I answered (God forgive me) in the words of Holy Scripture : "Sapiens es sieut angelus Dei !" Nothing escapes your Majesty's penetration ! True it is that my uncle spoke in similar terms of pour Majesty's almost superhuman beauty, but now my own eyes tell me that far from saying too much, his expression fell short of the truth. "

A murmur of approval and assent ran through the assembled bystanders. The Queen gave me a gracious pat with one of the gold tassels hanging from her girdle, saying, "Rise up Master St. Barbe, and follow us in the hall of audience. We must have some conversation with you"

It was plain that the Queen's vanity was tickled, and it has always been a puzzle to me how a rational being, perfectly aware of the falsity of these flatteries, should still take pleasure in them. Many an envious glance was directed towards me, as I followed in the Queen's train.

Amongst the maids of honor I saw Miss Occil. Our eyes met; I fanof appoyance, if not scorn on account of the flatteries I had been uttering. The contemptibility of such hollow sycophancy was borne in upon me forcibly, and I felt heartily ashamed of myself.

While this was passing in my mind the Queen had entered the audience chamber with her suite, Your Majesty every day." and taken her seat on a gilt arm chair, beneath a canopy of blue

the Lord Chamberlain. Besides my self a few of the nobles and ladies of the Court had the honor to be present at this andience, when various peti tioners made their requests to the Queen. I do not remember what the petition consisted in : they were of the nature usually asked of crowned heads. Elizabeth refused some with bitter irony , others are granted; almost invariably, she listened favorably to the application of Oatholic nobles who having apostasized, asked for a share in the property of other members of the family, confiscated on account of the owner's adhesion to his faith. But these favors-the reward of apostacywere often accorded grudgingly and scornfully, as one might throw a dog a bone and give him a kick at the same time.

Presently, it was my lot to witness a scene which will ever remain impressed on my memory. Lady Tre gian was announced, and the Groom of the Chambers ushered in a gentle Yeoman of distinguished appearance, dressed in black, still young, but pale and worn with grief. She led by the hand two little boys and s girl, wearing a white frock, held on to the skirt of her gown. On hearing the name of Tregian, an angry frown contracted Elizabeth's brow : this the lady appeared Lot to notice, at any rate she did not heed it, so bent was she on making her plaint for her petition heard. Throwing herself at the Queen's feet, with her children, she addressed her, at first with a trembling voice, but afterwards with the courage of despair, somewhat in this wise :

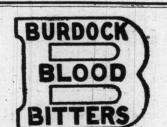
"Since your Majesty wields supreme power in this land, and is the earthly representative of the Divine Majesty, your subjects may claim your protection and help in this distress. I venture therefore to approach in my hour of trouble, and to implore for God's sake a gracious hearing on behalf of my unfortunate husband, who has languished in prison for many years, and on behalf of these innocent childr on ."

Elizabeth interrupted her impatiently. "If we were to listen to the gossip of all the women in the kingdom, she said, " little time would be left for the weighty affairs of the State that engross our attention. Make your story short, good woman. Who are you ? What do you want ?"

A flush overspread the countenance of the suppliant, betraying the vexation aroused by this unkindly rebuff. Quickly mastering her emotion, she continued, with the ntmost composure of manner: am the unhappy wife of Lord Francis Tregian, who is distantly related to the Royal House of Tudor. We lived in peace and comfort at our Castle near Launceston in Cornwall until on the testimony of a perjared villain, a wandering musician, bribed by our enemies to work our ruin, thing will. my husband was accused of harbor-

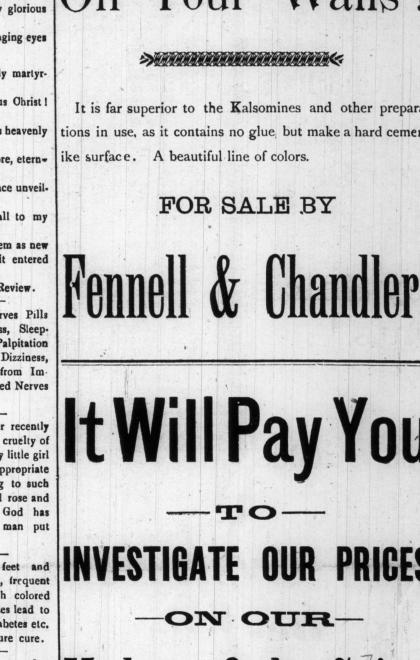
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