

The Spanish Armada. Traffiques, & Discoveries.

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passed by Plimmouth: in which regard (according to the iudgement of many skilful nauigatores) they greatly ouerthor themselves, whereas it had bene moze commodious for them to haue staied themselves there, considering that the Englishmen being as perbypounded, greatly relied vpon their owne forces, and knew not the estate of the Spanish naup. Moreover, this was the most conuenient port of all others, where they might with greater securitie haue bene aduertised of the English forces, and how the commons of the land stood affected, and might haue stirred vp some man might moze easily haue conuicted his ships.

But this they were prohibited to doe by the king and his counsell, and were expressly commanded to enter themselves vnto the souldiers and ships of the said duke of Parma, and so to vsing their purpose to effect. Which was thought to be the most easie and direct course, for that they would each man of them retire vnto his owne Iouince and Port for the defence thereof, and transporting the armie of the duke vnder the protection of their huge naup, they might inuade England.

It is reported that the chiefe commanders in the naup, and those which were moze skilfull in nauigation, to wit, John Martines de Ricaldo, Diego Flores de Valdez, and diuers others found fault that they were bound vnto so strict directions and instructions, because that in such a case many particular accidents ought to concurre and to be respected at one and the same instant, that is to say, the opportunity of the wind, weather, time, tide, and ebbe, wherein they might fall from Flanders to England. Oftentimes also the darkenesse and light, the situation of places, the depths and shoals were to be considered: all which especially depended vpon the conuenience of the windes, and were by so much the moze dangerous.

But it seemeth that they were enlied by their commission to ancre nere vnto, or about Calles, whither the duke of Parma with his ships and all his warrelke prouision was to resort, and while the English and Spanish great ships were in the midst of their conflict, to passe by, and to land his souldiers vpon the Downes.

The Spanish captiues reported that they were determined first to haue entered the riuer of Thames, and thereupon to haue passed with small ships vnto London, supposing that they might easily winne that rich and flourishing Citie being but meanely fortified and inhabited with citizens not accustomed to the warres, who durst not withstand their first encounter, hoping moreover to finde many rebels against her Maiestie and popish catholiques, or some fauourers of the Scottish queene (which was not long before most iustly beheaded) who might be instruments of sedition.

Thes often aduertising the duke of Parma of their approach, the 20. of July they passed by Plimmouth, which the English ships pursuing and getting the wind of them, gaue them the chase and the encounter, and so both flectes exchanged their bullets.

The day following which was the 21. of July, the English ships approached within musquet shot of the Spanish: at what time the lord Charles Howard most hotly and valiantly discharged his Ordnance vpon the Spanish Vice-admirall. The Spaniards then well perceiving the numberlesse of the English ships in discharging vpon the enimie on all sides, gathered themselves close into the forme of an halfe moone, and slackened their sailes, least they should outgoe any of their companie. And while they were proceeding on in this manner, one of their great Gallies was so furiously battered with shot, that the whole naup was faine to come by rounder together for the safegard thereof: whereby it came to passe that the principall Gallie of Sir William Don Pedro de Valdez, Valques de Silua, Alonzo de Sayas, and other noble men were imbarqued) falling foule of another shippe, had her fore-mast broken, and by that means was not able to keepe way with the Spanish flecte, neither would the sayde flecte sto to succour it, but left the distressed Gallie behind. The lord Admirall of England when he saw this ship of Valdez, thought he had bene voyd of Hariners and souldiers, taking with him as many shippes as he could, passed by it, that he might not loose sight of the Spanish flecte the night. For Sir Francis Drake (who was not withstanding appointed to beare out his lance with the Spanish flecte: but finding them to be Casterlings, he dismissed them. The lord Admirall all that night following the Spanish lanterns in the ad of the English, found himselfe in the danger to be in the midst of his enimies flecte, but when he perceived it, hee cleanly conueyed himselfe out of that great danger.

The day following, which was the 22. of July, Sir Francis Drake espied Valdez's shippe, whereunto hee sent forth his pinnasse, and being aduertised that Valdez himselfe