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**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

Charleston, S. C. blockaded by Black Beard.

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four sloops. Teach hoisted his flag, and began to fire at them, upon which the captain and his men left their ship and fled to the shore. Teach burned two of these sloops, and let the other three depart.

They afterwards sailed to different places, and having taken two small vessels, anchored off the bar of Charleston for a few days. Here they captured a ship bound for England, as she was coming out of the harbor. They next seized a vessel coming out of Charleston, and two pinks coming into the same harbor, together with a brigantine with fourteen negroes. The audacity of these transactions, performed in sight of the town, struck the inhabitants with terror, as they had been lately visited by some other notorious pirates. Meanwhile, there were eight sail in the harbor, none of which durst set to sea for fear of falling into the hands of Teach. The trade of this place was totally interrupted, and the inhabitants were abandoned to despair. Their calamity was greatly augmented from this circumstance, that a long and desperate war with the natives had just terminated, when they began to be infested by these robbers.

Teach having detained all the persons taken in these ships as prisoners, they were soon in great want of medicines, and he had the audacity to demand a chest from the governor. This demand was made in a manner not less daring than insolent. Teach sent Richards, the captain of the *Revenge*, with Mr. Marks, one of the prisoners, and several others, to present their request. Richards informed the governor, that unless their demand was granted, and he and his companions returned in safety, every prisoner on board the captured ships should instantly be slain, and the vessels consumed to ashes.

During the time that Mr. Marks was negotiating with the governor, Richards and his associates walked the streets at pleasure, while indignation flamed from every eye against them, as the robbers of their property, and the terror of their country. Though the affront thus offered to the Government was great and most audacious, yet, to preserve the lives of so many men, they granted their request, and sent on board a chest valued at three or four hundred pounds.

Teach, as soon as he received the medicines and his fellow pirates, pillaged the ships of gold and provisions, and then dismissed the prisoners with their vessels. From the bar of Charleston they sailed to North Carolina. Teach now began to reflect how he could best secure the spoil, along with some of the crew who were his favorites. Accordingly, under pretence of cleaning, he ran his vessel on shore, and grounded; then ordered the men in Hands' sloop to come to his assistance, which they endeavoring to do, also ran aground, and so they were both lost. Then Teach went into the tender with forty hands, and upon a sandy island, about a league from shore, where there was neither bird nor beast, nor herb for their subsistence, he left seventeen of his crew, who must inevitably have perished, had not Major Bonnet received intelligence of their miserable situation, and sent a long-boat for them. After this barbarous deed, Teach, with the remainder of his crew, went and surrendered to the governor of North Carolina, retaining all the property which had been acquired by his fleet.

The temporary suspension of the depredations of Black Beard, for so he was now called, did not proceed from a conviction of his former errors, or a determination to reform, but to prepare for future and more extensive exploits. As governors are but men, and not unfrequently by no means possessed of the most virtuous principles, the gold of Black Beard rendered him comely in the governor's eyes, and, by his influence, he obtained a legal right to the great ship called "The Queen Anne's Revenge." By order of the governor, a court of vice-admiralty was held at Bath-town, and that vessel was condemned as a lawful prize which he had taken from the Spaniards, though it was a well-known fact that she belonged to English merchants. Before he entered upon his new adventures, he married a young woman of about sixteen years of age, the governor himself attending the ceremony. It was reported that this was only his fourteenth wife, about twelve of whom were yet alive; and though this woman was young and amiable, he behaved towards her in a manner so brutal, that it was shocking to all decency and propriety, even among his abandoned crew of pirates.

In his first voyage, Black Beard directed his course to the Bermudas, and meeting with two or three English vessels, emptied them of their stores and other necessaries, and allowed them to proceed. He also met with two French vessels bound for Martinique, the one light, and the other laden with sugar and cocoa: he put the men on board the latter into the former, and allowed her to depart. He brought the freighted vessel into North Carolina, where the governor and Black Beard shared the prizes. Nor did their audacity and villany stop here. Teach and some of his abandoned crew waited upon his excellency, and swore that they had seized the French ship at sea, without a soul on board; therefore a court was called, and she was condemned, the honorable governor received sixty hogsheads of sugar for his share, his secretary twenty, and the pirates the remainder. But as guilt always inspires suspicion, Teach was afraid that some one might arrive in the harbor who might detect the roguery: therefore, upon pretence that she was leaky, and might sink, and so stop up the entrance to the harbor where she lay, they obtained the governor's liberty to drag her into the river, where she was set on fire, and when burnt down to the water, her bottom was sunk, that so she might never rise in judgment against the governor and his confederates.

Black Beard now being in the province of Friendship, passed several months in the river, giving and receiving visits from the planters; while he traded with the vessels which came to that river, sometimes in the way of lawful commerce, and sometimes in his own way. When he chose to appear the honest man, he made fair purchases on equal barter; but when this did not suit his necessities, or his humor, he would rob at pleasure, and leave them to seek their redress from the governor; and the better to cover his intrigues with his excellency, he would sometimes outbrave him to his face, and administer to him a share of that contempt and insolence which he so liberally bestowed upon the rest of the inhabitants of the province.

But there are limits to human insolence and depravity. The captains of the vessels who frequented that river, and had been so often harrassed and plundered by Black Beard, secretly consulted with some of the planters what measures

to pursue, in order to banish such an infamous miscreant from their coasts, and to bring him to deserved punishment. Convinced from long experience, that the governor himself, to whom it belonged, would give no redress, they represented the matter to the governor of Virginia, and entreated that an armed force might be sent from the men-of-war lying there, either to take or to destroy those pirates who infested their coast.

Upon this representation, the Governor of Virginia consulted with the captains of the two men-of-war as to the best measures to be adopted. He was resolved that the governor should hire two small vessels, which could pursue Black Beard into all his inlets and creeks; that they should be manned from the men-of-war, and the command given to Lieutenant Maynard, an experienced and resolute officer. When all was ready for his departure, the governor called an assembly, in which it was resolved to issue a proclamation, offering a great reward to any who, within a year, should take or destroy any pirate.

Upon the 17th of November, 1717, Maynard left James's river in quest of Black Beard, and on the evening of the 21st came in sight of the pirate. This expedition was fitted out with all possible expedition and secrecy, no boat being permitted to pass that might convey any intelligence, while care was taken to discover where the pirates were lurking. His excellency the governor of Bermuda, and his secretary, however, having obtained information of the intended expedition, the latter wrote a letter to Black Beard, intimating, that he had sent him four of his men, who were all he could meet with in or about town, and so bade him be upon his guard. These men were sent from Bath-town to the place where Black Beard lay, about the distance of twenty leagues.

The hardened and infatuated pirate, having been often deceived by false intelligence, was the less attentive to this information, nor was he convinced of its accuracy until he saw the sloops sent to apprehend him. Though he had then only twenty men on board, he prepared to give battle. Lieutenant Maynard arrived with his sloops in the evening, and anchored, as he could not venture, under cloud of night, to go into the place where Black Beard lay. The