

CHAPTER VII.

THE SAILOR.

England, bound in with the triumphant sea,
Whose rocky shore beats back the curious surge
Of watery Neptune. FALCONER.

But oh! thou glorious and beautiful sea,
There is health and joy and blessing in thee:
Solemnly, sweetly, I hear thy voice,
Bidding me weep and yet rejoice—
Weep for the loved ones buried beneath,
Rejoice in him who has conquered death.

CAPTAIN HARE of the Eurydice.

In the bow of the boat is the gift of another world. Without it what prison would be so strong as that white and wailing sea? But the nails that fasten together the planks of the boat's bows are the rivets of the fellowship of the world. Their iron does more than draw lightning out of heaven; it leads love round the earth.—
RUSKIN.

THE sea has nursed the most valorous of men. The dangers of a sea-going life educate men in courage; and not only in courage, but in a profound sense of duty. The life of a mariner is one of patience, activity and watchfulness. It is full of care and responsibility. It is not like a life on shore, where a man, after his day's work is done, can go to bed and sleep without fear.

The sailor must be constantly on the watch, by night and by day. On a long voyage the pilot may sit quiet in his cabin when the winds are allayed and the waters are smooth. But he is vigilant and active when the storm rises and the sea grows tumultuous. The sails have to be reefed, or the

ship has to be put about. It may be night. The sailor goes aloft to reef. He goes alone; it is at the risk of his life. He may be blown away by the fierceness of the wind; a sudden shock of the ship by the sharp stroke of the sea may shake him off; his fall is unheard in the storm and blackness of the night. But the ship goes on as before.

When the first man went to sea, in an open boat, and out of sight of land, he must have been appalled by his new conditions. Nothing about him—the sky above him, and the sea beneath him—only a plank between him and death. What a new sense of responsibility and courage that first seaman must have felt! Even to those on shore the sea is a great educator. Dr. Arnold said that nothing opens the character of an intelligent child so much as the first sight of the sea. Dr. Channing when a boy, spent much of his time on the sea-shore at Newport. He afterward said, "No spot on earth helped to form me more than that beach."

Some regard the sea as a great waste of waters. To one looking from a hill-top on the sea, it seems boundless. There is nothing but water, to the right and the left. In fair weather the waves come in gently, to lick your feet upon the sand. Then it curls and curls, and comes in wildly, with its huge rolling waves, that dash into spray on the shore. At one time it is quiet and feline, at another it rages and howls like a panther. The sea remembers nothing. It crumbles the ship on the rugged rocks, and then slumbers into a dreamy haze. "There is sorrow on the sea," said Jeremiah; "it is never at rest." It drowns out humanity and time. It belongs to eternity. It mourns out its tone for ever and ever.

But the ocean has an intimate connection with the progress of humanity. How is it that England excels all other nations in her care for those at sea? It is because we are a nation of sailors; and it is because of that that we are a commercial people. From the fishermen round our coasts, who bring us our constant supply of fish, to the huge steamers that sail to America, China, India, and the continental ports, to bring us our daily supplies of the comforts and necessities of life, we owe a great deal to our sailors. Perhaps we

would never have been a great nation, or at all events, a free and great nation, but for the sea that surrounds us.

The deep sea moat which lies between us and the Continent has rendered this country the refuge for the persecuted of all lands. Two hundred years ago, at the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, we secured the best commercial men of France; and our present supremacy in commerce is in a great measure owing to the lessons of industry and manufacture which we learned from the French Refugees. It is commerce that supports our navy. It is commerce that brings bread to our shores. Not only that: it is commerce that tends to civilize the world.

Sir Samuel Baker, in a lecture at Liverpool, declared that it was commerce alone with the nations of Africa which would prove the best missionary means of operation. The natives, who were men of common-sense, would listen to what they knew would benefit their position. Nothing could benefit the savages so much as the introduction of commerce, which would tend to excite their energy in producing from their own soil what the soil was capable of producing; and to exchange their produce for different commodities, which were unknown at present, but when known, would become wants, and add to their requirements.*

* On another occasion Sir Samuel Baker said: "As travellers, we have a duty to perform—a duty which might be said to belong to England. It was not only that they penetrated into countries unknown, but that they returned with information which would be commercially valuable to this country. He had always noticed that, however great the trouble and pains a traveller might take, his explorations would be utterly valueless unless there was some natural product of the country he had traversed which would be commercially valuable, so that in his steps—which were the first steps—commercial enterprise would be sure to follow. They might well be proud of the part which England had taken in the last few centuries—at any rate since the reign of Elizabeth—in civilizing the globe. The new world of America had been almost peopled by Englishmen, so had Australia; and it was curious to notice the enormous spread of English-speaking communities in various quarters of the universe. Those were the results more of commercial enterprise than the discoveries of travellers, and they afforded an augury of how, by degrees, countries hitherto barbarous might become civilized. The

It is to sailors that discovery of all the new countries belongs—from Columbus to Captain Cook. It is supposed that the Icelanders first discovered North America; but they made no settlements there. Columbus and Americus were the first who made their discoveries known to the world. The Portugese and the Dutch were among the greatest discoverers after Columbus. Fernando Magellan was the first to circumnavigate the world. He was only twenty years old when Columbus discovered America. His first voyage was to Africa and the Indies. His next was to South America. He voyaged along the coasts of Guinea, Brazil, and arrived in the bay of Rio de Janeiro. He went south and discovered the Straits of Magellan, from which he went into the Pacific.

The Dutch were also great adventurers in discovery. They were the first, under Barentz, to encounter the dangers of the North Cape, when endeavoring to find a way to Cathay. Their only result was to discover the island of Nova Zembla. The Dutch navigators went south, and discovered Australia (New Holland), Van Diemen's Land, and the islands of the Malaysian Sea.

The discovery by Vasco de Gama of the route to India by the Cape of Good Hope proved a great epoch in commercial history. It showed the nations of the west the sea-road to the remote East. The discovery is also claimed by the Dutch. They say that the brothers Houtman were the first to reach India by the Cape, and that there they laid the foundations of that great monopoly, the Dutch India Company, by which the little republic of Holland derived so much material power in ships, colonies, and commerce.

greatest travellers and discoverers were the Portugese and the Dutch; but it was mainly, if not entirely, through commercial enterprise that the discoveries of travellers became permanently valuable to mankind; and he had returned to this country perfectly certain, after the little he had done, that if England took in hand the development of the resources of Central Africa, the day would come, and was not far distant, when countries hitherto inhabited only by savage tribes would by degrees be brought within the pale of civilization; and that would be done simply by commerce."

The English were not as yet a commercial people. Trade had travelled westward, but it had not reached England. This country produced only raw material. Even the English wool was sent abroad to Belgium, to be spun and woven into cloth. There were plenty of sailors in England, but they had no employment in navigating ships, because there was no commerce. They were, however, very pugnacious. When there was no foreign war on foot, they went out to sea to fight each other. The neighboring seaports of Lowestoft and Yarmouth were often at war. They did not mind a little pivoting at times. They ventured out to sea and took possession of the ships passing their ports.

It was not until the time of Elizabeth that England produced a race of great seamen. Every one knows the history of Drake, Raleigh, Hawkins, and the early sea heroes. They sailed, as it were, blindfold, in their cockleshells of ships, into unknown seas, there to grope for the new countries which were at a future time to be the homes of their descendants. Spain and England were at war, and the English had many a hot fight with their enemies by sea and land. A gallant host of seamen was thus formed and disciplined, of which England had every need, when Spain, the most powerful of European nations, bore down upon her with her Invincible Armada. That was one of the greatest struggles for country, religion, honor, and independence, which has occurred in history.

Sir Francis Drake is one of the sea-heroes who stands out most prominently in the annals of the time. Mr. Motley says of him that he was one of the great types of the sixteenth century. Drake was a thorough seaman. He was originally of humble condition. He was bound apprentice on board a small lugger, where he learned the art of seamanship. When the skipper died he bequeathed the lugger to his apprentice. After a period of coasting on the narrow seas, he risked his hard earned savings in a voyage with Admiral Hawkins. He was captured by the Spaniards, and narrowly escaped with his life. His future expeditions against the Spaniards were eminently successful.

The King of Spain placed an embargo upon all English vessels, persons, and property in the ports of Spain. Drake went out to sea with six armed ships, and captured San Domingo, Carthagena, and St. Augustine. Philip II. was now preparing the greatest armament that the combined navies of Spain and Portugal, of Naples and Sicily, of Genoa and Venice, could waft across the seas to crush the arch-heretic of England. Rome blessed the undertaking. Prophecies had been heard in divers languages that the year 1588 should be "the most fatal and ominous unto all estates;" and it was now discovered that England was to be the object of this great maritime enterprise. Yet England did not quail. The whole community became of one heart and mind. It knit together men of all parties—Protestants and Catholics alike. Shakespeare was alive at the time; he thus wrote of the daring attempt upon English liberty:

"Come the three corners of the world in arms,
And we shall shock them: naught shall make us rue,
If England to herself do rest but true."

Drake determined to deal a blow at the heart of the Spanish project. He sailed from Plymouth with four Queen's ships and twenty-four furnished by the merchants of London. At the beginning of April, 1587, the English fleet entered the harbor of Cadiz and fell upon the Spanish ships destined for the invasion of England. Some of them were of the largest size then known. One was of 1500 tons, another of 1200, and several others 1000 and 800 tons. Drake destroyed 10,000 tons of shipping, with their contents. For two nights and a day he continued his work—scuttling, rifling, unloading, and burning the Spanish war-ships. Before he left, a hundred and fifty ships were burning and throwing a bright blaze upon the walls and forts of Cadiz.

On his return voyage to England, Drake captured and destroyed a hundred more vessels, appropriating part of the cargoes and taking the crews prisoners. He also captured a large Spanish carrack laden with a cargo of extraordinary value. This he also took with him to England. He confessed that he had done but little, and he gave the govern-

ment warning as to the enormous power and vast preparations of Spain. "There would," he said, "be forty thousand men under weigh erelong, well equipped and provisioned," and England could not be too energetic in its measures of resistance.

Everything was done by Philip to make his Armada invincible. He had spent nearly fifty thousand ducats on the fleet. The Pope lent him a thousand ducats. Besides what he had spent, he had two millions of ducats in reserve. The Armada consisted of one hundred and thirty-six ships. They were by far the largest that had up to that time been constructed. They contained thirty thousand Spanish infantry and sailors, two thousand galley slaves for the purpose of rowing the ships when the wind failed, and two hundred and ninety monks, priests, and familiars of the Inquisition. Besides this large army, thirty thousand troops were in the Spanish Netherlands ready to embark, on a given signal, in aid of the troops of the Armada. Such was the force which the English sailors had to combat. Before the Armada sailed the Pope, Sixtus V., fulminated his bull. He denounced Elizabeth as an illegitimate and usurper, and solemnly conferred her kingdom on Philip, with the title of Defender of the Christian faith, "to have and to hold as tributary and feudatory to Rome." Everything was now prepared for the subjugation of England, and the Invincible Armada set sail.

The first ships were sighted off the Lizard on the 22d of July, 1588. They had long been looked for. The beacon-fires blazed forth from the Lizard to Falmouth, Dodman Point, Gribbin Head, and Rame Head. When the news arrived at Plymouth that the enemy were in sight, Drake was playing a game of bowls with his comrades; but before the evening closed sixty of the best English ships were warped out of Plymouth Harbor to meet the foe. They went down the English Channel. It was not until the next day that they saw the bulky Spanish ships through the drizzly haze. Another day elapsed, and then they met.

The English commanders were Drake, Hawkins, and Frobisher. They were thorough seamen, of tried endurance,

skill, and valor. They had met danger in all its forms, and were now ready to endure everything for their country. Their influence was manifest on the first encounter. They obtained the weathergage, and cannonaded the enemy, escaping at will out of their range. The light English vessels, easily handled, sailed round and round the unwieldy galleons, pitching their shot into them as they passed. The Spaniards wished to engage in a general fight, but the English declined. They merely stuck to the enemy, and followed at their heels. The running fight continued along the coast, past Plymouth, from whence boats with reinforcements came out to join the English ships. When night came on the beacon-fires blazed up, so that it might always be known where the battle raged. The Spaniards got into collision with each other, and one of their ships was blown up by a Fleming. One of their rear guard vessels becoming disabled, Frobisher and Hawkins cannonaded her until night, but it was not till the following morning that she surrendered to the Revenge, commanded by Drake.

As the Armada, followed by the English fleet, went fighting along the coast of Devon and Dorset, the people on land looked on with intense anticipation. At every little port that they passed—at Dartmouth, Teignmouth, Lyme, and Weymouth—boats came out laden with men and provisions, and little ships darted out to sea, most of them merchantmen, to take part in the fray. The Armada reached the bay between Portland Bill and St. Alban's Head, when the wind shifted to the north-east, and gave the Spaniards the weathergage. The English made a tack seaward, and were soon after assaulted by the Spaniards, who bore down upon them. Ship after ship was engaged, but the Spaniards were never able to close with or to board their ever-attacking, ever-flying, adversaries. And so the roar of cannon ascended along the coast. One fight after another, but still nothing decisive.

The Armada passed the Isle of Wight on its way to the roads of Calais. The English, having received men and munitions from shore, following it slowly. They waited for a junction with Lord Henry Seymour and his squadron of

sixteen ships, which lay between Dungeness and Folkestone. When the junction took place, the English fleet made for Calais, where the Great Spanish Armada was found drawn up in a half-moon shape, and riding at anchor. They were waiting for the thirty thousand armed veterans from the Netherlands. The greatest Spanish general, Alexander Farnese, was to lead the entire Spanish army in their triumphal march into the capital of England. But the Armada waited in vain. The combined Dutch and Zealand fleet closed all the ports of the Netherlands, so that not even a cockleboat could escape.

Lord Howard, commander of the English fleet, called the commanders to a consultation. It was then determined to attack the Armada. It was dead at night. The sea was black, and thunder rolled in the distance. In a moment six blazing fire-ships were sent in among the Armada. The Spaniards were seized with a panic. There was a yell throughout the fleet. Every cable was cut, and the ships began to drift. The larger ships became entangled with each other. Some were burned by the flaming vessels. The largest and most splendid vessel of the Armada, the *Capitana*, was driven ashore, and taken possession of by the French. When morning dawned, part of the Spanish fleet lay disabled, but the greater number had put to sea, and were observed making for the Netherland ports. The English lifted anchor and followed them. They came up with the Spanish fleet off Gravelines, and immediately attacked them. They broke through the vanguard, and attacked the Spanish flag-ships. They riddled them through and through, tore their sails and rigging to shreds, and forced them back upon the main body. Four of their ships ran foul of each other. The English continued the battle for six hours, always refusing the attempts of the Spaniards to lay themselves alongside. Three of the Spanish ships went down before the fight was over, and many others were drifting, helpless wrecks, toward the fatal sandbanks of Holland. Sixteen of the best Spanish ships had already been sacrificed, and from four to five thousand soldiers had been

destroyed; yet not an English ship had been lost, and not more than a hundred Englishmen had been killed.

The wind was now blowing hard, and driving the ships on a lee shore, seeing which Medina Sidonia, the captain-general of the Spanish fleet, gave the order to retreat. The Invincible Armada then bore away toward the northwest, into the open sea. Lord Howard followed them with part of the English fleet; the remaining ships, being short of ammunition, made for the Thames. A tremendous gale set in. The wind from the south drove the Spanish galleons toward the cold, grim, hungry northern seas. Howard pursued them as far as the Firth of Forth. It was unnecessary to go farther. The winds had his enemies in their power. The crippled ships went down one after another. They were scattered far and wide. Some were wrecked on the rock-girdled coast of Norway. They could not sail southward. The English Channel was blocked against them. They could only reach Spain round the western coasts of Scotland and Ireland. But the navigation was most dangerous. In trying to reach the Western Ocean many of the Spanish ships were wrecked on the Shetland and Orkney Islands, or on the rocks in the dangerous tides of the Stronsa and Pentland Firths.*

And once into the west sea there were still the perils of the Hebrides, and the rocky islands of the west of Scotland, to be contended with. The season was now far advanced, and in storms the sea comes in from the west with tremendous power. The shores of Scotland and Ireland were found strewn with wrecks. Few of the Spaniards were left to tell the story; only the masses of driftwood found in heaps upon the beach told of the vessels destroyed. This, however, is known, that thirty-eight Spanish ships, including Admiral Oquendo's great galleon, were wrecked on the Irish coast, when nearly every soul on board perished. The

* One of the wrecks is supposed to have taken place on Fair Island, a storm-beaten ledge of cliffs. Some of the crew must have been saved, for there is a tinge of Spanish blood among the islanders to this day.

remainder of the Armada returned to Spain in a state of ruin. The ships were so damaged as to be rendered utterly worthless for future employment.*

Philip never repeated his enterprise of the Armada. It was, however, necessary for him to keep up a large fleet to maintain his intercourse with his American possessions, as well as to guard his gold ships on their way home. As England and Holland continued at war with Spain, frequent sea-fights occurred between the fleets of the respective countries. The English and the Dutch looked out for the Spanish galleons, to wrest from them the gold with which Philip carried on the war against English and Dutch liberty.

Great deeds of valor were done by the sea-heroes of England. Take the case of the last fight of Sir Richard Grenville, Vice-Admiral of the fleet in Queen Elizabeth's time. He was sent out to the Azores to intercept the Spanish La Plata fleet. Philip of Spain, being apprised of the adventure, dispatched a powerful fleet, consisting of fifty-three ships, to frustrate the attempt, and to bring the gold ships into port. The fleets met—six English against fifty-three Spanish. The superiority of the latter was so great that five of the English ships, under Lord Howard, were compelled to give way. Sir Richard Grenville remained in the *Revenge*, the old ship in which Sir Francis Drake had fought the Armada up the English Channel. He would not give way. He resisted the whole Spanish fleet.

He had only a hundred men with him, but they were each as brave as himself. For twelve hours the Spaniards poured their shot into the doomed ship. They boarded her fifteen times, and were repulsed with determined bravery. Sir

* With respect to the Armada, it is possible that it might have succeeded but for the gallant defence of the sailors. The fleet, then as now, is the first wall of defence. Queen Elizabeth had no standing army nor militia. She could only muster about 4000 volunteers. The Armada had been defeated, crippled, and driven to the north seas before the queen could meet her handful of volunteers at Tilbury. Had the English fleet not been able to prevent the soldiers of the Armada from landing, the prize of London might have been in their grasp. The safety of England, therefore, was entirely due to the seamen.

Richard was twice wounded. He was carried below, and received another shot in the head, while the surgeon who was dressing him was killed by his side. In this helpless state he advised that the ship should be sunk rather than yield; but most of the crew opposed this, and the *Revenge* struck—the only ship yet taken by the Spaniards. But she was so terribly injured by the shot poured into her from all sides that she could not be kept afloat, and went down in two days.

The death of the hero was as noble as his life. "Here," he said "I, Richard Grenville, die with a joyful and quiet mind, for that I have ended my life as a true soldier ought to do, fighting for his country, queen, religion, and honor; my soul willingly departing from the body, leaving behind the lasting fame of having behaved as every valiant soldier is in his duty bound to do." And so passed away the brave Sir Richard Grenville.

Power and commerce generally go together. When a country loses its commerce it loses its power. The one depends upon the other. The first great commercial state in modern times was that of Venice. We see the remains of it in the magnificent palaces along the Grand Canal, though the city is now in poverty. After the battle of Lepanto trade went still farther westward. Genoa then became the centre of commerce in the south, and the Hanse Towns of Germany in the north. Belgium, though small in extent, was one of the greatest producing countries in Europe, even while Holland had scarcely dragged itself together out of the slush of the Rhine.

But the terrorism of Alva, during the reign of Philip II., destroyed the commerce of Belgium. Spain, so long the tyrant of the New World—of Germany, of Italy, of the Netherlands—became the laughing-stock of Europe. Holland baffled her, and put her ships to flight. Holland became the great emporium of commerce, while the trade of Spain steadily declined, until she became the impecunious country we now see her.

The commerce of England followed that of Holland. They were both nations of sailors, sprung from the same

race. They inaugurated a new era in the history of the world. "Ships, colonies, and commerce," was their motto. They planted new lands, and spread their colonies over the world. France, Spain, Holland and England alike planted settlements in North America; but though the remnants of all survive, the English outnumber them all. In Canada, North America, Australia, New Zealand, the Cape of Good Hope, the Isles of India, the English language is spoken; and in another century it will be the most widely spoken language throughout the world. All this arises from ships and sailors.

During the great Revolutionary War, Napoleon shut all the ports of Europe against English ships. They were closed from Naples in Italy, from Toulon in France, from Cadiz in Spain, round the coasts of Holland, Denmark, and Germany, to Danzig in the Baltic. Napoleon hated the English fleet. It followed him through the Mediterranean, and caught him at Aboukir. It destroyed his flat-bottomed boats at Bologne: it carried troops to Corunna, to Torres Vedras, to Belgium, to thwart him. Napoleon never forgave the English fleet.

Yet it made its power felt everywhere. It was led by many heroes, and most of all by Nelson. He was a man of extraordinary genius. He saw clearly and acted vigorously. He felt that it was his business and his duty to watch over the very existence of England. Men and women felt safe and tranquil while Nelson kept the sea. He was not merely an able and courageous seaman. The pure flame of patriotism burned ever in his heroic soul; and the sum of his religion might be expressed in the words of Homer—

"The one best omen is to fight for fatherland."

His life was a romance. His weaknesses were as remarkable as his gifts and qualities. And yet he must remain one of the great heroic figures of the world. The very last words he spoke were these: "I have *done my duty*: I praise God for it!"

Our sailors are our own men, formed by the traditions of a naval race, acting on the desire for commerce by its in-

stincts, reared on by commerce in its habits, and moulded into a special and peculiar type of the English people by their isolation. In all his gallery of portraits, Plutarch has nobody to show us who makes us think of Drake, or Grenville, or Collingwood, or Nelson. Our sailors are our own peculiar men. Look at their character, as described by Lord Sandon, at Liverpool. He was addressing a number of boys training for merchant seamen. "What can be nobler," he said, "than to be a first-rate English sailor? And in what does the best type of character of the English sailor consist? I should say he is, above all things, *to be true, to be brave, to be kind, to be considerate for the weak, to be determined to do his duty to his God and his country.* The people who spend the happiest lives are those who think not first of themselves but of those around them, who do their duty and trust to God for the rest. That is the best receipt in life; that is the way in which the noblest English characters are formed"

The conditions laid down by the Queen for the prize given by Her Majesty to the marine boys are these: "*Cheerful submission to superiors, self-respect and independence of character, kindness and protection to the weak, readiness to forgive offence, a desire to conciliate the differences of others, and, above all, fearless devotion to duty and unflinching truthfulness.*" Such principles, if evoked and carried into action, would produce an almost perfect moral character in every condition of life.

The sailor is true to his ship. In the hour of danger the captain is the last man to leave it. Whether it be peril by fire or storm, the captain first sees the women and children safe, then his passengers, then his men, lastly himself. In such cases courage, like virtue, is its own reward. It does not seek for applause, neither on sea nor land. "I have only done my duty," is the seaman's best praise. Danger proves the occasion for evincing the highest qualities. When many lives are at stake, honor requires every effort to save them. Although the courageous man may rate the danger at its full value, he does not dread it, but manfully faces it. He is ready to meet death and life with equal calmness.