



UNIVERSITÄTS-
BIBLIOTHEK
PADERBORN

**Pirates own book, or authentic narratives of the lives,
exploits, and executions of the most celebrated sea
robbers**

ELLS, CHARLES

New York [u.a.], 1842

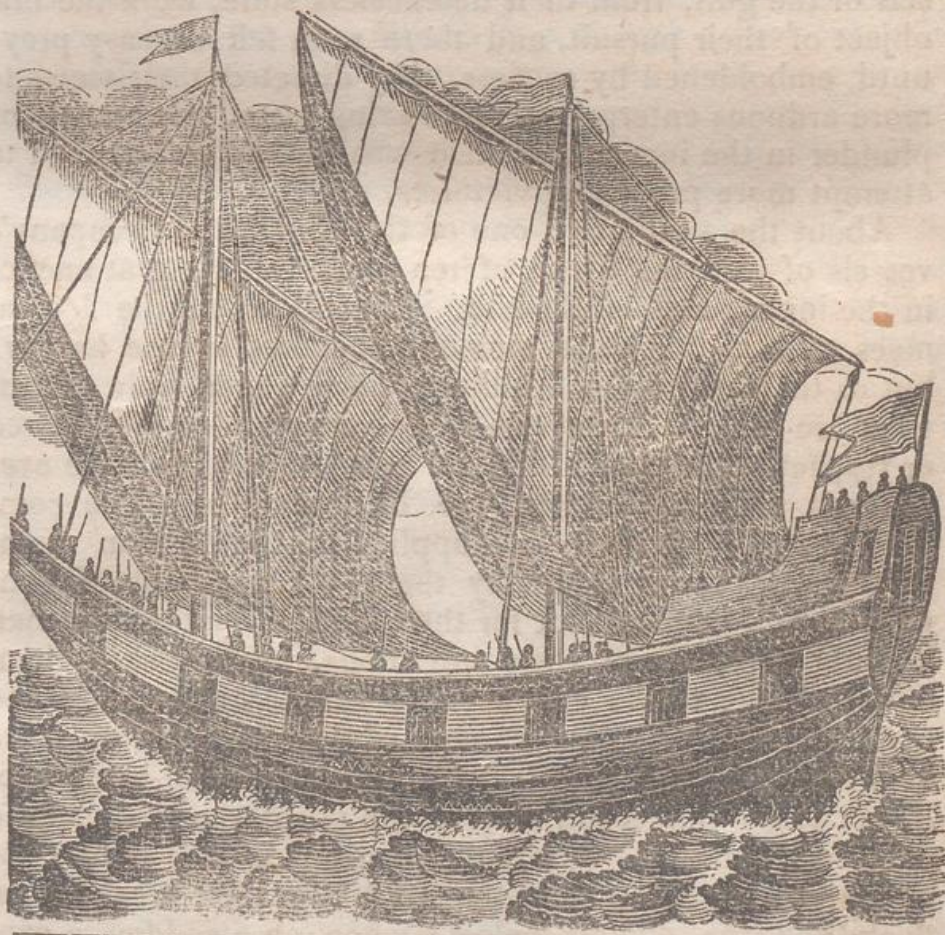
History of the Joassamee Pirates.

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-61163](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-61163)

THE REMARKABLE HISTORY OF THE
JOASSAMEE PIRATES,

OF THE PERSIAN GULF.

Containing a description of their chief town, Ras El Khyma and an account of the capture of several European vessels, and the barbarous treatment of their crews.—With interesting details of the several expeditions sent against them, and their final submission to the troops of the English East India Company.



A Joassamee Dow in full chase.

THE line of coast from Cape Mussenndom to Bahrain, on the Arabian side of the Persian Gulf, had been from

time immemorial occupied by a tribe of Arabs called Joassamees. These, from local position, were all engaged in maritime pursuits. Some traded in their own small vessels to Bussorah, Bushire, Muscat, and even India; others annually fished in their own boats on the pearl banks of Bahrain; and a still greater number hired themselves out as sailors to navigate the coasting small craft of the Persian Gulf.

The Joassamees at length perceiving that their local position enabled them to reap a rich harvest by plundering vessels in passing this great highway of nations, commenced their piratical career. The small coasting vessels of the gulf, from their defenceless state, were the first object of their pursuit, and these soon fell an easy prey; until, emboldened by success, they directed their views to more arduous enterprises, and having tasted the sweets of plunder in the increase of their wealth, had determined to attempt more promising victories.

About the year 1797, one of the East India Company's vessels of war, the *Viper*, of ten guns, was lying at anchor in the inner roads of Bushire. Some dows of the Joassamees were at the same moment anchored in the harbor; but as their warfare had hitherto been waged only against what are called native vessels, and they had either feared or respected the British flag, no hostile measures were ever pursued against them by the British ships. The commanders of these dows had applied to the Persian agent of the East India Company there, for a supply of gunpowder and cannon shot for their cruise: and as this man had no suspicions of their intentions, he furnished them with an order to the commanding officer on board for the quantity required. The captain of the *Viper* was on shore at the time, in the agent's house, but the order being produced to the officer on board, the powder and shot were delivered, and the dows weighed and made sail. The crew of the *Viper* were at this moment taking their breakfast on deck, and the officers below; when on a sudden, a cannonading was opened on them by two of the dows, who attempted also to board.

The officers, leaping on deck, called the crew to quarters, and cutting their cable, got sail upon the ship, so as

to have the advantage of manœuvring. A regular engagement now took place between this small cruiser and four dows, all armed with great guns, and full of men. In the contest Lieut. Carruthers, the commanding officer, was once wounded by a ball in the loins; but after girding a handkerchief round his waist, he still kept the deck, till a ball entering his forehead, he fell. Mr. Salter, the midshipman on whom the command devolved, continued the fight with determined bravery, and after a stout resistance, beat them off, chased them some distance out to sea, and subsequently regained the anchorage in safety.

Several years elapsed before the wounds of the first defeat were sufficiently healed to induce a second attempt on vessels under the British flag, though a constant state of warfare was still kept up against the small craft of the gulf. In 1804, the East India Company's cruiser, *Fly*, was taken by a French privateer, off the Island of Kenn, in the Persian Gulf; but before the enemy boarded her, she ran into shoal water, near that island, and sunk the government dispatches, and some treasure with which they were charged, in about two and a half fathoms of water, taking marks for the recovery of them, if possible, at some future period. The passengers and crew were taken to Bushire where they were set at liberty, and having purchased a country dow by subscription, they fitted her out and commenced their voyage down the gulf, bound for Bombay. On their passage down, as they thought it would be practicable to recover the government packet and treasure sunk off Kenn, they repaired to that island, and were successful, after much exertion, in recovering the former, which being in their estimation of the first importance, as the dispatches were from England to Bombay, they sailed with them on their way thither, without loss of time.

Near the mouth of the gulf, they were captured by a fleet of Joassamee boats, after some resistance, in which several were wounded and taken into their chief port at Ras-el-Khyma. Here they were detained in hope of ransom, and during their stay were shown to the people of the town as curiosities, no similar beings having been before seen there within the memory of man. The Joassamee ladies were so minute in their enquiries, indeed, that they

were not satisfied without determining in what respect an uncircumcised infidel differed from a true believer.

When these unfortunate Englishmen had remained for several months in the possession of the Arabs, and no hope of their ransom appeared, it was determined to put them to death, and thus rid themselves of unprofitable enemies. An anxiety to preserve life, however, induced the suggestion, on their parts, of a plan for the temporary prolongation of it, at least. With this view they communicated to the chief of the pirates the fact of their having sunk a quantity of treasure near the island of Kenn, and of their knowing the marks of the spot, by the bearings of objects on shore, with sufficient accuracy to recover it, if furnished with good divers. They offered, therefore, to purchase their own liberty, by a recovery of this money for their captors; and on the fulfillment of their engagement it was solemnly promised to be granted to them.

They soon sailed for the spot, accompanied by divers accustomed to that occupation on the pearl banks of Bahrain; and, on their anchoring at the precise points of bearing taken, they commenced their labors. The first divers who went down were so successful, that all the crew followed in their turns, so that the vessel was at one time almost entirely abandoned at anchor. As the men, too, were all so busily occupied in their golden harvest, the moment appeared favorable for escape; and the still captive Englishmen were already at their stations to overpower the few on board, cut the cable, and make sail. Their motions were either seen or suspected, as the divers repaired on board in haste, and the scheme was thus frustrated. They were now given their liberty as promised, by being landed on the island of Kenn, where, however, no means offered for their immediate escape. The pirates, having at the same time landed themselves on the island, commenced a general massacre of the inhabitants, in which their released prisoners, fearing they might be included, fled for shelter to clefts and hiding places in the rocks. During their refuge here, they lived on such food as chance threw in their way; going out under cover of the night to steal a goat and drag it to their haunts. When the pirates had at length completed their work of blood, and either

murdered or driven off every former inhabitant of the island, they quitted it themselves, with the treasure which they had thus collected from the sea and shore. The Englishmen now ventured to come out from their hiding places, and to think of devising some means of escape. Their good fortune in a moment of despair, threw them on the wreck of a boat, near the beach, which was still capable of repair. In searching about the now deserted town, other materials were found, which were of use to them, and sufficient plank and logs of wood for the construction of a raft. These were both completed in a few days, and the party embarked on them in two divisions, to effect a passage to the Persian shore. One of these rafts was lost in the attempt, and all on board her perished; while the raft, with the remainder of the party reached safe.

Having gained the main land they now set out on foot towards Bushire, following the line of the coast for the sake of the villages and water. In this they are said to have suffered incredible hardships and privations of every kind. No one knew the language of the country perfectly, and the roads and places of refreshment still less; they were in general destitute of clothes and money, and constantly subject to plunder and imposition, poor as they were. Their food was therefore often scanty, and always of the worst kind; and they had neither shelter from the burning sun of the day, nor from the chilling dews of night.

The Indian sailors, sipakees, and servants, of whom a few were still remaining when they set out, had all dropped off by turns; and even Europeans had been abandoned on the road, in the most affecting way, taking a last adieu of their comrades, who had little else to expect but soon to follow their fate. One instance is mentioned of their having left one who could march no further, at the distance of only a mile from a village; and on returning to the spot on the morrow, to bring him in, nothing was found but his mangled bones, as he had been devoured in the night by jackalls. The packet being light was still, however, carried by turns, and preserved through all obstacles and difficulties; and with it they reached at length the island of Busheap, to which they crossed over

in a boat from the main. Here they were detained by the Sheik, but at length he provided them with a boat for the conveyance of themselves and dispatches to Bushire. From this place they proceeded to Bombay, but of all the company only two survived. A Mr. Jowl, an officer of a merchant ship, and an English sailor named Penmel together with the bag of letters and dispatches.

In the following year, two English brigs, the Shannon, Capt. Babcock, and the Trimmer, Capt. Cummings, were on their voyage from Bombay to Bussorah. These were both attacked, near the Islands of Polior and Kenn, by several boats, and after a slight resistance on the part of the Shannon only, were taken possession of, and a part of the crew of each, cruelly put to the sword. Capt. Babcock, having been seen by one of the Arabs to discharge a musket during the contest, was taken by them on shore; and after a consultation on his fate, it was determined that he should forfeit the arm by which this act of resistance was committed. It was accordingly severed from his body by one stroke of a sabre, and no steps were taken either to bind up the wound, or to prevent his bleeding to death. The captain, himself, had yet sufficient presence of mind left, however, to think of his own safety, and there being near him some clarified butter, he procured this to be heated, and while yet warm, thrust the bleeding stump of his arm into it. It had the effect of lessening the effusion of blood, and ultimately of saving a life that would otherwise most probably have been lost. The crew were then all made prisoners, and taken to a port of Arabia, from whence they gradually dispersed and escaped. The vessels themselves were additionally armed, one of them mounting twenty guns, manned with Arab crews, and sent from Ras-el-Khyma to cruise in the gulf, where they committed many piracies.

In the year 1808, the force of the Joassamees having gradually increased, and becoming flushed with the pride of victory, their insulting attacks on the British flag were more numerous and more desperate than ever. The first of these was on the ship *Minerva*, of Bombay, on her voyage to Bussorah. The attack was commenced by several boats, (for they never cruise singly,) and a spirited resis-

tance in a running fight was kept up at intervals for several days in succession. A favorable moment offered, however, for boarding; the ship was overpowered by numbers, and carried amidst a general massacre. The captain was said to have been cut up into separate pieces, and thrown overboard by fragments; the second mate and carpenter alone were spared, probably to make use of their services; and an Armenian lady, the wife of Lieut. Taylor, then at Bushire, was reserved perhaps for still greater sufferings. But was subsequently ransomed for a large sum.

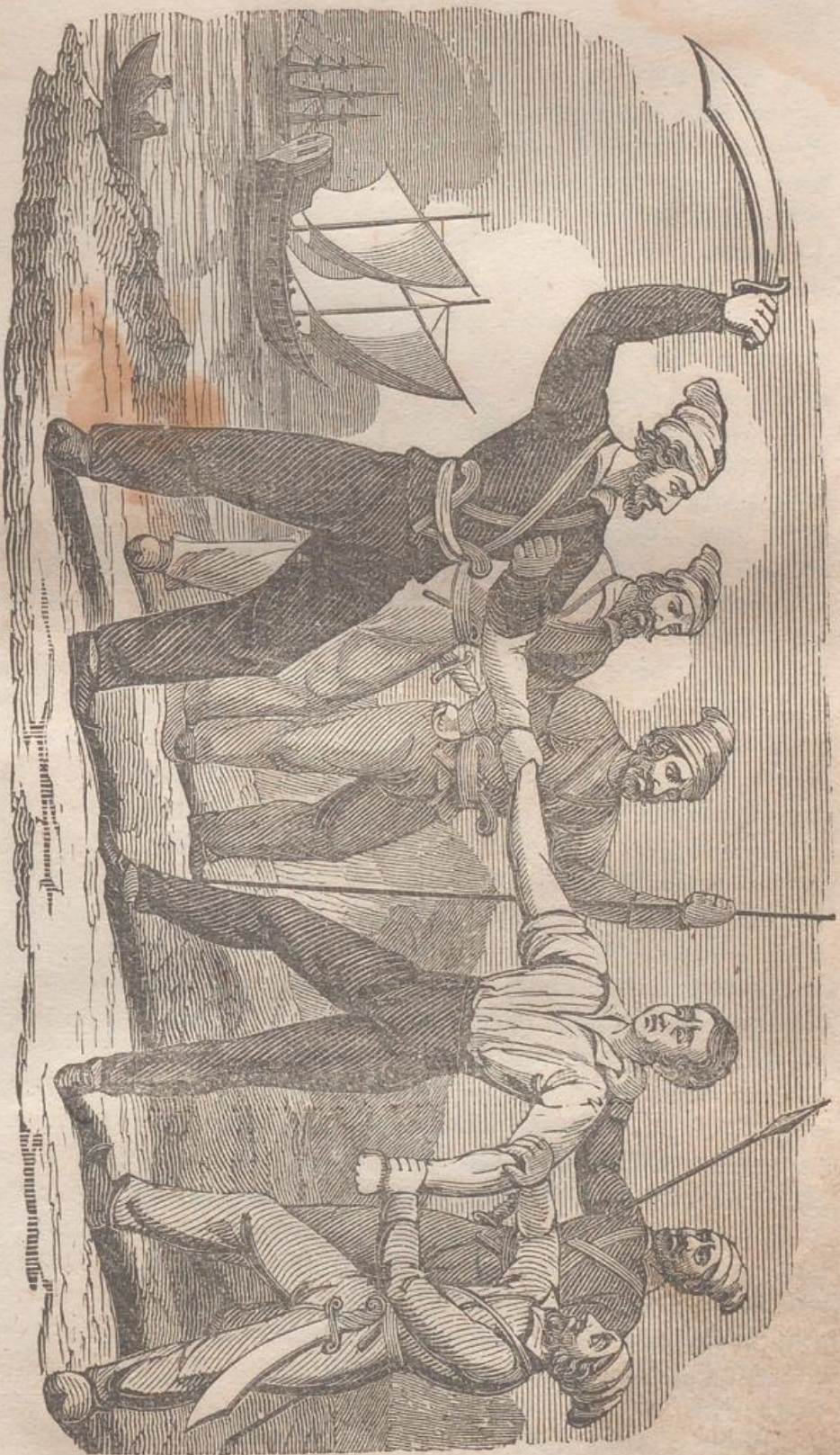
A few weeks after this, the Sylph, one of the East India Company's cruisers, of sixty tons and mounting eight guns, was accompanying the mission under Sir Harford Jones, from Bombay, to Persia; when being separated from the rest of the squadron, she was attacked in the gulf by a fleet of dows. These bore down with all the menacing attitude of hostility; but as the commander, Lieut. Graham had received orders from the Bombay government, not to open his fire on any of these vessels until he had been first fired on himself, the ship was hardly prepared for battle, and the colors were not even hoisted to apprise them to what nation she belonged. The dows approached, threw their long overhanging prows across the Sylph's beam, and pouring in a shower of stones on her deck, beat down and wounded almost every one who stood on it. They then boarded, and made the ship an easy prize, before more than a single shot had been fired, and in their usual way, put every one whom they found alive to the sword. Lieut. Graham fell, covered with wounds, down the fore hatchway of his own vessel, where he was dragged by some of the crew into a store room, in which they had secreted themselves, and barricaded the door with a crow-bar from within. The cruiser was thus completely in the possession of the enemy, who made sail on her, and were bearing her off in triumph to their own port, in company with their boats. Soon after, however, the commodore of the squadron in the Neried frigate hove in sight, and perceiving this vessel in company with the dows, judged her to be a prize to the pirates. She accordingly gave them all chase, and coming up with the

brig, the Arabs took to their boats and abandoned her. The chase was continued after the dows, but without success.



The Neried Frigate chasing a Fleet of Joassamee Dows.

These repeated aggressions at length opened the eyes of the East India Government, and an expedition was accordingly assembled at Bombay. The naval force consisted of La Chiffone, frigate, Capt. Wainwright, as commodore. The Caroline of thirty-eight guns; and eight of the East India Company's cruisers, namely, the Mornington, Ternate, Aurora, Prince of Wales, Ariel, Nautilus, Vestal and Fury, with four large transports, and the Stromboli bomb-ketch. The fleet sailed from Bombay in September, and after a long passage they reached Muscat, where it remained for many days to refresh and arrange their future plans; they sailed and soon reached Ras-el-



The Pirates striking off the arm of Capt. Babcock. p. 42.

... of the ... of Cape ... D. 413

Khyrna, the chief port of the pirates within the gulf. Here the squadron anchored abreast of the town, and the troops were landed under cover of the ships and boats. The inhabitants of the town assembled in crowds to repel the invaders; but the firm line, the regular volleys, and the steady charge of the troops at the point of the bayonet, overcame every obstacle, and multiplied the heaps of the slain. A general conflagration was then ordered, and a general plunder to the troops was permitted. The town was set on fire in all parts, and about sixty sail of boats and dows, with the *Minerva*, a ship which they had taken, then lying in the roads were all burnt and destroyed.

The complete conquest of the place was thus effected with very trifling loss on the part of the besiegers, and some plunder collected; though it was thought that most of the treasure and valuables had been removed into the interior. This career of victory was suddenly damped by the report of the approach of a large body of troops from the interior, and although none of these were seen, this ideal reinforcement induced the besiegers to withdraw. The embarkation took place at daylight in the morning; and while the fleet remained at anchor during the whole of the day, parties were still seen assembling on the shore, displaying their colors, brandishing their spears, and firing muskets from all points; so that the conquest was scarcely as complete as could be wished, since no formal act of submission had yet been shown. The expedition now sailed to Linga, a small port of the Joassamees, and burnt it to the ground. The force had now become separated, the greater portion of the troops being sent to Muscat for supplies, or being deemed unnecessary, and some of the vessels sent on separate services of Blockading passages, &c. The remaining portion of the blockading squadron consisting of *La Chiffone*, frigate, and four of the cruisers, the *Mornington*, *Ternate*, *Nautilus*, and *Fury*, and two transports, with five hundred troops from Linga, then proceeded to Luft, another port of the Joassamees. As the channel here was narrow and difficult of approach, the ships were warped into their stations of anchorage, and a summons sent on shore, as the people had not here abandoned their town, but were found at their posts of defence,

in a large and strong castle with many batteries, redoubts, &c. The summons being treated with disdain, the troops were landed with Col. Smith at their head; and while forming on the beach a slight skirmish took place with such of the inhabitants of the town, as fled for shelter to the castle. The troops then advanced towards the fortress, which is described to have had walls fourteen feet thick, pierced with loop holes, and only one entrance through a small gate, well cased with iron bars and bolts, in the strongest manner. With a howitzer taken for the occasion, it was intended to have blown this gate open, and to have taken the place by storm; but on reaching it while the ranks opened, and the men sought to surround the castle to seek for some other entrance at the same time, they were picked off so rapidly and unexpectedly from the loop holes above, that a general flight took place, the howitzer was abandoned, even before it had been fired, and both the officers and the troops sought shelter by lying down behind the ridges of sand and little hillocks immediately underneath the castle walls. An Irish officer, jumping up from his hiding place, and calling on some of his comrades to follow him in an attempt to rescue the howitzer, was killed in the enterprise. Such others as even raised their heads to look around them, were picked off by the musketry from above; and the whole of the troops lay therefore hidden in this way, until the darkness of the night favored their escape to the beach, where they embarked after sunset, the enemy having made no sally on them from the fort. A second summons was sent to the chief in the castle, threatening to bombard the town from a nearer anchorage if he did not submit, and no quarter afterwards shown. With the dawn of morning, all eyes were directed to the fortress, when, to the surprise of the whole squadron, a man was seen waving the British Union flag on the summit of its walls. It was lieutenant Hall, who commanded the *Fury* which was one of the vessels nearest the shore. During the night he had gone on shore alone, taking an union-jack in his hand, and advanced singly to the castle gate. The fortress had already been abandoned by the greater number of the inhabitants, but some few still remained there. These fled at the approach

of an individual supposing him to be the herald of those who were to follow. Be this as it may, the castle was entirely abandoned, and the British flag waved on its walls by this daring officer, to the surprise and admiration of all the fleet. The town and fortifications were then taken possession of. After sweeping round the bottom of the gulf, the expedition returned to Muscat.



The daring Intrepidity of Lieut. Hall.

On the sailing of the fleet from hence, the forces were augmented by a body of troops belonging to the Imaun of Muscat, destined to assist in the recovery of a place called Shenaz, on the coast, taken by the Joassamees. On their arrival at this place, a summons was sent, commanding the fort to surrender, which being refused, a bombard-

ment was opened from the ships and boats, but without producing much effect. On the following morning, the whole of the troops were landed, and a regular encampment formed on the shore, with sand batteries, and other necessary works for a siege. After several days bombardment, in which about four thousand shot and shells were discharged against the fortress, to which the people had fled for refuge after burning down the town, a breach was reported to be practicable, and the castle was accordingly stormed. The resistance still made was desperate; the Arabs fighting as long as they could wield the sword, and even thrusting their spears up through the fragments of towers, in whose ruins they remained irrecoverably buried. The loss in killed and wounded was upwards of a thousand men. Notwithstanding that the object of this expedition might be said to be incomplete, inasmuch as nothing less than a *total* extirpation of their race could secure the tranquillity of these seas, yet the effect produced by this expedition was such, as to make them reverence or dread the British flag for several years afterwards.

At length in 1815, their boats began to infest the entrance to the Red Sea; and in 1816, their numbers had so increased on that coast, that a squadron of them commanded by a chief called Ameer Ibrahim, captured within sight of Mocha, four vessels bound from Surat to that port, richly laden and navigating under the British flag, and the crews massacred.

A squadron consisting of His Majesty's ship *Challenger*, Captain Brydges, and the East India Company's cruisers, *Mercury*, *Ariel*, and *Vestal*, were despatched to the chief port of the Joassamees, *Ras-el-Khyma*. Mr. Buckingham the Great Oriental traveller, accompanied the expedition from *Bushire*. Upon their arrival at *Ras-el-Khyma*, a demand was made for the restoration of the four *Surat* vessels and their cargoes; or in lieu thereof twelve lacks of rupees. Also that the commander of the piratical squadron, Ameer Ibrahim, should be delivered up for punishment. The demand was made by letter, and answer being received, Captain Brydges determined to go on shore and have an interview with the Pirate Chieftain. Mr. Buckingham (says,) He requested me to accompany

him on shore as an interpreter. I readily assented. We quitted the ship together about 9 o'clock, and pulled straight to the shore, sounding all the way as we went, and gradually shoaling our water from six to two fathoms, within a quarter of a mile of the beach, where four large dows lay at anchor, ranged in a line, with their heads seaward, each of them mounting several pieces of cannon, and being full of men. On landing on the beach, we found its whole length guarded by a line of armed men, some bearing muskets, but the greater part armed with swords, shields, and spears; most of them were negroes, whom the Joassamees spare in their wars, looking on them rather as property and merchandize, than in the light of enemies. We were permitted to pass this line, and upon our communicating our wish to see the chief, we were conducted to the gate of the principal building, nearly in the centre of the town, and were met by the Pirate Chieftain attended by fifty armed men. I offered him the Mahommedan salutation of peace, which he returned without hesitation.

The chief, Hassan ben Rahma, whom we had seen, was a small man, apparently about forty years of age, with an expression of cunning in his looks, and something particularly sarcastic in his smile. He was dressed in the usual Arab garments, with a cashmeer shawl, turban, and a scarlet benish, of the Persian form, to distinguish him from his followers. These were habited in the plainest garments. One of his eyes had been wounded, but his other features were good, his teeth beautifully white and regular, and his complexion very dark.

The town of Ras-el-Khyma stands on a narrow tongue of sandy land, pointing to the northeastward, presenting its northwest edge to the open sea, and its south east one to a creek, which runs up within it to the southwestward, and affords a safe harbor for boats. There appeared to be no continued wall of defence around it, though round towers and portions of walls were seen in several parts, probably once connected in line, but not yet repaired since their destruction. The strongest points of defence appear to be in a fortress at the northeast angle, and a double round tower, near the centre of the town; in each

of which, guns are mounted; but all the other towers appear to afford only shelter for musketeers. The rest of the town is composed of ordinary buildings of unhewn stone, and huts of rushes and long grass, with narrow avenues winding between them. The present number of inhabitants may be computed at ten thousand at least. They are thought to have at present, (1816,) sixty large boats out from their own port, manned with crews of from eighty, to three hundred men each, and forty other boats that belong to other ports. Their force concentrated, would probably amount to at least one hundred boats and eight thousand fighting men. After several fruitless negotiations, the signal was now made to weigh, and stand closer in towards the town. It was then followed by the signal to engage the enemy. The squadron bore down nearly in line, under easy sail, and with the wind right aft, or on shore; the Mercury being on the starboard bow, the Challenger next in order, in the centre, the Vestal following in the same line, and the Ariel completing the division.

A large fleet of small boats was seen standing in from Cape Mussundum, at the same time; but these escaped by keeping closer along shore, and at length passing over the bar and getting into the back water behind the town. The squadron continued to stand on in a direct line towards the four anchored dows, gradually shoaling from the depth of our anchorage to two and a half fathoms, where stream anchors were dropped under foot, with springs on the cables, so that each vessel lay with her broadside to the shore. A fire was now opened by the whole squadron, directed to the four dows. These boats were full of men, brandishing their weapons in the air, their whole number exceeding, probably, six hundred. Some of the shot from the few long guns of the squadron reached the shore, and were buried in the sand; others fell across the bows and near the hulls of the dows to which they were directed; but the cannonades all fell short, as we were then fully a mile from the beach.

The Arab colors were displayed on all the forts; crowds of armed men were assembled on the beach, bearing large banners on poles, and dancing around them with their arms, as if rallying around a sacred standard, so that no

sign of submission or conquest was witnessed throughout. The Ariel continued to discharge about fifty shot after all the others had desisted, but with as little avail as before, and thus ended this wordy negotiation, and the bloodless battle to which it eventually led.

In 1818, these pirates grew so daring that they made an irruption into the Indian Ocean, and plundered vessels and towns on the islands and coasts. A fleet was sent against them, and intercepted them off Ashlo'a Island, proceeding to the westward in three divisions; and drove them back into the gulf. The Eden and Psyche fell in with two frankies, and these were so closely pursued that they were obliged to drop a small captured boat they had in tow. The Thetes one day kept in close chase of seventeen vessels, but they were enabled to get away owing to their superior sailing. The cruisers met with the Joassamees seventeen times and were constantly employed in hunting them from place to place.

At length, in 1819, they became such a scourge to commerce that a formidable expedition under the command of Major General Sir W. Grant Keir, sailed against them. It arrived before the chief town in December, and commenced operations. In his despatches Gen. Keir says—

I have the satisfaction to report the town of Ras-el-Khyma, after a resistance of six days, was taken possession of this morning by the force under my command.

On the 18th, after completing my arrangements at Muscat, the Liverpool sailed for the rendezvous at Kishme; on the 21st, we fell in with the fleet of the Persian Gulf and anchored off the island of Larrack on the 24th November.

As it appeared probable that a considerable period would elapse before the junction of the ships which were detained at Bombay, I conceived it would prove highly advantageous to avail myself of all the information that could be procured respecting the strength and resources of the pirates we had to deal with.

No time was lost in making the necessary preparations for landing, which was effected the following morning without opposition, at a spot which had been previously selected for that purpose, about two miles to the southward

of the town. The troops were formed across the isthmus connecting the peninsula on which the town is situated with the neighboring country, and the whole of the day was occupied in getting the tents on shore, to shelter the men from the rain, landing engineers, tools, sand bags, &c. and making arrangements preparatory to commencing our approaches the next day. On the morning of the 4th, our light troops were ordered in advance, supported by the pickets, to dislodge the enemy from a bank within nine hundred yards of the outer fort, which was expected to afford good cover for the men. The whole of the light companies of the force under Capt. Backhouse, moved forward, and drove the Arabs with great gallantry from a date grove, and over the bank close under the walls of the fort, followed by the pickets under Major Molesworth, who took post at the sand banks, whilst the European light troops were skirmishing in front. The enemy kept up a sharp fire of musketry and cannon; during these movements, Major Molesworth, a gallant officer was here killed. The troops kept their position during the day, and in the night effected a lodgement within three hundred yards of the southernmost tower, and erected a battery of four guns, together with a mortar battery.

The weather having become rather unfavorable for the disembarkation of the stores required for the siege, but this important object being effected on the morning of the 6th, we were enabled to open three eighteen pounders on the fort, a couple of howitzers, and six pounders were also placed in the battery on the right, which played on the defences of the towers and nearly silenced the enemy's fire, who, during the whole of our progress exhibited a considerable degree of resolution in withstanding, and ingenuity in counteracting our attacks, sallied out at 8 o'clock this evening along the whole front of our entrenchments, crept close up to the mortar battery without being perceived, and entered it over the parapet, after spearing the advanced sentries. The party which occupied it were obliged to retire, but being immediately reinforced charged the assailants, who were driven out of the battery with great loss. The enemy repeated his attacks towards morning but was vigorously repulsed. During the seventh

every exertion was made to land and bring up the remaining guns and mortars, which was accomplished during the night. They were immediately placed in the battery, together with two twenty-four pounders which were landed from the Liverpool, and in the morning the whole of the ordnance opened on the fort and fired with scarcely any intermission till sunset, when the breach on the curtain was reported nearly practicable and the towers almost untenable. Immediate arrangements were made for the assault, and the troops ordered to move down to the entrenchments by daylight the next morning. The party moved forward about 8 o'clock, and entered the fort through the breaches without firing a shot, and it soon appeared the enemy had evacuated the place. The town was taken possession of and found almost entirely deserted, only eighteen or twenty men, and a few women remaining in their houses.

The expedition next proceeded against Rumps, a piratical town, eight miles north of Ras-el-Khyma, but the inhabitants abandoned the town and took refuge in the hill fort of Zyah, which is situated at the head of a navigable creek nearly two miles from the sea coast. This place was the residence of Hussein Bin Alley, a sheikh of considerable importance among the Joassamee tribes, and a person who from his talents and lawless habits, as well as from the strength and advantageous situation of the fort, was likely to attempt the revival of the piratical system upon the first occasion. It became a desirable object to reduce the power of this chieftain.

On the 18th December, the troops embarked at Ras-el-Khyma, at day break in the boats of the fleet under command of Major Warren, with the 65th regiment and the flank companies of the first and second regiment, and at noon arrived within four miles of their destination. This operation was attended with considerable difficulty and risk, owing to the heavy surf that beat on the shore; and which was the occasion of some loss of ammunition, and of a few boats being upset and stove in.

At half past three, P. M., having refreshed the men, (says Major Warren,) we commenced our march and fording the creek or back water, took up our position at sun

set, to the northeastward of the fort, the enemy firing at us as we passed, notwithstanding that our messenger, whom we had previously sent in to summon the Sheikh, was still in the place; and I lost no time in pushing our riflemen and pickets as far forward as I could without exposing them too much to the firing of the enemy, whom I found strongly posted under secure cover in the date tree groves in front of the town. Captain Cocke, with the light company of his battalion, was at the same time sent to the westward, to cut off the retreat of the enemy on that side.



The Sheikh of Rumps.

At day break the next morning, finding it necessary to drive the enemy still further in, to get a nearer view of his defences, I moved forward the rifle company of the 65th regiment, and after a considerable opposition from the enemy, I succeeded in forcing him to retire some distance; but not without disputing every inch of ground, which was well calculated for resistance, being intersected at every

few yards, by banks and water courses raised for the purpose of irrigation, and covered with date trees. The next morning the riflemen, supported by the pickets, were again called into play, and soon established their position within three and four hundred yards of the town, which with the base of the hill, was so completely surrounded, as to render the escape of any of the garrison now almost impossible. This advantage was gained by a severe loss. Two twenty-four pounders and the two twelves, the landing of which had been retarded by the difficulty of communication with the fleet from which we derived all our supplies, having been now brought on shore, we broke ground in the evening, and notwithstanding the rocky soil, had them to play next morning at daylight.

Aware, however, that the families of the enemy were still in the town, and humanity dictating that some effort should be made to save the innocent from the fate that awaited the guilty; an opportunity was afforded for that purpose, by an offer to the garrison of security to their women and children, should they be sent out within the hour; but the infatuated chief, either from an idea that his fort on the hill was not to be reached by our shot, or with the vain hope to gain time by procrastination, returning no answer to our communication, while he detained our messenger; we opened our fire at half past eight in the morning, and such was the precision of the practice, that in two hours we perceived the breach would soon be practicable. I was in the act of ordering the assault, when a white flag was displayed; and the enemy, after some little delay, in assembling from the different quarters of the place, marched out without their arms, with Hussein Bin Alley at their head, to the number of three hundred and ninety-eight; and at half past one, P. M., the British flags were hoisted on the hill fort and at the Sheikh's house. The women and children to the number of four hundred, were at the same time collected together in a place of security, and sent on board the fleet, together with the men. The service has been short but arduous; the enemy defended themselves with great obstinacy and ability worthy of a better cause.

From two prisoners retaken from the Joassamees, they

learnt that the plunder is made a general stock, and distributed by the chief, but in what proportions the dependents cannot say; water is generally very scarce. There is a quantity of fish caught on the bank, upon which and dates they live. There were a few horses, camels, cows, sheep, and goats; the greatest part of which they took with them; they were in general lean, as the sandy plain produces little or no vegetation, except a few dates and cocoa-nut trees. The pirates who abandoned Ras-el-Khyma, encamped about three miles in the interior, ready to retreat into the desert at a moment's warning. The Sheikh of Rumps is an old man, but looks intelligent, and is said to be the man who advises upon all occasions the movements of the different tribes of pirates on the coast, and when he was told that it was the wish of the Company to put a stop to their piracy, and make an honest people of them by encouraging them to trade, seemed to regret much that those intentions were not made known, as they would have been most readily embraced. Rumps is the key to Ras-el-Khyma, and by its strength is defended from a strong banditti infesting the mountains, as also the Bedouin Arabs who are their enemies. A British garrison of twelve hundred men was stationed at Ras-el-Khyma, and a guardship. The other places sent in tokens of submission, as driven out of their fortresses on the margin of the sea, they had to contend within with the interior hostile tribes.



THE BARBAROUS CONDUCT AND ROMANTIC DEATH OF THE
JOASSAMEE CHIEF,
RAHMAH-BEN-JABIR.



Rahmah-ben-Jabir, a Joassamee Chief.

THE town of Bushire, on the Persian Gulf is seated in a low peninsula of sand, extending out of the general line of the coast, so as to form a bay on both sides. One of

these bays was in 1816, occupied by the fleet of a certain Arab, named Rahmah-ben-Jabir, who has been for more than twenty years the terror of the gulf, and who was the most successful and the most generally tolerated pirate, perhaps, that ever infested any sea. This man by birth was a native of Grain, on the opposite coast, and nephew of the governor of that place. His fellow citizens had all the honesty, however, to declare him an outlaw, from abhorrence of his profession; but he found that aid and protection at Bushire, which his own townsmen denied him. With five or six vessels, most of which were very large, and manned with crews of from two to three hundred each, he sallied forth, and captured whatever he thought himself strong enough to carry off as a prize. His followers to the number of two thousand, were maintained by the plunder of his prizes; and as the most of these were his own bought African slaves, and the remainder equally subject to his authority, he was sometimes as prodigal of their lives in a fit of anger as he was of his enemies, whom he was not content to slay in battle only, but basely murdered in cold blood, after they had submitted. An instance is related of his having put a great number of his own crew, who used mutinous expressions, into a tank on board, in which they usually kept their water, and this being shut close at the top, the poor wretches were all suffocated, and afterwards thrown overboard. This butcher chief, like the celebrated Djezzar of Acre, affected great simplicity of dress, manners, and living; and whenever he went out, could not be distinguished by a stranger from the crowd of his attendants. He carried this simplicity to a degree of filthiness, which was disgusting, as his usual dress was a shirt, which was never taken off to be washed, from the time it was first put on till worn out; no drawers or coverings for the legs of any kind, and a large black goat's hair cloak, wrapped over all with a greasy and dirty handkerchief, called the keffeea, thrown loosely over his head. Infamous as was this man's life and character, he was not only cherished and courted by the people of Bushire, who dreaded him, but was courteously received and respectfully entertained whenever he visited the British Factory. On one occasion, (says Mr. Buckingham,) at which I was

present, he was sent for to give some medical gentlemen of the navy and company's cruisers an opportunity of inspecting his arm, which had been severely wounded. The wound was at first made by grape-shot and splinters, and the arm was one mass of blood about the part for several days, while the man himself was with difficulty known to be alive. He gradually recovered, however, without surgical aid, and the bone of the arm between the shoulder and elbow being completely shivered to pieces, the fragments progressively worked out, and the singular appearance was left of the fore arm and elbow connected to the shoulder by flesh and skin, and tendons, without the least vestige of bone. This man when invited to the factory for the purpose of making an exhibition of his arm, was himself admitted to sit at the table and take some tea, as it was breakfast time, and some of his followers took chairs around him. They were all as disgustingly filthy in appearance as could well be imagined; and some of them did not scruple to hunt for vermin on their skins, of which there was an abundance, and throw them on the floor. Rahmah-ben-Jabir's figure presented a meagre trunk, with four lank members, all of them cut and hacked, and pierced with wounds, of sabres, spears and bullets, in every part, to the number, perhaps of more than twenty different wounds. He had, besides, a face naturally ferocious and ugly, and now rendered still more so by several scars there, and by the loss of one eye. When asked by one of the English gentlemen present, with a tone of encouragement and familiarity, whether he could not still dispatch an enemy with his boneless arm, he drew a crooked dagger, or yambeah, from the girdle round his shirt, and placing his left hand, which was sound, to support the elbow of the right, which was the one that was wounded, he grasped the dagger firmly with his clenched fist, and drew it backward and forward, twirling it at the same time, and saying that he desired nothing better than to have the cutting of as many throats as he could effectually open with his lame hand. Instead of being shocked at the uttering of such a brutal wish, and such a savage triumph at still possessing the power to murder unoffending victims, I knew not how to describe my feelings of shame and sorrow

when a loud roar of laughter burst from the whole assembly, when I ventured to express my dissent from the general feeling of admiration for such a man.

This barbarous pirate in the year 1827, at last experienced a fate characteristic of the whole course of his life. His violent aggressions having united the Arabs of Bahrene and Ratiffe against him, they blockaded his port of Daman, from which Rahmah-ben-Jabir, having left a garrison in the fort under his son, had sailed in a well appointed bugalow, for the purpose of endeavoring to raise a confederacy of his friends in his support. Having failed in this object he returned to Daman, and in spite of the boats blockading the port, succeeded in visiting his garrison, and immediately re-embarked, taking with him his youngest son. On arriving on board his bugalow, he was received by his followers with a salute, which decisive indication of his presence immediately attracted the attention of his opponents, one of whose boats commanded by the nephew of the Sheikh of Bahrene, proceeded to attack him. A desperate struggle ensued, and the Sheikh finding after some time that he had lost nearly the whole of his crew by the fire of Rahmah's boat, retired for reinforcements. These being obtained, he immediately returned singly to the contest. The fight was renewed with redoubled fury; when at last, Ramah, being informed, (for he had been long blind,) that his men were falling fast around him, mustered the remainder of the crew, and issued orders to close and grapple with his opponent. When this was effected, and after embracing his son, he was led with a lighted torch to the magazine, which instantly exploded, blowing his own boat to atoms and setting fire to the Shaikh's, which immediately afterwards shared the same fate. Sheikh Ahmed and a few of his followers escaped to the other boats; but only one of Rahmah's brave crew was saved; and it is supposed that upwards of three hundred men were killed in this heroic contest.

THE LIFE OF

LAFITTE,

THE FAMOUS PIRATE OF THE GULF OF MEXICO.



Lafitte boarding the Queen East Indiaman.

With a History of the Pirates of Barrataria—and an account of their volunteering for the defence of New Orleans; and their daring intrepidity under General Jackson, during the battle of the 8th of January, 1815. For which important service they were pardoned by President Madison.

JEAN LAFITTE, was born at St. Maloes in France, in 1781, and went to sea at the age of thirteen; after several voyages in Europe, and to the coast of Africa, he was appointed mate of a French East Indiaman, bound to Madras. On the outward passage they encountered a heavy gale off the Cape of Good Hope, which sprung the main-mast and otherwise injured the ship, which determined the captain to bear up for the Mauritius, where he arrived in safety; a quarrel having taken place on the passage out between Lafitte and the Captain, he abandoned the ship and refused to continue the voyage. Several privateers were at this time fitting out at this island, and Lafitte was appointed captain of one of these vessels; after a cruise during which he robbed the vessels of other nations, besides those of England, and thus committing piracy, he stopped at the Seychelles, and took in a load of slaves for the Mauritius; but being chased by an English Frigate as far north as the equator, he found himself in a very awkward condition; not having provisions enough on board his ship to carry him back to the French Colony. He therefore conceived the bold project of proceeding to the Bay of Bengal, in order to get provisions from on board some English ships. In his ship of two hundred tons, with only two guns and twenty-six men, he attacked and took an English armed schooner with a numerous crew. After putting nineteen of his own crew on board the schooner, he took the command of her and proceeded to cruise upon the coast of Bengal. He there fell in with the Pagoda, a vessel belonging to the English East India Company, armed with twenty-six twelve pounders and manned with one hundred and fifty men. Expecting that the enemy would take him for a pilot of the Ganges, he manœuvered accordingly. The Pagoda manifested no suspicions, whereupon he suddenly darted with his brave followers upon her decks, overturned all who opposed them, and speedily took the ship. After a very successful cruise he arrived safe at the Mauritius, and took the command of *La Confiance* of twenty-six guns and two hundred and fifty men, and sailed for the coast of British India. Off the Sand Heads in October, 1807, Lafitte fell in with the *Queen East Indiaman*, with a crew of near four hundred men, and carrying

forty guns; he conceived the bold project of getting possession of her. Never was there beheld a more unequal conflict; even the height of the vessel compared to the feeble privateer, augmented the chances against Lafitte; but the difficulty and danger far from discouraging this intrepid sailor, acted as an additional spur to his brilliant valor. After electrifying his crew with a few words of hope and ardor, he manœvered and ran on board of the enemy. In this position he received a broadside when close too; but he expected this, and made his men lay flat upon the deck. After the first fire they all rose, and from the yards and tops, threw bombs and grenades into the fore-castle of the Indiaman. This sudden and unforeseen attack caused a great havoc. In an instant, death and terror made them abandon a part of the vessel near the mizen-mast. Lafitte, who observed every thing, seized the decisive moment, beat to arms, and forty of his crew prepared to board, with pistols in their hands and daggers held between their teeth. As soon as they got on deck, they rushed upon the affrighted crowd, who retreated to the steerage, and endeavored to defend themselves there. Lafitte thereupon ordered a second division to board, which he headed himself; the captain of the Indiaman was killed, and all were swept away in a moment. Lafitte caused a gun to be loaded with grape, which he pointed towards the place where the crowd were assembled, threatening to exterminate them. The English deeming resistance fruitless, surrendered, and Lafitte hastened to put a stop to the slaughter. This exploit, hitherto unparalleled, resounded through India, and the name of Lafitte became the terror of English commerce in these latitudes.

As British vessels now traversed the Indian Ocean under strong convoys, game became scarce, and Lafitte determined to visit France; and after doubling the Cape of Good Hope, he coasted up to the Gulf of Guinea, and in the Bight of Benin, took two valuable prizes loaded with gold dust, ivory, and Palm Oil; with this booty he reached St. Maloes in safety. After a short stay at his native place he fitted out a Brigantine, mounting twenty guns and one hundred and fifty men, and sailed for Gaudaloupe; amongst the West India Islands, he made several valua-

ble prizes; but during his absence on a cruise the island having been taken by the British, he proceeded to Carthage, and from thence to Barrataria. After this period, the conduct of Lafitte at Barrataria does not appear to be characterised by the audacity and boldness of his former career; but he had amassed immense sums of booty, and as he was obliged to have dealings with the merchants of the United States, and the West Indies, who frequently owed him large sums, and the cautious dealings necessary to found and conduct a colony of Pirates and Smugglers in the very teeth of a civilized nation, obliged Lafitte to cloak as much as possible his real character.

As we have said before, at the period of the taking of Gaudaloupe by the British, most of the privateers commissioned by the government of that island, and which were then on a cruise, not being able to return to any of the West India Islands, made for Barrataria, there to take in a supply of water and provisions, recruit the health of their crews, and dispose of their prizes, which could not be admitted into any of the ports of the United States, we being at that time in peace with Great Britain. Most of the commissions granted to privateers by the French government at Gaudaloupe, having expired sometime after the declaration of the independence of Carthage, many of the privateers repaired to that port, for the purpose of obtaining from the new government commissions for cruising against Spanish vessels. Having duly obtained their commissions, they in a manner blockaded for a long time all the ports belonging to the royalists, and made numerous captives, which they carried into Barrataria. Under this denomination is comprised part of the coast of Louisiana to the west of the mouths of the Mississippi, comprehended between Bastien bay on the east, and the mouths of the river or bayou la Fourche on the west. Not far from the sea are lakes called the great and little lakes of Barrataria, communicating with one another by several large bayous with a great number of branches. There is also the island of Barrataria, at the extremity of which is a place called the Temple, which denomination it owes to several mounds of shells thrown up there by the Indians. The name of Barrataria is also given to a large basin

which extends the whole length of the cypress swamps, from the Gulf of Mexico to three miles above New Orleans. These waters disembogue into the gulf by two entrances of the bayou Barrataria, between which lies an island called Grand Terre, six miles in length, and from two to three miles in breadth, running parallel with the coast. In the western entrance is the great pass of Barrataria, which has from nine to ten feet of water. Within this pass about two leagues from the open sea, lies the only secure harbor on the coast, and accordingly this was the harbor frequented by the *Pirates*, so well known by the name of Barratarians.

At Grand Jerre, the privateers publicly made sale by auction, of the cargoes of their prizes. From all parts of Lower Louisiana, people resorted to Barrataria, without being at all solicitous to conceal the object of their journey. The most respectable inhabitants of the state, especially those living in the country, were in the habit of purchasing smuggled goods coming from Barrataria.

The government of the United States sent an expedition under Commodore Patterson, to disperse the settlement of marauders at Barrataria; the following is an extract of his letter to the secretary of war.

Sir—I have the honor to inform you that I departed from this city on the 11th June, accompanied by Col. Ross, with a detachment of seventy of the 44th regiment of infantry. On the 12th, reached the schooner Carolina, of Plaquemine, and formed a junction with the gun vessels at the Balize on the 13th, sailed from the southwest pass on the evening of the 15th, and at half past 8 o'clock, A. M. on the 16th, made the Island of Barrataria, and discovered a number of vessels in the harbor, some of which shewed Carthaginian colors. At 2 o'clock, perceived the pirates forming their vessels, ten in number, including prizes, into a line of battle near the entrance of the harbor, and making every preparation to offer me battle. At 10 o'clock, wind light and variable, formed the order of battle with six gun boats and the Sea Horse tender, mounting one six pounder and fifteen men, and a launch mounting one twelve pound carr made; the schooner Carolina, drawing too much water to cross the bar. At

half past 10 o'clock, perceived several smokes along the coasts as signals, and at the same time a white flag hoisted on board a schooner at the fort, an American flag at the mainmast head and a Carthagenian flag, (under which the pirates cruise,) at her topping lift; replied with a white flag at my main; at 11 o'clock, discovered that the pirates had fired two of their best schooners; hauled down my white flag and made the *signal for battle*; hoisting with a large white flag bearing the words "Pardon for Deserters;" having heard there was a number on shore from the army and navy. At a quarter past 11 o'clock, two gun boats grounded and were passed agreeably to my previous orders, by the other four which entered the harbor, manned by my barge and the boats belonging to the grounded vessels, and proceeded in to my great disappointment. I perceived that the pirates abandoned their vessels, and were flying in all directions. I immediately sent the launch and two barges with small boats in pursuit of them. At meridian, took possession of all their vessels in the harbor consisting of six schooners and one felucca, cruisers, and prizes of the pirates, one brig a prize, and two armed schooners under the Carthagenian flag, both in the line of battle, with the armed vessels of the pirates, and apparently with an intention to aid them in any resistance they might make against me, as their crews were at quarters, tompons out of their guns, and matches lighted. Col. Ross at the same time landed, and with his command took possession of their establishment on shore, consisting of about forty houses of different sizes, badly constructed, and thatched with palmetto leaves.

When I perceived the enemy forming their vessels into a line of battle I felt confident from their number and very advantageous position, and their number of men, that they would have fought me; their not doing so I regret; for had they, I should have been enabled more effectually to destroy or make prisoners of them and their leaders; but it is a subject of great satisfaction to me, to have effected the object of my enterprise, without the loss of a man.

The enemy had mounted on their vessels twenty pieces of cannon of different calibre: and as I have since learnt, from eight hundred, to one thousand men of all nations and colors.



Lafitte and his crew clearing the decks of the Indiaman. p. 65

Early in the morning of the 20th, the Carolina at anchor, about five miles distant, made the signal of a "strange sail in sight to eastward;" immediately after she weighed anchor, and gave chase the strange sail, standing for Grand Terre, with all sail, at half past 8 o'clock, the chase hauled her wind off shore to escape; sent acting Lieut. Spedding with four boats manned and armed to prevent her passing the harbor; at 9 o'clock, A. M. the chase fired upon the Carolina, which was returned; each vessel continued firing during the chase, when their long guns could reach. At 10 o'clock, the chase grounded outside of the bar, at which time the Carolina was from the shoalness of the water, obliged to haul her wind off shore and give up the chase; opened a fire upon the chase across the island from the gun vessels. At half past 10 o'clock, she hauled down her colors and was taken possession of. She proved to be the armed schooner, Gen. Boliver; by grounding she broke both her rudder pintles and made water; took from her her armament, consisting of one long brass eighteen pounder, one long brass six pounder, two twelve pounders, small arms, &c. and twenty-one packages of dry goods. On the afternoon of the 23d, got underway with the whole squadron, in all seventeen vessels, but during the night one escaped, and the next day arrived at New Orleans with my whole squadron.

At different times the English had sought to attack the pirates at Barrataria, in hopes of taking their prizes, and even their armed vessels. Of these attempts of the British, suffice it to instance that of June 23d 1813, when two privateers being at anchor off Cat Island, a British sloop of war anchored at the entrance of the pass, and sent her boats to endeavour to take the privateers; but they were repulsed with considerable loss.

Such was the state of affairs, when on the 2d Sept. 1814, there appeared an armed brig on the coast opposite the pass. She fired a gun at a vessel about to enter and forced her to run aground; she then tacked and shortly after came to an anchor at the entrance of the pass. It was not easy to understand the intentions of this vessel, who having commenced with hostilities on her first appearance now seemed to announce an amicable disposition.

Mr. Lafitte then went off in a boat to examine her, venturing so far that he could not escape from the pinnace sent from the brig, and making towards the shore, bearing British colors and a flag of truce. In this pinnace were two naval officers. One was Capt. Lockyer, commander of the brig. The first question they asked was, where was Mr. Lafitte? he not choosing to make himself known to them, replied that the person they inquired for was on shore. They then delivered to him a packet directed to Mr. Lafitte, Barrataria, requesting him to take particular care of it, and to deliver it into Mr. Lafitte's hands. He prevailed on them to make for the shore, and as soon as they got near enough to be in his power, he made himself known, recommending to them at the same time to conceal the business on which they had come. Upwards of two hundred persons lined the shore, and it was a general cry amongst the crews of the privateers at Grand Terre, that those British officers should be made prisoners and sent to New Orleans as spies. It was with much difficulty that Lafitte dissuaded the multitude from this intent, and led the officers in safety to his dwelling. He thought very prudently that the papers contained in the packet might be of importance towards the safety of the country and that the officers if well watched could obtain no intelligence that might turn to the detriment of Louisiana. He now examined the contents of the packet, in which he found a proclamation addressed by Col. Edward Nichalls, in the service of his Britannic Majesty, and commander of the land forces on the coast of Florida, to the inhabitants of Louisiana. A letter from the same to Mr. Lafitte, the commandant of Barrataria; an official letter from the honorable W. H. Percy, captain of the sloop of war *Hermes*, directed to Lafitte. When he had perused these letters, Capt. Lockyer enlarged on the subject of them, and proposed to him to enter into the service of his Britannic Majesty with the rank of post captain and to receive the command of a 44 gun frigate. Also all those under his command, or over whom he had sufficient influence. He was also offered thirty thousand dollars, payable at Pensacola, and urged him not to let slip this opportunity of acquiring fortune and consideration. On Lafitte's requir-

ing a few days to reflect upon these proposals, Capt. Lockyer observed to him that no reflection could be necessary, respecting proposals that obviously precluded hesitation, as he was a Frenchman and proscribed by the American government. But to all his splendid promises and daring insinuations, Lafitte replied, that in a few days he would give a final answer; his object in this procrastination being to gain time to inform the officers of the state government of this nefarious project. Having occasion to go to some distance for a short time, the persons who had proposed to send the British officers prisoners to New Orleans, went and seized them in his absence, and confined both them and the crew of the pinnace, in a secure place, leaving a guard at the door. The British officers sent for Lafitte; but he fearing an insurrection of the crews of the privateers thought it advisable not to see them, until he had first persuaded their captains and officers to desist from the measures on which they seemed bent. With this view he represented to the latter that, besides the infamy that would attach to them, if they treated as prisoners, people who had come with a flag of truce, they would lose the opportunity of discovering the projects of the British against Louisiana.

Early the next morning Lafitte caused them to be released from their confinement and saw them safe on board their pinnace apologizing the detention. He now wrote to Capt. Lockyer the following letter.

TO CAPTAIN LOCKYER.

Barrataria, 4th Sept. 1814.

Sir—The confusion which prevailed in our camp yesterday and this morning, and of which you have a complete knowledge, has prevented me from answering in a precise manner to the object of your mission; nor even at this moment can I give you all the satisfaction that you desire; however, if you could grant me a fortnight, I would be entirely at your disposal at the end of that time. This delay is indispensable to enable me to put my affairs in order. You may communicate with me by sending a boat to the eastern point of the pass, where I will be found. You have inspired me with more confidence than the

Admiral, your superior officer, could have done himself; with you alone, I wish to deal, and from you also I will claim, in due time the reward of the services, which I may render to you.

Yours, &c.

J. LAFITTE.

His object in writing that letter was, by appearing disposed to accede to their proposals, to give time to communicate the affair to the officers of the state government, and to receive from them instructions how to act, under circumstances so critical and important to the country. He accordingly wrote on the 4th September to Mr. Blanque, one of the representatives of the state, sending him all the papers delivered to him by the British officers with a letter addressed to his excellency, Gov. Claiborne of the state of Louisiana.

To Gov. CLAIBORNE.

Barrataria, Sept. 4th, 1814.

Sir—In the firm persuasion that the choice made of you to fill the office of first magistrate of this state, was dictated by the esteem of your fellow citizens, and was conferred on merit, I confidently address you on an affair on which may depend the safety of this country. I offer to you to restore to this state several citizens, who perhaps in your eyes have lost that sacred title. I offer you them, however, such as you could wish to find them, ready to exert their utmost efforts in defence of the country. This point of Louisiana, which I occupy, is of great importance in the present crisis. I tender my services to defend it; and the only reward I ask is that a stop be put to the proscription against me and my adherents, by an act of oblivion, for all that has been done hitherto. I am the stray sheep wishing to return to the fold. If you are thoroughly acquainted with the nature of my offences, I should appear to you much less guilty, and still worthy to discharge the duties of a good citizen. I have never sailed under any flag but that of the republic of Carthage, and my vessels are perfectly regular in that respect. If I could have brought my lawful prizes into the ports of this state, I should not have employed the illicit means that have

caused me to be proscribed. I decline saying more on the subject, until I have the honor of your excellency's answer, which I am persuaded can be dictated only by wisdom. Should your answer not be favorable to my ardent desires, I declare to you that I will instantly leave the country, to avoid the imputation of having cooperated towards an invasion on this point, which cannot fail to take place, and to rest secure in the acquittal of my conscience

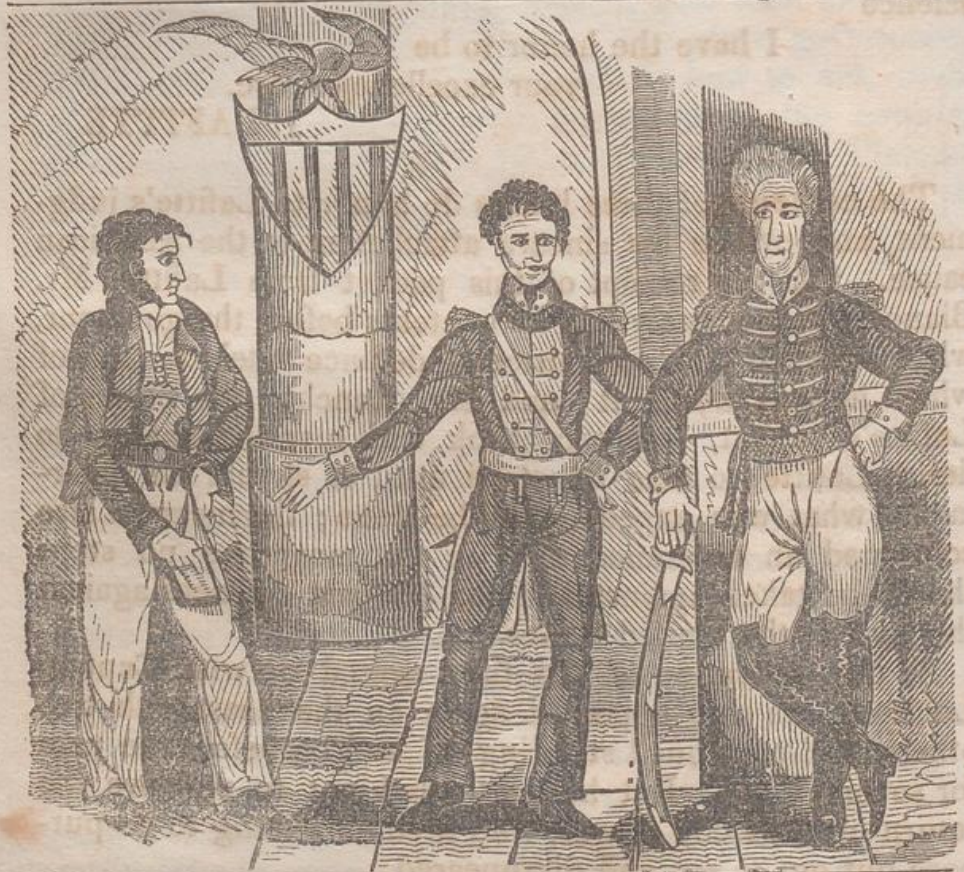
I have the honor to be
your excellency's, &c.
J. LAFITTE.

The contents of these letters do honor to Lafitte's judgment, and evince his sincere attachment to the American cause. On the receipt of this packet from Lafitte, Mr. Blanque immediately laid its contents before the governor, who convened the committee of defence lately formed of which he was president; and Mr. Rancher the bearer of Lafitte's packet, was sent back with a verbal answer to desire Lafitte to take no steps until it should be determined what was expedient to be done; the message also contained an assurance that, in the meantime no steps should be taken against him for his past offences against the laws of the United States.

At the expiration of the time agreed on with Captain Lockyer, his ship appeared again on the coast with two others, and continued standing off and on before the pass for several days. But he pretended not to perceive the return of the sloop of war, who tired of waiting to no purpose put out to sea and disappeared.

Lafitte having received a guarantee from General Jackson for his safe passage from Barrataria to New Orleans and back, he proceeded forthwith to the city where he had an interview with Gov. Claiborne and the General. After the usual formalities and courtesies had taken place between these gentlemen, Lafitte addressed the Governor of Louisiana nearly as follows. I have offered to defend for you that part of Louisiana I now hold. But not as an outlaw, would I be its defender. In that confidence, with which you have inspired me, I offer to restore to the state many

citizens, now under my command. As I have remarked before, the point I occupy is of great importance in the present crisis. I tender not only my own services to defend it, but those of all I command; and the only reward I ask, is, that a stop be put to the proscription against me and my adherents, by an act of oblivion for all that has been done hitherto.



Interview between Lafitte, General Jackson, and Governor Claiborne.

“My dear sir,” said the Governor, who together with General Jackson, was impressed with admiration of his sentiments, “your praiseworthy wishes shall be laid before the council of the state, and I will confer with my august friend here present, upon this important affair, and send you an answer to-morrow.” As Lafitte withdrew, the General said farewell; when we meet again, I trust it will be in the ranks of the American army. The result of the conference was the issuing the following order.

The Governor of Louisiana, informed that many individuals implicated in the offences heretofore committed against the United States at Barrataria, express a willingness at the present crisis to enrol themselves and march against the enemy.

He does hereby invite them to join the standard of the United States and is authorised to say, should their conduct in the field meet the approbation of the Major General, that that officer will unite with the governor in a request to the president of the United States, to extend to each and every individual, so marching and acting, a free and full pardon. These general orders were placed in the hands of Lafitte, who circulated them among his dispersed followers, most of whom readily embraced the conditions of pardon they held out. In a few days many brave men and skillful artillerists, whose services contributed greatly to the safety of the invaded state, flocked to the standard of the United States, and by their conduct, received the highest approbation of General Jackson.

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

A PROCLAMATION.

“Among the many evils produced by the wars, which, with little intermission, have afflicted Europe, and extended their ravages into other quarters of the globe, for a period exceeding twenty years, the dispersion of a considerable portion of the inhabitants of different countries, in sorrow and in want, has not been the least injurious to human happiness, nor the least severe in the trial of human virtue.

“It had been long ascertained that many foreigners, flying from the dangers of their own home, and that some citizens, forgetful of their duty, had co-operated in forming an establishment on the island of Barrataria, near the mouth of the river Mississippi, for the purpose of a clandestine and lawless trade. The government of the United States caused the establishment to be broken up and destroyed; and, having obtained the means of designating the offenders of every description, it only remained to answer the demands of justice by inflicting an exemplary punishment.

“But it has since been represented that the offenders have manifested a sincere penitence; that they have abandoned the prosecution of the worst cause for the support of the best, and, particularly, that they have exhibited, in the defence of New Orleans, unequivocal traits of courage and fidelity. Offenders, who have refused to become the associates of the enemy in the war, upon the most seducing terms of invitation; and who have aided to repel his hostile invasion of the territory of the United States, can no longer be considered as objects of punishment, but as objects of a generous forgiveness.

“It has therefore been seen, with great satisfaction, that the General Assembly of the State of Louisiana earnestly recommend those offenders to the benefit of a full pardon; And in compliance with that recommendation, as well as in consideration of all the other extraordinary circumstances of the case, I, *James Madison*, President of the United States of America, do issue this proclamation, hereby granting, publishing and declaring, a free and full pardon of all offences committed in violation of any act or acts of the Congress of the said United States, touching the revenue, trade and navigation thereof, or touching the intercourse and commerce of the United States with foreign nations, at any time before the eighth day of January, in the present year one thousand eight hundred and fifteen, by any person or persons whatsoever, being inhabitants of New Orleans and the adjacent country, or being inhabitants of the said island of Barrataria, and the places adjacent; *Provided*, that every person, claiming the benefit of this full pardon, in order to entitle himself thereto, shall produce a certificate in writing from the governor of the State of Louisiana, stating that such person has aided in the defence of New Orleans and the adjacent country, during the invasion thereof as aforesaid.

“And I do hereby further authorize and direct all suits, indictments, and prosecutions, for fines, penalties, and forfeitures, against any person or persons, who shall be entitled to the benefit of this full pardon, forthwith to be stayed, discontinued and released: All civil officers are hereby required, according to the duties of their respective stations, to carry this proclamation into immediate and faithful execution.

"DONE at the City of Washington, the sixth day of February, in the year one thousand eight hundred and fifteen, and of the independence of the United States the thirty-ninth.

"By the President,

"JAMES MADISON.

"JAMES MONROE,

Acting Secretary of State."

The morning of the eighth of January, was ushered in with the discharge of rockets, the sound of cannon, and the cheers of the British soldiers advancing to the attack. The Americans, behind the breastwork, awaited in calm intrepidity their approach. The enemy advanced in close column of sixty men in front, shouldering their muskets and carrying fascines and ladders. A storm of rockets preceded them, and an incessant fire opened from the battery, which commanded the advanced column. The musketry and rifles from the Kentuckians and Tennesseans, joined the fire of the artillery, and in a few moments was heard along the line a ceaseless, rolling fire, whose tremendous noise resembled the continued reverberation of thunder. One of these guns, a twenty-four pounder, placed upon the breastwork in the third embrasure from the river, drew, from the fatal skill and activity with which it was managed, even in the heat of battle, the admiration of both Americans and British; and became one of the points most dreaded by the advancing foe.

Here was stationed Lafitte and his lieutenant Dominique and a large band of his men, who during the continuance of the battle, fought with unparalleled bravery. The British already had been twice driven back in the utmost confusion, with the loss of their Commander-in-chief, and two general officers.

Two other batteries were manned by the Barratarians, who served their pieces with the steadiness and precision of veteran gunners. In the first attack of the enemy, a column pushed forward between the levee and river; and so precipitate was their charge that the outposts were forced to retire, closely pressed by the enemy. Before the batteries could meet the charge, clearing the ditch, they

gained the redoubt through the embrasures, leaping over the parapet, and overwhelming by their superior force the small party stationed there.

Lafitte, who was commanding in conjunction with his officers, at one of the guns, no sooner saw the bold movement of the enemy, than calling a few of his best men by his side, he sprung forward to the point of danger, and clearing the breastwork of the entrenchments, leaped, cutlass in hand, into the midst of the enemy, followed by a score of his men, who in many a hard fought battle upon his own deck, had been well tried.

Astonished at the intrepidity which could lead men to leave their entrenchments and meet them hand to hand, and pressed by the suddenness of the charge, which was made with the recklessness, skill and rapidity of practised boarders bounding upon the deck of an enemy's vessel, they began to give way, while one after another, two British officers fell before the cutlass of the pirate, as they were bravely encouraging their men. All the energies of the British were now concentrated to scale the breastwork, which one daring officer had already mounted. While Lafitte and his followers, seconding a gallant band of volunteer riflemen, formed a phalanx which they in vain assayed to penetrate.

The British finding it impossible to take the city and the havock in their ranks being dreadful, made a precipitate retreat, leaving the field covered with their dead and wounded.

General Jackson, in his correspondence with the secretary of war did not fail to notice the conduct of the "Corsairs of Barrataria," who were, as we have already seen, employed in the artillery service. In the course of the campaign they proved, in an unequivocal manner, that they had been misjudged by the enemy, who a short time previous to the invasion of Louisiana, had hoped to enlist them in his cause. Many of them were killed or wounded in the defence of the country. Their zeal, their courage, and their skill, were remarked by the whole army, who could no longer consider such brave men as criminals. In a few days peace was declared between Great Britain and the United States.

The piratical establishment of Barrataria having been broken up and Lafitte not being content with leading an honest, peaceful life, procured some fast sailing vessels, and with a great number of his followers, proceeded to Galvezton Bay, in Texas, during the year 1819; where he received a commission from General Long; and had five vessels generally cruising and about 300 men. Two open boats bearing commissions from General Humbert, of Galvezton, having robbed a plantation on the Marmonto river, of negroes, money, &c. were captured in the Sabine river, by the boats of the United States schooner Lynx. One of the men was hung by Lafitte, who dreaded the vengeance of the American government. The Lynx also captured one of his schooners, and her prize that had been for a length of time smuggling in the Carmento. One of his cruisers, named the Jupiter, returned safe to Galvezton after a short cruise with a valuable cargo, principally specie; she was the first vessel that sailed under the authority of Texas. The American government well knowing that where Lafitte was, piracy and smuggling would be the order of the day, sent a vessel of war to cruise in the Gulf of Mexico, and scour the coasts of Texas. Lafitte having been appointed governor of Galvezton and one of the cruisers being stationed off the port to watch his motions, it so annoyed him that he wrote the following letter to her commander, Lieutenant Madison.

To the commandant of the American cruiser, off the port of Galvezton.

Sir—I am convinced that you are a cruiser of the navy, ordered by your government. I have therefore deemed it proper to inquire into the cause of your lying before this port without communicating your intention. I shall by this message inform you, that the port of Galvezton belongs to and is in the possession of the republic of Texas, and was made a port of entry the 9th October last. And whereas the supreme congress of said republic have thought proper to appoint me as governor of this place, in consequence of which, if you have any demands on said government, or persons belonging to or residing in the same, you

will please to send an officer with such demands, whom you may be assured will be treated with the greatest politeness, and receive every satisfaction required. But if you are ordered, or should attempt to enter this port in a hostile manner, my oath and duty to the government compels me to rebut your intentions at the expense of my life.

To prove to you my intentions towards the welfare and harmony of your government, I send enclosed the declaration of several prisoners, who were taken in custody yesterday, and by a court of inquiry appointed for that purpose, were found guilty of robbing the inhabitants of the United States of a number of slaves and specie. The gentleman bearing this message will give you any reasonable information relating to this place, that may be required.

Yours, &c.

J. LAFITTE.

About this time one Mitchell, who had formerly belonged to Lafitte's gang, collected upwards of one hundred and fifty desperadoes and fortified himself on an island near Barrataria, with several pieces of cannon; and swore that he and all his comrades would perish within their trenches before they would surrender to any man. Four of this gang having gone to New Orleans on a frolic, information was given to the city watch, and the house surrounded, when the whole four with cocked pistols in both hands sallied out and marched through the crowd which made way for them and no person dared to make an attempt to arrest them.

The United States cutter, Alabama, on her way to the station off the mouth of the Mississippi, captured a piratical schooner belonging to Lafitte; she carried two guns and twenty-five men, and was fitted out at New Orleans, and commanded by one of Lafitte's lieutenants, named Le Fage; the schooner had a prize in company and being hailed by the cutter, poured into her a volley of musketry. The cutter then opened upon the privateer and a smart action ensued which terminated in favor of the cutter, which had four men wounded and two of them dangerously; but the pirate had six men killed; both vessels were captured and brought into the Bayou St. John. An

expedition was now sent to dislodge Mitchell and his comrades from the island he had taken possession of; after coming to anchor, a summons was sent for him to surrender, which was answered by a brisk cannonade from his breastwork. The vessels were warped close in shore; and the boats manned and sent on shore whilst the vessels opened upon the pirates; the boat's crews landed under a galling fire of grape shot and formed in the most undaunted manner; and although a severe loss was sustained they entered the breastwork at the point of the bayonet; after a desperate fight the pirates gave way, many were taken prisoners, but Mitchell and the greatest part escaped to the Cypress swamps where it was impossible to arrest them. A large quantity of dry goods and specie together with other booty was taken. Twenty of the pirates were taken and brought to New Orleans, and tried before Judge Hall, of the Circuit Court of the United States, sixteen were brought in guilty; and after the Judge had finished pronouncing sentence of death upon the hardened wretches, several of them cried out in open court, *Murder—by God.*

Accounts of these transactions having reached Lafitte, he plainly perceived there was a determination to sweep all his cruisers from the sea; and a war of extermination appeared to be waged against him.

In a fit of desperation he procured a large and fast sailing brigantine mounting sixteen guns and having selected a crew of one hundred and sixty men he started without any commission as a regular pirate determined to rob all nations and neither to give or receive quarter. A British sloop of war which was cruising in the Gulf of Mexico, having heard that Lafitte himself was at sea, kept a sharp look out from the mast head; when one morning as an officer was sweeping the horizon with his glass he discovered a long dark looking vessel low in the water, but having very tall masts, with sails white as the driven snow. As the sloop of war had the weather gage of the pirate and could outsail her before the wind, she set her studding sails and crowded every inch of canvass in chase; as soon as Lafitte ascertained the character of his opponent, he ordered the awnings to be furled and set his big square-sail and shot rapidly through the water; but as the breeze

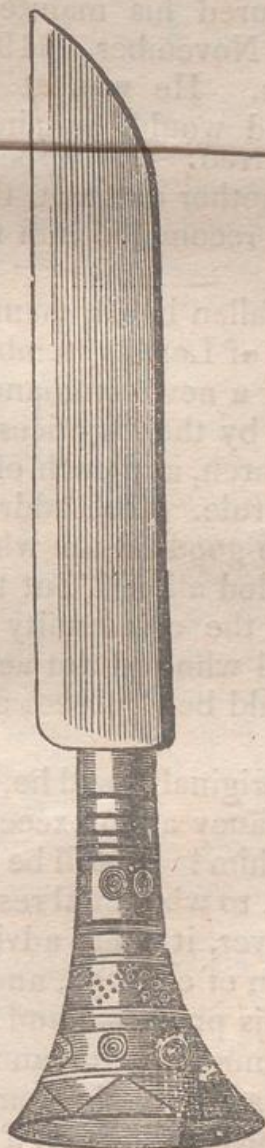
freshened the sloop of war came up rapidly with the pirate, who finding no chance of escaping, determined to sell his life as dearly as possible; the guns were cast loose and the shot handed up; and a fire opened upon the ship which killed a number of men and carried away her foretopmast, but she reserved her fire until within cable's distance of the pirate; when she fired a general discharge from her broadside, and a volley of small arms; the broadside was too much elevated to hit the low hull of the brigantine, but was not without effect; the foretopmast fell, the jaws of the main gaff were severed and a large proportion of the rigging came rattling down on deck; ten of the pirates were killed, but Lafitte remained unhurt. The sloop of war entered her men over the starboard bow and a terrific contest with pistols and cutlasses ensued; Lafitte received two wounds at this time which disabled him, a grape shot broke the bone of his right leg and he received a cut in the abdomen, but his crew fought like tigers and the deck was ankle deep with blood and gore; the captain of the boarders received such a tremendous blow on the head from the butt end of a musket, as stretched him senseless on the deck near Lafitte, who raised his dagger to stab him to the heart. But the tide of his existence was ebbing like a torrent, his brain was giddy, his aim faltered and the point descended in the Captain's right thigh; dragging away the blade with the last convulsive energy of a death struggle, he lacerated the wound. Again the reeking steel was upheld, and Lafitte placed his left hand near the Captain's heart, to make his aim more sure; again the dizziness of dissolution spread over his sight, down came the dagger into the captain's left thigh and Lafitte was a corpse.

The upper deck was cleared, and the boarders rushed below on the main deck to complete their conquest. Here the slaughter was dreadful, till the pirates called out for quarter, and the carnage ceased; all the pirates that surrendered were taken to Jamaica and tried before the Admiralty court where sixteen were condemned to die, six were subsequently pardoned and ten executed.

Thus perished Lafitte, a man superior in talent, in knowledge of his profession, in courage, and moreover in physi-

cal strength; but unfortunately his reckless career was marked with crimes of the darkest dye.

——— “He was the mildest manner’d man,
That ever scuttled ship or cut a throat;
With such true breeding of a gentleman,
You never could discern his real thought.
Pity he loved an adventurous life’s variety,
He was so great a loss to good society.”



33

THE LIFE OF
CAPTAIN ROBERTS

BARTHOLOMEW ROBERTS was trained to a sea-faring life. Among other voyages which he made during the time that he lawfully procured his maintenance, he sailed for the Guinea coast, in November, 1719, where he was taken by the pirate Davis. He was at first very averse to that mode of life, and would certainly have deserted, had an opportunity occurred. It happened to him, however, as to many upon another element, that preferment calmed his conscience, and reconciled him to that which he formerly hated.

Davis having fallen in the manner related, those who had assumed the title of Lords assembled to deliberate concerning the choice of a new commander. There were several candidates, who, by their services, had risen to eminence among their brethren, and each of them thought themselves qualified to bear rule. One addressed the assembled lords, saying, "that the good of the whole, and the maintenance of order, demanded a head, but that the proper authority was deposited in the community at large; so that if one should be elected who did not act and govern for the general good, he could be deposed, and another be substituted in his place."

"We are the original," said he, "of this claim, and should a captain be so saucy as to exceed prescription at any time, why, down with him! It will be a caution, after he is dead, to his successors, to what fatal results any undue assumption may lead; however, it is my advice, while we are sober, to pitch upon a man of courage, and one skilled in navigation,—one who, by his prudence and bravery, seems best able to defend this commonwealth, and ward us from the dangers and tempests of an unstable element, and the fatal consequences of anarchy; and such a one I take Roberts to be: a fellow in all respects worthy of your esteem and favor."

This speech was applauded by all but Lord Simpson, who had himself strong expectations of obtaining the highest command. He at last, in a surly tone, said, he did not regard whom they chose as a commander, provided he was not a papist, for he had conceived a mortal hatred to papists, because his father had been a sufferer in Monmouth's rebellion.

Thus, though Roberts had only been a few weeks among them, his election was confirmed by the Lords and Commons. He, with the best face he could, accepted of the dignity, saying, "that since he had dipped his hands in muddy water, and must be a pirate, it was better being a commander than a private man."

The governor being settled, and other officers chosen in the room of those who had fallen with Davis, it was resolved not to leave this place without revenging his death. Accordingly, thirty men, under the command of one Kennedy, a bold and profligate fellow, landed, and under cover of the fire of the ship, ascended the hill upon which the fort stood. They were no sooner discovered by the Portuguese, than they abandoned the fort, and took shelter in the town. The pirates then entered without opposition, set fire to the fort, and tumbled the guns into the sea.

Not satisfied with this injury, some proposed to land and set the town in flames. Roberts, however, reminded them of the great danger to which this would inevitably expose them; that there was a thick wood at the back of the town, where the inhabitants could hide themselves, and that, when their all was at stake, they would make a bolder resistance: and that the burning or destroying of a few houses, would be a small return for their labor, and the loss that they might sustain. This prudent advice had the desired effect, and they contented themselves with lightening the French vessel, and battering down several houses of the town, to show their high displeasure.

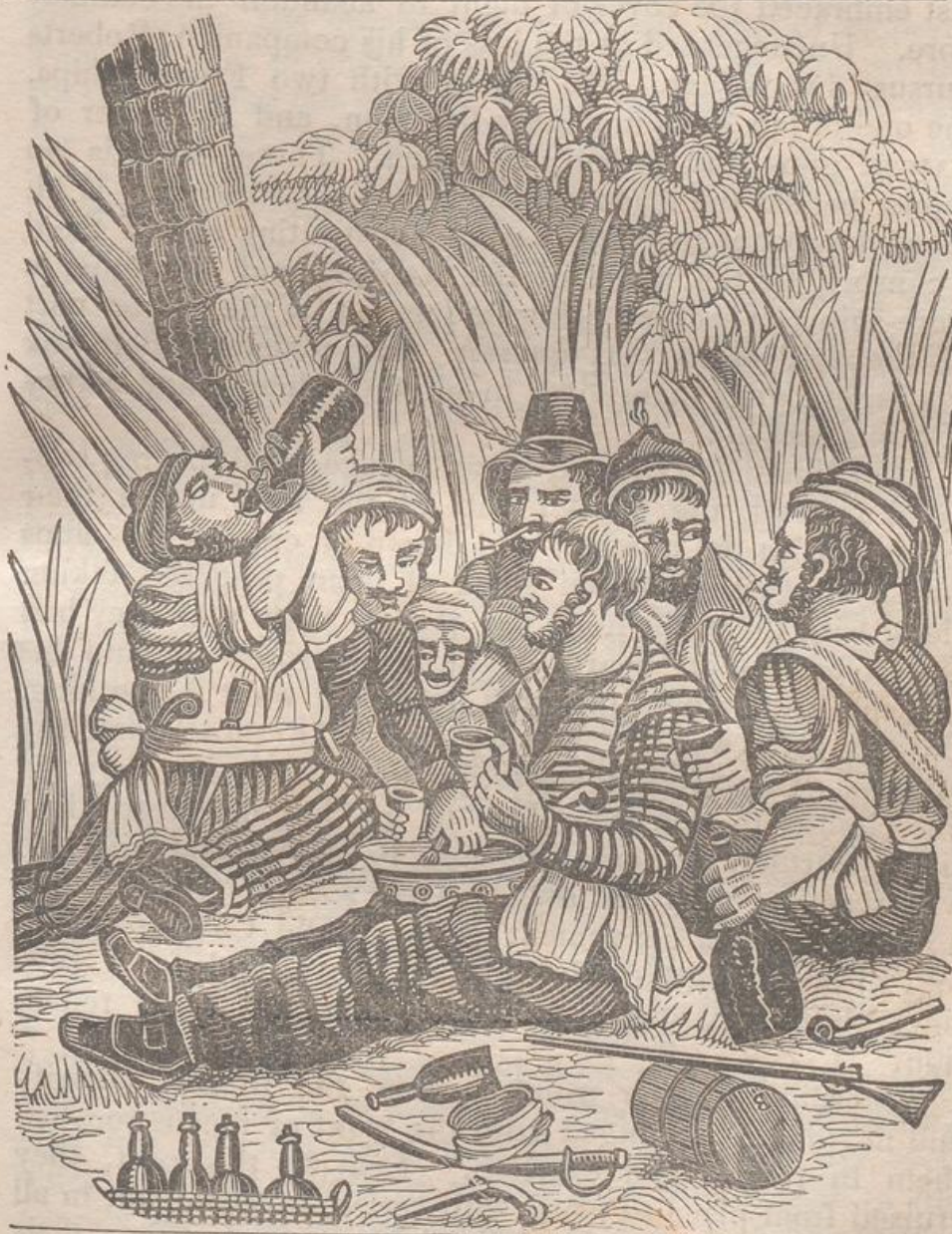
Roberts sailed southward, captured a Dutch Guineaman, and, having emptied her of everything they thought proper, returned her to the commander. Two days after, he captured an English ship, and, as the men joined in pirating, emptied and burned the vessel, and then sailed for St. Thomas. Meeting with no prize, he sailed for Anamaboa,

and there watered and repaired. Having again put to sea, a vote was taken whether they should sail for the East Indies or for Brazil. The latter place was decided upon, and they arrived there in twenty-eight days.

Upon this coast our rovers cruised for about nine weeks, keeping generally out of sight of land, but without seeing a sail; which discouraged them so, that they determined to leave the station, and steer for the West Indies; and, in order thereto, they stood in to make the land for the taking of their departure, by which means they fell in, unexpectedly, with a fleet of forty-two sail of Portuguese ships, off the Bay of Los Todos Santos, with all their lading in for Lisbon; several of them of good force, who lay there waiting for two men of war of seventy guns each for their convoy. However, Roberts thought it should go hard with him but he would make up his market among them, and thereupon he mixed with the fleet, and kept his men concealed till proper resolutions could be formed; that done, they came close up to one of the deepest, and ordered her to send the master on board quietly, threatening to give them no quarter, if any resistance or signal of distress was made. The Portuguese, being surprised at these threats, and the sudden flourish of cutlasses from the pirates, submitted without a word, and the captain came on board. Roberts saluted him in a friendly manner, telling him, that they were gentlemen of fortune, and that their business with him was only to be informed which was the richest ship in that fleet; and if he directed them right, he should be restored to his ship without molestation, otherwise he must expect instant death.

He then pointed to a vessel of forty guns, and a hundred and fifty men; and though her strength was greatly superior to Roberts', yet he made towards her, taking the master of the captured vessel along with him. Coming alongside of her, Roberts ordered the prisoner to ask, "How Seignior Captain did?" and to invite him on board, as he had a matter of importance to impart to him. He was answered, "That he would wait upon him presently." Roberts, however, observing more than ordinary bustle on board, at once concluded they were discovered, and pouring a broadside into her, they immediately boarded, grappled, and took

without taking leave of their friends. But a despatch being sent after them, they were brought back, and in a formal manner tried and sentenced, but one of them was saved by the humorous interference of one of the judges,



Captain Roberts' Crew carousing at Old Calabar River.

whose speech was truly worthy of a pirate — while the other two suffered the punishment of death.

When necessity again compelled them, they renewed their cruising; and, dissatisfied with capturing vessels which only afforded them a temporary supply, directed their course to the Guinea coast to forage for gold. Intoxication rendered them unruly, and the brigantine at last embraced the cover of night to abandon the commodore. Unconcerned at the loss of his companion, Roberts pursued his voyage. He fell in with two French ships, the one of ten guns and sixty-five men, and the other of sixteen guns and seventy-five men. These dastards no sooner beheld the black flag than they surrendered. With these they went to Sierra Leone, constituting one of them a consort, by the name of the *Ranger*, and the other a store-ship. This port being frequented by the greater part of the traders to that quarter, they remained here six weeks, enjoying themselves in all the splendor and luxury of a piratical life.

After this they renewed their voyage, and having captured a vessel, the greater part of the men united their fortunes with the pirates. On board of one of the ships was a clergyman, whom some of them proposed taking along with them, for no other reason than that they had not a chaplain on board. They endeavored to gain his consent, and assured him that he should want for nothing, and his only work would be, to make punch and say prayers. Depraved, however, as these men were, they did not choose to constrain him to go, but displayed their civility further, by permitting him to carry along with him whatever he called his own. After several cruises, they now went into a convenient harbor at Old Calabar, where they cleaned, refitted, divided their booty, and for a considerable time caroused, to banish care and sober reflection.

According to their usual custom, the time of festivity and mirth was prolonged until the want of means recalled them to reason and exertion. Leaving this port, they cruised from place to place with varied success; but in all their captures, either burning, sinking, or devoting their prizes to their own use, according to the whim of the moment. The *Swallow* and another man-of-war being sent out expressly to pursue and take Roberts and his fleet,

he had frequent and certain intelligence of their destination; but having so often escaped their vigilance, he became rather too secure and fearless. It happened, however, that while he lay off Cape Lopez, the Swallow had information of his being in that place, and made towards him. Upon the appearance of a sail, one of Roberts' ships was sent to chase and take her. The pilot of the Swallow seeing her coming, manœuvred his vessel so well, that though he fled at her approach, in order to draw her out of the reach of her associates, yet he at his own time allowed her to overtake the man-of-war.

Upon her coming up to the Swallow, the pirate hoisted the black flag, and fired upon her; but how greatly were her crew astonished, when they saw that they had to contend with a man-of-war, and seeing that all resistance was vain, they cried out for quarter, which was granted, and they were made prisoners, having ten men killed and twenty wounded, without the loss or hurt of one of the king's men.

On the 10th, in the morning, the man-of-war bore away to round the cape. Roberts' crew, discerning their masts over the land, went down into the cabin to acquaint him of it, he being then at breakfast with his new guest, captain Hill, on a savoury dish of salmagundy and some of his own beer. He took no notice of it, and his men almost as little, some saying she was a Portuguese ship, others a French slave ship, but the major part swore it was the French Ranger returning; and they were merrily debating for some time on the manner of reception, whether they should salute her or not; but as the Swallow approached nearer, things appeared plainer; and though they who showed any apprehension of danger were stigmatized with the name of cowards, yet some of them, now undeceived, declared it to Roberts, especially one Armstrong, who had deserted from that ship, and knew her well. These Roberts swore at as cowards, who meant to dishearten the men, asking them, if it were so, whether they were afraid to fight or not? In short, he hardly refrained from blows. What his own apprehensions were, till she hauled up her ports and hoisted her proper colors, is uncertain; but then, being perfectly convinced, he slipped

his cable, got under sail, ordered his men to arms without any show of timidity, dropping a first-rate oath, that it was a bite, but at the same time resolved, like a gallant rogue, to get clear or die.

There was one Armstrong, as was just mentioned, a deserter from the *Swallow*, of whom they enquired concerning the trim and sailing of that ship; he told them she sailed best upon the wind, and therefore, if they designed to leave her, they should go before it.

The danger was imminent, and the time very short, to consult about means to extricate himself; his resolution in this strait was as follows: to pass close to the *Swallow* with all their sails, and receive her broadside before they returned a shot; if disabled by this, or if they could not depend on sailing, then to run on shore at the point, and every one to shift for himself among the negroes; or failing in these, to board, and blow up together, for he saw that the greatest part of his men were drunk, passively courageous, and unfit for service.

Roberts, himself, made a gallant figure at the time of the engagement, being dressed in a rich crimson damask waistcoat and breeches, a red feather in his hat, a gold chain round his neck, with a diamond cross hanging to it, a sword in his hand, and two pair of pistols hanging at the end of a silk sling flung over his shoulders, according to the custom of the pirates. He is said to have given his orders with boldness and spirit. Coming, according to what he had purposed, close to the man-of-war, he received her fire, and then hoisted his black flag and returned it, shooting away from her with all the sail he could pack; and had he taken Armstrong's advice to have gone before the wind, he had probably escaped; but keeping his tacks down, either by the wind's shifting, or ill steerage, or both, he was taken aback with his sails, and the *Swallow* came a second time very nigh to him. He had now, perhaps, finished the fight very desperately, if death, who took a swift passage in a grape shot, had not interposed, and struck him directly on the throat. He settled himself on the tackles of a gun; which one Stephenson, from the helm, observing, ran to his assistance, and not perceiving him wounded, swore at him, and bade him stand up and

fight like a man ; but when he found his mistake, and that his captain was certainly dead, he burst into tears, and wished the next shot might be his portion. They presently threw him overboard, with his arms and ornaments on, according to his repeated request in his life-time.

This extraordinary man and daring pirate was tall, of a dark complexion, about 40 years of age, and born in Pembroke-shire. His parents were honest and respectable, and his natural activity, courage, and invention, were superior to his education. At a very early period, he, in drinking, would imprecate vengeance upon "the head of him who ever lived to wear a halter." He went willingly into the pirate service, and served three years as a second man. It was not for want of employment, but from a roving, wild, and boisterous turn of mind. It was his usual declaration, that, "In an honest service, there are commonly low wages and hard labor; in this,—plenty, satiety, pleasure and ease, liberty, and power; and who would not balance creditor on this side, when all the hazard that is run for it at worst, is only a sour look or two at choking? No,—a merry life and a short one, shall be my motto!" But it was one favorable trait in his character, that he never forced any man into the pirate service.

The prisoners were strictly guarded while on board, and being conveyed to Cape Coast castle, they underwent a long and solemn trial. The generality of them remained daring and impenitent for some time, but when they found themselves confined within a castle, and their fate drawing near, they changed their course, and became serious, penitent, and fervent in their devotions. Though the judges found no small difficulty in explaining the law, and different acts of parliament, yet the facts were so numerous and flagrant which were proved against them, that there was no difficulty in bringing in a verdict of guilty.

THE LIFE OF
CHARLES GIBBS

*Containing an Account of his Atrocities committed
in the West Indies.*

THIS atrocious and cruel pirate, when very young became addicted to vices uncommon in youths of his age, and so far from the gentle reproof and friendly admonition, or the more severe chastisement of a fond parent, having its intended effect, it seemed to render him still worse, and to incline him to repay those whom he ought to have esteemed as his best friends and who had manifested so much regard for his welfare, with ingratitude and neglect. His infamous career and ignominious death on the gallows; which brought down the "grey hairs of his parents in sorrow to the grave." The poignant affliction which the infamous crimes of children bring upon their relatives, ought to be one of the most effective persuasions for them to refrain from vice.

Charles Gibbs was born in the state of Rhode Island, in 1794; his parents and connexions were of the first respectability. When at school, he was very apt to learn, but so refractory and sulky, that neither the birch nor good counsel made any impression on him, and he was expelled the school.

He was now made to labor on the farm; but having a great antipathy to work, when about fifteen years of age, feeling a great inclination to roam, and like too many unreflecting youths of that age, a great fondness for the sea, he in opposition to the friendly counsel of his parents, privately left them and entered on board the United States sloop-of-War, Hornet, and was in the action when she

captured the British sloop-of-War, Peacock, off the coast of Pernambuco. Upon the return of the Hornet to the United States, her brave commander, Capt. Lawrence, was promoted for his gallantry to the command of the unfortunate Chesapeake, and to which he was followed by young Gibbs, who took a very distinguished part in the engagement with the Shannon, which resulted in the death of Lawrence and the capture of the Chesapeake. Gibbs states that while on board the Chesapeake the crew previous to the action, were almost in a state of mutiny, growing out of the non payment of the prize money, and that the address of Capt. Lawrence was received by them with coldness and murmurs.

After the engagement, Gibbs became with the survivors of the crew a prisoner of war, and as such was confined in Dartmoor prison until exchanged.

After his exchange, he returned to Boston, where having determined to abandon the sea, he applied to his friends in Rhode Island, to assist him in commencing business; they accordingly lent him one thousand dollars as a capital to begin with. He opened a grocery in Ann Street, near what was then called the *Tin Pot*, a place full of abandoned women and dissolute fellows. As he dealt chiefly in liquor, and had a "*License to retail Spirits*," his drunkery was thronged with customers. But he sold his groceries chiefly to loose girls who paid him in their coin, which, although it answered his purpose, would neither buy him goods or pay his rent, and he found his stock rapidly dwindling away without his receiving any cash to replenish it. By dissipation and inattention his new business proved unsuccessful to him. He resolved to abandon it and again try the sea for a subsistence. With a hundred dollars in his pocket, the remnant of his property, he embarked in the ship John, for Buenos Ayres, and his means being exhausted soon after his arrival there, he entered on board a Buenos Ayrean privateer and sailed on a cruise. A quarrel between the officers and crew in regard to the division of prize money, led eventually to a mutiny; and the mutineers gained the ascendancy, took possession of the vessel, landed the crew on the coast of Florida, and steered for the West Indies, with hearts resolved to make

their fortunes at all hazards, and where in a short time, more than twenty vessels were captured by them and nearly *Four Hundred Human Beings Murdered!*

Havanna was the resort of these pirates, to dispose of their plunder; and Gibbs sauntered about this place with impunity and was acquainted in all the out of the way and bye places of that hot bed of pirates, the Regla. He and his comrades even lodged in the very houses with many of the American officers who were sent out to take them. He was acquainted with many of the officers, and was apprised of all their intended movements before they left the harbor. On one occasion, the American ship *Caroline*, was captured by two of their piratical vessels off Cape Antonio. They were busily engaged in landing the cargo, when the British sloop of war, *Jearus*, hove in sight and sent her barges to attack them. The pirates defended themselves for some time behind a small four gun battery which they had erected, but in the end were forced to abandon their own vessel and the prize and fly to the mountains for safety. The *Jearus* found here twelve vessels burnt to the water's edge, and it was satisfactorily ascertained that their crews, amounting to *one hundred and fifty persons had been murdered*. The crews, if it was thought not necessary otherwise to dispose of them were sent adrift in their boats, and frequently without any thing on which they could subsist a single day; nor were all so fortunate thus to escape. "Dead men can tell no tales," was a common saying among them; and as soon as a ship's crew were taken, a short consultation was held; and if it was the opinion of a majority that it would be better to take life than to spare it, a single nod or wink from the captain was sufficient; regardless of age or sex, all entreaties for mercy were then made in vain; they possessed not the tender feelings, to be operated upon by the shrieks and expiring groans of the devoted victims! there was a strife among them, who with his own hands could despatch the greatest number, and in the shortest period of time.

Without any other motives than to gratify their hellish propensities, (in their intoxicated moments,) blood was not unfrequently and unnecessarily shed, and many widows and orphans probably made, when the lives of the unfortu-

nate victims might have been spared, and without the most distant prospect of any evil consequences, (as regarded themselves,) resulting therefrom.

Gibbs states that sometime in the course of the year 1819, he left Havanna and came to the United States, bringing with him about \$30,000. He passed several weeks in the city of New York, and then went to Boston, whence he took passage for Liverpool in the ship Emerald. Before he sailed, however, he had squandered a large part of his money by dissipation and gambling. He remained in Liverpool a few months, and then returned to Boston. His residence in Liverpool at that time is satisfactorily ascertained from another source besides his own confession. A female now in New York was well acquainted with him there, where, she says, he lived like a gentleman, with apparently abundant means of support. In speaking of his acquaintance with this female, he says, "I fell in with a woman, who I thought was all virtue, but she deceived me, and I am sorry to say that a heart that never felt abashed at scenes of carnage and blood, was made a child of for a time by her, and I gave way to dissipation to drown the torment. How often when the fumes of liquor have subsided, have I thought of my good and affectionate parents, and of their Godlike advice! But when the little monitor began to move within me, I immediately seized the cup to hide myself from myself, and drank until the sense of intoxication was renewed. My friends advised me to behave myself like a man, and promised me their assistance, but the demon still haunted me, and I spurned their advice."

In 1826, he revisited the United States, and hearing of the war between Brazil and the Republic of Buenos Ayres, sailed from Boston in the brig Hitty, of Portsmouth, with a determination, as he states, of trying his fortune in defence of a republican government. Upon his arrival he made himself known to Admiral Brown, and communicated his desire to join their navy. The admiral accompanied him to the Governor, and a Lieutenant's commission being given him, he joined a ship of 34 guns, called the 'Twenty Fifth of May.' "Here," says Gibbs, "I found Lieutenant Dodge, an old acquaintance, and a num-

ber of other persons with whom I had sailed. When the Governor gave me the commission, he told me they wanted no cowards in their navy, to which I replied that I thought he would have no apprehension of my cowardice or skill when he became acquainted with me. He thanked me, and said he hoped he should not be deceived; upon which we drank to his health and to the success of the Republic. He then presented me with a sword, and told me to wear that as my companion through the doubtful struggle in which the republic was engaged. I told him I never would disgrace it, so long as I had a nerve in my arm. I remained on board the ship in the capacity of 5th Lieutenant, for about four months, during which time we had a number of skirmishes with the enemy. Having succeeded in gaining the confidence of Admiral Brown, he put me in command of a privateer schooner, mounting two long 24 pounders and 46 men. I sailed from Buenos Ayres, made two good cruises, and returned safely to port. I then bought one half of a new Baltimore schooner, and sailed again, but was captured seven days out, and carried into Rio Janeiro, where the Brazilians paid me my change. I remained there until peace took place, then returned to Buenos Ayres, and thence to New York.

After the lapse of about a year, which I passed in travelling from place to place, the war between France and Algiers attracted my attention. Knowing that the French commerce presented a fine opportunity for plunder, I determined to embark for Algiers and offer my services to the Dey. I accordingly took passage from New York, in the Sally Ann, belonging to Bath, landed at Barcelona, crossed to Port Mahon, and endeavored to make my way to Algiers. The vigilance of the French fleet prevented the accomplishment of my design, and I proceeded to Tunis. There finding it unsafe to attempt a journey to Algiers across the desert, I amused myself with contemplating the ruins of Carthage, and reviving my recollections of her war with the Romans. I afterwards took passage to Marseilles, and thence to Boston.

An instance of the most barbarous and cold blooded murder of which the wretched Gibbs gives an account in the course of his confessions, is that of an innocent and

beautiful female of about 17 or 18 years of age! she was with her parents a passenger on board a Dutch ship, bound from Curracoa to Holland; there were a number of other passengers, male and female, on board, all of whom except the young lady above-mentioned were put to death; her unfortunate parents were inhumanly butchered before her eyes, and she was doomed to witness the agonies and to hear the expiring, heart-piercing groans of those whom she held most dear, and on whom she depended for protection! The life of their wretched daughter was spared for the most nefarious purposes—she was taken by the pirates to the west end of Cuba, where they had a rendezvous, with a small fort that mounted four guns—here she was confined about two months, and where, as has been said by the murderer Gibbs, “she received such treatment, the bare recollection of which causes me to shudder!” At the

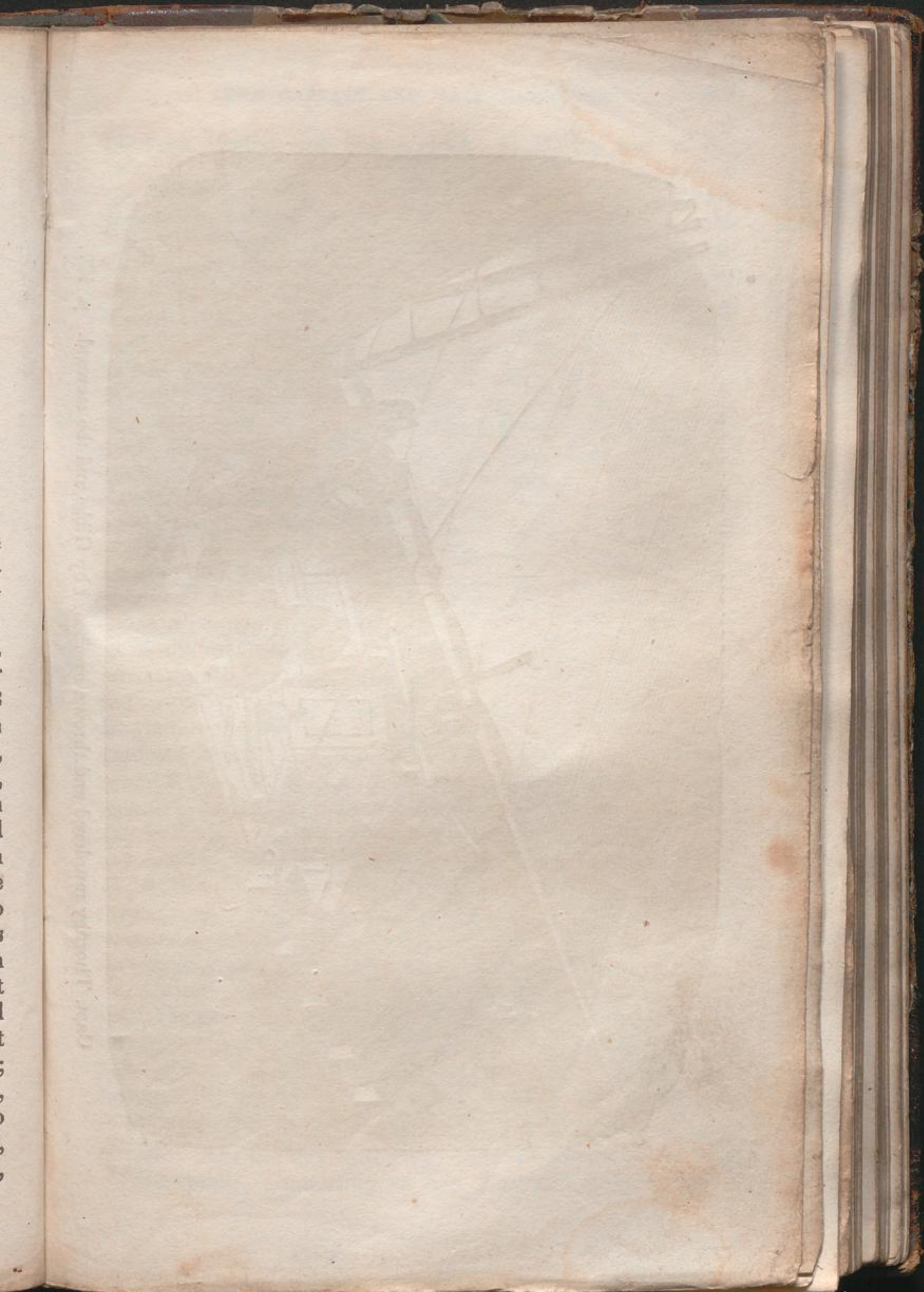


Gibbs carrying the Dutch Girl on board his Vessel.

expiration of the two months she was taken by the pirates on board of one of their vessels, and among whom a consultation was soon after held, which resulted in the conclu-

sion that it would be necessary for their own personal safety, to put her to death! and to her a fatal dose of poison was accordingly administered, which soon proved fatal! when her pure and immortal spirit took its flight to that God, whom, we believe, will avenge her wrongs! her lifeless body was then committed to the deep by two of the merciless wretches with as much unconcern, as if it had been that of the meanest brute! Gibbs persists in the declaration that in this horrid transaction he took no part, that such was his pity for this poor ill-fated female, that he interceded for her life so long as he could do it with safety to his own!

Gibbs in his last visit to Boston remained there but a few days, when he took passage to New Orleans, and there entered as one of the crew on board the brig *Vineyard*; and for assisting in the murder of the unfortunate captain and mate of which, he was justly condemned, and the awful sentence of death passed upon him! The particulars of the bloody transaction (agreeable to the testimony of Dawes and Brownrigg, the two principal witnesses,) are as follows: The brig *Vineyard*, Capt. William Thornby, sailed from New Orleans about the 9th of November, for Philadelphia, with a cargo of 112 bales of cotton, 113 hhds. sugar, 54 casks of molasses and 54,000 dollars in specie. Besides the captain there were on board the brig, William Roberts, mate, six seamen shipped at New Orleans, and the cook. Robert Dawes, one of the crew, states on examination, that when, about five days out, he was told that there was money on board, Charles Gibbs, E. Church and the steward then determined to take possession of the brig. They asked James Talbot, another of the crew, to join them. He said no, as he did not believe there was money in the vessel. They concluded to kill the captain and mate, and if Talbot and John Brownrigg would not join them, to kill them also. The next night they talked of doing it, and got their clubs ready. Dawes dared not say a word, as they declared they would kill him if he did; as they did not agree about killing Talbot and Brownrigg, two shipmates, it was put off. They next concluded to kill the captain and mate on the night of November 22, but did not get ready; but, on the night of the 23d,





Capt. Thornby murdered and thrown overboard by Gibbs and the steward. p. 107.

between twelve and one o'clock, as Dawes was at the helm, saw the steward come up with a light and a knife in his hand; he dropt the light and seizing the pump break, struck the captain with it over the head or back of the neck; the captain was sent forward by the blow, and halloed, oh! and murder! once; he was then seized by Gibbs and the cook, one by the head and the other by the heels, and thrown overboard. Atwell and Church stood at the companion way, to strike down the mate when he should come up. As he came up and enquired what was the matter, they struck him over the head—he ran back into the cabin, and Charles Gibbs followed him down; but as it was dark, he could not find him—Gibbs came on deck for the light, with which he returned. Dawes' light being taken from him, he could not see to steer, and he in consequence left the helm, to see what was going on below. Gibbs found the mate and seized him, while Atwell and Church came down and struck him with a pump break and a club; he was then dragged upon deck; they called for Dawes to come to them, and as he came up the mate seized his hand, and gave him a death gripe! three of them then hove him overboard, but which three Dawes does not know; the mate when cast overboard was not dead, but called after them twice while in the water! Dawes says he was so frightened that he hardly knew what to do. They then requested him to call Talbot, who was in the forecastle, saying his prayers; he came up and said it would be his turn next! but they gave him some grog, and told him not to be afraid, as they would not hurt him; if he was true to them, he should fare as well as they did. One of those who had been engaged in the bloody deed got drunk, and another became crazy!

After killing the captain and mate, they set about overhauling the vessel, and got up one keg of Mexican dollars. They then divided the captain's clothes, and money—about 40 dollars, and a gold watch. Dawes, Talbot and Brownrigg, (who were all innocent of the murder,) were obliged to do as they were commanded—the former, who was placed at the helm, was ordered to steer for Long Island. On the day following, they divided several kegs of the specie, amounting to five thousand dollars each—

they made bags and sewed the money up. After this division, they divided the remainder of the money without counting it. On Sunday, when about 15 miles S. S. E. of Southampton Light, they got the boats out and put half the money in each—they then scuttled the vessel and set fire to it in the cabin, and took to the boats. Gibbs, after the murder, took charge of the vessel as captain. From the papers they learnt that the money belonged to Stepher Girard. With the boats they made the land about daylight. Dawes and his three companions were in the long



Gibbs and Wansley burying the Money.

boat; the others, with Atwell, were in the jolly boat—on coming to the bar the boats struck—in the long boat, they threw overboard a trunk of clothes and a great deal of money, in all about 5000 dollars—the jolly boat foundered; they saw the boat fill, and heard them cry out, and saw them clinging to the masts—they went ashore on Barron Island, and buried the money in the sand, but very lightly. Soon after they met with a gunner, whom they requested

to conduct them where they could get some refreshments. They were by him conducted to Johnson's (the only man living on the island,) where they staid all night—Dawes went to bed at about 10 o'clock—Jack Brownrigg set up with Johnson, and in the morning told Dawes that he had told Johnson all about the murder. Johnson went in the morning with the steward for the clothes, which were left on the top of the place where they buried the money, but does not believe they took away the money.

The prisoners, (Gibbs and Wansley,) were brought to trial at the February term of the United States Court, holden in the city of New York; when the foregoing facts being satisfactorily proved, they were pronounced guilty, and on the 11th March last, the awful sentence of the law was passed upon them in the following affecting and impressive manner:—The Court opened at 11 o'clock, Judge Betts presiding. A few minutes after that hour, Mr. Hamilton, District Attorney, rose and said—May it please the Court, Thomas J. Wansley, the prisoner at the bar, having been tried by a jury of his country, and found guilty of the murder of captain Thornby, I now move that the sentence of the Court be pronounced upon that verdict.

By the Court. Thomas J. Wansley, you have heard what has been said by the District Attorney—by the Grand Jury of the South District of New York, you have been arraigned for the wilful murder of captain Thornby, of the brig Vineyard; you have been put upon your trial, and after a patient and impartial hearing, you have been found Guilty. The public prosecutor now moves for judgment on that verdict; have you any thing to say, why the sentence of the law should not be passed upon you?

Thomas J. Wansley. I will say a few words, but it is perhaps of no use. I have often understood that there is a great deal of difference in respect of color, and I have seen it in this Court. Dawes and Brownrigg were as guilty as I am, and these witnesses have tried to fasten upon me greater guilt than is just, for their life has been given to them. You have taken the blacks from their own country, to bring them here to treat them ill. I have seen this. The witnesses, the jury, and the prosecuting Attor-

ney consider me more guilty than Dawes, to condemn me—for otherwise the law must have punished him; he should have had the same verdict, for he was a perpetrator in the conspiracy. Notwithstanding my participating, they have sworn falsely for the purpose of taking my life; they would not even inform the Court, how I gave information of money being on board; they had the biggest part of the money, and have sworn falsely. I have said enough. I will say no more.

By the Court. The Court will wait patiently and hear all you have to say; if you have any thing further to add, proceed.

Wansley then proceeded. In the first place, I was the first to ship on board the *Vineyard* at New Orleans, I knew nobody; I saw the money come on board. The judge that first examined me, did not take my deposition down correctly. When talking with the crew on board, said the brig was an old craft, and when we arrived at Philadelphia, we all agreed to leave her. It was mentioned to me that there was plenty of money on board. Henry Atwell said "let's have it." I knew no more of this for some days. Atwell came to me again and asked "what think you of taking the money." I thought it was a joke, and paid no attention to it. The next day he said they had determined to take the brig and money, and that they were the strongest party, and would murder the officers, and he that informed should suffer with them. I knew Church in Boston, and in a joke asked him how it was made up in the ship's company; his reply, that it was he and Dawes. There was no arms on board as was ascertained; the conspiracy was known to the whole company, and had I informed, my life would have been taken, and though I knew if I was found out my life would be taken by law, which is the same thing, so I did not inform. I have committed murder and I know I must die for it.

By the Court. If you wish to add any thing further you will still be heard.

Wansley. No sir, I believe I have said enough.

The District Attorney rose and moved for judgment on Gibbs, in the same manner as in the case of *Wansley*, and the Court having addressed Gibbs, in similar terms, con-

cluded by asking what he had to say why the sentence of the law should not now be passed upon him.

Charles Gibbs said, I wish to state to the Court, how far I am guilty and how far I am innocent in this transaction. When I left New Orleans, I was a stranger to all on board, except Dawes and Church. It was off Tortugas that Atwell first told me there was money on board, and proposed to me to take possession of the brig. I refused at that time. The conspiracy was talked of for some days, and at last I agreed that I would join. Brownrigg, Dawes, Church, and the whole agreed that they would. A few days after, however, having thought of the affair, I mentioned to Atwell, what a dreadful thing it was to take a man's life, and commit piracy, and recommended him to 'abolish,' their plan. Atwell and Dawes remonstrated with me; I told Atwell that if ever he would speak of the subject again, I would break his nose. Had I kept to my resolution I would not have been brought here to receive my sentence. It was three days afterwards that the murder was committed. Brownrigg agreed to call up the captain from the cabin, and this man, (pointing to Wansley,) agreed to strike the first blow. The captain was struck and I suppose killed, and I lent a hand to throw him overboard. But for the murder of the mate, of which I have been found guilty, I am innocent—I had nothing to do with that. The mate was murdered by Dawes and Church; that I am innocent of this I commit my soul to that God who will judge all flesh—who will judge all murderers and false swearers, and the wicked who deprive the innocent of his right. I have nothing more to say.

By the Court. Thomas J. Wansley and Charles Gibbs, the Court has listened to you patiently and attentively; and although you have said something in your own behalf, yet the Court has heard nothing to affect the deepest and most painful duty that he who presides over a public tribunal has to perform.

You, Thomas J. Wansley, conceive that a different measure of justice has been meted out to you, because of your color. Look back upon your whole course of life; think of the laws under which you have lived, and you will find that to white or black, to free or bond, there is no

ground for your allegations; that they are not supported by truth or justice. Admit that Brownrigg and Dawes have sworn falsely; admit that Dawes was concerned with you; admit that Brownrigg is not innocent; admit, in relation to both, that they are guilty, the whole evidence has proved beyond a doubt that you are guilty; and your own words admit that you were an active agent in perpetrating this horrid crime. Two fellow beings who confided in you, and in their perilous voyage called in your assistance, yet you, without reason or provocation, have maliciously taken their lives.

If, peradventure, there was the slightest foundation for a doubt of your guilt, in the mind of the Court, judgment would be arrested, but there is none; and it now remains to the Court to pronounce the most painful duty that devolves upon a civil magistrate. The Court is persuaded of your guilt; it can form no other opinion. Testimony has been heard before the Court and Jury — from that we must form our opinion. We must proceed upon testimony, ascertain facts by evidence of witnesses, on which we must inquire, judge and determine as to guilt or innocence, by that evidence alone. You have been found guilty. You now stand for the last time before an earthly tribunal, and by your own acknowledgments, the sentence of the law falls justly on your heads. When men in ordinary cases come under the penalty of the law there is generally some palliative—something to warm the sympathy of the Court and Jury. Men may be led astray, and under the influence of passion have acted under some long smothered resentment, suddenly awakened by the force of circumstances, depriving him of reason, and then they may take the life of a fellow being. Killing, under that kind of excitement, might possibly awaken some sympathy, but that was not your case; you had no provocation. What offence had Thornby or Roberts committed against you? They entrusted themselves with you, as able and trustworthy citizens; confiding implicitly in you; no one act of theirs, after a full examination, appears to have been offensive to you; yet for the purpose of securing the money you coolly determined to take their lives—you slept and deliberated over the act; you were tempted on, and yielded;

you entered into the conspiracy, with cool and determined calculation to deprive two human beings of their lives, and it was done.

You, Charles Gibbs, have said that you are not guilty of the murder of Roberts; but were you not there, strongly instigating the murderers on, and without stretching out a hand to save him?—It is murder as much to stand by and encourage the deed, as to stab with a knife, strike with a hatchet, or shoot with a pistol. It is not only murder in law, but in your own feelings and in your own conscience. Notwithstanding all this, I cannot believe that your feelings are so callous, so wholly callous, that your own minds do not melt when you look back upon the unprovoked deeds of yourselves, and those confederated with you.

You are American citizens—this country affords means of instruction to all: your appearance and your remarks have added evidence that you are more than ordinarily intelligent; that your education has enabled you to participate in the advantages of information open to all classes. The Court will believe that when you were young you looked with strong aversion on the course of life of the wicked. In early life, in boyhood, when you heard of the conduct of men, who engaged in robbery—nay more, when you heard of cold blooded murder—how you must have shrunk from the recital. Yet now, after having participated in the advantages of education, after having arrived at full maturity, you stand here as robbers and murderers.

It is a perilous employment of life that you have followed; in this way of life the most enormous crimes that man can commit, are MURDER and PIRACY. With what detestation would you in early life have looked upon the man who would have raised his hand against his officer, or have committed piracy! yet now you both stand here murderers and pirates, tried and found guilty—you Wansley of the murder of your Captain, and you, Gibbs, of the murder of your Mate. The evidence has convicted you of rising in mutiny against the master of the vessel, for that alone, the law is DEATH!—of murder and robbery on the high seas, for that crime, the law adjudges DEATH—of destroying the vessel and embezzling the cargo, even for

scuttling and burning the vessel alone, the law is DEATH; yet of all these the evidence has convicted you, and it only remains now for the Court to pass the sentence of the law. It is, that you, Thomas J. Wansley and Charles Gibbs be taken hence to the place of confinement, there to remain in close custody, that thence you be taken to the place of execution, and on the 22d April next, between the hours of 10 and 4 o'clock, you be both publicly hanged by the neck until you are DEAD—and that your bodies be given to the College of Physicians and Surgeons for dissection.

The Court added, that the only thing discretionary with it, was the time of execution; it might have ordered that you should instantly have been taken from the stand to the scaffold, but the sentence has been deferred to as distant a period as prudent—six weeks. But this time has not been granted for the purpose of giving you any hope for pardon or commutation of the sentence;—just as sure as you live till the twenty-second of April, as surely you will suffer death—therefore indulge not a hope that this sentence will be changed!

The Court then spoke of the terror in all men of death!—how they cling to life whether in youth, manhood or old age. What an awful thing it is to die! how in the perils of the sea, when rocks or storms threaten the loss of the vessel, and the lives of all on board, how the crew will labor, night and day, in the hope of escaping shipwreck and death! alluded to the tumult, bustle and confusion of battle—yet even there the hero clings to life. The Court adverted not only to the certainty of their coming doom on earth, but to THINK OF HEREAFTER—that they should seriously think and reflect of their FUTURE STATE! that they would be assisted in their devotions no doubt, by many pious men.

When the Court closed, Charles Gibbs asked, if during his imprisonment, his friends would be permitted to see him. The Court answered that that lay with the Marshal, who then said that no difficulty would exist on that score. The remarks of the Prisoners were delivered in a strong, full-toned and unwavering voice, and they both seemed perfectly resigned to the fate which inevitably awaited them. While Judge Betts was delivering his address to them,

Wansley was deeply affected, and shed tears—but Gibbs gazed with a steady and unwavering eye, and no sign betrayed the least emotion of his heart. After his condemnation, and during his confinement, his frame became somewhat enfeebled, his face paler, and his eyes more sunken; but the air of his bold, enterprising and desperate mind still remained. In his narrow cell, he seemed more like an object of pity than vengeance—was affable and communicative, and when he smiled, exhibited so mild and gentle a countenance, that no one would take him to be a villain. His conversation was concise and pertinent, and his style of illustration quite original.

Gibbs was married in Buenos Ayres, where he has a child now living. His wife is dead. By a singular concurrence of circumstances, the woman with whom he became acquainted in Liverpool, and who is said at that time to have borne a decent character, was lodged in the same prison with himself. During his confinement he wrote her two letters—one of them is subjoined, to gratify the perhaps innocent curiosity which is naturally felt to know the peculiarities of a man's mind and feelings under such circumstances, and not for the purpose of intimating a belief that he was truly penitent. The reader will be surprised with the apparent readiness with which he made quotations from Scripture.

“ BELLEVUE PRISON, March 20, 1831.

“ It is with regret that I take my pen in hand to address you with these few lines, under the great embarrassment of my feelings placed within these gloomy walls, my body bound with chains, and under the awful sentence of death! It is enough to throw the strongest mind into gloomy prospects! but I find that Jesus Christ is sufficient to give consolation to the most despairing soul. For he saith, that he that cometh to me I will in no ways cast out. But it is impossible to describe unto you the horror of my feelings. My breast is like the tempestuous ocean, raging in its own shame, harrowing up the bottom of my soul! But I look forward to that serene calm when I shall sleep with Kings and Counsellors of the earth. There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest!—There

the prisoners rest together—they hear not the voice of the oppressor; and I trust that there my breast will not be ruffled by the storm of sin—for the thing which I greatly feared has come upon me. I was not in safety, neither had I rest; yet trouble came. It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth to him good. When I saw you in Liverpool, and a peaceful calm wafted across both our breasts, and justice no claim upon us, little did I think to meet you in the gloomy walls of a strong prison, and the arm of justice stretched out with the sword of the law, awaiting the appointed period to execute the dreadful sentence. I have had a fair prospect in the world, at last it budded, and brought forth the gallows. I am shortly to mount that scaffold, and to bid adieu to this world, and all that was ever dear to my breast. But I trust when my body is mounted on the gallows high, the heavens above will smile and pity me. I hope that you will reflect on your past, and fly to that Jesus who stands with open arms to receive you. Your character is lost, it is true. When the wicked turneth from the wickedness that they have committed, they shall save their soul alive.

“Let us imagine for a moment that we see the souls standing before the awful tribunal, and we hear its dreadful sentence, depart ye cursed into everlasting fire. Imagine you hear the awful lamentations of a soul in hell. It would be enough to melt your heart, if it was as hard as adamant. You would fall upon your knees and plead for God’s mercy, as a famished person would for food, or as a dying criminal would for a pardon. We soon, very soon, must go the way whence we shall ne’er return. Our names will be struck off the records of the living, and enrolled in the vast catalogues of the dead. But may it ne’er be numbered with the damned.—I hope it will please God to set you at your liberty, and that you may see the sins and follies of your life past. I shall now close my letter with a few words which I hope you will receive as from a dying man; and I hope that every important truth of this letter may sink deep in your heart, and be a lesson to you through life.

Rising griefs distress my soul,
And tears on tears successive roll—

For many an evil voice is near,
 To chide my woes and mock my fear—
 And silent memory weeps alone,
 O'er hours of peace and gladness known.

I still remain your sincere friend,

CHARLES GIBBS.

In another letter which the wretched Gibbs wrote after his condemnation to one who had been his early friend, he writes as follows:—"Alas! it is now, and not until now, that I have become sensible of my wicked life, from my childhood, and the enormity of the crime, for which I must shortly suffer an ignominious death!—I would to God that I never had been born, or that I had died in my infancy!—the hour of reflection has indeed come, but come too late to prevent justice from cutting me off—my mind recoils with horror at the thoughts of the unnatural deeds of which I have been guilty!—my repose rather prevents than affords me relief, as my mind, while I slumber, is constantly disturbed by frightful dreams of my approaching awful dissolution!"

On Friday, April twenty-second, Gibbs and Wansley paid the penalty of their crimes. Both prisoners arrived at the gallows about twelve o'clock, accompanied by the marshal, his aids, and some twenty or thirty United States' marines. Two clergymen attended them to the fatal spot, where everything being in readiness, and the ropes adjusted about their necks, the Throne of Mercy was fervently addressed in their behalf. Wansley then prayed earnestly himself, and afterwards joined in singing a hymn. These exercises concluded, Gibbs addressed the spectators nearly as follows:

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

My crimes have been heinous—and although I am now about to suffer for the murder of Mr. Roberts, I solemnly declare my innocence of the transaction. It is true, I stood by and saw the fatal deed done, and stretched not forth my arm to save him; the technicalities of the law believe me guilty of the charge—but in the presence of my God—

before whom I shall be in a few minutes—I declare I did not murder him.

I have made a full and frank confession to Mr. Hopson, which probably most of my hearers present have already read; and should any of the friends of those whom I have been accessory to, or engaged in the murder of, be now present, before my Maker I beg their forgiveness—it is the only boon I ask—and as I hope for pardon through the blood of Christ, surely this request will not be withheld by man, to a worm like myself, standing as I do, on the very verge of eternity! Another moment, and I cease to exist—and could I find in my bosom room to imagine that the spectators now assembled had forgiven me, the scaffold would have no terrors, nor could the precept which my much respected friend, the marshal of the district, is about to execute. Let me then, in this public manner, return my sincere thanks to him, for his kind and gentlemanly deportment during my confinement. He was to me like a father, and his humanity to a dying man I hope will be duly appreciated by an enlightened community.

My first crime was *piracy*, for which my *life* would pay the forfeit on conviction; no punishment could be inflicted on me further than that, and therefore I had nothing to fear but detection, for had my offences been millions of times more aggravated than they now are, *death* must have satisfied all.

Gibbs having concluded, Wansley began. He said he might be called a pirate, a robber, and a murderer, and he was all of these, but he hoped and trusted God would, through Christ, wash away his aggravated crimes and offences, and not cast him entirely out. His feelings, he said, were so overpowered that he hardly knew how to address those about him, but he frankly admitted the justness of the sentence, and concluded by declaring that he had no hope of pardon except through the atoning blood of his Redeemer, and wished that his sad fate might teach others to shun the broad road to ruin, and travel in that of virtue, which would lead to honor and happiness in this world, and an immortal crown of glory in that to come.

He then shook hands with Gibbs, the officers, and clergymen—their caps were drawn over their faces, a handker-

chief dropped by Gibbs as a signal to the executioner, caused the cord to be severed, and in an instant they were suspended in air. Wansley folded his hands before him, before he was run up, and did not again remove them, but soon died with very trifling struggles. Gibbs died hard; after being near two minutes suspended, he raised his right hand and partially removed his cap, and in the course of another minute, raised the same hand to his mouth. His dress was a blue round-about jacket and trousers, with a foul anchor in white on his right arm. Wansley wore a white frock coat, trimmed with black, with trousers of the same color.

After the bodies had remained on the gallows the usual time, they were taken down and given to the surgeons for dissection.

Gibbs was rather below the middle stature, thick set and powerful. The form of Wansley was a perfect model of manly beauty.