

And when it pleased the Lords Generall to call a common Councell (as often times upon weightie matters best known to their honours) then they would cause an other flagge to be hanged out, which was the Redrosse of S. George, and was very ealie to be known from the other that appertained onely to the select Councell, and so often as this Redrosse of S. George was hanged out, then came all the Masters and Captaines of all the ships whose opinions were to be demanded, in such matters as appertained unto this sayd select Councell: It was presently concluded, that our course in sayling should forthwith be altered, and that we should beare more into the West, for some purposes to them best known, and very instant many letters of instructions were addrested and sent to every particular Master and Captaine of the Ships: That the contents of those letters of instructions were as yet knowne unto any, neither was it held meet to be enquired or known of any of the titles and superscriptions of every mans particular letter these words were written: Open not these letters on pain of your lives, unless we chance to be scattered by tempest, then in any case cast them into the sea, sealed as they are. It should seeme that these words contained in them the principall place and meaning of this intended action, which was by their deepe foresights kept so secret, as no man to my knowledge either by, or could be suspected, more then themselves, who had the onely managing thereof. A conceite in my opinion of great moment in the world, to effect any matter of importance. I meane, to shew in these two vertues, Fidem, & Taciturnitatem: so much commended by the old writers. I say rarely, I assure my selfe it was this, and though it were but in respect of that pappe, yet by such watchfull secrecy, it deservedly immortall praise.

In this while, our ships, God be thanked, kept in a most excellent good order, being divided into squadrons: that is to say, The Earle of Essex, the Lord Admirall, the Lord Thomas Howard, the Lord Warben Sir Walter Raleigh, and the Admirall of the Hollanders. All the ships, albeit they did every day separate themselves of purpose, by the distance of the leagues, as well to looke out for such shippes as were happily under sayle, as also for the pursuing of sea-robbers: yet alwayes commonly eyther that day, or the next day, they came all together, with friendly salutations and gratulations one to another, which they terme by the name of Drapling: a ceremonie done solemnly, and in vertie with sound of Trumpets and noise of cheerefull voyces: and in such sort perceived was no small encouragement one to the other, beside a true repose of all such actions.

As I sayde, our journey was most prosperous, and all our shippes in very good order: then that the Mary Rose, by some mischance, either sprang or spent her force, was two dayes after Sir Robert Crosse had in a manner the like mischance.

After being thus betwene the North cape, and cape S. Vincent, and yet keeping such a close look, that by no means, those from the shoare might be able to descrye us: The Duke, a French Barke, and a Fleming coming from the coast of Barbarie were taken by some of our companie: but they were both of them very honourably and well treated by the Lord Generall: and so after a few dayes tarrying, were peaceably sent home, where they had conferred with them about such matters, as was thought good in their wisdome.

At the end of the same moneth, Sir Richard Leulson Knight, assisted with Sir Christopher Blunt, fought with three Danburchers, and in that fight slew two of them, and took the third, and in the end brought them all three in: and this was the very first battell or combat (as it were) of any matter of importance, or exploit worthy observation: none in the way outward of this honorable voyage, and was so well performed of our worthy Gentlemen, as every man highly commended them for their great valour, and courage, and no lesse for their good fortune in this their fortunate successe. The next day after, Sir Richard Weston meeting with a Fleming, who refused to take any pay, with the like good courage and resolution, attempted to bring him in. The fight was very hot betwene them, for a good space: in the end the Swallow, where in the sayd Sir Richard was, had her forebeake broken off: and having spent before in fight the one side of her Ordnance, while she prepared to take about, and to bestow on him the other side: in the end the Fleming taking this opportunity, did see almost halfe a league from him: and he made his escape. And yet the next day after, the ship of Terminus being in a narrow bay, in the very mouth of the River up to Lisbon, was taken, and brought in by Sir Dorrell, being