

Showdown with Spain

When Elizabeth I, Mary's half-sister, ascended the throne, Britain breathed a sigh of relief. In that same year (1558) England lost control of Calais — her last piece of Continental real estate. England was now forced to look elsewhere for an empire. She could no longer hope to expand her power and influence on the Continent. France was too powerful, and had proved that she could block English expansion there.

The loss of Calais freed the English of their centuries-old Continental entanglements, and made it possible for them to begin concentrating their energies on exploration, and eventually on colonization.

But England was not yet quite ready to begin colonizing. She hadn't yet built up her navy to the point where she would be able to protect her vital sea link with any future far-flung colonies in North America.

Queen Elizabeth's father (Henry VIII) and grandfather (Henry VII) had both taken a keen interest in helping to build up England's sea power. But this was a slow task. It took *time* to build enough fast, sleek ships to enable her to confront the mighty navy of Spain.

When Columbus discovered the New World in 1492, Spain was the "Mistress of the Sea" — the most powerful nation on earth. Shortly afterward, her mighty galleons were plowing the seas between Mexico and Spain, carrying vast quantities of gold and other treasures to fatten the Spanish purse.

This fabulous wealth made it possible for Spain to develop the world's mightiest navy. With her treasure she was also able to hire mercenaries to strengthen her armed forces. Spain, soon, had not only the most powerful navy, but also the world's mightiest army.

This was the dizzying height to which Spain had arisen when she came into conflict with England in the 1500s.

England Challenges Spain

England, France and other nations looked at Spain's increasing wealth and power with envy and suspicion, as they saw an unending stream of Spanish galleons carrying hoards of gold to deposit in King

Philip's coffers. Furthermore, this unprecedented amount of wealth, circulating throughout Europe, created chaos in the economies of England, France, the Netherlands and Germany.

But what could Britain, France and the other nations of Europe do?

The solution soon became apparent. Queen Elizabeth hesitantly sanctioned (unofficially, of course) her sea dogs — men like Drake, Hawkins, Howard, Greenville and Raleigh — to raid the Spanish treasure ships.

These English seamen believed Englishmen should be able to freely sail anywhere in the world without interference or molestation of any kind. But the Spaniards and the Portuguese didn't look at things the same way.

One year after Columbus discovered America, the Pope divided the new American lands between Spain and Portugal. An adjustment in the line of demarcation was made and ratified by the two nations at the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494.

This line of demarcation ran through mid-Atlantic from north to south about twelve hundred miles west of the Azores. The papal bull of 1493 gave Spain all land west of this line, and all to the east of it went to Portugal. This meant that all the new land in North, Central and South America went to Spain — with the exception of the eastern portion of South America (Brazil). Later, Spain even claimed Australia as a result of the papal bull of 1493 in which the Pope divided the territory of the Americas.

Other countries like England, France, and Holland simply didn't believe the Pope had legitimate God-given authority to divide up the world. They felt the unexplored world was still open to exploration and colonization by other nations — not just by the Spanish and the Portuguese.

Spain and Portugal, however, took the Pope seriously. They believed they had authority by divine right to claim all the newly discovered lands in the Americas, Africa and the Orient. They soon let other nations know that foreign ships were not welcome in the waters of their God-given territories.

An Inevitable Showdown

The English were particularly adamant in their belief that God hadn't really given Spain and Portugal all this new, rich land. Rather, they believed God was leading their explorers and seamen in staking out their claims in the New World — especially in North America.

Men like Sir Walter Raleigh, Frobisher, John Cabot (in the employ of England) and others continued exploring and probing the waters and lands of North America. Drake, Hawkins, Howard, Raleigh and other

English seamen began to sail into "Spanish waters" — especially into the West Indies. The Spaniards were fearful of these daring English interlopers. At first they merely turned a blind eye to the intruders. But in 1568 the Spanish treacherously attacked and destroyed a small British fleet which had been given a written promise from the viceroy of the Spanish fleet that they would not be molested. Most of the sailors in this fleet of English ships were either killed or later died horrible deaths at the hands of the Spaniards.

Fortunately, both Drake and Hawkins escaped. They solemnly vowed to take revenge upon the Spaniards for their treachery. This event occurred in 1568.

In retaliation for Spain's treachery, Drake led two small English vessels to the West Indies in May 1572, to inflict "God's punishment" on the world's mightiest Empire. It was on that voyage that Drake and his men captured a gold-and-silver-laden mule train at Nombre de Dios in Panama. They loaded this treasure into their two small ships and sailed away with it securely locked in their English sea chests.

Queen Elizabeth was pleased with the results of that daring piratical act by her bold sea captain, but she didn't dare publicly acknowledge this, for she still thought it wise to maintain peaceful relations with her brother-in-law, Philip of Spain. She therefore had no intention of officially countenancing piracy in Spanish waters.

Drake Circumnavigates the Globe

In the year 1577, Sir Francis Drake was given official support to seek a Northwest Passage to the Orient. He left England on December 13, 1577, in command of the *Golden Hind* and three smaller ships.

After much difficulty, Drake sailed around the southern tip of South America and up to the Isthmus of Panama, where he overpowered the Spanish treasure ship, *Cacafuego*. It was heavily laden with gold and silver. The *Cacafuego* contained thirteen chests full of reals of plate, eighty pounds of gold, and six and twenty tons of silver.

Drake then sailed to the San Francisco area, where he landed, claiming the area in the name of Queen Elizabeth.

Then he sailed west to the Moluccas, and continued around the world. He finally arrived back in England on September 26, 1580, where he was given a tumultuous welcome. The Queen knighted him for his bold exploits, and for being the first Englishman to circumnavigate the globe.

By now the die had been cast. England continued boldly, impudently sailing her vessels into Spanish waters, and, not content with that, she continued to plunder the Spanish ships as they carried their rich treasures back to Spain. This was too much for Philip. The deadly English sea-dragon had to be vanquished.

Queen Elizabeth and the English were also giving aid and comfort to the heretical, Protestant Dutch who were at that very moment seeking to defeat the Spanish Duke of Parma and drive him out of the Netherlands.

To complicate matters still more, Mary, Queen of Scots, had been imprisoned by Elizabeth and had been in prison for many years. While imprisoned, Mary continued plotting, doing everything possible to overthrow Elizabeth and the Protestants — hoping to become Queen and restore Catholicism to England. (Later, her treachery would cost her head.)

Philip's Treachery

In 1583, King Philip of Spain, faced with a disastrous wheat crop failure, asked London merchants to ship relief supplies. Then Philip had the gall to confiscate both wheat and ships!

One English vessel escaped, however, and returned to England with a hostage — the Governor of Bilbao, who had treacherously organized the seizure of the British ships. He was captured and bundled back to England. In his boot was discovered Philip's personal order to seize the grain ships. This document revealed the Spanish King's intention to use those English vessels to fulfill "God's obvious design" — which to Philip meant the punishment of Elizabeth — that "incestuous bastard, begotten and born in sin."

This additional Spanish treachery incensed all England. Elizabeth immediately retaliated by sending to the West Indies twenty-nine ships with 2,300 men under Drake's command. In 1585 they captured San Domingo — for which they extracted a heavy ransom. They also captured Cartagena, for which the Spaniards paid a ransom of 25,000 English pounds. Then Drake sailed northward and sacked St. Augustine, Florida, before going on to the struggling English colony at Roanoke, North Carolina. The dispirited survivors of this colony accepted Drake's offer of passage back to England.

Drake's bold exploits resulted in the bankruptcy of Spain's Bank of Seville and meant that Spanish troops in the Netherlands went unpaid.

"Singeing Philip's Beard"

By now King Philip was building the world's mightiest Armada to send against England — to bring her to heel. But the English knew Philip was planning an invasion, and they didn't wait for him to strike first.

In 1587 Sir Francis Drake and his buccaneers struck again — not at Lisbon, which was too well protected — but at Cadiz, where a portion of the "Invincible Armada" was being fitted out.

Drake's entire fleet consisted of only twenty-three ships, but as with nearly everything Drake did, this venture was spectacular. Sixty-five Spanish vessels were scuttled right in sight of the Castle of Cadiz.

Sir Francis then swept up the coast, looting and burning as he went. Next he sailed to the Azores, where he attacked and plundered the Spanish treasure ship *San Felipe*, with a cargo valued at 114,000 pounds — double the amount needed to pay for the entire expedition.

Drake's burning of sixty-five Spanish vessels at Cadiz came to be known as "singeing the King of Spain's beard."

But this loss of ships only angered Philip into intensifying his efforts to marshall the world's most formidable Armada.

The Armada was eventually composed of 130 ships and nearly 28,000 men — including 19,290 soldiers, 6,350 sailors and 2,080 galley slaves.

Large quantities of powder, 123,790 cannonballs and thousands of cannons, lesser guns and other weapons, all had to be provided. This mighty Armada bristled with 2,500 guns — enough to blow the British ships out of the water. Great quantities of food, water, wine, oil, many horses and mules also had to be supplied. Hemp, tar, garments, personal effects and numerous miscellaneous items completed the inventory.

All of this was assembled by midsummer, 1588. At last the Invincible Armada was ready to sail for England. Unfortunately for Spain, her ablest and most famous admiral, the never-vanquished Alvaro de Bazan, died of typhus. This left the Armada without an experienced Admiral.

Philip lost no time, however in appointing the Duke of Medina Sidonia — a gentleman of great nobility, but with very little experience or ability (even in his own eyes) to command. Strangely, the Duke had openly confessed that he easily became seasick. He told Philip that he did not feel qualified for the task — that he felt much more at home gardening than sailing.

But being a good Catholic, and not wanting to offend the King, he consented to accept the admiralship of the ill-fated Armada.

The Armada's Holy Crusade

At last the soldiers and sailors were collected, the ships were provisioned, after first having been tarred, caulked, and freshly painted. All was ready — except one thing.

This was to be no ordinary voyage. All Spain knew this was a religious naval crusade of the highest importance. Even the Pope was concerned, and expressed fear that the Armada could meet with disaster. Nothing therefore could be left to chance. God's blessing on the voyage must be invoked.

One Spanish sea captain remarked; "We are sailing against England in the confident hope of a miracle." He hoped for "some strange freak of weather," or thought that something might deprive "the English of their wits."

Were not these dedicated men who were about to sail with the Armada God's people? Wasn't the Most Catholic Philip God's *direct instrument* to bring Protestant Elizabeth and her heretical subjects back into the fold?

And if England could be conquered, and the English Protestants destroyed, Protestantism would be dealt a severe — if not fatal — blow. Then could not the Duke of Parma easily defeat the Dutch, once they had been deprived of England's aid — thereby destroying the seeds of Protestantism in the Netherlands? And would it not then be possible to suppress the Protestants in Germany and eventually extirpate all Protestantism from Europe — stamping it out once and for all?

With these thoughts in mind, the 27,500 Spaniards who took part in this crusade solemnly elicited and besought God's divine intervention, his miraculous help, to accomplish his high purpose — and this they fully expected to receive.

The Spanish believed the destruction of the monstrous dragon of British heresy could not be accomplished in the spirit of revenge or conquest, but only in the spirit of righteousness and true humility.

The officers and men, sailors and soldiers alike, were all ordered to confess their sins and attend Mass before beginning this holy undertaking!

Prostitutes were forbidden on board the ships, gambling and swearing were outlawed, and no "unclean thing" or person was allowed to go along.

Admiral of the Armada, Medina Sidonia, carried the holy standard of the fleet from the altar of the Cathedral of Lisbon, as he passed through lines of kneeling crusaders. On the Spanish flags were inscribed the words: "Arise, Lord, and vindicate your cause."

All England Trembles!

All England trembled in long awaited expectation — while the summer months of 1588 dragged on. The English knew Philip had the mightiest navy in the world, and they also knew his veteran soldiers in the Netherlands were the best. Spain was the most powerful country on earth.

It was wildly rumored in England that the Duke of Parma, Philip's able general on the Continent, had 55,000 troops, 5,000 horses and several hundred barges. It was feared (and indeed it was planned!) that Philip's Armada would sail up the Channel to Calais, France, pick up the

Duke's seasoned troops and then ferry them to England for the final assault on the island nation.

So confident were the Spaniards that God would give them the victory, that they sent along all the paraphernalia and accoutrements necessary to set up a Spanish government in London, once they had defeated the English army and marched to their capital.

England's army was pitifully small. Her cities were unwalled and unprotected. Her only salvation seemed to lie in *preventing* a Spanish invasion — not in defeating a superior army once it had actually landed on English soil. So all Britain hoped and prayed that God would help them defend their island home. They waited nervously during the early part of the summer of 1588 — wondering when and where the final Spanish onslaught would come.

At last Philip had readied his "Invincible Armada." On the 22nd of July, 1588, the King's 130 ships left La Coruna, in northern Spain. By the 29th of July, the Armada had been sighted off the southwest coast of England, south of the Lizard in Cornwall. England's Admiral Howard admitted the Armada was the mightiest fleet of ships ever assembled.

The English ships were at the time dispersed, some near Plymouth, while other squadrons were farther down the coast — just in case the Armada attacked Britain from that direction. Altogether, the English hoped to muster about 200 ships — manned by 16,000 brave hearts.

The English vessels were generally much smaller than the Spanish ships. But this proved to be an advantage. Sir John Hawkins had been engaged for some time in building a fleet of modern ships which were slimmer and much more maneuverable than any known vessels. In addition the English ships were equipped with smaller, lighter cannons (culverins) which fired nine-pound cannon shots with a half mile range; whereas the Spanish cannons were much larger — using thirty-pound cannonballs — but their range was only a quarter of a mile — about half the range of the British cannon.

Thus, the English ships were sleeker, faster, much more maneuverable, and had longer range cannon, whereas the Spanish galleons, galleasses and galley ships generally were much more massive ("floating fortresses") and more difficult to move.

Suspense mounted. Preparations continued at a furious pace. At last the long-awaited day arrived. All 130 vessels in Philip's Armada rendezvoused, except five ships which didn't make it. Philip was ready with his 125 ships to carry out his planned goal of ferrying Parma's troops from Calais to England.

Admiral of the English fleet, Lord Charles Howard, expected to be able to have some 200 ships ready to join in the battle before it was over, but only 54 were battle-ready. The other 150 ships were still being



Philip II, King of Spain, sent his "Invincible Armada" in 1588 to bring British Protestants to heel. After the English victory, Queen Elizabeth I had a medal struck bearing these words: "God blew and they were scattered."

prepared for action, or else were patrolling the Channel off the enemy-held ports.

Sidonia's Tactical Blunder

As the mighty Armada formed and began sailing along the south coast of England near Plymouth, the English fleet was caught in the disastrous position of having the Armada between itself and the wind. This gave the Armada a strategic advantage. Had Medina Sidonia seized this golden opportunity, he could undoubtedly have closed in on the English ships, trapping them in the process, and could have proceeded to annihilate the entire English fleet. He either failed to realize his advantage, or else decided against using his option of encircling and destroying the English ships. That tactical blunder may well have cost him the battle.

By the following morning, July 31, it was too late to exercise his option. Medina Sidonia was alarmed to discover that the English fleet had slipped out of Plymouth during the night, and had gained the advantage — had tacked around on the windward side of his Armada. Now it was the English who were in the most advantageous tactical position for joining battle. Admiral Howard maintained this advantageous position during the entire *ten days* of dueling.

Seeing the English fleet on the windward side of the Armada, the Duke ordered the Spaniards to battle stations and arranged his squadrons in a perfectly executed crescent formation. He put his mightiest galleons on the ends of the formation, while putting his troop carriers and clumsier merchantmen in the center.

This crescent formation was a deadly trap. The Spaniards hoped to entice the English ships to come in close enough so that they could enclose them. They could then fling their grappling hooks onto the English ships to prevent their escape.

Then, since the Spaniards outnumbered the English more than two to one, they could easily board their vessels and demolish them. They thus planned to close in and cut the English to ribbons.

But the English Admiral Howard had a different plan. His ships were smaller, but were much faster and more maneuverable. Since they also had smaller but longer-range cannon, the English ships would sail in close enough to pound the Spanish galleons with their long-range cannon, but not close enough to be hit by the heavier but shorter-range Spanish cannon.

Medina Sidonia hardly knew what to make of his enemy's strategy. It frustrated him to see the English ships come close enough to fire on his ships, then veer off before they got within range of his powerful cannons.

As it turned out, however, all tactics and human strategies came to naught. The English cannonballs merely bounced harmlessly off the thick oak walls of the mighty Spanish galleons. The hulls of some of Philip's mighty ships were nearly four feet thick!

For days, the English and Spanish fleets continued to engage in a running duel — mere gunnery practice — for the English cannons could not penetrate the thick hulls of the Spanish ships, and the Spaniards were prevented from getting close enough to even hit the English ships.

The Armada continued sailing along the south coast of England, on past the Isle of Wight — where it was prevented from landing.

For several days, Philip's "Invincible Armada" sailed majestically toward Calais. The English were frustrated in their attempt to stop or even to seriously hinder the stately course of the Armada.

But, as it sailed toward Calais, one of its ships, the 46-gun *Rosaria*, carrying 418 sailors and soldiers, and loaded with 55,000 golden ducats, fouled another ship and broke her own bowsprit, then lost her foremast. Unable to keep up with the rest of the Armada, she fell easy prey to Drake's waiting ships of war.

Another Spanish ship, the *San Salvador*, suddenly exploded in full view of the English fleet, spewing hundreds of sailors and soldiers into the sea. Reportedly, a Dutch master gunner, in a fit of rage, thrust a flaming linstock into the stern's powder magazine as a result of being caned by a Spanish captain. The Dutchman then jumped through a porthole into the sea.

Blazing Infernos

Minus these two casualties, the Armada continued its stately sail toward the French port of Calais, where it safely anchored in anticipation of taking the Duke of Parma's army on board, so they could be ferried to England where they would crush the small English army now waiting just across the Channel.

But nothing seemed to go right for the Spaniards. The Duke of Parma was bottled up at Dunkirk, and was therefore unable to rendezvous with the Armada now anchored at Calais. Parma was unable to embark because part of the English fleet, aided by a small ragtag Dutch fleet, kept him from sailing for Calais.

By now the Armada itself was in trouble. Its stores were spoiling, its ammunition was pretty well expended, and its water barrels were leaking. But the Armada had passed the point of no return.

The formidable Armada lay at anchor, still maintaining a perfect crescent formation. So the English decided to set the cat among the pigeons. They sent eight fire ships with their cannons double-spiked so they would fire at random or explode in the intense heat. These menac-

ing fire ships caused the Spaniards to panic and cut anchor. The Duke of Sidonia had commanded them not to cut anchor, but merely to slip anchor if need be to avoid any fire ships, and then resume their appointed place in the formation.

Many of the Armada's vessels, after avoiding the fire ships, resumed their battle formation; but the Spaniards were by now running low on ammunition.

Sensing the Spaniards' plight, the English ships were ordered to move in close enough to really damage the Spanish galleons. This they did, sailing in close, firing many broadsides into the bowels of the Spanish ships, then again veering off to prevent the enemy's grappling hooks from seizing them in their deadly clutches.

Now the English could see the blood and destruction which their guns, now firing at point-blank range, were wreaking on the Armada. Still they were unable to sink the ships. But they could mangle and destroy everything above the thick hulls of the lower decks, and that is exactly what they did.

During this battle off Gravelines, France, the Spaniards' predicament grew more serious. The Armada was drifting hopelessly toward shipwreck unless the wind changed.

Just in the nick of time the wind did change, and blew the Spanish Armada back out to safer waters, where they were able to regroup and head for home.

It was now obvious to the Duke of Parma that he would never be able to ferry his troops to the Armada. The Spanish Admiral Medina Sidonia also realized the hopelessness of this task.

There was nothing left to do but head back to home port. But it was not possible to sail straight for Spain, for the English ships were now much more numerous than the Spanish. Moreover, a strong, contrary wind made it impossible to sail in the direction of Spain.

What could the Spanish admiral do? He decided the best route was to sail up the English Channel, into the North Sea, then wheel around the north of Scotland, and finally double back toward Spain by sailing to the west of Ireland.

But this presented the Duke with several serious problems. How was he going to get more badly needed provisions to his thirsty and hungry men? Would he be able to safely sail the treacherous waters around Scotland and Ireland — with many of his ships badly battered, and with thousands of men wounded, sick and unable to assist in manning the ships?

This course of action, though not a pleasant choice, seemed the wisest.

The dangerous voyage back to Spain via Scotland-Ireland meant many more weeks of slow, difficult sailing against a contrary wind in



QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Elizabeth I was the strong-willed Queen who, in the late 1500s, opposed her brother-in-law, Philip II King of Spain. "Virginia" in America was named after Queen Elizabeth. Since she was never married, she was referred to as "the virgin queen." — *American Stock Photo*

dangerous waters; and always lurking nearby were the English and Irish, waiting with sword in hand to finish off any unfortunate, seasick Spaniards who escaped the vengeance of the sea.

One by one, crippled ships of the Armada fell behind and ceased to form part of its formation. The Invincible Armada grew smaller and smaller — losing twenty or thirty ships on the coasts of Scotland and Ireland.

Since many of the Spanish captains had panicked at Calais (as the English fire ships sailed among them), and cut anchor in their unthinking haste to escape the blazing infernos, now, without their anchors, it was difficult for them to prevent being blown toward the rocks or another ship. This cost the Armada many ships.

On one five-mile stretch of Irish coast at Sligo, in Donegal Bay, lay an estimated “eleven hundred dead bodies of men, which the sea had driven upon the shore.”

In any event, about half of the original 130 ships which set sail from Spain were destroyed in this ill-fated crusade before the Armada limped back to Spain. Half of the men died before its return. Another two thirds who did make it back were so malnourished that, within a month of their arrival back in Spain, they succumbed to death from the effects of disease, dysentery and hunger.

And half of the vessels which limped back to Lisbon never sailed again. Philip’s “Invincible Armada” had been overwhelmingly beaten.

“A Miracle” of Deliverance

Was the defeat of the Invincible Armada the result of superior British seamanship? Or was it the result of a miracle? Here is what Sir Winston Churchill said about the defeat of the Armada in 1588:

“But to the English people as a whole *the defeat of the Armada came as a miracle*. For thirty years the shadow of Spanish power had darkened the political scene. A wave of *religious emotion* filled men’s minds. One of the medals struck to commemorate the victory bears the inscription “*Afflavit Deus et dissipantur*” — “God blew and they were scattered.”

“Elizabeth and her seamen knew how true this was. The Armada had indeed been bruised in battle, but it was demoralised and set on the run by the *weather* [which the Creator controlled]. Yet the event was decisive. The English seamen might well have triumphed. Though limited in supplies and ships the new tactics of Hawkins had brought success. The nation was transported with relief and pride” (*A History of the English Speaking Peoples*, vol. II, Winston S. Churchill).

The Dutch also struck a medal showing the terrestrial globe slipping out of the grasp of the hands of Catholic Spain.

Since the English seamen had been unable to sink many of the ships of the Armada, they were somewhat dispirited after their battle with the Spaniards. They did not realize at first how severely crippled the Armada was — and neither did they realize for some time the awful toll both in lives and ships which the very harsh weather took, as the Armada slowly limped its way around the treacherous waters of Scotland and Ireland and finally back to the safety of Spain.

After this famous battle, wild rumors circulated through Europe — rumors that Drake had been captured and the English badly beaten. It was also rumored that the Spaniards had actually landed in England. These wild rumors caused jubilation in Spain, Italy and other Catholic countries. But such jubilation was short-lived; for the awful truth of the ghastly fate of the “Invincible Armada” soon became widely known all over Europe.

After the defeat of the Armada in 1588, England was held in much higher esteem. Philip’s vaunted naval superiority had become myth. Spain, with the pride of her naval power temporarily broken, was no longer looked upon as “Mistress of the Seas.”

Now the oceans were open to all who had the courage to sail them. No one had a charter from God to close any part of the Seven Seas to other nations. No longer did any papal bulls establish imaginary lines of demarcation.

The English had lost only two hundred men in action during the ten-day battle with the Armada; but after the battle, food poisoning killed several thousand among the English crews.

Philip was determined to outfit a second and even a third Armada if need be to break the back of English sea power. The immense wealth that kept steadily pouring in from the New World enabled him to continue building new ships. In fact, nothing seemed able to permanently check Philip’s naval might.

England’s Most Brilliant Naval Success

But the English knew they could hinder Philip’s naval buildup by further raids. So in 1596 Elizabeth authorized yet another audacious attack against Spanish naval installations at Cadiz. This time over a hundred vessels and six thousand men, under the joint command of Lord Admiral Howard and Sir Walter Raleigh as Vice-Admiral, sailed from Plymouth in June.

By a stroke of good luck, Spain’s entire West Indian treasure fleet lay at anchor as England’s powerful fleet sailed into Cadiz. Fortunately for the English, only four large galleons and a small squadron of galleys had been left to protect them. A noisy battle followed, but by nightfall Cadiz had been overrun, as English troops waded ashore with the Earl of Essex at their head.

The city fathers of Cadiz were willing to bargain with Admiral Howard for the release of the treasure ships cowering in the inner harbour.

Here is where the English missed a golden opportunity. Instead of heading straight for the treasure-laden galleons and securing them under English command, the English troops wasted their energy looting Cadiz — stripping away everything the sailors could take back with them to England: jewelry, silk gowns, church bells, furniture, tapestries, expensive clerical vestments and even bedding — anything the English thought might be of value.

It was at this point that the infuriated and exasperated Spanish Admiral, Medina Sidonia, executed a bold course of action. He wanted no part in any vulgar haggling with the perfidious English. The Admiral disdainfully ordered the burning of the entire fleet of 36 vessels (cargo and all!) rather than let them fall prey to the English or be used for ransom.

When Queen Elizabeth heard of the blunder of her admirals, she was furious! Why had they, through sheer carelessness, missed such a rich prize? Why hadn't the English seized the treasure ships before they were burnt?

In spite of Admiral Howard's tactical blunder, however, this naval sortie was England's most brilliant success of the entire Elizabethan Age. Besides the destruction of four of Philip's mightiest galleons, fifteen great merchantmen, and a host of lesser craft, Admiral Howard extracted 220,000 ducats as ransom.

The English had used surprise and audacity to catch the Spanish off guard. Once more Spain had been humiliated, and had suffered great financial loss.

In spite of this, Philip continued to build more ships to ferry his never-ending stream of treasure from the New World. And he was becoming wiser. His ports both in Spain and in the New World were now heavily fortified, and they would eventually become almost impregnable.

The Mighty All Die

On August 28, 1595, Sir Francis Drake and Sir John Hawkins set out on what proved to be their last expedition. Their fleet of 27 ships and 2,500 men sailed for Spanish waters in the New World — with the express intent of wreaking havoc on Spanish ports and ships.

But on this voyage, the luck of both Hawkins and Drake finally ran out! Wherever they went — Puerto Rico, Cartagena, the Isthmus, Nombre de Dios — they found high walls bristling with Spanish guns. After an abortive attack on Puerto Rico, Hawkins died.

Drake was determined to carry on alone, but he soon succumbed to depression at his failure to breach Spanish defenses, and then he fell ill

with dysentery. On January 27, 1596, the dreaded "El Draque," who for decades had struck terror in the Spanish, died and was buried at sea near Porto Bello.

This stout-hearted English sea-dog had become a legend in England and Spain, and throughout much of the world. His buccaneering exploits and his capture of Spanish treasure ships had provided a dashing, colorful chapter in English history.

With the passing of Drake and Hawkins, and with Spain strongly fortifying her ports, and building fast sleek ships that could equal any ships sailing under English command, both Spain and England drifted into a *de facto* truce. They both came to respect each other. Spain, the former "Mistress of the Sea," would learn to share the Seven Seas with the English and others. And the English seamen would end their piratical buccaneering and turn to more honorable ways of increasing their wealth.

Drake and Hawkins both died in 1595. Three years later Philip II of Spain died also. Though he was still plotting the subjugation of Protestant England, all his schemes were foiled by death.

Then, in 1603, Queen Elizabeth died, leaving the English throne to a new line of kings — the Stuarts. Under their guidance England would make her Ulster Plantations and, most importantly, her permanent plantations in the New World. The Elizabethan Age had come to a close.

From that time, Catholic Spain was able to employ her energies in colonizing and developing her vast domains in Central and South America. All these lands were destined to remain under the Catholic banner.

At the same time, Protestant England was now able to go merrily on her way, exploring, colonizing and developing her rich lands in North America and around the world.

Both England and Spain were destined to have a profound, lasting influence in shaping the Americas. But each would go its separate way — leaving the other to its divinely appointed birthright.

Confrontation between these mighty "Mistresses of the Sea" gave way to a period of peaceful co-existence. Now England could seriously begin the colonization of North America.