

## Sir Mortimer

They leaned against the parapet and looked out upon the now gleaming sea, the rack of the clouds and the broken cohorts of the stars. They looked out to the glistening line where the water met the east. "Homeward to-morrow!" said Arden, and Ferne asked, "What are thy ships, John?" and Nevil answered, "The one is the *Mere Honour*, the other I have very lately renamed the *Cygnat*. Wilt be her captain, Mortimer, from here to Plymouth Port?"

The Countess of Pembroke, in mourning for her parents, was spending a midsummer month in leafy Penshurst. It was a drowsy month, of roses fully blown and heavy lilies, of bees booming amongst all honey flowers, of shady copses and wide sunlit fields; and it was a quiet month because of the Countess's mourning and because Philip Sidney was Governor of Flushing. Therefore, save for now and then a messenger bringing news from London or Wilton or from that loved brother in the Netherlands, the Countess, her women, and a page or two made up the company at Penshurst. The pages and the young gentlewomen (all under the eye of