

ГОВАРД
ПАЙЛ

HOWARD
PYLE'S BOOK
OF PIRATES

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Howard Pyle's Book of Pirates

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Howard Pyle's Book of Pirates / Fiction, Fact & Fancy Concerning the
Buccaneers & Marooners of the Spanish Main:*

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Howard Pyle

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FOREWORD

Pirates, Buccaneers, Marooners, those cruel but picturesque sea wolves who once infested the Spanish Main, all live in present-day conceptions in great degree as drawn by the pen and pencil of Howard Pyle.

Pyle, artist-author, living in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth, had the fine faculty of transposing himself into any chosen period of history and making its people flesh and blood again – not just historical puppets. His characters were sketched with both words and picture; with both words and picture he ranks as a master, with a rich personality which makes his work individual and attractive

in either medium.

He was one of the founders of present-day American illustration, and his pupils and grand-pupils pervade that field to-day. While he bore no such important part in the world of letters, his stories are modern in treatment, and yet widely read. His range included historical treatises concerning his favorite Pirates (Quaker though he was); fiction, with the same Pirates as principals; Americanized version of Old World fairy tales; boy stories of the Middle Ages, still best sellers to growing lads; stories of the occult, such as *In Tenebras* and *To the Soil of the Earth*, which, if newly published, would be hailed as contributions to our latest cult.

In all these fields Pyle's work may be equaled, surpassed, save in one. It is improbable that anyone else will ever bring his combination of interest and talent to the depiction of these old-time Pirates, any more than there could be a second Remington to paint the now extinct Indians and gun-fighters of the Great West.

Important and interesting to the student of history, the adventure-lover, and the artist, as they are, these Pirate stories and pictures have been scattered through many magazines and books. Here, in this volume, they are gathered together for the first time, perhaps not just as Mr. Pyle would have done, but with a completeness and appreciation of the real value of the material which the author's modesty might not have permitted.

Merle Johnson.

PREFACE

Why is it that a little spice of deviltry lends not an unpleasantly titillating twang to the great mass of respectable flour that goes to make up the pudding of our modern civilization? And pertinent to this question another – Why is it that the pirate has, and always has had, a certain lurid glamour of the heroical enveloping him round about? Is there, deep under the accumulated debris of culture, a hidden groundwork of the old-time savage? Is there even in these well-regulated times an unsubdued nature in the respectable mental household of every one of us that still kicks against the pricks of law and order? To make my meaning more clear, would not every boy, for instance – that is, every boy of any account – rather be a pirate captain than a Member of Parliament? And we ourselves – would we not rather read such a story as that of Captain Avery's capture of the East Indian treasure ship, with its beautiful princess and load of jewels (which gems he sold by the handful, history sayeth, to a Bristol merchant), than, say, one of Bishop Atterbury's sermons, or the goodly Master Robert Boyle's religious romance of "Theodora and Didymus"? It is to be apprehended that to the unregenerate nature of most of us there can be but one answer to such a query.

In the pleasurable warmth the heart feels in answer to tales of derring-do Nelson's battles are all mightily interesting, but, even in spite of their romance of splendid courage, I fancy that the

majority of us would rather turn back over the leaves of history to read how Drake captured the Spanish treasure ship in the South Sea, and of how he divided such a quantity of booty in the Island of Plate (so named because of the tremendous dividend there declared) that it had to be measured in quart bowls, being too considerable to be counted.

Courage and daring, no matter how mad and ungodly, have always a redundancy of *vim* and life to recommend them to the nether man that lies within us, and no doubt his desperate courage, his battle against the tremendous odds of all the civilized world of law and order, have had much to do in making a popular hero of our friend of the black flag. But it is not altogether courage and daring that endear him to our hearts. There is another and perhaps a greater kinship in that lust for wealth that makes one's fancy revel more pleasantly in the story of the division of treasure in the pirate's island retreat, the hiding of his godless gains somewhere in the sandy stretch of tropic beach, there to remain hidden until the time should come to rake the doubloons up again and to spend them like a lord in polite society, than in the most thrilling tales of his wonderful escapes from commissioned cruisers through tortuous channels between the coral reefs.

And what a life of adventure is his, to be sure! A life of constant alertness, constant danger, constant escape! An ocean Ishmaelite, he wanders forever aimlessly, homelessly; now unheard of for months, now careening his boat on some lonely

uninhabited shore, now appearing suddenly to swoop down on some merchant vessel with rattle of musketry, shouting, yells, and a hell of unbridled passions let loose to rend and tear. What a Carlislean hero! What a setting of blood and lust and flame and rapine for such a hero!

Piracy, such as was practiced in the flower of its days – that is, during the early eighteenth century – was no sudden growth. It was an evolution, from the semilawful buccaneering of the sixteenth century, just as buccaneering was upon its part, in a certain sense, an evolution from the unorganized, unauthorized warfare of the Tudor period.

For there was a deal of piratical smack in the anti-Spanish ventures of Elizabethan days. Many of the adventurers – of the Sir Francis Drake school, for instance – actually overstepped again and again the bounds of international law, entering into the realms of *de facto* piracy. Nevertheless, while their doings were not recognized officially by the government, the perpetrators were neither punished nor reprimanded for their excursions against Spanish commerce at home or in the West Indies; rather were they commended, and it was considered not altogether a discreditable thing for men to get rich upon the spoils taken from Spanish galleons in times of nominal peace. Many of the most reputable citizens and merchants of London, when they felt that the queen failed in her duty of pushing the fight against the great Catholic Power, fitted out fleets upon their own account and sent them to levy good Protestant war of a private nature upon the

Pope's anointed.

Some of the treasures captured in such ventures were immense, stupendous, unbelievable. For an example, one can hardly credit the truth of the "purchase" gained by Drake in the famous capture of the plate ship in the South Sea.

One of the old buccaneer writers of a century later says: "The Spaniards affirm to this day that he took at that time twelvescore tons of plate and sixteen bowls of coined money a man (his number being then forty-five men in all), insomuch that they were forced to heave much of it overboard, because his ship could not carry it all."

Maybe this was a very greatly exaggerated statement put by the author and his Spanish authorities, nevertheless there was enough truth in it to prove very conclusively to the bold minds of the age that tremendous profits – "purchases" they called them – were to be made from piracy. The Western World is filled with the names of daring mariners of those old days, who came flitting across the great trackless ocean in their little tublike boats of a few hundred tons burden, partly to explore unknown seas, partly – largely, perhaps – in pursuit of Spanish treasure: Frobisher, Davis, Drake, and a score of others.

In this left-handed war against Catholic Spain many of the adventurers were, no doubt, stirred and incited by a grim, Calvinistic, puritanical zeal for Protestantism. But equally beyond doubt the gold and silver and plate of the "Scarlet Woman" had much to do with the persistent energy with which

these hardy mariners braved the mysterious, unknown terrors of the great unknown ocean that stretched away to the sunset, there in far-away waters to attack the huge, unwieldy, treasure-laden galleons that sailed up and down the Caribbean Sea and through the Bahama Channel.

Of all ghastly and terrible things old-time religious war was the most ghastly and terrible. One can hardly credit nowadays the cold, callous cruelty of those times. Generally death was the least penalty that capture entailed. When the Spaniards made prisoners of the English, the Inquisition took them in hand, and what that meant all the world knows. When the English captured a Spanish vessel the prisoners were tortured, either for the sake of revenge or to compel them to disclose where treasure lay hidden. Cruelty begat cruelty, and it would be hard to say whether the Anglo-Saxon or the Latin showed himself to be most proficient in torturing his victim.

When Cobham, for instance, captured the Spanish ship in the Bay of Biscay, after all resistance was over and the heat of the battle had cooled, he ordered his crew to bind the captain and all of the crew and every Spaniard aboard – whether in arms or not – to sew them up in the mainsail and to fling them overboard. There were some twenty dead bodies in the sail when a few days later it was washed up on the shore.

Of course such acts were not likely to go unavenged, and many an innocent life was sacrificed to pay the debt of Cobham's cruelty.

Nothing could be more piratical than all this. Nevertheless, as was said, it was winked at, condoned, if not sanctioned, by the law; and it was not beneath people of family and respectability to take part in it. But by and by Protestantism and Catholicism began to be at somewhat less deadly enmity with each other; religious wars were still far enough from being ended, but the scabbard of the sword was no longer flung away when the blade was drawn. And so followed a time of nominal peace, and a generation arose with whom it was no longer respectable and worthy – one might say a matter of duty – to fight a country with which one's own land was not at war. Nevertheless, the seed had been sown; it had been demonstrated that it was feasible to practice piracy against Spain and not to suffer therefor. Blood had been shed and cruelty practiced, and, once indulged, no lust seems stronger than that of shedding blood and practicing cruelty.

Though Spain might be ever so well grounded in peace at home, in the West Indies she was always at war with the whole world – English, French, Dutch. It was almost a matter of life or death with her to keep her hold upon the New World. At home she was bankrupt and, upon the earthquake of the Reformation, her power was already beginning to totter and to crumble to pieces. America was her treasure house, and from it alone could she hope to keep her leaking purse full of gold and silver. So it was that she strove strenuously, desperately, to keep out the world from her American possessions – a bootless task, for the

old order upon which her power rested was broken and crumbled forever. But still she strove, fighting against fate, and so it was that in the tropical America it was one continual war between her and all the world. Thus it came that, long after piracy ceased to be allowed at home, it continued in those far-away seas with unabated vigor, recruiting to its service all that lawless malign element which gathers together in every newly opened country where the only law is lawlessness, where might is right and where a living is to be gained with no more trouble than cutting a throat.

It is not because of his life of adventure and daring that I admire this one of my favorite heroes; nor is it because of blowing winds nor blue ocean nor balmy islands which he knew so well; nor is it because of gold he spent nor treasure he hid. He was a man who knew his own mind and what he wanted.

Howard Pyle

Chapter I

BUCCANEERS AND MAROONERS OF THE SPANISH MAIN

Just above the northwestern shore of the old island of Hispaniola – the Santo Domingo of our day – and separated from it only by a narrow channel of some five or six miles in width, lies a queer little hunch of an island, known, because of a distant resemblance to that animal, as the Tortuga de Mar, or sea turtle. It is not more than twenty miles in length by perhaps seven or eight in breadth; it is only a little spot of land, and as you look at it upon the map a pin's head would almost cover it; yet from that spot, as from a center of inflammation, a burning fire of human wickedness and ruthlessness and lust overran the world, and spread terror and death throughout the Spanish West Indies, from St. Augustine to the island of Trinidad, and from Panama to the coasts of Peru.

About the middle of the seventeenth century certain French adventurers set out from the fortified island of St. Christopher in longboats and hoys, directing their course to the westward, there to discover new islands. Sighting Hispaniola "with abundance of joy," they landed, and went into the country, where they found great quantities of wild cattle, horses, and swine.

Now vessels on the return voyage to Europe from the West

Indies needed revictualing, and food, especially flesh, was at a premium in the islands of the Spanish Main; wherefore a great profit was to be turned in preserving beef and pork, and selling the flesh to homeward-bound vessels.

The northwestern shore of Hispaniola, lying as it does at the eastern outlet of the old Bahama Channel, running between the island of Cuba and the great Bahama Banks, lay almost in the very main stream of travel. The pioneer Frenchmen were not slow to discover the double advantage to be reaped from the wild cattle that cost them nothing to procure, and a market for the flesh ready found for them. So down upon Hispaniola they came by boatloads and shiploads, gathering like a swarm of mosquitoes, and overrunning the whole western end of the island. There they established themselves, spending the time alternately in hunting the wild cattle and buccanning¹ the meat, and squandering their hardly earned gains in wild debauchery, the opportunities for which were never lacking in the Spanish West Indies.

At first the Spaniards thought nothing of the few travel-worn Frenchmen who dragged their longboats and hoys up on the beach, and shot a wild bullock or two to keep body and soul together; but when the few grew to dozens, and the dozens to scores, and the scores to hundreds, it was a very different matter, and wrathful grumblings and mutterings began to be

¹ Buccanning, by which the "buccaneers" gained their name, was a process of curing thin strips of meat by salting, smoking, and drying in the sun.

heard among the original settlers.

But of this the careless buccaneers thought never a whit, the only thing that troubled them being the lack of a more convenient shipping point than the main island afforded them.

This lack was at last filled by a party of hunters who ventured across the narrow channel that separated the main island from Tortuga. Here they found exactly what they needed – a good harbor, just at the junction of the Windward Channel with the old Bahama Channel – a spot where four-fifths of the Spanish-Indian trade would pass by their very wharves.

There were a few Spaniards upon the island, but they were a quiet folk, and well disposed to make friends with the strangers; but when more Frenchmen and still more Frenchmen crossed the narrow channel, until they overran the Tortuga and turned it into one great curing house for the beef which they shot upon the neighboring island, the Spaniards grew restive over the matter, just as they had done upon the larger island.

Accordingly, one fine day there came half a dozen great boatloads of armed Spaniards, who landed upon the Turtle's Back and sent the Frenchmen flying to the woods and fastnesses of rocks as the chaff flies before the thunder gust. That night the Spaniards drank themselves mad and shouted themselves hoarse over their victory, while the beaten Frenchmen sullenly paddled their canoes back to the main island again, and the Sea Turtle was Spanish once more.

But the Spaniards were not contented with such a petty

triumph as that of sweeping the island of Tortuga free from the obnoxious strangers; down upon Hispaniola they came, flushed with their easy victory, and determined to root out every Frenchman, until not one single buccaneer remained. For a time they had an easy thing of it, for each French hunter roamed the woods by himself, with no better company than his half-wild dogs, so that when two or three Spaniards would meet such a one, he seldom if ever came out of the woods again, for even his resting place was lost.

But the very success of the Spaniards brought their ruin along with it, for the buccaneers began to combine together for self-protection, and out of that combination arose a strange union of lawless man with lawless man, so near, so close, that it can scarce be compared to any other than that of husband and wife. When two entered upon this comradeship, articles were drawn up and signed by both parties, a common stock was made of all their possessions, and out into the woods they went to seek their fortunes; thenceforth they were as one man; they lived together by day, they slept together by night; what one suffered, the other suffered; what one gained, the other gained. The only separation that came betwixt them was death, and then the survivor inherited all that the other left. And now it was another thing with Spanish buccaneer hunting, for two buccaneers, reckless of life, quick of eye, and true of aim, were worth any half dozen of Spanish islanders.

By and by, as the French became more strongly organized for

mutual self-protection, they assumed the offensive. Then down they came upon Tortuga, and now it was the turn of the Spanish to be hunted off the island like vermin, and the turn of the French to shout their victory.

Having firmly established themselves, a governor was sent to the French of Tortuga, one M. le Passeur, from the island of St. Christopher; the Sea Turtle was fortified, and colonists, consisting of men of doubtful character and women of whose character there could be no doubt whatever, began pouring in upon the island, for it was said that the buccaneers thought no more of a doubloon than of a Lima bean, so that this was the place for the brothel and the brandy shop to reap their golden harvest, and the island remained French.

Hitherto the Tortugans had been content to gain as much as possible from the homeward-bound vessels through the orderly channels of legitimate trade. It was reserved for Pierre le Grand to introduce piracy as a quicker and more easy road to wealth than the semihonest exchange they had been used to practice.

Gathering together eight-and-twenty other spirits as hardy and reckless as himself, he put boldly out to sea in a boat hardly large enough to hold his crew, and running down the Windward Channel and out into the Caribbean Sea, he lay in wait for such a prize as might be worth the risks of winning.

For a while their luck was steadily against them; their provisions and water began to fail, and they saw nothing before them but starvation or a humiliating return. In this extremity they

sighted a Spanish ship belonging to a "flota" which had become separated from her consorts.

The boat in which the buccaneers sailed might, perhaps, have served for the great ship's longboat; the Spaniards outnumbered them three to one, and Pierre and his men were armed only with pistols and cutlasses; nevertheless this was their one and their only chance, and they determined to take the Spanish ship or to die in the attempt. Down upon the Spaniard they bore through the dusk of the night, and giving orders to the "chirurgion" to scuttle their craft under them as they were leaving it, they swarmed up the side of the unsuspecting ship and upon its decks in a torrent – pistol in one hand and cutlass in the other. A part of them ran to the gun room and secured the arms and ammunition, pistoling or cutting down all such as stood in their way or offered opposition; the other party burst into the great cabin at the heels of Pierre le Grand, found the captain and a party of his friends at cards, set a pistol to his breast, and demanded him to deliver up the ship. Nothing remained for the Spaniard but to yield, for there was no alternative between surrender and death. And so the great prize was won.

It was not long before the news of this great exploit and of the vast treasure gained reached the ears of the buccaneers of Tortuga and Hispaniola. Then what a hubbub and an uproar and a tumult there was! Hunting wild cattle and buccanning the meat was at a discount, and the one and only thing to do was to go a-pirating; for where one such prize had been won, others were

to be had.

In a short time freebooting assumed all of the routine of a regular business. Articles were drawn up betwixt captain and crew, compacts were sealed, and agreements entered into by the one party and the other.

In all professions there are those who make their mark, those who succeed only moderately well, and those who fail more or less entirely. Nor did pirating differ from this general rule, for in it were men who rose to distinction, men whose names, something tarnished and rusted by the lapse of years, have come down even to us of the present day.

Pierre François, who, with his boatload of six-and-twenty desperadoes, ran boldly into the midst of the pearl fleet off the coast of South America, attacked the vice admiral under the very guns of two men-of-war, captured his ship, though she was armed with eight guns and manned with threescore men, and would have got her safely away, only that having to put on sail, their main-mast went by the board, whereupon the men-of-war came up with them, and the prize was lost.

But even though there were two men-of-war against all that remained of six-and-twenty buccaneers, the Spaniards were glad enough to make terms with them for the surrender of the vessel, whereby Pierre François and his men came off scot-free.

Bartholomew Portuguese was a worthy of even more note. In a boat manned with thirty fellow adventurers he fell upon a great ship off Cape Corrientes, manned with threescore and ten men,

all told.

Her he assaulted again and again, beaten off with the very pressure of numbers only to renew the assault, until the Spaniards who survived, some fifty in all, surrendered to twenty living pirates, who poured upon their decks like a score of blood-stained, powder-grimed devils.

They lost their vessel by recapture, and Bartholomew Portuguese barely escaped with his life through a series of almost unbelievable adventures. But no sooner had he fairly escaped from the clutches of the Spaniards than, gathering together another band of adventurers, he fell upon the very same vessel in the gloom of the night, recaptured her when she rode at anchor in the harbor of Campeche under the guns of the fort, slipped the cable, and was away without the loss of a single man. He lost her in a hurricane soon afterward, just off the Isle of Pines; but the deed was none the less daring for all that.

Another notable no less famous than these two worthies was Roch Braziliano, the truculent Dutchman who came up from the coast of Brazil to the Spanish Main with a name ready-made for him. Upon the very first adventure which he undertook he captured a plate ship of fabulous value, and brought her safely into Jamaica; and when at last captured by the Spaniards, he fairly frightened them into letting him go by truculent threats of vengeance from his followers.

Such were three of the pirate buccaneers who infested the Spanish Main. There were hundreds no less desperate, no less

reckless, no less insatiate in their lust for plunder, than they.

The effects of this freebooting soon became apparent. The risks to be assumed by the owners of vessels and the shippers of merchandise became so enormous that Spanish commerce was practically swept away from these waters. No vessel dared to venture out of port excepting under escort of powerful men-of-war, and even then they were not always secure from molestation. Exports from Central and South America were sent to Europe by way of the Strait of Magellan, and little or none went through the passes between the Bahamas and the Caribbees.

In the Ile de la Vache the buccaneers shared among themselves two hundred and sixty thousand pieces of eight, besides jewels and bales of silk and linen and miscellaneous plunder to a vast amount.

Such was the one great deed of l'Olonaise; from that time his star steadily declined – for even nature seemed fighting against such a monster – until at last he died a miserable, nameless death at the hands of an unknown tribe of Indians upon the Isthmus of Darien.

And now we come to the greatest of all the buccaneers, he who stands pre-eminent among them, and whose name even to this day is a charm to call up his deeds of daring, his dauntless courage, his truculent cruelty, and his insatiate and unappeasable lust for gold – Capt. Henry Morgan, the bold Welshman, who brought buccaneering to the height and flower of its glory.

Having sold himself, after the manner of the times, for his

passage across the seas, he worked out his time of servitude at the Barbados. As soon as he had regained his liberty he entered upon the trade of piracy, wherein he soon reached a position of considerable prominence. He was associated with Mansvelt at the time of the latter's descent upon Saint Catharine's Isle, the importance of which spot, as a center of operations against the neighboring coasts, Morgan never lost sight of.

The first attempt that Capt. Henry Morgan ever made against any town in the Spanish Indies was the bold descent upon the city of Puerto del Principe in the island of Cuba, with a mere handful of men. It was a deed the boldness of which has never been outdone by any of a like nature – not even the famous attack upon Panama itself. Thence they returned to their boats in the very face of the whole island of Cuba, aroused and determined upon their extermination. Not only did they make good their escape, but they brought away with them a vast amount of plunder, computed at three hundred thousand pieces of eight, besides five hundred head of cattle and many prisoners held for ransom.

But when the division of all this wealth came to be made, lo! there were only fifty thousand pieces of eight to be found. What had become of the rest no man could tell but Capt. Henry Morgan himself. Honesty among thieves was never an axiom with him.

Rude, truculent, and dishonest as Captain Morgan was, he seems to have had a wonderful power of persuading the wild buccaneers under him to submit everything to his judgment, and to rely entirely upon his word. In spite of the vast sum of money

that he had very evidently made away with, recruits poured in upon him, until his band was larger and better equipped than ever.

And now it was determined that the plunder harvest was ripe at Porto Bello, and that city's doom was sealed. The town was defended by two strong castles thoroughly manned, and officered by as gallant a soldier as ever carried Toledo steel at his side. But strong castles and gallant soldiers weighed not a barleycorn with the buccaneers when their blood was stirred by the lust of gold.

Landing at Puerto Naso, a town some ten leagues westward of Porto Bello, they marched to the latter town, and coming before the castle, boldly demanded its surrender. It was refused, whereupon Morgan threatened that no quarter should be given. Still surrender was refused; and then the castle was attacked, and after a bitter struggle was captured. Morgan was as good as his word: every man in the castle was shut in the guard room, the match was set to the powder magazine, and soldiers, castle, and all were blown into the air, while through all the smoke and the dust the buccaneers poured into the town. Still the governor held out in the other castle, and might have made good his defense, but that he was betrayed by the soldiers under him. Into the castle poured the howling buccaneers. But still the governor fought on, with his wife and daughter clinging to his knees and beseeching him to surrender, and the blood from his wounded forehead trickling down over his white collar, until a merciful bullet put an end to the vain struggle.

Here were enacted the old scenes. Everything plundered that could be taken, and then a ransom set upon the town itself.

This time an honest, or an apparently honest, division was made of the spoils, which amounted to two hundred and fifty thousand pieces of eight, besides merchandise and jewels.

The next towns to suffer were poor Maracaibo and Gibraltar, now just beginning to recover from the desolation wrought by l'Olonaise. Once more both towns were plundered of every bale of merchandise and of every piaster, and once more both were ransomed until everything was squeezed from the wretched inhabitants.

Here affairs were like to have taken a turn, for when Captain Morgan came up from Gibraltar he found three great men-of-war lying in the entrance to the lake awaiting his coming. Seeing that he was hemmed in in the narrow sheet of water, Captain Morgan was inclined to compromise matters, even offering to relinquish all the plunder he had gained if he were allowed to depart in peace. But no; the Spanish admiral would hear nothing of this. Having the pirates, as he thought, securely in his grasp, he would relinquish nothing, but would sweep them from the face of the sea once and forever.

That was an unlucky determination for the Spaniards to reach, for instead of paralyzing the pirates with fear, as he expected it would do, it simply turned their mad courage into as mad desperation.

A great vessel that they had taken with the town of Maracaibo

was converted into a fire ship, manned with logs of wood in montera caps and sailor jackets, and filled with brimstone, pitch, and palm leaves soaked in oil. Then out of the lake the pirates sailed to meet the Spaniards, the fire ship leading the way, and bearing down directly upon the admiral's vessel. At the helm stood volunteers, the most desperate and the bravest of all the pirate gang, and at the ports stood the logs of wood in montera caps. So they came up with the admiral, and grappled with his ship in spite of the thunder of all his great guns, and then the Spaniard saw, all too late, what his opponent really was.

He tried to swing loose, but clouds of smoke and almost instantly a mass of roaring flames enveloped both vessels, and the admiral was lost. The second vessel, not wishing to wait for the coming of the pirates, bore down upon the fort, under the guns of which the cowardly crew sank her, and made the best of their way to the shore. The third vessel, not having an opportunity to escape, was taken by the pirates without the slightest resistance, and the passage from the lake was cleared. So the buccaneers sailed away, leaving Maracaibo and Gibraltar prostrate a second time.

And now Captain Morgan determined to undertake another venture, the like of which had never been equaled in all of the annals of buccaneering. This was nothing less than the descent upon and the capture of Panama, which was, next to Cartagena, perhaps, the most powerful and the most strongly fortified city in the West Indies.

In preparation for this venture he obtained letters of marque from the governor of Jamaica, by virtue of which elastic commission he began immediately to gather around him all material necessary for the undertaking.

When it became known abroad that the great Captain Morgan was about undertaking an adventure that was to eclipse all that was ever done before, great numbers came flocking to his standard, until he had gathered together an army of two thousand or more desperadoes and pirates wherewith to prosecute his adventure, albeit the venture itself was kept a total secret from everyone. Port Couillon, in the island of Hispaniola, over against the Ile de la Vache, was the place of muster, and thither the motley band gathered from all quarters. Provisions had been plundered from the mainland wherever they could be obtained, and by the 24th of October, 1670 (O. S.), everything was in readiness.

The island of Saint Catharine, as it may be remembered, was at one time captured by Mansvelt, Morgan's master in his trade of piracy. It had been retaken by the Spaniards, and was now thoroughly fortified by them. Almost the first attempt that Morgan had made as a master pirate was the retaking of Saint Catharine's Isle. In that undertaking he had failed; but now, as there was an absolute need of some such place as a base of operations, he determined that the place *must* be taken. And it was taken.

The Spaniards, during the time of their possession, had

fortified it most thoroughly and completely, and had the governor thereof been as brave as he who met his death in the castle of Porto Bello, there might have been a different tale to tell. As it was, he surrendered it in a most cowardly fashion, merely stipulating that there should be a sham attack by the buccaneers, whereby his credit might be saved. And so Saint Catharine was won.

The next step to be taken was the capture of the castle of Chagres, which guarded the mouth of the river of that name, up which river the buccaneers would be compelled to transport their troops and provisions for the attack upon the city of Panama. This adventure was undertaken by four hundred picked men under command of Captain Morgan himself.

The castle of Chagres, known as San Lorenzo by the Spaniards, stood upon the top of an abrupt rock at the mouth of the river, and was one of the strongest fortresses for its size in all of the West Indies. This stronghold Morgan must have if he ever hoped to win Panama.

The attack of the castle and the defense of it were equally fierce, bloody, and desperate. Again and again the buccaneers assaulted, and again and again they were beaten back. So the morning came, and it seemed as though the pirates had been baffled this time. But just at this juncture the thatch of palm leaves on the roofs of some of the buildings inside the fortifications took fire, a conflagration followed, which caused the explosion of one of the magazines, and in the paralysis

of terror that followed, the pirates forced their way into the fortifications, and the castle was won. Most of the Spaniards flung themselves from the castle walls into the river or upon the rocks beneath, preferring death to capture and possible torture; many who were left were put to the sword, and some few were spared and held as prisoners.

So fell the castle of Chagres, and nothing now lay between the buccaneers and the city of Panama but the intervening and trackless forests.

And now the name of the town whose doom was sealed was no secret.

Up the river of Chagres went Capt. Henry Morgan and twelve hundred men, packed closely in their canoes; they never stopped, saving now and then to rest their stiffened legs, until they had come to a place known as Cruz de San Juan Gallego, where they were compelled to leave their boats on account of the shallowness of the water.

Leaving a guard of one hundred and sixty men to protect their boats as a place of refuge in case they should be worsted before Panama, they turned and plunged into the wilderness before them.

There a more powerful foe awaited them than a host of Spaniards with match, powder, and lead – starvation. They met but little or no opposition in their progress; but wherever they turned they found every fiber of meat, every grain of maize, every ounce of bread or meal, swept away or destroyed

utterly before them. Even when the buccaneers had successfully overcome an ambushade or an attack, and had sent the Spaniards flying, the fugitives took the time to strip their dead comrades of every grain of food in their leathern sacks, leaving nothing but the empty bags.

Says the narrator of these events, himself one of the expedition, "They afterward fell to eating those leathern bags, as affording something to the ferment of their stomachs."

Ten days they struggled through this bitter privation, doggedly forcing their way onward, faint with hunger and haggard with weakness and fever. Then, from the high hill and over the tops of the forest trees, they saw the steeples of Panama, and nothing remained between them and their goal but the fighting of four Spaniards to every one of them – a simple thing which they had done over and over again.

Down they poured upon Panama, and out came the Spaniards to meet them; four hundred horse, two thousand five hundred foot, and two thousand wild bulls which had been herded together to be driven over the buccaneers so that their ranks might be disordered and broken. The buccaneers were only eight hundred strong; the others had either fallen in battle or had dropped along the dreary pathway through the wilderness; but in the space of two hours the Spaniards were flying madly over the plain, minus six hundred who lay dead or dying behind them.

As for the bulls, as many of them as were shot served as food there and then for the half-famished pirates, for the buccaneers

were never more at home than in the slaughter of cattle.

Then they marched toward the city. Three hours' more fighting and they were in the streets, howling, yelling, plundering, gorging, dram-drinking, and giving full vent to all the vile and nameless lusts that burned in their hearts like a hell of fire. And now followed the usual sequence of events – rapine, cruelty, and extortion; only this time there was no town to ransom, for Morgan had given orders that it should be destroyed. The torch was set to it, and Panama, one of the greatest cities in the New World, was swept from the face of the earth. Why the deed was done, no man but Morgan could tell. Perhaps it was that all the secret hiding places for treasure might be brought to light; but whatever the reason was, it lay hidden in the breast of the great buccaneer himself. For three weeks Morgan and his men abode in this dreadful place; and they marched away with *one hundred and seventy-five* beasts of burden loaded with treasures of gold and silver and jewels, besides great quantities of merchandise, and six hundred prisoners held for ransom.

Whatever became of all that vast wealth, and what it amounted to, no man but Morgan ever knew, for when a division was made it was found that there was only *two hundred pieces of eight to each man*.

When this dividend was declared, a howl of execration went up, under which even Capt. Henry Morgan quailed. At night he and four other commanders slipped their cables and ran out to sea, and it was said that these divided the greater part

of the booty among themselves. But the wealth plundered at Panama could hardly have fallen short of a million and a half of dollars. Computing it at this reasonable figure, the various prizes won by Henry Morgan in the West Indies would stand as follows: Panama, \$1,500,000; Porto Bello, \$800,000; Puerto del Principe, \$700,000; Maracaibo and Gibraltar, \$400,000; various piracies, \$250,000 – making a grand total of \$3,650,000 as the vast harvest of plunder. With this fabulous wealth, wrenched from the Spaniards by means of the rack and the cord, and pilfered from his companions by the meanest of thieving, Capt. Henry Morgan retired from business, honored of all, rendered famous by his deeds, knighted by the good King Charles II, and finally appointed governor of the rich island of Jamaica.

Other buccaneers followed him. Campeche was taken and sacked, and even Cartagena itself fell; but with Henry Morgan culminated the glory of the buccaneers, and from that time they declined in power and wealth and wickedness until they were finally swept away.

The buccaneers became bolder and bolder. In fact, so daring were their crimes that the home governments, stirred at last by these outrageous barbarities, seriously undertook the suppression of the freebooters, lopping and trimming the main trunk until its members were scattered hither and thither, and it was thought that the organization was exterminated. But, so far from being exterminated, the individual members were merely scattered north, south, east, and west, each forming a nucleus around

which gathered and clustered the very worst of the offscouring of humanity.

The result was that when the seventeenth century was fairly packed away with its lavender in the store chest of the past, a score or more bands of freebooters were cruising along the Atlantic seaboard in armed vessels, each with a black flag with its skull and crossbones at the fore, and with a nondescript crew made up of the tags and remnants of civilized and semicivilized humanity (white, black, red, and yellow), known generally as marooners, swarming upon the decks below.

Nor did these offshoots from the old buccaneer stem confine their depredations to the American seas alone; the East Indies and the African coast also witnessed their doings, and suffered from them, and even the Bay of Biscay had good cause to remember more than one visit from them.

Worthy sprigs from so worthy a stem improved variously upon the parent methods; for while the buccaneers were content to prey upon the Spaniards alone, the marooners reaped the harvest from the commerce of all nations.

So up and down the Atlantic seaboard they cruised, and for the fifty years that marooning was in the flower of its glory it was a sorrowful time for the coasters of New England, the middle provinces, and the Virginias, sailing to the West Indies with their cargoes of salt fish, grain, and tobacco. Trading became almost as dangerous as privateering, and sea captains were chosen as much for their knowledge of the flintlock and the cutlass as for

their seamanship.

As by far the largest part of the trading in American waters was conducted by these Yankee coasters, so by far the heaviest blows, and those most keenly felt, fell upon them. Bulletin after bulletin came to port with its doleful tale of this vessel burned or that vessel scuttled, this one held by the pirates for their own use or that one stripped of its goods and sent into port as empty as an eggshell from which the yolk had been sucked. Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston suffered alike, and worthy ship owners had to leave off counting their losses upon their fingers and take to the slate to keep the dismal record.

"Maroon – to put ashore on a desert isle, as a sailor, under pretense of having committed some great crime." Thus our good Noah Webster gives us the dry bones, the anatomy, upon which the imagination may construct a specimen to suit itself.

It is thence that the marooners took their name, for marooning was one of their most effective instruments of punishment or revenge. If a pirate broke one of the many rules which governed the particular band to which he belonged, he was marooned; did a captain defend his ship to such a degree as to be unpleasant to the pirates attacking it, he was marooned; even the pirate captain himself, if he displeased his followers by the severity of his rule, was in danger of having the same punishment visited upon him which he had perhaps more than once visited upon another.

The process of marooning was as simple as terrible. A suitable place was chosen (generally some desert isle as far removed as

possible from the pathway of commerce), and the condemned man was rowed from the ship to the beach. Out he was bundled upon the sand spit; a gun, a half dozen bullets, a few pinches of powder, and a bottle of water were chucked ashore after him, and away rowed the boat's crew back to the ship, leaving the poor wretch alone to rave away his life in madness, or to sit sunken in his gloomy despair till death mercifully released him from torment. It rarely if ever happened that anything was known of him after having been marooned. A boat's crew from some vessel, sailing by chance that way, might perhaps find a few chalky bones bleaching upon the white sand in the garish glare of the sunlight, but that was all. And such were marooners.

By far the largest number of pirate captains were Englishmen, for, from the days of good Queen Bess, English sea captains seemed to have a natural turn for any species of venture that had a smack of piracy in it, and from the great Admiral Drake of the old, old days, to the truculent Morgan of buccaneering times, the Englishman did the boldest and wickedest deeds, and wrought the most damage.

First of all upon the list of pirates stands the bold Captain Avary, one of the institutors of marooning. Him we see but dimly, half hidden by the glamouring mists of legends and tradition. Others who came afterward outstripped him far enough in their doings, but he stands pre-eminent as the first of marooners of whom actual history has been handed down to us of the present day.

When the English, Dutch, and Spanish entered into an alliance to suppress buccaneering in the West Indies, certain worthies of Bristol, in old England, fitted out two vessels to assist in this laudable project; for doubtless Bristol trade suffered smartly from the Morgans and the l'Olonnoises of that old time. One of these vessels was named the *Duke*, of which a certain Captain Gibson was the commander and Avary the mate.

Away they sailed to the West Indies, and there Avary became impressed by the advantages offered by piracy, and by the amount of good things that were to be gained by very little striving.

One night the captain (who was one of those fellows mightily addicted to punch), instead of going ashore to saturate himself with rum at the ordinary, had his drink in his cabin in private. While he lay snoring away the effects of his rum in the cabin, Avary and a few other conspirators heaved the anchor very leisurely, and sailed out of the harbor of Corunna, and through the midst of the allied fleet riding at anchor in the darkness.

By and by, when the morning came, the captain was awakened by the pitching and tossing of the vessel, the rattle and clatter of the tackle overhead, and the noise of footsteps passing and repassing hither and thither across the deck. Perhaps he lay for a while turning the matter over and over in his muddled head, but he presently rang the bell, and Avary and another fellow answered the call.

"What's the matter?" bawls the captain from his berth.

"Nothing," says Avary, coolly.

"Something's the matter with the ship," says the captain.

"Does she drive? What weather is it?"

"Oh no," says Avary; "we are at sea."

"At sea?"

"Come, come!" says Avary: "I'll tell you; you must know that I'm the captain of the ship now, and you must be packing from this here cabin. We are bound to Madagascar, to make all of our fortunes, and if you're a mind to ship for the cruise, why, we'll be glad to have you, if you will be sober and mind your own business; if not, there is a boat alongside, and I'll have you set ashore."

The poor half-tipsy captain had no relish to go a-pirating under the command of his backsliding mate, so out of the ship he bundled, and away he rowed with four or five of the crew, who, like him, refused to join with their jolly shipmates.

The rest of them sailed away to the East Indies, to try their fortunes in those waters, for our Captain Avary was of a high spirit, and had no mind to fritter away his time in the West Indies, squeezed dry by buccaneer Morgan and others of lesser note. No, he would make a bold stroke for it at once, and make or lose at a single cast.

On his way he picked up a couple of like kind with himself – two sloops off Madagascar. With these he sailed away to the coast of India, and for a time his name was lost in the obscurity of uncertain history. But only for a time, for suddenly it flamed

out in a blaze of glory. It was reported that a vessel belonging to the Great Mogul, laden with treasure and bearing the monarch's own daughter upon a holy pilgrimage to Mecca (they being Mohammedans), had fallen in with the pirates, and after a short resistance had been surrendered, with the damsel, her court, and all the diamonds, pearls, silk, silver, and gold aboard. It was rumored that the Great Mogul, raging at the insult offered to him through his own flesh and blood, had threatened to wipe out of existence the few English settlements scattered along the coast; whereat the honorable East India Company was in a pretty state of fuss and feathers. Rumor, growing with the telling, has it that Avary is going to marry the Indian princess, willy-nilly, and will turn rajah, and eschew piracy as indecent. As for the treasure itself, there was no end to the extent to which it grew as it passed from mouth to mouth.

Cracking the nut of romance and exaggeration, we come to the kernel of the story – that Avary did fall in with an Indian vessel laden with great treasure (and possibly with the Mogul's daughter), which he captured, and thereby gained a vast prize.

Having concluded that he had earned enough money by the trade he had undertaken, he determined to retire and live decently for the rest of his life upon what he already had. As a step toward this object, he set about cheating his Madagascar partners out of their share of what had been gained. He persuaded them to store all the treasure in his vessel, it being the largest of the three; and so, having it safely in hand, he altered the

course of his ship one fine night, and when the morning came the Madagascar sloops found themselves floating upon a wide ocean without a farthing of the treasure for which they had fought so hard, and for which they might whistle for all the good it would do them.

At first Avary had a great part of a mind to settle at Boston, in Massachusetts, and had that little town been one whit less bleak and forbidding, it might have had the honor of being the home of this famous man. As it was, he did not like the looks of it, so he sailed away to the eastward, to Ireland, where he settled himself at Biddeford, in hopes of an easy life of it for the rest of his days.

Here he found himself the possessor of a plentiful stock of jewels, such as pearls, diamonds, rubies, etc., but with hardly a score of honest farthings to jingle in his breeches pocket. He consulted with a certain merchant of Bristol concerning the disposal of the stones – a fellow not much more cleanly in his habits of honesty than Avary himself. This worthy undertook to act as Avary's broker. Off he marched with the jewels, and that was the last that the pirate saw of his Indian treasure.

Perhaps the most famous of all the piratical names to American ears are those of Capt. Robert Kidd and Capt. Edward Teach, or "Blackbeard."

Nothing will be ventured in regard to Kidd at this time, nor in regard to the pros and cons as to whether he really was or was not a pirate, after all. For many years he was the very hero of heroes of piratical fame; there was hardly a creek or stream or point of

land along our coast, hardly a convenient bit of good sandy beach, or hump of rock, or water-washed cave, where fabulous treasures were not said to have been hidden by this worthy marooner. Now we are assured that he never was a pirate, and never did bury any treasure, excepting a certain chest, which he was compelled to hide upon Gardiner's Island – and perhaps even it was mythical.

So poor Kidd must be relegated to the dull ranks of simply respectable people, or semirespectable people at best.

But with "Blackbeard" it is different, for in him we have a real, ranting, raging, roaring pirate *per se*– one who really did bury treasure, who made more than one captain walk the plank, and who committed more private murders than he could number on the fingers of both hands; one who fills, and will continue to fill, the place to which he has been assigned for generations, and who may be depended upon to hold his place in the confidence of others for generations to come.

Captain Teach was a Bristol man born, and learned his trade on board of sundry privateers in the East Indies during the old French war – that of 1702 – and a better apprenticeship could no man serve. At last, somewhere about the latter part of the year 1716, a privateering captain, one Benjamin Hornigold, raised him from the ranks and put him in command of a sloop – a lately captured prize – and Blackbeard's fortune was made. It was a very slight step, and but the change of a few letters, to convert "privateer" into "pirate," and it was a very short time before Teach made that change. Not only did he make it himself,

but he persuaded his old captain to join with him.

And now fairly began that series of bold and lawless depredations which have made his name so justly famous, and which placed him among the very greatest of marooning freebooters.

"Our hero," says the old historian who sings of the arms and bravery of this great man – "our hero assumed the cognomen of Blackbeard from that large quantity of hair which, like a frightful meteor, covered his whole face, and frightened America more than any comet that appeared there in a long time. He was accustomed to twist it with ribbons into small tails, after the manner of our Ramillies wig, and turn them about his ears. In time of action he wore a sling over his shoulders, with three brace of pistols, hanging in holsters like bandoleers; he stuck lighted matches under his hat, which, appearing on each side of his face, and his eyes naturally looking fierce and wild, made him altogether such a figure that imagination cannot form an idea of a Fury from hell to look more frightful."

The night before the day of the action in which he was killed he sat up drinking with some congenial company until broad daylight. One of them asked him if his poor young wife knew where his treasure was hidden. "No," says Blackbeard; "nobody but the devil and I knows where it is, and the longest liver shall have all."

As for that poor young wife of his, the life that he and his rum-crazy shipmates led her was too terrible to be told.

For a time Blackbeard worked at his trade down on the Spanish Main, gathering, in the few years he was there, a very neat little fortune in the booty captured from sundry vessels; but by and by he took it into his head to try his luck along the coast of the Carolinas; so off he sailed to the northward, with quite a respectable little fleet, consisting of his own vessel and two captured sloops. From that time he was actively engaged in the making of American history in his small way.

He first appeared off the bar of Charleston Harbor, to the no small excitement of the worthy town of that ilk, and there he lay for five or six days, blockading the port, and stopping incoming and outgoing vessels at his pleasure, so that, for the time, the commerce of the province was entirely paralyzed. All the vessels so stopped he held as prizes, and all the crews and passengers (among the latter of whom was more than one provincial worthy of the day) he retained as though they were prisoners of war.

And it was a mightily awkward thing for the good folk of Charleston to behold day after day a black flag with its white skull and crossbones fluttering at the fore of the pirate captain's craft, over across the level stretch of green salt marshes; and it was mightily unpleasant, too, to know that this or that prominent citizen was crowded down with the other prisoners under the hatches.

One morning Captain Blackbeard finds that his stock of medicine is low. "Tut!" says he, "we'll turn no hair gray for that." So up he calls the bold Captain Richards, the commander of his

consort the *Revenge* sloop, and bids him take Mr. Marks (one of his prisoners), and go up to Charleston and get the medicine. There was no task that suited our Captain Richards better than that. Up to the town he rowed, as bold as brass. "Look ye," says he to the governor, rolling his quid of tobacco from one cheek to another – "look ye, we're after this and that, and if we don't get it, why, I'll tell you plain, we'll burn them bloody crafts of yours that we've took over yonder, and cut the weasand of every clodpoll aboard of 'em."

There was no answering an argument of such force as this, and the worshipful governor and the good folk of Charleston knew very well that Blackbeard and his crew were the men to do as they promised. So Blackbeard got his medicine, and though it cost the colony two thousand dollars, it was worth that much to the town to be quit of him.

They say that while Captain Richards was conducting his negotiations with the governor his boat's crew were stumping around the streets of the town, having a glorious time of it, while the good folk glowered wrathfully at them, but dared venture nothing in speech or act.

Having gained a booty of between seven and eight thousand dollars from the prizes captured, the pirates sailed away from Charleston Harbor to the coast of North Carolina.

And now Blackbeard, following the plan adopted by so many others of his kind, began to cudgel his brains for means to cheat his fellows out of their share of the booty.

At Topsail Inlet he ran his own vessel aground, as though by accident. Hands, the captain of one of the consorts, pretending to come to his assistance, also grounded *his* sloop. Nothing now remained but for those who were able to get away in the other craft, which was all that was now left of the little fleet. This did Blackbeard with some forty of his favorites. The rest of the pirates were left on the sand spit to await the return of their companions – which never happened.

As for Blackbeard and those who were with him, they were that much richer, for there were so many the fewer pockets to fill. But even yet there were too many to share the booty, in Blackbeard's opinion, and so he marooned a parcel more of them – some eighteen or twenty – upon a naked sand bank, from which they were afterward mercifully rescued by another freebooter who chanced that way – a certain Major Stede Bonnet, of whom more will presently be said. About that time a royal proclamation had been issued offering pardon to all pirates in arms who would surrender to the king's authority before a given date. So up goes Master Blackbeard to the Governor of North Carolina and makes his neck safe by surrendering to the proclamation – albeit he kept tight clutch upon what he had already gained.

And now we find our bold Captain Blackbeard established in the good province of North Carolina, where he and His Worship the Governor struck up a vast deal of intimacy, as profitable as it was pleasant. There is something very pretty in the thought of the bold sea rover giving up his adventurous life (excepting now

and then an excursion against a trader or two in the neighboring sound, when the need of money was pressing); settling quietly down into the routine of old colonial life, with a young wife of sixteen at his side, who made the fourteenth that he had in various ports here and there in the world.

Becoming tired of an inactive life, Blackbeard afterward resumed his piratical career. He cruised around in the rivers and inlets and sounds of North Carolina for a while, ruling the roost and with never a one to say him nay, until there was no bearing with such a pest any longer. So they sent a deputation up to the Governor of Virginia asking if he would be pleased to help them in their trouble.

There were two men-of-war lying at Kicquetan, in the James River, at the time. To them the Governor of Virginia applies, and plucky Lieutenant Maynard, of the *Pearl*, was sent to Ocracoke Inlet to fight this pirate who ruled it down there so like the cock of a walk. There he found Blackbeard waiting for him, and as ready for a fight as ever the lieutenant himself could be. Fight they did, and while it lasted it was as pretty a piece of business of its kind as one could wish to see. Blackbeard drained a glass of grog, wishing the lieutenant luck in getting aboard of him, fired a broadside, blew some twenty of the lieutenant's men out of existence, and totally crippled one of his little sloops for the balance of the fight. After that, and under cover of the smoke, the pirate and his men boarded the other sloop, and then followed a fine old-fashioned hand-to-hand conflict betwixt him and the

lieutenant. First they fired their pistols, and then they took to it with cutlasses – right, left, up and down, cut and slash – until the lieutenant's cutlass broke short off at the hilt. Then Blackbeard would have finished him off handsomely, only up steps one of the lieutenant's men and fetches him a great slash over the neck, so that the lieutenant came off with no more hurt than a cut across the knuckles.

At the very first discharge of their pistols Blackbeard had been shot through the body, but he was not for giving up for that – not he. As said before, he was of the true roaring, raging breed of pirates, and stood up to it until he received twenty more cutlass cuts and five additional shots, and then fell dead while trying to fire off an empty pistol. After that the lieutenant cut off the pirate's head, and sailed away in triumph, with the bloody trophy nailed to the bow of his battered sloop.

Those of Blackbeard's men who were not killed were carried off to Virginia, and all of them tried and hanged but one or two, their names, no doubt, still standing in a row in the provincial records.

But did Blackbeard really bury treasures, as tradition says, along the sandy shores he haunted?

Master Clement Downing, midshipman aboard the *Salisbury*, wrote a book after his return from the cruise to Madagascar, whither the *Salisbury* had been ordered, to put an end to the piracy with which those waters were infested. He says:

"At Guzarat I met with a Portuguese named Anthony

de Sylvestre; he came with two other Portuguese and two Dutchmen to take on in the Moor's service, as many Europeans do. This Anthony told me he had been among the pirates, and that he belonged to one of the sloops in Virginia when Blackbeard was taken. He informed me that if it should be my lot ever to go to York River or Maryland, near an island called Mulberry Island, provided we went on shore at the watering place, where the shipping used most commonly to ride, that there the pirates had buried considerable sums of money in great chests well clamped with iron plates. As to my part, I never was that way, nor much acquainted with any that ever used those parts; but I have made inquiry, and am informed that there is such a place as Mulberry Island. If any person who uses those parts should think it worth while to dig a little way at the upper end of a small cove, where it is convenient to land, he would soon find whether the information I had was well grounded. Fronting the landing place are five trees, among which, he said, the money was hid. I cannot warrant the truth of this account; but if I was ever to go there, I should find some means or other to satisfy myself, as it could not be a great deal out of my way. If anybody should obtain the benefit of this account, if it please God that they ever come to England, 'tis hoped they will remember whence they had this information."

Another worthy was Capt. Edward Low, who learned his trade of sail-making at good old Boston town, and piracy at Honduras. No one stood higher in the trade than he, and no one

mounted to more lofty altitudes of bloodthirsty and unscrupulous wickedness. 'Tis strange that so little has been written and sung of this man of might, for he was as worthy of story and of song as was Blackbeard.

It was under a Yankee captain that he made his first cruise – down to Honduras, for a cargo of logwood, which in those times was no better than stolen from the Spanish folk.

One day, lying off the shore, in the Gulf of Honduras, comes Master Low and the crew of the whaleboat rowing across from the beach, where they had been all morning chopping logwood.

"What are you after?" says the captain, for they were coming back with nothing but themselves in the boat.

"We're after our dinner," says Low, as spokesman of the party.

"You'll have no dinner," says the captain, "until you fetch off another load."

"Dinner or no dinner, we'll pay for it," says Low, wherewith he up with a musket, squinted along the barrel, and pulled the trigger.

Luckily the gun hung fire, and the Yankee captain was spared to steal logwood a while longer.

All the same, that was no place for Ned Low to make a longer stay, so off he and his messmates rowed in a whaleboat, captured a brig out at sea, and turned pirates.

He presently fell in with the notorious Captain Lowther, a fellow after his own kidney, who put the finishing touches to his education and taught him what wickedness he did not already

know.

And so he became a master pirate, and a famous hand at his craft, and thereafter forever bore an inveterate hatred of all Yankees because of the dinner he had lost, and never failed to smite whatever one of them luck put within his reach. Once he fell in with a ship off South Carolina – the *Amsterdam Merchant*, Captain Williamson, commander – a Yankee craft and a Yankee master. He slit the nose and cropped the ears of the captain, and then sailed merrily away, feeling the better for having marred a Yankee.

New York and New England had more than one visit from the doughty captain, each of which visits they had good cause to remember, for he made them smart for it.

Along in the year 1722 thirteen vessels were riding at anchor in front of the good town of Marblehead. Into the harbor sailed a strange craft. "Who is she?" say the townsfolk, for the coming of a new vessel was no small matter in those days.

Who the strangers were was not long a matter of doubt. Up goes the black flag, and the skull and crossbones to the fore.

"'Tis the bloody Low," say one and all; and straightway all was flutter and commotion, as in a duck pond when a hawk pitches and strikes in the midst.

It was a glorious thing for our captain, for here were thirteen Yankee crafts at one and the same time. So he took what he wanted, and then sailed away, and it was many a day before Marblehead forgot that visit.

Some time after this he and his consort fell foul of an English sloop of war, the *Greyhound*, whereby they were so roughly handled that Low was glad enough to slip away, leaving his consort and her crew behind him, as a sop to the powers of law and order. And lucky for them if no worse fate awaited them than to walk the dreadful plank with a bandage around the blinded eyes and a rope around the elbows. So the consort was taken, and the crew tried and hanged in chains, and Low sailed off in as pretty a bit of rage as ever a pirate fell into.

The end of this worthy is lost in the fogs of the past: some say that he died of a yellow fever down in New Orleans; it was not at the end of a hempen cord, more's the pity.

Here fittingly with our strictly American pirates should stand Major Stede Bonnet along with the rest. But in truth he was only a poor half-and-half fellow of his kind, and even after his hand was fairly turned to the business he had undertaken, a qualm of conscience would now and then come across him, and he would make vast promises to forswear his evil courses.

However, he jogged along in his course of piracy snugly enough until he fell foul of the gallant Colonel Rhett, off Charleston Harbor, whereupon his luck and his courage both were suddenly snuffed out with a puff of powder smoke and a good rattling broadside. Down came the "Black Roger" with its skull and crossbones from the fore, and Colonel Rhett had the glory of fetching back as pretty a cargo of scoundrels and cutthroats as the town ever saw.

After the next assizes they were strung up, all in a row – evil apples ready for the roasting.

"Ned" England was a fellow of different blood – only he snapped his whip across the back of society over in the East Indies and along the hot shores of Hindustan.

The name of Capt. Howel Davis stands high among his fellows. He was the Ulysses of pirates, the beloved not only of Mercury, but of Minerva.

He it was who hoodwinked the captain of a French ship of double the size and strength of his own, and fairly cheated him into the surrender of his craft without the firing of a single pistol or the striking of a single blow; he it was who sailed boldly into the port of Gambia, on the coast of Guinea, and under the guns of the castle, proclaiming himself as a merchant trading for slaves.

The cheat was kept up until the fruit of mischief was ripe for the picking; then, when the governor and the guards of the castle were lulled into entire security, and when Davis's band was scattered about wherever each man could do the most good, it was out pistol, up cutlass, and death if a finger moved. They tied the soldiers back to back, and the governor to his own armchair, and then rifled wherever it pleased them. After that they sailed away, and though they had not made the fortune they had hoped to glean, it was a good snug round sum that they shared among them.

Their courage growing high with success, they determined to attempt the island of Del Principe – a prosperous Portuguese

settlement on the coast. The plan for taking the place was cleverly laid, and would have succeeded, only that a Portuguese negro among the pirate crew turned traitor and carried the news ashore to the governor of the fort. Accordingly, the next day, when Captain Davis came ashore, he found there a good strong guard drawn up as though to honor his coming. But after he and those with him were fairly out of their boat, and well away from the water side, there was a sudden rattle of musketry, a cloud of smoke, and a dull groan or two. Only one man ran out from under that pungent cloud, jumped into the boat, and rowed away; and when it lifted, there lay Captain Davis and his companions all of a heap, like a pile of old clothes.

Capt. Bartholomew Roberts was the particular and especial pupil of Davis, and when that worthy met his death so suddenly and so unexpectedly in the unfortunate manner above narrated, he was chosen unanimously as the captain of the fleet, and he was a worthy pupil of a worthy master. Many were the poor fluttering merchant ducks that this sea hawk swooped upon and struck; and cleanly and cleverly were they plucked before his savage clutch loosened its hold upon them.

"He made a gallant figure," says the old narrator, "being dressed in a rich crimson waistcoat and breeches and red feather in his hat, a gold chain around his neck, with a diamond cross hanging to it, a sword in his hand, and two pair of pistols hanging at the end of a silk sling flung over his shoulders according to the fashion of the pyrates." Thus he appeared in the last engagement

which he fought – that with the *Swallow* – a royal sloop of war. A gallant fight they made of it, those bulldog pirates, for, finding themselves caught in a trap betwixt the man-of-war and the shore, they determined to bear down upon the king's vessel, fire a slapping broadside into her, and then try to get away, trusting to luck in the doing, and hoping that their enemy might be crippled by their fire.

Captain Roberts himself was the first to fall at the return fire of the *Swallow*; a grapeshot struck him in the neck, and he fell forward across the gun near to which he was standing at the time. A certain fellow named Stevenson, who was at the helm, saw him fall, and thought he was wounded. At the lifting of the arm the body rolled over upon the deck, and the man saw that the captain was dead. "Whereupon," says the old history, "he" [Stevenson] "gushed into tears, and wished that the next shot might be his portion." After their captain's death the pirate crew had no stomach for more fighting; the "Black Roger" was struck, and one and all surrendered to justice and the gallows.

Such is a brief and bald account of the most famous of these pirates. But they are only a few of a long list of notables, such as Captain Martel, Capt. Charles Vane (who led the gallant Colonel Rhett, of South Carolina, such a wild-geese chase in and out among the sluggish creeks and inlets along the coast), Capt. John Rackam, and Captain Anstis, Captain Worley, and Evans, and Philips, and others – a score or more of wild fellows whose very names made ship captains tremble in their shoes in those good

old times.

And such is that black chapter of history of the past – an evil chapter, lurid with cruelty and suffering, stained with blood and smoke. Yet it is a written chapter, and it must be read. He who chooses may read betwixt the lines of history this great truth. Evil itself is an instrument toward the shaping of good. Therefore the history of evil as well as the history of good should be read, considered, and digested.

Chapter II

THE GHOST OF CAPTAIN BRAND

It is not so easy to tell why discredit should be cast upon a man because of something that his grandfather may have done amiss, but the world, which is never overnice in its discrimination as to where to lay the blame, is often pleased to make the innocent suffer in the place of the guilty.

Barnaby True was a good, honest, biddable lad, as boys go, but yet he was not ever allowed altogether to forget that his grandfather had been that very famous pirate, Capt. William Brand, who, after so many marvelous adventures (if one may believe the catchpenny stories and ballads that were written about him), was murdered in Jamaica by Capt. John Malyoe, the commander of his own consort, the *Adventure* galley.

It has never been denied, that ever I heard, that up to the time of Captain Brand's being commissioned against the South Sea pirates he had always been esteemed as honest, reputable a sea captain as could be.

When he started out upon that adventure it was with a ship, the *Royal Sovereign*, fitted out by some of the most decent merchants of New York. The governor himself had subscribed to the adventure, and had himself signed Captain Brand's commission. So, if the unfortunate man went astray, he must have had great

temptation to do so, many others behaving no better when the opportunity offered in those far-away seas where so many rich purchases might very easily be taken and no one the wiser.

To be sure, those stories and ballads made our captain to be a most wicked, profane wretch; and if he were, why, God knows he suffered and paid for it, for he laid his bones in Jamaica, and never saw his home or his wife and daughter again after he had sailed away on the *Royal Sovereign* on that long misfortunate voyage, leaving them in New York to the care of strangers.

At the time when he met his fate in Port Royal Harbor he had obtained two vessels under his command – the *Royal Sovereign*, which was the boat fitted out for him in New York, and the *Adventure* galley, which he was said to have taken somewhere in the South Seas. With these he lay in those waters of Jamaica for over a month after his return from the coasts of Africa, waiting for news from home, which, when it came, was of the very blackest; for the colonial authorities were at that time stirred up very hot against him to take him and hang him for a pirate, so as to clear their own skirts for having to do with such a fellow. So maybe it seemed better to our captain to hide his ill-gotten treasure there in those far-away parts, and afterward to try and bargain with it for his life when he should reach New York, rather than to sail straight for the Americas with what he had earned by his piracies, and so risk losing life and money both.

However that might be, the story was that Captain Brand and his gunner, and Captain Malyoe of the *Adventure* and the

sailing master of the *Adventure* all went ashore together with a chest of money (no one of them choosing to trust the other three in so nice an affair), and buried the treasure somewhere on the beach of Port Royal Harbor. The story then has it that they fell a-quarreling about a future division of the money, and that, as a wind-up to the affair, Captain Malyoe shot Captain Brand through the head, while the sailing master of the *Adventure* served the gunner of the *Royal Sovereign* after the same fashion through the body, and that the murderers then went away, leaving the two stretched out in their own blood on the sand in the staring sun, with no one to know where the money was hid but they two who had served their comrades so.

It is a mighty great pity that anyone should have a grandfather who ended his days in such a sort as this, but it was no fault of Barnaby True's, nor could he have done anything to prevent it, seeing that he was not even born into the world at the time that his grandfather turned pirate, and was only one year old when he so met his tragical end. Nevertheless, the boys with whom he went to school never tired of calling him "Pirate," and would sometimes sing for his benefit that famous catchpenny song beginning thus:

Oh, my name was Captain Brand,
A-sailing,
And a-sailing;
Oh, my name was Captain Brand,
A-sailing free.

Oh, my name was Captain Brand,
And I sinned by sea and land,
For I broke God's just command,
A-sailing free.

'Twas a vile thing to sing at the grandson of so misfortunate a man, and oftentimes little Barnaby True would double up his fists and would fight his tormentors at great odds, and would sometimes go back home with a bloody nose to have his poor mother cry over him and grieve for him.

Not that his days were all of teasing and torment, neither; for if his comrades did treat him so, why, then, there were other times when he and they were as great friends as could be, and would go in swimming together where there was a bit of sandy strand along the East River above Fort George, and that in the most amicable fashion. Or, maybe the very next day after he had fought so with his fellows, he would go a-rambling with them up the Bowerie Road, perhaps to help them steal cherries from some old Dutch farmer, forgetting in such adventure what a thief his own grandfather had been.

Well, when Barnaby True was between sixteen and seventeen years old he was taken into employment in the countinghouse of Mr. Roger Hartright, the well-known West India merchant, and Barnaby's own stepfather.

It was the kindness of this good man that not only found a place for Barnaby in the countinghouse, but advanced him so fast that against our hero was twenty-one years old he had

made four voyages as supercargo to the West Indies in Mr. Hartright's ship, the *Belle Helen*, and soon after he was twenty-one undertook a fifth. Nor was it in any such subordinate position as mere supercargo that he acted, but rather as the confidential agent of Mr. Hartright, who, having no children of his own, was very jealous to advance our hero into a position of trust and responsibility in the countinghouse, as though he were indeed a son, so that even the captain of the ship had scarcely more consideration aboard than he, young as he was in years.

As for the agents and correspondents of Mr. Hartright throughout these parts, they also, knowing how the good man had adopted his interests, were very polite and obliging to Master Barnaby – especially, be it mentioned, Mr. Ambrose Greenfield, of Kingston, Jamaica, who, upon the occasions of his visits to those parts, did all that he could to make Barnaby's stay in that town agreeable and pleasant to him.

So much for the history of our hero to the time of the beginning of this story, without which you shall hardly be able to understand the purport of those most extraordinary adventures that befell him shortly after he came of age, nor the logic of their consequence after they had occurred.

For it was during his fifth voyage to the West Indies that the first of those extraordinary adventures happened of which I shall have presently to tell.

At that time he had been in Kingston for the best part of four weeks, lodging at the house of a very decent, respectable

widow, by name Mrs. Anne Bolles, who, with three pleasant and agreeable daughters, kept a very clean and well-served lodging house in the outskirts of the town.

One morning, as our hero sat sipping his coffee, clad only in loose cotton drawers, a shirt, and a jacket, and with slippers upon his feet, as is the custom in that country, where everyone endeavors to keep as cool as may be – while he sat thus sipping his coffee Miss Eliza, the youngest of the three daughters, came and gave him a note, which, she said, a stranger had just handed in at the door, going away again without waiting for a reply. You may judge of Barnaby's surprise when he opened the note and read as follows:

Mr. Barnaby True.

Sir, – Though you don't know me, I know you, and I tell you this: if you will be at Pratt's Ordinary on Harbor Street on Friday next at eight o'clock of the evening, and will accompany the man who shall say to you, "*The Royal Sovereign* is come in," you shall learn something the most to your advantage that ever befell you. Sir, keep this note, and show it to him who shall address these words to you, so to certify that you are the man he seeks.

Such was the wording of the note, which was without address, and without any superscription whatever.

The first emotion that stirred Barnaby was one of extreme and profound amazement. Then the thought came into his mind that some witty fellow, of whom he knew a good many in that

town – and wild, waggish pranks they were – was attempting to play off some smart jest upon him. But all that Miss Eliza could tell him when he questioned her concerning the messenger was that the bearer of the note was a tall, stout man, with a red neckerchief around his neck and copper buckles to his shoes, and that he had the appearance of a sailorman, having a great big queue hanging down his back. But, Lord! what was such a description as that in a busy seaport town, full of scores of men to fit such a likeness? Accordingly, our hero put away the note into his wallet, determining to show it to his good friend Mr. Greenfield that evening, and to ask his advice upon it. So he did show it, and that gentleman's opinion was the same as his – that some wag was minded to play off a hoax upon him, and that the matter of the letter was all nothing but smoke.

Nevertheless, though Barnaby was thus confirmed in his opinion as to the nature of the communication he had received, he yet determined in his own mind that he would see the business through to the end, and would be at Pratt's Ordinary, as the note demanded, upon the day and at the time specified therein.

Pratt's Ordinary was at that time a very fine and well-known place of its sort, with good tobacco and the best rum that ever I tasted, and had a garden behind it that, sloping down to the harbor front, was planted pretty thick with palms and ferns grouped into clusters with flowers and plants. Here were a number of little tables, some in little grottoes, like our Vauxhall in New York, and with red and blue and white paper lanterns hung among the

foliage, whither gentlemen and ladies used sometimes to go of an evening to sit and drink lime juice and sugar and water (and sometimes a taste of something stronger), and to look out across the water at the shipping in the cool of the night.

Thither, accordingly, our hero went, a little before the time appointed in the note, and passing directly through the Ordinary and the garden beyond, chose a table at the lower end of the garden and close to the water's edge, where he would not be easily seen by anyone coming into the place. Then, ordering some rum and water and a pipe of tobacco, he composed himself to watch for the appearance of those witty fellows whom he suspected would presently come thither to see the end of their prank and to enjoy his confusion.

The spot was pleasant enough; for the land breeze, blowing strong and full, set the leaves of the palm tree above his head to rattling and clattering continually against the sky, where, the moon then being about full, they shone every now and then like blades of steel. The waves also were splashing up against the little landing place at the foot of the garden, sounding very cool in the night, and sparkling all over the harbor where the moon caught the edges of the water. A great many vessels were lying at anchor in their ridings, with the dark, prodigious form of a man-of-war looming up above them in the moonlight.

There our hero sat for the best part of an hour, smoking his pipe of tobacco and sipping his grog, and seeing not so much as a single thing that might concern the note he had received.

It was not far from half an hour after the time appointed in the note, when a rowboat came suddenly out of the night and pulled up to the landing place at the foot of the garden above mentioned, and three or four men came ashore in the darkness. Without saying a word among themselves they chose a near-by table and, sitting down, ordered rum and water, and began drinking their grog in silence. They might have sat there about five minutes, when, by and by, Barnaby True became aware that they were observing him very curiously; and then almost immediately one, who was plainly the leader of the party, called out to him:

"How now, messmate! Won't you come and drink a dram of rum with us?"

"Why, no," says Barnaby, answering very civilly; "I have drunk enough already, and more would only heat my blood."

"All the same," quoth the stranger, "I think you will come and drink with us; for, unless I am mistook, you are Mr. Barnaby True, and I am come here to tell you that the *Royal Sovereign* is come in."

Now I may honestly say that Barnaby True was never more struck aback in all his life than he was at hearing these words uttered in so unexpected a manner. He had been looking to hear them under such different circumstances that, now that his ears heard them addressed to him, and that so seriously, by a perfect stranger, who, with others, had thus mysteriously come ashore out of the darkness, he could scarce believe that his ears heard aright. His heart suddenly began beating at a tremendous rate,

and had he been an older and wiser man, I do believe he would have declined the adventure, instead of leaping blindly, as he did, into that of which he could see neither the beginning nor the ending. But being barely one-and-twenty years of age, and having an adventurous disposition that would have carried him into almost anything that possessed a smack of uncertainty or danger about it, he contrived to say, in a pretty easy tone (though God knows how it was put on for the occasion):

"Well, then, if that be so, and if the *Royal Sovereign* is indeed come in, why, I'll join you, since you are so kind as to ask me." And therewith he went across to the other table, carrying his pipe with him, and sat down and began smoking, with all the appearance of ease he could assume upon the occasion.

"Well, Mr. Barnaby True," said the man who had before addressed him, so soon as Barnaby had settled himself, speaking in a low tone of voice, so there would be no danger of any others hearing the words – "Well, Mr. Barnaby True – for I shall call you by your name, to show you that though I know you, you don't know me – I am glad to see that you are man enough to enter thus into an affair, though you can't see to the bottom of it. For it shows me that you are a man of mettle, and are deserving of the fortune that is to befall you to-night. Nevertheless, first of all, I am bid to say that you must show me a piece of paper that you have about you before we go a step farther."

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