

JACOB DUNHAM

JOURNAL OF
VOYAGES

Jacob Dunham
Journal of Voyages

«Public Domain»

Dunham J.

Journal of Voyages / J. Dunham — «Public Domain»,

Содержание

AUTHOR'S APOLOGY	5
RECOMMENDATIONS	6
EARLY LIFE OF THE AUTHOR	7
CHAPTER I.	8
CHAPTER II.	14
CHAPTER III.	17
CHAPTER IV	22
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	27

Jacob Dunham
Journal of Voyages / Containing an Account
of the Author's being Twice Captured by
the English and Once by Gibbs the Pirate...

AUTHOR'S APOLOGY

In presenting the following Voyages to the public, I must inform my readers that I have had but a common school education, and am unaccustomed to composition. I can only tell my story in a plain straight forward way, not being able to ornament it with flowery language.

My Voyages were all written by myself. I employed competent persons to copy the work from my manuscript, and they corrected the small inaccuracies that had escaped my observation.

I thought, that although my book might contain many defects, if composed by myself, that it would still gain more than it lost, by being the production of the very person who had seen and taken part in the scenes he related, and could vouch for the truth of all he had witnessed. It is not given to the public as a specimen of the beautiful in style, but as the story of an old sea captain who had lived in one of the most eventful periods of our country's history; and one who had nearly arrived at his last anchorage.

With this brief outline of my life, and this short explanation, I commit my little book, with confidence, to an indulgent public.

Jacob Dunham.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Captain Jacob Dunham, having applied to the Congress of the United States, for relief, on account of losses sustained by him by piratical robbery, We, the undersigned, do hereby certify that we are well acquainted with the said Jacob Dunham, have known him for many years past, that he is a man of truth and veracity, and that his statements are entitled to full faith and credit:

- Thomas O'Hara Croswell, Post-Master, Catskill.
- Abel Bruce, M. D.
- Robert Dorlon, Esq.
- Orrin Day, President of Tanner's Bank, Catskill.
- Hon. Malebone Watson, Judge of Supreme Court, New-York.
- Hon. John Adams.
- Caleb Day, Esq.
- J. D. Beers, President of Bank of North America, New-York.
- Jacob Haight, Treasurer of State of New-York.
- Hon. Zadock Pratt.
- T. K. Cooke, Member of New-York Assembly.
- James Powers, State Senator.
- Calvin Balis, Alderman of New-York City.
- W. P. Hallett, Clerk of the Supreme Court of State of New-York.
- Edwin Croswell, State Printer, Albany, New-York.

Catskill, New-York, December 30, 1839

EARLY LIFE OF THE AUTHOR

On the twenty-seventh day of April, 1779, in the town of Colchester, in the State of Connecticut, I was launched into the world, and entered on the tempestuous voyage of life.

While yet an infant at the breast, fate snatched me from my mother's arms, viewed me with a scornful eye, and exclaimed, "I doom this babe *a slave to hardships, dangers, and disappointments.*"

The following pages will show how far the prophecy has been fulfilled. My father, Samuel Dunham, was a Warrant Officer in the American Navy during the Revolutionary War, and followed the sea during almost his whole life-time. Whether the occupation of my father before me has had anything to do in shaping my course in life, the author is not wise enough to say, but leaves it to those who make greater pretensions than himself.

In the year 1785, the Author emigrated, along with his father, to where the village of Catskill now stands. The whole village contained but seven houses, and was cut up into cultivated fields and gardens. My father having bought half an acre of ground situated about where the Greene County Hotel now stands, built himself a small house. After living in Catskill about one year, my uncle sent for me to come to Connecticut and live with him, which I did. I returned to Catskill in the Spring of 1793, and then went as an apprentice to the Messrs. Thomas O'H. & Mackay Crosswell, Printers, who then published a small newspaper called *The Catskill Packet*. I lived with the Crosswell's about six years and a half, where I was well treated. Having a great desire to see some of the world, I went to Charleston, South Carolina, where I found employment in a Printing Office for a few months. During that winter I witnessed a large funeral procession in that city in commemoration of the death of General Washington. In the Spring of 1800, I returned to Catskill, and found some employment in the coasting trade, on the Hudson River. During the summer and the winter following, I made three voyages to Charleston and Savannah, and then returned to Catskill and worked at the Printing business about two years. I then made one voyage to the Island of St. Croix as a seaman. During this time I was married, in Catskill, in August, 1801, to a young woman named Fanny Morgan. I then found employment in the coasting trade in different vessels for one or two years, when I entered the employment of Messrs. T. B. & A. Cooke, as one-fourth owner of a packet sloop which sailed between Catskill and New-York, where we did a good business for many years. Not being content in doing well and making money in a moderate way, and a war breaking out between England and America, I determined to try my luck again on the Ocean; picturing to myself a rapid increase of the little property I had gained by hard and slow earnings.

From the time I left this safe business to embark on the Ocean, my adventures predicted by dame Fate, commenced. Since that time I have been rudely driven by winds and storms, captured by enemies, robbed by pirates, and have made many hair-breadth escapes both by sea and land, until the present time. I have now brought my poor old sheer hulk to anchor in the harbor of Catskill.

Not having much to occupy my mind, I frequently take a survey of my past life, which has been checkered with many frightful scenes.

Being strongly urged by many old friends, for several years past, to publish some account of my unfortunate adventures, I have reluctantly yielded to their request. In so doing, I must crave the indulgence of my readers.

CHAPTER I. Sloop Rover

"The sailor ploughs the raging main,
"In hopes a competence to gain,
"And when his toil and danger's o'er,
"Safe anchors on his native shore."

About the middle of May, in the year 1813, having a great desire to engage in some adventure; and hoping that fortune would smile upon my undertakings, I purchased of Messrs. Coddington & Thorp, of New-York, one quarter of an old Sloop called the Rover; for which I paid one hundred and twenty-five dollars. Messrs. Coddington & Thorp, and Captain Silus S. Vail, were owners of the other three-quarters.

The Rover was an old condemned sea vessel, having old thin sails, two deck beams broken, without top-mast, and a large piece of leather two feet square nailed over a rotten plank in her bottom.

As this was during the last war between the United States and England, the port of New-York and our whole north-eastern coast was closely blockaded by English shipping. It therefore became necessary for our citizens to transport large quantities of flour and other commodities from Baltimore and adjoining towns, to New-York by land; and from thence to be conveyed to the Eastern markets. The expense of transporting flour and other heavy articles by land, caused speculators and traders to seek shipments by water to Eastern ports. Freights of course were high, and but little attention paid by merchants to the crafts they chartered. A number of old vessels were offered for freight, the Rover rating No. 1 among them. The carrying business being well up, and much in that line offering, I embraced a proposal of one dollar per barrel for transporting 500 barrels of flour and 70 barrels of bread from New-York to Providence, Rhode Island.

I sailed from New-York about the 20th of May, intending to run through the most exposed places in the night, watching the movements of the blockading vessels closely, and when I got into a good harbor I intended to remain there until another dark night.

In heavy gales of wind the blockading ships generally put to sea for their own safety; which gave me an opportunity to make my passage unmolested.

I arrived, after a passage of forty-eight hours, at Stonington, Connecticut, without discovering any of the vessels of the enemy. I found a number of vessels had taken shelter in that harbor to avoid an English frigate which was cruising between Block Island and Newport. I remained at Stonington a few days, when a dark night appearing, I again made sail, and arrived at Providence, my port of destination, in safety. We landed our cargo, and Mr. Thorp, one of the owners, who had accompanied me for that purpose, was left to dispose of it.

Two or three days after unloading my vessel, I again sailed for New-York. We anchored at the mouth of Newport harbor for the purpose of awaiting an opportunity of returning when the blockading frigate should stand out to sea. I had to wait but a few days; as soon as I saw she was far enough from the port I made sail, and by keeping near the shore, arrived at Stonington without molestation from the enemy. Here I learned that New London, a port between me and my destination, was closely blockaded by a British fleet consisting of two 74 gun ships and two frigates. There were ten or twelve sail of coasting vessels then lying in the harbor at Stonington, most of which had been East with cargoes, and were waiting for dark nights or other favorable opportunities to pass the blockading squadron. I remained here eight or ten days. During this time the inhabitants of the town were much

alarmed, fearing the enemy would send in armed boats to cut out our vessels, and by that means annoy the inhabitants and fire the town.

To show our patriotism and courage, a meeting was called of the officers and crews of all the vessels in the harbor. We volunteered our services to stand night watches, and do all in our power in case an attack should be made. Our means of defence were scanty; a few fowling guns being the only weapons we had on board our vessels.

Some of the inhabitants finally procured for us an old ship gun, which we loaded with powder, but could not procure balls to fit it. We at length found one which we imagined we could force into the gun. After a long time, with a sledge and crowbar, we succeeded in driving it within six or eight inches of the cartridge.

The captains drew lots for the first watch, which fell upon me. I took charge of the watch until 12 o'clock that night, and was much pleased that we were not annoyed by the enemy, as I concluded that the firing of our own gun would make more havoc among us than all the enemy could bring against us. At the close of my watch I learned that two Sag-harbor vessels were getting under weigh, intending to pass through Plum Gut, which would conduct them some distance from where the enemy lay at anchor. As it was a dark night, and not being myself a good pilot through that passage, I concluded to follow them. The wind being light, they outsailed my vessel until I lost sight of them. About break of day it was so calm that I could not pass the fleet or get back to Stonington. I soon discovered a barge in pursuit of me, but there was no way of escape. The boat had on board a lieutenant, a midshipman, and twelve armed men. They left a prize master and two men to take charge of my sloop, and then proceeded to capture another small vessel at that time in sight. They soon overhauled her; but as she had nothing of value on board, having only some household furniture, and women and children, they let her pass. Three of the British vessels after firing a number of guns toward the shore proceeded to sea, while my vessel was taken within a small distance of the commodore's ship, which remained at anchor.

And here, as I deem it will not be altogether uninteresting to my readers, I will make a slight digression, in giving a brief description of the personal history of Commodore Hardy; for such was the name of the officer who had command of the fleet which had captured us. Although some Americans are under the impression that nothing good can come from British officers, which idea in many instances has been justified; yet, with regard to Sir Thomas Hardy, it might truly be said, that he was "One of Nature's noblemen;" for such his conduct to myself and crew fully showed him to be. He appeared to be a man about forty-five years of age, about six feet in height, elegantly formed, and possessing a benign expression of countenance, scarcely to be expected from one who had been following, from his youth, a sea-faring life, and had been engaged in some of the most bloody naval battles on record. When a poor boy he was taken on board the English fleet by Lord Nelson, continued with him during his various engagements, and became Nelson's principal fighting commander. At the battle of Trafalgar the admiral died in his arms.

On a signal being made we were ordered on board the commodore's ship. My vessel being old and shabby, I thought it best to keep on my working clothes to show my apparent poverty, which would excite some sympathy, but I had a good suit of clothes in my chest. When I got on board I found I was in his majesty's ship *Ramillies*, Sir T. W. Hardy, commander. I cast my eyes about in as awkward a manner as I could; the officers gathered round to have a little sport with a poor Yankee. They commenced their conversation by asking me if I were ever on board of a seventy-four before; I answered in the negative. The captain of marines then, taking hold of my striped cotton pantaloons, asked me if we made such fine cloth as that in our country. I told him a little, just to cover our nakedness during the war. Soon after a message came for me to go aft to see the commodore. I thought I would show myself very submissive by taking off my hat and putting it under my arm. The first salutation I had from him was, "Put on your hat, sir. Did you know that we were lying here." "Yes, sir," was my reply. He said, "How dare you venture out." I answered that I had been lying at

Stonington a number of days, waiting for a dark night to get past him. He then told me he must burn my vessel and send me to Halifax. I told him if the sentence was irrevocable, I had nothing to offer. I then left him and went forward and sat down on a gun in a pensive manner. He soon accosted me by asking me to go and get some breakfast, saying, "If I keep you I will not starve you to death." I thanked him, but told him I had taken breakfast before I left his prize. I kept my seat on the gun for a long time, until I excited the attention of the sailors, one of whom accosted me by saying, "Captain, don't look so sorrowful, our captain is a damned clever fellow; I guess he will give up your old serving mallet," as he called my sloop. "Yes," said another, "I would willingly give up my share, for it will not be enough to make more than a glass of grog apiece." The officers made themselves merry by passing many jokes with me, supposing they had a green Yankee to sport with. In the afternoon the commodore said, pointing towards my vessel, "That is a fine large sloop of yours; can't you give me fifteen hundred dollars for her; I am going to send two officers on board to prize her." I told him that was three times more than she was worth, and five times more than I was worth; that she was an old condemned vessel; that he could not send her to Halifax or Bermuda. I told him I thought if I could get on shore I could raise one hundred dollars, and perhaps that would be a compensation for the trouble he had in capturing her; that I presumed he would make a target of her to fire at if he retained her. He then left me: about half-an-hour after he called me into his cabin and said that he wanted to raise a little money to distribute among his crew; that he had not enough to allow one dollar apiece to them. Said he, "I want to use your old sloop for about three days. If you think you can raise one hundred dollars by going on shore, you can take your boat and go; and if you return in three days with the money, you shall have your sloop restored to you."

My two men immediately hauled the boat alongside ready for embarking. I bid the commodore good-by, and was going over the ship's side, when he called me back, saying, "I must parole you before you go!" "Just as you please," said I. "He said he was only doing me a favor, for then my own countrymen could neither draft nor impress me after I landed." I then took my boat and proceeded to Stonington, and arrived there that evening. I found most of the vessels that I left there before my departure. The captains assembled around me, eager to learn the news. I related my story and the bargain I had made with the commodore. Some thought I had made a good bargain, while others thought me foolish; saying, that if I returned on board he would keep my hundred dollars and send me to Halifax as a prisoner. The next day I negotiated with a merchant of that place for a loan of eighty dollars, by giving a draft on my friend in New-York for eighty-six dollars, and pledging my watch, quadrant, charts, &c. and a note I held against a merchant in New-York of one hundred dollars, as a security for the payment of the draft. This, with thirty dollars in bills, which I had in my pocket, was more than sufficient to ransom my vessel.

I returned to the Ramillies that afternoon. The boatswain, a grave looking old gentleman, very hospitably took me by the hand and asked me to go and live with him. He conducted me down two or three pair of stairs into his own room, which I found well furnished, but had no other light than a lamp, as his room was below the water. He told one of his boys to make a clean cot for me to sleep in, and to wait on me if I wanted anything. He treated me with some old rum he said he had kept on board for three or four years. He lamented much that England and America were at war with each other; that he never could realize us as prisoners, because we both spoke the same language and sprung from one nation.

The next morning I rose early, put on my best suit of clothes and went on deck. I saw the first lieutenant on the starboard side of the deck with his hands in his breeches pockets, walking very gracefully to and fro. To amuse myself I put my hands in my pockets, and commenced walking the opposite side of the deck in the same manner. He immediately stopped and looked at me with some surprise, exclaiming, "Is that you? Damn it, you have better clothes than I have. When we captured and brought you on board you had on an old short jacket and cotton trowsers, and looked so pitiful that most of the crew offered to give up their share of your old shallop if the commodore would let

you go. But I give you credit for it. You have Yankeed us better than any one we have taken yet." I looked about to see my old vessel which I left at anchor about half a mile from the ship, but she was missing. He asked me if I was looking for my old sloop. I told him I was. He said that I would never see her again. I told him I was not alarmed about it, for I had the commodore's word for it. He said he would be damned if I ever got her again. I told him the commodore had promised me to give her up in three days, and if he did not keep his word I would take my boat, land at New London, and get a warrant for him. He was pleased with the joke and soon after called his brother officers around him, who took me into a room and treated me with wine, segars, &c. They were very polite to me during my stay on board.

New London appeared from the deck of the ship to be four or five miles distant. Fishing boats came every day from the town and fished within a mile, without interruption. On their return they were often hailed from the ship to come on board, and the officers and crew purchased what fish they wanted, and paid a liberal price. I could see from the deck, with the spy glass, colors flying, and troops marching and re-marching in the city of New London. Above the city were the frigates United States and Macedonia, and the sloop-of-war Wasp, at anchor. During my stay of four or five days on board, the commodore would every afternoon send for me to come into his cabin, for the purpose of having some humorous conversation, which caused the time to pass very agreeably. The remainder of my time was passed among the officers, some of whom had relatives living in the city of New-York, with whom I had formerly traded. We became familiar, and they insisted on taking my name and number of my boarding house, saying, that when they took the city of New-York they would come and take a bottle of wine with me. I told them if ever they saw me in the city of New-York after they had captured it, it would be without a head.

The day before my departure from the ship, finding the commodore in good humor, I told him that I was a poor man and had a large family to support with my old sloop, that flour was worth only seven dollars per barrel in New-York, and was worth fourteen dollars in Boston, and that it would do him no harm to give me a passport to carry a cargo to Boston or neighboring ports. He paused for awhile, and then with a smile said, "You look like a pretty clever fellow, and if you go to New-York and take in a cargo, and come back here before I leave this station, which will be in about three weeks, I will then give you a passport. But if you attempt to run by me in the night, I shall make a prize of you." The next day my old sloop returned to the Ramillies with a quantity of beef on board. I made some complaint to the first lieutenant that the sailors had eaten up all my provisions and lost my lead-line, and hand-saw, &c. He remunerated me by giving me five times the value of what I had lost. I paid the commodore the ransom money, received their best wishes for a prosperous voyage, and departed.

On my arrival in New-York I was much interrogated to know why I had not obtained a license from Commodore Hardy; to which I gave evasive answers. Congress having about this time passed some stringent laws requiring our vessels of war to overhaul and search all vessels bound to, or coming from an enemy's ship, I thought best to keep my own secrets. An acquaintance of mine called on me and asked me if I thought it safe to take a cargo to Boston or some of the Eastern ports. I told him if I were able to purchase one, I would try it. He told me to call on him in a short time, as he thought he could procure a freight for me. He soon obtained five hundred barrels of flour, and seventy barrels of bread, at one dollar per barrel for freightage, and three per cent commission for selling. I was to remit the proceeds by mail, or pay it to their correspondents in Boston.

About the 20th of June I sailed from New-York and arrived within about five miles of the Ramillies, where I anchored. At daylight I found a barge coming towards us. My seamen were frightened, and attempted to make their escape to the shore, a distance of two miles; by threats and persuasion I prevented them. Soon after the barge came alongside. The commanding officer asked me what cargo I had on board, and sundry other questions. He then said, "You must be crazy. It was only last week we had you prisoner, when we pitied you so much that we volunteered to give up our

shares in your old sloop if the commodore would let you go." I told him I thought the commodore would let me pass. He replied, "You need not expect any favor from him, as he has sworn vengeance against all Americans. Yesterday morning we discovered a schooner lying at anchor near where you now are. I was ordered to go and capture her. I proceeded towards her, and saw the crew take her boat and pull for the shore; when I boarded her I found no person on board. In the cabin I found a manifest of her cargo, and in the list, some naval stores which we wanted for the ship's use. We got the schooner under weigh, beat her up within half a mile of the ship and came to anchor. Mr. Collingwood, our second lieutenant, whom you well know, was sent to relieve me, and I went to report to the commodore. The hatches were taken off and the tackle hooked on to a barrel of naval stores, when the schooner blew up. There were fourteen men on board, and all were killed except three seamen who were furling the fore-topsail. Those three were thrown some twenty rods, when the fore-mast was blown out of her. You cannot expect any favors of the commodore." Before leaving New-York I learned that some persons who had been captured by the commodore, ascertained, while on board, that he was in want of naval stores; as soon as the news got abroad, some merchants purchased by subscription an old schooner, and placed thirty casks of powder in her hold. Some machinery was attached to the powder by a string, which was also fastened to a barrel of naval stores, and when it was raised had caused the explosion, as related by the lieutenant.

My sloop was soon brought and anchored within half a mile of the ship. I was taken on board the ship and conducted to the commodore, who spoke to me in a pleasant manner. "Well, sir," said he, "I see you have arrived here again. What does your cargo consist of? Where are you bound?" I told him my cargo was flour, and that I was bound to Boston and some of the neighboring ports. He gave me a passport to protect me from capture by the English ships, and told me I could proceed on my voyage. I then steered for Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where I sold some of my flour at sixteen dollars per barrel. Finding the market dull, I proceeded to Newburyport, where I found an abundant supply. From thence I proceeded to Boston, where I sold the remainder of my flour at auction, at fourteen dollars per barrel.

After my flour was disposed of I purchased a cargo of boards to carry to Providence, Rhode Island. I loaded the sloop, intending to be ready to sail in the morning, but the tide receding during the night, the Rover was left aground at the Long Wharf. When I awoke in the morning I found my vessel had fallen over on her side, and had five feet of water in her hold. I procured a caulker, who, with myself and crew, went into the mud and water and commenced stopping the leaks, while the water was running out from her bottom from almost every seam. We caulked the largest with table knives, wooden wedges, &c. We then took four pounds of candles and a quantity of wood ashes and made a kind of putty, with which we stopped the remainder. In the mean time my two seamen were arrested for stealing and sent to jail. I hired a number of men and bailed and pumped out the water. I then shipped a new crew and proceeded to Providence. On my arrival there I was cordially greeted by the inhabitants, and disposed of my cargo very advantageously. In consequence of my good fortune a number of Quaker, and other persons, who were strangers to me, urged me to take charge of a good brig; supposing that I could protect their property. I declined taking another vessel, as my passport would not protect me with any other than the one I had. I, however, did not state to them the reason.

The rage for shipping in the Rover was so great that I could get about five times more for freightage than I could in time of peace. I took on board 31 pipes of brandy, 20 hogsheads of sugar, and 100 ceroons of tallow, and sailed for New-York. When I arrived at Hell Gate and was attempting to pass it, the wind being light, the sloop drifted upon the rock called the Hog's-back, and the tide falling, her bottom was left half out of water. At about 11 o'clock at night I made out to remove her off from the rocks, having four feet of water in her hold. She drifted back out of the Gate, when I succeeded in hauling her on shore and made her fast to the rocks. As it was dark and rainy, we could not tell at the time where we were. On groping my way into the cabin I found the water six inches deep on the cabin floor. I then lay down with clothes wet through to my skin. At daylight I found the

Rover, the tide having left her, some rods high and dry upon the rocks, and the water running from most of her seams. I called all hands and went to caulking with table knives, &c. We then applied a few pounds of putty and ashes to the seams. At high water she again floated. After hiring four negroes to go with us to New-York to assist in pumping and bailing, we proceeded on our course.

When we got to the city we hauled her into Coenties Slip, where the bottom is soft and muddy. The mud having filled up her seams in a few hours, she ceased leaking, and passed for a tight craft. I notified my consignees of our arrival and then landed the cargo. Five hogsheads of sugar were damaged in consequence of the leaking of my vessel. The consignees paid me for all the freight, and threw the loss of the damaged sugar upon the underwriters in Providence, who insured a considerable amount in the cargo.

As I had now been some time absent from my family, who resided in Catskill, I concluded to make them a visit. I agreed with my partners in the sloop to sell her at auction during my absence. The Rover was visited by multitudes of people, who pronounced her the most lucky vessel in the harbor. Many of them, I suppose, thought her to be a phantom ship. For myself, I felt well satisfied, as I had over two hundred dollars per month during the three months I sailed her, on a capital of one hundred and twenty-five dollars.

The fame of the Rover was so great that she sold for \$480. The purchaser took her up the Sound to Long Island, and laid her on shore at high water. He then loaded her with wood by driving alongside at low water. But when the tide rose he found her sides broken in and her hold filled with water. My hand trembles while I write of the untimely end of the charming sloop Rover.

CHAPTER II. Sloop New-York

About the first of November, 1813, having added a little to my small capital by my late adventure in the Rover, and feeling eager to add more, again trusting to the smiles of fickle fortune, I purchased a small sloop called the New-York, of 28 tons burden. Soon after I sold one-fourth of her to Messrs. T. B. & A. Cook, merchants in Catskill, and one-half of her to two merchants in the city of New-York. They considered it a kind of lottery adventure. One of the new owners in New-York had correspondents in Norfolk, Virginia, who informed us of the high prices of Northern produce in that city, and the situation of the English squadron in Lynhaven Bay, and advised us to procure a small vessel of light draught of water, and that by sailing in over a shoal called the Horse-shoe, in a dark night, we might avoid coming in contact with the enemy's fleet.

The American coast was closely blockaded by the English vessels, but heavy gales of wind frequently drove them off the coast for a short time, which offered some chance of making passages by keeping near the land.

The high prices of Northern produce in Southern markets held out great inducements to shippers to engage in exporting it. Our correspondents at Norfolk, stated potatoes to be worth one dollar and fifty cents per bushel; onions, sixteen dollars per hundred ropes; salt, two dollars and fifty cents per bushel, and cheese twenty-five dollars per cwt.

We loaded the sloop with four hundred bushels potatoes, two hundred bushels salt, three thousand four hundred and fifty ropes onions, and eight thousand six hundred pounds of cheese; all shipped on the joint account of the owners.

I was to purchase and sell the cargo, and when I arrived at Norfolk was to buy three or four old brigs or schooners, load them with coal, and when a favorable opportunity occurred by the enemy being driven to sea by the wind, send them to New-York. Vessels could be purchased in Norfolk at that time for one-third of their real value in time of peace; and the price of coal in New-York was three or four times as much as in Norfolk.

My wages, as master, was one hundred dollars per month, and I drew one-fourth of the profits of the whole concern.

On the 14th of November I sailed from New-York and proceeded to Sandy Hook, where I discovered an English frigate close in with the land, in chase of an American schooner, which she compelled to run ashore near Shrewsbury. I sailed into Mosquitto Cove, and took shelter among some thirty American gun-boats, the crews of which went as volunteers to protect the wreck of the schooner from being plundered by the English frigate, which they accomplished.

After tarrying two days at Mosquitto Cove, we weighed anchor and proceeded to sea, keeping as near the land as we could without being in danger of running aground, until we were some distance south of Cape Henlopen, when a violent gale of south-east wind commenced, and with our utmost exertions we succeeded in running into the bay.

Here I ascertained that my pilot, whom I had taken much pains to obtain, and who at the time I employed him had informed me he was well acquainted with that coast, had deceived me; he now for the first time informed me that he knew nothing of the different shoals and inlets on the Southern coast. I had now no alternative but to run by chance and keep a sharp look out for breakers. My little sloop was literally buried under water. The gale kept increasing until near night, when she struck upon a shoal. She thumped terribly, and almost every sea was breaking entirely over us when a seaman exclaimed, "She is bilged, a plank has come up from her bottom." On examination we found it was the shoe of her keel. We tried the pump and found we could keep her free of water by pretty hard labor. Soon after, she thumped over the shoal into nine feet water, where she did not strike so often,

and remained there until dawn. At daylight we cast out the anchors and succeeded in getting her into three or four fathoms water.

We then commenced repairing damages in the best manner we could. Her false keel had been broken and had swung across her main keel, which we could not repair. We then made sail for Chesapeake Bay and arrived that day about sun-set, without any material mishap.

Soon after, a light easterly wind sprung up, and we made sail for Norfolk. After entering the bay the wind slackened. About 11 o'clock in the evening it became a dead calm, with a thick fog: a strong tide set in, which prevented my going out to sea again. Soon after midnight we heard the cry, "Past 2 o'clock, and all's well," which I afterwards ascertained proceeded from His Britanic Majesty's ship *Dragon*, 74 guns, commanded by Commodore Barry, lying at anchor in the bay.

We continued drifting into the bay until about sunrise, when a light breeze sprung up and dispersed the fog, and we found ourselves drifting directly towards an English 20 gun brig called the *Sophia*, and the *Acton* of 16 guns, both lying at anchor within a mile of us. We were soon boarded from the *Sophia*, and we and our baggage taken on board of her. The brigs then got under weigh and proceeded up the bay, taking my sloop in tow, and anchored at the mouth of the river *Severn*.

During the next night they fitted out an expedition of four or five boats, and sent them up the river to cut out two or three of our vessels which were lying in the harbor, but they soon returned without accomplishing their design, having only obtained a quantity of plunder. They told me the inhabitants gave them a warm reception, by firing from behind trees and fences, and caused them to abandon the vessels. They weighed anchor the next morning, and after cruising about the bay, again took their station near *Watt's Island*. Here they made their rendezvous for some time; the officers occasionally going on shore, some days cruising about, and returning to the usual anchorage at night. They procured an abundance of cattle, sheep and poultry from the *Island*, and in about nine or ten days captured eight old schooners loaded with flour, from the *Rappahannock*, and bound to the *Eastern markets*. They sailed from there and anchored in *Lynn Haven Bay*, where we were sent on board the commodore's ship *Dragon*. I found twelve American captains prisoners on board the commodore's ship, who had been captured by the *Squadron*. The prizes which they had taken were small old vessels, some of which they stripped of their rigging and sails and set on fire; some parted their cables in a gale of wind and drifted to sea, my vessel among them. But my sloop, the *New-York*, and one or two others were afterwards towed back by the frigate and sent to *Bermuda*.

The American captains were quartered with the petty officers, such as midshipmen, captain's clerks, &c. and were treated with gin, segars, &c. and passed their time very jovially in telling stories, bragging of our naval engagements, &c. I must here tell a story related to me by one of the officers of the *Dragon*.

He said the Americans ought to be damned if they did not make an admiral of one Captain *Turner*, who commanded a *Baltimore schooner*. He said that while they were blockading the coast of *France* they captured him and his schooner; they put a prize-master and crew on board, and the crew of the schooner were put on board the *Squadron*, except Captain *Turner* and the cook, who remained on the schooner, which was ordered to sail for *England*. The next day *Turner* succeeded in getting the prize-master and crew drunk, killed the prize-master and part of the crew, and confined the remainder. He then returned to *France* with his vessel, shipped a new crew, and put to sea again. One morning they discovered from the *Squadron*, a schooner in company with two frigates, being between the schooner and the land. The *Dragon* steered directly for the schooner, while the frigates steered in different directions, to prevent the schooner from going back again into port. The *Dragon* by setting all her light sails was fast coming up with her, and commenced firing her bow guns, to which the schooner paid no attention. They soon came within musket-shot and fired a number of volleys which riddled the schooner's sails. The captain of the *Dragon* then gave orders to cease firing, as he considered it cold-blooded murder. On coming within a few rods of the schooner they saw but one man on board, and standing at the wheel. When within a short distance he suddenly put down

her helm, which brought her broad side across the ship's bow, intending that the ship should run over her. But the ship's helm was immediately put up, which caused her to strike the schooner near the bow and brought her alongside of the ship. They then hailed, "What schooner is that?" To which the man at the helm replied, "The Prize, Captain Turner, the very man you are looking for." On boarding the schooner, they found the crew all below, except the captain, who said he did not wish to expose his crew to their fire. He said the excitement was great on board the ship: that all the officers signed a petition to mitigate Turner's punishment.

While we were lying in Lynn Haven Bay, the Dragon had captured a small vessel, put on board of her a cannonade or short nine-pounder, a quantity of small arms, and called her the "Snap Dragon." They sent her out in pursuit of plunder and slaves, about one hundred and fifty of whom were captured as runaways from their masters. But on one of the expeditions of the Snap Dragon, she was captured by the Americans, having thirty men on board, and the prisoners sent to Baltimore. Soon after an exchange was agreed upon by which the prisoners of the Snap Dragon were exchanged for the Americans on board the ship. When the crew of the Snap Dragon were brought on board the ship we were all discharged, which caused no little rejoicing among us. We then returned to Baltimore, took leave of each other and made our way to our respective homes.

CHAPTER III. Sloop Biddle

Soon after my unfortunate adventure in the New-York, I took command of a schooner called the *Caty Ann*, and made a voyage to Savannah and back to New-York, without capture. Although Sir James Yeo, in the South Hampton frigate, was closely blockading Savannah at the time, I made a second attempt to proceed to the same port. After sailing a few miles south of Sandy Hook lighthouse we were chased back by an English frigate, and the schooner narrowly escaped being captured. The whole coast was so closely blockaded that I abandoned going to sea again until after peace was proclaimed.

About the first of May, 1813, I took charge of the brig *Cyrus*, of New-York, and made one voyage to Georgetown, South Carolina, and back, and then made another to Bermuda and Turk's Island.

Ever ready to sacrifice my personal comfort for the prospect of increasing the means of gaining an honest living – being in the prime of life and enjoying good health, and that huge monster, Fear, seldom throwing his dark shadow across my path – I engaged again to open a trade with the Indians on the Musquito Shore, on the borders of South America, now called New Grenada, or Central America. This country formerly belonged to the government of Spain, which still tried to exercise authority over it, although rebellions had broken out both in the North and South of it; and, the then called government of Columbia, under General Bolivar, aided by a number of Americans and others, with vessels commissioned as privateers, and land forces, made a strong resistance to the Spanish government. They fought many desperate battles with the royalists, under what was then called the Patriot, or Columbian flag. Carthagena, their largest sea-port, was taken and re-taken three several times, and every man in it put to death.

The king of the Musquito Indians claims the sea-coast of that country from the False Cape, lat. 15° 14' N. to Port Boro Toro, lat. 9° 29' N. The government of Old Spain likewise claimed it, but never had been able to dispossess the Indians. The sea-board of this country is very level, interspersed with lakes, rivers and creeks. From May until November the country is visited with heavy showers of rain. In many places I have from time to time walked in water some inches deep to go from one house to another. The Indian towns are mostly built some distance up the rivers or creeks, to secure them from any attacks from the sea-board. They have no roads inland, their whole travel being in canoes, by which means they can visit the different tribes, hauling them across narrow necks of land that separate one lake or river from another.

The Spanish government, under an old blockading decree had declared that any person found trading with these Indians, if captured, should lose his cargo by confiscation, and be sent to the mines for life. The government of Spain likewise claimed three small islands near the Musquito Shore, viz: Old Providence, lying in lat. 13° 27' N. long. 80° 39' W. This island I found inhabited by about thirty families of free people of different nations and colors, and from five to thirty slaves to every free person in the island. St. Andreas, lying in lat. 12° 33' N. long. 81° W. It contains about seventy-five families of free people, and about eight hundred slaves; it was lately the residence of a Spanish Governor named Gonzales. This place had a small fort, garrisoned with about thirty soldiers. I shall hereafter give the reader a further description of the island, related to me by Captain Mitchell, commonly called Mitchell the Pirate.¹ Great Corn Island lays in lat. 12° 19' N. long. 82° 11' W.

¹ The only account I have ever read of Mitchell is, that he was a partner with Lafitte, the Pirate, when they took possession of Baratara, where they carried their prizes. They kept possession of the place for some considerable time, bidding defiance to the authorities on that coast. Governor Claibourne, of Louisiana, afterwards issued a proclamation, offering these pirates a free pardon on condition that they would join the army then under command of General Jackson, for the defence of New Orleans. They accepted of

about forty miles from the main land. Little Corn Island, lying about ten miles from the great one, is inhabited, and produces large quantities of cocoa nuts and wild fruits.

The staple produce of the above named island is cotton. The soil is fertile and produces plantains, yams, sweet potatoes, and Tropical fruits in abundance. The inhabitants raise plenty of hogs and poultry, which they fatten on cocoa nuts, the oil from which, while fresh, is equal to lard for cooking fish, &c. and after it becomes rancid burns well in lamps.

About the first of January, 1816, I made a contract with the Messrs. Cotheal & Hoff and Mr. A. S. Hallett, merchants of New-York, to take charge of a small sloop called the Biddle, of thirty-two tons burthen. I was to proceed to Musquito Shore, land at the island of Old Providence, (if I saw no suspicious looking vessels in the harbor;) and open a trade with the Indians for the purchase of tortoise shell, which was very valuable at this time; these Indians furnish large quantities of that article. I likewise had orders to exchange my goods for hides, deer-skins, cochineal, gum elastic or India rubber, gum copal, cotton, fustic, sarsaparilla, &c.

I took on board an assorted cargo, calculated for a barter trade. As I was totally unacquainted with the trade, this voyage was considered an experimental trip. On my arrival the inhabitants informed me that they had not seen the American flag flying there for the last fourteen years.

I could not procure any correct charts of that coast. I found many shoals that never had made their appearance on any chart, so little had these seas been surveyed. I suppose young mariners have less difficulty in that respect now, as Queen Victoria has become god-mother to the young king of Musquito Shore, and taken him under her parental care, to assist him in robbing his neighbors' territories.

I will here give the reader a short description of the country, the undertaking, and some account of the disasters which befell me in the prosecution of the voyage. Having loaded my little sloop, (about the size of a clam boat,) I soon shipped a crew, which consisted of a North River captain, who had never been out of the sight of land, to act as my mate; and two old broken-down sailors, one acting as seaman and the other as cook. We sailed about the first of February, with a fair wind, and made our passage in twenty-two days to the Island of Old Providence, where we hoisted our flag for a pilot. I soon discovered a fishing canoe, having one white man and three or four negroes on board, who volunteered to pilot us into the harbor. I inquired of the white man, whose name was John Taylor, one of the largest planters in the island, for a Mr. Hoy, to whom I had a letter of introduction. Mr. Taylor replied that Mr. Hoy was dead, that he was his father-in-law. He took the letter, promised me friendly assistance, and piloted my vessel into the harbor. The inhabitants soon came on board and commenced a brisk trade with me. Previous to leaving New-York, I was advised not to enter the harbor of Old Providence if I saw any vessel looking like a privateer or man-of-war in sight of the place. In the afternoon I kept a good look out with my spy-glass, until near sun-set, when I discovered a schooner beating up under the lee of the island. I immediately applied to my new friend, Taylor, to pilot me out of the harbor, promising him to return again in a few days, which he utterly refused. He told me that the vessel in sight was a privateer belonging to Captain Mitchell, who commanded her – that Captain M. kept his (Taylor's) daughter as a wife, and that Mitchell was a clever fellow and would not molest me. As the channel of the harbor was narrow and difficult to pass through, I decided to remain at anchor rather than run the risk of getting the vessel on shore, considering it was best to keep quiet and trust to fortune. I felt somewhat agitated as the privateer approached the land, it being a dark night.

About 12 o'clock she anchored a short distance from us, when I was hailed from her, asking, "What sloop is that, and from whence come you?" I answered, "Sloop Biddle, from New-York." In a few moments a boat came alongside with the captain and eight men, all armed. I showed the

the Governor's terms, repaired to that place with all their men, and put themselves under the command of the General, who placed them in the hottest part of the battle, where they fought in the most gallant manner. Lafitte and Mitchell both held commissions under the government of the Republic of Columbia at this time.

captain my papers, and assured him my cargo was *bona fide* American property. He answered me, saying, "We shall see more about that to-morrow morning." He then left me and returned to his own vessel. Soon after I heard the report of a large cannon from the privateer, which was mounted on a circle, filled with chain and grape-shot, and pointed towards the shore, where it cut a decent road through the small trees. The next morning Captain Mitchell told me the gun was loaded full to the muzzle, and that when he loaded it he intended to fire into my vessel without hailing her, supposing she was Spanish, to whom he showed no quarter. On a second reflection he thought it best to hail the sloop before he fired. He said, "Had I fired into you, I should have cut your vessel all in pieces." He discharged the gun toward the shore as a signal to send a horse to convey him to Mr. John Taylor's, whom he called his father-in-law, as he kept his daughter Sarah as a wife.

Mitchell appeared to have full control over the island, and no one dare question his authority. He had made this place his rendezvous for some time past, bought all the provisions they could spare, both from masters and slaves, and paid them liberally, having plenty of money on board, and, like most seamen, was lavish in its expenditure. He had lately escaped from Carthagena, and brought a few half-starved passengers from that city. In running past one of their forts, a cannon ball had struck the schooner's fore-mast and cut it half off.

One of the passengers informed me that Carthagena was so closely besieged by the royalists at that time, that cowhides were sold at twelve dollars apiece, for food, and that he was obliged to pay three dollars for a pilot-biscuit, to prevent starvation. Some time after, I learned that the city was taken and all the inhabitants put to death.

The next morning after my arrival I was visited by Captain Mitchell, John Taylor, and most of the inhabitants of the island, who were much pleased to see an American vessel in the harbor, saying it was the only one that they had seen there in many years past. I was invited on shore to dine at Mr. Taylor's, in company with Captain Mitchell, where a good dinner was provided for us, consisting of roast pig, poultry, &c. My plate was plentifully supplied by Captain Mitchell. On looking over the table I did not discover any bread. Soon after a plate of roasted plantains was set before me. I took one, not knowing how to use it, this being the first I had ever seen of this kind of food. I soon found it to be the common bread of the country. We were politely waited upon, having a negro boy, from ten to fourteen years old, without one rag of clothing about him, standing behind the chair of each person at table, with a bush in his hand to keep the flies from annoying the company. The following day I was invited to dine on board Captain Mitchell's vessel. His boat was sent for me at the proper hour, and I was politely received on board and soon after conducted to the table, which was elegantly furnished with silver platters, plates, knives, forks, spoons, pitchers, tumblers, &c. and with the exception of knife-blades, every other article on the table was pure silver. He showed me many valuable diamonds, and large quantities of old gold and silver; and the least valuable article I saw on board his vessel was the schooner's ballast, which consisted of brass cannon.

I opened a good trade with the inhabitants, selling goods at retail, from one to three hundred per cent profit. In ten days I sold over eighteen hundred dollars' worth; about one-half was received in money, and the remainder in cotton. I took part of the cotton on board, and the balance was to be paid on my return to that port.

Captain Mitchell visited me daily, and told me some of his adventures. He said that a few months previous he had captured a small trading schooner, armed her for a privateer, and appointed one Captain Rose to the command of her, who was then on a cruise. A short time before, Rose had been with him in Old Providence. "While laying here," said he, "I made up my mind to sail for New-York, and there sell my vessel and cargo and retire to private life, thinking my means would support me. One morning, while contemplating my future enjoyments when I got well settled in New-York, I thought it would much disturb my mind to think that old Gonzales should boast that he had frightened Mitchell, who dared not attack him. He had sent me many saucy messages, by trading vessels, saying, I dare not come to St. Andreas, to annoy him, as I had the inhabitants of Providence, who were afraid

to resist me. These reflections so affected my mind that I immediately ordered my boat manned and went on board of Rose's vessel. I told Rose that we would never leave these seas until we had made an attack on St. Andreas, and that he must prepare himself to join me on the morrow. The next day we made the necessary preparation and sailed for that island, a distance of about sixty miles, where we arrived early in the evening, ran into the harbor and came to anchor. All hands on board, being only forty-six, including officers and seamen, had volunteered to make an attack on the island. We all landed, about 11 o'clock at night, except one man in each vessel. Being well acquainted with the local situation of the island, I proceeded to the plantation of Mrs. Lever, and captured her negro-driver, whose name was Frank, and told him to conduct me secretly to his young master William, if he did not I would kill him instantly. Frank soon led me to William's house, where we found him in bed. We seized him without making any alarm, and told him that death was his portion if he did not go with us without making any noise and strictly obey my orders. I had often heard of the boastings this young Lever had made of what he would do if he could catch Mitchell, and thought the present a good opportunity to retaliate upon him. I then told him he must conduct me to the house of Governor Gonzales without making any alarm, call the governor from his bed and tell him that Captain Mitchell was near the island with two privateers; that you imagine the island in great danger, and think it necessary to prepare for immediate defence.

"We marched directly to the house, where we found the governor in bed. I kept my men still, not allowing a loud word to be spoken. Lever obeyed my orders punctually, calling the old man out of bed by telling him his alarming tale. As soon as the old man opened the door I took hold of him and conveyed him on board of my vessel. We landed a six-pound brass cannon during the night, unroofed the governor's house, and mounted the gun on the second floor of the building. I sent a party to the fort, who put to death a few soldiers they found sleeping there. A number having taken lodgings with their families prevented their sharing the same fate.

"I took possession of the governor's house for my head quarters, where I issued a proclamation, addressed to the inhabitants, inviting them to surrender their arms, and by complying with the request, all private property should be respected. About ten o'clock the next morning I discovered a collection of about sixty men with two nine-pound carriage guns, on their way to my head quarters. Immediately beating up for volunteers, sixteen men agreed to follow me. On marching towards the enemy they abandoned their field-pieces and dispersed in great haste. We dismounted the guns and spiked them, burnt the carriages, and returned to our head quarters unmolested. Three days after, the inhabitants accepted of the proposed terms, and all opposition to my command ceased. I took the governor's negroes, money, plate, &c. and repaired on board, where I remained some days, treating the old fellow politely at my table, feeding him on the best the island produced, furnishing him with wine at his dinner, and plenty of Spanish segars. In a few days he appeared cheerful, composed, and conversed with me in a familiar manner. On the tenth day after his capture I gave him a good dinner, took a glass of wine with him, and told him I was going to hang him that afternoon. He laughed, supposing it a joke, and that I had no intention of harming him. He was sitting in an armed-chair near the cabin door, on deck, smoking a segar, when I ordered one of the seamen to reave a yard-rope from the fore-yard, bring the end aft and put it round his neck. He was soon dragged from the chair to the fore-yard-arm."

After Captain Mitchell had related his story, I asked him what he did with his body; he replied, "I let him hang about an hour, and then cut the rope and let the old devil go adrift." I said he should have spared his life, he being an old man who could never do him much harm. He replied, "I have served him the same as they will serve me when they catch me."

Captain Mitchell told me he was now bound to New-York, which he intended to make his permanent residence, but he must go by the way of New Orleans, as he had fourteen negro slaves he wanted to sell there. I told him the laws of the United States strictly forbid the carrying of slaves into that country; if he was caught in the act his vessel and cargo would be forfeited. He said he was

well acquainted with one Sisson, a New Orleans pilot, who would smuggle them on shore for him. I cautioned him against the attempt, by saying, "Captain Mitchell, be careful that those negroes do not sell you before you do them." He has often, since the loss of his vessel and cargo, repeated to me the caution I then gave him. He made a contract with me to return to Providence, after I had been to Musquito Shore and disposed of my cargo, and take Miss Sarah Taylor (whom he called his wife) and her servant to New-York, agreeing to pay me three hundred and thirty dollars for their passages; saying he intended to proceed along the coast of Cuba in search of Spanish vessels, and in all probability would have some hard engagements, and did not want a woman sniffing about him; and that he would eventually meet her in New-York.

Miss Sarah Taylor was educated in Jamaica, and had the appearance of a lady of some accomplishments, although she was living as a concubine.

Captain Mitchell was a man of some education, about five feet six inches high, dark hair and eyes, and had the appearance of a gentleman; was very liberal to unfortunate seamen, and one of the greatest tyrants to exercise authority over them that I have ever heard of. He had at that time two sailors lying in the stocks near Taylor's house, with their ancles two feet above the ground, they lying out of doors on their backs, their bodies exposed to the sun for two or three days. He informed me that he had captured a prize some time previous, and the prize-master and crew had run away with the vessel; that he then took an oath to shoot any of the crew if he ever saw them again. A few months after, he visited Corn Island, where one of the crew happened to arrive. Some of the inhabitants cautioned the man to keep out of his sight. He boastingly replied that Mitchell dared not shoot him. Mitchell said he hoped the man would not appear in his presence, as he did not want to kill him. "But," said he, "one day when I was taking a walk on the island he (knowing I had made the threat) presented himself a short distance before me, when I took a musket and shot him dead."

Some of the inhabitants informed me that the negro cook belonging on board his vessel asked him one day what he should cook for his dinner. Mitchell told him to kill a pig which they had on board. The cook did not understand his answer, and knowing his ungovernable temper, dared not ask him a second time, but built his fire and had his water boiling. At twelve o'clock Mitchell asked him what he was cooking for dinner, to which the cook replied, "I did not understand what you wanted for dinner." Mitchell seized him by the hair of his head with one hand, and with a ladle in the other poured the boiling water on him until he scalded him to death. One of the sailors told him he thought that was hard usage. Mitchell immediately drew a pistol from his belt and shot the sailor dead and then threw him overboard.

Captain Mitchell informed me that some years since he was cast away on the shore of the Pacific Ocean, and found it necessary to cross over the country by land to the Atlantic coast to get home, that he was arrested for not having a passport to travel. He was thrown into prison and for some misdemeanor was put into the stocks, where he had to lie on his back for some months, and while thus confined he had taken an oath that he would never die in peace until he had killed one hundred Spaniards with his own hands. Some three years after this time I accosted him in a humorous manner, by saying, "Mitchell how many have you due now?" He replied, "Seventeen, by G – d, Dunham, I have killed eighty-three with my own hands."

CHAPTER IV

After ten days successful trade at Old Providence, I got under weigh and proceeded towards Musquito Shore, and in the day-time ran in near the land, but could not discover any settlements. I kept beating to the northward, keeping as near the shore as safety would admit, with a good look-out for houses or canoes. By my observations I found a strong current setting to the southward. After beating up three days, we discovered a number of Indian houses near the entrance of a bay which appeared like a good harbor. From my reckoning I supposed this place to be Cape Gracios a Dios, (mercy of God.) I carefully sounded my way into the harbor and anchored.

Soon after we anchored, a canoe containing six or eight Indians, having a stripe of hair about three inches broad, extending from one ear to the other across the top of their heads, which were shaved close to the skin, came out to our vessel. They spoke to us in broken English. I asked them if this place was called the Cape. They answered "Yes." We discovered an English Island flag flying on shore near the largest house, and asking them who owned the house where the flag was flying; they answered "Admiral Dalby;" looking at me with some surprise, they exclaimed, "Don't you know Admiral Dalby?"

Supposing I had to appear before some great chief, whose name sounded so loud in my ears, I put on my best go-a-shore suit, to use an old sailor phrase, and treating the Indians with rum, &c. went on shore with them, and was conducted to the house of Admiral Dalby, whom I found dressed in a clean shirt and white pantaloons, a cotton handkerchief tied on his head, and an old English Admiral's red vest, with some old lace trimmings, having long skirts extending nearly to his knees, and without shoes. Seeing his *majestic* appearance, I approached him with all the politeness of a French dancing-master. After the ceremonies were ended, he asked me what country I came from, and what articles I wanted to purchase. I replied that I came from New-York, in North America, and that I belonged to the same continent that he did; that I wanted to purchase tortoise-shell, cow-hides, deer-skins, gum elastic, gum copal, cochineal, &c. We spent some time in ascertaining the Indian names of the gums, &c. before he understood what articles I wanted to purchase. He said, "Indian man and American man all one country belongs to, all the same as brothers, me right king's officer, all white men must help um; me good man, have good head, savy good? this place all me belong to. To-morrow I send plenty men to fetch you skins, gums, and every thing you want."

After all our arrangements were completed, it being the first time I ever had the honor of negotiating with an *admiral*, I invited him to go on board my vessel and drink tea with me; which invitation he readily accepted. On our arrival on board, my little table was soon placed on deck under an awning. The cook supplied us with the best our little sloop afforded; the *admiral* was seated at the head of the table, and waited on in the politest manner. After he had finished his tea, he drank a few glasses of rum and returned to his home.

When the cook set his table the next morning, he missed his tea spoons. Diligent search was made for them, but they could not be found. We charged the poor old cook with throwing them overboard in shaking out his crumbs of the table-cloth, which he strongly denied. The spoons cost about two or three cents apiece. The next day I called at the admiral's house, where I saw his children playing with my spoons. On inquiring I found the admiral had carried them on shore in his breeches pocket.

I remained at the Cape about one week, where I purchased a small quantity of tortoise-shell, some hides, deer-skins, tiger-skins, gums, &c. My owners had given me orders on my arrival in that country to procure an Indian pilot who was well acquainted with the coast.

My old friend, Admiral Dalby, procured me a pilot to conduct me to Pearl Key Lagoon, where most of the inhabitants spoke good English. I had a letter of introduction to an inhabitant of that place, whose name was Edward Patterson, a native of Curracoa, who had lived with the Musquitoes many

years, and intermarried with them. The pilot and his son-in-law came on board. I was compelled to hire the latter that he might assist his father-in-law in returning with his canoe. The price agreed on was ten yards of Osnabergs to each; no difference in the price, whether the voyage was performed in one week, or I detained him three months: it was all the same.

We weighed anchor and proceeded to the southward, intending to stop at every settlement between the Cape and Pearl Key Lagoon. The next day we anchored at Sandy Bay. Soon after, we were visited by Governor Clemente, Admiral Hammer, General McLean, and many petty officers and citizens. After treating with a few gallons of rum, by way of introduction, I opened a brisk trade with them, bartering my goods for the same kind of articles I had bought at the Cape. The governor brought on board with him one of his nine living wives. After remaining here three days, we got under weigh and steered southward, keeping near the land, under the direction of the pilot. In the evening I began to doubt his skill, and often hove the lead to satisfy myself, the pilot being stationed forward to keep a good look-out. About ten o'clock I heard the sound of out, out, out. I looked under the lee of the boom and discovered we were near the breakers. We attempted to tack ship, but found it impossible. In a few moments we were driven upon the reef, unshipping our rudder and thumping so hard that I expected she would break in pieces. About an hour after, she beat over the shoal into nine feet water, where we came to anchor. The next day I sounded a passage out between the shoals. In heaving the vessel through the passage we broke our largest anchor, and finding it impossible to save her, hoisted the jib and ran her on shore. When the wind abated we landed our sails, dry goods and hardware. We built a comfortable tent, which protected our goods from the rains which visit that country almost every day from May until November. We found ourselves near the mouth of a river called Waa-waa, some fifteen miles from the residence of Governor Clemente. After remaining here a few days I sent the pilot to the governor's residence, claiming his protection and requesting him to furnish me with men and canoes to transport my goods to Pearl Key Lagoon, and I would pay them a liberal compensation for their services. The messenger returned with an answer, that the governor had gone on an excursion through his dominions, and was not expected to return in less than two or three weeks. We passed our time in shooting deer, conies, parrots, boobies, gulls, &c. and catching fish, which we found in abundance.

After we had remained here four weeks, the governor arrived, accompanied by forty or fifty Indians. I provided a good dinner for the governor, his lady and officers, who were invited to my table. Rum, gin, and Catalonia wine, were served out in abundance. The governor promised me protection and assistance; but his business required his return home immediately, but added that he would send me relief the next day. Before we had finished dinner the mob of Indians commenced stealing our tumblers from the table, likewise knives, forks, some empty kegs, and a fine pig, which we had fattened, as well as most of the loose articles about our premises. I had made the governor many presents for his promised protection, and I remonstrated with him against this wanton outrage, without obtaining any redress.

About sunset the Indians all left my camp, except four canoes of country Indians, who lived four days paddle up some of the rivers: and according to the pilot's interpretation, they did not associate with the governor's gang, who treated them with contempt. After the governor and his tribe had left us, these Indians came to my tent, whom I treated with hospitality, and they encamped near us that night. The next morning my mate advised me to hire these Indians to take me to Pearl Key Lagoon in their canoes, taking my money, dry goods, and all my valuable articles with me, and he and the two sailors would remain by the wreck and take care of the heavy goods until I could procure some vessel or large craft to transport them to that place. Fearing an attack from the governor's party, I employed the pilot to negotiate a bargain with these Indians, as they could not speak English. He soon made an agreement by which I was to give two officers, captains of towns, ten yards of check shirting cloth each, and the soldiers, as he called them, five yards each, and five yards for the hire of a large canoe.

The bargain being closed we loaded the four canoes, together with the pilot's, with dry goods, cutlery, &c. In the large canoe I put my chest, charts, quadrant, clothing, nine hundred dollars in specie, and a ten gallon keg of rum, knowing it would stimulate them to perform the voyage with despatch, by giving them a drink on arriving at certain places we could see ahead. The cook had boiled me a piece of salt beef to carry with me, and put up two or three pounds of sea-bread. I took a jug of rum in addition to the ten gallon keg, on board of the canoe in which I embarked, and put a tea-cup in my pocket to serve as a tumbler. As soon as the canoes were loaded I measured ten yards to each of the officers, according to our contract, and then measured off five yards and gave it to one of the soldiers, who threw it on the ground, when the Indians commenced unloading the canoes. I called on the pilot for an explanation, and was informed that the soldiers said they had to work as hard as the officers, and would not proceed with me unless I gave them ten yards each. I was unable to avoid the extortion, and gave them the same quantity I had given the officers. In complaining to the pilot of the treatment I had received from the Indians, and the crime they had committed in stealing from me, he replied, "Tief man can't go and live wit God, Devil must catch um." After I had given the check to each of the twelve Indians who were to convey me to Pearl Key Lagoon, one of them seized his and escaped to the woods, which was the last I saw of him.

All things being ready, we made sail, myself taking charge of the large canoe, with orders for them all to keep close company, by shortening sail when necessary, so that they could assist one another should any accident happen. I now began to reflect on my forlorn situation, having five canoes under my control, twelve Indians, and only one that could speak English, the naked ocean on one side, the wilderness on the other, and a passage of one hundred and twenty miles to make before I could find a civilized habitation. We proceeded about ten miles on our way, when we ran our canoes on shore and drew them up on the beach, which was performed in great haste to prevent their filling with water and wetting the goods, to avoid which, I covered all the cargoes with cowhides.

Having secured our canoes, the Indians took cutlasses and dug a spring of fresh water, which after bailing out two or three times appeared clear, and we drank it with a real good will after we had mixed it with rum. I had made an agreement with them, by interpretation of the pilot, that I would treat them every time I drank myself, and at no other time, which was considered a fair bargain. They then took my meat and bread, and ate it all at one meal; after which they made a large fire on the ground to keep away tigers, panthers, &c.

I landed two chests, one containing my money and clothing, the other my most valuable goods; and wrapping myself in an old bed quilt, which protected me from the mosquitoes, took lodging on my chests, the Indians taking their station near the fire. The next morning we had nothing to eat. About nine o'clock the Indians went into the woods, *progg*ing, as they termed it, and after being gone some time returned with a few small oysters and some wild honey, which was all the food we got that day. The next morning we got under weigh and proceeded a few miles, when the wind rising created a heavy sea, and we were obliged to run our fleet on shore and remain until the following day.

In the afternoon the Indians unloaded two of the small canoes, (the wind having ceased blowing,) paddled out some distance and caught a large quantity of fish. At night they boiled three or four pots full, setting up until twelve o'clock and devouring all the fish they had caught. I thought they consumed five or six pounds each. The next morning we got under weigh and proceeded on our voyage until the afternoon, when the wind increasing, it was found necessary to lighten my canoe. I made a signal for the pilot to come alongside, he immediately obeyed, calling one of the captains of a town to join: when, after a short consultation, it was agreed to take some boxes of check shirting and the ten gallon keg of rum out of my canoe and put them on board of theirs. Strict orders were again given to keep close together, that assistance might be rendered to each other if necessary, the sea running high at the time. The captain's and pilot's canoes soon out-sailed the rest of the fleet. I made signals for them to shorten sail, which they paid no attention to, and at sun-set they were so far ahead that we could not discern them.

We then landed with the three canoes, made our fire and brought my two chests ashore, as on the night previous. Not having had any food that day I went a short distance into the woods, where I found some old cocoa-nuts, of which I made a poor supper. Not having any one to converse with, I laid down on my chests near the fire, my eight Indians near me. They soon commenced a long conversation, and being somewhat anxious to learn the subject of it, I lay listening very attentively. Having a fire-light I could see all their movements. I heard one of them repeat the word "*Buckra*" at the same time drawing his hand across his throat. I then imagined they were concocting some plan to kill me. In the morning they went into the woods, caught a land-tortoise, and laying him on a large fire with his back down, kept him there until he was dead, and then cutting a hole in his side, took out his inwards and roasted him in the shell, from which we made our breakfast.

I had discovered that these Indians had but little strength of body, in loading and unloading canoes; in handling heavy chests and boxes, it always took three Indians to carry one end when I could carry the other. Wishing to try their strength, by signs I introduced wrestling, jumping, &c. I found I could throw three of them on the ground at one time without much trouble. I then took my pistols from my chest, fired at targets, and performed many other exercises in order to show them my strength was much greater than theirs, that they might be cautious how they attacked me.

In the afternoon we got under weigh and proceeded a few miles, when we encamped for the night. The next morning the Indians went into the swamp after some food, and returned in a short time with a young alligator three or four feet in length, which they had caught: having tied up his mouth with a bark rope, they dragged him along on the ground by it. They also brought some alligator's eggs, which we boiled. They placed the middle of the alligator on the top of the fire, one holding the rope which secured his mouth, another his tail, (he being yet alive,) and burned him to death; after which they cut him to pieces and boiled his flesh in the pot, from which we made our breakfast. I ate some of the eggs, which I found very tough. Our jug of rum had been exhausted two or three days, and the Indians had lost all their ambition. I tried to make them understand, by signs, that when we arrived at Great River we should find our comrades who had left us in the two canoes, and get rum and provisions for the remainder of our voyage. Soon after, they showed me a point of land some distance ahead, and repeated the words, "Great River." I took a paddle in my hand and assisted them, at the same time making signs, by lifting the jug to my mouth, giving them to understand that they should have plenty of rum when we arrived there. When we were within two miles of the mouth of the river the Indians suddenly ran the canoes on shore, hauled them up on the land, unloaded all my goods and ran toward the woods, leaving me alone on the beach. I felt much surprised at being left in this sudden manner, half starved with hunger, and my strength exhausted for want of sleep. After piling up all my goods in the best manner I could, I re-loaded my pistols and prepared to defend myself. Hunger now prompted me to look for something to eat. I saw a large green turtle, some four feet in length, laying upon his back a few rods from my goods. I then walked in a different direction from the turtle, in pursuit of something to allay my hunger. Suddenly I discovered a large, strange Indian approaching toward me, having two small ropes in his hand, with eyes spliced in the ends, which he was slipping backward and forward as he approached near me. I slowly retreated some distance, casting my eyes over my shoulder, looking for some weapon to defend myself, when I discovered a stick of wood about the size of a man's wrist, which I quickly secured. He, advancing, asked if I was captain of the American vessel that was cast away on the coast a few weeks since, and if I was hungry. I told him yes: he still approached me during this conversation; upon which I raised my club and told him if he came any nearer to me I would kill him. He said if I would go with him to Admiral Drummer's house, which was but a short distance, I could get plenty to eat. I informed him that the Indians I had hired to carry my goods to Pearl Key Lagoon, had thrown them on shore here, left me, and that I dare not leave my goods unprotected on the beach. He said he would tell the Admiral of my situation, and informed me that two days ago two canoes, having some of my goods on board, arrived at the mouth of the river, that one of them had upset in passing the bar and lost one keg of

rum and one box of dry goods, which had sunk, and that they had been fishing for them but could not find them. He then took his leave, and going to the turtle put the ends of his rope on his flippers, placed the middle across his breast and dragged him off.

Admiral Drummer hearing of my arrival here, sent an Indian slave with a gold headed cane, which he considered as a badge of his office, inviting me to his house to take some breakfast. I returned my reasons for not accepting his invitation, by saying "I dare not leave my goods unprotected." Soon after the admiral brought me some warm cocoa, smoked meat and roasted plantains to eat. My appetite being good I made a hearty dinner. After some time my Indians returned from the woods with some coarse food they had gathered in the swamps. I told the admiral I had paid these Indians in advance to transport my goods to Pearl Key Lagoon, that they had broken their contract, and that they appeared determined to leave me here. After conversing with them some time, he told me they said they were half starved, had not any provisions to proceed with, and would not go any farther. He also said they were mountain Indians, living in the interior of the country, and were not under his control, but ordered them to put the goods into their canoes and carry me into the mouth of the river, where I would find the two boats which had left me some days before.

In the afternoon I was visited by the admiral, his two wives, and a number of his tribe. I made him and his wives many presents, and he promised to meet me the next day at the mouth of the river, when he would furnish me with men and canoes to carry me to the Lagoon. He left me soon after to return to his home. We proceeded with our three canoes into the mouth of the river, where I found the other two, one of them belonging to the pilot, who told me that, in crossing the bar at the mouth of the river, the captain's canoe had turned over and lost one box of check cloth, the ten gallon keg of rum, and they had both sunk, that they had fished for them a long time, but could not find them; also, that the captain had lost his dinner-pot by upsetting his canoe, and I must pay him for it, because he was at work for me. Another Indian had wrapped himself in his canoe-sail, and had laid so near the fire he had burnt a hole in it, and I must pay for it because he was in my employ.

Soon after my arrival in the mouth of the river the pilot told me he would go to the admiral's house and procure me some provisions; he left, followed by the whole gang, except one sick Indian who remained with me, with whom I could not converse except by signs. Knowing that a keg of rum would not sink in the water, I thought it best to search the shore and see what discoveries I could make. After walking about one-fourth of a mile I discovered a cow-hide secreted in the edge of the woods, which drew my attention to it. By removing the hide I discovered the box of dry goods and the dinner-pot for which he had demanded payment. I walked back to our landing place, took one of the canoes and carried the box, pot, &c. to my camp, where I opened the box and found some of the check a little wet, but not from the upsetting of the canoe. I searched the beach for some time, but could not find any traces of the rum-keg. Having no companion left with me except my sick Indian, and no food to eat, I was obliged to pick up old cocoa-nuts or any other articles I could swallow to satisfy my craving appetite.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.