

## 12 WHEN LOVE CALLS MEN TO ARMS

The Armada, said Alan, according to word that had been brought through the kingdom by horse, had been defeated in the English Channel by Howard, Drake, Hawkins, and Frobisher. The Spanish fleet, cut off by fire-ships, had attempted to return to Spain through the Pentland Firth. The English admirals were preparing to intercept them in the North Channel and the Atlantic and finish the drubbing.

"But what brings yon Spaniard here?" asked the laird peevishly.

Alan could not say a word as to that, save that the broken Armada might have encountered foul weather. The laird was silent for a while and he peered from under his heavy brows at the five or six survivors that had been collected, one after the other.

"Cam'ells," he said at length, and there was an ominous note in his words, "yon men are the enemies of the land. More, forbye, they are the enemies of my house, for my son, Archibald, is to the wars." His voice suddenly swelled in savage wrath. "Would they be showing mercy to him?"

I had crawled into the circle that I might hear and see better. Looking back on the horrors of that night, I think it must have been a white and open-mouthed face that Black Jamie saw when his eyes fell on me.

"Home, ye whelp!" he fairly screamed. As I