

All this time Phillip, the "most Catholic King of Spain," was preparing his famous invincible Armada, by which, as he said, to sweep both the Queen and her people into the sea. This Phillip was the titular King of England, as the husband of the deceased Mary. He had been an aspirant to the hand of Elizabeth, but Elizabeth was as difficult to court as she was to govern, and could manage her lovers as well as her ministers, and, being persuaded that Phillip was more influenced by politic motives than the tender passion, she rejected him. Every lady present will say, served him right. It is said that he promised her they would still be friends if they could not be lovers, but subsequent events proved that, like all rejected suitors, he was much offended, and his behavior afterwards seemed to indicate that he was determined if she would not wed she should not reign.

Phillip was the son of the great Emperor Charles V, and had all the dominion of his father except being King of the Romans. He was King of all the Spanish Kingdom, titular King of France and Jerusalem, and absolute dominator of Asia, Africa and America; he was also Duke of Milan and the two Burgandies, and hereditary sovereign of the seventeen Netherlands; he was the Pope's best friend, and the Pope was in trouble with Elizabeth. "England was lost, and that loss must be avenged," and he was preparing for it.

His preparations were of the most extraordinary description. For about four years was the work going on, and the war-cry raised through all his vast dominion, and all his lieges laid under contribution. The result was the production of a fleet of 130 ships larger than any that had ever been seen afloat before. For safety and better protection, twelve of the largest were named after the twelve Apostles, and the rest took their names from the various saints of the Romish Calendar. This large armament was furnished with 20,000 soldiers, besides a large army of 34,000 under the Duke of Parma, 8150 marines, 2088 galley slaves, 2635 pieces of cannon, 4575 quintals of gunpowder, a most fabulous quantity of provisions, and—Oh! sir, what shall we teetotalers say to this—14,170 pipes of wine, why these men never could have signed the pledge! Priests in large numbers, 180, were consecrated for this special work. Monks and friars, too, had an important part in this expedition—they had the charge of the implements of torture, as racks and whips and cats and thumb screws. Don Pedro, a Spanish prisoner, had the bold, impudent audacity to tell the British council that "with these we meant to whip you heretics to death." All above seven years were to go the way of their fathers, under seven were to be branded with the letter L and made captives. A special litany was prepared in which Heaven was implored to assist the faithful against the heretics of England.

The council of war gave instructions that the Armada was to sail to the coast opposite Dunkirk and Newport, and, having chased away all the English ships, should join the Duke of Parma, then sail to the Thames, and the whole Spanish army, and with one blow complete the conquest.

They were directed to avoid an engagement with the English fleet, and keep steadily in view the main object, and avoid everything that would interpose delay to the acquisition of a Kingdom.

And what were the English preparations to meet all this? for the dread moment seemed to have come when it was to be decided whether she was to be or not to be, and, if to be, whether she was to simply be a vassal at the feet of the Roman Pontiff. She had 14,000 seamen all told; the Royal navy was only twenty-eight sail of the line and most of them very small. The Spaniard had the advantage in number and size, in wealth and everything to such an extent none doubted his success. Perhaps I am wrong. We had the advantage in some things for the courage of the British tar never failed him, and God never forsook us, and these proved more in the end than all