

JOHN BLOUNDELLE-BURTON

# THE HISPANIOLA PLATE

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**The Hispaniola Plate**

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# John Bloundelle-Burton

## The Hispaniola Plate / (1683-1893)

"We passed the tropics, as near as we could guess, just where the famous Sir William Phips fished up the silver from the Spanish Plate wreck." -

Defoe ("Colonel Jack").

### PREFACE

Most of the maps of the West Indies published during the first half of the present century and anterior to that date mark distinctly the spot where the following story principally takes place. Thirty miles due north of Cape François, on the north coast of San Domingo, is a reef entitled "Bajo de la Plata, or Phips's Plate," while more modern maps simply describe it as "Silver Bank."

This is, of course, the spot where Sir William Phips—a now forgotten figure in history—obtained the plate mentioned by Defoe; and, so far as I am aware, there is but one detailed account in existence of how he found and secured that plate. This account is contained in a duodecimo volume entitled "*Pietas in Patriam: the Life of Sir William Phips*," published in London in 1697 anonymously, but guaranteed as accurate by several people who knew him. A production entitled "The Library of American Biography," edited by one Jared Sparks, also professes to give an accurate biography of Phips, but it is simply a garbled and mangled copy of the London publication. I should also mention that the "Biographia Britannica" refers to the expedition in the article on "Christopher Monk, second Duke of Albemarle." So does a work of the last century entitled "The Lives of the Admirals," by Lawrence Echard, and so also do some encyclopædias; but all of them undoubtedly derive their information from "*Pietas in Patriam*."

This work I have myself carefully followed, because in it alone are to be found the descriptions of the "Frigate Algier Rose," her eighteen guns and ninety-five men, of the various mutinies, of Alderly's arrival on the scene, of the second voyage with the tender, and so forth. Indeed, beyond the requirements of fiction the account is absolutely an account of what happened until the chase after Alderly by Nicholas Crafer, when fiction itself becomes predominant. Alderly, I should add, was as real a character as Phips himself. So was the carpenter who discovered the second mutiny. The rest, with the exception of the Duke of Albemarle, are imaginary.

I may add, in conclusion, that "The Hispaniola Plate" appeared originally in *The St. James's Budget*.

### A NEW NOVELIST

Nothing is more notable in recent literature than the sudden renewal of interest in the historical novel. Mr. Stanley Weyman is the most successful of this group of younger writers, but there is now treading on his heels another young novelist, whose work shows such splendid promise as well as such remarkable achievement, that he bids fair to outstrip Mr. Weyman and come first to the goal. This is Mr. John Bloundelle-Burton, whose story, "The Desert Ship," created such a stir in London a short time ago.

Mr. Burton was born in 1850. His parents intended him for a military life, but when at twenty-one he came into a comfortable inheritance, he determined to see something of the world. Already familiar with the Continent, he turned to fresher pastures and came to Canada; then running over the border into the "States," he lived down South for a considerable period. In Baltimore he first contracted the writing habit, sending an article to a paper there, which accepted it with thanks, but

with nothing else. While down South he fell in with "Red Cloud," an Indian chief, picking up much information that was strange and new, and that was later to be utilized in "The Desert Ship." Going back to England, he flitted between London and Paris, the latter being his favorite abode. In the Place de la Madeleine he lived with a company that contained representatives of every class and country. Describing them Mr. Bloundelle-Burton says: "One of our number was a Scotch duke; another a tailor's son, enormously rich and not a bad fellow; another a Spahi, home on leave from Africa; a fourth a Spaniard, rolling in money; another an American, who afterward died in prison while awaiting his trial for killing-absolutely killing-a man in a duel. They could not get over that in Paris; indeed, as a Frenchman said to me, it really looked as if the American had fully intended to murder his countryman."

Living in this way in Paris, our author began to write more and more; first for foreign papers, then for English ones. He began a connection with Galignani, which lasted intermittently for a long interval, and brought him acquaintance with many notable men, among them Jules Grévy, several years later President of the Republic. His next venture was sending English papers news from different popular resorts on the Continent-Switzerland and the Tyrol, Italy and the Riviera. Later on he helped edit a paper called *The American Visitor*, which told rich Americans where they could spend their money most rapidly, and where they had the best opportunity for catching a glimpse of fashionable society in England and on the Continent.

Mr. Burton's first long story was "The Silent Shore," which had quite a career under several different guises. Originally published in volume form, it later appeared as a play at the Olympic Theater, then ran as a serial in Spanish in a South American paper, and ended up as a serial in several English provincial papers. His next story was, "His Own Enemy," in the author's opinion, the best novel he has yet produced, "though not, I hope, the best I shall write," he adds.

"The Desert Ship," Mr. Burton's next book and the first to bring him genuine fame, was published by Hutchinson & Co., in London. It was received with a burst of praise from the critics, even Mr. Labouchere's sarcastic and hard-to-please paper, *Truth*, declaring it to be "an enthralling story and a book which will mark a period in the existence of anyone who is fortunate enough to get it. It is," the paper added, "as exciting as anything Verne ever wrote, and with the reality of Robert Louis Stevenson." Nothing succeeds like success, as Mr. Burton rapidly learned; editors with orders up their sleeves dropped in upon the rising young author, and he found it hard to satisfy all the demands made upon him. All this solicitation for the work of his pen resulted in a sudden literary output. Two stories appeared in quick succession: "The Gentleman Adventurer," which ran in *Young England*, and "The Adventures of Viscount Annerly," which was published in the *People*.

"The Hispaniola Plate," Mr. Burton's last and strongest book, is a semi-historical story. The scene is laid in the West Indies. The two principal characters belong to the Royal Navy, one living in Cromwell's, Charles II.'s and James II.'s reigns, the other in the present day; and the way in which the two periods are blended into the one book exhibits masterly skill. Mr. Burton is a passionate lover of the sea. Descended from a line of ancestors that acquired fame in the British Navy-his grandfather, Lieutenant Jermy, was a noted old commander of English ships and participated in the battle of New Orleans in 1814-he has in his blood a taste for the salt sea wave, and this gives his stories their breezy, out-of-door atmosphere.

Mr. Burton has a pleasant home just out of London at Barnes Common. Like so many other Englishmen of prominence in these days, he is married to an American woman. He is a large, broad-chested man, standing six feet, two inches and a quarter, in his shoes, with dark, piercing eyes. Mr. Burton has decided views about the true methods for literary work. He does not believe in fixing on a good subject for a novel, then selecting a picturesque period, and, after making yourself thoroughly acquainted with the manners and customs of that epoch, planting your characters in it, as is the habit of certain novelists. The story must come to you, you cannot go out and bring it in. "I never think," he says, "of producing a story laid in a period (or about persons) which I have to read up-to 'mug' up,

as we used to say at school. But I have been an ardent reader of history and memoirs all my life, and the story arises naturally from periods and incidents with which I am well acquainted."

"I mean," he adds, "that the story should fit into an intimate acquaintance with the *mise-en-scène*, not that the *mise-en-scène* should be hunted up to fit the story."

No one who reads this exciting story, "The Hispaniola Plate," and who is held captive by its vivid scenes, its deep, rich coloring, its overmastering air of reality, but will wish long life to this strong and original talent, which already has behind it such remarkable achievement. May we have many such books from his pen!

## CHAPTER I. NICHOLAS CRAFER'S STRANGE WILL

*"Gray's Inn Square, Oct. 20th, 1892.*

"My Dear Sir, – In answer to your request, I beg to inform you that the terms by which you inherit 'Phips House,' at Strand-on-the-Green, from your late uncle, are as follows-the statement being taken from the last will and testament of your ancestor Nicholas Crafer, made in the year 1695: -

'And I do hereby will and bequeathe that ye house called Phips by me, after my late captain and commander, Sir William Phips, when I purchased yt from Mr. Clitherow of Branford, do forever remaine in the possession of some descendant of mine, male or female, the former for choyce and preference, yet not also debarring, in fault of any bearing the name of Crafer existinge, those descending from the female side to succeed. That is to saye, it is to so remaine forever unless through it whoever doth succede shall thereinto find the means whereby to obtain unto themselves a fortune of and equivalint unto the summe of Fiftie thousand guineas, the which I do hereby testify the meanes are forthcoming. After whych the house may be disposed of as best beseemeth those who have so found ye fortune. This, therefore, I say, "Seeke and ye shall find, knocke and yt shall be opened unto you."

"This will, in spite of its quaintness, has ever, and will probably always, hold good, although not law, until one thing occurs of two: either that the house falls down of old age (which it seemed very likely to do when I inspected it after your late uncle's decease) or that some descendant of Commander Nicholas Crafer shall find the means of making the fortune of 50,000 guineas in or through it-a most unlikely thing to happen. For, as you know, many generations of Crafers have searched through the house from basement to garret, imagining that the original testator meant to hint that somewhere about it, was hidden away such a sum of money as he mentions; and always without result. Nor has the ingenuity of one generation after another ever been able to hit upon any hidden meaning which might be contained in the words of the will, or to find anything excepting the scrap of paper once discovered, of which you know; while certainly the land on which it stands-something under three acres-can hardly ever become of such value, or one-twentieth part of it.

"But as you know as much about your ancestor as I can possibly tell you, I need not write further, and I have only to state that, during your absence abroad, everything has been done to facilitate handing over the house to you on your return, and I now propose to prove your uncle's will, and, after the usual formalities, to put you in possession of Phips House and other property left by him. – Yours faithfully,

*"A. Bentham."*

This was the letter which Reginald Crafer read at his breakfast, one fine autumn morning, as he sat in that good old hostelry, "The George," at Portsmouth-a letter which he had found at the Naval Club after his early morning walk on the Battery-a walk taken with the view of aiding an already exceedingly good appetite, and of having a look at the waves dancing out at the Nab and sparkling in the bright October sunshine.

A better specimen of the young lieutenant of to-day than Reginald Crafer (with "N" after his name to show that he had taken up navigation as his branch) you might not see in any of her Majesty's ships. Tall, but not too tall for a sailor; close-shaven, as becometh the young naval officer of to-day, yet with excellent features that required nothing in the shape of whiskers or moustache to set them off; with clear grey eyes and a wholesome sunburnt skin-what more could a young man desire in the shape of personal gifts? Nay, what more pleasing a sight to gaze upon than this smart, good-looking young officer could the heart of a maiden desire?



Now Reginald Crafer-whom at this present moment you see eating buttered toast and a fried sole, as he reads his lawyer's letter-had just come home from the China Station in the *Ianthe* (twin-screw cruiser, first-class, armoured, 8,400 tons); and she having been paid off, the young man was on leave for the time being. He had slept at "The George" overnight for two reasons (ordinarily the naval officer rushes to London by the first train that will bear him, when once he has set foot on shore), one being that he wanted to go to a ball at the Commander-in-Chief's to which the officers of the returned cruiser were mostly invited; the other, that he expected to find a letter from the solicitor, Mr. Bentham-which, as you have seen, he did find.

This letter was in reply to one that Reginald had sent to the lawyer from Hong Kong, which in its own turn had also been a reply. For to the young lieutenant there had come at the Station a letter from Mr. Bentham, stating that his uncle-also a Reginald Crafer-was dead, that he had left the younger Reginald a few thousand pounds (the principal part of his income having been derived from an annuity and a government pension) and "Phips House." Then Reginald had written back for further details, had received the above-quoted answer at the Naval Club this morning, and-*voilà tout!*

Of course, he knew as much about the mysterious entailment of Phips House as the lawyer did; it would have been strange had he not done so. Eleven different Crafers had held possession of it since Nicholas departed this life in King William III.'s reign: eleven different Crafers, all of whom had sought high and low for the fortune it was supposed to contain, or for some clue as to how the fortune of "Fiftie thousand guineas" was to be obtained; and of those Crafers many had torn their hair in vexation, and others had stamped their feet and cursed and sworn-or, perhaps I had better say, grumbled and growled-at finding nothing. Of such irate descendants the last, the late lamented Reginald, had, however, not been one. Perhaps because he thought that if his ten predecessors could find no fortune in the house, he was not likely to do so; or perhaps because he was himself very comfortably off with his annuity and his pension from a Government office, and his few thousands of invested money-which Lieutenant Crafer now came into-he bothered his head not at all about the chimera of the house at Strand-on-the-Green. Certainly he cursed not over it, neither did he swear-unless it was at the damp from the river! – and, being bald, he had no hair to tear; and he never tapped panels nor prodded walls nor looked for secret doors in the house, contenting himself with letting young "Reg" do all this when he came to stay with him. For the rest, and being a bachelor, he spent much time at his club; he took a faint interest in the curiosity which the legend of Phips House excited in the minds of his friends, as well as of the waterside loafers of Brentford, Kew, Mortlake, and all the immediate neighbourhood; he would even go so far as to invite people to stay with him and hunt about the house for themselves, when they were not enjoying the prospect from the windows of the market-gardens across the river. But of excitement in the legendary fortune, this bald-headed and comfortably situated ex-Civil Servant could get up not one jot; and when a burglar broke into the house, determined on finding, as he informed the barrister who defended him, "the blooming fortune if it was to be found," he went to see him at Pentonville after his trial and told him he sincerely wished he had found it. Thus, to him, the fortune of Phips House was but an allegory or a myth, which he regarded but as a grown-up child regards a fairy-tale; and so, unbelieving in all that pertained to it, he passed away to Kensal Green and Reginald the Second ruled in his stead.

But he, when he was a child-being of a romantic nature-did believe in the fortune of Nicholas Crafer; and when he was a man-being a sailor-had not lost all faith in the romance.

Whether that faith was justified, you who read on shall see.

## CHAPTER II. AN OLD BIT OF HISTORY

Who is he, especially of the London brood, who knows not Strand-on-the-Green? Who knows not that it lies below the choice and savoury town of Brentford and below Kew Bridge also, on the Middlesex shore; that it is composed of a long, straggling row of houses, many of them old and most of them quaint, which are of all shapes, sizes, and uses? One there is in which once dwelt Zoffany, the painter; hard by is a waterman's cottage, where the succulent winkle or shrimp may be purchased and eaten-the former with a pin supplied by the vendor; then comes a row of comfortable houses panelled and wainscotted within, then more tiny shops (with, interspersed all along the row, the genial public-house); then more private houses; and so on to Phips House-old, quaint, gabled, and mullioned, panelled also, and wainscotted. In it are fireplaces in the corners of the rooms-sure proofs of the early Charles II. period; it has also carved wooden doors and carved balustrades and banisters; there are balconies to the front windows having bulging rails to fit the hoops of women belonging to long-forgotten days; and all about it is that genuine look of latter Stuart times which may still be found in very many houses in this locality.

"What did it appear like when Nicholas first bought it?" mused Reginald Crafer to himself a few evenings later than the day he breakfasted at "The George." "Even if it hasn't altered, its surroundings have." Then he turned his eyes around and went on, gazing down the river meanwhile. "The 'White Hart' at Mortlake was there, I think-I have read of Jacobites taking boat from its steps; and so was the Duke of Devonshire's and old Chiswick beyond, with wicked Barbara Villiers standing at the window of her house and shrieking for the return of her lost youth and beauty. But not much else! No main drainage then, no horrible gasworks, no District Railway bridges! It must have changed a good deal since Nicholas hid his fabulous fortune, or the story of it, in the house-if it is fabulous."

He put the key into the door and entered, musing still.

"I wonder what Nicholas did to pass his time? There was no 'Packet Hotel,' no 'Indian Queen,' no 'Star and Garter' then." These places are, it should be told, hostelries of more modern date. "There was not much for him to do to amuse himself," he went on. "He was too late to know Kinde Kit of Kingston, who lived here; too early for the Georgian revels at Kew. Yet he might have often seen William of Orange (it was hard by here they attempted to assassinate him); he might have smoked and drunk at the 'Three Pidgeons,' at Brentford, and known the daughter of Shakespeare's brother-actor, Lowin, who kept the place. Who knows?"

This young man, you see, was well acquainted with the history of the neighbourhood in which stood the house he had now inherited. It was not remarkable that he should be so. From his earliest childhood his fancy had been strongly taken by all the gossip connected with the property that must some day be his if his uncle remained unmarried, and never did he by haphazard see the names of Brentford, Kew, or Strand-on-the-Green printed but he studied every word in connection with them. Thus, he was neither erudite nor pedantic, but only very interested in all that concerned the spot, and, therefore, very well informed about it.

What he did not know was-in common with his forerunners-much about the mysterious Nicholas Crafer, who had contrived, by arousing the curiosity of his descendants through the medium of his strange will, to keep his memory very green. And not only the curiosity of his descendants, but also of most people brought into the slightest connection with the spot. The waterside hands, the barge-loaders and the lookers after private skiffs and gigs, the keepers of local refreshment-houses, whether "publics" or those chaste bowers which have upon their fronts the mystic legends, "Tea and hot water 9d." (how can there be tea-drinking without hot water?); even the hands of the steamers passing up and down-of the *Cardinal Wolsey* for Hampton Court (which place it reacheth

not without arduous struggles and terrible delay), and the captains of the *Bridegroom* and the *Wedding Ring* (graceful names well suited to riparian jaunts!) – all knew the legend of Phips House as well as its new owner. So, too, did the dwellers on Kew Green, the respectable City men who resided on the Kew Gardens estate and were on familiar terms with the parson, and the City clerks who abode in great numbers in modern Gunnersbury and modern Chiswick. All knew, I say, the legend of Phips House; all had heard of Nicholas Crafer, who was considered to have been a pirate and buccaneer; all-watermen, City men, and City clerks-were proud of their local history of Nicholas and their-in a way-connection with him.

What was, however, really known of him by the family-reduced now to Reginald alone-what had filtered through the eleven generations with regard to him, was no more than this: He had been an officer in the navy of the Commonwealth, being but a lad at that time, and serving under Blake during its last two years of existence; then under Charles II. in the royal navy; and then under James II., in whose first year of misrule he retired. Many a fight did he engage in in those days, as was well known to his descendants: he was in the destruction of the Spanish ships at Santa Cruz in 1657, and at the defeat of Van Wassenaer by James, Duke of York, in 1665, in the "four days' fight" in 1666, and he assisted in the capture of the *Golden Horse* corsair in 1681, and many other valiant deeds besides.

Yet were none of these martial feats so romantic as one other thing he did, or, rather two other things. He accompanied Sir William Phips, then plain Captain Phips, in both his expeditions for the fishing up of the Hispaniola Plate-the second attempt proving successful. Now, as not all the world knows, but as his descendants of course knew, 'twas in the *Algier Rose* that Phips made his first attempt to get this plate in the reign of that most high and puissant prince, King Charles II., of ever-gracious memory. 'Twas that great monarch who put at his disposal the *Algier Rose*, after listening to Phips's tale in the embrasure of a window at Whitehall-what time he was playing with the silky ears of a spaniel on his knee and leering at a young country lady fresh come to Court-a tale narrating how the Spanish plate ship, or carrack, was sunk off Hispaniola-or, as we now call it, San Domingo and Hayti; and how he, Phips, felt sure he could fish it up. But Phips came back without the plate, and the august Charles, being dead, could help him no more, nor would the saintly James, his successor, do so.

Phips was therefore now on what he would, perhaps, have called his "beam-ends," and so were some of his officers, including Nicholas Crafer; and on them he would doubtless have remained had not his good fortune thrown in his way at this moment a friendly patron. This was none other than Christopher Monk, second Duke of Albemarle, a nobleman who loved much the bottle-which fondness led to his death shortly afterwards, when Governor of Jamaica-and who also took great interest in stories of buried treasure, and listened to tales of such things with eagerness. To him, therefore, Phips opened up the subject of the Spanish plate. He swore that though he had failed once in finding it he would never fail again; and he so much impressed his drunken Grace with his energy and sincerity that, at last, he sailed once more for the West Indies as captain of a private ship commissioned to hunt for the plate, and with him Nicholas sailed too as second officer. Much money had been advanced for the quest; Albemarle taking six shares, while three were allotted to Phips, one to Nicholas, and one between the other officers, and the remainder amongst those adventurer-merchants who had assisted in finding the necessary capital.

All this is matter of history, which may be grubbed up by the student with little pains; so, too, is the fact that Phips did come back with the plate, having gone through some considerable dangers and hardships to secure it. Then the saintly King, James-who took a tenth as his royalty for granting the patent-was advised to seize all the plate on the ground that "one half of what had been in the Spanish carrack was missing," and that, consequently, Phips had secreted that half somewhere for his future use. But the King, contrary to what might have been expected of him, refused to believe such to be the case-perhaps because he had been a sailor himself once, and a good one, too! – and, instead, ordered the money to be divided and apportioned as had been at first arranged, and also, at the request of the graceless but goodhearted Duke, knighted the captain, making him thereby Sir William Phips.

So Albemarle got his six shares, Phips got his three, and Nicholas his one: but as to how much each got considerable doubt has ever existed, since some historians say the plate realised only £90,000, and some say £300,000; though it was thought that Phips got £16,000. But whatever it was it was sufficient to assist the Duke in ruling royally over his colony (for a year, when the bottle finished him!), to support Phips until the time came when he was made Governor of New England, and to enable Nicholas to buy his house at Strand-on-the-Green.

But than this no more was known, except that Nicholas lived some years after the making of his will, since he did not die until 1701, when the smallpox carried him off. And of what he did in those years neither was anything more known, nor of how he and Phips really got the treasure, what adventures they went through, or what hardships they then endured.

Yet, as will now be seen, the time was at last at hand when Reginald Crafer the second, twelfth in descent from Nicholas, the so-called pirate and buccaneer, was to find out all that there was to be discovered about him. He was soon to learn the reason of Nicholas's strange will and testament.

## CHAPTER III. THE VANISHED MR. WARGRAVE

Now, in the letter of Mr. Bentham, the lawyer, to the present Reginald, mention was made of "a scrap of paper once found," of which the young man knew. And that he did so know of it was most certain, as all who came after the fourth Crafer in descent from Nicholas had known, for it was in the time of that fourth Crafer and in the first year of the reign of George III. that it had been discovered. Only, when it was discovered it told nothing, since on it were simply the words, "My friend Mr. Wargrave has the papers that will tell all. – NICHOLAS CRAFER."

Nothing could very well have been more disheartening than this; and I fear that the fourth Crafer in descent, whose Christian name was David, must, when he discovered that paper, have been one of the family who indulged in hair (or wig) tearings and in strong language. He was himself a doctor-for the eleven descendants of Nicholas had among them embraced all the professions and callings fit for gentlemen-having a fair practice in the neighbourhood of Brentford and Chiswick, and was consequently a stay-at-home man. And during his home-keeping life, while having a few alterations made to what was in those days called the saloon, or withdrawing room, he found the useless piece of paper. It was in the leaves of a Wagener, always called by sailors a "Waggoner" (a book of charts, or *routier*, much used by old navigators), that the scrap was discovered pasted-between the cover and the title-page. The book itself was in a little wooden cupboard, not a foot square, that had always been evidently regarded as a secret receptacle and hiding-place, since over and in front of the cupboard-doors, which had an antique lock to them, the wainscotting was capable of removal. Yet, when last the wainscotting had been put over that cupboard, it was easy enough to perceive that the person who had so closed it up had intended it should not be opened again for some time, since the wood of the wainscot had been glued in some manner to the cupboard-door. Then, in the passage of time between Nicholas having closed up the cupboard and the epoch of David Crafer arriving, when the builder's man lighted on it-which was a period of over fifty-five years-some stamped hangings of floss and velvet had been placed over the wainscot by another owner; so that at last the little cupboard with its contents was entirely hidden away. That Nicholas could have ever intended his scrap of paper-if the information was really of any use in his own day, or in days near to his time-to be so lost, it was of course impossible to decide. Doubtless he never dreamt that the panels would be covered up by the hangings, and perhaps thought that, therefore, sooner or later, some curious eye would observe that there was a difference in their size where they enclosed the cupboard. However, whatever he thought or did not think, the builder in making his alterations had unearthed the paper.

Only, as David Crafer remarked, it was of no use to him now it was found and never would be; which was the truth, for when he in his turn went the way of those before him he had never so much as really and positively found out who Mr. Wargrave was.

Yet he had tried hard to do so in the time that was left him. Knowing his ancestor to have been a sailor, every record bearing on the sailors of the past fifty years was searched by him or those employed by him, but there was no Wargrave who had ever been heard of. The Admiralty officials of those days swore no Wargrave had ever served in the navy; whoever he was, they said, one thing was certain-he was not a King's officer. Then David Crafer got the idea that the man was, after all, a lawyer whom Nicholas confided in; but again he found himself at bay. The records of dead-and-gone lawyers, even when they had been famous, were scanty enough in the early days of last century; when they had not been famous-above all, when they were only attorneys-those records scarcely existed at all. So, at last, David Crafer gave up the law in despair. If there had ever been a Wargrave in that profession, he, at least, could find out nothing about him. Next, he tried the City, which was not a very large place in his own day, and had been smaller in the days of Nicholas. Yet it was difficult to

glean any information of the City even in those times-especially since the information desired was nearer sixty than fifty years old. It is true there was, as far back as the period of Nicholas Crafer and the mysterious Wargrave, a London Directory (such useful volume having been first published in 1677), yet in the copies which he could obtain a sight of-which was done with difficulty, since reference books were not preserved with much care in those times, and those which he did see were neither consecutive nor in a perfect condition-he found no mention of the name of Wargrave.

So time went on, David Crafer grew old and feeble, and had almost entirely desisted from the search for the name of Wargrave-the man himself must, of course, have been dead for some decades-and had long since come to the conclusion that he would never find out anything about him. Then, all at once, when visiting a friend in the City, and while turning over a volume in that friend's parlour, he lighted on the name and possibly the person. The book was entitled "A Compleat Guide to all Persons who have any Trade of Concern within the City of London and parts adjacent;" and peering into it in a half-interested, half-hopeless, and half-hearted manner, old David saw the name of "Samuel Wargrave, silversmith and dealer, Cornhill." Moreover, he saw that the book containing the name was published in 1701, the year when Nicholas died.

Therefore he thought he had found his man, or, at least, had found the chance of gleaning some information about him. But, alas! the year 1701 was a long way off the year 1760, when the paper was discovered in the little cupboard, and still longer off the year 1768, at which period David had now arrived. Moreover, David was, as has been said, grown old and feeble; "he did not know," he told himself that night as the coach took him back to Strand-on-the-Green, "if he cared overmuch now to go a-hunting for a dead man, or even for the knowledge that dead man might have possessed of Nicholas Crafer's treasure."

Yet, old as he was, being now turned seventy, he took the trouble to make some inquiries. He had a son, an officer, away serving in the American colonies, himself no longer a very young man; if he could find something more to leave him than the money for which he had sold his practice and his little savings and the old house to live in, why it would be well to do so. So, once more, armed with the knowledge that Mr. Wargrave had been a silversmith in Cornhill, he began further inquiries-which resulted in nothing! At least in nothing very tangible, though they proved that the man who was in the "Compleat Guide" had once lived where he was stated to have done. The parish books to which David obtained access showed this; and they showed also that he must have been the tenant of the whole house-even though he let off part of it, as was likely enough-since he was rented at £133 per annum, a good sum in those days even for a City house; but they told nothing further. No one could be unearthed who remembered Wargrave the silversmith, no one who had ever heard of him. Nor did his business appear to have survived him, since, in the half-year following his last payment of rates and taxes, the next occupant of the house was a mercer, who in his turn was followed by a coffee-house keeper, who, in David's own day-as he saw with his own eyes-was succeeded by a furniture dealer.

And then, as the old man reflected, this Mr. Wargrave might not be, probably was not, the man who was Nicholas's friend.

At this period David Crafer died; and ere his son, the officer in the American colonies, could be apprised of his death he too was dead, being shot through the heart in a skirmish with some Indians near Boston. Confirmation being received of his death, the property passed to another Crafer belonging to the elder branch, which was still existent in Hampshire; and by the time he in his turn had passed away the finding of the scrap of paper in the Wagener, and the hunt for Mr. Wargrave, were almost forgotten, if not entirely so. In fact, as generation continued to succeed generation, not only did these incidents become forgotten but the whole thing became almost a legend or a fairy-tale. One inheritor even went so far as to scoff at the will of Nicholas, saying that he was a romantic old sea-dog who had taken this manner of keeping his memory before his descendants; while, as you have seen, the late Reginald regarded the whole story with a pleasing indifference. But the present Reginald, who was himself of a romantic tendency, could by no means regard the story in anything

but the light of truth, and, if he ever indulged in any hopes at all, they were more that the mystery might be cleared up in his time than that the fortune of £50,000 should come to him.

And it is because in his time the mystery was cleared up, that the whole story of what Nicholas Crafer did leave behind him "equivalent unto the summe of fiftie thousand guineas" can now be told.

## CHAPTER IV. CAZALET'S BANK

Now this is the manner in which the mystery was at last cleared up in the time of Reginald Crafer, Lieutenant, R.N.

There was, and still is, in the neighbourhood that lies between Chancery Lane and Cheapside, an ancient banking establishment that is as old as the Bank of England itself-if not some years older-and that has, from its creation, been known as "Cazalet's." Yet there has been no Cazalet in the firm for nigh upon a hundred years, but, instead, the partners-of whom there are now two-boast the ancient patronymic of Jones. These Joneses are descendants, on the female side, from the last Cazalet, and in this way have become possessed of the old business; and it was when their father-for they are brothers-died, at almost the same time that Reginald's uncle passed out of existence, that a change took place, which led in a roundabout way to the writing of this narrative of "The Hispaniola Plate."

Old Mr. Jones had, I say, been gathered to all the other Joneses who had gone before him, and the two young Messrs. Jones-one aged forty-five and the other thirty-nine-decided that his decease marked a period in the existence of Cazalet's when a change ought to be made. That change was to take a shape, however, in the first instance, which caused a vast number of the people who banked with them, as well as all their senior clerks-many of them nearly as old as the late Jones himself-to shake their heads and to wonder why that late Jones did not burst forth corporeally from his grave, or, at the very least, appear in the spirit, to forbid the desecration that was about to take place. For the old house was to be pulled down-ruthlessly sacrificed to the spirit of the times, and a bran-new one was to be built up in its place!

"Well," said the ancient chief cashier-who had been there boy and man since 1843, and had grown old, and also tobacco-and-spirit-stained, during the evenings of a life spent in the service of Cazalet's-when he received the first intimation of this terrible news, "if that's going to happen it's time I was off. Lor' bless me! a new house! Well, then, they'll require some new clerks. They don't want a wreck like me in such a fine new modern building as they're going to shove up."

"Why, Mr. Creech," said a much younger *employé* of Cazalet's, a youth who came in airily every morning from Brixton, and was supposed to be the best lawn-tennis player in that suburb, "that's just why you ought to remain; you'll give the new show a fine old crusted air of respectability; you're a relic, you are, of the good old days. They'll never be able to do without you."

But Mr. Creech only grunted, and, it being one o'clock in the day when this conversation took place, he lifted up the lid of his desk, took some sandwiches out of a paper packet, and, applying his lips to a small flask, diffused a genial aroma of sherry-and-water around him. Yet, as he thus partook of his lunch, he wagged his head in a melancholy manner and thought how comfortable he had been for the best part of his life in the old, dingy, dirty-windowed house; it having been a standing rule of Cazalet's that the windows were never to be cleaned, and rumour had it that they had not been touched since the house was built.

That the firm "would never be able to do without him," as his cock-a-hoop junior had remarked, seemed, indeed, to be the case, and received exemplification there and then. For at that moment a bell rang in the inner sanctum where the brothers sat, and a moment afterwards the office-boy who had answered it told Mr. Creech that the "pardners wanted to see 'im;" whereon he gulped down a last drop of the sherry-and-water, wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, and went in to them, wondering "what was up now?"

"Sit down, Creech, sit down," said the "pardners" together, "we want to have a talk with you about the new house." Here Creech grunted. "Or rather," the elder one went on, "the old house;"



whereon the cashier smiled, as much as to say that that was a far more congenial subject to him. Then Alfred, the elder brother, continued:

"You know more about this house, Creech, than anybody else." Creech gave a grunt again here, which tailed off into a sigh. "Why, bless my soul! you've been here five years longer than I've been in existence-there's no one else knows as much about us as you do."

"I came here a boy of sixteen," said Creech, looking at the clock on the wall as though it was a kind of calendar of his career, "and I'm sixty-five now. That makes forty-nine years. Come Easter, I've been here fifty years. It's a long while!"

"It is a long while," said the younger partner, Henry. "But you're all right, you know, Creech. Cazalet's look after those who have served them long and well. When you feel like retirement and a pension, you say so. Only, I don't know how we shall get on without you. However, the retirement is a long way off yet, I hope. Let us talk about the present."

"What we want to know is this," said Alfred, "and you're the person to tell us. What is there stored away down in the vaults below the strong room? We haven't been down there for years; not since we were boys and our father used to let us go down sometimes. There seemed to be only an awful lot of mouldering rubbish, and it'll all have to be gone over and either destroyed or fetched up before the builders go to work on the foundations."

"So there is a lot of rubbish," replied Creech, "though I haven't been down there myself for over twenty years. The last time I was down was when the Prince o' Wales went to return thanks at St. Paul's. I remember it because I found a bottle of port wine on a ledge, and we drank his health as he went by. I told your father about it afterwards, and he said it must have been some of the Waterloo port his father had had given him."

"What else is there?"

"A lot of rubbish," repeated Creech. "There's several old boxes, most of them burst open, with leases, I should say, belonging to dead and gone customers of the bank, and a heap of broken old furniture that belonged upstairs when the family lived over the bank. I found a fine copper warming-pan, that Mr. Jones made me a present of; and I think there's an old spinet down there, and broken chairs and tables, and office stuff, and a basket full of broken glass and crockery, and that sort of thing."

"Humph!" said the elder brother. "Leases, eh? We ought to look into those. If they're ours we ought to preserve them, and if they belonged to customers who have left descendants, they should be returned. They may still be of the greatest value. Who can tell?"

"My wife," said the younger, "has been filling the new house at Egerton Gardens full of the most awful-looking gimcracks I ever saw. She'll want that spinet directly she hears of it, and if she could only find another warming-pan she'd hang it up in the bedroom passages as an ornament."

"My wife," said Creech, "warms the beds with ours in the winter. It's a very good one, but I'll send it back if Mrs. Jones wants to decorate her landing."

"No," said Jones Junior, "we'll say nothing about it. There's far too much rubbish in the house already. Suppose," to his brother, "we go down into the vaults and have a look round."

This was agreed to, so down they went, after Creech had armed himself with a large paraffin candle and had rummaged out a bag full of keys of all sizes and shapes, while the elder Jones carried with him the more modern and bright keys that opened the safes and strong room. This latter they were, of course, in the habit of visiting every day, but the trap door leading to the vaults below-which was in the floor of the strong room-testified to the truth of Creech's assertion that it possibly had not been opened for twenty years. First of all, when the key was found, the lock was so rusty that it could not be turned until some oil had been brought, and then the door had stuck so that the two brothers-for Creech was no good at this work-could hardly pull it up. However, at last they got it open, and then they descended the stone steps one by one.

The place-as seen by the light of the candle-was, as the old cashier had described it, an *olla-podrida* of all kinds of lumber. The hamper of broken glass and crockery was there, so was the spinet, looking very antique and somewhat mouldy-a thing not to be wondered at, seeing that the Jones family had not lived over the bank during the present century. The broken chairs, stools, and tables were all piled in a corner-in another stood the boxes, some of them burst open, of which Creech had spoken. And around and about the vaults there pervaded the damp atmosphere which such places always have. The cashier had brought a second candle in his pocket, which he now lit, and by this additional light they saw all that there was to be seen.

"A lease of a farm in Yorkshire," said Alfred, taking up the first one that lay loose on the top of the first box, whose rusted padlock came off it, nails and all, as they touched the lid, "called Shrievalls, from the Earl of Despare to Antony Jones. Lor' bless me! Why, Shrievalls has been in our family for any amount of time, and I never heard of the Earl. I suppose we bought it afterwards. That's no use to anyone. What's this? A covenant of the Earl of Despare to pay an annuity to Ambrose Hawkins for the remainder of his life, made in the year 1743; that covenant has expired! That's no use to any one, either. A bundle of acceptances by Sir Marmaduke Flitch to Peter Jones-our great-grandfather. Flitch! Flitch! No knowledge of him either. An authority from Annabella Proctor to pay to her brother, so long as he holds his peace-humph! – ha! – well, that's an old family scandal-we needn't read that just now. Transfer of a lease from Mr. Stringer, son of Sir Thomas Stringer, a judge of the King's Bench, to Mr. Samuel Wargrave, late silversmith and jeweller, of Cornhill, now of Enfield, dated 1688. I suppose one or the other of them was a customer of the bank."

"Then it was Wargrave!" exclaimed Creech. "I've seen that name in some of our old books. At least, I think I have. Let me see-Wargrave. Where *have* I seen it? I know it somehow."

"It can't matter," said the younger Jones. "There has been no Wargrave on our books for a long while."

"A bundle of letters," went on the elder, taking them up, "from the Lady Henrietta Belville to Bartholomew Skelton, Esquire, at the University of Leyden, with one beginning, 'My dear and only love, – Since my 'usband is away to York'-Oh, dear! dear! we needn't read that now."

"I should think not," said the younger brother. "The Skelton family still banks with us. We had better send the letter back intact. Bankers should keep secrets as well as lawyers."

"Wargrave," mumbled Creech to himself, as he leaned against an antique office-stool minus a leg. "Wargrave! Where have I heard the name?"

"An account book with no name in it but a date. And written therein, 'On behalf of the Earl of Mar, his expedition.' Humph! ha! well, we had a good many Jacobites among our old customers. What's this? A glove with a lot of tarnished silver fringe about it, a woman's-these are romantic finds! – a bunch of withered flowers, almost dust, and a little box-"

"That's it," exclaimed Creech, "a box with the name of Wargrave on it. That's it!"

"On the contrary, Creech, there is nothing on it; but, inside, a paper with written on that, and badly spelt, too-'His hair. Cut from his head by a true friend after his death at the Battle of Clifton Moor.'"

"No, no," said Creech, "I don't mean that box. I mean there is a box somewhere in this vault-a small one, with the name of Wargrave on it."

"There are a good many boxes with names on them," said one of the brothers, glancing round; "and I doubt if any speak more pathetically of the past than this one with its wisp of withered hair and its label."

But Creech was hunting about in the rubbish by now, and at last, exclaiming, "That's the one I mean," seized on a small iron box a foot square and brought it to where the partners and candles were.

"That," he said, as he plumped it down on the spinet, which emitted a rusty groan from its long-disused keys as he did so, "is the box I mean. I remember seeing it years and years ago. Look at what's written on it."

In faded ink, brownish red now instead of black, on paper a dirty slate colour instead of white, were the words: -

This box is to be given to any descendant or representative of Lieutenant Nicholas Crafer who is alive at my death. To be given at once after, but not before. – Samuel Wargrave.

*Nota Bene.* – I do believe it is very important.

*January, 1709.*

"And," exclaimed the younger brother, "being so very important it has lain here for over 180 years. We *have* been assiduous for our customers."

"But why," said the elder brother, "when you saw it years ago, Creech, was nothing done? Why did not you, or my father, find out some Wargrave or some Crafer? There must be some left."

"Your father said he would make some inquiries; but I don't know whether he ever did or not. At any rate, it went clean out of my head. I was just off on my holidays, I remember, when I happened to see it; and, to tell you the truth, I never thought any more about it from that day to this. And I shouldn't have done so now if it hadn't been for that transfer you read out a minute ago."

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A fortnight later the box was in Reginald Crafer's possession, with an apology from Messrs. Cazalet and Co. for the long period in which it had lain unattended to in their hands. They had discovered him by a reference to the suburban directory, after a search through the London and also several county directories, and Mr. Bentham's name had been quite enough to assure Messrs. Cazalet and Co. that he was the rightful person to whom to entrust the box.

The lock—a most excellent one, considering when it was made—had to be burst open, for no key could be found to fit it, and then Reginald saw what were its contents. First, there was a piece of paper on which was written: -

I do feel so sure that Mr. Wargrave will carry out my instructions after my death that I leave this pretious legacy to him in all good faith, and to you my descendant to whom it may after come, with all my love and good wishes; and so I say, May what you find herein prosper you. N. C.

Then, in a neat roll, tied up with black ribbon, was a vast number of sheets of paper covered with writing, some of it being very neat, some of it very ungainly, with many words scored out and others inserted, and also many misspelt, and some not spelt twice alike.

And Reginald Crafer, after an early meal, sat himself down to a perusal of those closely written sheets which had been at last unearthed after lying in the vaults of Cazalet's bank so long.

This is what they told him.

**The History of**  
**NICHOLAS CRAFER, Lieutenant,**  
**and the Search for**  
**THE HISPANIOLA PLATE,**  
**with all that occurred during that search and followed after it**  
**As told by him**

## CHAPTER V. CAPTAIN WILLIAM PHIPS

There will be but little need that I ask pardon of him or her who receives this paper from Mr. Wargrave, since if he who does so shall have courage, or she who receives it have an honest friend to depend upon, they will have no reason to reproach me for what I have done. The finding of it will tell him or her how they shall become possessed of a fortune; and those who have gone before them and after me can never know how they have missed it. That it is not well for any Crafer to find this paper near unto my time is the reason why, with great care and pains, I have so bestowed it in my friend's hand, and, better is it that I shall have laid in grave a hundred years or more before it is discovered, than that any coming close to me should light upon it.

Now, you who so receive my writing shall understand the reason whereof I say this. Because it partly relateth to a large amount of plate, of jewels, of gold and coins, all of which did indeed belong to the Spanish Carrack which my commander, Phips, digged or rather fished up, from the bottom of the sea where it had lain forty-four years, or, as some did aver, fifty, and because it was the rightful property of him, of the Duke of Albemarle who had a share therein, of King James who had a tenth, and of many others. For some of this money and valuables was all stolen by a thief who was ever a rogue in grain, and what is true enough is, that there was a many suspicions when the finders came back to London that one half of this treasure was missing. As indeed some was, tho' not stolen by him whom the accusers pointed at. For Phips, who was an honest-born New England boy-one of twenty-six children-who had been bred a shepherd and had then become a sailor, was indeed no thief, but ever an honest man, as James declared, who was himself none too honest. Yet, as I say, when the ship with the treasure came back to England, there was a cry that one half was missing, that Phips had left me and others behind to hide away that half, and that, indeed, we were all thieves-tho' we were none, or only one of us, and that was neither Phips nor I.

Now, if so be that the house which I called after my dear and honoured friend, and superior in rank tho' not in birth-for the Crafers have ever been gentlemen of repute and of good descent from an ancient family in Hampshire-be not burned down or falleth not down from age, and our line dieth not out, and the paper telling where these writings are be not doomed to be found by a stranger, then must a Crafer be the one to read them. And he will find strange matter in it who doth so read. For in the long winter evenings which are before me-since I have begun to write this narrative in the month of November, 1700, and trust to finish it with the incoming of the New Century-I do propose to tell you who may open the packet all that befel our voyages to find the contents of the Hispaniola Plate Ship, which was sunken off "The Boylers," a reef of shoals a few leagues off of the island of Aiitti, as the natives call it; but known generally by its Spanish name of San Domingo.

And being but a poor penman I mean to divide my story into heads, thusly.

First, I mean to tell you of my acquaintance with Phips at the time he approached The King, I mean Charles; then of how he sailed in the *Algier Rose* for Hispaniola, and of two mutinies. Then, how after four years, we again sailed in the Duke's ship, or *Furie*, and what happened to us in the fishing up of the plate. But more than all this is to tell you of shameful villainies and thievings that took place, and of how the chief villain was frustrated so that not he but another was to be benefited. And who, think you, my descendant whom I know not, is that other? You may think Phips, you might imagine myself or the Duke, you might suppose some of the other adventurers. Yet 'tis not so. 'Tis no less an one than *you-you, yourself*. That is if you have a manly heart, or, being a woman, a man to help you. For as I have writ-and if I repeat myself you must forgive me, for we sailors who fought battles almost weekly had but little enough time to study the art of writing; and you will find your

reward by reading this-it is you who are to benefit. You are to have the fortune which the thief was possessed of, tho' not what he stole.

Therefore, having made this introduction, I proceed to tell my tale. And as I have, although a sailor, been ever a God-fearing man, I pray that it shall be a Crafer who receives this from where I have disposed of it. For it was I who gained it all from him, and tho' I shall never see you who come after me, you may well suppose that I would sooner, far sooner, that the fortune came to one of my own flesh and blood than to one no way allied to me.

So I begin.

'Twas in the year of our Lord 1682, and during the visit of Prince George,<sup>1</sup> son of the Elector of Hanover, that I made the friendship of Phips, then Captain of a private ship hailing from Boston. I was ashore from the royal yacht that had brought the Prince over, and, insomuch as I now sought another ship, had gone into lodgings in Spring Gardens, both because of the freshness of the air over that of the city and its nearness to the Admiralty office. And it was at this latter, where there had creeped up again a good habit of the Admirals of meeting their officers frequently, that I encountered William Phips. A brave, topping gentleman he was, too, – for all he was a Puritan, tho', I think, ever in his mind a sailor first-then thirty-two years of age, fine and big and well dressed. Now, as a colonist and but a private sailor man, Phips was inferior to all of us who sailed for the King, yet he won soon upon us. He was brought in by Matthew Aylmer, then holding the rank of commander, though destined for much higher things, as I have lived to see; and soon we were told what his business was. This was no less than to get the King to give him a ship in which he had a mind to go treasure-hunting. Yet this was not a vision neither, for says he to us,

"Gentlemen, I know what I speak of and 'tis not foolishness. In Hispaniola-where I have been many a time-there is a place called Porto de la Plata. Surely some of you King's officers have heard tell of it!"

Two or three amongst us nodded of our heads with assent at this, and he continued: -

"Well gentlemen, do you know why 'tis so termed? No? Then will I tell you. Forty-four, or as some say fifty years ago, there came ashore at that spot-which then had no name at all-a shipwrecked crew in an open boat, in which there was no room for them to lie down, so stuffed full was it of plate."

Here one or two of us laughed, and some seemed much aroused, while Phips continued: -

"They were saved from the great Spanish plate ship which had sunk some leagues out when striking on a reef, and what they brought with them was all that they could save. This was well known all over the island shortly afterwards, and is spoken of now, even unto this day."

He had told this tale before to Aylmer, as afterwards I learned from him, and a few moments later he told it to the King, being taken over to him by his friend and introduced. Now, it is not for me to write down the grievous faults and failings of Charles-he is gone before his Judge! – but I will say this, that, with all his errors, he had a mind beyond the common. Therefore he harkened unto Phips, and later on he called his brother James, whose faults were greater than his, but a good sailor, and asked him what he thought on't?

James was at once all for it and hot upon the idea, for it seemed that it was not the first time he had heard of the sunken plate ship, and he was taken with Phips-as, indeed, were all who met with him. So, to make what would be a tedious story short, Phips received a commission from the King to go out in command of the *Algier Rose*, with orders to find the wreck and bring all away in her if he could. And it fell out to my great good fortune that I went too. To my good fortune as it came later, tho' not then, for it was not on this journey that we found the treasure, as you shall soon know.

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<sup>1</sup> Afterwards King George I. of England. – Ed.

Yet we hoped to find it, and so I was glad to go. It was in the "Dog" tavern at Westminster, where many naval men did, and still do, resort, that I got my appointment to the *Algier Rose*, Phips, who had taken a fancy to me, swearing that he would not sail without me. So there I made interest with several from the Admiralty, who would come to the "Dog" for half a pint of mulled sack, or a dram of brandy, and at last received my commission as first lieutenant to the frigate. A better ship never swam than she, carrying eighteen guns and ninety-five men, and when we took her out early in '83 I can tell you that the brave hearts on board of her were joyful.

In 1683 it was when we dropped down on the tide, with a lusty cheer or two from the King's ships lying in the river off Bugsby's Hole-for they knew our intent-and another from the old man-of-war, the *Jerzy*, in which I had served as a young lieutenant; and so away out to sea with light canvas all in aloft, and just a single reef in our tops'ls, and off we went to find the great Hispaniola wreck.

And so I put down my pen awhile.

## CHAPTER VI. THE BEGINNING OF A MUTINY

Now it happened that at the "Dog" tavern one day there came in, when we were sitting there, an astrologer, or geomancer, as 'tis called-namely, a caster of figures-who marking out Phips (perhaps because of his uncommon and striking appearance) seized upon him to tell his fortune, which he, having ever a mind turned towards fun, was well disposed enough to.

So the cheat, as I thought him to be-though found afterwards he spake true-catching holt upon Phips's hand, looked long and fixedly at it, after which he said that much money should be found by him.

"In very truth," called out Phips, while all around did laugh, "'tis that I go to seek, friend; nor, since every drawer in this tavern and ragamuffin 'twixt here and Charing Cross knows as much, art thou so wondrous a necromancer? Go to! your divinations are not worth a piece."

"Yet, stay," said the caster, speaking up boldly to him-"stay. What you go to seek you shall not find."

"Ha!" exclaimed Phips, looking at him. "Not find it?"

"Nay, not yet. At present you are thirty-two years of age; it wants five ere you shall get that you seek. Then shall you obtain your desires."

"Tis well," exclaimed Phips, "and therefore must I stay the five years where I go, for find it I will. Yet, harkee, friend, put not such reports about in this neighbourhood, or I will slit thy nose for thee. I am a captain of a King's ship now" – as indeed he was, for his commission was made out-"and a good ship too. I want not to lose it through the chatter of any knave."

"Moreover," went on the geomancer, taking no more heed of what he said than tho' he had never spoken-"moreover, this is not all." And as he spake he pricked with a pin a number of little dots on the table, where the drink stood. "This is not all. You shall do more."

"Ay," exclaimed Phips, "I shall! Maybe I shall have thee whipped. Yet continue."

"You shall rule over a large country, though never a King, and you shall die" —

"Stop there," called out Phips, "and say no more. What thou hast promised is enough. As for my death, when it comes, it comes; that also is enough. Now go." And as he spake he picked out from a handful of elephant and other guineas, as well as some silver-pieces, a crown, and tossed it to the fellow, who, pouching it, went off.

Yet, afterwards, when we were well on the road to Hispaniola, Phips would talk with me on this astrologer, and would discuss much his promises. "For," said he, "there have been many such who have told truths. My mother had a paper written down by one which worked out so truly year by year, that at last she flung it in the fire, saying she would no more of it. And a mighty marvellous thing it was! Year by year she bore my father a child for twenty-six years, and the astrologer's paper had so stated, as well as what the sex of the child should be, yearly. And also did it state that I-her ninth-should some day command a King's ship, which led to my always aspiring to do so; and as I now do the *Algier Rose*" – and he stamped on the poop-house where we stood, as though to confirm his words.

By this time it had arrived that we had passed thro' the Gulph Stream and were well on our way for Hispaniola, so that 'twas very hot. Sharks passed near us often, but gave us good heart, since never did they follow us. Portugee Admirals sailed by on the water, their pretty forms dotting the tranquil waves-'tis ever tranquil in these regions-like flowers, and the voyage was a good one. Of our crew also there was nought to complain, the ninety-five men who composed it being all sailors who well knew, their work. 'Twould have been strange had they not known it! Many of them had been fighting the French and the Dutch for the length of their lifetimes; but 'specially had they fought the French, which



seems to be what an Englishman is ordained, for; and they had lived all those lifetimes on the sea. Yet, as you shall learn ere long, they were soon to give us much trouble, and, later, to give us more.

Now, as I have writ, and as, indeed, the Geomancer rightly forecast, it was not to be that the treasure should be found by those who sailed in the *Algier Rose*. Therefore should I not have written down here this our first cruise in search of that treasure, had it not been that what happened on that voyage has much to do with what happened on the second one, when we did indeed find all. To do, that is to say, with the stealing of a great portion of the treasure by a thief, and how it came about that he could so steal it. But I wander from what should be a plain record, and will now proceed.

When once we were safe anchored in Balsamo Bay, which is near unto St. Jago, and not far from the reef called by us the "Boylers," but by the Spaniards and Portygees the "Bajo" – wanderers on the seas who have late been there tell me it is now called the Bajo de la Plata, – we set to work at once; but our efforts met with no success. Of divers we had procured two, one a Portygee mulatto, the other an African negro-the largest and most hideous brute in the form of man that I had ever set my eyes upon. Day by day we sent them down, and day by day they returned, swearing that they could find nothing of the Plate ship-no, not so much as a spar or a block. At first we thought they lied, as, indeed, we ever did, until at last the wreck was found, and then we knew they had spoken truth; for, having floated off, as we once thought, she was three cables-but you shall see.

Thus we worked, fishing ever and catching nothing, for two years, in which time we endured many hardships. To begin with, the Spaniards harassed us much, in spite of our not having been at war with them since '60, and endeavoured to drive us away from the neighbourhood of the Reef. But them we defied, and, on their sending out at last a bomb-ketch to attack us, we first of all spoke it fair, and, on that being no good, blew it out of the water; whereon we heard no more of them, perhaps because just now they were busy with the French, who had for the last six or seven years gotten holt of the part called Aiitti, and wanted the rest.

But now trouble bred amongst us, as, alas! it will do in any number or body of men who, after long seeking for a thing and finding it not, grow moody and heartsore.

For the men began to mutter between themselves and to say that we should never find the sunken ship, and that, since we had a fine frigate of our own, well armed and manned, why not put it to some purpose, and go pirating and buccaneering in the Southern Seas? The first to hear of this was the carpenter, a straightforward honest man of good grit; the last, of course, was the captain. But being myself forewarned by this man, whose name was Hanway, I soon went and spake to the captain, telling him what was going forward and below; and marvellous calm he was when he did hear it.

Being evening, he was sitting in his cabin under the poop, and, for coolness, had divested himself of his coat and waistcoat, and was refreshing of himself with a drink of rum sangaree. Then, when he had passed me over a glass and I had told my tale of what the carpenter had repeated to me, says he, mightily easy: -

"They wish me to go a-pirating in the Southern Seas, do they? And how do they mean to sound me, Crafer?"

"They are going to put it to you first," says I; "then, if you deny them, they mean to seize the ship."

"So, so," replied he, "that is their intention! Well, we will see. What are they at now?"

"Standing about the forepart and in the waist," said I, "talking to each other and doubtless concocting their precious schemes. What is best to be done?"

"Action," says he, "action, Crafer;" and he made for the cabin door that opened on to the quarterdeck.

But here I exclaimed, "What will you do? You have neither coat nor waistcoat, pistol nor hanger; will you go forth and beard mutineers in such a garb as this?"

"Ay! will I," he says, looking for all the world like a great lion-"Ay! will I. And you shall see. In half an hour there will be no mutineers in the *Algier Rose*."

And then, as I regarded his face-on which there was a dreadful look-and observed his great muscular form, I thought what a grand man he was and of what a good breed these New Englanders were. And a few minutes later I had reason for my opinion.

Now Phips had ever treated his men like brothers, never setting them to work he would not put his own hand to, never cursing or swearing at them as so many of the dandy captains and soldier captains-who, good Lord! in those days were sent to command ships at sea-used to do; but ever kind and gentle to them, besides helping them with a turn at their labour. Therefore, as you may think, I was rightly astonished when, on our going on deck, his manner was all changed, so that the William Phips I knew was no longer to be perceived.

"Ho! there, you men," says he, in a voice that neither I nor they had ever heard before; "ho, there, you skulking dogs, what are you doing forward? Come here, all on you, to the quarterdeck. Come here, I say." And with that he stood in his shirtsleeves, looking for them to come forward. Very startled, they did so; coming slow, however, so that Phips hurried them by bawling, "Faster, faster, damn you, or the bos'un shall hase you." Which words from him made them all to look out of the tail of their eyes, but yet to come faster. So that, ere long, he had got half a dozen of 'em ranged up in front of him and a dozen more behind, looking on, moody and dark, as though afraid that whatever project they had formed was nipt in the bud.

"Now," says he with another oath-which never did I expect to hear from him, a New England Puritan and ever a God-fearing man-"now, who's captain of this King's ship, the *Algier Rose*, eh? Speak out."

"You are," they muttered, surlily enough.

"Louder," says he, "louder. You hain't lost your voices, have you? You can make the devil's own noise when you're singing and bellowing your profane ballads in the fo'castle. Speak up!" with still another oath. "Who's captain of this ship, I say?"

"You are," they answered louder, yet looking black enough.

"Very well," says he. "Now listen to me, you lubbers, and listen well."

## CHAPTER VII. THE ENDING OF IT

"Now," he went on, "you're talking about mutiny, I hear, and pirating in the Southern Seas. Well, who's going to begin the mutiny, eh? Which of you? Let him come forward so that I can catch holt of him, and string him up to the fore-top-sail yard with my own hand. Come, which of you is it, to commence with?"

And again he glared terrible fierce at them.

Then says one of them-poor fool! – "We shall never find no plate here; what's the good, captain, of our stopping here?"

In a moment that man was upon his back with the blood pouring from his face, the captain having felled him like a butcher fells an ox, and "Fling him overboard to the sharks," says he. "Quick, or some more of you go, too. I'll have no mutineers here and no talk of the Southern Seas. Over with him, I say!"

But not one of them all moved.

"What," he roared, "it is a mutiny, then! Therefore, let's see the means to quell it. Crafer, call up all the officers. And now, you hounds, you who don't want to go to the Southern Seas, stand on the larboard side. Jump, skip, damn you! All who are on the starboard side when I have counted ten shall be treated as mutineers. Now."

Some did jump and skip in verity, hopping over to the larboard as quick as ever they could; for his wrath was awful to see; while for those who moved slower-though they, too, meant to go-the punishment was terrible. He sprung amongst them like a lion, as I have said; he struck and beat them with his fists, bruising and blackening of their faces; he kicked them like dogs, until every man who had come up to the quarter deck was over on to the larboard side-some of them bellowing with pain, some trying to staunch their bleeding wounds, some leaning over the bow muttering curses in their agony.

Meanwhile the officers had all come up.

"Over with them to the sharks," he cried. "Over! Over! Send other men forward to help bind them and fling them forth. And this brute first," said he, pointing to the man he had first knocked down.

"Mercy! Mercy!" they screamed now, while the other men forward, who were not disaffected, or, at least, had not shown their disaffection, came hurrying aft at the double whistles of the bo'sun and the bo'sun's mate. "Mercy! Mercy! Kill us, but give us not to the sharks. Mercy!"

I whispered to him, "Surely you will not do this thing, sir?" and was eased by a glance from him and a word to the effect that he meant not to do so, yet to scare them, especially the first one, or leader, so that they should have had their bellies full of mutiny; and, meanwhile, the poor piteous wretches were howling and weeping, some calling on their God and some on their mothers, while all the while their comrades bound them tight.

"Now," says he, and at his words there went up a shriek more dreadful than before, "Now, fling over some jerked pork whereby the sharks may be attracted. 'Twill be a fitting prelude to a better meal."

Thereby they roared and roared again until, in very truth, I wonder the Spanish did not hear them on land-and "Over with the lines ready to lower those dogs," says he, "and, meantime, I will go and wash their filthy blood off my hands;" and away he went into his cabin. Then, we who remained on deck saw to the pork being thrown over, what time I found opportunity of telling my officers that he might not yet carry out his dread sentence-and, presently, we saw the most horrid sight that any sailor is ever doomed to see. We perceived in the dim grey of the coming night that terrible heave of

the water that the shark maketh, we saw the ripple caused by many fins, we even saw plain enough the evil, squinting, and upturned eyes looking for more prey. They had come for their suppers and wanted it-they wanted their victims; and the victims, gasping and sweating with fear, saw them as well as we did and knew their wants.

One fell down on deck and died with very fright all in his cords as he was bound, the others shuddered and shrieked again as Phips's voice was heard from the poop, and then he came forth once more.

"Are the sharks here?" he roared, "are they come?"

And as he spoke his eye lighted on him who had fallen dead, and he turned him over with his foot to see if he were truly so.

"A pretty mutineer," then says he, "a pretty mutineer! Well, he is dead, so over with him-he assoils his Majesty's deck; over with him."

In a minute that dead body was cast over the bows and went splashing into the sea. Then we saw the waves all tumbled and tossed as though a seaquake had taken place, or a whale had disturbed them in its passage; we saw the ripples made by the fins of the brute down there, and the silver glisten of those fins-we saw the water tinge from green to pale pink and then to red, until, at last, the dead man's blood had overmastered the sea's natural colour.

Meanwhile still the rebellious ones shouted and bawled; while some who were older cursed and blasphemed, another wept, and still another-the first one whom Phips had beat down-tried, all bound as he was, to rush at him and strike him with his manacled hands, or bite at him.

But now the captain paused, though ever with his eye on this fellow, and spake and said:

"Well, my hearts, how like you mutineering against the King's Grace, eh? and against me who stand here for the King? 'Tis profitable, is it not-far more so than hunting for the plate-ship, with three good meals of jerked pork and drink into you every day? What say you?"

All but that mad and furious one shouted still for mercy-he standing apart glowering-and clasped their hands and said that, if he would but spare them, never more would they think of aught but their duty to the King and him-"only, only," they wailed, "not the sharks, not the sharks!"

"Well," says he, at last, "since you are but beaten hounds and know it, it shall not be the sharks this time-only, henceforth, beware! For if ever again one of you so much as mutter a word of disaffection, so surely shall your blood tinge the waters round as the blood of that mutineer tinges it now. You hear?"

They said they heard, and that there was no fear that ever would they offend more, no, not if the *Algier Rose* stayed there a century, so then Phips spake again, while 'twas noticed by us officers that never did he include the first man-whose name was Brooks-in his address, nor did he cast his eyes once towards him now.

"So be it," he said, "and so it must be. For remember ever, 'tis not against me you offend and rebel, who am but a servant like yourselves, and was, a few short years ago, but a poor sailor also like yourselves; but against the King and the country, who, sending us here, believe and confide in us. Therefore, to mutiny is to commit treason, and for both of these the punishment is Death. But, since this is your first offending, I spare you death-yet must you be punished. Therefore, now listen. Until the frigate touches English waters once again, or until we strike soundings in the Channel, all of you rebels must take a double night-watch, at sea or anchor, and no drink must you have whatsoever, nor ever any leave. Are you content, or have you a better mind for the sharks?"

Poor, wretched fools! What could they say but that they were content-and so they were unbound and set free.

Then, turning to Brooks, and with those fierce and terrible eyes upon him, he continued-

"For you, you are but as a savage beast, and unrepentant. Therefore, I still mean to fling you to the sharks, or to, perhaps, maroon you. Yet will I decide nothing in haste; the sharks," he said,

very grim, "are always there, so, too, are many islands on which to cast you alone. I will take time to think how to punish you."

Can it be conceived that this idiot and wretch, even at such a moment of peril as this, should be still so hardened as to defy Phips! Yet so he did. First he gnashed his teeth at the Captain, and then he swore a great oath that, were he free, he would kill him. And, though he muttered this under his lips, yet Phips heard him.

For a moment he paused, looking fixedly at him, then he called up some of the men who had retreated forward, and said:

"Lower him over to the sharks." And all of us, officers and men, did shudder as we heard the order. "Only," he went on, "since still am I merciful, remembering that I am naught but the servant of the King, lower him by degrees two feet at a time. Then, if by the period he has reached the water's edge he sues not for pardon, let the sharks have him;" saying which he turned on his heel and entered again his cabin.

It was done, amidst the curses of Brooks and his fightings to be free. Longwise, he was lowered, face downwards, and, although twice the lines were lengthened so that, from being twelve feet above the waters he was at last but eight, still only would he revile the King, the captain, and all.

"Thou fool," I called down to him, as, indeed did his shipmates, "recant, and sue for pardon." But still he would not, raving ever.

"Lower," I commanded to the men-"two feet more;" and by two feet so much nearer was he to the beasts below, who now began to disturb the water once again and cause it to heave, and to show their fins and hideous eyes. Still he would not and so, with another order, down he went to four feet from the surface. And now the water was all ruffled and bubbling as though boiling, or as 'tis when a child throws a cake to the trouts in a fishpond, and the eyes of the man looking down into the sea were looking into the eyes of the horrid things gazing up. Yet still, though he was now silent, he would not call for mercy.

The sweat was standing at this time on all our brows and, in very truth, our hearts were softened towards him-for if a villain he was a brave one-and almost did my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, for the time had come for a fresh order that would bring him to two feet. So I paused, hoping he would plead, yet he did not.

"Brooks," I called now, very low, for I wished to spare the man, and wanted not Phips to hear me. "Brooks, this is, indeed, your very last occasion. Will you yield?"

*He answered not.*

Then, as I was about, perforce, to do my duty, the water heaved and surged more than before, and, leaping up from the sea as leaps the grayling from the pool to take the fly, there came two great monstrous sharks, their loathsome jaws extended so that the yellow teeth were quite visible, they evidently driven beyond endurance by the sight of the tempting bait so near. In that instant all shuddered and drew back, daring not to look below, the sweat poured out all over us now, and from the side there came a fearful, piercing scream of agony and the voice of Brooks calling, "In God's mercy draw me up, oh! draw me up. I am penitent. Pity! Pity!"

The sharks in their frenzied leap had struck against each other and, instead of seizing their victim, had but hurled each other back into the sea, and thus he was spared. So we drew him up, and with this ended the first mutiny of the *Algier Rose*.

## CHAPTER VIII. THE SECOND MUTINY

And now I commence again.

Two years more had passed, and still we had not found the plate.

Very disheartened were we all by now, you may be sure, perhaps the one who kept himself best being the captain, who still hearkened after the astrologer's prophecy. Yet this, while still he did so, he chided himself for, saying that it became not a Puritan of New England to believe in any such things.

"For," says he, "in my colony they are now burning witches and wizards, geomancers, astrologers, and those which pretend to be Cabala with the stars, to say nought of quack-salvers and saltim-bancoes, so that I am but a degenerate son. Yet not of my mother neither; for she, as I have told you, Nick" – as now he called me – "bought an astrologer's pricked paper and found it come true. Still, wrong as I do, I cannot but think the caster was right. Then, if so, must we wait another year; for by that time I shall have arrived at my thirty-seventh."

That he would have waited had not the King-but you shall hear.

We had now arrived, as I have said, at our fourth year out, and at this time Phips, who had one moment, as I have also writ, the idea of staying until his thirty-seventh year, and at another the mind to take the frigate home and confess to the King that he had failed, decided to have the ship's bottom cleaned, or, as 'tis called, breamed. Therefore, for this purpose we moved her somewhat away from the "Boylers" to a little island, of which there is a multitude hereabout-for we would not go to the mainland for fear of a broil with the Spaniards-and there careened her.

Now, a sweet little isle this was as any one might wish to see-though very small, and on the charts tho' not the maps, – all covered over with a small forest in which grew the palm, the juniper, the caramite and acajou, as well as good fruits, such as limes, toronias, citrons, and lemons. Also, too, there were here good streams of fair fresh water all running about, at which one might stoop to lave themselves or to drink their fill. Ofttimes we had been over there before, especially to fetch in our boats the fresh water and the limes, for since our tubs of beer<sup>2</sup> had long since run dry this was our only beverage. Moreover, here we came in boats when we took our spells of leave, and, lying down in the little forest, would try to forget the tropic heat of where we had now been stationed so long, and would send our minds shooting back to memories of cool English lanes all shotted with the sweet May and the Eglantine, of our dear grey skies and our pleasant wealds.

But now we were come in the ship to work and not to take our ease, for breaming is, as sailors know, no lightsome task. Yet, too, there was a pleasant relaxation even in this, for, since the frigate was not liveable when careened over, all of us were bestowed ashore. So, too, were the remaining stores, of which in most things we still had a plenty, and so, too, were the great guns, they being placed around our encampment as though a fort. The ship herself was hove down by the side of a rock which stretched out from the land a little way; and, so that we could come at her and go to and fro with greater ease, we had constructed a bridge made of a plank leading from the summit of the rock to the shore, just above high water. 'Twas not long to the beginning of the rock from the land, being some thirty feet, but once on the rock itself one had to walk some hundred feet to reach where the frigate was.

Now Phips, as ever, setting a good example, had with his own great strong hands helped at hauling the ship over, and ashore he had assisted in cutting down trees to make our encampment palisadoes, our cabin roofs and wooden walls, and so forth. Never did he spare himself, and thus endeavoured to keep harmony and good will among all, officers and men alike.

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<sup>2</sup> The drink of the Navy prior to the introduction of rum by Admiral Vernon.

As to the mutiny, 'twas now forgot, or at least we thought so. Brooks, who had been the ringleader in it, seemed quite broken since the episode with the sharks, and, perhaps, also a little with the treatment since accorded him. Never had the Captain relaxed on him-and but little on the others, tho' somewhat-and never had he been permitted so much as an hour's leave or a sup of the beer while the casks lasted, or to take more than one watch and one dog watch below in the twenty-four hours. I say it broke him, yet I liked not the look to be seen sometimes on his face; and 'twas more than once that I bid the Captain observe him well, as also I did the subaltern officers. But Phips only laughed, saying:

"Tush, Nick! We have scotched the villain; have no fear; what can he do? Moreover, is not old Hanway a watch dog that never looses his eye from him? And, as he knows, his friends the sharks are ever near."

So the memory of the mutiny slumbered or awakened but little, and time went on and the breaming of the ship was a'most finished. We got her clean at last, by a plentiful kindling of furze and oil and faggots, so as to melt the old pitch about her, and were rapidly getting her re-pitched and caulked, coated and stuffed, so that when we went back to fish for another year she would be so clean and neat that, when we upped anchor, we should be ready for home at once. Also we had righted the ship again so that some few could live in her, and soon we meant to bring back the stores, great guns and other things.

But now we were to learn over what a masked mine we had been slumbering, and we were to see once more how the hand of Providence was always guarding us, as, I thank God, it has ever done where I have been concerned.

There were seven of us in the frigate one most glorious Sunday afternoon-namely, the Captain and myself and five men, when, sitting on the poop under an awning, he and I saw Hanway being supported between two others from the little wood to the plank that reached the shore. The man seemed sick enough by the way he dragged himself along between those two, and we, wondering what ailed him, went up on to the rock and so on to the hither side of the plank, and the Captain hailed to know what was the mischief with him?

"Sir," calls back a sailor, one of those leading him, "he is took very ill with a colic and wishes to go aboard to get a dram and rest. Will you permit his coming?"

"And welcome," says Phips. "But how will it be for him to pass over the plank?"

"We will come fore and aft of him, sir," says the man, "so he shall not fall."

Receiving permission to do this, they started to reach the rock; and by the foremost man walking backwards-which a sailor can do as easily as a cat-and the other propping him up behind, they gotten him along the plank.

"What ails you, man?" says the Captain kindly to him then, when he was there, but Hanway only groaned and placed his hand on his stomach, so that, sending the sailors back to the isle, we took him between us, and so got him into the captain's saloon.

"A dram of brandy," says Phips, "is the thing for you, my man," and with that he makes to call for his servant; when, to our extreme astonishment, Hanway puts up his hand to stop him, and stands up, as straight and well as ever he was.

"What foolishness is this?" asks Phips, with his brow all clouded; "what mean you, Hanway, by this conduct?"

"Hush," says he, glancing round the cabin. "Hush! It means-there is no one by, I trust! – it means *mutiny* again, Captain. That's what it means!"

"Does it so?" says he, all calm in a moment, though his eye wandered to his sword and pistols hanging over the table-"does it so? And when and how, Hanway?"

"To-night," says the carpenter; "and from the isle. I have heard it all, though they know not I have heard one word. See, Captain, it was thus. I was lying in the grass under a bush but an hour ago, when there comes that most dreadful wretch, Brooks, with half a score more, and sits himself down

on the other syd, behind a clump of cabbage-palms that grew next the bush. And so I heard all. Says he, 'Now, lads, to-night is our occasion, or never. To-night I must have my account with Phips and Crafer, so that there shall be a new captain and a new commander to the *Algier Rose*!'

"And who," asks Phips, "are to succeed us, Hanway?"

"Brooks, it seems, is to be captain in your place, sir," goes on the carpenter, "and the master-at-arms, Taylor, is to be commander. For the rest I know not; but, sir, let me tell you that, excepting yourself and the officers, myself and the bos'un, all are mutineers, and they mean to get the frigate if they can and go a-buccaneering to the South Seas, as has been ever their intent since we could not fish up the plate."

"Tis well, very well," says Phips, "but how will they do it? Can you tell us that?"

"Brooks gives them this scheme, sir," continues Hanway. "'To-night, my hearts,' said he to them, 'there is no moon. Therefore, what easier than to take the ship? We can outnumber them quite easy-the big guns are all ashore, there is not so much as a carronade in her. So, too, are the small arms, the powder and ball; yet, since we must not injure the *Algier Rose*, we must not fire into her, nor need we do so. For,' says he, 'at about dawn, or a little before, we can all pass the plank and reach the rock, when we can descend on the ship and put every one to death that is not for us. And I,' says he, 'will particularly kill Phips, whom I do hate most deadly.'"

Phips smiled and nodded his head pleasantly at this, for all the world as though he had heard the dearest news, and then he says, "And, how much more, Hanway?"

"Only this, sir," goes on the carpenter, "that Brooks knows not what will be the distribution aboard and ashore of the men, and fears therefore that he may get brought into the ship for the night-while the officers may be ashore with the other mutineers."

"He need have no fear," says the captain, very sinister; "when the muster is called it shall be arranged to suit him to his exact pleasure. Now, Hanway, go you back ashore, mingle freely with them, and trust to me and Mr. Crafer."

Then, when the carpenter had returned ashore, saying he had had a dram and his pains were eased, Phips and I held a long consultation together, and our plan was formed. How it worked you shall soon read.

But ere I go on I must rest my hand.



## CHAPTER IX. AND THE PREPARATIONS AGAINST IT

It was an hour before sunset that the order was usually given to the bos'un to pipe all hands to muster, and on this fair Sabbath evening you may be sure it failed not. Now, since so much of the ship's company was ashore it was the habit for the few in her to go also ashore, so that the whole roll might be called. Therefore, on this occasion we in the frigate went by the rock and plank to land, leaving the vessel alone save but for two men on watch, and at once began the muster.

The officers were partly divided, some to remain on the isle, some to be in the frigate, I being of the former, the captain of the latter. Now this plan had been communicated to all officers previous to the muster; since Phips had asked two or three of them to supper with him-of whom I was not one, but had, instead, gone on shore-and there he had divulged the whole wicked story. There was not any more danger to those who were ashore than to those in the ship, since Hanway had gathered from some source that the officers on land were not to be despatched until the ship herself was taken, and it was thought she could be easier taken and with less noise than they could be murdered. So that was to be done. Moreover, likewise had Hanway learned that Brooks hoped some of the mutineers would be told off into the ship, whereby they might lie in wait to spring out and assist their brother-scoundrels when they boarded her, and this, on hearing, Phips again said should be done.

"For," says he, "since they would have some of their comrades in the frigate, they shall be obliged. Only, they will not know that when the rounds are gone those choice companions will be prisoners all, with bilboes on their feet and gags in their mouths."

And now, all arrangements being made, ashore we went to call this muster. First I called the officers, naming for the shore myself, a lieutenant, and the master's mate; for the ship, the Captain, the second lieutenant, another mate, and the two gentlemen-midshipmen we carried (we had three, but one was drowned coming out); these being, when they joined the ship, little lads of eight and nine years, scarce better than babes, but now grown big boys. Then, this done, I passed to the others, bringing the carpenter and his mate into the frigate, and likewise the bos'un and his. Next Brooks was called for the shore with most of the known mutineers, excepting only some others of their gang and companions in guilt into the ship. And when this was done there was to be observed, by those who looked sharply, a glance pass between them.

So 'twas arranged, and all was well for the foiling of these villains. And thus, having well concerted our plans, we all went to our various stations, the Captain walking back to the frigate with his complement, and I in command of the shore party. And now must I relate all that happened both with them-which I gathered afterwards-and with us on land, which I saw. But first for the ship.

At sunset, which comes fast in these parts, the Captain, after the rounds, stationed in his cabin on each side of the door the bo'sun-who was enormous in size-and the carpenter, Hanway; then, sending for each of the known mutineers one by one into the cabin, he had them knocked on the head as they came in, bilboes put on their feet, and they carried down amongst the ballast. With them he put a good guard, who had orders that should they cry out-tho' if they did none could have heard them on the isle-they should instantly be despatched; so they were safe and secure, and henceforth he had but to deal with those ashore. Next he sent for the midshipmen, who, coming into his cabin, he demanded of them which was the lightest in weight; for, said he, "I have work for one of you young lads to-night that shall make a mate of you if you do well."

Now, of these boys-one named Fanshawe, the other Caldwell (who as I now write commands the *Lizard*, of twenty-four guns, he having been promoted out of the *Richmond*) – the latter was by far the lighter, he being very lean and spare. Therefore, to him says Phips:

"My boy, you must do a good service to-night, so I hope you have a strong heart;" to which the lad said he hoped indeed he had; tho', later on, he told me that at that moment his thoughts went flying off to home and to his mother, who had cried so bitterly when she brought him down to go to sea.

"Well," says Phips, "now this you have to do. We will get from Hanway a bolt-such as those of the big guns-and what you must perform is this. To-night at the darkest you shall creep from the rock to the plank, and so to the middle of it, and, when there, you will first fix a staple under the board, then through that you will run the bolt. Next, where its head will enter you must make a mortise-another staple will do very well-and then when all is fixed you shall, with a bradawl and a gimlet, so bore the board that t'will yield to any weight when the bolt is unshotted. You understand, my lad?"

The boy's eyes sparkled, for he was stout of heart, and he answered readily that he comprehended; and so Phips goes on:

"Then, when all this is done, to the eye of the bolt you shall attach a line and so bring it back under the plank to the further end of the rock, where some one or other shall take it from you. Now, my boy, there is little of danger to you if you are careful. And, remember, first fix your staple, then your bolt, and, last of all, pierce and bore the plank and do it well, and so shall you earn your higher rank. Now go, sleep until we wake you."

The lad told us afterwards he slept not in his hammock at all, but rather repeated to himself his instructions again and again, so as to be perfect; and thus the time wore on, and, at last, there was that thick inky darkness that comes in tropic nights. Then Phips summoned him, repeated to him once more his orders, and the boy prepared to speed on his work.

"I cannot, my little lad," said Phips, "go with you, nor send the men; the plank would not bear our big forms when bored, and they might see us. Otherwise, and if I could do it, I would not send one of such tender years as thou art. So be brave, and so fare-ye-well and a speedy return."

He laid his great hand on the boy's shoulder as he spake, and bid him again "God speed;" and then the child went forth, his little heart quite brave and cheerful. Only, when he was gone, they found he had left upon his sea-chest, writ large, the place where his mother lived and to where she might be addressed if he came back no more; and also he had writ a little prayer to Phips that he would speak well of him to her, and say that he died in his duty.

That he might so die all knew; and from his writing they learned he knew it, too. For there were many ways to it. The mutineers would doubtless shoot him if they saw him on the plank, and so begin their wicked work at once, or the plank might fall under him, or he fall off it in the dark, when it was well possible-the water being deep enough-that the sharks should have him.

So he went forth, and, of those who saw him go, one or two crept along the rock after him to watch and see if all was well, and they observed, and told afterwards, how he never faltered in his task. Through the darkness of that black night he crept upon the plank, making no noise, and, laying himself flat out upon it, went to work. Once those behind said they heard the muffled sound of the screws as he fixed tight the staples-though those who knew not what was a-doing might have thought 'twas but the creaking of the board! And once they heard him let fall a screw into the water that plumped in with a little splash. But that was all, and presently by his breathing they heard him coming back. He had done his work-the springe was set! He had done that work well, too, only, so wrought upon was his mind, that, when he once more stood upon the deck of the frigate, he fainted, and fell into the Captain's arms as the latter spake approvingly to him.

Now, therefore, there was nought for them on the ship to do but to wait the coming of the dawn-tho' all in her hoped the mutineers might make their attack ere then. For, if they came when the dayspring was about, it was possible they might perceive the piercings of the plank: while, if they came earlier, they could see nought.

And so, I say, the night went on and the stars above began to pale-the great Southern Cross turned from her deep crimson to a white, and the dews from the little island sent forth innumerable scents and perfumes. Meanwhile, nought could be heard from the shore by those in the ship, for all

was still as death; while on the water round the rock a gentle splash alone was heard, telling that those watchers of it, the sharks, were looking ever for some prey. And, by now, several of the ship's company, headed by Phips, had crept along the rock towards where the plank was, and, heavily armed, and hidden as much as possible, were waiting to see what movement was forthcoming and when the attack was to be made.

## CHAPTER X. AND HOW IT WAS ENDED

And now must I return to the party on shore, with which I was.

The watch being set-which throughout the night I took very good care should be composed of those whom I had reason to consider the worst of the mutineers-we, the officers, turned into the hut that had been constructed and set apart for all of that rank. Of course we knew what the intention of the Captain was as to the sawing of the plank, and, indeed, were quite cognizant of when young Caldwell was at work on it, though none of the rebels were so. Moreover, when I had reason to suppose he was at his business, I, affecting a merciful disposition towards them which I did not in any way feel, went out to where they lay and told the men on watch to turn in awhile, as I and one of the lieutenants would take the look out for a spell.

Now this I had not planned with the captain previously, it being an afterthought, yet I took credit to myself for its being an excellent one. For see what good came of it! Firstly, it removed the mutinous watch from the open where they might have seen or heard the lad, since the encampment lay but a hundred yards or so inland from the beach; and, secondly, it played the game, as they say, into their hands. For they minded not for us, the officers, to be on the alert at this early part of the night, but would, as I knew, rather have it so, for they wanted us asleep in the latter part when they meant to set about their dirty work. And it lulled them, as after-events showed, into false security; for, seeing that we treated them so kindly, they never dreamed we had one idea of all their treachery.

And to further this idea in their minds, after eight bells had struck from the frigate, and a fresh watch set, I went in to the men in their huts, and seeing Brooks sitting up and looking very wideawake, I said to him-though in my mind I would sooner have thrust my sword through his heart:

"Brooks," I said, "we are all sleepy now; therefore we will turn in. And since there is scarce any necessity for caution here-none being able to attack this little isle of ours-relieve your watch somewhat."

"Ay, ay, sir," says Brooks, while yet by the oil flame I could see the devil's light shining in his wicked eye. "Ay, ay, sir. What shall I do?"

"Let most of the watch rest themselves. What need that all should labour? We fear nought here. Leave but two men on watch-the frigate is herself a guard-ship-and let us take some repose. Only, as I and the other officers are very sleepy, call us not until the day watch; let us not be disturbed."

"I'll warrant you, sir," said Brooks, and positively the fiend hid his head in the shadow so that I might not see the grin on his face, though I saw it well enough, be sure. "I'll warrant you, sir, you shall not be troubled." Whereon I bade him good night, and so back to our hut.

"Now," says I to my comrades when I entered, "all is indeed well. We have but to keep quiet, and these wretches will go to destruction their own way. For, see now, they must be caught between two fires! Once they are on the plank, or some of them, they will be in the water the next moment if Caldwell has but done his work well. And even though he has not, what matters? From the rock they will be shot down, and from the shore by us, while we have this hut for a fort if needed. So now, while we pretend sleep, let us be watchful and await the good time."

Then, very quietly, we saw to our arms, the bite of our swords and the priming of our pistols. Also had we in the hut some musketoons, very good ones, each loaded with five ounces of iron, which had been brought in from the ship when careened and placed here to guard against rust, as well as some peteraroes loaded with old broken iron and rusty nails, which could well be fired through the doorway.

And now we three put out our light, wishing each other "Good night" somewhat loudly, so that if any were creeping or crawling about they could not but hear, and at intervals of our long vigil we would snore, sometimes in concert, sometimes singly, so as more to deceive them.

And in this manner passed the night, we hearing and counting all the bells as they struck in the ship.

At last there was a stir. Soft as was the grass around, we could hear stealthy footfalls; presently in the open window-frame-purposely left open by us the better to deceive these villains-we saw a face look in on us and again withdrawn, we heard a whispered talk outside, and then they went away. We knew the attack was about to begin. So, when the footsteps had retreated and we imagined that by now they must have gotten down to the beach (and, indeed, silently as they went, we could hear the pebbles crack and rustle beneath their bare feet), slowly I rose and glanced out from the side of the window. But only to draw back my head on the instant, for there, they not being such fools as might have been supposed, were two of the mutineers on guard, one on each side of the window. At present, 'twas evident they thought not that we were awake, since each was leaning with his back to the walls of the hut gazing after his companions, and I had time to ponder on what I must do.

First, I had the intelligence to say nought to either of my comrades, while for sign I could give none, seeing that, as yet, the day was not come-though afar off a saffron tinge in the sky heralded its near approach-and then I took time to reflect. Now, had there been but one man he had been soon despatched, for I could from the window have run him through, or cut his throat ere he could make any noise. But with two it was different. So, I say, I pondered deep. Yet, soon, this was what I resolved to do. I would go again to the window and then would remain there, a pistol in each hand, and, the moment I heard any scuffle or noise from the neighbourhood of the rock, would fire into their heads. Meanwhile, should they discover that we were awake, yet would I do the same thing-and the noise would but serve to warn our friends over there. So now I crept to the lieutenant and the master's mate, and, touching them gently in the dark, put my fingers on each of their lips, and then away again to the window.

So I was there, ready for them, for though they had each in their hands a musketoon there was nought to fear. Ere they could lift them the brains would be out, they would be gone-but at this moment up came the sun as it had been promising, and in a moment all was flooded with light. And at the same moment they saw me and gave a shout at seeing my face close to them, and the two pistols to their ears. Poor wretches! all rebels and mutineers as they were, what gain had they in their evil? Ere the shout had finished they were dead outside the hut; even dead before the report had ceased to ring. Yet I had spoilt nothing by my haste, for as now the daylight poured over all I saw that the attack on the rock had begun, and, a moment afterwards, we had rushed pell mell from the hut to assist in taking the mutineers in the flank. And, now, I will write down exactly how our position was. On the rock there stood Phips with all his men by his side, on the plank were two or three of the mutineers with Brooks at their head, and smiling quite gay was Phips, as he called out.

"And 'good morning' to you, Captain Brooks, as I hear you are to be to-day. My compliments to you, Captain Brooks, for a better frigate than the *Algier*-"

"To, hell with your compliments," howled back Brooks, "and your scoffs. Yet we mean to have the ship, anyway; so come on. We are eighty to ten so you must yield."

"Must I, indeed," says Phips, "well, we will see for that."

Meanwhile I had perceived what was my office, and so, going back with the lieutenant and the master's mate-all unperceived by the mutineers, who had been quite engrossed with those on the rock, so that they saw not our sally forth-we dragged out the peteraroes and a little old Lombard we had, very good for throwing a big shot, and lighting our fuse we gave them a rousing broadside and did good execution. The Lombard crashed down four of them, while the peteraroes did great slaughter, and we gave them a volley from the musketoons, and so in amongst them with our cutlasses and very busy.

Meantime Phips and his party were firing into them from the rock-though not at Brooks and those on the plank, which was shaking under their weight as they advanced; and now the captain shouted to him, "Come on, Captain Brooks, come on and take command of your ship. Come on, I say."

And on Brooks went, hurling oaths like a tempest howling across the sea, and followed by the others; while, now and again, he yelled out, "We are betrayed; we are betrayed," and so got fair into the middle of the plank.

And then he saw, but too late, the snare in which he had been taken. For it bent so under their weight and also gave so that, looking down, he saw it was all bored and pierced so as to be by now almost apart, and kept up only by the great gun-bolt.

"Back! back!" he screamed then to the others. "Back! See, oh God! see, the plank gives, it yields, we are undone!" And then from him there came a worse cry, a thrilling blood-curdling shout, for he saw what was below him. The sharks which do infest all parts of these waters had come again-attracted, doubtless, by the blood of the killed and wounded and the dead bodies in the water, which already they were busy at; and with them and fighting them for the prey, were fierce crocodiles-or, as they are called by the Spanish, the allagartos. "For God's sake, back!" he howled, "back, I say!" But those behind could not turn back because we were there, and so they met their doom. With one more scoff and jeer Phips and a sailor pulled at the line, the great gun-bolt came forth from the mortise, or staple-the boy had done well his work overnight! – the plank broke with a crash, and down they went.

And as they went we saw the great snouts of the crocodiles come at them, and tear them below with a snapping dreadful to hear, we saw the sharks heave over on their sides to take their prey, we heard one wild and awful yell from each of these villains, and all was over with them. As for the others who were not killed, they threw down their arms and implored mercy, and so were bound and carried away for the time.

And in this way ended the second and last mutiny in the *Algier Rose*, wherefore I will again rest awhile.

## CHAPTER XI. THEY HAVE TO DESIST

Now, by this time Phips was within a month of his thirty-sixth year, and we had been out on our fishing expedition four years almost, it being the end now of 1686 of our Lord.

"So," says Phips, "another month will see me into my thirty-seventh, and then, Nick, we must have the plate."

"Whereby you mean to say," I observed, "that you do, indeed, believe in that Jack Pudding's prophecy that at that time you shall find it. Yet I should scarce have thought, sir, that so stalwart a sailor as you would have hearkened much to such as he."

"I hearkened to him," replied he, "because I am a sailor, and therefore, like unto you, Nick, and all of us, given unto believing in auguries. Yet, reflect also on what other reasons I have. First, there was my dear mother, whose doings were most rightly foretold; and next was there the vow I always made that, some day, I would command a King's ship. Well, that have I done, though without finding the plate-carrack, and therefore I am positive that when my thirty-sixth year is past I shall do so."

"I trust you may," says I, "yet in four years it has not been done; how, therefore, shall it now be done in one?"

"We will fish in other waters," says he; "we will try another side of the reef. We will have it, Nick-have it somehow."

Yet, as you who read this paper shall see, it was not until his thirty-seventh yeare came-proving thereby, alas! that wizards and astrologers, who are the children of the devil, can speak truth sometimes-that it was to be taken from where it had lain for its forty-four or fifty years. Meanwhile I must perforce write down all that happened before that time.

To begin, therefore, the mutiny was, as you have seen, over, and so rooted up and crushed down also were the men that it was impossible there could be another. Of killed there were thirty-one, including Brooks and the man who was to have had my place, and there was something like twenty-five prisoners; the remainder of the crew, though but few, being tried men and loyal to us. Some of the dead we took into the middle of the beach and buried, while the sharks and crocodiles provided the graves for the others without any trouble to us; and then, all being done that was necessary, we left this sweet little harbour of ours, which, had it not been stained by the horrid mutiny and its outcome, we should have turned away from with regret. But, considering what had happened there, we went back to the blazing sea quite joyfully to begin once more our search.

For those mutineering ruffians who were not killed, it would have been easier to them if they had been. They worked now under the boiling tropic sun in chains, their hands alone being free wherewith to assist the divers; they were given no more food than would actually keep them alive and enable them to work; they had but one watch off during the twenty-four hours, and over them ever was an officer with a loaded pistol to his hand, ready to shoot them down. And, worse than this, whenever we should return to Spithead there they would be hanged to the yard-arm, as they would have been ere this to the yard-arm of the *Algier Rose*, had they not been wanted to work the ship home when her time came to go. Verily, they had gained little by their wicked foolishness!

So in this way the weeks slipped by and still we found no plate, yet was Phips firm. His commission was for five years, which would carry him well into that thirty-seventh year for which he longed so, and that commission he fully meant to serve, when, lo! there happened a thing that for a time changed all his plans, though not for long, owing to Providence, as you shall read.

One morning when the day broke, the lookout descried, some two leagues from us and our reef, a great frigate sailing very free and bearing down towards us, while to our joy we saw that she carried our own dear English colours. Now, in all the three years and a half that had passed, or nearly four, no

ship of our own country had come anywhere near us, although often enough had we thought we saw them pass afar, as, indeed, they must have done on their way to some of the West Indie Islands. Yet, as I say, none had come to us, and so we had no news from the world without. But that this frigate was making for us there could be now no doubt; already, she was so near that she was shortening her sail, and, not long afterwards, she fired a salute, which we returned with joyous hearts. Then she hove-to, and signalled to us that the Captain was to go aboard.

You may be sure that he went very willingly, the ship proving to be the *Guinea*, and an old Commonwealth frigate I knew very well, and a good sailer; and brave enough did Phips look as he took his seat in his boat, all adorned in his best scarlet coat and his great wig; "for," says he, "hot as the morning is, and will be hotter, I will not go to greet a brother-captain foully dressed."

That we in the *Algier Rose* waited impatiently enough for the news you may be sure, and, since 'twas long a-coming, that impatience became very great. Indeed, 'twas not till night was near at hand that we saw the boat coming back to us, while at the same time we saw the great frigate's topsayl fill, and observed her slowly gather way and steer towards the west. Then, a while later, the Captain came aboard, and, sending for me into his cabin, he said, while I noticed that his face was grave and sad:

"Nick, we have to give up the search; we shall not get the plate now. The frigate was, as doubtless you made out, the *Guinea*, on her way to Jamaica to relieve the *Constant Warwick*, and brought me my orders to go home."

"But," said I, "the commission was for five years; they are not yet expired."

"Nay," says he, "that matters not. The King is dead, and has been so for a year, and the Duke of York has succeeded him. And he believes not in putting the ships of his navy to treasure hunts, deeming such things better for private adventurers. Moreover, he says the *Algier Rose* can do better service at home against his enemies-of which the Captain of the *Guinea* says he has a many-than in fishing for plate. So, to-morrow, Nick, we will take in water from the island, and away to England."

"'Tis pity," says I, "a many pities. Yet the King's orders must be obey'd. And the plate-I wonder who will get that?"

"I shall," said Phips sharply, "and you, Nick, if you will follow me. For the very moment I give up my command of this ship, I shall seek out those private adventurers of whom the new King speaks. I would pawn my life the thing is there, and I will have it. Am I a man to be thwarted?"

Indeed, he was no such a man-only, as I whispered to him, he must, if still he believed in his Geomancer, be very sharp. He would be in his thirty-seventh year by the time he set foot on English ground again.

"Ay, ay," says he, while he took a great drink from his cup and passed it to me, "and so I shall, But before the thirty-seventh year is gone, I shall be back again-and you shall be with me, Nick, an' you will."

For myself 'twas very easy to say I would come. If James was king now, then he would have for officers of his ships all those who had served him when he was a sailor, and never had I been one of those. Moreover, I had no interest with either Edward Russell-who is now as I write Earl of Orford-or with Rooke, both of whom were like to be the King's great seamen; so that there was little enough likelihood that I should get another ship. There were just now hundreds of worthy sailors waiting for appointments, and I had no better chance than, if as good as, they. Also was I gone my time, having been now at sea since 1656, when I went a boy of eight, so that I was nigh forty years of age, and was never like now to be a captain, being but a plain sailor and no gentleman courtier or page of honour. Had I been that and not known the maintruck from the keel, then, perhaps, might I have gotten a ship at twenty. But enough of this, only I had a mind to come out with Phips if he came again as an adventurer; and that we should see when we got home.

A week later we had wooded and watered from our isle, and the wind being fair away we went, while the last piece of counsel we received came from the beastly great negro of whom I have writ before. This creature's name was Juan, he having been born at San Domingo city, a Spanish slave,



which he no longer was, and as we had always thought, though we were never convinced thereof, had egged on Brooks and the others to mutiny by telling of them that we were a-fishing in the wrong pool-as anglers at home say-but that if they could take the frigate from Phips, whom he hated, he could show them where the plate really was.

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