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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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TWO FATEFUL STORMS

The defeat of the Spanish Armada in the 16th century has a remarkable parallel in the 13th century history of the Far East, the details of which are fully set forth by N. Yamada in his book "Ghenko; the Mongol Invasion of Japan." Just as Philip II of Spain first attempted to subdue England by statecraft and then by force of arms, so Kublai Kahn, the great Mongol ruler, first sent ambassadors to demand the submission of Japan and later despatched two military expeditions to that country; and just as a storm helped defeat the enemies of England so did one save Japan from conquest.

The first of the Mongol attacks failed, partly on account of stormy weather. In 1281 Kublai fitted out a huge armada of 3,500 ships and 100,000 men. Sailing in two divisions -- one from the Yang-tse-Kiang and the other from Korea -- the great fleet reached its appointed rendezvous on the Japanese coast, where a series of fights occurred. Then, on July 17, came a terrific typhoon. The invading fleet was shattered and 70,000 of those on board were drowned. The survivors landed on Taka Isle, but subsequently nearly all were killed by the Japanese. Three, who were spared, were sent back to Kublai's court bearing a defiant message from the Japanese.

"Both Philip of Spain and Kublai Khan," says Yamada, "equipped what each thought an invincible armada to exterminate a nest of insolent pirates and bring to their feet an island country of infinitely inferior resources to their own. In both cases the resolution, skill and valor of the defenders might perhaps have failed had not the forces of Nature come at an opportune moment to their assistance."

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