

MANLY PEEKE

OF

TAVISTOCK.

BY

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Three to One:

Being, An English-Spanish Combat,

Performed by a *Westerne* Gentleman, of *Tauystoke* in *Deuon shire*,
with an English Quarter-Staffe, against Three *Spanishe*
Rapiers and Poniards, at *Sherries* in *Spaine*,

The fiftene day of Nouember, 1625.

In the Prefence of Dukes, Condes, Marquesses, and other Great
Dons of *Spaine*, being the Counsell of Warre.

The Author of this Booke, and Actor in this Encounter, *Richard Peccke*.



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MANLY PEEKE

OF

TAVISTOCK.

IN the early part of the seventeenth century the pirates of the African shores of the Mediterranean were a scourge and a terror, not only to the crews of the trading vessels of European nations, but also to the populations of the towns and villages on the sea-board. Algerine corsairs made prizes even off our coasts, and many English and Irish were carried away as slaves.

In 1621 King James resolved to make an effort to put a stop to these depredations, and proposed to the chief Christian powers that steps should be taken to destroy the stronghold of the pirates—Algiers, and Spain readily agreed to co-operate. Preparations were made, and the command given to Sir Robert Mansell. Before, however, the arrangements were complete, Spain refused to do as she had promised, and the King, while fearing to abandon altogether the expedition on account of the expectations that had been raised, did a much worse thing, and sent it out with a small force imperfectly equipped, and with especial instruc-

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tions to the commander, that on no account was the safety of the ships to be risked.

Among the volunteers accompanying Sir Robert Mansell was a gentleman of this county, Richard Peeke, evidently one who, if he had not fought with them, had inherited, in common with many of his companions, the traditions of Drake, Hawkins, and Raleigh. He describes himself as "a Westerne man, Devonshire my countrey, and Taunestoke my place of Habitation."

I am unable to obtain any information as to the family or antecedents of this bold man, and unfortunately the parish registers at Tavistock do not commence until 1620.

We have no account of his exploits during the time he served under Mansell. The fleet reached Algiers, surprised the enemy, and, attacking the ships and galleys in the port, set them on fire. Neglecting to follow up the advantage gained, Mansell appears to have done nothing further, and the Algerines, recovering from the panic into which they had been thrown, and aided by, as one account says, "a great cataract of rain which hindered the working of the English fireworks," were able to extinguish the fires, and mounting batteries upon the shore, not only succeeded in driving off their assailants, but recovered the whole of their ships except two. Mansell, it may be concluded, adhered pretty closely to his commission, and did not risk very much, for he lost only eight men, and brought the whole of his ships home in safety.

Such a foolish display was, as might be expected, productive of the most serious consequences. The pirates, exasperated against England, and despising her as an enemy, resolved to inflict as much injury as possible upon her commerce, and in a few months succeeded in taking no less than thirty-five English merchant ships, with their cargoes and crews, selling the latter as slaves. The whole country was stirred with anger at the failure of this ill-planned and ill-conducted expedition and its results.

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Peeke was not one of the eight who lost their lives, but, as he says,

“After I had seene the Beginning and End of *Argeires*
“Voyage, I came home, somewhat more acquainted with
“the World, but little amended in Estate: My Body more
“walled and weather beaten, but my Purse neuer the fuller,
“nor my Pockets thicker lynes.”

The adventure and experience gained seem to have contented him for some little time, and he remained at home at Tavistock until October, 1625, when, notwithstanding the hardships he had endured and the poor results to his person and his purse,

“The Drumbe beating vp for a New Expedition in which,
“many noble Gentlemen, and Heroicall Spirits, were to
“venture their Honors, Lives and Fortunes: Cables could
“not hold me, for away I would, and along I vowed to goe,
“and did so.”

This expedition was the one projected by King Charles against Spain, which was fitted out at so great a sacrifice, and which ended so disastrously. It sailed from Plymouth, probably the second week in October, as it reached Cadiz on the 22nd of that month; and although Peeke does not complain, other accounts speak of its encountering rough weather. The fleet consisted of eighty, ninety, or one hundred and ten (the numbers vary to this extent) sail of all kinds; some only colliers, and a great many being Dutch vessels. On board these was an army of ten thousand men, and both men and ships were apparently well armed and equipped. The command was given—the country in general much doubting the wisdom of the choice—to the new peer, Viscount Wimbledon, better known as Sir Edward Cecil, grandson of Lord Burleigh, whose military experience had been gained in the service of Holland, and who had won a reputation in the

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Netherlands. The Earl of Essex, afterwards the Parliamentary general, was the second in command.

One of the King's ships was the *Convertine*, the Captain being Thomas Porter, and in it went our hero, Richard Peeke, who really appears to have been the only man in the whole fleet who came out with anything like credit from the affair. He relates his adventures in a very scarce little tract,* written and printed by him on his return, and as his story is of so curious a nature, and as the pamphlet is so inaccessible to the general reader, I have thought that a short resume of the contents of his little book would be of some interest, and do something to resuscitate the memory of a well-nigh forgotten, but brave Devonshire man.

The story is modestly told in good nervous English. The tract is dedicated to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, and addressing his sovereign, Peeke tells him that—

“If I were againe in *Spain*, I should thinke no happinesse
“on Earth, so great, as to come into *England*, and at your
“Royall Feete, lay downe the Story of my Dangers, and
“Percegrination: which I tell as a late Sea-wraekt Man,
“(tos'd and beaten with many Misfortunes;) Yet setting my
“weary Body at last on a Blessed Shore: My Handes now
“lay hold vpon your Altar, which is to me a Sanctuary:
“Heere I am safe in Harbor. That Psalme of Kingly
“*David*, which I sung in my *Spanish* Captivity (*When as we*
“*fate in Babilon &c.*) I now haue changed to an other Tune:

* Since I wrote this I find that Mr. Arber has reprinted this tract in the first volume of his *English Garner*, but without any attempt to preserve the spelling of the original.

There is but one copy in the British Museum, which is imperfect, the title-page with the woodcut being a *fac-simile* by Chaulfield. The date is queried as 1626.

The copy, which I have had for many years, is interesting in another way. It formerly belonged to the younger Ireland, the notorious Shakespearean forger, and it has his autograph on the title-page. It is slightly imperfect, the title-page having, as frequently happens, been cut by the binder, and we thus lose the address of the printer—J. P.

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“ saying, (with the same Prophet), *Great is thy Mercy towards*
“ *me (O Lord) for thou hast delivered my Soule from the lowest*
“ *Grave.* And, as your Maiesty hath bene graciously pleased
“ both to let your poore Soldier and Subiect behold your
“ Royall Person, and to heare him speake in his rude Lan-
“ guage; So, if your Maiesty, vouchsafe to cast a Princely
“ eye on these his unhandsonic Papers; New Sun beames
“ shall spread ouer him and put a Quickning Soule into
“ that Bosome which otherwise must want Life, for want of
“ your Comfort. Those graces from your Excellent Clemency
“ (already receiued) being such, that I am ashamed, and
“ sorry, not to have Endur'd, and to have done more in
“ Forreigne Countries for the Honor of Yours: When from
“ so High a Throane, my Soueraigne Deignes to looke Downe,
“ on a Creature so unworthy, whose life, he prostrates before
“ your Highnes.”

Pecke then, beginning his story, addresses himself to his loving Countrymen, and intreats them—

“ Not to cast a malicious eye vpon my Actions, nor rashly to
“ condemne them, or to flagger in your opinions of my per-
“ formance, sithence I am ready with my life to Iustify what
“ I set downe; the Truth of this Relation being Warrented
“ by noble proofes and Testimonies not to be questioned.

“ I know not what the Court of a King meanes, nor what
“ the fine phrases of silken Courtiers are: A good Shippe I
“ know, and a poore Cabbin, and the language of a Cannon:
“ And therefore, as my Breeding has bin Rough (scorning
“ Delicacy:) And my Present Being consisteth altogether
“ vpon the Soldier (blunt, plaine, and vnpolished:) so must
“ my Writings be, proceeding from fingers sifter for the Pike
“ than the Pen: And so (kinde Countreymen) I pray re-
“ ceauce them.

“ Neither ought you to expect better from me, because I
“ am but the Chronicler of my owne Story.”

The *Conuertine*, with Pecke on board, reached Cadiz (throughout the tract called Cales) on the 22nd Oct., 1625

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about three o'clock in the afternoon, and the same evening sixteen Dutch ships, and about ten White Hall men (called, Peeke says in England, Colliers) were commanded to attack the fort of Puntal, which after a severe fight surrendered to the Earl of Essex, who had landed troops on the evening of the following day.

We need not follow the doings of the little army, as Peeke did not accompany it, and apparently knew nothing of its fortunes until after his return to England. Suffice it is to say that the attack upon Cadiz was a miserable failure. A rapid march was made towards the bridge of Suazzo, but the men finding cellars of wine, indulged to excess, and broke out into mutiny. Their commander, timid and irresolute, became frightened, and although no considerable force of the enemy had been seen, hurriedly gave orders for a return to the ships, and following out his other instructions, went in search of a rich Spanish fleet from the West Indies. This fleet, however, succeeded in eluding Wimbledon, and after cruising about in ineffectual search for nearly three weeks, failing provisions compelled a return; and in wretched plight, with the loss of a thousand men from disease, and with the plague, the expedition returned to Plymouth. "To the King this disgraceful result was a source of the keenest anguish; the council examined the Commander-in-chief"—who received the nick-name of *Sit-still*, a play upon his family name—"and his inferior officers; but their statements were discordant, their complaints reciprocal, and after a long investigation it was deemed expedient to bury the whole matter in silence." *

The return of the fleet caused great discontent in other ways; for, for want of money to pay them, the troops were kept embodied, and they were billeted in private houses, which was a cause of great annoyance, more especially to the inhabitants of Plymouth.

* Lingard.

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To return to Richard Peeke. He being a sailor did not accompany the army, but at mid-day he thought he would venture on shore to refresh himself, and soon met some Englishmen with oranges and lemons.

“The sight of these, sharpened my stomach the more to goe
“on, because I had a desire to present some of those Fruites
“to my Captaine. Hereupon I demanded of them what
“danger there was in going? They sayd, None, but that
“all was hush, and not a *Spaniard* Rirring.

“We parted, they to the Shippes, I forward: And before I
“reached a mile, I found (for all their talking of no danger)
“Three *English* Men Barke dead, being slayne, lying in the
“way, it being full of deepe Sandy pittes, so that I could
“hardly find the passage, and one, some small distance from
“them, not fully dead.

“The groanes which he vttered led me to him; and
“finding him lying on his belly, I called to him, and turning
“him on his back, saw his woundes, and said; Brother what
“Villaine has done this mischeife to thee? He lamented in
“sighes and dolefull lookes, and casting vp his eyes to
“Heauen, but could not speake. I then resolved (and was
“about it) for Christian Charities sake; and for Countries
“sake, to have carried him on my back to our Shippes, farre off
“though they lay, and there (if by any possible meanes it
“could haue bin done) to haue recovered him.

“But my good intents were preuented: For on a sodaine
“came rushing in vpon me, a *Spanish*-Horseman whose
“Name, as afterward I was informed, was *Don Iuan of*
“*Cales*, a Knight; I seeing him make speedily and fiercely
“at me, with his drawne weapon, suddenly whip'd out mine,
“wrapping my Cloake about mine Arme: Fine or six Skir-
“mishes wee had, and for a pretty while, fought off and on.

“At last, I getting with much adoe, to the top of a sandy
“Hillock the Horseman nimbly followed vp after: By good
“Fortune to me, (though bad to himselfe) he had no
“Petronell or Pistolls about him; and therefore clapping

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“Spurres to his Horsesides, his intent as it seemed, was,
“with full careere to ride ouer me, and trample me vnder
“his Horfe's feete: But a Prouidence greater than his Fury
“was my Guard.

“Time was it for me to looke about warily, and to lay
“about lustely, to defend a poor Life so hardly distressed;
“As therefore his Horfe was violently breaking in vpon me
“I struck him into the eyes, with a flappe of my Cloake;
“vpon which turning sideward, I took my aduantage and as
“redily as I could, stepping in, it pleased God that I should
“pluck my Enemy downe, and haue him at my Mercy, for
“Life, which notwithstandinge, I gaue him: He falling on
“his knees and crying out in *French* to me, *Pardone moy le*
“*vous prie, Je suis un buon chrestien.* Pardon me Sir, I am
“a good Christian.

“I seeing him braue and hauing a soldier's minde to Rifle
“him I searched for Jewels, but found, onely fure Peices of
“Eight about him in all, amounting to twenty Shillings
“English. Yet he had Gold, but that I could not come by;
“For I was in hast to haue sent his *Spanish* Knight-hood
“home on Foote and to haue taught his Horfe an *English*
“pace.

“Thus farre, my Voyage for Oranges sped well, but in the
“end proved sower Sawce to me. And it is harder to keepe
“a victory then to obteyne: So, heere it fell out with mine.

“For, fourteene *Spanish* Muskaliers, spying me so busy
“about one of their countrey men bent all the Mouthes
“of their peeces to kill me, which they could not well doe,
“without endangering this *Don Iohn's* life; so that I was
“inforced (and glad I scap'd so too) to yield myself their
“Prisoner.

“True Valour (I see) goes not alwaies in good Cloathes
“For, He whom before I had surprized, seeing me fast in the
“snare and (as the euent proved) disdaining that his Countrey
“men should report him so dishonored, most basely (when my
“handes were in a manner bound behind me) drew out his
“Weapon (which the rest had taken from me to giue him)

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“and wounded me through the Face from Eare to Eare, and
“had there killd me, had not the foureteene muskatiers
“rescued me from his Rage.

“Vpon this I was led in Triumph, into the Towne of *Cales* ;
“An Owle not more wondred and hooted at, a Dog not more
“curfed.

“In my beeing ledde thus along the Streets, A *Flemming*
“spying me cryed out alowde, Whither do you leade this
“*English Dogge*? Kill him, kill him, hee's no Christian.
“And with that, breaking through the Crowde, in vpon those
“who held mee, ranne me into the Body with a Halbert, at the
“Reynes of my Backe, at the least foure inches.

“One *Don Fernando*, an antient Gentleman, was sent
“downe this Summer, from the King at *Madrid*, with Soldiers ;
“But before our fleete came the Soldiers were discharged ;
“They of *Cales* never suspecting that we meant to put in
“there.

“Before him was I brought to be examined, yet few, or
“no questions at all, were demaunded of me, because he saw I
“was all bloudy in my Clothes and so wounded in my Face and
“lawes, that I could hardly speake: I was therefore com-
“mitted presently to Prison where I lay eighteen dayes.
“The Noble Gentleman giuing expresse charge, that the best
“Surgeons should be sent for, least, being so basely hurt and
“handled by Cowards, I should be demanded at his hands.

“I being thus taken on the Monday, when I went on
“Shore, the Fleete departed on the Friday following, from
“*Cales*, at the same time when I was there a Prisoner.

“Yet, thus honestly was I vsed by my worthy Friend
“Captaine *Porter* : He above my deserving, complayning,
“that he feared he had lost such a Man : My Lord Generall
“(by the solicitation of Master *John Glanville*, Secretary to
“the Fleete) sent three men on Shore, to enquire in *Cales* for
“me and to offer (if I were taken) any reasonable Ransome :
“But the Towne thinking me a better Prize then (indeede) I
“was, denyed me, and would not part from me.

“Then came a Command to the *Teniente* or Gouvernor of

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“ *Cales*, to have me sent to *Sherrys* (otherwise called *Xeres*)
“ lying three Leagues from *Cales*.

“ Wondrous unwilling (could I otherwise have chosen)
“ was I to go to *Sherrys*, because I feared I should be then
“ put to Tortures.

“ Having therefore a Young-man (an *English* man and a
“ Merchant, whose Name was *Goodrow*,) my fellow Prisoner
“ who lay there for Debt; and so I thinking there was no
“ way with me but one; (That I must be sent packing to my
“ long home) Thus I spake vnto him.

“ Countrey-man, what my Name is, our Partnership in
“ Misery hath made you know: And with it, know that I am
“ a *Devonshire* Man borne; and *Taufstock* the place of my
“ once abiding. I beseech you, if God euer send you liberty,
“ and that you faile into *England*, take that Countrey in your
“ way; Commend me to my Wife and children, made
“ wretched by me, an infortunate Father and Husband;
“ Tell them, and my Friends (I entreate you, for God's
“ cause) that if I be (as I suspect I shall be) put to death in
“ *Sherris*, I will die a Christian soldier, no way, I hope,
“ dishonouring my King, Countrey, or the Iustice of my
“ Cause or my Religion.”

He reached *Xeres* on Thursday, at midnight; and on the following Sunday two friars—Irishmen—came to him, and said that he was to die the next day, and offered their services, which he refused.

It would seem that he was brought before a Council of War the next day, November 15th; but it is not at all apparent why he was considered a prisoner of so much consequence as to be examined before three dukes, four counts, four marquises, and other great persons. He thus describes the interview:

“ At my first appearing before the Lordes my Sword lying
“ before them on a Table, the Duke of *Medina* asked me if I
“ knew that Weapon; It was reached to me, I tooke it, and
“ embraced it in mine armes, and with tears in mine eyes

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“kist the Pomell of it, He then demanded, how many men
“I had kild with that Weapon? I told him if I had kild One I
“had not bene there now, before that Princely Assembly, for
“when I had him at my foote begging for Mercy, I gaue him
“life, yet he, then very poorely did me a mischiefe; Then
“they asked *Don John* (my Prisoner) what Woundes I gaue
“him; He sayd, None; Vpon this he was rebuked and told
“that if vpon our first Encounter, he had run me through, it
“had beene a faire and Noble Triumph, but so to wound me
“being in the hands of others, they held it Base.

“Then sayd the Duke of *Medyna* to me; Come on *English*
“Man. What Shippe came you in? I told him, The *Con-*
“*uertine*; Who was your Captaine? Captaine *Portar*; What
“Ordnance carryed your Shippe; I sayd Forty pieces: But
“the Lords looking all this while on a paper, which they
“held in their hands, Duke *Matyna* sayd, In their Note, there
“was but thirty eight.

“In that Paper (as after I was informed, by my two *Irish*
“Interpreters) there was set down, the Number of our Shippes,
“their Burden, Men, Munition, Victuall, Captaines, &c. as
“perfect as wee ourselues had them in *England*.

“Of what Strength (quoth another Duke) is the Fort at
“*Plymouth*? I answered, very Strong: What Ordnance in it?
“Fifty sayd I: That is not so sayd he, there is but seenteene:
“How many Soldiers are in the Fort? I answered, two
“hundred: That is not so (quoth a Conde) there is but
“twenty.

“*Marquesse Alquenexes* asked me, Of what strength the little
“Iland was before *Plymouth*? I told him, I knew not:
“Then (quoth he) wee doe.

“Is *Plymouth* a walled Towne? Yes my Lordes: And a
“good Wall? Yes sayd I, a very good wall: True, sayd a
“Duke, to leape ouer with a Staffe. And hath the Towne,
“sayd the Duke of *Matyna*, strong Gates? Yes: But quoth
“he, there was neither Wood nor Iron to those Gates, but
“two days before your Fleete came away.

“Now, before I go any farther, let me not forget to tell

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“you, that my two *Irish* confessors had beene heere in
“*England* the last Summer, & when our Fleete came
“from *England*, they came for *Spaine*; Hauing seene our
“King at *Plymouth* when the Soldiers there showed their
“Armes, and did then diligently obserue what the King did,
“and how he carried himselfe.

“How chance (sayd Duke Giron) did you not in all this
“bravery of the Fleete take *Cales*, as you tooke *Puntall*?
“I replied, that the Lord Generall might easily haue taken
“*Cales*, for he had neere a thousand Scaling Ladders to set
“vp, and a thousand Men to loose; but he was loath to rob
“an Almeshouse, having a better Market to goe to: *Cales*, I
“told them was held Poore, Vnmand, and Vnmunitioned;
“What better Market, sayd *Medyna*? I told him, *Genoa* or
“*Lisbone*, and as I heard, there was instantly vpon this an
“Army of Six thousand Soldiers sent to *Lisbone*.

“Then, quoth one of the Earles, when thou meetst me in
“*Plymouth*, wilt thou bid me welcome? I modestly told
“him I could wish they would not too hastily come to
“*Plymouth*, for they should find, it another manner of place,
“there as now they sleight it.

“Many other Questions were put to me by these great
“Dons, which so well as God did enable me, I answered,
“they speaking in *Spanish*, and their words interpreted to
“me, by those two *Irish* men before spoken of, who also relate
“my severall answers to the Lords.

“And by the common People who encompass me round,
“many icerings, mockeries, scornes, and bitter iests, were to
“my face thrown vpon our Nation, which I durst not so
“much as bite my lippe against, but with an inforced patient
“care stood still, and let them runne on in their Reuilings.

“At the length, amongst many other reproches, and
“spightfull Names, one of the *Spaniards*, called *English* men
“*Gallinas*, (Hennes;) At which the great Lordes fell a laugh-
“ing: Herevpon one of the Dukes (poynting to the *Spanish*
“Soldiers) bid me note how their King kept them; And
“indeed, they were all wondrous braue in Apparell, Hattes,

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“Bandes, Cuffes, Garters, &c. and some of them in Chaines
“of Gold: And asked farther if I thought these would prooue
“such *Hennes* as our *English*, when next year they should
“come into *England*? I sayd no: But being somewhat
“imboldened by his merry Countenance, I told him as merily,
“I thought they would be within one degree of *Hennes*;
“What meanst thou by that, said a Conde? I replyed they
“would prooue *Pullets*, or *Chickens*. Durst thou then (quoth
“Duke *Medyna*, with a brow half angry) fight with one of
“these *Spanish Pullets*.

“O my Lord, sayd I, I am a Prisoner, and my Life at
“Stake, and therefore dare not be so bold to adventure vpon
“any such Action: There were heere of vs *English* some
“fourteene Thousand, in which Number, there were aboue
“twelue Thousand, better, & stouter Men than euer I
“shall be: Yet with the licence of this Princely Assembly, I
“dare hazard the breaking of a Rapier: and withall told
“him, Hee was vnworthy the Name of an *English* Man that
“should refuse to Fight with one Man of any Nation whatso-
“euer. Hereupon my Shackells were knockt off, and my
“Iron Ring and Chayne taken from my Neck.

“Roome was made for the Combatants, Rapier and
“Dagger the Weapons: A *Spanish* Champion presents him-
“selfe, Named *Signior Tingo*: When after wee had played
“some reasonable good time, I disarmed, as thus,

“I caught his Rapier betwixt the Barres of my Poniard,
“and there held it, till I closed in with him, and tripping vp
“his Heeles, I tooke his Weapons out of his hands, and de-
“liuered them to the Dukes.

“I could wish, that all you, my deere Countrey men who
“reade this Relation, had either bin there, without danger,
“to haue beheld vs: Or that He with whom I fought were
“heer in Person, to iustifie the issue of that Combat.

“I was then demaunded, If I durst Fight against another?
“I told them, my heart was good to adventure, but humbly
“requested them to giue me pardon, if I refused.

“For, to my selfe I too well knew, that the *Spaniard* is

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“Haughty, Impatient of the least affront; and when he receives but a touch of any Dishonor, Disgrace, or Blemish (especially in his owne Countrey and from an *English Man*) his Reuenge is implacable, mortall, and bloody.

“Yet being by the Noblemen, pressed agen, and agen, to try my Fortune with another, I (seeing my Life in the Lyons paw, to struggle with whome, for safety, there was no way but one, and being afrayd to displease them,) sayd, That if their Graces, and Greatnesses, would giue me leave to play at mine owne Countrey Weapon, called the *Quarter-Staffe*, I was then ready there, an Oppsite against any comer, whome they would call forth; and would willingly lay downe my Life before those Princes, to doe them Seruice, prouided my Life might by no soule meanes be taken from me.

“Herevpo, the head of a Halbert which went with a Screw was taken off, and the Steall deliuered to me: the other But-end of the Staffe hauing a short Iron Pike in it: This was my Armor, and in my place I stood, expecting an Opponent.

“At the last, a handsome and well Spirited *Spaniard* steps forth with his Rapier and Pomard: They asked me, what I sayd to Him? I told them I had a sure Friend in my hand, that neuer failed me, and therefore made little account of that One to play with, and should shew them no Sport.

“Then a Second (Armed as before) presents himselfe: I demanded if there would come no more? The Dukes asked, how many I desired? I told them any number vnder Sixe: Which resolution of mine they smiling at in a kind of scorne held it not Manly (it seemed) nor fit for their owne Honors, and Glory of their Nation; to worry one man with a Multitude; and therefore appointed Three onely (so Weapond) to enter into the Lifles.

“Now Gentlemen; if here you condemne mee, for plucking (with mine owne hands) such an assured danger, vpon mine owne head: Accept of these Reasons for excuse.

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“To dye, I thought it most certaine, but to dye basely, I
“would not: For Three to kill One, had bin to Me no Dif-
“honor; To Them (Weapons considered) no Glory; An
“Honourable Subjection I esteemed better, then an Ignoble
“Conquest. Vpon these Thoughts I fell to it.

“The Rapier Men trauesel their ground, I mine; Danger-
“ous Thrusts were put in, and with dangerous hazard auoyded:
“Showtes echoed to Heauen, to encourage the *Spaniards*;
“Not a shoute, nor Hand to hearten the poore *English* Man;
“Onely, Heauen I had in mine Eye, the Honor of my
“Coutrey in my Heart, my Fame at the Stake, my Life on
“a narrow Bridge, and Death both before me and behind me.

“It was not now a time to dally, they still made full at
“me; And I had become a Coward to my Selve, and a Villane
“to my Nation, if I had not called vp all that weake Man-
“hood which was mine, to garde my owne Life, and ouer-
“throw my Enemies.

“Plucking vp therefore a good heart, seeing my selfe faint
“and wearied, I vowed to my Soule, to doe something, ere
“she departed from me; And so setting All vpon one cast, It
“was my Good Fortune (it was my God did it for Mee) with
“the But-end where the Iron Pike was, to Kill one of the
“Three; and within a few Boutes after, to Disarme the other
“two, causing the One of them to fly into the Arnie of
“Soldiers then present and the Other for refuge fled behind
“the Bench.

“I hope, if the brauing *Spaniards* set vpon *England* (as
“they threaten) we shall enery One of vs giue the repulse to
“more than Three; Of which good Issue for the Publique, I
“take this my Private interest to be a Pledge.

“Now was I in greater Danger, being (as I thought) in
“Peace, then before, when I was in Battaille; For a generall
“murmure filled the Ayre, with Threatnings at me; the
“Soldiers especially bit their thumbs, and how was it possible
“for me to scape?

“Which the Noble Duke of *Medina Sidonia* seeing called
“me to him, and instantly caused Proclamation to be made,

Three to One : Being,

“that none, on paine of death should meddle with mee ; And
“by his Honorable Protection I got off ; And not off, onely
“with Safety, but with Money, For by the Dukes and Condes
“were given me in Gold to the value of foure Pounds tenne
“Shillings sterling and by the Marquesse *Alquenezes* himselve,
“as much ; He embracing me in his Armes and bestowing
“vpon me that long *Spanish* Ruslet Cloake I now weare,
“which he tooke from one of his Mens backs ; And withall
“furnished me with a cleane Band and Cuffes ; It being one
“of the greatest fauours a *Spanish* Lord can doe to a meane
“Man, to reward him with some Garment, as recompence of
“Merit.

The Spaniards nobly appreciating the bravery of their captive, resolved to give him his liberty, and under the conduct of four gentlemen attached to the suite of the Marquis *Alquenezes*, he was sent to Madrid to be presented to the King. During *Peeke's* stay in the city he was a guest at the house of the marquis, whose lady paid him great attention, and on his leaving gave him a golden chain and jewels for his wife, and pretty things for his children. On Christmas-day he was presented to the King, the Queen, and *Don Carlos* the Infanta.

“Being brought before him, I fell (as it was fitt) on my
“Knees : Many Questions were demanded of me, which so
“well as my plaine witte directed me, I resolved.

“In the end, his Maiesty offered me a Yearely Pention, (to
“a good Valley) if I would Serue him, eyther at Land or at
“Sea ; For which his Royall Fauors, I confessing myselve in-
“finitely Bound, and my Life indebted to his Mercy, most
“humbly intreated, that with his Princely Leauē, I might be
“suffered to returne into mine owne Countrey, being a Subiect
“onely to the King of *England* my Souereigne.

“And besides that Bond of Allegiance there was another
“Obligation, due from me, to a Wife and Children : And

An English-Spanish Combat.

“therefore most submissively beg’d, that his Maiefty would
“be so princely minded, as to pittie my Estate, and to let
“me goe: To which he at last granted; Bestowing vpon me,
“one hundred Pistoletts, to beare my Charges.

“Having thus left *Spain*, I tooke my way through some
“part of *France*: Where, by occasion, happening into Com-
“pany of seuen *Spaniards*, their Tongues were too lauish in
“Speeches against our Nation: Vpon which, some high words
“flying vp and downe the Roome, I leaped from the Table,
“and drew.

“One of the *Spaniards* did the like (none of the rest being
“Weaponed, which was more then I knew.)

“Vpon the noise of this Bulling, two *English* Men more
“came in, who vnderstanding the abuses offered to our
“Countrey, the (*Spaniards* in a short time, Recanted on their
“Knees) their Rashnesse.

“And so hoysing Saile for *England*: I landed on the three
“and twenty day of Aprill 1626. at *Foy* in *Cornewall*.

“And thus ended my *Spanish* Pilgrimage: With thankes
“to my good God, that in this extraordinary Manner pre-
“ferued me, amidst these desperate Dangers.

And then he breaks out in conclusion into a peon of
thanksgiving.

The little book ends with sundry verses written by a friend
in commendation of the author, commencing—

Seldome doe Cloudes so dimme the day,
But *Sol* will once his Beames display:
Though *Neptune* drives the surging Seas
Some times he gives them quiet ease:
And so few Projects speed to ill
But somewhat chaunceth at our will.

I will not instance in the Great,
Placed in Honors higher Seate;
Though Vertue in a Noble Line,
Commends it, and the more doth shine:
Yet this is proud by Sword and Pen
Desert oft dwells in private Men.

Three to One.

My prooffe is not farre hence to seeke
There is at hand braue *Richard Peeke*
Whose worth his Foes cannot reuoke,
Born in the Towne of *Tauystoke*
In *Deuon*, where *Minerua* sitts
Shaping stoute Hearts and pregnant Witts.

And ending—

If thus his very Foes him lou'd
And Deeds against themselves approu'd;
How should his Friends his loue embrace
And yeild him countenance and grace?
The praise and worth how can we cloke
Of manly *Peeke* of *Tauystoke*?

On his return Peeke was presented to the King, and then he settled down at Tavistock, as he tells us. My enquiries have not resulted in connecting him with any other exploits by sea or land; but if he lived, he doubtless took an active part in the civil war so near at hand when his little book was published.

The verses, which are signed J. D., I set down as the composition of that voluminous versifier John Davies, of Hereford; but I can obtain no proof of the fact. I find that Mr. Grosart, in his recently completed edition of the works of Davies,* has inserted them without question as written by his author, under the head of "Commendatory Poems," and speaks of them as being "somewhat noticeable." It must, however, be noticed, that in no other commendatory verses did Davies sign his initials only, but always either "Jo. Davies," or "John Davies of Hereford." The style is quite that of Davies, and if he did not write them it would be difficult to find an author for them.

* *The Collected Works of John Davies*, 4to, 1877.