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## Documents 1588F

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# The voyage of Thomas Cavendish—The narratives of Francis Pretty and Thomas Fuller

*Source: The narrative of Francis Pretty was first printed in Latin at Frankfurt in 1599 and in English by Richard Hakluyt in Volume 3 of his 3-volume set entitled: The Voyages, Navigations, and Discoveries of the English Nation (London, Barker, 1599); since reprinted and edited many times, e.g. in the collections by Purchas, Callander, Harris, Burney, de Broses, etc. Some notes from the logbook of Thomas Fuller were also published by Hakluyt.*

### Introductory note.

Also known as Candish, and erroneously as Escander and Liscander by the Spanish, Thomas Cavendish [1555?-1592] became the second Englishman to circumnavigate the world. He wanted to emulate Drake whose famous trip had earned him a knighthood from Queen Elizabeth. A first cruise in 1585 had earned him enough money to buy three small ships, equipped with 123 men, for his expedition. He left on 23 July 1586 to follow the track opened by Drake around South America.

He sailed up the coast of Chile and Peru, plundering along the way. On November 4, 1587, his flagship **Desire** with the help of the tender **Content** easily captured the galleon **Santa Ana** whose crew was exhausted after six months of a sea voyage from Manila. Shortly afterwards, the **Content** went missing and was never heard of again. The **Desire** crossed the Pacific alone in record time, touching at Guam on 3 January 1588 [English old-style date].

Kingston, in his book on "Notable Voyagers" said that at Guam "a number of natives came off, bringing fruits and vegetables, but became so troublesome that, losing temper, Cavendish in a most justifiable manner ordered a shot to be fired among them. On the 14th of the same month the **Desire** made the Philippines."

In September 1588, Cavendish was back at Plymouth with his booty. He was to die at sea on the coast of Brazil on yet another expedition (1591-92) during which he visited the Falkland Islands. The following account is reproduced in the original Elizabethan English.



**Portrait of Thomas Cavendish.** *(From Holland's Hweerologia)*

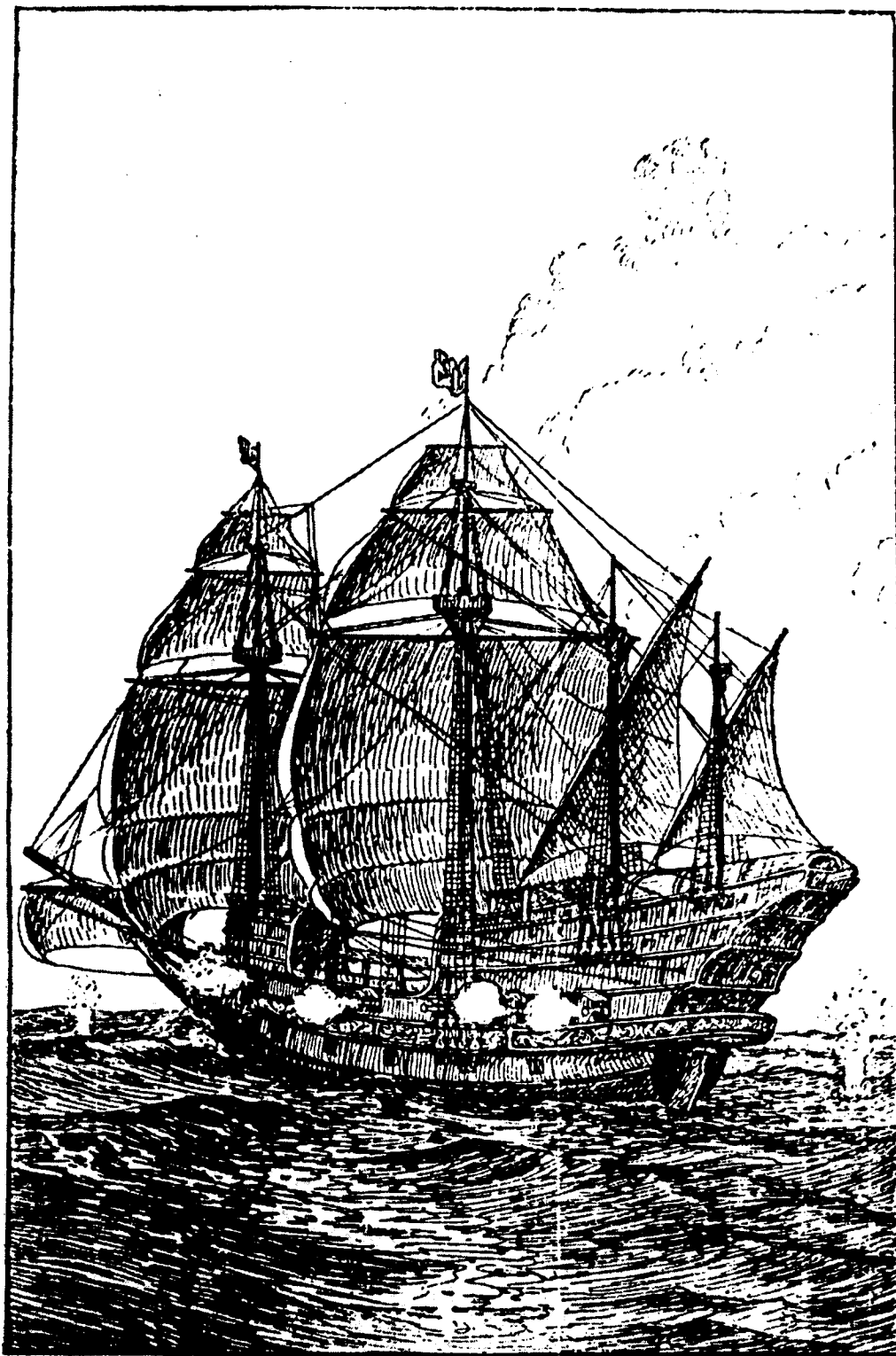
## F1. The admirable and prosperous voyage of the Worshipfull Master Thomas Candish, &c. [by Francis Pretty]

### [The capture of the Santa Ana]

The 14 of October we fell with the cape of S. Lucar which cape is very like the Needles at the isle of Wight; and with the said cape is a great bay called by the Spaniards Aguada Segura: into which bay falleth a faire fresh river, about which many Indians use to keepe: wee watered in the river and lay off and on from the said cape of S. Lucas untill the fourth of November, and had the windes hanging still Westerly.

The 4th of November, the **Desire** and the **Content**, wherein were the number of [blank] Englishmen onely living, beating up and downe upon the headland of California, which standeth in 23 degrees and  $\frac{2}{3}$  to the Northward, betwene seven and 8 of the clocke in the morning, one of the company of our Admirall [i.e. flagship] which was the trumpeter of the ship going up into the top espied a sayle bearing in from the sea with the cape; whereupon hee cryed out with no small joy to himselfe and the whole company, A sayle, a sayle, with which cheerefull word the master of the ship and divers others of the company went also up into the maine top, who perceiving the speech to be very true gave information unto our Generall of these happy newes, who was no lesse glad then the cause required: whereupon he gave in charge presently unto the whole company to put all things in readines; which being performed we gave them chase some 3 or 4 houres, standing with our best advantage, and working for the winde. In the after-noone we gat up unto them, giving them the broad side with our great ordinance and a vollee of small shot, and presently layed the ship aboard, whereof the king of Spaine was owner, which was Admiral of the south sea, called the **S. Anna**, & thought to be 700 tunnes in burthen.

Now as we were ready on their ships side to enter her, being not past 50 or 60 men at the uttermost in our ship, we perceived that the Captaine of the said ship had made fights fore and after, and layd their sailes close on their poope, their mid ship, with their fore castle, and having not one man to be seene, stood close under their fights, with lances, javelings, rapiers, & targets, & an innumerable sort of great stones, which they threw overboord upon our heads and into our ship so fast and being so many of them, that they put us off the shippe againe, with the losse of 2 of our men which were slaine, & with the hurting of 4 or 5. But for all this we new trimmed our sailes, and fitted every man his furniture, and gave them a fresh encounter with our great ordinance, and also with our small shot, raking them through and through, to the killing and maiming of many of their men. Their Captaine still like a valiant man with his company stood very stoutely unto his close fights, not yeelding as yet: Our General encouraging his men a fresh with the whole noyse of trumpets gave them the third encounter with our great ordinance and all our small shot to the great discomforting of our enemies raking them through in divers places, killing and spoiling many of their men. They being thus



**A Spanish galleon in combat, ca. 1580. This could represent the *Santa Ana* fighting off Cavendish in 1587. (From Wycherley's *Buccaneers of the Pacific*, 1928)**

discomforted and spoiled, and their shippe being in hazard of sinking, by reason of the great shot which were made, whereof some were under water, within 5 or 6 houres fight set out a flagge of truce and parled for mercy, desiring our Generall to save their lives and to take their goods, and that they would presently yeeld.

Our Generall of his goodnes promised them mercy, and willed them to strike their sayles, and to hoysse out their boate and to come aboard: which newes they were full glad to heare out, and one of their cheife marchants came aboard unto our General: and falling downe upon his knees, offered to have kissed our Generals feete, and craved mercie: our General most graciously pardoned both him and the rest upon promise of their true dealing with him and his company concerning such riches as were in the shippe: and sent for their Captaine and their Pilote, who at their comming used the like dutie and reverence as the former did.

The Generall of his great mercy & humanitie, promised their lives and good usage. The sayd Captaine and Pilote presently certified the Generall what goods they had within boord, to wit, an hundreth and 22 thousand pezos of golde: and the rest of the riches that the ship was laden with, was in silkes, sattens, damasks, with muske & divers other marchandize, and great store of all maner of victuals with the choyse of many conserves of all sortes for to eate, and of sundry sorts of very good wines. These things being made knowne to the Generall by the aforesaid Captaine and Pilote, they were commanded to stay aboard the **Desire**, and on the 6 day of November following wee sent into an harbour which is called by the Spaniards, Aguada Segura, or Puerto Seguro.

Here the whole company of the Spaniards, both of men and women to the number of 190 persons were set on shore: where they had a fayre river of fresh water, with great store of fresh fish, foule, and wood, and also many hares and conies upon the maine land. Our generall also gave them great store of victuals, of gar-uansos [i.e. chickpeas], peasen, and some wine. Also they had all the sailes of their shippe to make them tents on shore, with licence to take such store of planks as should bee sufficient to make them a barke.

Then we fell to hoysing in of our goods, sharing of the treasure, and aloting to every man his portion. In devision whereof the eight of this moneth, many of the company fell into a mutinie against our Generall, especially those which were in the **Content**, which neverthesse were after a sort pacified for the time.

On the 17 day of November, which is the day of the happy Coronation of her Majestie, our Generall commanded all his ordinance to be shot off, with the small shot both in his owne shippe where himselfe went, and also in the **Content**, which was our Vice-admirall. This being done, the same night we had many fire-workes and more ordinance discharged, to the great admiration of all the Spaniards which were there: for the most part of them had never seene the like before.

This ended, our Generall discharged the Captaine, gave him a royall reward, with provision for his defence against the Indians and his company, both of swords, targets, pieces, shot and powder to his great contentment: but before his departure, he tooke out of this great shippe two yong lads borne in Japon, which could both wright and

reade their owne language, the eldest being about 20 yeeres olde was named Christopher, the other was called Cosmus, about 17 yeeres of age, both of very good capacitie. He tooke also with him out of their ship, 3 boyes borne in the isles of Manilla, the one about 15, the other about 13, and the youngest about 9 yeeres old. The name of the eldest was Alphonso, the second Anthony de Dasi, the third remaineth with the right honourable the Countesse of Essex. He also tooke from them, one Nicholas Roderigo a Portugall, who hath not onely bene in Canton and other parts of China, but also in the islands of Japon being a countrey most rich in silver mynes, and hath also bene in the Philippinas.

Hee tooke also from them a Spaniard whose name was Thomas de Ersola<sup>1</sup>, which was a very good Pilote from Acapulco and the coast of Nueva Espanna unto the islands of Ladrones, where the Spaniardes doe put in to water, sayling betweene Acapulco and the Philippinas: in which isles of Ladrones, they finde fresh water, plantans, and potato rootes: howbeit the people be very rude and heathens.

The 19 day of November aforesaid, about 3 of the clock in the afternoone, our Generall caused the kings shippe to be set on fire, which having to the quantitie of 500 tunnes of goods in her we saw burnt unto the water, and then gave them a piece of ordinance and set sayle joyfully homewardes towardes England with a fayre winde, which by this time was come about to Eastnortheast: and night growing neere, we left the **Content** a sterne of us, which was not as yet come out of the road. And here thinking she would have overtaken us, we lost her companie and never saw her after.<sup>2</sup>

Wee were sayling from this haven of Aguada Segura in California unto the iles of Ladrones the rest of November, and all December, and so forth until the 3 of Januarie 1588, with a faire winde for the space of 45 dayes: and we esteemed it to be between 17 and 18 hundred leagues.

### [Visit to Guam]

The 3 day of January by sixe of the clocke in the morning wee had sight of one of the islands of Ladrones called the island of **Guana** [Guam], standing in 13 degrees 2/3 toward the North, and sayling with a gentle gale before the winde, by 1 or 2 of the clocke in the afternoone, wee were come up within 2 leagues of the island, where we met with

1 Ed. note: Notwithstanding what is said below, this man was the master of the Santa Ana, Thomas de Alzola (with his name misspelled). The man who piloted the English as far as the Philippines and was hanged there, for treason, at Capul Island on 26 January 1588 was Alonso de Valladolid (See Doc. 1588E). As for the master of the Santa Ana, he made a declaration about the capture of the ship, dated Acapulco 8 January 1588 (AGI papeles diversos, legajo 14; copy in MN Madrid: Colección de Navarrete, tome 26).

2 Ed. note: The Content, whose captain was Stephen Hare, was conjectured to have stayed behind voluntarily, being dissatisfied with Cavendish, intending to sail northward along the coast of California to look for a quick passage to England by the Strait of Anian, in the winter-time. They may also have tried to return to the Strait of Magellan and they perished in the attempt. As for the Santa Ana, her anchor ropes were burned and she drifted ashore where the Spanish managed to extinguish the flames; after a quick refit, she proved able to sail onward to Acapulco.

60 or 70 sailes of canoas full of Savages, who came off to sea unto us, and brought with them in their boates plantans, cocos, potato rootes, and fresh fish, which they had caught at sea, and helde them up unto us for to truck [i.e. barter] or exchange with us; which when we perceived, we made fast little pieces of old iron upon small cords and fishing lines, and so vered the iron unto their canoas, and they caught hold of them and tooke off the iron, and in exchange of it they would make fast unto the same line either a potato roote, or a bundle of plantans, which we haled in: and thus our company exchanged with them until they had satisfied themselves with as much as did content them: yet we could not be rid of them. For afterward they were so thicke about the ship, that it stemmed & brake 1 or 2 of their canoas: but the men saved themselves being in every canoa 4, 6 or 8 persons all naked & excellent swimmers and divers.

They are of a tawny colour & marveilous fat, & bigger ordinarily of stature then the most part of our men in England, wearing their haire marveilous long; yet some of them have it made up and tyed with a knot on the crowne, & some with 2 knots, much like unto their images which wee saw them have carved in wood, and standing in the head of their boates like unto the images of the devill.

Their canoas were as artificially made as any that ever wee had seene: considering they were made and contrived without any edge-toole. They are not above halfe a yard in bredth and in length some seven or eight yardes, and their heades and sternes are both alike, they are made out with raftes of canes and reedes on the starrebordside, with maste and sayle: their sayle is made of mattes of sedges, square or triangle wise: and they saile as well right against the winde, as before the winde.

These Savages followed us so long, that we could not be ridde of them: untill in the end our General commanded some half dozen harquebuzes to be made ready; and himselfe strooke one of them and the rest shot at them: but they were so yare and nimble, that we could not discerne whether they were killed or no, because they could fall backward into the sea and prevent us by diving.

The 14 day of January lying at hull with our ship all the middle watch, from 12 at night until foure in the morning, by the breake of day wee fell with an headland of the isles of the Philippinas, which is called Cabo del Spirito Santo which is of very great bignes and length, high land in the midst of it, and very low land as the Cape lyeth East and West, trending farre into the sea to the westward. This cape or island is distant from the ile of Guana, one of the Ladrones, 310 leagues. We were in sayling of this course eleven dayes with skant windes and some foule weather, bearing no sayle two or three nights. This island standeth in 13 degrees...

The fifteenth of January wee fell with an island called Capul...

...

### [Hanging of the Spanish pilot]

The same day at night, being the 15 January 1588, Nicholas Roderigo, the Portuguese whom we had taken out of the great **Santa Anna** at the Cape of California, desired to speake with our General in secret: which when our General understood, he sent for him

& asked him, what he had to say unto him. The Portugal made him this answer, that although he had offended his worship heretofore, yet nowe hee had vowed his faith and true service unto him, and in respect whereof he neither could nor would conceale such treason as was in working against him and his company: and that was this. That the Spaniard which was taken out of the great **sant Anne** for a Pilote, whose name was Thomas de Ersola<sup>1</sup>, had written a letter, secretly sealed it and locked it up in his cheste, meaning to convey it by the inhabitants of this island to Manilla, the contents whereof were:

*"That there had been two English ships along the coast of Chili, Peru, Nueva Espanna, and Nueva Galicia, and that they had taken many shippes and merchandize in them, and burnt divers towns, and spoiled all that ever they could come unto; and that they had taken the kings ship which came from Manilla and all his treasure, with all the merchandize that was therein; and had set all the people on shore, taking himself away perforce. Therefore he willed them that they should make strong their bulwarks with their two Gallies, and all such provision as they could possibly make. He farther signified, that wee were riding at an island called Capul, which was at the end of the island of Manilla, being but one shippe with small force in it, and that the other ship, as he supposed, was gone for the North-west passage, standing in 55 degrees: and that if they could use any meanes to surprize us being there at an anker, they should dispatch it: for our force was but small, and our men but weake; and that the place where we roade was but 50 leagues from them. Otherwise, if they let us escape, within fewe yeares they must make account to have their towne besieged, and sacked with an armie of English."*

This information being given, our Generall called for him, and charged him with these things, which at the first he utterly denied: but in the ende, the matter being made manifest and known of certaintie by especiall tryall and proofes, the next morning our General willed that he should be hanged: which was accordingly performed the 16 of January.

## F2. The notes of Thomas Fuller

**Certain rare and special notes most properly belonging to the voyage of M. Thomas Candish next before described; concerning the heights, soundings, lyings of lands, distances of places, the variation of the Compasse, the just length of time spent in sayling betweene divers places, and their abode in them, as also the places of their harbour and anckering, and the depths of the same, with the observation of the windes on severall coastes:**

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1 Ed. note: As explained earlier, the pilot's name was Alonso de Vallalolid, not Alzola.



**Written by M. Thomas Fuller of Ipswich, who was Master in the Desire of M. Thomas Candish in his foresaid prosperous voyage about the world.**

...  
Item, The 3 day of August [i.e. 13 August, new style] we departed from the port of Aguatulco [Huatulco, Mexico], and the 26 day of August we arrived at the port of S. Iago, where wee watered, and stayed ther untill the second day of September, and ankered in 6 fadoms.

Item, The 2 of September we departed from the port of S. Iago, and the 3 day of September we put into a port one league unto the Westwards of Natividad [Navidad], where we ankered in 8 fadoms water.

Item, The 4 day of September wee departed from the port of Natividad, and the 7 day of September we put into the bay of Xalisco [Jalisco], where we ankered in 9 fadoms water, and the 10 day of September we departed from the bay of Xalisco, and the 12 day of September we ankered at the island of S. Andrew, where we ankered in 17 fadoms water.

Item, The 17 day of September we departed from the island of S. Andrew, and the 24 day of September we put into the bay of Chiametlan, where we ankered in 8 fadoms water, and the 26 of September we departed from the bay of Chiametlan, and the 28 day wee ankered under the islands of Chiametlan in 4 fadoms.

Item, The 9 day of October wee departed from the islands of Chiametlan, and crossing over the mouth of Mar vermejo [i.e. Gulf of California], the 14 day of October we lay off the Cape of S. Lucas, and the 4 day of November we tooked the great and rich ship called **Santa Anna**: and we ankered in 12 fadoms water.

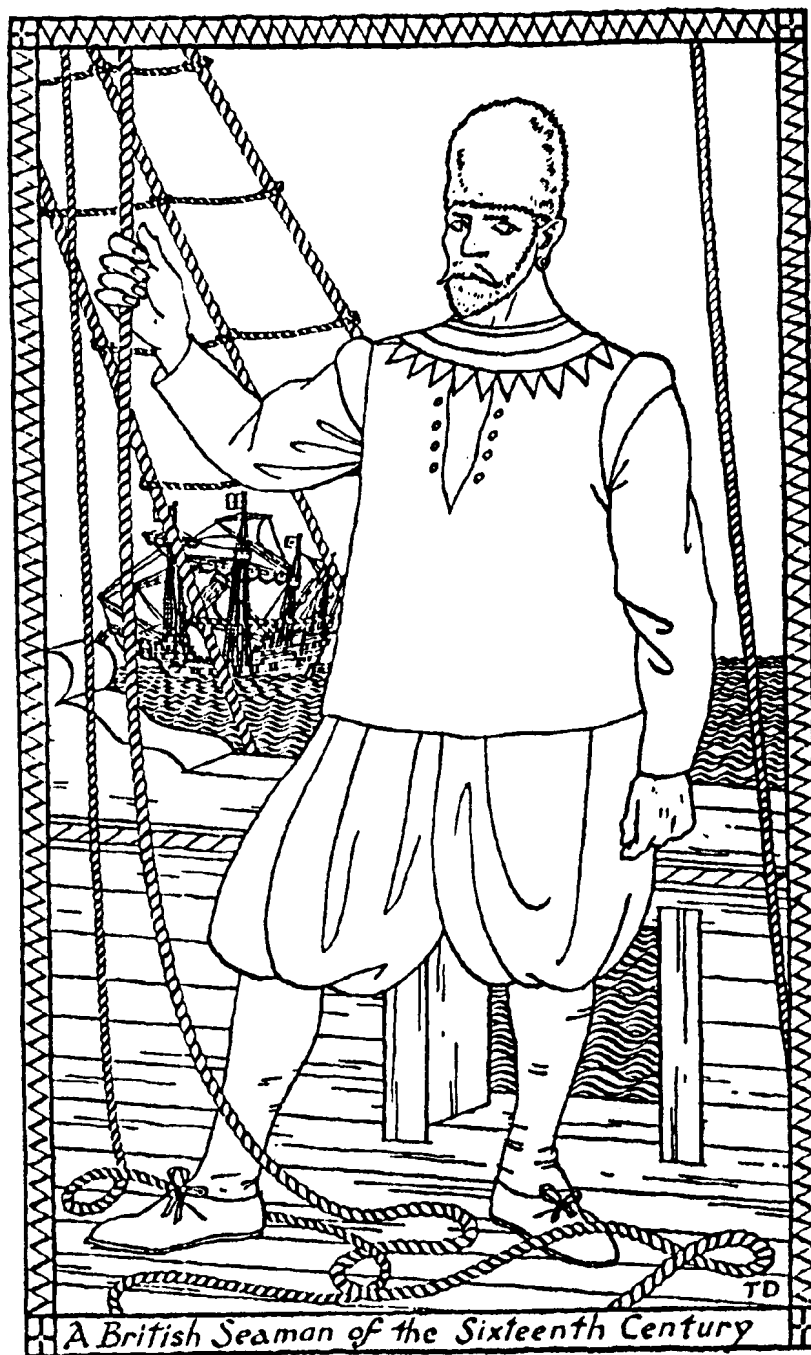
Item, the 19 day of November we departed from the port of S. Lucas, and the 3 day of January [1588] wee had sight of one of the islands of the Ladrones, which island is called The island of **Iwana**<sup>1</sup> [Guam], standing in the latitude of 13 degrees and 50 minutes.

Item, The 3 day of January we departed from the iland if Iwana, and the 14 day of Januarie we had sight of the cape of Spirito santo, and the same day we put into the Streights of the Philippinas; and the 15 day of January we ankered under the iland of Capul, on the which iland we watered and wooded.

...  
Item, The 9 day of September 1588 wee arrived, after a long and terrible tempest, in the Narrow seas, in the haven of Plimmouth in safetie, by the gracious and most mercifull protection of the Almighty, to whom therefore be rendered immortall praise and thankesgiving now and for ever. Amen.

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1 Ed. note: Typographical error for Guana.



**The dress of an English seaman at the close of the 16th century.** *"It comprised a ruff and short sleeveless jacket over a doublet, with wide baggy breeches falling into many folds below the knees. On his head he wears a thrummed cap, and at his left side will be seen a dagger or knife."* (From G. E. Manwaring's article in the *Mariner's Mirror*, Vol. IX, 1923. Drawing as adapted by Thomas Derrick from a 1904 edition of Hakluyt)