The Golden Galleon

The Adventures of Master Gilbert Oglander

by Robert Leighton, 1859-1934

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Table of Contents

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Illustrations

Illustration:
A Perilous Situation

Preface

In this present amphibious story I have tried to represent some of the conditions of life ashore and afloat in the glorious days of Queen Elizabeth; but I must state, to begin with, that the only portion of the narrative that is actually based upon historical fact is the account of Lord Thomas Howard's expedition against the West Indian treasure-ships. In this part of the story I have closely followed the original report of the last fight of THE REVENGE, as it was written by Sir Walter Raleigh some few weeks after the battle.

My friend Commander C.N. Robinson tells me that Sir Richard Grenville's disregard of Admiral Howard's instructions was, strictly speaking, a breach of discipline. Whether or not this was the case need not here be discussed. All that we need remember just now is that Sir Richard was one of the bravest of the many brave men of his splendid time, and that, undismayed by the almost certain prospect of defeat, he led a forlorn hope, plunged into the glorious fray, and fought to the death with a boldness which has never been excelled in all the course of our naval history.

Grenville was not a great admiral as Drake and Nelson were great, and this most memorable action upon which his fame must always rest was not an example of the supremest heroism, simply because his success or failure involved no high or very noble principle. But the worst that can be said of his daring exploit is that it was the Balaclava charge of the Spanish war; at its best it was an example, and a very grand example, of that British pluck and intrepidity which have ever been the distinguishing characteristics of our fighting countrymen; and I shall be glad if, in writing this story, I help in some measure to instil into my young readers a fuller pride in the navy which has secured for England her supremacy upon the seas.

Robert Leighton.

Chapter I

Timothy Trollope.

TIM," said Peter Trollope, looking up from the oily whetstone that lay on the edge of the table in front of him, and slowly wiping the blade of the razor on the broad palm of his hand, "I want thee to go fetch me some more herbs."

"Herbs?" repeated Tim from the far corner of the shop, where he was sprawling upon the floor side by side with a very ugly-looking bull-dog.

"Ay," returned his father, running the edge of the razor along his thumb-nail to test its keenness. "My stock is at an end, and I have none left to make up the physic for Cap'n Cruse's sick wife. 'Tis some hellebore roots that I need most, and a little meadow-saffron and jasmine, and, if thou canst come upon them, a handful of yew-berries. You will find them all in Modbury Park if I make no mistake—overagainst the plantation of fir-trees where we saw the dead hind. I'd have thee go there this morning; and see that thou tarry not over long by the way, for I shall need thy help in distilling them."

Timothy rose slowly to his feet. There was a look of glum discontent on his face. It was evident that he was in nowise willing to obey his father's behest.

"What!" cried Peter, glancing at the lad with sharp reproof. "Dost object to the journey? Now, prithee, what wild boy's adventure hast thou on hand that is more to thy humour?"

Timothy looked dreamily out through the little latticed window towards the quay, and his eyes wandered for a time among the masts and riggings of the ships.

"I was but thinking to go out for a sail in Ambrose Pennington's fishing-boat," he said in a sulky undertone.

"A plague on your fishing-boats!" exclaimed Peter somewhat angrily. "Y'are for ever thinking of the sea and ships and all such mischievous inventions! I'll not have it, look you. And to-day, so please you, you'll do my bidding and go fetch me these herbs, and there's an end on't."

Timothy made no answer, for at this moment a hairy-faced mariner entered the shop, making a great noise upon the sanded floor with his heavy sea-boots.

"Give you good-morning, Master Whiddon," said Peter Trollope with a bow and a smile, as he offered the man a chair in the middle of the room. "What may be your honour's will?"

"Trim me my beard, Master Trollope," returned the seaman, seating himself in the chair and stretching out his legs in front of him; "and tell me your news; for 'tis a good two years since I was last ashore in Plymouth, and I am full eager, as you may be sure, to learn all that hath happened in my absence."

Timothy opened a little locker under the window and drew forth a large canvas wallet, which he strapped over his shoulder. Then he crossed over to a door and disappeared into an inner room behind the shop, leaving his father to attend to his customer and retail news that to the boy, at all events, was as stale as a last year's chestnut.

Peter Trollope was a barber-surgeon. He carried on his useful art (for in his deft hands it was in truth an art) at the sign of the Pestle and Mortar, down against Sutton Pool. He was a great man in Plymouth town, by reason of his entertaining talk and his skill alike in surgery and in hairdressing; and his little shop was the lounging-place of all the idle young gallants of the port, who came in to discuss the latest news from London, to gossip about their neighbours' affairs and about the ships, or to learn the tricks and fashions in the new art of taking tobacco. Men

who had received sword-wounds in street frays or damaged skulls in tavern brawls came to him to have their hurts dressed and plastered; he had a famous tincture for the toothache, a certain remedy for melancholy, and at curing the common ailments of children and old women no doctor in the town could beat him. Mariners just home after a long voyage came to him to have their overgrown locks shorn and their beards singed. Poor workmen and apprentices came to him to be polled for twopence, were soon trimmed round as a cheese, and dismissed with a hearty "God speed you, my master!" There were many high and mighty gentlemen among his customers too, I do assure you; for he had starched the beard of the great Sir Walter Raleigh, curled the moustachios of brave Sir Francis Drake, and tied up the lovelocks of courtly Sir Anthony Killigrew.

The Pestle and Mortar stood facing the busy wharf at the corner of one of the narrow alleys that led up into the town. The upper windows of the house looked out across the Pool, where all the ships and fishing-boats were harboured. From these upper windows you could, if you had only been there, see down upon the ships' decks and watch the brown-faced seamen at their work of discharging the merchandise that they had brought from distant climes; and in the street below there was the channel where, on wet days, the rain-water rushed by in a deep stream; and where, when the rain had ceased, young Timothy Trollope and his playmates used to go out in their bare feet and sail their tiny boats, and imagine these bits of rough-hewn stick to be Spanish galleons, laden with gold, or corsair galleys with cargoes of Christian captives for the slave-markets of Algiers.

Timothy's games had always some connection with ships (which, I suppose, was natural enough, seeing that he had been born and brought up in sight of the sea, and with the smell of tar rope and bilge-water for ever in his nostrils), and all his boyish ambitions were of travel and adventure, fostered, it may be, by the travellers' talk he had heard from the mariners who gossiped with his father in the barber's shop.

Many of these adventurous mariners, remembering past benefits that they had received at the hands of the kindly barber-surgeon, or perhaps being short of money (as they ofttimes were, in spite of the vast treasures that they had voyaged and fought for in far-off regions), had given or sold to him many relics of their travels in foreign lands, and the shop was a veritable museum of curiosities from all parts of the known world. Here was a live poll-parrot brought home by one of Sir Richard Grenville's seamen from Virginia; the jaws of a giant shark that had been killed by John Hawkins' boatswain off the west coast of Africa; a Turk's scimitar, a Patagonian's war-club, a red Indian's tobacco-pipe, an Icelander's harpoon, and even some of the so-called gold brought back by Sir Martin Frobisher from distant Greenland. People who had never crossed the seas regarded these things with wonder and reverence, but seamen were wont to scoff at them, and to declare that they were but the sweepings and refuse of ships' cabins. Peter Trollope, however, was proud of his curious collection; and often, when business was slack, he would sit in his chair by the fire and look at the things each in turn, and grumble that Providence had not made him an adventurer instead of a quiet, stay-at-home barber-surgeon.

Master Thomas Cavendish, the great explorer, when he was fitting out his ship, the HUGH GALLANT, for his voyage round the world, had once said to him:

“Peter, thou art too good a man to be wasting thy palmiest days at the clipping of hair. Those strong big limbs of thine should rather be employed in the hauling of ropes, the shifting of heavy guns, or fighting against the Spaniards. Now, my ship will be a-sailing out of Plymouth Sound in a few days’ time, wilt shut up shop and join us? I do faithfully promise that thou shalt come back home again at the end of two brief years a wealthier man than ever the use of such trifling instruments as scissors and curling-irons can make thee.”

But Peter was already a married man, with a growing family of boys to keep and to clothe and to send out upon the world, and he chose the certainty of an easy livelihood rather than the promise of riches which were to be gained, if at all, by deserting his home and leaving his wife and children to shift for themselves. He had reflected, too, that if there were Spaniards to be fought abroad, there was also a threatened danger from the same dread enemy at home in England, and that Queen Elizabeth had as great need for landsmen to defend her coasts as for mariners to extend her power beyond the seas. And, indeed, when that danger arrived (as it did in the year 1588, when Timothy was a boy of twelve years old) Peter proved himself ready and willing to fight for his country, albeit the sum of his work on that glorious occasion was no more than to help to light the bonfire on Plymouth Hoe—the first of those beacon-fires which flashed along the coast to warn all England of the coming of King Philip’s great armada.

The memorable rout of the Spanish ships had taken place just two years before the opening of my story, and Timothy Trollope was now a well-grown lad of fourteen. He could remember all the events of the chase up the Channel, for he had heard the story repeated many times by men who had fought upon the Queen’s ships. He was reminded of them every day; and even this morning as he strode through the town with his bag over his shoulders on his way to Modbury, he saw a group of the Spanish prisoners of war standing in the market-place—dark-visaged, evil-looking men, who seemed to be for ever plotting and scheming how they might escape from England and get back to their own orange groves in sunny Seville.

Tim hated the Spaniards (as I suppose all English boys hated them at that time), and he was careful to pass the señors at a very safe distance, believing that there was danger in being close to them, and that under their long black cloaks each of them carried a rapier or a stiletto ready to his hand, to draw upon any unwary person who should happen to betray by look or sign the enmity that was in the hearts of all the townsfolk, young and old. For although the prisoners were out on their parole and were strictly forbidden to carry arms, yet Timothy always secretly mistrusted them, and suspected them, not without reason, of carrying weapons which they were only too ready to use.

It was a long walk from Plymouth to Modbury Park; but the morning was fine, and Timothy, having left the town behind, tramped merrily along the shady country lanes, slashing with his stick at the rank weeds that grew at the wayside, and fancying that each nettle and foxglove that he laid low was a proud Spaniard whom he had slain.

As he crossed the fields by a footpath leading towards Beddington Dingle, a covey of partridges, alarmed at his approach, rose with a noisy whirr of wings from the stubble. In the woods of the dingle he watched a squirrel running along the

high branch of an oak-tree, and in a ditch at the farther border of the wood he startled a rat, and loitered there for a long, long time trying to discover the hole into which the animal had escaped.

While he was searching he heard voices from behind him, mingled with the screaming of hawks, the yelping of dogs, and the tinkling of bells.

"Well cast off aloft, ah!—well flown!" cried one voice.

"Now she hath seized the fowl," cried another, "and 'gins to plume her—rebeck her not!—stand still and check her!"

Timothy turned quickly round. High in the air he saw a heron flying, pursued by a couple of falcons, that whirled about their quarry, shunning its spear-like beak. At a moment of advantage one of the hawks mounted yet higher, and then, swooping down, struck like a thunderbolt upon her prey and seized the fowl within her talons. A shower of feathers floated down into the midst of the joyous crowd of men and women who were watching the sport from their horses' backs in the stubble-field.

It was a very gay and courtly company. Here on their prancing horses were many elegant gentlemen wearing plumed hats and bright-coloured capes; ladies with their snow-white ruffs and their long velvet gowns that almost swept the daisies and dandelions at their horses' feet; and all were laughing and calling aloud in their excitement as they compared the merits of their birds, or made wagers on the success of their flights.

Near to where Timothy stood, an old gentleman with a pointed white beard and a russet-coloured doublet rode on a very large chestnut horse. He carried a merlin hawk perched on his fist, but he seemed to take less interest in the sport than did his younger companions. Timothy had seen him many times before, both in Plymouth and at Modbury Park, and knew him to be the great Baron Champernoun, the lord of the manor of Modbury, a noted soldier and courtier. A very beautiful lady rode by his side, wearing a sombre black gown and a wide black hat with black feathers. She looked strangely out of place among her gaily-dressed friends, and Timothy wondered why she should wear this habit of gloom, until he saw her face, when he at once recognized her as the Lady Elisabeth Oglander, and knew that her reason for shunning bright colours in her apparel was the death of her most noble husband, the honourable Edmund Oglander, who had fallen in battle in the Netherlands while fighting against the Spaniards.

She drew rein, and the master falconer approached her with his square frame round his waist, on which were perched some half-dozen hawks with their hoods and bells and their scarlet tufts. The lady leaned over on her saddle and took a hawk from the falconer's hand. The bird flapped its wings in great commotion until it was fairly perched on the fingers that held it. Then the Lady Elizabeth, holding her hand aloft, rode off across the field, followed presently by the rest of the hawking party, while Tim Trollope watched them disappear round a corner of the wood.

As he turned to continue his way he came face to face with a boy of about his own age, who was carrying some dead partridges—spoils of the chase.

"Helloh, Will!" cried Timothy, recognizing the lad. "I had thought you were at work on Modbury farm. Hast had a rise in the world that you are out here at the heels of the gentlefolks?"

“A rise, do you call it?” returned Will. “That is as it may be. For my own part I do call it but a change of labour. I get no more pay for’t, I promise you; and ‘tis a vast deal harder work than the herding of cattle or the tending of sheep. I like it not, Tim; and ‘tis certain I shall not stand it much longer.” He dropped his burden on the grass at his feet and gazed idly about him with a dreamy look in his eyes. Presently he added, “I am for the sea, if peradventure I can get a ship to take me. I’d leave to-morrow an I could get someone to take my place.”

Timothy glanced quickly at his young friend.

“I’ll take it!” he cried eagerly. “I’ll take your place, and gladly. For I have been wanting these many months past to go to work, and, since my father will not suffer me to go to sea, why, there is nothing I’d like better than to be in the service of my Lord Champernoun.”

And with this new idea in his head he went on his way, inwardly resolving that on the very next day he would go up to Modbury Manor and apply to his lordship’s bailiff, entreating him to give him work, either on the farm or else in the mews where the hawks were kept. And he had little doubt that when once he had got promise of employment there would be no possible opposition from his father.

This thought of his father reminded him that he had not yet begun to gather the herbs for which he had been sent out, so he went on over the fields until he came to the fir plantation in Modbury Park, and there in a quiet hollow he began to fill his wallet with such roots and berries as the barber-surgeon had bidden him bring home.

He had walked round by the lake, and was unearthing the root of a rare herb which he knew that his father would set great store by, when, without the warning of any previous sound or movement he felt himself suddenly seized from behind and held firmly by his leather belt.

Now, although the hand which held him was a very tiny one, yet it gripped him with surprising tenacity, and the suddenness of the assault was such that the lad, knowing that he was a trespasser on private ground, was greatly alarmed. He thought at once of my lord’s gamekeeper, and he dreaded the consequences. He struggled to wrench himself away, and turned to confront his assailant. Instead of the man that he had expected, he beheld a little maid whose large blue eyes regarded him with an expression of ferocity that would have been terrible if it had not been merely assumed. She wore a lace-trimmed frock of golden-brown velvet that came down nearly to her toes. There was a crimson silk sash about her waist and a milk-white ruffle round her neck, and her cheeks were rosy with glowing health. She was beautiful to behold. But Tim thought nothing of her beauty; he was only astonished that so dainty a little gentlewoman, the granddaughter of a noble baron as he knew her to be, should display such boldness as to lay hands upon him, the son of a poor barber. He looked at her in amazement.

“Certes, Mistress Oglander,” said he in his confusion, “how you did startle me! I heard not your approach.”

“That is scarcely to be believed,” quoth she, still gripping his belt, “for we have been firing our guns into your quarter this half-hour past!” Then tugging at him with renewed energy, she added, “You are now fairly conquered and our lawful prize of war.”

“Nay, Mistress Oglander,” stammered Timothy, “I know not what you mean! I am but gathering a few poor herbs for my father, Master Trollope, the barber-surgeon of Plymouth, and I beg you to release me.”

Mistress Oglander looked strangely incredulous, and for a moment she relaxed her hold of him. She glanced round as though in search of someone whom she expected to see among the trees at the edge of the lake.

“I care not whose son you may be,” said she. “In real truth you are no man’s son; nor, so please you, am I Drusilla Oglander; for you are a Spanish treasure-ship that I have captured on the high seas, while I am the good ship PRUDENCE of Falmouth, who now intendeth to take you as my prize to England.”

Timothy seemed to apprehend her purpose, for he calmly yielded himself to her humour.

“An that be the way of it all,” quoth he, “then am I well content. But I do pray that England doth lie at no great distance from this spot, for I must get home with my bag of herbs for the which my father is impatiently waiting.”

“‘Tis but a little way beyond the beeches yonder,” explained Drusilla, indicating three tall trees that grew in the midst of a shrubbery at the far end of the little lake. “‘Twill take but a few moments to cross the Atlantic Ocean, and then we are there.”

She drew him onward for some yards, when suddenly he stopped. She glanced at him in quick alarm.

“Nay,” she cried, “you must not sink! You are to be refitted when we reach port, and then, you know, you will be made into an English ship.”

But Timothy still hesitated, and even made a movement as if to free himself and run away.

“Why are you sinking?” questioned little Drusilla, to whom his movements seemed to imply that he had been seriously damaged in the late battle. “It cannot be that the shots I fired struck you below the water!”

“‘Tis my heart that sinketh,” returned Tim. “Prithee, who and what are the men I see lurking under yonder trees?”

Drusilla smiled.

“The one sitting down with his back to the railings,” said she, “is the SANTA BARBARA galleon—a poor hopeless wreck. The other—well, I scarce know what he is at this moment, for he hath been so many things this morning that ‘tis hard to remember. But I think he was the mule-train the last time—the mule-train that Drake captured near to Nombre de Dios. Gilbert was Captain Drake. Gilbert doth always like to be Captain Drake whenever ‘tis possible, and will never consent to be a Spaniard, unless it be King Philip himself or else the great Marquis of Santa Cruz.”

“Master Gilbert can scarce be blamed for his choice,” remarked Tim. And, understanding from what the girl had said that there was no reason for the fear that had come over him, he meekly suffered himself to be taken into port in the character of a captive treasure-ship.

Chapter II

The Young Heir of Modbury.

"I CAN scarce agree with you there," remarked the young man whom Drusilla had described as a poor helpless wreck. He was a thin, sallow-faced, sad-looking individual, with lank black hair, hollow cheeks, and weary, lack-lustre eyes. His ruff was limp and frayed at the edge, and his long scraggy neck rose out of it like the stump of a mushroom that had difficulty in supporting the large head that surmounted it. His sombre black cloth doublet hung loose about his body, and its elbows were worn threadbare. One of his long bony fingers was thrust between the closed leaves of a little book that he held lovingly in his hand. His whole appearance suggested that his habit of life was that of a student, and his discourse certainly did not give the lie to his appearance.

"I can scarce agree with you, Sir Richard," said he in a thin, pipy voice. "Your Ovid is indeed a prince among poets, but in my own poor opinion Virgil is the greater of the two, inasmuch as the epic is greater than the lyric."

"Nay, but I care not to dispute such deep and learned matters with you, Master Pym," returned the other with a yawn that betrayed his weariness of the student's argument. "You are a scholar who knoweth all these things as I do know the ropes of a ship, while I am but a simple seaman, devoid of learning, who hath scarce opened a book since I was a mere stripling. Talk to me of travel if you like, or of Her Majesty's temper, and I will give ear to you, but to books and poets I cry avast!" He shifted his position on the fallen tree upon which he was sitting, and turned his clear gray eyes in the direction of the plantation towards which, a few minutes before, Drusilla had sailed off in quest of adventure. "Ah!" he cried, observing the girl approaching with Timothy Trollope at her heels. "Whom have we here—a prisoner of war? Why, I'll be sworn 'tis the self-same young jackanapes that leapt into Sutton Pool yester-morn to rescue the drunken fisherman that fell in! Dost know the name of him, Master Pym?"

The scholar drew the wide brim of his hat over his brow to shield his eyes from the glare of the sun.

"Ay," he said after a long pause, "I know him. 'Tis one of Barber Trollope's brood—a wild, thoughtless ragamuffin, that doth spend his days in loitering about the quays and picking up the talk of rough mariners. But what, I'd like to know, can Mistress Drusilla mean by thus dragging him hither? I warrant me she hath caught him in some poaching business."

Sir Richard stroked his crisp dark beard and said with a laugh:

"'Tis far more likely she hath taken him for some Barbary corsair, and is bringing him back as a prize. For you must bear in mind, Master Pym, that the maid left us on a treasure-hunting cruise. Ay, I'll be bound 'tis as I say," he added, as Drusilla came into the harbour of the trees. "She hath the rascal in tow, look you, with his belt for hawser."

At this moment a fleet of English merchantmen, in the boyish person of Master Gilbert Oglander, hove into sight in the offing; and Drusilla, relinquishing her prize and sternly bidding Timothy to remain at anchor until her return, ran off to meet her brother.

Timothy respectfully took off his cap and stood mutely in front of the handsome bearded gentleman whom Master Pym had addressed as “Sir Richard”, not daring to raise his eyes from the ground.

“How now, boy!” cried Sir Richard in a gruff voice, that seemed to have in it something of the deep roar of the sea waves breaking upon cavernous rocks. “What hath brought thee here? Hast been a-thieving of his lordship’s rabbits, quotha?”

“No, please your worship,” stammered Timothy, “I have done no manner of harm.”

“Then wherefore are you here, a-trespassing on private lands?” demanded Sir Richard.

“Mistress Oglander did arrest me, yonder by the trees,” answered Tim. “I was about to go home when she came behind me and seized me, declaring that I was a Spanish treasure-ship. I yielded to her humour, and—”

“Ay,” interrupted Sir Richard with a grim smile, “I’ll be sworn you yielded—as all Spaniards must when ‘tis question of fighting with a well-found English ship such as the one that conquered you. But, prithee, what may it be that you have concealed in yon fat wallet at your back? I’ll engage it is a pheasant-bird, or else a brace of plump partridges. Come, my young poacher, open your wallet that I may see!”

He caught the boy by the shoulder and turned him round, grabbing at the bag.

“‘Tis but a few poor herbs, your honour, that I have been gathering for my father,” explained Tim, opening the bag.

“And what does your father with such wretched weeds?” demanded Sir Richard.

“They are to be made into physic, sir,” said the lad.

“Physic?” cried Sir Richard, shaking his head in doubt. “Nay, poison more like! What is thy name, boy?”

“Timothy Trollope, at your honour’s service,” returned Tim. “Father’s a barber-surgeon.”

“Ay, a barbarous surgeon truly, if ‘twas he that patched up Jan Coppinger’s broken skull last week. I’d have made a goodlier job of it myself. And so Timothy is your name, eh? Well, I’ll bear it in mind, boy; for ‘twas you, if I mistake not, that I saw yester-noon helping to drag tipsy Tom Vercoe out of Sutton Pool. ‘Twas a kindly deed, to say the least on’t. And look you, Master Timothy, if ever you should take to the notion, as most boys do if I know ought of boyhood, of joining Her Majesty’s service on the sea, you have but to acquaint me with it, and I’ll be sworn you shall not wait long for a ship. Dost know me?”

Timothy’s face brightened as he answered:

“There be few boys in Plymouth town that do not know your worship. You are Sir Richard Grenville that went out to Virginia, and that also fought against the infidels at Lepanto.”

The joyous young voice of Drusilla Oglander broke in upon this little conversation.

“Come, Captain Grenville,” said she, taking Sir Richard by the arm and dragging him under the shadow of one of the beech-trees. “Y’are standing in the middle of the sea where you are. We are about to play at a great sea-fight, and you are to be the Spanish fleet.”

It was strange to see the tall strong man being led about by this little girl and made to do her bidding as if she had been his sovereign queen.

"Even as you list, good my mistress," said he with a docile submission which was hardly to be expected in one who had the reputation of being a cruel and relentless warrior. "I am willing to enact whatsoever part you please; only, if, as I suspect, I am to be the Armada, as you made me on the other occasion when you brought me to such disaster, I do beseech you to excuse me the long voyage round the islands of Orkney, for my limbs are scarce equal to the journey this morning."

"You shall take what part you choose," interposed Gilbert Oglander, standing at his sister's side and glancing up into Sir Richard Grenville's twinkling gray eyes.

Gilbert was a boy of thirteen years old, very agile and active. His hair was very dark, and its darkness made his skin seem all the more fair and clear. In stature he was not very tall for his age, but his limbs were sinewy and strong, and one could see at a glance that he was of gentle birth, that he had lived much of his life in the open air, and that he was well fitted to endure all manner of fatigue.

"You shall take what part you choose," said he.

"Why, then, an that be so," returned Captain Grenville, "I will choose to be Don Hugo de Monçada's great galleass, for then I may lie and rest me on Calais beach and thus be out of the action, as she was when she ran aground."

"Yes," agreed Drusilla; "but first you must be the whole Spanish fleet, anchored in Calais Roads. Master Pym will help you to make a show of numbers, while Gilbert will, of course, be Sir Francis Drake on board the REVENGE, and Sir Martin Frobisher on board the TRIUMPH, and whichever other of our English admirals he doth care to be. I am myself to be the lord admiral's flag-ship."

"And, prithee, what ship or squadron of ships doth young Timothy Trollope represent?" questioned Sir Richard Grenville. "Surely you will not scorn so useful an addition to the game?"

"We had best make Timothy enact the part of the English fire-ships," suggested Christopher Pym, smiling as his eyes rested upon the lad's bright red hair. And at his suggestion Drusilla clapped her hands together and cried "Yes, he shall be the fire-ships!"

And she forthwith proceeded to point out to her strangely-assorted playmates how the wide stretch of grass in front of them was to be understood by them all to be the Narrow Seas, how the distant plantation where Timothy had gathered his herbs was to represent the French coast between Calais and Dunquerque, and how the embankment of the fish-pond was to be Calais Roads. The higher ground under the beech-trees where the five were now standing was to be looked upon as the Kentish cliffs.

These matters being arranged to the understanding of all, the Spanish Armada, in the persons of Sir Richard Grenville and Master Christopher Pym, sailed obediently up the English Channel, pursued at no great distance by the English flag-ship and her consorts, who assailed their enemy with round after round of heavy shot, discharged from their chase-guns. There was one very tremendous engagement between Frobisher's TRIUMPH and the Spanish SANTA ANNA, which presently grew into a general conflict in which many ships were sunk. Then the Spaniards, much crippled in the fray, were permitted to sail on again, only to be again pursued by their persistent foes. The English ships bore down upon them,

and then, being within easy range, luffed up and poured their broadsides into the enemy's hulls with relentless fury. But the Armada looked always as formidable as ever, and again and again they formed themselves in line of battle, to endure yet again the prolonged fire of the English guns.

At last the Queen's fleet fell back and allowed the Spaniards to sail on in calm security to their desired refuge in Calais Roads. When, as they imagined, they were at a safe anchorage and hoped to repair the damages of battle (for in truth Sir Richard Grenville had received some surprising buffetings at the hands of Drusilla and Gilbert Oglander, to say nothing of Master Pym, whose wide-brimmed hat lay abandoned in mid-channel), the English ships drew near with the fell purpose of dislodging the enemy and driving them out into the open sea. And when night was supposed to have fallen, the lord-admiral and Sir Francis Drake put their woolly heads together in warlike conference and decided to send forth their fire-ships into the midst of the galleons.

Timothy Trollope received his instructions, and straightway drifted into the bay, waving his hands aloft like leaping flames. His near approach threatened to spread disaster among the ships of Spain, and at a given signal from the SAN MARTIN the dons all slipped their anchors, and in a confusion of panic endeavoured to make an escape. In the panic the great galleass of Don Hugo de Monçada ran aground on the sands and there lay basking in the sun, an unconcerned witness of the conflict that ensued between Pym and Trollope, who had now turned Spaniard, on the one side and Drusilla and her brother on the other.

Drusilla was bent upon carrying through the mimic fight to the battle of Gravelines, and, drawing Gilbert apart, she allowed Timothy and Master Pym to sail out into the Channel for some distance before starting in pursuit. It seemed to Sir Richard Grenville as he watched them that there occurred some change in their tactics, for Gilbert Oglander, having made pretence of sinking some half-score of the Armada ships, suddenly drew off and approached a very tall tree that stood alone on a wide expanse of grass. The lad placed his hands on the tree-trunk, looked up into the leafy branches and presently began to climb upward.

"Peradventure he intends to assail the enemy from the tops with musket and arquebus," mused Sir Richard, and he continued to watch his young friend ascending from branch to branch. Up and up he climbed till he reached one of the topmost boughs, and then he lay out upon the stout branch and crept along it towards its more slender end. Suddenly he slipped. For a moment it seemed as if he were about to fall to the ground, some thirty feet below, but he caught the branch under his right arm, and remained there suspended.

Understanding the boy's danger, Captain Grenville quickly rose to his feet and ran towards the tree.

"Hold fast!" he cried as he got to the foot of the tree.

Gilbert raised himself a few inches until he could catch hold of the bough with his second hand, and there he hung, calling aloud for help.

Sir Richard gripped the tree and was about to make the attempt to climb up to the boy's rescue, when his shoulders were seized by a pair of hands, someone leapt upon his back and clambered over him, crushing him down under two heavy boots. When the weight was removed from him he looked up and saw young Timothy Trollope scaling the tree with astonishing speed.

“Help! help! or I shall fall!” cried Gilbert Oglander.

“Hold but another moment,” returned Timothy; and ascending to the branch from which Gilbert was hanging he worked his way along it, and, leaning over like a very monkey, caught the lad in his one strong right arm and raised him bodily up to a position of safety.

For some minutes the two lads sat astride the bough facing each other, speaking never a word.

“Certes,” cried Gilbert at last, breaking the silence, “‘twas a narrow escape that! I was as near as might be to falling.”

“In sooth I believe you were,” agreed Timothy; “and it had been a goodly fall whichever way you had landed.”

“But for your timely help I should have been sorely hurt for a certainty,” remarked Gilbert; and then after a brief pause he added: “Prithee, how shall I reward you withal?”

“Nay, I need no reward, and will take none,” returned Timothy.

“Yea, but you shall have a suitable recompense; for it hath cost you something as I see,” said Gilbert. “Look at your doublet, ‘tis torn down the front. And you have scratched your face too.”

Timothy examined into his own hurts and said with a careless smile:

“Tut! ‘tis nothing. Both the rent and the scratch will easily mend; whereas if your worship had fallen to the ground it must surely have been a matter for the physician, and haply a month’s idleness in your bed. And now, so please you, we will, if you are ready, climb down again, for Sir Richard Grenville is calling to you, bidding you tell him if you are hurt.”

When the two had got down to the ground again, it was to find that Drusilla had run off to a farther end of the meadow, where a double row of giant trees marked the long avenue leading up from the lodge gates to Modbury Manor. From where he stood Timothy could hear the sound of horses’ feet and the jingling of stirrups and harness. It was the hawking party returning from the chase, and not until he saw them among the trees of the avenue did he remember the resolve he had made a little while before, to seek out his lordship’s steward and ask him for work in the stables. Turning to Master Gilbert Oglander, who was on the point of following Drusilla, Timothy ventured to say:

“I beg your honour’s pardon, but since you were so gracious a moment ago as to offer me a favour in return for the slight help I gave you, I have a boon that I would ask of you.”

“Name it,” demanded Gilbert.

“Ay, name it, lad,” urged Sir Richard Grenville, playfully slapping Tim on his broad back. “Thou’rt a deserving boy, that hath the makings of a man in him, and shalt have whatsoever boon thou dost name. So out with it, and be not over-modest in thy request.”

Timothy’s eyes rested still upon the handsome young countenance of Master Gilbert Oglander.

“‘Tis this that I would crave,” said he, “that you would by your favour help me to get work as a stable-boy or a shepherd or a falconer in his lordship your grandfather’s service.”

Gilbert Oglander nodded and said smilingly:

“Gladly will I do that for you, Master Trollope; ay, and more, for it seemeth to me you are fit for better work than to groom horses or to feed greedy hawks; and, moreover, I have taken somewhat of a fancy to you.” He looked aside at Sir Richard Grenville. “What say you, Captain Grenville?” he questioned. “Dost think he’ll do in the place of Will Leigh? Will is about to join Her Majesty’s service, you know.”

Thus appealed to, Sir Richard spoke very highly of Timothy Trollope, and added that he would himself see Lord Champernoun touching the matter. And at this Timothy thanked them both and presently turned on his way back to Plymouth, overjoyed at the new prospect that had so unexpectedly opened out before him.

As he trudged homeward along the leafy lanes he sang over and over again the snatch of a song of the time:

“*I would not be a serving-man*
To carry the cloak-bag still,
Nor would I be a falconer
The greedy hawks to fill;
But I would be in a good house,
And have a good master too;
And I would eat and drink of the best,
And no work would I do.”

It was not many days afterwards that Lord Champernoun, riding into Plymouth, halted at the sign of the Pestle and Mortar and informed the barber-surgeon that his son Timothy was to consider himself engaged as squire and personal attendant to Master Gilbert. His lordship gave instructions that Timothy was to go at once to Silas Quiller, the tailor, to be measured for two suits of the Oglander livery, and that as soon as the lad was fitted-out he was to repair to the manor and to begin his duties.

Those duties were very simple, as Timothy early discovered. He was to act as valet to the young heir of Modbury; to comb his hair in the mornings, keep his wardrobe in good order, attend him on his journeys, and do his bidding in all things. At the first Timothy was very humble, as he deemed it his duty to be; but as the months went on and he acquired some of the manners of the gentlefolk among whom he was placed, he became more familiar with his young master, who treated him more as a companion and a playmate than as a servant. Yet Timothy never overstepped the limits of his position, but was always respectful and submissive and loyal.

Chapter III

The Man with the Scarred Cheek.

ON a certain afternoon in December, Gilbert Oglander and Timothy Trollope were loitering on the heights of Plymouth Hoe on their way into the town. They

were looking out across the Sound, watching the movements of a ship that was drifting inward with the tide. A breeze from off the sea swelled the vessel's worn and mended topsails; she moved with a slow, lazy motion, as if in very weariness. The lads were questioning what manner of ship she might be and whence she had come.

"'Tis an old Hollander putting in for repairs," ventured Gilbert. "I warrant me she hath suffered some damage in the storm of yesternight."

Timothy shook his head, and then, after a short pause, he said:

"No, Master Gilbert, she is no foreigner at all, but one of our own brave English adventurers. Look at the tattered flag waving from the staff on her after-castle. 'Tis the red cross of St. George. And by the decayed and grimy look of her, I'd judge that she hath been on some long and perilous voyage—it may be to far Cathay, or the scorching coasts of Africa, or it may even be to the Western Indies of which we have heard so much."

"An that be so," returned Gilbert as he stood gazing with wondering eyes upon the approaching ship, "methinks there will be some very strange surprising things for us to see and hear when she droppeth anchor in the haven yonder. She is deeply laden, look you. 'Tis the bars of silver in her hold that do weigh her down, or else the heavy chests of gold and precious stones. Ay, 'tis surely from the Spanish Main that she hath come; for now as she beareth round I can e'en see the shining gold-dust clinging to her sides from out her port-holes like flour-drift from out the windows of Modbury Mill."

Timothy smiled incredulously and moved apart from his companion.

"'Tis no gold-dust that you see, my master," said he, "but only the red iron from off her rust-eaten chains. Come, let us walk down unto the harbour, that we may get a nearer view of her and see what manner of voyagers she bringeth home."

They walked together down the grassy slopes. In aspect, as in their natures, they differed one from the other as much as a heavy Flemish horse differs from an agile Arab steed. Timothy looked much the elder, although in truth he was his master's senior by no more than a twelvemonth. Gilbert had much ado to keep pace with his long measured strides, or perhaps it was his own great riding-boots of thick hard leather coming up above his knees which made his steps seem difficult. The strong December wind, blowing from over the Channel, caught his ample cloak, and the garment was forever escaping from his careless hold and flapping outward behind him, assailing his ears or getting twisted about his long sword. As the cloak blew aside from his shoulders it revealed the pink silk slashings of his doublet of russet velvet and the glittering ornaments on his girdle. He wore a little velvet cap, embroidered with gold lace and surmounted with a gallant waving feather which was held in place by a pearl brooch.

Timothy towered a full head and shoulders above him, being indeed almost a man in height and build, with great broad shoulders and big strong hands and muscular arms, and plump cheeks that were as red as ripe Devon apples. But in spite of his great bulk and his somewhat ungainly figure, Tim was nevertheless alert and active when occasion required, as many of his acquaintance were well aware; for at a wrestling bout, at fencing, riding, climbing, swimming, and many other manly exercises, there were few who could excel him. He was dressed very plainly now, as beseemed one whose work it was to serve and to obey. His cap,

which was set jauntily on his head of curly red hair, was not of silk or velvet, but simple knitted wool, unadorned with any gay-coloured ribbons or flaunting feathers. He wore no lace ruff about his thick neck, but only a simple white linen collar. His body was covered by a doublet of plain tan-coloured leather; his wide trunks were of fustian, trimmed with cotton braid and gartered below the knee; and he wore low shoes without any spurs. Like his young master, he carried a sword; and he also had in his belt a small dagger. He was well skilled in the use of both these weapons, and during the months that he had passed in Master Oglander's service he had imparted much of this skill to Gilbert.

By the time that the two had got down to the level ground, and had passed through several of the quaint narrow streets leading towards the harbour, the strange ship had sailed far to the eastward of Mill Bay; her men were aloft furling the sails, and she was slowly drifting with the tide into the sheltered basin of Sutton Pool.

Some fishermen and seamen had gathered in groups upon the wharf to watch her as she came nearer, and to make conjectures as to what might be her name and whence she had come. Gilbert Oglander strode into their midst and stood awhile listening to their talk.

"'Tis a full three years since she sailed out of Plymouth Sound," said one of them.

"Ay, and the rest!" declared another. "Why, 'twas in the summer of 1586 that she went out—in the self-same month, if not the same week, that Thomas Cavendish sailed with his three ships to make the voyage round the world, and that, as I do reckon it, must be nigh upon four years and six months; though in truth it seemeth less. But the years do fly amazingly in these busy times!"

"Know you the name of this vessel that is now coming in, Master Whiddon?" asked Gilbert of a brown-faced mariner at his elbow.

"Ay, to be sure, Master Oglander," returned Whiddon. "We do make her out to be the PEARL—one of Sir Walter Raleigh's ships—that went out along with two others upon a voyage of adventure to the Brazil, or some such place. Master Will Marsden, of Plymouth, was her captain; an old playmate of mine own, and a right fortunate seamen in his younger days. Well do I mind how we all envied him when he set out on this same voyage. But alas! by the look of his ship at this moment, and the fact that he hath come home alone and unattended, I much doubt that he hath left the better part of his good fortune behind him. Ah, there be blackamoors aboard of her!"

"Ay," interposed another of the group, who by his apron and his turned-up sleeves was evidently an artisan and a landsman. "And at seaman's work too. A woeful sign, my masters! Where be all the brave men of Devon that set sail in her, I'd like to know? Down among the coral and the shrimps at the bottom of the sea, I suppose, or else toiling in Spanish galleys, imprisoned by the Inquisition, or lying dead with the crows a-picking of their bones out yonder in Panama. 'Tis ever so with these buccaneering cruises. I like them not, for they do ever end with disaster."

"Thou'rt over-quick with thy conjectures, Jack Prynne," said the man named Whiddon. "The craft is short-handed, 'tis true; but how know you that the brave men you speak of have not given up their lives for old England in honest fight

against the Spaniards? Had you yourself been as brave as they—God rest 'em!—you would not have taken flight from Plymouth the last week, as you did with the other timid fools, because of a mere idle alarm that the king of Spain was sending over another armada, forsooth. A brave thing, truly, thus to take to your heels. Why, man, I marvel that y'are not ashamed to show your craven face in the town again!"

Jack Prynne stroked his beard, partly hiding his shamed face with his big work-worn hand.

"When we went away," said he, "the town was ill-defended. Sir Francis Drake was absent."

"The more reason why every man should have remained to protect his home and do his duty by his neighbours," returned Whiddon. "Drake cannot well be in two places at once. What astonisheth me is, that you should all have come trooping back the instant you heard that Sir Francis had again taken up his residence in the town. Sure, 'tis a very high compliment to a man when his mere presence among us should inspire such confidence and allay such a general panic."

"There goes her anchor!" cried Timothy Trollope. And as he spoke there was a splash of water at the ship's bow, followed by the familiar rumbling noise of her hempen cable as it tore through the hawse-pipe.

Now that the vessel was close at hand it could be seen that she was very much battered by the storms and conflicts through which she had passed during her long voyaging in distant seas. The lower timbers of her hull were overgrown with barnacles and slimy green weeds. Above the water-line there were many shot-holes, patched up with raw hides, sheets of lead, or rough-hewn balks of wood; and in one place, abaft her main-chains, a cannon-ball could be seen deeply embedded in the stout oak. In place of her original mizzen-mast there was the trunk of a forest tree, with the bark still upon it; and the lateen yard was made of spliced bamboo. Her standing rigging was mended with strands of twisted cow-hide. She was a ship of about a hundred tons burden, built with a high castle at her poop and with bulging sides. Her bows were as round and blunt as the breasts of the noisy sea-birds that floated near her in the harbour, feeding on the garbage thrown from the fishing-boats.

She had not long been at anchor when a boat was put off from her, and was rowed by two men towards the stone-built slip beside which Gilbert Oglander and Timothy Trollope were standing. The boat had four occupants in addition to the two seamen who pulled at the oars. They were a black-bearded, middle-aged man who sat on the stern gunwale, and who seemed by his frequent commands to the rowers to be in authority; a woman, who sat near him; a beardless youth, who was crouching down in the bottom of the boat; and an aged, white-haired man, with a brown sunburned face and a long silvery beard, who was bending forward over the prow as if in desperate eagerness to spring on shore.

As the little craft came yet nearer, Timothy Trollope observed that the passengers seemed to be no less weary and tattered than the ship from which they had just come. The old man at the bow wore no clothing save a ragged canvas shirt and a pair of wide, ill-made trunks. One of the rowers had but a single sleeve to his jerkin, and his hair was long and matted. The woman wore a large black cloak, whose hood was drawn over her head, leaving visible no more of her than

her thin olive-coloured face and her sparkling dark eyes. She paid scarcely any regard to what was passing, but sat like an image, gazing stonily before her.

"Ship your oar, Pascoe!" cried the man at the stern. "Pull three more strokes, Mason!"

He rose to his feet as he gave these orders, showing himself to be very tall. None of the men on shore seemed to know him; nor did he greet them, even as a stranger newly arrived from foreign climes might have been expected to do.

The old man at the bow was the first to leap on shore. And, having done so, he fell down upon his knees, reverently pressed his lips upon the stones, and murmured the words:

"Thanks be to God! Thanks be to God!"

Then he stood up beside the boat and held it by the gunwale while the woman and the two other passengers stepped ashore.

Gilbert Oglander paid but small regard to them, little dreaming of the important parts they were destined to play in his life. He only noticed as they passed him that the tall man's otherwise handsome face was marred by an unsightly scar on the right cheek, that the youth seemed to be about sixteen years of age, and that the woman, when she spoke to either of her companions, did so in a foreign tongue.

The youth who had come ashore paused for a moment, tightening his sword-belt, and as he did so he glanced aside at the old man.

"Art going back to the ship, Jacob?" he inquired with seeming carelessness, yet with a look of strange eagerness in his dark eyes as if much depended upon the veteran's answer.

The graybeard slowly shook his head, and the deep-drawn sigh that issued from his lips seemed to Gilbert Oglander to betoken a whole world of past troubles and present gratitude.

"Wherefore should I go back, Master Philip?" said he in a husky voice. "Have I not had enough of the pestilent old hulk, think you? I have done all that was needed of me, I trow; and since, as you well know, I did but engage to work my passage home, there be no wages due to me and we are quits. As to my worldly belongings," he added with a hollow, uneasy laugh as he rested his bony hand upon the leathern bag that hung at his side, "this wallet containeth all my chattels and goods. Ay, all that I am worth in the world. And little enough, you'll be saying, as the sole outcome of all my perils and wanderings. Howbeit," he went on, not heeding that the young man had already passed beyond hearing and was continuing his way up the slip, "there's but small use in complaining. And after all, God hath been truly merciful in that He hath brought me safely back to my dear native land. Sure 'tis worth all my twenty-three years of voyaging to be back once more in Plymouth town and to again set foot on English ground!"

Illustration:

God hath been truly merciful in that he hath brought me safely back

A gust of cold wind blew round one of the stone piers of the wharf near which he lingered. He shivered slightly, and drew his ragged canvas shirt closer about his

bare chest and neck. Then his moist blue eyes surveyed the group of men who now stood apart watching the boat returning to the ship.

"I don't see none o' my old friends among you, my masters," said he, looking from one to the other. "You'm all strangers to me. And peradventure I am as great a stranger to yourselves. But the time hath been when I was as well known in Plymouth as the tower of St. Andrew's church yonder." A forced, unnatural smile flitted about the parched blue lips as he added, addressing no one in particular: "Jacob Hartop is my name—Jacob Hartop that went out with John Hawkins in the year 1567, and that hath now comehome after three-and-twenty years of foreign travel and fighting and slavish toil."

He held out his hand to grasp that of one of the older men who stood near. As he did so Timothy Trollope noticed that his wrist bore an indented mark upon it, as if it had been too tightly clasped by a bracelet. Several of the bystanders now shook hands with him.

"Thou'rt welcome home, friend Hartop," said one.

"God give you peace and joy, my master!" said another.

"And may you never need to wander from England's shores again!" said a third.

Captain Whiddon then stepped forward, and said he:

"Be you related to young George Hartop that fell in the great fight against the Invincible Armada of Spain?"

Jacob Hartop stared blankly before him. It was evident that he knew naught of the great fight referred to. He was about to answer when the touch of a hand on his thin bare arm caused him to turn suddenly round, and he stood face to face with Gilbert Oglander.

"Thou'rt thinly clad, and the wind blows cold," said Gilbert as he took off his cloak and spread it over the ancient traveller's shoulder. "I pray you take this cloak."

The old man drew back.

"Nay, I can take no such goodly gift from one who doth owe me no manner of kindness," he declared, attempting to remove the garment. "Believe me, I am not so cold but that a walk and a flagon of ale will warm me." But seeing that the offer was seriously meant he relented, and, fixing his tearful eyes upon Gilbert, he said: "Now, prithee, my gallant young sir, what might be your honour's name? Tell me, so that I may bear it in memory, and think of you with the gratitude that I do truly feel."

Gilbert Oglander made a light pretence of not having heard the question, and, followed by Timothy, he strode gaily up to the head of the slip.

The tall man with the scar on his cheek was at this moment crossing the muddy roadway with his two companions towards a house with heavy overhanging gables, that stood at the corner of one of the alleys. It was a tavern, as could be known by the fact that the window lattices were painted red, and it bore the sign of the Three Flagons. The stranger had to bend down his head as he entered the low porchway.

"Truly a man may be known by the hostelry he chooseth," remarked Timothy Trollope as he saw the woman's skirts disappear behind the door-post. "I had thought by their favour that these people were of high station and good breeding, and that by their great haste to quit their ship they were intent upon travelling yet farther into the country, haply to some famous old estate. But 'tis plain to see that

they do intend to abide at the humble Three Flagons. 'Tis a cheap inn and an ill-managed. Nevertheless, I should engage that they will have better comfort withal than on board the cranky old PEARL. Think you that the man with the wounded cheek is her captain?"

Gilbert shrugged his shoulders.

"A ship's master would scarcely be the first to quit her on coming into port," said he; "although, indeed, it may well be that the man's gallantry hath brought him ashore thus speedily in his wish to place the woman and her son in decent lodgings."

"And, prithee, wherefore do you so readily make up your mind that the lad is her son?" inquired Timothy.

"For the simple and plain reason that her eyes and his have got the self-same foreign look in them," answered Gilbert. "But wherefore should we discuss these people? Foreigners as they are, they can be of no earthly interest to us, now or hereafter. As to the ship, well, had we but gone aboard of her we might have learned something of more value touching the adventures she hath gone through; but as the matter stands, Tim, we have but wasted a good half-hour of time, and shall not now be home until after dark."

Chapter IV

At the Sign of the Pestle and Mortar.

ON the afternoon upon which the good ship PEARL dropped anchor in Sutton Pool, Peter Trollope was less busy than it was his wont to be at that time of day. His one customer since noon had been a poor farrier's apprentice, who had come in to have an aching tooth pulled out—an operation which had occupied the barber-surgeon scarcely a minute, and earned for him the total sum of twopence. But he had seen the ship enter the harbour, and knew well that sooner or later some of her crew would pay him a visit. In the meantime he engaged himself with two large, wild-looking birds, which he kept imprisoned in a dark box on a shelf near the window. He had just been feeding them with raw meat and was closing the lid of the box, when the shop-door was flung open and his son Timothy strode within, making a great clatter with his sword as he dragged the weapon behind him along the stone floor.

Tim threw his cap upon the oak settle at the farther end of the room, seated himself in an easy chair before the fire, and stretched out his legs at full length in front of him with all the freedom of a full-grown man. The bull-dog, which had been asleep in one of the warm corners of the ingle, crept out yawning and wagging his stump of a tail by way of greeting.

"So thou hast at last thought fit to come in and see if we be all alive still?" said Peter in an agrieved tone, as he regarded his stalwart son. "Thou'rt a dutiful son to thy poor parents, in all conscience. 'Tis shameful of thee, thus to neglect us, Tim. Thou'rt so vastly taken up with all the great folks at Modbury—my lord this, and my lady that, and all the rest of them—that thou dost seem to forget thine own

flesh and blood. 'Twas only yesterday, as I live, that I saw thee passing by my very door without so much as looking in to give me a good day! Zounds, boy, 'tis most unseemly!"

Timothy stroked the dog's ears without raising his eyes to his justly-offended father.

"I had been bidden to go quickly on my errand, father," he explained, "and I dared not tarry by the way. I might not even have come in at this present time to see thee, but that my master hath given me leave while he goes to the end of the town to take a message from my lord to Sir Francis Drake."

"Methinks Master Oglander might have saved himself a journey," remarked the barber; "for 'tis only a half-hour since that I saw Sir Francis passing the door here, on his way, as I do believe, to Modbury Manor; for he wore his new damson silk cape with the gold-lace trimmings, and you may be sure by that token that he was going to where there will be women's eyes to look upon him."

Peter had approached the fireplace, and now stood with his back to the crackling logs, facing his son.

"I am sorry," he continued in a more cheery tone, "that Master Gilbert did not chance to come in with thee, Tim. I have wished to see him these many days past on a matter of business. I have here a pair of fine young goshawks that he might be willing to buy from me."

"Show them to me," demanded Timothy, rising from his chair. "If they be goshawks indeed, and in goodly condition, I doubt not that he will gladly buy them. Let me see them. I shall soon know if they be of any use. But I will wager you ere I set eyes on them that they are no more fit to fly against a pheasant than a mere sparrow-hawk might be."

"Nay, I cannot myself swear to them," said the barber, crossing to the shelf near the window, and proceeding to open the box, "for I have not been brought up among gentlefolks as thou hast been, and have never in all my life been present at a hawking party. But the lad who left them in my keeping did positively declare them to be of the true goshawk breed, and he bade me sell them for him if perchance I might find a likely customer." He threw back the lid of the box. "Here they be," said he.

Timothy looked over his father's shoulder at the birds. Then he thrust his gloved hand deep into the box. There was a noisy flapping of wings and a harsh rasping screech. Tim brought forth his hand with one of the hawks perched upon it. He held it aloft, examining the bird with critical eye.

"He is somewhat short i' the neck and flabby of flesh," he remarked, with the air of one who was a judge of such points, "but the head is of good shape, and the eyes are clear. He is fierce enough too, o' my conscience. Here, put him back, lest he bite me! And now," he added, when the bird was restored to its prison, "what want you for the pair of them? No cozening, mind you. I will not have my master overcharged even by my own father."

The barber-surgeon named the sum at which he was willing to sell the birds, and Tim at once proceeded to beat down the price to half the amount. Neither noticed in the midst of their dispute that a customer had entered the shop.

"Hi there, master barber!" cried the new-comer. "Cease your wrangling, and come and cut me my hair! Dost think I am going to wait for you all night?"

“Presently, your worship—presently,” answered Peter, snatching up his scissors and comb. Then, turning to his son, he added: “Thy mother is laid abed with her old illness, Tim; get thee upstairs to her for awhile.”

Timothy obediently disappeared through the door at the back of the shop, stumbling up the stairs with noisy feet and equally noisy sword; while his father, snipping his scissors merrily in his right hand and thus making a show of being exceedingly busy, offered his customer a chair where the light from the window might fall upon him.

He was a stranger to Peter Trollope, and therefore, it must be assumed, a stranger to Plymouth also. His long, untidy hair and beard, his bronzed skin, and, indeed, his whole appearance, betokened that he had newly come off the sea. His doublet, which had once been velvet, was worn threadbare; the colour, whatever it may originally have been, had suffered by the salt water, and was now an indistinct gray, stained here and there with dark-brown patches, which Peter surmised to be the stains of hardened blood. It was plain to see that the man was in some sort a warrior as well as a traveller.

While the barber was spreading a white napkin about him to protect his clothing from the clippings of hair which must presently fall from the scissors, he looked into the stranger’s face, and perceived that the right cheek was marred by an old wound—a long straight wound like the cut of a knife, beginning below the eye and ending somewhere in the midst of his thick black beard.

“Well?” quoth the stranger, seeing that the barber hesitated to make a start. “Cut me my hair, I say.”

“I am ready to execute your worship’s will,” announced Peter with a low bow, as he snipped his scissors. “Prithee, sir, will you have your worship’s hair cut after the Italian manner, short and round, and then flounced with the curling-irons, or like a Spaniard’s, long at the ears and curled like to the two ends of a new moon; or will you be Frenchified with a love-lock down to your shoulder, whereon you may hang your lady’s favour? The English cut is base in these days of fashion, and gentlemen scorn it. Speak the word, sir; and howsoever you would have it, it shall be done.”

“Nay, a plague on your love-locks and curling-irons,” the stranger cried impatiently. “Do it as you please, but howsoever you do it, do it quickly. I know naught of your strange fashions and monstrous manners of haircutting. I have been absent from England so many years, that now when I come back I am as one who hath risen from out his grave to find all things changed.”

“In truth, sir,” observed the barber, “your worship will indeed find many changes, alike in government and in manners, if so be your absence hath been so long as you do say. Her Majesty’s ministers and counsellors, indeed, have changed as often as the seasons. But the Queen herself, God bless her, is yet with us; so England is merry England still, and long may it so remain!”

Peter was now busy at work shearing his customer’s plenteous crop of tangled hair.

“And how many years in all did your worship say that you had been abroad?” he ventured presently to inquire.

“More years than I care to number,” was the somewhat curt reply.

“Ah!” responded Peter. “Then, sir, you had no hand in the glorious defeat of the great Armada of Spain? Haply your worship was in some far-distant country at that great time?”

The stranger shifted his position in his chair. His fingers moved restlessly.

“Haply I was,” he answered. “But had I chanced to be at the very extremities of the earth, methinks I should still have heard rumour of the matter; for wherever there be Spaniards and wherever there be Englishmen, they are alike disposed to boast of their own prowess on that occasion. And from neither the one nor the other is it possible to arrive at the simple truth.”

“The simple truth is simply this, your honour,” returned Peter Trollope, with a proud smile, “that the Spaniards, despite their greater ships and their greater army of soldiers, were utterly routed and defeated.” And the gossiping barber proceeded to tell the whole story to his listening customer as he continued with his clipping.

At length, having fairly come to the beard, he broke off in his wordy narrative and requested to know if his worship would have his beard cut short and to a peak like Sir Francis Drake’s, or broad and round like a spade. “Or shall I shave it off,” said he, “and leave only your worship’s moustachios?” But he had scarcely made the last suggestion when his eye was once more caught by the cut on the man’s cheek. “I would advise that the beard be left as it is,” he said, “for it doth help to hide the wound upon your face. Although, indeed, there be many men in Plymouth who would be mightily proud to display so honourable a scar, for I doubt not your worship came by it in some desperate battle against our enemies of Spain.”

It was at this moment that Timothy returned into the shop. He overheard his father’s remark, and noticed that for some reason the stranger winced, as though he were far from being proud of the old wound.

“I do perceive that ‘tis the cut from a sword,” added the barber-surgeon, looking at the scar more closely. “I trust, for the honour of England, that you slew the rascal who gave it you.”

“‘Tis no sword-cut, but a wound from an Indian’s arrow, shot at me from ambush,” declared the traveller; and there was a curious tone in his voice—a tone which seemed to indicate that he was in reality giving only a half explanation, or perhaps even a totally false one. In any case he hastened very plainly to change the subject.

“You named one Francis Drake just now,” said he. “Peradventure you can inform me if he be still alive?”

“Alive? Ay, that he is! Alive and well, the Lord be praised! and in Plymouth town at this present time—ah! I beg your worship’s pardon. Perhaps I caught your cheek with the point of my scissors?”

The stranger had given a slight nervous start, and a look of displeasure if not of actual annoyance had come into his dark eyes.

“In Plymouth at this present time?” he repeated. And then he muttered some words in a foreign tongue, which neither Timothy nor his father could comprehend.

“Had you chanced to come in but an hour earlier you might even have encountered him,” remarked the barber, “for he passed by this very door, and

returned my salutation most graciously, as, indeed, he doth always do, whenever I come nigh him; for he is by no means proud, I promise you, for all that he hath done more for England than any other living man. But I am talking thus while it may be that your worship doth know him far better than I—while it may even be that you are his personal friend."

The man with the scarred cheek made no response to this last remark, but only leaned back in his chair, closing his eyes and knitting his brows. He remained silent until Trollope had clipped his beard to a satisfactory shape and was giving it the final touches. Then the warrior looked up suddenly and said with curious earnestness, as though he were seeking an answer to a most important question:

"There dwelt in the neighbourhood of Plymouth a score of years ago or so, a certain nobleman by name Baron Champernoun. Canst tell me, master barber, if there be any of his lordship's family still dwelling in these parts?"

Peter Trollope glanced aside at his son and smiled. Timothy strolled slowly towards the window and seated himself near the two goshawks, whence he could watch the stranger's face.

"The name is passing well known to all men of Devon," answered Peter as he surveyed his workmanship with excusable pride. "And Lord Champernoun himself—the only Lord Champernoun that I have known—still dwelleth at his family estate nigh unto the village of Modbury. He is stricken in years and passing feeble; but clear in his mind withal, and as excellent and worthy a Christian gentleman as you will find in all the land. As to his lordship's family, sir, 'tis small in number. He had two sons, your worship, to wit, Edmund Oglander and Jasper; for Oglander is the family name, you must know, Champernoun being but the baron's title, bestowed upon the head of the family in Henry the Fifth's time, and—"

"Ay, I wot well that there were two sons," interrupted the stranger, brusquely, "Edmund and Jasper, you say. Ay, and what of them, I pray you?"

"They both are dead," returned Peter Trollope. "Both lost their lives in distant lands. The Honourable Edmund Oglander, my lord's eldest son, went over to the Netherlands some five years agone, and fell in the battle of Zutphen—the same engagement in which the virtuous and gallant Sir Philip Sidney received his death wound from a Spanish bullet. The younger son, Jasper, died of a fever or some such pestilent mischance out in the Western Indies, whither he had gone to seek adventure and fortune in one of John Hawkins' ships. His lordship grieved not overmuch for the loss of Jasper, 'tis said; nor do I marvel at it, for surely a greater scamp and reprobate than young Jasper Oglander hath never lived."

"And both are dead, eh?" mused the traveller in a strange calculating tone. "Ods life! and who would have thought it? Why, then," he presently added, "it must be that the old baron is now quite alone in the world, and hath none of his own kin to follow him in his title and estates? Sooth, I do pity him to be thus left desolate in his old age, with never a son or a son's son to carry on his honoured name!"

"'Tis doubtless a sore grief to his lordship that his son Edmund surviveth not to enjoy his great inheritance," remarked Peter Trollope, "albeit Master Edmund gave up his life in a good and noble cause, and therein Lord Champernoun hath assuredly a sweet consolation. But if his lordship hath no longer a son, there is,

after all, his grandson—a bright and gallant young gentleman, and a worthy heir to so vast an heritage."

The stranger raised his heavy eyebrows in quick surprise.

"So-ho?" quoth he; "a grandson, eh? Prithee, what might be the fortunate stripling's age?"

The barber turned to his son, who was at that moment looking out through the window at a strangely-dressed negro woman who was crossing the road in company with a seaman in the direction of the Three Flagons.

"Tim, what might be Master Gilbert's age?" he asked of the lad.

"Fourteen years, mayhap," answered Timothy. "And speaking of Master Gilbert, father, that remindeth me that I am to meet him at the market-cross at four by the clock; so I must tarry here no longer. I will let him know what you have said concerning the goshawks." And with that he took up his cap, wished his father a "God speed you!" and strolled out into the street.

As he approached the Three Flagons he was attracted by a little crowd of boys and girls who stood on the causeway staring at the black woman as she followed the seaman into the inn. At the same moment the youth whom Tim had seen coming ashore from the Pearl was making his way through the crowd. The lad glanced up at Tim in passing and seemed about to speak. Tim returned the glance and said:

"If 'tis the tall man with the scarred cheek that you are seeking, my master, you will find him at the sign of the Pestle and Mortar, some dozen yards along the Barbican on your left-hand side."

"'Tis not him that I am in want of at this moment," responded the lad, "I am seeking for the old rascal who came from off the ship with us an hour ago. Canst tell me which way he went?"

Timothy shook his head, disliking the haughty way in which the information was demanded.

"No," he answered. "'Twas no business of mine to spy upon him."

"I will reward you well if you can find him for me," pursued the other with unmistakable eagerness. And he thrust his fingers into his pouch and drew forth a small silver coin.

Timothy Trollope smiled and bade him keep his money. "As for my turning constable," he added, "I thank your honour, but I have other matters to occupy me." And so saying he went on his way towards the market-place.

As he walked along the harbour front his thoughts wandered back to the old storm-beaten mariner who had named himself Jacob Hartop. He remembered how Hartop, on stepping ashore, had gone down on his knees and fervently thanked his God for having brought him safely back to his native land, and how the tears had come into his dim eyes when Gilbert Oglander had done him the slight kindness of giving him a garment to cover his ill-clad body. Such a devout and grateful old man, thought Tim, could scarcely truly deserve the title of rascal which had just been applied to him. Why was this foreign-looking youth so very anxious that the old mariner should not escape him? Was it that he might do him some good service or pay him some debt of gratitude? Or was it not rather that he sought to do him some personal injury?

Chapter V

Rapiers to the Rescue.

IT was already dark as night when Gilbert Oglander and Timothy Trollope, having kept their tryst in the old market-place, made their way together out of the dimly-lighted town. The wind had changed to the north-east, and snow had come with it. The white flakes swept along with a mad horizontal rush, alighting only, as by accident, when some tree or cottage or human figure barred their onward career. The two lads pulled down their caps about their tingling ears, bent their whitened bodies forward against the blast, and strode along regardless of the slush and mud upon the road.

Neither spoke much until they had walked almost a mile's distance away from the town and were out in the open country. Here the snow seemed to be falling thicker and the wind to be blowing almost a gale.

"Methinks thou hadst best have kept thy cloak to thyself, Master Gilbert," remarked Timothy at length, as he passed under the friendly shelter of a thick hedge, "for it had been of far greater use to thee than to the old man you so generously gave it to. Here are we exposed to the bitterness of this storm, while he, I will warrant me, is already at home before a goodly fire, or else carousing with his boon companions in some comfortable tavern parlour."

Gilbert walked on a few paces in silence.

"It matters little to me whether the cloak hath been of use to the poor fellow or not," he presently said. "I saw him tremble with the cold, and could not think of him going half-clothed while I had a garment to spare. And when one thinks on't, Tim, 'tis surely a hard matter for a seaman who hath spent half a lifetime in tropic countries to come home here to England in the very depth of winter."

"Pooh!" objected Timothy. "But 'tis said that an Englishman can endure any climate in the world and suffer no ill from it. What of Sir Martin Frobisher and his crews, who voyaged far up into the frozen regions of the Arctic, where, 'tis said, there be whole mountains of ice, and where even the salt seas be frozen over for a full half of the year? I will engage that Sir Martin and his men met not such kindly gentlemen up in those parts to give them warm cloaks withal. And as for this old man Hartop, I'd be in nowise astonished to-morrow if I heard that he had sold your cloak to a pawnbroker and spent the money in strong liquors, or else thrown it away in the dice-box. You cannot persuade me, Master Gilbert, that a man who hath been for a score of years in foreign lands could come home so poor as this man, if he had not squandered all his gains in wanton idleness."

"Misfortune doth ofttimes come even to those who are righteous," remarked Gilbert Oglander in a sober voice as he shook the wet snow from the front of his doublet and hitched his sword anew under his arm, "and I will not believe that the man who could devoutly thank God, as Hartop did, for having brought him safely home, could be aught but an honest man at heart."

"Nevertheless," pursued Timothy, "I do greatly fear that your charity in this present case was misplaced; for as I was passing nigh to the sign of the Three

Flagons on my way to the market-place just now, I encountered once again the dark-eyed youth whom we saw coming from off the ship. He besought me to tell him, if I could, whither the old man Hartop had gone, and did even offer to reward me if I could aid him in arresting the old rascal, as he called him. He spoke in such wise that I could only believe that the old mariner had committed some cruel offence against him. And, indeed, Master Gilbert, if you remember, this Hartop was truly in a mighty desperate hurry to separate himself from his shipmates."

"Well, well, 'tis no affair of ours, Tim, howsoever it be," returned Gilbert. And he bent down his head and marched on in silence.

Tim Trollope walked in advance of his young master to shield him from the snow; and thus they plodded on their way, until they came to a narrow lane bordered by high overhanging trees that increased the darkness, and amid whose leafless, dripping branches the wind whistled and moaned. As the two turned into the lane Timothy dropped back to his companion's side.

"There is a matter upon which I listed to speak with you," he abruptly said, and then was silent for a dozen strides. "'Tis about the man we saw to-day—" he added, "the man with the scarred cheek."

"And what of him?" questioned Gilbert. "Hast learned peradventure that he hath discovered a new Eldorado? or that his ship is laden with a cargo of talking poll-parrots and gambolling monkeys? What of him, quotha?"

"Nay, I have learned but little concerning either him or his ship," answered Timothy. "But when I was in at the Pestle and Mortar this afternoon, he also was there, getting his hair and beard trimmed, and it chanced that he did question my father most curiously touching my lord your grandfather and your late uncle Jasper. It seemeth that he knew both your father and your uncle. And more especially was he interested as to yourself, Master Gilbert."

"How so?" exclaimed Gilbert, growing attentive now. "But if I heard him aright as he spoke to the woman who was with him, 'twas surely in the Portuguese that he spoke, and I marvel how any Portugal man could have known my father."

"'Tis true that he did speak in a foreign tongue," responded Timothy, "but, for all that, I take him to be an Englishman born, if indeed he be not even a man of Devon. My reason for speaking of him, however, is that he showed a very strange and surprising concern in the matter of my Lord Champernoun's title and estates. When he was told that your uncle Jasper had died of a malaria out on the Spanish Main, a smile came upon his face. It was as if he knew a vast deal more about Jasper Oglander than we could tell him. 'Twas not my business to question one of my father's customers; but had I been bold enough I should certainly have asked him if 'twas not true, as I do suspect, that he had some part in the death of your uncle; for you must not forget, Master Gilbert, that the matter was never very clearly explained to us. Even Sir Richard Grenville threw some doubt upon the report that he died of a fever, and suggested that 'twas by the hand of man that he was taken off. And, indeed, if all we have heard of Jasper Oglander be true, he was a man (saving your presence) of such evil ways, that 'twould be no great wonder to me if he had been murdered by some one whom he had injured out there in wild Virginia."

"Thou'rt too prone to listen to idle gossip, Tim," rejoined Gilbert in a tone of reproof; "ay, and too ready to draw your own conclusions. For my own part I am

willing to believe that Uncle Jasper was a far better man than report hath made him out to be. 'Tis true that I never knew him, and that I never even set eyes upon him save when I was a little child, and too young to judge of his character. But my grandfather hath never spoken an ill word of him in my hearing, and, prithee, what should that bode but that Jasper was a very worthy and proper gentleman?"

"Not in your hearing, it may well be," interposed Timothy, "but I do assure you that my lord hath no great cause to love his younger son's memory. As for your father (God rest him!), he and his brother Jasper were ever at enmity."

Gilbert walked on for many moments without speaking, but at last he said:

"I have heard more than once of that enmity, Tim, but never yet have I discovered its cause. Canst tell me why it was that they quarrelled, lad?"

"There were divers causes, Master Gilbert," returned Tim. "But for the most part the enmity arose (or so at least I have been told) out of Jasper Oglander's envy and jealousy. He was jealous of your father's greater wit and learning; of his greater skill in all games and manly sports; jealous in that his brother Edmund was chosen by the Queen to be one of Her Majesty's pages at the court and afterwards one of her favoured courtiers. But more than all else, 'tis said that he was jealous in that your father was the elder son, and by consequence the heir to the Champernoun title and lands. Also, you must understand—"

Gilbert suddenly gripped his companion's arm.

"Hark!" he cried. "Prithee, what is that strange wailing sound that I hear?"

Timothy came to a stand-still and held his breath, listening for a few moments.

"I hear naught whatsoever," said he, "naught but the wailing of the wind among the trees. Yet wait! there was in truth another sound. Was't not the screech of some wild bird of the night? No; 'tis there again. 'Tis someone singing—some wayfarer chanting a ditty to scare away the ghosts."

"Even so it is," agreed Gilbert. "Ay, and a likely place for a ghost too, down yonder in Beddington Dingle. I had rather travel a good five miles round than pass through that dark and desolate wood after midnight."

"And I also," returned Timothy, resuming his steady strides; "but less from the fear of ghosts and goblins than from dread of footpads and thievish vagabonds; for the place hath been overrun with them these many weeks past. 'Twas in that self-same hollow that Farmer Uscombe was robbed of his purse, and ten angels in it, only a seven nights since. Faith, my master, but the man in front of us hath truly a lusty and tuneful voice! Ay, and a clear. You can e'en hear his very words. 'Tis some mariner's song he singeth, touching the taming of the blustering winds or some such theme. Hark at him!"

The two lads gave no thought to the continuance of their broken conversation, but walked silently onward through the dark lane, guiding their way by the level patches of snowy ground that lay between the high and shadowy banks at the roadside. The wayfarer in advance of them was either walking very slowly or else coming towards them from the opposite direction, for his merry ditty became more and more distinct with every step they took.

"Who thinks to strive against the stream,
And for to sail without a mast,
Or without compass cross the main,

His travel is forlorn and waste;
And so in cure of all his pain
His travel is his chiefest gain.

"So he likewise, that goes about
To please each eye and every ear,
He needs to have, withouten doubt,
A golden gift with him to bear;
For ill report shall be his gain
Though he bestow both toil and pain.

"God grant each man once to amend;
God send us all a happy place;
And let us pray unto the end
That we may have our prince's grace:
Amen, amen! so shall we gain
A due reward for all our pain."

Thus he sang. And at the close of each verse he broke out into a lively chorus that echoed through the woods. Towards the last, however, he stopped very suddenly, and his melody presently gave place to a loud alarming cry for help.

"Thieves! Cut-purses!" he cried "Ah, had I but a sword!"

The two lads set off at once at a quick run in the direction whence the cry had come.

They had gone but fifty yards or so, when at a sharp turn in the lane they came upon some four men whose figures loomed darkly through the mist of falling snow. One of the men lay struggling on the ground trying to disentangle his head and arms from his cloak, while two of his assailants knelt over him, the one evidently robbing him of such valuables as he might have about him, the other with a dagger threateningly drawn. The fourth man stood apart, encouraging them in their evil work.

Gilbert and Timothy understood in a moment what was going on. The victim of this night attack was doubtless the wayfarer whom they had heard but a few minutes before carolling his moral ditty; and these three vagabonds had fallen upon him from their ambush in the dingle, where they had probably waited with intent to waylay the first passer-by and rob him.

"Out with your rapier, Master Gilbert!" cried Timothy as he drew his own weapon. "We must e'en rescue the man. Yet use your blade discreetly, for 'twill go ill with us if we do slay one of the rascals."

Illustration:
Timothy caught him by the neck and hurled him back

He flung himself upon the man nearest to him—the one with the drawn dagger,—caught him by the neck and hurled him back into the ditch. Gilbert Oglander was about to deal in like manner with the other robber, when the third man, who had hitherto stood apart,—a very tall man, wearing a wide slouched hat and a long cloak,—sprang upon him and forced him back.

Timothy now stood over their fallen victim, guarding him while he struggled to his knees. In the meantime the one whom Tim had flung into the ditch had regained his feet and drawn his rapier. Wrapping the skirt of his cloak about his left arm, he leapt upon Gilbert Oglander. In the darkness Gilbert scarcely saw his intention, and might have been taken wholly unaware had not Timothy warned him at the right moment. Gilbert caught his adversary's rapier on his own blade and returned the attack. The man facing him was small, lithe, and evidently well skilled in the use of his weapon. Bending his body forward, he stretched forth his cloaked left arm, thus shielding himself. Gilbert made a thrust at the man's right side, but with no greater result than to strike a spark of fire from the other's blade. In recovering his balance he felt his left foot slip upon a clod of snow; he fell forward, and at the same moment there was a sharp twinge of pain in the upper part of his right arm. His sword dropped from his grasp and he rolled over.

When he rose to his feet again he saw that the three robbers had escaped. Timothy, and the wayfarer who had been the cause of this encounter, were down in the ditch, peering through a dark gap in the bank by which the three vagabonds had made their way into the wood.

"The rascals! They have escaped us!" Timothy was saying. "Well, there is small harm done, and no one is hurt!"

"Small harm, say you?" cried the wayfarer, speaking now for the first time. "But they have robbed me—robbed me of all that I had in the world!"

"Your all cannot surely have been much, my friend, since you carried it with you so lightly," said Timothy. "There is little use in making such dole over a trifle."

"Ah, you do not know, you do not know!" said the other, pacing to and fro in his dire distress. "As well might they have taken my life as what they have gone off with."

Timothy searched into the man's face, yet saw nothing to enlighten him in the black darkness.

"Art thou of Plymouth?" he presently asked.

"That I am, my master," came the reply. "My name, sirs, is Jacob Hartop—Jacob Hartop that went out with John Hawkins in the year sixty-seven, and that hath now come home only to be waylaid and robbed by a parcel of villainous cut-purses that sprang upon me from among the trees yonder. I had not heard them behind me, for it chanced that, being somewhat lonesome on dry land, I fell to chanting a little song, as it were for company's sake. I warrant me the ruffians would not so have overpowered me had they not thrown my cloak over my eyes and mouth, and thus disabled me from defending myself."

He drew the garment about his shoulders, turning up its high collar round his neck. "'Tis a cloak that a kindly young gentleman gave unto me as I stepped ashore," he went on. "Had I been without it I might have worsted my assailants; and yet had I not had it I must surely have been slain, for one of the villains stabbed at me with his dagger with intent to take my life, and by God's providence the blade, instead of entering my heart, struck upon one of these gay silver buttons."

He paused and looked at Gilbert as the lad limped towards him. Even in the darkness he seemed to recognize him.

“Now, beshrew me if thou art not the self-same young gentleman who gave me the cloak,” he cried in grateful surprise. Then, noticing that Gilbert walked lame, he added, “But thou art limping! Hast hurt thy leg in the scrimmage?”

Timothy glanced in alarm at his young master, and besought him to tell what injury he had received.

“I slipped on the snow,” explained Gilbert, “and gave my foot a twist. ‘Tis naught to speak of. Come, let us hasten home. Sir Francis Drake hath gone to spend the night with my grandfather and certain of his friends from London, and we may yet be in time to hear him relate some of his adventures ere he returns to Plymouth. I will take thy arm, Timothy, for my foot is paining me, and—”

He was about to tell that he had been wounded, but not wishing to alarm his companions, or perhaps a little ashamed of being defeated by a mere footpad, he kept the matter to himself.

“What do I hear?” exclaimed Jacob Hartop. “Didst thou not speak the name of Francis Drake—Sir Francis Drake? God be thanked! Then he is still alive, eh? And hath risen in the world since the days when he and I were shipmates? Sir Francis, forsooth! Well, he deserveth all the honours that a prince can bestow upon him. Right well do I mind the time when we were at Nombre de Dios. Ah! that was a time, my masters. But ‘tis a long story. Whither are ye bound for?”

“We go to the manor-house of Modbury,” answered Timothy.

“Ah! I know it well,” returned Hartop as he trudged along the lane at Gilbert’s right side. “‘Tis my Lord Champernoun’s place, and I doubt not you will both be in his lordship’s service—pages in his household belike?” He did not wait for an answer to his last remark, but went on with a cheerfulness that was surprising in an old man; a man, moreover, who had just been robbed of all his worldly wealth: “Prithee, have they mended the old bell that hung in the little turret above the stables? Ha, ha! ‘Twas I that broke it, flinging a stone at a blue jay that was perched upon the weather-vane. Many are the apples and pears I stole from out the orchard there; ay, and the rabbits and pheasants I trapped i’ the woods! His lordship had a Flanders mare by name Nancy, that he was wont to ride upon to London. She had a white star betwixt her eyes, and a most shrewish temper withal. None could ride her but his lordship and William Stevens; though ‘tis true she would willingly eat an apple o’ mornings from out my lady’s hand. Is the animal still as full of her tricks as she used to be?”

“‘Tis like enough that the animal is in her grave these twenty years, Master Hartop,” said Timothy, smiling to himself at the old man’s memory of a time long past.

“Ay, like enough, like enough,” mused the old man. “Time doth slip by with astonishing speed—though, indeed, ‘twas laggard enough in the galleys and in the prison of Cadiz.”

“I pray you tarry a moment,” interposed Gilbert, suppressing a groan of pain. “I cannot walk so fast. My ankle hurts me at every step. I beg you haul off my boot, Tim, to give me a few moments’ ease. Come closer, Master Hartop, and let me lean on your shoulder.”

The old man obeyed, while Timothy went down on his knees in the mud and tried, but with little success, to remove the offending boot. He was interrupted by a sudden cry from Hartop.

“God bless us all, what is this?” the mariner cried, running his hand over Gilbert’s right arm. “There be surely more wet here than hath come from a few flakes of snow. Why, ‘tis blood, my master, ‘tis blood! Thou art wounded!”

“Wounded?” echoed Timothy rising excitedly to his feet. “Oh, my master! Wherefore didst thou not tell us of this before? Where is the wound?”

“The fellow’s rapier pierced me in the arm,” explained Gilbert in a faint voice, as he leaned yet more helplessly on Hartop’s shoulder. “But ‘tis not much, I do assure you.”

Timothy Trollops pressed his open palm upon the lad’s sleeve, and, finding it wet from shoulder to wrist, “Not much?” he cried. “Why, thou’rt scarce able to stand, so much blood hath streamed from thee! Thou’rt well-nigh fainting! Had I but known of this at the time, I warrant me the scoundrel should not have escaped so easily. Wouldst know the man again, my master?”

“Not I,” murmured Gilbert in a yet fainter voice. “I saw not his face.”

“Nor I neither,” added Jacob Hartop. “‘Twas too dark to see aught but their shadowy forms, even if mine own face had not been half-smothered under my cloak. But they are clean gone now you’ll be saying, and ‘twill avail us little to go in search of them or to tarry here any longer while one of us is sore wounded.” He put his arms about Gilbert and added: “Heave thyself on to my back, young friend, and I will carry thee. ‘Tis but a small distance if I mind aright from here to Thomas Southam’s mill, where peradventure we shall get help, and a horse to carry thee further.”

Timothy gently pushed the old man aside.

“Thy memory is like to an old almanack, Master Hartop,” he said, “and of as little value for present use. Southam’s mill was burnt to the ground a good ten years ago, and hath never yet been rebuilt.”

“What?” cried Hartop, and, as if the information concerning the mill had staggered him, he stepped backward, allowing Gilbert Oglander to slip from his grasp. “Burnt to the ground!” he repeated. “Then prithee, young sir, what hath become of the miller’s fair young daughter Betty—Betty Southam that promised to wait for me when I sailed away to foreign lands, ay, and to marry me when I should come back with the fortune that I meant to gain for her? What hath become of her, I say?”

Timothy lifted Gilbert upon his knee and held him there while he answered:

“Betty Southam? Ah! I knew her when I was a little child. But I do protest she was then neither young nor fair. As to what hath become of her, ‘tis soon told, Master Hartop. She was found lying dead one winter’s morning in Beddington Woods.”

“Alas!” cried Hartop. “Then was my song indeed prophetic, for all my travel hath in very truth been ‘forlorn and waste’.”

“Listen!” interrupted Timothy. “Hear you not the sound of horses’ feet upon the road? ‘Tis surely our robbers, riding away.”

“I hear them plainly,” returned Hartop. “There be two horses, as I judge by the sound. And, far from retreating, they are coming nearer and nearer. I pray Heaven that they be friends who will help us!”

Gilbert Oglander had now somewhat recovered from his faintness, and with the help of his two companions he limped to the side of the road, where, sitting on the

edge of the ditch, he at length succeeded in pulling offhis boot, for his ankle had been badly sprained and was already somewhat swollen.

The three waited there in silence at the roadside until the horsemen whom they had heard approaching came within a few yards of them, when Timothy Trollope stepped out in front of them, and waving his hands aloft called aloud to them to halt. His call was not needed, however, for the horsemen had already drawn rein.

"So-ho!" cried one of them as he unsheathed his sword, and spurring his horse again he drove the animal on as if to run Timothy down. "We have caught you, you rascals, have we?" he cried with an oath. "We shall teach you better than to go about a-pillaging of honest folks' farmyards and carrying off their ducks and hens! 'Tis Plymouth gaol that shall be your lodging to-night if I be not vastly in error." He turned to his companion, "Now, Jake," he ordered, "look you to those two in the ditch there! See that they escape not into the wood."

Timothy sprang forward and seized the horse's bridle.

"Hold hard, Bob Harvey," he cried, addressing the rider. "Have a care where y'are driving your horse. Can you not see who we are, man? Here be Master Oglander, bleeding and well-nigh dead of a great sword-cut given him by a thief of a footpad but a few minutes since."

"Od's life, Master Tim, is't yourself then?" cried the horseman drawing back. "Faith, lad, I had nearly run you through. What bringeth you here at such an hour? And Master Gilbert wounded, say you?—and by footpads? Prithee, how many were there? I'll be sworn 'twas the self-same gang that we are now seeking."

"There were three of them," answered Timothy. "And after robbing this poor old man here and wounding Master Gilbert they made off through Beddington Woods."

"Ay, three there were at the Manor Farm. I warrant me, they are the same lot," declared Bob Harvey. Then he added, turning to his follower, "Come, Jake, we may catch them yet if so be we gallop round to the other road." And he dug his spurs into his horse's side.

"Stay!" cried Timothy, gripping the reins. "Thou'dst best dismount, Bob, and give up thy horse to the young master; or else take him up beside thee and ride home with him. As for the thieves, or poachers, or whatever they be, Jake Thew may continue the chase alone."

"As you will, Master Timothy," returned Harvey; "but methinks Master Gilbert had better get up in front of me. 'Tis an ill-mannered animal this, and hard to manage."

So Gilbert Oglander mounted on the horse's back and rode slowly homeward, while the second horseman galloped off alone along the lane in the direction of the town. Timothy intended to go home afoot, runningall the way by his master's side, but ere he started off he turned to Jacob Hartop.

"And now, Master Hartop," said he, "prithee, where go you to-night? Hast got a home in these parts?"

Jacob was silent for some moments. At last he said:

"I had meant to rest myself at Southam's Mill, where they have daily expected me these twenty years and more. But if, as you say, the mill hath been burnt down, why, then, there is not a house in the land that I can call my home. Howbeit, I doubt not I shall find goodly shelter under the lee of some friendly

haystack. 'Twill not be the first, no, nor the hundredth time that I have slept in the open air. And believe me, my master, he is a happy man who hath none to thank for his food and shelter saving only his God."

"I do perceive that thou art an easily contented mortal," remarked Timothy with a ring of sympathy in his voice.

"Privation hath made me so," returned Hartop.

"Nevertheless," pursued Tim, "you will, so please you, think no more of the haystack, but come on to the manor of Modbury; for sure I am that Master Oglander would blame me most severely were I to suffer you to go adrift like a lost creature."

Hartop answered very seriously and firmly: "Were there no other house in all England, my master, I should still refuse to take shelter in the manor of Modbury."

"And wherefore?" asked Timothy in surprise.

"Because," returned the old mariner, "it is in that same house that my bitterest enemy doth live—Jasper Oglander to wit."

"Pooh!" rejoined Timothy. "Jasper Oglander is dead these many years."

"Not so," declared Hartop. "You, indeed, and many others may believe him dead. But in this matter, at the least, I make no mistake; for hark ye, my friend, Jasper Oglander is as much alive at this moment as you or I. You and your young friend may not have known him—how should you?—but 'twas he whom you saw this very day coming ashore from the ship PEARL; he and his wife and his son. If you should see him again—as I doubt not you will ere many hours be past—you shall know him by the token that he hath an old knife-cut across his cheek: a cut that was dealt to him by one whom he sought to treacherously murder."

Chapter VI

Table-Talk at Modbury Manor.

AT this same time, while Gilbert and Timothy were continuing their journey homeward through the darkness and the driving sleet after their encounter with the unknown robbers in Beddington Dingle, Lord Champernoun and his household were seated at the supper-table in the great dining-hall of Modbury Manor. Some friends were with them—high-born ladies and noble gentlemen who had been of a hawking party that day, and had come back very weary and full of the enjoyment of the sport. Chief among the ladies, both for her beauty and wit and for her noble birth, was the Lady Elizabeth Oglander—or Lady Betty, as she was familiarly called—who, as the widow of the Honourable Edmund Oglander, was now the mistress of Modbury Manor; and among the men, Sir Walter Raleigh and those two gallant seamen, Sir Francis Drake and Sir Richard Grenville.

It was a very large and splendid hall, with a high arched roof and tall embrasured windows, whose broad panes were rich with heraldic devices in coloured glass. The walls were panelled with carved oak and adorned with stags' horns, suits of armour, halberds, swords, and crossbows. The lower parts of the windows and the heavy clamped doors were covered with tapestry to keep out the

draught, and in the huge red cavern of the fireplace the flaming logs roared and crackled, sending forth strange moving shadows across the rush-strewn floor, and casting a bright flicker of light upon the wings of the brass pelicans that stood gazing out from either side of the hearth.

At the head of the long table sat the aged baron himself, Gilbert Oglander's grandfather, a kindly, white-haired, white-bearded gentleman, wearing a doublet of black velvet with gold chains and a snowy white ruff. His guests and the members of his household were all grown-up persons, with the one exception of Drusilla Oglander; and Drusilla, who was still scarce more than a little girl and had but lately left the nursery, seemed to be very lonely in consequence. She had no companion near her at the table saving the family bloodhound, Nero, whose ponderous head rested upon her knee, ready to gobble such morsels of meat as the girl might pick from her plate and give to him. There was a vacant seat at her side, but her brother Gilbert, who had gone into Plymouth that afternoon, had not returned to occupy it, and she was perforce content to listen silently to the talk that was going on among her elders at the upper end of the table. Yet quite as often did she find entertainment in listening to the men and women who sat below the great salt-cellar—the barrier which separated them from those who were above them in station.

One of the men, a rosy-faced young falconer who had been with the hawking party, was boasting of how Sir Walter Raleigh had deigned to hold speech with him, and to ask his opinion concerning the possibility of stopping a falcon in its full flight and making the bird return obediently to the lure. The fact that the great courtier had thus honoured him seemed to have given the man the right to speak with authority on all matters with which Sir Walter Raleigh was personally concerned.

"Wait until the meal is over," Drusilla heard him say; "wait and you shall see him taking tobacco. 'Tis a wonderous sight, my masters. I have seen him at it with mine own eyes. He can blow the smoke out through his nostrils in two long tubes, or drink it down into his inside as one might drink a cup of malmsey. Ay, 'tis a marvellous habit, is it not, Christopher Pym?"

He glanced across the table at a pale, abstracted-looking man, with straight black hair and lack-lustre eyes. Christopher Pym seemed to feel himself out of place among these his table companions, for in spite of his threadbare cloak and his ragged wristbands he was still a ripe scholar and a born gentleman. He smiled faintly and answered:

"Ay, truly, Master Hawksworth, 'tis a marvellous habit—marvellous in that it is indulged in by gentlefolk. For my own part, I like it not. As well might you make a chimney of your throat at once, and call in the chimney-sweep o' mornings to sweep out the black soot."

"'Tis plain to see that thou hast never tried it," remarked Hawksworth. "But after all, 'twas never intended for poor schoolmasters."

Christopher Pym quietly broke off a few crumbs from his piece of bread, and holding them in his thin fingers proceeded slowly to cleanse his platter.

"No," he said with another faint smile. "There be few such luxuries that a poor tutor can afford out of five marks a year. But I am well content to live without the vile herb and let others take it who may."

"'Tis a right gentlemanly accomplishment, I warrant you," pursued Hawksworth; "ay, and one which may gain a man great fame if he but exercise it with skill. Look at young Sir Anthony Killigrew, for example; he hath made himself famous in Plymouth by his skill, for he can not only blow the smoke from his nose, but he hath performed a much more wondrous trick; for on a day in last week he took three long whiffs from his tobacco-pipe, drank three cups of canary on the top of them, then took horse, and brought forth the smoke, one whiff at Burrington, the second at Bickley, and the third at Tamerton. 'Twas he who first taught Master Gilbert Oglander to drink tobacco, although 'tis true the lad misliked it and hath since abandoned it."

"Master Gilbert hath shown greater wisdom in abandoning it than in taking to it," observed Christopher Pym, shaking his head with regret at his pupil's weakness.

Hearing her brother's name, Drusilla leaned over across the salt-box and said:

"I pray you, Master Pym, can you tell me what hath kept my brother so late in Plymouth?"

"My lord sent him into the town on some private business, Mistress Drusilla," answered the poor tutor. "I know of naught else that can have detained him. He hath taken Timothy Trollope to bear him company,however, and you may be assured no harm will come to him."

Drusilla leaned back in her chair, refusing the plate of roasted pheasant that was offered to her by one of the blue-coated serving-men. Her eyes rested upon the cheerful countenance of Sir Francis Drake, and then upon the proud cold face of Sir Walter Raleigh, who sat next to him. She had never, before this same day, seen Sir Walter Raleigh, and his courtly manners seemed somehow to give him a dignity which made it that she dared not have approached him. Even his gay apparel, his jewelled doublet, his stiffly-starched ruff, and his white be-ringed fingers placed him at such a distance from her that he appeared to be far too grand and proud ever to think of taking notice of a little girl.

With Sir Francis Drake it was very different. She had known him to come to Modbury more than once on purpose to see her, as he had said; he had come into the nursery and played with her and told her stories; and once, when Gilbert had been making a toy ship to sail in the lake, Sir Francis had sat down on the nursery floor and taken out his knife and some string and helped to rig the little vessel. They had called the boat the REVENGE, which was the name of the ship that Sir Francis had commanded when he went out to fight against the Spanish Armada, and on board of which he had won such glory for himself and for England. As Drusilla looked across at him now his eyes met hers, and he raised his tall glass of canary wine, bowing to her with as much polite grace as if she had been a full-grown lady. She returned his greeting with a smile, raising her little silver tankard of new milk and saying:

"To your good health, Sir Francis."

Then the voice of Lord Champernoun was heard from the head of the table.

"So it seemeth, Sir Francis, that thou hast once more been incurring Her Majesty's displeasure?"

"How so, baron?" questioned Drake, looking up in surprise.

“Marry! In the matter of the King of Spain,” returned Lord Champernoun. “It doth appear from what I have lately heard that Her Majesty’s government have received information that King Philip, knowing how you had fallen into disgrace with Queen Elizabeth, hath been secretly making overtures to you to enter the Spanish service and lead a new armada against England. Zounds, man, we shall soon be hearing that thou hast turned Papist also, I suppose!”

Drake laughed, and playfully stroked his full and curly beard. There was a merry twinkle in his large clear eyes.

“‘Tis not the first time that His Majesty of Spain hath so approached me,” said he. “Her Majesty (God bless her!) is at liberty to believe, if she so listeth, that I am about to accept Spain’s generous offers. ‘Tis her gracious habit to think ill of me. But methinks the people of England will still believe me incapable of such treachery.”

Sir Walter Raleigh’s silvery voice interposed:

“Thou hast given but a half-denial of the matter, Drake,” said he as he reached his hand to the middle of the table and picked an apple from one of the plates. “And I do assure thee that Her Majesty will require a fuller proof ere she consent to forgive thee. All thy endeavours to win her favour by the building of flour-mills and the making of water-conduits for this town of Plymouth will go for little against this suspicious rumour.”

“And, prithee, what punishment doth Her Majesty intend to mete out to me withal?” questioned Drake. “Hath she given orders that I am to be clapped into the Tower, or held to ransom like our Spanish prisoners?”

“Scarcely that,” answered Raleigh. “She hath but decided to give thee the command at Plymouth, with orders to keep the town in a state of defence, and so resist any attempt by the Spaniards to invade our western ports.”

“There is small consolation in that,” returned Drake. “I had hoped, as ye all know, that I might be deemed worthy to take the command of the great expedition against Panama that hath been in contemplation so long. ‘Tis mine by right, and it hath been the dream of my life.”

“That same command hath been graciously reserved for myself,” said Sir Walter Raleigh. And he seemed to smile at the mortification that came into his rival’s face.

There was silence for a few moments, and then the gruff voice of Sir Richard Grenville broke in.

“Thou’lt not forget me, cousin Walter, when ‘tis question of Panama?” said he. “‘Twould suit my disposition well to be made thy vice-admiral.”

“And touching that same matter, Raleigh,” interposed Lord Champernoun as he pushed back his great chair and crossed his legs, “I would ask you to reserve a place on board your ship for my grandson Gilbert. The lad hath long been beseeching me to launch him upon the world of action.”

“I’ll think on’t, baron,” said Raleigh with a slight nod of his head that showed he had no great desire to favour the young heir of Modbury.

“The boy shall come with me, my lord, if Sir Waiter takes him not,” cried Sir Richard Grenville. “I promise you that.”

“I had rather see Gilbert Oglander under mine own wing,” declared Drake in an undertone.

“Ay, if that wing be not already broken,” suggested Raleigh.

The Lady Betty glanced at Lord Champernoun with anxiety in her eyes.

"Surely Gilbert is yet too young to be trusted upon the sea," she objected. "Hath not his family already sacrificed enough to the Spaniards that thou shouldst consent to this thing? Thine own two sons have given up their lives in foreign lands. I pray thee spare me mine."

Lord Champernoun made no answer, for at that moment one of the serving-men had come to his side and whispered some message into his ear. Drusilla saw her grandfather start back as if in alarm. His face, in the light of the table-candles, was seen to have become suddenly very pale. Drusilla instantly thought of her brother Gilbert, and feared that some great ill had happened to him. She looked towards the door behind her grandfather's chair.

It opened, and there came into the hall, not her brother nor even Timothy Trollope, but a tall dark man who was a complete stranger to her. He removed his wide slouched hat as he entered, and his long cloak, which was besprinkled with snow-flakes, fell from his shoulders, revealing a much-worn and faded doublet with tarnished braid and ominous stains. He was followed by a much younger man, whom Timothy Trollope, had he chanced to be present, would doubtless have recognized as the foreign-looking youth he had encountered at the door of the Three Flagons.

Drusilla noticed that the youth's cloak was bespattered with mud, but she remembered that the roads were bad, and opined that he had had some trifling accident. He took off the garment and laid it with his hat and sword upon one of the oak benches that were against the wall. He seemed to be exceedingly modest, for he stood in the background like one whohad been suddenly brought into a strange place, and had not yet mustered the courage to raise his eyes and see for himself what manner of place it happened to be.

Lord Champernoun rose from his chair but did not advance to meet the strangers.

"Jasper Oglander, did you say?" he cried in astonishment, turning aside to the serving-man. "Jasper Oglander? 'Tis impossible!"

"Ay, 'tis Jasper Oglander," said the stranger, stepping forward and standing in front of the old baron. "Dost not know me, father?"

Lord Champernoun raised his trembling hand and ran his fingers nervously through his thin locks of white hair.

"I understand you not," he faltered. "Jasper Oglander is dead—dead these many years. They have told me so. And yet—"

"Haply the news was more welcome to your lordship than my presence here just now," interrupted the stranger with a dark frown on his brow. "Believe me, sir, I had not wished to break in upon your merriment. But having only this afternoon arrived in the port of Plymouth, I deemed it my duty to present myself before you without further loss of time."

"Your better duty would have been to acquaint me of your existence a score of years ago," his lordship returned with stern rebuke. And then, his eyes falling upon the figure of the bashful youth, he added: "Prithee, who is the stripling at your heels?"

"Your grandson, my lord—Philip Oglander to wit—born in Brazil in the year fifteen hundred and seventy-four."

“And his mother?” pursued the baron questioningly.

The stranger twirled his newly-trimmed moustachios and answered:

“His mother, so please you, is now resting in Plymouth town, at the sign of the Three Flagons. The weather is somewhat inclement for a lady to travel, and she is weary after our long voyage. In good time, when she hath been furnished with new apparel—apparel more befitting her appearance among such fine ladies as I do see here now,—I shall give myself the pleasure of presenting her in her English home.”

Lord Champernoun bit his lip. It was evident that his newly-returned son was not to be heartily welcomed.

By this time the servants at the lower end of the table, having finished their supper, had retired from the hall. The ladies, too, had risen, and Sir Walter Raleigh, with courtly gallantry, had opened the door leading out into the adjoining hall, whence already the sounds of music could be heard.

Lady Betty passed out, followed by her lady guests, glancing as she did so towards the intruder with something akin to indignation in her beautiful blue eyes.

“‘Tis some impostor, I’ll avow,” she whispered to Raleigh as she came near him, “or else some Spanish spy, masquerading in the character of the long-lost Jasper. Thou’lt join us presently, Sir Walter?”

“Gladly, my lady, so you promise us a song,” said he, bowing low. And when the ladies had all retired, leaving only Drusilla behind them, he strolled back into the hall and made his way to the fireplace, where, seating himself, he proceeded to fill his tobacco-pipe.

Sir Francis Drake had apparently paid but slight attention to the entrance of Jasper Oglander and his son Philip, but had remained at the table cracking nuts. He had cracked about a dozen of them and cleared the kernels of all remnants of shell and rough skin, and now he gathered them in his hand and rose, beckoning to Drusilla.

“These be for you, sweetheart,” said he as he offered them to her. “And now I must hie me back to Plymouth. Wilt kiss me?”

She held up her face, and he put his two hands upon her shoulders and held her from him at the full length of his strong arms. Then he bent down and pressed his lips upon her white forehead. “Give you good-night,” he added, “and God be with you always!”

“Good-night!” she answered, and her eyes followed him as he went away, limping slightly in his walk. She saw him stop suddenly as he came near to where her grandfather and Jasper Oglander were still standing. He drew back a step, looking up into Jasper’s face, and, as it seemed, fixing his gaze upon the old wound on the man’s cheek.

“‘Sdeath! Captain Drake, you here?” cried Jasper Oglander in a tone of astonishment and no less of annoyance. “Art thou a wizard?” And he hesitatingly held out his hand.

Drake affected not to notice this offer of friendship, but stood unmoved, his round head with its short curly brown hair held proudly back, his great broad chest expanded, and his muscular figure poised with easy grace. Compared with the tall man in front of him he seemed to be of very low stature; but there was a dignity about him which the other entirely lacked.

“A wizard?” he repeated. Then shrugging his shoulders he added: “That is as it may be. But I thank God in that I am at least an honest Englishman, who hath no cause to go skulking about the world as thou hast been doing, Master Oglander.” He turned to Lord Champernoun. “Give you good-night, my lord!” he said as they shook hands, and then he went round for his cape and hat, which were hanging up near the fireplace, where Sir Walter Raleigh and some others were already regaling themselves amid a cloud of tobacco smoke.

Lord Champernoun had bidden his new-found son and Philip Oglander sit down at the table and take some supper. Meat and drink had been brought in for them, and they were eating with an appetite which betrayed that they had long been unaccustomed to such goodly fare.

Meanwhile Drusilla had withdrawn to one of the window embrasures, where she sat munching her Brazilian nuts. Sir Richard Grenville stood near her, examining a suit of armour that was propped up in the corner.

“‘Tis the armour that was worn by Sir Stephen Oglander in the wars of the Roses,” the girl informed him. “And the curved sword that is hanging near it on the next panel was taken by my grandfather in a certain battle against the Turks—not this grandfather, you know, but the other one, my mother’s father, the Earl of Dersingham.”

“Ah! so thine ancestor fought against the Infidels, eh?” said Grenville, and pushing aside Philip Oglander’s cloak, which lay on the bench, he sat down beside her. “Didst know that I too have been in battle against them?”

“No,” she answered, open-eyed. “Prithee, tell me of it. Was it by sea or by land?”

“By land for the most part,” he returned; “but the greatest battle was by sea, and it took place in the Gulf of Lepanto. ‘Twas the most glorious engagement and the most honourable victory I have ever taken part in, saving only the late fight which you wot of against the dons of Spain. I will tell thee of it if thou’rt not too weary. ‘Twill pass the time until your brother comes in.”

As he spoke he took up Philip Oglander’s rapier, and in mere idleness he drew the long narrow blade from its leathern scabbard, held the weapon out in front of him and glanced along it with critical eye, examined its curious basket hilt of twisted metal, then pressed his thumb against the sharp point, took the point end in one hand and the hilt in the other, and bent the blade to test its flexible spring, and finally held the weapon out once more at arm’s-length.

“The battle was betwixt the Turks and the Christians,” he went on. But here he was abruptly interrupted. Philip Oglander had risen from the table and crossed the floor towards him.

“Your pardon, my master, but that rapier is mine!” cried the lad in strange excitement, speaking with his mouth full of food.

Sir Richard Grenville glanced up at him in surprise, still retaining the weapon.

“A goodly blade too, o’ my conscience,” he muttered with a grim smile. “Fashioned in Toledo, I warrant me. ‘Tis not often we see its like in England, save in the hands of our country’s foes. But I would warn you, young sir, that ‘tis a good three inches too long to suit Queen Elizabeth’s regulations. I should counsel you to have it clipped ere you venture to carry it again through English streets.”

He handed the rapier to its owner, holding it by the end of the blade. Philip Oglander received it, sullenly returned it to its scabbard, and strode back to the table, there to continue his supper.

Grenville was about to proceed with his narrative of Lepanto fight when Drusilla laid her fingers upon his arm.

"See!" she cried. "Thou hast wounded thy hand, 'tis bleeding!"

"Nay, but I felt no cut," said he. "And yet," he added, looking at his opened palms, "there is surely blood there. However, Mistress Drusilla, to go on with our story. I was saying that 'twas a fight betwixt the Christians and the Infidels—the Cross against the Crescent—"

"Wait," interrupted the girl. "I heard but this moment the sound of a horse's feet in the courtyard. It must surely be Gilbert returned. I pray you tarry here till I come back." And so saying she tripped lightly to the end of the hall and flung open the door by which her uncle and cousin had lately entered.

There was a murmur of voices from without. The further door at the end of the outer hall stood open, and by the aid of the large hanging lamp in the great arched porchway she could see the form of a horse, with Timothy Trollope and Bob Harvey by its side. They were helping Gilbert down from the horse's back. Drusilla saw his face, and it was very pale; she saw that when they lifted him down to the ground he could scarcely stand, but was obliged to lean for support on Trollope's shoulder.

"I might even have guessed that some ill had happened to thee since thou art so late in coming home, Gilbert," she said, disguising her inward alarm. "Art badly hurt? Hast thou been thrown from thy horse?"

"Nay, 'tis nothing, good my sister," answered Gilbert as cheerily as his weakness allowed. "'Tis naught but a sprained ankle."

"Ay, but the blood!" said she, touching him on his right arm. "What doth this bode?"

"A scratch he got in a tussle we have had with some vagabond gypsies down in the dingle," explained Timothy Trollope, well-nigh breathless after his long run by the horse's side. "Prithee, be not alarmed, Mistress Drusilla." He signed to Bob Harvey. "Take you his heels, Bob, while I take him by the shoulders. We had best carry him within."

Drusilla went before them while they carried him into the dining-hall. She was met on the threshold by Sir Francis Drake, who was then on the point of leaving, a saddled horse being already in waiting for him outside to carry him back to Plymouth. On being hurriedly told what had happened he returned into the hall, threw off his cape and hat, turned up his cuffs, and prepared to exercise his surgical skill in attending to Gilbert's hurts.

"A knife, if you please, Mistress Drusilla," he said, when Timothy had laid the wounded lad upon one of the settles near to the fire. And when the knife was brought he quietly ripped open Gilbert's sleeve, discovering the wound.

"'Tis nothing serious," he said reassuringly to Lord Champernoun, who stood near with Raleigh, Grenville, and many others who had crowded round. "Let him have a warm potion to drink and some food, an he will but take it, and when I have bound up the arm he had best be put to bed."

Timothy Trollope moved to the table to get a cup of mulled sack. As he was passing behind where Drusilla stood he caught sight of Jasper Oglander and his son, both of whom, having risen from their supper, were looking over the girl's shoulders at Gilbert. There was a subdued look of enmity in Jasper Oglander's eyes, which Timothy did not understand. He remembered it long afterwards, however, when circumstances and a better knowledge of the man's nature explained its meaning.

Chapter VII

The Instinct of a Brute Dog.

JASPER OGLANDER and his son were up betimes on the following morning, and had come down to the lower rooms while yet the housemaids were sweeping up the rushes from the floors and dusting the furniture. Seeing one of the serving-men coming from the buttery Jasper called out to him, commanding him to bring two stoups of small ale. The man was waiting to take the emptied vessels, when the sound of a loud bell clanged through the house. At this Philip Oglander bowed his head and crossed himself; whereupon his father trod upon his toe and frowned at him.

"Thou fool!" said Jasper when the man had left them. "Dost want to betray us so soon? Did I not warn thee an hundred times that these people are all of the Protestant faith—heretics and Lutherans who would but despise us and regard us as enemies did they know that we are of the Holy Church? By the Rood, boy, thy forgetfulness hath nearly cost us dearly, for look at who cometh behind thee—thy cousin Drusilla, a saucy maid, by her favour, and it may be a dangerous."

Drusilla was at the moment descending the broad staircase, carrying a little basket of apples in her one hand, and with the other drawing the hood of her mulberry-coloured cloak over her fair hair. She curtsied low and bade them a good-morrow when she came before them into the front hall.

"Art going abroad so early?" asked her uncle, returning her greeting, and taking up his wide-brimmed hat from the bench where he had dropped it when drinking his cup of small ale. "If so, we would go with thee, for I am fain to show thy cousin what manner of home he hath come to. To have such escort as thine will make our inspection doubly agreeable."

"I was but going to the stables to give these apples to my brother's favourite horse," answered Drusilla. "But if ye would see the grounds I will willingly bear you company."

"And how fares Master Gilbert, prithee?" inquired Jasper, leading the way out into the porchway, and standing there a moment looking out across the terrace and the wide expanse of lawn to the misty woodlands beyond.

"The wound in his arm hath troubled him but little," she answered, "but his sprained ankle hath swollen greatly and is very painful. I fear me it will be many days ere he can leave his bed."

"'Tis a pity the rascals who thus assailed him cannot be caught and brought to a speedy justice," remarked Philip with seeming sympathy in his tone, albeit with an unkindly curl of his upper lip. "Was your brother unarmed that he thus allowed a vagabond gypsy to overcome him?" he added.

"Nay, for who would go unarmed in these days?" returned Drusilla. "But even the skilfullest swordsman may sometimes be taken at a disadvantage. Gilbert's foot slipped upon the snow, and his adversary did thrust at him even as he fell. Timothy Trollope knew not of the matter until the three robbers had fled, or else I am very sure they should not have got away so easily."

"And, prithee, who may be this Timothy of whom you speak, cousin?" pursued Philip.

Drusilla answered:

"He is Gilbert's good and faithful servant—the same who brought him in yesternight. He is the son of Master Peter Trollope, the barber-surgeon of Plymouth town."

"Ah! methought I had seen him once before," observed Jasper. "He was even in his father's shop whilst I was there having my beard trimmed. And now—let us to the stables first, Mistress Drusilla, and then when we have made the round of the mansion and had a peep at the hawks in the mews and the deer in the chase, we shall haply go within again and introduce ourselves to your brother. Fortunate Gilbert, to be the heir to such vast and valuable estates as these!" he added covetously, as, standing at the end of the terrace where a spacious flight of stone steps led down to the lawn, he glanced towards the avenues of tall old trees that opened out before him. "Were I their owner, however, I should hew down those unsightly trees; they do but interrupt the view, and so much stout oak is but wasted while there be battle-ships to be built—to say naught of the price one might get in exchange for the timber withal."

Drusilla conducted her new-found relatives over the stables. They had a distant sight of the farm buildings, where the cows, having been newly milked, were wandering out through the gates in slow and irregular procession towards the pasture lands. Then they went round to the kennels and looked at the hounds, and to the mews, where Hawksworth and his fellows were feeding the falcons. Thence through the orchard, now bare of fruit, and the kitchen-garden, where Lord Champernoun, at the instance of his friend Sir Walter Raleigh, had in the last season grown a wondrous crop of potatoes and other vegetable products of the New World. Then round into the park to where a herd of deer, browsing in the wet grass, started off, alarmed at their approach, and ran with great fleetness to a misty hollow among the trees.

At first Drusilla had been strangely shy with her two companions; but they showed such interest in the home of her childhood and treated her with such graceful courtesy that she soon became familiar with them, and answered their many questions freely and eagerly. She pointed out the old oak-tree in the middle of the park under whose spreading branches the village children had crowned her as Queen of the May in the last spring-time. She took them to the side of the lake where Gilbert and she had been wont to sail their boats, and where Gilbert only a week ago had caught a pike. And then, coming back by the front of the house, she pointed out the little latticed window of her chamber, half-hidden among the

clambering ivy. From where they were they could see the full extent of the great baronial mansion, with its abutting wings end many gables flanking the tall central turret,—on which the gilt weather-vane shone bright in the morning sunlight,—its stone-shafted oriel windows, and its curiously-twisted chimneys. It was all very magnificent, albeit Drusilla thought less of it for this fact than for the reason that it was sanctified as the residence of so many of her ancestors.

"Ah, 'tis in truth a palace fit for a king!" declared Jasper Oglander aside to his son. "I marvel that I ever had the foolishness to leave it. What wouldst thou say, Phil, an thy father were the owner and master of the place? Nay, do not smile, boy; less likely things than this have come to pass; and remember there be but two frail lives between me and it—your grandfather, poor addle-pated pantaloon, and this stripling Gilbert as they call him, touching whom I should have been by no means sorry had his assailant of yesternight done his work more completely. Mark you, Phil," he reiterated with emphasis, "I had not been sorry—nay, why boggle the matter?—I had in truth been exceeding glad had the wound you wot of been a span nearer to his heart."

Whatever Philip might have said in reply to this cruel remark was cut short by the return of Drusilla, who had but ran forward a few paces to greet Nero, the bloodhound, at the entrance of the courtyard. The dog as it approached the father and son hung down his furrowed head and growled ominously—which was a habit quite unusual with him, in spite of his aspect of ferocity.

"Come, Brutus—Hector—Pompey—what is thy name? Come, good dog," said Jasper Oglander caressingly, snapping his finger and thumb together ininvitation to the dog. But Nero still hung his head, and growlingly sniffed about the man's feet, coming finally to Philip and growling yet again. "Ah! he doth well discern that we are strangers to him," continued Jasper, "or else he doth smell the brine about our clothes. Such dogs, I have observed, have a natural aversion to seamen."

"Indeed, uncle, it can scarce be so with Nero," remarked Drusilla, "for he hath a marvellous fondness for Sir Francis Drake, and Sir Francis is a seaman in all conscience."

"Ay, plague on the man," muttered Jasper to himself. And presently he followed Drusilla across the courtyard and into the house.

Timothy Trollope had been for the longer half of the night in his young master's room—a small chamber in the west wing of the house, with very simple furniture, but being crowded with a variety of toy ships, bows and arrows, kites, whips, spurs, morions, corselets, rapiers, foreign shells, snakes bottled in oil, skins of rare animals and birds, and other curious and boyish gear. In front of the fireplace there was a large Polar bear skin, with the head still attached, given to Gilbert by his friend Sir Martin Frobisher. A small casement window in a corner of the room was fitted like a ship's port-hole, with a demi-culverin made of brass pointing outward towards a strip of blue sea that could be discerned far away in the distance beyond the promontory of Rame Head. Gilbert had once fired this cannon from this same place, loading it with stone-shot and aiming at a certain chestnut-tree in the park. The cannon had rebounded even to the farther end of the room, smashing into a cupboard, much to the damage thereof. The report had alarmed the household, nay, even the whole country-side for a mile round; it had come nigh to the deafening of Gilbert himself, for his ears tingled for many days.

Fortunately no one had suffered any hurt; fortunately, also, the splendid mansion was too well built to suffer from so unwonted a shock. The lad had fallen into disgrace for a week afterwards and was forbidden to bring gunpowder into the house again. He regretted the foolish freak, but in his regret, and despite of the chastisement he received by order of his stern and offended grandfather, there was still a sort of boyish satisfaction in his heart—a satisfaction which arose from the fact that his shot had hit its intended mark.

Lady Betty smiled as, sitting by her son's bedside in view of the cannon, she remembered this long-past incident. She had come into the room in the early morning, and had dismissed Timothy Trollope, bidding him go and get some sleep and return when the household had risen. Gilbert had slumbered during the whole time that she had been present with him, but at the sound of the opening of the door he had awakened, to find Timothy again at his side and his mother silently retreating on tiptoe.

"Ah, she hath gone, and I had hardly known she was here!" sighed Gilbert. "Go, summon her back, Tim—yet, no; let her not know that I am awake. 'Twill comfort her to think that I am still asleep. But I am sorry that she hath gone. I had meant to question her concerning this Uncle Jasper and his son. For what my mother doth say of them and think of them is certain to be true and just, whether her judgment be favourable or the reverse. Didst mark her demeanour towards them yesternight, Tim? Didst mark if she greeted them in friendly wise?"

"I marked little of anything, so much was I concerned as to your hurts, dear master," returned Timothy; "but in so far as I could see, her ladyship seemed to regard your uncle rather with annoyance than friendship, and to avoid his near presence as if she misliked his intrusion."

"And yet, if I mind aright, my mother hath ofttimes spoken of him as though she had known him passing well," observed Gilbert, as he half-raised himself upon his uninjured arm.

Timothy strode slowly towards the window and looked out into the park.

"She knew him ere yet she was wedded," he said in a quiet decisive tone, "so at least my father hath told me. But peradventure 'twas only idle gossip."

"Gossip?" repeated Gilbert reprovingly. "Gossip about my mother? Prithee, what said your father? Come, tell me, Tim."

"Nay, be not alarmed," said Timothy, turning for amoment from the window and looking his young master in the face. "'Twas only this, that when my lady was at Her Majesty's court in Richmond as one of Her Majesty's ladies-in-waiting, Jasper Oglander did woo her in the hope that she would wed him, and so cut out his brother, of whom, as thou knowest, he was bitterly jealous. My lady chose the better man to be her husband, and Master Jasper departed across the seas to forget his disappointment in foreign lands."

"Tut! There is naught in that," rejoined Gilbert with a light laugh. "'Tis in no wise surprising that Jasper Oglander or any other man should admire my mother. Doth not all England admire her? Have not a full score of our best poets penned sonnets in her praise? Out upon thee, Timothy, out upon thee!"

"Well, howsoever it be," said Timothy as he gave his head a careless toss and stood with his thumbs in his belt at the window; "howsoever it be, I like not the

man myself. He is a braggart, of that I am sure, and there is a look in his eyes that doth betoken deceitfulness."

"Thy opinion in the matter of people's characters is seldom to be depended upon, Tim," remarked Gilbert, assuming the gravity of worldly wisdom. "Thou dost trust overmuch to instinct and too little to a knowledge of the world. 'Tis a brute dog's method."

Timothy strode to the bedside and sat down on the chair that Lady Betty had lately left. He crossed his legs and was silent for a few moments.

"'Tis true I have not travelled as thou hast done, Master Gilbert, nor been to a great public school to learn Latin and Greek as thou hast been. But methinks a brute dog's instinct may yet sometimes be trusted; and I have even known the dog Nero to be right in his discernment of men when thou and I have failed. Howbeit, 'tis not for me, who am but a servant, to say ought in disparagement of your worshipful uncle, who may, after all, be a very proper gentleman; and I do humbly beseech your pardon, sir, for having said so much as I have already done."

There was a light knock at the door. Tim started to his feet.

"Wilt let us enter, Gilbert?" asked Drusilla in a half-whisper as though she feared to disturb her brother. "Uncle Jasper and Cousin Philip are here, and they would be better known to thee."

Timothy opened the door and they entered.

"I fear that we disturb thee, Master Gilbert," began Jasper Oglander in a soft, tender voice, when the greetings had been exchanged. "But we were anxious, as thou mayest be sure, to make thy good acquaintance, as we have already made that of thy sweet sister."

"Thou art right welcome, Uncle Jasper; and thou too, Cousin Philip," said Gilbert with hearty candour. "Ay, sit you upon the bed, Drusilla," he added, turning to Drusilla. "But see you come not too near to my lame foot, for 'tis easily hurt. I am like our grandfather now, when he is troubled with his gout."

"Ah! doth the old gentleman suffer much with that complaint, then?" said Jasper in a tone of sympathetic interest; and, without pausing for an answer, he went on: "'Tis old age creeping upon him, I doubt. Let me see—ay—he must be well upon threescore years and ten. But he hath led a busy life, what with wars, and parliaments, and missions of state, and religious controversy; 'tis little wonder that his hairs are silvered. But I thank God and the saints that I find him looking so hale and well."

"*The saints*, Uncle Jasper?" cried Drusilla, noticing this slip of the tongue. "Is it not enough to thank God alone?"

"Nay, I meant not that, of course," said Jasper, growing very red in the face, yet passing the matter off with a careless laugh. "You see, in my travels in foreign countries I have come so much in contact with Spaniards and others of the Romish faith that I have, as it were, acquired insensibly their habit of mentioning the saints, to whom they do so constantly appeal."

"Yes, I have heard them oftentimes," said Gilbert; "for there be many Spanish Papists at this present time in Plymouth. Prisoners of war they are—although it seemeth vain to call them prisoners, for they do go about the streets with freedom, and are little different from other men saving that they are not permitted to carry arms."

“They would speedily find that they were prisoners indeed, if they did but attempt to escape from our shores, however,” interposed Timothy Trollope.

Jasper Oglander seemed to take a lively interest in this particular subject.

“Prithee, what is their number, and how came they to be prisoners in England?” he asked of his nephew.

“I know not truly how many there be,” answered Gilbert; “a good two score, I should say. They were taken on board of the Spanish galleon NUESTRA SEÑORA DEL ROSARIO, the flagship of Don Pedro de Valdes, who surrendered to Francis Drake at the time of the Armada fight. Many of their companions were sent back to Spain, but these remain in Plymouth, for I know not what reason other than that Queen Elizabeth hath not chosen to liberate them.”

Having learned so much, Jasper hastened to change the subject.

“I have been told,” he said, “that you received your injuries yesternight in rescuing one Jacob Hartop, an aged mariner who, as it chanceth, came home with us from the Indies. Was he, too, wounded in this encounter?”

Gilbert turned to Timothy, and Timothy answered:

“No, your worship; he was but robbed.”

“H’m! the thieves can have gained but sorry booty from so impoverished a prey,” remarked Jasper, with a derisive sneer. “Poor crazed creature, he was scarce worth the room he occupied aboard our ship! And, indeed, we should never have consented to bring him but that we were short-handed, and he so earnestly craved for his passage back to England, and so we gave him a berth out of mere compassionate charity.”

“Haply, too, you had been acquainted with the man in former years?” suggested Gilbert.

Jasper glanced in quick apprehension at his nephew, as if questioning whether the lad spoke from knowledge or only at random.

“No, faith, no,” he answered, with seeming indifference. “I have but known him during our late voyage.”

Then Timothy Trollope—remembering how Philip had made inquiry of him concerning Hartop; remembering, too, how speedily the attack upon the old seafarer had followed upon his own meeting with Philip Oglander in the town—ventured to address the two visitors thus:

“I have been thinking,” said he, looking from Jasper to Philip and back again to Jasper, “that ‘tis passing strange you neither saw nor heard aught of this encounter. You set out from Plymouth at close upon five o’clock, or only a brief time before my master and I started for home. You could scarce have arrived at the manor-house very much in advance of us. ‘Tis plain, therefore, that you were at no great distance from Beddington Dingle at the moment when this thing befell. And yet it seemeth that you knew naught of the matter until Master Gilbert was carried wounded into the dining-hall.”

While Timothy spoke Jasper’s fingers were idly playing with the fringe of Gilbert’s counterpane. He glanced upward with a composure which at once dispelled all Timothy’s doubts, and remarked with so much seeming candour that there was no gainsaying the truth of his statement:

“That same question hath already occurred to me,” said he; “and, indeed, had we chanced to come by that same road I doubt not that we should certainly have

passed your robbers by the way. Peradventure we might even have been near enough at hand to render you some timely aid in overcoming the rascals. But it so happened that we journeyed by the longer way of the main road instead of taking the short cut by the Beddington Lane."

"Would that you had indeed been near, uncle!" said Drusilla, as she sat at the foot of the bed, her two hands stretched out clasping the carved oak rail against which her back was resting. "For apart from yourself, who are, as it seemeth, a man of war, I am well assured that Cousin Philip is a master of fence. I saw his long rapier yesternight. 'Tis such a weapon as surely none but the skilfullest swordsman could handle."

"Ay, 'tis a pretty enough blade," returned Jasper carelessly; "but more for ornament, I do assure you, than for use, Mistress Drusilla. As for Philip, he is a sorry hand at such matters. In fencing, as in many other arts that I have wished him to exercise, he is in truth a very dullard and bungler."

Philip Oglander smiled, with his tongue in his cheek.

"Marry, father, but thou art giving me an over-true character," said he, modestly hanging his head. "My cousins will think me a dunce indeed if you herald me thus. But when Cousin Gilbert hath recovered from his injuries, as I do pray that he speedily may, I will ask him to give me a few lessons in the use of the rapier."

"That will I most gladly do," returned Gilbert. "Although, for the matter of that, Timothy Trollope here would prove a likelier and a skilfuller teacher than I, for I am still but his pupil."

"I thank you," said Philip, with a curious lift of his eyebrows as he glanced across at Timothy. "But so please you, I had rather take my lessons from a gentleman."

Timothy winced under the reproach to his lowly birth, and moved away, busying himself by putting aside some books that his young master had left lying on the window-shelf.

"Was not I right, Tim?" remarked Gilbert, some few minutes afterwards, when Drusilla with her uncle and cousin had departed. "Are not they good worthy folk, these relatives of mine?"

"It would ill become me to differ from you, Master Gilbert," answered Timothy. "My instincts may be at fault."

Chapter VIII

The Old Buccaneer.

THE sun shone brightly that morning in a clear blue sky, shedding a glistening light upon the bare wet branches of the trees, and upon the little pools of water that lay in the hollows of the land and between the deep long furrows of the ploughed fields. The sleety snow of the previous night had not rested, but had left the ground soft and slushy, and as Timothy Trollope strode down one of the narrow lanes in the direction of the home-farm his great boots sank deep into the mud at every stride.

"'Tis true enough. God wot 'tis true I am no gentleman," he said to himself as he went along, regardless of the mire. "Nevertheless, I like not the lad's manner of telling me so. 'Twas ill-bred, at the least; and doubly hurtful in that 'twas true. Haply he knew by my raiment, or by my speech, or my ungainly movements, that I am lowly born. 'Tis passing strange how these gentlefolks do know their own class. They will recognize a man of good breeding from across the street, and tell him from a churl though he have not so much as opened his lips. And yet 'tis not the fashion of his coat that doth proclaim him a gentleman, else would Philip Oglander himself be writ down the veriest varlet, for a more ill-favoured fashion than his I have not seen upon a gentleman these many days. Nay, I like him not, despite Master Gilbert. And his words do rankle in me like the sting of a wasp. '*I thank you; but so please you, I had rather take my lessons from a gentleman.*' A gentleman, forsooth! Marry, I have taught a better gentleman than him to use the rapier. Howbeit, there is a medicine for every malady, and it may be that yon simpering fool shall some day take from me a lesson that he wots not of."

At the end of the lane Timothy came upon some men who were at work thatching the roof of one of the farm cottages. The man at the foot of the ladder was Jake Thew, the same who had ridden in pursuit of the robbers.

"What ho there, Jake!" cried Timothy, as he clambered up to the gate. "Didst catch a sight of those rascally Egyptians yesternight?"

"More than a sight, Master Trollope; I catched themselves," came the ready answer. "That is to say, Thomas Lee and I did catch 'em. Thomas rid round by the highroad with William his son. They doubled at the corner of Beddington Lane with intent to meet us in the dingle. We met nigh upon half a mile from the spot where Master Gilbert was wounded, sir. The three of us did scour the country-side, now this way, now that, until well upon midnight; and at last we came upon the vagabonds lying hidden in a place that we'd passed a good half-dozen times—Beddington Dingle to wit. Thomas Lee let fire his pistol upon them, though purposely aiming above their heads, lest he should kill one of them and so be brought up for murder; and the rascals surrendered. So we carried them off and lodged them in Plymouth gaol, sir, where they both now are."

"Both?" echoed Timothy. "And were there not three of them in all?"

Jake left the foot of the ladder, his companions being now on the cottage roof, and waded through the mud to where Timothy was.

"Nay, sir, there were but two; we sought for three, but the third had made good his escape. And well for him that he did so, for 'twas he—so Robert Harvey avers—who ran his rapier into Master Gilbert's arm."

"Plague on the man!" cried Timothy, in vexation. "But we shall catch him yet, I promise you. Prithee, did the constable search the men ere you came away?"

"There was small need to search 'em, my master. The booty they took was scarce so portable as to be stowed away beneath their jerkins. We found it all in two great meal-sacks that they carried off from the barn. And a pretty catalogue it was withal—*item*, three young capons; *item*, one fat hen; *item*, a sucking pig, divers farm implements, and a lordly goose that Dame Trevenen the hen-wife was feeding up for Christmas."

"Ay, a goodly haul, o' my conscience," agreed Timothy. "But found ye nought of what the rogues stole from the old man?"

"Nay," answered Jake with a shake of his head. "Although 'tis true that young Robin Redfern passing through the dingle early this morning, did come upon an old and worthless wallet, which might indeed have belonged to the man you speak of. 'Twas empty, though—empty as a hatched egg,—and Robin left it where it lay among last year's brambles."

"Ah! he had better have brought it with him," said Timothy, "for it will serve as evidence to convict the thieves alike of the stealing of the poultry and the wounding of Master Gilbert. And now," he added, "what canst tell me touching this same old man? Didst see him yesternight after I left him on the road?"

Jake Thew nodded and smiled.

"That we did, my master," said he. "We encountered him nigh unto Modbury Bridge. He was tramping along full contented and jovial, singing lustily enough to wake the very birds in the trees. 'Twas the ballad of *The Beggar's Daughter of Bednall Green* that he sang. And in truth he might well have been that same beggar himself, so ill-favoured was he, and so poorly clad withal."

"Ay," rejoined Trollope, "but, if I mind aright, your beggar man of Bednall Green did turn out in the end to be a man of substance, and more wealthy than any one of his daughter's wooers. Whereas this Jacob Hartop hath not a groat in the world to call his own, saving what he may claim, by virtue of his calling, from the seamen's chest at Chatham, which Sir Francis Drake hath made for the relief of aged mariners."

"He will not want for friendly help in these parts, howsoever," remarked Thew, "for it seemeth he was born in Modbury village, and there be many there still living who have some remembrance of him as a young man ere he went upon the sea, and who will gladly give him both food and shelter. There is the widow Frampton for one, who took him into her cottage yesternight and gave him a supper and a bed, by reason that he sailed in the same ship with her goodman to the Spanish Main. You will find him there even now, sir, if so be you would see him."

Timothy waited only to make certain further inquiries concerning the identity of the two men who had been taken to the gaol, and then set off on his way down to the village.

He went first to the widow Frampton's cottage, a clean little thatched dwelling, with the dry and faded stalks of honeysuckle about the trellised porch and a tiny garden in front. He asked for Jacob Hartop, and was told that the old man had wandered out to enjoy the fresh morning air. Timothy inquired which way he had gone, and was told that he would perhaps find him down beside the sign of the Champernoun Arms, as he had said before going out that he had a mind to have a gossip with some of the villagers over a pot of home-brewed ale.

Timothy made his way along the street past many whitewashed cottages, all curiously striped with cross beams of black oak, and looking very sweet and cosy with their thatched roofs and their smoking chimneys. A turn in the road brought him within a few yards of the village well. About a dozen curly-headed boys and girls stood round it, and in their midst, sitting on the stone parapet that encircled the fountain, was Jacob Hartop. He was easily known by the fact that he still wore Gilbert Oglander's cloak, with its badge of the Oglanders on the shoulder. The old man's back was towards Timothy, and the lad went quietly up behind him until he came within sound of his voice. Jacob was holding forth to his juvenile audience

on the precious virtues of pure water, a cup of which liquid he held in his right hand, resting on his knee.

"Ay," he was saying as Timothy drew near, "I told ye but a little while ago of all the gold and precious stones that I possessed—enough and more in value, as I say, to buy up all Plymouth and Modbury. Well, I would, at times, willingly have given the whole of that treasure for one such little cup of water as this. Ah! 'tis a terrible thing to be dying of thirst, my boys, as many of our brave men were a-dying at that time aboard the GOLDEN GALLEON. 'Tis to be compared only with the tortures of the Inquisition. But there, bairns, methinks I have talked enough about myself and my ship. What would ye next—a song—a fairy tale?"

Timothy was about to break into the circle, but the voice of a yellow-haired little maid of some ten or eleven years old checked him.

"You did say you would tell us of Captain Drake," she said.

"Yes," chimed in a boy at her elbow, "thou didst say we should hear how it was that Sir Francis was crippled. I have oft wondered, when I have seen him going up to my lord's great house yonder, how it was that he came to walk lame."

Hartop laid his cup of water aside on the parapet of the well, and took the yellow-haired maid in his arms and perched her upon his knee. The other children gathered closer round him.

"You must know, then," he began, looking from one to the other of the rosy faces, "that our great enemies the Spaniards have long been famous for the vast wealth that they have gathered out yonder in the islands that we name the West Indies. Every year King Philip doth send out a fleet of his galleons to bring home to Spain their cargoes of silver and gold. 'Tis that same vast wealth that hath made him able to fit out his armadas and pay his armies of soldiers to fight against your fathers. Now Queen Elizabeth (God bless her!) hath ever been anxious to stop those treasures from crossing over to Spain, and she hath allowed Captain Drake and others of her great seamen, as well as such more humble buccaneers as myself, to rove the Spanish Main and capture such treasure-ships as came in their way, also to land their forces on the Spanish islands and strip King Philip's treasure-houses of the gold and silver therein stored."

At this point Timothy Trollope, being somewhat interested in the narrative, sat down on the edge of the well with his back against one of the pillars of the winch.

"One such treasure-house was at a place which the Spaniards called Nombre de Dios," continued Hartop, "a town of the same size as Plymouth. The great building in which all the gold and silver was stored was named the Treasure House of the World, and I promise you it well merited the name. If all the cottages in Modbury village were made of solid silver and the church there of solid gold, there would yet be less than was contained in the place I speak of. All the ships now lying in Plymouth harbour would not have been able to carry it away, though they had gone all together and made two voyages over their work.

"Now Captain Drake made up his mind to have that treasure and carry it off, even though he should cast it all into the deep sea before he came home again to England; for he well knew that if it should ever reach Spain King Philip would thus be made so rich that he could build more ships of war than any other monarch in all the world. So to Nombre de Dios did Drake take his ships. Their crews were made up of the best young men of Devon."

"And were you also with Drake at that time, Master Hartop?" asked one of the elder boys, whose name was Robin Redfern.

"I had that honour; yes," said Hartop. "And well I mind the night that we landed. 'Twas a stormy night. The clouds were as black as my cloak, and the rain was such as you never saw in dear old England. By misfortune the Spaniards got wind of our coming, and we had but reached the main street of the town when they sounded the alarm. They blew their trumpets, they rang their great bells, their soldiers appeared in vast numbers at every corner, firing their muskets and their arrows into our midst. Many of our best men fell. But Captain Drake still urged us on, and we gladly followed his lead, for we knew that, despite the greater number of our enemies, we were more than equal to them in bravery, and that the gold was still within our reach—that, indeed, Master Oxenham and Captain Drake's brother John had already gone round with their men to break open the treasure-house doors. While these our comrades were thus occupied, Captain Drake meant to return to the middle of the town and engage our enemies in a wide, open market-place. Be called to us to follow him thither. He stepped briskly forward to lead the way, and then with a cheery cry on his lips he suddenly rolled over in the wet sand, with his face as white as this little lady's frock.

"'Twas daylight by that time, and I had myself seen that with every step he had taken, for the distance of it may be half a mile, he had left the imprint of his foot in blood. Ever since our first encounter with the Spaniards he had been secretly struggling against a desperate wound in his leg, saying never a word about it, but hiding it lest the knowledge of it might dishearten us. He had gone bravely on until he could no longer stand. There, lying well-nigh dead upon the sand, he beseeched us to proceed with our work. We refused, and he grew angry. Again and again he entreated us, but we told him—which was no more than the truth—that his life was dearer to us than all the wealth of the Indies. We carried him down to our boats and took him aboard his ship, leaving the Spaniards and their wealth behind. And that was the end of our attempt upon the Treasure House of the World.

"'Twas long ere Captain Drake was well enough to leave his bed, but ever since that time he hath walked with a limp in his gait. May he walk through this life for many and many a year yet to come, say I!"

"Amen to that!" chimed in Timothy Trollope, rising and walking round to the other side of the well and greeting Jacob Hartop.

The old man looked very different now from the weary and storm-tossed wanderer of the night before. His weather-beaten face had been newly washed, and was of a clear ruddy brown, albeit wrinkled with many lines that were as the river courses upon a map. His silvery hair and beard had been trimmed and combed, and he wore a small white ruff that covered from view his thin and scraggy neck. Some kindly villagers had given him a shepherd's jacket of russet frieze with red sleeves, a pair of thick start-up boots, and a pair of rough cloth stockings. He lifted the yellow-haired maid from his knee and stood up, taking Timothy's hand.

"How fares your young master?" he inquired; and when Timothy had told him, he bade farewell to the children and walked by the tall young fellow's side towards the bridge that crossed the little river. There he paused as if about to turn back,

but Timothy drew him on, telling him that Lord Champernoun had ordered that if he could be found he was to be brought up to the manor-house.

"My lord was ill pleased that you came not yesternight," said Tim. "And it seemeth that Sir Walter Raleigh, hearing that you had been in the Indies, hath also expressed a wish to have speech with you."

"Sir Walter Raleigh?" repeated Hartop in a tone of surprise. "Ah! then 'tis my bounden duty to go with you. I knew not that he was within a hundred miles of this place. And I have news for him. But I gave you my reasons for avoiding Modbury Manor at this present time. I wanted not to meet again with Master Jasper Oglander, of whom, God wot, I have already seen more than pleaseth me. I wot well that he did intend to go thither yesternight. Didst find him there when ye went in, prithee?"

Timothy nodded. "We found him and his son at the table when we carried Master Gilbert into the dining-hall," he said.

"And the sigñora his wife? Was not she also present?" asked the old man, glancing up at Timothy as it were with the corner of his eye.

"No," answered Trollope; "I heard naught of her."

"Ah!" returned Hartop in a tone which Timothy did not exactly understand.

And then, after a few moments' silence, Jacob added, as if speaking to himself: "'Tis as I judged, then—and yet—?"

Timothy stroked his upper lip meditatively, and then, turning abruptly upon the old mariner: "Now, prithee, what doubts and questions art thou turning over in thy mind?" he inquired.

Jacob Hartop set his eyes straight before him up the long lane and strode on in resolute silence. But Timothy was pertinacious; he nudged his elbow against Jacob's arm.

"I'll tell thee what thou'rt thinking, Master Hartop," said he smiling. "Thou'rt thinking that 'tis passing strange that Jasper Oglander and his son were so close at hand at the time that thou wert robbed—nay, more, I'll warrant me thou'rt even questioning whether they were not themselves the very men who robbed thee."

Jacob Hartop suddenly came to a stand-still and stared at Timothy in wonderment.

"By St George," he exclaimed, "thou'rt a very 'cute and promising lad, Timothy! Beshrew me if thou'st not hit upon my veritable thoughts! 'Twas that in truth that I was questioning. But there be many points, nevertheless, that seem to disprove the suspicion; as, firstly, if Jasper and his son sought to rob me, why did they not rob me aboard the ship, where the matter was as easy as eating and drinking? Secondly, if 'twas they who robbed me, how came it that there was a third man in the work with them? And who might that third man have been? But on the other hand, mark you, if 'twas not they who did it, who else were my assailants? Who other than they could have known that I had aught about me that was worth the robbing?"

"Ah! then you were not so poor as you did look?" cried Timothy. "You did indeed carry something of value in your wallet?"

"'Twas something which would most certainly have been accounted of value—of the most exceeding value—by Queen Elizabeth, or Francis Drake, or Walter Raleigh, or even perchance by my Lord Champernoun, but by few else," answered

Jacob Hartop. “Your common footpad rascal who seeketh for that which will buy him bread would peradventure have cast it into the fire, not guessing at its import.”

“And yet you hinted but a moment ago that Jasper Oglander did know you had that about you which was worth the robbing,” said Timothy.

“Ay, but Jasper Oglander is different,” returned Hartop gravely. “He is without honour, and without conscience, a vile dissembler, and—” He broke off, recollecting that Timothy was a servant in Modbury Manor, and that it was therefore unwise to speak thus of Lord Champernoun’s son. “But why should I catalogue his faults?” he continued. “If you would learn more of him, you have but to question Sir Francis Drake, who will haply tell you more than I dare tell. ‘Twas indiscreet in me to mention Jasper in this connection; but your own remark took me unawares. Nevertheless I am by no means certain that it was not indeed Jasper Oglander who attacked and robbed me yesternight—to say nothing of the wounding of your young master who rescued me—and I am minded to find out the truth, though it cost me until the end of the year in the search for it.”

“You might better have said to the end of this lane,” smiled Timothy, “for I can at once set your mind at ease. Like yourself, Master Hartop, I had vaguely suspected that Jasper Oglander had had a hand in this affair; but he hath given my suspicions a very positive denial, for he hath declared that both he and Master Philip did journey round by the highroad, and were nowhere near to Beddington Dingle. Also, the actual thieves have been discovered.”

Hartop glanced at Timothy with a curious light in his eyes.

“And yet,” said he, “I traced both Jasper and Philip’s footprints in the snowy ground of Beddington Lane. What should that bode, I pray you?”

“Tut!” retorted Timothy. “How know you their footprints from those of any other honest folk?”

The old mariner answered with quiet deliberation, and with a firmness that seemed to show that he had little doubt upon the matter:

“By the token that Jasper Oglander’s feet do turn slightly inward as he walks, and by the fact that his boots be pointed at the toes, in the Spanish fashion. By the token, too, that in the snow, hard against the left bootmark of him who walked by his side, there was here and there a little line, made by the point of a rapier scabbard—made, as I take it, by the point of Philip Oglander’s rapier, which, if you will have occasion to observe, is a weapon of unusual length.”

“Marry!” cried Trollope. “Thou art surely a very bloodhound in thy skill at tracking!”

“‘Tis an art that hath oft served me in good stead,” returned Hartop. “I learned it from John Hawkins. And, touching this matter of the wounding of Master Gilbert, didst chance to regard the fashion of his adversary’s sword-play?”

Timothy shook his head. “I knew naught of the encounter till ‘twas over,” he answered. “Yet wait; Master Gilbert did indeed tell me this morning that the man had enwrapped his guard arm with the skirt of his cloak.”

“Ay, Philip Oglander’s own method. I had guessed so much,” said Hartop with a confident nod of his head.

“What?” exclaimed Timothy. “You will say that it was Philip Oglander? ‘Tis not possible, man. Why, the lad’s own father informed us only this morning that Philip

was but a dullard—a very dunce—at the use of the rapier. The lad admitted as much also, and even spoke of taking lessons from Master Gilbert. It is not possible, I say."

"Ah! I do perceive that thou art yet but a simple countryman, Master Trollope," rejoined Jacob Hartop as he paused at the edge of a great slough of mud that was in front of him and turned to his companion. "A simple country lad that doth see no guile, knowing not of man's manifold wickednesses. But thou'lt learn wisdom with growing years… And so he declared that his son was but a dullard at sword-play, eh? Hark'ee, my lad; attend to an old man's counsel; and when Jasper Oglander—ay, or his son—doth say that a thing is white, believe thou that 'tis in truth black. When he doth declare that he is a devout and zealous Protestant, believe thou that he is in truth an ardent and bigoted Papist. When he doth declare—as I doubt not he soon will—that he is heart and soul for Queen Elizabeth, believe thou that he is all in all for King Philip and Spain. When—"

"Enough!" exclaimed Timothy drawing back a step in anger. "I will hear no more. You are the man's enemy and do but speak against him falsely. He hath given you his help, and yet you turn against him and decry him as though he were a very villain. You say that it was he who robbed you. I tell you 'tis false—false as your own calumnies. Ay, and I will prove its falseness, for the men who robbed you have been caught. They were caught at a late hour yesternight and are now lying in Plymouth gaol."

The old man started at Timothy, astonished and perplexed. Then he turned and carefully picked his way across the slough of mud, saying never a word. At length, when the lad again came to his side, he said very calmly:

"Are you certain sure of this that you tell me, Master Trollope? Are you certain that these men have been caught?"

"Certain," Timothy answered curtly. And they continued their journey in silence.

At this same time Baron Champernoun was in his great gloomy library with Sir Walter Raleigh and Raleigh's cousin, Sir Richard Grenville. His lordship was seated before the fire in a large arm-chair, with his head supported upon pillows and his feet propped up in front of him on a high hassock. Raleigh had been writing at the table, but had now swung round his chair and sat with his two hands clasping one of his knees, looking down at the crimson rosette that adorned his dainty shoe. Grenville stood with his back to the cheek of the fireplace. He was a tall, broad-shouldered seaman of about fifty years of age, with dark curly hair and a full, pointed beard that was sprinkled with gray. There was an easy, careless look about him, and his voice when he spoke seemed to have in it something of the deep low murmur of the sea.

"Ay, cousin Walter," he was saying, "thou hast made a stroke of ill-luck for once with this PEARL. She hath never brought thee much profit to speak of, and this last adventure of hers doth bring her misfortunes to a climax. 'Tis the first time I have known a ship come home from the Indies lacking a cargo that would amply repay her owners for their outlay. And her crew, from what Master Jasper hath told us, are of as little value as herself, what with graybeards for sailing-masters and negroes for seamen. I never saw the negro yet who could handle a rope or trim a sail. 'Tis surprising to me that with such a ship's company the craft hath ever

reached port. What wilt do with the old hulk now, Walter—break it up for firewood, or sell it to thine enemy?"

"Sell the ship, Raleigh—sell her to Jasper Oglander," interposed Lord Champernoun with a chuckling laugh. "I'll go to the expense of fitting her out anew for him. 'Twill be a cheap enough way of getting rid of him for another year or two."

"I will sell her most willingly, baron, an you are serious," remarked Raleigh. "But I promise you it would be cheaper far to build a new vessel altogether. The PEARL is one of your old-fashioned craft. We have made an hundred improvements in our ships since she was launched—thanks to John Hawkins and other skilled and worthy navigators. We have devised the striking of the topmast, together with the chain-pump. We have invented studding sails, top-gallant sails, sprit sails, topsails. We now weigh our anchors by the capstan. Our hulls are now built on longer keels than formerly, with lowered superstructure and finer lines, which make them swifter and capable of carrying more sail. Compare such a heavy cumbrous ship as the PEARL with our vessels of the newer sort, such as the REVENGE. The improvement is too great to admit of controversy."

"Thou'rt right, cousin Walter," said Grenville, advancing a step and seating himself on an oak settle that stood beyond the too-great warmth of the fire. "Wiseacres, who knew less than we, declared that our new ships would be too crank to carry sail, and only fit for smooth water, and they foretold that they would surely founder in the heavy seas of the Atlantic. But the result hath disproved their prophecies."

"The high charging of ships was but a huge mistake," pursued Raleigh. "Those towering castles at stern and prow did but increase the ship's leeway, made her sink too deep in the water, and tended to overset her."

"I am not learned in these matters," remarked Lord Champernoun with some impatience. "But touching that ship the REVENGE, which you mentioned just now, Raleigh, did I not hear some weeks since that she had met with some grave disaster?"

Sir Walter Raleigh picked up his quill from the table and began idly to nibble at the feather end, leaving his cousin to answer the question.

"'Twas a small matter, as things have turned out," said Grenville; "and although it might indeed have been serious, yet there was not a single life lost. She was riding at her moorings in the river Medway, off the town of Rochester, with naught but her bare masts overhead, and in a great storm of wind and weather she suddenly turned topsy-turvy, her keel uppermost. Howsoever, they have righted her now, and she is being refitted for her next voyage, whithersoever that may be."

"Her destination hath not yet been decided upon," remarked Raleigh. "But there is talk of her being despatched to join others of Her Majesty's ships that are now lying in wait off the Western Islands to intercept and capture the Spanish plate fleet, which should be returning from Havana at about this time. But I much doubt that 'tis already too late for her to enter upon that journey, and it may be that she will be commissioned for the expedition to Panama."

Sir Richard Grenville slowly rose to his feet, and touching Raleigh on the shoulder, "Look you, cousin Walter," he said, "'tis not often that I do ask you a favour, but an you love me I would beseech you to use your influence with Her

Majesty on my account, and advise her with all your eloquence to graciously appoint me to the command of the REVENGE."

"Thou shalt have it, Dick; on my honour thou shalt have it," returned Raleigh, turning about and clapping the rough seaman on the broad back.

"Ay," interposed Lord Champernoun, "and thou shalt take my young grandson Gilbert with thee, Grenville. I had rather he learned seamanship under thee than under any other man in all Her Majesty's service."

At this moment there was a knock at the library door, and Timothy Trollope entered, followed by Jacob Hartop.

Chapter IX

Concerning a Stolen Letter.

TIMOTHY had given the old man a pair of cloth shoes in place of the mud-covered boots that he had worn on his walk from the village, and had himself changed his rough outdoor clothes for a suit of dark-blue frieze.

"What have we here?" questioned the baron, turning in his chair and looking towards the door.

"'Tis Master Jacob Hartop, my lord," answered Timothy, "the same who was robbed yesternight."

"That matter is settled, for the men are arrested," said his lordship with a wave of his thin white hand that was meant for a dismissal. "I have now no need of the man's evidence. You had best take him down to the town and let Justice Oldfield examine him." His eyes rested upon Hartop for a moment. "Yet stay," he added. And then, addressing Hartop, he said: "Art thou a man of Devon, prithee?"

"I am, your lordship," answered Jacob. "So please you, I am Modbury born, and did serve your lordship's family in my youth—until, my lord, your father got me a ship and I went to sea."

"How long time have you been absent from England?" Lord Champernoun asked, gazing dreamily into the fire.

"'Tis nigh upon three-and-twenty years since last I trod upon these shores," the old mariner answered.

"What is your history during all those years?" pursued the nobleman.

"A troublous one, my lord. So please you, I was one of Captain John Hawkins' men that went out with him from Plymouth in the year fifteen hundred and sixty-seven. I was his master's mate aboard the MINION, and was with him in his fight at San Juan de Ulloa. Captain Hawkins left me, with certain others, in Mexico, where I remained for two years, until I fell into the hands of the Spaniards, who carried me off to Spain. I was a prisoner in the Contratation House of Cadiz for twelve months, and a slave in one of the galleys of Don Andrea Doria for two years more, being present as a slave on that admiral's flag-ship at the battle of Lepanto." He broke off, glancing nervously from one to the other of the company. At the mention of the battle of Lepanto Sir Richard Grenville raised his eyebrows. No one spoke, however, and presently the old buccaneer continued:

“Transferred to one of King Philip’s great galleons, I was taken once more to the Spanish Indies; but by God’s providence the galleon was captured on the high seas by Captain Ned Horseley, the English buccaneer, and I was by him handed over to Captain Francis Drake. Under Drake, so please you, I served at the attack on Nombre de Dios, and at the taking of Porto Bello in the year seventy-two. Again I fell into the hands of our enemies, and was for eight long years in the Everlasting Prison Remediless in Hispaniola; since when I have been in the Indies—in Darien, in Brazil, in Virginia. I had the good fortune to come into possession of a great galleon, with which I roved the seas, making many conquests and gaining great wealth. But again I had the ill fortune to lose her. Thereafter I found my way out to the Western Indies, and have now come back from Havana in the good ship PEARL.”

His listeners nodded and smiled as he ended his narrative.

“What say you to that, Sir Walter?” asked Lord Champernoun, turning to Raleigh.

“A goodly record, o’ my conscience,” returned Sir Walter. And glancing towards Hartop he added: “And so thou hast been robbed—eh, my man? Prithee, what might have been the value of your stolen property?”

Hartop hesitated and looked a little confused. At last he said, bowing to Raleigh:

“So please your honour, is it to Sir Walter Raleigh that I do now speak?”

Sir Walter Raleigh nodded. “Yes, I was asking thee the value of thy stolen goods.”

“Nay, I know not precisely,” answered Hartop. “It might be about the value of five or six hundred pounds in the form of pearls and emeralds and gew-gaws of such sort. But of these I care naught, for there was that in my wallet which I had rather have given my life than lose—a letter addressed to your worshipful self, that I was bidden to give with all speed into your honour’s hands. I had thought it was safe in the pocket of my hose until late yesternight, but then I minded that ere I left the ship I put it into my wallet. And ‘tis gone—God forgive me, ‘tis gone!”

“From Havana, say you?” cried Sir Walter Raleigh doubtingly. “Prithee, who writ it?”

“Captain William Marsden, please your worship.”

“Marsden?” echoed Raleigh. “But he is dead. He died ere the PEARL set sail on her homeward voyage. Jasper Oglander told me so. ‘Twas of a malarial fever that he died.”

Hartop shook his head and rejoined very calmly: “No; so please your worship ‘twas not fever. Master Oglander must surely have been misinformed, or else—” He broke off, glancing apprehensively at Lord Champernoun. “Captain Marsden was murdered, your worship, and he writ the letter, knowing beforehand that his life was menaced.”

“Some treachery at work, eh?” muttered Sir Walter. “Well, and the letter. Dost know naught of its purport?”

“Naught saving the words that the captain spake as he gave it unto me,” answered Hartop. “They were these: ‘Guard the letter with thy life, Hartop, and let no Spaniard or friend of Spain know aught of its existence. Deliver it into the hands of Sir Walter Raleigh wheresoever he may be found, and, failing him, any one of Her Majesty’s privy councillors. If thou shouldst fall into the hands of our

enemies, destroy the letter. If thou shouldst lose it, which Heaven forfend, go still to Raleigh and tell him this: tell him that the King of Spain's people in the Indies have gathered together here in the treasure-houses of Havana the vastest store of silver and gold that hath ever been known upon earth, and that it is the intention of the King to have all this treasure transported into Spain, to the end that he may—in revenge for the great loss he hath lately suffered at the hands of England—build a yet greater armada than that of two years ago, wherewith to invade and conquer our Queen's dominions. Bid Sir Walter bear this in mind: that the taking of that treasure into Spain doth mean nothing short of the downfall of England and all her glory upon the seas.'"

"Yes, yes," interrupted Sir Walter, striding to and fro athwart the end of the table. "But all this I did know passing well before—although, indeed I was scarce aware that the treasure was so great. Even now at this present time Hawkins and Frobisher are lying in wait with their ships at the Azores, with intent to intercept the Spanish galleons."

"Your pardon, sir, but so please you I am not done," returned Jacob Hartop. "The more important part is to come. King Philip of Spain, it seemeth from what Captain Marsden told me, is fully aware that the English ships are even now lying in wait for his galleons; and the captain bade me tell your honour that if matters remain as they now are, those ships will continue so to lie inactive until their hulls be all eaten with the worm and their crews all dead of famine and disease."

"And how so?" demanded Raleigh in a loud voice. "Are they not as well equipped as any fleet that ever sailed out of England, quotha?"

Hartop shrank back, overawed by the great courtier's imperative manner.

"I am striving to repeat Captain Marsden's message," he said meekly; and then he went on more boldly: "Inclosed with the letter I have so unfortunately lost there was, I believe (although I of course saw it not), a copy of King Philip's own private instructions to the admiral of the plate fleet, sent out secretly to Havana. They arrived there but three days before Captain Marsden received his intelligence. Those instructions were to the effect that the galleons were to remain in Havana throughout the winter, and to set sail on the first day of the month of March next, by which time the English ships, their hulls rotten and their crews reduced by pestilence, would be too weak to offer any obstacle."

"Ah, now do I begin to perceive some daylight!" exclaimed Sir Walter Raleigh—"as much, it may be, as if I had e'en read the letter thou hast guarded so ill." He turned to Lord Champernoun. "That letter must be found," he said. "It will go ill with us if it fall into the hands of any friend of Spain. I beg thee to see to it in such wise as may seem most expedient. In the meantime—although I am sorry to abridge my so pleasant visit—I must hie me back to London. Cousin Dick," he added, nodding to Captain Grenville, "there is work for thee in this matter, I do promise thee."

Timothy Trollope had not heard this conversation. Having ushered Jacob Hartop into Lord Champernoun's presence, he had withdrawn from the library and made his way up the stairs to his young master's bedroom. The sound of merry laughter greeted him from within as he reached the door. He knocked and entered, and found Gilbert sitting up in bed with a smile on his face, and with his bandaged arm resting in a sling of brilliant red silk. The Lady Betty sat at his bedside, at

work with her needle upon a piece of tapestry; Drusilla, seated on a low stool at her mother's feet, was nursing a litter of mewing kittens. Philip Oglander occupied a chair close by, and was speaking when Timothy appeared, entertaining his cousins by his descriptions of life in Brazil, of adventurous journeys through primeval forests, of horseback rides across the wide pampas, and dream-like voyages among the islands of the Antilles.

"And prithee, cousin Philip, didst never go to any school out there in those beauteous places?" asked Drusilla.

And Philip answered:

"Nay, there be neither schools nor colleges in the Brazil, saving only those which are kept up by the Jesuit fathers, and with them and their Romish fashions I could have no dealings."

"And yet thou'rt not lacking in classical knowledge," remarked Lady Betty with a smile, as she plied her busy needle; "for I heard thee but a little while since reading to Gilbert out of his book of Virgil, and it seemeth to me that thy skill in the Latin tongue doth greatly excel that of many English boys I have known who have studied at the great colleges of Oxford."

At this Philip shrugged his shoulders and affected to make light of the accomplishment, concealing the fact that it was one of those same Jesuit priests who had taught him in one of the Romish colleges of Brazil.

Lady Betty smiled at him yet again. "Thou'rt too modest, Master Philip," said she.

"Ay," added Gilbert; "but I have observed that Philip doth ever strive to avoid all vain boastfulness."

"'Tis a commendable quality," remarked his mother.

Clearly did it appear to Timothy Trollope that Philip had already won his way into the good opinion of his relatives, and that they were disposed to like him, not only because of his relationship, but also, as it seemed, because of a certain air of natural courtliness that revealed itself in his manner of speech. Moreover, there was an attraction in his dark handsome face and in his dreamy beautiful eyes which made him very winsome. Even Timothy, who had from the first taken a strong prejudice against him, could not but admit to himself that there was something of inborn nobility about the lad which might give the lie to all that old Hartop had hinted regarding him.

Later on that same day, when Sir Walter Raleigh and his retinue had departed, Timothy took horse and rode in to Plymouth to attend the examination of the two poachers before Justice Oldfield. Jacob Hartop, Bob Harvey, and Jake Thew had ridden in advance of him, and he did not overtake them until they were on the outskirts of the town, at a little wayside hostelry where their horses were stabled, and thence they walked to the court-house.

Hartop and Timothy walked together along by the harbour, when, on approaching the quay against which the good ship PEARL was now lying, they came upon a crowd of men—mariners, fishermen, and merchants—who appeared to be greatly concerned in some matter which was going on in their midst.

"Ah! I can e'en guess what 'tis," said Hartop. "'Tis Captain Evans putting up our crew of blackamoors to auction. He bought 'em over in Florida, lacking better hands, to work the ship home. Ay, and a sorry lot they proved, Master Timothy. I

warrant he'll get scarce a half of the price he gave for them. Thou seest the black woolly poll of the tall African who is standing upon the wine-cask close against the auctioneer? We named him Æsop, by reason of his fables. He was once upon a time the reigning king of a country nigh unto Sierra Leone, with as many wives as there be days in the year. Captain Hawkins captured him and sold him to the Spaniards. He served as our cook aboard the PEARL, and I promise you he made such soup as the Queen herself might relish. As for his manner of cooking a cutting from off the side of a shark, why, Lor' bless you, sir!—"

The old man broke off abruptly as a heavy hand was laid on his shoulder.

Illustration:
And how fares it with thee, old shipmate?

"Od's life!" exclaimed the hearty voice of Sir Francis Drake. "So 'tis thy very self, Jacob? Faith, thou'rt passing nimble on thy feet, for all thy gray hairs. And how fares it with thee, old shipmate? Hast brought thy fortune home with thee?"

"Fortune, Captain Drake?" returned Hartop, grasping the knight's proffered hand; "Lor' bless you, sir, I'd none to bring saving only a handful of precious stones that were stolen from me within an hour's time of my landing. No, the great fortune that you wot of, and the GOLDEN GALLEON that carried it, now lie at the bottom of the sea—a wealthy treasure-house that hath claimed tribute from many a good ship that you and I have known, Master Drake."

Sir Francis nodded.

"True, Jacob, true," said he with a sad smile that seemed to betoken a world of melancholy memories, "and the last long home of many a goodly man of Devon that hath been our shipmates! Ay, man, and thou hast lost it, eh? Why, 'twould have made thee one of the wealthiest men in all England had it been brought home here to Plymouth. But I had e'en guessed that some such dire misfortune had befallen thee when I heard that thou hadst come hither aboard this worm-eaten old craft, the PEARL; for well did I know that friend Hartop must surely have been put to the hardest of shifts ere he would consent to sail i' the same vessel as Master Jasper Oglander. And, touching that matter, Jacob, how came it I pray you, that Jasper got possession of any ship of Sir Walter Raleigh's?"

"He had chartered her for the homeward voyage," answered Hartop, "and spent his last groat in victualling her. Master John Evans was our captain, the command falling to him on the death of your old friend, Will Marsden."

"'Tis a fact, then, that Will is dead?" cried Drake in a tone of surprised inquiry, as he gazed across the harbour. Then lowering his voice and touching Jacob on the shoulder he added: "Prithee, Jacob, answer me this—had he you wot of aught to do with Will's death?"

"Hush!" cautioned Hartop, suddenly gripping Drake's arm. "Here cometh Jasper himself!"

Timothy moved aside while Jasper Oglander strode along the causeway with silent tread, his eyes bent on the ground as if he were absorbed in some important business that required his deepest thought. As he passed nigh, however, he raised his eyes and looked out from under his wide sombrero hat full into Drake's face. His own face became very red, all except the scar on his cheek, which remained of

a dead white colour. He quickly averted his gaze and passed on without a word, hastening his steps somewhat.

Sir Francis Drake and Jacob Hartop exchanged meaning glances.

"You see he doth still bear the mark of the cut you gave him across his craven face," remarked Hartop as he watched Jasper crossing the muddy street.

A grim smile played for a moment upon Drake's handsome, ruddy countenance as he answered:

"Ay, marry. And i' faith 'twas a pretty enough cut for him to remember me by—eh, Jacob? I warrant me he ne'er looks in his looking-glass without minding of the occasion of it. And yet methinks I might well have dealt him a severer blow without blame, for he had surely done for me outright had you not so timely warned me of his evil purpose. Dost remember, Jacob, how he came stealing aft to my cabin, with the moonlight glinting on his naked rapier—how he silently pushed open the door, and then, believing me to be slumbering, prepared to do his work?"

"Right well do I mind it," returned Hartop with a grave shake of the head. "And greatly have I marvelled ever since how it came that you let him off so easily. Any man less forgiving than yourself would assuredly have had him slung up to the yard's-arm for attempting so foul a deed."

Timothy overheard this part of the conversation, but, not wishing to seem to take interest in other people's affairs, he strode a few steps away and stood at the edge of the quay looking down upon the untidy and now deserted deck of the Pearl. But what he had heard had nevertheless given him occasion for reflection.

"So 'twas a falsehood he told when he declared to my father yesterday that the wound was made by an Indian's arrow," he said to himself as he leaned against the granite pillar round which one of the ship's thick ropes was bound. "I might even have guessed as much, for the cut is not one such as any arrow could make. Certes, I wonder what Master Gilbert will think of his uncle when he doth learn what manner of man he truly is! Methinks I was not so far in error, after all, when I said that I distrusted him, although 'twas no more than mere instinct that gave me that feeling concerning him. But I now have warrant for my opinion, in all conscience, and if I make not a huge mistake, some grave trouble will ere long spring out of his coming to Modbury Manor; for it seemeth that he doth intend to take up his residence in my lord's family. Ay, faith, and a mighty pretty gentleman he is to be counted one of so noble and honourable a household!"

Timothy's anxiety grew deeper and deeper as he continued to review the situation. It was not the mere discovery that Jasper Oglander was untruthful which disturbed his peace of mind. It was not even the thought that there might, after all, be some reason in the accusations which Jacob Hartop had made against him in the earlier morning. It was the reflection that, as he had just now learned, this Jasper Oglander had once treacherously attempted to take the life of Sir Francis Drake. In common with all English boys at that time Timothy Trollope had a regard for the great seaman and warrior which amounted to reverent worship. Sir Francis Drake was to him the noblest hero in all the world—a hero who could do no wrong, and who had won for England a glory that could never die; and just in proportion as he honoured and reverenced Sir Francis, so did he now detest the man who, for whatsoever cause it may have been, had attempted that hero's life.

Had Timothy been bold enough to follow Jasper Oglander instead of waiting as he now did upon the busy quay, he might have learned something more of the man's treachery. But Jasper was not the man toallow himself to be caught unawares, or to afford any stranger the slightest chance of prying into the secret matters that he had at present in hand. Having crossed the street, he walked on for a few yards looking unconcernedly about him, and then turned in at the front porchway of the Three Flagons.

Passing through the little parlour of the hostelry, where some seamen and merchants sat before the fire gossiping and drinking, he mounted the narrow dark stairs, and, arriving at the second landing, pushed open a creaking door at the end of the corridor. The room that he entered was a small, plainly-furnished apartment, in the front gable of the house, whose side walls sloped upward at a sharp angle, meeting above. A charcoal fire burned in a brazier in one of the corners, and near it on the floor a youth lay sound asleep. Jasper went up to him, listened to his breathing for a few moments, and then strode to the little casement window and looked down upon the quay where Drake and Hartop still stood talking together. He watched them until they parted, and when Timothy Trollope and Hartop had gone their way to the courthouse be glanced once more at his sleeping companion, drew a chair to the little centre table, and sat down with his elbow on the table and his head resting on his hand. Thus he remained for many minutes, ruminating.

"And yet, what should it matter to me whom the old man hath speech with?" he presently murmured, as if arguing with himself. "He can tell naught Honest clown that he is, he had not so much as looked at the letter, for the seal was unbroken. He can, therefore, know naught of its purport. I warrant me Will Marsden was too cautious a man to venture to impart his knowledge by word of mouth, and if old Hartop doth not know, no man else can know. There cannot be a person in England, saving only myself, who doth even suspect aught of His Spanish Majesty's designs. The treasure will be brought safely over to Spain, and then with a new armada well equipped we may snap our fingers at England's Drakes and Howards and her much-vaunted strength upon the seas. As for Elisabeth Tudor—we'll burn her at the stake, and a fitting end for the heretic Jezebel, say I!"

He thrust his hand into the breast of his doublet and drew forth first a little canvas bag, which he laid before him on the table, and then a soiled and crumpled sheet of paper, that was folded and refolded into a small parcel of the size of his own hand. This last he opened out in front of him. It was closely covered with writing. He glanced down the page, his eyes following his finger from line to line until he came to a little below the middle, and here he paused.

"Ay, by my faith, considering thou wert but a poor untutored mariner, thou hast put the matter exceeding well, Master Will," he muttered admiringly. "As for thy good counsel, 'twere wiser than most seamen could give. But 'tis useless now, seeing that Sir Walter Raleigh, for whom thou didst intend it, can neither receive it nor profit by it."

He stopped and shot a glance in the direction of the man lying before the fire.

"Art sleeping, Andrea?" he questioned in a low voice. But a deep-drawn breath was the only answer, and he again went on silently reading.

When he had got to the end of the paper he took it in his fingers and deliberately tore it into small shreds. He silently carried the fragments to the fire and cast them upon it, going down on his knees and blowing the charcoal into a glow until the paper caught alight and was consumed. Then, returning to the table he took up the little canvas bag, loosened its strings and poured its contents into the palm of his hand. Glistening gems they were—emeralds that were clear and green as a curling ocean wave pierced by a shaft of sunlight; sapphires that were blue as a Pacific sea that reflects the azure sky; rubies that were as drops of crimson blood; together with many beauteous pearls and other precious stones, wonderful to behold. He counted them all one by one, made a mental estimate of their value, and then, smiling with satisfaction, returned them to the bag, which he carefully tied up and as carefully hid away in the breast of his doublet.

Having done this he stepped towards the youth near the fire, and, bending down, prodded him with his finger.

"Andrea!" he said. "Andrea! Come, wake up!"

Andrea turned over, rubbed his eyes with his knuckles, and presently rose to his feet.

"Sancta Maria!" he muttered, "what a dream I have had! Methought I was engaged in a deadly duel, and that mine adversary had run me through!"

"Doubtless 'tis the recollection of your struggle with old Hartop," remarked Jasper, speaking, as the youth had done, in the Spanish tongue. "But come, what of the errand I sent you out upon two hours ago? Didst discover aught of our friends?"

"That I did," replied Andrea, "and more easily than I had expected. 'Twas my father's friend, Don Miguel Fernandes that I met. He hath been a prisoner here in this town for the past two years, with his companions to the number of five-and-twenty. Some of the less important of them are confined in a strong-built house in the centre of the town, and are under the charge of one Master Richard Drake—a kinsman of the great Dragon. But some half-dozen Castilian gentlemen—survivors of the Armada,—who were shipwrecked in Ireland, are of the number, and these, it seemeth, are permitted to go abroad for six hours every day, having given their parole."

"And who are these same gentlemen? What are their names?" inquired Jasper. And when Andrea had named them he said: "A goodly company! By the mass, a most noble company! Assuredly Spain can ill afford to let them languish here when they might so easily be at home working for His Most Christian Majesty and our Holy Mother church!" He touched the youth's shoulder and added with grave earnestness: "Look you, Andrea, these gentlemen must escape from England, and that speedily, for there is no time to be lost."

Andrea looked up surprised and eager.

"Escape!" he repeated. "Ah! but how, señor, how?"

"Nay, I know not how," answered Jasper with a shrug, "but 'tis surely possible. I only marvel how it happens that they have not themselves contrived it long since."

"Ay, but they have given their word of honour," returned Andrea; "and thou knowest as well as I that a Spanish gentleman cannot break his word."

"Pooh!" cried Jasper. "'Tis no breach of honour to break one's word to heretics! But leave the matter to me, and, by our Lady, I'll contrive it, in spite of Drake and

all of them." He broke off and glanced towards the door, which had been opened. A young negro woman stood upon the threshold. "What want you, Catalina?" he demanded.

She answered him in halting Spanish, saying that the señora her mistress had heard his voice, and had sent her in to ask him if it was his wish that she should make herself ready for the journey to Modbury.

"Tell the señora that we start in half an hour's time," said he; and then he turned to Andrea to further discuss the matter of the Spanish prisoners of war.

Chapter X

A Rapier and a Riding Whip.

IT was late in the afternoon when Timothy returned to Modbury, and when he had taken some food he made his way up the stairs to his young master's room. Gilbert was reading when he entered, but, at sight of Timothy, threw aside his book.

"Ah, thou'rt back!" cried Gilbert. "Well, what of the cut-purse gypsies, Tim? Didst see them?"

"Ay, full well did I see them," answered Timothy. "And Justice Oldfield hath dealt with them according to their deserts. They are men well beknown in the neighbourhood, Master Gilbert, and you must even yourself have ofttimes seen or heard of them. The elder of them, who is known as Red Bob, hath been in the lock-up once before for a like offence. His companion is a young seaman named Tom Lane. They both were armed with daggers. The third man who was with them in the stealing of the farm poultry, and who is supposed by many to have been the man whom you crossed swords with, is not yet arrested. Justice Oldfield tried to prove them guilty of the robbery of Jacob Hartop's wallet, but neither Jacob nor I could swear to their identity. There was naught to prove that they were the same men that we encountered, so they were charged with the poaching alone and escaped a hanging on the accusation of highway robbery, and they have been thrown into prison, where they are to remain for the space of six months."

"But surely there could be no possible mistake in supposing that they were the same men," remarked Gilbert. "I can well believe that it was not easy for you to recognize them, but the empty wallet was found near to the place where these fellows were caught, and there is certainly enough evidence in that fact alone to prove that the two crimes were committed by these same men!"

"So it might seem," returned Timothy; "but Hartop declared most positively that the men who attacked and robbed him in nowise resembled these poachers, and for my own part I was well-nigh as positive as he."

"And, prithee, by what token art thou so sure?" inquired Gilbert. Timothy did not answer immediately. He was considering within his own mind whether he should give expression to his suspicions against Jasper and Philip Oglander. These suspicions had grown even stronger since he had learned more of Jasper's evil character, but he still had no other foundation for them than Jacob Hartop's

assertion regarding the footmarks in Beddington Lane, and he felt the injustice of making any accusation of a definite sort. At last he replied somewhat falteringly:

"It seemeth to me, in so far as I can recollect, that the men we encountered in the dingle wore large wide hats such as seamen wear, whereas Red Bob and Tom Lane had small, close-fitting caps. Furthermore, as thou'rt aware, Master Gilbert, the man who crossed rapiers with thee and wounded thee was a skilful swordsman—a more skilful than any rogue and vagabond about these parts is likely to be."

Gilbert shook his head doubtingly.

"There is no knowing," he said; "these rascals are acquainted with all manner of tricks and subterfuges. It doth not seem to me that 'tis in anywise likely that there were two separate and distinct companies of thieves at work in the one neighbourhood and at the same hour. Well do I believe that these rascals, Red Bob and Tom Lane, as you name them, were guilty of both the theft from the farmyard and the stealing of old Jacob Hartop's wallet, and that Justice Oldfield hath been over lenient." He paused a few minutes to take up some food from his plate that was near him. Then continuing, he said: "Hark you, Timothy. My grandfather hath been speaking with me touching this same Jacob Hartop, and it seemeth that the old mariner was the bearer of a most precious letter for Sir Walter Raleigh, containing news of the King of Spain's treasure-ships. The letter hath been carried off by these thieves, and 'tis necessary, nay, 'tis even of vital importance to England, that it should be recovered, lest it fall into the hands of any friend of Spain. Were I able to go about I should make it my business to search for it, but I am told that I must rest my sore foot for a day or two longer, and it were as well that thou shouldst undertake the matter in my stead."

Timothy had looked up sharply at mention of the missing letter. So this was the thing of value concerning which Jacob Hartop had said that rather than lose it he would willingly have sacrificed his own life! The information had given Tim an important clue. It had given him the new suggestion that the robbery had been arranged beforehand, and was no mere highwayman's attack upon a chance traveller, for it was now clear that the person who had stolen the letter from the old man must have known full well of its existence, and committed the robbery with the express purpose of gaining possession of it and thus intercepting its delivery into Sir Walter Raleigh's hands. Timothy arrived at this conclusion even before his young master had ceased speaking, and, taking into consideration Hartop's hint that Jasper was secretly a friend of Spain, he regarded it as well-nigh certain that Jasper was himself the thief, and was in all probability in present possession of the missing document. He did not dare as yet to reveal his suspicions to Gilbert, but he resolved to seek for still further evidence in support of them. When he should have gathered full and undeniable proof against Jasper it would then be time enough to expose his villainy. And with this resolve in his mind he silently quitted the room.

It chanced that as he passed down the wide staircase and into the back hall he caught sight of Philip Oglander's rapier hanging from a rack. He went to it, and after taking it down he drew it from its scabbard, finding that it was, as Jacob Hartop had said, of more than the ordinary length of blade. He was examining its sharp, slender point when he was startled by hearing a voice behind him.

“It seemeth that you discover something of interest about my rapier,” said Philip Oglander.

Timothy turned round and said with confident coolness:

“I was but observing its great length, Master Philip. ‘Tis a handsome weapon; but perchance you are not aware, sir, that in England ‘tis unlawful to carry a rapier so long in the blade as this is.”

Philip Oglander smiled, showing his beautiful white teeth.

“The same remark was made to me yesternight by one of my grandfather’s guests,” said he. “Sir Richard Grenville, I think it was. He, too, cautioned me against wearing it. I would have the blade shortened, therefore, if there be any man about the household who can do it. I will e’en leave the matter in your hands.”

“Of a surety,” agreed Timothy, wondering at the youth’s courtesy towards him, “our blacksmith will clip it down to the lawful measurement. I will, if you so please, take it down to him in the early morning.”

Now, Timothy Trollope had examined the rapier less with the intention of considering the length of the blade than with the object of discovering if by any chance there remained upon it any evidence of the weapon having been used in a recent encounter. If, as Jacob Hartop had confidently averred, it was Philip who had fought with and wounded Master Gilbert on the previous evening, then there was certainly a vague possibility of the weapon still bearing some slight trace of blood. But if Tim had expected to find any such stain he was disappointed, for he discovered the steel to be bright and clean from hilt to point.

Nevertheless, he continued for many days thereafter to keep a close watch upon the doings of both Jasper and Philip, in the expectation that by some carelessly-spoken word or unconsidered act either of them might betray himself, and reveal not only a knowledge of the missing letter but also perhaps his sympathy with the King of Spain. Timothy felt that in thus spying upon his master’s relatives he was to some extent disloyal and dishonourable; but Hartop had awakened in his mind strange misgivings regarding them, and his only aim was to arrive at the truth. He had wished for help from Jacob Hartop in the matter, but the old man had shown a dread of remaining in a neighbourhood in which there was a danger of his encountering Jasper Oglander, and on the third day after his arrival in England he had set off on foot to the village of Polperro, where, as he had heard, a niece of his was at that time living, so that Timothy could not now consult with him.

On a certain afternoon some time thereafter Timothy and Gilbert, who had now recovered from his hurts, were crossing the market-place of Plymouth towards one of the side streets, when Timothy observed Sir Francis Drake standing at the doorway of a mercer’s shop. Sir Francis, in spite of his long friendship with Lord Champernoun, had avoided Modbury Manor ever since the arrival there of Jasper Oglander, giving as his reason the excuse that he was extremely busy in the work of making new fortifications on St. Nicholas Island. His gaze now rested upon the figures of three men who stood at some thirty yards away from him. One of them was Jasper Oglander. His companions were Don Miguel Fernandes, the chief of the Spanish prisoners of war, and young Andrea de Ortega.

Timothy touched Gilbert’s elbow.

"There stands your uncle, Master Gilbert," said he, "holding speech with our enemies of Spain."

"Ay," returned Gilbert, showing no surprise. "Haply he is giving the poor fellows some consolation in their affliction."

"'Tis such consolation as Sir Francis Drake doth not wholly approve of," said Timothy, "for look you, there he goes towards them to interrupt their conspiracies!"

Gilbert gave a light laugh.

"Conspiracies, forsooth!" said he. "Your mind doth ever run upon such fancies, Tim. Dost imagine that my uncle, even if he had a mind to conspire—which is impossible in one of his upright and honourable nature—would be so simple as to carry on such doubtful business in the public streets? Od's life, Tim, y'are even as suspicious as Christopher Pym, who approached me this morning with a long, woeful face and declared that he had come upon my aunt, Donna Lela, muttering Romish prayers over her beads and crossing herself like a veritable Papist! Christopher bade me go with him and bear eye-witness to his strange discovery, and I found the woman innocently engaged in unwinding a skein of silk that Pym had mistaken for a rosary, and crooning a quaint Portuguese love-song that he had taken for a paternoster! So I had the laugh of Christopher, as I now have of thee, Master Timothy, for mark you how Sir Francis is now passing your imagined conspirators, who are doubtless talking of no more serious subject than the price of bread!"

"Ay, but they have separated for all that," remarked Timothy, observing that Jasper Oglander at sight of Drake had bidden a hasty farewell to the two Spaniards. It was upon the point of Timothy's tongue to retort further by informing his young master of the conversation he had overheard some days before between Sir Francis and old Hartop concerning Jasper. But at that moment they were met at the street corner by a tall, broad-shouldered young gallant, by name Roland Grenville, who grasped Gilbert's hands very heartily and congratulated him on his so easy recovery from his late hurts.

"Tut! my hurts were scarce worth the mention," quoth Gilbert. "Prithee, speak of other matters, and tell me—hath Sir Richard yet returned from London?"

Sir Richard's stalwart son shook his head.

"Nay," he answered. "He hath scarce had time to get there as yet, nor do we expect him back for some weeks yet to come. He hath gone to the town of Rochester to see to the fitting out of the good ship REVENGE, which is now lying in the river Medway. He is to bring her round to Plymouth when she is ready for sea. What her destination may thereafter be I know not, for 'tis held a secret; but wheresoever she may be bound for I do heartily rejoice to think that I am to have a berth aboard of her. 'Tis no small honour to be appointed to so renowned a ship. You, too, I hear, are to go out in her. So we shall be shipmates, eh?"

"Ay, that is indeed so," returned Gilbert with a proud smile, "for your father promised me the coveted opportunity, and charged me ere he went away to make ready against his return. You may be certain I am anxious for the time to come, for 'tis my first voyage, as you know. I am not like you, who have already heard the thunder of ships' guns in battle. Dost expect we shall have any fighting, Roland?"

"Fighting!" exclaimed Grenville. "Why, bless you, lad, there would be small use in our voyaging if there were not! I know that the ship is being fitted with brand-new guns of brass. Prithee, what should that bode but fighting? 'Twould go ill with us indeed if there were not a few Spanish galleons to give chase to in whatsoever seas we may sail. And I promise you the REVENGE will not be far behind when 'tis a question of fighting the Don and capturing his treasure-ships."

He moved to go, but paused to add: "Hast seen aught of Sir Francis Drake these few days past? I am told he is in marvellous dudgeon in that my father instead of himself hath got the command of the REVENGE."

"His disappointment is but natural," returned Gilbert, "seeing that he hath fought so often and so well upon her decks. But I heard him remark only the last time that I spoke with him, that if there was one man other than himself to whom the Queen might fittingly entrust this her favourite warship, that man was your father—Sir Richard Grenville."

During the journey homeward on that afternoon Gilbert noticed that Timothy was unusually silent.

"Certes, but thou'rt passing gloomy this afternoon, Trollope," he said; "what ails thee, quotha?"

"I was but grieving at the near prospect of your quitting England, sir," answered Timothy, "and at your leaving me behind when I should be far happier, ay, and peradventure more useful, were I to accompany you. I would gladly give all that I have, or may have, in the world to be with you aboard the REVENGE, though my duty were only the swabbing of the decks or the cleaning of the brass guns of which Master Grenville spake."

Gilbert looked at him with an amused smile.

"Why, lad," said he, "I had never dreamed that there was the spirit of a seaman in thee. But if it be that y'are set upon the voyage, 'twill be an easy matter for me to speak on your behalf to Sir Richard Grenville or some other of Her Majesty's generals. I'll bear't in mind, Tim."

And Timothy, hearing this, became in a moment light of heart. He exulted in this new possibility, and bore himself with as much pride and conscious dignity as if indeed he had already been appointed by Her Majesty's own personal warrant.

During the few following weeks of impatient waiting, Gilbert Oglander was occupied in making preparation for his expected departure, and also in paying farewell visits to certain of his friends and relatives in various parts of the country.

On one such visit, which was to Willoughby Grange, in the north part of Devon, he was accompanied by his uncle Jasper. They had been absent for two days, during which time Jasper Oglander made himself so extremely agreeable that Gilbert, already disposed in his favour, was at last so completely won over to him that he found something to love or to admire in all that he did and all that he said.

They were on their return journey, riding southward along the road towards Plymouth; their tired horses were ambling side by side. Jasper had been earnestly urging his nephew to make the best of his greatopportunity in regard to the forthcoming voyage with Sir Richard Grenville; for although the intended destination of the REVENGE and her companion ships of the fleet was still held a close secret, yet Jasper did not doubt, as he said very plainly, that under the

leadership of so able a general as Grenville there would be much honour to gain and great wealth to bring home.

"As for fighting," he said, "'tis impossible that you can fail to have many a brush with the Spaniards, and I know full well that when you enter into battle you will play no coward's part, for you are a true Oglander and will surely distinguish yourself as all our ancestors have done. Be bold, therefore. Be bold, my boy."

And thereupon he continued to speak of warfare, making it out that there was nothing to be afraid of in cannon-balls or boarding-pikes so long as a man kept his wits about him and dared to mix in the thickest of the fight. It would seem, indeed, that Jasper had almost a personal motive in urging his nephew thus earnestly, but of this Gilbert in his innocence guessed nothing.

"There is one matter as to which I would counsel thee, however," Jasper continued, "and that is that thou wouldst do well to reconsider thy intention of allowing that madcap youngster, Timothy Trollope, to bear thee company. I like not his too familiar bearing towards thee. He is no fitting companion for one of thy noble birth. I would not trust him."

Gilbert Oglander looked at his uncle in astonishment.

"I must confess I have never yet found Timothy Trollope to be aught else than a good and faithful servant," said he, "nor do I see any possible reason why he should not accompany me. He is the son of a very worthy tradesman in Plymouth, and I have ever known him to speak the truth and to act in all matters as beseemeth an honest youth."

"Speaks the truth!" cried Jasper, leaning forward on his saddle to adjust his horse's rein that had got twisted; "speaks the truth, say you? Body o' me! why, 'twas only two nights since that I caught him in one of the blackest of lies. Nay," he added, seeing the incredulity in Gilbert's face, "there is no need to dwell upon the matter. I will not repeat so base a slander."

"But 'tis only right that I should know it, uncle," pursued Gilbert. "If Trollope be indeed untruthful 'twere well that I should not be kept in ignorance. Prithee, tell me what the lie was that he told thee."

Jasper rode on in silence for several minutes as if in doubt.

"The lie was this," he said at last. "He declared that thy mother, the Lady Betty, was in her secret heart of the Romish Church, and that she was even now, unknown to my Lord Champernoun, carrying on a political intrigue with the King of Spain."

Gilbert reined in his horse and regarded his uncle for a moment in bewilderment.

"What?" he cried. "Dost tell me that Timothy said such things as that? Nay, I can scarce believe it. The scoundrel! the base ingrate! 'Tis a deliberate, scandalous falsehood!"

Jasper nodded and said: "Right glad I am to see that thou look'st upon the matter thus seriously, Gilbert. I only marvel how the knave could have dared to say such a thing in my hearing. But 'tis ever the way with these low-born and ill-bred louts. I'd have no more to do with him an I were thou. Let the dog go back to the gutter whence you took him."

Now, Gilbert was very sorely troubled and vexed about this matter. He could not believe that Timothy would stoop to the telling of a lie, much less to the utterance

of a scandal. And yet, he asked himself, was not his uncle Jasper equally incapable of falsehood? Arguing with himself as he continued on the ride homeward, he scarce could come to any clear reason either way, nor indeed could he see the possibility of finally making up his mind until he should confront young Trollope and boldly accuse him of the lie.

It happened very opportunely that the very first person whom they met upon the road was Timothy himself. He came galloping towards them on one of Lord Champernoun's favourite hunting horses. Gilbert observed, as he approached nearer, that his face was radiant with some new joy.

"The ship hath arrived!" cried Timothy ere yet he was within the distance of a score yards. "The REVENGE hath entered into Plymouth harbour!" And then as he drew rein he noticed that Gilbert, instead of showing gladness, looked sorely troubled and annoyed.

"Your pardon, Master Gilbert," said he, "I see you are vexed that I should be riding upon his lordship's own horse. But indeed it was my lord himself who bade me do so."

"Nay, I am vexed at no such harmless matter as that," returned Gilbert gloomily.

"I had hoped that the news I brought you would afford you pleasure, sir," pursued Timothy.

"It might well have done so had it not been that I have heard other news which hath given me pain," quoth Gilbert. And, raising his voice in angry accusation, he added: "I hear that two days ago you told a vile lie about my mother—a lie which, were you even closer to me than you have hitherto been, I could never forgive."

Timothy winced under his young master's frown; but Gilbert went on mercilessly: "You had the baseness to declare that my mother is an idolatrous Papist, and that she hath been secretly in league with the King of Spain. How dare you utter such scandalous lies? How dare you, I say?"

For the moment Timothy imagined that his master was suddenly bereft of his senses.

"I deny that I did ever utter any such thoughts," he stammered, looking Gilbert full boldly in the face. "Nay, how were it possible that I should do so, knowing that there liveth not a more devout Protestant in all England than my lady, nor a more faithful subject of Queen Elizabeth? 'Tis a cruel falsehood, Master Gilbert, and methinks you might know me better than to accuse me thus upon a mere malicious report."

He glanced towards Jasper, who had brought his horse nearer to where his own and Gilbert's steeds stood restless at the roadside.

"'Tis not very hard for me to guess the source whence that report hath reached you," Timothy went on, his face growing pale in his indignation, and his white lips trembling. "I will warrant me that 'twas your virtuous uncle here who thus maligned me. But since he hath spoken falsely of me, I will now speak the truth regarding himself. You are deceived in him, Master Gilbert—vastly deceived. You think him a man of honour, but I tell you he is a traitor end a renegade."

Timothy broke off, disturbed by the look of evil menace that had come into Jasper's dark eyes which were now fixed upon him.

"Proceed," commanded Jasper, gripping the silver handle of his riding-whip. "Prithee, say your say, young man. But mark you, if you dare to say aught that is

not true of me, by the Holy Rood, sirrah, I will thrash you within an inch of your life."

This swearing by the Romish emblem passed at the moment unnoticed by Gilbert, but it did not escape Timothy Trollope.

"I care as little for your threats as I do for your Papist oaths," the lad retorted, growing bolder. And then turning to Gilbert he continued: "So please you, sir, 'twas not the Lady Betty but Master Jasper himself whom I accused of being a Papist and of being secretly in league with the King of Spain."

"'Tis a lie!" cried Jasper furiously, wheeling his horse round so that he came within a few feet of Timothy. But Timothy was now roused, and he determined to speak his mind at all hazards.

"'Tis no lie!" he declared firmly as he watched the man's whip hand. "Both your wife and your son, as well as yourself, are sworn Papists, and you are yourself, as I well know, little better than a skulking spy of King Philip of Spain. If it be not as I say, then, prithee, what mean all your secret meetings and underhand plottings with the Spanish prisoners of war down in Plymouth town? Wherefore, also, I pray you, did you purloin Captain Marsden's letter from old Jacob Hartop?"

Jasper's face had grown white with suppressed indignation. His eyes flashed threateningly.

"Take that for an answer, thou base, lying scoundrel!" he cried savagely; and, leaning forward over his saddle, he dealt the lad a smart and vicious cut across his face with the riding-whip. Timothy was well-nigh blinded with the pain, and presently a drop of blood trickled down his cheek.

"Impertinent whelp!" continued Jasper, preparing to repeat the blow. But Timothy had backed his horse a few steps, and, instead of striking him, Jasper hurled the whip at his head. Timothy dexterously caught it in his hand and flung it some distance along the road, at the same time spurring his horse and galloping away. Gilbert watched him for a moment, and then called him back. But Timothy went on, very sad at heart, for he divined that his young master had lost faith in him.

And indeed it seemed that this was the case, for later on the same day, when Gilbert was at the kennels paying a visit to one of his favourite dogs, Timothy approached him.

"So please you, Master Gilbert—" began Tim in a tone of abject apology. But Gilbert looked at him in stern reproof, and interrupted him, saying:

"Look you, Trollope, I'll have no more of these malicious tales of yours. 'Tis no business of yours to act the spy upon my relatives, and I command you to do no more of it."

Timothy hung his head, hurt to the quick by the reproach.

"Must I then take it that you have lost all confidence in me, Master Gilbert?" he asked.

"Ay," returned Gilbert. "Much am I afraid that 'tis so indeed."

"Then, sir," said Timothy in an unsteady voice, "'twere surely best that I should leave you; for I cannot brook your displeasure, nor think of remaining in the service of a master who hath lost trust in my honour."

"E'en do as ye list," retorted Gilbert. And Timothy, taking the words for a dismissal, walked slowly away, well-nigh broken-hearted.

On the evening of the following day the news reached Modbury Manor that the Spanish prisoners of war, to the number of seven-and-twenty, had made their escape.

Chapter XI

The Affray on Polperro Beach.

IT was at an ivy-covered house standing upon the heights a little distance beyond the fishing village of Polperro that Jacob Hartop had taken his present refuge. His niece, whom he had been at some pains to discover, was the wife of that Captain Whiddon who sailed out in the service of Sir Walter Raleigh, with intent to discover the Land of Gold that was supposed to lie beyond the river Orinoco, and who, with his ship's crew, had endured untold privations in the swamps of Trinidad, all of which may be read in Raleigh's printed account of his discovery of the Empire of Guiana and the great and golden city of Manoa.

Mrs. Mercy Whiddon had a cluster of sturdy boys and girls about her, and you may be sure that Master Hartop was a right welcome guest in their home, for he had a deft hand at the making of a wheelbarrow or a rabbit-hutch, and his tales of adventure were ever of the exciting sort which young people do most delight to hear. Captain Whiddon himself was no less pleased than his sons and daughters to have old Jacob under his roof, for it chanced that Hartop and he had known each other years before, out on the Spanish Main, and had struck up a friendship from the simple reason that they both were men of Devon, and that they both bore the name of Jacob.

On a certain evening, ere yet the children had gone to their beds, the family were seated in the living room. From the window they could see the glistening track of the moon's silvery light across the Channel, with here and there a black-sailed fishing-boat pitching about upon the waves; in moments of silence they could hear the breaking of the tide upon the rocks below the cliff, and the ivy leaves, disturbed by the wind, tapping against the diamond panes of the window casement. Jacob Whiddon sat in the ingle, with Bertha, his youngest girl, perched on his knee. Ambrose Pennington, who had sailed round from Plymouth to confer with the captain on some matter concerning Lord Thomas Howard's fleet, sat near him, while Jacob Hartop sat in the midst of a group of children, who were attentively watching him as with a large knife and a block of deal wood he fashioned the rough hull of a boat.

"And how many masts will the ship have?" questioned one of the boys.

"Three, Master Jack," answered Hartop; "for 'tis a ship royal, like unto the DEFIANCE that is now lying in Plymouth."

"Then we must e'en have an admiral's flag made for her," said little Jack. "Mother shall make one for us out of the piece of silk that she cut from off Bertha's belt."

"Nay, but we agreed that the ship should be named the PILGRIM," objected the eldest of the boys. "For the PILGRIM is father's ship, and she hath but two masts."

“The number of her masts and the name she shall have are matters for yourselves to determine,” said Hartop, as he held the boat in front of him bow-on and glanced with one eye along her deck. “The only matter that doth at present concern me is her hull, and when ‘tis done, as I promise you it shall be on the morrow, then the rigging of the craft will remain for other hands than mine, for ere she is ready to be launched I shall be far away upon the seas.”

He continued to hew at the boat’s hull with his knife, shaving down her bows to the required degree of roundness.

“Thou’lt not forget the string of coral beads you did promise me,” said Jack’s sister Mary, after a long pause of silence.

“Ay, faith, I’ll mind on’t, truly,” answered Jacob with a smile; “and if luck doth follow us, thou shalt have a goodly chain of pearls into the bargain.”

“And wilt bring me home one of those green poll-parrots, or one of the long-tailed monkeys that you told us of?” pleaded one who stood at his knee.

“Ay, surely; I’ll bring thee a whole ship-load of such trumpery an Captain Grenville will but let me,” returned the old man.

“What!” interposed Ambrose Pennington, turning round on his chair. “Art for going out with the fleet, then, friend Hartop?”

Hartop nodded.

“Ay,” he answered. “A life on land hath but few joys for such as me, I find, and I am for having just one cruise more with the buccaneers and another sight of the palm-trees. And yet,” he added, “‘tis less of my own wish than by the will of Sir Richard Grenville that I go; for he hath besought me to accompany him, since ‘tis supposed that I know more than most men touching the purpose of this present expedition.”

Pennington drew his chair nearer to the old man and sat facing him, bending forward in attention with his two hands clasped between his knees.

“‘Tis nought to be marvelled at that Sir Richard should have such a wish,” said he, “for it seemeth that you have some special knowledge of the matter. An it be no secret, Master Hartop, mayhap you’d enlighten us concerning this same cruise, for I, too, am to be aboard the REVENGE, and ‘tis but natural I should wish to know the purpose of our voyage.”

Hartop dusted the shavings of wood from his knees and continued with his work.

“‘Tis no longer a secret,” he said, “and, indeed, I had thought that Captain Whiddon had already informed you on the matter. Sir Walter Raleigh did in truth bid me keep my knowledge to myself. But that was some three months ago, and now that Her Majesty hath bidden my Lord Thomas Howard assemble this squadron, and hath made no secret of our destination, I know no reason why I should scruple to break silence.”

“Nay, ‘tis no longer a secret. Tell us the tale,” interposed Captain Whiddon. “For all that I do myself know is the simple fact that we are to waylay and capture King Philip’s treasure-ships.”

“You must know,” began Hartop, “that the late expedition which the Queen’s ships made to the Western Islands, under Frobisher and Hawkins, during the last summer past, was a failure. Their intention was even the same as ours. But King Philip, getting wind of their purpose, sent out to the Indies, giving orders that his

ships were to winter in the Havana, and delay their home-coming until this present summer. Now the result of that delay is, that instead of one year's harvest of silver and gold there is now fully double that quantity lying in the treasure-houses of Nombre de Dios waiting to be brought over to Spain. 'Tis the mightiest hoard of wealth that ever was brought together since the world began, and I promise you it will give the Spaniards a hard enough task to transport so large a burden across the seas. Ay, even though every galleon of their armada were loaded up to the gunwales."

"And prithee, Master Hartop, how many galleons do you reckon there will be engaged in that same task?" inquired Captain Whiddon.

"Well, as to that," said Hartop, "I scarce can tell. But this I know full surely, that even at the time when we started homeward in the PEARL, there were then lying at the Havana no fewer than fifty of King Philip's finest ships. Many of them were of a thousand tons apiece, which, as I judge, is about double the size of Lord Thomas Howard's DEFIANCE. Nay, fifty sails, do I say? There were more than that. Let me see! There were three-and-thirty galleons of Nova Hispania, and three-and-twenty of Terra Firma—that's fifty-six. Then there were twelve of San Domingo, and it may be nine of Honduras. How many might that be, all told, Master Jack?"

Jack Whiddon counted on his fingers and presently answered:

"Seventy and seven."

"Body o' me!" exclaimed Ambrose Pennington. "And do you say that so vast an armada as that is to be attacked and captured by these half-dozen warships that we now have lying in Sutton Pool?" He held his hand palm uppermost, as if to suggest that it could well embrace the dimensions of the whole of Admiral Howard's fleet. "Why, 'tis madness to think on't!"

"So it might seem," nodded Hartop. "But 'tis as well to understand, Master Pennington, that we have certain very great advantages in our favour. To begin with, these Spaniards have been languishing for many months in an evil climate; they will surely be reduced by disease, by famine, and I know not what other pestilential ills, while we shall meet them strong and fresh and hearty. Their galleons will be half rotten, bored by the teredo worm, overgrown with weeds and barnacles, and, moreover, very heavily laden; while our own ships, on the other hand, are newly fitted out with good sails and riggings, strong clean hulls, good guns, and an abundance of ammunition. Also, you must bear in mind that while the Queen's ships will doubtless keep together in one compact squadron, the Spaniards, by reason of the long voyage, and perhaps stress of weather, to say naught of the differing sailing powers of their ships, will most certainly be separated one from the other, so that 'twill be an easy enough matter for our admiral to pick them off one by one."

"There is good reason in your argument, to be sure." declared Pennington; "and if the matter turn out as you have set it down, I doubt not that we shall, one and all, return to England in a few weeks' time with riches enough to serve us and keep us in luxury to the end of our days."

"Ay," agreed Captain Whiddon, "'tis like a fairy dream."

"As for the REVENGE," added Pennington, with an encouraging glance at Jacob Hartop, "she is a right gallant ship, and as pretty a one as you will find upon all

the seas, notwithstanding the ill-luck that hath hitherto been her so frequent attendant."

Jacob Hartop raised his grizzled eyebrows.

"Ill-luck?" he repeated. "Why, methought she had been of all Her Majesty's ships the most highly-favoured by fortune. Prithee, was it not upon her decks that Sir Francis Drake held command when he gave such a trouncing to the Duke of Medina-Sidonia three years ago?"

Ambrose Pennington nodded and smiled.

"No man doth know better than I how well she behaved on that same occasion," said he. "I was then but her master's mate, and of no great account on board. But I mind well every incident and movement in the engagement—how we met the Armada down by the Lizard in Cornwall, how we beat them and shuffled them together first to Portland, where they shamefully abandoned Don Pedro de Valdes with his mighty ship to be taken by the REVENGE; how we chased them from Portland to Calais, where they lost Hugo de Monçada with the great galleass of which he was captain; then how we drove them with squibs and fireships from their anchorage in Calais Roads, gave them a sound drubbing off the coast of Flanders, and anon chased them out of sight of England, round about Scotland and Ireland, where the storms of the northern seas speedily finished the destruction that we had begun. And I tell thee that there was no ship in all Queen Elizabeth's fleet that did greater service for our country than the REVENGE. And yet, for all that, she must still be counted the unfortunatest ship her Queen's Majesty hath had during her reign—"

"Heaven grant that her misfortunes will have forsaken her during this present voyage!" interposed Hartop. "For, although I set not a single groat's value upon my own poor life, yet I am well assured that every man and every ship of our company will be sorely needed ere we fulfil the work that is before us. But, prithee, wherein lieth the ship's ill-luck and misfortune?"

"In many particulars," answered Pennington. "As for example, on her very first voyage when coming back from Ireland, with Sir John Parrot in command, she was like to be cast away upon the sand-banks that are off the Kentish coast. After, in the voyage of Sir John Hawkins in 1586, she struck aground in coming into Plymouth harbour, before her going to sea. Upon the coast of Spain she left her fleet, ready to sink with a great leak. At her return into Plymouth she beat herself upon the Winter Stone and stove in her bows. Twice did she run aground in going out of Portsmouth haven; and on the latter occasion lay two-and-twenty hours beating upon the shore. Once more she was driven upon the rocks outside of Plymouth here, and lay helpless and abandoned for six winter months. Forced off again, she was being taken to the river Thames to be docked, when, her old leak breaking upon her, she was like to have drowned all her ship's company. And ye have surely heard that even four short months since, when riding at her moorings in the Medway, she turned right over with her keel uppermost. So you see, my masters, in whatsoever way you do regard it withal, she is a ship well laden with disaster and full fraught with ill-success."

"Marry!" cried Jacob Hartop, "but that is indeed a most woeful record for so young a ship. But, I pray you, Master Pennington, wherefore do you so meekly consent to be one of her crew, knowing that she hath been so unfortunate?"

And Pennington answered:

"For the reason that, notwithstanding her misfortunes, she doth still remain the ship which beyond all others in Her Majesty's navy hath given the soundest thrashing to the Spaniards. And I do firmly hope and believe, that if there be any glory to be won on this present expedition it will be mostly won by the REVENGE and her gallant commander Sir Richard Grenville. For you must know that Sir Richard hath already won the name of 'the Spaniards' terror'."

Now, while Pennington was in the midst of this speech Mercy Whiddon had gone out of the room, and as she crossed the passage she was startled by hearing the sound of men's feet outside, and the loud rapping of a stick upon one of the panels of the door.

"Save us all!" she exclaimed in sudden alarm. "Who can be coming here at such an hour as this?" And then returning to the room she called upon her husband. "Jacob!" she cried. "There be someone at the door, I pray you open it, for I fear 'tis some unruly stranger." And as she spoke yet another thundering blow fell upon the door.

Jacob Whiddon strode out into the passage and flung open the door.

"What want you?" he demanded, as he espied a tall cloaked figure upon the step. "And who are you that dares to disturb honest folk at this time of night?"

"'Tis I," came the answer; "'tis I, Timothy Trollope of Plymouth town. And I crave your help, Master Whiddon, and the help of as many men as there may be in your house. 'Twas Master Richard Drake that sent me hither. He is down by the beach yonder, lying in wait for the Spanish prisoners who have made their escape. We have tracked them thus far, and have now discovered that a ship is lying in readiness to carry them off to Spain."

"Escaped, have they?" cried Captain Whiddon. "Then, by thunder, if that be so I am with you, my master!" And leaving Timothy standing at the door he returned into the room and called upon Pennington and Hartop to buckle their swords about them, and join with him in the adventure.

Jacob Hartop was the first of the three men to join Timothy in the little garden in front of the house. He carried a long sword and a heavy, cumbrous pistol and a large knotted stick.

"So 'tis you, Master Trollope?" said he, as he glanced into Timothy's face by the light from the window. "And, prithee, how cometh it that thou hast taken to the constable's work of chasing fugitive prisoners?"

"'Twas by chance that I heard the rogues had escaped," said Tim, moving towards the gate as if in eagerness to get down to the beach. "I was passing beside the gaol when Master Richard Drake ran out crying for men to help him, for that his prisoners had escaped. I joined in the crowd, following Master Drake at his horse's heels."

"Ah!" returned Hartop, "trust a Spaniard for winning his way out of a pent-house. They are like unto serpents for guile and cunning, as I well know, who have lived in their midst. But I'll engage that these could scarce have won their freedom without help from the outside. Dost know if they had any such help, Master Trollope?"

Timothy did not reply at the moment, for Whiddon and Pennington had now joined them, and were calling upon the lad to lead the way to the spot where the escaped Spaniards might be expected to be found.

"Yonder lies their ship," explained Timothy, pointing out to the shadowy headland, below which the faint outline of a vessel's hull could be seen. Then, as his eyes still rested upon the ship, he suddenly gripped old Hartop's arm. "Look at her, Jacob Hartop! Look at her well!" he cried. "Dost know the craft, man?"

"Nay, how should I know one ship from another in such uncertain light, and with eyes so dim as mine be?" questioned the old man.

At this Ambrose Pennington cast a glance towards the ship. A gleam of moonlight now rested upon the water behind her, and her tall hull and masts and bellying sails were darkly outlined against the bright light.

"Why, my lad," said he, in a tone of disappointment, "that is no Spanish ship! Y'are fooling us, for sure. No, 'tis no Spanish ship, I say, but just the old PEARL, that hath been lying under repair against Sutton wharf there these two months past, and that hath come out to-day to try her new-made sails! Come you back to the house, Master Whiddon, for I'll be sworn the lad hath but been playing us some childish prank. Spaniards, forsooth! Prithee who ever heard of a Spaniard, aye, or any other prisoner, breaking away from the hands of Richard Drake?"

At that instant there came a long loud whistle from the beach below.

"Hark you, my masters," cried Timothy Trollope, "that whistle is Drake's signal, calling his men together; and I do most positively declare to you that in a very little time there will be some fighting to be done down on the beach, for we saw the Spaniards, to the number of a good score at the least, passing along the headland and making signs to the ship, which were duly answered. Nay, more, we saw a boat put out from the ship and make for the spot where Master Drake and some three or four men of Plymouth now are—"

"Nay, why stand we parleying here?" broke in Jacob Hartop. "I am for climbing down to the beach, and let them follow me who will." And so saying he swung his great stick over his shoulder and took a slanting course down the slope of the cliff, followed closely by Timothy Trollope.

Whiddon and Pennington, it seemed, preferred to descend by the easier way of the footpath, which led down to the shore in another direction. Timothy, with greater eagerness and with more alertness than old Hartop, soon passed his companion, and was down upon the beach while Jacob was still struggling to penetrate a thick tangle of bramble bushes that grew upon the lower slope.

Timothy waited for him some few moments, and as he stood still he became conscious of some moving figures passing into the shadow behind a wooden hut, in which the fishermen of the neighbouring village kept their old nets and torn sails. A gleam of moonlight glinting upon a drawn sword proved to him that the figures were not those of innocent fishermen. He crept stealthily towards them.

A man presently appeared round the farther corner of the hut. He wore a long cloak and a wide sombrero hat. Timothy guessed that he was one of the escaping Spaniards, and he was about to hail the man when he was startled by once more hearing the long loud whistle, this time close behind him. In an instant as it seemed, he was surrounded by many men. One of them seized him, gripping him by the throat.

“Back there, you Spanish dog!” the fellow cried, at the same moment taking hold of Timothy’s drawn sword and dropping it on the shingle behind him.

Timothy knew his voice. It was that of young Roland Grenville.

“Nay, unhand me, Master Grenville,” the lad cried, as well as the tightening fingers upon his throat would permit him. “I am Timothy Trollope, that went up to summon Jacob Whiddon. I—I—”

“S’death, lad, I had nearly throttled thee!” cried Grenville, releasing him, and then stooping and taking up Timothy’s rapier, he added: “Here, take thy blade and hie thee down to the boats yonder at the water’s edge. And, hark ye, if any Spaniard attempt to get aboard, run him through. Dost hear me? Run him through.”

Scarcely had he spoken when the report of a pistol-shot from behind him rang through the air. It was Ambrose Pennington who had fired it at the retreating forms of the Spaniards, who, having crept along under the deep shadow of the cliff, had eluded their pursuers and were now hastening across the open beach down towards the water’s edge.

“To the boats! to the boats, my lads!” cried Pennington, and he set off at a run, followed by Roland Grenville, Timothy, Richard Drake, and several of the men who had come out from Plymouth. At their heels ran Jacob Hartop, pistol in hand, and as game for a fight as any of them.

When the old man got down to the foreshore, where the outgoing tide was plashing upon the loose stones, he found himself in the midst of some thirty men, who were belabouring each other with their sticks and swords. It was difficult for him in the darkness to discover which were Spaniards and which men of Plymouth. But presently the crowd divided, one half remaining fighting, the others rushing knee-deep into the water and scrambling into one of the two boats that lay afloat within easy reach. Jacob Hartop levelled his pistol at one of the foremost of the fugitives and fired. Without waiting to see the effect of his shot, he turned to discover Captain Whiddon, Roland Grenville, and Timothy Trollope engaged all three in combat with seven of the Spaniards. Hartop saw that Timothy Trollope was being hard pressed by three of the enemy, who were assailing him with their heavy sticks. Only one of them was armed with a sword, and this one stood in front of Timothy, while his two companions were attacking the lad from the rear.

Jacob rushed headlong into the fray and speedily relieved Timothy of two of his assailants, who, seeing the old man’s glittering rapier, and being themselves armed only with cudgels, turned upon their heels and fled towards the boats.

Illustration:
Timothy disarmed the fellow, and with a forward thrust pierced him in the chest

Left alone with his one adversary, whose back was to the light, Timothy crossed swords with him. The Spaniard had wrapped the tail of his coat round his left arm. Something in his manner of fence reminded Timothy of the encounter in Beddington Dingle. For a moment he thought of young Philip Oglander. He tried to get a glimpse of the man’s face, but a quick thrust aimed at his sword-arm brought him to a sense of his danger, and he did not pause to think which one of

the Spaniards whom he had so often seen in Plymouth his antagonist might be. Whosoever he was, he certainly was no dunce in the use of his weapon, and with all Timothy's skill he had much ado to hold his own. The duel continued for several moments, but at last with a dexterous wrist movement Timothy disarmed the fellow, and with a heavy forward thrust pierced him in the chest.

He staggered for a moment, clapped his two hands against his breast, and, leaving his weapon lying upon the beach, ran off towards his companions. Timothy watched him as he fled, and saw him wade into the water and scramble over the gunwale of the boat upon which Jacob Hartop had fired. There were already some ten of the Spaniards on board of her. They were pushing off; their oars were in the row-locks, and so fully were Richard Drake and his men engaged in making prisoners of those that remained that they were unaware of what had happened until Timothy raised the alarm and drew their attention to the fugitives. Captain Whiddon reloaded his pistol and fired at them, but with no apparent effect. The boat sped out into the deeper water and was soon beyond range of such few firearms as were available. As for the Spaniards who had been left behind, they were speedily captured and bound with ropes, ready to be marched beck to Plymouth.

The whole affray had occupied but a few minutes. Two of the Spaniards had been killed, and one of Drake's men—a young vintner of Plymouth—had been badly wounded, while there were few of the others who had not received scars and bruises.

When at last the prisoners were secured, Roland Grenville, Jacob Hartop, and Timothy Trollope were told off to conduct them to some place of safety in Polperro, while Drake, Whiddon, Pennington, and some three others jumped into the remaining boat and pulled off in pursuit of the men who had escaped. How they fared Timothy did not learn until the next morning, when he was told that after an exciting chase the Spaniards had succeeded in gaining the deck of their ship, which had sailed off westward along the coast, not to be overtaken by a small boat whose occupants had only two pairs of oars and no sail. There was only one thing which Drake gained by his pursuit, and that was the knowledge that the ship was indeed the PEARL of Plymouth.

When they had securely housed their prisoners in a vacant stable in Polperro, and left Hartop in guard at the door, Roland Grenville and Timothy Trollope returned to the beach, taking with them a lighted lantern. They were accompanied by a fisherman, who helped them to carry the two dead Spaniards up to a shed adjoining Jacob Whiddon's house. Timothy recognised the dead men as Don Miguel de Fernandes and Andrea de Ortega. He had known Don Miguel by sight for many months past, but searching in his memory he could only remember Andrea from the time when Jasper Oglander had come home to England.

As he was turning away from having bolted the door of the shed, Roland Granville said, touching Timothy on the arm:

"Here is a weapon for thee, Master Trollope. I will engage that 'tis a well-tempered one. These Dons do ever contrive to get hold of a goodly piece of steel; and in spite of Master Drake's watchfulness, more than one of them was armed with his Toledo blade to-night. 'Tis a marvel to me where they found them, for, as you know, they were forbidden to go armed."

"I'll be sworn they had friends outside of their prison," returned Timothy, "else would they never have escaped." He took the rapier from Grenville's hand. "Thank you," said he. "I will keep it, sir, and gladly, for it can scarce be a worse weapon than my own."

"I picked it up on the beach," said Grenville, "at the spot where I saw you engaged with one of the rascals. 'Twas his sword, I doubt not. But, prithee, since you disarmed him, why did you not run him through?"

"Indeed, Master Grenville," quoth Tim, "methought I had e'en done so. I gave him a good span of my weapon in his chest ere he ran off to the boat, and I warrant he'll not soon recover. Rather, I should say, I will warrant that he cannot recover."

Timothy carried the rapier back with him to Plymouth that night, and when he reached home he examined it. He saw that its point had been roughly ground down, obviously with the purpose of shortening the weapon to the limited length required by the law. Timothy immediately remembered that this had been done to Philip Oglander's rapier. He looked at the hilt and at once recognized it. Yes, there was no doubt that this was Master Philip's weapon. There was no doubt either that the young man with whom Tim had just had the duel on the beach and whom he had wounded was Philip Oglander himself.

Arguing upon this fact, Timothy was not long in coming to the conclusion that the escape of the Spanish prisoners of war had been achieved by the help of Philip, if not also of Jasper. There was truth, then—absolute truth—in the accusation which Timothy had made, that Jasper Oglander and his son were in league with the King of Spain, and that they had all along been plotting in the interests of England's enemies.

Chapter XII

Baron Champernoun.

IT was on a certain sunny afternoon in early March, the year 1591. The quays and wharfs around Sutton Pool were thronged with people—women in bright-coloured gowns and snowy ruffs, gentlemen with plumed hats and gaudy, flowing capes, yeomen and tradesmen in their more sober garments, and noisy, boisterous apprentices. From the little casement windows of the quaint gabled houses near by, many faces looked out upon the busy scene below, and here and there a white kerchief was waved in farewell to some soldier or seaman watching it from the heavily-laden boats that were putting out into the harbour. For it was the day of the departure of Lord Thomas Howard's squadron of war-ships on its treasure-hunting expedition to the islands of the Azores. The ships' masts could be seen with their white sails half-unfurled, and their pennants, ancients, and banners fluttering gaily in the breeze that blew from off the land.

The crowd was thickest near to the landing-stairs, where a stream of men—some wearing glittering morions and corselets, others wide seamen's hats and long sea-cloaks, and each with a clanking sword by his side—moved slowly towards the

stone steps, where the boats were waiting to convey them out to their respective ships.

Among them was old Jaoob Hartop. He carried his bundle of spare clothing and a pair of heavy boots under his arm. His face looked fresher and younger, his eyes were brighter, and his step was lighter than three months before, when he had landed at this same place from on board the PEARL. No one seemed to know him as he passed through the throng, saving only a curly-headed boy, who pulled at his coat and cried:

"What, Master Hartop! Art going with the fleet then? Didst not tell us that you had done with sea-faring for the rest of thy days?"

Jacob glanced at the urchin, and recognised him as one of the group of children who had stood around him at the well in Modbury village the morning after the robbery, to listen to his story of how Sir Francis Drake had been wounded at Nombre de Dios.

"Ay, faith, I am going out with the fleet, friend Robin," he answered cheerily, as he stopped at the boy's side. "A life on land hath but few joys, I find, for a lonely old man, and I am minded to go out and see a bit more of the world, and mayhap recover some of the great wealth that you wot of—the wealth that went down in my golden galleon out yonder to the west of Flores."

"Ah!" said the lad. "An I were old enough, 'tis not a little that would keep me at home when such fine adventures are in store. I'd run away and join one of the ships, even as Master Trollope hath done. His father forbade him to have ought to do with the sea, and yesternight they had a quarrel; but this morning Timothy hath packed up his bag and gone off."

"And, prithee, what ship hath the lad joined?" asked Jacob. "Hath he gone on board the REVENGE, think you?"

"Nay, that is just what his father would know," answered Robin Redfern. "He hath been questioning everyone, but none can tell him. But 'tis not likely he hath gone on board the REVENGE, for on that ship Master Oglander is sailing, and you may be sure that Timothy Trollope would avoid such companionship after what hath happened."

Jacob Hartop's jaw dropped. A look of dismay came into his eyes.

"Heaven forfend!" quoth he gloomily. Then taking a corner of the boy's collar in his fingers, and looking into his face, he added: "Say you that Jasper Oglander hath gone aboard the REVENGE?"

The boy looked puzzled, but presently, understanding the old man's drift, he answered:

"Nay. I meant young Master Gilbert, and not his uncle."

"Then wherefore should Timothy Trollope avoid the same ship that his young master is sailing upon?" questioned Hartop.

"For the reason that Master Gilbert is no longer his master; no, nor even his friend," said Robin. "Some dispute—I know not what it may have been—ended in Master Trollope being dismissed from Modbury Manor."

"That may well be," returned Jacob, "but it seemeth to me that Master Timothy is surely of a quarrelsome disposition. Howbeit, he will be speedily knocked into submission and obedience on board ship. As to young Gilbert Oglander, I'll engage he's like all the rest of his family—"

“See!” interrupted the lad admiringly, as he pointed towards the steps; “see! yonder stands Master Gilbert even now. Certes! how brave he doth look with his new morion and breast-piece!”

Hartop was forced onward by the moving throng, and presently he arrived at the top of the steps. What kissing and handshaking and fond partingswere going on here! There were tears, too, in the women’s eyes, for all knew that there was fighting to be done, and that of the gallant adventurers who were taking their leave, not all would come safely home again. Jacob came shoulder to shoulder with Ambrose Pennington, whom he had met once before at this same place. Ambrose was to be Sir Richard Grenville’s sailing-master on board of the REVENGE, and he was now bidding farewell to his aged mother.

“God speed thee, then!” sobbed the old woman as she clung to his hand. “And mayst thou ever bear it in mind that ‘tis our Queen and our country that thou servest, and that ‘tis thy duty to fight hard and bravely whensoever there be Spaniards to be vanquished!”

“Ay, faith, I’ll mind on it truly,” answered Ambrose, kissing his mother’s wrinkled forehead. Then, catching a glimpse of Jacob Hartop, he cried: “Ha, Master Hartop! How fare you, old friend? I have not seen thee since our encounter with the Dons three nights ago. Didst get any hurt, man?”

“Not I,” answered Hartop as he began to descend the stone stairs. “No hurt beyond the disappointment of hearing the rascals had escaped you. Where think you they have sped to?”

“Spain, you may swear,” returned Pennington, closely following him. “‘Tis the only land that will welcome such refuse.”

“An that be so, there is yet a chance that we shall overhaul them,” said Jacob with satisfaction, “for the Pearl is but a laggard at sailing. A herring-boat might outstrip her hand over hand, to say naught of such well-found ships as these of my Lord Howard’s.”

Gilbert Oglander was stepping into one of the boats when Hartop and Pennington got to the foot of the flight of stairs. He nodded in greeting to the two men, and made room for them beside him in the stern-sheets. Then, all being seated and the boat full, the man at the bow pushed off, the oars were dipped, and amid the cheers of the crowd on shore the little craft was steered out into the harbour.

In his boyish excitement at getting into the boat, Gilbert had not observed that his uncle Jasper was standing at the end of the quay quietly watching him. Gilbert had already bidden farewell to his uncle, as indeed to all the household at Modbury Manor, some three hours before, and he could not have expected that Jasper, even allowing for the great affection he had heretofore shown for him, would have the desire to wish yet a second farewell.

But in actual truth it was a far other errand than this that had brought Jasper Oglander into the town so quickly upon his nephew’s heels. It was an errand which, had it been duly fulfilled, would have certainly prevented Gilbert’s departure from England. It was in fact with the purpose of summoning the lad back to his home that Jasper had thus hastened to the harbour.

And yet, strangely enough, he made not the smallest attempt to stop the boat as it put out from the landing-stairs; nay, he even seemed anxious that his nephew

should not catch sight of him, for as the rowers pulled past where he had stationed himself, he drew cautiously back into the crowd. Apparently, therefore, it was in some way to Jasper's personal advantage that Gilbert should be permitted to leave the country at this particular time. So it accordingly befell that the lad was taken out to his ship, and that he proceeded on his voyage in total ignorance of a most important circumstance which directly concerned him.

When about noon that day Gilbert had mounted his horse to start for Plymouth, all had been well with the family at Modbury Manor. He had waved his hand in farewell to his grandfather, who had stood at the open casement above the porch, and had embraced his mother and Drusilla, and shaken hands with all the servants. Drusilla and his uncle Jasper had accompanied him down the long avenue to the lodge gate, and thence he had ridden off alone.

He had expected that his cousin Philip would be at the manor to bid him farewell. Philip had been absent for two days, and, strangely enough, he had given no reason for going away. None knew where he had gone excepting his father, and Jasper, on being questioned, had merely stated that the lad had had a mind to take an excursion into the country. Nothing was guessed of the part that he had taken in the affray on Polperro beach. Indeed, it seemed that Timothy Trollope alone knew this, and as Timothy was no longer in service at Modbury Manor, no word of Philip Oglander's connection with the escape of the Spanish prisoners of war had yet been spoken.

Gilbert had been gone scarcely an hour when a messenger on horseback arrived bearing a letter for my Lord Champernoun. The letter was delivered into the aged baron's own hand in his private library. No one was present when he opened and read it, but some minutes afterwards the Lady Betty Oglander was passing the library door when she heard a heavy fall. She opened the door and looked within and saw Lord Champernoun lying unconscious on the floor. She called aloud for help. Her cry was answered by Jasper. They went in together and lifted the old nobleman into his chair. His face was bloodless, and they could not hear him breathing.

"Holy Mother, he is dead!" exclaimed Jasper Oglander. "What in Heaven's name can have caused it so suddenly?" He looked blankly about the room as if in search of an explanation. Seeing the letter on the floor he picked it up, and unnoticed by Lady Betty thrust it into the breast of his doublet.

"'Tis his heart!" cried Lady Betty. "He must surely have had some sudden shock. It may even be that Gilbert's departure hath unduly excited him." Then, remembering Gilbert, she turned to Jasper. "Good my brother," said she, "go, I beseech you, and bring back my son, for he must not be allowed to leave England. Take horse at once and bring him back, and—"she glanced once again at the lifeless baron, felt for the beating of his heart, and put her cheek to his lips to discover if there might not still be some breath in him—"bring also a physician. There may yet be hope."

Jasper shook his head sadly.

"It is death, madam," said he; "I know full well that it is death. Nevertheless, I will go at once into Plymouth and bring Gilbert back with me; for, as you most truly say, he must not be permitted to quit the country while his grandsire lies

dead. Think on't, my lady," he went on, "your son Gilbert is now the head of this noble house. He is Baron Champernoun—"

"Go—go at once!" implored Lady Betty, and her eyes followed him anxiously as he left the room. And as he went out Drusilla, Donna Lela, Christopher Pym, and others entered in alarm, only to find that Lord Champernoun had passed indeed beyond all hope.

Little did Gilbert Oglander dream of this calamity as he sat in the stern of the rowing-boat that was taking him out to the REVENGE. His thoughts were only of the ships and of the men who were to be his future companions, and he listened with full interest to the talk that was going on beside him between Ambrose Pennington and old Jacob Hartop.

"Here we are, good my masters! There lieth our fleet!" cried Pennington, as the boat was brought round abreast of the outer wall of the harbour. "Dost know the ships by sight, Hartop?"

"Not I," answered Jacob, leaning forward and running his eyes with slow deliberation along the line of stately ships of war. "They be all new built since my time, and, as I have already said, I have been these many weeks past away from Plymouth, and only came into the town again early this morning. Prithee, which of them is the REVENGE?"

"We can scarcely see her as yet," returned Pennington. "She doth lie out yonder beyond the point, half-hidden by the larger vessel that is moored this side of her. The larger ship is the BONAVENTURE, the greatest in the squadron by a good hundred tons. Sir Robert Cross is her commander—a right worthy seaman and a gallant. Next to her lies Captain Duffield's ship the CRANE, and astern of her again the FORESIGHT, with Captain Thomas Vavasour's pennant flying from her mast-head. These two great ships to the leeward are the LION and the DEFIANCE."

"Ay, and I judge that the DEFIANCE is the one with the higher hull," remarked Hartop, "for I see she doth fly my Lord Thomas Howard's banner and an admiral's pennant. 'Tis a right goodly array truly, yet small enough, my masters, for the work we have in hand, as ye would surely agree an you knew how many great galleons of Spain do go to make up the treasure fleet that we have engaged to capture."

The boat was now being rowed along the line of the admiral's squadron, and Gilbert Oglander paid no farther regard to the conversation of his companions, but directed his attention to each of the great vessels in turn. There were six of Queen Elizabeth's ships; the largest being the BONAVENTURE of six hundred tons, and the smallest being the CRANE of two hundred tons. But in addition to these there were some half a dozen other vessels which had been contributed to the expedition by certain patriotic English gentlemen and merchant adventurers, as the BARK RALEIGH, which was Sir Walter Raleigh's share in the enterprise, the PRUDENCE, the PILGRIM, and the GEORGE NOBLE. There were also several smaller ships, victuallers, as they were called, carrying stores and extra ammunition. The whole fleet numbered in all twenty sails, and the combined companies numbered something like two thousand five hundred men and boys. The larger ships mounted from thirty to fifty guns apiece. Of this squadron Lord Thomas Howard

was the appointed admiral and general. His vice-admiral was Sir Richard Grenville.

Chapter XIII

Outward Bound.

THE REVENGE lay at anchor in the midst of many merchant ships, pinnaces, and fly-boats,—a very gallant ship, with her carved and gilded bulwarks, with her tall, stout masts, with her silken, swallow-tailed banners flying from her masts and yards, her great standard, bearing the royal arms, at her forecastle. At her maintop the glorious flag of St George's Cross was fluttering in the breeze—the flag under which so many great seamen had beforetime traded, explored, and fought in England's honour, that Drake and Cavendish had borne round the world, that Lancaster carried to the East Indies and Frobisher to the far north; the flag that had blown triumphant against the Spaniards off Gravelines three years before this time, and that was destined soon to wave with less good fortune though not with less glory over the shot-torn wreck of the REVENGE herself.

Gilbert had been on board many times during the past two weeks while the business of preparation and victualling was in progress. He had explored the vessel from stem to stern, from the high, square forecastle, where the bowsprit rose steeply upward, and carried at its outer end a small mast with its sprit-topsail; and back aft to the sloping quarter-deck and the higher poop-deck, where a narrow strip of railed platform ran athwart from side to side above the water. He had been below to the main-deck where the heaviest guns were carried, and below that again to the lower deck that was dark and airless as a pit. He had even climbed the tall main-mast and stood upon the gallery, whence in time of battle the ship's archers and musketeers were wont to shoot down upon their enemy alongside. He would willingly have climbed the bonaventure mast also, and crept up to the high peak of the long lateen yard that towered aloft above the ship's stern lantern, but one of the men in authority had warned him against the danger of such an attempt.

Now, when he mounted the ladder at the vessel's side and passed through the gangway upon the main-deck, he was met by Roland Grenville, who was arrayed in all the bravery of a new shining corselet, a pair of new leathern trunk-hose, a coarse blue cloth doublet, and a wide seaman's hat. Roland greeted him heartily, bade him salute the quarter-deck, and then conducted him below to the large cabin, reserved for what were in those days called gentlemen volunteers, most of whom were young men of good families, who entered the naval service not as actual officers or midshipmen but as captain's servants. For in Queen Elizabeth's time it was customary for each captain of a man-of-war to be allowed two personal servants for every fifty of his crew. Such servants or cabin-boys were almost invariably recruited from among the captain's relations, friends, or followers. Sir Richard Grenville had in this manner appointed his own son Roland and Master Gilbert Oglander.

When the two lads had eaten some ship's biscuits and bacon, and drunk between them a tankard of small ale, they went out upon the upper deck and loitered there for a while, until Gilbert requested his companion to show him over the ship and tell him about her guns. Young Grenville, having already spent some three years upon the sea, could point out all matters of interest, and explain the uses of all maritime instruments and implements of warfare. He was himself a very skilful gunner, and he took especial delight in showing Gilbert the ship's ordnance.

The REVENGE mounted forty "great ordnance" of brass, including cannon-royal, demi-cannon, and culverins for firing a broadside. Of these the cannon-royal were the largest, having a range of a mile's distance, weighing four tons, and being twelve feet in length. Their mouths gaped through the round portholes of the main-deck. The demi-cannon were a foot longer, but a ton lighter. But in many parts of the vessel there were other smaller swivel-guns, such as sakers, falcons, minions, fowlers, and murdering-pieces. The murdering-pieces were mounted one on the after part of the forecastle and the other on the fore part of the poop, and they pointed inboard, so that their shot might be discharged into the midst of the enemy when attempting to board her.

"But these guns in especial are not ofttimes used," explained Roland Grenville, "for you must know, Oglander, that in these days our sea-fights come but seldom to a matter of boarding. 'Tis rarely I have seen great execution done with them; no, nor even with the bow and arrow, small-shot, or the sword. I am not sure, indeed, that in the whole course of the Armada fight there was a single occasion on which the Spaniards gained a footing on an English deck. The battle was chiefly gained by our great artillery breaking down masts and yards, tearing, raking, and bilging the enemy's ships."

There were many things for Gilbert to see and to admire: the racks where the arquebuses were kept, the bows of divers shapes and sizes and the cases of arrows, the pikes, the granadoes, the piles of hollow brass balls and earthen pots covered with quarter bullets and filled with gunpowder, which, as Roland explained, would make an incredible slaughter in a crowd of Spaniards; the stacks of crossbar, langrel and chain shot, and the many implements for wild-fire, wherewith to strike burning into a ship's side to fire her. And, finally, the powder magazines and the rows of hanging cartridge-cases, in which, during an action, the ship's boys were wont to carry up the gunpowder to the gunners.

They went forward into the seamen's quarters, where they found a motley crew of mariners—many of them well-tried voyagers with gray hairs and weather-beaten faces, many burly men of war, who bore in their scarred cheeks and broken limbs the traces of bygone battles. Some were young lads starting full joyously on their first enterprise, and among them, too, were many lawless fellows, pirates and robbers, who had been taken out of Plymouth prison and forced upon the ship, in the foolish belief that when removed from the scenes of their past misdeeds they would change into good and peaceful servants. The crew had been on board some two days, and now they were lying about in lazy groups, regaling themselves with the ale that had been served out to them, making a better acquaintance with each other, and boasting of the great things they had done, and the yet greater things they expected to do in this coming voyage.

When Roland and Gilbert entered the cabin, one Edward Webbe, a gunner, of London, was telling of his adventures in foreign lands. A man of some forty years was he, but he looked much older by reason of the privations and perils through which he had gone.

"Moreover," he was saying, "in the land of Egypt, near to the river of Nile, there are seven mountains builded on the outside like unto the point of a diamond, which mountains were builded in King Pharaoh's time for to keep corn in, and they are mountains of great strength. In that same river of Nile there be long fishes that are of twelve foot long, with marvellous great mouths and long tails, and hides hard as the sole of my boot. These fishes are so subtle that, swimming near the shore-side, they will pull men and women suddenly into the river and devour them."

"Why, they be sharks, surely," remarked one who sat near him.

"Nay," corrected Jacob Hartop from the dark corner where he was sitting mumbling a ship's biscuit. "I have seen such animals myself out in Virginia, where we called them alligators. But, prithee, continue with your recital, neighbour. Did ye not say that ye had been to the land of Prester John?"

"Yea," proceeded Edward Webbe; "and this Prester John of whom I spake before is a king of great power and keepeth a very bountiful court, after the manner of that country, and hath every day to serve him at his table sixty kings, wearing leaden crowns on their heads, and these serve in the meat to Prester John's table. And continually the first dish of meat set upon the table is a dead man's skull, clean picked and laid in black earth; putting him in mind that he is but earth, and that he must die and shall become earth again."

"Ay, a marvellous country truly," interrupted Hartop, "as I do know full well, who have been there. And I doubt not, Master Webbe, that, having travelled in those lands, you have also known somewhat of the Turks, eh?"

"Right well have I known them," returned Webbe with a rueful head-shake. "And because I was a Christian, and because the Turk had no cause to use me in my office of gunnership, I was imprisoned in Constantinople, where I found two thousand other prisoners and captives, Christians all of them, who were pinned up against stone walls, locked fast in iron chains, grievously pinched, with extreme penury. And I do avow that many times we wished for death rather than in such misery to live, and grieved at our hard hap that the wars had not ended us ere we came thither."

"Ay, right well I know such misery," said Jacob Hartop rising from his seat, and, thrusting forward his bared left arm he added: "Look you at this, neighbour!" He pointed with one finger at a depression in his wrist, which showed where the iron chains had been bound. As he stood forward he caught sight of Roland Grenville and Gilbert Oglander in the doorway, and he touched his gray forelock in salutation. At the same moment there came the shrill sound of a whistle from the main-deck.

"'Tis the muster-call," cried Roland Grenville. "Come, my lads, tumble up, one and all!" and he waited by the door as they all filed past him, and smiled as he regarded their strangely-assorted attire. Many were raggedly clothed; some looked as if they had but lately come from off the ploughed fields, others still wore their fishermen's jackets, that yet had clinging to them the shining scales of the herring;

and others again were gaily set out in the bravery of new suits of doublet and hose and clean ruffs and long mariners' boots. Gilbert Oglander had gone out beyond the door to watch them take their respective places in ranks upon the upper-deck, but young Grenville remained behind until the last of them had passed out. He glanced into the cabin they had left to assure himself that none had remained, and in one of the far corners, which was in deep shadow, he observed a movement. He called out, believing for the moment that one of the men lay there dazed with over-much ale, but there was no answer, and the dark form that he had taken for a bundle of humanity was silent and still. He stepped towards it and prodded it with his foot. There was no response, and he saw only a heavy seaman's cloak and the corner of a biscuit bag.

"Tut!" said he to himself. "I could almost have sworn 'twas a man lying there. And yet I might have seen that 'twas too small." And he turned to the door with a light laugh and went out upon the open deck.

Scarcely had he turned his back when the bundle moved yet again, a corner of the cloak was raised, and a pair of bright eyes peered out from a round boyish face, and a boyish voice murmured:

"Dear heart, I thought he'd discovered me! 'Twas Master Grenville, as I live! Lord send he cometh not back ere the ship hath begun to sail!"

Sir Richard Grenville had come on board, having spent some hours that afternoon in consultation with the admiral and the various captains of the squadron; and now when his own ship's company had been mustered he stood at the forward rail of the quarter-deck looking down at the sea of faces on the upper deck below him. His captain and lieutenants, arrayed in their best, stood apart from him, while the ship's preacher in his sombre black gown and white ruffle and scholar's cap sat near on the carriage of the murderer-gun, sedately turning over the leaves of his prayer-book.

The crew were all ranked in order, according to their several stations. The warrant-officers stood in groups apart from the seamen, for they were persons of great importance on board. The sailing-master, Ambrose Pennington, and his mates, who were responsible for the navigation of the ship, were indeed next in rank to the lieutenants; the corporal was also a great man, for it was his duty to look after the small-arms and musketeers' equipment, and to exercise the men-at-arms. The master-gunner and his mates, of whom one was Jacob Hartop and another Edward Webbe, had the duty of keeping the guns in good order, of seeing to their tackle, and also of looking after the powder-room or magazine, and the gun-room, where the small-arm ammunition was stored. The master-carpenter and his mates were to attend to the repairs and general state of the vessel's hull, to see to the plugging of shot-holes in action, the pumps and caulking, and the masts and yards, while the boatswain and his mates had charge of the ropes, rigging, cables, anchors, sails, and flags, superintending the men at their stations, setting the watches and carrying out punishments. Then, too, there were the purser, the quarter-masters, and the swabber. This last officer had the work of seeing to the ship being kept clean within and without above water, and he was answerable for the men keeping their persons clean.

The positions held by the members of the crew were in those days as many and various as in our own navy. The surgeon was not accounted of high rank, his

wages being but twenty shillings a month, which was the same amount as that received by the trumpeter. There were drummers, cooks, yeomen of the sheets, yeomen of powder, stewards, armourers, and many other qualifications; and lastly, there were the seamen and gromets, or ship's boys. The whole ship's company of the REVENGE numbered two hundred and fifty all told.

Sir Richard Grenville inspected them all from where he stood. His eyes searched into each man's face as he answered to his name called out by the purser from his roll, and if there was aught of doubt as to the man's appearance of fitness, he was bidden to stand forward so that the general might have a nearer sight of him, and, if need were, question him. But all had been well chosen in so far as their bodily health could be judged; and if some did indeed appear to be rough and ill-kempt and of an idle sort, Sir Richard still passed them, knowing full well that rogues do ofttimes prove to be good and true men when 'tis a question of fighting for England's glory and advancement on the seas.

"And now, my men," said their leader when the roll had come to an end, "I would say a word to ye ere I dismiss ye to your quarters. We are bound, as ye all doubtless know, to the islands of the Azores, where 'tis our purpose to intercept and lay capture to certain of the Spaniards' treasure-ships coming back to Spain from the Indies. My Lord Thomas Howard is our chief and admiral, to lead the expedition, by the appointment of her most gracious Majesty the Queen—"

"God bless her!" cried someone from the midst of the crowd, and the cry was taken up by many voices repeating the words "God bless the Queen!"

"But aboard this ship, and for the continued honour of this ship, which hath already done so much good service for England, ye are to understand that your duty is one of constant and unvaried obedience to your officers, whose word is your law."

He paused for a moment, looking out over the water to the DEFIANCE, whose anchors were already up, and whose sails were one by one taking the wind.

"And," he went on, turning again to the men, "for as much as the good success and prosperity of every action doth consist in the due service and glorifying of God, and that not only our being and preservation but the prosperity of all our actions and enterprises do immediately depend on His Almighty goodness and mercy, it is provided now as heretofore that all the company, as well officers as others, shall duly repair every day twice at the call of the ship's bell to hear public prayers to be read, such as are authorized by the Church, and that in a godly and devout manner, as good Christians ought. Finally, I would have you to observe this ordinance, which hath ever been observed upon the ships which I have commanded, namely, that no man, be his provocation whatsoever it may, shall swear by the name of God or use any profane oath, or blaspheme His holy name."

He drew back a step and turned to the preacher.

"Give 'em a prayer, parson," said he; "but be brief, I adjure you, for we must up anchor and be off."

At this Sir Richard took off his plumed hat and dropped it on the deck at his feet, and stood with his hands clasped before him and his head reverently bowed. His example was followed by his officers, and when the preacher went forward to the rail of the little pulpit that was at the front of the quarter-deck and held up his hands, the crowd upon the upper deck became suddenly silent. Each man bared

his head and clapped his rough right hand over his eyes, as the chaplain's solemn voice rang out with the words:

"*Oh, eternal Lord God, who alone spreadest out the heavens and rulest the raging of the sea; who hast compassed the waters with bounds until day and night come to an end; be pleased to receive into thy Almighty and most gracious protection the persons of us thy servants and the fleet in which we serve. Preserve us from the dangers of the sea and from the violence of the enemy, that we may be a safeguard unto our most gracious sovereign lady, Queen Elizabeth, and her dominions, and a security for such as pass the seas upon their lawful occasions; that the inhabitants of our Island may in peace and quietness serve thee our God: and that we may return in safety to enjoy the blessings of the land with the fruits of our labours, and with a thankful remembrance of thy mercies to praise and glorify thy holy name, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*"

The parson remained with uplifted hands, Sir Richard Grenville looked up for a moment.

"Enough, man," he said, "enough. George Fenner hath catted his anchor. Duffield is already under sail." But the parson did not heed him, and on hearing the words "*Our Father*" Grenville again assumed the attitude of devotion and waited until the final "*Amen*". Then turning to his captain he gave a word of instruction, the word was passed down, and immediately there was a hurry and bustle among the crew. Some climbed up to the yards and began to shake out the sails, others sped to the capstans, while others attended to getting on board the ship's boats.

Lord Thomas Howard's flag-ship, the DEFIANCE, led the way into the Sound. She was followed closely by the great ship of Sir Robert Cross—the BONAVENTURE. Then at some distance went Captain Fenner's LION, Captain Vavasour's FORESIGHT, and Captain Duffield's CRANE. Some of the smaller vessels of the fleet, the private adventurers which had been contributed to the expedition by Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir George Carey, and other gentlemen, sailed out in the train. Among these were the GEORGE NOBLE of London, the PILGRIM OF PLYMOUTH, and the BARK RALEIGH.

The REVENGE was the last to leave Plymouth harbour, for, being commanded by the vice-admiral, her place was in the rear. But her sailing powers were greater than those of any other ship in the squadron, and she might easily have overhauled her fastest consort had her master so willed. Some of the heavily-laden victuallers were overtaken even at the mouth of Plymouth Sound. One of them, the PILGRIM, was close beside her as they entered the open sea at sunset-time, and Gilbert Oglander, who was at the moment climbing down the ladder stairs from the quarter-deck, paused in his descent and looked over the bulwarks down upon her decks. He could see the faces of her crew. He could see Captain Whiddon on her poop deck, pacing to and fro from rail to rail.

Gilbert was wondering why it was that seamen invariably had this habit, when suddenly his thoughts were interrupted by sounds from behind him on the upper deck. He turned, and saw a little crowd of men at the foot of the main-mast. Some of them were laughing, others were loudly talking as they bent over some object on

the deck that seemed to be the cause of their concern. As Gilbert approached the crowd broke up, and he perceived old Jacob Hartop standing there holding a little boy by the ear.

Illustration:
Ay, but how came ye aboard, my lad?

"Ay, but how came ye aboard, my lad?" Jacob was asking, looking into the boy's tearful face.

"In a boat, so please you, sir," replied the boy. "In the same boat with yourself, Master Hartop."

"Nay, but I saw you not," returned Jacob. "I saw you not, else, be assured, I'd have sent you back instanter to your mother. What think you the poor soul will do when she findeth you have not come home?"

"I had but one thought," said the lad, looking up, "and that was to get on board the REVENGE with Master Gilbert Oglander."

It was at this moment that Gilbert entered the crowd and heard his name spoken. He glanced at the boy.

"Body o' me!" he cried. "Why, 'tis young Robin Redfern of Modbury village! How comes he here?"

"Ay, 'tis Robin himself, truly," said Jacob Hartop, turning at hearing Gilbert's voice. "He hath a mind to fight for the Queen, he says, so smuggled himself aboard. Master Roland Grenville found him stowed away below, and hath now gone to inform Sir Richard. I saw the child myself on Sutton quay, ay, and spake with him, but I'd no notion that he meant to follow us on board. 'Tis foolish in him, as I have told him, for a lad so young is but an encumbrance on a ship of battle."

"Nay, but I mean to work," protested Robin. "I'll work hard. Sure there be many things I can do, Master Hartop." And then as he saw Sir Richard Grenville emerging from one of the doors at the farther end of the deck he began to cry very piteously, as though fearing that he must surely be severely punished.

"What have we here?" demanded Sir Richard.

"So please your honour, 'tis a boy," explained one of the men.

"Ay, I can well see 'tis not a horse," said the admiral; and then plying the boy with many questions, and learning that he was from Modbury, he turned to Gilbert Oglander: "Take him into your personal charge, Master Oglander," said he. "Let him be your serving-boy, or a powder-boy, or what you like; and bid the purser enter him on the ship's books. As for his mother, 'tis a pity for her that most concerns me, and I would have you inscribe a letter to her, and throw it overboard in a bottle, which may haply be picked up by some passing fishing-boat." And with that he strolled back aft towards his cabin, where he remained secluded until late on the following morning.

Now as Gilbert passed again along the deck he looked over to the land, as he had done many times already, in the hope of being able to make out the towers of Modbury Manor in the far distance. Many a time had he stood in the upper room of one of those towers to watch the ships sailing outward from Plymouth Sound, and now for the first time he hoped to reverse the process and try to discover his

home from the ship's deck. It was no very easy matter, in the fading light of the evening, to identify any house so far away; but Modbury stood upon a height and was prominent enough if one knew exactly where to look for it. At last, however, he descried the topmost tower above the trees; he could even see the tall flag-staff, with the flag fluttering in the breeze. He kept his eyes fixed upon the flag for many moments, believing that it had been hoisted for his own benefit as a signal of farewell. But at last he began to realize that for some strange reason it had not been drawn fully up to the top of the staff—that indeed it had been hoisted half-mast high. And this, as he well knew, was a token of death. A pang of alarm shot through him; he felt suddenly very desolate and lonely. Again and again he turned his eyes upon the flag, hoping that he had made a mistake. As he stood there Roland Grenville passed near him.

"What, art home-sick so soon?" said he with a light laugh.

Gilbert was silent for a moment, and at length, pointing to the land, he said:

"Look to the flag on Modbury tower yonder. I beg you look at it and tell me if my sight deceiveth me. Is't not flying at the half-mast?"

"Ay, in very sooth, 'tis so," returned young Grenville. "I can see it plainly. Someone is surely dead—Ah, the trees hide it now!"

"Heaven send 'tis not my grandfather!" cried Gilbert. "I cannot believe 'tis he, for I left him hale and well. And yet I can think of none else."

"Mayhap 'tis your uncle Jasper," suggested Roland.

But Gilbert shook his head, remembering Jasper's vigorous strength.

"No," he said; "it cannot be uncle Jasper."

"Then 'tis your cousin Philip, I warrant me," said Grenville. "The lad hath met with some mishap on the hare-brained journey that you told me of. Said you not that he went off on horseback, and that you had not heard news of him for two full days? 'Tis clearly he."

And arguing with himself that night as he lay in the ship's cabin, sleepless and sick at heart, Gilbert came to the conclusion that this was so. He surmised that Philip had been thrown from his horse, or had come into some quarrel with highway vagabonds and had been brought home to Modbury dead. Little did he dream that Philip Oglander was now on board the PEARL on his way to Spain; little did he dream that his grandfather now lay dead in his great room at Modbury Manor; and as little did he dream that now at this same moment he was himself the only Baron Champernoun.

Chapter XIV

A Chain of Penance.

THAT brief voyage from Plymouth to the islands of the Azores was in the main an uneventful one. Gilbert Oglander, who, notwithstanding his love of ships, had never before spent a night upon the sea, very speedily succumbed to the effects of the ship's motion. The REVENGE rolled and pitched upon the great green waves that met her in the open channel beyond the Eddystone rocks, and when she was

off Ushant a thick sea-mist hemmed her in, and she lay there tossing for many hours under close-reefed sails, beyond sight or hail of the other vessels of the fleet.

It was while the fog still held round her that Gilbert first ventured upon deck. Jacob Hartop met him there, and greeted him with a question.

"Prithee, Master Oglander," said the old man, "hast seen aught of young Robin Redfern these few hours past?"

"Nay," answered Gilbert, "he hath not been near me since I have been below."

"Then I much fear," returned Hartop, "that the lad hath fallen overboard, for no man hath set eyes upon him since we shortened sail eight hours ago. We have searched for him all-wheres, but he cannot be found. As a last resource I have sent a man up the main-mast to seek him in the tops, although 'tis well-nigh impossible he can be there."

As he spoke the old man glanced aloft through the fog, and at the same moment a voice hailed him from tops.

"Below there!" the voice cried. "The kid is here. I have found him!"

Jacob Hartop sprang up upon the bulwarks, grasped the shrouds, and climbed up with the nimbleness of a much younger man. Gilbert watched him, and presently he disappeared into the railed gallery there. When he again appeared he was slowly descending, bearing the boy's inert form over his shoulder.

"There!" cried Hartop, as he dumped the lad down upon the deck. "Thank the Lord y'are not starved to death up there!"

The boy looked up, dazed as if he had been suddenly aroused from sleep.

"How came you to go hiding up there?" questioned Hartop in a severe tone. "Dost know how you have alarmed us, quotha? How came you up there, I say?"

The lad's eyes glanced about him as if in mortal fear.

"'Twas Red Bob," he stammered. "He's here, on board this ship. I was afraid of him, Master Hartop; for he doth owe me a sorry grudge for being the cause of his being put into prison. I went up the mast to hide from him, and, being there, I could not get down again, try as I would."

"And, prithee, who might be this Red Bob of whom y'are so afraid?" asked Jacob.

And then Robin caught sight of Gilbert Oglander, and he said:

"Master Gilbert should know the man. 'Tis the man that was put into prison for stealing the ducks and geese from the Manor farm, Master Gilbert, and that attacked you in Beddington Dingle, and that robbed Master Hartop of his bag of precious stones that he had brought home from the Spanish Main."

"Marry!" exclaimed Gilbert in surprise. "And you say he is aboard the REVENGE?"

"Ay, truly," said Robin; "and by the way he regarded me, I feel sure he doth know that it was I who raised the alarm and was the cause of his being caught."

"You need be in no such fear of the man, my lad," said Gilbert. "Let him but attempt to harm you, and I warrant you he'll not soon forget it. You are in my personal charge now, Robin, and I'll see you are hurt by no man."

Later on that same day Gilbert encountered the man Red Bob in the forward part of the ship, whence the lad had gone immediately after prayers to witness a strange ceremony, of which the occasion was this: that Red Bob had that day been taken in the swearing of a blasphemous oath, and was now to be punished in

sight of his companions. With a general consent of all the ship's company, it had been ordained that any man guilty of using profane language should be condemned to wear a heavy iron chain about his neck, and that at the time of morning and evening prayers he should receive three blows given him by the boatswain. The guilty man could only free himself from the penalty by transferring it to another whom he discovered swearing. Thus did the men of theRevenge endeavour to banish the vice of bad language on board.

Red Bob had worn the chain for the space of seven hours, and he was standing in the midst of his fellows meekly submitting to the boatswain's blows when Gilbert appeared. Gilbert thought he had never seen a man whose face showed more of brutality and evil than this Red Bob, and as he looked at him and remembered that night in Beddington Dingle, he could not doubt that it was this same man, this poacher, who had attacked Jacob Hartop and stolen the poor old man's wallet with its jewels and the precious letter, of which so much had been said at Modbury Manor.

Jacob Hartop himself was at Gilbert's elbow as Red Bob retired towards the forecastle smarting from the boatswain's blows. As he approached them he touched his forelock, and was passing on when Gilbert accosted him.

"Stop," said the lad, "I have a word or two to say to you."

"I am at your worship's service," returned Red Bob. "What would you?" And then, recognizing Gilbert as the young heir of Modbury, he added: "But I have little need to ask, methinks, for I guess that you would question me concerning the matter of the night when I was arrested and thrown into Plymouth gaol?"

Gilbert nodded. "Yes," he said, "you have guessed my wish right truly."

"Well, your honour," said Red Bob, "as to the poaching of the farm ducks—"

"Nay, I meant not the poaching matter," interrupted Gilbert. "You have had your just punishment for that, and so 'tis at an end. It was rather of the matter of your attack upon Master Hartop here, that I would know more. You see, there was a letter stolen—a letter of grave importance."

"Ay, 'twas the Spaniards that purloined it," broke in Red Bob.

"The Spaniards?" echoed Gilbert. "Prithee, what Spaniards mean you?"

"Look you, my masters," said Red Bob, and then he drew Gilbert to the bulwarks and signed to Hartop to join him. "I can tell you, mayhap, more than you know. But firstly, be assured that I had no hand in the affair. The men who waylaid Master Hartop were Jasper Oglander, his son Philip, and one Andrea de Ortega. Nay, do not doubt me," he cautioned, seeing that Gilbert shook his head in incredulity; "I had the whole story from overhearing the Spaniards while I was in the gaol. For you must know that, having been for some three years on the Spanish galleys, I know their language, though of that they never dreamt when they contrived their plots and conspiracies in my hearing. Willingly would I have warned Master Richard Drake of their schemes; but in gaol one can hold speech with none but one's fellow-prisoners, and ere I was released and brought on board this ship the Spaniards had made good their escape."

"Ay, but what of Master Jasper Oglander?" interrupted Hartop. "Say you that you have proof against him?"

"I have proof thus far," rejoined Red Bob, "that on that night in December he and his two companions followed you from the ship with intent to get possession

of the letter. It was they who assailed you in Beddington Dingle. They possessed themselves of the letter, which, it seemeth, contained news of the Spanish plate fleet. It was on account of that news that they were in so great haste to get back to Spain. Their escape was contrived by Jasper Oglander and his son—"

"Marry come up!" cried Gilbert "Why, then, Timothy Trollope was right after all!"

Red Bob shook his head, and a grim smile played about his lips.

"Timothy Trollope had been righter still if he had finished his work on Polperro beach," said he. "'Tis said that the lad ran his rapier through young Philip Oglander. Haply he did so; but of this I am certain, that young Philip Oglander is at this moment on board the PEARL on his way to Spain, with intent to inform the Spanish king of the setting out of this present expedition to waylay the plate fleet. That, my master, is the sum of what I know, and if there be aught else that you would question me upon, my name on the ship's books is Robert Cruse, and you will find me when on duty in the carpenter's quarters." And so saying, he again touched his forelock and proceeded on his way into the forecastle.

Thus, when it was too late to relent, did Gilbert learn of his injustice towards Timothy Trollope. He reflected that had he only believed in Timothy's report of the character of Jasper and Philip Oglander, much mischief might have been averted. For it needed no assurance from Jacob Hartop to bring him to understand to the full all that might follow from the escape of the Spanish prisoners. They were now on their way to Spain, apparently with the object of hastening to King Philip and informing him of the starting of Lord Thomas Howard's expedition to the Azores; and the result of their intelligence would no doubt be that the Spanish king would endeavour by all the means in his power to frustrate the English designs upon his treasure-ships.

Gilbert spoke of these things with Roland Grenville, but young Grenville regarded them with small concern, and reminded Gilbert that Lord Thomas Howard was well acquainted with the situation, for that he had given instructions to all his captains to keep a constant watch for thePearl, to the end that if any should sight her she was to be pursued and captured, or else sent to the bottom with a well-directed shot.

But if any strange vessels were espied they were only peaceful traders bearing our own flag of St. George, or else one or two of the Earl of Cumberland's fleet, which were at that time cruising off the coasts of Spain. Certain it is that the PEARL did not come within sight of any on board the REVENGE, for her voyage across the Bay of Biscay and thence westward to the Azores was performed without so much as the firing of a single gun. Nor did any event of great moment occur the while on board, or any circumstance worthy of mention, saving only that ere the Western Isles were sighted the men had already begun to grumble much at the quality of their rations and at their bodily discomforts.

For, as if the ill results of bad victualling of the Queen's ships in 1588 had not been a sufficient lesson, the food supplied to the present expedition was of the poorest sort, and it was little wonder that there was much discontent. The beer, of which one gallon each day was supplied to every man and boy, had been stored in old oil and fish barrels, and was so corrupt that many refused to drink of it. The meat was so salt that many said the brine had been put into it for the purpose of disguising the rank foulness thereof. The bread, too, was daily becoming more

closely inhabited by maggots, while even the sweetest food was like to become unsavoury by reason of the noisome and poisonous scent of the bilge-water, which was in itself enough, had not the men all been for the most part hale and healthy, to make many a brave sailor food for crabs and sharks.

But if the men grumbled it was as yet only in surly undertones, for all knew that there was good fruit to be had on the island of Flores, and perhaps even some good wine. Furthermore, the Spanish treasure-ships were expected on an early day, when, after a little fighting, as none doubted, our ships would speedily be filled up to the gunwales with bars of gold and ingots of silver and bags of precious stones. And then it would be—Hi! for England and a merry life for the rest of their days!

The thought of that treasure buoyed up the heart of many a man whose spirit might else have failed him in the long days of waiting that were before them. But more than the hope of gain was the hope, which every man in the fleet felt in his inmost heart, of giving a trouncing to the proud Dons of Spain. For assuredly there was no stronger feeling in the British seaman's heart at that time than that of hatred of the Spaniard.

Chapter XV

In Search of the Plate Fleet.

IT had been night-time when the fleet cast anchor under shelter of the island of Flores—the most westerly of the Azores; and if any of the younger members of the expedition who had not before gazed upon foreign land had hoped to witness aught that was novel or surprising, they had perforce to content themselves for the time being with the sight of a stretch of dark land rising out of a blue moonlit sea. Here and there, it is true, they could discern the black outline of a tall date-palm against the lighter background of the sky, poised, as it were, on the ridge of some rugged hill. But when the morning came the sloping land could be clearly seen with its terraces of vine and its blossoming orange-trees and its plantations of olives; and at the foot of the cliffs there was a long white line of foam, where the Atlantic rollers broke upon the rocky shores.

The REVENGE lay so near to the shore that the people of the island, who had come down from their village on the hillside, could be distinctly seen standing in a group looking out in wonder at the ships. And some of them had even put out their boats and were paddling towards the ships in the hope of doing some trade in the selling of fresh fruit. When they came alongside, certain of the officers bought a few bunches of luscious grapes or baskets of oranges and dates; but what was most required was a supply of fresh water, and for this the English saw no reason why they should pay money or money's worth, and their own boats were better fitted for the carrying of water-beakers than those of the natives. So, ere the sun was yet high above the horizon, two boats of the REVENGE were launched, and a like number from each of the other ships, and they were pulled towards the beach.

In one of the REVENGE's boats went Gilbert Oglander. He sat at the tiller, and he steered her round under the stern of Jacob Whiddon's bark, the PILGRIM, that lay but a cable's length away from his own ship. As he passed under her high counter one of her own boats shot out from her larboard side, and her men pulled vigorously at their oars as if intent upon having a race. Gilbert glanced at her rowers as she came abreast of him, and as he caught sight of the youth at her helm he started in amazement. For a moment he could not believe the evidence of his own eyes. But when the youth turned half-round with his face full in view there could be no mistake as to his identity, and Gilbert cried aloud in a voice that carried far across the waves:

"Tim! Timothy! Timothy Trollope!"

And Timothy (for it was in truth he) touched his cap in salutation, and answered cheerily:

"Give you good-morrow, Master Oglander. Prithee, hast had a pleasant voyage, withal?"

"Ay, truly," returned Gilbert. "But 'sdeath, Tim, I thought not to see you here!"

And then the boats drew apart, and Timothy remained out of sight in the rear for some ten minutes, until the keels grounded on the pebbles of a little sheltered creek whither the boats from the DEFIANCE had already led the way. And when Gilbert leapt ashore he ran across some rocks to where Timothy's boat was arriving; he caught the painter-rope that was thrown to him, and drew the craft inward through the deep green water to the edge of the rock. As Timothy stepped out, Gilbert, remembering nothing of the disagreement that had come betwixt them, took the lad by the hand and clapped him on the shoulder in very joy.

"Well met!" said he; "well met!" he repeated. "But why, since thou'rt sailing i' the fleet, Tim, didst thou not come aboard the REVENGE, quotha? There was ample room for thee."

Timothy smiled awkwardly.

"I cared not a groat which ship I sailed on, so that it were but in the following of my lord the admiral," said he, as he strode over the rough rocks towards a little grassy knoll beyond. "'Tis true I had wished to be aboard one of the Queen's ships rather than on a mere adventurer such as Jacob Whiddon's PILGRIM. Yet so hard did my father urge my staying at home, even to the last day, that 'tis a marvel that I did end by gaining his consent to my coming at all, and it was by sheer good luck that I succeeded in getting a berth with Whiddon."

"Wouldst come aboard the REVENGE even now an I got thee entered on her books, Tim?" questioned Gilbert.

"Ay, gladly," returned Timothy; "for I do assure thee the life we have had since leaving Plymouth hath been none too comfortable; and the food is less to be desired than that which I have ofttimes seen bestowed upon the swine at Modbury Manor. As for the beer they give us, I vow I'd rather regale myself on the water out of the sea. Ay, gladly would I join the REVENGE. And yet," he added, with a curiously undecided look in his eyes, "'tis surely passing strange, Master Gilbert, that thou shouldst ask me aboard the same ship with thyself, seeing that when last we parted it was upon no friendly terms."

"I should willingly forget and dismiss from my mind the matter that parted us," said Gilbert. "And I will own now that I made a huge mistake in my judgment of

thee, Tim. I fear thou wert right in thy estimate of my uncle. I blush to think it, but I am well-nigh convinced that he was, as you said, engaged in plotting on the side of our country's enemies."

"It may be that you will have proof of it when we return to England," observed Timothy. And then with a "God-speed you", he turned and rejoined his shipmates, wondering the while at Master Oglander's friendly feeling towards him.

When Timothy again went on board the PILGRIM he sought out her captain and told him of the offer that Gilbert had made, beseeching Jacob Whiddon to let him join the REVENGE if it should so chance that Sir Richard Grenville would have him. Captain Whiddon murmured some objections, saying that his acquaintance with Timothy during the voyage had taught him the lad's value.

"Nevertheless," said he, "if you are a handy man on board this small craft, I doubt not that you would prove even more so in a wider sphere. 'Tis your own advantage that I consider, Timothy, and looking at the matter thus, it would ill become me to refuse your pleading."

For the rest of that day, and during the day that followed, Timothy cast many a longing glance towards the REVENGE. So often did he look at the ship that very soon he came to know every rope of her rigging, every spar of her masts, and every plank of her richly-carved and gilded hull. She was a comely vessel, he thought, with her tall poop and her glittering brass guns, her waving flag of St. George, and her crew of merry, stalwart men. But the days passed and yet no message came to him, and he began to think that Gilbert Oglander had surely forgotten all about him.

During these days the ships remained in the same positions as they had taken up when they had cast anchor. At times the boats would be sent ashore, or to one or other of the victuallers; but there was no sign of growing activity, nothing to indicate that the expected treasure-ships were at hand.

Two weeks went by and still all remained as before. But on a certain Monday morning in early April, when Timothy sat with some of the men enjoying the bright sunshine on deck, he observed a boat putting off from the REVENGE. He watched it idly, growing more eager when he saw that it was approaching the PILGRIM, and that Gilbert Oglander sat in her stern seats.

Very soon the boat was alongside, and Gilbert climbed up the ship's side ladder and stepped on deck, and strode aft to the captain's cabin. There he remained for many minutes, delivering some message from Sir Richard Grenville. When at length he came again upon the deck he sought out Timothy Trollope—no difficult task, seeing that Tim was patiently waiting for him at the gangway.

"Didst think I had forgotten thee, Tim?" said Gilbert. And then, without waiting for answer he added: "Get thy trappings and baggage ready, lad, and come aboard the REVENGE with us; for Sir Richard hath consented to thy coming, and hath bidden me fetch thee."

It occupied Timothy but a few moments to gather his belongings together; for in truth they made but a scanty bundle, needing no great consideration in the packing. With his morion slung basket-wise on his arm, his corselet gripped by the shoulder-straps, his sword dangling at his side, and his small canvas bag of spare clothing carried on his back, he followed Gilbert Oglander into the boat, and waving a farewell to his old shipmates he was rowed alongside the REVENGE.

Timothy was somewhat awed by the sight of Lord Thomas Howard on the ship's quarter-deck, where the admiral, arrayed in a suit of spotless gray velvet trimmed with silver lace, paced to and fro in earnest colloquy with Sir Richard Grenville.

Lord Thomas, it seemed, had been making a tour of his fleet that morning, inspecting the ships and giving various instructions to his captains. When Timothy came on board the whole company of the REVENGE were being mustered on the upper deck. Gilbert Oglander presented him to the purser, who straightway entered his name on the ship's books.

When the roll had been called, the admiral and the vice-admiral, standing at the forward rail of the quarter-deck, looked down upon the sea of sunburnt faces and continued their conversation. Presently Sir Richard Grenville leaned over the rail and spoke to one of the officers who stood below.

"Master Tremayne," said he, "send me up the man Hartop—Jacob Hartop."

And when the word had been passed forward, Jacob Hartop strode towards the stairs and mounted to the quarter-deck, where he saluted the two great men.

Lord Thomas Howard signed to him to approach nearer, saying at the same time:

"It seemeth you are passing well acquainted with these islands, my man?"

"I have good reason to know them well, my lord," returned Jacob. "I lost my ship off this same island of Flores—a ship that was loaded even to the gunwales with Spanish treasure—and for two weeks I cruised among the Azores in an open boat in search of a vessel to fetch me home to England. I have been ashore on every island in the group, and have lived in Terceira for full three months. Yes, my lord, so please you, I know them well."

"Good!" nodded the admiral. "And I doubt not you can manage a small boat if need be?"

"Ay, or a large," said Jacob. "I am well trained in navigation, as Sir Richard Grenville can avouch."

"Enough," said Lord Thomas. And then, becoming more familiar in his tone of speech, he told Jacob that he had a mind to send him off for a cruise to the westward with the purpose of keeping an outlook for the appearance of the Spanish treasure-ships. "You shall have a good, swift-sailing fly-boat," he said, "and may choose your own companions for crew. And when you catch sight of the plate fleet it shall be your object to hasten back with all speed to our anchorage here and warn us of their coming."

"Right well do I understand," agreed Jacob. "Prithee, when do I set off?"

"When you list," said Lord Thomas; "but at noon to-day at the latest, for it may be that they are already within a day's sail of the islands."

So Jacob Hartop, having received full instructions, returned to the upper deck. And as he was passing the main-mast he caught sight of Timothy Trollope and touched him on the elbow, bidding him follow him.

"I am glad to see thee aboard of us, Master Timothy," said he, shaking the lad by the hand. "And in truth you are in goodly time. Art willing for an adventure, lad?"

"Ay, in faith am I that," said Tim. "I am ill of this weary waiting and ceaseless idleness. But what mean you by adventure, Master Hartop?"

Then Jacob opened out to him his plans for the cruise in search of the enemy, and asked him to be one of his little crew.

Timothy at first leapt gladly at the proposal, but at the next moment he shook his head in doubt.

"How will it be," said he, "if the Spaniards should come before we return? I should then see naught of the fighting, and I would not for anything in the world miss such an experience."

"You need have no fear as to that, my boy," returned Jacob, "for shall we not be the first to see them when they come? Yea, 'tis for that reason that we go, so that we may hasten back and give the alarm. Come, be not afraid that we shall miss aught by our absence; for I do vouch for it that if you remain on board the REVENGE it will be but a weary time of waiting and inactivity, whereas in our boat we shall at the least be moving from place to place with the chance of adventure. I had thought that you would rejoice at the opportunity, as did Master Oglander when I broached the matter to him."

Timothy's face brightened up at these last words.

"You had not told me that Master Gilbert was to come," said he. "In that case, I will certainly consent."

"'Twas he who bade me ask you," remarked Hartop; "for you must know that we had word of the thing full three days ago, when Sir Richard Grenville, with more impatience than my Lord Thomas hath yet shown, saw the merit of sending out scouts, and made up his mind to speak with Lord Thomas as he hath done this morning."

In something less than an hour's time Jacob was ready with his little crew, which he had chosen with the thought of friendliness rather than with any regard to their special fitness for the expedition. The old gunner, Edward Webbe, was a useful man, in that he could not only manage a boat, but could also, if necessary, speak with any Spaniards or Portuguese in their own tongue, and he also knew the islands. Timothy Trollope was strong for the pulling of an oar when the wind would not serve for the use of the sail, while Gilbert Oglander had marvellously keen eye-sight, and might therefore be depended upon for a look-out. Young Robin Redfern was chosen for no greater reason than that he had pleaded to accompany Master Oglander, and because he was of no great bulk and would therefore occupy very little room in a boat whose accommodation was limited. All five were disguised as fishers, and their boat, which was rigged with a lateen-sail, might well be mistaken at a distance for a Biscayan fishing-boat. The provisions wherewith she was stored were sufficient to serve for two weeks.

A light breeze from the south-east blew over the sea as Jacob Hartop took his little craft out of the roadstead at the north of Flores Island where the fleet lay at anchor. A projecting headland soon hid the ships from view, and towards evening the land itself was but a dim blue line on the horizon in the east. At nightfall the crew was divided into watches, and Timothy, Webbe, and Robin Redfern slept while Hartop and Gilbert remained awake, keeping the boat before the wind as she sailed ever westward. But at sunrise on the next morning the course was altered to the south, and so maintained until noon, when it was again altered to the north. And so, backward and forward, north and south, the cruising was kept up

day after day. But it was not until the evening of the ninth day that a single sail was sighted.

It was Robin Redfern who caught the first glimpse of the vessel—a mere dark speck against the sunset sky.

"They are coming! they are coming!" he cried, half in terror and half in joy. And in a moment his four companions were standing up on the boat's half-deck and gazing out with searching eyes across the ocean.

"What make you of her, Master Oglander?" questioned Jacob Hartop in a quiet, deeply earnest tone as he gripped one of the stays to steady himself while the boat rose to meet the great Atlantic rollers.

Gilbert shielded his eyes from the strong light of the sunset as he stood with one arm clasped about the mast.

"'Tis a goodly ship in the matter of size," he presently said; "yet I can see but little of her hull, for she is bow-on, sailing eastward as it seemeth."

"Haply 'tis one of their quick-sailing advance guards," suggested Webbe.

But Hartop silently continued to look out upon the sea with his brows bent and an expression of grim expectancy in his cold gray eyes.

"Canst make out if there be more than one ship?" he asked after a long pause. "Mark it well, my boy; for it were best that we make the matter full certain ere we fly back with the alarm."

Gilbert's eyes slowly swept the line of the horizon.

"No," he said; "there is but the one."

"Then we may not yet return," said Hartop; and turning to Timothy Trollope he added: "Take you the tiller, Tim, and keep our head to the westward until the dusk hath fallen. By that time we should know more."

The wind served well for this new course, and the boat sped on. But when the sun had sunk the strange ship could no more be seen, for the bright yellow afterglow was speedily obscured by a gray sea-mist.

Earlier on that same day they had observed that the sea was plentifully strewn with tufts of sea-weed, and below their boat, when they had looked over the gunwale and peered down into the depths of the water, they had seen dense forests of marine growth thickly entangled, and many thousands of jelly-fish and other denizens of the deep.

Jacob Hartop had shown more interest and concern in this fact than any of his companions.

"'Tis for all the world like what I have seen many times in the Sargasso Sea," said he. "And yet it cannot surely be that we have come so far to the westward as that."

But as the evening wore on and the water became yet more densely full of living things, he shook his head gravely and murmured a wish that they had turned back towards the Azores. "For," said he, "if it be that we are on the fringe of the Sargasso Sea there is no knowing what may befall us."

"And prithee, Jacob, what manner of dangers do you fear?" questioned Edward Webbe. "Sure there can be no peril in sailing over a forest of harmless sea-weeds."

"'Twas in the Sargasso Sea that I lost my ship," said Jacob. "I know the place full well, and never do I wish to be back in it again. Hast never heard of it, Ned?"

Webbe shook his head and smiled as he answered:

“Mayhap I have heard the name. But it seemeth to me that we are now in the Atlantic Ocean; and if thou dost declare that we are nigh unto any other sea, why, I can only believe that thou art dreaming.”

“Well do I know that we are in the Atlantic,” returned Hartop, “though a good piece farther to the westward than we had intended. But you must know that this Sargasso Sea of which I speak, is itself a part of the Atlantic—and a part which all wise mariners do avoid. ‘Tis in places naught but a solid mass of sea-weed, so dense as to support the weight of a man, yea, even of a ship. Once within its confines, ‘tis rare that a vessel doth ever escape; and most men who have been through it will tell you strange and marvellous tales of hideous monsters with hundreds of arms, that dart out and entwine in their grip of death all who come within their venomous reach.”

“Then I pray you let us adventure no farther,” said Webbe, “for I, at least, have no great wish to be embraced by such arms. Let us turn back, Jacob.”

“I would that we were once more aboard of the REVENGE,” muttered young Robin Redfern, who lay stretched upon the half-deck at Gilbert Oglander’a feet. “Who knows but that the Spaniards have already passed us, and been overmastered and taken home to England.”

“There can be little harm in keeping on our present course until sunrise,” said Jacob Hartop, not heeding the boy’s remark. “Then, if we see no sign of the plate fleet, we can turn about and make a run for Flores.”

“Ay,” added Webbe, “it were even wise to turn at the first peep of dawn; for, mind you, it would go ill with us if we should find ourselves in the very midst of the galleons without a chance of escape.”

And so they held on westward; and when darkness fell over the sea, Hartop and Gilbert curled themselves up under their rugs in the boat’s well and went to sleep, leaving Timothy in charge of the tiller and Webbe and Robin on the watch forward.

It may be that the recent mention of the loss of his ship lingered in Jacob’s mind as he fell asleep, for, as he dreamt, he saw himself once again upon her deck. A great galleon she was. He had won her in battle from the Spaniards, and as she was a better vessel than his own poor craft, he had converted her to his own use, and taking his own crew aboard of her had hoisted the red cross of St George and cruised with her as a buccaneer on the Spanish Main, conquering many another ship of Spain and transferring their treasures to his own hold, until the galleon was weighed down almost to her lower port-holes with the weight of gold that she carried. And then on a certain night when he was homeward bound he lay in his cabin asleep, and there had come to him one of the ship’s boys to tell him that the galleon had sprung a leak and was sinking. He heard the boy calling him now as he lay in his dreams in the REVENGE’s boat, sailing on those same seas.

“Master Hartop!” the boy cried, laying his hand on the old buccaneer’s breast. “Master Hartop! Quick! quick!”

Jacob turned over and sat up, and found himself not in his ship’s cabin but in an open boat. And the boy who had called him was young Robin Redfern, who now stood over him with a face as white as the sea-foam, and with his hand that held the boat’s lantern trembling as if with palsy.

“‘Sdeath, boy!” cried Hartop. “What in the world hath happened?”

Robin raised his free hand and pointed over the boat's gunwale across the water.

"Look!" he cried. "What can it mean?"

Chapter XVI

The Green Light Upon the Sea.

JACOB was on his feet in a moment. His eyes were dazed by a strange pale-green light that shone luminous over the boat's larboard bow. The sea was calm, with only a gentle swell rolling from the east; the sky was black and starless, and all was dark around saving only in the one direction where shone the ghostly green light, that reared itself like a cloud of radiant mist out of the sea, only a few yards from where he stood.

Even as he gazed upon it, bewildered and speechless, the light seemed to approach, or else it was the boat that sailed into the luminance. It shed its ghastly green glare upon everything, making all on board as plain as though the craft were bathed in soft moonlight. All was as green as grass. Webbe, Timothy, and Gilbert stood staring about them like phantoms, silently glancing at one another with the emotions of men who had been suddenly hurried into another world. Their faces, their clothing, even their hair was green, and it seemed that the mysterious light had deprived them of speech, for none spoke.

Timothy Trollope, who had been at the helm, had suddenly ceased to pay any regard to the steering, and now the boat's sail swayed idly to and fro, empty of wind. Gilbert Oglander, regaining his sober senses, looked over the side to search for the origin of the strange radiance. But there was no flame to the light, which seemed to be a mere transparent shaft of air, as unsubstantial as a rainbow. And when he turned to see if Jacob Hartop were yet awake, and found the old man at his side, he implored an explanation of the mystery.

"What means it, Master Hartop?" he asked in an awe-stricken voice. "Hast seen its like ever before?"

But the old buccaneer made no answer. Clambering over the coaming of the well, he crept on hands and knees towards the bow near where Gilbert stood. He peered out into the light, gripping the gunwale with trembling hands. He remained thus for many moments. Then suddenly he drew back, flung his left arm round Gilbert's legs, and with a wild, frantic cry upon his lips pointed out with his skinny right hand into the midst of the green light.

"See! see!" he cried. "It is a ship!"

Gilbert's eyes followed the direction in which the old man pointed, and presently he discovered, at the farther fringe of the light, the towering form of a vessel's hull. He could clearly see her stern port-holes, with the gallery above them, and above the gallery the projecting rail of her poop-deck. Her counter was richly carved with many strange devices, and the carvings were covered with tarnished gold. Her stout masts rose high above her, and her ragged sails were ample evidence that it was long since the ship had known their use.

"Can you not see her?" continued Hartop. "Od's life, boy! Look where I point."

"I see her, Master Hartop," returned Gilbert; "I see her. 'Tis a galleon, and a Spaniard by her build."

"Ay, faith, a galleon indeed," nodded Hartop; "and a galleon upon which mine eyes now look not for the first time, if she be not a ghost!" He rose to his feet, still keeping his arm about Gilbert, and added in a strange, dry voice that was scarcely more than a breath: "'Tis a ghost, Master Oglander, 'tis a ghost that you look upon—the ghost of the Golden Galleon!"

And so saying, he turned from the sight and sank upon the narrow deck, covering his face with his hands.

By this time Timothy Trollope also had seen the galleon. Clasping the tiller, he held it over. But it had no effect, for the pinnace had no way upon her; the wind had fallen to an absolute calm, and the sail hung loose and motionless against the mast.

"Out with the sweeps!" cried Edward Webbe, and Timothy, leaving his post, took up one of the long oars, while Gilbert Oglander took the other, and together they pulled and pulled, striving to bring the boat round and so escape from the grim phantom galleon. But with the first stroke they made their oar-blades caught in a mesh of sea-weeds. The disturbed water flashed with phosphorescent fire, and when the oars were with difficulty dragged up they rose dripping with a shower of sparks and heavy with clinging weeds. Again the oars were dipped, and again they were weighted with the tangled growth of weeds.

"'Tis of no avail, Tim," declared Gilbert as he drew in his oar. He leaned over the boat's side and looked down into the calm, shadowy water, where fitful tracks of shining white light showed the movements of coiling writhing monsters of the deep.

"Nay, pull at your oars!" cried Jacob Hartop, rising now from the deck and slipping down into the well. "Let us not be carried nearer to that horrid ship! Dip not your blades so deep, but pull her round that we may get beyond this phantom light. Here, Ned," he added to Webbe, "take thou a hand of Timothy's oar, while I give a help to Gilbert. 'Twill go ill if four of us cannot move her. Robin, my lad, get thee to the tiller and steer us back into the darkness."

He looked aft to where Robin stood and saw the lad obediently approach the tiller, while he himself pulled at Gilbert's oar. The boat began to move, but scarcely had a second stroke of the oars been made when a frantic scream came from Robin Redfern, and the lad, starting forward, plunged himself headlong into the midst of his companions.

"In heaven's name, what hath bewitched the lad?" cried Hartop. He abandoned the oar and bent down to pick Robin up, and felt him trembling in every limb. The boy was comforted by the touch of human hands, but he positively refused to return to the helm.

"I cannot, I cannot!" he cried.

"Take you the oar, then, Robin," said Timothy, "while I go."

But Timothy, bold though he was, came back even more quickly than Robin had done, with his face transfixed with terror.

"Look! look!" he stammered, pointing with fearful eagerness to the boat's stern.

All turned their gaze towards the tiller, and saw something which might well fill them with dread. A long flesh-like arm, half-pink half-green, was gliding slowly over the gunwale, with the movements of a huge caterpillar. Its farther end was not visible at first, but Gilbert Oglander, glancing over into the water, traced the thing for many yards to where it was rooted in a great green shining body midway betweenthe boat and the galleon. The body was furnished with two great glaring eyes as large as plates. From near the eyes some eight or nine other arms or tentacles were stretched forth, some lying inactive on the water's surface, others poised in the green air, with rows of immense sucking discs on their under side; and two of them had climbed up the galleon's hull and were entwined about her like a pair of giant serpents. All this Gilbert perceived in a momentary glance. But he told naught of the matter to his mates. Going down on his hands and knees in the boat's well he crept to one of the little lockers that were under the side-seats. He pulled open the door, thrust in his arm end brought out two swords, and flung one of them to Timothy.

Illustration:
For the love of Heaven cut the thing in twain!

"Here, Tim, quick!" he cried. "For the love of heaven cut the thing in twain!"

Then again thrusting his arm into the locker he brought out an axe, which he gripped in his hand. Springing aft to the stern, he then began to hew at the monstrous arm at the part which was lying across the gunwale. Timothy got to the other side, and in like manner struck with all his might at the creature. Stroke after stroke of sword and axe fell upon the writhing thing.

Suddenly the boat swayed over, the sail drew wind, and as suddenly the mysterious green light flickered, faded, flickered again, and then faded into utter darkness. There was a faint splash under the stern.

"'Tis done!" shouted Timothy, stamping his heel on the severed portion of the monster's arm as it lay across the deck. "Give us a hand here, Master Webbe, and help us to heave this thing overboard. Touch it not but with your boot, lest it sting you with its poison. Now, all together!"

"Down with the helm!" cried Hartop, himself springing to the tiller. And then, as the remnant of the animal's tentacle was plunged into the sea, the pinnace moved slowly onward over the darkened waters, and the little crew breathed in thankful freedom. Yet a strange superstitious terror had seized upon them, and for a long time no word was spoken and no sound heard but the creaking of the ropes, the light bubbling of the water at the bow, and the intermittent sobbing of young Robin Redfern. They yearned for the coming of daylight, and dreaded every moment that the eerie green light might again surround them. Again and again Jacob Hartop as he sat at the tiller glanced furtively behind him, as if to assure himself that he was not being pursued by what he firmly believed to be the phantom of his lost ship. Timothy Trollope, too, whose simple and untutored mind had yielded to the same superstitious fear that was oppressing the skipper, stood up time after time and, rubbing his eyes, glanced backward across the sea. Gilbert Oglander had but an uneasy sleep, while Webbe, who sat with his legs outstretched before him and his back firmly planted against the boat's side-

planks, refused to close his eyes. The only one who slept peacefully was Robin, who had literally cried himself to sleep.

At last, in the eastern sky there appeared the faint gray gleam of coming dawn. The welcome light crept over sky and sea. The men could now see each other's pale and troubled faces, and then, for the first time since the mysterious green radiance had vanished, Jacob Hartop spoke.

"It hath been a most merciful escape," said he, "a most merciful deliverance. The Lord be thanked!"

"Ay, the Lord be thanked!" murmured Edward Webbe.

The two old men had been feasting their eyes on the dawn-light over in the east. But Gilbert Oglander, who now rose to his feet and faced the westward, gave a slight start and quietly placed his hand on Hartop's shoulder.

"The galleon is still in sight, Master Hartop," said he.

"Ay," echoed Timothy Trollope, "she is still in sight."

Slowly and deliberately Jacob turned his head. His hand lost its hold of the tiller. Slowly he looked back again at his companions.

"What means it?" he muttered hoarsely through his dry, parched lips. His face was ashen gray and woefully haggard. He seemed to have aged a score of years since the last evening. "What means it?" he repeated dryly.

"It seemeth to me," said Gilbert, "that your golden galleon is no ghost after all, but a veritable floating ship."

"Said you not that she was loaded with Spanish treasure, Master Hartop?" questioned Timothy.

Jacob nodded.

"As full laden as ever ship could be," he answered.

"And wilt thou leave her there, where she is, to drift at random on the wide sea, to rot upon the water, and to go down at last to bestow her treasure upon the mermaids? I pray thee, let us go back to her, that we may bring away with us some of the gold whereof thou hast spoken."

"What!" cried Hartop, fixing his glassy eyes in astonishment upon the bold lad.

"'Tis daylight now," pursued Tim. "Mark how the coming sunlight spreads across the sky. Mark how its bright reflection gleams upon your galleon's golden hull. Why need we fear to approach her, ay, or even to board her, in the broad light of day?"

Hartop shook his head in grave rebuke.

"Thou'rt over bold, Master Timothy," said he. "The ship were a wealthy prize, I will allow. But I would have thee know that 'twas not to ransack drifting derelicts that we came out upon this voyage, but in quest of King Philip's plate fleet. Having failed to discover the fleet in our allotted time, we shall now return to Queen Elizabeth's ships at Flores and inform Her Majesty's admiral of the result of our quest. Asfor the golden galleon, let her rot, let her sink, say I. Let her treasures go down to the mermaids' halls, that the precious gems may bedeck the mermaids' necks withal. It will not be the first ship-load of Spanish doubloons that hath gone unto the depths for the children of the ocean to play with. And I say to you, were the galleon thrice her size, with thrice her present wealth aboard of her, I would not turn back a fathom's distance with the thought of entering her. And now," he

added, “I pray you, just hitch me up another inch or two of the peak halliard there, while Gilbert doth set about preparing our breakfast.”

And so they sailed back to Flores.

Chapter XVII

Sir Richard Grenville.

FOUR months went by—four months of weary, monotonous waiting—and still Lord Thomas Howard’s fleet lay in its old anchorage in the roadstead off the north of Flores Island. The long-expected homeward-bound treasure *flota* from the Spanish Main had not yet come in sight. The King of Spain, who was now well aware of the presence of the English ships at the Azores, and who knew their drift as surely as did Lord Thomas himself, was sensible of how much the safety of his galleons concerned his own interests and the interests of his country; and by secret means he had communicated with his admirals at Nombre de Dios, causing them to delay their starting; for he chose to hazard the perishing of ships, men, and goods by bringing them over in a season of storms rather than endanger their falling into our hands.

He had two distinct designs in bringing his fleet home so late. One was that he thought that Lord Thomas would have consumed his victuals and have been forced accordingly to abandon his quest and return to England; and the other was that he might meanwhile gain time to furnish a great fleet, which he was preparing to act as the guardian of his treasure galleons. In the first design he found himself deceived, for Admiral Howard had not been two months at the Western Isles ere he received supplies of victuals from England; and in the second he was equally prevented, for the Earl of Cumberland, who was then cruising off the coast of Spain, was keeping a constant watch upon the port of Ferrol, where the new armada was being hurriedly fitted out, and Cumberland was prepared to send intelligence to Flores to warn Lord Thomas at the moment of danger.

But despite the arrival of supplies from home, the provisions of the English fleet at the Azores were meagre in quantity, and in quality wretchedly poor, and it was found necessary to add to them by making frequent raids upon the nearer islands and taking forcible possession of food from the islanders’ homesteads. The hot summer months of June and July had brought additional discomforts to the crews, and early in August a pestilent sickness spread from ship to ship. On the DEFIANCE a score of men had died before the middle of August, and an equal number of the ship’s company of the LION were carried off. Sir Robert Cross of the BONAVENTURE had buried in the sea no fewer than thirty-six of his picked men, and the disease in a more or less virulent form had made an entrance upon every one of the Queen’s six ships, as well as the victuallers, fly-boats, and small pinnaces that were of the expedition. Jacob Whiddon’s little ship, the PILGRIM, had escaped so far with but one death.

On board the REVENGE Sir Richard Grenville had much ado to stem the tide of the dread visitation. His ship was small, and her crowded crew had but indifferent

accommodation even when in good health, and when the illness seized them there was little chance of a recovery. The matter was made worse by the fact that, for want of a more convenient hospital, her sick men were forced to lie upon the ballast, down below, where no fresh air could reach them, where the light of the sun could not penetrate, and where even the best and freshest food became speedily rank and nasty. Her surgeons were ignorant men, of a low and ill-educated class, to whom the payment of five shillings a week was considered an ample return for the exercise of their profession. Of medicine and the laws of health they scarcely knew anything. They could saw off a shattered limb or patch a broken head passing well; but they had no more than a child's skill in dealing with a sickness that came of bad sanitation, putrid food, and insidious infection. The ship's lower decks were so pestilential that a sound man might hardly hope to go below without catching the disease.

At the first it was the men of the commoner sort, the working mariners and the ill-fed soldiers, who were affected, but betimes the gentlemen of the poop were struck down one by one by the fell complaint, and there were few among them who did not suffer in some wise, if it were no more than to experience a sickly headache. So general did the complaints become, that many of the men, led by Red Bob, threatened more than once to break out into open mutiny. They declared that they were being poisoned by sour beer and rancid meat, and day after day, as the expected treasure-ships failed to come into view, the discontent became stronger and more noisy.

Sir Richard Grenville held a firm and determined authority over his ship's company, however, for he was a most resolute man, and none dared to openly offend him. He was a man very unquiet in his mind, always eager and impatient, and greatly affected to war. It was perhaps from this same resolute spirit that he had been able to perform the many valiant acts that are recorded of him. At the age of sixteen he had distinguished himself for bravery and fearlessness in the wars in Hungary under the Emperor Maximilian against the Turks; he had fought in the great sea-fight at Lepanto with the Christians against the Turks, when thirty thousand of the Saracens fell or were taken prisoners, and twelve thousand Christian slaves were liberated. Also he had taken prominent part in the defeat of the Spanish Armada. Of his life in Virginia, whither he went to found the first English colony, many heroic acts are recorded. His rivals thought him harsh and overbearing, and certify that he exercised a most tyrannical rule over his colonists and shipmates from first to last; and Master Ralph Lane (who is remembered as being the first to introduce the herb tobacco into England) wrote of him in an ample discourse addressed to Sir Walter Raleigh, that Grenville's pride was intolerable, his ambition insatiable, and that his proceedings towards them all in Virginia, and to Lane in particular, were unendurable. It seems certain that among the islanders of the Azores he was greatly feared for his severity in leading his men to plunder the homesteads for food for the ships. Some things that are written of him show that at times he could be boastful and inclined to bravado.

"He was of so hard a complexion," says Jan van Linschoten in a document that is to be found in Hakluyt's *Voyages*, "that as he continued among the Spanish captains while they were at dinner or supper with him, he would carouse three or four glasses of wine, and in a bravery take the glasses between his teeth and crash

them in pieces and swallow them down, so that oftentimes the blood ran out of his mouth, without any harm at all unto him. And this was told me by divers credible persons that many times stood and beheld him."

Yet he was a very excellent gentleman, a loyal subject of the Queen, and a very proper Christian. In an age when cruelty in war was common he fought with a truly British sense of fairness, and while the Spaniards treated their prisoners with unnameable tortures Sir Richard Grenville was ever just and humane with the enemies who fell into his hands. He hated the Spaniards with a fierce envenomed hatred, and was never known to shrink from an encounter with them, or to neglect a chance of striking a blow which should help to lessen their vaunted power upon the seas. No man in his time—not even Drake himself—was more bold or more courageous in attacking them. His self-confidence and his trust in English pluck were supreme. He considered an Englishman equal to any dozen Spaniards.

On one occasion when he was returning from the Spanish Main in a ship which had been sorely battered by storms and badly bored by the teredo-worm, he sighted a richly-laden galleon. His ship could not be brought to a close encounter, and he had no boats, yet he was bent upon capturing that galleon. So he made a raft out of the boards of chests and boxes, took a handful of men with him, and on this frail craft adventured an attack. He brought the raft alongside the galleon and clambered up upon her decks. As soon as his men were all off the raft it fell asunder and sank at the galleon's side, thus cutting off the adventurers' retreat. Yet they captured the galleon and brought her home as a prize to England.

It was towards the end of the hot month of August that the sickness on board the Revenge, as on board all the other ships of the fleet, became more general and severe. Lord Thomas Howard, realizing at last that it was the ships themselves that were unhealthy, and that if he would preserve his little army from actual dissolution he had better institute an hospital of some sort on shore, issued orders to his various captains, instructing them to land their sick men upon the beach, where huts and tents and other shelters were erected. This proceeding was found to be of vast benefit. Each ship's company was kept separate in their own shelters, with a goodly number of healthy men to attend to their wants.

Gilbert Oglander and Roland Grenville were among those who were told off to take charge of the REVENGE's invalids. Timothy Trollope and Robin Redfern were with them, acting for the greater part of the time as water-carriers. Red Bob was among the sick, so was Edward Webbe. Hartop remained on board the ship.

It was weary work looking after men who, in the midst of their sickness, were for ever grumbling at the bad food and the lack of good doctors. But the purer air and an abundance of fresh water, together with such ripe fruit as could be procured, gradually brought the sufferers round to a better condition. The deaths were fewer and the pestilence ceased to spread. Also on the thirtieth day of the month there arrived two ships from England, sent out by the merchants of Plymouth with a supply of victuals; and the news of home brought additional cheer to those who had been lingering here in the Azores for over five months, waiting for the treasure-ships that they were to waylay and capture, waiting until the very clothes on their backs were worn to rags.

Chapter XVIII

Drusilla's Letter.

ON the morning following the arrival of the ships, boats were sent shoreward for water and for shingle. The shingle was required for ballast, the old and polluted ballast having been cast overboard in the endeavour to clear the vessels of the infection.

Jacob Hartop was in charge of one of the boats from the REVENGE, and all through the day he laboured in the heat of the sun with his men, shovelling shingle into his boat and making trip after trip between the shore and the ship. When he landed on his second trip he sought out Gilbert Oglander.

Gilbert looked very different now from the gaily-apparelled lad who had gone on board the vice-admiral's ship at Plymouth in the early spring-time. His face was burned to a rich ruddy brown; his clothes were soiled and ragged, the gilt lace trimmings tarnished; the feathers had been torn from his cap, which was now but a sorry covering for his long-grown hair. Like all his companions, he had, for reasons of economy as much as for those of comfort and convenience, altogether abandoned his boots, and his bare feet, like his face and hands and arms, were as sunburnt as those of a Sicilian fisherman. He was kneeling in the shade of a large spreading date-palm, peeling a ripe orange for Red Bob, when Jacob Hartop approached him. He glanced up and nodded to the old buccaneer, smiled in greeting, and proceeded to divide the orange into liths, handing them one by one to his patient.

Jacob sat down on the soft warm sand and watched the lad for a few moments in silence.

"Art weary, Jacob?" asked Gilbert, hearing the old man's heavy breathing.

"Ay, weary of waiting for the Dons," answered Jacob, bending over and taking up a handful of the sand and letting it slowly stream out again between his gnarled fingers. Then presently he added: "Thou hast heard of the coming of the two ships from home,—eh, Master Gilbert?"

"Yes," returned Gilbert, wiping his hot brow with the back of his hand. "Phew! Would that they had brought a few hogsheads of our Devonshire cider with them. But that were too much to expect, methinks." He rose to his feet and stood beside Jacob, with his hands lightly clasped behind his back, and gazed out upon the sea towards where the little REVENGE rode at anchor. "Hast heard aught of their news, Master Hartop?" he asked.

Hartop shook his head.

"Naught to speak of," he answered. "It seemeth that Sir Francis Drake hath been summoned to Her Majesty's court, where he is in great favour, and that Sir Walter Raleigh hath fallen into disgrace; but more than this I have heard nothing. It may be, however, that thou'lt learn more from the letter that I bring thee," he added, thrusting his hand into his doublet. "Sir Richard bade me give it thee, saying as he handed it unto me, 'Tell Master Oglander that I would willingly have kept the letter myself, for that by the superscription I do judge it to be a message from my little sweetheart Drusilla'."

Gilbert fairly leapt at the letter when it was produced.

"It is! It is from Drusilla!" he cried, as he glanced at his name upon it. "'Twas she indeed that writ it!" Whereupon he pressed the missive to his lips, glanced at it yet again, and then exclaimed; "Only to think on't, Jacob! Is't not truly passing strange that my sister had this in her hand—ay, and haply kissed it as I do now—scarcely a month ago!" He was about to break the seal, but he forebore. "Nay," he said, "I will not read it now. Let me wait until the joy of receiving it hath abated;" and kissing it again he thrust it securely under his belt and went once more among the sick men, attending to their wants, and giving them such cheer as they had not known for many a day.

In the afternoon, when most of the invalids were asleep, Gilbert escaped from the beach and climbed the high bank of land to the level ground above, where the olive-trees grew. He perched himself upon one of the lower boughs of one of the largest of the trees, and, resting his back against the main trunk, took out his letter.

It had been written, not at Modbury Manor but at Willoughby Grange, the Devonshire seat of Sir Lester Willoughby. Gilbert read it slowly, dwelling on each word with fond interest.

Writ at Willoughby Grange,
in the County of Devon,
the 5th day of August, 1591.

I know not, dear my brother Gilbert, if this letter will ever reach thee, but Master Christopher Pym hath but now ridden hence from Plymouth to tell me that the good ship BARBARA JANE is being fitted to sail to the Western Isles with victuals for the Lord Thomas Howard his fleet, and to bid me write to thee in the hope that if thou art alive (as I pray God thou be) thou shall know hereby the things which have befallen us in thy so long absence, and of how Jasper Oglander hath proved himself to be a most iniquitous person with no good in him, who hath been secretly working to the ruination of our home and family, to the uttermost grief and distress of our saintly mother.

These things I must confide to thee, dear Gilbert, even in the order in which they happened; for 'tis meet that thou shouldst know them at the soonest possible time, so that thou mayest come back to us, if haply thou canst, and aid us in our tribulation. Yet even now, as I do indite these lines, I can scarce put the matter in its true order, so much confused am I in mind concerning all that hath disturbed our happiness, and so greatly do I fear (despite Master Pym's assurances) that thou art indeed and in truth dead and gone, as Jasper hath so positively averred. Of this terrible report of thine untimely death, we have no assurance either of truth or of disproof, and can only devoutly pray (as we do daily and nightly pray) that 'tis yet another of Jasper Oglander's evil and wicked falsehoods, set forth to gain his own advantage and advancement. But alas! I much fear me that I shall never, never see thee again, and that thou art, as the letter said, no more in this world.

We were concerned (as thou knowest) about the strange absence of cousin Philip. It was said by his father that he had gone on horseback upon a journey of pleasure into the country. But this report hath been proved false, utterly

false. Philip is even at this present time abroad in Spain, working in league with our country's enemies. We learnt it at the time of our dear grandfather's sudden death—

Gilbert started back in amazement as he read these last words, almost falling from his seat on the olive-tree.

"Grandfather's death!" he cried aghast, dropping the letter on his lap. And then, as in a flash, his thoughts sped back to the time of his leaving Plymouth and the sight of the flag flying at half-mast on the towers of Modbury Manor. "*Grandfather's sudden death!*" he repeated, and for many minutes his brain seemed to be stunned by the news. His tear-filled eyes wandered eastward across the broad blue sea. Far away in the mid-distance between him and the clear horizon he saw, almost unconsciously, a little ship ploughing her way under full sail onward in the direction of Flores. At any other time and in a different mood the sight of that ship, where ships were so seldom to be seen, would have aroused in him a keen concern. But now he gave it only an instant's thought, and turned to continue the reading of Drusilla's letter.

We learnt it at the time of our dear grandfather's sudden death, which befell within an hour after thou hadst gone off to join the "Revenge". A messenger had ridden in hot haste to the manor, bearing a letter for grandfather. What the letter contained and whence it had come we knew not; nor could it be found anywhere in the library. But later, when, at the instance of our mother, Jasper took horse for Plymouth to warn thee of what had happened and bring thee back if there were yet time, Christopher Pym came within to our mother and handed her the letter, saying that he had discovered it at the spot where uncle Jasper had mounted his horse, and declaring that the letter had fallen from Jasper's belt. The letter was from Master Peter Trollope in Plymouth, and it told that both Jasper and Philip Oglander were traitors; that it was they who had contrived the escape of the Spanish prisoners of war, and that Philip Oglander had sailed with them for Spain in the ship PEARL, which Jasper had purchased, from Sir Walter Raleigh out of money stolen, on the night ye wot of, from poor old Jacob Hartop.

Master Pym hath always held to the belief that 'twas the shock of reading this letter that brought about my Lord Champernoun's death.

Greatly were we all concerned when we heard that the REVENGE had set sail, and that thou hadst departed in her. 'Tis hard to believe, but Master Pym doth continually aver that Jasper (although 'tis certain he had ample time to warn thee) purposely held back from seeing thee or telling thee of my lord's death, desiring that thou shouldst quit the country in ignorance and run the risk of death by battle or storm, rather than that thou shouldst return home to thy rightful heritage, and so deprive him of his heart's desire. For it is now manifest to us all that Jasper, even from the first moment of his landing in Plymouth, hath been scheming and planning how he might cheat thee of thy rights, and become himself the Baron Champernoun and the owner of Modbury Manor and all the family estates.

And he hath now gained his wish: whether honestly or not can only depend upon whether thou art still alive. At the first he affected to sorrow over thine absence, speaking of thee as "Lord Champernoun" and "his lordship, my dear nephew", and the like. But on a day in the month of May he returned from Plymouth town in great haste and seeming grief, and when his wife, Donna Lela, besought him to tell her wherefore he wore a so doleful countenance, he produced a letter. "'Tis for this that I mourn," said he with a great sorrowful sigh, as he handed the letter to our mother. "'Tis a letter newly come from Sir Richard Grenville," said he. "Read it, good my sister, and God give thee strength to bear its terrible news." And ere mother had read beyond a dozen of thewritten lines she uttered a scream that might have been heard in the buttery, and fell back in her chair crying, "Oh! my son, my dear son! dead! dead! dead!" And Christopher Pym, seeing that her eyes were flooded with tears ere yet she would read the letter to its end, rose from the supper-table where we all were, and, said he, "I pray you, my lady, let me read you the letter;" and she gave it unto him, and he read it aloud so that all could hear. It told of a great storm that my lord Thomas Howard his fleet had encountered in the Bay of Biscay, and of how the REVENGE in particular had been sorely buffeted by the mountainous waves, and of how one great wave, sweeping over her decks, had carried off many gallant men, and among them Master Gilbert Oglander.

When Master Pym came to the end and read the name of Richard Grenville, his eyes darted across the table to Jasper Oglander, and the look that Jasper returned to him was dreadful to behold. Master Pym with no more ado went round to where Jasper sat and touched him on the shoulder, and presently Jasper rose and they quitted the room together. We knew not what their intent might be, but 'tis certain that they quarrelled, and 'tis certain that from that day to this good Master Christopher Pym hath never set foot in Modbury Manor.

Now it was not many days thereafter that Jasper began to show by his bearing the thing that was in his mind. He bade all the servants and household address him and speak of him as "my lord", he signed his letters "Champernoun", and if Parliament had been in session, I doubt not that he would have hastened to take his seat in the House of Peers. He gave orders for many changes in the manor-house, he commanded the foresters to hew down our best and bravest oak-trees in the park, and he sold the timber to the shipwrights with which to build ships withal. But more unhappy than all else was his overbearing manner towards our mother. He treated her as though she had no right to remain under the roof, and his Papist wife, whom (as Master Pym hath told me) he had brought over from some hovel in Honduras, was thrust into our mother's place as Lady Champernoun.

Thou canst well understand, dear my brother, how grieved was our mother at all this. She lingered not longer in the place than was barely needful to gather her own personal possessions together, and then, carrying me with her, she set off to Willoughby Grange, where we now are.

'Twas but this morning (as I have said) that Master Christopher Pym came hither with word that the BARBARA JANE is about to sail for the Azores. He hath spoken long and earnestly with our mother,and she is so sorely

distressed that she hath bidden me do what she had willingly have done with her own hand—write to thee, in the hope that thou art still alive, and tell thee of these things. And what hath given her a strong hope is, that Christopher Pym doth now positively declare that the letter which Jasper averred had come to him from Sir Richard Grenville came not from Sir Richard at all, but was a base and wilful forgery.

Much more have I to tell thee. But I have already spent many hours over this long letter, which hath yet to be read by our mother and writ out again by Master Pym, who will set it forth in more seemly English than I, an ignorant girl, can command.

Farewell, dear my brother. The Lord bless thee and bring thee home in safety, and govern thee with His grace and make thee a good servant to our Queen and country. Thy loving sister, so long as thou livest in the fear of God,

Drusilla Oglander.

Grasping the letter in his hand, Gilbert bent forward with his head upon his knees and wept.

Long, long he remained thus, now weeping in sorrow for his mother, now yearning to be back in England, now fretting over the fate that kept him, as it were, a prisoner on foreign shores. Oh, why were the Spanish so long in coming? Why did they delay?

Suddenly he was aroused by hearing strange sounds: the tinkling of distant bells, the shrill, penetrating whistle of boatswains' pipes, and then the loud report of a cannon. He stood up and glanced through the foliage down at the fleet, and there he saw that the ships were in unwonted commotion. Boats were passing to and fro along the line. Near to the admiral's flag-ship there was a strange vessel with fresh white sails that had been newly furled. It was the same ship that he had already seen making her way across the sea. He turned and glanced over the water to make sure that this was so, for he could not well believe that she had come so quickly, or that he had remained inactive so long, brooding over the letter. Yes, it was indeed the same ship.

But what was this that he now saw upon the far horizon? He strained his eyes in eagerness. Away in the east, like a string of threaded beads upon the line of the horizon, there appeared a whole armada of ships—ten, twenty, forty, nay, more even than this. And they were sailing westward towards Flores—westward from Spain!

Chapter XIX

A Splendid Disobedience.

GILBERT came down upon the beach at the spot where the men of theDefiance and the Bonaventure were encamped. Sir Robert Cross and Sir Richard Grenville had come ashore, and their voices sounded loud and re-echoed among the rocks as they issued orders to the men to carry the invalids down to the boats and

hasten on board. All was bustle, noise, and confusion. Here a stalwart man of Devon had shouldered one of his sick shipmates and was carrying him over the shingle, here others were rolling down water-breakers that had been left from the early morning, and others again carrying bedding and tent-poles, with their wrappings of ropes and sail-cloth.

The first person whom Gilbert recognised in the crowd was Timothy Trollope.

"What means all this commotion, Tim?" he inquired. "Is't the treasure-ships in sight?"

"No such good luck," answered Tim, looking up from his work of lifting one of the admiral's men upon his shoulder. "Here, I pray you, lend me a hand, Master Gilbert, and I'll tell you as we carry this poor fellow to his boat."

Gilbert took the man's legs in his arms while Timothy laid hold of him by his body, and as they bore him downward over the rough beach Tim said:

"Didst thou not see the coming of the ship, then?"

"I indeed saw a little ship approach," returned Gilbert, "but I know not whence she came nor—"

"'Tis Captain Middleton's ship," interrupted Timothy. "Captain Middleton's ship come hence from Spain to give the alarm that full half a hundred of King Philip's warships are even now bearing down upon us with intent to do battle!"

"I have seen them. I saw them from the heights," declared Gilbert. And then questioning Timothy further he learned that Captain Middleton had been one of the Earl of Cumberland's fleet, that he had had a race with the galleons and had outstripped them by only a few hours' sail. He had counted three-and-fifty galleons—the best that Spain possessed, and it seemed that the King of Spain, knowing of Lord Thomas Howard's presence and intention at the Azores, had sent out this formidable fleet to frustrate his foes and protect his treasure-ships against the English.

The news had come upon Lord Thomas Howard like a thunder-clap, when he was all unprepared for the emergency. As we have seen, more than half the crew in every ship were away on shore, lying sick, while a large part of the remainder were busy collecting ballast and getting water. On board most of the ships only a few officers and ship-keepers were left. Yet taken by surprise as they were, the captains were now meeting the perilous situation with a prompt alacrity worthy of the navy of which they were proud to form a part. Sir Richard Grenville as vice-admiral had hastened ashore, knowing that it was his duty to remain behind with his ship until the last man was on board. He now gave his orders calmly and with no show of hurry, and when he had seen the men of the flag-ship well in the way of getting on board, he passed on along the beach to where those of the BONAVENTURE were preparing to quit their temporary dwelling-place. In like manner he saw to the men of Captain Fenner's LION, Captain Vavasour's FORESIGHT, Captain Duffield's CRANE, and to those of the BARK RALEIGH, the PILGRIM, the GEORGE NOBLE, and the other smaller ships. Lastly, he came to his own men of the REVENGE, and when these had been sent on board he again made his way along the beach to pick up all the possible stragglers. This work occupied him little more than half an hour, for all knew what was at stake, and each man had taken his own duty in hand with ready promptitude.

The first alarm-gun had been fired at one o'clock. By two o'clock five of the six men-of-war and all the victuallers, flyboats, and pinnaces had slipped their cables or weighed their anchors, had shaken out their sails and were beginning to work out seaward for an offing.

While Sir Richard Grenville was on shore the admiral himself had not been idle. It was too late now to think of ballasting his ships, which were all too light by reason of having been emptied of all the old and infected ballast that they had brought in them from England; but he knew that more than half his forces were sick and useless for the work of battle, that on the BONAVENTURE, his largest ship, there were not so many men in health as could handle her mainsail, so he ordered that a score of the best should be transferred to her from the ship that Sir George Cary had sent out with the expedition, while Sir George Cary's ship was at the last moment scuttled and left to go to the bottom.

Lord Thomas Howard signalled his orders to his little fleet, and his own ship, the DEFIANCE, led the way out into the offing, for the Spanish galleons were already approaching the nearest headland of the island and he deemed it wise to escape as speedily as he could. He saw that the REVENGE had not yet weighed anchor, and he signalled to her yet again, intending that Grenville should loiter no longer, but that, whatever her condition or the condition of the few men still remaining ashore, she should at once slip her cable and follow in her appointed place at the rear.

Sir Richard Grenville saw the signal, but thinking only of the sick men in his charge he would not start until he had collected and shipped the last of his crew, who, if he had left them on shore, must have been lost.

"We cannot leave the poor fellows here to die," said he to Timothy Trollope, who had been with him during this time helping the men into the boats. "It were surely cowardly to abandon them. Heave yourself up on my back, lad," he added, speaking to Red Bob, who was now the last remaining man. "There is yet time if we are but quick." And with Timothy's help he carried Bob down to the boat, and then they were rowed out to the REVENGE.

Then with every man safe on board he at last weighed. At the same instant as the dripping anchor came to the bows, the tall masts with their bellying sails and the towering hulls of the two vanguard squadrons of the Spanish fleet appeared under the headland. On the galleons swept to the windward of the REVENGE, with their ports triced up and the gun muzzles showing, and the brass patereros glittering in the afternoon sun.

Sir Richard, standing, as it seemed, quite unconcerned upon his quarter-deck, took in the position in which he was placed. To the windward of him were the fifty-three great galleons of Spain. On his lee, now drawing wind and sailing quickly into safety, were the ships of Lord Thomas Howard. Grenville was not a trained seaman, and he knew but few of the mariner's tricks and tactics, but he understood his present case well enough to know that his best and only chance of safety was to 'bout ship and run for it in the endeavour to weather the leaders of the Spaniards.

He cast a moment's glance at his sailing-master and in turn at Captain Robinson, who stood near him.

"It seemeth to me," remarked the master, "that we have lingered over long."

“Ay,” added Captain Robinson. “The delay hath cost Her Majesty her goodliest ship and us our lives and our long-cherished honour.”

“How so?” questioned Grenville, in the blunt direct tone which signified his inward excitement.

Captain Robinson raised his eyebrows in slight surprise, and his fingers played with the point of his well-trimmed black beard.

“Why,” answered he in a seemingly careless tone, “methinks we are caught in a very pretty trap, that is all.” And then a new and earnest light flashing in his beautiful blue eyes, he added: “Look you, Sir Richard, we have but one way only. Let out your mainsail, sir, and cast about, and trust to the sailing of the ship. She is ill-conditioned, ‘tis true; but ‘twill go ill if we cannot even yet escape and join our squadron.”

Sir Richard Grenville regarded him with a stern determined glance.

“What!” he cried. And then he laughed, and in a softer voice added: “No, no. I never yet turned tail on devil or Don, nor will I do so now. Rather would I die this day than dishonour myself, my country, or Her Majesty’s ship!” He strode slowly across the deck and as slowly returned. Then he looked out over the rail at the approaching galleons. They now appeared in two well-ordered squadrons on his weather-bow, sailing down upon him between the two neighbour islands of Flores and Corvo. “Truly they are a brave sight,” he went on, “as gallant a sight as mine eyes have rested upon these three years agone. But, mark you, Master Robinson, I mean not to fly from them, not I. ‘Tis one against fifty-three, but, by thunder, I mean to adventure it! In despite of their so great strength I intend to pass in betwixt those two squadrons and force them to give me way!”

“Nay, ‘tis impossible; ‘twere rank madness to make the attempt,” cried the master. “Sure ‘tis no dishonour to fly before such overwhelming numbers. Cast about, sir, while yet there is time. Believe me, ‘tis the better course.”

But Sir Richard Grenville would not be persuaded, and the word was passed aft to the steersman to take the ship in between the two lines of galleons.

It was at this moment that Gilbert Oglander showed himself before his chief. He was about to ask some question, but Sir Richard cut him short.

“Bring me my casque, boy, and my breastplates and tassets, also my best sword!” Then to the master he added: “Let beat the men to their fighting quarters. Run out the guns, and let every one be manned by a brave son of Devon that will stick to his post while there be powder to shoot and ships to be shot.”

None on board had expected this order. All were appalled by Sir Richard’s boldness. But when once the word had gone forth that there was fighting to be done, there was not a man or a boy whose bodily health permitted him who did not fly to his particular post with joy at the thought of having it out with the hated Spaniards.

Already the REVENGE was drifting onward to meet her foes. With her hundred eager fighting-men on her decks, and her ninety sick lying unserviceable on the ballast, she slowly made her way into the narrow channel between the oncoming galleons. The first four of them, either awed by her boldness or else not quite prepared, permitted her to pass, but immediately “sprang their luff” and fell under her lee, where they contented themselves with firing a few shots into one of the English victualling ships, the GEORGE NOBLE, of London, that with greater spirit

than might have been expected of so small a craft, had detached herself from Her Majesty's ships and fallen behind to offer aid to the hard-pressed REVENGE. Her captain, scorning the few shots that had rattled through his shrouds, now brought her under the REVENGE's counter and called out to Sir Richard Grenville, asking him for commands.

"Nay, seek no commands of me," cried Grenville in reply. "But save yourself, in God's name, while there be time. As for me, why, prithee, leave me to my fortune. I can look after myself if any man can."

At this moment occurred the catastrophe which Captain Robinson and the sailing-master had clearly foreseen. The great galleon, SAN PHILIP, being to the windward of the REVENGE, and coming speedily towards her, becalmed her sails, which flapped loose, flattened against her masts, hung down, and ceased to draw. The REVENGE lost the way that was upon her, and she could neither move onward nor obey her helm. The SAN PHILIP was a huge and high-charged ship of fifteen hundred tons—three times the burden of the REVENGE—carrying three tiers of ordnance on a side, and eleven pieces in every tier. She had eight great guns peeping out of her chase-ports, and from these she belched forth a volley of cross-bar shot that crashed into Grenville's gallant little ship, making her tremble in every plank, yet doing but slight mischief. And at the same time the three galleons that were to his leeward luffed up, and fired their forward guns into his rigging. These ships were all high in the hull, and their guns were so trained that the shots passed over the REVENGE's upper bulwarks, only severing a few ropes or clipping some splinters of timber from off her masts and yards. One of the nearest galleons was the admiral, or flag-ship, of the Biscayan squadron, a very mighty and powerful vessel, commanded by the great Spanish warrior Britandona.

Gilbert Oglander, as he strode towards the companion stairs after having helped Sir Richard Grenville to don his body armour, glanced round at the vast fleet of the enemy. Each galleon's decks and fighting-tops were crowded with soldiers, whose morions and breastplates glistened in the afternoon sun. On the SAN PHILIP's decks there were, as he afterwards estimated, no fewer than six or seven hundred soldiers, apart from her seamen, and the others of the Spanish ships must certainly have been equally well manned; while on the REVENGE there were no fighting-men beside the mariners, excepting only the servants of her officers and some few gentlemen volunteers like himself.

Already the dread sounds of battle greeted Gilbert's unaccustomed ears. The loud rumbling roar of the cannons coming from the lumbering hulls below was mingled with the sharp crackling of musketry from above, where the Spaniards posted in the tops were firing in the hope of picking off some of the English officers. The air was even at this early time charged with a faint smell of burnt gunpowder. Gilbert did not pause to watch the opening of the battle, but hastened down to the main-deck, where, for the present, he was to occupy himself in helping the gunners and carrying out the powder from the magazines.

Here, down below, he found Edward Webbe with his lighted lintlock coolly glancing outward along the barrel of a great brass gun. There was no need to take careful aim, for wheresoever the cannon might be fired its contents of heavy shot were certain to strike into the oaken hull of one of the galleons. Webbe applied his fuse, and the cannon flung forth its spurt of fire with a thunderous boom that

made the very deck shake and the strained lashings creak. Along the whole space of the 'tween decks and at both sides the gunners applied themselves to their work with quiet and unruffled movements, and presently Edward Webbe gave up his gun to another man and undertook the task of directing his shipmates in the work, only peering out now and again through one of the portholes to watch the movements of the enemy, as galleon after galleon came within close range.

"Steady, my lads!" he cried, "and take good aim. Waste not a shot, but mark well where it must find its home. Lower your gun's muzzle, Matthew Giles," he said to one who was training his piece to fire against the walls of one of the nearer galleons. "Take her below the water-line, and sink her."

It was the great SAN PHILIP that was alongside now. Having blocked out the breeze from the REVENGE's sails by her own vast stretch of canvas, she had forced herself full into the path of the English man-of-war, and swung herself round broadside to broadside, with her grapplings ready to hold her intended victim fast and so overpower her by superior strength, and riddle her with shot until she should sink. This was just at three o'clock in the afternoon, and forthwith the terrible and memorable combat was begun in desperate earnest.

At the same time four other of the most formidable of the Spanish galleons—the smallest of them double the size of the REVENGE—drew out to support the SAN PHILIP, and took up positions round Sir Richard Grenville's ship, two on her larboard side, one astern of her, and the fourth under her bows. And all five assailed her with a storm of iron shot and heavy stone balls and langrage and cross-bar shot. The noise of the discharge of so many guns was deafening to hear. But it was seen that the greater number of the shots passed over her, so low in the hull was she compared with the towering height of her enemies. Nevertheless many a shot buried itself in her stout sides, many crashed through her bulwarks, cut great pieces out of her masts, and tore her sails and rigging. But her gallant flag of St George waved gloriously on high; her men stuck to their work with ever-ripening courage, and small though she was in the midst of her huge foes, she dealt them as much as they gave: nay, even more than that, for she had British guns on board of her and British men to fire them, and never a shot did they fire that did not tell.

After the interchange of many volleys of great ordnance and small-shot, the Spaniards, finding that the REVENGE still held her ground and defended herself with so great determination, made an attempt to board her, hoping to force her by the sheer multitude of their armed soldiers and musketeers. The great SAN PHILIP drew to close quarters. Her bulging sides crunched against those of the REVENGE, and a host of her men clambered over her rails, pike and sword in hand, climbed into the REVENGE's lower shrouds, and swarmed like so many infuriated bees along her stout bulwarks at every point. But Ambrose Pennington, who had control of the murderer-gun on the starboard side of Sir Richard's quarter-deck, was ready at the moment with his fuse. He fired the gun, and its scattering charge of small-shot played fearful havoc among the would-be boarders, while those who escaped the destructive fire fell either back between the ships or forward upon the deck of the REVENGE, where they were speedily overpowered.

Nor were the gunners below decks unmindful of their opportunity. At the moment when the Spaniards were in the act of boarding, Edward Webbe had every

gun on his starboard side ready loaded with cross-bar shot and primed. He gave the order, and his men applied their lintlocks, and the full broadside was discharged straight into the SAN PHILIP's hull. After this she sheered off with all diligence from her too close position, "utterly misliking her first entertainment". It was said afterwards that the galleon foundered, but Sir Walter Raleigh in his written account of the fight cast doubt upon the point. Howbeit, no sooner had the SAN PHILIP been cleared away than her position was taken up by yet another galleon, only to be beaten off in like manner. One after another they closed and boarded, one after another they were flung back beaten and in confusion, their boarders being repulsed again and again, taking refuge in their own ships or else falling into the seas.

To tell every incident of this terrible battle would make a long story, albeit the valour displayed by our English seamen on that great occasion has no more glorious example in all the annals of our navy's history. Hour after hour went by and still the REVENGE fought on with undaunted courage. Many of her men were slain and many were hurt, and her surgeons and their assistants were busy in the hold. Yet the Spaniards suffered more. Early in the fight Don Louis Cutino, one of the admirals of Seville, brought his galleon alongside in all her bravery, but he had not fought for more than a quarter of an hour ere a broadside from the REVENGE was fired point blank into his vessel's hull, sinking her with all on board. And the same fate befell the powerful galleon, the ASCENSION, of Seville, commanded by the Marquis of Arumburch. One other galleon, sorely beaten, had yet strength to recover the roadstead of the island of St. Michaels, where she quickly followed her anchor to the bottom. A fourth, to save her men, was run aground on Flores.

All through that hot August afternoon the REVENGE fought on, and as each galleon was driven off another pushed in to relieve her beaten consort and to renew the attack upon the stubborn little English man-of-war, who withstood it all with her hundred men on board, resisting all comers. With never fewer than two mighty galleons by her side, she fought to the death, single-handed.

The Spaniards had an unlimited reserve. They could not all hope to empty their guns into their heroic little foe, but they crowded round, ever near, to supply the attacking ships when needed with fresh soldiers, all manner of arms, and with powder and shot in plenty. To the REVENGE there remained no such comfort, no supply of either ships or men or weapons, and, alas! no hope.

Chapter XX

The Last Fight of the REVENGE.

ONCE, indeed, in the course of the fight, an English ship appeared, brave and willing to offer her small help.

Towards sunset, during a momentary lull in the storm of battle, while one of the broken and battered Spanish ships was being cleared away from the ceaseless fury of the English guns, Jacob Hartop left the little brass falcon gun on the forecastle, at which he had stood for four terrible hours, and went down for a

drink of water. A musket-shot had struck him in the thigh, and he was somewhat faint. He limped within the doorway of the seamen's quarters. A dozen men were in this shelter, some binding up their wounds, some resting and gathering breath before going out again upon the decks, others patiently waiting for their turn with the water-dipper.

Jacob's eyes surveyed them, passing slowly from one face to another. He nodded to one, gave a cheering smile to another, and helped a third to tie a knot in the kerchief which he was binding over his arm.

"What say you, my masters?" said he. "This be life, eh? This be tasting glory!"

"Ah—h!" breathed Jeff Dimsdale, the man who was taking the dipper from young Robin Redfern. "'Tis such glory as might fill many of our friends at home with envy. May I taste more on't ere I be like Tom Wilson that's down below on the ballast with a bullet in his honest heart!" He raised the water to his pale lips. "Tom would ha' given a deal for this drop o' water, I reckon," he said. Then, still hesitating to drink, he added: "Here's to Queen Bess, God bless her!"

Drinking the water at one long draught, he silently handed the dipper back to Robin and passed out into the open.

"'Tis men such as Jeff that have won England her glory on the main," declared Hartop, as he watched the man striding along the deck. Even as his eyes rested upon him, he saw Dimsdale stagger and fall, with an arrow, fired from the tops of one of the Spaniards, piercing his temple. A youth, hastening forward, stumbled over the fallen man, rose to his feet, looked into Dimsdale's face and passed on. The youth was Gilbert Oglander, who with grimy, powder-stained countenance, had come up on deck, utterly tired out by his hard work below. He entered the forecastle and waited his turn for a drink of water.

"What, art stationed below decks, Master Oglander?" questioned Jacob Hartop. "Methinks your better place were up here where there be boarders to repel. There be many who can carry powder on board, but few who have the skill to wield a sword or shoot an arrow as thou hast, my master."

"In truth, 'twas that very thought that brought me hither," said Gilbert. "And with the more reason, in that the powder is not now so plentiful or the gunners so many that those I have left below cannot be quickly enough served by the ship's boys. Hast seen aught of Timothy Trollope, Master Hartop?"

Jacob shook his head, but Robin Redfern, hearing the question, answered, as he pointed outward along the upper deck to where, under the larboard bulwarks, a half-dozen of Sir Richard Grenville's men were fighting amid a clash of arms with some score of Spaniards who had made an entrance upon the REVENGE:

"So please you, sir, he is yonder, where, as I have seen with my own eyes, he hath slain a full dozen Spaniards."

Without waiting for his much-needed drink of water, Gilbert snatched up a morion that lay at his feet, clapped it upon his bare head, unsheathed his sword, and ran out to join in the fray. Jacob Hartop, smiling at the lad's impetuous eagerness, turned to the water-butt and took the proffered dipper from Robin Redfern's hand.

Robin's face was very pale, and there was a strange light in his grave, gray eyes. He glanced quickly round the cabin, and presently darted into the further corner, went down upon his knees in the dark, and after a moment emerged gripping a

little sword in his right hand, and strode to the door. Jacob Hartop stretched out his hand to stop the boy, guessing his purpose, but Robin escaped him and ran out, mingling with the fighting crowd.

Very soon afterwards Hartop was again at his gun on the starboard side of the forecastle deck. At the moment there was a slight lull in the battle. A galleon that had been grappled to this side of the Revengefor an hour or more, and was now almost a total wreck, was being drawn off to give place to a mighty ship which had stood by from the time of the opening of the battle, and whose decks were crowded with soldiers. Glancing out through the gap thus made, Hartop saw at some distance away a little ship flying the flag of St. George. She seemed to be hovering near, either to see the success of the fight, or else, which was more probable, to do what she might to rescue the REVENGE from the grip of her overpowering enemies. Hartop knew the little ship. He had seen her many times during the voyage out from England and also at the anchorage at Flores. It was Jacob Whiddon's PILGRIM.

The great galleon which now closed in to the attack was the St. Paul, the flag-ship of Don Alonzo de Bassan, a brother of the renowned Marquis of Santa Cruz, and King Philip's chosen admiral. Already the REVENGE's bowsprit had been shot away, her foremast had fallen by the board, and her main topmast was lying across her main-deck with two Englishmen and seven Spaniards crashed under its weight. Her sails were in ribbons, and her riggings were in a hopeless tangle of broken rope; her bulwarks had great yawning gaps in them, yet still her gallant flag waved gloriously, albeit with many shot-holes in it, over her poop. And now the ST. PAUL opened fire upon her, first from her chase-guns that shot out their great stone balls, and then, as she swung round, from her full broadside. Sir Richard Granville's mizzen-mast, which had beforetime been sorely hacked and splintered, fell with a crash. And now she lay heaving lazily on the swell of the ocean, with but the ragged stumps of her three masts showing above the level of her shattered hull, and her ship's company in their sadly reduced numbers showing still a sturdy and dauntless front, and ever persistently fighting on. The sea round about her was so strewn with wreckage that the galleons could not now come close to her as they had done at the first, but lay round her in a ring, firing into her or sending out their boats crowded with soldiers to board her, the beams of the setting sun shining on their morions and body armour, and glancing on the blades of their drawn swords.

As Don Alonzo's ship hove near, and when the cloud of smoke from her discharged guns had lifted, the archers in her fighting-tops fired down their arrow shafts in the endeavour to pick off such of the English officers as presented themselves on the poop-deck. Sir Richard Grenville was struck many times, but his body armour was well forged, and although he indeed had received many slight wounds on hands and neck and face, yet he was practically unhurt, and his hoarse voice could be heard amid the battle's thunder cheering his men and bidding them fight on.

His son Roland had been wounded by a musket-shot in his right arm, but, like Sir Richard, he cared not so long as he had breath in him to fight; so he took his sword in his left hand, and ever when any Spaniards attempted to make an entrance upon the decks he was ready to repel them, with Timothy Trollope and

Gilbert Oglander shoulder to shoulder with him, forming a human barrier through which no Don, howsoever bold, might pass.

Gilbert Oglander became conscious that as Don Alonzo's galleon came near, there was one archer in her mizzen-top who had, as it seemed, singled him out from among his companions. Arrow after arrow struck with a sharp ring upon his breastplate; and as he moved along the deck to encounter new foes, again and again an arrow would buzz past him, always from the same direction.

The Spaniards, secure in the knowledge that the REVENGE was helpless, went about the fighting more slowly as evening drew upon them. It was as if they thought to prolong their victim's life, and wished only to see for how much time the little REVENGE would hold out against them. During a lull in the fight Sir Richard Grenville ordered his men to clear the decks of wreckage, and to cast overboard the bodies of the slain. Water was served round, together with bread and onions. As Gilbert Oglander was carrying a flagon of water to one of his wounded comrades who lay in the scuppers, an arrow struck the flagon and dashed it from his grasp. He picked the empty vessel up and returned to the water-butt to refill it. Again as he passed aft an arrow struck him, this time making a deep dent in his morion. And at that moment young Robin Redfern, with a kerchief bound round his bleeding head, came up to him and touched him on the arm.

"Master," the lad cried, "I pray you have a care how you expose yourself to the aim of the archer who hath just fired at you. His arrows have pursued you this long while past. And—and—prithee, Master Gilbert, dost know who 'tis?"

"Nay, how should I know one Spaniard from another?" Gilbert asked, passing on towards the wounded man. But Robin held him.

"Hark you, my master," cried the lad, "I have seen his face. I saw it but a few moments ago, and, as I live, 'tis the face of your own cousin, Master Philip Oglander!"

Now Gilbert, despite the excitement of the battle had not forgotten Drusilla's letter that was nestling within his doublet under the protection of his breastplate. His thoughts had gone more than once to his home and to the remembrance of his uncle's trickery, and this had increased by an hundredfold his hatred of all friends of Spain, and he had fought with a spirit of personal vengeance as well as with the desire to help his fellow-countrymen and his Queen in this battle against their dread enemy. For an instant he doubted the truth of what Robin had told him, and when he had served the wounded man with his drink of water, and helped him down to the crowded cockpit, he looked out through one of the portholes in search of his cousin in the galleon's tops. But the place where his enemy had stood was now cleared of men, and Philip Oglander was nowhere to be seen.

As he was mounting the ladder-stairs to regain the deck, he came upon a man climbing painfully upward with a sword between his teeth. Putting his arm about the man's body to assist him, he said:

"Art wounded, my master?"

The man looked round at him. It was Red Bob.

"Not I," he answered. "But I can no longer lie and listen to the groans of my friends down there, nor to the booming of the guns, and think that, ill though I am, I have not yet fired a shot or drawn a weapon in defence of this good ship. A

score of the sick men have already gone up to fight, Master Oglander, and 'tis my intention to join them, and do what little I can."

"May the good God put strength into your arm, then!" returned Gilbert, and, stepping upon the deck, he drew the man with him, and gave him a loaded pistol and a bag of powder and shot. Jacob Hartop encountered them as they moved aft.

"My good gun hath been dismounted at last," said he. "Yet 'tis of little account, methinks, for I do hear that the powder hath well-nigh given out." A cheer from the after-deck broke in upon his words. "Ah, here be work for us!" he added, snatching his sword from his side and limping towards the quarter-deck, followed by Gilbert and Red Bob.

A boat-load of Spanish soldiers had put out from the admiral's galleon, and had come alongside the REVENGE. Fresh and eager they clambered up from her chains and over her broken bulwarks—two score of them at the least. Sir Richard Grenville and Captain Robinson rallied their men to their sides. They quickly drew together in a line, a gallant little company of twelve, not one of whom was without a wound, saving three who had come up from their hard beds on the ballast, and these were so weak that it was a labour even to raise their swords.

They met their foes with a rattle of pistol-shots and then with a clash of steel. Sir Richard Grenville closed with a tall Don, whose gay clothing and sparkling rings proclaimed him a man of consequence. Whatever Grenville may have been as a seamen, he was certainly no mean swordsman. He parried the Spaniard's fierce thrust, and with a quick movement of his strong wrist and an alert lunge forward sent the point of his weapon deep into the other's bare throat. The Spaniard fell, and Sir Richard stepped over his inert body to encounter the man who had taken his leader's place. Four Spaniards did he vanquish with his own hand within the few minutes during which this engagement on his quarter-deck lasted. And by his side—the least with the greatest—fought little Robin Redfern.

Robin, indeed, seemed to have abandoned all sense of fear or thought of danger, and he fought valiantly in his own boyish fashion. At one moment he rushed forward into the very midst of the Spaniards, and engaged hand to hand with one whom he seemed to have singled out. Gilbert, seeing him thus expose himself, pressed in to his rescue, caught him by the shoulder and dragged him back, parrying on his own blade the sword-thrust that must else have ended the boy's life. Gilbert now crossed swords with Robin's antagonist, and in the fading evening light caught sight of his face, recognizing it as the face of his own cousin, Philip. For a moment Gilbert drew back, appalled at the thought of fighting with one of his own flesh and blood. But Philip, with a scornful laugh on his lips, pressed him to the duel. It was thrust and cut and parry, parry and cut and thrust, for many moments. The two were equally matched in skill, albeit Gilbert had already been fighting forfive hours without a rest, while his cousin was full fresh and active. Back and ever back, foot by foot, Gilbert was forced, and at last a fierce thrust delivered with all the strength in Philip's right arm, backed by all the weight in his body, brought Gilbert to his knees. The sword's point struck against his breast-plate, doing no real injury, but by its sheer force it disturbed his balance. He rolled over on the deck, and his own weapon fell from his hand.

The Great Fight on board the Revenge.

"Now will I do for thee at last!" cried Philip Oglander savagely between his teeth, speaking in English. He held his sword in air for a moment as if in deliberation where to strike. In that moment his weapon hand was struck a tremendous blow by a pistol flung at it by Red Bob, and Red Bob himself sprang forward, crying "Traitorous hound! I know ye!" and clutched him round the body in a wrestling embrace. The two swayed to and fro for an instant, and then Red Bob dropped on the deck with Philip Oglander's dagger in his heart.

When Gilbert rose to his feet to continue the duel with his cousin he saw Philip climbing back over the bulwark in haste to regain the galleon's boat. Others of the Spaniards occupied Gilbert now, and Ambrose Pennington and one of the yeomen of the sheets coming up to help, they were soon overpowered or driven over the side. Some fell into the sea; five-and-twenty of them had been slain; and the boat returned to Don Alonzo's ship with but seven out of the forty men who had set out in her, less than half an hour earlier.

Darkness had now spread across the sea, the stars peeped out through the overhanging mist of smoke, and in a wide ring about the REVENGE the galleons stood, ceaselessly firing upon her. Their guns flashed out their fire into the black night. Many of the shots flew wide; some passed over the low-lying wreck and struck the galleons lying beyond, yet many thundered against the sides of the English ship, burying themselves in her stout timbers or rebounding with a hiss into the sea. Hour after hour throughout the night the battle continued, and if not many of Sir Richard Grenville's men were killed or wounded it was because so few remained alive to be wounded or killed. An hour before midnight there were but a dozen men and boys at Sir Richard's side upon his decks, and these were all so weary and bruised and hungry that they scarce could stand. Yet they hovered about their chief, seldom speaking, but only exchanging strange glances one with another, binding up each other's hurts, or gazing about them at the flashing of the cannon. At times one would take up a musket, and, if he could find powder and shot wherewith to load it, would fire into a crowd of soldiers upon one of the Spaniard's decks.

Sir Richard strode to and fro, sword in hand, with a staggering gait, now pausing behind the shelter of some yet unbroken piece of bulwark and watching the movements of the enemy. And once he caught at Gilbert Oglander's arm, gripping it tightly as though to support himself.

"I pray thee tell me, Sir Richard," cried the lad. "Art wounded? Wilt go below to the cabin?"

"Nay, nay," returned Grenville quickly, breathing hard nevertheless, "I would but ask thee to hasten below and discover wherefore our guns be silent. Od's life, boy, must we lie here and not give them shot for shot! Go, bid the gunners maintain their firing!"

And Gilbert obeyed, coming back some minutes afterwards, saying:

"Good my master, the last barrel of powder hath been broached, and there is scarce enough for another round."

Then Sir Richard took off the casque from his head and wiped his brow, answering:

“Go below yet again and bid them sweep up the boards of the magazine, and scrape out a handful of powder wheresoever it may be found. And you, boy,” he added to young Robin Redfern, who stood trembling near him under the light of one of the deck lanterns, “hie you to one of the water-butts and bring me a drink of water.”

His voice was weak, and Ambrose Pennington, who had seated himself on the thick end of a dismounted cannon, heard it and quickly rose to his feet.

“Y’are hurt, Sir Richard,” said he. “I know it, though you do bear it so bravely. I beg you let me help you to your cabin, where the surgeon will attend you.”

Sir Richard shook his head.

“Wherefore should I leave the deck now,” said he,—“now when there be so few to defend it?”

“Nay, I implore you,” urged Pennington, and putting his arm about the admiral’s body he gently drew him towards the stairs. And Grenville went with him. The surgeon was brought, and he speedily took off Sir Richard’s body-armour, and laid bare the many wounds that he had received. These he washed and bound up with bandages. The two stood under a little hanging lamp that was near the open porthole. Their movements, or their flitting shadows, must have been observed upon one of the galleons, for even as they were nearly ready to quit the cabin a musket-shot struck Sir Richard on his shoulder. A second bullet struck him on the head, and at the same moment a third shot killed the surgeon at his side.

Taking up a fragment of linen Sir Richard bound it about his head and staggered to the door. Severe as his injuries were, it was not in him to stand aside in the hour of peril. He crept up to the deck. At the top of the stairs he was met by Robin Redfern, who had patiently stood there with the flagon of water that he had been sent for.

“God bless thee, my lad!” said Sir Richard, taking the cup from the boy’s hand. “And may you live to serve your Queen and country as I have tried to serve them!”

The words had but left his lips when a cannon-ball whizzed past him. He turned to look for the boy, and found Robin lying dead at his feet. Then a full broadside of his own ship’s guns was fired.

“Fight on! Fight on!” he cried, although indeed none was near him to hear his encouraging words.

That was the last discharge of his heavy guns; for now there was not sufficient powder on board with which to fire them, and even the smaller cannons, the falconets and demi-culverins, could be but sparingly used. Yet so long as there was a handful of powder to be found it was carefully employed. Not only had the ammunition run short, but all the pikes were broken in hand-to-hand fight, and of Grenville’s men that had gone into action forty lay dead, and the most part of the rest severely wounded. The ship herself was almost a wreck, her tackle all cut asunder, her upper works altogether rased. During the fifteen hours, from three o’clock in the afternoon, when the battle had begun, until daybreak on the next morning, she had been closely assailed by fifteen several galleons, in addition to those that had fired upon her from a distance.

Just before dawn, Edward Webbe and the few remaining gunners who had been at work between decks appeared above the hatchway. They had used up the powder to the last grain, and there was no more fighting to be done. Webbe was as

black as a coalman, his clothing was torn to tatters, and he was covered with wounds. He went up to Captain Robinson and told him the condition of the ship. The captain then held colloquy with the sailing-master, and both approached Sir Richard Grenville.

"Our powder hath been spent, even to the last corn," said the captain.

"We have six feet of water in the hold," added the sailing-master, "and three great shot-holes below the water-line which are so weakly plugged that with the first working of the sea we must needs sink."

Sir Richard Grenville took a turn to and fro, meditating. Then he looked at the master-gunner, whom he knew to be a most resolute man, and said in a tone of command:

"Blow up the ship, then! Blow her up! Split her and sink her, that naught may remain of glory or victory to our enemies. As for ourselves, let us yield ourselves unto God, and to the mercy of none else!"

"Nay," returned the master. "Have we not told ye that there is no gunpowder on board wherewith to fire a gun, much less to blow up the ship?"

"Why, then," cried Grenville, "split her up with your hatchets, pull out the plugs from the shot-holes. But sink her, sink her how you will. For while we have, like valiant men, repulsed so many of our enemies, it were folly now to shorten the honour of our nation by prolonging our lives for a few hours or a few days. So let sink her, I say. Sink her, in God's name."

To this Edward Webbe and divers others who were with him readily assented. But Captain Robinson and Pennington were of another opinion, and they besought Sir Richard to have care of them, declaring that the Spaniards would doubtless be as ready to accept a composition as they themselves were ready to offer the same. "There be many able and valiant men in our company yet living," said the captain, "whose wounds are not mortal, and who may yet do their country and Queen acceptable service hereafter."

But Sir Richard refused to hearken to this pleading, and he moved away and stood for a while looking over the sea that was now clearer under the approaching light of dawn. And beyond the galleons he caught sight of Jacob Whiddon's ship, the PILGRIM, bearing away to the leeward with two great galleons in pursuit of her.

Meanwhile, Captain Robinson held speech with his fellows and won many of them to his side, and he besought Ambrose Pennington to leave the ship and go on board the St. Paul and parley with Don Alonzo de Bassan for conditions. So Pennington and Jacob Hartop and some three others, all of them sorely wounded and looking strangely ill-conditioned, went down into an empty boat that was alongside, and holding up a white flag in their bow they crossed the intervening space of sea to the admiral.

They found Don Alonzo in no great haste to make another entry upon the REVENGE, for his men had had enough of her, and even still feared her. Pennington told him that Sir Richard Grenville had a mind to blow up his ship with himself and all his ship's company.

"And wherefore should he resort to a measure so extreme?" questioned Don Alonzo. "Since his disposition is so dangerous, return to him, I beg you, and let him know that I am willing to put an end to this battle, and that I have already

lost more men and more ships than I had ever thought to lose at the hands of one small English man-of-war. Bid him understand that I yield to him his life, and that the lives of all his ship's company shall be spared and sent home to England. For the better sort, such reasonable ransom shall be paid as their estates may bear. But I do aver, and swear by the Holy Mother, that all of you shall be free from the galleys and from imprisonment. I care not to expose myself and my fleet to further loss and mischief. Also, 'tis my great desire to rescue your Sir Richard Grenville, whom for his most notable valour I do greatly honour and admire."

With this answer Pennington returned to the REVENGE, and since safety of life was promised, the larger number of the men, feeling themselves to be now at the end of their peril, stood up against Sir Richard and Edward Webbe, and declared their willingness to surrender.

"What!" cried Edward Webbe with bitter scorn and contempt in his voice. "Do you ask me to surrender to a Spaniard? Me who have borne so much of horror and torture and cruelty at their hands, and at the hands of their accursed Inquisition? God forbid! No, I will not surrender. Rather would I die now at this moment where I stand!"

And thus saying he whipped out his sword, and resting its hilt upon the deck, held its point towards his body with intent to throw himself upon it. But the captain arrested him in the act, kicking the sword away. Webbe struggled to regain his weapon, and, failing, was about to rush to the ship's side and fling himself into the sea, when Ambrose Pennington and another caught him and carried him down to his cabin and there locked him in, making sure that he had no weapon within reach.

Sir Richard Grenville stood alone, not attempting to dissuade his men from their resolve, and presently in the silence Jacob Hartop spoke.

"Ned was right," said he, stepping to Sir Richard's side. "An English ship, even though she be a poor battered hulk, were ever a better home than a galleon of Spain." He glanced aft to the flag-staff upon which a tattered remnant of the honoured flag still fluttered in the morning air, and baring his head he added: "God bless Queen Elizabeth!"

Gilbert Oglander and Timothy Trollops had taken no part in this little scene. They were at the time both below in the cockpit attending to their wounds and giving what small help was in their power to their sick and dying companions. Here, too, was Roland Grenville. But in good time the death-like silence of the abated battle brought the three up on deck. As they came to the stair-head they glanced upon the water, which rippled and glanced in the morning light; for there were now no intervening bulwarks to shield it from their sight. And they saw some six gaily-furnished boats approaching. The boats were brought alongside, and the boys at their bows threw up coils of rope as they touched, which, falling upon the blood-stained deck, were taken by certain of Sir Richard's men and secured to such balks of timber as could be found. Then one by one the men stole away into the boats and were taken aboard Don Alonzo's ship and others of the galleons.

Sir Richard Grenville, thus overmatched, agreed after much persuasion to leave the Revenge, which was indeed an unsavoury resting-place for any man, her decks being covered with blood and strewn with the bodies of dead and wounded men, as if it had been a slaughter-house.

“Well, an you will, let it be so,” said Sir Richard as he turned to descend into the boat that the Spanish admiral had sent for him. “He may do with my body what he listeth, for I esteem it not.” And grasping the hand of Gilbert Oglander, who was helping him, he added, “Pray for me, Gilbert, my lad. And bid the others of our company pray for me also.”

Then he swooned, reviving only when he was laid upon a couch in the cabin of one of the Spanish officers on board the ST. PAUL.

Don Alonzo himself would neither see him nor speak with him. But the other captains and gentlemen received him with gracious courtesy, treated him with humanity and kindness, and left nothing unattempted that might contribute to his comfort or tend to his recovery. They wondered at his courage and his stout heart, for he now showed no sign of faintness nor change of colour.

Gilbert Oglander remained at his side throughout that day, and was relieved at night by Sir Richard’s son Roland. Early in the morning the galleons anchored in the roadstead of Terceira. Sir Richard Grenville was too weak to be removed upon the island, and Gilbert and Roland sat with him until he died on the morning of the third day after the battle.

His last words were worthy of his life. Two of the Spanish captains were present as he spoke them in their own tongue.

“Here die I, Richard Grenville,” he murmured as he held his son’s hand. “Here die I, Richard Grenville, with a joyful and quiet mind, for that I have ended my life as a true soldier ought to do that hath fought for his country, Queen, religion, and honour, whereby my soul most joyful departeth out of this body, and shall always leave behind it an everlasting fame of a valiant and true soldier that hath done his duty as he was bound to do.”

Chapter XXI

Prisoners and Caprives.

IT was the intention of the Spaniards to take the broken and shot-riddled hulk of the REVENGE to Spain as their vaunted prize. And well might they set glory upon their conquest, for she was the one and only English ship that had surrendered to them during the whole course of the war, and in capturing her they had sacrificed four of their own best galleons, while sustaining great damage to some fourteen others. Nearly two thousand of their soldiers had been slain in the fight or drowned in the sea, including two high and mighty hidalgos, Don Louis de St. John, whom Grenville had vanquished with his own hand, and Don George de Prunaria de Malaga, besides many others of special account.

Their admiral now sent a large company of carpenters, riggers, and swabbers on board of her to repair her leaks, pump out the water that was deep in her hold, and clear her of the wreckage that encumbered her; while those who remained alive of her gallant crew were dispersed among the Spanish ships as prisoners, although permitted to go ashore upon the island during the daytime under close surveillance of a guard of armed soldiers.

Don Alonzo de Bassan's fleet lay in the roadstead of Terceira awaiting the daily expected arrival of the West India treasure-ships, which appeared in straggling numbers day by day. The Lord Thomas Howard's squadron, which had set out to lay capture to them, appeared not again, but having left the REVENGE to her fate at the opening of the battle, departed for England. Some accused him of cowardice in avoiding an engagement; but 'tis certain enough that he knew the risks that were entailed, and if the truth must be set down, Sir Richard Grenville had really been guilty of disobedience.

While Gilbert and Timothy were still prisoners on board the St. Paul they were quartered in a little cabin under the poop. With them was Ambrose Pennington, and in another cabin were Roland Grenville and Captain Robinson. Jacob Hartop had remained on board the Revenge with Edward Webbe, refusing to quit her while she floated.

On a certain day, ere yet the combined fleets from Spain and the West Indies were ready to depart for Spain, Philip Oglander lay on his bed under pretence of being wounded, albeit his wounds were no more serious than a cut upon his knuckles and a dark-blue bruise upon the back of his right hand, where the pistol flung by Red Bob had struck him. It was not so much these hurts that kept him abed as the eager desire which was consuming him to hear what was going on in the cabin next to his own. It was the cabin occupied by his cousin Gilbert and Timothy Trollope. Philip did not dare to speak openly with his cousin and question him concerning what knowledge he might have of the things that had been going forward at Modbury Manor, but he was aware that Gilbert knew more than himself, for he had once seen Gilbert reading a letter—Drusilla's letter,—and also he had on occasion heard Timothy Trollope—whether in jest or in earnest—address Gilbert as "my lord".

Now Philip had himself received more than one letter from England. For his father, well knowing the traitorous business which occupied Philip in Spain, and knowing where a letter might find him, had written to him informing him of the death of Lord Champernoun, and bidding him remember that he, Philip, might one day inherit the title and estates, and that, therefore, it was incumbent upon him to look well to his personal safety.

"Indeed," wrote Jasper, "there is but one thing now standing between thee and this great heritage, and that is thy cousin, Master Gilbert Oglander. There is naught that I wish for more heartily than to hear of the young Jackanapes' death. Therefore I do conjure thee, my son, if thou shouldst by chance encounter him, prithee do thy work with more surety than thou didst do it in Beddington Dingle. Let there be no bungling, but bear thee well in mind that upon thy well-directed arrow shaft, or rapier point, must depend thy future and the possibility of dubbing thyself Baron Champernoun."

These were vague hints. But Philip had understood them. He had understood them to mean that his father urged him to seek out Gilbert Oglander and frustrate his return to England. And Philip had sought to obey these injunctions, although hitherto without success. He had tried to compass Gilbert's death during the battle, and, having failed, he yet had hope that some chance would favour him for fulfilling his cherished desire. And he furtively watched his cousin, spied upon his every movement, and endeavoured by every available means to entrap him to his

death. But Gilbert, wheresoever he went about the galleon and whenever he went ashore, was for ever accompanied by Timothy Trollope, and Philip saw no advantage in running the risk of a hand-to-hand encounter with the barber's valiant son.

On this day as he lay in his cabin he listened for every word that should pass between Gilbert and his two companions. Much that was said was in the form of mere idle remark about the late battle, or about their wounds, or about the death of Sir Richard Grenville. But after a while there was talk of home, and at length, in answer to some question of Ambrose Pennington, Gilbert spoke of his uncle Jasper, and thereupon told the whole story of his grandfather's death and of his uncle's assumption of the title, even as Drusilla had recounted it in her letter.

"Ah!" muttered Philip, overhearing every word. "Then he doth know. By Our Lady, he doth know all!"

Then, setting his teeth together, he vowed that come what might Gilbert should never return to England to enjoy his inheritance. And from that moment he continued to watch his cousin with increased diligence. It was some comfort to his wicked soul to know that Gilbert was now a captive, and that as such it was more than probable he would spend many a year to come in some Spanish prison, as so many Englishmen had done before him. But this was not enough, for there was the chance of an escape from prison; there was the chance, indeed, that Don Alonzo might liberate his captives to ransom; there were a hundred ways by which Gilbert might succeed in returning to his native land. But there was one sure and certain means of preventing this, and that was that, by fair measures or by foul, Gilbert should be brought to his death, and Philip now resolved that this should be. He would not rest content until his cousin lay lifeless, ay, as lifeless as brave Sir Richard Grenville, whose body now lay at the bottom of the sea.

Gilbert was quite oblivious of the secret danger that threatened him, nor did he see aught but pure accident in what befell him on the next day.

The Spanish admiral did not wish that his ship should be encumbered by a crowd of wounded Englishmen. And on the day before the sailing of his fleet he ordered that those who were at present on board the ST. PAUL should be removed to the REVENGE. And it followed accordingly that boats were put out for this purpose.

Gilbert and Timothy were at the gangway together, and it chanced that Timothy descended the side-ladder first, scarcely observing that Philip Oglander had crept to Gilbert's side. Timothy was already in the boat, when, on looking up, he saw Gilbert stumble and fall. Fortunately the boat was not close alongside; there was a yard of water between it and the ship. Gilbert was but a poor swimmer, and when he splashed into the sea he sank deep down. There was a strong current, and when he rose to the surface he appeared many yards away astern of the boat. Timothy plunged in and swam to him, thinking of sharks, and when he reached him and supported him, he turned to see if the boat were being brought to the rescue. He heard some orders given in Spanish, which seemed to him to be given in Philip Oglander's voice. Louder still than Philip's was the voice of Ambrose Pennington, which could be heard for a long distance away, crying out to the boatmen to cast off and pull towards the two lads, and mingling his commands with volleys of round English oaths that would surely have won for him the iron

chain of punishment had they been heard a few days before on board the REVENGE. But the Spaniards heeded him not at all, declaring that the boys were but foreign lumber who might well be allowed to drown for all the use they would be on the galleys.

Pennington appealed to Philip Oglander, saying that it was his own cousin and the head of his family who was in danger. But Philip turned away with a derisive laugh, no doubt congratulating himself upon the fact that it was his own foot over which Gilbert had tripped.

From a high part of the galleon's poop where he presently climbed he watched the heads of the two boys as they were carried away in the current. Soon an intervening galleon hid them from his view, and he consoled himself with the thought that he had very cleverly got rid of the one person who, next to his own father, stood between him and the baronage of Champernoun.

But he had not counted upon Timothy Trollope's powers of swimming. For some moments Timothy thought to strike out for the shore, and gripping Gilbert with his one arm and bidding him be calm, he manfully breasted the swelling waves. Swimming to the leeward of one of the galleons he presently saw an empty boat lying at her side. He swam towards it and got hold of its gunwale, helping Gilbert to do likewise. Then, while Gilbert held on, Timothy climbed over her stern, and kneeling upon one of the thwarts hauled his companion on board.

"'Twas Philip Oglander that did it," said he, wringing the water out of Gilbert's ragged clothing. "I saw him put forth his foot and trip thee. I have seen all along that he hath had designs against thee, Master Gilbert—I mean, my lord—"

"Nay, keep to the Gilbert, Tim," interrupted Gilbert. "As to this matter of my falling overboard, well, I can e'en believe as you say, nevertheless we might easily have been in a worse case than we are now. For, look you, there is a ladder up the ship's side at your elbow, and it were easy enough to get on board of her."

"It were equally easy to cut the boat's painter and make for the shore," said Tim.

"But there be no oars aboard," returned Gilbert.

"Wherefore need we concern ourselves about oars?" asked Timothy. "I will adventure it however it be." And he felt for his knife. A look of sudden despair came into his face. "Alas!" he added, "I had forgotten that the Dons had deprived us of our weapons!"

He stepped to the boat's bow, and was about to try to untie the knot of her painter when a voice greeted him from above, and a Spaniard with very furious curled moustachios appeared in the opening of the gangway. To escape now with the boat was impossible, and the two boys yielded themselves up as prisoners, explaining as best they could the accident that had brought them there.

The Spaniards appeared to regard the matter with indolent indifference, saying that the lads should be sent back on board the flag-ship on the morrow. In the meantime Gilbert and Timothy were permitted to sit in the warm sunlight to dry their clothes on the upper deck, and no more notice was taken of them until late in the evening, when one of the galleon's boys gave them each an onion. They slept under the lee of one of the big guns, and in the morning the same ship's-boy brought them a tin dish of bean soup, indicating by signs that they were to share it between them.

On the afternoon of that same day some officers from one of the other galleons came on board, and with them was one Maurice Fitz John, of Desmond, a forlorn-looking Irish traitor who, because he could speak English, had been sent to speak with the English prisoners in each ship and to persuade them to serve the King of Spain. He had not expected to find any on board this particular galleon—the SANTA MARIA, as she was named—but discovering Gilbert and Timothy, he accosted them, believing them to be very humble seamen. He besought them to take arms in King Philip's legion, using very subtle arguments. They would have three times the amount of pay that they could get on an English ship, he said, and he promised them such advancement as he thought would tempt any young men who were, as these were, ship-broken and half-starved and ill-clothed, and if they would be good Catholics the safety of their souls should be assured.

Timothy Trollope noticed that the man was himself but ill-apparelled, and reflected that such beggarly appearance was in itself a sufficient answer to the argument of rich pay. As for the notion of changing their religion, it was as repulsive to both Tim and Gilbert as that of deserting their Queen.

"Well, well," said the Irishman, when, having used up all his eloquence in his pleadings, he turned to go, "an ye will not see the advantage of what is offered ye, 'tis no concern of mine. 'Tis yourselves that will suffer for your obstinacy. But I doubt not that a few years of work at the oars of His Majesty's galleys will bring ye to better reason." And with that he departed.

For many days thereafter Gilbert and Timothy led a very weary, uncomfortable life. In return for their food and such shelter as was given to them, they were made to do much dirty and distasteful work. They were never permitted to go on shore, yet they were free from the restraint of chains—a dispensation for which they were thankful. Gradually their wounds healed, and they regained strength with such speed, that when at last the full number of the treasure-ships had arrived and the fleet was ready to sail for Spain, they were almost as well in health as they had been on the day before the battle.

Chapter XXII

The Great Cyclone.

IT was on the last day of September that the combined fleets—to the number of a hundred and forty ships—weighed anchor and set sail. The sky was dark and threatening as they left Terceira, and they had not well got out of sight of the island when a most terrible storm arose. The sea was suddenly whipped up into great mountainous waves, the wind, which seemed to come from all quarters at once, howled and shrieked like a thousand furies. The vast fleet was dispersed, each galleon being left to take care of itself. Some tried to put back to Terceira, others endeavoured to make for the island of St. Michael's. The whole sea between these two islands was dotted over with struggling ships. It was such a storm as comes only once in a hundred years, and its effects were terrible. Out of the hundred and forty galleons no more than three-and-thirty ever arrived in Spain

and Portugal. All the rest were cast upon the rocky ribs of the islands or were overwhelmed in the sea.

It was off the island of Terceira that the REVENGE—or what remained of her—came to her end. She had been taken out in tow by the SAN ANDREA galleon, but when the tempest rose to its height she was cast off and abandoned to her fate. Driven by the tremendous waves upon the outlying rocks, she was shattered to splinters, so that not a trace of her remained but a few balks of her stout oaken timbers that drifted as flotsam to the beach. There had been seventy men on board of her, many of them Spaniards, some few of them captive Englishmen. Among the latter were Jacob Hartop and Edward Webbe. Only one man reached the island alive, and he, being sorely hurt, had but time to tell his tale to the islanders and be shriven before he died.

Roland Grenville, who had been drafted on board the SAN ANDREA, was the only one of our friends who was not shipwrecked. He was taken to Lisbon, where, after having endured great privations in prison (whereof much might be told), he fell in with the gallant Captain Monson, escaped to Cadiz, was again imprisoned, and finally rescued by the Earl of Essex on the occasion of the famous expedition against that Spanish stronghold.

For three days the SANTA MARIA was buffeted about in the storm. From her watery decks Gilbert Oglander and Timothy Trollope saw many a galleon go down, and not only such galleons as had been of Don Alonzo De Bassan's fleet, but many others of the treasure-ships, which took with them to the bottom their wealthy cargoes of silver and gold. On the morning of the fourth day, when the tempest was at its height, she fell in with the flag-ship, whose foremast was gone by the board, and whose sails were but so many ragged ribbons flying from her yards. Her rudder was gone, and she was helpless. Nor was the SANTA MARIA in any better case, for only her main-mast was standing, and the great waves washed over her, threatening to swamp her at every moment. The two ships came close together, and their white-faced and frightened seamen could see each other's faces from deck to deck. They drew apart when the deeper darkness of night came on, but in the morning they were again within sight, beating about in the perilous channel between the islands of St. George and Graciosa.

There was a slight lull in the storm in the afternoon, and the commander of the SANTA MARIA thought he might succeed in gaining some shelter under the lee of the island of Graciosa. He had his ship put about, and approaching the ST. PAUL attempted to cross her bows, but a sudden change in the wind drove him to leeward, and before anyone on board realized their peril the two vessels crashed together with fearful force. So great was the impact that Don Alonzo's galleon heeled over until her larboard bulwarks were for a moment under water. But she righted herself again and sailed on, leaving many of her men who had been upon her open decks floundering in the sea. Among these was Philip Oglander.

Philip was a good swimmer, and when he rose to the surface he struck out, shook the water from his dripping hair, and looked around. His own ship was now drawing away, forced onward by the storm. He turned and saw the high bows of the SANTA MARIA towering above him, with her timbers broken and wrecked, and the water pouring into the yawning gap. The galleon plunged forward, staggered, rolled, then plunged forward again with her bow buried deep in a sea of foam. She

did not lift herself now, but first her forward part sank lower and lower, the waves swept over her, seeming to rejoice in their conquest, and presently, with a great gurgling sound, the vessel disappeared.

Gilbert and Timothy had been on her mid-deck when the two ships crashed together. They were standing abaft her thick main-mast, with their arms linked. Timothy, watching the ship's onward course and noting the position of the flag-ship, had foreseen the collision.

"Look you," said he, gripping Gilbert's arm more tightly, "we shall strike her. Be ready, master; and if we should founder, cling to me, I implore you." And then, even as he spoke, the two ships crashed together, and the lads were thrown off their feet. Timothy flung his arms around Gilbert and held him. They lay there waiting. They felt the deck trembling beneath them, swaying to and fro.

"We are sinking!" cried Timothy. And for many moments—moments that seemed like hours of suspense—he was silent. Suddenly there was a great breaking of timber. He saw the white foam leaping up over the steep incline of the deck. The tall main-mast swayed over and fell with a crash that was like a crack of thunder. And then all was dark, and he felt himself being drawn below in the vortex with the sinking ship.

Still clinging to his companion, he opened his eyes. The water was all black about him. He moved his legs, trying to force himself upward. Soon he began to rise; the darkness became less dense, it grew from black to dark green, and then to a lighter green, and at last the daylight burst once more upon him. Striking out with his one free arm he kept himself afloat, then disengaged himself from Gilbert and took a fresh hold of the lad, keeping his head up above the water. Gilbert's eyes greeted him with recognition.

"Hold on, hold on to me!" cried Timothy, as a great wave swept over them, carrying with it a huge spar of wreckage.

The spar threatened to fall down upon Gilbert's head, but the waves kept it buoyant. Timothy stretched forth his arm and gripped some floating cordage, and presently drew himself towards the drifting spar, which he found to be the galleon's main-mast.

"Lay hold on't!" he cried. And Gilbert, releasing his grip of Timothy's belt, put his hand upon the mast, and, with infinite trouble and after many failures, at last succeeded in climbing up and getting astride of it, while Timothy, working his way along to its end, also climbed up.

When they were both together again in comparative safety, they looked about them in the hope of saving some of the Spaniards.

"There is one!" cried Gilbert, as he saw a woolly black head appear within a couple of yards of him. "'Tis José, the blackamoor."

And Timothy stretched forth his leg for the negro, who speedily caught it and clambered up. A second and a third man appeared, but both were too far off to be helped, and as neither could swim they were quickly lost to sight.

It was at this juncture that Philip Oglander, swimming about in search of some wreckage by which he might hope to save himself, caught sight of the negro José. Timothy and Gilbert had their backs to him; he only saw that they were human figures, and that they were for the time being on a secure refuge. Swimming towards José, he at last attracted the negro's attention. The noise of the wind and

waves was too great for a voice to be heard, and he climbed upon the floating mast without either Gilbert or Timothy's knowledge. It was, indeed, as much as any one of them could do to retain his balance and keep himself from being washed off, for the ponderous log upon which they rested rolled heavily upon the waves, and at times either plunged into them or was itself by them thrown upward into the air, and those who rode upon it might better have been upon a mad horse, so difficult was it to keep a seat. Cold and hungry and pale with the terror of their situation, the boys clung tightly with legs and arms, hoping only that God would bring them out of their peril.

The night came on and darkness deepened their distresses. Timothy, who was in front of Gilbert, had not thus far dared to turn round and face him, but he had worked his way backward so that Gilbert might cling to him, and the while the boy's hand touched him he was comforted. In the darkness of the night Gilbert heard what he thought was a human cry—asin truth it was,—and putting his lips to Timothy's ear he called out:

"He hath fallen off! José hath fallen off!"

But later he felt that someone was moving behind him, and again he spoke to Timothy.

"Nay, I mistook," said he; "he is still with us."

Timothy made no response, satisfied only that his companion was able to take even so much interest in anything apart from the thought of his own immediate danger.

The storm subsided somewhat during the early morning. The spar floated more easily, and when a faint streak of gray light appeared in the eastern sky, Timothy ventured to alter his position and bring himself round face to face with Gilbert. Glancing over Gilbert's shoulder, he saw that the negro—or what he supposed to be the figure of the negro—was still there, lying with his head upon his hands, and his hands gripping a strand of thick rope that was coiled about the mast. As the light grew stronger, however, he was astonished to notice that those hands were not black, and that where he had expected to see a head of woolly black hair there was a head whose hair was long and straight. Further scrutiny revealed to him the fact that through a long rent in their companion's jerkin there was a gleam of white skin. He waited until the coming daylight should enable him to discover more of this mystery, and as yet he said nothing to Gilbert.

At last the dawn broke, and with its coming Timothy saw the pale haggard face of Philip Oglander turned towards him, with the dark hollow eyes gleaming in startled recognition.

Chapter XXIII

The Writing in the Book.

GILBERT saw the sudden change that had come into Timothy's countenance, but he paid little heed to it, for his own attention had been attracted by something else, something that the light of dawn had disclosed upon the sea not a cable's

length away from where he and his two companions were floating about on that log of the lost galleon's mast.

Gripping Timothy's shoulders with his two hands, he cried aloud:

"Look you, Tim! Look! A ship!"

And at that instant Philip Oglander's eyes rested also upon the object which had attracted Gilbert.

Timothy craned his head round, and saw the ship's huge bulk heaving lazily upon the sea, with a glint of light upon a piece of brass that edged her forecastle rail. Her bow was towards them. Her masts were all gone, and there was no sign of life upon her decks. As she rose lazily upon the waves the lower planks of her hull were seen to be thickly encrusted with barnacles.

But Timothy was for the time being very little concerned with the ship. There was now a hope of safety, and with that hope he was satisfied. But his discovery that Philip Oglander was now a companion of their strange position filled him with a feeling of dismay, for he knew that Philip was no friend to Gilbert any more than to himself, and there was something about the lad that made him uncomfortable, while yet there was of course no reason to fear him. Touching Gilbert on the shoulder Tim signed to him to turn his head. Gilbert obeyed, and saw his cousin, and wondered how it had come to pass that he was here. His wonderment continued throughout the whole morning, for it was still impossible to carry on any conversation, on account not only of the noise of the storm, but also of the danger of moving and of being thrown off the spar into the sea.

At mid-day the wind fell and the sun came out. They were no nearer to the ship than they had been in the early morning. All through the afternoon the lads watched the labouring hulk, but even when the sun had set they could not be sure whether the distance between her and themselves had increased or diminished. That next night seemed to be a full year's time of endurance and cold and hunger, and their only comfort was in the consciousness that the waves were gradually becoming less in size and that the wind's force had abated.

On the next morning it was seen that the ship was a little nearer; she was indeed so close that every detail of her structure could be distinguished. She was still bow on, as the mariners say, and her towering after-castle could be seen high above the level of her forward bulwarks. Something about her—the tangle of green and brown sea-weed clinging to her bulging bows, the thick crust of barnacles below her water-line, and a white mess of guano along the edge of her bulwarks and about the lips of her chase-guns—seemed to indicate that she had been drifting for a long time unattended. It was clear that she had been deserted. It was equally clear that she had not formed one of either Don Alonzo's fleet from Spain or of the fleet of treasure-ships from the West Indies.

"Dost think we might get some food in her, Tim, if so be we could win our way aboard?" asked Gilbert.

Timothy shook his head.

"Haply we might," said he gravely; "but haply we might not. Yet even to be upon her decks would be some comfort; for at the least we might then stretch our legs and run about until some warmth came into us."

Philip Oglander drew himself close behind Gilbert, and leaning over him called out to Timothy Trollope:

“Canst swim, Master Trollope?” he questioned.

Timothy nodded. “Why?” he asked.

“Because,” returned Philip, “there is some rope here, which one might bind about one’s body, and so, swimming to the ship, haul this mast alongside.”

“I have already bethought me of that,” said Timothy; “but the rope is not long enough. A better plan were for you and me to lay ourselves in the water at the mast’s side, and so, clinging to it, paddle with our feet until we bring it near. Then, when we be close enough, I would indeed swim with the rope.”

This suggestion was agreed upon, and Timothy and Philip put themselves one at either side of the mast and propelled it along; not very quickly, it is true, for with all their efforts it was but small way that they could get into the heavy log. Yet if it was only inch by inch that they moved it, this was something. They laboured all through the morning, and at mid-day they had the satisfaction of knowing that they had lessened the distance between them and the ship by at least half a dozen yards. Meanwhile Gilbert gathered all the pieces of rope that were wound about the mast and spliced them together; and when this was done his two companions converted it into a hawser, and binding an end of it about their bodies swam towards the ship, towing the mast behind them. Thus they made better progress, and in the evening, while the sun was setting in a rack of clouds, they had brought themselves under the vessel’s larboard bow.

Gilbert Oglander, waiting until a wave should lift him within reach, caught at a line of rope that hung from the ship’s broken bowsprit. By this he swarmed up. Timothy and Philip followed, and at last, after great difficulty, all three of them stood upon her deck.

It was covered with the refuse of sea-birds. The deck guns were white with guano. Looking aft to the incline of her poop-deck they saw the companion hatch of the cabin, and this suggested that in the cabin itself they might find something that would serve as food. Timothy led the way down to the main-deck. In a coil of rope on one of the closed hatchways he caught sight of two white eggs. He leapt to them, and took one of them in his hand, giving it to Gilbert; the other he gave to Philip.

“God grant that they be fresh,” said he.

Philip tapped his egg on one of the stanchions, chipping off a little piece of the shell. With a muttered Spanish curse he dropped the egg upon the deck, and stamped his foot upon the shrivelled, half-formed little sea-gull that the shell had enclosed.

Gilbert bent down to break the other egg on a corner of the hatch covering. As he did so he caught sight of something that glittered on the deck—a small square of yellow metal about the size of his hand. He picked it up and examined it.

“Why, ‘tis gold!” said he.

“Ay,” agreed Timothy, “and there be other pieces the same as it. Look!” he added, pointing to the scuppers. And there Gilbert saw at least a dozen other little bars of gold.

Philip saw them also, and darted towards them, gathering them together with miserly avarice.

“Come,” said Timothy, “let us go below and seek for food. I fear me there is little hope of our finding any, but it may be that we can come upon a few grains of corn or else a crust of old bread.”

He led the way aft to a door under the quarter-deck, and pushed it open. A dry, mouldy smell met him as he entered into the darkness. He felt about with his hands, and stepped cautiously until he found himself at the head of a narrow staircase. Step by step he went down. The stairs creaked under him.

“‘Tis all well,” he said, looking back at Gilbert, who had hesitated to follow. “There is another door here, if I could but find the handle. Ah, ‘tis here!”

He turned the handle, and a ray of light fell upon him. Gilbert was soon at his heels, and they entered together into a spacious cabin, which, in spite of its dank and mouldy atmosphere, bore still some signs of past luxury. At its farther end was a row of square port-holes, at each of which there was a small brass cannon, richly chased and ornamented. The panels around the cabin were of finely carved oak, with figures of saints and quaint devices and Latin legends. There were curtains of crimson velvet, and in the corners were little shelves of carved oak upon which stood goblets of silver and gold. Facing the port-holes there was a large mirror, black now, and dulled by the damp atmosphere. Around the sides stood large oak chests, which seemed to have served as seats; and in the middle of the floor, which was covered with the remains of what had once been a handsome Turkey carpet, there was a large oak table.

It was this table upon which Timothy Trollope’s eyes first rested as he entered. It was strewn with jars and candlesticks, cups and dishes, all of them made of solid gold, and in their midst, scattered about like corn on a barn floor, were hundreds of many-coloured precious stones that sparkled in the light.

“Food! food!” cried Timothy, casting his hungry eyes about him.

“Haply there will be some in here,” said Gilbert; and he strode towards one of the chests whose lid was partly open. He looked within. “Alas!” he cried, “it is only gold!”

Timothy passed to one of the others. It was locked. He passed to the next and opened it. “No,” said he, “‘tis only money!” At the farther end of the cabin one of the chests had fallen asunder like a rotten sack of grain, and the floor was strewn with gold coins.

“Here is a cupboard,” cried Gilbert, turning the rusty key which was still in the lock. But the shelves were filled with daggers, their hafts studded with gems, and with pistols of many design.

Under the table a square of the carpet was turned back, revealing a trap-door. Gilbert caught hold of the ring-bolt and pulled it up and looked down into the darkness. As the ship rolled, he thought he heard the rushing of water. Taking up a handful of doubloons, he dropped them through the opening. They splashed into water.

“Prithee, where is Philip?” asked Timothy. “Wherefore hath he not come with us?”

“I left him on the deck,” answered Gilbert.

“Then I pray you let us return to him,” said Timothy, “for I have found some four tallow candles, and we must share them with him. They are but a sorry sort of food to feed upon withal, but I have oft times heard of hungry men staving off

starvation with no better fare. Nay, I am in earnest," he added, seeing the look of disgust in Gilbert's face. "Sure they are made out of good tallow-fat." He smiled grimly as he offered one of the candles to Gilbert, saying with much gravity, "I pray you, good my lord, wilt join me in a banquet of candles?"

Gilbert took the proffered food, yet hesitated to begin.

They quitted the cabin and mounted the stairs. When they regained the deck Philip Oglander was not to be seen. They called him, but he did not answer. Already the dusk was falling and they became anxious. But Timothy felt well assured that Philip was still on board, and surmised that he had found his way below into some one of the cabins. Nevertheless a further search was made for him, and it was only the growing darkness that urged them once more to return to what they believed to be the captain's room. Here Timothy made a beginning upon one of the candles, and, finding it not altogether disagreeable, he recommended Gilbert to make a similar meal. So hungry were they both that they would fain have finished the whole of their store, but they remembered Philip, and in fairness they put aside for him his due share.

It was, as Timothy had remarked, a sorry sort of food, but in the absence of any better it served for the time, and having partaken of it they cleared the table of the things that were upon it, stretched themselves out upon its hard substance, and, committing themselves to God's keeping, fell asleep. A gnawing thirst disturbed their slumbers, but the rest was welcome after all their troubles and dangers, and when a beam of morning sunlight pouring in through the stern-ports awakened them they arose, conscious that they had been refreshed.

Timothy's first act was to go to one of the open port-holes to look at the weather. The sea was now much calmer than when he had last looked upon it, and instead of the great broken waves with their caps of foam and showery spray, there was a long, regular rolling swell, only slightly rippled by the fresh morning breeze. That breeze was so refreshing that Timothy lingered at the port-hole, breathing it with joy. He crept outward, too, and tried to make out some of the devices that were carved upon the vessel's stern. Suddenly he hastened back into the cabin. His face was ghastly, and a strange agitation shone in his eyes.

"Master Gilbert!" he cried, "Master Gilbert—my lord, my lord!"

Gilbert stared at him in amazement, thinking for the moment that he had lost his senses.

"What hath come over thee, Timothy?" he asked. "Hast seen a ghost?"

"Haply I have," answered Timothy, his limbs shaking under him. "Dost know what ship we are in?"

"Nay, how should I know?" returned Gilbert, still in doubt as to Timothy's sanity.

Timothy grasped Gilbert by his two shoulders and said in a hollow, awe-stricken voice:

"'Tis *The Golden Galleon*!"

Gilbert started back in astonishment.

"How know you?" he cried.

"By the devices I have now seen carven upon her stern," said Timothy. "I knew them again. They are the same that we saw in the midst of that weird green light

on the Sargasso Sea, and 'tis the self-same ship, as I'm a living son of a barber. 'Tis Jacob Hartop's *Golden Galleon*—or else her ghost, as Jacob averred."

"Her ghost!" echoed Gilbert; and he put his hand upon the table as if to assure himself that it was a solid substance. "Nay, Tim, 'tis no ghost," said he, "although I will not deny that she may be Jacob's galleon." He paused for many moments reflecting. At last he went on: "Prithee, Tim, didst ever hear from Jacob how long it was since he deserted that same golden galleon of his?"

"Three years at the least," answered Timothy; "for 'tis not to be forgotten that when he had left her he voyaged yet again to the Spanish Main, where he fell in with your uncle Jasper and the good ship PEARL."

Now, in preparing the table as a bed on the night before, Timothy had left only one thing lying there, and that thing was a large book which he had placed as a pillow for Gilbert. The book lay still upon the table close to Gilbert's hand. Gilbert idly turned back its first page. His eyes rested upon a line of cramped and almost illegible writing. He looked at it closer and then started back.

"Tim!" he cried. "'Tis true—'tis true what you say, for here is his very name writ in this book!" He put his finger on the page while Timothy drew nearer. "There, where I point," he added. "'Tis his own hand, see—'Jacob Hartop, Buccaneer, Hys logg booke'."

"Nay, I must e'en take thy word for't, my master," said Tim; "for thou knowest that although I can make shift to read a line of print, yet writing done with a quill is beyond me. So," he mused, "this is poor Jacob's treasure-ship—the same that he hath so oft spoken of. Ay, and I'll engage 'tis, as he hath reported, loaded full deep with gold. Such wealth might make us great and glorious did we but have it in England, Master Gilbert. But of what avail is it now? 'Tis of no use under the sun. For my own part, I'd exchange it all for a barrel of good Devon apples or a loaf of my mother's home-made bread."

"And I also," added Gilbert.

They were silent for some minutes. Timothy was the first to speak.

"'Tis passing strange where thy cousin Philip hath got to," said he. "Methinks 'twere well that we now made another search for him."

Gilbert agreed, and together they went and searched the ship. During their search they discovered that the galleon was indeed laden with gold. But they cared not for this while their vitals were being gnawed with hunger and their lips were blue and parched with thirst.

Philip Oglander, it would seem, was more familiar with the structure of a galleon than were either Timothy or Gilbert. For instead of going at once to the poop-cabins he had found his way down to the rooms amidships, where it was customary to keep the stores. What little food he had found was either saturated with salt-water or rotten with decay, or else so hard and dried up that it would have required a pickaxe to break it, much less human teeth. In his quest, however, he had discovered what Gilbert and Timothy had not even dreamt of, namely, some huge bins of Spanish wine. Into one of these he had managed to bore a hole with the point of his dagger. Unlike Timothy, he had not for an instant thought of sharing his discovery. He had taken his fill of the wine, leaving a stream running from the bin, and finding some stale and mildewed bread, he had cleaned it and put it to soak and soften in a bath of the red liquid.

When Timothy and Gilbert at last came upon him he was lying on the floor in an intoxicated sleep, with a flood of wine about him. Timothy regarded him in horror and disgust.

"It seemeth to me that Master Philip might almost have acquainted us of such a discovery as this," said he, and picking up a little golden cup from the floor he held it to catch the drippings from the bin. He presently passed the cup to Gilbert.

"Drink, my master," said he; "'twill do thee good. But take not much at the first, for there is naught so bad upon an empty stomach as strong liquor. Thy cousin hath seemingly been so unwise as to drink his fill."

"'Tis naught to marvel at," said Gilbert, having taken a mouthful, "for of a surety it doth put new life into one. Ay, even to wet one's lips with it doth send the blood racing through the body like the water in a mill-dam."

Timothy espied Philip's bread soaking in its silver dish of wine, and he took some out, sharing it with Gilbert, and they ate it and were refreshed.

Suddenly as they were leaving Philip to finish his sleep, they were startled by hearing from across the sea the report of a cannon-shot. Timothy bounded forward, and was speedily upon the deck. Gilbert followed at his heels. Looking over to the eastward they saw a gallant little ship in full sail bearing down towards them. A faint mist of smoke was being wafted by the wind from one of her forward guns. From her sprit-topmast there waved the glorious flag of St. George.

"'Tis an English ship!" cried Timothy with joy.

"Ay," added Gilbert; "and what is more, 'tis one that is no stranger to me. Thou shouldst know her even better than I, Tim; for, if I mistake not, 'tis none other than Jacob Whiddon's PILGRIM. I know her by the token that her fore-topsail hath got a round patch of lighter canvas in it. And, mark you, 'tis Master Whiddon's ancient that flieth from her mainyard. Ay, 'tis the PILGRIM. And of that I have now no manner of doubt."

"Then are we saved!" murmured Timothy. "Prithee, Master Gilbert, hie thee below and bid thy cousin Philip come up, while that I climb to the top of the poop-deck and make a signal."

And so saying Timothy sought about for some flag or rag which he might wave to the ship as a sign that there were people on board the galleon. No flag could he find, but taking a strip of red silk that he had discovered in Hartop's cabin, he tied it by the corners to the end of a pike, and this he waved to and fro from the highest part of the galleon's hull. His signal was answered from the PILGRIM, and the ship bore down before the wind with a belt of white foam streaming off from her round bows, and her white sails glimmering in the bright sunlight.

Meanwhile Gilbert Oglander had gone below to arouse his cousin. Philip was very sound asleep; but after many efforts Gilbert awakened him, and he staggered to his feet. Glaring at Gilbert with bloodshot eyes he did not speak for many minutes. Gilbert told him of the approaching ship, and added that now they might hope to be taken home to England.

This mention of England seemed to have aroused strange thoughts in Philip's brain, and without warning he closed the cabin door and planted himself with his back against it.

"Thou, at least, shalt never see England again!" he cried. "By the Holy Mother thou shalt not! Dost think that I will brook the thought of thee being Baron

Champernoun, while I, who am a better man than thee, am plain Philip Oglander? No! This ship hath wealth enough aboard her to serve me in plenty for the rest of my days. And thou shalt not share it; neither shalt thou ever live to hear thyself addressed by the great title of Champernoun!"

He spoke the words in a thick drunken voice, his eyes fixing themselves upon his cousin in terrible menace.

Gilbert could not repress the smile that came to his lips.

"Hush, good my cousin!" said he. "Thou hast taken overmuch of this strong wine, methinks, and thy tongue doth say things which thy heart cannot mean."

Illustration:
He made a lunge at Gilbert, aiming a blow at his heart

"What?" cried Philip. And whipping his dagger from his belt he made a lunge at Gilbert, aiming a blow at his heart.

Gilbert drew aside and avoided the blow, and Philip's head struck with a resounding knock against the bulkhead. The pain enraged him, and swearing a great Spanish oath he renewed the attack, rushing at his cousin with wild fury. This time his foot slipped on the slimy, wine-flooded floor. He fell with a heavy thud; his weapon hand was under him, and the dagger, which he had held sword-wise, with the point upward, buried the full length of its blade in his chest.

Gilbert turned to the door and opened it. As he looked round at Philip he saw a stream of blood issuing from under him. Philip tried to rise, but rolled over on his back. Only the handle of his dagger could be seen. Gilbert bent down to withdraw it, but it was tightly wedged between the ribs.

"The Saints protect me!" groaned Philip. "I am done for!"

"Much do I fear that thou art indeed. God forgive thee," said Gilbert, and quitting the store-room he returned to the deck to summon Timothy. It was at this moment that Timothy had seen the answering signal from the PILGRIM. He went below with Gilbert and when they entered the store-room they found that Philip Oglander was dead.

Chapter XXIV

Peter Trollope Shuts Up Shop.

ON a certain gray, windy morning in late October, Peter Trollope's shop was more than usually busy. Every bench had its occupant, and the talk was loud and animated. In the big chair near the fire sat that great courtier Sir Walter Raleigh, smoking a stick of twisted tobacco, to which he gave the Spanish name of cigarro. He joined not much in the gossip, for he had already recounted all that was so far known concerning the last fight of the Revenge, news of which had come to England some few days earlier, and he was passing doleful in spirit over the death of his noble kinsman, Sir Richard Grenville. Now and again he did indeed put in a

word when it was question of deciding the number of Spanish galleons that had been vanquished in the fight, or the number of Spaniards that had been slain, but for the most part he was gloomily silent.

"My brother Tom was aboard of her, and I'll engage that he gave not up his life ere he had laid a good dozen of the Dons low," said a burly fisherman from one of the corners of the shop.

"Ay," added another man, "and my son Bill was among 'em; likewise my good wife's brother Dick."

Peter Trollope snipped his scissors over the head of the young gallant whose hair he was trimming.

"My boy Timothy went also out with the fleet," said he; "though 'twas not on one of Her Majesty's ships that he sailed, but aboard Jacob Whiddon's PILGRIM, of which there hath been no word."

"She was seen taking some part in the battle," remarked Sir Walter Raleigh, puffing a cloud of blue smoke in a column above his head, "for since Whiddon was but an adventurer and owed no duty of obedience to my Lord Thomas, he was free to do what he listed. And he listed to have a shot at the galleons, and so, for aught I know, came to grief."

"Ah!" sighed the barber. "Then peradventure Timothy hath, after all, been slain?"

"As like as not," nodded Sir Walter; "as like as not. And you may take it that since naught hath been heard of the PILGRIM, she hath either gone to the bottom in the battle, or else been broken on the rocks of the Western Isles, as so many others were in the great storm that followed on the heels of the fight."

"The rascal was full eager to join the REVENGE," continued the barber, "and did declare most positively to me that Sir Richard had promised him a berth. 'Twas his desire to be with his young master, Master Gilbert Oglander, that took him away—"

"Touching Master Gilbert Oglander," broke in Christopher Pym, addressing Sir Walter Raleigh, "he was on board the REVENGE. I pray you, Sir Walter, I pray you, tell me is there aught of news concerning the lad?"

Sir Walter shook his head.

"No," he answered. "Much do I fear me that he hath gone with the rest. And 'tis a pity if it be so, for now that the vile traitor, his uncle, hath paid the penalty of his treachery—"

"The penalty!" interrupted Christopher Pym. "Hath he then been proven guilty?"

"Ay," returned Raleigh. And at this the whole room was silent, for the information was new. Sir Walter Raleigh, resting his elbows on the arms of his chair, held his two hands in front of him, busying his be-ringed fingers with adjusting the outer leaf of tobacco about his cigar. "Ay," he went on, "Jasper hath paid the penalty, for being found guilty by the judgment of the Star Chamber, he was on Monday morning last beheaded on Tower Hill."

Sir Walter paused, and having adjusted his cigar to his satisfaction he took up the fire-tongs, and with them picked out a piece of burning wood from the fire the while he lighted the end of his cigar.

"You may be sure," he went on, "that 'twas not as Lord Champernoun that the rascal was tried. For apart from the fact that he had not yet proved that his

nephew, Master Gilbert Oglander, was dead, and that therefore he was himself by right of succession the real Lord Champernoun—apart from this, I say, he had neither taken out his license as a baron nor taken his seat in Her Majesty's House of Peers. He had been over eager to claim his dead father's name and estates, you see, my masters, and by very reason of his too great eagerness he revealed his trickery and the vile treachery that lay behind it."

"Ay, but his treachery and his machinations and intrigues with the King of Spain would yet have been discovered," said Peter Trollope, "even although he had not sought to make himself Baron Champernoun. For it hath been amply proven that even before my Lord Thomas Howard's fleet departed out of Plymouth, Jasper Oglander had connived at the escape of the Spanish prisoners of war—had even planned their escape, indeed,—and had sent off his son Philip to Spain to inform the Spanish king of the purpose of my Lord Thomas's expedition against the plate fleet."

"All that and more than that was brought out at the man's trial in London," said Sir Walter Raleigh. "And now it seemeth that that same son of his, Philip Oglander, was present on board Don Alonzo Bassan's galleon."

"'Twere well, methinks, that the lad had accompanied his father to Tower Hill," remarked Peter Trollope. "And now," he added, "a strange thought hath occurred to me. It is that, should Master Gilbert—or Lord Champernoun as he should truly be named—have been slain in the fight on the REVENGE, and should his cousin have escaped, then the cur Philip Oglander must now be regarded as the head of the Oglander family, and the rightful owner of the title and estates."

No one seemed to take notice of this remark, but at last Christopher Pym spoke.

"Better that the title and estates should fall into oblivion than that," said he. "Howsoever it be," he added, rising and taking up his walking-staff, "I am now impelled to take horse and journey to Willoughby Grange, there to inform my Lady Betty Oglander of this news, and bid her return to her rightful home at Modbury."

"I pray you give her ladyship my most devoted remembrances," said Raleigh; "and bid her from me to be of good cheer concerning her son Gilbert, for if the lad be no more, he hath at least given up his life for the honour of his Queen and country, even as his sire and so many other of his noble family hath done before him. Give you good-day, Master Pym, and God speed you."

An hour or so after this conversation had ended, Peter Trollope sat alone in his shop thinking sadly over the remark that had fallen from Sir Walter Raleigh touching the probable fate of the PILGRIM. Trade had not been brisk at the "Pestle and Mortar" during the months of Timothy's absence. Of hair cutting and the trimming of beards there had been plenty, but it chanced that a very skilful man of medicine had opened a business a few doors away, and had succeeded so well that he had drawn all Master Trollope's surgical trade away from him, so that, but for an occasional customer who came in to have a tooth drawn, Peter could scarcely with justice call himself a barber-surgeon, but merely a barber. Also, he had fallen into debt, and his creditors were pressing him for a settlement. Upon all his other distresses had come the word that in all probability his son Timothy had been either killed in battle or drowned in a storm; and this was the destruction of all his hopes, for he had in his more sanguine moments nursed the thought that Tim, even though he returned penniless and ragged, might yet be a help to him at

this present time, and a joy to him in the future. But if Tim were really dead, what more could be looked to in this world but continued poverty and hard work and unhappiness?

In the midst of his doleful sorrowings and regrets he heard the clatter of horse's feet on the stones of the street outside. The door of the shop was swung open, and in bounced Timothy himself.

His face was rosy brown and it wore a joyous smile, and although his clothing was woefully ragged and white with the salt of the sea, yet there was an air of dignity about him that was quite foreign to the lad who had gone away seven months earlier. He strode into the shop as though he had been one of the lords of the land, and stood in front of his father with his arms akimbo, looking down upon the amazed barber and laughing at his confusion.

"Father," said Timothy, "I am come back."

"In sooth," said the barber, "my eyes give me ample evidence of the fact."

"And art glad to see me, father?"

"Ay, God knoweth I am that, Tim. Give me thy hand!"

"What, though I am dressed as a beggar withal?"

"Ay, though thy rags were e'en raggeder than they are," said Peter, the tears filling his eyes. He shook the lad's hand with a grip whose strength betokened his fulness of joy. "Tim, my lad," he added after a brief pause, "tell me, I pray you, hast thou been in battle?"

"Ay," returned Timothy, "the most glorious battle that ever was. I have fought, father, as my wounds shall presently prove to thee, and have killed as many Spaniards as might fill thy poor shop."

"An thou hast proved thyself a man and not a coward?"

Timothy nodded.

"'Tis enough for me," said Peter. "And now, I pray you, tell me where is thy ship?"

"Lying in Polperro Bay," answered Timothy, "where we dropped anchor but a half-dozen hours since. Master Whiddon and my Lord Champernoun—Master Gilbert Oglander that was—have come with me into Plymouth, and bade me beseech thee to come with me to the sign of the Crown, where they now are, and where we are presently to sit down to the lordliest banquet mine host can provide. So get thee ready instanter, while that I go within to see my mother and don some goodlier raiment."

"Nay, but I cannot leave my business at this hour of the day," objected Peter.

At which Timothy laughed and said:

"Hark ye, father, and listen to me. Thou hast cropped thy last head of hair and shaven thy last chin. No more work shalt thou do for the rest of thy days. Thou shalt have a coach to drive in, and a lordly mansion to live in, with a tribe of serving people to do thy bidding, and shalt live on the best in the land—"

"Nay, mock me not, boy," cried the barber. "I can ill bear thy jests just now; for of a truth I am deep in debt, and know not how we shall contrive to live without charity beyond another week."

"A truce to your charity," cried Tim. "Hark'ee, father, I am rich. Ay, rich as a king." He plunged his hands into his pockets and scattered many golden coins upon the chair near which he stood. "These be but a few trifles that have slipped

into my pockets unawares, and are but a small sample of the PILGRIM's cargo. If more be needed for the nonce, thou hast but to send a cart round to Polperro and get more. But bear this in mind, good my father, thou shalt shut up shop for good and all, and never again shall thine ears be assailed by the snipping of barber's scissors or the fizzling of curling-tongs!"

Now this that Timothy promised did actually come to pass. Nor was Peter Trollope the only one in Plymouth who enjoyed some benefit from the treasures of *The Golden Galleon*. Every man and boy of the ship's company of the PILGRIM received his proportionate share of the wealth, while Captain Whiddon—without whom Timothy and Gilbert might never have returned to England—received only less than Gilbert and Timothy.

The PILGRIM had not been large enough to hold all the treasure that *The Golden Galleon* had contained, not even although her very ballast had been jettisoned to make more room. But when she had been loaded with as much as she could safely carry, she had been brought home as quickly as the winds would drive her. What became of the old derelict, whether she sank to the bottom as a consequence of the shots that were fired into her hull by the departing PILGRIM, or whether she remained afloat long enough for yet another ship to board her and take toll of her remaining treasure, Gilbert Oglander and his companions never learned. But, judging by circumstances, it is pretty certain that she sank to the bottom, and that, as Jacob Hartop had expressed it, her treasures went down to the mermaid's halls, where her precious gems might serve to bedeck the mermaid's necks.

It was on the third day after the return of the PILGRIM that Gilbert Oglander—or, as we may now call him, Lord Champernoun—rode along the familiar lanes to Modbury. He had thus delayed his home-coming because he had heard that his mother and Drusilla were still absent. But on this morning Christopher Pym had come to him and told him that they had returned, and were expecting him.

Timothy rode in his company, not now as his squire but as his companion, for it was as companions and loving friends that they were always afterwards to regard each other.

Gilbert waxed indignant when he saw the work that his uncle had done in hewing down the trees in the avenue of the manor, but his indignation was soon overcome by the joy of meeting his mother and Drusilla.

To tell of that meeting, and to record all that was said and done on that momentous day would make a long story in itself. In the evening Gilbert sat at the head of the table with his dearest friends and all his household about him. It was a happy occasion, not only for himself who had endured so much, but also for his mother and for Drusilla, who now realized for the first time that the terrors held over them by Jasper Oglander were no more to be feared, and whose anxiety concerning Gilbert was at last allayed by seeing him there alive and well, occupying his rightful place, and bearing within himself the promise of a great and useful manhood.