

## CHAPTER XXX.

HOW THE ADMIRAL JOHN HAWKINS TESTIFIED AGAINST  
CROAKERS.

"Oh, where be these gay Spaniards,  
Which make so great a boast O?  
Oh, they shall eat the gray-goose feather,  
And we shall eat the roast O!"

*Cornish Song.*

WHAT if the spectators who last summer gazed with just pride upon the noble port of Plymouth, its vast break-water spanning the Sound, its arsenals and docks, its two estuaries filled with gallant ships, and watched the great screw-liners turning within their own length by force invisible, or threading the crowded fleets with the ease of the tiniest boat;—what if, by some magic turn, the nineteenth century, and all the magnificence of its wealth and science, had vanished—as it may vanish hereafter—and they had found themselves thrown back three hundred years into the pleasant summer days of 1588.

Mount Edgecombe is still there, beautiful as ever: but where are the docks, and where is Devonport? No vast drydock roofs rise at the water's edge. Drake's island carries but a paltry battery, just raised by the man whose name it bears; Mount Wise is a lone gentleman's house among fields; the citadel is a pop-gun fort, which a third class steamer would shell into rubble for an afternoon's amusement. And the shipping where are they? The floating castles of the Hamoaze have dwindled to a few crawling lime-hoys; and the Catwater is packed, not as now, with merchant craft, but with the ships who will tomorrow begin the greatest sea-fight which the world has ever seen.

There they lie, a paltry squadron enough in modern eyes; the largest of them not equal in size to a six-and-thirty gun frigate, carrying less weight of metal than one of our new gun-boats, and able to employ even that at not more than a quarter of our modern range. Would our modern spectators, just come down by rail for a few hours, to see the cavalry embark, and return tomorrow in time for dinner,

have looked down upon that petty port, and petty fleet, with a contemptuous smile, and began some flippant speech about the progress of intellect, and the triumphs of science, and our benighted ancestors? They would have done so, doubt it not, if they belonged to the many who gaze on those very triumphs as on a raree-show to feed their silly wonder, or use and enjoy them without thankfulness or understanding, as the ox eats the clover thrust into his rack, without knowing or caring how it grew. But if any of them were of the class by whom those very triumphs have been achieved; the thinkers and the workers, who, instead of entering lazily into other men's labors, as the mob does, labor themselves; who know by hard experience the struggles, the self-restraints, the disappointments, the slow and staggering steps, by which the discoverer reaches to his prize; then the smile of those men would not have been one of pity, but rather of filial love. For they would have seen in those outwardly paltry armaments the potential germ of that mightier one which now loads the Black Sea waves; they would have been aware, that to produce it, with such materials and knowledge as then existed, demanded an intellect, an energy, a spirit of progress and invention, equal, if not superior, to those of which we now so loudly boast.

But if, again, he had been a student of men rather than of machinery, he would have found few nobler companies on whom to exercise his discernment than he might have seen in the little terrace bowling-green behind the Pelican Inn, on the afternoon of the nineteenth of July. Chatting in groups, or lounging over the low wall which commanded a view of the Sound and the shipping far below, were gathered almost every notable man of the Plymouth fleet, the whole posse comitatus of "England's forgotten worthies." The Armada has been scattered by a storm. Lord Howard has been out to looked for it, as far as the Spanish coast; but the wind has shifted to the south, and fearing lest the Dons should pass him, he has returned to Plymouth, uncertain whether the Armada will come after all or not. Slip on for awhile, like Prince Hal, the drawer's apron; come in through the rose-clad door which opens from the tavern, with a tray of long-necked Dutch glasses, and a silver tankard of wine, and look round you at the gallant captains, who are waiting for



the Spanish Armada, as lions in their lair might wait for the passing herd of deer.

See those five talking earnestly, in the centre of a ring, which longs to overhear, and yet is too respectful to approach close. Those soft long eyes and pointed chin you recognize already; they are Walter Raleigh's. The fair young man in the flame colored doublet, whose arm is round Raleigh's neck, is Lord Sheffield; opposite them stands, by the side of Sir Richard Grenville, a man as stately even as he, Lord Sheffield's uncle, the Lord Charles Howard of Effingham, Lord High Admiral of England; next to him is his son-in-law, Sir Robert Southwell, captain of the Elizabeth Jones: but who is that short, sturdy, plainly dressed man, who stands with legs a little apart, and hands behind his back, looking up, with keen gray eyes, into the face of each speaker? His cap is in his hands, so you can see the bullet head of crisp brown hair and the wrinkled forehead, as well as the high cheek bones, the short square face, the broad temples, the thick lips, which are yet firm as granite. A coarse plebeian stamp of man; yet the whole figure and attitude are that of boundless determination, self-possession, energy; and when at last he speaks a few blunt words, all eyes are turned respectfully upon him;—for his name is Francis Drake.

A burly, grizzled elder in greasy sea-stained garments contrasting oddly with the huge gold chain about his neck, waddles up, as if he had been born and had lived ever since, in a gale of wind at sea. The upper half of his sharp dogged visage seems of brick-red leather, the lower of badger's fur; and as he claps Drake on the back, and, with broad Devon twang, shouts, "Be you a coming to drink your wine, Francis Drake, or be you not?—saving your presence, my Lord;" the Lord High Admiral only laughs, and bids Drake go and drink his wine; for John Hawkins, Admiral of the Port is the Patriarch of Plymouth seamen, if Drake be their hero, and says and does pretty much what he likes in any company on earth; not to mention that today's prospect of an Armageddon fight has shaken him altogether out of his usual crabbed reserve, and made him overflow with loquacious good-humor, even to his rival Drake.

So they push through the crowd, wherein is many another man whom one would gladly have spoken with face to face on earth. Martin Frobisher and John Davis

are sitting on that bench, smoking tobacco from long silver pipes; and by them are Fenton and Withrington, who have both tried to follow Drake's path round the world, and failed, though by no fault of their own. The man who pledges them better luck next time, is George Fenner, known to "the seven Portugals," Leicester's pet, and captain of the galleon which Elizabeth bought of him. That short prim man in the huge yellow ruff, with sharp chin, minute imperial, and self-satisfied smile is Richard Hawkins, the Complete Seaman, Admiral John's hereafter famous and hapless son. The elder who is talking with him is his good uncle William, whose monument still stands, or should stand, in Deptford Church; for Admiral John set it up there but one year after this time; and on it record how he was, "A worshiper of the true religion, an especial benefactor of poor sailors, a most just arbiter in most difficult causes, and of a singular faith, piety and prudence." That, and the fact that he got creditably through some sharp work at Porto Rico, is all I know of William Hawkins; but if you or I, reader, can have as much or half as much said of us when we have to follow him, we shall have no reason to complain.

There is John Drake, Sir Francis' brother, ancestor of the present stock of Drakes; and there is George, his nephew, a man not overwise, who has been round the world with Amyas; and there is Amyas himself, talking to one who answers him with fierce, curt sentences, Captain Barker of Bristol, brother of the hapless Andrew Barker who found John Oxenham's guns, and, owing to a mutiny among his men, perished by the Spaniards in Honduras, twelve years ago. Barker is now captain of the Victory, one of the queen's best ships; and he has his accounts to settle with the Dons, as Amyas has; so they are both growling together in a corner, while all the rest are as merry as the flies upon the vine above their heads.

But who is the aged man who sits upon a bench, against the sunny south wall of the tavern, his long white beard flowing almost to his waist, his hands upon his knees, his palsied head moving slowly from side to side, to catch the scraps of discourse of the passing captains? His great grandchild, a little maid of six, has laid her curly head upon his knees, and his grand-daughter, a buxom black-eyed dame of thirty, stands by him and tends him, half as nurse, and half, too, as showman, for he seems an object



of curiosity to all the captains, and his fair nurse has to entreat again and again, "Bless you sir, please now, don't give him no liquor, poor old soul, the doctor says." It is old Martin Cockrem, father of the ancient host, aged himself beyond the years of men, who can recollect the bells of Plymouth ringing for the coronation of Henry the Eighth, and who was the first Englishman, perhaps, who ever set foot on the soil of the New World. There he sits, like an old Druid Tor of primeval granite amid the tall wheat and rich clover crops of a modern farm. He has seen the death of old Europe and the birth-throes of the new. Go to him, and question him; for his senses are quick as ever; and just now the old man seems uneasy. He is peering with rheumy eyes through the groups, and seems listening for a well-known voice.

"There 'a be again! Why don't 'a come, then?"

"Quiet, Gramfer, and don't trouble his worship."

"Here an hour, and never speak to poor old Martin! I say, sir?"—and the old man feebly plucks Amyas' cloak as he passes. "I say, captain, do'e tell young master old Martin's looking for him."

"Marcy, Gramfer, where's your manners? Don't be vexed, sir, he'm a'most a babe, and tejus at times, mortal."

"Young master who?" says Amyas, bending down to the old man, and, smiling to the dame to let him leave his way.

"Master Hawkins; he'm never been a-near me all day." Off goes Amyas; and, of course, lays hold of the sleeve of young Richard Hawkins; but as he is in act to speak, the dame lays hold of his, laughing and blushing.

"No, sir, not Mr. Richard, sir; Admiral John, sir, his father; he always calls him young master, poor old soul!" and she points to the grizzled beard and the face scarred and tanned with fifty years of fight and storm.

Amyas goes to the Admiral, and gives his message.

"Mercy on me! Where be my wits? Iss, I'm a-coming," says the old hero in his broadest Devon, waddles off to the old man, and begins lugging at a pocket. "Here, Martin, I've got mun, I've got mun, man alive; but his Lordship kept me so. Lookee here, then! Why, I do get so lusty of late, Martin, I can't get to my pockets!"

And out struggle a piece of tarred string, a bundle of papers, a thimble, a piece of pudding-tobacco, and last of

all, a little paper of Muscovado sugar—then as great a delicacy as any French bonbons would be now—which he thrusts into the old man's eager and trembling hand.

Old Martin begins dipping his finger into it, and rubbing it on his toothless gums, smiling and nodding thanks to his young master; while the little maid at his knee, unrebuked, takes her share also.

"There, Admiral Leigh; both ends meet—gramfers and babies! You and I shall be like to that one day, young Samson!"

"We shall have slain a good many Philistines first, I hope."

"Amen! so be it; but look to mun! so fine a sailor as ever drank liquor; and now greedy after a bit of sweet trade! 'tis piteous like; but I bring mun a bit whenever I come, and he looks for it. He's one of my own flesh like, is old Martin. He sailed with my father Captain Will, when they was both two little cracks aboard of a trawler; and my father went up, and here I am—he didn't, and there he is. We'm up now, we Hawkinses. We may be down again some day."

"Never, I trust," said Amyas.

"Tain't no use trusting, young man; you go and do. I do hear too much of that there from my lad. Let they ministers preach till they'm black in the face, works is the trade!" with a nudge in Amyas' ribs. "Faith can't save, nor charity nether. There, you tell with him, while I go play bowls with Drake. He'll tell you a sight of stories. You ask him about good King Hal, now, just—"

And off waddled the Port Admiral.

"You have seen good King Henry, then, father?" said Amyas, interested.

The old man's eyes lighted at once, and he stopped mumbling his sugar.

"Seed mun? Iss, I reckon. I was with Captain Will when he went to meet the Frenchman there to Calais—at the Field, the Field—"

"The Field of the Cloth of Gold, Gramfer," suggested the dame.

"That's it. Seed mun? Iss, fegs. Oh, he was a king! The face o' mun like a rising sun, and the back o' mun so broad as that there" (and he held out his palsied arm), "and the voice of mun! Oh, to hear mun swear! Wasn't it merry, oh, 'twas royal!—Seed mun? Iss, fegs! And I was



seed mun do what few has; I've seed mun christle like any child."

"What—cry?" said Amyas. "I shouldn't have thought there was much cry in him."

"You think what you like——"

"Gramfer, Gramfer, don't you be rude, now——"

"Let him go on," said Amyas.

"I seed mun christle; and, oh dear, how he did put hands on mun's face; and 'Oh, my gentlemen,' says he, 'my gentlemen! Oh, my gallant men!' Them was his very words."

"But when?"

"Why, Captain Will had just come to the Hard—that's to Portsmouth—to speak with mun, and the barge Royal lay again the Hard—so; and our boot alongside—so; and the king he standeth as it might be there, above my head, on the quay edge, and she come in near abreast of us, looking most royal to behold, poor dear! and went to cast about. And Captain Will, saith he, 'Them lower ports is cruel near the water;' for she had not more than a sixteen inches to spare in the nether overloop, as I heard after. And saith he, 'That won't do for going to windward in a say, Martin.' And as the words came out of mun's mouth, your worship, there was a bit of a flaw from the westward, sharp like, and overboard goeth my cap, and hitth against the wall, and as I stooped to pick it up, I heard a cry, and it was all over!"

"He is telling of the Mary Rose, sir."

"I guessed so."

"All over: and the cry of mun, and the screech of mun! Oh, sir, up to the very heavens! And the king he screeched right out like any maid, 'Oh my gentlemen, oh my gallant men!' and as she lay on her beam-ends, sir, and just a-settling, the very last souls I seen was that man's father, and that man's. I knowed mun by their armor."

And he pointed to Sir George Carew and Sir Richard Grenville.

"Iss! Iss! Drowned like rattens. Drowned like rattens!"

"Now; you mustn't trouble his worship any more."

"Trouble? Let him tell till midnight, I shall be well pleased," said Amyas, sitting down on the bench by him.

"Drawer! ale—and a parcel of tobacco."

And Amyas settled himself to listen, while the old man purred to himself—

"Iss. They likes to hear old Martin. All the captains look upon old Martin."

"Hillo, Amyas!" said Cary, "who's your friend? Here's a man been telling me wonders about the River Plate. We should go thither for luck there next time."

"River Plate?" said old Martin. "It's I knows about the River Plate; none so well. Who'd ever been there, nor heard of it nether, before Captain Will and me went, and I lived among the savages a whole year; and audacious civil I found 'em if they'd had but shirts to their backs; and so was the prince o' mun, that Captain Will brought home to King Henry; leaswise he died on the voyage; but the wild folk took it cruel well, for you see, we was always as civil with them as Christians, and if we hadn't been, I should not have been here now."

"What year was that?"

"In the fifteen thirty; but I was there afore, and learnt the speech o' mun; and that's why Captain Will left me to a hostage, when he tuked their prince."

"Before that?" said Cary; "why the country was hardly known before that."

The old man's eyes flashed up in triumph.

"Knowed? Iss, and you may well say that! Look ye here! Look to mun!" and he waved his hand round—

"There's captains! and I'm the father of 'em all now, now poor Captain Will's in gloory; I, Martin Cockrem! . . . Iss, I've seen a change. I mind when Tavistock Abbey was so full o' friars, and goolden idols, and sich noxious trade, as ever was a wheat-rick of rats. I mind the fight off Brest in the French wars—Oh, that was a fight, surely!—when the Regent and the French Carack were burnt side by side, being fast grappled, you see, because of Sir Thomas Knivet; and Captain Will gave him warning as he ran a-past us, saying, says he——"

"But," said Amyas, seeing that the old man was wandering away, "what do you mind about America?"

"America? I should think so! But I was a-going to tell you of the Regent—and seven hundred Englishmen burnt and drowned in her, and nine hundred French in the Brest ship, besides what we picked up. Oh, dear! But about America."



"Yes, about America. How are you the father of all the captains?"

"How? you ask my young master! Why, before the fifteen thirty, I was up the Plate with Cabot (and a cruel, fractious, ontrustful fellow he was, like all they Portingals), and bid there a year and more, and up the Paraguaio with him, diskivering no end; whereby, gentles, I was the first Englishman, I hold, that ever sot a foot on the New World, I was!"

"Then here's your health, and long life, sir!" said Amyas and Cary.

"Long life? Iss, fegs, I reckon, long enough already! Why, I mind the beginning of it all, I do. I mind when there wasn't a master mariner to Plymouth, that thought there was aught west of the Land's End except herrings. Why, they held them, pure wratches, that if you sailed right west away far enough, you'd surely come to the edge, and fall over cleve. Iss,—'twas dark parts round here, till Captain Will arose; and the first of it I mind was inside the bar of San Lucar, and he and I were boys about a ten-year-old, aboard of a Dartmouth ship, and went for wine; and there come in over the bar he that was the beginning of it all."

"Columbus?"

"Iss, fegs, he did, not a pistol-shot from us; and I saw mun stand on the poop, so plain as I see you; no great shakes of a man to look to nether; there's a sight better here, to plase me; and we was disappointed, we lads, for we surely expected to see mun with a goolden crown on, and a sceptre to a's hand, we did, and the ship o' mun all over like Solomon's temple for gloory. And I mind that same year, too, seeing Vasco de Gama, as was going out over the bar, when he found the Bona Speranza, and sailed round it to the Indies. Ah, that was the making of they rascally Portingals, it was! . . . And our crew told what they seen and heerd: but nobody minded sich things. 'Twas dark parts, and Popish, then; and nobody knowed nothing, nor got no schooling, nor cared for nothing, but scrattling up and down alongshore like to prawns in a pule. Iss, sitting in darkness, we was, and the shadow of death, till the day-spring from on high arose, and shined upon us poor out-o'-the-way folk—the Lord be praised! And now, look to mun!" and he waved his hand all round—"Look to mun!

Look to the works of the Lord! Look to the captains! Oh, blessed sight! And one's been to the Brazils, and one to the Indies, and the Spanish Main, and the North-West, and the Rooshias, and the Chinas, and up the Straits, and round the Cape, and round the world of God, too, bless His holy name; and I seed the beginning of it; and I'll see the end of it too, I will! I was born into the old times but I'll see the wondrous works of the new, yet, I will! I'll see they bloody Spaniards swept off the seas before I die, if my old eyes can reach so far as outside the Sound. I shall, I knows it. I says my prayers for it every night; don't I, Mary? You'll bate mun, sure as Judgment, you'll bate mun! The Lord'll fight for ye. Nothing'll stand against ye. I've seed it all along—ever since I was with young master to the Honduras. They can't bide the push of us! You'll bate mun off the face of the seas, and be masters of the round world, and all that therein is. And then, I'll just turn my old face to the wall, and depart in peace, according to His word.

"Deary me, now, while I've been telling with you, here've this little maid been and ate up all my sugar!"

"I'll bring you some more," said Amyas; whom the childish bathos of the last sentence moved rather to sighs than laughter.

"Will ye, then? There's a good soul, and come and tell with old Martin. He likes to see the brave young gentlemen, a-going to and fro in their ships, like Leviathan, and taking of their pastime therein. We had no such ships to our days. Ah, 'tis grand times, beautiful times surely—and you'll bring me a bit sugar?"

"You were up the Plate with Cabot?" said Cary, after a pause. "Do you mind the fair lady Miranda, Sebastian de Hurtado's wife?"

"What! her that was burnt by the Indians? Mind her? Do you mind the sun in heaven? Oh, the beauty! Oh, the ways of her! Oh, the speech of her! Never was, nor never will be! And she to die by they villains; and all for the goodness of her! Mind her? I minded nought else when she was on deck."

"Who was she?" asked Amyas of Cary.

"A Spanish angel, Amyas."

"Humph!" said Amyas. "So much the worse for her, to be born into a nation of devils."

"They'm not all so bad as that, yer honor. Her hus-



band was a proper gallant gentleman, and kind as a maid, too, and couldn't abide that De Solis' murderous doings."

"His wife must have taught it him, then," said Amyas, rising. "Where did you hear of these black swans, Cary?"

"I have heard of them, and that's enough," answered he, unwilling to stir sad recollections.

"And little enough," said Amyas. "Will, don't talk to me. The devil is not grown white because he has trod in a lime-heap."

"Or an angel black because she came down a chimney," said Cary: and so the talk ended, or rather was cut short: for the talk of all the groups was interrupted by an explosion from old John Hawkins.

"Fail? Fail? What a murrain do you hear, to talk of failing? Who made you a prophet, you scurvy, hang-in-the-wind, croaking, white-livered son of a corby-crow?"

"Heaven help us, Admiral Hawkins, who has put fire to your culverins in this fashion?" said Lord Howard.

"Who? my Lord! Croakers! my Lord! Here's a fellow calls himself the captain of a ship and her Majesty's servant, and talks about failing, as if he were a Barbican loose-kirtle trying to keep her apple-squire ashore! Blurt for him, sneak-up! say I."

"Admiral John Hawkins," quoth the offender, "you shall answer this language with your sword."

"I'll answer it with my foot; and buy me a pair of horn-tips to my shoes, like a wraxling man. Fight a croaker? Fight a frog, an owl! I fight those that dare fight, sir!"

"Sir, sir, moderate yourself. I am sure this gentleman will show himself as brave as any, when it comes to blows: but who can blame mortal man from trembling before so fearful a chance as this?"

"Let mortal man keep his tremblings to himself, then, my Lord, and not be like Solomon's madmen, casting abroad fire and death, and saying, it is only in sport. There is more than one of his kidney, your Lordship, who have not been ashamed to play Mother Shipton before their own sailors, and damp the poor fellows' hearts with crying before they're hurt, and this is one of them. I've heard him at it afore, and I'll present him, with a vengeance, though I'm no churchwarden."

"If this is really so, Admiral Hawkins——"

"It is so, my Lord! I heard only last night, down in a tavern below, such unbelieving talk as made me mad, my

Lord; and if it had not been after supper, and my hand was not over-steady, I would have let out a pottle of Alicante from some of their hoopings, and sent them to Dick Surgeon, to wrap them in swaddling-clouts, like whining babies as they are. Marry come up, what says Scripture? 'He that is fearful and faint-hearted among you, let him go and'—what? son Dick there? Thou'rt pious, and read'st thy Bible. What's that text? A mortal fine one it is, too."

"'He that is fearful and faint-hearted among you, let him go back,'" quoth the Complete Seaman. "Captain Merryweather, as my father's command, as well as his years, forbid his answering your challenge, I shall repute it an honor to entertain his quarrel myself—place, time, and weapons being at your choice."

"Well spoken, son Dick!—and like a true courtier, too! Ah! thou hast the palabras, and the knee, and the cap, and the quip, and the innuendo, and the true town fashion of it all—no old tarry-breeks of a sea-dog, like thy dad! My Lord, you'll let them fight?"

"The Spaniard, sir; but no one else. But, captains and gentlemen, consider well my friend the Port Admiral's advice; and if any man's heart misgives him, let him, for the sake of his country and his queen, have so much government of his tongue to hide his fears in his own bosom, and leave open complaining to ribalds and women. For if the sailor be not cheered by his commander's cheerfulness, how will the ignorant man find comfort in himself? And without faith and hope, how can he fight worthily?"

"There is no croaking aboard of us, we will warrant," said twenty voices, "and shall be none, as long as we command on board our own ships."

Hawkins, having blown off his steam, went back to Drake and the bowls.

"Fill my pipe, Drawer—that croaking fellow's made me let it out, of course! Spoil-sports! The father of all manner of troubles on earth, be they noxious trade of croakers! 'Better to meet a bear robbed of her whelps,' Francis Drake, as Solomon saith, than a fule who can't keep his mouth shut. What brought Mr. Andrew Barker to his death but croakers? What stopped Fenton's China voyage in the '82, and lost your nephew John, and my brother Will, glory and hard cash too, but croakers? What sent back my Lord Cumberland's armada in the '86, and that after they'd proved their strength, too, sixty o'



mun against six hundred Portugals and Indians; and yet wern't ashamed to turn round and come home empty-handed, after all my Lord's expenses that he had been at? What, but these same beggarly croakers, that be only fit to be turned into yellow-hammers up to Dartmoor, and sit on a tor all day, and cry 'Very little bit of bread, and no chee-e-ese!' Marry, sneak-up! say I again."

"And what," said Drake, "would have kept me, if I'd let 'em, from ever sailing round the world, but these same croakers? I hanged my best friend for croaking, John Hawkins, may God forgive me if I was wrong, and I threatened a week after to hang thirty more; and I'd have done it, too, if they hadn't clapped tompons into their muzzles pretty fast."

"You're right, Frank. My old father always told me—and old King Hal (bless his memory!) would take his counsel among a thousand;—'And, my son,' says he to me, 'whatever you do, never you stand no croaking; but hang mun, son Jack, hang mun up for an ensign. There's Scripture for it,' says he (he was a mighty man to his Bible, after Bloody Mary's days, leastwise), 'and 'tis written,' says he 'It's expedient that one man die for the crew, and that the whole crew perish not; so show you no mercy, son Jack, or you'll find none, leastwise in they manner of cattle; for if you fail, they stamps on you, and if you succeeds, they takes the credit of it to themselves, and goes to heaven in your shoes.' Those were his words, and I've found mun true. Who com'th here now?"

"Captain Fleming, as I'm a sinner."

"Fleming? Is he tired of life, that he com'th here to look for a halter? I've a warrant out against mun, for robbing of two Flushingers on the high seas, now this very last year. Is the fellow mazed or drunk, then? or has he seen a ghost? Look to mun!"

"I think so, truly," said Drake. "His eyes are near out of his head."

The man was a rough-bearded old sea-dog, who had just burst in from the tavern through the low hatch, upsetting a drawer with all his glasses, and now came panting and blowing straight up to the High Admiral,—

"My Lord, my Lord! They'm coming! I saw them off the Lizard last night!"

"Who? my good sir, who seem to have left your manners behind you."

"The Armada, your worship—the Spaniard; but as for my manners, 'tis no fault of mine, for I never had none to leave behind me."

"If he has not left his manners behind," quoth Hawkins, "look out for your purses, gentlemen all! He's manners enough, and very bad ones they be, when he com'th across a quiet Flushinger."

"If I stole Flushingers' wines, I never stole negurs' souls, Jack Hawkins; so there's your answer. My Lord, hang me if you will: life's short and death's easy 'specially to seamen; but if I didn't see the Spanish fleet last sundown, coming along half-moon wise, and full seven mile from wing to wing, within a four mile of me, I'm a sinner."

"Sirrah," said Lord Howard, "is this no fetch, to cheat us out of your pardon for these piracies of yours?"

"You'll find out for yourself before nightfall, my Lord High Admiral. All Jack Fleming says, is, that this is a poor sort of an answer to a man who has put his own neck into the halter for the sake of his country."

"Perhaps it is," said Lord Howard. "And after all, gentlemen, what can this man gain by a lie, which must be discovered ere a day is over, except a more certain hanging?"

"Very true, your Lordship," said Hawkins, mollified. "Come here, Jack Fleming—what wilt drain, man! Hippocras or Alicant, Sack or John Barleycorn, and a pledge to thy repentance and amendment of life."

"Admiral Hawkins, Admiral Hawkins, this is no time for drinking."

"Why not, then, my Lord? Good news should be welcomed with good wine. Frank, send down to the sexton, and set the bells a-ringing to cheer up all honest hearts. Why, my Lord, if it were not for the gravity of my office, I could dance a galliard for joy!"

"Well, you may dance, Port Admiral: but I must go and plan; but God give to all captains such a heart as yours this day!"

"And God give all generals such a head as yours! Come, Frank Drake, we'll play the game out before we move. It will be two good days before we shall be fit to tackle them, so an odd half-hour don't matter."

"I must command the help of your counsel, Vice-Admiral," said Lord Charles turning to Drake.

"And it's this, my good Lord," said Drake, looking up,



as he aimed his bowl. "They'll come soon enough for us to show them sport, and yet slow enough for us to be ready; so let no man hurry himself. And as example is better than precept, here goes."

Lord Howard shrugged his shoulders and departed, knowing two things—first, that to move Drake was to move mountains; and next, that when the self-taught hero did bestir himself, he would do more work in an hour than any one else in a day. So he departed, followed hastily by most of the captains; and Drake said in a low voice to Hawkins—

"Does he think we are going to knock about on a lee-shore all the afternoon and run our noses at night—and dead up-wind, too—into the Dons' mouths? No Jack, my friend. Let Orlando-Furioso-punctilio-fire-eaters go and get their knuckles rapped. The following game is the game, and not the meeting one. The dog goes after the sheep, and not afore them, lad. Let them go by, and go by and stick to them well to windward, and pick up stragglers, and pickings, too, Jack—the prizes, Jack!"

"Trust my old eyes for not being over-quick at seeing signals, if I be hanging in the skirts of a fat-looking Don. We'm the eagles, Drake; and where the carcase is, is our place, eh?"

And so the two old sea-dogs chatted on, while their companions dropped off one by one, and only Amyas remained.

"Eh, Captain Leigh, where's my boy Dick?"

"Gone off with his lordship, Sir John."

"On his punctilios too, I suppose, the young slashed-breeks. He's half a Don, that fellow, with his fine scholarship, and his fine manners, and his fine clothes. He'll get a taking down before he dies, unless he mends. Why ain't you gone too, sir?"

"I follow my leader," said Amyas, filling his pipe.

"Well said, my big man," quoth Drake. "If I could lead you round the world, I can lead you up Channel, can't I?—Eh! my little bantam-cock of the Orinoco? Drink, lad! You're over-sad today."

"Not a whit," said Amyas. "Only I can't help wondering whether I shall find him after all."

"Whom! That Don? We'll find him for you, if he's in the fleet. We'll squeeze it out of our prisoners somehow. Eh, Hawkins? I thought all the captains had promised to send you news if they heard of him."

"Ay, but it's ill looking for a needle in a haystack. But I shall find him. I am a coward to doubt it," said Amyas, setting his teeth.

"There, Vice-Admiral, you're beaten, and that's the rubber. Pay up three dollars, old high-flyer, and go and earn more, like an honest adventurer."

"Well," said Drake, as he pulled out his purse, "we'll walk down now and see about these young hot-heads. As I live they are setting to tow the ships out already! Breaking the men's backs over night, to make them fight the lustier in the morning! Well, well, they haven't sailed round the world, Jack Hawkins."

"Or had to run home from St. Juan d'Ulloa with half a crew."

"Well if we haven't to run out with half crews. I saw a sight of our lads drunk about this morning."

"The more reason for waiting till they be sober. Besides, if everybody's caranting about to once each after his own men, nobody'll find nothing in such a scrimmage as that. Bye, bye, Uncle Martin. We'm going to blow the Dons up now in earnest."