

**A HISTORY OF
GIBRALTAR AND ITS
SIEGES. SECOND EDITION**

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A History of Gibraltar and Its Sieges. Second Edition by J. H. Mann

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AND ITS SIEGES.



THE ROCK, FROM FORT SAN FELIPE.

Stephens, F. G.
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HISTORY OF GIBRALTAR

AND

ITS SIEGES.

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By J. H. MANN.



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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA


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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

E propose to recite the history of Gibraltar, describe the sieges it has undergone, and, in doing so, to take the famous Rock itself as a centre round which may be ranged the figures of the chieftains who have been concerned in its attack and defence; also to travel with these champions into their own countries, and trace the sources of their actions. It will be by no means desirable to omit the second section of our purpose, and leave the champions to themselves before or after they have quitted the place of battle, because it is undoubtedly true that if Gibraltar has conferred fame upon them, they, in turn, have, by deeds done elsewhere, reflected light upon the noble Rock itself. As to this effect of glory sent back from rock to warrior and from warrior unto rock, the matter has an image in the place itself, as, ages ago, when the first Phœnician voyagers were creeping out of the resplendent Mediterranean, or Great Sea, so they called it, into the *Mare Tenebrosum*, or "Dark Sea," which their imaginations filled

with shadows, they, as the sun went down, saw his glory shine backwards from the pillar of ancient fame. In like manner, craft, drifting through those Straits, which have taken many names from that mount which we call Gibraltar, still see dawn shine from its sides long before the sea mists are broken up. Thus, Al-makkari, the Arabian writer, says: "The water surrounds Gibraltar on almost every side, so as to make it look like a watch-tower erected in the midst of the sea, and facing Algeciras." "The mountain of Taric" (Gibraltar), says a Granadian poet, quoted by him, "is like a beacon spreading its rays over the sea, and rising far above the neighbouring mountains. One might fancy that its face almost reaches the sky, and that its eyes are watching the stars in the celestial track." "I sailed once," says another Moorish writer, "with my father, from Ceuta to Gibraltar, and had an opportunity of verifying the truth of this assertion. When we came near the coast, my father told me to look in the direction of Gibraltar; I did so, and saw the whole mountain shining as if it were on fire." Thus it was a beacon to many a store-ship or swift-running craft going to the relief of the garrisons which were beleaguered there. Thus the Moors described it when the Spaniards besieged it; thus the Spaniards said, in turn; and thus, with reversed reference to the last, the English sea-captains spoke, when they were "running in," as the term was, with stores from Britain or from Lisbon, on the one hand, and from Mahon on the other.

The fame of the Great Siege, or last attack, with which the military history of Gibraltar for the present ceases, has so much outshone that of what was done and suffered before, that not a few readers will learn for the first time that this victory was the fourteenth of its order. By these Gibraltar is mostly made lustrous; but to English eyes, at least, its lustre should

be increased by recollections of many naval victories which have been obtained by Englishmen, and almost within sight of the Rock. Thus, there is the never-to-be-forgotten Trafalgar, the greatest of these external combats. The fights off Cape St. Vincent are many. Thus, Sir George Rooke was beaten by Tourville, of France, in 1693 ; Rodney's victory over the Spaniards, under Langara, happened there in 1780 ; that of Sir John Jervis (Earl St. Vincent) took place seventeen years later ; and the capture of Don Miguel's fleet was effected by Admiral Napier in 1833. We shall show that the Romans of old fought Carthaginian galleys in the bay, and that the very Northmen, when going to the Crusades early in the twelfth century, obtained naval victory in sight of the Rock of rocks.

In 1607 was conducted, under the batteries of the Rock, which were then in Spanish hands, that naval combat which Sully describes as "the most furious battle which was ever fought in the memory of man." This happened between the Dutch Vice-Admiral, Jacob Heemskerk, with ten or twelve vessels, and the Spanish Admiral, Don Juan Alvares d'Avila, with a force which was four times as strong as that of his enemy. In spite of this disproportion the Hollander utterly ruined the Spaniard, "and filled all Spain with horror." Heemskerk was as audacious as Blake at Santa Cruz, and as valiantly resolute as Nelson in the fight off the neighbouring Cape Trafalgar, which occurred almost two centuries after this glorious Dutch sailor sealed with his blood the freedom of his country, made Henri the Fourth of France rub his hands, and dashed the schemes of Spinola to pieces. Of this memorable combat, so important in its results, few Englishmen know anything. Probably not one in ten of the garrison of Gibraltar ever heard of it. By and by we shall tell more about it.

The Bay of Cadiz seems yet to ring with the names of Drake, Howard of Effingham, Blake, Collingwood, and Nelson. These combats took place to the north and east of the place; from the south, off Cape Spartel, Howe's and Cordova's guns were heard in Gibraltar on the 20th of October, 1782, as those of Rooke and Thoulouse had been audible, so they say, when in combat at sea, off Malaga, and far to the eastward, on the 13th of August, 1704. This last was a tremendous fight, which is, however, hardly named in what are called "Histories of England"; yet more than fifty ships on each side were engaged, and nearly six thousand men disabled or killed. On our side, besides lesser men, were Rooke, Byng (Lord Torrington), Sir Cloudesley Shovel, and Sir John Leake. These are but a few of the famous Englishmen; these are a few of the acts they have performed, external to, but in direct relationship with, the fortress of which we write. It was in the mood caused by memories of these deeds that Browning wrote "Home Thoughts from the Sea"; and, in words that sound like the voice of some enormous organ, thus expressed the feelings of many, when sailing into the Straits:

"Nobly, nobly Cape St. Vincent to the north-west died away;
 Sunset ran, one glorious blood-red, reeking into Cadiz Bay;
 Bluish, mid the burning water, full in face Trafalgar lay;
 In the dimmest north-east distance dawned Gibraltar, grand and gray;
 'Here and here did England help me,—how can I help England?'—say,
 Whoso turns as I, this evening, turn to God to praise and pray,
 While Jove's planet rises yonder, silent over Africa."

These triumphs or defeats deeply concern us, the English, although our holding of the Rock is but of little more than a century and a half's duration; yet what must be the thoughts of a Spaniard with regard to this piece of his own territory, which was held by his countrymen in uninterrupted possession for two centuries and a half before it fell into our hands; the