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

ELMS, CHARLES

New York [u.a.], 1842

The Adventures of Captain Condent.

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THE ADVENTURES OF
CAPTAIN CONDENT.

CAPTAIN CONDENT was a Plymouth man born, but we are as yet ignorant of the motives and time of his first turning pirate. He was one of those who thought fit to retire from Providence, on Governor Rogers' arrival at that island, in a sloop belonging to Mr. Simpson, of New-York, a Jew merchant, of which sloop he was then quarter-master. Soon after they left the island, an accident happened on board, which put the whole crew into consternation. They had among them an Indian man, whom some of them had beaten; in revenge, he got most of the arms forward into the hold, and designed to blow up the sloop; upon which, some advised scuttling the deck, and throwing grenade shells down, but Condent said that was too tedious and dangerous, since the fellow might fire through the deck and kill several of them. He, therefore, taking a pistol in one hand, and his cutlass in the other, leaped into the hold. The Indian discharged a piece at him, which broke his arm; but, however, he ran up and shot the Indian. When he was dead, the crew hacked him to pieces, and the gunner, ripping up his belly and tearing out his heart, broiled and eat it.

After this, they took a merchantman called the Duke of York; and some disputes arising among the pirates, the captain, and one half of the company, went on board the prize; the other half, who continued in the sloop, chose Condent captain. He shaped his course for the Cape-de-Verd Islands, and in his way took a merchant ship from Madeira, laden with wine, and bound for the West Indies, which he plundered and let go; then coming to the Isle of May, one of the said islands, he took the whole salt fleet,

consisting of about 20 sail. Wanting a boom, he took out the mainmast of one of these ships to supply the want. Here he took upon himself the administration of justice, inquiring into the manner of the commanders' behavior to their men, and those against whom complaint was made, he whipped and pickled. He took what provision and other necessaries he wanted, and having augmented his company by volunteers and forced men, he left the ships and sailed to St. Jago, where he took a Dutch ship, which had formerly been a privateer. This proved also an easy prize, for he fired but one broadside, and clapping her on board, carried her without resistance, for the captain and several men were killed, and some wounded by his great shot.

The ship proving for his purpose, he gave her the name of the Flying Dragon, went on board with his crew, and made a present of his sloop to a mate of an English prize, whom he had forced with him. From hence he stood away for the coast of Brazil, and in his cruize took several Portuguese ships, which he plundered and let go.

After these he fell in with the Wright galley, Capt. John Spelt, commander, hired by the South Sea company, to go to the coast of Angola for slaves, and thence to Buenos Ayres. This ship he detained a considerable time, and the captain being his townsman, treated him very civilly. A few days after he took Spelt, he made prize of a Portuguese, laden with bale goods and stores. He rigged the Wright galley anew, and put on board of her some of the goods. Soon after he had discharged the Portuguese, he met with a Dutch East Indiaman of 28 guns, whose captain was killed the first broadside, and took her with little resistance, for he had hoisted the pirate's colors on board Spelt's ship.

He now, with three sail, steered for the island of Ferdinando, where he hove down and cleaned the Flying Dragon. Having careened, he put 11 Dutchmen on board Capt. Spelt, to make amends for the hands he had forced from him, and sent him away, making him a present of the goods he had taken from the Portuguese ship. When he sailed himself, he ordered the Dutch to stay at Ferdinando 24 hours after his departure; threatening, if he did not

comply, to sink his ship, if he fell a second time into his hands, and to put all the company to the sword. He then stood for the coast of Brazil, where he met a Portuguese man of war of 70 guns, which he came up with. The



The Pirates riding the Priests about deck.

Portuguese hailed him, and he answered, *from London, bound to Buenos Ayres.* The Portuguese manned his shrouds and cheered him, when Condent fired a broadside, and a smart engagement ensued for the space of three

glasses; but Condent finding himself over-matched, made the best of his way, and being the best sailer, got off.

A few days after, he took a vessel of the same nation, who gave an account, that he had killed above forty men in the Guarda del Costa, beside a number wounded. He kept along the coast to the southward, and took a French ship of 18 guns, laden with wine and brandy, bound for the South Sea, which he carried with him into the River of Platte. He sent some of his men ashore to kill some wild cattle, but they were taken by the crew of a Spanish man-of-war. On their examination before the captain, they said they were two Guinea ships, with slaves belonging to the South Sea company, and on this story were allowed to return to their boats. Here five of his forced men ran away with his canoe; he plundered the French ship, cut her adrift, and she was stranded. He proceeded along the Brazil coast, and hearing a pirate ship was lost upon it, and the pirates imprisoned, he used all the Portuguese who fell into his hands, who were many, very barbarously, cutting off their ears and noses; and as his master was a papist, when they took a priest, they made him say mass at the mainmast, and would afterwards get on his back and ride him about the decks, or else load and drive him like a beast. He from this went to the Guinea coast, and took Capt. Hill, in the Indian Queen.

In Luengo Bay he saw two ships at anchor, one a Dutchman of 44 guns, the other an English ship, called the Fame, Capt. Bowen, commander. They both cut and ran ashore; the Fame was lost, but the Dutch ship the pirate got off and took with him. When he was at sea again, he discharged Captain Hill, and stood away for the East Indies. Near the Cape he took an Ostend East-Indiaman, of which Mr. Nash, a noted merchant of London, was supercargo. Soon after he took a Dutch East-Indiaman, discharged the Ostender, and made for Madagascar. At the Isle of St. Mary, he met with some of Capt. Halsey's crew, whom he took on board with other stragglers, and shaped his course for the East-Indies, and in the way, at the island of Johanna, took, in company with two other pirates he met at St. Mary's, the Cassandra East-Indiaman, commanded by Capt. James Macraigh. He continued his



Capt. Condent leaping into the hold, to attack the Indian. p. 221.



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course for the East-Indies, where he made a very great booty; and returning, touched at the island of Mascarenhas, where he met with a Portuguese ship of 70 guns, with the viceroy of Goa on board. This ship he made prize of, and hearing she had money on board, they would allow of no ransom, but carried her to the coast of Zanguebar, where was a Dutch fortification, which they took and plundered, razed the fort, and carried off several men voluntarily. From hence they stood for St. Mary's, where they shared their booty, broke up their company, and settled among the natives. Here a snow came from Bristol, which they obliged to carry a petition to the governor of Mascarenhas for a pardon, though they paid the master very generously. The governor returned answer he would take them into protection if they would destroy their ships, which they agreed to, and accordingly sunk the Flying Dragon, &c. Condent and some others went to Mascarenhas, where Condent married the governor's sister-in-law, and remained some time; but, as I have been credibly informed, he is since come to France, settled at St. Maloes, and drives a considerable trade as a merchant.