

THE REAL STORY OF THE PIRATE



A. Hyatt Verrill

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THE REAL STORY OF THE PIRATE

BY

A. HYATT VERRILL

AUTHOR OF "THE REAL STORY OF THE WHALER,"
"ISLES OF SPICE AND PALM," ETC.



The  Rio Grande Press, Inc.

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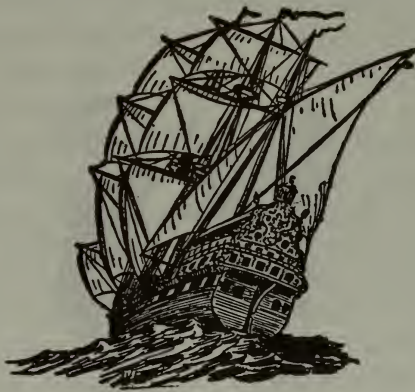
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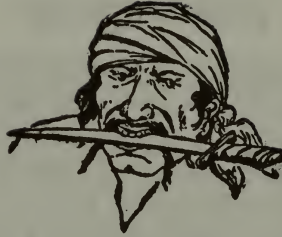


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INTRODUCTION

Probably no class of human beings has inspired more stories than the pirates who, from time immemorial, have figured in tales of romance, adventure, and daring without losing their interest. There is scarcely a boy or a man who, at some period of his life, has not wished he were a pirate. Few there are who do not eagerly devour any pirate yarn published, new or old.

Just why this is so is a bit difficult to understand, for pirates, as a whole, were far from being the chivalrous, gallant characters that should make favorite heroes of fiction. No doubt, however, their popularity is largely due to the picturesque, adventurous life they led, their enviable freedom from conventions and laws, their undoubted bravery, dare-devil recklessness, and incredible feats. In admiring these, and thrilling to their swashbuckling deeds, we forget their sordid motives, their cruelty, their utter ruthlessness. But, unfortunately, fiction has not adhered to facts in treating of the sea rovers and the majority of people have a very hazy and erroneous idea of the pirates, the buccaneers, and other corsairs.

INTRODUCTION

From the thousands of pirates who first and last have infested the seas only a few have been selected as leading men in piratical literature and, oddly enough, these have not by any means been the men who did the most remarkable things or led the most adventurous lives or were the most daring.

Kidd, Morgan, Blackbeard, Tew, Montbars, and even Lafitte have taken a prominent part in countless stories while scores of others, who were far more worthy of being made immortal in song and story, have been overlooked or ignored, and even their names are unknown to the public at large.

Sharp, Ringrose, Watling, Bonnet, Stafford, Cook, Bonny, Foster, Braziliero, Portugues, L'Ollonais, Greaves, and countless others are names almost unknown, except to those who have made an historical study of the pirates; and yet these men led lives which put Kidd and his ilk to shame.

Unfortunately also, pirate stories have far too often departed far from the historical facts. As a result, the popular idea of pirates and buccaneers—and the public is all too prone to think the two synonymous—is vague and hazy.

In the present book, the author has endeavored to tell the true story of the pirate, devoid of all fiction, rumor, and pure tradition, and to include only the facts which may be obtained from unquestionable, historical accounts, and contemporaneous works.

But stripped of all the glamour of fiction, the story of the pirate is full of interest, romance, adventure, and thrills. Indeed, it is a case where truth

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is even stranger than fiction, for no author could imagine anything to equal the real deeds, the marvelous feats, the incredible daring, and the utter depravity and disregard for humanity of the pirates and buccaneers. The author has also endeavored to point out the tremendous influence of the buccaneers upon our own country and people. Had it not been for these picturesque sea rovers, England would have been hard pressed to retain her hold in the New World, and the United States might now be under Spanish rule. The downfall of Spain's sea power was largely due to the sea rovers and, no matter how despicable they were in many ways, we cannot fail to feel a debt of gratitude to the buccaneers.

It may surprise you to learn that many of our customs, our luxuries, even our monetary system were inherited from the buccaneers, while much of our early knowledge of the Antilles, of South America, of the East Indies, and of the sea came from them. Still more surprising is the fact that pirates were a menace to mariners until as recently as 1825. As extracts from American newspapers included in the book will prove, they were as much a part of the risks of the sea as hurricanes and rocks.

Unfortunately, few of the pirates wrote accounts of their lives and, as the authors of the various existing histories of the sea rovers could not be in several places at the same time, many of the most notable piratical voyages and feats, as well as the names of prominent pirate chieftains, do not appear in the literature of their day. There remains avail-

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able, however, a vast amount of authentic literature concerning pirates and buccaneers, but to include accounts of all the pirates in a book of this scope is manifestly impossible. Much of this information is in old Spanish, French, or Dutch and many of the books are exceedingly rare and difficult of access.

The author, however, has endeavored to include all the more notable pirates in the present work and to give a condensed account of their deeds. In compiling the material, he has availed himself of a vast amount of data in his possession, and he believes that he has thrown new light upon the personalities and deeds of famous corsairs and has made public material which hitherto has been known only to those making a special study of the subject.

Among the works from which the author has obtained information embodied in this work may be mentioned: *The Buccaneers of America*, Esquemeling, 1678; *The Dangerous Voyage and Bold Assaults of Captain Bartholomew Sharp and Others*, Basil Ringrose, 1685; *Our Navy and the Barbary Corsairs*, Allen; *Travellers and Outlaws*, Higginson; *De Berugte Landen Zee Helden*, Kerstemann, 1756; *Journal du Voyage Fait la Mer de Sud Avec Les Filibustiers de l'Amerique en 1684*, Lussan, 1690; *Pirates and Buccaneers of all Countries, History of the Pirates*; *Lives of English Highwaymen, Pirates and Robbers*, Johnson; *Memoirs of Sir Francis Drake*, Cates; *Life, Voyages, etc., of Captain John Smith*, by himself; *Voyage of Samuel Champlain, 1599-1602*; logs of whalemens and Salem sea captains; old periodicals, letters and newspapers, etc.

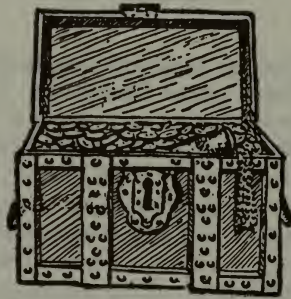
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In illustrating the book the author has made use of rare old prints, contemporaneous with the buccaneers and pirates, as well as of photographs taken by himself. Manifestly, many of the subjects which it has been deemed necessary to illustrate cannot be photographed and, as there are no available pictures in existence, the author has made original drawings compiled from the most accurate data and descriptions at his disposal.

Not only is it hoped that the volume will prove of interest to all those interested in pirates, but that it will be entertaining reading for lovers of the sea, of battles, of adventurous deeds, and of romantic picturesque characters. Visitors to the Caribbean or the Spanish Main will find in its pages much that will make those places more enjoyable by linking them with the pirates and the buccaneers and by visualizing them as they were in the days when Don and Briton battled and fought and ravished with unspeakable cruelty and incredible daring.







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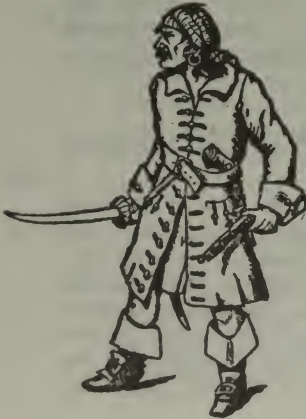
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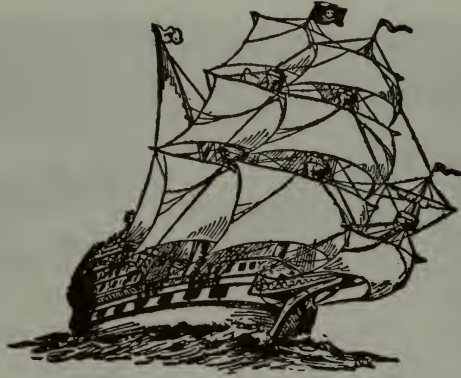
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SPANISH SHIP SINKING A BUCCANEER CRAFT

THE REAL STORY OF THE PIRATE

CHAPTER I

THE EARLY PIRATES

(1588—1682)

No one knows who were the first pirates nor when men first conceived the idea of making a livelihood by preying upon ships. But it is highly probable that pirates originated almost coincidentally with the invention of sea-going craft. Pirates, strictly speaking, have existed from prehistoric times and are known even among the more primitive and savage nations. The Phœnicians were pirates, the Greeks and Romans were notorious pirates, and the Norse Vikings were a race of pirates. From the earliest times, too, oriental seas have been infested with pirates.

In the days of these early pirates, the profession of piracy was perfectly legitimate, and was a form of warfare or conquest. No one thought a Viking or a Roman a criminal because he bore down upon some other craft or some unprotected settlement, robbed, slaughtered, and carried off prisoners to slavery. And even many centuries thereafter piracy

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was looked upon as an adventurous and honorable profession which explains why the freebooters increased and multiplied and carried on their trade without serious interference or molestation until comparatively recent times.

In the old days, a man secured a ship and went a-pirating much as the knights ashore donned their mail and, mounting their chargers, rode forth to joust with any they might meet. It was a question of might making right and any one had the privilege of acquiring the belongings of others unable to protect their possessions by force of arms.

There is no doubt that piracy built up a splendid race of daring seamen and doughty fighters, just as knight-errantry developed a fearless and gallant race of soldiery. It was piracy that led the Phœnicians far and wide, for commerce in their day was carried on by force of arms and conquest. It was piracy that led the Vikings to England, and across the Atlantic to Greenland and New England, and much that has been handed down to us in the way of seamanship, navigation, and the art of shipbuilding is due to the early sea rovers.

Even our famous clipper ships were evolved through a form of piracy-privateering—for the swift privateers of revolutionary days were the first vessels ever built on clipper lines. The very nature of the pirates' profession, as well as their success and their lives, depended upon the stanchness and speed of their ships, and hence the piratical races developed craft which could outsail the peaceful merchantmen. Even in the East, the piratical Malays evolved craft

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which are still famed for speed, and the swift ships of the Barbary corsairs were equally well known.

The Chinese and Malay pirates and their ilk are not of any real interest. They were, and the few remaining are still, mere maritime thugs—cutthroats who attacked and robbed any ship they thought they could overpower and made sudden dashes from safe retreats, killed and robbed and scurried back to their holes. There was nothing romantic or picturesque in a horde of half-naked Chinese or Malays swarming over a ship's deck, putting the crew to death, slitting throats and stabbing with daggers and creeses and making a getaway at the first show of assistance or superior forces. They never accomplished any noteworthy or great deeds, they were cowards at heart and have no real place in a story of the pirate.

The Barbary pirates, who brazenly plied their trade for so long in the Mediterranean, were a step better. They systematized their piracy, were organized and not ruthless murderers, but took prisoners whom they either ransomed or sold as slaves. They were not notable for reckless bravery, and seldom made an attack against overwhelming odds and superior armament; and never pursued their calling far from home or scoured the seas on long voyages. Neither did they make forays upon fortified towns or cities of distant nations, and had it not been for the part which our navy took in suppressing them, the Barbary corsairs never would have come into much prominence or played an important part in the story of the pirate.

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In American waters there were few real pirates in the early days, unless we look upon Columbus and the other conquerors and discoverers as pirates. Columbus and his fellow explorers were robbers and murderers, but hardly pirates as some authors have claimed; for a pirate is and must be primarily a sea robber, and there were no ships to lay aboard and rob when those old Dons penetrated the unknown seas of the New World.

Drake and Hawkins were probably the first who could, by any stretch of the imagination, be called pirates in American waters, but even they were not real pirates nor even buccaneers. They were officers in the British navy and while nominally Spain and England were at peace at the time of Drake's and Hawkins' greatest exploits in the Caribbean, still both nations admitted that a state of war practically existed and the two old sea dogs claimed to be carrying on a maritime guerrilla warfare for the glory of their country and the confusion of their hereditary enemies, the Spaniards.

They were, in effect, nothing more or less than privateers who rather overstepped the bounds of legitimate privateering, and in their day it was a difficult matter to draw a hard-and-fast line between a privateer and a pirate. Of course, they took loot and carried out their exploits for their personal benefit and gain as much as for the Crown, but privateers did that, even during our Revolutionary War and the War of 1812.

Quite naturally, the Dons considered them pirates, but, during the World War, England, France, and

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the United States looked upon the German U-boats as piratical craft and these could hardly be included in a history of pirates.

Drake's and Hawkins' careers have been described many times and are so well known that it is hardly worth while to deal with them in detail although a brief sketch of Drake's voyages may not be amiss, as they had a very direct bearing and influence upon the buccaneers and pirates who followed in his wake.

It is a rather strange and interesting fact that many of the most notorious and successful pirates and buccaneers were, in private life, men of the most law-abiding and peaceful professions, and Drake was no exception. He was a naval chaplain, at one time vicar of a parish, and yet he seemed to take naturally to the sea and to deeds of valor and bloodshed. He first came into prominence by sailing around the world, a deed that was more or less involuntary on his part—and for which he was knighted. The voyage was begun in 1572 when Drake set out in four small ships for the Spanish main on a privateering expedition.

He sailed boldly into Nombre de Dios, to the utter consternation of the Dons, but he and his men were rank amateurs, and when a little group of about a dozen Spaniards discharged their muskets at the British, the invaders beat a hasty retreat without securing a shilling's worth of booty. But Drake and his men were apt pupils and learned rapidly. He raided several towns, took considerable loot, and showed great skill in outwitting and outfighting the Dons although his defeats were as numerous as his

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victories, as he freely admits in his memoirs, for which frankness we must give him due credit.

But he was a tenacious old rascal and an efficient one. His brother, John, was killed in an attack on a Spanish ship, his other brother, Joseph, and scores of his men, died of yellow fever and, when at last the scourge was over, only forty-four men out of a crew of seventy-three were left alive. Notwithstanding these misfortunes, Drake continued to harass the Dons. He captured and looted many towns, fought Indians and Spaniards with equal impartiality and varying success and, at last, feeling he had accomplished quite enough for the glory of his Queen and the benefit of his pocketbook, he sailed home by way of Cape Horn and the Cape of Good Hope and was thus the first Englishman to circumnavigate the globe.

Thus knighthood and fame were won and Drake rose to still greater prominence by the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. But his honors were empty ones, and he was a sad and embittered man, because Richard Hawkins, the son of his kinsman and lifelong friend, John Hawkins, was a captive of the Dons in the West Indies. The two old sea fighters swore eternal vengeance on the Spaniards, vowing that they would destroy the power of Spain in the New World, and in 1595 set out to fulfill these vows with a fleet of twenty-seven ships and a force of 2,500 men.

Here it may be well to call attention to the fact that this expedition was a seminaval one, for six of the vessels were British men-of-war provided by

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Queen Elizabeth, and for this reason Drake and Hawkins could not possibly be considered pirates on this memorable voyage.

The expedition was disastrous from the start. At Porto Rico they were ignominiously defeated and Hawkins received a wound from which he died. He was buried off the island and Drake, more vengeful and broken-hearted than ever, headed for Central America for a second attack on Nombre de Dios.

This time he met with better success, and with the aid of Cimmeroon negroes and friendly Indians took the town. Then he tried to hold up the trains of mules carrying the bullion and plate from west coast mines across the old gold road from Panama to the Atlantic. But fortune frowned, one of his men sneezed and betrayed the presence of the hidden British, Drake was beaten off and the doughty old admiral received a wound which, combined with an attack of fever, caused his death soon after. His body was buried at sea off the present harbor of Porto Bello and the much harassed Dons again breathed freely.

But there were two other followers of Drake who were more privateers than pirates, whose careers and exploits are well worth telling. Not only were they far more romantic characters than their predecessors, but one of them accomplished that which had baffled Drake and all others—the capture of San Juan de Porto Rico against which the British fleets had hurled their shot time and again in vain.

This man was a scholar, a gentleman and a noted sportsman—no less a personage than the Right

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Honorable George, Earl of Cumberland, M.A., Cambridge. My Lord was a peer of a bold and romantic nature, a courtier and notorious gambler whose morals were of such a character that they attracted attention even in those days when morality was conspicuous by its absence, but he was as brave and strong as he was dissolute.

Having run through the entire gamut of sixteenth-century thrills and excitement, he decided that the land had nothing more to offer and that the corsair's life was the only thing left to quicken his pulses and satiate his desire for romance and adventure. Being a man of means, he fitted out a ship and for several years roved the sea as a sort of nautical knight-errant. In fact he was a Knight of the Garter and took part in the defeat of the Armada.

Cumberland was a great favorite of Queen Elizabeth and for some reason, which history fails to relate, his sovereign saw fit to bestow upon him a jeweled glove from one of her own queenly hands. This token the gallant dare-devil earl was accustomed to wear like a plume in his hat, and from this fact he was far better known as "the man with the glove in his hat" than by his official title.

Having served his apprenticeship as a sea rover, Sir George looked about for greater deeds and conquests. He was most ambitious, and knowing that the greatest sea fighters of the times—Sir Francis Drake and his friend Hawkins—had found Porto Rico too hard a nut to crack, my Lord of the glove in his hat decided to attempt this redoubtable fortress himself.

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Accordingly, in March, 1598, he set sail from Plymouth, England, bound for the West Indies, with a fleet of twenty ships, all provided by himself. His flagship bore the suggestive name of *The Scourge of Malice* and as usual, Sir George, pacing the high poop, wore a wide-brimmed white hat with drooping plume and the queen's glove thrust through the band to show the wine-colored cuff ablaze with diamonds. A month later the fleet put into Dominica, where the men were given shore leave, and fresh water and fruits and vegetables were taken aboard, and then, having refreshed themselves, they proceeded to San Juan.

Being wholly unexpected by the Dons, the Earl sailed close in to the island unseen and landed a force of six hundred men about two miles to the east of the Morro, thus coming in by the back door as we might say. The exact spot was near where the Santurce bridge now stands, and with muffled footsteps the little army of British approached the sleeping town along the high road where now the trolley cars pass between San Juan and the residential suburbs.

Dividing his force into two parties, Sir George attacked the town at two points simultaneously and after two hours of wild hand-to-hand fighting was in possession of the capital. His success was largely due to luck, as the usual garrison of the citadel had been weakened by the withdrawal of the greater portion of the soldiers for service in Cartagena, but there is no doubt that Cumberland's strategy and bravery had a great deal to do with the victory. There was plenty of plunder to be had, although

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most of the inhabitants had fled into the country upon the advent of the British. Cumberland had little to complain of, and as he had not acquired the habit of torturing prisoners, a custom followed by later pirates, or because he was too gallant a gentleman to inflict such atrocities, my Lord established himself in the town, repaired the damages to forts and buildings and tried to establish friendly relations with the four remaining white inhabitants.

Realizing the strategic position of San Juan and the all but impregnable fortress, Cumberland conceived the idea of establishing himself there permanently—in short, his idea was to make the spot a pirate stronghold from which to conduct forays upon the neighboring Spanish possessions.

But there was an unseen and unsuspected enemy lurking about San Juan which even the daring Sir George was powerless to conquer. This was the deadly yellow fever; and almost before the Earl realized that the scourge was upon them, half his men were dead and scores more were dying.

Unlike Drake, Cumberland had sense enough to know that to defy the fever was hopeless and so, with his few remaining men and his plunder, he hurried aboard his ships, set sail, leaving the Yellow Jack victorious, and reached England in safety after an uneventful voyage.

No less romantic than the man with the glove in his hat was another titled personage who sought the life of a sea rover in the Caribbean some fifty years after Cumberland's exploit. In fact, the deeds of

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this gentleman of the sea were performed during the days of the buccaneers, although he was not one of the Brethren. He was a scion of royalty, one Prince Rupert of the Rhine, a clever, highly educated but headstrong young blood who, according to his contemporaries, was a great dandy, "very sparkish in his dress," and a veritable bundle of nervous energy.

Life was never dull when the Prince was about, and again to quote his chroniclers, he was "like a perpetual motion." His early life was one constant round of adventure and he always made the most of his opportunities. Doing nothing was his *bête noir* and once, when a prisoner at Linz, he not only managed to learn drawing but devoted his spare moments to making love to the governor's daughter. The Prince was a most chivalrous gentleman, a Don Quixote of the sea, and in 1648 he sailed from Ireland with seven ships to champion the cause of England in the Indies.

Like Drake and his predecessors, Prince Rupert sallied forth as a privateer or an irregular of Britain's naval forces, but he soon found that piracy afforded far more opportunities for his restless spirit and love of adventure than legitimate warfare. Of adventure he had a plenty and for several years he led a merry and kaleidoscopic life, although never resorting to cruelties or to despicable practices like the buccaneers and later pirates.

But all the corsairs had careers of short duration and Prince Rupert came to grief within five years of the time he sailed from the Emerald Isle. His fleet was caught in a storm off the Virgin Islands and

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driven on to the jagged reefs of Anegada. The *Defiance* in command of Prince Maurice, Rupert's brother, was a total loss and her royal commander went down with her; the *Honest Seaman* was broken to pieces on the reefs, and the only survivor was the *Swallow* with the romantic Rupert in command. Battered and crippled, the *Swallow* crept towards home and, almost sinking, reached the coast of France in 1653.

But the brilliant, dandy Prince was a broken man. Lonely and disheartened and "too far spent ever to put to sea again," he settled down to a quiet life in England and, in 1682, almost unknown and forgotten, died quietly in his bed at Spring Gardens.

Prince Rupert's career was short and meteoric, which was ever the rule with the pirates and buccaneers. The freebooters crowded so much into their lives and performed so many deeds that hearing of their exploits leads us to think that the more famous men of their profession ravaged the seas for many years. But the pirates' lives were always short and merry ones. Few people can realize that all of Morgan's exploits were performed within a space of five years; that Teach, or Blackbeard, rose from a common mariner to the pinnacle of piracy of his times and was killed, all within two years; and that scores of the most noted pirates existed as such for only a twelvemonth.

I do not know positively which pirate carried on his nefarious calling for the greatest length of time, but probably the honors would go to Ringrose,

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Dampier, or Sharpe, while the prize for a short career would unquestionably be awarded to Fly, who played havoc with shipping along our Atlantic coast, rose to no little fame, and came to an abrupt finish, all within the space of one month!

CHAPTER II

THE BEGINNING OF THE BUCCANEERS

(1629—1640)

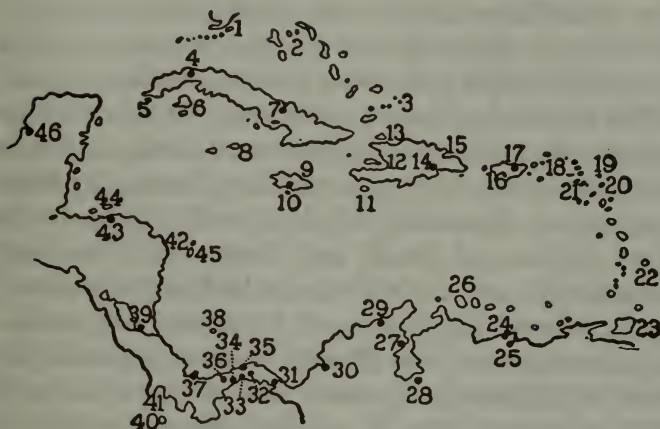
OF all the pirates who ever scoured the seas or scuttled a ship the most famous, the most daring, the most picturesque, and the most romantic were the buccaneers. Indeed, it was the buccaneers who made piracy a household word and a theme for endless stories and songs.

Generally, when we think of pirates, or see stage pirates, or read pirate stories, unconsciously we imagine or portray a buccaneer. They developed piracy into an art and a profession, were highly organized, eminently picturesque and accomplished feats which have never been equaled for sheer recklessness, triumphs over tremendous odds and incredible hardships patiently endured.

Their leaders made names for themselves that will never die and immortalized piracy. And yet, strictly speaking, the buccaneers were not true pirates—that is, not in the beginning, although eventually they deteriorated into common pirates.

And oddly enough the buccaneers came into being through the overbearing policy of those who eventually suffered the most at their hands. Had it not been for these freebooters it is doubtful if Spain

BEGINNING OF THE BUCCANEERS



THE CARIBBEAN AND THE SPANISH MAIN

(Showing localities mentioned in the book.)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Florida | 24. La Guaira |
| 2. Nassau (Old Providence) | 25. Caracas |
| 3. Caicos Islands | 26. Curaçoa |
| 4. Havana | 27. Maracaibo |
| 5. Cape Antonio | 28. Gibraltar |
| 6. Isle of Pines | 29. Rio de la Hacha |
| 7. Puerto Principe | 30. Cartagena |
| 8. Cayman Islands | 31. El Real (Darien) |
| 9. Jamaica | 32. Old Panama |
| 10. Port Royal | 33. Panama City |
| 11. Cow Island (Isla de vacas) | 34. Natá |
| 12. Santo Domingo (Hispaniola) | 35. Porto Bello |
| 13. Tortuga | 36. San Lorenzo (Chagres) |
| 14. San Domingo City | 37. Bocas del Toro |
| 15. Samana Bay | 38. Old Providence Is. |
| 16. Puerto Rico | 39. Nicaragua |
| 17. San Juan | 40. Coiba Is. |
| 18. Virgin Islands | 41. Gulf of Nicoya |
| 19. St. Barts | 42. Cape Gracias a Dios |
| 20. Antigua | 43. Puerto Caballos (Puerto Cortez) |
| 21. St. Kitts (St. Christopher) | 44. Bay Islands |
| 22. Barbados | 45. De las Pertas Islands |
| 23. Trinidad | 46. Campeche |

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ever would have lost her supremacy on the seas or her hold on America, and yet the buccaneers were bred and brought into being by the Dons themselves.

The Spaniards forced the French and British to piracy and spelled thereby their own doom—hoist, to use a figurative and time-worn expression, by their own petard. Spain had acquired vast holdings in the West Indies and South and Central America and claimed still more. In fact, she laid claim to sovereignty over all the Antilles and America and, realizing that she must use drastic measures, passed decrees which practically made pirates and outlaws of all foreigners trading in so-called Spanish waters or dominions in the New World.

In order to enforce her decrees Spain employed armed vessels or *guarda costas*, whose officers had orders to destroy any strange ships they met and to take no prisoners. Furthermore, Spanish troops were dispatched to destroy British, French or Dutch settlements within the territory claimed by Spain and to massacre the inhabitants without mercy. As a result, the other nations came to look upon the Dons as sworn enemies and the matter of religion made more bitter the endless warfare that arose between the Spaniards and their enemies.

Spain soon found that she had a hard nut to crack, for with the restrictions on trade and settlement of the West Indies, there were vast fortunes to be won by those hardy enough to dare Spain's vengeance. Despite her inhumanity and ruthlessness, Spain found that her actions only attracted more and more adventurers to these lands she wished for herself.

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Protests made by Spain to England, France, and Holland, and demands for redress for injuries inflicted by their subjects, were met with derision, or by the answer that Spain was at liberty to act as she saw fit against those acting without royal commissions. Queen Elizabeth boldly told the Spanish king that as he had started the game, she washed her hands of it and Spain was forced to solve her problem herself, which she did to her own destruction.

Once the defeat of the Armada proved that the vaunted prowess of the Spanish was overrated, Drake, Hawkins, and others set sail defiantly for Spanish-American waters, fought the Dons, captured their towns and played merry havoc with them. But these men were not buccaneers nor pirates, but privateers, and the other adventurers and settlers carried on their bitter fight against the Spaniards of their own volition and as they saw fit.

There was no organization, no well-directed or concerted offensive against the Dons until 1629 when a Spanish force attacked the settlers on the island of St. Christopher, now called St. Kitts.

At that time there were both French and British settlements on the island, and having been driven off by the Dons, a number of the French set sail in small, native, dugout canoes in search of new homes. A few remained at St. Kitts and the surviving British colonists took up their abode in the nearby island of Nevis.

In their tiny cockleshell boats, the homeless French reached Hispaniola (now known as Santo Domingo), a stronghold of the Spaniards, their

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richest island, and in its northern portion largely uninhabited. Finding the country teeming with game, wild cattle, horses, and pigs, the French at once landed and sent back word to their compatriots who followed overseas in great numbers. But they well knew that here in the Dons' own country permanent settlements or agricultural industries were impractical and hence, for a livelihood, they slaughtered the wild cattle and dried the flesh over fires. The result, known as *bucan* by the Caribs and Spaniards, was a valuable article of trade, and from their profession the French were known as bucaniers, which later became buccaneers. They were hunters, expert marksmen and woodsmen, rough fellows garbed in the hides of their prey, without interest in either piracy or seamanship.

Of course they could not remain in Hispaniola very long unknown to the Spaniards and forces were soon sent to dislodge them. But the bucaniers had no intention of attempting serious resistance to the Spanish troops. Deciding that discretion was the better part of valor, they went to the island of Tortuga off the northern coast of what is now Haiti, a place even better adapted to their profession than the mainland. Here there were a few Spaniards, but oddly enough, these fellows were friendly and welcomed the refugees. For a space of six months all went well. But finding new French arrivals threatened their possession, these Dons sent word to the authorities of Hispaniola and a large force of Spaniards was dispatched to drive off the French.

As they had no women or children to bother with,

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the French once more slipped away, and in canoes returned to Hispaniola. The Dons, finding no one to drive out of Tortuga, turned their attention to the larger island only to find that the French had beaten them at this game of "Puss in the Corner" and had gone back to Tortuga.

This time, however, the French made up their minds that they would remain and, as a first step in this direction, promptly deported and destroyed the Spaniards there, built rude forts and prepared to resist further interference on the part of the Dons. Moreover, they sent word to the governor of St. Kitts asking for aid and begged him to send a governor for their new possession.

This was in 1630. The worthy French official at St. Kitts promptly acceded to the demands of his wild, cattle-hunting subjects, sent a ship well armed, a force of men and one, Monsieur le Passeur, as executive. Le Passeur immediately commenced work upon fortifications, selecting as the site for his fort a high rocky hill commanding the harbor on the southern side of the island.

The only access to this spot was a steep and narrow pass or cañon which would admit but two persons at a time and could therefore be readily defended. In the center of the hilltop was a deep bowl-like depression which the governor had transformed into a magazine and storehouse. It was a place admirably designed by nature for the purpose of a fort, and with vast toil and labor two guns were hoisted to the hilltop, sheds and houses were built and when all was accomplished, the cañon was

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destroyed and the fortress completely isolated. Its garrison could enter and leave only by means of ladders which were drawn into the fort when not in use and as there was a plentiful supply of fresh water gushing from a spring among the rocks, the Frenchmen were prepared to withstand almost any siege.

Feeling themselves so thoroughly protected from the Dons, the French flocked to the island and in addition to buccanning meat they planted tobacco, corn and other crops and built a good sized town. Naturally the Spaniards of Hispaniola felt far from pleased at the foothold won by the French and were still more annoyed by the fact that the latter had acquired the habit of making destructive raids upon the Spanish towns and settlements and even upon Spanish ships, from the fastness of their island.

At last, unknown to the French, a force of eight hundred Spaniards with many slaves and Indians, succeeded in landing at Tortuga. It was evident, however, that they could not surprise the buccaneers' fort or settlements without being seen, for the forest had been cleared away and no attack could be made without heavy guns which were not available. The only thing to be done was to erect another fort and for this purpose the Dons selected a mountain overlooking the French battery. To take artillery up this height was impossible without almost super-human toil. But slaves were there, their lives were nothing to the Dons and under the lash these unfortunate beings worked and hewed and cut a way

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through the rock to the mountain top. Through this laboriously quarried pass two large guns were dragged, and the Spaniards rested from their labors and rubbed their hands with satisfaction at the thought of the surprise they would give the French on the following morning.

Although the Dons had landed surreptitiously, their labors had not passed unnoticed and the French were thoroughly aware of what was taking place. Under the shelter of darkness the buccaneers climbed silently up the mountainside and utterly surprised the Spaniards. So terrified were the Dons at this sudden and unexpected assault that the greater part threw themselves from the cliffs while those who remained were cut down without mercy. Thus the victorious French were in possession of the Spaniards' fort without the loss of a man and must have laughed in their sleeves at the way they had let their enemies build a second fortress for them.

Up to this time the French had not made piracy a paramount profession and the buccaneers were what their name implied. They had, however, dabbled in piracy a little, much to the discomfiture of the Spaniards, and had taken a number of Spanish ships. This they had accomplished by means of small boats, for they had no large vessels and the bravery and resourcefulness they displayed in these attempts were well worthy of note.

Sneaking from Tortuga in their dugouts or piraguas the French would silently approach a Spanish ship. Then, while the expert marksmen picked off the gunners and the helmsmen, the buccaneers would

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row near to the ship's side so that her guns could not be depressed to hit them, and would wedge the vessel's rudder. This done, the French would swarm up the ship's side, knives in teeth, pistols in belts, and by sheer recklessness and fury would overpower the crew.

One of the most notable of these attacks was that of Pierre le Grand, known also as Peter the Great, a native of Dieppe in Normandy. With twenty-eight men in a single boat, Pierre was cruising about near the Caicos Islands. He had been at sea for some time, provisions were low and no prizes had been sighted. They were on the point of giving up when a large Spanish ship was seen, a heavily armed galleon which later proved the flagship of the vice admiral.

So desperate was the chance in attacking the vessel that le Grand ordered one of his men to bore holes through the bottom of the boat in order that she might founder and thus compel his crew to take the Spanish ship or drown. The Dons had already seen the French boat, but the vice admiral looked contemptuously at it and its ragged occupants and remarked:

“Must I then fear such a pitiful thing? No, not were she a ship as big and strong as mine own.”

But the Don did not know the desperate character of the buccaneers. It was twilight and the Frenchmen urged their tiny boat close to the galleon, scuttled their craft and armed with pistols and swords swarmed up the ship's side and on to her decks. Those Spaniards on deck were instantly cut down,

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a party of French rushed to the gun room and seized the ammunition and small arms while le Grand, with a few companions, dashed to the cabin. Here the vice admiral with his officers were enjoying a quiet game of cards when without warning the door burst open and fierce, bewhiskered faces and roughly garbed figures showed in the candlelight. Before the Spaniards could even rise, pistols were pointed at their heads.

Dropping his cards the astounded admiral exclaimed, "Jesus bless us! Are these devils or what?"

The buccaneers held all the trumps, Pierre had won the game, and the stakes, consisting of the galleon and all the riches she contained, were his without the loss of a man.

Beyond question Peter the Great was a wise man, for only a wise man knows when he has enough and Pierre decided that his first and last prize was amply sufficient for all his future needs.

Forcing what Spanish seamen he required into his service, he placed the rest of the officers and crew ashore at Santo Domingo and set sail with all his easily acquired riches for France. There he settled down on the proceeds of his piratical feat and gave up buccaneering forever.

This coup of le Grand's paved the way for many similar attacks by the French of Tortuga and soon the term "buccaneer," instead of implying a cattle hunter, became synonymous with the most feared and daring of Spain's enemies.

Once in possession of ships taken as prizes the

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buccaneers were in a position to carry their piratical ventures farther afield and to take even larger and richer ships.

To Tortuga, flocked Dutch, British, Danes, Swedes, and French and soon the spot became the headquarters of the sea rovers. They made no secret of their activities—indeed were proud of them—and buccaneering became the sole industry of the island.

Although composed of such lawless men a regular government was maintained under officials sent from France, but the governors were, of course, in thorough sympathy with their subjects, shared in the loot taken, and even fitted out craft to prey upon the Dons.

With their impregnable forts upon the mountains, the single port on the rockbound islet, and their rapidly growing forces of wild reckless men, the settlement of Tortuga grew into a nest of corsairs who defied the mighty power of Spain almost within a stone's throw of Spain's richest possession in the Antilles. Within easy reach of the rich cities of the Spanish Main they commanded the passage between Cuba and Santo Domingo.

Here to Tortuga flocked slaves who had been sold for debt in the British islands, ne'er-do-wells from England, France, Holland, and other lands, ex-soldiers and sailors, escaped criminals and convicts, soldiers of fortune and adventurers, ragamuffins and gutter sweepings, refugees and outlaws, robbers and thugs, desperate characters of all nations, but all actuated by the same motive—lust of gold and hatred of the Spaniards.

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And although only a few were hunters of the wild cattle, all took the name of buccaneers. In this connection attention must be called to a most curious and interesting fact. Although the term "buccaneer" or "bucanier" was first applied only to the French hunters, it gradually became connected with all the sea rovers and still later solely with the English buccaneers, while the French assumed the name of filibusters. The origin of this word was quite different from that of buccaneer. Owing to the fact that the earlier attacks on Spanish ships were made by small boats or, as the Spaniards called them, *fibotes*, the piratical buccaneers became known as *fiboteros*.¹ This was altered to *fibustiers* by the French and later to filibusters which was in turn corrupted to flybusters and to freebooters by the English and took the form of *vlieboters* in the Dutch.²

But to themselves, whether French, Dutch, British or a mixture of a score of nationalities, these sea rovers were known as "Brethren of the Main," a highly organized, efficient and powerful association that ravished land and sea for years, carried terror to the hearts of every Spaniard, committed unspeakable atrocities, and performed incredible feats—the greatest band of corsairs the world has ever known.

¹ Probably the word *fibustiers* was derived from the English *flyboats*—a type of small, single-masted craft much favored by the British buccaneers—or from *fly-boaters* and not from the Spanish equivalent. In various instances I find references, in contemporaneous writings, to *fly boats* and *fly boaters*. However, regardless of whether the word was derived directly from the English or from the Spanish there is little or no question that *filibuster* and *freebooter* were both corruptions of the same original term.

² *Land en Zee Heldin*, Kersteman, 1756.

CHAPTER III

THE BRETHREN OF THE MAIN

(1640—1666)

Now that the buccaneers had graduated from their original profession of meat curers and cattle hunters and had taken to the sea and to piracy, they found that organization and concerted action were essential. As a result, they formulated or adopted laws, rules, and regulations covering almost every contingency that might arise. As the bulk of the men were impecunious and lacking in initiative, they found that they must have leaders, men who possessed executive and strategic ability and either owned vessels or could secure them from friends.

These leaders were often neither seamen nor navigators and the buccaneer chieftains or captains, and even the so-called admirals, for the sea rovers were fond of high-sounding titles, were by no means the most important personages on board the ships.

The work of navigating and of handling the vessels fell to trained seamen who were known as pilots or coxswains, or sometimes quartermasters, and were in virtual command as long as the buccaneers were at sea. Most of these men were educated, able to read and write in order to keep the logs and work out observations. It was largely to these men that

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we owe the records and history of the buccaneers, although a few of the rank and file, surgeons and others, were educated and talented men and left wonderfully detailed records of the doings of themselves and their comrades.

But not all those who went a-pirating on the buccaneers' ships were fighting men, nor did all take part in the raids and battles. There were seamen whose duty it was to handle the vessel, and coopers, carpenters, stewards, surgeons, navigators, personal servants and slaves, who took no part in battles unless of necessity.

The wonderful success of the buccaneers was largely due to the careful preparations and the thorough organization of the Brethren and no naval or military expedition was ever more carefully planned with regard to the least detail than the forays of the buccaneers.

When a leader decided to set forth to rob and murder the hated Dons he published or proclaimed his intent and the buccaneers flocked to him by hundreds. Then the details of the proposed expedition were laid before the chosen company. Every man furnished his equipment, arms, and ammunition, and supplied his *pro rata* portion of the supplies. This last was not a matter of concern—in fact, was a lark rather than otherwise—for to provision their ships the buccaneers had but to make a foray on Hispaniola. There they commandeered cattle, pigs, and other foodstuffs required and, if the owner objected, slit his throat for his trouble. The buccaneers frequently solved their financial problems in

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these raids on enemies' farms and sacked a town and secured funds and stores of wines, grain, and other provisions at one and the same time.

A council or conference was then held and the individual shares of the proceeds of the expedition were determined. The buccaneers carried out their arrangements on a businesslike basis for they formed a temporary stock company on mythical assets which would not materialize until the loot was secured as no capital was invested. The leaders supplied only the ship and her armament and the officers gave their services.

In return for what each man, including the leader, was to supply in goods or skill, a certain number of the shares of so-called "common stock" was allotted. Thus the captain often received five hundred pieces of eight (each share was counted a piece of eight), the carpenter received one hundred and fifty, the surgeon, who supplied his own medicines, two hundred or even two hundred and fifty, and the men, for the stolen supplies they provided, were allotted about two hundred shares. All this was carefully set down in articles signed by each man, in which they pledged themselves to obedience to the leader to the end of the expedition. In case of failure to carry out these obligations, the offender was to be marooned or to be inflicted with even more drastic punishment, and rarely, indeed, did disloyalty occur.

Finally, the matter of indemnity or accident insurance was adjusted and embodied in the articles. Thus, for the loss of life or of a right arm, six hundred pieces of eight or six slaves would be agreed

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upon; for a left arm, five hundred pieces of eight or five slaves; for a right leg, five hundred pieces of eight or five slaves; for a left leg, four hundred pieces of eight or four slaves; for an eye, or a finger or hand, one hundred pieces of eight or one slave. Slaves were always valued at one hundred pieces of eight each, whether male or female, white, black or red, old or young, and the beneficiary had the option of taking either slaves or cash.

It was then agreed that any residue from the total results of the expedition—after deducting the various shares and indemnities—should be divided among the whole company in certain proportions. This varied, but as a rule was about five or six times as much for the captain as for the seamen. The master or mate received twice the seamen's share, the other officers their proportionate amount and the residue was divided equally among all the members of the fighting and navigating force. Even the boys received a quota—usually half a share—for they were quite important personages, their duties being to handle ammunition, wait on the men and, in case their vessel was to be deserted, to remain on board until the last moment and set it afire.

Moreover, the articles bound the men to turn in everything they took to the common fund and a solemn oath—often signed in blood—pledged them not to conceal anything. Oddly enough these wild, reckless rascals were absolutely faithful and honorable in their dealings with one another and would

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freely divide their last centavo or their last shirt with their less fortunate fellows.

They had their own codes of honor, their own laws, and their own standards. We usually think of the buccaneers as utterly depraved, lawless, lacking in every decent trait, but, as a matter of fact, they possessed many excellent characteristics.

It seems very strange to think of men, who robbed and tortured and murdered and ravished right and left, possessing any religious feeling. But paradoxical as it may appear, the buccaneers insisted on the observance of the Sabbath.

On one occasion—as will be told later—the crew of a buccaneer ship mutinied and placed their captain in confinement and elected a successor for the sole reason that the leader did not hesitate to attack the enemy on Sunday and did not hold religious services. There are also several instances where buccaneer chieftains shot down their men for interfering with or interrupting divine service, while the Jamaica buccaneers even had their own church.

The commonly accepted idea that the buccaneers killed or tortured all the prisoners they took is without any foundation. To be sure, there were some buccaneer leaders who were inhuman monsters and gloried in refusing quarter, killing all who fell into their hands. But, as a rule, the buccaneers treated their prisoners in a fairly humane manner, and seldom killed captives out of hand. If the prisoners were important or wealthy persons they were usually held for ransom, while those of the crew who remained alive after a ship was taken, were

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usually either set ashore or turned adrift in their boats with food and water, but without enough sail to enable them to reach port and summon help until the buccaneers were safely out of reach.

And in judging the buccaneers and their deeds we must make allowance for the prevailing customs of their times and the accepted methods of warfare then in vogue. To make slaves of prisoners, to torture innocent and inoffensive people in order to learn the hiding places of their riches, to force men to walk the plank are deeds which appear monstrously inhuman and ruthlessly cruel. But we must remember that in the days of the buccaneers the law itself inflicted unspeakable tortures upon criminals and malefactors for the most trivial offenses. Cutting off ears and hands, slitting tongues, branding, hanging by thumbs, flogging and the pillory were penalties imposed upon offenders whom nowadays we would think severely punished if sentenced to a few days in jail.

Impaling, quartering, flaying alive and hanging in chains were legitimate everyday punishments, while debtors and prisoners of war were regularly sold into slavery. Looting, the ravishing of women, and the burning of towns were all a recognized part of warfare and hence the buccaneers committed no greater excesses and cruelties than the duly constituted authorities or the soldiers of their day.

Indeed, as a rule, they were more humane than the troops or the judges. This was largely to their own interests, as they realized that if they gave no quarter to the Spaniards, the Dons would retal-

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iate in kind. The buccaneers frequently fell into the Spaniards' clutches and they were anxious to build up a certain reputation for humanity among their enemies. On at least one occasion, the gratitude of the Dons for mercy shown their fellows by the buccaneers, resulted in the rescue of a number of the corsairs from a swift and sudden end.

We must bear in mind that the buccaneers did not consider themselves pirates or outlaws. England and France were at war with Spain and the buccaneers looked upon themselves as a sort of irregular force preying upon the enemies of their native lands. They never attacked or molested ships or property of their own countrymen and therefore were not true pirates. Indeed, they flew the flags of their own countries and did not, as is often thought, use the "Jolly Roger" as their standard. Each piratical or buccaneer chieftain had his own colors or house flag, and the black flag was not known as the emblem of the Brethren. Thus the burgee of Sharp was a red flag bearing a bunch of green and white ribbons; that of Sawkins, a red flag striped with yellow; Peter Harris flew a plain green burgee, and Coxon displayed a red flag. The conventional pirate flag with its skull and bones was adopted later and only came into use as a piratical emblem after the scattered buccaneers had deteriorated into common pirates without a country and without respect for the banners of their former lands. The true buccaneers were always patriotic and at the first call of their mother country would flock to her aid.

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When the British strove to wrest Jamaica from the Spanish the buccaneers were called upon to help and ably filled their parts. Had it not been for them, it is very doubtful if the British would have succeeded in ousting the Dons from Jamaica.

In short, the buccaneers were self-constituted auxiliaries of England and France, and while they had no authority under which to carry on their warfare and conducted it largely for their own benefit, their selfish and patriotic motives were so closely linked that it is hard to distinguish between them. When they took a Spanish ship or a Spanish town they invariably hoisted the British ensign or the French flag over their prize and, to add to their martial effect, had the music of trumpeters and drummers to which to march.

When we consider the ragtag and bobtail of which the buccaneers' forces were composed, we may wonder that they were as humane, as decent, and as merciful as they were. They were a wild, rough lot—their one thought, drink, gamble, and carouse, and the rewards to be had for scuttling a ship or putting a score of Dons to death were enormous. Often the loot taken in a single raid was so great that even the common seaman received as much as five thousand pieces of eight (approximately five thousand dollars) for his share. Give the ordinary rough seaman of to-day license to rob and destroy without fear of punishment or redress, and, with such a prize before him, how would he act? Not by any means as well as did the buccaneers, I'll warrant.

Some of the leaders had commissions or letters

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of marque as privateers, but far more acted solely on their own initiative; and as their governments realized they were preying solely on a recognized enemy, no steps were taken to stop the freebooters. Indeed, they were openly encouraged and fostered and for years the British and French islands, especially Jamaica, were headquarters for the buccaneers and depended for their prosperity upon them.

Even the Dons, regardless of official decrees, considered the buccaneers more as gallant and honorable enemies of war than as pirates. The rovers and the Spaniards carried on negotiations and exchanged courtesies, while the Dons traded with the buccaneers at times, and, meeting on neutral ground, purchased loot from them as from any other customers.

And now a word or two about the famous pieces of eight, the doubloons, and the onzas which always appear in pirate literature and without which no pirate tale would be complete. Few people know what pieces of eight were and it is often thought they were gold coins of great value. But in reality, the piece of eight was a silver coin with an approximate value of that of our dollar. The name was derived from the fact that it had a value of eight reales and usually bore a figure eight and an "R" upon its reverse side. The real was one half a peseta or approximately twelve and a half cents. To-day the peseta is worth about twenty cents and the real but ten cents, and the piece of eight which still exists as a standard Spanish coin, known as the "Spanish Dollar," sells at any money changer's

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for eighty-five cents. But aside from slight changes in the inscriptions and the head of a different sovereign, Spanish dollars of recent date and the pieces of eight of the buccaneers are identical, some of the modern coins even bearing the "8-R" of old.¹

The doubloon was a gold coin of one hundred reales or twelve and a half pieces of eight, and consequently had a value of approximately twelve and a half dollars. At the present exchange it is worth about ten dollars (\$10.62). The onza or "double doubloon" was a gold coin of two hundred pieces of eight, or twice the value of the ordinary doubloon. Its weight was twenty-five grams and its present value in gold is about \$16.50. In addition to these minted coins there were silver pieces of one half, one, and two reales which were most interesting bits of metal known as "cross money." These were irregular pieces of silver cut from pieces of eight and of one fourth, one eighth, or one sixteenth their weight. To prove that they were of sterling or minted silver of standard quality, a portion of the coat of arms of Spain was left intact upon them, and as this usually took the form of a cross the common name of cross money was given. The section of the piece of eight did not always bear the shield or *escudo* and in such cases it was customary for the priests—whose integrity could be depended upon—to stamp a rude cross upon the bit of bullion as proof that it was from a minted coin. Such coins are still in use in many parts of Central America

¹ Current issues of the Spanish dollar are coins of five pesetas or ten reales each with a value of one dollar at normal exchange.

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—notably in Panama—and while no two are alike in size or shape or in the “cross” upon them, they are easily recognized by their size and pass as one half, one, and two real pieces. These are particularly worthy of mention as many writers have erroneously called them “pieces of eight” from the fact that they were cut from the eight real coins.

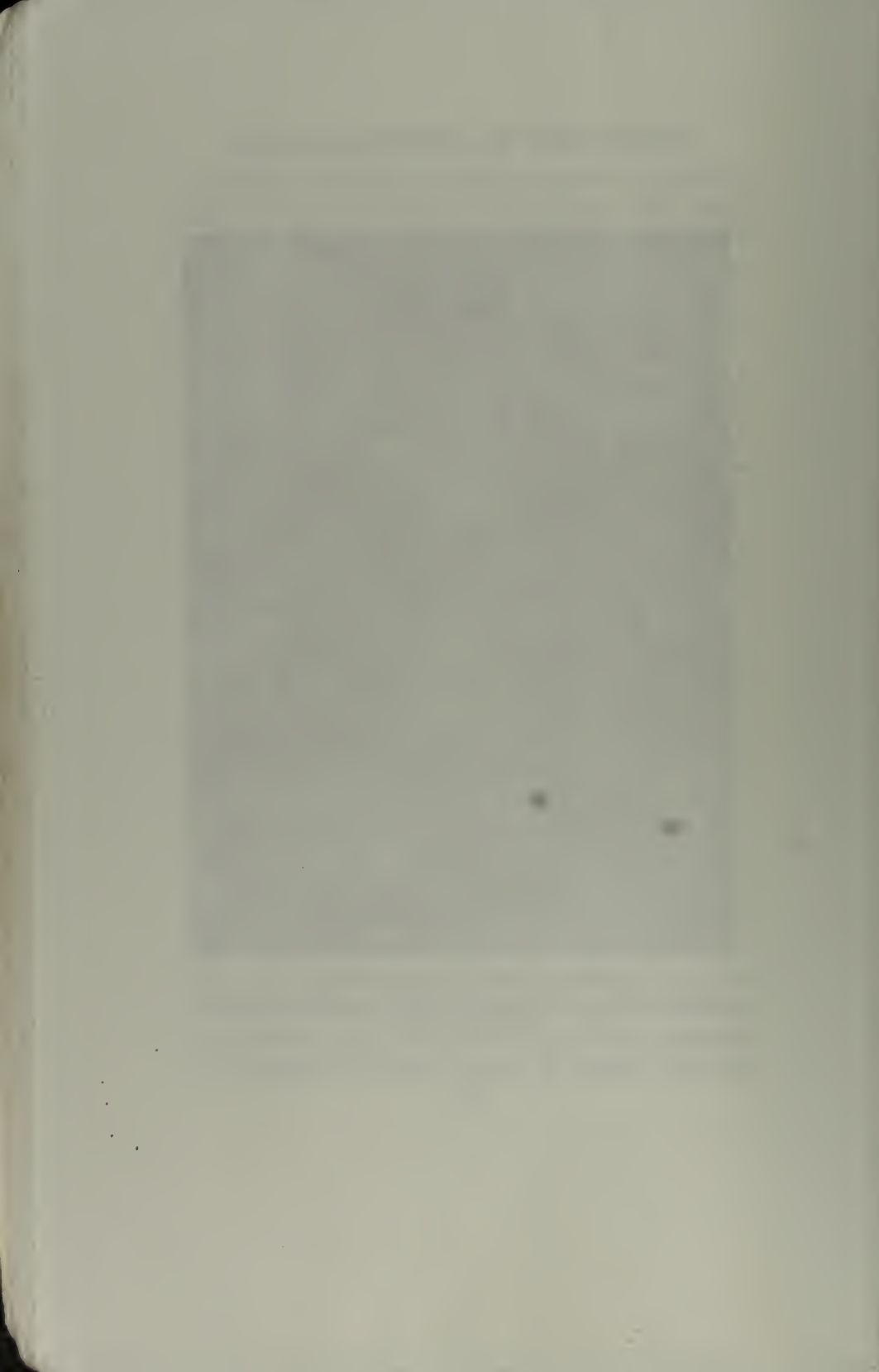
The most interesting fact about the pieces of eight and the old Spanish coinage is the direct derivation of our own monetary system from that used by Spain in buccaneer days. The piece of eight is the ancestor of our own “almighty dollar,” and even our dollar symbol is merely a corruption of the symbol used in the days of the buccaneers, for denoting pieces of eight and has nothing to do with the monogram, U. S., as has been claimed.

For many years before the Revolution, practically all trade and commerce was conducted on the basis of the Spanish coinage and the piece of eight passed everywhere, much as the Mexican dollar is extensively used in the Orient. Then, when the newborn republic decided to adopt a coinage of its own, it was quite natural that the new standard should be made as nearly the size and value of the piece of eight as possible. Moreover, the bullion from which the new coins were struck was mainly obtained from pieces of eight, and the colonists issued newly designed pieces of eight which they called “dollars.” Not only did they follow out the value of the piece of eight in order that there might be no confusion in exchange, but they followed the Dons’ example in adopting a decimal system of values, the new



SPANISH COINS OF BUCCANEER DAYS

1-2 Piece of Eight. 3-4 Doubloon. 5-6 Onza or Double Doubloon.
7-8 Cross Money.



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dollar being worth one hundred cents as the piece of eight was worth one hundred centavos, the ten dollar gold piece taking the place of the doubloon and the twenty dollar piece that of the onza. As accountants and clerks were accustomed to keep their books and accounts in terms of pieces of eight, for which the symbol was a figure eight with a perpendicular line through it, and as the new dollar had the same value, it was only natural that they should use the same symbol for dollars, adding a second line for distinction. This symbol became altered to the well-known dollar sign.

Many old accounts and bills are still in existence bearing such items as: "100 bags of sugar at 860, 8600," and which when hurriedly written might easily be mistaken for a modern statement in dollars with the familiar symbol.¹

In addition to the coins described and the Spanish *castellanos* worth half a doubloon, there were also French, Dutch and English coins—pistoles, Louis d'or, guilders, piasters and guineas, pounds and spade guineas, with an almost endless number of subsidiary silver coins.

All these figure in the literature and history of the buccaneers, but throughout the world the Spanish coins were looked upon as the standard. It must have taken an expert accountant to keep track of the relative values of these coins, but it is doubtful

¹ The same thing has occurred in many of the Spanish-American countries. Although their standard coin is the peso they use the dollar symbol for it, the same slightly altered ancient symbol used for the old pieces of eight.

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if the buccaneers ever bothered their heads about working out the exchange. No doubt they roughly calculated the values of gold or silver coins by size and weight, or reckoned them in terms of bullion, as they did golden and silver vessels, chalices, ornaments, and the plate and jewelry they obtained. Of precious metals the corsairs knew the value, but they had vague ideas of the worth of gems, and, according to their contemporaries, were outrageously cheated when they disposed of such things. This did not greatly trouble the sea rovers. As long as they got enough to enable them to have a prolonged debauch ashore they were satisfied and when all was spent, would once more sail forth to replenish their empty pockets at the expense of the Dons.

It is also worth while for us to consider the equipment, the arms, and the ships of the buccaneers. For small arms they used the same heavy cumbersome muskets used in hunting wild cattle; long-barreled, smooth-bore pistols; cutlasses and heavy dirks or daggers much like butchers' knives, used by them in skinning and dressing wild animals. We usually think of a buccaneer's or pirate's cutlass as a slightly curved, short-bladed sword with a brass guard similar to that of a modern navy cutlass or saber. But from old prints made in the days of the buccaneers it is evident that these weapons of the freebooters were distinctive. They were extremely heavily bladed, scimitarlike swords with a guard like an inverted scallop shell, and often had a crossbar and a saberlike guard in addition. These scallop-guarded cutlasses were apparently typical of the

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buccaneers and used exclusively by them, for they are never shown in the possession of any of the Spaniards or the soldiers or sailors of other nations. Possibly they were made especially for the sea rovers, but more likely were manufactured by buccaneer armorers in Tortuga and Jamaica.

There are many records of the freebooters capturing great stores of muskets, pistols, and ammunition, but I can find no record of an instance where the buccaneers made use of the Spaniard's swords. It is not difficult to understand why. They had no use for them. The Dons used light rapiers wholly unsuited to the rough-and-tumble fighting of the buccaneers. The long swords would have been a handicap in a scramble over a vessel's side or when handling the ship, and the corsairs used their cutlasses as tools as well as weapons. In the jungles the buccaneer used his cutlass to hew a path and the heavy blade, with its scimitarlike curve, was excellent for cutting brush. Indeed, the buccaneers' cutlass was the forerunner of the modern machete and not only does the latter closely resemble the freebooters' cutlass in form and design but, throughout the West Indies, the machete is still known only by the name of cutlass.

The cannon of the buccaneers were mainly light bronze and iron pieces—carronades, howitzers, and the still lighter culverins, which were scarcely more than heavy muskets mounted on swivel carriages. The "grate pieces of iron" mentioned by the chroniclers of the buccaneers were ridiculously small as compared with modern field pieces or even with

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the muzzle-loading cannon of our Civil War days.

In many of the old buccaneer strongholds these ancient guns may still be found. I have examined scores of them and the largest I have ever seen had not more than a four-inch bore and used round shot weighing about eighteen pounds.

As the buccaneers made use of any vessels they could obtain adapted to their purposes, their ships, of course, varied greatly in size and armament, but they were very seldom large or heavily armed. The big ships with their deep draught were of no use to the freebooters. Speed and seaworthiness were desirable and the smaller the ship the better—provided she could accommodate the horde of buccaneers in her company. A small vessel could run into rivers, among reefs, and into shoal waters where the enemy's men-of-war could not follow; they could be careened on any sheltered beach for cleaning and repairs; they were easy to handle and offered a smaller mark for the enemy's guns.

Many of the vessels they used were scarcely larger than good-sized rowboats; sloops and piraguas and the so-called "barks" were favorites and even the larger vessels were seldom over one hundred tons burden. The nautical terms in use in the days of the buccaneers were very different from those of to-day and their sloops and barks were not the sloops and barks we know.

A sloop, in the time of the buccaneers, was frequently larger than a bark, and was a two-masted vessel, while the bark was a small type of coasting craft with a single mast. The piragua, still used in

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Santo Domingo, Cuba, and Porto Rico, was a small open boat with a single huge lateen sail; and the "ship" was a three-masted vessel with square rigged fore and mainmasts and a lateen-rigged mizzen. They were high, clumsy-looking craft, in form much like the caravals of Columbus with low bows and lofty sterns, ornate poops, and a square sprit sail forward where jibs are now used and were practically useless in sailing against or on the wind.¹

The traditional "low black schooner with its rakish masts" was absolutely unknown to the buccaneers or to pirates until comparatively recent times—the latter part of the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth century. Moreover, the buccaneers' ships were not "bristling with guns" as many would have us believe. Vessels of four, six, or eight guns were the common type; those of ten, twelve, and sixteen guns were not unusual and the most heavily armed buccaneer vessel of which I have found any definite record was the flagship of Morgan on his expedition to Panama which mounted "twenty-two great guns and six smaller ones of brass."

¹ The high poops, lofty stern castles, and immense amount of freeboard on these old ships have been a source of wonder and curiosity to many. The explanation is simple. In the days of such vessels cannon were clumsy weapons of very short range, and in order to prevent the enemy's guns from sweeping their decks, as well as to provide elevations for mounting their guns in order to increase their range, each nation tried to outdo the others in building high-sided and high-sterned ships. The buccaneers, who depended far more on hand-to-hand fighting than on artillery, were the first to cut down and do away with these cumbersome, top-heavy structures which gradually disappeared altogether as the power and range of cannon were increased.

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But what the freebooters' ships lacked in armament they made up in numbers of men. They fairly swarmed with buccaneers, and some idea of the huge crews carried may be gained from the fact that Morgan's fleet of thirty-seven vessels had a complement of over two thousand fighting men in addition to their crews and the boys and officers. Small barks and sloops often carried from one hundred to two hundred men who must have slept, literally piled, upon the restricted area of the decks of their tiny craft.

The rank and file of the buccaneers was made up of the flotsam and jetsam of Europe and the Antilles, but among this riffraff were many who were gentlemen born and of superior attainments and education. It is hard to realize that poets, authors, scientists, musicians, chemists, jurists, even doctors of divinity were found among the buccaneers. Foster, who was reproved by the notorious Morgan for his "harshness," wrote sentimental poetry and, in the lulls between taking the lives of Spaniards and sacking towns, penned *Sonnettes of Love* and other poems. He might, with good reason, be considered the poet laureate of the buccaneers, although his *Sonnettes* may not have been remarkable from a literary standpoint.

Dampier, who was one of Sharp's companions on his "dangerous voyage" and a pirate through and through, was a scientist, naturalist, and author. He kept a journal in which he set down everything of interest, and his descriptions of the fauna and flora, the Indians and their habits are the most accurate

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we have. His manuscript he kept securely in "a large jointe of Bambo" which he says "I stopt at both ends, closing it with Wax, so as to keep out water. In this I preserved my Journal and other Writings from being wet, tho' I was often forced to swim."

Of course, from the nature of his profession, the author-naturalist was obliged to write his journal by fits and starts, extracting the rolled paper from its resting place in the "jointe of Bambo" to jot down a few hurried lines in the lull of battle or by the flickering lights of camp fires in the jungle. But as he never failed to make notes of anything of interest, his journal gives us a splendid insight into the ways of the buccaneers and the strange scenes witnessed.

Lussan, too, was a writer and left an excellent book of his adventures. Wafer was a surgeon, and apparently a good one. Jobson was a divinity student who at one period in his career had been a chemist or druggist in London. In all his wanderings and throughout his piratical career he carried a Greek Testament, and was in the habit of entertaining his fellow corsairs by reading aloud from the much-thumbed and blood-stained volume.

Finally, there was Esquemeling who started in life as a clerk in the West India Company. This company had obtained a charter or concession to trade with the buccaneers at Tortuga and sent Esquemeling out as an accountant to look after the company's interests, in 1666. The buccaneers gladly took advantage of the goods and supplies

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offered for sale by the West India Company, but when it came to collecting its debts the company found the happy-go-lucky freebooters a difficult lot. They flatly refused to settle up and, as a result, the company's Tortuga branch became bankrupt.

The directors sent word to sell all the company's possessions in Tortuga and along with its goods and chattels went its employees. Esquemeling was sold like a bundle of calico to the governor of Tortuga, who, to quote Esquemeling's own words was "the most cruel tyrant and perfidious man ever born of woman." He treated the ex-accountant with brutality, allowed him almost to starve to death, and made his life miserable, although, as Esquemeling tells us, he was willing to allow the poor chap to buy his freedom "but not under the rate of three hundred pieces of eight, I at that time not being master of one in the whole world."

At last, through ill treatment and starvation, Esquemeling became dangerously ill and the governor, fearing that death would rob him of his slave and the pieces of eight he represented, gladly sold him to a surgeon of the island at the bargain price of seventy pieces of eight.

This new master proved very different from the governor. He treated Esquemeling with great kindness, restored him to health, provided him with clothing, and at the end of a year's service gave him his liberty on the condition that when Esquemeling was in a position to do so he should pay one hundred pieces of eight, "which kind proposal of

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his I could not choose but accept with infinite joy and gratitude of mind," Esquemeling says.

Being thus at liberty—"though like unto Adam when he was first created by the hands of his Maker—that is naked and destitute of all human necessities nor knowing how to get my living—I determined to enter into the wicked order of the Pirates or Robbers at Sea."

The buccaneers, "both the superior and vulgar sort," welcomed the accountant with open arms, and he continued to live among them until 1672, although by no means approving of their deeds or ways. He admits that he "assisted them in all their designs and attempts and served them in many notable exploits" and to him we owe a debt of gratitude for having given us the most complete and trustworthy account of the buccaneers.

It is a thousand pities that there were not more clerks of his ilk sold among the chattels of the West India Company to serve among the "Robbers at Sea" and leave a chronicle of their exploits to posterity, for Esquemeling—although he made the most of his time and led a varied and venturesome life—could deal with only a portion of the "wicked order of Pirates." Fortunately, his lot was always cast with those who performed the most "notable exploits," for he had an uncanny knack of smelling out those "designs and attempts" which held the greatest adventures and were conducted by the most famous or infamous buccaneer leaders.

CHAPTER IV

SOME EARLY BUCCANEER CHIEFTAINS AND THEIR DEEDS

(1654—1660)

HAVING learned how and why the buccaneers came into existence, how they were organized and equipped and the character of their personnel, let us now take up the buccaneer leaders of note and look into their lives, their personalities, and their deeds.

As I have already stated, the first noteworthy feat performed by a buccaneer—at least, the first of which we have authentic record—was the capture of the Spanish flagship off the Caicos Islands by Pierre le Grand. Following this, countless Spanish vessels were taken, but it was not until several years later—in 1654—that the buccaneers extended their sphere of operations and attacked a Spanish town. This first town taken was New Segovia in Honduras and the buccaneers at once realized that they could secure far more loot, with almost as little risk, by raiding the cities rather than by scuttling ships. As a result, the buccaneers, although still seizing every ship they could lay their hands on, became far more noted for feats ashore than for deeds at sea.

EARLY BUCCANEER CHIEFTAINS

As a matter of fact, their chieftains were seldom seamen and the fighting men were not sailors, so that ravishing the Spanish Main—and here let me pause to remark that the Spanish Main was the mainland of Spanish America and not the sea, as most people suppose—became the favorite occupation of the freebooters, the capture of vessels being made of secondary consideration.

It was in the same year that New Segovia was taken (1654) that Penn and Venables, with their British troops and British men-of-war, attacked Jamaica and in their attempt enlisted a large number of the buccaneers. The capture of this island and its acquisition by the British provided the freebooters with a new base. Port Royal became the nest of the English buccaneers and Tortuga was left to the French exclusively. That same year the Dons recaptured Tortuga, the French freebooters or filibustiers as they were now called, fled to lairs in Samana Bay (Santo Domingo), St. Martins, and St. Bartholomew or St. Barts, the Virgin Islands, Anegada, the Caymans and other retreats. Tortuga remained in the hands of the Spaniards for six years—until 1660—when it once more fell into the hands of the filibustiers.

During this period, when Tortuga was a Spanish possession, the French to some extent allied themselves with their British freebooter friends. But they were looked upon with more or less dislike and distrust and quarrels and dissensions were frequent. Although Frenchmen, as well as Dutch and other races, took part in the great buccaneer raids of

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Morgan, and other leaders, the French were not greatly in evidence and the majority of the more noteworthy buccaneer exploits were performed by British buccaneers under English leaders.

It is necessary to mention these facts here in order to understand the sequence of events and the various references to Port Royal, Samana Bay and Tortuga, as well as the obvious jealousies and disagreements of the French and British buccaneers.

One of the first buccaneers to distinguish himself for the desperate undertaking which he conceived and partially carried out, was Pierre François or, as he was more often called, Peter Francis. In a small boat manned by twenty-six men, Francis had been waiting for an opportunity to dash at the ships sailing from the harbor of Maracaibo bound for Campeche.

Luck, however, was against him. Either the ships sailed with strong convoys or else remained in port and it began to look as though the buccaneers would be compelled to return empty-handed. But this was something the freebooters seldom did, and racking his brains for some scheme whereby to fill his own and his men's pockets, the resourceful Peter remembered the pearling fleet plying its trade off the port of Rancherias on the coast of Colombia.

The fleet, consisting of a dozen small piraguas and "barks," was always, as Peter well knew, guarded by a Spanish man-of-war, for the catch of pearls was of great value and no doubt the warship was stationed there as much to prevent the negro divers

EARLY BUCCANEER CHIEFTAINS

from making off with the pearls as to protect the fleet from stray buccaneers.

The fact that he would have to face a dozen boats, each manned by Spanish men-at-arms and brawny negroes, and an armed sloop as well, did not deter Peter, once his mind was made up, and he decided then and there to recoup his fortunes by raiding the pearl fishers.

Hoisting sail the buccaneers steered a course for the mouth of the Rio de la Hacha, from which point of vantage they could see the pearl fleet becalmed and riding at anchor with the man-of-war about two miles from the smaller vessels. Lowering their sails the freebooters took to their oars and pulled slowly along the shore as though a local craft bound from one port to another. All unsuspecting the real character of the tiny boat, the Dons on the largest vessel of the fleet—which was manned by sixty sailors and mounted eight guns—watched the buccaneers approaching until Peter's boat was almost alongside and the buccaneer leader called upon the Spaniards to surrender.

Dismayed at finding the dreaded enemy so near at hand, the Dons rushed madly to secure their arms, but before they could train a gun on the small boat or fire more than a few shots from their muskets, Peter's men had swarmed over the ship's side and in a few moments had the vessel in their hands.

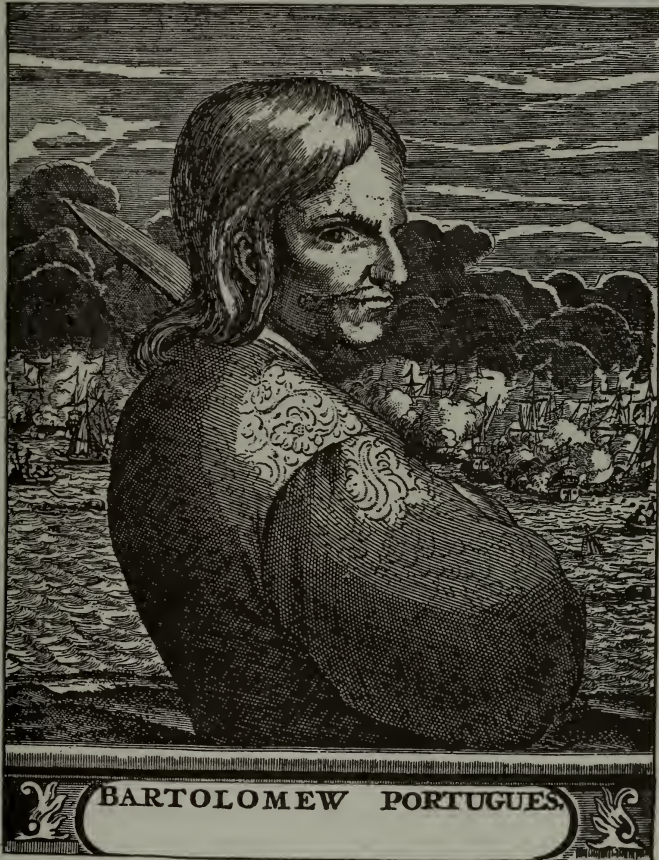
Once in possession of this armed bark the rest seemed comparatively easy. Hoisting the Spanish flag, and spreading sail to the light breeze that arose, Peter headed for the guard ship. The Dons on the

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man-of-war, however, were suspicious. They did not suspect the presence of the buccaneers, but, seeing the sloop set sail, they feared that the men aboard had mutinied and were attempting to get away with the pearls. As a result, the man-of-war at once started for the buccaneers who, seeing that their ruse would fail and knowing that it would be hopeless to attempt open battle with the war ship, tried to escape towards the open sea. No doubt they would have succeeded, for the ship they had taken was far speedier than the war vessel, had not a sudden squall carried away their mast, rendering escape impossible.

Still undaunted—though four of their number had been killed or wounded in the short fracas of taking the vessel—the buccaneers prepared to resist the man-of-war which rapidly bore down upon them. But the odds were too great, they realized they would be obliged to surrender or be annihilated, and thereupon Peter began to make terms with the enemy. The Dons, not dreaming that the buccaneers were at their mercy, were glad enough to agree to the proposition which provided that the freebooters should not be made slaves, but should be set ashore unharmed upon free or neutral land. No doubt Peter and his men most heartily cursed the unlucky squall which had snapped the rotten mast of their prize, for the boat they had taken contained pearls to the value of one hundred thousand dollars, not to mention the value of the arms, guns, and fittings, and the vessel itself.

This was one of the few instances wherein the



BARTOLOMEU PORTUGUES

BARTOLOMEU PORTUGUES



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buccaneers were completely worsted and were left penniless, for while they were frequently defeated or made prisoners they usually managed to retrieve their ill luck and turn the tables on the Dons.

Such was the case with Bartholomew Portugues, a buccaneer born in Portugal—from which he derived his name—and who was a most resourceful villain. Bart, as he was known to his intimates, was a Port Royal buccaneer, having nested among the British, and with thirty men and four small guns was cruising between Jamaica and the Cuban coast in search of any stray Spanish ships he could pick up. Presently he spied a sail and little dreaming what was in store for him, headed boldly for it. When too close to turn tail he discovered it to be a huge galleon carrying twenty guns and a crew of seventy men bound for Havana from Cartagena.

As there was nothing to do but fight or be captured, Portugues decided on the former course and went at the galleon tooth and nail. More by luck than anything else the buccaneers came practically unscathed through the first assault and, encouraged by their success, attacked the Spanish ship once more. Amazed and demoralized by such unheard-of daring, the Dons became panic-stricken and in the end the redoubtable Portugues became master of the rich prize, having lost but ten men killed and four wounded, whereas the Spaniards had lost over thirty men.

With this fine, heavily armed ship, Bartholomew attempted to sail for Jamaica, but encountering head winds he was forced to abandon this and headed for

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Cape San Antonio, Cuba, to secure fresh water and make necessary repairs, as well as to set ashore the Dons aboard and the Spanish passengers. They had nearly reached the cape when they unexpectedly met three great ships bound for Havana. Unable to escape and completely outnumbered by both men and guns, the buccaneers were forced to surrender.

But luck again turned in their favor. Two days after they had been made prisoners, a hurricane swept across the Caribbean, the three Spanish ships became separated, and the vessel in which the buccaneers were confined was blown before the tempest to Yucatan. Arriving at Campeche the galleon was welcomed by the leading people of the town who, learning that the notorious Bartholomew was on board, prepared for a grand celebration wherein friend Bart and his comrades were to be the central figures. In other words, it was decided to have such a hanging as had never been known before.

Having had previous demonstrations of the slipperiness of buccaneer captives, the authorities deemed it wise to let the prisoners remain aboard ship for greater security until the gibbets were ready and the people had made due preparations for the fiesta.

This was, as it turned out, a great mistake on their part. Hearing rumors of the fate in store for him on the following day, Portugues decided to betake himself from the scene of action and to this end he availed himself of two earthen wine jars. These he stopped tightly, intending to use them as floats

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or water wings, for, like many of the buccaneers, he could not swim a stroke.

The jars prepared, Bart set himself down to await nightfall. He had expected the sentry who guarded his cell to sleep at his post as was usual, but for some reason or other the fellow on this particular night was unusually wide-awake and vigilant. Bartholomew, however, had prepared for any contingency and had managed to secure a knife, and finding the sentry disinclined to take his accustomed siesta, Portugues leaped upon him. To use Esquemeling's words "he gave him such a mortal stab as suddenly deprived him of life and the possibility of making any noise."

The way now being clear, Bartholomew picked up his extemporized life preservers, leaped into the sea and undetected reached the shore in safety. It would seem that he was scarcely better off than before, for he was unarmed—having left the knife in the unfortunate sentry's back—he had nothing to eat, no means of making fire, and was in the enemy's country. But one of the most admirable traits of the freebooters was their indomitable spirit, the fact that they never despaired of winning through, and Portugues was one of the most resourceful and optimistic of them all.

Realizing that the hue and cry of his escape would soon be raised and that he could not hope to get away by flight, he hurried into the near-by jungle and hid himself in a hollow tree where, for three days, he remained without food or water. Several times the Spaniards passed close to his hiding place while

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the buccaneer watched them and listened to their conversation, but at last the search was abandoned and the half-starved buccaneer crept forth from his tree and started afoot for the Gulf of Triste, over one hundred miles distant.

To accomplish such a feat would be difficult indeed for a well-equipped man under the best of conditions and Portugues, it must be remembered, was stripped of practically everything and was surrounded by enemies. His way led through trackless jungle and along the sea beach and there were several large rivers to be crossed which, to a man unable to swim, were impassable. He subsisted upon shellfish which he secured from rocks along shore, kept to the woods as much as possible, and when he reached the first river, instead of giving up in despair, he bravely set to work to overcome the seemingly impossible difficulties.

From a bit of driftwood, a water-worn plank with a few rusting spikes in it, he extracted the nails and patiently whetted them upon a stone until he secured a cutting edge. With these frail, makeshift knives of soft iron the buccaneer managed to cut enough limbs from trees to form a raft which he bound together with twigs and vines and on this crossed safely to the farther banks.

Over and over again this tedious work was repeated until, on the fourteenth day after setting out from his hollow tree, Portugues arrived safe and sound at his destination.

Here he found, as he had hoped, a buccaneer craft recently arrived from Jamaica. To the freebooters

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he told his tale and from their chief requested the loan of a boat and twenty men with which to return to Campeche, rescue his comrades, if they still remained unchanged, and capture the vessel from which he had escaped.

This request was readily granted and once more with armed men at his command, Bartholomew set a course for Campeche. Arriving at the river's mouth, Portugues and his men hid their cutlasses and pistols and rowed openly and boldly into the harbor as though peaceful fishermen or natives. Edging gradually towards the ship, which was still at anchor in the harbor, the buccaneers drew alongside without arousing the Spaniards' suspicions. A moment later the freebooters had dropped their oars, seized their weapons, and like cats clambered over the ship's rails, cutting and shooting down the amazed Dons before they could resist.

In command of the well-found and well-armed vessel, Portugues and his men sailed triumphantly out of port in the very ship he had captured in Cuban waters, with riches in her hold amounting to nearly one hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

With his booty and his ship Portugues dreamed of even greater deeds and continued on his way toward Jamaica and the shipping lanes. But Bart's star of luck was on the wane. Near the Isle of Pines a second hurricane swept across the Caribbean, his ship was driven on the reefs of the Jardines, and while Portugues and his men managed to reach the shore, his ship and all it contained went to the bottom. As poor or even poorer than when

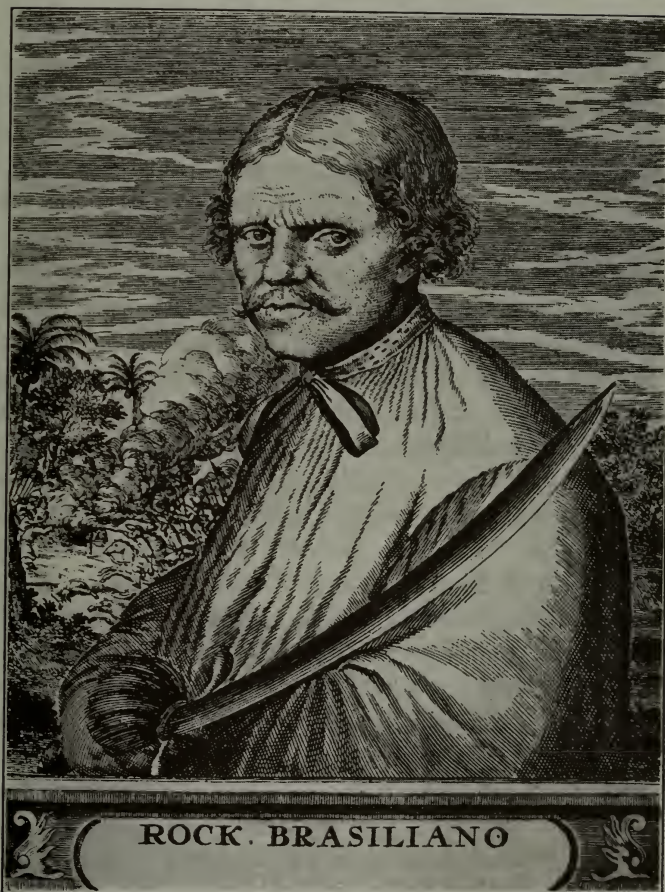
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he first set forth a-pirating, Bartholomew at last reached Jamaica, but from that time on he was ever in ill luck and never rose to further prominence among the buccaneers.

At the same time that Portugues was making fame for himself, there was another noteworthy buccaneer in Jamaica, a man of uncertain ancestry, a native of Groningen in Holland. Since he had long resided in Brazil, he was known by the name of Roche, or Rock, Brasiliano.

Roche at first served as an ordinary seaman on the buccaneers' ships, but his bravery and intelligence soon won respect from his fellow pirates. His opportunity arrived on an occasion when a number of men had a misunderstanding with their captain and deserted their ship in a body. Brasiliano, who was one of the number, was at once chosen leader. As it happened, these dissenters were still in possession of ample funds from a recent foray and with this ready cash purchased and fitted out a ship in which to start off independently.

Luck was with Brasiliano from the start and a few days after setting forth from Port Royal he and his men took a large Spanish ship well laden with bullion and plate. This first feat won him renown, but affluence was too much for him and, as Esquemeling so aptly puts it, "he had no good behavior nor government over himself in his domestic or private affairs, for in these he would oftentimes shew himself brutish or foolish. Many times being in drink he would run up and down the streets



ROCK BRASILIANO



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beating or wounding whom he met, no person daring to oppose him or make any resistance."

Undoubtedly he was a far from desirable neighbor, but as Port Royal was full of such "brutish or foolish" characters and as murders, brawls and lawlessness of all forms were part of the daily life of that buccaneers' lair, Brasiliano's shortcomings probably passed almost unnoticed. In his public or professional life Roche was even more "brutish" than when at home and even Esquemeling, who was more or less hardened to the pirates' ways, assures us that Brasiliano "showed himself very barbarous and cruel." His favorite diversion, when on the war path, was to roast the Dons upon wooden spits over slow fires as a penalty for refusing to reveal the location of their hog yards.

Like Portugues, Brasiliano seems to have had an unlucky faculty for running afoul of hurricanes and in one of these "monstrous and overgrown stormes," as Captain John Smith called them, Roche's ship was wrecked upon the coast of Yucatan. With their swords and muskets and a limited supply of ammunition the buccaneers escaped through the surf to the shore and, like Portugues, started afoot for the Gulf of Triste where buccaneers were in the habit of congregating.

On the way, they were met by a troop of over one hundred Spanish cavalry, but notwithstanding the odds against them—there were only thirty buccaneers in the party—Brasiliano and his men attacked the horsemen without the least hesitation.

Holding their fire until the Dons were close, the

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pirates picked the cavalrymen off coolly and carefully, their aim being so deadly that within an hour the Spaniards were forced to retreat, leaving over half their number dead or wounded on the field. Stripping the dead of their arms and clothing and knocking the wounded over the head with their muskets, the buccaneers proceeded on their way with the majority mounted on horses deserted by the defeated Dons. Their own loss was negligible—two men killed and two wounded—and they were now well provided with arms and ammunition and ready for anything.

Presently, in a small cove, they espied a small boat at anchor protecting a fleet of canoes engaged in loading logwood, and Brasiliano at once sent a party of six men to seize the canoes. Embarking in these, the buccaneers attacked the guard boat and secured her. Their sole need now was food and this they supplied by slaughtering their mounts and curing the flesh.

Thus the buccaneers were once more prepared for a foray on Spanish ships and soon took a vessel "laden with divers sorts of merchandise and a very considerable number of pieces of eight." With this prize they made for Jamaica where, as Esquemeling informs us, they "wasted in a few days in taverns all they had gained by giving themselves over to all manner of debauchery."

This, however, was the almost universal habit of the sea rovers. It was a matter of easy-come, easy-go and hence there is little reason for any faith in the countless tales and traditions of buried

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pirate loot for, according to all authentic accounts, the pirates were never thrifty souls and spent their earnings as fast as acquired with no thought of burying treasure for the proverbial rainy day. The amount of loot that the buccaneers could manage to expend in riotous living would shame the most prodigal of the modern spendthrifts on the Great White Way. Esquemeling, who should know, states that it was not unusual for a buccaneer to spend two or three thousand pices of eight in a single night, "not having themselves peradventure a good shirt to wear on their backs in the morning." Often, a flushed and flush pirate would order a pipe of wine placed in the street and, at point of pistol would force every passer-by to drink or, with both hands, would playfully splash the liquor over the persons and the garments of all who appeared.

Roche and his crew, having expended their gold in Jamaica, once more set forth, heading for Yucatan, which was Roche's favorite hunting ground. A fortnight after his arrival on the coast he seized a native canoe and with a few companions started on a scouting trip to the harbor of Campeche. He played in bad luck, however, fell into the hands of the Dons, and was cast into a dungeon to await a public hanging.

One would imagine that the Dons, having had so many proofs of the pirates' resourcefulness and ability to slip from their clutches, would have put a speedy end to all these gentry who fell into their clutches. But the Spaniards never seemed to profit by experience. Portugues had but recently slipped

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between their fingers in Campeche and yet, when the dreaded Brasiliano was in their power, they placed him in a cell instead of hanging him out of hand.

To be sure, Roche was chained in a stone cell and was well guarded, but what he could not accomplish by force he felt could be accomplished by strategy and he at once put into execution a plan he had formed.

Winning the confidence of one of his jailers—who was a captive or slave of the Dons—Brasiliano secured writing materials and penned a note addressed to the governor of Campeche stating that “he should have a care how he used those persons he had in his custody. For in case he caused them any harm they did swear unto him they would give no quarter to any person of the Spanish nation that should fall into their hands.”

This note Brasiliano signed with the name of another buccaneer chief and bribing the slave with promises of granting him freedom and taking him along as a member of his crew, Roche had the letter duly delivered to His Excellency.

Some idea of the terror that the rovers inspired in the hearts of the Dons may be obtained from the fact that this clumsy forgery so impressed the governor that he at once released Brasiliano and his comrades after causing them to take a solemn oath pledging themselves to abandon piracy forever.

He had a glimmering of sense—or a suspicion that the oath would not be binding, however—and instead of sending them on their way to do as they

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pleased he placed them as common sailors aboard a galleon bound for Spain. The Spaniards treated them far too generously, however, and paid them off at the end of the voyage with the rest of the crew. Their earnings amounted to five hundred pieces of eight and with this they purchased a few necessities, secured passage, and were soon back in Jamaica, once more preying on the chivalrous Dons.

CHAPTER V

NEW ENTERPRISES OF THE BUCCANEERS

(1660—1666)

IT was about the time that Portugues and Brasiliano were doing their bit at making history for the buccaneers that the freebooters decided to try their hand at sacking towns as well as scuttling ships.

Spain, finding that mere armaments and large crews did not in the least deter the buccaneers from attacking and seizing her plate ships, resorted to sending her vessels in fleets convoyed by heavily armed men-of-war. Brave and reckless as they were, the buccaneers were never fools and they realized that there was a limit to what they could hope to accomplish, and that a fleet, accompanied by several frigates bristling with guns and swarming with soldiery, was that limit.

To be sure, a galleon would now and then fare forth alone or would become separated from her convoy by storm and the pirates would swoop down and capture her. But the pickings at sea were getting poor, there were more buccaneers than Spanish vessels, and all along the coasts of the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico were rich towns offering tempting opportunities for daring men. Many of these were strongly fortified and garrisoned, some were

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even considered impregnable and still others were practically undefended.

The latter were of course the easiest nuts to crack, but they also promised the least loot. The first to fall was, as previously noted, New Segovia in Honduras. So easily was this place taken and so satisfying the results that one Lewis Scot at once set forth for Yucatan, sacked and pillaged the city of Campeche and started the custom of threatening to utterly destroy the town unless paid a handsome ransom by the unfortunate inhabitants.

Following closely in Scot's wake came a friend of his, Mansveldt or Mansvelt, a "hoary old pirate," Esquemeling calls him, who sacked the towns along the Colombian coast. Another Englishman of Jamaican birth, John Davis, landed on the coast of Nicaragua and hiding his ship in a small, wooded cove, Davis with eighty men in three canoes started up the river towards the rich town of San Juan de Nicaragua. Paddling up stream at dead of night the buccaneers made their way, concealing themselves in creeks and in the shelter of the jungle during the day, until, on the third night, they reached the city.

Here, far from the coast, the Spaniards felt perfectly secure from the buccaneers and only a single sentry was on guard. Thinking the pirates merely fishermen returning from the lake he paid little heed to them, especially as the freebooters spoke to him in his own tongue.

Without hindrance the canoes were run ashore and an Indian, who accompanied the buccaneers, in-

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stantly leaped on the sentry and killed him. Entering the town, the buccaneers knocked boldly on the doors of the most promising houses, and when the doors were opened, sprang within, seized and bound the owners, and helped themselves to all the place contained. Having cleaned out the residences, Davis and his men turned their attentions to the churches while the terror-stricken population hurried and scurried about striving to collect their scattered wits and conceal what few things remained in their possession.

Evidently there were a few cool-headed Dons in the town, for very soon the inhabitants rallied, secured arms, and prepared to defend themselves and their property. The buccaneers saw that they would have to put up a stiff fight and would probably lose much of their loot, as well as their lives, so, loaded down with riches and driving a number of prisoners before them, they evacuated the city.

Their idea in carrying the captives along was to use them as hostages in case any of their own number fell into the Dons' hands, but as this did not occur they used them to secure provisions and compelled the prisoners to rob their own fellows of food.

Unmolested, the buccaneers reached their ship and put to sea not a moment too soon, for scarcely were sails hoisted when a body of five hundred cavalrymen appeared on the shore. The loot, so hurriedly acquired, amounted to over fifty thousand dollars in value and consisted largely of jewels, gold and silver altarpieces and chalices, bullion and plate, and

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four thousand pieces of eight, a fairly good haul for eighty men in a week's work.

This exploit won fame for Davis and upon his return to Jamaica he was elected admiral of a fleet of eight pirate vessels. His first foray after taking command was on the north coast of Cuba, but it proved unsuccessful and he headed for Florida. Here he took St. Augustine, overcame the garrison of two hundred Spaniards, and did not lose a single man in the battle.

Following rapidly on these exploits, Vera Cruz was taken and sacked by French and Dutch buccaneers under Van Horn, Grammont, and De Graff, while the most notoriously cruel and brutal of all buccaneers, Francis L'Ollonais, rose to the pinnacle of buccaneer fame by his ruthless and daring exploits.

L'Ollonais or Lollonois, a native of France, had been sold as a slave in the Antilles and winning his freedom, made his way to Tortuga. Here for a time he followed the peaceful career of a cattle hunter and tiring of this humdrum life joined the sea rovers. For several voyages he served as an ordinary seaman, but his undaunted courage and utterly ruthless nature soon attracted attention. Indeed, no less a personage than Monsieur de la Place, the governor of Tortuga, became his patron and supplied him with a well-found ship.

Immediately L'Ollonais met with unqualified success and in a short space of time he and the governor waxed rich and prosperous. Much of his success was due directly to his unprecedented cruelties and

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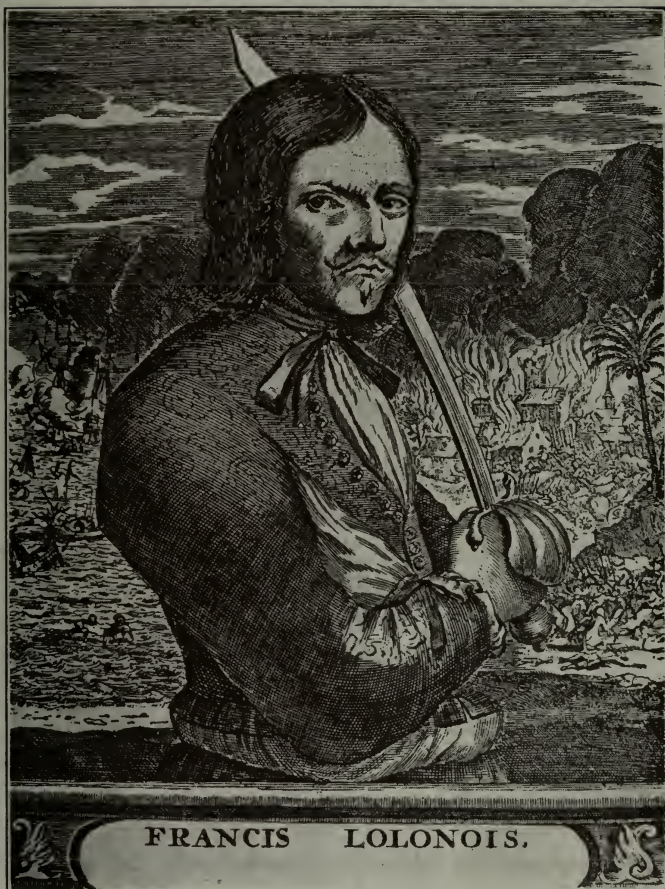
so thoroughly terrified did the Spaniards become that the mere mention of his name was enough to throw them into a panic and cause them to surrender.

Indeed, so feared was L'Ollonais that the Dons repeatedly cast themselves into the sea or committed suicide rather than fall into the monster's hands and suffer the unspeakable tortures which he invariably inflicted upon his prisoners.

L'Ollonais' first misfortune had its beginning in one of those "monstrous and overgrowne stormes" which played such an important part in the careers of Portugues and Brasiliano. He lost his ship in a hurricane on the coast of Yucatan and all his men managed to reach land. But before they could rally they were attacked by the Spaniards who butchered the majority of the buccaneers and seriously wounded L'Ollonais.

Realizing that if found wounded the Dons would take full advantage of their opportunity and would let him know how it felt to be tortured after his own manner of treating prisoners, L'Ollonais smeared his face with blood and sand and crawled under a number of dead bodies. Here he remained until the victorious Dons retired from the field of battle when he made his way to the forest and managed to bind up his wounds after a fashion. Then, disguising himself in a Spanish suit of clothes taken from one of the dead Dons, L'Ollonais proceeded towards Campeche.

Entering the city undetected, he got into communication with some English and French slaves and revealing his identity promised them liberty if they



FRANCIS LOLONOIS.

FRANCIS L'OLLONIS



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would help him with his plans. With their aid he secured a canoe and accompanied by his new-found friends went to sea.

He must have been highly amused to think that he, the most dreaded and most wanted of all the buccaneers, was there in the heart of the Spanish city where every one was rejoicing at the news of the supposed death of L'Ollonais, confirmed by his own men who had been made prisoners.

As the pirate chieftain wandered about the town he mingled with the merrymaking throng, watched the huge bonfires kindled in the plazas, visited the dance halls where revelry held sway and no doubt cheered and shouted as lustily as any in celebrating his supposed death.

Leaving the city behind, L'Ollonais in his frail craft set a course for Tortuga, where he eventually arrived, and was welcomed as one risen from the dead. Here he secured another small vessel with a crew of twenty-one men, and again set out on a foray to recoup his fortunes, this time making for Cuba. His objective point was the village of Los Cayos on the southern coast, a place doing a good trade in tobacco, sugar, and hides, with a harbor too shallow for large vessels. To L'Ollonais with his handful of men this offered a promising prospect, for it was unfortified, there was no danger of running unexpectedly into a large vessel, and if he could secure a cargo of sugar and other commodities he could dispose of them in Tortuga for enough to secure a larger ship and outfit a stronger force.

But L'Ollonais' plans went awry. He was sighted

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by some fishermen, the villagers sent a messenger post haste to Havana notifying the governor of the buccaneers' presence and His Excellency immediately despatched a ship carrying ten guns and ninety armed men to attack the pirates.

The governor could scarcely credit the story that L'Ollonais was off the Cuban coast, for word of the famous pirate's death had been brought from Campeche; but he was a sensible man and took no chances. His instructions to his ship's officers were most explicit, for under severe penalties he commanded them "not to return unto his presence without having totally destroyed the pyrates." In order that there should be no chance of pirate prisoners escaping, he added a negro hangman to the crew with orders that he "should immediately hang every one of the said pyrates, excepting L'Ollonais, whom they should bring alive to Havana."

L'Ollonais, however, had captured some natives and by torture had learned of the approach of the war vessel, and instead of turning tail he embarked in two canoes and sailed into the Estera River where the Spanish ship had anchored. He arrived alongside the war vessel at two in the morning and upon being hailed and challenged with the question "whence he came and if he had seen any pirates abroad," replied in Spanish that he had "seen no pirates nor anything else." Before the men aboard the war vessel had thoroughly digested this somewhat ambiguous response the buccaneers' canoes were alongside and, armed to the teeth, the pirates swarmed over the rails. Taken completely by sur-

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prise the Spaniards still managed to put up a stiff fight—no doubt remembering the parting injunction of the governor of Havana—but in a hand-to-hand fight the Dons never had a chance against the buccaneers who drove the crew under hatches and took possession of the ship.

Stationing his men at the hatches, L'Ollonais ordered the Spaniards to come up one at a time and as fast as the poor wretches appeared he had their heads struck off. Among the rest the negro hangman appeared. With wildly rolling eyes the trembling fellow implored mercy, stating that he was only a slave, that he had been sent as an executioner against his will and that if the pirates would spare him he would join their company and give them much valuable information. L'Ollonais, promising to spare him, induced him to divulge all the information he possessed and then ordered him butchered like the rest.

Only one man was left alive, a cowering, terrorized Spaniard whom L'Ollonais sent back to Havana with a letter to the governor stating that, "I shall never henceforward give quarter to any Spaniard whatsoever and I have great hopes I shall execute on your own person the very same punishment I have done upon them you sent against me. Thus I have retaliated the kindness you designed to me and my companions."

The governor, to again quote the chronicler of the events, "was much troubled to understand these sad and withal insolent news which occasioned him to swear, in the presence of many, he would never grant

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quarter to any pyrate that should fall into his hands." This, however, was not at all pleasing to the worthy citizens of Havana. In fact they argued that as the pirates "had an hundred times more opportunity of revenge than he they would certainly take occasion thence to do the same and that hereafter they should always be in danger of losing their lives."

Realizing the truth of this, the fiery old Don bridled his anger and "remitted the severity of his oath aforementioned." But he certainly could not complain that those of his ship had not obeyed his orders; they had not come into his presence without the pirates.

L'Ollonais was now in possession of a fine well-armed ship, but he lacked both crew and provisions. The latter was a matter easily remedied by the simple expedient of stealing what was required. As there seemed little to steal along the Cuban coast, he headed southward for the Spanish Main, where he immediately secured a prize laden with plate and general merchandise. With this he returned in triumph to Tortuga.

He was now once more a famous chief and longed for greater deeds and being an ambitious rascal he decided to attack the strongly fortified city of Maracaibo, a town famed for its wealth and treasures, but badly situated for an attack upon the shores of the shallow lake.

Gathering a fleet of eight ships and six hundred and twenty men, L'Ollonais set sail. With him was the mayor of Tortuga, named Michael de Basco, who

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was a retired buccaneer and a trained soldier and to him L'Ollonais promised the command of his forces on land.

Hardly had they started, when off Punta de Espada (Haiti) they sighted a ship from Porto Rico. Commanding the other vessels to wait for him near the island of Saona, L'Ollonais started in chase of the Spanish ship. But the Dons were no cravens and for three hours a terrific battle raged, for the Porto Rican ship carried sixteen guns and a crew of fifty fighting men who gave a mighty good account of themselves. Eventually the battle was won by the buccaneers and a right good prize the vessel proved, for her cargo consisted of sixty tons of cocoa, forty thousand pieces of eight and jewels valued at ten thousand dollars.

Putting some of his own men aboard the prize, L'Ollonais sent her to Tortuga with orders to discharge her cargo and join his fleet at Saona.

In the meantime the other vessels of the fleet had captured a Spanish ship laden with military supplies and the pay for the garrison at Santo Domingo. From her they secured seven thousand pounds of powder, scores of muskets, quantities of ammunition and small arms, and twelve thousand pieces of eight.

When, a few days later, the first prize returned from Tortuga and joined his flotilla, L'Ollonais made her his flagship and, greatly elated at such success so early in the voyage, the buccaneers squared away for Maracaibo.

At the time of L'Ollonais' expedition, Maracaibo was strongly fortified and contained about three

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thousand inhabitants with a garrison of about eight hundred soldiers, while across the lake, and nearly one hundred and twenty miles from the sea, was the city of Gibraltar, a town of about fifteen hundred people.

Without misadventure the buccaneers sailed into the lake, silenced the outlying batteries and captured the first real fortification or castle after a desperate fight lasting three hours.

Realizing that nothing could now check the pirates' advance, the people started to flee to the neighboring town of Gibraltar, spreading the news of the buccanners' victory among the villages and outlying estates. The pirates meanwhile devoted their energies to sacking and burning, spiked the guns of the forts and then directed their course to the main city of Maracaibo, about eighteen miles distant. Here, under cover of a heavy artillery fire—for they imagined the Dons might have devised an ambuscade—the buccaneers landed in canoes and found the place utterly deserted. But there was plenty of loot and provisions, as well as liquor, remaining, and the pirates held high revels.

The next day L'Ollonais sent parties of his men into the outlying country for the twofold purpose of looting the estates and bringing in any inhabitants who might be in hiding. In both these designs they were eminently successful and returned at sundown with twenty thousand pieces of eight, several mule loads of merchandise and twenty captives—men, women, and children. As usual, L'Ollonais at once put these unfortunates to torture to make them

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confess the hiding places of their riches; breaking them on the rack, roasting them over hot coals, and hacking them to pieces bit by bit.

Even these atrocities failed to wring the desired information from the agonized people for the simple reason that they had no riches to divulge. At last, however, one of the prisoners agreed to guide the pirates to the hiding place of a number of well-to-do Spaniards. But in this the buccaneers were balked, for the Dons—fully aware of what was taking place—had fled, taking their belongings with them or burying them safe from the pirates. After fifteen days of cruelties and with little success in securing loot the buccaneers started for Gibraltar.

The citizens and refugees here had sent word to the governor at Merida of the buccaneers' arrival and the doughty governor, at the head of four hundred soldiers, hurried to the defense of the threatened town. Thus, when the pirates arrived, Gibraltar was defended by over eight hundred well-armed men, while a battery of twenty guns had been established behind earthworks at one spot with another of eight guns near by. In addition, the road to the town was barricaded and blocked and a new path made through a swamp.

Quite unprepared for any great resistance from the hitherto defenseless town, the buccaneers approached and when they found such a warm welcome awaiting them paused to hold a council of war. L'Ollonais pointed out that it was a desperate enterprise, the Dons having had ample time to prepare for a siege, but the men, feeling sure that the inhabi-

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tants of Maracaibo had carried vast riches with them in their flight and that untold wealth awaited them in the town, were unanimous in their decision to attack.

Assuring them that he would himself pistol the first man who showed fear, L'Ollonais landed three hundred and eighty men and, guided by a prisoner, marched on the town. Finding the main road barricaded they turned aside and at last discovered the new way. Almost before they realized their predicament they were deep in the mire and from vantage points in ambush the Dons were picking them off. Hastily cutting branches from the trees and throwing them on the mud they managed to cross the swamp despite a withering fire from the batteries and muskets and, reaching firm ground, found themselves facing the battery of eight guns charged with small bullets and scrap iron. These wrought fearful execution at such short range that soon the buccaneers were obliged to retire. But the Dons had felled trees and in their rear the passage was blocked, and there was nothing for the pirates to do but advance.

With commendable common sense the Dons remained in the protection of the forts and refused to show themselves until L'Ollonais, realizing that his men stood no chance, pretended to retreat precipitately when the Spaniards foolishly rushed from the earthworks in pursuit. This was L'Ollonais' opportunity, and turning, the buccaneers fell upon the Dons and fought so furiously that over two hundred Spaniards were killed.

Fighting their way through the remaining troops

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the pirates captured the batteries and turning the guns on the other fort forced the garrisons to surrender, after promising them quarter, and were soon in possession of the town.

The carnage had been frightful. Over five hundred Spaniards had been killed and the buccaneers had lost nearly one hundred men. With one hundred and fifty prisoners and nearly five hundred captured slaves the buccaneers transformed the great church into a combined prison and fort and started on their merry work of looting, torturing, and general devilment.

Despite the enormous amount of treasure they found, the pirates were unsatisfied and began to make forays into the neighboring country, bringing in vast quantities of provisions, cattle, swine, and horses. All of this the pirates used for themselves, leaving their prisoners to starve, the only rations they gave them being half putrid mules' flesh.

For four long weeks the buccaneers remained at Gibraltar while daily the agonized screams of tortured men and women rose to Heaven and murder, rapine, and every form of excess held sway.

Finally, despairing of finding any more loot or of taking any more prisoners to torture, the buccaneers sent four of their captives into the country as messengers to the Dons still in hiding and demanded a ransom of ten thousand pieces of eight, stating that failure to pay would result in the burning of the town and the butchering of all captives left alive.

Two days only were allowed for securing the ransom and as the money was not produced on time,

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L'Ollonais fired the city. Finding the pirates were in earnest, the Dons promised to raise the required sum if the buccaneers would extinguish the flames. The fire, however, had gained too much headway and a large part of the city was destroyed before it was under control.

Then, with the ransom, the loot, and a large number of prisoners who had not been ransomed, L'Ollonais and his men left for Maracaibo, where they demanded a ransom of thirty thousand pieces of eight. Unable to raise this amount the Spaniards finally arranged with L'Ollonais to accept twenty thousand pieces of eight and five hundred head of cattle.

Then at last, the buccaneers sailed away and the stricken inhabitants breathed a heartfelt prayer of relief which was changed to lamentation and despair when, three days later, the pirates once more appeared. This time, however, L'Ollonais merely desired a pilot to take his ships over the harbor bar and when the man was furnished the buccaneers departed for good and all.

Eight days later the fleet arrived at Vaca Island off Santo Domingo where the loot was landed and divided, when it was found that the total value of the riches obtained amounted to more than two hundred and sixty thousand dollars, every man in addition to his share of gold and silver receiving silks and other valuables worth over one hundred pieces of eight as a bonus.

A month later L'Ollonais and his victorious men

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were back at Tortuga where, as Esquemeling remarks, "The taverns got the greatest part of the riches insomuch that soon after the pirates were constrained to seek more by the same unlawful means they had obtained the preceding."

CHAPTER VI

THE FALL OF L'OLLONAIIS AND THE RISE OF ANOTHER

(1666—1668)

THE capture of Maracaibo and the immense loot taken had made L'Ollonais so famous that more men flocked to his standard than he could use.

As Esquemeling tells us, he was "constrained to seek more riches," so L'Ollonais decided to make a foray on Nicaragua and with six ships and a force of seven hundred men he again set sail from Tortuga. His first port of call was Matamana on the southern coast of Cuba where he stole a large number of canoes from the defenseless fishermen, for these small craft were necessary to ascend the shallow San Juan river in Nicaragua and for forays on the towns of the coast.

From Cuba they laid a course for Cape Gracias a Dios, but becoming becalmed—the frequent misfortunes to the buccaneers through storms or calms prove how unseaworthy were the ships of their time—L'Ollonais drifted against his wishes to the coast of Honduras.

Sadly in need of provisions, for they had drifted idly for many days, the fleet put into the river Zagua where they robbed a few miserable fishermen and

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Indians and then followed along the coast to Puerto Caballos (now Porto Cortez).

Although there was a Spanish man-of-war mounting twenty-four guns in the harbor, the buccaneers did not hesitate, but surprised and captured the ship and took the town, wantonly burning it after securing all the valuables it contained.

Few of the inhabitants had managed to escape and L'Ollonais took a large number of prisoners whom he at once began treating in his customary brutal manner, "committing upon them the most insolent and inhuman cruelties that ever heathens invented and putting them to the cruelest tortures they could imagine or devise."

It was L'Ollonais' delight to hack the racked and tortured captives to bits or to pull out their tongues as a finale to his cruelties, and this bloodthirsty amusement he kept up until but two of the prisoners remained alive, reserved as guides to lead the buccaneers to San Pedro, about forty miles from Puerto Caballos. With three hundred men, L'Ollonais started on this trip leaving his lieutenant, Moses Van Clein, with the rest of the men in the stricken town.

About ten miles from the port L'Ollonais' party was ambushed by a troop of Spaniards and although the Dons fought furiously the pirates came off victorious as usual, although the buccaneers lost heavily. Infuriated by this, L'Ollonais demanded of the prisoners taken if there was no other road by which he might travel. Each in turn declared there was not and the buccaneer, beside himself with ungovernable

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fury, seized his cutlass, ripped open the breast of the nearest captive and tearing out his heart commenced biting and gnawing at it with his teeth like a ravenous wolf.

At his threats that he would treat all the others likewise if they did not show him some other path, the horrified Dons pledged themselves to do as he wished. But the trail was impassable and they were forced to return to the main road. The following day they again ran into an ambush which they overcame only to run into a third. Even when, at tremendous loss, the Spaniards were repulsed, the buccaneers found the road barricaded and fortified with hedges of cactus across it, behind which Spanish sharpshooters were stationed.

For a time the pirates were repulsed and throughout the day the battle raged, until at sundown, the Dons, under a flag of truce, offered to surrender, provided they should be given quarter for two hours. L'Ollonais agreed, but, as soon as the allotted time had passed, he sent men in pursuit of the Dons and hunted them down and murdered them like wild beasts. The greater portion of the valuables in the town had been taken safely beyond the buccaneers' reach, however, and the corsairs obtained scarcely anything of value after all their trouble and loss of lives. They had, "according to their usual customs, committed the most horrid insolencies," and finding nothing to steal, the buccaneers left the town two days later and returned to their ships. For a time they contented themselves with murdering and robbing the fishermen and then retired to the small

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islands off Guatemala to careen and refit their ships.

But luck was against them. Although they cruised about the coast for three months no prize was sighted and the men grew discontented and mutinous. At this juncture word was brought by comrades they had left behind that a large ship had arrived at a river several leagues distant and, with great expectations, L'Ollonais made all speed towards the spot.

The Dons had, however, learned of the sea rovers' presence and having a heavily armed vessel carrying forty-two guns, manned by one hundred and thirty fighting men, they prepared to give the buccaneers a hot reception. Although L'Ollonais' ship carried but twenty-two guns and his only other vessel was a small "fly-boat" he rushed boldly to the attack and succeeded in boarding and capturing the ship.

To their utter disgust and disappointment the pirates then discovered that she was scarcely worth the powder and shot expended, as practically all her cargo had been discharged, the only loot on board being fifty bars of iron, a small parcel of paper and a few jars of wine. Still further disgruntled by this, the crew broke into open dissension and the majority, led by Van Clein, deserted and returned to Tortuga. On their way home this party did a little pirating on the side, sacked towns in Panama and Costa Rica, attempted to take Natá and were defeated and with loot amounting to only a few hundred dollars for their pains reached Tortuga.

In the meantime L'Ollonais with his few loyal men remained in Honduras, having a hard time to keep soul and body together, subsisting on monkeys

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and turtles and securing no booty, until at last, his ship grounded on a sand bank on the Las Pertas Islands and was a total loss. Securing planks and spikes from the wreck the buccaneers started to build a long boat in which to reach Tortuga, but they were unskilled as boat builders, their tools were poor and months went by. In order to maintain themselves they cultivated the ground, raised a few vegetables and detailed fishing and hunting parties.

Finally, six months after being wrecked, the buccaneers completed their crazy craft only to find that it would accommodate less than half the party. They were in a pretty fix and L'Ollonais suggested that they should draw lots and that those who were lucky should embark, go to Nicaragua and endeavor to seize canoes in which all might reach Tortuga.

This was done and L'Ollonais and the crew of the boat reached the river in safety. But ill luck was still against them. The party was attacked by a strong party of Indians and Spaniards, the greater portion of the buccaneers were killed and L'Ollonais, callously deserting his comrades on the islands, started with his few remaining men for the coast of Colombia.

But he never reached his destination. At every turn ill fortune assailed him "which of long time had been reserved for him as a punishment due to the multitude of horrible crimes which in his own licentious and wicked life he had committed," and to still further paraphrase his chronicler, "God Almighty had appointed the Indians of Darien to be the instruments and executioners thereof."

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In other words, this monster in human form fell into the hands of the savage Kuna Indians of Darien. Even these untamed Indians had heard of L'Ollonais' unspeakable cruelties and while they were usually friendly with the buccaneers they fell upon L'Ollonais and made him a prisoner. Then, with fiendishness equal to his own, they tore him to pieces alive and tossed him "limb by limb into the fire and his ashes into the air to the intent that no trace or memory might remain of such an infamous, inhuman creature."

We can feel no pity for L'Ollonais; his end was one he justly deserved and, as Esquemeling aptly remarks, "thus ends the history of the life and miserable death of that infernal wretch L'Ollonais who, full of horrid, execrable and enormous deeds and also debtor of so much innocent blood, died by cruel and butcherly hands such as his own were in the course of his life."

Of the doings of those of L'Ollonais' companions who were left behind at the islands, there is not much to be said. They were rescued by another buccaneer and attempted to attack Cartagena, but were utterly routed. Forced to abandon everything they owned, in rags and without food, they made their way to the coast, subsisting upon their own shoes, their belts and their sword scabbards. Only a few emaciated half-dead survivors reached the shore and these, like L'Ollonais, fell into the hands of savages and were disposed of much after the fashion of their monstrously inhuman leader.

While L'Ollonais and his men had been leaving a

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trail of torn and bleeding corpses behind them on the Central American coast a new star had arisen in the firmament of the buccaneers at Jamaica. Mansveldt, that "hoary old pirate" already mentioned, had conceived the idea of establishing a buccaneer stronghold on the island of St. Catherine or Old Providence, off the Costa Rican coast and, looking about for promising young buccaneers to join him, his attention was attracted to Henry Morgan.

Morgan, a native of Wales, had run away from home and had shipped or rather stowed away, on a vessel bound from Bristol for Barbados. Arriving at that island the captain had sold young Morgan into slavery as was customary and, having served his time the young Welshman worked his way to Jamaica and joined the buccaneers. He was a thrifty, canny youth and a good fighter, and unlike his fellows, he managed to lay aside a good part of his earnings, for he had no intention of remaining an ordinary seaman or fighting man for the rest of his days. Finally, his nest egg having grown to proper size, he purchased a ship, gathered together a crew and made a successful raid on Campeche, returning with several prizes.

So promising did Morgan appear that Mansveldt selected him as his vice admiral and with fifteen ships and five hundred men the "hoary old pirate" and the rising young buccaneer set sail for Old Providence.

The island and its forts fell, the buccaneers took possession and having reconditioned the forts and left a garrison of their own, Mansveldt and Morgan



SIR HENRY MORGAN



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sailed for the coasts of Central America, carrying their prisoners along. Mansveldt, for all his shortcomings, was a tender-hearted villain and Morgan had not yet acquired the ruthless ways which made him infamous in later raids and so, quite mercifully, they placed their prisoners safely ashore near Porto Bello.

Their intention was to march overland and sack Natá, in the present republic of Panama, at that time a rich mining center, and the oldest town on the American continent. The governor of Panama had, however, been notified of the buccaneers' intentions and at the head of a large force of men he set out to checkmate them. This he accomplished most effectually and the buccaneers met with one of the worst defeats they ever suffered.

And here let me digress to call attention to the fact that the Spaniards were by no means the cowards or the poor fighters that many seem to imagine. This erroneous idea has come about through the fact that the buccaneers were so often victorious and overcame tremendous odds. But these successes were not due to lack of valor on the part of the Spanish sailors, soldiers, or civilians. It was due entirely to the reckless disregard of death of the buccaneers, the fact that they almost always surprised the enemy, that they fought preferably at close quarters with swords, knives, and pistols and more than anything else owing to the fearful terror which their very names inspired. In every instance, where the Dons had half a chance, they fought most courageously and even when defeated

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they always gave good accounts of themselves and inflicted serious losses on the buccaneers.

Even the buccaneers praised the Spaniards for their courageous behavior and heroic defense and no braver deeds have ever been recorded than some of those performed by the Spanish commanders and their men.

We must remember, too, that the Spaniards were trained to depend upon their officers in an emergency, that they could not use their own judgment or act on their own initiative and that, like all trained troops, they were at a loss and became demoralized if their commanders fell.

On the other hand, the buccaneers fought as independent men, each one for himself and devil take the hindmost, and if a leader fell in the battle it did not trouble the rank and file in the least—there was simply the more loot to be divided, or rather more shares to the survivors—and once a fight was started the buccaneer chieftains let the men work out their own salvations.

That the Spaniards were marvelously heroic is proved by countless records. The governor of Porto Bello refused quarter, and backing against a wall, fought off the entire swarm of buccaneers, building a rampart of dead and wounded pirates about him with his rapier, until shot down.

The commandant of San Lorenzo held the entire horde of pirates at bay with a handful of picked men for hours and when he at last fell the buccaneers found that, out of a garrison of three hundred and

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fourteen men, only thirty were left alive and not an officer was among the survivors.

The same was true of the crews of Spanish ships, and individual acts of incredible heroism are often recorded.

Naturally the chroniclers of the buccaneers devoted most of their pages to the triumphs and doings of the buccaneers and glossed over their defeats, and the very fact that they repeatedly give space to praising the Spaniards' valor is proof of the fighting quality of the Dons.

But to return to Mansveldt and Morgan after they had "retired suddenly with all speed and care" from their ill-starred attack on Natá.

Crestfallen at their defeat, disheartened at their failure and decimated by the Spaniards' arms they returned to Old Providence where they found all well. The man left in charge, Le Sieur Simon, had greatly strengthened the forts and batteries, fields had been planted and feeling that the place was quite able to desist any attack of the Dons, Mansveldt returned to Jamaica to secure recruits and supplies to send to his piratical stronghold.

To this effect he had a conference with the governor, but His Excellency feared to incur the displeasure of his king by lending such open and brazen aid to the buccaneers and refused to supply the men and arms Mansveldt desired.

Still intent on his scheme, the "hoary old pirate" made his way to Tortuga to lay his proposition before the French buccaneers and their governor, but before he arrived "death suddenly surprised him

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and put a period to his wicked life," thereby leaving Morgan in supreme command of the old fellow's fleet and men.

In the meantime, Le Sieur Simon was having troubles of his own at Old Providence. The Dons attacked the island with a large fleet. Simon saw no chance of a successful resistance and wisely surrendered and then to his chagrin, a few days later, a vessel arrived from Jamaica which the cautious and canny governor had surreptitiously sent out on his own account. This ship and its company fell easy victims to the Dons, for they forced poor Simon to hoist the British colors on the forts and even made him lure the newcomers into port, all unsuspecting that the island had changed hands and was again in possession of the Spaniards. These unfortunate people—fourteen men, one woman and her daughter—were transported to Porto Bello along with the buccaneer prisoners taken on the island, and were later compelled to labor at the fortifications there and at Panama.

With the demise of Mansveldt and his own sudden rise to admiral of the fleet, Morgan endeavored to carry out his old comrade's ideas and wrote a number of letters to prominent merchants and others in Virginia and New England begging them to supply arms, provisions, and men for Old Providence and pointing out the riches to be won by maintaining such a hornet's nest at the very doors of New Spain. Then, having tidings of the fall of the island, he abandoned the idea and commenced preparations for a raid on some rich city in Cuba.

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At first it was decided to attack Havana, but as it was agreed that to capture that strongly fortified place would require a larger force than was available it was decided to raid the rich and prosperous city of Puerto Principe instead. This city, which is now known as Camaguey was, as it is now, an interior town, moved from its former location on the coast owing to the frequent raids it had suffered at the hands of the freebooters. This fact was rather an inducement to Morgan than otherwise, for since its removal it had remained unmolested and offered virgin territory, while the mere fact that it was inland did not deter the buccaneer leader in the least.

Landing at Puerto Principe Bay, Morgan led his men towards the doomed city. Unknown to him, however, a Spanish prisoner had managed to swim ashore and had carried news of Morgan's arrival and as a result the inhabitants had secreted most of their valuables while the governor had gathered his men and had laid an ambush for the buccaneers.

But in his efforts to hold back the pirates he had overdone himself. Among other things he had felled trees across the road and finding these impediments, Morgan led his men by a roundabout way, thus escaping the hidden Dons in their ambuscades. Quite unmolested, the buccaneers reached the open plain before Puerto Principe and were there confronted by a troop of cavalry.

Somehow or other, the Spaniards could never overcome the idea that the buccaneers, being primarily seamen, would be demoralized by horsemen and over and over again—at Puerto Caballos, Mara-

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caibo, Campeche, Panama and elsewhere — they charged the pirates with their cavalry. The buccaneers, however, were ever most resourceful and ready for anything. No doubt, had they been suddenly attacked by tanks or airplanes, they would have instantly evolved some means of combating them, and, shouting and yelling, beating drums and waving bright colored rags, Morgan's men rushed at the Spanish cavalry.

Instead of being frightened by the horses the buccaneers succeeded most admirably in stampeding the beasts and the cavalrymen, unable to maneuver, unable even to control their terrorized steeds, broke and fled while the pirates picked off horses and men with their muskets. The whole affair was over in a few hours and while scores of Spaniards were killed only a few buccaneers were lost.

The Dons now retired to the town, barricaded themselves in the houses and public buildings and determined to sell their lives dearly. But when Morgan sent word that if they did not surrender he would burn the town and would tear the women and children to pieces before the eyes of the defenders, the Dons capitulated.

No sooner had they done so than Morgan—who was ever a most despicable scoundrel—herded the inhabitants into the churches where he left them to starve while looting the city and having a glorious round of debauchery. Each day he sent parties of his men into the outlying country to bring in prisoners and booty and one by one he dragged the half-starved captives from the churches and put

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them to the most fiendish tortures to compel them to confess where they had hidden their riches. He spared none; men, women, and children, poor and rich, freemen and slaves, white and black, were alike tortured and maltreated and those who failed to lose their lives upon the rack or the wheel perished of thirst and hunger in their places of confinement.

It was the first time Morgan had had an opportunity to exhibit his bloodthirsty, inhuman character and he enjoyed himself to the full and gave his ruthless nature full rein. Even when at last Morgan felt sure there was nothing more to be stolen, he was not content, but demanded of the stripped and maltreated wretches that they should pay a ransom for the town. With dire threats of what would happen if they failed, he sent four prisoners into the country to gather the sum demanded and, to still further impress them, he mutilated and tortured a number of their friends before their eyes ere they set out.

But so bare had Morgan stripped the land that the poor men, after wandering about for several days, returned, stating that they could find no one to whom they could appeal. At the same time they begged Morgan to have a little patience, promising to try again and assuring him that within fifteen days they could raise the money.

This extension Morgan granted, but unfortunately, some of his men at that time brought in a negro prisoner on whose person were found letters written to the prisoners by the governor of Santiago in which His Excellency advised them "not to make too much haste to pay the ransom, but on the con-

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trary, to put off the pirates as well as they could with excuses and delays, expecting to be relieved by him within a short time when he would certainly come to their aid.”

Morgan had no mind to be caught by a force from Santiago and hastily ordering the booty to be packed up he prepared to depart for the coast. At the same time he informed the prisoners that unless the ransom for the town and for themselves was forthcoming by the following day he would burn the town about their ears.

This, however, was pure bluff on Morgan’s part. He knew full well that there was no money available, that he could not remain to carry out his threat and, demanding five hundred head of cattle and men to drive them to his ships in lieu of the ransom, he left Puerto Principe untouched by the torch.

The following day the five hundred head of cattle, with salt for curing them, were delivered to the buccaneers as agreed and the six hostages held by Morgan were demanded in exchange. But here again Morgan showed the deceitful underhanded character for which he was famed. He refused to deliver the hostages until the Spaniards had slaughtered and salted the beeves, which being done, he released the prisoners and prepared to sail from Cuba’s shores.

And here, as in the case of the fellow countryman of Morgan in the old nursery rhyme, a marrow bone entered into Morgan’s life and bade fair to bring disaster.

It happened that an English buccaneer—possibly

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he was also a Welshman—coveted the marrow bones belonging to one of the French members of the party and when the latter's back was turned he stole them. The French buccaneer then and there challenged the thieving Briton to a duel, but before they reached the place of the contest the Englishman drew his sword and treacherously killed the Frenchman by stabbing him in the back.

Immediately the French rose in arms against their British comrades and it looked very much for a time as though Morgan's raid and the British freebooters would come to an end then and there. Morgan, however, was a man of great personal magnetism and was a smooth talker, and pushing between the two factions he quelled the trouble by ordering the offending Englishman to be seized and chained and promising to see that he was properly hanged when they reached Jamaica.

Sailing to a small cay, Morgan came to anchor and proceeded to divide the loot, when, to the chagrin and consternation of his men, it was found that the total value of all the booty taken was not over fifty thousand pieces of eight, not enough, as Esquemeling tells us, to "pay their debts in Jamaica."

But here once again Morgan's silver tongue came to his aid. He made a wonderful speech in which he reminded them that they should "think upon some other enterprize and pillage before they returned home" rather than lament how little they had obtained, and promising that if they followed him they would all be rich men. Indeed, he even went further and pledged himself to see that credit was extended

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to them in Jamaica until they had succeeded in gathering in more loot.

To these pleas the British buccaneers listened and assented, but the French, still disgruntled over the theft of the marrow bones and the treachery of the thief, deserted one and all.

Notwithstanding this, Morgan bade them a friendly farewell, reiterated his promise to have the offending Englishman punished and—what was more remarkable—he kept his word and had the rascal hanged in chains when he reached Port Royal.

CHAPTER VII

WORST AND GREATEST OF BUCCANEERS

(1668—1669)

ALTHOUGH the sack of Puerto Principe had brought little in monetary returns, yet it had added luster to Morgan's already wide fame and he had no difficulty in securing all the men and ships he might require for any venture.

Within a few days after his return to Jamaica after the taking of Puerto Principe, he was again ready for further deviltries and with a fleet of nine vessels and four hundred and sixty fighting men he sailed out of Port Royal bound for Costa Rica.

Morgan had kept his plans to himself, but upon approaching the coast he called his captains together and announced his intentions of attacking the supposedly impregnable fortress of Puertobello (Porto Bello).

At that time Porto Bello was considered the strongest and richest city of the coast. It was the Atlantic terminus of the paved "gold road" from Panama and over this highway through the jungles came all the vast, incalculable treasure from the west coasts of South America and the East Indies: the output of the fabulously rich mines of

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Peru, Mexico, and Darien; the loot of Inca and Aztec cities; the pearls from the Pearl Islands and fortunes in precious jewels from the Orient. And over the gold road from Atlantic to Pacific flowed millions in money and merchandise and arms and supplies brought from Spain and destined for the Spanish colonies of the west coast, India, and the East Indies. Indeed, Porto Bello was little more than a gigantic safe deposit vault, a treasure house wherein countless millions were often stowed awaiting ships to or from Spain.

When first built, the Dons had erected castles and forts which they thought would withstand the onslaught of any force, but the very year that it had been completed, 1602, William Parker and his men had taken the place and had carried off an immense booty. Thereupon the forts had been greatly strengthened and a larger garrison maintained so that at the time Morgan set out it was considered impregnable and quite beyond the hopes of any buccaneer force.

All this Morgan's comrades pointed out, telling the redoubtable Welshman that their force was far too inadequate to make the attempt, that it would result only in defeat and advising him to alter his plans and tackle something easier.

But Morgan was not to be swayed. His enthusiasm and eloquence won them over and telling them that "if our number is small our hearts are great and the fewer we are the better shares we shall have," he swept away the last objections and all swore to follow him to the death.

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In order to understand the events that followed, a few words of explanation regarding the city and the fortifications are necessary. Porto Bello was situated at the head of a small, almost landlocked harbor and was built mainly upon a steep bluff above the river. The fortifications consisted of two large castles or stone forts commanding the harbor entrance, the larger of which was San Jerome, a veritable citadel inclosing the treasury, churches, the commandant's residence, immense barracks and magazines. In addition, there were several small outlying batteries to protect the place from land attacks. There were few large or noteworthy residences in the town, the place being merely a storehouse and port and above the landing place were many huge warehouses wherein were kept the less valuable goods destined for shipment to Spain or for transportation to the west coast.

The garrison consisted of about three hundred soldiers while a large proportion of the four hundred permanent inhabitants were trained to act as men-at-arms if necessity arose.

Realizing that to attack the town by way of the harbor would be futile, Morgan sailed at night into the Naos River, about thirty miles west of Porto Bello and very near the present city of Colón.

Ascending the river as far as Puerto Pontin, he anchored his vessels, left a few men in charge and landed his fighting men. With the party was an Englishman who had at one time been a prisoner at Porto Bello and who acted as a guide. As they neared the outlying batteries this man and three

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companions were sent forward and, stealing like shadows upon the sentry, seized and bound him before he could utter a sound. The unfortunate sentinel was brought before Morgan and under threat of torture was forced to give information regarding the forces and other details of the main castles.

Having obtained this information, the buccaneers stealthily approached the first fort and the captured sentry was ordered to hail the defenders and advise them to surrender as otherwise they would be given no quarter and would be put to torture. But the Dons refused absolutely and immediately commenced firing at the buccaneers. Although their shots did no great damage in the darkness they served to alarm the other garrisons and instantly the entire city was on the defensive.

Under cover of the darkness—and fighting like fiends—the pirates took the fort, and shutting the brave defenders with their officers in a magazine, blew them and the fort to bits.

Having thus disposed of the first defenses, Morgan hurried his men towards the castle of San Jerome, cutting down the terrorized people and looting as they advanced, while one party of the pirates was sent to the cloisters where they made prisoners of the priests and nuns.

With the remaining soldiers and what citizens he could rally the governor retired to the castle of San Jerome and kept up an incessant fusillade upon the buccaneers. Hiding behind houses and walls, scattering so as to afford little chance for the cannon to take effect, the pirates picked off the Spanish gun-

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ners as calmly and nonchalantly as though shooting cattle.

But little headway was made on either side. The buccaneers could not approach the castle and the Spaniards could not dislodge the buccaneers. Making fire balls, the pirates attempted to dash close to the walls and throw the incendiary missiles within, but were beaten off by showers of stones and molten lead from the defenders and were forced to retire.

Morgan himself began to despair of taking the place and, goaded to desperation, for the treasures were all within the fortress, he commenced to put into execution one of the most cowardly and despicable acts of his whole career. He had a dozen rough ladders made and these he forced the nuns and priests to carry to the castle walls, thinking the Dons would hesitate to cut down these religious people.

But he did not know the character of the stout-hearted governor of Porto Bello. Despite his horror at being compelled to do so, he commanded his men to shoot down nuns and monks alike, regardless of their pitiful pleas.

With the rain of lead and bullets from the castle before them and the drawn swords and clubbed muskets of the buccaneers in their rear, the holy men and women placed the ladders, falling dead and wounded by scores as they did so, and up the ladders swarmed the pirates, knives in teeth, fire balls, and grenades in hand.

Beset by the blazing combustibles, blown to pieces by the grenades, cut down by the flashing cutlasses, the Dons threw down their arms and begged quarter.

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All save the heroic governor who, backing against a wall, defied the horde of inhuman buccaneers alone. With flashing rapier he parried, thrust, and slashed, until about him a barricade of dead buccaneers was formed, and amazed at his almost superhuman valor the pirates drew back and promised him quarter if he surrendered. With blazing eyes and threatening sword he replied defiantly that he "would rather die a valiant soldier than be hanged as a coward."

Again and again the buccaneers rushed him, striving by numbers to make him prisoner, but each time they were driven back before that darting, blood-stained blade. Even his own wife and daughter implored him to surrender, but all to no avail, until at last, one of the pirates—Morgan himself it is said—shot him down.

Being now in possession of all the defenses, the buccaneers herded their prisoners into storerooms and barracks, shutting all the wounded into one room "to the intent their own complaints might be the cure of their own diseases; for no other was afforded them."

Then commenced such an orgy of drinking, carousing and debauchery that, as Esquemeling who was present assures us, "if there had been found only fifty courageous men they might easily have retaken the city and killed all the pirates."

But the fifty courageous men most unfortunately were not available and the buccaneers remained unmolested throughout that wild and awful night. The next day, having secured all the loot they could find, the buccaneers commenced their usual round

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of tortures to wring confessions of hidden wealth from the prisoners. For fifteen terrible days this continued and hundreds of the Spaniards, men and women, were cut to bits, flogged to death, roasted alive or torn to pieces on the rack.

Meanwhile, word had reached the governor of Panama and he hurriedly prepared to send a force of armed men to drive the buccaneers from the stricken city.

Morgan, learning of this, sent a detachment of one hundred men to a narrow pass on the road, ambushed the Spaniards and drove them back. He then sent word by a prisoner, demanding a ransom of one hundred thousand pieces of eight and threatening to burn the city, blow up the forts and butcher all the prisoners unless it were paid.

The governor failed to respond and despite their plight the remaining inhabitants of the town managed to raise the required sum which they paid to Morgan. But if the governor of Panama was callous or careless about the fate of his fellow countrymen in Porto Bello, his wonder and his curiosity were greatly aroused at four hundred men taking the supposedly impregnable forts. Unable to understand this, and no doubt thinking the British had used witchcraft or some new engine of warfare to accomplish their feat, he sent a messenger to Morgan asking for "some small pattern of those arms wherewith he had taken with such violence so great a city."

Morgan received the messenger civilly, entertained him with the stolen wines and food he had

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acquired and sent him back to the governor with a pistol, a few leaden bullets and a letter stating that "he desired His Excellency to accept that slender pattern of the arms wherewith he had taken Porto Bello and keep them for a twelvemonth; after which time he promised to come to Panama and fetch them away."

Evidently the governor possessed a sense of dry humor and was a most punctilious old hidalgo, for he sent back a second courier bearing a heavy gold ring as a present to Morgan and informing the buccaneer chieftain that "he desired him not to give himself the labor of coming to Panama as he had done to Porto Bello, for he did certify to him, he should not speed so well here as he had done there."

Little did the old Don realize how soon Morgan's promise would be fulfilled or with whom he had to deal.

Morgan had not, however, captured Porto Bello without heavy loss. Many of his men had been killed in the fighting, scores had fallen victims to disease or had died from their excesses, and less than half the original company reached Cuba where the spoils were divided. The loot was tremendous, amounting to two hundred and fifty thousand pieces of eight in cash, vast quantities of silks, linen, velvets, and other merchandise and fortunes in jewelry and gems.

But to the buccaneers this meant merely untold license and unbridled debauchery and within a few weeks the booty, won with such loss of life and inhumanity, was dissipated in Port Royal's dives and

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dens and Morgan's men were clamoring for another foray.

Morgan was now the most famous of buccaneers. He had accomplished an incredible and seemingly impossible feat, he had secured greater loot than ever had fallen into buccaneers' hands before and every pirate was anxious to serve under him.

Morgan himself was as impatient to be up and doing as his men and issued orders to his captains to assemble a fleet at Vaca Island, south of Santo Domingo. In Port Royal harbor was a new ship mounting thirty-six guns which had recently arrived from New England and so great was Morgan's fame that the governor of Jamaica turned this over to the chieftain for his flagship.

Arriving at the rendezvous, Morgan found a French vessel of twenty-four iron and twelve brass guns and used every endeavor to induce this vessel to join his fleet.

The French, however, remembering their dissensions with Morgan in Cuba, refused, and Morgan, with his usual duplicity and deceit, decided to secure the coveted ship by treachery. It appears that a short time previously this French vessel, being short of provisions, had held up an English ship and had commandeered necessary supplies, giving in return bills of exchange on Jamaica and Tortuga. This incident Morgan seized upon as a flimsy excuse for his underhanded deed and invited the French captain and his officers to dine with him aboard his flagship.

No sooner had they put foot on his decks than he had them seized, disarmed, and imprisoned in the

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hold. This being accomplished Morgan and his fellows celebrated their duplicity by a feast and carousal which, as was customary, was accompanied by the discharge of cannon. In the midst of the festivities—the crew being drunk and careless—the magazine caught fire and the ship was blown to pieces, killing three hundred and fifty buccaneers and the unfortunate Frenchmen in the hold. Morgan and his officers escaped destruction as they were in the cabin at the stern far from the magazine.

No one knew how the accident happened—though probably caused by the pipe of some half drunken buccaneer—but Morgan immediately charged it to the captive Frenchmen, claiming they had purposely fired the powder to revenge themselves. As the French were scattered in fragments upon the sea there were none to contradict this accusation. When certain papers were found on the French ship, Morgan made his case still stronger by twisting these into proofs that the French were pirates intending to prey upon British shipping.

As a matter of fact, the papers were merely permits from the governor of Barracoa (Cuba) authorizing the French to trade in Spanish ports. Unfortunately the commission was so worded as to include a license to “cruise upon the British pirates,” a paragraph included as a reason for the permit to trade.

On the strength of this, Morgan seized the vessel and sent her to Jamaica where she was confiscated, her crew imprisoned and the vessel was later delivered to Morgan.

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In the meantime, the bodies of the victims of the explosion had been gathered up at Morgan's orders and some idea of his character may be obtained from the fact that he not only had the bodies stripped of all valuables and jewelry but even of their clothing, all of which he auctioned off to his men. Yes, a very canny and thrifty soul was this most despicable Welshman.

At last, with fifteen vessels, the largest of which carried but fourteen small guns, and with nine hundred and sixty men Morgan set sail for Saona Island and after some difficulty in rounding Cape Lobos—three weeks were required by the unwieldy vessels to accomplish this—he met an English ship from which he purchased necessary supplies.

Proceeding on his voyage, Morgan arrived at Ocoa, where he landed men to secure water and provisions. Here, while hunting cattle, they were attacked by the Spaniards and were forced to retreat to their ships leaving their beef behind with considerable loss to themselves. As a retaliation Morgan destroyed the homes of the poor and innocent country people and murdered the owners, and having thus satisfied himself continued to Saona. Several of his ships had not arrived and while waiting for these Morgan sent one hundred and fifty men to pillage the towns near Santo Domingo.

Once more they were driven off by the Dons and returned empty-handed. Morgan was now in a fury of impatience and although he had but eight ships and less than five hundred men under his command—the seven other vessels had not arrived—he de-

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cided to sail for La Guaira and attack that city and Caracas.

From this he was dissuaded by a French buccaneer who had served under L'Ollonais and who pointed out that Maracaibo offered far better opportunities. Morgan agreed to the Frenchman's suggestions and stopping at Curaçoa for supplies, the fleet reached the entrance to the Lake of Maracaibo, approaching the place at night.

Since L'Ollonais' visit, the Dons had built a new fort, however, and from this the Spaniards kept up a fusillade that continued until the next night, so that the buccaneers were unable to land. But with night-fall the firing ceased and the buccaneers, rushing the fort, found to their surprise that it was entirely deserted.

This evacuation seemed suspicious and Morgan, fearing a trap, hurried about the deserted fort. Fortunate indeed was it for him, and most unfortunate for the Dons, that he had this hunch, for in one of the magazines he discovered a burning fuse leading to the store of powder, the sputtering end of the fuse within a few inches of the explosives! Ten minutes more would have seen fortress and buccaneers blown to atoms and Morgan's career of bloodshed would have come to a just and fitting end.

In the fort the pirates secured a quantity of powder and arms and then, having demolished the walls and spiked the guns, they crossed the harbor bar and headed for the city. The water, however, was low and the buccaneers were compelled to take to small boats and canoes, arriving off the city of

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Maracaibo the following day. Here no resistance was offered, they found the fort abandoned and with the exception of a few beggars not a soul remained in the town.

Taking possession of the city, Morgan sent scouting parties to the outlying country in search of fugitives and loot and these returned the next day with thirty prisoners and fifty mule loads of booty. All of these prisoners, regardless of age or sex, were put to the rack and other tortures to compel them to disclose the hiding places of their possession and Morgan outdid himself in devising hellish cruelties.

He stretched them, spread-eagled, between stakes and beat them to a pulp, placed burning slow matches between their fingers or toes, bound wet raw hide about their heads and exposed it to the sun until it shrunk, and crushing the skulls, forced their eyes from their sockets; flayed them alive inch by inch and for three weeks kept up these fiendish atrocities, for each day new prisoners were brought in until no more victims could be found.

Only the richest and most influential captives escaped, these being held for ransom, and having squeezed Maracaibo dry Morgan sailed on for Gibraltar as L'Ollonais had done a few years previously.

At Gibraltar the inhabitants—despite warnings of dire results that would follow if they offered resistance—received the buccaneers with a furious cannonade. Drawing off temporarily, the pirates landed out of range of the batteries and on the following morning marched on the town through the forest.

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Realizing from past experiences with L'Ollonais that they need expect no mercy from the buccaneers, the inhabitants and garrison fled, carrying with them everything of value they could, destroying the ammunition and spiking the guns.

As at Maracaibo, the buccaneers found the city deserted, the only man remaining an old half-witted fellow without brains enough to run away. Seizing this idiot, the pirates put him to the rack until, in his extremity, he declared that he would show them his riches if they released him. Apparently the pirates imagined the poor fellow was some well-to-do citizen in disguise, although why they should be so lacking in intelligence as to think any one with sense would remain in the city is incomprehensible. However, they believed him and followed him to a poverty-stricken hut containing only a few earthen pots and three worn pieces of eight. This further incensed the buccaneers and when they demanded his name he replied that he was "Don Sebastian Sanchez and brother to the governor of Maracaibo."

Of course it was merely a delusion of a disordered mind, but the pirates took it seriously and feeling sure he had deceived them they again placed him on the rack, following this by spread-eagling him with cords to thumbs and toes and placing heavy weights upon his body, finally killing him by kindling dry palm leaves on his face and chest.

In the meantime, men sent into the fields returned with a poor farmer and his two daughters. Fearing the torture the peasant agreed to lead the pirates to hiding places of the people, but being unable to find

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them, the unfortunate farm hand was tortured and hanged, together with the two girls.

Also, on one of their forays, they caught a negro slave to whom they promised gold and liberty if he would betray his master. The black led them to a party of Spaniards who were made prisoners, whereupon the buccaneers ordered the slave to butcher and torture most of the captives before the eyes of the others.

Altogether two hundred and fifty prisoners were taken, tortured and most of them killed by Morgan and his fellow friends in the days that he remained in Gibraltar. No one was spared. Even a white-haired old Portuguese—a man over seventy years old—was racked and his arms broken at the shoulders, after which he was spread-eagled by his thumbs and toes while the cords that supported him were beaten upon by sticks and a two hundred pound stone was laid on his stomach. Even this failed to wring a confession of his supposedly hidden wealth, the man screaming and pleading that he had owned but one hundred pieces of eight and that these had been stolen from him. Burning palm leaves were then passed over his face and body, until at last, convinced that no cruelties could force him to confess, he was carried to the church where he was lashed to a pillar and left for five days without food and with the least possible water to keep him alive.

At the end he agreed to secure money for a ransom and named five hundred pieces of eight as the utmost his friends could raise. At this, Morgan derided him, ordered his men to beat the nearly dead fellow

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with cudgels and demanded five thousand pieces of eight. Finally the shrinking tortured man agreed to furnish a thousand and these being paid he was set at liberty, horribly mutilated, a hopeless cripple and scarcely able to drag his broken, tortured limbs over the ground.

Even the monstrous cruelties mentioned were by no means the worst. Many of the captives were slashed and torn and left to die slowly in the sun; others were crucified with burning fuses wound about limbs and bodies; others had hands and feet burnt off in heaps of coals or were roasted alive over slow fires while many of the devices resorted to were indescribable and unprintable. Never, even in the worst days of the Inquisition, were such tortures devised and put into practice, never have savage Indians or Africans or cannibal islanders invented deeds as fiendish as this civilized Welshman and his British fellows hatched in their brains and inflicted upon the Spaniards, and history holds no record of a more inhuman, utterly ruthless and execrable scoundrel than Morgan.

But Morgan in his cupidity almost overdid himself. A captive slave offered to lead the buccaneers to the hiding place of the governor himself, a small island in a river where, with the richest citizens and most of the women, the governor had sought refuge. Morgan at once despatched two hundred men in two large boats to the river where a vessel was reported and with nearly two hundred more men started in person to take the governor.

Word of Morgan's approach reached the fugitives

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in time, however, and knowing they could not move down the river with the buccaneers there the governor led his party to a high and inaccessible mountain whose sole approach was a narrow cañon through which it was necessary to pass in single file.

Two days later Morgan reached the island only to find his prey flown and not knowing the difficulties before him attempted to ascend the mountain. Beaten back by the shots from above, unable to force the pass, Morgan reluctantly retraced his steps only to be met with a terrific downfall of rain and a flooded river.

Laden with booty taken from outlying estates and with nearly one hundred captive women and children the boats were swamped, many of the buccaneers were drowned, the loot was lost and more than half the prisoners were swept away, while the few survivors died soon after from hardships and exposure.

Five weeks had now passed since Morgan took the town and demanding a ransom as usual he prepared to depart. The inhabitants begged piteously for more time, agreeing to raise five thousand pieces of eight and offering to give themselves up as hostages for the security of the ransom. This Morgan agreed to and with his four hostages and a large number of slaves he had captured, together with all his booty, Morgan sailed away for Maracaibo.

Morgan was a bit nervous for fear the inhabitants of that town had rallied and had blocked his escape from the lake and his fears were not unfounded.

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Although he found Maracaibo still deserted, an old man whom they found ill in the town informed them that three Spanish men-of-war were anchored at the entrance of the lake awaiting the buccaneer's return. Moreover, he added, the forts were again manned and ready to attack the pirates so that the buccaneers were most effectually bottled up.

Sending a boat to make sure the information was correct, the resourceful buccaneer set his brains to work to devise some plan to get out of his difficulty. Before he had hit upon a scheme the scouts returned, stating that not only had the old man told the truth but that he had not told half of it. The largest Spanish ship mounted forty guns, the second in size thirty and the smallest twenty-four, while all were fairly swarming with men-at-arms and heavy cannon had been added to the batteries ashore.

Consternation reigned among the buccaneers. They had fought hard, had endured hardships, had killed, murdered, and tortured and had secured vast booty only to be caught like rats in a trap by warships and forces of men far in excess of their own, their largest ship carrying but fourteen guns and their total force amounting to barely three hundred men. There appeared no way of escape, all saw death staring them in the face and bitterly they berated Morgan for his cupidity in remaining so long at Gibraltar.

Morgan blustered and talked, promised to deliver them and, as a means of taking their minds off their troubles, sent a messenger to the Spanish admiral demanding a ransom if Maracaibo was not to be

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utterly destroyed. The admiral was not to be so easily bluffed. He knew he had the famous Morgan in a hole and he saw no way for the buccaneers to escape. So, with great courtesy and magnanimity, he offered most generous terms embodied in the following letter :

From Don Alonso del Campo y Espinosa, Admiral of the Spanish fleet, unto Captain Henry Morgan, commander of pirates.

Having understood by all our friends and neighbors the unexpected news that you have dared to attempt and commit hostilities in the countries, towns, cities, and villages belonging to the dominions of his Catholic Majesty, my Sovereign Lord and master; I let you understand by these lines that I am come to this place according to my obligations nigh unto that castle which you took out of the hands of a parcel of cowards, where I have put things into a very good posture of defense and mounted again the artillery you had nailed and dismounted. My intent is to dispute with you your passage out of the lake and follow you everywhere to the end you may see the performance of my duty. Notwithstanding, if you be contented to surrender with humility all that you have taken, together with the slaves and other prisoners, I will freely let you pass without trouble or molestation, upon condition that you retire home presently to your own country. But in case you make any resistance or opposition unto these things I proffer unto you, I do assure you I will command boats to come from Caracas wherein I shall put troops and coming to Maracaibo will cause you utterly to perish by putting every man of

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you to the sword. This is my last and absolute resolution. Be prudent, therefore, and do not abuse good soldiers who desire nothing more ardently than to revenge on you and your people all the cruelties and base infamous actions you have committed upon the Spanish nation in America.

Dated on board the Royal Ship named the Magdalen, lying at anchor at the entry of Lake Maracaibo, this 24th day of April, 1669.

DON ALONSO CAMPO Y ESPINOSA.

Calling his men together, Morgan read this courteous if defiant letter both in English and French and asked them to decide whether they would comply and lose their booty or would resist and lose, perhaps, both booty and lives.

Their answer was immediate, unanimous, and characteristic. Booty to them was more than anything else. Life and limb mattered little and their response was that they "had rather fight and spill their very last drop of blood than surrender the booty they had won with so much danger to their lives."

Morgan was, however, at a loss. It was, to use a slang expression, "up to him" to get out of the trap and at this juncture one of his men offered to solve the problem.

"Take you," he said, "care of the rest and I will undertake to destroy the biggest of the ships with only twelve men. The manner shall be by making a fire ship of that vessel we took in the river at Gibraltar. Which to the intent she may not be known as a fire ship we will fill her decks with logs

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of wood standing with hats and caps to deceive their sight with the representation of men. The same we will do at the ports that serve for guns which will be filled with counterfeit cannon. At the stern we will hang the English colors and persuade the enemy she is one of our best men-of-war that goes to fight them.''

This appeared an excellent scheme, but still Morgan hesitated until he had tried to make better terms with Don Alonso. Accordingly, the following day, he sent two messengers to the admiral offering to quit Maracaibo without damaging the town or exacting ransom and promising to liberate all the white prisoners and one half the slaves and to return the four hostages from Gibraltar, provided he and his men were allowed free and unmolested exit from the lake.

This proposition Don Alonso indignantly refused to countenance, adding that, unless the pirates surrendered within two days according to the conditions of his letter, he would come and force them to it.

Realizing that the admiral could neither be bluffed nor frightened, Morgan had no recourse save to fight and at once proceeded to arrange the fire ship as suggested by his resourceful sailor. With the ship ready with dummy cannon and men and with her hold filled with inflammable palm leaves, powder, brimstone, and pitch, and with heaps of powder on deck, the buccaneers prepared for their desperate venture.

All the male prisoners were placed in one boat with the women in another, along with the jewels,

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plate and other riches. Less valuable goods were distributed among the remaining vessels and each craft was manned by twelve buccaneers.

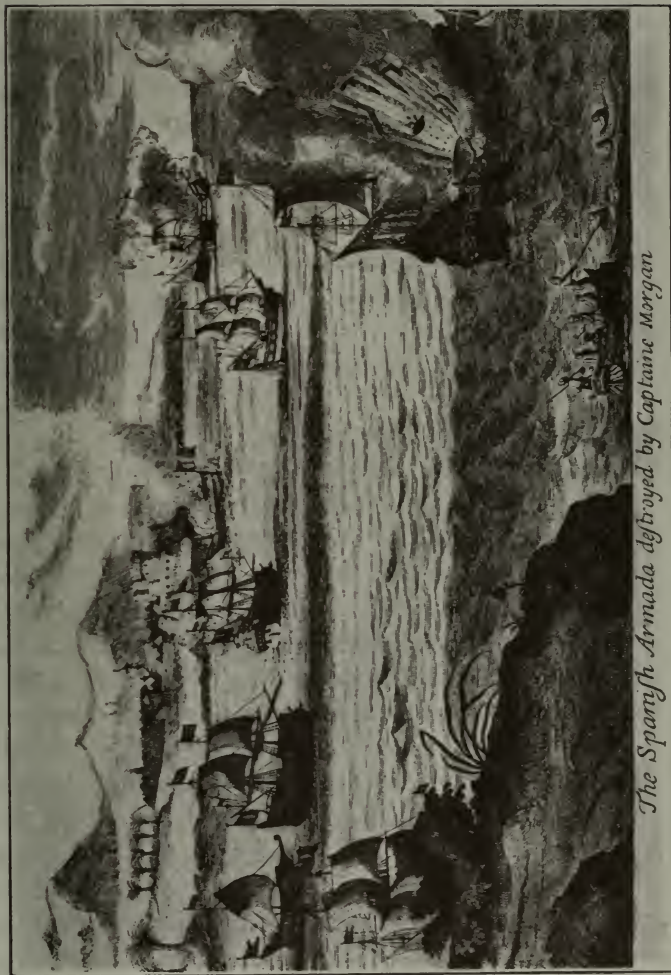
With the fire ship in advance the flotilla set out and soon sighted the Spanish fleet riding to anchors in the middle of the lake entrance. It was now nearly sundown and Morgan's boats anchored out of gunshot of the men-of-war.

With dawn, the pirates headed directly for the Spanish ships whereupon the Dons hoisted anchor and prepared to attack. But a moment later the fire ship drifted against the flagship of the admiral, her dare-devil crew grappled fast and before the Dons could get clear she was a mass of seething flames, while the piles of powder, exploding on deck, scattered blazing brands over the decks and rigging of the Spaniard.

So rapidly did the flames spread that within a few minutes the flagship was sinking and those on the second ship, fearing a like fate, sailed her as rapidly as possible towards the castle where the crew scuttled her and took to the land.

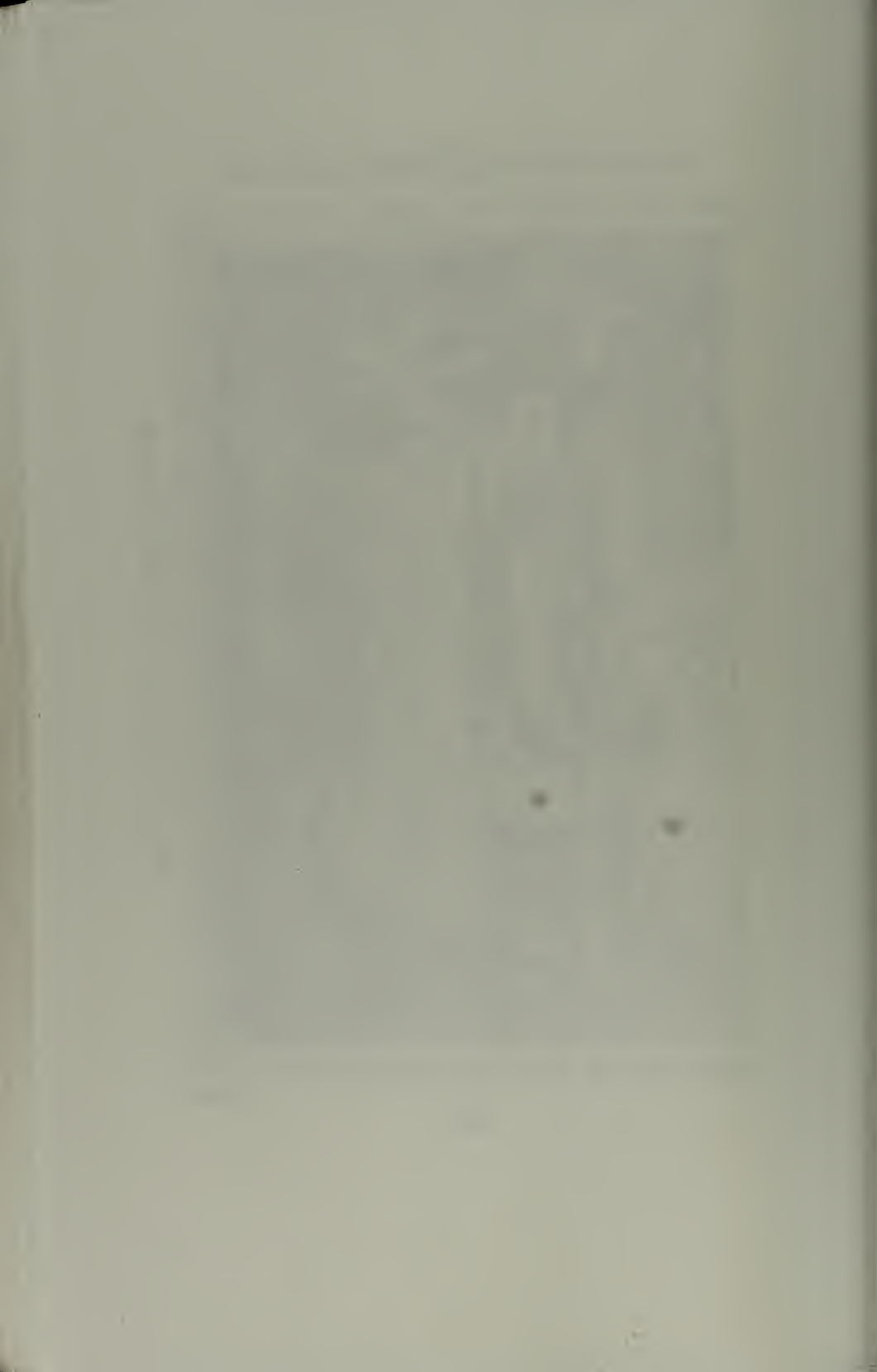
The third ship, left alone, fell, after a brief battle, into the buccaneers' hands.

Thus, without any loss to themselves and in an incredibly short space of time, the pirates had utterly destroyed the Spanish fleet and had opened their way to the sea. Poor old Admiral Espinosa must have been terribly chagrined at the ease with which his little armada had been dispersed and sunk and his men drowned and driven to seek refuge ashore.



The Spanish Armada destroyed by Captaine Morgan

MORGAN DEFEATING THE SPANISH FLEET AT MARACAIBO



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Among the men rescued from the water was a pilot, a foreigner, who gave Morgan full and detailed information regarding the forces ashore and, in addition, told the buccaneer leader that the scuttled Spanish ship had a vast treasure in plate and coin aboard. Morgan at once decided to make an effort to salvage this and returned to Maracaibo to refit the captured Spanish war vessel which he took as his flagship.

Before this, however, the buccaneers had attempted to follow up their victory by attacking the fort ashore, but in this they were defeated, being obliged to retire to their boats with a loss of over thirty men.

From Maracaibo, Morgan sent another message to the admiral, who was safe in the fort, again demanding a ransom for Maracaibo. Don Alonso—despite the fact that the shoe was now on the other foot—urged his countrymen to refuse, but they, having experienced such a demonstration of the buccaneers' prowess, decided to comply and sent a courier to Morgan asking what he demanded. The buccaneer was not as exorbitant as usual and offered to spare the town for thirty thousand pieces of eight and five hundred cattle. Being a Welshman, however, he was not averse to a bit of dickering and at last agreed to accept twenty thousand pieces of eight and the beeves. The latter were delivered the following day and, soon after, the cash was duly paid over.

Morgan then hedged and absolutely refused to carry out the whole of his promise, declaring he would hold the prisoners he had agreed to release

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until after he had passed the forts and was beyond all danger.

There was nothing for the Dons to do but submit, and Morgan with his fleet spread sail and reached the sunken ship which the Dons had tried to burn. With little trouble the buccaneers recovered fifteen thousand pieces of eight, a quantity of plate and bullion, many gold and jeweled sword hilts and a vast mass of silver which had been pieces of eight but which had melted and run together in the heat of the flames.

Despite the fact that he held prisoners as hostages, Morgan was by no means sure he could safely run the gauntlet of the fort, for he had in mind the way in which the soldiers of Porto Bello had shot down the nuns and priests and he was not one to take any unnecessary chances.

First, he ordered the prisoners to ask the admiral to guarantee safe passage for the ships, threatening to hang the captives to the yards of his ship if His Excellency did not comply. Accordingly the prisoners sent a deputation to Don Alonso begging him to agree for the sake of their captive wives and children.

But the admiral would have none of it. He tartly informed them that "if you had been as loyal to your King in hindering the entry of these pirates as I shall do their going out, you had never caused these troubles." In short, he told them literally to "go hang" and crestfallen, the messengers returned to Morgan. Oddly enough—perhaps as he realized it would have no effect—he refrained from carrying

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out his desperate threat and merely remarked that "if Don Alonso will not let me pass I will find means to do it without him."

Next, he divided the loot, fearing that there might be no better chance and also—as Esquemeling, who knew Morgan's character right well, assures us "as he was jealous that any of his commanders might run away with the best part of the spoil which lay more in one vessel than another." Morgan invariably judged others by himself, trusted no one and thought every one a thief like himself. The loot, when brought together and apportioned totaled a bit over a quarter of a million in cash and jewels, almost the same amount in general merchandise and nearly two hundred slaves.

The booty having been duly divided, Morgan began preparations for running past the fort, but as to pass through the narrow channel under the heavy guns and the musketry fire of the Dons would result in certain destruction Morgan resorted to a very clever ruse.

Embarking armed men in canoes he sent them ashore at some distance from the fort—though in plain view of the Spaniards. Then, when the craft reached land, they drew out of sight under the trees along shore and the men, lying down, concealed themselves, and the canoes and boats returned, apparently empty, to the ships. Throughout the day the small craft plied steadily back and forth and the Dons felt convinced that Morgan was landing his entire force for a concerted attack on the rear. This was exactly what Morgan had hoped for, for the

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Spaniards, to repulse the expected attack, hastily moved all their cannon from the water front to the land side of the battery.

Then, as night fell, Morgan silently weighed anchors and without hoisting sail allowed the tide to drift his ships towards the harbor mouth. Not until they were almost aground at the fortress did he order sails raised and before the astonished and outwitted Dons could move their artillery back, the buccaneers were almost out of range.

A few shots struck and killed a few pirates, others tore through sails and rigging, but the wind was fair and soon the round shot were dropping harmlessly into the sea astern of the buccaneers' ships.

Waiting only long enough to launch a boat and send the prisoners ashore—retaining, however, the hostages from Gibraltar who had not been ransomed—Morgan fired a parting salute of seven guns and squared away for Jamaica.

CHAPTER VIII

MORGAN'S GREATEST FEAT

(1670—1671)

ONE would have thought that Morgan, having acquired a very comfortable fortune by his rascality and his two successful and profitable raids, would have retired to spend the remainder of his life in peace and plenty. But his lust for gold and blood was insatiable and his love of fame and his confidence in his own abilities monumental.

Having twice accomplished the seemingly impossible, he looked about for something even more difficult — and offering greater reward — and decided that either Vera Cruz or the city of Panama should be next to feel the weight of his blood-stained hands.

His men, and hundreds of others, were ready and anxious for another adventure and Morgan, after a short stay at Port Royal, commenced preparations for his most famous or infamous exploit. Deciding upon the south side of Tortuga as his rendezvous, he “wrote divers letters to all the ancient and expert pirates there inhabiting,” not forgetting the governor of Tortuga and the hunters and planters of the island, the few on Santo Domingo and the corsairs nesting on Trade Wind Cay in the Bay of Samana. To all of these he outlined his plans, appointed the

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meeting place, and on October 24, 1670, joined his choice assortment of cutthroats and robbers. From far and near they had come; by ship, canoe, and small boat, even by foot across Santo Domingo, all lured by the thought of gold and the fame of Morgan—the greatest gathering of buccaneers ever known.

Arriving with his fleet at Vacca Island, south of Haiti, Morgan sent four ships with four hundred men on a raiding expedition to La Rancheria on the Colombian coast and busied himself and his men, during the absence of the party, by careening, cleaning, and fitting out the ships. The raiding party arrived in due time at Rio de la Hacha, captured a ship laden with maize that was anchored in the river and, after a fierce, all-day battle, took the town.

Not content with robbing the country of food and supplies the buccaneers proceeded to torture and kill the prisoners and to gather loot, until at the end of fifteen days, they returned to their rendezvous with a vast amount of loot and supplies and with four thousand bushels of maize, in addition to what they had secured on their prize.

They had been absent five weeks and had been given up as lost, but when, with a good ship to add to the fleet, no inconsiderable amount of good gold and silver and ample provisions, they returned, there was great merrymaking and rejoicing. Setting sail, the fleet joined a few additional ships from Jamaica and with thirty-seven ships and two thousand fighting men, besides seamen and boys, Morgan headed for the Central American coast.

But this was no ordinary buccaneers' raid. Such

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a large fleet and such an army of men could not be handled by one or two men and before sailing Morgan organized his flotilla like a naval force, dividing it into two squadrons with a vice admiral in charge of the second and to every captain he issued commissions, duly executed in real naval form, which authorized them to perform "any and all hostile acts" against the Spanish nation either ashore or at sea "in like manner as if they were open and declared enemies (as he termed it) of the King of England," his pretended master.

Just what his idea was in doing this is something of a puzzle, for the buccaneers needed no commissions or warrants in order to commit "any or all hostile acts" against the Dons and Morgan knew perfectly well that Spain and England were not officially at war. But it pleased his inordinate vanity, no doubt, to be able to give commissions like a true admiral and maybe his captains felt flattered also.

Before the fleet started the usual council was held and the various articles and agreements were drawn up regarding shares and indemnities.

Owing to the desperate and dangerous character of the proposed raid, the indemnities were greatly increased, the loss of both legs being valued at one thousand five hundred pieces of eight or fifteen slaves; both hands, one thousand eight hundred pieces of eight or eighteen slaves; one leg—either right or left—six hundred pieces of eight or six slaves; a hand the same amount as for a leg and for the loss of an eye one hundred pieces of eight or one slave. Moreover, the shares of booty varied

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from the usual rule. Morgan was to receive one one hundredth of the total booty obtained; each captain was to receive the shares of eight men, for the expenses of his ship, in addition to his own shares; the surgeon, in addition to his regular pay, was to get two hundred pieces of eight and every carpenter was to receive a bonus of one hundred pieces of eight. Finally, any man who distinguished himself in battle or was the first to enter a fort or to haul down the Spanish flag was to be awarded fifty pieces of eight, while the first to board a prize would have one tenth of all on board her.

A meeting of the officers was held to decide upon the city to be attacked. Arguments were long and earnest, some being in favor of Cartagena, others of Vera Cruz, and Morgan and a few urging that Panama should be the victim. There was no doubt that the latter offered the greatest reward, for, being on the Pacific, it had been unmolested.

On the other hand, this fact made it most difficult to reach. It necessitated the capture of the island of Old Providence, the taking of the heavily manned and redoubtable fortress of San Lorenzo at the mouth of the Chagres River, and a long and dangerous march across the Isthmus through the enemy's country. Despite all this, Morgan had his way, and it was decided that Panama should be the objective point.

The fleet sailed from Cape Tiburon on the 16th of December, 1670, and four days later the peaks of Old Providence rose above the horizon ahead. Not only did Morgan wish to capture this place in order

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to prevent the Dons from having a force in his rear, but in addition, he intended to garrison it with his own men to protect his retreat, while, finally, he needed guides for his march across the Isthmus and he knew that at Old Providence he would find condemned bandits and outlaws who would gladly join his forces and lead his men on to Panama.

Morgan landed at the island at the head of one thousand men, but met such a galling fire from the defenders that he was forced to retreat and rallied his men in an open field which "afforded no strange beds to these people as being sufficiently used to such kind of repose."

But they were ravenously hungry. Expecting to take the place easily, Morgan had carried no provisions along and, as a result, the men had nothing to eat all day or the following night. To add to their misery a heavy tropical rain began to fall, drenching them to the skin. As Esquemeling remarks, they were in such a plight that one hundred armed men "might easily have torn them all to pieces."

The following day the downpour continued so heavily that no advance was possible, and drenched, chilled, and hungry they were almost ready to give up. At last they discovered an ancient, worthless horse in a field which they instantly "killed and flayed and divided into small pieces amongst themselves as far as it would reach, for many could not obtain a mouthful, and which they devoured with neither salt nor bread like ravenous wolves."

We can scarcely marvel at many not being able to secure a mouthful for a lone horse "which was

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both lean and full of scabs and blotches" would not go far to provide a banquet for one thousand hungry pirates.

The men now began to mutter and talk of returning to the ships, but at this juncture the resourceful Morgan rigged a canoe with a white flag displayed upon it, and this was sent to the Spanish governor with a message stating that, "if within a few hours he delivered not himself and all his men, he (Morgan) did swear to him he would most certainly put them all to the sword."

This sort of bluff was a favorite scheme of Morgan's when he was in a tight place and the marvel is that it so often worked. He knew—and the Dons should also have known—that he was in sore straits and could not carry out his threat and yet, so great was the Spaniards' terror of Morgan, that the governor merely asked for two hours to consider the proposition. At the end of that time he sent two canoes under a flag of truce demanding two hostages from Morgan as pledges.

These terms Morgan granted, delivering two of his captains to the Spaniards, after which the governor's messengers laid His Excellency's plans before the buccaneer. It appeared that the governor was, figuratively, between the devil and the deep sea. If he surrendered without further resistance and lived he would most assuredly be hanged as a traitor by his own government, while if he refused Morgan's terms, he might lose his life as well as sacrifice many of his people. He therefore proposed to enter into an agreement with Morgan whereby there should

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be a sham battle, the Spaniards using blank charges and the pirates firing into the air, after which the Dons would surrender as though overcome by superior forces.

This traitorous scheme was agreed to by Morgan and was carried out as arranged that same night. Morgan with his men made a sham attack on Fort San Jerome; his fleet drew near the Santa Teresa fort and opened a harmless cannonade under cover of which men were landed near St. Matthew's battery and there—as prearranged—they captured the governor who had agreed to lead them into San Jerome as though forced to do so by his captors.

Everything fell out as arranged, the island was in possession of the buccaneers without loss of life on either side and the pirates commenced looting as usual. They tore down houses to provide wood for their fires, helped themselves to live stock and provisions and herded the inhabitants together like cattle.

These prisoners totaled four hundred and fifty, among them being many women and children and a horde of slaves, all of whom, with the exception of the women who were locked in the church, were sent into the outlying country to seek provisions with which to feed the buccaneers.

Although the pirates secured little in the way of riches they obtained a vast amount of arms and ammunition, among the booty being thirty thousand pounds of powder, hundreds of muskets, and many cannon, in addition to those mounted on the forts. Also, as Morgan had foreseen, there were three

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bandits imprisoned on the island and these willingly agreed to act as guides and betray their countrymen.

Morgan had all the forts, with the exception of San Jerome, destroyed, spiked their guns, and comfortably settling himself in the governor's house, ordered Captain Brodely to proceed with four ships, one boat, and four hundred men to the mouth of the Chagres and to take the fortress of San Lorenzo.

Morgan has always had the credit of taking this place which was the key to his raid on Panama, but he actually had no hand in it and remained in safety at Old Providence until word of the capture of the stronghold was brought to him. He was resourceful, clever, a born leader, a wonderfully eloquent talker, a strategist, a seaman and a most inhuman and despicable rascal without principle or honesty, but there is nothing in his records to show that he possessed any great personal courage. He never distinguished himself in any battle by any noteworthy feat of arms; no mention of his taking active part in any fight is made in any chronicle of his career and he always played safe as far as his own life and person were concerned. There is no question but that he was at heart a coward with a broad yellow streak and was the type of man to let others bear the brunt of fighting and then pose as a fire eater and a hero by torturing helpless captives.

He would resort to any means to accomplish his ends and preferred underhanded, deceitful means to open fighting and did not hesitate to betray his own men on occasion. Bad as they were, most of the buccaneers kept the promises and pledges they made

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with their enemies, but Morgan could not even play square in such matters. Time and again he broke truces, promises and pledges and yet, in his strange and contradictory make-up, there were certain noble qualities and admirable traits which occasionally cropped out. At most unexpected moments he would perform acts of gallantry and justice in the midst of most execrable performances and a psychoanalyst would have found this noted buccaneer chieftain a most interesting subject for study.

Brodely anchored his ships in a cove or bay about three miles from the Chagres mouth and landing his men marched through the jungle towards the castle. This fort, which still stands in an excellent state of preservation, is situated upon a bluff at the bend of the river and commands the entrance to the stream. Behind it is a deep swamp and it is surrounded by a wide moat with the only entrance over a narrow drawbridge. It is solidly constructed of massive stone and masonry, with bombproof underground passages and storerooms, a huge water tank within the walls, immense magazines, two bastions on the river side and four toward the land. On the northern side its walls join the almost perpendicular cliff rising from the river, while at the base of the hill, forming a continuation of the main castle, is a smaller but very strong fort that then mounted eight guns with two smaller six-gun batteries beyond at the mouth of the river. At the time of Brodely's attack the place was still further strengthened by being completely surrounded with strong palisades of tree trunks sharpened at the

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tops and placed in a double row with earth between.

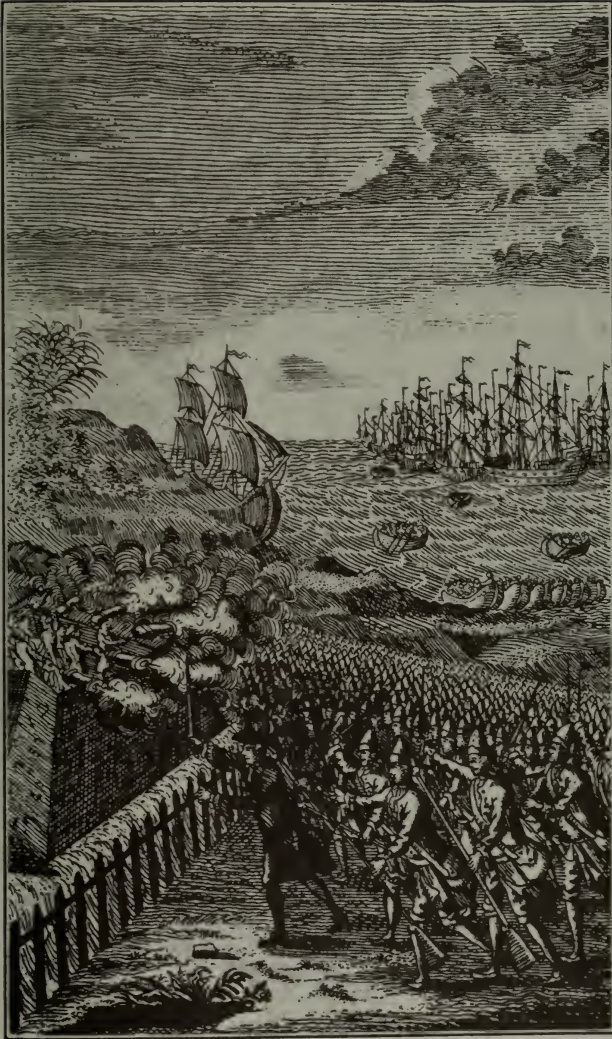
Knowing the castle was impregnable from the water side, the buccaneers approached through the woods, expecting to find cover from which they could assault the fort from the rear. But they found the jungle dense, the ground swampy and did not reach the vicinity of the fort until two o'clock in the afternoon after marching since dawn.

Then, to their chagrin, they discovered that the Dons had cleared a wide space about the castle and that they could not advance a step without being exposed to the fire of the Spaniards' cannon and musketry.

After some hesitation they drew their cutlasses, and carrying fire balls, rushed forward across the open space. But they were met with a withering fire, they could not scale or destroy the palisades and were forced to retreat with heavy loss. With nightfall, however, they made another attempt, but despite every effort were unable to approach closely enough to throw their fire balls into the fort or to destroy the palisades.

It looked very much as if, for once, Morgan's men were to fail utterly, when, by merest accident, the tide turned in their favor. One of the buccaneers was struck by an arrow which entered his back and passed completely through his body. With a savage oath he jerked the shaft out of the wound, wrapped a bit of rag from his shirt about it and ramming it down his musket fired it in a fit of fury at the Dons.

The cotton cloth caught fire from the powder and



ATTACK ON SAN LORENZO



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falling on the thatch of a building within the castle, instantly set the dry palm leaves ablaze.

In the heat of the battle this incident passed unnoticed until the flames were beyond control and before they could be checked they had reached a magazine, there was a terrific explosion, and in the confusion that followed—for there was little water with which to extinguish the fire—the pirates succeeded in reaching the palisades and igniting them in several places. As the stakes burned and were pulled down, the earth between tumbled into the trench, thus enabling the pirates to swarm into the fort, although met by showers of molten lead and blazing fire balls hurled at them by the defenders.

Despite the damage caused by the explosion the pirates had no easy time of it. Over and over again they were driven back and made no headway, contenting themselves throughout the night by shooting at the Spaniards as they showed themselves in the glare of the flames.

With dawn the buccaneers found that the breaches in the palisades had widened, but the Dons had moved their artillery to command them, the garrison was concentrated at the openings and furious fighting continued until noon before the pirates succeeded in gaining a breach which was defended by the governor with twenty-five picked men.

Inch by inch the Dons gave way, fighting valiantly and furiously, until at last, finding the castle would fall into the buccaneers' hands, many of the Spaniards cast themselves from the castle wall into the river or upon the jagged rocks below the walls rather

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than surrender to the pirates. Not a man offered to surrender or asked quarter and the governor, with a handful of men, fought heroically until he fell with a musket ball through his head.

When at last the pirates were in possession they found that of the three hundred and fourteen Spaniards who had garrisoned the fort only thirty were living and of these over twenty were seriously wounded, while not a single officer remained alive.

The buccaneers had also suffered heavy losses. Over one hundred men had been killed and more than seventy wounded and, to their discomfiture, they discovered that their designs on Panama had been discovered and that the surprise they had counted on had come to naught. During the battle several of the Spaniards had volunteered the hazardous feat of stealing through the pirates' lines, had safely succeeded and had carried word of the buccaneers' arrival to Panama.

Brodely, having imprisoned the few surviving Dons in the church, sent a ship to Old Providence with the news of the victory to Morgan and prepared to put the fortress in condition for defense.

Ruthlessly burning the town and carrying the unfortunate inhabitants and soldiers with him, Morgan left Old Providence and eight days later reached the Chagres mouth and saw the British colors flying above San Lorenzo. So great was the joy of the pirates that they carelessly ran four of their ships upon the rocks at the mouth of the river, among the vessels being Morgan's flagship.

But the devil watched over his own as usual and

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once more Morgan and his ruffians escaped their justly deserved fate, although a number of the prisoners from Old Providence were drowned. But of course a few score of these were of no account in the minds of the buccaneers.

All the surviving prisoners were at once put to work repairing the fortress and setting up new palisades to put it in a condition for defense. In the river were several Spanish coasting vessels, four small ships and many canoes, all of which the buccaneers seized. Then, leaving a garrison of five hundred men at San Lorenzo, Morgan and his remaining twelve hundred rascals embarked in the five captured boats and thirty-two canoes and pulled up the Chagres on their way to distant Panama.

They were most improvident as usual, and despite the lesson they had so recently received at Old Providence, they took very few provisions, expecting to subsist on stolen supplies on the journey. But the Dons had fled from every town and village, carrying with them or destroying everything edible. Moreover, the river was very low, for it was January and the dry season, and the bed was choked with trees, so that the pirates were soon forced to abandon their boats and take to land.

Even on the first day they suffered from hunger. Several times they saw villages and rushed joyfully forward, expecting to find food to fill their empty stomachs, only to find deserted huts and burned fields.

By the fourth day they were so ravenously hungry that when, in one abandoned settlement, they found

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some leather bags that had contained bread, the buccaneers devoured the sacks.

To quote Esquemeling, "some persons who never were out of their mother's kitchens may ask how these pyrates could eat, swallow and digest those pieces of leather so hard and dry. To whom I only answer: That could they once experiment what hunger, or rather famine, is, they would certainly find the manner, by their necessity, as these pyrates did. For these first took the leather and sliced it in pieces. Then did they beat it between two stones and rub it, often dipping it in the water of the river, to render it by these means supple and tender. Lastly they scraped off the hair and roasted or broiled it upon the fire. And being thus cooked they cut it into small morsels and eat, helping it down with frequent gulps of water, which by good fortune, they had near at hand."

On the fifth day they found the first foodstuffs—two sacks of meal and two jars of wine with a few plantains—which Morgan apportioned among the weakest and hungriest of his men.

The party had now been divided, the more exhausted men paddling in canoes, the others ashore, and on the sixth day they found a barn or shed full of corn. Devouring the maize raw, they hurried on and an hour later encountered an ambushade of Indians. Feeling certain that they would secure better food by defeating the Indians, they recklessly threw away their corn, only to find—when the Indians gave way and faded into the forest—that they left nothing behind them to eat. Several buccaneers

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were killed by the savages' arrows and that night the men began to mutter and talk of returning to the sea. But they were overruled by the majority and the next day continued on their wearisome, killing march through the jungle.

The seventh day they reached Santa Cruz (now Las Cruces) and saw smoke rising from the houses. Thinking the village still occupied, they dashed upon it with wild shouts and ready arms to find that the smoke was from the burning buildings which had been put to the torch by the retreating Dons. All the pirates found were a few half-starved cats and dogs which they "immediately killed and devoured with great appetite." A little later, they found about a dozen jars of Peruvian wine which they quickly disposed of and, as a result, fell violently ill. Morgan and the others at once assumed that the liquor had been poisoned, but, as Esquemeling says, "the true reason was their huge want of sustenance in that whole voyage and the manifold sorts of trash they had eaten."

At Las Cruces it was necessary to abandon the canoes as this was the limit of navigation, but fearing the craft would be destroyed in his absence and that he would be unable to descend the river on his return, Morgan sent them back to where he had left the larger boats, leaving only one canoe well hidden in the bush so that he could send a message to the others upon his return.

Although the town was deserted, the Spaniards and their Indian allies lurked near and one party of pirates, venturing into the woods, was attacked

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and driven back with loss, leaving one of their number a prisoner of the Dons.

The next day they were again ambushed in a narrow pass and were met by a shower of arrows which killed and wounded a number of the buccaneers. For an hour or two a sharp battle raged, the Indians finally giving way after eight pirates had been killed and ten seriously wounded. Had the Indians been skilled strategists or familiar with methods of warfare, they might easily have wiped out Morgan's force then and there, and thus saved Panama, for the narrow rocky defile was an ideal spot for the purpose.

A little after this skirmish, the pirates reached open savannas, where they were again attacked by Indians who, after a short resistance, retreated. The following day they ascended a hill or low mountain and to their infinite delight looked at last upon the Pacific with the towers of the churches of Panama and the ships in the harbor in plain view. At the foot of the mountain, too, they discovered a number of cattle, asses, and horses which they slaughtered and ate, the first real food they had obtained in nine days.

Esquemeling's description of this banquet is most vivid. He says, "the flesh of these beasts they cut into convenient gobbets and threw them in the fires, and half roasted, they devoured them with incredible haste and appetite. For such was their hunger that they resembled cannibals more than Europeans, the blood many times running down from their beards to the middle of their bodies."

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Morgan, however, was not at all easy in his mind. For the nine days that he and his men had been tramping across the Isthmus he had been unable to capture a single Indian or Spaniard from whom he could secure information regarding the forts or garrison at Panama, and he feared a trap or a surprise was in store for him.

So, the bloody feast over, he sent a party of fifty buccaneers ahead to try to secure prisoners. Towards evening they discovered a troop of horsemen who rushed off, and a few moments later they came within sight of Panama.

At this the pirates became delirious with joy and excitement. They danced, pranced, yelled, and halloed, threw their hats in the air, sounded their trumpets and beat their drums as if "they had already obtained the victory and the entire accomplishment of their designs."

That night their camp was made on the grassy savanna with full preparation for attacking the city at dawn. While preparing for the night, fifty cavalrymen appeared—a reconaissance party from the city—and approached the buccaneers closely, remaining just beyond musket range and taunting the pirates with cries of "Perros! Nos veremos!" ("Dogs! We shall meet you.")

Leaving half a dozen of their number to watch the buccaneers the rest of the Dons then retired and, immediately after, the guns of the forts opened fire on the pirates' camp. This cannonade continued all night and a large body of cavalry and foot soldiers, fully two hundred, placed themselves on the plain,

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practically blocking all approaches to the threatened city.

All these preparations for defense troubled the buccaneers little for the balls from the great guns were poorly aimed and did no execution.

Having placed their sentries, the buccaneers "began every one to open their satchels and, without preparation of napkins or plates, fell to eating very heartily the remaining pieces of bulls' and horses' flesh which they had reserved since noon. This being done they laid themselves down to sleep upon the grass with great repose and huge satisfaction, expecting with impatience the dawning of the next day."

The next day at dawn the men were called and formed in battle array, and with drums and trumpets sounding, they marched towards the city. By the advice of one of his bandit guides, Morgan left the main road—which had been barricaded and strongly defended—and took a difficult way through the woods. This was a move the Dons had not anticipated and hurriedly leaving their stations and batteries they attempted to head off the pirates.

In numbers the Spaniards and buccaneers were about equal, the Dons' forces consisting of four regiments of foot, two squadrons of cavalry, many Indians and black slaves, and some volunteer citizens. In addition, they drove forth a herd of half-wild bulls with the childish idea that the cattle would stampede the buccaneers and run over them.

When, emerging from the wood, the pirates saw the array of heavily armed and trained troops drawn

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up to receive them they began to have misgivings as to their success.

In fact, Esquemeling says, "Yea, few or none there were but wished themselves at home, or at least free from the obligation of that engagement wherein they perceived their lives must be so narrowly concerned. But they reflected upon the straits they had brought themselves into and that now they ought of necessity either fight resolutely or die, for no quarter could be expected from an enemy against whom they had committed so many cruelties."

Indeed, it was Hobson's choice. They could not retreat and were forced to wipe out the Dons before they could advance. Moreover, before them, gleaming in the morning sun, were the towers of Panama—the richest of cities of New Spain—that "Goode and Statelye Citie" with wealth untold, slaves and women, rich wines and the best of viands, and the chance for endless villainies and unlimited debauchery, all theirs for the taking.

Dividing his force into three battalions, Morgan sent forward two hundred sharpshooters—cattle hunters from Tortuga and Santo Domingo—as an advance skirmishing party to pick off the Spanish officers and men at a distance.

Immediately the cavalry charged, but the savanna was wet and soggy and the horses plunged in the quagmire so that their evolutions could not be carried out. With a well-aimed volley the pirate sharpshooters brought down a number of the Dons, "wherewith the battle was instantly kindled very hot," as Esquemeling assures us.

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The Dons, according to our friend Esquemeling, defended themselves most courageously—thus disproving the claim of Spanish historians that the governor showed himself and his men cowards that day—but nature and superior marksmanship were against them.

Finding they were losing rather than gaining, the Dons played their trump card and drove the wild bulls at their enemies. But men who had followed the trade of hunting wild cattle in the forests of Santo Domingo and among the crags and jungles of Tortuga were not the sort to be dismayed by any herd of half-tamed steers. The greater part of the bulls, far more terrified by the sounds of battle than any human beings would have been of them, turned and ran snorting to the outlying country, while the few who broke through the buccaneers' ranks were shot down and did no greater damage than "to tear the colours to pieces."

The battle had now "kindled very hot" for two hours, the greater portion of the cavalry were unhorsed or killed and those who still retained their mounts fled towards the city. This retreat demoralized the foot soldiers, and firing a parting volley, they took to their heels.

Tired from their long tramp, still weak from lack of food and having fought since daybreak, the pirates were in no shape to follow up the retreat. Nevertheless, they succeeded in hunting down a number of the defeated soldiers and butchered them without mercy wherever found. Even a party of priests, who were brought to Morgan were pistoled at his

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orders. A little later a Spanish captain was taken who, under threat of torture, informed Morgan that the total force in the town had consisted of four hundred cavalry, twenty-four hundred infantry and about sixty Indians and negroes. Having secured this information Morgan put the officer out of the way and having learned that guns commanded the highroad, he at once prepared to march on the town by another route. His own losses had been heavy, but far less than those of the Dons who had left six hundred dead on the field, besides the wounded and prisoners and the refugees killed by the pirates.

Every foot of their way towards the town was contested and they were constantly under fire of the fort's guns which, having been loaded with small bullets and scrap iron, caused fearful havoc among the buccaneers so that they "unavoidably lost, at every step they advanced, great numbers of men."

For three long hours they fought their way towards the town until, when at such close quarters that the artillery could not be used, the decimated pirates rushed, with drawn cutlasses and pistols, on the Spaniards and took the city.

For a time they ran madly about, ruthlessly cutting down the people regardless of age or sex, destroying all they could lay hands on, pillaging and looting. But this was not at all to Morgan's mind. With difficulty he rounded up his men, assembled them in the plaza and with most awful threats commanded them not to drink or taste any liquor.

This he did—so he stated—because he had received word that the wines had been poisoned. Esquemel-

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ing gave, as his opinion, that this was merely an excuse; that Morgan, realizing that if his men became drunk they might be attacked and overcome by the rallying Dons, very wisely took this means of avoiding such a contingency.

Unfortunately for Morgan's plans, the soldiers who had escaped from San Lorenzo had arrived at Panama in ample time for the citizens and the priests to carry away the most precious things in the city. The famed golden altar of San José and the priceless church vessels and jewels, millions in money and jewelry, countless treasures of the wealthy Spaniards, all had been hurriedly loaded on to ships and boats which had sailed, no one knew where, before the buccaneers' arrival.

This drove Morgan into a perfect frenzy. There was vast loot left, but he was furious to think that anything had escaped him. He immediately ordered twenty-five men to embark in the only boat remaining in the harbor and sent them in chase of the fleeing ships and then, to vent his anger, he secretly set fire to several of the larger buildings.

There have been innumerable discussions as to who started the fire. Some have claimed it was done purposely by the buccaneers; others have placed the blame on the Dons and still others have claimed it was an accident.

Esquemeling was there, a witness of all that happened, and he boldly states without equivocation that "Morgan endeavored to make the public believe the Spaniards had been the cause thereof, which sus-

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picions he surmised among his own people, perceiving they reflected upon him for that action."

Furthermore, he says, "nobody knowing what motives persuaded Captain Morgan thereto which are as yet unknown to this day."

Hence there can be no question that Morgan was himself responsible for this, the most ruthless and inexcusable destruction ever perpetrated by any buccaneer or pirate, the blackest blot of Morgan's thoroughly black life.

Panama was largely of wood, the houses of cedar "of very curious and magnificent structure and richly adorned within," while the poorer residences were of cane and palm. In addition to these wooden buildings there were several large and imposing stone edifices, including the eight monasteries, two fine churches, a hospital, a huge slave market belonging to the Genoese traders, the king's stables, the governor's house, the forts and the treasury. Altogether the town contained over seven thousand houses and huts and these, closely placed and of inflammable materials, burned like tinder.

So rapidly did the flames spread that, despite the efforts of the Spaniards—aided by the buccaneers who blew up buildings with gunpowder and pulled down others to check the conflagration—an entire street was consumed within an hour. Beyond all control it swept over the city, destroying everything in its path, sparing nothing and raging for four weeks until the blackened ruins of the slave market and treasury, a few crumbling monastery walls and

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the lofty tower of St. Anastasio church were all that remained of the populous and rich city.

Within the slave market were hundreds of blacks and a great store of meal. This building Morgan surrounded with armed men and put to the torch. Then, as the terrified slaves attempted to escape he drove them back, or cut them down, while he watched with unholy glee the agonies and listened to the heart-rending shrieks of the hundreds of slaves being roasted alive before his eyes.

Throughout the raging conflagration the buccaneers were forced to camp at some distance from the burning city, but no sooner had the flames died down than they hurried to the ruins and sought among the glowing coals and smoking timbers for the gold and silver that had escaped destruction. Fused into unrecognizable masses they found plate and bullion, coins and ornaments, hundreds of pounds of precious metal and from the captives, by torture, they wrung the secret hiding places of more fortunes. In cisterns and wells the people had hidden what riches could not be transported and from these places the pirates recovered priceless things.

Knowing that the richest of the people had fled into the surrounding country and to their distant estates, Morgan despatched a force of three hundred pirates to round up and capture all the Dons they could lay hands on.

Within two days, over two hundred prisoners were brought in, and day after day, scores of fugitives were hunted, corralled and brought as captives to Morgan. For miles about the stricken city, the



MORGAN TORTURING CAPTIVES AT PANAMA



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pirates ranged, sparing none, until far and near the countryside was stripped bare and every Spaniard who had not fled to remote parts of the country had been captured.

All these Morgan either put to the most awful tortures or—in the case of the women or obviously prominent men—held for ransom. The buccaneers outdid all their previous efforts in torturing the citizens of Panama and never had the sun looked down on greater cruelties and more intense agonies than those in the ruined city destroyed by Morgan.

One poor wretch, a man servant, had, in the confusion, donned a pair of his master's "taffety breeches" to which a small silver key was hanging. This the pirates saw and at once jumped to the conclusion that it was the key to a treasure chest. The shivering servant protested that he knew nothing of it, explaining about the mistake in his garments, but to no avail. He was placed on the rack and his arms torn from their sockets. Then a twisted cord was placed about his head and drawn tight until his eyes protruded and "appeared as big as egges." Even this failing to wring the desired information from the shrieking servant he was strung up by the thumbs and flogged almost to death. Following this his ears and nose were cut off, his face singed with burning straw and finally, convinced he really knew nothing, his tormentors ran him through with a lance and put a merciful end to his sufferings.

In the meantime, the boats sent out by Morgan had returned with no news of the fleeing treasure ships. They had, however, taken many prisoners

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and a quantity of booty at the islands of Taboga and Tabogilla, as well as a ship which they brought to Panama. This came near breaking up Morgan's plans and forces. Lured by the riches they knew awaited them on the Pacific coast, and with a well-armed ship at their disposal, a number of the pirates plotted to seize the vessel, desert Morgan and go pirating on their own account. Word of this reached Morgan, however, and he immediately had the ship and other craft burned.

Morgan and his men had now been in Panama three weeks and the chieftain, having acquired everything of value available, sent some of the captives into the country with orders to bring a ransom for the town and the other prisoners, among them a large number of priests and nuns. Very little resulted from this, for, of a truth, the inhabitants had very little to gather for a ransom of any sort.

At last, with all his six hundred prisoners and one hundred and seventy-five mule loads of treasure, Morgan and his pirates left the ruined city and started back towards Las Cruces.

Nothing could equal the anguish and despair of those poor, robbed and stricken women and children as, herded together by their inhuman captors, they were marched over the savannas, through swamps and jungle, towards slavery or worse.

"Nothing else could be heard," says Esquemeling, "save the lamentations, cries, shrieks and doleful sighs of so many women and children. Besides that among all these miserable prisoners there was ex-

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trema hunger and thirst, which hardships Captain Morgan designedly caused with intent to excite them more earnestly to seek money wherewith to ransom themselves."

Many of the women begged Morgan to let them return to Panama to rejoin their surviving friends, but his answer was "he came not hither to hear lamentations and cries, but rather to seek money."

Clad in the flimsiest garments, with high-heeled slippers on their feet, these high-bred ladies, unused to any hardship, were dragged and beaten through the jungle, prodded with knives or swords, and when, through sheer exhaustion, they stumbled or fell they were butchered and the horde of pirates and the train of mules trampled their bodies in the mire.

And here, in the midst of this awful misery, Morgan exhibited one of those strange, incomprehensible traits of his character which were ever cropping out. One of the women captives, a rich and virtuous lady, looked upon by Morgan with lustful eyes in Panama, had successfully repelled all his advances and was now being dragged along between two villainous old pirates. With "lamentations that did pierce the skies," she told them that she had asked two priests to go to her friends and fetch money for her ransom, but that instead, they had used the money to secure the release of some of their own order.

Her statement was brought to Morgan, who then and there halted his party, seized the accused priests, and wringing admissions of their duplicity from them, immediately released the lady, and apologized most profusely for the inconvenience he had caused

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her. Most wonderful of all, he presented her with the sum raised for her ransom and sent her joyfully to her friends with a guard of released slaves.

Having performed this gallant deed, he hanged the deceitful clerics to a convenient tree and proceeded on his way.

While speaking of this "most virtuous lady" it may be of interest to mention an incident as an illustration of the awful fear with which the Dons regarded the pirates and the exaggerated and ridiculous tales of them which were spread among the Spaniards. When first captured by Morgan the lady expressed amazement that the buccaneers resembled human beings, telling him that she had been told they had the shapes of beasts and that it was a most surprising thing to hear them swear and curse by the name of God and Christ like other men. Another woman, when she first saw the buccaneers, exclaimed "Jesus bless me! These thieves are like us Spaniards and not irrational beasts!"

With such ideas of the buccaneers in their minds it is little wonder that the mere mention of the name "buccaneer" was enough to cause a panic among the Spaniards.

CHAPTER IX

'AN AMAZING UNDERTAKING

(1671—1680)

BEFORE Morgan reached San Lorenzo on his return trip he called a halt, as was customary, and not only was every buccaneer put under oath to conceal nothing, but, to make assurance doubly sure, every member of the party was searched "even to the very soles of his shoes."

Arriving at San Lorenzo, a boat loaded with the prisoners from Old Providence who had been laboring at repairing the castle, was sent to Porto Bello with demands for a ransom for the fortress.

The reply was most unsatisfactory and to the point, for the governor of Porto Bello informed Morgan that he would not give a farthing to him and that he could do with San Lorenzo as he pleased. No doubt this caused Morgan to regret his humanity in releasing the Old Providence captives, and realizing he could get nothing in the way of ransom he ordered the destruction of the castle and proceeded to divide the loot already secured.

While he had been absent at Panama the garrison left at San Lorenzo had been doing a bit of pirating on its own account and had taken several ships and a considerable amount of booty.

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In spite of this, the dividends were woefully small and Morgan retained the best of everything for himself and acted in an entirely unprecedented manner by ignoring the prearranged agreement of the shares.

No buccaneer had ever dared do this, for even the worst of the rascals were honorable in this respect and looked upon the agreements with their men as sacred. But Morgan had no idea of honor or decency. So obviously unfair was his division of the immense booty that his men openly accused him of cheating. And little wonder, for out of the vast sum, nearly two hundred mule loads of loot, the tremendous ransoms, and the prizes taken off San Lorenzo, the men each received only two hundred pieces of eight!

It was brazen cheating, wholesale robbery, and the men grew so mutinous and threatening that Morgan sneaked aboard his ship at night with a few companions and leaving his fellows destitute of supplies, sailed away for Jamaica.

Most of the deserted men scattered along the Central American coast, subsisting on what they could secure in the way of fish and game, robbing villages, and taking a few small boats. Some made their way after incredible hardships to Tortuga and a few managed to reach Jamaica, swearing vengeance on their traitorous commander.

But Morgan had come to the end of his rope. Hardly had he reached Jamaica when a British warship sailed into the harbor bearing royal warrant to recall the governor of the island and take him, a virtual prisoner, to England, there to "give an account of his proceedings and behavior in relation

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to pyrates whom he had maintained in those parts to the huge detriment of the subjects of the King of Spain.”

Along with the royal order for the arrest of His Excellency came a new governor, who notified the inhabitants that henceforth no pirate or buccaneer would be permitted to sail from Jamaica, to seek refuge or harbor at the island or commit any depredations against Spain or others.

Not only did the new executive publish his intents, but he most rigorously kept his promises, hanging a number of the buccaneers who had taken part in a raid on a Cuban town, imprisoning others and sending friend Morgan back to face His Majesty along with the deposed governor.

Once more, however, Morgan's silvery and plausible tongue—and no doubt a goodly sum in gold and jewels in addition—won the day, and instead of being hanged as he richly deserved, he was honored, knighted, and sent back to Jamaica as Lieutenant Governor.

No doubt, too, the King of England believed in setting a thief to catch a thief and in selecting Morgan to suppress his former comrades he chose wisely. Morgan was just the sort of unprincipled scoundrel to betray those who had served with him and he had no pity on any of the buccaneers who fell into his clutches. He hung them right and left without semblance of trial, despatched expeditions to Ane-gada and other lairs where they had sought refuge and practically wiped the corsairs and piracy from the British possessions. And yet he had not re-

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formed, was still the same crafty, double-faced, black-hearted old villain as of yore. While hanging his old comrades with one hand he was secretly financing piratical expeditions—in which his brother had a leading part—with the other.

Finally, so many complaints of his dishonesty, as well as his severity and lack of justice, reached England, that Morgan was recalled. What ultimately became of him is not known. He dropped completely from sight, disappeared from the stage, and whether he settled down and lived a quiet obscure life in England, turned planter under an assumed name and ended his days in the islands, or was murdered by one of the men he had betrayed makes little difference.

But despite England's stand, the fact that the British islands were no longer safe places for them, and the fact that they were now nothing more nor less than ordinary pirates, the buccaneers did not give up their murderous ways. Tortuga afforded a den for the French pirates, the Danish, Dutch, and French Isles of the Virgins became noted lairs for the sea rovers of many nationalities and the Caymans and the islands off the Central American coast sheltered still more, while Trade Wind Cay in Samana Bay (Santo Domingo) was fortified and became a veritable pirates' Gibraltar.

But pickings on sea and land were poor. The galleons sailed either in convoys with warships to protect them or heavily armed, while English ports were friendly and British ships of war aided their

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former enemies, the Spaniards, to beat off the corsairs.

Maracaibo, Porto Bello, Vera Cruz, and all the rich cities of the Spanish Main had been sacked and sacked again until the Dons no longer stored vast riches in their treasure houses, and the remaining buccaneers—or rather pirates—found their profession far less remunerative than in former years.

At this time, when the pirates often cruised the Caribbean for weeks without taking a prize, a number of the freebooters foregathered in the island-studded waters of Bocas del Toro between Panama and Costa Rica. Among those who met in this sheltered spot were several British pirates who had recently taken Porto Bello for the second time. They were a reckless, dare-devil lot, buccaneers of standing and far more decent and humane men than Morgan and his ilk.

Captain Peter Harris was there, with Richard Sawkins, Captain Cook, Bartholomew Sharp, Captain Coxon, Alleston and Row, Mackett, and one Frenchman, a Captain Bournano. And along with them were several other notable characters: Basil Ringrose, the pilot and navigator; Dampier, the scientist author; Wafer, the surgeon; and Jobson, the Divinity student.

As they gathered in the cabin of Sharp's ship, discussing ways and means, chatting of past deeds and wondering where they could strike next to fill their depleted pocketbooks, Bournano suggested Chepo, a town on the Pacific coast of Panama. He

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stated that the Darien Indians, although nominally at peace with Spain, were really friendly with the pirates and would gladly aid them in attacking their hereditary enemies, the Dons, and he suggested landing in Darien, marching overland, and sacking Chepo.

It was a mad, amazing scheme. Morgan had found it about all he could do to cross the Isthmus via the Chagres and the gold road, and no buccaneer had ever attempted crossing through the jungle-covered Indian country. But these men balked at nothing and unanimously they agreed to Captain Bournano's wild scheme, provisioned their ships with turtles and maize and set sail for Darien on March 23, 1680.

Their ships were well found, heavily armed, and swarmed with men. Bournano commanded a ninety-ton ship of six guns and eighty-six men; Coxon, a vessel of eighty tons, eight guns and ninety-seven men; Harris, the largest vessel of one hundred and fifty tons, twenty-five guns and one hundred and seven men; Sharp, a twenty-five-ton vessel carrying two guns and forty men; Cook, an unarmed ship of thirty-five tons and forty-three men; Row, another unarmed ship of twenty tons and twenty-five men; Alleston commanded a small vessel of eighteen tons and twenty-four men; while Sawkins and Mackett had mere shallops of sixteen and fourteen tons, respectively, manned by thirty-five and twenty men. But the size of ships and their armament was of no account in the expedition they had in mind. Men were what counted and with a total

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force of four hundred and seventy-seven pirates they felt they could conquer the world if need be.

Their first stop was the Samballas (now called San Blas) islands inhabited then, as now, by the San Blas Indians who from earliest times had been allies of the buccaneers and spoke both English and French fluently, as they do to this day.

The Indians welcomed the piratical argosy, but when they had heard the plans frowned upon them. They stated that Chepo was not rich and that Tocamora necessitated a terrific march through mountainous country. But they went the pirates one better by suggesting an attack on Panama which, since Morgan's raid, had been rebuilt on its present site.

To any but these dare-devil Englishmen such a proposition would have appeared too amazing and ridiculous to consider, but to these hardy and determined men there was no such word as impossible and when the Indians pointed out that their route would lead via the town of El Real de Santa Maria there was no longer any hesitation. El Real, to be sure, was a mere village, a tiny outpost, but it was the storehouse and shipping point for the vast quantities of gold from the Caña mine of Darien, one of the richest mines in the world, and shiploads of bullion were often stored there awaiting transport to Panama.

So, leaving their ships behind guarded by a handful of men, the pirates landed on the shores of Darien, and accompanied by their Indian guides,

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plunged into the untrodden and unexplored jungles of the Isthmus.

Three hundred and thirty-one men made up this party which, on the 5th of April, 1670, started on the most daring and wonderful expedition ever undertaken by buccaneers or pirates, an expedition that made Morgan's greatest feats pale to insignificance and resulted in the most marvelous voyage in the annals of piracy.

Assured by the Indians that they could obtain food on the way, the pirates reduced their provisions to the minimum, each man carrying four small loaves of bread only, while their arms consisted of muskets, pistols, and cutlass, with plenty of powder and ball. To avoid confusion, and in order that they might identify one another in case they became separated, the men were divided into divisions, each led by a commander and each carrying the colors of its captain's ship. Sharp commanded one company carrying his well-known banner of red with its bunch of white and green ribbons; Sawkins displayed his flag of red striped with yellow; Peter Harris, at the head of two companies, flew two green pennants; Alleston and Mackett joined forces with Coxon and carried red flags, while Cook brought up the rear with his red and yellow colors bearing a hand and sword for his device.

From the very first the buccaneers met with terrific difficulties and hardships. They were forced to hew a way through the tangled jungle, they were attacked by biting flies and swarms of mosquitoes and, as it was the rainy season, they were con-

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stantly drenched to the skin. But they had expected all this and no one complained. Soon after entering the forest they met another Indian, a chief of the Kunas, who joined them with some of his warriors. The next day four of the men gave out and were sent back to the ships. That same day they ascended a mountain, crossed the divide and came to the head waters of the Chukunaque River which empties into the Pacific. Mountain after mountain was ascended, the peaks often so steep and the trail so narrow that but one man could pass at a time, and by nightfall, after traveling about eighteen miles, they camped beside the Chukunaque in a pouring rain.

Following the course of the stream, crossing and recrossing it "at every half mile" as Ringrose assures us in his journal, and often up to their waists in the swift current, the pirates at noon reached an Indian village. This was a settlement of Kunas, a tribe which has never been pacified and who detested the Dons. Here the buccaneers were made welcome by the chief and his sons and were given food and shelter.

Ringrose and Dampier described these Kunas very accurately, mentioning the gold rings in their noses, the crowns of wood or bamboo they wore and the costumes and customs which are precisely the same to-day.

Here among the friendly, savage Kunas, the pirates rested for a day and by acclamation chose Sawkins as their leader. The following day they went on their way, following the river banks and

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constantly passing Indian villages whose inhabitants handed the pirates plantains and food while a number of the men joined them on their march.

That night they spent in an Indian village and the next morning Sharp, Coxon, Cook, and seventy men embarked in fourteen dug-out canoes, thinking travel by water easier than by land. In this they were sadly mistaken, for, as Ringrose, who was of the party, says, "if we had been tired while traveling by land before, certainly we were in worse condition now in the canoes. For at a distance of almost every stone's cast, we were constrained to quit them and get out of our boats and haul them over either sands or rocks and at other times over trees that lay across and filled the river. Yea, several times over the very points of land itself."

I have personally gone through this country, both afoot and by canoe, and I can fully appreciate and realize the difficulties those old pirates encountered. Even with the most modern equipment and under the most favorable conditions, it is a journey entailing inexpressible hardships and, to the buccaneers, it must have been a veritable nightmare.

But they were rapidly nearing their goal and Dampier religiously kept his journal, secured from dampness in its "jointe of Bambo well stopt with wax at the two ends," and Basil Ringrose jotted down the events of each day as regularly as though keeping his ship's log, while Wafer used his skill in curing fever and insect stings, and Jobson enter-

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tained his weary comrades by reading passages from his precious Greek Testament.

Meantime the party had become separated and those in the canoes were greatly worried, fearing treachery on the part of the Indians, but on the afternoon of the eighth day the others joined them safely and the following day all embarked in sixty-eight canoes and swept down the river towards El Real.

With them were now fifty Indians and at midnight the flotilla reached a point within half a mile of the town and camp was made. It was a most horrible place to stop, a point where the tide left broad areas of slimy black mud exposed, and in order to reach solid land the pirates laid paddles, poles, and bunches of grass upon the muck and floundered ashore, finally resting until dawn without fires or shelter, for they feared detection by the Spaniards.

So close were they to the settlement that the sound of a gunshot was heard at daybreak, and gathering up their arms the three hundred and twenty-seven pirates and their fifty Indian allies marched on the town. The Dons had evidently received word of the pirates' approach, and were on the defensive, but the horde of buccaneers made short work of the defenders and of the twelve-foot palisades that had been erected. The fort was taken before more than fifty pirates had become engaged and with a loss of only two men slightly wounded among the buccaneers.

Within the place were two hundred and sixty

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Spaniards, in addition to twenty-six killed and sixteen wounded in the brief engagement. But to the pirates' utter chagrin there was no treasure worth mentioning. They had missed a fortune by the narrowest margin, for only three days before their arrival over three hundred pounds in gold dust had been shipped from El Real to Panama.

Confined in the fort the pirates found a number of Indian captives, one of whom was the daughter of the Kuna chief. The Indians, incensed at this, started to butcher the Spaniards and were with the greatest difficulty restrained by the pirates, after a number of the Dons had been massacred.

There was nothing to do but continue to Panama, and with Coxon elected as commander, the pirates piled into their canoes and started down the Tuira River, leaving behind most of the Indians who would go no farther.

The Kuna chief, his son and a few others, were still faithful, and the chief promised that, if necessary, he would send fifty thousand of his braves to aid the pirates in taking Panama. The humanity of the pirates on this occasion was well rewarded, for the Don who had stolen the chief's daughter, out of gratitude to the pirates for saving him from the Indians, gladly agreed to guide the buccaneers to Panama. This proved most fortunate, as will be seen.

After leaving El Real, which was burned at the request of the Indians, the pirates' boats became separated and the canoe containing Ringrose, being overloaded, was cast ashore and capsized on an

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island. All escaped safely, however, and despite their plight—for they had lost everything but their arms, and even their shoes were washed away—they paddled doggedly along the coast, keeping a sharp lookout for their comrades while several men constantly bailed out the water that splashed over the rails of their deeply laden canoe with every wave.

That these five men—there were three pirates besides Ringrose and the Spaniard—in a tiny twenty-foot dugout canoe, less than a foot and a half wide, ever managed to navigate the open Pacific without a mishap is simply astounding.

About the entrance to San Miguel Gulf the seas run very high with each turn of the tide; all along the coast there is always a heavy swell, and many a time I have found a fifty-foot sailing vessel uncomfortably small and dangerous for navigating that stretch of the Pacific.

Ringrose, who was ever most moderate in his statements, and, sailor-like, made little of perils and hardships of the sea, admits that it was a most perilous voyage and says “from the great dangers we were in it was the sorrowfullest night I had ever experienced in my whole life.”

To add to their troubles it poured incessantly and not only were they soaked through and through but it was impossible to make a fire to warm or dry themselves or to cook food. In addition, they were greatly worried over their missing comrades, who, with larger and better boats, had outdistanced them, leaving Ringrose and his party to get on as best they might, for, as he remarks, “such is the

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procedure of these wild men that they care not the least whom they lose of their company or leave behind."

They were, to use his own words, "all very sorrowful to see ourselves so far from the rest of our companions, as also totally destitute of all human comfort, for a vast sea surrounded us on one side and the mighty power of our enemies, the Spaniards on the other. Neither could we descry at any hand the least thing to relieve us, all that we could see being the wide sea, high mountains and rocks, while we ourselves were confined in an eggshell instead of a boat without so much as a few clothes to defend us from the injuries of the weather."

But Ringrose was a thorough seaman, a stout-hearted, very decent chap and he carried his comrades in their "eggshell" to safety. On one occasion, as he and his fellows were driven on the shore, another craft was also cast upon the rocks. The six Spaniards it contained had been among the garrison of El Real and welcomed the four pirates, made a fire, and shared all they had out of gratitude for Ringrose's protection of them from the savages.

By this time the three pirates were heartily sick of their adventure and begged Ringrose to allow them to settle down among the Indians rather than to go on, but Ringrose induced them to wait for one more day and, as luck would have it, before the twenty-four hours had expired they spied an Indian on the shore.

The fellow took to his heels at sight of the

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white men, but he was soon overtaken and proved to be one of the Indians who had aided the pirates, but had mistaken them for Spaniards. This man led Ringrose and his four companions to an Indian camp where they had a large canoe. In this the pirates embarked with their red-skinned friends who assured them that the main party of pirates was not far ahead which was wonderfully good news to the four men.

The Indians were, however, intent on making away with the six shipwrecked Dons but Ringrose insisted they must be spared and finally appeased the savages by allowing them to keep one of the Spaniards as a slave. Fearing he could not restrain the Indians indefinitely, Ringrose then gave his own "eggshell" to the five remaining Spaniards and sped them on their way, advising them to use their best endeavors to get beyond the savages' reach.

In the large seaworthy canoe, paddled swiftly by the muscular Indians, the pirates were comfortable and, a breeze coming up, the redskins spread a sail and "therewith made brave way to the infinite joy and comfort of our hearts."

At about nine o'clock of the evening they had embarked in the large canoe, two fires were seen on shore. These the Indians declared were the camp fires of their friends. But no sooner had the canoe touched the shore than sixty Spaniards rushed from the woods and made the pirates prisoners, while the Indians escaped to the forest.

Ringrose seized his gun, but was instantly overpowered and felt that his minutes were numbered.

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He could not speak Spanish and none of the Dons understood either English or French, but Ringrose, who was an educated man, managed to converse with them in Latin. To his surprise he discovered they were Spaniards who had been released by the main party of buccaneers and, still smarting from their defeat and late imprisonment, threatened Ringrose and his friends with dire reprisals.

Then, indeed, was Ringrose thankful that he had saved the life of the man who had stolen the chief's daughter. This man told the leader of the Dons of the kind treatment he had received and instantly the attitude of the Spaniards changed. They embraced Ringrose, freed his comrades, and after giving them food, restored their canoe and let them go. The Dons pardoned the Indians for Ringrose's sake and when, after some difficulty, the Indians had been assured of their safety and had been rounded up, the Spaniards even pushed the canoe into the water for them.

The next morning they sighted a boat approaching which, as it came closer, proved to be one containing a party of the buccaneers who led Ringrose and his fellows to the camp where all were reunited to their great joy.

The following day they reached the island called Farol de Platanos whereon a watch tower was maintained for the purpose of warning Panama of the approach of enemies. Evidently the watchman on duty was very careless, for the pirates surprised him in his hut, made him prisoner and to their

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delight were assured their arrival on the Pacific was unsuspected.

That same evening a small bark anchored under the lee of the island and was at once captured by the buccaneers.

In this small coasting vessel one hundred and thirty-seven of the pirates "together with that sea artist and valiant commander, Captain Bartholomew Sharp," and Captain Cook embarked, abandoning their canoes. This left far more space in the small boats for the remaining pirates and in the afternoon the flotilla of canoes sighted a second coasting vessel and bore down upon her. Captain Harris in his canoe reached her first, took her after a sharp engagement and thirty men were put aboard her. The remaining canoes made for shore, and on the way went in chase of a third bark. This time the Dons were the victors and escaped, after beating off Coxon's boat and killing one pirate and wounding two others. This rather discouraged the pirates, for they felt sure that word of their presence would be carried to Panama, but there was no help for it and in the afternoon all the small boats met as agreed at Chepillo island.

Upon this island were a number of negroes and mulattos who were quickly overpowered and taken prisoners. Finding here a piragua, the pirates changed their plans, and instead of remaining over night, hurried on towards Panama, only twenty-two miles distant, hoping to arrive before the defenders could prepare themselves for the attack.

At Chepillo, for some reason—Ringrose merely

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says because "it was judged convenient by the commanders, for certain reasons which I could not dive into"—the Indians were instructed to slaughter the helpless prisoners. But despite the fact that the savages were well armed while the captives had no weapons, the latter succeeded in escaping to the woods with the loss of but one man.

The following day, April 23, 1680, the pirates came within view of Panama and the ships in the harbor. To their surprise there was a large fleet at anchor, consisting of "five great ships, three pretty big barks or little men-of-war," and all cleared for action.

Opposed to this formidable array were five canoes containing but thirty-six men¹ "in a very unfit condition to fight, being tired with rowing," who had outdistanced the two piraguas containing many more of the buccaneers.

To us it seems utterly incredible that thirty-six men, equipped only with muskets, cutlasses, and pistols, and in tiny canoes should have ever dreamed

¹ At first glance there appears to be some great mistake in his statement as to the number of pirates, as their total force, when they crossed the Isthmus, was three hundred and twenty-seven, in addition to their Indian allies. But it must be remembered that one hundred and thirty-seven of the men had gone aboard the captured bark with Captain Sharp and Captain Cook and that Captain Harris, with thirty men, had boarded the second prize taken. Moreover, the majority of the Indians had left the pirates at the Gulf of San Miguel and the second piragua did not reach the scene of battle in time to take part. Sharp and his company were also absent, for Ringrose later explains that they had been to the outlying islands in search of water and did not return until the 25th of April—two days after the victory had been won.

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of attacking a Spanish fleet of men-of-war, but apparently it never occurred to the pirates to turn back.

The Dons were now sailing towards them and Ringrose and his comrades headed into the wind's eye and got to windward, a smart maneuver as the clumsy ships were of little use on the wind. While doing this, the piraguas, or at least one of them, arrived on the scene with her thirty-two pirates, making a total of sixty-eight men as opposed to the Spanish force of two hundred and seventy-eight.¹

The canoe of Captain Sawkins and the one that contained Ringrose were at some distance from the others, so that one large Spanish ship, sailing between the two parties of pirates, fired broadsides to right and left at the same instant. This cannonade killed four men in Sawkins' canoe and one in that of Ringrose, but with the volley of musketry from the pirates a dozen of the Dons were killed.

Before the buccaneers could all reload, one of the smaller warships bore down upon them, discharging her guns as she came. But before she was out of musket range a lucky shot from a pirate's gun killed the helmsman, causing the vessel to broach to and lie aback. Before the ship could be swung on her course the pirates were under her stern and out of reach of the guns where, by constant firing, they prevented any one from taking the wheel, in addition to cutting the main sheet and braces with their bullets.

Meanwhile, the third ship was coming to the aid of the distressed vessel. Hastily leaping from his

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canoe, which was sinking, Sawkins and his men clambered into the piragua and started for the oncoming ship, leaving four canoes to handle the helpless war vessel as best they might. Boldly attacking the big man-of-war, Sawkins ran his piragua alongside and a desperate hand-to-hand conflict ensued.

Events were now moving thick and fast. Sawkins was engaging the ship of Captain Peralta, the four canoes, with Ringrose and Springer in charge, were under the stern of the admiral's ship and the first vessel which had tackled the pirates had now tacked and was coming back.

Realizing that they would be destroyed if they were caught under the flagship's stern, two of the canoes went forth to the attack and fired such a well-aimed and deadly volley at the new arrival that the Spaniards hastily shifted their helm and made off, leaving the admiral to his own devices. Then, through a shower of cannon balls and bullets, Ringrose and Springer rowed back, wedged the rudder of the flagship and succeeded in killing the admiral and the helmsman. Demoralized, the crew cried for quarter and the pirates swarmed up her sides and took possession.

The decks were a perfect shambles. Over two thirds of the ship's crew had been killed and many others wounded and the planks were crimson with blood. Coxon at once took command and Captain Harris, who had been shot through both legs, and all the wounded pirates were placed on board, after which the remaining buccaneers in their two seaworthy canoes hurried to Sawkins' aid.

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Three times Sawkins and his men had been beaten from the Spaniards' decks, but were still fighting doggedly against the Dons. The valor of these Spaniards even won praise from the buccaneers and Ringrose says, "to give our enemies their due no men in the world did ever act more bravely." The pirates in the two canoes, arriving alongside the ship unseen in the turmoil of battle, were about to scramble aboard when there was a terrific explosion and a number of the Dons were blown to bits or hurled into the sea.

Captain Peralta then exhibited as splendid an act of bravery and heroism as was ever known. Without hesitation he leaped overboard, and in spite of the pirates' shots, rescued a number of his men though terribly burnt and injured himself.

But the ship was doomed. Even while the gallant captain was saving his men there was a second explosion and in the confusion of this Sawkins and his men took the ship. The condition of the vessel is perhaps best described in Ringrose's own words:

"I never saw in my life," he says, "such a miserable sight, for not one man there was found but was either killed, desperately wounded or horribly burned with powder, insomuch that their black skins (a number of the crew were negroes and mullatos) were turned white in several places, the powder having torn it from their flesh and bones."

Having, as he says, "compassionated their misery," Ringrose boarded the admiral's ship, "to observe likewise the condition of the ship and men."

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If anything, the scenes he witnessed here were even worse than on the other, for he says, "Here I saw what did astonish me and will scarcely be believed by others than ourselves who saw it. There were found on board this ship but twenty-five men alive whose number, before the fight, had been fourscore and six. So that threescore and one had been utterly destroyed. But what is more, of these twenty-five men, only eight were able to bear arms, all the rest being desperately wounded. Their blood ran down the deck in whole streams and scarce one place on the ship was free from blood."

There were still five ships to be taken, the most powerful, apparently, of all, lying at anchor in the distance near the island of Perico, off the city. When the pirates asked Captain Peralta how many men were upon these the hearts of the buccaneers sank, for he assured them that the largest alone carried three hundred and fifty men. But the next moment the pirates shouted with joy for a dying Spaniard, feeling perhaps that he must tell the truth ere he passed away, raised himself on one arm and gurgled through his bloody lips that there was not one man on board any of the other vessels, all having been placed upon those the buccaneers had engaged and taken.

When the pirates reached the anchored vessels they found the dying Don had spoken the truth. The ships were absolutely deserted and the largest of the ships—the *Santissima Trinidad* (Blessed Trinity) had been set on fire and a hole bored in her planking to prevent her from falling into the pirates'

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hands. The fire was quickly quenched, the leak plugged, and the buccaneers used her as a hospital, placing all their wounded aboard.

The entire fleet was theirs. With less than one hundred men, in small boats and canoes, armed only with cutlasses, pistols and muskets, they had defeated nearly three hundred Spaniards and had captured eight vessels, while their total losses were but eighteen men killed and twenty-two wounded. It was the most marvelous battle, the most signal victory ever known and the whole affair, which had commenced about sunrise, was all over before noon.

The Spaniards themselves were loud in their praise of the pirates' unprecedented bravery and fighting abilities. Peralta, Ringrose says, "would often break out in admiration of our valor and say, 'Surely you Englishmen are the valiantest men in the whole world.'"

I doubt if anywhere in maritime history can any record be found of a fight to equal this and yet it was but a prelude to the amazing undertaking that was to follow.

CHAPTER X

WHAT HAPPENED ABOARD THE "MOST BLESSED TRINITY"

(1680—1682)

To the pirates' disappointment they found little of value on the captured ships for they carried miscellaneous cargoes of wine, sugar, hides, soap, and flour. Only one had a cargo of real value, nearly one hundred tons of bar iron, which was at that time in great demand on the Pacific coast, and yet, as the Dons declined to ransom it and the pirates had no use for it, they burned the ship and sunk her with her cargo. One other vessel, an old craft of sixty tons burden was also burned as were two of the war vessels taken in the engagement, and a small bark.

As Sharp and his men had not yet arrived, Sawkins was chosen commander-in-chief and took possession of the *Most Blessed Trinity*. Captain Cook was given the second largest vessel while Coxon, disgruntled at certain reflections made upon his courage during the battle, decided to return to the Atlantic across Darien, taking with him seventy men and the Indians.

Although the original plan of the freebooters had been to take and sack Panama they changed their

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minds when they had an opportunity to view the city and decided it would be too big an undertaking, even for their reckless company.

At that time the new city—on its present site—had grown to formidable size and was strongly defended. A high, thick wall completely surrounded it, with the exception of a water gate through which flowed a creek or estuary of the sea by which small craft could enter, and the wall fairly bristled with heavy cannon.

It was strongly garrisoned with fifteen hundred troops and contained many thousand inhabitants, and the pirates very wisely decided that it would be to their best interest to leave it alone and seize what shipping entered the port until the people were willing to pay handsomely to have them leave. Ringrose gave a very accurate and detailed description of the city and it is evident from this that the town has changed but little in outward appearances in the two centuries and a half since his visit. He speaks of the eight churches, which at the time were not entirely completed; states that the houses "for the most part are three stories in height" and of stone and brick with tiled roofs; and he calls attention to the fact that the city was built on ground "very damp and moist which renders the place of bad repute for health" which, as every one knows, was only too true until the United States took charge of sanitary conditions.

He also mentions the surprising fact that "the water is full of worms and these are much prejudicial to shipping," and goes on to say that, "in one night

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after our arrival we found worms of three quarters of an inch in length, both in our bed clothes and other apparel.”

What these “worms” were it is impossible to imagine. Possibly, to the bluff old sailor, any crawling thing was a “worm,” although Dampier should have been able to identify them, and in that case Ringrose’s statement still holds good, for beasties fully three quarters of an inch in length are far too numerous for comfort in bed clothes and other apparel in Panama to-day.

The pirates remained off Panama for about ten days and each day seized the unsuspecting coasting vessels that sailed into port, taking what they desired in the way of cargo, burning the vessels, and turning the crews loose. These were mere incidents by the way, for the freebooters had greater things in view, having received word that a galleon was on the way from Callao with one hundred thousand pieces of eight in her hold. This they discovered through the taking of a ship off Taboga, which was the first prize of real value they secured, her cargo consisting of two thousand jars of wine, fifty casks of gunpowder, and fifty-one thousand pieces of eight.

It was at this time, while lying off Taboga, that an incident occurred which sheds an interesting light upon the strange relations between the pirates and the Spaniards.

To the island came a number of Spanish merchants from Panama who at once started a brisk trade with the pirates, selling the freebooters what sup-

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plies and other merchandise they required, trading commodities with the buccaneers for goods stolen by the pirates from the Spaniards' own ships and even buying back the captured slaves at two hundred pieces of eight each.

It is hard to imagine a more unique and picturesque sight than that presented by the sleepy little town of Taboga as the freebooters bickered and bargained and dealt with the Dons from the town they had besieged.

The little village, half in smoking ruins from an accidental fire started by a drunken pirate, stood above the sandy beach, with its background of green hills; the captured vessels, flying the colors of Sharp, Sawkins and the rest, rode at anchor in the offing; the blackened hulks of the burned warships and barks dotted the shallows; and, in the distance, the frowning walls and majestic towers of Panama shimmered in the sun. Drawn upon the beach we can picture the clumsy jolly-boats of the pirates, the slender dugout canoes, the piraguas and bongos, the flat-bottomed "pangas" of the natives and the Spanish merchants; the half-naked negro slaves lounging by the boats and chatting with the bronze-faced, bewhiskered, bandanna-headed pirates. Beyond, upon the shingle, were great piles of barrels, bales, and cases; jars of rich Spanish wines; ornate iron-bound chests of jewels; trinkets, golden plate, and garments heavy with bullion; bales of rich satins, velvets, and brocades; loaves of brown sugar wrapped in plantain leaves; sacks of meal and maize; bundles of ill-smelling hides and boxes

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of soap. Over this heterogeneous collection the burly English freebooters and the richly clad, olive-skinned Dons bargain and haggle and beat one another down as goods change hands and the raucous high-pitched voices and the clink of pieces of eight mingle with the screams of sea birds and the clashing of the swaying palm fronds.

Strange, incomprehensible to us, are such things, but there was little real ill will between the robbers and the robbed. Might made right in those days and while Don and Briton fought and battled like wild beasts, between rounds they were on quite friendly terms. Moreover, the merchants of Panama were sharp business men—many of them Jews, as at the present day—and they well knew the pirates' reputation for ignorance of values and their carelessness of ill-gotten wealth. It was a golden opportunity for securing bargains, a chance the crafty merchants could not afford to miss—even though they were buying their own goods from the robbers and were being paid for what they sold with pieces of eight stolen from their own ships.

Despite the fact that they were avowed enemies of the pirates, the Dons were not averse to exchanging courtesies with them. The bishop of Panama had formerly been Bishop of Santa Marta when Sawkins had taken that town, and for a space the worthy cleric had been a prisoner of the pirate captain. Sawkins, learning of this from some of the merchants with whom he was dealing, sent the Bishop a letter reminding him of their previous acquaintance and presenting him with two loaves of sugar

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—which were very valuable just then. On the following day the Bishop sent a reply to the captain, thanking him for his humanity and kindness in the past and inclosing a golden ring as a keepsake.

By the same messenger came also a long letter from His Excellency, the governor of Panama, asking Sawkins why he and his men had "come into those parts," and, "from whom they had their commissions and to whom he ought to complain for the damages they had already done to him?"

To this Sawkins somewhat humorously replied that, "he had come to assist the King of Darien who was the true Lord of Panama and the country thereabouts. And that since he had come so far there was no reason but he should have some satisfaction. So that if His Excellency was pleased to send him five hundred pieces of eight for each man and one thousand for each commander and not further annoy the Indians, but suffer them to use their own power and liberty, then he would desist from all further hostilities and go away peacefully. Otherwise he should stay there and get what he could, causing them what damage was possible."

Furthermore he added, "that as yet his company were not all come together, but when the others were come up they would come and visit His Excellency in Panama and bring their commissions on the muzzles of their guns, at which time His Excellency should read them as plain as the flame of gunpowder could make them."

With such interchange of pleasantries and marketing, the pirates whiled away the time, until, as they

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were short of provisions, the expected plate ship had not arrived, and the men were becoming disgruntled, Sawkins thought best to make a raid along the coast.

Raiding settlements en route, from Taboga to Otoque, on to Coiba and hence to Puebla Nueva they sailed, the *Most Blessed Trinity* in the lead, Sawkins' and Sharp's colors fluttering from her masthead, her ornate, lofty poop charred and blackened by the fire.

Since leaving Darien on their amazing undertaking the pirates' numbers had been vastly reduced. They had started with three hundred and twenty-seven men, but they had lost about thirty in taking the ships off Panama, seventy had deserted with Coxon, and on the way up the coast they had lost two of the captured barks with twenty-two men, and a few had died from wounds and sickness. Their total force when they arrived off Puebla Nueva was less than two hundred.

Anchoring under the lee of Coiba, Sawkins and Sharp, with about sixty men, joined Captain Cook in his smaller ship and made for the river on which the little town of Puebla Nueva was built. This was on May 22, 1680, and, as it turned, a most unfortunate day for the pirates. The town was scarcely worth sacking and the pirates thought to have a very easy job taking it.

Leaving their ship at the river's mouth, they embarked in canoes and paddled upstream, only to find that the people had felled trees across the channel and had erected breastworks on the shores.

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While leading a charge against these Sawkins fell, shot through the brain, while two other men were killed and several wounded. Demoralized at the death of their leader whom they idolized, the pirates retreated, and taking to their canoes hurried towards the open sea and their ship. But on the way down stream they managed to capture three vessels in retaliation.

In the meantime Cook's ship had gone on the rocks and his men were transferred to one of the vessels seized in the river.

The death of Sawkins caused dissensions among the pirates and three days after his death there was open mutiny, a number of the men declaring they would go no farther but would return across the Isthmus as Coxon and his men had done.

Sharp, who was now in command, called a meeting on the *Trinity* and there, to the utter amazement of all, laid before them a proposition so astounding that even the hardiest pirates were speechless with surprise. It was nothing less than to refit the *Trinity*, sail down the west coast of South America, raid the rich cities of Callao, Guayaquil, Lima, Arica and others and then, passing through the Straits of Magellan, sail to the West Indies through the Atlantic.

There was no doubt that, could this remarkable plan be carried out, there would be huge rewards for those who survived, but the idea of voyaging in a battered, half-burnt galleon down the Pacific coast and through unchartered seas around South America did not appeal to many. It was far too

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hazardous even for them and all of Sawkins' men and a number of others declared flatly they would have nothing to do with it and would go back across Darien.

It was indeed fortunate that Ringrose was such a thorough sailor that the perils of the sea were less to his mind than the perils of the jungle. For had he joined the deserters the chances are that the *Most Blessed Trinity* never would have completed that marvelous voyage and, most certainly, we would not have had his log to give us an authentic account of what transpired on the *Trinity*.

He was very near leaving with the others. Indeed, he says himself, "I was totally desirous in my mind to quit those hazardous adventures and return homewards with those who were now going to leave us. Yet being much afraid and averse to trust myself among wild Indians any farther, I chose rather to stay, though unwilling, and venture on that long and dangerous voyage."

Sixty-three of the men, however, feared the "wild Indians" far less than the voyage and left via Darien, leaving one hundred and thirty-two men to continue the voyage with the *Most Blessed Trinity*. Burning the other ships and saving only their metal work and rigging, and with but one vessel to accompany the *Trinity*, the pirates provisioned their ships, sent their prisoners to Panama, reserving only one, a Captain Juan, who volunteered to act as pilot, and on the 6 of June, 1680, set sail from Coiba on their "most perilous voyage."

Space forbids a detailed description of all the

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events and adventures that followed. They took ships and sacked towns, visited hitherto unknown islands, stopped at the Galapagos, lost a few men in brisk sea battles, took rich booty and treated their prisoners with great consideration—for pirates. This was no doubt largely through selfish motives, for they could not fill their ship with useless captives who required food and as they could not conveniently put them ashore they usually placed them aboard their own ships and after cutting away sails and rigging left them to be picked up by other vessels or to make land as fate willed.

They attacked Arica, but were forced back by the heavy surf which, Ringrose says, "ran so high and with such force against the rocks that our boats must needs have each been staved into one thousand pieces if we should venture ashore."

Then they made for Hilo, which was taken and sacked. Here they narrowly escaped annihilation at the hands of the Dons, who had promised to ransom a sugar mill by bringing eighty head of cattle and instead gathered a force to attack the pirates who were awaiting the beeves.

In revenge for this the freebooters destroyed the mill and having safely regained their ships, went on towards Coquimbo where they defeated the Spaniards, sacked and burned the town of La Serena and also collected ninety-five thousand dollars as a ransom for sparing Coquimbo.

Here, too, they escaped destruction by a hair's breadth, the Dons having resorted to a very clever means of burning the *Trinity* as she lay at anchor.

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They had inflated a horse hide which, with one man swimming beside it, had been floated from shore without attracting attention, the swollen hide being mistaken for the carcass of a horse. Reaching the ship, the daring Spaniard had pushed his float under the vessel's stern and, resting upon it, had crammed oakum, brimstone, and tar between the stern post and rudder. This he ignited and before the pirates realized what had happened the rudder and counter of the *Trinity* were ablaze.

Although they smelled and saw the smoke the freebooters had no idea where the fire was and ran here, there, and everywhere, seeking for the flames so that the fire had gained considerable headway and had done a great deal of damage before it was discovered and quenched.

With the rudder repaired, the pirates left Coquimbo and voyaged to Juan Fernandez which they reached on December 24, 1680. Here they spent Christmas, celebrating the day by three volleys at sunrise, skylarking ashore, hunting goats and seals, and very nearly losing ships and lives in a violent storm that arose. Here, also, they secured fresh water, fruits, and vegetables, and a supply of firewood, and rerigged the *Trinity*. Hardly had this been done when a second storm cast the ship adrift, dragging her anchors and almost wrecking her on the rocks.

The men had tired of the voyage, and with plenty of loot which they were impatient to spend, again mutinied, some demanding to go back to England, others clamoring for the captains to head for the

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West Indies, and only a few desiring to continue their successful raiding along the coast.

Another cause of dissent, ridiculous as it may seem, was the carelessness of Captain Sharp in religious matters. The men complained that he had failed to keep the Sabbath, had even fought battles and taken prizes on Sunday, and had altogether neglected the spiritual side of the pirates' needs. For these reasons the men voted to depose him and, in his stead, elected as commander a hypocritical old rascal named John Watling. Having appointed a new chief, the pirates finally agreed to continue along the coast and tarred and calked the vessels preparatory for setting forth, finally sailing from Juan Fernandez on January 12, 1681.

The next day they met three Spanish war vessels, huge ships carrying a total of thirty guns, but neither side seemed anxious to fight, the Dons keeping off and Watling, Ringrose says, "showing himself to be faint hearted," though it is questionable if it were cowardice so much as common sense that prevented him from attacking ships so much more powerful than his own. And if Watling was "faint hearted" his comrades were, also, for Ringrose admits that the commander "propounded the question to us whether we were willing to bear away from them. To which we all agreed with one consent."

From Juan Fernandez the pirates sailed for Iquiqui and Arica with intent to retrieve their fortunes "at that rich place." On the way they visited a

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poor Indian village and took as prisoner an old man whom Watling questioned about Arica.

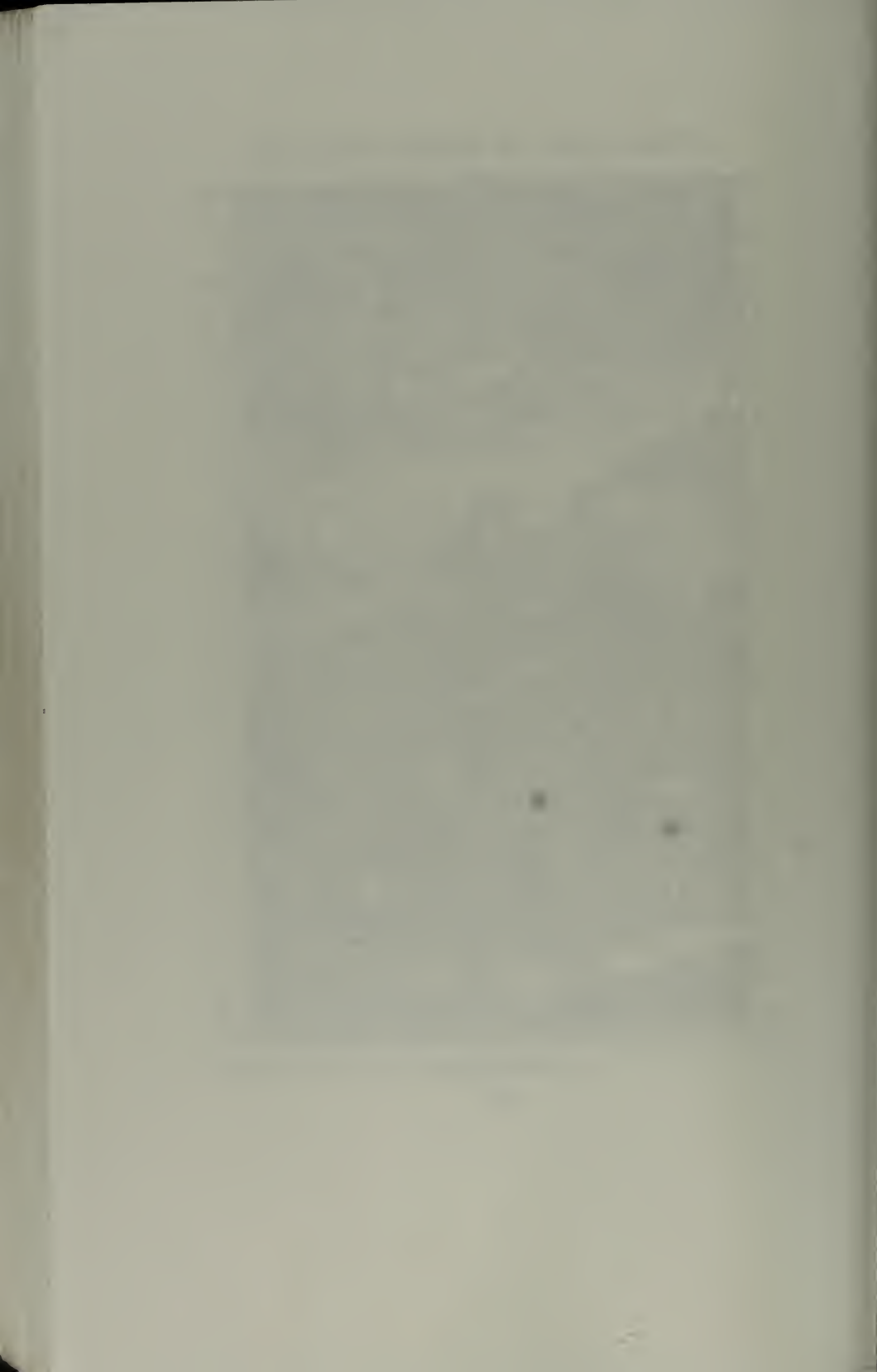
Thinking the unfortunate Indian was lying, the commander ordered him shot, whereupon Sharp—who had apparently had time to meditate upon his ungodly ways and had decided to reform—called for a basin of water, and washing his hands therein, declared dramatically: “Gentlemen, I am clear of the blood of this old man and I warrant you a hot day for this piece of cruelty whenever we come to fight at Arica.”

This speech greatly disturbed the pirates, but it failed to deter Watling, and the execution of the helpless Indian was carried out. But when they reached Arica, Sharp’s prophecy was more than fulfilled and Watling repented, if he had time, of his inhumanity. The old Indian had told the truth, the Spaniards were prepared, and the pirates were ignominiously defeated, despite a terrific, bloody battle.

Every street in the city “was filled with dead bodies,” the plazas were red with blood and the air was rent with the screams of wounded and dying men as the fight raged back and forth. Everywhere the Dons swarmed. As fast as they were driven back in one spot they attacked from another and though the pirates more than once thought they were in possession of the city, their enemies would spring as if by magic from houses and byways and renew the battle. Scores of the freebooters fell, among them Watling and both the quartermasters, and the survivors were surrounded.



BATTLE OF ARICA



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As Ringrose says, "we were in a very distracted condition, the enemy rallying and beating us from place to place and in more likelihood to perish every man than to escape the bloodiness of the day. Now we found the words of Captain Sharp to bear a true prophecy, being all very sensible that we had a day too hot for us after that cruel heat in killing and murdering in cold blood the old Indian, whom we had taken prisoner and who had told unto us nothing less than the truth."

Being so sore beset and with no one to turn to, the pirates were only too glad to plead with Sharp to take command, despite his religious shortcomings; but Sharp was thoroughly peeved at the treatment he had received and for a time stoutly refused to take charge. At last he consented—probably to save his own skin—and being, as Ringrose declared, "a man of undaunted courage not fearing in the least to look an insulting enemy in the face," he managed to hew a way through the enemy's lines and brought his men safely to the shore, retreating "in as good order as we could possibly observe in that confusion."

The two surgeons of the pirates were, however, left behind, prisoners of the Dons, for they had devoted their time, between caring for the wounded and fighting, to drinking the wines and liquors they found, and when Sharp and the rest retired the two medicos were maudlin drunk and flatly refused to leave the scene of bloodshed and good liquor.

As far as our story is concerned they pass from the picture, but in passing it may be of interest

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to remark that they proved most useful to the Spaniards, as there were no other surgeons in the town, and were well treated and paid for their services for a long time thereafter.

Disgruntled at their defeat, the pirates cruised northward, making a second attack at Hilo on the way, and eventually arrived off Darien, where forty-seven of the men decided to follow those who had gone before and make their way across the Isthmus. In this party were Dampier, Wafer, and Jobson with his Greek Testament. The trip of this party across Darien, and their subsequent adventures, are really another story and suffice to say, they had a terrible time of it. Wafer was injured by the accidental discharge of a musket and was left with the Indians, where he resided for months, becoming an involuntary medicine man and finally escaping from his too attentive tribe, naked and painted. In this state he reached his comrades on the shores of the Caribbean, much to their wonder and amazement. The others suffered unspeakable hardships and over and over again regretted leaving the *Trinity*. Weighted down with their gold they were mired in swamps, were drowned in rivers and so thoroughly exhausted and disheartened, that when a man fell with the bags of golden doubloons and silver pieces of eight scattered about him, the survivors did not even stop to gather up the treasure. Instead, they pressed on, leaving their dead comrade surrounded by his useless wealth, to the buzzards and the jungle beasts.

Reaching the Gulf of Nicoya the *Trinity* came to anchor on May 9, 1681, after a year's cruise, very

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much the worse for the buffeting, the fighting, and the fire she had undergone, and with less than seventy-five of the pirates remaining. These solemnly pledged themselves to stick together to the last and to consummate their hare-brained undertaking.

But before they could hope to sail southward to the Straits of Magellan it was necessary to put the *Most Blessed Trinity* in seaworthy shape. There were no shipwrights on board, but the pirates were not men to let such a small matter interfere with their plans. When they required something they did not have they invariably took it from the Dons and now, being in need of capable shipbuilders, they raided a village and made prisoners of several men of that profession.

Drawing their ship into the river, a staging was rigged, the captive shipwrights and carpenters were set to work, aided by the pirates, and from dawn until dark they labored. The deck was torn up and relaid, the masts were taken out and shortened, the ornate poop and galleries were hacked off and new rigging was rove and served, and new sails bent on. The hull was careened, cleaned, caulked, and pitched and at the end of a fortnight, the *Trinity* was once more ready for sea.

So well had the captured shipbuilders worked that Sharp magnanimously made them a present of a bark he had taken, and on the 1st of June, 1681, the *Trinity* again sailed southward bound for the West Indies around South America.

But they could not resist pirating on their way and

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on July 10, they took a ship, which, oddly enough, proved to be a vessel they had taken the year before at Panama with fifty thousand pieces of eight.

This time her cargo was even more satisfactory, for in her hold the pirates found thirty-seven thousand pieces of eight, besides quantities of plate, rich silks and velvets, wines and provisions, powder and arms. Indeed, so heavily laden was the ship that Ringrose remarks that "she seemed buried in the water." And when a dividend of the booty was made each man received two hundred and thirty-four pieces of eight in addition to his share of the other valuables.

For several weeks thereafter, prizes came thick and fast to the pirates' hands, among them the *Santo Rosario*. Much to the pirates' chagrin she contained little of value, her cargo consisting of wine with some plate and coins and seven hundred ingots of metal which the pirates, mistaking for tin, threw overboard. One ingot was retained by a member of the *Trinity's* company as a souvenir and we can imagine the feelings of the freebooters when, later, they discovered that the supposed tin was solid silver and that in their ignorance they had cast away a fortune!

Their attempt to raid the towns were mostly failures, however, for the entire population of the west coast had been alarmed by the previous raids; everywhere the Dons were on the defensive and finding Paita, Colan, and the other ports too strongly defended to warrant an attack with the few men at his disposal, Sharp abandoned all plans



A
DESCRIPTION
of
The South Sea & Coasts
of
AMERICA
Containing of whole Navigation
and all those places at which
Capt. SHARP and
his Companions were in
the years
1680 & 1683

SHARP'S VOYAGE
TO THE SOUTH SEA
IN THE SHIP THE TRINITY
UNDER THE COMMAND OF
CAPTAIN JOHN SHARP
IN THE YEARS 1680 & 1683

Printed and Sold by W. B. M. at the Sign of the Sun in Pall Mall London

THE VOYAGE OF THE "MOST BLESSED TRINITY"



THE "MOST BLESSED TRINITY"

of sacking towns and ordered the *Trinity* headed for the Straits of Magellan.

From that date, August 29, the ship kept steadily on her southward course through gales and calms, through tempestuous seas and heavy fogs, ever approaching nearer and nearer to the storm-lashed, desolate tip of the continent. With the crudest of instruments, Ringrose worked out his latitude, guessing his longitude by figuring how many leagues west of Darien they had come, and never sighting land until they reached some barren unknown islands which they named the Duke of York's. Here, through stress of raging storms, they remained from October 12 to November 2, and here, their rudder having been carried away, they undertook the herculean task of hanging a new one which they safely accomplished.

The men began to suffer from the cold, being totally unprovided for winter weather, their ragged garments and the silken and satin clothing stolen from the Dons affording no protection from the sleet, snow, and hail that fell.

But the worst was yet to come. They missed the entrance to the Straits of Magellan and bore on into the stormy, bitterly cold, gray seas and lowering skies beyond the Horn. Continuously it blew a hurricane, the rotten rigging and old sails—of light canvas made for tropical weather—gave way, and the men, with frozen hands and feet, were forced constantly to repair shrouds, lower yards, furl and reef. November 10 found them buffeted and almost helpless.

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“The wind,” says Ringrose, “increased insomuch that about noon our mainsail blew to pieces. Hereupon we were forced to lower the yard and unbend the sail lying under our mizzen. But that also gave way so that the rest of the day we lay a hull in dark weather, foggy and windy, with huge seas which oftentimes rolled completely over us. In the afternoon it seemed to abate somewhat, but soon became worse than before compelling us to lower our foreyard.”

Day after day it was the same. Each time the wind let up, sails were spread and the clumsy old galleon forged on her way, only to be driven back and far off her course as driving sleet and howling gales ripped her sails and swept her decks with freezing seas.

Then, to their other perils, were added the floes and bergs, often, so Ringrose states in his log, “so long we could not see the end of them”; provisions were running low and a number of the men were confined to their berths with frostbite. But still the *Most Blessed Trinity* plunged on, rounding the Horn, no one knew when or where, until, thinking himself beyond the Cape, Ringrose headed northeast for the broad Atlantic.

Gradually, however, the weather moderated; the winds were lighter, the snow and hail ceased, and by December 3, the air was warm and pleasant. But while the worst of the gales and cold were over the men were in sorry plight. Many were crippled from frozen fingers, there was so little food that they were on half rations and on the 7th of the month

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Captain Sharp learned that some of the men had planned to celebrate Christmas by murdering him. This plan he nipped in the bud by sharing all the wine aboard then and there, feeling convinced they would not carry out their plot when sober.

Several of the men died from gangrene and frost-bite, the ship began to leak, and the half-starved, discouraged, heartsick men labored ceaselessly at the pumps. By Christmas the weather had become hot, and desiring to put the men in the best possible spirits, Sharp ordered a sow—which had been brought on board at the Gulf of Nicoya—to be butchered and served as a Christmas feast. This was indeed a treat, being the first meat the men had eaten since they had left Paita, but the succeeding days were even worse by comparison and by the last day of December they were reduced to three pints of water a day and a few dry biscuits for each man.

On January 5, however, they caught an albacore weighing one hundred and twenty pounds, the men feasted royally, and for several days thereafter albacore and other fish were taken daily. Moreover, heavy rains fell, the water was caught in canvas and the casks filled, and the men's spirits rose once more.

By January 25, sea birds and weeds convinced Ringrose that land was not far distant, and the next day a sudden tornado carried away several sails, the foretopmast backstays, the sheets of the foretopsail, and a number of shrouds.

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The ship was leaking like a sieve and all realized that unless they made port very soon their marvelous and "most perilous voyage" would end in a watery grave for every one aboard the battered old galleon that had so bravely weathered the Horn.

But their troubles were nearly over. On January 28, the joyful cry of "Land!" rang out and as the sun rose and the haze lifted the sea-weary pirates saw Barbados looming above the horizon barely eight miles away.

Incredibly well had Ringrose navigated the *Most Blessed Trinity*. With uncanny skill had he brought her from Nicoya, down the Pacific, around Cape Horn and back to the Caribbean as truly and as certainly as though he were the pilot of a great steamship with the latest and most perfect instruments. It was a feat unequaled, such an example of navigation as had never before been known and the men shouted themselves hoarse with delight and cheered Ringrose like the conqueror he was.

But they were not fated to set foot ashore for several days yet. As they rounded the point of the island and Carlisle Bay opened before them, they saw a ship anchored off the town and, somewhat suspicious, Sharp hailed a fishing boat and learned that the vessel in Bridgetown harbor was the British frigate, *Richmond*.

To sail into Carlisle Bay meant instant capture and probable hanging as pirates. With her patched sails and frayed rigging humming to the trade wind; ancient pumps clanking and the stinking water pouring from her scuppers; every strained plank

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and timber groaning; with charred stern, mutilated galleries and weather-beaten sides to give her the appearance of a phantom ship, the *Trinity* bore on for Antigua, arriving there February 1, 1682, nearly two years after the pirates started on their great adventure.

Here some of the men landed and secured passage for England on the *Lisbon Merchant*, lying in the harbor of St. Johns. Among them was Ringrose. The others continued to Nevis where Sharp left and, as a parting gift, made a present of the *Trinity* to the men who elected to remain in the West Indies.

Thus ended the "dangerous voyage and bold assaults of that great sea artist Captain Bartholomew Sharp," the greatest feat of all the buccaneers. It only remains to add that Sharp and his fellows were arrested and tried for piracy when they reached England, but as the only charge against them was the taking of the *Santo Rosario*, and as it was proven that the Dons fired the first shot, the "great sea artist" and his friends were acquitted on a plea of self-defense.

Despite their shortcomings we cannot fail to be glad that Sharp and Ringrose escaped execution, for men as brave, as merciful, as resourceful, and as gallant as they had proved themselves, were surely worthy of a better fate than being hanged as common pirates.

CHAPTER XI

SOME STRANGE CHARACTERS

(1682—1690)

WHEN we stop to consider that all manner of men were included in the ranks of the buccaneers, it is not surprising that among them we should find many strange and interesting characters. Moreover, the reasons which caused them to join the "brethren" were as varied as their stations in life, their nationalities, their professions and physical and mental characteristics.

Many became buccaneers for pure love of adventure, love of fighting, or love of gold. Others cast their lot with the freebooters through hatred of the Spaniards or because of religious convictions and their dislike of Catholics. Others turned to the life of the corsairs as affording an easy, and often the only, available means of earning a livelihood and a few were forced into it by being made prisoners by the rovers. And occasionally men joined the Brethren of the Main for most lofty and admirable reasons, despite the means to their ends.

Such an one was Montbars, who, so he alleged, had the greatest sympathy for the oppressed Indians and negroes and felt that he was the pre-

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destined liberator and savior of these unfortunate victims of Spain's misrule. It was a philanthropic and humane reason and Montbars proceeded to carry out his rôle of liberator by the simple and effective method of killing off the Spaniards. It is very doubtful if his activities resulted in any benefit to the Indians or blacks, but even if he was not successful in accomplishing the purpose of his dreams he was most eminently successful in decimating the Dons. Indeed, he was so efficient at this that he soon became known and dreaded by the nickname of "The Exterminator."

But because Montbars was an idealist and philanthropist it did not prevent him from being an excellent business man or make him oblivious to the good things and the comforts and luxuries of life.

The Indians and negroes had no use for money, they would not have known what to do with it if they had it, and as the majority of the Dons whom "The Exterminator" relieved of life possessed more or less wealth, which they could not use after Montbars had passed their way, the humane pirate no doubt looked upon it as nothing short of a crime to let the valuables of the deceased go to waste.

Besides, even if he was above such things himself, his men were not. To carry out his program as liberator of the oppressed he needed a horde of rough-and-ready corsairs who were only too glad to help the Exterminator add luster to his gruesome reputation; but they did not give a hang for the natives or their woes and clamored for good pieces of eight and golden doubloons.

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As a result, the original and laudable purposes of Montbars' crusade was gradually forgotten and it is to be feared that the Exterminator soon cared as little about the Indians' state as did his men and devoted all his energies to the accumulation of filthy lucre at the expense of the Dons.

Very different was that fascinating character, Greaves, better known as Red Legs, a pirate through force of circumstances and the decree of Fate and—paradoxical as it may seem—a really moral pirate.

Young Greaves began life as a white slave in Barbados, and was the son of prisoners taken in the time of Cromwell, who, in company with thousands of others, were branded like cattle and sent to the Barbados. There they were sold to the planters at fifteen hundred pounds of sugar per head. Most of these captives were Irish or Scotch and, from the bare knees of the men, were commonly known as Red Legs—a name that sticks to their descendants to the present day.

Fortunately for the future pirate chieftain, his parents were sold to a kind planter who was in sympathy with their cause and who treated them like equals, educated the boy and brought him up as companion for his own son. Later, however, upon the death of the planter, the youthful Red Legs was sold to a dissolute, cruel rascal and life became so unbearable that the youngster decided to run away and hide on some Dutch or New England vessel.

Swimming across Carlisle Bay, he missed the ship he was bound for and clambered on to a pirate vessel whose captain—one Hawkins—was notorious

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for his cruelty and ruthlessness. The ex-slave had scarcely gained the buccaneer's decks when he found himself taking part in the seizure of a ship and later was given the choice of joining the corsairs or being marooned. He chose the lesser of two evils and rapidly distinguished himself for bravery and his skill at gunnery.

But Red Legs, as he was called, did not take at all kindly to some features of the pirates' life and profession. He openly resented the maltreatment of women, the torture of prisoners and the murder of noncombatants. Eventually this led to a duel with the captain in which the youngster was victorious and was unanimously elected commander.

For many years thereafter Red Legs followed the profession of piracy with tremendous success, though ever noted for his humanity and morality. It is said that he never mistreated prisoners, never killed a man save in actual combat, and never robbed the poor or the passengers on the ships he took.

Probably his most noteworthy feat was the capture of the island of Margarita off the Venezuelan coast. Finding the Spanish fleet anchored off the island, awaiting the annual shipment of pearls, Red Legs took the ships, turned the war vessels' guns on the forts, which he silenced, and made off with an incalculably immense booty in gold and pearls.

But Red Legs was never born to be a pirate. He always longed to give up the wild life and settle down to a respectable career. Once he tried to do so in Nevis and succeeded for a time, only to

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be denounced by a seaman who had been spared by this magnanimous freebooter. Red Legs was promptly cast into a dungeon, but before he could be executed, the earthquake that destroyed the town intervened and by the cataclysm the pirate was freed.

He succeeded in gaining a small boat that was adrift and eventually, more dead than alive, was rescued by a whaleship. After serving with no little success as a whaleman he won a pardon for his past life by aiding in capturing a gang of pirates and again took up the life of a planter in the islands. This time he was more successful and lived and died a highly honored and respected member of the community. He was noted for his charity, although no one dreamed that the vast sums of money he gave to public institutions had been won by piracy on the high seas and the sacking of Spanish towns.

But perhaps the most fascinating, picturesque, and romantic figure in the annals of the buccaneers and pirates was the French gentleman who, being in financial difficulties, endeavored to recoup his fortunes and pay his debts by robbing the Dons.

This gallant cavalier, Le Sieur Raveneau de Lus-san, was a highly educated and religiously inclined fellow and, for the benefit of succeeding generations, he wrote a most fascinating and interesting book relating his deeds and adventures. He was far from being a modest author and believed thoroughly in blowing his own horn, but as all the incidents he narrates bear the earmarks of truth and

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are borne out by others, we can be reasonably sure that they were not exaggerated.

As de Lussan had no intention of taking to the life of a pirate as a permanent occupation, but only as a temporary means to an end, at the close of which he planned to return to the gay society of Paris, he did not fall into evil ways or vulgar money grubbing as did Montbars.

Throughout his career of several years as a freebooter he was highly successful in filling his pocket-book and he proved conclusively that pirating could be conducted profitably and at the same time humanely and without interfering with one's morals or ideals.

Raveneau was a devout member of the Catholic Church and, despite the fact that his crew was as choice an assortment of cutthroats and desperadoes as ever sailed the seas, de Lussan made it a point—which he enforced at the point of his cutlass or the muzzle of his pistol—that no churches, priests, nuns, or other “religious persons” were to be molested in any manner whatsoever.

As the greatest riches acquired by other piratical gentlemen were those of the churches—chalices, altarpieces, jeweled images and crucifixes—de Lussan must have foregone a vast amount of readily available loot by his religious scruples, and we can readily imagine how covetously his wild crew looked upon the wealth within the churches and itched to get their hands upon it.

But their leader would have none of it and, whenever he attacked a town, he invariably led his men

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to the church or cathedral first, requested the priests to hold Mass or say prayers and then, feeling he had done his duty as far as the spiritual welfare of his men and himself were concerned, he would systematically loot the town.

Even in this occupation he was ever the gallant gentleman of France. Although he took prisoners (not excepting the ladies) and held them for ransom, he always treated the latter—if we are to believe his own statements—as befitted members of the fair sex. When they were released, and Raveneau jingled their ransom money in his pockets, he would advise them to go to their church and offer thanks for their deliverance and prayers for him.

De Lussan was also greatly troubled by the behavior of the British buccaneers and pirates. He could not countenance their desecration of the churches and on more than one occasion came to blows with them over this matter. But he soon found that the Dons, taking advantage of his pious scruples, did not hesitate to use the churches as safe deposit vaults for their personal property, feeling that within the sacred walls they were safe from Raveneau.

De Lussan, despite this subterfuge, was a man of his convictions and instead of discriminating between personal and church property and helping himself to the former regardless of its hiding places, he met the difficulty by levying tribute—or perhaps we might call it an insurance premium—upon the priests in return for exempting their cloisters and churches from search or molestation.

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Also, it came to this gentlemanly Frenchman as a distinct surprise to find that the Spaniards looked upon the buccaneers as some sort of wild beast and pictured them as inhuman monsters. It was particularly painful to de Lussan to learn what erroneous ideas the ladies held.

On one occasion, when escorting a lovely Spanish captive to her temporary place of confinement, the maiden burst into tears and implored de Lussan not to devour her. This amazing request fairly stunned the gallant Raveneau and when he asked what had put such a ridiculous idea in her mind she assured him that "he looked hungry and she feared he could not wait until she was properly prepared for the table!"

"Mon Dieu!" exclaimed the hurt and astonished Frenchman. "Do you suppose I would eat you in the street?"

And for the next hour or two he devoted his time to convincing the young lady and her friends that he and his men were not cannibals. Then and there he decided to carry the gospel of truth to the benighted Dons—as far as the pirates were concerned. He was wont to gather his prisoners in some public square or building and deliver lengthy lectures upon the life and character of the buccaneers, taking, it is to be feared, his own personality as an example of all, which probably led his hearers into still greater errors regarding the freebooters.

At any rate, it is certain that de Lussan succeeded in convincing the Dons that he was neither a cannibal nor a ruthless murderer and he relates one incident

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which shows that even the victims of his forays held him in high esteem.

He had laid siege to a large town and after a sharp and rather bloody battle, succeeded in taking it. Then, having herded his men into the church and duly attended divine services, Raveneau and his crew proceeded to make the rounds of the buildings and residences, seeking booty.

As it happened, one of the homes that de Lussan entered was that of a rich Don who had been treasurer of the town before he had fallen before the pirates' attack. Finding the lovely widow in tears and despair at the death of her spouse, de Lussan apologized profusely and discreetly withdrew to await a more opportune moment for acquiring the wealth of the deceased treasurer.

This unexpected appearance of a strikingly handsome Frenchman clad in silks and satins, with waxed mustaches curled above a smiling mouth, and a jaunty plumed hat in hand, had a most surprising effect upon the young widow.

She had expected to see a burly, unshaven ruffian in bloody rags and with cutlass and pistol in hands, and when the courtly and polite gentleman entered her home she almost forgot her bereavement in her amazement and pleasant surprise.

And when de Lussan returned, after a discreet absence, he was most cordially welcomed by the lady, was invited to partake of refreshments and spent a very pleasant hour or two chatting and conversing and gossiping of European events and society. So enjoyable did the pirate chieftain find the visit that

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he quite forgot his purpose and withdrew without even mentioning the matter that had brought him hither.

Over and over again the gallant Raveneau called on the charming Donna and it was very evident that she was more charmed by him than he was with her.

Realizing that the time for his departure was drawing near and that she was likely to lose her heart, as well as her late husband, as a result of the pirates' raid, she cast aside all modesty and reserve, and declaring her love, proposed that de Lussan should marry her and settle down as a man of wealth in the town.

De Lussan was in something of a quandary as he admits in his memoirs. He was highly flattered and complimented and the vision of a life of ease, far from his insistent creditors, was most alluring—to say nothing of the beautiful young lady who had literally cast herself at his perfectly booted feet, but it seemed to him a bit precipitate, as the defunct treasurer had been dead but a few days and de Lussan himself had officiated at the burial services.

Moreover, he had not set forth on his expedition with the idea of marrying widows or other ladies, while finally, he had some doubts as to how his men would look upon a female acquisition to the crew, if he took a wife with him, and he had still greater misgivings as to the treatment he would receive from the Dons after the ship had sailed and had left him alone with his bride.

But the resourceful widow had foreseen all this and was prepared for his objections. She had no

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idea of accompanying her chosen lover on his piratical voyage, and assured Raveneau that she was not only amply able to provide for both him and herself, but that she had arranged matters so that his men would not know of his reformation and desertion. In a word, he was to take a horse she had, ride to her country estate and remain there until the pirates, thinking him killed by Indians or the Dons, left without him. Then, with his crew safely out of the way, he was to return, marry the Donna and step into the late treasurer's shoes.

Not only did she propose that he should take the place of the late official in her heart and home, but that he should assume his official duties as well. Thereupon de Lussan protested that it was utterly inconceivable that the Dons should or would intrust the city's funds to an ex-pirate, no matter how pious and gallant a man he might be.

The lady, however, was not to be balked by any such objections and immediately produced documents, signed by His Excellency the Governor and other high municipal officials, and in which they pledged themselves to welcome de Lussan as a brother and fellow citizen and to offer him the position of treasurer as well.

It was a sore temptation to de Lussan. On the one hand, a life of danger and constant peril with rough and brutal companions and with debts confronting him. On the other, a life of ease, a lovely bride and a well paid and responsible position with delightful society and no financial worries. Had the offer been made under different circumstances or by men of

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another race no doubt Raveneau would have jumped at the chance and his piratical career would have ended and no record of his life and deeds would have been handed down to posterity.

But de Lussan still felt there must be a "nigger in the wood pile" somewhere. He did not trust the Dons and despite their pledges felt that his life ashore among them would not be a bed of roses. He had robbed, ruined, and killed their countrymen and themselves, had despoiled their cities and he could not imagine it possible that they would forget and forgive merely because he married a wealthy society widow of the town.

He considered it far more likely that it was all a trick to get him in their power and that, even if he married the lady, it would not be long before she was once more a widow. So, wisely deciding that the state of a live pirate chieftain was more desirable than that of a dead treasurer, he slipped away from the charmer's presence, gathered his men together and hurriedly sailed off before he could change his mind.

No doubt the bereaved lady followed his subsequent career with interest and pride and pointed to the reports of his valiant deeds with great satisfaction and caused much envy among her friends, as from time to time rumors and tales of de Lussan's activities reached the town.

And as far as his prowess and his valor went, she could well be proud of him. His raids on the west coast of South America were universally successful. He carried on his forays like an able general and a

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magnanimous victor and he even attacked and captured the city of Panama. Having once decided to carry on and to forego an easy life, he conducted his operations on a grand scale, rapidly piling up wealth at the expense of the Dons until he felt that he had enough to pay all his obligations and live comfortably for the rest of his life in addition.

So, discarding his warlike accouterments, arraying himself in the garments befitting a French gentleman and cavalier rather than a pirate, and substituting a jewel-hilted rapier for his cutlass, de Lussan bade farewell to his freebooter crew and sailed for the French West Indies.

Here he became very popular, distinguished himself in a duel or two, spent money lavishly, cut a wide swathe among the ladies, and, with flattering letters of introduction in his pockets, left the Antilles for his beloved France, where he led the life of a gentleman, paid his debts, and devoted his spare time to writing the story of his buccaneering life.

CHAPTER XII

THE PIRATES IN THE SOUTH SEAS

(1683—1720)

WITH Spain, England and even France hunting down the last of the buccaneers in the Caribbean, and with no safe refuges where large numbers of the freebooters could foregather in the West Indies, the surviving corsairs turned their attentions to more distant seas.

The voyage of the *Most Blessed Trinity* and the Sieur De Lussan's raids along the western coast of South America had attracted wide attention and had proved that the freebooters could conduct successful and remunerative raids far from their home waters.

Here, in the Pacific, were no British men-of-war to make life miserable for piratically inclined gentlemen and here—on the coasts of America from California to Chile—were rich Spanish towns and countless Spanish ships, while in the little known East Indies was virgin territory for the corsairs.

If Sharp and his companions could spend two years on the west coast and sail safely around the Horn in a battered old galleon, others could certainly round the Cape in well-found ships and cruise in the Pacific, and a boom in piracy began for the South Sea (as the Pacific was called).

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One of the first ships to follow Sharp's example was the *Revenge*, a tiny twenty-five-ton vessel of eighteen guns and a crew of seventy men, which set sail from Chesapeake Bay in August, 1683. Several of our old friends were among the crew of this ship, notably Dampier, Wafer, Cook, and Davis. Off Sierra Leone they picked up their first prize, a Danish ship of thirty-six guns, and as she was so much better than their own vessel they promptly abandoned the latter, transferred themselves to their prize and renamed her the *Bachelors' Delight*.

They rounded Cape Horn without misadventure, reached Juan Fernandez in March, 1684, and there met another English pirate, Captain Swan, with his ship the *Nicholas*. Sailing up the coast they took a few prizes, sacked a few towns and reached the Gulf of Nicoya, where Cook died and Davis became commander.

Here the two vessels parted company, the *Nicholas* returning to England while the *Bachelors' Delight* sailed southward. At the island of La Plata they met the *Cygnnet*, commanded by another Captain Swan.

The *Cygnnet* had been fitted out in London, ostensibly as a peaceful trader, but rounding the Horn and reaching the Gulf of Nicoya had taken on board a crew of pirates, who had come overland across the Isthmus.

The *Cygnnet* and the *Bachelors' Delight* at once joined forces and together sacked Paita and Guayaquil and blockaded Panama. Here they were joined by Grognet and L'Escayer with two hundred French

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and nearly one hundred English pirates who had crossed the Isthmus and, a little later, two hundred and sixty more Frenchmen arrived, thus raising the total force to 960 men with ten vessels which, excepting the *Cygnets* and *Bachelors' Delight*, carried no guns.

On May 28, 1685, the long expected Spanish treasure fleet from Callao arrived and though the Dons' vessels outnumbered the buccaneers' and carried a superior armament (there were six war vessels and six smaller ships with two fire ships in the fleet), rather than risk the loss of their rich cargo, they crept into a small bay and landed their vast treasure safely.

Too late they were discovered by the pirates and a long range cannonade took place, the pirates at last withdrawing to Quibo Island, where they met other freebooters.

Here, as so often happened, dissensions arose among the men and the British, under Davis, left their French companions and sailed to Nicaragua, where they sacked Leon and Rio Lexa. There was more trouble between the crews and Swan and Townley set forth to find their former French comrades, while Davis went to the Galapagos Islands and the Peruvian coast where he cruised until 1686, taking a number of prizes and sacking several rich towns.

Here the pirates again split up, some returning to the West Indies around Cape Horn, while the rest remained with Davis and continued pirating along the coast until 1687, when they met Townley and the

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French pirates, in whose company they took Guayaquil. Davis then sailed around Cape Horn for the West Indies, where he arrived in the spring of 1688.

The French, after plundering several towns, returned to Quibo where they were attacked by a Spanish squadron, their ship was destroyed, and after terrible hardships were rescued by Townley with whom they went north and sacked Grenada in Nicaragua.

But the French and British pirates were forever quarreling, and, soon after this, the Frenchmen left and crossed the Isthmus, thereby losing a share in one of the greatest treasures that ever fell to the freebooters.

This was nothing more or less than the cargo of bullion and plate which the Spanish ships had landed at Lavelia, Panama, the year before, and which, with incomprehensible carelessness, had been left by the Viceroy practically unguarded. Soon after this coup, Townley was attacked by a Spanish man-of-war and mortally wounded and his men dispersed.

In the meantime, Swan on the *Cygnets* was cruising along the coasts of Central America and Mexico, awaiting the arrival of a richly laden galleon from Manilla.

Upon the *Cygnets* at this time, Wafer was surgeon, Dampier was the quartermaster and Basil Ringrose was pilot-in-chief and supercargo.

We can imagine what thrilling tales these three old cronies had to tell of their adventures since first they started out on that memorable trip across Darien which ended with the astonishing voyage of the

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Most Blessed Trinity. We can picture them, seated together beside a gun carriage, comparing notes, Ringrose telling of the battles and raids up and down the coast, of Sharp's dramatic prophecy regarding Arica, of the wild storms and terrible cold, the rotten rigging and torn sails of the old *Trinity*, and boasting of his skill in bringing her safe and sound to Barbados without sighting land for months. And Dampier and Wafer had much to tell, also. No doubt Dampier still kept a journal in a "jointe of Bambo" and perchance read extracts from it to his old comrades, while Wafer unquestionably told the story of his strange life among the Kunas and chuckled over his reminiscences as he related how the Indians had stripped him of his garments, painted him in red and black and made a medicine man of him. And how they must have roared with laughter at the surgeon's description of his escape and the astonishment and wonder of his fellows when he dashed, naked and painted, from the jungle on to the beach where they were camping.

But the three oddly assorted characters were never to meet again. During an attack on a small, insignificant town, the pirates met with the greatest disaster in their history. Sixty of the men were cut off from the rest and were killed by the Dons and among those who fell was Ringrose.

Disgusted with the ill success he had met along the coast, Swan headed across the broad Pacific towards the East Indies. He reached the island of Mindanao in the Philippines safely, and here his men mutinied and, marooning their captain and thirty-six

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men who were faithful to him, the mutineers, with Dampier in charge, sailed off to cruise among the countless islands of the South Seas. They touched at Celebes, Timor, and New Holland; put in at northern Australia, and when they reached the Nicobar Islands, Dampier and a few others, who had had their fill of the ship and her crew, deserted and later managed to reach England.

Meanwhile, the *Cygnets*, foul, leaking and on the verge of falling to pieces, proceeded to Madagascar, where she promptly went to the bottom before she could be brought to anchor.

Here several of her crew settled, married natives, and became peaceful colonists, joining the petty chiefs among the tribes.

From that time on, the South Seas and Indian Ocean became favorite hunting grounds of the pirates and not only did they cruise about, seize ships right and left and sack towns, but in addition, they established colonies of white men and actually set up independent states, especially on Madagascar.

Had the pirates been as capable of controlling men ashore as they had been at sea, these piratical settlements might have succeeded and the history of the South Seas might have been very different. But there were constant dissensions, internal strife, and difficulties with the natives, until eventually all were abandoned.

The ideals which led the freebooters to establish these colonies were most admirable and Utopian, their aim being perfect liberty, a republican form of government, and a semisocialistic state.



BUCCANEERS ATTACKING A SPANISH FORT



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Most noteworthy of the men who endeavored to carry out this dream was Mission, a native of Provence, France, son of a well-to-do man, who shipped as an apprentice on the *Victoire*, a French frigate commanded by a relation, Captain Fourbin.

While on shore leave at Naples, young Mission visited Rome and there fell in with a renegade priest named Caraccioli who was full of socialistic ideas—an atheist and a revolutionary. Mission was greatly attracted to this fellow and managed to induce Captain Fourbin to find a place for him on the *Victoire*.

Despite all his failings, Caraccioli was a brave and valiant fighter, as was Mission, and in various engagements between the French and Moors, as well as against British warships, the two distinguished themselves and rose rapidly to the rank of petty officers.

Caraccioli was a most eloquent talker and very soon he had thoroughly converted Mission and most of the ship's crew to his beliefs. When Captain Fourbin was killed off Martinique in an engagement with a British ship, and the second captain and three lieutenants were also lost, Mission assumed command, appointed the ex-priest his lieutenant, fought the English ship to a finish, and at the close of the battle was loudly acclaimed captain by all the men.

With a good, armed ship under his feet and a faithful crew, Mission suggested that they should bid defiance to all nations, consider themselves under allegiance to no flag, and sail the seas, acquiring what they desired, and finally establishing an independent state in some safe, out-of-the-way spot.

This met with unanimous approval and, as "sover-

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eign of the South Seas," Mission hoisted sail and laid a course for the northern coast of South America which seemed to offer the most promising field for rich prizes.

Theirs was indeed a strange, bizarre company, an argosy of sailors and marines with a renegade priest and an idealistic Frenchman in command but all filled with ideas of liberty, equality, and independence which they were prepared to force on all they met by means of powder and ball.

Mission's ideas were most lofty and humane, as witness the speech which he made to his men soon after sailing from Martinique. He assured them there was a Supreme Being, although he did not believe in any creed, that he was satisfied men were never born to be slaves and that while the greater part of the world would brand his generous crew and himself as pirates it was through ignorance and selfishness.

"However," he added, "self-preservation was essential if they were to succeed," and that, for this reason and "not because of a cruel disposition he was obliged to declare war against all such as should refuse him entry of their ports or who should not at once surrender and give up what necessities he required; but in a more particular manner against all European ships."

Finally, he concluded by saying: "And I do now declare such war and at the same time recommend you a humane and generous behavior towards your prisoners, which will appear by so much more the effects of a noble soul, as we are satisfied we should

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not meet the same treatment should our ill fortune or want of courage give us up to their mercy.”

Then all of the two hundred and thirty men were sworn to follow the commands and examples of their commanders and, immediately thereafter, they captured an English vessel off St. Kitts. She was a sloop from New England, and after Mission had taken provisions, rum, and supplies without “offering the least violence to the men or stripping them,” she was released.

Evidently this new form of piracy was a vast surprise to honest Thomas Butler, her skipper, for he vowed “he had never met with so candid an enemy as these Frenchmen.” He, however, declined Mission’s invitation to join his Utopia.

A few days later they took another sloop off Jamaica and once more amazed the crew by setting them free and uninjured after helping themselves to what they required. This time Ramsey, the sloop’s captain, did Skipper Butler one better and gave Mission and his men three rousing cheers as they sailed away.

Next, Mission attacked two Dutch ships off Cartagena and after a fight lasting six hours, Mission most regretfully sank the larger vessel, and boarding the other, begged the Dutchmen’s pardons as he cut them down. The survivors were freed and Mission sailed to Cartagena, where he easily disposed of his prize and her cargo for fifty-two thousand pieces of eight and called on the governor.

His Excellency took quite a fancy to Mission, supplied him with provisions and requested the French-

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man to convoy a Spanish ship, the *San José*, from Porto Bello to Havana. He added that she was carrying eight hundred thousand pieces of eight and, of course, this humane and liberty-loving pirate gladly acceded to Governor Zerda's request.

Fortunately for the *San José* and her cargo, she had unexpectedly set sail a few days before and Mission never met her. But he fell in with a twenty-gun ship bound from Jamaica to London, secured a quantity of ammunition and supplies, as well as four thousand pieces of eight, and after releasing her sailed blithely away.

All this time Mission had been posing as a French naval officer with the *Victoire* ostensibly a French man-of-war. Now he decided to start on another tack and, realizing he might run afoul of other French warships in the Caribbean, he headed for Africa.

Off the Guinea coast he took several prizes, acquired loot of great value (the booty included gold dust to the value of ten thousand dollars), and finally ran into the Lagoa river where he cleaned and refitted his ship.

To chronicle all the events that followed would fill many pages and would prove tiresome, so only the more notable of Mission's victories and undertakings will be mentioned. Off the Cape of Good Hope he captured a British ship and secured over three hundred thousand dollars in minted English gold. In this engagement the British captain was killed and Mission, expressing the greatest regret, officiated at the burial ashore and had his men erect

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a stone over the grave, which bore the inscription, "Here lies a most gallant Englishman."

So charmed were the British at Mission's ways and so fascinated by his purpose that thirty of the crew joined him voluntarily. Having warned them that they "need not expect a dissolute or immoral life," he swore them on and dividing his crew, placed Caraccioli on the prize as her commander.

Within a few days all the British prisoners had joined him, with the exception of the officers, and Mission and his prize sailed for Madagascar. On the way they rescued an East Indiaman that was in a sinking condition and graciously set the crew ashore at Johanna. Here they were all welcomed by the queen-regent and her brother, and Mission married the queen's sister, while Caraccioli took the prince's daughter as his bride. Several other men married the natives and being given their share of the booty settled on the island.

At that time the islanders were having trouble with a tribe of a near-by isle and Mission and his fellows took charge of the native forces and won a great victory.

Eventually, after numerous adventures, prominent among them the taking of a Portuguese ship with gold and diamonds to the value of three million dollars, during the capture of which Caraccioli lost a leg, Mission founded a colony on Madagascar. Here he was joined by various pirates, notable among whom was Captain Tew. The settlement, which he named *Libertatia*, grew and prospered exceedingly.

The inhabitants had their own flag, called them-

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selves the *Liberi* and built houses, forts, and public buildings. They had large farms, raised cattle, and added to their population and their wealth by carrying on their piratical ventures throughout the South Seas, in the Persian Gulf, among the islands of the China Sea, and even in the Red Sea.

When, at one time, dissensions arose between Mission's original French settlers and Tew's men, the two leaders decided to fight a duel. But the sensible and diplomatic Caraccioli pointed out that the loss of either would be irreparable and that, to avoid further discord, the little state should elect rulers and frame a constitution and laws.

This was accordingly done and Mission was unanimously elected Lord Conservator with the official title of Supreme Excellence, while Tew was made Admiral and Caraccioli was appointed Secretary of State.

A council or house of representatives was chosen, without distinction or discrimination as regarded color or wealth; an equal division of all cattle and treasure was made and those who had no land or were unfamiliar with agriculture were given work they could do at wages regulated by the state. Laws were then made and registered in a state book and it was provided that the council was to meet annually, or oftener if required, and that nothing of importance could be done without the state's approbation.

Nothing could have been more Utopian and idealistic than this strange settlement, this independent, socialistic state founded, built up, and administered

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by pirates; a state where equality, liberty, and humanity were supreme. Mission had, in every way, carried out his ideals and his promises. All slaves captured were at once freed and given land or occupation, schools were established and the ignorant blacks were taught French and English. All the booty taken from prizes was equally divided among those who remained ashore and those who went to sea. There was no capital punishment, no chance for graft, no distinctions as to race, creed, color, or wealth. It is doubtful if, anywhere or at any time, there has ever been a more promising colony or one founded and carried out more honestly, humanely, and fairly. Had it continued it might have revolutionized civilization, but through the very humanity and liberality of its people it fell.

So widespread had the reputation of Mission and the Liberi become, that ships, attacked by their admiral, Tew, seldom resisted, but knowing their crews would not be harmed, surrendered what the pirates required, while, strange as it may seem, vessels that came to the port of Libertatia were not molested but treated as they would have been in any seaport.

Many nationalities joined the colony, Dutch, French, English, and Portuguese, and ships were sent to distant ports to secure recruits for the colony.

In the meantime, some of Tew's men had started a rival colony or state of their own and Admiral Tew, as he was called, set sail to visit them and endeavored to induce them to join the main colony at Libertatia.

In this he was not successful, the men affirming

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that they were perfectly happy and contented and could see nothing to gain, although they offered to come under the flag of any European nation that would send out a governor to take charge.

While arguing with them, Tew lost his ship in a sudden and violent storm and a little later was rescued by a ship which proved to be the *Bijoux* from Libertatia, with Mission on board.

Mission brought sad news. A native tribe, which had been treated most kindly and had been looked upon as friendly, had suddenly and without the slightest provocation swept down upon Libertatia at night and had fiendishly murdered men, women, and children and had burned the place to the ground. Caraccioli had died fighting and Mission and forty-five men were all who escaped the massacre.

Mission, however, had managed to save a quantity of uncut diamonds, some bars of gold and other valuables and Tew tried to induce his companions to sail to America and settle down in New England. But Mission was a broken-hearted and utterly discouraged man. He insisted on sharing his little treasure with Tew and the other men, asked for one of the vessels, called for volunteers and declared he was through with future settlements and desired only to pass the remainder of his days erasing bitter memories from his mind.

Fifteen of the men volunteered to accompany him and the others, thirty-four in number, joined Tew. For a time the two sloops sailed together, until off Cape Infantes, a terrific storm swept upon them and

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Mission's vessel, with all on board, went down within musket-shot of Tew's ship.

Tew continued on to New England and settled in Rhode Island. He had started on his piratical career on a sloop furnished by friends in Bermuda and, true to his promises, he sent fourteen times the sloop's cost to the Bermudian as his share of profits. For many years Tew lived quietly in Rhode Island, no one suspecting his past, but his old shipmates were constantly looking him up, borrowing money, and begging him to go to sea again.

For a long time he refused, but in the end, the lure of the freebooter's life was too much and he yielded and took command of a piratical craft and sailed to the Red Sea.

Here Tew attacked a ship belonging to the Great Mogul and during the battle was mortally wounded. To quote his chronicler, "a shot carried away the rim of Tew's belly who held his bowels with his hands for some space. When he dropped, it struck such terror to his men that they suffered themselves to be taken without further resistance."

In addition to Tew and Mission there were a number of other pirates in the South Seas and Indian Ocean, but none had the aims or carried out the idealistic schemes of Mission. Only a brief mention of the more noteworthy of these corsairs and their deeds can be made, for few did anything unusual or of particular interest, and many of them will be included in accounts of piracies in American waters, where their careers started.

Among these South Sea pirates was Captain John

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Bowen, who, in 1700, was in command of the ship *Speaker* cruising on the coast of Malabar. So commonplace had piracy become in the East Indies at this time that an open and well-recognized trade had sprung up between the pirates and the inhabitants of the ports, and the natives of one town did not hesitate to buy the loot taken from their neighbors by the pirates.

Indeed, it was not at all unusual for the merchants of a port to give the pirates information about the sailing of valuable ships, so that the corsairs might seize them and bring in their cargoes which were then auctioned off in the markets.

It was soon after taking such a ship, an East Indian from Bengal, that Bowen's ship was lost off Mauritius.

Bowen was well received by the Dutch governor of the island, who supplied doctors, medicines, and food for the shipwrecked pirates, and after three months on Mauritius they secured a sloop, rerigged her as a brigantine and in March, 1701, sailed for Madagascar after giving two thousand five hundred pieces of eight as a present to the governor, leaving him the wreck of their ship with its guns and stores which had been salvaged.

At Madagascar they erected a fort and established a town. Soon after this, the ship *Speedy Return* and a brigantine put into the port and were at once seized by Bowen and his men. After taking several prizes with these newly acquired vessels, Bowen's men joined some other pirates and cruised about for several months, taking over a million dollars in coin

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and as much more in valuables and merchandise from prizes and finally settling down among their Dutch friends in Mauritius.

Another well-known South Sea pirate of about the same era was Captain John Halsey, a native of Boston, who was commissioned by the governor of Massachusetts as a privateer to cruise on the Grand Banks.

His first prize was a French fisherman, which was a perfectly lawful capture, but instead of taking her and convoying her to Boston, Halsey connived with the French skipper to join their forces as pirates. They were to meet at Fayal, but the French ship failed to keep the appointment. Whether she was lost en route or the Frenchman decided to go pirating on his own account, was never known; but this did not interfere with the Bostonian's plans. He took a Spanish ship off the Canary Islands, doubled the Cape of Good Hope and stopped in at Madagascar. Then he went to the Red Sea, met a Dutch ship of sixty guns and then, through some strange freak of conscience, suddenly announced that he would attack only Moorish ships thereafter.

This did not at all please his crew, especially as the Dutchman was a tempting prize. The men mutinied, put Halsey and his gunner in irons and attacked the Dutchman. They had caught a tartar, however, and narrowly escaped destruction and were only too glad to release their captain and to beat a hasty retreat.

For some time Halsey cruised with indifferent success, until at last, realizing that Moorish ships

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were few and far between, he thought better of his previous decision and carried on a furious battle with two British ships which he took.

The captain of one of these, the *Essex*, proved to be an old friend of Halsey's quartermaster, and, as a result, the property of the *Essex's* skipper and that of her passengers was not molested. From the *Essex* the pirates took over two hundred thousand dollars in British gold and from her consort, the *Rising Eagle*, they secured fifty thousand more and with this great booty they sailed for Madagascar.

Some of the passengers on the *Essex* arrived shortly after and bargained with the pirates for the property taken from the *Essex* and *Rising Eagle*. The pirates were quite agreeable, invoices were produced and the stolen merchandise was sold back to the Englishmen for cash, much as the Dons dealt with Sharp's men at Panama.

Soon after this, a Scotch vessel, the *Neptune*, arrived, expecting to sell liquor and other supplies to the pirates, but a hurricane sweeping over the island destroyed the two pirate vessels and dismantled the *Neptune*.

Without ships, Halsey and his men decided to make a prize of the Scotch vessel and, with the aid of her mate, Burgess, who was ready to turn corsair, compelled the ship's crew to surrender. This scheme was fostered and encouraged by the crafty merchants who had come to purchase goods of the pirates on the *Greyhound* and were jealous of another ship getting any portion of the corsairs' trade.

But when one deals with pirates one must watch

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one's step most carefully as the dishonest merchants on the *Greyhound* soon learned to their sorrow. No sooner had Halsey and Burgess taken the *Neptune* than they boarded the *Greyhound*, held up the merchants who had started the ball rolling, robbed them of all their money, and took possession of the very goods they had sold to them a few days previously. Then, scoffing at the stripped and crestfallen Englishmen, they ordered them to hoist anchor and sail, which they promptly did.

It will be noted that these pirates of the South Seas were of a very different type from the buccaneers or the pirates that infested the Caribbean and the Atlantic coasts of America. They never maltreated or killed prisoners, seldom scuttled the ships they took and never demanded ransom. They killed in battle to be sure, but they were not wanton murderers. Between them and the cutthroat pirates of our waters was the same difference as between a burglar and a gunman. They were prepared to kill to save themselves, but they did not murder out of hand or except in self-defense.

Shortly after the taking of the *Neptune*, Captain Halsey died of fever and was buried "with great solemnity, the prayers of the Church of England being read over him and his sword and pistols being laid on his coffin, which was covered with a ship's jack. As many minute guns were fired as he was years old, viz. : 46, and three English volleys and one French volley of small arms." His chronicler goes on to say that "his grave was made in a garden of

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watermelons and fenced in to prevent his being rooted up by wild hogs.”

Captain Thomas White, a native of Plymouth, England, was another of these South Sea corsairs who, early in his career, was taken prisoner by a French pirate off the Guinea coast. The French then massacred the Englishmen, setting them up with bulls'-eyes marked on their chests and using them as targets for rifle practice. White, however, was saved by one of the French who heroically threw himself before the captive and fell from the bullets of his own comrades.

White was then spared and for a time sailed with the French pirates, until they were wrecked on Madagascar and White escaped and sought refuge with a native king named Bavaw. He remained with this potentate for over a year or until the arrival of a pirate brigantine, which he joined.

It is some satisfaction to learn that the cruel and inhumane French pirates were left ashore, and, a little later, met a just fate by being butchered by the natives.

Soon after joining the brigantine, her commander, Captain Read, died and one James took command. After cruising and taking prizes for some weeks, James fell in with Ort Van Tyle, a Dutch pirate from New York, in whose company he took a few prizes.

One of the vessels attacked by White's ship and his Dutch friends was the *Speaker*, already mentioned, which was French built, though at the time she belonged to some English slave merchants. As

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she approached the harbor the pirates, thinking her a heavily armed man-of-war, became frightened and ran their craft aground in shoal water. This greatly elated the young and inexperienced commander of the *Speaker* and he proudly exclaimed, "How will my name ring on the exchange when it is known I have run two pirates aground."

But a few days later he sorely regretted this speech when one of his men reminded him of it by sarcastically remarking:

"Lord! How our captain's name will ring on the exchange when it is heard he frightened two pirate ships ashore and was taken by their two small boats afterwards."

It was another case of the captain underestimating the strategy and resourcefulness of the pirates and very dearly he paid for the lesson they taught him.

Firing a few shots at the deserted pirate craft, he sent his purser ashore, whereupon the unfortunate officer was promptly made a prisoner by the pirates lurking in the brush. Undeterred by this, in fact knowing nothing of it, for he had sent his purser on a mission to the native king and thought him safe on his journey, the *Speaker's* captain landed with his men and started to trade with the natives for slaves.

Mingling with the natives were the pirates who were wholly unsuspected by the commander of the *Speaker*. By getting acquainted with the latter's crew, the pirates soon found a member who was willing to aid them and promised to wet the priming of the slaver's guns.

In the meantime the captain of the ship was

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treated well by the pirates and was invited to a barbecue feast. While he was dining, Bowen, who was present, suddenly whipped out his pistols, clapped them to the amazed captain's head and informed him he was their prisoner. At the same time other pirates had surrounded the *Speaker's* boats' crews and told them they were prisoners. The reply of the sailors was most characteristic of the times.

"Zounds!" exclaimed a tarry old salt, "we don't trouble our heads over what we are. Let's have t'other bowl of punch!"

The ship was then taken without the loss of a life on either side and the unlucky commander was released, given a small vessel the pirates had previously captured, and told to clear out.

Bowen thus came into possession of the *Speaker* and for some time cruised with White and his friends.

White, after separating from Bowen, took many prizes, accumulated a large fortune—even his men received nearly ten thousand dollars each as their share—and settled down in Madagascar. But he could not resist the call of the sea and a pirate's life.

Shipping as a common sailor before the mast on a brigantine under Captain Halsey, he served for some time, and then returned to his native wife and his home in Madagascar, where he died of fever. In his will he provided for legacies to various relatives and friends and appointed three men of as many nationalities as guardians for his son, with instructions to take the boy to England and educate him

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with money left for the purpose. All this was duly carried out and White was buried with all the ceremony and honors that had been accorded Halsey, with whom he had served.

Coincident with the exploits of these worthies in the South Seas were the deeds of Howard, Cornelius, Williams, North, and Burgess.

Thomas Howard, a native of London and the son of a Thames lighterman, first went to sea as a sailor on a ship bound to Jamaica, where he deserted, and with some wild, piratically inclined comrades, stole a canoe and made for the Grand Cayman Islands. Here they found a crowd of ex-buccaneers and pirates, two hundred in number, and seizing a turtling sloop declared themselves pirates.

Soon afterwards, they took an Irish brigantine, exchanged vessels, and a little later still further improved their condition by taking an armed Spanish vessel. In her they cruised on the Virginia coast, captured a New England brigantine bound for Barbados and once more shifted to the larger and better ship. They now had a vessel of ten guns with a crew of eighty men, of whom a man named James (mentioned in the account of White) was captain, while Howard was quartermaster.

Their career was a series of progressions, for within a few days after taking the brigantine they seized a fine Virginian galley mounting twenty-four guns, which was crowded full of malefactors and convicts being transported. These rascals gladly joined the pirates, and, deserting the brigantine,

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they took to their latest prize. Soon afterwards they sighted a man-of-war, and deciding discretion the better part of valor, sailed from the Atlantic coast and headed overseas for Guinea, where they took prizes right and left. Off the African coast they attacked a Portuguese ship mounting thirty-six guns and captured her after a stiff fight.

Finding the captain hiding in the hold, the pirates whipped him about the decks, deriding him for his cowardice. They renamed their prize the *Alexander* and again shifted their belongings and themselves.

From their humble start as penniless adventurers in a tiny turtling sloop, they had advanced by leaps and bounds to well-to-do pirates in a thirty-six-gun ship with one hundred and eighty men, a force which was constantly increased as prizes were taken and new men joined their company.

Doubling the Cape of Good Hope, Howard and his friends proceeded to Madagascar. Here the ship was run on a reef and the crew deserted the captain—who was ill—the quartermaster and eleven faithful men, and made off with the provisions and water towards an adjacent island.

Thereupon Howard and the others gathered up the treasure, placed it in another boat and left for Madagascar, leaving the sick captain to himself.

Fortunately for him, the vessel was left high and dry at the fall of the tide and he walked ashore and joined his men. Then, forcing the Portuguese and French members of the crew to take a raft and leave, the Dutch and English broke up the ship and prepared to construct a sixty ton vessel. Just before

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this was completed, a pirate brigantine arrived and rescued them.

In the meantime, Howard and his comrades, with their loot, landed safely and lived for a time by hunting and fishing. Finally, while on a hunt, the men absconded, leaving Howard behind.

There was no honor among these thieves, and a few days later Johnson, who was now leader, was deserted by the others as he had deserted Howard. Johnson, however, managed to reach a native king, told him the story and, claiming the boat and treasure was his, led the king to his sleeping comrades. The dusky monarch shot one of the pirates, but the others escaped with the boat and treasure.

Howard had been found by subjects of the king of Anquala and had been well cared for, and finally was picked up by a vessel, afterwards joining Bowen on the *Speaker*.

Still later, he became commander of the *Prosperous*, a thirty-six-gun vessel which he and a few piratical friends seized in Madagascar, and after numerous adventures joined Bowen in an attack upon a Moorish fleet off the island of St. Johns.

One prize fell to Bowen, but the *Prosperous*, being a slow ship, did not arrive on the scene of battle until the Moors had retreated to the river where they were lightening their ships to cross the bar. Not to be outdone by Bowen, Howard boldly sailed upon the Moors and after a terrific battle secured the richest of the ships, which contained nearly a million dollars' worth of valuables. With this fortune, Howard

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sailed to India, married a native woman and retired from the sea.

“Being a morose, ill-natured fellow,” says his chronicler, “he used his wife ill and was murdered by her relations.”

David Williams, like the famous Morgan, was a Welshman, and like Sir Henry, a farmer's son. He was ignorant, morose, sour, unsociable and ill-tempered and “knew as little of the sea or of ships as he did of the arts or of natural philosophy,” to quote the historian. He was not cruel, however, and did not turn pirate from choice.

Shipping on a merchant vessel bound for India, he was accidentally marooned on Madagascar when the ship was forced to slip her cables and take to sea in a sudden storm.

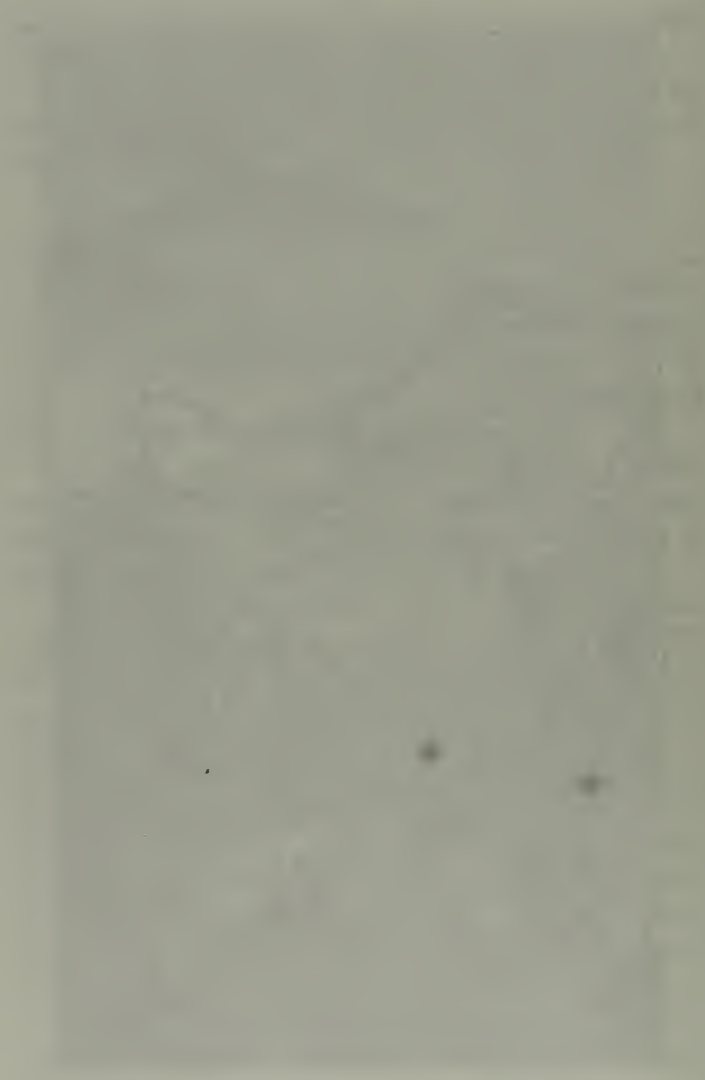
Left naked and destitute—for David and a comrade had swum ashore in search of fresh water—the two youths were rescued by friendly natives. They were well treated, but Williams' companion became homesick and despondent and soon died. Shortly after this, the tribe that had adopted the Welshman had a battle with a neighboring tribe and in this Williams showed himself so proficient in fighting that he became the confident and closest friend of the king. But it was not long before the defeated tribesmen came back, wiped out Williams' friends and took the Welshman prisoner.

His captors took him before their king who, recognizing him as the leader of his rival's forces and appreciating his bravery, welcomed Williams as a



BATTLE BETWEEN SPANIARDS AND BUCCANEERS

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friend. He at once shifted his allegiance to the new master, joined him in his wars against other tribes and once more changed hands by being made a prisoner of the enemy.

As he was just as well treated by these tribesmen as by the others, the Welshman threw in his lot with them and led them to battle as he had done the others, until his fame as a warrior spread throughout the island.

These tales reached the ears of the most powerful ruler, Dempaino, and he demanded that Williams be delivered to him. When his orders were disobeyed he promptly declared war, attacked the other tribe with a force of six thousand men and having defeated Williams' friends, took the Welshman to his own country. He bestowed every honor upon him, provided him with the richest clothes, gave him slaves and servants, and made him commander of his army.

Williams remained with Dempaino for several years, until the arrival of a pirate ship, the *Mocha*, under Captain Culliford. He joined the ship and after one voyage returned to Madagascar and took part in the seizure of the *Speaker*, already described, but later joined Howard on the *Prosperous*. Williams was captured and made a slave by a Dutchman, Ort Van Tyle, and for six months labored like a black in the fields. He managed to escape from Van Tyle, made his way to a native prince named Rebaiharang and lived with the natives for a year.

He then joined a Dutchman, named Pro, who had a small settlement, and a little later was taken

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prisoner, together with Pro, by a British frigate. In an expedition against the natives, several of the frigate's crew were killed and in the confusion of the fight Williams and Pro escaped, reached some friendly natives, were provided with a boat and provisions, and eventually joined Captain White's pirates at Methelage in Madagascar.

After several voyages with White, and several unsuccessful attempts to settle down on shore, for his morose nature and ill temper made him heartily disliked by the other pirates, Williams and a few men started out in a small sloop to attempt a raid on an Arabian settlement at Boyn. Here they were ambushed and captured by the Arabs and Meyeurs, one of the pirates, was killed. Williams was bound and tortured for an entire day, and beaten and buried in hot ashes, and was finally killed by a lance thrust.

As a pirate, Williams was an utter failure, but as an adventurer he had few equals and, despite his ill nature and his disagreeable ways, he had so won the friendship and admiration of the natives that his former patron, King Dempaino, seized the Arab ruler of Boyn and promptly executed him. Dempaino remarked that "he was sorry the villain had but one life to make atonement for the barbarity he had been guilty of."

Mention has already been made of Samuel Burgess in the account of Halsey's career. He was a native of New York, a well-educated man and for some time was a privateer in the West Indies. As mate he then

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sailed on a ship owned by a Mr. Philips, bound for Madagascar, to trade with the pirates where he joined the corsairs. After taking a number of prizes, Burgess returned to West Indian waters, disposed of his loot along the Spanish Main and purposely wrecked his ship at Sandy Hook in New York harbor, reaching shore as an honest shipwrecked mariner and quietly living on the proceeds of his piracy.

Burgess even married a relative of Mr. Philips, the shipbuilder who had owned Burgess's first vessel, who unsuspecting the pirate's past, provided him with another ship and sent him on a second trading trip to Madagascar. For a wonder, Burgess was honest on this voyage and although he met a number of his old cronies he did not fall into temptation but returned to New York with profits of over twenty-five thousand dollars to his ship's credit. The owner, encouraged at this venture, told Burgess to select his own cargo for the next voyage and, once more playing straight, Burgess eclipsed his former success and returned with nearly sixty thousand dollars clear profit.

On his third trip, however, he met with disaster. He had taken on as passengers a number of pirates who desired to return to their former homes in America, and at the Cape of Good Hope, Burgess and his passengers were seized by an East Indian and taken before the governor of Madras.

His Excellency, however, refused to have anything to do with the affair. Some of the pirate passengers, not trusting to the governor's word, escaped in small boats with their riches, while those who

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thought themselves safe remained, only to be clapped into prison where they remained in chains until their deaths.

Burgess was carried to England where he was liberated and the captain of the ship that had taken him absconded, fearing arrest, while his company paid heavy damages to Philips. Very foolishly, Burgess remained in London for some time and was recognized and denounced as a pirate by a former associate, Culliford.

Mr. Philips spent a fortune and employed every means to save Burgess from hanging, pleading, as his defense, that he had been compelled to join the pirates. Despite this, Burgess was convicted and condemned, but at the last minute was pardoned by the queen through the intercession of the bishops of London.

For a year or so after this, Burgess did little. Then he secured a berth as mate on the Scotch ship, *Neptune*, bound for Madagascar and, arriving at the island, plotted with his old pirate friends to seize her, as already described under the account of Halsey's life.

Following this treacherous act, Burgess settled down, but soon resumed piracy, until being accused of betraying some of his associates, he was seized by the pirates under North, was robbed of all he possessed and then released. For two or three years he lived ashore at Methelage where he was captured by Dutchmen who were in turn taken by French pirates.

The Dutchmen, with Burgess, were landed at

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Johanna where Burgess' knowledge of ships and navigation proved of the greatest value, for they built a vessel and sailed to Youngoul where Burgess joined a ship bound to the West Indies, as third mate.

Captain Harvey of the *Henry*, on which Burgess had shipped, having difficulties with the natives, Burgess was sent to interview the local native king. Unfortunately for the New Yorker, he had said some very unpleasant things about the dusky ruler, despite the fact that he had been well treated by him, and the potentate, deciding that it was a good opportunity for silencing the white man's tongue, treated him to poisoned liquor from which Burgess died soon after.

Last of these South Sea pirates of note is Captain Nathaniel North, a native of Bermuda and a sawyer by profession, who shipped as cook on a Bermudian sloop bound for Barbados where she was to be fitted out as a privateer.

Arriving at Barbados, North and the others were pressed by naval officers of the frigate *Reserve*. Appealing to the governor, all but North succeeded in obtaining their release, but Nathaniel, being a mere lad of seventeen, was left aboard as of little importance.

At Jamaica, North managed to escape and shipped on a sugar lighter where he served for two years as a deck hand. He then joined a privateer and distinguished himself by his bravery. On a second cruise, he was again seized by a British press gang,

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once more escaped and joined another privateer, only to be again pressed into service on the frigate *Assistance*.

Evidently this sort of thing began to pall upon North, for he decided to have nothing more to do with British ships, and working his way to Curaçao, he shipped on a Dutch vessel trading along the South American coast. He next served on a Spanish ship which cruised to Newfoundland, preying as a privateer on the French.

They took several prizes and when their captain died, they shifted to one of these, the *Pelican*, and cruised to the West Indies. From there they sailed to Africa, rounded the Cape of Good Hope and thence went to the East Indies with the avowed intention of preying only on Moorish ships, "to return home," as their chronicler says, "with clean consciences and clean but full hands."

Moorish vessels being scarce, however, they decided to retrieve their fortunes by capturing and ransoming the king of Johanna. This they accomplished quite successfully, sailed to Augustin where they picked up Williams as already mentioned, and headed for the Red Sea.

Soon afterwards, they joined Culliford, took a few Moorish ships, gathered in several hundred thousand dollars in loot, and, on their way back to Madagascar, were dismasted in a hurricane.

Under jury masts they made St. Marys where they met our old friend Burgess in his trading ship, and after disposing of their booty, sailed to the Straits of Malacca, returning again to Madagascar with

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booty that netted over five thousand dollars to each member of the crew.

Here they met a British fleet under Commodore Littleton, who had been sent out to pardon all pirates who chose to accept and settle down. Both Culliford and Shivers, with many of their men, took advantage of this offer and went home in the merchant ships.

North also accepted a pardon, but becoming suspicious, as the time for the surrender had elapsed before the men-of-war arrived, he took to a small boat and headed for Madagascar. His boat was capsized and all the men were lost with the exception of North. He swam ashore quite naked, and so astonished and frightened the natives, who took him for a sea-devil, that they fled into the forest. One woman, however, who had seen white men before, provided him with clothing and guided him to a settlement of the pirates about six miles distant.

From there he voyaged in a pirate vessel that arrived, had a part in the capture of the *Speaker*, as already described, and was made quartermaster by Bowen.

After a long cruise through the Indian Ocean they headed again for Madagascar, but on the way Bowen and forty men went ashore and North was made commander. The historian's description of the ceremony of the pirates when doing this is well worth repeating. "The crew," he says, "having made choice of a person to command, they carry him a sword in a very solemn manner, make him some compliments and desire he will take upon him the

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command; that he will take possession of the great cabin, and, on his accepting the office, he is led into the cabin in state and placed at a table where only one chair is set at the upper end, and one at the lower end of the table for the quartermaster. The captain and he being placed, the latter tells him the conclusions of the crew and that he, in the name of the company, promises to obey all his lawful commands and declares him captain. Then the quartermaster takes up the sword, which he had before presented him and had been returned, puts it in his hand and says: 'This is the commission under which you are to act. May you prove fortunate for yourself and us.' The guns are then fired round, shot and all, he is saluted with three cheers and the ceremony ends with an invitation from the new captain to such as he thinks fit to dine with him and a large bowl of punch to every mess."

Having, with such an elaborate and imposing ceremony, been made captain, North continued to Madagascar where the pirates landed and settled "like sovereign princes" among the natives.

The Moorish prisoners had been left on the ship and North secretly advised them to clear off with the ship in the night, as otherwise the pirates would make slaves of them ashore. This kindly hint was taken and the pirates, the next morning, were dumb-founded to find their vessel gone. In a body they rushed to North, telling him of the disaster, but he calmly replied that if the Moors had gone off with the ship, "it was their own fault as they should have left enough on board to secure her." There

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was nothing to be done about it and the pirates thereupon made the best of their fate, built huts, planted gardens and chose North as their ruler. Even the natives allowed him to settle their difficulties and it speaks well for his justice and honesty that no appeal was ever made from his decisions.

For three years, the little settlement prospered and grew. On one occasion North led his men and friendly natives against another tribe, defeated them after a terrific battle, took over three thousand prisoners, and forced tribes throughout the surrounding territory to swear allegiance.

But as was ever the case, the ex-pirates could not resist going to sea and when Halsey dropped into the port one day, North accepted his offer to take command of a captured brigantine.

North, however, was now a most mild-mannered pirate. Indeed, he was nothing but a slaver and he even went to Mascarhenas, visited the Catholic priests there, confessed penitence for his sins, and made arrangements for his children to be educated by the Church. He promised to return to his settlement, to endeavor to lead a life of atonement for his past, and never to leave the island. So repentant and anxious to make up for his past was North, that when he heard of some Frenchmen shipwrecked on Madagascar, he went three hundred miles out of his way to rescue them. Only one man was found, but North fed and clothed him and took him home.

Upon his arrival at his colony, he found everything in an uproar and his men on the verge of a war with the natives. He managed to pacify both

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sides, however, remained four months, and left on a trading voyage. On this cruise, North heard of depredations by the Arabs and landing, burned the Arabian town and took a number of prisoners.

But his worthy aims were rudely interrupted. Some of his enemies bribed the natives and North was murdered in his own bed. His men, furious at the natives' treachery, attacked them, slaughtered them by hundreds and for seven years carried on a relentless war against them, wreaking a terrible revenge for the death of a man who, by his fairness, his humanity, and his high ideals had won the hearts of all, although he had been a pirate.

CHAPTER XIII

KIDD, OUR DEARLY BELOVED

(1695—1702)

It is rather remarkable that Kidd, the most famous of pirates, the man whose name is synonymous with piracy, whom we invariably associate with the Jolly Roger, should have been the most obscure and unimportant of the freebooters, a rank amateur, if indeed he was a pirate at all. He has been the hero of more stories of piracy and buried treasure than all the other buccaneers and pirates together but it is very doubtful if Kidd ever willingly committed a single act of piracy or deserved being classed as a sea rover.

In the opinion of the author and many others, and in the light of the most authentic records, Captain Kidd was a much maligned and persecuted man who was accused of deeds he never committed and was tried, condemned, and executed on the flimsiest evidence of wholly unreliable, prejudiced, and untrustworthy witnesses. To use a modern police expression, he was "framed" and paid the penalty of death to save the faces of wealthy and influential persons in whom he had trusted.

As politics played a very important part in Kidd's life and death and as his contemporaries were prejudiced and, in addition, dared not express sentiments

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or opinions which reflected upon his judges, it is very difficult to find a trustworthy and impartial account of his career and trial. Moreover, romance, tradition, and fiction have woven a veil of misinformation about Kidd, and it is an almost impossible task to destroy a popular idea and establish a new standard.

But there are plenty of records of Kidd's life and the proceedings that resulted in his execution; and having these, each person must judge for himself as to the merits of Kidd's case.

Captain Robert Kidd first attracted attention when he was commander of a privateer, cruising in West Indian waters. Having distinguished himself for his bravery and patriotism, Kidd was recommended by the governor of Barbados, Lord George Belmont, and by other prominent men, as a most trustworthy man for the command of a ship to hunt down and destroy the pirates, then far too numerous in West Indian and East Indian waters.

Lord Belmont's suggestions were not, however, followed by the officials and feeling that robbing the sea robbers would be a most profitable venture, His Excellency and some friends of wealth decided to send Kidd pirate hunting on their own account on a fifty-fifty basis with the worthy captain.

In order to give the undertaking official sanction, and to keep the crew of Kidd's ship under control, Belmont managed to secure a royal warrant from the King of England which read as follows:

“William The Third, by the grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, defender

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of the faith, etc. To our trusty and dearly beloved Capt. Robert Kidd, commander of the ship *Adventure* galley, or to any other, the commander of the same for the time being, Greeting: Whereas we are informed that Thomas Too, John Ireland, Capt. Thomas Wake and Captain William Maze or Mace and other subjects, natives or inhabitants of New York and elsewhere, in our plantations in America, have associated themselves with divers other wicked and ill-disposed persons, and do, against the law of nations, commit many and great piracies, robberies and depredations on the seas upon the parts of America and in other parts, to the great hindrance and discouragement of trade and navigation, and to the great danger and hurt of our loving subjects, our allies, and others, navigating the seas upon their lawful occasions. Now know ye, that we, being desirous to prevent the aforesaid mischiefs, and as much as in us lies, to bring said pirates, freebooters and sea rovers to justice, have thought fit and do hereby give and grant to the said Robert Kidd, to whom our commissioners for exercising the office of Lord High Admiral of England, have granted a commission as a private man-of-war (bearing the date of the 11th day of December, 1695) and unto the commander of the said ship for the time being, and unto the officers, mariners and others which shall be under your command, full power and authority to apprehend, seize, and take into your custody as well, the said Capt. Thomas Too, John Ireland, Capt. Thomas Wake and Capt. William Maze or Mace, as all such pirates, freebooters and sea

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rovers being either our subjects or of other nations associated with them, which you shall meet upon the coasts of America, or upon any other seas or coasts, with all the ships and vessels and all such merchandise, money, goods, and wares as shall be found on board, or with them, in case they shall willingly yield themselves; but if they will not yield without fighting, then you are by force to compel them to yield. And we also require you to bring, or cause to be brought, such pirates, freebooters or sea rovers as you shall seize, to a legal trial, to the end they may be proceeded against according to the law in such cases. And we do hereby command all our officers, ministers and other loving subjects whatsoever to be aiding and assisting to you in the premises. And we do hereby enjoin you to keep an exact journal of your proceedings in the execution of the premises, and set down the names of such pirates and of their officers and company, and the names of such ships and vessels as you shall by virtue of these presents take and seize, and the quantities of arms, ammunition, provision and lading of such ships, and the true value of same, as near as you can judge. And we do hereby strictly charge and command you, as you will answer to the contrary at your peril, that you do not, in any manner, offend or molest our friends or allies, their ships or subjects, by color or pretext of these presents, or the authority thereby granted. In witness whereof, we have caused the great seal of England to be affixed to these presents. Given at our court in Kensington, this 26th day of January, 1695, in the 7th year of our reign."

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In addition to this very explicit, if somewhat voluminous commission, Kidd was also provided with a second warrant known as a "commission of reprisals." This was to justify him in the taking of French vessels—England and France being then at war—regardless of whether or not they were "pirates, freebooters and sea rovers." It is referred to in the king's commission as having been granted by the Lord High Admiral.

Armed with these elaborate, sealed papers, Kidd set sail from Plymouth, England, in May, 1696, in his "*Adventure galley*" of thirty guns and with a crew of eighty men, bound on a pirate hunt that would, he hoped, bring him and his sponsors both fame and fortune. His first port of call was New York and on the voyage across the Atlantic he captured a French fishing vessel which he brought in as a prize.

At New York he increased his crew to one hundred and fifty-five men, sailed to Madeira, where he took on wine and vegetables, and then proceeded to the Cape Verde Islands. Although Kidd's commission stated that the West Indian pirates were the primary object of his man hunt yet, under orders from Belmont and the others—who saw greater chances for profits in the East Indies—Kidd shaped his course from the Cape Verde Islands directly for Madagascar without a look-in at the Antilles.

He arrived at this pirates' lair in February, 1696, and found, to his disappointment, that most of the pirate ships were cruising in search of prizes and that not one of them—at least not one which Kidd dared attack—was at any of the Madagascan ports.

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Sailing from Madagascar, Kidd headed for the Malabar coast where he arrived in June. But though he cruised back and forth from Malabar to Mohila and hence to Johanna, the pirates failed to appear, the crew began to grumble, and the *Adventure* became daily more and more in need of repair. Without funds, for Kidd had expected to secure the wherewithal for such things from his prospective prizes, he put into Johanna, borrowed a sum of money from some stranded Frenchmen and refitted his ship.

History fails to relate how he succeeded in securing this cash from avowed enemies of his king and country, but in all probability it was at the muzzle of a pistol. Even if such were the case, it was a perfectly legitimate procedure in time of war and the incident had no bearing on future events.

During his long cruise in the Indian Ocean, Kidd had had abundant opportunities to turn pirate and seize rich prizes, had he been so inclined. He had met many richly laden East Indiamen which he could easily have taken with none save his crew the wiser, but he offered no violence whatsoever—a fact which was never dwelt upon during his trial.

With his ship once more in seaworthy shape, Kidd sailed to Mabbee on the Red Sea where he forcibly took some corn from the natives and then went to Bab's Key, a small island at the entrance of the Red Sea.

It was here, according to the testimony of his men at the trial, that Kidd made the incriminating remark, "We have been unsuccessful hitherto, but

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we'll make our fortunes from the Mocha fleet," a statement capable of two interpretations. Kidd's claim was that he knew the fleet would in all probability be attacked by pirates whom he could take, while his men vowed that he intended to turn pirate himself and seize some of the merchantmen.

Soon after this the fleet appeared, a dozen or fifteen ships, convoyed by a Dutch and a British man-of-war. Kidd, according to the testimony of his men, fired on some of the Moorish ships, but was driven off by the warships. He then headed for Malabar and took a small Moorish vessel from Aden. The master of this vessel was an Englishman named Parker who, with a Portuguese, Don Antonio, Kidd took on his own ship as pilots.

News of this seizure had spread and when Kidd sailed into Carawar some of the English merchants demanded that Kidd deliver Parker and Antonio to them. Kidd stoutly denied he had taken them and, soon after, a Portuguese man-of-war met the *Adventure* and, after a six hours' fight, Kidd discreetly withdrew. It was not long after this battle that the *Adventure* met a Moorish vessel with a Dutch captain and Kidd, as was customary with privateers, hoisted French colors. The Moor also displayed the ensign of France and Kidd, coming up with her, hailed her in French and received a reply in the same tongue from a Frenchman on board.

This was amply sufficient to warrant Kidd taking the ship as a prize and when the Frenchman was examined and found in possession of French passes and documents, Kidd accused him of being the cap-

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tain of the vessel posing as a passenger. It was claimed that Kidd forced the Frenchman to admit being the commander, but the chances are that he was so in reality. At any rate, Kidd concluded the evidence of French ownership was ample and seized the cargo.

A little later he met a Dutch ship and although his crew clamored to seize it, Kidd refused, whereupon the men mutinied and armed themselves with the intention of taking a boat and attacking the Dutchman. Kidd's warning that if they did he would prevent their return to the *Adventure* put an end to the mutineers' attempt. All of this was freely admitted at Kidd's trial, but had no influence with the judges, although common sense would have pointed out that a pirate, such as Kidd was alleged to be, would have had no hesitation in attacking the Dutch vessel.

It was at this time that an incident occurred which had a most important bearing on the trial and sentence of the unfortunate Kidd. One of his men, a gunner named Moore, became threatening and insulting, whereupon Kidd seized a bucket with which he felled the mutineer, who died the next day. No one denied that Moore threatened the captain and Kidd admitted he killed him, pleading, with perfectly good reason, that the commander of a ship was supreme and that to strike down a rebellious or disobedient seaman was no crime.

Shortly after this, the *Adventure* took several small prizes and later, on one of the Malabar islands, Kidd burned a native village and killed several of the

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inhabitants as reprisal for his cooper, whom they had murdered, a deed which was to his credit, although used against him at his trial.

Putting to sea once more, Kidd met the *Queda Merchant*, a Moorish ship of four hundred tons with a rich cargo. Her captain was an Englishman named Wright, and Kidd, flying the French flag, came alongside.

Whether Kidd actually had a hand in what followed is very questionable as will be seen later, but whether he did or did not, there was no doubt that the *Adventure* looted the ship of valuables worth nearly one hundred and fifty thousand dollars which was divided among the *Adventure's* men, the crew of the prize being set safely ashore.

With the *Queda Merchant* manned by some of Kidd's crew, the two ships proceeded to Madagascar where Kidd was visited by some old friends, Englishmen who were now members of the crew of the pirate, Culliford. They asked Kidd if he had come to hang them and Kidd—perhaps through old friendship or more likely because he realized the overwhelming force of pirates on the island—greeted them as friends and even gave Culliford certain stores and supplies he required. This incident was used against Kidd, but as the *Adventure* was under the guns of Culliford's ship, as there were several hundred desperate pirates in the settlement ashore and Kidd was in no position to fight, it is quite within reason that, as Kidd claimed, he pretended to fall in with the pirates' desires to save his own and his crew's skins.

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As the *Adventure* was now utterly unseaworthy her armament and equipment were transferred to the *Queda Merchant*. While this was being done a large part of Kidd's men deserted to the pirates, a fact borne out at his trial and which should have gone far to prove that even his own men realized Kidd was no pirate. Had he been so, they would have had no reason for leaving the *Queda* and joining Culliford. Reaching Aboyna, a Dutch Island, Kidd was told that he had been declared a pirate in England and was "wanted."

As a matter of fact, tales of Kidd's activities, or at least of the *Adventure's* unlawful acts, had reached England and a commission had been appointed by Parliament to inquire into the whys and wherefores of Kidd's rather unusual commission. This inquiry placed Lord Belmont and his friends in a most unenviable light. In fact, after Kidd's execution, His Excellency wrote and published a pamphlet in which he endeavored to justify himself and to throw all the blame on Kidd.

But Belmont and his fellows, being influential and with many political pulls managed to hush up their part in the affair. In order that the public might think them most conscientious and honorable, they induced the king to sign a proclamation offering free pardons to all pirates who should surrender themselves voluntarily before April, 1699, but excepting Kidd and Avery from this act of clemency.

It was very evident that Kidd had no knowledge of this, for hearing that he had been accused of piracy, he at once set sail for New York, resolved to

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give himself up, produce his proofs of innocence and secure the support of Lord Belmont and his friends. So anxious was Kidd to reach New York and face his accusers that, finding the *Queda* a slow sailer, he put into Santo Domingo, purchased a fast sloop, and leaving the *Queda* in a harbor, hurried to New York.

Still faithful to his employers, and perhaps rather doubtful of the treatment he would receive at the hands of the authorities, Kidd sailed into Long Island Sound, communicated with Belmont and hid such booty as he had on Gardiner's Island. Belmont met him, advised Kidd to give himself up and promised to use his influence and his evidence to clear him.

Realizing that his proofs lay largely in the French passes and documents he had taken from the ships and men he had seized, Kidd gave these into his friends' keeping with an assurance that they would be produced when wanted.

Then, feeling quite sure of his acquittal, Kidd surrendered to the authorities at Boston. Belmont, as soon as he was in possession of Kidd's documents, secured the valuables the captain had hidden and then roundly and publicly denounced Kidd as a pirate and used his influence to have him convicted.

From first to last, the officials played false with Kidd and his men. Even some of Kidd's former associates, who, under the terms of the king's proclamation gave themselves up, were arrested, imprisoned, and eventually hanged. Although the governor of New Jersey testified they had surrendered within the time limit, the prosecution argu-

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ing that they had not surrendered to the properly constituted authorities and that the governor of New Jersey had no right to receive them, a quibble which was a disgrace to British law and justice. Kidd and nine of his men were carried to England and placed on trial at Old Bailey in May, 1701, the men being charged with piracy, while Kidd was charged with piracy and the murder of the gunner Moore.

The trial, from first to last, was a farce and a travesty on justice. The papers which might have cleared Kidd were never produced, despite his pleas. Belmont used every effort to throw suspicion on Kidd while the witnesses against him, and the only evidence offered, were his own men who turned State's evidence and tried to save their own necks by claiming they were compelled to obey Kidd's orders.

Kidd told a reasonable, straightforward story. He declared that he had no reason to go pirating, being in comfortable circumstances with a wife and home in England; that the fact he had had ample opportunities to take rich prizes and did not showed him to be honest, and that the very charge of murder against him was proof that he had tried to keep his men in hand and that a mutiny had taken place. He insisted that the men had overpowered him, had confined him to his cabin and had threatened to shoot him; and that, in order to prevent him from bringing them to justice or reporting the prizes he had taken, they had set his ship on fire and that ninety-five of the mutineers deserted at one time. Furthermore,

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he swore that every prize he had taken, aside from those seized when he was helplessly at the mercy of his men, had carried French passes which he had been promised would be produced at the trial and that, as far as the gunner Moore was concerned, he had merely exercised his right as a commander to strike down or kill a mutinous member of his crew.

Despite this, and the testimony of prominent men as to Kidd's good reputation, his former acts of bravery and patriotism and his good standing, Kidd was found guilty, along with six of his men, the other three who had testified against him being released and pardoned.

When asked what he had to say as to why sentence should not be pronounced against him, Kidd replied that he had nothing to say except that "he had been sworn against by perjured and wicked people," and when the judge condemned him to be hanged he said, "My Lord, it is a very hard sentence. For my part I am the most innocent person of them all only I have been sworn against by perjured persons."

To the last, Kidd maintained his innocence. When he was taken to the scaffold and the clergyman besought him to confess and repent, he replied he had done nothing wrong and hence had nothing to confess or to repent of and although the rope broke and the half-strangled Kidd was lifted and a second noose placed about his neck and the zealous divine delayed the execution for some time as he besought Kidd to confess, the agonized man still maintained his innocence and begged his executioners to put an end to his sufferings.

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After their deaths the bodies of Kidd and his men were suspended in chains at various points along the Thames where their decaying bodies and bleaching bones swayed and dangled in the wind for many years. The gruesome sight was intended as a warning to other piratically inclined seamen, but in reality, it was a lasting memorial to the execrable dishonesty of unprincipled wealthy politicians and the miscarriage of vaunted English justice.

But whether we take the part of Kidd and believe him the victim of perjury and circumstantial evidence, or whether we prefer to look upon him as an unscrupulous scoundrel who took advantage of his commission to turn pirate, we must admit that he was a most overrated corsair, a weak, vacillating character who could not even control his own men and who never took but one prize worth mentioning.

Compared with countless others whose names are utterly unknown and whose careers are unchronicled, Kidd, even if all the charges against him were true, was a mere amateur, a rank beginner. Why he should have become so famed in song and story is something of a puzzle, but it must be remembered that his trial and execution came at a time when piracy occupied a very important place in the public mind and that, as I have before said, his career and end were used as political weapons. Belmont and his friends were openly accused of conniving with Kidd and instigating piracy, and their enemies declared that, in fitting out the *Adventure*, they had in view the profits to be made in piracy as much, if not more, than the profits to be acquired by suppressing

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pirates. Finally, the fact that Kidd had a royal commission attracted a great deal of attention, while the exaggerated rumors of the treasure he had secured led to wild tales of buried loot.

There is scarcely a spot from Maine to South America, or about the Caribbean, where rumor and tradition have not placed Kidd's treasure, and yet the only valuables he ever had to bury were those he hid on Gardiner's Island with full permission of the owner. These were secured intact by Belmont. So, whether Kidd was or was not a pirate, it is certain that he never buried treasure which he did not possess.

CHAPTER XIV

THE UNFURLING OF THE JOLLY ROGER

(1702—1718)

CONTRARY to popular fancy, the early pirates and the buccaneers did not fly the conventional pirate flag. But when the sea rovers degenerated to common sea robbers and cutthroats, who owed allegiance to no country and preyed upon all without discrimination, they adopted the black banner with the grinning skull and crossbones as their emblem. Under this "Jolly Roger," as it was called, they plied their trade in the Caribbean, upon the five oceans in the far south seas, and even along the coasts of New England and Newfoundland.

These scoundrels were legion. Scores lived, plied their nefarious trade, died and were forgotten. Even their names have passed out of existence in the years since they roved the seas. Others, through some noteworthy deed or by the amount of damage they inflicted, impressed themselves upon the memories of the people and won a place in the literature of their times. A few were so spectacular that they became transformed into popular heroes or romantic characters—sea-going Jesse James, if I may use the simile; while still others won fame and a lasting niche in history through their capture and subsequent executions.

UNFURLING THE JOLLY ROGER

Prominent among the pirates of the Caribbean in the early part of the eighteenth century, and perhaps the most spectacular and theatrical of all the freebooters, was Edward Teach, otherwise and more widely known as Blackbeard. It is true that Teach never performed any very remarkable or noteworthy feats; there is no record that he even took any very valuable prizes, and he was a most insignificant pirate, compared to many of the buccaneers, or others of his ilk who ravaged the Atlantic coast of America.

But Blackbeard was unique in his line, a man of such striking appearance and personality that he attracted world-wide attention. He was the ideal pirate of fiction and the stage, the true swashbuckling, fierce-visaged, bloodthirsty, dyed-in-the-wool pirate of youthful penny dreadfuls and the model for countless blood-and-thunder tales of the sea rovers.

Teach, like so many pirates, was a native of Bristol, England, and early in life became an honest mariner. But reaching Jamaica on one of his voyages, and perhaps hearing great tales of the old buccaneers who had made the island their lair a few years previously, sailor Ned decided to give up the merchant marine and follow the corsair's life.

At that time, 1716, this was not a difficult matter to accomplish, for pirates, good, bad, and indifferent, were almost as thick as peaceful seamen in the Caribbean, and Teach soon joined a pirate ship. Of his first few months of piracy we know little,

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but it is very evident that he learned rapidly and bent all his energies to becoming proficient in his chosen trade.

He must have been a lad of ability and determination who would have risen to prominence in any profession he selected, for within the space of two years from the time he cast aside the marlinspike for the cutlass he rose from an unknown green hand to the pinnacle of piracy.

He was a thorough believer in the value of appearances and first impressions and he set about to make himself as terrifying and horrible in aspect as in deeds. He allowed his intensely black hair and heavy beard to grow long, braided the latter into numerous pigtails, each tied with a knot of bright ribbon and often fastened them together behind his ears.

With ebon mane falling to his shoulders, black beard growing from just beneath his eyes and dangling in braids to his waist, great loose-lipped mouth with yellow fanglike teeth and puffy, red-rimmed fierce eyes, he was a hideous and repulsive looking creature. But Teach was not even satisfied with this. To render himself still more terrible, he was accustomed to stick burning slow-matches in his hair and beard which, according to those who knew, "made his eyes glow most horribly."

His costume was as spectacular and as true to piratical ideals as his physical make up. He wore a typical robber's hat of felt, a long-skirted coat of bright colored silk or velvet with huge cuffs turned back to the elbows, knee breeches of gaudy

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hue, silk stockings and low shoes with immense buckles. In addition to his cutlass and knife and his pistols stuck through his broad belt, he wore a sort of bandolier across his chest furnished with several holsters carrying additional pistols. He was, in fact, a real walking arsenal and was phenomenal for his strength and endurance.

And his deeds were no less terrifying than his person. He was a most unholy, ruthless, and wholly execrable scoundrel, remorselessly cruel and bloodthirsty and without a single redeeming feature. He was absolutely without principle or honor and did not hesitate to rob his fellow pirates, or even his own crew and on one occasion marooned a number of his men on a desolate cay for the purpose, so he said, of learning how long men could survive without food or water.

Fortunately for the castaways, Blackbeard's experiment was an utter failure, for the men were rescued by another pirate, Major Stede Bonnet. Blackbeard's sense of humor also was as grim as his character. Once, when time hung heavily on his hands, he suggested that, as long as he and his men were bound to go to the nether regions eventually, it would be a good plan to create a miniature hell of their own in order to see who was best prepared to endure the hereafter.

Realizing that if they declined their captain could and would produce an inferno far more unpleasant than anything they could contrive, the men agreed and proceeded to ignite various kegs of brimstone in the vessel's hold. Then, with the hatches closed, they

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seated themselves with their commander on the balcony. Very soon the stifling, nauseating fumes were more than they could bear and choking, coughing, and spluttering they made their way on deck. Not until some time after the last of his crew had reached the open air did Blackbeard come forth and when he did so he looked, as one of the men remarked, "like a half-hanged man."

This statement pleased Blackbeard immensely and he at once had another brilliant idea, which was nothing more or less than to try hanging to determine who would survive the longest. The men, however, had had quite enough of such drastic experiments for one day and as the breeze freshened and Teach was obliged to turn his attention to his ship the hanging bee was indefinitely postponed. Teach, however, never forgot his triumph in out-doing his men in the hold and to the end of his days bragged about it.

At another time this humorous pirate with his weird ideas of a joke, was entertaining a pilot and his sailing master, Israel Hands, in his cabin while his vessel was riding at anchor in a quiet bay. They had been drinking and chatting, seated about the rough table with a single candle for illumination, when Blackbeard suddenly drew his pistols, blew out the candle and crossing his hands fired under the table. One of the shots went wild, but the other shattered Israel's knee, crippling him for life. When the candle was again relit and the amazed and angry men demanded to know why Teach had acted in such a surprising manner, the pirate roared with

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laughter, cursed them roundly, and replied that if he didn't shoot one or two of them now and then they'd "forget who he was."

Through his acts and his appearance, Blackbeard became a veritable bugaboo along the Atlantic coast and throughout the Caribbean. The mere mention of his name inspired terror, people superstitiously credited him with having the evil eye, bearing a charmed life, and being in league with the devil, and yet this repulsive and thoroughly brutal creature managed to woo and win no less than fourteen wives. His last, according to his chroniclers, was "a young and beautiful creature of sixteen years."

Unfortunately history fails to tell us by what manner of means Blackbeard won the hearts of the fourteen ladies or how he disposed of them as his fancies turned to new damsels, but it is evident he was as fast a worker and as successful in affairs of the heart as in scuttling ships.

Blackbeard's favorite haunts were the Bahama Islands and the numerous bays and inlets along the Carolina coast, and as even the most villainous pirate must have some friends ashore to whom he can sell his booty, Teach was on good terms with the citizens of Nassau and the inhabitants of North Carolina. Indeed, it was rumored, with good reason, that the governor of Carolina was one of Blackbeard's friends and confidants and, in return for affording the pirate refuge on the coast, received no small income from the freebooter. At any rate, there was no doubt that the people who dwelt along that section of the coast treated Teach like a king,

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served him as pilots when required, and even gave him most valuable information as to the movements and cargoes of merchant ships.

But Blackbeard was such an unscrupulous villain that he could not be true even to his friends. Having returned from a most successful voyage on the coast of Honduras, and as a number of the men from the prizes had enlisted with him, he decided that he had a large enough force—three vessels, four hundred men, and forty guns—to perform some feat worthy of the old buccaneers.

As the scene of his exploit he selected Charleston, South Carolina, and anchoring his ships outside the harbor, he blockaded the port. The citizens, as well as the local shipmasters, were so accustomed to seeing the notorious pirate and looked upon him in such a friendly light, that they were not at all disturbed by his appearance and never dreamed he had any unpleasant plans in mind.

Consequently, they unhesitatingly allowed three ships to sail, which, to their amazement were immediately captured by Teach. One of these not only carried a valuable cargo, but was also a passenger vessel and among the passengers were several very prominent and influential citizens. Among them was a Mr. Wragg, a member of the "Province Council," and another was a Mr. Marks.

Even when they had somewhat recovered from their surprise at Blackbeard's action these worthy men supposed that the pirate would merely help himself to what he desired and allow them and the ships to proceed, but Teach had other ideas on the

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subject. He was in no particular need of either money or supplies, being just back from a successful foray, but his men were far from well. Many were suffering from fever, a few had received wounds that had not healed, and Blackbeard's medicine chest was exhausted.

He was a thrifty soul, a trader rather than a merchant, and remembering how the buccaneers had been accustomed to ransom their well-to-do prisoners, Blackbeard decided to try his hand at the same game and trade his captives for pills, powders and plasters.

So placing Mr. Marks in a boat accompanied by three pirates, Teach sent him with a message to the governor stating that unless His Excellency sent the desired drugs and medicines required—to the value of three hundred pounds sterling—and allowed the pirates in the boat to return free and unmolested, all the prisoners taken on the ships would be promptly hanged to the yardarm.

When, after two days, the boat failed to return Teach became furious and came very near putting his threat into execution by stringing up the indignant Mr. Wragg, the councilman, and his comrades. But before he had quite decided on the details of the hanging, word was brought that his boat had been capsized and had been delayed in reaching the city. For a few days longer, Teach waited for the governor's reply and then swore, with most terrible oaths, that he would hang every man, woman, and child he had taken prisoner.

We can imagine the distracted state of mind of

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these unfortunate captives. They knew Blackbeard's reputation for cruelty and ruthlessness, and even though he had hitherto been on friendly terms with the Carolinians, they also knew the temper of the governor and the citizens of Charleston. They might wink at a pirate and trade with him as long as he exempted them and their property from molestation, but to be held up and threatened was quite a different matter, and the trembling, frightened prisoners had little hopes of the pirate's demands being complied with.

Finally, when Blackbeard vowed he would hang them all the following day, Mr. Wragg, thoroughly disgusted with friends who valued lives less than a few medicines, suggested that if Teach would spare their lives they would aid him by showing him the channel into the harbor, and would even help him in attacking the town.

This pleased Teach tremendously. It was an entirely new game and appealed to his strange sense of humor. It was highly amusing to think of having a respected councilman siding with a pirate and fighting his fellow citizens and so, rescinding his orders for the wholesale execution, he agreed to the captives' proposition.

But Blackbeard never had an opportunity to enjoy this bizarre performance and, like so many of his other experiments, it was never carried out. The governor and the citizens realized that, with no armed ships at their disposal and Teach holding the trumps in the persons of Wragg and other prisoners, there was nothing to do but comply with Black-

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beard's demand and they hurriedly collected the drugs and medicines demanded by the ferocious pirate off the harbor.

There was also another reason why they made haste to comply with Blackbeard's demands. The three pirates were in the city, making themselves most obnoxious with their coarse behavior, and swaggering ways, acting as if they were lords of the town. Their presence and their manners were most irritating to the inhabitants and the governor was in fear and trembling lest his people should take the matter in their own hands and lynch or maltreat these unwelcome visitors. Such an event would, he knew, be most unfortunate, for he was fully aware that if any harm befell the men Blackbeard would murder the prisoners and would, in all likelihood, attack the city also.

But to gather nearly fifteen hundred dollars' worth of medicines, in a city of Charleston's size, in those days was no easy matter, and, as we have seen, Teach had almost reached the end of his patience when the boat appeared with the three pirates safe and sound and loaded to the gunwhales with the medicines.

Unquestionably Blackbeard was terribly disappointed at having his adventure turn out such a commonplace affair after all, for he had set his heart on seeing his captives fighting against their friends. But having made his own terms there was nothing he could do but accept when they were complied with. Teach, however, was an ugly customer when peeved and he gave vent to his spleen

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by stripping the prisoners of the better part of their clothing and setting them ashore far from the town, leaving them to make their miserable way through swamps and marshes.

With all his booty and his floating apothecary's shop, Teach set sail from Charleston harbor and made his way to his old haunts on the North Carolina coast. Here he passed quite a little time, having a well-earned vacation so to speak, and then electrified his friends by announcing that he had decided to abandon piracy and turn peaceful merchantman.

Accordingly he fitted out a little sloop and secured clearance papers for a West Indian port. Shaking hands with the people of Bath in farewell, he received their good wishes for a pleasant and successful voyage, and sailed away on his ostensible trading cruise.

But long before he reached his West Indian destination he apparently changed his mind once more, for very soon after his departure from Bath he came sailing into the port accompanied by a large French ship well laden with a valuable cargo but without a soul on board.

He declared that he had found the vessel totally abandoned at sea, but as there was nothing in the world the matter with the ship and she had a rich cargo, the people, knowing Blackbeard so well, put tongues in cheeks and winked knowingly at one another. Whatever their private opinions might have been the citizens of Bath were not the kind to question Blackbeard when he brought business to their town, and the officials made no objections to

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the pirate landing and disposing of the cargo from his prize.

Perhaps Teach had done this as a test case to learn just how far he could go with the citizens of Bath and his friends on the North Carolina coast. At any rate, he decided that he could do about as he pleased and could go as far as he liked, so he took to pirating along the coast, even visiting Philadelphia and wandering about the streets looking at the sights.

The strangest sight of all, however, was this swaggering pirate stalking through the Quaker City or standing on Chestnut or Market streets, with his braided beard tied with ribbons, his rakish hat, cutlass and pistols, and gaudy clothes. Had there been such things as motion pictures in those days, doubtless the Philadelphians would have thought Teach an actor waiting to be filmed. As there were not, he attracted so much attention that word of his presence reached the ears of the governor who very quickly decided to teach the pirate that the inhabitants of Philadelphia were not in the same class with those of Bath.

A warrant for Blackbeard's arrest was at once sworn out, but before the police or the bailiff could get up courage to tap the pirate on the shoulder and inform him that he was under arrest, Teach decided that the Quaker town was too slow for his liking and went back to his ship.

Blackbeard, however, had begun to exhaust the patience of even his North Carolina friends. He did not discriminate in regard to the ownership of ves-

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sels he took, he robbed the people of North Carolina as freely as those of the more southerly state, and when he went a bit further and tried his hands at murdering and torturing some of the crew of a North Carolina vessel which he took, the people decided they were through with him for good and all.

Their governor was too thoroughly mixed up with Blackbeard's activities to help them and South Carolina was too poor to aid, so an appeal was made to Virginia. The Virginians gladly agreed to do all they could to rid themselves and their neighbors of the troublesome pirate and the legislature promptly offered a reward for the capture of all pirates and for Blackbeard in particular. The price set on Blackbeard's head was one hundred pounds sterling, a huge sum in those days, and enough to tempt any adventurer.

But to be tempted to bring in the unprepossessing head of a dreaded pirate and to accomplish the feat, are two very different matters. A ship, a company of fighting men and arms would be needed and those would cost far more than the reward, so, with regretful sighs, those who would have gone pirate hunting abandoned their ideas as impossible and it looked as if Blackbeard's head might remain safely on his shoulders for years to come.

There were at that time in Hampton Roads a couple of young British naval officers, Lieutenants Maynard and Brand, who, like most young officers, were not overblessed with money, but were itching for a fight. They had no vessels in which to go after Teach and, moreover, had their own duties

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on the war vessels anchored in the Roads, but they were resourceful youths, and visiting the governor told him how anxious they were to secure Blackbeard's head and the hundred pounds and suggested that His Excellency should provide the sinews of war in the shape of vessels and men for their undertaking. To this the governor agreed and Maynard and Brand, in two sloops, with dare-devil crews, sailed forth from Hampton Roads on their dangerous mission.

At that time Teach was lying at Ocracoke Inlet on the Carolina coast and although he heard of the naval officers coming for him he felt so secure in his own power and strength that he refused to budge from his snug anchorage. He regarded with the greatest contempt all naval officers—and particularly these two who were scarcely more than boys, and did not even bother to make any particular arrangements for a fight, but spent the entire night preceding Maynard's arrival drinking with a friend from Bath.

With dawn, Maynard slipped up the creek to the inlet on his sloop, the *Pearl*, and to his delight saw Blackbeard's ship quietly at anchor, for he had feared that the pirate might have given him the slip.

As the pirates caught sight of the *Pearl*, Teach ordered the cable cut and running up the black flag with its grinning skull and bones, allowed his vessel to drift into shoal water and ground. He had hoped in this way to lure Maynard on the bar where he would be helpless, but the lieutenant was not so

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green as Teach thought him. Maynard was bound he would get alongside the pirate—for neither vessel carried guns—but he had no intention of getting aground. So he quickly lightened his vessel by ordering everything movable thrown overboard—even the ballast, the anchors, and the water casks were sacrificed—and setting jib and mainsail he bore down on the pirates' ship.

This was not at all to Blackbeard's liking. His own vessel was hard and fast on the mud and Maynard's was under control, but he was not at all frightened or doubtful of the outcome. Tucking burning slow-matches under the rim of his hat, as usual before a fight, he sprang upon the taffrail of his vessel, cursed Maynard with vile oaths and raising a panikin of rum to his bearded lips drank to the lieutenant's damnation. A moment later a boatload of armed men put off from the *Pearl* headed for the pirate, but Teach's men poured such a volley into it that twenty-nine of the men were killed and wounded and the others hastily returned to the *Pearl*.

The tide was now rising and Maynard crept closer and closer to the other vessel, in the meantime sending all his men, with the exception of the helmsman, below, he and the man at the tiller crouching back of the bulwarks out of reach of the pirates' muskets. Slowly the little sloop edged towards the stranded vessel on whose decks Teach and his ruffians gathered with drawn cutlasses and cocked pistols ready to leap aboard the *Pearl* the instant she grated

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alongside, and never doubting that once they had boarded her the day would be theirs.

To board a ship with flashing swords and blazing pistols was their own game, a game at which they had always won and they were more than eager for the slashing, hand-to-hand fight at which they were adepts.

The instant the *Pearl* was within leaping distance, Teach and his pirates sprang, cursing and yelling, on to the sloop's decks to be met with Maynard's crew who swarmed up from below. What followed would have suited the most blood-lustful pirate who ever lived. Everywhere the men fought, shooting, cutting, thrusting; surging back and forth across the deck, in one of the most terrific hand-to-hand battles of history.

But wild and savage as the conflict was it was nothing to the duel taking place between the two commanders—the giant, black-bearded, fierce-visaged pirate, and the slender, lithe-limbed, clear-eyed lieutenant. As the two had first met, both had fired their pistols at the same instant, and while Maynard was untouched, Blackbeard was struck in the face and his awful visage was made even more terrible by the blood streaming over his beard and dripping from the beribboned braids.

Tossing aside the useless pistols, the two men fell upon each other with their swords. Teach rained terrific blows with his heavy cutlass, Maynard parried, thrusting, with his lighter naval weapon. Spitting the blood from his mouth, yelling like a wild beast, swearing he would hack Maynard's heart

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from his body, the pirate aimed his furious blows, but he had, for the first time, met with a skilled swordsman, and steel slithered against steel and his cutlass failed to touch the lieutenant's body.

Over and over again, Maynard got in a stroke or a thrust. Teach was wounded in a score of places and covered with blood from head to foot and yet he seemed to lose none of his gigantic strength.

Back and forth they pressed; Blackbeard's ferocious yells sounding above the din of battle all about, while under their feet the deck became slippery with blood and they tripped and stumbled over dead and wounded men.

Then, as he parried a terrific blow, Maynard's sword snapped at the hilt. With a shout of triumph Teach swung his cutlass, but the lieutenant leaped aside, the blow fell short and merely sliced off some of his fingers. At the same instant, one of Maynard's men leaped forward and brought his sword down on Blackbeard's neck nearly severing it. Holding his head in place with one hand Blackbeard whirled about and cut the sailor down with a single blow. Then, kicking off his shoes to prevent slipping in the pools of blood upon the planks, streaming with gore, Blackbeard backed against the bulwarks roaring like a mad bull, shouting defiance.

As the lieutenant and his men closed in upon the wounded pirate, Teach drew his pistol, cocked it and aimed at Maynard's breast. But before a man could cut him down, even before he could pull the trigger, the pistol fell clattering from his hand, his knees gave way and he sank lifeless to the deck.

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He had been wounded in twenty-five places, five where bullets had passed through his body, and he was almost hacked to pieces. With the fall of their leader, the other pirates were panic-stricken. A few remained alive and uninjured and these leaped overboard, only to be captured by the victorious men under Maynard and confined in the *Pearl's* hold.

Only one man of Blackbeard's crew escaped and he, by a strange irony of fate, owed his freedom and his life to Blackbeard's cruelty. The man was Israel Hands, who had been wounded in the knee by Teach in a fit of humor some time previously, and was safe ashore nursing his shattered kneecap.

Cutting off Blackbeard's head, Maynard suspended it from the end of his bowsprit and with Brand, who came too late to be in at the fight, he sailed to Bath. Here he compelled the officials to surrender the cargo taken from the French vessel, and, breaking up the pirates' lair at the inlet, he headed for Hampton Roads with the dreaded pirate's head still dangling from the tip of his bowsprit and thirteen luckless pirates in the *Pearl's* hold.

The entire thirteen—certainly an unlucky number for them—were hanged; Blackbeard had been wiped from the face of the earth, and Maynard had well earned his reward.

CHAPTER XV

THE SOLDIER PIRATE

(1716—1718)

WHILE Teach, the melodramatic, was playing ducks and drakes with the shipping along the Atlantic coast and in the Caribbean, another strange and interesting character was plying the pirates' trade in the same waters.

Indeed, he was an acquaintance, if not a friend, of Blackbeard's as will be seen, but a man of a very different sort, though fully as remarkable and unusual in his way as his bewhiskered fellow rover.

This man was Major Stede Bonnet, an officer in the British army, a native of Barbados and a highly-educated, rich, and respected gentleman. In fact the gallant Major was a leading member of Barbados' four hundred and a pillar of the church in the "tight little, right little island."

No one even suspected that Major Bonnet had a streak of romance, adventure, or rascality in his make-up and when, in 1716, he purchased a sloop, engaged a crew of seventy men and after fitting her out, named her the *Revenge*, no one thought anything was wrong, although there was great curiosity to know why the army officer was going into the shipping business.

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To all questions, however, the Major merely answered "Wait," and then, before the time for waiting had expired, sloop, major and crew disappeared one night and tongues began to wag furiously at the "Beefsteak and Tripe Club" and in many a private residence and on many a street corner in Bridgetown.

Then, a few months later, the Barbadians were scandalized and amazed to hear that their esteemed friend and fellow citizen, Major Bonnet, had become a common pirate. Not only did it grate on the sensibilities of the people that one whom they had welcomed to their hearts and homes, who was a native of this most orderly little island, should disgrace them by taking to a corsair's life, but it angered them to think that, in a spot where there were so many excellent seamen, an out-and-out landsman, an ex-soldier, should have been the one to represent Barbados in the pirating industry.

The Major knew absolutely nothing of the sea or of ships. He knew all about sugar cane, about running a plantation, about horses and cattle and live stock, and about drilling red-coated soldiers, but he was as ignorant of seamanship as a newborn babe. In fact, he did not know the bow of a vessel from the stern, or the bowsprit from the tiller, and his former friends foresaw a very speedy and ignominious end in store for him.

Nevertheless, there was no doubt that, despite his handicap, he had turned pirate and every one began to wonder why he had done so. They were not long in finding out. Gossip flew thick and fast and very

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soon every one was convinced that the Major had taken to the wild life to escape a henpecked existence at home. Evidently, betwixt his sharp-tongued spouse and the perils of piracy, he had chosen the latter as the lesser evil, and even Johnson in his *History of Pyrates* admits that a nagging tongue was the cause of the Major's fall from grace. Although the author was far too gallant a gentleman to more than hint at it he says:

“It is believed this humor to go a-pyrating proceeded from a disorder of the mind which is said to have been occasioned by certain discomforts to be found in the married state.”

But if Major Bonnet knew nothing of ships or the sea, he had the courage of his convictions and manfully stuck it out and did his best to learn. Moreover, he had seventy of the choicest cutthroats and ruffians he could find along the waterfront and in the alleys of Bridgetown to help him and to teach him the tricks of the trade, and he was an adept pupil.

With Barbados a mere speck on the horizon astern, Bonnet hoisted his brand new black flag with his skull and bones, donned his cutlass and though desperately seasick, paced the afterdeck as the *Revenge* sped through the Caribbean bound for the coast of Virginia.

Here he had more or less success taking several prizes, robbed them of their cargoes, burned the vessels and set the crews ashore.

This was, at the time, the easiest way of disposing of the captives, for the *Revenge* was close to land, but the Major realized—for he had avidly devoured

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all the books he could find relating to pirates—that such humane actions were not in precise accordance with the best pirate etiquette. And as Stede had always been a great stickler for conventions and formalities—as an army officer and society man should be—he decided that if he were to hold the same social position among gentlemen of the sea as he had ashore, he must follow the most polite practices of the pirates to the letter and make all prisoners he took walk the plank in time-honored fashion.

As an exponent of such piratical formalities the Major became most proficient and was soon recognized in the fraternity as a Beau Brummell, a real arbiter of what was exactly *au fait* among the corsairs.

Moreover, Bonnet believed in covering a wide field in his hunt for victims. Instead of confining himself to the beaten track of pirates and picking up what he could about the Caribbean and along the Virginia and Carolina coasts, he cruised far and wide, taking prizes from the Antilles to Massachusetts and even swooping down on shipping in Long Island Sound. Indeed, he made his headquarters at one time at Gardiner's Island and before his old cronies at Barbados had ceased gossiping about him, Bonnet had become the terror of the Atlantic coast from the Carolinas to the Gulf of Maine.

But the Major, despite his success, was not having a happy time of it. His men had the greatest contempt for him as a landlubber and once or twice they tried to mutiny. But they were heartily sorry for their efforts. They had quite overlooked the fact

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that, although their captain was no sailor, yet he was a soldier, and as a Major in His Majesty's forces was quite capable of handling unruly men.

He was as well aware as any one that the captain of a ship is supreme, and with his military training he believed religiously in making the rank and file keep their places and in upholding the dignity of his official position so, quite unlike the usual pirate chieftain, Bonnet promptly suppressed all incipient uprisings by the simple and effective means of blowing out the men's brains, flogging them, and placing them in double irons, according to the seriousness of their offenses.

And he was never to be caught napping. He was always armed; he never appeared on deck without a brace of cocked pistols and, as he was a dead shot and an expert swordsman, the men soon decided that he was not the sort to be meddled with and made the best of their life on the *Revenge*.

Finally, having inspired such fear along the coast that few vessels ventured forth without a convoy, the Major ordered his sloop headed southward and sailed to Honduras, where he met Blackbeard.

Unquestionably Bonnet looked upon the redoubtable Teach very much as a small boy, whose imagination has been fired by dime novels, regards a train robber of repute. Being an amateur himself—though a successful one—the Major almost worshiped a man of Blackbeard's fame and very likely envied him his bizarre beard and ferocious aspect.

At any rate, he was most highly flattered when Teach welcomed him as a member of the piratical

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fraternity and even invited him to take part in a raid he was then organizing.

Of course, the Major should have known better than to place any faith or trust in the old reprobate, but he imagined that there was honor among pirates as well as among thieves, and he never dreamed that Blackbeard was anything but sincere. So, when Teach sent word to Bonnet that he would be glad to have him come aboard his ship for a pleasant chat and some refreshment, the Major donned his best clothes and quickly presented himself in the cabin of the other's ship.

We can imagine his surprise, not to mention his fury, when Blackbeard, with a cocked pistol in one hand and a long-stemmed pipe in the other, calmly informed his visitor that he had decided to take the Major's ship for himself. Then Teach added insult to injury by telling Bonnet that, as he was a rank landlubber, not fit to command any vessel and should confine himself to a landsman's duties, he planned to keep him aboard his ship and let him write the log and serve as supercargo.

It was a terrible downfall, to be suddenly reduced from a pirate captain to the lowliest position on Blackbeard's ship, but the Major was far too wise to resist, though he fumed and swore and vowed vengeance inwardly.

For some time, however, he had no opportunity for retrieving his fortune. He sailed with Blackbeard on several cruises, took part in the blockade of Charleston already described and finally found

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himself with Teach at the latter's lair at Ocracoke Inlet.

And then, for the second time in his piratical career, the Major fairly gasped with amazement. Blackbeard, having no further use for a supercargo and having acquired better ships than Bonnet's, told the latter that he was at liberty to go when and where he pleased—adding that it would no doubt be to the devil—returned his *Revenge* and his crew, and bade him begone.

While Bonnet had been cruising as supercargo with Teach he had devoted his spare time to plans for the future and evolved a new and novel scheme for pirating which, he felt sure, would be most lucrative and safe.

And now with the sloop and his crew once more under his command, he proceeded to put his plans into execution. England had gone to war with Spain once more and King George of England had—in order to break up piracy as well as to secure the services of such redoubtable fighters—offered to pardon all pirates who surrendered within a stated time.

It was in these events that the Major saw a new opportunity. Declaring he had thought better of his ways and had abandoned piracy, he left the *Revenge* in a hidden creek, traveled overland to Bath, took the necessary oaths of allegiance and signed the papers which would win him pardon. Then he secured clearance papers for St. Thomas, which was a British naval station, and where he hoped to obtain a commission as a privateer.

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But the Major was in need of a crew. Some of his men, suspicious of pardons, had deserted; others were far too well known as pirates to risk taking them to St. Thomas, and others, he feared, might tell tales of deeds he had in view. He had barely enough to man his sloop, but hoping to be able to pick up others in St. Thomas, he set sail.

And oddly enough luck was with him and Blackbeard unwittingly aided him. As he was approaching St. Thomas he passed a small desert cay and saw figures on the beach frantically striving to attract attention. When Bonnet landed in his boat, he discovered the men to be members of Blackbeard's crew, fellows whom the heartless Teach had marooned there as an experiment to see how long they could survive, and as they were quite as angry at Teach as was the Major, and owed their lives to Bonnet, the latter decided they were just the men for his purpose.

But long before Stede had completed his plans for being a pirate with a pardon and a royal commission to cover his crimes, he received news that quite changed his mind. He had never forgiven Blackbeard the trick he had played and had vowed to revenge himself. Now his chance had come.

Teach was preparing for another cruise and had left Ocracoke Inlet, and the Major at once decided to go pirating a pirate instead of chasing honest merchant ships.

Fortunately for Blackbeard, the Major never succeeded in catching him, for if he had it is very doubtful if the honor of taking Teach's head would

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have been left to Lieutenant Maynard, for Bonnet was a wonderful swordsman and a remarkable pistol shot, and his crew was largely composed of men who hated Blackbeard with every drop of blood in their veins.

Finally, giving up all hopes of finding his enemy, Bonnet changed the name of his sloop to the *Royal James*, called himself Captain Thomas, and announcing that he was determined to be an out-and-out pirate once more, he again unfurled the Jolly Roger.

He took several prizes off Virginia, sailed into Delaware Bay and helped himself to what ships he desired and when off Lewes, Delaware, he sent some prisoners ashore and informed the officials that if they interfered with his boat or men he would bombard the town.

Finally, his *Royal James* becoming leaky, the Major put into a port in North Carolina and having no timber or planking of his own he seized a local sloop and broke it up to secure the desired lumber.

This was a sad mistake on the part of Bonnet. The people were not at all averse to dealing with pirates, but they had no use for pirates who helped themselves, and very rapidly the news spread up and down the coast that Captain Thomas, as they called him, was a dishonest pirate who did not hesitate to rob those whom he should consider friends.

Moreover, this event occurred at a most unfortunate time. The people were still irritated over Blackbeard's recent escapade at Charleston and a Mr. Rhett, a wealthy gentleman of that city, visited

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the governor and offered to fit out an expedition to hunt down the pirates at his own expense.

Accordingly the governor granted him a commission authorizing him to take or kill Captain Thomas or any other pirates, and armed with this, Mr. William Rhett prepared to make things hot for our old friend, the Major.

Securing two large sloops, the *Henry* and the *Sea Nymph*, he armed them with eight guns, shipped a large crew and started out. Rhett was no more of a seaman than Bonnet and when, following the pirate's trail, he reached the Cape Fear River he found himself in a dilemma. His pilots knew nothing of that part of the coast and before he had traveled any distance up the stream both his vessels were hard and fast aground. To be sure, there was no danger. The tide was low and with the flood tide the sloops would float, but Mr. Rhett was impatient and anxious to be after the pirates whose ship was just beyond, with the topmasts visible above a bluff, while he, with his pirate hunters and their guns, were stuck fast on a sandbar.

Meanwhile Bonnet had not been ignorant of the sloops' arrival. He had no idea who or what they were, but he determined to find out and sent three boats full of armed men to have a look.

When they returned and informed the Major that they were heavily manned sloops with eight cannon in each, Bonnet was very much disturbed and not a little anxious. He suspected they were after him and while he was unquestionably a brave man and would unhesitatingly have attacked the two sloops in

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the open sea, he realized that he was literally in a hole with only the narrow channel of the river in which to maneuver and the two vessels with their guns to block his exit.

Moreover, he knew that as soon as the tide rose and his enemies's ships floated they would attack him and he was enough of a strategist to be aware that the man who strikes first has the great advantage. So, clearing his decks for action and loading every cannon, pistol, and musket on his vessel, Bonnet, with his men at quarters, hoisted anchor and dropped down the stream.

Never has there been a stranger sea battle; a battle between vessels commanded by landsmen—one a merchant, the other an army officer—in a narrow river, with all three vessels hard aground, for within a few moments from the start of the engagement all the sloops were fast on the sand-bars.

Had it not been so serious, it would have been laughable. Here were the three vessels, immovable and helpless, with a falling tide rapidly leaving them high and dry; with the *Royal James* and the *Henry* within pistol shot of each other, while the *Sea Nymph* was stranded so far away that she was merely a spectator.

Neither Bonnet nor Mr. Rhett could get any closer or farther apart and as few of the latter's guns could be brought to bear upon the pirate, the two crews commenced the fight by firing at one another with their muskets and pistols.

As both sides kept out of range and out of sight

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as much as possible, little damage was done, until the tide fell and the sloops careened, the *Royal James* listing away from the *Henry* and exposing the latter's decks to the pirates' fire.

For five hours the battle continued, until the tide turned and the contending sloops commenced to rise slowly to a level keel. The *Henry* was the first to feel the tide, being in a deeper spot than the other, and at last she was afloat while the pirates' boat was still hard aground.

Realizing that they were practically at the mercy of Rhett's men, the pirates were anxious to surrender, but Bonnet would not listen to them. He swore that with the first sign of surrender he would blow up the magazines, and did his utmost to encourage his men and to instil some of his own fighting spirit in them. But they had had enough, and despite his resistance, soon overpowered him. When the *Henry* came alongside they surrendered to Mr. Rhett and his crew without a blow or a single shot.

Bonnet and his men were taken to Charleston where, strange as it may seem, there was a strong public sentiment in favor of the misguided Major; partly, perhaps, because he was by birth a gentleman, partly, no doubt, because he was undeniably brave and possibly because many of the citizens sympathized with him and understood the "discomforts of the married state" which had driven him to piracy.

His men were promptly hanged, but his own trial was delayed for some time and he was treated with a great deal of leniency. Taking advantage of this,

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the Major managed to escape in a canoe, and for the second time was captured and brought back by Mr. William Rhett, who had no intention of losing the seventy pounds reward which he had earned by taking Bonnet in the first place.

Four days later, he was sentenced to death and hanged at White Point, November, 1718. Before he went forth to his death Judge Trot, who had tried him, gave poor Bonnet a most impressive lecture. It was a most amazing discourse to be delivered to a man about to be hanged by the neck until he was dead. The learned Judge advised the Major to lead a "higher life" and continued to point out the condemned pirate's sins and to urge him to better ways in future, apparently quite overlooking the fact that the Major's future was measured by hours. Probably it was the first time he had ever had an opportunity to lecture a pirate, or a malefactor of such prominence, and he meant to make the most of it, for such a chance might never come again.

At any rate, he kept droning on by the hour; it seemed as if he would never stop, and when, afterwards, his harangue was printed it filled six pages of the finest type.

Probably listening to this long-winded judge was about the hardest part of Bonnet's sentence. Even Mrs. Bonnet's tirades would have been preferable to this, and we can very easily believe that, long before His Honor came to an end, the Major was heartily sorry that he had not touched off the magazine on his ship.

CHAPTER XVI
PIRATES OF OUR COAST
(1717—1726)

IN the days of Blackbeard and Bonnet the seas fairly swarmed with pirates. Few, however, were characters of renown or of interest, but were a sordid, low-lived lot, mere maritime thugs, who never attacked a ship if they did not feel sure they could take her—unless a fight were unavoidable—and preyed upon the weak and defenseless.

They were of very different stuff from the buccaneers and were largely made up of criminals, thieves, mutineers, and other scum of seaboard towns and ports. To be sure, a few were ex-buccaneers, a few were men of good birth and education, and a few were pure adventurers, although these were in the minority.

With the breaking up of the buccaneers, most of the brethren had given up a sea life and had settled in Tortuga, Jamaica, and other West Indian islands and had become respectable and peaceful planters. But they had set an example that had shown how easy and how profitable piracy was and they had plenty of imitators.

Most of the pirates of the early part of the eighteenth century made the South Seas and the Caribbean their hunting grounds. Blackbeard, Bon-

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net, and a few of their fellows made raids along the Atlantic coast, even going as far north as New England, while others made the waters of New England and the Middle States their haunts.

To us it seems strange that pirates could sail into the harbors of Norfolk, Baltimore, Marblehead, Providence, or even into Long Island Sound, seize and sink ships, and get away without the least trouble. But we must remember that in those days these ports were comparatively small, that they had no means of defense and seldom had armed vessels at their disposal, and that the pirates, with their swift armed ships, could strike and be far away almost before the inhabitants realized what had happened.

Moreover, news traveled very slowly. The only means of communication were sailing vessels or stage coaches and there was no means of warning towns or shipping of the pirates' presence until it was too late. Comparatively little damage was done, however. Most of the vessels taken were small, with cargoes of no great value, and the pirates even descended to capturing whaleships and fishing smacks.

To enumerate all the pirates who frequented our coasts in those days, or to chronicle their lives and deeds, would be monotonous, but a few were of sufficient interest, or were so well known or displayed such unusual traits or characteristics, that they are worthy of brief mention.

Among these was Captain Bellamy who, with a companion, Paul Williams, had been engaged in

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wrecking in the West Indies. This venture proving far from remunerative, the two decided to turn pirates and in two small sloops captured a valuable prize, the *Whidaw*, bound from Jamaica to London. Her cargo consisted of gold dust, ivory, and other riches, and as she carried twenty-eight guns and was a large, well-found ship, Bellamy and Williams at once transferred themselves and their men to the *Whidaw* and Bellamy was elected commander.

For some time they cruised off Virginia, taking a number of prizes, and off the Capes ran into a terrific storm which nearly capsized the ship and compelled them to run before the gale. The thunder was so terrific that the crew became terror-stricken. Bellamy, however, laughed at their fears, swore and blasphemed and vowed he was only sorry he could not run out his guns to "return the salutes of the gods who had got drunk over their tipples."

The storm continued for four days and when it was over the *Whidaw* was a dismantled, leaking hulk upon the tossing Atlantic. But Bellamy was a good seaman; jury masts were rigged and the leaks were stopped. They had been driven off Block Island by the storm and so cruised along the Rhode Island and Massachusetts coasts, gradually working south until they reached South Carolina, and taking several prizes on their way.

Off Carolina they took a Boston sloop commanded by a Captain Beer and Bellamy's address to the sloop's skipper is worth recording as illustrating the peculiar attitude he held towards the rest of the world and his own profession.

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“I am sorry,” he said, “that you can’t have your sloop again, for I scorn to do any one any mischief—when it is not to my advantage—though you are a sneaking puppy, and so are all those who will submit to be governed by laws which rich men have made for their own security, for the cowardly whelps have not the courage otherwise to defend what they get by their knavery. But, damn ye altogether for a pack of crafty rascals, and you, who serve them, for a parcel of hen-hearted numbskulls. They vilify us, the scoundrels do, when there is the only difference that they rob the poor under cover of the law, forsooth, and we plunder the rich under the protection of our own courage. Had you not better make one of us than sneak after these villains for employment?”

From all of which it will be seen that Bellamy—though he had never heard of such things—was a thorough Bolshevik and socialist in his sentiments.

Captain Beer, however, politely declined the invitation to become a pirate, stating his conscience would not permit it. To this Bellamy replied:

“You are a devilish conscientious rascal. I am a free prince and have as much authority to make war on the whole world as he who has a hundred sail at sea and this my conscience tells me. But there is no arguing with such sniveling puppies who allow their superiors to kick them about the deck at pleasure.”

Then, setting Captain Beer and his men ashore, the pirates hied themselves to Cape Cod where they captured a vessel loaded with wine and the crew, or the majority of them, joined the pirates.

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The *Whidaw* was now badly in need of repair and Bellamy sailed to the Penobscot River in search of a good spot to careen. He finally decided upon the river Mechisses and anchored two miles from the mouth. There he built a breastwork wherein he placed the cannon, and dug a magazine in the earth for the powder, discharged the stores and cargoes, and careened the *Whidaw* and the prizes.

All this work was done by the prisoners whom Bellamy had reserved and compelled to labor like negro slaves. They received barely enough food to keep them alive and were flogged and beaten if they lagged.

With the ships cleaned and refitted, Bellamy sailed to Newfoundland, took a few fishing vessels on the Banks and, off Fortune Bay, attacked a French corvette of thirty-six guns carrying troops to Quebec.

The battle was terrific. The French boarded the *Whidaw* twice, but were driven back each time, the slaughter was fearful on both sides, and after a two hours' engagement Bellamy tried to withdraw. But the Frenchman stuck to him, continued to fire, and chased the *Whidaw* until nightfall, when, under cover of darkness, Bellamy managed to escape.

Returning to Newfoundland, the *Whidaw* met her prizes at Placenta Bay and from there they ran to Nantucket Shoals where they took a whaling vessel, the *Mary Anne*.

This was the most unfortunate thing that Bellamy ever did, but he little dreamed of what stuff the New England whalers were made and had no idea,

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when he made a prisoner of the *Mary Anne's* bronze-faced skipper, that he had sealed his own doom.

As the whaleman was familiar with the coast, Bellamy compelled him to pilot the captured ship and hung a light on her stern which the other vessels were to follow. Biding his time, the whaleman waited until the pirates became careless and while they were carousing, deliberately ran the *Mary Anne* ashore near Eastman, Massachusetts. The *Whidaw*, following close astern, ran upon the rocks while the sloop grounded in a sandy bay. Of all the company aboard the *Mary Anne*, the daring whaleman alone escaped; not a soul aboard the *Whidaw* lived to reach the shore and only seven pirates on the sloop gained dry land.

These were at once seized by the inhabitants and, on the statement of the whaleman and their own confessions, were tried, condemned, and hanged. They were all foreigners, ignorant, vicious men, but the puritanical denizens of the Massachusetts town felt that it would be on their consciences if they executed such infidels without making an endeavor to save their souls.

According to a contemporary writer, "by the indefatigable pains of a pious and learned divine, who constantly attended them, they were at length, by the special grace of God, made sensible of and truly penitent for the enormous crimes they had been guilty of."

Another pirate of our coast, whose capture and death were really the most interesting episodes in



THE MUTINY ON THE "ELIZABETH"

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his career, and also came to his end at the hands of a whaleman, was Captain William Fly. He was a pirate in early youth, a cutthroat, a very ignorant rascal, and as cruel and ruthless as any corsair who ever disgraced the seas.

In 1726, he was boatswain on the *Elizabeth* of Bristol, commanded by Captain Green, and bound for the coast of Guinea.

Probably Fly had shipped with malice aforethought and for the sole purpose of acquiring a ship, for he soon connived with the crew to mutiny, murder the captain and the mate and to go pirating with himself in command.

On the 27th of May, the mutiny burst out. The man at the wheel was held at the muzzle of a pistol to his post and Fly, seizing a cutlass, rushed into the captain's cabin with several of his men. Warning the astonished captain that he would be butchered if he resisted and telling him the ship was in their hands, they dragged the helpless skipper on deck.

He was by no means either a brave or heroic man and begged piteously that they would spare his life, argued that his living would be no obstacle to their plans, reminded them that he had always been a kind master, and pledged himself not to divulge their plans or identities if they would put him ashore.

To this, Fly replied: "Aye, to live and hang us if we are ever taken. No, no, that bite won't take, it has hanged many an honest fellow already."

Sniveling, on his knees, the terrified captain besought mercy, even claiming he was unworthy to appear before God and he cried that he was loaded

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with sins and that to take his life before he had washed them away by tears of repentance would be a cruelty beyond murder as it would doom him to eternal misery.

But Fly was not the man to have pity nor to care whether the skipper was doomed to eternal misery or not. "No preaching!" he cried. "Be damned an' you will, what's that to us."

Hauling him to the steerage, Fly asked if he preferred to take a leap like a brave fellow or to be tossed over like a sneaking rascal.

Shrieking and trembling the captain exclaimed, "Bo'sun, for God's sake don't throw me overboard. If you do I'm forever lost. Hell's the portion of my crimes."

With a curse, Fly exclaimed, "Since he's so Godly we'll give him time to say his prayers and I'll be parson. Say after me, 'Lord have mercy on me.' Short prayers are best, so no more words and over with him, lads."

As they tossed the doomed man over the side he grasped wildly at the main sheet and hung there, begging piteously for his life. One of the mutineers thereupon seized the cooper's axe and chopped off the skipper's hand so that he dropped into the sea, still shrieking for mercy.

The mate, Thomas Jenkins, was next seized and brought on deck. He was a braver man than his captain and merely asked that he be spared, to which Fly retorted, "You are of the captain's mess and you should drink together. It's a pity to part such good company."

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Being a powerful man, Jenkins struggled furiously with his captors, whereupon Winthrop, who had chopped off the skipper's hand, struck the mate a terrific blow with the axe, severing one shoulder. He was then tossed overboard and although terribly wounded he still swam, and shouted to the doctor to throw him a rope. The doctor, however, was powerless to help, being also a prisoner, and the mate at last sank.

Of all the officers, only the doctor was spared, owing to the fact that the mutineers required his services, and Fly being duly made commander as agreed, the *Elizabeth* started on her piratical career.

Her first prize, taken off North Carolina, was the *John and Hannah*, a sloop commanded by Captain Faulkner who, unsuspecting the *Elizabeth's* character, went aboard to see if she required a pilot.

He was told that the ship was a merchantman from Jamaica and Faulkner and a companion, a Mr. Roan, were invited to the cabin by Fly, where the two were informed that they were prisoners of pirates and that the *John and Hannah* was a prize.

Under dire threats, Faulkner was then sent in a boat to bring his own vessel alongside the pirate ship, but owing to contrary winds was unable to do so and returned to the *Elizabeth*, where he was cursed and berated by Fly and was triced up and flogged unmercifully. Some of the pirates then attempted to bring out the sloop, but managed to run her on a bar, where she sank.

A few days later, they took the *John and Betty*, Captain Gale, from Barbados to Guinea, and finding

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nothing of value on her made her captain a prisoner and freeing Faulkner and the *Elizabeth's* doctor, placed them aboard the *John and Betty*.

Captain Atkinson, however, was held to act as a pilot and was threatened with a most horrible death if he played them false. He assured Fly that he knew little of the coast and that it was hard to have to answer with his life for his ignorance.

But to all his protests Fly merely replied: "No, that won't do. Your palavering won't save your bacon.¹ So either discharge your trust like an honest man or I'll send you with my service to the devil. So no more words about the matter."

Then he ordered Atkinson to take the wheel and steer a course for New England.

On the way, off Delaware Bay, they took a sloop bound for Philadelphia from New York with fifty passengers. As this prize was of no value she was released and the pirates took only one prisoner, a man named James Benbrooke. The *Elizabeth* then was headed for Martha's Vineyard. Atkinson, finding that neither Fly nor any of his men knew the least thing about the coast, managed to miss Martha's Vineyard completely and Fly did not become suspicious until they had passed Nantucket.

Then, finding he had been fooled, Fly swore Atkinson should die and was on the point of shooting him when one of his men, Mitchell, intervened and convinced Fly that even a bad pilot was better than

¹ I believe this is the earliest recorded instance of this supposedly modern slang expression being used.

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none at all. Realizing that he must use guile and craft to accomplish anything, Atkinson then changed his tactics and pretended to fall in with the pirates' ways and gradually won the confidence of the men to such a point that they were almost ready to depose Fly and elect Atkinson in his place.

In the meantime, the *Elizabeth* had reached the Banks and finding no better prey, Fly made the great mistake of capturing a whaling schooner. He questioned the captain as to other vessels in the vicinity and promised the whaleman that, if he could put him in the way of getting a good prize, he would release him and return his schooner. Pretending to agree, the prisoner told him he had seen another ship shortly before his capture and gave Fly its position.

But the whaleman, as usual with those of his profession, was not one to submit to any murderous pirate without an effort to even scores and turn the tables and when, a little later, the other ship was sighted and Fly sent his newly acquired prize in chase, the whaleman saw the chance he had been waiting for.

Aside from Fly, only three pirates were left on the *Elizabeth*, with fifteen prisoners who were being forced to work as crew, Atkinson, Benbrooke, Captain Faulkner's mate, Walker, six of Gale's men and the carpenter and gunner who had been on the *Elizabeth* when Fly had killed her captain.

Fly, however, was taking no chances. He kept his cutlass and pistols within easy reach upon the deck house beside him; his three pirates were heavily armed and there were no weapons available for the

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prisoners to seize, while the gunner and carpenter, with such of the captives who were not required to work the ship, were below hatches.

But what could not be done by force could be done by strategy and, whispering his plans to Atkinson, Walker, and Benbrooke, the whaling skipper prepared to put his hastily evolved scheme into operation.

Strolling forward, Atkinson called back that he thought he saw sails on the horizon and asked Fly to come and have a look. Totally unsuspecting, the pirate captain picked up his glasses and hurried to the bows where, seated on the windlass, he scanned the horizon.

Instantly Benbrooke and the whaleman secured Fly's weapons, and at their signal, Walker and Atkinson seized Fly who, wholly unprepared and defenseless, made little resistance. Then, cowing the three surprised pirates with Fly's weapons, the whaleman and his fellows disarmed them, bound them hand and foot and released the prisoners who had taken no part in the affair and had no knowledge of what had been taking place.

Those who had gone in chase of the other vessel were the only ones who escaped, and with the pirate chief and his three men safely ironed the *Elizabeth* sailed into Great Brewster, Mass., on June 28, 1726.

The law worked swiftly in those days—especially when pirates were concerned—and on July 4 the four pirates were brought to trial in Boston and eight days later were duly executed. Fly was given

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special honors by being hung in chains at the entrance to Boston Harbor.

Another pirate who for a time ravaged our coasts was Lewis who, in his younger days, had served under the pirate Bannister. When the latter had been captured and hung from his own yardarm, young Lewis and another boy were triced up to the corvette's mizzen peak like living flags and were thus brought into Port Royal, Jamaica.

Lewis was a youth of intelligence, and a linguist, speaking half a dozen languages fluently, among them the dialect of the Mosquito Indians, and for this reason soon secured a berth as supercargo and interpreter on a Jamaican merchant ship.

He was captured soon afterwards by a Spanish ship, was taken to Havana, and escaping with six fellow prisoners, seized a canoe and boarded and captured a Spanish piragua. Two of the latter's crew joined Lewis and with nine men and the piragua he took a turtling sloop and several of her crew joined his company.

By constantly adding to his crew and taking larger and larger prizes, Lewis progressed until he was master of a good-sized ship and a company of over fifty men.

His next attempt was on a Bermuda brigantine of ten guns commanded by a Captain Tucker. Realizing he could not hope to secure this vessel openly he sent a letter to her commander offering to purchase the brigantine for ten thousand pieces of eight

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and adding that if the captain did not part with her willingly he'd take her anyway.

The Bermudian laughed at the threat, and showing the letter to the captains of several other Bermuda vessels that were anchored near, offered to sail out and settle with the pirates if they would lend him fifty men. The others, however, declined, but agreed that for safety's sake they would sail together.

Hardly had they left port when Lewis appeared and attacked the little fleet. Several of the sloops hastily made the best of their heels and cleared out; one belonging to a Captain Dill opened fire with two guns, but one gun burst and killed three of the crew, and only Tucker was still ready to carry on. Calling to the others to send him men, he went at the pirates, firing a broadside at them, and then, finding there was no response from his fellow Bermudians, he trimmed sail and left his cowardly friends to their fate.

One of these fell into Lewis' hands and the pirate, boarding her, immediately berated her captain for surrendering. He demanded to know why the skipper had so basely betrayed the trust his owners had put in him, told him he was a knave and a coward and added that he would punish him accordingly.

"You might have got off," exclaimed Lewis, "as your vessel is a much better sailer than mine," and then, seizing a rope's end in one hand and a cudgel in the other, he drove the Bermudian about the decks, belaboring him unmercifully.

Howling for mercy, the captain, to appease Lewis,

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informed him that there was a quantity of money on his sloop, but instead of winning the pirate's favor this had a totally different effect.

Lewis told him he was a rascal and a damnable villain for thus betraying his owners' property, redoubled the blows he was raining on the poor skipper and then, helping himself to what he wanted, he released the cowering Bermudian and placed him back aboard his vessel.

After this episode, Lewis cruised along the coast of Florida, up to the Carolinas and Virginia, trading like Blackbeard with the inhabitants, and taking a number of prizes.

From the Carolinas, Lewis steered a course for Newfoundland, where he took several fishing smacks, finally putting into Trinity Bay, where he seized a twenty-four-gun ship lying at anchor.

Shortly after this, Lewis put into a harbor where there was a large French man-of-war mounting twenty-four guns and impudently anchored near by. When he was hailed by the Frenchman he replied that he was from Jamaica with rum and sugar and the French advised him to get off at once as there was a pirate on the coast (referring to Lewis himself) and added that he was not at all sure he was not the rogue.

Lewis took the hint and put to sea, but he coveted the powerful French ship and meant to have her. After two weeks at sea he slipped in close to shore, seized some small boats and with his crew in these rowed into the harbor. While some of the boats attacked the shore batteries the others went for the

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French ship, and just as the morning star appeared, the ship and the battery were theirs.

Firing seven guns, which was the prearranged signal, Lewis brought his own vessel into the harbor and at once commenced shifting his property into the captured French ship, which he named the *Morning Star* in honor of the hour of his victory.

Several of the crew of the French vessel joined Lewis and with a heavily armed ship and two hundred men he headed across the seas for Africa.

On the way, while in chase of a Carolina vessel, he carried away his fore and main topmasts, whereupon Lewis rushed up the shrouds to the main top, tore out a handful of his hair and tossing it into the air exclaimed: "Good devil take this till I come!"

This incident convinced his superstitious men that Lewis was in league with Satan and when the ship, despite her crippled rigging, gained on the other vessel and finally overtook her, they were absolutely sure that the devil had a hand in it.

If so, his satanic majesty evidently thought Lewis' lock of hair an inadequate offering for the success he had granted the pirate, and that he could not afford to wait much longer, for shortly after the episode dissensions arose among the French and English members of the crew and one of the Frenchmen murdered Lewis in his bed.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE THIEF WHO TURNED PIRATE

ALTHOUGH all the pirates were thieves, very few were thieves before they took to the sea and their nefarious calling. But there was one pirate, for some time the terror of New England waters, who, from earliest boyhood, was a thief. His piratical career began in the slums of London and he followed out the tenets of his pickpocket and sneak-thief associates on the high seas.

This was Edward Low, a native of Westminster, England, and he came from a family of thieves, so that we cannot really blame Edward for the life he adopted and led with no little success.

When still a small child, the future pirate learned his profession by taking a prominent part in the most novel form of thievery ever devised. Concealed in a large basket, young Low was carried through the London streets on the head of an elder brother and from his hiding place would reach out and snatch wigs and headgear from the passers-by.

It was a most annoying and surprising thing to have one's hat or wig lifted suddenly from one's head on a crowded street and no one suspected that the stalwart porter, carrying a hamper on his head, was the cause of this mysterious disappearance of valuable toupees and plumed beavers. For a long

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time Low and his brother did a most lucrative business and the honest townsfolk, to protect themselves, or rather their hats and wigs, fitted their hats with strings and ribbons which were tied firmly under their chins.

This rather put an end to the boy-in-the-basket occupation of the Lows and the youngster turned to picking pockets and robbing other boys. Not only did he steal anything he desired, but he took supreme delight in pommeling his victims, gouging their eyes, biting off their fingers and noses, or kicking them into the gutter, all of which was splendid practice for a piratical career.

As young Low grew older the petty sums he could obtain from pilfering others' pockets or holding up gamins in London byways, were far from satisfying Edward's longings and requirements, and hearing wonderful tales of America, he shipped on a vessel and in due time landed in Boston.

Low's finances were at their lowest ebb when he stepped ashore at the Hub, and not being familiar with Bostonian highways and byways, and somewhat fearful of the bailiffs with their staffs and the laws of a strange land, Low decided to try to earn an honest living for a space.

Accordingly he secured a position as apprentice to a ship rigger, but soon quarreled with his master over a question of certain tools and supplies which had strangely vanished, and running away, he shipped on a vessel bound for Honduras.

Here, for a time, he followed the free and easy life of a logwood cutter, but again had trouble with

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his master and made an unsuccessful attempt to murder him. Failing in this, he gathered a number of other rascals, seized a small boat and rowing off to his master's schooner, took possession and sailed away, leaving the captain and his crew marooned on shore.

With a good vessel and a dozen reckless men under his control, Low felt quite prepared to establish himself as a full-fledged pirate, and searching about until he found some black cloth in the lazarette, Edward made himself a crude Jolly Roger and hoisted it to his masthead.

But a ship, even though she has a black flag and a crew, is ill fitted for piracy without guns and other weapons, and of these Low had none. Without such sinews of war Low was in no position to attack even a turtler or a fishing boat, but he had heard that pirates lurked in the Virgin Islands, and deciding that the more advanced of the profession should be willing to help out a beginner by loaning him a cutlass or two and a few pistols, Low headed for the islands. Here he had the good fortune to meet Lowther, who was quite a good-natured and amiable sort of freebooter, and when Low's schooner sailed into the port with the homemade Jolly Roger at the masthead, Lowther was not a little amused. But he was a sociable chap, he admired Low's nerve in turning pirate without arms and he received him with hospitality and gladly provided the needful accessories of a pirate just starting out in life.

Moreover, he suggested that Low might find it advantageous to go into partnership for a time,

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pointing out that in this way Edward might learn the A, B, C's of piracy through example and that, while acquiring knowledge, he could share in the profits of the cruise. This seemed a good plan to the ex-pickpocket and wig stealer and, as Lowther's lieutenant, Low felt he was really a pirate at last.

Together the two pirates and their vessels sailed from their lair in the Virgin Islands and took several prizes and considerable booty, all of which caused Low to have such a high opinion of himself that he decided to dissolve partnership with Lowther and strike out on his own account.

Soon after he arrived at this conclusion, the two pirates took a brigantine and Low made a bargain with Lowther—odd that the two names were so similar—by which he acquired the brigantine.

In this fine vessel with a crew of forty-four men—and no doubt with a fine, new, properly made Jolly Roger—Low bade farewell to his erstwhile partner and headed northward.

Low had first set foot on American soil in New England, and because he felt more at home there or possibly because he wished to impress his old acquaintances with his rise in the world, headed for Massachusetts and captured a sloop just entering Newport harbor.

After looting this prize he cut away her yards and sails and then, unable to resist his youthful habit of maiming those he had robbed, he deliberately crippled the captain and officers of the sloop and set them adrift in their disabled sloop.

Despite their condition, the injured men reached

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Block Island and soon word went forth to the mainland that a new and desperate pirate was in New England waters. Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut towns buzzed like hornets' nests; volunteers flocked to the officials begging a chance to go pirate hunting and two vessels were fitted out so rapidly that on the evening of the very day when the news had reached the port they were ready to sail.

But even the few hours' delay was enough to allow Low to escape, and crestfallen, the avengers of the sloop returned to port.

For a few days, nothing more was heard of the new star in the piratical firmament and then, from Marblehead, came the astounding news that Low had sailed boldly into the little port of Rosemary where thirteen ships had been anchored and, with the black flag flying from his masthead, had actually looted the entire fleet. Not content with this, he had taken his pick of the vessels, had impressed the men he needed into his service, and had sailed away unharmed.

Within the space of a few months Low had grown from a weaponless pirate in a small schooner with a homemade flag, to the commander of a fully armed fleet of over a dozen ships, the largest pirate force since the days of the old buccaneers.

All along the coast the merchant ships and fishing smacks huddled in safe harbors, people trembled every time a strange sail appeared and Low's name was spoken in hushed tones. No one can say how far this product of the London gutters might have

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gone had Low been able to keep on as he had started, but finding few prizes off New England he headed back towards the Caribbean and ran into a terrific hurricane.

In order to save the vessels, guns, ammunition, and much of the loot were cast into the sea and when the surviving vessels and their crews reached shelter in the West Indies, Low was as poor in worldly goods and armament as when he had first met Lowther.

But Low was not one to balk at petty thievery. He had been born and bred in that profession and, hoping to rob the fisherfolk or the natives of the few dollars they possessed, Low sneaked along the shores of the islands. Luck was with him and very soon he sighted a derelict, a pathetic, dismasted hulk upon whose shattered decks was a group of wretched men signaling frantically for help.

Even the worst of the buccaneers and the South Sea pirates hesitated to rob shipwrecked men and often went far out of their way to aid them, but to Low the helpless mariners on the wrecked ship were simply easy prey and like a buzzard he swooped down upon them. Without giving the least heed to the poor fellows' pleas, Low plundered the vessel, even stripping the garments from the half-famished men, and sailed away, leaving them without food or water.

Among other booty, he had secured over five thousand dollars in gold, as well as arms and ammunition, and once more a properly equipped pirate, Low took prizes right and left, torturing and mal-

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treating his prisoners in a manner that would have done credit to Morgan or L'Ollonais, and proving himself as despicable and black-hearted a villain as ever sailed under the skull and bones.

And he was consistently yellow. If he sighted a ship which appeared capable of making a good fight he sailed away from her as fast as he could and never in his career did he figure in an honorable or gallant engagement or in any but the most underhanded and contemptible exploits. He would torture and maim out of pure love of bloodshed and a fiendish desire to see his victims suffer; he was a blusterer and a liar, and even his own men had the greatest contempt for him, bad as they were.

Gradually, as time passed, Low's fleet diminished in size and, one after another, he sank, abandoned, or gave up his vessels, for he soon found that a large flotilla was a nuisance and that one or two ships stood a much better chance of sneaking into a port and getting safely away than a fleet did.

Eventually, when he was down to his own vessel and one other, he sighted a sail which he took for an unarmed merchant ship and bore down on her with the black flag fluttering and snapping in the wind from his mastheads.

But Low had made the mistake of his life. It was exactly as if, after picking a pocket, he had bumped into a stalwart "Bobby" with the wallet he had stolen still in his hand; for the ship he was about to attack was the *Greyhound*, British man-of-war.

Not until they were almost within musket shot did Low and his pirates realize their mistake and only

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when their expected prize suddenly veered in her course and poured a broadside into the pirate ships.

Amazed, demoralized, with their ship cut to pieces, their rigging in ribbons, and dead strewing their decks, the pirates on the smaller vessel fired a few of their guns and surrendered. But Low had not waited for this. His ship had not been put out of commission and, without any regard for his fellows, he turned tail, and piling on every stitch of canvas, ran off as if the devil were at his heels—as he was.

Twenty-five of Low's men were tried, convicted, and hanged at Newport, but Low, although he escaped the law, met an even more fitting end. For a time he continued pirating in his same contemptible manner until at last he was killed by one of his own men whom he had tried to cheat while playing cards.

CHAPTER XVIII

A METEORIC PIRATE

(1718)

HAD life insurance been in vogue in the days of the buccaneers and pirates, the companies would have gone into bankruptcy if they had insured the sea rovers. They were mighty poor risks and usually came to sudden and violent ends very shortly after they took to their profession.

It was not an occupation in which men lived to gray old age and retired to pass their declining years in peace, and very few of the freebooters lived to see their fiftieth birthdays. Morgan, whose career was unusually long, came into the limelight, performed all his most noteworthy exploits and passed into oblivion within five years.

Blackbeard rose from an ordinary sailor to the pinnacle of his trade and lost his life in two years. Esquemeling, although he was wise enough to retire while the retiring was good, was a pirate for six years only, and countless others of the gentry passed out of existence within a few months from the time they first raised the black flag or went a-buccaneering.

And those who followed in the wake of the buccaneers—the true pirates of the Caribbean, the South

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Seas and the coast—led even shorter lives than their predecessors.

Their piracies seldom lasted more than a few months and Fly beat all records with but one month from the time he turned pirate until he was captured.

But of them all perhaps the most meteoric pirate was one Richard Worley, who, for the space of six weeks, carried more terror to the hearts of residents along our coasts and caused more worries to ship-masters than many a corsair who ravaged the seas for years.

Moreover, Worley was notable for the rapidity of his rise in the profession. Fly, by murder and mutiny, secured a large and fully equipped ship. Lewis and others, although they started with small boats, took other vessels, climbing up the rounds of the piratical ladder by constantly acquiring larger and larger vessels, until they were in a position to accomplish affairs of importance, but Worley leaped at one bound from nothing to a full-fledged pirate.

Possibly he had read accounts of the bold assaults of the old buccaneers and decided to emulate them in their methods, or he may have realized that piracy was a get-rich-quick scheme and that the quicker he was, the richer he would get.

There is no doubt that Richard was a far braver and more adventurous character than most pirates of his time. No craven would have attempted what he did and when he was obliged to fight he fought as courageously as any old buccaneer.

Worley made his first public appearance off the

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Jersey coast in an open boat with eight men. Of course no fishing craft or trading vessel paid any heed to a little yawl bobbing on the waves off the sandy shores of New Jersey, and as a result Worley had little difficulty in boarding and capturing them. But Richard was ambitious and had no idea of contenting himself with robbing coasting sloops and smacks.

Reaching Delaware Bay he and his men pulled leisurely along and in true buccaneer style boarded and captured a large vessel lying at anchor whose crew never dreamed that pirates were within a thousand miles of the port.

Excitement reached fever heat when news of this daring outrage was brought to Philadelphia, and so exaggerated did the account of the deed become, as it passed from mouth to mouth, that very soon Worley with his open boat and eight companions had grown in imagination to a twenty-gun ship filled to overflowing with heavily armed cutthroats.

Rapidly the news spread and couriers were sent to New York, Boston, Norfolk, and other ports, warning shipping to keep in port and notifying the authorities that a desperate and bold pirate was cruising with his ship full of desperadoes off the coast.

Indeed, the effect of Worley's exploit was very much the same as would be produced to-day if a great ocean liner were to be held up and robbed by pirates in midocean or if a gang of wild west desperadoes should suddenly dash through New York streets and loot the Subtreasury.

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The people ashore decided something must be done and New York took the lead and fitted out an armed flotilla to go in search of the daring pirates and their "ship." But they were not looking for a rowboat with nine occupants, and even if they had been, it would have been a hard task to find it. The tiny boat could be run ashore at any spot, it could dodge into creeks or rivers, and it never ventured far from shore, so that the flotilla of pirate hunters, after cruising for several days without success, returned to port.

Worley, in the meantime, had kept merrily on, acquiring prizes and amassing wealth. He had taken several vessels, but none appealed to him as being preferable to his shallop, until he took a large sloop which exactly suited him. Then, with his faithful rowboat in tow and his eight companions as crew, Richard began to enlarge his sphere of activities with his new pirate ship.

For three weeks he had everything his own way along the Jersey coast and up and down Chesapeake and Delaware Bays. He named his new vessel the *New York's Revenge*, proving that he possessed a keen sense of humor, and flitted like a will-o'-the-wisp from place to place until the distracted inhabitants of the ports felt absolutely dizzy.

One day he would be reported off Sandy Hook, next he would seize a vessel in the Delaware and before the public were over its amazement at this he would attack a vessel in Hampton Roads and a few days later take a prize off Fire Island.

Nothing was too small or too large for Worley.

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All was fish that came to his net and he would board and loot a brig as readily and as successfully as a dory.

And ashore the denizens of New York, Philadelphia, and Norfolk were literally shaking in their boots. They had known the heavy hand of pirates before, for in those days the sea robbers were not uncommon, but here was a pirate who brought the old tales of the buccaneers most vividly to their minds. Many people were still living who remembered Morgan's sack of Panama and Porto Bello and they began to fear that in Worley they had a second Morgan. If a rowboat and nine men could grow to an armed ship in less than a month it was not beyond the bounds of probability that said ship might grow to a fleet within the next three weeks, and the good folk of the Quaker City earnestly besought their governor to act and act quickly.

His Excellency realized the necessity of taking strenuous measures as much as did the merchants and the shipowners, and knowing a British man-of-war was lying in New York harbor, he sent post-haste to the officers, begging them to come to the Delaware and wipe Worley from the seas.

But the *Phœnix*, as the corvette was named, was as unsuccessful as the New York expedition which had sought Worley previously. Richard was not in the Delaware, but in the *New York's Revenge* had sailed southward, seeking new fields for his harvesting.

Hitherto he had not disturbed the Carolina coast, that being the stamping ground for other corsairs,

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and, since the demise of Blackbeard and capture of Bonnet, a locality where pirates were far from welcome.

Despite the fact that the Carolinians had made short work of Teach and the Major they were not at ease. They greatly feared that the fellow corsairs of those famous leaders might take it into their heads to revenge the spectacular Blackbeard or to attempt to rescue Bonnet, who was still in jail awaiting trial, and that the freebooters might appear in force off Charleston or Bath and wreak dire vengeance.

And for such a calamity they were not at all prepared. Mr. Rhett had worsted Bonnet and Maynard had done for Teach, but neither the brave lieutenant nor the worthy merchant felt able to cope with a pirate fleet, and so the governor of South Carolina sent word to England urgently requesting a warship be sent to guard his coast from freebooters.

Then, long before the British man-of-war arrived, indeed, before the governor's message could have reached England, word came that a notorious pirate named Moody with two ships was cruising off Charleston and playing havoc with the shipping.

Here, very evidently, was the beginning of the long feared and expected pirate fleet. No doubt, thought the people, Moody was merely waiting for reinforcements before attacking the town, and the Carolinians decided at once that before other corsairs could arrive they must take the bull by the horns and go after Moody.

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Accordingly, four ships were hastily armed and equipped and then the question arose as to who was to take command. Mr. Rhett flatly refused, having had a dissension with the governor, and as there were no naval officers or sea captains available it began to look as if the expedition might remain at anchor indefinitely.

But Governor Johnson was not to be so easily deterred. He vowed that if Mr. Rhett could carry on a battle with pirates and be victorious, he could do as well, and accordingly he announced that he was the self-appointed commander and the fleet set forth. The flotilla consisted of Bonnet's old ship, the *Royal James*, the *Sea Nymph* which had taken part in the strange engagement when Bonnet was captured, the *King William*, and the *Mediterranean*.

Feeling that the pirates with only two vessels, one a sloop and the other a ship, might be frightened off if they saw four armed vessels approaching, Governor Johnson had his craft disguised as merchantmen. The cannon, loaded and primed, were covered with tarpaulins, the greater part of the crews were kept below decks and there was no sign that the four vessels were other than defenseless coasting craft.

Soon they caught sight of the pirates, anchored off Sullivan's Island, and the corsairs, evidently sighting the oncoming vessels at the same time, hove up anchors and headed for them. Here were four easy prizes coming directly into their clutches, and breaking out the black flags, the pirates ran for the Carolinians expecting an easy victory.

In a few moments they were within hail and the

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captain of the leading pirate craft sprang upon the rail of his vessel and yelled through a speaking trumpet for the nearest ship, the *King William*, to surrender. The answer he received was as disconcerting as it was unexpected. The tarpaulins were jerked from the cannon, armed men swarmed up from below, and the sixty-eight guns of the four vessels poured a terrific broadside at the pirates.

The pirates were in a bad fix. The *Royal James* and the *Sea Nymph* had slipped in between the corsairs' ship and the harbor mouth, cutting off the freebooters' retreat, and all four of the governor's vessels were firing as fast as the cannons could be loaded and run out.

But Moody was no coward. Once his first amazement was over he turned loose with every gun and musket aboard and the battle was on. So close together were the ships that at times their yardarms touched and interlocked and pistols and muskets did as much if not more execution than the cannon.

For four hours the battle raged, and the smoke from powder often hid the contending ships from one another. Spars and masts fell crashing to the decks; sails were cut to ribbons; round shot plunged through hulls and cut through knots of half-naked, smoke-grimed men. And, lining the docks and waterfront of Charleston, the people anxiously watched the battle between their townsmen and the pirates.

But desperately as the corsairs fought, four ships presented odds they could not overcome, and as the *Sea Nymph* and the *Royal James* maneuvered into

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position where they could rake the pirate's decks, her crew abandoned their cannon and scuttled below. They had not given up the fight, however. When the two Charleston vessels ran alongside and boarded her, their crews were met by the freebooters armed with pistols and cutlasses and a desperate hand-to-hand combat continued until the last corsair was cut down.

Then, as the black flag was hauled down and, escorted by the *Sea Nymph* and the *Royal James*, the battered, shot-riddled hulk was worked slowly up the harbor, a mighty cheer arose from the throats of the assembled throng. Once more with a landsman in command, their ships had beaten and captured a dread pirate and they had good reason to be proud.

Meanwhile the other pirate vessel had made away and was standing out to sea. But Governor Johnson meant to make his victory complete and ordered the *Mediterranean* and the *King William* after her.

Desperately the pirates strove to outdistance their pursuers. They recklessly tossed cannon and ammunition into the sea, even sacrificing their boats to lighten their ship, but to no avail. The Carolinian vessels were far speedier craft than the pirates' ship and when the *King William* fired a few shots across the enemy's decks the pirates, without cannon to return the fire, hauled down their flag and surrendered.

And when the governor boarded his prize he found to his surprise that she was not a pirate ship at all, but a vessel loaded with convicts being

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brought from England to serve their time on the Carolina plantations and who, having been taken by the pirates, had willingly agreed to mutiny, seize the ship's officers, and turn pirates themselves. Then His Excellency had another surprise. As he went over the captured vessel he entered her hold and there found thirty-six terrified, frightened women, also convicted criminals, who had been locked under hatches to keep them out of the way during the battle.

But still greater surprises were in store for His Excellency. Indeed, it was a day of surprises. He had gone out to fight Moody and was very much in the position of a man who, shooting at a fox, brings down a tiger, for instead of getting Moody he had bagged no less a man than Worley.

Never in the history of Charleston had there been such a celebration as that which followed the discovery that Worley had fallen to the gallant Governor Johnson, and we can well forgive His Excellency if he strutted a bit and puffed out his chest at having unsuspectingly put an end to this meteoric pirate's career.

CHAPTER XIX

PIRATES IN PETTICOATS

(1718—1720)

FROM earliest times there have been instances of women taking the part of men and doing men's work as well, if not better, than men themselves. There have been women soldiers, women bandits, women sailors, and even one woman whaler, but one would scarcely expect to find women pirates.

Nevertheless there were two women who were most famous and successful pirates during the early years of the eighteenth century, whose exploits and careers again prove Kipling's contention that "the female of the species is more deadly than the male."

These two women, Mary Reed and Anne Bonny, were veritable amazons of the sea and could handle cutlass and pistols, could swear and blaspheme, and could board a prize or make a prisoner walk the plank with the best of the freebooters.

As the two were fast friends and as their careers were coincident and closely interlocked it is necessary to treat of both together, although their origins and early lives were very different.

Mary Reed, the most famous of the two in many ways, was the daughter of an English sea captain

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whose wife usually accompanied him on his voyages. There were two children, Mary, the eldest, and a boy, and when the latter died the captain's wife—who had expected a legacy would be left him from her mother-in-law—decided that the only thing to be done was to transform Mary into a boy.

So, when the ship again touched at England, the skipper's family consisted of himself, his sea-going wife, and a curly-headed boy—as far as outward appearances went. And even when the old lady died with never a ha'penny in the way of a legacy, Mary, having grown accustomed to boys' clothes, and finding such garments far more suited to life aboard ship, remained a youth, even going out to service in an inn as a "Buttons" where no one suspected her sex. Mary, however, had been born and brought up on the bounding wave and longed for the wide blue sea, and as life on shore was very humdrum and monotonous, she shook the dust of the inn from her feet and enlisted as a powder monkey on a man-of-war.

But life aboard a man-of-war and life aboard her father's ship she soon found were very different and tired of being ordered about by pompous naval officers and acting as servant of all on board, Mary once more changed her mode of life, and making her way to Flanders, decided to try soldiering for a time.

According to the most trustworthy accounts, Mary made as good a soldier as she had a sailor or a man-of-war's man, and took part in several battles where she displayed great bravery and excellent fighting ability.

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Although Mary gloried in the roar of musketry and the smell of powder smoke she was averse to long marches and managed to have herself transferred to a cavalry regiment. This suited her immensely and she became a splendid horseman—or rather horsewoman—was an adept with sword or pistols and might have made a name for herself as a trooper had she not lost her heart to a handsome young comrade in arms.

Revealing her true identity and her affection, Mary quit the army, married the object of her love—who also resigned from the service—and together they opened a little tavern or roadhouse which they named *The Three Horseshoes*.

As far as known they were quite happy and contented and got along very well, but Fate seemed bent on making a man out of Mary and when her husband died she again donned male attire and shipped on a vessel bound for the West Indies.

No doubt she had wished merely to go to some new land where she would be free from old associations and might forget her bereavement, so took the part of a sailor in order to save the cost of her passage. But as it fell out, this voyage marked the turning point in Mary's life and resulted in her becoming famous and leaving a name for herself in history, whereas, had she remained in *The Three Horseshoes* she probably would have lived, died, and been completely forgotten as befitted an obscure innkeeper.

Before the ship with Mary on board reached the Antilles, it was attacked and taken by British pirates, and as Mary seemed a strong and likely lad,

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the corsair chief suggested that she should join his company. Mary, who loved excitement and variety in life, foresaw that her longings would be satisfied among the pirates and promptly signed herself on as a member of the freebooters' crew.

And she made an excellent pirate. Even her leather-faced and bewhiskered comrades looked upon her with envy and admiration, though at first they had teased and twiggged her over her fair skin and effeminate features. But the supposed "boy" soon put them in their places and after she had lopped off the three fingers of one hoary old cut-throat with her cutlass and had punctured the lung of another with a pistol bullet in fair duels, Mary was left in peace, and was acknowledged as an equal.

Eventually the company disbanded in the Bahamas and Mary, now a thorough convert to the black flag, shipped again on a privateer which promptly turned pirate, as was very common in those days.

But once again Mary proved only a woman with a romantic soul and a tender heart, though she was a swashbuckling pirate with pistols and cutlass in her belt and murder on her soul. One of the prisoners she took was a young and prepossessing English sailor and once more Mary fell desperately in love.

Evidently her passion was returned in full measure, for he not only married her at the first opportunity, but even became a pirate himself for her sake.

Mary, however, was terribly afraid that her new partner in life would come to some harm. She had

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no fears for herself, for she was a sailor and a pirate of experience and felt abundantly able to look after herself. But her husband was an amateur, a quiet, good-hearted chap who wouldn't have harmed a fly if his wife had not been a pirate, and Mary watched over and guarded him as if he were a child.

Like many another man, however, Mary's husband possessed plenty of courage when aroused, despite his peaceful and pleasant ways, and when one of the pirates, having noticed how Mary watched over her spouse and protected him, called him a milksop, Mary's husband instantly challenged the fellow to a duel to the death.

This did not suit Mary in the least. She had no doubts as to her husband's bravery, but she well knew that he was no expert in the use of deadly weapons, whereas the other pirate was an accomplished swordsman and a skilled shot. So, despite her husband's pleas, Mary locked him in her cabin, donned his clothes and thus disguised hastened to the appointed meeting place.

Quite unsuspecting that his antagonist was a woman, the pirate expected an easy victory, and grinning and jesting, slashed away. In a few moments, however, his grin changed to a frown, his jeers to curses, and a troubled look spread over his savage face. Somehow or other his opponent had developed sudden and remarkable skill and before his stupid brain could solve the mystery he was lying a lifeless, bloody heap upon the sand of the little cay where the duel had been fought.

It was at about this time that Mary met Anne

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Bonny and a great friendship sprang up between the two, which endured to the ends of their short careers.

Anne was Irish, the daughter of a lawyer of good family who had settled in Carolina and had become a planter. Her mother died when she was a small child and, with no girl friends, Anne grew up among men and boys and had the greatest contempt for womanly weaknesses. She was also a most fiery-tempered miss, and on one occasion, when still a young girl, she stabbed a serving woman with a carving knife while in a fit of anger brought on by an impertinent remark made by the unfortunate servant.

A few years later she fell in love with an impecunious sailor, and her father, with an Irish temper equal to his daughter's, promptly turned Anne out of doors when he learned of her marriage to the mariner.

This, however, did not trouble her in the least. She told her father what she thought of him, went aboard her husband's ship, and sailed to New Providence. At that time the Bahamas were a nest of pirates, and at the spot where Nassau now stands was a rude settlement composed almost entirely of the sea rovers. They had everything their own way, acknowledged no rulers or laws and jocularly called an old derelict of a pirate who had the best hut "Governor Sawney."

The forts, which had been erected by the British, were in bad repair and the guns had been dismounted and stolen by the pirates; the place



MARY REED FIGHTS A DUEL FOR HER HUSBAND



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swarmed with the roughest, toughest men of every nationality and in the harbor were scores of vessels flying the Jolly Roger.

To this pirates' stronghold came Anne and her sailor husband, and the quick-tempered and high-spirited Irish girl was at once in her element. Here life moved swiftly, brawls and quarrels were of everyday occurrence, every man was a law unto himself, and the air was full of excitement. Everywhere bronze-faced, bewhiskered, swaggering pirates thronged the waterfront and crooked, ill-kept streets.

Strange wares, rare spices, rich silks, and golden trinkets were bartered and traded and haggled over in the market and in the drinking places. Life was as cheap as liquor, slaves could be bought for a song and money flowed freely, as the corsairs reveled and drank and caroused.

It was all very picturesque, very thrilling, very novel, and Anne, being young and impressionable, was dazzled, fascinated, almost hypnotized.

As she wandered about, she saw many striking and famous pirate chiefs. Blackbeard with his gigantic frame, his bull neck, and his braided whiskers; Bonnet with his carefully tailored clothes and trim iron-gray Vandyke; Bellamy and Lewis; Vane and Augur; Cunningham and Dowling; McCarthy and Lithgow; Bendall and Ling, with hosts of lesser lights in the ranks of piracy.

And then, one day, she met a newcomer. A picturesque figure, a burly, athletic, broad-shouldered young freebooter clad in shirt, jacket, and baggy trousers of gaudy calico.

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Perchance he smiled at Anne, perhaps she made the first advances, but certain it is that at the first sight of Captain John Rackham, more commonly known as "Calico Jack," Anne lost her heart completely, and fell madly, head over heels, in love with the gayly clad, dashing young pirate.

After that first meeting the honest sailorman husband was in the discard. Anne wondered how she had ever seen anything in him, and having become very friendly with Calico Jack, she callously deserted her legitimate spouse, and boarding Rackham's vessel, sailed away from New Providence with her new sweetheart in the calico garments.

So thoroughly impressed with the pirate's life was Anne that she donned man's clothing, buckled a cutlass about her waist, and sticking pistols through her sash, became a thorough pirate herself.

On her plantation home in the Carolinas Anne had become proficient in the use of firearms and Jack soon taught her how to wield a cutlass as well as any of his crew. And it was while cruising about on Calico Jack's ship that Anne met Mary Reed and her pirate husband.

The two captains were chatting, the two women having a heart-to-heart talk, for Mary and her spouse had come aboard Rackham's ship for a visit, when, to the consternation of the pirates, a man-of-war hove in sight.

There was no chance to escape, there was nothing to do but fight and trust to luck, and luck that day was against the pirates. For a time the battle raged furiously, Mary and Anne fighting side by side upon

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the pirate ship's deck and slashing and shooting as savagely as the rest. But as the heavier armament of the corvette began to tell and men were cut down and mangled by grape and chain shot, the pirates, and even the dashing Jack himself, scurried for shelter to the hold, leaving the two women alone upon the deck to face the enemy.

This was more than the two amazons could stand. Their pirate husbands had shown the white feather, and despite their cries and their endeavors to rally the men, and their entreaties to their husbands to come on deck and prove their bravery, the freebooters refused to budge from their refuge.

Then, thoroughly disgusted and beside themselves with rage, the two women rushed to the open hatch and commenced firing their pistols into the huddled men below, killing one of the pirates and wounding several.

But two women, no matter how brave they might be or how proficient in the use of weapons, could not hope to hold off a boarding party of man-of-war's men and presently Anne and Mary, with their pirate husbands and the crew, were prisoners.

The pirates were taken to England, where the impetuous Anne, with Mary Reed, Calico Jack, and all the others, were duly tried and condemned to death. Mary, however, was taken ill with fever and died before the date set for her execution and Anne, for some unknown reason, was reprieved at the last moment and finally pardoned.

But she had had enough of pirates and of Calico Jack in particular. He had failed utterly to come

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up to her expectations of what a pirate should be and she hadn't the least pity for him.

Nevertheless, being a woman, she was determined to have the last word and requested the authorities to be allowed to visit the condemned man.

Glaring at him contemptuously, as he sat in his cell heavily chained, she remarked that if he had possessed the courage to fight like a man—or even like a woman—he would not then be waiting to be hanged like a dog, and with this bit of cold comfort turned on her heel and walked away.

From that moment Anne passes from history. No one seems to know what became of her. Whether she again donned a man's clothes and died like a man; whether she had had enough of the sea and settled down ashore, or whether she found still another lover who fulfilled all her expectations, and lived happily ever after, are all matters of conjecture and the reader may take his choice.

CHAPTER XX

THE BARBARY CORSAIRS

(1798—1805)

ALTHOUGH England, France, and the other European nations had declared the buccaneers pirates upon the conclusion of the wars with Spain, and, after the breaking up of the brethren, had taken and hanged pirates wherever found, they had made little impression upon the freebooters.

No concerted or extensive actions had been taken by the various governments, and, as a result, piracy flourished all over the world and very few, comparatively, were brought to justice or were destroyed.

It was, so to speak, a question of "let George do it," each nation relying on the others to make the seas safe for honest seamen, and nine times out of ten, if a man-of-war sighted pirates the latter easily slipped away in their swifter, lighter ships and snapped their fingers at the authorities.

Large rewards were offered for the capture of certain notorious pirates and these were usually earned, if won at all, by private citizens, as in the case of Mr. Rhett and Lieutenant Maynard. A few expeditions were also fitted out to go pirate hunting

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—such as Belmont's when Kidd was given his commission — but killing a particular pirate here and there, or capturing a few pirate vessels, made little impression upon the sea robbers.

In the Indian Ocean and the South Seas they plied their trade openly and profitably; they sailed up and down the Atlantic coast and did about as they pleased, and they swarmed in the Caribbean.

One reason why they were not wiped out was because of the constant quarrels and wars between the European powers. England, France, and Holland, as well as Spain, were too busy flying at one another's throats to spare men and ships to go after pirates, while the West Indian islands and the East Indies, constantly changing owners, afforded the corsairs safe retreats. The Dutch and Danes, the French and even the British, winked at pirates frequenting their Caribbean ports as long as the rascals preyed upon the ships of enemy nations and brought trade and money to the islands, and the Danes and Dutch, with their neutral ports, openly welcomed the freebooters and looked upon them as good customers.

Moreover, all the powers were in the habit of granting privateers' commissions to almost any one when at war, and from privateering to piracy was an easy step. Once a man with a fleet ship and a few guns had taken legitimate prizes as a privateer, it was hard to control him when a war was over and his lucrative profession was brought to an end.

He could see no valid reason why, merely because the kings of two countries had settled their difficul-

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ties, he should give up an easy living and so he continued to seize ships and loot cargoes.

So strong had the pirates become by the early part of the eighteenth century that the established regular colonies or settlements in the East and West Indies, especially in Madagascar and the Bahamas, defied the world.

New Providence was a notorious pirates' rendezvous; as already mentioned, the Virgin Islands teemed with them; and the Caymans and the Bay Islands off Honduras were well known as pirate lairs.

So powerful and bold had the pirates become that, in 1717, King George of England decided that the only cure was to make the pirates allies, rather than enemies, of the crown and accordingly he issued a proclamation offering free pardon to all pirates—excepting only a few of the more notorious leaders—who voluntarily surrendered and took the oath of allegiance within a certain time.

Many of the Madagascar pirates took advantage of this and when, on the 20th of July, 1718, Mr. Woodes Rogers, the newly appointed governor and vice admiral of the Bahama Islands, arrived at New Providence with copies of the proclamation and blank pardons in his pockets, he found nearly one thousand pirates gathered at the island to welcome him and to surrender.

As he landed, and with his aides and soldiers, marched up from the beach the pirates formed a double column and discharged their muskets in a deafening volley over his head.

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A few of the corsairs, rather doubtful as to the sincerity of the king in granting pardons, sailed away and continued their depredations, but the majority remained, surrendered their vessels and arms, and being duly pardoned, fell manfully to work to erect houses and establish the town of Nassau.

Later, when war between Spain and England again broke out—and still later when England's North American colonies declared their independence—many of the ex-pirates again took to privateering or fought on British and American men-of-war and were of the greatest value to the causes of both nations.

But the bulk of the pirates were a thing of the past and while pirates still existed in the West Indies and elsewhere they were not particularly troublesome in American waters.

With the close of the Revolution, however, the United States found themselves confronted with a class of pirates who were a most serious problem. For many years the Barbary corsairs had practically controlled shipping in the Mediterranean. They seized vessels and their crews as they pleased, towed their prizes into port and made slaves of their prisoners and were so powerful and dangerous that the European nations paid the Bashaw a regular annual tribute in order to prevent their ships from being attacked and seized.

Even the Americans did this for a time, but paying tribute to a ruffianly gang of Mohammedan cut-throats and pirates was not at all to the liking of the

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liberty-loving inhabitants of the United States, especially as they had just shown the world that their navy was mistress of the seas and had beaten the most powerful British warships in fair battle.

The trouble came to a head when, in 1785, two American vessels were seized by these corsairs and twenty-one American citizens were thrown into slavery. They were ransomed upon the payment of nearly sixty thousand dollars and the famous slogan: "Millions for defense but not one cent for tribute" became the watchword of the newborn republic.

Yet, on January 20, 1798, the frigate *Crescent* cleared from Portsmouth for Algiers, bearing over a quarter of a million dollars' worth of presents for the Dey as compensation for delay in fulfilling treaty obligations and with the ship herself to be presented to that ruler for good measure.

This created a great deal of resentment on the part of the public and called forth scathing and sarcastic editorials in the newspapers while it resulted merely in making the pirate chiefs more insolent than ever.

Piracy, it must be remembered, was a state or government institution of the Barbary States and soon after the *Crescent* and her rich cargo were presented to the Dey, the Bashaw of Tripoli demanded equal gifts, and these not being forthcoming he declared war on the United States.

Following this, the Bey of Tunis demanded that forty cannon and ten thousand small arms be sent him immediately, adding that peace depended upon compliance. And when, in May, 1800, the *George*

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Washington conveyed the annual tribute to the Dey of Algiers he ordered that the frigate be placed at his disposal to carry ambassadors and presents to the Sultan of Turkey, threatening to blow the ship out of water if his demands were refused.

Realizing that the Dey could easily carry out his threat, and under advice of the American consul, Captain Bainbridge finally assented. Some idea of the insolent and overbearing attitude of the Dey and his fellows may be gained from his speech on this occasion when he told Captain Bainbridge, "You pay me tribute by which you become my slaves and I have a right to order you about as I think proper."

It is amazing to us now to think of our country being reduced to a mere servitor of a half-civilized pirate chief, but the government was poorly equipped for battle, having but fifteen war vessels afloat, and with only nine captains, thirty-six lieutenants, and one hundred and fifty midshipmen in the way of officers. And so, despite the public demand that the nation should defy the corsairs, not until May, 1801, was any action taken, even though the Tripolitan states had warned our government that war would be declared.

The first action took place between the *Enterprise* and the *Tripoli* in which not a life was lost on the American vessel, while the corsairs lost twenty killed and twenty-eight wounded.

Several minor engagements followed, but it was not until May, 1803, that the Americans took the offensive, assembled their vessels off Tripoli, and on the 10th of June, prepared to bombard the town.

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For several months a sort of guerrilla marine warfare was carried on, the Americans sinking and capturing a number of the enemy's ships. The American vessels were, however, greatly handicapped in their operations. The shoal water prevented their approaching close to shore and much of their work was done in armed small boats. On the 31st of October, the *Philadelphia*, while in chase of a Tripolitan vessel, ran on to a reef within a few miles of Tripoli and was at once attacked by a horde of the natives. As resistance was hopeless the magazine was flooded and the ship surrendered and the three hundred and fifteen Americans on board were taken prisoners and carried to the city with great rejoicing.

Two days later, the *Philadelphia* was floated and towed close in shore where she was refitted by the Tripolitans with the intention of using her against the Americans. In the meantime, Captain Bainbridge managed to get into communication, by secret letters written in lemon juice, with Captain Preble and declared he believed it would be possible to destroy the *Philadelphia* at her anchorage.

"Charter a small merchant schooner," he wrote, "fill her with men and let her enter the harbor at night with her men hidden below deck. Steer her directly on the frigate and let the men board, sword in hand, and there is no doubt of their success. The frigate in her present condition is a powerful auxiliary battery for the defense of the harbor and though it will be impossible to remove her and restore her to our navy, yet as she may, and no doubt will, be

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repaired, an important end will be gained by her destruction.”

Captain Preble, however, had no vessel which would serve for the purpose, but when, on the 23d of December, Lieutenant Decatur in the *Enterprise* captured a Tripolitan ketch, Preble decided she was just what he needed and told Decatur of his plans.

The Lieutenant immediately volunteered to take command and selected sixty-two men to accompany him on his desperate undertaking.

On February 4, 1804, Decatur and his brave crew in the captured *Mastico* left Syracuse for Tripoli and reached the port at night. There was a gale raging, however, and the small boats in which parties were sent to reconnoiter were smashed to bits and their occupants barely escaped with their lives.

There was nothing to be done but go to sea and heave to and for six days the little ketch, of thirty-five tons burden, pitched and tossed and was in imminent danger of foundering. By the 15th of the month the weather had moderated and under cover of darkness Decatur stole into the harbor, orders were given not to use a firearm of any sort except in case of the utmost emergency, and cautiously the Americans approached the *Philadelphia*.

When challenged by the sentry, they replied that they had just arrived from Malta and had lost their anchors in the storm and asked permission to make fast to the frigate's chains. As soon as the ketch was secured alongside the Americans boarded with a rush, cutlasses and boarding pikes in hands, and so surprising the corsairs by their sudden onslaught

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that all the Tripolitans on deck leaped into the sea in a mad rush to gain the shore by swimming.

So completely had the Americans surprised the enemy that scarcely any resistance was offered and in ten minutes from the time the ship was boarded she was in Decatur's hands.

Then, rapidly passing up the combustibles from the ketch, and placing them throughout the hulk, the Americans touched them off and in a moment the *Philadelphia* was a roaring furnace, the men having barely time to escape and pull away from the blazing frigate.

But the gallant Americans were not out of danger by any means. The light of the burning vessel illuminated the harbor and in the glare the ketch was plainly visible. Instantly the guns on the forts and vessels opened fire and through a hail of shot and shell the little craft made her way out of the harbor, only one shot taking effect and that merely ripping through her sails.

In this gallant engagement only one American was wounded while the loss to the Tripolitans was never known. About twenty were killed aboard the frigate in the fight between decks, many were drowned trying to escape and a large number, believed to have hidden themselves in the hold, were blown up with the ship.

This was a terrific blow to the Tripolitans, but a greater was to follow. Cruising along the coast, the American fleet destroyed countless small craft and a number of gunboats, blockaded the ports, and on August 3, 1804, sailed close in shore and commenced

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to bombard Tripoli and the armed vessels in the harbor.

The first day's battle was wholly satisfactory to the Americans. Several gunboats of the enemy were sunk, others were taken prizes by boarding and the bombardment had caused great damages to the forts and town.

On the 7th of August, the second attack was made and, although it inflicted heavy losses on the enemy, it resulted in the deaths of twenty-two Americans and the wounding of six others, nearly all of whom were in the smaller gunboats and were shelled by the shore batteries.

The third attack was not made until August 25, but this was of little effect, the ships being compelled to withdraw owing to lack of wind before they had inflicted any serious damage.

By this time, however, the Bashaw began to realize that the Americans were in earnest and he offered to release the prisoners he had taken for a ransom of five hundred dollars each, which was half the amount he had demanded a few days previously.

This offer was refused by Captain Preble and on the 28th the fleet again shelled town and shipping, the *Constitution* running in to within musket shot of the mole where she lay nearly an hour, pouring a terrific fire of round shot, grape and cannister into the town. This attack was far more effective than any of those preceding and was the beginning of the end.

A few days later, the ketch, which had served Decatur so well, was filled with explosives and

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converted into a gigantic mine, and in command of Commandant Richard Somers with ten men started on a most hazardous trip—an attempt to navigate her into the harbor and to explode her in the midst of the enemy's shipping.

Before leaving, every man aboard bade good-by to his friends, disposed of his personal belongings, and prepared to die.

As she disappeared in the darkness and haze, every eye upon the fleet was strained at the spot where she had been last seen and expectantly, with bated breaths, those upon the ships waited to hear the detonation of the explosion that would spell the doom of many a corsair and corsair craft and would unquestionably wipe out a number, if not all, of their brave shipmates.

At last the roar of cannon broke the silence of the night. The shore batteries had sighted the ketch and were raining shot and shell at her and then—a sheet of flame stabbed through the darkness, burning, blazing brands were hurled to the zenith and, as they fell, a terrific explosion boomed over the waters. Even the batteries were hushed, a silence as of death hung over the sea and land and the men upon the ships stood silent, white-faced, mute with horror. Throughout the long night they watched, pacing the decks, speaking in hushed, awed tones, straining their eyes across the silent sea for traces of their missing comrades.

Dawn broke at last. Upon a reef of jagged rocks a splintered mast rested; scattered on the placid surface of the harbor were bits of wreckage and

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mangled bodies. Three of the enemy's gunboats were shattered hulks and three more had disappeared; but no signs of Somers or his men were seen. Every man upon the ketch had gone to his death and the few mangled and burned bodies that were found later were unrecognizable. No braver deed was ever performed by any men and their names will live forever in the annals of our navy as heroes.

Soon after this most gallant and daring deed, internal strife began in the Barbary states. Jealousies and ill feeling between the rulers caused revolutions and when the American vessels, now grown to an impressive and powerful fleet, appeared off Tunis and Captain Rodgers informed the Bey he would give him just thirty-six hours in which to sign the peace he proposed, the Bey capitulated. The war was over, the Barbary corsairs were a thing of the past and the grand old frigates sailed triumphantly from the Mediterranean.

CHAPTER XXI

THE PIRATE WHO WAS NOT A PIRATE

(1809—1823)

SHORTLY after the corsairs of the Barbary coast had been brought to their senses and a proper respect for the rights of others—in the spring of 1809 to be exact—two young Frenchmen stepped ashore at New Orleans.

Their names were Jean and Pierre Lafitte, blacksmiths by profession, but unusually intelligent, well-bred and educated men for members of their trade. Jean, who was the younger of the two, was a fair-skinned youth with black hair and eyes, with a merry smile constantly on his clean-shaven face and was an accomplished linguist, speaking half a dozen tongues with equal fluency. His brother, Pierre, was much like him in personal appearance, though less amiable in manner and not so accomplished.

Both dressed well, and were well liked, and after looking about a bit they opened a smithy on Bourbon Street which they worked with a number of slaves, seldom soiling their own shapely hands by manual labor.

As blacksmiths, the Lafittes apparently did a very good and lucrative business, for they were invariably attired in fashionable clothes and were well supplied

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with funds; but, judging from events that followed, it is not at all unlikely that a considerable part of their income was derived from smuggling, for at that time New Orleans was a noted spot for the contrabandistas.

Indeed, smuggling had long been an acknowledged and almost open part of Louisiana's commerce. In the old French and Spanish colonial days it thrived and flourished and when the United States acquired the territory smuggling had become so firmly established as a profitable business in Louisiana that the people continued at their old game in defiance of government and laws.

In addition to the ordinary smuggling, there was also a good trade carried on between the inhabitants and privateersmen and pirates, who brought in their stolen and seized cargoes and disposed of them to the natives, who in turn smuggled the goods in and sold them at a fine profit.

So large had this industry become that a regular center or headquarters had been established on the island of Grande Terre, a sandy strip of land six miles long and three miles in width, which forms the outer boundary of Barataria Bay.

Here the Baratarians, as they were called, had a number of buildings and warehouses, and being practically immune from interference on the part of the authorities, they actually controlled the Gulf Coast between the Mississippi and Bayou La Fourche, a stretch of fully fifty miles.

In a way the Baratarians were a bit like the old buccaneers in Tortuga. Public sentiment was with

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them, they were too numerous and too powerful to be easily dislodged, and while they were not out-and-out pirates, many of them were privateers. Pirates from the Caribbean and the Bay Islands were frequent visitors to Grande Terre where they were welcomed and traded freely with the Baratarians.

But like the buccaneers in their early days, these Louisiana smugglers lacked organization and an efficient sales force. It was in this that the Lafittes, or more especially Jean the younger, saw an opportunity.

He was a good business man, he was welcomed to the best circles of New Orleans, and he had a wonderful personality. Very soon he was acting as banker and commercial agent for the Baratarians and under his advice and his direction the smugglers prospered and succeeded as never before.

Gradually he assumed more and more control, until, before long, he was the acknowledged leader, ruler, and head of the Baratarians. Before his advent the colony had been divided into several factions, each under its own leader and all acting independently. But Lafitte soon united these, formed a trust, as one might say, and took entire charge.

He did not accomplish this entirely by peaceful or business means. Jean was as good a fighter as he was a business man and he was as skilled with sword or pistol as with a smith's tongs or hammer, and when a burly ex-pirate named Grambo, who had considered himself boss of Barataria, questioned Jean's methods, the latter put an end to the argument with a pistol bullet.

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Very rapidly Jean and his brother rose to affluence and prominence. By 1813, four years after they had landed in America, the brothers had brought the smuggling fraternity to such a point that the legitimate commerce of New Orleans had appreciably diminished and the United States customs in Louisiana were scarcely more than a farce.

But if the harbor of New Orleans was almost deserted, the Bay of Barataria was alive with shipping. From all quarters of the world sailing craft put into the bay and discharged their cargoes on Grande Terre, whence they later found their way, duty free, into New Orleans and other Gulf ports.

There, on the low, sandy island, huge flimsy warehouses fairly bulged with merchandise. Hordes of half-naked slaves toiled ceaselessly, unloading bags, bales, bundles, and barrels; trundling countless packages up the beach; piling them high under hastily constructed shelters or stowing them in the holds of swift craft about to sail for other ports. About the landing places, picturesque crowds gathered—wide-trousered, bronzed sailors, rough-clad fishermen, fierce-visaged pirates, swaggering privateersmen, merchants from far and near, Baratarians chattering in their soft Creole dialect and swarthy, half-breed Mosquito Indians from the Honduras coast. Weekly, cargoes of slaves were landed, weak, emaciated, galled by chains and caked with filth after their terrible trip from the African coast, and from every state in the Union men flocked to Grande Terre to purchase the "black ivory" auctioned off upon the sandy strip of wave-washed land.

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Even the National Government began to be alarmed. If the Baratarians continued to increase their power and their organization at their present rate it was but a question of time when the smugglers under Lafitte would not only control Louisiana, but the entire Mississippi valley as well.

And so, underestimating the power of the smugglers, the government sent a revenue cutter to seize Grande Terre and break up the smugglers' nest. But the Baratarians' spies were everywhere. Those on the island knew perfectly well what was taking place and when the little vessel arrived they laughed at the revenue officers, invited them to have a drink of cognac or champagne, and sent them on their way with a warning not to return. No one ship, no one crew of customs officers, could cope with hundreds of desperate armed men and very soon rumor had it that the government's agents were in partnership with the smugglers.

Then the Governor of Louisiana tried his hand. He issued a proclamation denouncing the Baratarians as pirates, cautioning the residents of the state not to deal with them, and threatening dire penalties for all who disobeyed, as well as for any of the Baratarians who might fall into his clutches.

But the Governor's well-meant efforts were absurdly childish. To the secret joy of nine tenths of the people of New Orleans the Baratarians paid not the least heed to his threats and all his proclamation did was to brand the Lafittes and their friends as pirates—a misnomer, which curiously enough, has persisted until the present time and in the public

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mind Lafitte is still a pirate, though he never committed an act of piracy during his life in Louisiana.

So completely did the brothers defy the Governor that they strolled about the streets of New Orleans openly, dressed in the latest and most expensive garments, twirling gold-headed canes, decked in priceless jewels and chatting with prominent merchants and bankers on street corners and in crowded cafés.

Their names appeared everywhere as patrons of public entertainments and charities, they were invited to social functions, balls, and receptions and, to add insult to injury, the Baratarians posted notices of their slave auctions beside the Governor's proclamation.

Governor Claiborne was furious and desperate. He issued a second manifesto offering five hundred dollars reward for the arrest of either of the Lafittes and, as a result, an ambitious officer of the law while trying to earn the reward was shot through the lungs and killed on the street.

Next, the Governor appealed to the legislature, asking an appropriation for a force of armed men to be sent against the so-called "pirates." But many of the members of the legislature were in sympathy, if not more closely connected with the Baratarians, and promptly the legislature informed the Governor that there were no funds available.

Then His Excellency secured an indictment against the smugglers, an indictment for piracy against Jean and the Baratarians, and a warrant for the arrest of Pierre on the charge of being an accessory.

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A few days later Pierre was arrested in New Orleans and was placed in jail and Governor Claiborne felt he had at last accomplished something. But he did not realize the resources or power of his smuggler adversaries. Jean retained the two best lawyers in the state, Edward Livingston and John R. Grymes, and paid them \$20,000 each as a retaining fee. Grymes had been district attorney and resigned to defend Lafitte. When the trial commenced the new prosecuting attorney accused Grymes of having been bribed from the path of honor, whereupon the lawyer challenged the attorney to a duel and shot him through the hip, crippling him for life.

With such eminent lawyers, the acquittal of Pierre was a foregone conclusion and to celebrate the victory, the two lawyers were invited to Grande Terre. Livingston declined, but Grymes accepted and tales are still told of the princely entertainment accorded him by the smugglers and how he returned in a yawl boat laden to the gunwales with chests of gold and silver, and how, within a week, he had lost every penny at a gaming table.

Meanwhile war had been declared with England and in September, 1814, the British sloop of war *Sophia* appeared off Grande Terre and Captain Lockyer, her commander, came pulling in towards land in his cutter.

The British were invited ashore, were wined and dined, and over their after-dinner cigars, the Englishman informed Lafitte that an attack was planned on New Orleans and that he had come to ask the smugglers to aid the British forces. To make his

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offer more attractive, Lockyer handed Lafitte a letter from Colonel Nichols, commander of the British forces in the Gulf, which contained a promise of a high commission in the navy and thirty thousand dollars in cash, with amnesty to all the Baratarians, if Lafitte would join the British against the Americans. On the other hand, he was assured that, if he refused, the British fleet would attack Grande Terre, destroy the settlement, and hang every man taken as a pirate.

Lafitte, although a fine smuggler chief and a keen business man (not to mention his knowledge of the blacksmith's art), was no sailor. He had never been to sea but once in his life—when he came over the Atlantic from France—he had no desire to become a naval officer and the sum of thirty thousand dollars was a mere bagatelle to him. Moreover, he was ardently patriotic, even if he had violated United States laws and defied the authorities.

So, mentally he damned the English for trying to bribe him to betray his country, and diplomatically informed Lockyer that he would have to think the matter over and asked for ten days in which to consider it.

This was granted and no sooner had the naval officers returned to the *Sophia* than Lafitte despatched a messenger posthaste to the State Legislature with the letter from Colonel Nichols, complete information of what had taken place, and an offer from Lafitte placing his own and his friends' services at the disposal of the United States.

Governor Claiborne at once called a council of

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the army, navy, and militia officers and submitted Lafitte's documents to them. But instead of accepting Lafitte's offer and voting him thanks for giving them the first information of the proposed attack on New Orleans by the British, the pig-headed officers declared the papers forgeries, and instead of taking steps to defend the city, they decided to send an expedition against the Baratarians.

Under Commodore Patterson and Colonel Ross, the expedition started out and the smugglers, supposing the authorities had accepted their offer and that the display of forces was to impress the British, were taken completely by surprise and their settlement broken up.

Only the Lafittes and a few of the men escaped to the mainland and a vast amount of rich booty was secured by the authorities and taken back in triumph to New Orleans.

We could scarcely blame Lafitte if, after this dastardly bit of treachery on the part of the Governor, he turned pirate or joined the British; but he did neither. When General Jackson took command of the forces at New Orleans, Jean Lafitte came forth from hiding and again offered his services to the General. At first Jackson refused, apparently thinking it beneath his dignity to deal with a smuggler and so-called pirate, but later, realizing the weakness of his forces and the desperate need of reënforcements, he accepted Lafitte's offer and placed the Frenchman in command of the redoubts on the river. Here Lafitte stationed a portion of his men while the others took part in serving the batteries at New

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Orleans, and throughout that memorable and historic battle the smugglers and Lafittes conducted themselves with such conspicuous bravery that they were favorably mentioned in the general orders published after the victory.

In these General Jackson eulogized Lafitte and his men, recommended a pardon and reward for all, and from outlaws and smugglers the Baratarians were transformed to heroes.

But the Lafittes, despite their patriotism, had had enough of Louisiana. During the celebration that followed the victory at New Orleans a magnificent ball was given by the army officers. It was a splendid affair, ablaze with uniforms, thronged with the most beautiful ladies of the state, glorious with priceless jewelry and dazzling costumes, and among the guests was Jean Lafitte. When, during the reception, General Coffe was introduced to the ex-smuggler chief he did not quite catch the name and for an instant regarded Lafitte coldly. Instantly the latter advanced and exclaimed emphatically and clearly, "Lafitte, the pirate."

Without hesitation, the general smiled, extended his hand and greeted the other heartily.

That was the last appearance of Lafitte in his old haunts. He and his brother vanished completely. No one seemed to know where they had gone and there were many rumors and vague tales about them. Some claimed they had formed a smuggling settlement near Galveston. Others said they had taken out privateers' commissions from a South American republic. Many events seemed to bear

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out the Galveston theory, but when the smugglers' nest on the Texas coast was destroyed by an American war vessel, no trace of the Lafittes was found. Then gossip had it that they had escaped and taken up headquarters in Yucatan. There was nothing definite known about them, however, and for many years it has been thought that their ultimate fate was unknown, an unsolved mystery. But a yellowed and faded clipping, taken from a Baltimore newspaper printed in 1823, apparently sets all doubts at rest. It is scarcely more than a paragraph, probably tucked away in an inconspicuous part of the paper and is as follows :

LAFITTE, THE NOTED PIRATE, KILLED

A British sloop of war fell in with and captured a piratical vessel with a crew of sixty men, under command of the famous Lafitte. He hoisted the bloody flag and refused quarter and fought until nearly every man was killed or wounded—Lafitte being among the former.

So, if the British were not mistaken, Lafitte died a pirate, even though he had not been one during his life at New Orleans, and it is comforting to know that the patriotic smuggler spent his last moments fighting against the former enemies of his country, after all.

CHAPTER XXII

THE LAST OF THE PIRATES

(1821—1922)

It is commonly thought that pirates in American waters passed out of existence long ago, and it will come as a surprise to many to learn that the Caribbean was infested by pirates and that many ships—American as well as European—were taken, and many men tortured and killed by pirates as recently as 1825.

To be sure, piracy as a profession, in American waters, became an industry of disrepute soon after the establishment of Nassau and the blanket pardoning of the freebooters by King George in 1717.

A few, such as Vane, John Augur, William Cunningham, Dennis McCarthy, William Dowling, William Lewis, Thomas Morris, George Bendeall, William Ling and George Rounsivel refused the chance to secure pardons, and slipping away from New Providence, carried on a despicable form of piracy among the Bahamas and neighboring islands for a few years. Others still hung about the Virgin Islands. But all these men were soon rounded up and were tried, condemned, and executed; and gradually the surviving pirates of Anglo-Saxon blood gave up their dishonest life and took to safer and more respectable occupations.

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Still, among the islands and the cays of the Antilles, a few pirates lurked—Spaniards, Portuguese, French, negroes, and half-breeds—despicable, sneaking, cowardly rascals who never fought openly or attacked an armed ship, but as cruel, bloodthirsty, and atrociously ruthless as the worst of the old buccaneers.

Of their personalities and deeds there is no need to speak. They were mere cutthroats—thugs of the seas—and the best idea of their misdeeds and the ends of their careers may be gained by accounts copied from old newspapers, ships' logs, official documents and similar sources.

Here, for example, is an extract from a Boston paper dated November 6, 1821:

The brig *Cobbesecontee*, Capt. Jackson, arrived yesterday from Havana, sailed thence on the morning of the 8th ult. and on the evening of the same day, about four miles from the Moro, was brought to by a piratical sloop containing about 30 men. A boat from her, with ten men, came along side and soon after they got on board commenced plundering. They took nearly all the clothing from the Captain and mate—all the cooking utensils and spare rigging—unrove part of the running rigging, cut the small cable, broke the compasses, cut the mast's coat to pieces, took from the Captain his watch and four boxes cigars and from the cargo three bales cochineal and six boxes cigars. They beat the mate unmercifully and hung him up by the neck under the maintop. They also beat the Captain severely—broke a large broad sword across his back,—and ran a long knife through his thigh so that he almost bled to death.

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Capt. Jackson saw the sloop at Regla the day before.

Capt. Jackson informs us, and we have also been informed by other persons from the Havana, that this system of Piracy is openly countenanced by some of the inhabitants of that place—who say it is a retaliation on the Americans for interfering against the Slave Trade, and for allowing Patriot privateers to refit in their ports. The Pirates therefore, receiving such countenance, grow more daring—and increase in number from the success which has attended this new mode of filling their pockets.

• • • • •

In the same paper appeared this account of a pirate attacking an American vessel:

Captain Bugnon, who arrived yesterday from Charleston, spoke on the 2d inst. off the S. Shoal of Nantucket, the brig *Three Partners*, from Jamaica to St. John—had been robbed off Cape Antonio, by a piratical vessel of about 35 tons and 17 men, of clothing, watches, &c. and the Captain was hung up by the neck to the fore yardarm till he was almost dead.

Farther on in the same column of maritime news, appears the following:

Capt. Bourn, who arrived yesterday from Cape Haytien, spoke on the 26th ult. lat. 33, lon. 78. brig *Sea Lion*, 36 days from Cape Haytien for Belfast, Ireland, which had been plundered by a pirate in the Gulf.

The brig *Harriet*, Capt. Dimond, from St. Jago de Cuba for Baltimore, arrived at Havana on the 16th ult. having been robbed of all her cargo of sugar, and \$4,000 in specie off Cape Antonio, by a boat with 15 men having two schooners in co. Capt. D. was hung

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up by the neck and remained senseless for some time after he was taken down.

The Dutch brig *Mercury*, 77 days from Marseilles, arrived at Havana on the 16th ult. after having been robbed of \$10,000 worth of cargo by a piratical schooner off Cape Antonio.

In another paper, published the same year, 1821, appears the following:

"U. S. BRIG *SPARK*"

A letter from a gentleman belonging to this vessel, dated St. Barts, Nov. 3, 1821, says:

We arrived here after a rather rough passage, in eighteen days from Boston, all well. We expect to sail again in two or three days. We found here the piratical ship which robbed the *Orleans Packet*. She is now in possession of the Swedish government. She came into their possession in the following manner: The crew landed her cargo on a small island near this, from whence it was taken by a schooner to St. Thomas. They then run the ship into Five Island Harbour, where all the crew, except two men, deserted her. The government, hearing of her being there, sent a guard and took possession of her, brought her into this harbour and confined the two men found as pirates. It is said Capt. Elton has requested the governor to allow him to take them to the U. S. for trial. This piratical ship was originally the U. S. brig *Prometheus* which was condemned two years since, and was then sold.

The next year, 1822, the following entry was made in the log book of the brig *Dover*, Captain Sabins, from Matanzas for Charleston:

"Jan. 16, 1822, sea account, at 1 P.M.—Pan of Matanzas bearing S. saw a boat coming to us from

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a small drogher, which came out of Matanzas the night before us, with five Spaniards armed with long knives, pistols, cutlasses, &c. When they got within hail, they fired a musket at us, cheered and came on board. They were the most villainous looking rascals that any one had probably ever beheld. They immediately drew their weapons and after beating us up severely with their cutlasses drove us below. They then robbed us of all our clothes except what we had on, our watches and everything of value. We were afterwards called up singly. Four men with drawn knives stood over the captain and threatened him if he did not give up his money, they would kill all hands and burn the vessel. After robbing the people they commenced plundering the brig. They broke open hatches, made us get out our boat and carry their plunder to their vessel. They took from us one compass, five bags coffee, one barrel sugar, nearly all our provisions, our colors, rigging, and cooking utensils. They then ordered us to stand north or they would overhaul us, murder the crew, and burn the vessel. We made sail and shortly after were brought to by another boat of the same character, which fired into us, but left us upon being informed that we had been already robbed.

* * * * *

That same year a report was made by the captain of the schooner, *Jane*, of Boston, stating that, on the 24th of January, they were taken by a pirate schooner, carried to a place where there were three more pirate vessels and that the pirate captain and his mate quarreled over the question of whether the captives should all be put to death or not. Unable to

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agree, they fought a duel with muskets, the captain being killed and the mate then taking command. Evidently this was fortunate for the captives, for after the skipper and the crew of the *Jane* had been robbed and beaten they were released.

• • • • • •

Under date of June 1, 1822, a Mobile paper published the following:

Capt. Carter of the schr. *Swan* arrived yesterday from Havana, reports that on his outward passage from this port, on the 27th ult. at 8 o'clock, A. M. being then within 30 miles from Havana, he was boarded by an open boat from shore manned with nine men who all appeared to be Spanish, armed with muskets, pistols, cutlasses, and knives, who plundered the vessel of everything they could carry off. They also robbed the captain and crew of their clothing, even stripping the jackets from their backs, and the shoes from their feet.

The villains would not even spare the property of a Spanish priest, passenger on board, but robbed him also of his clothes, money, and plate, the value of \$800. They, however, afterwards returned his gown.

A sail heaving in sight they left the schooner with orders to steer E.N.E. and not go over three leagues from shore under pain of death.

From their conversation while on board it appeared that they intended to board the schooner again in the evening, run her ashore and burn her. But she escaped by the darkness of the night.

• • • • • •

✓ Finally, and most interesting of all, we have a letter written by a man who actually was captured

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and tortured by pirates in 1823, probably the only account in existence of a pirates' prisoner who came within an inch of death and witnessed tortures and fiendish atrocities equaled only by those committed by L'Ollonais. The letter was printed in the *American Monthly Magazine* of February, 1824, and is as follows:

In the early part of June I sailed from Philadelphia in the schooner *Mary* on a voyage to New Orleans. My principal object in going round by sea was the restoration of my health which had been for many months declining. Having some friends in New Orleans whose commercial operations were conducted on an extensive scale, I was charged with the care of sums in gold and silver amounting altogether to nearly eighteen thousand dollars. This I communicated to the captain and we concluded to secure it in the best manner possible. Accordingly a plank was taken off the ribs of the schooner in my cabin and the money being placed in the vacancy the plank was nailed down and the seams tarred and painted over. Being thus relieved from an apprehension of the money being found upon us, in case of an attack by pirates, my mind was easier and what other articles I had of value I could carry about with me, I did so. I also brought a quantity of bank notes to the amount of fifteen thousand dollars. Part of these I caused to be carefully sewed in the left lapel of my coat, supposing that in case of being lost at sea, should my body be found, my coat would still contain the most valuable of my effects. The balance was carefully quilted into my black silk cravat.

Our crew consisted of the captain and four men,

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with a supply of live stock for the voyage and a Newfoundland dog who had once saved the captain, his master, from a watery grave when he had been stunned and knocked overboard by a sudden shifting of the boom. I was the only passenger on board.

It was towards the evening of the fourteenth day, two hours before sunset, that we espied a sail astern of us. As twilight came, it neared us with astonishing rapidity. Night closed and all around us was impenetrable darkness.

We coursed our way steadily through the night, though once or twice the roaring of the waves increased so suddenly as to make us believe we had passed a breaker. At the time it was unaccountable, but now I believe it was occasioned by the bark behind us coming rather near in the darkness. At midnight I went on deck. Nothing but occasional sparkle was to be seen and the ocean was undisturbed. Still, in spite of my endeavors, I could not compose myself. At the windlass, three of the sailors, like myself unable to sleep, had collected. On joining them I found our fears were mutual. They all kept their eyes fixed on the unknown vessel, as if anticipating some dreadful event. They informed me they had put their arms in order and were determined to stand or die.

At this moment a flash of light, perhaps a musket burning priming, proceeded from the vessel in pursuit and we saw distinctly that her deck was covered with men. My heart almost failed me. I had never been in battle and I knew not what it was.

Day at length dawned and setting all canvas our pursuer gained alarmingly upon us. In a few minutes she fired a swivel and came alongside. She was a pirate. Her boat was lowered and about a

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dozen hideous looking objects jumped in with a commander at their head.

The boat pushed off and was nearing us fast as we arranged ourselves for giving her a broadside. Our whole stock of arms consisted of six muskets and an old swivel, used as a signal gun, and a pair of pistols of my own. The pirate boat's crew were armed with muskets, pistols, cutlasses, and knives and when she came within her own length of us, we fired five of our muskets and the swivel into her.

Her fire was scarcely half given when she filled and went down with all her crew. At this success we were inclined to rejoice, but looking over the pirate schooner observed her deck still swarming with the same description of horrid looking wretches. A second boat's crew pushed off with their muskets pointed directly at us the whole time. When they came within the same distance as the other we fired, but with little effect if any. The pirate immediately returned the fire and with horrid cries jumped aboard of us. Two of our brave crew were lying dead upon the deck and the rest of us expected nothing better. French, Spanish, and English were spoken indiscriminately and all at once, the most horrid imprecations were uttered against us and threats that fancy cannot imagine.

A wretch, whose black shaggy whiskers covered nearly his whole face, whose eyes were only seen at intervals beneath his bushy eyebrows, and whose whole appearance was more that of a hell-hound than of a human being, approached me with a drawn cutlass in his hand. I drew one of my pistols and snapped it in his face; but it flashed in the pan and before I could draw the other, the pirate with a brutality that would have disgraced a cannibal,

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struck me over the face with his cutlass and knocked me down. I was too much wounded by the blow to resist and the blood ran in torrents from my forehead. In this situation the wretch seized me by the scalp, and thrusting his cutlass in my cravat, cut it through completely. I felt the cold iron glide along my throat and even now the very thought makes me shudder. The worst idea I had ever formed of human cruelty seemed now realized and I could see death stare me in the face. Without stopping to examine the cravat, he put it in his pocket and in a voice of thunder exclaimed, "*levez vous!*"

I accordingly rose to my feet and he pinioned my arms behind my back, led me to the gunwale of the vessel and asked another of the gang in French whether he should throw me overboard. At the recollection of that scene I am still staggered. I endeavored to call the prospects of eternity before me, but could think of nothing except the cold and quiverless apathy of the tomb.

His infamous companion replied, "*Il est trop bonne hetire l'envoyer au diable,*" and led me to the foremast where he tied me with my face to the stern of the vessel. The cords were drawn so tight around my arms and legs that my agony was excruciating. In this situation he left me.

On looking around, I found them all employed in plundering and ransacking everything we had. Over my left shoulder, one of our sailors was strung up to the yardarm, and apparently in the last agonies of death; while before me, our gallant Captain was on his knees and begging for his life. The wretches were endeavoring to extort from him the secret of

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our money; but for a while he was firm and dauntless.

Provoked by his obstinacy, they extended his arms and cut them off at the elbows. At this, human nature gave way and the injured man confessed the spot where he had concealed the specie. In a few moments it was aboard their own vessel. To revenge themselves on our unhappy captain, when they had satisfied themselves that nothing else was hidden, they spread a bed of oakum on the deck, and after soaking it through with turpentine, tied the captain on it, filled his mouth with the same combustibles and set the whole on fire. The cries of the unfortunate man were heart rending and his agonies must have been unutterable; but they were soon over. All this I was compelled to witness. Heartsick with the sight, I once shut my eyes; but a musket discharged close to my ear was a warning sufficient to keep them open.

On casting my eyes to the stern of the vessel, I discovered that the boatswain had been nailed to the deck through his feet and the body spiked through to the tiller. He was writhing in the last agonies of crucifixion. Our fifth comrade was out of sight during all this tragedy; in a few minutes, however, he was brought upon the deck blindfolded. He was then conducted to the muzzle of the swivel and commanded to kneel. The swivel was then fired off, and his head was dreadfully wounded by the discharge. In a moment after it was agonizing to behold his torments and convulsions—language is too feeble to describe them. I have seen men hung upon the gibbet, but their death is like sinking in slumber when compared with his.

Excited with the scene of human butchery, one

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of these wretches fired his pistol at the captain's dog. The ball struck his shoulder and disabled him; he finished him by shooting him again, and at last by cutting out his tongue! At this hell-engendered act my blood boiled with indignation at such savage brutality on a helpless, inoffensive dog! But I was unable to give utterance or action to my feelings.

Seeing that the crew had been every one despatched, I began to think more of myself. My old enemy, who seemed to forget me, once more appeared and approached me; but shockingly besmeared with blood and brains. He stood by the side of the unfortunate sailor who suffered from the swivel and supported him with the point of his bayonet. He drew a stiletto from his belt, placed its point upon my heart and gave a heavy thrust. I felt its point touch my skin; but the quilting of my banknotes prevented further entrance. This savage monster then ran it up my breast, as if intending to divide my lungs, and in doing so, the bank bills fell upon the deck. He snatched them up greedily and exclaimed, "*Ah! laissez mois voir ce que reste.*"

My dress in a few moments was ripped to pieces at the peril of my life. He frequently came so near as to tear my skin and deluge me with blood; but by the mercy of Providence, I escaped from every danger.

At this moment a heavy flaw struck the schooner and I heard one of the pirates exclaim, "A sail!" They all retreated precipitately, and gaining their own vessel, were soon out of sight.

Helpless as I now was I had the satisfaction of knowing the pirates had been frightened by the appearance of a sail, but it was impossible for me

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to see it. Still tied to the foremast I knew not what was my prospect of release. An hour or two had elapsed after they left me, and it was now noon. The sun played violently upon my head and I felt a languor and debility that indicated approaching fever. My head gradually sank upon my breast, then I was shocked by hearing water pouring into the cabin windows. The wretches had scuttled the vessel and left me pinioned to go down with her. I commended my Spirit to my Maker and gave myself up for lost. I felt myself gradually dying away and the last thing I remembered was the foaming noise of waves. This was occasioned by a ship passing by me. I was taken in, restored to health and am now a poor, ruined, helpless man.

But, we may add, fortunate indeed to be alive at all. Few, if any men, have ever come so near death at the hands of pirates and have lived to tell the tale. And, think of it, this happened less than one hundred years ago!

But at last these atrocities exhausted the patience of the American people. The public and the press demanded that something be done to wipe pirates from American waters, and the government finally sent Commodore Porter with a fleet of warships to hunt down and destroy every pirate he could lay hands on.

Porter sailed from Baltimore on the steam galley *Enterprise* on January 16, 1823, and joined the rest of the squadron, which had fitted out at Norfolk, his objective point being the coast of Cuba

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where most of the recent piracies had been committed. There was great rejoicing as the squadron sailed on its mission, and the following is an extract from a Baltimore paper, dated January 17, 1823:

Yesterday Commodore Porter left this port in the steam galley *Enterprise* for the purpose of suppressing piracy on the coast of Cuba. Every friend of humanity must wish that the efforts of the distinguished officer, who has been selected to this command, meet with success. The means adopted are certainly the best calculated to effect the object. Frigates and sloops of war are totally inadequate by means of their great draught of water, but the vessels which have been selected by Commodore Porter are precisely calculated to ferret the banditti from their lurking places. The aid of steam will, we think, be a most valuable addition and from the way the *Enterprise* has been fitted out we have every reason to believe she will completely answer the expectations formed. In a very short time we hope to hear of the Commodore's arrival on his cruising ground and we doubt not he will soon put an end to the ravages of those lawless barbarians.

And the hopes and expectations of the public were completely fulfilled. Reaching the Caribbean, the vessels scattered, and from time to time word was brought back by merchantmen, and by official reports, telling of the relentless war of extermination being carried on against the pirates. The *Porpoise*, under Captain Ramage, put into Charleston with four prisoners and reported destroying three pirate strongholds on shore and taking twelve pirate vessels. Three of the prisoners were Spaniards, the

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other a Portuguese and two were father and son, the latter but eighteen years of age.

On February 14, 1824, the *Grampus*, Lieutenant Gregory, reached Charleston after four months in the West Indies and brought three pirates. One of these was delivered to the Americans by the Governor of St. Barts, the other two had been turned over to the *Grampus* by the President of Haiti, and in addition to taking these three—who, by the way, were all West Indian mulattos—Lieutenant Gregory had destroyed several pirate ships and had broken up their lairs.

Far and wide upon the Caribbean the American vessels cruised, and one by one they sought out and destroyed the lairs of the surviving pirates, sank their ships, burned their settlements and captured prisoners.

And not to be outdone by the Americans, in the waters surrounding her own islands, Great Britain took a hand and sent sloops of war and armed schooners on a pirate hunt.

In November, 1824, the British schooner *Speedwell* put into Nassau with eighteen pirate prisoners who, mistaking the vessel for a merchantman, had tried to board her and were promptly captured after a brisk fight wherein sixteen pirates were killed.

The British cutter *Grecian*, with a crew of only fifty men, sighted a pirate ship off the Isle of Pines, and, despite the fact that the corsair carried eight guns and one hundred men, she captured the pirate vessel, killed nearly half her crew and with three prisoners—all that survived, for many leaped into

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the sea—she came triumphantly into Jamaica, where it was discovered that one of the captives was La Cata, the most ruthless and notorious pirate of the times.

Near Matanzas, Commodore Porter attacked a pirates' stronghold on July 5, 1823, and after a heavy engagement destroyed the place and sunk a schooner, killing thirty-five out of her sixty men, the Americans being so incensed at the depredations and atrocities committed by the pirates that their officers could not control them, and they cut down the swimming pirates despite their pleas for quarter.

Soon after this, on July 21, the *Greyhound* and *Beagle* of Porter's squadron attacked another pirate lair near Cape Cruz on the southern coast of Cuba, and despite a heavy cannonade from the pirates' forts on the bluffs, the Americans landed in boats, burned the town, killed many of the pirates, drove the others into the jungle, and discovered a huge cave where the corsairs had hidden a vast amount of booty, which the bluejackets seized. In the cave, too, were quantities of human bones, all that remained of prisoners tortured and left to die.

About the same time, also, a British sloop of war took a pirate schooner off Santo Domingo, made her crew of sixty prisoners, and secured two hundred thousand dollars in coin and many other valuables which the pirates had looted from prizes.

But despite the Americans' destruction of piratical lairs and ships and the taking of prisoners, our government was far too lenient. Corsairs who had

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butchered American seamen and had plundered our ships were given a few years in prison, or escaped penalties through technicalities or lack of direct evidence, and while a few were executed, our attitude towards the scoundrels was by no means as satisfactory as that of the British.

Once the English had started to clear the Caribbean of pirates, they went at it with a will. The fact that a man was a pirate was quite enough to hang him, and the British courts at Nassau and Kingston asked no direct evidence of specific murders. Ten pirates, taken by the British sloop *Tyne*, were executed at one time in Kingston on February 7, 1823.

La Cata and his companions were hanged there when they were brought in by the *Grecian*, and scores were tried and condemned and duly put to death in Nassau, Kingston, Barbados, and elsewhere.

Quite unofficially it became the habit for American ships to turn their captives over to the British, whose methods of disposing of them were prompt and to the point, for both nations, although they had been fighting each other tooth and nail a dozen years previously, worked in perfect accord and the utmost harmony against these common enemies.

And even the Spanish authorities in Cuba and Porto Rico were at last compelled to take a hand. A pirate vessel was taken off Matanzas on May 16, 1825, by a British cutter, and all the surviving prisoners were taken to Havana, where the British demanded that the Spaniards should prove their

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good faith by convicting their own countrymen of piracy. The Dons tried and condemned the wretches to the garrote. Before they were put to death these pirates confessed to having taken over twenty American vessels, whose crews had been murdered to the last man. At the same time, another British ship took eleven pirates to San Juan, Porto Rico, demanded that the authorities punish them as they deserved, and a few days later the eleven were executed together.

These were practically the last of the pirates in the western hemisphere. The United States had set the example, England had joined hands with us, and even the Spaniards and French had acted. It was the first time in history that really concerted, organized action had been taken against the pirates and within a few years the last American pirate had been wiped from the seas.

But still, in remote parts of the world, in the South Seas and the orient, pirates lurked. Only this year—in October, 1922—came the following despatch from Canton, China :

Mrs. Lo Hon-cho, China's woman pirate chief, who for a year has been terrorizing the countryside about Pakhoi, is reported to have been captured.

When her husband, who was a noted pirate, was killed in 1921, Mrs. Lo Hon-cho took command of his ship and crew and succeeded so well that her fleet soon grew to sixty ocean-going pirate junks.

Youthful, and said to be pretty, the female pirate gained a record and a reputation as the most murderous and ruthless of all China's



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assortment of banditti. During the revolution, Mrs. Lo Hon-cho joined forces with the Sun leader, General Wong Min-tong, and received the rank of Colonel.

Together the General and the lady Colonel gathered in forty thousand dollars from the city of Pakhoi as ransom to prevent it being looted.

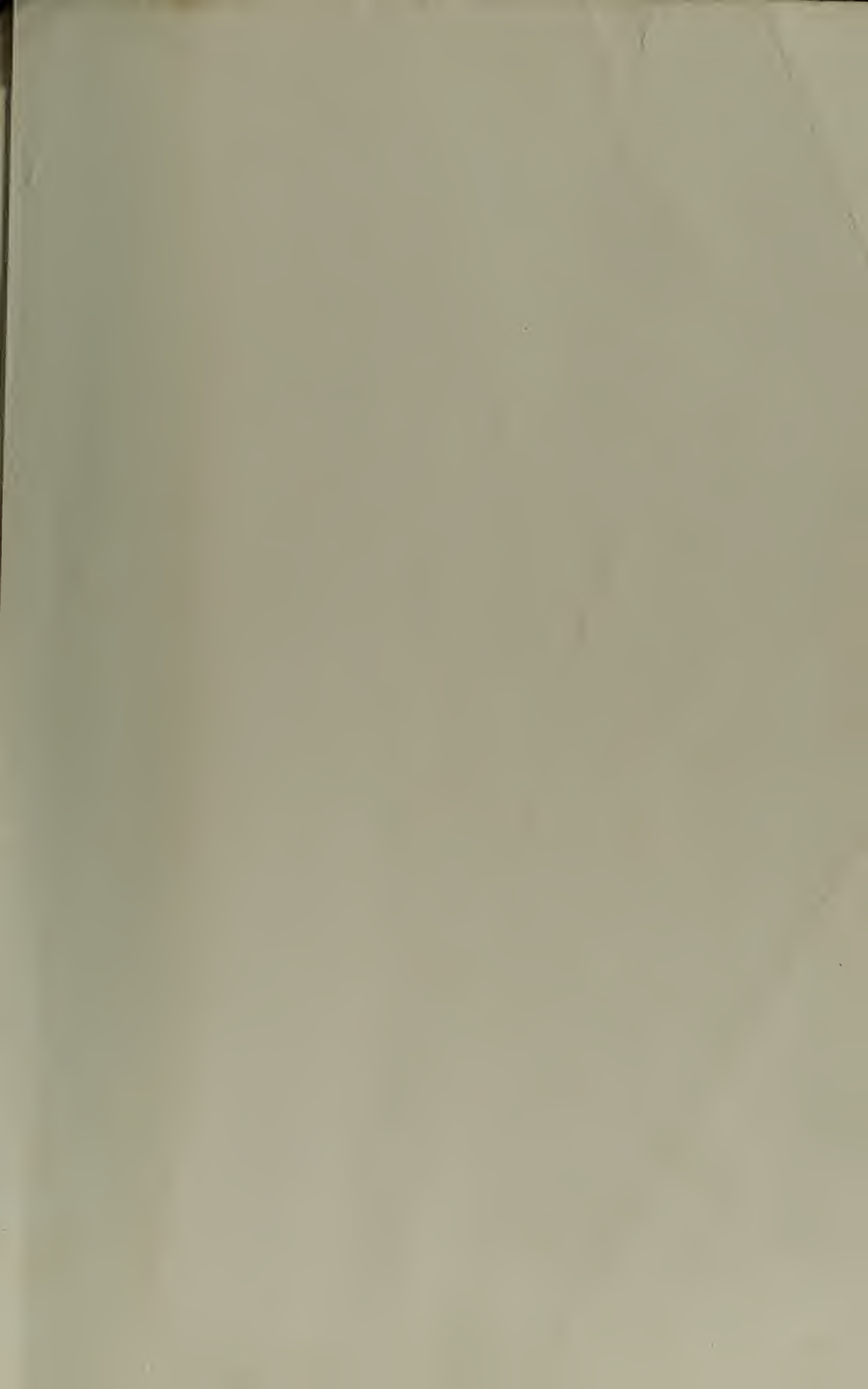
After the General returned to Canton, she resumed her piracies, preying upon fishing fleets, villages and farmers. In her attacks on villages she usually took fifty or sixty girls prisoners, later selling them into slavery.

On her return from one of these forays, this woman pirate stopped at a village on the coast and while feasting was surprised by a Chinese warship. In the battle that followed, forty of the junks were destroyed. Mrs. Lo Hon-cho escaped, but soon after was betrayed by one of her followers in return for a promise of pardon from the military commander of Pakhoi.

Perchance there may still be pirates afloat, somewhere upon the seven seas. Very possibly Mrs. Lo was not the last of the corsairs, but to all intents and purposes, piracy is a thing of the past, and it would be a strange whim of Fate if the last of the pirates were a woman.

(1)

THE END



There is no more entrancing body of water in either the Western or the Eastern Hemisphere—than the Caribbean Sea, with a fringe of lovely tropical islands on the one side and on the other the Spanish Main and its picturesque centuries-old towns and fascinating sights. Aside from its beauty, its delightful climate, and its ever-shifting scenes, the Caribbean and its shores are redolent of romance. It was the starting-point of those brave though ruthless adventurers who carved a new world for Castile and Leon. For centuries it was the treasure-house of the world and the battle-ground of the mightiest European powers. Across this sapphire sea sailed the caravels of Columbus, the *Golden Hind* of Drake, and the stately, plate-laden galleons of Spain.

And across this same sea coursed those fierce sea-rovers, the buccaneers.

Of all the dare-devil spirits who sailed the Caribbean and ravaged the Spanish Main, the buccaneers were the most picturesque and romantic. Villains though they were; reddened with the blood of innocent and helpless though their hands; black-hearted cutthroats beyond denial—yet there is something about them that appeals to all, and that, despite their ill deeds, fills one with admiration.

Perchance it is the fact that we all appreciate bravery—and, notwithstanding their multitude of sins, the buccaneers were brave beyond compare. Again, it may be that in all of us lurks a little of the gambling spirit and we admire those who can take a chance, even though we do not, and no greater gamblers ever lived than the buccaneers. They staked their lives at every turn, they gambled with death, and the greater the odds the more readily did they throw themselves into the game. And it was this gambling spirit, this recklessness that enabled them to defy the world of their day.

A. HYATT VERRILL

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