



Ten Great Adventurers

*Kate Dickinson Sweetser
Edited by Amy Puetz*

*Ten Great
Adventurers*

SAMPLE

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By Kate Dickinson Sweetser

Edited by Amy Puetz

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History at its Best!

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PREFACE

TO the exhaustive biographies of able historians, whose work gives a wealth of fact and detail concerning the adventurers herein portrayed, I owe a debt of gratitude for their aid in the making of this small volume.

Especially do I tender grateful appreciation to the works of J.S.C. Abbott, Francis Parkman, Washington Irving, Dr. Reuben G. Thwaiter, H. D. Traill, John Fiske, Vautier Golding, W. H. Prescott, Julian Corbett, H. C. Buell, J. P. Frothingham, Basil Matthews, L. M. Elton, J. W. Mario, G. M. Trevelyan, and many others whose monographs and magazine articles have given inspiration in the writing of these sketches for young readers.

If the volume gives them a desire to turn to the more comprehensive histories it will have accomplished its object.

Kate Dickinson Sweetser
New Jersey, 1915

INTRODUCTION

WE all need heroes! Some are super heroes with many unrealistic powers, others are larger-than-life fictional characters who accomplish impossible deeds, but the best kinds of heroes are real men in the pages of history. Those brave men, who explored new worlds, defended their countries, fought for liberty, opened up untamed lands, and spread the gospel are better than all the fictional heroes put together. True heroes don't need super powers or special weapons, yet their deeds sometimes seem more apt to be fictional than true. In this book you will meet ten truly heroic men.

The original book by Kate Dickinson Sweetser was a true delight and I've only made small grammatical corrections. I hope this book will become a favorite with boys of all ages. These ten great adventurers showcase heroes of the highest order.

Amy Puetz
Wyoming, 011 2

FRANCIS DRAKE

ADVENTURER IN SPANISH WATERS

IT was a night of a terrific storm in the south of England. Out in Plymouth Harbor an old warship lying at anchor rolled heavily, while the wind howled in its rigging, waves dashed high against it, and blinding sheets of rain swept across the decks.

In the old ship there were sounds of occupancy, cries of frightened children, flickering lights, voices calling, men hurrying here and there, below and above. Someone was lost in the fury of the gale. They were searching. Then came a joyful shout:

“Here he is! We have found him!” Strong arms gripped a small boy snuggled close to a great gun at the ship’s side.

“Were you not afraid, my son?” queried Edmund Drake as he and the child battled out of the teeth of the gale.

“Afraid!” the boy laughed. “Had you not come, I was going to climb the rigging, to see better.” Then he added, with deep conviction, “Father, I love the sea best of all!”

That this childish assertion was no passing whim history has clearly revealed, for inwrought in the nature of the boy, Francis Drake, was such a love of the sea in all its moods that to it and its adventuring his later career was to be joyfully dedicated for the glory of England.

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Throughout his life Francis Drake had one clear vision of childhood. It was of a night when there was confusion in the Drake home in Devonshire, voices of crying women, of stern men; then he was carried out into the darkness on a long journey, at the end of which he was put to bed, to awaken in strange surroundings. There were sights and sounds of the great sea, of dockyards and ships in the distance, and a strange stillness unbroken by any carter's wheel. Then memory shifted to an old warship lying at anchor in Chatham reach, off Plymouth Harbor, and there we have our first glimpse of the boy who was later to win renown as "the foremost sailor of the **Reformation**, the chief pirate of **Queen Elizabeth**, and one of England's greatest admirals."

When blue-eyed, curly-haired Francis grew older he heard the details of his earlier life. In 1554, at the time of his birth, there was hot strife between **Catholics** and **Protestants**. Because of that strife his father, Edmund Drake, a loyal Protestant, was obliged to flee from his home in Devon, and that early memory of Francis' was of St. Nicholas Island in Plymouth Harbor, where, through the aid of the Hawkins brothers, relatives of the Drakes and rich ship-builders who owned almost all of Plymouth, the fugitives were given a refuge. Then, through other influential friends, Edmund Drake was given an appointment as reader of prayers to the royal navy, and with the appointment went a unique home in the old war-vessel riding at anchor in the quiet harbor.

There were eleven sturdy brothers to keep Francis company on the old ship, and many a merry game and pirate prank the flock must have played as they romped on deck or climbed the rigging of their strange home. It was indeed a fit nursery for the crusading sea-king of later years, for "the clatter of the shipwright's hammers as they polished the idle guns . . . were the first sounds his dawning intelligence learned to grasp. His eyes could rest nowhere but on masts and guns and the towering hulks of warships which lay anchored about his floating home." Small wonder that the shriek and surge of the elements were as the call of the master to which he thrilled and pledged a joyful service!

Francis Drake

Edmund Drake's hope had been to place his boys in the navy, but when, at the death of **King Edward**, his sister **Mary**, the Catholic queen, came to the throne of England, and became betrothed to **Philip of Spain**, a country as loyally Catholic as England in general was Protestant, not only was all England roused to opposition, but many good Protestants, among them Edmund Drake, lost their positions. For that reason he was obliged to let his boys find work wherever they could, and Francis became ship-boy on a vessel which carried on a coasting trade with France and Holland.

This apprenticeship was in itself a determining factor in Drake's later career, for on the little Channel coaster the rigid discipline and bitter privations molded the boy into a man of firm muscles and iron will, while he was learning about ship management, and letting no detail of wind or tide escape him as the little boat plied its way to various ports.

He heard captains and sailors talk bitterly of Philip and his persecution of subjects in the Netherlands, and of the horrors of the **Inquisition**. These were rousing Protestants to that fierce indignation which was an underlying cause of the religious war, or Reformation.

These reasons, added to the memory of that flight from Devon in childhood, doubtless gave Drake the first sharp impulse of hatred for Spain and the Spaniards which was to be the driving-force of his later career, and from those days on the Channel coaster his determination never wavered. He would be a power on the sea, and a menace to Catholic, predatory Spain wherever and whenever he had the opportunity.

Then a great event happened. The captain of the Channel coaster died, leaving his small craft to Francis Drake!

One can fancy the joy and pride with which the young captain now began to trade for himself along the coast, daily gaining more accurate knowledge of ship-craft and of the sea, and as he heard returning seamen tell in glowing phrases of those new-found islands, called the Indies, across the untried ocean, his dreams expanded, he grew tired of his little boat which "crept along the

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shore,” and as he steered it in the familiar course he determined on voyages to far-off lands and adventures beyond those of any who had yet **fared** forth to the new land of America.

Following up this decision, he gave his boat to a younger brother, and went into the employ of the Hawkins brothers, one of whom, **John Hawkins**, had just come back from such a successful slave-trading expedition in the Indies—England’s first venture in this questionable kind of commerce—that all Plymouth was ringing with his praise. Only too glad was he to take into his employ such a stalwart young fellow as this kinsman of his, and although Francis did not go on the second slave-trading trip of the Hawkins’, having been sent as purser of a ship bound for the Bay of Biscay, his second voyage was to the islands of his dreams.

Hawkins’ second expedition had been as successful as the first, and Spain, in alarm for her own trade, forced him to promise not to repeat it the following year. Hawkins fulfilled the letter of the promise and remained at home, but he sent an expedition under Captain Lovell, and with him went Francis Drake. It was a trip Drake never forgot, not only because of the wealth of tropical **luxuriance** that stretched before his **unwonted** eyes, but because when at La Hacha, a port on the Spanish Main, he and his companions were the victims of such unexpected treachery from the Spaniards that they were “obliged to sail home **ignominiously** with the loss of all their venture.”

Then he made a voyage to Guinea on the west coast of Africa, under Captain George Fenner, when for two days Fenner fought and finally drove off a Portuguese galleass and six gunboats; and Drake, watching the breathless encounter, vowed a vow that some day he, too, would be as valiant a sea fighter as was this brave captain.

Soon the chance came to prove his mettle. On an October day in 1567 a small fleet of six ships—the *Jesus* and the *Minion* of the royal navy, with four smaller boats, the *William and Mary*, the *Angel*, the *Swallow*, and the *Judith*—all set sail, glided slowly out of Plymouth Harbor, and with them went Drake, as pilot, or second officer, of the *Jesus*, with Hawkins in command. Later in the

Francis Drake

voyage Drake was transferred to the command of a French trading vessel which they had captured, and still later to command of the *Judith*.

As the little fleet sailed away from Plymouth, Drake stood by Hawkins's side, erect and resolute, with eyes as blue and hair as curly as in his childish days, but now with the flowing mustache and pointed beard of Queen Elizabeth's time adding to his air of distinction, and with a native kindliness of nature and firmness of purpose showing in his features and bearing, while it was easy to see his glee at the thought of adventuring on the high seas.

From the moment of setting sail until they had secured a rich cargo of gold and precious stones in exchange for the two hundred slaves they carried from Africa for barter, the expedition was successful, but no sooner had they turned homeward with their treasure than two terrific hurricanes so disabled their ships that they were obliged to put into port at San Juan de Ulua, or Vera Cruz, the port of the city of Mexico.

There in the quiet harbor they found twelve Spanish vessels lying at anchor, unarmed, and loaded with an almost priceless cargo of gold and silver; this was to be escorted to Spain by a strong fleet, for which the ships were waiting, and on the morning after the English vessels had anchored in the harbor, up came the looked-for fleet, to find itself in an unexpected and critical position.

If the Spanish ships remained outside the harbor, the first gale that came would either destroy or blow them out to sea, while if they entered, they would be at the mercy of the English seamen. It must have been a great temptation to the English commander to keep them out of the harbor and to have them at his mercy. But being diplomatic as well as eager, he made a compact of peace with them, and for three days English and Spanish vessels lay side by side in apparent peace and good-fellowship. Yet underneath was a current of hostility utterly unguessed by Hawkins. With infamous treachery the Spaniards, regardless of compacts, attacked the rival fleet, and though the English resisted bravely, sank four Spanish ships, killed over five hundred Spaniards, and wrecked the

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Spanish flag-ship, the result was disastrous. The smaller English ships were sunk, and the *Jesus* so badly damaged that it had to be abandoned with a valuable cargo. Only the little *Judith* and the *Minion* got clear, and it is said that Drake escaped from the *Jesus* at great peril.

The men on the *Minion* were so panic-stricken that they set sail without orders, and, “being separated from the *Judith*, wandered in unknown seas, the sailors forced by hunger to eat cats, parrots, mice, and monkeys, while a terrible thirst almost made them lose their reason.”

Meanwhile, into Plymouth Harbor, on January 23, 1569, sailed a small, battered ship; and before any one realized what ship it was, Drake, sturdy and weather-bronzed, had gone ashore and told his story of disaster to William Hawkins. He, stunned by the misfortune which had come to the English fleet, sent Drake immediately to the queen with the bad news.

His tale produced a profound sensation not only among court circles, but throughout England. While the excitement was at its height the *Minion* was sighted off Cornwall, and John Hawkins arrived to tell his equally thrilling story of adventure and disaster. At first he was very cool to Drake, feeling that he had deserted him in a time of sore need, but when he heard that Drake’s one thought on that fateful night of storm had been to get his men and cargo home without further loss, he let the matter drop.

In the following summer Drake married Mary Newman, a Devonshire girl, giving characteristically far less time to this romantic chapter of his life than to his sea ventures, for because of that last disastrous voyage he was burning with desire to have the queen declare war on Spain. This Elizabeth did not think best to do, so Drake decided to take the matter of revenge in his own hands, and this is the way he did it:

In 1570, with two small vessels, the *Dragon* and the *Swan*, he sailed quietly out of Plymouth Harbor, headed for the Indies to look them over and discover the best place to make a successful attack on the Spaniards. Then later, with a suitable fleet, he would return and strike at the weak spot. At the time it seemed as if this

Francis Drake

reconnoitering expedition was really a private one, manned and carried out by Drake alone, but it has since been thought that John Hawkins suggested the trip and aided in financing it.

With safe swiftness Drake made his desired discoveries and added to them in the next year, when he went again, this time with the *Swan* alone, and, if the trips accomplished nothing else, they gave the Spaniards a great respect for Drake's humanity, while he, we are told, acquired a contempt for their power.

Whatever Francis Drake was or was not—and of all great pirates he was the most daring and the most successful—his sea raids were all made with one determining impulse. His was more the idea of a crusading king than a buccaneer, and wherever he plundered or pillaged or took men as prisoners of war, there was justice and mercy for the unarmed, for women, and for children. This, even under their anger at his wild inroads on their colonies and cargoes, the Spaniards never denied, and his frank, kind nature won men even under stress of fear.

He returned to England full of a scheme so wild in its daring that those to whom he presented it gasped at the extravagance of its details. Despite its hazards, it is generally supposed that the queen, though giving it no open approval, secretly subscribed largely to the cost of the expedition. Certain it is that no ships in the royal navy were ever more elaborately fitted out with ammunition, weapons, and all the necessities of a long voyage, than were the *Pascha* and the *Swan* when on a **Whitsunday Eve**, May 24, 1572, under the command of Drake as admiral and his brother John as vice-admiral, they sailed out of Plymouth Harbor.

"The crews, all told, numbered but seventy-three souls; among them Joseph Drake, too, and John Oxenham; there was but one of them who had reached the age of thirty, and their modest end was nothing less than to seize the port of Nombre de Dios and empty into their holds the treasure house of the world!

"On his previous voyage Drake had discovered a little landlocked bay indenting the lonely shores of the Gulf of Darien, and there had buried his surplus stores for a future necessity."

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Now, on the 12th of July, the *Pascha* and *Swan* quietly sailed into the little cove, where Drake planned to put together pinnaces, or small boats, which he had brought in the *Pascha* in pieces, and in which his attack on Nombre de Dios was to be made. As the *Pascha* led the way into the bay a cloud of smoke was seen blowing off the land. Someone had discovered Drake's tropical treasure house! Hastily arming his men with muskets and such other firearms as were on hand, and proceeding boldly to land, Drake, leading, plunged into the dense forest before him, in search of a solution to the mystery. Not a human being was in sight, but nailed on a huge tree was a lead tablet with this cut in it:

Captain Drake,

If you fortune to come to this Port, make haste away! For the Spaniards which you had with you here the last year have betrayed this place and taken away all that you left here. I depart from hence this present 7th of July, 1572.

Your very loving friend,
John Garret

The smoke came from a fire which Garret and his companions had lighted before they left five days before. Notwithstanding the news contained on the tablet, Drake was determined to stay in the harbor until he had put together his pinnaces; so the *Pascha* and *Swan* anchored, and the men, after building a shore fortification for defense, were busy with the pinnaces when, much to their alarm, they sighted a suspicious-looking squadron making for the shore. It proved to be only an English one under Captain James Ranse, with two Spanish prizes in tow. Immediately Drake held a long conversation with Ranse. The two sea-rovers pledged their solemn covenant of comradeship, and Drake went back to work at his pinnaces.

At the end of the week they were ready for use, and the whole fleet stole silently out of the bay, with no sound to betray their going but the soft swirl of the waves against the little ships.

"Sailing northwest to a thickly wooded island, they found Negroes there loading timber into frigates from Nombre de Dios,"

Francis Drake

who told them that the forests on either side of Nombre de Dios were inhabited by a savage black tribe called Maroons, who hated the Spaniards and had only one desire—to kill and torture them. Only six weeks before, they had almost succeeded in surprising Nombre de Dios, when the governor, in great alarm, had sent to Panama for fresh troops to help resist their further attacks.

This was bad news for Drake, for the Panama troops might arrive before his own, and there was need to push ahead quickly. Freeing the blacks whom he had seized, he sent them ashore, hoping they would give a good account of his kindness to the Maroons, as it was necessary to have them friendly. He and Captain Ranse held a quick conversation, and arranged that the three ships and the caravel should lie hidden among the Pine Islands, under Ranse, while Drake made his venture in the pinnaces manned by seventy-three men, taking as many firearms as they could carry, also trumpets and a drum for the comfort of the men and to alarm the enemy.

Sailing westward along the coast toward Nombre de Dios, presently the little fleet lay under a bluff in the harbor, waiting breathlessly for dawn, which was the time Drake had appointed for the attack on the town.

There was no sound but the booming of the surf and the anxious whispers of the invaders, and Drake saw clearly that another hour of suspense would make cowards of his bravest men, who realized that on the other side of the point lay a settlement as big as Plymouth, perhaps even then full of Spanish soldiers. Drake made a quick resolution. The rising moon should play the part of the sun. Boldly he proclaimed dawn, and ordered an immediate assault!

A few moments later the boats had grounded and his men were landing right under the shore batteries, from which, unfortunately, the gunner in charge escaped and ran to give the alarm. So when Drake's men marched into town it was in an uproar of defense, and a sharp volley of shot greeted them. They retorted with a roar of musketry; then, pikes and swords in hand, the Spaniards fled in wild confusion and terror, leaving the adventurers free to march to the governor's house. There they found piles of silver bars, to the

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joy of the men; but Drake ordered them to be left untouched, and gave a command to march on to the king's treasure house near the harbor, which held far more valuable stores of gold and gems. While they were wondering how to break into the treasure house, John Drake and Oxenham, who had been down to the harbor to make sure of the safety of the pinnaces, breathlessly reported one hundred and fifty soldiers newly arrived to protect the town. Drake's men were panic-stricken with fear of being taken prisoners, but his ringing voice reassured them.

"I have brought you to the door of the treasure house of the world," he declared. "Blame nobody but yourselves if you go away empty!" But he saw that they were still afraid, and commanded his brother and Oxenham to immediately break open the door of the treasure house, while he went back to hold the plaza. Even while he spoke he grew deathly white and fell forward, overcome with faintness from a wound in his leg which he had been concealing for hours for fear of creating panic among his men. Now loss of blood and pain overcame him, and his men, clustering around him and seeing how grave his condition was, firmly set aside his orders to proceed with the expedition, "in spite of his angry protest, declaring that his life was more to them than all the gold of the world, lifting him with almost womanly tenderness; and, still protesting, he was carried on board his pinnace as the sun rose over the quiet harbor, and his great attempt to rifle the treasure house of the world had failed."

But it was no easy matter to daunt the great pirate.

"Ten days later, with his wounds healed and his men and ships in good shape again, he swooped down on Cartagena, the capital of the Spanish Main, but found that he had been sighted and an alarm given. However, he boldly entered the harbor with his pinnaces, seized a large ship that was unloading at the quay, and, while frantic alarms rang on land, carried it off to sea in his own redoubtable fashion. Then, realizing that it would be wise to disappear until the excitement he had caused in the capital had subsided, he laid a quick plan, and by night there was no trace of

Francis Drake

him or of his fleet except the charred remains of the *Swan* burning at the water's edge!"

To carry out his new plan the pinnaces must be more fully manned, which could only be done by his brother's boat being abandoned, and this would bring about a mutiny on board should the men discover it. But Drake's brain was fertile in expedients. He held a long talk with Tom Moone, carpenter of the *Swan*, who was a great admirer of Drake, and, as a result of the talk, "that night Moone secretly scuttled his ship at the risk of his life, and in the morning she was full of water; yet so cleverly had Moone's work been done that not a leak could be found!" It is said that Drake himself worked all day at the pumps with well simulated anxiety till he was exhausted, and yet the water was scarcely reduced. Then, in despair, the broken-hearted young captain asked his brother's advice, and as a result at dusk fired his own stricken ship; so, according to his desire and plan, without mutiny, Drake had the men to man his pinnaces. Small wonder that he was called "The Devil" by those who feared his bold pirateering.

To the Spaniards the burning ship was proof that the hated pirate had left the coast. But, no indeed! He had merely sailed for a landlocked harbor not far away, where he remained for over two weeks while his ships were being overhauled. "The English called the place Port Plenty, because from its safe retreat they were able to sail out and sweep the sea of every passing ship," thereby adding largely to their store of supplies. Along the coast, on the many nearby islands, they made storehouses in which they hid their surplus supplies, and almost daily captured new prizes, large and small.

Friendly relations with the Maroons had been established by the aid of a faithful black man, Diego, who had become Drake's loyal subject at Nombre de Dios. He brought two Maroon leaders to his master, and they declared that because of Drake's hatred of the Spaniards they stood ready to assist him in any enterprise against them. Consequently he decided to tell them of his new project to seize King Philip's gold as it was leaving Panama, for the achievement of which their help was necessary. They were thrilled

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with the idea, but told Drake that it would be five months before the dry season, when the gold would be carried overland. This was a blow to Drake, for he dreaded the long months of waiting in the **enervating** climate; but with characteristic resolve he at once set to work to make all conditions of life as healthful as possible, and anchored in a safer harbor among the islands of the Muletas, where he had a strong fort built for shore defense.

Nevertheless, those were weary months of waiting, and, as Drake had feared, months of sickness and disaster, during which, every now and again, Drake, like some saga of Norsemen days, would venture forth on a pirate trip; and then it was that the wild blood of the adventurer flowed fast and free in the veins of the seaking of Devon.

“He gathered fruit in the gardens of Santiago de Tolu; he snatched vessels from the very jaws of the Spanish guns; he rode out two gales in the harbor of Cartagena itself; he jumped ashore in the face of the garrison to show how cheaply he held the arms of Spain; and yet with a skill and judgment beyond his years he eluded every attempt to capture him by force or fraud, and through sickness and hunger, exposure and disappointment, maintained his men in such a state of cheerful obedience as had perhaps never before been seen.”

Conditions were all against him. Coming back from one of his expeditions, he found his brother John dead, he having been foolish enough to attack with a rapier and an old firelock a frigate full of Spanish musketeers. This great loss came at a bad time, for the daring seizure of the gold was now very near. While they waited for the Maroons to bring word that the moment for action had come, ten men came down with fever, and in a few hours half the company had been stricken. Joseph Drake died in his brother's arms, and it seemed as if there would be none left for the great adventure.

At the end of January the Maroons reported that the fleet had put in at Nombre de Dios and that the gold would now begin to be carried overland. A pinnacle which was dispatched to prove the truth of the statement confirmed the news, and at once all was

Francis Drake

bustle and excitement where before only sorrow and sickness had been.

Of the seventy-three men who left Plymouth eight months before, some were too feeble to march, and some had to be left to tend them and to guard the Spanish prisoners from the fury of the Maroons, so only eighteen men stood ready for action when, on the 3rd of February, with a body-guard of thirty Maroons, they plunged into the forest on their bold hazard. The Maroons marched ahead, cheering them with the news that about half-way on their journey they would come to a great tree from which could be seen not only the north sea from which they came, but the south sea toward which they were going, which report proved true. In the morning on the fourth day of their march with a mighty thrill they saw the untried ocean of Drake's dreams, and, "sinking on his knees, he prayed Almighty God of His goodness to give him life and leave to sail once in an English ship on that sea!" He called the other seventeen Englishmen around him, and they stood in silence, straining their eyes to look across the Pacific Ocean, which stretched in blue calm beyond their yearning gaze. Then, refreshed and inspired, they took up their march again toward Panama, and, having found out from a Maroon spy the time when the gold-trains would pass on the Nombre de Dios road, the little company lay in ambush for weary hours in silent expectation.

Down the road echoed the faint tinkle of mule bells, and hearts beat fast; the long-awaited hour had come. Drake's command was for all to lie down close to the ground and keep still. But one man, eager to see whether the treasure was really coming in sight, cautiously raised his head above the high grass, silently peering over it. Only the top of his head showed, but that was enough! He was seen; there was a quick whispered alarm given by the convoy of the treasure. Quietly the precious gold packs were turned back toward Nombre de Dios, and when Drake's men with shouts leaped from the thicket on the heavily laden mules they found neither gold nor precious stones, and again Drake's adventuring had been foiled of its aim. There was no time to waste in regrets. There must be immediate action, for soldiers would soon doubtless

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come hurrying out of Panama, and perhaps in Venta Cruz the alarm had been given, too. The best way of escape lay through that place. Mounted on mules, the men made their way through the woods almost into the town, when the escorting Maroons declared they smelled powder, that the enemy was near, and suddenly a Spanish officer cried, "*Hoo!*" And barred the road. Drake answered in the same fashion.

"Who are you?" asked the officer.

"Englishmen!" said Drake.

"Then," said the Spanish commander, "In the name of the King of Spain yield yourselves, and on the word and faith of a gentleman soldier you shall be used with all courtesy." To which Drake made answer:

"For the honor of the Queen of England, my mistress, I must have passage that way," and flashed his pistol in the Spaniard's face.

Instantly there was a volley of shots from the Spaniards, and as the firing stopped Drake whistled, a signal for his men to fire. The Maroons led the charge, leaping and yelling like fiends, shouting "*Yo Peho! Yo Peho!*" Their terrible war cry struck terror to the hearts of many, who were swept before the English force as leaves in the wind. Up the narrow streets of the city and into a monastery they fled, and were locked in, while the victors pillaged the place, with an English picket holding the gate. An hour and a half later the looting was stopped by an advance guard of cavalry from Panama, but so strong was Drake's command over his men that the cavalry were repulsed, and when they came back later, reinforced by other troops, to storm the captured town, the fearsome Drake had vanished.

"Where he and his fleet had gone no one knew, and the gold-ships did not dare to move from port until he had been located. Meanwhile, the treasure was being sent overland across the Isthmus under strong guards, and on the 31st of March three long mule trains, guarded by many soldiers, left Venta Cruz carrying thirty tons of silver and a quantity of gold."

Francis Drake

Safely the trains went on to the very gates of Nombre de Dios, when the stillness of the night was broken by rattling of muskets, jangling of bells, and hideous cries of “*Yo Peho! Yo Peho!*” As yelling figures surrounded soldiers and mule trains, and the bodyguard of the treasure fled terrified into the city without the silver and gold.

Drake had reappeared, and while the Spaniards were recovering from the shock he and his men, light-hearted with success, were “busily hiding bars of silver under trees, burying them in the bed of the river and in land-crabs’ burrows,” until fifteen tons of their loot was concealed. Then, carrying the remainder, they staggered on to load the pinnaces with it; but when they reached the shore there were only seven Spanish ships to be seen, and not a pinnace in sight.

Drake showed quick wit. “Have a good hope!” he cried. “It is God who has permitted the enemy to prevail against the pinnaces in our absence. It is He who sent the storm to bring tree trunks down the river that we may make a raft on which to reach the ships before the Spaniards arrive.” Then, seeing fright still written on some faces, he added, “It is no time to fear, but rather to haste to prevent that which is feared!” His courage was infectious. A raft was hastily made of the tree trunks, with a biscuit bag for a sail, and a tree for a rudder, and manned with two Frenchmen and an Englishman. As they set off in their odd craft, Drake waved a brave farewell to those on shore, crying out, “If it please God that I shall ever set foot aboard my frigate in safety, I will, God willing, by one means or other, get you all aboard, despite all the Spaniards in the Indies!”

Only too well he knew how desperate was their plight. For six hours they rolled on the heavy sea, their bodies parched and blistered by the sun, the waves surging over them to the armpits. Then Drake cried, “There are the pinnaces!” And sure enough, there they were, disappearing around a point of land not far away. Steering the raft ashore through the high surf, Drake jumped out. Running around the headland, he found the crews of the pinnaces, who were horrified at the blistered flesh and ragged condition of

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DRAKE SIGHTS THE ENGLISH PINNACES

Francis Drake

the captain and his men, while they told of the heavy gale which had driven them out of their course. Then Drake drew a piece of gold from his bosom, and, holding it up for them all to see, he cried:

“Give thanks to God. Our voyage is made!”

With quiet dispatch they then set sail and joined the party guarding their great treasure. Much of that which had been buried was also afterward recovered, despite the Spaniards’ efforts to find it, and the entire booty of the expedition was tremendous, for besides the lesser plunder of Nombre de Dios and Venta Cruz, and the large amount taken from the mule trains, they had also plundered two hundred other vessels once, and some as many as three times. So, despite their great failures, they had made great successes too, and now their one thought was to reach home in safety with their treasure.

So small was the number of men left that the *Pascha* was too large for them to sail, and Drake gave it to his Spanish prisoners as a reward for their long detention.

“A fortnight later, after an uneventful voyage, the little fleet sailed into Plymouth Harbor, with a thunder of saluting guns which brought the good folk, who had just gathered for the church service, running to the harbor edge to greet the returning adventurers.”

Drake had returned to England not only with his old impulse to wage war on all subjects of Spain, but with a new hot desire to go back and sail on that untried ocean of which he had had a glimpse from the great tree.

He tried in vain to rouse the queen to a like enthusiasm for his new project, for she was now surrounded with men who were friendly with Spain, and bitter against her favorite pirate, whose actions by land and sea had robbed their country of so much wealth. Not only was he obliged to wait for a more fortunate time to plead his cause, but so bitter was the “feeling against him, as being dangerous to Spain, that he was compelled to hurry out to sea for fear of arrest, and spent two years, if legend be true, hiding among islands off the coast of Ireland. Then, having fitted up three

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frigates and manned them at his own expense—for he was now a rich man—he joined the Earl of Essex in a campaign in Ulster, and greatly enjoyed the society of the courtly earl and those brilliant men of the world who were associated with him. One of Francis Drake's strongest characteristics was that, despite his own rough, unpolished bearing, he dearly loved refinement of speech and manner and all the luxuries of life.

At the end of four years, Queen Elizabeth at last decided to give one thousand pounds to Drake's new hazard, provided everything connected with the expedition should be kept secret. Nothing loath, so long as he could once again ride the high seas in quest of adventures, on a November day in 1577, the great pirate rover stood ready to start for that fabled ocean of his longings.

His fleet was made up of five ships—the *Pelican* (his flag-ship), the *Elizabeth*, the *Marigold*, the *Swan*, and the *Christopher*. The ships' crews numbered one hundred and fifteen men and fourteen boys, all armed with "cartridges, wildfire, chain-shot, guns, pistols, bows, and other weapons." A large store of provisions was taken, and pinnaces to be set up when needed, and Drake took care to "make provision for ornament and delight, carrying to this purpose expert musicians, rich furnishings, and even vessels for his table made of pure silver," that there should be nothing lacking to impress any foreign people who might be encountered in the perilous trip; but at best it was a madcap expedition, and its real destination was kept a secret from the crews until the coast of Morocco was reached, Drake allowing them to think they were bound for Alexandria, for fear many would refuse to go. On their way out they picked up several large prizes, one a big Portuguese ship with a valuable cargo of food and wine. The passengers and crew Drake sent ashore, but kept the pilot, Numa de Silva, who proved an invaluable assistant and wrote an account of the trip.

Drake having decided it wise to lessen the number of his ships, found a harbor to anchor in, and sacrificed the *Swan*, a prize ship, and the *Christopher*, adding their stores to those of the other vessels, then went on his way in the three remaining ships to the bleak shore of Patagonia.

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There, in a harbor called Port St. Julian, they found a gibbet on which Magellan was supposed to have executed several rebellious men of his company. Here Drake, cut to the heart by the treachery of Thomas Doughty, his supposedly loyal friend, after consultation with his crew and the guilty man himself, was obliged to mete out a horrible punishment to him for his infamy.

Even after Doughty had been put to death there was bad blood among the crews, and Drake was fearful that the voyage might be unsuccessful because of this, and after much thought on the subject finally gathered his whole company together on shore, supposedly to hear the clergyman preach. Instead, Drake himself rose and stood before them with dignified presence, and in a clear voice of command said that their quarrel must cease or the voyage would be disastrous. "I must have the gentleman to haul and draw with the mariner, and the mariner with the gentleman," he cried. "I would know him who would refuse to set his hand to a rope." Then he offered to send any who wished to quit the expedition back to England in the *Marigold*. "But let them take heed," he said, "that they go homeward; for if I find them in my way, I will surely sink them."

There was a moment of silence; then, as one man, they agreed to stand by him, whereupon he told them the entire scheme of the voyage, and that it was the queen who had sent them out. Then with cheery words he dismissed them to their various duties, and there was no more discord with which to contend.

"On the 20th of August, the small fleet, in bitter cold and with many of the crew sick, sailed between snowcapped peaks and dull, gray cliffs in to the Strait of Magellan, and a month later the *Pelican*, which Drake had rechristened the *Golden Hind*, in honor of Christopher Hatton, the queen's favorite, whose crest was a Golden Hind, sailed into the untried waters of Drake's dream-sea, being the first English vessel to venture on the Pacific." For six weeks the voyagers encountered the most terrific storm they had ever been subjected to, and, battered and torn of sail, were swept six hundred miles out of their course; the *Marigold* went down

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with all on board; and a week later Captain Wynter, on the *Elizabeth*, having lost courage, turned back and sailed for England.

Drake, undaunted, pursued his course, and sailed into smooth, sunny waters. Then came the day of days, even in his adventurous career, when, after threading his way among the islands of Tierra del Fuego, he landed and stood where the waters of the two mighty oceans surged and merged into one.

With a thrill of awe, he then lay down on the most southerly point of land on the Western Hemisphere, and, stretching out his arms, “with his hands struck from the chart the *Terra Australis Incognita*.”

From that time all went prosperously with ships and crews, and as they sailed northward along the coast of America, Drake, the new-made explorer and navigator, once more became the pirate in whose blood surged hot impulse for plunder. In the harbor of Valparaiso, the *Golden Hind* seized a Spanish galleon lying at anchor, and stored her rich cargo of gold away in her own hold. At Tatapaca they found a dock piled high with bars of shining silver, while at Arica were found blocks of precious metal as large as brickbats, and both bars and blocks were immediately appropriated by the crew of the *Golden Hind*. Then Drake heard of a galleon which was the great glory of the Spanish Main, carrying gems and gold to Panama, and away sped the *Golden Hind* in pursuit. The treasure ship off Cape San Francisco sighted, captured, rifled of its priceless gems, its glittering gold, its tons of silver, all added to the stores of the *Golden Hind*!

Drake's question now was whether to turn toward home or to risk his precious cargo for further adventuring. To turn back would be wise, but his was ever the way of valor rather than that of discretion, and he decided that, having “swept one whole continent from the globe, and by his survey of the coast of America determined the shape of another,” he would now settle the question of the **Northwest Passage**, and, if it existed, sail home by that route. This new resolve completely mystified the Spaniards, who, in a state of alarm at the redoubtable pirate's latest feats of

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buccaneering, were guarding the Strait of Magellan in hopes of capturing him there, and with no idea of what he was really doing.

Meanwhile he had seized a vessel near the China Sea, carrying secret charts by which the rich Spanish trade across the Pacific was guided, and the charts were of far more value to the captain of the *Golden Hind* than all its other cargo, priceless as it was.

“In high glee Drake now sped on his way northward, but a terrific storm caught his small ship, froze the rigging, and half paralyzed his men. However, he went on to Vancouver, but there gave up the struggle and ran south to a harbor near San Francisco, where the Indian natives begged the strange white men to remain among them. But in a month the *Golden Hind* was ready for its long trip across the Pacific, and then for sixty-four days Drake steered his ship without sight of land, disdaining to follow the usual trade-track of the Spaniards. Beyond the Caroline Islands, beyond the Moluccas, sped the *Golden Hind* through unnumbered perils, with but one aim now—making for her old moorings in Plymouth Harbor, left behind three long years before, and never did quiet harbor present such beauty and happiness to seafarers as did that same bay when they sailed into it safely, with joyful minds and thankful hearts, on the 26th of September, 1580.”

Despite his long absence from civilization, Drake had not forgotten the shifting tide of court policy, nor the many varying moods of the queen, and with characteristic diplomacy, instead of running close to land, he dropped anchor behind St. Nicholas Island, and waited for developments.

The news of his return spread like wildfire on shore. A messenger rowed out to the *Golden Hind* and commanded his immediate presence at court, which message he received without comment other than a dry smile, and wisely gathered together some of the rarest treasures of his sea-raids. Well he knew Elizabeth's love of the glittering prizes he always bore home for her enrichment, and whatever temper he might find the court disposed to hold toward him, he trusted that his offerings would balance the scales on his side with the queen. And he was right. The vague rumors of his death at the hands of the Spaniards, which

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had reached England from time to time during his long voyage, had caused many to rejoice that the “Master Thief of the Unknown World,” as he was called, could no longer be a menace to the sea commerce of Spain. Yet when he appeared laden with rich booty the queen was so filled with admiration for his vast venturing that she lauded him to the skies, and all England was roused to wild enthusiasm by the tales he had to tell and the treasure he had brought back to their country.

By Elizabeth’s order the *Golden Hind* was taken up the Thames, and on the 4th of April she honored it with a visit, at which time a great banquet was served. Then, in the presence of a vast throng, and amid wild applause, she knighted her favorite pirate. By her order “the little ship of great adventuring” was to be preserved forever, and today its remains are to be found made into a chair which is on view in an Oxford library. Drake’s plunder was deposited in the Tower, after some four hundred thousand dollars had been taken from it, as his own share, and later the queen gave him fifty thousand dollars more, making the hazard well worthwhile for all concerned.

Burning in Drake’s heart there was now a keen desire to show the possibilities of the navy as a separate weapon of war, and he was longing to prove his point in such a way as to increase England’s supremacy at sea. However for five weary years he was obliged to wait to get his “letters of marque,” or commission. They were not idle years, however, for he spent them in serving both as a member of Parliament and as mayor of Plymouth, in which office he improved the town and harbor greatly, and showed himself to be a man of executive ability on land as well as on sea.

Then **Philip of Spain** seized a fleet of English corn ships trading in Spanish ports, and Drake had immediate orders to sail against the settlements on the Spanish Main, his old familiar haunts; and with thirty ships, “commanded by such famous captains as Fenner, Wynter, and Frobisher, and with two thousand soldiers and sailors to man the most extensive privateering fleet on record, on a day in late September the fleet stood out to sea with Drake’s colors flying on the *Elizabeth Bonaventura*.” Once again

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the great sea-rover felt the thrill of adventuring as he steered his course across the Atlantic to the West Indies, and, reaching Santiago, took possession of fortress and town and raised the English flag on the fortress. Food and wine were taken, but no treasure, and after firing the town in revenge for old-time wrongs done to William Hawkins, the fleet again put out to sea, but because of sickness, which broke out among the crews, they anchored off some islands and passed Christmas there among kindly natives. Then they attacked the city of San Domingo, the oldest and most important city of the Indies, and foremost in Drake's list for destruction.

After some brisk fighting he took possession of it, while the Spanish troops fled; but the English, not having enough men to garrison the town, after demanding a heavy ransom, left, taking guns and food, besides many galley slaves, whom they freed, as was Drake's custom whenever it was possible. At Cartagena, where he knew the fortifications well, from his many visits there, he steered into the outer harbor by a difficult channel, and fired on the fort under cover of darkness while secretly landing soldiers, who made their way to town, "wading in the sea-wash" to avoid the poisoned stakes which had been placed in readiness for them. The place was taken; then Drake calmly destroyed the shipping and demanded a large ransom, but was forced to accept a smaller one rather than delay, as there was much sickness among his men—for which reason he gave up attacks on Nombre de Dios and Panama, to his great disappointment.

As a whole the expedition had not been successful in the way of plunder, for much treasure had been taken from the towns by Spaniards in fear of an attack; also many of Drake's best men had died, and he thought it wise to turn again toward England, stopping only at St. Augustine to destroy a fort, from which he took away guns and two thousand pounds. By the 28th of July the fleet was again in home waters, Drake feeling partly satisfied because, despite the disappointments of the voyage, by the capture of San Domingo and Cartagena he had struck Spain a blow from which she could not easily recover.

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His uppermost thought now was to strengthen the English navy, as there were repeated rumors that Philip of Spain was collecting and equipping a vast **Armada** for the invasion and conquest of England. The queen was doubtful of Philip's design, and glad to keep Drake, her most able sea strategist, at home, for there were plots against her life at that time, as well as rumors of war.

At last, by means of a stolen document which was sufficient evidence that Philip was indeed preparing to invade England, Elizabeth was convinced of his purpose, and there was a flurry of preparation, with Drake as its central figure. He was made the queen's admiral-at-the-seas, with Borough as vice-admiral, while a fleet of five battleships, nine gunboats, and nine cruisers was equipped, to which the queen contributed four battleships; the rest were the property of Drake and London merchants, and their proposed purpose was "to cripple the King of Spain in his own waters and retard his preparations for invasion, a purpose which Drake called "singeing the king of Spain's beard."

"With apparent bravado, but really with **consummate** seamanship, Drake sailed for Cadiz harbor, where he had heard the Spanish ships were gathering. Both the outer and inner harbors were crowded with vessels, and in sailed Drake, routed the defending galleys, and made havoc among the ships, of which he burned or captured about thirty-six, and carried away four laden with wine, oil, biscuits, and dried fruit; departing thence, as Drake said, 'at our pleasure, with as much honor as we could wish.' His fleet was chased by Spanish galleys, but the wind favored the English and away they sailed in safety without the loss of a single man, having captured a rich Spanish galleon belonging to the Marquis de Santa Cruz, plundered and scuttled and captured warships and store-ships, and destroyed twelve thousand tons of shipping in less than thirty-six hours."

Philip's plan had been for squadrons from Sicily, Italy, and Spain to meet at Lisbon, ready to advance against England, so Drake learned from Spaniards he captured, and he decided to "stand off Cape St. Vincent and intercept the fleet." But first he needed water.

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“At Sagres Castle was the one anchorage along the coast, and that was on a high cliff defended by strong forts. With quick decision Drake announced his intention of storming the castle. Borough, more conservative in his policy, objected to the risk, and was promptly made a prisoner in his own cabin, while Drake, the redoubtable, led an attack on the strongly fortified castle, he himself toiling like a common laborer, carrying fagots which were piled against the castle gate and set on fire. The commander was killed and the fort surrendered, leaving Drake in possession of one of the best places to get water and to anchor on the coast of Spain.”

Having finished his work by throwing the big guns of the fort over the cliffs into the sea, Drake retreated to a bay south of Lisbon, where he could attack the ships if they should attempt to move north. “His real desire was to fall on the Spanish admiral, Santa Cruz, and the whole fleet, as he had entered the harbor of Cadiz, but orders from the home government forbade this declaration of war, so he lay in the southerly bay, sending occasional taunting messages to the admiral, hoping to goad him into a fight in open waters; but Santa Cruz refused the challenge, and Drake grew restless and sailed for the Azores, capturing the *San Filipe*, a royal merchantman, with a cargo worth a million dollars and papers revealing the secrets of the East India trade.” Then back he went triumphant, to lay his gifts, the results of his latest exploit, at the feet of his queen, who, it is said, graciously accepted the offerings, sent her apologies to Philip for the depredations of her favorite, whom she reprimanded, though none too severely, and settled down into a state of peace again, believing that the Armada would give no further trouble for some time to come.

“But Philip at once began repairing Drake’s inroads on his great fleet with feverish activity, while the Duke of Medina Sidonia was chosen to take command of the fleet, as Santa Cruz had died recently. Drake, too, was making his preparations, and when there was a rumor that the Armada would sail from Lisbon before 1587, England immediately placed the navy on an established war

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footing, while Lord Howard as high admiral, with Drake as his lieutenant, was put in command of a squadron of thirty ships.”

Drake’s drastic method would have been to go in search of the great fleet at once, but circumstances were against him; instead he was obliged to remain for months at anchor in Plymouth Harbor. Four times he put to sea; only to be forced back by shifting orders from the changeable-minded queen or by contrary winds, but at last came the day for which his whole roving life had been preparing him.

The Spanish Armada put to sea on a May day in 1588, and a gorgeous pageant it was, with its one hundred and forty vessels—galleys, galleons, and galleasses—decorated with bright streamers, with standards glittering in the sunshine, while the booming of guns and the voices of cheering throngs added to the thrill of the occasion as the vast fleet set sail, carrying twenty thousand soldiers, eight thousand sailors, two thousand galley-slaves, and many noblemen.

In this same month of May, while Drake and his officers were passing time by playing a game of bowls on Plymouth Hoe, there came a captain of a pinnace running and breathless with his news: “the Armada has been sighted—is coming up the coast!” Trembling with excitement, his companions at once stopped their game, but Drake calmly continued, remarking, “There is time to finish the game and beat the Spaniards, too!” Not until night did the English ships sail out of the harbor for the great conflict. When the two fleets had the first glimpse of each other, the Spanish Armada was a wonderful spectacle as it wound along the English coast in an unbroken, crescent-shaped line for seven miles. On the decks of the ships were massed a great number of sailors and men of rank, and bands were playing when the great fleet came within sight. The news of their coming ran like lightning down the English coast, and fires of warning were kindled all along the shore.

“In point of numbers, the great fleets were almost evenly matched, but the Spanish boats were heavy and unwieldy in comparison to the English ships, which were built on newer and

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faster principles and carried more guns for their size. Then, too, they had the great advantage over the enemy in being manned with men who could either sail the ships or fight the enemy, while the Spaniards were only prepared to fight in the old fashioned way; the soldiers despised big guns and preferred a fight with ‘hand-thrusts and push of pike,’ while their sailors were not prepared to fight at all, so the English had the advantage.”

Early the next morning the battle between the fleets began, and raged along the Channel throughout the week, the nimble, light English ships darting in and out among the unwieldy Spanish craft, harassing them, cannonading their enormous turrets, then slipping out of range of their shots. Twice there were close encounters between the clumsy galleons and the quicker English warships, and all the time both fleets were making their slow way down the Channel until they dropped anchor in the narrow strait between Dover and Calais, and lay there facing each other—exponents of the hatred of two rival nations—the Spanish ships examples of the old naval system, the English vessels showing the dawn of the modern navy.

Darkness fell over the great fleets, but Drake, the unconquerable, was at work. Quietly, stealthily, six ships threaded their silent way between the Spanish vessels—there was a flash of blinding light, the roar of flames, as eight fire-boats blazed their way, carrying terror in their wake. Shrieks and shouts of terror were heard from the great Armada, and, although not a ship took fire, the panic caused cables and anchors to be slipped, and “huge galleons, like fleeing monsters, took their flight, routed and dismayed. Daylight found the remains of the fleet off Gravelines, on the Flemish coast, still pursued by the English, led on by Drake.”

“From early morning until six that night the two great fleets were locked in terrific combat; then, disabled and disorganized, riddled with shot and shell, the ships which had been the glory of the Spanish Armada gave up the losing fight, drifted some toward the coast of Holland, others to the Spanish coast, even then pursued by Drake’s flying frigates, so that only a shattered, tattered

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remnant of the glorious sea pageant at last found its way back to home waters.” To Drake’s indomitable courage, to his keen wit and heroic daring, the great rout and victory were due.

Having broken the power of Spain by crippling the great Armada, the hero of the hour, by reason of his daring victory, now dreamed a new dream of conquest—to free Portugal from the power of Spain by the aid of an armada of his own. The expedition failed, but at least it was a brilliant failure which gave the Spanish king much trouble and added to the honor of the English.

Then, with a burst of enthusiasm for the scene of his early adventuring—the Spanish Main—once again Drake headed an expedition to La Hacha and Nombre de Dios, and next, as if overcome by a thrill of youthful zeal, he headed for the rich towns of Nicaragua and the port of Honduras, but sickness broke out among his men; John Hawkins, second in command, was taken sick and died; then Drake was stricken down at Porto Bello, never to recover.

“The body was carried out a league to sea, and there, in sight of the spot where his first victory had been celebrated, amidst a lament of trumpets and the thunder of cannon, the sea received her own again. At his side were sunk two of his ships, for which there was no longer need, and all his latest prizes, and for a pall he had the smoke of the latest fort which his life-long enemy had raised against him.

“So the fleet went its way and left him, lying like a Viking, dead and alone amidst his trophies, on the scene of his earliest triumph and his last defeat.”

Drake, the great sea-rover, had **fared** forth to his last and greatest adventure.