

THE QUEEN'S SECRET.

CHAPTER XVII.—Continued.

"Nay, nay, I promise nothing but what's in limits of my soul's keeping," interrupted Goodniff; "if thy heart extend to the stopping of breath, or maiming of horses, I tell thee right roundly, Master Southron, thou must carry thy herings to another market."

"How now!" cried Southron, surprised at the growl, serious tone of his companion; "art thou so, and wouldst thou 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 my past life, as far as 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."

"And so thou wouldst mend thy life by turning headman or Calvinist," laughed his companion; "verily, honest Goodniff, thou'rt too far for a psalm singer, and too lazy for a headman." "Nathless," promptly replied the innkeeper, "a fat psalm singer or a lazy headman is nearer heaven, I trow, than the gull-top of Master Southron of Evesham."

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