



With Drake on the Spanish Main

Herbert Strang

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The romancer, in choosing as the setting for a tale the period of a man who looms large in history, finds himself on the horns of a dilemma. He cannot place his fictional near his historical hero without either dwarfing the former until the young reader ceases to find him interesting, or robbing the latter of some of the glamour with which history invests him. In the following pages I have tried to meet the difficulty by making Francis Drake the presiding genius of the story. The deeds of Dennis Hazelrig are akin to those of Drake; the same spirit of adventure dominates them: and when, in the course of the story, the real and the fictitious personages meet, it is, I trust, without loss of dignity to either. It was 1572 when Drake, at the age of twenty-seven, sailed out of Plymouth on the Nombre de Dios expedition that brought him into fame. He led a Lilliputian fleet: the "Pascha" and the "Swan", a hundred tons between them, with seventy-three men, all ranks and ratings, aboard of them. But both vessels were 'richly furnished with victuals and apparels for a whole year, and no less heedfully provided with all manner of ammunition, artillery, artificers' stuff and tools; but especially three dainty pinnaces made in Plymouth, taken asunder all in pieces,' and stowed aboard to be set up as occasion served. Includes a brief biography of the author.

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