

Ah ! it had come ; his heart gave a leap and seemed to cease.

" Your Grace must forgive me, but I cannot consent."

There was a dead silence ; when Anthony looked up, she was staring at him with the frankest astonishment.

" Did you think, Mr. Norris, you could be at Court and say mass too whenever you wished ?" Her voice rang harsh and shrill ; her anger was rising.

" I was not sure what your Grace intended for me."

" The fellow is mad," she said, still staring at him.

" Oh ! take care, take care !"

" Your Grace knows I intend no insolence."

" You mean to say, Mr. Norris, that you will not take a pardon and a post at Court on those terms ?"

Anthony bowed ; he could not trust himself to speak, so bitter was the reaction.

" But, see man, you fool ; if you die as a traitor you will never say mass again either."

" But that will not be with my consent, your Grace."

" And you refuse the pardon ?"

" On those terms, your Grace, I must."

" Well——" and she was silent a moment, " you are a fool, sir."

Anthony bowed again.

" But I like courage.—Well, then, you will not be my servant ?"

" I have ever been that, your Grace ; and ever will be."

" Well, well,—but not at Court ?"

" Ah ! your Grace knows I cannot," cried Anthony, and his voice rang sorrowfully.

Again there was silence.

" You must have your way, sir. poor Minnie's sake ; but it passes my understanding what you mean by it. And let me tell you that not many have their way with me, rather than mine."

Again hope leapt up in his heart. The Queen then was not so ungracious.

He looked up and smiled—and down again.

" Why, the man's lips are all a-quiver. What ails him ?"

" It is your Grace's kindness."