CHARLES KINGSLEY

WESTWARD HO! OR, THE VOYAGES AND ADVENTURES OF SIR AMYAS LEIGH, KNIGHT, OF BURROUGH, IN THE COUNTY OF DEVON, IN THE REIGN OF HER MOST GLORIOUS MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH

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Содержание

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By one who (unknown to them) has no other method of expressing his admiration and reverence for their characters.

That type of English virtue, at once manful and godly, practical and enthusiastic, prudent and self-sacrificing, which he has tried to depict in these pages, they have exhibited in a form even purer and more heroic than that in which he has drest it, and than that in which it was exhibited by the worthies whom Elizabeth, without distinction of rank or age, gathered round her in the ever glorious wars of her great reign.

C. K. FEBRUARY, 1855.

CHAPTER I
HOW MR. OXENHAM SAW THE WHITE BIRD

"The hollow oak our palace is,
Our heritage the sea."

All who have travelled through the delicious scenery of North Devon must needs know the little white town of Bideford, which slopes upwards from its broad tide-river paved with yellow sands, and many-arched old bridge where salmon wait for autumn floods, toward the pleasant upland on the west. Above the town the hills close in, cushioned with deep oak woods, through which juts here and there a crag of fern-fringed slate; below they lower, and open more and more in softly rounded knolls, and fertile squares of red and green, till they sink into the wide expanse of hazy flats, rich salt-marshes, and rolling sand-hills, where Torridge joins her sister Taw, and both together flow quietly toward the broad surges of the bar, and the everlasting thunder of the long Atlantic swell. Pleasantly the old town stands there, beneath its soft Italian sky, fanned day and night by the fresh ocean breeze, which forbids alike the keen winter frosts, and the fierce thunder heats of the midland; and pleasantly it has stood there for now, perhaps, eight hundred years since the first Grenville, cousin of the Conqueror, returning from the conquest of South Wales, drew round him trusty Saxon serfs, and free Norse rovers with their golden curls, and dark Silurian Britons from the Swansea shore, and all the mingled blood which still gives to the seaward folk of the next county their strength and intellect, and, even in these levelling days, their peculiar beauty of face and form.

But at the time whereof I write, Bideford was not merely a pleasant country town, whose quay was haunted by a few coasting craft. It was one of the chief ports of England; it furnished seven ships to fight the Armada: even more than a century afterwards, say the chroniclers, "it sent more vessels to the northern trade than any port in England, saving (strange juxtaposition!) London and Topsham," and was the centre of a local civilization and enterprise, small perhaps compared with the vast efforts of the present day: but who dare despise the day of small things, if it has proved to be the dawn of mighty ones? And it is to the sea-life and labor of Bideford, and Dartmouth, and Topsham, and Plymouth (then a petty place), and many another little western town, that England owes the foundation of her naval and commercial glory. It was the men of Devon, the Drakes and Hawkins', Gilberts and Raleighs, Grenvilles and Oxenhams, and a host more of "forgotten worthies," whom we shall learn one day to honor as they deserve, to whom she owes her commerce, her colonies, her very existence. For had they not first crippled, by their West Indian raids, the ill-gotten resources of the Spaniard, and then crushed his last huge effort in Britain's Salamis, the glorious fight of 1588, what had we been by now but a popish appanage of a world-tyranny as cruel as heathen Rome itself, and far more devilish?

It is in memory of these men, their voyages and their battles, their faith and their valor, their heroic lives and no less heroic deaths, that I write this book; and if now and then I shall seem to warm into a style somewhat too stilted and pompous, let me be excused for my subject's sake, fit rather to have been sung than said, and to have proclaimed to all true English hearts, not as a novel but as an epic (which some man may yet gird himself to write), the same great message which the songs of Troy, and the Persian wars, and the trophies of Marathon and Salamis, spoke to the hearts of all true Greeks of old.

One bright summer's afternoon, in the year of grace 1575, a tall and fair boy came lingering along Bideford quay, in his scholar's gown, with satchel and slate in hand, watching wistfully the shipping and the sailors, till, just after he had passed the bottom of the High Street, he came opposite

to one of the many taverns which looked out upon the river. In the open bay window sat merchants and gentlemen, discoursing over their afternoon's draught of sack; and outside the door was gathered a group of sailors, listening earnestly to some one who stood in the midst. The boy, all alive for any sea-news, must needs go up to them, and take his place among the sailor-lads who were peeping and whispering under the elbows of the men; and so came in for the following speech, delivered in a loud bold voice, with a strong Devonshire accent, and a fair sprinkling of oaths.

"If you don't believe me, go and see, or stay here and grow all over blue mould. I tell you, as I am a gentleman, I saw it with these eyes, and so did Salvation Yeo there, through a window in the lower room; and we measured the heap, as I am a christened man, seventy foot long, ten foot broad, and twelve foot high, of silver bars, and each bar between a thirty and forty pound weight. And says Captain Drake: 'There, my lads of Devon, I've brought you to the mouth of the world's treasure-house, and it's your own fault now if you don't sweep it out as empty as a stock-fish.'"

"Why didn't you bring some of they home, then, Mr. Oxenham?"

"Why weren't you there to help to carry them? We would have brought 'em away, safe enough, and young Drake and I had broke the door abroad already, but Captain Drake goes off in a dead faint; and when we came to look, he had a wound in his leg you might have laid three fingers in, and his boots were full of blood, and had been for an hour or more; but the heart of him was that, that he never knew it till he dropped, and then his brother and I got him away to the boats, he kicking and struggling, and bidding us let him go on with the fight, though every step he took in the sand was in a pool of blood; and so we got off. And tell me, ye sons of shotten herrings, wasn't it worth more to save him than the dirty silver? for silver we can get again, brave boys: there's more fish in the sea than ever came out of it, and more silver in Nombre de Dios than would pave all the streets in the west country: but of such captains as Franky Drake, Heaven never makes but one at a time; and if we lose him, good-bye to England's luck, say I, and who don't agree, let him choose his weapons, and I'm his man."

He who delivered this harangue was a tall and sturdy personage, with a florid black-bearded face, and bold restless dark eyes, who leaned, with crossed legs and arms akimbo, against the wall of the house; and seemed in the eyes of the schoolboy a very magnifico, some prince or duke at least. He was dressed (contrary to all sumptuary laws of the time) in a suit of crimson velvet, a little the worse, perhaps, for wear; by his side were a long Spanish rapier and a brace of daggers, gaudy enough about the hilts; his fingers sparkled with rings; he had two or three gold chains about his neck, and large earrings in his ears, behind one of which a red rose was stuck jauntily enough among the glossy black curls; on his head was a broad velvet Spanish hat, in which instead of a feather was fastened with a great gold clasp a whole Quezal bird, whose gorgeous plumage of fretted golden green shone like one entire precious stone. As he finished his speech, he took off the said hat, and looking at the bird in it—

"Look ye, my lads, did you ever see such a fowl as that before? That's the bird which the old Indian kings of Mexico let no one wear but their own selves; and therefore I wear it,—I, John Oxenham of South Tawton, for a sign to all brave lads of Devon, that as the Spaniards are the masters of the Indians, we're the masters of the Spaniards:" and he replaced his hat.

A murmur of applause followed: but one hinted that he "doubted the Spaniards were too many for them."

"Too many? How many men did we take Nombre de Dios with? Seventy-three were we, and no more when we sailed out of Plymouth Sound; and before we saw the Spanish Main, half were gastados, used up, as the Dons say, with the scurvy; and in Port Pheasant Captain Rawse of Cowes fell in with us, and that gave us some thirty hands more; and with that handful, my lads, only fifty-three in all, we picked the lock of the new world! And whom did we lose but our trumpeter, who stood braying like an ass in the middle of the square, instead of taking care of his neck like a Christian? I tell you, those Spaniards are rank cowards, as all bullies are. They pray to a woman, the idolatrous rascals! and no wonder they fight like women."

"You'm right, captain," sang out a tall gaunt fellow who stood close to him; "one westcountryman can fight two easterlings, and an easterling can beat three Dons any day. Eh! my lads of Devon?

"For O! it's the herrings and the good brown beef,
And the cider and the cream so white;
O! they are the making of the jolly Devon lads,
For to play, and eke to fight."

"Come," said Oxenham, "come along! Who lists? who lists? who'll make his fortune?

"Oh, who will join, jolly mariners all?
And who will join, says he, O!
To fill his pockets with the good red goold,
By sailing on the sea, O!"

"Who'll list?" cried the gaunt man again; "now's your time! We've got forty men to Plymouth now, ready to sail the minute we get back, and we want a dozen out of you Bideford men, and just a boy or two, and then we'm off and away, and make our fortunes, or go to heaven.

"Our bodies in the sea so deep,
Our souls in heaven to rest!
Where valiant seamen, one and all,
Hereafter shall be blest!"

"Now," said Oxenham, "you won't let the Plymouth men say that the Bideford men daren't follow them? North Devon against South, it is. Who'll join? who'll join? It is but a step of a way, after all, and sailing as smooth as a duck-pond as soon as you're past Cape Finisterre. I'll run a Clovelly herring-boat there and back for a wager of twenty pound, and never ship a bucketful all the way. Who'll join? Don't think you're buying a pig in a poke. I know the road, and Salvation Yeo, here, too, who was the gunner's mate, as well as I do the narrow seas, and better. You ask him to show you the chart of it, now, and see if he don't tell you over the ruttier as well as Drake himself."

On which the gaunt man pulled from under his arm a great white buffalo horn covered with rough etchings of land and sea, and held it up to the admiring ring.

"See here, boys all, and behold the pictur of the place, dra'ed out so natural as ever was life. I got mun from a Portingal, down to the Azores; and he'd pricked mun out, and pricked mun out, wheresoever he'd sailed, and whatsoever he'd seen. Take mun in your hands now, Simon Evans, take mun in your hands; look mun over, and I'll warrant you'll know the way in five minutes so well as ever a shark in the seas."

And the horn was passed from hand to hand; while Oxenham, who saw that his hearers were becoming moved, called through the open window for a great tankard of sack, and passed that from hand to hand, after the horn.

The school-boy, who had been devouring with eyes and ears all which passed, and had contrived by this time to edge himself into the inner ring, now stood face to face with the hero of the emerald crest, and got as many peeps as he could at the wonder. But when he saw the sailors, one after another, having turned it over a while, come forward and offer to join Mr. Oxenham, his soul burned within him for a nearer view of that wondrous horn, as magical in its effects as that of Tristrem, or the enchanter's in Ariosto; and when the group had somewhat broken up, and Oxenham was going into the tavern with his recruits, he asked boldly for a nearer sight of the marvel, which was granted at once.

And now to his astonished gaze displayed themselves cities and harbors, dragons and elephants, whales which fought with sharks, plate ships of Spain, islands with apes and palm-trees, each with its name over-written, and here and there, “Here is gold;” and again, “Much gold and silver;” inserted most probably, as the words were in English, by the hands of Mr. Oxenham himself. Lingeringly and longingly the boy turned it round and round, and thought the owner of it more fortunate than Khan or Kaiser. Oh, if he could but possess that horn, what needed he on earth beside to make him blest!

“I say, will you sell this?”

“Yea, marry, or my own soul, if I can get the worth of it.”

“I want the horn,—I don’t want your soul; it’s somewhat of a stale sole, for aught I know; and there are plenty of fresh ones in the bay.”

And therewith, after much fumbling, he pulled out a tester (the only one he had), and asked if that would buy it?

“That! no, nor twenty of them.”

The boy thought over what a good knight-errant would do in such case, and then answered, “Tell you what: I’ll fight you for it.”

“Thank ‘ee, sir!

“Break the jackanapes’s head for him, Yeo,” said Oxenham.

“Call me jackanapes again, and I break yours, sir.” And the boy lifted his fist fiercely.

Oxenham looked at him a minute smilingly. “Tut! tut! my man, hit one of your own size, if you will, and spare little folk like me!”

“If I have a boy’s age, sir, I have a man’s fist. I shall be fifteen years old this month, and know how to answer any one who insults me.”

“Fifteen, my young cockerel? you look liker twenty,” said Oxenham, with an admiring glance at the lad’s broad limbs, keen blue eyes, curling golden locks, and round honest face. “Fifteen? If I had half-a-dozen such lads as you, I would make knights of them before I died. Eh, Yeo?”

“He’ll do,” said Yeo; “he will make a brave gamecock in a year or two, if he dares ruffle up so early at a tough old hen-master like the captain.”

At which there was a general laugh, in which Oxenham joined as loudly as any, and then bade the lad tell him why he was so keen after the horn.

“Because,” said he, looking up boldly, “I want to go to sea. I want to see the Indies. I want to fight the Spaniards. Though I am a gentleman’s son, I’d a deal liever be a cabin-boy on board your ship.” And the lad, having hurried out his say fiercely enough, dropped his head again.

“And you shall,” cried Oxenham, with a great oath; “and take a galloon, and dine off carbonadoed Dons. Whose son are you, my gallant fellow?”

“Mr. Leigh’s, of Burrough Court.”

“Bless his soul! I know him as well as I do the Eddystone, and his kitchen too. Who sups with him to-night?”

“Sir Richard Grenville.”

“Dick Grenville? I did not know he was in town. Go home and tell your father John Oxenham will come and keep him company. There, off with you! I’ll make all straight with the good gentleman, and you shall have your venture with me; and as for the horn, let him have the horn, Yeo, and I’ll give you a noble for it.”

“Not a penny, noble captain. If young master will take a poor mariner’s gift, there it is, for the sake of his love to the calling, and Heaven send him luck therein.” And the good fellow, with the impulsive generosity of a true sailor, thrust the horn into the boy’s hands, and walked away to escape thanks.

“And now,” quoth Oxenham, “my merry men all, make up your minds what mannered men you be minded to be before you take your bounties. I want none of your rascally lurching longshore vermin, who get five pounds out of this captain, and ten out of that, and let him sail without them

after all, while they are stowed away under women's mufflers, and in tavern cellars. If any man is of that humor, he had better to cut himself up, and salt himself down in a barrel for pork, before he meets me again; for by this light, let me catch him, be it seven years hence, and if I do not cut his throat upon the streets, it's a pity! But if any man will be true brother to me, true brother to him I'll be, come wreck or prize, storm or calm, salt water or fresh, victuals or none, share and fare alike; and here's my hand upon it, for every man and all! and so—

"Westward ho! with a rumbelow,
And hurra for the Spanish Main, O!"

After which oration Mr. Oxenham swaggered into the tavern, followed by his new men; and the boy took his way homewards, nursing his precious horn, trembling between hope and fear, and blushing with maidenly shame, and a half-sense of wrong-doing at having revealed suddenly to a stranger the darling wish which he had hidden from his father and mother ever since he was ten years old.

Now this young gentleman, Amyas Leigh, though come of as good blood as any in Devon, and having lived all his life in what we should even now call the very best society, and being (on account of the valor, courtesy, and truly noble qualities which he showed forth in his most eventful life) chosen by me as the hero and centre of this story, was not, saving for his good looks, by any means what would be called now-a-days an "interesting" youth, still less a "highly educated" one; for, with the exception of a little Latin, which had been driven into him by repeated blows, as if it had been a nail, he knew no books whatsoever, save his Bible, his Prayer-book, the old "Mort d'Arthur" of Caxton's edition, which lay in the great bay window in the hall, and the translation of "Las Casas' History of the West Indies," which lay beside it, lately done into English under the title of "The Cruelties of the Spaniards." He devoutly believed in fairies, whom he called pixies; and held that they changed babies, and made the mushroom rings on the downs to dance in. When he had warts or burns, he went to the white witch at Northam to charm them away; he thought that the sun moved round the earth, and that the moon had some kindred with a Cheshire cheese. He held that the swallows slept all the winter at the bottom of the horse-pond; talked, like Raleigh, Grenville, and other low persons, with a broad Devonshire accent; and was in many other respects so very ignorant a youth, that any pert monitor in a national school might have had a hearty laugh at him. Nevertheless, this ignorant young savage, vacant of the glorious gains of the nineteenth century, children's literature and science made easy, and, worst of all, of those improved views of English history now current among our railway essayists, which consist in believing all persons, male and female, before the year 1688, and nearly all after it, to have been either hypocrites or fools, had learnt certain things which he would hardly have been taught just now in any school in England; for his training had been that of the old Persians, "to speak the truth and to draw the bow," both of which savage virtues he had acquired to perfection, as well as the equally savage ones of enduring pain cheerfully, and of believing it to be the finest thing in the world to be a gentleman; by which word he had been taught to understand the careful habit of causing needless pain to no human being, poor or rich, and of taking pride in giving up his own pleasure for the sake of those who were weaker than himself. Moreover, having been entrusted for the last year with the breaking of a colt, and the care of a cast of young hawks which his father had received from Lundy Isle, he had been profiting much, by the means of those coarse and frivolous amusements, in perseverance, thoughtfulness, and the habit of keeping his temper; and though he had never had a single "object lesson," or been taught to "use his intellectual powers," he knew the names and ways of every bird, and fish, and fly, and could read, as cunningly as the oldest sailor, the meaning of every drift of cloud which crossed the heavens. Lastly, he had been for some time past, on account of his extraordinary size and strength, undisputed cock of the school, and the most terrible fighter among all Bideford boys; in which brutal habit he took much delight, and contrived,

strange as it may seem, to extract from it good, not only for himself but for others, doing justice among his school-fellows with a heavy hand, and succoring the oppressed and afflicted; so that he was the terror of all the sailor-lads, and the pride and stay of all the town's boys and girls, and hardly considered that he had done his duty in his calling if he went home without beating a big lad for bullying a little one. For the rest, he never thought about thinking, or felt about feeling; and had no ambition whatsoever beyond pleasing his father and mother, getting by honest means the maximum of "red quarrenders" and mazard cherries, and going to sea when he was big enough. Neither was he what would be now-a-days called by many a pious child; for though he said his Creed and Lord's Prayer night and morning, and went to the service at the church every forenoon, and read the day's Psalms with his mother every evening, and had learnt from her and from his father (as he proved well in after life) that it was infinitely noble to do right and infinitely base to do wrong, yet (the age of children's religious books not having yet dawned on the world) he knew nothing more of theology, or of his own soul, than is contained in the Church Catechism. It is a question, however, on the whole, whether, though grossly ignorant (according to our modern notions) in science and religion, he was altogether untrained in manhood, virtue, and godliness; and whether the barbaric narrowness of his information was not somewhat counterbalanced both in him and in the rest of his generation by the depth, and breadth, and healthiness of his education.

So let us watch him up the hill as he goes hugging his horn, to tell all that has passed to his mother, from whom he had never hidden anything in his life, save only that sea-fever; and that only because he foreknew that it would give her pain; and because, moreover, being a prudent and sensible lad, he knew that he was not yet old enough to go, and that, as he expressed it to her that afternoon, "there was no use hollaing till he was out of the wood."

So he goes up between the rich lane-banks, heavy with drooping ferns and honeysuckle; out upon the windy down toward the old Court, nestled amid its ring of wind-clipt oaks; through the gray gateway into the homeclose; and then he pauses a moment to look around; first at the wide bay to the westward, with its southern wall of purple cliffs; then at the dim Isle of Lundy far away at sea; then at the cliffs and downs of Morte and Braunton, right in front of him; then at the vast yellow sheet of rolling sand-hill, and green alluvial plain dotted with red cattle, at his feet, through which the silver estuary winds onward toward the sea. Beneath him, on his right, the Torridge, like a land-locked lake, sleeps broad and bright between the old park of Tapeley and the charmed rock of the Hubbastone, where, seven hundred years ago, the Norse rovers landed to lay siege to Kenwith Castle, a mile away on his left hand; and not three fields away, are the old stones of "The Bloody Corner," where the retreating Danes, cut off from their ships, made their last fruitless stand against the Saxon sheriff and the valiant men of Devon. Within that charmed rock, so Torridge boatmen tell, sleeps now the old Norse Viking in his leaden coffin, with all his fairy treasure and his crown of gold; and as the boy looks at the spot, he fancies, and almost hopes, that the day may come when he shall have to do his duty against the invader as boldly as the men of Devon did then. And past him, far below, upon the soft southeastern breeze, the stately ships go sliding out to sea. When shall he sail in them, and see the wonders of the deep? And as he stands there with beating heart and kindling eye, the cool breeze whistling through his long fair curls, he is a symbol, though he knows it not, of brave young England longing to wing its way out of its island prison, to discover and to traffic, to colonize and to civilize, until no wind can sweep the earth which does not bear the echoes of an English voice. Patience, young Amyas! Thou too shalt forth, and westward ho, beyond thy wildest dreams; and see brave sights, and do brave deeds, which no man has since the foundation of the world. Thou too shalt face invaders stronger and more cruel far than Dane or Norman, and bear thy part in that great Titan strife before the renown of which the name of Salamis shall fade away!

Mr. Oxenham came that evening to supper as he had promised: but as people supped in those days in much the same manner as they do now, we may drop the thread of the story for a few hours, and take it up again after supper is over.

"Come now, Dick Grenville, do thou talk the good man round, and I'll warrant myself to talk round the good wife."

The personage whom Oxenham addressed thus familiarly answered by a somewhat sarcastic smile, and, "Mr. Oxenham gives Dick Grenville" (with just enough emphasis on the "Mr." and the "Dick," to hint that a liberty had been taken with him) "overmuch credit with the men. Mr. Oxenham's credit with fair ladies, none can doubt. Friend Leigh, is Heard's great ship home yet from the Straits?"

The speaker, known well in those days as Sir Richard Grenville, Granville, Greenvil, Greenfield, with two or three other variations, was one of those truly heroical personages whom Providence, fitting always the men to their age and their work, had sent upon the earth whereof it takes right good care, not in England only, but in Spain and Italy, in Germany and the Netherlands, and wherever, in short, great men and great deeds were needed to lift the mediaeval world into the modern.

And, among all the heroic faces which the painters of that age have preserved, none, perhaps, hardly excepting Shakespeare's or Spenser's, Alva's or Farina's, is more heroic than that of Richard Grenville, as it stands in Prince's "Worthies of Devon;" of a Spanish type, perhaps (or more truly speaking, a Cornish), rather than an English, with just enough of the British element in it to give delicacy to its massiveness. The forehead and whole brain are of extraordinary loftiness, and perfectly upright; the nose long, aquiline, and delicately pointed; the mouth fringed with a short silky beard, small and ripe, yet firm as granite, with just pout enough of the lower lip to give hint of that capacity of noble indignation which lay hid under its usual courtly calm and sweetness; if there be a defect in the face, it is that the eyes are somewhat small, and close together, and the eyebrows, though delicately arched, and, without a trace of peevishness, too closely pressed down upon them, the complexion is dark, the figure tall and graceful; altogether the likeness of a wise and gallant gentleman, lovely to all good men, awful to all bad men; in whose presence none dare say or do a mean or a ribald thing; whom brave men left, feeling themselves nerved to do their duty better, while cowards slipped away, as bats and owls before the sun. So he lived and moved, whether in the Court of Elizabeth, giving his counsel among the wisest; or in the streets of Bideford, capped alike by squire and merchant, shopkeeper and sailor; or riding along the moorland roads between his houses of Stow and Bideford, while every woman ran out to her door to look at the great Sir Richard, the pride of North Devon; or, sitting there in the low mullioned window at Burrough, with his cup of malmsey before him, and the lute to which he had just been singing laid across his knees, while the red western sun streamed in upon his high, bland forehead, and soft curling locks; ever the same steadfast, God-fearing, chivalrous man, conscious (as far as a soul so healthy could be conscious) of the pride of beauty, and strength, and valor, and wisdom, and a race and name which claimed direct descent from the grandfather of the Conqueror, and was tracked down the centuries by valiant deeds and noble benefits to his native shire, himself the noblest of his race. Men said that he was proud; but he could not look round him without having something to be proud of; that he was stern and harsh to his sailors: but it was only when he saw in them any taint of cowardice or falsehood; that he was subject, at moments, to such fearful fits of rage, that he had been seen to snatch the glasses from the table, grind them to pieces in his teeth, and swallow them: but that was only when his indignation had been aroused by some tale of cruelty or oppression, and, above all, by those West Indian devilries of the Spaniards, whom he regarded (and in those days rightly enough) as the enemies of God and man. Of this last fact Oxenham was well aware, and therefore felt somewhat puzzled and nettled, when, after having asked Mr. Leigh's leave to take young Amyas with him and set forth in glowing colors the purpose of his voyage, he found Sir Richard utterly unwilling to help him with his suit.

"Heyday, Sir Richard! You are not surely gone over to the side of those canting fellows (Spanish Jesuits in disguise, every one of them, they are), who pretended to turn up their noses at Franky Drake, as a pirate, and be hanged to them?"

"My friend Oxenham," answered he, in the sententious and measured style of the day, "I have always held, as you should know by this, that Mr. Drake's booty, as well as my good friend Captain Hawkins's, is lawful prize, as being taken from the Spaniard, who is not only hostis humani generis, but has no right to the same, having robbed it violently, by torture and extreme iniquity, from the poor Indian, whom God avenge, as He surely will."

"Amen," said Mrs. Leigh.

"I say Amen, too," quoth Oxenham, "especially if it please Him to avenge them by English hands."

"And I also," went on Sir Richard; "for the rightful owners of the said goods being either miserably dead, or incapable, by reason of their servitude, of ever recovering any share thereof, the treasure, falsely called Spanish, cannot be better bestowed than in building up the state of England against them, our natural enemies; and thereby, in building up the weal of the Reformed Churches throughout the world, and the liberties of all nations, against a tyranny more foul and rapacious than that of Nero or Caligula; which, if it be not the cause of God, I, for one, know not what God's cause is!" And, as he warmed in his speech, his eyes flashed very fire.

"Hark now!" said Oxenham, "who can speak more boldly than he? and yet he will not help this lad to so noble an adventure."

"You have asked his father and mother; what is their answer?"

"Mine is this," said Mr. Leigh; "if it be God's will that my boy should become, hereafter, such a mariner as Sir Richard Grenville, let him go, and God be with him; but let him first bide here at home and be trained, if God give me grace, to become such a gentleman as Sir Richard Grenville."

Sir Richard bowed low, and Mrs. Leigh catching up the last word—

"There, Mr. Oxenham, you cannot gainsay that, unless you will be discourteous to his worship. And for me—though it be a weak woman's reason, yet it is a mother's: he is my only child. His elder brother is far away. God only knows whether I shall see him again; and what are all reports of his virtues and his learning to me, compared to that sweet presence which I daily miss? Ah! Mr. Oxenham, my beautiful Joseph is gone; and though he be lord of Pharaoh's household, yet he is far away in Egypt; and you will take Benjamm also! Ah! Mr. Oxenham, you have no child, or you would not ask for mine!"

"And how do you know that, my sweet madam!" said the adventurer, turning first deadly pale, and then glowing red. Her last words had touched him to the quick in some unexpected place; and rising, he courteously laid her hand to his lips, and said—"I say no more. Farewell, sweet madam, and God send all men such wives as you."

"And all wives," said she, smiling, "such husbands as mine."

"Nay, I will not say that," answered he, with a half sneer—and then, "Farewell, friend Leigh—farewell, gallant Dick Grenville. God send I see thee Lord High Admiral when I come home. And yet, why should I come home? Will you pray for poor Jack, gentles?"

"Tut, tut, man! good words," said Leigh; "let us drink to our merry meeting before you go." And rising, and putting the tankard of malmsey to his lips, he passed it to Sir Richard, who rose, and saying, "To the fortune of a bold mariner and a gallant gentleman," drank, and put the cup into Oxenham's hand.

The adventurer's face was flushed, and his eye wild. Whether from the liquor he had drunk during the day, or whether from Mrs. Leigh's last speech, he had not been himself for a few minutes. He lifted the cup, and was in act to pledge them, when he suddenly dropped it on the table, and pointed, staring and trembling, up and down, and round the room, as if following some fluttering object.

"There! Do you see it? The bird!—the bird with the white breast!"

Each looked at the other; but Leigh, who was a quick-witted man and an old courtier, forced a laugh instantly, and cried—"Nonsense, brave Jack Oxenham! Leave white birds for men who will show the white feather. Mrs. Leigh waits to pledge you."

Oxenham recovered himself in a moment, pledged them all round, drinking deep and fiercely; and after hearty farewells, departed, never hinting again at his strange exclamation.

After he was gone, and while Leigh was attending him to the door, Mrs. Leigh and Grenville kept a few minutes' dead silence. At last—"God help him!" said she.

"Amen!" said Grenville, "for he never needed it more. But, indeed, madam, I put no faith in such omens."

"But, Sir Richard, that bird has been seen for generations before the death of any of his family. I know those who were at South Tawton when his mother died, and his brother also; and they both saw it. God help him! for, after all, he is a proper man."

"So many a lady has thought before now, Mrs. Leigh, and well for him if they had not. But, indeed, I make no account of omens. When God is ready for each man, then he must go; and when can he go better?"

"But," said Mr. Leigh, who entered, "I have seen, and especially when I was in Italy, omens and prophecies before now beget their own fulfilment, by driving men into recklessness, and making them run headlong upon that very ruin which, as they fancied, was running upon them."

"And which," said Sir Richard, "they might have avoided, if, instead of trusting in I know not what dumb and dark destiny, they had trusted in the living God, by faith in whom men may remove mountains, and quench the fire, and put to flight the armies of the alien. I too know, and know not how I know, that I shall never die in my bed."

"God forfend!" cried Mrs. Leigh.

"And why, fair madam, if I die doing my duty to my God and my queen? The thought never moves me: nay, to tell the truth, I pray often enough that I may be spared the miseries of imbecile old age, and that end which the old Northmen rightly called 'a cow's death' rather than a man's. But enough of this. Mr. Leigh, you have done wisely to-night. Poor Oxenham does not go on his voyage with a single eye. I have talked about him with Drake and Hawkins; and I guess why Mrs. Leigh touched him so home when she told him that he had no child."

"Has he one, then, in the West Indies?" cried the good lady.

"God knows; and God grant we may not hear of shame and sorrow fallen upon an ancient and honorable house of Devon. My brother Stukely is woe enough to North Devon for this generation."

"Poor braggadocio!" said Mr. Leigh; "and yet not altogether that too, for he can fight at least."

"So can every mastiff and boar, much more an Englishman. And now come hither to me, my adventurous godson, and don't look in such doleful dumps. I hear you have broken all the sailor-boys' heads already."

"Nearly all," said young Amyas, with due modesty.. "But am I not to go to sea?"

"All things in their time, my boy, and God forbid that either I or your worthy parents should keep you from that noble calling which is the safeguard of this England and her queen. But you do not wish to live and die the master of a trawler?"

"I should like to be a brave adventurer, like Mr. Oxenham."

"God grant you become a braver man than he! for, as I think, to be bold against the enemy is common to the brutes; but the prerogative of a man is to be bold against himself."

"How, sir?"

"To conquer our own fancies, Amyas, and our own lusts, and our ambition, in the sacred name of duty; this it is to be truly brave, and truly strong; for he who cannot rule himself, how can he rule his crew or his fortunes? Come, now, I will make you a promise. If you will bide quietly at home, and learn from your father and mother all which befits a gentleman and a Christian, as well as a seaman,

the day shall come when you shall sail with Richard Grenville himself, or with better men than he, on a nobler errand than gold-hunting on the Spanish Main."

"O my boy, my boy!" said Mrs. Leigh, "hear what the good Sir Richard promises you. Many an earl's son would be glad to be in your place."

"And many an earl's son will be glad to be in his place a score years hence, if he will but learn what I know you two can teach him. And now, Amyas, my lad, I will tell you for a warning the history of that Sir Thomas Stukely of whom I spoke just now, and who was, as all men know, a gallant and courtly knight, of an ancient and worshipful family in Ilfracombe, well practised in the wars, and well beloved at first by our incomparable queen, the friend of all true virtue, as I trust she will be of yours some day; who wanted but one step to greatness, and that was this, that in his hurry to rule all the world, he forgot to rule himself. At first, he wasted his estate in show and luxury, always intending to be famous, and destroying his own fame all the while by his vainglory and haste. Then, to retrieve his losses, he hit upon the peopling of Florida, which thou and I will see done some day, by God's blessing; for I and some good friends of mine have an errand there as well as he. But he did not go about it as a loyal man, to advance the honor of his queen, but his own honor only, dreaming that he too should be a king; and was not ashamed to tell her majesty that he had rather be sovereign of a molehill than the highest subject of an emperor."

"They say," said Mr. Leigh, "that he told her plainly he should be a prince before he died, and that she gave him one of her pretty quips in return."

"I don't know that her majesty had the best of it. A fool is many times too strong for a wise man, by virtue of his thick hide. For when she said that she hoped she should hear from him in his new principality, 'Yes, sooth,' says he, graciously enough. 'And in what style?' asks she. 'To our dear sister,' says Stukely: to which her clemency had nothing to reply, but turned away, as Mr. Burleigh told me, laughing."

"Alas for him!" said gentle Mrs. Leigh. "Such self-conceit—and Heaven knows we have the root of it in ourselves also—is the very daughter of self-will, and of that loud crying out about I, and me, and mine, which is the very bird-call for all devils, and the broad road which leads to death."

"It will lead him to his," said Sir Richard; "God grant it be not upon Tower-hill! for since that Florida plot, and after that his hopes of Irish preferment came to naught, he who could not help himself by fair means has taken to foul ones, and gone over to Italy to the Pope, whose infallibility has not been proof against Stukely's wit; for he was soon his Holiness's closet counsellor, and, they say, his bosom friend; and made him give credit to his boasts that, with three thousand soldiers he would beat the English out of Ireland, and make the Pope's son king of it."

"Ay, but," said Mr. Leigh, "I suppose the Italians have the same fetch now as they had when I was there, to explain such ugly cases; namely, that the Pope is infallible only in doctrine, and quoad Pope; while quoad hominem, he is even as others, or indeed, in general, a deal worse, so that the office, and not the man, may be glorified thereby. But where is Stukely now?"

"At Rome when last I heard of him, ruffling it up and down the Vatican as Baron Ross, Viscount Murrough, Earl Wexford, Marquis Leinster, and a title or two more, which have cost the Pope little, seeing that they never were his to give; and plotting, they say, some hare-brained expedition against Ireland by the help of the Spanish king, which must end in nothing but his shame and ruin. And now, my sweet hosts, I must call for serving-boy and lantern, and home to my bed in Bideford."

And so Amyas Leigh went back to school, and Mr. Oxenham went his way to Plymouth again, and sailed for the Spanish Main.

CHAPTER II
HOW AMYAS CAME HOME THE FIRST TIME

"Si taceant homines, facient te sidera notum,
Sol nescit comitis immemor esse sui."

Old Epigram on Drake.

Five years are past and gone. It is nine of the clock on a still, bright November morning; but the bells of Bideford church are still ringing for the daily service two hours after the usual time; and instead of going soberly according to wont, cannot help breaking forth every five minutes into a jocund peal, and tumbling head over heels in ecstasies of joy. Bideford streets are a very flower-garden of all the colors, swarming with seamen and burghers, and burghers' wives and daughters, all in their holiday attire. Garlands are hung across the streets, and tapestries from every window. The ships in the pool are dressed in all their flags, and give tumultuous vent to their feelings by peals of ordnance of every size. Every stable is crammed with horses; and Sir Richard Grenville's house is like a very tavern, with eating and drinking, and unsaddling, and running to and fro of grooms and serving-men. Along the little churchyard, packed full with women, streams all the gentle blood of North Devon,—tall and stately men, and fair ladies, worthy of the days when the gentry of England were by due right the leaders of the people, by personal prowess and beauty, as well as by intellect and education. And first, there is my lady Countess of Bath, whom Sir Richard Grenville is escorting, cap in hand (for her good Earl Bourchier is in London with the queen); and there are Bassets from beautiful Umberleigh, and Carys from more beautiful Clovelly, and Fortescues of Wear, and Fortescues of Buckland, and Fortescues from all quarters, and Coles from Slade, and Stukelys from Affton, and St. Legers from Annery, and Coffins from Portledge, and even Coplestones from Eggesford, thirty miles away: and last, but not least (for almost all stop to give them place), Sir John Chichester of Ralegh, followed in single file, after the good old patriarchal fashion, by his eight daughters, and three of his five famous sons (one, to avenge his murdered brother, is fighting valiantly in Ireland, hereafter to rule there wisely also, as Lord Deputy and Baron of Belfast); and he meets at the gate his cousin of Arlington, and behind him a train of four daughters and nineteen sons, the last of whom has not yet passed the town-hall, while the first is at the Lychgate, who, laughing, make way for the elder though shorter branch of that most fruitful tree; and so on into the church, where all are placed according to their degrees, or at least as near as may be, not without a few sour looks, and shovings, and whisperings, from one high-born matron and another; till the churchwardens and sidesmen, who never had before so goodly a company to arrange, have bustled themselves hot, and red, and frantic, and end by imploring abjectly the help of the great Sir Richard himself to tell them who everybody is, and which is the elder branch, and which is the younger, and who carries eight quarterings in their arms, and who only four, and so prevent their setting at deadly feud half the fine ladies of North Devon; for the old men are all safe packed away in the corporation pews, and the young ones care only to get a place whence they may eye the ladies. And at last there is a silence, and a looking toward the door, and then distant music, flutes and hautboys, drums and trumpets, which come braying, and screaming, and thundering merrily up to the very church doors, and then cease; and the churchwardens and sidesmen bustle down to the entrance, rods in hand, and there is a general whisper and rustle, not without glad tears and blessings from many a woman, and from some men also, as the wonder of the day enters, and the rector begins, not the morning service, but the good old thanksgiving after a victory at sea.

And what is it which has thus sent old Bideford wild with that "goodly joy and pious mirth," of which we now only retain traditions in our translation of the Psalms? Why are all eyes fixed, with

greedy admiration, on those four weather-beaten mariners, decked out with knots and ribbons by loving hands; and yet more on that gigantic figure who walks before them, a beardless boy, and yet with the frame and stature of a Hercules, towering, like Saul of old, a head and shoulders above all the congregation, with his golden locks flowing down over his shoulders? And why, as the five go instinctively up to the altar, and there fall on their knees before the rails, are all eyes turned to the pew where Mrs. Leigh of Burrough has hid her face between her hands, and her hood rustles and shakes to her joyful sobs? Because there was fellow-feeling of old in merry England, in county and in town; and these are Devon men, and men of Bideford, whose names are Amyas Leigh of Burrough, John Staveley, Michael Heard, and Jonas Marshall of Bideford, and Thomas Braund of Clovelly: and they, the first of all English mariners, have sailed round the world with Francis Drake, and are come hither to give God thanks.

It is a long story. To explain how it happened we must go back for a page or two, almost to the point from whence we started in the last chapter.

For somewhat more than a twelvemonth after Mr. Oxenham's departure, young Amyas had gone on quietly enough, according to promise, with the exception of certain occasional outbursts of fierceness common to all young male animals, and especially to boys of any strength of character. His scholarship, indeed, progressed no better than before; but his home education went on healthily enough; and he was fast becoming, young as he was, a right good archer, and rider, and swordsman (after the old school of buckler practice), when his father, having gone down on business to the Exeter Assizes, caught (as was too common in those days) the gaol-fever from the prisoners; sickened in the very court; and died within a week.

And now Mrs. Leigh was left to God and her own soul, with this young lion-cub in leash, to tame and train for this life and the life to come. She had loved her husband fervently and holily. He had been often peevish, often melancholy; for he was a disappointed man, with an estate impoverished by his father's folly, and his own youthful ambition, which had led him up to Court, and made him waste his heart and his purse in following a vain shadow. He was one of those men, moreover, who possess almost every gift except the gift of the power to use them; and though a scholar, a courtier, and a soldier, he had found himself, when he was past forty, without settled employment or aim in life, by reason of a certain shyness, pride, or delicate honor (call it which you will), which had always kept him from playing a winning game in that very world after whose prizes he hankered to the last, and on which he revenged himself by continual grumbling. At last, by his good luck, he met with a fair young Miss Foljambe, of Derbyshire, then about Queen Elizabeth's Court, who was as tired as he of the sins of the world, though she had seen less of them; and the two contrived to please each other so well, that though the queen grumbled a little, as usual, at the lady for marrying, and at the gentleman for adoring any one but her royal self, they got leave to vanish from the little Babylon at Whitehall, and settle in peace at Burrough. In her he found a treasure, and he knew what he had found.

Mrs. Leigh was, and had been from her youth, one of those noble old English churchwomen, without superstition, and without severity, who are among the fairest features of that heroic time. There was a certain melancholy about her, nevertheless; for the recollections of her childhood carried her back to times when it was an awful thing to be a Protestant. She could remember among them, five-and-twenty years ago, the burning of poor blind Joan Waste at Derby, and of Mistress Joyce Lewis, too, like herself, a lady born; and sometimes even now, in her nightly dreams, rang in her ears her mother's bitter cries to God, either to spare her that fiery torment, or to give her strength to bear it, as she whom she loved had borne it before her. For her mother, who was of a good family in Yorkshire, had been one of Queen Catherine's bedchamber women, and the bosom friend and disciple of Anne Askew. And she had sat in Smithfield, with blood curdled by horror, to see the hapless Court beauty, a month before the paragon of Henry's Court, carried in a chair (so crippled was she by the rack) to her fiery doom at the stake, beside her fellow-courtier, Mr. Lascelles, while

the very heavens seemed to the shuddering mob around to speak their wrath and grief in solemn thunder peals, and heavy drops which hissed upon the crackling pile.

Therefore a sadness hung upon her all her life, and deepened in the days of Queen Mary, when, as a notorious Protestant and heretic, she had had to hide for her life among the hills and caverns of the Peak, and was only saved, by the love which her husband's tenants bore her, and by his bold declaration that, good Catholic as he was, he would run through the body any constable, justice, or priest, yea, bishop or cardinal, who dared to serve the queen's warrant upon his wife.

So she escaped: but, as I said, a sadness hung upon her all her life; and the skirt of that dark mantle fell upon the young girl who had been the partner of her wanderings and hidings among the lonely hills; and who, after she was married, gave herself utterly up to God.

And yet in giving herself to God, Mrs. Leigh gave herself to her husband, her children, and the poor of Northam Town, and was none the less welcome to the Grenvilles, and Fortescues, and Chichesters, and all the gentle families round, who honored her husband's talents, and enjoyed his wit. She accustomed herself to austerities, which often called forth the kindly rebukes of her husband; and yet she did so without one superstitious thought of appeasing the fancied wrath of God, or of giving Him pleasure (base thought) by any pain of hers; for her spirit had been trained in the freest and loftiest doctrines of Luther's school; and that little mystic "Alt-Deutsch Theologie" (to which the great Reformer said that he owed more than to any book, save the Bible, and St. Augustine) was her counsellor and comforter by day and night.

And now, at little past forty, she was left a widow: lovely still in face and figure; and still more lovely from the divine calm which brooded, like the dove of peace and the Holy Spirit of God (which indeed it was), over every look, and word, and gesture; a sweetness which had been ripened by storm, as well as by sunshine; which this world had not given, and could not take away. No wonder that Sir Richard and Lady Grenville loved her; no wonder that her children worshipped her; no wonder that the young Amyas, when the first burst of grief was over, and he knew again where he stood, felt that a new life had begun for him; that his mother was no more to think and act for him only, but that he must think and act for his mother. And so it was, that on the very day after his father's funeral, when school-hours were over, instead of coming straight home, he walked boldly into Sir Richard Grenville's house, and asked to see his godfather.

"You must be my father now, sir," said he, firmly.

And Sir Richard looked at the boy's broad strong face, and swore a great and holy oath, like Glasgerion's, "by oak, and ash, and thorn," that he would be a father to him, and a brother to his mother, for Christ's sake. And Lady Grenville took the boy by the hand, and walked home with him to Burrough; and there the two fair women fell on each other's necks, and wept together; the one for the loss which had been, the other, as by a prophetic instinct, for the like loss which was to come to her also. For the sweet St. Leger knew well that her husband's fiery spirit would never leave his body on a peaceful bed; but that death (as he prayed almost nightly that it might) would find him sword in hand, upon the field of duty and of fame. And there those two vowed everlasting sisterhood, and kept their vow; and after that all things went on at Burrough as before; and Amyas rode, and shot, and boxed, and wandered on the quay at Sir Richard's side; for Mrs. Leigh was too wise a woman to alter one tittle of the training which her husband had thought best for his younger boy. It was enough that her elder son had of his own accord taken to that form of life in which she in her secret heart would fain have moulded both her children. For Frank, God's wedding gift to that pure love of hers, had won himself honor at home and abroad; first at the school at Bideford; then at Exeter College, where he had become a friend of Sir Philip Sidney's, and many another young man of rank and promise; and next, in the summer of 1572, on his way to the University of Heidelberg, he had gone to Paris, with (luckily for him) letters of recommendation to Walsingham, at the English Embassy: by which letters he not only fell in a second time with Philip Sidney, but saved his own life (as Sidney did his) in the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day. At Heidelberg he had stayed two years, winning fresh honor

from all who knew him, and resisting all Sidney's entreaties to follow him into Italy. For, scorning to be a burden to his parents, he had become at Heidelberg tutor to two young German princes, whom, after living with them at their father's house for a year or more, he at last, to his own great delight, took with him down to Padua, "to perfect them," as he wrote home, "according to his insufficiency, in all princely studies." Sidney was now returned to England; but Frank found friends enough without him, such letters of recommendation and diplomas did he carry from I know not how many princes, magnificos, and learned doctors, who had fallen in love with the learning, modesty, and virtue of the fair young Englishman. And ere Frank returned to Germany he had satiated his soul with all the wonders of that wondrous land. He had talked over the art of sonneteering with Tasso, the art of history with Sarpi; he had listened, between awe and incredulity, to the daring theories of Galileo; he had taken his pupils to Venice, that their portraits might be painted by Paul Veronese; he had seen the palaces of Palladio, and the merchant princes on the Rialto, and the argosies of Ragusa, and all the wonders of that meeting-point of east and west; he had watched Tintoretto's mighty hand "hurling tempestuous glories o'er the scene;" and even, by dint of private intercession in high places, had been admitted to that sacred room where, with long silver beard and undimmed eye, amid a pantheon of his own creations, the ancient Titian, patriarch of art, still lingered upon earth, and told old tales of the Bellinis, and Raffaelle, and Michael Angelo, and the building of St. Peter's, and the fire at Venice, and the sack of Rome, and of kings and warriors, statesmen and poets, long since gone to their account, and showed the sacred brush which Francis the First had stooped to pick up for him. And (license forbidden to Sidney by his friend Languet) he had been to Rome, and seen (much to the scandal of good Protestants at home) that "right good fellow," as Sidney calls him, who had not yet eaten himself to death, the Pope for the time being. And he had seen the frescos of the Vatican, and heard Palestrina preside as chapel-master over the performance of his own music beneath the dome of St. Peter's, and fallen half in love with those luscious strains, till he was awakened from his dream by the recollection that beneath that same dome had gone up thanksgivings to the God of heaven for those blood-stained streets, and shrieking women, and heaps of insulted corpses, which he had beheld in Paris on the night of St. Bartholomew. At last, a few months before his father died, he had taken back his pupils to their home in Germany, from whence he was dismissed, as he wrote, with rich gifts; and then Mrs. Leigh's heart beat high, at the thought that the wanderer would return: but, alas! within a month after his father's death, came a long letter from Frank, describing the Alps, and the valleys of the Waldenses (with whose Barbes he had had much talk about the late horrible persecutions), and setting forth how at Padua he had made the acquaintance of that illustrious scholar and light of the age, Stephanus Parmenius (commonly called from his native place, Budaeus), who had visited Geneva with him, and heard the disputations of their most learned doctors, which both he and Budaeus disliked for their hard judgments both of God and man, as much as they admired them for their subtlety, being themselves, as became Italian students, Platonists of the school of Ficinus and Picus Mirandolensis. So wrote Master Frank, in a long sententious letter, full of Latin quotations: but the letter never reached the eyes of him for whose delight it had been penned: and the widow had to weep over it alone, and to weep more bitterly than ever at the conclusion, in which, with many excuses, Frank said that he had, at the special entreaty of the said Budaeus, set out with him down the Danube stream to Buda, that he might, before finishing his travels, make experience of that learning for which the Hungarians were famous throughout Europe. And after that, though he wrote again and again to the father whom he fancied living, no letter in return reached him from home for nearly two years; till, fearing some mishap, he hurried back to England, to find his mother a widow, and his brother Amyas gone to the South Seas with Captain Drake of Plymouth. And yet, even then, after years of absence, he was not allowed to remain at home. For Sir Richard, to whom idleness was a thing horrible and unrighteous, would have him up and doing again before six months were over, and sent him off to Court to Lord Hunsdon.

There, being as delicately beautiful as his brother was huge and strong, he had speedily, by Carew's interest and that of Sidney and his Uncle Leicester, found entrance into some office in the queen's household; and he was now basking in the full sunshine of Court favor, and fair ladies' eyes, and all the chivalries and euphuisms of Gloriana's fairyland, and the fast friendship of that bright meteor Sidney, who had returned with honor in 1577, from the delicate mission on behalf of the German and Belgian Protestants, on which he had been sent to the Court of Vienna, under color of condoling with the new Emperor Rodolph on his father's death. Frank found him when he himself came to Court in 1579 as lovely and loving as ever; and, at the early age of twenty-five, acknowledged as one of the most remarkable men of Europe, the patron of all men of letters, the counsellor of warriors and statesmen, and the confidant and advocate of William of Orange, Languet, Plessis du Mornay, and all the Protestant leaders on the Continent; and found, moreover, that the son of the poor Devon squire was as welcome as ever to the friendship of nature's and fortune's most favored, yet most unspoilt, minion.

Poor Mrs. Leigh, as one who had long since learned to have no self, and to live not only for her children but in them, submitted without a murmur, and only said, smiling, to her stern friend—"You took away my mastiff-pup, and now you must needs have my fair greyhound also."

"Would you have your fair greyhound, dear lady, grow up a tall and true Cotswold dog, that can pull down a stag of ten, or one of those smooth-skinned poppets which the Florence ladies lead about with a ring of bells round its neck, and a flannel farthingale over its loins?"

Mrs. Leigh submitted; and was rewarded after a few months by a letter, sent through Sir Richard, from none other than Gloriana herself, in which she thanked her for "the loan of that most delicate and flawless crystal, the soul of her excellent son," with more praises of him than I have room to insert, and finished by exalting the poor mother above the famed Cornelia; "for those sons, whom she called her jewels, she only showed, yet kept them to herself: but you, madam, having two as precious, I doubt not, as were ever that Roman dame's, have, beyond her courage, lent them both to your country and to your queen, who therein holds herself indebted to you for that which, if God give her grace, she will repay as becomes both her and you." Which epistle the sweet mother bedewed with holy tears, and laid by in the cedar-box which held her household gods, by the side of Frank's innumerable diplomas and letters of recommendation, the Latin whereof she was always spelling over (although she understood not a word of it), in hopes of finding, here and there, that precious excellentissimus Noster Franciscus Leighius Anglus, which was all in all to the mother's heart.

But why did Amyas go to the South Seas? Amyas went to the South Seas for two causes, each of which has, before now, sent many a lad to far worse places: first, because of an old schoolmaster; secondly, because of a young beauty. I will take them in order and explain.

Vindex Brimblecombe, whilom servitor of Exeter College, Oxford (commonly called Sir Vindex, after the fashion of the times), was, in those days, master of the grammar-school of Bideford. He was, at root, a godly and kind-hearted pedant enough; but, like most schoolmasters in the old flogging days, had his heart pretty well hardened by long, baneful license to inflict pain at will on those weaker than himself; a power healthful enough for the victim (for, doubtless, flogging is the best of all punishments, being not only the shortest, but also a mere bodily and animal, and not, like most of our new-fangled "humane" punishments, a spiritual and fiendish torture), but for the executioner pretty certain to eradicate, from all but the noblest spirits, every trace of chivalry and tenderness for the weak, as well, often, as all self-control and command of temper. Be that as it may, old Sir Vindex had heart enough to feel that it was now his duty to take especial care of the fatherless boy to whom he tried to teach his qui, quae, quod: but the only outcome of that new sense of responsibility was a rapid increase in the number of floggings, which rose from about two a week to one per diem, not without consequences to the pedagogue himself.

For all this while, Amyas had never for a moment lost sight of his darling desire for a sea-life; and when he could not wander on the quay and stare at the shipping, or go down to the pebble-ridge

at Northam, and there sit, devouring, with hungry eyes, the great expanse of ocean, which seemed to woo him outward into boundless space, he used to console himself, in school-hours, by drawing ships and imaginary charts upon his slate, instead of minding his "humanities."

Now it befell, upon an afternoon, that he was very busy at a map, or bird's-eye view of an island, whereon was a great castle, and at the gate thereof a dragon, terrible to see; while in the foreground came that which was meant for a gallant ship, with a great flag aloft, but which, by reason of the forest of lances with which it was crowded, looked much more like a porcupine carrying a sign-post; and, at the roots of those lances, many little round o's, whereby was signified the heads of Amyas and his schoolfellows, who were about to slay that dragon, and rescue the beautiful princess who dwelt in that enchanted tower. To behold which marvel of art, all the other boys at the same desk must needs club their heads together, and with the more security, because Sir Vindex, as was his custom after dinner, was lying back in his chair, and slept the sleep of the just.

But when Amyas, by special instigation of the evil spirit who haunts successful artists, proceeded further to introduce, heedless of perspective, a rock, on which stood the lively portraiture of Sir Vindex—nose, spectacles, gown, and all; and in his hand a brandished rod, while out of his mouth a label shrieked after the runaways, "You come back!" while a similar label replied from the gallant bark, "Good-bye, master!" the shoving and tittering rose to such a pitch that Cerberus awoke, and demanded sternly what the noise was about. To which, of course, there was no answer.

"You, of course, Leigh! Come up, sir, and show me your exercitation."

Now of Amyas's exercitation not a word was written; and, moreover, he was in the very article of putting the last touches to Mr. Brimblecombe's portrait. Whereon, to the astonishment of all hearers, he made answer—

"All in good time, sir!" and went on drawing.

"In good time, sir! Insolent, veni et vapula!"

But Amyas went on drawing.

"Come hither, sirrah, or I'll flay you alive!"

"Wait a bit!" answered Amyas.

The old gentleman jumped up, ferula in hand, and darted across the school, and saw himself upon the fatal slate.

"Proh flagitium! what have we here, villain?" and clutching at his victim, he raised the cane. Whereupon, with a serene and cheerful countenance, up rose the mighty form of Amyas Leigh, a head and shoulders above his tormentor, and that slate descended on the bald coxcomb of Sir Vindex Brimblecombe, with so shrewd a blow that slate and pate cracked at the same instant, and the poor pedagogue dropped to the floor, and lay for dead.

After which Amyas arose, and walked out of the school, and so quietly home; and having taken counsel with himself, went to his mother, and said, "Please, mother, I've broken schoolmaster's head."

"Broken his head, thou wicked boy!" shrieked the poor widow; "what didst do that for?"

"I can't tell," said Amyas, penitently; "I couldn't help it. It looked so smooth, and bald, and round, and—you know?"

"I know? Oh, wicked boy! thou hast given place to the devil; and now, perhaps, thou hast killed him."

"Killed the devil?" asked Amyas, hopefully but doubtfully.

"No, killed the schoolmaster, sirrah! Is he dead?"

"I don't think he's dead; his coxcomb sounded too hard for that. But had not I better go and tell Sir Richard?"

The poor mother could hardly help laughing, in spite of her terror, at Amyas's perfect coolness (which was not in the least meant for insolence), and being at her wits' end, sent him, as usual, to his godfather.

Amyas rehearsed his story again, with pretty nearly the same exclamations, to which he gave pretty nearly the same answers; and then—"What was he going to do to you, then, sirrah?"

"Flog me, because I could not write my exercise, and so drew a picture of him instead."

"What! art afraid of being flogged?"

"Not a bit; besides, I'm too much accustomed to it; but I was busy, and he was in such a desperate hurry; and, oh, sir, if you had but seen his bald head, you would have broken it yourself!"

Now Sir Richard had, twenty years ago, in like place, and very much in like manner, broken the head of Vindex Brimblecombe's father, schoolmaster in his day, and therefore had a precedent to direct him; and he answered—"Amyas, sirrah! those who cannot obey will never be fit to rule. If thou canst not keep discipline now, thou wilt never make a company or a crew keep it when thou art grown. Dost mind that, sirrah?"

"Yes," said Amyas.

"Then go back to school this moment, sir, and be flogged."

"Very well," said Amyas, considering that he had got off very cheaply; while Sir Richard, as soon as he was out of the room, lay back in his chair, and laughed till he cried again.

So Amyas went back, and said that he was come to be flogged; whereon the old schoolmaster, whose pate had been plastered meanwhile, wept tears of joy over the returning prodigal, and then gave him such a switching as he did not forget for eight-and-forty hours.

But that evening Sir Richard sent for old Vindex, who entered, trembling, cap in hand; and having primed him with a cup of sack, said—"Well, Mr. Schoolmaster! My godson has been somewhat too much for you to-day. There are a couple of nobles to pay the doctor."

"O Sir Richard, gratias tibi et Domino! but the boy hits shrewdly hard. Nevertheless I have repaid him in inverse kind, and set him an imposition, to learn me one of Phaedrus his fables, Sir Richard, if you do not think it too much."

"Which, then? The one about the man who brought up a lion's cub, and was eaten by him in play at last?"

"Ah, Sir Richard! you have always a merry wit. But, indeed, the boy is a brave boy, and a quick boy, Sir Richard, but more forgetful than Lethe; and—sapienti loquor—it were well if he were away, for I shall never see him again without my head aching. Moreover, he put my son Jack upon the fire last Wednesday, as you would put a football, though he is a year older, your worship, because, he said, he looked so like a roasting pig, Sir Richard."

"Alas, poor Jack!"

"And what's more, your worship, he is pugnax, bellicosus, gladiator, a fire-eater and swash-buckler, beyond all Christian measure; a very sucking Entellus, Sir Richard, and will do to death some of her majesty's lieges erelong, if he be not wisely curbed. It was but a month agone that he bemoaned himself, I hear, as Alexander did, because there were no more worlds to conquer, saying that it was a pity he was so strong; for, now he had thrashed all the Bideford lads, he had no sport left; and so, as my Jack tells me, last Tuesday week he fell upon a young man of Barnstaple, Sir Richard, a hosier's man, sir, and plebeius (which I consider unfit for one of his blood), and, moreover, a man full grown, and as big as either of us (Vindex stood five feet four in his high-heeled shoes), and smote him clean over the quay into the mud, because he said that there was a prettier maid in Barnstaple (your worship will forgive my speaking of such toys, to which my fidelity compels me) than ever Bideford could show; and then offered to do the same to any man who dare say that Mistress Rose Salterne, his worship the mayor's daughter, was not the fairest lass in all Devon."

"Eh? Say that over again, my good sir," quoth Sir Richard, who had thus arrived, as we have seen, at the second count of the indictment. "I say, good sir, whence dost thou hear all these pretty stories?"

"My son Jack, Sir Richard, my son Jack, ingenui vultus puer."

"But not, it seems, ingenui pudoris. Tell thee what, Mr. Schoolmaster, no wonder if thy son gets put on the fire, if thou employ him as a tale-bearer. But that is the way of all pedagogues and their sons, by which they train the lads up eavesdroppers and favor-curriers, and prepare them—sirrah, do you hear?—for a much more lasting and hotter fire than that which has scorched thy son Jack's nether-tackle. Do you mark me, sir?"

The poor pedagogue, thus cunningly caught in his own trap, stood trembling before his patron, who, as hereditary head of the Bridge Trust, which endowed the school and the rest of the Bideford charities, could, by a turn of his finger, sweep him forth with the besom of destruction; and he gasped with terror as Sir Richard went on—"Therefore, mind you, Sir Schoolmaster, unless you shall promise me never to hint word of what has passed between us two, and that neither you nor yours shall henceforth carry tales of my godson, or speak his name within a day's march of Mistress Salterne's, look to it, if I do not—"

What was to be done in default was not spoken; for down went poor old Vindex on his knees:—

"Oh, Sir Richard! Excellentissime, immo praecelsissime Domine et Senator, I promise! O sir, Miles et Eques of the Garter, Bath, and Golden Fleece, consider your dignities, and my old age—and my great family—nine children—oh, Sir Richard, and eight of them girls!—Do eagles war with mice? says the ancient!"

"Thy large family, eh? How old is that fat-witted son of thine?"

"Sixteen, Sir Richard; but that is not his fault, indeed!"

"Nay, I suppose he would be still sucking his thumb if he dared—get up, man—get up and seat yourself."

"Heaven forbid!" murmured poor Vindex, with deep humility.

"Why is not the rogue at Oxford, with a murrain on him, instead of lurching about here carrying tales and ogling the maidens?"

"I had hoped, Sir Richard—and therefore I said it was not his fault—but there was never a servitorship at Exeter open."

"Go to, man—go to! I will speak to my brethren of the Trust, and to Oxford he shall go this autumn, or else to Exeter gaol, for a strong rogue, and a masterless man. Do you hear?"

"Hear?—oh, sir, yes! and return thanks. Jack shall go, Sir Richard, doubt it not—I were mad else; and, Sir Richard, may I go too?"

And therewith Vindex vanished, and Sir Richard enjoyed a second mighty laugh, which brought in Lady Grenville, who possibly had overheard the whole; for the first words she said were—

"I think, my sweet life, we had better go up to Burrough."

So to Burrough they went; and after much talk, and many tears, matters were so concluded that Amyas Leigh found himself riding joyfully towards Plymouth, by the side of Sir Richard, and being handed over to Captain Drake, vanished for three years from the good town of Bideford.

And now he is returned in triumph, and the observed of all observers; and looks round and round, and sees all faces whom he expects, except one; and that the one which he had rather see than his mother's? He is not quite sure. Shame on himself!

And now the prayers being ended, the rector ascends the pulpit, and begins his sermon on the text:—

"The heaven and the heaven of heavens are the Lord's; the whole earth hath he given to the children of men;" deducing therefrom craftily, to the exceeding pleasure of his hearers, the iniquity of the Spaniards in dispossessing the Indians, and in arrogating to themselves the sovereignty of the tropic seas; the vanity of the Pope of Rome in pretending to bestow on them the new countries of America; and the justice, valor, and glory of Mr. Drake and his expedition, as testified by God's miraculous protection of him and his, both in the Straits of Magellan, and in his battle with the Galleon; and last, but not least, upon the rock by Celebes, when the Pelican lay for hours firmly fixed, and was floated off unhurt, as it were by miracle, by a sudden shift of wind.

Ay, smile, reader, if you will; and, perhaps, there was matter for a smile in that honest sermon, interlarded, as it was, with scraps of Greek and Hebrew, which no one understood, but every one expected as their right (for a preacher was nothing then who could not prove himself "a good Latiner"); and graced, moreover, by a somewhat pedantic and lengthy refutation from Scripture of Dan Horace's cockney horror of the sea—

"Illi robur et aes triplex," etc.

and his infidel and ungodly slander against the impias rates, and their crews.

Smile, if you will: but those were days (and there were never less superstitious ones) in which Englishmen believed in the living God, and were not ashamed to acknowledge, as a matter of course, His help and providence, and calling, in the matters of daily life, which we now in our covert atheism term "secular and carnal;" and when, the sermon ended, the communion service had begun, and the bread and the wine were given to those five mariners, every gallant gentleman who stood near them (for the press would not allow of more) knelt and received the elements with them as a thing of course, and then rose to join with heart and voice not merely in the Gloria in Excelsis, but in the Te Deum, which was the closing act of all. And no sooner had the clerk given out the first verse of that great hymn, than it was taken up by five hundred voices within the church, in bass and tenor, treble and alto (for every one could sing in those days, and the west-country folk, as now, were fuller than any of music), the chant was caught up by the crowd outside, and rang away over roof and river, up to the woods of Annery, and down to the marshes of the Taw, in wave on wave of harmony. And as it died away, the shipping in the river made answer with their thunder, and the crowd streamed out again toward the Bridge Head, whither Sir Richard Grenville, and Sir John Chichester, and Mr. Salterne, the Mayor, led the five heroes of the day to await the pageant which had been prepared in honor of them. And as they went by, there were few in the crowd who did not press forward to shake them by the hand, and not only them, but their parents and kinsfolk who walked behind, till Mrs. Leigh, her stately joy quite broken down at last, could only answer between her sobs, "Go along, good people—God a mercy, go along—and God send you all such sons!"

"God give me back mine!" cried an old red-cloaked dame in the crowd; and then, struck by some hidden impulse, she sprang forward, and catching hold of young Amyas's sleeve—

"Kind sir! dear sir! For Christ his sake answer a poor old widow woman!"

"What is it, dame?" quoth Amyas, gently enough.

"Did you see my son to the Indies?—my son Salvation?"

"Salvation?" replied he, with the air of one who recollected the name.

"Yes, sure, Salvation Yeo, of Clovelly. A tall man and black, and sweareth awfully in his talk, the Lord forgive him!"

Amyas recollected now. It was the name of the sailor who had given him the wondrous horn five years ago.

"My good dame," said he, "the Indies are a very large place, and your son may be safe and sound enough there, without my having seen him. I knew one Salvation Yeo. But he must have come with—By the by, godfather, has Mr. Oxenham come home?"

There was a dead silence for a moment among the gentlemen round; and then Sir Richard said solemnly, and in a low voice, turning away from the old dame,—

"Amyas, Mr. Oxenham has not come home; and from the day he sailed, no word has been heard of him and all his crew."

"Oh, Sir Richard! and you kept me from sailing with him! Had I known this before I went into church, I had had one mercy more to thank God for."

"Thank Him all the more in thy life, my child!" whispered his mother.

"And no news of him whatsoever?"

"None; but that the year after he sailed, a ship belonging to Andrew Barker, of Bristol, took out of a Spanish caravel, somewhere off the Honduras, his two brass guns; but whence they came the Spaniard knew not, having bought them at Nombre de Dios."

"Yes!" cried the old woman; "they brought home the guns, and never brought home my boy!"

"They never saw your boy, mother," said Sir Richard.

"But I've seen him! I saw him in a dream four years last Whitsuntide, as plain as I see you now, gentles, a-lying upon a rock, calling for a drop of water to cool his tongue, like Dives to the torment! Oh! dear me!" and the old dame wept bitterly.

"There is a rose noble for you!" said Mrs. Leigh.

"And there another!" said Sir Richard. And in a few minutes four or five gold coins were in her hand. But the old dame did but look wonderingly at the gold a moment, and then—

"Ah! dear gentles, God's blessing on you, and Mr. Cary's mighty good to me already; but gold won't buy back childer! O! young gentleman! young gentleman! make me a promise; if you want God's blessing on you this day, bring me back my boy, if you find him sailing on the seas! Bring him back, and an old widow's blessing be on you!"

Amyas promised—what else could he do?—and the group hurried on; but the lad's heart was heavy in the midst of joy, with the thought of John Oxenham, as he walked through the churchyard, and down the short street which led between the ancient school and still more ancient town-house, to the head of the long bridge, across which the pageant, having arranged "east-the-water," was to defile, and then turn to the right along the quay.

However, he was bound in all courtesy to turn his attention now to the show which had been prepared in his honor, and which was really well enough worth seeing and hearing. The English were, in those days, an altogether dramatic people; ready and able, as in Bideford that day, to extemporize a pageant, a masque, or any effort of the Thespian art short of the regular drama. For they were, in the first place, even down to the very poorest, a well-fed people, with fewer luxuries than we, but more abundant necessaries; and while beef, ale, and good woollen clothes could be obtained in plenty, without overworking either body or soul, men had time to amuse themselves in something more intellectual than mere toping in pot-houses. Moreover, the half century after the Reformation in England was one not merely of new intellectual freedom, but of immense animal good spirits. After years of dumb confusion and cruel persecution, a breathing time had come: Mary and the fires of Smithfield had vanished together like a hideous dream, and the mighty shout of joy which greeted Elizabeth's entry into London, was the key-note of fifty glorious years; the expression of a new-found strength and freedom, which vented itself at home in drama and in song; abroad in mighty conquests, achieved with the laughing recklessness of boys at play.

So first, preceded by the waits, came along the bridge toward the town-hall a device prepared by the good rector, who, standing by, acted as showman, and explained anxiously to the bystanders the import of a certain "allegory" wherein on a great banner was depicted Queen Elizabeth herself, who, in ample ruff and farthingale, a Bible in one hand and a sword in the other, stood triumphant upon the necks of two sufficiently abject personages, whose triple tiara and imperial crown proclaimed them the Pope and the King of Spain; while a label, issuing from her royal mouth, informed the world that—

"By land and sea a virgin queen I reign,
And spurn to dust both Antichrist and Spain."

Which, having been received with due applause, a well-bedizened lad, having in his cap as a posy "Loyalty," stepped forward, and delivered himself of the following verses:—

"Oh, great Eliza! oh, world-famous crew!
Which shall I hail more blest, your queen or you?

While without other either falls to wrack,
And light must eyes, or eyes their light must lack.
She without you, a diamond sunk in mine,
Its worth unprized, to self alone must shine;
You without her, like hands bereft of head,
Like Ajax rage, by blindfold lust misled.
She light, you eyes; she head, and you the hands,
In fair proportion knit by heavenly hands;
Servants in queen, and queen in servants blest;
Your only glory, how to serve her best;
And hers how best the adventurous might to guide,
Which knows no check of foemen, wind, or tide,
So fair Eliza's spotless fame may fly
Triumphant round the globe, and shake th' astounded sky!"

With which sufficiently bad verses Loyalty passed on, while my Lady Bath hinted to Sir Richard, not without reason, that the poet, in trying to exalt both parties, had very sufficiently snubbed both, and intimated that it was "hardly safe for country wits to attempt that euphuistic, antithetical, and delicately conceited vein, whose proper fountain was in Whitehall." However, on went Loyalty, very well pleased with himself, and next, amid much cheering, two great tinsel fish, a salmon and a trout, symbolical of the wealth of Torridge, waddled along, by means of two human legs and a staff apiece, which protruded from the fishes' stomachs. They drew (or seemed to draw, for half the 'prentices in the town were shoving it behind, and cheering on the panting monarchs of the flood) a car wherein sate, amid reeds and river-flags, three or four pretty girls in robes of gray-blue spangled with gold, their heads wreathed one with a crown of the sweet bog-myrtle, another with hops and white convolvulus, the third with pale heather and golden fern. They stopped opposite Amyas; and she of the myrtle wreath, rising and bowing to him and the company, began with a pretty blush to say her say:—

"Hither from my moorland home,
Nymph of Torridge, proud I come;
Leaving fen and furzy brake,
Haunt of eft and spotted snake,
Where to fill mine urns I use,
Daily with Atlantic dews;
While beside the reedy flood
Wild duck leads her paddling brood.
For this morn, as Phoebus gay
Chased through heaven the night mist gray,
Close beside me, prankt in pride,
Sister Tamar rose, and cried,
'Sluggard, up! 'Tis holiday,
In the lowlands far away.
Hark! how jocund Plymouth bells,
Wandering up through mazy dells,
Call me down, with smiles to hail,
My daring Drake's returning sail.'
'Thine alone?' I answer'd. 'Nay;
Mine as well the joy to-day.

Heroes train'd on Northern wave,
To that Argo new I gave;
Lent to thee, they roam'd the main;
Give me, nymph, my sons again.'
'Go, they wait Thee,' Tamar cried,
Southward bounding from my side.
Glad I rose, and at my call,
Came my Naiads, one and all.
Nursling of the mountain sky,
Leaving Dian's choir on high,
Down her cataracts laughing loud,
Ockment leapt from crag and cloud,
Leading many a nymph, who dwells
Where wild deer drink in ferny dells;
While the Oreads as they past
Peep'd from Druid Tors aghast.
By alder copses sliding slow,
Knee-deep in flowers came gentler Yeo
And paused awhile her locks to twine
With musky hops and white woodbine,
Then joined the silver-footed band,
Which circled down my golden sand,
By dappled park, and harbor shady,
Haunt of love-lorn knight and lady,
My thrice-renowned sons to greet,
With rustic song and pageant meet.
For joy! the girdled robe around
Eliza's name henceforth shall sound,
Whose venturous fleets to conquest start,
Where ended once the seaman's chart,
While circling Sol his steps shall count
Henceforth from Thule's western mount,
And lead new rulers round the seas
From furthest Cassiterides.
For found is now the golden tree,
Solv'd th' Atlantic mystery,
Pluck'd the dragon-guarded fruit;
While around the charmed root,
Wailing loud, the Hesperids
Watch their warder's drooping lids.
Low he lies with grisly wound,
While the sorceress triple-crown'd
In her scarlet robe doth shield him,
Till her cunning spells have heal'd him.
Ye, meanwhile, around the earth
Bear the prize of manful worth.
Yet a nobler meed than gold
Waits for Albion's children bold;
Great Eliza's virgin hand

Welcomes you to Fairy-land,
While your native Naiads bring
Native wreaths as offering.
Simple though their show may be,
Britain's worship in them see.
'Tis not price, nor outward fairness,
Gives the victor's palm its rareness;
Simplest tokens can impart
Noble throb to noble heart:
Graecia, prize thy parsley crown,
Boast thy laurel, Caesar's town;
Moorland myrtle still shall be
Badge of Devon's Chivalry!"

And so ending, she took the wreath of fragrant gale from her own head, and stooping from the car, placed it on the head of Amyas Leigh, who made answer—

"There is no place like home, my fair mistress and no scent to my taste like this old home-scent in all the spice-islands that I ever sailed by!"

"Her song was not so bad," said Sir Richard to Lady Bath—"but how came she to hear Plymouth bells at Tamar-head, full fifty miles away? That's too much of a poet's license, is it not?"

"The river-nymphs, as daughters of Oceanus, and thus of immortal parentage, are bound to possess organs of more than mortal keenness; but, as you say, the song was not so bad—erudite, as well as prettily conceived—and, saving for a certain rustical simplicity and monosyllabic baldness, smacks rather of the forests of Castaly than those of Torridge."

So spake my Lady Bath; whom Sir Richard wisely answered not; for she was a terribly learned member of the college of critics, and disputed even with Sidney's sister the chieftaincy of the Euphuists; so Sir Richard answered not, but answer was made for him.

"Since the whole choir of Muses, madam, have migrated to the Court of Whitehall, no wonder if some dews of Parnassus should fertilize at times even our Devon moors."

The speaker was a tall and slim young man, some five-and-twenty years old, of so rare and delicate a beauty, that it seemed that some Greek statue, or rather one of those pensive and pious knights whom the old German artists took delight to paint, had condescended to tread awhile this work-day earth in living flesh and blood. The forehead was very lofty and smooth, the eyebrows thin and greatly arched (the envious gallants whispered that something at least of their curve was due to art, as was also the exceeding smoothness of those delicate cheeks). The face was somewhat long and thin; the nose aquiline; and the languid mouth showed, perhaps, too much of the ivory upper teeth; but the most striking point of the speaker's appearance was the extraordinary brilliancy of his complexion, which shamed with its whiteness that of all fair ladies round, save where open on each cheek a bright red spot gave warning, as did the long thin neck and the taper hands, of sad possibilities, perhaps not far off; possibilities which all saw with an inward sigh, except she whose doting glances, as well as her resemblance to the fair youth, proclaimed her at once his mother, Mrs. Leigh herself.

Master Frank, for he it was, was dressed in the very extravagance of the fashion,—not so much from vanity, as from that delicate instinct of self-respect which would keep some men spruce and spotless from one year's end to another upon a desert island; "for," as Frank used to say in his sententious way, "Mr. Frank Leigh at least beholds me, though none else be by; and why should I be more discourteous to him than I permit others to be? Be sure that he who is a Grobian in his own company, will, sooner or later, become a Grobian in that of his friends."

So Mr. Frank was arrayed spotlessly; but after the latest fashion of Milan, not in trunk hose and slashed sleeves, nor in "French standing collar, treble quadruple daedalian ruff, or stiff-necked rabato,

that had more arches for pride, propped up with wire and timber, than five London Bridges;" but in a close-fitting and perfectly plain suit of dove-color, which set off cunningly the delicate proportions of his figure, and the delicate hue of his complexion, which was shaded from the sun by a broad dove-colored Spanish hat, with feather to match, looped up over the right ear with a pearl brooch, and therein a crowned E, supposed by the damsels of Bideford to stand for Elizabeth, which was whispered to be the gift of some most illustrious hand. This same looping up was not without good reason and purpose prepense; thereby all the world had full view of a beautiful little ear, which looked as if it had been cut of cameo, and made, as my Lady Rich once told him, "to hearken only to the music of the spheres, or to the chants of cherubim." Behind the said ear was stuck a fresh rose; and the golden hair was all drawn smoothly back and round to the left temple, whence, tied with a pink ribbon in a great true lover's knot, a mighty love-lock, "curled as it had been laid in press," rolled down low upon his bosom. Oh, Frank! Frank! have you come out on purpose to break the hearts of all Bideford burghers' daughters? And if so, did you expect to further that triumph by dyeing that pretty little pointed beard (with shame I report it) of a bright vermilion? But we know you better, Frank, and so does your mother; and you are but a masquerading angel after all, in spite of your knots and your perfumes, and the gold chain round your neck which a German princess gave you; and the emerald ring on your right fore-finger which Hatton gave you; and the pair of perfumed gloves in your left which Sidney's sister gave you; and the silver-hilted Toledo which an Italian marquis gave you on a certain occasion of which you never choose to talk, like a prudent and modest gentleman as you are; but of which the gossips talk, of course, all the more, and whisper that you saved his life from bravoes—a dozen, at the least; and had that sword for your reward, and might have had his beautiful sister's hand beside, and I know not what else; but that you had so many lady-loves already that you were loath to burden yourself with a fresh one. That, at least, we know to be a lie, fair Frank; for your heart is as pure this day as when you knelt in your little crib at Burrough, and said—

"Four corners to my bed
Four angels round my head;
Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,
Bless the bed that I lie on."

And who could doubt it (if being pure themselves, they have instinctive sympathy with what is pure), who ever looked into those great deep blue eyes of yours, "the black fringed curtains of whose azure lids," usually down-dropt as if in deepest thought, you raise slowly, almost wonderingly each time you speak, as if awakening from some fair dream whose home is rather in your platonical "eternal world of supra-sensible forms," than on that work-day earth wherein you nevertheless acquit yourself so well? There—I must stop describing you, or I shall catch the infection of your own euphuism, and talk of you as you would have talked of Sidney or of Spenser, or of that Swan of Avon, whose song had just begun when yours—but I will not anticipate; my Lady Bath is waiting to give you her rejoinder.

"Ah, my silver-tongued scholar! and are you, then, the poet? or have you been drawing on the inexhaustible bank of your friend Raleigh, or my cousin Sidney? or has our new Cygnet Immerito lent you a few unpublished leaves from some fresh Shepherd's Calendar?"

"Had either, madam, of that cynosural triad been within call of my most humble importunities, your ears had been delectate with far nobler melody."

"But not our eyes with fairer faces, eh? Well, you have chosen your nymphs, and had good store from whence to pick, I doubt not. Few young Dulcineas round but must have been glad to take service under so renowned a captain?"

"The only difficulty, gracious countess, has been to know where to fix the wandering choice of my bewildered eyes, where all alike are fair, and all alike facund."

"We understand," said she, smiling;—

"Dan Cupid, choosing 'midst his mother's graces,
Himself more fair, made scorn of fairest faces."

The young scholar capped her distich forthwith, and bowing to her with a meaning look,

"'Then, Goddess, turn,' he cried, 'and veil thy light; Blinded by thine, what eyes can choose aright?'"

"Go, saucy sir," said my lady, in high glee: "the pageant stays your supreme pleasure."

And away went Mr. Frank as master of the revels, to bring up the 'prentices' pageant; while, for his sake, the nymph of Torridge was forgotten for awhile by all young dames, and most young gentlemen: and his mother heaved a deep sigh, which Lady Bath overhearing—

"What? in the dumps, good madam, while all are rejoicing in your joy? Are you afraid that we court-dames shall turn your Adonis's brain for him?"

"I do, indeed, fear lest your condescension should make him forget that he is only a poor squire's orphan."

"I will warrant him never to forget aught that he should recollect," said my Lady Bath.

And she spoke truly. But soon Frank's silver voice was heard calling out—

"Room there, good people, for the gallant 'prentice lads!"

And on they came, headed by a giant of buckram and pasteboard armor, forth of whose stomach looked, like a clock-face in a steeple, a human visage, to be greeted, as was the fashion then, by a volley of quips and puns from high and low.

Young Mr. William Cary, of Clovelly, who was the wit of those parts, opened the fire by asking him whether he were Goliath, Gogmagog, or Grantorto in the romance; for giants' names always began with a G. To which the giant's stomach answered pretty surlily—

"Mine don't; I begin with an O."

"Then thou criest out before thou art hurt, O cowardly giant!"

"Let me out, lads," quoth the irascible visage, struggling in his buckram prison, "and I soon show him whether I be a coward."

"Nay, if thou gettest out of thyself, thou wouldst be beside thyself, and so wert but a mad giant."

"And that were pity," said Lady Bath; "for by the romances, giants have never overmuch wit to spare."

"Mercy, dear lady!" said Frank, "and let the giant begin with an O."

"A –"

"A false start, giant! you were to begin with an O."

"I'll make you end with an O, Mr. William Cary!" roared the testy tower of buckram.

"And so I do, for I end with 'Fico!'"

"Be mollified, sweet giant," said Frank, "and spare the rash youth of yon foolish knight. Shall elephants catch flies, or Hurlo-Thrumbo stain his club with brains of Dagonet the jester? Be mollified; leave thy caverned grumblings, like Etna when its windy wrath is past, and discourse eloquence from thy central omphalos, like Pythoness ventriloquizing."

"If you do begin laughing at me too, Mr. Leigh –" said the giant's clock-face, in a piteous tone.

"I laugh not. Art thou not Ordulf the earl, and I thy humblest squire? Speak up, my lord; your cousin, my Lady Bath, commands you."

And at last the giant began:—

"A giant I, Earl Ordulf men me call,—
'Gainst Paynim foes Devonia's champion tall;
In single fight six thousand Turks I slew;
Pull'd off a lion's head, and ate it too:

With one shrewd blow, to let St. Edward in,
I smote the gates of Exeter in twain;
Till aged grown, by angels warn'd in dream,
I built an abbey fair by Tavy stream.
But treacherous time hath tripped my glories up,
The stanch old hound must yield to stancher pup;
Here's one so tall as I, and twice so bold,
Where I took only cuffs, takes good red gold.
From pole to pole resound his wondrous works,
Who slew more Spaniards than I e'er slew Turks;
I strode across the Tavy stream: but he
Strode round the world and back; and here 'a be!"

"Oh, bathos!" said Lady Bath, while the 'prentices shouted applause. "Is this hedge-bantling to be fathered on you, Mr. Frank?"

"It is necessary, by all laws of the drama, madam," said Frank, with a sly smile, "that the speech and the speaker shall fit each other. Pass on, Earl Ordulf; a more learned worthy waits."

Whereon, up came a fresh member of the procession; namely, no less a person than Vindex Brimblecombe, the ancient schoolmaster, with five-and-forty boys at his heels, who halting, pulled out his spectacles, and thus signified his forgiveness of his whilom broken head:—

"That the world should have been circumnavigated, ladies and gentles, were matter enough of jubilation to the student of Herodotus and Plato, Plinius and – ahem! much more when the circumnavigators are Britons; more, again, when Damnonians."

"Don't swear, master," said young Will Cary.

"Gulielme Cary, Gulielme Cary, hast thou forgotten thy—"

"Whippings? Never, old lad! Go on; but let not the license of the scholar overtop the modesty of the Christian."

"More again, as I said, when, incolae, inhabitants of Devon; but, most of all, men of Bideford school. Oh renowned school! Oh schoolboys ennobled by fellowship with him! Oh most happy pedagogue, to whom it has befallen to have chastised a circumnavigator, and, like another Chiron, trained another Hercules: yet more than Hercules, for he placed his pillars on the ocean shore, and then returned; but my scholar's voyage—"

"Hark how the old fox is praising himself all along on the sly," said Cary.

"Mr. William, Mr. William, peace;—silentium, my graceless pupil. Urge the foaming steed, and strike terror into the rapid stag, but meddle not with matters too high for thee."

"He has given you the dor now, sir," said Lady Bath; "let the old man say his say."

"I bring, therefore, as my small contribution to this day's feast; first a Latin epigram, as thus—"

"Latin? Let us hear it forthwith," cried my lady.

And the old pedant mouthed out—

"Torriguiam Tamaris ne spernat; Leighius addet
Mox terras terris, inclyte Drake, tuis."

"Neat, i' faith, la!" Whereon all the rest, as in duty bound, approved also.

"This for the erudite: for vulgar ears the vernacular is more consonant, sympathetic, instructive; as thus:—

"Famed Argo ship, that noble chip, by doughty Jason's steering,

Brought back to Greece the golden fleece, from Colchis home careering;
But now her fame is put to shame, while new Devonian Argo,
Round earth doth run in wake of sun, and brings wealthier cargo."

"Runs with a right fa-lal-la," observed Cary; "and would go nobly to a fiddle and a big drum."

"Ye Spaniards, quake! our doughty Drake a royal swan is tested,
On wing and oar, from shore to shore, the raging main whbreasted:—
But never needs to chant his deeds, like swan that lies a-dying,
So far his name, by trump of fame, around the sphere is flying."

"Hillo ho! schoolmaster!" shouted a voice from behind; "move on, and make way for Father Neptune!" Whereon a whole storm of raillery fell upon the hapless pedagogue.

"We waited for the parson's alligator, but we wain't for yourn."

"Allegory! my children, allegory!" shrieked the man of letters.

"What do ye call he an alligator for? He is but a poor little starved evat!"

"Out of the road, old Custis! March on, Don Palmado!"

These allusions to the usual instrument of torture in West-country schools made the old gentleman wince; especially when they were followed home by—

"Who stole Admiral Grenville's brooms, because birch rods were dear?"

But proudly he shook his bald head, as a bull shakes off the flies, and returned to the charge once more.

"Great Alexander, famed commander, wept and made a pother, At conquering only half the world, but Drake had conquer'd t'other; And Hercules to brink of seas!—"

"Oh—!"

And clapping both hands to the back of his neck, the schoolmaster began dancing frantically about, while his boys broke out tittering, "O! the ochidore! look to the blue ochidore! Who've put ochidore to maister's poll!"

It was too true: neatly inserted, as he stooped forward, between his neck and his collar, was a large live shore-crab, holding on tight with both hands.

"Gentles! good Christians! save me! I am mare-rode! Incubo, vel ab incubo, opprimor! Satanas has me by the poll! Help! he tears my jugular; he wrings my neck, as he does to Dr. Faustus in the play. Confiteor!—I confess! Satan, I defy thee! Good people, I confess! [Greek text]! The truth will out. Mr. Francis Leigh wrote the epigram!" And diving through the crowd, the pedagogue vanished howling, while Father Neptune, crowned with sea-weeds, a trident in one hand, and a live dog-fish in the other, swaggered up the street surrounded by a tall bodyguard of mariners, and followed by a great banner, on which was depicted a globe, with Drake's ship sailing thereon upside down, and overwritten—

"See every man the Pelican,
Which round the world did go,
While her stern-post was uppermost,
And topmasts down below.
And by the way she lost a day,
Out of her log was stole:
But Neptune kind, with favoring wind,
Hath brought her safe and whole."

"Now, lads!" cried Neptune; "hand me my parable that's writ for me, and here goeth!"

And at the top of his bull-voice, he began roaring—

"I am King Neptune bold,
  The ruler of the seas
I don't understand much singing upon land,
  But I hope what I say will please.

"Here be five Bideford men,
  Which have sail'd the world around,
And I watch'd them well, as they all can tell,
  And brought them home safe and sound.

"For it is the men of Devon.
  To see them I take delight,
Both to tack and to hull, and to heave and to pull,
  And to prove themselves in fight.

"Where be those Spaniards proud,
  That make their valiant boasts;
And think for to keep the poor Indians for their sheep,
  And to farm my golden coasts?

"'Twas the devil and the Pope gave them
  My kingdom for their own:
But my nephew Francis Drake, he caused them to quake,
  And he pick'd them to the bone.

"For the sea my realm it is,
  As good Queen Bess's is the land;
So freely come again, all merry Devon men,
  And there's old Neptune's hand."

"Holla, boys! holla! Blow up, Triton, and bring forward the freedom of the seas."

Triton, roaring through a conch, brought forward a cockle-shell full of salt-water, and delivered it solemnly to Amyas, who, of course, put a noble into it, and returned it after Grenville had done the same.

"Holla, Dick Admiral!" cried neptune, who was pretty far gone in liquor; "we knew thou hadst a right English heart in thee, for all thou standest there as taut as a Don who has swallowed his rapier."

"Grammercy, stop thy bellowing, fellow, and on; for thou smellest vilely of fish."

"Everything smells sweet in its right place. I'm going home."

"I thought thou wert there all along, being already half-seas over," said Cary.

"Ay, right Upsee-Dutch; and that's more than thou ever wilt be, thou 'long-shore stay-at-home. Why wast making sheep's eyes at Mistress Salterne here, while my pretty little chuck of Burrough there was playing at shove-groat with Spanish doubloons?"

"Go to the devil, sirrah!" said Cary. Neptune had touched on a sore subject; and more cheeks than Amyas Leigh's reddened at the hint.

"Amen, if Heaven so please!" and on rolled the monarch of the seas; and so the pageant ended.

The moment Amyas had an opportunity, he asked his brother Frank, somewhat peevishly, where Rose Salterne was.

"What! the mayor's daughter? With her uncle by Kilkhampton, I believe."

Now cunning Master Frank, whose daily wish was to "seek peace and ensue it," told Amyas this, because he must needs speak the truth: but he was purposed at the same time to speak as little truth as he could, for fear of accidents; and, therefore, omitted to tell his brother how that he, two days before, had entreated Rose Salterne herself to appear as the nymph of Torridge; which honor she, who had no objection either to exhibit her pretty face, to recite pretty poetry, or to be trained thereto by the cynosure of North Devon, would have assented willingly, but that her father stopped the pretty project by a peremptory countermove, and packed her off, in spite of her tears, to the said uncle on the Atlantic cliffs; after which he went up to Burrough, and laughed over the whole matter with Mrs. Leigh.

"I am but a burgher, Mrs. Leigh, and you a lady of blood; but I am too proud to let any man say that Simon Salterne threw his daughter at your son's head;—no; not if you were an empress!"

"And to speak truth, Mr. Salterne, there are young gallants enough in the country quarrelling about her pretty face every day, without making her a tourney-queen to tilt about."

Which was very true; for during the three years of Amyas's absence, Rose Salterne had grown into so beautiful a girl of eighteen, that half North Devon was mad about the "Rose of Torridge," as she was called; and there was not a young gallant for ten miles round (not to speak of her father's clerks and 'prentices, who moped about after her like so many Malvolios, and treasured up the very parings of her nails) who would not have gone to Jerusalem to win her. So that all along the vales of Torridge and of Taw, and even away to Clovelly (for young Mr. Cary was one of the sick), not a gay bachelor but was frowning on his fellows, and vying with them in the fashion of his clothes, the set of his ruffs, the harness of his horse, the carriage of his hawks, the pattern of his sword-hilt; and those were golden days for all tailors and armorers, from Exmoor to Okehampton town. But of all those foolish young lads not one would speak to the other, either out hunting, or at the archery butts, or in the tilt-yard; and my Lady Bath (who confessed that there was no use in bringing out her daughters where Rose Salterne was in the way) prophesied in her classical fashion that Rose's wedding bid fair to be a very bridal of Atalanta, and feast of the Lapithae; and poor Mr. Will Cary (who always blurted out the truth), when old Salterne once asked him angrily in Bideford Market, "What a plague business had he making sheep's eyes at his daughter?" broke out before all bystanders, "And what a plague business had you, old boy, to throw such an apple of discord into our merry meetings hereabouts? If you choose to have such a daughter, you must take the consequences, and be hanged to you." To which Mr. Salterne answered with some truth, "That she was none of his choosing, nor of Mr. Cary's neither." And so the dor being given, the belligerents parted laughing, but the war remained in statu quo; and not a week passed but, by mysterious hands, some nosegay, or languishing sonnet, was conveyed into The Rose's chamber, all which she stowed away, with the simplicity of a country girl, finding it mighty pleasant; and took all compliments quietly enough, probably because, on the authority of her mirror, she considered them no more than her due.

And now, to add to the general confusion, home was come young Amyas Leigh, more desperately in love with her than ever. For, as is the way with sailors (who after all are the truest lovers, as they are the finest fellows, God bless them, upon earth), his lonely ship-watches had been spent in imprinting on his imagination, month after month, year after year, every feature and gesture and tone of the fair lass whom he had left behind him; and that all the more intensely, because, beside his mother, he had no one else to think of, and was as pure as the day he was born, having been trained as many a brave young man was then, to look upon profligacy not as a proof of manhood, but as what the old Germans, and those Gortyneans who crowned the offender with wool, knew it to be, a cowardly and effeminate sin.

CHAPTER III
OF TWO GENTLEMEN OF WALES, AND HOW THEY HUNTED WITH THE HOUNDS, AND YET RAN WITH THE DEER

"I know that Deformed; he has been a vile thief this seven years;
he goes up and down like a gentleman: I remember his name."

—Much Ado About Nothing.

Amyas slept that night a tired and yet a troubled sleep; and his mother and Frank, as they bent over his pillow, could see that his brain was busy with many dreams.

And no wonder; for over and above all the excitement of the day, the recollection of John Oxenham had taken strange possession of his mind; and all that evening, as he sat in the bay-windowed room where he had seen him last, Amyas was recalling to himself every look and gesture of the lost adventurer, and wondering at himself for so doing, till he retired to sleep, only to renew the fancy in his dreams. At last he found himself, he knew not how, sailing westward ever, up the wake of the setting sun, in chase of a tiny sail which was John Oxenham's. Upon him was a painful sense that, unless he came up with her in time, something fearful would come to pass; but the ship would not sail. All around floated the sargasso beds, clogging her bows with their long snaky coils of weed; and still he tried to sail, and tried to fancy that he was sailing, till the sun went down and all was utter dark. And then the moon arose, and in a moment John Oxenham's ship was close aboard; her sails were torn and fluttering; the pitch was streaming from her sides; her bulwarks were rotting to decay. And what was that line of dark objects dangling along the mainyard?—A line of hanged men! And, horror of horrors, from the yard-arm close above him, John Oxenham's corpse looked down with grave-light eyes, and beckoned and pointed, as if to show him his way, and strove to speak, and could not, and pointed still, not forward, but back along their course. And when Amyas looked back, behold, behind him was the snow range of the Andes glittering in the moon, and he knew that he was in the South Seas once more, and that all America was between him and home. And still the corpse kept pointing back, and back, and looking at him with yearning eyes of agony, and lips which longed to tell some awful secret; till he sprang up, and woke with a shout of terror, and found himself lying in the little coved chamber in dear old Burrough, with the gray autumn morning already stealing in.

Feverish and excited, he tried in vain to sleep again; and after an hour's tossing, rose and dressed, and started for a bathe on his beloved old pebble ridge. As he passed his mother's door, he could not help looking in. The dim light of morning showed him the bed; but its pillow had not been pressed that night. His mother, in her long white night-dress, was kneeling at the other end of the chamber at her prie-dieu, absorbed in devotion. Gently he slipped in without a word, and knelt down at her side. She turned, smiled, passed her arm around him, and went on silently with her prayers. Why not? They were for him, and he knew it, and prayed also; and his prayers were for her, and for poor lost John Oxenham, and all his vanished crew.

At last she rose, and standing above him, parted the yellow locks from off his brow, and looked long and lovingly into his face. There was nothing to be spoken, for there was nothing to be concealed between these two souls as clear as glass. Each knew all which the other meant; each knew that its own thoughts were known. At last the mutual gaze was over; she stooped and kissed him on the brow, and was in the act to turn away, as a tear dropped on his forehead. Her little bare feet were peeping

out from under her dress. He bent down and kissed them again and again; and then looking up, as if to excuse himself,—

"You have such pretty feet, mother!"

Instantly, with a woman's instinct, she had hidden them. She had been a beauty once, as I said; and though her hair was gray, and her roses had faded long ago, she was beautiful still, in all eyes which saw deeper than the mere outward red and white.

"Your dear father used to say so thirty years ago."

"And I say so still: you always were beautiful; you are beautiful now."

"What is that to you, silly boy? Will you play the lover with an old mother? Go and take your walk, and think of younger ladies, if you can find any worthy of you."

And so the son went forth, and the mother returned to her prayers.

He walked down to the pebble ridge, where the surges of the bay have defeated their own fury, by rolling up in the course of ages a rampart of gray boulder-stones, some two miles long, as cunningly curved, and smoothed, and fitted, as if the work had been done by human hands, which protects from the high tides of spring and autumn a fertile sheet of smooth, alluvial turf. Sniffing the keen salt air like a young sea-dog, he stripped and plunged into the breakers, and dived, and rolled, and tossed about the foam with stalwart arms, till he heard himself hailed from off the shore, and looking up, saw standing on the top of the rampart the tall figure of his cousin Eustace.

Amyas was half-disappointed at his coming; for, love-lorn rascal, he had been dreaming all the way thither of Rose Salterne, and had no wish for a companion who would prevent his dreaming of her all the way back. Nevertheless, not having seen Eustace for three years, it was but civil to scramble out and dress, while his cousin walked up and down upon the turf inside.

Eustace Leigh was the son of a younger brother of Leigh of Burrough, who had more or less cut himself off from his family, and indeed from his countrymen, by remaining a Papist. True, though born a Papist, he had not always been one; for, like many of the gentry, he had become a Protestant under Edward the Sixth, and then a Papist again under Mary. But, to his honor be it said, at that point he had stopped, having too much honesty to turn Protestant a second time, as hundreds did, at Elizabeth's accession. So a Papist he remained, living out of the way of the world in a great, rambling, dark house, still called "Chapel," on the Atlantic cliffs, in Moorwinstow parish, not far from Sir Richard Grenville's house of Stow. The penal laws never troubled him; for, in the first place, they never troubled any one who did not make conspiracy and rebellion an integral doctrine of his religious creed; and next, they seldom troubled even them, unless, fired with the glory of martyrdom, they bullied the long-suffering of Elizabeth and her council into giving them their deserts, and, like poor Father Southwell in after years, insisted on being hanged, whether Burleigh liked or not. Moreover, in such a no-man's-land and end-of-all-the-earth was that old house at Moorwinstow, that a dozen conspiracies might have been hatched there without any one hearing of it; and Jesuits and seminary priests skulked in and out all the year round, unquestioned though unblest; and found a sort of piquant pleasure, like naughty boys who have crept into the store-closet, in living in mysterious little dens in a lonely turret, and going up through a trap-door to celebrate mass in a secret chamber in the roof, where they were allowed by the powers that were to play as much as they chose at persecuted saints, and preach about hiding in dens and caves of the earth. For once, when the zealous parson of Moorwinstow, having discovered (what everybody knew already) the existence of "mass priests and their idolatry" at Chapel House, made formal complaint thereof to Sir Richard, and called on him, as the nearest justice of the peace, to put in force the act of the fourteenth of Elizabeth, that worthy knight only rated him soundly for a fantastical Puritan, and bade him mind his own business, if he wished not to make the place too hot for him; whereon (for the temporal authorities, happily for the peace of England, kept in those days a somewhat tight hand upon the spiritual ones) the worthy parson subsided,—for, after all, Mr. Thomas Leigh paid his tithes regularly enough,—and was content, as he expressed it, to bow his head in the house of Rimmon like Naaman of old, by eating Mr. Leigh's

dinners as often as he was invited, and ignoring the vocation of old Father Francis, who sat opposite to him, dressed as a layman, and calling himself the young gentleman's pedagogue.

But the said birds of ill-omen had a very considerable lien on the conscience of poor Mr. Thomas Leigh, the father of Eustace, in the form of certain lands once belonging to the Abbey of Hartland. He more than half believed that he should be lost for holding those lands; but he did not believe it wholly, and, therefore, he did not give them up; which was the case, as poor Mary Tudor found to her sorrow, with most of her "Catholic" subjects, whose consciences, while they compelled them to return to the only safe fold of Mother Church (extra quam nulla salus), by no means compelled them to disgorge the wealth of which they had plundered that only hope of their salvation. Most of them, however, like poor Tom Leigh, felt the abbey rents burn in their purses; and, as John Bull generally does in a difficulty, compromised the matter by a second folly (as if two wrong things made one right one), and petted foreign priests, and listened, or pretended not to listen, to their plottings and their practisings; and gave up a son here, and a son there, as a sort of a sin-offering and scapegoat, to be carried off to Douay, or Rheims, or Rome, and trained as a seminary priest; in plain English, to be taught the science of villainy, on the motive of superstition. One of such hapless scapegoats, and children who had been cast into the fire to Moloch, was Eustace Leigh, whom his father had sent, giving the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul, to be made a liar of at Rheims.

And a very fair liar he had become. Not that the lad was a bad fellow at heart; but he had been chosen by the harpies at home, on account of his "peculiar vocation;" in plain English, because the wily priests had seen in him certain capacities of vague hysterical fear of the unseen (the religious sentiment, we call it now-a-days), and with them that tendency to be a rogue, which superstitious men always have. He was now a tall, handsome, light-complexioned man, with a huge upright forehead, a very small mouth, and a dry and set expression of face, which was always trying to get free, or rather to seem free, and indulge in smiles and dimples which were proper; for one ought to have Christian love, and if one had love one ought to be cheerful, and when people were cheerful they smiled; and therefore he would smile, and tried to do so; but his charity prepense looked no more alluring than malice prepense would have done; and, had he not been really a handsome fellow, many a woman who raved about his sweetness would have likened his frankness to that of a skeleton dancing in fetters, and his smiles to the grins thereof.

He had returned to England about a month before, in obedience to the proclamation which had been set forth for that purpose (and certainly not before it was needed), that, "whosoever had children, wards, etc., in the parts beyond the seas, should send in their names to the ordinary, and within four months call them home again." So Eustace was now staying with his father at Chapel, having, nevertheless, his private matters to transact on behalf of the virtuous society by whom he had been brought up; one of which private matters had brought him to Bideford the night before.

So he sat down beside Amyas on the pebbles, and looked at him all over out of the corners of his eyes very gently, as if he did not wish to hurt him, or even the flies on his back; and Amyas faced right round, and looked him full in the face with the heartiest of smiles, and held out a lion's paw, which Eustace took rapturously, and a great shaking of hands ensued; Amyas gripping with a great round fist, and a quiet quiver thereof, as much as to say, "I AM glad to see you;" and Eustace pinching hard with white, straight fingers, and sawing the air violently up and down, as much as to say, "DON'T YOU SEE how glad I am to see you?" A very different greeting from the former.

"Hold hard, old lad," said Amyas, "before you break my elbow. And where do you come from?"

"From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it," said he, with a little smile and nod of mysterious self-importance.

"Like the devil, eh? Well, every man has his pattern. How is my uncle?"

Now, if there was one man on earth above another, of whom Eustace Leigh stood in dread, it was his cousin Amyas. In the first place, he knew Amyas could have killed him with a blow; and there are natures, who, instead of rejoicing in the strength of men of greater prowess than themselves,

look at such with irritation, dread, at last, spite; expecting, perhaps, that the stronger will do to them what they feel they might have done in his place. Every one, perhaps, has the same envious, cowardly devil haunting about his heart; but the brave men, though they be very sparrows, kick him out; the cowards keep him, and foster him; and so did poor Eustace Leigh.

Next, he could not help feeling that Amyas despised him. They had not met for three years; but before Amyas went, Eustace never could argue with him, simply because Amyas treated him as beneath argument. No doubt he was often rude and unfair enough; but the whole mass of questions concerning the unseen world, which the priests had stimulated in his cousin's mind into an unhealthy fungus crop, were to Amyas simply, as he expressed it, "wind and moonshine;" and he treated his cousin as a sort of harmless lunatic, and, as they say in Devon, "half-baked." And Eustace knew it; and knew, too, that his cousin did him an injustice. "He used to undervalue me," said he to himself; "let us see whether he does not find me a match for him now." And then went off into an agony of secret contrition for his self-seeking and his forgetting that "the glory of God, and not his own exaltation," was the object of his existence.

There, dear readers, Ex pede Herculem; I cannot tire myself or you (especially in this book) with any wire-drawn soul-dissections. I have tried to hint to you two opposite sorts of men,—the one trying to be good with all his might and main, according to certain approved methods and rules, which he has got by heart, and like a weak oarsman, feeling and fingering his spiritual muscles over all day, to see if they are growing; the other not even knowing whether he is good or not, but just doing the right thing without thinking about it, as simply as a little child, because the Spirit of God is with him. If you cannot see the great gulf fixed between the two, I trust that you will discover it some day.

But in justice be it said, all this came upon Eustace, not because he was a Romanist, but because he was educated by the Jesuits. Had he been saved from them, he might have lived and died as simple and honest a gentleman as his brothers, who turned out like true Englishmen (as did all the Romish laity) to face the great Armada, and one of whom was fighting at that very minute under St. Leger in Ireland, and as brave and loyal a soldier as those Roman Catholics whose noble blood has stained every Crimean battlefield; but his fate was appointed otherwise; and the Upas-shadow which has blighted the whole Romish Church, blighted him also.

"Ah, my dearest cousin!" said Eustace, "how disappointed I was this morning at finding I had arrived just a day too late to witness your triumph! But I hastened to your home as soon as I could, and learning from your mother that I should find you here, hurried down to bid you welcome again to Devon."

"Well, old lad, it does look very natural to see you. I often used to think of you walking the deck o' nights. Uncle and the girls are all right, then? But is the old pony dead yet? And how's Dick the smith, and Nancy? Grown a fine maid by now, I warrant. 'Slid, it seems half a life that I've been away.

"And you really thought of your poor cousin? Be sure that he, too, thought of you, and offered up nightly his weak prayers for your safety (doubtless, not without avail) to those saints, to whom would that you—"

"Halt there, coz. If they are half as good fellows as you and I take them for, they'll help me without asking."

"They have helped you, Amyas."

"Maybe; I'd have done as much, I'm sure, for them, if I 'd been in their place."

"And do you not feel, then, that you owe a debt of gratitude to them; and, above all, to her, whose intercessions have, I doubt not, availed for your preservation? Her, the star of the sea, the all-compassionate guide of the mariner?"

"Humph!" said Amyas. "Here's Frank; let him answer."

And, as he spoke, up came Frank, and after due greetings, sat down beside them on the ridge.

"I say, brother, here's Eustace trying already to convert me; and telling me that I owe all my luck to the Blessed Virgin's prayers for me.

"It may be so," said Frank; "at least you owe it to the prayers of that most pure and peerless virgin by whose commands you sailed; the sweet incense of whose orisons has gone up for you daily, and for whose sake you were preserved from flood and foe, that you might spread the fame and advance the power of the spotless championess of truth, and right, and freedom,—Elizabeth, your queen."

Amyas answered this rhapsody, which would have been then both fashionable and sincere, by a loyal chuckle. Eustace smiled meekly, but answered somewhat venomously nevertheless—

"I, at least, am certain that I speak the truth, when I call my patroness a virgin undefiled."

Both the brothers' brows clouded at once. Amyas, as he lay on his back on the pebbles, said quietly to the gulls over his head—"I wonder what the Frenchman whose head I cut off at the Azores, thinks by now about all that."

"Cut off a Frenchman's head?" said Frank.

"Yes, faith; and so fleshed my maiden sword. I'll tell you. It was in some tavern; I and George Drake had gone in, and there sat this Frenchman, with his sword on the table, ready for a quarrel (I found afterwards he was a noted bully), and begins with us loudly enough about this and that; but, after awhile, by the instigation of the devil, what does he vent but a dozen slanders against her majesty's honor, one atop of the other? I was ashamed to hear them, and I should be more ashamed to repeat them."

"I have heard enough of such," said Frank. "They come mostly through lewd rascals about the French ambassador, who have been bred (God help them) among the filthy vices of that Medicean Court in which the Queen of Scots had her schooling; and can only perceive in a virtuous freedom a cloak for licentiousness like their own. Let the curs bark; Honi soit qui mal y pense is our motto, and shall be forever."

"But I didn't let the cur bark; for I took him by the ears, to show him out into the street. Whereon he got to his sword, and I to mine; and a very near chance I had of never bathing on the pebble ridge more; for the fellow did not fight with edge and buckler, like a Christian, but had some newfangled French devil's device of scryming and foining with his point, ha'ing and stamping, and tracing at me, that I expected to be full of eyelet holes ere I could close with him."

"Thank God that you are safe, then!" said Frank. "I know that play well enough, and dangerous enough it is."

"Of course you know it; but I didn't, more's the pity."

"Well, I'll teach it thee, lad, as well as Rowland Yorke himself,

> 'Thy fincture, carricade, and sly passata,
> Thy stramazon, and resolute stoccata,
> Wiping maudritta, closing embrocata,
> And all the cant of the honorable fencing mystery.'"

"Rowland Yorke? Who's he, then?"

"A very roystering rascal, who is making good profit in London just now by teaching this very art of fence; and is as likely to have his mortal thread clipt in a tavern brawl, as thy Frenchman. But how did you escape his pinking iron?"

"How? Had it through my left arm before I could look round; and at that I got mad, and leapt upon him, and caught him by the wrist, and then had a fair side-blow; and, as fortune would have it, off tumbled his head on to the table, and there was an end of his slanders."

"So perish all her enemies!" said Frank; and Eustace, who had been trying not to listen, rose and said—

"I trust that you do not number me among them?"

"As you speak, I do, coz," said Frank. "But for your own sake, let me advise you to put faith in the true report of those who have daily experience of their mistress's excellent virtue, as they have of the sun's shining, and of the earth's bringing forth fruit, and not in the tattle of a few cowardly back-stair rogues, who wish to curry favor with the Guises. Come, we will say no more. Walk round with us by Appledore, and then home to breakfast."

But Eustace declined, having immediate business, he said, in Northam town, and then in Bideford; and so left them to lounge for another half-hour on the beach, and then walk across the smooth sheet of turf to the little white fishing village, which stands some two miles above the bar, at the meeting of the Torridge and the Taw.

Now it came to pass, that Eustace Leigh, as we have seen, told his cousins that he was going to Northam: but he did not tell them that his point was really the same as their own, namely, Appledore; and, therefore, after having satisfied his conscience by going as far as the very nearest house in Northam village, he struck away sharp to the left across the fields, repeating I know not what to the Blessed Virgin all the way; whereby he went several miles out of his road; and also, as is the wont of crooked spirits, Jesuits especially (as three centuries sufficiently testify), only outwitted himself. For his cousins going merrily, like honest men, along the straight road across the turf, arrived in Appledore, opposite the little "Mariner's Rest" Inn, just in time to see what Eustace had taken so much trouble to hide from them, namely, four of Mr. Thomas Leigh's horses standing at the door, held by his groom, saddles and mail-bags on back, and mounting three of them, Eustace Leigh and two strange gentlemen.

"There's one lie already this morning," growled Amyas; "he told us he was going to Northam."

"And we do not know that he has not been there," blandly suggested Frank.

"Why, you are as bad a Jesuit as he, to help him out with such a fetch."

"He may have changed his mind."

"Bless your pure imagination, my sweet boy," said Amyas, laying his great hand on Frank's head, and mimicking his mother's manner. "I say, dear Frank, let's step into this shop and buy a penny-worth of whipcord."

"What do you want with whipcord, man?"

"To spin my top, to be sure."

"Top? how long hast had a top?"

"I'll buy one, then, and save my conscience; but the upshot of this sport I must see. Why may not I have an excuse ready made as well as Master Eustace?"

So saying, he pulled Frank into the little shop, unobserved by the party at the inn-door.

"What strange cattle has he been importing now? Look at that three-legged fellow, trying to get aloft on the wrong side. How he claws at his horse's ribs, like a cat scratching an elder stem!"

The three-legged man was a tall, meek-looking person, who had bedizened himself with gorgeous garments, a great feather, and a sword so long and broad, that it differed little in size from the very thin and stiff shanks between which it wandered uncomfortably.

"Young David in Saul's weapons," said Frank. "He had better not go in them, for he certainly has not proved them."

"Look, if his third leg is not turned into a tail! Why does not some one in charity haul in half-a-yard of his belt for him?"

It was too true; the sword, after being kicked out three or four times from its uncomfortable post between his legs, had returned unconquered; and the hilt getting a little too far back by reason of the too great length of the belt, the weapon took up its post triumphantly behind, standing out point in air, a tail confest, amid the tittering of the ostlers, and the cheers of the sailors.

At last the poor man, by dint of a chair, was mounted safely, while his fellow-stranger, a burly, coarse-looking man, equally gay, and rather more handy, made so fierce a rush at his saddle, that, like "vaulting ambition who o'erleaps his selle," he "fell on t'other side:" or would have fallen, had he

not been brought up short by the shoulders of the ostler at his off-stirrup. In which shock off came hat and feather.

"Pardie, the bulldog-faced one is a fighting man. Dost see, Frank? he has had his head broken."

"That scar came not, my son, but by a pair of most Catholic and apostolic scissors. My gentle buzzard, that is a priest's tonsure."

"Hang the dog! O, that the sailors may but see it, and put him over the quay head. I've a half mind to go and do it myself."

"My dear Amyas," said Frank, laying two fingers on his arm, "these men, whosoever they are, are the guests of our uncle, and therefore the guests of our family. Ham gained little by publishing Noah's shame; neither shall we, by publishing our uncle's."

"Murrain on you, old Franky, you never let a man speak his mind, and shame the devil."

"I have lived long enough in courts, old Amyas, without a murrain on you, to have found out, first, that it is not so easy to shame the devil; and secondly, that it is better to outwit him; and the only way to do that, sweet chuck, is very often not to speak your mind at all. We will go down and visit them at Chapel in a day or two, and see if we cannot serve these reynards as the badger did the fox, when he found him in his hole, and could not get him out by evil savors."

"How then?"

"Stuck a sweet nosegay in the door, which turned reynard's stomach at once; and so overcame evil with good."

"Well, thou art too good for this world, that's certain; so we will go home to breakfast. Those rogues are out of sight by now."

Nevertheless, Amyas was not proof against the temptation of going over to the inn-door, and asking who were the gentlemen who went with Mr. Leigh.

"Gentlemen of Wales," said the ostler, "who came last night in a pinnace from Milford-haven, and their names, Mr. Morgan Evans and Mr. Evan Morgans."

"Mr. Judas Iscariot and Mr. Iscariot Judas," said Amyas between his teeth, and then observed aloud, that the Welsh gentlemen seemed rather poor horsemen.

"So I said to Mr. Leigh's groom, your worship. But he says that those parts be so uncommon rough and mountainous, that the poor gentlemen, you see, being enforced to hunt on foot, have no such opportunities as young gentlemen hereabout, like your worship; whom God preserve, and send a virtuous lady, and one worthy of you."

"Thou hast a villainously glib tongue, fellow!" said Amyas, who was thoroughly out of humor; "and a sneaking down visage too, when I come to look at you. I doubt but you are a Papist too, I do!"

"Well, sir! and what if I am! I trust I don't break the queen's laws by that. If I don't attend Northam church, I pay my month's shilling for the use of the poor, as the act directs; and beyond that, neither you nor any man dare demand of me."

"Dare! act directs! You rascally lawyer, you! and whence does an ostler like you get your shilling to pay withal? Answer me." The examinate found it so difficult to answer the question, that he suddenly became afflicted with deafness.

"Do you hear?" roared Amyas, catching at him with his lion's paw.

"Yes, missus; anon, anon, missus!" quoth he to an imaginary landlady inside, and twisting under Amyas's hand like an eel, vanished into the house, while Frank got the hot-headed youth away.

"What a plague is one to do, then? That fellow was a Papist spy!"

"Of course he was!" said Frank.

"Then, what is one to do, if the whole country is full of them?"

"Not to make fools of ourselves about them, and so leave them to make fools of themselves."

"That's all very fine: but—well, I shall remember the villain's face if I see him again."

"There is no harm in that," said Frank.

"Glad you think so."

"Don't quarrel with me, Amyas, the first day."

"Quarrel with thee, my darling old fellow! I had sooner kiss the dust off thy feet, if I were worthy of it. So now away home; my inside cries cupboard."

In the meanwhile Messrs. Evans and Morgans were riding away, as fast as the rough by-lanes would let them, along the fresh coast of the bay, steering carefully clear of Northam town on the one hand, and on the other, of Portledge, where dwelt that most Protestant justice of the peace, Mr. Coffin. And it was well for them that neither Amyas Leigh, nor indeed any other loyal Englishman, was by when they entered, as they shortly did, the lonely woods which stretch along the southern wall of the bay. For there Eustace Leigh pulled up short; and both he and his groom, leaping from their horses, knelt down humbly in the wet grass, and implored the blessing of the two valiant gentlemen of Wales, who, having graciously bestowed it with three fingers apiece, became thenceforth no longer Morgan Evans and Evan Morgans, Welshmen and gentlemen; but Father Parsons and Father Gampian, Jesuits, and gentlemen in no sense in which that word is applied in this book.

After a few minutes, the party were again in motion, ambling steadily and cautiously along the high table-land, towards Moorwinstow in the west; while beneath them on the right, at the mouth of rich-wooded glens, opened vistas of the bright blue bay, and beyond it the sandhills of Braunton, and the ragged rocks of Morte; while far away to the north and west the lonely isle of Lundy hung like a soft gray cloud.

But they were not destined to reach their point as peaceably as they could have wished. For just as they got opposite Clovelly dike, the huge old Roman encampment which stands about midway in their journey, they heard a halloo from the valley below, answered by a fainter one far ahead. At which, like a couple of rogues (as indeed they were), Father Campian and Father Parsons looked at each other, and then both stared round at the wild, desolate, open pasture (for the country was then all unenclosed), and the great dark furze-grown banks above their heads; and Campian remarked gently to Parsons, that this was a very dreary spot, and likely enough for robbers.

"A likelier spot for us, Father," said Eustace, punning. "The old Romans knew what they were about when they put their legions up aloft here to overlook land and sea for miles away; and we may thank them some day for their leavings. The banks are all sound; there is plenty of good water inside; and" (added he in Latin), "in case our Spanish friends—you understand?"

"Pauca verba, my son!" said Campian: but as he spoke, up from the ditch close beside him, as if rising out of the earth, burst through the furze-bushes an armed cavalier.

"Pardon, gentlemen!" shouted he, as the Jesuit and his horse recoiled against the groom. "Stand, for your lives!"

"Mater caelorum!" moaned Campian; while Parsons, who, as all the world knows, was a blustering bully enough (at least with his tongue), asked: What a murrain right had he to stop honest folks on the queen's highway? confirming the same with a mighty oath, which he set down as peccatum veniale, on account of the sudden necessity; nay, indeed fraus pia, as proper to support the character of that valiant gentleman of Wales, Mr. Evan Morgans. But the horseman, taking no notice of his hint, dashed across the nose of Eustace Leigh's horse, with a "Hillo, old lad! where ridest so early?" and peering down for a moment into the ruts of the narrow track-way, struck spurs into his horse, shouting, "A fresh slot! right away for Hartland! Forward, gentlemen all! follow, follow, follow!"

"Who is this roysterer?" asked Parsons, loftily.

"Will Cary, of Clovelly; an awful heretic: and here come more behind."

And as he spoke four or five more mounted gallants plunged in and out of the great dikes, and thundered on behind the party; whose horses, quite understanding what game was up, burst into full gallop, neighing and squealing; and in another minute the hapless Jesuits were hurling along over moor and moss after a "hart of grease."

Parsons, who, though a vulgar bully, was no coward, supported the character of Mr. Evan Morgans well enough; and he would have really enjoyed himself, had he not been in agonies of fear lest those precious saddle-bags in front of him should break from their lashings, and rolling to the earth, expose to the hoofs of heretic horses, perhaps to the gaze of heretic eyes, such a cargo of bulls, dispensations, secret correspondences, seditious tracts, and so forth, that at the very thought of their being seen, his head felt loose upon his shoulders. But the future martyr behind him, Mr. Morgan Evans, gave himself up at once to abject despair, and as he bumped and rolled along, sought vainly for comfort in professional ejaculations in the Latin tongue.

"Mater intemerata! Eripe me e—Ugh! I am down! Adhaesit pavimento venter!—No! I am not! El dilectum tuum e potestate canis—Ah! Audisti me inter cornua unicornium! Put this, too, down in—ugh!—thy account in favor of my poor—oh, sharpness of this saddle! Oh, whither, barbarous islanders!"

Now riding on his quarter, not in the rough track-way like a cockney, but through the soft heather like a sportsman, was a very gallant knight whom we all know well by this time, Richard Grenville by name; who had made Mr. Cary and the rest his guests the night before, and then ridden out with them at five o'clock that morning, after the wholesome early ways of the time, to rouse a well-known stag in the glens at Buckish, by help of Mr. Coffin's hounds from Portledge. Who being as good a Latiner as Campian's self, and overhearing both the scraps of psalm and the "barbarous islanders," pushed his horse alongside of Mr. Eustace Leigh, and at the first check said, with two low bows towards the two strangers—

"I hope Mr. Leigh will do me the honor of introducing me to his guests. I should be sorry, and Mr. Cary also, that any gentle strangers should become neighbors of ours, even for a day, without our knowing who they are who honor our western Thule with a visit; and showing them ourselves all due requital for the compliment of their presence."

After which, the only thing which poor Eustace could do (especially as it was spoken loud enough for all bystanders), was to introduce in due form Mr. Evan Morgans and Mr. Morgan Evans, who, hearing the name, and, what was worse, seeing the terrible face with its quiet searching eye, felt like a brace of partridge-poults cowering in the stubble, with a hawk hanging ten feet over their heads.

"Gentlemen," said Sir Richard blandly, cap in hand, "I fear that your mails must have been somewhat in your way in this unexpected gallop. If you will permit my groom, who is behind, to disencumber you of them and carry them to Chapel, you will both confer an honor on me, and be enabled yourselves to see the mort more pleasantly."

A twinkle of fun, in spite of all his efforts, played about good Sir Richard's eye as he gave this searching hint. The two Welsh gentlemen stammered out clumsy thanks; and pleading great haste and fatigue from a long journey, contrived to fall to the rear and vanish with their guides, as soon as the slot had been recovered.

"Will!" said Sir Richard, pushing alongside of young Cary.

"Your worship?"

"Jesuits, Will!"

"May the father of lies fly away with them over the nearest cliff!"

"He will not do that while this Irish trouble is about. Those fellows are come to practise here for Saunders and Desmond."

"Perhaps they have a consecrated banner in their bag, the scoundrels! Shall I and young Coffin on and stop them? Hard if the honest men may not rob the thieves once in a way."

"No; give the devil rope, and he will hang himself. Keep thy tongue at home, and thine eyes too, Will."

"How then?"

"Let Clovelly beach be watched night and day like any mousehole. No one can land round Harty Point with these south-westers. Stop every fellow who has the ghost of an Irish brogue, come he in or go he out, and send him over to me."

"Some one should guard Bude-haven, sir."

"Leave that to me. Now then, forward, gentlemen all, or the stag will take the sea at the Abbey."

And on they crashed down the Hartland glens, through the oak-scrub and the great crown-ferns; and the baying of the slow-hound and the tantaras of the horn died away farther and fainter toward the blue Atlantic, while the conspirators, with lightened hearts, pricked fast across Bursdon upon their evil errand. But Eustace Leigh had other thoughts and other cares than the safety of his father's two mysterious guests, important as that was in his eyes; for he was one of the many who had drunk in sweet poison (though in his case it could hardly be called sweet) from the magic glances of the Rose of Torridge. He had seen her in the town, and for the first time in his life fallen utterly in love; and now that she had come down close to his father's house, he looked on her as a lamb fallen unawares into the jaws of the greedy wolf, which he felt himself to be. For Eustace's love had little or nothing of chivalry, self-sacrifice, or purity in it; those were virtues which were not taught at Rheims. Careful as the Jesuits were over the practical morality of their pupils, this severe restraint had little effect in producing real habits of self-control. What little Eustace had learnt of women from them, was as base and vulgar as the rest of their teaching. What could it be else, if instilled by men educated in the schools of Italy and France, in the age which produced the foul novels of Cinthio and Bandello, and compelled Rabelais in order to escape the rack and stake, to hide the light of his great wisdom, not beneath a bushel, but beneath a dunghill; the age in which the Romish Church had made marriage a legalized tyranny, and the laity, by a natural and pardonable revulsion, had exalted adultery into a virtue and a science? That all love was lust; that all women had their price; that profligacy, though an ecclesiastical sin, was so pardonable, if not necessary, as to be hardly a moral sin, were notions which Eustace must needs have gathered from the hints of his preceptors; for their written works bear to this day fullest and foulest testimony that such was their opinion; and that their conception of the relation of the sexes was really not a whit higher than that of the profligate laity who confessed to them. He longed to marry Rose Salterne, with a wild selfish fury; but only that he might be able to claim her as his own property, and keep all others from her. Of her as a co-equal and ennobling helpmate; as one in whose honor, glory, growth of heart and soul, his own were inextricably wrapt up, he had never dreamed. Marriage would prevent God from being angry with that, with which otherwise He might be angry; and therefore the sanction of the Church was the more "probable and safe" course. But as yet his suit was in very embryo. He could not even tell whether Rose knew of his love; and he wasted miserable hours in maddening thoughts, and tost all night upon his sleepless bed, and rose next morning fierce and pale, to invent fresh excuses for going over to her uncle's house, and lingering about the fruit which he dared not snatch.

CHAPTER IV
THE TWO WAYS OF BEING CROST IN LOVE

"I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honor more."—LOVELACE.

And what all this while has become of the fair breaker of so many hearts, to whom I have not yet even introduced my readers?

She was sitting in the little farm-house beside the mill, buried in the green depths of the valley of Combe, half-way between Stow and Chapel, sulking as much as her sweet nature would let her, at being thus shut out from all the grand doings at Bideford, and forced to keep a Martinmas Lent in that far western glen. So lonely was she, in fact, that though she regarded Eustace Leigh with somewhat of aversion, and (being a good Protestant) with a great deal of suspicion, she could not find it in her heart to avoid a chat with him whenever he came down to the farm and to its mill, which he contrived to do, on I know not what would-be errand, almost every day. Her uncle and aunt at first looked stiff enough at these visits, and the latter took care always to make a third in every conversation; but still Mr. Leigh was a gentleman's son, and it would not do to be rude to a neighboring squire and a good customer; and Rose was the rich man's daughter and they poor cousins, so it would not do either to quarrel with her; and besides, the pretty maid, half by wilfulness, and half by her sweet winning tricks, generally contrived to get her own way wheresoever she went; and she herself had been wise enough to beg her aunt never to leave them alone,—for she "could not a-bear the sight of Mr. Eustace, only she must have some one to talk with down here." On which her aunt considered, that she herself was but a simple country-woman; and that townsfolks' ways of course must be very different from hers; and that people knew their own business best; and so forth, and let things go on their own way. Eustace, in the meanwhile, who knew well that the difference in creed between him and Rose was likely to be the very hardest obstacle in the way of his love, took care to keep his private opinions well in the background; and instead of trying to convert the folk at the mill, daily bought milk or flour from them, and gave it away to the old women in Moorwinstow (who agreed that after all, for a Papist, he was a godly young man enough); and at last, having taken counsel with Campian and Parsons on certain political plots then on foot, came with them to the conclusion that they would all three go to church the next Sunday. Where Messrs. Evan Morgans and Morgan Evans, having crammed up the rubrics beforehand, behaved themselves in a most orthodox and unexceptionable manner; as did also poor Eustace, to the great wonder of all good folks, and then went home flattering himself that he had taken in parson, clerk, and people; not knowing in his simple unsimplicity, and cunning foolishness, that each good wife in the parish was saying to the other, "He turned Protestant? The devil turned monk! He's only after Mistress Salterne, the young hypocrite."

But if the two Jesuits found it expedient, for the holy cause in which they were embarked, to reconcile themselves outwardly to the powers that were, they were none the less busy in private in plotting their overthrow.

Ever since April last they had been playing at hide-and-seek through the length and breadth of England, and now they were only lying quiet till expected news from Ireland should give them their cue, and a great "rising of the West" should sweep from her throne that stiff-necked, persecuting, excommunicate, reprobate, illegitimate, and profligate usurper, who falsely called herself the Queen of England.

For they had as stoutly persuaded themselves in those days, as they have in these (with a real Baconian contempt of the results of sensible experience), that the heart of England was really with

them, and that the British nation was on the point of returning to the bosom of the Catholic Church, and giving up Elizabeth to be led in chains to the feet of the rightful Lord of Creation, the Old Man of the Seven Hills. And this fair hope, which has been skipping just in front of them for centuries, always a step farther off, like the place where the rainbow touches the ground, they used to announce at times, in language which terrified old Mr. Leigh. One day, indeed, as Eustace entered his father's private room, after his usual visit to the mill, he could hear voices high in dispute; Parsons as usual, blustering; Mr. Leigh peevishly deprecating, and Campian, who was really the sweetest-natured of men, trying to pour oil on the troubled waters. Whereat Eustace (for the good of the cause, of course) stopped outside and listened.

"My excellent sir," said Mr. Leigh, "does not your very presence here show how I am affected toward the holy cause of the Catholic faith? But I cannot in the meanwhile forget that I am an Englishman."

"And what is England?" said Parsons: "A heretic and schismatic Babylon, whereof it is written, 'Come out of her, my people, lest you be partaker of her plagues.' Yea, what is a country? An arbitrary division of territory by the princes of this world, who are naught, and come to naught. They are created by the people's will; their existence depends on the sanction of him to whom all power is given in heaven and earth—our Holy Father the Pope. Take away the latter, and what is a king?—the people who have made him may unmake him."

"My dear sir, recollect that I have sworn allegiance to Queen Elizabeth!"

"Yes, sir, you have, sir; and, as I have shown at large in my writings, you were absolved from that allegiance from the moment that the bull of Pius the Fifth declared her a heretic and excommunicate, and thereby to have forfeited all dominion whatsoever. I tell you, sir, what I thought you should have known already, that since the year 1569, England has had no queen, no magistrates, no laws, no lawful authority whatsoever; and that to own allegiance to any English magistrate, sir, or to plead in an English court of law, is to disobey the apostolic precept, 'How dare you go to law before the unbelievers?' I tell you, sir, rebellion is now not merely permitted, it is a duty."

"Take care, sir; for God's sake, take care!" said Mr. Leigh. "Right or wrong, I cannot have such language used in my house. For the sake of my wife and children, I cannot!"

"My dear brother Parsons, deal more gently with the flock," interposed Campian. "Your opinion, though probable, as I well know, in the eyes of most of our order, is hardly safe enough here; the opposite is at least so safe that Mr. Leigh may well excuse his conscience for accepting it. After all, are we not sent hither to proclaim this very thing, and to relieve the souls of good Catholics from a burden which has seemed to them too heavy?"

"Yes," said Parsons, half-sulkily, "to allow all Balaams who will to sacrifice to Baal, while they call themselves by the name of the Lord."

"My dear brother, have I not often reminded you that Naaman was allowed to bow himself in the house of Rimmon? And can we therefore complain of the office to which the Holy Father has appointed us, to declare to such as Mr. Leigh his especial grace, by which the bull of Pius the Fifth (on whose soul God have mercy!) shall henceforth bind the queen and the heretics only; but in no ways the Catholics, at least as long as the present tyranny prevents the pious purposes of the bull?"

"Be it so, sir; be it so. Only observe this, Mr. Leigh, that our brother Campian confesses this to be a tyranny. Observe, sir, that the bull does still bind the so-called queen, and that she and her magistrates are still none the less usurpers, nonentities, and shadows of a shade. And observe this, sir, that when that which is lawful is excused to the weak, it remains no less lawful to the strong. The seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal did not slay his priests; but Elijah did, and won to himself a good reward. And if the rest of the children of Israel sinned not in not slaying Eglon, yet Ehud's deed was none the less justified by all laws human and divine."

"For Heaven's sake, do not talk so, sir! or I must leave the room. What have I to do with Ehud and Eglon, and slaughters, and tyrannies? Our queen is a very good queen, if Heaven would but grant

her repentance, and turn her to the true faith. I have never been troubled about religion, nor any one else that I know of in the West country."

"You forget Mr. Trudgeon of Launceston, father, and poor Father Mayne," interposed Eustace, who had by this time slipped in; and Campian added softly—

"Yes, your West of England also has been honored by its martyrs, as well as my London by the precious blood of Story."

"What, young malapert?" cried poor Leigh, facing round upon his son, glad to find any one on whom he might vent his ill-humor; "are you too against me, with a murrain on you? And pray, what the devil brought Cuthbert Mayne to the gallows, and turned Mr. Trudgeon (he was always a foolish hot-head) out of house and home, but just such treasonable talk as Mr. Parsons must needs hold in my house, to make a beggar of me and my children, as he will before he has done."

"The Blessed Virgin forbid!" said Campian.

"The Blessed Virgin forbid? But you must help her to forbid it, Mr. Campian. We should never have had the law of 1571, against bulls, and Agnus Deis, and blessed grains, if the Pope's bull of 1569 had not made them matter of treason, by preventing a poor creature's saving his soul in the true Church without putting his neck into a halter by denying the queen's authority."

"What, sir?" almost roared Parsons, "do you dare to speak evil of the edicts of the Vicar of Christ?"

"I? No. I didn't. Who says I did? All I meant was, I am sure—Mr. Campian, you are a reasonable man, speak for me."

"Mr. Leigh only meant, I am sure, that the Holy Father's prudent intentions have been so far defeated by the perverseness and invincible misunderstanding of the heretics, that that which was in itself meant for the good of the oppressed English Catholics has been perverted to their harm."

"And thus, reverend sir," said Eustace, glad to get into his father's good graces again, "my father attaches blame, not to the Pope—Heaven forbid!—but to the pravity of his enemies."

"And it is for this very reason," said Campian, "that we have brought with us the present merciful explanation of the bull."

"I'll tell you what, gentlemen," said Mr. Leigh, who, like other weak men, grew in valor as his opponent seemed inclined to make peace, "I don't think the declaration was needed. After the new law of 1571 was made, it was never put in force till Mayne and Trudgeon made fools of themselves, and that was full six years. There were a few offenders, they say, who were brought up and admonished, and let go; but even that did not happen down here, and need not happen now, unless you put my son here (for you shall never put me, I warrant you) upon some deed which had better be left alone, and so bring us all to shame."

"Your son, sir, if not openly vowed to God, has, I hope, a due sense of that inward vocation which we have seen in him, and reverences his spiritual fathers too well to listen to the temptations of his earthly father."

"What, sir, will you teach my son to disobey me?"

"Your son is ours also, sir. This is strange language in one who owes a debt to the Church, which it was charitably fancied he meant to pay in the person of his child."

These last words touched poor Mr. Leigh in a sore point, and breaking all bounds, he swore roundly at Parsons, who stood foaming with rage.

"A plague upon you, sir, and a black assizes for you, for you will come to the gallows yet! Do you mean to taunt me in my own house with that Hartland land? You had better go back and ask those who sent you where the dispensation to hold the land is, which they promised to get me years ago, and have gone on putting me off, till they have got my money, and my son, and my conscience, and I vow before all the saints, seem now to want my head over and above. God help me!"—and the poor man's eyes fairly filled with tears.

Now was Eustace's turn to be roused; for, after all, he was an Englishman and a gentleman; and he said kindly enough, but firmly—

"Courage, my dearest father. Remember that I am still your son, and not a Jesuit yet; and whether I ever become one, I promise you, will depend mainly on the treatment which you meet with at the hands of these reverend gentlemen, for whom I, as having brought them hither, must consider myself as surety to you."

If a powder-barrel had exploded in the Jesuits' faces, they could not have been more amazed. Campian looked blank at Parsons, and Parsons at Campian; till the stouter-hearted of the two, recovering his breath at last—

"Sir! do you know, sir, the curse pronounced on those who, after putting their hand to the plough, look back?"

Eustace was one of those impulsive men, with a lack of moral courage, who dare raise the devil, but never dare fight him after he has been raised; and he now tried to pass off his speech by winking and making signs in the direction of his father, as much as to say that he was only trying to quiet the old man's fears. But Campian was too frightened, Parsons too angry, to take his hints: and he had to carry his part through.

"All I read is, Father Parsons, that such are not fit for the kingdom of God; of which high honor I have for some time past felt myself unworthy. I have much doubt just now as to my vocation; and in the meanwhile have not forgotten that I am a citizen of a free country." And so saying, he took his father's arm, and walked out.

His last words had hit the Jesuits hard. They had put the poor cobweb-spinners in mind of the humiliating fact, which they have had thrust on them daily from that time till now, and yet have never learnt the lesson, that all their scholastic cunning, plotting, intriguing, bulls, pardons, indulgences, and the rest of it, are, on this side the Channel, a mere enchanter's cloud-castle and Fata Morgana, which vanishes into empty air by one touch of that magic wand, the constable's staff. "A citizen of a free country!"—there was the rub; and they looked at each other in more utter perplexity than ever. At last Parsons spoke.

"There's a woman in the wind. I'll lay my life on it. I saw him blush up crimson yesterday when his mother asked him whether some Rose Salterne or other was still in the neighborhood."

"A woman! Well, the spirit may be willing, though the flesh be weak. We will inquire into this. The youth may do us good service as a layman; and if anything should happen to his elder brother (whom the saints protect!) he is heir to some wealth. In the meanwhile, our dear brother Parsons will perhaps see the expediency of altering our tactics somewhat while we are here."

And thereupon a long conversation began between the two, who had been sent together, after the wise method of their order, in obedience to the precept, "Two are better than one," in order that Campian might restrain Parsons' vehemence, and Parsons spur on Campian's gentleness, and so each act as the supplement of the other, and each also, it must be confessed, gave advice pretty nearly contradictory to his fellow's if occasion should require, "without the danger," as their writers have it, "of seeming changeable and inconsistent."

The upshot of this conversation was, that in a day or two (during which time Mr. Leigh and Eustace also had made the amende honorable, and matters went smoothly enough) Father Campian asked Father Francis, the household chaplain, to allow him, as an especial favor, to hear Eustace's usual confession on the ensuing Friday.

Poor Father Francis dared not refuse so great a man; and assented with an inward groan, knowing well that the intent was to worm out some family secrets, whereby his power would be diminished, and the Jesuits' increased. For the regular priesthood and the Jesuits throughout England were toward each other in a state of armed neutrality, which wanted but little at any moment to become open war, as it did in James the First's time, when those meek missionaries, by their gentle

moral tortures, literally hunted to death the poor Popish bishop of Hippopotamus (that is to say, London) for the time being.

However, Campian heard Eustace's confession; and by putting to him such questions as may be easily conceived by those who know anything about the confessional, discovered satisfactorily enough, that he was what Campian would have called "in love:" though I should question much the propriety of the term as applied to any facts which poor prurient Campian discovered, or indeed knew how to discover, seeing that a swine has no eye for pearls. But he had found out enough: he smiled, and set to work next vigorously to discover who the lady might be.

If he had frankly said to Eustace, "I feel for you; and if your desires are reasonable, or lawful, or possible, I will help you with all my heart and soul," he might have had the young man's secret heart, and saved himself an hour's trouble; but, of course, he took instinctively the crooked and suspicious method, expected to find the case the worst possible,—as a man was bound to do who had been trained to take the lowest possible view of human nature, and to consider the basest motives as the mainspring of all human action,—and began his moral torture accordingly by a series of delicate questions, which poor Eustace dodged in every possible way, though he knew that the good father was too cunning for him, and that he must give in at last. Nevertheless, like a rabbit who runs squealing round and round before the weasel, into whose jaws it knows that it must jump at last by force of fascination, he parried and parried, and pretended to be stupid, and surprised, and honorably scrupulous, and even angry; while every question as to her being married or single, Catholic or heretic, English or foreign, brought his tormentor a step nearer the goal. At last, when Campian, finding the business not such a very bad one, had asked something about her worldly wealth, Eustace saw a door of escape and sprang at it.

"Even if she be a heretic, she is heiress to one of the wealthiest merchants in Devon."

"Ah!" said Campian, thoughtfully. "And she is but eighteen, you say?"

"Only eighteen."

"Ah! well, my son, there is time. She may be reconciled to the Church: or you may change."

"I shall die first."

"Ah, poor lad! Well; she may be reconciled, and her wealth may be of use to the cause of Heaven."

"And it shall be of use. Only absolve me, and let me be at peace. Let me have but her," he cried piteously. "I do not want her wealth,—not I! Let me have but her, and that but for one year, one month, one day!—and all the rest—money, fame, talents, yea, my life itself, hers if it be needed—are at the service of Holy Church. Ay, I shall glory in showing my devotion by some special sacrifice,—some desperate deed. Prove me now, and see what there is I will not do!"

And so Eustace was absolved; after which Campian added,—

"This is indeed well, my son: for there is a thing to be done now, but it may be at the risk of life."

"Prove me!" cried Eustace, impatiently.

"Here is a letter which was brought me last night; no matter from whence; you can understand it better than I, and I longed to have shown it you, but that I feared my son had become—"

"You feared wrongly, then, my dear Father Campian."

So Campian translated to him the cipher of the letter.

"This to Evan Morgans, gentleman, at Mr. Leigh's house in Moorwinstow, Devonshire. News may be had by one who will go to the shore of Clovelly, any evening after the 25th of November, at dead low tide, and there watch for a boat, rowed by one with a red beard, and a Portugal by his speech. If he be asked, 'How many?' he will answer, 'Eight hundred and one.' Take his letters and read them. If the shore be watched, let him who comes show a light three times in a safe place under the cliff above the town; below is dangerous landing. Farewell, and expect great things!"

"I will go," said Eustace; "to-morrow is the 25th, and I know a sure and easy place. Your friend seems to know these shores well."

"Ah! what is it we do not know?" said Campian, with a mysterious smile. "And now?"

"And now, to prove to you how I trust to you, you shall come with me, and see this—the lady of whom I spoke, and judge for yourself whether my fault is not a venial one."

"Ah, my son, have I not absolved you already? What have I to do with fair faces? Nevertheless, I will come, both to show you that I trust you, and it may be to help towards reclaiming a heretic, and saving a lost soul: who knows?"

So the two set out together; and, as it was appointed, they had just got to the top of the hill between Chapel and Stow mill, when up the lane came none other than Mistress Rose Salterne herself, in all the glories of a new scarlet hood, from under which her large dark languid eyes gleamed soft lightnings through poor Eustace's heart and marrow. Up to them she tripped on delicate ankles and tiny feet, tall, lithe, and graceful, a true West-country lass; and as she passed them with a pretty blush and courtesy, even Campian looked back at the fair innocent creature, whose long dark curls, after the then country fashion, rolled down from beneath the hood below her waist, entangling the soul of Eustace Leigh within their glossy nets.

"There!" whispered he, trembling from head to foot. "Can you excuse me now?"

"I had excused you long ago;" said the kindhearted father. "Alas, that so much fair red and white should have been created only as a feast for worms!"

"A feast for gods, you mean!" cried Eustace, on whose common sense the naive absurdity of the last speech struck keenly; and then, as if to escape the scolding which he deserved for his heathenry—

"Will you let me return for a moment? I will follow you: let me go!"

Campian saw that it was of no use to say no, and nodded. Eustace darted from his side, and running across a field, met Rose full at the next turn of the road.

She started, and gave a pretty little shriek.

"Mr. Leigh! I thought you had gone forward."

"I came back to speak to you, Rose—Mistress Salterne, I mean."

"To me?"

"To you I must speak, tell you all, or die!" And he pressed up close to her. She shrank back, somewhat frightened.

"Do not stir; do not go, I implore you! Rose, only hear me!" And fiercely and passionately seizing her by the hand, he poured out the whole story of his love, heaping her with every fantastic epithet of admiration which he could devise.

There was little, perhaps, of all his words which Rose had not heard many a time before; but there was a quiver in his voice, and a fire in his eye, from which she shrank by instinct.

"Let me go!" she said; "you are too rough, sir!"

"Ay!" he said, seizing now both her hands, "rougher, perhaps, than the gay gallants of Bideford, who serenade you, and write sonnets to you, and send you posies. Rougher, but more loving, Rose! Do not turn away! I shall die if you take your eyes off me! Tell me,—tell me, now here—this moment—before we part—if I may love you!"

"Go away!" she answered, struggling, and bursting into tears. "This is too rude. If I am but a merchant's daughter. I am God's child. Remember that I am alone. Leave me; go! or I will call for help!"

Eustace had heard or read somewhere that such expressions in a woman's mouth were mere facons de parler, and on the whole signs that she had no objection to be alone, and did not intend to call for help; and he only grasped her hands the more fiercely, and looked into her face with keen and hungry eyes; but she was in earnest, nevertheless, and a loud shriek made him aware that, if he wished to save his own good name, he must go: but there was one question, for an answer to which he would risk his very life.

"Yes, proud woman! I thought so! Some one of those gay gallants has been beforehand with me. Tell me who—"

But she broke from him, and passed him, and fled down the lane.

"Mark it!" cried he, after her. "You shall rue the day when you despised Eustace Leigh! Mark it, proud beauty!" And he turned back to join Campian, who stood in some trepidation.

"You have not hurt the maiden, my son? I thought I heard a scream."

"Hurt her! No. Would God that she were dead, nevertheless, and I by her! Say no more to me, father. We will home." Even Campian knew enough of the world to guess what had happened, and they both hurried home in silence.

And so Eustace Leigh played his move, and lost it.

Poor little Rose, having run nearly to Chapel, stopped for very shame, and walked quietly by the cottages which stood opposite the gate, and then turned up the lane towards Moorwinstow village, whither she was bound. But on second thoughts, she felt herself so "red and flustered," that she was afraid of going into the village, for fear (as she said to herself) of making people talk, and so, turning into a by-path, struck away toward the cliffs, to cool her blushes in the sea-breeze. And there finding a quiet grassy nook beneath the crest of the rocks, she sat down on the turf, and fell into a great meditation.

Rose Salterne was a thorough specimen of a West-coast maiden, full of passionate impulsive affections, and wild dreamy imaginations, a fit subject, as the North-Devon women are still, for all romantic and gentle superstitions. Left early without mother's care, she had fed her fancy upon the legends and ballads of her native land, till she believed—what did she not believe?—of mermaids and pixies, charms and witches, dreams and omens, and all that world of magic in which most of the countrywomen, and countrymen too, believed firmly enough but twenty years ago. Then her father's house was seldom without some merchant, or sea-captain from foreign parts, who, like Othello, had his tales of—

> "Antres vast, and deserts idle,
> Of rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads reach heaven."

And,—

> "And of the cannibals that each other eat,
> The anthropophagi, and men whose heads
> Do grow beneath their shoulders."

All which tales, she, like Desdemona, devoured with greedy ears, whenever she could "the house affairs with haste despatch." And when these failed, there was still boundless store of wonders open to her in old romances which were then to be found in every English house of the better class. The Legend of King Arthur, Florice and Blancheflour, Sir Ysumbras, Sir Guy of Warwick, Palamon and Arcite, and the Romaunt of the Rose, were with her text-books and canonical authorities. And lucky it was, perhaps, for her that Sidney's Arcadia was still in petto, or Mr. Frank (who had already seen the first book or two in manuscript, and extolled it above all books past, present, or to come) would have surely brought a copy down for Rose, and thereby have turned her poor little flighty brains upside down forever. And with her head full of these, it was no wonder if she had likened herself of late more than once to some of those peerless princesses of old, for whose fair hand paladins and kaisers thundered against each other in tilted field; and perhaps she would not have been sorry (provided, of course, no one was killed) if duels, and passages of arms in honor of her, as her father reasonably dreaded, had actually taken place.

For Rose was not only well aware that she was wooed, but found the said wooing (and little shame to her) a very pleasant process. Not that she had any wish to break hearts: she did not break her heart for any of her admirers, and why should they break theirs for her? They were all very charming,

each in his way (the gentlemen, at least; for she had long since learnt to turn up her nose at merchants and burghers); but one of them was not so very much better than the other.

Of course, Mr. Frank Leigh was the most charming; but then, as a courtier and squire of dames, he had never given her a sign of real love, nothing but sonnets and compliments, and there was no trusting such things from a gallant, who was said (though, by the by, most scandalously) to have a lady love at Milan, and another at Vienna, and half-a-dozen in the Court, and half-a-dozen more in the city.

And very charming was Mr. William Cary, with his quips and his jests, and his galliards and lavoltas; over and above his rich inheritance; but then, charming also Mr. Coffin of Portledge, though he were a little proud and stately; but which of the two should she choose? It would be very pleasant to be mistress of Clovelly Court; but just as pleasant to find herself lady of Portledge, where the Coffins had lived ever since Noah's flood (if, indeed, they had not merely returned thither after that temporary displacement), and to bring her wealth into a family which was as proud of its antiquity as any nobleman in Devon, and might have made a fourth to that famous trio of Devonshire Cs, of which it is written,—

"Crocker, Cruwys, and Copplestone,
When the Conqueror came were all at home."

And Mr. Hugh Fortescue, too—people said that he was certain to become a great soldier—perhaps as great as his brother Arthur—and that would be pleasant enough, too, though he was but the younger son of an innumerable family: but then, so was Amyas Leigh. Ah, poor Amyas! Her girl's fancy for him had vanished, or rather, perhaps, it was very much what it always had been, only that four or five more girl's fancies beside it had entered in, and kept it in due subjection. But still, she could not help thinking a good deal about him, and his voyage, and the reports of his great strength, and beauty, and valor, which had already reached her in that out-of-the-way corner; and though she was not in the least in love with him, she could not help hoping that he had at least (to put her pretty little thought in the mildest shape) not altogether forgotten her; and was hungering, too, with all her fancy, to give him no peace till he had told her all the wonderful things which he had seen and done in this ever-memorable voyage. So that, altogether, it was no wonder, if in her last night's dream the figure of Amyas had been even more forward and troublesome than that of Frank or the rest.

But, moreover, another figure had been forward and troublesome enough in last night's sleep-world; and forward and troublesome enough, too, now in to-day's waking-world, namely, Eustace, the rejected. How strange that she should have dreamt of him the night before! and dreamt, too, of his fighting with Mr. Frank and Mr. Amyas! It must be a warning—see, she had met him the very next day in this strange way; so the first half of her dream had come true; and after what had past, she only had to breathe a whisper, and the second part of the dream would come true also. If she wished for a passage of arms in her own honor, she could easily enough compass one: not that she would do it for worlds! And after all, though Mr. Eustace had been very rude and naughty, yet still it was not his own fault; he could not help being in love with her. And—and, in short, the poor little maid felt herself one of the most important personages on earth, with all the cares (or hearts) of the country in her keeping, and as much perplexed with matters of weight as ever was any Cleophila, or Dianeme, Fiordispina or Flourdeluce, in verse run tame, or prose run mad.

Poor little Rose! Had she but had a mother! But she was to learn her lesson, such as it was, in another school. She was too shy (too proud perhaps) to tell her aunt her mighty troubles; but a counsellor she must have; and after sitting with her head in her hands, for half-an-hour or more, she arose suddenly, and started off along the cliffs towards Marsland. She would go and see Lucy Passmore, the white witch; Lucy knew everything; Lucy would tell her what to do; perhaps even whom to marry.

Lucy was a fat, jolly woman of fifty, with little pig-eyes, which twinkled like sparks of fire, and eyebrows which sloped upwards and outwards, like those of a satyr, as if she had been (as indeed she had) all her life looking out of the corners of her eyes. Her qualifications as white witch were boundless cunning, equally boundless good nature, considerable knowledge of human weaknesses, some mesmeric power, some skill in "yarbs," as she called her simples, a firm faith in the virtue of her own incantations, and the faculty of holding her tongue. By dint of these she contrived to gain a fair share of money, and also (which she liked even better) of power, among the simple folk for many miles round. If a child was scalded, a tooth ached, a piece of silver was stolen, a heifer shrew-struck, a pig bewitched, a young damsel crost in love, Lucy was called in, and Lucy found a remedy, especially for the latter complaint. Now and then she found herself on ticklish ground, for the kind-heartedness which compelled her to help all distressed damsels out of a scrape, sometimes compelled her also to help them into one; whereon enraged fathers called Lucy ugly names, and threatened to send her into Exeter gaol for a witch, and she smiled quietly, and hinted that if she were "like some that were ready to return evil for evil, such talk as that would bring no blessing on them that spoke it;" which being translated into plain English, meant, "If you trouble me, I will overlook (i. e. fascinate) you, and then your pigs will die, your horses stray, your cream turn sour, your barns be fired, your son have St. Vitus's dance, your daughter fits, and so on, woe on woe, till you are very probably starved to death in a ditch, by virtue of this terrible little eye of mine, at which, in spite of all your swearing and bullying, you know you are now shaking in your shoes for fear. So you had much better hold your tongue, give me a drink of cider, and leave ill alone, lest you make it worse."

Not that Lucy ever proceeded to any such fearful extremities. On the contrary, her boast, and her belief too, was, that she was sent into the world to make poor souls as happy as she could, by lawful means, of course, if possible, but if not—why, unlawful ones were better than none; for she "couldn't a-bear to see the poor creatures taking on; she was too, too tender-hearted." And so she was, to every one but her husband, a tall, simple-hearted rabbit-faced man, a good deal older than herself. Fully agreeing with Sir Richard Grenville's great axiom, that he who cannot obey cannot rule, Lucy had been for the last five-and-twenty years training him pretty smartly to obey her, with the intention, it is to be charitably hoped, of letting him rule her in turn when his lesson was perfected. He bore his honors, however, meekly enough, having a boundless respect for his wife's wisdom, and a firm belief in her supernatural powers, and let her go her own way and earn her own money, while he got a little more in a truly pastoral method (not extinct yet along those lonely cliffs), by feeding a herd of some dozen donkeys and twenty goats. The donkeys fetched, at each low-tide, white shell-sand which was to be sold for manure to the neighboring farmers; the goats furnished milk and "kiddy-pies;" and when there was neither milking nor sand-carrying to be done, old Will Passmore just sat under a sunny rock and watched the buck-goats rattle their horns together, thinking about nothing at all, and taking very good care all the while neither to inquire nor to see who came in and out of his little cottage in the glen.

The prophetess, when Rose approached her oracular cave, was seated on a tripod in front of the fire, distilling strong waters out of penny-royal. But no sooner did her distinguished visitor appear at the hatch, than the still was left to take care of itself, and a clean apron and mutch having been slipt on, Lucy welcomed Rose with endless courtesies, and—"Bless my dear soul alive, who ever would have thought to see the Rose of Torridge to my poor little place!"

Rose sat down: and then? How to begin was more than she knew, and she stayed silent a full five minutes, looking earnestly at the point of her shoe, till Lucy, who was an adept in such cases, thought it best to proceed to business at once, and save Rose the delicate operation of opening the ball herself; and so, in her own way, half fawning, half familiar—

"Well, my dear young lady, and what is it I can do for ye? For I guess you want a bit of old Lucy's help, eh? Though I'm most mazed to see ye here, surely. I should have supposed that pretty face could manage they sort of matters for itself. Eh?"

Rose, thus bluntly charged, confessed at once, and with many blushes and hesitations, made her soon understand that what she wanted was "To have her fortune told."

"Eh? Oh! I see. The pretty face has managed it a bit too well already, eh? Tu many o' mun, pure fellows? Well, 'tain't every mayden has her pick and choose, like some I know of, as be blest in love by stars above. So you hain't made up your mind, then?"

Rose shook her head.

"Ah—well," she went on, in a half-bantering tone. "Not so asy, is it, then? One's gude for one thing, and one for another, eh? One has the blood, and another the money."

And so the "cunning woman" (as she truly was), talking half to herself, ran over all the names which she thought likely, peering at Rose all the while out of the corners of her foxy bright eyes, while Rose stirred the peat ashes steadfastly with the point of her little shoe, half angry, half ashamed, half frightened, to find that "the cunning woman" had guessed so well both her suitors and her thoughts about them, and tried to look unconcerned at each name as it came out.

"Well, well," said Lucy, who took nothing by her move, simply because there was nothing to take; "think over it—think over it, my dear life; and if you did set your mind on any one—why, then—then maybe I might help you to a sight of him."

"A sight of him?"

"His sperrit, dear life, his sperrit only, I mane. I 'udn't have no keeping company in my house, no, not for gowld untowld, I 'udn't; but the sperrit of mun—to see whether mun would be true or not, you'd like to know that, now, 'udn't you, my darling?"

Rose sighed, and stirred the ashes about vehemently.

"I must first know who it is to be. If you could show me that—now—"

"Oh, I can show ye that, tu, I can. Ben there's a way to 't, a sure way; but 'tis mortal cold for the time o' year, you zee."

"But what is it, then?" said Rose, who had in her heart been longing for something of that very kind, and had half made up her mind to ask for a charm.

"Why, you'm not afraid to goo into the say by night for a minute, are you? And to-morrow night would serve, too; 't will be just low tide to midnight."

"If you would come with me perhaps—"

"I'll come, I'll come, and stand within call, to be sure. Only do ye mind this, dear soul alive, not to goo telling a crumb about mun, noo, not for the world, or yu'll see naught at all, indeed, now. And beside, there's a noxious business grow'd up against me up to Chapel there; and I hear tell how Mr. Leigh saith I shall to Exeter gaol for a witch—did ye ever hear the likes?—because his groom Jan saith I overlooked mun—the Papist dog! And now never he nor th' owld Father Francis goo by me without a spetting, and saying of their Ayes and Malificas—I do know what their Rooman Latin do mane, zo well as ever they, I du!—and a making o' their charms and incantations to their saints and idols! They be mortal feared of witches, they Papists, and mortal hard on 'em, even on a pure body like me, that doth a bit in the white way; 'case why you see, dear life," said she, with one of her humorous twinkles, "tu to a trade do never agree. Do ye try my bit of a charm, now; do ye!"

Rose could not resist the temptation; and between them both the charm was agreed on, and the next night was fixed for its trial, on the payment of certain current coins of the realm (for Lucy, of course, must live by her trade); and slipping a tester into the dame's hand as earnest, Rose went away home, and got there in safety.

But in the meanwhile, at the very hour that Eustace had been prosecuting his suit in the lane at Moorwinstow, a very different scene was being enacted in Mrs. Leigh's room at Burrough.

For the night before, Amyas, as he was going to bed, heard his brother Frank in the next room tune his lute, and then begin to sing. And both their windows being open, and only a thin partition between the chambers, Amyas's admiring ears came in for every word of the following canzonet, sung in that delicate and mellow tenor voice for which Frank was famed among all fair ladies:—

"Ah, tyrant Love, Megaera's serpents bearing,
Why thus requite my sighs with venom'd smart?
Ah, ruthless dove, the vulture's talons wearing,
Why flesh them, traitress, in this faithful heart?
Is this my meed? Must dragons' teeth alone
In Venus' lawns by lovers' hands be sown?

"Nay, gentlest Cupid; 'twas my pride undid me.
Nay, guiltless dove; by mine own wound I fell.
To worship, not to wed, Celestials bid me:
I dreamt to mate in heaven, and wake in hell;
Forever doom'd, Ixion-like, to reel
On mine own passions' ever-burning wheel."

At which the simple sailor sighed, and longed that he could write such neat verses, and sing them so sweetly. How he would besiege the ear of Rose Salterne with amorous ditties! But still, he could not be everything; and if he had the bone and muscle of the family, it was but fair that Frank should have the brains and voice; and, after all, he was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, and it was just the same as if he himself could do all the fine things which Frank could do; for as long as one of the family won honor, what matter which of them it was? Whereon he shouted through the wall, "Good night, old song-thrush; I suppose I need not pay the musicians."

"What, awake?" answered Frank. "Come in here, and lull me to sleep with a sea-song."

So Amyas went in, and found Frank laid on the outside of his bed not yet undrest.

"I am a bad sleeper," said he; "I spend more time, I fear, in burning the midnight oil than prudent men should. Come and be my jongleur, my minnesinger, and tell me about Andes, and cannibals, and the ice-regions, and the fire-regions, and the paradises of the West."

So Amyas sat down, and told: but somehow, every story which he tried to tell came round, by crooked paths, yet sure, to none other point than Rose Salterne, and how he thought of her here and thought of her there, and how he wondered what she would say if she had seen him in this adventure, and how he longed to have had her with him to show her that glorious sight, till Frank let him have his own way, and then out came the whole story of the simple fellow's daily and hourly devotion to her, through those three long years of world-wide wanderings.

"And oh, Frank, I could hardly think of anything but her in the church the other day, God forgive me! and it did seem so hard for her to be the only face which I did not see—and have not seen her yet, either."

"So I thought, dear lad," said Frank, with one of his sweetest smiles; "and tried to get her father to let her impersonate the nymph of Torridge."

"Did you, you dear kind fellow? That would have been too delicious."

"Just so, too delicious; wherefore, I suppose, it was ordained not to be, that which was being delicious enough."

"And is she as pretty as ever?"

"Ten times as pretty, dear lad, as half the young fellows round have discovered. If you mean to win her and wear her (and God grant you may fare no worse!) you will have rivals enough to get rid of."

"Humph!" said Amyas, "I hope I shall not have to make short work with some of them."

"I hope not," said Frank, laughing. "Now go to bed, and to-morrow morning give your sword to mother to keep, lest you should be tempted to draw it on any of her majesty's lieges."

"No fear of that, Frank; I am no swash-buckler, thank God; but if any one gets in my way, I'll serve him as the mastiff did the terrier, and just drop him over the quay into the river, to cool himself, or my name's not Amyas."

And the giant swung himself laughing out of the room, and slept all night like a seal, not without dreams, of course, of Rose Salterne.

The next morning, according to his wont, he went into his mother's room, whom he was sure to find up and at her prayers; for he liked to say his prayers, too, by her side, as he used to do when he was a little boy. It seemed so homelike, he said, after three years' knocking up and down in no-man's land. But coming gently to the door, for fear of disturbing her, and entering unperceived, beheld a sight which stopped him short.

Mrs. Leigh was sitting in her chair, with her face bowed fondly down upon the head of his brother Frank, who knelt before her, his face buried in her lap. Amyas could see that his whole form was quivering with stifled emotion. Their mother was just finishing the last words of a well-known text,—"for my sake, and the Gospel's, shall receive a hundred-fold in this present life, fathers, and mothers, and brothers, and sisters."

"But not a wife!" interrupted Frank, with a voice stifled with sobs; "that was too precious a gift for even Him to promise to those who gave up a first love for His sake!"

"And yet," said he, after a moment's silence, "has He not heaped me with blessings enough already, that I must repine and rage at His refusing me one more, even though that one be—No, mother! I am your son, and God's; and you shall know it, even though Amyas never does!" And he looked up with his clear blue eyes and white forehead; and his face was as the face of an angel.

Both of them saw that Amyas was present, and started and blushed. His mother motioned him away with her eyes, and he went quietly out, as one stunned. Why had his name been mentioned?

Love, cunning love, told him all at once. This was the meaning of last night's canzonet! This was why its words had seemed to fit his own heart so well! His brother was his rival. And he had been telling him all his love last night. What a stupid brute he was! How it must have made poor Frank wince! And then Frank had listened so kindly; even bid him God speed in his suit. What a gentleman old Frank was, to be sure! No wonder the queen was so fond of him, and all the Court ladies!—Why, if it came to that, what wonder if Rose Salterne should be fond of him too? Hey-day! "That would be a pretty fish to find in my net when I come to haul it!" quoth Amyas to himself, as he paced the garden; and clutching desperately hold of his locks with both hands, as if to hold his poor confused head on its shoulders, he strode and tramped up and down the shell-paved garden walks for a full half hour, till Frank's voice (as cheerful as ever, though he more than suspected all) called him.

"Come in to breakfast, lad; and stop grinding and creaking upon those miserable limpets, before thou hast set every tooth in my head on edge!"

Amyas, whether by dint of holding his head straight, or by higher means, had got the thoughts of the said head straight enough by this time; and in he came, and fell to upon the broiled fish and strong ale, with a sort of fury, as determined to do his duty to the utmost in all matters that day, and therefore, of course, in that most important matter of bodily sustenance; while his mother and Frank looked at him, not without anxiety and even terror, doubting what turn his fancy might have taken in so new a case; at last—

"My dear Amyas, you will really heat your blood with all that strong ale! Remember, those who drink beer, think beer."

"Then they think right good thoughts, mother. And in the meanwhile, those who drink water, think water. Eh, old Frank? and here's your health."

"And clouds are water," said his mother, somewhat reassured by his genuine good humor; "and so are rainbows; and clouds are angels' thrones, and rainbows the sign of God's peace on earth."

Amyas understood the hint, and laughed. "Then I'll pledge Frank out of the next ditch, if it please you and him. But first—I say—he must hearken to a parable; a manner mystery, miracle play,

I have got in my head, like what they have at Easter, to the town-hall. Now then, hearken, madam, and I and Frank will act." And up rose Amyas, and shoved back his chair, and put on a solemn face.

Mrs. Leigh looked up, trembling; and Frank, he scarce knew why, rose.

"No; you pitch again. You are King David, and sit still upon your throne. David was a great singer, you know, and a player on the viols; and ruddy, too, and of a fair countenance; so that will fit. Now, then, mother, don't look so frightened. I am not going to play Goliath, for all my cubits; I am to present Nathan the prophet. Now, David, hearken, for I have a message unto thee, O King!

"There were two men in one city, one rich, and the other poor: and the rich man had many flocks and herds, and all the fine ladies in Whitehall to court if he liked; and the poor man had nothing but—"

And in spite of his broad honest smile, Amyas's deep voice began to tremble and choke.

Frank sprang up, and burst into tears: "Oh! Amyas, my brother, my brother! stop! I cannot endure this. Oh, God! was it not enough to have entangled myself in this fatal fancy, but over and above, I must meet the shame of my brother's discovering it?"

"What shame, then, I'd like to know?" said Amyas, recovering himself. "Look here, brother Frank! I've thought it all over in the garden; and I was an ass and a braggart for talking to you as I did last night. Of course you love her! Everybody must; and I was a fool for not recollecting that; and if you love her, your taste and mine agree, and what can be better? I think you are a sensible fellow for loving her, and you think me one. And as for who has her, why, you're the eldest; and first come first served is the rule, and best to keep to it. Besides, brother Frank, though I'm no scholar, yet I'm not so blind but that I tell the difference between you and me; and of course your chance against mine, for a hundred to one; and I am not going to be fool enough to row against wind and tide too. I'm good enough for her, I hope; but if I am, you are better, and the good dog may run, but it's the best that takes the hare; and so I have nothing more to do with the matter at all; and if you marry her, why, it will set the old house on its legs again, and that's the first thing to be thought of, and you may just as well do it as I, and better too. Not but that it's a plague, a horrible plague!" went on Amyas, with a ludicrously doleful visage; "but so are other things too, by the dozen; it's all in the day's work, as the huntsman said when the lion ate him. One would never get through the furze-croft if one stopped to pull out the prickles. The pig didn't scramble out of the ditch by squeaking; and the less said the sooner mended; nobody was sent into the world only to suck honey-pots. What must be must, man is but dust; if you can't get crumb, you must fain eat crust. So I'll go and join the army in Ireland, and get it out of my head, for cannon balls fright away love as well as poverty does; and that's all I've got to say." Wherewith Amyas sat down, and returned to the beer; while Mrs. Leigh wept tears of joy.

"Amyas! Amyas!" said Frank; "you must not throw away the hopes of years, and for me, too! Oh, how just was your parable! Ah! mother mine! to what use is all my scholarship and my philosophy, when this dear simple sailor-lad outdoes me at the first trial of courtesy!"

"My children, my children, which of you shall I love best? Which of you is the more noble? I thanked God this morning for having given me one such son; but to have found that I possess two!" And Mrs. Leigh laid her head on the table, and buried her face in her hands, while the generous battle went on.

"But, dearest Amyas!—"

"But, Frank! if you don't hold your tongue, I must go forth. It was quite trouble enough to make up one's mind, without having you afterwards trying to unmake it again."

"Amyas! if you give her up to me, God do so to me, and more also, if I do not hereby give her up to you!"

"He had done it already—this morning!" said Mrs. Leigh, looking up through her tears. "He renounced her forever on his knees before me! only he is too noble to tell you so."

"The more reason I should copy him," said Amyas, setting his lips, and trying to look desperately determined, and then suddenly jumping up, he leaped upon Frank, and throwing his arms

round his neck, sobbed out, “There, there, now! For God’s sake, let us forget all, and think about our mother, and the old house, and how we may win her honor before we die! and that will be enough to keep our hands full, without fretting about this woman and that.—What an ass I have been for years! instead of learning my calling, dreaming about her, and don’t know at this minute whether she cares more for me than she does for her father’s ‘prentices!”

“Oh, Amyas! every word of yours puts me to fresh shame! Will you believe that I know as little of her likings as you do?”

“Don’t tell me that, and play the devil’s game by putting fresh hopes into me, when I am trying to kick them out. I won’t believe it. If she is not a fool, she must love you; and if she don’t, why, be hanged if she is worth loving!”

“My dearest Amyas! I must ask you too to make no more such speeches to me. All those thoughts I have forsworn.”

“Only this morning; so there is time to catch them again before they are gone too far.”

“Only this morning,” said Frank, with a quiet smile: “but centuries have passed since then.”

“Centuries? I don’t see many gray hairs yet.”

“I should not have been surprised if you had, though,” answered Frank, in so sad and meaning a tone that Amyas could only answer—

“Well, you are an angel!”

“You, at least, are something even more to the purpose, for you are a man!”

And both spoke truth, and so the battle ended; and Frank went to his books, while Amyas, who must needs be doing, if he was not to dream, started off to the dockyard to potter about a new ship of Sir Richard’s, and forget his woes, in the capacity of Sir Oracle among the sailors. And so he had played his move for Rose, even as Eustace had, and lost her: but not as Eustace had.

CHAPTER V
CLOVELLY COURT IN THE OLDEN TIME

"It was among the ways of good Queen Bess,
Who ruled as well as ever mortal can, sir,
When she was stogg'd, and the country in a mess,
She was wont to send for a Devon man, sir."

West Country Song.

The next morning Amyas Leigh was not to be found. Not that he had gone out to drown himself in despair, or even to bemoan himself "down by the Torridge side." He had simply ridden off, Frank found, to Sir Richard Grenville at Stow: his mother at once divined the truth, that he was gone to try for a post in the Irish army, and sent off Frank after him to bring him home again, and make him at least reconsider himself.

So Frank took horse and rode thereon ten miles or more: and then, as there were no inns on the road in those days, or indeed in these, and he had some ten miles more of hilly road before him, he turned down the hill towards Clovelly Court, to obtain, after the hospitable humane fashion of those days, good entertainment for man and horse from Mr. Cary the squire.

And when he walked self-invited, like the loud-shouting Menelaus, into the long dark wainscoted hall of the court, the first object he beheld was the mighty form of Amyas, who, seated at the long table, was alternately burying his face in a pasty, and the pasty in his face, his sorrows having, as it seemed, only sharpened his appetite, while young Will Cary, kneeling on the opposite bench, with his elbows on the table, was in that graceful attitude laying down the law fiercely to him in a low voice.

"Hillo! lad," cried Amyas; "come hither and deliver me out of the hands of this fire-eater, who I verily believe will kill me, if I do not let him kill some one else."

"Ah! Mr. Frank," said Will Cary, who, like all other young gentlemen of these parts, held Frank in high honor, and considered him a very oracle and cynosure of fashion and chivalry, "welcome here: I was just longing for you, too; I wanted your advice on half-a-dozen matters. Sit down, and eat. There is the ale."

"None so early, thank you."

"Ah no!" said Amyas, burying his head in the tankard, and then mimicking Frank, "avoid strong ale o' mornings. It heats the blood, thickens the animal spirits, and obfuscates the cerebrum with frenetical and lymphatic idols, which cloud the quintessential light of the pure reason. Eh? young Plato, young Daniel, come hither to judgment! And yet, though I cannot see through the bottom of the tankard already, I can see plain enough still to see this, that Will shall not fight."

"Shall I not, eh? who says that? Mr. Frank, I appeal to you, now; only hear."

"We are in the judgment-seat," said Frank, settling to the pasty. "Proceed, appellant."

"Well, I was telling Amyas, that Tom Coffin, of Portledge; I will stand him no longer."

"Let him be, then," said Amyas; "he could stand very well by himself, when I saw him last."

"Plague on you, hold your tongue. Has he any right to look at me as he does, whenever I pass him?"

"That depends on how he looks; a cat may look at a king, provided she don't take him for a mouse."

"Oh, I know how he looks, and what he means too, and he shall stop, or I will stop him. And the other day, when I spoke of Rose Salterne"—"Ah!" groaned Frank, "Ate's apple again!"—"(never

mind what I said) he burst out laughing in my face; and is not that a fair quarrel? And what is more, I know that he wrote a sonnet, and sent it to her to Stow by a market woman. What right has he to write sonnets when I can't? It's not fair play, Mr. Frank, or I am a Jew, and a Spaniard, and a Papist; it's not!" And Will smote the table till the plates danced again.

"My dear knight of the burning pestle, I have a plan, a device, a disentanglement, according to most approved rules of chivalry. Let us fix a day, and summon by tuck of drum all young gentlemen under the age of thirty, dwelling within fifteen miles of the habitation of that peerless Oriana."

"And all 'prentice-boys too," cried Amyas, out of the pasty.

"And all 'prentice-boys. The bold lads shall fight first, with good quarterstaves, in Bideford Market, till all heads are broken; and the head which is not broken, let the back belonging to it pay the penalty of the noble member's cowardice. After which grand tournament, to which that of Tottenham shall be but a flea-bite and a batrachomyomachy—"

"Confound you, and your long words, sir," said poor Will, "I know you are flouting me."

"Pazienza, Signor Cavaliere; that which is to come is no flouting, but bloody and warlike earnest. For afterwards all the young gentlemen shall adjourn into a convenient field, sand, or bog—which last will be better, as no man will be able to run away, if he be up to his knees in soft peat: and there stripping to our shirts, with rapiers of equal length and keenest temper, each shall slay his man, catch who catch can, and the conquerors fight again, like a most valiant main of gamecocks as we are, till all be dead, and out of their woes; after which the survivor, bewailing before heaven and earth the cruelty of our Fair Oriana, and the slaughter which her basiliscine eyes have caused, shall fall gracefully upon his sword, and so end the woes of this our lovelorn generation. Placetne Domini? as they used to ask in the Senate at Oxford."

"Really," said Cary, "this is too bad."

"So is, pardon me, your fighting Mr. Coffin with anything longer than a bodkin."

"Bodkins are too short for such fierce Bobadils," said Amyas; "they would close in so near, that we should have them falling to fisticuffs after the first bout."

"Then let them fight with squirts across the market-place; for by heaven and the queen's laws, they shall fight with nothing else."

"My dear Mr. Cary," went on Frank, suddenly changing his bantering tone to one of the most winning sweetness, "do not fancy that I cannot feel for you, or that I, as well as you, have not known the stings of love and the bitterer stings of jealousy. But oh, Mr. Cary, does it not seem to you an awful thing to waste selfishly upon your own quarrel that divine wrath which, as Plato says, is the very root of all virtues, and which has been given you, like all else which you have, that you may spend it in the service of her whom all bad souls fear, and all virtuous souls adore,—our peerless queen? Who dares, while she rules England, call his sword or his courage his own, or any one's but hers? Are there no Spaniards to conquer, no wild Irish to deliver from their oppressors, that two gentlemen of Devon can find no better place to flesh their blades than in each other's valiant and honorable hearts?"

"By heaven!" cried Amyas, "Frank speaks like a book; and for me, I do think that Christian gentlemen may leave love quarrels to bulls and rams."

"And that the heir of Clovelly," said Frank, smiling, "may find more noble examples to copy than the stags in his own deer-park."

"Well," said Will, penitently, "you are a great scholar, Mr. Frank, and you speak like one; but gentlemen must fight sometimes, or where would be their honor?"

"I speak," said Frank, a little proudly, "not merely as a scholar, but as a gentleman, and one who has fought ere now, and to whom it has happened, Mr. Cary, to kill his man (on whose soul may God have mercy); but it is my pride to remember that I have never yet fought in my own quarrel, and my trust in God that I never shall. For as there is nothing more noble and blessed than to fight in behalf of those whom we love, so to fight in our own private behalf is a thing not to be allowed to a Christian

man, unless refusal imports utter loss of life or honor; and even then, it may be (though I would not lay a burden on any man's conscience), it is better not to resist evil, but to overcome it with good."

"And I can tell you, Will," said Amyas, "I am not troubled with fear of ghosts; but when I cut off the Frenchman's head, I said to myself, 'If that braggart had been slandering me instead of her gracious majesty, I should expect to see that head lying on my pillow every time I went to bed at night.'"

"God forbid!" said Will, with a shudder. "But what shall I do? for to the market tomorrow I will go, if it were choke-full of Coffins, and a ghost in each coffin of the lot."

"Leave the matter to me," said Amyas. "I have my device, as well as scholar Frank here; and if there be, as I suppose there must be, a quarrel in the market to-morrow, see if I do not—"

"Well, you are two good fellows," said Will. "Let us have another tankard in."

"And drink the health of Mr. Coffin, and all gallant lads of the North," said Frank; "and now to my business. I have to take this runaway youth here home to his mother; and if he will not go quietly, I have orders to carry him across my saddle."

"I hope your nag has a strong back, then," said Amyas; "but I must go on and see Sir Richard, Frank. It is all very well to jest as we have been doing, but my mind is made up."

"Stop," said Cary. "You must stay here tonight; first, for good fellowship's sake; and next, because I want the advice of our Phoenix here, our oracle, our paragon. There, Mr. Frank, can you construe that for me? Speak low, though, gentlemen both; there comes my father; you had better give me the letter again. Well, father, whence this morning?"

"Eh, company here? Young men, you are always welcome, and such as you. Would there were more of your sort in these dirty times! How is your good mother, Frank, eh? Where have I been, Will? Round the house-farm, to look at the beeves. That sheeted heifer of Prowse's is all wrong; her coat stares like a hedgepig's. Tell Jewell to go up and bring her in before night. And then up the forty acres; sprang two coveys, and picked a leash out of them. The Irish hawk flies as wild as any haggard still, and will never make a bird. I had to hand her to Tom, and take the little peregrine. Give me a Clovelly hawk against the world, after all; and—heigh ho, I am very hungry! Half-past twelve, and dinner not served? What, Master Amyas, spoiling your appetite with strong ale? Better have tried sack, lad; have some now with me."

And the worthy old gentleman, having finished his oration, settled himself on a great bench inside the chimney, and put his hawk on a perch over his head, while his cockers coiled themselves up close to the warm peat-ashes, and his son set to work to pull off his father's boots, amid sundry warnings to take care of his corns.

"Come, Master Amyas, a pint of white wine and sugar, and a bit of a shoeing-horn to it ere we dine. Some pickled prawns, now, or a rasher off the coals, to whet you?"

"Thank you," quoth Amyas; "but I have drunk a mort of outlandish liquors, better and worse, in the last three years, and yet never found aught to come up to good ale, which needs neither shoeing-horn before nor after, but takes care of itself, and of all honest stomachs too, I think."

"You speak like a book, boy," said old Cary; "and after all, what a plague comes of these newfangled hot wines, and aqua vitaes, which have come in since the wars, but maddening of the brains, and fever of the blood?"

"I fear we have not seen the end of that yet," said Frank. "My friends write me from the Netherlands that our men are falling into a swinish trick of swilling like the Hollanders. Heaven grant that they may not bring home the fashion with them."

"A man must drink, they say, or die of the ague, in those vile swamps," said Amyas. "When they get home here, they will not need it."

"Heaven grant it," said Frank; "I should be sorry to see Devonshire a drunken county; and there are many of our men out there with Mr. Champernoun."

"Ah," said Cary, "there, as in Ireland, we are proving her majesty's saying true, that Devonshire is her right hand, and the young children thereof like the arrows in the hand of the giant."

"They may well be," said his son, "when some of them are giants themselves, like my tall school-fellow opposite."

"He will be up and doing again presently, I'll warrant him," said old Cary.

"And that I shall," quoth Amyas. "I have been devising brave deeds; and see in the distance enchanters to be bound, dragons choked, empires conquered, though not in Holland."

"You do?" asked Will, a little sharply; for he had had a half suspicion that more was meant than met the ear.

"Yes," said Amyas, turning off his jest again, "I go to what Raleigh calls the Land of the Nymphs. Another month, I hope, will see me abroad in Ireland."

"Abroad? Call it rather at home," said old Cary; "for it is full of Devon men from end to end, and you will be among friends all day long. George Bourchier from Tawstock has the army now in Munster, and Warham St. Leger is marshal; George Carew is with Lord Grey of Wilton (Poor Peter Carew was killed at Glendalough); and after the defeat last year, when that villain Desmond cut off Herbert and Price, the companies were made up with six hundred Devon men, and Arthur Fortescue at their head; so that the old county holds her head as proudly in the Land of Ire as she does in the Low Countries and the Spanish Main."

"And where," asked Amyas, "is Davils of Marsland, who used to teach me how to catch trout, when I was staying down at Stow? He is in Ireland, too, is he not?"

"Ah, my lad," said Mr. Cary, "that is a sad story. I thought all England had known it."

"You forget, sir, I am a stranger. Surely he is not dead?"

"Murdered foully, lad! Murdered like a dog, and by the man whom he had treated as his son, and who pretended, the false knave! to call him father."

"His blood is avenged?" said Amyas, fiercely.

"No, by heaven, not yet! Stay, don't cry out again. I am getting old—I must tell my story my own way. It was last July,—was it not, Will?—Over comes to Ireland Saunders, one of those Jesuit foxes, as the Pope's legate, with money and bulls, and a banner hallowed by the Pope, and the devil knows what beside; and with him James Fitzmaurice, the same fellow who had sworn on his knees to Perrott, in the church at Kilmallock, to be a true liegeman to Queen Elizabeth, and confirmed it by all his saints, and such a world of his Irish howling, that Perrott told me he was fain to stop his own ears. Well, he had been practising with the King of France, but got nothing but laughter for his pains, and so went over to the Most Catholic King, and promises him to join Ireland to Spain, and set up Popery again, and what not. And he, I suppose, thinking it better that Ireland should belong to him than to the Pope's bastard, fits him out, and sends him off on such another errand as Stukely's, —though I will say, for the honor of Devon, if Stukely lived like a fool, he died like an honest man."

"Sir Thomas Stukely dead too?" said Amyas.

"Wait a while, lad, and you shall have that tragedy afterwards. Well, where was I? Oh, Fitzmaurice and the Jesuits land at Smerwick, with three ships, choose a place for a fort, bless it with their holy water, and their moppings and their scourings, and the rest of it, to purify it from the stain of heretic dominion; but in the meanwhile one of the Courtenays,—a Courtenay of Haccombe, was it?—or a Courtenay of Boconnock? Silence, Will, I shall have it in a minute—yes, a Courtenay of Haccombe it was, lying at anchor near by, in a ship of war of his, cuts out the three ships, and cuts off the Dons from the sea. John and James Desmond, with some small rabble, go over to the Spaniards. Earl Desmond will not join them, but will not fight them, and stands by to take the winning side; and then in comes poor Davils, sent down by the Lord Deputy to charge Desmond and his brothers, in the queen's name, to assault the Spaniards. Folks say it was rash of his lordship: but I say, what could be better done? Every one knows that there never was a stouter or shrewder soldier than Davils; and the young Desmonds, I have heard him say many a time, used to look on him as their father. But he

found out what it was to trust Englishmen turned Irish. Well, the Desmonds found out on a sudden that the Dons were such desperate Paladins, that it was madness to meddle, though they were five to one; and poor Davils, seeing that there was no fight in them, goes back for help, and sleeps that night at some place called Tralee. Arthur Carter of Bideford, St. Leger's lieutenant, as stout an old soldier as Davils himself, sleeps in the same bed with him; the lacquey-boy, who is now with Sir Richard at Stow, on the floor at their feet. But in the dead of night, who should come in but James Desmond, sword in hand, with a dozen of his ruffians at his heels, each with his glib over his ugly face, and his skene in his hand. Davils springs up in bed, and asks but this, 'What is the matter, my son?' whereon the treacherous villain, without giving him time to say a prayer, strikes at him, naked as he was, crying, 'Thou shalt be my father no longer, nor I thy son! Thou shalt die!' and at that all the rest fall on him. The poor little lad (so he says) leaps up to cover his master with his naked body, gets three or four stabs of skenes, and so falls for dead; with his master and Captain Carter, who were dead indeed—God reward them! After that the ruffians ransacked the house, till they had murdered every Englishman in it, the lacquey-boy only excepted, who crawled out, wounded as he was, through a window; while Desmond, if you will believe it, went back, up to his elbows in blood, and vaunted his deeds to the Spaniards, and asked them—'There! Will you take that as a pledge that I am faithful to you?' And that, my lad, was the end of Henry Davils, and will be of all who trust to the faith of wild savages."

"I would go a hundred miles to see that Desmond hanged!" said Amyas, while great tears ran down his face. "Poor Mr. Davils! And now, what is the story of Sir Thomas?"

"Your brother must tell you that, lad; I am somewhat out of breath."

"And I have a right to tell it," said Frank, with a smile. "Do you know that I was very near being Earl of the bog of Allen, and one of the peers of the realm to King Buoncompagna, son and heir to his holiness Pope Gregory the Thirteenth?"

"No, surely!"

"As I am a gentleman. When I was at Rome I saw poor Stukely often; and this and more he offered me on the part (as he said) of the Pope, if I would just oblige him in the two little matters of being reconciled to the Catholic Church, and joining the invasion of Ireland."

"Poor deluded heretic," said Will Cary, "to have lost an earldom for your family by such silly scruples of loyalty!"

"It is not a matter for jesting, after all," said Frank; "but I saw Sir Thomas often, and I cannot believe he was in his senses, so frantic was his vanity and his ambition; and all the while, in private matters as honorable a gentleman as ever. However, he sailed at last for Ireland, with his eight hundred Spaniards and Italians; and what is more, I know that the King of Spain paid their charges. Marquis Vinola—James Buoncompagna, that is—stayed quietly at Rome, preferring that Stukely should conquer his paternal heritage of Ireland for him while he took care of the bona robas at home. I went down to Civita Vecchia to see him off; and though his younger by many years, I could not but take the liberty of entreating him, as a gentleman and a man of Devon, to consider his faith to his queen and the honor of his country. There were high words between us; God forgive me if I spoke too fiercely, for I never saw him again."

"Too fiercely to an open traitor, Frank? Why not have run him through?"

"Nay, I had no clean life for Sundays, Amyas; so I could not throw away my week-day one; and as for the weal of England, I knew that it was little he would damage it, and told him so. And at that he waxed utterly mad, for it touched his pride, and swore that if the wind had not been fair for sailing, he would have fought me there and then; to which I could only answer, that I was ready to meet him when he would; and he parted from me, saying, 'It is a pity, sir, I cannot fight you now; when next we meet, it will be beneath my dignity to measure swords with you.'

"I suppose he expected to come back a prince at least—Heaven knows; I owe him no ill-will, nor I hope does any man. He has paid all debts now in full, and got his receipt for them."

"How did he die, then, after all?"

"On his voyage he touched in Portugal. King Sebastian was just sailing for Africa with his new ally, Mohammed the Prince of Fez, to help King Abdallah, and conquer what he could. He persuaded Stukely to go with him. There were those who thought that he, as well as the Spaniards, had no stomach for seeing the Pope's son King of Ireland. Others used to say that he thought an island too small for his ambition, and must needs conquer a continent—I know not why it was, but he went. They had heavy weather in the passage; and when they landed, many of their soldiers were sea-sick. Stukely, reasonably enough, counselled that they should wait two or three days and recruit; but Don Sebastian was so mad for the assault that he must needs have his veni, vidi, vici; and so ended with a veni, vidi, perii; for he Abdallah, and his son Mohammed, all perished in the first battle at Alcasar; and Stukely, surrounded and overpowered, fought till he could fight no more, and then died like a hero with all his wounds in front; and may God have mercy on his soul!"

"Ah!" said Amyas, "we heard of that battle off Lima, but nothing about poor Stukely."

"That last was a Popish prayer, Master Frank," said old Mr. Cary.

"Most worshipful sir, you surely would not wish God not to have mercy on his soul?"

"No—eh? Of course not: but that's all settled by now, for he is dead, poor fellow."

"Certainly, my dear sir. And you cannot help being a little fond of him still."

"Eh? why, I should be a brute if I were not. He and I were schoolfellows, though he was somewhat the younger; and many a good thrashing have I given him, and one cannot help having a tenderness for a man after that. Beside, we used to hunt together in Exmoor, and have royal nights afterward into Ilfracombe, when we were a couple of mad young blades. Fond of him? Why, I would have sooner given my forefinger than that he should have gone to the dogs thus."

"Then, my dear sir, if you feel for him still, in spite of all his faults, how do you know that God may not feel for him still, in spite of all his faults? For my part," quoth Frank, in his fanciful way, "without believing in that Popish Purgatory, I cannot help holding with Plato, that such heroical souls, who have wanted but little of true greatness, are hereafter by some strait discipline brought to a better mind; perhaps, as many ancients have held with the Indian Gymnosophists, by transmigration into the bodies of those animals whom they have resembled in their passions; and indeed, if Sir Thomas Stukely's soul should now animate the body of a lion, all I can say is that he would be a very valiant and royal lion; and also doubtless become in due time heartily ashamed and penitent for having been nothing better than a lion."

"What now, Master Frank? I don't trouble my head with such matters—I say Stukely was a right good-hearted fellow at bottom; and if you plague my head with any of your dialectics, and propositions, and college quips and quiddities, you sha'n't have any more sack, sir. But here come the knaves, and I hear the cook knock to dinner."

After a madrigal or two, and an Italian song of Master Frank's, all which went sweetly enough, the ladies rose, and went. Whereon Will Cary, drawing his chair close to Frank's, put quietly into his hand a dirty letter.

"This was the letter left for me," whispered he, "by a country fellow this morning. Look at it and tell me what I am to do."

Whereon Frank opened, and read—

"Mister Cary, be you wary
  By deer park end to-night.
Yf Irish ffoxe com out of rocks
  Grip and hold hym tight."

"I would have showed it my father," said Will, "but—"

"I verily believe it to be a blind. See now, this is the handwriting of a man who has been trying to write vilely, and yet cannot. Look at that B, and that G; their formae formativae never were begotten in a hedge-school. And what is more, this is no Devon man's handiwork. We say 'to' and not 'by,' Will, eh? in the West country?"

"Of course."

"And 'man,' instead of 'him'?"

"True, O Daniel! But am I to do nothing therefore?"

"On that matter I am no judge. Let us ask much-enduring Ulysses here; perhaps he has not sailed round the world without bringing home a device or two."

Whereon Amyas was called to counsel, as soon as Mr. Cary could be stopped in a long cross-examination of him as to Mr. Doughty's famous trial and execution.

Amyas pondered awhile, thrusting his hands into his long curls; and then—

"Will, my lad, have you been watching at the Deer Park End of late?"

"Never."

"Where, then?"

"At the town-beach."

"Where else?

"At the town-head."

"Where else?"

"Why, the fellow is turned lawyer! Above Freshwater."

"Where is Freshwater?"

"Why, where the water-fall comes over the cliff, half-a-mile from the town. There is a path there up into the forest."

"I know. I'll watch there to-night. Do you keep all your old haunts safe, of course, and send a couple of stout knaves to the mill, to watch the beach at the Deer Park End, on the chance; for your poet may be a true man, after all. But my heart's faith is, that this comes just to draw you off from some old beat of yours, upon a wild-goose chase. If they shoot the miller by mistake, I suppose it don't much matter?"

"Marry, no."

"'When a miller's knock'd on the head,
The less of flour makes the more of bread.'"

"Or, again," chimed in old Mr. Cary, "as they say in the North—

"'Find a miller that will not steal,
Or a webster that is leal,
Or a priest that is not greedy,
And lay them three a dead corpse by;
And by the virtue of them three,
The said dead corpse shall quicken'd be.'"

"But why are you so ready to watch Freshwater to-night, Master Amyas?"

"Because, sir, those who come, if they come, will never land at Mouthmill; if they are strangers, they dare not; and if they are bay's-men, they are too wise, as long as the westerly swell sets in. As for landing at the town, that would be too great a risk; but Freshwater is as lonely as the Bermudas; and they can beach a boat up under the cliff at all tides, and in all weathers, except north and nor'west. I have done it many a time, when I was a boy."

"And give us the fruit of your experience now in your old age, eh? Well, you have a gray head on green shoulders, my lad; and I verily believe you are right. Who will you take with you to watch?"

"Sir," said Frank, "I will go with my brother; and that will be enough."

"Enough? He is big enough, and you brave enough, for ten; but still, the more the merrier."

"But the fewer, the better fare. If I might ask a first and last favor, worshipful sir," said Frank, very earnestly, "you would grant me two things: that you would let none go to Freshwater but me and my brother; and that whatsoever we shall bring you back shall be kept as secret as the commonweal and your loyalty shall permit. I trust that we are not so unknown to you, or to others, that you can doubt for a moment but that whatsoever we may do will satisfy at once your honor and our own."

"My dear young gentleman, there is no need of so many courtier's words. I am your father's friend, and yours. And God forbid that a Cary—for I guess your drift—should ever wish to make a head or a heart ache; that is, more than—"

"Those of whom it is written, 'Though thou bray a fool in a mortar, yet will not his folly depart from him,'" interposed Frank, in so sad a tone that no one at the table replied; and few more words were exchanged, till the two brothers were safe outside the house; and then—

"Amyas," said Frank, "that was a Devon man's handiwork, nevertheless; it was Eustace's handwriting."

"Impossible!"

"No, lad. I have been secretary to a prince, and learnt to interpret cipher, and to watch every pen-stroke; and, young as I am, I think that I am not easily deceived. Would God I were! Come on, lad; and strike no man hastily, lest thou cut off thine own flesh."

So forth the two went, along the park to the eastward, and past the head of the little wood-embosomed fishing-town, a steep stair of houses clinging to the cliff far below them, the bright slate roofs and white walls glittering in the moonlight; and on some half-mile farther, along the steep hill-side, fenced with oak wood down to the water's edge, by a narrow forest path, to a point where two glens meet and pour their streamlets over a cascade some hundred feet in height into the sea below. By the side of this waterfall a narrow path climbs upward from the beach; and here it was that the two brothers expected to meet the messenger.

Frank insisted on taking his station below Amyas. He said that he was certain that Eustace himself would make his appearance, and that he was more fit than Amyas to bring him to reason by parley; that if Amyas would keep watch some twenty yards above, the escape of the messenger would be impossible. Moreover, he was the elder brother, and the post of honor was his right. So Amyas obeyed him, after making him promise that if more than one man came up the path, he would let them pass him before he challenged, so that both might bring them to bay at the same time.

So Amyas took his station under a high marl bank, and, bedded in luxuriant crown-ferns, kept his eye steadily on Frank, who sat down on a little knoll of rock (where is now a garden on the cliff-edge) which parts the path and the dark chasm down which the stream rushes to its final leap over the cliff.

There Amyas sat a full half-hour, and glanced at whiles from Frank to look upon the scene around. Outside the southwest wind blew fresh and strong, and the moonlight danced upon a thousand crests of foam; but within the black jagged point which sheltered the town, the sea did but heave, in long oily swells of rolling silver, onward into the black shadow of the hills, within which the town and pier lay invisible, save where a twinkling light gave token of some lonely fisher's wife, watching the weary night through for the boat which would return with dawn. Here and there upon the sea, a black speck marked a herring-boat, drifting with its line of nets; and right off the mouth of the glen, Amyas saw, with a beating heart, a large two-masted vessel lying-to—that must be the "Portugal"! Eagerly he looked up the glen, and listened; but he heard nothing but the sweeping of the wind across the downs five hundred feet above, and the sough of the waterfall upon the rocks below; he saw nothing but the vast black sheets of oak-wood sloping up to the narrow blue sky above, and the broad bright

hunter's moon, and the woodcocks, which, chuckling to each other, hawked to and fro, like swallows, between the tree-tops and the sky.

At last he heard a rustle of the fallen leaves; he shrank closer and closer into the darkness of the bank. Then swift light steps—not down the path, from above, but upward, from below; his heart beat quick and loud. And in another half-minute a man came in sight, within three yards of Frank's hiding-place.

Frank sprang out instantly. Amyas saw his bright blade glance in the clear October moonlight.

"Stand in the queen's name!"

The man drew a pistol from under his cloak, and fired full in his face. Had it happened in these days of detonators, Frank's chance had been small; but to get a ponderous wheel-lock under weigh was a longer business, and before the fizzing of the flint had ceased, Frank had struck up the pistol with his rapier, and it exploded harmlessly over his head. The man instantly dashed the weapon in his face and closed.

The blow, luckily, did not take effect on that delicate forehead, but struck him on the shoulder: nevertheless, Frank, who with all his grace and agility was as fragile as a lily, and a very bubble of the earth, staggered, and lost his guard, and before he could recover himself, Amyas saw a dagger gleam, and one, two, three blows fiercely repeated.

Mad with fury, he was with them in an instant. They were scuffling together so closely in the shade that he was afraid to use his sword point; but with the hilt he dealt a single blow full on the ruffian's cheek. It was enough; with a hideous shriek, the fellow rolled over at his feet, and Amyas set his foot on him, in act to run him through.

"Stop! stay!" almost screamed Frank; "it is Eustace! our cousin Eustace!" and he leant against a tree.

Amyas sprang towards him: but Frank waved him off.

"It is nothing—a scratch. He has papers: I am sure of it. Take them; and for God's sake let him go!"

"Villain! give me your papers!" cried Amyas, setting his foot once more on the writhing Eustace, whose jaw was broken across.

"You struck me foully from behind," moaned he, his vanity and envy even then coming out, in that faint and foolish attempt to prove Amyas not so very much better a man.

"Hound, do you think that I dare not strike you in front? Give me your papers, letters, whatever Popish devilry you carry; or as I live, I will cut off your head, and take them myself, even if it cost me the shame of stripping your corpse. Give them up! Traitor, murderer! give them, I say!" And setting his foot on him afresh, he raised his sword.

Eustace was usually no craven: but he was cowed. Between agony and shame, he had no heart to resist. Martyrdom, which looked so splendid when consummated selon les regles on Tower Hill or Tyburn, before pitying, or (still better) scoffing multitudes, looked a confused, dirty, ugly business there in the dark forest; and as he lay, a stream of moonlight bathed his mighty cousin's broad clear forehead, and his long golden locks, and his white terrible blade, till he seemed, to Eustace's superstitious eye, like one of those fair young St. Michaels trampling on the fiend, which he had seen abroad in old German pictures. He shuddered; pulled a packet from his bosom, and threw it from him, murmuring, "I have not given it."

"Swear to me that these are all the papers which you have in cipher or out of cipher. Swear on your soul, or you die!"

Eustace swore.

"Tell me, who are your accomplices?"

"Never!" said Eustace. "Cruel! have you not degraded me enough already?" and the wretched young man burst into tears, and hid his bleeding face in his hands.

One hint of honor made Amyas as gentle as a lamb. He lifted Eustace up, and bade him run for his life.

"I am to owe my life, then, to you?"

"Not in the least; only to your being a Leigh. Go, or it will be worse for you!" And Eustace went; while Amyas, catching up the precious packet, hurried to Frank. He had fainted already, and his brother had to carry him as far as the park before he could find any of the other watchers. The blind, as far as they were concerned, was complete. They had heard and seen nothing. Whosoever had brought the packet had landed they knew not where; and so all returned to the court, carrying Frank, who recovered gradually, having rather bruises than wounds; for his foe had struck wildly, and with a trembling hand.

Half-an-hour after, Amyas, Mr. Cary, and his son Will were in deep consultation over the following epistle, the only paper in the packet which was not in cipher:—

"'DEAR BROTHER N. S. in Chto. et Ecclesia.

"This is to inform you and the friends of the cause, that S. Josephus has landed in Smerwick, with eight hundred valiant Crusaders, burning with holy zeal to imitate last year's martyrs of Carrigfolium, and to expiate their offences (which I fear may have been many) by the propagation of our most holy faith. I have purified the fort (which they are strenuously rebuilding) with prayer and holy water, from the stain of heretical footsteps, and consecrated it afresh to the service of Heaven, as the first-fruits of the isle of saints; and having displayed the consecrated banner to the adoration of the faithful, have returned to Earl Desmond, that I may establish his faith, weak as yet, by reason of the allurements of this world: though since, by the valor of his brother James, he that hindered was taken out of the way (I mean Davils the heretic, sacrifice well-pleasing in the eyes of Heaven!), the young man has lent a more obedient ear to my counsels. If you can do anything, do it quickly, for a great door and effectual is opened, and there are many adversaries. But be swift, for so do the poor lambs of the Church tremble at the fury of the heretics, that a hundred will flee before one Englishman. And, indeed, were it not for that divine charity toward the Church (which covers the multitude of sins) with which they are resplendent, neither they nor their country would be, by the carnal judgment, counted worthy of so great labor in their behalf. For they themselves are given much to lying, theft, and drunkenness, vain babbling, and profane dancing and singing; and are still, as S. Gildas reports of them, 'more careful to shroud their villainous faces in bushy hair, than decently to cover their bodies; while their land (by reason of the tyranny of their chieftains, and the continual wars and plunderings among their tribes, which leave them weak and divided, an easy prey to the myrmidons of the excommunicate and usurping Englishwoman) lies utterly waste with fire, and defaced with corpses of the starved and slain. But what are these things, while the holy virtue of Catholic obedience still flourishes in their hearts? The Church cares not for the conservation of body and goods, but of immortal souls.

"If any devout lady shall so will, you may obtain from her liberality a shirt for this worthless tabernacle, and also a pair of hose; for I am unsavory to myself and to others, and of such luxuries none here has superfluity; for all live in holy poverty, except the fleas, who have that consolation in this world for which this unhappy nation, and those who labor among them, must wait till the world to come.[1]

"Your loving brother,

"N. S."

"Sir Richard must know of this before daybreak," cried old Cary. "Eight hundred men landed! We must call out the Posse Comitatus, and sail with them bodily. I will go myself, old as I am. Spaniards in Ireland? not a dog of them must go home again."

"Not a dog of them," answered Will; "but where is Mr. Winter and his squadron?"

[1] See note at end of chapter.

"Safe in Milford Haven; a messenger must be sent to him too."

"I'll go," said Amyas: "but Mr. Cary is right. Sir Richard must know all first."

"And we must have those Jesuits."

"What? Mr. Evans and Mr. Morgans? God help us—they are at my uncle's! Consider the honor of our family!"

"Judge for yourself, my dear boy," said old Mr. Cary, gently: "would it not be rank treason to let these foxes escape, while we have this damning proof against them?"

"I will go myself, then."

"Why not? You may keep all straight, and Will shall go with you. Call a groom, Will, and get your horse saddled, and my Yorkshire gray; he will make better play with this big fellow on his back, than the little pony astride of which Mr. Leigh came walking in (as I hear) this morning. As for Frank, the ladies will see to him well enough, and glad enough, too, to have so fine a bird in their cage for a week or two."

"And my mother?"

"We'll send to her to-morrow by daybreak. Come, a stirrup cup to start with, hot and hot. Now, boots, cloaks, swords, a deep pull and a warm one, and away!"

And the jolly old man bustled them out of the house and into their saddles, under the broad bright winter's moon.

"You must make your pace, lads, or the moon will be down before you are over the moors." And so away they went.

Neither of them spoke for many a mile. Amyas, because his mind was fixed firmly on the one object of saving the honor of his house; and Will, because he was hesitating between Ireland and the wars, and Rose Salterne and love-making. At last he spoke suddenly.

"I'll go, Amyas."

"Whither?"

"To Ireland with you, old man. I have dragged my anchor at last."

"What anchor, my lad of parables?"

"See, here am I, a tall and gallant ship."

"Modest even if not true."

"Inclination, like an anchor, holds me tight."

"To the mud."

"Nay, to a bed of roses—not without their thorns."

"Hillo! I have seen oysters grow on fruit-trees before now, but never an anchor in a rose-garden."

"Silence, or my allegory will go to noggin-staves."

"Against the rocks of my flinty discernment."

"Pooh—well. Up comes duty like a jolly breeze, blowing dead from the northeast, and as bitter and cross as a northeaster too, and tugs me away toward Ireland. I hold on by the rosebed—any ground in a storm—till every strand is parted, and off I go, westward ho! to get my throat cut in a bog-hole with Amyas Leigh."

"Earnest, Will?"

"As I am a sinful man."

"Well done, young hawk of the White Cliff!"

"I had rather have called it Gallantry Bower still, though," said Will, punning on the double name of the noble precipice which forms the highest point of the deer park.

"Well, as long as you are on land, you know it is Gallantry Bower still: but we always call it White Cliff when you see it from the sea-board, as you and I shall do, I hope, to-morrow evening."

"What, so soon?"

"Dare we lose a day?"

"I suppose not: heigh-ho!"

And they rode on again in silence, Amyas in the meanwhile being not a little content (in spite of his late self-renunciation) to find that one of his rivals at least was going to raise the siege of the Rose garden for a few months, and withdraw his forces to the coast of Kerry.

As they went over Bursdon, Amyas pulled up suddenly.

"Did you not hear a horse's step on our left?"

"On our left—coming up from Welsford moor? Impossible at this time of night. It must have been a stag, or a sownder of wild swine: or may be only an old cow."

"It was the ring of iron, friend. Let us stand and watch."

Bursdon and Welsford were then, as now, a rolling range of dreary moors, unbroken by tor or tree, or anything save few and far between a world-old furze-bank which marked the common rights of some distant cattle farm, and crossed then, not as now, by a decent road, but by a rough confused track-way, the remnant of an old Roman road from Clovelly dikes to Launceston. To the left it trended down towards a lower range of moors, which form the watershed of the heads of Torridge; and thither the two young men peered down over the expanse of bog and furze, which glittered for miles beneath the moon, one sheet of frosted silver, in the heavy autumn dew.

"If any of Eustace's party are trying to get home from Freshwater, they might save a couple of miles by coming across Welsford, instead of going by the main track, as we have done." So said Amyas, who though (luckily for him) no "genius," was cunning as a fox in all matters of tactic and practic, and would have in these days proved his right to be considered an intellectual person by being a thorough man of business.

"If any of his party are mad, they'll try it, and be stogged till the day of judgment. There are bogs in the bottom twenty feet deep. Plague on the fellow, whoever he is, he has dodged us! Look there!"

It was too true. The unknown horseman had evidently dismounted below, and led his horse up on the other side of a long furze-dike; till coming to the point where it turned away again from his intended course, he appeared against the sky, in the act of leading his nag over a gap.

"Ride like the wind!" and both youths galloped across furze and heather at him; but ere they were within a hundred yards of him, he had leapt again on his horse, and was away far ahead.

"There is the dor to us, with a vengeance," cried Cary, putting in the spurs.

"It is but a lad; we shall never catch him."

"I'll try, though; and do you lumber after as you can, old heavysides;" and Cary pushed forward.

Amyas lost sight of him for ten minutes, and then came up with him dismounted, and feeling disconsolately at his horse's knees.

"Look for my head. It lies somewhere about among the furze there; and oh! I am as full of needles as ever was a pin-cushion."

"Are his knees broken?"

"I daren't look. No, I believe not. Come along, and make the best of a bad matter. The fellow is a mile ahead, and to the right, too."

"He is going for Moorwinstow, then; but where is my cousin?"

"Behind us, I dare say. We shall nab him at least."

"Cary, promise me that if we do, you will keep out of sight, and let me manage him."

"My boy, I only want Evan Morgans and Morgan Evans. He is but the cat's paw, and we are after the cats themselves."

And so they went on another dreary six miles, till the land trended downwards, showing dark glens and masses of woodland far below.

"Now, then, straight to Chapel, and stop the foxes' earth? Or through the King's Park to Stow, and get out Sir Richard's hounds, hue and cry, and queen's warrant in proper form?"

"Let us see Sir Richard first; and whatsoever he decides about my uncle, I will endure as a loyal subject must."

So they rode through the King's Park, while Sir Richard's colts came whinnying and staring round the intruders, and down through a rich woodland lane five hundred feet into the valley, till they could hear the brawling of the little trout-stream, and beyond, the everlasting thunder of the ocean surf.

Down through warm woods, all fragrant with dying autumn flowers, leaving far above the keen Atlantic breeze, into one of those delicious Western combes, and so past the mill, and the little knot of flower-clad cottages. In the window of one of them a light was still burning. The two young men knew well whose window that was; and both hearts beat fast; for Rose Salterne slept, or rather seemed to wake, in that chamber.

"Folks are late in Combe to-night," said Amyas, as carelessly as he could.

Cary looked earnestly at the window, and then sharply enough at Amyas; but Amyas was busy settling his stirrup; and Cary rode on, unconscious that every fibre in his companion's huge frame was trembling like his own.

"Muggy and close down here," said Amyas, who, in reality, was quite faint with his own inward struggles.

"We shall be at Stow gate in five minutes," said Cary, looking back and down longingly as his horse climbed the opposite hill; but a turn of the zigzag road hid the cottage, and the next thought was, how to effect an entrance into Stow at three in the morning without being eaten by the ban-dogs, who were already howling and growling at the sound of the horse-hoofs.

However, they got safely in, after much knocking and calling, through the postern gate in the high west wall, into a mansion, the description whereof I must defer to the next chapter, seeing that the moon has already sunk into the Atlantic, and there is darkness over land and sea.

Sir Richard, in his long gown, was soon downstairs in the hall; the letter read, and the story told; but ere it was half finished—

"Anthony, call up a groom, and let him bring me a horse round. Gentlemen, if you will excuse me five minutes, I shall be at your service."

"You will not go alone, Richard?" asked Lady Grenville, putting her beautiful face in its nightcoif out of an adjoining door.

"Surely, sweet chuck, we three are enough to take two poor polecats of Jesuits. Go in, and help me to boot and gird."

In half an hour they were down and up across the valley again, under the few low ashes clipt flat by the sea-breeze which stood round the lonely gate of Chapel.

"Mr. Cary, there is a back path across the downs to Marsland; go and guard that." Cary rode off; and Sir Richard, as he knocked loudly at the gate—

"Mr. Leigh, you see that I have consulted your honor, and that of your poor uncle, by adventuring thus alone. What will you have me do now, which may not be unfit for me and you?"

"Oh, sir!" said Amyas, with tears in his honest eyes, "you have shown yourself once more what you always have been—my dear and beloved master on earth, not second even to my admiral Sir Francis Drake."

"Or the queen, I hope," said Grenville, smiling, "but pocas palabras. What will you do?"

"My wretched cousin, sir, may not have returned—and if I might watch for him on the main road—unless you want me with you."

"Richard Grenville can walk alone, lad. But what will you do with your cousin?"

"Send him out of the country, never to return; or if he refuses, run him through on the spot."

"Go, lad." And as he spoke, a sleepy voice asked inside the gate, "Who was there?"

"Sir Richard Grenville. Open, in the queen's name?"

"Sir Richard? He is in bed, and be hanged to you. No honest folk come at this hour of night."

"Amyas!" shouted Sir Richard. Amyas rode back.

"Burst that gate for me, while I hold your horse."

Amyas leaped down, took up a rock from the roadside, such as Homer's heroes used to send at each other's heads, and in an instant the door was flat on the ground, and the serving-man on his back inside, while Sir Richard quietly entering over it, like Una into the hut, told the fellow to get up and hold his horse for him (which the clod, who knew well enough that terrible voice, did without further murmurs), and then strode straight to the front door. It was already opened. The household had been up and about all along, or the noise at the entry had aroused them.

Sir Richard knocked, however, at the open door; and, to his astonishment, his knock was answered by Mr. Leigh himself, fully dressed, and candle in hand.

"Sir Richard Grenville! What, sir! is this neighborly, not to say gentle, to break into my house in the dead of night?"

"I broke your outer door, sir, because I was refused entrance when I asked in the queen's name. I knocked at your inner one, as I should have knocked at the poorest cottager's in the parish, because I found it open. You have two Jesuits here, sir! and here is the queen's warrant for apprehending them. I have signed it with my own hand, and, moreover, serve it now, with my own hand, in order to save you scandal—and it may be, worse. I must have these men, Mr. Leigh."

"My dear Sir Richard—!"

"I must have them, or I must search the house; and you would not put either yourself or me to so shameful a necessity?"

"My dear Sir Richard!—"

"Must I, then, ask you to stand back from your own doorway, my dear sir?" said Grenville. And then changing his voice to that fearful lion's roar, for which he was famous, and which it seemed impossible that lips so delicate could utter, he thundered, "Knaves, behind there! Back!"

This was spoken to half-a-dozen grooms and serving-men, who, well armed, were clustered in the passage.

"What? swords out, you sons of cliff rabbits?" And in a moment, Sir Richard's long blade flashed out also, and putting Mr. Leigh gently aside, as if he had been a child, he walked up to the party, who vanished right and left; having expected a cur dog, in the shape of a parish constable, and come upon a lion instead. They were stout fellows enough, no doubt, in a fair fight: but they had no stomach to be hanged in a row at Launceston Castle, after a preliminary running through the body by that redoubted admiral and most unpeaceful justice of the peace.

"And now, my dear Mr. Leigh," said Sir Richard, as blandly as ever, "where are my men? The night is cold; and you, as well as I, need to be in our beds."

"The men, Sir Richard—the Jesuits—they are not here, indeed."

"Not here, sir?"

"On the word of a gentleman, they left my house an hour ago. Believe me, sir, they did. I will swear to you if you need."

"I believe Mr. Leigh of Chapel's word without oaths. Whither are they gone?"

"Nay, sir—how can I tell? They are—they are, as I may say, fled, sir; escaped."

"With your connivance; at least with your son's. Where are they gone?"

"As I live, I do not know."

"Mr. Leigh—is this possible? Can you add untruth to that treason from the punishment of which I am trying to shield you?"

Poor Mr. Leigh burst into tears.

"Oh! my God! my God! is it come to this? Over and above having the fear and anxiety of keeping these black rascals in my house, and having to stop their villainous mouths every minute, for fear they should hang me and themselves, I am to be called a traitor and a liar in my old age, and that, too, by Richard Grenville! Would God I had never been born! Would God I had no soul to be saved, and I'd just go and drown care in drink, and let the queen and the Pope fight it out their own way!" And the poor old man sank into a chair, and covered his face with his hands, and then leaped up again.

"Bless my heart! Excuse me, Sir Richard—to sit down and leave you standing. 'S life, sir, sorrow is making a hawbuck of me. Sit down, my dear sir! my worshipful sir! or rather come with me into my room, and hear a poor wretched man's story, for I swear before God the men are fled; and my poor boy Eustace is not home either, and the groom tells me that his devil of a cousin has broken his jaw for him; and his mother is all but mad this hour past. Good lack! good lack!"

"He nearly murdered his angel of a cousin, sir!" said Sir Richard, severely.

"What, sir? They never told me."

"He had stabbed his cousin Frank three times, sir, before Amyas, who is as noble a lad as walks God's earth, struck him down. And in defence of what, forsooth, did he play the ruffian and the swashbuckler, but to bring home to your house this letter, sir, which you shall hear at your leisure, the moment I have taken order about your priests." And walking out of the house he went round and called to Cary to come to him.

"The birds are flown, Will," whispered he. "There is but one chance for us, and that is Marsland Mouth. If they are trying to take boat there, you may be yet in time. If they are gone inland we can do nothing till we raise the hue and cry to-morrow."

And Will galloped off over the downs toward Marsland, while Sir Richard ceremoniously walked in again, and professed himself ready and happy to have the honor of an audience in Mr. Leigh's private chamber. And as we know pretty well already what was to be discussed therein, we had better go over to Marsland Mouth, and, if possible, arrive there before Will Cary: seeing that he arrived hot and swearing, half an hour too late.

Note.—I have shrunk somewhat from giving these and other sketches (true and accurate as I believe them to be) of Ireland during Elizabeth's reign, when the tyranny and lawlessness of the feudal chiefs had reduced the island to such a state of weakness and barbarism, that it was absolutely necessary for England either to crush the Norman-Irish nobility, and organize some sort of law and order, or to leave Ireland an easy prey to the Spaniards, or any other nation which should go to war with us. The work was done—clumsily rather than cruelly; but wrongs were inflicted, and avenged by fresh wrongs, and those by fresh again. May the memory of them perish forever! It has been reserved for this age, and for the liberal policy of this age, to see the last ebullitions of Celtic excitability die out harmless and ashamed of itself, and to find that the Irishman, when he is brought as a soldier under the regenerative influence of law, discipline, self-respect, and loyalty, can prove himself a worthy rival of the more stern Norse-Saxon warrior. God grant that the military brotherhood between Irish and English, which is the special glory of the present war, may be the germ of a brotherhood industrial, political, and hereafter, perhaps, religious also; and that not merely the corpses of heroes, but the feuds and wrongs which have parted them for centuries, may lie buried, once and forever, in the noble graves of Alma and Inkerman.

CHAPTER VI
THE COMBES OF THE FAR WEST

"Far, far from hence
The Adriatic breaks in a warm bay
Among the green Illyrian hills, and there
The sunshine in the happy glens is fair,
And by the sea and in the brakes
The grass is cool, the sea-side air
Buoyant and fresh, the mountain flowers
More virginal and sweet than ours."

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

And even such are those delightful glens, which cut the high table-land of the confines of Devon and Cornwall, and opening each through its gorge of down and rock, towards the boundless Western Ocean. Each is like the other, and each is like no other English scenery. Each has its upright walls, inland of rich oak-wood, nearer the sea of dark green furze, then of smooth turf, then of weird black cliffs which range out right and left far into the deep sea, in castles, spires, and wings of jagged iron-stone. Each has its narrow strip of fertile meadow, its crystal trout stream winding across and across from one hill-foot to the other; its gray stone mill, with the water sparkling and humming round the dripping wheel; its dark, rock pools above the tide mark, where the salmon-trout gather in from their Atlantic wanderings, after each autumn flood: its ridge of blown sand, bright with golden trefoil and crimson lady's finger; its gray bank of polished pebbles, down which the stream rattles toward the sea below. Each has its black field of jagged shark's-tooth rock which paves the cove from side to side, streaked with here and there a pink line of shell sand, and laced with white foam from the eternal surge, stretching in parallel lines out to the westward, in strata set upright on edge, or tilted towards each other at strange angles by primeval earthquakes;—such is the "mouth"—as those coves are called; and such the jaw of teeth which they display, one rasp of which would grind abroad the timbers of the stoutest ship. To landward, all richness, softness, and peace; to seaward, a waste and howling wilderness of rock and roller, barren to the fisherman, and hopeless to the shipwrecked mariner.

In only one of these "mouths" is a landing for boats, made possible by a long sea-wall of rock, which protects it from the rollers of the Atlantic; and that mouth is Marsland, the abode of the White Witch, Lucy Passmore; whither, as Sir Richard Grenville rightly judged, the Jesuits were gone. But before the Jesuits came, two other persons were standing on that lonely beach, under the bright October moon, namely, Rose Salterne and the White Witch herself; for Rose, fevered with curiosity and superstition, and allured by the very wildness and possible danger of the spell, had kept her appointment; and, a few minutes before midnight, stood on the gray shingle beach with her counsellor.

"You be safe enough here to-night, miss. My old man is snoring sound abed, and there's no other soul ever sets foot here o' nights, except it be the mermaids now and then. Goodness, Father, where's our boat? It ought to be up here on the pebbles."

Rose pointed to a strip of sand some forty yards nearer the sea, where the boat lay.

"Oh, the lazy old villain! he's been round the rocks after pollock this evening, and never taken the trouble to hale the boat up. I'll trounce him for it when I get home. I only hope he's made her fast where she is, that's all! He's more plague to me than ever my money will be. O deary me!"

And the goodwife bustled down toward the boat, with Rose behind her.

"Iss, 'tis fast, sure enough: and the oars aboard too! Well, I never! Oh, the lazy thief, to leave they here to be stole! I'll just sit in the boat, dear, and watch mun, while you go down to the say; for you must be all alone to yourself, you know, or you'll see nothing. There's the looking-glass; now go, and dip your head three times, and mind you don't look to land or sea before you've said the words, and looked upon the glass. Now, be quick, it's just upon midnight."

And she coiled herself up in the boat, while Rose went faltering down the strip of sand, some twenty yards farther, and there slipping off her clothes, stood shivering and trembling for a moment before she entered the sea.

She was between two walls of rock: that on her left hand, some twenty feet high, hid her in deepest shade; that on her right, though much lower, took the whole blaze of the midnight moon. Great festoons of live and purple sea-weed hung from it, shading dark cracks and crevices, fit haunts for all the goblins of the sea. On her left hand, the peaks of the rock frowned down ghastly black; on her right hand, far aloft, the downs slept bright and cold.

The breeze had died away; not even a roller broke the perfect stillness of the cove. The gulls were all asleep upon the ledges. Over all was a true autumn silence; a silence which may be heard. She stood awed, and listened in hope of a sound which might tell her that any living thing beside herself existed.

There was a faint bleat, as of a new-born lamb, high above her head; she started and looked up. Then a wail from the cliffs, as of a child in pain, answered by another from the opposite rocks. They were but the passing snipe, and the otter calling to her brood; but to her they were mysterious, supernatural goblins, come to answer to her call. Nevertheless, they only quickened her expectation; and the witch had told her not to fear them. If she performed the rite duly, nothing would harm her: but she could hear the beating of her own heart, as she stepped, mirror in hand, into the cold water, waded hastily, as far as she dare, and then stopped aghast.

A ring of flame was round her waist; every limb was bathed in lambent light; all the multitudinous life of the autumn sea, stirred by her approach, had flashed suddenly into glory;—

"And around her the lamps of the sea nymphs, Myriad fiery globes, swam heaving and panting, and rainbows, Crimson and azure and emerald, were broken in star-showers, lighting Far through the wine-dark depths of the crystal, the gardens of Nereus, Coral and sea-fan and tangle, the blooms and the palms of the ocean."

She could see every shell which crawled on the white sand at her feet, every rock-fish which played in and out of the crannies, and stared at her with its broad bright eyes; while the great palmate oarweeds which waved along the chasm, half-seen in the glimmering water, seemed to beckon her down with long brown hands to a grave amid their chilly bowers. She turned to flee; but she had gone too far now to retreat; hastily dipping her head three times, she hurried out to the sea-marge, and looking through her dripping locks at the magic mirror, pronounced the incantation—

"A maiden pure, here I stand,
Neither on sea, nor yet on land;
Angels watch me on either hand.
If you be landsman, come down the strand;
If you be sailor, come up the sand;
If you be angel, come from the sky,
Look in my glass, and pass me by;
Look in my glass, and go from the shore;
Leave me, but love me for evermore."

The incantation was hardly finished, her eyes were straining into the mirror, where, as may be supposed, nothing appeared but the sparkle of the drops from her own tresses, when she heard rattling down the pebbles the hasty feet of men and horses.

She darted into a cavern of the high rock, and hastily dressed herself: the steps held on right to the boat. Peeping out, half-dead with terror, she saw there four men, two of whom had just leaped from their horses, and turning them adrift, began to help the other two in running the boat down.

Whereon, out of the stern sheets, arose, like an angry ghost, the portly figure of Lucy Passmore, and shrieked in shrillest treble—

"Eh! ye villains, ye roogs, what do ye want staling poor folks' boats by night like this?"

The whole party recoiled in terror, and one turned to run up the beach, shouting at the top of his voice, "'Tis a marmaiden—a marmaiden asleep in Willy Passmore's boat!"

"I wish it were any sich good luck," she could hear Will say; "'tis my wife, oh dear!" and he cowered down, expecting the hearty cuff which he received duly, as the White Witch, leaping out of the boat, dared any man to touch it, and thundered to her husband to go home to bed.

The wily dame, as Rose well guessed, was keeping up this delay chiefly to gain time for her pupil: but she had also more solid reasons for making the fight as hard as possible; for she, as well as Rose, had already discerned in the ungainly figure of one of the party the same suspicious Welsh gentleman, on whose calling she had divined long ago; and she was so loyal a subject as to hold in extreme horror her husband's meddling with such "Popish skulkers" (as she called the whole party roundly to their face)—unless on consideration of a very handsome sum of money. In vain Parsons thundered, Campian entreated, Mr. Leigh's groom swore, and her husband danced round in an agony of mingled fear and covetousness.

"No," she cried, "as I am an honest woman and loyal! This is why you left the boat down to the shoore, you old traitor, you, is it? To help off sich noxious trade as this out of the hands of her majesty's quorum and rotulorum? Eh? Stand back, cowards! Will you strike a woman?"

This last speech (as usual) was merely indicative of her intention to strike the men; for, getting out one of the oars, she swung it round and round fiercely, and at last caught Father Parsons such a crack across the shins, that he retreated with a howl.

"Lucy, Lucy!" shrieked her husband, in shrillest Devon falsetto, "be you mazed? Be you mazed, lass? They promised me two gold nobles before I'd lend them the boot!"

"Tu?" shrieked the matron, with a tone of ineffable scorn. "And do yu call yourself a man?"

"Tu nobles! tu nobles!" shrieked he again, hopping about at oar's length.

"Tu? And would you sell your soul under ten?"

"Oh, if that is it," cried poor Campian, "give her ten, give her ten, brother Pars—Morgans, I mean; and take care of your shins, Offa Cerbero, you know—Oh, virago! Furens quid faemina possit! Certainly she is some Lamia, some Gorgon, some—"

"Take that, for your Lamys and Gorgons to an honest woman!" and in a moment poor Campian's thin legs were cut from under him, while the virago, "mounting on his trunk astride," like that more famous one on Hudibras, cried, "Ten nobles, or I'll kep ye here till morning!" And the ten nobles were paid into her hand.

And now the boat, its dragon guardian being pacified, was run down to the sea, and close past the nook where poor little Rose was squeezing herself into the farthest and darkest corner, among wet sea-weed and rough barnacles, holding her breath as they approached.

They passed her, and the boat's keel was already in the water; Lucy had followed them close, for reasons of her own, and perceiving close to the water's edge a dark cavern, cunningly surmised that it contained Rose, and planted her ample person right across its mouth, while she grumbled at her husband, the strangers, and above all at Mr. Leigh's groom, to whom she prophesied pretty plainly Launceston gaol and the gallows; while the wretched serving-man, who would as soon have dared to leap off Welcombe Cliff as to return railing for railing to the White Witch, in vain entreated her

mercy, and tried, by all possible dodging, to keep one of the party between himself and her, lest her redoubted eye should "overlook" him once more to his ruin.

But the night's adventures were not ended yet; for just as the boat was launched, a faint halloo was heard upon the beach, and a minute after, a horseman plunged down the pebbles, and along the sand, and pulling his horse up on its haunches close to the terrified group, dropped, rather than leaped, from the saddle.

The serving-man, though he dared not tackle a witch, knew well enough how to deal with a swordsman; and drawing, sprang upon the newcomer, and then recoiled—

"God forgive me, it's Mr. Eustace! Oh, dear sir, I took you for one of Sir Richard's men! Oh, sir, you're hurt!"

"A scratch, a scratch!" almost moaned Eustace. "Help me into the boat, Jack. Gentlemen, I must with you."

"Not with us, surely, my dear son, vagabonds upon the face of the earth?" said kind-hearted Campian.

"With you, forever. All is over here. Whither God and the cause lead"—and he staggered toward the boat.

As he passed Rose, she saw his ghastly bleeding face, half bound up with a handkerchief, which could not conceal the convulsions of rage, shame, and despair, which twisted it from all its usual beauty. His eyes glared wildly round—and once, right into the cavern. They met hers, so full, and keen, and dreadful, that forgetting she was utterly invisible, the terrified girl was on the point of shrieking aloud.

"He has overlooked me!" said she, shuddering to herself, as she recollected his threat of yesterday.

"Who has wounded you?" asked Campian.

"My cousin—Amyas—and taken the letter!"

"The devil take him, then!" cried Parsons, stamping up and down upon the sand in fury.

"Ay, curse him—you may! I dare not! He saved me—sent me here!"—and with a groan, he made an effort to enter the boat.

"Oh, my dear young gentleman," cried Lucy Passmore, her woman's heart bursting out at the sight of pain, "you must not goo forth with a grane wound like to that. Do ye let me just bind mun up—do ye now!" and she advanced.

Eustace thrust her back.

"No! better bear it, I deserve it—devils! I deserve it! On board, or we shall all be lost—William Cary is close behind me!"

And at that news the boat was thrust into the sea, faster than ever it went before, and only in time; for it was but just round the rocks, and out of sight, when the rattle of Cary's horsehoofs was heard above.

"That rascal of Mr. Leigh's will catch it now, the Popish villain!" said Lucy Passmore, aloud. "You lie still there, dear life, and settle your sperrits; you'm so safe as ever was rabbit to burrow. I'll see what happens, if I die for it!" And so saying, she squeezed herself up through a cleft to a higher ledge, from whence she could see what passed in the valley.

"There mun is! in the meadow, trying to catch the horses! There comes Mr. Cary! Goodness, Father, how a rid'th! he's over wall already! Ron, Jack! ron then! A'll get to the river! No, a wain't! Goodness, Father! There's Mr. Cary cotched mun! A's down, a's down!"

"Is he dead?" asked Rose, shuddering.

"Iss, fegs, dead as nits! and Mr. Cary off his horse, standing overthwart mun! No, a bain't! A's up now. Suspose he was hit wi' the flat. Whatever is Mr. Cary tu? Telling wi' mun, a bit. Oh dear, dear, dear!"

"Has he killed him?" cried poor Rose.

"No, fegs, no! kecking mun, kecking mun, so hard as ever was futeball! Goodness, Father, who did ever? If a haven't kecked mun right into river, and got on mun's horse and rod away!"

And so saying, down she came again.

"And now then, my dear life, us be better to goo hoom and get you sommat warm. You'm mortal cold, I rackon, by now. I was cruel fear'd for ye: but I kept mun off clever, didn't I, now?"

"I wish—I wish I had not seen Mr. Leigh's face!"

"Iss, dreadful, weren't it, poor young soul; a sad night for his poor mother!"

"Lucy, I can't get his face out of my mind. I'm sure he overlooked me."

"Oh then! who ever heard the like o' that? When young gentlemen do overlook young ladies, tain't thikketheor aways, I knoo. Never you think on it."

"But I can't help thinking of it," said Rose. "Stop. Shall we go home yet? Where's that servant?"

"Never mind, he wain't see us, here under the hill. I'd much sooner to know where my old man was. I've a sort of a forecasting in my inwards, like, as I always has when aught's gwain to happen, as though I shuldn't zee mun again, like, I have, miss. Well—he was a bedient old soul, after all, he was. Goodness, Father! and all this while us have forgot the very thing us come about! Who did you see?"

"Only that face!" said Rose, shuddering.

"Not in the glass, maid? Say then, not in the glass?"

"Would to heaven it had been! Lucy, what if he were the man I was fated to—"

"He? Why, he's a praste, a Popish praste, that can't marry if he would, poor wratch."

"He is none; and I have cause enough to know it!" And, for want of a better confidant, Rose poured into the willing ears of her companion the whole story of yesterday's meeting.

"He's a pretty wooer!" said Lucy at last, contemptuously. "Be a brave maid, then, be a brave maid, and never terrify yourself with his unlucky face. It's because there was none here worthy of ye, that ye seed none in glass. Maybe he's to be a foreigner, from over seas, and that's why his sperit was so long a coming. A duke, or a prince to the least, I'll warrant, he'll be, that carries off the Rose of Bideford."

But in spite of all the good dame's flattery, Rose could not wipe that fierce face away from her eyeballs. She reached home safely, and crept to bed undiscovered: and when the next morning, as was to be expected, found her laid up with something very like a fever, from excitement, terror, and cold, the phantom grew stronger and stronger before her, and it required all her woman's tact and self-restraint to avoid betraying by her exclamations what had happened on that fantastic night. After a fortnight's weakness, however, she recovered and went back to Bideford: but ere she arrived there, Amyas was far across the seas on his way to Milford Haven, as shall be told in the ensuing chapters.

CHAPTER VII
THE TRUE AND TRAGICAL HISTORY OF MR. JOHN OXENHAM OF PLYMOUTH

"The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew;
The furrow follow'd free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea."

The Ancient Mariner.

It was too late and too dark last night to see the old house at Stow. We will look round us, then, this bright October day, while Sir Richard and Amyas, about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, are pacing up and down the terraced garden to the south. Amyas has slept till luncheon, i. e. till an hour ago: but Sir Richard, in spite of the bustle of last night, was up and in the valley by six o'clock, recreating the valiant souls of himself and two terrier dogs by the chase of sundry badgers.

Old Stow House stands, or rather stood, some four miles beyond the Cornish border, on the northern slope of the largest and loveliest of those combes of which I spoke in the last chapter. Eighty years after Sir Richard's time there arose there a huge Palladian pile, bedizened with every monstrosity of bad taste, which was built, so the story runs, by Charles the Second, for Sir Richard's great-grandson, the heir of that famous Sir Bevil who defeated the Parliamentary troops at Stratton, and died soon after, fighting valiantly at Lansdowne over Bath. But, like most other things which owed their existence to the Stuarts, it rose only to fall again. An old man who had seen, as a boy, the foundation of the new house laid, lived to see it pulled down again, and the very bricks and timber sold upon the spot; and since then the stables have become a farm-house, the tennis-court a sheep-cote, the great quadrangle a rick-yard; and civilization, spreading wave on wave so fast elsewhere, has surged back from that lonely corner of the land—let us hope, only for a while.

But I am not writing of that great new Stow House, of the past glories whereof quaint pictures still hang in the neighboring houses; nor of that famed Sir Bevil, most beautiful and gallant of his generation, on whom, with his grandfather Sir Richard, old Prince has his pompous epigram—

"Where next shall famous Grenvil's ashes stand?
Thy grandsire fills the sea, and thou the land."

I have to deal with a simpler age, and a sterner generation; and with the old house, which had stood there, in part at least, from gray and mythic ages, when the first Sir Richard, son of Hamon Dentatus, Lord of Carboyle, the grandson of Duke Robert, son of Rou, settled at Bideford, after slaying the Prince of South-Galis, and the Lord of Glamorgan, and gave to the Cistercian monks of Neath all his conquests in South Wales. It was a huge rambling building, half castle, half dwelling-house, such as may be seen still (almost an unique specimen) in Compton Castle near Torquay, the dwelling-place of Humphrey Gilbert, Walter Raleigh's half-brother, and Richard Grenville's bosom friend, of whom more hereafter. On three sides, to the north, west, and south, the lofty walls of the old ballium still stood, with their machicolated turrets, loopholes, and dark downward crannies for dropping stones and fire on the besiegers, the relics of a more unsettled age: but the southern court of the ballium had become a flower-garden, with quaint terraces, statues, knots of flowers, clipped yews and hollies, and all the pedantries of the topiarian art. And toward the east, where the vista of the valley opened, the old walls were gone, and the frowning Norman keep, ruined in the Wars of the

Roses, had been replaced by the rich and stately architecture of the Tudors. Altogether, the house, like the time, was in a transitionary state, and represented faithfully enough the passage of the old middle age into the new life which had just burst into blossom throughout Europe, never, let us pray, to see its autumn or its winter.

From the house on three sides, the hill sloped steeply down, and the garden where Sir Richard and Amyas were walking gave a truly English prospect. At one turn they could catch, over the western walls, a glimpse of the blue ocean flecked with passing sails; and at the next, spread far below them, range on range of fertile park, stately avenue, yellow autumn woodland, and purple heather moors, lapping over and over each other up the valley to the old British earthwork, which stood black and furze-grown on its conical peak; and standing out against the sky on the highest bank of hill which closed the valley to the east, the lofty tower of Kilkhampton church, rich with the monuments and offerings of five centuries of Grenvilles. A yellow eastern haze hung soft over park, and wood, and moor; the red cattle lowed to each other as they stood brushing away the flies in the rivulet far below; the colts in the horse-park close on their right whinnied as they played together, and their sires from the Queen's Park, on the opposite hill, answered them in fuller though fainter voices. A rutting stag made the still woodland rattle with his hoarse thunder, and a rival far up the valley gave back a trumpet note of defiance, and was himself defied from heathery brows which quivered far away above, half seen through the veil of eastern mist. And close at home, upon the terrace before the house, amid romping spaniels and golden-haired children, sat Lady Grenville herself, the beautiful St. Leger of Annery, the central jewel of all that glorious place, and looked down at her noble children, and then up at her more noble husband, and round at that broad paradise of the West, till life seemed too full of happiness, and heaven of light.

And all the while up and down paced Amyas and Sir Richard, talking long, earnestly, and slow; for they both knew that the turning point of the boy's life was come.

"Yes," said Sir Richard, after Amyas, in his blunt simple way, had told him the whole story about Rose Salterne and his brother,—"yes, sweet lad, thou hast chosen the better part, thou and thy brother also, and it shall not be taken from you. Only be strong, lad, and trust in God that He will make a man of you."

"I do trust," said Amyas.

"Thank God," said Sir Richard, "that you have yourself taken from my heart that which was my great anxiety for you, from the day that your good father, who sleeps in peace, committed you to my hands. For all best things, Amyas, become, when misused, the very worst; and the love of woman, because it is able to lift man's soul to the heavens, is also able to drag him down to hell. But you have learnt better, Amyas; and know, with our old German forefathers, that, as Tacitus saith, Sera juvenum Venus, ideoque inexhausta pubertas. And not only that, Amyas; but trust me, that silly fashion of the French and Italians, to be hanging ever at some woman's apron string, so that no boy shall count himself a man unless he can vagghezziare le donne, whether maids or wives, alas! matters little; that fashion, I say, is little less hurtful to the soul than open sin; for by it are bred vanity and expense, envy and heart-burning, yea, hatred and murder often; and even if that be escaped, yet the rich treasure of a manly worship, which should be kept for one alone, is squandered and parted upon many, and the bride at last comes in for nothing but the very last leavings and caput mortuum of her bridegroom's heart, and becomes a mere ornament for his table, and a means whereby he may obtain a progeny. May God, who has saved me from that death in life, save you also!" And as he spoke, he looked down toward his wife upon the terrace below; and she, as if guessing instinctively that he was talking of her, looked up with so sweet a smile, that Sir Richard's stern face melted into a very glory of spiritual sunshine.

Amyas looked at them both and sighed; and then turning the conversation suddenly—

"And I may go to Ireland to-morrow?"

"You shall sail in the 'Mary' for Milford Haven, with these letters to Winter. If the wind serves, you may bid the master drop down the river tonight, and be off; for we must lose no time."

"Winter?" said Amyas. "He is no friend of mine, since he left Drake and us so cowardly at the Straits of Magellan."

"Duty must not wait for private quarrels, even though they be just ones, lad: but he will not be your general. When you come to the marshal, or the Lord Deputy, give either of them this letter, and they will set you work,—and hard work too, I warrant.

"I want nothing better."

"Right, lad; the best reward for having wrought well already, is to have more to do; and he that has been faithful over a few things, must find his account in being made ruler over many things. That is the true and heroical rest, which only is worthy of gentlemen and sons of God. As for those who, either in this world or the world to come, look for idleness, and hope that God shall feed them with pleasant things, as it were with a spoon, Amyas, I count them cowards and base, even though they call themselves saints and elect."

"I wish you could persuade my poor cousin of that."

"He has yet to learn what losing his life to save it means, Amyas. Bad men have taught him (and I fear these Anabaptists and Puritans at home teach little else), that it is the one great business of every one to save his own soul after he dies; every one for himself; and that that, and not divine self-sacrifice, is the one thing needful, and the better part which Mary chose."

"I think men are inclined enough already to be selfish, without being taught that."

"Right, lad. For me, if I could hang up such a teacher on high as an enemy of mankind, and a corrupter of youth, I would do it gladly. Is there not cowardice and self-seeking enough about the hearts of us fallen sons of Adam, that these false prophets, with their baits of heaven, and their terrors of hell, must exalt our dirtiest vices into heavenly virtues and the means of bliss? Farewell to chivalry and to desperate valor, farewell to patriotism and loyalty, farewell to England and to the manhood of England, if once it shall become the fashion of our preachers to bid every man, as the Jesuits do, take care first of what they call the safety of his soul. Every man will be afraid to die at his post, because he will be afraid that he is not fit to die. Amyas, do thou do thy duty like a man, to thy country, thy queen, and thy God; and count thy life a worthless thing, as did the holy men of old. Do thy work, lad; and leave thy soul to the care of Him who is just and merciful in this, that He rewards every man according to his work. Is there respect of persons with God? Now come in, and take the letters, and to horse. And if I hear of thee dead there at Smerwick fort, with all thy wounds in front, I shall weep for thy mother, lad; but I shall have never a sigh for thee."

If any one shall be startled at hearing a fine gentleman and a warrior like Sir Richard quote Scripture, and think Scripture also, they must be referred to the writings of the time; which they may read not without profit to themselves, if they discover therefrom how it was possible then for men of the world to be thoroughly ingrained with the Gospel, and yet to be free from any taint of superstitious fear, or false devoutness. The religion of those days was such as no soldier need have been ashamed of confessing. At least, Sir Richard died as he lived, without a shudder, and without a whine; and these were his last words, fifteen years after that, as he lay shot through and through, a captive among Popish Spaniards, priests, crucifixes, confession, extreme unction, and all other means and appliances for delivering men out of the hands of a God of love:—

"Here die I, Richard Grenville, with a joyful and quiet mind; for that I have ended my life as a true soldier ought, fighting for his country, queen, religion, and honor: my soul willingly departing from this body, leaving behind the lasting fame of having behaved as every valiant soldier is in his duty bound to do."

Those were the last words of Richard Grenville. The pulpits of those days had taught them to him.

But to return. That day's events were not over yet. For, when they went down into the house, the first person whom they met was the old steward, in search of his master.

"There is a manner of roog, Sir Richard, a masterless man, at the door; a very forward fellow, and must needs speak with you."

"A masterless man? He had better not to speak to me, unless he is in love with gaol and gallows."

"Well, your worship," said the steward, "I expect that is what he does want, for he swears he will not leave the gate till he has seen you."

"Seen me? Halidame! he shall see me, here and at Launceston too, if he likes. Bring him in."

"Fegs, Sir Richard, we are half afeard. With your good leave—"

"Hillo, Tony," cried Amyas, "who was ever afeard yet with Sir Richard's good leave?"

"What, has the fellow a tail or horns?"

"Massy no: but I be afeard of treason for your honor; for the fellow is pinked all over in heathen patterns, and as brown as a filbert; and a tall roog, a very strong roog, sir, and a foreigner too, and a mighty staff with him. I expect him to be a manner of Jesuit, or wild Irish, sir; and indeed the grooms have no stomach to handle him, nor the dogs neither, or he had been under the pump before now, for they that saw him coming up the hill swear that he had fire coming out of his mouth."

"Fire out of his mouth?" said Sir Richard. "The men are drunk."

"Pinked all over? He must be a sailor," said Amyas; "let me out and see the fellow, and if he needs putting forth—"

"Why, I dare say he is not so big but what he will go into thy pocket. So go, lad, while I finish my writing."

Amyas went out, and at the back door, leaning on his staff, stood a tall, raw-boned, ragged man, "pinked all over," as the steward had said.

"Hillo, lad!" quoth Amyas. "Before we come to talk, thou wilt please to lay down that Plymouth cloak of thine." And he pointed to the cudgel, which among West-country mariners usually bore that name.

"I'll warrant," said the old steward, "that where he found his cloak he found purse not far off."

"But not hose or doublet; so the magical virtue of his staff has not helped him much. But put down thy staff, man, and speak like a Christian, if thou be one."

"I am a Christian, though I look like a heathen; and no rogue, though a masterless man, alas! But I want nothing, deserving nothing, and only ask to speak with Sir Richard, before I go on my way."

There was something stately and yet humble about the man's tone and manner which attracted Amyas, and he asked more gently where he was going and whence he came.

"From Padstow Port, sir, to Clovelly town, to see my old mother, if indeed she be yet alive, which God knoweth."

"Clovally man! why didn't thee say thee was Clovally man?" asked all the grooms at once, to whom a West-countryman was of course a brother. The old steward asked—

"What's thy mother's name, then?"

"Susan Yeo."

"What, that lived under the archway?" asked a groom.

"Lived?" said the man.

"Iss, sure; her died three days since, so we heard, poor soul."

The man stood quite silent and unmoved for a minute or two; and then said quietly to himself, in Spanish, "That which is, is best."

"You speak Spanish?" asked Amyas, more and more interested.

"I had need to do so, young sir; I have been five years in the Spanish Main, and only set foot on shore two days ago; and if you will let me have speech of Sir Richard, I will tell him that at which both the ears of him that heareth it shall tingle; and if not, I can but go on to Mr. Cary of Clovelly,

if he be yet alive, and there disburden my soul; but I would sooner have spoken with one that is a mariner like to myself."

"And you shall," said Amyas. "Steward, we will have this man in; for all his rags, he is a man of wit." And he led him in.

"I only hope he ben't one of those Popish murderers," said the old steward, keeping at a safe distance from him as they entered the hall.

"Popish, old master? There's little fear of my being that. Look here!" And drawing back his rags, he showed a ghastly scar, which encircled his wrist and wound round and up his fore-arm.

"I got that on the rack," said he, quietly, "in the Inquisition at Lima."

"O Father! Father! why didn't you tell us that you were a poor Christian?" asked the penitent steward.

"Because I have had naught but my deserts; and but a taste of them either, as the Lord knoweth who delivered me; and I wasn't going to make myself a beggar and a show on their account."

"By heaven, you are a brave fellow!" said Amyas. "Come along straight to Sir Richard's room."

So in they went, where Sir Richard sat in his library among books, despatches, state-papers, and warrants; for though he was not yet, as in after times (after the fashion of those days) admiral, general, member of parliament, privy councillor, justice of the peace, and so forth, all at once, yet there were few great men with whom he did not correspond, or great matters with which he was not cognizant.

"Hillo, Amyas, have you bound the wild man already, and brought him in to swear allegiance?"

But before Amyas could answer, the man looked earnestly on him—"Amyas?" said he; "is that your name, sir?"

"Amyas Leigh is my name, at your service, good fellow."

"Of Burrough by Bideford?"

"Why then? What do you know of me?"

"Oh sir, sir! young brains and happy ones have short memories; but old and sad brains too long ones often! Do you mind one that was with Mr. Oxenham, sir? A swearing reprobate he was, God forgive him, and hath forgiven him too, for His dear Son's sake—one, sir, that gave you a horn, a toy with a chart on it?"

"Soul alive!" cried Amyas, catching him by the hand; "and are you he? The horn? why, I have it still, and will keep it to my dying day, too. But where is Mr. Oxenham?"

"Yes, my good fellow, where is Mr. Oxenham?" asked Sir Richard, rising. "You are somewhat over-hasty in welcoming your old acquaintance, Amyas, before we have heard from him whether he can give honest account of himself and of his captain. For there is more than one way by which sailors may come home without their captains, as poor Mr. Barker of Bristol found to his cost. God grant that there may have been no such traitorous dealing here."

"Sir Richard Grenville, if I had been a guilty man to my noble captain, as I have to God, I had not come here this day to you, from whom villainy has never found favor, nor ever will; for I know your conditions well, sir; and trust in the Lord, that if you will be pleased to hear me, you shall know mine."

"Thou art a well-spoken knave. We shall see."

"My dear sir," said Amyas, in a whisper, "I will warrant this man guiltless."

"I verily believe him to be; but this is too serious a matter to be left on guess. If he will be sworn—"

Whereon the man, humbly enough, said, that if it would please Sir Richard, he would rather not be sworn.

"But it does not please me, rascal! Did I not warn thee, Amyas?"

"Sir," said the man, proudly, "God forbid that my word should not be as good as my oath: but it is against my conscience to be sworn."

"What have we here? some fantastical Anabaptist, who is wiser than his teachers."

"My conscience, sir—"

"The devil take it and thee! I never heard a man yet begin to prate of his conscience, but I knew that he was about to do something more than ordinarily cruel or false."

"Sir," said the man, coolly enough, "do you sit here to judge me according to law, and yet contrary to the law swear profane oaths, for which a fine is provided?"

Amyas expected an explosion: but Sir Richard pulled a shilling out and put it on the table. "There—my fine is paid, sirrah, to the poor of Kilkhampton: but hearken thou all the same. If thou wilt not speak an oath, thou shalt speak on compulsion; for to Launceston gaol thou goest, there to answer for Mr. Oxenham's death, on suspicion whereof, and of mutiny causing it, I will attach thee and every soul of his crew that comes home. We have lost too many gallant captains of late by treachery of their crews, and he that will not clear himself on oath, must be held for guilty, and self-condemned."

"My good fellow," said Amyas, who could not give up his belief in the man's honesty, "why, for such fantastical scruples, peril not only your life, but your honor, and Mr. Oxenham's also? For if you be examined by question, you may be forced by torment to say that which is not true."

"Little fear of that, young sir!" answered he, with a grim smile; "I have had too much of the rack already, and the strappado too, to care much what man can do unto me. I would heartily that I thought it lawful to be sworn: but not so thinking, I can but submit to the cruelty of man; though I did expect more merciful things, as a most miserable and wrecked mariner, at the hands of one who hath himself seen God's ways in the sea, and His wonders in the great deep. Sir Richard Grenville, if you will hear my story, may God avenge on my head all my sins from my youth up until now, and cut me off from the blood of Christ, and, if it were possible, from the number of His elect, if I tell you one whit more or less than truth; and if not, I commend myself into the hands of God."

Sir Richard smiled. "Well, thou art a brave ass, and valiant, though an ass manifest. Dost thou not see, fellow, how thou hast sworn a ten-times bigger oath than ever I should have asked of thee? But this is the way with your Anabaptists, who by their very hatred of forms and ceremonies, show of how much account they think them, and then bind themselves out of their own fantastical self-will with far heavier burdens than ever the lawful authorities have laid on them for the sake of the commonweal. But what do they care for the commonweal, as long as they can save, as they fancy, each man his own dirty soul for himself? However, thou art sworn now with a vengeance; go on with thy tale: and first, who art thou, and whence?"

"Well, sir," said the man, quite unmoved by this last explosion; "my name is Salvation Yeo, born in Clovelly Street, in the year 1526, where my father exercised the mystery of a barber surgeon, and a preacher of the people since called Anabaptists, for which I return humble thanks to God."

Sir Richard.—Fie! thou naughty knave; return thanks that thy father was an ass?

Yeo.—Nay, but because he was a barber surgeon; for I myself learnt a touch of that trade, and thereby saved my life, as I will tell presently. And I do think that a good mariner ought to have all knowledge of carnal and worldly cunning, even to tailoring and shoemaking, that he may be able to turn his hand to whatsoever may hap.

Sir Richard.—Well spoken, fellow: but let us have thy text without thy comments. Forwards!

Yeo.—Well, sir. I was bred to the sea from my youth, and was with Captain Hawkins in his three voyages, which he made to Guinea for negro slaves, and thence to the West Indies.

Sir Richard.—Then thrice thou wentest to a bad end, though Captain Hawkins be my good friend; and the last time to a bad end thou camest.

Yeo.—No denying that last, your worship: but as for the former, I doubt—about the unlawfulness, I mean; being the negroes are of the children of Ham, who are cursed and reprobate, as Scripture declares, and their blackness testifies, being Satan's own livery; among whom therefore there can be none of the elect, wherefore the elect are not required to treat them as brethren.

Sir Richard.—What a plague of a pragmatical sea-lawyer have we here? And I doubt not, thou hypocrite, that though thou wilt call the negroes' black skin Satan's livery, when it serves thy turn to

steal them, thou wilt find out sables to be Heaven's livery every Sunday, and up with a godly howl unless a parson shall preach in a black gown, Geneva fashion. Out upon thee! Go on with thy tale, lest thou finish thy sermon at Launceston after all.

Yeo.—The Lord's people were always a reviled people and a persecuted people: but I will go forward, sir; for Heaven forbid but that I should declare what God has done for me. For till lately, from my youth up, I was given over to all wretchlessness and unclean living, and was by nature a child of the devil, and to every good work reprobate, even as others.

Sir Richard.—Hark to his "even as others"! Thou new-whelped Pharisee, canst not confess thine own villainies without making out others as bad as thyself, and so thyself no worse than others? I only hope that thou hast shown none of thy devil's doings to Mr. Oxenham.

Yeo.—On the word of a Christian man, sir, as I said before, I kept true faith with him, and would have been a better friend to him, sir, what is more, than ever he was to himself.

Sir Richard.—Alas! that might easily be.

Yeo.—I think, sir, and will make good against any man, that Mr. Oxenham was a noble and valiant gentleman; true of his word, stout of his sword, skilful by sea and land, and worthy to have been Lord High Admiral of England (saving your worship's presence), but that through two great sins, wrath and avarice, he was cast away miserably or ever his soul was brought to the knowledge of the truth. Ah, sir, he was a captain worth sailing under!

And Yeo heaved a deep sigh.

Sir Richard.—Steady, steady, good fellow! If thou wouldst quit preaching, thou art no fool after all. But tell us the story without more bush-beating.

So at last Yeo settled himself to his tale:—

"Well, sirs, I went, as Mr. Leigh knows, to Nombre de Dios, with Mr. Drake and Mr. Oxenham, in 1572, where what we saw and did, your worship, I suppose, knows as well as I; and there was, as you've heard maybe, a covenant between Mr. Oxenham and Mr. Drake to sail the South Seas together, which they made, your worship, in my hearing, under the tree over Panama. For when Mr. Drake came down from the tree, after seeing the sea afar off, Mr. Oxenham and I went up and saw it too; and when we came down, Drake says, 'John, I have made a vow to God that I will sail that water, if I live and God gives me grace;' which he had done, sir, upon his bended knees, like a godly man as he always was, and would I had taken after him! and Mr. O. says, 'I am with you, Drake, to live or die, and I think I know some one there already, so we shall not be quite among strangers;' and laughed withal. Well, sirs, that voyage, as you know, never came off, because Captain Drake was fighting in Ireland; so Mr. Oxenham, who must be up and doing, sailed for himself, and I, who loved him, God knows, like a brother (saving the difference in our ranks), helped him to get the crew together, and went as his gunner. That was in 1575; as you know, he had a 140-ton ship, sir, and seventy men out of Plymouth and Fowey and Dartmouth, and many of them old hands of Drake's, beside a dozen or so from Bideford that I picked up when I saw young Master here."

"Thank God that you did not pick me up too."

"Amen, amen!" said Yeo, clasping his hands on his breast. "Those seventy men, sir,—seventy gallant men, sir, with every one of them an immortal soul within him,—where are they now? Gone, like the spray!" And he swept his hands abroad with a wild and solemn gesture. "And their blood is upon my head!"

Both Sir Richard and Amyas began to suspect that the man's brain was not altogether sound.

"God forbid, my man," said the knight, kindly.

"Thirteen men I persuaded to join in Bideford town, beside William Penberthy of Marazion, my good comrade. And what if it be said to me at the day of judgment, 'Salvation Yeo, where are those fourteen whom thou didst tempt to their deaths by covetousness and lust of gold?' Not that I was alone in my sin, if the truth must be told. For all the way out Mr. Oxenham was making loud speech, after his pleasant way, that he would make all their fortunes, and take them to such a Paradise, that

they should have no lust to come home again. And I—God knows why—for every one boast of his would make two, even to lying and empty fables, and anything to keep up the men's hearts. For I had really persuaded myself that we should all find treasures beyond Solomon his temple, and Mr. Oxenham would surely show us how to conquer some golden city or discover some island all made of precious stones. And one day, as the captain and I were talking after our fashion, I said, 'And you shall be our king, captain.' To which he, 'If I be, I shall not be long without a queen, and that no Indian one either.' And after that he often jested about the Spanish ladies, saying that none could show us the way to their hearts better than he. Which speeches I took no count of then, sirs: but after I minded them, whether I would or not. Well, sirs, we came to the shore of New Spain, near to the old place—that's Nombre de Dios; and there Mr. Oxenham went ashore into the woods with a boat's crew, to find the negroes who helped us three years before. Those are the Cimaroons, gentles, negro slaves who have fled from those devils incarnate, their Spanish masters, and live wild, like the beasts that perish; men of great stature, sirs, and fierce as wolves in the onslaught, but poor jabbering mazed fellows if they be but a bit dismayed: and have many Indian women with them, who take to these negroes a deal better than to their own kin, which breeds war enough, as you may guess.

"Well, sirs, after three days the captain comes back, looking heavy enough, and says, 'We played our trick once too often, when we played it once. There is no chance of stopping another reco (that is, a mule-train, sirs) now. The Cimaroons say that since our last visit they never move without plenty of soldiers, two hundred shot at least. Therefore,' he said, 'my gallants, we must either return empty-handed from this, the very market and treasury of the whole Indies, or do such a deed as men never did before, which I shall like all the better for that very reason.' And we, asking his meaning, 'Why,' he said, 'if Drake will not sail the South Seas, we will;' adding profanely that Drake was like Moses, who beheld the promised land afar; but he was Joshua, who would enter into it, and smite the inhabitants thereof. And, for our confirmation, showed me and the rest the superscription of a letter: and said, 'How I came by this is none of your business: but I have had it in my bosom ever since I left Plymouth; and I tell you now, what I forbore to tell you at first, that the South Seas have been my mark all along! such news have I herein of plate-ships, and gold-ships, and what not, which will come up from Quito and Lima this very month, all which, with the pearls of the Gulf of Panama, and other wealth unspeakable, will be ours, if we have but true English hearts within us.'

"At which, gentles, we were like madmen for lust of that gold, and cheerfully undertook a toil incredible; for first we run our ship aground in a great wood which grew in the very sea itself, and then took out her masts, and covered her in boughs, with her four cast pieces of great ordnance (of which more hereafter), and leaving no man in her, started for the South Seas across the neck of Panama, with two small pieces of ordnance and our culverins, and good store of victuals, and with us six of those negroes for a guide, and so twelve leagues to a river which runs into the South Sea.

"And there, having cut wood, we made a pinnace (and work enough we had at it) of five-and-forty foot in the keel; and in her down the stream, and to the Isle of Pearls in the Gulf of Panama."

"Into the South Sea? Impossible!" said Sir Richard. "Have a care what you say, my man; for there is that about you which would make me sorry to find you out a liar."

"Impossible or not, liar or none, we went there, sir."

"Question him, Amyas, lest he turn out to have been beforehand with you."

The man looked inquiringly at Amyas, who said—

"Well, my man, of the Gulf of Panama I cannot ask you, for I never was inside it, but what other parts of the coast do you know?"

"Every inch, sir, from Cabo San Francisco to Lima; more is my sorrow, for I was a galley-slave there for two years and more."

"You know Lima?"

"I was there three times, worshipful gentlemen, and the last was February come two years; and there I helped lade a great plate-ship, the Cacafuogo,' they called her."

Amyas started. Sir Richard nodded to him gently to be silent, and then—

"And what became of her, my lad?"

"God knows, who knows all, and the devil who freighted her. I broke prison six weeks afterwards, and never heard but that she got safe into Panama."

"You never heard, then, that she was taken?"

"Taken, your worships? Who should take her?"

"Why should not a good English ship take her as well as another?" said Amyas.

"Lord love you, sir; yes, faith, if they had but been there. Many's the time that I thought to myself, as we went alongside, 'Oh, if Captain Drake was but here, well to windward, and our old crew of the "Dragon"!' Ask your pardon, gentles: but how is Captain Drake, if I may make so bold?"

Neither could hold out longer.

"Fellow, fellow!" cried Sir Richard, springing up, "either thou art the cunningest liar that ever earned a halter, or thou hast done a deed the like of which never man adventured. Dost thou not know that Captain Drake took that 'Cacafuogo' and all her freight, in February come two years?"

"Captain Drake! God forgive me, sir; but—Captain Drake in the South Seas? He saw them, sir, from the tree-top over Panama, when I was with him, and I too; but sailed them, sir?—sailed them?"

"Yes, and round the world too," said Amyas, "and I with him; and took that very 'Cacafuogo' off Cape San Francisco, as she came up to Panama."

One glance at the man's face was enough to prove his sincerity. The great stern Anabaptist, who had not winced at the news of his mother's death, dropt right on his knees on the floor, and burst into violent sobs.

"Glory to God! Glory to God! O Lord, I thank thee! Captain Drake in the South Seas! The blood of thy innocents avenged, O Lord! The spoiler spoiled, and the proud robbed; and all they whose hands were mighty have found nothing. Glory, glory! Oh, tell me, sir, did she fight?"

"We gave her three pieces of ordnance only, and struck down her mizzenmast, and then boarded sword in hand, but never had need to strike a blow; and before we left her, one of her own boys had changed her name, and rechristened her the 'Cacaplata.'"

"Glory, glory! Cowards they are, as I told them. I told them they never could stand the Devon mastiffs, and well they flogged me for saying it; but they could not stop my mouth. O sir, tell me, did you get the ship that came up after her?"

"What was that?"

"A long race-ship, sir, from Guayaquil, with an old gentleman on board,—Don Francisco de Xararte was his name, and by token, he had a gold falcon hanging to a chain round his neck, and a green stone in the breast of it. I saw it as we rowed him aboard. O tell me, sir, tell me for the love of God, did you take that ship?"

"We did take that ship, and the jewel too, and her majesty has it at this very hour."

"Then tell me, sir," said he slowly, as if he dreaded an answer; "tell me, sir, and oh, try and mind—was there a little maid aboard with the old gentleman?"

"A little maid? Let me think. No; I saw none."

The man settled his features again sadly.

"I thought not. I never saw her come aboard. Still I hoped, like; I hoped. Alackaday! God help me, Salvation Yeo!"

"What have you to do with this little maid, then, good fellow!" asked Grenville.

"Ah, sir, before I tell you that, I must go back and finish the story of Mr. Oxenham, if you will believe me enough to hear it."

"I do believe thee, good fellow, and honor thee too."

"Then, sir, I can speak with a free tongue. Where was I?"

"Where was he, Amyas?"

"At the Isle of Pearls."

"And yet, O gentles, tell me first, how Captain Drake came into the South Seas:—over the neck, as we did?"

"Through the Straits, good fellow, like any Spaniard: but go on with thy story, and thou shalt have Mr. Leigh's after."

"Through the Straits! O glory! But I'll tell my tale. Well, sirs both—To the Island of Pearls we came, we and some of the negroes. We found many huts, and Indians fishing for pearls, and also a fair house, with porches; but no Spaniard therein, save one man; at which Mr. Oxenham was like a man transported, and fell on that Spaniard, crying, 'Perro, where is your mistress? Where is the bark from Lima?' To which he boldly enough, 'What was his mistress to the Englishman?' But Mr. O. threatened to twine a cord round his head till his eyes burst out; and the Spaniard, being terrified, said that the ship from Lima was expected in a fortnight's time. So for ten days we lay quiet, letting neither negro nor Spaniard leave the island, and took good store of pearls, feeding sumptuously on wild cattle and hogs until the tenth day, when there came by a small bark; her we took, and found her from Quito, and on board 60,000 pezos of gold and other store. With which if we had been content, gentlemen, all had gone well. And some were willing to go back at once, having both treasure and pearls in plenty; but Mr. O., he waxed right mad, and swore to slay any one who made that motion again, assuring us that the Lima ship of which he had news was far greater and richer, and would make princes of us all; which bark came in sight on the sixteenth day, and was taken without shot or slaughter. The taking of which bark, I verily believe, was the ruin of every mother's son of us."

And being asked why, he answered, "First, because of the discontent which was bred thereby; for on board was found no gold, but only 100,000 pezos of silver."

Sir Richard Grenville.—Thou greedy fellow; and was not that enough to stay your stomachs?

Yeo answered that he would to God it had been; and that, moreover, the weight of that silver was afterwards a hindrance to them, and fresh cause of discontent, as he would afterwards declare. "So that it had been well for us, sirs, if we had left it behind, as Mr. Drake left his three years before, and carried away the gold only. In which I do see the evident hand of God, and His just punishment for our greediness of gain; who caused Mr. Oxenham, by whom we had hoped to attain great wealth, to be a snare to us, and a cause of utter ruin."

"Do you think, then," said Sir Richard, "that Mr. Oxenham deceived you wilfully?"

"I will never believe that, sir: Mr. Oxenham had his private reasons for waiting for that ship, for the sake of one on board, whose face would that he had never seen, though he saw it then, as I fear, not for the first time by many a one." And so was silent.

"Come," said both his hearers, "you have brought us thus far, and you must go on."

"Gentlemen, I have concealed this matter from all men, both on my voyage home and since; and I hope you will be secret in the matter, for the honor of my noble captain, and the comfort of his friends who are alive. For I think it shame to publish harm of a gallant gentleman, and of an ancient and worshipful family, and to me a true and kind captain, when what is done cannot be undone, and least said soonest mended. Neither now would I have spoken of it, but that I was inwardly moved to it for the sake of that young gentleman there" (looking at Amyas), "that he might be warned in time of God's wrath against the crying sin of adultery, and flee youthful lusts, which war against the soul."

"Thou hast done wisely enough, then," said Sir Richard; "and look to it if I do not reward thee: but the young gentleman here, thank God, needs no such warnings, having got them already both by precept and example, where thou and poor Oxenham might have had them also."

"You mean Captain Drake, your worship?"

"I do, sirrah. If all men were as clean livers as he, the world would be spared one half the tears that are shed in it."

"Amen, sir. At least there would have been many a tear spared to us and ours. For—as all must out—in that bark of Lima he took a young lady, as fair as the sunshine, sir, and seemingly about two or three-and-twenty years of age, having with her a tall young lad of sixteen, and a little girl, a

marvellously pretty child, of about a six or seven. And the lady herself was of an excellent beauty, like a whale's tooth for whiteness, so that all the crew wondered at her, and could not be satisfied with looking upon her. And, gentlemen, this was strange, that the lady seemed in no wise afraid or mournful, and bid her little girl fear naught, as did also Mr. Oxenham: but the lad kept a very sour countenance, and the more when he saw the lady and Mr. Oxenham speaking together apart.

"Well, sir, after this good luck we were minded to have gone straight back to the river whence we came, and so home to England with all speed. But Mr. Oxenham persuaded us to return to the island, and get a few more pearls. To which foolishness (which after caused the mishap) I verily believe he was moved by the instigation of the devil and of that lady. For as we were about to go ashore, I, going down into the cabin of the prize, saw Mr. Oxenham and that lady making great cheer of each other with, 'My life,' and 'My king,' and 'Light of my eyes,' and such toys; and being bidden by Mr. Oxenham to fetch out the lady's mails, and take them ashore, heard how the two laughed together about the old ape of Panama (which ape, or devil rather, I saw afterwards to my cost), and also how she said that she had been dead for five years, and now that Mr. Oxenham was come, she was alive again, and so forth.

"Mr. Oxenham bade take the little maid ashore, kissing her and playing with her, and saying to the lady, 'What is yours is mine, and what is mine is yours.' And she asking whether the lad should come ashore, he answered, 'He is neither yours nor mine; let the spawn of Beelzebub stay on shore.' After which I, coming on deck again, stumbled over that very lad, upon the hatchway ladder, who bore so black and despiteful a face, that I verily believe he had overheard their speech, and so thrust him upon deck; and going below again, told Mr. Oxenham what I thought, and said that it were better to put a dagger into him at once, professing to be ready so to do. For which grievous sin, seeing that it was committed in my unregenerate days, I hope I have obtained the grace of forgiveness, as I have that of hearty repentance. But the lady cried out, 'Though he be none of mine, I have sin enough already on my soul;' and so laid her hand on Mr. Oxenham's mouth, entreating pitifully. And Mr. Oxenham answered laughing, when she would let him, 'What care we? let the young monkey go and howl to the old one;' and so went ashore with the lady to that house, whence for three days he never came forth, and would have remained longer, but that the men, finding but few pearls, and being wearied with the watching and warding so many Spaniards, and negroes came clamoring to him, and swore that they would return or leave him there with the lady. So all went on board the pinnace again, every one in ill humor with the captain, and he with them.

"Well, sirs, we came back to the mouth of the river, and there began our troubles; for the negroes, as soon as we were on shore, called on Mr. Oxenham to fulfil the bargain he had made with them. And now it came out (what few of us knew till then) that he had agreed with the Cimaroons that they should have all the prisoners which were taken, save the gold. And he, though loath, was about to give up the Spaniards to them, near forty in all, supposing that they intended to use them as slaves: but as we all stood talking, one of the Spaniards, understanding what was forward, threw himself on his knees before Mr. Oxenham, and shrieking like a madman, entreated not to be given up into the hands of 'those devils,' said he, 'who never take a Spanish prisoner, but they roast him alive, and then eat his heart among them.' We asked the negroes if this was possible? To which some answered, What was that to us? But others said boldly, that it was true enough, and that revenge made the best sauce, and nothing was so sweet as Spanish blood; and one, pointing to the lady, said such foul and devilish things as I should be ashamed either for me to speak, or you to hear. At this we were like men amazed for very horror; and Mr. Oxenham said, 'You incarnate fiends, if you had taken these fellows for slaves, it had been fair enough; for you were once slaves to them, and I doubt not cruelly used enough: but as for this abomination,' says he, 'God do so to me, and more also, if I let one of them come into your murderous hands.' So there was a great quarrel; but Mr. Oxenham stoutly bade put the prisoners on board the ships again, and so let the prizes go, taking with him only the treasure, and the lady and the little maid. And so the lad went on to Panama, God's wrath having gone out against us.

"Well, sirs, the Cimaroons after that went away from us, swearing revenge (for which we cared little enough), and we rowed up the river to a place where three streams met, and then up the least of the three, some four days' journey, till it grew all shoal and swift; and there we hauled the pinnace upon the sands, and Mr. Oxenham asked the men whether they were willing to carry the gold and silver over the mountains to the North Sea. Some of them at first were loath to do it, and I and others advised that we should leave the plate behind, and take the gold only, for it would have cost us three or four journeys at the least. But Mr. Oxenham promised every man 100 pezos of silver over and above his wages, which made them content enough, and we were all to start the morrow morning. But, sirs, that night, as God had ordained, came a mishap by some rash speeches of Mr. Oxenham's, which threw all abroad again; for when we had carried the treasure about half a league inland, and hidden it away in a house which we made of boughs, Mr. O. being always full of that his fair lady, spoke to me and William Penberthy of Marazion, my good comrade, and a few more, saying, 'That we had no need to return to England, seeing that we were already in the very garden of Eden, and wanted for nothing, but could live without labor or toil; and that it was better, when we got over to the North Sea, to go and seek out some fair island, and there dwell in joy and pleasure till our lives' end. And we two,' he said, 'will be king and queen, and you, whom I can trust, my officers; and for servants we will have the Indians, who, I warrant, will be more fain to serve honest and merry masters like us than those Spanish devils,' and much more of the like; which words I liked well,—my mind, alas! being given altogether to carnal pleasure and vanity,—as did William Penberthy, my good comrade, on whom I trust God has had mercy. But the rest, sirs, took the matter all across, and began murmuring against the captain, saying that poor honest mariners like them had always the labor and the pain, while he took his delight with his lady; and that they would have at least one merry night before they were slain by the Cimaroons, or eaten by panthers and lagartos; and so got out of the pinnace two great skins of Canary wine, which were taken in the Lima prize, and sat themselves down to drink. Moreover, there were in the pinnace a great sight of hens, which came from the same prize, by which Mr. O. set great store, keeping them for the lady and the little maid; and falling upon these, the men began to blaspheme, saying, 'What a plague had the captain to fill the boat with dirty live lumber for that giglet's sake? They had a better right to a good supper than ever she had, and might fast awhile to cool her hot blood;' and so cooked and ate those hens, plucking them on board the pinnace, and letting the feathers fall into the stream. But when William Penberthy, my good comrade, saw the feathers floating away down, he asked them if they were mad, to lay a trail by which the Spaniards would surely track them out, if they came after them, as without doubt they would. But they laughed him to scorn, and said that no Spanish cur dared follow on the heels of true English mastiffs as they were, and other boastful speeches; and at last, being heated with wine, began afresh to murmur at the captain. And one speaking of his counsel about the island, the rest altogether took it amiss and out of the way; and some sprang up crying treason, and others that he meant to defraud them of the plate which he had promised, and others that he meant to desert them in a strange land, and so forth, till Mr. O., hearing the hubbub, came out to them from the house, when they reviled him foully, swearing that he meant to cheat them; and one Edward Stiles, a Wapping man, mad with drink, dared to say that he was a fool for not giving up the prisoners to the negroes, and what was it to him if the lady roasted? the negroes should have her yet; and drawing his sword, ran upon the captain: for which I was about to strike him through the body; but the captain, not caring to waste steel on such a ribald, with his fist caught him such a buffet behind the ear, that he fell down stark dead, and all the rest stood amazed. Then Mr. Oxenham called out, 'All honest men who know me, and can trust me, stand by your lawful captain against these ruffians.' Whereon, sirs, I, and Penberthy my good comrade, and four Plymouth men, who had sailed with Mr. O. in Mr. Drake's ship, and knew his trusty and valiant conditions, came over to him, and swore before God to stand by him and the lady. Then said Mr. O. to the rest, 'Will you carry this treasure, knaves, or will you not? Give me an answer here.' And they refused, unless he would, before they started, give each man his share. So Mr. O. waxed very mad,

and swore that he would never be served by men who did not trust him, and so went in again; and that night was spent in great disquiet, I and those five others keeping watch about the house of boughs till the rest fell asleep, in their drink. And next morning, when the wine was gone out of them, Mr. O. asked them whether they would go to the hills with him, and find those negroes, and persuade them after all to carry the treasure. To which they agreed after awhile, thinking that so they should save themselves labor; and went off with Mr. Oxenham, leaving us six who had stood by him to watch the lady and the treasure, after he had taken an oath of us that we would deal justly and obediently by him and by her, which God knows, gentlemen, we did. So he parted with much weeping and wailing of the lady, and was gone seven days; and all that time we kept that lady faithfully and honestly, bringing her the best we could find, and serving her upon our bended knees, both for her admirable beauty, and for her excellent conditions, for she was certainly of some noble kin, and courteous, and without fear, as if she had been a very princess. But she kept always within the house, which the little maid (God bless her!) did not, but soon learned to play with us and we with her, so that we made great cheer of her, gentlemen, sailor fashion—for you know we must always have our minions aboard to pet and amuse us—maybe a monkey, or a little dog, or a singing bird, ay, or mice and spiders, if we have nothing better to play withal. And she was wonderful sharp, sirs, was the little maid, and picked up her English from us fast, calling us jolly mariners, which I doubt but she has forgotten by now, but I hope in God it be not so;" and therewith the good fellow began wiping his eyes.

"Well, sir, on the seventh day we six were down by the pinnace clearing her out, and the little maid with us gathering of flowers, and William Penberthy fishing on the bank, about a hundred yards below, when on a sudden he leaps up and runs toward us, crying, 'Here come our hens' feathers back again with a vengeance!' and so bade catch up the little maid, and run for the house, for the Spaniards were upon us.

"Which was too true; for before we could win the house, there were full eighty shot at our heels, but could not overtake us; nevertheless, some of them stopping, fixed their calivers and let fly, killing one of the Plymouth men. The rest of us escaped to the house, and catching up the lady, fled forth, not knowing whither we went, while the Spaniards, finding the house and treasure, pursued us no farther.

"For all that day and the next we wandered in great misery, the lady weeping continually, and calling for Mr. Oxenham most piteously, and the little maid likewise, till with much ado we found the track of our comrades, and went up that as best we might: but at nightfall, by good hap, we met the whole crew coming back, and with them 200 negroes or more, with bows and arrows. At which sight was great joy and embracing, and it was a strange thing, sirs, to see the lady; for before that she was altogether desperate: and yet she was now a very lioness, as soon as she had got her love again; and prayed him earnestly not to care for that gold, but to go forward to the North Sea, vowing to him in my hearing that she cared no more for poverty than she had cared for her good name, and then—they being a little apart from the rest—pointed round to the green forest, and said in Spanish—which I suppose they knew not that I understood,—'See, all round us is Paradise. Were it not enough for you and me to stay here forever, and let them take the gold or leave it as they will?'

"To which Mr. Oxenham—'Those who lived in Paradise had not sinned as we have, and would never have grown old or sick, as we shall.'

"And she—'If we do that, there are poisons enough in these woods, by which we may die in each other's arms, as would to Heaven we had died seven years agone!'

"But he—'No, no, my life. It stands upon my honor both to fulfil my bond with these men, whom I have brought hither, and to take home to England at least something of my prize as a proof of my own valor.'

"Then she smiling—'Am I not prize enough, and proof enough?' But he would not be so tempted, and turning to us offered us the half of that treasure, if we would go back with him, and rescue it from the Spaniard. At which the lady wept and wailed much; but I took upon myself to comfort her, though I was but a simple mariner, telling her that it stood upon Mr. Oxenham's honor;

and that in England nothing was esteemed so foul as cowardice, or breaking word and troth betwixt man and man; and that better was it for him to die seven times by the Spaniards, than to face at home the scorn of all who sailed the seas. So, after much ado, back they went again; I and Penberthy, and the three Plymouth men which escaped from the pinnace, keeping the lady as before.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.