







## OUR SEA POWER

*This book has been warmly commended by the Educational  
Committee of the Navy League*





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**HORATIO NELSON.**

Portrait by J. Hoppner, in St. James's Palace.

# OUR SEA POWER

*Its Story and its Meaning*

BY

H. W. HOUSEHOLD

WITH FOREWORD BY

ADMIRAL THE LORD BERESFORD

G.C.B., G.C.V.O.

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TO THE  
CHILDREN OF THE EMPIRE  
THE WRITER WOULD VENTURE TO  
DEDICATE THIS STORY OF THEIR  
GREAT INHERITANCE



## FOREWORD

BY

ADMIRAL THE LORD BERESFORD, G.C.B., G.C.V.O.

I WELCOME with great pleasure the appearance of a text-book on Naval History designed for the especial use of children in our secondary and elementary schools. I have long been convinced that it is very necessary to make the real meaning of Sea Power, and the influence which our Fleet exercises upon the development of civilisation, more thoroughly understood by rising generations of English men and women. I have no doubt if our school readers had been more generous in the treatment of the wonderful story of the sea, as it affects the liberty, unity and prosperity of the British Empire, and had told that story in simple and plain language to the pupils in our schools, we should never have had the unhappy differences in public opinion which operated so much against enlightened naval policy previous



to the War. It is well that the text-book, to which I now offer my word of encouragement, should have been prepared by one of our County Directors of Education, and I feel that Mr. Household has been peculiarly happy in his treatment of the whole subject, in the arrangement of the matter, and in the spirit which he infuses into the subject, keeping as he does steadily in view the appeal which must be made to the mind of the child.

Mr. Household's work opens with a general survey of the influence of Sea Power in the development of the earlier empires in history, and proceeds to develop in a clear and effective way the essential importance of command of the sea to the growth and maintenance of Imperial Power. His chapters on "English Sea Power in the Channel" and the "Age of Discovery" are very interesting indeed, and are followed by the era of sea achievement associated with the names of Drake and Hawkins. It has been truly said that if Drake were not an historical personage he would have been a hero of romance, and realising in these days of trial the full significance of the Drake tradition when our Fleet is the guardian of the democratic liberty of the world, we feel a thrill of pride in those deeds which laid the foundation of the British Empire.

It is not my function to discuss in any detail the contents of this excellent work, but I feel I must compliment the Author on the tactful and kindly way in which he deals with the relations of this country with our gallant enemies of other days.

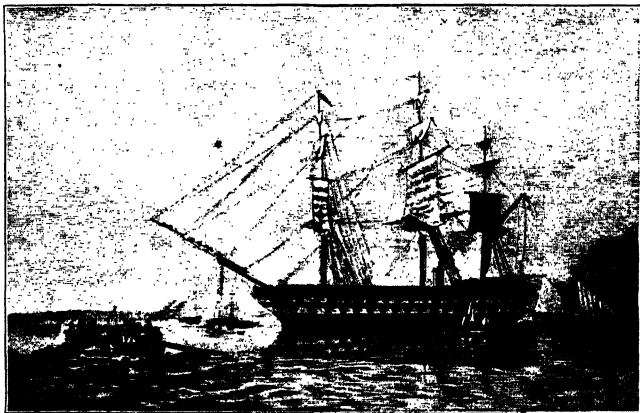
The illustrations which appear in the volume add considerably to its value, and I commend the work to Education Committees, and to the patriotic teachers of the Empire, to whom is entrusted the making of the character of our future citizens. There can be no finer training for a child than the inculcation of a lofty and ennobling spirit of patriotism, and in no way can the patriotism of the British child be so successfully aroused as by the stirring story of our splendid fighting seamen.



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H.M.S. "AGAMEMNON,"

Launched at Woolwich, 1852, the first Screw Line of Battleship designed for the British Navy. From a drawing by B. W. Brierley.

## INTRODUCTION

It is the purpose of this little book to tell of Sea Power and what it means ; how at last England won it, and why she must always keep it, if she is to be a free country. It is a story that all children of the Empire should know. If it has been told in the right way most of them will like it, for there flows in their veins a share of the blood of the old English and Viking sea-wanderers, their forefathers, who conquered this country and made it England, and who themselves loved stories of the sea. In some that blood flows more strongly, and to them the sea calls, and they feel the old longing to wander,

that took those distant forefathers across so many seas, and they become sailors or emigrants themselves. But upon all, as they grow up, will fall a share in the great duty of guarding the safety and honour of our Empire. In peace time, as citizens, they will help to decide by speech and vote whether or not money shall be given to keep, as they should be kept, its great fleets; and all must be ready, if war should come again, to fight as soldiers or as sailors if their country needs them.

Every boy and girl knows the famous signal that Nelson made to his fleet, as it sailed down to fight at Trafalgar. His captains and sailors knew exactly what their duty was, and how to do it, for he had taught them. There is no Nelson to train us in all the duties of a citizen, but there are books and, above all, schools to help in the teaching and training of British children. The writer of this little book hopes to teach them something of their duty towards the Navy, so that they may know how to think and act for their country when they are grown to manhood.

Though it may not seem an easy thing to learn how to think and act for their Motherland, and to do all the duty that we owe her, yet one simple rule can be given to everyone; and, unless they obey that, they are not likely to master the more difficult rules that should guide them, as citizens, in thought and speech and action. The simple rule is this: Always to do the work in front of us, our daily work, with all our

power. That work is done for England as well as for ourselves, and England expects each one of us always to do our best. Only so can we show ourselves worthy of those who have died for us. Only so can boy or girl hope to tread in the steps of that gallant boy, whose name will shine out immortal through the centuries in the splendid company of the great ones of our race, Jack Cornwell, V.C.; a boy who was made of the very stuff and after the very pattern of those who, with Drake and Blake and Hawke and Nelson, won and kept for England her Sea Power.





## CHAPTER I

### PHOENICIAN, GREEK AND ROMAN

THERE can be no trade, no gathering of wealth, no comfort, where life and property are not safe. If bands of plundering enemies lie always in wait across the great highways of land or ocean, there will be no constant passing of merchant ships by sea, or of caravan and train by road and rail. A country that makes wealth, as England does, by fetching and carrying across the ocean, must keep the ocean highways well guarded. Its warships, like policemen, must watch every dark corner, and see that no peaceful traveller is harmed. If no other country can drive those policemen off their beat, then it has Sea Power. But as soon as it tires of paying those policemen, or the policemen lose their strength and courage, robbers begin to appear ; ships are seized and plundered ; sailors and merchants are killed ; people cease to travel ; cities by the sea become unsafe to live in, grass grows in their streets and upon their quays, and their very names perish. After a time another country, perhaps the strongest of the pirates, preferring

peace to war and regular trade to piracy, makes itself master of the rest and once more keeps the seas in order. Sometimes two great countries have fleets which seem to be of almost equal strength ; some cause of quarrel arises and there is war between them. Then woe betide the one whose fleets are beaten ! Its trade by sea is ruined ; its over-sea possessions are cut off from the support of the parent country and fall to the enemy ; and it has to sue for peace—and pay for it. So has always run the tale of history. So empires are won and lost.

Long, long ago, before written history began, the great races, that in later centuries were to make history and to write it, dwelt about the Mediterranean Sea. Among them were daring and adventurous sailors. Only a small part of the world was then known to them. Westward they had not gone beyond the limits of the Mediterranean, nor eastward beyond the shores of India. But man is always eager to search out the unknown. Now there are only the ice-guarded secrets of the polar regions to discover ; then nine-tenths of the globe had still to be explored. And beyond the limits of what was known, terrible dangers were always believed to be waiting for the rash explorer, dragons and fearsome beasts and wandering rocks and man-eating giants. Men then were very much like little children of to-day. They would believe any story, and they shivered with fright in the dark. The man who ventured out to see for himself

whether the dragon or the giant really lurked behind that furthest cape was bold indeed. These daring wanderers had neither compass nor chart to guide them, and their ships coasted from point to point. They sailed or were rowed during the day, and were hauled up, if possible, upon some beach at fall of night.

Beyond the Straits of Gibraltar was the great outer ocean, the very edge of the world ; and even the boldest did not dare to face its terrors. The first to do so were the Phoenicians, a Canaanite people who lived in the sea-girt cities of Tyre and Sidon. They were bolder than all other sailors, and they sent out expeditions to explore the Straits, which men at that time called the " Pillars of Hercules." Twice expeditions came back, beaten no doubt partly by the difficulties, and partly by the dread of the unknown that damped their courage. The third time they passed the Straits, and they founded a colony at Gades, the modern Cadiz, in a land which they called Tarshish, where they found great wealth of silver ; so much that, as we know, silver " was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon."

After this other explorers felt their way along the coasts of the Bay of Biscay, and at last reached Cornwall, with its tin mines. Wherever they went they bought and sold and gained great riches, for they were masters of the sea and no man hindered them. They built fleets upon the Red Sea also, and sailed to Arabia and India, and far down the

east coast of Africa. There is a story that an expedition rounded the Cape of Good Hope from the eastward, and, sailing up the west coast, entered the Mediterranean by the Straits of Gibraltar, and returned to Egypt, whence they had started, after an absence of three years.

Of course the population of their cities multiplied, and there was not room for all. And of course, as happens still, young men and young women emigrated and founded colonies far away. The greatest of the Phoenician colonies was Carthage, near the modern Tunis on the north African coast. In later days the colony became greater than the mother city, and was the rival of Rome for the empire of the Mediterranean. If that seems strange, one need only remember that it is but three hundred years since the first English colony took root in North America, and yet the population of the United States and Canada is already twice that of the British Isles.

There is no doubt that wealth and ease spoil a people, and they lose the courage and endurance which brought them to greatness in the days when life was all a struggle. Before the great German War some people thought that England had lost the courage and endurance that made her people so ready to face adventure and danger in earlier days. The Germans thought so, too, and said it openly.

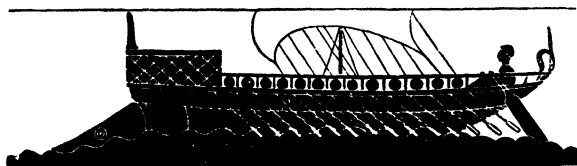
War is a terrible thing; and if the world is ever perfect perhaps no man will be fond of fighting.

But the world is not perfect yet, and even in modern Europe many men are fond of fighting ; while on other continents there are still great races, numbering many millions of sturdy warriors, who love war and live for it, just as pirates did, and who are always ready to pounce upon the richer countries, if ever they should fail to provide for their self-defence. Therefore, if England values its safety and freedom, and cherishes its honour, it must always be ready to fight, however little it may wish to do so. All history teaches us that the race that loves war sooner or later conquers the race that shrinks from it, and ceases to train itself for self-defence.

The Phoenicians in time were spoilt. They had been too much occupied with getting riches. So when the great inland power of Babylon, with its famous capital on the Euphrates, sent out its conquering armies in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, it became master of the Phoenician cities, as it became master of Jerusalem, early in the sixth century B.C. From that day the Phoenicians, though still great sailors, were no longer the lords of the sea. They had to serve many foreign powers in turn, and were finally conquered by the Turk. To the Turk Tyre belongs now, and all its fame and greatness have long been buried in the past.

The Empire of Babylon did not last long. Down from the barren highlands beyond Mesopotamia came another race as yet unspoilt by wealth, the soldier Persians under their great king Cyrus. They

overran the great empires of Assyria and Babylon and Egypt, and at last they came up against and conquered the Greek cities on the Asiatic coast of the Aegean Sea. Then began a famous struggle between the Persians and the European Greeks, on the issue of which depended the whole future history of the world ; and Sea Power decided it. If the Persians had won, Greek art and Greek literature and Greek thought would have perished in their infancy, and the Europe, the England that we know.



GREEK WAR-SHIP.

From an Attic black-figured vase, sixth century B.C.

to-day, would have been wholly different in language, thought, religion and way of life.

For centuries the Greeks, like the earlier Phoenicians, had been sending out colonies of emigrants across the seas, and they had founded new cities from the Black Sea to Marseilles. One of these was Byzantium upon the Bosphorus, which hundreds of years later was renamed Constantinople by Constantine, the first Christian emperor of Rome, who made it the second capital of the empire.

The Greeks were fine sailors and could fight, when there was need, for the defence of their sea-ways

and their colonies. So now the Athenians sent an expedition across the Aegean to help their Asiatic cousins. They pressed on up country and burned the famous city of Sardis, an outpost of the Persian empire. When Darius the king, who was the friend of the prophet Daniel, heard of the daring deed in his distant capital, he vowed vengeance on Athens. Lest the never-ending business of his great empire should make him forget the misdeeds of a little city just beyond one corner of it, he made a slave say to him each day, "Master, remember the Athenians."

The empire of the Persians was a land empire, like that of Napoleon. The Sea Power of England wrecked all Napoleon's plans, destroyed his empire, enabled the conquered lands to free themselves, and sent him prisoner to St. Helena. So, too, it was the sea power of Athens and her sister states that stopped the terrible Persian, before whose irresistible advance the great land powers of Asia and of Africa had fallen.

Darius gathered together a fleet manned by Phoenicians and Asiatic Greeks. These people were his conquered subjects. They had no love for Persia. They fought because their master bade them fight, and could punish disobedience. But such people do not fight well. The Athenians and the other European Greeks were fighting for their homes and liberty and honour. On board the fleet Darius sent a large expeditionary force across the Aegean. The Athenians for the moment stood alone,



and could not beat the fleet or stop the landing. On the famous shore of Marathon in 490 B.C. they faced a Persian army for the first time, and there they gloriously defeated it and drove it back to its ships. Darius and, after his death, Xerxes his son, now spent ten years in preparing a vast fleet and army for the conquest of Greece. The army crossed the Dardanelles and marched down along the coast, while the fleet sailed beside it. Army and fleet were many times greater than any army or fleet that the Greeks could bring against it. At Thermopylae, a narrow pass between the mountains and the sea, 300 Spartans with a small force of their allies held up the whole Persian army for several days. Xerxes was furious. At first he had despised them, but now, after several great attacks had been beaten off, he sent against them the 10,000 "Immortals," the most famous troops of Persia, and they were beaten too. At last, to his relief, a traitor came and told him of a path across the mountains, by which a Persian force could get behind the pass and hem the Spartans in. The Spartans heard of the betrayal. They knew that the defence had become hopeless. They could either retreat while there was still time, or they could stay and die. Their allies they sent away before retreat was cut off, but for themselves they chose death, and died to a man where they stood, as the tradition of their country taught them. That splendid fight and its heroic ending showed the Persians for the first time

what a free people would do and suffer rather than own a master. They were the earliest among Asiatics to feel the superiority of the European, which, till the rise of the Japanese, no Asiatic had ever challenged with success.

The Persian army after forcing the pass pressed on and took Athens. The Athenians withdrew to their fleet, which lay in the little bay of Salamis with the ships of the other Greek allies. There in 480 B.C. they joined battle with the Persian fleet and tumbled it to ruin. Salamis is one of the great decisive battles of the world, and its story, so long as men can read it, will always make the heart beat faster.

After the defeat Xerxes left Greece, and a year later, such is Sea Power, the Athenians were fighting and beating the Persians upon the shores of Asia. Like ourselves they felt that the ships and coasts of the enemy were their own true frontier. The Persians never faced them at sea again, and 150 years later Alexander the Great broke their power for ever, took their empire from them, and penetrated even to India. To complete his mastery of the sea he took Tyre from the Persians, and he founded Alexandria, which, nearly two thousand years later, was still the great market where the silks and fruits and spices of the East were brought and shipped to Italy by the Venetians, who then sent them overland to western Europe.

The next great struggle for Sea Power began in

the western Mediterranean in the middle of the third century B.C. It was the struggle between Rome and Carthage. The Romans hitherto had been occupied in conquering Italy. As soldiers they were unequalled, but they were no seamen, and they had no navy. Now that they were masters of the



TRIEME.

From a relief from Puteoli.

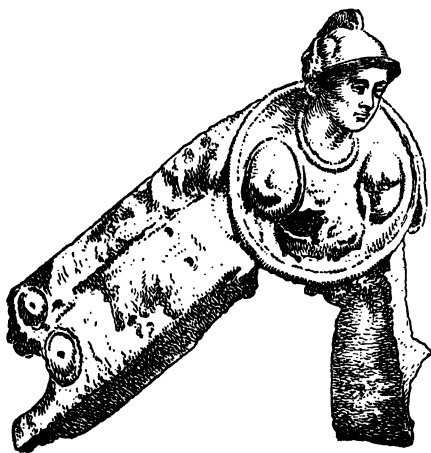
peninsula, they looked across the straits of Messina at Sicily, and they wished to be masters of that too. It was a beautiful island and very rich, and it lies so close to Italy that the Romans could never feel safe in the south while it was in the hands of another powerful people. So the Romans coveted its possession, and the Carthaginians who held it, or most of it, prepared to defend it against them.

Carthage was a colony of Tyre, bound to it by ties of blood and affection, as is Australia to us to-day ; but there was no Phoenician empire of which it formed a part. 'By this time it had won an empire of its own. Sardinia, southern and eastern Spain, and most of Sicily, with many a smaller island in the western Mediterranean, were provinces of this great North African state. Such an empire could not be held without Sea Power, or attacked by a people who did not possess it.

The Romans disliked the sea, as most landmen do, and they dreaded it ; but they were a wonderful people, who could train themselves to do anything, and who could always find just the right way of dealing with every difficulty that they came across. If they created a fleet it had to be the best fleet, just as their armies were the best armies, their roads the best roads and their laws the best laws. Everything they did was thorough. So now, knowing that they had to fight Carthage, and that only by gaining the mastery of the sea could they beat her, they set to work to make sailors of themselves. They built a fleet on the model of a Carthaginian war vessel that had been wrecked, and, while the fleet was building, they trained their men to row upon benches set up on land. And long and loudly the Carthaginian seamen laughed when they heard the news.

History is always repeating itself. Put Germany for Rome and England for Carthage, and once again

we have a continental state learning to use the sea in order to attack a great empire won and defended by Sea Power. But the second story has a different ending, for Rome beat Carthage and took her empire from her. The Carthaginians, like their Phoenician forefathers, thought too much of gathering wealth.



BRONZE FIGURE-HEAD OF A ROMAN VESSEL.  
From the sea near Actium. In the British Museum.

They were too busy to be soldiers or sailors, and so in their armies and on their ships there were too many hired men and native Africans whom they had conquered. These men fought well and they were finely led, but they were beaten in the end by the men who fought for the safety and the honour of their own home-land.

The struggle began in 264 B.C. There were three

great wars. The last ended with the destruction of Carthage in 146 B.C., but most of her empire had passed to Rome fifty years earlier. Rome won the first sea fight of the war, the first sea fight Romans had ever fought. They had thought out beforehand the best way of doing it. They knew that they could not hope to beat the Carthaginians in sailing and manœuvring. The fight must be made as much like a land battle as possible, and then they could use their splendid soldiers. So they invented a sort of drawbridge, which they swung on a rope from a pole in the bows of the ship, and, as soon as a Carthaginian ship came near enough, the drawbridge was let down with a crash, and a strong iron spike on its under side was driven into the deck and kept the ships together. The Roman soldiers, who were waiting for the moment, jumped on board, and soon had the Carthaginian crews at their mercy. Ship after ship was taken in this way, and the Carthaginians, to their astonishment, were soundly beaten. In a few years the Romans had gained such a command of the sea that they actually carried an army of invasion over into Africa, and attacked Carthage at home, doing what Germany would have liked to do to us, but could not.

After the defeat of Carthage each generation saw Rome's power extend, until her empire reached to Britain westward, to the Rhine and the Danube on the north, nearly to Bagdad eastward, and so by Syria to Egypt, and the long northern coast of

Africa in the south. She had become by this time a great imperial city like London. The corn lands of Italy could not feed her, and year by year wheat in great quantities was imported from over sea. If the mastery of the sea were lost, she would starve as England would to-day. But for centuries her ships passed unchallenged everywhere. There is no better description of a sea voyage, in the days when her power was at its height, than that in which the writer of the Acts of the Apostles tells of the voyage of St. Paul from Caesarea in Palestine to Rome, in A.D. 62 and 63. They sailed throughout in Roman waters, and their ship was as safe from all risk of attack by enemy or pirate as any ship in the same waters to-day. It was the same in the narrow seas of Britain, where Roman transports and Roman merchantmen passed to and fro in perfect safety, so complete and unquestioned was Rome's Sea Power. But, as the centuries passed, history once more repeated itself. The Romans were spoilt by their wealth. The simple, hardy countrymen of Italy disappeared, and the farm work was done by the slaves of the great landowners, who had heaped together large estates. The armies and fleets of the empire were recruited from the races of its subject provinces, and it finally broke up under the attacks from all sides of the hardy barbarous races beyond its borders, the forefathers of the Germans, French and English of to-day. Never again were the seas so safe to peaceful traffic until English-men-

of-war began to put down piracy and the slave trade in the nineteenth century, after the Napoleonic wars.

Till Germany challenged British Sea Power, as Rome challenged the earlier power of Carthage, there was not a sea upon the surface of the globe where the British Navy did not assure safety from attack to every British ship. And when the challenge came, within a few short weeks the merchant flag of Germany had vanished from the seas, and the German fleet was locked up in its harbours ; while British transports and British merchantmen, carrying from all parts of the world the raw materials and the food without which our people can neither work nor live, passed to and fro as freely as they did before the war. A few ships, it is true, were lost at first to cruisers such as the gallant and adventurous " Emden," and afterwards more to the submarines, but England has never ceased to use at her will the highways of the ocean.



## CHAPTER II

### ENGLISH SEA POWER IN THE CHANNEL

THE first faint dawn of English Sea Power appeared when the Roman fleets and armies withdrew from Britain, and raiders from the cold and hungry coasts of Denmark and northern Germany began to roam the seas. These English raiders, as years passed, settled in ever larger numbers in the south and east of Britain. Then they pushed their way up the rivers, as our armies in their wars have pushed their way up the Nile or up the Tigris, and in 150 years Britain had become England, the home of the English. But the English had not yet learnt to pull together as one people. They were too busy fighting one another on land to think about protecting the country from fresh invasion. They did not keep fleets at sea in readiness to seek out, attack and destroy an enemy wherever he appeared, as the English people learnt to do in later times. So again, from those same northern coasts about the entrance to the Baltic, came invaders of the same blood and speech, and of much the same habits, as the English who had come three hundred years before. "The

first sight of the Danes," a historian has written, "is as if the hand on the dial of history had gone back three hundred years. The same Norwegian fiords, the same Frisian sandbanks, pour forth their pirate fleets as in the days of Hengest and Cerdic. There is the same wild panic as the black boats of the invaders strike inland along the river reaches, or moor round the river islets, the same sights of horror—firing of homesteads, slaughter of men, women driven off to slavery or shame, children tossed on pikes or sold in the market-place—as when the English invaders attacked Britain."

The German of the twentieth century has shown himself no less brutal than the Dane of the ninth, for every one of those sights, except just the taking of money for the slaves, has been seen in those unhappy countries that were not protected by the sea from invasion by the German armies. They have suffered at German hands horrors of which, a few years ago, nobody out of Germany dreamed that modern armies could be guilty; and England knows now that only her mastery of the sea saved her from the same appalling misery.

The Danes were wonderful seamen. In their long light undecked vessels, with great curved dragon heads, eager like the Phoenicians to seek out the unknown, they pushed across the wild Atlantic westward, and even reached America hundreds of years before Columbus discovered it, though the way was lost and the discovery forgotten after-

wards. With the same restless adventurous daring they hunted the whale and seal and walrus, and man himself, for the wealth they yielded. In whatever waters their ships chose to roam they were masters.

When the Danes settled in England, they settled also in the north of France, where they were known as the Northmen, a name that soon changed to Norman. There the spirit of the old Roman lands touched them. They learnt the French speech, which is only Latin as the centuries have altered it, and they learnt how to keep order and to make good laws; in a word, to govern. Some two hundred years later, as Normans, they pushed out once more across the sea. They founded a Norman kingdom in Sicily and the south of Italy, and William the Conqueror seized England, which once again the old English folk, for all the Danish blood that mingled with their own, had not the skill or power by sea to save from his invading fleet.

The genius of the Normans made the English a united people, and gave them the priceless heritage of Sea Power. The spirit of adventure and the ability to govern were in their blood, and they remain in the best English blood to-day. No writer has ever drawn such clear and simple pictures of the past as Rudyard Kipling. Every boy and girl who wonders what the men of the Stone Age thought and said and did, or what the life of a Roman centurion in Britain was like, or how the masons and

architects, who built and beautified our glorious churches, worked and talked, should read *Puck of Pook's Hill* and *Rewards and Fairies*. In the story called "Young Men at the Manor," which is in *Puck of Pook's Hill*, Kipling sees in his fancy and explains to us how the Normans conquered England. It is the way in which young Englishmen still carry England's flag, and do English justice, and win to love of England men of other blood and other speech the whole world over. French Canadians, South African Boers, Indian Princes, all have fought with equal courage and devotion as sons of the great Empire, which Sea Power has won for us, and which Sea Power alone can keep.

Never since the time of William the Conqueror has England been invaded. Now and again, when weak or foolish kings neglected the Navy, the mastery of the Channel was lost for a few years, and the shores of southern counties might be raided ; but generally the Navy has been kept as it should be kept, and England's command of her own home waters has been complete. For some centuries, it is true, there was no such safety for peaceful voyagers in the narrow seas as there was in Roman days. Many pirates lurked in English harbours, and preyed upon merchant ships of all countries as they passed up and down the Channel. But those same pirates were good Englishmen, and, if there was any fighting to be done for England against France, they were always among the best and bravest of the English

seamen. The winds and the waves had no more terrors for them than they had for their Viking forefathers; and as for any enemy afloat, he had only to be attacked and he was beaten. So well did our enemies know this that they have generally tried to avoid that dangerous attack, whether Spaniards, French, or Germans. And an enemy, who is always thinking how he can avoid a close fight and run away, is half beaten before a shot is fired.

There was no professional army or navy in those days. Each landowner was bound to serve on land and bring men according to his means when the king needed him; and, in the same way, the men of the sea ports were bound to serve with their ships at sea. On land baron and knight very soon became robbers if there was no strong hand to keep them in order, as happened in the days of Stephen. The seaman still more easily became a mere pirate in the intervals of peace, for it was not many generations since his ancestors were roving Northmen; and also it is more difficult to keep order on the seas than on the land. Even the "Shipman," whom Chaucer describes in the second half of the fourteenth century, was almost as much pirate as trader;

If that he fought and had the higher hand,  
By water he sent them home to every land.

Which means that he drowned all his unhappy prisoners in the regular pirate fashion. As for his seamanship,

There was none such from Hull unto Carthage.  
Hardy he was, and wise to undertake ;  
With many a tempest had his beard been shake.  
He knew well all the havens, as they were,  
From Gothland<sup>1</sup> to the Cape of Finisterre,  
And every creek in Britain and in Spain.

It will be noticed that his voyages did not take him to the Mediterranean, where English ships at that time seldom went. The merchandise of the Mediterranean countries and of the further east did not yet come to England by sea, but by the costly overland route from Italy to Antwerp, Hamburg, and other North Sea ports.

The sailors of other countries were no more anxious to tackle these old sea-dogs than the Spaniards of Queen Elizabeth's day were to tackle Hawkins and Drake ; so we are not surprised to find Edward I. claiming to be the sovereign of the narrow seas, and the French king recognising that sovereignty.

"The kings of England," says Edward, "by right of the said kingdom from time to time, whereof there is no memorial to the contrary, have been in peaceable possession of the sovereign lordship of the sea of England and of the isles within the same."

Some of these isles, the Channel Islands, lie within sight of the French coast, and French has been spoken in them from that day to this. They belonged to the Norman dukes, as well all islands might ; and when the Norman dukes became English kings the

<sup>1</sup> Sweden.

Channel Islands became English too, and English they have remained ever since. In all the long French wars the Sea Power of England kept them safe against attack.

It is always well to try to see ourselves as others see us. Englishmen have never been very good at doing this. They have always expected the foreigner to take their point of view, and have thought him unreasonable for preferring his own. In those old days and for centuries afterwards France was always the enemy, and until, in the time of Charles II., France began to aim at the mastery of western Europe, England generally began the fighting. If a Frenchman was within reach the Englishman always wanted to fight him. We read that "When in 1404 the French appeared off the Isle of Wight, the inhabitants invited them to land and promised them six hours for rest and refreshment, if they would vouchsafe the delights of a pitched battle."

The Englishman was always sure that he could beat the Frenchman, or even two of him ; and as he never hid his certainty Frenchmen were not likely to love him very much. This rather unpleasant habit of claiming superiority lasted till after the great Napoleonic wars. That on the water there was a superiority, due really to better seamanship and the greater confidence that experience gives, many tales of wonderful deeds, done against what should have been impossible odds, amply prove.

It was in the reign of Edward III. that the Hundred

Years' War with France began. For many of those years, in the reigns of Edward III., Henry V., and Henry VI., English armies, helped by the rulers and men of French provinces that disliked the rule of the French King at Paris, marched about France at their will. England commanded the sea, and no French ships could attack the transports and merchant ships that passed constantly to and fro. Crécy and Poitiers could never have been fought if Edward III. had not first attacked and almost destroyed the French fleet off Sluys in Flanders in 1340.

But English Sea Power at that time was something very different from what it is to-day. England ruled the local seas, but she ruled no others. She lay as yet on the very edge, the western edge, of the known world. Beyond stretched the limitless ocean that no sailors, English or other, dared to explore.

The middle of the world then was the Mediterranean; and of the Mediterranean, Venice at its centre was the queen. But the day was near at hand that was to show to the eyes of wondering men a new world and new ways of travel. Then England was to find herself no longer on the farthest edge of a flat earth, but in the middle of the round globe. She would be better placed than any other people to rule its waters, and, like the Phoenicians, to fetch and to carry in ships for all of them.



## CHAPTER III

### THE AGE OF DISCOVERY

WESTERN EUROPE in those old days could supply itself fairly well with necessaries. It had enough corn and meat for its food, and enough wool and leather for its clothing. Luxuries, however, it never can produce. It has not the climate. Then as now it looked to the warm and sunny east for these. From the east still come much of the silk and cotton—and even cotton was a luxury in those early days ; from the east too come most of the contents of the grocer's shop—pepper, nutmeg, mace, cinnamon, and cloves among them. Nowadays we could get on much better without those spices than the people of the Middle Ages could. Sheep and cattle could not be fed and fattened through the winter then as they are now, for there were no turnips or mangolds, and no artificial foods. So, in the late autumn, all that could be spared were killed for meat, and salted down to last the winter. Potatoes were unknown, and green vegetables were scarce, and one can imagine how the people tired of salt meat and bread for months on end, varied only

by salt fish in Lent. No wonder that they were fond of the spices of the east, that gave a taste to the dull fare. For the sake of those spices many a dangerous voyage was undertaken, and many a great battle fought at sea.

The Spice Islands lie in the great archipelago south and east of the Malay Peninsula, where the waters of the Indian Ocean and the South Pacific meet. In those days the spices, with the perfumes, the silk, the muslin and the calico of India, were fetched across the Indian Ocean by the Arab seamen who sailed with the monsoons. They were landed at the Red Sea ports and carried thence, sometimes by caravan, sometimes down the Nile in boats, to Alexandria, where the merchants and shipmen of Venice met the Arabs, in what was the greatest market of the Mediterranean. Venetian ships carried the spices up the Adriatic, and from Venice they were sent overland again across the Alps into Germany. At last, partly by river, partly by road, they came to Antwerp, Bruges, Hamburg, and Bremen, and other ports in the North Sea, whence England drew her supply.

Many people handled the spices on their long journey, and grew rich, for the profits were great. But they were loaded and unloaded so often, and travelled so far by land on the back of camel or mule, that the journey cost much money ; and the spices by the time they reached Western Europe were very dear. Some of the peoples who lay

outside the Mediterranean coveted a share in this profitable trade. If only a way could be found round Africa to India, a ship might load in the Moluccas and sail straight home again ; and the spices would not have to be unloaded till they reached their journey's end. To carry goods by sea costs many times less than to carry them by land, and the profits would be immense. And always, too, there was the hope of finding the precious gold itself. But was there a way round ? The Arab geographers and mapmakers said that there was not, but the Greeks nearly two thousand years before had thought that there might be ; and they knew that the Phoenicians said that some ships of theirs once found the way. But of all that lay south of Cape Bojador in the west, and Cape Guardafui in the east, there was no actual knowledge. All was guesswork, and there are not many people who will risk their lives to find out whether a mere guess is right or wrong. About the unknown lands and seas that stretched beyond Cape Bojador there was many a grim legend, and sailors felt towards the voyage of discovery just as the early Phoenicians had felt about the seas beyond the Pillars of Hercules. When the limit of all previous discovery was reached, and all beyond was unknown, tales, which perhaps would be laughed at by safe firesides at home, seemed only too likely to be true. And they were such tales ! A learned Arab had written that in those seas " whirlpools always destroy any adventurer,"

and he was supposed to know. Good Christians said that God would punish the impious explorer who pried into the secrets hidden beyond Cape Bojador, by turning him into a negro. It was believed that the sun poured down sheets of liquid flame upon the ground, and that the waters of the sea and the rivers were boiling hot ; and there were the usual terrible monsters lurking by the way. The Saracen mapmakers, when they reached the limits of what was known, had a way of filling up the empty spaces on sea and land with pictures of the monsters that they supposed to live there. On this very part they had drawn the great hand of the devil, stretched out of the waters to grasp and drag down to death and torment all who ventured there.

There are three motives which will stir brave men in all times to face great peril. They are (1) eagerness to find out the unknown, (2) the lust for gold, and (3) the wish to teach their religion to people, whether savage or civilised, who worship other gods. The first motive inspires men like Captain Scott, who seek no reward but knowledge ; the second still sends multitudes after the gold within the Arctic Circle, to the Klondike, where thousands lost their lives not so many years ago in the terrible struggle through ice and snow over the mountain passes ; and the third sends missionaries, at the peril of their lives, to every corner of the globe. All of these motives helped to encourage the explorers,

who, after a century of effort, made their difficult way round the Cape of Good Hope to India and the Spice Islands.

The Portuguese led the way. In the fifteenth century Portugal had some great kings ; and one of them, King John, had a son—his third son—who, though never king himself, has become more famous than any of the kings of Portugal. He was born in 1394 and lived till 1460, and he is known to history as Prince Henry the Navigator. His mother was a sister of our King Henry IV., and she was such a mother as will always have great sons. As she lay dying in 1415, all Portugal was busy with preparations for an expedition against the Moors across the Straits of Gibraltar, in which her husband and her sons were to take part. Her last thought was for them and for her adopted country ; it was not for herself. “What wind,” she asked, “blows so strongly against the house ?” They told her it was the north wind. “It is the wind for your voyage,” she said, and then lay back and died.

Prince Henry was eager to search out the unknown, and also to teach the Christian faith to the heathen ; the captains and crews, whom he taught and sent out on voyages of discovery, wanted to find the dazzling riches that lay waiting at their journey’s end. While he was still a young man, in 1415, directly after the campaign against the Moors, the Prince went to live by Cape St. Vincent, with the sea stretched out before him, and there he made

his home for the rest of his life. He studied the stars, and the science of navigation and shipbuilding. He got better maps, and he had his sailors taught to use the best instruments for finding the latitude. The compass also by this time was in general use. The strange habit of the needle, when touched by a magnet, of pointing to the north, and so making it possible to steer a course when sun and stars are hidden, had been discovered by the Chinese, and it had been known in Europe for two or three hundred years. But it was feared at first as magic, and an invention of the devil. In the middle of the thirteenth century a traveller, to whom it was shown, said that "no master mariner would dare to use it lest he should be thought a magician." And the fate of a magician then was to be burnt at the stake. Prince Henry sent out ship after ship, but they always returned without having rounded the dreaded Bojador, with its stormy waters, that were made still more terrible by the tales that all men knew. At last in 1434 some brave men rounded it, and found to their joy that the sea beyond was "as easy to sail in as the waters at home." Year after year ships pressed on further. They reached Cape Blanco, and brought back some negro prisoners and a little gold dust. Then there was more eagerness for discovery. Other ships went further and brought back more gold and more prisoners. The slave trade had begun. Nobody, least of all Prince Henry and his captains, dreamed of all the horrors to which

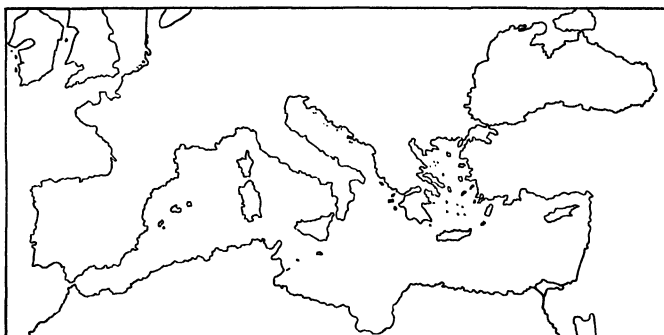
that trade was to lead in later centuries. Prince Henry was very glad to see the negroes. He would save their souls, "which but for him, would have been for ever lost." And the captains and sailors, who gained riches by their sale, said to themselves that, after all, they were saving them from being sacrificed to wild gods, or killed to make a meal for cannibals stronger than themselves.

Henry died before the great Gulf of Guinea was reached. The coast ran eastwards now for many hundred miles, and men thought that the end was near. But it took twenty-five years still to reach the Cape of Good Hope; for beyond the Equator Africa runs down more than 2000 miles southwards, an appalling distance to ships that still feared to trust themselves far out of sight of land. At last, in 1486, when Henry had been dead twenty-six years, Bartholomew Diaz rounded the Cape of Good Hope and reached Algoa Bay, but he could get no further. He called the cape the Cape of Storms, a name that it well deserved, but the king, when he heard his report, renamed it the Cape of Good Hope, because he believed that beyond it would soon be found that way to India, which for seventy years the sailors of his country had been seeking.

It needed, however, a new lesson, taught by a still greater man, before that way could be found.

The Portuguese were trying to find a way eastward to India and the Spice Islands. There were others, however, who thought that a nearer and better

way might be found westwards. The old maps were very accurate when they dealt with the coast line of countries that were constantly visited by ships, as the map below will show. Only the shape and size of Ireland are seriously wrong. The geographers had also a fairly close idea of the distance round the world, but they knew very little



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SKETCH MAP OF DULCERT'S PORTOLANO OF 1339.

about the continent of Asia, and they greatly exaggerated its width upon their maps. They thought that it was only about 4000 miles from Europe across an open sea westwards to China. Of course, we know now that it is more than three times that distance, and that an unknown America and an unknown Pacific Ocean lie between.

While the Portuguese were still trying to find the eastern route round Africa, Christopher Columbus was planning a voyage westward right away from



all known land, hoping to find India beyond the Atlantic. He was born in 1446, the son of a weaver of Genoa. He studied geography and seamanship, and he hoped some day to explore the Atlantic and find that way by the west. He gathered all the information that he could, and then he went to the king of Portugal with his ideas, and asked him for ships and money for the voyage. The king would give no help, for the Portuguese did not want any western way to be discovered ; so Columbus went to Spain. After five years of weary waiting, at last he had his way, and King Ferdinand, whose daughter Catherine of Aragon was afterwards to be queen of England, sent him off with three little ships and the stores and money necessary for the great venture. He sailed on Friday the 3rd August, 1492, and on the 11th October he saw land. He had come to the islands which are still known as the West Indies. He thought that at last he had reached Asia, but before long the voyages of other explorers showed that it was not Asia, and that the way there must be far longer and more difficult than had been supposed. It seems that Columbus himself never knew that he had found a new world. The islands which he had discovered—for it was not till his fourth voyage in 1502 that he himself touched the mainland—he called the West Indies because he had reached them by his western route. Of course if they had really been a part of India they would have been upon its eastern and not its western edge.

When Columbus set out across the Atlantic westwards, and left all known land out of sight behind him, he and his men made a daring venture, that had an immediate effect upon all explorers and made possible all the great discoveries that followed. Till then the Portuguese had never dared to trust themselves to the open ocean. At last, however, taught by the example of Columbus, Vasco da Gama, in 1497, no longer coasted down the length of Africa, but steered straight for the Cape Verde Islands, and thence into the ocean. He rounded the Cape of Good Hope, sailed up the east coast beyond Mozambique, and then steered eastwards across the Indian Ocean by the route well known to the Arab seamen. He reached Calicut in twenty-three days from the coast. There he traded with the Indian merchants, and at last, together with much other wealth, he brought back to Europe by sea the famous spices of the east—the cinnamon, nutmeg, mace, pepper, ginger, and above all, cloves—of which everybody wanted to have more, and which, till that time, had been so dear that a pound of spices actually cost as much as two sacks of wheat.

Venice knew what the discovery of the new all-sea route meant for her. A Venetian of the day said that “when this news reached Venice, the whole city felt it greatly and remained stupefied, and the wisest held it as the worst news that had ever arrived.” And so it was for them. They had fetched and carried between east and west for

centuries, and had grown rich with the profits. Now a new and better and cheaper road had been found, and Western Europe needed them no longer. The spices of the east were brought to the west without so much as entering the Mediterranean, and Venice lost her importance, as so many of our own old towns upon the coaching roads lost theirs, when the railways took another route and left them on one side.

The new lands that had been discovered became colonies of Spain and Portugal. They were very rich, and the merchant ships that passed to and fro were tempting prizes for enemies or pirates. Sea Power alone could protect them. It would be well for Spain and Portugal to make their sea-paths safe.

## CHAPTER IV

### HAWKINS AND DRAKE

FROM the larger West Indian Islands the Spaniards before long made their way into Mexico. There they found gold in quantities beyond their wildest dreams, and they seized the land and all its wealth. Ten years later, in 1531, they began the conquest of Peru on the Pacific, between the Andes and the sea, a land still richer than Mexico.

The gold and silver, and the merchandise from these rich colonies, poured across the sea to Spain. The treasure of Peru was taken by sea to Panama, carried over the isthmus on mules, and then shipped across the Atlantic, avoiding the stormy and dangerous voyage by the Straits of Magellan. The ships that sailed up and down the Pacific coast were built in Peru. On those distant waters the Spaniards were sure no enemy would venture, for the way was too long and dangerous. But no safety could be expected in the Atlantic, except such as swift ships, well handled and well armed, could assure. The Spaniards, however, were not good seamen, and those who governed them were too

often dishonest or unwise. Their ships were unwieldy and slow ; and, worse still, they were badly armed and manned. The government required them to carry crews and guns and ammunition sufficient for defence, but the officials whose duty it was to inspect the ships before sailing, and to see that the orders of the government were obeyed, were easily bribed to be blind, and to say that all was in order when it was not. The merchants and shipowners were in a great hurry to become rich. They did not like to load their ships with cannon and shot and gunpowder, large crews and many soldiers. That would mean so much less room for merchandise : so they ran foolish risks, and they bribed the officials to be blind. When the officials of any country can be bribed to disobey orders, that country's ruin is only a matter of time.

In the first half of the sixteenth century France and Spain were generally at war, and it was not long before the seamen of Normandy and Brittany discovered how weakly the Spanish ships and Spanish colonies were protected. They were much better seamen than the Spaniards, and their ships, like the English ships that routed the Armada, were quick sailers, and were well armed and well manned. They attacked and captured Spanish treasure ships, one of which was so richly loaded that the very cabin boys made fortunes out of their share of the booty. A single French ship seized Havana in 1536 and took a large ransom from it.

Three Spanish ships appeared after it had left, and were sent in pursuit ; but it fought and captured the three, and then sailed back to Havana and took another ransom.

Of course the stories of this new wealth, so easily to be won, passed quickly into England, and no doubt there was much talk about them in the seaports of the west. But England and Spain were friends at that time, and when Queen Mary came to the throne she married Philip II. of Spain. It was the time of the Reformation. Mary burnt the Protestants in England, and Philip hunted them out and tortured and killed them by the thousand in every part of his vast dominions. Mary and Philip were at war with France, but England was no longer mistress of her seas. Henry VIII. had built and kept up a fine navy, and he was master of the Channel in the old English way ; but Mary had allowed the ships to rot in harbour ; and so the Channel was full of privateers, whose captains held authority from the French king to capture English and Spanish merchantmen wherever they could find them. They played the pirate, under another name, to their hearts' content. English trade was crippled, and Calais, the last English possession in France, was lost.

Fortunately Mary's reign was short, and, after Elizabeth succeeded her in 1558, there was a great change. England became Protestant again, and to the joy of every sailor, and of most other people

too, there was no more talk of alliance with Spain. It gradually became certain that sooner or later Spain and England would have to fight, but Elizabeth was not ready yet. It takes a long time to build up again a strong navy when once it has been neglected for years, and, besides, England was poor, and her people were not yet all of one mind. Some were friendly to the Catholics and Mary Queen of Scots, and others feared Spain and wished for peace. Before the war came there must be a strong fleet and a united people ; and there must be money also, which only years of prosperous trade could provide. And if Elizabeth wanted to delay the outbreak of war as long as she could, Philip also had very good reasons for not hurrying it on. But, though the two countries were not at war for another twenty years and more, there was many a fight at sea between Spaniard and English in the meantime. There was nothing now to prevent English seamen from following the example of the French, and adventurers, who, as the law ran, were only pirates, began to sail from the western ports and prey upon the Spanish merchant ships. The cruisers of the French Protestant party helped them (for Protestant and Catholic fought each other for long years in France), and in the summer of 1563 they took 700 Spanish prizes between them. There are not many Spanish merchant ships in the English Channel now, but in those days there were ; for Holland and Belgium, the Low Countries as they were called,

were then part of the Spanish empire. They were separated from Spain by the width of France. Communication with them had therefore to be kept up mainly by the sea, and depended for its safety on Sea Power. When these provinces revolted from Spain a few years later, the English adventurers took service under William the Silent, their heroic leader, and doubled Philip's difficulties. Elizabeth turned a blind eye on their doings. Philip, of course, said that she must stop them, but she was always ready with excuses for doing nothing, and Spain never would learn that only Sea Power can protect trade and communications with lands beyond the sea.

English seamen were in a dangerous mood. Friends of theirs, innocent merchants many of them, had been tortured and burnt as Protestants in Spain and the Spanish colonies,<sup>1</sup> and many more were starving in Spanish prisons. They wanted revenge ; they wanted to defend their faith ; but, above all, they wanted freedom to trade with the Spanish colonies, and many of them longed to have the plundering of Spanish treasure ships.

<sup>1</sup>Shakespeare was only describing a favourite Spanish torture when (*Winter's Tale*, iv. iv. 816-825) he made Autolycus threaten the Clown that he "shall be flayed alive ; then 'nointed over with honey, set on the head of a wasp's nest ; then stand till he be three-quarters . . . dead ; then recovered again with aqua-vitæ . . . ; then, raw as he is, and in the hottest day . . . shall he be set against a brick-wall, the sun looking with a southward eye upon him, where he is to behold him with flies blown to death."



One of the first of the English adventurers to quit the Channel, and carry the English flag into the Spanish waters of the New World, was John Hawkins of Plymouth. He began as a trader. Philip did his best to keep foreign ships away from his colonies, partly because he wanted to have all the trade for Spain, and partly because where those ships went, Protestant notions of religion generally spread. The colonists themselves wanted to buy and sell to the best advantage, and did not mind what ships came, so long as they came in peace. In Cuba and San Domingo they were very short of labour on their great sugar estates and in the factories. The native races whom they found in the islands were dying out, and it was necessary to replace them. So a trade sprang up in negroes from West Africa. The Spanish government at home kept a close control over this trade. They limited the number to be sold, and they charged a heavy duty on each slave landed. The colonists complained that they could not get as many slaves as they needed, and that the duty made the price too high. They were very ready, therefore, to encourage any smugglers who would land more slaves and cheat the government of the duty. Hawkins took up this smuggling trade. He collected negroes at Sierra Leone and crossed to San Domingo, where he sold them at a great profit. Philip was furious when he heard what had happened, and threatened punishment if the offence was repeated. But the

profits were great, and nobody worried about the threats. A company was at once formed in England for a second voyage. Elizabeth herself took shares, and lent a fine ship, the "Jesus." Again the slaves were sold, and again the profits were immense. A third voyage, however, was not so successful. In October, 1567, Hawkins sailed again in the "Jesus" with four other ships, one of which, the little "Judith," was commanded by a young cousin of his own, the famous Francis Drake, then twenty-five years of age. Kipling has made a story about him, called "Simple Simon," in *Rewards and Fairies*. It is not all history, but it tells, better than any history, how those splendid seamen were trained for their work, and with what skill and gallantry they did it. They were true sons of the Vikings, and the stuff of which builders of empire are made.

Again the slaves were bought and sold, and a great treasure of gold and silver and jewels was collected by peaceful bargaining. The squadron had already sailed for home when it was caught by a hurricane, and had to seek refuge in a Spanish port on the coast of Mexico. As it lay there refitting, a Spanish fleet of thirteen warships, well armed and well manned, suddenly appeared. It had been sent out to look for Hawkins, and deal out to him the punishment that Philip had threatened. Hawkins and his men made a gallant and, for a time, successful defence, and the Spaniards could not force the entrance to the harbour. A storm was brewing outside, and to save

their ships they promised Hawkins that, if he would let them in, he should refit his little fleet, buy and sell what he wanted, and sail away in peace when he was ready. He trusted their word and let them in but a few days later they made a treacherous attack upon him. The English fought stoutly, but at last the "Jesus" was set on fire, and Hawkins had to leave all his treasure behind him, and escape, as best he could, with the little "Judith" and one other vessel. The Spaniards never did a worse day's work for themselves. By their treachery they had made of Francis Drake an enemy for life. No more of the slave-dealing and peaceful bargain and sale for him! He meant to have revenge on the Spaniards for the loss of his treasure and the lives of his friends. He had learnt that the gold and silver from the rich Peruvian mines were brought up the Pacific coast to Panama, carried across the isthmus on mules by a track which the canal now follows, and embarked again on the other side for Spain. Drake quietly fitted out a squadron of three little vessels. He had no partners, and he kept his secret. In the late summer of 1572 he sailed. He landed on the isthmus, made his way to a point from which he could surprise the mule train, fell upon it suddenly, and seized without difficulty all the enormous booty. From the top of a tall tree, upon the height of the watershed, he gazed down upon the Pacific, and then and there he prayed God "to give him life and leave to sail once in an English ship upon that

sea." All went well on his voyage home, and he and his fellow adventurers shared the rich spoils.

Five years later he set out on his great voyage for the Pacific with five little ships, manned by 160 men and boys. The Queen privately took a share in the venture, but she gave Drake no authority to fight. England and Spain were not yet openly at war, and she could not afford to have it said that she had sent him. If necessary she must be able to disown his acts, and leave him to be hanged as a pirate if he was caught. She had to think for England. Her subjects understood her difficulties, and cheerfully took such risks. Kipling has told a story, "Gloriana," in *Rewards and Fairies*, which is partly fact and partly fiction, of two young men who did so for their Queen's sake, and who did not have Drake's good fortune.

On November 15th, 1577, Drake sailed from Plymouth in his famous ship the "Pelican" or "Golden Hind" (for he changed its name to "Golden Hind" on entering the Straits of Magellan) with its four little consorts. Philip had heard from his ambassador in England of the preparations for the voyage, but he was so sure that Drake could not possibly sail round into the Pacific, that no warning was sent to Peru, and the Spaniards only looked for him as usual about the West Indies and the isthmus. In August, 1578, after many difficulties he entered the stormy and dangerous Magellan Straits. It took three weeks to cover the seventy miles. Then the

"Golden Hind" was beaten back southwards to Cape Horn, which the English sailors were the first to see. Slowly Drake won his way back again. It had been arranged that all the ships should meet off Valparaiso, but when Drake arrived there in December he found himself alone. One ship had weakly given up the struggle and gone home again, and the rest had been lost. But if Drake could not find his friends, he found the next best thing, an enemy, and an enemy wholly unprepared. There in Valparaiso harbour lay a great Spanish galleon just in from Peru. Its crew thought that the "Golden Hind" was a fellow Spaniard. The ship was easily captured, and a rich treasure of gold was taken out of her. Drake then sailed to Tarapaca, now Iquique, on the coast of Chili. Again his arrival was wholly unexpected, and, as one of his companions wrote, "being landed, we found by the sea side a Spaniard lying asleep, who had lying by him thirteen bars of silver, which weighed 4000 ducats Spanish. We took the silver and left the man. Not far from hence, going on land for fresh water, we met with a Spaniard and an Indian boy driving eight llamas or sheep of Peru, which are as big as asses; every of which sheep had on his back two bags of leather, each bag containing 50 lbs. weight of fine silver. So that, bringing both the sheep and their burden to the ships, we found in all the bags eight hundredweight of silver."

At Lima they heard that a great treasure ship had



**SIR FRANCIS DRAKE ON BOARD THE "REVENGE."**  
From the painting by Sir Seymour Lucas in the possession of Mrs. Paddon.

lately sailed for Panama. This they followed and captured; and they found in her twenty tons of silver and a hundredweight of gold, besides quantities of jewels and precious stones.

It was now time for Drake to escape, for all the coast was alarmed and a strongly armed squadron was looking for him. To return by the way he had come would have been too dangerous, so first of all he sailed up the coast of California looking for a passage round North America into the Atlantic. But the weather grew cold as they sailed north and the crew sickened; and as it became plain that the passage, if it existed at all, must be a very long one he came south again, refitted his ship on the coast of San Francisco among natives, who "supposed them to be gods and would not be persuaded to the contrary" (for Drake was always just as kind as the Spaniards were cruel), and then started across the Pacific on his homeward voyage of 20,000 miles. In the autumn of 1580 he reached Plymouth harbour, nearly three years after he left it. The fame of his splendid voyage rang through all England. The Queen visited his ship when she lay as a show for London in the Thames, and knighted him on board.

Yet again, in 1585, Drake dashed at the West Indies; this time with a fleet of 25 privateers and 2500 men. He had no difficulty in getting either ships or men, for young men of every rank in life were eager for the honour of sharing the adventures of Sir Francis Drake. The Queen still gave him no

commission, and his crews had no pay but what they won from the enemy. They were still only pirates in the eyes of Spain. They took by storming three fine Spanish cities in the islands, and they won in spoils and ransom enough to pay the expenses of the voyage and the wages of the crews ; but the officers and owners of the ships got no profits from the venture, for they missed the great treasure fleet which they had hoped to capture. The deadly yellow fever attacked the crews, and when they turned for home the winds were contrary and water ran short. They had to land in Cuba and dig wells. " Drake himself . . . worked with spade and bucket, like the meanest person in the whole company, always foremost where toil was to be endured or honour won."

Such a leader puts his own splendid spirit into his men, and they will follow him anywhere. What wonder if England felt safe while he was there to lead her fleets, or that when at last Spain gathered her great Armada the Queen made him Vice-admiral, second in command only to Lord Howard of Effingham, the Lord High Admiral of England.

War could be avoided no longer. By 1587 Philip was preparing in earnest to crush, as he hoped, the country that stood then, as she has stood so often since, in the way of a great imperial power that aimed at the mastery of western Europe. Then it was that Drake sailed with his fleet of privateers to Cadiz, and burnt all the shipping and



the stores that were being collected there. He had singed the King of Spain's beard. He was teaching England also her true method of defence ; showing her that the fleets and the coasts of the enemy are her own real frontier, and that where they are there her ships must be.

His courage and enterprise so impressed the Spaniards that they said that "if he was not a Lutheran there would not be the like of him in the world"; and a Court lady, who had been invited by Philip to a boating party on a lake near Madrid, far from the sea, sent a jesting refusal, saying that "she dared not trust herself on the water with his Majesty, lest Sir Francis Drake should have her." The dull King promptly banished her from Court.

The Spanish plan of invasion was much like all other plans that have been made for invading England. A large army was gathered on the Belgian coast. The great Armada was to sweep the English fleet off the seas, burst through the Channel, pick up the army, which would be waiting with its transports, and land it on the English coast. The Spaniards never dreamed of failure. They were so sure that the little English ships were no match for their own huge galleons. They did not expect any serious resistance, and they were foolish enough not even to prepare for it. They only carried fifty rounds of ammunition for each gun, and their food and water were both bad and utterly insufficient.



THE DEFEAT OF THE SPANISH ARMADA.  
After the painting by De Louthembourg.

They did not understand the English way of fighting, for they had never fought a fleet action with English ships before. In the Mediterranean against the Turk they had always fought at close range, grappled with the hostile ship, and swept its decks with the musketry of the soldiers whom they carried on board. But their guns were too light, their decks were too high, and their ships were too slow to give them victory over the handy English ships and their hard-hitting, well-aimed guns. Then, most foolish thing of all, Philip, at the last moment, put in command an admiral who had never been to sea before. As soon as the Armada was sighted from Plymouth the English fleet dashed at it. Then followed the famous week of fighting up the Channel, the story of which is told in every history book. The Spaniards at last sought shelter in the Calais roads, but they were frightened out again by the fire-ships, and, after another desperate battle off the coast between Calais and Dunkirk, they fled up the North Sea before the rising south-west gale. Many a great galleon was wrecked on the wild coasts of Scotland and Ireland, and only sixty out of their hundred and thirty ships, and 9000 out of their 30,000 men ever reached Spain again. The winds and the waves had fought for England, but not till good ships, good sailing, good shooting, and matchless leadership had already made the victory secure. And England must never trust to anything else for victory. She must always see to it that she has more ships and better ships,

more guns and better guns, than any other country, or, indeed, any two countries, and can handle those ships and guns with a skill to be matched by no other sailors in the world.

So Spain had failed. A great empire, with scattered colonies and a large trade over seas, she could not guard her ocean highways, or punish the little island kingdom, whose daring sailors ranged the seas, burnt her towns, and seized her shipping at their will. But England herself had as yet no colonies, and her trade beyond the oceans was still small, though it had begun to grow. Her Sea Power was still much what it had been under the Edwards. She had shown that she was mistress of her own seas, and she had shown that Spain was not mistress of any seas, but until she had colonies and trade in distant waters it was not her task to keep her watch-dogs there. It was not very long, however, before she had to face a more dangerous enemy than Spain, and to fight for mastery in the North Sea and the Channel with the Dutch, the story of whose rise to power will be told shortly in the next chapter. It is a story of patriotism as heroic and glorious as that of the Greeks when Xerxes came against them ; and it is good for a people like ourselves, who have never seen our country suffer, to hear such stories.

## CHAPTER V

### THE PATRIOTISM OF THE DUTCH

THERE is nothing that ennobles men and nations so much as a hard struggle with nature for a living. People who live among the mountains, or upon the sea, or where a colder climate makes hard work necessary if the earth is to yield its increase, are nearly always proud and stubborn people, who love liberty and will fight for it. Sooner or later such people become rulers among the nations, and win their way to Empire.

The Dutch were such a people. Their land, or a large part of it, is a delta, formed by the deposits of the Rhine. By nature it is a mere swamp, and it lies so low that, but for the skill of man, the spring tides would cover it several times every month. But for many centuries the Dutch have toiled ceaselessly to win land from the sea, building great banks, called dykes, to hold back the tide, and pumping the land water out of the big ditches which drain the fields, and which lie far below sea level. By patient labour they had won freedom from the destroying power of Nature, and they were not

the folk to lie down meekly beneath the destroying hand of man. Their laws, more than a thousand years ago, declared "that the race shall be free as long as the wind blows out of the clouds and the world stands." They were attacked by powerful nations, eager to take that freedom from them, first the Spaniards and then the French ; but with stern and resolute endeavour they met and barred the way against the sweeping tide of conquering armies, as they had barred the way against the tide of ocean.

The sovereigns who ruled over them for many centuries held the reins lightly, and granted laws like our Magna Carta. They were foreigners, but they promised that they would put no other foreigners in office over the people, that they would take no taxes without their consent, and that no one should be imprisoned without fair trial. But there came a day when the Dutch and Belgian provinces passed by inheritance into the hands of Philip II. of Spain. It was the time of the Reformation, and most of the people in those provinces were Protestants. Philip in his stubborn way set to work to force them back into the old church ; but those people felt, as we feel, that there can be no freedom at all if a man has to take his religion at the bidding of a sovereign, and they resisted Philip at every step. At last he sent against them—surely the strangest of all missionaries—a great army of Spaniards, who were then the finest soldiers in the world. The Dutch and Belgians

were no soldiers : they were weavers, millers, seamen, traders ; men of peace. But they shut their gates and they manned their walls, and turned out to fight, as our own people turned out to fight for the freedom of Europe against Germany. It was a terrible struggle, but no one thought of yielding. When the men were killed, the very women and children took their places with gun and pike ; and when starvation threatened, they ate cats and dogs and rats and mice, and at last they boiled shoe leather and the very nettles and grass for food. But the great Spanish guns battered down the walls of town after town, and then the soldiers were let loose upon the people. They murdered thousands in cold blood amid scenes of cruelty and horror that no words can paint, and that even the Germans have hardly matched. Philip hoped, as the Germans hoped, that the story of these horrors would terrify the rest of the country into submission. He found, however, as the Germans found, that it had just the opposite effect. It doubled the obstinacy and fury of the resistance. But gradually the Belgian provinces were overcome, and little Holland, under its great leader William the Silent, Prince of Orange, was left to battle alone against all the power of Spain. When the Dutch could do no more by force of arms, they opened the dykes of a large district, let the sea in, and drowned the land. " Better a drowned land than a lost land," they said ; and so, for love of freedom and honour, they

sank everything that they had, their crops and their cattle, their homes and all that they held, beneath the waters. The Spaniards fled in terror and the land was saved: There was no beating a people who showed such a spirit, and, though there were yet many years of fighting, the Spaniards were obliged in the end to recognise their independence, and the Dutch Republic through the seventeenth century was one of the Great Powers of Europe.

Never has the flame of patriotism burned more brightly. Rather than surrender faith and freedom, the Dutch were willing to sacrifice their lives and all their possessions ; and, when by their heroic efforts they had beaten their great enemy, each acre of the land, whose liberty they had bought so dearly, became for ever sacred to them. And that generation of heroes had heroes for their children and grandchildren. With that great example before them the Dutch of the next century, when again Holland was in peril, this time from the French, could only say, " Our forefathers did this great thing, shall we be less than they ? " Now a man feels ashamed to show himself before the world unworthy of his forefathers ; so they too rose to the supreme height of devotion and self-sacrifice, and drowned the land again and yet again to save it.

It is suffering and sacrifice that make patriots of a people, and teach them to love their country as a great Mother whose safety and honour are in their keeping. But the horrors that countries on



the continent of Europe have suffered by war, by repeated invasions century after century, we have never known since William the Conqueror came. Our country owes its safety, as Shakespeare saw in his day, when Philip II. tried to invade it, to

the silver sea,  
Which serves it in the office of a wall,  
Or as a moat defensive to a house  
Against the envy of less happier lands.

So we have never been taught the terrible lesson, and perhaps we never shall feel for the land that is our Mother quite the passionate love that Dutchmen, Frenchmen, Russians, feel for theirs. The Englishman is slow to move ; but, when once he has taken up as his own a quarrel, which he believes to be just, he is a dangerous enemy, for he has a stubborn pride which will never own defeat. Shakespeare knew well that this was the Englishman's way, when he made the Dane Polonius advise his son Laertes to

Beware  
Of entrance to a quarrel, but being in,  
Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.

It was not till long after the great war had broken out that the people of England began to feel, as a whole, that it really mattered to them ; that the quarrel was theirs, and that their country needed the help of each one of them if the enemy was to be beaten, and Europe saved. But the awakening

came in time, and the children and grandchildren of the men who have fought for England will have a great example to live up to. Finer soldiers and sailors England never had to guard her ; nobler deeds of heroism were never done for her on land or sea than have been done of late.

## CHAPTER VI

### ADMIRAL BLAKE

It was by Sea Power that Holland rose to be a leading state in Europe. Her people were born sailors. Those who lived upon the coast were a fisher folk, out in all weathers battling with the North Sea for the herring. The sea had no terrors for them, and the war with Spain gave to the Dutch sailors, as it had given to the English, an opportunity of plundering Spanish colonies and the sea-borne trade of Spain. Philip, in 1580, made himself King of Portugal,<sup>1</sup> and so became master of the precious Spice Islands in the East Indies ; and early in the next century, after defeating Spanish fleets in several splendid sea fights, the Dutch took possession of the islands. Then, following the example of the Spaniards and Portuguese, they tried to prevent the ships of any other nation from going there. England had been their friend through the long war, but they did not want any English ships in those eastern seas, claiming a share in the profits of the trade. When English ships pushed their way in,

<sup>1</sup> It was sixty years before Portugal freed herself again.

the Dutch did their best to push them out again, and the two countries began to quarrel over the spice trade. If James I. and Charles I. had not quarrelled with their people, and divided England against herself, war with the Dutch must have come much sooner. But the Stuart kings never had any care for the honour or welfare of their country, if their own personal interest ran the other way ; and they let Holland lord it over the seas, take the herrings in English waters, seize English ships that tried to trade in the Moluccas, and refuse to acknowledge that "sovereign lordship of the sea of England" which, centuries before, Edward I. had claimed as England's right from time immemorial.

But to James and Charles followed Oliver Cromwell, the greatest statesman and soldier that had governed England for centuries. He was always very jealous for the safety and honour of his country. He had beaten the Royalists by creating a disciplined professional army, which obeyed orders, and knew how to carry them out ; and over the navy, which needed the same lesson, the Parliament set in 1649, as one of its three admirals, Colonel Robert Blake, a cavalry soldier fifty years of age. It seems a strange choice, for Blake knew nothing of the sea ; but he had a genius for leadership and battle. Seamen handled the ships, but Blake told them where to place them and how to fight them, and himself, like Nelson, was always in the forefront

of the fight. Like Nelson he knew how to put his daring spirit into his men, setting them his own glorious example ; and with him to lead them nothing was impossible.

The Dutch had for a long time been the great ocean carriers, "the waggoners of all the seas," for the rest of the continent of Europe. They had been much quicker than the English to realise the great wealth that could be made by fetching and carrying between east and west, and had gained something of the position that the Venetians had enjoyed before the great voyages of discovery. During the Civil War between king and parliament, they had also got into their hands the greater part of the English carrying trade. In this there was great danger to England, for every merchant ship had to be ready at all times to defend itself, and merchant ships and merchant sailors took their place in the navy, fighting alongside the king's ships in the line of battle whenever there was war. If foreign ships and foreign sailors had continued to fetch and carry for England, she would very soon have had neither ships nor trained sailors sufficient for her defence.<sup>1</sup> So the Navigation Act was passed,

<sup>1</sup> It is worthy of note that of the 197 ships that formed the fleet which beat the Spanish Armada only 34 were Royal men-of-war.

Merchant ships and seamen have given invaluable service again in our great war ; but their duties have been very different, though no less dangerous. Some have patrolled the seas to guard the trade routes, others with the fishermen have hunted for submarines and dredged for mines.

requiring all goods imported into England to be carried either in an English ship or in a ship belonging to the country that produced them. Countries that hitherto had employed Dutch ships to take their goods to England now had to employ English ships instead. To be prevented from visiting England or the English colonies was a severe blow to the Dutch ; but they would have submitted to it, for they had too much to lose by fighting England to wish for war. It was otherwise, however, with England. She had many old scores to pay off, and the English sailors hated the Dutch. The parliament, therefore, which had a further quarrel with them for giving shelter to Charles II. and the fugitive royalists, now proceeded to press a demand to which they knew the stubborn pride of the Dutch could never yield without a fight. They required “that the ships of the Dutch, as well ships of war as others, meeting any ships of war of the English Commonwealth in the British seas, shall strike their flags and lower their topsails in such manner as hath ever been at any time heretofore practised” ; which means that the Englishman, sailing in the seas he called his own, had always expected every foreigner, so to speak, to take his hat off to him, and would no longer allow the proud and powerful Dutch to escape the distasteful act of homage, which under the Stuart kings, for the first time, they had been allowed to shirk. So there was war. Dutch and English, “the greatest naval power of

the day, and the greatest naval power of the future," had to fight to see which was to be master. "The trade of the world is too little for us two, therefore one must go down," said a naval captain a few years later. The war lasted for nearly two years (1652-1654), and there were several stubborn battles at sea, Blake leading the English fleet and Van Tromp the Dutch, for most of the time. Though Holland was the smaller country, the two sides were not unequally matched. The English had not nearly so many ships as the Dutch, but the ships they had were better built and better gunned. The guns, too, were used to better purpose. The Dutch, like the French in the next century, always aimed at masts and rigging, but the English fired into the hull of the ship, to sink or kill. The courage of the English sailor was what it always has been ; but the courage and good shooting of the sailors can do little without good leading. Only a really great admiral can win great battles, and great admirals are few. He it is who, by patient teaching and constant practice, trains ships to work together ; he who by wise handling and great example wins the confidence of officers, and wakes in them those qualities that fit men to take responsibility, and enable them to act with swift and well-judged daring ; he who inspires in his sailors the admiration and perfect trust that alone can make them fight on and work on through weariness and perils, which would overcome men in whose hearts there was any room for

doubt ; he who, in the moment when the fleets sight each other, takes the great decision, shows where and how the blow shall be struck, and leads the way himself into the thunder of the guns. In the next century England had some admirals who could not take that great decision, who shrank from the risks of battle, and would not lead. Blake's name will always live with Nelson's in the story of the navy for his great genius for leadership, and the splendour of his daring. History will say hereafter whether our great war has added other splendid names to theirs.

The first action of the war was fought early in May, 1652. Some forty Dutch ships under Van Tromp tried to force their way through the Straits of Dover, and relieve some merchantmen that were held up by English cruisers in the Channel. Blake was at Dover with fifteen ships. Eight more under Admiral Bourne, his second in command, lay at anchor in the Downs, some twenty miles away. Without waiting for Bourne, Blake in the "James," his flagship, led his fifteen ships against the Dutch forty. For hours he kept up the unequal fight. Ships and crews suffered heavily, the "James" most heavily of all. But Bourne had heard the guns, and, as Blake expected, came up in time to relieve the glorious fifteen. The Dutch gave up the attempt to force the Straits, and left two of their ships as prizes in Blake's hands.

He defeated the Dutch again at the end of September, off the mouth of the Thames, and took some



prizes. It was thought that there would be no more fighting till winter was over, for in those days fleets rarely kept the sea during the winter months. At the end of November, however, when many of Blake's ships were scattered in their harbours, Van Tromp suddenly came out with a great fleet of ninety ships, and found Blake with only forty-two ; and of the forty-two half were short of men. Blake could have refused a battle, and taken shelter under the guns on shore, but, to his thinking, the honour and safety of England required him to fight ; and he could dare, like Nelson, to risk defeat and possible destruction, knowing that any fleet that had beaten him, after such a fight as he would give it, would not be able to do much more mischief for some time. So he fought. Two of his ships were captured after a famous fight, and three were sunk ; and when the short November day ended and the kindly darkness came, Blake, having done all that skill and courage could do, drew off his battered ships and found shelter in the Thames. Van Tromp did not attempt to follow him, but for a month or two he was master of the Channel, and it was then that, as the story goes, (though it seems that, like so many other stories, it is probably untrue) he sailed with a broom at his masthead, to show that he had swept the English out. But he cannot have felt much satisfaction at his victory. He had not been able to destroy Blake's force, and it had become too plain what would be the fate of any Dutch fleet that should



FIGHT BETWEEN BLAKE AND VAN TROMP IN THE CHANNEL, FEB. 29, 1653.

From a contemporary print

meet an equal number of English ships with Blake to lead them. Englishmen, on the other hand, were as proud of this glorious defeat as of many a victory, and the Council of State thanked Blake for his services. A new fleet was at once got ready for a fresh blow at Van Tromp, and in February Blake was at sea again off Portland with seventy ships. On the 18th Van Tromp was sighted coming up the Channel covering a large convoy of 150 merchantmen, which he hoped to carry safely through to their home ports. Blake's fleet was in three squadrons, two of which were some distance away, one to the east, the other westwards. Van Tromp had the wind behind him, and bore down upon Blake, hoping to crush him before the other squadrons could come up. Again Blake faced the odds, and held the Dutch for hours. His flagship, the "Triumph," lost 100 men. Her captain was killed on deck, Blake himself was wounded in the thigh, and the ship was badly crippled ; but she was still fighting when the other squadrons joined and took the pressure off. For two more days the battle raged. On the third day several of the Dutch ships were sunk or taken, and at last their line was broken. The English cruisers burst through and captured some fifty of the merchantmen, and all looked forward to a great victory and many prizes on the morrow. But Van Tromp was a skilful leader, and under the cover of the night he used the turn of the tide to steal away, and by morning was past Calais and out of reach.

Blake suffered much from his wound, and he took little further part in the war, which ended without any really decisive victory having been gained by either side. But the Dutch knew well before the war began that, unless they could gain a crushing victory, they would be face to face with ruin, for they depended then, as we to-day, upon their sea-borne trade. Unless the English fleets could be beaten, or locked up in their harbours, and the English cruisers swept off the sea, those cruisers would make many a rich prize, as the great merchant fleets of Holland, coming in from all parts of the world, passed up the English Channel to get to their own ports. And that was what happened. In the end the Dutch were compelled to make peace to avoid utter ruin; for their harbours were full of idle ships, that dared not venture on the seas, and, as the sailors and the men of the dockyards and great warehouses were out of work, the country was full of beggars. Holland had lost Sea Power. She could not protect her trade. The same thing will happen to England, or to any other country that depends upon its sea-borne trade for food and raw materials and work for its people, if it does not keep a navy so strong that it can always command the waters, and make the sea-paths safe for its ships against any enemy that may ever come against it.

A year later Cromwell sent Blake with a fleet of five and twenty ships into the Mediterranean,

where English fleets had seldom been seen before,<sup>1</sup> to punish the pirates of Tunis and Algiers, set free the Englishmen whom they held in slavery, and, in general, to display the power of England and warn all men and nations to keep their hands off English ships and sailors. The work was done in Blake's own thorough way, and the fleet of Tunis, which resisted, was destroyed. "I will make the name of Englishman to be as much dreaded as ever was the name of *civis Romanus*,"<sup>2</sup> said Cromwell; and, ever since, the English fleets have always been at hand to protect English merchantmen in the Mediterranean. Before that time the shipman sailed at his own risk. He did his best to defend himself, and never dreamt of claiming, nor did England think of giving, the protection of the navy.

A little later in the same year, 1655, war broke out with Spain. Cromwell had demanded that English ships should be allowed to trade with the Spanish colonies in the West Indies and America, and that English merchants in Spain and the colonies should not be ill-used merely because they were Protestants. But Spain would not consent. "My master has but two eyes," said the Spanish ambassador, "and you ask him for both." Blake left the Mediterranean to cruise off Cadiz, and watch for the coming of the Spanish treasure ships; and

<sup>1</sup> Blake himself had been in the Mediterranean with a small squadron in 1650, in pursuit of Prince Rupert and the Royalist fleet.

<sup>2</sup> Roman citizen.

another fleet, with 6000 soldiers on board, was already in the West Indies, where Jamaica was seized and added to the growing list of English colonies. From May, 1655, till August, 1657, with but few intervals, Blake was cruising to and fro in the neighbourhood of the Straits of Gibraltar. There is no harder work for seamen than the constant cruising between two fixed points. And cruising on that station was harder in Blake's time than it was in the next century, for England had not yet taken the famous Rock from Spain, and had no naval station in those waters where she could refit and provision her ships.

The Spanish treasure ships sailed every year from Panama and Mexico as they had done in the days of Drake, but they now broke the voyage at Santa Cruz in Teneriffe, one of the Canary Islands, where they were met by cruisers, who came to tell them whether the way was clear to Cadiz, or whether an enemy's fleet lay across their path. For more than a year no treasure fleet appeared, but at last after a long and weary watch one fleet was cut off, and several galleons captured, in September, 1656, by two of Blake's officers. There was £600,000 on board "in coin and ingots of silver like sugar loaves in shape," and there was much prize money to be divided between officers and crews, a welcome reward for all the hardships that they had endured.

The next year saw the greatest of all Blake's

victories. The Spanish treasure fleet of sixteen ships, six great galleons among them, had taken shelter at Santa Cruz, and lay there waiting till it should be safe to cross to Spain. They were powerful fighting ships, and, as they were also covered by batteries of guns on shore, they thought themselves quite safe. Probably nobody but a Nelson or a Blake would have dared to attack them, for the approach to Santa Cruz is very difficult, and a fleet that had made its way under sail into the bay might find itself unable to get out again. But Blake like Nelson had an eye for such a position. The thing that would have been impossible for others was possible for him. His ships sailed into the bay early in the morning, and by noon the batteries were silenced. Two hours later every Spanish ship had been destroyed, and they lay with their treasure at the bottom of the sea. They had been burnt and sunk because it was impossible to get them away; though the wind, which had borne the English fleet into the bay, swung round as soon as the fight was over and carried it safely out again.

All Europe marvelled at the victory. Lord Clarendon, who was at that time a royalist refugee abroad, and who became Lord Chancellor when Charles II. came back in 1660, could not disguise his pride in it, though it had been won by a Puritan rebel. "The whole action," he wrote, "was so miraculous, that all men who know the place,

wondered that any sober man, with what courage soever endued, would ever have undertaken it ; and they could hardly persuade themselves to believe what they had done, whilst the Spaniards comforted themselves with the belief that they were devils<sup>1</sup> and not men who had destroyed them in such a manner. So much a strong resolution of bold and courageous men can bring to pass, that no resistance and advantage of ground can disappoint them."

It was Blake's last victory, for he died, like Drake, upon his flagship on the voyage home, worn out with years of fighting and victories more splendid than any admiral but Nelson has ever won. Clarendon, who knew what he was writing about, said "He was the first man that declined the old track, and made it manifest that the science might be attained in less time than it was imagined ; and despised those rules which had been long in practice, to keep his ships and men out of danger, which had been held in former times a point of great ability and circumspection, as if the principal art requisite in the captain of a ship had been to be sure to come home safe again. He was the first man who brought the ships to condemn castles on shore, which had been thought ever very formidable, and were dis-

<sup>1</sup>The Spaniards could never understand that it was possible for mere men to beat them. Drake they believed had sold his soul to Satan, and so obtained a magic mirror which he kept in his cabin, and which showed him every movement of the Spanish fleets and all that passed on board, so that he could even count their crews.



covered by him to make a noise only, and to fright those who could rarely be hurt by them. He was the first that infused that proportion of courage into the seamen, by making them see by experience what mighty things they could do if they were resolved, and taught them to fight in fire as well as upon water, and though he hath been very well imitated and followed, he was the first that gave the example of that kind of naval courage and bold and resolute achievements."

There are not the stories about Blake that there are about Nelson. No letters or journals have come down to us, and we have very little certain knowledge about the man beyond his mighty deeds. He took his degree at Oxford in 1617, and after his father's death, a few years later, went to live the life of a country gentleman at his home near Bridgewater in Somerset. He sat in the House of Commons as member for Bridgewater during the Short Parliament, and then the outbreak of the Civil War, when he was forty-two, called him to arms, as it called so many others for the first time in their lives. He soon showed himself a good officer, and gained distinction by his gallant defence of Taunton against the royalists. He was always a brave and chivalrous enemy, who could never be either mean or cruel. When he captured the Dutch herring fleet and a squadron of twelve war ships that protected it, off the coast of Scotland, though he threw the herrings into the sea, he let the fishing boats go free, because they

belonged to poor men and were their only means of livelihood.

In an old "History and Life" that was written about fifty years after his death, there are stories which are said to have been repeated by a former servant of his named Thomas Bear. One of them gives a pleasant picture of his kindly ways and simple piety.

"General Blake pray'd himself aboard his ship, with such of his men as could be admitted to that duty with him, and the last thing he did after he had given his commands and word to his men in order to retire to his bed, was to pray with the aforementioned Mr. Bear. When that was over he was wont to say, 'Thomas, bring me the pretty cup of sack,' which he did, with a crust of bread; he would then sit down, and give Thomas liberty to do the same, and inquire what news he had of his Bridgewater men that day, and talk of the people and affairs of the place."

It may be added that most of our great sailors have shown that same simple piety. It was taught them, as it was taught to the old sailors of the Mediterranean in the days of David and Hiram, King of Tyre, by the great Mother on whose bosom they were rocked from boyhood, the Mighty Sea.

They that go down to the sea in ships, and  
occupy their business in great waters;  
These men see the works of the Lord, and  
his wonders in the deep.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE FIRST ENGLISH COLONIES

ENGLAND and Holland fought many another stubborn battle at sea during the reign of Charles II., but the Dutch no longer hoped for mastery. Charles was one of the worst of men and kings. Clever and witty, but utterly heartless and unprincipled, "he never said a foolish thing, and never did a wise one." While he was an exile the Dutch had given him shelter and had shown him much kindness. In return he gave them war, and later in his reign did his best to bring about their utter ruin at the hands of France.

The first war, in which France could not make up her mind which side to help, lasted from 1664 to 1667. One battle in June, 1666, raged for four days, and ended after great slaughter in a somewhat indecisive and unprofitable victory for the Dutch. Two months later the fleets met again, and this time the Dutch were badly beaten. But Charles could not even fight as though he cared about winning. He starved the navy, using for purposes of his own the money that parliament had voted for ships

and men, and the fleet could no longer keep the sea. Suddenly in the summer of 1667 the Dutch appeared off the coast, and forced their way up the Thames and Medway. The sailors, long unpaid, were sullen and mutinous, and would not fight; and English men-of-war, unprepared and undefended, sought shameful shelter behind a boom that was drawn across the river. The boom was broken and fire-ships were loosed upon the anchored fleet. Many of the ships were burnt there as they lay, and one, the "Royal Charles," was towed off uninjured as a prize to Holland, where she became a Dutch flagship, and where her sternpiece remains to-day in a museum at Amsterdam. The state of London reminded Samuel Pepys, who was then writing his famous diary, of the dreadful days of the Great Fire in the previous year. The citizens were seized with panic, and those who could do so fled with such of their valuables as they could remove. Charles alone was unconcerned. Mr. Pepys wrote: "Sir H. Cholmly come to me this day, and tells me the Court is as mad as ever; and that the night the Dutch burned our ships the King did sup with my Lady Castlemayne at the Duchess of Monmouth's, and there were all mad in hunting of a poor moth."

England was frightened and ashamed, but she escaped, as she could never hope to escape again, the terrible disasters to which she exposes herself when she neglects her Navy. The Dutch knew that

their triumph was only for the moment. To regain the mastery of the sea was no longer possible. They were exhausted, and were glad to be able to make peace, leaving in England's hand their one colony on the American continent, New Amsterdam, which was renamed New York, in honour of James, Duke of York, the future James II.

Five years later the two countries were at war again, and this time the Dutch fought, as they had fought against Philip II. of Spain, for national existence. Louis XIV. of France, a man of mighty ambitions, who aimed at the mastery of Europe, wanted, like Germany, to seize Belgium and Holland, and so open the way for further conquests. Such a purpose was full of danger to England, but Charles cared nothing for that. He had sold himself to Louis, and was busily plotting the overthrow of the religion and the liberties of his own people. This, however, was not yet known, and he succeeded in dragging England, though most unwillingly, into the war. The French armies were overrunning Holland, and again the Dutch opened the dykes to save the land, and the young William of Orange led his people with all the resolution of his great ancestor, against this new and still more dangerous enemy. At sea there were the usual stubborn and indecisive battles. But England had never wanted the war, and, when the treacherous plans of Charles were discovered, the rising temper of his people compelled him to make peace. Dutch and English



THE CAPTURED "ROYAL CHARLES" BEING TAKEN TO HOLLAND.

Picture by Storck, in the Amsterdam Museum.

drew together, and, when the Stuarts left the land for ever, they became warm allies in the long struggle against the French.

A few months after the beginning of the war the great John de Witt, who governed Holland during the boyhood of William of Orange, was murdered. It was only five years since the Dutch ships had been in the Thames, but de Witt, wise and far-seeing, knew only too well that, whatever Charles might do to tarnish the honour of England (and Mr. Pepys noted that "the King do mind nothing but pleasures, and hates the very sight or thought of business") he could not undo the great work of Cromwell and Blake. Looking into the future the Dutch statesman saw the coming greatness of his country's rival on the seas. "When by the cruelties of Alva," he wrote, "the clothworkers fled to England,<sup>1</sup> and set up cloth-weaving there, the English, by degrees, began to vend their manufactures throughout Europe. They became potent at sea and no longer depended on the Netherlands. Also, by the discovery of the inexpressibly rich cod-bank of Newfoundland, the merchants of Bristol grew rich. Moreover, the planting of many English colonies in America has drawn much trade there with the mother-country. So that this mighty island, united with Ireland under one king, seated in the midst of Europe, having a

<sup>1</sup> Many Belgian refugees came over then to escape from the Spaniards, and they brought to England the arts and crafts for which they were famous.

coast full of good havens and bays, will in all respects be formidable to all Europe ; for, according to the proverb, a master at sea is a master on land."

De Witt had seen the coming greatness of England as a danger to his country and to Europe, and he had died her enemy: When William of Orange became King of England it was England's power that saved both from France.

Between the England of 1603, when Queen Elizabeth died, and the England of 1672, when de Witt was murdered, the difference was great. In 1603 she had not a single colony, and her trade beyond the ocean was in its infancy. How came the rapid change ?

England had taken a share, though late, in the great voyages of discovery. Henry VII., an able and far-seeing man, copied the example of his friend and ally Ferdinand of Spain, and in 1497, five years after Columbus had discovered America, sent out an expedition from Bristol across the Atlantic. It was not commanded by an Englishman, but by the Venetian John Cabot and his son Sebastian. "When the news came of Columbus' finding of the passage by the west to the east," wrote Sebastian afterwards, "I sailed north-west, not thinking to find any land but Cathay (China), and thence to turn to India." This was the beginning of the famous search for a north-west passage to India, which occupied the thoughts and endeavours of explorers for the next hundred years. The shape of the continents to the



northward was still unknown. If a direct way could be found by the north of America, the long voyage round South Africa would be avoided and there would be less risk of collision with the Portuguese. Cabot discovered Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, but no north-west passage. English ships speedily followed in his track, and the great cod fishery began. There was no need after that to hire the services of foreign explorers. Fifty years later an attempt was made to find a passage by the north-east, and the White Sea and Archangel were discovered. This was soon seen to be no way to India, but Moscow was visited, and a new trade was opened up with the Russians, who had not yet reached the Baltic coast. There were many famous explorers, and many a wonderful voyage, the story of which cannot be told here. Davis, Hudson and Baffin left their names upon the map. They probed the icy channels of the north for a road to India, but never found one, and many gallant sailors gave their lives, as Captain Scott gave his, in the attempt to search out the secret places of the earth.

All this time it was a means of trading with the Indies that England was seeking. There was no attempt as yet to found colonies. Even Drake did not think of trying to seize and occupy any of the Spanish possessions. He only made it as difficult and unprofitable as he could for the Spaniards to hold them. Sir Walter Raleigh was the first Englishman to dream of colonies of English settlers over

seas. He hoped to conquer and create a mighty empire, "a better Indies for Her Majesty than the King of Spain hath any." But Raleigh failed. The colony which he planted in Virginia in 1583 was unsuccessful, and the survivors came home again three years later. His attempts in Guiana and up the Orinoco had no better fortune. To him, as to the Spaniards, colonies always stood for gold. But there were other men who saw that a healthy climate and a fertile soil gave better promise of a home for colonists. As one of them wrote, "that is the richest land which feeds most men." It was to till the land that the first successful colonies were planted in the reign of James I. In 1606 a little band of emigrants sailed into Chesapeake Bay and up the James River, where they founded Jamestown in Virginia. After much toil and danger the colony took root, and town and river are known by the same names to-day. A settlement in Newfoundland followed, and a few years later, in 1620, the famous "Mayflower" sailed with the band of Puritan exiles who settled in New Plymouth, and were the founders of the great New England States. They, too, had their trials, but they were made of the stern stuff that cannot fail. They had turned their backs for ever on the old England, and sought a home beyond the seas where they might have freedom to worship God in the manner of their choice. They would have nothing to do with the English Church and the English bishops, and James would have

no Nonconformity in England. "I will make them conform," he said, "or harry them out of the land." So they went where he could trouble them no more. They worked and prospered as such men and women always do, and within 20 years 200 ships and 20,000 settlers had followed them across the sea. Out of these colonies, which for generations remained under the English crown, with English governors at their head, but largely settling their own affairs in the English way, were to grow in later days the United States of America.

Eastwards, too, the first foundations of our Indian Empire had been laid. Drake had seen the wealth of the Spice Islands as he sailed homewards on his voyage round the world, and English merchant ships soon began to make their way round the Cape of Good Hope in eager though perilous competition with the Dutch, and they visited the mainland of India as well as the Spice Islands. Here is a chance glimpse of some of these old-time sailors. In September, 1607, two ships bound for India, the "Dragon," commanded by Captain Keeling, and the "Hector" by Captain Hawkins, lay in company off Sierra Leone, and Captain Keeling made these entries in his log :

"September 5. I sent the interpreter, according to his desire, aboard the Hector wher he brooke faste, and after came aboard mee, wher we gave the tragedie of Hamlett.

"Sept. 30. Captain Hawkins dined with me, wher my companions acted King Richard the second.

“31st.<sup>1</sup> I invited Captain Hawkins to a fische dinner, and had Hamlet acted aboard me ; wch I permitt to keepe my people from idlenes and unlawfull games, or sleepe.”

Would the sailors of any little merchant ship to-day be able to act a great play at a moment's notice, and would it keep their companions “from idlenes and unlawfull games or sleepe” ?

To encourage this trade with India, and to find money for the venture, the East India Company was formed in 1600, on the model of the great and powerful Dutch Company, though on a very much smaller scale. By 1640 the Company had obtained trading stations and built forts upon the coast of the continent, making their headquarters at Madras ; and in 1660 Bombay was given to England by Portugal as part of the dowry of their princess Catherine, when she married Charles II.

All these new possessions brought great trade and wealth to England, and as England mounted Holland fell. So it was that John de Witt, looking into the future, saw that “this mighty island” was likely before long to be such a master on both sea and land as might well become formidable to all Europe. Formidable in truth she did become, but only to those who, like France then and Germany of late, have sought to abuse their power and play the tyrant.

<sup>1</sup> His dating was faulty.

## CHAPTER VIII

### OLD ADMIRALS AND INGLORIOUS FIGHTS

IN 1688 William of Orange came to England and James II. fled across the sea to France. From that time onwards, until the battle of Waterloo in 1815 brought the long wars to an end, France was the great enemy of England, and the years of peace were few. It was with no dreams of conquest, but most unwillingly, that England went to war. France aimed at the mastery of Europe, and Louis XIV. wanted to put James upon his throne again to keep England quiet. So she had to fight, as she has fought again, for her own freedom and that of Europe. Belgium was the great battlefield, for through Belgium France aimed at Holland and the Rhine. Out of the long wars England came with a great and growing empire, but when she entered on them she had still to learn what Sea Power meant—that mastery at sea meant mastery on land as well.

For many a year she still had enemies at home, the Jacobites. Catholic Ireland fought hard for James, and, when beaten down, remained sullen,

restless, hostile. The Scottish Highlanders could not forget the Stuarts, and twice broke into rebellion. A successful invasion by a French army might at any time have produced a very serious rising. In 1692 Louis gathered an army of 30,000 men at Havre and Cherburg, and sent out his fleet to clear the way for the passage of the 500 transports that were to carry them to England. At La Hogue the combined Dutch and English fleets gained a great victory over the French, and Louis made no further attempt at invasion.

Louis had made one of his grandsons King of Spain, and Spain was dragged into the war. Spanish treasure ships were captured as usual, but there were no more great battles at sea after La Hogue. But more important than the winning of many battles was the capture of the Rock of Gibraltar by Sir George Rooke in 1704. From that day onward England held the key that can open and close the door of the Mediterranean ; she lay between the French fleet at Toulon and the fleets in the Biscay ports, and could prevent them from joining ; and she had a dockyard where ships on the Mediterranean station could be refitted and provisioned without returning home.

Between 1713, when the Treaty of Utrecht closed the war, and 1739 there was a long interval of peace, the last that century was to know. When war broke out again, there followed one of the most inglorious periods in the history of the Navy. English sailors

were as good as ever, but of the admirals and captains many had not really studied their profession, and others were old and incapable. To make matters worse, rules had been laid down for the fighting of fleet actions, that made it difficult to win great victories or to fight in the old hard-hitting English way.

A great fleet at sea covers many miles. The French line of 33 ships at Trafalgar stretched for five miles in close fighting order. In the Dutch wars there were often fleets of 80 and 90 ships; and no admiral, no matter where he was placed, could see what his ships were doing, or give them orders by signal, when once battle had been joined. From that moment he could no longer control the movements of the fleet.

This seemed unsatisfactory and even dangerous, and admirals felt that the risks were too great. Prince Rupert, when some hesitation was shown about giving him the command in 1664 because he had been unlucky, snapped out: "I can answer but for one ship, and in that I will do my part; for it is not in that as in the army, where a man can command everything." Nelson had his way out of the difficulty. He trained his captains thoroughly. He saw them frequently and talked to them much. His plans were always so carefully explained that they understood exactly what it was that he required of them; and when the great day of Trafalgar was approaching, he told them all that, "in case signals



LA HOGUE, 1692.  
After the painting by Benjamin West, P. R. A.



can neither be seen or perfectly understood, no captain can do wrong if he places his ship alongside that of an enemy." But a hundred years earlier, it was thought that safety might be secured by laying down rules to be followed by fleets when joining battle. Unfortunately the rules that were followed were unsound. They were copied from France, and France had borrowed them from Spain, who had learnt her manœuvres in the Mediterranean. But in the Mediterranean, men could not forget the teaching of the centuries during which all vessels were moved by oars, and could, therefore, turn this way and that at will. The fleets of the Mediterranean were very large, and the galleys fought in ordered lines, with a drill almost as exact as that of an army on land. Those who studied the history of naval tactics tried to apply the methods of the fleets of galleys to fleets under sail, and the great French admiral, Tourville, who was beaten at La Hogue, had more success than any other sailor in teaching his fleets to manœuvre in exact formation. Unfortunately, he and other admirals became so fond of the line ahead and line abreast, that they could not bring themselves to break the line even to win a battle. Tourville used his skill to avoid battles, and would spend days manœuvring in sight of the enemy without engaging. Though a man of dauntless personal courage he did not like to risk his ships ; and for the next fifty years there were many like him, both in France and in England. So

utterly had Blake's teaching and the great words of Clarendon been forgotten.

The rival fleets generally sailed in line ahead, in one or two columns. When the enemy was sighted, a single line was formed, and the two fleets steered parallel courses waiting for an opportunity to close. The rules required that an admiral should not take his fleet down to attack until his van, centre, and rear were opposite the enemy's van, centre, and rear, and then each ship engaged the ship opposite to it in the hostile line. There was no attempt to concentrate a superior force on a part of the enemy's line, where the rest of the fleet could bring no help. Any advantage in numbers was thrown away, for a ship, that found itself without an opposite in the enemy's line, simply waited idle, till one of its fellows fell out and left a vacant place. It was scarcely possible to fight a decisive battle under such rules, and many a golden opportunity of dealing a crushing blow was lost, because admirals would take their whole fleet down together or not at all. They could not bring themselves to dash upon an enemy with the ships that were at hand, as Blake did. All the formal manœuvres must be completed first, and by that time the opportunity had generally passed.

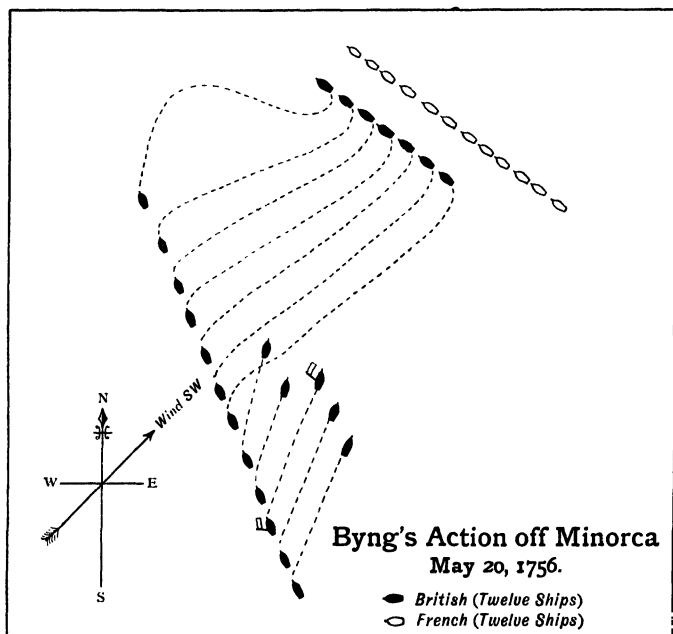
In 1739 the admirals on both sides were old men who had seen no fighting. Some had not even been at sea for many years. There was an idea that none but the old should be trusted. In 1744 one of these old admirals, Admiral Matthews, who was

67 years of age, and who for nearly twenty years had never been at sea, came across the combined French and Spanish fleet of twenty-eight ships-of-the-line off Toulon. He was a rude, domineering, unpopular old man. He had no very clear idea of what to do or how to do it, and naturally his captains were equally confused in mind. As it happened, in a muddle-headed kind of way he tried to do the right thing. The two fleets were equal in numbers. Matthews, who wanted to fight, could not get his line ranged in order opposite the enemy, and as they were gradually drawing away from him, he tried to bring his van and centre down against their centre and rear. His action was against all rules, though it was the obvious thing to do, and it shocked his second-in-command and some of the captains. There was no corresponding part of the enemy's fleet for them to attack, and therefore they would not join in the attack at all. The result was, of course, a failure, and the old admiral, who had tried in a clumsy way to do the right thing, was turned out of the Navy. The vice-admiral, who had failed him, urged that "no man that is an officer, who knows his duty, will make the signal for line abreast to steer down upon an enemy, until the fleet has been stretched and extended in a line of battle. . . . Can it be service to bear down so much unformed and in confusion, that the van cannot possibly join battle with and engage the van of the enemy, the centre with the centre, and the rear with the rear ? "

The court that tried Matthews agreed with his vice-admiral ; but several of the captains, who could have brought their ships into close action and failed to do so, were removed from their commands and were not employed again. Under such rules Nelson could not have fought one of his battles. Their absurdity was seen at last. Admiral Matthews was dismissed for breaking them : Admiral Byng was shot, because at the critical moment he could not bring himself to do so.

Byng was in the Mediterranean in 1756 to defend Minorca, where a French army had landed to besiege Port Mahon. The army depended for food, munitions, and reinforcements on France. If their communications with France could be cut, and supply ships could no longer reach them, sooner or later they would have to abandon the siege, and either escape or surrender. But, if Byng was to cut the French communications, he must beat the French fleet or drive it into port. He sighted it near Minorca on the 19th May, and during the following night both fleets were manœuvring for a favourable position. Next morning, while they were sailing on courses not parallel to each other, but converging at an angle of 30 or 40 degrees, with the two vans about two miles apart, Byng made the signal for battle. His ships should then have turned, each roughly at right angles to its former course, and gone down in line abreast to reach their positions opposite the French line. Unfortunately the van

was much nearer to the enemy than the rear, and the line could not be formed so as to enable all the ships to engage at the same time. The result of the



Emery Walker Ltd. sc.

BYNG'S ACTION OFF MINORCA, MAY 20, 1756.

manceuvre was that the van ships got into action while the centre and rear were still at a distance. At that moment, Byng, who was in the third ship, from the rear, instead of letting every ship make its way into the fight as fast as it could, and himself pressing down with every sail set, deliberately

shortened sail to wait for the two ships next to him on his left, because they had got behind. "I am ahead of those two ships," he said to his captain, who had protested, "and you would not have me, as admiral of the fleet, run down as if I was going to engage a single ship? It was Mr. Matthews' misfortune to be prejudiced by not carrying his force down together, which I shall endeavour to avoid." Others followed his discouraging example, and the result was that the seven ships that did get into close action were roughly handled by the fire of the whole French fleet as it passed. When at last Byng came into action with his own ship, he showed indecision and never got to close fighting. The only example that he set his fleet was one of backwardness and hesitation, an example only too easily followed. Of course, he was defeated. He withdrew to Gibraltar, and Minorca fell to the French. He had acted very much as the rules of the time directed, and with a wooden obstinacy that sacrificed everything to observing their very letter. Personally he was a brave man, but as a commander he had shown timidity. Having sent part of his fleet somewhat clumsily to battle, he dared not take the risk of breaking rules to get the rest there. The country was furious at his failure, and he was tried and shot for "not having done his utmost to defeat the French fleet or to relieve the garrison."

## CHAPTER IX

### ANSON'S VOYAGE ROUND THE WORLD

THOUGH these fleet actions were inglorious ; though admirals showed no genius for leadership in battle, let rules which were made to serve them be their masters, and doubted and hesitated when the moment cried for action ; though many captains were incapable, and had made no study of their profession ; yet the British sailor was the same splendid man that he always has been. With a Drake or a Blake or a Nelson to lead him he would still have shown the same shining qualities to all the world.

In this inglorious time there were two captains in the Navy who led him as he loved to be led. One was to be known afterwards as the great Lord Hawke, who will always live in history with Blake and Nelson as a great battle leader. The other, Lord Anson, followed in the very steps of Drake, took his ship, the "Centurion," round the world, overcoming difficulties and facing perils only less than those that Drake surmounted, and in the old style captured a great Spanish galleon loaded with treasure in the China seas. The story of Anson's



H.M.S. "CENTURION" ENGAGED AND TOOK THE SPANISH GALLEON "NUESTRA SEÑORA DE CAPADONGO," FROM ACAPULCO BOUND TO MANILA, OFF CAPE ESPIRITU SANTO, PHILIPPINE ISLANDS, JUNE 20, 1743.  
From the original plate in the first edition of Anson's *A Voyage Round the World*, 1741-4, published in 1748.



voyage is one that boys love, for it is a tale packed with adventures as thrilling as those of any story-book.

It was in 1739 that war broke out with Spain. It was the old story. The Spaniards wanted, as always, to stop British trade with their colonies, and British ships would go. The Treaty of Utrecht had brought to an end in 1713 the great war with Louis XIV., in which Marlborough, leading English, Dutch, and German troops, had won his famous victories. That treaty gave to England the right to send one ship each year to visit the Spanish colonies. But English merchants and sailors were not satisfied with the single ship. They sent one ship, it is true, keeping within the letter of the treaty, but, as soon as her cargo had been cleared, she was reloaded from others that lay waiting for her at sea. The Spanish colonists, just as in the time of Hawkins, were glad of the chance to buy and sell, and asked no awkward questions when the ship came back again with a fresh cargo in a strangely short time. But the Spanish Government not unnaturally objected, and their cruisers took to searching English ships that hung about the coast with suspicious cargoes on board. The cargoes were seized, and the seamen were often cruelly ill-used. Tales of their sufferings reached England, and the people grew angry, and demanded war with Spain. The temper of the country was such that Sir Robert Walpole, the Prime Minister, dared

not admit the Spanish right of search, and he had to begin a war for which he was not ready, in a cause in which he did not believe. A squadron was fitted out, and set sail in September, 1740, for the Pacific, to harass the Spanish colonies, and prey upon the Spanish trade. It was commanded by Captain George Anson, who flew the broad pennant of a commodore in the "Centurion," a small ship-of-the-line of 60 guns and 400 men. He had with him the "Gloucester" and the "Severn," each of 50 guns, the "Pearl" of 40 guns, the "Wager" of 28, and the little "Trial" of 8. They followed for the most part in Drake's track. Instead, however, of passing like Drake through the Straits of Magellan, they came south of Tierra del Fuego, and sailed through the Straits of Le Maire and round Cape Horn, which Drake had been the first to see. They passed the straits in fair weather, "ignorant that the time drew near when the squadron would be separated never to unite again, and that this day of our passage was the last cheerful day that the greatest part of us would ever live to enjoy. . . . From the storm which came on before we had well got clear of Straits Le Maire, we had a continual succession of such tempestuous weather as surprised the oldest and most experienced mariners on board, and obliged them to confess that what they had hitherto called storms were inconsiderable gales compared with the violence of these winds, which raised such short, and at the same time such

mountainous waves as greatly surpassed in danger all seas known in any other part of the globe. And it was not without reason that this unusual appearance filled us with continual terror, for had any one of these waves broke fairly over us, it must in all probability have sent us to the bottom."

The squadron was scattered. The "Severn" and the "Pearl" were lost at sea with all hands. The "Wager" also was wrecked, and, though some of her crew finally reached England after thrilling adventures, they, too, were lost to Anson. On the 9th June, 1741, the "Centurion" reached the island of Juan Fernandez, which was to be the rendezvous of the squadron. There she was rejoined by the "Gloucester" and the "Trial," and the sailors found curious traces of Alexander Selkirk, who had lived there alone "about 32 years before our arrival at the island," and whose story had inspired Defoe to write *Robinson Crusoe*. "H's manner of life," wrote the historian of the voyage, "during his solitude was in most particulars very remarkable; but there is one circumstance he relates which was so strangely verified by our own observation that I cannot help reciting it. He tells us, among other things, as he often caught more goats than he wanted, he sometimes marked their ears and let them go. . . . Now it happened that the first goat that was killed by our people at their landing had his ears slit; whence we concluded that he had doubtless been formerly under the power

of Selkirk. This was indeed an animal of a most venerable aspect, dignified with an exceeding majestic beard, and with many other symptoms of antiquity." One of those symptoms no doubt was an exceeding toughness, but the fresh meat would be none the less welcome to those who shared it, after having tasted nothing but salt meat for months. Many of the men had died of scurvy in the three ships, and on the "Centurion" only 155 remained alive out of the 400 who had sailed from Portsmouth. The crews of the "Gloucester" and "Trial" had suffered no less heavily. By the beginning of September, when they sailed on up the coast on their great adventure, there were but 335 men and boys to sail and fight the three ships, "a number greatly insufficient for manning the 'Centurion' alone, and barely capable of navigating all the three with the utmost exertion of their strength and vigour."

They found the Spaniards as usual unprepared, and took prizes and plundered towns in the old way of Drake. Like Drake, too, Anson showed a humanity and kindness to his prisoners that surprised them and won their gratitude. It was so unlike the Spanish way. Before long the battered and leaky "Trial" had to be abandoned, and some months later the "Centurion" and the "Gloucester" set out across the Pacific, to lie in wait upon the other side for the great galleon that sailed every year from Acapulco to Manilla, loaded with treasure

to pay for the rich produce that she was to bring back with her. In the middle of the ocean the "Gloucester" lost her masts and sprang a leak. Desperate efforts were made by the small and weary remnant of her crew to save her, but in vain. With seven feet of water in her hold she was abandoned and destroyed, and the "Centurion" sailed on alone. The China coast was reached in November, 1742, and "thus after a fatiguing cruise of above two years' continuance, we once more arrived in an amicable port in a civilised country, where the conveniences of life were in great plenty; where the naval stores, which we now extremely wanted, could be in some degree procured; where we expected the inexpressible satisfaction of receiving letters from our relations and friends; and where our countrymen who were lately arrived from England would be capable of answering the numerous inquiries we were prepared to make both about public and private occurrences, which, whether of importance or not, would be listened to by us with the utmost attention, after the long suspension of our correspondence with our country to which the nature of our undertaking had hitherto subjected us."

In April, 1743, they put to sea again with 227 men and boys on board, to cruise off the Philippine Islands, across the path that the galleon would take. At the end of May they had reached their station, and at last, early one morning towards the end of

June, to the joy of all, the long-expected sail was seen from the masthead. The galleon was a much larger ship than the "Centurion," with 550 men on board, and she waited confidently for the attack. But the English ship was better handled and her guns were better fought. The engagement had the ending which English sailors never doubted, though the odds were so heavily against them. The Spaniard, after a gallant fight, surrendered, and with her great treasure worth nearly £400,000 in money of that day, and nearly twice as much in modern money, fell as a prize to the "Centurion" and her heroic, much-enduring crew.

In March, 1744, the "Centurion" reached the Cape of Good Hope, then a Dutch colony, and at the beginning of June, by marvellous good fortune passed, hidden by a kindly fog, through the middle of a French fleet that was cruising at the mouth of the Channel. On the 15th she came to anchor at Spithead. The treasure was carried to London in thirty-two waggons, and welcomed by cheering crowds and military bands. Anson was made a peer and an admiral, and the story of his voyage, written by the chaplain who sailed with him on the "Centurion," has been read from that day to this, in many languages, by all who love the great tales of the sea.

## CHAPTER X

### HAWKE AT QUIBERON

Down upon the quicksands, roaring out of sight,  
Fiercely beat the storm wind, darkly fell the night,  
But they took the foe for pilot and the cannon's glare for light,  
When Hawke came swooping from the west.

—HENRY NEWBOLT.

COMMANDING a 70-gun ship, the "Berwick," in Admiral Matthews' unlucky fleet off Toulon in 1744, was a Captain Edward Hawke, who was then thirty-nine years of age. He had a full share of the spirit of Nelson and of Blake, and he dared to take responsibility when others shirked it. He was not afraid to risk his ship, or to disregard all rules that would keep him out of action, when it was in his power to deal the enemy a heavy blow. At Toulon "upon the signal for battle he took his own ship into close action with the antagonist allotted to him by the order of the fleet ; but after beating her out of the line he looked round for more work to do. Seeing then that several of the British vessels had not come within point-blank, but, through professional timidity,

or over-cautious reverence for the line of battle, were engaging at long range a single Spaniard, he quitted his own position ; brought her also to close quarters, and after an obstinate contest, creditable to both parties, forced her to surrender. She was the only ship to haul down her flag that day, and her captain refused to surrender his sword to any but Hawke, whom alone he accepted as his vanquisher." His daring action, when so many others failed, attracted general attention. He became a favourite with both King and people, and after his promotion to admiral three years later, important commands were generally given to him. In 1747 with a fleet of twelve ships-of-the-line in the Bay of Biscay, he forced a French fleet of eight to fight him, and he took six of them.

From 1748 to 1756 there was an uneasy peace, which, it was plain, could not last long. In America and India there was fighting much of the time. The French had been the first to settle in Canada. Cartier had discovered the Gulf and River of St. Lawrence in 1535. He believed that he had at last found the north-west passage, for the length of the gulf and the width of the mouth of the great river misled him, and he thought that the continent of North America ended in a strait such as that which Magellan had discovered round the tapering point of South America, and that he was close to China. It was in 1608 that the first settlement took place, and 150 years later the French claimed the whole



of North America except the comparatively narrow belt between the Alleghany Mountains and the sea, where the British colonies lay ; and even that they intended to conquer if they could. Their explorers and missionaries had made their way far into the interior, and, wherever they went, they claimed the land for France. But the French had not learnt how to manage colonies. They did not settle down to a home life, tilling the land, keeping shops, working as smiths and carpenters, and so building up the frame-work of a great country. They lived as trappers, hunting for skins, and every man was a soldier. The soil of the earth, which is the great wealth of man, was nowhere the better or the richer for their presence. They thought only of conquest, and of adding so many square miles to the empire of France. So it is not surprising that their numbers increased but slowly. The British, on the other hand, brought to their colonies the old home life of the Motherland. That has been the secret of their success as colonisers. Farms and villages, and towns with shops, warehouses and factories sprang up everywhere, and by the middle of the eighteenth century, there was a British population of 1,200,000, while the French numbered but 80,000. Yet the 80,000 wanted the whole land for their own. They built strong forts along the rivers behind the British colonies, so as to cut them off from the interior, and behaved in a high-handed, overbearing way. It was plain that there

must be a fight for mastery. "There is no repose for our thirteen colonies," wrote Benjamin Franklin, "so long as the French are masters of Canada." George Washington himself thought the same, and during those uneasy years of so-called peace, he was fighting, as a young man, with a mixed force of colonists and British regulars, who tried to break a gap in the French chain of forts.

The same kind of thing was going on in India. The French governor, Dupleix, formed great schemes of empire which forced the British traders to become soldiers in self-defence, and drew Robert Clive from a clerk's desk into the army. Clive's startling victories shattered all the dreams of Dupleix, and the empire fell not to France, who had schemed for it, but to the British, who up to that time had been well content to carry on the ordinary business of a great trading company. In 1756 the great war, known as the Seven Years' War, broke out. England was the ally of Frederick the Great of Prussia, and helped him to defend himself against Austria, Russia, and France. British soldiers fought at Minden and on other German battlefields against the French, and British fleets carried armies into Canada and India, kept the ways open for reinforcements and supplies, and, by the mastery which they obtained, made it very difficult for any help to reach the French.

Louisburg, on Cape Breton Island, was the French naval stronghold. It lay on the flank of

any advance up the St. Lawrence, and was the key to gulf and river. No army could be carried up the river against Quebec till Louisburg had been taken. An expedition was sent against it. The fleet shut up the weaker French squadron, and covered the landing of the army under Wolfe. Siege was laid to the town and it fell. Then it was possible for Wolfe to go on to Quebec. The fleet carried him there, covered his positions, and moved him up and down the river as he wanted. It was "father and mother to the army" in 1759 just as it was at Gallipoli in 1915. Montcalm, the French general at Quebec, could get no help from home. He wrote for reinforcements, but the French Minister had to refuse them, for "it was too probable that the English would intercept them on the way." So Quebec fell to Wolfe in that year of victories, 1759, when Horace Walpole, with laughing but not extravagant exaggeration, said: "We are forced to ask every morning what victory there is, for fear of missing one." Wolfe died on the field of his triumph, and to Wolfe the glory of the conquest of Canada will always go. But it was Sea Power that made the conquest possible. For want of Sea Power Montcalm and his gallant Frenchmen died in vain, and Canada, with all the other French possessions in North America, fell to England. Early in 1761 the same fate, for the same reason, overtook them in India, and in 1762 island after island in the French West Indies also fell. Colonies always depend upon

Sea Power for defence, and France could not command the seas. She had thought to win a great empire on distant continents, but she found that the master at sea was a master on land too, and she lost an empire instead of winning one ; while “ at the end of seven years the kingdom of Great Britain had become the British Empire.”

It was the great battle of Quiberon Bay, won by Lord Hawke on November 20th, 1759, a few months after Wolfe's victory and death, that decided the struggle at sea. After their defeat, the French could only watch helplessly, while their remaining colonies fell one after another, with all their trade, into the hands of England. But if any other admiral than Hawke had been in command on that great and dangerous day, the result might have been very different. By the end of 1758 France had learnt, what she had to learn yet again in Napoleon's day, and what Germany has had to learn of late, that no armies, however strong, can gain the mastery of Europe, so long as our Sea Power stands unbroken in the way. Stung by their losses, “ by the constant lashing of the Power of the Sea,” the French government, too late, determined to mass their fleets, make one great bid for victory, and attempt the invasion of our island. Troops assembled at French ports in the Channel and the Bay of Biscay, transports were gathered to carry them across, and the French fleets were to unite near Brest, and come out to

sweep the British from the seas. England's answering move then, as in Napoleon's time, was to blockade the ports in which the French fleets were being fitted out, and prevent their junction. One British fleet was watching Havre and another Toulon, and Sir Edward Hawke with some 20 ships-of-the-line cruised off Brest, where the largest of the French fleets lay under the Marshal de Conflans. Three or four ships sailed up and down close inshore, where they could see what was going on in the harbour, and whether the enemy looked like coming out. The rest were kept out of sight, cruising at a distance, but easily to be found by the attendant frigates if the moment came for fighting or pursuit. But the seas of the Bay of Biscay are stormy. In a westerly gale it was impossible for a great fleet to keep its station off Brest, and it would run for shelter to Torbay, 100 miles away. The French fleet, however, could not get out while the wind came from the west, and as soon as the gale dropped the British ships sailed again for their station. At Torbay they refitted, took in stores and provisions, and snatched such short rest as they could from the constant toil of cruising.

French courage was always matchless, and yet French ships and sailors could never win victories against England. One reason was that they had been taught the old bad lesson that they must not risk their ships. They considered it "a mishap to their ships to fall in with a hostile force, and, if one was met,



THE BATTLE OF QUIBERON BAY, NOV. 20, 1759.

After the painting by R. Paton.

their duty was to avoid action if possible to do so honourably." What they considered a mishap the British fleets have always regarded as their great opportunity. Another reason was that the British were always at sea, perfecting their seamanship and gunnery, while the French lay blockaded in harbour month after month, losing instead of gaining skill. Therefore, when the day of battle came, they knew themselves no match for their enemy, and they lacked the priceless confidence, the feeling that victory is certain, that always inspires British fleets for their great task.

There were a good many nervous people at home in England. Even some of the Ministers were afraid lest the Brest fleet should slip out, escape Hawke, and reach the Clyde with the army of invasion. But Hawke knew his business, and he told those who wrote anxious letters not to worry. "Their Lordships," he wrote, "may rest assured there is little foundation for the present alarms. While the wind is fair for the enemy's coming out, it is also favourable for our keeping them in; and while we are obliged to keep off they cannot stir."

Early in November there were heavy gales. Hawke fought against them for several days, but at last on the 10th he had to seek shelter in Torbay. On the 14th he got away again, but the change of weather that enabled him to sail let Conflans out of Brest. He had put to sea with twenty-one ships-of-the-line, meaning now to fight a battle that should clear the

sea for the passage of the transports to the Clyde. Hawke was off Ushant with twenty-three, when he heard the news on the 16th, in the afternoon, from ships that had seen the French to the southward, steering east. He judged that Conflans was running for Quiberon, and made all sail, hoping, if possible, to cut him off. On the morning of the 20th, at half-past eight, a frigate out ahead signalled that she had sighted the French fleet. The wind was blowing strong from the west-north-west, freshening for a gale, and the sea was high. The French were making for Quiberon bay, and by ten o'clock Hawke could see that, in spite of the purpose with which they had sailed, they wished to avoid a battle if they could. But he meant to force a fight upon them ; " to attack them in the old way and make downright work of them," as he said afterwards. There was no time for manœuvres, or for forming line in the way that the men of his day were so fond of, spending hours and even days in parade-ground movements. The French would have gained shelter long before they were completed. To chase in the old way of Blake was the only chance of gaining a great victory. So Hawke signalled to the seven ships nearest to the French " to chase and draw into a line of battle ahead of me, and endeavour to stop them till the rest of the squadron should come up, who also were to form as they chased, that no time might be lost in the pursuit." The French could only sail the pace of their slowest ships. They dared not let any lag

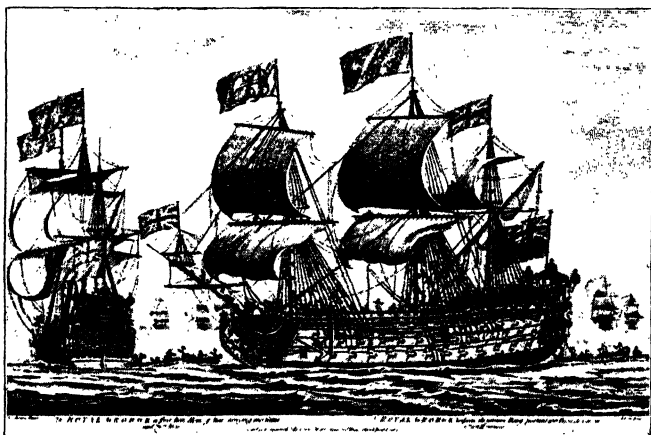


behind or they would certainly be taken. After them in close pursuit came Hawke's fastest ships at their best pace, secure in knowing that, once they had engaged, reinforcements would continually be coming up. By 2.30 the leaders had overtaken the French rear, and firing had begun. They "behaved like angels," said Hawke. There was no doubt, no hesitation here. A great admiral will almost always have captains and crews worthy of him. A Matthews and a Byng are badly served because their example and their teaching have been poor, but a Blake, a Hawke, a Nelson are followed to the death. Their men behave "like angels."

M. de Conflans, the French admiral, was leading his fleet. The coast was dangerous, the channels were narrow, and he wanted to show the way, and by his own action let the fleet know what he wished them all to do. M. de Conflans was no coward, though he was first in the retreat, and he was as wily as he was brave. Shoals lie in front of Quiberon Bay and form a breakwater covering it from the great seas of the Bay of Biscay. Dangerous reefs line the narrow passage leading into it. At the southern end of the shoals some great rocks stand out above the water, called the Cardinals. Round these Conflans led, very soon after the firing had begun, believing that no enemy who did not know the ground would dare to follow him. In the British fleet there was no pilot who knew the coast, and the darkness of a November evening was coming on fast. The sailing

master of the fleet warned Hawke of the great risks he would run if he followed Conflans round the Cardinals. "You have done your duty in warning me," said Hawke, "now lay us alongside the French Commander-in-chief." But Hawke knew what he was doing, and had measured the risks. Where the French could sail he could follow; and if there was room for them there was room for him. So he "took the foe for pilot," and pressed on with all the sail his ships could carry in the storm. The picture is wild and grand, for "this was one of the most dramatic of sea fights. Forty-odd tall ships, pursuers and pursued, under reefed canvas, in fierce career drove furiously on; now rushing headlong down the forward slope of a great sea, now rising on its crest as it swept beyond them; now seen, now hidden; the helmsmen straining at the wheels, upon which the huge hulls, tossing their prows from side to side, tugged like a maddened horse, as though themselves feeling the wild 'rapture of the strife' that animated their masters, rejoicing in their strength, and defying the accustomed rein." With the ships rolling so deeply, the heavy guns on the lower deck could not be used, for the ports could not be opened. One French ship, the "Thésée," hard pressed and outnumbered, ventured to open hers, but a great sea broke in and she sank like a stone with her crew of 700 men. Hawke himself in the "Royal George," that sank years afterwards at her anchorage at Spithead, was in the thickest of the fight.

He was making for Conflans' flagship when a French 70-gun ship, "La Superbe," threw herself in the way. A broadside from the "Royal George" so shattered the unfortunate ship that she too sank. In the raging sea no help could be given. "The 'Royal George's' people gave a cheer," said one



"THE ROYAL GEORGE."

After a painting by Thomas Baston.

who saw the fight, "but it was a faint one; the honest sailors were touched at the miserable state of so many hundreds of poor creatures."

The sun had long set and it was growing dark, when at five o'clock Hawke made the signal to anchor. It would be well if the fleet could ride out the gale that blew straight upon the shore. Two ships had been captured and two sunk, and the rest had

scattered. But Hawke sighed for the opportunity of which the early darkness had robbed him. "Had we but two hours more daylight," he wrote, "the whole had been totally destroyed or taken ; for we were almost up with their van when night overtook us." He felt as Sir David Beatty felt on the evening of the great Jutland battle. "I can fully sympathize with his feelings," wrote Sir John Jellicoe, "when the evening mist and fading light robbed the Fleet of that complete victory for which he had manœuvred, and for which the vessels in company with him had striven so hard."

But the victory proved to be more decisive than Hawke knew at the moment. The French navy made no further effort during the war. Seven of the beaten ships fled northward and ran up the mouth of the Vilaine, a little river that flows into Quiberon Bay. There they were blockaded for two years. Eight others stood south and reached Rochefort ; and there they too were blocked up by a squadron that occupied the Basque Roads. The islands there and in Quiberon Bay, close to the French coast, were cultivated as kitchen-gardens by the British sailors throughout the long blockade, for green vegetables were a rare luxury on board ship in those days. Besides the four ships lost in the battle, two more were lost in the hours that followed. One ran ashore in the night and was wrecked, and another, Conflans' flagship, "Le Soleil Royal," its masts gone and its timbers shattered, anchored in the

darkness in the middle of the British fleet. At day-break, to avoid capture, the cables were cut, and the great ship was run ashore and burnt by her crew. Two British ships also went ashore, one on the shoals during the battle, the other on the following day. Both were lost, but most of their crews were saved.

"When I consider," said Hawke, "the season of the year, the hard gales on the day of action, a flying enemy, the shortness of the day, and the coast they were on, I can boldly affirm that all that could possibly be done has been done." He had saved England from invasion, and destroyed for the time the naval power of France. England honoured him and has cherished his memory ever since. He showed her sailors such a path to victory as British sailors love to follow, the path down which Blake and Nelson always led them. "For God's sake," he wrote, when a very old man in 1780, to the then Commander-in-chief of the Channel fleet; "For God's sake, if you should be so lucky as to get sight of the enemy, get as close to them as possible. Do not let them shuffle with you by engaging at a distance, but get within musket shot if you can. This will be the means to make the action decisive." So wrote Nelson also, twenty years later, "Lay a Frenchman close and you will beat him."

To those great souls England owes the glorious tradition that inspires her sailors. To attack, to lay the enemy close, to make the action decisive, is still the purpose and the darling desire of our fleets.

## CHAPTER XI

### ENGLISH SEAMEN FROM BLAKE TO NELSON

THE great Dr. Johnson could never understand why any man should go to sea. "No man will be a sailor," he said once, "who has contrivance enough to get himself into a jail ; for being in a ship is being in a jail, with the chance of being drowned." Another time he said, "A man in a jail has more room, better food, and commonly better company." And Dr. Johnson knew very well that a prison, in the second half of the eighteenth century, was no palace. He knew that it was commonly said that of those in prison one in four died every year ; but he also knew that during a long voyage, such as, for example, the voyage to China, sometimes half and very often a third of the crew would die. The story of Anson's Voyage shows how terrible the losses from scurvy were. Dr. Johnson referred to the same subject again and again in his conversations. In 1778 he said one day, "When you look down from the quarter-deck to the space below, you see the utmost extremity of human misery ; such crowding, such filth, such stench." One of those who were talking

with him replied, "We find people fond of being sailors." "I cannot account for that," answered Johnson, "any more than I can account for other strange perversions of imagination."

Thirty years earlier Smollett, the novelist, who had been a surgeon in the navy, told in one of his books many stories of the daily life on board a man-of-war. The hero of his tale is seized by the press-gang. It is discovered that he has some knowledge of surgery, and he is sent down to the cockpit as an assistant to the surgeon. One of his fellow-assistants guides him to his new quarters. "We descended," he says, "by divers ladders to a space as dark as a dungeon, which I understood was several feet under water. I had no sooner approached this dismal gulf than my nose was saluted with an intolerable stench of putrefied cheese and rancid butter, that issued from an apartment at the foot of the ladder resembling a chandler's shop, where, by the faint glimmering of a candle, I could perceive the ship's steward." Then his guide, "taking a light in his hand, conducted me to the place of his residence, which was a square of about six feet enclosed with canvas nailed round to the beams of the ship, to screen us from the cold, as well as from the view of the midshipmen and quartermaster, who lodged within the cable-tiers on each side of us.

"When I followed him into the sick-berth or hospital, and observed the situation of the patients,

I was much less surprised that people should die on board, than that any sick person should recover. Here I saw about fifty miserable wretches, suspended in rows, so huddled one upon another, that no more than fourteen inches space was allotted for each with his bed and bedding ; and deprived of the light of the day, as well as of fresh air ; breathing nothing but a noisome atmosphere of the morbid steams exhaling from their diseased bodies, devoured with vermin hatched in the filth that surrounded them, and destitute of every convenience necessary for people in that helpless condition." He adds that the doctor, when visiting the sick, " thrust his wig in his pocket, and stript himself to his waistcoat ; then creeping on all fours under their hammocks, and forcing up his bare pate between two, kept them asunder with one shoulder until he had done his duty." No wonder Anson's men died by hundreds.

A naval captain about the same time, writing to a boy who was entering the service as a midshipman, painted the life that he would live in very similar colours, and added, " In a man-of-war you have the collected filth of jails ; condemned criminals have the alternative of hanging or of entering on board."

It was not possible, in those days of constant war, to keep the ships' companies at full strength with sailors who had enlisted of their own free will ; and armed parties, called pressgangs, were frequently sent out to seize men and carry them on board.



Many were seized off merchant ships at sea, and still more in the streets and public-houses of the seaport towns.

The poor wretches swept up by the pressgangs were described in the reign of Charles II. as "fit for nothing but to fill the ships full of vermin," so dirty were they. It is curious to notice that, though there was no uniform in those days, or till long afterwards, there was a practice of selling clothes of one pattern on board the King's ships, and the filthy state of the garments of the pressed men led to these clothes being very generally sold to them.

In spite of all these horrors and hardships, it was generally possible to get plenty of good recruits on ships under good commanders. In the days of Blake, when the pay was good, the service was even popular; but in Charles II.'s time the money was not paid regularly, and was often long overdue. This, of course, led to discontent. At the end of the eighteenth century the pay was still the same as it had been a hundred years before, though all prices had advanced greatly in the interval, and this was naturally felt by the sailors as a great hardship.

A cruel captain in those days could give his crew a terrible time. Flogging with the cat-o'-nine-tails, which was the common punishment, was frequent, and men sometimes died under the lash. Other punishments were almost as severe. A chaplain

in the navy from 1675 to 1679 kept a diary, which has come down to us, and he records how a seaman "for goeing on shoare without leave, had his leggs tyd together, his hands tyd to a greate rope, and stood on the syd of the ship to be hoysted up to the yardarme, and from thence to dropp downe in to the water 3 times ; but he lookeing so very pittifully was spared." Evidently the captain was good-humoured and merciful.

Monday morning was the appointed time of punishment for the boys who had misbehaved themselves during the week, and they were " whipt with a catt with 9 tayles for their misdemeanurs by the boarsun's mate." And the sailors believed that a ship would be unlucky where this duty was not regularly performed.

" This day," says the chaplain on another occasion, " David Thomas, and Martin, the coock, and our master's boy, had their hand stretched out, and with their backs to the rayles, and the master's boy with his back to the maine mast, all looking on upon the other, and in each of their mouths a maudlen-spike, viz., an iron pinn clapt close into their mouths, and tyd behind their heads ; and there they stood a whole houre, till their mouths were very bloody : an excellent cure for swearers." With a good-humoured captain, who could temper these rough punishments with mercy, and at times spare the man who looked " so very pittifully," life was bearable. All life was rough in those days, and manners

and punishments were rough too. But with a man of harsh and cruel temper terrible things might and did happen.

In September, 1797, there was cruising in the West Indies the frigate "Hermione" of thirty-two guns. She was commanded by a certain Captain Hugh Pigot, who seems to have delighted in cruelty. Such men could never get good crews of volunteers, and they had to rely on the pressgang to fill their ships. The result was that the "Hermione" had many bad characters on board, and these men were made worse by the brutality of the captain. At last, one day, he provoked them to mutiny by act and speech so brutal that it would hardly be believed if it were not set down in sober history. The men were aloft reefing the topsails. They were not quick enough to please him, and he called out that he would flog the last man off the mizzen-topsail yard. Now the most active sailors would be the two men at the outer ends of the yard, and, as they would be the last to come down because they could not pass the others on the yard, the punishment would most unfairly fall on them. Hearing the cruel threat, these two men resolved to escape the flogging if they could. Instead of waiting for their companions to get off the yard before them, they made a spring at the rigging, but missed their hold, fell on the quarter-deck and were killed. When this was reported to the captain, all that he had to say was, "Throw the lubbers overboard."

The crew were already in a dangerous temper, and, the next day, a mutiny broke out. Unhappily they were not content with doing rough justice on the brutal captain. They murdered, in a very cruel manner, several of the officers as well, including one of the young midshipmen ; and then took the ship into a Spanish harbour, and handed her over to the Spaniards. The story of her recapture, two years later, is one of the most wonderful stories of English daring that has ever been told.

Unhappily there were a good many brutal captains, and mutinies in single ships had been sadly frequent in the last years of the eighteenth century. In 1797, however, a few months before the mutiny in the "Hermione," whole fleets mutinied at Spithead and the Nore and in the North Sea. The men wanted better pay and pensions, better treatment for the sick, better food and more of it, and more consideration in the matter of leave. The mutiny at Spithead called the attention of Parliament and the whole country to their grievances, and for the most part they were quickly remedied. The later mutinies at the Nore and in the North Sea were more dangerous, and the demands made were unreasonable. The men themselves at last saw this. They submitted, and their leaders were hanged. But the country meanwhile had been in terrible danger. England was then at war, not only with France and Spain, but with Holland also. Napoleon had forced Holland to fight, but as he could not give her the

protection of Sea Power, she lost colony after colony in the war, the Cape of Good Hope and Ceylon among them.

The North Sea fleet was under orders to sail from Yarmouth to blockade the Dutch fleet at the Texel when the mutiny broke out. Only two ships out of the entire fleet set sail, the "Venerable" with Admiral Duncan on board, and the "Adamant." These two ships took up their station off the Texel, and, by repeated signals to an imaginary fleet in the distance, they made the Dutch believe that a strong force was present. At last word came that the whole of the Dutch fleet was putting to sea, but Duncan was not the man to run away. The two ships anchored where the channel was narrowest, and prepared to fight to the end. "I have taken the depth of the water," said Duncan, "and when the "Venerable" goes down, my flag will still fly." But the Dutch did not come out after all, and some weeks later, when the North Sea fleet had returned to their duty, Duncan defeated them at Camperdown, and took many of their ships.

But, with so many hardships to endure, what reasons could still make men fond of being sailors? They are not hard to find. The old Viking love of wandering by sea is in the blood of many of our race. The sea is always calling to them. The spirit of adventure also had the same strong hold over men then, that it had when they went to face the unknown terrors beyond the Pillars of Hercules



THE BATTLE OF CAMPERDOWN, 1797.  
After the painting by Robert Dodd.

and Cape Bojador. There are men and boys, and girls too, nowadays, who cannot rest at home in comfort. They want to see more and know more than can be found in the narrow limits of their home life, and they are ready to pay the price. As Shakespeare said, "Home-keeping youth have ever homely wits." In the eighteenth century dreams of prize-money drew many a boy to sea. In 1762 each sailor in the crew of the frigate "Active," which, in company with a smaller vessel, took a Spanish treasure ship, received as his share £485. The captain took £65,000; each warrant officer £4336, and each petty officer £1806. Few prizes yielded such sums as that, but a great deal of money was obtained by the crews of fortunate ships.

Captain Marryatt, who wrote so many stories of the sea, said in one of his books, "There is certainly something in the life of a sailor which enlarges the mind." The sea is a great schoolmaster. The sailor sees other countries, other peoples, other manners and ways of thought. He comes back a wiser and more broad-minded man than he went out. He can see more clearly than those who stay at home what really matters and what does not, and he generally makes a better citizen.

That Hawke and Nelson, and a good many other admirals and captains, were able to make such glorious fighting men out of the wretched material that the pressgangs brought on board, may seem strange. No doubt it was partly because the sea is

such a good schoolmaster, but partly also because almost everybody has something good in him, and even something great, if only it can be found under the covering of misery or poverty, which hides it from himself as well as from others. Great men like Nelson can fashion heroes out of very strange material.

Everybody knows that what was rough and bad in the life of the navy in the old days has long passed away ; and Dr. Johnson, if he could have seen the ships and sailors of to-day, would no doubt have spoken very differently about them.



## CHAPTER XII

### LORD NELSON

#### I. INTRODUCTORY

It was in 1789 that the great French revolution broke out. For a century France had suffered much from the ambition and misgovernment of its kings and ministers. The kings engaged in war after war for the conquest of countries that had done France no harm, and they treated French lives and French money as though they were personal belongings of their own, to be squandered at their will. The nobles also had many rights and privileges which were very burdensome to those who lived upon their lands, and very irritating to all who were not of noble birth. No matter how able he might be, no man who was humbly born could rise above the lowest position in the army or navy, or in the service of the State. Everybody in France knew how Charles I. had had his head cut off for misgoverning his country, and how Cromwell had been chosen to rule England in his place. And it was only quite recently that England's American colonies had set up a republican government as the United States,

after winning their independence in a long war in which France had given them great help. The French did not at first wish to kill their King or to dethrone him, but they did wish to strip him of all real power, and to force him to govern through ministers responsible to a Parliament. Their attempts to do this caused much quarrelling, and the King, and those who preferred the old state of things, did all they could to prevent the success of the revolutionary party. But they were too few and weak, and their efforts only angered those who were opposed to them, and caused the direction of affairs to fall into the hands of men of extreme views. These men knew no mercy, and were ready to use even the most terrible means to get what they wanted. A dreadful period of organised murder followed. The King and Queen were guillotined. Thousands of the nobles and the clergy, and many a noble lady, from the King's sister downwards, shared their fate. France was bathed in blood, and the horrors of that time can never be forgotten. Then the republicans split into rival parties, and that which had the power for the moment sent its opponents to the guillotine. At last all France, shuddering and sick under the bloody reign of terror, welcomed the rise of a strong man who could restore the rule of law and order. That man was Napoleon Bonaparte, whose genius for war and government has probably never been equalled in all the history of mankind. Unfortunately, France still thirsted for foreign conquest, and

sent out her armies into the many divided states of Germany and Italy, tumbling sovereigns from their thrones, and setting up republican governments, whether the people wished for them or not. A few years later Napoleon made himself Emperor. Then the republics vanished, and his brothers and generals became kings of the conquered countries. All Europe had to fight to defend itself against the ambition of France. There were times when it seemed that France would succeed, and England fought on alone, stubbornly holding the seas against Napoleon.

At one time Napoleon dreamed, like William II. of Germany, of making himself master of the East. He did not yet know what Sea Power meant, or how the lack of it was to ruin his plans. He wanted to conquer Egypt, and from there to spring across the Indian Ocean upon India. The purpose of a great expedition, which he was fitting out at Toulon, was suspected by the British Government, and to defeat it there was sent into the Mediterranean Sir Horatio Nelson, who had lately been promoted to be rear-admiral at the age of thirty-eight. Napoleon managed to get to Egypt without being caught upon the sea, but a few weeks later Nelson found his fleet drawn up in the Bay of Aboukir, near the mouth of the Nile, in a position that was thought to be secure against attack, and there he crushed it, sinking or capturing eleven out of its thirteen ships. Napoleon had to escape from Egypt some months later in a small vessel, but there was no return for

his splendid army. It was in the position of Montcalm's army in Canada ; it could neither escape, nor be reinforced. The sea-ways were closed by the victorious British fleet. The battle of the Nile freed Egypt from Napoleon, and shattered all his dreams of Eastern empire. That was the first lesson that Nelson and our Sea Power taught him. Three years later, in 1801, came the second. British fleets were blockading the enemy's port in order to cripple his foreign trade, and cut off the supply of things that he required from abroad, as always they must when we are at war. This was very annoying to the neutral States, and especially to those about the Baltic Sea. They did not like their ships being searched by British cruisers, and the interference with their profitable trade with France made them angry. The more angry they became the better Napoleon was pleased. At last he succeeded in persuading Russia, Denmark, and Sweden to arm their fleets, and to agree to use force to prevent British war vessels from searching their merchantmen at sea. The right of search can never safely be given up by England, and a fleet was sent into the Baltic to compel the northern States to submit to it. In a desperate battle at Copenhagen, Nelson crushed the resistance of the Danes, and once more defeated Napoleon's schemes.

At last Napoleon saw what Sea Power meant. He could never be what he wanted to be till our Sea Power had been destroyed. So he contrived a

clever plan for the invasion of the country. For the third time Nelson thwarted him. After a wonderful voyage from the Mediterranean to the West Indies and back again, in pursuit of a portion of the French fleet, he met and overwhelmed the combined fleets of France and Spain at Trafalgar on October 21st, 1805. Never again during the remaining ten years of the war did the fleets of France venture to meet the British fleets in battle. Then Spain rebelled against Napoleon, and England's command of the sea made it possible to send an army to help the Spaniards and Portuguese. It was that army that, during the six long years of the Peninsular War (1808-1814), caused the great drain of men and money which, Napoleon said later, caused his ruin. But without Nelson and his splendid victories it would have been impossible to keep that army supplied with men, guns, and munitions for so many years, or even to send it there at all.

If it can ever be said that England owed her safety to a single man she owed it to Nelson. Probably no other man would have dared to attempt what he attempted at the Nile and Copenhagen, or to sail to the West Indies as he did in 1805. No story of our Sea Power would be complete without some fuller account of the life and deeds of the great admiral, in whose teaching and example every navy in the world since his day has sought its inspiration. His equal as a commander at sea has never lived.

## II. YOUTH AND EARLY MANHOOD

Horatio Nelson was born on the 29th of September, 1758, the sixth of the eleven children of a Norfolk rector. From boyhood he was frail and delicate, and in the days of his greatness he was constantly ill and suffered much. Great sailor though he was, sea-sickness frequently distressed him all his life. But his weakness was brushed aside, and all his sufferings were forgotten, as soon as the enemy's fleet was out and there were great services to be done for England.

Nelson's father was very poor, and when an offer was made by an uncle to take one of the boys on board his ship as a midshipman, and so start him in life, Horatio, then only twelve years old, was chosen, or, according to another story, volunteered to be the one to go. His uncle pitied him, for the life was very rough, and he knew how delicate the little boy was. "What has poor little Horatio done," he said, "that he, being so weak, should be sent to rough it at sea? But let him come, and if a cannon-ball takes off his head, he will at least be provided for." So the boy went, and little was the schooling that he ever had. His letters all his life showed the want of it. He was a man who had much to say and his pen was a ready one, but he often wrote awkward sentences, and his English was sometimes at fault. It is a great thing to be a master of good English if a man has wise thoughts to teach to

his fellows, or noble deeds to tell of ; but without such thoughts and deeds ready words and graceful sentences are poor things at best, and may be very dangerous, for they may spread wrong opinions and encourage wrong action. Politicians of all parties spend much of their time in making speeches, and many of them are sadly lacking in wise thoughts, and think too often of what will serve their parties instead of what will be good for their country. Boys who learn to observe, and think, and act with intelligence, though the language that they use be faulty, will meet with success, and win confidence, and gain a power to serve England, which a mere spinner of words will never have. Through all history, and in these days perhaps more than ever before, life in the navy has taught men to observe, and think, and act intelligently. That is why the sailor is always useful wherever he is, and is called a handy man. People always want him when he leaves the sea, and he can always get good employment and good pay.

Boys who rise in later life to greatness, as Nelson did, generally show signs in boyhood of the character which makes them great. There are two stories of Nelson's boyhood that show in him the sense of duty and resolution and courage, that distinguished him above other men, and enabled him to do great things.

"He and his elder brother were going to school one winter day upon their ponies. Finding the snow so deep as to delay them seriously, they

went back, and the elder reported that they could not get on. The father very judiciously replied : ‘ If that be so, I have of course nothing to say ; but I wish you to try again, and I leave it to your honour not to turn back, unless necessary.’ On the second attempt, the elder was more than once for returning ; but Horatio stuck it out, repeating continually, ‘ Remember, it was left to our honour,’ and the difficult journey was accomplished.

“ The children in this instance seem to have felt that there was danger in going on. The other recorded occurrence shows in the lad that indifference to personal benefit, as distinguished from the sense of conspicuous achievement, which was ever a prominent characteristic of the man. The master of his school had a very fine pear-tree, whose fruit the boys coveted, but upon which none dared hazard an attempt. At last Nelson, who did not share their desire, undertook the risk, climbed the tree by night, and carried off the pears, but refused to eat any of them,—saying that he had taken them only because the others were afraid.”

Many of the great captains and admirals of his time had early opportunity in those days of constant war of doing daring deeds, which attracted attention and won them promotion. Others had relations in places of power, who could push them on. Nelson had no such chances. His uncle, Captain Suckling, died before he was twenty, and very little hard fighting came his way for some years. But his constant



attention to duty, the thoroughness with which he mastered every detail of his daily work, and his readiness to face and overcome the ordinary difficulties of his service, marked him at once as one to rely upon and use, when fearlessness, devotion, good sense, and prompt action were required. He told a story afterwards which shows what sort of young officer he was. When he was nineteen he was promoted, on passing his examination, to be lieutenant, and was appointed to the "Lowestoffe," a frigate of thirty-two guns. "Whilst in this frigate," he wrote, "an event happened which presaged my character; and, as it conveys no dishonour to the officer alluded to, I shall insert it. Blowing a gale of wind, and a very heavy sea, the frigate captured an American letter-of-marque. The first lieutenant was ordered to board her, which he did not do, owing to the very heavy sea. On his return, the captain said, 'Have I no officer in the ship who can board the prize?' On which the Master ran to the gangway, to get into the boat: when I stopped him, saying, 'It is my turn now; and if I come back, it is yours.' This little incident has often occurred to my mind; and I know it is my disposition, that difficulties and dangers do but increase my desire of attempting them." He always found a way to do what seemed impossible to others.

The next year, 1778, he was taken by the Admiral on to his flagship as third lieutenant. Fortunate vacancies occurred, and in a few months he had risen



NELSON VOLUNTEERING TO BOARD A PRIVATEER IN A GALE.

After the picture by A. Westall in the Painted Hall, Greenwich.

to be first lieutenant. Before the end of the year he had become a commander, with a small cruiser of his own, and in June, 1779, when he was still under

twenty-one, he was made a captain and given a frigate. At that time he was in the West Indies. Soon afterwards he showed his daring and devotion in a dangerous expedition on shore in Central America. His commanding officer reported that "he was the first on every service, whether by day or night." The climate was bad and his health suffered, but till the work was finished he would not give in. Then he fell dangerously ill, and had to return to England. A period of peace followed, and for some years Nelson was on shore and unemployed.

### III. THE BATTLE OF CAPE ST. VINCENT

At the beginning of 1793 the French Republic declared war on England. Directly it was known that war was coming, the fleets were made ready for sea, and Nelson, then thirty-four, was appointed to the command of the "Agamemnon," a small ship-of-the-line of sixty-four guns attached to the Mediterranean fleet. In her he served for three years, steadily refusing larger and better ships, because he could not bring himself to leave his officers and men. It was always his way to think the ship that he had, and the men and officers with whom he served, the very best in all the fleet. While he was there perhaps they were ; and such a way of thinking always makes men work happily and well together. Then, as always, officers and men adored him.

In the Mediterranean he had plenty of opportunities of showing the stuff that he was made of. One admiral after another chose him for the most responsible and difficult tasks, sending him away from the fleet for months at a time on some special service. Other captains were sometimes jealous of him. One wrote to him grumbling, "You did as you pleased in Lord Hood's time, the same in Admiral Hotham's, and now again with Sir John Jervis ; it makes no difference to you who is 'Commander-in-chief.'"

While Admiral Hotham was in command, two partial fleet actions were fought on succeeding days, in which Nelson greatly distinguished himself. He had managed then, as he always did, to have his ship in the right place, saw an opportunity to deal a blow, and dealt it. He thought that on the second day the French fleet could have been destroyed. "Sure I am," he wrote, "had I commanded our fleet . . . that either the whole French fleet would have graced my triumph or I should have been in a confounded scrape." But the admiral was too much under the influence of the old tradition, and would not break the line. He could not take all his ships down together, so he let the French fleet go.

Nelson knew that he could do great things, and burned for the opportunity of doing them. It was a little later that he wrote to his wife, "One day or other I will have a long Gazette to myself ; I feel that such an opportunity will be given me. I cannot, if I am in the field of glory, be kept out of

sight." But as yet his name was not widely known in England. It was well known, however, in Italy, for he had now served for some years off the Italian coast. Writing again to his wife he said, "I will relate another anecdote, all vanity to myself, but you will partake of it. A person sent me a letter, and directed as follows, 'Horatio Nelson, Genoa.' On being asked how he could direct in such a manner, his answer, in a large party, was, 'Sir, there is but one Horatio Nelson in the world.' I am known throughout Italy; not a Kingdom or State, where my name will be forgotten."

It was under Sir John Jervis, who soon afterwards was made Earl St. Vincent for his great victory over the Spanish fleet, that Nelson, now a commodore, did the first of the dazzling deeds that turned the eyes of all England upon him. Napoleon's great victories had begun. Austria and the states of Italy and Germany had been compelled to make peace. England alone kept up the struggle. At that moment Spain too declared war upon her, and the position became very dangerous. The Spanish fleet must be beaten, and prevented from joining with the French, or all communication with the Mediterranean would be cut off, and Sea Power in those waters would pass to the enemy. Sir John Jervis was sent to do the work. His fleet was cruising in the Atlantic, off the mouth of the Straits of Gibraltar. The day before the battle, Nelson, who had been sent into the Mediterranean in a frigate

for a special and dangerous duty, rejoined and went on board the "Captain," a seventy-four to which he had transferred from the worn-out "Agamemnon" in the summer of 1796, when she had to be sent home to England. Most of his officers and some of his crew went with him to the "Captain." The 14th February, 1797, was a famous day. At daybreak the two fleets were twenty-five miles west of Cape St. Vincent, which is on the Portuguese coast 150 miles north-west of Cadiz. There was a fog at the time, and the enemy's fleet was only partly visible. Sir John Jervis had with him fifteen ships-of-the-line. The Spaniards were known to be stronger, but their exact numbers were unknown. However, the admiral was resolved to fight, and he was heard to say, as he paced up and down the deck, "A victory is very essential to England at this moment." The fog began to lift, and ship after ship of the enemy came into sight. Reports came one after another to the admiral: "'There are eight sail-of-the-line, Sir John.' 'There are twenty sail-of-the-line, Sir John.' Finally, when the full tale of twenty-seven was made out, the captain of the fleet remarked on the greatness of the odds. 'Enough of that, sir,' retorted the admiral, . . . 'if there are fifty sail, I will go through them.'" It is easy to understand why Nelson loved Jervis, and delighted to serve under him.

Of all the fleets that England had then at sea, guarding her own paths across the waters, and barring

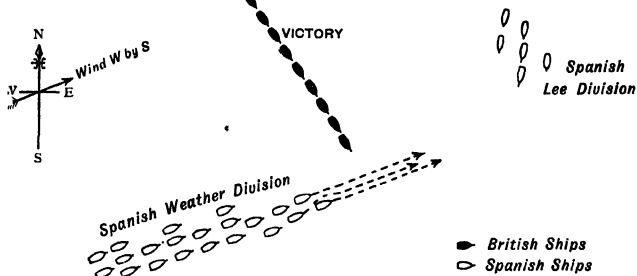
the way to the ships of France and Spain, none was so splendidly efficient as the fleet that Sir John Jervis had been training for its work for more than a year. He was very strict with officers and men. He would have no idleness ; he would give no leave. If any man grumbled or disobeyed, his hand fell heavily upon the offender, no matter what his rank. The fleet was always at sea. "Inactivity," he said, "will make cowards of us all." So officers and men were in constant training, perfecting their discipline and seamanship and gunnery against the great day that all expected and for which all longed.

Captain Mahan, the American sailor and historian, has described the opening movements of the battle. "During the night," he writes, "the wind had shifted from the eastward to west by south, and, being now fair, the Spaniards were running for their port, heading about east-southeast ; but they were in disorder, and were divided into two principal fragments, of which the headmost, and therefore the leewardmost, numbered six ships. It was separated from the other division of twenty-one by a space of six or eight miles. . . . [Jervis had kept his fleet] throughout the night in two columns, in close order, a formation suited by its compactness to a hazy night, and at the same time manageable in case of encountering an enemy suddenly. The course was south by west, almost perpendicular to that of the Spaniards. The two fleets were thus

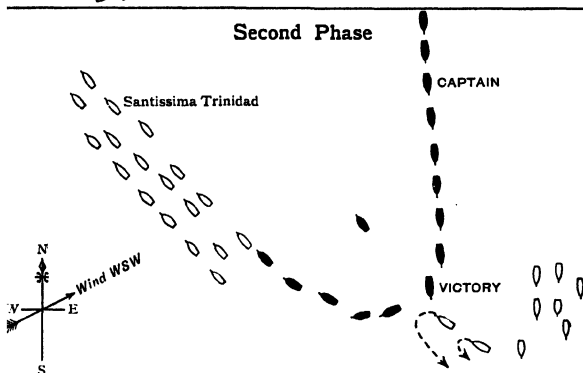
# BATTLE OF CAPE ST. VINCENT

February 14, 1797.

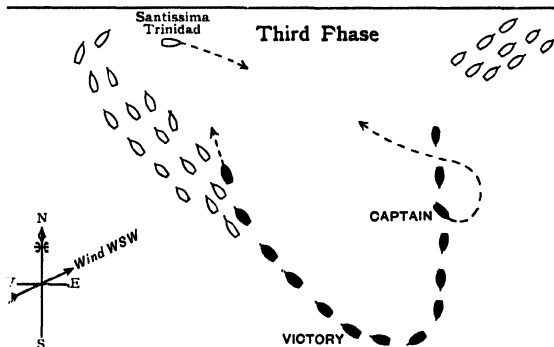
## First Phase



## Second Phase



## Third Phase





running, one from the westward, and the other from the northward, to a common crossing.<sup>1</sup>

“ At daylight the enemy’s fleet was partly visible to the leading ships of the British columns. As the morning advanced, and the situation developed, it was seen that the Spanish line was long and straggling, and the gap began to show. As the British were heading directly towards it, Jervis ordered a half-dozen of his ships, which were all still under moderate canvas, to press on and interpose between the enemy’s divisions. An hour or so later he made the signal to form the single column which was the usual fighting order of those days. . . . Nelson’s ship was thirteenth in the new order, therefore nearly the last. . . . Three of the larger Spanish body succeeded in crossing ahead of the British column and joining the lee group, thus raised to nine ships. No others were able to effect this, the headmost British ships anticipating them in the gap. Jervis’s plan was to pass between their two divisions with his one column, protracting this separation, then to go about in succession and attack the eighteen to windward, because their comrades to leeward could not help them in any short time. This was done. The lee ships did attempt to join those to windward by breaking through the British order, but were so roughly handled that they gave up and continued to the south-southwest, hoping to gain a better opportunity. The weather ships, on the other hand,

<sup>1</sup> See Plan, page 143.



**THE BATTLE OF ST. VINCENT.**

From a painting by Lieutenant Brenton of the "Barfleur," who took part in the engagement.

finding they could not pass, steered to the northward—nearly parallel, but opposite to the course which both the British and their own lee group were then following. A heavy cannonade now ensued, each British ship engaging as its batteries came to bear, through the advance of the column to the south-southwest. After an hour of this, the admiral made the signal to tack in succession. This was instantly obeyed by the leader, the 'Culloden,' which was expecting it, and each following ship tacked also as it reached the same point. But as the Spaniards were continually receding from this point, which the British rear was approaching, it was evident that in time the latter would leave uncovered the ground that had so far separated the two hostile divisions. This the Spanish admiral expected to be his opportunity ; it proved to be Nelson's."

At this moment the British column was in the shape of a V, and each ship tacked as it reached the bottom of the V. Nelson at the right-hand top corner had just passed the Spanish rear, and the "Culloden" in the British van had not yet reached the left-hand top corner. In a few minutes there would be nothing to stop the two Spanish divisions from reuniting. Seeing the danger and also the opportunity, Nelson, without waiting for orders, turned out of the line, took his ship from one side of the V to the other, and threw himself across the path of the Spanish van at the point where they were trying to cross to join their lee

division. For some little time his single ship was engaged with five or six Spaniards, most of them much larger, but he held them until the "Culloden" and other ships came up to help him. Then occurred a strange and striking scene. The "Captain," a



NELSON BOARDING THE "SAN JOSEF."

From the picture by H. Singleton.

mere wreck incapable of movement, lay against the "San Nicholas," a ship of eighty guns, and beyond her, alongside, was the great "San Josef" of 112 guns. Both the Spaniards had been badly knocked about also, but either alone was much stronger than the "Captain," many of whose crew had fallen in

the unequal fight. But Nelson, unable now to take any other share in the battle, called for boarders, and himself at the head of his men clambered on board the "San Nicholas," and soon beat down all opposition. Her colours were hauled down, and her officers handed him their swords. The "San Josef" then began to fire upon the boarding party, so Nelson, calling for reinforcements from the "Captain," charged with his men for the second great ship. Before he reached her deck a Spanish officer called out that they surrendered. "From this most welcome information," wrote Nelson, "it was not long before I was on the quarter-deck, where the Spanish captain, with a bow, presented me his sword, and said the admiral was dying of his wounds below. I asked him, on his honour, if the ship was surrendered. He declared she was ; on which I gave him my hand, and desired him to call on his officers and ship's company, and tell them of it—which he did ; and on the quarter-deck of a Spanish First-rate, extravagant as the story may seem, did I receive the swords of vanquished Spaniards ; which, as I received, I gave to William Fearney, one of my bargemen, who put them with the greatest sang-froid under his arm."

Two deeds of splendid daring had been followed by a third, the boarding of an enemy's ship over the deck of another—"Nelson's patent bridge," as the delighted sailors called it. The rest of the fleet were now coming up fast, and, as each ship passed the

“ Captain ” and her prizes, its crew burst into cheers. “ Nothing in the world,” wrote a distinguished onlooker to Nelson, “ was ever more noble than the transaction of the ‘ Captain ’ from beginning to end, and the glorious group of your ship and her two prizes, fast in your gripe, was never surpassed, and I dare say never will.”

Meanwhile the Spanish weather division had been beaten off. The battle was won. Four prizes had been taken out of a fleet of twenty-seven by a fleet of fifteen. All England rejoiced in the splendid victory. Sir John Jervis became Earl St. Vincent, and Nelson was made a Knight of the Bath, and a month or two later was promoted, in his proper turn, to be rear-admiral.

A few months later he was to suffer his one defeat. He had been sent with a squadron to seize Santa Cruz in Teneriffe. Blake had attacked and destroyed a fleet in the bay. Nelson’s task was different. He had to put a force on shore, storm the forts and capture a strongly garrisoned town. It could not be done. The losses were heavy. Nelson’s right arm was shattered and had to be taken off, and the attempt was abandoned.

#### IV. THE BATTLE OF THE NILE.

Early in the following year, 1798, it became known in England that the French were gathering a large army and many transports in their Mediterranean

harbours, and that a fleet was being fitted out at Toulon. Napoleon intended to seize Egypt, which then belonged to Turkey, and from Egypt to ship an army across the Indian Ocean for a sudden attack upon India. There was no Suez Canal then, and if he could keep his plans secret, and carry them out with sufficient speed, he might be in India six months before any reinforcements cou'd reach it from England round the Cape of Good Hope. The secret of his intentions was well kept, but the great preparations, that were being made at Toulon and the neighbouring ports, could not be concealed. The British Government could only guess at their purpose, but they could set a watch upon Toulon, and if the French fleet could be kept blockaded there, or forced to action directly it came out, no serious mischief could be done. All England knew now who was the man for such a task. Nelson was chosen, much to the vexation of several of his seniors; but, unfortunately, before his fleet could be assembled, Napoleon had sailed with twelve ships-of-the-line and 40,000 troops. This was on the 19th May, and it was not until the 28th that Nelson heard the news. His fleet did not join him till the 7th June, and then, by a chapter of accidents, he found himself without a single frigate. The frigates corresponded to the fast cruisers of to-day, and were the eyes and ears of the fleet, spreading out across the sea in all directions to get news of the enemy's movements. It was impossible to wait for

them, and for lack of frigates Nelson suffered two months of terrible anxiety. He knew how great the danger was to England if Napoleon was not caught in time, but he could get no news and he did not know where he had gone. It was always likely that he would go to Egypt, so Nelson sailed eastwards with his fleet of twelve seventy-fours and one fifty-gun ship. On the 28th June he reached Alexandria. There was no French fleet there, and it had not been seen or heard of. He had missed it on the way, as he was to learn later, by the narrowest margin, for on the 25th the two fleets had only been about sixty miles apart. If the scouting frigates had been spread across the sea, Napoleon could hardly have escaped. But the chance was lost. Nelson still knew nothing. The French might have gone to Sicily after all, so he went back again to see, beating all the way against a westerly wind. After a tedious voyage, during which he was torn by anxiety at the idea of possible failure on this his first important command, he reached Syracuse on the 19th July. Still no French ; still no news of them to be had anywhere ; fears and alarms on every side. On the 24th the British fleet again turned eastwards, and three days later learnt at last that the French had been seen four weeks before off Crete, steering a course that would take them straight to Egypt. Again Nelson pressed on for Alexandria, and early in the afternoon of the 1st August, 1798, a look-out from the masthead caught sight of the enemy's




fleet lying at anchor in Aboukir Bay. There were thirteen ships-of-the-line, the great "Orient" of 120 guns, which flew the flag of Admiral Brueys, the Commander-in-Chief, three eighty-gun ships and nine seventy-fours; and they lay in a very strong position. But neither the strength of the enemy's position nor the size of his ships gave Nelson one moment's pause. After the terrible months of anxiety his mind was at last at rest. "The only happy moment I felt," he wrote afterwards, "was in the view of the French; then I knew that all my sufferings would soon be at an end." He meant to attack at once, and there was not a moment's hesitation, though three of his ships were miles away. The different positions in which the enemy might be found, at sea or at anchor, had all been thought out and discussed with his captains, and plans of attack had been prepared. The captains knew his mind, and were as eager and confident as he. All his life he had a matchless way of winning the admiration, and the enthusiastic and intelligent support of those who served under him. He was unrivalled as a teacher of fighting men. "I had the happiness to command a band of brothers," he wrote; "My friends readily conceived my plan." "A band of brothers"! "My friends"! Who can wonder that they loved him?

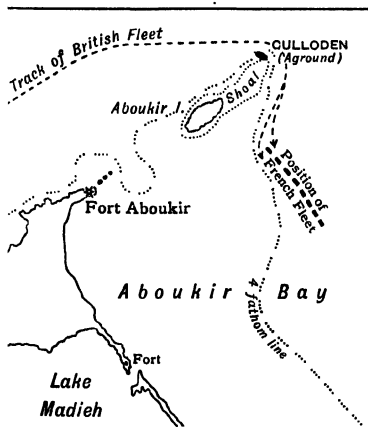
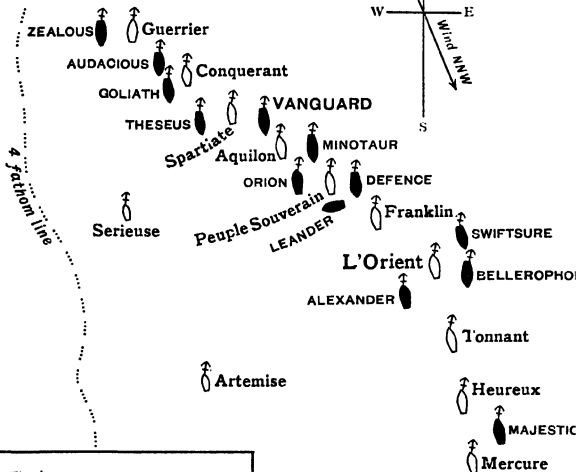
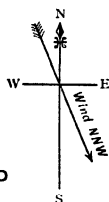
As he had found the enemy at anchor, his plan was to throw the whole of his force upon the ships at the windward end of the line; for then those to

# BATTLE OF THE NILE

August 1, 1798

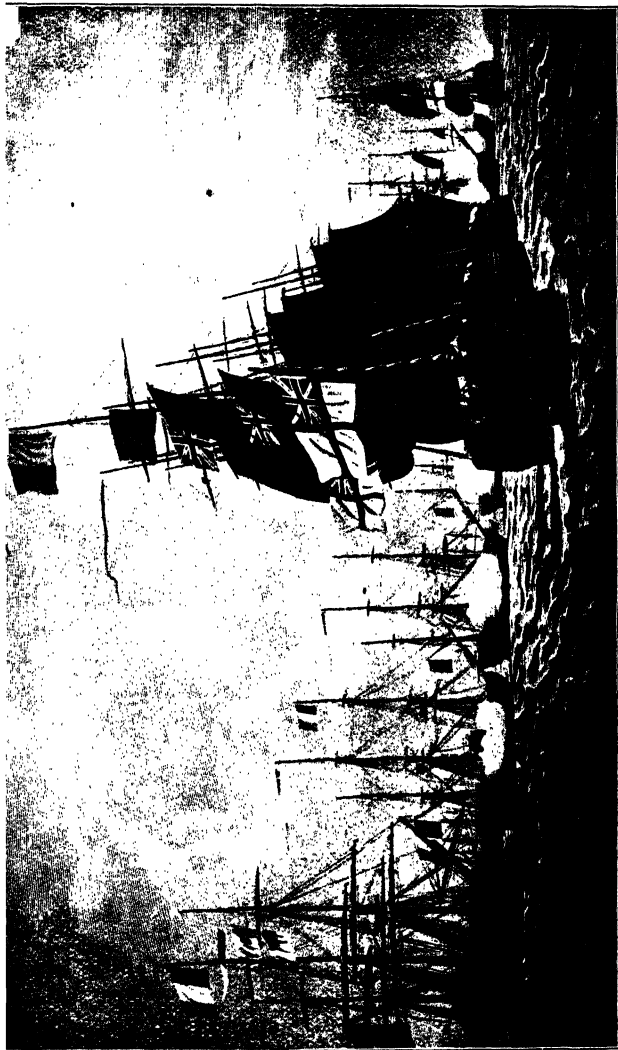
British Ships.....  ZEALOUS

French Ships.....  Guerrier



leeward would not be able to get up against the wind to help. But could he get at them? The French did not believe that he could. They were anchored in shallow and dangerous waters of which Nelson had no proper chart; but a ship swings at her anchor with wind and tide, and he knew that, where a French ship had room enough to swing, his must have room to anchor by her side. At the head of the French line, a little way beyond the bows of the leading French ship, the "Guerrier," was a dangerous shoal, commanding the entrance to the bay from the north. The French had counted upon this to protect them from a flank attack, but the leading British ships, sounding with the lead as they crept cautiously round the point, found just room enough to pass between the "Guerrier" and the rocks.

It was a little after half-past six, and the sun was sinking low, when the "Goliath" passed round the "Guerrier's" bows, pouring in a raking broadside from her guns. The "Zealous," "Orion," "Theseus," and "Audacious" followed. They found, as they hoped (though no French admiral should have been so caught), that the French ships had not expected to have to fight on the side inshore, and that their guns were not ready. The sixth ship was the "Vanguard," Nelson's flagship. Instead of passing inside the French line he anchored outside their third ship, which was already engaged on the other side; and the remainder of his fleet, as they came up, followed him, placing the head of the



THE BATTLE OF THE NILE, AUG. 1, 1798.  
After the picture by R. Dodd.

French line under a terrible concentrated fire. Five French ships were under the guns of eight British within half-an-hour of the opening of the battle, and their comrades to leeward looked on helplessly. Just as the sun sank, at 7.15, the masts of the "Guerrier" went overboard, to the cheers of the whole fleet.

About two hours after the battle had begun, Nelson was wounded in the forehead and was carried down to the cockpit. The surgeon hurried to him at once, but Nelson sent him away. "I will take my turn with my brave fellows," he said; and he waited until all those who had been wounded before him had been attended to. It was about the same time that a welcome reinforcement joined the British fleet. The "Alexander" and the "Swiftsure," with the fifty-gun ship "Leander," had been far astern when the battle opened, and they now came up in the darkness. As they approached the entrance to the bay they saw a great ship fast upon the rocks. It was the "Culloden," which had skirted the shoal too closely and had gone aground. Troubridge, her gallant captain, with lantern and voice warned the ships that followed him, and they passed on into the fight. "Her misfortune was great," wrote Nelson, "in getting aground, while her more fortunate companions were in the full tide of happiness." There rings out the joy of battle. The two fresh seventy-fours anchored on either side of the "Orient" just as the "Bellérophon," crushed



THE BLOWING UP OF THE "L'ORIENT" DURING THE BATTLE OF THE NILE.

After the painting by De Louthembourg.

by the fire of the great 120-gun ship, drifted disabled out of action. Then followed the tragic climax of the fight. Admiral Brueys already lay dead on the "Orient," when, a little before nine o'clock, she was seen to be on fire astern. The British guns were at once directed on the spot, in order to make it impossible to put the fire out. Speedily the flames leapt up the tarred rigging, and before long the great ship was in a blaze from end to end. At a quarter to ten she blew up with an explosion that shook the neighbouring ships through all their timbers. In some of them the flying fragments started fires, but they were prepared against the danger and quickly put them out. The tremendous catastrophe so appalled those who watched it on both fleets, that for ten minutes not a gun was fired, and a great silence fell upon the scene. Then the terrible cannonade broke out again, and did not finally die away until three in the morning. By that time six of the French ships had hauled down their flags, and the "Orient" had blown up. Six still had their colours flying, but at daybreak three of the six were seen to be ashore disabled. They had slipped their cables to avoid the coming danger, just before the "Orient" blew up. About noon the other three made sail to escape, and one, the "Timoléon," went ashore in doing so. Two got away, the British ships being too disabled aloft to chase. These were the "Guillaume Tell" and the "Généreux," under Villeneuve, the rear-admiral,

who lived to be beaten and captured at Trafalgar. Both ships were taken in the Mediterranean later on.

The effect of this tremendous blow has already been described. Far-off India was delivered from all fear of invasion by the great sea-fight thousands of miles away; Egypt before long was recovered from the enemy, and frightened Sicily was safe at last. Napoleon went home a few months later, and the army that he had left to its fate gave way to despair. "Here we are," they said, "abandoned in this barbarous country, without communication with home, without hope of return." The mastery that they had won on land was fruitless, from the moment that the mastery of the sea had passed to Nelson's fleet.

#### V. TRAFALGAR.

After the victory of the Nile, Nelson had that Gazette to himself of which he had dreamed. He was made Lord Nelson of the Nile, thanked by Parliament, and given a pension of £2000 a year. From all over Europe decorations and honours poured in upon him, the gifts of sovereigns whom his great victory had freed from anxiety, and who saw the salvation of their countries in the Sea Power of England.

There is no space to tell the tale of Copenhagen. It is time now to pass to the crowning glory of Trafalgar.



In October, 1801, peace had been made, but it did not last long. England and France were both tired, but both unbeaten, and Napoleon only used the opportunity which the peace gave him to prepare for a fresh war. It would have been folly to wait and let him strike the first blow at his own chosen moment ; so in May, 1803, England declared war again, and for nearly two years fought on without a single ally.

The interval of peace Nelson spent at the home that he had lately bought at Merton, an hour's drive from London, the only home of his own that he ever had in England. From that dear home he set out, when war was declared, and he was only to visit it again for three short weeks before he died. He was sent now to take command of the Mediterranean fleet, and, after visiting some of the important stations under his command, he joined it off Toulon on the 8th July, 1803, and hoisted his flag upon the "Victory." For more than two years from that day he never went outside her. Other officers might go ashore, but he would not. The sailors could not go, and the confinement and discomfort which they had to suffer he would suffer with them.

It was war to the death now. Napoleon at last knew what Sea Power meant. "To live without commerce, without shipping, without colonies, subjected to the unjust will of our enemies, is to live as Frenchmen should not," he said in his address to the nation. The German emperor might have

written the words ! To live so did not mean ruin to France, for the soil of France can supply most of the necessaries of life to its people ; but it would mean quick ruin to England, whose people live on foreign food, and whose great manufactures would cease if the cotton and wool and other raw material did not come in constantly across the sea.

Napoleon saw that he could not become master of Europe till he had beaten England, and that to beat England he must command the sea. He need not win a battle. If only the British fleets could be deceived, and lured to a distance, so that his ships might command the Straits of Dover for a few days, the thing was done ; or so he thought. For two years he schemed and prepared, and in the spring of 1805 he was ready. A great army had been gathered at Boulogne, and the transports were waiting. It was then that he set his fleets in motion. He had twenty ships at Brest, ten at Toulon, five at Rochefort, and there were fifteen Spaniards in Ferrol and Cadiz. The Toulon and Rochefort fleets were to break out, deceive, if they could, the watching frigates, and sail for the West Indies. There they were to wait for forty days for the Brest fleet, spending the interval in seizing islands and sugar fleets, and then come swiftly back again and occupy the Channel. Napoleon expected that, when his fleets disappeared from sight, England would be torn with anxiety. She would not know where the blow was to fall, and she would scatter her ships

to protect colonies and trade routes in all the seas. Before these ships could be recalled and concentrated, he hoped that his fleets would have seized the Straits of Dover, and his great army would be in England. Once that army had landed he believed that he would have England on her knees. That his great plan failed was due to Nelson's genius. Though England did not know it, it had failed before Trafalgar. Nelson's dogged pursuit of the Toulon fleet had ruined it. Villeneuve tried hard to escape him, but he would not be thrown off. He followed the French to the West Indies; he followed them back again. "Make us masters of the Straits of Dover, be it but for four or five days," wrote Napoleon to Villeneuve, but it could not be done.

The wait off Toulon was long and weary. To those at home it seemed, no doubt, that nothing was being done. It has been the same with the Grand Fleet in the northern waters. The words that Captain Mahan used of the watch off Toulon he would have used again to-day, had he lived to see history repeat itself. It "saved England," he wrote. "The world has never seen a more impressive demonstration of the influence of sea power upon its history. Those far-distant, storm-beaten ships, upon which the Grand Army never looked, stood between it and the dominion of the world." So again the fleets of England have saved the world from a German conqueror, under whose rule men and countries

would be like pieces in a game, or like helpless and dishonoured slaves unable to speak or act save as their master bade them.

On the 17th January, 1805, Villeneuve broke out of Toulon, but a storm came on, and he had to go back to repair damage to his ships. Nelson learnt from the frigates that he was out, but they did not know that he had gone back again. He took up a station where he expected to meet the French, if they were sailing for Egypt as he supposed. When they did not appear he went once more to Alexandria to look for them. It was late in February before he heard, on his way back, that they had returned to Toulon. Then, just as in 1798, the wind was contrary, and the voyage back was slow. On the 30th March Villeneuve started once more. He was watched by the British frigates, but he managed to throw them off by a sudden change of course in the night. The news reached Nelson on the 4th April. Again he fell back off Sicily so as to lie across the path to Egypt. But no French came. There was a fortnight of the old harassing anxiety, and then, on the 19th, he heard that Villeneuve had passed the Straits of Gibraltar on the 8th. The start was long, and contrary winds made it longer, for it was the 6th May before Nelson reached Gibraltar. Then came the great question, Where had the Toulon fleet gone? It might have sailed for Brest, or for Ireland, or for the West Indies. Nelson went up the Portuguese coast in search of

news, but could hear nothing definite. At the best it was only probable that the West Indies were the goal. It was Nelson's charge to watch that fleet and see that it did no mischief. He did not wait for orders. Without more delay he decided to leave his station and cross the Atlantic to the West Indies. The risks were great. Villeneuve's fleet was now eighteen ships-of-the-line. If Nelson found it he would have to offer battle with only ten. If he did not find it, if it had gone elsewhere, it might do untold mischief, and, as he had acted without orders, his career would probably be ruined. "If I fail," he wrote, "if they are not gone to the West Indies, I shall be blamed: to be burnt in effigy or Westminster Abbey is my alternative." Fears and alarms work sudden changes in the minds of the crowd. They worship a man as a hero one day, and burn him in effigy the next. So it was with Hawke. When they heard that the Brest fleet had got to sea, they burnt him in effigy in London almost at the same moment that he was daring all the dangers of the Bay of Quiberon.

On the 11th May Nelson started in pursuit. To make a long story short, he reached the West Indies before Villeneuve had had time to do any mischief; his arrival frightened him away; he followed after him again across the Atlantic, and arrived in Europe before him. Then, when he heard that Villeneuve had put into Ferrol, again without orders, he left his station and took his war-worn ships to join the

Channel fleet off Ushant, raising it to the number of thirty-five ships-of-the-line, lying between the Brest fleet and Villeneuve at Ferrol. Villeneuve dared not face the odds. Instead of sailing for Brest and the Channel, as his orders were, he turned back for Cadiz, and Napoleon's great scheme was shattered. He abandoned it for ever, and set his army then and there in motion eastwards against Austria. But Nelson by that time was in England. He had left his fleet with Admiral Cornwallis off Ushant, and had come home for the last time. He was hailed as the saviour of the great fleet of sugar ships, of the West Indies, of England itself. To the people it was he and his ships, no matter what other admirals and fleets might do (and some had done but ill), that had stood, and still stood, between them and all the horrors of invasion.

For England did not yet know that the danger had passed ; that Napoleon was beaten without a battle, and had changed all his plans. It was only known that Villeneuve had joined the Spanish fleet in Cadiz, and that nearly forty ships-of-the-line lay there. The anxiety had been very great when the Toulon fleet vanished from sight, and no one could say where it would reappear. That there might be no such anxiety again, the Government resolved to hold Villeneuve fast in Cadiz, or force him to fight if he came out. There was only one man for the task. The country would only feel safe if Nelson lay in front of Cadiz. He had left Merton on the

night of the 13th September to drive to Portsmouth, and in his private diary he wrote this prayer :

“ At half-past ten drove from dear dear Merton, where I left all which I hold dear in this world, to go to serve my King and Country. May the great God whom I adore enable me to fulfil the expectations of my Country ; and if it is His good pleasure that I should return, my thanks will never cease being offered up to the Throne of His Mercy. If it is His good Providence to cut short my days upon earth, I bow with the greatest submission, relying that he will protect those so dear to me, that I leave behind. His will be done : Amen, Amen, Amen.”

The next morning he went on board the “ Victory,” and, as he came down to the landing-place at Portsmouth the people gathered about him, and “ pressed forward to obtain a sight of his face. Many were in tears, and many knelt down before him, and blessed him as he passed. England has had many heroes, but never one who so entirely possessed the love of his fellow countrymen as Nelson.” So wrote the poet Southey, who lived through those great days. The scene touched Nelson deeply. He turned to Captain Hardy, the captain of the “ Victory,” and said, “ I had their huzzas before, now I have their hearts.”

The following day he sailed to join the fleet off Cadiz. He was going out to save England and to die. He knew in his heart that he would never see his home again. From the time that he left,

there hung over him the foreboding of coming death. How these things happen no man knows. He longed to live, but the feeling that death was to be his lot abated nothing of his cheerfulness and confidence. His first thought, almost his only thought, was for England and those under his charge.

On the 28th September he reached the fleet. He was welcomed as only those are welcomed who are greatly loved. The officers came on board and dined with him by turns. He explained to them his great plan of attack; the "Nelson touch," he called it. "It was like an electric shock," he said. "All approved . . . From admirals downwards, it was repeated 'It must succeed, if ever they will allow us to get at them.' " That Villeneuve must come out all knew. Cadiz could not possibly feed his great fleet and its 30,000 sailors for more than a few weeks. Everything was done to tempt him to come out. The main body of the fleet was withdrawn fifty miles from shore. Only frigates cruised off the mouth of the harbour. A small squadron of fast battle-ships lay further out, and repeated the signals of the frigates to the fleet.

The cares and anxieties of a Commander-in-Chief press heavily and always, and Nelson was worn out with many years of ceaseless work, with many wounds, and constant illness; and over him hung the shadow of approaching death. Men in such case are often irritable and impatient. There are few who can think of the very humblest, as he always did.



Yet, if they can so think, the love and confidence they win are beyond all price. It was on one of the days just before the battle, that a mail was made up for England. It was likely to be the last chance of writing home, before the enemy came out. "The letters had been collected as usual, the bags were all on board the departing vessel, and she herself, under full sail, had got already some distance away, when Nelson saw a midshipman come up and speak to Lieutenant Pasco, the signal officer, who, upon hearing what was said, stamped his foot in evident vexation, and uttered an exclamation. The admiral, of whose nearness Pasco was not aware, called him, and asked him what was the matter. 'Nothing that need trouble your Lordship,' was the reply. 'You are not the man to lose your temper for nothing,' rejoined Nelson. 'What was it?' 'Well, if you must know, my lord, I will tell you. You see that cockswain,' pointing to one of the most active of the petty officers; 'we have not a better man on board the "Victory," and the message which put me out was this. I was told that he was so busy receiving and getting off the mail-bags, that he forgot to drop his own letter to his wife into one of them, and he has just discovered it in his pocket.' 'Hoist a signal to bring her back,' was Nelson's instant command; 'who knows that he may not fall in action to-morrow. His letter shall go with the rest,'—and the dispatch vessel was brought back for that alone."

It was on the 19th October in the morning, that the signal came through from the frigates, "The enemy are coming out of port." They were thirty-three ships-of-the-line—eighteen French and fifteen Spanish. Against them Nelson had twenty-seven. Villeneuve had no hope of victory. Defeat was certain, for he had to leave Cadiz, and Nelson lay across his path. It was not till the afternoon of the 20th, that the whole of his fleet got clear of the bay. The main bodies of the two fleets did not see each other on that day. At midnight they were still ten miles apart. Three miles away from the French lay the "Euryalus," commanded by Captain Blackwood, who had charge of the frigate squadron, and through the night the chain of frigates repeated to the flagship, by signal guns and coloured lights, news of each movement of the enemy.

The morning of the 21st, Trafalgar Day, dawned clear. The wind was very light from the west, and the sea was calm, but a great swell was rolling in from the westward, giving warning of the storm that followed the battle, and caused the loss of so many of the shattered prizes in the days that followed. With daylight the two fleets first saw each other. The French and Spaniards lay in line of battle, stretching over five miles of sea, roughly north and south. A little before seven o'clock Nelson, approaching from the west, with the wind behind him, formed his fleet in two columns about a mile apart. The northern column of thirteen

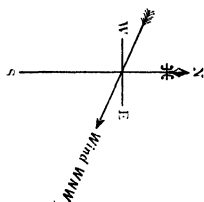
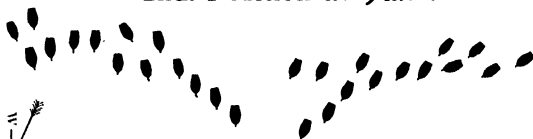
ships he led himself in the "Victory"; the southern of fourteen was led by Vice-Admiral Collingwood, his second-in-command, in the "Royal Sovereign." The plan of battle, the "Nelson touch," sent these two long columns down before the wind at right angles to the enemy's line. They were to break that line in two places, Nelson's just ahead of the centre, where he expected Villeneuve to be, and Collingwood's about twelve ships from their rear. It would be some time before the ships in the French van, which were not engaged, could get back to help the rest of the fleet, even if they could make up their minds to help at all; and Nelson expected that, by the time they were in a position to do anything, the victory would already be complete. Everything turned out as he had expected, and he lived to know it. But time passed slowly from seven o'clock till noon. The wind was so light that the ships were sailing less than two miles an hour, and the French were still far off.

Early in the morning Captain Blackwood had been summoned on board the "Victory," and Nelson kept him there till the ship was under fire. To his presence we owe much of our knowledge of what Nelson said and did during that morning. The risk which the admiral was taking in leading the column was apparent to everybody. For the last half-hour before closing the French line, the "Victory" would be the mark for the concentrated fire of about a quarter of the French fleet. That fire

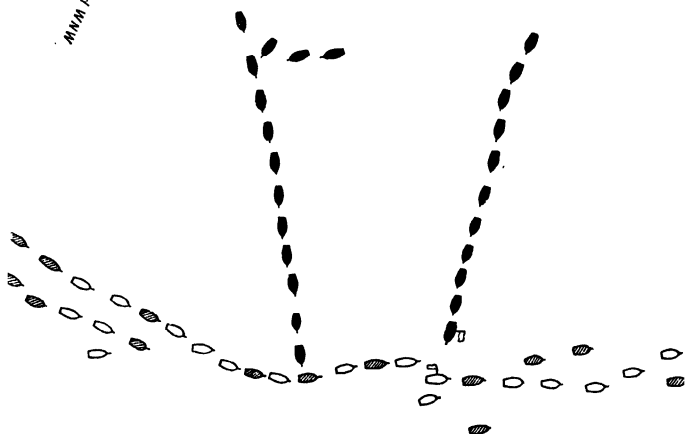
# Position of the British Fleet at Daylight on October the 21st. 1805



## 2nd. Position at 9 a.m.



## 3rd. Position at Noon



# THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR October 21, 1805

(Adapted from the Naval Chronicle Plan)

● British ○ French ▨ Spanish

would rake her decks, as she approached, from end to end, while she could make no reply. Twenty men, in fact, were killed and thirty wounded, before ever she fired a shot. Blackwood tried to persuade Nelson to hoist his flag on board the "Euryalus," and direct the battle from her, lying outside the line, but he made no answer to the suggestion, except to have more sail made upon the "Victory." A little later, about 9.30, when the fleets were still six miles apart, Blackwood tried again. This time he proposed that one or two ships should be allowed to pass the "Victory." "Let them go," said Nelson, and the "Téméraire" was hailed to go ahead. But the "Victory" was a fast ship, and, unless sail was shortened, the "Téméraire" could not pass her in time to lead into the enemy's line. Nelson, however, would not have a sail touched, and when the "Téméraire" once came a little closer than he liked, he called out to her commander, "I'll thank you, Captain Harvey, to keep your proper station, which is astern of the 'Victory.'" He could not bring himself to yield the place of honour and of danger. He wished to show the fleet what to do, and he knew that, if he could break through the enemy's line, those that followed would have a much less difficult task. The French line had not been well formed. The lightness of the wind prevented the ships from getting into station, and they lay in a rough crescent, in some cases two and three abreast, masking each other's fire. But for all that the line

was dangerously strong; perhaps stronger, for it would be the more difficult to pierce.

About eleven o'clock Nelson went down to his cabin, which, now that the ship was cleared for action, and all wooden partitions had been taken down, was only curtained off from the rest of the deck. There he was seen upon his knees by one who entered, writing in his private diary. They were the last words that his pen ever wrote, and surely there could be no nobler prayer in the heart of a commander on the day of battle.

"May the Great God, whom I worship, grant to my Country, and for the benefit of Europe in general, a great and glorious victory; and may no misconduct in anyone tarnish it, and may humanity after victory be the predominant feature in the British fleet. For myself, individually, I commit my life to Him who made me, and may His blessing light upon my endeavours for serving my Country faithfully. To Him I resign myself and the just cause which is entrusted to me to defend. Amen. Amen. Amen."

A little later he was on deck again, and it was some time before twelve o'clock that he made the famous signal. He proposed at first to say, "Nelson confides that every man will do his duty." It was suggested to him to put "England" for "Nelson," and he welcomed the suggestion. The signal officer then proposed "expects" for "confides," because there was a single signal for the former word, whereas

the latter would have to be spelt out letter by letter, and time was pressing. So it was that the great signal was composed, and it was received with cheers by the men, as it passed from ship to ship.

A few minutes more, and at 12.10 the "Royal Sovereign," at the head of the other column, and then about two miles distant from the "Victory," broke through the enemy's line, after enduring the same furious concentrated fire for which Nelson had still to wait. At 12.20 the "Bucentaure," Ville-neuve's flagship, fired a shot at the "Victory" to try the range, but it fell short. A few minutes later, however, a second came alongside at a range of a mile and a quarter. Blackwood was then sent away to his ship, and as he left he took Nelson's hand and said, "I trust, my Lord, that on my return to the 'Victory,' which will be as soon as possible, I shall find your Lordship well and in possession of twenty prizes." Nelson's answer was, "God bless you, Blackwood, I shall never speak to you again." Then a shot from the "Bucentaure" passed through the mainsail, and at once seven or eight ships about her opened fire, hoping to cripple the "Victory" aloft, and so delay the moment when her terrible broadside could be brought to bear. The sails were riddled, and men began to fall fast. The mizzen topmast was shot away, and then the wheel. And all the while not a shot from the "Victory." But her moment was coming. At one o'clock she passed under the stern of the "Bucentaure" at a



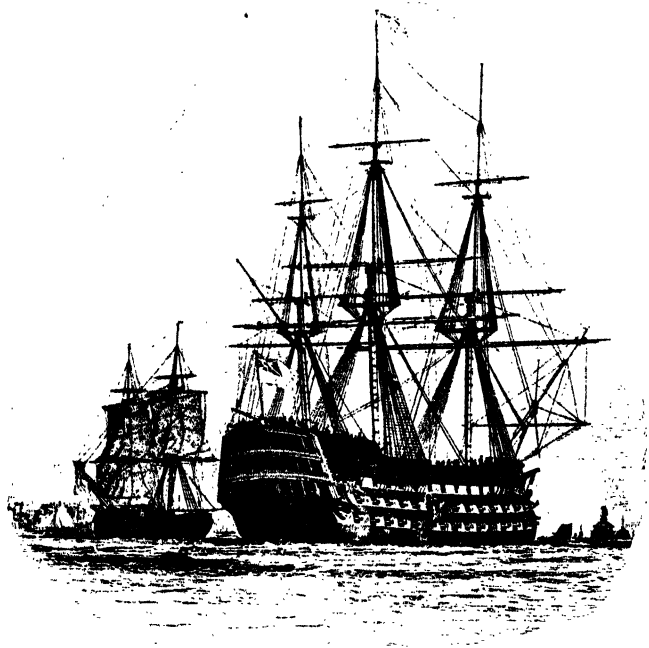
THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR.  
After the painting by Stanfield.



distance of only thirty feet, and her double-shotted guns began to speak. Each as it bore was fired, raking the unhappy ship from end to end. Twenty guns were dismounted, and four hundred men killed and wounded, by that one broadside. Behind the "Bucentaure" lay two or three other ships, and alongside one of these, the "Redoutable," a seventy-four, the "Victory" was steered at ten minutes past one, and they lay side by side with the great guns thundering.

Admiral and captain had for the time no more to do, so they paced together up and down the quarter-deck. Only fifty feet above them, in the mizzen top of the "Redoutable," was a party of sharpshooters, and fifteen minutes after the duel between the two ships began, Nelson was hit by one of their bullets. "They have done for me at last," he said, and added, "My backbone is shot through." They carried him below, and there he lingered for three hours in torturing pain. But his mind was clear to the end, and he wanted to know how the fight was going. The "Bucentaure" had hauled down her flag at five minutes past two, and the cheers of the seamen at their guns told from time to time of the surrender of other ships. But this was not enough. He sent for Hardy : he wanted to know all that an admiral should know of the progress of the battle. When Hardy did not come, he grew anxious and impatient. "Will nobody bring Hardy to me ? He must be killed," he said again and again.

But Hardy could not come. The enemy's van, which at first had made no attempt to come to the help of the centre and rear, had been called down



NELSON'S "VICTORY," 104 GUNS, BUILT IN 1765.

After a drawing by E. W. Cooke.

by Villeneuve's signal before the "Bucentaure" surrendered, and ten fresh ships were approaching. It was for Hardy on the flagship to make provision for dealing with their attack. The rear ships of

Nelson's column were still coming into action. Two of these covered the battered "Victory," and at last Hardy could go to Nelson's side.

" ' Well, Hardy,' said Nelson, ' how goes the battle? How goes the day with us ? ' ' Very well, my Lord,' replied Hardy. ' We have got twelve or fourteen of the enemy's ships in our possession, but five<sup>1</sup> of their van have tacked, and show an intention of bearing down upon the " Victory." I have therefore called two or three of our fresh ships round us, and have no doubt of giving them a drubbing.' ' I hope none of *our* ships have struck, Hardy.' ' No, my Lord,' was the answer, ' there is no fear of that.' " Then Nelson spoke a few words of himself and of his wishes, and Hardy went back to the deck. An hour later, about four o'clock, he came down again. Nelson was still conscious, but the end was near. The victory by this time was complete, but it was difficult to see how many ships had been captured, and some still held out. In the end it proved to be eighteen. Hardy told Nelson it was certainly fourteen or fifteen. " That is well," said Nelson, but he added, " I bargained for twenty." Then, thinking of the coming storm, " Anchor, Hardy, anchor." " If I live, I'll anchor," he added afterwards. But life was ebbing fast. " Don't throw me overboard," he said to Hardy ; and then came the farewell " Kiss me, Hardy," and the captain knelt

<sup>1</sup> The other five passed further away to leeward and did not threaten the " Victory."

down and kissed his cheek. "Now I am satisfied," he said, "Thank God, I have done my duty." Once more, before he went, Hardy knelt by him and kissed him, but Nelson could no longer see him. "Who is that?" he asked; and when Hardy told him, he said, "God bless you, Hardy."

Then the pain and suffering grew greater. "Drink, drink," he called, "fan, fan," "rub, rub." And every now and then he said again, "Thank God, I have done my duty." The last words that he was heard to utter by his secretary, who bent over him rubbing his chest, were "God and my Country." Then, very quietly, he died. In the log of the "Victory" his passing was recorded in these words: "Partial firing continued until 4.30, when a victory having been reported to the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Nelson, K.B., he died of his wound."

England was saved, and her saviour was dead; but his spirit lives, and will live, so long as British fleets keep the waters of the world. To him, to his teaching, and to his peerless deeds, England owes her Empire and the Sea Power by which she holds it still.



