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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

They board the American brig Mexican.

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

on the last Wednesday of August, and was quietly pursuing her voyage towards Rio Janeiro. Nothing remarkable had happened on board, says Captain B., until half past two o'clock, in the morning of September 20th, in lat. 38, 0, N., lon. 24, 30, W. The attention of the watch on deck was forcibly arrested by the appearance of a vessel which passed across our stern about half a mile from us. At 4 A. M. saw her again passing across our bow, so near that we could perceive that it was a schooner with a fore top sail and top gallant sail. As it was somewhat dark she was soon out of sight. At daylight saw her about five miles off the weather quarter, standing on the wind on the same tack we were on, the wind was light at S. S. W. and we were standing about S. E. At 8 A. M. she was about two miles right to windward of us; could perceive a large number of men upon her deck, and one man on the fore top gallant yard looking out; was very suspicious of her, but know not how to avoid her. Soon after saw a brig on our weather bow steering to the N. E. By this time the schooner was about three miles from us and four points forward of the beam. Expecting that she would keep on for the brig ahead of us, we tacked to the westward, keeping a little off from the wind to make good way through the water, to get clear of her if possible. She kept on to the eastward about ten or fifteen minutes after we had tacked, then wore round, set square sail, steering directly for us, came down upon us very fast, and was soon within gun shot of us, fired a gun and hoisted patriot colors and backed main topsail. He ran along to windward of us, hailed us to know where we were from, where bound, &c. then ordered me to come on board in my boat. Seeing that he was too powerful for us to resist, I accordingly went, and soon as I got along-side of the schooner, five ruffians instantly jumped into my boat, each of them being armed with a large knife, and told me to go on board the brig again; when they got on board they insisted that we had got money, and drew their knives, threatening us with instant death and demanding to know where it was. As soon as they found out where it was they obliged my crew to get it up out of the run upon deck, beating and threatening them at the same time because they did not do it quicker.

When they had got it all upon deck, and hailed the schooner, they got out their launch and came and took it on board the schooner, viz: ten boxes containing twenty thousand dollars; then returned to the brig again, drove all the crew into the fore-castle, ransacked the cabin, overhauling all the chests, trunks, &c. and rifled my pockets, taking my watch, and three doubloons which I had previously put there for safety; robbed the mate of his watch and two hundred dollars in specie, still insisting that there was more money in the hold. Being answered in the negative, they beat me severely over the back, said they knew that there was more, that they should search for it, and if they found any they would cut all our throats. They continued searching about in every part of the vessel for some time longer, but not finding any more specie, they took two coils of rigging, a side of leather, and some other articles, and went on board the schooner, probably to consult what to do with us; for, in eight or ten minutes they came back, apparently in great haste, shut us all below, fastened up the companion way, fore-scuttle and after hatch-way, stove our compasses to pieces in the binnacles, cut away tiller-ropes, halliards, braces, and most of our running rigging, cut our sails to pieces badly; took a tub of tarred rope-yarn and what combustibles they could find about deck, put them in the camboose house and set them on fire; then left us, taking with them our boat and colors. When they got alongside of the schooner they scuttled our boat, took in their own, and made sail, steering to the eastward.

As soon as they left us, we got up out of the cabin scuttle, which they had neglected to secure, and extinguished the fire, which if it had been left a few minutes, would have caught the mainsail and set our masts on fire. Soon after we saw a ship to leeward of us steering to the S. E. the schooner being in pursuit of her did not overtake her whilst she was in sight of us.

It was doubtless their intention to burn us up altogether, but seeing the ship, and being eager for more plunder they did not stop fully to accomplish their design. She was a low strait schooner of about one hundred and fifty tons, painted black with a narrow white streak, a large head with the horn of plenty painted white, large maintopmast

but no yards or sail on it. Mast raked very much, main-sail very square at the head, sails made with split cloth and all new; had two long brass twelve pounders and a large gun on a pivot amidships, and about seventy men, who appeared to be chiefly Spaniards and mulattoes.

The object of the voyage being frustrated by the loss of the specie, nothing now remained but for the Mexican to make the best of her way back to Salem, which she reached in safety. The government of the United States struck with the audacity of this piracy, despatched a cruiser in pursuit of them. After a fruitless voyage in which every exertion was made, and many places visited on the coast of Africa, where it was supposed the rascals might be lurking, the chase was abandoned as hopeless, no clue being found to their "whereabouts."

The Panda after robbing the Mexican, pursued her course across the Atlantic, and made Cape Monte, from this she coasted south, and after passing Cape Palmas entered the Gulf of Guinea, and steered for Cape Lopez which she reached in the first part of November. Cape Lopez de Gonzalves, in lat. $0^{\circ} 36' 2''$ south, long. $8^{\circ} 40' 4''$ east, is so called from its first discoverer. It is covered with wood but low and swampy, as is also the neighboring country. The extensive bay formed by this cape is fourteen miles in depth, and has several small creeks and rivers running into it. The largest is the river Nazareth on the left point of which is situated King Gula's town the only assemblage of huts in the bay. Here the cargo of the Panda was unloaded, the greater part was entrusted to the king, and with the rest Capt. Gibert opened a factory and commenced buying various articles of commerce, as tortoise shell, gum, ivory, palm oil, fine straw carpeting, and slaves. After remaining here a short time the crew became sickly and Capt. Gibert sailed for Prince's Island to recover the health of his crew. Whilst at Prince's Island news arrived of the robbery of the Mexican. And the pirate left with the utmost precipitation for Cape Lopez, and the better to evade pursuit, a pilot was procured; and the vessel carried several miles up the river Nazareth. Soon after the Panda left Prince's Island, the British brig of war, Curlew, Capt. Trotter arrived, and from the description given of the ves-

sel then said to be lying in the Nazareth, Capt. Trotter knew she must be the one, that robbed the Mexican; and he instantly sailed in pursuit. On nearing the coast, she was discovered lying up the river; three boats containing forty men and commanded by Capt. Trotter, started up the river with the sea breeze and flood tide, and colors flying to take the desperadoes; the boats kept in near the shore until rounding a point they were seen from the Panda. The pirates immediately took to their boats, except Francisco Ruiz who seizing a fire brand from the camboose went into the magazine and set some combustibles on fire with the laudable purpose of blowing up the assailants, and then paddled ashore in a canoe. Capt. Trotter chased them with his boats, but could not come up with them, and then boarded the schooner which he found on fire. The first thing he did was to put out the fire which was in the magazine, below the cabin floor; here was found a quantity of cotton and brimstone burning and a slow match ignited and communicating with the magazine, which contained sixteen casks of powder.

The Panda was now warped out of the river, and anchored off the negro town of Cape Lopez. Negotiations were now entered into, for the surrender of the pirates. An officer was accordingly sent on shore to have an interview with the king. He was met on the beach by an ebony chief, calling himself duke. "We followed the duke through the extensive and straggling place, frequently buried up to the ankles in sand, from which the vegetation was worn by the constant passing and repassing of the inhabitants. We arrived at a large folding door placed in a high bamboo and palm tree fence, which inclosed the king's establishment, ornamented on our right by two old honey combed guns, which, although dismounted, were probably, according to the practice of the coast, occasionally fired to attract the attention of passing vessels, and to imply that slaves were to be procured. On the left of the enclosure was a shed, with a large ship's bell suspended beneath, serving as an alarum bell in case of danger, while the remainder was occupied with neatly built huts, inhabited by the numerous wives of the king.

"We sent in to notify him of our arrival, he sent word

out that we might remain outside until it suited his convenience. But as such an arrangement did not suit ours, we immediately entered, and found sitting at a table the king. He was a tall, muscular, ugly looking negro, about fifty years of age. We explained the object of our visit, which was to demand the surrender of the white men, who were now concealed in the town, and for permission to pass up the river in pursuit of those who had gone up that way. He now expressed the most violent indignation at our presumption in demanding the pirates, and the interview was broken off by his refusing to deliver up a single man."

We will now return to the pirates. While at Prince's Island, Capt. Gibert bought a magnificent dressing case worth nearly a thousand dollars and a patent lever watch, and a quantity of tobacco, and provisions, and two valuable cloth coats, some Guinea cloth and black and green paint. The paint, cloth and coats were intended as presents for the African king at Cape Lopez. These articles were all bought with the money taken from the Mexican. After arriving at the Nazareth, \$4000 were taken from the trunk, and buried in the yard of a negro prince. Four of the pirates then went to Cape Lopez for \$11,000, which had been buried there. Boyga, Castillo, Guzman, and the "State's Evidence," Ferez, were the ones who went. Ferez took the bags out, and the others counted the money; great haste was made as the musquitoes were biting intolerably. \$5000 were buried for the captain in canvass bags about two feet deep, part of the money was carried to Nazareth, and from there carried into the mountains and there buried. A consultation was held by Capt. Gibert, De Soto, and Ruiz, and the latter said, if the money was not divided, "there would be the devil to pay." The money was now divided in a dark room and a lantern used; Capt. Gibert sat on the floor with the money at his side. He gave the mate about \$3000, and the other officers \$1000, each; and the crew from \$300 to \$500, each. The third mate having fled, the captain sent him \$1000, and Ruiz carried it to him. When the money was first taken from the Mexican, it was spread out on the companion way and examined to see if there was no gold amongst it; and then put into bags made of dark coarse