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The Third Troublesome Voyage Made with the Jesus of Lubec, 1567-1568

by John Hawkins

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with the Jesus of Lubec,
1567-1568

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INTRODUCTION

HAWKINS reached England in September, 1565, bringing with him much treasure in gold, silver, and various commodities, and valuable information concerning that part of the New World which he had visited. With such results as a return for his outlay, Hawkins had no difficulty in enlisting the interest of his countrymen in a new and larger expedition, having commercial gains principally in view. The record of this third "troublesome" voyage was written by Hawkins himself. It was reprinted by the Hakluyt Society in its Hawkins volume in 1868. Francis Drake, afterward Sir Francis Drake, commanded one of the vessels connected with the expedition. The African coast was again visited, and a large number of slaves were secured and afterward sold in the Spanish settlements of the New World. Neither in the relation of the second voyage by Sparke, nor in this by Hawkins, is there any intimation whatever that at that time the slightest disgrace attached to slave-stealing and slave-selling. The authorities for the voyage are best discussed by Mr. Julian S. Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, I. 414-420. Hawkins was a member of Parliament for Plymouth from 1571 to 1583. Deceiving both the Queen of Scots and Philip as to his loyalty, Hawkins was made a grandee of Spain in 1571, and received as a reward for his pretended treachery a considerable sum of money, which he used in equipping a large number of vessels for operations against Spain in the summer of 1572. He was made treasurer of the navy in 1573, succeeding his father-in-law, Ben Gonson. He was "the man to whom is due all the credit of preparing the royal fleet to meet the Armada," in 1588, served with distinc-

tion as rear-admiral in the naval conflict that ensued, and was knighted July 25, 1588. With Frobisher, Hawkins undertook a voyage in 1590 for the purpose of harassing Spanish commerce. In 1592 he founded, at Chatham, "Sir John Hawkins's Hospital" for needy mariners and shipwrights. In 1595, in company with Drake, he was connected with an expedition against the Spanish settlements in the West Indies; and he died at sea November 12, 1595, "neere the Easternmost end of Saint Juan de Puerto Rico."

H. S. B.

THE THIRD VOYAGE BY M. JOHN HAWKINS, 1567-1568

The third troublesome voyage made with the Jesus of Lubec, the Minion, and foure other ships, to the parts of Guinea, and the West Indies, in the yeeres 1567 and 1568 by M. John Hawkins.

THE ships departed from Plimmouth, the second day of October, Anno 1567 and had reasonable weather untill the seventh day, at which time fortie leagues North from Cape Finister,¹ there arose an extreme storme, which continued foure dayes, in such sort, that the fleete was dispersed, and all our great boats lost, and the Jesus our chiefe shippe, in such case, as not thought able to serve the voyage: whereupon in the same storme we set our course homeward, determining to give over the voyage: but the eleventh day of the same moneth, the winde changed with faire weather, whereby we were animated to followe our enterprise, and so did, directing our course with the Islands of the Canaries, where according to an order before prescribed, all our shippes before dispersed, met at one of those Ilands, called Gomera, where we tooke water, and departed from thence the fourth day of November, towards the coast of Guinea, and arrived at Cape Verde, the eighteenth of November: where we landed 150 men, hoping to obtain some Negros, where we got but fewe, and those with great hurt and damage to our men, which chiefly proceeded of their envenomed arrowes: and although in the beginning they seemed to be but small hurts, yet there hardly escaped any that had blood drawn of them, but died in strange sort, with

¹ On the northwestern coast of Spain.

their mouthes shut some tenne dayes before they died, and after their wounds were whole;¹ where I my selfe had one of the greatest woundes, yet thanks be to God, escaped. From thence we passed the time upon the coast of Guinea, searching with all diligence the rivers from Rio grande, unto Sierra Leona, till the twelfth of Januarie, in which time we had not gotten together a hundreth and fiftie Negros: yet notwithstanding the sicknesse of our men, and the late time of the yeere commanded us away: and thus having nothing wherewith to seeke the coast of the West Indies, I was with the rest of our company in consultation to goe to the coast of the Mine,² hoping there to have obtained some golde for our wares, and thereby to have defraied our charge. But even in that present instant, there came to us a Negro, sent from a king oppressed by other Kings his neighbours, desiring our aide, with promise that as many Negros as by these warres might be obtained, aswell of his part as of ours, should be at our pleasure: whereupon we concluded to give aide, and sent 120 of our men, which the 15 of Januarie, assaulted a towne of the Negros of our Allies adversaries, which had in it 8000 Inhabitants, being very strongly impaled and fenced after their manner, but it was so well defended that our men prevailed not, but lost sixe men and fortie hurt: so that our men sent forthwith to me for more helpe: whereupon considering that the good successe of this enterprise might highly further the commoditie of our voyage, I went my selfe, and with the helpe of the king of our side, assaulted the towne, both by land and sea, and very hardly with fire (their houses being covered with dry Palme leaves) obtained the towne, and put the inhabitants to flight, where we tooke 250 persons, men, women, and children, and by our friend the king of our side, there were taken 600 prisoners, whereof we hoped to have had our choise: but the Negro (in which nation is seldome or never found truth) meant nothing lesse: for that night he remooved

¹ The West African negroes poisoned their arrows; the wounds produced by them tended to result in something resembling lockjaw.

² El Mina, or the Gold Coast.

his campe and prisoners, so that we were faine to content us with those fewe which we had gotten ourselves.

Now had we obtained between foure and five hundred Negros, wherewith we thought it somewhat reasonable to seeke the coast of the West Indies, and there, for our Negros, and other our merchandize, we hoped to obtaine, whereof to countervaille our charges with some gaines, wherunto we proceeded with all diligence, furnished our watering, tooke fuell, and departed the coast of Guinea the third of Februarie, continuing at the sea with a passage more hard, then before had bene accustomed till the 27 day of March, which day we had sight of an Iland, called Dominica, upon the coast of the West Indies, in fourteene degrees: from thence we coasted from place to place, making our traffike with the Spaniards as we might, somewhat hardly, because the king had straightly commanded all his Governours in those parts, by no meanes to suffer any trade to be made with us: notwithstanding we had reasonable trade, and courteous entertainment, from the Ile of Margarita¹ unto Cartagena,² without any thing greatly worth the noting, saving at Capo de la Vela,³ in a towne called Rio de la Hacha⁴ (from whence come all the pearles) the treasurer who had the charge there, would by no meanes agree to any trade, or suffer us to take water, he had fortified his towne with divers bulwarkes in all places where it might be entered, and furnished himselfe with an hundred Hargabuziers,⁵ so that he thought by famine to have inforced us to have put a land our Negros: of which purpose he had not greatly failed, unlesse we had by force entred the towne: which (after we could by no meanes obtaine his favour) we were inforced to doe, and so with two hundred men brake in upon their bulwarkes, and entred the towne with the losse onely of two men

¹ In the Caribbean Sea, off the coast of Venezuela.

² A city on the northern coast of Colombia, capital of a province of the same name and of the state of Bolivar.

³ On the coast of Magdalena, one of the states of Colombia.

⁴ West of Capo de la Vela.

⁵ Men armed with the arquebus, a firearm of the period; written also harquebus.

of our partes, and no hurt done to the Spaniards because after their voley of shot discharged, they all fled.

Thus having the town with some circumstance, as partly by the Spaniards desire of Negros, and partly by friendship of the Treasurer, we obtained a secret trade: whereupon the Spaniards resorted to us by night, and bought of us to the number of 200 Negros: in all other places where we traded the Spaniards inhabitants were glad of us, and traded willingly.

At Cartagena the last towne we thought to have seene on the coast, we could by no meanes obtaine to deale with any Spaniard, the governor was so straight, and because our trade was so neere finished we thought not good either to adventure any landing, or to detract further time, but in peace departed from thence the 24 of July, hoping to have escaped the time of their stormes which then soone after began to reigne, the which they called Furicanos, but passing by the West end of Cuba, towards the coast of Florida, there happened to us the 12 day of August an extreme storme which continued by the space of foure dayes, which so beat the Jesus, that we cut downe all her higher buildings, her rudder also was sore shaken, and withall was in so extreme a leake, that we were rather upon the point to leave her then to keepe her any longer, yet hoping to bring all to good passe, we sought the coast of Florida, where we found no place nor Haven for our ships, because of the shalownesse of the coast: thus being in greater dispaire, and taken with a newe storme which continued other 3 dayes, we were inforced to take for our succour the Port which serveth the citie of Mexico called Saint John de Ullua,¹ which standeth in 19 degrees: in seeking of which Port we tooke in our way 3 ships which carried passengers to the number of an hundred, which passengers we hoped should be a meane to us the better to obtaine victuals for our money, and a quiet place for the repairing of our fleete. Shortly after this the 16 of September we entered the Port of Saint John de Ullua and in our entrie the Spaniardes thinking us to be the fleete of Spaine, the

¹ San Juan de Ulua, a small island on the Mexican coast opposite Vera Cruz, on which is a castle of the same name.

chiefe officers of the Countrey came aboard us, which being deceived of their expectation were greatly dismayed: but immediatly when they sawe our demand was nothing but victuals, were recomfited. I found also in the same Port twelve ships which had in them by the report two hundred thousand pound in gold and silver, all which (being in my possession, with the kings Iland as also the passengers before in my way thitherward stayed) I set at libertie, without the taking from them the waight of a groat: onely because I would not be delayed of my dispatch, I stayed two men of estimation and sent post immediatly to Mexico, which was two hundred miles from us, to the Presidentes and Councell there, shewing them of our arrivall there by the force of weather, and the necessitie of the repaire of our shippes and victuals, which wantes we required as friends to king Philip to be furnished of for our money: and that the Presidents and Councell there should with all convenient speede take order, that at the arrivall of the Spanish fleete, which was dayly looked for, there might no cause of quarrell rise betweene us and them, but for the better maintenance of amitie, their commandement might be had in that behalfe. This message being sent away the sixteenth day of September at night, being the very day of our arrivall, in the next morning which was the seventeenth day of the same moneth, we sawe open of the Haven thirteene great shippes, and understanding them to bee the fleete of Spaine, I sent immediatly to advertise the Generall of the fleete of my being there, doing him to understand, that before I would suffer them to enter the Port, there should some order of conditions passe betweene us for our safe being there, and maintenance of peace. Now it is to be understood that this Port is made by a little Iland of stones not three foote above the water in the highest place, and but a bow-shoot of length any way, this Iland standeth from the maine land two bow shootes or more, also it is to be understood that there is not in all this coast any other place for shippes to arrive in safety, because the North winde hath there such violence, that unlesse the shippes be very safely mored with their ankers fastened

upon this Iland, there is no remedie for these North windes but death: also the place of the Haven was so little, that of necessitie the shippes must ride one aboard the other, so that we could not give place to them, nor they to us: and here I beganne to bewaile that which after followed, for now, said I, I am in two dangers, and forced to receive the one of them. That was, either I must have kept out the fleete from entering the Port, the which with Gods helpe I was very well able to doe, or else suffer them to enter in with their accustomed treason, which they never faile to execute, where they may have opportunitie, to compasse it by any meanes: if I had kept them out, then had there bene present shipwracke of all the fleete which amounted in value to sixe Millions, which was in value of our money 1800000. li. which I considered I was not able to answere, fearing the Queenes Majesties indignation in so waightie a matter. Thus with my selfe revolving the doubts, I thought rather better to abide the Jutt of the uncertainty, then the certaintie. The uncertaine doubt I account was their treason which by good policie I hoped might be prevented, and therefore as chusing the least mischief I proceeded to conditions. Now was our first messenger come and returned from the fleete with report of the arrivall of a Viceroy, so that hee had authoritie, both in all this Province of Mexico (otherwise called Neuva Espanna) and in the sea, who sent us word that we should send our conditions, which of his part should (for the better maintenance of amitie betweene the Princes) be both favourably granted, and faithfully performed with many faire wordes how passing the coast of the Indies he had understood of our honest behaviour towards the inhabitants where we had to doe, aswell elsewhere as in the same Port, the which I let passe: thus following our demand, we required victuals for our money, and licence to sell as much ware as might furnish our wants, and that there might be of either part twelve gentlemen as hostages for the maintenance of peace: and that the Iland for our better safetie might be in our owne possession, during our abode there, and such ordinance as was planted in the same Iland which were

eleven peeces of brasse: and that no Spaniard might land in the Iland with any kind of weapon: these conditions at the first he somewhat misliked, chiefly the guard of the Iland to be in our owne keeping, which if they had had, we had soone knowen our fare: for with the first North winde they had cut our cables and our ships had gone ashore: but in the ende he concluded to our request, bringing the twelve hostages to ten, which with all speede of either part were received, with a writing from the Viceroy signed with his hande and sealed with his seale of all the conditions concluded, and forthwith a trumpet blowen with commandement that none of either part should be meane to violate the peace upon paine of death: and further it was concluded that the two Generals of the fleetes should meete, and give faith ech to other for the performance of the premisses which was so done. Thus at the end of 3 dayes all was concluded and the fleete entered the port, saluting one another as the maner of the sea doth require. Thus as I said before, Thursday we entred the port, Friday we saw the fleete, and on Munday at night they entered the Port: then we laboured 2. daies placing the English ships by themselves, and the Spanish ships by themselves, the capitaines of ech part and inferiour men of their parts promising great amity of al sides: which even as with all fidelitie it was ment on our part, so the Spaniards ment nothing lesse on their parts, but from the maine land had furnished themselves with a supply of men to the number of 1000, and ment the next Thursday being the 23 of September at dinner time, to set upon us on all sides. The same Thursday in the morning the treason being at hand, some appearance shewed, as shifting of weapon from ship to ship, planting and bending of ordinance from the ships to the Iland where our men warded, passing too and fro of companies of men more then required for their necessary busines, and many other ill likelihoods, which caused us to have a vehement suspition, and therewithall sent to the Viceroy to enquire what was ment by it, which sent immediatly straight commandement to unplant all things suspicious, and also sent word that he in the faith of a

Viceroy would be our defence from all villanies. Yet we being not satisfied with this answer, because we suspected a great number of men to be hid in a great ship of 900 tunnes, which was moored next unto the Minion, sent againe to the Viceroy the master of the Jesus which had the Spanish tongue, and required to be satisfied if any such thing were or not. The Viceroy now seeing that the treason must be discovered, forthwith stayed our master, blew the Trumpet, and of all sides set upon us: our men which warded a shore being stricken with sudden feare, gave place, fled, and sought to recover succour of the ships; the Spaniards being before provided for the purpose landed in all places in multitudes from their ships which they might easily doe without boates, and slewe all our men ashore without mercie, a few of them escaped aboard the Jesus. The great ship which had by the estimation three hundred men placed in her secretly, immediatly fell aboard the Minion, but by Gods appointment, in the time of the suspicion we had, which was onely one halfe houre, the Minion was made readie to avoide, and so leeing her headfasts, and hayling away by the sternfastes she was gotten out: thus with Gods helpe she defended the violence of the first brunt of these three hundred men. The Minion being past out, they came aboard the Jesus, which also with very much a doe and the losse of manie of our men were defended and kept out. Then there were also two other ships that assaulted the Jesus at the same instant, so that she had hard getting loose, but yet with some time we had cut our headfastes, and gotten out by the sternfastes. Nowe when the Jesus and the Minion were gotten about two shippes length from the Spanish fleete, the fight beganne so hotte on all sides that within one houre the Admirall of the Spaniards was supposed to be sunke, their Viceadmirall burned, and one other of their principall ships supposed to be sunke, so that the shippes were little able to annoy us.

Then it is to be understood, that all the Ordinance upon the Ilande was in the Spaniards handes, which did us so great annoyance, that it cut all the mastes and yarges of the Jesus

in such sort that there was no hope to carrie her away: also it sunke our small shippes, whereupon we determined to place the Jesus on that side of the Minion, that she might abide all the batterie from the land, and so be a defence for the Minion till night, and then to take such reliefe of victuall and other necessaries from the Jesus, as the time would suffer us, and to leave her. As we were thus determining, and had placed the Minion from the shot of the land, suddenly the Spaniards had fired two great shippes which were comming directly with us, and having no meanes to avoide the fire, it bredde among our men a marvellous feare, so that some sayd, let us depart with the Minion, other said, let us see whether the winde will carrie the fire from us. But to be short, the Minions men which had alwayes their sayles in a readinesse, thought to make sure worke, and so without either consent of the Captaine or Master cut their saile, so that very hardly I was received into the Minion.

The most part of the men that were left alive in the Jesus, made shift and followed the Minion in a small boat, the rest which the little boate was not able to receive, were inforced to abide the mercie of the Spaniards (which I doubt was very little) so with the Minion only and the Judith (a small barke of 50 tunne) we escaped, which barke the same night forsooke us in our great miserie: we were now remooved with the Minion from the Spanish ships two bow-shootes, and there rode all that night: the next morning we recovered an Iland a mile from the Spaniardes, where there tooke us a North winde, and being left onely with two ankers and two cables (for in this conflict we lost three cables and two ankers) we thought alwayes upon death which ever was present, but God preserved us to a longer time.

The weather waxed reasonable, and the Saturday we set saile, and having a great number of men and little victuals our hope of life waxed lesse and lesse: some desired to yeeld to the Spaniards, some rather desired to obtaine a place where they might give themselves to the Infidels, and some had rather abide with a little pittance the mercie of God at Sea:

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so thus with many sorrowful hearts we wandred in an unknown Sea by the space of 14 dayes, till hunger inforced us to seek the land, for hides were thought very good meat, rats, cats, mice and dogs, none escaped that might be gotten, parrats and monkeyes that were had in great price, were thought there very profitable if they served the turne one dinner: thus in the end the 8 day of October we came to the land in the botome of the same bay of Mexico in 23 degrees and a halfe, where we hoped to have found inhabitants of the Spaniards, reliefe of victuals, and place for the repaire of our ship, which was so sore beaten with shot from our enemies and brused with shooting off our owne ordinance, that our wearie and weake armes were scarce able to defende and keepe out water. But all things happened to the contrary, for we found neither people, victuall, nor haven of reliefe, but a place where having faire weather with some perill we might land a boat; our people being forced with hunger desired to be set on land, whereunto I consented.

And such as were willing to land I put them apart, and such as were desirous to goe homewardes, I put apart, so that they were indifferently parted a hundred of one side and a hundred of the other side: these hundred men we set a land with all diligence in this little place beforesaid,¹ which being landed, we determined there to take in fresh water, and so with our little remaine of victuals to take the sea.

The next day having a land with me fiftie of our hundreth men that remained for the speedier preparing of our water

¹ The number was one hundred and fourteen. David Ingram, Richard Brown and Richard Twide made their way northward, and about fifty leagues from Cape Breton found a French vessel, on which they were carried to England. About seventy of the others, including Miles Phillips and Job Hortop, marched westward into Mexico. Of this number sixty-eight suffered punishment and imprisonment in the galleys, and three were burned to death. Narratives written by Miles Phillips and Job Hortop are preserved in Hakluyt's *Voyages*, IX. 398-465, of the Hakluyt Society's edition. David Ingram's narrative, printed by Hakluyt in his edition of 1589, was omitted in the edition of 1600 on account of "some incredibilities." In his *Westward Ho*, Charles Kingsley made extensive use of the material furnished by these relations, as well as of that found in Hawkins's own narrative.

aboard, there arose an extreame storme, so that in three dayes we could by no meanes repaire aboard our ship: the ship also was in such perill that every houre we looked for shipwracke.

But yet God againe had mercie on us, and sent faire weather, we had aboard our water, and departed the sixteenth day of October, after which day we had faire and prosperous weather till the sixteenth day of November, which day God be prayesd we were cleere from the coast of the Indies, and out of the channell and gulfe of Bahama, which is betweene the Cape of Florida, and the Ilandes of Lucayo.¹ After this growing neere to the colde countrey, our men being oppressed with famine, died continually, and they that were left, grew into such weakenesse that we were scantly able to manage our shippe, and the winde being always ill for us to recover England, we determined to goe with Galicia² in Spaine, with intent there to relieve our companie and other extreame wantes. And being arrived the last day of December in a place neere unto Vigo called Ponte Vedra,³ our men with excesse of fresh meate grew into miserable diseases, and died a great part of them. This matter was borne out as long as it might be, but in the end although there were none of our men suffered to goe a land, yet by accesse of the Spaniards, our feeblenesse was knowne to them. Whereupon they ceased not to seeke by all meanes to betray us, but with all speede possible we departed to Vigo, where we had some helpe of certaine English ships and twelve fresh men, wherewith we repaired our wants as we might, and departing the 20 day of January 1568⁴ arrived in Mounts bay⁵ in Cornewall the 25 of the same moneth, praised be God therefore.

If all the miseries and troublesome affaires of this sorowfull

¹ Hawkins was familiar with this route, as he passed the same way in his previous voyage.

² Northwest province of Spain.

³ In the southern part of the province of Galicia.

⁴ Old style. By new style, 1569.

⁵ On the southern coast of Cornwall, between the Lizard and Land's End.

voyage should be perfectly and throughly written, there should neede a painefull man with his pen, and as great a time as he had that wrote the lives and deathes of the Martyrs.

JOHN HAWKINS.