THE LIFE OF RALEIGH

1594.

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SIR WALTER RALEIGH

LITTLE BIOGRAPHIES

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SIR WALTER RALEIGH

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BY

I. A. TAYLOR

WITH TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS

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What makes a hero? An heroic mind
Express'd in action, in endurance proved:
And if there be pre-eminence of right,
Derived through pain well suffer'd, to the height
Of rank heroic, 'tis to bear unmoved,
Not toil, not risk, not rage of sea or wind,
Not the brute fury of barbarians blind,
But worse—ingratitude and poisonous darts
Launch'd by the country he had served and loved.

—Sir HENRY TAYLOR, *Heroism in the Shade.*

PREFACE

In this short life of Sir Walter Raleigh the attempt is made to offer to those lacking leisure or inclination for the study of the long and exhaustive biographies which exist, a sketch of a brilliant historical figure.

Within so small a compass it is obvious that much has necessarily been omitted which might fitly claim a place in a more elaborate and ambitious work, the selection of facts or episodes being determined rather by the amount of light thrown by them on the personality of the central figure than by their national or general importance. It is however hoped that nothing has been left out which is essential to the comprehension of the character of England's great sea-captain, or of the spirit in which his work was performed.

Amongst later writers I have been principally indebted to Mr. Edwards' *Life*, with its volume of collected letters, and to Mr. Stebbing's biography; while Major Martin Hume's more recent researches amongst Spanish archives furnish additional important information with regard to the intrigues to which Raleigh's ultimate ruin was largely due.

I. A. T.

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WALTER RALEIGH

CHAPTER I

1552–1576

Birth and parentage—Boyhood—Oxford—A soldier in France.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH was born at Hayes Farm, near Budleigh Salterton, on the Devonshire coast, about the year 1552. Of his childhood and boyhood singularly little is known, save what it is possible to infer from the position of his family and the nature of his surroundings.

With regard to the first, antiquarians and genealogists have vied with each other in providing him with pedigrees, dating sometimes back to Norman, sometimes to still earlier days; whilst by one authority it is asserted that Plantagenet blood ran in his veins. Leaving these more doubtful matters on one side, it is at least certain that the Raleighs had been settled in Devonshire for several generations, and that, intermarrying with their neighbours in their own county and in Cornwall, they were related to many of the great West-

country families, counting Grenvilles, St. Legers, Russells, Drakes and Courtenays amongst their kin; so that the sneers levelled at Elizabeth's favourite, as an upstart and a "Jack," by his rivals in court favour—gibes to which he showed himself not indifferent by the steps he took to prove himself a gentleman by birth and lineage—were without justification in fact.

Raleigh's own father, another Walter, had done his best to multiply family connections by marrying three wives. By his first, Joan Drake—probably cousin to the admiral—he had two sons, John and George; to his second—the daughter of one Darrell, of London—a daughter, Mary, was born; while his third wife, Katherine, daughter of Sir Philip Champernoun and widow of Otho Gilbert of Compton, brought him four sons, of whom Walter was the second, the birth of his brother Carew having preceded his own by some two years.

Passing from his family to his surroundings, Hayes Farm, the house in which the large family were brought up, was a solitary building, with gabled wings, mullioned windows and thatched roof, standing within easy reach of the beach at Budleigh Salterton, no doubt the favourite playground of the lads. When it is further borne in mind that the Devonshire fishing villages were largely inhabited by a sea-faring population, and that the sailors with whom the boys must have

been in daily intercourse will have had abundance of tales to recount of adventures by sea, of encounters with the Spanish enemy, of booty brought home, and of voyages of exploration to the newly discovered western lands of which men's imagination was then full, it is not difficult to trace the influence of his boyhood's associations upon Raleigh's after life. The whole band of brothers seem indeed to have adopted the water as their natural sphere of action, since the names of all four were included in a list of sea-captains drawn up in 1585.

It was a healthy and pleasant life; and it is clear that Raleigh, in after days, looked back with affection to his early home; since, when casting about for a spot in which to settle, he made an attempt to purchase Hayes Farm from its owner, explaining that "for the natural disposition he had for that place, being born in that house, he would rather seat himself there than anywhere else."

Of what other influences, besides such as would naturally have given an adventurous and seaward direction to his imagination, were brought to bear upon his early years the material for hazarding any conjecture is scanty. If, as would appear from what is known of his father and mother,[1] a somewhat belligerent form of Protestantism pre-

[1] Mr. Gosse has concluded—it would seem on insufficient evidence—that Raleigh's mother remained for a time a Catholic (see *Raleigh*, Edmund Gosse, p. 2).

vailed at Hayes Farm, it seems to have had less effect upon the boy than the influences of the beach. Though no doubt a staunch supporter of the Reformation, Raleigh's own views were speculative rather than dogmatic, and his weight in after years was thrown into the scale of religious toleration; while that he felt a certain distaste for controversial theology may be inferred from the terms of his allusion to "that religion among Christians, the discourse whereof hath so occupied the world, as it hath well-nigh driven the practice thereof out of the world. . . . We are all (in effect)," he adds, "become comedians in religion." [1]

Whether or not the opinions of the elder Raleigh on spiritual questions were of a more aggressive type, it was a time when it was not easy even for peace-loving men to keep clear of the struggles constantly taking place between the different religious parties. In the year 1549 he is accordingly found suffering a brief imprisonment at the hands of the insurgents who, in the Rising of the West, had taken up arms in the Catholic cause; while some years later he must have incurred a certain amount of risk by aiding in the escape of his kinsman, Sir Peter Carew—involved in the conspiracy of Sir Thomas Wyatt—by sending him round the coast in a vessel of his own.

[1] Preface to *History of the World.*

Of Raleigh's schooling nothing certain is known. It is likely enough that he received it at Budleigh, in the intervals of the studies—possibly more important to his future career—prosecuted on the beach. That he was no unwilling scholar may be taken for granted from his notorious love of learning in later life. But it is only with his becoming, at fourteen or fifteen, a commoner at Oriel that the realm of conjecture is exchanged for some degree of certainty. Even with regard to his Oxford course, and to the length of its duration, authorities are at variance; while of any details with regard to this period there is again a singular lack. At Oxford, however, his friendship with Sir Philip Sidney is said to have been inaugurated; and Anthony Wood further reports that during his residence there, "his natural parts being strangely advanced by academical learning, under the care of an excellent tutor, he became the ornament of the juniors, and was worthily esteemed a proficient in oratory and philosophy."[1] The only personal anecdote that remains of his college days is contained in Bacon's *Apophthegms*, where it is related that "whilst Ralegh was a scholar at Oxford there was a cowardly fellow who happened to be a very good archer; but having been grossly abused by another, he bemoaned himself to Ralegh, and asked his advice what he

[1] Wood, *Athenæ Oxonienses.*

should do to repair the wrong that had been offered him. *Why, challenge him,* answered Ralegh, *to a match of shooting,*"—a story which testifies to a certain sharpness of tongue on the part of the counsellor, if to nothing else.

The only remaining fact ascertainable about his university course is that he quitted Oxford without taking his degree; and when it next becomes possible to trace his movements with any confidence he is found, at seventeen, serving his apprenticeship to the art of war with the Huguenot forces in France.

At most periods of his life one or more of his numerous cousins are distinguishable amongst Raleigh's surroundings. A Champernoun—doubtless of his mother's kin—had been his companion at Oxford; and it was as one of a corps of volunteers raised by a member of the same family—all zealous in the Huguenot cause—that he is believed to have crossed the Channel in the year 1569.

For months Henry Champernoun, leader of the English contingent, had been soliciting the Queen's permission to take the field; while Elizabeth, for her part, had been engaged, after her usual fashion, in keeping both the French parties in play: now raising the hopes of the Huguenots as to assistance to be afforded them in their desperate struggle; now assuring Salignac, ambassador of Charles IX., in characteristic language, that "those

of La Rochelle could not boast to have obtained of her any help whatsoever, either in money, ammunition, or provisions, unless they had taken them, on the word of Elijah, from the bottle of the widow of Sarepta; for assuredly her purse was none the less full for what they obtained from it." [1]

The final result, so far at least as Champernoun's tedious suit was concerned, is probably correctly enough described by the French envoy when he told his master in July, 1569, that the English leader had been "suffered to join those of La Rochelle without express licence, but nevertheless—under semblance of acting for himself—to be the Queen's agent in their camp." [2] In other words Champernoun and his followers were to be permitted to take the risk, Elizabeth reaping the advantage of any success by which the expedition should be attended; while in case of disaster she held herself free from responsibility. It was not a course marked by overmuch generosity, but it was one eminently in harmony with the Queen's usual policy.

Over the precise date of Raleigh's arrival in France uncertainty once more hangs. He has been stated to have taken part in the battle of Jarnac, fought in the spring of 1569, the assumption being based upon an ambiguous passage in his *History of the World*. But if Camden is right when he expressly asserts that he formed one of the body

[1] *Correspondance Diplomatique.* [2] *Ibid.*

raised and commanded by his cousin, his presence at Jarnac is disproved, since the English contingent only joined the Huguenot forces on the 5th of October of that year; while a further element of obscurity is introduced by Raleigh's own mention of the fact that he had been an eye-witness of the retreat of Moncontour, the battle of that name having taken place two days before the arrival of Champernoun and his little band.

Whatever was the exact date of the beginning of Raleigh's French campaign, it is believed to have lasted some five or six years. During that time, however, no mention of him is to be found in any contemporary record; whether because the proceedings of an unknown boy, younger son of a Devonshire squire, were not of sufficient importance to attract attention, or because, as one authority suggests,[1] the position of an Englishman, whose presence in France might be connived at by Elizabeth, but who—holding no commission from her—was liable, in case of capture, to be hanged as a common felon, was not such as to make it desirable to court notice. In after years Raleigh was always too much occupied with matters of present interest to permit him to indulge largely in reminiscences of the past; and with the exception of two or three references to his French experiences contained in his *History of the World*

[1] E. Edwards, *Life of Ralegh*, vol. i., p. 32.

nothing is practically known of them. The hypothesis which includes him in the group of Englishmen who, from the shelter of Walsingham's Paris abode, witnessed the horrors of St. Bartholomew is virtually disproved by his own silence; and his biographers must be content to leave the term of his service in France in obscurity.

CHAPTER II

1576–1581

Home in England—First expedition by sea—Life in London —Ireland—Massacre of Del Oro.

WHEN Raleigh once more found himself in England it was under changed circumstances. He had left it a boy of seventeen; he returned as a man of twenty-three or twenty-four, who had already had his share of adventure and experience. Connected by ties of blood with many of those belonging to the court of Queen Elizabeth, he doubtless had no difficulty in gaining admission to the society by which it was surrounded; nor was it long before some of the acquaintanceships destined to be of importance to him later on were formed. It is thought not unlikely that his connection with Leicester had begun still earlier; that it had become a close one during this period is proved by a letter written in 1580 from Ireland, in which he assures the Queen's favourite that "if your lordship shall please to think me yours, as I am, I will be found as ready, and dare do as much

in your service, as any man you may command"—an offer prefaced by a reminder of the affection which Raleigh had openly professed for his correspondent. With Sidney, too, his friendship was cemented; while an unfortunate intimacy was inaugurated with the notorious De Vere, Earl of Oxford, of brilliant gifts and evil reputation. George Gascoigne, the poet, must likewise at this time have been a friend, since it is to the year 1576 that the verses belong which, affixed to Gascoigne's "Steele Glas," are signed "Walter Rawely of the Middle Temple," where recent evidence proves him to have been resident in February, 1575, though never giving himself seriously to the study of law.

Wherever fighting was going forward Raleigh was likely enough to be found; and though the tradition according to which his life in England was varied by a term of service under Sir John Norreys in the Low Countries is not supported by any positive evidence, it is of no antecedent improbability. The event, however, at once certain and of most importance belonging to this period was the abortive expedition by sea undertaken in conjunction with his half-brother, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, thirteen years older than himself.

It was an enterprise strictly in accordance with the spirit of the times, the objects of which are plainly set forth in the explanatory "Discourse"

addressed by Gilbert to the Queen, and apparently published without permission from the writer. In this paper, in which the scheme of an attack to be directed, under cover of an exploring expedition, against the possessions of Spain in the West Indies and elsewhere was submitted to Elizabeth, the hand of the younger brother has been detected by some judges. Whether or not the conjecture is correct, the plan would doubtless have had his full approbation ; and the project itself is an interesting example, both of the bold spirit of enterprise and of the absolute absence of morality in international affairs characteristic at that day of even men of unblemished honour and spotless reputation.

It was proposed that, England being then on terms of nominal peace with Spain, the suggested expedition should wear the semblance of a private adventure, should be publicly denounced by the Queen, the action of those who engaged in it disavowed, and the admirals who should lend their aid to bring the affair to a successful conclusion made to suffer a sham imprisonment. Once again, in fact, the risk was to be undertaken by the men who made the venture, while the advantages accruing from it, if any, should be shared by the Government. The whole mode of procedure recommended, frankly and specifically, was one of deliberate fraud, openly avowed. "For," says the author easily, "I hold it as lawful in Christian

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

policy to prevent a mischief betimes as to revenge it too late, especially seeing that God Himself is a party in the quarrels now afoot."

Whatever may be thought of the system of morals thus expounded, the expedition which was to be conducted on the rules laid down, now forbidden, now partly authorised, proved a failure, and is only worthy of notice as the earliest of Raleigh's adventures at sea of which any certain record remains, and as having been probably the first occasion—leaving out of the reckoning his problematical service in Holland—upon which he was brought into direct collision with his life-long enemy, Spain.

By 1579 he was back in London and playing his part in a quarrel forced upon Sidney by the Earl of Oxford. Being, as he was at the time, the rival of Leicester in court favour, it was De Vere's object to detach from the Dudley faction all those over whom he could gain influence; and it has been suggested that it was with this aim that he had selected for his friend and confidant one so unfitted for the post as Raleigh. However that may be, it was the latter who, with Charles Arundel, among whose papers the incident has been preserved, was sent by Oxford with a challenge to Sir Philip. The affair, however, came to nothing; for though Sidney "accepted gladly thereof and desired much that it might not be deferred," De

Vere, "never meaning anything less, as after it appeared, told us plainly he was not to hazard himself, having received such an injury, and therefore he had another course, and that was to have him murdered in his lodging."

It will readily be believed that this method of disposing of an enemy—and that enemy Sir Philip Sidney—was not likely to commend itself to Raleigh, and the suggestion was probably the beginning of the coolness between him and Oxford which ended in their enmity. It has been said that for each party to a friendship to be in possession of secrets which would hang the other is a useful incentive to fidelity; but in cases where such knowledge is one-sided, it may well be questioned whether it has a similar effect. So far was it from being the case in this instance that Oxford has not been exempt from the suspicion of having attempted to send his confidant to a place where his silence would be ensured.

Current reports concerning De Vere must however be received with caution. While undoubtedly one of the worst specimens of Elizabeth's courtiers, he was likewise an unpopular man, being the enemy of Leicester—then high in public favour; and was liable, besides, as a convert of the Jesuits, to have every conceivable crime fathered upon him. It is nevertheless a significant fact to find Raleigh himself—than whom no man would have been

less likely to entertain fanciful suspicions—using language which points, in no equivocal fashion, to the risks run by those to whom his former associate owed a grudge. It was when, in response to Burghley's solicitations some years later, he was using his influence with the Queen on behalf of her minister's disreputable son-in-law, then fallen into disgrace, that in a letter to Burghley himself he made allusion to the probable peril he incurred should his suit prove successful: "I am content, for your sake," he wrote in 1583, "to lay the serpent before the fire, as much as in me lieth, that, having received strength, myself may be most in danger of his poison and sting."

For the present, however, Oxford seems to have been powerless against him; and the only mischance which is recorded as belonging to this period consisted of a brief imprisonment in the Fleet, in consequence of a "fray" which had taken place between himself and Sir Thomas Perrot, afterwards brother-in-law to Essex.

Whether or not Raleigh had yet come under the Queen's personal notice there are no means of ascertaining. It is, however, clear that his position at court did not offer sufficient attraction to keep him in London when an opportunity occurred of seeking his fortune elsewhere. It was in January, 1580, that, as captain of a hundred soldiers, he started for Cork, the voyage, owing to unfavour-

able weather, lasting nearly a month. His service in Ireland covered nearly two years, and is marked by the first serious blot upon his reputation, left by the part taken by him in the infamous massacre of Del Oro.

In extenuation of his conduct upon that melancholy occasion it is fair to take into account, not only the temper of the times, but also the nature of his own apprenticeship to war. During the years passed in France, as one of a body of soldiers holding no definite commission from the Queen, he had himself been liable at any moment to be put to death as an outlaw. In Ireland the position was reversed, the Irish being, in the estimation of Elizabeth and her representatives, mere rebels, in no wise entitled to the treatment accorded to honourable foes. Raleigh's own chief, Lord Grey, too, while bearing a high character in other respects, was notorious for his severity. A man, according to the description of him given by his secretary, Edmund Spenser, "most gentle, affable, loving and temperate," as well as right noble, just, godly and sincere, such qualities found singular expression in his Irish administration, during which, to quote his own statement, "1485 chief men and gentlemen were slain, not accounting those of meaner sort, nor yet executions by law, and killing of churles, which were innumerable." [1]

[1] Abstract by R. W. Church of Lord Grey's paper.

Upright and honourable, with a stern sense of public duty, he was a devoted adherent of the Puritan religion, and so fierce an enemy to Rome that he considered himself to have failed in what he owed to God and to the truth in the exact proportion in which he had showed mercy to a Papist, or permitted even the Queen's commands to come before the "one article of looking to God's dear service."

The spirit by which the Lord Deputy was animated found brutal expression in his subordinates. "If hell were open, and all the evil spirits were abroad," was the verdict of Andrew Trollope, "they could never be worse than these Irish rogues —rather dogs, and worse than dogs." "There is no way," says some one else, "to daunt these people but by the edge of the sword and to plant better in their place, or rather, let them cut one another's throats." "At Kilkenny," wrote Sir W. Drury, ". . . thirty-six persons were executed, among which some good ones; two for treason, a blackamoor, and two witches by natural law, for that we found no law to try them by in this realm;" while Ormond has to complain that he has been charged with "slackness in but killing three men," the true number being more than 3,000.

It is useless to multiply quotations. The war in Munster was practically one of extermination. But when all possible allowance is made, both for

Raleigh's own antecedents and for the effect of the atmosphere by which he was surrounded, it cannot be denied that it would be well for his reputation could his career in Ireland be blotted out of history.

The date of his arrival was a time of much anxiety on the part of the English garrison and of hope on that of the Irish people, in their habitual condition of chronic resistance to their foreign masters. The Pope and Philip II. of Spain, following Elizabeth's example in her dealings with French Huguenots, had sent over a body of some hundreds of Italians and Spaniards, who, establishing themselves in a fort in Kerry, named Del Oro, served as a rallying point for Irish discontent. It was against these combined native and foreign forces that the contingent under Raleigh was to be employed.

The first transaction of any importance in which he took part on his arrival was the trial of James Desmond, brother of the earl of that name, in which he was associated with Sir Warham St. Leger, who, having fallen under suspicion in London on account of intrigues carried on with the adherents of Mary Stuart, seems to have been anxious, by his conduct as Provost-marshal of Munster, to vindicate to the full his character for loyalty. In the case of James Desmond little disposition to mercy was shown by either of his

judges, and he was promptly sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered.

His Irish career having been thus inaugurated, Raleigh is found a little later earning distinction in the field by means of a successful manœuvre in which a whole detachment of the enemy were either taken captive or slain, the spirit in which the struggle was carried on being graphically demonstrated by an incident which, in slightly varying form, has often been narrated.

Among the prisoners on this occasion was one laden with withies, who, in answer to a question of Raleigh's as to the use to which he had intended to put them, replied hardily that they had been meant to hang up the English churls.

"Is it so?" returned Raleigh; "they shall now serve for an Irish kern," and suited at once the action to the word.[1]

To the terrible massacre of Del Oro such scenes as these are the prelude. It was under the personal generalship of Lord Grey that that slaughter took place, nor did he attempt to disavow responsibility in the matter. One, at least, of his subordinates, Admiral Bingham, indeed, endeavoured to shift the blame on to other shoulders, but the Lord Deputy's own account of the affair, contained in his despatch to the Queen,[2] is too explicit to leave room for doubt. After narrating the negotiations

[1] John Hooker. [2] *Calendar of State Papers, Ireland.*

which had taken place between himself and the garrison of the beleaguered fort, with his own demands for unconditional surrender, he relates how the colonel came forth, and with his principal gentlemen gave himself up. And upon this, pursues Lord Grey, "I sent certain gentlemen in, to see their weapons and armour laid down, and to guard the munitions and victual there left for spoil. Then put I in certain bands, who straight fell to execution. There were six hundred slain. . . . Of the six hundred slain, four hundred were as gallant and goodly personages as of any I ever beheld. So hath it pleased the Lord of Hosts to deliver your enemies into your Highness' hand, and so too, one only excepted, not one of yours is either lost or hurt."

In this butchery of defenceless men—thus described not by a critic but by the responsible agent—Raleigh was a participator. "Captain Ralegh," says Hooker,[1] "together with Captain Mackworth, entered into the Castle and made a great slaughter."

It is strange to find in Spenser an apologist for the massacre, characterised by him as an act of unavoidable severity.[2]

In November, 1580, the sack of Del Oro took place. For thirteen months longer Raleigh remained in Ireland, where his adventures, not im-

[1] John Hooker's *Supplement to the Chronicle of Holinshed.*
[2] *View of Present State of Ireland.*

probably embellished by the chronicler,[1] resemble the feats of a knight-errant of romance. We read of ambushes escaped; of fights at fords; of Lord Roche bearded in his own castle, and carried away a prisoner. Certain of the enemy are challenged to personal combat—Ormond, though no friend to Raleigh, being associated with him in this last performance—and hair-breadth escapes of every description take place. A guerilla warfare was, in fact, maintained; the English garrison, owing to the economy practised by Elizabeth and her ministers, being of insufficient force to reduce the country and its starving and desperate inhabitants to submission.

To Raleigh's own discontent, alike with his position and the means at his disposal for carrying on his work, his letters bear witness. They bear witness likewise to another fact—the fact that, while an admirable leader, he was a bad subordinate. With neither Lord Grey, nor with Ormond, who, as Governor of Munster and general, was his more immediate superior, was he on good terms. He always believed—frequently, no doubt, rightly—that he knew better than they what was good for the country and the service of the Queen; they resented the belief and not improbably the fact. While, if loyalty to his commanding officer is included in a soldier's duty, it must be confessed

[1] Hooker's *Supplement.*

that it was not a virtue he exhibited. "Would God your Honour and Her Majesty," he wrote to Walsingham almost on his first arrival in Ireland, "as well as my poor self, understood how pitifully the service here goeth forward! Considering that this man [Ormond] having now been Lord General of Munster now about two years, there are at this instant a thousand traitors more than there were the first day."[1] A further complaint, this time addressed to the Lord Deputy, resulted in Ormond's recall; but, while he was so far successful, the tone he took with Lord Grey himself was not such as commended itself or the writer to his superior.

Grey was no doubt for his own part weary enough of the whole business, and eager, as others in the same position have been before and since, to be relieved from his charge—a wish made plain, as well as the sentiments with which he regarded the young critic, in a letter to Walsingham in which, enclosing one from Raleigh, he remarks sardonically that he is willing to relinquish to persons so sanguine the honour of carrying out their own designs, and begs that he himself may be freed from the burden of office.

During the summer of 1591, upon Ormond's recall, the government of Munster was provisionally entrusted to Sir William Morgan, Raleigh himself, and Captain Piers. It is possible that, raised to

[1] *Irish Correspondence.*

a position of greater responsibility, Raleigh may have found the duties involved more arduous than they had appeared, viewed from below. At any rate he was no better pleased than before. "I have spent some time here under the Deputy," he wrote to Leicester, transferring his attentions from Ormond to Grey, "in such poor place and charge as, were it not for that I know him to be as of yours, I would disdain it as much as to keep sheep."[1]

The letter was written in the month of August. In December of the same year Raleigh's Irish campaign came to an end; and he left the country in charge of despatches addressed by the new governor of Munster, Colonel Zouch, to Lord Burghley.[2]

[1] *MS. Harl.*, British Museum.
[2] 4th December, 1581, State Papers Office.

CHAPTER III

1582–1588

Life at court—The Queen's favourite—Rapid advancement—Captain of the Guard—Exploring and colonising expeditions—The Earl of Essex's rise and Raleigh's decline.

IT may be that when Raleigh quitted Ireland he expected his absence from the scene of action to be of short duration. If so he was mistaken. It was in a very different environment that the next years of his life were to be spent. He had been a soldier in France, a soldier in Ireland; he was now to fill the post of reigning favourite at Elizabeth's court. When or how he first entered into personal relations with the Queen it would be difficult to determine. Of any actual intercourse between the two there is no trace previous to his return from the Irish campaign. As to the manner in which Elizabeth's attention was first directed towards the man who was to play so important a part in her surroundings we are also left in doubt; but though there is no positive evidence to support

the familiar stories, first told by Fuller, of the magnificent cloak laid on the ground in order that the Queen might walk dry-shod across the mire, or of the lines scratched upon the window-pane, neither is there any intrinsic reason why they should be dismissed as false. Raleigh's wit was bold and shrewd, and he may well have fashioned or turned to account such opportunities of bringing himself into notice.

But in any case he would have been likely enough, on his return from Ireland, to be admitted to her presence.

Fresh from the seat of war, an eye-witness of the events of the past two years, and eager and ready to offer advice as to the methods by which the struggle might best be brought to a successful conclusion, it is not probable that Elizabeth kept him long waiting for an audience, and once brought into personal relations with her, the charm of his personality, his good looks, ready tongue and brilliant gifts, were amply sufficient to establish him in the favour of a woman not only peculiarly susceptible to such attractions, but with insight and penetration enough to divine the depth and scope of the intellectual capacities which lay below.

That his advancement proceeded rapidly, a letter written in the Queen's name bears witness. In this document, dated April, 1582, when he had not been more than four months at court, he is appointed

to a command in Ireland left vacant by the death of a certain Captain Appesley ; while at the same time the said "Rawley is, for some considerations, by us excused to stay here."

At the nature of these considerations it is not difficult to guess. Raleigh's career as favourite was begun, nor was the Queen found willing for several years to spare him on distant service.

What the post he was to fill implied, to him as to others by whom it was occupied in turn, is well known ; nor is it altogether easy to forgive him for the part for which he allowed himself to be cast in the drama in which he was to take his share. The office which was fitting enough for a Leicester, a Hatton, or even an Essex, was too low a one for a Raleigh.

Yet in passing sentence upon this portion of his life it is fair to take into account, not alone the glamour which surrounds a throne, but likewise the position personally filled by the woman who singled him out for favour. Few men are proof against the infection of a general enthusiasm, and the place the Queen held in the hearts of the people was unique. "We have had grander and nobler rulers," says J. R. Green, "but none so popular as Elizabeth. The passion of love, of loyalty, of admiration, which finds its most perfect expression in the "Faery Queen," pulsed as intensely through the veins of her meanest sub-

jects. To England, during her reign of half a century, she was a virgin and a Protestant Queen, and her immorality, her absolute want of religious enthusiasm, failed utterly to blur the brightness of the national ideal." [1]

And while a man may be pardoned if the affection lavished upon him by a woman thus regarded throughout the length and breadth of the kingdom was found in some degree intoxicating, it must also be remembered that Elizabeth, with all her faults and follies, swayed not seldom by sordid passions, and the dupe not less of her own vanity than of those whose interest it was to pander to it, was nevertheless possessed of gifts well calculated to dazzle one whose versatility, whose ready wit and keen intellect corresponded in many ways to her own. It was not upon the ground of sentiment alone that they met. If Elizabeth had all the littlenesses which are commonly regarded as specially feminine, she also possessed the qualities out of which a great sovereign is shaped; and in this latter capacity—with her mind, like his, bent upon the aggrandisement of England—she must have made a powerful appeal to Raleigh's imagination, as well as to a brain which often took precedence of his heart.

Furthermore, while genuine admiration for the Queen, combined probably with a certain degree

[1] *Short History of the English People*, p. 366.

of attachment to the woman, went to make the position he occupied with regard to her a different one from that filled by a favourite who, like Essex, seems to have felt little of either, it must also be remembered that Raleigh was very human; and that to a man of small fortune and moderate position, yet of far-reaching and eager ambition, alike patriotic and personal, the temptation to subordinate means to ends by making use of the Queen's favour to realise his projects and materialise his dreams might well be irresistible. Raleigh at any rate did not find it possible to resist it. His history for the years following his Irish campaign was the history of the Queen's favourite.

Those years, preceding as they did the great national triumph of the defeat of the Spanish Armada, were, so far as Raleigh was concerned, phenomenally uneventful. With occasional absences, such as that during which he formed one of the escort which accompanied Elizabeth's rejected suitor, the Duke of Anjou, to the Low Countries, he spent them in attendance on the Queen, residing, when not actually at court, first at Islington, then a rural suburb, and later on, as his means increased, at Durham House, near the river, the sequestrated palace of the Bishops of Durham, leased to him by Elizabeth.

Although his predecessors in the Queen's affections, Leicester and Hatton, still enjoyed a certain

RALEIGH'S HOUSE AT ISLINGTON

amount of her favour, there can be no doubt that it was by Raleigh's influence that she was during these years chiefly swayed. The greatest personages at court sought his good offices. Burghley begged his intercession on behalf of his graceless son-in-law; and when Leicester—absent in the Netherlands—had temporarily incurred the Queen's displeasure, and Raleigh had been suspected of foul play towards his early patron, Elizabeth herself was at the pains to vindicate his loyalty by hastening to inform the earl, through Walsingham, "that, upon her honour, the gentleman hath done good offices for you."

Raleigh's own fortunes, meanwhile, were rapidly rising, and the Queen's favour had already found substantial expression. Licences to export woollen goods, a grant of the Farming of Wines, the Wardenship of the Stannaries, the Lieutenancy of Cornwall, the Vice-Admiralty of Cornwall and Devon, and lastly, in 1587, the Captaincy of the Queen's Guard, with Knighthood—all these honours and gifts were conferred upon him in succession; while when Babington's execution on the charge of high treason left his large estates forfeited to the Crown they most of them passed into the favourite's possession.

In Ireland, too, he had become a large landed proprietor in the counties of Cork, Waterford and Tipperary, by means of a grant from the Queen, to

the amount of some twelve thousand acres, of a portion of the confiscated Desmond estates. Whatever may be thought of the species of wholesale robbery of which this was an instance, Raleigh at least was not indifferent to the responsibilities involved in the ownership of property in a country sunk into a condition which he himself described as "the common woe," and he took measures at once to ensure the cultivation of the land by transplanting a certain number of tenants from his own native West country. It is said, too, that it was upon his estates that the potato was first grown, so that Ireland is not without a debt of gratitude towards the man to whom in other respects she owes a debt of another nature.

While, however, the Queen was thus lavish in the bestowal of her favours, it is probable that an even greater source of wealth was supplied by the huge gambling enterprises on which, during these and later years, he staked sums so large. "In accordance with the manners of the age"—thus it is described by a biographer—"he declared a private war against Spain." In other words, he engaged in a series of freebooting enterprises on an enormous scale; fitting out, either singly or in partnership with others, now one or two vessels, now whole fleets, which, commanded by his captains —since he himself was tied to the court—laid wait for the ships of Spain laden with rich cargoes from

the West, brought home, when successful, the freight to England and put the prisoners up to ransom. Such expeditions were recognised means of acquiring wealth, Elizabeth herself being not above sharing in them; while Cecil will be found later on—though on that special occasion under the rose—a partner in an enterprise of the kind.

If, however, Raleigh loved and sought money, he spent it with a spendthrift's hand. His dress, even at a day when extravagance in that direction was common, was notorious for its magnificence, and a contemporary Jesuit, describing—not probably without exaggeration—the "darling of the English Cleopatra," mentions in especial that his shoes alone were valued at over six thousand gold pieces.

Nor was it in ostentation and display alone that his riches were spent. He had not, in the life of a courtier, lost sight of the great schemes upon which his heart was set; and during these years of prosperity he was constantly endeavouring to realise the dream which haunted him to the very foot of the scaffold—the establishment of a larger England across the seas. As early as 1583 he laid out £2,000, at least, in equipping the *Ark Ralegh*, to form one of a fleet to be commanded by Sir Humphrey Gilbert on an exploring expedition; although in the end his own vessel was debarred from taking part in the voyage by a fever which,

breaking out among the crew, necessitated its return to Plymouth: "the reason I could never understand," says a puzzled historian.[1] "Sure I am, no cost was spared by their owner, Master Ralegh, in setting them forth. Therefore I leave it unto God."

It was in this expedition that Newfoundland was taken possession of in the name of the Queen. Calamity, however, pursued those who took part in it, culminating in the death of Gilbert himself and the loss of his ship; the last glimpse obtained of the ill-fated explorer showing him "seated abaft with a book in his hand," cheering the doomed crew with the reminder that "we are as near to Heaven by sea as by land."

The loss of his brother must have been a heavy blow to Raleigh. He was not, however, to be disheartened. Obtaining from the Queen a renewal of the charter which had been held by Sir Humphrey, he was thereby formally empowered to discover any lands not actually in the possession of a Christian prince, and to hold the same for his own benefit and that of his heirs, on condition that a fifth part of all gold and silver so obtained should be reserved to the Crown; and expedition after expedition was despatched by him with the object of annexing and colonising such lands. For it must always be remembered that, in spite of failure and

[1] Hayes in *Hayluyt*, vol. iii., p. 190.

disappointment, it was colonisation, and only secondarily gold and riches, which was the chief end of Raleigh's exploring projects. "I shall yet live to see it an English nation," he wrote later on of that Virginia of which, named thus in honour of the Queen, the discovery belongs to these years; retaining a confidence in ultimate success even after nine several expeditions had practically resulted in failure, and though, "when he wrote these words to Sir Robert Cecil, England, it is to be remembered, nowhere visibly possessed even the beginnings of a colony." [1] It was in such matters as these that the imagination of the poet directed and upheld the zeal of the adventurer.

To this period belongs also the importation—of altogether incalculable importance—into England of both potatoes and tobacco. On his estate in Ireland Raleigh introduced the first, brought home by some of his own captains from Carolina; while, though the practice of smoking was not initiated by him, it was he who made it the fashion at court. In these halcyon days it is said that Elizabeth would sit beside him while he smoked his silver pipe; and to his fidelity to the habit witness is borne by Aubrey when he mentions—doubtless at least repeating a common report—that on his day of execution Raleigh "tooke a pipe of tobacco a little before he went to the scaffold, which some formall persons were scandalized at."

[1] E. Edwards, *Life of Ralegh*, vol. i., p. 92.

Doubtless these years of favour and success must have been pleasant. Yet, notwithstanding the varied interests and occupations with which they were filled, it is impossible not to entertain a suspicion that the adventurer *par excellence* of his day must have chafed against the fetters which compelled him to act by deputy alone at sea. Forced, however, to remain for the most part at home, he did not content himself with the life of an idle man. As member of Parliament, to which he was returned as knight of the shire for Devon in 1585, he took an active part in the business of the House; while as Warden of the Stannaries his duties were performed with so much zeal and assiduity that long after he was in his grave the Cornish mines were worked under the regulations which he had put in force, and which, while safeguarding the interests of the Crown, were designed to better the condition of the labourers. The rough West-country people, like his followers by land and sea, loved him, and he deserved his popularity.

But at court he was not popular. The position of a favourite invites hostility, nor was Raleigh the man to disarm his enemies by a policy of conciliation. He was always in too much haste to reach his goal to take any but the direct path. His pride was a proverb. "His næve (blemish) was," says Aubrey, "that he was damnably proud. Old Sir Robert Harley, of Brampton Brian Castle (who

knew him), would say, 'twas a great question who was the proudest, Sr. W. or Sr. Thomas Overbury, but the difference that was, was judged on Sr. Thomas' side." [1] His self-confidence came near to arrogance. The Earl of Northumberland complained that he desired to seem to be able to sway all men's courses. He had never mastered the art of compromise or the equally important one of seeming to follow where in truth he led. It is probable that the man who had so ill filled the post of a subordinate in Ireland was no better fitted for co-operation in a higher sphere, and it is a significant fact that Elizabeth, sagacious alike in her choice of instruments and in the uses to which she put them, never gave him a seat at the Council Board.

Whatever might be the cause of it, he has been described as, in 1587, filling the place of the "best hated man of the world in court, city and country."

What Raleigh himself felt about his unpopularity remains unknown. By no word, written or spoken, is it upon record that he made allusion to it. But it would be rash from his silence to infer indifference, since to speak least of what comes nearest home is so common a practice that it may almost stand as an axiom of human intercourse. When a man pours a hundred grievances into your ear it is

[1] Aubrey, *Lives of Eminent Men.*

not unsafe to assume that he is silent about the very one that aches worst at his heart, and his confidences are often only so many outworks surrendered in order to concentrate the strength of the garrison within.

Whether he regarded the fact with disquiet, or with contemptuous indifference, or whether, engrossed in the great plans and projects of which his imagination was full, and strong in the favour of the Queen, he forgot to take it into account at all, his unpopularity was a factor that no man in his position could wisely afford to despise. Among the courtiers there were probably few who were not looking eagerly forward to the day when he in his turn should find a supplanter. The Cecil faction regarded him with distrust as an adherent of Leicester; while Leicester, for his part, could not be expected to look kindly upon his own successor in the Queen's good graces. Both parties would have rejoiced in his decline. And presently a cloud, though at first scarcely bigger than a man's hand, rose upon the horizon. It was due to the presence at court of a handsome, petulant, wayward boy of twenty.

The first indications of a competitor for the capricious affections of Elizabeth must, one would think, have caused serious anxiety to the favourite who for some five years had reigned supreme. It is strange, however, how often in their forecasts

the most sagacious of men contrive to exempt themselves from the common doom, and it may be that Raleigh, clear-sighted as he was, had failed to lay his reckoning with the inevitable end of such a connection as was his with the Queen. Perhaps, too, he may have made the mistake—not an uncommon one—of underrating his rival, conceiving it impossible that the chasm separating a woman of fifty-five from a lad under twenty-one could be so bridged as to make the influence to be exercised by the latter a serious factor to be taken into account.

If so, he was to learn his mistake. Essex was a rival whom no man could afford to despise. It is true that to those who look back upon his short and ill-starred career, the memory of his wild and treasonable schemes, his headstrong passions, his unreasonable jealousies, his abuse of the affection lavished on him by Elizabeth, has often obscured or blotted out the recollection of the noble qualities and the brilliant gifts which dazzled eyes as penetrating as those of Bacon, and went far to explain, if not to excuse, the Queen's infatuation. But others have taken a truer view. "He was a man," says a writer whose authority on the history of those times carries as much weight as any, "of so many gifts and so many virtues, that even now when his defects and the issues to which they carried him are fully known, it still seems

possible that under more favourable accidents he might have realised all the promise of his morning. . . . He must have seemed in the eyes of Bacon like the hope of the world." [1]

Whether or no, as it has been stated, the boy had been brought forward by his step-father, Leicester, with the deliberate intention of using him to supply a counter-influence to that of Raleigh, it was to the credit of the future favourite that he did not at once take kindly to the office. As a child of ten he had refused the kiss which Elizabeth would have bestowed upon him, and there seemed at first a possibility of a repetition of the scene.

The dislike, however, with which from the first he regarded Raleigh was no doubt a powerful incentive to do his best in the matter of supplanting him, and he must soon have thrown himself with ardour into the enterprise; since, as early as May, 1587, Anthony Bagot, a friend of the young earl's, was writing to his father of the Queen that "when she is abroad nobody near her but my Lord of Essex, and at night my Lord is at cards, or one game or another, till the birds sing in the morning."

It is not impossible that, at this stage at least, the humours of the wayward boy had a charm for

[1] James Spedding, *Lord Bacon's Letters and Life*, vol. i., p. 106.

the woman to whom everybody else deferred; and that his fits of ill-temper, and the caprices which matched her own, had a novelty which recommended to her the lad who dared to indulge them. An account given by Essex himself of one of the quarrels which were afterwards so frequent between the ill-assorted couple furnishes a graphic picture of the terms upon which at this early date they stood, while it also betrays plainly enough the sentiments with which he regarded Raleigh. It was while the Queen was on a visit at North Hall that the scene had taken place described by Essex himself in a letter to his friend, Edward Dyer. Taking offence at some slight he conceived Elizabeth to have put upon his sister, he had first reproached her bitterly; and then, declining to accept her excuses, had proceeded to charge her with the "true cause" of her conduct, "which was only to please that knave Ralegh, for whose sake I saw she would both grieve me and my love, and disgrace me in the eye of the world. From thence she came to speak of Ralegh; and it seemed she could not well endure anything to be spoken against him; and, taking hold of one word 'disdain,' she said there was 'no such cause why I should disdain him.' This speech did move me so much that, as near as I could, I did describe to her what he had been and what he was." So the altercation had gone on, Raleigh

the chief bone of contention, the boy's jealousy finding vent in saying, "of grief and choler, as much against him as he could"; the letter in which the report is contained ending in a dark threat that the Queen shall see if she is able to drive the writer to be friends with Raleigh or whether "other extremities" will not be rather the result of her conduct.

The "extremities" to which he had in fact resorted had been to leave the house at midnight, taking with him the sister who had been the original cause of dispute; and to set off the following day for the coast, intending to cross to the Low Countries, a plan promptly frustrated by Elizabeth, who sent off a messenger in hot haste to capture and bring back the truant.

If, however, Essex's fortunes were rising, and Raleigh's in a measure on the decline, Elizabeth was not yet disposed to forego the attendance of the latter.

The predominance of one favourite was not always equivalent to the dismissal of his predecessor. In 1585, when Raleigh's own influence was at its height, she had experienced so sudden and violent a return of her waning passion for Leicester—just then appointed to the command of the troops to be sent to the Netherlands—as to cause her to cancel his leave of absence and countermand the preparations for war. The letter

in which Leicester, naturally indignant at her change of purpose and ignorant of its motive, describes the explanation he had received from Elizabeth on repairing to court is both curious and touching.

"I find her Majesty," he wrote, "very desirous to stay me. She makes the cause only the doubtfulness of her own self, by reason of her often disease taking her of late, and this last night worst of all. She used very pitiful words to me: she shall not live and would not have me from her. You can consider what manner of persuasions these must be to me from her, and therefore I would not say much for any matter, but did comfort her as much as I could."[1]

In that very same year, too, accused by Heneage, on Christopher Hatton's behalf, of the greater grace shown to her new favourite, she had made a pretence of resenting the charge, and, in Heneage's words, reporting the affair to his principal, had "used great bitterness of speech towards Raleigh," saying that "she had rather see him hanged than equal him with you, or that the world should think she did so."[2]

Both these occurrences had taken place when Raleigh's influence was supreme, and no doubt, now that he too was superseded by a newer

[1] 29th September, 1585.
[2] Nicolas, *Life of Hatton*, p. 415.

caprice, she would have wished in turn to retain him at her side, though in a secondary place. But it must have been a painful position—it is to be wished that he had met it with more dignity by a voluntary withdrawal from the unworthy rivalship, especially to a man so "damnably proud" as Elizabeth's Captain of the Guard—to stand by and be a witness of the Queen's growing infatuation, while conscious all the time of the malevolent satisfaction of his many enemies, and of the eagerness with which they were watching for every fresh sign of Elizabeth's declining favour.

Straws indicate the direction of the current; and the insolence of Tarleton, the fool, as from behind the Queen's chair he watched the cards at which she and Raleigh played, is an example of how each and all waited their opportunity to precipitate his fall.

"See how the Knave commands the Queen!" said the licensed jester, as he looked on at the game; whereat it is said that Elizabeth, jealous of her reputation for independence, frowned.

It was true that her patience, never inexhaustible, was even at this early stage often sorely tried by Essex; and on one occasion, when in a fit of passion and jealousy caused by some token of her favour accorded to Charles Blount he had fought the latter in a duel, she is recorded as exclaiming that "By God's death, it were fitting

SIR WALTER RALEIGH, CAPTAIN OF THE QUEEN'S GUARD

some one should take him down and teach him better manners, or there were no rule with him"; but her affection always got the better of her reason, and by December, 1587, he had been raised to the post of Master of the Horse.

So matters stood when the news of the preparations being made on an immense scale by Spain for the invasion of England forced the Queen to turn her attention, for a time at least, to more important matters than what, for fault of a better name, must be called her love affairs.

CHAPTER IV

1588–1590

The Invincible Armada—The Catholic persecution—Raleigh's part in the preparations for defence—Defeat of the Armada—Portuguese expedition—Reprisals—Ireland—Raleigh as a poet—Return to court.

THE year 1588—the year of the Armada—was come. To all it had been apparent that Philip of Spain was gathering up his strength for some great blow, and it was natural enough that little doubt should be entertained as to the power at which it was to be directed.

The persecution of the Catholics, and in particular of the priests belonging to the Jesuit mission, is considered by Green to have been the immediate cause of the invasion. The thoroughness and success with which the missionaries had accomplished their work was their crime, and it was heavily visited. Hundreds perished in prison or on the scaffold. Reconciliation with Rome was thereby arrested, "but the work which the priests had effected could not be undone . . . and the English

Catholics were severed more hopelessly than ever from the national Church. But the effect of this bloodshed on the world without was far more violent and productive of wider and greater results. The torture and death of the Jesuit martyrs sent a thrill of horror through the whole Catholic Church, and roused at last into action the sluggish hostility of Spain." [1]

In England the Catholics were reasonably enough suspected of looking forward with hopeful anticipation to the expected invasion, and preparations for keeping in check malcontents at home, as well as for defending the country by land and sea, were being actively carried forward. In the previous year Drake had delivered his warning to Burghley. "Assuredly," he wrote, "there never was heard of or known so great preparations as the King of Spain hath and daily maketh ready for the invasion of England. . . . It is very necessary that all possible preparations for defence be speedily made;" while the writer himself had forthwith started for Cadiz, with thirty small vessels under his command, burnt the store-ships and galleys in the harbour, and stormed the ports of the Faro.

It was an exploit which would have been after Raleigh's own heart, and of which the hero must have won his envy. But his own work had lain in England, and it is only in July, 1588, that he seems

[1] Green's *Short History of the English People*, p. 402.

to have been afloat and in actual collision with the Spanish forces. It is curious that it is precisely during this year, when his activity is certain to have been great, that information with regard to his movements is scanty, the part which he took in the struggle itself being mainly left to conjecture. So little indeed is known of his personal share in it that it will be well, in this place, to pass over as briefly as possible, and in spite of its national importance, the great Spanish disaster.

As early as September, 1587, Raleigh was engaged in superintending the repair of the fortifications at Portsmouth;[1] while in the following March he was at work in the Council Chamber, settling, in conjunction with the Queen's other advisers, upon a general plan of defence.[2] About this time he was likewise joining with Drake in pressing upon those in authority the bold policy of taking the initiative in the struggle which was plainly at hand, by proceeding with the English fleet to Spain, there to attempt the destruction of the armaments of the enemy, with their arsenals and stores, before they could put out to sea. Whether or no the project was as wise as it was daring, it did not find favour in the necessary quarters, and the arrival of the Spanish fleet was awaited at home.

In the West country, Raleigh's own special pro-

[1] State Papers Office. [2] *Ibid.*

vince, he had been busy organising levies, and one of his only letters of this date extant gives an account of the difficulties there experienced in raising a body of 2,000 foot and 200 horse, many local authorities considering that the cost, if not at least in part defrayed by the Treasury, would prove too grievous a burden to the country. The Earl of Bath, Sir John Gilbert and Sir Richard Grenville—the last two kinsmen of Raleigh's own —took, he observes, a different view, "being more zealous in religion and her majesty's service," and thought the thing very feasible.

The fate of the Armada is too well known for the story to need repetition here. During the early part of the eventful year Raleigh was paying a visit to his Irish estates; but it has been seen that by March he was present in London at the deliberations of the Council, and in July he was receiving a report from his deputies in the West of the preparations for defence which were being carried on in Cornwall and Devonshire—the signatories to the document being all three his "loving kinsmen." His presence at the engagement which took place on July 23rd has been very commonly asserted; but though it is difficult to believe that he would have consented to be absent from the fleet at such a juncture, there is no positive evidence to the contrary, unless the rewards bestowed upon him when the war was concluded be accepted as

proof. It is a significant fact, however, that in the distribution amongst the English admirals of prisoners of rank Raleigh's share was equal to that awarded to Drake.

With these meagre materials for forming a conjecture as to the part taken personally by Raleigh in one of the principal events of Elizabeth's reign it is necessary to be content; nor does he again emerge from the mist until the war was practically at an end.

The months which followed were, however, active ones with him. All England was eager for retaliation, and in so congenial a duty Raleigh was not likely to be backward. During the year 1589 and those which succeeded it he was constantly engaged in fitting out privateer vessels which, under the command of his chosen captains, were sent to wage "private warfare" against the national enemy.

It is said—and the charge was likely enough true—that such freebooting officers were not overscrupulous in examining into the ownership of the vessels of which they found themselves in a position to make prizes; and in 1589 the Queen was issuing commands that "two barks of Cherbourg," belonging to "two of the French King's subjects," which had been taken possession of on Raleigh's behalf should be restored to their lawful proprietors, while Sir Walter and his men are further

cautioned to be more careful for the future in their choice of victims.[1] In the same way complaints were again preferred against him some three years later, the sufferers on this occasion being the owners of a ship sailing under Dutch colours. Raleigh in this case, at least, took the part of his captain with zeal and ardour; maintaining, with what truth it is difficult to determine, that the aggrieved parties were merely "Spaniards in disguise, seeking the good and profit of the common enemy, with the loss and hindrance of such of Her Majesty's subjects as, to their great charge, do venture upon reprisals."[2]

During this same year, of 1589, Raleigh was at sea himself in a more regular capacity than that of the leader of a company of freebooters. The solicitations of Don Antonio, King of Portugal, for eight years an exile in England, had furnished Elizabeth with an opportunity of retaliating on Philip by sending an expedition with the ostensible object of replacing Antonio upon the throne. The attempt, under the command of Drake by sea, and Norreys on land, resulted in little substantial success. The Portuguese testified no desire to reinstate their late sovereign, and the enterprise, so far as its avowed object was concerned, resulted

[1] *Register of Privy Council.*

[2] "The answer of Sir Walter Ralegh to the complaint of Albert Reynardson and others," *Lansdowne MS.*

in failure. A large quantity of plunder, however, fell into English hands both on land and sea; by which Raleigh, who had joined the expedition—like Essex and many other gentlemen—in the capacity of a volunteer, profited to no small extent.

A gold chain, presented by the Queen in recognition of his services on this occasion, must have been given to the sea-captain rather than to the friend; for about this time a cloud had arisen between himself and Elizabeth, as to the origin and duration of which we are once more left in doubt. That to Essex, and to his persistent hostility, it was directly or indirectly due, there can scarcely be a doubt. Shortly after the dispersion of the Armada the young earl had sent Raleigh a challenge, on what pretext is not known; and though the Council intervened to hush the matters up, lest, coming to the Queen's ears, "it might injure the earl," it was one more token of the nature of the relations existing between them; which, the Queen's infatuation being what it was, must have made the older man's position at court a precarious one. By August, 1589, the newer favourite had so far triumphed that Sir Francis Allen was writing to Anthony Bacon that "my Lord of Essex hath chased Mr. Ralegh from the court and hath confined him in Ireland."

No doubt, whether right or wrong, Allen gave expression to the interpretation generally put upon

Raleigh's absence. The latter himself, however, with the evident heat of a proud man, gave a different explanation of it. "Cousin George," he says, writing in December to Sir George Carew, "For my retreat from the Court it was upon good cause to take order for my prize. If in Ireland they think that I am not worth the respecting they shall much deceive themselves. I am in place to be believed not inferior to any man, to pleasure or displeasure the greatest; and my opinion is so received and believed as I can anger the best of them. And, therefore, if the deputy be not as ready to stead me as I have been to defend him,—be it as it may."[1]

The letter, probably written from London after his visit to Ireland had terminated, speaks also of "that nearness to her Majesty which still I enjoy, and never more." It is indeed likely enough that any coolness there had been was followed by a restoration to favour. In the meantime his residence in Ireland, to whatever cause it had been due, must have had its compensations. The account of it reads like a sort of idyllic interlude in the middle of the life of action and business and money making and court intrigue in which he was so deeply engaged.

There can be little doubt that in the course of the Irish campaign, eight years earlier, Raleigh and

[1] *Carew Papers*, Lambeth Palace.

Edmund Spenser, Lord Grey's secretary, must have met, although there is no positive evidence to that effect. On Raleigh's present visit to Ireland, he found the poet, as a sharer to the amount of some three thousand acres in the partition of confiscated estates, settled at Kilcolman Castle, between Mallow and Limerick; and in the old half-ruined house of the Desmonds the two inaugurated a friendship.

It is no wonder, if community of tastes be a short cut to intimacy, that it should have been so. During the years which had passed since Raleigh had served in Munster many fresh occupations and a multiplicity of interests had crowded his life. But of the fact that he had found time to establish a literary reputation proof is afforded by the number of writers who, by dedication or otherwise, sought to associate his name with their works.

His extant poems, it is true, are few. When the world went well with him he had little time to give to the making of verses. He never collected his poems; many of them he did not even care to claim; so that much uncertainty has prevailed concerning the authorship of some of those ascribed to him; while of a lengthy composition, written, as it is supposed, about this date and named *Cynthia* in honour of the Queen, only one book has been preserved. And though Puttenham, in his *Art of English Poesy*, published at this time, includes

him amongst the poets of the day, observing that "for ditty and amorous ode, I find Sir Walter Raleigh's vein most lofty, insolent [original?] and passionate," it has been pointed out that to his misfortunes is due the best of his work. Thus "The Soul's Errand," whatever may have been the precise date of its composition, was manifestly written in a spirit of bitterness and revolt against that world with which he had at other times so much reason to be content; while "The Pilgrimage" belongs to a period of actual disgrace. "His imprisonments," says a critic, "were in fact his salvation. Through the Traitor's Gate he passed to a tranquillity and thoughtfulness for which there seemed no opportunity outside. In his cell in the White Tower his soul found and enjoyed a real freedom."[1] It is the judgment of a man of letters; nor can the debt owed by literature to James I. and his advisers be denied. But it must not be forgotten that Raleigh's own estimate of the compensations afforded by captivity may have been a different one, and that, in point of fact, he never ceased to beat against his bars.

The passing cloud which, obscuring Elizabeth's favour, left him leisure to turn his attention for the moment to poetry was a different matter, and it, at least, must have had a silver lining.

Lismore Castle, Raleigh's Irish home, was not far

[1] Professor Hales, in *The English Poets*, vol. i., p. 487.

from Kilcolman, and it was at the last that the meeting took place recorded by Spenser himself. On a certain day, he says,—

I sat, as was my trade,
Under the foot of Mole, that mountain hoare,
Keeping my sheep among the coolly shade
Of the green alders, by the Mulla's shore;
There a strange shepherd chanced to find me out,—
Whether allured with my pipe's delight,
Whose pleasing sound yshrilled far about,
Or whether led by chance, I know not right,—
Whom, when I asked from what place he came
And how he hight, himself he did ycleepe
The shepherd of the Ocëan by name,
And said he came from the main-sea deep,—
He sitting me beside in that same shade
Provoked me to play some pleasant fit,
And, when he heard the music which I made,
He found himself full greatly pleased at it:
Yet emuling my pipe, he took in hond
My pipe,—before that emuled of many,—
And played thereon (for well that skill he conned):
Himself as skilful in that art as any.
He piped, I sung; and, when he sung, I piped;
By change of turns each making other merry:
Neither envying other, nor envied;
So piped we, until we both were weary.[1]

The scene must have come near to taking on the complexion of a dream to the man who had come straight from his life of turmoil and adventure, of dangers run and risks encountered, of strenuous endeavour, now crowned with success, now ending in failure, from combating open foes

[1] "Colin Clout's Come Home Again."

abroad and secret ones at home. The time too was propitious for snatching such a breathing space in the race of life. "Men felt as they feel after a great peril, a great effort, a great relief; as the Greeks did after Salamis and Platæa, as our fathers did after Waterloo. . . . One of those solemn moments had just passed when men see before them the course of the world turned one way, when it might have been turned another."[1]

At the moment too there was little, one would think, to make Raleigh, notwithstanding his unquiet and restless temperament, eager to return to the scene of active life. In the rhymes which had alternated with Spenser's in their friendly rivalry,—

> His song was all a lamentable lay
> Of great unkindnesse and of usage hard,
> Of Cynthia the Ladie of the Sea,
> Which from her presence faultlesse him debard.

It was inevitable, however, that before long his eyes should turn to the future, and thinking of the court and of the honour there paid to genius it was natural enough that he should have wished, perceiving the beauty of Spenser's work, to take him where he would receive due appreciation. That a man possessed of such gifts should remain buried in the wilds of Ireland was not to be permitted; while it has likewise been sug-

[1] R. W. Church, *Spenser*, pp. 94, 95.

gested that the idea of presenting the poet as a peace-offering to Elizabeth may have had some share in his desire to introduce his friend at court.

Whether his anticipations were justified and the gift he brought in his hand had anything to do with his restoration to favour, we are ignorant, but it is certain that that restoration took place; and it has been seen that in December he was writing to his cousin of that nearness to her Majesty which he enjoyed, and never more.

That nearness had suffered interruption, and to eyes as clear-sighted as Raleigh's the interruption must have contained alike a prophecy and a warning. At present, however, all was once more sunshine, and it was through Raleigh's patronage that Spenser first gained Elizabeth's favour—

> "The Shepherd of the Océan," quoth he,
> "Unto that goddess' grace me first entranced.
> And to mine oaten pipe inclined her ear,"—

while it was also mainly due to his influence that the "Faëry Queen" first saw the light. It seems, in fact, that from Raleigh's return to court, somewhere before the end of 1589, until his disgrace more than two years later, the favour shown him by Elizabeth showed no serious diminution.

CHAPTER V

1590–1592

At court again—Changes there—Essex's marriage—Raleigh interferes in favour of religious toleration—Panama expedition planned—Elizabeth Throgmorton—Disgrace and imprisonment—Provisional release—*Madre de Dios*.

BY the time Raleigh was once again established at court, certain changes had taken place among the influences there at work. Leicester, to whose party—rather, at least, than to that of the Cecils—he had belonged, was dead; but, to set against any loss he might thus have sustained, Walsingham and Hatton, both his enemies, had likewise gone their way behind the scenes. Essex, tired already, by his own account, of the post of favourite, was playing a dangerous game by entering into secret relations with James of Scotland, Elizabeth's probable successor; while his marriage in 1590 to Frances Walsingham, Sidney's widow, had roused Elizabeth's indignation, regarding it, as she did, not only in the light of an offence to herself, but as a disgrace to the young earl, Lady Sidney being

"beneath his degree." The quarrel, like others, had been patched up, the bride "living very retired in her mother's house," and being ignored at court; but the temporary alienation of the Queen from his most formidable rival had no doubt operated in Raleigh's favour.

He seems at any rate to have been reinstated in his old position, and to have been once more regarded as a powerful intercessor by those who desired to gain the Queen's ear.

It is curious to find that he and Essex were about this time linked together in the same cause; since in a letter of 1591 it is stated that "the Puritans hope well of the Earl of Essex, who makes Raleigh join him as an instrument from them to the Queen upon any partial occasion of relieving them."[1]

Whether the young earl was likely to "make" Raleigh join him in any undertaking may be doubted. Whatever action of the kind indicated was taken by his rival was probably due rather to principles of religious toleration than to any personal sympathy with a sect the members of which would have been perfectly ready to give their own approval to persecution so long as it was not directed against themselves. Of toleration, however, he was always an advocate; and he is found exerting himself at this time on behalf of a

[1] Thomas Phelipps, *Dom. Corresp., Eliz.*, Rolls House.

Puritan divine named Udal, condemned to death on account of an attack on episcopal authority; and who, though the sentence was afterwards commuted to banishment, ultimately breathed his last in one of those hospitable prisons of Elizabeth's which threw their doors open to men of such opposite faiths, and in which the heroic young Southwell, Jesuit and poet, was at this very time suffering the tortures which were only to be ended by his execution three years later.

Another client of Raleigh's—one fancies of a more congenial type—was a Captain Spring; who, unable to make good his claim to sums due from the Treasury, applied for assistance to the Captain of the Guard. To plead for money is a thankless office; nor was Elizabeth in especial likely to welcome such an application.

"When will you cease to be a beggar?" she is said to have asked Raleigh on this or some other occasion.

"When your majesty," was his ready rejoinder, "ceases to be a benefactor."

While putting forward the claims of others, Raleigh was not the man to neglect his own. It was during this period that he received from the Queen the grant of Sherborne Castle in Dorsetshire, which became his country home and upon which he lavished so much care and money. Possibly even at the time that he was soliciting

the gift he had in view the mistress who should be set over his house, for there can be no doubt that by this date, if not earlier, he had become attached to the woman who was to be his wife and to whom much of his future happiness was due—Elizabeth Throgmorton.

Elizabeth Throgmorton was an orphan, of perhaps twenty-two, and according to the scanty details which have come down to us, tall, fair-haired and blue-eyed, with an oval face. She was the daughter of Sir Nicholas Throgmorton, and maid of honour to the Queen. So much is certain. It is also certain that Raleigh loved her. But the facts attending his marriage, as well as the events preceding it, are involved in mystery. It has been asserted, partly on the evidence of a letter of very doubtful authenticity,[1] that Sir Walter Raleigh had been "two inward" with the woman he loved; and the calumny, if calumny it was, finds a place in Camden's history. With regard to this charge it is impossible to speak with certainty; but it should be remembered that, granting that the accusation gained currency at the time, the court, for the most part hostile to Raleigh, would have been ready to put the worst construction upon his actions, and eager to circulate any report injurious to his reputation. That the statement printed by

[1] Described in the *Dictionary of National Biography* as a "forged news-letter."

Camden during their lifetime should have been allowed by Raleigh and his wife to remain uncontradicted has been accepted as negative evidence of the truth of the accusation, but it may be that they elected to treat the slander with contempt, nor can their silence be treated as conclusive. Whatever were the facts, it is, however, unfortunately beyond doubt that Raleigh met the crisis occasioned by his relations with Elizabeth Throgmorton, of whatever nature they had been, neither with chivalry nor generosity.

It was a singularly unpropitious moment, so far as he was concerned, at which to incur the Queen's displeasure; and if the strength of a temptation be held to mitigate the guilt of yielding to it, the inducement to throw dust in Elizabeth's eyes may be allowed its weight.

The passion for undertaking enterprises partly piratical or buccaneering, but carried out under the patronage of the Crown, and in which the Queen herself was a sharer—venturing as little as might be while claiming the largest possible returns—was at its height. It was upon the high seas that Englishmen, frequently of rank and position, sought at once fortune, fame and excitement. The ships of Spain, laden with fabulous wealth, were everywhere to be met with and everywhere were fair prey.

As lately as during the preceding year an im-

portant expedition had been despatched to the Azores, in which Raleigh was to have held the post of vice-admiral; but in which, probably owing to the reluctance of the Queen to part with him, he had after all taken no personal share. The venture had met with but indifferent success, and in the course of it took place the celebrated sea-fight in which Sir Richard Grenville, Raleigh's cousin, commanding the *Revenge*, met his end. "Here die I," were his last words as he lay wounded to death on board the enemy's ship, "here die I, Richard Grenville, with a joyful and quiet mind, for that I have ended my life, as a soldier ought to do, fighting for his country, Queen, religion and honour." The speech—men died dramatically as well as gallantly in those days—was made in the language of the conquerors who stood around him.

In his "Report of the Truth of the Fight about the Isles of the Azores," published at first anonymously, Raleigh gave a description of the affair; and it may well be that a desire to avenge Grenville's death combined with other motives to increase his eagerness to lead in person an expedition against Grenville's foes. At any rate in the planning of such an expedition on a scale of unusual magnitude, during the winter of 1591-92, he had taken an important part, the double object in view consisting of an attack upon the Spanish settlement at Panama,

and the capture of a fleet of richly laden caracks known to be returning from the East Indies to Seville. Of this expedition the chief command had been bestowed upon Raleigh, while he had ventured in it, like the recklest gambler he was, not only all his own available money, but further sums borrowed for the purpose. Success being under these circumstances of vital importance to him, it was natural that, with the self-confidence which was so marked a feature in his character, he should have been anxious to keep the conduct of the enterprise in his own hands.

Preparations had been actively pushed forward, and by February, 1592, the fleet—consisting of two war-ships furnished by the Queen and thirteen other vessels equipped by the adventurers, of whom Raleigh was chief—was ready to set sail.

Obstacles, however, including a prolonged spell of contrary winds, delayed the start; while Elizabeth, ignorant of her favourite's offence, was making strenuous endeavours to induce him to relinquish into other hands the charge of the expedition and to remain at her side.

To Raleigh it must have been a time of supreme anxiety, conscious as he was of the danger of discovery; and a letter to Sir Robert Cecil, with whom he was at the moment on friendly terms, shows both that he was aware that rumour was busy with his name, and also that he was prepared at all

costs to give the lie to a charge likely to prove so damning to his fortunes.

Dating from Chatham and dealing first with business, he goes on to say that the Queen had his promise that, should he succeed in inducing the companies to follow Frobisher, he would relinquish to him the command, only accompanying the fleet some fifty leagues; though loath to venture what he had spent on another man's fortune. Then follows the mention of the matter which must have been prominent in his mind. "I mean not to come away," he says, "as they say I will, for fear of a marriage, and I know not what. If any such thing were, I would have imparted it to yourself before any man living, and therefore I pray believe it not, and I beseech you to suppress, what you can, any such malicious report. For I protest before God, there is none on the face of the earth that I would be fastened unto."[1]

The denial was explicit. It is possible—in extenuation of what must otherwise be accounted a deliberate falsehood—that, notwithstanding what had passed between the writer and Elizabeth Throgmorton, he had not yet definitely determined on the sacrifice of his prospects and present position involved in a marriage. The wedding, whenever it took place, was strictly private, and it is impossible to assign a date to it. At the best, however,

[1] To Robert Cecil, from Chatham, 10th March, 1592.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

it cannot be denied that, whatever was the stage now reached by the affair, it must have gone too far to render justifiable the attempt on Raleigh's part to elude the consequences by an escape to sea which would leave his fellow culprit to bear alone the brunt of the storm following upon discovery.

Wind and weather conspired to prevent the execution of his design. Before he was out of reach it is probable that the truth had become known to the Queen, and his chances of commanding the expedition were at an end.

It is not surprising that when Elizabeth learnt the terms upon which the man she had so singled out for favour stood with her maid of honour her indignation should have been hot against him. In any case unlikely to have tolerated the existence of a rival, the deception which had been practised, together with the secrecy with which the affair had been conducted, gave, had it been necessary, the point to the whole transaction. Elizabeth had not only been wounded, but—which is a thing harder to forgive—she had been made a fool of. Raleigh had been no exception to the rest of the courtiers in the matter of fulsome adulation, or of the extravagant homage it was the custom to pay at her shrine. To him, as to lesser men bred in the atmosphere of her court, such language was probably as unmeaning as the affectionate heading

of a letter. But unfortunately Elizabeth attached to it a different significance. To the woman who, at close upon sixty, not only cherished the strange craving to be loved *d'amour*, but was also a victim to the still more astonishing delusion that a passion could be commanded as easily as an attendance at court, each fresh disenchantment caused a bitterness of disappointment which, grotesque from one point of view, is from another not without pathos. Fighting her losing battle with age and decay, her impotent anger at each fresh defeat had something akin to the helpless indignation of a child. Refusing to profit by experience, she had taken Raleigh's protestations, like others of the kind, literally; and it was precisely at the moment when she had been giving inconvenient proof of her own affection by her attempts to keep him at home that she became aware that his heart belonged to another woman, to whom he had been in secret paying his addresses. It was no wonder that Elizabeth should have given free course to her resentment—the resentment alike of a jealous woman and of an injured Queen. Nor did she delay to strike.

The wind had at length taken a favourable direction; and Raleigh, in command of the fleet, had lost no time in putting out to sea. It must have been with relief that he set sail, but if he had begun to congratulate himself upon his escape his

hopes were doomed to disappointment. He had not been two days at sea when Frobisher overtook him, bearer of the Queen's orders that the command should be surrendered jointly to himself and Sir John Borough, and that Raleigh should return forthwith to England.

The summons has been diversely interpreted, some believing it to have been sent in love, while the Queen was still in ignorance of any ground of offence. There was no alternative but submission. Raleigh's obedience, however, was not promptly rendered, nor was it till Cape Finisterre had been reached that he made up his mind to relinquish his post. Information had come in which led him to alter the destination of the fleet; and abandoning the designs upon Panama, he despatched one squadron to the Azores, to waylay the vessels returning from the Indies, while another was sent to the coast of Spain, "thereby to amuse the Spanish fleet," and keep it at home. After which, yielding reluctant obedience to the Queen's behest, he returned to England, to find himself a disgraced man and to be shortly relegated to the Tower. The most sanguine anticipations of his many enemies had been fulfilled; the downfall of the favourite was complete; and Sir Edward Stafford was able presently to write, with malicious satisfaction, to Anthony Bacon: "If you have anything to do with Sir Walter Ralegh, or any love

to make to Mistress Throgmorton, at the Tower to-morrow you may speak with them."

It has been suggested that, even at this date, the marriage may have already taken place, but of evidence, either for or against the conjecture, there is none; and if it be true that Raleigh's confinement was shared by his companion in disgrace—which, one may observe in passing, does not appear at the first blush a likely form of punishment to have been inflicted by the jealous Queen—her company does not seem to have availed to reconcile him to his captivity.

No doubt the prospect of a residence of uncertain duration in the Tower, at a time when an expedition planned by himself and on the success of which his whole fortune was staked was on the high seas, was a trial which would have put a strain upon any man's powers of endurance. But Raleigh cannot be said to have borne the test well, nor were the measures taken by him to put an end to the situation such as command respect. Making every allowance for the fashions of the day, and accepting the prisoner's language as in part a pardonable compliance with the exigencies of the moment, and in part the exaggerated expression of a certain amount of genuine attachment to the person of the Queen, it must still be admitted that Raleigh overacted his part to a degree consistent neither with dignity, nor certainly with

that pride with which he was so largely credited. A man—to reverse the common saying—should have the qualities of his defects; pride should include self-respect. But both one and the other are conspicuously wanting in the methods by which Raleigh strove to reinstate himself in the royal favour.

"My heart was never broken," he wrote lamentably to Cecil, upon hearing that her Majesty was about to start on her summer progress unattended by the Captain of the Guard—"my heart was never broken till this day, that I hear the Queen goes so far off,—whom I have followed so many years with so great love and desire, in so many journeys, and am now left behind her, in a dark prison all alone. While she was yet near at hand, that I might hear of her once in two or three days, my sorrows were the less: but even now my heart is cast into the depth of all misery. I that was wont to behold her riding like Alexander, hunting like Diana, walking like Venus, the gentle wind blowing her fair hair about her pure cheeks, like a nymph; sometime sitting in the shade like a goddess; sometime singing like an angel; sometime playing like Orpheus. Behold the sorrow of the world! Once amiss, hath bereaved me of all. . . . She is gone, whom I trusted, and of me hath not one thought of mercy, nor any respect of that which was. Do with me now therefore what you list. I am more

weary of life than they are desirous I should perish."[1]

While, coming from words to deeds, it is related by Sir Arthur Gorges, an eye-witness of the scene, that, when once a royal procession was passing down the river, the prisoner not only swore that the Queen had been brought thither "to break his gall in sunder with Tantalus' torment," but carried the farce so far as to enter upon a hand-to-hand struggle with his jailer in order, by obtaining a sight of his mistress, to prevent his heart from breaking.[2]

Raleigh might have spared himself and his reputation these desperate endeavours to regain his liberty. Elizabeth proved obdurate, and he was left chafing over his enforced inactivity, it being considered, as he wrote to Lord Admiral Howard, "more profitable to punish my *great treasons* than that I should either strengthen the fleet or do many other things that lie in the ditches."[3]

It was only in September, after some eight weeks of captivity, that, for strictly practical reasons, he was permitted to leave the Tower and to enjoy a partial and provisional liberty.

The orders issued by him when compelled to

[1] To Sir R. Cecil, *Cecil Papers*, Hatfield.

[2] Sir Arthur Gorges to Sir R. Cecil, *Dom. Corresp.*, Rolls House.

[3] *Dom. Corresp., Eliz.*, Rolls House.

relinquish personal supervision of the expedition planned chiefly by himself had borne good fruit; chief amongst the results of the venture being the capture of an immense carack, the *Madre de Dios*, laden with a cargo of fabulous value.

In dividing the booty, however, trouble had arisen; and it was in order to settle disputes as to the spoil, and also to bring his authority to bear upon the half-mutinous crews who had been met on their return with the news of the imprisonment of their captain, that Raleigh was permitted to leave his place of captivity. A letter from Hawkins to Burghley remains, adroitly calculated to bring about his enfranchisement. With respect to the arrangement of the partition of the plunder, the former told the Lord Treasurer, Sir Walter Raleigh was the man wanted, nor was the Tower a convenient place in which to assemble together the necessary parties to the transaction. "I do not perceive," added the writer diplomatically, "that he hath done anything in his accounts, nor that he hath any disposition to do anything, while he is there." And it would be much to the Queen's advantage that he should be enabled to attend to these affairs.

Burghley's response was prompt. Though still in custody, Raleigh was permitted to leave his prison, and two days later was on his way to Dartmouth. The object of this short delay has been

conjectured to have had to do with the accomplishment of the marriage which, in prospective, had already proved so costly; but no evidence remains to support the surmise.

Other commissioners had preceded him to the scene of action, of whom the chief was Robert Cecil. "Her Majesty's captive comes after me," wrote the latter to his father, "but I have outrid him and will be at Dartmouth before him." [1]

Raleigh's enfranchisement had not taken place too soon. The fame of the immense carack, laden with unprecedented wealth, had drawn crowds to Dartmouth, and "pillage" was going merrily forward, the riches which should have fallen to the share of Queen and adventurers alike suffering thereby sensible diminution, and the presence of the admiral and chief adventurer being much needed to restore order to the rebellious crews. The "best hated" man in the world was loved by his sailors and dependants. "I assure you, Sir," says Cecil, describing to Sir Thomas Heneage the arrival of the prisoner at Dartmouth, "his poor servants, to the number of a hundred and forty goodly men, and all the mariners, came to him with such shouts and joy, as I never saw a man more troubled to quiet them in my life. But his heart is broken; for he is very extreme pensive longer than he is busied, in which he can toil

[1] *Dom. Corresp., Eliz.*, Rolls House.

terribly. . . . Whensoever he is saluted with congratulations for liberty, he doth answer, No; I am still the Queen of England's poor captive. I wished him to conceal it, because here it doth diminish his credit, which, I do vow to you before God, is greater among the mariners than I thought for."

The disputes concerning the apportionment of the spoil occupied much time, and bear witness to that parsimony in venturing money and eagerness in claiming it which was one of Elizabeth's unattractive features. It does not appear that Raleigh was generously dealt with in the results of an enterprise which had been mainly due to his spirit and energy. Neither is it clear when his release from custody took place, though there is no trace of his return at this time to the Tower. The Queen's indignation had had time to cool, and though she persisted in refusing him admission to her presence, she had probably reflected that to keep a man for an unlimited term in captivity would require a pretext stronger than any which had been furnished by her present captive. It is a curious and significant comment upon the arbitrary exercise of authority by which he had been committed to the Tower that no mention of this imprisonment is to be found in the registers of the Privy Council.

CHAPTER VI

1592–1595

Absence from court—Sherborne—Parliament—"Sir Walter Raleigh's School of Atheisme"—Guiana.

RALEIGH was a free man once more; but a longer time was necessary before he should be restored to the enjoyment of any measure of royal favour; and for a matter of four years he was refused admittance to the royal presence.

They were years, notwithstanding his constant efforts to regain his position at court, when he was probably as happy as at any period of his life. Though the success of his domestic arrangements was a topic upon which he may well have forborne to enlarge, so far as any communications likely to reach the Queen's ear were concerned, his marriage seems to have proved more than worth what it had cost. An heir had also been born to him—a little Walter—and at Sherborne he spent much of his time, planting his garden and beautifying his home.

No doubt at times the life, to his restless spirit, seemed dull—"Sir," he writes once to Cecil, "these

poor countries yield no news"—but upon the whole it must have been pleasant enough to compensate, at least for a time, for the lack of that constant excitement and activity which constituted in his opinion the things best worth having.

Nor were gardening and building his sole occupations. Banished as he remained from court, he did not absent himself wholly from London. He was an active member of Parliament, coming forward in especial to plead the cause of religious toleration with regard to the treatment to be accorded to the Brownist sect; and supporting principle by common sense when he demanded upon whom the maintenance of the women and children was to fall in the event of the bread-winners, as a body, being visited with death or banishment—a plea which experience may have taught him was more likely to appeal to the royal understanding than one based upon grounds of justice or mercy alone.

His own views on theological and doctrinal matters seem to have been regarded at this time with some distrust. It was a day when careful watch was kept over men's private convictions; and Raleigh was not apt to make open confession of his own. His anti-Catholicism, it is true, was above suspicion, and he doubtless conformed to the worship established by law. But his spirit was too bold to be limited by the narrow lines laid down by the sectarian dogmatism of the day. He

was addicted to speculation and counted amongst his associates men such as Marlowe, the dramatist, and the navigator Hariot, an avowed Deist; while he was also a member of a kind of debating society —stigmatised by an angry Catholic as "Sir Walter Raleigh's School of Atheisme"—in which religious and metaphysical subjects were freely discussed.

In May, 1593, so much unfavourable attention had been attracted by this coterie, that a warrant was issued for Marlowe's arrest, though the culprit died before it could take effect; while a commission of inquiry was sent to Dorsetshire to pursue investigations in the neighbourhood of Sherborne, with what result is not apparent.

The whole business, so far as Raleigh was concerned, may likely enough have been set on foot by enemies apprehensive of his restoration to favour, and eager to use any means to injure his reputation. But that he had a curiosity as to the opinions of all schools of thought was doubtless true. It is related that he once spent a whole June night in argument with an arrested Jesuit; and such discussions, carried on with men with whom he was not—as in this case—publicly known to be in disagreement, might easily be turned by skilful manipulation to his prejudice.

If, however, Raleigh was employing part of his unusual leisure in metaphysical investigation, his mind was too restlessly alert to allow him to

confine himself to regions of spiritual adventure alone; and his imagination was increasingly occupied with the thought of discoveries to be effected on a lower plane. To carry out his projects satisfactorily it was plainly necessary that he should regain his credit at court, and this consideration must have occupied an important place among the motives which led him to lose no opportunity of recalling himself to the favourable recollection of the Queen. Accordingly, he is now found submitting to her through Cecil a statement of his views concerning the policy fittest to be pursued with regard to Ireland and Scotland; or again offering, by means of his pen or otherwise, to settle, in conformity with her views, the vexed question of the succession; or sending to the Lord Admiral (June, 1594) news of the Spanish fleet and begging him to remember that "it is the Queen's honour and safety to assail and not defend," adding a proffer of his own services in a private capacity "in the place of a poor mariner or soldier."

It was clear that Elizabeth's pardon was not to be lightly won; and all his endeavours to elicit a response were met with the same discouraging silence. It was not, however, Raleigh's habit to give way to despondency; and, cast down as he might have been, it was about this very time that —vexed by contrary winds as well as by other

matters—he was writing to Cecil that "the body is wasted with toil; the purse with charge; and all things worn. Only the mind is indifferent to good fortune or to adversity." [1]

Whether or not the boast was altogether justified, the failure of the methods he had hitherto employed to regain his place in the Queen's good graces seems only to have stimulated him to fresh endeavour, and to have led to his recognition of the fact that a more powerful recommendation to favour was necessary to compel her to relax her attitude, and that his schemes of exploration and discovery would for the present have to be carried out independently of her assistance. It was, at any rate, now that his Guiana projects took definite shape.

His first step was the despatch of a vessel designed to make a preliminary recognisance of the regions he had in view; his next—a characteristic one—to keep himself before the eyes of the public by living in London in such state and magnificence as to prove, when inviting co-operation in his plans, that he was, in spite of his disgrace, no ruined man.

Nor was he without a friend at court, Sir Robert Cecil being at this time profuse in his professions of goodwill. Whether or not they were sincere, his readiness to facilitate the accomplishment of

[1] *Cecil Papers*, Hatfield.

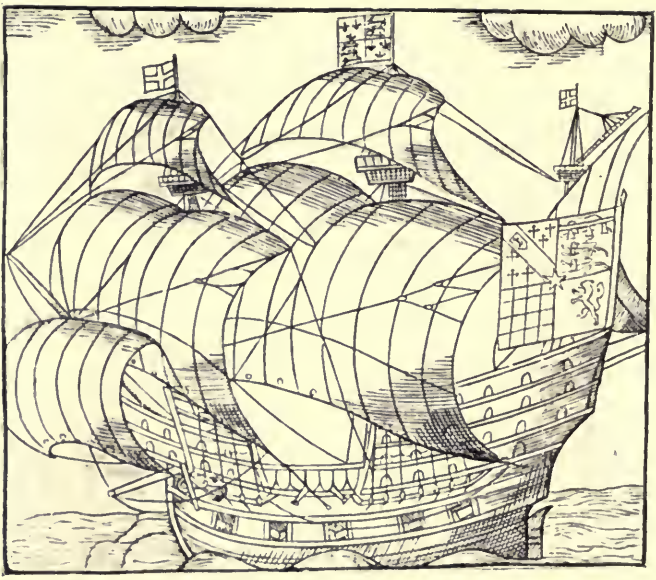
Raleigh's schemes might have been due to more than one motive. While few desired the return of the discarded favourite to court, apprehensions were always entertained that Elizabeth might so far relent as to recall him. "It is now feared by all honest men," wrote Nicholas Faunt to Anthony Bacon, in January, 1594, "that he shall presently come to the court; yet it is well withstood. God grant him some further resistance." So long as he was in another hemisphere all was safe; and men had been known to remain there. Whether such considerations had any weight with the Queen's secretary or not, he seems to have displayed much zeal in the furtherance of Raleigh's wishes, and this notwithstanding the appeals made to him by the wife of the latter to use his influence in an opposite direction.

"I hope for my sake," she wrote, "that you will rather draw Sir Walter towards the east than help him forward towards the sunset, if any respect to me or love to him be not forgotten. But every month hath his flower and every season his contentment, and you great councillors are so full of new counsels as you are steady in nothing. But we poor souls that hath bought sorrow at a high price desire and can be pleased with the same misfortune we hold, fearing alteration will but multiply misery, of which we have already felt sufficient. . . . I humbly beseech you rather stay him than

further him, by the which you shall bind me for ever." [1]

If, however, Elizabeth Throgmorton had desired a husband who should remain contentedly at home, it was not to Walter Raleigh that she should have given herself. Love, as Oldys has pointed out, which in some other great courtiers of those times was the grand business of their life, seemed only an interlude in his; and though his affection had been sufficient to cause him to brave the Queen's displeasure by making Elizabeth his wife, he was not the man to find domestic happiness, however great, all-sufficing. By the winter of 1594-95, if not before, Lady Raleigh must have become convinced of the futility of any attempts to keep him at home. His imagination had been fired, in connection with what was then called the "Empire of Guiana," with dreams of successes greater than any achieved, so far, either by himself or by any of the legion of lesser explorers infected with the fever of conquest then prevalent; of personal advancement, and of empire for England and for England's Queen to be won in those "sunset" lands which Lady Raleigh was so unwilling he should visit; and it would have taken stronger inducements than even love of wife and child to keep him back from the adventure. From this period dates his belief in that fabulous land of gold—the El Dorado of the Spaniard—

[1] *Cecil Papers*, Hatfield.



A SAILING SHIP IN THE TIME OF RALEIGH

which, to him as to so many, proved so powerful an incentive to enterprise. For though, in Raleigh's case, empire and not gold—or at least empire first and gold only secondarily—was the object of his quest, the lower motive was necessary to bring him recruits and to open the way to the nobler objects upon which his heart was set. The higher aim, however, always came first. "I could have returned a good quantity of gold ready cast," he wrote in describing his present enterprise, "if I had not shot at another mark than present profit."

Of his success in enlisting public interest in the scheme, the strength of the expedition which set sail in February, 1595—under the command, be it remembered, of a man labouring under the Queen's displeasure—is a proof. The High Admiral lent a ship, Cecil money, and many officers and gentlemen offered their services as volunteers. Raleigh, for his own part, had once more embarked almost his entire fortune on the venture, several vessels being equipped at his private cost. The royal commission he held was a comprehensive one, authorising him to offend and enfeeble the King of Spain and his subjects; to discover and subdue heathen lands; to resist and expel intruders within 200 leagues of his settlements; and to capture vessels trading within such limits. On the 6th of February, after some delay from contrary winds, the fleet set sail.

Of the fortunes of the expedition, lasting some six months, Raleigh, in his *Discovery of Guiana*, has given an account. The term was not strictly accurate, since Guiana had already been visited by seven or eight Spanish expeditions, another being even now in preparation. But so far as England was concerned it seems to have been unbroken ground; even Captain Whiddon, despatched by Raleigh as pioneer during the previous year, having encountered but indifferent success by reason of the obstacles interposed by the plausible Governor of Trinidad. It is characteristic of the generous dealings of Raleigh with his subordinates that no trace is apparent of any displeasure on his part at the failure of this "most valiant and honest" man; although on his own arrival in the West Indies he made it his first object to inflict punishment on those who had hindered the performance of his errand, attacking and capturing the town of San José and taking the governor himself prisoner. It was on this occasion that, by liberating five Indian chiefs, undergoing there barbarous treatment at the hands of the Spanish authorities, Raleigh inaugurated those amicable relations with the native tribes which he kept up to the end.

Meantime, from Spaniards and Indians alike, fabulous tales were reaching the ears of the explorers of the lands for which they were bound

—tales which, dealing with the mythical city of El Dorado, painted it in colours well calculated to fire their imagination. "So much gold as all yonder plain will not contain it"—men who, dancing, were covered with gold—these were details of the picture painted of Manoa, the golden city, by those who described its glories.

Of these descriptions, so dazzling to the strangers and by which they might easily have been lured to destruction, some may have been deliberate attempts to mislead, while others were probably traditions handed down from generation to generation, gaining in splendour from natural exaggeration, and of which the metaphorical language was interpreted by the strangers literally.

To what degree Raleigh himself gave credit to such stories remains doubtful. America was an unknown land, whose possibilities were untested. Already it had afforded proof of wealth which at an earlier day might well have been regarded as fabulous, nor was there any necessary limit to be placed to its riches. Deceived he undoubtedly was; but no proof exists of the calculated falsehood with which he has been charged. His sagacious intelligence may indeed have detected the legendary nature of the current reports, but in an El Dorado of some kind he certainly believed, and to the discovery of a land of gold he looked confidently forward.

According to his present plans the ships were to be left at anchor at Los Gallos while the course of the Orinoco should be explored, a party of a hundred men being embarked for this purpose in a barge, supplemented by a couple of wherries and one ship's boat.

With the details of the adventurous journey thus performed it is impossible to deal here. In spite of hardship, continual toil and labour in rowing, and of the difficulty of navigating that unknown "labyrinth of rivers," a distance of some four hundred miles inland was traversed, a fair country was discovered, and the explorers succeeded in satisfying themselves of the existence in it of gold and silver, though there was no time, even had appliances been at hand, to open any mines.

So far success, though hardly won, had attended the venture; and notwithstanding that of the El Dorado of their waking dreams no glimpse had been obtained, the sharers in it were justified in believing that the way had been smoothed for future exploration; while it had also been demonstrated that the newly discovered country contained wealth awaiting those who should come prepared to remove it.

To the Indians Raleigh had dilated upon the justice, greatness and charity of the mistress he served; while the practical proofs given by

him of honesty, fair dealing and consideration for women had so impressed the natives, accustomed as they were to Spanish manners and customs, that tradition long honoured his memory and looked forward to his promised return.

By July or August Raleigh was back in England and able to reckon up the losses and gains of the adventure. It had not proved lucrative; much labour and many hardships had been involved; yet he had his reward. To Spain he was more than ever an object of hostility—always something gained; and if Englishmen loved him no better than before, his name was on all men's lips. References were made to his exploits on the stage; and his appearance in the London streets, accompanied by a young Indian chief, was the signal for general interest. To a man of Raleigh's disposition such results were worth the winning; while the extent to which jealousy was aroused—no unfair measure of success—may be inferred from the calumny industriously circulated to the effect that, whilst his ships were in the Indies and his men exploring Guiana, he had remained in comfort at home, all his information being acquired at second hand and himself the author of a gigantic fraud. It was further asserted that the specimens of Guiana ore had been purchased in Barbary, in order to impose on simple men.

Before six months were passed Raleigh had sent out another expedition to Guiana under Captain Keymis, who had commanded a ship in the first. Being, however, but indifferently provided with means either to effect fresh discoveries or to work any mines, Keymis did little save confirm Raleigh's own conclusions as to the existence of gold, strengthen the confidence of the Indians, and gain the knowledge that a Spanish settlement was once more being attempted in the country.

By the time that his deputy returned to England Raleigh was already engaged in the enterprise in which he reached the height of his fame, and Guiana for the moment was relegated to the second place.

CHAPTER VII

1596–1597

Preparations for war—Cadiz—the Queen's continued displeasure—Final reinstatement at court.

WHATEVER had been the results achieved by the Guiana expedition, in one respect it had failed to accomplish that which might reasonably have been anticipated. No alteration had taken place in the attitude maintained by Elizabeth towards her former favourite. England might be ringing with his fame, London watching him with an interest which was distinct from affection; but one door was closed against him. He was not to be admitted to court; and Elizabeth was to hear the story of his adventures only at second hand.

Under these circumstances he must have been even more ready than would otherwise have been the case—though he was never backward when fighting was in question—to welcome a further opportunity, and a greater one than any that had hitherto offered, of winning distinction, and compelling recognition.

His custom when out of favour—"tennis ball of fortune" as he was called—was to be found "not but by fame." And a great opportunity to be found by fame was at hand. He might be trusted to make the most of it.

The idea of an expedition to Spain, and an attack to be directed against her at home, after the example she herself had set, had been for some time, though intermittently, in contemplation. To seek the enemy in her own ports had, it will be remembered, been the course advocated by Raleigh and Drake when the Armada was on the point of starting, and Hawkins had since urged the same bold policy. In the spring of 1596 it was determined to carry it out. The plan was received, by the upper classes at least, with enthusiasm, a thousand volunteers offering themselves for service, and what Raleigh's satisfaction must have been can easily be imagined. For more than one cause he had always been anxious for open war with Spain. To weaken her strength and humble her pride was one of the chief objects of his life; while from the point of view of a privateering adventurer he had complained that, so long as a nominal peace prevailed, many persons entertained inconvenient scruples as to the lawfulness of seizing Spanish prizes. Moreover, looking at the matter from the standpoint of his present position, it must have been clear that in a scheme in which he was

THE SEAL OF THE LORD HIGH ADMIRAL

so eminently fitted to be a leader not even the Queen's persistent displeasure could refuse him a prominent post.

That he should be placed at the head of the expedition was not to be expected. The Lord High Admiral, Lord Howard of Effingham, and the Earl of Essex were in joint command, the one supreme over the naval, the other over the land forces. But with these two were associated in authority a council of war, consisting of five members, of whom Raleigh, as Rear-Admiral, was one.

Up till almost the last it did not seem certain that the plan would be carried out, Elizabeth's changes of purpose contributing a formidable element of insecurity to the project; till Essex—never conspicuous for patience—was driven to express himself with uncourtierlike candour. Whatever might be his faults no undue love of money was included in them, and the offers made by the Queen to indemnify the disappointed leaders, should the scheme be abandoned, for all financial losses they might have incurred in preparing for the expedition had the reverse of a soothing effect upon him.

"I pray your Lordships to consider," he wrote to the Council, "how many things at once I should have sold for money. I will leave mine own reputation, as too small a matter to be mentioned. But I should have sold the honour of her Majesty; the safety of Her State; the contentment of Her

Confederate; the fortune of many of my poor friends and countrymen; and the possibility of giving a blow to that enemy that ought ever to be hateful to all true English hearts. I should have sold all this for private profit. Therefore, though I ask pardon of her Majesty,—and pray your Lordships to mediate it for me,—that I was carried by this zeal so fast as that I forgot those reverent forms that I should have used; yet I would rather have my heart out of my body, than this zeal out of my heart." [1]

The letter shows Essex at his best. To his secretary, Reynolds, he wrote, with even more passion, that he would either go through with the expedition, or "of a general, become a monk, at an hour's warning." [2]

Essex's pleadings, with other inducements to back them, prevailed. When all was at length settled and the fleet assembled off Plymouth, it was, strangely enough, Raleigh who was latest in reporting himself—a tardiness eagerly seized upon by his enemies in the hope of turning it to his disadvantage. What the cause of his delay had been he himself makes plain. He had in fact been busily engaged in pressing men for the service —no popular one at the time—and was, in his own words, "hunting after runaway mariners and dragging in the mire from alehouse to alehouse."

[1] *Dom. Corresp., Eliz.* [2] *Bacon Papers*, Lambeth Palace.

Whether or not his satisfaction at finding himself once more in a way to deal a blow at the Spaniards was lessened by the fact of his subordination to his less experienced rival, he was not a man to hang back for any such reason; while the fact that Essex held the key to the Queen's favour may have been a further inducement to pursue the policy of conciliation towards the young earl by which his conduct was marked.

The fleet, divided into four squadrons, made up in all seventeen Queen's ships, with seventy hired vessels; while the Dutch, whom the event proved could well have been spared, contributed twenty-four sail. The start was made on June 2nd, and the weather being favourable Cadiz was reached by the 20th. It was at the very beginning of operations that Raleigh's influence made itself felt and in all probability decided the fortunes of the fight.

Having been set to keep watch upon the harbour, in order to prevent the escape of any vessels, he found, on rejoining the fleet, that it had been determined to disembark the troops at a distance of half a league from Cadiz; and to make an attack upon the town before dealing with the Spanish fleet within the harbour—a perilous, and, as it seemed to Raleigh, a wholly indefensible plan of action. To Essex, already engaged in disembarking his men, his remonstrances were first directed;

but, finding that the responsibility for the decision rested with the Lord High Admiral, he proceeded to address himself to the latter, with such good effect as to obtain a countermand of the orders already issued, and to determine Effingham upon attacking the fleet before making any assault upon the town.

Essex, for once, was in genuine agreement with his rival; and as Raleigh, passing his vessel on his way to his own, shouted out in Spanish the good news—"Entramos, entramos"—he threw his hat into the sea in a transport of boyish and excited gratification.

On the following day, a Sunday, the great fight took place in which Raleigh touched the summit of his fame. All alike were eager to lead the attack, but it was he who won the day, "holding," notwithstanding the honour he was ready to yield to others, "his own reputation the dearest." And lest any should after all get the start of him, by break of day he was moving forward, well in advance of the body of the fleet, to face the seventeen warships which, moored under the batteries of the fort, awaited his coming. "It was," it has been said, "the Balaklava charge of the ocean."

As the *Warspite*, Raleigh's ship, entered the bay battleships and forts opened fire; but only answering with gay bravado by a blare of his trumpets he made his way onwards.

He was not allowed to keep his place in the front uncontested. Lord Thomas Howard compelled Dudley, Leicester's son, whose ship was in the van, to exchange it with his own; Essex, leaving his post with the body of the fleet, thrust himself forward into the thick of the fight; at one moment both Sir Francis Vere and Howard had slipped in front of Raleigh himself; while, when he had quickly vindicated his claim to be foremost, Vere surreptitiously attached his ship to the *Warspite*. It was in vain. The rope was discovered and cut; and Raleigh, adroitly throwing his vessel across the channel, made it impossible for others to pass him again.

In the course of the day Raleigh and Essex met, all old rivalries for the moment forgotten. Essex, for once the more prudent of the two, had tried to dissuade Raleigh from attempting, in the absence of the fly-boats which should have been at hand, to board the great war-ships he had engaged; but, failing, "I will second you, upon my honour," he cried; and the two parted.

Till two or four in the afternoon—authorities differ—the fight was kept up. By singular good fortune, as Raleigh must have deemed it, two of the ships opposed to him were the same to which his kinsman, Grenville, had been forced to yield; and he was now to be "revenged for the *Revenge*, or to second her with mine own life." He did

the first. The *St. Philip* was blown up by her own desperate crew; the *St. Andrew*, captured by Raleigh himself, together with the *St. Matthew*—the only two ships carried away by the victors—was brought by him safely to England.

The victory was complete, and Raleigh the hero of it.

At the attack on Cadiz itself he was unable to assist save in the unusual character of a spectator, being temporarily crippled by a wound in his leg. Borne on a litter, however, he watched the sack of the town long enough to enable him to bear generous witness to Essex's management of the affair. "The Earl hath behaved himself, I protest to you by the living God," he wrote to Cecil, "both valiantly and advisedly in the highest degree, without pride, without cruelty; and hath gotten great honour and much love of all." For himself, he added a little wistfully, he hoped her Majesty would take his labours in good part. Had his life been rendered up he would only have paid some part of the debts he owed her. As it was, it was but borrowed, to be paid hereafter should occasion offer.[1]

He could afford to be generous, taking into account his own share in the glory of the day; and his tenacity of the honour he had won is as characteristic as his readiness to give credit to others.

[1] *MS. Cotton*, British Museum.

"*A moy seul,*" was his comment on the margin of a book, *Les Lauriers de Nassau,* which, in an account of the fight, had associated Lord Thomas Howard with him in the order to begin the assault. And again, "*J'ay pris tous deux,*" when his part in the capture of the *St. Matthew* and the *St. Andrew* had been omitted. His distinction had been won in fair field, and not a jot of it should be wrested from him.

Much difference of opinion prevailed amongst the leaders as to the manner in which the victory should best be utilised. Some were for holding Cadiz; others—Raleigh amongst them—for an immediate return to England. The more prudent counsels prevailed, and by the 1st of August Raleigh was on his way home.

The return of the expedition must have been attended with disappointment. The most brilliant victory of Elizabeth's reign had been won, and one of the most striking exploits recorded in history performed. But if it had been expected that the Queen would have been anxious to do honour to those who had fought and conquered in her name, such anticipations were doomed to disappointment. Complete as had been the success from a military or naval point of view, it was undeniable that blunders had been committed by which the material harvest which might have been reaped had been seriously diminished. A number of

richly laden caracks had been allowed to slip through the fingers of the victorious fleet, possibly too much occupied with other matters to give due consideration to financial affairs; and though at Cadiz itself much plunder had fallen into English hands it was not available for the most part to fill the coffers of the Government or Queen. For an expedition expected not only to pay its own costs but to leave a handsome profit besides, Essex was not a well-chosen commander; while "for my own part," says Raleigh, who on other occasions was not without an eye to business, "I have gotten a lame leg and a deformed. For the rest either I spoke too late or it was otherwise resolved"—"*en laquelle ils n'ont trompé,*" is the more open comment made once more in the margin of *Les Lauriers.*

One would have thought that Elizabeth might have been satisfied. The affront offered by the Armada had been abundantly avenged; English prestige had received an unprecedentedly large increase, thirteen Spanish men of war, with seventeen galleys, moored under batteries, having been in little more than three hours destroyed, crippled or captured by eight English ships; while, on land, the forts, together with a large part of the town itself, had been razed to the ground.

To Raleigh personally the results of the expedition must have been eminently satisfactory. If,

besides a lame leg, he had carried away few trophies; if too, in spite of the glory with which he had covered himself, he was still excluded from the royal presence, he had gained what was better worth having than gold or court favour. With the exception of Essex—a melancholy exception, testifying to the increasing predominance over his nobler qualities of that jealousy which was his ruling passion—enemies and friends combined to bear witness to his achievements. "Sir Walter Ralegh did, in my judgment, no man better," said Sir Anthony Standen, Essex's own dependant.[1] "That which he did in the sea service could not be bettered," wrote George Carew.[2]

The Queen, however, was not yet to be softened. Her humour indeed was such that she was turning upon Burghley himself and calling him a miscreant and a coward for pleading the right of Essex to the profit to be made out of his own prisoners; and she had, in fact, decided — to borrow Mr. Edwards' terse statement—"that the service at Cadiz was to be no matter for reward or distinction to anybody." It was clear that Raleigh's exclusion from court could not be final, but it was not till May, 1597—nine months after his return from Spain—that he was to be once

[1] Cadiz, 5th July, *MS. Harl.*, British Museum.

[2] Sir G. Carew to Sir R. Cecil, Hatfield House.

more admitted to Elizabeth's presence ; while only on June 2nd was he allowed to resume the personal discharge of his duties as Captain of the Guard, for the last four years performed by deputy.

That evening, however, he "rid abroad with the Queen"—Essex having betaken himself to Chatham, in order not to be a witness of his rival's reinstatement—"and had private conference with her."[1]

What did they talk of, one wonders, as they rode together that June evening? Was their conversation made up of explanations and apologies and forgiveness? Or did they, more wisely, ignore those four years of bitterness and estrangement ; making believe, after that vain and melancholy fashion which is nevertheless the better alternative of the two, that there had never in truth been any estrangement at all?

[1] Rowland Whyte to Sir R. Sydney, Collin's *Letters and Memorials of State.*

CHAPTER VIII

1597–1601

Raleigh and Cecil—Friendly relations with Essex—Island voyage—Essex's displeasure—Return to England—Raleigh as peacemaker—Fall of Essex.

RALEIGH was restored to favour—so much was certain. What was likely to be the result must have been a question which many of those connected with the court—mostly his enemies—were asking themselves, not without anxiety.

With Cecil he had been for some years on terms of friendship. Not many months later the Secretary's little son was sent to Sherborne to share the education of Raleigh's boy, and in the letters of this period the note of affectionate intimacy is recurrent. "So, with my most humble duty to my mistress—I care not much for your idle Honour"—ends one of Raleigh's, in which he had been pressing for an answer from the Secretary on Guiana matters. And a little later on, in a letter to Essex, doubtless intended for

Raleigh's eye, Cecil in his turn jests at the restless energy of "good Mr. Raleigh, who wonders at his own diligence (because diligence and he are not familiars)"; adding that "your Rear-Admiral, who makes haste but once in the year to write a letter by post, gave date from Weymouth, which by the circumstances I know was written from Plymouth."

In January, 1597, a letter from Raleigh displays another aspect of the friendship by which the two were united. Written on the occasion of the death of Cecil's wife, it is a conspicuous proof of the intimacy between them at the time.

"Because I know not how you dispose of yourself," he writes, "I forbear to visit you, preferring your pleasing before mine own desire. I had rather be with you now than at any other time, if I could thereby either take off from you the burden of your sorrows, or lay the greater part thereof on mine own heart;" going on to admonish him, as only a close friend could have a right to do, how grief should be borne and misfortune met, and subscribing himself, "yours ever beyond the power of words to utter, W. Ralegh."[1]

What was more inexplicable than the alliance between Raleigh and Cecil was the cordiality existing between the two and Essex. To whatever cause the phenomenon was due, Raleigh and the latter were now reported to be intimates,

[1] *Cecil Papers*, Hatfield.

"and often goes the Earl to Sir Robert Cecil's house, very private, where they all meet,"[1] while later on it was again asserted that "none but Cecil and Ralegh enjoy the Earl of Essex; they carry him away as they list."

The singular combination was not likely to be of long duration. Only the preceding year, in Essex's absence at Cadiz, the Queen had asserted her independence by bestowing the secretaryship upon Cecil, to the exclusion of the earl's nominee, and Cecil was not the man to forget the strenuous efforts of the favourite to keep him out of office. Nor was it possible that Raleigh's reinstatement at court should have been viewed with favour by one so notoriously swayed by jealousy as the latter.

For the moment, however, Raleigh and Essex at least were drawn together by the bond of a common interest. In the desire to strike a fresh blow at Spain they were agreed, and such a blow seemed in prospect. Tidings had reached England that, eager to avenge Cadiz and to repeat the attempt in which the Armada had failed, Philip was assembling a fleet at Ferrol; and once more it was decided to take the initiative by seeking the enemy at home. The expedition due to this determination has received the name of the Island Voyage, owing to the fact that, its original object having been abandoned, the scene of action was

[1] Rowland Whyte to Sir Robert Sydney.

transferred to the Azores. The results of the enterprise were of little national importance; but Raleigh's figure is brought by it into such clear relief that it is worth dealing with in more detail than, measured by its effects, it would merit.

It is impossible, studying the various episodes by which Raleigh's career is crowded, not to be struck by the resemblance borne alike by his exploits and by the spirit in which they were performed to the feats of some knight-errant of romance. It is true that, looking closer into the texture of the story, incongruous features become apparent, such as a keen eye to his own interests, and a proportionate regard for the solid advantages to be gained. But in his gay and careless courage, approaching to foolhardiness, in his chivalrous and generous temper, and his total indifference to personal danger, he well represents the legendary hero riding forth in quest of adventure. And nowhere are these particular traits more brilliantly exhibited than in this Island Voyage, of which the narrative, given by Sir Arthur Gorges, captain of Raleigh's ship, is that of an eye-witness.

Once more the victor of Cadiz occupied a subordinate post. It was reported that Essex, offered in the first place a joint command, had refused it. At any rate he obtained supreme authority, Lord Thomas Howard being vice-admiral, and Raleigh, as before, rear-admiral under him.

The venture began ill, the tempestuous weather experienced in the Channel forcing the ships to put back into harbour, to Essex's immense chagrin. "That which most grieveth me," wrote Raleigh with characteristic kindliness, contrasting sharply with the treatment he himself received later on, "and which, I profess before the Majesty of God, I do constantly believe, is that either my Lord General himself will wrestle with the seas to his peril, or (constrained to come back) will be found utterly heart-broken; although it be not in the power of man to fight against elements."[1] "I beseech you," he writes again, addressing Cecil, "to work from her Majesty some comfort to my Lord General, who, I know, is dismayed by these mischances, even to death; although there could not be more done by any man upon the earth."[2]

By the time the start could be effected, it was clear that the original design must be abandoned for the year; and it was determined to proceed at once to the Azores, to seize, if possible, those islands, and also to intercept the fleet expected there from the Indies. Fresh misadventures, however, occurred. In the Bay of Biscay the weather was again so stormy that Raleigh's ship, besides suffering much damage, was separated from the

[1] To the Lords of the Council, *Dom. Corresp., Eliz.*, Rolls House.

[2] To Sir R. Cecil, *Dom. Corresp., Eliz.*, Rolls House.

main body of the fleet; only rejoining it, together with some thirty other sail, when the islands had been reached.

His enemies had lost no time in making capital out of his mishaps; and although the commander-in-chief "seemed to be the joyfullest man living for our arrival," [1] some remorse must have mingled with his welcome, since it presently transpired that he had already sent home a complaint of Raleigh's conduct in separating himself from the fleet. His apologies, however, were frank enough; the blame being thrown by him upon those who, he said, "had taxed him secretly with strange reports," while he treated Raleigh with cordiality and sought his society.

His good humour, however, was of short duration, a fresh exploit of the rear-admiral's being sufficient to dispel it. It had been decided that an attack was to be made by the two conjointly upon the Island of Fayall, and Raleigh, finding himself, with his squadron, first at the *rendez vous*, was naturally eager to set to work. For four days, however, he curbed his own impatience and that of his men, in full view of Fayall preparing for defence, manning the shore, and, worst of all, setting up "a great red standard" in defiance. Patience, however, has limits. The men, short

[1] Sir A. Gorges. The subsequent quotations are from his narrative, cite by Oldys in his *Life of Raleigh*.

of food and water, were inclined to mutiny; the enemy were daring them to the attack; and in the end "seeing these Spaniards and Portuguese are so gallant to seek or follow," said Raleigh, addressing his men, "we will try our fortune with them, and either win a landing or gain a beating." Declining, in the first instance, the assistance of the Dutch companies under his command, he pushed forward accordingly to the shore, followed by 260 men alone, Sir Arthur Gorges being of the number.

As the little band neared the beach the fire of the enemy was so hot that not only some among the soldiers, but certain of the leaders themselves, showed dismay; whereupon Raleigh, rebuking them openly "with many reproachful words," ordered his own boatmen to row him upon the rocks, bidding such of his men as were not afraid to follow; and thus, clambering over the rocks and wading through the surf, the rear-admiral of the fleet effected his landing, driving the Spaniards before him as he went.

Permitting now some of the Dutchmen to join him, he led the party himself full in the face of the fort, carrying no weapon save his leading staff and with no armour but his collar; and when, on finding it necessary to send a reconnoitring body to inspect the defences, the Dutch troops—many of them raw recruits—flinched from the perilous service, their leader once more braved the danger

in person, telling them that "he would not offer that to any man which he would himself refuse . . . and they shall well perceive that I myself will do that which they dare not attempt." Then, calling for his cuirass and casque, he said "that he would go view the way for them, which they made so nice of."

Notwithstanding all remonstrances he carried out his determination, taking with him only Gorges and some eight or ten followers. Of the small party two lost their lives, others—Gorges among the number—were wounded, and the clothes of Raleigh himself were riddled with shot. "And still they plied us so fast with small shot," adds Gorges, "that, as I well remember, he wished me to put off a large red scarf which I then wore, being, as he said, a very fair mark for them. But I, not being willing to do the Spaniards so much honour at that time, though I could have wished it had not been on, answered the rear-admiral again that his white scarf was as eminent as my red, and therefore I would now follow his example."

Enough has been quoted to illustrate the spirit in which the adventure was undertaken. The result was a complete success; and Essex, arriving the following day with his fleet, found the work done and done by Raleigh alone.

To any man the march which had been, if not stolen, gained upon him would have been matter

for vexation; and there were not wanting those about the general eager to fan the flame of his displeasure, some even going so far as to declare the rear-admiral worthy of death.

The first brunt of Essex's wrath was borne by the officers commanding the land forces which had given Raleigh their support; and on the latter himself repairing to the flag-ship he was coldly received and charged with "breach of order and discipline" in effecting a landing in the absence of his superior in command.

Raleigh's vindication was made with dignity and moderation. He assumed full responsibility for what had been done, exonerating from all blame those who had acted with him; and Essex was so far soothed that he consented to go ashore to the lodging in which Raleigh had established himself. What occurred there is graphically described. When Raleigh invited his guest to supper, he took care, in doing so, to explain that, in the event of his invitation being accepted, he claimed no consequent privilege or favour, should the earl desire to call him to further account.

Upon this, Sir Christopher Blount, who had accompanied Essex, took upon himself—somewhat officiously—to reply, observing that "he thought my Lord would not sup at all."

Raleigh turned upon him. It was one thing to treat the Commander-in-Chief with the courtesy

due to his position, but quite another to submit to insolence from a subordinate. For Sir Christopher's own appetite, he answered, he might—when he was invited—disable it at his own pleasure. But if the earl would stay, he would be glad of his company.

How the question of supper was settled does not appear. But it would seem that Raleigh was even at this stage so doubtful of Essex's intentions, surrounded as he was by men urging a trial by court-martial, that he was inclined the next morning to stand upon the defensive with the squadron under his command, rather than trust to the justice of his rival. Lord Thomas Howard, however, pledging his honour that Raleigh should come to no harm, the affair was patched up, and the culprit guilty of the crime of having achieved the solitary real success of the expedition was permitted to go unpunished. But that the incident should not have left its mark is impossible, and the death-blow must have been given to any chance of lasting cordiality between Raleigh and the man by whom he had been wronged.

The fleet returned home without further adventure, save the capture of three prizes—the most important of them, if not all three, falling once more to Raleigh's share—to find that, barren as the voyage had proved, its consequences might have been serious; since a second Armada had after

all been despatched from Spain; and it had been due rather to weather than to any precautionary measures that it had been attended, in the absence of the English fleet, with no more success than the first.

On the reappearance of the Commander-in-Chief the Queen's anger—it was not her way to treat failure with leniency—blazed forth; and though her indignation gave way as usual to the charm of his presence, changes had taken place at court which Essex, for his part, viewed with moody displeasure. Cecil had been made Master of the Wards; and, worse still, Lord Howard of Effingham was now Earl of Nottingham, and by virtue of his new patent, coupled with the office of Lord High Admiral, took precedence of Essex himself.

The latter, declining to submit to the indignity, withdrew in dudgeon from court; and it was only due to the tact and ingenuity exercised by Raleigh, apparently oblivious of his own late causes of offence, that a reconciliation between the Queen and her favourite was effected, Essex by his advice being made Lord Marshal of England and thereby entitled to take precedence of the High Admiral. Under these circumstances the sulky favourite consented to resume his place at court and peace was once more restored.

The year 1598, therefore, opened well, and Raleigh, as author of the reconciliation of Essex

and the Queen, must have been in favour with both. The mediator, it is true, would have liked to have obtained a peerage for himself, as well as the Marshalship for his rival; and probably better still a seat at the Council Board. But neither was forthcoming, and there is no sign that Raleigh took his disappointment ill. London was gay that winter, and Lord Cobham's name, as well as those of Essex and Cecil, had come of late to be constantly linked with his own. It was an ill-starred friendship, but its warmth was matter of public notoriety. Cobham, said Coke at Raleigh's trial, had loved the prisoner "as his life." "From henceforth," Raleigh for his part once wrote to Cobham, "I can present you with nothing but my fast love and true affection, which shall never part from studying to honour you, till I be in the grave."[1] Scarcely a year, alas, after the words were written, all question of any honour in which it was possible to hold Cobham, as well as of any love between the friends, was at an end. But for the present they were close companions.

Raleigh, during this and the following years, was as usual immersed in business. Always active in Parliament, he was now earning besides the gratitude of Cornish men by his attention to their interests in matters of trade; while, when appointed later on to the Governorship of Jersey,

[1] *Dom. Corresp., Eliz.*, Rolls House.

he set to work industriously at local business there. And in addition to these peaceful labours, there were not wanting recurrent alarms as to Spanish invasions, when he was in much request for making arrangements for defence by land and sea. His life was in fact as full as a life could be, and all went well with him.

It is Essex, however, who, during this period—from 1598 to the fatal February of 1601—fills the foreground of the scene; his doom darkening above him, and lending, to those who look back, a tragic significance to incidents otherwise of small account.

By the spring of 1598 Irish matters had become even more urgent than usual; and in March Sir Thomas Cecil, Sir William Russell, Raleigh himself and others were in consultation over them, the question being mooted of sending as deputy either Russell—who refused to go—or Raleigh, who "did little like it."[1]

A fresh quarrel between the Queen and Essex had taken place in the course of the summer, consequent upon the well-known scene, when Elizabeth, indignant at an act of overt discourtesy, went so far as to strike the delinquent, who thereupon, swearing, his hand on his sword, that not from her father would he have borne the affront, had withdrawn from the court. By

[1] *Sydney Papers.*

October another reconciliation had taken place, but there had been that between the two which neither would forget, and it was from this time that Essex's downward course began. With Elizabeth personal matters took precedence of public, and Raleigh was probably right when he attributed the final catastrophe rather to words of insolent contempt—to the effect that the Queen's conditions of restoration to favour were as crooked as her carcase—said to have been spoken by the earl and reported to Elizabeth, than to his actual treason.

Affairs in Ireland had meanwhile been going from bad to worse; and in October, when the Queen and Essex were once more, ostensibly at least, at one, it was determined that the latter should himself be the new deputy. If he did not like the office, he liked still less that it should be bestowed upon another man; and it possibly appeared to offer favourable opportunities for the forwarding of those schemes in which shortly afterwards he became so deeply involved.

It was April, 1599, before he proceeded to take up his new duties. With the details of the fashion in which they were performed we are not here concerned. The most credible interpretation of his conduct suggests that he was playing a double game, and that the crushing of the rebellion then taking place in Ireland was an object subordinated

in his plan of action to others of a treasonable or semi-treasonable nature. At all events, having carried on for six months a wholly inefficient campaign, he arranged a truce with the rebel leader Tyrone, and leaving Ireland suddenly, in direct defiance of the Queen's orders, presented himself, travel-stained and dusty, at ten o'clock in the morning, in her bedroom at Nonsuch.

The act of disobedience was the beginning of the end. That interview with the Queen took place in September, 1599. The same night he was virtually under arrest; and seventeen months later he paid with his life the penalty of his treason.

It is with the part played by Raleigh in the dark drama that it is alone question here. The main facts are beyond dispute. That he approved the execution of Essex can scarcely be denied. That he was justified in approving, and possibly in advocating it, likewise admits of little doubt. Yet, as the enemy of the accused, the more generous course would have been to stand aside and at least to abstain from throwing the weight of his influence into the balances against him. A story was current that when Essex's evil counsellors sought to decide him at Fayall upon trying Raleigh by court-martial he replied that "had he not been his friend" he would have done so. In later versions of the story a word was omitted and

Essex was made to reply that *had* Raleigh been his friend he would have acted as his advisers would have had him. It is in the spirit of this amended answer that those to whom Raleigh's reputation is dear would have had him act now. There is a law of honour in the treatment of an enemy which takes precedence of the claims of friendship itself. And, tried by that law, Raleigh must be found wanting.

Yet, in passing judgment upon him, his great provocations should be remembered, as well as those risks and contingencies which must have been constantly before his mind. In opposing any recovery by Essex of position or influence he must have felt that he was not improbably fighting for his life and the lives of his friends. Not only did past experience, but also his knowledge, so far as it went, of Essex's present attitude, warn him that his hostility was implacable towards all those by whom his supremacy at court was disputed. In letters to the Queen from Ireland—letters of which the contents must have been known to Cecil and through him to Raleigh—he had traduced them both, as well as Raleigh's friend, Cobham; to James of Scotland he had charged them with favouring the pretensions of the Infanta to the succession. By every means in his power he had striven to impair their credit. Part of this was known to Raleigh, and knowing it—and, still

more, being acquainted with Essex's vindictive and passionate temper and his ascendency over the Queen—he may well have considered that it was a question whether it should be his enemy, or himself, with Cobham, his friend, and Cecil, who should end their days upon the scaffold.

It must also be remembered in Raleigh's defence, that in striking at Essex the blow was not directed at a defenceless man. Disgraced as he was, he was no contemptible foe. Of the London populace—the worthlessness of whose affection had yet to be proved—he had ever been the favourite, and continued to be so still, whether or not he had ceased to be the Queen's. Already they were murmuring at his captivity and, unwilling to blame Elizabeth, were laying the responsibility for it upon her advisers, amongst whom Raleigh, whom they had never loved, held a foremost place; whilst an inner circle of associates—men like Mountjoy, Southampton and Blount, as well as a multitude of his other *âmes damnées*—were ready to go all lengths in his support.

Aware of all this, there can be no doubt that Raleigh earnestly desired that Essex's downfall should be final and did what in him lay to secure that end. His most careful and painstaking biographer[1] has decided that the well-known letter to Cecil bearing conclusive witness to these efforts

[1] E. Edwards, *Life of Ralegh*, vol. i., pp. 258-60.

was written, not in February, 1601, when, after his actual treasonable outbreak, Essex was undergoing his trial on a capital charge, but during the term of imprisonment which followed upon his return from Ireland, when the question at issue was the minor one: whether he was merely to be censured and left to receive the Queen's pardon so soon as she might be disposed to grant it; or whether he should be made a state prisoner, incapable of holding office. To whatever period, however, the letter—too long to be given here—is attributed, it is difficult, reading it, to believe that no other penalty than imprisonment and deprivation of office was in the writer's mind.

Essex for his part conspired with his enemies to bring about his own destruction, rushing blindly on his ruin. By February, 1601, the end was come.

As he gathered his followers together for his final effort, he told them that the insurrection he had planned was in self-defence—that Cobham and Raleigh were plotting his murder. Of the value attached to the story by those in a position to judge of it Blount's account of the matter at his trial bears witness. He did not believe, he then acknowledged, that Raleigh and Cobham "had meant any such thing, nor that the Earl himself feared it, only it was a word cast out to colour other matters"—to furnish Essex, that is, with a pretext and a popular cry.

On Saturday, 7th February, Essex's friends had gathered together at his house. On Sunday morning—the day when Essex was to prove, in bitterness of spirit, how much the idolatry of the London mob was worth—Raleigh's figure stands out in a scene which possesses the clearness of a steel engraving. On that day Sir Ferdinando Gorges, one of those implicated in the conspiracy, received at Essex House a summons from the Captain of the Guard to attend him at his own. Gorges, a straightforward man, referred the invitation to the earl, who bade him accept it, stipulating, however, that the meeting should take place, not at Durham House, but on the river.

Gorges' account of the interview remains, corroborated by Raleigh himself. Blount, also in council at Essex House, had desired, with others, that Gorges should avail himself of the opportunity to murder or seize Raleigh. Gorges, however, declining the suggestion, repaired with two companions to the meeting; while with characteristic absence of precaution Raleigh rowed out into the river alone, admonishing Gorges to make all haste to leave London, a warrant being out to commit him to the Fleet. His advice came too late, so Gorges told him, proceeding to brag somewhat indiscreetly of the extent of the preparations for the coming rising; and after some further altercation the two parted, Raleigh to repair to the court,

Gorges to return to Essex House, while Blount, who had no doubt watched the scene from a point of vantage, took the work he had pressed upon Gorges upon himself, and sent four ineffectual shots after Raleigh as he rowed away.

A little later, Essex was riding through the City, some two hundred gentlemen in his train, shouting that his life was in danger and his enemies were seeking to murder him; while the citizens were looking stolidly on, not one of them rallying to the cause of the popular idol. The game was up.

On Ash Wednesday, February 22nd, Essex was executed in the Tower, Raleigh, as Captain of the Guard, being present on duty. In expectation that the dying man might wish to speak to him he took up his station in the first place near the scaffold. But the position being misinterpreted by the spectators as one of triumph over a fallen foe,[1] he presently withdrew to the armoury—glad enough, one may well believe, to do so—and there awaited, as he himself afterwards said, in tears, the end of the tragedy.

When all was over and he was being rowed back to Durham House, tradition recounts that a great sadness was visible on his countenance. Again, we may well believe it.

Raleigh's most formidable antagonist was removed; the accomplices of his treason were dead

[1] Camden.

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or scattered. But he had other enemies, more dangerous because less open, with whom to reckon, and if his sadness was partly due, as some have surmised, to personal foreboding, it was not unjustified.

CHAPTER IX

1601–1603

Elizabeth's end approaching—Visit to Basing—Biron envoy to her court—Raleigh's multiplied employments—His views on Irish matters—Intrigues with James—Cecil and Raleigh—Elizabeth's death.

ELIZABETH'S long reign was nearing its close. Much had changed in the course of it. In a sense, she stood in a new world, partly her own creation, solitary. "The temper of the age was changing, and isolating her as it changed. Her own England, the England which had grown up around her, serious, moral, prosaic, shrank coldly from this child of earth and the Renaissance, brilliant, fanciful, unscrupulous and irreligious." [1] And Essex was gone—Essex, upon whom she had lavished the strange, passionate affection which he had repaid so ill, lay in the grave to which her own warrant had consigned him. Nor was his place filled by any other. Raleigh, indeed, was true and faithful; but though he had her con-

[1] Green's *Short History of the English People*, p. 445.

fidence he no longer occupied his old place in her heart; and most of the rest of those around her were busied with speculations concerning the future, and with their attempts to arrange it to their own advantage.

It was a dreary, lonely old age. But for the present she kept up a brave front. In September, 1601, she paid her last visit to Lord Winchester at Basing; while it fell to Raleigh's share—finding himself by chance in London—to receive Marshal Biron, who, having arrived on a mission from Henry IV., had found the Queen absent. Raleigh did his best to replace her, doing the honours of London to the foreigners, carrying them, as he tells Cecil, to Westminster Abbey to see the monuments; entertaining them at the Bear Garden, "which they had great pleasure to see";[1] and adapting himself with such care to the tastes of the guests that, finding it was French fashion "to wear all black and no bravery at all," he wrote to Lord Cobham from Basing, to which he had now conducted them, that "I am even now going at night to London to provide me a plain taffeta suit and a plain black saddle," though, as everybody knew, such simplicity in dress was in no way to his liking.

In this same letter he did his best to persuade Cobham, evidently reluctant to quit the amusements of Bath, that it would be well to obey a

[1] *Cecil Papers*, Hatfield.

summons sent him by the Queen, who, he says, "will take it exceeding kindly, and take herself more beholden unto you than you think"; and Raleigh will himself accompany his friend to Bath, as soon as they can both be spared. "I durst not say," he adds, "that I knew you were resolved not to come, but left it to the state of your body."[1]

Elizabeth, one cannot but think, must have been tired of hearing of the state of her courtiers' bodies; since most of them had a fashion of falling conveniently ill when matters at court were out of gear; so that at times they might almost be imagined to have been the victims of an epidemic. Raleigh himself had suffered from attacks of this ambiguous nature. At this period, however, indications are apparent that his health and vigour were in truth no longer what they had been in earlier days; and on the present occasion he was forced to remain sick at Sherborne instead of accompanying Lord Cobham to Bath. It may therefore have been partly for reasons of health, as well as owing to his wife's preferences, that much of his time seems to have been spent during these two years in the country, either at Sherborne or Bath, or attending to the affairs of his governorship in Jersey.

His attention was also being given as usual to

[1] *Dom. Corresp.*, Rolls House.

expeditions by sea. In 1602 one of these, of which little is known, was despatched as a final attempt to vindicate his Virginian rights; while a certain Gilbert—possibly a nephew—seems to have started on a voyage of discovery in a vessel of Raleigh's, unauthorised by the owner. In some of the privateering enterprises in which he was concerned Cecil was his partner, but secretly, "for though," as he once characteristically wrote when enjoining discretion, "I thank God I have no other meaning than becometh an honest man in any of my actions, yet that which were another man's *Pater noster*, would be accounted in me as a charm."[1]

Ireland also claimed a share of Raleigh's attention, especially when, in the autumn of 1601, it was made the scene of another Spanish invasion, which once more proved a failure. On the methods to be employed in dealing with "rebels" his views were consistent to the last, being in unfortunate harmony with his services in Munster; and he has left his opinion on record that "it can be no disgrace if it were known that the killing of a rebel were practised." It may, however, be pleaded in his defence that he was in such matters in full agreement with most of the men of his day, Cecil, for instance, having no objection to conniving at assassination in such a case, though

[1] *Cecil Papers*, Hatfield.

cherishing a certain prejudice against the use of poison.

At home, Raleigh had been engaged for some time in wearisome litigation with a former steward at Sherborne; which, dating from the year of the Cadiz expedition, was still a subject of correspondence and of serious vexation in 1602.

And while occupied with all these cares, great and small, he must have known that, swiftly and surely, the day was approaching when all other questions would be merged in that, of paramount importance, of the effect upon the fortunes of England, and upon his own in particular, of the change which was at hand.

For, in spite of the gallant fight she had maintained with them, the invincible enemies, age and decay, were, step by step, gaining upon Elizabeth; and to the eyes of all it must have been evident that the crisis could not be far distant. To those about her person the fact was matter of daily observation, acted on by each according to his kind. Thus Cecil, after the manner of the Unjust Steward, set himself diligently to the task of ensuring that, when his present office should know him no more, other habitations should open to receive him; while Raleigh, conscious as he must have been that except for his mistress he stood almost alone, unloved alike by court and country, hated by many, seems altogether to have failed to

make provision for the future. It is true that by selling his Munster estate to the Earl of Cork he had rid himself of an unprofitable property, and had thus striven to benefit his wife and child, but so far as any propitiation of the powers that were to be was concerned such measures as he may have taken were absolutely ineffective.

In November, 1601, the Duke of Lennox, sent on a mission to London by King James, had sounded both Raleigh and Cobham with regard to his master's claims to the succession; but though authorities are divided as to the impression produced upon the envoy, it is clear that, even if favourable, it did not avail to counterbalance the effect of other agencies at work, and that Raleigh, compared with others, must have been at least backward in paying court to the rising sun.

That it should have been so is the more remarkable since the Queen's favour seems, to the last, to have been subject to fluctuations which might have served as an excuse to a less loyal servant to transfer his allegiance elsewhere. Even as it was he could not fail to be sensible of discontent which he expressed openly enough.

"It grieves me," he wrote to Cecil in a letter attributed to the year 1602, "to find with what difficulty and torment to myself I obtain the smallest favour. Her Majesty knows that I am ready to spend all I have, and my life, for her in

a day. . . . Let the Queen, then, break their hearts that are none of hers. There is little gain in losing her own. These things should not torment me if I were as others are. But it is true, *Ubi dolor, ibi amor; exue amorem.*" [1] And again, addressing this time Elizabeth herself, he writes: "Your Majesty having left me I am left all alone in the world, and am sorry that ever I was at all. What I have done is out of zeal and love, and not by any encouragement; for I am forgotten in all rights and in all affairs, and mine enemies have their will and desire over me." [2]

The complaint was probably due to a passing cloud and to no real estrangement—it was Raleigh's way to use the language of exaggeration. Yet he was no doubt in possession of genuine grievances. High as was his place in Elizabeth's favour, he was never, to the last, admitted to the Council Board, while his simple knighthood was the highest rank to which he ever attained. In such matters it was undeniable that his enemies had their wills and desires over him.

There is, however, no evidence that he entertained any suspicion of the principal influence that was industriously at work against him—the influence of the man who, at this time, occupied the position of his familiar friend.

For while matters stood thus with Raleigh, Cecil

[1] *Cecil Papers*, Hatfield. [2] *Ibid.*

had been gaining power every day. When the fall of Essex had left his place vacant, there had remained, chief amongst those enjoying the Queen's confidence, Cecil, Cobham, Nottingham, Raleigh himself and some few others, from whom it might have seemed that Raleigh had little to fear, Cecil —the most powerful of all—being regarded as he was in the light of an ally. But this would have been to overlook the fact that, Essex—their common foe—being removed, it was likely enough that the Secretary would transfer his jealousy to the man who had been Essex's rival; and, astute and unscrupulous as he was, would set himself to undermine any influence likely to compete in the present or future with his own.

He had, in fact, settled upon an ingenious method of strengthening his own hands. By attaching to himself those who, having belonged to Essex's faction, now found themselves without a leader and were eager to sell themselves to the highest bidder, he secured the adhesion of supporters specially adapted to prove valuable instruments in preparing for the approaching crisis.

Essex—"my martyr Essex," as James sometimes termed him—had long been engaged in intrigues with the Scotch court; and the tools employed by him were naturally in a position to obtain credit for their new master. It was characteristic of the acute yet mean intelligence of the Secretary that

he should have turned these instruments to the account he did.

For the entire correspondence with James called by his name it is said that Cecil himself was not responsible; and the contention is borne out by passages in the letters of the chief agent in it which point to his communications being at times unauthorised. But, making every possible allowance, Cecil's share in paving the way for Raleigh's ruin is heavy enough. Nor does the argument of the absence of any accusation upon Raleigh's part carry much weight; since, even had he, later on, suspected the part played by Cecil, a hundred reasons may have kept him silent; and the very ignorance he displays only serves, in the light of documentary evidence of the intrigues of which he he was the victim, to darken Cecil's treachery.

Into the details of those intrigues there is no space to enter here. Essex's sisters; Cobham's wife, Lady Kildare; Nottingham, and Lord Thomas Howard, all played their part in them. But it was Cecil who, with Lord Henry Howard, was the chief instrument in poisoning the mind of his future sovereign against Raleigh.

Lord Henry, enjoying James's entire confidence and now become Cecil's agent, took the largest part in the correspondence. And Lord Henry's principal object, besides his own advancement, was the ruin of his enemies, amongst whom Raleigh,

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Cobham and Northumberland stood first. Towards these three he nourished a loathing which came near to madness. "Hell cannot afford a like triplicity that denies the Trinity"—"those wicked villains, Cobham and Raleigh"—"that accursed duality"—these are some of the flowers of speech adorning the letter of Cecil's new confederate. While—to add to the confusion in which friend was opposed to friend, kinsman to kinsman, husband to wife—the wife of Northumberland, one of Howard's "triplicity," was Essex's sister; Cobham's wife—while bearing, as Howard explains, "a strange affection to Cobham, whom never woman loved or will love, besides herself"—was deeply implicated in the intrigues so disastrous to Cobham's friend; and Cobham himself was the brother of Cecil's dead wife.

Cecil, whatever might be the case with others, was troubled by no sentimental considerations.

"I do profess," he wrote to James, with the sickly admixture of piety which was characteristic of the time and the man, "in the presence of Him that knoweth and searcheth all men's hearts, that if I did not sometimes cast a stone into the mouth of these gaping crabs"—Raleigh and Cobham—"when they are in their prodigal humour of discourses, they would not stick to confess daily how contrary it is to their nature to resolve to be under your sovereignty, though they confess—Raleigh

especially—that (*rebus sic stantibus*) natural policy forces them to keep on foot such a trade against the great day of mart. In all which light and sudden humours of his, though I do no way check him, because he shall not think I reject his freedom or his affection, but always (*sub sigillo confessionis*) use contestation with him that I neither had, nor ever would, *in individuo*, contemplate future idea, nor even hoped for more than justice, in time of chance; yet under pretext of extraordinary care of his well-doing, I have seemed to dissuade him from engaging himself too far, even for himself. . . . Would God I were as free from offence towards God in seeking, for private affection, to support a person whom most religious men do hold *anathema*." [1]

And with this letter of Cecil's—a specimen of the services he was doing his friend with the man with whom it would soon lie to make or mar his future—it may be well to compare a postscript addressed by Raleigh to himself in a letter of August, 1602, of which the earlier part refers to matters of business. "I hope," he adds, "you will excuse my cumbersome letters and suits. It is your destiny to be troubled with your friends, and so must all men be. But what you think unfit to be done for me shall never be a quarrel, either internal or external. I thank you evermore for

[1] Sir Robert Cecil to King James VI., *Cecil Papers*, Hatfield.

the good, and what cannot be effected, farewell it! If we cannot have what we would, methinks it is a great bond to find a friend who will strain himself in his friend's cause in whatsoever,—as this world fareth."

One wonders whether even Cecil was proof against a touch of remorse as he read the expression of Raleigh's generous confidence; or whether he merely congratulated himself upon the adroitness with which he had succeeded in avoiding awakening suspicions on the part of his friend, or perhaps had lulled them when awakened to rest; for at one time during this year of 1602 he had written to Carew complaining that Raleigh and Cobham "do use me unkindly," adding generously, "but I have covenanted with my heart not to know it. . . . All my revenge shall be to heap coals on their heads."

The end was creeping nearer and nearer. At times the Queen's popularity appears to have been as great as ever. At others the old attachment to her person seemed failing. There is something very pathetic in the picture given by Townshend of one of the last occasions on which she met her Parliament; when, in leaving, the great Queen—great in spite of her littlenesses—"after room made, came through the Commons to go to the Painted Chamber, who graciously offering her hand to the Speaker, he kissed it, but not one word she spoke

unto him, neither as she went through, few said, 'God bless your Majesty!' as they were wont in all great assemblies. And the throng being great and little room to pass, she moved her hand to have more room, whereupon one of the gentlemen ushers said openly, 'Back, Masters, make more room,' and one answered stoutly behind, 'If you will hang us, we can make *no more room*'; which the Queen seemed not to hear, though she heaved up her head and looked that way towards him that spake. After she went to Whitehall by water."[1]

In March, 1603, the end came. Whether it was the result of a chill, or whether the deep melancholy which had settled over her—the outcome of memories which lay behind and the anticipation of swift-coming death—grew too strong to be resisted, she had at length given up the struggle. Refusing either food or medicine, she sat propped up on a stool refusing to go to bed, her eyes fixed on the ground, silent, motionless. Once when Cecil would have constrained her to take rest she turned upon him: "Thou art so presumptuous," she said, "because thou knowest I shall die." Cecil did know it—well. He, at least, was ready for the event. And presently having been lifted, when almost unconscious, into her bed, with the clergy around attempting to direct her

[1] Townshend, *Four Last Parliaments of Elizabeth*, p. 179.

thoughts to a Kingdom not of this world, the last of the Tudors passed away.

Among those who were gathered round the death-bed of the Queen Raleigh was not included. In the same way that silence is sometimes more significant than speech, so may absence be than presence. Loyalty is no doubt a reality, but the ties created by it belong rather to the imagination than to the heart; nor, in the stress of a great crisis, do they always hold together. Raleigh had been the Queen's true servant for more than a generation; he was one of the last survivors of the men who had surrounded her in her happiest years; yet when death was at hand she can have had no craving for his presence, else would he have been at her side; he for his part can have had no longing to see her once more, else during that last fortnight he would not have been waiting at a distance to hear of the end. As it was, it is Cecil who occupies the principal place at that melancholy death-bed—Cecil, selfish and calculating, and to whom his dying mistress probably represented merely, or chiefly, a factor in the rising or falling of his own fortunes.

However that might be, Elizabeth was dead and Raleigh's ruin begun.

CHAPTER X

1603

James's accession—Raleigh out of favour—Deprived of offices—Arrested—In the Tower—Trial at Winchester—Conviction.

THE practical unanimity with which James was permitted to ascend the throne must have falsified many forecasts. Up to the very day of Elizabeth's death it would have been rash to hazard a decided opinion as to the future, and her determined refusal to name a successor, though justified by the result, must have lent another element of dangerous uncertainty, in the eyes of those who were looking on, to the approaching crisis.

That James should have become King with as little difficulty as if he had occupied the position of uncontested heir seemed little short of a miracle, at which England was itself astonished; men like Bacon—to use his own words—feeling as if they were "waking from a fearful dream," from the anticipation of tumult and disturbance, accompanied possibly with danger to the new religion, to a sense of security and peace.

Raleigh, summoned to London by the Queen's death, was present at a meeting held at Whitehall, adding his signature to the welcome addressed by it to the new King. If it is true that he gave it at the same time as his opinion that a limit should be set to the power of James with regard to the appointment of Scots to English offices, the fact will not have helped to lessen the prejudice entertained against him at head-quarters; nor added to the cordiality with which he was greeted when, in spite of a prohibition issued by Cecil in the name of his new master, he met the latter on his journey south, alleging as his excuse the necessity of obtaining royal authorisation for his administration of the Duchy of Cornwall. His reception can have left little doubt in his mind as to the King's disposition, and the account given by Aubrey of the meeting—though of no very reliable nature—may, likely enough, be true. The pun on Raleigh's name, ill-mannered as it was, might have seemed to James a good joke; but it is said that he never forgave his new subject's ambiguous reply to the boast that, had he met with opposition, he would have been able to vindicate his rights by force. "Would God," answered Raleigh, "that had been put to the trial! Your Majesty would then have known your friends from your enemies."

The two men can have had nothing in common,

and poisoned as the King's mind had already been, it is clear that personal acquaintance did not serve to dissipate his prejudice. James was only anxious to give the suitor what he had come for, at least for the moment, and to get quickly rid of him; which was accordingly done.

In April James reached London; nor did he lose time in supplying Raleigh with an earnest of his future treatment. In May he was deprived of the Captaincy of the Guard, the dismissal being provisionally softened by an equivalent in money; the legality of his office as licencer of wines was called in question, all dues being suspended; and he was required at unreasonably short notice, and with no compensation for the sums he had expended on it, to surrender Durham House to its former episcopal possessors. By July he was under arrest.

The circumstances made use of to furnish a pretext for the charges brought against him are so complicated, and involved in such a tissue of falsehood, that it is difficult so to tell the story as to give a distinct summary of the events which terminated in the Winchester trial. But the attempt must be made.

It had been inevitable that, notwithstanding the general satisfaction at the peaceful solution of the question of succession, certain individuals and parties should have been left discontented; and

that in especial the Catholics should have experienced bitter disappointment at the absence of the religious reaction for which they had hoped. Though far from united in aims or methods, they were therefore at one in their desire to make trouble for James, either in the interest of Arabella Stuart or in any fashion which would secure toleration to the Catholic religion. With these malcontents, priests and laymen, were associated in greater or less degree all who, for whatever reason, felt dissatisfaction at the present state of things. Amongst this heterogeneous and ill-assorted company were such men as the Puritan, Lord Grey of Wilton, George Brooke, Cobham's brother, Sir Griffin Markham, Cobham himself, and—according to his accusers—Cobham's friend, Raleigh.

With the "Bye" Plot, or priests' treason, having for its chief object to "surprise" and coerce or even murder the King, Raleigh had clearly nothing to do, being at his trial exonerated from any direct participation in it. It was upon his connection with Cobham, and Cobham's connection with a second conspiracy, known as the "Main" and having to do with the pretensions of Arabella Stuart and the establishment of secret relations with Spain, that Raleigh's accusation was based, and through which, by an almost unparalleled miscarriage of justice, his condemnation was obtained.

That Cobham had been engaged in dealings of a more or less illicit character with Aremberg, envoy of the Archduke Albert and the Infanta, was certain; and it was argued that Raleigh, of whom Cobham was the single intimate friend, must necessarily have been aware of his proceedings, assertions of the vaguest possible kind being accepted as evidence of his complicity. Thus George Brooke was reported to have said that he "confidently thought what his brother knew was known to the other;" and was likewise quoted as declaring that Raleigh had been thought by the conspirators a fit man to be of the action—an opinion which, true or false, did not constitute evidence of his guilt. But such speculations and surmises were reckoned of so much importance that at the trial itself Brooke was cited by Coke as "thinking" that "the project for the murder of the King was infused by Raleigh into his brother's head"; a charge not even included in the indictment.

The fact was that Raleigh's fall had been decided upon beforehand; so that whatever items of evidence, however weak in character, could be made to tell against him were allowed to carry weight, while to any of an opposite nature little value was attached. "I doubt the dice not fairly thrown," wrote Harington, "if Raleigh's life be the losing stake."

Into the masses of evidence, for and against him,

there is here no space to enter. What may be accepted as proved is that Cobham had spoken to him of money to be obtained from Spanish sources, and of a probable pension to be granted to Raleigh himself in consideration of certain services to be performed by him for Spain; an idea to which, as Raleigh afterwards told the King, he had attached so little importance as to have forgotten it until the matter was brought up at his trial. He himself also admitted that he had known Cobham to have been in secret communication with Aremberg. For the rest, it is likely enough that during Elizabeth's lifetime the claims of Arabella may have been discussed between the friends; and that later on Raleigh may have expressed his discontent alike with the general situation and with his personal treatment. Apart from Cobham's charges, no more serious offences have been proved against him, then or since. And the value to be attached to Cobham's charges will be shown by an examination of the circumstances under which they were made.

Raleigh, though no longer Captain of the Guard, had continued at court, displaying a certain maladroitness in suiting himself to the King's temper by urging upon James, who was eager for peace with Spain, a policy of war; and going so far as to offer to invade Spanish territory at the head of 2,000 men, at no cost to the Government—a suggestion likely enough to inspire his new master

with fresh distrust of a subject possessed of resources so formidable. So late, however, as July, Raleigh, unsuspecting of the impending blow, was in attendance at Windsor; when, waiting one morning on the terrace in readiness to ride out in the royal train, he received a summons to appear before the Council in order to reply to questions it was desirous of putting to him.

Over his examination some obscurity hangs. Raleigh himself asserted that he had been interrogated with regard to the conspiracy to surprise the King—a plot in favour of Arabella Stuart—and concerning Lord Cobham. What is of more importance is that, the examination over, he made known to Cecil in a letter certain circumstances touching Cobham's communications with Spanish agents—amounting to little more than the bare fact that communications of some kind had taken place; and that, on the letter, or part of it, being shown by Cecil to Cobham, the latter, crying out "Oh traitor, oh villain," straightway retorted by charging Raleigh with having been throughout his instigator in his dealings with Spain. Thus began the series of accusations and retractations, one following fast on the other, which so seriously affected the question of Raleigh's guilt or innocence, and in fact secured his condemnation.

Cobham had doubtless cause for complaint. It may be that Raleigh could have pleaded extenua-

ting circumstances with regard to his disclosures. He may have imagined Cecil to be already cognisant of the facts with which they were concerned. He may have attached to them little importance. But, be that as it might, he was in honour bound to keep silence; and, being so bound, he spoke.

He himself was at once put under arrest; and some few days later both he and Cobham were lodged in the Tower. His case had been prejudged, and even at this stage he was treated as if his treason had been proved. He was forced to resign the Wardenship of the Stannaries and the Governorship of Jersey; and was in a fair way to become a penniless man, the property that remained to him being, in the event of his conviction, forfeited to the Crown. It is this consideration which has been believed to have prompted the ineffectual attempt at suicide which occurred soon after he was placed in the Tower, and was so little in harmony with his general character and conduct. Confiscation would have left his wife and child unprovided for; while by dying before his conviction he would assure to them his Sherborne estate. Had such been his plan he failed to carry it out. The wound he inflicted was slight and his recovery rapid. Attempts have even been made by his partisans to prove that the whole incident was an invention of his enemies, intended to discredit him in the eyes of the world—a theory, however, diffi-

cult to maintain in the face of the explicit statement of Cecil himself.

It is to this date that the apocryphal letter of farewell to his wife belongs—a letter of which no original has been discovered, which only came to light more than two hundred years later and which it is difficult to believe to be genuine. The most noticeable thing about it, besides some beauty of style, is an allusion to a daughter nowhere else mentioned and presumably illegitimate.

Cobham meanwhile had lost no time in repenting of the charges he had made against his friend. Not ten days after his first indignant outburst he retracted most of his accusations, and was said by Cecil to have "cleared Sir Walter in most things." While confined in the Tower he went still further in the way of atonement. Passionately eager to escape from the toils of his enemies, Raleigh had contrived that a letter should reach Cobham, in which he entreated him to do him justice in writing. Weak, wretched and remorseful, Cobham was not insensible to the appeal. Already, indeed, he had craved permission of Sir George Harvey, Lieutenant of the Tower, to approach the Council in such a manner as to undo more thoroughly his evil work. "God is my witness," he wrote, "it doth touch my conscience." Harvey having, however, declined to facilitate the expression of his penitence, Cobham now readily took advantage of the opportunity

which offered, addressing to Raleigh a letter which was pushed under his door.

Though intended as a response to Raleigh's request, it was not worded to the satisfaction of the latter—being "not to his contenting," as he afterwards declared; and he wrote again, urging Cobham to vindicate him more thoroughly at his approaching trial. Cobham, however, preferring not to await that event, answered by a second letter, pronounced by Raleigh "very good," and upon which he relied to refute any charges based upon Cobham's former accusations. Versions of this letter differ, but their tenor is the same; and all contain Raleigh's absolute vindication—"for anything I know you are as innocent and clear from any treasons against the King as is subject living."

In possession of this document Raleigh started in better hope than he might otherwise have done for Winchester; at which place, on account of the plague which was raging in London, his trial was to take place.

It is a strange fact that the protection of his escort was necessary to protect from mob-violence the hero of Cadiz, the great sailor and coloniser, the gallant adventurer, and the friend and favourite of the late great Queen—a man whose exploits had been of the very kind to appeal to popular sentiment. Yet so it was. If one harebrained

fellow amongst so great a multitude had begun to set upon him, as they were near to do it, no entreaty or means could have prevailed, the fury and tumult of the people was so great." [1]

Still stranger, perhaps, is it that when he came out from the trial, condemned and convicted of treason, "he came out an object of general pity and admiration, and has held his place ever since as one of England's favourite and representative heroes." [2] And this, as another writer has pointed out, not because the struggle had been for any sublime cause or impersonal ideal. "Yet so high was his spirit, and his bearing so undaunted, that he has appeared to subsequent generations a martyr on the altar of English liberties." [3]

In the indictment Raleigh, with Cobham and George Brooke, was charged with compassing "to deprive the King of his crown and dignity; to subvert the Government and alter the true religion as established in England; to levy war against the King, with other accusations of a like nature."

Upon the bench sat Sir John Popham, Lord Chief Justice of England; Chief Justice Anderson, Justices Gawdy and Warburton; and, as Commissioners, Lord Thomas Howard, newly created

[1] Waad to Cecil, *Dom. Corresp., James I.*, Rolls House.

[2] James Spedding, *Lord Bacon's Letters and Life*, vol. iii., p. 134.

[3] W. Stebbing, *Life of Raleigh*, p. 206.

Earl of Suffolk, Raleigh's old comrade at Cadiz; Lord Mountjoy, now Earl of Devonshire; Lord Henry Howard, the prisoner's unscrupulous foe; Lord Cecil, and others. Coke, as Attorney-General, with Serjeants Hele and Phillips, prosecuted. The prisoner, allowed no counsel, conducted his own defence.

The proceedings were opened by Hele with a joke. Arabella Stuart, he said, had no more title to the Crown than he himself, "which before God, I utterly renounce." Whereat Raleigh, reflecting, it may be, upon the bearing of the remark upon James's own claims, smiled. It was, however, of course, Coke who played the principal part in the prosecution. When he began his speech it was to deal with the treason called the "Bye," with which Raleigh, addressing the jury, requested them to bear in mind that he was not so much as charged. "What is the treason of Markham and the priests to me?" he asked Coke himself.

"I will, then, come close to you," replied the Attorney-General. "I will prove you to be the most notorious traitor that ever came to the bar. . . . Thou art a monster; thou hast an English face, but a Spanish heart. . . ." So he went on: Raleigh had incited Cobham to treason; had plotted in favour of Arabella; talking of it with none but Cobham because—quoting a message alleged to have been sent by him to the latter—by a single witness he could never be condemned.

Now and then Raleigh put in a contemptuous question.

"If my Lord Cobham be a traitor," he inquired after a lengthy digression of Coke's upon Cobham's affairs, "what is that to me?"

"All that he did," replied the Attorney-General, "was by thy instigation, thou viper; for I *thou* thee, thou traitor! I will prove thee the rankest traitor in all England."

Cobham's charge was then repeated. Spanish money had been promised; he had spoken to Raleigh concerning its distribution. Raleigh had instigated all; for all he was responsible.

Permitted at length to reply, the accused gave a categorical denial to every charge, save that he had suspected Cobham of having kept intelligence with Aremberg. Would he, he asked, have been so mad—knowing the present strength of England, united with Scotland and ruled by an active King in the place of a lady "whom time had surprised"—as to choose that moment for becoming a Robin Hood, a Wat Tyler, or a Jack Cade? Would he, acquainted with the poverty of Spain, believe in the gold of which Cobham had spoken? Or was the man who had recently employed his pen in arguing against peace with that country likely to be intriguing in her interest? Proceeding to explain his frequent meetings with Cobham as connected with private matters, he solemnly pro-

tested, before God, that of his conspiracies he was "as clear as whosoever here is freest." As to Cobham, "this is a known fashion of his," he said contemptuously, "to do any friend he hath wrong, and then to repent it."

It was when the foreman of the jury desired to be told the date of the letter to Cecil which had so inflamed Cobham's wrath as presumably to prompt his accusations that the Secretary came upon the scene, smooth and plausible, so wrapping up his reply that little that is intelligible can be extracted from it, and digressing pathetically into his own feelings towards "this gentleman at the bar." "A former dearness," he said, ". . . tied upon the knot of his virtues, though slacked since by his actions, I cannot but acknowledge." One almost hears the tears in the Secretary's voice, and wonders with what sentiments the prisoner listened to it!

Fragmentary reports of his defence are all that remain; but of its force and brilliance it is possible to judge from the effect produced upon impartial witnesses. To one so unlikely as the King to receive with satisfaction testimony in favour of the accused, two independent reports are said to have been made, the one affirming "that never man spake so well in times past, nor would do in the time to come"; while the other spectator—it would seem a Scotchman—"said that whereas,

when he saw Sir Walter Ralegh first, he was so led with the common hatred that he would have gone a hundred miles to have seen him hanged, he would, ere they parted, have gone a thousand to save his life." [1]

Upon the general audience, assembled to hear the arraignment of the man they hated, the like effect was produced, disapproval of some of Coke's coarse abuse being expressed by hisses.

Again and again Raleigh demanded to be confronted with his accusers, and again and again his demand was refused; his further claim to the benefit of the statute by which no man was to be convicted of treason save on the evidence of two witnesses being also disallowed. The appeal, he was told, was made to obsolete acts. A single witness was now legally sufficient; while, besides, the accusation of one who had first accused himself had the force of a verdict of twelve men.

A single admission he made. At dinner one day Cobham, he owned, had spoken of Spanish money. Funds were to be forthcoming to promote peace with Spain—no more treasonable object—and part might be bestowed upon Raleigh, as upon Cecil himself, or Mar. For the rest, "could I stop my Lord Cobham's mouth?" he asked, demanding once again to see Cobham face to face.

"Let me speak for my life," he pleaded. "It

[1] Dudley Carleton to Chamberlain, *Wharton MS.*, Bodleian.

ROBERT CECIL, EARL OF SALISBURY

can be no hurt to him to be brought. He dareth not excuse [accuse?] me. If you grant me not this favour, I am strangely used," putting scornfully aside the argument urged against his demand, namely, that Cobham might be moved to swerve from the truth in order to acquit him. If all that was alleged was true and Cobham owed his own ruin to Raleigh, then "whom hath he cause to accuse or to be revenged on, but on me? . . . And I know him to be as revengeful as any man on earth. . . . It is a toy to tell me of law. I defy law. I stand on the facts."

Here again Cecil interposed, smooth and oily, with an apology for speaking so often, "which will make the world think I delight to hear myself talk." His affection, he assured Raleigh, had not been extinguished, but slacked, in regard to his defects. Dared the prisoner, he asked, challenge Cobham's personal testimony?

Raleigh's answer was decisive. "Now," he said. If, face to face with him, Cobham would repeat his charges, then God's will and the King's be done!

"Then call to God, Sir Walter," said Cecil, "and prepare yourself;" adding his conviction that it would be proved by Cobham that Raleigh had been his instigator and reverting again to his own sickly professions of goodwill, "excepting your fault, I am your friend. . . ."

After all this Cobham was not produced. Possibly had Raleigh been aware of the whole truth he might have been less urgent in his demand. All this time he must have been relying upon the card he had in reserve—Cobham's written acquittal. He was ignorant of the fact that the Government was ready to trump it; that what had passed in the Tower was already known; that pressure had once more been brought upon the poor weak traitor; and that he had retracted his retractation.

For the moment, when that revelation was made, Raleigh was overwhelmed—"much amazed". But, "gathering his spirits again," he produced Cobham's letter to himself, Cecil consenting to read it aloud. That Cobham was a perjured liar was clear. The question remained when he had lied and when he had spoken truth—a question decided, by judges and jury, beforehand. A verdict of guilty was returned; judgment was pronounced by Popham in terms of coarse brutality vying with the language employed by Coke, and sentence of death was passed.

That the conviction was legally unjustifiable has never been disputed. On the question of Raleigh's moral innocence historians are divided; nor is it likely that the matter will ever be settled beyond doubt. Had all that was alleged been proved, his offence would have been limited to having listened

to Cobham's schemes for obtaining money from Spain, and to having demanded a pension in exchange for the disclosure of State secrets. Had the services required been such as could be discharged without detriment to English interests he would not have done more than others. Cecil was for years a Spanish pensioner; Northumberland accepted pay from France. Whether or not Raleigh was likely to consent to use his influence in favour of his life-long enemy we are justified in doubting, the more so when the future implacable hostility of Spain is remembered. It is more probable, should the hypothesis of his guilt be accepted, that he was ready to receive money for services he would never have performed; but even of this there is no proof. On Cobham's word alone he was condemned; and Cobham, to use Raleigh's own words, was "a base, dishonourable, poor soul."

CHAPTER XI

1603–1616

Reprieve—The Tower—Prison life and occupations—Literature—Prince Henry—His death—Companions in the Tower.

WHETHER Raleigh's execution was ever intended by the King may be doubted. He may well have desired his death, yet have feared to allow what was virtually a legal murder. He gave, however, no sign of any hesitation, and the clergy attending the prisoners impressed upon them the vanity of any hope of a commutation of the capital sentence.

For Raleigh's conduct under that sentence only regret and something akin to shame can be felt. It had ever been his habit to make straight for his goal, without too strict an examination into the road he took to arrive at it; and life being the boon he now craved, he lowered himself into the dust to obtain it. It was not so much, as some one has pointed out, that he feared death—he could meet that gallantly enough—as that he loved life.

A poet has his weaknesses as well as his strength, and imagination takes effect in different ways. Death and life are simple terms, but the meanings attached to them are infinitely varied. To Raleigh life still meant limitless possibilities, which he could not bring himself to relinquish without a struggle; nor did any sacrifice seem too great for the attainment of his object. This is the explanation of the fashion in which he pleaded his cause, if not the excuse for it. That he himself repented his self-abasement is evident from the instructions he gave his wife to obtain, if possible, possession of the letters in which he had sued for his life. "God knows," he wrote, "that it was for you and yours that I desired it. But it is true I disdain myself for begging it."

Those letters—to Cecil, to the Commissioners, to the King—display one aspect of that many-sided, contradictory nature. To another witness is borne, not only by the "Pilgrimage," believed to have been written when death seemed imminent, but by his farewell letter to his wife—one which may well be permitted to blot out the memory of those he desired to recall.

"My love I send you," he wrote, "that you may keep it when I am dead; and my counsel, that you may remember it when I am no more. I would not, with my last will, present you with

sorrows, dear Bess. Let them go to the grave with me, and be buried in the dust. And seeing it is not the will of God that ever I shall see you in this life, bear my destruction gently, and with a heart like yourself." Nor is she to mourn too long. He is sorry he leaves her and his boy no richer; it may be well for her to marry again. "Remember," he goes on, "your poor child for his father's sake, that comforted you and loved you in his happiest times. . . . I cannot write much. God knows how hardly I stole this time, when all sleep; and it is time to separate my thoughts from the world. Beg my dead body, which living was denied you. . . . I can write no more. Time and death call me away. . . . My true wife, farewell. Bless my poor boy; pray for me. My true God hold you both in his arms. Written with the dying hand of sometime thy husband, but now (alas !) overthrown. Yours that was; but now not my own, W. RALEIGH." [1]

In the verses written at this same time,

> Whilst my soul, like quiet palmer,
> Travelleth towards the land of heaven,

his thoughts reverted to the iniquitous travesty of a trial which he had just undergone, and he drew a picture of another and a different court of justice,

[1] Transcript, *Dom. Corresp.*, *James*, Rolls House.

Where no corrupted voices brawl;
No conscience molten into gold,
No cause deferr'd, no vain-spent journey,
For there Christ is the King's Attorney,
Who pleads for all without degrees,
And He hath angels, but no fees.
And when the grand twelve million jury,
Of our sins, with direful fury,
Against our souls black verdicts give
Christ pleads His death and then we live.

The bitterness of death had been tasted to the full before the royal clemency was exercised, James's course being marked by the wanton cruelty of a man who tortures his victims for his own amusement. Those who were to have suffered first—Markham, Grey and Cobham—were one by one led out to the scaffold, Raleigh watching the scene from his prison window; and, one by one, were removed, Markham being promised a respite of two hours; Grey informed that the order of execution was changed and Cobham was to die first; while after the latter had been likewise confronted with the block all three lives were granted. To make the farce complete, only the presence of the royal comedian was wanting.

The death sentence having been commuted in the case of those whose treason had been proved, it was clearly impossible that Raleigh should be executed, and in December he was sent back to the Tower.

The actual crisis over, it became necessary, whether or not he was ever again to enjoy his freedom, that he should take thought for a means of living and of providing for his wife and child. Reprieved but not pardoned, he therefore now turned his attention to these matters. As convicted of treason, he was civilly dead and stripped of all offices and emoluments. His patent for the licensing of wines had passed to Nottingham, who was so little content with his acquisition, lucrative as it was, that he sought to recover for his own use arrears due to the Raleighs. The Lieutenancy of Cornwall, the Wardenship of the Stannaries, the Government of Jersey, with all remaining posts, had gone into other hands. But Sherborne was still left; having, as it was hoped, escaped confiscation owing to a conveyance by which it had been previously settled by Raleigh on his son.

The vicissitudes of this estate would be sufficient to fill a chapter in themselves; but it is enough to say that, owing to a technical flaw, the deed was pronounced worthless in law; and the property upon which Raleigh had expended so much care and money was eventually given by the King to his rapacious favourite. "I must have the land—I must have it for Carr," he is said to have told Lady Raleigh when she made her entreaty to him to spare her child's inheritance. One

could have wished that Raleigh had not stooped to make a like petition to the favourite himself. "I beseech you," he wrote, "not to begin your first buildings upon the ruins of the innocent." It is scarcely necessary to say that his pleading was vain; but the property, lost to Raleigh as it was, did not remain long in the hands of its new master, since before the former owner quitted the Tower, the Earl of Somerset had likewise found a lodging there.

In the event, a certain inadequate sum allowed to Lady Raleigh in consideration of her interest in the estate prevented the family from falling into absolute destitution; and that Raleigh was not, like some of the men whose condemnation he had shared, left actually penniless must be attributed to Cecil, by that time Earl of Salisbury. The relations of the two men are throughout perplexing; but although overmuch weight cannot be attached to the language of confidence and gratitude addressed by the Raleighs to one whose goodwill it was so important to propitiate, the expressions to be found in their letters are too strong not to be accepted as implying a certain amount of service rendered, as well as of benefits hoped for; while it would also appear that, on Raleigh's side at least, some remnant of the old affection lingered—as is shown when, after an angry interview with Cecil, he told Sir Walter Cope that he would have

bought the Secretary's presence "at a far dearer rate than those sharp words."[1] In his treatment of men by whom he had been wronged—as, notably, in the case of Essex—there was often apparent a species of careless generosity, distinct from magnanimity, and arising, it may be, from a comparatively low estimate of human nature, and a consequent indulgence for the frailties to which it is prone. To this, as well as to the practical importance of keeping on good terms with Cecil, his condonation of the conduct of the latter may have been partly due.

Had it been based upon motives of interest alone one would believe that he must have wearied of keeping up the vain show of friendship; for in the Tower, with one short interval, when he was removed to the Fleet, on the occasion of a royal visit to the Tower for the purpose of witnessing the worrying of a lion by a couple of mastiffs, the next twelve years of Raleigh's life were passed—years which turned him into an old man, broken in health though never in spirit, nor ever resigned to his fate or abandoning the hope of retrieving his fallen fortunes.

It was no wonder if during that long captivity his health gave way. The conditions of the place were not such as conduce to health of body or mind. During his first year of imprisonment

[1] Sir Walter Cope, *Archæologia.*

THE TRAITORS GATE

Raleigh was writing to complain that his boy—Lady Raleigh, with her child, had come to share her husband's lot—had "lain these fourteen days" next door to a woman sick of the plague and whose child had died of it. And even when the plague was gone, the damp and cold of his prison so told upon his health that in 1606 his physician, advising that his patient should be moved to some warmer room, reported that his left side was numbed, and his fingers and, to some degree, his tongue were contracted.

All these drawbacks notwithstanding, the prisoner's lot was not without alleviations. Those brought into constant communication with him could not remain insensible to the attraction of his personality. Even previous to his trial the young sons both of Sir John Peyton and Sir George Harvey, successively Lieutenants of the Tower, had been won over to play into his hands; and Sir George himself was now anxious to do what he could to lighten his captivity, surrendering in particular for his use his own private garden; where Raleigh, turning it into a laboratory, erected a furnace and carried on the experiments in chemistry which at this time afforded his principal means of distraction. There he discovered the art of condensing fresh water from salt, and prepared the balsams and invented the drugs which gained a wide reputation. One or two patients, it is true,

are said to have died after taking his medicines; but no one thought the less of his skill for that.

There were, however, results of his leisure of more moment to posterity than the preparation of that "balsam of Guiana" which the Comtesse de Beaumont, coming to visit the lions, begged from the prisoner as she passed him in the garden, or the contents of that multitude of jars and phials which were said to contain "all the spirits in the world except the Spirit of God." For it is to this period that not only most of his shorter prose writings, many and various, belong, but also his greatest literary achievement of all, *The History of the World.*

In one sense of less value, at least to the ordinary reader, than the verses, few in number, to which he himself attached so little importance, this work bears marvellous witness alike to the genius, the indomitable energy and the infinite industry of a man who, already past his prime and worn with sickness and sorrow, could set his hand to the task.

In the preface the writer himself recognises and apologises for the magnitude of an undertaking attempted by one "in whom had there been no other defect (who am all defect) than the time of day, it were enough; the day of a tempestuous life drawn on to the evening before I began." But it was as natural to Raleigh to set no work beyond his powers as it was to "labour terribly" at whatsoever he undertook.

Of the scope and extent of the task to which he had addressed himself the preliminary survey of his subject contained in the preface gives a measure. There he deals, with his wonted beauty of language and style, full of dignity and grace, with history as a whole, from the creation onwards; with God's righteous judgments executed upon kingdoms and princes and dynasties; and with the retribution which follows upon the shedding of blood; adding illustrations drawn from the times of Pharaoh and of Jezebel down to those of the Tudor kings, interspersed with fulsome flattery of the reigning sovereign, James, "who, as well in divine as human understanding, hath exceeded all that fore-went him by many degrees"—a tribute which might surely have opened to the author of it the doors of his prison! Passing on, he proceeds to describe and refute the Aristotelian theory of the universe, and concludes with the promise of other volumes to follow that now presented to the public. From the customary flattery of the reader he declares himself to forbear, since "all the hope I have lies in this, that I have already found more ungentle and uncourteous readers of my love towards them, and well deserving of them, than ever I shall do again. For had it been otherwise," he adds with pardonable bitterness, "I should hardly have had this leisure to have made myself a fool in print."[1]

[1] Preface to *History of the World.*

Of the body of the great work thus ushered in, it must suffice to quote the summary given by Mr. Stebbing, where he says that "its true grandeur is in the scope of the conception, which exhibits a masque of the Lords of the Earth . . . rioting in their wantonness and savagery, as if Heaven cared not or dared not interpose, yet made to pay in the end to the uttermost farthing of righteous justice." [1]

For one quotation, however, from the closing sentences of the book, space must be found. To those to whom life means most, who are most, in the fullest sense of the word, alive, death, the end of all mortal activities, is sometimes an even more haunting presence than to others. And this would seem to have been the case with Raleigh. As Dr. Hannah has pointed out in his preface to Raleigh's collected poems, not a few of them might have been written in immediate anticipation of the end. Again and again the reiterated note of the vanity of human existence is struck.

> What is our life? The play of passion.
> Our mirth? The music of division:
> Our mothers' wombs the tiring houses be,
> Where we are dressed for life's short comedy.
> The earth the stage; Heaven the spectator is,
> Who sits and views whosoe'er doth act amiss.
> The graves which hide us from the scorching sun
> Are like drawn curtains when the play is done.
> Thus playing post we to our latest rest,
> And then we die in earnest, not in jest.

[1] *Life of Ralegh*, p. 278.

And the eloquent panegyric of that same King of Terrors of whose sovereignty he had so abiding a consciousness, with which he concludes his *History of the World,* may well serve as an example of the gifts of language and force for which his prose is distinguished. There he apostrophises great Death —Death "that puts into man all the wisdom of the world, without speaking a word; which God with all the words of his Law, promises or threats, doth infuse. Death, which hateth and destroyeth man, is believed; God, which hath made him and loves him, is always deferred. *I have considered* (saith Solomon) *all the works that are under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit;* but who believes it till Death tells it us? . . . It is therefore Death alone that can suddenly make man to know himself. . . . O eloquent, just and mighty Death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou hast cast out of the world and despised: thou hast drawn together all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *Hic jacet.*"

Published in 1614, the book at once achieved the popularity to which the eleven editions printed during the succeeding hundred years bear witness; but the portions of the work which were to have

followed were never written; or, if written, were—as tradition has sometimes asserted—destroyed; and the great achievement, monumental as it is, remains incomplete.

Of other shorter writings, some unquestionably his own, others of more uncertain authorship, many are attributed to this period of captivity. Among them are disquisitions moral, political, practical and metaphysical; but of all Raleigh's less important prose works two only—*The Truth of the Fight about the Isles of the Azores*, and *The Discovery of Guiana*—were printed during his lifetime, the first having had for its object the commemoration of his kinsman's heroic death, the second designed to further his own schemes with regard to Guiana.

It was well that Raleigh should have possessed the outlet afforded by literature for the superabundant energy which was no longer permitted to find it in other directions. But while it is difficult to deny the assertion that to his misfortune his reputation owes its greatest lustre, it must be admitted that he paid heavily for the position he was to occupy in the eyes of posterity; and that, in spite of the resources afforded by his strenuous intellectual activity, life must have been a wearisome business to a man so little fitted to be caged up within stone walls.

Presently, too, the suspicion got abroad that Harvey was making things too pleasant for his

involuntary guest. With Lady Raleigh lodging in the Tower, with little Walter and the new baby who had come to share the family disasters, for companions, and with the kindly lieutenant doing what he could to soften their captivity, it was perhaps apprehended that a fair chance was not being afforded to the prisoner of acquiring that humility which it was so desirable that he should learn; and his inveterate enemy, Henry Howard—now Earl of Northampton—when writing later on to Carr that the "lawless liberty of the Tower" was having a bad effect on its inmates, added that, in particular, Raleigh's boldness, pride and passion were in no way lessened by confinement.

Whatever might be the reason, the treatment he received was curiously varied, his fetters being at times suddenly tightened, as if new evidence of guilt was shortly expected to justify fresh severity in the eyes of the world. It was when the attempt was further made to prove his implication in the Gunpowder Plot that the prisoner's endurance seems to have been in most danger of giving way. Sick in body and distressed in mind, he even lost patience with his wife, telling Cecil, in a letter dealing with the old subject of the Sherborne property, that he would be made more than weary of his life by Lady Raleigh should nothing be done in that matter. "She hath already," he adds, "brought her eldest son in one hand, and her

sucking child in another, crying out of her and their destruction, charging me with unnatural negligence, and that having provided for mine own life I am without sense and compassion of theirs." [1]

The outburst of irritation may be forgiven to a man harassed beyond bearing. For eight out of the twelve years spent in the Tower he was to be subjected to the petty tyranny of Sir William Waad, one of those who had occupied a place on the bench at his trial, and by whom the kindly Harvey had been replaced. Finding affairs in the Tower arranged little to his liking, his own garden appropriated to the prisoner's use, and the prisoner showing himself to the people who collected outside in such a fashion and with such a bearing that he might be supposed rather to have been cleared of guilt than to remain charged with it, Waad promptly set himself to introduce improvements by imposing fresh restrictions of various kinds; while at one time a more serious step was taken and Lady Raleigh was forbidden to lodge in the Tower. On this occasion, however, Raleigh made a protest which seems for once to have been effective, his wife being readmitted to "this unsavoury place"—"a miserable fate for her, and yet great for me, who in this wretched estate can hope for no other thing than peaceable sorrow."

Yet all this time—through these interminable

[1] *Cecil Papers*, Hatfield.

years—Raleigh's hopes survived. Nor were they wholly unfounded, for he had achieved a certain foothold in the very citadel of the enemy. Henry, Prince of Wales, had, under his mother's influence, become a participator in Queen Anne's admiration for her husband's great victim; and upon his attachment Raleigh may well have founded anticipations of ultimate rehabilitation. The boy sat metaphorically at the feet of the captive, claimed his assistance in the matter of shipbuilding, was his constant advocate with James, and sought his counsel upon the scheme for marrying him to the daughter of the Duke of Savoy; upon which last occasion Raleigh's advice, unhesitatingly hostile to any such alliance, must have served as an unwelcome reminder to Spain that her old enemy was still alive and to be reckoned with.

That the wife and the heir of the King were bent upon his release may well have justified Raleigh's hopes. In 1612, too, Lord Salisbury's death—notwithstanding the language in which both had striven to disguise their estrangement—had seemed to remove an obstacle from the way of their realisation; since Raleigh can scarcely have failed to accuse Cecil in his heart of connivance at least in his prolonged captivity. In November of that same year, however, his sanguine anticipations were dashed to the ground.

It was reported that Prince Henry had at last

wrung from his father the promise that Raleigh's liberty should be granted at the approaching Christmas; but before that date he was attacked by a malignant fever which it was soon clear was likely to prove fatal. On the morning before his death the Queen, in her despair, demanded from Raleigh the elixir to which she believed herself to have once owed her own life; and the prisoner, sending it, added a boast that unless the Prince's disease was the result of poison, a cure would certainly be effected. After an animated discussion between the physicians and the Lords of the Council, the drug was administered, the Prince, after receiving it, rallying so far as to regain power of speech. But the improvement was only temporary, and the life of such supreme importance to Raleigh quickly passed away.

With the Prince vanished all present hope of release, and Raleigh remained as close a prisoner as before, in no way benefited by the past advocacy of the King's unloved son; while James's hostility may have been still further embittered by the suspicion of poison suggested by his message. The gates of the Tower were at any rate shut as firmly as ever upon himself and the rest of the heterogeneous company assembled there—upon Grey, the Puritan; McCarthy, the Irish patriot and poet; poor weak Arabella Stuart, whose only crime was her royal blood; Northumberland, "the Wizard

Earl," cultivated and courtly, making love to whomsoever was thrown in his way by fate, and at the same time investing "his prison with the atmosphere of a university"; Cobham, miserable and false, of whom even the wife who had loved him had grown weary; Sir Thomas Overbury, soon to die of poison, in spite of the plasters supplied by Raleigh; to all of whom was shortly to be added James's infamous favourite, Carr, Earl of Somerset, and his wife.

CHAPTER XII

1616–1618

Release—Terms of it—Preparations for Expedition to Guiana —Spanish ambassador, Gondomar—Project for sack of Genoa—Negotiations with France—The Guiana expedition—Walter Raleigh's death—Failure—Return to England.

ON the 19th of March, 1616, the Tower gates were opened and Raleigh, if not a free man, was at least at liberty to leave his prison and to live, under the eye of a keeper, in his own house.

His release was the result neither of a tardy justice, nor of generosity, nor of compunction, but, in one form or another, of gold—of hard cash judiciously applied on the one hand, and on the other of the hope of more.

All through the years of his captivity Raleigh had cherished his dreams of exploration and discovery—of an England, after his many failures, still to be founded beyond the seas; and of the wealth awaiting those who should have boldness and enterprise enough to make it their own in

Guiana and Virginia, of both of which he had been, in the technical sense of the word, the discoverer.

Continually he had sued for permission to pursue his schemes in person, and continually had been refused it. In vain he had offered hostages for his good faith in his wife and two sons; and had demanded that his crew should be given orders to throw him into the sea should he seek to divert the expedition to any other goal than the legitimate one. Any pledge that might be required from him he was ready to give. More, he was willing, if necessary, to abandon the hope of leading the enterprise in person, sending Keymis as his deputy and at his own cost; his freedom to be the prize in case of success. Expeditions on a small scale he had continued to despatch, thus keeping himself in the memory of the nation, and Guiana before the eyes of the public.

So far, however, his entreaties had been fruitless. Salisbury had listened, had seemed to approve; had then retired into his "*arrière-boutique*," and had done no more; and Raleigh had been forced to see the years slip by with nothing accomplished.

At last, however, a change came. Some of his enemies were dead, others out of favour. Salisbury was gone, Somerset in prison, Northampton and his venomous hate were buried together; while those who filled their places—Sir Ralph Winwood, now Secretary, in particular—were inclined to listen

more favourably to his proposals. Other men, too, less honest and more interested than Winwood, their imaginations catching fire from his own, were led to indulge visions of fabulous riches to be obtained, should the great sea-captain be permitted to lead the quest; whilst bribes, skilfully applied, set the connections of the King's new favourite, Villiers, at work to open the prison doors.

So, presently, all these various influences combining for the same end, the word went forth that Raleigh—not even now pardoned—was to be set free to seek his fortune and the fortune of King and courtiers in those regions in which he was so confident of finding it.

All England—it is scarcely too much to say, all Europe—watched the great adventurer as his prison doors swung back to let him pass out. Friendly and unfriendly eyes were alike fixed upon him. Spain in particular was intent upon her scrutiny, knowing, as she had good reason to know, that it was her arch-enemy who was thus set loose; France would willingly have secured him as a friend; and lesser states—Denmark, Savoy, Venice—had all their own interest in the matter. Raleigh's name, whether to friend or foe, was a force in itself. Of that force James had determined to make use, retaining over its possessor the power of life and death, to be used as the result should prove most advantageous to himself.

Raleigh's first act on recovering partial liberty was to survey the changes which had taken place in London during his incarceration. His next—scarcely more than a week after he had left the Tower—was, by arranging for the building of the ship *Destiny*, to initiate his preparations for the coming enterprise.

He had ever been a gambler, and he was as ready as before to risk all, and more than all, that he possessed upon the venture; stripping himself and his wife of such remnants of property as they retained, and borrowing additional sums besides.

When all was done it is said that not more than a hundred pounds remained; but desperate as was the game, it was one after Raleigh's own heart; and even had not liberty, if not life itself, been at stake, no sacrifice would have seemed to him too great to ensure success.

Nor can it be doubted that he expected to succeed. To those indeed who, looking back, know the end, it may be true that, as Mr. Stebbing has said, the spectacle of his confidence is among the most pathetic tragedies in history. But there is another aspect of the matter. Though hope deferred may make the heart sick, the malady is but a trifle compared with that of having nothing to hope for; and disappointment, viewed aright, is only the payment, already overdue, for anticipation. So that, in spite of the sequel, Raleigh may not after all

have come off the loser; and we may at all events be justified in believing that this year of liberty after long confinement, of renewed activity after enforced idleness, of excitement after the deadly quiet of a prison, was not devoid of its special happiness.

Expressly forbidden to resort either to court or, without special permission, to any public assembly, Raleigh must nevertheless have been much before the public in the narrow limits of the London of his day, as he passed to and fro attending to his business—a man aged and broken in health, but with his interest in life as keen as ever and his reputation greater, so that men pressed eagerly into his service, anxious to take part in the expedition he was to lead.

Among the volunteers were many of rank and position—mostly, one would believe, young men to whom he must have represented rather a tradition than an actuality; though some old comrades still remained, ready to serve under him once more. But the mass of his followers were unhappily of a different stamp and little fitted, by his own account, to bring the enterprise to a prosperous conclusion, being "drunkards, blasphemers and others, as their fathers, brothers and friends thought it an exceeding good gain to be discharged of."[1]

One person, looking vigilantly on at Raleigh's

[1] *Apology for the Voyage to Guiana.*

preparations, was destined to play too important a part in the tragedy that followed to be passed over without special mention. This was the Spanish ambassador, Sarmiento, afterwards Count of Gondomar. Through the examination of Spanish archives it has been proved by Raleigh's latest biographer "that it was with no desire to inflict punishment for the injury actually done on the last Guiana voyage, that led Gondomar to hound Raleigh to death, for he was practically condemned before he sailed, but to serve as an object lesson to England that all South America, at least, belonged to Spain." [1]

Times were changed since the days of Elizabeth. To be at peace with Spain and to enjoy her friendship was James's cherished ambition, to ensure the fulfilment of which he would have sacrificed far more than the life of his greatest subject. And both as ambassador and personally, Gondomar was of the last importance at the English court, the place he filled there being indicated by a letter of the year 1622, written from Madrid, in which he tenders his thanks to James for having admitted him—a Spaniard—not only to his Privy Council, but to his private closet itself.

Such being the place he enjoyed in the royal confidence, it is no longer startling to find that

[1] Martin Hume, *Life of Raleigh*, preface, pp. 12, 13.

though, according to Raleigh's son, James had promised, "on the word of a King," to keep secret the programme of the scheme, with details and chart, with which Raleigh had been required to furnish him, a full account of what was intended, together with a copy of the official report on the strength of the fleet which was to take part in the expedition, was forthwith transmitted to Madrid. Nor must it be forgotten how heavily Raleigh was handicapped by the existence of an informer in the person of his own sovereign.

That Gondomar was justified in feeling distrust may freely be admitted. The ambition of Elizabeth's old sea-captain was not likely to be limited to a search for gold. Steeped in the traditions of a past age, the rights of England over Guiana and Virginia were articles of his life's creed; and in the case at least of the first were in direct opposition to the Spanish claim to exclusive political possession. In spite, therefore, of the King's pledge that all those taking part in the expedition should be bound over, on pain of death, to peaceable behaviour, conflict must have been clearly possible, if not inevitable.

At one time, indeed, it had seemed likely that a blow might be struck at Spanish interests nearer home; information being sent by the Venetian envoy to his Government of a scheme by which it was proposed to utilise Raleigh's preparations for

the purpose of seizing on Genoa—always subservient to Spain—and appropriating its wealth. Even James, it seems, aware of the project, for a time "liked it well." But the plan came to nothing. The sack of Genoa would certainly not have conduced to the furtherance of James's principal object, an alliance with Spain, and the idea, if ever seriously entertained, was abandoned.

Raleigh would no doubt have been as ready for such a venture as for any other, and it may well be that, in his anticipations, memories of the old privateering successes which had so often been combined with more legitimate exploits played a part. "Before he went, having conference with some great Lords, his friends, who told him that they doubted he would be prizing if he could do it handsomely—'Yea,' saith he, 'if I can light right on the Plate fleet you will think I were mad if I should refuse it.' To whom they answering, 'Why then you will be a pirate.' 'Tush,' quoth he, 'my Lord, did you ever hear of any that was counted a pirate for taking millions?'"[1] Which, whether or not, as has been suggested, made in jest, was an apt enough retort.

Whatever side issues or possibilities he may have contemplated, however, there can be no doubt that his main object was that which he avowed;

[1] *State Papers, Domestic, James I.* The "great Lords" are elsewhere said to represent Bacon.

and by August the commission was signed which empowered him to voyage to those parts of America possessed by savage tribes, and to bring thence commodities profitable for home use. By these generalities was of course understood the gold mine on the banks of the Orinoco visited by him in former days.

Gondomar had from the first opposed the scheme; but, assuming gold to be the object, he now went so far as to promise protection to a mining expedition should it go unescorted by an English military force. It was not surprising that Raleigh declined the offer. To have confided his fortunes to Spanish honour would have been suggestive of too childlike an innocence.

Over the negotiations between Raleigh and another Power some obscurity hangs; but it seems certain that communications took place between himself and the Comte des Marêts, French ambassador to St. James'. According to the latter, Raleigh, discontented—as he might well be—with the treatment he had received, professed himself in the course of conversation ready, should his present venture prove successful, to transfer his services to France. Whether or not the envoy's account of what had passed had any foundation in fact, it is not likely that such a step was ever seriously contemplated by Raleigh; and, as Mr. Stebbing suggests, the exchange of empty compli-

ments more probably constituted the groundwork on which the report was based. The object of some further negotiations appears to have been permission to use French ports as shelter for Spanish prizes; while it also seems to have been intended that French ships should meet and co-operate with Raleigh's own. Whatever arrangements were made, Winwood, and probably the King, were aware of them, though it was convenient to the latter to keep himself in the background.

Meantime all was ready for the departure of the expedition. It was doubtless a singular anomaly that its commander-in-chief, holding the King's commission and entrusted by it with power of life and death over the King's subjects, by the exercise of martial law, should leave England himself an unpardoned man and with the halter still round his neck; but so it was. Had he had more cash to spare for bribes a full pardon might probably have been added to the liberty he had already purchased. It is reported, on the authority of his son, that Bacon was responsible for the advice to save money he could ill spare, together with the assurance that his commission constituted a pardon in itself. Whether or not so high a legal authority committed himself to this opinion, Raleigh neglected the precaution of obtaining a formal pardon, and left England still holding his life merely at the King's pleasure.

Another Walter Raleigh was also going to his doom. His son and namesake was the captain of the *Destiny*.

Early in April, 1617, Raleigh, with a fleet of seven ships, afterwards doubled, left the mouth of the Thames. By an unfortunate series of accidents, however, the start was delayed for some months, and it was not until after the middle of August that Cork was finally left behind. To a delay so prejudicial to his chances of success we owe an incident too characteristic to be omitted. While detained by contrary winds at Cork he was interrogated by Lord Boyle, then in possession of Raleigh's former Munster estates, concerning a lease granted by him in earlier days to a certain Pine, whose conduct had formerly caused considerable annoyance to Raleigh himself. The opinion he gave was unfavourable to Pine's present claim. But not long afterwards, when death was near, he was troubled by a fear that his judgment had been overhasty, and one of his last acts was to beg that the evidence should be revised.

On August 19th the final start was made. Orders for the fleet had been drawn up, described by a contemporary as unprecedented in their "godly, severe, and martial government," while, looking at them from another point of view, they prove—as conclusively as the "ordnance, 121 pieces," mentioned in the official report—by

their constant reference to "the enemy" that conflict was openly acknowledged to be likely.

By September 6th, Lancerota, one of the Great Canaries, had been reached; and it was here that Raleigh's first difficulty in connection with Spain occurred. The natives, in expectation of the arrival of a fleet of Barbary corsairs, and mistaking the English for Turks—an error in which the better informed governor was careful to leave them—set upon a party which had been disembarked in search of provisions, and killed or wounded several of the men. Raleigh found himself in a difficulty. The Englishmen were eager to avenge their comrades; but, aware of the King's predilections and also knowing that his enemies were on the watch to make out a case against him, he dared not permit a return of hostilities and left the vicinity as speedily as might be. His course was doubtless wise, but notwithstanding the forbearance he had shown, a captain under his command—one Bailey—seized upon the pretext afforded by the unprovoked struggle to desert, sailing home with a report of piratical proceedings on the part of his admiral—a story so flagrantly at variance with the truth that, eager as were his enemies to accept any evidence to Raleigh's discredit, it failed to obtain credence until the ill-success of the expedition made its leader fair prey for any slander, however ill-founded. Even now the incident was

utilised by Gondomar for the purpose of obtaining fresh pledges from James, Sir Thomas Lake expressing, on the King's behalf, his great sorrow for "the atrocious wickedness" perpetrated in the Canaries, and likewise conveying to Gondomar in writing Viscount Fenton's explicit assurance that his Majesty was very disposed and determined against Raleigh, and would join the King of Spain in ruining him, though the resolution was to be kept for the time secret.

Meanwhile at Gomera, one of the smaller Canaries, the single piece of good fortune of the voyage had befallen the fleet, the governor's wife proving to be partly of English blood and anxious to testify her goodwill by presents; while the governor himself volunteered to send home his appreciation of the blameless conduct of the English sailors. It was well to make the most of this last gleam of good luck. From thenceforth all went ill. Sickness broke out on board the ships, carrying off officers as well as men, among them Raleigh's own valued servant, Talbot—"as faithful and true a man," said his master, "as ever lived. I lost him to mine inestimable grief."[1] John Pigott, Lieutenant-General of the land service, was also a victim, Raleigh himself being presently struck down with fever. Calms had succeeded the tempestuous weather encountered at first, and the

[1] *Journal, Cott. MS.*

voyage took more than double the usual time; so that it was not till the middle of November that Cayenne harbour was reached, and that Raleigh was able to send his wife an account of all that had been endured during the voyage.

"Sweet Heart," he said, "I can yet write unto you but with a weak hand, for I have suffered the most violent calenture, for fifteen days, that ever man did, and lived: but God that gave me a strong heart in all my adversities, hath also now strengthened it in the hell-fire of heat." Notwithstanding all misfortunes he still hoped to perform that which he had undertaken—if, as he adds bitterly, "the diligent care at London to make our strength known to the Spanish King by his ambassador" have not barred the way. One comfort he could at least afford to the unfortunate wife and mother—the last that was to reach her—in the assurance that "your son had never such good health." The Indians too had been found faithful to the tradition of loyalty to Raleigh. "To tell you that I might be here King of the Indians were a vanity; but my name hath still lived among them. . . . All offer to obey me."

It was clear that Raleigh, exhausted by sickness, was not in a condition to take personal command of the exploring party; nor would it have been desirable that he should, in any case, relinquish to another the charge of the fleet—the

safety of which was so essential to a retreat. It was therefore resolved that, with the five larger ships, he should remain at Trinidad; an equal number of the lesser vessels, with Keymis as guide, proceeding up the Orinoco to seek the mine which was the object of the expedition.

Sir Wareham St. Leger, Raleigh's lieutenant, being likewise disabled by sickness, his place was filled by George Raleigh, nephew to Raleigh; his son Walter commanding the land forces. On Keymis rested the responsibility of finding the mine.

The hazardous nature of the enterprise, more especially taking into account the character of the men engaged in it, must have been patent to all. That a Spanish settlement existed in Guiana was known, its precise locality remaining uncertain; and wherever Spaniards were encountered it would be as enemies. So much might be assumed. Whether or not a struggle was inevitable, Raleigh could not fail to regard one as probable, and 400 soldiers and sailors accompanied the party, prepared to repel force by force. If possible, however, the mine was to be reached without a fight. Keymis, for his part, had orders, should it not prove rich enough to be worth the holding, to confine himself to carrying off some samples of ore, as evidence that the design had been genuine. In effecting a landing caution was to be used, "for l

know," wrote the admiral, "a few gentlemen excepted, what a scum of men you have. And I would not, for all the world, receive a blow from the Spaniards to the dishonour of our nation." For his own part, dead or alive, Raleigh would be found awaiting the return of the party, either with his ships or their ashes; "for I will fire, with the galleons, if it come to extremity; never will I run," he added, referring to a possible attack on his little fleet, which, considering the detailed information forwarded to Spain, might well seem not improbable.

On December 10th the expedition set out. By the 31st it had reached the Spanish town, San Thome, built on the banks of the river, from which they were fired upon as they passed. The following day they landed, with the intention of resting for the night before starting in search of the mine. Such, at least, was Raleigh's account of the matter, differing in some respects from that of a contemporary Spaniard, who asserted that the landing was made below the town, against which the English forces had deliberately marched. It seems at any rate clear that the fight was initiated by the Spaniards, who fell upon the English soon after dark; the latter, though surprised, repulsing the enemy and pursuing them as far as the town itself, where the battle was renewed. It was here that young Raleigh fell. "Fonder of

glory than safety," the boy had slain one of the enemy's captains, when he was himself shot; and still pressing forward, in spite of his wound, was struck down by the butt-end of a musket, and, crying out, "Go on! Lord have mercy upon me and prosper your enterprise," died.

The fight ended in the success of the English, the governor himself losing his life in the engagement, and the town remaining in the hands of the victors.

The way might now have seemed clear to the mine, according to Keymis's calculations not more than eight miles distant; but a week elapsed before any attempt to reach it was made; and when at length a couple of launches set out, an ambuscade awaited them, nine men were killed or wounded, and Keymis, losing heart altogether, declined to prosecute the search. Honest and faithful as he was, the disasters which had befallen the enterprise had broken his spirit. Walter was dead; Walter's father, left sick at Trinidad, might well be also dead or dying; and under the circumstances he refused the responsibility of proceeding farther. After another futile attempt on the part of George Raleigh to reach the goal, the party therefore retraced their steps, having lost some 250 men, fired the town, and acquired a certain amount of spoil. The venture upon which Raleigh had staked his all had resulted in absolute failure.

Before the return of the explorers to the fleet, Keymis's letter, telling of his son's death, had been received by Raleigh. How that news affected him is to be learnt, not only in the mention of it in his letter to Winwood—also dead before it reached him — to whom he said that with the tidings of his loss "all respect of this world hath taken end in me," but in that other letter—surely one of the saddest ever written—in which, though not till five weeks later, he communicated the tidings to the boy's mother.

"I was loath to write," he says, "because I knew not how to comfort you; and, God knows, I never knew what sorrow meant till now. . . . Comfort your heart (dearest Besse), I shall sorrow for us both. I shall sorrow the less, because I have not long to sorrow, because not long to live." She is to refer to Winwood's letter for details. "I have written but that letter, for my brains are broken, and it is a torment to me to write, and especially of misery." He would willingly die, heartbroken with failure, had it not been for her sake. "If I live to return, resolve yourself that it is the care of you that hath strengthened my heart."

When that letter was written, another tragedy had taken place; which, though dwarfed by the overwhelming sorrow which had preceded it, must have been hard enough in itself to bear. It was

the death, under peculiarly painful circumstances, of Lawrence Keymis.

Keymis, befriended by Raleigh almost from boyhood, had remained loyal to him ever since. His allegiance had never faltered, and Raleigh had repaid his service with absolute trust. Nor had his confidence been misplaced. But when, on March 2nd, the exploring party brought back its confession of failure and disaster, Raleigh, heartbroken and wasted with sickness and anxiety, every hope shattered, received the man to whom the mission had been entrusted with bitter reproaches, telling him he had "undone him and wounded his credit with the King past recovery." How the upbraiding of his master must have struck home to the heart of the faithful servant it is not difficult to imagine. A day or two later the end came. Bringing the letter of excuse he had addressed to the Earl of Arundel—one of Raleigh's sureties—he begged the latter to read it and to forgive him; and on Raleigh's sternly refusing to endorse his explanations, repeating that "he had undone him by his obstinacy, and that he would not favour or colour in any sort his former folly," he asked whether that was his resolution? On Raleigh's replying in the affirmative he answered, "I know[1] then, sir, what course to take." What that course was, was presently

[1] According to the *Apology*, "I know *not*," etc.

shown. Half an hour later Keymis was found stabbed to the heart by his own hand, having first made an ineffectual effort to shoot himself.

Whatever Raleigh felt he gave no expression to his grief. "My brains are broken," he repeated to his wife, "and I cannot write much. I live yet, and I have told you why."[1]

On Raleigh's movements between leaving the Indies and arriving in England much light has been thrown by the discovery among the Spanish papers by Major Martin Hume of two letters addressed by him from Plymouth to his old friend, Lord Carew. According to this account, his intention of returning to make a second attempt in Guiana being frustrated by the desertion of two of his captains, and discovering further a plot on the part of his crews to possess themselves of a ship and to turn pirates on their own account, he decided to set sail at once for England—a plan which, in spite of the opposition offered by the mutineers, was carried out. He was aware, he added, he had himself been charged with piratical intentions—accusations refuted by his present action, since "at the manifest peril of my life"—from the mutineers—"I have brought myself and my ship to England . . . for even death itself shall not make me turn thief and vagabond, nor

[1] Copy in *Harl. MS.*, British Museum.

will I ever betray the noble courtesy of the several gentlemen who gave sureties for me."

By June 21st Plymouth was reached. Raleigh had received warnings—which indeed cannot have been needed—that danger awaited him at home. But ill and heart-broken, he can scarcely have had spirit to keep up the fight with fate. His wife and remaining child were in England and his word was pledged. To have broken it would have been to break faith with Arundel and Pembroke, his sureties. A King might play the traitor, but not a Raleigh. So he went back to meet his enemies. They were ready for him.

CHAPTER XIII

1618

Arrest—Journey to London—Attempted escape—The Tower again—Commission of examination—Course pursued—Execution granted—The last night—The scaffold—Summary.

JAMES would join the King of Spain in ruining Raleigh. The explicit assurance offered to Gondomar epitomises the situation as regards the man who, wrecked in fortune and in health, had returned to face his enemies, to become their prey, and at the same time to win over them his singular victory for all time.

Gondomar, soon after the arrival of the *Destiny*, had left England, carrying with him Buckingham's written pledge that as much severity should be exercised towards the adventurers "as if they had done the like spoil in any of the cities of England," with the additional promise that, should it seem best to his sovereign, they should be sent to receive their punishment in Madrid. He might well be satisfied! Raleigh's doom was practically sealed.

Already, indeed, he had been judged and condemned. In June, while, yet upon the high seas, he was incapable of making any defence, James had, in a proclamation, denounced the events at San Thome as scandalous and enormous outrages, declaring his "detestation of the said insolencies" and charging all his subjects to give evidence in the matter, in order that the guilty might be brought to punishment. The rest of Raleigh's history is contained in the fashion after which that punishment was contrived and inflicted.

The first step was clearly to gain possession of the person of the chief culprit—no difficult task, since he had by his return invited capture. The Vice-Admiral of Devon, a kinsman of Raleigh's own, Sir Lewis Stukeley—rechristened, by rough public justice, Sir Judas—was charged with the arrest; and meeting Raleigh, with his wife and Captain King—a companion of the voyage—on their way to London, brought the party back to Plymouth in order that the *Destiny*, with whatever was on board her, might be seized.

Stukeley proved at first so careless a jailer that it has been surmised that, with or without the connivance of the authorities, he would not have been unwilling that his prisoner should escape. The idea did, in fact, suggest itself to Raleigh, who since the King's proclamation can have entertained little doubt as to the issue of a trial; and with

King's assistance it was arranged that a French vessel lying off the town should take him across the Channel.

In accordance with this plan the two rowed out one night to sea; but when the ship was almost reached Raleigh turned back. Whether it was that hope had revived, making a free and honourable future at home seem possible, or that even his brave spirit shrank from the prospect of an old age passed as a refugee and a stranger in a foreign land, the project was abandoned, to be resumed too late to be carried into effect.

To the journey to London a disagreeable incident belongs. A Frenchman named Manourie, at once a quack and a Government spy, had been added to the party; of this man's services Raleigh made use when at Salisbury to produce symptoms of serious disease; while the patient, by counterfeiting madness, gained time by the delay to draw up the statement of his case afterwards called the *Apology for the Voyage to Guiana*. Alluding later on to the incident, Raleigh ascribed the deception to his desire to obtain an interview with James, then expected at Salisbury; but whatever may have been his motive the whole affair was a discreditable one.

Flight having been once more determined upon, Lady Raleigh had meantime proceeded with Captain King to London, there to make arrangements for

it; and on Raleigh's arrival he was permitted to reside at his own house, the Government, duly apprised by Manourie of his intention of evasion, being not unwilling that he should put himself in the wrong by the attempt. French agents had met him with offers of assistance, which, however, he had courteously declined, preferring to dispense with foreign aid. By means of bribery he believed himself to have gained over Stukeley; and with his help, that of King and one or two former dependants, he hoped, unsuspecting of the atmosphere of treachery by which he was surrounded, to make his escape. King was, in fact, the single honest man engaged in the undertaking, Stukeley appearing to take quite singular satisfaction in the work of betrayal, and adding little gratuitous touches to increase the dramatic completeness of the performance.

On Friday, August 7th, Raleigh had reached London. On the following day the cautious Stukeley, still in charge of the prisoner, obtained a warrant authorising connivance on his part at the attempt to escape. Sunday night, therefore, he, with his son, a page, and Raleigh himself, met King, accompanied by the men he had engaged and two wherries, at the Tower Dock; when Stukeley, warming to his work, asked King "whether thus far he had not distinguished himself an honest man," receiving in return King's

ambiguous reply to the effect "that he hoped he would continue so."

The sight of a boat apparently following his own raised some apprehensions in Raleigh's mind; but Stukeley, "cursing and damning himself" for venturing his fortunes with a man so full of doubts, succeeded for the time in persuading the fugitive that all was well; and it was not till Woolwich had been passed that suspicions of treachery, though limited to the watermen, suggested themselves to Raleigh. A mile farther on those suspicions were verified. Ordering his own boat to be turned about, the pursuing wherry was met, and Raleigh, even then confiding in Stukeley's good faith, declared himself his prisoner, the traitor embracing him "with the greatest tenderness" and with many protestations of fidelity.

Only when the whole party, captors and fugitives alike, had landed at Greenwich did the true state of the case at last become apparent to Raleigh; when King heard him address to the man who had betrayed him the single reproach which is on record. "Sir Lewis," he said, "these actions will not turn out to your credit."

To King, who had remained obstinately faithful, in spite of Raleigh's own advice to declare himself a sharer in Stukeley's plot, he observed as the two parted at the Tower, each in custody, that his subordinate need fear no danger; "but as for me,

I am the mark that is shot at." After which King, forced to quit his master, left him "to His tuition," as he afterwards said, "with Whom I do not doubt that his soul resteth."

So far all had gone as Raleigh's enemies desired. Not only had he been made prisoner, but had been detected in the act of attempting to escape. His death was a foregone conclusion; but the process by which it should be brought about had yet to be determined. During the weeks that followed his committal to the Tower no effort was spared to collect such evidence concerning recent events as would justify their being visited with the extreme penalty. But unexpected difficulties occurred. Intentions of piracy never carried into effect were hard to prove, and even if proved were scarcely sufficient; the negotiations with France, out of which capital was sought to be made, had likewise had no result, while of some of them at least the King and Council had been cognisant. Nor could Raleigh be held criminally responsible for the offer which he had declined of the French agents to assist him in his escape. There remained the central question of the expedition, and of the collisions with Spanish subjects which had taken place in the course of it. But here again facts were hard to deal with satisfactorily.

Subservient as the court had become to Spain, the sentiments of the English nation could not be

wholly overlooked; and unless the Spanish claims to rights over Guiana, as well as over the rest of South America, were admitted, it would be difficult to convict Raleigh of a capital offence in resisting force by force. Should, on the other hand, those Spanish claims be allowed, the action of James himself, in permitting the attempt to discover and work a mine in foreign territory was obviously open to question. That the Government had been aware of the existence of a Spanish settlement could scarcely be denied; any more than the proof afforded by the force that Raleigh had been permitted to take out, of a recognition on the part of the authorities of the possibility, at least, of a struggle. It was therefore no easy matter to discover, in recent events, the necessary pretext for Raleigh's execution, and at one time there were those to whom his fate still seemed uncertain; while the Queen, now by direct appeals to her husband, now through the influence of Buckingham, was exerting herself to the utmost to save him. But James's word had been pledged to Spain and for once he meant to keep it.

The simple method of examination of the prisoner producing little result, Sir Thomas Wilson, Keeper of the State Papers, was placed in charge of him, that he might gain his confidence and entangle him in his talk; while letters passing between Raleigh and his wife were intercepted

in the hope that they might supply additional evidence. All was, however, in vain and it was clear that other means must be taken. What was the mode of procedure finally decided upon has been summarised by Oldys: "As he must be put to death they found a way . . . by making this last action at St. Thome the efficient cause, but the obsolete condemnation at Winchester, fifteen years ago, the nominal cause of his destruction; as a course whereby both the law would be judicially satisfied, and the title be left, for fear of displeasure, undecided."

Seeing that the prisoner was already, by virtue of the Winchester sentence, "civilly dead," trial by jury was declared to be in law impossible. Two alternatives were therefore offered by the Commissioners who had been appointed to examine him for the King's adoption — either the issue, simultaneously with a warrant for his execution on the old conviction, of a printed exposition of his recent offences which should afford a moral justification for the punishment awarded; or else— and to this course the Commissioners inclined—to summon him before the whole Council, judges being also present, together with a fit audience of gentlemen of rank and position, and to charge him with his late offences; in order that, the case against him being thus heard, the Lords of the Council and the judges should decide whether warrant for his

execution might "with justice and honour" be granted.[1]

Mr. Spedding, quoting this document, draws attention to the fact that the Commissioners, by the partial publicity thus recommended, proved their own confidence in the strength of the case. Against this evidence of fair play must be set James's reply. With a certain brutal candour he confessed plainly that, to call the prisoner publicly before the Council, "We think it not fit, because it would make him too popular, as was found by experience at Winchester, where by his wit he turned the hatred of men into compassion of him." [2]

He was therefore to be called only before his previous examiners; the result of former examinations was to be read and he himself to be heard in his own defence; after which the long suspended sentence would be pronounced, the warrant receive the royal signature, and Raleigh would die by virtue of the sentence passed fifteen years ago. It was this plan, with some modifications, which was ultimately carried out.

No complete account of the proceedings by which Raleigh's fate was finally decided remains. Awakened at eight in the morning on October 28th, while suffering from an attack of ague, he was summoned to appear before the King's Bench at Westminster. There the old Winchester conviction

[1] *Gibson Papers.* [2] *Fortescue Papers.*

was read, and Yelverton, the Attorney-General, called for execution; observing, somewhat rhetorically, that the prisoner "hath been a star at which the world hath gazed, but stars may fall, nay, they must fall when they trouble the sphere wherein they abide." Chief Justice Montagu, too, prefaced the granting of execution with a lengthy exhortation. Raleigh, he said, had given proof of courage and wisdom, and now was the time for the exercise of these virtues. His faith had been called in question; but having read his book the Chief Justice was convinced of his Christianity—which must have been a comfort to the prisoner at the bar. Sorrow, he proceeded, also dealing in rhetoric, would not, in some kind, avail him, "for were you pained, sorrow would not ease you; were you afflicted, sorrow would not relieve you; were you tormented, sorrow would not content you; and yet the sorrow for your sins would be an everlasting comfort to you." Raleigh, he added, was to fear death neither too much nor too little, so might God have mercy on his soul.

Raleigh listened, one might almost believe, with a smile, to the lay preacher who was to conclude the sermon by the order of his judicial murder. He was little in need of an exhortation to courage. If he had loved life he had never feared death, nor was he likely to play the coward now. Perhaps certainty had even brought with it a reaction,

after the long strain of suspense. At any rate, meeting on his way from Westminster to the Gate House an old acquaintance, Sir Hugh Beeston, he gave him cheerful greeting.

"You will come to-morrow morning?" he asked, inviting him to the last pageant in which he himself would take a part; adding, "I do not know what you may do for a place. For my own part I am sure of one. You must make what shift you can."

To his cousin, Francis Thynne, come to the prison to take farewell, he spoke in such jesting fashion that the visitor was moved to remonstrance.

"Do not carry it with too much bravery," he advised. "Your enemies will take exception if you do."

"It is my last mirth in this world," Raleigh pleaded. "Do not grudge it to me. When I am come to the sad parting you will see me grave enough."

Tounson, Dean of Westminster, sent to prepare him for the end, marvelled at the gay and gallant bearing of the man he had come to strengthen against the last enemy. "When I began to encourage him against the fear of death," he said, "he seemed to make so light of it that I wondered at him. When I told him that the dear servants of God, in better causes than his, had shrunk back and trembled a little, he denied it not. But yet he gave God thanks he had never feared death."[1]

There was, nevertheless, one parting, before

[1] Tounson to Esham.

that final one of which he had spoken to Thynne, which must have been difficult to face. That evening his wife came to bid him a last farewell, the hope to which she had so long clung wrenched from her grasp. During that hour of converse he spoke of the vindication of his fame, which, should he be denied the privilege of speech upon the scaffold, would remain her charge. Of Carew, his boy, it is said he would not speak. Silence was best. At the last Lady Raleigh told him, with tears, of the poor concession which was all she had been able to wring from the Lords of the Council—the possession of his body.

"It is well, dear Bess," he said gently, "that thou mayest dispose of that dead which thou hadst not always the disposing of when alive." And so they parted.

When she was gone he set to work at his Testamentary Note, to be left behind in case his mouth should be shut upon the scaffold; after which, it is believed, he wrote the lines found in the Bible given by him to Dr. Tounson. Well known as they are, they must find a place here.

Even such is time, that takes in trust
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,
And pays us but with earth and dust;
Who, in the dark and silent grave,
When we have wandered all our ways,
Shuts up the story of our days.
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,
My God shall raise me up, I trust.

OLD PALACE YARD

The next morning, very early, he received the Holy Communion; and was then taken to Palace Yard, where the scaffold had been erected. Mounting it cheerfully, he saluted those of his acquaintance who were present, prefacing his speech with the request that, should the intermittent fever to which he was subject lay hold of him before the end, the signs of it might be attributed to the true cause and not to any dismay.

The misgivings he had felt lest the right of open speech should be denied him were not realised. For five and twenty minutes he spoke, while around stood men enough of all classes to enable him to feel that it was England itself that he was addressing. His mind was clear; and so noble was his bearing and the delivery of his vindication such, that to the manner rather than to the matter of it is its singular effect upon public opinion attributed by Bacon's apologist.[1] Nor is it unlikely that it was the man himself, tested in that supreme hour, rather than the facts he reasserted, by whom the victory was won. "He had formerly boasted that he *despised* death. But his meditations in the Tower had raised his mind to a still higher elevation, for his entertainment of it on the scaffold was not with contempt, but rather with polite and courtly welcome. Never was death by the public

[1] J. Spedding, *Lord Bacon's Letters and Life*, vol. vi., pp. 372-73.

executioner so completely cheated of its victory."[1]

The Earls of Arundel, Oxford and Northampton stood in Sir Randolph Carew's gallery; but on Raleigh expressing a fear that his voice might not reach them, they answered that they would come down to him, and so did. And then Raleigh's triumph began. He was no longer the brow-beaten prisoner, sueing for pardon, anxious for wife and child, the great schemes which still seemed possible urging him on to mistaken appeals. Certainty of death had already brought with it death's great emancipation. But yesterday James's victim, to-day his chains were already slipping off. He was, to use his own words, "the subject of Death, and the great God of Heaven was his Sovereign."

Thanking God that He had brought him into the light to die, he recapitulated the charges brought against him, replying to them one by one, and vindicating his loyalty to country and King. Once more he asserted the good faith with which he had set sail for Guiana, and with which he had of his own free will come back to England; he gave the lie to the calumny which had charged him with an ungenerous triumph over the dying Essex; he exposed the falsehood of Stukeley—now, however,

[1] J. Spedding, *Lord Bacon's Letters and Life*, vol. vi., pp. 372-73.

forgiven ; and he craved God's pardon for his many sins committed as a sea-faring man, a soldier and a courtier, all "courses of wickedness and vice" ; and so took leave of those present, for "I have," he said, "a long journey to take, and must bid the company farewell."

As the executioner knelt for forgiveness he laid his hands on the man's shoulders, freely granting it. Then testing with his finger the edge of the axe, he lifted and kissed the blade.

"It is a sharp and fair medicine," he said, smiling, "to cure me of all my diseases."

When the fatal stroke should have been dealt the executioner faltered. Twice Raleigh had given the signal, and still the work was undone. Then, for the last time, his voice was heard.

"What dost thou fear?" he asked. "Strike, man, strike."

Thus admonished, the headsman did his duty. The axe fell and all was over.

To some men it chances to live before their time ; some come too late. The fate of each is a hard one. Raleigh, on the contrary, unfortunate in much, was supremely fortunate in belonging to an eminent degree to his age. Many-sided as the century in which the best part of his life was passed, and gifted with a versatility which scarcely finds a parallel in history, his brilliant intellectual

endowments, his poetical gifts, his insatiable ambition—alike personal and national—his patriotism, and above all his restless spirit of adventure, made him the epitome of the England of his day. The history of Walter Raleigh, during the reign of Elizabeth, is the history of England in brief.

In his nature elements not commonly found in conjunction were welded together. He was alike speculative and practical, credulous and shrewd. With an honourable uprightness which compelled recognition from his opponents, it has been seen that he was nevertheless capable upon occasion of subordinating principle to interest, and that the pride for which he was so noted did not prevent him from stooping to acts which would have been scorned by lesser men. It is difficult, passing his life in review, to bring him into harmony with himself—to reconcile the man of high honour with the circumstances attending his marriage or with his dealings with Irish foes; the gallant leader of forlorn hopes by land and sea, who again and again looked death in the face without flinching, with the prisoner abasing himself to the dust to obtain from his enemies the boon of life; the sagacious thinker and statesman with the gambler by whom his entire fortune would be staked upon the issue of a venture; the advocate of religious toleration with the eager sharer in a priest-hunt; the poet and the philosopher with

the seeker after gold. But hardest of all is it to reconcile with the author of the magnificent and scathing denunciations of evil in high places contained in the "Soul's Errand," and its fearless challenge to dignitaries temporal and spiritual, the man who could bring himself, apparently without effort, to pander as grossly as any of her other courtiers to Elizabeth's diseased vanity, who could fawn on a James or a Cecil, and could make his appeal to a Carr.

> Say to the court it glows
> And shines like rotten wood,
> Say to the church it shows
> What's good and doth not good.
> If court and church reply
> Then give them both the lie.
> . . . . . .
> If potentates reply
> Give potentates the lie.

Alas, Raleigh rarely gave it, either to court, church, or potentate! And yet there can be no doubt that he expressed his genuine scorn for the network of falsehood and unreality which, with a philosopher's insight as well as a poet's indignation, he discerned all around him—a scorn, it may well be, only the more bitter because of his consciousness that he himself—sinning against light—was involved in its meshes. "He was a man," it has been said, "with a higher ideal than he attempted to follow;"[1] and the words give

[1] R. W. Church's *Spenser*, p. 162.

the key to many of the contradictions he presents. He knew the right and disdained the wrong; yet often, and with apparent absence of scruple, he chose the lower path, as if subscribing to two different moral codes—the one the result of conscience and imaginative faculties combined; the other representing a rough and ready compromise which, accepting the world as it was, permitted the game of life to be played according to the rules in common use. Only at the great crises of life, and above all on the scaffold—as if some such supreme test was necessary to eliminate the alloy—did the higher nature completely vindicate its superiority to the baser elements with which it was united. "If the law destroy me," he wrote on one occasion to James, "your Majesty shall put me out of your power; and I shall have then none to fear, none to reverence, but the King of Kings." [1] It was as if, an involuntary prophet, he was foretelling the conditions upon which alone he would win that ultimate emancipation.

In the conciliation of public opinion he was never over careful. It is perhaps to this fact that his lack of popularity was partly due. For while few names have been held in so much honour by posterity, it has been shown that among his contemporaries he won but scant affection. His wife passionately loved him; some few comrades and

[1] *Cecil Papers*, Hatfield.

dependants would have given their lives for him; and, amongst women, Anne of Denmark, queen of his arch-enemy James, and Lady Pembroke remained faithful to him to the end. But Elizabeth, whom he had loyally served and whose favourite he was, seems never, judged by her actions, to have completely trusted him; amongst the men with whom he mixed there is scarcely one, outside his own kinsfolk, with whom he can be said to have stood on terms of enduring affection; by his single intimate friend, Cobham, as well as by his familiar associate, Cecil, he was betrayed; while stranger still is the evidence afforded by the conduct of the infuriated rabble on the occasion of his trial at Winchester as to the sentiments with which he was regarded by the lower classes of his countrymen.

He has had his revenge. If he was not loved by the men of his own day, posterity has made the balance even. His faults and failings have been forgotten, and only his brilliant gifts and the services he rendered his country remembered. And they have been well remembered. So strong and commanding was his individuality, that looking back across the centuries his figure stands out as distinctly as when his contemporaries feared, hated and plotted against him, Elizabeth by turns loved and mistrusted him, his comrades played him false, and Spain clamoured, not in vain, for his blood.

His name is scarcely less familiar to Englishmen now than then. "God has made nobler heroes," said Robert Louis Stevenson, "but he never made a finer gentleman than Walter Raleigh." Whether the estimate is right or wrong there can be no doubt that it expresses the general verdict.

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