



CHAPTER XIII

HOW THE 'GOLDEN HIND' CAME HOME AGAIN

'The spirits of your fathers
Shall start from every wave ;
For the deck it was their field of fame,
And ocean was their grave.'

CAMPBELL.

'So you see, my dear Mrs. Hawkins, having the silver, as your own eyes show you, beside the ores of lead, manganese, and copper, and above all this gossan (as the Cornish call it), which I suspect to be not merely the matrix of the ore, but also the very crude form and *materia prima* of all metals—you mark me?—If my recipes, which I had from Doctor Dee, succeed only half so well as I expect, then I refine out the Luna, the silver, lay it by, and transmute the remaining ores into Sol, gold. Whereupon Peru and Mexico become superfluities, and England the mistress of the globe. Strange, no doubt ; distant, no doubt : but possible, n.y dear madam, possible !'

'And what good to you if it be, Mr. Gilbert? If you could find a philosopher's stone to turn sinners into saints, now :—but nought save God's grace can do that : and that last seems oftentimes over long in coming.' And Mrs. Hawkins sighed.

‘But indeed, my dear madam, conceive now.—The Comb Martin mine thus becomes a gold mine, perhaps inexhaustible; yields me wherewithal to carry out my North-West patent; meanwhile my brother Humphrey holds Newfoundland, and builds me fresh ships year by year (for the forests of pine are boundless) for my China voyage.’

‘Sir Humphrey has better thoughts in his dear heart than gold, Mr. Adrian; a very close and gracious walker he has been this seven year. I wish my Captain John were so too.’

‘And how do you know I have nought better in my mind’s eye than gold? Or, indeed, what better could I have? Is not gold the Spaniard’s strength—the very main-spring of Antichrist? By gold only, therefore, can we outwrestle him. You shake your head: but say, dear madam (for gold England must have), which is better, to make gold bloodlessly at home, or take it bloodily abroad?’

‘O Mr. Gilbert, Mr. Gilbert! is it not written, that those who make haste to be rich, pierce themselves through with many sorrows? O Mr. Gilbert! God’s blessing is not on it all.’

‘Not on you, madam? Be sure that brave Captain John Hawkins’s star told me a different tale, when I cast his nativity for him—Born under stormy planets, truly: but under right royal and fortunate ones.’

‘Ah, Mr. Adrian! I am a simple body, and you a great philosopher: but I hold there is no star for a seaman like the Star of Bethlehem; and that goes with “peace on earth and goodwill to men,” and not with such arms as that, Mr. Adrian. I can’t abide to look upon them.’

And she pointed up to one of the bosses of the ribbed oak-roof, on which was emblazoned the fatal crest which Clarencieux Hérvey had granted years before to her husband, the ‘Demi-Moor proper, bound.’

‘Ah, Mr. Gilbert! since first he went to Guinea after those poor negroes, little lightness has my heart known; and the very day that that crest was put up in our grand new house, as the parson read, the first lesson, there was this text in it, Mr. Gilbert, “Woe to him that buildeth his house

by iniquity, and his chambers by wrong. Shalt thou live because thou closest thyself in cedar?" And it went into my ears like fire, Mr. Gilbert, and into my heart like lead; and when the parson went on, "Did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice? Then it was well with him," I thought of good old Captain Will; and—I tell you, Mr. Gilbert, those negroes are on my soul from morning until night! We are all mighty grand now, and money comes in fast: but the Lord will require the blood of them at our hands yet, He will!

'My dearest madam, who can prosper more than you? If your husband copied the Dons too closely once or twice in the matter of those negroes (which I do not deny), was he not punished at once when he lost ships, men, all but life, at St. Juan d'Ulloa?'

'Ay, yes,' she said; 'and that did give me a bit of comfort, especially when the Queen—God save her tender heart!—was so sharp with him for pity of the poor wretches: but it has not mended him. He is growing fast like the rest now, Mr. Gilbert, greedy to win, and niggardly to spend (God forgive him!), and always fretting and plotting for some new gain, and envying and grudging at Drake, and all who are deeper in the snare of prosperity than he is. Gold, gold, nothing but gold in every mouth—there it is! Ah! I mind when Plymouth was a quiet little God-fearing place as God could smile upon: but ever since my John, and Sir Francis, and poor Mr. Oxenham found out the way to the Indies, it's been a sad place. Not a sailor's wife but is crying "Give, give," like the daughters of the horse-leech; and every woman must drive her husband out across seas to bring her home money to squander on hoods and farthingales, and go mincing with out-stretched necks and wanton eyes; and they will soon learn to do worse than that for the sake of gain. But the Lord's hand will be against their tires and crimping-pins, their mufflers and farthingales, as it was against the Jews of old. Ah, dear me!'

The two interlocutors in this dialogue were sitting in a low oak-panelled room in Plymouth town, handsomely

enough furnished, adorned with carving and gilding and coats of arms, and noteworthy for many strange knickknacks, Spanish gold and silver vessels on the sideboard ; strange birds and skins, and charts and rough drawings of coast which hung about the room ; while over the fireplace, above the portrait of old Captain Will Hawkins, pet of Henry the Eighth, hung the Spanish ensign which Captain John had taken in fair fight at Rio de la Hacha fifteen years before, when, with two hundred men, he seized the town in despite of ten hundred Spanish soldiers, and watered his ship triumphantly at the enemy's wells.

The gentleman was a tall fair man, with a broad and lofty forehead, wrinkled with study, and eyes weakened by long poring over the crucible and the furnace.

The lady had once been comely enough : but she was aged and worn, as sailors' wives are apt to be, by many sorrows. Many a sad day had she had already ; for although John Hawkins, port-admiral of Plymouth, and patriarch of British shipbuilders, was a faithful husband enough, and as ready to forgive as he was to quarrel, yet he was obstinate and ruthless, and in spite of his religiosity (for all men were religious then) was by no means a 'consistent walker.'

And sadder days were in store for her, poor soul. Nine years hence she would be asked to name her son's brave new ship, and would christen it the *Repentance*, giving no reason in her quiet steadfast way (so says her son Sir Richard) but that 'Repentance was the best ship in which we could sail to the harbour of heaven' ; and she would hear that Queen Elizabeth, complaining of the name for an unlucky one, had rechristened her the *Dainty*, not without some by-quip, perhaps, at the character of her most dainty captain, Richard Hawkins, the complete seaman and Euphuist afloat, of whom, perhaps, more hereafter.

With sad eyes Mrs. (then Lady) Hawkins would see that gallant bark sail Westward-ho, to go the world around, as many another ship sailed ; and then wait, as many a mother beside had waited, for the sail which never returned ; till, dim and uncertain, came tidings of her boy fighting for four

days three great Armadas (for the coxcomb had his father's heart in him after all), a prisoner, wounded, ruined, languishing for weary years in Spanish prisons. And a sadder day than that was in store, when a gallant fleet should round the Ram Head, not with drum and trumpet, but with solemn minute-guns, and all flags half-mast high, to tell her that her terrible husband's work was done, his terrible heart broken by failure and fatigue, and his body laid by Drake's beneath the far-off tropic seas.

And if, at the close of her eventful life, one gleam of sunshine opened for a while, when her boy Richard returned to her bosom from his Spanish prison, to be knighted for his valour, and made a Privy Councillor for his wisdom; yet soon, how soon, was the old cloud to close in again above her, until her weary eyes should open in the light of Paradise. For that son dropped dead, some say at the very council-table, leaving behind him nought but broken fortunes, and huge purposes which never were fulfilled; and the stormy star of that bold race was set for ever, and Lady Hawkins bowed her weary head and died, the groan of those stolen negroes ringing in her ears, having lived long enough to see her husband's youthful sin become a national institution, and a national curse for generations yet unborn.

I know not why she opened her heart that night to Adrian Gilbert, with a frankness which she would hardly have dared to use to her own family. Perhaps it was that Adrian, like his great brothers, Humphrey and Raleigh, was a man full of all lofty and delicate enthusiasms, tender and poetical, such as women cling to when their hearts are lonely; but so it was; and Adrian, half ashamed of his own ambitious dreams, sate looking at her awhile in silence; and then—

'The Lord be with you, dearest lady. Strange, how you women sit at home to love and suffer, while we men rush forth to break our hearts and yours against rocks of our own seeking! Ah well! were it not for Scripture, I should have thought that Adam, rather than Eve, had been the one who plucked the fruit of the forbidden tree.'

‘We women, I fear, did the deed nevertheless; for we bear the doom of it our lives long.’

‘You always remind me, madam, of my dear Mrs. Leigh of Burrough, and her counsels.’

‘Do you see her often? I hear of her as one of the Lord’s most precious vessels.’

‘I would have done more ere now than see her,’ said he with a blush, ‘had she allowed me: but she lives only for the memory of her husband and the fame of her noble sons.’

As he spoke the door opened, and in walked, wrapped in his rough sea-gown, none other than one of those said noble sons.

Adrian turned pale.

‘Amyas Leigh! What brings you hither? How fares my brother? Where is the ship?’

‘Your brother is well, Mr. Gilbert. The *Golden Hind* is gone on to Dartmouth, with Mr. Hayes. I came ashore here, meaning to go north to Bideford, ere I went to London. I called at Drake’s just now, but he was away.’

‘The *Golden Hind*? What brings her home so soon?’

‘Yet welcome ever, sir,’ said Mrs. Hawkins. ‘This is a great surprise, though. Captain John did not look for you till next year.’

Amyas was silent.

‘Something is wrong!’ cried Adrian. ‘Speak!’

Amyas tried, but could not.

‘Will you drive a man mad, sir? Has the adventure failed? You said my brother was well.’

‘He is well.’

‘Then what—Why do you look at me in that fashion, sir?’ and springing up, Adrian rushed forward, and held the candle to Amyas’s face.

Amyas’s lip quivered, as he laid his hand on Adrian’s shoulder.

‘Your great and glorious brother, sir, is better bestowed than in settling Newfoundland.’

‘Dead?’ shrieked Adrian.

‘He is with the God whom he served!’

'He was always with Him, like Enoch : parable me no parables, if you love me, sir !'

'And, like Enoch, he was not ; for God took him.'

Adrian clasped his hands over his forehead, and leaned against the table.

'Go on, sir, go on. God will give me strength to hear all.'

And gradually Amyas opened to Adrian that tragic story, which Mr. Hayes has long ago told far too well to allow a second edition of it from me : of the unruliness of the men, ruffians as I said before, caught up at haphazard ; of conspiracies to carry off the ships, plunder of fishing-vessels, desertions multiplying daily ; licences from the General to the lazy and fearful to return home : till Adrian broke out with a groan—

'From him ? Conspired against him ? Deserted from him ? Dotards, buzzards ! Where would they have found such another leader ?'

'Your illustrious brother, sir,' said Amyas, 'if you will pardon me, was a very great philosopher, but not so much of a general.'

'General, sir ? Where was braver man ?'

'Not on God's earth : but that does not make a general, sir. If Cortes had been brave and no more, Mexico would have been Mexico still. The truth is, sir, Cortes, like my Captain Drake, knew when to hang a man ; and your great brother did not.'

Amyas, as I suppose, was right. Gilbert was a man who could be angry enough at baseness or neglect, but who was too kindly to punish it ; he was one who could form the wisest and best-digested plans, but who could not stoop to that hail-fellow-well-met drudgery among his subordinates which has been the talisman of great captains.

Then Amyas went on to tell the rest of his story : the setting sail from St. John's to discover the southward coast ; Sir Humphrey's chivalrous determination to go in the little *Squirrel* of only ten tons, and 'overcharged with nettings, fights, and small ordnance,' not only because she was more

fit to examine the creeks, but because he had heard of some taunt against him among the men, that he was afraid of the sea.

After that, woe on woe; how, seven days after they left Cape Raz, their largest ship, the *Delight*, after she had 'most part of the night' (I quote Hayes), 'like the swan that singeth before her death, continued in sounding of trumpets, drums, and fifes, also winding of the cornets and hautboys, and, in the end of their jollity, left off with the battle and doleful knells,' struck the next day (the *Golden Hind* and the *Squirrel* sheering off just in time) upon unknown shoals; where were lost all but fourteen, and among them Frank's philosopher friend, poor Budæus; and those who escaped, after all horrors of cold and famine, were cast on shore in Newfoundland. How, worn out with hunger and want of clothes, the crews of the two remaining ships persuaded Sir Humphrey to sail toward England on the 31st of August; and on 'that very instant, even in winding about,' beheld close alongside 'a very lion in shape, hair, and colour, not swimming but sliding on the water, with his whole body; who passed along, turning his head to and fro, yawning and gaping wide, with ugly demonstration of long teeth and glaring eyes; and to bid us farewell (coming right against the *Hind*) he sent forth a horrible voice, roaring and bellowing as doth a lion.' 'What opinion others had thereof, and chiefly the General himself, I forbear to deliver; but he took it for bonum omen, rejoicing that he was to war against such an enemy, if it were the devil.'

'And the devil it was, doubtless,' said Adrian, 'the roaring lion who goes about seeking whom he may devour.'

'He has not got your brother, at least,' quoth Amyas.

'No,' rejoined Mrs. Hawkins (smile not, reader, for those were days in which men believed in the devil); 'he roared for joy to think how many poor souls would be left still in heathen darkness by Sir Humphrey's death. God be with that good knight, and send all mariners where he is now!'

Then Amyas told the last scene ; how, when they were off the Azores, the storms came on heavier than ever, with 'terrible seas, breaking short and pyramid-wise,' till, on the 9th September, the tiny *Squirrel* nearly foundered and yet recovered ; 'and the General, sitting abaft with a book in his hand, cried out to us in the *Hind*, so oft as we did approach within hearing, "We are as near heaven by sea as by land," reiterating the same speech, well bebecoming a soldier resolute in Jesus Christ, as I can testify he was.

'The same Monday, about twelve of the clock, or not long after, the frigate (the *Squirrel*) being ahead of us in the *Golden Hind*, suddenly her lights were out ; and withal our watch cried, the General was cast away, which was true ; for in that moment, the frigate was devoured and swallowed up of the sea.'

And so ended (I have used Hayes's own words) Amyas Leigh's story.

'Oh my brother ! my brother !' moaned poor Adrian ; the glory of his house, the glory of Devon !'

'Ah ! what will the Queen say ?' asked Mrs. Hawkins through her tears.

'Tell me,' asked Adrian, 'had he the jewel on when he died ?'

'The Queen's jewel ? He always wore that and his own posy too, "Mutare vel timere sperno." He wore it ; and he lived it.'

'Ay,' said Adrian, 'the same to the last !'

'Not quite that,' said Amyas. 'He was a meeker man latterly than he used to be. As he said himself once, a better refiner than any whom he had on board had followed him close all the seas over, and purified him in the fire. And gold seven times tried he was, when God, having done His work in him, took him home at last.'

And so the talk ended. There was no doubt that the expedition had been an utter failure ; Adrian was a ruined man ; and Amyas had lost his venture.

Adrian rose, and begged leave to retire ; he must collect himself.

'Poor gentlen an !' said Mrs. Hawkins ; 'it is little else he has left to collect.'

'Or I either,' said Amyas. 'I was going to ask you to lend me one of your son's shirts, and five pounds to get myself and my men home.'

'Five? Fifty, Mr. Leigh ! God forbid that John Hawkins's wife should refuse her last penny to a distressed mariner, and he a gentleman born. But you must eat and drink.'

'It's more than I have done for many a day worth speaking of.'

And Amyas sat down in his rags to a good supper, while Mrs. Hawkins told him all the news which she could of his mother, whom Adrian Gilbert had seen a few months before in London ; and then went on, naturally enough, to the Bideford news.

'And by the bye, Captain Leigh, I've sad news for you from your place ; and I had it from one who was there at the time. You must know a Spanish captain, a prisoner——'

'What, the one I sent home from Smerwick ?'

'You sent? Mercy on us ! Then, perhaps, you've heard——'

'How can I have heard? What?'

'That he's gone off, the villain !'

'Without paying his ransom?'

'I can't say that ; but there's a poor innocent young maid gone off with him, one Salterne's daughter—the Popish serpent !'

'Rose Salterne, the mayor's daughter, the Rose of Torridge !'

'That's he.: Bless your dear soul, what ails you?'

Amyas had dropped back in his seat as if he had been shot ; but he recovered himself before kind Mrs. Hawkins could rush to the cupboard for cordials.

'You'll forgive me, madam ; but I'm weak from the sea ; and your good ale has turned me a bit dizzy, I think.'

'Ay, yes, 'tis too, too heavy, till you've been on shore a

while. Try the aqua vitæ ; my Captain John has it right good ; and a bit too fond of it too, poor dear soul, between whiles, Heaven forgive him !'

And so she poured some strong brandy and water down Amyas's throat, in spite of his refusals, and sent him to bed, but not to sleep ; and after a night of tossing, he started for Bideford, having obtained the means for so doing from Mrs. Hawkins.

