

never could present me with a worse," roared the Queen. The poor Dean humbly begged her pardon. She snapped back, "I pray that God will grant you a better spirit and more wisdom in the future."

A sidelight on Elizabeth's character is a letter she wrote in 1571 to the Bishop of Ely. It concerned some land she thought the church should give up to Lord Hatton in Holborn (we have today, of course, a reminder of these times by Hatton Garden and Ely Place near Holborn). Dr. Cox, the Bishop, refused to grant the land, and in a pique the Queen wrote to him:—

"Proud Prelate,

You know what you were before I made you what you are now. If you do not immediately comply with my request, I will unfrock you by God.

Elizabeth."

On August 18th, 1574, Elizabeth and her Court went to Worcester in State. She did the very loyal town the honour of borrowing £200 under a privy seal Warrant, in the time, as she states, of her need. Promising to repay it within two years. She still has not paid it back and the unpaid debt remains one of the bad debts of the town!

In the spring of 1580 Elizabeth was perturbed at the number of people who copied her dress, especially her famous ruff around her neck (the ruff which formed so characteristic a feature of her dress) and an Act was passed in Parliament empowering certain officials to stand at corners of the streets armed with shears for the purpose of clipping all ruffs which exceeded the size prescribed by the new law.

In the same year this far-sighted woman became deeply concerned at the rapid growth of London, and fearing an epidemic of plague or fever owing to the huge numbers of people living in such a confined space she prohibited any new dwelling house to be built within three thousand paces of the gates of London (a precursor of the "Green Belt") and she forbade anyone to allow more than one family to live in one house.

In this same year Elizabeth did Mr. Francis Drake the honour of going on board his ship at Deptford after his voyage of discovery round the world, and here in the ship she knighted him and consented to share the golden fruit of his subsequent voyages.

The following year the vexed question of the Queen's marriage cropped up again.

Little is known of the circumstances that led to the Queen in the summer of 1581, advancing to the Duke Francis of Anjou a subsidy of 100,000 crowns and, it appears, a hint that a marriage might be arranged. Presumably she thought an alliance with France would be a barrier to the aspirations of the Spaniards. However, it will never be known, despite the differing opinions of historians and of contemporaries whether it was for love or duty.

The French envoys duly arrived by boat at the Tower Pier in August, 1581, under a salvo of artillery and were received with the greatest honours. They were conducted by Sir Philip Sydney, Fulke Grenville and Lord Windsor to the Queen, and an agreement was drawn up whereby six weeks after the arrival of the duke, the marriage should take place. The duke was to be *King* of England and the first born son was to be the heir to the throne of France and the second born the heir to the throne of England.

He arrived early in November, 1582, but the Queen we are told began to have doubts. Nevertheless, she persuaded him, a staunch Catholic, to accompany her to the Protestant service in St. Paul's Cathedral. She declared him to be the "most deserving and constant of all her lovers."

On the anniversary of her Coronation day she placed a ring on his finger before the whole Court and many foreign ambassadors. This was taken by all to mean that the nuptials would be forthcoming. Great unrest followed—My Lords Leicester, Hatton and Walsingham especially were determined to prevent the marriage.

The same evening when the Queen returned to her Chamber

she found all the Ladies of the Court prostrating themselves on the ground in what she described as "a fine concert of weeping and wailing," begging her not to marry and to think again for the sake of the realm.

In the morning she sent for the duke and told him that two more nights like the last would bring her to the grave. She described her feelings of love and duty and she said she had decided to sacrifice her happiness to the welfare of her people.

The duke returned to his own apartments where he flung the ring to the ground and exclaimed that "the women of England were as changeable as their own climate or the waves that encircled their shores."

Many interesting and important events took place during the great reign of Elizabeth the First but perhaps the one that most captures the minds is the story of the Armada. To tell of this historic event one would need a lecture on its own, suffice it to say that on May 29th, 1588, the mighty array of tall vessels left the Bay of Lisbon. Off Finisterre a storm blew up and scattered many of the ships of this fleet, and so far as we are able to discover there were 130 Men-of-War, having on board 19,290 soldiers, 8,350 mariners, 2,080 galley-slaves besides a numerous company of priests to maintain discipline and stir up religious fervour. There was hardly a family in Spain who did not at the time send a son or a husband on this great adventure. Elizabeth had 15 ships and 5,000 men. The Lord Mayor of London, through the citizens, placed a further 30 ships and 10,000 men at arms at the disposal of the Queen. Elizabeth took command of the venture herself. She appointed two Generals, the first the Earl of Leicester who was stationed at Tilbury, and the Lord Hunsdon who was in charge of the Queen's Body-Guard. The Lord High Admiral Howard, Baron Effingham and Sir Francis Drake, the Vice-Admiral.

By July 19th, after many days of anxious watching through fog and adverse winds, Howard was informed by the bold pirate, Flemming, that the Armada was hovering off the Lizard Point. Drake, Frobisher and Hawkins joined in the fray and we know the result.

We use the term "*clod*" for anyone who is clumsy and stupid. I wonder whether we know that Clod was the name of the Queen's Court Jester or Fool and that the name has been handed down. He was perhaps one of the greatest Court Fools ever and took the place of present day comedians.

Essex appears to have courted royal disfavour about June, 1598. During a disgraceful scene when the Queen boxed his ears, he began to draw his sword against her, but was stopped only by the Lord Admiral who was present, thrusting himself between them. On being dismissed Essex muttered something about the "king in petticoats."

On August 4th, 1598, Lord Burghley, the Queen's advisor and friend died after a long illness and on September 13th of that year, Philip II of Spain died also.

In the spring of 1602, Elizabeth's health began to fade. She paid many visits to her Palace at Richmond where the air seems to have bouyed her up, but she was by this time an aged and a sick woman, sickened very probably by the thoughts of the countless murders that had been done in her name.

It is an almost impossible task to trace the passage of the mighty Elizabeth through the dark valley of the shadow of death. Many have been dazzled with the splendour of her life, but few, even her most ardent admirers, would wish their last end might be like hers.

Through the winter of 1602-1603 the Queen took to her room and then was seen a great deal in public. Then again another silence in her Chambers and then yet another deliverance. The story got around that she was mad, but the French Ambassador who saw her from time to time sent a dispatch to the King of France to say that while the Queen might be wandering in her mind from time to time, she certainly was *not* mad.

And so died the great Queen, *Elizabeth the First* in the seventieth year of her age and the forty-fourth of her reign.

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