XXI.—*Two Letters relating to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada. Communicated by Sir HENRY ELLIS, K.H. Sec. in a Letter to Capt. W. H. SMYTH, Director.*

Read Jan. 24, 1850.

MY DEAR CAPTAIN SMYTH,

British Museum, Jan. 23, 1850.

I have copies of two very interesting documents to communicate to our Society, and I know not to whom they can be so appropriately addressed as to our Naval Director.

One is a Letter from the Lords of the Council to the Lord Admiral of England, dated on the 25th of July, 1588, announcing that Queen Elizabeth had given order that in the county of Kent a good number of her best and choicest shot of the Trained Bands should be forthwith sent to the sea-side, that upon notice given from him they might be brought to double man the particular ships which were under his own command, and that of Lord Henry Seymour.

The second is a still more curious Document than the first, and I may safely say unique. I think you will agree with me that it is not undeserving to be engraved in fac-simile in the *Archæologia*. (Plate X.)

It is the Minute of Council held by our great commanders at the moment they had completed the defeat of the Armada, declaring how far in prudence they could chase the dispersed enemy, consistently with the supplies they possessed for their support, not leaving out of view the necessity of protecting the shores of their country.

In accordance with the determination which this document records, Camden tells us, the Lord Admiral "himself chased the Spaniards till they were gone past Edinburgh Frith. For some there were that feared they would have recourse to the King of Scots."

These documents are preserved in the library bequeathed to the British Museum by the late Right Honourable Thomas Grenville.

Each is followed by short notices upon the characters of the several persons by whom they are subscribed. These I have also chosen should accompany them.

At the close of the comment upon the first document, however, there is a mistake. The Newspapers referred to are not genuine. They were in fact the first experiment

of the party, by whose learning and ingenuity the celebrated work intituled the "Athenian Letters" was afterwards produced.

I remain,

My dear Captain Smyth,

Very truly yours,

HENRY ELLIS.

1.

"After our right hartie commendacions to your Lordship. Forasmuch as the Queenes Maiestie is enformed that the enimie is verye well provyded of shott, and it maye be that your lordship is not at this present furnished with suche a number to answer them as is meete: Her highnes beinge verye carefull that your lordship should be supplied with all the provisions that maye be had, hathe geven order that in the countie of Kent a good number of her best and choysent shotte of the trayned bandes in the said countie should be forthwith sent to the sea-side, to the intent that upon anie notice to be geven from your lordship they maye be broughte unto yow to double man the shippes, that are both with your lordship and the Lord Henrie Seymer: which Her Maiestie hath thought good to signifie unto your lordship by this bearer Sir Thomas Gorge, knighte, who is of purpose dispatched unto your lordship for that cause. And so, beseechinge Almightye God to sende your lordship a happie and honourable ende of this servyce, we bidd yow right hartelie ffarewell: from Richmond, the xxvth of Julie, 1588.

Yo^r Lordships assured lovinge frendes,

Chr. Hatton, Canc.

W. Burghley.

F. Knollys.

T. Heneage.

A. Poulet.

J. Wolley.

L. Admirall.

Endorsed,

To our very good Lorde,

The Lord Admirall of England."

Cecil Lord Burleigh was at this time Lord High Treasurer, and led the Queen's councils. A man possessed of unrivalled talent for business, of profound sagacity, secrecy, and resolution, of

winning manners, and extraordinary temper ; but of a cold and unfeeling heart. His calmness and fortitude at this great crisis were worthy of himself, the nation, and their heroic sovereign ; his example infused courage into all breasts, and made success inevitable.

Sir Christopher Hatton rose to the chancellorship, not by the law offices, but through the Privy Chamber. He died in 1591.

Sir Francis Knollys, K.C. married a sister of the first Lord Hunsdon, and niece of Queen Anne Boleyn. He became a Privy Councillor, and finally Treasurer of the Household. He sat as one of the Judges on Mary Queen of Scots.

Sir Amias Poulett was Ambassador to France in 1576, and was long the principal Custodian of poor Queen Mary.

Sir Thomas Heneage was Vice-Chamberlain of the Household, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and Privy Councillor.

The epoch of the Spanish Armada is also the epoch of the periodical press—"the fourth estate of the realm." The earliest newspaper known to exist was the *English Mercurie*, which by authority "was imprinted at London by Her Highnesses printer, 1588." In the British Museum are several newspapers which were printed while the Spanish fleet was in the English Channel. It was a policy worthy of Burleigh to present, during a season of overwhelming anxiety, the danger of false reports, by the publication of real information. The earliest of these gazettes preserved, is dated only two days after the date of the first of our present documents. It contains the usual article of news, like the *London Gazette* of the present day ; and among other notices, gives an extract of a letter from Madrid, which speaks of putting the Queen to death, and of the instruments of torture on board the Spanish fleet.

2.

"1 August, 1588.

We, whose names are her under written, have determyned and agreeede in counsaile to folowe and pursue the Spanishe Fleete untill we have cleared oure owne coaste and broughte the Frithe weste of us. And then to returne backe againe as well to revictuall oure ships (which stand in extreme scarsitie) as alsoe to guard and defende oure owne coaste at home. With further protestatione, that if oure wants of victualles and munitione were suppliede, we wold pursue them to the furthest that they durste have gone.

C. Howard.

George Cumberland.

T. Howard.

Edmonde Sheffielde.

Fra. Drake.

Edw. Hoby.

John Hawkins.

Thomas Fenner."

Charles Howard, second Baron Howard of Effingham, and first Earl of Nottingham, was Lord High Admiral of England at this eventful time.

George Clifford, third Earl of Cumberland, the celebrated adventurer, whom Elizabeth used to call her champion—was one of the most intrepid spirits of an age full of enterprize and daring. He is characterized by Dr. Whitaker as an accomplished courtier, a skilful navigator, a most courageous commander, and an ardent patriot.

Lord Thomas Howard, second son of Thomas fourth Duke of Norfolk, distinguished himself in this reign as a Naval Commander. He was created Earl of Suffolk in 1603.

Edmonde Sheffield, third Lord Sheffield, took a prominent part in the defeat of the Armada; and was made a Knight of the Garter. He was created Earl of Mulgrave in 1626.

Sir Francis Drake, the first Englishman that compassed the globe, and one of the most daring men that ever fought; was appointed Vice-Admiral of the Fleet at this critical period, at the particular instance of Lord Effingham; and he acquitted himself in this important command with his usual valour and skill. This eminent man died in 1596.

Sir John Hawkins, a seaman scarcely less renowned than Drake, was Rear Admiral of this Fleet. He signalled himself by his nautical talents and personal intrepidity on many occasions. He was a freebooter and a slave-dealer, like most of the adventurers of that wild age, and he was buried in the element which was so long his home, in 1595.

To these Observations may be added that

Sir Edward Hoby's name no-where occurs in lists of officers of the fleet opposed to the Armada; although his portrait is found among those engraved round the margin of the "Tapestry Hangings of the House of Lords," by Pine. His signature to this letter shows, at all events, that he must have held some important post.

Thomas Fenner was Captain of the *Non Pariglia*.

1. August. 1588

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88 & whose names are subscribed written & are
determined and agreed in response to follow and
pursue the Spanish fleet until we have
cleared our own coast and brought the Spanish
fleet off and then to return back again
as well to repair such our ships as stand in extreme
peril as also to guard and defend our own
coast as come not further & stations for if
we want s^{ts}. for powder and munitions we
supplye we will supplye you to go further
for your ships and guns.

Howard George Cumberland

John W. Edmund Stacey

John Drake

Edm. Hobby

John Hawkins

Thomas Remond

1. August.
Determined by the council
to reduce the Spanish
of the by the

Fac Simile of the Minute of Council at Sea, upon the defeat of the Spanish Armada.