

**DOCUMENTS FROM
SIMANCAS RELATING TO
THE REIGN OF
ELIZABETH, (1558-1568)**

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RELATING TO THE

REIGN OF ELIZABETH,

(1558—1568.)

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH OF DON TOMÁS GONZALEZ
AND EDITED.

With Notes and an Introduction,

BY

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LIBRARIAN TO THE ATHENÆUM.

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PREFACE.

MANY years have passed since Mr. Patrick Fraser Tytler, then engaged upon his 'History of Scotland,' called my attention to a very valuable series of Historical Documents printed in the seventh volume of the 'Memorias de la Real Academia de la Historia,' 4to, Madrid, 1832, under the title of "Apuntamientos para la historia del Rey Don Felipe Segundo de España, por lo tocante á sus relaciones con la Reina Isabel de Inglaterra desde el año 1558 hasta el de 1576, formados con presencia de la Correspondencia Diplomática original de dicha época por Don Tomás Gonzalez, Canónigo de Plasencia."

These papers have never been translated, and were first noticed by the late Mr. Henry Howard, of Corby Castle, whose extensive researches to illustrate the fortunes of that noble family of Howard, which form so grand a picture in English history by every varied charm of character and of incident, are familiar to genealogists. They have been since quoted by Dr.

Lingard, L. Ranke, and W. H. Prescott, and are included in his work by Mr. Froude, with great additions from his own researches. But the references in Lingard's History, vol. vi., 8vo, 1849, are only calculated to confuse the reader. These are sometimes given as "Memorias," then as "Gonzalez," "From the documents at Simancas," "Feria to Philip," "Apuntamientos apud Gonzalez," whilst it is also very certain that the work has been cited by others by whom it has never been seen. The translator, therefore, has ventured to submit a series of extracts from these documents, with references to the histories of the authors by whom they have been quoted, as illustrations of the policy of Elizabeth, or which specially denote the state of parties, and of opinion, during the earlier periods of her reign. To these extracts notes have been added, without regard to religious creed or to political opinion, but solely to explain, correct, or to confirm the text.

The excerpts relating to Scotland and to Ireland have been for the most part omitted. As regards Scotland, the translator could not hope to add any matter of interest to a period, the annals of which have been recorded by the researches of Mr. Tytler, and over which Mr. Froude now throws the light of more extensive inquiry and the charm of a graceful style. With respect to Ireland the case is somewhat different. The history of Ireland in the sixteenth

century is yet to be written ; most certainly it is not to be understood by a few extracts or memoranda, copied as they occurred to the transcriber, who was unacquainted with their value, and which are useless unless accompanied with explanatory narrative.

It is for this reason also that the occasional notices of the exploits of the Cobhams and of Sir John Hawkins are omitted. The Cobhams are a type of the younger sons of noble families, and of races now honourable for centuries in their own counties, who left many an ancient mansion, and many a pleasant country-seat, thick-girt with patriarchal trees, accompanied with a few retainers, or alone, for brave adventure on the "Narrow Seas." They set forth, urged by the strong impulse of the age, to ravage the coast of Spain or of her colonial possessions, to intercept the fleet laden with the wealth of the Indies, and to fight beside the Huguenot in France, or the persecuted in the Netherlands, or wherever there was need of the stout heart, for that Reformed religion which to them was honour, fame,—ay, even Life eternal. Religious zeal, once quickened, dies only from lapse of faith or the languor of gratified success. The spirit which impelled the Arab upon the West, the cry which went forth as a trumpet-blast to the Spaniard to raise on high the standard of the true Faith, and to expel the Moors from Spain, now thrilled the heart and nerved the stern reso-

lution of the Reformer. When the young heir departed from the ancestral seat, it was amid the blessings which were given of old to the Crusader. The old hall was filled by the chiefs and the retainers of his race. Age in its aspect of dignified repose, youth in its sheen of beauty, brave men who had borne the shock of foreign war, gathered around. In every hamlet and town through which he passed, the casements were opened, the street was full, and the benison of the aged, the good wish of the stalwart yeoman, and the cheering tenderness of women, bade him "God speed" on his way. When news came from the battle-field, it was related until it became a gossip's tale in every cottage, in many a lonely hamlet, and in many a hidden glen. If he returned, the tenantry trooped from afar to greet him; bonfires blazed around, and he was received amid the hearty revelry of every one allied to or born on the estate. If Fortune had been adverse, and he had found a nameless grave upon a barren strand, a trusty retainer would bring home some relic of his leader, a casque, a glove, a dented sword, to be hung up in the church, the manor-house, or hall, as a fond and proud memorial. This which was true of the Reformer, was true also of the Catholic. However we may be separated in creed, every Englishman must regard with pride the records of those great families of the old Faith whose names impart so much interest to the history

of his land. The various classes of society were then linked in closer bonds. The difference between each grade was greater, but the sense of humanity was stronger. The laws were imperfect, but there was much manly feeling, and a hearty unity among the people. Rank, as being more assured, was less conventional in sympathy, and the sense of power in a noble mind always tempers its exercise. The conviction of a common danger, the love of an imperilled Faith, influenced alike both Catholic and Reformer, and became a law, to unite the noble with the commoner, as that "touch of Nature which makes the whole world kin."

The maritime exploits of Drake and Hawkins far exceed in interest the narratives of personal adventure. These are of national import. No chapter in English history is more attractive than that which records the rise and the gallant progress of our English navy. Partly national, partly buccaneer and pirate, it became a self-organized power in the State. When Elizabeth hesitated, it was firm; whilst the Council doubted, it struck. The hope, the courage, and the confidence of England were with the fleet. Had Spain destroyed this outward barrier, what remained to retard victory? Troops whose numbers figured upon paper, recruits hastily levied, led by the conspicuous incapacity of Leicester, to oppose the genius of Parma, and the disciplined legions of Spain!