

Queen Elizabeth

In the days of Queen Elizabeth, English sailors first began to find their way across the seas to new lands, from which they brought home many strange, and rich, and beautiful things.

The Spaniards sailed across the seas too, to take gold and Silver from the mines (= miniere) in Mexico, which belonged to the King of Spain. Sometimes the English ships met the Spanish ones, and robbed them of their gold, for it was thought quite right and reasonable in those days to take every opportunity of doing harm (hurt = fare del male) to the enemies of England. Of course the Spaniards hated the English for this, and whenever they met English ships which were weaker than theirs they attacked them, and robbed them, killing the sailors, or taking them prisoners. |

Once, a small ship, called the *Revenge*, was sailing home to England, when it met with fifty great Spanish vessels.

The captain of the *Revenge* was Sir Richard Grenville, and he had a great many sick men on board.

There was no time to escape from the Spanish ships, which soon surrounded the little *Revenge*. So there were only two ways which Sir Richard could take. One was to give up (= consegnare) his ship to the Spaniards; the other was to fight with them till his men were all killed, or his ship sank. (= affondata) |

Some of the sailors suggested him to take the first way, but the others, and all the sick men, said: "No, let us fall into the hands of God, and not into the hands of Spain." This they said because they thought it better to die, than to be made prisoners by the cruel Spaniards.

Sir Richard made up his mind to fight. It was afternoon when the firing (battle = combattimento) began, and all night long, until daylight came, the little English ship kept (= tenne testa) the fifty Spanish vessels at bay. Then it was found that all the powder was gone (= era finito), and all the English were dead or dying. And then only was the flag of the *Revenge* pulled down (= ammainata), to show that she surrendered to her enemies.

The brave Sir Richard was taken on board a Spanish ship, where he soon died of his wounds (= ferite).

These were his last words: " Here die I, Richard Grenville, with a joyful and quiet mind, because I have fought for my country and my queen, for honour, and for God."