

The Story of the "Revenge"

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Eleven of our twelve ships escaped ;
Sir Richard stood alone !
Though they were three and fifty sail—
A hundred men to one—
The old Sea Rover would not run,
So long as he had man or gun ;
But—he could die when all was done.

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Ship after ship like broken waves
That wash up on a rock,
Those mighty galleons fall back foiled
And shattered from the shock.
With fire she answers all their blows ;
Again, again in pieces strows
The girdle round her as they close.

Through all that night the great white storm
Of worlds in silence rolled ;
Sirius with green-azure sparkle,
Mars in ruddy gold.

Heaven looked with stillness terrible
Down on a fight most fierce and fell—
A sea transfigured into hell.

Some know not they are wounded till
'Tis slippery where they stand ;
Then each one tighter grips his steel
As 'twere salvation's hand.

Grim faces glow through lurid night
With sweat of spirit shining bright :
Only the dead on deck turn white.

At daybreak the flame-picture fades
In blackness and in blood ;
There, after fifteen hours' fight,
The unconquered sea-king stood,
Defying all the powers of Spain :
Fifteen armadas hurled in vain,
And fifteen hundred foemen slain.