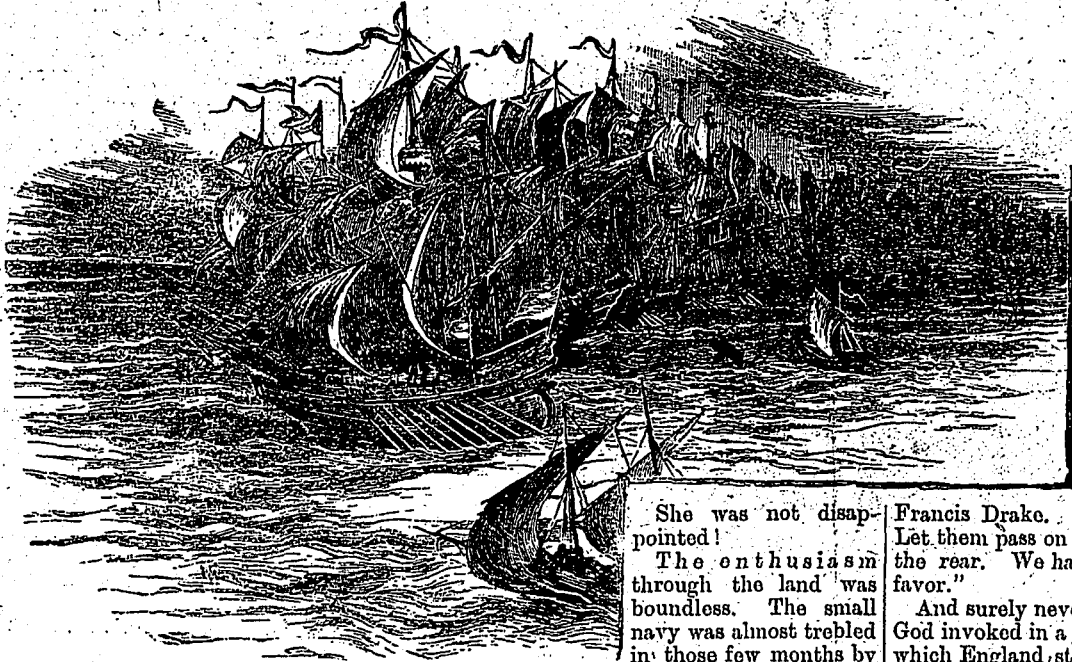


IN THE DAYS OF THE GREAT ARMADA.

(By Crona Temple in Sunday at Home.)



APPROACH OF THE ARMADA.

CHAPTER III.

Daniel Lavin's sloop was not the only vessel that was being hurried to sea that July Sunday evening, as the Spanish fleet came slowly up the Channel.

For weeks, aye, for months past, men's minds had been full, and their tongues busy, with reports of what Philip was doing; and noblemen and gentlemen, down to the humblest squire who owned money or could command "a following," were bracing themselves for defence. Ships were fitted out at private charges, volunteers were pressing forward to man them, and from end to end of England there was but one resolve—to beat off the invader or to die in the attempt.

Some few Englishmen there were who yet clung to the rule of Rome; and to them this threatened subjugation of their country was the only way—a dreadful and sorrowful way, it is true—but the only way of restoring England to the bosom of the Catholic Church. Others there were who, while not Protestant, yet preferred their country to the Papedom.

Mary of Scotland, the Roman Catholic heiress of the throne, was dead, and her son James was of the Reformed Faith. Pope Sixtus V. had issued a proclamation absolving the subjects of Elizabeth from all allegiance to her rule, and formally assigning the kingdom to Philip of Spain "as lineal descendant of the Plantagenets." There was also a blasphemous promise that whosoever should help the cause of the Church of God by the conquest of England and destruction of heresy, they should have indulgence for former sins, and remission from scores of years of the pains and terrors of purgatory.

It was, therefore, not only a foreign foe that the country was preparing to resist; men were making ready to strike for all things most precious to them—for freedom, for faith, for very existence itself.

It is difficult to realize now, in these days of stability and peace, what our forefathers felt and feared three hundred years ago. They had no regular army; their coasts were practically undefended; their navy, twenty-eight sail all told, was composed of ships small and few indeed compared with the enormous flotilla which was being prepared in the ports of Spain, Sicily, Naples, Portugal, and the Netherlands. The sailors serving with the fleet did not exceed fifteen thousand men.

But if their danger was great their hearts were dauntless. It was not only Doris's lover, young Robert Bulteel, who believed that England would prove herself victorious, no matter what force King Philip might bring.

And the bravest heart in England was that of Elizabeth, that "lion-like woman" who, despite her faults, and her faults were many—had a courage equal to that of any man. She was not in the least dismayed, the danger only roused her daring soul. She knew her cause was righteous, and she knew also that her people would be true to her and to themselves.

sent to the city of London to ask what contingent of ships and men could be furnished to meet this direful need. The Lord Mayor asked what force the city was expected to furnish.

"Five thousand men, and fifteen ships," was the royal reply.

After two days of deliberation the Londoners offered ten thousand men-at-arms and thirty well-found vessels; and upon the equipment of this force they spared no care or cost.

But if the preparations had been enthusiastic the thrill that ran through the south country when it was known that the Armada was actually in British waters made every heart beat high as with the stir of victory.

An old writer, Camden, tells how the Spanish fleet came on, "the ships with lofty turrets like castles in front, like a half-moon, the wings thereof spreading out about the length of seven miles, sailing very slowly, though with full sails, the winds being, as it were, tired with carrying them, and the ocean groaning under the weight of them." And in truth it was the mightiest fleet that at that time had ever swept the ocean—one hundred and fifty huge galleons and men-of-war, having on board twenty-nine thousand men, soldiers, sailors, and galley-slaves.

And on the sea-coast of the Netherlands there waited, as was well-known, the Duke of Parma, with an army of forty thousand men, ready to fling himself on the shores of Essex as soon as the Spaniards should make good their landing; and then at one blow should be decided the fall and fortunes of England.

The wind blew free and fair, and the crisp waves of the Channel rolled gaily in the sun as the proud array came onwards. One Hemming, a freebooter—a pirate, if all the truth were told—caught sight of their blazoned sails and streaming flags, and he made haste with the news to Plymouth Bay.

At Plymouth were the English captains, the High Admiral, Lord Howard of Effingham, Drake, and Hawkins, and Frobisher, men who had already measured their wits and their stout swords against Spain. They listened to Hemming's eager tale with a grim smile on their lips. They were glad this uncertainty was over at last; they

She was not disappointed!

The enthusiasm through the land was boundless. The small navy was almost trebled in those few months by private enterprise and generosity. The queen

Francis Drake. "They come, do they? Let them pass on; we will harry them in the rear. We have fair winds and God's favor."

And surely never was the great Name of God invoked in a juster cause than that for which England struck that day!

Stately and tall showed the Spanish ships as they rose and rolled on the running sea. They were crowded with the flower and chivalry of the South. There was scarcely a noble house in Aragon or Castile, in Geneva or Savoy, that had not sent sons or scions upon this quest of glory—and more than glory! for was it not the cause of Holy Church itself? Highborn ladies had sewed those silken banners, priests had blessed them, kings and princes had watched them hoisted to the wind. And there could be no doubt, no doubt at all, but that those sacred standards would presently wave over the realm of England, and over the head of its heretic queen.



NEWS OF THE ARMADA.

valor they possessed. The yards were squared; the canvas every stitch of it was set, and like hounds set free from the leash the small ships rushed forward in chase of their prey.

CHAPTER IV.

On board the Ark-Raleigh was Robert Bulteel. He was a man worthy of Doris, judging by the look of him, as he stood by the taffrail with folded arms watching the pace at which they were gaining on the Spaniards. He was square-

built and wide-chested, with frank, grey, piercing eyes, and a broad strong forehead, a strong man altogether, one who had mastered life's hardest lesson, that of obedience and reverence, and had thereby grown but the stronger and more fit to rule.

Thomas Clatworthy had been doubtful as to the wisdom of allowing him to try to win Doris for his wife; the girl was young, too young, he said; and the Clatworthys, though simple yeoman-folk, had always been of note and repute in the Exe valley, and Robert Bulteel was a stranger. He had been brought as a child to Exmouth by an old man—a curious old

man—who was reputed by the superstitious to deal in magic and charms, but who lived inoffensively enough by dressing skins and stitching them into the wallets which every traveller and horseman required in those days. After his death, the lad Robert had earned his bread on board first one and then another of the little trading vessels that carried merchandize between England and Flanders; or it might be, as a greater adventure, found their way into the Mediterranean, whence, if they were fortunate, they returned with cargoes rich enough to make ample amends for the risks they had run.

Robert did not come empty handed when he asked Clatworthy to give him his Doris. He had prospered wonderfully, and had won his way upwards until he owned part—but a small part truly—of the craft in which he sailed. And it was not only his prosperity that induced Master Clatworthy to give his consent. Doris loved him; and the father could not bear to see those sweet eyes of hers sad with tears.

So Robert and Doris were betrothed. "You must wait," said Clatworthy, "wait awhile until you know better what are life's meanings. She is so young, Robert; and as for thee, thou hast yet to learn that success, aye, even happiness itself, is not the best at which we can aim. God rules the small as well as the great; think reverently of him, Robert, and he will teach thee things which as yet thou has not known the need of knowing."

His words fell on their ears as the rain falls on the smooth shore-stones. They were so happy that they indeed "felt no need" of those higher things of which he spoke.

Then came the rumors of danger, the news of the arming of that huge force that was to overwhelm the land. Not a trader crossed the seas but brought back word of the terrible engines of destruction that were being forged to hurl death and doom on England. The harbors of Spain were choked with war-like stores, the ports of the Mediterranean were busy with the building of the warships that were to bear them. On every side could be heard and seen the preparations for the "Invincible Armada."

It was no time to think of love or marriage. And Robert Bulteel unclasped Doris's hands from about his neck and bade her take heart of grace. He laughed as he kissed away her tears of distress, saying, she was not fit to be a seaman's wife if she shook and shivered oversorrow that might never come. "I have joined the Admiral's ship," he said. "It is worth something to tread the same decks with such a bold true man as is Lord Howard of Effingham! Look up, sweet-heart, and give me joy! I am going to fight side by side with heroes, and may end in being a hero myself—who knows?"

He was a hero already in poor Doris's opinion; but she did not say so for the reason that her bitter crying made all speech most difficult just then. And so he left her, and took his way to Plymouth, where the "Ark-Raleigh" was getting her powder on board at the quay beneath the Hoe.

And now, on the 22nd of July, the moment of action had come. The time for snatching at reports and vague stories was past; here in the British seas was the great fleet; here before their eyes were the fighting-ships and galleons of Spain.

(To be Continued.)



GOOD-BYE.