## THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE

## SECRET.

## OHAFTEB XXX - (Continued.)

" Hoot, awa wi' ye, ye lesy, guid-for-nathin haggis," olied Nell; "wha gars ye sit doon there sic fashion? Up wi'ye, map, an dinus keep blowin' and reulin' that gate, like a stuck porpla."

"Nell, Nell, I say wilt answer me a simple question?"

"Ay; out wit."

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"Humph out wi't," repeated the fat host of the Whitehorse, who had thus thrown himself down to die, from sweat and exhaustion, in his endeavor to reach Whinstone Hollow. = Out wit; ay, that's always the way-always in a hurry ; hugh I never, never giving time, But hark thee, Nell, hark thee, and tell me inly, hast soy old grudge against me, for which thou wouldst be avenged ?"

"Why, ye puir, dait, silly saul, what gradge oud I has agin ye?'

"And dost not know that I weigh three hundred and odd pounde, ch ?"

"Weel, an gin ye weigh four hundher, what's that to do wi't ?"

"And this here place where I sit," consinued Oliver, "is two long miles from the Peacook.

"Ay, is't? I'll no deny that."

"And thou knowest well my father, honest man-hugh !--- died of surfeit."

"Ay, dia he, puir fellow, guid rest his saul; his fat choked him as mornin' gaein' up his ain stairs."

" True; and now, with all that knowledge, thou wouldst order me here at this hour, on some damnable affair o' thine,--hugh ! hugh ! - which, if it kill me not in the outset, by loss o' sweat and overstretching o' lung, will most likely send me to the gallows in the end. Hugh | grace and patience ! what a plight I'm in! Marry, woman, look at me; here I'm slitting on this tuft of grass, a man of three hundred pounds and odd, who has not walked a mile on foot, except-hugh! how the sweat streams off mel-except on thy errands, and from my own fireside to the top; sy, marry, here am I, after bobbing and cousing on a pillion thirteen grod miles to the Peacock, on a high-trotting Flemish horse, and falling from his back on the pavement. Hugh | my head's still dumfounded with the awful shock and after having it broken and plastered over with that barber's most willanous balsam, then stumbled and foundered over roots of trees and brushwoodhugh! hugh! grace and patience-ay, for two long miles in quest of a place called Whinstone Hollow-why, woman, an that be not murder with intent to kill, an it be not a dev'lish plot against my life, why, then, tell me, what is it ?"

Hand yer tongue, man, and get ye up; is this a fittin' time to clover aboot sic trifles ?'

"Trifies!" gramercy, woman, trifies! d'ye sall the loss of human life a trifls? Ah, Nell, Nell, thou never hadst much sympathy for sorporal distress," groaned out Oliver, endea-woring, with great exertion and waste of strength, to regain his feet.

"Hugh! hugh!' Le ejsoulated, as he rose up at lust, and leaned back against a tree; grace and patience ! how stiff my joints have become all of a sudden ! Well, now toit again," he added; "to it sgale, and finish the work thou hast so pobly begun. Marry shall I run barefoot to London to buy thee an apron string, or catch thee a rabbit for thy supper, or challenge Kit Harlow, the mad poet, who's so remarkably thin of ficab, to fight me with the long rapier, or-

"Haud yer peace, haud yer peace, man, an tinna mak sican a rout. or well draw the solks frae the cabin do .... taere, aboot yer

ings."
Well," pursued Offv ' proceed; sy, sy, proceed with thy sentence, and fail not, I yray thee, through foolish delicacy-hugh! filings of tin, and strangled babes. Noll'l Hugh-hu !? "Doll thaw the wisen frae ye, for a bletherin' ekyte," cried Nell, as soon as Oliver's older." cough had interrupted his direiul category; wha gats ye aye rin on that gate? When I come t'ye for a bit favor, it's mathin' but a

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hale string o' ill names an upcastins I'm greated wi??"

"Harkee, Nell; thou canst not deny thou hast a most villainous, unsavory repute." "Weel, an wha cares?" responded Neil. " li I maun spac a fortune aince an again, an play cantrips to blindfauld my enemies, for a lawin' honest purpose, whay shud I fash my-sel about ithers' opinions? I has a mission, man, that stands muckle in need o' some sic

awsome repute to carry it on wi'." "True, Nell, most true; but didst never suspect thy ill name might one day tuck thee up in the gallows, and send thy associate and abetter of witchotaft, a certain Oliver Good. niff, to dangle at thy side for a warning to all good Ohristians ?"

Here the door of the hut opened, and Nell seeing the danger of prolonging the conference in such a place, seized Oliver by the sleeve, and towed him off, in somewhat of a hurry, on his way to the village, cautioning him all the time to be prudent and careful in his conduct of the business intrusted to his management; whilst he, on the other hand, suffering her to drag him away, kept constantly beseching her to travel at a slower pace, and to remember there was a triffing difference, in respect of agility, between Nell

Gower and Oliver Goodniff.

## CHAPTEB XXXI.

When the spacwife returned to the hut, after parting with Oliver, she found the Earl of Leicester sitting in a corner, wrapped in his cloak, with his mask on, as she first saw him at the cavern, and Southron standing at the door scemingly impatient at her delay. The light, which came from the dying embers on the rude hearth, was so faint as barely to reveal the shadowy form of the earl, as he sat, moody and solitary, leaning against the wall in the remotest corner of the cabin. The strict sileace he maintained lest Southron might detect him, or afterwards recognize him by his voice, gave him leisure to meditate on the plans he had formed for his future guidance in his intercourse with Elisabeth. He feit the die was now cast, and that life and death depended on his advoitness in managing ner, through fear of exposure. He had himself witnessed the effect which his mere hint at the life of the royal babe had produced on her bold and stubborn heart, in the scene of the antechamber. He saw how the very thought had crushed her in the presence of her assembled courtiers, in whose sight she was never before known to quall. And yet he felt it was a dangeaous experiment; for the woman who laughed to soorn the rumors already circulated concerning her amorons intrigues, might, in a moment of revengeful passion, send him to the block, and with her oustomary effrontery defy his charges and his posthumous claims. She was not a simple, gentle Amy Robeart, whom he might appease by flattery or soothe by blandishments, and who loved him with a pure and disinterested affection, but a woman as cunning as a serpent, and as revengeful as a tigress; a woman who loved him with the heart of a Jezebel and the vulgarity of a courtesan. He was, indeed, well convinced of the difficulty of managing such a woman, and nothing but his own

presumptuous self-reliance, and his insatiable ambition, could have prompted him to undertake the task. Himself a confirmed libertine, he had no real love for Elizabeth ; had he but once seen himself king consort he would have shown his contempt for ber after their union, as manifest as his pretended love before it. And thus it was, Elizabeth enamored of the person of the earl and the earl enamored of the throne of the queen. Lelcester, in the absence of Nell Gower, was cautionsly weighing these perplexing matters over in his mind, and making out for himself the only course which his late interview with the queen had left open to him, namely, perseverance in pressing his claim on her regards, and using it as a means to accomplish the object of his ambition. As Nell Gower entered the hut, Lelcester rose, and waving his hand as a sign for Southron to withdraw, approached the spacwife.

Noll, jackdaws and ravens e'er thon'st a day

"He, ba!" obvokled Nell ; "ye'd frighten an anid woman, wad yo? Hs, ha !" "An old devil, rather," replied the car), provoked more and more at her contempt of his threat.

"Ou, sy; sm an auld deevil jist noo; but when ye cam to secure my services, a night nas sas lang gane, I was e'en a wise, carefu', sonsy auld woman; an if ye dinna forget, I tould ye then ye'd see me burnt wi' fagots the next minit after I'd hae done yer biddin'. Ov, I ken ye well, my Lord o' Leicester; I kenned ye sin' yer on the maddened multitude. At this monursery days, and could tell ye mair o' yer doins than ye wot o'; so jist yo. keep a quist tongue in yer head, an gang yer ain gate, ne'er mindin' yer neebors, for ye'il fin' enough to do, I ween.

Ay, ay, gaug yer ain gate, and mak yer ain way after yer ain fashion, for by my hopes o' mercy, Bobert Dudley, in yer, strivin' to reach the throne, or the block, gin ye come foul c' the Scotch spacewife, she'll mak ye repent o't ilka day o' yer life."

"A murrain take thee, old witch," oried the earl; "I'm sorely tempted to order that fellow without there to fling thee over the precipice."

"Ye wouldna di that, my Lord, tor an earl's ransom."

"How so, dame ?"

"Ou, ye ken a trick worth twa o't ; ye didna clap yer een yet on the bairn, ye ken. If ye aince get haud o' that, guid faith, I wouldna, for my suld gray cloak, bide wi'ln sirm's length o' ye, or that dour chiel withoot there. But come awa, an daff yer cloak an mask, an in yer ain proper person gie this Plimpton orders to gang hame agin wi' his warrint, whilst I manage to let him see the queen's ain handwritin' an seal to the license."

"Ah, I had almost forgotten that; pray let me see the paper."

"Na, na," responded Nell, "I dinna carry sic a precious trist aboot me; there's nathin' wrong in the drawin' o't, I hope." " Nothing," said the earl.

" Nathing ava ?"

"Nought that I know of."

" Barrin' that it's yer ain writin', or, to speak mair plainly, a forgery," she whispered, approaching a step, and stretching out her | ye ! and bury yer skiens to the hilt in them. neck in mook confidence to the earl, "an A perjured queen an' her fause minion might yet be an unco awkward thing in has boken raith wi' ye, an' there's the angry queen's possession. "" ever mathing now to depend on but yer ain strong arms. Look here!" she cried, cester for presuming too much on the strength c' a delicate secret."

Leicester gazed at the old woman a second or two in an attitude of surprise, not knowing how to reply to the startling revelation; and Nell looked at him as fixedly, and judged from the heaving of his chest and twitching of his mask, that the words were producing the effect she anticipated.

Leicester, when he wrole this license, and appended to it the signature and seal of her majesty, never suspected it would cause him the least uneasiness. He gave it, as he supposed, to please a foolish old orone, who expressed an eccentric predilection for a most extraordinary place of residence, and concluded the affair would never again bespoken of. In fact, so unimportant an act did the forgery acem to him, under the cironmstances, that he would quite have forgotten It, had not his thoughts of the child occasionally recalled it to his memory. But now, the oir-cumstances had somewhat changed; he was no longer in a position to take such a liberty with inpunity. The queen had been out-raged by his audacious conduct in the antechamber; and how did he know, if this paper once fell into her hands, but she might, es the old womau said, make it a pretence to rid herself of his annoyance.

"Wilt thou return me the document?" a length demanded Laicester.

bear of thy connecting it with this affair of no blood might be shed in the holy thine, I'll have thy carcass thrown to the place; but his words were lost or unheeded in the confusion. The soldiers then rallied, and, smarting under the shame; of defeat, and respirotoed, as they were, by some of their comrades from without, drew their swords, and made a desperate and indisoriminate attack on the defenceless Catholics through all parts of the chapel; and the yells and cries that followed their sword thrusts, and blows of their carabines, occasioned a scene of indescribable terror and confusion. Again the priest was heard imploring the soldiers to desist, and promising submission on the part of the unfortunate Catholics ; but his entreaties had little effect ment a sharp cry came up from the middle

submit, without further resistance, to the queen's officer. In a second after a shot was fired, that rang along the vaulted roo), and echoed through the passages without. The aim was the deliberate and unerring aim of a marksman; for the ball passed through the priest's forehead, as he turned with uplifted hands a third time to deprecate the fury of the soldiere, and he fell back against the altar, his brains scattered on the antependum. Then was heard a yell of such terrible anguish from the spectators of the murder, as human error never heard before; and in the midst of the Neil Gower, with her hood thrown back, her gray hairs streaming behind her,

and a gleaming dagger in her hand, came driving towards the altar. When Alice saw Father Peter lying dead, with his vestments still upon him, she gazed silently on his face for an instant. It was a gaze of unutterable anguish; she neither moved nor wept, but stood over him like a statue. Then. as the terriple truth gradually unfolded itself down, and falling upon his breast, lay there the ciborium and hand it to the soldier, in speechless agony.

"Where's the Earl of Leicester?" cried Nell Gower; "can he be here an stan' calmly by to winess this butchery? is this his promise of sanctuary preevilege ? is this the protection o' a queen's license ? On wi' ye, Catholics I" she vociferated, jumping on a rock near the altar, and waving the degger above her head-" on wi pointing to the dead ; "here's a sight to look upon; yer ain pricet, that tended ye in yer sickness an yer sorrow; that prayed for ye car an late; that loed ye an yeirs we' a' the fondness o' a father-behauld him here dead at the altar. An ye has sauls in yer bodies, or bluid it yer veive, can ye bear this sight? Will fence of the honor of my God ; ay, and drink ye those this?" she vcolferated, as the tears it to the hilt if thou but touch with the tip streamed down her writkled checks, and al. of thy finger this sacred treasure." most choked her utterance. "On, on wi' ye!

an let yer dirks rive ilka heart G' them." The Gaberluzzle, now in the dress of a pricet, the same to which Alice had failed to her not." recognize him before at the door of her little cell, made his way through the crowd, and commanded Nell Gower to desist from her inflammatory harangue,

"Is this the conduct of a Christian and a Oatholio?" he cried ; "down with thee, wc-man, and see to thy charge, there ; it's more "N befitting thee, I trow, than thus to excite the have strength to guard it." fury of these men. O God !" he added, as another shot and another scream broke on his ear, "save thy suffering people."

"Hoot, awa wi' ye, father Henry ! are we to blde here to be stain without an effort to blood-stained, his leit arm slung in a red slik | nier face nor a brawer airm than his this side defend oursels? Here, my lads," she cried to some of those near her, tak him ahint | appeared at the side of the dauntless girl. the rock there, and haud him weel. We canna spare writher life like his; awa till a's ower. Hugh l" she ejaculated, as a

" Gramercy, woman," replied the fellow. endeavoring to shake her off with brutal vic-lence, "what care I for thy sacrament? This render to the afforts of the queen's majesty. v seel's my booty, and by \_\_\_\_\_ I'll have it." See to it, inaves, "he oried, "that ye dis-"As they valuest thy salvation, give it to me," entreated the trembling girl. "I will thuse brawlers." And thou, sir," he con-tinued, turning to O'Brien, " who art thou, repay thes a hundred fold. Here, here, take who would thus strangle a fallen adver-all my jewels; they are a hundred times its sary?" worth to thee; but spare me this. O air-air. pray thes touch it not.",

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"Away there, away, with a wannion t'ye, thou saucy wench," he muttered in reply to her samest entreaty; and ahaking her free of his arm, sgain snatohed at the olborium. But Alloe was too, quick for him; ere ne ac-covered from the powerful exertion pray, master?" to throw her off, she "The Barl of Lelcester, if it so please thee, bounded past him like an arrow, and securing the saored vessel, sprang with of the chapel, and the name of Alice Went- securing the sacred vessel, sprang with worth was headd, distinctly pronounced by a it clasped in her arms to hide it behind the strong, coarse voice, commanding her to altar. But she was not destined to escape so easily ; for just as she gained the corner, she was stopped by Sir Thomas Plimpton himself. He had already searched for her through every part of the chapel, fighting his way as he went, and always mistaking her person, through means of the black scari which Nell Gower had thrown over her shoulders to mislead Millar. Now, however, he had little doubt of her identity, even though her long, shining tresses had fallen down and partly concealed her face. He needed but the single glance of her dark,

The instant the devoted girl saw who barred the passage, she halted suddenly on her step, and drawing herself up to her full height, gazed fixedly on the dark face of her persecutor.

"Surrender thyself, fair maiden," he commanded, bowing low, and dropping the point of his blood-stained sword. "I attach thee under warrant of arrest." And so sayto her bewildered brain, she slowly sank ing, he stretched forth his left hand to seize who stood hard by claiming it as his right. Alice spoke not a word, but still gazed at him, like a young Pythoness her bosom heaving with indignation, and her form as firm and erect as a statue. As Plimpton approached the sacred vessel, she drew forth the dagger from her heart, which she carried from Brockton, and pricked his fingers so painfully that he started back, exclaiming.-

"What, maiden ! I knew not thon hadet carried such sharp weapons. Ah, by my halihat dome, Mistress Alice, thy temper is much changed of late."

"This is the vessel that contains the Holy of Holies," responded Alice, in a calm but firm voice. "God willeth that I guard it, albeit unworthy the trust. And as this dag ger once shed royal blood in defence of my mother's honor it shall now shed thine in de-

"Hoa there, varlets ! why stand ye staring at the silly wench?" shouted Plimpton; "pinion her behind there, but ses ye harm

"O man," cried Alice, with a burst of enthusiastic confidence in the power of God, "neither thyself nor thy minions have power to pinion me whilst I hold this blessed cup." "Give it me," said Plimpton, again advan-

"Never," cried Alice, "while I live and

Two of the soldiers now made a motion to execute the orders of their master, when a shout was heard behind, and then a tall, musscarf, and followed by Nell Gower, suddenly "Which of ye dares molest this maiden ?"

he demanded, stepping before Alice and lookwi' him back there, an dinna let him budge ing round till his eye fell upon Plimpton. Foor Alice! the moment she heard the mgth demanded Leicester. "Ne," responded Nell; "I'll keep it to re- the Gaberlunzia had disappeared in the side her, and feit sure of his protection, her dead, whilst Nell thus spoke her simple but woman's heart could no longer sustain the struggle she had so long maintained " I'll give thee gold for it." By this time every soldier from without against the natural weakness of her sex, "Hoor, mani I diana care a thistle down had poured in, and made an onslaught and she sank down insensible at his feet, against the natural weakness of her sex, still holding her hands folded over the sacred vessel, and pressing it to her bosom. "O God of my fathere," cried the Gaberlunzle, who had witnessed the whole scene from behind the altar, where he remained still met his. He approached and spoke to her that arm through all the vicissitudes of the guarded; "I thank thee for that sight. It re- low and tenderly; but she replied not in bloody fray; and as the soldiers fell, crushed pays me for years of suffering. Alice, Alice, Alice, her heart was too full to speak; she

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doublet and close-fitting hose, and ordered all "" See to it, knaves," he oried, " that ye dis-

"Nay, sir, thou mistakest; be's but a trescherous dog, and deserveth to be strangled under the heel of every honest man he chances to come foul of."

"Dog, or devil, Sir Stranger, let him rise, I command thes." "Thou commandest! and who art thou,

sir; and thou,-ah, my good sooth,-if I mistake not, the very hero of the Tartan bonnet. Spurn him from thee, and let him rise, sir; he's not worthy to wipe the feet of so gallant a fellow as the costard monger of mid-summer eve. So ho, Sir Thomas Plimpton," he added, as the latter rose inexpressibly crestfallen and disappointed at the turn things had taken, and mortified by the presence of the carl, his bitter enemy. "Marry, sir, thou'rt in a corry plight, methinks; but get thee gone -get thee gone, and take thy followers with thee, and see to it thon'rt forthcoming on the morrow, when this matter shall be investigated. As to the prisoners here, I shall answer for them myself,"

Plimpton seemed doubting for an instant whether he should resist or obey the order.

"Thou'rt my superior officer, my lord captain," said he at length, biting his lip, and casting a ferocious look at the earl, " and therefore I must needs submit. But we shall meet again. As for this meddler." he added, casting a side glance at O'Brien, who stood leaning on his sword, eying him with a smile of unutterable scorn, "I've a debt to pay him, and he shall have it in proper season."

" Nay, sir, not to me, not to me," responded Bodger, with the same contemptuous smile; "I'll send thee my henchman, for thon'rt a most treacherous and cowardly bind, and unworthy the courtesy of knight or gentleman.

When Plimpton and his surviving followers had lett the cavern, carrying with them the dead and wounded of the party, Leicester turned to look for Nell Gower and the child. He found the old woman sitting on the ground, behind the altar, supporting the head of the dead priest upon her lap, and Alice beside her, resting hers on the breast of the Gaberlunzie.

O'Brien followed the earl, and stood for a while sliently gazing on the face of the priest. Once only he cast a furtive glance towards Alloe, as ff he wished, yet feared, to look at her in her hour of sorrow. Nell saw him, and muttered, in answer to his thoughts,--

"Ay, man, he was her godiather; 'twas himsel atood up for her at the blessed font; ay, 'deed was't, an the puir wee bairn, when she cudna spak used run aye to greet him wi' the sign o' the cross, ilka time he'd come to Brockton. Frae that hour to this, she was aye his theme, when he'd sit down wi' us to has a bit crack roun the chimney neuk. An after he took orders, an cam down here whiles to say the mass, Wullie Hasleton, the auld clerk, ust aye hear him whisperin' the same of Alice Wentworth in his prayers. But he's gone frae her noo, puir thing; he's dead and gone. Mony a hunt they gaed him these twa years, and mony's the hill he orassed 'tween here and Allanbury, or Glastonbury, as the new-fangied name gaes; an in cular, active young man, his jerkin torn and troth, Bodger O'Brien, there was nae a bonthe border. But he didna care for thas things, this mony a year, beein' a priest c' God, a man o' peace. O, ay, was he lad," she oried, bending down to kiss his forehead, "and died for his auld faith, lik a brave, dauntless sol-

dier as he was, wi' his armor on ."

delicacy! gramercy on't !- fail not to speak shy wishes concerning the manner of my death. I only stipulate, if it so please thee, that it be somewhat sudden, and require not an over exertion o' lung or limb." "The dell tak yer tongue; canna ye keep

it frae waggin' for as minit?" oried Nell, making Oliver by the arm. "Hearken to me, man; there's a wee bit bairn here ye maun tak under yer charge."

"A bairn! woman-who, grace and pa-Mence !' "Whisht, ye bletherin' clift; has ye na

TESSOD AVA ?" "A bairn ! O, doubtless, thou'lt strap it

on my shoulders, cradic and blankets, and ail the other appendages; eb, marry, and send me tumbling back again to Wimbleton."

4 Listen. Ye'll return without delay to the Peacock, and bide ye there till Southron ca's for ve wi' the child. An dinna forget to tak tent, that is disna is', whilst yer jerkin' up an doun on the pillion."

"Grace and patience, Nell ! on the pillion didst thou say ? On the pillion ? I carry a ohild en a pillion ?"

"Hush, man, an be na sae glegg. An min when ye come to the Whitehorse, ye'll no be surprised to see two three lrish lads, wi' blue blouses, makin' merry wi' yer ale. An gin they pick a quarrel wi' Southron, and tak awa the bairn from his custody, why, ye can blusther, ye ken, an gie them a wallop o' a cudgel now an they, to show yer no privy to the plot. But dinna fash yersel aboot the wee donny thing, honest Oilver, for ye maun be sure it will is' into guid and carefu hands"

"Humph ?' said the innkeeper, when Nell had communicated her wishes, "and so it was for this instruction thoust brought me hither fifteen miles-two on foot and thirteen on horseback.'

"Ay, an wad has brought ye as mony mair, on the same erran'. Ou, trust me couain, it's na common brat o' some nameless light o' love, or Nell Gower wadna trouble hersel sas muckle about its safe keepin'; na, ns, Oliver, the puir thing may yet repay ye for a' the ills ye has suffered on its acooupt."

"But why didst not come thyself, with thy instructions ?" demanded Oliver, somewhat wratby at Nell, for thus needlessly dragging him out on so long and fatiguing a journey. "Thou wert lighter of foot, methinks, to trip it to Wimbleton on thine own business than Oliver Goodniff to run to Whinstone Hollow for Information that doth ·but little concern him."

" Ou, ye dinna ken, man, ye dinna ken, it may yet concern ye mair than ye wot o'; ye has na forgotion the auld waa's o' Westlow Abbey yit, and the wierd woman's prophecy-

' In twenty years more ye'll be just two score There's a secret that night to be t ld, That will wake ye, or ward ye, for a queen will reward ye With a collar of hemp or gold.' "

" Nell, Nell," oried Oliver, shaking his head doubtingly, " I fear me much the hem- aback by the recognition. pin one's the more likely. And it's not soul by wicked practices, like other women of doubtful repute, nor, if I may say it, required many deeds of darkness at my hands ;

"Why hast thou come hither without the babe?" he brgan. "E'en to mak a condition wi' ye ere I part

wi't," promptly replied Nell. "Ab. theu wouldst bargain once more ?"

"Ou, na, I canna say it's a bargain either;

only jist to remind ye that ye maunua see the queen's promise o' sanctuary rights to Whinstane Hollow braken to yer vera face an no mak an effort to prevent it." "Who dares disrespect the royal license?"

demanded Leicester.

"One Sir Thomas Plimpton, at yer service, wha comeg wi's troop o' soldiers, an a warrint frae her majesty's ain hand and seal, to

search for pricets an mass mongers, an aboon a' for ane Alice Wentworth, that's noo under my special protection.

"By my halidome this is strange," muttered the earl; "I had thought this man had gone to Scotland this morn. Where is he?" "Doon by there, amang the rooks in the hollow "

"Bath he much force of ercort?"

"Ay, I'll be bound has he, twa three sozen men or mair, an waits only for the return o' a spy he sent to the cavern, to spier after the bit lassie. If ye dinna mak haste, ye'll be ower late to stap him. An gin he ance maks his way in, ye'll has trouble to set him out.

"Aud the child; where may the child 4. 73

"Ou, dinna fret yersel aboot the bairn; ye'll has it gien ye, sale an soun, as soon's ye send Plimpton awa."

"But I'm unattended, my good woman, and cannot therefore compel him to leave; besides, I feel no desire to be recognized at such a time and place."

"Weel, woel, just as ye like it, but I maun hand the child till ye mak guid the queen's promise;" and Nell made a motion towards the door.

"If thou'lt give the babe to this fellow without further delay, I shall hasten to the court, and return with sufficient force to defend the cavern, and give safe escort to all its

inmates beyond the forest." "Ou, ay ;it wud be the auld story, 1'll warrint : get hand o' yer sin, and the deil tak the rest."

"No; I promise thee right faithfully -"Pugh i my Lord Leicester, I wudna gie a bodie for yer promise, or the queen's either," interrupted Nell.

"Ah! how knowest thou I'm Lord Lelcester ?" demanded the earl, somewhat taken

"I spaed it, my lord; didna ye learn frae that thou hast done much down the queen how I tauld fortunes, an tuck right evil either in thy time, nor perilled thy bairns' lives, an concocted poisons, an a' that? bairns' lives, an concocted poisons, an a' that? Hoot, my lord, ye surely didna take me for sa blate a body as no to spier after yer name." but, Nell, Nell, thou hast a most damnable in a tone of vexation and disappointment, under the feet of the combatants. The name; the very sound of it tells of old bones, " I would have thee speak of it with proper priset, now released for an instant from the priset, now released for an instant from the barrent barren in a tone of vexation and disappointment, under the feet of the combatants. The wrist. and oriokets' legs, and bolling cauldrons, and respect; for by my good faith, if I but once hands of the soldiers, begged carnestly that ' sir; 'tis the Holy Eucharist."

mind ye o' my past services, gin I e'er hap. | men's arms; 'ain minit mair wad taen a prepen to get in trouble."

for a' the goud in yer coffers. I tauld ye aince on the people, without distinction of afore, that goud and siller cud buy na comforts for me. So come awa to the cave, my guid lord, or bide here, just as ye like it." And Nell opened the door, and disappeared without further parley.

Re-entering the passage leading to the chapel, she heard Millar conversing with some one on his way out, and suspected he was communicating to a messenger from shot forth once more the enthusiastic fire the impatient Sir Thomas the cause of his of her youth. delay.

The mass had well nigh ended, the holy communion given to the faithful, and Alice Wentworth just returned to her place, after receiving the blessed sacrament, when Nell, walking stealthily up the aisle, knelt down behind the young girl. Hardly had she done so, however, when a clatter and sirush, as of armed men, was heard at the door.

Every eye turned in the direction of the featful sounds, and every form, bent and prostrated before the sacred altar, as if moved by one common impuise, rose up simultan. eously, and turned round to gaze back, like a herd of startled deer, back, when the first distant bay of the hounds breaks upon their ears. The women trembled with fear, and backed through the crowd in the direction of the altar, or clung to the arms of their husbands and friends for protection; and the men drew their swords and dirks from upder their cloaks and jer-

kins, and prepared to defend themselves. The instant Nell heard the first sound from the corridor without, she plucked from Alics's neck the red scarf she wore, and substituting

black one, directed her to keep among the women near the altar as much as possible. "What mummery is this?" demanded Plimpton, advancing with his sword drawn, Father Peter conveyed, "come down, or and flinging down the missal from which the thou'lt be lost; listen, they're shouting thy pricet was commencing to read the concluding prayer. "I arrest thee, Sir Mumbler, in the queen's name; hos there, men; tear off these gewgaws, and bind him in irons."

"Away, fellow! take thy hands off, and pollute not the sacred vestments!" orled one of the Oatholic gentlemen, who had stationed himself near the priest as soon as he heard the first rush of the sol. diere. "Away, caltiff!" he shouted, throwing aside his cloak and drawing his rapier, "or the sanotuary itself will not save thee."

Plimpton's followers, in obedience to orders, had laid hold of Father Peter, and commenced to tear off the vestments. when some half dozen peasants came driving on in a body from the direction of the door, and, snatching their daggers from their belts, attacked the soldiers. They struck, however, with the handles of their weapons, probably from an unwillingness to shed blood, and especially in a place so sacred. One of the soldiers, who had torn the chasuble, or outer vestment, almost entirely off the

cloue lite."

age or sex. Every arm in the chapel appeared raised in a deadly fight; but there was one seen to wave above the rest, and prostrate all before it. Nell's glance followed

"O, guid God!" she cried : "gle us but a

sirs, what a sough's in his blows! On wi' ye, sits, what a sought it has blown. On why it, my bra young callent, an avenge the murder him to come on. o' God's minister. Down wi' them, my bonnie "Saxon dog," he cried; "I have searched had, down wi' the dogs o' hell, down wi' for thee long, but have found thee at last. them."

Here a number of shots were fired, as the soldiers succeeded for a time in extricating on this craven hind. O for one stout arm!" their fire arms from the crush of their assailants; some of the balls taking fatal effect, bursting from his guarda, and rushing and others wounding, or flattoning harmlessly forth with the daggen in his hand on the rooks. In the midst of this discharge, which he snatched from Alloc's un-Nell stood upon the rock, waving her dirk conscious grasp. "Here 14 is, my with her right hand, whilst she threw back gallant boy; it hath fougut many a fair her long hair with her left. Her gray locks, failing from the roll in which she always kept | it may once, at least, protect the honor of the them hound up, almost reached her feet; her King of kings. On with thee, my brave motions and gesticulations, as she swaved young soldier; resistance is no longer a crime, from side to side, lent an impressiveness and but a duty." force to her words that seemed to infuse fire into the hearts of the Catholics. And as stanning blow from the handle of his dagger,

illumined her flushed and flery countenance, she seemed like Hecate baranguing the Faries.

"Nell, dear Nell," oried the trembling Alice, who had now ventured out from behind the altar, where she had the body of name; they're firing at thee. O, dear Nell, expose not thyself thus."

"Aws, awa wi'ye bairn, and dinna mind me," responded Nell in a hoarse, exhausted voice, "what care I for their powder and balls, their bolts an arrows? They cauna harm me. God has gien me mony a long year to live for his ain holy purposes, an a' the desvils in earth or hell canna hurt a hair o' my head. Awa wi'ye, lassie, an save yersel. On wi' ye, Oatholics," she resumed, again waving her dagger-"on wi ye, an fight for yer altars; down wi' the dogs,

an' dinna "pare a coward heart o' them." Whilst Nell spoke thus, a wave of the turious crowd rolled up and broke against the altar, driving the old woman from her tribune, and soattering some of the sacred vessels on the floor. The gold ciborium, in which the blessaed sacrament was kept, just then attracted the notice of one of the soldiers, and he made an attempt to snatch it from the alter, with, no doubt, the intention of appropriating it as his share of the plunpriest, received a blow on the temple from der. But Allee, who had turned to secrete the hard knuckles of a stalwart fellow in a herself behind the rock, perceiving the man's blue gabardine, that sent him with a thud object, and trembling with fear and indignaagainst the wall, whence he sank down sense- tion at the bare thought of the outrage he less on the pavement. Another fell at the might offer the sacred body of her Bedeemer, "Whatever be my name," replied the earl first moment of attack, and was crushed sprang forward, and caught him firmly by the

"Touch it not," she oried; "touch it not,

one or two others, removed her. O'Brien, then turning on Plimpton, who had just raised dozen arms like that to defend us. Heegh, his rapler to stab him from behind, leansd his back against the wall, and shouted to

> O for one stout arm to keep off these blood hounds, while I avenge the murdered priest "Here it is," shouted the Gaberiunzie, fight for the honor of a perjured king

Whilst the Gaberlunzle, with many a the glance of the torches along the walls wielded sure and strong in his weil-trained arm, kept off the followers of Plimpton from overpowering their master's assailant; the latter struggled desperately with his opponent. Exhausted from fatigue and loss of blood, and having his left arm broken by a builet in the beginning of the fray, he fought against overwhelming odds. Plimptov, on the other hand, inflamed with jealousy. and maddened with rage at this attempt of the young irishman to rescue his prize a third time, struck and thrust with his rapier in all the fury of revenge and despair.

The quarrel, however, lasted not long, for Plimpton's rage soon exhausted his strength. than ye wot o'. But let's guide our Belying, as he did, more upon force than skill, in the management of his weapon, his passes were made with so murderous an impetuosity that he exposed himself more than once to his adversary's cooler weapon. It was after seeing one or two blunders of this kind, so unusual in honor able fight, and which he was by no means prepared to expect that O'Brien resolved not to let the next pass with impunity ; and silding his sword up under that of his antagonist, as the latter missed his longe, fairly ran it through his sword arm. The instant Plimpton felt himself wounded, he threw himself down, and sued for quarter; but O'Brien, unwilling to treat so mean a villain on easy terms. placed his toot on his neck, and orushing him beneath it, commanded him to renounce all protended claims which the queen's war. rant had given, or would yet give him, to the custody of Alice Wentworth. Ere the fallen man, however, could mumble a syliable in reply, a tall, noble-looking personage, wearing a white plume in his connet, appeared at the head of some tweaty men, armed with and may be, for aught I ken to the contrary, sword and buckler, and dressed in light-blue

affecting panegyric, his lips twitching, and his breast heaving with emotion as he gazed and listened. But when she at length concluded, the noble, generous fellow could no longer restrain his tears, and kneeling down, he fervently klased the pale forehead of the confessor.

As he slowly rose up again, Alice's eye one by one under its terrible blows, her thou has well proved thyself the daughter of did better, gentle reader; she took old checks finesed fresh again, and her eye Annie Howard." shot forth once more the enthusiastic fire As the girl fell, Nell Gower, assisted by lips, and wet it with her tears -- the holiest tribute of gratitude she could offer him for his veneration of the dead. Leicester, seeing her take the young man's hand, looked iu her modest face and sighed, libertine as he was, when her guileless simplicity recalled the memory of his gentle Amy Robsart.

In the silence that now prevailed, a tiny scream was heard in a distant part of the oavern.

"Come," said Leicester, beckoning to Nell Gower, "I would speak with thec."

The old woman rose up, and conducted him to the place where she had left Whitret Macbairn in charge of the infant.

It was then arranged that the dwarf should carry the child to Southron, who still remained expecting it at the hut; that Alice and Bodger O'Brien should accompany the earl to the royal palace, not as prisoners under Plimpton's warrant of arrest, but as free petitioners to her majesty; and that the Gaberlunzie, with the other surviving Catholics, should remain unmolested to bury the dead and carry home their wounded.

" There's se thing mair, my Lord Leicester, whilk I'd mak bauld to remind ye o'," observed Nell, "and that's cen jist this-that shud ill betide un assie at the hands o' this Plimpton, or 'e queen's, I'll hand ye accountable for't."

"Me accountable hs, ha !" laughed Leicester; "why, woman, thou speakest like an empress."

"Weel, weel, man, ye need na laugh an tak on that gate," responded Nell; "I ken the power I has ower ye weel enough, and tak care I dinna mak yersel ken it sooner business canny and fairly ; let's gie and tak, een though the ain be a mighty carl, an the ither a blatherin', daft auld spaewife. Ou, ay, let's gie and tak-gle me yer protection lor as bairn, an I'll gie ye my secrecy for the titber."

"And what knowest thou of secrets respecting this child ?" said Leicester, assuming a composure he was far from feeling.

"Ha, hal did ye no hear I was a Scotch spacwife?' resumed Nell.

"Ay, marry, have I; and what of that?" "Hand out yer han', an come ye nearer the

light," she replied. "I'll tell ye a' the secrets o' the bairn in a clappin'."

The earl assented, and held out his jewelled hand

"Now," said Nell, looking at it under the torchlight, "there's a wee spot there, that's ay termed a secret; it's a red mark or blemlah, as ye may ca' it. Weel, sae far sae guid; and these sax lines here, runnin' slantin into't, we ca' the guards, or secret keepers. This ain ye see's blacker than a' the rest,

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