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EMINENT MARINE ARTISTS.

BY HARRY PARKER.

NO. 5.—AUGUSTINE RYTHER.

IN a former article (Vol. I., No. 5 of *THE MARINER'S MIRROR*) a brief description was given of Cornelius Vroom's designs for the tapestries of the Spanish Armada, and we may now appropriately refer to another artist, who engraved some extremely rare plans of that famous victory over the Spanish Fleet. Although Augustine Ryther was not an artist in oils, water-colours, or crayons, it may interest some of the members of this Society to have what few particulars there are to be obtained of this famous engraver, who was also a contributor to the former "*Mariner's Mirrour*," and in 1588 made the alterations on the frontispiece which we use as our present cover, and which differs considerably from the frontispiece in the Dutch original.

Augustine Ryther flourished between the years 1576 and 1590, but there is no authentic information regarding the date of his birth or death. He was born at Leeds, and was probably connected with the old and knightly family of Ryther in Yorkshire. He was one of the earliest English exponents of the art of engraving on copper, and it appears that he kept a print-seller's shop near Leadenhall, where, in 1579, he was associated with Christopher Saxton in engraving and publishing some of the famous maps of the counties of England.

In 1588 his name appears with those of Jodocus Hondius, Theodore de Bry, and others among the engravers of the charts to "*The Mariner's Mirrour*," which were first designed by Lucas Wagenaar (1540-1596), the famous Dutch navigator, geographer and writer.

At the British Museum there is an extremely rare set of ten charts, representing the various actions between the Spanish and English fleets, entitled "*Expeditionis Hispanorum in Angliam vera descriptio Anno D. MDLXXXVIII.*," which were designed by Robert Adams, surveyor to Queen Elizabeth. They were engraved by Augustinus Ryther, and probably published by him in 1589, for in 1590 Ryther issued a translation of this work under the title of "*A discourse concerning the Spanishe fleete inuadinge Englande, in the yeare 1588 and overthrowne by her Ma^{ties}. Naueie under the conduction of the Right Honour-*

able the Lorde Charles Howarde highe Admirall of Englande, written in Italian by Petruccio Ubaldino, citizen of Florence, and translated for A. Ryther ; unto the wth discourse are annexed certaine tables expressinge the seuerall exploites and conflictes had with the said fleete. These books with the tables (plans) belonging to them are to be solde at the shoppe of A. Ryther, being a little from Leadenhall, next to the signe of the Tower." The book was printed by A. Hatfield. This work is dedicated by Ryther to Lord Howard of Effingham, and in the dedication he alludes to the time spent by him in engraving the plates, and apologises for the two years they took in preparing for publication. In the preface Ryther says, " If in the graven tables there be anything which doth not please thee in regard to the worke I crave pardon for it, because I count myself as yet but a yong beginner."

The charts (or plans) depict the various engagements and defeats of the Spanish Armada in the Channel, and trace the course of the beaten ships round the British Isles. They were originally drawn by Robert Adams ; and there is not much doubt that they are the most important and the truest pictorial records of the Spanish Armada that exist.

It is probable that Ryther's charts were the foundation for the designs which Vroom made for the House of Lords tapestries, as in many cases a great resemblance between one and the other is apparent. But on the other hand it has been suggested, by Ottley, that the Adams-Ryther charts may have been engraved from the first designs made by Vroom ; but no authentic information is to hand to prove who really was the true originator of the designs, more specially as both men were strictly contemporary, and there is nothing to show that they didn't collaborate. Copies of Ryther's charts, by H. Gravelot, were published by John Pine, in his work on the tapestries of the House of Lords.

Ryther was also principally concerned in engraving several fine maps of London, Yorkshire, Cambridge, etc., but these items, although of great rarity, would be of no interest to students of naval archæology.