THE QUEEN'S SECRET.

CHAPTER XVI .- Continued .

"Nay, nay, I promise nothing but what's in limits of my soul's keeping,' interrupted Goodniff; "if thy behest extend to the stopping o' breath, or maining o' horses, I tell thee right roundly, Master Southron, thou must carry thy herrings to another mar-

"How now!" oried Southton, surprised at the gruff, serious tone of his companion; "art smitten, and wouldst turn Calvinist?

"Not so, worshipful sir; I'm not knave enough to turn Calvinist; but to be plain with thee for once, I had some misgivings of may past life, as far at least as spent in thy honorable company, and would see to it in time; when Death comes, he gives but short time to settle the reckoning."

sAnd so ithou wouldst mend thy life by furning beadsman or Calvinist," laughed his companion; "verily, honest Goodniff, thou'rt 200 fat for a psalm singer, and too lazy for a

besdeman." "Natheless,' promptly replied the innkeeper, "a fat pealm singer or a lazy beadsman is nearer heaven, I trow, than the gulltrop of Master Southron of Eveeham."

True, and then thou mightst turn up a saint, and thy tap room a shrine, where thy adorers would honor thy memory in dagger ale and huffcap. Think on't, think on't, most virtuous dealer in lambswool and rosemary; more marvellous things have hap-

"True again, most facetious Master Southron, for doubtless thou'st heard the queen's majesty hath resolved to live and die a virgin. "Ay, marry have I; and what seest thou

so wonderful in that?" "Nothing beyond credence, since thou

persuadest me I may be a saint. Verily, the reformation, as great folks call it, is but a child's gimerack, after all the pother it's making. Soul o'my body, I once thought It little less than a miracle; but now, since hs, ha! grace and patience!" added Oliver, chuckling as the thought tickled his

"Since what, man?" urged Southron. "Why, if Queen Bess is to live and dle a virgin, and Oliver Goodniff turn out a saint, the reformation. with it is but a soap bubble, after all. Look there; seest thou that picture anent thee on the wall, with the long face and single white feather? It's Sir Thomas Seymours." And Goodniff laughed at the rc-20001'S." collections it inspired.

"What meanest thou by that, impudent warlet? Wouldst slander the queen's majesty?" demanded Southron, turning on his chair, and searching for the handle of his

clagger.
But Goodniff busied himself to mend the fire, and affected not to hear the question, nor to notice the threat. After a minute's allence, he resumed,-

"As to my saintship, there thou mistakest again, Master Southron, and art wrong in the premises; the new religion can furnish no saints, and therefore ——"

"And therefore," interrupted Southron, "though thou canst not be a saint de jure, yet thou mayst de facto. So keep heart o' grace, man, cut short thy hair, learn to turn up the whites o' thine eyes, eat garlic, reduce thy flesh, attend the prayer meetings of the God-fearing and well-beloved Master Taresoul, and thou'lt bld fair for a saintship.'

Grace and patience! Master bouthron, the sack hath warmed the cockles o' thy heart, even to make thee witty--- quality for which thou wast never very remarkable in thy youth; he, ha!'

"Thou mayat yet be a sain:, I repeat, man hold thy peace, and consider on't."

" Faith, sir, I fear me," replied Oliver, leering at his guest—"I fear me my saintship would turn out from the hands of Master Teresoul what folks say the new religion did from the hands of its craftsmen. '4 "Ha! and that was -

"A very crude production. Ha, ha! grace and patience!"

41 Well, well, enough of this; and now for thy gossip. How go on affairs at Hampton

" Indifferently well." "And the queen?

"The queen still alleth, yet is declared out of danger. "Hast heard within the week?"

"As late as yesterday, Master Crimp; her majesty's messenger, on his way to Liston, alighted to quaff a stoup o' Canary, and averred she was yet ailing, but out of danger. Folks say the mediciner is right cunning in

his art, and rises high in favor. "Heaven save her majesty, I say, friend Oliver,—and that's a loyal wish,—and long may she reign over us, as she doth right royally; but I tell thes, Goodniff, it likes me not to hear of strange doctors, with outlandish names, come over here to take the life o' the queen, as 'twere, out o' the safe keeping of her majesty's own peaceful and liege sub-

iects." "A foreigner, saidst thou, Master Southron? grace and patience! a foreigner!"

" Ay, good sooth, is he; and there are some who suspect him to have cast the horoscope of Elizabeth for that most astute and cunning woman-that Amalekite, as Taresoul would call her, Uatharine de Medicis, before his head rested once on his pillow at Hampton."

" Hast heard so, and from what source? inquired Goodniff, again mending the fire.

I say report hath it so. "What, man! report's no authority. I wonder much a man c' thy high pretensions and marvellous wisdom would believe the breath o' report in such stirring times. Who hath ever heard that repart hung a man on the gallows, or made a virgin of a queen, unless there was reason for't aforegone? I therefore ask thee once more, what cause exists for this suspicion?"

"I have already told thee, numskull," replied Southron; "dost not believe it?" "If such report passeth my credence, another don't," observed Goodniff.

"And what is that, I pray thee, most incre-

dulous innkeeper? "That her majesty's own lawful physician hath been dismissed her service in disgrace,

some five weeks gone." "Ha! sayest thou so? and how camest thou by this knowledge?" demanded southrop, desirous of knowing how far his host

had penetrated into the secrets of the palace. "Why, dost forget that I sell wine to noble customers who honor my poor bostelrie? and though the law hath forbidden more than five yards of cloth for hose and doublet for linkboy or apprentice, in the good city of London, yet it hath no statute for plugging innkeepers' cars against state goseip.'

"My Lord of Leicester is a noble gentleman and a good," quietly observed Southron; "and if he brought over this new mediciner from Ostend, he hath been well assured of his

skill in the healing art." "My lord is indeed most loyal in his dewoirs to her majesty," added Goodnin; "so much so that the lady in waiting, the Coun-

prohibit his presence in the antechamber, lest his health sufter from overwatch."

And who's thy informant, honest Good-

niff?' carelessly inquired Southron. "It matters not," replied the innkeeper if I find thou deservest confidence I may

tell thee, may hap." "Dost doubt my honesty, school fellow?

"Nay, good friend; but thou gavest me such reason just now for guarding my slippery tongue, that I am fain to profit by it once in my life."

"Hoot, man, thy reason is flat. Say thou mistrustest me, and I'll understand thee bet-

"Mistrust is safer than confidence," responded the innkeeper, smiling provokingly, and thrusting his hands into the pockets of his doublet. "I have seen many a tongue stopped at Tyburn for speaking, but not one

for holding its peace." Southron rose suddenly from his chair, his

ace flushed with anger. "Hast forgotten, Goodniff, thou'rt but liv. ing on sufferance?" he demanded, hissing out the syllables, and fixing on his companion a look of stern severity. "Out upon thee for a dunghili, a Papist, a hogshead, a cozening variet; thy impudence is marvellous-ly great to speak me thue, when thou knowest a breath of my lungs

would hang thee on thine own sign post. But thou canst not cozen me, Oliver Goodniff; thou'rt itching this half hour tell what thou wouldst fain have a secret, and natheless, if broken, would prove but a billed aut, not worth the cracking. But enough of this now; keep thy secret, if any thou hast, and maybap, when we return, I may bring Nell Gower, the spaewife, with me to unravel it."

"Return!' repeated Goodniff, with affected aurprise'

"Ay, did I not say return?-return or come back again—it algnifieth reversion. Hast forgot thy learning, too? We go to Hampton Court, or thereabouts, to-night, and return against daybreak."

"Heigh ho! Hampton Court, forsooth!" " Dost know Nell Gower of that neighbor-

bood?"

"The Scotch spaswife?" "Ay, the same.

"Gadaloke, man, thou art mad. The sack hath made away with thy brains. To Hampten at this hour! Grace and patience! and what bringeth thee to Hampton Court, Master Bouthron? Dost forget there be arqueonses on gate, and tower, and keep, enough to garrison the whole city of London?"

"I said 'Hampton or thereabouts,' and there be many places for three miles round the palace besides the court. So I ask thee again, knowest thou where liveth Nell Gower, the Scotch spaewife?'

"What is thy business, friend, with Nell Gower at this time o' night?" demanded Goodniii evasively.

" Much that concerns me and others." "And didst come hither to inquire her residence?

"Ay, marry have I." "Then thou it find her either at Whinstone Hollow, or meet her riding on a rush blade between Hampton and Whitehall," replied

Goodniff. "And as I know not where lies Whinstone Hollow, thou'lt accompany me thither. So get thee again to the tap, and draw me another flagon, that we may keep courage within and cold without; for our duties may require steady hande and light hearts e'er the sun doffs his nightcap on the morrow; haste thee, friend; the night wears apace; go thee to the tap."

"As I live by my honesty, Master Southron said the fat innkeeper, "thou makest as little ado of my going to Hampton as if I were but a boy, fit only to run errands for a grocer in Cheapside." And whilst the speaker appeared deeply offended at his companion's condetect something like a desire on his part to visit the palace, notwithstanding.

Goodniff saw that something was about to happen of rare importance, in which he was expected to take a part; but what it was he could not for a moment imagine. He reflected at, whatever it might be, it should accomplished in the night, and therefor, a secret; and again, being about Hampton Court, it was likely to be some affair of moment. It was clear to him, also, that he was not of Southron's selection, for that gentleman of late days had taken pains to avoid his company as much as possible; he concluded, therefore, that the very equivocal message left at the Whitehorse on the previous morning by Whitret Machairn during his absence in London, namely, -" Be cautious and prudent, or thy fortune will be as cogglesome as the pillion on which thou must mount,"-referred immediately to his cooperation in the business which Southron had in hands, and in which, he doubted not, Nell Gower had connected him in some way. These reflections passed rapidly through his mind, and caused him to feel rather uneasy at the undefined prospect before him.

"Heth!" he continued, after a moment's interruption, during which he stood before the fire twirling his thumbs in a maxa of conjectures, whilst his companion emptled the wine flask-"heth! here I am ordered out o' my house at midnight, without a why or a wherefore. Gadzooka! friend of mine, let's hear at least the errand."

"That's to be learnt, master innkeeper; so content thee, and the soonr we reach Whinstone Hollow, the sconer wilt thou know the secret, if so be thou'rt not spitted for thy inqualtiveness e'er the time come. He, ha! what a belly that is to oil a rapier in !" he added, tapping honest Godniff on the paunch

with the butt of his riding whip. "True," persisted the innkeeper, determined not to abandon himself entirely to the guldance of his companion without another trial : "but why in Death's name hast chosen me for thy helpmate, seeing the encumbrance thou mockest at may retard our progress. Methinks thou might have chosen one o' lighter limb than Oliver Goodniff."

"Hark thee, man," replied Southron, taking Oliver's whisker between his finger and thumb, and pronouncing his words with a peculiar intonation, "there may be men more active to use their legs and arms in times like these, when the word is, who can ruffie it best, I grant; but there are few who can find prettier reasons for keeping quiet tongues in their heads than thou, friend Oliver, in my employment. Factions and clans have so bought up other's secrets now, that close tongues are nearly as scarce as masses. No, no, Oliver, I mean not to put thy prowess to the task, but I've selected thee as one who will hardly verture to deceive Bobert South and who knows more of the Scoton apaewife I'm in search of, if report speak true, than his neighbors. But, friend Oil-

affair so fresh." "As fresh as when it happened twenty

ver, I still grieve to find thy memory of that

memory slip me not."

"And-let me see-that's just twenty years ago to the hour." " Well, and what seest strange in that, Oli-

ver? "Strange! Why, dost forget, man, the madrigal the welrd woman sang thee that night at Evesham? It ran thus :-

In twenty years more thou'lt be just two-Score;

There's a secret that night to be told That will wake thee or ward thee, For a queen will reward thee With a collar of hemp or gold."

"Enough, Master Goodniff; a truce with this folly," ejaculated Southron, impatiently handing the empty flagon to the innkeeper. "And now move thy legs quickly, or I'll smarten them. Get thee to the stable, and then to the road."

"On a knave or a fool's errand," muttered Goodniff, waddling off.

"Thou'lt make it so by thy going doubt-

"A snare to invelgle us to our ruin." "Out upon thee for a craven," replied "thou chicken-hearted capon! Southron, Who cares for thy ruin? Art thou of such importance in the state, that men should plot thy destruction."

"And how am I to accompany thee, worshipful sir?" demanded Goodniff turning on bis step, and pursing up his lips with an air of importance; "theu shouldst know I keep no horses for my pleasure."

"And therefore thou shalt ride on the pillion behind me."

"On the pillion," repeated the burly innkeeper, with affected surprise at the proposal; "no, no, good sir; my neck is yet o some value to myself, though it may not be worth a scotch bodle to thee; and therefore I'll none of thy pillion If thou broughtest a pillion here all the way from Evesham, to perch Oliver Goodniff thereon, and pink him to Hampton, thou mistakest me confoundedly.

"Goodniff, thou needest not speak so loud," calmly observed Southron, when his companion had exhausted his Lreath by the unusual length of the sentence; " I have already said," he continued, fixing his keen eye on Goodniff, . thou shalt accompany me; and

thou shalt.' "Shall!" repeated Goodniff; "ay, forsooth shall! Grace and patience! thou regardest me but as a makeweight at the Gloster races, a man of two hundred and forty

"Mind not the weight," interrupted his companion; my horse is strong, and will carry thee as safely as her majesty's new state coach.

Oliver at length soffered himself to be prevailed on, partly by entreaty and partly by menace, the latter of which seemed the more effectual, to consent to the perilous enter-

Seated high on a pillion of unshaven calfskins, his neels tightening on the horse's flank as his pace quickened, and his right arm wound round his companion in a loving embrace, Gondniff was borne rapidly on towards Hampton.

CHAPTER XVII.

When Southton and his companion eached the few scattering houses which then formed the village of Hampton, they were not surprised to see lights in the windows of the inne, and horses here and there hooked to the trees and door posts; for in those days, inns and taverns, night and day, resounded to the roar of ribald song and drunken clamor. The immigrants and wandering soldiers from the Netherlands had introduced their customs of nightly revelry and drunken debauch among the English. Footmen and messengers, occupied during the day in attemptuous tone, a close observer might easily | tendance on their masters, devoted the night to their own special pleasures, and spen in the drinking booths that surrounded favorite," retorted Rodger O'Brien, for the the court, in uprear and carousal.

During these reveiries, many were the disputes that arose among the lackeys and followers of rival parties, each endeavoring to uphold the credit of his employer, often ending in loss of life and limb, and not unfrequently giving rise to feuds and quarrels, that involved the nobility themselves in interminable lawsuits. If this could be said of inns and taverns generally in and round the city of London, it was doubly true of those in the vicinity of the court. There not only the innkeeper found a driving trade and a bustling employment, but the tailors and the hair-dressers might be seen, busy through all hours of the night, fitting out the newly-arrived squire or country gentleman for the court visit of the next morning.

"Get thee down, Oliver," said Southron, reining in his horse; "we shall see it Matthew Linkwater still keeps the sack butts he bossted so much of last Shrovetide. I'll deposit thee here, on this mounting stone, where the descent is trifling. So down with

thee, and stretch thy limbs. Oliver, disengaging his feet from the pillion strap, slid down the horse's side as directed, but unfortunately alighted on the outer edge of the flag, instead of the middle, causing it to upset and throw him back under the horse. The mettlesome animal, startled by the falling of Goodnifi's bulky form against his feet, broke off at full gallop, and ran for some distance beyond the

village before Southron could rein him in. In the meantime, Goodniff, imagining the horse had trampled him to death, lay on his back, sprawling and kicking, like a capsized frog, and groaning piteously for help. He had not been long, however, in that position, when two men ran from a barber's shop, on the opposite side of the street, and assisting him to rise, conveyed him thither, to have his wound and bruises examined.

Whilst the barber was in the act of applying some healing balsam to a slight scratch on the back of Oliver's head, Southron had returned, and giving his horse to a

groom, entered the shop. He saw at once, in the smirks and gestures of the barber, an evidence of Goodnifi's safety. if indeed he could have any doubt regarding

"What, man," said he, approaching and striking him between the shoulders with his open hand, as if to rouse him from his lether. gy, "art dying, that thou lookest so pale ?" "The pillion—the pillion!" mutered Goodniff, in great distress. "I told thee

"But thy wound's not deeper than s brier scratch; pshaw! a man like thee, so llon. hearted of old, to be thus slanderous of thy. self. Dost feel pain?"

'twould be so.'

"Pain enough," responded Goodniff; ' the fall hath shaken me into a mass." "Thou wert that already, methicks," said the barber, corking up his balsam bottle, and

turning to the customer he had quitted. "Then the Lord Arundel is not at court?" observed the person seated in the barber's

"Ac, something like this nigh if my riding posthaste in the direction of Doer.

" Art sure of that?" a Positive; the honorable secretary's confidential servant hath informed me. I tell thee so, most gracious sir, for I know thou'rt a gentlemen, and to gentles and squires of noble bkth alone do I ever open my lips on state affairs."

"I see thou'rt wondrous prudent, friend, but what reason hast thou for thinking the eari's departure an affair of moment.

" Pardon me, gracious sir, but I have been so long in the company of noble lords, and, I might take grace and say, kings and princes both in their palaces and in my own humble abode, that I have learnt to value, not only so overt an act as the departure of the Earl of Arundel for France, at such a time when the Duke of Anjou hath proposed for the hand of our good queen, but even the most triffing expression, nay, a nod of their noble beads, as having something in it beyond vulgar sight."

"Hast heard of the queen's health this morning?"

"Not yet, not yet, worshipful sir. Becretary Jones has but just arrived; when his servants come on the morrow to have their hair dressed, we shall know more. shade did you say, sir ?--dark red?"

"As you please," replied the stranger; "I hava no choice."

"Yer, dark red," pursued the barber, holding a bottle between him and the light; "dark red becometh gentlemen best, as my friend Sir Walter Baleigh observed, when I last had the honor of dressing his hair; it's much affected by her majesty, he saith, and very fashionable at court. This hair dye, honorable sir, l've obtained at great expense, from an herb very rare, and to be found only in the Highlands of Scotland, and given me by a servant of the late Lord Arran. Now, sir," he added, as he applied the liquid, "thy hair shall be as glossy as dax, and when it reddens with this powerful extract, her majesty will doubtless be kind and gracious to the handsome and galiant wearer."

- Her majesty's life is no longer in danger then ?" observed the stranger heedless of the compliment.

"So report saith; yet none are permitted sight or speech of her majesty, save her lady in waiting and physician."

"Not even my Lord of Leicester ?" said the stranger, with a smile; methought he was a standing exception."

"I know not, worshipful sir," replied the berber, prudently preserving the same undertone he had assumed. "I know not how he fares at Hampton; tongues there are not so long as they were at Whitehall. As for the Lord Robert, he is right bountiful and right honorable, and far be it from me to speak him 111."

"So thou'rt of a mind, therefore, with her majesty the queen,' observed the stranger, as he rose from the chair and prepared to leave. "I shall ever feel honored in thinking like her majesty, worshipful sir," replied the barber, bowing to his customer, as the latter

deposited a small piece of gold in his palm. " And if her gracious majesty doth favor to my Lord Dudley," broke in Southron, who had been listening attentively to the foregoing conversation, unobserved by the speakers, "who so bold as to gainsay his merit?"

" And who art thou, sirrab, that presumeth thus to meddle in such matters?" demanded the stranger, now drawn up to his full height, and turning his head round to look at Southron, with scorn and contempt marked on his handsome countenance; "things have come to a pretty pass when the Queen of England is beholden to such defenders:" and the speaker, picking up a Scotch bonnet from the table, placed it on his head.

"Thou hast demanded who I am," responded Southron, "and I tell thee I am one who suffers no Scotch churl to speak slightingly

of my noble Lord of Leicester unrequited." champing o speaker was no other, "and prepared, doubtless, to clear the nuble earl of the stain of attainture for endeavoring to remove the queen from the succession. His newly-born loyalty, I doubt not, hath grown up in the smile of

his sovereign, and will die in her frown." "Plague upon thee for a coxcomb," shouted Southrop, laying his hand on the bilt of his sword; "thy insolence is beyond bearing; be ye noble, or be ye henchman, I'm half in

clined to chastise thee for thy foul words." Southron's powerful voice, now raised in angry recrimination, attracted half a score of idlers from the neighboring tavern, who, learning the cause of the dispute, joined in with him, and loudly commanded who dared asperse the fame of the poble and gallant

Lord Leicester. "Back, minions!" cried O'Brien, in a voice that made itself heard and feared; " away to your ale barrels; I seek no quarrel with this fellow:" and he strode out of the shop, the new comers making way for him as he passed.

" know you that man, honest barber?" inquired Goodniff, who had till now remained a silent spectator.

"Never saw him before, worthy sir; how somever, he guerdoned me well for inture services, and must, from his bigh bearing, be of gentle birth."

'Goes he to court on the morrow?' "Ay does he; I have just dyed his hair for a court visit."

"But he cannot see her grace-she's confined to her chamber." "Well, good sir, he will be likely to learn

that when he reaches the palace." Southron, actuated by some new thought buckled his sword and belt tighter round his waist, passed quickly through the shop, and was about to hurry down the street, probably in pursuit of the stranger, in order to provoke a quarrel, when all of a sudden he felt the skirt of his cloak plucked from behind, and, turning, beheld Whitret Macbairn at his

side. "What, in the flend's name, art thou, or what dost want with me?" demanded Southron, vexed at the interruption, and surprised for her father, and then sit down exhausted, at the sudden appearance of the dwarf.

Whitret placed his finger on his lips. "Speak, or, by the rood, I'll open thy lips with the point of my dagger."

The dwarf shook his head. "Thou liest, thou elf of Beelzebub; thou canst speak if thou wilt." Whitret opened his mouth, pointed to his

tongue, and then motioned Southron to follow. The latter, expecting an immediate revolution of some mystery, no longer hesitated, but followed his guide in silence. They passed some distance beyond the village, and then entered a wood so dark and dismal that Southron began to feel some misgivings of his safety in such a place and with such a conductor. The moon having set fer some time, the farther he proceeded the more the darkness increased, till at length he was obliged to take the hand of Whitret Machairn between the tips of his fingers; so low was the creature that he hardly

THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE. cloak, and wearing a broad-brimmed hat of the precipies, plucking the stray flowers that hung within his reach. into the darkness. The richly-laced cloak, of unusual length and of French pattern, bespoke the wearer a gentleman of rank. He stood, however, with his back to the dim light of the doorway, so that Southron could not see his face.

"Art thou Robert Southron, of Evesham?" demanded the stranger. "I am," was the concise answer.

"Didst receive instructions from Ashley, of Ashley Park, and art come hither in consequence?"

"I am here to execute the orders of a noble of the court, who should meet me at Whinstone Hollow, near the place frequented by Nell Gower, the Scotch spacwife."

" Hast thou a companion, and canst trust Southron replied in the affirmative.

A second was more than I stipuleted for why didst bring him without directions to that effect?" "Because I knew not the way to Whin-

stone Hollow, and wanted a guide."

"Where hast thou parted with him?" "At the barber's shop in the village." "Where thou wert about to embroil thyself

with a gallant of the court." "He spoke irreverently of the noble Earl of Lelcester, and of her majesty the queen, and therefore deserved a whipping by the town beadle," replied Southron confidently.

"Dost know the Earl of Leicester?" inquired the unknown. "I have seen him once, but might not recognize him now."

"Art ready to execute my orders?" "When I know who gives them, perchance mav."

"That thou shalt never know."

"Then I shall not execute them," replied Southron resolutely, as if he had no suspicion of the perton whom he addressed. "I'm directed by the Earl of Leicester to

command thee execute my orders under peralty of his displeasure."

"It thou dost fall, thy life will pay the forfelt, didst reflect on that possibility?"

"As for life," responded Southron, "I never expected it would last long; and should it end now, why, I shall not be disappointed; by a tiny scream from under her cloak. "Ay besides, no doubt, it will be lost in honorable an there's mare o't." she muttered service.

the unknown, "and if thy intentions accord with it, thou'it suit my purpose marvellously little it kens wha' trouble it's makin, well." "And that purpose is one that likes the night better than the day, if I can judge by

"I like thy manner of speech," observed

the circumstances," subjoined Southron. "Nay, if thou thinkest to be employed in a deed of darkness, good fellow, thou art much mistaken; no darkness shall accompany the deed but the darkness of the

"And if so, why not intrust me with thy name? "Well," replied the unknown, "I might

hath nothing to do with the business in hand; or I might tell thee it would be unsafe ever again to recognize me; whi hof the three will content thee? "Neither," responded Bouthron.

"And what shall content thee?"

"Thy name, to give me confidence; men don't risk their necks in such employment as thine promises to be, without a reason." "Listen, then," said the stranger. shall give thee two reasons why thou'it do my bidding and yet discover not my name. The first is, that if thou refusest to comply with my orders, or fail to accomplish them, I'll make thee shorter by the head before the sun sets to-morrow; the second, that if thou

to thee than my name.

"Both reasons are solid," replied Southron, 'could they be realized.' "Doubt you my power or my purse, fellow? -which?

"Say I doubt both, good sir, what follows ?" "Proof," replied the stranger ! " here, clutch this;" - and he flung him a well filled

"Good," replied Southron, jingling the preclous metal it contained; "it's certie a weighty reason." "And now for the power-see!" and the anknown threw back his cloak, and pointed

purse :- " what thinkest thou now?"

to the breast of his doublet, which shone brilliantly in the uncertain light. Southron touched his Milan bonnet, and

nowed obsecuiously. "Proof beyond question, most noble sir. I await thy orders." "Follow me, then," commanded the

CHAPTER XVIII.

stranger, "and be silent."

A few days after the rescue, Allce Wentworth and Nell Gower ventured and from the dark recesses of Whinstone Holow, for it was to that wild and desola a retreat Rodger O'Brien at length succeeded in conveying the young girl. They crept forth from their hiding-place, to steal a glance at the green earth and the smiling heavens. Alice, accustomed from her childhood to roam as free as air through the groves and meadows of Brockton, to pull the wild flowers on the hillsides, and chase the rabbits through the gleng, could ill brook so dark and dismal a prison. And short as was the period of her confinement, it wrought a visible change in her appearance. The rosy blush of health, that mantled on her cheeks but a few days ago, had disappeared, and the flash of her dark lustrous eye was dimmed by her tears. Her hair too. was neglected, and fell over her shoulders in disordered tresses. No wonder: she had done little else, since she was carried there, but kneel before the little altar, weep and pray to seek solace in the caresses of her old friend. Often did Nell contemplate her in silence, with her rossiy and the fingers, and unconsciously from her fingers, and her hands, her head resting on her hands, musing over the fate of her father. And oft did the old woman's eye light

up sgain with the indignant fire of former years, as she looked at her sinking form, and thought of the authors of her sorrows. They had stolen out, and ascended the green bank above the entrance of the cavern by an easy footpath, Nell preceding her fair

companion, and carrying something carefully wrapped under the folds of her gray closk. It was a delightful summer evening; everything around them seemed happy and joyous under the rays of the sun, now sinking behind the tall trees that breasted the forest. The birds were singing their last evening carol, and bidding adieu to the bright orb under whose beams they hopped and sung so

"Nell," said Alice, turning her tearful eyes up to the face of the old woman, as they both sat down on the greensward-"Nell, I can stey no longer in this dreary place; I will go see the queen on the morrow, even should I go alone.

"Gang alane! hoot, lassie, ye mauna think o' sic a thing. It's no in the woods o' Brockton yer noo, ye ken; na, na; guid gracious! ye cudna di that, bairn; be aboot us, gang alane! did ony body e'er hear the like?" "I dreamed last night my father was dead,

Nell, and that his spirit came to upbraid me for deserting him." "Dinna fash yersel, lassle, about desertin him; ye cudna help it; better leave fayther and mither, an a' the hale warld, than fa' in the fangs c' Sir Thomas Plimpton."

"Could I but see him once more, Nell, just to clasp him again in my arms, and receive his blessing, and feel his old, withered hands on my head, I would be satisfied to bear all the misfortunes fate could crowd upon me."

"Weel, weel; dinna ye greet, dinna ye greet, bairn, an tak courage; there's ane awa in search o' Sir Geoffrey, that ne'er returned without his erran'."

"Whither could he have gone, Nell, after leaving Glastonbury? The man thou called the gaperbungle, who sent the message by Whitret, saw him last, wandering through the rules and searching for something he had lost. What could it be, Nell?" "Ou, his bit pictures and beauks, I'll war.

rint; puir dait body, he's amaist as muckle

a bairn now as e'er he was. But dinns fret,

Alice; yer trials maun soon be ower, and then we'll gang, Sir Geoffrey an a', to Holyrood. Why, woman, jist think o' that-to be daffin wi' our bonnie queen an a' the guld hearts at Holyrood. An' then what care we for a' the warld else? Let Elizabeth tak yer lands if she will, an' bestow them on her minions-let her burn an' rack a' the sacred things that since gi d her kingdon a fair name an' a saintly character-blot out the Henrys, the "Ab, the Earl of Leicester! If my devoir the Alfreds an' mony mair, frae the history of the author, suddenly softening his tone," I am read; to the nation, and then mak a new dynasty will Henry VIII. for its head, and the royal arms quartering a Bible on the ain side, and a Venus on the titherlechery an bastardy an Arianiam, supportin the word o' God on their shoulders, hegh, sirs." Here Nell's rhapsody was interrupted an there's mare o't," she muttered, uncovering the babe, and laying it down on the warm green grass beside her. It's head's as red as her ain; puir thing! and may yet mak in the warld. See the black mole shint its leg, about the size o' the puirtith pieces she gies hersel to the beggar

> Stairs. Whom mean ye, Nell?" said Alice, looking up. "Ah! but I forgot I must ask thee no questions respecting the child."

bodies, when she gaes boatin off Whitehall

Whilst this conversation was passing, Whitret Macbairn, after gathering what he sought among the busher, came climbing up the precipice, unobserved by the speakers, say because it so pleaseth me, and that swinging by the branchess of the should satisfy thee; or I might say my name stunted copse from rock to rock; now disappearing in the deep fig-sures, and again suddenly emerging till he reached the summit. Alice lay on the grass, leaning on her arm, and looking at the babe. Whitret crept along noiselessly as a snake, till within a few feet of the young girl, and there he stopped-his head almost invisible amongst the brushwood-and gazed at her so intensely that his whole soul seemed to shoot from his eyes. He had lain thus some ten or twelve minutes, when the bonquet of wild flowers he had gathered fell from his unconscious hand. The slight noise it made attracted the attention of Alice, who, turning her head, beheld two large, flery orbs peering out from behind the ferp, and fixed upon her with so

stare that she screamed and started. Whitret immediately rose, and picking up the flowers, approached Alice, and presented them with a low reverence, kissing her hand

as she held it out to receive the offering. "What gard ye jump, lassie?" inquired Nell Gower, looking round for the cause of the fright. "Nothing,' replied Alice, trembling like a frightened fawn; "nothing but Whitret here,

so fixed a stare through the twigs and fern, that I took him for a -"A tiger or a basilisk, eh?"

whose eyes I just detected gezlug at me with

"Ay, good sootb, his stare startled me-it seemed almost to eat me up." "God be aboot us," muttered Nell, speaking to herself as her eye followed Whitret. " It's the curse o' his race; the sins o' the parents are to be visited on the children, to the

fourth generation." "Once before," pursued Alice, "I caught his eyes fixed upon me whilst telling my beads at the altar, and he perplexed me so that I was obliged to interrupt my devo-

tions. "Humph! sy, that's mair o't—the chape! or the cloister, or the-ou' it's a' the same; look at that," continued Nell, pointing to the dwarf, who had sat down on the grass and taken the babe in his arms. "He little kens whose child he fondles; weel, weel, the dell

'Ill hae his ain vit." "Poor Whitret's so gentle," observed Alice, that only for that wild look of his, me-

thinks I could like him much.' "That's his fayther's look, bairn, an a proof of his parentage. An for his gentleness, it a' comes o' his mither."

" His mother!" (To be continued).

ASHBURNHAM, Mass., Jan. 14, 1880. I have been very sick over two years. They all gave me up as past cure. I tried the most skillful physicians, but they did not reach the worst part. The lungs and heart would fill up every night and distress me, and my throat was very bad. I told my children I never should die in peace until I had tried hop bitters. I have taken two bottles. They have helped me very muck indeed. I am now well. There was a lot of sick folks here who have seen how are helped me, and they used them and are cured, and feel as thankful as J w that there

is so valuable a medicine mede.

MRS. JULIA G. OUSHING.

"THE FAIR LAND OF POLAND," Bunnin, Now 1-It is asserted that Blamark and Resucky favor the re-establishment of the Lingdom of Poland.

ful disorders to which women are subject. In female complaints Dr. R. V. Pierce's "Favor-Ite Prescription" is a certain cure. By all druggists. Negotiations with the Hovas have been re-

Bad temper often proceeds from those pain-

opened by Admiral Galibers on behalf of

Ministers, Lawyers, Teachers and others whose occupation gives but little exercise, should use Carter's Little Liver Pills for tor-

arm chair, with a white napkin spread round reached his kness. At length they cheerly through the long day. Whitret years ago; and i' faith, the stars hid their his neck, and his long, weavy hair thrown stopped at what Southron supposed to be a Macbairn, too, seemed to participate in the faces that night just as they do now when pleasures which nature so abundantly furhut; for he felt the mud walls with his thou flung it among the tombetones." back over his shoulders. "He left London yesterday," replied the hands. Here the dwarf whistled low and nished, and quitting the little footpath, "Hush thou dolt!" ejaculated Southron, well informed barber, "with a single re- stealthly; and immediately a door opened, jumped from rock to rock, amid the holly tainer, and was met by Secretary Jones and a talk man, wrapped closely in a dark bushes and dwarf hand that grew on the face pid Liver and billousness. One is a dose. looking steathily round the kitchen as if he tess of Harrington, hath thought proper to were airaid of cavesdroppers; "ay-----