



CHAPTER IX

HOW AMYAS KEPT HIS CHRISTMAS DAY

Take aim, you noble musquetcers,
And shoot you round about ;
Stand to it, valiant pikemen,
And we shall keep them out.
There's not a man of all of us
A foot will backward flee ;
I'll be the foremost man in fight,
Says brave Lord Willoughby !'

Elizabethan Ballad.

IT was the blessed Christmas afternoon. The light was fading down ; the even-song was done ; and the good folks of Bideford were trooping home in merry groups, the father with his children, the lover with his sweetheart, to cakes and ale, and flapdragons and mummer's plays, and all the happy sports of Christmas night. One lady only, wrapped close in her black muffler and followed by her maid, walked swiftly, yet sadly, toward the long causeway and bridge which led to Northam town. Sir Richard Grenville and his wife caught her up and stopped her courteously.

'You will come home with us, Mrs. Leigh,' said Lady Grenville, 'and spend a pleasant Christmas night?'

Mrs. Leigh smiled sweetly, and laying one hand on Lady

Grenville's arm, pointed with the other to the westward, and said—

‘I cannot well spend a merry Christmas night, while that sound is in my ears.’

The whole party around looked in the direction in which she pointed. Above their heads the soft blue sky was fading into grey, and here and there a misty star peeped out: but to the westward, where the downs and woods of Raleigh closed in with those of Abbotsham, the blue was webbed and tufted with delicate white flakes; iridescent spots, marking the path by which the sun had sunk, showed all the colours of the dying dolphin; and low on the horizon lay a long band of grassy green. But what was the sound which troubled Mrs. Leigh? None of them, with their merry hearts, and ears dulled with the din and bustle of the town, had heard it till that moment: and yet now—listen! It was dead calm. There was not a breath to stir a blade of grass. And yet the air was full of sound, a low deep roar which hovered over down and wood, salt-marsh and river, like the roll of a thousand wheels, the tramp of endless armies, or—what it was—the thunder of a mighty surge upon the boulders of the pebble-ridge.

‘The ridge is noisy to-night,’ said Sir Richard. ‘There has been wind somewhere.’

‘There is wind now, where my boy is, God help him!’ said Mrs. Leigh: and all knew that she spoke truly. The spirit of the Atlantic storm had sent forward the token of his coming, in the smooth ground-swell which was heard inland, two miles away. To-morrow the pebbles, which were now rattling down with each retreating wave, might be leaping to the ridge-top and hurled like round-shot far ashore upon the marsh by the force of the advancing wave, fleeing before the wrath of the western hurricane.

‘God help my boy!’ said Mrs. Leigh again.

‘God is as near him by sea as by land,’ said good Sir Richard.

‘True: but I am a lone mother; and one that has no heart just now but to go home and pray.’

And so Mrs. Leigh went onward up the lane, and spent all that night in listening between her prayers to the thunder of the surge, till it was drowned, long ere the sun rose, in the thunder of the storm.

And where is Amyas on this same Christmas afternoon ?

Amyas is sitting bareheaded in a boat's stern in Smerwick bay, with the spray whistling through his curls, as he shouts cheerfully—

‘Pull, and with a will, my merry men all, and never mind shipping a sea. Cannon balls are a cargo that don't spoil by taking salt water.’

His mother's presage has been true enough. Christmas eve has been the last of the still, dark, steaming nights of the early winter ; and the western gale has been roaring for the last twelve hours upon the Irish coast.

The short light of the winter day is fading fast. Behind him is a leaping line of billows lashed into mist by the tempest. Beside him green foam-fringed columns are rushing up the black rocks, and falling again in a thousand cataracts of snow. Before him is the deep and sheltered bay : but it is not far up the bay that he and his can see ; for some four miles out at sea begins a sloping roof of thick grey cloud, which stretches over their heads, and up and far away inland, cutting the cliffs off at mid-height, hiding all the Kerry mountains, and darkening the hollows of the distant firths into the blackness of night. And underneath that awful roof of whirling mist the storm is howling inland ever, sweeping before it the great foam-sponges, and the grey salt spray, till all the land is hazy, dim, and dun. Let it howl on ! for there is more mist than ever salt spray made, flying before that gale · more thunder than ever sea-surge wakened echoing among the cliffs of Smerwick bay ; along those sand-hills flash in the evening gloom red sparks which never came from heaven ; for that fort, now christened by the invaders the Fort del Oro, where flaunts the hated golden flag of Spain, holds San Josepho and eight hundred of the foe ; and but three nights ago, Amyas and Yeo, and the rest of Winter's shrew'est hands, slung four culverins

out of the Admiral's main deck, and floated them ashore, and dragged them up to the battery among the sand-hills; and now it shall be seen whether Spanish and Italian condottieri can hold their own on British ground against the men of Devon.

Small blame to Amyas if he was thinking, not of his lonely mother at Burrough Court, but of those quick bright flashes on sand-hill and on fort, where Salvation Yeo was hurling the eighteen-pound shot with deadly aim, and watching with a cool and bitter smile of triumph the flying of the sand, and the crashing of the gabions. Amyas and his party had been on board, at the risk of their lives, for a fresh supply of shot; for Winter's battery was out of ball, and had been firing stones for the last four hours, in default of better missiles. They ran the boat on shore through the surf, where a cove in the shore made landing possible, and almost careless whether she stove or not, scrambled over the sand-hills with each man his brace of shot slung across his shoulder; and Amyas, leaping into the trenches, shouted cheerfully to Salvation Yeo—

'More food for the bull-dogs, gunner, and plums for the Spaniards' Christmas pudding!'

'Don't speak to a man at his business, Master Amyas. Five mortal times have I missed; but I will have that accursed Popish rag down, as I'm a sinner.'

'Down with it, then; nobody wants you to shoot crooked. Take good iron to it, and not footy paving-stones.'

'I believe, sir, that the foul fiend is there, a turning of my shot aside, I do. I thought I saw him once: but, thank Heaven, here's ball again. Ah, sir, if one could but cast a silver one! Now, stand by, men!'

And once again Yeo's eighteen-pounder roared, and away. And, oh glory! the great yellow flag of Spain, which streamed in the gale, lifted clean into the air, flagstaff and all, and then pitched wildly down head-foremost, far to leeward.

A hurrah from the sailors, answered by the soldiers of the opposite camp, shook the very cloud above them: but ere its echoes had died away, a tall officer leapt upon the

parapet of the fort, with the fallen flag in his hand, and rearing it as well as he could upon his lance point, held it firmly against the gale, while the fallen flagstaff was raised again within.

In a moment a dozen long-bows were bent at the daring foeman: but Amyas behind shouted—

‘Shame, lads! Stop and let the gallant gentleman have due courtesy!’

So they stopped, while Amyas, springing on the rampart of the battery, took off his hat, and bowed to the flag-holder, who, as soon as relieved of his charge, returned the bow courteously, and descended.

It was by this time all but dark, and the firing began to slacken on all sides; Salvation and his brother gunners, having covered up their slaughtering tackle with tarpaulings, retired for the night, leaving Amyas, who had volunteered to take the watch till midnight; and the rest of the force having got their scanty supper of biscuit (for provisions were running very short) lay down under arms among the sand-hills, and grumbled themselves to sleep.

He had paced up and down in the gusty darkness for some hour or more, exchanging a passing word now and then with the sentinel, when two men entered the battery, chatting busily together. One was in complete armour; the other wrapped in the plain short cloak of a man of pens and peace: but the talk of both was neither of sieges nor of sallies, catapult, bombard, nor culverin, but simply of English hexameters.

And fancy not, gentle reader, that the two were therein fiddling while Rome was burning; for the commonweal of poetry and letters, in that same critical year 1580, was in far greater danger from those same hexameters than the common woe of Ireland (as Raleigh called it) was from the Spaniards.

Imitating the classic metres, ‘versifying,’ as it was called in contradistinction to rhyming, was becoming fast the fashion among the more learned. Stonyhurst and others had tried their hands at hexameter translations from the Latin and

Greek epics, which seem to have been doggerel enough; and ever and anon some youthful wit broke out in iambics, sapphics, elegiacs, and what not, to the great detriment of the Queen's English and her subjects' ears.

I know not whether Mr. William Webbe had yet given to the world any fragments of his precious hints for the 'Reformation of English poetry,' to the tune of his own 'Tityrus, happily thou liest tumbling under a beech-tree': but the Cambridge Malvolio, Gabriel Harvey, had succeeded in arguing Spenser, Dyer, Sidney, and probably Sidney's sister, and the whole clique of beaux-esprits round them, into following his model of

What might I call this tree? A laurel? O bonny laurel!
Needes to thy bowes will I bowe this knee, and vail my bonetto;

after snubbing the first book of 'that Elvish Queene,' which was then in manuscript, as a base declension from the classical to the romantic school.

And now Spenser (perhaps in mere melancholy wilfulness and want of purpose, for he had just been jilted by a fair maid of Kent) was wasting his mighty genius upon doggerel which he fancied antique; and some piratical publisher (Bitter Tom Nash swears, and with likelihood, that Harvey did it himself) had just given to the world,—'Three proper wittie and familiar Letters, lately past between two University men, touching the Earthquake in April last, and our English reformed Versifying,' which had set all town wits abuzzing like a swarm of flies, being none other than a correspondence between Spenser and Harvey, which was to prove to the world for ever the correctness and melody of such lines as,

For like magnificoes, not a beck but glorious in show,
In deede most frivolous, not a looke but Tuscanish always.

Let them pass—Alma Mater has seen as bad hexameters since. But then the matter was serious. There is a story (I know not how true), that Spenser was half bullied into rewriting the *Fairy Queen* in hexameters, had not Raleigh, a true romanticist, 'whose vein for ditty or amorous ode was most

lofty, insolent, and passionate,' persuaded him to follow his better genius. The great dramatists had not yet arisen, to form completely that truly English school, of which Spenser, unconscious of his own vast powers, was laying the foundation. And, indeed, it was not till Daniel, twenty years after, in his admirable apology for rhyme, had smashed Mr. Campian and his 'eight several kinds of classical numbers,' that the matter was finally settled, and the English tongue left to go the road on which Heaven had started it. So that we may excuse Raleigh's answering somewhat waspish to some quotation of Spenser's from the three letters of 'Immerito and G. H.'

'Tut, tut, Colin Clout, much learning has made thee mad. A good old fishwives' ballad jingle is worth all your sapphics, and trimeters and "riff-raff thurlery bouncing." Hey? have I you there, old lad? Do you mind that precious verse?'

'But, dear Wat, Homer and Virgil——'

'But, dear Ned, Petrarch and Ovid——'

'But, Wat, what have we that we do not owe to the ancients?'

'Ancients, quotha? Why, the legend of King Arthur, and Chevy Chase too, of which even your fellow-sinner Sidney cannot deny that every time he hears it even from a blind fiddler it stirs his heart like a trumpet-blast. Speak well of the bridge that carries you over, man! Did you find your Redcross Knight in Virgil, or such a dame as Una in old Ovid? No more than you did your Pater and Credo, you renegado baptized heathen, you!'

'Yet, surely, our younger and more barbarous taste must bow before divine antiquity, and imitate afar——'

'As dottrels do fowlers. If Homer was blind, lad, why dost not poke out thine eye? Ay, this hexameter is of an ancient house, truly, Ned Spenser, and so is many a rogue: but he cannot make way on our rough English roads. He goes hopping and twitching in our language like a three-legged terrier over a pebble-bank, tumble and up again, rattle and crash.'

'Nay, hear, now—

See ye the blindfolded pretty god that feathered archer,
Of lovers' miseries which maketh his bloody game?¹

True, the accent gapes in places, as I have often confessed to Harvey, but——'

'Harvey be hanged for a pedant, and the whole crew of versifiers, from Lord Dorset (but he, poor man, has been past hanging some time since) to yourself! Why delude you into playing Procrustes as he does with the Queen's English, racking one word till its joints be pulled asunder, and squeezing the next all a-heap as the Inquisitors do heretics in their banca cava? Out upon him and you, and Sidney, and the whole kin. You have not made a verse among you, and never will, which is not as lame a gosling as Harvey's own—

O thou weathercocke, that stands on the top of Allhallows,
Come thy ways down, if thou dar'st for thy crown, and take the
wall on us.

Hark, now! There is our young giant comforting his soul with a ballad. You will hear rhyme and reason together here, now. He will not miscall "blind-folded," "blind-fold-ed," I warrant; or make an "of" and a "which" and a "his" carry a whole verse on their wretched little backs.'

And as he spoke, Amyas, who had been grumbling to himself some Christmas carol, broke out full-mouthed—

'As Joseph was a-walking
He heard an angel sing—
"This night shall be the birthnight
Of Christ, our heavenly King.

His birthbed shall be neither
In housen nor in hall,
Nor in the place of paradise,
But in the oxen's stall.

¹ Strange as it may seem, this distich is Spenser's own; and the other hexameters are all authentic.

He neither shall be rocked
In silver nor in gold,
But in the wooden manger
That lieth on the mould.

He neither shall be washen
With white wine nor with red,
But with the fair spring water
That on you shall be shed.

He neither shall be clothed
In purple nor in pall,
But in the fair white linen
That usen babies all."

As Joseph was a-walking
Thus did the angel sing,
And Mary's Son at midnight
Was born to be our King.

Then be you glad, good people,
At this time of the year ;
And light you up your candles,
For His star it shineth clear.'

'There, Edmunde Classicaster,' said Raleigh, 'does not that simple strain go nearer to the heart of him who wrote *The Shepherd's Calendar*, than all artificial and outlandish

Wote ye why his mother with a veil hath covered his face ?

Why dost not answer, man ?'

But Spenser was silent awhile, and then—

'Because I was thinking rather of the rhymer than the rhyme. Good heaven ! how that brave lad shames me, singing here the hymns which his mother taught him, before the very muzzles of Spanish guns ; instead of bewailing unmanly, as I have done, the love which he held, I doubt not, as dear as I did even my Rosalind. This is his welcome to the winter's storm ; while I, who dream, forsooth, of heavenly inspiration, can but see therein an image of mine own cowardly despair.

Thou barren ground, whom Winter's wrath has wasted,
Art made a mirror to behold my plight.¹

Pah! away with frosts, icicles, and tears, and sighs——'

'And with hexameters and trimeters too, I hope,' interrupted Raleigh: 'and all the trickeries of self-pleasing sorrow.'

'——I will set my heart to higher work, than barking at the hand which chastens me.'

'Wilt put the lad into the *Fairy Queen*, then, by my side? He deserves as good a place there, believe me, as ever a Guyon, or even as Lord Grey your Arthegall. Let us hail him. Hallo! young chanticleer of Devon! Art not afraid of a chance shot, that thou crowest so lustily upon thine own mixen?'

'Cocks crow all night long at Christmas, Captain Raleigh, and so do I,' said Amyas's cheerful voice; 'but who's there with you?'

'A penitent pupil of yours—Mr. Secretary Spenser.'

'Pupil of mine?' said Amyas. 'I wish he'd teach me a little of his art; I could fill up my time here with making verses.'

'And who would be your theme, fair sir?' said Spenser.

'No "who" at all. I don't want to make sonnets to blue eyes, nor black either: but if I could put down some of the things I saw in the Spice Islands——'

'Ah,' said Raleigh, 'he would beat you out of Parnassus, Mr. Secretary. Remember, you may write about Fairyland, but he has seen it.'

'And so have others,' said Spenser; 'it is not so far off from any one of us. Wherever is love and loyalty, great purposes, and lofty souls, even though in a hovel or a mine, there is Fairyland.'

'Then Fairyland should be here, friend; for you represent love, and Leigh loyalty; while, as for great purposes and lofty souls, who so fit to stand for them as I, being (unless

¹ *The Shepherd's Calendar.*

my enemies and my conscience are liars both) as ambitious and as proud as Lucifer's own self?'

'Ah, Walter, Walter, why wilt always slander thyself thus?'

'Slander? Tut.—I do but give the world a fair challenge, and tell it, "There—you know the worst of me: come on and try a fall, for either you or I must down." Slander? Ask Leigh here, who has but known me a fortnight, whether I am not as vain as a peacock, as selfish as a fox, as imperious as a *bona roba*, and ready to make a cat's paw of him or any man, if there be a chestnut in the fire: and yet the poor fool cannot help loving me, and running of my errands, and taking all my schemes and my dreams for gospel; and verily believes now, I think, that I shall be the man in the moon some day, and he my big dog.'

'Well,' said Amyas, half apologetically, 'if you are the cleverest man in the world what harm in my thinking so?'

'Hearken to him, Edmund! He will know better when he has outgrown this same callow trick of honesty, and learnt of the great goddess Detraction how to show himself wiser than the wise, by pointing out to the world the fool's motley which peeps through the rents in the philosopher's cloak. Go to, lad! slander thy equals, envy thy betters, pray for an eye which sees spots in every sun, and for a vulture's nose to scent carrion in every rose-bed. If thy friend win a battle, show that he has needlessly thrown away his men; if he lose one, hint that he sold it; if he rise to a place, argue favour; if he fall from one, argue divine justice. Believe nothing, hope nothing, but endure all things, even to kicking, if aught may be got thereby; so shalt thou be clothed in purple and fine linen, and sit in kings' palaces and fare sumptuously every day.'

'And wake with Dives in the torment,' said Amyas. 'Thank you for nothing, Captain.'

'Go to, *Misanthropos*,' said Spenser. 'Thou hast not yet tasted the sweets of this world's comfits, and thou railest at them?'

'The grapes are sour, lad.'

‘And will be to the end,’ said Amyas, ‘if they come off such a devil’s tree as that. I really think you are out of your mind, Captain Raleigh, at times.’

‘I wish I were; for it is a troublesome, hungry, windy mind as man ever was cursed withal. But come in, lad. We were sent from the Lord Deputy to bid thee to supper. There is a dainty lump of dead horse waiting for thee.’

‘Send me some out, then,’ said matter-of-fact Amyas. ‘And tell his Lordship that, with his good leave, I don’t stir from here till morning, if I can keep awake. There is a stir in the fort, and I expect them out on us.’

‘Tut, man! their hearts are broken. We know it by their deserters.’

‘Seeing’s believing. I never trust runaway rogues. If they are false to their masters, they’ll be false to us.’

‘Well, go thy ways, old honesty; and Mr. Secretary shall give you a book to yourself in the *Fairy Queen*—“Sir Monoculus or the Legend of Common Sense,” eh, Edmund?’

‘Monoculus?’

‘Ay, Single-eye, my prince of word-coiners—won’t that fit?—And give him the Cyclop’s head for a device. Heigho! They may laugh that win. I am sick of this Irish work; were it not for the chance of advancement I’d sooner be driving a team of red Devons on Dartside; and now I am angry with the dear lad because he is not sick of it too. What a plague business has he to be paddling up and down, contentedly doing his duty, like any city watchman? It is an insult to the mighty aspirations of our nobler hearts,—eh, my would-be Ariosto?’

‘Ah, Raleigh! you can afford to confess yourself less than some, for you are greater than all. Go on and conquer, noble heart! But as for me, I sow the wind, and I suppose I shall reap the whirlwind.’

‘Your harvest seems come already; what a blast that was! Hold on by me, Colin Clout, and I’ll hold on by thee. So! Don’t tread on that pikeman’s stomach, lest he take thee for a marauding Don, and with sudden dagger slit Colin’s pipe, and Colin’s weasand too.’

And the two stumbled away into the darkness, leaving Amyas to stride up and down as before, puzzling his brains over Raleigh's wild words and Spenser's melancholy, till he came to the conclusion that there was some mysterious connection between cleverness and unhappiness, and thanking his stars that he was neither scholar, courtier, nor poet, said grace over his lump of horseflesh when it arrived, devoured it as if it had been venison, and then returned to his pacing up and down ; but this time in silence, for the night was drawing on, and there was no need to tell the Spaniards that any one was awake and watching.

So he began to think about his mother, and how she might be spending her Christmas ; and then about Frank, and wondered at what grand Court festival he was assisting, amid bright lights and sweet music and gay ladies, and how he was dressed, and whether he thought of his brother there far away on the dark Atlantic shore ; and then he said his prayers and his creed ; and then he tried not to think of Rose Salterne, and of course thought about her all the more. So on passed the dull hours, till it might be past eleven o'clock, and all lights were out in the battery and the shipping, and there was no sound of living thing but the monotonous tramp of the two sentinels beside him, and now and then a grunt from the party who slept under arms some twenty yards to the rear.

So he paced to and fro, looking carefully out now and then over the strip of sand-hill which lay between him and the fort ; but all was blank and black, and moreover it began to rain furiously.

Suddenly he seemed to hear a rustle among the harsh sand-grass. True, the wind was whistling through it loudly enough : but that sound was not altogether like the wind. Then a soft sliding noise : something had slipped down a bank, and brought the sand down after it. Amyas stopped, crouched down beside a gun, and laid his ear to the rampart, whereby he heard clearly, as he thought, the noise of approaching feet ; whether rabbits or Christians, he knew not : but he shrewdly guessed the latter.

Now Amyas was of a sober and business-like turn, at least when he was not in a passion; and thinking within himself that if he made any noise, the enemy (whether four or two-legged) would retire, and all the sport be lost, he did not call to the two sentries, who were at the opposite ends of the battery; neither did he think it worth while to rouse the sleeping company, lest his ears should have deceived him, and the whole camp turn out to repulse the attack of a buck-rabbit. So he crouched lower and lower beside the culverin, and was rewarded in a minute or two by hearing something gently deposited against the mouth of the embrasure, which, by the noise, should be a piece of timber.

'So far, so good,' said he to himself; 'when the scaling ladder is up, the soldier follows, I suppose. I can only humbly thank them for giving my embrasure the preference. There he comes! I hear his feet scuffling.'

He could hear plainly enough some one working himself into the mouth of the embrasure: but the plague was, that it was so dark that he could not see his hand between him and the sky, much less his foe at two yards off. However, he made a pretty fair guess as to the whereabouts, and, rising softly, discharged such a blow downwards as would have split a yule log. A volley of sparks flew up from the hapless Spaniard's armour, and a grunt issued from within it, which proved that, whether he was killed or not, the blow had not improved his respiration.

Amyas felt for his head, seized it, dragged him in over the gun, sprang into the embrasure on his knees, felt for the top of the ladder, found it, hove it clean off and out, with four or five men on it, and then of course tumbled after it ten feet into the sand, roaring like a town bull to her Majesty's liege subjects in general.

Sailor-fashion, he had no armour on but a light morion and a cuirass, so he was not too much encumbered to prevent his springing to his legs instantly, and setting to work, cutting and foining right and left at every sound, for sight there was none.

Battles (as soldiers know, and newspaper editors do not)

are usually fought, not as they ought to be fought, but as they can be fought; and while the literary man is laying down the law at his desk as to how many troops should be moved here, and what rivers should be crossed there, and where the cavalry should have been brought up, and when the flank should have been turned, the wretched man who has to do the work finds the matter settled for him by pestilence, want of shoes, empty stomachs, bad roads, heavy rains, hot suns, and a thousand other stern warriors who never show on paper.

So with this skirmish; 'according to Cocker,' it ought to have been a very pretty one; for Hercules of Pisa, who planned the sortie, had arranged it all (being a very *sans-appel* in all military science) upon the best Italian precedents, and had brought against this very hapless battery a column of a hundred to attack directly in front, a company of fifty to turn the right flank, and a company of fifty to turn the left flank, with regulations, orders, passwords, countersigns, and what not; so that if every man had had his rights (as seldom happens), Don Guzman Maria Magdalena de Soto, who commanded the sortie, ought to have taken the work out of hand, and annihilated all therein. But, alas! here stern fate interfered. They had chosen a dark night, as was politic; they had waited till the moon was up, lest it should be too dark, as was politic likewise: but, just as they had started, on came a heavy squall of rain, through which seven moons would have given no light, and which washed out the plans of Hercules of Pisa as if they had been written on a schoolboy's slate. The company who were to turn the left flank walked manfully down into the sea, and never found out where they were going till they were knee-deep in water. The company who were to turn the right flank, bewildered by the utter darkness, turned their own flank so often that, tired of falling into rabbit-burrows and filling their mouths with sand, they halted and prayed to all the saints for a compass and lantern; while the centre body, who held straight on by a trackway to within fifty yards of the battery, so miscalculated that short

distance, that while they thought the ditch two pikes' length off, they fell into it one over the other, and of six scaling ladders, the only one which could be found was the very one which Amyas threw down again. After which the clouds broke, the wind shifted, and the moon shone out merrily. And so was the deep policy of Hercules of Pisa, on which hung the fate of Ireland and the Papacy, decided by a ten minutes' squall.

But where is Amyas?

In the ditch, aware that the enemy is tumbling into it, but unable to find them; while the company above, finding it much too dark to attempt a counter sortie, have opened a smart fire of musketry and arrows on things in general, whereat the Spaniards are swearing like Spaniards (I need say no more), and the Italians spitting like venomous cats; while Amyas, not wishing to be riddled by friendly balls, has got his back against the foot of the rampart, and waits on Providence.

Suddenly the moon clears; and with one more fierce volley, the English sailors, seeing the confusion, leap down from the embrasures, and to it pell-mell. Whether this also was 'according to Cocker,' I know not: but the sailor, then as now, is not susceptible of highly-finished drill.

Amyas is now in his element, and so are the brave fellows at his heels; and there are ten breathless, furious minutes among the sand-hills; and then the trumpets blow a recall, and the sailors drop back again by twos and threes, and are helped up into the embrasures over many a dead and dying foe; while the guns of Fort del Oro open on them, and blaze away for half an hour without reply; and then all is still once more. And in the meanwhile, the sortie against the Deputy's camp has fared no better, and the victory of the night remains with the English.

Twenty minutes after, Winter and the captains who were on shore were drying themselves round a peat-fire on the beach, and talking over the skirmish, when Will Cary asked—

'Where is Leigh? who has seen him? I am sadly afraid he has gone too far, and been slain.'

'Slain? Never less, gentlemen!' replied the voice of the very person in question, as he stalked out of the darkness into the glare of the fire, and shot down from his shoulders into the midst of the ring, as he might a sack of corn, a huge dark body, which was gradually seen to be a man in rich armour; who being so shot down, lay quietly where he was dropped, with his feet (luckily for him mailed) in the fire.

'I say,' quoth Amyas, 'some of you had better take him up, if he is to be of any use. Unlace his helm, Will Cary.'

'Pull his feet out of the embers; I dare say he would have been glad enough to put us to the scarpines; but that's no reason we should put him to them.'

As has been hinted, there was no love lost between Admiral Winter and Amyas; and Amyas might certainly have reported himself in a more ceremonious manner. So Winter, whom Amyas either had not seen, or had not chosen to see, asked him pretty sharply, 'What the plague he had to do with bringing dead men into camp?'

'If he's dead, it's not my fault. He was alive enough when I started with him, and I kept him right end uppermost all the way; and what would you have more, sir?'

'Mr. Leigh!' said Winter, 'it behoves you to speak with somewhat more courtesy, if not respect, to captains who are your elders and commanders.'

'Ask your pardon, sir,' said the giant, as he stood in front of the fire with the rain steaming and smoking off his armour; 'but I was bred in a school where getting good service done was more esteemed than making fine speeches.'

'Whatsoever school you were trained in, sir,' said Winter, nettled at the hint about Drake; 'it does not seem to have been one in which you learned to obey orders. Why did you not come in when the recall was sounded?'

'Because,' said Amyas, very coolly, 'in the first place, I did not hear it; and in the next, in my school I was

taught when I had once started not to come home empty-handed.'

This was too pointed; and Winter sprang up with an oath—'Do you mean to insult me, sir?'

'I am sorry, sir, that you should take a compliment to Sir Francis Drake as an insult to yourself. I brought in this gentleman because I thought he might give you good information; if he dies meanwhile, the loss will be yours, or rather the Queen's.'

'Help me, then,' said Cary, glad to create a diversion in Amyas's favour, 'and we will bring him round'; while Raleigh rose, and catching Winter's arm, drew him aside, and began talking earnestly.

'What a murrain have you, Leigh, to quarrel with Winter?' asked two or three.

'I say, my reverend fathers and dear children, do get the Don's talking tackle free again, and leave me and the Admiral to settle it our own way.'

There was more than one captain sitting in the ring: but discipline, and the degrees of rank, were not so severely defined as now; and Amyas, as a 'gentleman adventurer,' was, on land, in a position very difficult to be settled, though at sea he was as liable to be hanged as any other person on board; and on the whole it was found expedient to patch the matter up. So Captain Raleigh returning, said that though Admiral Winter had doubtless taken umbrage at certain words of Mr. Leigh's, yet that he had no doubt that Mr. Leigh meant nothing thereby but what was consistent with the profession of a soldier and a gentleman, and worthy both of himself and of the Admiral.

From which proposition Amyas found it impossible to dissent; whereon Raleigh went back, and informed Winter that Leigh had freely retracted his words, and fully wiped off any imputation which Mr. Winter might conceive to have been put upon him, and so forth. So Winter returned, and Amyas said frankly enough—

'Admiral Winter, I hope, as a loyal soldier, that you will understand thus far; that naught which has passed

to-night shall in any way prevent you finding me a forward and obedient servant to all your commands, be they what they may, and a supporter of your authority among the men, and honour against the foe, even with my life. For I should be ashamed if private differences should ever prejudice by a grain the public weal.'

This was a great effort of oratory for Amyas; and he therefore, in order to be safe by following precedent, tried to talk as much as he could like Sir Richard Grenville. Of course Winter could answer nothing to it, in spite of the plain hint of private differences, but that he should not fail to show himself a captain worthy of so valiant and trusty a gentleman; whereon the whole party turned their attention to the captive, who, thanks to Will Cary, was by this time sitting up, standing much in need of a handkerchief, and looking about him, having been unhelmed, in a confused and doleful manner.

'Take the gentleman to my tent,' said Winter, 'and let the surgeon see to him. Mr. Leigh, who is he?—'

'An enemy, but whether Spaniard or Italian I know not; but he seemed somebody among them, I thought the captain of a company. He and I cut at each other twice or thrice at first, and then lost each other; and after that I came on him among the sand-hills, trying to rally his men, and swearing like the mouth of the pit, whereby I guess him a Spaniard. But his men ran; so I brought him in.'

'And how?' asked Raleigh. 'Thou art giving us all the play but the murders and the marriages.'

'Why, I bid him yield, and he would not. Then I bid him run, and he would not. And it was too pitch-dark for fighting; so I took him by the ears, and shook the wind out of him, and so brought him in.'

'Shook the wind out of him?' cried Cary, amid the roar of laughter which followed. 'Dost know thou hast nearly wrung his neck in two? His vizor was full of blood.'

'He should have run or yielded, then,' said Amyas; and getting up, slipped off 'o mind some ale, and then to

sleep comfortably in a dry burrow which he scratched out of a sand-bank.

The next morning, as Amyas was discussing a scanty breakfast of biscuit (for provisions were running very short in camp), Raleigh came up to him.

‘What, eating? That’s more than I have done to-day.’

‘Sit down, and share, then.’

‘Nay, lad, I did not come a-begging. I have set some of my rogues to dig rabbits; but as I live, young Colbrand, you may thank your stars that you are alive to-day to eat. Poor young Cheek—Sir Johr Cheek, the grammarian’s son—got his quittance last night by a Spanish pike, rushing headlong on, just as you did. But have you seen your prisoner?’

‘Nö; nor shall, while he is in Winter’s tent.’

‘Why not, then? What quarrel have you against the Admiral, friend Bobadil? Cannot you let Francis Drake fight his own battles, without thrusting your head in between them?’

‘Well, that is good! As if the quarrel was not just as much mine, and every man’s in the ship. Why, when he left Drake, he left us all, did he not?’

‘And what if he did? Let bygones be bygones, is the rule of a Christian, and of a wise man too, Amyas. Here the man is, at least, safe-home, in favour and in power; and a prudent youth will just hold his tongue, mumchance, and swim with the stream.’

‘But that’s just what makes me mad; to see this fellow, after deserting us there in unknown seas, win credit and rank at home here for being the first man who ever sailed back through the Straits. What had he to do with sailing back at all? As well make the fox a knight for being the first that ever jumped down a jakes to escape the hounds. The fiercer the flight the fouler the fear, say I.’

‘Amyas! Amyas! thou art a hard hitter, but a soft politician.’

‘I am no politician, Captain Raleigh, nor ever wish to be. An honest man’s my friend, and a rogue’s my foe; and I’ll tell both as much, as long as I breathe.’

‘And die a poor saint,’ said Raleigh, laughing. ‘But if Winter invites you to his tent himself, you won’t refuse to come?’

‘Why, no, considering his years and rank; but he knows too well to do that.’

‘He knows too well not to do it,’ said Raleigh, laughing as he walked away. And verily in half an hour came an invitation, extracted, of course, from the Admiral by Raleigh’s silver tongue, which Amyas could not but obey.

‘We all owe you thanks for last night’s service, sir,’ said Winter, who had for some good reasons changed his tone. ‘Your prisoner is found to be a gentleman of birth and experience, and the leader of the assault last night. He has already told us more than we had hoped, for which also we are beholden to you; and indeed my Lord Grey has been asking for you already.’

‘I have, young sir,’ said a quiet and lofty voice; and Amyas saw limping from the inner tent the proud and stately figure of the stern Deputy, Lord Grey of Wilton, a brave and wise man, but with a naturally harsh temper, which had been soured still more by the wound which had crippled him, while yet a boy, at the battle of Leith. He owed that limp to Mary Queen of Scots; and he did not forget the debt.

‘I have been asking for you; having heard from many, both of your last night’s prowess, and of your conduct and courage beyond the promise of your years, displayed in that ever-memorable voyage, which may well be ranked with the deeds of the ancient Argonauts.’

Amyas bowed low; and the Lord Deputy went on, ‘You will needs wish to see your prisoner. You will find him such a one as you need not be ashamed to have taken, and as need not be ashamed to have been taken by you: but here he is, and will, I doubt not, answer as much for himself. Know each other better, gentlemen both: last night was an ill one for making acquaintances. Don Guzman Maria Magdalena Sotomayor de Soto, know the hidalgo, Amyas Leigh!’

As he spoke, the Spaniard came forward, still in his

armour, all save his head, which was bound up in a handkerchief.

He was an exceedingly tall and graceful personage, of that *sangre azul* which marked high Visi-gothic descent; golden-haired and fair-skinned, with hands as small and white as a woman's; his lips were delicate, but thin, and compressed closely at the corners of the mouth; and his pale blue eye had a glassy dulness. In spite of his beauty and his carriage, Amyas shrank from him instinctively; and yet he could not help holding out his hand in return, as the Spaniard holding out his, said languidly, in most sweet and sonorous Spanish—

‘I kiss his hands and feet. The Señor speaks, I am told, my native tongue?’

‘I have that honour.’

‘Then accept in it (for I can better express myself therein than in English, though I am not altogether ignorant of that witty and learned language) the expression of my pleasure at having fallen into the hands of one so renowned in war and travel; and of one also,’ he added, glancing at Amyas’s giant bulk, ‘the vastness of whose strength, beyond that of common mortality, makes it no more shame for me to have been overpowered and carried away by him than if my captor had been a paladin of Charlemagne’s.’

Honest Amyas bowed and stammered, a little thrown off his balance by the unexpected assurance and cool flattery of his prisoner; but he said—

‘If you are satisfied, illustrious Señor, I am bound to be so. I only trust that in my hurry and the darkness, I have not hurt you unnecessarily.’

The Don laughed a prettily little hollow laugh: ‘No, kind Señor, my head, I trust, will after a few days have become united to my shoulders; and, for the present, your company will make me forget any slight discomfort.’

‘Pardon me, Señor; but by this daylight I should have seen that armour before.’

‘I doubt if not, Señor, as having been yourself also in the forefront of the battle,’ said the Spaniard, with a proud smile.

‘If I am right, Señor, you are he who yesterday held up the standard after it was shot down.’

‘I do not deny that undeserved honour; and I have to thank the courtesy of you and your countrymen for having permitted me to do so with impunity.’

‘Ah, I heard of that brave feat,’ said the Lord Deputy. ‘You should consider yourself, Mr. Leigh, honoured by being enabled to show courtesy to such a warrior.’

How long this interchange of solemn compliments, of which Amyas was getting somewhat weary, would have gone on, I know not: but at that moment Raleigh entered hastily—

‘My lord, they have hung out a white flag, and are calling for a parley!’

The Spaniard turned pale, and felt for his sword, which was gone; and then, with a bitter laugh, murmured to himself—‘As I expected.’

‘I am very sorry to hear it. Would to Heaven they had simply fought it out!’ said Lord Grey, half to himself; and then, ‘Go, Captain Raleigh, and answer them that (saving this gentleman’s presence) the laws of war forbid a parley with any who are leagued with rebels against their lawful sovereign.’

‘But what if they wish to treat for this gentleman’s ransom?’

‘For their own, more likely,’ said the Spaniard; ‘but tell them, on my part, Señor, that Don Guzman refuses to be ransomed; and will return to no camp where the commanding officer, unable to infect his captains with his own cowardice, dishonours them against their will.’

‘You speak sharply, Señor,’ said Winter, after Raleigh had gone out.

‘I have reason, Señor Admiral, as you will find, I fear, ere long.’

‘We shall have the honour of leaving you here, for the present, sir, as Admiral Winter’s guest,’ said the Lord Deputy.

‘But not my sword, it seems.’

‘Pardon me, Señor; but no one has deprived you of your sword,’ said Winter.

‘I don’t wish to pain you, sir,’ said Amyas, ‘but I fear that we were both careless enough to leave it behind last night.’

A flash passed over the Spaniard’s face, which disclosed terrible depths of fury and hatred beneath that quiet mask, as the summer lightning displays the black abysses of the thunderstorm; but like the summer lightning it passed, almost unseen; and blandly as ever, he answered—

‘I can forgive you for such a neglect, most valiant sir, more easily than I can forgive myself. Farewell, sir! One who has lost his sword is no fit company for you.’ And as Amyas and the rest departed he plunged into the inner tent, stamping and writhing, gnawing his hands with rage and shame.

As Amyas came out on the battery, Yeo hailed him—

‘Master Amyas! Hillo, sir! For the love of Heaven tell me!’

‘What then?’

‘Is his Lordship stanch? Will he do the Lord’s work faithfully, root and branch: or will he spare the Amalekites?’

‘The latter, I think, old hip-and-thigh,’ said Amyas, hurrying forward to hear the news from Raleigh, who appeared in sight once more.

‘They ask to depart with bag and baggage,’ said he, when he came up.

‘God do so to me, and more also, if they carry away a straw!’ said Lord Grey. ‘Make short work of it, sir!’

‘I do not know how that will be, my Lord; as I came up a captain shouted to me off the walls that there were mutineers; and, denying that he surrendered, would have pulled down the flag of truce, but the soldiers beat him off.’

‘A house divided against itself will not stand long, gentlemen. Tell them that I give no conditions. Let them lay down their arms, and trust in the Bishop of Rome who sent them hither, and may come to save them if he

wants them. Gunners, if you see the white flag go down, open your fire instantly. Captain Raleigh, we need your counsel here. Mr. Cary, will you be my herald this time?’

‘A better Protestant never went on a pleasanter errand, my Lord.’

So Cary went, and then ensued an argument, as to what should be done with the prisoners in case of a surrender.

I cannot tell whether my Lord Grey meant, by offering conditions which the Spaniards would not accept, to force them into fighting the quarrel out, and so save himself the responsibility of deciding on their fate; or whether his mere natural stubbornness, as well as his just indignation, drove him on too far to retract: but the council of war which followed was both a sad and a stormy one, and one which he had reason to regret to his dying day. What was to be done with the enemy? They already outnumbered the English; and some fifteen hundred of Desmond’s wild Irish hovered in the forests round, ready to side with the winning party, or even to attack the English at the least sign of vacillation or fear. They could not carry the Spaniards away with them, for they had neither shipping nor food, not even handcuffs enough for them; and as Mackworth told Winter when he proposed it, the only plan was for him to make San Josepho a present of his ships, and swim home himself as he could. To turn loose in Ireland, as Captain Touch urged, on the other hand, seven hundred such monsters of lawlessness, cruelty, and lust, as Spanish and Italian condottieri were in those days, was as fatal to their own safety as cruel to the wretched Irish. All the captains, without exception, followed on the same side. ‘What was to be done, then?’ asked Lord Grey impatiently. ‘Would they have him murder them all in cold blood?’

And for a while every man, knowing that it must come to that, and yet not daring to say it; till Sir Warham St. Leger, the Marshal of Munster, spoke out stoutly—‘Foreigners had been scoffing them too long and too truly with waging these Irish wars as if they meant to keep them alive, rather than end them. Mercy and faith to every

Irishman who would show mercy and faith, was his motto; but to invaders, no mercy. Ireland was England's vulnerable point; it might be some day her ruin; a terrible example must be made of those who dare to touch the sore. Rather pardon the Spaniards for landing in the Thames than in Ireland!—till Lord Grey became much excited, and turning as a last hope to Raleigh, asked his opinion: but Raleigh's silver tongue was that day not on the side of indulgence. He skilfully recapitulated the arguments of his fellow-captains, improving them as he went on, till each worthy soldier was surprised to find himself so much wiser a man than he had thought; and finished by one of his rapid and passionate perorations upon his favourite theme—the West Indian cruelties of the Spaniards, ‘. . . by which great tracts and fair countries are now utterly stripped of inhabitants by heavy bondage and torments unspeakable. O witless Islanders!’ said he, apostrophising the Irish; ‘would to Heaven that you were here to listen to me! What other fate awaits you, if this viper, which you are so ready to take into your bosom, should be warmed to life, but to groan like the Indians, slaves to the Spaniard; but to perish like the Indians, by heavy burdens, cruel chains, plunder and ravishment; scourged, racked, roasted, stabbed, sawn in sunder, cast to feed the dogs, as simple and more righteous peoples have perished ere now by millions! And what else, I say, had been the fate of Ireland had this invasion prospered, which God has now, by our weak hands, confounded and brought to nought? Shall we then answer it, my Lord, either to our conscience, our God, or our Queen, if we shall set loose men (not one of whom, I warrant, but is stained with murder on murder) to go and fill up the cup of their iniquity among these silly sheep? Have not their native wolves, their barbarous chieftains, shorn, peeled, and slaughtered them enough already, but we must add this pack of foreign wolves to the number of their tormentors, and fit the Desmond with a bodyguard of seven, yea, seven hundred devils worse than himself? Nay, rather let us do violence to our own human nature, and show ourselves in

appearance rigorous, that we may be kind indeed ; lest while we presume to be over-merciful to the guilty, we prove ourselves to be over-cruel to the innocent.'

'Captain Raleigh, Captain Raleigh,' said Lord Grey, 'the blood of these men be on your head !'

'It ill befits your Lordship,' answered Raleigh, 'to throw on your subordinates the blame of that which your reason approves as necessary.'

'I should have thought, sir, that one so noted for ambition as Captain Raleigh would have been more careful of the favour of that Queen for whose smiles he is said to be so longing a competitor. If you have not yet been of her counsels, sir, I can tell you you are not likely to be. She will be furious when she hears of this cruelty.'

Lord Grey had lost his temper : but Raleigh kept his, and answered quietly—

'Her Majesty shall at least not find me among the number of those who prefer her favour to her safety, and abuse to their own profit that over-tenderness and mercifulness of heart which is the only blemish (and yet, rather like a mole on a fair cheek, but a new beauty) in her manifold perfections.'

At this juncture Cary returned.

'My Lord,' said he, in some confusion, 'I have proposed your terms ; but the captains still entreat for some mitigation ; and, to tell you truth, one of them has insisted on accompanying me hither to plead his cause himself.'

'I will not see him, sir. Who is he ?'

'His name is Sebastian of Modena, my Lord.'

'Sebastian of Modena ? What think you, gentlemen ? May we make an exception in favour of so famous a soldier ?'

'So villainous a cut-throat,' said Zouch to Raleigh, under his breath.

All, however, were for speaking with so famous a man ; and in came, in full armour, a short, bull-necked Italian, evidently of immense strength, of the true Cæsar Borgia stamp.

'Will you please to be seated, sir,' said Lord Grey coldly.

‘I kiss your hands, most illustrious: but I do not sit in an enemy’s camp. Ha, my friend Zouch! How has your Signoria fared since we fought side by side at Lepanto? So you, too, are here, sitting in council on the hanging of me.’

‘What is your errand, sir? Time is short,’ said the Lord Deputy.

‘Corpo di Bacco! It has been long enough all the morning, for my rascals have kept me and my friend the Colonel Hercules (whom you know, doubtless) prisoners in our tents at the pike’s point. My Lord Deputy, I have but a few words. I shall thank you to take every soldier in the fort—Italian, Spaniard, and Irish—and hang them up as high as Haman, for a set of mutinous cowards, with the arch-traitor San Josepho at their head.’

‘I am obliged to you for your offer, sir, and shall deliberate presently as to whether I shall not accept it.’

‘But as for us captains, really your Excellency must consider that we are gentlemen born, and give us either *buena querra*, as the Spaniards say, or a fair chance for life; and so to my business.’

‘Stay, sir. Answer this first. Have you or yours any commission to show either from the King of Spain or any other potentate?’

‘Never a one but the cause of Heaven and our own swords. And with them, my Lord, we are ready to meet any gentlemen of your camp, man to man, with our swords only, half-way between your leaguer and ours; and I doubt not that your Lordship will see fair play. Will any gentleman accept so civil an offer? There sits a tall youth in that corner who would suit me very well. Will any fit my gallant comrades with half an hour’s *punto and stoccado*?’

There was a silence, all looking at the Lord Deputy, whose eyes were kindling in a very ugly way.

‘No answer? Then I must proceed to exhortation. So! Will that be sufficient?’

And walking composedly across the tent, the fearless ruffian quietly stooped down, and smote Amyas Leigh full in the face.

Up sprang Amyas, heedless of all the august assembly, and with a single buffet felled him to the earth.

'Excellent!' said he, rising unabashed. 'I can always trust my instinct. I knew the moment I saw him that he was a cavalier worth letting blood. Now, sir, your sword and harness, and I am at your service outside!'

The solemn and sententious Englishmen were altogether taken aback by the Italian's impudence; but Zouch settled the matter.

'Most noble captain, will you be pleased to recollect a certain little occurrence at Messina, in the year 1575? For if you do not, I do; and beg to inform this gentleman that you are unworthy of his sword, and had you, unluckily for you, been an Englishman, would have found the fashions of our country so different from your own that you would have been then hanged, sir, and probably may be so still.'

The Italian's sword flashed out in a moment: but Lord Grey interfered.

'No fighting here, gentlemen. That may wait; and, what is more, shall wait till—Strike their swords down, Raleigh, Mackworth! Strike their swords down! Colonel Sebastian, you will be pleased to return as you came, in safety, having lost nothing, as (I frankly tell you) you have gained nothing, by your wild bearing here. We shall proceed to deliberate on your fate.'

'I trust, my Lord,' said Amyas, 'that you will spare this braggart's life, at least for a day or two. For in spite of Captain Zouch's warning, I must have to do with him yet, or my cheek will rise up in judgment against me at the last day.'

'Well spoken, lad,' said the colonel, as he swung out. 'So! worth a reprieve, by this sword, to have one more rapier-rattle before the gallows! Then I take back no further answer, my Lord Deputy? Not even our swords, our virgin blades, Signor, the soldier's cherished bride? Shall we go forth weeping widowers, and leave to strange embrace the lovely steel?'

'None, sir, by Heaven!' said he, waxing wroth. 'Do

you come hither, pirates as you are, to dictate terms upon a foreign soil? Is it not enough to have set up here the Spanish flag, and claimed the land of Ireland as the Pope's gift to the Spaniard; violated the laws of nations, and the solemn treaties of princes, under colour of a mad superstition?'

'Superstition, my Lord? Nothing less. Believe a philosopher who has not said a pater or an ave for seven years past at least. *Quod tango credo*, is my motto; and though I am bound to say, under pain of the Inquisition, that the most holy Father the Pope has given this land of Ireland to his most Catholic Majesty the King of Spain, Queen Elizabeth having forfeited her title to it by heresy,—why, my Lord, I believe it as little as you do. I believe that Ireland would have been mine, if I had won it; I believe religiously that it is not mine, now I have lost it. What is, is, and a fig for priests; to-day to thee, to-morrow to me. Addio,'—and out he swung.

'There goes a most gallant rascal,' said the Lord Deputy.

'And a most rascally gallant,' said Zouch. 'The murder of his own page, of which I gave him a remembrancer, is among the least of his sins.'

'And now, Captain Raleigh,' said Lord Grey, 'as you have been so earnest in preaching this butchery, I have a right to ask none but you to practise it.'

Raleigh bit his lip, and replied by the 'quip courteous'—

'I am at least a man, my Lord, who thinks it shame to allow others to do that which I dare not do myself.'

Lord Grey might probably have returned 'the counter-check quarrelsome,' had not Mackworth risen—

'And I, my Lord, being in that matter at least one of Captain Raleigh's kidney, will just go with him to see that he takes no harm by being bold enough to carry out an ugly business, and serving these rascals as their countrymen served Mr. Oxenham.'

'I bid you good-morning, then, gentlemen, though I cannot bid you God speed,' said Lord Grey; and sitting down again, covered his face with his hands, and, to the

astonishment of all bystanders, burst, say the chroniclers, into tears.

Amyas followed Raleigh out. The latter was pale, but determined, and very wroth against the Deputy.

‘Does the man take me for a hangman,’ said he, ‘that he speaks to me thus? But such is the way of the great. If you neglect your duty, they haul you over the coals; if you do it, you must do it on your own responsibility. Farewell, Amyas; you will not shrink from me as a butcher when I return?’

‘God forbid! But how will you do it?’

‘March one company in, and drive them forth, and let the other cut them down as they come out.—Pah!’

It was done. Right or wrong, it was done. The shrieks and curses had died away, and the Fort del Oro was a red shambles, which the soldiers were trying to cover from the sight of heaven and earth, by dragging the bodies into the ditch, and covering them with the ruins of the rampart; while the Irish, who had beheld from the woods that awful warning, fled trembling into the deepest recesses of the forest. It was done; and it never needed to be done again. The hint was severe, but it was sufficient. Many years passed before a Spaniard set foot again in Ireland.

The Spanish and Italian officers were spared, and Amyas had Don Guzman Maria Magdalena Sotomayor de Soto duly adjudged to him, as his prize by right of war. He was, of course, ready enough to fight Sebastian of Modena: but Lord Grey forbade the duel: blood enough had been shed already. The next question was, where to bestow Don Guzman till his ransom should arrive; and as Amyas could not well deliver the gallant Don into the safe custody of Mrs. Leigh at Burrough, and still less into that of Frank at Court, he was fain to write to Sir Richard Grenville, and ask his advice, and in the meanwhile keep the Spaniard with him upon parole, which he frankly gave,—saying that as for running away, he had nowhere to run to; and as for joining the Irish he had no mind to turn pig; and Amyas found

him, as shall be hereafter told, pleasant company enough. But one morning Raleigh entered—

‘I have done you a good turn, Leigh, if you think it one. I have talked St. Leger into making you my lieutenant, and giving you the custody of a right pleasant hermitage—some castle Shackatory or other in the midst of a big bog, where time will run swift and smooth with you, between hunting wild Irish, snaring snipes, and drinking yourself drunk with usquebaugh over a turf fire.’

‘I’ll go,’ quoth Amyas; ‘anything for work.’ So he went and took possession of his lieutenantancy and his black robber tower, and there passed the rest of the winter, fighting or hunting all day, and chatting and reading all the evening, with Señor Don Guzman, who, like a good soldier of fortune, made himself thoroughly at home, and a general favourite with the soldiers.

At first, indeed, his Spanish pride and stateliness, and Amyas’s English taciturnity, kept the two apart somewhat; but they soon began, if not to trust, at least to like each other; and Don Guzman told Amyas, bit by bit, who he was, of what an ancient house, and of what a poor one; and laughed over the very small chance of his ransom being raised, and the certainty that, at least, it could not come for a couple of years, seeing that the only De Soto who had a penny to spare was a fat old dean at St. Yago de Leon, in the Caraccas, at which place Don Guzman had been born. This of course led to much talk about the West Indies, and the Don was as much interested to find that Amyas had been one of Drake’s world-famous crew, as Amyas was to find that his captive was the grandson of none other than that most terrible of man-hunter, Don Ferdinando de Soto, the conqueror of Florida, of whom Amyas had read many a time in *La Casas*, ‘as the captain of tyrants, the notorious and most experimented amongst them that have done the most hurts, mischiefs, and destructions in many realms.’ And often enough his blood boiled, and he had much ado to recollect that the speaker was his guest, as Don Guzman chatted away about his grandfather’s hunts, of innocent

women and children, murders of caciques and burnings alive of guides, '*pour encourager les autres,*' without, seemingly, the least feeling that the victims were human beings or subjects for human pity; anything, in short, but heathen dogs, enemies of God, servants of the devil, to be used by the Christian when he needed, and when not needed killed down as cumberers of the ground. But Don Guzman was a most finished gentleman nevertheless; and told many a good story of the Indies, and told it well; and over and above his stories, he had among his baggage two books,—the one Antonio Galvano's *Discoveries of the World*, a mine of winter evening amusement to Amyas; and the other, a manuscript book, which, perhaps, it had been well for Amyas had he never seen. For it was none other than a sort of rough journal which Don Guzman had kept as a lad, when he went down with the Adelantado Gonzales Ximenes de Casada, from Peru to the River of Amazons, to look for the golden country of El Dorado, and the city of Manoa, which stands in the midst of the White Lake, and equals or surpasses in glory even the palace of the Inca Huaynacapac; 'all the vessels of whose house and kitchen are of gold and silver, and in his wardrobe statues of gold which seemed giants, and figures in proportion and bigness of all the beasts, birds, trees, and herbs of the earth, and the fishes of the water; and ropes, budgets, chests, and troughs of gold: yea, and a garden of pleasure in an island near Puna, where they went to recreate themselves when they would take the air of the sea, which had all kind of garden herbs, flowers, and trees of gold and silver of an invention and magnificence till then never seen.'

Now the greater part of this treasure (and be it remembered that these wonders were hardly exaggerated, and that there were many men alive then who had beheld them, as they had worse things, 'with their corporal and mortal eyes') was hidden by the Indians when Pizarro conquered Peru and slew Atahuallpa, son of Huaynacapac; at whose death, it was said, one of the Inca's younger brothers fled out of Peru, and taking with him a great army,

vanquished all that tract which lieth between the great rivers of Amazons and Baraquan, otherwise called Maranon and Orenoque.

There he sits to this day, beside the golden lake, in the golden city, which is in breadth a three days' journey, covered, he and his court, with gold dust from head to foot, waiting for the fulfilment of the ancient prophecy which was written in the temple of Caxamarca, where his ancestors worshipped of old; that heroes shall come out of the West, and lead him back across the forests to the kingdom of Peru, and restore him to the glory of his forefathers.

Golden phantom! so possible, so probable, to imaginations which were yet reeling before the actual and veritable prodigies of Peru, Mexico, and the East Indies. Golden phantom! which has cost already the lives of thousands, and shall yet cost more; from Diego de Ordas, and Juan Corteso, and many another, who went forth on the quest by the Andes, and by the Orinoco, and by the Amazons; Antonio Sedenno, with his ghastly caravan of manacled Indians, 'on whose dead carcasses the tigers being fleshed, assaulted the Spaniards'; Augustine Delgado, who 'came to a cacique, who entertained him with all kindness and gave him beside much gold and slaves, three nymphs very beautiful, which bare the names of three provinces, Guanba, Gotoguane, and Mairare. To requite which manifold courtesies, he carried off, not only all the gold, but all the Indians he could seize, and took them in irons to Cubagua, and sold them for slaves; after which Delgado was shot in the eye by an Indian, of which hurt he died'; Pedro d'Orsua, who found the cinnamon forests of Loxas, 'whom his men murdered, and afterwards beheaded Lady Anes his wife, who forsook not her lord in all his travels unto death'; and many another who has vanished with valiant comrades at his back into the green gulfs of the primeval forests never to emerge again. Golden phantom! man-devouring, whose maw is never satiate with souls of heroes; fatal to Spain, more fatal still to England upon that shameful day, when the last of Elizabeth's heroes shall lay down his head upon the block, nominally for having

believed what all around him believed likewise till they found it expedient to deny it in order to curry favour with the crowned cur who betrayed him, really because he alone dared to make one last protest in behalf of liberty and Protestantism against the incoming night of tyranny and superstition. Little thought Amyas, as he devoured the pages of that manuscript, that he was laying a snare for the life of the man whom, next to Drake and Grenvile, he most admired on earth.

But Don Guzman, on the other hand, seemed to have an instinct that that book might be a fatal gift to his captor; for one day, ere Amyas had looked into it, he began questioning the Don about El Dorado. Whereon Don Guzman replied with one of those smiles of his, which (as Amyas said afterwards) was so abominably like a sneer, that he had often hard work to keep his hands off the man—

‘Ah! You have been eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, Señor? Well; if you have any ambition to follow many another brave captain to the pit, I know no shorter or easier path than is contained in that little book.’

‘I have never opened your book,’ said Amyas; ‘your private manuscripts are no concern of mine: but my man who recovered your baggage read part of it, knowing no better; and now you are at liberty to tell me as little as you like.’

The ‘man,’ it should be said, was none other than Salvation Yeo, who had attached himself by this time inseparably to Amyas, in quality of bodyguard; and, as was common enough in those days, had turned soldier for the nonce, and taken under his patronage two or three rusty bases (swivels) and falconets (four-pouuders), which grinned harmlessly enough from the tower top across the cheerful expanse of bog.

Amyas once asked him how he reconciled this Irish sojourn with his vow to find his little maid? Yeo shook his head.

‘I can’t tell, sir, but there’s something that makes me always to think of you when I think of her; and that’s often

enough, the Lord knows. Whether it is that I ben't to find the dear without your help; or whether it is your pleasant face puts me in mind of hers; or what, I can't tell; but don't you part me from you, sir, for I'm like Ruth, and where you lodge I lodge; and where you go I go; and where you die—though I shall die many a year first—there I'll die, I hope and trust; for I can't abear you out of my sight; and that's the truth thereof.'

So Yeo remained with Amyas, while Cary went elsewhere with Sir Warham St. Leger, and the two friends met seldom for many months; so that Amyas's only companion was Don Guzman, who, as he grew more familiar, and more careless about what he said and did in his captor's presence, often puzzled and scandalised him by his waywardness. Fits of deep melancholy alternated with bursts of Spanish boastfulness, utterly astonishing to the modest and sober-minded Englishman, who would often have fancied him inspired by usquebaugh, had he not had ocular proof of his extreme abstemiousness.

'Miserable?' said he, one night in one of these fits. 'And have I not a right to be miserable?—Why should I not curse the virgin and all the saints, and die? I have not a friend, not a ducat on earth; not even a sword—hell and the furies! It was my all: the only bequest I ever had from my father, and I lived by it and earned by it. Two years ago I had as pretty a sum of gold as cavalier could wish—and now!'—

'What is become of it, then? I cannot hear that our men plundered you of any.'

'Your men? No, Señor! What fifty men dared not have done, one woman did! a painted, patched, fucused, periwigged, bolstered, Charybdis, cannibal, Megera, Lamia! Why did I ever go near that cursed Naples, the common sewer of Europe? whose women, I believe, would be swallowed up by Vesuvius to-morrow, if it were not that Belphegor is afraid of their making the pit itself too hot to hold him. Well, sir, she had all of mine and more; and when all was gone in wine and dice, woodcocks' brains and

ortolans' tongues, I met the witch walking with another man. I had a sword and a dagger: I gave him the first (though the dog fought well enough, to give him his due), and her the second; left them lying across each other, and fled for my life:—and here I am! after twenty years of fighting, from the Levant to the Orellana—for I began ere I had a hair on my chin—and this is the end!—No, it is not! I'll have that El Dorado yet! the Adelantado made Berreo, when he gave him his daughter, swear that he would hunt for it, through life and death.—We'll see who finds it first, he or I. He's a bungler; Orsua was a bungler—Pooh! Cortes and Pizarro? we'll see whether there are not as good Castilians as they left still. I can do it, Señor. I know a track, a plan; over the Llanos is the road; and I'll be Emperor of Manoa yet—possess the jewels of all the Incas; and gold, gold! Pizarro was a beggar to what I will be!

'Conceive, sir,' he broke forth during another of these peacock fits, as Amyas and he were riding along the hillside; 'conceive! with forty chosen cavaliers (what need of more?) I present myself before the golden king, trembling amid his myriad guards at the new miracle of the mailed centaurs of the West; and without dismounting, I approach his throne, lift the crucifix which hangs around my neck, and pressing it to my lips, present it for the adoration of the idolater, and give him his alternative; that which Gayferos and the Cid, my ancestors, offered the Soldan and the Moor—baptism or death! He hesitates; perhaps smiles scornfully upon my little band; I answer him by deeds, as Don Ferdinando, my illustrious grandfather, answered Atahuallpa at Peru, in sight of all his court and camp.'

'With your lance-point, as Gayferos did the Soldan?' asked Amyas, amused.

'No, sir; persuasion first, for the salvation of a soul is at stake. Not with the lance-point, but the spur, sir, thus!'

And striking his heels into his horse's flanks, he darted off at full speed.

'The Spanish traitor!' shouted Yeo. 'He's going to escape! Shail we shoot, sir? Shall we shoot?'

‘For Heaven’s sake, no!’ said Amyas, looking somewhat blank, nevertheless, for he much doubted whether the whole was not a ruse on the part of the Spaniard, and he knew how impossible it was for his fifteen stone of flesh to give chase to the Spaniard’s twelve. But he was soon reassured; the Spaniard wheeled round towards him, and began to put the rough hackney through all the paces of the manège with a grace and skill which won applause from the beholders.

‘Thus!’ he shouted, waving his hand to Amyas, between his curvets and caracoles, ‘did my illustrious grandfather exhibit to the Paynim Emperor the prowess of a Castilian cavalier! Thus!—and thus!—and thus, at last, he dashed up to his very feet, as I to yours, and bespattering that unbaptized visage with his Christian bridle-foam, pulled up his charger on his haunches, thus!’

And (as was to be expected from a blown Irish garron on a peaty Irish hillside) down went the hapless hackney on his tail, away went his heels a yard in front of him, and ere Don Guzman could ‘avoid his selle,’ horse and man rolled over into a neighbouring bog-hole.

‘After pride comes a fall,’ quoth Yeo, with unmoved visage as he lugged him out.

‘And what would you do with the Emperor at last?’ asked Amyas, when the Don had been scrubbed somewhat clean with a bunch of rushes. ‘Kill him, as your grandfather did Atahuallpa?’

‘My grandfather,’ answered the Spaniard indignantly, ‘was one of those who, to their eternal honour, protested to the last against that most cruel and unknighly massacre. He could be terrible to the heathen; but he kept his plighted word, sir, and taught me to keep mine, as you have seen to-day.’

‘I have, Señor,’ said Amyas. ‘You might have given us the slip easily enough just now, and did not. Pardon me, if I have offended you.’

The Spaniard (who, after all, was cross principally with himself and the ‘unlucky rarer’s son,’ as the old romances have it, which had played him so scurvy a trick) was all

smiles again forthwith ; and Amyas, as they chatted on, could not help asking him next—

‘I wonder why you are so frank about your own intentions to an enemy like me, who will surely forestall you if he can?’

‘Sir, a Spaniard needs no concealment, and fears no rivalry. He is the soldier of the Cross, and in it he conquers, like Constantine of old. Not that you English are not very heroes ; but you have not, sir, and you cannot have, who have forsworn our Lady and the choir of saints, the same divine protection, the same celestial mission, which enables the Catholic cavalier single-handed to chase a thousand Paynims.’

And Don Guzman crossed himself devoutly, and muttered half a dozen Ave Marias in succession, while Amyas rode silently by his side, utterly puzzled at this strange compound of shrewdness with fanaticism, of perfect high-breeding with a boastfulness which in an Englishman would have been the sure mark of vulgarity.

At last came a letter from Sir Richard Grenville, complimenting Amyas on his success and promotion, bearing a long and courtly message to Don Guzman (whom Grenville had known when he was in the Mediterranean, at the battle of Lepanto), and offering to receive him as his own guest at Bideford, till his ransom should arrive ; a proposition which the Spaniard (who of course was getting sufficiently tired of the Irish bogs) could not but gladly accept ; and one of Winter’s ships, returning to England in the spring of 1581, delivered duly at the quay of Bideford the body of Don Guzman Maria Magdalena. Raleigh, after forming for that summer one of the triumvirate by which Munster was governed after Ormond’s departure, at last got his wish and departed for England and the Court ; and Amyas was left alone with the snipes and yellow mantles for two more weary years.