

Fletcher Joseph Smith

In the Days of Drake



Joseph Fletcher
In the Days of Drake

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=23149243

In the Days of Drake:

Содержание

INTRODUCTION	4
IN THE DAYS OF DRAKE	7
CHAPTER I.	7
CHAPTER II.	14
CHAPTER III.	22
CHAPTER IV.	29
CHAPTER V.	38
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	42

Fletcher J. S.

In the Days of Drake

INTRODUCTION

In the whole history of the English people there is no period so absolutely heroic, so full of enthralling interest, as that in which the might of England made itself apparent by land and sea – the period which saw good Queen Bess mistress of English hearts and Englishmen and sovereign of the great beginnings which have come to such a magnificent fruition under Victoria. That was indeed a golden time – an age of great venture and enterprise – a period wherein men’s hearts were set on personal valor and bravery – the day of great deeds and of courage most marvelous. To write down a catalogue of all the names that then were glorious, to make a list of all the daring deeds that then were done – this were an impossible task for the most painstaking of statisticians, the most conscientious of historians and chroniclers. For there were men in those days who achieved world-wide fame, such as Drake, Frobisher, Hawkins, Raleigh, Grenville, and Gilbert – but there were also other men, the rough “sea-dogs” of that time, whose names have never been remembered, or even recorded, and who were yet heroes of a quality not inferior to their commanders and leaders. All men of that age

whose calling led them to adventure and enterprise could scarcely fail to find opportunity for heroism, self-denial, and sacrifice, and thus the Elizabethan Englishman of whatever station stands out to us of these later days as a great figure – the type and emblem of the England that was to be. It is this fact that makes the Elizabethan period so fascinating and so full of romance and glamour. Whenever we call it up before our mind's eye it is surrounded for us with all those qualities which go toward making a great picture. There is the awful feud 'twixt England, the modern spirit making toward progress and civilization, and Spain, the well-nigh worn-out retrogressive force that would dam the river of human thought. There is the spectacle of the Armada, baffled and beaten, and of the English war-ships under men like Drake and Frobisher, dropping like avenging angels upon some Spanish port and working havoc on the Spanish treasure galleons. There, too, are the figures of men like Grenville and Raleigh, born adventurers, leaders of men, who knew how to die as bravely and fearlessly as they had lived. And beyond all the glory and adventure there looms in the background of the picture the black cruelties of Spain, practiced in the dark corners of the earth, against which the English spirit of that day never ceased from protesting with speech and sword. It was well for the world that in that fierce contest England triumphed. Had Spain succeeded in perpetuating its hellish system, how different would life in east and west have been! But it was God's will that not Spain but England should win – and so to-day we find

the English-speaking peoples of the world in Great Britain and America, in Australia and Africa, free, enlightened, full of great purpose and noble aims, working out in very truth their own salvation. It is when one comes to think of this, that one first realizes the immeasurable thanks due to the heroes, known and unknown, of the Elizabethan age. Whether they stand high on the scroll of fame or lie forgotten in some quiet graveyard or in the vast oceans which they crossed, it was they, and they only, who laid the great foundations of the England and the United States of to-day.

J. S. FLETCHER.

IN THE DAYS OF DRAKE

CHAPTER I. OF MY HOME, FRIENDS, AND SURROUNDINGS

Now that I am an old man, and have some leisure, which formerly I did not enjoy, I am often minded to write down my memories of that surprising and remarkable adventure of mine, which began in the year 1578, and came to an end, by God's mercy, two years later.

There are more reasons than one why I should engage in this task. Every Christmas brings a houseful of grandchildren and young folks about me, and they, though they have heard it a dozen times already, are never tired of hearing me re-tell the story which seems to them so wonderful.

Then, again, I am often visited by folk who have heard of my travels, and would fain have particulars of them from my own lips; so that oftentimes I have to tell my tale, or part of it, a dozen times in the year. Nay, upon one occasion I even told it to the King's majesty, which was when I went up to London on some tiresome law business. Sir Ralph Wood, who is my near neighbor and a Parliament man, had mentioned me to the King, and so I

had to go to Whitehall and tell my story before the court, which was a hard matter for a plain-spoken country gentleman, as you may well believe.

Now all these matters have oft prompted me to write down my story, so that when any visitor of mine might ask me for it, I could satisfy him without trouble to myself, by simply putting the manuscript into his hand and bidding him read what I had there written. But until this present time I have never seemed to have opportunity such as I desired, for my duties as magistrate and church-warden have been neither light nor unimportant. Now that I have resigned them to younger hands, I have leisure time of my own, and therefore I shall now proceed to carry out the intention which has been in my mind for many years.

I was born at York, in the year 1558. My father, Richard Salkeld, was the youngest son of Oliver Salkeld, lord-of-the-manor of Beehcot-on-the-Wold, and he practiced in York as an attorney. Whether he did well or ill in this calling I know not, for at the early age of six years I was left an orphan. My father being seized by a fever, my mother devoted herself to nursing him, which was a right and proper thing to do; but the consequence was disastrous, for she also contracted the disease, and they both died, leaving me alone in the world.

However, I was not long left in this sad condition, for there presently appeared my uncle, Sir Thurstan Salkeld of Beehcot, who settled my father's affairs and took me away with him. I was somewhat afraid of him at first, for he was a good twenty years

older than my father, and wore a grave, severe air. Moreover, he had been knighted by the Queen for his zealous conduct in administering the law. But I presently found him to be exceeding kind of heart, and ere many months were over I had grown fond of him, and of Beechcot. He had never married, and was not likely to, and so to the folks round about his home he now introduced me as his adopted son and heir. And thus things went very pleasantly for me, and, as children will, I soon forgot my early troubles.

I think we had nothing to cause us any vexation or sorrow at Beechcot until Dame Barbara Stapleton and her son Jasper came to share our lot. Jasper was then a lad of my own age, and like me an orphan, and the nephew of Sir Thurstan. His mother, Sir Thurstan's sister, had married Devereux Stapleton, an officer in the Queen's household, and when she was left a widow she returned to Beechcot and quartered herself and her boy on her brother. Thereafter we had trouble one way or another, for Dame Barbara could not a-bear to think that I was preferred before her own boy as Sir Thurstan's heir. Nor did she scruple to tell Sir Thurstan her thoughts on the matter, on one occasion at any rate, for I heard them talking in the great hall when they fancied themselves alone.

"'Tis neither right nor just," said Dame Barbara, "that you should make one nephew your son and heir to the exclusion of the other. What! is not Jasper as much your own flesh and blood as Humphrey?"

"You forget that Humphrey is a Salkeld in name as well as in blood," said Sir Thurstan. "If the lad's father, my poor brother Richard, had lived, he would have succeeded me as lord of Beechcot. Therefore, 'tis but right that Dick's boy should step into his father's place."

"To the hurt of my poor Jasper!" sighed Dame Barbara.

"Jasper is a Stapleton," answered Sir Thurstan. "However, sister, I will do what is right as regards your lad. I will charge myself with the cost of his education and training, and will give him a start in life, and maybe leave him a goodly sum of money when I die. Therefore, make your mind easy on that point."

But I knew, though I was then but a lad, that she would never give over fretting herself at the thought that I was to be lord of all the broad acres and wide moors of Beechcot, and that Jasper would be but a landless man. And so, though she never dare flout or oppress me in any way, for fear of Sir Thurstan's displeasure, she, without being openly unfavorable, wasted no love on me, and no doubt often wished me out of the way.

At that time Jasper and I contrived to get on very well together. We were but lads, and there was no feeling of rivalry between us. Indeed, I do not think there would ever have been rivalry between us if that foolish woman, my Aunt Barbara, had not begun sowing the seeds of discord in her son's mind. But as soon as he was old enough to understand her, she began talking to him of Beechcot and its glories, pointing out to him the wide park and noble trees, the broad acres filled with golden grain, and the

great moors that stretched away for miles towards the sea; and she said, no doubt, how grand a thing it would be to be lord of so excellent an estate, and how a man might enjoy himself in its possession. Then she told him that I was to have all these things when Sir Thurstan died, and thereafter my cousin Jasper hated me. But he let his hate smoulder within him a good while before he showed it openly. One day, however, when we were out in the park with our bows, he began to talk of the matter, and after a time we got to high words.

“My mother tells me, Humphrey,” said he, “that when my uncle Thurstan dies all these fair lands will pass to thee. That is not right.”

“’Tis our uncle’s land to do with as he pleases,” I answered. “We have naught to do with it. If he likes to leave it to me, what hast thou to say in the matter? ’Tis his affair; not thine, Master Jasper. Besides, I am a Salkeld, and you are not.”

“Is not my mother a Salkeld?” he asked.

“It counts not by the mother,” I answered. “And, moreover, my father would have heired the estate had he lived. But be not down-hearted about it, Jasper, I will see that thou art provided for. When I am lord of Beehcot I will make thee my steward.”

Now, that vexed him sore, and he flew into a violent rage, declaring that he would serve no man, and me last of all; and so violent did he become that he was foolish to look at, and thereupon I laughed at him. At that his rage did but increase, and he presently fitted an arrow to his bow and shot at me meaning,

I doubt not, to put an end to me forever. But by good fortune his aim mischanced, and the arrow did no more than pin me to the tree by which I stood, passing through my clothes between the arm and the body. And at that we were both sobered, and Jasper cooled his hot temper.

“What wouldst thou have done if the arrow had passed through my heart, as it might easily have chanced to do?” I inquired of him.

“I would have gone home and told them that I had killed thee by accident,” he answered readily enough. “Thou wouldst have been dead, and therefore no one could have denied my tale.”

I said naught to that, but I there and then made up my mind that if ever I went shooting with him again I would keep my eyes open. For I now saw that he was not only false, but also treacherous. Indeed, I was somewhat minded to go to my uncle and tell him what had taken place between us, but I remembered that the good knight was not fond of carried tales, and therefore I refrained.

After that there was peace for some years, Dame Barbara having evidently made up her mind to take things as they were. She was mortally afraid of offending Sir Thurstan, for she had no jointure or portion of her own, and was totally dependent upon his charity for a sustenance. This made her conduct herself towards me with more consideration than I should otherwise have received from her. Possibly she thought that it might be well to keep in good favor with me in view of my succeeding Sir

Thurstan at no distant period. At any rate I had no more trouble with Jasper, and I overheard no more unpleasant discussions between Dame Barbara and the knight.

From our tenth year upwards Jasper and myself daily attended the vicarage, in order to be taught Greek, Latin, and other matters by the Reverend Mr. Timotheus Herrick, vicar of Beechcot. He was a tall, thin, spindle-shanked gentleman, very absent-minded, but a great scholar. It was said of him, that if he had not married a very managing woman in the shape of Mistress Priscilla Horbury, he would never have got through the world. He had one child, Rose, of whom you will hear somewhat in this history, and she was three years younger than myself. When Jasper and I were thirteen and Rose ten years of age, she began to learn with us, and presently made such progress that she caught up to us, and then passed us, and so made us ashamed of ourselves. After that she was always in advance of us, and we used to procure her help in our lessons; then she lorded it over us, as little maidens will over big lads, and we were her humble slaves in everything.

CHAPTER II.

PHARAOH NANJULIAN

Now it chanced that one afternoon in the June of 1575 Jasper and I were on our way from the vicarage to the manor, our lessons for that day being over. We had to pass through the village of Beehcot on our homeward journey, and it was when we were opposite the inn, then kept by Geoffrey Scales, that there occurred an incident which was to have a greater influence upon our future lives than we then imagined. In the wide space by the inn, formed by the meeting of four roads, there was gathered together a goodly company of people, who seemed to be talking as one man, and looking as with one eye at something in their midst.

“What have we here?” said Jasper, as we paused. “Is it some bear-ward with his bear, or one of those wandering Italians that go about with a guitar and a monkey?”

“I hear no music,” said I. “It seems to be something of more importance than either bear or monkey. Let us see for ourselves.”

So we ran forward and joined the crowd, which began presently to make way for us. Then we saw that nearly everybody in the village, saving only the men who were at work in the fields, had run together with one accord in order to stare and wonder at a man, who sat on the bench just outside the ale-house door. It was clear to me at once that he was not a native of those parts,

and might possibly be a foreigner. He seemed to be of thirty-five or forty years of age, his skin and hair were very dark, and he wore a great black beard, which looked as if it had known neither comb nor scissors for many a long month. Also he was of great size and height, and on his brawny arms, which were bare from the elbows downwards, there were figures and patterns traced in blue and red, so that I at once set him down for a sailor, who had seen much life in strange countries. As for his garments, they were much stained and worn, and his feet, which were naked, were evidently callous and hardened enough to stand even the roughest roads.

When we first set eyes upon him the man was leaning back against the wall of the ale-house, looking defiantly at John Broad, the constable, who stood by him, and at Geoffrey Scales, the landlord, who stood behind Broad. In the rear, holding his chin with one hand, and looking exceeding rueful of countenance, stood Peter Pipe, the drawer. All round them hung the crowd of men and women, lads and lasses, staring open-mouthed at the great man with the black beard.

“What’s all this?” said I, as we pushed our way to the front.

The sailor jumped to his feet and touched his forelock civilly enough. He looked at John Broad.

“Marry, Master Humphrey,” answered John Broad, “you see this great fellow here, with a beard so long as the Turks? A’ cometh into our village here, God knows where from, and must needs fall to breaking the heads of peaceable and honest men.”

“Tis a lie,” said the sailor. “At least, that part of it which refers to peaceable and honest men. As to the breaking of heads, I say naught.”

“But whose head hath he broken?” asked Jasper.

“Mine, sir,” whined Peter Pipe. “God ha’ mercy! – it sings like Benjamin Good’s bees when they are hiving.”

“And why did he break thy head?”

“Let him say,” said the sailor. “Aye, let him say.”

Peter Pipe shuffled his feet and looked out of his eye-corners. He was a creature of no spirit, and always in deadly fear of something or somebody.

“Maybe he will clout me again,” said Peter.

“Fear not,” said the sailor. “I would not hurt thee, thou two-penny-halfpenny drawer of small beer. Say on.”

“This man, then, Master Humphrey, a’ cometh into our kitchen and demands a pot of ale. So I fetched it to him and he paid me – ”

“Was his money good?”

“Oh, aye, good money enough, I warrant him,” said Geoffrey Scales.

“I said naught to the contrary,” continued Peter. “But no sooner had he drunk than he fell to cursing me for a thief, and swore that I had served him with small beer, and with that he caught up the tankard and heaved it at me with such force that my jaw is well-nigh broken.”

“And didst serve him with small beer?”

"I serve him with small beer! Nay, Master Humphrey, bethink you. As if I did not know the difference betwixt small beer and good ale!"

"That thou dost not," said the sailor. "Young sir, listen to me. I know thee not, and I fear thee not, and I know not why I should trouble to talk to thee. But thou seemest to be in authority."

"'Tis Sir Thurstan's nephew," whispered the constable.

"What know I of Sir Thurstan? Young sir, I am a man of Cornwall, and my name it is Pharaoh Nanjulian. They know me in Marazion. I have been on a venture to the North Seas – plague take it, there is naught but ice and snow there, with white bears twenty feet long – "

"List to him!" said someone in the crowd.

"I will show thee the white bear's trick, an' thou doubtest me. But to proceed. Young sir, we were wrecked – sixteen good men and true we were – off the Norroway coasts, which methinks are fashioned of iron, and we underwent trials, yea, and hunger. After a time we came to Drontheim – "

"Where is that?"

"A sea-coast town of Norroway, young sir. And thence we took ship to Scarborough. But there was no ship at Scarborough going south, wherefore I set out for mine own country on foot. And to-day, which is my first on this journey, I came to this inn for a pint of good ale, and paid my money for it too, whereupon yonder scurvy knave gives me small beer, thin as water. And I, being somewhat hot and choleric of temper, threw the measure

at him, and rewarded him for his insolence. So now I will go on my way, for 'tis a brave step from here to Marazion, and I love not ye north-country folk."

"Not so fast," quoth John Broad. "Thou must needs see Sir Thurstan before we let thee go."

"What want I with Sir Thurstan?"

"Marry, naught; but he may want something with thee. We allow not that wandering rascals shall break the peace in our village."

"If thou talkest to me like that, Master Constable, I shall break thy head, and in such a fashion that thou wilt never more know what peace is. We men of Devon and Cornwall allow no man to lord it over us."

"Thou shalt to Sir Thurstan, anyhow," said John Broad. "We will see what the law says to thee. I fear me thou art a man of lawless behavior; and, moreover, there are strange characters about at this moment."

"Dame Good had two fowls stolen last night," said a voice in the crowd.

"Yea, and there are two fine linen sheets stolen from the vicarage hedge," piped another.

"He looks a strange mortal," said a third.

"And wears gold rings in his ears," cried a fourth. "A' must be a foreigner, and maybe a Papist."

"Foreigner or Papist I am not, good folks, but a true-born Englishman, and a good hater of all Frenchmen and Spaniards.

So let me go forward peaceably. As for the clout I gave Master Peter, here is a groat to mend it. I have but a round dozen, or I would give him two.”

With that he would have moved forward, but John Broad barred the way.

“Not till I have taken thee before his worship,” said he. “What, am I not constable of this parish, and duly sworn to arrest all suspicious persons, sturdy beggars, and what not?”

The sailor paused and drew his breath, and looked at the constable’s round figure as if in doubt what to do.

“I am loth to hurt thee,” said he, “but if I hit thee, Master Constable, thou wilt never more drink ale nor smell beef. Know that once in Palermo there came upon me a great brown bear that had got loose from his ward, and I hit him fair and square between the eyes, and he fell, and when they took him up, his skull it was cracked. Is thy skull harder than the bear’s?”

At this John Broad trembled and shrank away, but continued to mutter something about the law and its majesty.

“You had better go with him before my uncle,” said I. “He will deal justly with thee. He is hard upon no man, but it might fare ill with John Broad if Sir Thurstan knew that he had suffered you to go unapprehended.”

“Oh, if you put it in that way,” he answered, and turned again, “I will go with you. Heaven send that the good gentleman do not detain me, for I would fain reach York to-night.”

So we all moved off to the manor, and as many as could

find room crowded into the great hall where Sir Thurstan sat to deliver judgment on all naughty and evilly-disposed persons. And presently he came and took his seat in the justice-chair and commanded silence, and bade John Broad state his case. Then Peter Pipe gave his testimony, and likewise Geoffrey Scales, and then Sir Thurstan called upon the sailor to have his say, for he made a practice of never condemning any man unheard.

After he had heard them all, my uncle considered matters for a moment and then delivered judgment, during which everybody preserved strict silence.

“I find, first of all,” said he, “that Peter Pipe, the drawer, did serve this man with small beer instead of good ale. For what! I watched the man as he told his story, and he did not lie.”

“I thank your honor,” said the sailor.

“Wherefore I recommend Geoffrey Scales to admonish Peter at his convenience – ”

“Yea, and with a stick, your honor,” said Geoffrey.

“So that he transgress not again. Nevertheless, the sailor did wrong to maltreat Peter. There is law to be had, and no man should administer his own justice. Wherefore I fine thee, sailor, and order thee to pay ten groats to the court.”

“As your honor wills,” said the man, and handed over the money. “I have now one left to see me all the way to Marazion. But justice is justice.”

“Clear my hall, John Broad,” said my uncle. This order the constable carried out with promptitude. But when the sailor

would have gone, Sir Thurstan bade him stay, and presently he called him to his side and held converse with him.

“Dost thou propose to walk to Marazion?” he asked.

“With God’s help, sir,” answered the man.

“Why not try Hull? Thou mightest find a ship there for a southern port.”

“I had never thought of it, your honor. How far away may Hull be?”

“Forty miles. What means hast thou?”

“But one groat, sir. But then I have become used to hardships.”

“Try Hull: thou wilt find a ship there, I doubt not. Hold, here are twelve shillings for thee. Humphrey, have him to the kitchen and give him a good meal ere he starts.”

“Your honor,” said the sailor, “is a father and a brother to me. I shall not forget.”

“Do thy duty,” said Sir Thurstan.

So I took the man to the kitchen, and fed him, and soon he went away.

“Young master,” said he, “if I can ever repay this kindness I will, yea, with interest. Pharaoh Nanjulian never forgets.”

With that he went away, and we saw him no more.

CHAPTER III.

ROSE

There being no disposition on my part to renew our differences, and none on his to lead up to an open rupture, my cousin Jasper Stapleton and I got on together very well, until we had reached the age of nineteen years, when a new and far more important matter of contention arose between us.

Now, our first quarrel had arisen over the ultimate disposition of my uncle's estates; our second was as to which should be lord over the heart and hand of a fair maiden. To both of us the second quarrel was far more serious than the first – which is a thing that will readily be understood by all young folks. It seemed to both of us that not all the broad acres of Beechcot, nay, of Yorkshire itself, were to be reckoned in comparison with the little hand of Mistress Rose Herrick.

For by that time Mistress Rose had grown to be a fair and gracious maiden, whose golden hair, floating from under her dainty cap, was a dangerous snare for any hot-hearted lad's thoughts to fall entangled in. So sweet and gracious was she, so delightful her conversation, so bewitching her eyes, that I marvel not even at this stretch of time that I then became her captive and slave for life. Nor do I marvel, either, that Jasper Stapleton was equally enslaved by her charms. It had indeed been wonderful if he or I had made any resistance to them.

As to myself, the little blind god pierced my heart with his arrow at a very early stage. Indeed, I do not remember any period of my life when I did not love Rose Herrick more dearly than anything else in God's fair world. To me she was all that is sweet and desirable, a companion whose company must needs make the path of life a primrose path; and, therefore, even when I was a lad, I looked forward to the time when I might take her hand in mine, and enter with her upon the highway which all of us must travel.

However, when I was come to nineteen years of age, being then a tall and strapping lad, and somewhat grave withal, it came to my mind that I should find out for myself what feelings Rose had with regard to me, and therefore I began to seek her company, and to engage her in more constant conversation than we had hitherto enjoyed. And the effect of this was that my love for her, which had until then been of a placid nature, now became restless and unsatisfied, and longed to know whether it was to be answered with love or finally dismissed.

Thus I became somewhat moody and taciturn, and took to wandering about the land by myself, by day or night, so that Sir Thurstan more than once asked me if I had turned poet or fallen in love. Now, both these things were true, for because I had fallen in love I had also turned poet; as, I suppose, every lover must. In sooth, I had scribbled lines and couplets, and here and there a song, to my sweet mistress, though I had never as yet mustered sufficient courage to show her what I had written. That, I think, is

the way with all lovers who make rhymes. There is a satisfaction to them in the mere writing of them; and I doubt not that they often read over their verses, and in the reading find a certain keen and peculiar sort of pleasure which is not altogether unmixed with pain.

Now it chanced that one day in the early spring of 1578 I had been wandering about the park of Beechcot, thinking of my passion and its object, and my thoughts as usual had clothed themselves in verses. Wherefore, when I again reached the house, I went into the library and wrote down my rhymes on paper, in order that I might put them away with my other compositions. I will write them down here from the copy I then made. It lies before me now, a yellow, time-stained sheet, and somehow it brings back to me the long-dead days of happiness which came before my wonderful adventure.

TO ROSE

When I first beheld thee, dear,
Day across the land was breaking,
April skies were fine and clear
And the world to life was waking;
All was fair
In earth and air:
Spring lay lurking in the sedges:
Suddenly

I looked on thee
And straight forgot the budding hedges.

When I first beheld thee, sweet,
Madcap Love came gayly flying
Where the woods and meadows meet:
Then I straightway fell a-sighing.
Fair, I said,
Are hills and glade
And sweet the light with which they're laden,
But ah, to me,
Nor flower nor tree
Are half so sweet as yonder maiden.

Thus when I beheld thee, love,
Vanished quick my first devotion,
Earth below and heaven above
And the mystic, magic ocean
Seemed to me
No more to be.
I had eyes for naught but thee, dear,
With his dart
Love pierced my heart
And thou wert all in all to me, dear!

Now, as I came to an end of writing these verses I was suddenly aware of someone standing at my side, and when I looked up, with anger and resentment that anyone should spy upon my actions, I saw my cousin Jasper at my elbow, staring

at the two words, "To Rose," which headed my composition. I sprang to my feet and faced him.

"That is like you, cousin," said I, striving to master my anger, "to act the spy upon a man."

"As you please," he answered. "I care what no man thinks of my actions. But there," pointing to the paper, "is proof of what I have long suspected. Humphrey, you are in love with Mistress Rose Herrick!"

"What if I am?" said I.

"Nothing, but that I also am in love with her, and mean to win her," he replied.

After that there was silence.

"We cannot both have her," said I at last.

"True," said he. "She shall be mine."

"Not if I can prevent it, cousin. At any rate she has the principal say in this matter."

"Thou hast not spoken to her, Humphrey?"

"What is that to thee, cousin? But I have not."

"Humphrey, thou wilt heir our uncle's lands. Thou hast robbed me of my share in them. I will not be robbed of my love. Pish! do not stay me. Thou art hot-tempered and boyish, but I am cold as an icicle. It is men like me whose love is deep and determined, and therefore I swear thou shalt not come between me and Rose Herrick."

I watched him closely, and saw that he valued nothing of land or money as he valued his passion, and that he would stay at

nothing in order to gain his own ends. But I was equally firm.

“What do you propose, Jasper?” I asked. “It is for Mistress Rose Herrick to decide. We cannot both address her at the same time.”

“True,” he said; “true. I agree that you have the same right to speak to her that I have. Let us draw lots. The successful one shall have the first chance. Do you agree?”

I agreed willingly, because I felt certain that even if Jasper beat me he would have no chance with Rose. There was something in my heart that told me she would look on me, and on me only, with favor.

We went out into the stackyard, and agreed that each of us should draw a straw from a wheat-stack. He that drew the longest straw should have the first right of speaking. Then we put our hands to the stack and drew our straws. I beat him there – my straw was a good foot longer than his.

“You have beaten me again,” he said. “Is it always to be so? But I will wait, cousin Humphrey.”

And so he turned away and left me.

Now, seeing how matters stood, it came to my mind that I had best put my fortune to the test as quickly as possible, and therefore I made haste over to the vicarage in order to find Rose and ask her to make me either happy or miserable. And as good luck would have it, I found her alone in the vicarage garden, looking so sweet and gracious that I was suddenly struck dumb, and in my confusion could think of naught but that my face was

red, my attire negligent, and my whole appearance not at all like that of a lover.

“Humphrey,” said Rose, laughing at me, “you look as you used to look in the days when you came late to your lessons, from robbing an orchard or chasing Farmer Good’s cattle, or following the hounds. Are you a boy again?”

But there she stopped, for I think she saw something in my eyes that astonished her. And after that I know not what we said or did, save that presently we understood one another, and for the space of an hour entirely forgot that there were other people in the world, or, indeed, that there was any world at all.

So that evening I went home happy. And as I marched up to the manor, whistling and singing, I met my cousin. He looked at me for a moment, and then turned on his heel.

“I see how it is,” he said. “You have no need to speak.”

“Congratulate me, at any rate, cousin,” I cried.

“Time enough for that,” said he.

And from that moment he hated me, and waited his opportunity to do me a mischief.

CHAPTER IV.

FOUL PLAY

When a man has conceived a deadly hatred of one of his fellow-men, and has further resolved to let slip no chance of satisfying it, his revenge becomes to him simply a question of time, for the chance is sure to come sooner or later.

It was this conviction, I think, that kept my cousin Jasper Stapleton quiet during the next few months. He knew that in due course his revenge would have an opportunity of glutting itself, and for that evil time he was well content to wait. You may wonder that so young a man should have possessed such cruel feelings toward one who had never done him any willful wrong. But as events proved Jasper was of an exceeding cruel and malignant nature, and his wickedness was all the worse because it was of a cold and calculating sort. If a man gave him an honest straightforward blow or buffet, it was not Jasper's way to strike back there and then, face to face, but rather to wait until some evil chance presented itself – and then, his adversary's back being turned, Jasper would plant a dagger between his shoulders. In other words, he bided his time, and when he did strike, struck at an unguarded place.

Now at that time I had very little idea that Jasper entertained such hard thoughts of me – my knowledge of his cruelty only came by later experience. All that spring and summer of 1578 I

was living in a very paradise, and cared not for Jasper or Dame Barbara or anybody else. My uncle had sanctioned the betrothal of Rose Herrick and myself, and the good vicar had given us his blessing in choice Latin. There had been some little scolding of us from both manor-house and vicarage, for Sir Thurstan and Master Timotheus both thought us too young to talk of love and marriage; but in the end our pleadings prevailed, and it was arranged that we were to consider ourselves plighted lovers, and that our wedding was to take place in two years. This settled, there was naught but happiness for me and Rose. I think we spent most of that summer out of doors, wandering about the Chase, and talking as lovers will, of all the days to come. Never once did there come a cloud over the fair heaven of our hopes, unless it was once, when in a remote corner of the woods, we suddenly came face to face with Jasper Stapleton. He had been out with his bow, and when we met him he was advancing along the path, with a young deer slung over his shoulders. At the sound of our footsteps on the crackling underwood, he stopped, looked up, and, recognizing us, turned hastily away and vanished in the thick bushes.

“Why did Jasper go away so suddenly?” asked Rose.

“Because he was not minded to meet us,” said I.

“But why? And I have not seen him these many weeks – he seems to avoid me. Did you mark his face, Humphrey, – how white it turned when he set eyes on us? And there was a look on it that frightened me – a look that seemed to promise no love for

you, Humphrey,” she said.

“Have no fear, sweetheart,” I answered. “Jasper is a strange fellow, but he will do me no harm. He is only disappointed because I have won a flower that he would fain have possessed himself.”

“What do you mean?” she asked.

“I mean, sweetheart, that Jasper was much in love with Mistress Rose Herrick, and liked not that Humphrey Salkeld should win her. There – perhaps I have done wrong to tell thee this; but, indeed, I like not mysteries.”

But so strange are women, that Rose immediately fell to sighing and lamenting on Jasper’s woes. “It is sad,” she said, “that any man should sorrow over a maiden’s pretty face, when there are so many girls in the world.” This train of thought, however, suddenly slipped from her when she remembered Master Jasper’s ugly looks.

“He will do you a mischief, Humphrey,” she said. “I saw it in his eyes. He hates you. They say that jealousy breeds murder – oh! what if Jasper should try to kill you?”

I laughed at the notion. I was so cock-a-whoop at that time, so elated with my love and my fair prospects, that I did not believe anything could harm me, and said so. Nevertheless, I believe Rose was from that time much concerned as to the relations between me and Jasper, having some woman-born notion that all might not go so well as I, in my boyish confidence, anticipated. But when she set forth her fears from time to time, I only laughed

at her, never thinking that my cousin's opportunity was already close at hand.

Early in the month of October in that year Sir Thurstan called Jasper and myself into the library one morning, and informed us that he had business for us at the port of Scarborough. There was, he said, a ship coming over from Hamburg, the master of which had been entrusted with a certain commission from him, and as the vessel was now due, he wished us to go over to Scarborough and complete the matter, by receiving certain goods and paying the master his money. Neither Jasper nor I were displeased at the notion of this trip, for we were both minded to see a little of the world. True, I did not like the idea of being separated from my sweetheart for several days; but then, as she said, there would be the delight of looking forward to our meeting again. Alas! neither of us knew that that meeting was not to take place for three long and weary years.

We set out from Beechcot, Jasper and I, one Monday morning, having with us money wherewith to pay the charges of the ship-master. From the manor-house to Scarborough there was a distance of twenty odd miles, and therefore we rode our horses. Sir Thurstan had given us instructions to put up at the Mermaid Tavern, near the harbor, and there we accordingly stabled our beasts and made arrangements for our own accommodation. The ship which we were expecting had not yet arrived, and was not likely to come in before the next day, so that we had naught to do but look about us and derive what amusement we could from the

sights of the little fishing town. Small as the place was, it being then little more than a great cluster of houses nestling under the shadow of the high rock on which stands Scarborough Castle, it was still a place of importance to us, who had never for many years seen any town or village bigger than our own hamlet of Beehcot, where there were no more than a dozen farmsteads and cottages all told. Also the sailors, who hung about the harbor or on the quay-side, or who sat in their boats mending their nets and spinning their yarns one to another, were sources of much interest, so that we felt two or three days of life in their company would not be dull nor misspent. Moreover, the merchant, whose ship it was that carried Sir Thurstan's goods, showed us much attention, and would have us to his house to talk with him and tell him of our uncle, whose acquaintance he had made many years previously, but had not been able to cultivate.

There is, near the harbor of Scarborough, lying half-hid amongst the narrow streets which run up towards the Castle Hill, a quaint and curious inn known as the Three Jolly Mariners. At its door stands a figure carved in wood, which at some time, no doubt, acted as figurehead to a ship, but whether it represents Venus or Diana, Hebe or Minerva, I do not know. Inside, the house more resembles the cabin of a vessel than the parlor of a tavern. On the walls are many curious things brought by mariners from foreign parts, together with relics of ships that had made many voyages from the harbor outside, and had finally come home to be broken up. In this place, half-parlor, half-cabin, there

assembled men of seafaring life: salts, young and old, English, Scotch, Norwegians, and Danes, with now and then a Frenchman or Spaniard, so that there is never any lack of interesting and oftentimes marvelous discourse.

Our ship not having come in on the Tuesday night, Jasper and I, in company with the merchant aforesaid, entered the Three Jolly Mariners, and having saluted the assembled company, sat down to wait awhile, the harbor-master thinking it likely that our vessel would shortly be signaled. There were several men in the inn, drinking and talking, and all were of interest in my eyes, but one of them much more so than the others. He was a stoutly-built, tall man of middle age, dressed in what seemed to my eyes a very fantastic style, there being more color in his dress than was then usual. He had a high, white forehead, over which his jet-black hair was closely cropped, his eyes were set rather too near together to be pleasant, his nose was long, his teeth very white and large, and his beard, almost as black as his hair, was trimmed to a point. As he sat and listened to the conversation around him he never laughed, but occasionally he smiled, exposing his cruel teeth, and reminding me of a dog that shows its fangs threateningly.

Our friend the merchant whispered to us that this gentleman was a certain Captain Manuel Nunez, who came trading to Scarborough from Seville. He further informed us that his ship now lay outside in the harbor, and was a fine vessel, of very graceful proportions, and much more beautiful to look at than

our English ships, which are somewhat squat and ugly, though not difficult to handle.

“And although he is a Spaniard,” continued our friend, “this Senor Nunez is well liked here, for he makes himself courtly and agreeable to those who have to do with him, so that our recent relations with his country have not prevented him from coming amongst us.”

However, there was something about the man which almost made me afraid. He reminded me of a viper which I once killed in Beechcot Woods. And though we entered into conversation with him that night, and found him a mightily agreeable companion, I still preserved the notion that he was a man not to be trusted, and like to prove cruel and treacherous.

The following day, going down to the harbor-wall to see if there were any signs of our ship, I saw my cousin engaged in close conversation with Senor Nunez. I did not intrude myself upon them, but presently the Spaniard, catching sight of me, came to my side, and with a courteous salutation addressed me.

“I have been inviting your good cousin, Master Stapleton, to go aboard my vessel yonder,” said he, “and I would tender the same courtesy to yourself, Master Salkeld. It is not often that an English country gentleman has a chance of seeing a Spanish ship in these sad days, unless, alack! it be in this deplorable warfare; and, therefore, I thought you might both be glad of this opportunity.”

“What do you say, Humphrey?” asked Jasper, who had now

approached us. "I would like to see the inside of a Spanish ship. If 'tis aught like the outside it should be well worth an examination."

"A look at the Santa Luisa will repay your trouble, gentlemen," said the Spaniard with a proud smile. "There is no faster ship for her size on the high seas."

"I am agreeable," said I. "Our own ship is not yet come, and time begins to hang heavy."

"Then you shall come on board to-night," said Captain Nunez. "Until six of the clock I am engaged on shore, but at that hour I will have a boat awaiting us at the harbor stairs, and you shall go aboard with me, gentlemen."

So we agreed and parted with him, Jasper full of the matter, and exclaiming that we should have much to tell the folks at home. I, however, was beginning to get somewhat impatient with respect to our own ship, which its owner now believed to have been unexpectedly detained, and I only regarded the visit to the Santa Luisa as a diversion.

At six o'clock that night, Jasper and I met the Spaniard at the harbor stairs and went on board his vessel. We found the Santa Luisa to be a very fine ship, and of much more pretentious appearance as regarded her fittings than our own English trading vessels. We passed an hour or so in examining her, and were then pressed by Senor Nunez to enter his cabin and enjoy his hospitality.

I have no very clear recollection of what followed. I remember that we ate and drank, that the Spaniard was vastly amusing in

his discourse, and that I began to feel mighty sleepy. After that I must have gone to sleep.

When I came to my full senses again I was lying in a hammock, and I could tell from the motion of the ship that we were at sea in a good, fresh wind. The Spaniard stood by me, regarding me attentively. I started up and addressed him.

“Senor Nunez! I have been asleep. Where am I? The ship seems to be moving!”

“The ship is moving, Master Salkeld,” he answered, in his smooth, rich voice. “At this moment she is off the Lincolnshire coast. You have slept for twelve hours.”

CHAPTER V.

PHARAOH NANJULIAN AGAIN

I do not know to this day how I got out of the hammock, but no sooner did I hear the Spanish captain utter these words than I made haste to go on deck and examine the truth of his statement for myself. But before I could reach the companion I reeled and staggered, and should have fallen, if Nunez had not seized my arm and supported me. He helped me to a seat, and handed me a glass containing a restorative.

“You are not well,” he said. “But you will come round presently.”

“Senor!” I cried, “what is the meaning of this? Why am I on this ship, and why are we at sea? How is it that I am not at Scarborough? There has been some treachery – some foul play!”

“Nay,” said he, “be moderate, I entreat you, Senor. Do not let there be any talk of treachery. Am I not serving you as a friend?”

“I do not comprehend anything of what you say,” I answered. “There is some mystery here. Again I ask you – why am I on board your ship and at sea?”

“And I ask you, Senor, where else did you expect to be but on board my ship and at sea?”

I stared at the man in amaze and wonder. He returned my gaze unflinchingly, but I felt certain that in his eyes there was a cruel mockery of me, and my blood seemed to turn cold within me

as I recognized that I was in the Spaniard's power. But, being now in a desperate mood, I strove to be cool and to keep my wits about me.

"I expected to be at Scarborough, Senor," I said. "Where else? I remember coming aboard your vessel and eating and drinking with you, but after that I must have fallen asleep. I wake and find myself at sea."

"Naturally you do," said he with a smile. "Allow me, Master Salkeld, to recall to you certain incidents which took place last night. You came on board my ship with your cousin, Master Stapleton, and I offered you my poor hospitality. Was that all that took place?"

"It was," said I, confidently enough.

"That is strange," said he, giving me another of his queer looks. "I fear you have undergone some strange mental change in your long sleep. But as I perceive that you do not understand me, I will explain matters to you. Last night, Master Salkeld, as you and your cousin sat at meat with me, you explained to me that you had committed some great crime against the laws of your country, and that it was necessary, if you would save your head, to leave England at once. I remarked that I was about to set sail for the West Indies, and should be pleased to take you as my passenger, whereupon you and your cousin having consulted together, you paid me the passage-money – and here we are."

The man told me all this with the utmost assurance, his face utterly unmoved and his strange eyes inscrutable. It was a lie

from beginning to end, and I knew it to be a lie. Nevertheless, I knew also that I was powerless, and I made up my mind to act prudently.

“Senor,” I replied, “as between you and me, I may as well tell you that I do not believe a single word of what you have said. There has been treachery – and it lies with you and my rascal cousin, Jasper Stapleton. I have committed no crime against the laws, and I wish to be put ashore at your earliest opportunity.”

“You shall be obeyed, Master Salkeld,” he replied, bowing low, but with a mocking smile about his lips.

“Where do you first touch land?” I inquired.

“I have already told you, Master Salkeld. Somewhere in the West Indies.”

“But you do not mean to carry me to the West Indies?” I cried. “Why, ’tis a journey of many thousands of miles!”

“Precisely. Nevertheless, you must undertake it. We touch no land until we make Barbadoes or Martinique.”

I said no more; it was useless. I was in the man’s power. Nothing that I could say or do would alter his purpose. There had been villainy and treachery – and my cousin, Jasper Stapleton, had worked it. I comprehended everything at that moment. I had been lured on board the Spanish vessel and subsequently drugged, in order that Jasper might rid himself of my presence. That was plainly to be seen. But what of the future? The West Indies, I knew, were thousands of miles away. They were in the hands of our hereditary enemies, the Spaniards. From them I

should receive scant mercy or consideration. I was penniless – for my money had disappeared – and even if I had possessed money, what would it have benefited me in a savage land like that to which I was being carried? I might wait there many a long year without meeting with an English ship. I turned to the Spaniard.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.