

The Essex Ring.

FAMOUS RELIC OF QUEEN ELIZABETH.

The famous "Essex ring," to which much romance attaches, has been sold at Christie's for 3250gns. It was presented to the public by the auctioneer as "Lot 56," for auctioneers are, as a rule, prosaic persons. Here is the story of this historic ring:— Elizabeth, Queen, gave to her favourite, the Earl of Essex, a ring with the promise that, of whatsoever crimes his enemies might accuse him, a return of the ring to her Majesty would act as a pledge that she would pardon him, or at least admit of him giving an explanation to justify himself in her presence. Essex fell into disfavour, and was condemned to death. He entrusted the ring to the Countess of Nottingham, a relative of the Earl, to be sent to Elizabeth. That jealous countess kept back the ring. When the ring did not come, Elizabeth believed that out of pride and obstinacy the earl had determined not to sue to her for his life; or else that he depended on her love to save him without being asked. Her pride and obstinacy could not brook this; from day to anxious day, she allowed the sentence to go unrepealed; and Essex lost his head. Later (says one story) the countess showed Elizabeth the ring, and pleaded for forgiveness. Exclaiming, "God may forgive you, but I never can!" Elizabeth "flung herself out of the chamber"; and surrendered herself to the despair which seized her heart, and died. Another story is that the Countess of Nottingham, remorseful on her deathbed, begged the Queen to come to her. Elizabeth seized the dying woman by her shoulders and literally shook the little remaining life out of her.

From Lady Frances Devereux, daughter of the ill-fated Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, and who married William Duke of Somerset, the ring was inherited by her daughter, Lady Mary Seymour, who married Henry second Earl of Winchelsea. Next it passed to her daughter, Lady Frances Finch, who espoused Thos. Thynne, first Viscount Weymouth, and next to her daughter, Frances Thynne, who married Sir Robt. Worsley. Her daughter, Frances Worsley, next had it, and she married Jno. Carteret Earl Granville. Louise Carteret, her daughter, who married Thomas, second Viscount Weymouth, was the last lady to

VISCOUNT Weymouth, was the last lady to keep over it, and then the ring started an old bachelor regime, passing successively to Hy. Fdk. Lord Carteret, George Lord Carteret, John Lord Carteret, and to his nephew, the Rev. Lord John Thynne, whose executors gave the order for sale.
