

Sir Walter Raleigh.

BY ELEANOR ROBINSON.

In the first book of the "Faerie Queen," Spenser introduces his hero, Arthur, the great soul, and with him, "a gentle youth, his dearly loved squire." Arthur stands for the great Earl of Leicester, Queen Elizabeth's favourite courtier, and the gentle squire, who bears the name of Timias, is none other than Sir Walter Raleigh, the famous soldier, sailor, colonizer, adventurer, courtier and poet.

Raleigh was born in Devon, the land of sailors, in 1552, of gentle parentage. He was a younger half-brother of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, and probably went with that famous sea-captain on expeditions when he was still a boy. It is certain that he crossed the Atlantic in one of Gilbert's ships on the expedition to the St. Lawrence in 1578, and that he had visited the West Indies before that time. He was educated at Oxford.

Raleigh had attached himself to the Earl of Leicester, under whose protection he was presented at court, where almost at once he became a favourite of the Queen. We are told that at this time he was very handsome; tall and strongly built, with dark hair and a bright colour, a look of alertness and brilliance, and a ready, witty tongue. He dressed very splendidly and gorgeously, even for those days. Everyone knows the story of how he pleased the queen by spreading his gay cloak for her to walk on:

"Her Majesty, meeting with a plashy place, made some scruple to go on; when Raleigh (dressed in the gay and genteel habit of those times) presently cast off and spread his new plush cloak on the ground, whereon the Queen trod gently over, rewarding him afterwards with many suits for his so free and seasonable tender of so fair a foot-cloth."

The same writer also tells us that once, when Raleigh was high in the Queen's favour, he wrote on a pane of glass with a diamond, where the Queen could see:

"Fain would I climb, but that I fear to fall,"

and that Elizabeth wrote underneath,

"If thy heart fail thee, then climb not at all."

Whether these tales are true or not, it is a fact that the Queen granted Raleigh valuable estates, and privileges which made him a very rich man. He was made Vice-Admiral of the counties of Cornwall and Devon, and Lord Warden of the

Devonshire tin mines. He was a Member of Parliament for Devon in 1585, and was knighted in the same year. He was greatly beloved and trusted by his own west country people, and he deserved it, for he worked for their welfare, saw that they had justice, and, in particular, he had reforms made in working the mines that made life easier for the miners.

But Raleigh's interest was by no means confined to England. On the death of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, he took up the plans that Gilbert had failed in, and made great efforts to establish an English colony in America. He got the Queen to renew in his own name the charter which she had granted to his half-brother, and this charter gave him power to inhabit and fortify any remote lands that were yet unoccupied by any Christian power. In April, 1584, he sent out his first fleet, whose leaders landed in a country to which they gave the name Virginia, in honour of the Virgin Queen. Raleigh was styled "Lord and Governor of Virginia." In 1585, the second expedition, under Sir Richard Grenville, went out to settle in the country, and for nearly a year one hundred and eight persons in Raleigh's service lived at Roanoke. Raleigh never set foot in Virginia himself, but he sent out, in all, six expeditions, and spent a large fortune in his efforts to colonize it. Finally he gave up the attempt, and leased his rights to a company of merchants. His name was afterwards given to the capital of North Carolina in gratitude for what he tried to do. For Raleigh's aims were wider and more unselfish than those of most of the explorers and colonizers of the time. He did seek wealth and fame for himself, but not these alone. He desired to benefit both the new land and the old by communication and settling. In Ireland, where he was given a large tract of land, he introduced the potato. The spot where he planted the first potato is still pointed out, as are also the descendants of the wallflowers that he brought from the Azores, and the cedars that he planted near Cork.

In 1592, Raleigh fell into disgrace with Queen Elizabeth, chiefly through his secret marriage with Elizabeth Throckmorton, one of the Queen's maids of honour. The Queen, who could not endure that her courtiers should love any woman but herself, threw Sir Walter into the Tower where he spent two months most unhappily. He was much too fond of action and of fresh air to bear being shut