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THE WRECKS OF THE SPANISH ARMADA ON THE COAST OF IRELAND.*

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THERE are points at which history and geography meet, and where history provides material that geography alone can weave into shape. In the case of the destruction of the Spanish Armada by Atlantic seas, chiefly on the west coast of Ireland, the event was of such supreme importance in itself, and occupies such a prominent place in history and in the imagination of the British people, that I may be pardoned if I assume that every detail that can be found out as to the wrecks of the ships is worthy of record. Since the State papers of England, Ireland, Spain, Venice, and the Papal States of the period of Queen Elizabeth have been published, it has been found possible to get at the very sources of the history of the enterprises and intrigues of that brilliant time.

Captain Duro in Spain, and Mr. Froude in England, were probably the first to avail themselves of the Spanish papers of Simancas. The editors of the State papers, especially Major Martin A. S. Hume, have, in their introductions and other writings, done good service in bringing out many details of deep interest, which they were in a specially favourable position to discover.

Other historians, Prof. Laughton, for example, in 'The Defeat of the Spanish Armada,' and Julian Corbett in his 'Drake and the Tudor Navy,' have seized upon the information thus provided, and given to us the result of their investigations. The only reason I can offer for entering the lists on such a subject is, that I may claim to look at the

* Read at the Royal Geographical Society, February 9, 1906.

facts from a slightly different point of view, and if I have been able to see a few things that others have missed, it is simply because I have had special opportunities of studying the geographical side of the question.

In 1890 and 1891 it became my duty to make a special Fishery Survey of the west coast of Ireland. I had to navigate all harbours, channels, and creeks on that coast, and while primarily interested in the present condition of the inhabitants, the traditions of the past that still linger, aroused my interest in the history of the places we frequented, and to which I have many times returned in succeeding years.

There proved to be many interesting events associated with those wild western bays, but none probably of so much general interest as the wrecks of the Armada. Twenty-five ships* appear to have been wrecked on the Irish coast, while others reached safe anchorages on that coast, and were among those that ultimately returned to Spain.

Before taking up the story of these wrecks, we must consider what previous knowledge the Spaniards had of navigation on the Irish coast. That they showed a remarkable amount of knowledge of this kind is, I think, a fact, for they frequently brought their big ships to anchor in exactly the best places. Mr. Froude, who was evidently impressed by this, attributes this successful pilotage to Maurice Fitzgerald the titular Earl of Desmond, Fitzmaurice, and some other Irishmen, who were on board. There is nothing to show that any of these gentlemen were navigators. Most probably they were not. The Irish themselves at this time were not given to navigation, though the O'Flahertys and O'Malleys of Connaught were remarkable exceptions to this rule. The fact is, that among the crews of the Spanish ships, besides a few Scotch and Irish pilots, there must have been hundreds of men accustomed for years to take part in the Irish fisheries and Irish trade. In Duro's list of pilots and "experts," almost all the names indicate Italians or Spaniards.

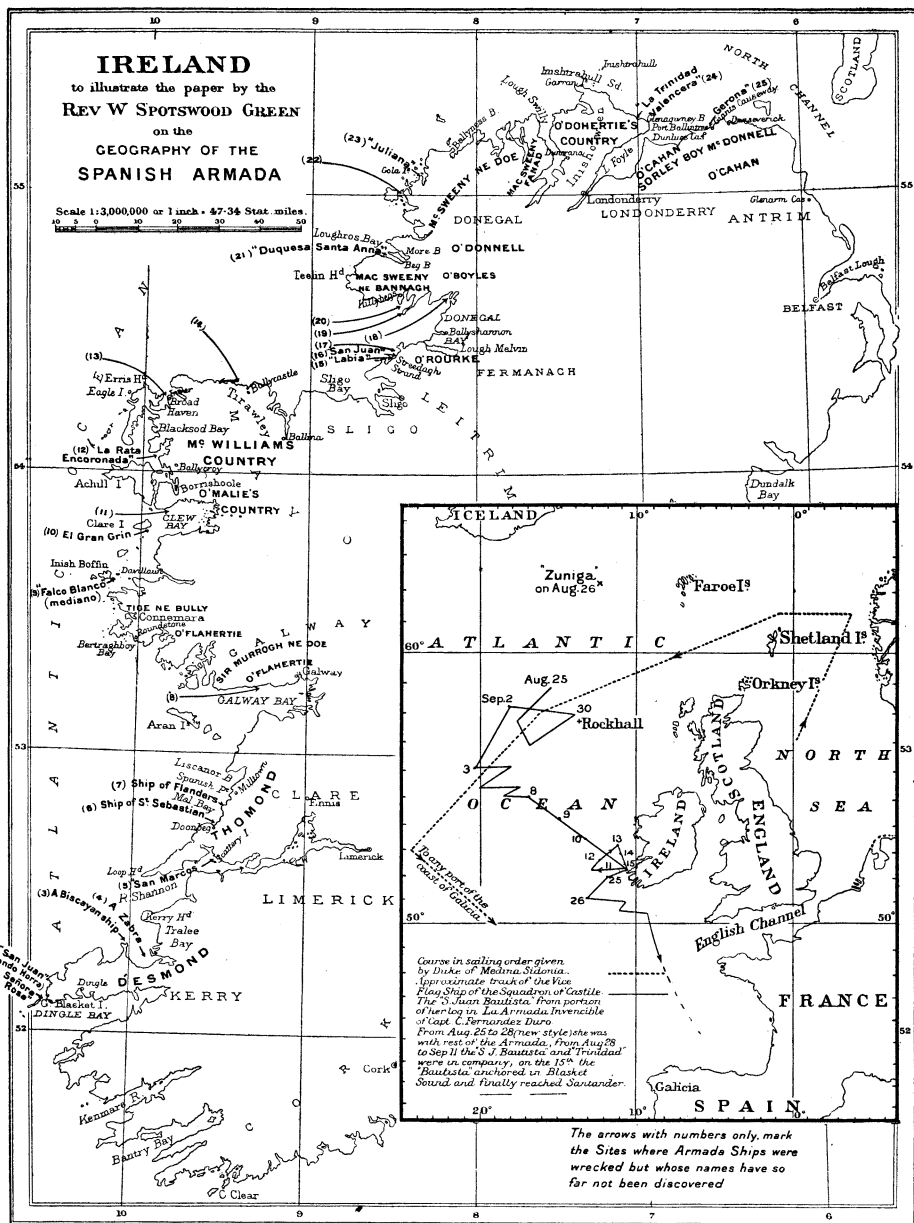
Spanish intercourse with Ireland, of which so many traces still remain, went on for centuries prior to the days of Elizabeth, and, in the years immediately before the sailing of the Armada, the Spaniards on the Irish coast were not only represented by the crews of the six hundred Spanish fishing boats, of which Sir Humphrey Gilbert makes a special report to the queen,† but also in permanent fishing establishments on the coast.

Sir Francis Drake drew up a complete scheme for capturing these trading ships and fishing boats, and he states that the fishing vessels

* If the *Hulk* that got into Donegal was lost, the number would be twenty-five (see State Papers, Ireland, 1588-92, p. 64).

† Carew Papers, 1572, p. 422; also *ibid.*, 1580, pp. 285-286.

were each of about 100 tons burthen.* Owing to the prevailing south-



westerly and north-westerly winds, the run to and fro between Spain and the west of Ireland was a comparatively easy voyage for vessels

* State Papers (Spanish), February 7, 1587.

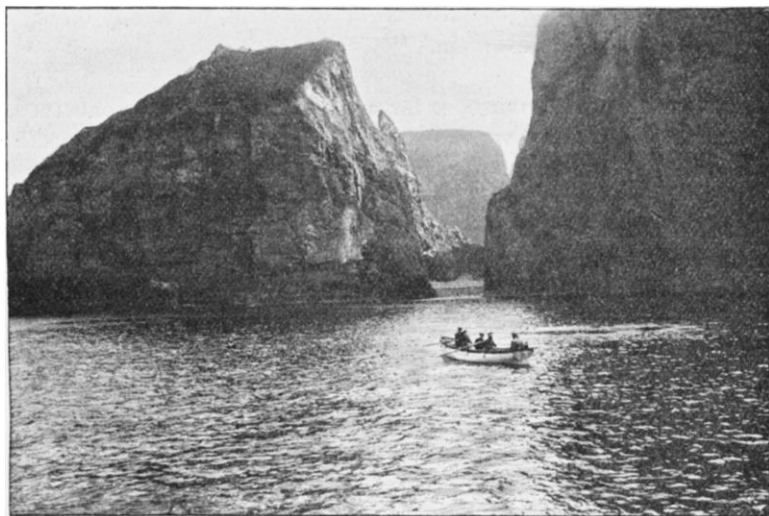
that could wait a little for a fair wind. And the west of Ireland then seemed to be for fishing what the banks of Newfoundland have since become.

From this personal knowledge, which the Spaniards gained by experience, we naturally turn to the maps or charts of the coast. Mercator's charts, published 20 years before the Armada time, are very accurate, and his chart of the eastern Atlantic compares favourably with charts made long after. Other maps of this date and later show great inaccuracies in detail. In Norden's map, published in 1610, a line drawn from Teelin head in Donegal to a berth off the Blaskets in Kerry represents a safe course for a ship to clear all land, while in actual fact the north coast of Mayo, terminating in Eagle island, projects 40 miles to the westward of this line, and, with the exception of Broadhaven, in which one Armada ship was lost, presents a line of precipitous cliffs, with no creek in which a ship could shelter. Eight of the ships known to have been caught by this trap were lost, and possibly others were dashed against the iron-bound Mayo shore, of which no records exist. Even at the present day a ship might well be wrecked on these Mayo cliffs and escape all notice, for, owing to the tops of the cliffs being the highest land and the ground sloping down as you go inland, the very sparse population command no view from their dwellings of what goes on on the sea.

The tales of the few Spaniards who escaped when the ships were lost sometimes show what at first sight seems marvellous ignorance of the places where they were wrecked, and some writers, taking these accounts as accurate, have got into hopeless confusion in attempting to fix the scenes. Many of the survivors were soldiers, who took but little interest in the problems of navigation that the sailors were striving to solve; many of the accounts were passed from men of one ship to men of another before the story became embodied in a despatch to Spain, or to England, as the case might be. In illustration of this, the survivors are frequently found describing any headland from the north of Donegal to the south of Cork as "Cape Clear." Now, Cape Clear, being at the extreme south of Ireland, would not come in sight at all if they followed the sailing directions given to them, and most frequently what they mean by Cape Clear is any headland they first fell in with.

Prior to the period of the Armada, Spaniards had done much towards the advancement of scientific navigation, and many works in Spanish had been written on the subject. Their latitude observations, taken with the cross-staff or astrolabe, seem wonderfully accurate wherever it is possible to check them. Watches had been recently invented, and though their use in obtaining longitude had been suggested, it does not appear that the method had come into general use. Longitude at sea was fixed by combination of dead-reckoning with

latitude observations, but the use of the log was unknown. Great-circle sailing was beginning to be understood. The measurements of distance were sometimes confusing, as leagues may mean anything, from an Italian league (which was 1000 yards) to a league referred to by Flemish captains, which measured fifteen to a degree. The league used by the Spaniards was the same as ours, and the distances mentioned in their logs are generally accurate. For example, one ship of the Armada, having got her latitude by observation, fixed her position by sounding in 125 fathoms on the Rockall bank, and entered her distance from the Irish coast as 95 leagues, which was approximately the distance to Erris Head.* An important correction which has to be considered in reading the narratives, is that the variation of the compass for the British area



NEAR PORTURLIN, AMONG THE CLIFFS OF NORTH MAYO.

in 1588 averaged about 10° E., compared with about 20° W. as it is at present.

When the sun set on Friday, August 3 (Old Style), 1588, the Duke of Medina-Sidonia saw the last of the British fleet. They had escorted him till they were abreast of the Firth of Forth, to make sure that he did not attempt a landing in Scotland.

He had now time to collect his remaining squadrons and issue orders for the long voyage that was before them. A copy of the sailing orders he distributed was found in one of the vessels wrecked in Ireland, and a translation made at the time is still extant. It runs thus—

* *Relacion de Marcos de Aramburu in Duro's 'La Armada Invencible.'*

"THE COURSE THAT SHALL BE HELD IN THE RETURN OF THIS
ARMY INTO SPAIN.

"The course that is first to be held is to the North-North-East, until you be found under 61 degrees and a half: and then to take great heed lest you fall upon the island of Ireland, for fear of the harm that may happen unto you upon that coast.

"Then parting from those Islands, and doubling the Cape in 61 degrees and a half, you shall run West-South-West until you be found under 58 degrees: and from thence to the South-West to the height of 53 degrees: and then to the South-South-West, making to the Cape Finisterre, and so to procure your entrance into the Groyne or to Ferrol, or to any other port of the coast of Galicia." *

It was a very safe course, so far as the Irish coast was concerned, if a long one. The ships were to turn west so as to clear the north of Shetland by 30 miles; to keep north-westward of Rockall, and when altering their course to south-south-west, were to be 360 miles west of Galway. If the course here given was followed, it would not lead to Cape Finisterre at all, but out into the direction of the Azores. There is, however, a very evident error of transcription in the last "leg" of this course. It should read "S.E." not "S.S.W." The Spanish words for east and west are so much alike that the error was easy. These sailing directions were not, however, adhered to, for a British fishing-boat reported the wonderful sight she saw on September 8, as she was returning from Shetland to England—a great fleet of "monstrous great ships, with all sheets aftward" (that is, running before the wind), making for the sound between Fair Isle and Orkney.† The Duke and other officers of the fleet also state that this was the route taken.

Don Baltasar de Zuñiga was landed at Scalloway, in Shetland, on August 10, with despatches for Spain, which he delivered safely.‡

As the fleet passed the Orkneys we may take stock of the number of ships composing it. This has been variously stated as 80 or 100. Both these figures are, I expect, under the mark. The Armada had left Spain 130 strong, but I think Prof. Laughton's statement may be accepted that the number of vessels of all sorts, including despatch boats and *zabras*, that actually entered the English channel was no more than 120, of which seven large ships, the *San Salvador*, *Rosario*,

* State Papers (Ireland), vol. 137, 1.

† Laughton, 'Spanish Armada,' vol. 2, p. 137.

‡ State Papers (Venetian), 1588, document 745.

Santa Ana, *San Lorenzo*, *Maria Juan*,* *San Filipe*, and *San Mateo*, were lost during the days of fighting. The *San Juan de Sicilia* went down in the North sea. The *Falco Blanco* (mayor) was captured when trying to get back through the Channel. The balance of those missing was mostly made up of small craft, one of which at least is known to have gone off to communicate with the Duke of Parma, and did not return.

Taking the number of ships that passed the Orkneys as 100, and allowing that 57 of them got back to Spain, which I think is nearly correct, the result may be stated as follows: The *Gran Grifon*, after taking on board a portion of the crew of the *Barque of Hamburg*, which went down in the Atlantic, put back and was lost on Fair Isle; † 2 ships lost on Scottish coast, the *Florencia*, in Sound of Mull (wreck now being explored), ‡ and a vessel called the *San Juan* on the outer Hebrides; § 25 lost on coast of Ireland; 2 blown by storm into the English channel; || 57 returned to Spain; 12 unaccounted for. Result, 100.

Of the twelve unaccounted for, some were probably lost on the out isles of Scotland and of Ireland, while others may have gone down at sea.

Of the ships that passed westwards into the Atlantic, there was the Capitana General, *San Martin*, with the Duke of Medina Sidonia on board; and the *San Juan*, on which went Martinez de Recalde, the Admiral of the Armada.

The Levantine squadron was represented by the *Regazzona*, a ship of 1200 tons and the largest in the fleet; and by others, including *La Trinidad Valencera* and *La Rata Encoronada*. The last ship, specially well-found, was commanded by Don Alonso de Leyva, and with him were many of the noble youths who had come to be present at the invasion of England. On this ship great state was observed, and on the way to the Channel banquets had been given at which the Duke and other high officers of the fleet were present. ¶ The *Rata*, too, was one of the hardest of fighters, and was in the thick of every engagement; while her commander, in the opinion of many, should have been the leader of the Armada.

Of the galleasses, the ships with oars worked by hundreds of slaves, there were the *Napolitana*, the *Gerona* and the *Zuñiga*. The remainder of the fleet was made up of galleons, transports, and the smaller craft known as pataches and zabras belonging to various squadrons.

All the ships were now short of water and provisions, though some

* State Papers (Venetian), 1588, document 746.

† Hume, *Transactions of R. Hist. Society*, vol. 11.

‡ Duke of Argyle in *Pall Mall Magazine*, vol. 36, No. 149, p. 372.

§ Hume, *Trans. R. Hist. Soc.*, vol. 11.

|| State Papers (Venetian), 1588, No. 765; also (Spanish), p. 462. Laughton, 'Defeat of the Spanish Armada,' vol. 2, p. 386.

¶ 'Harleian Miscellany,' vol. 1, p. 140.

were better off than others. Numbers of men were sick, and the small relief that was gained at Scalloway, from the trading-vessels captured, did little to alter the deplorable state of the crews.

With the wind north-east,* they passed the Orkneys on August 9 and 10, and, according to the log of the *Zuñiga*, she and some of the others, including the *San Martin*, ran 400 miles in three days, and sighted the north of Ireland. Then the wind went to the south, and drove the whole fleet northwards;† but on the 15th the Duke was able to report, when about 70 miles north-west of Rockall, that 95 ships were with him.‡ On August 23 and 24 there was a great storm, which scattered the ships, and on August 26 some found themselves in 63° N. lat. Survivors inform us that at this time frequent inquiries were made from the flag-ship as to the welfare of the *Rata* and of Don Alonso de Leyva.

When the Armada was in lat. 58° N. off Rockall, a momentous conference took place on board the *San Martin* as to whether it would be better, on account of the famishing state of the crews, to make for the Irish coast, or to follow the safer course into the Atlantic. We can quite imagine how difficult it was to reach unanimity on such a terribly pressing question. Calderon reports that, while Diego Flores advocated the former course, the Duke was led to decide to keep to the westward. Recalde, however, with seventeen ships, had already separated from the Duke; in desperate straits for fresh water, and with the crews dying by scores, they arrived at the fateful decision of making for the Irish coast.

Besides those ships that at first accompanied Recalde, others that had suffered special damage in the fighting, and were to leeward, joined him later on, all hoping to reach port, obtain water, and do some repairs. So that the Lord Deputy Fitzwilliam may not have been far wrong in reporting that fifty-nine ships were sighted from the Irish coast.§

The galleass *Zuñiga*, after her rudder was injured in a gale, fell in with the Duke's squadron, but the Duke told her commander that he could render no assistance, and he would have to get on as best he could. Falling away to the south-east, he came up with Recalde, but their appeal for help again met with a similar answer, and as best she could the *Zuñiga* made her way southward.

The ships that had followed Recalde were again scattered in a south-westerly gale on September 2, and, according to their position

* Laughton, vol. 2, p. 370.

† State papers (Spanish), 1587-1603, p. 461.

‡ One of the prisoners examined at Dingle said he thought this figure was too high, as he only counted 75 ships on that day.

§ State Papers (Ireland), vol. 136, p. 43.

to windward, they all dropped in upon the Irish coast at different points about the same time, between September 1 and 5.

We must imagine this group of vessels approaching the Irish coast from the north-west, and forced inshore. Those most to windward would reach Kerry, others Clare, Galway, or Mayo; while the leeward ships, failing to weather the north-west corner of Mayo, would fall away into Donegal bay. And in this order they arrived.

Some ships that sighted Ireland at this time tacked to north-west and gained an offing before the wind veered, and thus escaped; among these was Calderon's hulk *San Salvador*.

Martinez de Recalde could not personally take much part in the direction of affairs, for he was very ill; according to the evidence of one of the prisoners examined at Dingle, he took to his bed after the battle of Gravelines, and never left it until the day they sighted the coast of Kerry. Experienced old sailor that he was, he no doubt pulled himself together when the landfall had to be made, and thus brought his ship, with two despatch vessels, on September 5, safely to anchor under the lee of the Great Blasket island. Another large ship, which had sighted the Blaskets on September 1, and had been standing off and on, met him at sea and followed him in in safety. This ship was the vice-flagship of the Castillian squadron, and must have been the *San Juan Bautista*.* During the gale of the 10th, the *Nuestra Señora de la Rosa*, in attempting to enter, struck a rock, but ran on, firing guns for help. She anchored near to Recalde, but at two in the afternoon suddenly went down. Her pilot's son, who was washed to the mainland on some planks, was brought a prisoner to Dingle, and was the sole survivor. He gave in his evidence that this ship carried, besides her own guns, twenty-five field pieces of brass, and 50,000 ducats in gold and silver coin. Following the *N.S. de la Rosa* at 4 p.m. came the *San Juan* of Ragusa, her mainmast gone and her sails in tatters. She also anchored near to Recalde and sank, but not before the crew and some pieces of artillery were saved. In this place seventy years ago the Blasket islanders fished up a brass gun, about a three-pounder. Its build is peculiar, in that the chase is heavier than the breech, and from the position of the trunnions it balances with the muzzle down. The coat-of-arms on the gun is an uprooted tree with a band across it. It is still preserved in Clonskea Castle, near Dublin.

Recalde, in the *San Juan*, and the surviving ships with him, remained in the Blasket sound for thirteen days, and then passed on to Spain. Recalde showed consummate skill in selecting his anchorage, for the only wind that could make it unsafe would be a fair wind for Spain. Before he anchored, or soon after, a large Biscayan fell away to leeward, between the Blaskets and Kerry Head, and was lost with all

* 'Duró, La Armada Invencible,' p. 315.

hands, while a zabra, with twenty-four men,* went ashore in Tralee bay, where her crew were all hanged.

On or about the day that Recalde entered the Blasket sound, four large ships and three despatch boats entered the Shannon, and, sailing up, anchored safely in Scattery roads. In the State Papers it is called "Raviskeith," but as Inishcathy, or Inishkeith, was the old name for Scattery island, the best roadstead in the lower Shannon is undoubtedly indicated.

That the ships should have reached Scattery roads and left without mishap is another instance of good pilotage. While there they burnt the *St. Marcos*, a great galleon that had suffered much in the fighting, and was no longer seaworthy. The remaining ships left the Shannon on the 11th, the wind then being north-east, and possibly were among those that got back to Spain.

In Mal bay, on the west coast of Clare, on September 10, at two o'clock in the afternoon,† two large ships were wrecked: one, hailing from San Sebastian, came ashore at Doonbeg; another, a ship of Flanders, after an attempt to get shelter behind Mutton island, was wrecked under Tromra castle.

Numerous local traditions about these wrecks exist, some quite fabulous, but the relics, which were numerous up to the early part of last century, have disappeared, except a richly carved and inlaid oak table with mahogany top preserved in Dromoland castle (see p. 446). The graves of the men washed ashore, or executed by Boetius MacClancy, Sheriff of Clare, are still shown at Spanish Point, near Miltown Mal bay.

The galleass *Zuñiga*, which had nearly succeeded in rounding the Blaskets, was driven by the westerly gale back on to the coast of Clare; but the wind shifting to south, and finding herself hemmed in by land on both hands, she ran up Liscanor bay on September 5, and found safe anchorage off the castle of Liscanor. Juan de Saavedra, who commanded the infantry on board her, in a letter to the king called the place "Tue," which Major Hume, in editing the Spanish State Papers, suggests meant "Tralee." It could not have been Tralee, for the ship was driven by a southerly gale, which would have been right out of Tralee bay. Moreover, when her boat landed, seeking food and provisions, the sheriff reported that the ship that was anchored a mile off the castle of Liscanor was the *Sumiga*.‡

"Tue" would have been the Spanish phonetic spelling of the Irish word *tuath* for "district," Tuath i Conor, or "the district of Conor," being the old name for the region surrounding Liscanor bay.

The *Zuñiga* sailed on the 12th with a fair wind, and got clear of the Irish coast.

A great number, probably twenty ships, of the Armada were

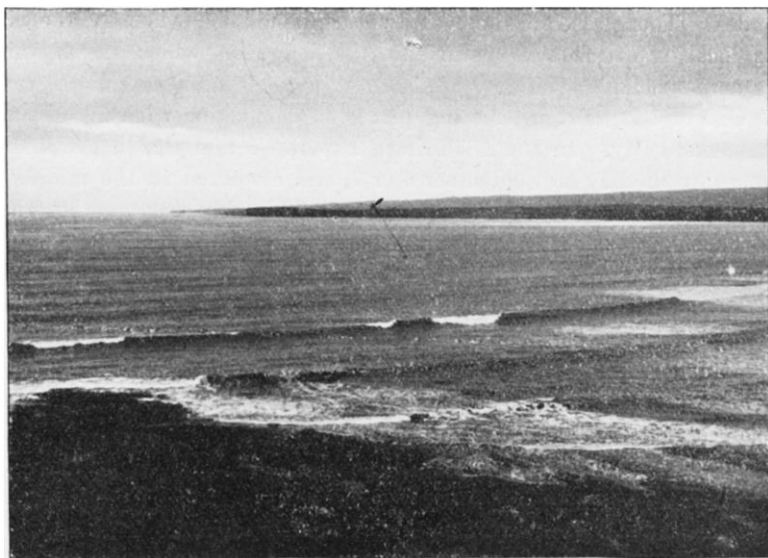
* State Papers (Spanish), 1587-1603, p. 463.

† Ibid., 1588, p. 463.

‡ Carew Papers.

sighted off the Clare coast: four anchored in the open sea off Loop head; two of these were probably those wrecked in Mal bay, while the others, as well as two ships which were seen at anchor for three days outside the Arran islands, may have left the coast in safety.

The *Falco Blanco* (mediano) was lost somewhere in Connemara—that is, in Tige ne Boulie O'Flahertie's country. Tradition points to Davillaun, near Boffin, as a possible site. Unlike Clare, this country was practically outside English control, and the survivors of this wreck, including Don Luis de Cordova, were at first cared for by the O'Flaherties, who, sailors themselves and knowing something of



LISCANNOR BAY, SHOWING IN THE DISTANCE THE CASTLE OFF WHICH THE "ZUÑIGA" ANCHORED.

the outside world, were inclined to protect the survivors. Threats, however, induced them to deliver up the prisoners, and, with the exception of Don Luis, a few officers, and two others who were hidden away by the townspeople, they were all beheaded or hanged in Galway.* The guns of the *Falco Blanco* and of two other ships wrecked in Mayo were afterwards used by the O'Flaherties and Burkes to fortify their castles when they went into rebellion against the English. A galleon sailed up to within a mile of Galway seeking relief, seventy of her company, who landed,† were made prisoners, but the ship and over 300 men were lost.‡

* Hardiman, 'History of Galway.'

† Ibid.

‡ Ed. Whyte in State Papers (Ireland). According to local tradition, a large piece of oak embedded in the sand at Barna is a portion of this ship.

Passing north of Galway to Clew bay and Mayo, we meet with definite information of the loss of the great ship *El Gran Grin*, with Don Pedro de Mendoza on board; striking the rocks of Clare island, she went down. For some days those who had escaped safe to land, numbering one hundred, hoping that their lives at least would be spared, and hearing that other Spaniards had landed to the northward, asked that they might be sent in boats to the mainland; but Dowdarra O'Mailie, who was chief of the island, and wished to stand well with the English, put them all, including Don Pedro, to the sword.

Another ship was wrecked in Clew bay, at a place then called Finglass, in the barony of Borrischoole. From this wreck sixteen men landed. Tourglass, on the Currawn peninsula, is evidently the site, for local tradition still points to the ledge on which the Spanish warship struck.

One of the most interesting places in connection with the Armada is Blacksod bay. In the Irish State Papers we find that a great ship came into the bay on September 6 or 7, and anchored in the middle of the bay between Torane and Ballycroy. This ship was no other than *La Rata Encoronada*, with Don Alonso de Leyva and his young nobles on board.

Mr. Froude gives a faithful account of the wreck of this ship, but he gets into confusion as to the subsequent events. Soon after the *Rata* anchored off Ballycroy, which was an exposed anchorage, another great ship, the *Duquesa Santa Ana*, sailed in, and, going up the bay, was reported to be at "Pollilly, off Torane." This is the best anchorage in Blacksod, and would nowadays be described as "Elly bay off Tirawn."

Besides these two ships, another came in and anchored off "Beal-ingly," which I have reason to believe was the Bull's Mouth at the southern end of the bay. She had no "cock-boat," and failed to communicate with the shore, and went to sea after a week's stay. This vessel was probably *La Nuestra Senora de Begoña*, for when the *Zuñiga* left Liscanor, she fell in with the *Begoña* at sea, and received from her the news of the loss of the *Rata*. The *Rata* dragged her anchor, and was seen stranded on September 11. De Leyva and his company landed and proceeded to fortify themselves in an old castle close by. Landing all the treasures that they could save, and their armour, they burnt the wreck. The old ruined castle of Doona marks the site with accuracy.

I visited this place some years since, and found tradition existing of "the great ship that came there, hundreds of years ago." The people had on various occasions, "when the strand was low," lifted some of the timbers. On a subsequent visit, I secured one of her frame timbers of Italian oak, burnt off at one end.

De Leyva did not stop at Doona, but crossed the bay with his company, and, joining the people of the *Santa Ana*, they proceeded to

fortify themselves at the ruined castle of Tirawn, but subsequently went on board again and put to sea.

These events being more connected with history than geography, I must thus dismiss them and follow the fortunes of the *Santa Ana*, as I think I have found the exact site of her destruction. Failing to get towards Spain, owing to the wind on the 15th having backed to the southward for another cyclone, she kept away northward for Scotland, but is reported to have been wrecked in Loughros More bay, in Donegal. De Leyva and the two ships' companies, making about 800 all told, entrenched themselves on shore close to the wreck for nine days, and then made their way overland to Killybegs. Finding there the galleass *Gerona* in a very battered state, they repaired her, mending her rudder that was broken; and on October 16 put to sea for Scotland with 1300 men on board. She rounded Ireland's north point in safety, but, her rudder giving way, she was driven at midnight on to the "Rock of Bunbois," near the Giant's Causeway, and all perished except nine sailors and soldiers, who managed to reach the shore, and were kindly treated by the MacDonnells in Dunluce castle. These men told the story of the wrecks of the *Rata*, the *Santa Ana*, and the *Gerona* to survivors of another wreck, the *Valencera*, and these men, in repeating the story, mixed up the events regarding each of these ships, so that an examination of the geographical conditions can alone unravel the tangle.

Major Hume's criticism * of Prof. Laughton's attempt to clear the question is sound, though he goes astray about the place where the *Rata* sought shelter and was wrecked. One event, however, impressed itself on me as giving a most reliable clue. As the story comes to us, the *Rata*, finding herself drifting, and having only one anchor, passed a cable to a rock, and so tried to save herself from being stranded. Now, there is no rock off Ballycroy where such a thing would be possible; the only rocks where such a manœuvre would be possible, at any of the places where these wrecks occurred, are in Loughros bay. It was, therefore, I feel sure, the *Santa Ana* that tried this plan of saving herself. What appear to be her remains may still be seen when tides are low, and one of her large guns lies on an island in Kiltooris lake, close to the scene of the wreck.

Before returning to the order I have followed of taking the ships from windward to leeward, it may be well to deal with the site of the last great catastrophe that closed the careers of Don Alonso de Leyva and his gallant company. Tradition connects the wreck of the *Gerona* with the little bay called Port na Spagna to the eastward of the Giant's Causeway, but those who reported from personal knowledge said she was wrecked on the "Rock of Bunbois," that is, in English, the

* Hume, *Transactions of the R. Hist. Society*, vol. 11.

rock of *Bush Foot*, which is a little to the westward of the Causeway ; and the Lord Deputy reported December 31, "that three fair pieces of brass lie among the rocks of Bunboyes, where Don Alonso was drowned, and can be recovered."

It is hard to doubt tradition that has fixed a name to a place. It is also hard to believe that a second wreck occurred in the vicinity of the Causeway, because the reports of events about Dunluce were very full and complete. Taking all things into account, I incline to the conclusion that the remains of the *Gerona* lie off the Bush river near Port Ballintrae.



REEFS OF BUSH FOOT, WHERE DON ALONZO DE LEYVA AND 1800 MEN WERE DROWNED.

The Lord Deputy did not get the guns. When H.M.S. *Popinjay* came to raise them, they found that the MacDonnells, aided by two Spaniards, had raised the guns and also two chests of treasure. The guns were used to defend Dunluce castle against the English,* and one of the chests is still in Glenarm castle.

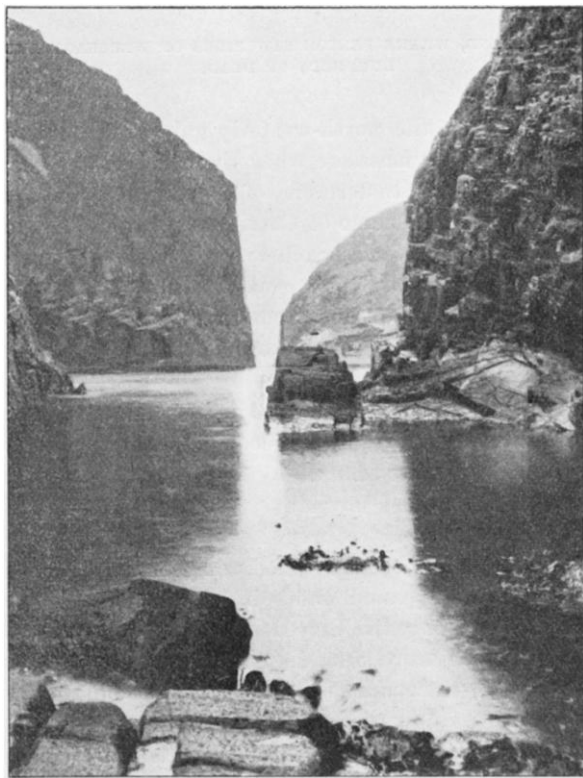
But to return. At Inver, in Broadhaven, one large ship was wrecked about the time that the *Rata* entered Blacksod bay, but beyond the report that all the treasure in her was saved by the Government officer, I can find no details. She was the first of those trapped by the north coast of Mayo, which, as I have said, projects far beyond the points shown in the maps of the west of Ireland then existing, and that have come down to us.

* Hill, 'The MacDonnells of Antrim,' p. 189.

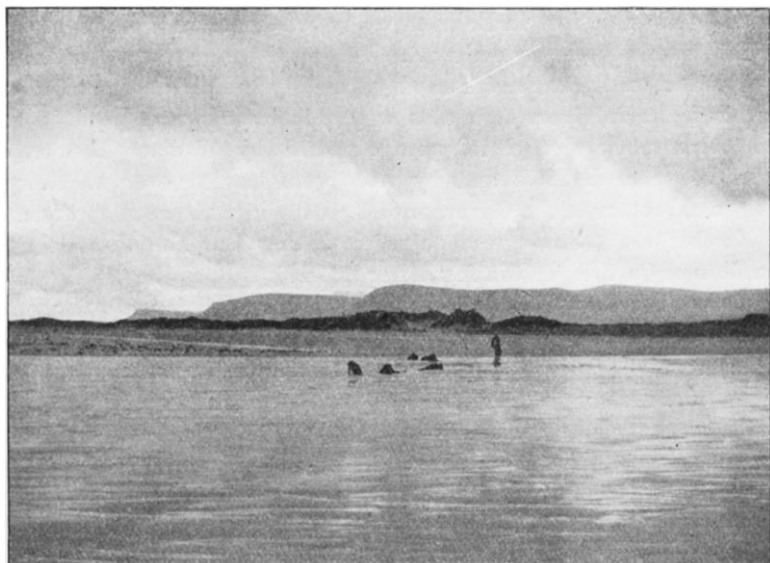
Failure to weather Eagle island threw no less than nine ships, including the ship lost in Broadhaven, in the direction of Donegal bay, and they were hopelessly embayed. Passing the ship wrecked at Inver, one was lost on the coast of Tirawley, possibly in Ballycastle or Lackan bay; and the survivors from this wreck, including some ecclesiastics and other persons of note, were captured by William Bourke, of Ardnaree, near Ballina, and by him were handed over to George Bingham, brother of the Governor of Connaught, who executed them.

Farther east three great ships, including the *San Juan* of the squadron of Castille, driven further to leeward, and, as they said, "failing to weather Cape Clear" (in this case it was Eagle island), anchored off Streedagh strand, between Sligo and Ballyshannon.

History in this case, as contained in Captain Cueller's letter, first published by Captain Duro, and of which several translations have been made, furnishes ample material for discussing questions of topography. The ship of the Levant squadron, probably the *Labia*, in which Captain Cueller then was, and her two companions were driven



MOYASTA SOUND, IN THE CLIFFS OF NORTH MAYO.



STREEDAGH STRAND, WHERE FENTON SAW PILES OF WRECKAGE AND MANY HUNDREDS OF DEAD.

ashore and wrecked in the north-westerly gale of September 10, with the loss by drowning, or massacre when they reached the shore, of over 1200 men. Rocks off the eastern end of Streedagh strand, in memory of the event, still bear the name of Carrig na Spagna, and Cueller says the shore he landed on was "a beach covered with very fine sand, shut in on one side and the other by great rocks," and considering the direction of the wind and other circumstances, the smooth strand to the eastward of Milkhaven was, I believe, the exact spot where Cueller was washed ashore.

The Lord-Deputy Fitzwilliam visited these strands after the wrecks. Fenton had previously reported 1200 dead, and great masses of wreckage. The bodies were, no doubt, by nature or by human agency, buried in the sandhills, and nowadays, when storms shift the dunes, quantities of human bones are brought to light. This is well known to the local inhabitants. I have found some of them myself, inshore from where Cueller's ship came, and being told that they were of more frequent occurrence along the Streedagh shore, I searched the dunes there, but at that time failed to find any. The occurrence is, no doubt, only occasional. A gentleman in Sligo possesses the figure-head of one of these vessels, but I know of no other relics.

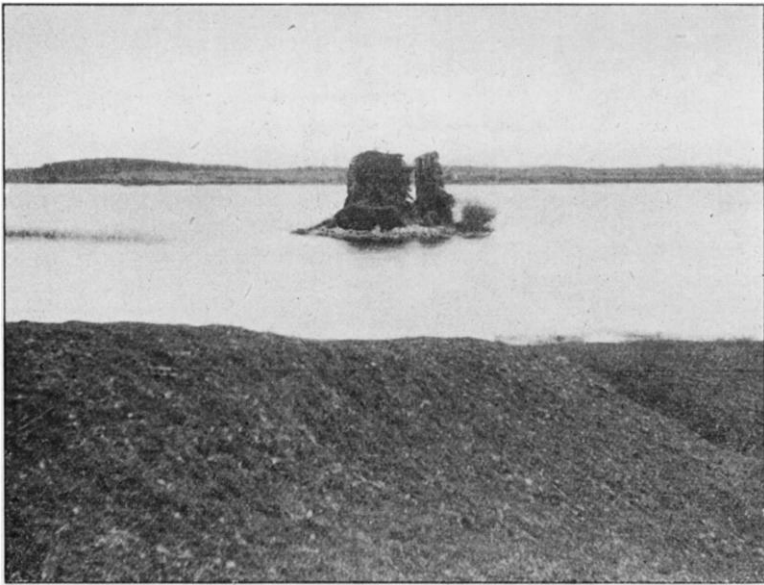
Mr. Allingham, of Ballyshannon, has done much to elucidate Captain Cueller's wanderings around the mountains, and to McClancey's castle on Lough Melvin, and I am satisfied that, with his aid, I have followed

Cueller's track till, nine months after the wreck, he was ferried probably from Dunseverick, in Antrim, to Scotland.*

One of the Armada transports, that had "cast out 120 great horses and 60 mules" and had lost her mainmast, was assisted into Donegal harbour by a turf boat. Whether she was subsequently lost or not is uncertain, but as a large ship was reported lost in O'Boyle's country,† I think she may have been the one referred to.

On September 5, three ships were seen from the Sligo coast making for Killybegs. One of these, the galleass *Gerona* referred to above, got safely in, one was lost a little outside the entrance, the third appears to have run ashore in the harbour, and, breaking up, the wreckage was used by De Leyva and his people in repairing the *Gerona*. When De Leyva therefore reached Killybegs, he found over 1500 Spaniards in McSweeney ne Bannagh's country before him, but when pressed to assist the chieftains of these parts in making war on the English, he replied that the levying of war in Ireland was not included in the instructions he had received from King Philip.‡

At the entrance of the United Service Institution in Whitehall may be seen an anchor said to have been raised from an Armada wreck in



McCLANCY'S CASTLE ON LOUGH MELVIN, WHICH CAPTAIN CUELLAR HELD AGAINST THE LORD DEPUTY.

* Allingham, 'Captain Cuellar's Adventures in Connacht and Ulster.'

† Carew Papers, 1588, p. 472.

‡ 'Don Philip O'Sullivan Beare.' Translation by M. J. Byrne in 'Ireland under Elizabeth,' p. 61.

Arranmore roads.* In a bay just north of Arranmore, and within the shelter of the Gola islands, is another Carrig na Spagna, marking undoubtedly the site of a wreck concerning which tradition is very clear. Living men remember guns having been raised, and one family is said to have made quite a fortune out of the brass guns, and, no doubt, more valuable articles that they recovered. A few years since a salvage steamer tried to work there, but without much success.

At the time of the Armada this part of Donegal was outside all control of the English Government, and the accounts received were consequently unreliable; the State Papers contain no definite information beyond the fact that large numbers of Spaniards who landed there



RICHLY CARVED AND INLAID OAK TABLE WITH MAHOGANY TOP, PRESERVED AT DROMOLAND CASTLE.

were befriended by the O'Donnells and McSweenys. I think that the name of one of these Donegal wrecks was the *Juliana*; for in spite of an explicit statement by the survivors of the *Valencera* that the *Labia* and the *Juliana* went down with all hands at sea, we find many years afterwards (1596), when envoys came to the Earl of Tyrone from King Philip, they found with him some of the survivors from these ships.

We now come to the last ship that was certainly lost in Ireland, *La Trinidad Valencera*, a great Venetian ship of 1100 tons, with Don

* Local tradition has it that this anchor was lost by an Armada ship that got safely away.

Alonso de Luzon, Ponce de Leon, and other renowned officers on board. In the gale of the 2nd she had sprung a leak that could not be kept under, and, sailing in through Inishtrahull sound, she ran up along the coast of Inishowen, and anchored in Glenagivney bay (called Kinogoe bay on the charts). It took two days to land her crew and some men from the *Bark of Hamburg* that were on board, numbering in all 600 men.

When the *Valencera* sank and became a wreck, Don Alonso and his company marched 18 miles inland to Illagh (or Aillagh), O'Dohertie's town, where they surrendered to the English, after many had been shot down.* The ruined castle of Ellagh close by, on the north side of the railway between Derry and Buncrana, still marks the site of this surrender. The survivors who escaped capture, in reporting the wreck to the pilot-general of the Armada, stated that they were wrecked in O'Dohertie's country, close to the *Blaskets*. There were evidently men on board who had been on the Kerry coast, and, mistaking their land-fall, and assuming that the Garvan islands and Inishtrahull were the Blaskets, they may have run along the coast looking for Smerwick harbour.

Just before last Christmas I ran in through Inishtrahull sound, in a westerly gale, and up along Inishowen to Lough Foyle, passing Glenagivney bay on the way, which offered no shelter for a ship to anchor in, and the idea of mistaking the whole place for the Kerry coast, as they appear to have done, did not seem very extravagant.

The old bell in the church of Carndonagh in Inishowen is supposed to have belonged to the *Valencera*. The *Valencera* belonged to the Levantine squadron, as did also the *Rata*, the *San Juan de Sicilia*, the *Labia*, the *Juliana*, to which I have referred, and five other ships. The men they carried numbered 3527, out of which only one vessel, the *Regazzona*, and about 400 men, returned to Spain.

In enumerating the ships wrecked on the coast of Donegal, I feel sure that some are omitted.† Tradition exists of some men washed ashore in Ballyness bay, and the gold rings off their fingers are still preserved at Horn head. There are accounts in the State Papers which would seem to imply that other ships were wrecked in McSweeney ne Doe's country, and that one ship was burned by the Spaniards in Lough Swilly. If I am correct, it would reduce the number of ships unaccounted for, but the ground is too uncertain to build any definite conclusions upon.

During the whole time that the Armada was beating this terrible retreat, the wind was oftener southerly than in any other point. It varied chiefly from south to south-west, and in spite of this some of the ships made their way to windward, or at least were able to

* Barrow, 'Life of Drake,' p. 333; and Hume, *Trans. of R. Hist. Soc.*, vol. 11, "Some Survivors of the Armada."

† State Papers (Ireland), vol. 137, 39, II.

maintain a southerly course, which proves, I think, that they were able to sail successfully within about six points of the wind. Others probably had no weatherly qualities at all, only made way when they got the wind abaft the beam, and had to run before every gale.

The weather all over the British area was exceptionally stormy: cyclone followed cyclone, those of August 23-24, September 2 and 10 being the heaviest. It was in this last north-westerly gale of September 10 that most of the wrecks occurred. Ed. Whyte, who was clerk of the council of Connaught, writing of it, states, "There blew a most extreme wind and cruel storm the like whereof hath not been seen or heard a long time."*

Cyclonic conditions prevailed until after October, when our interest in the weather, so far as this paper is concerned, comes to an end.

Before the paper, the PRESIDENT said: Mr. Spotswood Green is not unknown to the Royal Geographical Society. It is quite true that it is many years now since he read us a paper here, but there are some present who remember his reading a paper on his ascent of Mount Cook in New Zealand, and, at a later period, another paper upon his ascents of the Rocky mountains.

After the paper, the PRESIDENT: I will ask Major Martin Hume to address us. He is, as you know, one of the highest living authorities, being the editor of the Spanish State Papers. He has just arrived from Madrid.

Major MARTIN HUME: I personally am very deeply indebted to Mr. Spotswood Green, both for his extremely interesting and learned paper, and also for the article which treated of the same subject, which he published in *Macmillan's Magazine* some years ago. It was necessary, indeed, for some gentleman of geographical taste and knowledge and with full local information to supplement the conclusions that we, gathering our facts from entirely different sources, had arrived at. It will occur to any one, after having seen the inhospitable coast upon which these unfortunate ships were lost, how difficult it was for the men struggling on shore, half starved, despairing, drowning, to recollect, even if they heard or understood, in a foreign language the names, outlandish to them, of the cruel rocks upon which they were lost. So the Spanish Records have contained, only in a few cases, distorted phonetic representations of the names of the localities in which the wrecks took place. We, it is true, have arrived by a process of guesswork at conclusions, in most cases not very widely different from those arrived at by Mr. Spotswood Green, with regard to the position of the various wrecks. But, after all, it was guesswork at best. And, as I say, geography has come to the aid of history in this matter, and has enabled us to fix the exact positions where these tragedies took place. There is another science which has to thank Mr. Spotswood Green for the information he has conveyed to us to-night—that is, the science of ethnology. Any one who goes along the coast of Ireland and along the Devonshire coast will in one locality after another find that the inhabitants of this or that village are asserted to be descendants of the men from the Armada wrecked upon their coast; that the dark complexion of the population is owing to the fact that a number of men of the Armada settled and married in that part of the district. Hardly a Cornish manor-house exists without the so-called Armada

* State Papers (Ireland), vol. 136, p. 57.