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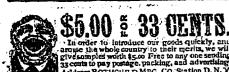
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THE QUEEN'S SECRET

OHAP. XLVIII (Continued.)

On receiving this answer, the queen shock her, head, and covered her face for a moment with her hands, as if in despair of being able to save the prisoner after such positive testi mony.

"May it please your grace," said Alice, looking up timidly at her judge, "not to bring this witness against me. I will answer right freely and truly without his confronting."

"Dost thou soknowledge, then, the truth of the testimony?" inquired Elizabeth.

"Nay, most gracious madam; for verily I refused not to obey the royal warrant."
"Nor threaten to stab the witness if he but laid a finger on thee?"

" On the sacred vessel, please your grace the witness mistaketh."

"The sacred vessel?-what may that be?" "The consecrated cup in which lay the body of the Baylour." "Ab! wouldet thou have killed him in its

defence? "I am a Catholic," replied Alice, "and that blessed cup was dearer to me than my

11 fe." "Wouldst have sacrificed thy life to save

1t ?" "Ay, sy, verily, a thousand lives to thield it from such pollution. O my liege, blame me not for my bold words—blame me not if I dared so to speak to this bad man. For

he who had loved me from mine earliest years, and filled my soul with the light of faith, was then lying a corpse at my feet; and the witness, here, stood before me ready to grasp the sacred treasure with blood stained hands; my liege, my liege, do not blame me if at such a time I spoke in language unbecoming my sex, for my heart was filled with indignation against this wicked man."

"Why call ye him wicked?" inquired toe queen, willing now to make her diegraced minion as odious as possible to the bench and the spectators, as a prelude to his approaching incarceration.

"I may not speak my reasons in this publio place," murmured Alice in an undertone.

"Ab, well," muttered the queen, "his conduct, doubtless, might do but little credit to his place. Witness, bast seen this lady worshipping at the mass?' she continued, again addressing Plimpton.

" Most gracious madam," interrupted Alice, it is needless to interrogate this man; I

" Hold thy peace, woman; thou lackest not boldness, nor presumption either, to interrupt us thus," exclaimed Elizabeth.

Please your grace, I mean not to be bold; I only wish to terminate this trial as soon as may comport with justice and the due course of law; I confess, before God and the world, I am a Catholic, and have worshipped at the mass in Whinstone Hoilow; so far am I amenable to punishment, and willing to undergo it; but I pray your majesty to spare me this man's testimony, for his sight appalleth me.

"So thou makest boast of thy religion in our very presence," said the queen; "hah! ha! sh-what thinkest thou, my Lord Montegue?"

"The gentlest fawn will butt, my liege, when she is hard pressed, and cannot escape, replied Montague.

"And so thou'rt willing to suffer the penalty, my good damsel," resumed the queen; knowest thou what that is?" "They tell me it is forfeiture of lands, and

even death, if the queen so willeth it." "And dost not fear to die?"

"Not when I die for my faith, please your gřace." "Doth that faith teach thee to resist lawful

authority?" "Nay, my liege, but to obey it, as coming from God."

"Why, therefore, dost not obey the authority of the queen, prohibiting the hearing of the muse?

"Because the queen possesses not such authority." "What I wouldst dispute our power to make

"Truly, most gracious madam, I see not how God could confer power to make human laws subversive of the divine."

"Humph!" ej 'culated Elizabeth, biting her lip and tearing a piece of paper she held in her fingers. " Dost refuse to acknowlege the queen's aupremacy ?"

"In what, please your majesty?" "In church and state."

"If you: majesty meaneth the reformed church, I may readily acknowledge it, for it concerneth me not; but if thou meanest the Catholic, I must withhold my consent to such a doctrine, insomuch that I recegnize no authority therein but the Pope of Rome, the vicar of Christ on earth, and those holding office through him;" and as the prisoner spoke, her cheeks flushed, and the tones of her voice grew strong, as if a secret voice within her breast encouraged her to speak boldly and fear not.

"Dost thou acknowledge the queen's temporal supremacy over these realms?" de-manded Elizabeth, slowly but sternly pronouncing the words.

There was a pause of nearly a minute, during which a profound ellence reigned throughout the hall, and every eye was fixed on the

youthful confessor. "I am commanded," replied Alice, at length, siter some deliberation, "to declare whether I acknowledge the queen's temporal supremacy in these realms; and I hereby declare that I do, and shall ever acknowledge

it so long as the church doth. "Ah, and were the pope to order thee tomorrow to deny our authority as that of a usurper, wouldst thou obey it?' " If he did so as head of the church, with

the advice of the council, and acting in the capacity of the vicar of Christ, I would in. stantly," replied Alloe. "Mark that, my lords," said Elizabeth, smil-

ing at the commissioners. "Wouldst thou renounce thy allegiance to the Queen of England," she again demanded at the bidding of the pope, acting in such capacity?"

"Truly I would," promptly replied the girl, in a firm, unhesitating tone. "O, thank God for that," orled a feeble but exolted voice at the door of the council

The prisoner started slightly as the words fell upon her ear, and she had half turned to look in the direction whence they came, when | of employing him at all." the thought of the queen's presence recalled

her.
"Maider," said the queen, "thou art bold who to offer us insult in our own palace. Who hath prompted thee to this? for it seemeth hard to believe one so young could speak such language of her free secord."

My liege, I meant not to be bold; I am

but I must not forget, nevertheess, that God is still the eternal and almighty Sovereign, and queens but instruments in his hands."

Elizabeth again shook her head, and leaned back in her chair, as if all was now over. Alss! she muttered, as if to herself, but intended for the bonch and the nobles around her, "It's hard to save one bent so much on her own destruction."

"Doet thou believe," inquired the srchbishop, in the slow, solemn manner peculiar to him when before the people - Dost thou believe, young woman, that the pope hath power to absolve from their allegiance her majesty's subjects in these realms?"

"I' do." replied Alice; "for as vicar of Christ on earth, he hath power to rule over men's consciences as his Lord and Master ruleth over men's hearts; and therefore when he, as vicar of Christ, declareth me absolved from allegiance to any secular power, I do firmly believe that I am thereby absolved.

"Therefore thou maintainest the pope's temporal and spiritual power in realms." "In every realm, my lord, I hold he

can exercise temporal power when such becomes necessary for the enforcement of his spiritual supremacy. "And that it matters not in such circum-

stances, whether question cometh of Catholic or Protestant sovereigns?" "Not a jot," said Aifce, firmly the high priest on earth hath been given a sovereignty above them all, and in its exercise should have regard not to the false religious

opinions of particular realms, but to the salvation of the great human family." " May the God of heaven bless thee, Alice," cried the same teeble, faltering voice, in the

direction of the door. "Silence in the court!" commanded the tipstaff, rising and looking toward: the guard. Alice again started at the sound of that voice, and facing round to Lord Montague, gazed at him for an instant in silence, her eyes fixed, and her face growing pale as mar-

"My lord, my lord," she said at length, " what voice is that? O, tell me-tell me truly, is he yet living? if he be, that stand.

"Unhand me ! let me go !" cried the voice again ; " let me embrace her before I dieshe's my child, she's my child-Alice, Alice I'm living still i"

" Guards," shouted the usher, " arrest that man for disturbing the court! Ho! there. halberdiers, why stand ye staring thus? away with him !" " It's my Lord of Leicester," replied one of

the guard. "What! what! my Lord of Leicester? sjaculated the queen, starting up from her chair of state—" how cometh this?"

The earl, who had just then reached the door of the council room, replied that an old man, claiming to bu the father of the grisoner, begged for admittance, and leave to embrace his child before he died. "He seem. eth weak and feeble, please your majesty," added the earl, "and the guards here are treating him somewhat roughly."

The whole bench had now risen, on seeing her majesty starting so suddenly from her seat, and looked earnestly towards the door.

"My lord, my lord!" repeated Alice clinging to Montague, "he lives he lives! bring me to him-bring me to him! marry, my good lords, this maiden beareth | O my God; my kind and good God, I thank not herself so like the terrified fawn that thee for this mercy to ma-from my trieth to fly from the pursuing hounds, ha, whole soul I thank thee." And the fair girl raised her clasped hands and tearful eyes to Him who is the comforter of the silloted, and the source of all consolation.

and admit the old man! said the queen again resuming her seat; "admit him, that we may see the root from which springeth this cross-grained scion."

"Make way there!" oried the guards make way, and let the sick man pass."

"Make way !" repeated the tipstaff; "fall ye back, lieges, and open way. "Silence in the court!" vociferated the

crier. The crowd now fell back before the pikes and swords of the guards, opening a passage from the door to the bar of the council board, and ther, assisted by the Earl of Leicester on the one side and Reddy Connor on Knight

the other, came the Knight or Brookton, staggering up the aisle. The old man's appearance had much changed since we saw him last; his thread-bare, ink-stained doublet was now torn, nay, almost ragged his long, white hair lay back, tossed on his shoulders, his eye sunken, and his once ruddy cheeks pale from grief, age and sickness.

"Who art thou?" demanded Elizabeth, as the knight thus approached the bar.

There was no reply; Sir Geoffrey heard her not; he had his eyes fixed on the form of Alice, and his sense of sight seemed to absorb all his other faculties. He heard nothing and saw nothing in all that assembly but his child; nay, he should not have heard the thunder nor seen the lightning, had they roared and flathed around him; his soul was in his Alice. O, little recked he then of kings or queens; had all the sovereigns of Europe been assembled on the bench, he had spared them not a glance to save his life. On he came, staggering, and supported like a

Alice, whose view of the open passage had been hitherto intercepted by the crowd, now caught sight of her tather holding his arms stretched out to embrace her, and springing instantly from the side of her advocate and defender, she flung herself on the old man's breast, and hung there sobbing out her heart

in a eptochless agony of love. " My darling," said the knight, looking down on the beautiful fice of his child, after the first burst of joy was over-" my darling, I am with thee once again."

Alice could not reply in words. She only raised her delicate white hands, and stroking down his gray locks, looked into bis

eves. Every voice in that crowd seemed hushed and every eye full save Elizabeth Tudor's and Sir Nicholas Bacon's.

"Father, dear father, we heard thou hadst left us," said the gentle girl, speaking in a whisper, as she always loved to speak to the old man when he peared troubled in mind. Her words, though intended for his ear alone, were pronounced in a manner as earnest and unaffected as if she had been sitting under the old sundial at Brockton, apparently unconscious of the presence of any other living thing.

" O, no," replied Sir Geoffrey, pressing her to his heart, "I was always sure God would preserve me till I had seen thee once more verily, Alice, I was right sorely perplexed about Goodman Witherstone, the amanuensis. I was wrong to say that ... I acknowledge I was very wrong; for truly, I never thought

Alice smiled up in the face of the simple old man and blessed him in her heart for his tender affection. "Poor Beddy," said the knight, looking round..." he staid with me when all the rest

had fled." Allos turned and beheld the faithful servant standing behind awaiting her notice. She stretched out her hand

head aside to avoid the gaze of the crowd,for there was a tour gathering in his eye,and, touching Alice on the arm, whispered in

her ear, " Am afeered he'll niver get over this; see he's sinkin' faster and faster every minit; but shure he cudn't die alsy any way till he'd see you; poor ould crather—Sam Wabble and myself had to carry him from the Paycock, afther yer uncle gave him the last sacramente.

"Enough of this; we have had tears and embracings enough, and to spare, I trow," said Elizabeth, at length becoming impatient of the delay, though she hesitated to interrupt the scene, on account of the general sympathy manifested by the spectators; "let the prisoner sgain be placed at the bar, to hear the sentence of the court."

Alice was now gently forced from the arms of her father, conducted back to the stand, and Sir Geoffrey given in charge to Raddy. "Prisoner," said Bacon, addressing the young girl on a sign from the queen, thou hast confessed thyself a violator of the law, as well by hearing mass contrary to the statute, as by refusing to acknowledge the Queen's supremacy; knowest then aught of reason why the court should not pronounce sentence against thee accordingly ?"

"I have none to offer," replied the prisoner "save that it is a most unjust law, and should not be enforced."

"And thou, my Lord Montague," said the queen, " hast aught further to plead in the maiden's defence?' "I have, please your majesty." promptly

responded Montaguo. "Proceed then, without further delay, for this case hath already cost us time over-

muoh." "Orier," said Montague, " call the right honorable Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. to appear in evidence on this trial, with her. majesty's permission."

The queen bowed her assent. Leicester, who had taken his seat under the bench, now came forward and took his

"Most gracious sovereign, and lords com missioners of the court," said Montague, " I shall be able to prove by the aid of this most noble gentleman's testimony, that neither the prisoner nor those present at the 22288 in Whinstone Hollow, on the night of the massacre, were guilty of a violation of the statute, the cell or cavern of the said Whinstone Hollow being a privileged place, sanctuary rights having been granted to it by license of her most gracious majesty, the queen, our beloved and illustrious sovereign, now presiding on the bench."

The commissioners drow themselves up, astonished at this bold and unexpected declaration, and looked at each other, and

then at the queen for an explanation. Leicester, on the other hand, stood conwas, perhaps, too late, that he had run his head into a noose from which he might find it troublesome to extricate it. He knew the queen was incensed against him, both on account of the child and his friendship for the prisoner, and feared, if the forged licensa were produced in open court, she migt make it a cause for impeachment.

"What may this mean, my Lord Montague ?" said Elizabeth, seeing Leicester turning pale and crest-fallen; " it is surely for the first time we've heard of such license.

"The noble earl, my liege, will doubtless afford your gracious majesty satisfactory information," replied Montague, whilst a smile played about the edges of his mouth, that spoke far more than he dared to utter in words.

"Humph! this is passing strange," muttered Elizabeth, detecting a secret in Montague's countenance; "but proceed-proceed with the trial."

"Mayhap it were better, my liege," reand the earl had some private understanding anent this matter ere it cometh before the

court." The blood mounted instantly to the queen's

"What! my lord," she demanded, "wouldst have the condemnation or acquittal of the prisoner depend on the private instructions of my Lord Lelceste"?"

" Nay, but please your grace, if this license. granted to Nell Gower in requital of certain secret services, be not in your majesty's handwriting, then it must be a stopped.

"A forgery, my lord! eh?" "Pardon, my liege—the matter rests thus: A woman, whose name is Nell Gower, but who is better known as the 'spacwife,' hath now in her possession, a license purporting to be in the handwriting and under the seal of her majesty, the queen, granting sanctuary privileges to a place called Whinstone Hollow, in the neighborhood of caused to be murdered, fifteen persons, including the priest, whilst engaged at solemn worship. Doubtless this license hath been granted to the woman for some special and important services to be explained hereafter in course of trial. Now, please your majesty, and my lords commissioners, the case is exceeding simple. If this license be of her majesty's grant. ing, asbeit her grace may not remember it amongst so many state papers, then the prisoner stands acquitted of the charges in the indictment; but it, on the other hand, it be not of her majesty's granting, it will be incumbent on us to summon the 'spacwife,' and oblige her to account for the manner it came into her possession."

"Please your gracious majesty," observed Ocoll, "this is a grave and somewhat delicate point, and needeth good care in the handling, or trouble may come of it."

"May we see this license, my lord?" inquired Elizabeth. "Nay nuder your grace's favor, the instrument is in possession of the spaewife," returned Montague, "and she is not in court."

" Hast examined it?" "Truly, I have, please your grace; and it seemeth much like a royal document, "And the handwriting?"

"Nay, it doth not become me to speak on that, my liege, without a positive command the conditions." from your majesty, and as formal witness against the delinquent.'

Elizabeth now saw plainly how the case stood. Pale, and agitated from fear of ex-

posure, she paused a moment to reflect on the course she ought to puses. There was lit-

tle doubt in her mind, now, that the license was written and the royal test attached by Leicester himself. It was consequently a forgery, and if proved, subjected the granter to the penalty of high treased; should the spaewife, therefore, be summored, her testimony, together with the well known handwriting of the earl, might possibly chylot him, and true, happily for Elizabeth, esons her at once from the galling power of he haughly

looking wistfully at his master, he turned his an allegation put forth by such a person as Nell Gower, the bench would probably acquit him, and thus Nell Gower herself be instantly arraigned for forgery. Now, this guilty, would be likely to make he denied even your majesty's right to the few scruples about divulging her secrets. All throne, and called thee a naurper."
this passed through Elizabeth's saind in a "Who speaks?" inquired the knight. guilty. this passed through Elizabeth's mind in a ""Who speaks " inquire this passed through Elizabeth's mind in a ""Bir Thomas Plimpton." this passed through Education of Deschillty "Bir Thomas Pumpton."
second, and, seeing there was no possibility "Ahl my God!" exclaimed the old man, of safely gratifying her insatiable desire for Alloe's death and the earl's rain at the same shrinking back in terror, " hath he pursued us time, she resolved to deler hearing the charge hither, even into the presence of the queen?

> "My Lord Montague," said the queen, afsorting a composure she by no means falt marry thee child. O daughter of my heart," this charge of lorgery night too much em he murmused, drawing her head over on his barrass the present case, and we therefore must put off its hearing until the morrow, when thou mayst produce the spaewife, an it be needful."

"Then it's your majesty's pleasure to adourn this court," observed Montague. "Nay, nay, my lord, hath not the charge

been proved against the prisoner ?" " Not so, under your grace's favor; the prisoner standeth acquitted of the charge, if the cavern of Whinstone Hollow enjoyed the sanctuary privilege."

"That remainsth yet to be seen," replied Elizabeth. "The court shall now pass sentence, reserving its execution, however, till such time as this forgery affair may be investigated. Prisoner, stand forth and answer for the last time, dost thou, or dost knight, hearing the name of the witness thou not, acknowledge the queen's supre MACY

At this moment, Sir Geoffrey made some

exclamation which disturbed the court. "Who speaks ?" demanded Elizabeth. "May it please your grace," feebly mut-

tered the knight, attempting to rise. "Bring him forward then," said the queen. nodding her assent to the officers, " that the court may judge of the young recusant by the

The knight of Brookton was now helped forward on the stand beside his daughter, by two of the deputy nehers. His face was white as marble; his hands trembled, and his imbs shook as with a palsy. When he had staggered up to where Alice stood, he threw silence..." hold thy peace, grumbler, and dishis left arm over her neck, and balanced himself in that position with the aid of a cane some one handed him from the crowd. "Leave me," said he, turning his head half So, there, Sir Thomas Plimpton," she con-round to the ushers—"leave me; my child tinued, "held up thy cropped head, that the will now support me."

" Dear father," whispered Alice, "take thee care thou offendest not the queen.

" Is she straight before me, Alice?" "Ay, dost not see her there on the banch? " Nay, my sight hath grown weak of late." "What wouldst thou of the court?" demand-

ed Elizabeth. " I would ask thee to spare this little girl's life, for thy royal father's sake," responded founded and surprised. He now saw, when it | Sir Geoffrey, "seeing she hath never injured thee in word or deed."

"Our royal father-what knowest thou o our father?" " Little for a good score years-little since he rebelled sgainst the church; but when he was yet young and happy, I was his companion in arms, in many a wild fray. Twice he owed me his life, and now I come here to

claim a little mercy from his daughter for the sake of the olden time." as the knight spoke his head fell for ward on his breast, and his limbs tottered un-

der him. " And what mercy canst thou expect from the daughter, when thou cursest the father's memory ?"

"I curse not at all," slowly replied the knight; "God hath not given us tongues to curse, but to bless; and I will bless and pray even for those who have driven me from my home and my books out here on the world's charity, an thou but sparest my child. For sixteen years these old eyes have seldom looked on woman's face, save this," patting his daughter's cheek with the hand he had thrown round her neck, "and therefore little sion; it was when last I carried despatches am I versed in the ways of the court, and to Scotland, to the Earl _____" little know I how to excite a woman's pity; but if thou only lookest in this child's face, your grace will see she deserveth not death. ears," exclaimed Elizabeth, interrupting her O my lords, my lords, she is as innecent as the new-born babe."

"Ay, marry-innocent, forgooth; she hath simply, yea or nay." violated the law, and refused to acknowledge our supremacy; call ye this innocence?" demanded the queen, endeavoring to implicate the knight, as an offset to the sympathy manifested by the banch and the spectators.

"Under your gracious majesty's favor." said Montague, rising, "I must 'caution the with. Here's a fortune seeking, sour-visaged knight of Brockton against answering that question."

"'Sdeath!' cried Elizabeth, turning sharply on the advocate, "art thou censor of the court? marry, we knew not the bench had such a supervisor" "With your grees's permission," observed

Thomas Plimpton hath murdered, or might be seated; the seated tottering, and seemeth in id he" "Let him stand," rent d Elizabeth; " we shall not detain him 1992.

"Lean on me, father,' whispered Alice "I am strong, and oan support thee." "Darling," muttered the knight, " living and dying thou art a staff of strength to me. " Speak not of dyling, dear father."

Alas! Alice, the sand is nearly run; my old associations interrupted, my library burnt, and my daughter fled, I have felt my heartstrings snapping, one by one, day by day, till now, dear child, their is none left but thee. "Sir Geoficey Wentworth," said Elizabeth,
we are disposed to be merciful to thy daughter, the prisoner, in consideration of her youth, and even thy past contumacious and most disloyal behavior, if thou but express sorrow for the same, and promise submission to the laws in future; and yet, my lords,"

she added, turning to the commissioners, "I fear this exercise of the royal elemency may work as much mischief in the end; and she spoke as if all was now over, and no act of thine." hesitancy to be anticipated on the part of the

acoused. "Art willing to sue for pardon, Sir Geoffrey Wentworth, on these terms?" repeated the queen.

"Please your grace, my memory groweth somewhat remiss of late; I remember not "They are easy of compliance," observed Elizabeth, "namely, that thou avow sorrow for the past, and promise submission for the future, both for thyself and daughter."

are these the only terms?" "What! the only terms-do they not satisfy thee?" The knight shook his head, and remained

silent for a moment.
"Speak!" commanded the queen "Darling, my heart is breaking," murmured the old man, softly whispering the words over his daughter's shoulder.

"Wilt not answer?" again demanded the queen.

Thou'rt a most perverse wretch," exolaimed the queen, "and deservest no

mercy."
Whe hath reviled your majesty in most might prove a very disastrons conse blasphemous manner, observed Plimpton. quence; for the spaewife, once found h. Nay, when fendered the oath of supremacy,

of fergery for the precent, and proceed at once, methods that after bankshing us from home, and to pass sentence on the young request, trust compelling us to crave the world's cold charing to the morrow for the conviction of the try, he might have been satisfied. Eh, but I had almost forgotten," continued the knight, at My-Lord Montague," said the queen, at he would marry thee, Alice—he would breast, "thou must never marry that man,

even to save thy life." "Prisoner, did he ask thee in marriage?" inquired Montague, addressing Alice.

" He did."

"When, and where?" "During the journey to London. He averred, also, that her majesty had promised to give me to him in marriage."

" Sir Thomas Plimpton, advance to the bar in obedience to the royal summons," cried the tipstaff, at a signal from the attorney-general.

The tall, gaunt form of the discarded courtier then slowly ascended the few steps that led to the council table, and took the stand baside Sir Geoffrey and his daughter. The called, and feeling him now at his eide, turn. ed to look at the man who had caused him so much misery, fixing his eyes close upon him, for, alas! they were now almost sightless. "What !" soid he, after gazing at him for a time in apparent astonishment-" what I the queen to promise thee my little Alice in mar isge! surely, man, thou must belie thy mistress, for verily it would be a most damnable sacrilege to wed this angel to a monster like thee. O dear me! thou hast wisage hateful as thy heart." And the old

men shook his trembling hand at the sinister looking witness, and turned away. "Hold thy pesce, Sir Geoffrey Wentworth." commanded Elizabeth, striking the deak with a book she held in her hand to enforce respect not the presence; 'sdeath my lords, each one here thinks he hath right to use his tongue without stint or reverence. court may see thy comely countenance, and answer to the bench."

"My honored liege," submitted the venerable Marquis of Winchester, himself a Catholic, though never a stanch one in the presence of royalty, "may it please your grace to dispense with the effquette of the court, and order the old man a chair, for he seemeth no longer able to stand."

The queen made a signal to the usher, who instantly placed a chair upon the table, on which the knight slowly seated himself. holding Alice firmly by the hand, as if he dreaded some one might snatch her away. "And so, Sir Thomas Plimpton," resumed Elizabeth, "the prisoner averreth thou hast

solicited her, when yet in thy custody, to wed

thee; and, furthermore, avouched our reyal promise to eniorce thy suit-what sayest thou?" "An it please your gracious majesty, may not contradict the maiden," responded Plimpton, resolved to make a last effort to secure the wealthy helress, even at the risk of offending the queen by the avowal. Indeed, it was the only hope now left him, for he saw clearly, it the queen banished him not to Brockton a mar-

ried man, she would send him to the Tower, and thence to the block, and bury his secrets and himself together in the same grave. "What! man; dost swear that we verily

and indeed made thee such promises?" " Ay, most truly hath your majesty." D Verv Nay, I can remind your grace of the occa-

" Hold! sir-enough! we care not to divalge our state secrets to so many greedy quondam confident, lest he might say too much. "We wish thee to answer our question

"Then do I most solemnly swear that your majesty had promised me the hand of this maiden in requital of certain services."

"My lords," observed the royal tactician, smiling round at the commissioners, "queens should be careful whom they deign to triffe gentleman, who thinks, doubtless, the mirth we once indulged at his expense may now be turned to account. Ye see, my lords, he hath resolved to hold us to our foolish promises; hah! marry, he hath caught us. What think ye, then, if still, in consideration of the prisoner's youth, and her father's great Hampton Palace, the same in which Sir the Marquis of Winchester, "the knight age and apparent infirmity, we pardon both on condition that the damsel wed this man, and thus in time abandon her errors; for truly, we see not how we can elsewise redeem our foolish promise."

The commissioners at once expressed their cordial assent, and the queen proceeded. "Prisoner, art willing to take this man for thy husband?" she demanded; " if so, we are disposed to pardon thee and thy father for what hath passed, in the hope that ye may both soon repent under the ghostly counsel

of this most plous and God-fearing Christian, Bir Thomas Plimpton."

Alice replied not, but, bending down, whispered something in her father's ear.

The knight drew back and stared at her in surprise. "Never!" he exclaimed, pushing her from him gently, and looking up re-proachiully in her face; " never, never! were it to save my life a thousand times; dear child, thou wouldst not kill thy father, wouldst thon? Ah, Alice, I must soon die; indeed, indeed, I feel the death-beat at my heart; but God forbid it should be hastened by word or

"Malden!" orled Elizabeth, angrily striking the bench a second time, "we would have thee look up and answer us. 'Sdeath, wench, thou seemest to make but small account of our sovereign will and pleasure; give answer -wilt consent to marry this man to says thine own and thy father's life?"

"Not II" replied the noble-minded girl, in a clear, firm voice, though the tears were still glistening on her cheeks. "But a short week gone, and I had consented to become his wife to save my father from "God bless me!" ejaculated the knight; the penalty of recusancy; now, there's are these the only terms?" hearted old man is fast nearing those confines where your majesty's sceptre can no longer reach him, nor the sacrifice of his child add another hour to his life. So far, thy power hath prevailed," continued Ailce, warming as she proceeded. "Ay, thou hast hunted him from his peaceful homestead, burnt to askes every object of his innocent attachment, wrenched asunder all those foud associations that entwined with the fibres of

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