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THE HOUNDS OF GOD

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EAN 8596547184393

DigiCat, 2022
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Table of Contents

CHAPTER I

Table of Contents

THE MISANTHROPE

Table of Contents

It was Walsingham who said of Roger Trevanion, Earl of Garth, that he preferred the company of the dead to that of the living.

This was a sneering allusion to the recluse, studious habits of his lordship. His lordship, no doubt, would have regarded the sneer as a thunderbolt of lath; that is, if he regarded it as a thunderbolt at all. It is much more likely that he would have accepted the statement in its literal sense, admitted the preference and justified it by answering that the only good men were dead men. This because, being dead, they could no longer work any evil.

You conceive that the experience of life which brings a man to such a conclusion cannot have been pleasant. His misanthropy dated from his adolescence, arose out of his close friendship for the gallant Thomas Seymour, who was brother to one queen and husband to another, and who, under the spur of ambition and perhaps indeed of love, would, upon the death of Katherine Parr, have married the Princess Elizabeth. As Seymour's devoted and admiring friend, he had seen at close quarters the slimy web of intrigue in which the Lord Admiral was taken, and he had narrowly escaped being taken with him and with him sent to the block. He had witnessed the evil working of the envious ambition of the Protector Somerset, who, fearful lest fruition

of the affair between the Lord Admiral and the Princess should lead to his own ultimate supersession, had not scrupled to bring his own brother to the scaffold upon a fabricated charge of high-treason.

It was pretended that the Admiral was already the lover of the Princess and that he conspired with her to overthrow the established regency and to seize the reins of power with his own hands. Indeed, the full pretence was that his courtship of the Princess was no more than a step in the promotion of his schemes. The two offences were made so interdependent that either might be established upon evidence of the other.

Young Trevanion suffered arrest, together with all the principal persons in the household of the Princess Elizabeth, and all who were in close relations with the Admiral, whether as servants or as friends. Because he was at once a member of the household of the Princess and probably more in Seymour's confidence than any other man, he became the subject of assiduous attention on the part of the Council of Regency. He was brought repeatedly before that council, examined and reëxamined, questioned and probed *ad nauseam*, with the object of tricking him into incriminating his friend by admissions of what he had seen at Hatfield whilst living there and of what confidences his friend might have reposed in him.

Although years later, when the admission could do no harm to any, his lordship is known to have confessed that the Admiral's passion for the young Princess was very real and deep with roots in other than ambition, and that once at Hatfield he had surprised her in the Admiral's arms—from

which it may reasonably be concluded that she was not indifferent to his passion, yet before the Council, young Trevanion could remember nothing that might hurt his friend. Not only did he stubbornly and stoutly deny knowledge, direct or indirect, of any plot in which Seymour was engaged; but, on the contrary, he had much to say that was calculated to prove that there was no substance whatever behind this shadow of treason cast upon the Admiral. By his demeanour he put the members of the Council in a rage with him on more occasions than one. It was an education to him of the lengths to which human spite can go. The Protector, himself, went so far once as to warn him savagely that his own head was none so safe on his shoulders that by pertness of words and conduct he should himself unsettle it further. Their malevolence, begotten as he perceived of jealous fear, made these men, whom he had accounted among the noblest in England, appear despicable, mean, and paltry.

Under the shadow of that malevolence, Trevanion was sent to the Tower, and kept there until the day of Seymour's execution. On that blustering March morning, he was granted a favour which he had not ventured to solicit; he was conducted to the chamber in which his doomed friend was imprisoned and left alone with him to take his leave.

He was one-and-twenty at the time, an age in which life is so strong in a man and death so abhorrent that it is almost terrifying to look upon another who is about to die. He found the Admiral in a state of composure which he could not understand, for the Admiral too was still young, scarcely more than thirty, tall, vigorous, well-made, and

handsome. He sprang up to greet Trevanion almost gladly. He talked volubly for the few moments they were together, scarcely allowing the younger man to interject a word. He touched almost tenderly upon their friendship, and, whilst moved by Garth's sorrow, desired him to be less glum, assured him that death was no great matter once you had brought yourself to look it in the face. He had taken a full leave, he announced, of the Lady Elizabeth, in a letter which he had spent most of the night in writing to her; for although denied pen and ink by the Lords of the Council, he had plucked an aglet from his hose and contrived to write with that, and with the ink supplied by his own veins. This letter, he told Trevanion, speaking boldly and loudly, was concealed within the sole of his shoes, and a person of trust would see to its safe delivery after he was gone. There was an odd smile on his lips as he made the announcement, a singular slyness in his fine eyes, which puzzled Trevanion at the time.

They embraced and parted, and Trevanion returned to his own prison to pray for his friend and to resolve the riddle of that unnecessary and indeed incautious confidence touching the letter in his shoes. Later he understood.

With the knowledge of men which the Admiral possessed, he had been quick to conclude that it was out of no kindly feelings Trevanion had been permitted to pay him this last visit. It was the hope of the Lords of the Council that Seymour might seize the opportunity to send some message to the Princess which would be incriminating in character, and their spies were posted to overhear and report. But Seymour, guessing this, had taken full

advantage of it to inform them of the existence of letters which he desired them to find, letters which had been written so that they might be found, couched in such terms that their publication must completely vindicate the Princess.

That was the last act of Seymour's devotion. Although the letters were never published, they may have done their work by limiting the persecution to which the Lady Elizabeth was thereafter subject. But the jealous spite which had spilled Seymour's blood left the honour of the Princess besmirched by the foul tales that were current of her relations with the Admiral.

It was Trevanion, himself, some months later, after his release and when about to withdraw from the scene of events which had killed his faith in men, who, in going to take his leave of the Princess Elizabeth, informed her of the letter. And that slim girl of sixteen, with a sigh and a sad smile that would have been old on a woman twice her years, had repeated, perhaps in a different tone, the cautious words she had used of the Admiral on an earlier occasion.

'He was a man of much wit but very little judgment. God rest him!'

It was perhaps because he accounted this requiem so inadequate that, when she would have had him resume his place in her household, he was glad to be able to answer her that this the Lords of the Council had already expressly denied him. Besides, his one desire was to remove himself from the neighbourhood of the Court. He had been through the valley of the shadow, and he had been permitted to

perceive the vile realities, the unscrupulous ambitions, the evil greed, the unworthy passions festering under the fair surface of Court life. It had filled him with loathing and disgust, and had put a definite end to all courtly aspirations in himself.

He withdrew to his remote Cornish estates, there to devote himself to husbandry and to the care of his people, matters which his father and grandfather had entrusted to their stewards. Nor was he to be lured thence by an invitation from the Princess Elizabeth when she became queen and desired to reward those who had served her in her time of tribulation.

He married, some ten years later, one of the Godolphins, a lady of whom repute says that she was so beautiful that to behold her was to love her. If that is true of her, it would appear to be the only commendation she possessed. She was destined to carry the disillusioning of the Earl of Garth yet a stage farther. A foolish, empty, petulant creature, she made him realize once again that the fairest skin may cover the sourest fruit, whereafter she departed this life of a puerperal fever within a fortnight of the birth of their only child, some five years after their ill-matched union.

Just as his one glimpse below the surface of Court life had sufficed him, so his one experience of matrimony surfeited him. And although only thirty-six at the time of her ladyship's death, he undertook no further adventures in wedlock, nor indeed adventures of any kind. He was soul-weary, a distemper that not infrequently attacks the thoughtful and introspective. He took to books, by which he had always been attracted; he amassed at Trevanion Chase

a prodigious library, and as the years slipped by, he became more and more interested in the things that had been and the things which philosophy taught him might be, and less in those that actually were. He sought by study to probe the meaning, purpose, and ultimate object of life, than which there is no pursuit likelier to alienate a man from the business of living. He became more and more aloof, took less and ever less heed of events about him. The religious dissensions by which England was riven left him unmoved. Not even when the menace of Spain hung like a black cloud over the land, and everywhere men were arming and drilling against the day of invasion, did the Earl of Garth, now well-advanced in years, awaken to interest in the world in which he lived.

His daughter, who had been left more or less to bring herself up as she chose, and who by a miracle had accomplished the task very creditably, was the only living person who really understood him, certainly the only one who loved him, for you conceive that he did not invite affection. She had inherited a considerable portion of her mother's good looks, and most of the good sense and good feeling that had distinguished her father in his youth, with just enough of her mother's perversity to give a spice to the mixture. If she reached—as she eventually did—the age of twenty-five unmarried the fault was entirely her own. There had been suitors to spare at any time after her seventeenth year, and their comings and goings at times had driven his lordship to the verge of exasperation. She was credited with having broken several hearts. Or, to put it more happily, since that untruly implies an undesirable activity on her

part, several hearts had been broken by her rejection of their infatuated owners. She had remained as impassive as one of the rocks of that Cornish coast against which ships might break themselves if hard-driven by weather or ill-handled.

She loved her liberty too well to relinquish it. Thus she informed her suitors. Like the Queen, she was so well satisfied with her maiden estate that she accounted it the best estate in the world and was of no mind to change it for any other.

This was no mere pretext upon which mercifully to dismiss those wooers who did not commend themselves. It was, there is every reason to believe, the actual truth. The Lady Margaret Trevanion had been reared, as a result of her father's idiosyncrasies, in masculine freedom. Hers from the age of fifteen or sixteen to come and go unquestioned; horses and dogs and hawks had engrossed her days; she was as one of the lads of her own age with whom she associated; her frank boyishness kept her relations with them on exactly the same plane as that which marked the association of those boys with one another. If the advent of her first suitor when she had reached the age of seventeen produced the result of setting a check upon her hoydenishness, arousing her to certain realities and imposing upon her thereafter a certain circumspection, she did not on that account abandon her earlier pursuits or the love of personal liberty which their free indulgence had engendered in her. The odd thing is that she was nowise coarsened by the masculinity with which her unusual rearing had invested her. Just as the free and constant

exercises of her tall, supple body appeared but to have enriched it in feminine grace, so the freedom of mental outlook upon which she had insisted had given her a breadth and poise of mind from which she gathered a dignity entirely feminine, as well as command over herself and others. She afforded perhaps a remarkable instance of the persistence of inbred traits and how they will assert themselves and dominate a character in despite of environment and experience.

At the time at which I present her to you she had reached her twenty-third year firmly entrenched in her maidenhood; and, with the plainly asserted intention of remaining in that estate, she had so far successfully discouraged all suitors but one. This one was an amiable lad named Gervase Crosby, of a considerable Devon family, a kinsman to Lord Garth's neighbour, Sir John Killigrew of Arwenack, and a persistent fellow who could not take 'no' for an answer. He was a younger son with his way to make in the world, and Killigrew, a bachelor, with no children of his own, had taken an interest in him and desired to promote his fortunes. As a result of this the boy had been much at Arwenack, that stately castellated house above the estuary of the Fal. Killigrew was closely connected with the Godolphins, and therefore looked upon the Earl of Garth as a kinsman by marriage and upon Margaret as a still closer kinswoman on the maternal side. He was one of the few among the surrounding gentry who ventured freely to break through the seclusion in which the old earl hedged himself about, and who was not to be discouraged by the indifference of his welcome at his lordship's hands. It was under his ægis

that young Crosby was first brought to Trevanion Chase, when a well-grown, handsome lad of sixteen. Margaret liked him and used him with a frank, boyish friendliness which encouraged him to come there often. They were much of an age, and they discovered a similarity in tastes and an interest in the same pursuits which made them fast friends.

Killigrew, after much deliberation, had resolved that his young kinsman should study law, with a view to a political career. He argued that if young Crosby's brains were any match for his long, comely body there should be a brilliant future for him at the Court of a queen who was ever ready to promote the fortunes of a handsome man. Therefore he brought tutors to Arwenack and set about the lad's education. But, as often happens, the views of young and old did not here coincide. Crosby was of a romantic temperament, and he could perceive no romance in the law, however much Killigrew might labour to demonstrate it for him. He desired a life of adventure; to live dangerously was in his view the only way to be really alive.

The world was still ringing with the echoes of the epic of Drake's voyage round the globe. The sea and the sailor's opportunity to probe the mysteries of the earth, penetrating uncharted oceans, discovering fabulous lands, called him; and finally Killigrew yielded, being wise enough to perceive that no man will make a success of a career in which his heart is not engaged.

Sir John took the boy to London. That was in 1584, just after his twentieth birthday. Before setting out upon that voyage of adventure, Gervase had desired to establish moorings at home against his return, and he had offered

himself, heart and hand and the fortune which he was to make, to the Lady Margaret.

If the offer did not dazzle her ladyship, it certainly startled her. From their fairly constant association she had come to regard him almost as a brother, had come to permit him those familiarities which a sister may permit, had even upon occasion allowed a kiss or two to pass between them with no more than sisterly enthusiasm. That, unsuspected by her, there should have been anything more than brotherliness on his part seemed ludicrous. She said so, and brought down upon herself a storm of reproaches, pleadings, and protestations which soared in moments to heights of terrifying vehemence.

The Lady Margaret was not terrified. She remained calm. The self-reliance which her rearing had imposed upon her had taught her self-control. She took refuge in that phrase of hers about her preference for a maiden estate. What was good enough for the Queen, she announced, was good enough for her, as if making of virginity a point of loyalty.

Shocked and dejected, Gervase went to take his leave of her father. His lordship, who had just discovered Plato and was absorbed in that philosopher's conception of the cosmos, desired to cut these valedictions short. But Gervase deemed it incumbent upon him to enlighten the Earl on the subject of his daughter's unnatural views of life. No doubt he hoped, with the irrepressible optimism of the young, to enlist his lordship's aid in bringing her ladyship to a proper frame of mind. But his lordship, irritated perhaps by the interruption, had stared at him from under shaggy eyebrows.

'If she chooses to lead apes in hell, what affair is that of yours?'

If Master Crosby had been shocked already by the daughter's attitude towards what he accounted the most important thing in life, he was far more deeply shocked by her sire's. This, he thought, was a nettle to be grasped. So he grasped it.

'It is my affair because I want to marry her.'

The Earl maintained his disconcerting level stare. He did not even blink.

'And what does Margaret want?' he asked.

'I have told your lordship what she says she wants.'

'Since she says what you say she says, I wonder that you think it worth while to trouble me.'

This would have discouraged any young man but Gervase Crosby. He drew a swift, shrewd inference favourable to himself. I suspect that Killigrew had good reasons besides the lad's looks and inches for intending him for the law, just as I suspect that a good lawyer was lost in him when he took to the sea.

'Your lordship means that I deserve your approval, and that if I can bring Margaret to a change of views ...'

'I mean,' his lordship interrupted him, 'that if you bring Margaret to a change of views, I will then consider the situation. It is not my habit to deal with more than I find before me, or to plague myself over possibilities which may never become realities. It is a habit which I commend to you now that you are about to go forth into the world. Too much good human energy is wasted in providing for contingencies that never arise. I make you in these words, if you will

trouble to bear them in your memory, a parting gift of more value than you may at present discern. I shall hope to hear of your good fortune, sir.'

Thus the misanthrope dismissed the lover.

CHAPTER II

Table of Contents

THE LOVER

Table of Contents

Mr. Crosby's bearing was marked upon his departure from Arwenack by none of that exultation proper to the setting out of a young man who regards the world as his oyster. Too much that he valued was being left behind unsecured; and the Earl, he could not help admitting to himself, had not been encouraging. But what youth desires, it believes that it will ultimately possess. His confidence in himself and in his star was restored and his natural buoyancy reëstablished long before the journey was accomplished.

Travelling by roads which were obstacles to, rather than means of progress, Sir John Killigrew and his young cousin reached London exactly a week after setting out. There no time was lost. Sir John was a person of considerable consequence, wielding great influence in the West and therefore to be well received at Court. Moreover, some personal friendship existed between himself and the Lord Admiral Howard of Effingham. To the Admiral he took his young cousin. The Admiral was disposed to be friendly. Recruits for the navy at such a time, especially if they happened to be gentlemen of family, were more than welcome. The difficulty was to find immediate employment for Mr. Crosby. The Admiral took the young man to Deptford and presented him to the manager of Her Majesty's

dockyards, that old-time slaver and hardy seaman Sir John Hawkins. Sir John talked to the lad, liked him, admired his clean length of limb and read promise in his resolute young countenance and frank, steady blue eyes. If he was in haste for adventure, Sir John thought he could put him in the way of it. He gave him a letter to his young kinsman, Sir Francis Drake, who was about to put to sea from Plymouth, though on the object of that seagoing Sir John seemed singularly—perhaps wilfully—ignorant.

Back to the West went Gervase, once more in the charge of Killigrew. At Plymouth they sought and duly found Sir Francis. He paid heed to the strong recommendation of Hawkins's letter, still greater heed to the personality of the tall lad who stood before him, some heed also, no doubt, to the fact that the lad was a kinsman of Sir John Killigrew, who was a considerable power in Cornwall. Young Crosby was obviously eager and intelligent, knew already at least enough of the sea to be able to sail a fore-and-aft rig, and was fired by a proper righteous indignation at the evil deeds of Spain.

Drake offered him employment, the scope of which he could not disclose. A fleet of twenty-five privateers was about to sail. They had no royal warrant, and in what they went to do they might afterwards be disowned. It was dangerous work, but it was righteous. Gervase accepted the offer without seeking to know more, took leave of his kinsman, and went on board Drake's own ship. That was on the 10th September. Four mornings later, Drake's maintop was flying the signal 'up anchor and away.'

If none knew, perhaps not even Drake himself, exactly what he went to do, at the least all England, simmering just then with indignation, knew why he went to do it, whatever it might prove to be. There was a bitter wrong to be avenged, and private hands must do the work, since the hands of authority were bound by too many political considerations.

In the North of Spain that year the harvest had failed and there was famine. Despite the hostile undercurrent between Spain and England, which at any moment might blaze into open war, despite Spanish intrigues in which Philip II was spurred on by the Pope to exert the secular arm against the excommunicate bastard heretic who occupied the English throne, yet officially at least, on the surface, there was peace between the two nations. England had more corn than she required for her own consumption and was willing to trade it to the famine-stricken Galician districts. But because of certain recent barbarous activities of the Holy Office upon English seamen seized in Spanish ports, no merchant ships would venture into Spanish waters without guarantees. These guarantees had ultimately been forthcoming in the shape of a special undertaking from King Philip that the crews of the grain ships should suffer no molestation.

Into the northern harbours of Corunna, Bilbao, and Santander sailed the ships of the English corn-fleet, there to be seized, in despite of the royal safe-conduct, their cargoes confiscated, their crews imprisoned. The pretext was that England was lending aid to the Netherlands, then in rebellion against Spain.

Diplomatic representations were of no avail. King Philip disclaimed responsibility. The English seamen, he said, were no longer in his hands. As heretics they had been claimed by the Holy Office. To purge them of their heresy, some were left to languish in prison, some sent as slaves to the galleys, and some were burnt in fools' coats at the *autos-da-fé*.

To rescue even those who survived from the talons of the Holy Office was beyond hope. It remained only to avenge them, to read Spain a punitive lesson which she should remember, a lesson which, it was hoped, would teach her to curb in future her zeal of salvation where English heretics were concerned.

The Queen could not act in her own name. For all her high stomach and for all the indignation which it is not to be doubted now consumed her, prudence still dictated that she should avoid with mighty Spain an open war for which England could not account herself prepared. But she was willing enough to give a free hand to adventurers, whom at need she could afterwards disown.

That was the reason of Drake's setting forth with his twenty-five privateer ships. That was the voyage on which Gervase Crosby went to win his spurs in this new order of chivalry whose tilting-yard was the wide ocean. It was a voyage that lasted ten months; but so eventful, adventurous, and instructive did it prove that not in as many years of ordinary sailing could it have offered a man a more generous schooling in fighting seamanship.

They sailed first of all into the beautiful Galician port of Vigo at a time when the grapes were being gathered for the

vintage, labours which their sudden appearance interrupted. And here Drake published, as it were, his cartel; he made known, inferentially at least, the aim and purpose of that imposing fleet of his. Of the Governor, who sent in alarm to know who and what they were who came thus in force and what they sought at Vigo, Drake asked to be informed whether the King of Spain was at war with the Queen of England. When he was fearfully assured that this was not the case, he asked further to be informed how it happened, then, that English ships which had sailed into Spanish harbour under the safe-conduct of King Philip's word had been seized and their owners, officers, and crews imprisoned, maltreated, and slain. To this he received no proper answer. He did not press for one unduly; he contented himself with inviting the Governor to consider that English seamen could not suffer that such things should happen to their brethren. After that he demanded water and fresh provisions. There was also a little plundering, a mere ensample this of what might be done. Whereafter, with refurnished ships, Sir Francis sailed away, leaving Spain to conjecture in dismay and rage whither he was going and to concert measures for forestalling and destroying so endemonized an Englishman—*inglez tan endemoniado*.

November saw him at Cape Verde, where he missed the plate fleet upon which no doubt he had intentions. Its capture would have indemnified England for the loss of the confiscated corn. He turned his attentions, instead, to the handsome town of Santiago, possessed it, sacked it, and might have been content with that but for the barbarous murder and mutilation of a poor ship-boy, which revived

memories of some Plymouth sailors lately murdered there. The town was fired, and Sir Francis sailed away leaving behind him a heap of ashes to show King Philip that barbarity was not the prerogative of Spain and that talion law existed upon earth and always would exist as long as there were men to enforce it. Let His Most Catholic Majesty learn that Christianity, whose particular champion he accounted himself, had for corner-stone the precept that men should do unto their neighbours as they would have their neighbours do unto them and, conversely, not do unto their neighbours what was detestable when suffered by themselves. Lest this King, who was so passionately concerned in the eternal salvation of others, should himself miss salvation through an inadequate appreciation of that great principle, Sir Francis meant to bring it strongly to his notice by further illustration.

The fleet spent Christmas at St. Kitts, and, having there refreshed itself, went to pay its respects to San Domingo, that magnificent city of Hispaniola, where as a monument to the greatness of Spain the grandeurs of the Old World were reproduced in palaces, castles, and cathedrals. Here things, without being difficult, were not quite so easy as at Santiago. The Spaniards turned out horse and foot to resist the landing of the English. There was some fighting, some cannonading, in the course of which the Spaniards killed the officer commanding the particular landing-party of which Gervase Crosby was a member. Gervase, eager and audacious, acting upon impulse and without any sort of authority, took his place, and skilfully brought up his men to

join the vanguard under Christopher Carlile which carried the gate and cut its way into the town.

For his part in this, Gervase was afterwards commended by Carlile to Drake, and by Drake confirmed in the command which he had so opportunely usurped.

The castle meanwhile had surrendered, and the English put the city to ransom. Its treasure had already been removed out of it, and all that Drake could extract from the Governor was twenty-five thousand ducats, nor did he succeed in extracting this until he had reduced nearly all its marble splendours to ruins.

After San Domingo came Cartagena, where a tougher resistance was encountered, but subdued, and where again young Gervase Crosby showed his mettle when he led the men of his recent command to scale the parapets and engage the Spanish infantry at point of pike. The captured city saved itself from the fate of Santiago and San Domingo by a promptly forthcoming ransom of thirty thousand ducats.

That was enough for the purpose; enough to show King Philip that the activities of the Holy Office were not meekly to be suffered by English seamen. Destroying in passing a Spanish fort in Florida, Drake's fleet set sail for home and was back in Plymouth by the end of July, having proved to all humanity that the mightiest empire of the world was by no means invulnerable, and having apparently made war inevitable by throwing down a gauntlet which the hesitating King of Spain could hardly ignore.

The Gervase Crosby who came back to Arwenack was a very different person from the Gervase Crosby who had

gone forth a year ago. Adventure and experience had ripened him, dangers faced and conquered, and an increase of general knowledge, which included a fair command of Spanish, had given him a calmer self-assurance. Also he was bronzed and bearded. He came in confidence to Trevanion Chase, conceiving that the capture of the Lady Margaret would prove now a trifling matter to one who had been at the capturing of Spanish cities. But the Lady Margaret manifested no enthusiasm for his deeds, when, for her benefit and in her presence, he recounted them to the Earl, who had no wish to hear them. When his lordship had heard them despite himself, he curtly pronounced Drake a shameless pirate, and, in the matter of the hanging of some monks at San Domingo, a murderer. His daughter agreeing with him, Master Gervase departed in a dudgeon too deep for expression that his glorious deeds upon the Spanish Main should be so contemptuously dismissed.

The explanation lies in the fact that the Earl of Garth had been brought up in the Catholic Faith. He had long since ceased to practise the Christian religion in any of its forms. The narrow intolerance of priestcraft of whatever denomination had revolted him, and study and brooding, and Plato in particular, had brought him to demand a nobler and wider conception of God than he could discover in any creed alleged to have been revealed. But underneath his philosophic outlook there lingered ineradicably an affection for the faith of his youth and of his fathers. It was purely sentimental, but it vitiated his judgment on those rare occasions when he permitted himself at all to turn his attention to the problems that were afflicting England.

Unconsciously, imperceptibly, this had created at Trevanion Chase, the atmosphere in which Margaret had been reared. In addition to this, and probably in common with the majority of the gentry of her day—certainly so if we are to believe those who kept King Philip informed of the state of public opinion in England—she could not exclude from her heart a certain sympathy with the Queen of Scots, now languishing in an English prison and in peril of her life. The Lady Margaret might be imbued with some of the widespread English antipathy to Spain and resentment of its operations against men of her own English blood; she might shudder at the tales of the activities of the Holy Office; but all this was tempered in her by a disposition to regard King Philip as a Spanish Perseus intent upon the deliverance of the Scottish Andromeda.

Gervase's angrily silent departure she observed with a smile. Afterwards she grew thoughtful. Could the wound be so deep that he would not come again? she wondered. She confessed frankly to herself that she would be sorry if that were so. They had been good friends, Gervase and she; and it was far from her wish that their friendship should end like this. Apparently it was also far from Gervase's wish. He was back again in two days' time, his indignation having cooled, and when she hailed his appearance with a 'Give you welcome, Master Pirate!' he had enough good sense to laugh, realizing that she no more than rallied him. He would have kissed her according to the fraternal custom which had grown up between them, but this she denied him on the score of his beard. She could not suffer to be kissed by a hairy man; she would as soon be hugged by a bear.

As a consequence of this assertion, he appeared before her on the morrow shaved like a Puritan, which sent her into such an ecstasy of mirth that he lost his temper, laid rough hands upon her and kissed her forcibly and repeatedly in pure anger and just to show her that he was master, and man enough to take what he lacked.

At last he let her go, and was prepared to be merry in his turn. Not so the lady. She stood tense and quivering, breathing hard, her face white, save for a red spot on each cheek-bone, her red-gold hair in disorder, and flames in her vivid blue eyes. For a long moment those eyes pondered him in silent fury. This and the outraged dignity which he read in every line of her tall supple figure abashed him a little, rendered him conscious that he had behaved like an oaf.

'Faith!' she said at last with ominous composure of voice, 'you must think yourself still in San Domingo.'

'In San Domingo?' quoth he, labouring to discover the inference.

'Where you no doubt learnt to mishandle women in this fashion.'

'I?' He was scandalized. 'Margaret, I vow to God...'

She, however, cared nothing for his vows and interrupted them. 'But this is Trevanion Chase, not a city conquered by pirates; and I am the Lady Margaret Trevanion, not some unfortunate Spanish victim of your raid.'

He was wounded and indignant. 'Margaret, how can you suppose that I...that I...' He became inarticulate. Indeed, there were no words for it that a lady could tolerate. And

she, perceiving that she had found the heel of her Achilles, turned the arrow in the wound to avenge herself.

'Such ready expertness argues abundant practice, sir. I am glad to know, even at the cost of the indignity, the quality of those adventures which were left out of your brave narrative to my father. As you boasted, sir, you've learnt a deal on the Spanish Main. But in your place I shouldn't practise in England what you learnt there.'

He read in her tone, as she intended that he should, a depth of conviction against which he felt that protestations and arguments would be idle. It would need evidence to dispel it, and where should he find evidence? Moreover, she was no longer there to listen to arguments. She had departed whilst he was still deep in his dumb, bewildered mortification. Useless to go after her in her present mood, he assured himself. And so he went home to Arwenack, trusting dejectedly that time would efface the bad impression he had made and modify the terrible assumptions to which he had given rise.

Time, however, was denied him. Before the month was out there came a summons from Sir Francis recalling him to Plymouth. If he was a clumsy lover, there is no doubt that he was a very promising seaman, as Drake had observed, and Drake had urgent need of all such men. War was coming. That was now beyond all doubt. A great fleet was building in the Spanish dockyards, and in Flanders the Prince of Parma was assembling a mighty army of the finest troops in Europe for the invasion of England so soon as the fleet should be ready to cover his passage.

Gervase went to take his leave of Margaret and her father. Lord Garth he found as usual in his library, his gaunt, spare frame wrapped in a bedgown, his head covered by a black velvet cap with ear-flaps, his mind fathoms deep in scholarly speculation. The fiddling of Nero during the burning of Rome seemed to Gervase a reasonably pardonable trifle of conduct, compared with the Earl of Garth's absorption at such a time in the works of men who had been dead a thousand years and more. To startle him out of this unpatriotic lethargy, Master Crosby talked of the Spanish invasion as if it were already taking place. His lordship was not startled. A man who is obsessed by the Platonic theory that the earth, the sun, the moon, and all the visible heavenly bodies are so much sediment in the ether, with a more or less clear perception of all that this connotes, cannot be expected to concern himself deeply with the fortunes of such ephemeral things as empires.

The traditions and duties of gentility imposed it upon him to dissemble his impatience at the unwelcome interruption of his studies and to utter a courteous Godspeed which should straightly put an end to it.

From his lordship, Gervase went in quest of her ladyship. It was a fine autumn day, and he found her taking the air in the garden with a company of gallants. There was that handsome fribble Lionel Tressilian who was too much at Trevanion Chase these days for Gervase's peace of mind. There was young Peter Godolphin, a kinsman of Margaret's, it is true, but not of such near kinship that he might not aspire to make it nearer. And there were a half-dozen other beribboned lute-tinklers, stiffly corseted in modish narrow-

waisted doublets, their trunks puffed out with Spanish bombast. He descended upon them with his news, hoping to dismay them out of their airy complacency as he had hoped to dismay the Earl.

Ignoring them, he flung his bombshell at the feet of Margaret.

'I come to take my leave. I am summoned by the Admiral. The Prince of Parma is about to invade England.'

It made some little stir, and might have made more but for the flippancy of young Godolphin.

'The Prince of Parma cannot have heard that Mr. Crosby is with the Admiral.'

It raised a general laugh, in which, however, Margaret did not join. It may have been this little fact that lent Gervase the wit to answer.

'But he shall, sir. If you have messages for him, you gentlemen who stay at home, I will do my best to bear them.'

He would gladly have quarrelled with any or all of them. But they would not indulge him. They were smooth and sleek, whilst Margaret's presence made him set limits on his display of the scorn they aroused in him.

When presently he departed, Margaret went with him through the house. In the cool grey hall she paused, and he stood to take his final leave of her. Her eyes were very grave and solemn as she raised them to his face.

'Is it war, indeed, Gervase?'

'That is what I gather from the letters I have had and the urgency of this summons. I am to leave at once, the Admiral bids me. All hands are needed.'