

DOCUMENTS
CONCERNING
ENGLISH VOYAGES TO
THE SPANISH MAIN,
1569-1580

Irene A. Wright



THE HAKLUYT SOCIETY

Documents concerning English Voyages to the Spanish Main, 1569–1580

- I. Spanish Documents selected from
the Archives of the Indies at Seville;
II. English Accounts, Sir Francis Drake revived,
and Others Reprinted

Edited by
IRENE A. WRIGHT

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1569-1580

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PHILIP II. OF SPAIN

*Portrait attributed to Sofonisba Anguisciola
in the National Portrait Gallery, London.*

DOCUMENTS
CONCERNING ENGLISH VOYAGES
TO THE SPANISH MAIN
1569-1580

I

SPANISH DOCUMENTS
SELECTED FROM THE ARCHIVES OF
THE INDIES AT SEVILLE

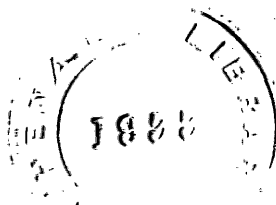
II

ENGLISH ACCOUNTS
"SIR FRANCIS DRAKE REVIVED"
AND OTHERS, REPRINTED

BY

I. A. WRIGHT, B.A., F.R.Hist.S.

COMENDADORA, ORDER OF ALFONSO XII
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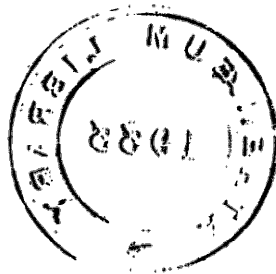


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PREFACE

THIS book is complementary to the Hakluyt Society's No. LXII, Second Series, *Spanish Documents concerning English Voyages to the Caribbean, 1527-1568*. Those of the present volume carry the story forward, through Oxenham's disastrous expedition, to 1580.

Of these Spanish documents little need be said, since they speak eloquently for themselves. The originals are in good condition and in good custody, in the General Archives of the Indies at Seville, Spain.

To make them more intelligible, an outline map of the Main (and Antilles) is included, at the end of the book. Places mentioned in the text of the volume will be found upon that map; and therefore notes explanatory of them have been omitted, as superfluous. Further, opposite p. 46, is a map which shows the lie of the isthmus on a somewhat larger scale, whereon the student may follow Drake's route to Venta Cruces and Oxenham's to Vallano.

To supplement these Spanish accounts of the various English enterprises there are presented, in Part II, the most interesting available English versions of the same matters. Chief of these (No. 1) is a remarkable work (*Sir Francis Drake Revived*), the full title of which sets forth its origin and its purpose. On that title page¹ it is stated that this truly "Memorable Relation of. . . Rare occurrences" was compiled by Philip Nichols, preacher, from the reports of Drake's first independent voyage furnished by certain participants in it; and it is there further asserted that the text was "Reviewed by Sir Francis Drake himselfe before his death, and much holpen and enlarged by divers Notes with his owne hand here and there Inserted." The finished work was proffered to Charles I by Drake's nephew, who in the volume (first

¹ p. 245. *post.*

printed in 1626¹) included an earlier dedicatory epistle addressed to Elizabeth, dated January 1, 1592, which purports to have been written by Sir Francis himself. Therein Drake claims credit for the entire composition, the book being, he says, the "first fruites" of his unaccustomed pen. Further critical study, which the work merits, may determine whether or not the preacher's text, based on Seely's and Hixon's relations, was indeed so "much holpen and enlarged. . . with his owne hand" that we may consider Drake to be the author of it. For my part, I incline to think that he claimed the book with as much justification as pride.

Doubtless because it is lively and colourful, not only the authenticity but also the veracity of *Sir Francis Drake Revived* has been questioned². It must surely be recognized that the contemporary Spanish documents herewith published (Nos. 17-28, 30, 31) establish its validity beyond cavil. To be sure, the English were not always well informed concerning the Spaniards' customs, strength, movements and intentions; and the Spaniards were equally ignorant concerning those of the English. Be this as it may, the reader is invited to study the story of Drake's attack on the pack-train at Campos River, Nombre de Dios (April, 1573), as told in *Sir Francis Drake Revived* and corroborated in Documents Nos. 24, 31, etc., and ask himself whether he can reasonably doubt that the event occurred as the book relates; and, finally, whether in any work of fiction (classic or "thriller") he has read anything to surpass this tale, in diversity of incident, in vividness of description, or in the portrayal of character.

Whether Drake was writing to attract approbation and recruits to his last voyage (as well he may have been), or, as he says in the dedication to the queen, "that posteritie be

¹ Nicholas Bourne, who printed the first edition, issued a second in 1628, the text of which was used in the present work. The book was reprinted in 1653 (November 8, 1652) as part first of "a summary and true relation of four several voyages made by the said Sir Francis Drake to the West Indies." These editions are all available in the North Library of the British Museum.

² For instance, by both Froude and Fernandez Duro. However, see Corbett, Sir Julian, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, Longmans, London, 1912, I, p. 401.

not deprived of such help," certainly *Sir Francis Drake Revived* deserves a permanent and honoured place among the very best records of those amazing 16th-century adventures out of which grew the sea-power of England.

Item No. 2 of Part II is the better of Hakluyt's two accounts of Oxenham's expedition, both of which seem to have been drawn from the same original, credited to a Portuguese pilot called Lopez Vaz. This may possibly be the Antonio Vaez mentioned in Document No. 29. It will be observed that his relation is based upon no first-hand knowledge of the events it describes. While far less valuable as a source for history than the Spanish documents of this collection, Nos. 36 *et seq.*, it is nevertheless of interest, if only because it is all that his compatriots have known of Oxenham and his men from the time they left Plymouth in 1576 until the appearance of this present book in the year of grace 1932, three and a half centuries later.

Item No. 3 of Part II, Hakluyt's account of Barker's expedition, is similarly reprinted for the student's convenience in comparing it with these Spanish documents which correct and supplement it.

Item No. 4, from Richard Hawkins's well-known *Observations*, is appended not for its historical import but because it is curious, and quite properly closes our volume on a high note of morality, in a manner which would have won the approval of those persons whose exploits are here set forth.

For encouragement and very material assistance in the work of preparing this publication I am much indebted to the Hakluyt Society's president, Sir William Foster, to its secretary, Mr Edward Lynam, and to Dr James A. Williamson. By his invaluable criticism of the work made from the English point of view, Dr Williamson has helped me to keep my balance, as it were.

Finally, repeated thanks are due to Sr. Don Cristóbal Bermudez Plata, chief of the Archives of the Indies, who has established and maintains excellent working conditions in that great institution; and to his staff, particularly its humbler members, the *ordenanzas*, whose backs must have ached,

often, from carrying bales of papers back and forth between my desk and the shelves.

The preceding volume of similar Spanish documents was of service to British writers (according to their acknowledgments and to press comments). It is hoped that this volume may be of use to even more of them; but the editor would feel still better repaid for the labour which has gone into this book were such students to come to Spain, especially to Seville, to delve for themselves into the great collections of Spanish state papers, where so much bearing directly upon British history remains unknown. Facilities for travel to and in Spain, present living conditions here, the character of Spain's archivists (in any event, those at Seville), have invalidated any excuse which might be advanced on behalf of British historians for failure to consult Spanish sources for any work on any topic in history to which Spain was the party of the other part.

It is hoped to follow this volume, in due season, with another, presenting later documents of the same sort. There is no end to the material available at Seville alone, to say nothing of Madrid and Simancas, where unquestionably more is to be had.

IRENE A. WRIGHT

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INTRODUCTION

IT was as explorers that the English first presented themselves in Spain's Indies, in 1527, although even then they were probably not averse from trade¹. It was as business men that they returned, in 1562, their sole object being profit. To obtain profit, if for no other reason, they desired to trade peaceably. Because (his Catholic majesty's laws and the Roman church's prohibitions to the contrary notwithstanding) Spanish colonials on the islands and along the Main were eager to do business with them, peace prevailed (sometimes under the fiction of hostilities) and trade throve² between these colonials and men who, like John Hawkins, were corsairs in the sense in which that word was used in his time, i.e. to mean illicit trader or contrabandist.

However, distinct from the Hawkinses and their kind, there were other English (individuals and groups) to whose character and convictions events in England, in Europe, and in America itself, were making friendly intercourse with Spanish papists increasingly distasteful. They voyaged, or financed voyages,

¹ Cf. the Society's publication No. LXII, Second Series, *English Voyages to the Caribbean, 1527-1568*.

² The situation is lucidly summarized in a "memorandum of matters relating to revenues in the Indies," preserved in *A. de I.* 140-7-32, and endorsed: "Drawn up in the Council for Indies and approved by his majesty." On p. 3 "vessels and fleets of corsairs which sail the Indies course" are considered to represent a loss in revenues. "They say they carry merchandise and products from England, France and other parts, and sell and barter these to his majesty's subjects at lower prices than those prevailing for goods from Seville, wherefore they are well received and covered by these subjects. As return cargoes the foreigners carry home gold and silver and *en route* do what harm and damage they are able, and they report on the land and on the sea routes. They and others are developing an appetite for such business and profits, and because they are avaricious, fond of money, and possess such resources in ships, cordage, seamen, pilots and all else necessary for the voyage, unless a remedy be applied betimes this evil, which is great, will augment daily."

to the Indies for profit, to be sure, but they were no longer particular, as John Hawkins had been, to give value for value obtained. After Pedro Menéndez de Avilés had eliminated the French from Florida (especially from 1567 on), the English sailed the Caribbean and along the Main in company with formidable Huguenot captains whose professed object was adequate as well as profitable revenge. After 1568 the English had scores of their own to settle, and from 1569 forward their activities constitute the third phase of Anglo-Spanish relations in the West Indies, which was war (*guerre de course*), waged through seventeen years in which neither Elizabeth nor Philip saw fit to recognize it for what it was (1569-86).

After 1568, in close association with men like Jean Bontemps, Captain Le Testu, possibly even with Dominique de Gourges¹, and later (1572 and thereafter) on their own account, relegating business to a secondary place, with heavy hand these English took from Spaniards in the Indies "recompence" and "amends" for "losse" and "wrongs" received². Hawkins had sought to establish permanent business relations, and would have preferred that they should be legitimate; to be "revenged for injury³" to themselves,

¹ Governor Pedro Ponce de Leon (to the crown, Coro, December 15, 1567, in *A. de I.* 54-4-15, Santo Domingo 193) states that they were French and Scotch who burned Borburata in revenge for Ribaut's death. *A. de I.* 2-5-1/22, *Patronato* 267, 45, affords details of the methods, but not the identity, of these avengers.

Counsel for the crown, in pressing for prosecution of soldiers accused of deserting Fort San Mateo (near the present-day Jacksonville, Florida) when Dominique de Gourges attacked in 1568, states that the assailants were French and English. Cf. the *fiscal's* memorial, *A. de I.* 54-5-16, Santo Domingo 231, 7. Very possibly these are two references to one and the same expedition.

Cf. *Spanish Calendar*, II, p. 277, Guerau de Spes to the crown, London, September 11, 1570, reference to La Rochelle and especially to Jolis and his English crew.

² Cf. Corbett, *op. cit.* I, pp. 147-8. "The laconic statement of the family narrative" concerning Drake's motives (and observe the frank wording of the third line of its very title!) sounds more convincing, with Spanish state papers in view, than does Sir Julian's elaboration of national policies behind him.

³ "... (Hawkins) asserts that he will be revenged for the injury the Spaniards have done him"—Guerau de Spes to the crown, London, July 1, 1570, in *Spanish Calendar*, II, p. 258.

to their fellow-countrymen or co-religionists, to humiliate their enemies, insult catholicism in its priests and images and ornaments, and, while so doing, to enrich themselves and their principals, was the very different purpose of the men who came after Hawkins, of whom Francis Drake was but one among many of his sort. These rovers had frequently the countenance¹, but not often the commission, of Elizabeth and her councillors. To the Spaniards they were "thieves by sea," and, presently, highwaymen by land, to whom before the last quarter of the 16th century had ended they applied generally the word "pirate," with no more and no less justice than usually attends its application to commerce destroyers.

While it has usually been considered that the battle of San Juan de Ulua (1568) put an end to the second-phase of Anglo-Spanish relations in the West Indies, i.e. to that of "aggressive commerce"² (which has now been shown to be far less aggressive than diplomatic³), a closer study of Spanish documents makes it evident that although the battle of San Juan de Ulua did usher in the third phase of these relations, i.e. the era of irregular warfare among the islands and along the continents—it did not, as a matter of fact, terminate the second phase. Illicit commerce continued after 1568 "as usual." Not even the house of Hawkins abandoned its system, forsook its usual haunts, or turned upon its old friends in the Indies⁴. After 1568 both phases existed simultaneously—

¹ "It is believed that Captain John Hawkins, his brother, Sir William Winter, many others, the brothers of this Francis Drake, and Louis Larder(er), are participants and accomplices in these crimes and robberies. For instance, they cite that a slave boy obtained in one of these piracies was given to a councillor, who presented him to the queen, who highly prized him. She was led to understand that he had been brought from Guinea. . . ."—*A. de I.* 2-5-2/21, *Patronato* 266, 1.

² Corbett, *op. cit.* I, p. 151.

³ Observe that Hawkins blamed the failure of his 1566 adventure upon "the simpleness" of Lovell and Drake, "whoe knew not howe to handle these matters." Cf. Williamson, J. A., *Sir John Hawkins*, Clarendon Press, 1927, p. 520. Had aggression been what was lacking, Drake could have been relied upon to furnish that!

⁴ The editor doubts that the Hawkins brothers forbore to trade even in the years immediately following the 1568 disaster; certainly there are Spanish documents to prove that in 1583 William Hawkins himself was in the Indies on a commercial reconaissance.

illicit trade and irregular warfare—until in 1586 Drake's great raid proclaimed a recognized state of war.

Now, just as the Portuguese were the earliest corsairs, driving contraband trade in slaves especially, so the French were the first pirates in the West Indies¹. The English and the Dutch² steered close in the wake of both. To the Spaniards these foreigners were all "enemies"—of God and of the king—"heretic Lutherans," abhorrent to "both majesties," with some of whom illicit business might sometimes be done, against all of whom it was increasingly necessary to be on guard. Among them (unfortunately for the historian) the Spaniards did not correctly distinguish even nationality, to say nothing of the true names of ships, ports of origin, or the identity of commanders, many of whom worked under *noms de guerre* (John Goodweather, Nicholas of the Isles, John Noble, etc.). The names of others appear curiously translated from one language to another, or even more fantastically corrupted. *Aquines* for Hawkins, *Dracques* for Drake, and *Guataral* for Walter Raleigh are typical; and easier to decipher than *los capitanes de ysla dui y forsamua*, captains of the Isle of Wight and of Portsmouth, for the interpretation of which the writer is indebted to Dr Williamson.

Indeed, even at the moment, it must have been difficult to identify shifting units, given the loose agreements (like Hawkins' with Bland, or Drake's with Le Testu) into which vessels or groups of vessels of different nationalities frequently entered, sometimes before they left Europe, sometimes when they met upon the Guinea coast, sometimes *en route* to the Indies or after their arrival there. Under these agreements they formed joint expeditions, which as readily broke up, once their purpose was achieved or defeated. It must have been difficult to identify them—especially when they were no more desirous to be identified than contrabandists or raiders generally are.

¹ The French made their first appearance in the Indies in 1528, according to depositions preserved in *A. de I.* 53-1-9, Santo Domingo 9, an *información*.

² Document No. 2.

From a mass of material available at Seville, Documents Nos. 1, 2 and 3 of this collection were chosen to depict conditions prevailing by sea, especially along the Spanish Main, in 1569, i.e. at the commencement of the third phase of Anglo-Spanish relations (irregular warfare) in the Caribbean. Document No. 4 suggests what conditions prevailed by land. There the Spaniards were harassed and their goods and lives endangered by escaped slaves—blacks called *cimarrones* or 'maroons. Not only did these negroes maintain their liberty, but, also, as their numbers were augmented by natural increase and by their captures of the more docile slaves whom they carried off by force from the outskirts of the Spanish settlements, by 1569 they had come to constitute a serious menace to the few sparsely populated towns upon the isthmus¹. Document No. 9 is a résumé of these circumstances, which the genius of Francis Drake turned to his advantage in the early, more picturesque, stage of his career.

Not this stage, but his subsequent career lends to the Drake of this period an interest and an importance which he did not in reality then possess. He was as yet truly "a meane subject of her Majesties²," who had not exhibited any outstanding ability, neither in 1566 (at Rio de la Hacha with John Lovell) nor in 1568 (with Hawkins, on Hawkins' third voyage). He was at this time merely one adventurous and apparently popular captain among many to whom appealed mightily the danger, the satisfaction and the profit to be had from robbing a mortal enemy near the source of his dangerous

¹ "This land is wearied of the *cimarrones* and the French; and certainly it is a great pity, for those who are doing business both by sea and by river are readily despoiled, amidst many affronts. This is a matter which it touches your majesty's conscience to remedy for love of God. . . ."—The bishop to the crown, Panama, February 8, 1570, in *A. de I.* 69-4-31, Panama 100. Writing under date of March 15, 1571, from Panama, the bishop urged that no more negroes be sent to Tierra Firme, "for certainly human tongue cannot relate the ignominies which both French and *cimarrones* have this year inflicted here on all sorts of persons; and of a thousand negroes who arrive annually, 300 or more escape to the wilds. . . ."—*A. de I.* 69-2-21, Panama 11, f. 233.

² See pp. 251, 253, *post.* Cf. Corbett, *op. cit.* 1, pp. 191-2.

strength. Because in later years Drake became far more than this, details of his earlier voyages acquire an interest which does not attach to those of other quite similar voyages made at the same time by certain of his friends and compatriots who had no higher destiny before them.

It will be recalled that Drake reached England, after the San Juan de Ulua disaster, on January 20, 1569. William Hawkins at once despatched him to London with a demand on Cecil and the council for a commission of reprisal. Drake was of a disposition to argue hotly, under the circumstances, for such leave to seek revenge. On January 25, 1569, John Hawkins landed in Cornwall. The tone of the letter¹ which he wrote to Cecil from Mount's Bay suggests that this time the elder cooler man may have been in no humour to lay any restraint upon the younger. On February 4 John Hawkins reached London.

In his own account of the San Juan de Ulua affair Hawkins states that on the night of the battle Drake "forsooke" him in his "greate miserie²." Coming from a man who is not known publicly to have condemned any other officer who ever served under him³, this was severe censure. It has long constituted a basis for the generally accepted supposition that the disastrous end of the third voyage permanently estranged Hawkins and Drake. As a matter of fact, immediately thereafter may have been the one moment when they worked in perfect agreement, since "the treason of the Spanyards" upon that occasion had moved John Hawkins out of the calculating temper of the merchant which had theretofore been as markedly his as had the temper of the aggressive fighter been Drake's from the beginning. Yet neither Drake nor Hawkins, their story, nor the evidence of its truth which they must have shown in their persons, moved Cecil to grant the commission of reprisal asked of him. It is inconceivable, however, that he should not have sympathized with their desire for it.

¹ John Hawkins to Sir William Cecil, Mount's Bay, Cornwall, January 25, 1569, in Hawkins, Mary S. W., *Plymouth Armada Heroes*, Plymouth, 1888, p. 34.

² Hakluyt, Richard, *Principal Navigations*, Glasgow, 1904, x, p. 72.

³ Williamson, J. A., "Books on Drake," in *History*, XII, No. 48, p. 315.

Immediately, "Drake disappears...¹" "*The English Hero*...says that he now served for some time upon one of the queen's ships to his great advantage²." Where did he serve? If not aboard "one of the queen's ships," since Dr Williamson's researches, especially in declared accounts in the Public Record Office, have discovered no trace of such employment of any of her majesty's ships, then is it possible that, aboard some other acceptable vessel, it was in the Indies that Drake served in 1569?

If, without a commission, but with the support of the Hawkinses, the tacit approval of the council and the applause, unquestionably, of seafaring elements, Drake was already off to sea to avenge himself and his lost and abandoned comrades, there was indeed "good reason³" not only to dissociate him from the inquiry which was made into the San Juan de Ulua affair, but also in every other fashion to stifle curiosity concerning his whereabouts in the early part of 1569.

The writer does not agree with Dr Williamson's supposition that Drake may have indulged in any piratical proceedings between his clearance from San Juan de Ulua after the battle and his arrival in Plymouth, to cover which might have been the object of a conspiracy of silence. The San Juan de Ulua affair left Drake in no condition to assume the aggressive, nor has investigation at Seville discovered any indication that he did so. The admiralty court's silence concerning him seems better explained by supposing that, although Drake did not obtain the commission of reprisal he demanded, he did obtain tacit permission to do his worst. This, too, better explains John Hawkins' silence with respect to him than the usual supposition that these two men had become widely estranged. As a matter of fact, John Hawkins' silence concerning Drake, then and thereafter, may have been the best possible evidence, if not of friendship and approval, at least of a willingness to co-operate. Hawkins' experience of Drake must have borne in on him that here was a man

¹ Corbett, *op. cit.* I, pp. 125-6.

² Corbett, *op. cit.* I, p. 126.

³ Williamson, *op. cit.* p. 200.

better fitted to carry out the belligerent intentions which Hawkins' comrades advertised¹ at Vigo, as they refreshed there on their return from Mexico at the end of 1568, than he had ever been to sell negroes and cloth to Spanish colonials.

If Drake "served" in the Indies in 1569, it is almost certain that he worked with Frenchmen. Had he needed any introduction to them, Captain Bland (Blondel) could have furnished it. Given what must have been his humour at the time, Drake doubtless found the purposes of the French, and even their methods, congenial. They made a record in the Indies that year (1569) for cruelty².

Out of Diego Flores' second fleet, which Pedro Menéndez and the armada were escorting, they cut a richly-laden vessel (said to belong to the *adelantado* himself); it was reported that they deliberately drowned its crew and passengers, women and religious among them³. Twice they took Tolu, once by assault; and the second time they burned the town⁴. They appeared at the mouth of the Chagre River and there

¹ *A. de I.* 2-5-1/20, *Patronato* 265, 13.

² *A. de I.* 69-3-1, Panama 32, for depositions made at Nombre de Dios, May, 1569, concerning damage done, etc., etc.

³ Documents Nos. 3 and 7. "Captain... [torn away], a Norman, took a vessel proceeding to the Indies with Pedro Menéndez' armada, aboard which was a Spanish lady and other women and her two children and more than fifty-eight religious and many other passengers and seamen. They say there were 265 persons in the ship... and that he threw them overboard and carried off the vessel with more than 100,000 ducats in goods to Brest in Brittany. This same Nepeville is the man who burned Tolu..."—The ambassador's memorandum (September, 1571), in *A. de I.* 2-5-1/22, *Patronato* 267, 53. "In the year 1569 Captain Nepeville with five ships took a vessel, Francisco Muñoz master, burgher of Triana. It was a unit in Pedro Menéndez' convoy and witness believes that he got more than 100,000 ducats out of her, for she was laden. She was taken off Santa Marta. Witness knows of the matter because the French who committed this robbery, themselves told him..." (when in 1571 he was their prisoner)—Pedro Morera, deposition, Havana, July 23 (?), 1572, item 54 of the *legajo* cited.

⁴ Documents Nos. 3 and 9, item 5. Writing to the crown from Panama, [letter preserved in *A. de I.* 69-2-23, Panama 13, 16], under date of June 26, 1569, Licentiate Carasa states that the first attack occurred either at the very end of 1568 or early in January, 1569, and the second shortly afterwards. In *A. de I.* 72-5-12, Santa Fé 83, may be seen an *información* on the merits of Juan de Espinoza, burgher of Tolu, wherein it appears that the enemy burned Tolu upon the second occasion.

seized river barks from which they got gold and silver, and miscellaneous cargo of less interest¹. Off the coast of Veragua they took a Nicaraguan frigate aboard which was a fortune in coin². All this occurred before July 1, 1569, when Diego Flores left for Spain, for it is recorded that to his mortification these things happened while he was present on the Mainland coast, or before he arrived³. If Drake participated in any of them, he must have had just time (and none to spare) to return home in fine fettle to marry his Mary at St Budeaux on July 4 of that year⁴.

One reason for supposing that Drake had a share in these depredations is that when he and the French reappeared in 1571 they seem to have been recognized⁵ and reported to be the same relentless enemies who had raided and robbed and killed in 1569. It is certain that the French were the same. If the English were, then Francis Drake's third voyage to the Indies was one hitherto unknown, made in 1569.

Whether or no he made such a voyage in close association with, or, more probably, in subordination to, the French, is a problem which perhaps cannot be certainly decided until close study be made of French documents concerning the men herein called Bontemps, Jolis, Harnao, Ambile, Bienville, Nepeville (Capdeville?), Bland (Blondel) and Nicholas of the Isles. Meantime, with these Spanish documents in view, it is surely permissible to ask: Where was Francis Drake between February 4 and July 4, 1569, if not in the Indies with the French, who (in Bland and his crew) were smarting as he was under the memory of San Juan de Ulua, nor needed that additional incident to inflame them against Spaniards?

An argument for the possibility that Drake was indeed present with the French who, in 1569, laid such heavy toll upon the Spanish Indies in life and property, is that presently he carried into execution schemes which seem to have originated with these men. He might, however, have learned

¹ Documents Nos. 1, 2, 3, 7, etc., etc.

² Document No. 9, item 4.

³ Documents Nos. 1 and 3.

⁴ Corbett, *op. cit.* 1, p. 127.

⁵ Documents Nos. 7, 8, 9, etc. See Sotomayor and Peñalosa to the crown, Nombre de Dios, March, 1571, in *A. de I.* 69-2-3, Panama 33.

of these projects in any port they frequented. Furthermore, such schemes were the logical development of events—a course obvious and open to all. Or Drake may have learned of such plans in February of 1571, especially if the purpose of that year's voyage was "to gaine. . . intelligences¹." He must, then, at least have conversed with these Frenchmen, even if he were not in close working agreement with them at the time.

It is stated in *Sir Francis Drake Revived*² that Drake went to the Indies in 1570 with two ships, the *Dragon* and the *Swan*. The assertion that he went in 1570 is not incompatible with the supposition that he had been there the year before, on a voyage concerning which it was wisdom to say nothing whatsoever, either at the time or at any later period.

The Ashmole MS. 830 states that "in the year 1570 he (Drake) went to the Indies in a barke of ffortie tonnes. . . ." Neither is this incompatible with the foregoing, since from its name—the *Dragon* being a common ship name in France—it is possible to infer that the Ashmole "barke" was the *Swan*, sailing with a French associate.

The student of Spanish documents must, however, be somewhat troubled by the rest of the first indictment of the Ashmole MS., which declares that in 1570 Drake and "an Englishe marchant of Exeter called Richard Dennys and others. . . upon the coast of Nombre de Dios did robbe divers barkes in the river of Chacro and in the same river did robbe divers barkes that were transporting of marchandizes of ffortye thousand duckattes, velvettes and taffitas, besides other marchandizes with gold and silver in other barkes and with the same came to Plymouthe where it was divided amongst his partners." The student's difficulty arises from the evidence before him that, as a matter of fact, nothing of this sort happened off Nombre de Dios or in the Chagre River in 1570; whereas in 1570/71 it did.

In 1570 nothing of any importance whatever occurred in the Indies, the Ashmole MS. to the contrary notwithstanding.

¹ p. 254, *post*.

² *Ibid.*

It was very distinctly an off-year for "piracy¹." There was no true Mainland fleet². This meant there was little legitimate business afloat, to pillage. Moreover, Menéndez' great galleons were lumbering about the Caribbean in search of "enemies." It was wisdom to avoid them. Nevertheless, though the season was dull and they were not aggressive, "enemies" (supposed to be French) were numerous enough.

¹ In September, 1571, the Spanish ambassador at Paris drew up a memorandum of French depredations which is preserved in *A. de I. 2-5-1/22, Patronato* 267, 53, to which the Council for the Indies added what it could. These data were formulated into an interrogatory according to which depositions were taken in various ports of the Indies, and on this information were based Spanish claims made against the French (items 40 and 88 of this *legajo*). Unfortunately, in order that confusion might not weaken his position, the ambassador demanded that no mention be made of the English in these depositions, etc., not even when it was obvious that they were involved. In this memorandum, which covers the matter to June 20, 1571, no depredations for 1570 are listed; which may mean that none were committed, or that they were committed by the English and therefore omitted. The general tenor of correspondence from the Indies supports the former alternative.

In like fashion, but somewhat later (1575), similar information was compiled in the Indies concerning depredations committed by the English; two related documents, both "extracts," are preserved at Seville (*A. de I. 2-5-1/20, Patronato* 265, 28; *2-5-2/21, Patronato* 266, 1, see *S.P. Spain*, xviii, cited by Corbett, *op. cit.* 1, p. 402) and one, the Ashmole MS. 830, at the Bodleian. The first contains reference to the year 1570 in one paragraph, which reads: "According to other evidence taken in the city of Nombre de Dios on March 15 it appears that on that coast the English at that time took a frigate of Gaspar Hernandez', though it was in ballast."

² Diego Flores served Spain as general commanding the Mainland fleet—his first—in 1567. With his second fleet he anchored at Nombre de Dios in June, 1569, and with part of it returned at once, being under orders to be back in Spain before the end of the year. He arrived in Cadiz late in September, 1569. That part of his fleet which he left behind him was brought home by Nicholas Cardona, who cleared from Nombre de Dios in April, 1570. Escorted by Pedro Menéndez with four galleons of the guard, he reached Spain in early August, 1570. Meanwhile, Menéndez' other five galleons patrolled the Caribbean, especially around Hayti, where corsairs were reported to be.

When Diego Flores arrived in September, 1569, preparations were well advanced for another Mainland fleet, that is, for the usual annual fleet for 1570, which was to leave in January. Its clearance was suspended, partly at least because of the rumour that there were many enemy sails along the coast of Spain and among the islands. This fleet did not clear until October, 1570. Again Diego Flores commanded and with this, his third fleet, he arrived in Nombre de Dios late in January of 1571. Presumably that year's most enterprising "enemies" appeared off the Main at about the same time.

If Drake was among them and his purposes piratical, his voyage cannot possibly have been as lucrative as the Ashmole MS. asserts, or there would have been at least such record of it as these Spanish documents do contain of precisely such a seizure of "duckattes, velvettes and taffitas" made on the Chagre River in 1571.

Or if Drake was abroad in 1570 in the more modest character of illicit trader, it is quite possible that, along with the *Dragon*, the *Swan* did good business, being especially welcome to the colonials precisely because there was no true Mainland fleet that year to supply their market. And if the *Swan* did this business quietly, on Hawkins' principles, none concerned would have had any particular occasion to report their transactions in the state papers now accumulated at Seville.

In support of the possibility that Drake's 1570 voyage was such a trading venture (on true Hawkins lines), it is interesting to observe that late in 1569 (November–December) and early (January) in 1570 a considerable number of enemy ships were off the coast of Spain and among the islands. Among these ships the English may not have been more than three or four sail (a ship or two and attendant pinnaces). There is good evidence¹ that their commander was William Hawkins in person, described as "an old man, of about 50 years," "the old captain." His subordinates showed him marked respect to his face; behind his back they robbed his prisoners, towards whom he had been considerate. Captains, under him, of two pinnaces are mentioned, but not by name. These English said that they were going "below," i.e. south of the equator. Doubtless this meant either to Guinea or to Brazil. The Spaniards preferred to believe that their destination was the Indies, and the colonial authorities were warned². The air was

¹ *A. de I.* 42–6–2/6, *Contratación* 5168, IV, ff. 57, 58, 59, 61, 63 and reverse, 68 reverse, 69 reverse, 72 reverse; cf. Williamson, *op. cit.* p. 229, note; 143–3–12, Doctor Mexia to the Council for the Indies, Tenerife, February 4, 1570; 140–7–32, depositions made at Santa Cruz, Tenerife, January 19, 1570, especially Vicente Romano's, who had been a prisoner of these English; Juan de Abalia to the crown, Cadiz, March 6, 1570, etc., etc.

² Cf. *A. de I.* 69–2–23, Panama 13, the *Audiencia* to the crown, Panama, April 2, 1570, acknowledging receipt of stringent orders to take extra-

full of rumours that John Hawkins was going out to fetch those of his men whom he had been compelled to abandon¹. These are dates (November, 1569–January, 1570) when Drake, making an Indies voyage in 1570, may well have been off Cape St Vincent and in the vicinity of Tenerife, where the Spaniards believed John Hawkins himself to be, with a son of Ribaut in his company². It will be borne in mind that Drake was not yet exercising independent command, having neither the money nor the credit with which to end his subordination to the Hawkinses. It is extremely probable that he was serving under William Hawkins; and possible that, at the end of 1569 or commencement of 1570, “the old captain” from the neighbourhood of the islands may have sent him into the Indies on a trading voyage to be conducted on the Hawkins plan, i.e. without disturbance.

Obviously, there is much here which must be left for further study to clear up. (1) Did Drake make a voyage to the Indies in 1569? (2) Did he make a voyage in 1570? And was it a trading voyage under the auspices of the house of Hawkins? (3) Does the Ashmole MS. ascribe to 1570 events of 1570/71? Is the problem here merely that of adjustment to the unreformed calendar then used in England? Further research, in English and especially in French archives, or even among Spanish documents, may disclose additional facts.

Certainly, in 1570 (as we now measure the year) nothing occurred so to alarm the Spaniards there as had the audacity of those enemies (French, or French and English) who in 1569 stationed themselves at the mouth of the Chagre and, apparently for the first time, interfered with trade and communications between Spain and the vast realm called Peru. To the Spaniards this was a very serious development.

Until that date the French and the English associated with

ordinary measures to protect the bullion which Cardona eventually brought home safe.

¹ *A. de I.* 140–7–32, Don Juan de Mendoza to the crown, from Dublin, March 6, 1570, reporting that “Stukeley has a small ship ready to clear, which Stukeley denies will join John Hawkins, who is said to be returning to ‘Florida’ for his men.”

² Abalia’s letter of March 6, 1570, cited above.

them had plundered inter-colony traders, and now and then a Canary Island wine-ship or an advice-boat from Seville. Thus they provided themselves with subsistence and information, and picked up hides, sugar, brazil wood (all local products) and not a little silver and gold. They had sacked miserable seaboard settlements when they could, and held them to ransom. But all in all, the contrabandists probably did a better business than the commerce destroyers, prior to 1569. Now, however, doubtless emboldened by the situation in Europe and encouraged by their own success, these began to tap the main streams of business between Spain and the northern and western coasts of South America.

Interest in those enormous areas—which are now Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile—was at the moment very keen¹, because of their increasing production of precious metals, pearls and emeralds. Their development and prosperity augmented their importation of merchandise from Spain, which, under the existing system of trade control, must all come from Andalusia in the annual Mainland fleet under convoy to Cartagena and especially to Nombre de Dios. Through this latter neglected settlement passed the major stream of incoming business. There the fleets' cargoes were re-laden into barks for transportation up the Chagre River to a post called Venta Cruces or the House at Cruces, whence this merchandise proceeded by pack-train to Panama.

Venta Cruces, literally the Crosses Roadhouse, was the most important way-station, and the only one mentioned by name, between Nombre de Dios and Panama. It appears not to have been immediately upon the river, yet to have possessed a wharf and warehouses on the water. Doubtless some officials² resided there; some soldiers may have been stationed there; and there would have been a few religious to attend to the spiritual needs of a small population inhabiting half a hundred comparatively substantial houses.

Similarly, outgoing merchandise and "the plate," meaning

¹ Cf. Document No. 13.

² But no governor; cf. pp. 307-8, *post*. The description is doubtless otherwise correct enough.

gold and silver bullion—crown revenues from the west coast of South America and the private fortunes of individuals (some retiring to Spain, others seeking investment in goods at Nombre de Dios)—all came down to Venta Cruces from Panama by mule-train. From the Venta the bulkier, less valuable freight continued aboard the river barks, along with passengers who preferred the longer, easier water route to the real hardships of overland travel. These passengers frequently carried their metal with them, in coin, plates or bars. But the larger part of this, and especially his majesty's revenues, continued by mule-train from the way-station of Venta Cruces to the coast.

So upon Nombre de Dios by land and by water converged also the great stream of export business, annually, when the fleet appeared; for that fleet, returning to Andalusia, was the only licit means of transportation to Europe. "Loose ships" were occasionally by special permit cleared to cross the Atlantic "outside fleets," and advice-boats usually carried some cargo, as well as despatches, permission so to do apparently constituting an acceptable form of payment for their service. But the vast bulk of trade and commerce between Spain and South America travelled under control between Andalusia and Nombre de Dios, by the Chagre River, through Venta Cruces, to and from Panama. In interfering with the Chagre River craft the French and the English (represented especially by Captain Francis Drake) were now tampering with communications and a trade route which it was vitally important to Spain to maintain and protect.

Concerning Drake's voyage of 1571 the Spanish documents seen have definite information to contribute. Nos. 5-13 have been selected for presentation. They show that in that year Drake reappeared off the Mainland coast, apparently in February, following as usual after the Mainland fleet, which was Diego Flores' third. Obviously, the pirates must work in defiance of the fleet's escorting warships (be these Pedro Menéndez' armada of the guard, as in 1569, or only the captain-general's flagship and the vice-admiral, galleons both, as in 1571), since only when the fleet they convoyed was on

the coast was business lively. Then only, as has been said, was treasure shipped down to galleons ready to receive and protect it. Only then did merchants forgather in numbers, at Nombre de Dios especially, bringing gold and silver to buy goods, of which, if the bullion had not been taken from them *en route* thither, it was still worth while to relieve them as they returned home. Hard metal in bars and disks from the mines, or in nuggets and dust from the placers, and coined money, constituted the best loot—items these of export trade; but the velvets, taffetas, linens, wines, oils, etc., incoming from Spain were not to be despised.

For their defence the “pirates” relied less upon strength (brass artillery, arquebuses, bows, arrows, swords, bucklers) than upon agility—upon their superior seamanship, upon the light draught of their smaller craft¹, and especially upon oars² as against sails. As Documents Nos. 8 to 13 make very evident, they crossed the Atlantic in vessels of size and strength to withstand the voyage; upon arrival in the Indies they anchored these in safe retreats or even destroyed them, so great was sometimes their confidence that they could seize a suitable vessel when the time should come for their return home. The “pirate’s” real work was done by small light craft, equipped (in the case of the English, certainly) with oars as well as sails. The documents mentioned (Nos. 8–13) furnish ample evidence that their speed, lesser size, and ability to row when the wind failed, completely discomfited Diego Flores, his galleons, and even his frigates along the Main in 1569–71. The Spaniards were repeatedly out-sailed, out-rowed, and out-manœuvred.

For before he had been in Nombre de Dios harbour with his third fleet much more than a month³, Diego Flores was aware of the presence of Frenchmen—the same who had humiliated him in 1569 by their depredations committed then when he was present and was supposed to suffice for the

¹ Sir Julian Corbett’s discussion of types and development of seacraft is pertinent, *op. cit.* II, index, under “Ships.”

² Cf. especially Document No. 8.

³ Compare Documents Nos. 6 and 8.

protection of the Main. Only a little later did he hear also of English¹, from whose ship, stationed like a base at Cativas Headland, its men sallied in a pinnace to plunder.

The French, and possibly these English associated with them, now took Baltazar de Melo's bark—a valuable prize—far up the Chagre River, and it was learned that it had been their purpose to sack the crossroads station itself. This was unprecedented audacity². Diego Flores went out in person from Nombre de Dios with flagship and vice-admiral to chastise such temerity³. With its booty the French ship departed, into the north. The English remained, dodging away from the Spaniards into shoal water.

Considerable interest attaches to this particular robbery. These French were under the command of Captain Nicholas des Isles (Bezellin? Leyerre?). Their ship was *L'Esperance* and they were sent out by "Musoir Turbila" to sack the post at Cruces⁴.

¹ Document No. 8.

² Document No. 9, item 15. "A thing not heretofore seen or imagined"—Dr Barros to the crown, Panama, May 21, 1571, in *A. de I.* 69-2-23, Panama 13, 23.

³ Documents Nos. 7 *et seq.* "The general's first sally was fruitless and he returned to port"—The *Audiencia* to the crown, Panama, March 14, 1571, in *A. de I.* 69-2-23, Panama 13. "The general. . . went out last week with both galleons after a French corsair ship and a galliot and was fortunate enough to find him, but because one galleon sprung a mast and was so disabled, he could not take him"—Gerónimo Narvaéz de Padilla to the crown, Nombre de Dios, March 14, 1571, in *A. de I.* 69-3-9, Panama 40. Nevertheless, it was from these galleons that Des Isles fled in such haste that his ship and launch were separated; cf. Estevez' deposition, *A. de I.* 2-5-1/22, *Patronato* 267, item 53. Possibly the smaller vessel remained in the Indies for some little time after the ship had gone home.

⁴ A very good account of the voyage of *L'Esperance* was given to the *Audiencia* at Panama in his deposition made February 20, 1571, by the negro named Pedro Mandinga, whom the French had carried off in 1569, brought back in 1571 to serve them as a guide to the way-station, and who deserted to the Spaniards when the attacking party drew near the place. Cf. *A. de I.* 2-5-1/22, *Patronato* 267, legalized copy of this deposition. Originally it was an enclosure in a despatch from the *Audiencia* to the crown, of the same date, now to be found in *A. de I.* 69-2-23, Panama 13, 22.

While in France Pedro Mandinga resided, he says, "in a village called 'Punta de Mel (Point-Audemer?),' where there was a great monastery. It was situated between Rouen and "Monfle." His master, "Musoir Turbila," bade him lead Captain des Isles to the House at Cruces. The negro's reward was to be the hand of the serving-maid, Marie, in marriage. But when he had brought the French (and the English?) within five

At the same time it is stated¹ that they were the men who took Diego Polo's bark; and that bark was taken in 1568 by

leagues of the House at Cruces, Pedro Mandinga deserted them and warned the Spaniards. The French then withdrew downstream and at a bend in the river called Los Magos fell upon a Chagre River bark richly laden with silks and some wine, belonging to Baltazar de Melo. This proved a good prize, and when it had been taken, the French ship fled from Diego Flores' punitive expedition, sailing northward along the coast of Central America, where it did further damage to shipping.

These corsairs re-entered France via Honfleur, carrying with them a Spaniard named Vicente Estevez, who eventually returned to Spain, from whom, when he had so returned, the Spanish authorities learned a good deal. Cf. the *legajo* cited, item 53, the Spanish ambassador's memorandum (Paris, September, 1571) concerning French depredations; item 54, Ricardo Caro's deposition, made at Havana, July 23(?), 1572; and item 60, depositions made by Melo's negroes who deserted the bark after its capture, dated at Nombre de Dios, March 2, 1571.

It would be interesting to identify "Musoir Turbila," who can hardly have been Captain Tutila (Document No. 31) with whom Drake attacked the pack-train at Nombre de Dios in 1573, for in *Sir Francis Drake Revived* (p. 316, *post*) this man is called Captain Tetu, and it is now generally accepted that he was the famous hydrographer, Guillaume Le Testu, whose atlas (*Cosmographie Universelle*) is a treasure preserved in the French Ministry of War, and Le Testu was almost certainly in prison in Flanders at the time *L'Esperance* set sail on this adventure.

There is evidence that a Frenchman whose name is given as Giraldo Tetu was the master or perhaps the pilot of a ship called the *Countess* which at this very time (early spring, 1571) was doing the Spanish damage off Santo Domingo. Cf. *A. de I. 2-5-1/22, Patronato* 267, 53, the ambassador's memorandum previously mentioned; item 54, Pedro Morera's deposition made at Havana, July 23(?), 1572. According to item 57 of this same *legajo* there may have been Englishmen with him. One "Guillermogrin" is mentioned in item 58, i.e. William Green, a captain or pilot. In connection with the seizure of Asensio Hernandez' ship *Nuestra Señora de la Ayuda*, it is there stated that the officer commanding these enemies was Jacques Sores, described as a nephew of Ribaut, to whom most of the crew claimed relationship. Item 59 suggests that this vessel may have been Laudonnière's. Ambassador Alava informed the crown (this *legajo*, Paris, July 1, 1571) that he had just had news that Laudonnière had returned to Normandy with a prize, which seems to have been Hernandez' vessel.

¹ "6. According to further evidence taken in the said city of Nombre de Dios on November 2, 1571, it appears that at that season in the Chagre River certain corsairs (who seem to have been French) took a bark laden with merchandise en route to the House at Cruces, which belonged to Baltazar de Melo, merchant.

"7. According to further evidence taken in the said city of Nombre de Dios on November 1, 1571, it appears that said corsairs (French and (*sic*) English, not stated which) took and looted a frigate which belonged to Diego de Polo"—*A. de I. 2-5-1/20, Patronato* 265, item 28, Extract (of depositions not seen).

Paul Blondel alias Captain Bland, Hawkins' associate upon his third voyage. If, then, these English had a hand in Melo's despoiling (as they may not have had, but probably did), here we have Francis Drake again in close association with the very Frenchman who suffered even more than he at San Juan de Ulua—since there Bland lost his *Don de Dieu*, while Drake got off with the *Judith*. For the English ship anchored at Cativa[s] Headland¹ was the *Swan*, Francis Drake commanding.

"The year 1568 Paul Blondel of Saint Valerie in Lower Normandy, with a vessel called the *Don de Dieu*, off the Mainland coast seized a frigate laden with much gold and silver and other jewels of great value, belonging in part to Juan Ortiz de Zarate. . . .

"At the time deponent had cleared from the harbour of Nombre de Dios in another frigate, his own, also carrying gold and silver for delivery to the second fleet which Diego Flores de Valdes brought over, which lay at anchor in the harbour of Cartagena. Deponent cleared in company and convoy of a *cayman* belonging to Diego Polo, government notary of Cartagena, which also carried gold and silver and other jewels to a value of over 200,000 *pesos*. Deponent's cargo was 300,000 *pesos* in silver bars. In the ports it is always known what each ship carries, because the cargo is delivered against public reckoning and receipt.

"And as they sailed on a course for the harbour of Cartagena, the said Frenchman came out to them and took the said *cayman* with a ship and a shallop rowing twenty-four oars. He pursued the said *cayman* until he came alongside and looted it, twenty Frenchmen having boarded. This witness saw, and they chased him till they bottled him up in the town of Tolu, and so witness escaped from them; and this is how he knows"—Rodrigo Caro, deposition, Havana, July 23, 1572, in *A. de I.* 2-5-1/22, *Patronato* 267, 54.

"[In] the year 1568 Paul Blondel of Saint Valerie in Lower Normandy, commanding a vessel called the *Don de Dieu*, looted a frigate carrying a large quantity of gold and silver and other jewels of great value, of which the *Adelantado* Juan Ortiz de Zarate was part owner.

"We have here a weak lot of evidence furnished by Seville which deals not only with the said French pirate but also mentions others, Englishmen, and this weakens the case. . . .

"The *Adelantado* Zarate might send a power-of-attorney to negotiate and collect from Paul Blondel of Saint Valerie what he stole of him, and to treat with Juan Diaz, his Portuguese pilot, and consorts. Further, it will be necessary to send a bit of evidence of the robbery, which he can draw up with two or three of his suite who accompanied him, without mentioning English ships or other person except Paul Blondel. The evidence he did send talks now of English and next of French"—The Spanish ambassador's memorandum (Paris, 1571) in *A. de I.* 2-5-1/22, *Patronato* 267, 53, pp. 4 and 12.

¹ See outline map. Cativa[s] Headland was Point San Blas; but apparently Las Cativas meant the islands of Las Mulatas Archipelago, extending southward along the coast.

Nor, as has been shown, does the interest which attaches to this incident end here. Melo was robbed of "velvettes and taffitas" (which came from Spain in the fleet¹). Their value was so great that the affair created unusual interest and indignation. In fine, this was just such a robbery, in the same place (the Chagre River) as the Ashmole MS. charges against Drake, but ascribes to the year 1570—when, excepting at precisely this time, which was still that year, by English reckoning, there was no fleet to have brought over such merchandise in quantity. And just as it must be left an open question whether the date given by that manuscript should be interpreted to read 1570/71 (leaving us, then, with no information whatever concerning a voyage in 1570 proper), so the documents here presented leave it an open question whether or not Drake arrived in time for a share in the spoiling of Melo in 1570/71, with considerable weight of evidence that he did.

In any event, after the French had taken Melo's fine silks and velvets, their ship made off; but the English remained. Documents Nos. 5 and 6 show "Captain Francis" in action. These documents constitute the first clear and unobstructed view yet obtained of Drake in the Caribbean and to them the student is referred. Surely comment is superfluous.

Against these English, with whom some French may still have been associated (but not Captain Nicholas des Isles himself, for he had certainly sailed homeward), the Spaniards sent out frigates². These were more manageable craft than galleons, yet they proved equally unavailing against the "luck"³ and celerity of the enemy. It seems that Drake actually went still farther up the river (after the Melo incident) and plundered the wharf itself at Cruces, as well as other craft upon the river⁴. Nevertheless, since the merchandise which

¹ Similar merchandise brought from the Orient by the galleon trade crossed Mexico, not the isthmus.

² Documents 7, 8, 13. *A. de I.* 69-2-23, Panama 13, the *Audiencia* to the crown, March 12, 1571, for mention of efforts to trap the enemy in the Chagre River after the attack on the Cruces wharf.

³ Document No. 12.

⁴ Document No. 9, items 10 and 11. Cf. Corbett, *op. cit.* 1, p. 183 n. The date 1571 is correct.

the fleet had brought must proceed to its destination, a dozen or so barks with their cargoes sailed under escort from Nombre de Dios for the Chagre. Between Puerto Bello and Bastimentos Islands¹ Drake's pinnace took them, transferred the cargoes of all to two, and with these withdrew to the base-ship at Cativas Headland².

In this vicinity a few days later the enemy took a despatch boat³ which had cleared from Cartagena⁴, killed its owner, subjected to insult and humiliation a friar (who happened to be a passenger), seized the cargo and destroyed the mail, except the royal despatches. These, with the survivors (some wounded) who had been set ashore on an islet, were fetched to Nombre de Dios by the middle of May when, it would seem, Drake cleared from the Mainland coast. The 1571 voyage was unquestionably a fairly profitable adventure.

From it the man who was to become one of England's greatest naval heroes returned home with hands reddened. This, with the Spanish documents in view, it is as impossible to disprove as it is unnecessary. It does not appear that Drake and the English generally were wantonly cruel. The French were so; and defended their cruelty by reminding the Spaniards that in Florida Pedro Menéndez had given cause⁵. Neither does it appear, however, that Drake respected human life or property rights when they stood in his way to his object; and that object, it must be repeated, was to enrich and advance himself as well as to wreak vengeance and weaken a national enemy. To be sure, the excommunication of

¹ Off Manzanillo Point.

² Documents No. 9, item 12; Nos. 10, 12, 13.

³ Documents No. 9, item 13; Nos. 10, 11, 12, 13.

⁴ Corbett, *op. cit.* I, p. 152. This vessel had sailed from Cartagena but was taken nearer to Nombre de Dios.

⁵ While Menéndez did not, as has been too long taught, pledge the French his word to spare their lives, nor does it seem possible that they could have understood him to do so, his fanatical slaughter of so many helpless men, who were by circumstances compelled to surrender to him, was fully recognized by Spanish colonials to have been at the least very unwise, in that it laid them open to reprisals. Time and again colonial governors excused themselves from obeying repeated orders to execute foreign prisoners, on the very rational ground that the colonies were unable to defend themselves against the prisoners' compatriots who, hearing of such execution, might deal as harshly by defenceless Spaniards.

Elizabeth (1570) and the Ridolfi plot (1571) were embittering the Anglo-Spanish quarrel and especially accentuating its religious aspect; but it is difficult to imagine that Drake, presently exhibiting a quoit of Spanish gold as evidence of a successful voyage, was at the moment weighing the reformation against the counter-reformation¹! In the opinion of his own people and of his own time, Drake's conduct was meritorious. Why measure the man by any other standard?

His 1571 voyage made Drake's name (*el capitan Francisco*) known and feared on the Spanish Main. The seizure of barks far up the Chagre River was serious, less in the immediate loss inflicted than in its implication of coming events, which the Spaniards appreciated to the full².

Drake had learned the Chagre River; and never again made much use of the stream. He had learned the purposes and plans, acquired the manners, and at times adopted the methods of the best (or the worst!) of the Huguenot privateers. It does not appear, however, that in 1571 Drake made any real acquaintance with the 'maroons. If he had come, as is authoritatively stated³, "to gaine . . . intelligences," his conduct of his next (1572) voyage suggests that he did not obtain all the information it would have been advisable for him to possess. In fine, judged by his 1571 voyage alone, Francis Drake does not appear any abler captain or more important than other, to-day unidentified, Englishmen who were at the time making voyages to the Indies similar to his. Documents Nos. 14-16 concern such.

The three ships there mentioned would seem to have been Sir William Winter's⁴, which had left England before the end of March, 1571, following, evidently, the usual course along the Main, with a call at Jamaica⁵ and home by way of

¹ Corbett, *op. cit.* I, pp. 147-8, 187. Cf. p. 321, *post.*

² Document No. 13.

³ p. 254, *post.*

⁴ *Spanish Calendar*, II, pp. 294-5, 300, 339, 353-4.

⁵ "And another corsair, name unknown, except that he was an Englishman, was off the island of Jamaica with three ships belonging to George and William Winter, gentlemen, and looted and burned a vessel belonging to Hernan Ruiz, burgher of Seville, and committed other damages and depredations; and of what he carried off to England it is known that one

the Florida coast, where they attacked Saint Augustine at the very end of that year or the commencement of 1572. They were driven off by the *Adelantado* Pedro Menéndez himself, who, surviving shipwreck and Indians and "led...by a miracle," arrived, with his customary strenuousness, just in the nick of time.

Drake's next voyage (1572-3)—probably his sixth—was his first made in independent command¹. It is the English account of this voyage (*Sir Francis Drake Revived*), compiled by Philip Nichols, preacher, first published by Drake's nephew in 1626, which is appended as item No. 1, Part II, of the present volume, that the reader may compare it closely with the Spanish documents (Nos. 17-31) which parallel it.

No. 17 bears out its account of Drake's arrival in the sheltered harbour on the Main which had been his lair in other years, and corroborates the incident of Ranse's appearance with his prizes, and the busy setting up of his "dainty pinnaces." When these were ready, the English bore down upon Nombre de Dios, approaching cautiously that no warning might be given.

In these Spanish documents (see especially No. 23) as in the English narrative, we hear the English drums and trumpets sound through the Spanish town at dead of night, we see the startled residents wake to the glare of fire-pikes—to find John Drake and Oxenham in possession of the market-place. Again the church bell clamours its alarm and cannot be stilled, while through the darkness men, women and children flee—with what an outcry and turmoil we may imagine—out through the Panama gate into the open country. But here, too, we see the Spaniards rally—a dozen, two dozen—to face the enemy in the streets and break into the market-place, to make a final desperate stand there. Again we see the trumpeter fall, whose silence discomfited the English. Drake

negro is in possession of 'Juan Bautista de Sant Bitores' and another in that of the Earl of 'Arfort' [Hertford?]. . ."—*A. de I. 2-5-2/21, Patronato* 266, item 1, extract of evidence assembled in the Indies concerning depredations (English).

¹ Hakluyt correctly calls this "the first voyage attempted...by... Francis Drake himself. . ."—*Principal Navigations*, x, pp. 75-6.

was forced to retire to his pinnaces, wounded and defeated, his carefully planned enterprise gone all awry.

No wonder that, faced with such movement and such colour in these old papers (English and Spanish alike), those who imagine that to be accurate history must also be "as dry as dust" may have inclined to question the validity of such a story as *Sir Francis Drake Revived*; but when, after 358 years the very Spaniards he fought step forth from their own documents to support his story, even to such detail as one trumpeter stretched lifeless in the market-place of Nombre de Dios that night, not much ground remains upon which to base rejection of that amazing little book.

This, "the family narrative¹," states that the purpose of the 1572 voyage was to sack Nombre de Dios. The miscarriage of his assault upon the town had begun Drake's first independent undertaking most inauspiciously, and his misfortunes continued and augmented through the year 1572.

It is human to imagine the career of such a figure as Drake became to have consisted of triumph after triumph; whereas perhaps the hero's very greatness lies in his ability to wrest victory out of defeat after defeat. The story told in *Sir Francis Drake Revived* is a tale of failure after failure; but the whole is so gilded by the glow of final success that the fact that it is such may too easily pass unobserved.

In August (1572) Drake lay at Port Plenty, Isle of Pines (Mainland coast), determinedly scheming how to "make" a voyage which had failed. Fearing the issue, Ransie withdrew from the agreement he had entered into, and sailed away.

Now Drake considered the 'maroons and listened to suggestions from one of them, Diego, who had attached himself to the English. He sent his brother John with Hixon to reconnoitre the Chagre River and bring him late news of Cruces. Undoubtedly Drake was pondering the notion that a raid upon that post would be profitable; and surely he was endeavouring to get into communication with the outlaw blacks, of whom there were three bodies². First, a small

¹ Corbett, *op. cit.* 1, p. 147.

² *A. de I.* 2-4-1/12, *Patronato* 234, 6, 1, sworn statements made at Panama, August 30, 1580. Cf. p. 259, *post*.