

Brady Cyrus Townsend

Sir Henry Morgan, Buccaneer: A Romance of the Spanish Main



Cyrus Brady

**Sir Henry Morgan, Buccaneer:
A Romance of the Spanish Main**

«Public Domain»

Brady C.

Sir Henry Morgan, Buccaneer: A Romance of the Spanish Main /
C. Brady — «Public Domain»,

Содержание

PREFACE	6
BOOK I	8
CHAPTER I	9
CHAPTER II	15
CHAPTER III	22
CHAPTER IV	27
BOOK II	32
CHAPTER V	32
CHAPTER VI	38
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	39

Brady Cyrus Townsend
Sir Henry Morgan, Buccaneer:
A Romance of the Spanish Main

TO MY ONLY BROTHER

COLONEL JASPER EWING BRADY

LATE U.S. ARMY

*"Woe to the realms which he coasted! for there
Was shedding of blood and rending of hair,
Rape of maiden and slaughter of priest,
Gathering of ravens and wolves to the feast;
When he hoisted his standard black,
Before him was battle, behind him wrack,
And he burned the churches, that heathen Dane,
To light his band to their barks again."*

Scott: "Harold the Dauntless."

PREFACE

In literature there have been romantic pirates, gentlemanly pirates, kind-hearted pirates, even humorous pirates – in fact, all sorts and conditions of pirates. In life there was only one kind. In this book that kind appears. Several presentations – in the guise of novels – of pirates, the like of which never existed on land or sea, have recently appeared. A perusal of these interesting romances awoke in me a desire to write a story of a real pirate, a pirate of the genuine species.

Much research for historical essays, amid ancient records and moldy chronicles, put me in possession of a vast amount of information concerning the doings of the greatest of all pirates; a man unique among his nefarious brethren, in that he played the piratical game so successfully that he received the honor of knighthood from King Charles II. A belted knight of England, who was also a brutal, rapacious, lustful, murderous villain and robber – and undoubtedly a pirate, although he disguised his piracy under the name of buccaneering – is certainly a striking and unusual figure.

Therefore, when I imagined my pirate story I pitched upon Sir Henry Morgan as *the* character of the romance. It will spare the critic to admit that the tale hereinafter related is a work of the imagination, and is not an historical romance. According to the latest accounts, Sir Henry Morgan, by a singular oversight of Fate, who must have been nodding at the time, died in his bed – not peacefully I trust – and was buried in consecrated ground. But I do him no injustice, I hasten to assure the reader, in the acts that I have attributed to him, for they are more than paralleled by the well authenticated deeds of this human monster. I did not even invent the blowing up of the English frigate in the action with the Spanish ships.

If I have assumed for the nonce the attributes of that unaccountably somnolent Fate, and brought him to a terrible end, I am sure abundant justification will be found in the recital of his mythical misdeeds, which, I repeat, were not a circumstance to his real transgressions. Indeed, one has to go back to the most cruel and degenerate of the Roman emperors to parallel the wickednesses of Morgan and his men. It is not possible to put upon printed pages explicit statements of what they did. The curious reader may find some account of these "Gentlemen of the Black Flag," so far as it can be translated into present-day books intended for popular reading, in my volume of "Colonial Fights and Fighters."

The writing of this novel has been by no means an easy task. How to convey clearly the doings of the buccaneer so there could be no misapprehension on the part of the reader, and yet to write with due delicacy and restraint a book for the general public, has been a problem with which I have wrestled long and arduously. The whole book has been completely revised some six times. Each time I have deleted something, which, while it has refined, I trust has not impaired the strength of the tale. If the critic still find things to censure, let him pass over charitably in view of what might have been!

As to the other characters, I have done violence to the name and fame of no man, for all of those who played any prominent part among the buccaneers in the story were themselves men scarcely less criminal than Morgan. Be it known that I have simply appropriated names, not careers. They all had adventures of their own and were not associated with Morgan in life. Teach – I have a weakness for that bad young man – is known to history as "Blackbeard" – a much worse man than the roaring singer of these pages. The delectable Hornigold, the One-Eyed, with the "wild justice" of his revenge, was another real pirate. So was the faithful Black Dog, the maroon. So were Raveneau de Lussan, Rock Brazilliano, L'Ollonois, Velsers, Sawkins, and the rest.

In addition to my desire to write a real story of a real pirate I was actuated by another intent. There are numberless tales of the brave days of the Spanish Main, from "Westward Ho!" down. In every one of them, without exception, the hero is a noble, gallant, high-souled, high-spirited, valiant descendant of the Anglo-Saxon race, while the villain – and such villains they are! – is always a proud and haughty Spaniard, who comes to grief dreadfully in the final trial which determines the issue.

My sympathies, from a long course of reading of such romances, have gone out to the under Don. I determined to write a story with a Spanish gentleman for the hero, and a Spanish gentlewoman for the heroine, and let the position of villain be filled by one of our own race. Such things were, and here they are. I have dwelt with pleasure on the love affairs of the gallant Alvarado and the beautiful Mercedes.

But, after all, the story is preëminently the story of Morgan. I have striven to make it a character sketch of that remarkable personality. I wished to portray his ferocity and cruelty, his brutality and wantonness, his treachery and rapacity; to exhibit, without lightening, the dark shadows of his character, and to depict his inevitable and utter breakdown finally; yet at the same time to bring out his dauntless courage, his military ability, his fertility and resourcefulness, his mastery of his men, his capacity as a seaman, which are qualities worthy of admiration. Yet I have not intended to make him an admirable figure. To do that would be to falsify history and disregard the artistic canons. So I have tried to show him as he was; great and brave, small and mean, skilful and able, greedy and cruel; and lastly, in his crimes and punishment, a coward.

And if a mere romance may have a lesson, here in this tale is one of a just retribution, exhibited in the awful, if adequate, vengeance finally wreaked upon Morgan by those whom he had so fearfully and dreadfully wronged.

CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY.

Brooklyn, N.Y., *December, 1902.*

Note. – The date of the sack of Panama has been advanced to comply with the demands of this romance.

BOOK I
HOW SIR HENRY MORGAN IN HIS OLD AGE
RESOLVED TO GO A-BUCCANEERING AGAIN

Sir Henry Morgan, Buccaneer

CHAPTER I

WHEREIN SIR HENRY MORGAN MADE GOOD USE OF THE TEN MINUTES ALLOWED HIM

His Gracious Majesty, King Charles II. of England, in sportive – and acquisitive – mood, had made him a knight; but, as that merry monarch himself had said of another unworthy subject whom he had ennobled – his son, by the left hand – "God Almighty could not make him a gentleman!"

Yet, to the casual inspection, little or nothing appeared to be lacking to entitle him to all the consideration attendant upon that ancient degree. His attire, for instance, might be a year or two behind the fashion of England and still further away from that of France, then, as now, the standard maker in dress, yet it represented the extreme of the mode in His Majesty's fair island of Jamaica. That it was a trifle too vivid in its colors, and too striking in its contrasts for the best taste at home, possibly might be condoned by the richness of the material used and the prodigality of trimming which decorated it. Silk and satin from the Orient, lace from Flanders, leather from Spain, with jewels from everywhere, marked him as a person entitled to some consideration, at least. Even more compulsory of attention, if not of respect, were his haughty, overbearing, satisfied manner, his look of command, the expression of authority in action he bore.

Quite in keeping with his gorgeous appearance was the richly furnished room in which he sat in autocratic isolation, plumed hat on head, quaffing, as became a former brother-of-the-coast and sometime buccaneer, amazing draughts of the fiery spirits of the island of which he happened to be, *ad interim*, the Royal Authority.

But it was his face which attested the acuteness of the sneering observation of the unworthy giver of the royal accolade. No gentleman ever bore face like that. Framed in long, thin, gray curls which fell upon his shoulders after the fashion of the time, it was as cruel, as evil, as sensuous, as ruthless, as powerful an old face as had ever looked over a bulwark at a sinking ship, or viewed with indifference the ravaging of a devoted town. Courage there was, capacity in large measure, but not one trace of human kindness. Thin, lean, hawk-like, ruthless, cunning, weather-beaten, it was sadly out of place in its brave attire in that vaulted chamber. It was the face of a man who ruled by terror; who commanded by might. It was the face of an adventurer, too, one never sure of his position, but always ready to fight for it, and able to fight well. There was a watchful, alert, inquiring look in the fierce blue eyes, an intent, expectant expression in the craggy countenance, that told of the uncertainties of his assumptions; yet the lack of assurance was compensated for by the firm, resolute line of the mouth under the trifling upturned mustache, with its lips at the same time thin and sensual. To be fat and sensual is to appear to mitigate the latter evil with at least a pretence at good humor; to be thin and sensual is to be a devil. This man was evil, not with the grossness of a debauchee but with the thinness of the devotee. And he was an old man, too. Sixty odd years of vicious life, glossed over in the last two decades by an assumption of respectability, had swept over the gray hairs, which evoked no reverence.

There was a heavy frown on his face on that summer evening in the year of our Lord, 1685. The childless wife whom he had taken for his betterment and her worsening, some ten years since – in succession to Satan only knew how many nameless, unrecognized precursors – had died a few moments before, in the chamber above his head. Fairly bought from a needy father, she had been a cloak to lend him a certain respectability when he settled down, red with the blood of thousands whom he had slain and rich with the treasure of cities that he had wasted, to enjoy the evening of his life. Like all who are used for such purposes, she knew, after a little space, the man over whom the mantle of her reputation had been flung. She had rejoiced at the near approach of that death for

which she had been longing almost since her wedding day. That she had shrunk from him in the very articles of dissolution when he stood by her bedside, indicated the character of the relationship.

To witness death and to cause it had been the habit of this man. He marked it in her case, as in others, with absolute indifference – he cared so little for her that he did not even feel relief at her going – yet because he was the Governor of Jamaica (really he was only the Vice-Governor, but between the departure of the Royal Governor and the arrival of another he held supreme power) he had been forced to keep himself close on the day his wife died, by that public opinion to which he was indifferent but which he could not entirely defy. Consequently he had not been on the strand at Port Royal when the *Mary Rose*, frigate, fresh from England, had dropped anchor in the harbor after her weary voyage across the great sea. He did not even yet know of her arrival, and therefore the incoming Governor had not been welcomed by the man who sat temporarily, as he had in several preceding interregnums, in the seats of the mighty.

However, everybody else on the island had welcomed him with joy, for of all men who had ever held office in Jamaica Sir Henry Morgan, sometime the chief devil of those nefarious bands who disguised their piracy under the specious title of buccaneering, was the most detested. But because of the fortunate demise of Lady Morgan, as it turned out, Sir Henry was not present to greet My Lord Carlingford, who was to supersede him – and more.

The deep potations the old buccaneer had indulged in to all outward intent passed harmlessly down his lean and craggy throat. He drank alone – the more solitary the drinker the more dangerous the man – yet the room had another occupant, a tall, brawny, brown-hued, grim-faced savage, whose gaudy livery ill accorded with his stern and ruthless visage. He stood by the Vice-Governor, watchful, attentive, and silent, imperturbably filling again and again the goblet from which he drank.

"More rum," said the master, at last breaking the silence while lifting his tall glass toward the man. "Scuttle me, Black Dog," he added, smiling sardonically at the silent maroon who poured again with steady hand, "you are the only soul on this island who doesn't fear me. That woman above yonder, curse her, shuddered away from me as I looked at her dying. But your hand is steady. You and old Ben Hornigold are the only ones who don't shrink back, hey, Carib? Is it love or hate?" he mused, as the man made no answer. "More," he cried, again lifting the glass which he had instantly drained.

But the maroon, instead of pouring, bent his head toward the window, listened a moment, and then turned and lifted a warning hand. The soft breeze of the evening, laden with the fragrance of the tropics, swept up from the river and wafted to the Vice-Governor's ears the sound of hoof beats on the hard, dry road. With senses keenly alert, he, also, listened. There were a number of them, a troop possibly. They were drawing nearer; they were coming toward his house, the slimmer house near Spanish Town, far up on the mountain side, where he sought relief from the enervating heats of the lower land.

"Horsemen!" he cried. "Coming to the house! Many of them! Ah, they dismount. Go to the door, Carib."

But before the maroon could obey they heard steps on the porch. Some one entered the hall. The door of the drawing-room was abruptly thrown open, and two men in the uniform of the English army, with the distinguishing marks of the Governor's Guard at Jamaica, unceremoniously entered the room. They were fully armed. One of them, the second, had drawn his sword and held a cocked pistol in the other hand. The first, whose weapons were still in their sheaths, carried a long official paper with a portentous seal dangling from it. Both were booted and spurred and dusty from riding, and both, contrary to the custom and etiquette of the island, kept their plumed hats on their heads.

"Sir Henry Morgan – " began the bearer of the paper.

"By your leave, gentlemen," interrupted Morgan, with an imperious wave of his hand, "Lieutenant Hawxherst and Ensign Bradley of my guard, I believe. You will uncover at once and apologize for having entered so unceremoniously."

As he spoke, the Governor rose to his feet and stood by the table, his right hand unconsciously resting upon the heavy glass flagon of rum. He towered above the other two men as he stood there transfixing them with his resentful glance, his brow heavy with threat and anger. But the two soldiers made no movement toward complying with the admonition of their sometime superior.

"D'ye hear me?" he cried, stepping forward, reddening with rage at their apparent contumacy. "And bethink ye, sirs, had best address me, who stand in the place of the King's Majesty, as 'Your Excellency,' or I'll have you broke, knaves."

"We need no lessons in manners from you, Sir Henry Morgan," cried Hawxherst, angry in turn to be so browbeaten, though yesterday he would have taken it mildly enough. "And know by this, sir," lifting the paper, "that you are no longer Governor of this island, and can claim respect from no one."

"What do you mean?"

"The *Mary Rose* frigate arrived this morning, bringing Lord Carlingford as His Majesty's new Governor, and this order of arrest."

"Arrest? For whom?"

"For one Sir Henry Morgan."

"For what, pray?"

"Well, sir, for murder, theft, treason – the catalogue fills the paper. You are to be despatched to England to await the King's pleasure. I am sent by Lord Carlingford to fetch you to the jail at Port Royal."

"You seem to find it a pleasant task."

"By heaven, I do, sir!" cried the soldier fiercely. "I am a gentleman born, of the proudest family in the Old Dominion, and have been forced to bow and scrape and endure your insults and commands, you bloody villain, but now –"

"'Tis no part of a soldier's duty, sir, to insult a prisoner," interrupted Morgan, not without a certain dignity. He was striving to gain time to digest this surprising piece of news and thinking deeply what was to be done in this entirely unexpected crisis.

"Curse it all, Hawxherst!" Ensign Bradley burst out, pulling at the sleeve of his superior. "You go too far, man; this is unseemly."

Hawxherst passed his hand across his brow and by an effort somewhat regained his self-control.

"Natheless 'tis in this paper writ that you are to go to England a prisoner on the *Mary Rose*, to await the King's pleasure," he added, savagely.

"His Gracious Majesty hath laid his sword upon my shoulder. I am a knight of his English court, one who has served him well upon the seas. His coffers have I enriched by – but let that pass. I do not believe that King Charles, God bless him –"

"Stop! The *Mary Rose* brings the news that King Charles II. is dead, and there reigns in his stead His Gracious Majesty King James."

"God rest the soul of the King!" cried Morgan, lifting his hat from his head. "He was a merry and a gallant gentleman. I know not this James. How if I do not go with you?"

"You have ten minutes in which to decide, sir," answered Hawxherst.

"And then?"

"Then if I don't bring you forth, the men of yonder troop will come in without further order. Eh, Bradley?"

"Quite so, Sir Henry," answered the younger man. "And every avenue of escape is guarded. Yield you, sir; believe me, there's naught else."

"I have ten minutes then," said the old man reflectively, "ten minutes! Hum!"

"You may have," answered the captain curtly, "if you choose to take so long. And I warn you," he added, "that you'd best make use of that time to bid farewell to Lady Morgan or give other order for the charge of your affairs, for 'twill be a long time, I take it, before you are back here again."

"Lady Morgan is dead, gentlemen, in the room above."

At this young Bradley removed his hat, an example which Hawxherst followed a moment after. They had always felt sorry for the unfortunate wife of the buccaneer.

"As for my affairs, they can wait," continued Morgan slowly. "The game is not played out yet, and perchance I shall have another opportunity to arrange them. Meanwhile, fetch glasses, Carib, from yonder buffet."

He nodded toward a huge sideboard which stood against the wall immediately in the rear of Ensign Bradley, and at the same time shot a swift, meaning glance at the maroon, which was not lost upon him as he moved rapidly and noiselessly in obedience.

"Gentlemen, will you drink with me to our next merry meeting?" he continued, turning to them.

"We're honest soldiers, honorable gentlemen, and we'll drink with no murderer, no traitor!" cried Hawxherst promptly.

"So?" answered Morgan, his eye sparkling with baleful light, although he remained otherwise entirely unmoved.

"And let me remind you," continued the soldier, "that your time is passing."

"Well, keep fast the glasses, Carib, the gentlemen have no fancy for drinking. I suppose, sirs, that I must fain yield me, but first let me look at your order ere I surrender myself peaceably to you," said the deposed Governor, with surprising meekness.

"Indeed, sir – "

"'Tis my right."

"Well, perchance it may be. There can be no harm in it, I think; eh, Bradley?" queried the captain, catching for the moment his subaltern's eye.

Then, as the latter nodded his head, the former extended the paper to Morgan. At that instant the old buccaneer shot one desperate glance at the maroon, who stood back of the shoulder of the officer with the drawn sword and pistol. As Hawxherst extended the paper, Morgan, with the quickness of an albatross, grasped his wrist with his left hand, jerked him violently forward, and struck him a vicious blow on the temple with the heavy glass decanter, which shattered in his hand. Hawxherst pitched down at the Governor's feet, covered with blood and rum. So powerful had been Morgan's blow that the brains of the man had almost been beaten out. He lay shuddering and quivering on the floor. Quickly as Morgan struck, however, Carib had been quicker. As the glass crashed against the temple of the senior, the maroon had wrenched the pistol from the junior soldier's hand, and before he realized what had happened a cold muzzle was pressed against his forehead.

"Drop that sword!" cried Morgan instantly, and as the weapon fell upon the floor, he continued, smiling: "That was well done, Black Dog. Quite like old times, eh?"

"Shall I fire?" asked Carib, curling his lips over his teeth in what passed with him for a smile.

"Not yet."

"Your Excellency," gasped poor Bradley, "I didn't want to come. I remonstrated with him a moment since. For God's sake – "

"Silence, sirrah! And how much time have I now, I wonder?" He looked at his watch as he asked the question. "Three minutes! Three minutes between you and instant death, Ensign Bradley, for should one of your men enter the room now you see what you would have to expect, sir."

"Oh, sir, have mercy – "

"Unless you do exactly what I say you will be lying there with that carrion," cried Morgan, kicking the prostrate body savagely with his jewelled shoes.

"What do you want me to do? For God's sake be quick, Your Excellency. Time is almost up. I hear the men move."

"You are afraid, sir. There still want two minutes – "

"Yes, yes, but – "

"Go to the window yonder," cried the old man contemptuously – whatever he was he was not afraid – "and speak to them. Do you, Carib, stand behind, by the window, well concealed. If he hesitate, if he falter, kill him instantly."

"Pistol or knife?"

"The knife, it makes less noise," cried the buccaneer, chuckling with devilish glee. "Only one minute and a half now, eh, Mr. Bradley?"

"They're coming, they're coming!" whispered Bradley, gasping for breath. "Oh, sir – "

"We still have a minute," answered Morgan coolly. "Now, stop them."

"But how?"

"Tell them that you have captured me; that my wife is dead; that you and Lieutenant Hawxherst will spend the night here and fetch me down to Port Royal in the morning; that I have yielded myself a prisoner. Bid them stay where they are and drink to your health in bottles of rum, which shall be sent out to them, and then to go back to Port Royal and tell the new Governor. And see that your voice does not tremble, sir!"

There was a sudden movement outside.

"If they get in here," added Morgan quickly, "you are a dead man."

Bradley, with the negro clutching his arm, ran to the window. With the point of his own sword pressed against the back of his neck he repeated the message which Morgan had given him, which was received by the little squadron with shouts of approbation. He turned from the window, pale and trembling. Moistening his lips he whispered:

"I stopped them just in time."

"Well for you that you did," said Morgan grimly. "Come hither! Face that wall! Now stand there! Move but a hair's-breadth, turn your head the thousandth part of a degree, and I run you through," he added, baring his sword. "Rum for the men without, Carib," he added, "and then tell me when they are gone."

While the two were left alone in the room, Morgan amused himself by pricking the unfortunate officer with the point of the weapon, at the same time enforcing immobility and silence by the most ferocious threats of a speedy and cruel death. The men outside drank noisily and presently departed, and the half-breed came back.

"Bind this fool," Morgan commanded briefly. "Then bid the slaves keep close in their cabins on pain of my displeasure – they know what it is. Then fetch the fastest horse in the stable to the front door. Get my riding-boots and cloak, and before you go hand me that little desk yonder. Be quick about it, too, for time presses, although I have more of it than these gentlemen would have allowed me."

As the maroon, after carefully lashing the officer with a seaman's expertness, rushed out to busy himself in carrying out these commands, Morgan opened the desk which he had handed to him and took from it several rouleaux of gold and a little bag filled with the rarest of precious stones; then he made a careful examination of the body on the floor.

"Not quite dead yet," he murmured, "but there is no use wasting shot or thrust upon him, he won't survive that blow. As for you, sir," looking at the paralyzed ensign, lying bound upon the floor, "you thought you could outwit the old buccaneer, eh? You shall see. I dealt with men when you were a babe in arms, and a babe in arms you are still. Ho! Ho!"

He laughed long and loudly, though there was neither mirth nor merriment in his sinister tones. The blood of the poor listener froze in his veins at the sound of it.

The brief preparations which Morgan had indicated as necessary for the journey were soon made.

He was always promptly obeyed by his own people; the slaves fled his presence when they could as if he had been a pestilence. At a sign from his taciturn body-servant at the open door that the horse was ready, he rose to his feet.

"Shall I kill this one now?" asked the maroon.

Morgan looked at the young man reflectively. The tongue of the ensign clave to the roof of his mouth; the sweat stood out on his forehead; he could not utter a word from fright. He was bound and trussed so tightly that he could not make a move, either. His eyes, however, spoke volumes.

"Well," said Sir Henry deliberately, "it would be a pity to kill him – " he paused; "in a hurry," he added.

"Dead men tell no tales."

"Eh, well, we can take care of that. Just lay him near his friend, lock the doors when I am gone and set the place on fire. The people are all out of the house. See they remain away. 'Twill make a hot, glorious blaze. You know the landing opposite Port Royal?"

The half-breed nodded.

"Meet me there as quick as you can. Lose no time."

"Aye, aye, sah," answered the Carib. "And Lady Morgan, sah?"

"Let her burn with the other two. She is so saintly she may like the fire, for I am afraid there will be none where she has gone. Good-by, Master Bradley. You allowed me ten minutes. I take it that this house will burn slowly at first, so perhaps you may count upon – let us say – half an hour. I'm generous, you see. Harry Morgan's way! 'Tis a pity you can't live to take my message to Lord Carlingford. The next time he sends any one for me let him send men, not fools and – cowards."

"You villain! You cursed, murdering villain!" gasped Bradley at last.

"To our next meeting, Mr. Bradley, and may it be in a cooler place than you will be in half an hour!"

CHAPTER II

HOW MASTER BENJAMIN HORNIGOLD, THE ONE-EYED, AGREED TO GO WITH HIS OLD CAPTAIN

Close under the towering walls of the old Spanish fort, now for a quarter of a century dominated by the English flag, as if seeking protection from its frowning battlements with their tiers of old-fashioned guns, stood the Blue Anchor tavern. It had been a famous resort for the bold spirits of the evil sort who had made Port Royal the base of their operations in many a desperate sea venture in piracy in the two decades that had just passed; but times had changed, even if men had not changed in them.

The buccaneer had been banished from the Caribbean. Whereupon, with a circumspect prudence, he had extended his operations into the South Seas, where he was farther from civilization, consequently harder to get at, and, naturally, more difficult to control. Since the sack of Panama, twenty-five years before, his fortunes had been rapidly declining. One of the principal agents in promoting his downfall had been the most famous rover of them all. After robbing his companions of most of their legitimate proportion of the spoils of Panama, Sir Henry had bought his knighthood at the hands of the venal Charles, paying for it in treasure, into the origin of which, with his usual careless insouciance, his easy-going majesty had not inquired any too carefully. And the old pirate had settled down, if not to live cleanly at least to keep within the strict letter of the law. There was thereafter nothing he abhorred so thoroughly as buccaneering and the buccaneer – ostensibly, that is.

Like many a reformed rake this gentle child of hell, when the opportunity came to him with the position of Vice-Governor, endeavored to show the sincerity of his reformation by his zealous persecution. He hanged without mercy such of his old companions in crime as fell into his clutches. They had already vowed vengeance upon him, these sometime brethren of the coast, for his betrayal of their confidence at Panama; they had further resented his honor of knighthood, his cloak of respectability, his assumption of gentility, and now that he hanged and punished right and left without mercy, their anger and animosity were raised to the point of fury, and many of them swore deeply with bitter oaths that if they ever caught him defenceless they would make him pay dearly in torture and torment for these various offences. He knew them well enough to realize their feelings toward him, and blind fate affording him the opportunity of the upper hand he made them rue more bitterly than ever their wild threats against him.

He had, moreover, so conducted himself in his official position that everybody, good, bad, and indifferent, on the island hated him. Why he had not been assassinated long since was a mystery. But he was a dangerous man to attack. Absolutely fearless, prompt, decisive, resourceful, and with the powers and privileges of the office he held besides, he had so far escaped all the dangers and difficulties of his situation. Charles had constantly befriended him and had refused to give ear either to the reiterated pleas of the islanders for his removal, or to the emphatic representations of the Spanish court, which, in bitter recollection of what he had done – and no more cruel or more successful pirate had ever swept the Caribbean and ravaged the Spanish Main – were persistently urged upon his notice. But with the accession of James the situation was immediately altered. The new monarch had at once acceded to the demand of the Spanish Ambassador, presented anew at this opportune time, and a new Governor of Jamaica was despatched over the sea with orders to arrest Morgan and send him to England. Hawxherst, who, in common with all the officers of the insular army, hated the bloodstained villain whom fortune had placed over them, had solicited Lord Carlingford to allow him to execute the order, with what success we have seen.

The news of the long-wished-for downfall of the tyrant had been spread abroad and formed the one topic of conversation in Port Royal and the vicinity that day. Now the work of the day was over and, as usual, the Blue Anchor tavern was crowded with men from the frigate and other shipping in the harbor, mingling with others from the purlieus of the town. Fumes of rum and spirits pervaded the tobacco-smoked barroom which served as the main parlor of the inn. It was yet early in the evening, but the crowd, inflamed with liquor, was already in uproarious mood. Over in the corner a young Englishman was singing in a rich, deep voice a new song by a famous poet of London town:

"Let us sing and be merry, dance, joke and rejoice,
With claret and sherry, theorbo and voice!
The changeable world to our joy is unjust,
All treasure's uncertain,
Then down with your dust;
In frolics dispose your pounds, shillings and pence,
For we shall be nothing a hundred years hence.

We'll sport and be free, with Frank, Betty and Dolly,
Have lobsters and oysters to cure melancholy;
Fish dinners will make a man spring like a flea,
Dame Venus, love's lady,
Was born of the sea;
With her and with Bacchus we'll tickle the sense.
For we shall be past it a hundred years hence."

It was a popular song, evidently, for the whole assembly joined in the chorus —

"In frolics dispose your pounds, shillings and pence,
For we shall be nothing a hundred years hence."

They roared it out in the deep bass voices of the sea, marking the time by hammering in unison upon the oaken tables with their pewter mugs and flagons. The sentiment seemed to suit the company, if the zest with which they sang be any criterion. Care was taken to insure a sufficient pause, too, after the chorus between each of the verses, to permit the drinking, after all the essential part of the evening's entertainment, to be performed without hindrance.

There was one man, however, from the post of honor which he occupied at the head of the table evidently held in high consideration among the habitués of the inn, who did not join in the singing. He was a little man, who made up for his shortness of stature by breadth of shoulder and length of arm. There was an ugly black patch over his left eye; no one had ever seen him without that patch since the day of the assault on the fort at Chagres; an Indian arrow had pierced his eye on that eventful day. Men told how he had gone to the surgeon requesting him to pull it out, and when the young doctor, who had been but a short time with the buccaneers, shrank from jerking the barb out in view of the awful pain which would attend his action, had hesitated, reluctant, the wounded man had deliberately torn out the arrow, and with oaths and curses for the other's cowardice had bound up the wound himself with strips torn from his shirt and resumed the fighting. His courage there, and before and after, although he was an illiterate person and could neither read nor write, had caused him to be appointed boatswain of the ship that had carried Morgan's flag, and he had followed his leader for many years with a blind devotion that risked all and stuck at nothing to be of service to him.

It had been many years since Master Benjamin Hornigold, coming down from bleak New England because he found his natural bent of mind out of harmony with the habits and customs of

his Puritan ancestors, had drifted into buccaneering under the flag of his chief. He was an old man now, but those who felt the force of his mighty arms were convinced that age had not withered him to any appreciable degree.

Aside from Morgan, Hornigold had loved but one human creature, his younger brother, a man of somewhat different stamp, who had been graduated from Harvard College but, impelled by some wild strain in his blood and by the example of his brother, had joined the buccaneers.

There were many men of gentle blood who were well acquainted with the polite learning of the day among these sea rovers from time to time, and it is related that on that same Panama excursion when "from the silent peak in Darien" they beheld for the first time after their tremendous march the glittering expanse of the South Seas, with white Panama in its green trees before them, the old cry of the famous Ten Thousand, "Thalatta! Thalatta! The sea! The sea!" had burst from many lips.

All his learning and refinement of manner had not prevented young Ebenezer Hornigold from being as bad at heart as his brother, which is saying a great deal, and because he was younger, more reckless, less prudent, than he of riper years, he had incautiously put himself in the power of Morgan and had been hanged with short shrift. Benjamin, standing upon the outskirts of the crowd jesting and roaring around the foot of the gibbet, with a grief and rage in his heart at his impotency, presently found himself hating his old captain with a fierceness proportioned to his devotion in the past. For he had appealed for mercy personally to Morgan by the memory of his former services and had been sternly repulsed and coldly dismissed with a warning that he should look to his own future conduct lest, following in the course of his brother, he should find himself with his neck in the noose.

Morgan, colossal in his conceit and careless in his courage, thought not to inquire, or, if he gave the subject any consideration at all, dismissed it from his mind as of little moment, as to what was the subsequent state of Hornigold's feelings. Hornigold could have killed Morgan on numberless occasions, but a consuming desire for a more adequate revenge than mere death had taken hold of him, and he deferred action until he could contrive some means by which to strike him in a way that he conceived would glut his obsession of inexpiable hatred.

Hornigold had reformed, outwardly that is, and was now engaged in the useful and innocent business of piloting ships into the harbor, also steering their crews, after the anchors were down, into the Blue Anchor tavern, in which place his voice and will were supreme. He had heard, for Lord Carlingford had made no secret of his orders, that his old master was to be arrested and sent back to England. The news which would have brought joy to a lesser villain, in that it meant punishment, filled him with dismay, for such was the peculiarity of his hatred that he wanted the punishment to come directly from him – through his agency, that is. He desired it to be of such character that it should be neither speedy nor easy, and he lusted most of all that Morgan should know in his last hours – which Hornigold prayed Satan might be long ones – to whom he was indebted for it all.

And, strange as it may seem, there was still a certain loyalty of a distorted, perverted kind, in the man's breast. No matter what Morgan had done, no one else should punish him but himself. He would even have fought for his sometime chief, were it necessary, against the King or his law, if need be. He was therefore very much disturbed over what he heard. Had it been possible he would have warned Morgan immediately of his purposed arrest, but he had been detained on the frigate by necessary duties from which he could find no means of escape until too late. He had, however, a high sense of Sir Henry's courage and address. He hoped and believed that he would not be taken by such men as Hawxherst and Bradley; but if he were, Hornigold made up his mind to rescue him.

There was a little islet in the Caribbean just below Hispaniola, in whose wooded interior still lurked some of the old-time buccaneers, proscribed men, who, from time to time, did pirating in a small way on their own account; just enough to keep their hands in. If the worst came, Hornigold, who with his little pinnace had kept in touch with them secretly, could assemble them for the rescue of their old captain. Then the former Governor, in his power and in their possession, could be disposed

of at their leisure and pleasure. All these things had busied the man during the evening, and he sat even now in the midst of the revelry about him, plunged in profound thought.

Unobserved himself, he had taken account of every man who was present. He knew all the habitués of the port, and enjoyed a wide acquaintance among the seamen whose vessels frequented the harbor. He decided there were then in that room perhaps twenty men upon whom he could depend, proper inducement being offered, for almost any sort of service. Among these were five or six superior spirits whom he knew to be tried and true. There was young Teach, the singer of the evening, a drunken, dissolute vagabond, who had been discharged from his last ship for insubordination and a quarrelsome attack upon one of his officers, for which he had narrowly escaped hanging as a mutineer. The man was as bold as a lion, though; he could be trusted. There, too, was Rock Braziliano, a Portuguese half-breed, and hobnobbing with him was Raveneau de Lussan, a Frenchman – prime seamen and bold fellows both. Further down the table, the huge Dutchman, Velsers, was nodding stupidly over his rum.

These men and a few others were veterans like Hornigold himself. They were the best of the lot, but for the most part the assemblage was made up of the sweepings of the town, men who had the willingness to do anything no matter how nefarious it might be, their only deterrent being lack of courage. Hornigold's single eye swept over them with a fierce gleam of contempt, yet these were they with whom he must work in case of necessity.

One or two others in whom he reposed confidence, men who composed the crew of his own pinnace, he had sent off early in the evening to Spanish Town to gather what news they could. One of them came in and reported that the squadron of horse which had gone up with the officers to bring back Morgan had come back without him and without the officers. The spy's insignificance prevented him from learning why this was, but hope instantly sprang up in Hornigold's breast upon receipt of this news. Knowing Morgan as he did, he was convinced that he had found some means to dispose of the two officers and send away the cavalry.

He was not unprepared, therefore, when he saw the tall form of the maroon appearing in the doorway through the smoke. No one else noticed the silent Carib's entry, and he stood motionless until Hornigold's eye fastened upon him. Then by an imperceptible move of his head he indicated a desire to speak with him without the room. The one-eyed nodded slightly in token that he understood, and the maroon vanished as silently as he had come. Waiting a few moments, Hornigold rose from his seat and began threading his way through the boisterous crowd toward the door. Thrusting aside detaining hands and answering rude queries with an old sailor's ready banter, bidding them on no account to cease the festivities because of his departure, and in fact ordering a new draught of rum for all hands, he succeeded in breaking away under cover of the cheers which greeted this announcement.

It was pitch dark outside and he stopped a moment, hesitating as to what he should do. He had no doubt but that the maroon had a message for him from his master. But a second had elapsed when he felt a light touch on his shoulder. His hand went instantly to the seaman's hanger at his side and he faced about promptly. A ready man was Master Hornigold.

"It's I, bo's'n," whispered a familiar voice.

"You, Black Dog? Where's your master?"

"Yonder."

"Let me see him."

A tall, slender figure muffled in a heavy riding-coat sat in the stern sheets of a small boat in the deepest shadow of one of the silent and deserted piers.

"Captain Morgan?" whispered Hornigold softly, as followed by the maroon he descended the landing stairs leading toward the boat.

"'Tis you, Master Hornigold," answered the man, with an accent of relief in his voice, thrusting the pistol back into his belt as he spoke. He, too, was a ready man with his weapons and one not to be caught napping in any emergency.

"Me it is, sir," answered the boatswain, "and ready to serve my old captain."

"You heard the news?"

"I heard it on the frigate this afternoon."

"Why did you not send me warning?"

"I had no chance. I'd 'a' done it, sir, if I could have fetched away."

"Well, all's one. I've laid those two landlubbers by the heels. Eh, Carib?"

"Where are they, sir?"

"I might make a guess, for I left them bound and the house blazing."

"'Tis like old times!"

"Ay! I've not forgot the old tricks."

"No, sir. And what's to do now?"

"Why, the old game once more."

"What? You don't mean – "

"I do. What else is there left for me? Scuttle me, if I don't take it out of the Dons! It's their doing. They've had a rest for nigh twenty years. We'll let it slip out quietly among the islands that Harry Morgan's afloat once more and there's pickings to be had on the Spanish Main – wine and women and pieces of eight. Art with me?"

"Ay, of course. But we lack a ship."

"There's one yonder, man," cried Morgan, pointing up the harbor, where the lights of the *Mary Rose* twinkled in the blackness.

"To be sure the ship is there, but – "

"But what?"

"We've no force. The old men are gone."

"I am here," answered Morgan, "and you and Black Dog. And there are a few others left. Teach is new, but will serve; I heard his bull voice roaring out from the tavern. And de Lussan and Velsers, and the rest. I've kept sight of ye. Curse it all, I let you live when I might have hanged you."

"You did, captain, you did. You didn't hang everybody – but you didn't spare, either."

It would have been better for the captain if it had been lighter and he could have seen the sudden and sharp set of Master Hornigold's jaws, which, coupled with the fierceness which flamed into his one eye as he hissed out that last sentence, might have warned him that it would be safer to thrust his head into the lion's mouth than altogether to trust himself to his whilom follower. But this escaped him in the darkness.

"Listen," he said quickly. "This is my plan. In the morning when Hawxherst and Bradley do not appear, the new Governor will send more men. They will find the house burned down. No one saw us come hither. There will be in the ruins the remains of three bodies."

"Three?"

"Yes. My Lady Morgan's."

"Did you kill her?"

"I didn't have to. They'll think that one of them is mine. No hue or cry will be raised and no search made for me. Do you arrange that the crew of the *Mary Rose* be given liberty for the evening yonder at the Blue Anchor. They've not been ashore yet, I take it?"

"No, but they will go to-morrow."

"That's well. Meanwhile gather together the bold fellows who have stomach for a cruise and are willing to put their heads through the halter provided there are pieces of eight on the other side, and then we'll take the frigate to-morrow night and away for the Spanish Main. That will give us a start. We'll pick up what we can along the coast first, then scuttle the ship, cross the Isthmus, seize another and have the whole South Seas before us – Peru, Manila, wherever we will."

"The King has a long arm."

"Yes, and other kings have had long arms too, I take it, but they have not caught Harry Morgan, nor ever shall. Come, man, wilt go with me?"

"Never fear," answered Hornigold promptly. "I've been itching for a chance to cut somebody's throat."

He did not say it was Morgan's throat, but the truth and sincerity in his voice carried conviction to the listening captain.

"Thou bloody butcher!" he laughed grimly. "There will be plenty of it anon."

"Where will you lay hid," asked the boatswain, "until to-morrow night?"

"I have thought of that," said Morgan promptly. "I think the best place will be the cabin of your pinnace. I'll just get aboard, Black Dog here and I, and put to sea. To-morrow night at this hour we'll come back here again and you will find us here at the wharf."

"A good plan, Master Morgan," cried Hornigold, forgetting the title as the scheme unfolded itself to him. "What's o'clock, I wonder?"

As he spoke the sound of a bell tapped softly came floating over the quiet water from the *Mary Rose*.

"Four bells," answered Morgan listening; "at ten of the clock, then, I shall be here."

"Leave the rest to me, sir," answered Hornigold.

"I shall. That will be your boat yonder?"

"Ay. Just beyond the point."

"Is anybody aboard of her?"

"No one."

"Is there rum and water enough for one day?"

"Plenty. In the locker in the cuddy."

"Good! Come, Carib. Until to-morrow night, then!"

"Ay, ay, sir," said Hornigold, leaning over the pier and watching the boat fade into a black blur on the water as it drew away toward the pinnace.

"He's mine, by heaven, he's mine!" he whispered under his breath as he turned and walked slowly up to the house.

Yet Master Hornigold meant to keep faith with his old captain. He was sick and tired of assumed respectability, of honest piloting of ships to the harbor, of drinking with worthy merchantmen or the King's sailors. The itch for the old buccaneering game was hard upon him. To hear the fire crackle and roar through a doomed ship, to lord it over shiploads of terrified men and screaming women, to be sated with carnage and drunk with liquor, to dress in satins and velvets and laces, to let the broad pieces of eight run through his grimy fingers, to throw off restraint and be a free sailor, a gentleman rover, to return to the habits of his earlier days and revel in crime and sin – it was for all this that his soul lusted again.

He would betray Morgan, yet a flash of his old admiration for the man came into his mind as he licked his lips like a wolf and thought of the days of rapine. There never was such a leader. He had indeed been the terror of the seas. Under no one else would there be such prospects for successful piracy. Yes, he would do all for him faithfully, up to the point of revenge. Morgan's plan was simple and practicable. De Lussan, Teach, Velsers and the rest would fall in with it gladly. There would be enough rakehell, degraded specimens of humanity, hungry and thirsty, lustful and covetous, in Port Royal – which was the wickedest and most flourishing city on the American hemisphere at the time – to accompany them and insure success, provided only there would be reward in women and liquor and treasure. He would do it. They would all go a-cruising once more, and then – they would see.

He stayed a long time on the wharf, looking out over the water, arranging the details of the scheme outlined by Morgan so brilliantly, and it was late when he returned to the parlor of the Blue Anchor Inn. Half the company were drunk on the floor under the tables. The rest were singing, or shouting, or cursing, in accordance with their several moods. Above the confusion Hornigold could

hear Teach's giant voice still roaring out his reckless refrain; bitter commentary on their indifference it was, too —

"Though life now is pleasant and sweet to the sense,
We'll be damnably moldy a hundred years hence."

"Ay," thought the old buccaneer, pausing in the entrance, for the appositeness of the verses impressed even his unreflective soul, "it will be all the same in a hundred years, but we'll have one more good cruise before we are piped down for the long watch in."

He chuckled softly and hideously to himself at the fatalistic idea.

By his orders, enforced by the vigorous use of seamen's colts, the inn servants at once cleared the room of the vainly protesting revellers. Those whose appearance indicated a degree of respectability which promised payment for their accommodation, were put to bed; the common sort were bundled unceremoniously out on the strand before the door and left to sober up as best they might in the soft tropic night. Teach, Kaveneau, and the Brazilian were detained for conference with the boatswain. To these worthies, therefore, Hornigold unfolded Morgan's plan, which they embraced with alacrity, promising each to do his share. Velsers was too stupidly drunk to be told anything, but they knew they could count upon him without fail.

CHAPTER III

IN WHICH SIR HENRY MORGAN FINDS HIMSELF AT THE HEAD OF A CREW ONCE MORE

The next morning, after waiting a reasonable time for a message from the two soldiers at Spanish Town, Lord Carlingford, the new Governor, who had taken up his residence temporarily at Port Royal, summoned his attendants, and himself repaired to the seat of Government to ascertain why no further report had been received from his officers. Great was his astonishment when he found that the residence of the Vice-Governor had been destroyed by fire during the night. The frightened slaves could tell nothing. Morgan and Carib had taken care that no one had marked their departure. Consequently when the search of the ruins revealed the remains of three bodies, so badly charred as to be unrecognizable, it was naturally inferred at first that they were those of the buccaneer and the two unfortunate officers. It was known among the people of the place, however, that Lady Morgan had been seriously ill, so ill that she could not have been removed, and there were some who suspected that one of the bodies was hers and that the arch-fiend himself had by some means disposed of the officers and escaped. Therefore a hue and cry was raised for him and a strict search instituted by order of the Governor, who, after setting affairs in motion, returned to Port Royal.

Troops were accordingly ordered out, and even details of surly seamen, growling at being deprived of their accustomed shore liberty, were detailed from the frigate, which happened to be the only war vessel in commission in the harbor. Hornigold, Raveneau, and one or two of the others known to be former companions of the buccaneer, were closely interrogated, but they stoutly declared they did not know his whereabouts and had seen nothing of him. Later in the afternoon it was observed that Hornigold's pinnace was not in the harbor. Indeed, with cunning adroitness that master mariner himself called attention to the fact, cursing the while his old commander for his alleged theft of the boat, and declaring his willingness to join in the search for him. It was known to the authorities that the execution of the boatswain's brother by Morgan had shattered the old intimacy which subsisted between them; consequently his protestations were given credence and suspicion of collusion was diverted from him.

Lord Carlingford finally determined to send the *Mary Rose* to sea in an endeavor to overhaul the pinnace, in the hope that the former Vice-Governor might be found on her, although the chances of success were but faint. The frigate, however, was not provisioned or watered for a cruise, after her long voyage from England. There had been considerable scurvy and other sickness on the ship and she was in no condition to weigh anchor immediately; she would have to be re-supplied and the sick men in her crew replaced by drafts from the shore. Besides, in accordance with the invariable custom, the great majority of the men had been given shore leave for that afternoon and evening, and those few who were not on duty were carousing at the Blue Anchor Inn and similar taverns and would be utterly unable to work the ship, should they be called upon to do so, without being given a chance to sober up. This would take time, and Lord Carlingford upon the representations of his sea officers decided to wait until the morrow before commencing work. One secret of Morgan's success was the promptness with which he struck. Nobler and better men could have learned a lesson from this old buccaneer, notably the Governor.

As he could do so, not only personally but through his able lieutenants, Hornigold busied himself during the day and the preceding night in enlisting as vicious a gang of depraved ruffians as could be gathered together in what was perhaps the wickedest city in the world. It had been decided after conference between the leaders that there was no place within the confines of Port Royal itself where so many men could meet without exciting suspicion. He had accordingly appointed a rendezvous

for the night across the narrow entrance to the harbor, opposite the fort, under the trees which overshadowed the strand, some distance back from high-water mark. Singly or in groups of two or three, the men had gone across in boats after sunset, successfully eluding observation, for the night was moonless and very dark.

There was no room, indeed, for suspicion on the part of the authorities, save in the bare fact of the possible escape of Morgan; but it had been twenty years since that worthy had gone buccaneering, and, except in the minds of his former companions and participants, much of the character of his exploits had passed out of mind. No special watch was kept, therefore, in fort or town or on the ship. Morgan was gone certainly, but nothing was feared from a single proscribed man.

There was rum in plenty under the trees on the point, but care was taken by Rock Braziliano, Raveneau, and the others, even including Velsers, that no one should drink enough to lose entire control of his faculties or to become obstreperous. Just enough was given to make the timid bold, and the hardy reckless. They knew the value of, and on occasion could practise, abstinence, those old buccaneers, and they were determined to keep their men well in hand. No fires were lighted, no smoking permitted. Strict silence was enjoined and enforced. It was perhaps ten o'clock before all were assembled.

When morning had cleared their brains of the rum they had taken, there had been ferocious opposition on the part of the older men. Not that they objected to buccaneering. They were eager for the chance once more, but the memory of Morgan's betrayals of his old comrades rankled deep. There were many beside Hornigold who had promised themselves the luxury of vengeance upon their old commander. There were none, however, who had so dwelt upon it as the boatswain, nor were there any whose animosity and determination compared to his fierce hatred. He was therefore able, at last, to persuade them into a surly willingness to accept Morgan as their captain in this new enterprise. Indeed, without him they could do nothing, for there was no one who possessed the ability or experience to lead them save he. The best men of the old stamp were now in the South Seas and far away; they had been driven from the Caribbean. It was not difficult for Hornigold to show them that it must be Morgan or no one.

Their feelings of animosity were, perforce, sunk beneath the surface, although they smouldered still within their breasts. They would go with him, they said. But let him look to himself, they swore threateningly. If he betrayed them again, there were men among them who would kill him as remorselessly as they would stamp on a centipede. If he behaved himself and the expedition on which he was to lead them proved successful, they might forgive him – all but old Hornigold. Truth to tell, there was no one among them who felt himself so wronged or so badly treated as the one-eyed envenomed sailor.

The bulk of the party, which numbered perhaps one hundred men, were simply plain, ordinary thieves, cut-throats, broken-down seamen, land sharks and rascals. Not much was to be expected of them. They were not of the stuff of which the old-time buccaneers had been made, but they were the best to be obtained at that time in Port Royal. Even they would not have been so easily assembled had they realized quite what was expected of them. They knew, of course, that they were committing themselves to some nefarious undertaking, but to each recruit had been vouchsafed only enough information to get him to come to the rendezvous – no more. They were a careless, drunken, dissolute lot.

By Hornigold's orders they were told off in five parties of about twenty each, commanded respectively by himself, Velsers, Raveneau, the Brazilian, and the last by Teach, who, though the youngest of the leaders, had a character for daring wickedness that would stop at nothing. With much difficulty the boatswain had succeeded in obtaining five boats, each capable of carrying one band. Every one brought his own arms, and in general these men did not lack a sufficiency of weapons. Those who were deficient, however, were supplied from a scanty stock which the leaders had managed to procure.

All was in readiness, when one of the men who had been stationed on the extreme edge of the beach toward the channel reported the approach of a small boat looking like the pinnacle.

The wind, fortunately for the enterprise, happened to be blowing fresh out of the harbor and it was necessary for the pinnacle to beat up toward the entrance. She showed no lights, but, as she tacked in close to the shore, between the watcher and the lights of the town, he observed her. The boat was handled with consummate skill; she dropped anchor and hauled down her sails noiselessly just abreast the pier which had been appointed the rendezvous by the two men on the night before. As soon as Hornigold learned of the approach he took a small boat, leaving Velsers in command of the band on shore, and repaired with the other leaders to the wharf on the other side. As the boat approached the wharf it was hailed in a sharp whisper.

"Who comes?" cried the voice on shore.

"Hornigold!" answered the boatswain in a low tone, as the boat swept alongside.

"So, 'tis you, is it?" cried Morgan, attended by the maroon as usual, again putting his pistol back into his belt. "Seeing so many of you in the skiff, I feared a trap until you gave the word."

"I've brought along Raveneau, the Brazilian, and young Teach," said the boatswain.

"Welcome, my hearties, all!" said the Vice-Governor softly. "We're off to the Spanish Main with a good ship, plenty of liquor beneath the hatches, brave hearts to run her. There will be plenty of pickings meet for any man. Are you with me?"

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"We are," answered one and another.

The place where they stood was lonely and deserted at that time of night, but Hornigold suggested that they immediately repair to the other side, there to perfect their further plans. Indeed, they had no plans as yet. There was not head enough among them to concoct the details of the scheme, although no better instruments for an expedition than the chief and those assembled under him could be gathered together. They had waited for Morgan.

"You speak well," answered the captain. "Are all preparations made?"

"All we could make without you, captain," replied Hornigold as the party re-entered the boat.

"How many men have you gathered?"

"About five score."

"Boats?"

"Five."

"Will they carry all?"

"With a little crowding."

"Who leads each boat?"

"I, one, sir, with your permission; Raveneau here, another; the Brazilian, the third; young Teach, a fourth, and Velsers –"

"Where is he?"

"With the rest of the men – the fifth."

"Good! Are they all armed?"

"Every man has a sword and a pistol at least."

"What of the men?"

"A poor lot," answered Teach, recklessly. "A dastardly crew."

"Will they fight, think ye?"

"Curse me, they'll have to fight; we'll make them!" said Hornigold.

"Do they know what's up?"

"Not exactly," answered Raveneau, the Frenchman, a man of good birth and gentle manners, but as cruel and ruthless a villain as any that ever cut a throat or scuttled a ship. "Have no fear, captain," he continued smoothly. "Once we start them, they will have to fight."

"Did you ever know me to show fear, de Lussan?" cried the captain bending forward and staring at the Frenchman, his eyes glittering in the darkness like those of a wildcat.

"No, captain."

"No, nor did any other man," answered Morgan, and from where he sat Hornigold marked the little dialogue and swore in his heart that this man who boasted so should beg for his life at his hand, with all the beseeching pity of the veriest craven, before he finished with him. But for the present he said nothing. After a short pause, Morgan resumed:

"Have they suspected my escape?"

"They have," answered the boatswain. "They found the remains of the three bodies in the burned house this morning. At first they thought one of them was yours, but they decided after a while that one was a woman, and they guessed that you had made away with the officers and escaped. I told them you had stolen my pinnace and got away."

"You did, eh?"

"Yes."

"And he swore and cursed you roundly, captain," interposed the Brazilian chuckling maliciously. "Aye, sir, he swore if he got hands on you he would give you up."

Morgan turned this time to Hornigold. He was by no means sure of his position. He knew the enmity of these men, and he did not know how far their cupidity or their desire to take up the old life once more under such fortunate auspices as would be afforded under his command would restrain them.

"Master Ben Hornigold, said ye that?" he queried. "Would ye betray me?"

His hand stole to his waist and his fingers closed around his pistol grip.

"No fear, captain," answered that worthy composedly, sustaining the captain's searching gaze. A braver man never stepped a deck than he. "I did it to divert their attention. You see, they fancied at first that we old sea-dogs might have something to do with your escape, but I undeceived them. They reckoned that you had been hard on us and that we might be hard on ye – "

"No more of this, gentlemen, the past is gone. We begin again," cried Morgan fiercely. "And mark me, the man who betrays Harry Morgan will not live many minutes to boast of it! I'd kill him if he sat on the steps of a throne. Easy there!" he called out to the oarsmen, assuming the command as by right, while the boat's keel grated on the shingle. "All out now and lead the way. Nay, gentlemen, you shall all precede me. Carib, here, will bring up the rear. And it may be well for you to keep your weapons in your belts."

Much impressed, the little party disembarked and walked rapidly toward the place of assemblage, under the trees. Morgan and the maroon came last, each of them with a bared sword and cocked pistol.

"Lads," said Hornigold, as they approached the men, "here's your captain, Sir Henry Morgan."

"The Governor!" cried one and another, in surprise and alarm. The man had been a terror to evildoers too poor to bribe.

"Nay, men, Governor no more," Morgan answered promptly. "A free sailor who takes the sea against the Spanish Dons. We'll go buccaneering as in the old days. These men here," pointing to the group of officers, "can tell you what it means. You have heard tales of the jolly roving life of the brethren-of-the-coast. We'll do a little picking in the Caribbean, then over the Isthmus, and then down into the South Seas. There's wine and women and treasure to be had for the taking. The Spaniards are cowards. Let them hear that Harry Morgan is once more on the sea under the Jolly Roger and they will tremble from Darien down to the Straits of Magellan. It will be fair play and the old shares. Who's with me?"

"I!" "I!" "I!" broke from the bolder spirits of the crowd, and the rest, catching the contagion, finally joined in the acclaim.

"Easy," said the captain, "lest we be heard. Hornigold, is there liquor?"

"Plenty, sir."

"Let each man have a noble draught, then to the boats."

"But, captain," spoke up Sawkins, one of the boldest recruits, who was not in the secret, "be ye goin' buccaneerin' in boats? Whar's the ship?"

"I have a ship in the harbor," cried Morgan, "well found and provided."

"Ay, but what ship?"

"Confusion, sir!" shouted Morgan. "Begin ye by questioning me? Into the boat with your comrades! Velsers, de Lussan, Rock see that the men get into the boats as soon as they have their dram. And hark ye, gentlemen, a word with ye!" calling them apart while the rest were being served. "Put the boldest men in the stern sheets with yourselves, the rest at the oars, and do you have your weapons ready. The *Mary Rose* lies just within the bar. You, Velsers and Rock, gain the fo'c'sl from larboard and starboard. You, Teach and Raveneau, board at the different gangways. Hornigold, I'll go in your boat and we'll attend to the cabin. Let all be done without noise. No pistols, use the blade. Take no prisoners and waste no time. If we gain the deck without difficulty, and I think we can, clap to the hatch covers and we'll cut cable and get under way at once."

The men had been embarking in the boats rather reluctantly as he spoke, but presently all was ready. Finally Hornigold and then Morgan with the maroon stepped into the last boat, first making sure there were no stragglers left behind, and Morgan gave the command:

"Shove off!"

Sawkins, the bold spirit who had spoken before, presumed, in spite of the commander's threat, to open his mouth again as the boats slowly left the beach, rowing through the passage and up the harbor against the ebb just beginning; he pulled the stroke oar in Hornigold's boat.

"Before I go further," he cried, "I want to know what ship we're goin' aboard of."

"Ay!" came in a subdued roar from the men behind him, who only needed a leader to back out of the enterprise, which, as it threatened to involve fighting, began to seem not quite so much to their taste. "What ship?"

"The frigate," answered Hornigold shortly.

"What! The *Mary Rose*! The King's ship!" cried the men, ceasing to row. In an instant Morgan's pistol was out. His motion was followed by Hornigold and the maroon.

"Row, you dogs!" he cried fiercely.

The stroke oarsman hesitated, although the others tried to pick up the stroke.

"I give you one minute, then I blow out your brains, pull out the plug in this boat, and we'll all go to hell together," said Morgan truculently to the recalcitrant men.

"Row, for your life's sake!" cried the man behind Sawkins, hitting him in the back with the haft of the oar.

"It's the King's ship!"

"What do we care for the King?" said Morgan. "He is the law, and none of us love the law. Two-thirds of her crew are drunk, t'other third are ashore or sick. They are unprepared, asleep. There'll be naught but the anchor watch. One sharp blow, and we have the frigate – then away. What fear ye, lads?"

By such words as these, but more by the threatening appearance of the weapons pointed from the stern sheets, Morgan inspirited his men; and by similar language and threats, the men in the other boats did the same. After rowing a short distance the flotilla separated. Those approaching from the farther side of the ship necessarily made a wide détour, for which the others waited, so they would all arrive simultaneously. After a suitable time the order was passed softly to give way again. In perfect silence, broken only by the "cheep" of the oars in the locks, the five boats swept down on the doomed frigate.

CHAPTER IV

WHICH TELLS HOW THE "MARY ROSE" FRIGATE CHANGED MASTERS AND FLAGS

The *Mary Rose* was a ship with a history. The battle roster of the English navy had borne many of her name. In each instance she had been found in the thickest of the fighting. The present vessel was an old ship, having been built some thirty years before, but she was still staunch and of a model which combined strength with speed. The most conspicuous expedition she had participated in had been a desperate defence of a convoy in the Mediterranean against seven Sallee rovers, in which, after a hard engagement lasting four hours, the *Mary Rose* triumphed decisively without losing a single sail of her convoy. A rude song was made about the action, and the two lines of the ballad, summing up the results, were painted around the wheel:

"Two we burnt, and two we sank, and two did run away,
And one we carried to Leghorn Roads, to show we'd won the day."

The commander of the ship on this memorable and heroic occasion had been knighted on his return to England, and on the accession of James had been sent to Jamaica with Lord Carlingford as Vice-Governor, to take command of the naval station and supersede Morgan. Admiral Sir John Kempthorne was an elderly man at this time, but his spirit was the same that had enabled him to withstand so successfully the overwhelming onslaught of the Algerine pirate ships.

The English navy, however, was then in a state of painful decay. The famous Test Act, which excluded James from the naval service while he was Duke of York, because he was a Roman Catholic, had deprived the navy of its most influential and able friend. The greedy rapacity with which Charles II. had devoted the money assigned by the Commons for the support of the fleet to his own lustful and extravagant purposes, the favoritism and venality which he allowed in the administration of the Admiralty, and the neglect with which he viewed the representations of Pepys and others as to the condition of his fleets, had reduced the navy of England, which had won such immortal glory under Blake, to the very lowest depth it ever reached. The ships were in bad repair and commanded by landsmen who shirked going to sea; they were ill-found, the wages of the seamen not paid – in short, they presented pictures of demoralization as painful as they were unusual.

Kempthorne, having been a tried and a successful naval commander in his younger days, had striven, with some success so far as his own ship was concerned, to stem the prevailing tide of ruin, and the *Mary Rose* was perhaps one of the best frigates in the service, which, however, was not saying a great deal. He could not, of course, better the character of the crew which had been provided for him, nor could he entirely re-supply the ship, or make good her faulty and deficient equipment, but he did the best he could. Under ordinary circumstances he could have given a good account of himself if engaged with even the perfectly appointed ships of the Dutch Republic, or of the Grand Monarch himself. Indeed, in spite of the horrible degeneracy, the prestige of victory was still, as it has ever been, with England. King James, a successful, even brilliant naval commander in his youth, had decided to rehabilitate the navy with a view to putting it on its old footing, and with that object in view he had sent one of his best admirals across the sea to the important island of Jamaica, then the headquarters of the West India Squadron.

Kempthorne had welcomed the duty, and had determined that so far as the station at Port Royal was concerned he would make it the model one of the colonies, of the kingdom itself for that matter,

provided he were sustained by the King as had been promised. Lord Carlingford, with the zeal of a new appointee, had promised his coöperation.

The admiral was seated in the cabin of the frigate that night cogitating upon his plans, when his thoughts were interrupted by the rattle of oars, indicating the arrival of a boat. The sound of the approaching boat came faintly through the open stern windows of the cabin under the high poop-deck.

The ship was more or less deserted. The sick men had been put ashore; most of the crew, and the officers as well, had followed them. They would not be back until the morrow, when Sir John had orders to get away in pursuit of Hornigold's pinnace. With the captain in the cabin, however, was the old master of the ship, a man who had been promoted to that rank after the famous fight with the Algerines because of his gallantry in that action. Kempthorne was consulting with him about the necessary arrangements before sailing the next day.

As the admiral heard the noise made by the oars in the oarlocks he raised his voice, and calling a sentry, for there was half a platoon of soldiers on board who had not yet been allowed liberty (the beginnings of the Royal Marine of England, by the way), he bade him ascertain if the approaching boat was that containing the Governor. It was still early evening, and Lord Carlingford had announced his intention of sleeping in the ship, for the weather was intensely warm and he thought it might be cooler in the harbor than in the crowded low-lying town of Port Royal.

At the same time the admiral arose, buckled on his sword, and made ready to go on deck to meet Lord Carlingford, should it prove to be his expected visitor. Pausing a moment to say a final word to the master, he was conscious of something striking the ship. Before he could formulate the idea that a boat must have been hit in the bends, there were several similar shocks. The old master, who happened to be unarmed, stepped forward.

"That will be a boat, sir," he said quickly, "striking against the side of the ship. There's another, and another!"

His voice indicated surprise and some apprehension. What could it be?

"Let us go on deck at once," said Kempthorne, stepping forward. As he did so the silence was broken by a wild, terrified cry. A moment after, the sentry on the quarter-deck outside the entrance to the poop cabin fired his piece. The shot was followed by the sound of a fierce blow, and then a heavy fall. A sharp, imperious voice cried quickly:

"The ship is ours! Waste no time! Overboard with him! Clap to the hatch covers!"

The necessity for concealment outside was apparently at an end. The heavy covers were flung down upon the hatches and secured. The ship was filled with a confused babel of many voices and trampling feet. At the sound of the shot, the admiral and the master sprang to the door, but before they could pass the entrance it was flung violently open, and a man richly dressed after the fashion of Jamaica, followed by a tall, savage-looking half-breed, a compound of negro and Indian, clad in a gorgeous livery, each with pistol and sword, sprang into the room and forced the two men back. As soon as he could recover himself Kempthorne whipped out his sword. He found himself covered, however, as did the master, with a pistol.

"Throw down your sword!" cried Morgan fiercely, "and yield yourselves without quarter."

"Who are you that ask?"

"Sir Henry Morgan."

"You bloody villain!" cried Kempthorne. "Dare you attempt to take the King's ship?"

"That for the King!" answered Morgan, waving his sword. "Who are you?"

"Sir John Kempthorne, Admiral and Vice-Governor of Jamaica."

"You would fain fill my station, would you, sir?"

"I would not descend to the station of a pirate, a robber, a murderer, a –"

"S'dearth, silence!" roared Morgan furiously. "The ship is ours! I've a message for the King. Wilt carry it?"

"I would not insult my royal master by carrying a message from such as you."

"You will have it!" shouted Morgan, white with rage, lunging forward at him.

Their blades crossed in an instant, and at the same moment the old master, reckless of what happened, flung himself between the two. There was a roar from Carib's pistol, and the old man fell. As Kempthorne relaxed his guard slightly in the confusion Morgan ran him through. The admiral fell so suddenly that he jerked the blade, buried in his breast, out of the buccaneer's hand.

"God – " he gasped, as he lay upon the body of the old sailor, "God – save the – King."

"Would'st sit in my place, eh?" cried Morgan, laughing truculently as he turned on his heel and left the cabin.

Beneath the hatches, the platoon of soldiers and the men there imprisoned were yelling and making a tremendous racket. They were helpless, however, and could do nothing. The men of the boarding parties were clustered in groups forward and aft and around the closed passageways into the interior of the ship, waiting for the next order.

The noise and confusion which had followed the sentry's bold shot had awakened the attention of the people of the town. Lights twinkled on the ramparts of the fort, and the long roll of a drum could be heard coming faintly up the harbor against the wind. Lord Carlingford had just entered his boat to board the ship. There was not a moment to lose.

"Hornigold, go forward with your men to the forecabin. Velsers, come you hither with yours for the after guard. Teach, to the fore; Raveneau, to the main; and Rock, to the mizzenmast. Loose sail. Lively now. We must get out of this before the fort's awake," cried Morgan.

Instantly the shrouds were covered with nimble forms making their way aloft where the wide yard-arms stretched far over the sea. The men were in good spirits. The capture of the ship had been so easy; there had been only the anchor watch and the sentry on deck to deal with, and they had been murdered unsuspecting, although the cabin sentry had killed one of the attacking party and wounded another before he went down. They jumped with alacrity, therefore, to obey their captain's commands. As the ponderous sheets of canvas fell from the yards, the men lay down from aloft, and sheets and halyards were manned, the cable that moored the vessel to the anchor was cut, the ship swung to starboard, the yards were braced in, and she began to slip through the water toward the narrow mouth of the harbor. There were other war vessels in the harbor, but they were all dismantled and laid up in ordinary, so the buccaneers had no pursuit to fear.

The guns of the fort commanded the harbor mouth, and under ordinary circumstances would have made it impossible for a ship to enter or leave without permission. The mouth was narrow and dangerous, but the best pilot in the West Indies stood forward leaning over the knightheads, conning the ship. Raveneau and Velsers, than whom no better seamen ever held a spoke, by Morgan's orders were stationed at the wheel to steer the frigate. Rock and Teach distributed the best of the men among the guns of the spar-deck battery on the port side. As was usual, the guns were already charged. There were no loggerheads available, no matches with which to fire them, but Morgan instructed those who seemed to have some skill in gunnery, whom he placed in temporary charge of the cannon, how to fire them by snapping their pistols at the touch-holes, which were primed from a powder horn that had been brought by the pirates.

The land breeze was fresh and strong, and the *Mary Rose* vindicated her claim to be considered a fast sailer. She fairly ripped down the harbor, threading her way through the channel under Hornigold's nice pilotage until she came near to the narrow entrance. By Morgan's orders each man remained motionless at the place where he had been stationed, and the ship, so far as human noise was concerned, was as still as death. Even the soldiers below, finding no attention paid to their cries, had subsided into comparative quiet. The silence was broken only by the creaking of cordage, the dashing of water against the bows, and the groaning of the timbers. Ever and anon Hornigold's deep voice, crying "Larboard" or "Starboard" as the case might be, rolled along the deck to the watchful men gripping the wheel. Suddenly the old buccaneer cried out sharply:

"There's a boat right ahead, sir."

"Run her down!" answered Morgan instantly.

"Ay, ay! Starboard! Starboard again! Let her go off another half-point. Steady! Very well dyce. Now! Meet her! Meet her!"

The ship swept around slightly and rushed directly at the boat. It was the boat of the Governor. Instantly wild cries arose from the men on the thwarts. They were stopped by a stern voice.

"Ahoy, the *Mary Rose*!"

Silence.

"Ahoy, the frigate! What are you doing? Where is Admiral Kempthorne?"

At that instant the soldiers beneath the hatches suddenly resumed their commotion, thus apprising the men in the boat that something was sadly wrong.

"Larboard your helm!" cried a voice from the boat, "or you'll be on us. Who's in command? What are you about?"

"Sir Harry Morgan!" shouted a voice out of the darkness. "And we mean to run you down."

"Back water, for God's sake! Stern, all!" cried Lord Carlingford to the paralyzed rowers; but before they could move the looming bow of the frigate was upon them. Carlingford had risen in his boat before the collision, and with dauntless courage he shook his bared sword in the darkness toward the ship.

"The King will triumph!" he cried.

"You can go to hell!" shouted Morgan, "with Hawxherst and Bradley and Kempthorne and all who oppose me."

A terrible, smashing crash cut short his words, and, amid the ripping, tearing sound of the parting timbers of the overridden boat, and shouts, cries, and appeals for mercy, the *Mary Rose* swept on. One or two beneath her forefoot leaped frantically at the bobstays, but they were driven from their holds by savage pike thrusts from Hornigold's men.

A wild yell of elation broke from the pirates. They were completely possessed by their success now, but Morgan stopped the noise in an instant.

"Silence!" roared the captain. "We are not yet free. Back to your stations! Stand by the larboard battery!"

At that time the entrance to the harbor was very narrow, and the channel swept close under the Port Royal shore. Everybody in the town knew that something had happened on the frigate. The garrison of the fort was out and the guns were loaded and bore fair upon the channel. Softly, for they were within earshot distance of the fort, Morgan passed the word to train the guns of the battery on the parapet of the fort. He also told off all the men with small arms to line the side, with instructions for them to fire at the port-holes of the fort as they passed, and he charged every one, under pain of death, to keep all fast until he gave the word. Hornigold bent all his mind to getting the ship safely out of the harbor. Two or three reliable men were stationed in the gangway, whose sole business it was to repeat his commands without fail during the confusion, no matter what happened. They were right in the entrance now, and coming opposite the fort. The men below were still keeping up a great noise, but a hail which came across the water from the rampart was entirely audible, the distance not being more than half pistol shot.

"Hello, the *Mary Rose*! Hello, the frigate!"

"Ay, ay! What is it?"

"Where are you going? Where's Lord Carlingford?"

There was no answer. The rapidly moving ship was fairly abreast the fort now. In thirty seconds she would be beyond it.

"We have killed the Governor and Kempthorne, and this is the ship of Sir Henry Morgan, bound for the Spanish Main on a buccaneering cruise. Fire!"

A perfect hail of shot at point blank range belched forth from the twenty-four guns of the larboard battery of the onrushing ship. In the surprise and confusion caused by this murderous

discharge at short range, the frigate slipped by, and although every gun in the fort, whether it bore or not, was finally discharged by the infuriated soldiery, no serious damage was done to the ship. Here and there a man fell. The starboard main topsail sheet was cut, a few ropes parted, but that was all. Pouring a perfect hail of musketry and pistol fire upon the surprised garrison, which did execution, the frigate slipped through the channel. Before the cannon could be reloaded they were out of range. There before them lay the open sea, bounded to the southward by the rich and unprotected cities of the Spanish Main.

"We're out of the harbor, sir," cried Hornigold, coming aft to where Morgan stood triumphant on the poop.

"That's well!" said the commander. "Secure the guns and muster the crew. We'll divide into watches and bear away to the southward."

"Long live Sir Henry Morgan, King of the Buccaneers!" cried a voice out of the darkness, and amid a tremendous roar of cheers the vessel swept away, leaving the lights of Port Royal twinkling faintly in the distance far behind them.

BOOK II

THE CRUISE OF THE BUCCANEERS AND WHAT BEFEL THEM ON THE SEAS

CHAPTER V

HOW THE "MARY ROSE" OVERHAULED THREE SPANISH TREASURE SHIPS

Ten days after her departure from Port Royal the *Mary Rose* was tumbling southward before a gentle breeze through the blue and languid seas. Much had happened in the interval. In the first place, Morgan had organized and drilled the ship's crew relentlessly. With the aid of the five principal adventurers, whom he had constituted his lieutenants, he had brought the motley crowd which he had shipped into a state of comparative efficiency and of entire subjection to his iron will. Years of quasi-respectability, of financial position, of autocratic power as Vice-Governor had modified the ideas of the old buccaneer, and the co-operative principle which had been the mainspring of action as well as tie which produced unity among the brethren-of-the-coast had ceased to be regarded, so far as he was concerned. He took care, however, to be upon fairly amicable terms with the officers in command and the veterans, though he treated the rest of the riff-raff like the dogs they were. They murmured and raged but did not revolt, although it was quite possible that if he pushed them too far, and they found a leader, they might make trouble.

In accordance with Hornigold's advice, after deliberation between Morgan and the leaders, the *Mary Rose* had first run up to La Vaca Island, south of Hispaniola, and the number of original marauders had been increased by fifty volunteers, all those, indeed, who could be reached, from the small pirates who made that delectable spot their rendezvous. In addition to those, the crew had also been reënforced largely from those of the unpaid and discontented seamen and soldiers of the frigate who had happened to be under hatches the night of the capture. Presented with the choice of instant death or adherence to the band, most of them had accepted the latter alternative, although, to their great credit be it said, not until one or two of the loyal veterans, who had hotly refused to have anything to do with their ruffianly captors, had been forced to walk the plank as an example to the rest should they prove recalcitrant. Partly through terror, partly through discontent, partly on account of promises of the great reward awaiting them, speciously urged by Morgan himself, for he could talk as well as he could fight, and, most of all, because even at that date it was considered a meritorious act to attack a Spaniard or a Papist under any circumstances or conditions, especially by persons as ignorant as the class in question, some seventy cast in their lot with the rest.

Among the two hundred and twenty members of the heterogeneous crew so constituted, were to be found natives of almost every race under the sun, even including one or two Spanish renegados, and it would be safe to say that the lowest and meanest representatives of the several races were assembled on that very ship. The officers and men who had been recruited from Isla La Vaca, as well as the older original members of the crew of the *Mary Rose*, together with a select few of the remainder, were men of approved courage. The officers, indeed, bore reputations for hardihood and daring not to be surpassed. Most of the rest, however, were arrant cowards. As a body the band could not compare, except in leadership, with the former bands of buccaneers who had made themselves and their names a terror to Latin civilization in the New World.

Morgan himself, however, almost made up for all deficiencies. Age had not quenched his ardor, diminished his courage, or deprived him of that magnetic quality which had made him an unquestioned leader of men. His eye was as keen, his hand as steady, his soul as reckless, and his skill as high as when he had led the greatest buccaneer fleet that had ever assembled, on the famous Panama expedition. Everybody on the ship hated him except young Teach and the faithful Black Dog; the old buccaneers because he had betrayed them, the soldiers and sailors of the crew because he had captured their ship and forced them to become his allies, the mean and lowly body of rascals because he kept them ruthlessly under hand. But they all feared him as much as they hated him and they admired him as much as they feared him.

So far as he was concerned discipline was absolute. He still seemed to fancy himself the Vice-Governor and the representative of that King against whom he had taken up arms. He demanded to be treated accordingly. No admiral of the fleet was ever served more promptly and respectfully than he. Even his nearest associates were treated with a certain haughtiness, which they bitterly resented and which they would have called in question had the situation been other than it was. Truth to tell, influenced by Hornigold, they had embarked upon a mad enterprise, and they needed Morgan to bring it to a successful conclusion. Without him the slender coherence which already existed would fail, and anarchy would be the state upon the ship. There would be nothing left to them but to scatter if they could make an unheeded landing at some convenient place, or be captured, if they could not, with a certainty of being hung forthwith. So long as they remained together, it was certain that Morgan would lead them on some successful enterprise and they might get some reward for their risks and crimes. In his safety lay their safety.

The buccaneer was entirely aware of this, and therefore counted freely upon the backing of the veterans among the officers and crew. He would take care of the rest.

The ship, however, was a floating colony of suspicion, treachery, and hatred. Morgan himself never appeared without being loaded with weapons, not for bravado but for use should occasion rise, and his back was always protected by the silent and gigantic maroon, whom the sailors, catching the title from those who had known him of old, referred to with malignant hatred as "Black Dog." That was a name, indeed, which the taciturn half-breed rather rejoiced in than resented. Morgan had been able to awaken love in no hearts except those of young Teach, whose feeling was admiration rather than affection, and this half-breed maroon. Whether it was from his black African mother or from his fierce red Carib father he inherited the quality of devotion was not apparent. Devoted he had been and devoted he remained.

Close association in the narrow confines of the ship with the man who had, as he believed, wronged him, had but intensified Hornigold's hatred. The One-Eyed found it difficult to dissemble, and took refuge in a reticence which was foreign to his original frank and open character. Morgan half suspected the state of affairs in his old boatswain's moiled and evil soul, and he watched him on account of it more closely than the others, but with no great disquiet in his heart. Truth to tell, the old pirate was never so happy as in the midst of dangers, imminent and threatening, which would have broken the spirit of a less resolute man. There was one among the officers he was sure of and upon whom he could depend in an emergency, and that was young Teach. He had flattered him by unusual marks of kindness, and alone among the officers this fellow did not seem to cherish the rancor and suspicion of the others. He was too young to have experienced a betrayal as had the rest; this was his first venture in actual piracy and he found it marvelously pleasant.

The officers, too, were all suspicious of one another. As each one nursed his own private designs he suspected the others of doing likewise – and with reason. But there was as yet little outward friction among them. Raveneau, for instance, was most scrupulously polite to the captain and his associates. Velsers was too stupid in his cups – and he was generally in them – to do more than growl, and the Brazilian had all the capacities of his race for subtle concealment.

Although the necessary orders for working the ship were obeyed and Morgan personally imposed implicit obedience and respect for his commands, no duties other than those required were performed by the men. During the day when not at work or at drill, they drank, smoked, gambled, and fought at pleasure, although, as the captain mercilessly exercised them during long hours at the great guns and with small arms, they did not have any too much leisure for play. During the night they kept watch and watch, of course, but in it all they took no care of the ship, and filth and dirt abounded. If they had anticipated a long cruise things would necessarily have been different, but as they had gone far to the southward now, and might make a landfall at any moment there was no necessity for bothering about mere cleanliness, which, as it is supposed to be next to godliness, was naturally far removed from this band of cut-throats. Morgan had not communicated his ultimate purposes to his men as yet, but as he was the only navigator on the ship he was, perforce, allowed to have his own way.

Breakfast had been served – a meagre breakfast it was, too, for all hands were on short allowance of everything but spirits, on account of the unprovided state of the ship. Fortunately for their contentment, there was plenty of rum on board. The men were congregated forward on the forecastle or in the waist, wrangling and arguing as usual. The officers gathered on the quarter-deck, and Morgan paced the high raised poop alone, overlooking them, when the lookout suddenly reported three sail in sight. The half-drunken sailor who had been sent aloft at daybreak had kept negligent watch, for almost as soon as he had made his report the ships were observed from the deck of the frigate.

The *Mary Rose* had the wind on her quarter, her best point of sailing, and she was covered with canvas from her trucks to her decks, from her spritsail yard to her huge mizzen crossjack, a lateen sail. The wind was light, but she was making rapid progress toward the approaching strangers, who, with their larboard tacks aboard, were beating up toward the English.

Attended by the maroon, Morgan, pistol in hand, went forward to the forecastle, kicking his way clear through the sullen, black-browed mass of sailors. He ran a short distance up the weather fore-shrouds and took a long look at the strangers. They all flew the yellow flag of Spain. One was a huge galleon, the other two smaller ships, though larger in each instance than the *Mary Rose*, and all heavily armed.

One of the plate ships from Porto Bello was due in this latitude about this time, and Morgan instantly surmised that the galleon was she, and that the two others were Spanish frigates to give her safe convoy across the ocean. Spain was at peace with all the world at that time, and the two frigates would have been ample to ward off the attack of any of the small piratical craft which had succeeded the buccaneer ships of the Caribbean. The Spaniards had no idea that such a vulture as Morgan was afloat; therefore, although they had sighted the *Mary Rose* long before she had seen them because they kept better watch, they came on fearlessly and without hesitation. It was evident to the experienced officers among them that the vessel was an English frigate, and as England was a country with which there was profound peace at the time they apprehended nothing.

The position of the approaching ships with reference to one another was somewhat peculiar. The first and smallest frigate was perhaps half a mile ahead of her consorts, who were sailing side by side, a cable's length apart. Morgan at once determined to attack them. He knew that he possessed the handiest ship, and he believed that he had discovered a way to master the other three. The two frigates were the most dangerous antagonists. If he could dispose of them the galleon would be at his mercy. He did not hesitate to encounter such odds, and even in the minds of the craven part of the crew one English ship was thought to be good for any three Spaniards that ever floated.

The interest of the crew had been excited by the approaching strangers, which were rapidly drawing nearer. They ceased their arguments and strife, therefore, and crowded forward, looking alternately from the foreign ships to their own leader, lightly poised on the sheer-poles scanning the enemy. There were plenty of men of sufficient experience among them to pronounce them Spanish

ships immediately, and they therefore anticipated that work lay before them that morning. Presently Morgan sprang down upon the forecastle and faced his men.

"Lads," he said, "those are Spanish ships."

"Ay, ay, sir," came from one another as he paused a moment to let the significance of his announcement sink in.

"And," he continued, raising his voice so that it was audible throughout the ship, "the great one will be one of the plate ships homeward bound – but she'll never get there – from Porto Bello!"

A perfect yell of delight drowned his further remarks. The men shrieked and shouted and hurrahed at the joyous announcement, as if all they had to do was to go aboard and take the ships. When the hullabaloo had subsided, Morgan continued:

"I'm glad to see you take it so bravely, for while there is treasure enough under her hatches to make us all rich, yet we'll not get it without a fight, for yonder are two heavily armed frigates. We'll have to dispose of them before we get at the galleon. But, hearts of oak, I never saw the buccaneer who wasn't worth three or a dozen of the Dons, and with a stout ship like this one under my feet and a band of brave hearts like you I wouldn't hesitate to tackle the whole Spanish navy. It means a little fighting, but think of the prize!" he cried, playing skilfully upon the cupidity of his men. "Some of us will lose the number of our messes, perhaps, before nightfall; but," he continued, making a most singular and effective appeal, "there will be more to divide for each man that is left alive. Are you with me?"

"To the death!" cried young Teach, who had come forward and mingled with the crowd, lifting a naked cutlass as he spoke. His cry was taken up and repeated, first by one and then another until the whole body was yelling frantically to be given a chance to fight the Spanish ships.

"That's well," said Morgan grimly. "Master Teach, here, will command forward on the fo'c'sl. Raveneau and Velsers shall attend to the batteries in the waist. I appoint you, Hornigold, to look after the movements of the ship. See that the best hands are at the wheel and have sail trimmers ready. My Portuguese friend, you may look to the after guns. Now to your stations. Cast loose and provide! Man the larboard battery! See every thing is ready, but hold your fire and keep silence under pain of death! Yon frigate over there, we'll strike first. She'll be unprepared and unsuspecting. One good blow ought to dispose of her."

As he spoke, the men hurried to their stations. There was no lack of skill on the frigate, and now was seen the value of Morgan's constant drilling. The cannon of the ship were cast loose and loaded, loggerheads and matches lighted, small arms distributed and primed, pikes were served out, cutlasses loosened in their sheaths, and such as had armor, still worn in greater or less degree even in that day, donned it, and the ship was full of busy preparation.

"We've no flag flying, sir," said Hornigold as the men settled down to their stations, grim and ready.

"Ay," said Morgan, "show the English flag. We'll make as much trouble for his gracious majesty, King James, as possible."

In a short time the glorious colors of England, which had never waved over so despicable a crew before, rippled out in the freshening breeze. As they were rapidly approaching the Spanish ship now, Morgan descended from the poop-deck to make a personal inspection of his frigate before beginning action. He found everything to his taste, and passed along the lines of silent men congregated around the guns with words of stern appreciation.

The crews of the guns had been constituted with great care. The gun captains in each instance were tried and proved seamen, men as fearless as they were capable. The weaker and the more wretched portion of the band had been so placed that opportunity for showing cowardice would be greatly circumscribed, and the stern command of the captain that the officers and petty officers should instantly shoot any man who flinched from duty was not without effect. He did not hesitate to remind the men, either, that they fought with halters around their necks. As even the craven becomes dangerous when pushed to the wall, he felt they would give a good account of themselves.

"Hornigold," said Morgan, as he stepped up on the quarter-deck again, "I want the frigate to pass as close to windward of that Spanish ship as you can bring her without touching. Let her not suspect our desire, but whirl into her as we get abreast. Don't fall foul of her as you value your life!"

"Ay, ay, sir," answered that veteran, squinting forward along the jib-boom with his one eye as if measuring the distance, "I'll bring her close enough for you to leap aboard and yet never touch a rope yarn on her."

He spoke with the consciousness and pride of his skill.

"Now, lads," cried Morgan, "have everything ready, and when I give the word pour it in on yonder ship. I want to settle her with one broadside. It'll be touch and go, for we've got to dispose of her in an instant. Stand by for the word! Now, lie down, all, behind the bulwarks and rails. Let us make no show of force as we come up. We must not arouse suspicion."

The two ships, the *Mary Rose* going free, the Spanish frigate close hauled on the port tack, were now within hailing distance. As they approached each other the buccaneer could see that the other ship was crowded with men. Among her people the flash of sunlight upon iron helmets denoted that she carried a company of soldiers. The Spaniards were entirely unsuspecting. The men had not gone to their quarters, the guns were still secured; in short, save for the military trappings of the soldiers on board and the tomponed muzzles of her cannon, she was in appearance as peaceful a vessel as sailed the seas.

The two ships were near enough now to make conversation possible, and the *Mary Rose* was hailed by a tall, richly dressed officer in glistening breastplate and polished steel cap, standing on the forecastle of the other ship.

"What ship is that?" he cried in broken English.

"This is the frigate *Mary Rose*." The usual answer to such a hail would have been: "This is His Britannic Majesty's frigate *Mary Rose*," but the Spaniards suspected nothing as Morgan continued, "carrying Sir Henry Morgan, sometime Vice-Governor of the Island of Jamaica."

"I have the honor to wish the Vice-Governor a very good morning," answered the Spaniard, courteously waving his hand in salutation.

"Now, Hornigold, now!" said Morgan in a fierce whisper.

The old boatswain sprang himself to the wheel. With his powerful hands he revolved it quickly until it was hard up. The frigate answered it instantly. She swung away toward the Spaniard to leeward of her with a suddenness that surprised even her steersman.

"And I salute the Vice-Governor," continued the Spanish captain, just as the English ship swept down upon him; and then he cried in sudden alarm and excitement:

"Have a care, señor! What mean you? You will be aboard of us! Hard up with the helm!"

As soon as the *Mary Rose* had begun to fall off, ay, even before her motion had been perceptible, Hornigold had reversed the helm.

"Flow the head sheets there," he cried, shoving the wheel over spoke by spoke with all the force of his arms. "Flatten in aft a little, here! Steady! Very well dyce. We're right abreast now, Captain," he said.

Almost as quickly as she had fallen off the nimble frigate, beautifully handled, came to the wind again. She was now almost in touch with the other ship. Hornigold's seamanship and skill had been magnificent. He had done all that was asked of him and all that he had promised.

"Ay, ay," answered Morgan in triumphant commendation. "Handsomely done. I could leap aboard!"

The Spanish ship was filled with confusion. The captain, with his face black with rage, stood on the forecastle shaking his fist.

"This is outrageous, sir!" he shouted. "You have nearly run us down! What do you want?"

"I want to return your salute," answered Morgan suavely. "Up, lads!" he cried. As the men sprang to their feet, he roared out fiercely: "Stand by! Fire! Pour it into them!"

The *Mary Rose* was almost in contact with the Spanish ship, when a perfect tornado of fire burst from her side. Every gun in her broadside, and she was a forty-eight gun frigate, was discharged point-blank at the astonished enemy. Not waiting to reload the guns, the crew seized the small arms ready charged to hand, and as they slowly swept by poured a withering fire upon the Spaniard's crowded decks. Out of the flame and smoke the *Mary Rose* burst upon the astounded eyes of the officers and men of the two remaining ships. The first frigate was a wreck on the water. Some of the pirate guns had been depressed, great holes had been opened by the shot, the masts had been carried away, and the devoted ship was sinking, her decks covered with dead and dying.

"We wish you the compliments of the morning, señor," roared Morgan, facing aft toward the battered and ruined frigate. "How like you our salute?"

But the captain of the Spanish vessel lay dead upon his bloody deck, and if any answered the jeering taunt it was drowned by the laughter and cheering of the English crew. They had eliminated the first ship from the game. They had diminished their enemies by a third, and full of confidence they swept down upon the other two.

CHAPTER VI

IN WHICH IS RELATED THE STRANGE EXPEDIENT OF THE CAPTAIN AND HOW THEY TOOK THE GREAT GALLEON

Although they could not comprehend the reason for the vicious attack upon their consort by a ship of a supposedly friendly power, it was evident to the Spaniards in the two remaining ships that the English frigate was approaching them with the most sinister and malevolent purpose. One glance at the sinking remains of their ruined and battered consort established that fact in the most obtuse mind. Consequently the exultant men on the *Mary Rose* could hear the shrill notes of the trumpeters on the two other ships calling their men to arms.

With a confidence born of success, however, Morgan resolutely bore down upon the enemy. Even the dastards in his crew had been excited by the ease and success of the first treacherous blow and plucked up courage, believing that their captain's invincible skill, address, and seamanship would carry them safely through the next encounter.

The Spanish had little warning after all, for the breeze was rapidly freshening, and in what seemed an incredibly short time the English frigate was close at hand. Though they worked with a desperate energy they had not entirely completed those preparations required by the shock of battle. As usual, Morgan was determined to lose no time. If he could have thrown his vessel upon them out of the fire and smoke of the first broadside he would have gained the victory with scarcely less difficulty than he had seized the first advantage, but that was not to be, and it was with considerable anxiety that he surveyed the crowded decks of the two remaining ships.

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.