



The burning match in hand;  
With mail of glorious intent  
All hearts were clad; and in they went,  
A force that cut through where 'twas sent. 35

“Push home, my hardy pikemen!  
For we play a desperate part;  
To-day, my gunners, let them feel  
The pulse of England's heart!  
They shall remember long that we 40  
Once lived; and think how shamefully  
We shook them! one to fifty-three.”

With face of one who cheerly goes  
To meet his doom, that day,  
Sir Richard sprang upon his foes: 45  
The foremost gave him way;  
His round shot smasht them through and through;  
The great white splinters fiercely flew:  
And madder grew his fighting few.

They clasp the little ship “Revenge,” 50  
As in the arms of fire;  
They run aboard her, six at once;  
Hearts beat and guns leap higher:  
Through bloody gaps the boarders swarm;  
But still our British stay the storm; 55  
The bulwark in their breast is firm.

Ship after ship, like broken waves  
That wash upon a rock,  
Those mighty galleons fall back foiled,  
And shattered from the shock: 60  
With fire she answers all their blows;  
Again, again in pieces strows  
The burning girdle of her foes.

Through all the night the great white storm  
Of worlds in silence rolled; 65  
Sirius with his sapphire sparkle;  
Mars in ruddy gold;

Heaven lookt, with stillness terrible,  
Down on a fight most fierce and fell:  
A sea transfigured into hell. 70

Some know not they are wounded  
Till 'tis slippery where they stand;  
Some with their own good blood make fast  
The pike-staff to their hand;  
Wild faces glow through lurid night, 75  
With sweat of spirit shining bright:  
Only the dead on deck turn white.

At daybreak the flame-picture fades,  
In blackness and in blood;  
There! after fifteen hours of fight, 80  
The unconquered Sea-King stood,  
Defying all the powers of Spain:  
Fifteen Armadas hurled in vain;  
And fifteen hundred foemen slain.

Around that little bark "Revenge," 85  
The baffled Spaniards ride  
At distance. Two of their good ships  
Were sunken at her side,  
The rest lie round her in a ring,  
As round the dying lion-king, 90  
The dogs, afraid of his death-spring.

Our pikes all broken; powder spent;  
Sails, masts to shreds were blown;  
And with her dead and wounded crew  
The ship was going down! 95  
Sir Richard's wounds were hot and deep;  
Then cried he, with a proud pale lip,  
"Ho! gunner, split and sink the ship;

"Make ready now, my mariners,  
To go aloft with me: 100  
That nothing to the Spaniard  
May remain of victory.  
They cannot take us, nor we yield;

So let us leave our battle-field  
Under the shelter of God's shield." 105

They had not heart to dare fulfil  
The stern commander's word;  
With bloody hands, and weeping eyes,  
They carried him aboard  
The Spaniard's ship; and round him stand 110  
The warriors of his wasted band.  
Then said he, feeling death at hand,

"Here die I, Richard Grenville,  
With a joyful and quiet mind;  
I reach a soldier's end: I leave 115  
A soldier's fame behind;  
Who for his queen and country fought,  
For honour and religion wrought,  
And died as a true soldier ought."

Earth never returned a worthier trust 120  
For hand of Heaven to take,  
Since Arthur's sword, Excalibur,  
Was cast into the lake,  
And the king's grievous wounds were dressed  
And healed by weeping queens who blessed, 125  
And bore him to a valley of rest.

Old heroes who could grandly do  
As they could greatly dare,  
A vesture very glorious  
Their shining spirits wear, 130  
Of noble deeds. God give us grace,  
That we may see such face to face,  
In our great day that comes apace.

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