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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**

The West India Pirates.

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## THE WEST INDIA PIRATES,

*Containing Accounts of their Atrocities, Manners of Living, &c., with proceedings of the Squadron under Commodore Porter in those seas, the victory and death of Lieutenant Allen, the interesting Narrative of Captain Lincoln, &c.*



*A Piratical Vessel, destroying a Merchant Ship.*

Those innumerable groups of islands, keys and sandbanks, known as the West-Indies, are peculiarly adapted from their locality and formation, to be a favorite resort for pirates; many of them are composed of coral rocks, on which a few cocoa trees raise their lofty heads; where there is

sufficient earth for vegetation between the interstices of the rocks, stunted brush-wood grows. But a chief peculiarity of some of the islands, and which renders them suitable to those who frequent them as pirates, are the numerous caves with which the rocks are perforated; some of them are above high-water mark, but the majority with the sea water flowing in and out of them, in some cases merely rushing in and at high-water filling deep pools, which are detached from each other when the tide recedes, in others with a sufficient depth of water to allow a large boat to float in. It is hardly necessary to observe how convenient the higher and dry caves are as receptacles for articles which are intended to be concealed, until an opportunity occurs to dispose of them. The Bahamas, themselves are a singular group of isles, reefs and quays; consisting of several hundred in number, and were the chief resort of pirates in old times, but now they are all rooted from them; they are low and not elevated, and are more than 600 miles in extent, cut up into numerous intricate passages and channels, full of sunken rocks and coral reefs. They afforded a sure retreat to desperadoes. Other islands are full of mountain fastnesses, where all pursuit can be eluded. Many of the low shores are skirted, and the islands covered by the mangrove, a singular tree, shooting fresh roots as it grows, which, when the tree is at its full age, may be found six or eight feet from the ground, to which the shoots gradually tend in regular succession; the leaf is very thick and stiff and about eight inches long and nine wide, the interval between the roots offer secure hiding places for those who are suddenly pursued. Another circumstance assists the pirate when pursued.—As the islands belong to several different nations, when pursued from one island he can pass to that under the jurisdiction of another power. And as permission must be got by those in pursuit of him, from the authorities of the island to land and take him, he thus gains time to secrete himself. A tropical climate is suited to a roving life, and liquor as well as dissolute women being in great abundance, to gratify him during his hours of relaxation, makes this a congenial region for the lawless.

The crews of pirate vessels in these seas are chiefly com-

posed of Spaniards, Portuguese, French, Mulattoes, Negroes, and a few natives of other countries. The island of Cuba is the great nest of pirates at the present day, and at the Havana, piracy is as much tolerated as any other profession. As the piracies committed in these seas, during a single year, have amounted to more than fifty, we shall give only a few accounts of the most interesting.

In November 1821, the brig Cobbessecontee, Captain Jackson, sailed from Havana, on the morning of the 8th for Boston, and on the evening of the same day, about four miles from the Moro, was brought to by a piratical sloop, containing about 30 men. A boat from her, with 10 men, came alongside, and soon after they got on board commenced plundering. They took nearly all the clothing from the captain and mate—all the cooking utensils and spare rigging—unrove part of the running rigging—cut the small cable—broke the compasses—cut the mast's coats to pieces—took from the captain his watch and four boxes cigars—and from the cargo three bales cochineal and six boxes cigars. They beat the mate unmercifully, and hung him up by the neck under the maintop. They also beat the captain severely—broke a large broad sword across his back, and ran a long knife through his thigh, so that he almost bled to death. Captain Jackson saw the sloop at Regla the day before.

Captain Jackson informs us, and we have also been informed by other persons from the Havana, that this system of piracy is openly countenanced by some of the inhabitants of that place—who say that it is a retaliation on the Americans for interfering against the Slave Trade.

About this time the ship Liverpool Packet, Ricker, of Portsmouth, N. H., was boarded off Cape St Antonio, Cuba, by two piratical schooners; two barges containing thirty or forty men, robbed the vessel of every thing movable, even to her *flags*, rigging, and a boat which happened to be afloat, having a boy in it, which belonged to the ship. They held a consultation whether they should murder the crew, as they had done before, or not—in the mean time taking the ship into anchoring ground. On bringing her to anchor, the crew saw a brig close alongside, burnt to the water's edge, and three dead bodies

floating near her. The pirates said they had burnt the brig the day before, and *murdered all the crew!*—and intended doing the same with them. They said “look at the turtles, (meaning the dead bodies) you will soon be the same.” They said the vessel was a Baltimore brig, which they had robbed and burnt, and murdered the crew as before stated, of which they had little doubt. Captain Ricker was most shockingly bruised by them. The mate was hung till he was supposed to be dead, but came to, and is now alive. They told the captain that they belonged in Regla, and should kill them all to prevent discovery.

In 1822, the United States had several cruisers among the West-India islands, to keep the pirates in check, much good was done, but still many vessels were robbed and destroyed, together with their crews. This year the brave Lieutenant Allen fell by the hands of pirates; he was in the United States schooner Alligator, and receiving intelligence at Matanzas, that several vessels which had sailed from that port, had been taken by the pirates, and were then in the bay of Lejuapo. He hastened to their assistance. He arrived just in time so save five sail of vessels which he found in possession of a gang of pirates, 300 strong, established in the bay of Lejuapo, about 15 leagues east of this. He fell, pierced by two musket balls, in the van of a division of boats, attacking their principal vessel, a fine schooner of about eighty tons, with a long eighteen pounder on a pivot, and four smaller guns, *with the bloody flag nailed to the mast.* Himself, Captain Freeman of Marines, and twelve men, were in the boat, much in advance of his other boats, and even took possession of the schooner, after a desperate resistance, which nothing but a bravery almost too daring could have overcome. The pirates, all but one, escaped by taking to their boats and jumping overboard, before the Alligator's boat reached them. Two other schooners escaped by the use of their oars, the wind being light.

Captain Allen survived about four hours, during which his conversation evinced a composure and firmness of mind, and correctness of feeling, as honorable to his character, and more consoling to his friends, than even the dauntless bravery he before exhibited.”

The surgeon of the Alligator in a letter to a friend, says, "He continued giving orders and conversing with Mr. Dale and the rest of us, until a few minutes before his death, with a degree of cheerfulness that was little to be expected from a man in his condition. He said he wished his relatives and his country to know that he had fought well, and added that he died in peace and good will towards all the world, and hoped for his reward in the next."

Lieutenant Allen had but few equals in the service. He was ardently devoted to the interest of his country, was brave, intelligent, and accomplished in his profession. He displayed, living and dying, a magnanimity that sheds lustre on his relatives, his friends, and his country.

About this time Captain Lincoln fell into the hands of the pirates, and as his treatment shows the peculiar habits and practices of these wretches, we insert the very interesting narrative of the captain.

The schooner Exertion, Captain Lincoln, sailed from Boston, bound for Trinidad de Cuba, Nov. 13th, 1821, with the following crew; Joshua Brackett, mate; David Warren, cook; and Thomas Young, Francis De Suze, and George Reed, seamen.

The cargo consisted of flour, beef, pork, lard, butter, fish, beans, onions, potatoes, apples, hams, furniture, sugar box shooks, &c., invoiced at about eight thousand dollars. Nothing remarkable occurred during the passage, except much bad weather, until my capture, which was as follows:—

Monday, December 17th, 1821, commenced with fine breezes from the eastward. At daybreak saw some of the islands northward of Cape Cruz, called Keys—stood along north-west; every thing now seemed favorable for a happy termination of our voyage. At 3 o'clock, P. M., saw a sail coming round one of the Keys, into a channel called Boca de Cavolone by the chart, nearly in latitude  $20^{\circ} 55'$  north, longitude  $79^{\circ} 55'$  west, she made directly for us with all sails set, sweeps on both sides (the wind being light) and was soon near enough for us to discover about forty men on her deck, armed with muskets, blunderbusses, cutlasses, long knives, dirks, &c., two carronades, one a twelve, the other a six pounder; she was a schooner, wearing the Patriot flag, (blue, white and blue) of the Republic of

Mexico. I thought it not prudent to resist them, should they be pirates, with a crew of seven men, and only five muskets; accordingly ordered the arms and ammunition to be immediately stowed away in as secret a place as possible, and suffer her to speak us, hoping and believing that a republican flag indicated both honor and friendship from those who wore it, and which we might expect even from Spaniards. But how great was my astonishment, when the schooner having approached very near us, hailed in English, and ordered me to heave my boat out immediately and come on board of her with my papers.—Accordingly my boat was hove out, but filled before I could get into her.—I was then ordered to tack ship and lay by for the pirates' boat to board me; which was done by Bolidar, their first lieutenant, with six or eight Spaniards armed with as many of the before mentioned weapons as they could well sling about their bodies. They drove me into the boat, and two of them rowed me to their privateer, (as they called their vessel), where I shook hands with their commander, Captain Jonnia, a Spaniard, who before looking at my papers, ordered Bolidar, his lieutenant, to follow the Mexican in, back of the Key they had left, which was done. At 6 o'clock, P. M., the Exertion was anchored in eleven feet water, near this vessel, and an island, which they called Twelve League Key, (called by the chart Key Largo), about thirty or thirty-five leagues from Trinidad. After this strange conduct they began examining my papers by a Scotchman who went by the name of Nickola, their sailing master.—He spoke good English, had a countenance rather pleasing, although his beard and mustachios had a frightful appearance—his face, apparently full of anxiety, indicated something in my favor; he gave me my papers, saying "take good care of them, for I am afraid you have fallen into bad hands." The pirates' boat was then sent to the Exertion with more men and arms; a part of them left on board her; the rest returning with three of my crew to their vessel; viz. Thomas Young, Thomas Goodall, and George Reed—they treated them with something to drink, and offered them equal shares with themselves, and some money, if they would enlist, but they could not prevail on them. I then requested permission to

go on board my vessel which was granted, and further requested Nickola should go with me, but was refused by the captain, who vociferated in a harsh manner, "No, No, No," accompanied with a heavy stamp upon the deck. When I got on board, I was invited below by Bolidar, where I found they had emptied the case of liquors, and broken a cheese to pieces and crumbled it on the table and cabin floor; the pirates, elated with their prize, (as they called it), had drank so much as to make them desperately abusive. I was permitted to lie down in my berth; but, reader, if you have ever been awakened by a gang of armed desperadoes, who have taken possession of your habitation in the midnight hour, you can imagine my feelings.—Sleep was a stranger to me, and anxiety was my guest. Bolidar, however, pretended friendship, and flattered me with the prospect of being soon set at liberty. But I found him, as I suspected, a consummate hypocrite; indeed, his very looks indicated it. He was a stout and well built man, of a dark, swarthy complexion, with keen, ferocious eyes, huge whiskers, and beard under his chin and on his lips, four or five inches long; he was a Portuguese by birth, but had become a naturalized Frenchman—had a wife, if not children, (as I was told) in France, and was well known there as commander of a first rate privateer. His appearance was truly terrific; he could talk some English, and had a most lion-like voice.

Tuesday, 17th.—Early this morning the captain of the pirates came on board the *Exertion*; took a look at the cabin stores, and cargo in the state rooms, and then ordered me back with him to his vessel, where he, with his crew, held a consultation for some time respecting the cargo. After which, the interpreter, Nickola, told me that "the captain had, or pretended to have, a commission under General Traspelascus, commander-in-chief of the republic of Mexico, authorizing him to take all cargoes whatever of provisions, bound to any royalist Spanish port—that my cargo being bound to an enemy's port, must be condemned; but that the vessel should be given up and be put into a fair channel for Trinidad, where I was bound." I requested him to examine the papers thoroughly, and perhaps he would be convinced to the contrary, and told him my cargo

was all American property taken in at Boston, and consigned to an American gentleman, agent at Trinidad. But the captain would not take the trouble, but ordered both vessels under way immediately, and commenced beating up amongst the Keys through most of the day, the wind being very light. They now sent their boats on board the Exertion for stores, and commenced plundering her of bread, butter, lard, onions, potatoes, fish, beans, &c., took up some sugar box shooks that were on deck, and found the barrels of apples; selected the best of them and threw the rest overboard. They inquired for spirits, wine, cider, &c. and were told "they had already taken all that was on board." But not satisfied they proceeded to search the state rooms and fore-castle, ripped up the floor of the latter and found some boxes of bottled cider, which they carried to their vessel, gave three cheers, in an exulting manner to me, and then began drinking it with such freedom, that a violent quarrel arose between officers and men, which came very near ending in bloodshed. I was accused of falsehood, for saying they had got all the liquors that were on board, and I thought they had; the truth was, I never had any bill of lading of the cider, and consequently had no recollection of its being on board; yet it served them as an excuse for being insolent. In the evening peace was restored and they sung songs. I was suffered to go below for the night, and they placed a guard over me, stationed at the companion way.

Wednesday, 19th, commenced with moderate easterly winds, beating towards the north-east, the pirate's boats frequently going on board the Exertion for potatoes, fish, beans, butter, &c. which were used with great waste and extravagance. They gave me food and drink, but of bad quality, more particularly the victuals, which was wretchedly cooked. The place assigned me to eat was covered with dirt and vermin. It appeared that their great object was to hurt my feelings with threats and observations, and to make my situation as unpleasant as circumstances would admit. We came to anchor near a Key, called by them Brigantine, where myself and mate were permitted to go on shore, but were guarded by several armed pirates. I soon returned to the Mexican and my mate to the Exertion, with

George Reed, one of my crew ; the other two being kept on board the Mexican. In the course of this day I had considerable conversation with Nickola, who appeared well disposed towards me. He lamented most deeply his own situation, for he was one of those men, whose early good impressions were not entirely effaced, although confederated with guilt. He told me "those who had taken me were no better than pirates, and their end would be the halter ; but," he added, with peculiar emotion, "I will never be hung as a pirate," showing me a bottle of laudanum which he had found in my medicine chest, saying, "If we are taken, that shall cheat the hangman, before we are condemned." I endeavored to get it from him, but did not succeed. I then asked him how he came to be in such company, as he appeared to be dissatisfied. He stated, "that he was at New Orleans last summer, out of employment, and became acquainted with one Captain August Orgamar, a Frenchman, who had bought a small schooner of about fifteen tons, and was going down to the bay of Mexico to get a commission under General Traspelascus, in order to go a privateering under the patriot flag. Capt. Orgamar made him liberal offers respecting shares, and promised him a sailing master's berth, which he accepted and embarked on board the schooner, without sufficiently reflecting on the danger of such an undertaking. Soon after she sailed from Mexico, where they got a commission, and the vessel was called Mexican. They made up a complement of twenty men, and after rendering the general some little service, in transporting his troops to a place called \_\_\_\_\_ proceeded on a cruise ; took some small prizes off Campeachy ; afterwards came on the south coast of Cuba, where they took other small prizes, and the one which we were now on board of. By this time the crew were increased to about forty, nearly one half Spaniards, the others Frenchmen and Portuguese. Several of them had sailed out of ports in the United States with American protections ; but, I confidently believe, none are natives, especially of the northern states. I was careful in examining the men, being desirous of knowing if any of my countrymen were among this wretched crew ; but am satisfied there were none, and my Scotch friend concurred in

the opinion. And now, with a new vessel, which was the prize of these plunderers, they sailed up Manganeil bay; previously, however, they fell in with an American schooner, from which they bought four barrels of beef, and paid in tobacco. At the Bay was an English brig belonging to Jamaica, owned by Mr. John Louden of that place. On board of this vessel the Spanish part of the crew commenced their depredations as pirates, although Captain Orgamar and Nickola protested against it, and refused any participation; but they persisted, and like so many ferocious blood-hounds, boarded the brig, plundered the cabin, stores, furniture, captain's trunk, &c., took a hogshead of rum, one twelve pound carronade, some rigging and sails. One of them plundered the chest of a sailor, who made some resistance, so that the Spaniard took his cutlass, and beat and wounded him without mercy. Nickola asked him "why he did it?" the fellow answered, "I will let you know," and took up the cook's axe and gave him a cut on the head, which nearly deprived him of life. Then they ordered Captain Orgamar to leave his vessel, allowing him his trunk and turned him ashore, to seek for himself. Nickola begged them to dismiss him with his captain, but no, no, was the answer; for they had no complete navigator but him. After Captain Orgamar was gone, they put in his stead the present brave (or as I should call him cowardly) Captain Jonnia, who headed them in plundering the before mentioned brig, and made Bolidar their first lieutenant, and then proceeded down among those Keys or Islands, where I was captured. This is the amount of what my friend Nickola told me of their history.

Saturday, 22d.—Both vessels under way standing to the eastward, they ran the Exertion aground on a bar, but after throwing overboard most of her deck load of shooks, she floated off; a pilot was sent to her, and she was run into a narrow creek between two keys, where they moored her head and stern along side of the mangrove trees, set down her yards and topmasts, and covered her mast heads and shrouds with bushes to prevent her being seen by vessels which might pass that way. I was then suffered to go on board my own vessel, and found her in a very filthy condition; sails torn, rigging cut to pieces, and every thing in

the cabin in waste and confusion. The swarms of mosquitoes and sand-flies made it impossible to get any sleep or rest. The pirate's large boat was armed and manned under Bolidar, and sent off with letters to a merchant (as they called him) by the name of Dominico, residing in a town called Principe, on the main island of Cuba. I was told by one of them, who could speak English, that Principe was a very large and populous town, situated at the head of St. Maria, which was about twenty miles north-east from where we lay, and the Keys lying around us were called Cotton Keys.—The captain pressed into his service Francis de Suze, one of my crew, saying that he was one of his countrymen. Francis was very reluctant in going, and said to me, with tears in his eyes, "I shall do nothing but what I am obliged to do, and will not aid in the least to hurt you or the vessel; I am very sorry to leave you." He was immediately put on duty and Thomas Goodsall sent back to the Exertion.

Sunday, 23d.—Early this morning a large number of the pirates came on board of the Exertion, threw out the long boat, broke open the hatches, and took out considerable of the cargo, in search of rum, gin, &c., still telling me "I had some and they would find it," uttering the most awful profaneness. In the afternoon their boat returned with a perough, having on board the captain, his first lieutenant and seven men of a patriot or piratical vessel that was chased ashore at Cape Cruz by a Spanish armed brig. These seven men made their escape in said boat, and after four days, found our pirates and joined them; the remainder of the crew being killed or taken prisoners.

Monday, 24th.—Their boat was manned and sent to the before-mentioned town.—I was informed by a line from Nickola, that the pirates had a man on board, a native of Principe, who, in the garb of a sailor, was a partner with Dominico, but I could not get sight of him. This lets us a little into the plans by which this atrocious system of piracy has been carried on. Merchants having partners on board of these pirates! thus pirates at sea and robbers on land are associated to destroy the peaceful trader. The willingness exhibited by the seven above-mentioned men, to join our gang of pirates, seems to look like a general un-

derstanding among them; and from there being merchants on shore so base as to encourage the plunder and vend the goods, I am persuaded there has been a systematic confederacy on the part of these unprincipled desperadoes, under cover of the patriot flag; and those on land are no better than those on the sea. If the governments to whom they belong know of the atrocities committed (and I have but little doubt they do) they deserve the execration of all mankind.

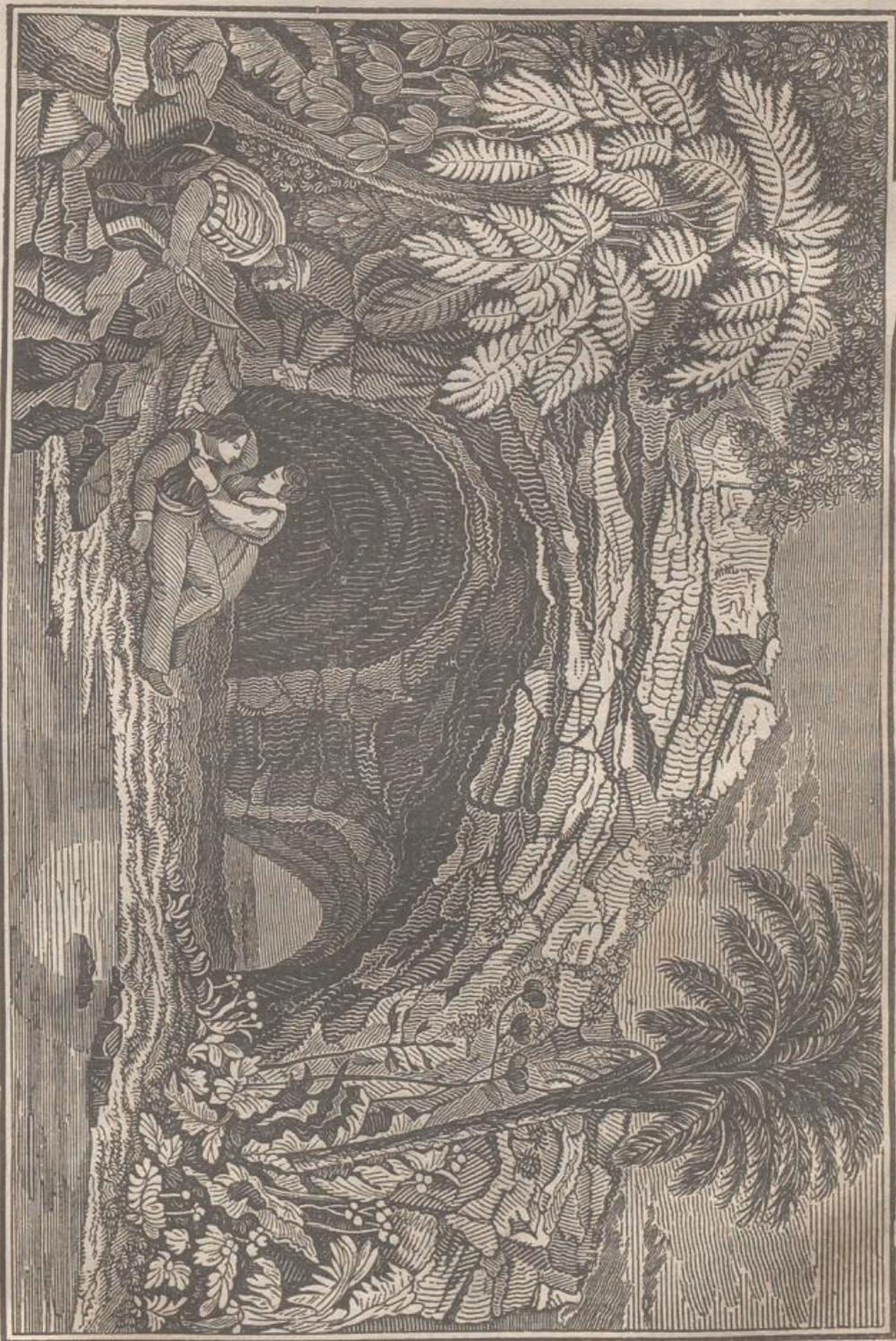
Thursday, 27th.—A gang of the pirates came and stripped our masts of the green bushes, saying, "she appeared more like a sail than trees"—took one barrel of bread and one of potatoes, using about one of each every day. I understood they were waiting for boats to take the cargo; for the principal merchant had gone to Trinidad.

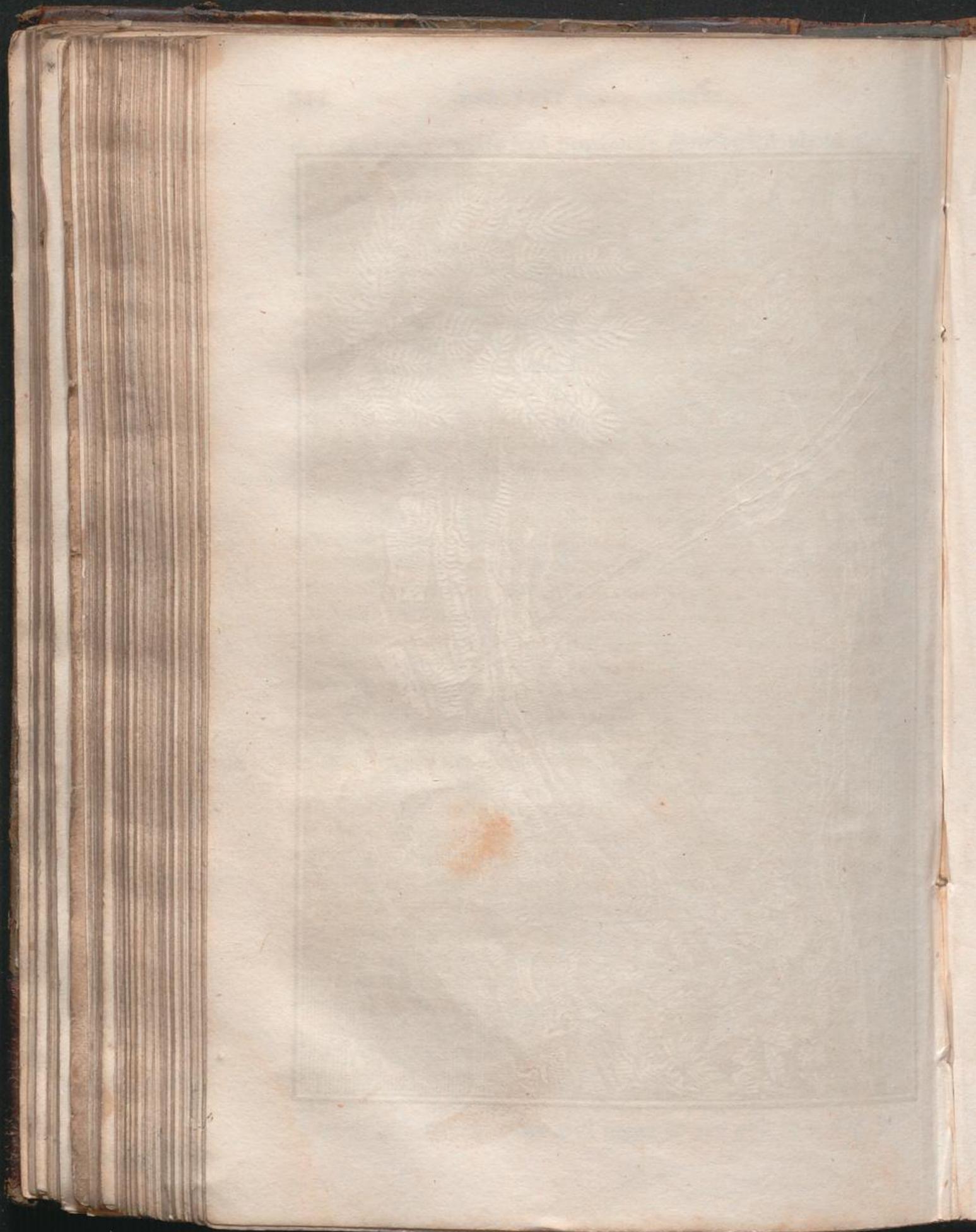
Sunday, 30th.—The beginning of trouble! This day, which peculiarly reminds Christians of the high duties of compassion and benevolence, was never observed by these pirates. This, of course, we might expect, as they did not often know when the day came, and if they knew it, it was spent in gambling. The old saying among seamen, "no Sunday off soundings," was not thought of; and even this poor plea was not theirs, for they were on soundings and often at anchor.—Early this morning, the merchant, as they called him, came with a large boat for the cargo. I was immediately ordered into the boat with my crew, not allowed any breakfast, and carried about three miles to a small island out of sight of the Exertion, and left there by the side of a little pond of thick, muddy water, which proved to be very brackish, with nothing to eat but a few biscuits. One of the boat's men told us the merchant was afraid of being recognised, and when he had gone the boat would return for us; but we had great reason to apprehend they would deceive us, and therefore passed the day in the utmost anxiety. At night, however, the boats came and took us again on board the Exertion; when, to our surprise and astonishment, we found they had broken open the trunks and chests, and taken all our wearing apparel, not even leaving a shirt or pair of pantaloons, nor sparing a small miniature of my wife which was in my trunk. The little money I and my mate had, with some belonging to

the owners, my mate had previously distributed about the cabin in three or four parcels, while I was on board the pirate, for we dare not keep it about us; one parcel in a butter pot they did not discover.—Amidst the hurry with which I was obliged to go to the before-mentioned island, I fortunately snatched my vessel's papers, and hid them in my bosom, which the reader will find was a happy circumstance for me. My writing desk, with papers, accounts, &c., all Mr. Lord's letters (the gentleman to whom my cargo was consigned) and several others were taken and maliciously destroyed. My medicine chest, which I so much wanted, was kept for their own use. What their motive could be to take my papers I could not imagine, except they had hopes of finding bills of lading for some Spaniards, to clear them from piracy. Mr. Bracket had some notes and papers of consequence to him, which shared the same fate. My quadrant, charts, books and bedding were not yet taken, but I found it impossible to hide them, and they were soon gone from my sight.

Tuesday, January 1st, 1822—A sad new-year's day to me. Before breakfast orders came for me to cut down the Exertion's railing and bulwarks on one side, for their vessel to heave out by, and clean her bottom. On my hesitating a little they observed with anger, "very well, captain, suppose you no do it quick, we do it for you." Directly afterwards another boat full of armed men came along side; they jumped on deck with swords drawn, and ordered all of us into her immediately; I stepped below, in hopes of getting something which would be of service to us; but the captain halloed, "Go into the boat directly or I will fire upon you." Thus compelled to obey, we were carried, together with four Spanish prisoners, to a small, low island or key of sand in the shape of a half moon, and partly covered with mangrove trees; which was about one mile from and in sight of my vessel. There they left nine of us, with a little bread, flour, fish, lard, a little coffee and molasses; two or three kegs of water, which was brackish; an old sail for a covering, and a pot and some other articles no way fit to cook in. Leaving us these, which were much less than they appear in the enumeration, they pushed off, saying, "we will come to see you in a day or

A Cave in the Caricos group of the West India Islands.





two." Selecting the best place, we spread the old sail for an awning; but no place was free from flies, moschetoës, snakes, the venomous skinned scorpion, and the more venomous santipee. Sometimes they were found crawling inside of our pantaloons, but fortunately no injury was received. This afternoon the pirates hove their vessel out by the Exertion and cleaned one side, using her paints, oil, &c. for that purpose. To see my vessel in that situation and to think of our prospects was a source of the deepest distress. At night we retired to our tent; but having nothing but the cold damp ground for a bed, and the heavy dew of night penetrating the old canvass—the situation of the island being fifty miles from the usual track of friendly vessels, and one hundred and thirty-five from Trinidad—seeing my owner's property so unjustly and wantonly destroyed—considering my condition, the hands at whose mercy I was, and deprived of all hopes, rendered sleep or rest a stranger to me.

Friday, 4th.—Commenced with light winds and hot sun, saw a boat coming from the Exertion, apparently loaded; she passed between two small Keys to northward, supposed to be bound for Cuba. At sunset a boat came and inquired if we wanted anything, but instead of adding to our provisions, took away our molasses, and pushed off. We found one of the Exertion's water casks, and several pieces of plank, which we carefully laid up, in hopes of getting enough to make a raft.

Saturday, 5th.—Pirates again in sight, coming from the eastward; they beat up along side their prize, and commenced loading. In the afternoon Nickola came to us, bringing with him two more prisoners, which they had taken in a small sail boat coming from Trinidad to Manganail, one a Frenchman, the other a Scotchman, with two Spaniards, who remained on board the pirate, and who afterwards joined them. The back of one of these poor fellows was extremely sore, having just suffered a cruel beating from Bolidar, with the broad side of a cutlass. It appeared, that when the officer asked him "where their money was, and how much," he answered, "he was not certain but believed they had only two ounces of gold"—Bolidar furiously swore he said "ten," and not finding any

more, gave him the beating. Nickola now related to me a singular fact; which was, that the Spanish part of the crew were determined to shoot him; that they tied him to the mast, and a man was appointed for the purpose; but Lion, a Frenchman, his particular friend, stepped up and told them, if they shot him they must shoot several more; some of the Spaniards sided with him, and he was released. Nickola told me, the reason for such treatment was, that he continually objected to their conduct towards me, and their opinion if he should escape, they would be discovered, as he declared he would take no prize money. While with us he gave me a letter written in great haste, which contains some particulars respecting the cargo;—as follows:—

*January 4th, 1822.*

SIR,—We arrived here this morning, and before we came to anchor, had five canoes alongside ready to take your cargo, part of which we had in; and as I heard you express a wish to know what they took out of her, to this moment, you may depend upon this account of Jamieson for quality and quantity; if I have the same opportunity you will have an account of the whole. The villain who bought your cargo is from the town of Principe, his name is Domingo, as to that it is all that I can learn; they have taken your charts aboard the schooner Mexican, and I suppose mean to keep them, as the other captain has agreed to act the same infamous part in the tragedy of his life. Your clothes are here on board, but do not let me flatter you that you will get them back; it may be so, and it may not. Perhaps in your old age, when you recline with ease in a corner of your cottage, you will have the goodness to drop a tear of pleasure to the memory of him, whose highest ambition should have been to subscribe himself, though devoted to the gallows, your friend,

Excuse haste.

NICKOLA MONACRE.

P. S. Your answer in writing when I come again.

Sunday, 6th.—The pirates were under way at sunrise, with a full load of the Exertion's cargo, going to Principe again to sell a second freight, which was done readily for cash. I afterwards heard that the flour only fetched five

dollars per barrel, when it was worth at Trinidad thirteen; so that the villain who bought my cargo at Principe, made very large profits by it.

Tuesday, 8th.—Early this morning the pirates in sight again, with fore top sail and top gallant sail set; beat up along side of the Exertion and commenced loading; having, as I supposed, sold and discharged her last freight among some of the inhabitants of Cuba. They appeared to load in great haste; and the song, "O he oh," which echoed from one vessel to the other, was distinctly heard by us. How wounding was this to me! How different was this sound from what it would have been, had I been permitted to pass unmolested by these lawless plunderers, and been favored with a safe arrival at the port of my destination, where my cargo would have found an excellent sale. Then would the "O he oh," on its discharging, have been a delightful sound to me. In the afternoon she sailed with the perough in tow, both with a full load, having chairs, which was part of the cargo, slung at her quarters.

Monday, 14th.—They again hove in sight, and beat up as usual, along-side their prize. While passing our solitary island, they laughed at our misery, which was almost insupportable—looking upon us as though we had committed some heinous crime, and they had not sufficiently punished us; they hallooed to us, crying out "Captain, Captain," accompanied with obscene motions and words, with which I shall not blacken these pages—yet I heard no check upon such conduct, nor could I expect it among such a gang, who have no idea of subordination on board, except when in chase of vessels, and even then but very little. My resentment was excited at such a malicious outrage,, and I felt a disposition to revenge myself, should fortune ever favor me with an opportunity. It was beyond human nature not to feel and express some indignation at such treatment.—Soon after, Bolidar, with five men, well armed, came to us; he having a blunderbuss, cutlass, a long knife and pair of pistols—but for what purpose did he come? He took me by the hand, saying, "Captain, me speak with you, walk this way." I obeyed, and when at some distance from my fellow prisoners, (his men following) he said, "the captain send me for your wash." I

pretended not to understand what he meant, and replied, "I have no clothes, nor any soap to wash with—you have taken them all," for I had kept my watch about me, hoping they would not discover it. He demanded it again as before; and was answered, "I have nothing to wash;" this raised his anger, and lifting his blunderbuss, he roared out, "what the d—l you call him that make clock? give it me." I considered it imprudent to contend any longer, and submitted to his unlawful demand. As he was going off, he gave me a small bundle, in which was a pair of linen drawers, sent to me by Nickola, and also the Rev. Mr. Brooks' "Family Prayer Book." This gave me great satisfaction. Soon after, he returned with his captain, who had one arm slung up, yet with as many implements of war, as his diminutive wicked self could conveniently carry; he told me (through an interpreter who was his prisoner,) "that on his cruize he had fallen in with two Spanish privateers, and beat them off; but had three of his men killed, and himself wounded in the arm"—Bolidar turned to me and said, "it is a d—n lie"—which words proved to be correct, for his arm was not wounded, and when I saw him again, which was soon afterwards, he had forgotten to sling it up. He further told me, "after to-morrow you shall go with your vessel, and we will accompany you towards Trinidad." This gave me some new hopes, and why I could not tell. They then left us without rendering any assistance.—This night we got some rest.

Tuesday, 15th. The words "go after tomorrow," were used among our Spanish fellow prisoners, as though that happy tomorrow would never come—in what manner it came will soon be noticed.

Friday, 18th commenced with brighter prospects of liberty than ever. The pirates were employed in setting up our devoted schooner's shrouds, stays, &c. My condition now reminded me of the hungry man, chained in one corner of a room, while at another part was a table loaded with delicious food and fruits, the smell and sight of which he was continually to experience, but, alas! his chains were never to be loosed that he might go and partake—at almost the same moment they were thus employed, the axe was applied with the greatest dexterity to both her masts

and I saw them fall over the side! Here fell my hopes—I looked at my condition, and then thought of home.—Our Spanish fellow prisoners were so disappointed and alarmed that they recommended hiding ourselves, if possible, among the mangrove trees, believing, as they said, we should now certainly be put to death; or, what was worse, compelled to serve on board the Mexican as pirates. Little else it is true, seemed left for us; however, we kept a bright look out for them during the day, and at night “an anchor watch” as we called it, determined if we discovered their boats coming towards us, to adopt the plan of hiding, although starvation stared us in the face—yet preferred that to instant death. This night was passed in sufficient anxiety—I took the first watch.

Saturday, 19th.—The pirate’s largest boat came for us—it being day-light, and supposing they could see us, determined to stand our ground and wait the result. They ordered us all into the boat, but left every thing else; they rowed towards the Exertion—I noticed a dejection of spirits in one of the pirates, and inquired of him where they were going to carry us? He shook his head and replied, “I do not know.” I now had some hopes of visiting my vessel again—but the pirates made sail, ran down, took us in tow and stood out of the harbor. Bolidar afterwards took me, my mate and two of my men on board and gave us some coffee. On examination I found they had several additional light sails, made of the Exertion’s. Almost every man, a pair of canvass trousers; and my colors cut up and made into belts to carry their money about them. My jolly boat was on deck, and I was informed, all my rigging was disposed of. Several of the pirates had on some of my clothes, and the captain one of my best shirts, a cleaner one, than I had ever seen him have on before.—He kept at a good distance from me, and forbid my friend Nickola’s speaking to me.—I saw from the companion way in the captain’s cabin my quadrant, spy glass and other things which belonged to us, and observed by the compass, that the course steered was about west by south,—distance nearly twenty miles, which brought them up with a cluster of islands called by some “Cayman Keys.” Here they anchored and caught some fish, (one of which was named

*guard fish*) of which we had a taste. I observed that my friend Mr. Bracket was somewhat dejected, and asked him in a low voice, what his opinion was with respect to our fate? He answered, "I cannot tell you, but it appears to me the worst is to come." I told him that I hoped not, but thought they would give us our small boat and liberate the prisoners. But mercy even in this shape was not left for us. Soon after, saw the captain and officers whispering for some time in private conference. When over, their boat was manned under the command of Bolidar, and went to one of those Islands or Keys before mentioned. On their return, another conference took place—whether it was a jury upon our lives we could not tell. I did not think conscience could be entirely extinguished in the human breast, or that men could become fiends. In the afternoon, while we knew not the doom which had been fixed for us, the captain was engaged with several of his men in gambling, in hopes to get back some of the five hundred dollars, they said, he lost but a few nights before; which had made him unusually fractious. A little before sunset he ordered all the prisoners into the large boat, with a supply of provisions and water, and to be put on shore. While we were getting into her, one of my fellow prisoners, a Spaniard, attempted with tears in his eyes to speak to the captain, but was refused, with the answer—"I'll have nothing to say to any prisoner, go into the boat." In the mean time Nickola said to me, "My friend, I will give you your book," (being Mr. Colman's Sermons,) "it is the only thing of yours that is in my possession; I dare not attempt any thing more." But the captain forbid his giving it to me, and I stepped into the boat—at that moment Nickola said in a low voice, "never mind, I may see you again before I die." The small boat was well armed and manned, and both set off together for the island, where they had agreed to leave us to perish! The scene to us was a funereal scene. There were no arms in the prisoners boat, and, of course, all attempts to relieve ourselves would have been throwing our lives away, as Bolidar was near us, well armed. We were rowed about two miles north-easterly from the pirates, to a small low island, lonely and desolate. We arrived about sunset; and for the support of us eleven prisoners, they

only left a ten gallon keg of water, and perhaps a few quarts, in another small vessel, which was very poor; part of a barrel of flour, a small keg of lard, one ham and some salt fish; a small kettle and an old broken pot; an old sail for a covering, and a small matrass and blanket, which was thrown out as the boats hastened away. One of the prisoners happened to have a little coffee in his pocket, and these comprehended all our means of sustaining life, and for what length of time we knew not. We now felt the need of water, and our supply was comparatively nothing. A man may live nearly twice as long without food, as without water. Look at us now, my friends, left benighted on a little spot of sand in the midst of the ocean, far from the usual track of vessels, and every appearance of a violent thunder tempest, and a boisterous night. Judge of my feelings, and the circumstances which our band of sufferers now witnessed. Perhaps you can and have pitied us. I assure you, we were very wretched; and to paint the scene, is not within my power. When the boats were moving from the shore, on recovering myself a little, I asked Bolidar, "If he was going to leave us so?"—he answered, "no, only two days—we go for water and wood, then come back, take you." I requested him to give us bread and other stores, for they had plenty in the boat, and at least one hundred barrels of flour in the Mexican. "No, no, suppose to-morrow morning me come, me give you bread," and hurried off to the vessel. This was the last time I saw him. We then turned our attention upon finding a spot most convenient for our comfort, and soon discovered a little roof supported by stakes driven into the sand; it was thatched with leaves of the cocoa-nut tree, considerable part of which was torn or blown off. After spreading the old sail over this roof, we placed our little stock of provisions under it. Soon after came on a heavy shower of rain which penetrated the canvass, and made it nearly as uncomfortable inside, as it would have been out. We were not prepared to catch water, having nothing to put it in. Our next object was to get fire, and after gathering some of the driest fuel to be found, and having a small piece of cotton wick-yarn, with flint and steel, we kindled a fire, which was never afterwards suffered to be

extinguished. The night was very dark, but we found a piece of old rope, which when well lighted served for a candle. On examining the ground under the roof, we found perhaps thousands of creeping insects, scorpions, lizards, crickets, &c. After scraping them out as well as we could, the most of us having nothing but the damp earth for a bed, laid ourselves down in hopes of some rest; but it being so wet, gave many of us severe colds, and one of the Spaniards was quite sick for several days.

Sunday, 20th.—As soon as day-light came on, we proceeded to take a view of our little island, and found it to measure only one acre, of coarse, white sand; about two feet, and in some spots perhaps three feet above the surface of the ocean. On the highest part were growing some bushes and small mangroves, (the dry part of which was our fuel) and the wild castor oil beans. We were greatly disappointed in not finding the latter suitable food; likewise some of the prickly pear bushes, which gave us only a few pears about the size of our small button pear; the outside has thorns, which if applied to the fingers or lips, will remain there, and cause a severe smarting similar to the nettle; the inside a spongy substance, full of juice and seeds, which are red and a little tartish—had they been there in abundance, we should not have suffered so much for water—but alas! even this substitute was not for us. On the northerly side of the island was a hollow, where the tide penetrated the sand, leaving stagnant water. We presumed, in hurricanes the island was nearly overflowed. According to the best calculations I could make, we were about thirty-five miles from any part of Cuba, one hundred from Trinidad and forty from the usual track of American vessels, or others which might pass that way. No vessel of any considerable size, can safely pass among these Keys or “Queen’s Gardens,” as the Spaniards call them) being a large number extending from Cape Cruz to Trinidad, one hundred and fifty miles distance; and many more than the charts have laid down, most of them very low and some covered at high water, which makes it very dangerous for navigators without a skilful pilot. After taking this view of our condition, which was very gloomy, we began to suspect we were left on this desolate island by those mer-

ciless plunderers to perish. Of this I am now fully convinced; still we looked anxiously for the pirate's boat to come according to promise with more water and provisions, but looked in vain. We saw them soon after get under way with all sail set and run directly from us until out of our sight, and *we never saw them again!* One may partially imagine our feelings, but they cannot be put into words. Before they were entirely out of sight of us, we raised the white blanket upon a pole, waving it in the air, in hopes, that at two miles distance they would see it and be moved to pity. But pity in such monsters was not to be found. It was not their interest to save us from the lingering death, which we now saw before us. We tried to compose ourselves, trusting that God, who had witnessed our sufferings, would yet make use of some one, as the instrument of his mercy towards us. Our next care, now, was to try for water. We dug several holes in the sand and found it, but quite too salt for use. The tide penetrates probably through the island. We now came on short allowance for water. Having no means of securing what we had by lock and key, some one in the night would slyly drink, and it was soon gone. The next was to bake some bread, which we did by mixing flour with salt water and frying it in lard, allowing ourselves eight quite small pancakes to begin with. The ham was reserved for some more important occasion, and the salt fish was lost for want of fresh water. The remainder of this day was passed in the most serious conversation and reflection. At night, I read prayers from the "Prayer Book," before mentioned, which I most carefully concealed while last on board the pirates. This plan was pursued morning and evening, during our stay there. Then retired for rest and sleep, but realized little of either.

Monday, 21st.—In the morning we walked round the beach, in expectation of finding something useful. On our way picked up a paddle about three feet long, very similar to the Indian canoe paddle, except the handle, which was like that of a shovel, the top part being split off; we laid it by for the present. We likewise found some konchs and roasted them; they were a pretty good shell fish, though rather tough. We discovered at low

water, a bar or spit of sand extending north-easterly from us, about three miles distant, to a cluster of Keys, which were covered with mangrove trees, perhaps as high as our quince tree. My friend Mr. Bracket and George attempted to wade across, being at that time of tide only up to their armpits; but were pursued by a shark, and returned without success. The tide rises about four feet.

Tuesday, 22d.—We found several pieces of the palmetto or cabbage tree, and some pieces of boards, put them together in the form of a raft, and endeavored to cross, but that proved ineffectual. Being disappointed, we set down to reflect upon other means of relief, intending to do all in our power for safety while our strength continued. While setting here, the sun was so powerful and oppressive, reflecting its rays upon the sea, which was then calm, and the white sand which dazzled the eye, was so painful, that we retired under the awning; there the moschetoës and flies were so numerous, that good rest could not be found. We were, however, a little cheered, when, in scraping out the top of the ground to clear out, I may say, thousands of crickets and bugs, we found a hatchet, which was to us peculiarly serviceable. At night the strong north-easterly wind, which prevails there at all seasons, was so cold as to make it equally uncomfortable with the day. Thus day after day, our sufferings and apprehensions multiplying, we were very generally alarmed.

Thursday, 24th.—This morning, after taking a little coffee, made of the water which we thought least salt, and two or three of the little cakes, we felt somewhat refreshed, and concluded to make another visit to those Keys, in hopes of finding something more, which might make a raft for us to escape the pirates, and avoid perishing by thirst. Accordingly seven of us set off, waded across the bar and searched all the Keys thereabouts. On one we found a number of sugar-box shooks, two lashing plank and some pieces of old spars, which were a part of the Exertion's deck load, that was thrown overboard when she grounded on the bar, spoken of in the first part of the narrative. It seems they had drifted fifteen miles, and had accidentally lodged on these very Keys within our reach. Had the pirates known this, they would undoubtedly have placed us

in another direction. They no doubt thought that they could not place us on a worse place. The wind at this time was blowing so strong on shore, as to prevent rafting our stuff round to our island, and we were obliged to haul it upon the beach for the present; then dug for water in the highest place, but found it as salt as ever, and then returned to our habitation. But hunger and thirst began to prey upon us, and our comforts were as few as our hopes.

Friday, 25th.—Again passed over to those Keys to windward in order to raft our stuff to our island, it being most convenient for building. But the surf on the beach was so very rough, that we were again compelled to postpone it. Our courage, however, did not fail where there was the slightest hopes of life. Returning without it, we found on our way an old top timber of some vessel; it had several spikes in it, which we afterwards found very serviceable. In the hollow of an old tree, we found two guarnas of small size, one male, the other female. Only one was caught. After taking off the skin, we judged it weighed a pound and a half. With some flour and lard, (the only things we had except salt water,) it made us a fine little mess. We thought it a rare dish, though a small one for eleven half starved persons. At the same time a small vessel hove in sight; we made a signal to her with the blanket tied to a pole and placed it on the highest tree—some took off their white clothes and waved them in the air, hoping they would come to us; should they be pirates, they could do no more than kill us, and perhaps would give us some water, for which we began to suffer most excessively; but, notwithstanding all our efforts, she took no notice of us.

Saturday, 26th.—This day commenced with moderate weather and smooth sea; at low tide found some cockles; boiled and eat them, but they were very painful to the stomach. David Warren had a fit of strangling, with swelling of the bowels; but soon recovered, and said, "something like salt rose in his throat and choked him." Most of us then set off for the Keys, where the plank and shooks were put together in a raft, which we with pieces of boards paddled over to our island; when we consulted the best plan, either to build a raft large enough for us all to go on, or a boat; but the shooks having three or four nails

in each, and having a piece of large reed or bamboo, previously found, of which we made pins, we concluded to make a boat.

Sunday, 27th—Commenced our labor, for which I know we need offer no apology. We took the two planks, which were about fourteen feet long, and two and a half wide, and fixed them together for the bottom of the boat; then with moulds made of palmetto bark, cut timber and knees from mangrove trees which spread so much as to make the boat four feet wide at the top, placed them exactly the distance apart of an Havana sugar box.—Her stern was square and the bows tapered to a peak, making her form resemble a flat-iron. We proceeded thus far and returned to rest for the night—but Mr. Bracket was too unwell to get much sleep.

Monday, 28—Went on with the work as fast as possible. Some of the Spaniards had long knives about them, which proved very useful in fitting timbers, and a gimblet of mine, accidentally found on board the pirates, enabled us to use the wooden pins. And now our spirits began to revive, though *water, water*, was continually in our minds. We now feared the pirates might possibly come, find out our plan and put us to death, (although before we had wished to see them, being so much in want of water.) Our labor was extremely burdensome, and the Spaniards considerably peevish—but they would often say to me “never mind captain, by and by, Americana or Spanyol catch them, me go and see ’um hung.” We quitted work for the day, cooked some cakes but found it necessary to reduce the quantity again, however small before. We found some herbs on a windward Key, which the Spaniards called Spanish tea.—This when well boiled we found somewhat palatable, although the water was very salt. This herb resembles pennyroyal in look and taste, though not so pungent. In the evening when we were setting round the fire to keep off the moschetoës, I observed David Warren’s eyes shone like glass. The mate said to him—“David I think you will die before morning—I think you are struck with death now.” I thought so too, and told him, “I thought it most likely we should all die here soon; but as some one of us might survive to

carry the tidings to our friends, if you have any thing to say respecting your family, now is the time."—He then said, "I have a mother in Saco where I belong—she is a second time a widow—to-morrow if you can spare a scrap of paper and pencil I will write something." But no to-morrow came to him.—In the course of the night he had another spell of strangling, and soon after expired, without much pain and without a groan. He was about twenty-six years old.—How solemn was this scene to us! Here we beheld the ravages of death commenced upon us. More than one of us considered death a happy release. For myself I thought of my wife and children; and wished to live if God should so order it, though extreme thirst, hunger and exhaustion had well nigh prostrated my fondest hopes.

Tuesday, 29th.—Part of us recommenced labor on the boat, while myself and Mr. Bracket went and selected the highest clear spot of sand on the northern side of the island, where we dug Warren's grave, and boxed it up with shooks, thinking it would be the most suitable spot for the rest of us—whose turn would come next, we knew not. At about ten o'clock, A. M. conveyed the corpse to the grave, followed by us survivors—a scene, whose awful solemnity can never be painted. We stood around the grave, and there I read the funeral prayer from the Rev. Mr. Brooks's Family Prayer Book; and committed the body to the earth; covered it with some pieces of board and sand, and returned to our labor. One of the Spaniards, an old man, named Manuel, who was partial to me, and I to him, made a cross and placed it at the head of the grave saying, "Jesus Christ hath him now." Although I did not believe in any mysterious influence of this cross, yet I was perfectly willing it should stand there. The middle part of the day being very warm, our mouths parched with thirst, and our spirits so depressed, that we made but little progress during the remainder of this day, but in the evening were employed in picking oakum out of the bolt rope taken from the old sail.

Wednesday, 30th.—Returned to labor on the boat with as much vigor as our weak and debilitated state would admit, but it was a day of trial to us all; for the Spaniards

and we Americans could not well understand each other's plans, and they being naturally petulant, would not work, nor listen with any patience for Joseph, our English fellow prisoner, to explain our views—they would sometimes undo what they had done, and in a few minutes replace it again; however before night we began to caulk her seams, by means of pieces of hard mangrove, made in form of a caulking-iron, and had the satisfaction of seeing her in a form something like a boat.

Thursday, 31st.—Went on with the work, some at caulking, others at battening the seams with strips of canvas, and pieces of pine nailed over, to keep the oakum in. Having found a suitable pole for a mast, the rest went about making a sail from the one we had used for a covering, also fitting oars of short pieces of boards, in form of a paddle, tied on a pole, we having a piece of fishing line brought by one of the prisoners. Thus, at three P. M. the boat was completed and put afloat.—We had all this time confidently hoped, that she would be sufficiently large and strong to carry us all—we made a trial and were disappointed! This was indeed a severe trial, and the emotions it called up were not easy to be suppressed. She proved leaky, for we had no carpenter's yard, or smith's shop to go to.—And now the question was, "who should go, and how many?" I found it necessary for six; four to row, one to steer and one to bale. Three of the Spaniards and the Frenchman claimed the right, as being best acquainted with the nearest inhabitants; likewise, they had when taken, two boats left at St. Maria, (about forty miles distant,) which they were confident of finding. They promised to return within two or three days for the rest of us—I thought it best to consent—Mr. Bracket it was agreed should go in my stead, because my papers must accompany me as a necessary protection, and my men apprehended danger if they were lost. Joseph Baxter (I think was his name) they wished should go, because he could speak both languages—leaving Manuel, George, Thomas and myself, to wait their return. Having thus made all arrangements, and putting up a keg of the least salt water, with a few pancakes of salt fish, they set off a little before sunset with our best wishes and prayers for

their safety and return to our relief.—To launch off into the wide ocean, with strength almost exhausted, and in such a frail boat as this, you will say was very hazardous, and in truth it was; but what else was left to us?—Their intention was to touch at the Key where the Exertion was, and if no boat was to be found there, to proceed to St. Maria, and if none there, to go to Trinidad and send us relief.—But alas! it was the last time I ever saw them!—Our suffering this day was most acute.

Tuesday, 5th.—About ten o'clock, A. M. discovered a boat drifting by on the southeast side of the island about a mile distant. I deemed it a providential thing to us, and urged Thomas and George trying the raft for her. They reluctantly consented and set off, but it was nearly three P. M. when they came up with her.—it was the same boat we had built! Where then was my friend Bracket and those who went with him? Every appearance was unfavorable.—I hoped that a good Providence had yet preserved him.—The two men who went for the boat, found it full of water, without oars, paddle, or sail; being in this condition, and about three miles to the leeward, the men found it impossible to tow her up, so left her, and were until eleven o'clock at night getting back with the raft. They were so exhausted, that had it not been nearly calm, they could never have returned.

Wednesday, 6th.—This morning was indeed the most gloomy I had ever experienced.—There appeared hardly a ray of hope that my friend Bracket could return, seeing the boat was lost. Our provisions nearly gone; our mouths parched extremely with thirst; our strength wasted; our spirits broken, and our hopes imprisoned within the circumference of this desolate island in the midst of an unfrequented ocean; all these things gave to the scene around us the hue of death. In the midst of this dreadful despondence, a sail hove in sight bearing the white flag! Our hopes were raised, of course—but no sooner raised than darkened, by hearing a gun fired. Here then was another gang of pirates. She soon, however, came near enough to anchor, and her boat pushed off towards us with three men in her.—Thinking it now no worse to die by sword than famine, I walked down immediately

to meet them. I knew them not.—A moment before the boat touched the ground, a man leaped from her bows and caught me in his arms! *It was Nickola!*—saying, “Do you now believe Nickola is your friend? yes, said he, *Jamieson* will yet prove himself so.”—No words can express my emotions at this moment. This was a friend indeed. The reason of my not recognizing them before, was that they had cut off their beards and whiskers. Turning to my fellow-sufferers, Nickola asked—“Are these all that are left of you? where are the others?”—At this moment seeing David’s grave—“are they dead then? ah I suspected it, I know what you were put here for.” As soon as I could recover myself, I gave him an account of Mr. Bracket and the others.—“How unfortunate,” he said, “they must be lost, or some pirates have taken them.”—“But,” he continued, “we have no time to lose; you had better embark immediately with us, and go where you please, we are at your service.” The other two in the boat were Frenchmen, one named Lyon, the other Parrikete. They affectionately embraced each of us; then holding to my mouth the nose of a teakettle, filled with wine, said “Drink plenty, no hurt you.” I drank as much as I judged prudent. They then gave it to my fellow sufferers—I experienced almost immediate relief, not feeling it in my head; they had also brought in the boat for us, a dish of salt beef and potatoes, of which we took a little. Then sent the boat on board for the other two men, being five in all; who came ashore, and rejoiced enough was I to see among them Thomas Young, one of my crew, who was detained on board the Mexican, but had escaped through Nickola’s means; the other a Frenchman, named John Cadedt. I now thought again and again, with troubled emotion, of my dear friend Bracket’s fate. I took the last piece of paper I had, and wrote with pencil a few lines, informing him (should he come there.) that “I and the rest were safe; that I was not mistaken in the friend in whom I had placed so much confidence, that he had accomplished my highest expectations; and that I should go immediately to Trinidad, and requested him to go there also, and apply to Mr. Isaac W. Lord, my consignee, for assistance.” I put the paper into a

junk bottle, previously found on the beach, put in a stopper, and left it, together with what little flour remained, a keg of water brought from Nickola's vessel, and a few other things which I thought might be of service to him. We then repaired with our friends on board, where we were kindly treated. She was a sloop from Jamaica, of about twelve tons, with a cargo of rum and wine, bound to Trinidad. I asked "which way they intended to go?" They said "to Jamaica if agreeable to me." As I preferred Trinidad, I told them, "if they would give me the Exertion's boat which was along-side (beside their own) some water and provisions, we would take chance in her,"—"for perhaps," said I, "you will fare better at Jamaica, than at Trinidad." After a few minutes consultation, they said "you are too much exhausted to row the distance of one hundred miles, therefore we will go and carry you—we consider ourselves at your service." I expressed a wish to take a look at the Exertion, possibly we might hear something of Mr. Bracket. Nickola said "very well," so got under way, and run for her, having a light westerly wind. He then related to me the manner of their desertion from the pirates; as nearly as I can recollect his own words, he said, "A few days since, the pirates took four small vessels, I believe Spaniards; they having but two officers for the two first, the third fell to me as prize master, and having an understanding with the three Frenchmen and Thomas, selected them for my crew, and went on board with orders to follow the Mexican; which I obeyed. The fourth, the pirates took out all but one man and bade him also follow their vessel. Now our schooner leaked so bad, that we left her and in her stead agreed to take this little sloop (which we are now in) together with the one man. The night being very dark we all agreed to desert the pirates—altered our course and touched at St. Maria, where we landed the one man—saw no boats there, could hear nothing from you, and agreed one and all at the risk of our lives to come and liberate you if you were alive; knowing, as we did, that you were put on this Key to perish. On our way we boarded the Exertion, thinking possibly you might have been there. On board her we found a sail and paddle. We took one of the pirate's

boats which they had left along-side of her, which proves how we came by two boats. My friend, the circumstance I am now about to relate, will somewhat astonish you. When the pirate's boat with Bolidar was sent to the before mentioned Key, on the 19th of January, it was their intention to leave you prisoners there, where was nothing but salt water and mangroves, and no possibility of escape. This was the plan of Baltizar, their abandoned pilot; but Bolidar's heart failed him, and he objected to it; then, after a conference, Captain Jonnia ordered you to be put on the little island from whence we have now taken you. But after this was done, that night the French and Portuguese part of the Mexican's crew protested against it; so that Captain Jonnia to satisfy them, sent his large boat to take you and your fellow prisoners back again, taking care to select his confidential Spaniards for this errand. And you will believe me they set off from the Mexican, and after spending about as much time as would really have taken them to come to you, they returned, and reported they had been to your island, and landed, and that none of you were there, somebody having taken you off! This, all my companions here know to be true.—I knew it was impossible you could have been liberated, and therefore we determined among ourselves, that should an opportunity occur we would come and save your lives, as we now have." He then expressed, as he hitherto had done, (and I believe with sincerity,) his disgust with the bad company which he had been in, and looked forward with anxiety to the day when he might return to his native country. I advised him to get on board an Amerian vessel, whenever an opportunity offered, and come to the United States; and on his arrival direct a letter to me; repeating my earnest desire to make some return for the disinterested friendship which he had shown toward me. With the Frenchman I had but little conversation, being unacquainted with the language.

Here ended Nickola's account. "And now," said the Frenchmen, "our hearts be easy." Nickola observed he had left all and found us. I gave them my warmest tribute of gratitude, saying I looked upon them under God as the preservers of our lives, and promised them all the

assistance which my situation might enable me to afford.—  
This brings me to,

Thursday evening, 7th, when, at eleven o'clock, we anchored at the creek's mouth, near the Exertion. I was anxious to board her; accordingly took with me Nickola, Thomas, George and two others, well armed, each with a musket and cutlass. I jumped on her deck, saw a fire in the camboose, but no person there: I called aloud Mr. Bracket's name several times, saying "it is Captain Lincoln, don't be afraid, but show yourself;" but no answer was given. She had no masts, spars, rigging, furniture, provisions or any thing left, except her bowsprit, and a few barrels of salt provisions of her cargo. Her ceiling had holes cut in it, no doubt in their foolish search for money. I left her with peculiar emotions, such as I hope never again to experience; and returned to the little sloop where we remained till—

Friday, 8th—When I had a disposition to visit the island on which we were first imprisoned.—Found nothing there—saw a boat among the mangroves, near the Exertion. Returned, and got under way immediately for Trinidad. In the night while under full sail, run aground on a sunken Key, having rocks above the water, resembling old stumps of trees; we, however, soon got off and anchored. Most of those Keys have similar rocks about them, which navigators must carefully guard against.

Monday, 11th—Got under way—saw a brig at anchor about five miles below the mouth of the harbor; we hoped to avoid her speaking us; but when we opened in sight of her, discovered a boat making towards us, with a number of armed men in her. This alarmed my friends, and as we did not see the brig's ensign hoisted, they declared the boat was a pirate, and looking through the spy-glass, they knew some of them to be the Mexican's men! This state of things was quite alarming. They said, "we will not be taken alive by them." Immediately the boat fired a musket; the ball passed through our mainsail. My friends insisted on beating them off: I endeavored to dissuade them, believing, as I did, that the brig was a Spanish man-of-war, who had sent her boat to ascertain who we were. I thought we had better heave to. Immedi-

ately another shot came. Then they insisted on fighting, and said "if I would not help them, I was no friend." I reluctantly acquiesced, and handed up the guns—commenced firing upon them and they upon us. We received several shot through the sails, but no one was hurt on either side. Our two boats had been cast adrift to make us go the faster, and we gained upon them—continued firing until they turned from us, and went for our boats, which they took in tow for the brig. Soon after this, it became calm: then I saw that the brig had us in her power.—She manned and armed two more boats for us. We now concluded, since we had scarcely any ammunition, to surrender; and were towed down along-side the brig on board, and were asked by the captain, who could speak English, "what for you fire on the boat?" I told him "we thought her a pirate, and did not like to be taken by them again, having already suffered too much;" showing my papers. He said, "Captain Americana, never mind, go and take some dinner—which are your men?" I pointed them out to him, and he ordered them the liberty of the decks; but my friend Nickola and his three associates were immediately put in irons. They were, however, afterwards taken out of irons and examined; and I understood the Frenchmen agreed to enlist, as they judged it the surest way to better their condition. Whether Nickola enlisted, I do not know, but think that he did, as I understood that offer was made to him: I however endeavored to explain more distinctly to the captain, the benevolent efforts of these four men by whom my life had been saved, and used every argument in my power to procure their discharge. I also applied to the governor, and exerted myself with peculiar interest, dictated as I trust with heartfelt gratitude—and I ardently hope ere this, that Nickola is on his way to this country, where I may have an opportunity of convincing him that such an act of benevolence will not go unrewarded. Previous to my leaving Trinidad, I made all the arrangements in my power with my influential friends, and doubt not, that their laudable efforts will be accomplished.—the sloop's cargo was then taken on board the brig; after which the captain requested a certificate that I was politely treated by him, saying that his

name was Captain Candama, of the privateer brig Prudentee of eighteen guns. This request I complied with. His first lieutenant told me he had sailed out of Boston, as commander for T. C. Amory, Esq. during the last war. In the course of the evening my friends were taken out of irons and examined separately, then put back again. The captain invited me to supper in his cabin, and a berth for the night, which was truly acceptable. The next morning after breakfast, I with my people were set on shore with the few things we had, with the promise of the Exertion's small boat in a day or two,—but it was never sent me—the reason, let the reader imagine. On landing at the wharf Casildar, we were immediately taken by soldiers to the guard house, which was a very filthy place; thinking I suppose, and even calling us, pirates. Soon some friends came to see me. Mr. Cotton, who resides there brought us in some soup. Mr. Isaac W. Lord, of Boston, my merchant, came with Captain Tate, who sent immediately to the governor; for I would not show my papers to any one else. He came about sunset, and after examining Manuel my Spanish fellow prisoner, and my papers, said to me, giving me the papers, "Captain, you are at liberty." I was kindly invited by Captain Matthew Rice, of schooner Galaxy, of Boston, to go on board his vessel, and live with him during my stay there. This generous offer I accepted, and was treated by him with the greatest hospitality; for I was hungered and he gave me meat, I was athirst and he gave me drink, I was naked and he clothed me, a stranger and he took me in. He likewise took Manuel and my three men for that night. Next day Mr. Lord rendered me all necessary assistance in making my protest. He had heard nothing from me until my arrival. I was greatly disappointed in not finding Mr. Bracket, and requested Mr. Lord to give him all needful aid if he should come there. To Captain Carnes, of the schooner Hannah, of Boston, I would tender my sincere thanks, for his kindness in giving me a passage to Boston, which I gladly accepted. To those gentlemen of Trinidad, and many captains of American vessels, who gave me sea clothing, &c. I offer my cordial gratitude.

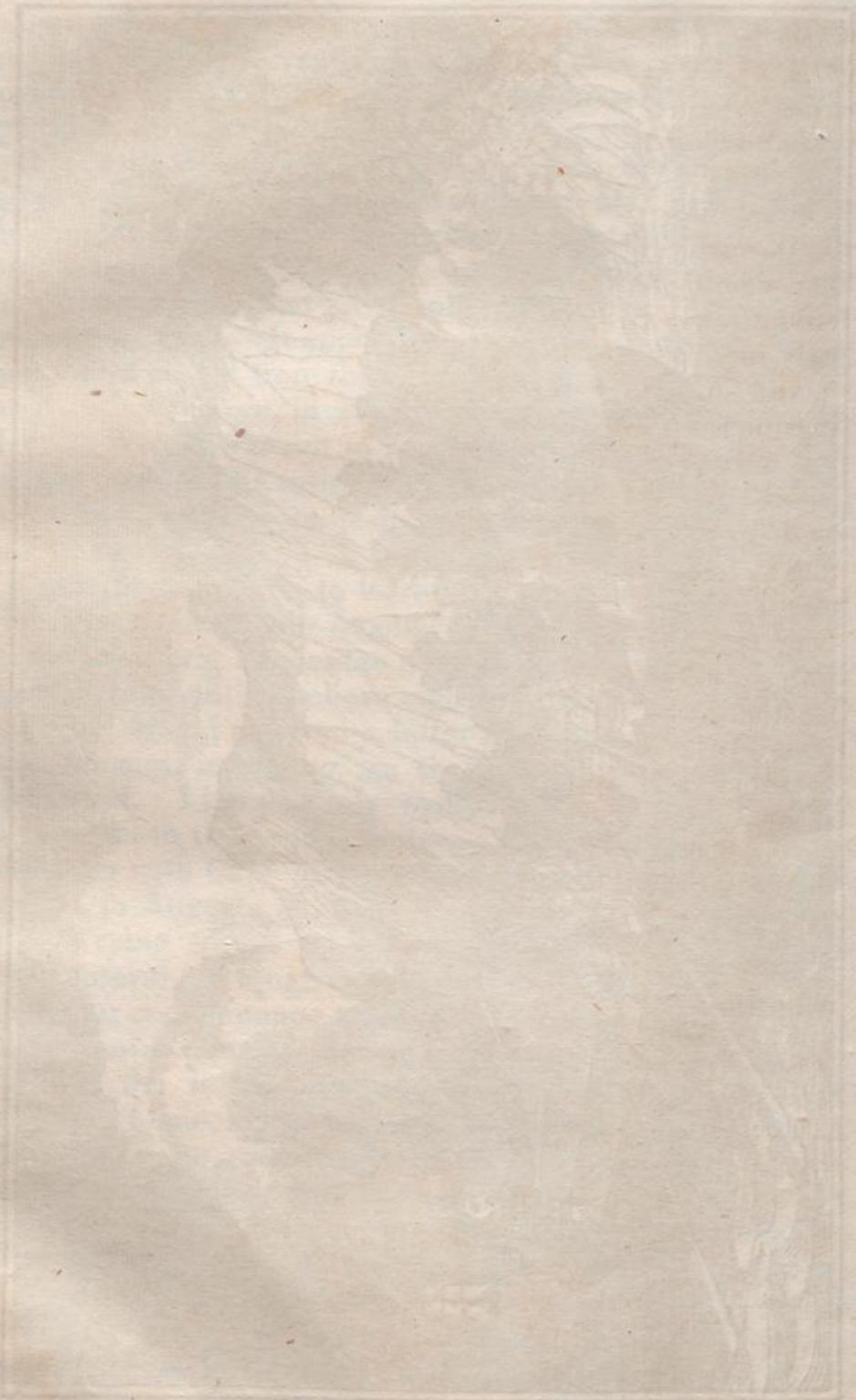
I am fully of the opinion that these ferocious pirates are linked in with many inhabitants of Cuba; and the government in many respects appears covertly to encourage them.

It is with heartfelt delight, that, since the above narrative was written, I have learned that Mr. Bracket and his companions are safe; he arrived at Port d'Esprit, about forty leagues east of Trinidad. A letter has been received from him, stating that he should proceed to Trinidad the first opportunity.—It appears that after reaching the wreck, they found a boat from the shore, taking on board some of the *Exertion's* cargo, in which they proceeded to the above place. Why it was not in his power to come to our relief will no doubt be satisfactorily disclosed when he may be so fortunate as once more to return to his native country and friends.

I felt great anxiety to learn what became of Jamieson, who, my readers will recollect, was detained on board the Spanish brig *Prudentee* near Trinidad. I heard nothing from him, until I believe eighteen months after I reached home, when I received a letter from him, from Montego Bay, Jamaica, informing me that he was then residing in that island. I immediately wrote to him, and invited him to come on to the United States. He accordingly came on passenger with Captain Wilson of *Cohasset*, and arrived in Boston, in August, 1824. Our meeting was very affecting. Trying scenes were brought up before us; scenes gone forever, through which we have passed together, where our acquaintance was formed, and since which time, we had never met. I beheld once more the preserver of my life; the instrument, under Providence, of restoring me to my home, my family, and my friends, and I regarded him with no ordinary emotion. My family were delighted to see him, and cordially united in giving him a warm reception. He told me that after we separated in Trinidad, he remained on board the Spanish brig. The commander asked him and his companions if they would enlist; the Frenchmen replied that they would, but he said nothing, being determined to make his escape, the very first opportunity which should present. The Spanish brig afterwards fell in with a *Columbian Patriot*, an armed brig



The Pirates fire into Lieut. Kearney's boat, while reconnoitering the shore. p. 376.



The picture has been painted by Henry J. Hunt, while reconstructing the shore. P. 270.

of eighteen guns. Being of about equal force, they gave battle, and fought between three and four hours. Both parties were very much injured; and, without any considerable advantage on either side, both drew off to make repairs. The Spanish brig *Prudentee*, put into St. Jago de Cuba. Jamieson was wounded in the action, by a musket ball, through his arm, and was taken on shore, with the other wounded, and placed in the hospital of St. Jago. Here he remained for a considerable time, until he had nearly recovered, when he found an opportunity of escaping, and embarked for Jamaica. He arrived in safety at Kingston, and from there, travelled barefoot over the mountains, until very much exhausted, he reached Montego Bay, where he had friends, and where one of his brothers possessed some property. From this place, he afterwards wrote to me. He told me that before he came to Massachusetts, he saw the villanous pilot of the Mexican, the infamous Baltizar, with several other pirates, brought into Montego Bay, from whence they were to be conveyed to Kingston to be executed. Whether the others were part of the Mexican's crew, or not, I do not know. Baltizar was an old man, and as Jamieson said, it was a melancholy and heart-rending sight, to see him borne to execution with those gray hairs, which might have been venerable in virtuous old age, now a shame and reproach to this hoary villain, for he was full of years, and old in iniquity. When Jamieson received the letter which I wrote him, he immediately embarked with Captain Wilson, and came to Boston, as I have before observed.

According to his own account he was of a very respectable family in Greenock, Scotland. His father when living was a rich cloth merchant, but both his father and mother had been dead many years. He was the youngest of thirteen children, and being, as he said, of a roving disposition, had always followed the seas. He had received a polite education, and was of a very gentlemanly deportment. He spoke several living languages, and was skilled in drawing and painting. He had travelled extensively in different countries, and acquired in consequence an excellent knowledge of their manners and customs. His varied information (for hardly any subject escaped him,) render-

ed him a very entertaining companion. His observations on the character of different nations were very liberal; marking their various traits, their virtues and vices, with playful humorousness, quite free from bigotry, or narrow prejudice.

I was in trade, between Boston and Philadelphia, at the time he came to Massachusetts, and he sailed with me several trips as my mate. He afterwards went to Cuba, and was subsequently engaged in the mackerel fishery, out of the port of Hingham, during the warm season, and in the winter frequently employed himself in teaching navigation to young men, for which he was eminently qualified. He remained with us, until his death, which took place in 1829. At this time he had been out at sea two or three days, when he was taken sick, and was carried into Cape Cod, where he died, on the first day of May, 1829, and there his remains lie buried. Peace be to his ashes! They rest in a strange land, far from his kindred and his native country.

Since his death I have met with Mr. Stewart, of Philadelphia, who was Commercial Agent in Trinidad at the time of my capture. He informed me that the piratical schooner Mexican, was afterwards chased by an English government vessel, from Jamaica, which was cruising in search of it. Being hotly pursued, the pirates deserted their vessel, and fled to the Mangrove bushes, on an island similar to that on which they had placed me and my crew to die. The English surrounded them, and thus they were cut off from all hopes of escape. They remained there, I think fourteen days, when being almost entirely subdued by famine, eleven surrendered themselves, and were taken. The others probably perished among the mangroves. The few who were taken were carried by the government vessel into Trinidad. Mr. Stewart said that he saw them himself, and such miserable objects, that had life, he never before beheld. They were in a state of starvation; their beards had grown to a frightful length, their bodies were covered with filth and vermin, and their countenances were hideous. From Trinidad they were taken to Kingston, Jamaica, and there hung on Friday, the 7th of February, 1823.

About a quarter of an hour before day dawn, the wretched culprits were taken from the jail, under a guard of soldiers from the 50th regiment, and the City Guard. On their arrival at the wherry wharf, the military retired, and the prisoners, with the Town Guard were put on board two wherries, in which they proceeded to Port Royal Point, the usual place of execution in similar cases. They were there met by a strong party of military, consisting of 50 men, under command of an officer. They formed themselves into a square round the place of execution, with the sheriff and his officers with the prisoners in the centre. The gallows was of considerable length, and contrived with a drop so as to prevent the unpleasant circumstances which frequently occur.

The unfortunate men had been in continual prayer from the time they were awakened out of a deep sleep till they arrived at that place, where they were to close their existence.

They all expressed their gratitude for the attention they had met with from the sheriff and the inferior officers. Many pressed the hands of the turnkey to their lips, others to their hearts, and on their knees, prayed that God, Jesus Christ, and the Virgin Mary would bless him and the other jailors for their goodness. They all then fervently joined in prayer. To the astonishment of all, no clerical character, of any persuasion, was present. They repeatedly called out "Adonde esta el padre," (Where is the holy father.)

Juan Hernandez called on all persons present to hear him—he was innocent; what they had said about his confessing himself guilty was untrue. He had admitted himself guilty, because he hoped for pardon; but that now he was to die, he called God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost, the Virgin Mary, and the Saints, to witness that he spoke the truth—that he was no pirate, no murderer—he had been forced. The Lieutenant of the pirates was a wretch, who did not fear God, and had compelled him to act.

Juan Gutierrez and Francisco de Sayas were loud in their protestations of innocence.

Manuel Lima said, for himself, he did not care; he felt

for the old man (Miguel Jose.) How could he be a pirate who could not help himself? If it were a Christian country, they would have pardoned him for his gray hairs. He was innocent—they had both been forced. Let none of his friends or relations ever venture to sea—he hoped his death would be a warning to them, that the innocent might suffer for the guilty. The language of this young man marked him a superior to the generality of his companions in misfortune. The seamen of the *Whim* stated that he was very kind to them when prisoners on board the piratical vessel. Just before he was turned off, he addressed the old man—"Adios viejo, para siempre adios."—(Farewell, old man, forever farewell.)

Several of the prisoners cried out for mercy, pardon, pardon.

Domingo Eucalla, the black man, then addressed them. "Do not look for mercy here, but pray to God; we are all brought here to die. This is not built for nothing; here we must end our lives. You know I am innocent, but I must die the same as you all. There is not any body here who can do us any good, so let us think only of God Almighty. We are not children but men, you know that all must die; and in a few years those who kill us must die too. When I was born, God set the way of my death; I do not blame any body. I was taken by the pirates and they made me help them; they would not let me be idle. I could not show that this was the truth, and therefore they have judged me by the people they have found me with. I am put to death unjustly, but I blame nobody. It was my misfortune. Come, let us pray. If we are innocent, so much the less we have to repent. I do not come here to accuse any one. Death must come one day or other; better to the innocent than guilty." He then joined in prayer with the others. He seemed to be much revered by his fellow prisoners. He chose those prayers he thought most adapted to the occasion. Hundreds were witnesses to the manly firmness of this negro. Observing a bystander listening attentively to the complaints of one of his fellow wretches, he translated what had been said into English. With a steady pace, and a resolute and resigned countenance, he ascended the fatal

scaffold. Observing the executioner unable to untie a knot on the collar of one of the prisoners, he with his teeth untied it. He then prayed most fervently till the drop fell.

Miguel Jose protested his innocence.—“No he robado, no he matado ningune, muero inocente.”—(I have robbed no one, I have killed no one, I die innocent. I am an old man, but my family will feel my disgraceful death.)

Francisco Miguel prayed devoutly, but inaudibly.—His soul seemed to have quitted the body before he was executed.

Breti Gullimillit called on all to witness his innocence; it was of no use for him to say an untruth, for he was going before the face of God.

Augustus Hernandez repeatedly declared his innocence, requested that no one would say he had made a confession; he had none to make.

Juan Hernandez was rather obstinate when the executioner pulled the cap over his eyes. He said, rather passionately—“Quita is de mis ojos.”—(Remove it from my eyes.) He then rubbed it up against one of the posts of the gallows.

Miguel Jose made the same complaint, and drew the covering from his eyes by rubbing his head against a fellow sufferer.

Pedro Nondre was loud in his ejaculations for mercy. He wept bitterly. He was covered with marks of deep wounds.

The whole of the ten included in the death warrant, having been placed on the scaffold, and the ropes suspended, the drop was let down. Nondre being an immense heavy man, broke the rope, and fell to the ground alive. Juan Hernandez struggled long. Lima was much convulsed. The old man Gullimillit, and Miguel, were apparently dead before the drop fell. Eucalla (the black man) gave one convulsion, and all was over.

When Nondre recovered from the fall and saw his nine lifeless companions stretched in death, he gave an agonizing shriek; he wrung his hands, screamed “Favor, favor, me matan sin causa. O! buenos Christianos, me amparen, ampara me, ampara me, no hay Christiano en asta, tiara?”

(Mercy, mercy, they kill me without cause—Oh, good Christians, protect me, Oh, protect me. Is there no Christian in this land?)

He then lifted his eyes to Heaven, and prayed long and loud. Upon being again suspended, he was for a long period convulsed. He was an immense powerful man, and died hard.

A piratical station was taken in the Island of Cuba by the U. S. schooners of war, Greyhound and Beagle. They left Thompson's Island June 7, 1823, under the command of Lieuts. Kearney and Newton, and cruised within the Keys, on the south side of Cuba, as far as Cape Cruz, touching at all the intermediate ports on the island, to intercept pirates. On the 21st of July, they came to anchor off Cape Cruz, and Lieut. Kearney went in his boat to reconnoitre the shore, when he was fired on by a party of pirates who were concealed among the bushes. A fire was also opened from several pieces of cannon erected on a hill a short distance off. The boat returned, and five or six others were manned from the vessels, and pushed off for the shore, but a very heavy cannonade being kept up by the pirates on the heights, as well as from the boats, were compelled to retreat. The two schooners were then warped in, when they discharged several broadsides, and covered the landing of the boats. After a short time the pirates retreated to a hill that was well fortified. A small hamlet, in which the pirates resided, was set fire to and destroyed. Three guns, one a four pounder, and two large swivels, with several pistols, cutlasses, and eight large boats, were captured. A cave, about 150 feet deep, was discovered, near where the houses were, and after considerable difficulty, a party of seamen got to the bottom, where was found an immense quantity of plunder, consisting of broadcloths, dry goods, female dresses, saddlery, &c. Many human bones were also in the cave, supposed to have been unfortunate persons who were taken and put to death. A great many of the articles were brought away, and the rest destroyed. About forty pirates escaped to the heights, but many were supposed to have been killed from the fire of the schooners, as well as from the men who landed. The bushes were so thick that it was impossible to go after them. Several other caves are

in the neighborhood, in which it was conjectured they occasionally take shelter.

In 1823, Commodore Porter commanded the United States squadron in these seas; much good was done in preventing new acts of piracy; but these wretches kept aloof and did not venture to sea as formerly, but some were taken.

Almost every day furnished accounts evincing the activity of Commodore Porter, and the officers and men under his command; but for a long time their industry and zeal was rather shown in the *suppression* of piracy than the *punishment* of it. At length, however, an opportunity offered for inflicting the latter, as detailed in the following letter, dated Matanzas, July 10, 1823.

"I have the pleasure of informing you of a brilliant achievement obtained against the pirates on the 5th inst. by two barges attached to Commodore Porter's squadron, the Gallinipper, Lieut. Watson, 18 men, and the Moscheto, Lieut. Inman, 10 men. The barges were returning from a cruise to windward; when they were near Jiguapa Bay, 13 leagues to windward of Matanzas, they entered it—it being a rendezvous for pirates. They immediately discovered a large schooner under way, which they supposed to be a Patriot privateer; and as their stores were nearly exhausted, they hoped to obtain some supplies from her. They therefore made sail in pursuit. When they were within cannon shot distance, she rounded to and fired her long gun, at the same time run up the bloody flag, directing her course towards the shore, and continuing to fire without effect. When she had got within a short distance of the shore, she came to, with springs on her cable, continuing to fire; and when the barges were within 30 yards, they fired their muskets without touching boat or man; our men gave three cheers, and prepared to board; the pirates, discovering their intention, jumped into the water, when the bargemen, calling on the name of "Allen," commenced a destructive slaughter, killing them in the water and as they landed. So exasperated were our men, that it was impossible for their officers to restrain them, and many were killed after orders were given to grant quarter. Twenty-seven dead were

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counted, some sunk, five taken prisoners by the bargemen, and eight taken by a party of Spaniards on shore. The officers calculated that from 30 to 35 were killed. The schooner mounted a long nine pounder on a pivot, and 4 four pounders, with every other necessary armament, and a crew of 50 to 60 men, and ought to have blown the barges to atoms. She was commanded by the notorious Diablero or Little Devil. This statement I have from Lieut. Watson himself, and it is certainly the most decisive operation that has been effected against those murderers, either by the English or American force.

“This affair occurred on the same spot where the brave Allen fell about one year since. The prize was sent to Thompson’s Island.”

A British sloop of war, about the same time, captured a pirate schooner off St. Domingo, with a crew of 60 men. She had 200,000 dollars in specie, and other valuable articles on board. The brig Vestal sent another pirate schooner to New-Providence.

THE  
ADVENTURES AND EXECUTION  
OF  
CAPTAIN JOHN RACKAM.

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THIS John Rackam, as has been reported in the foregoing pages, was quarter-master to Vane's company, till the crew were divided, and Vane turned out of it for refusing to board a French man-of-war, Rackam being voted captain of the division that remained in the brigantine. The 24th of November 1718, was the first day of his command; his first cruise was among the Carribbee Islands, where he took and plundered several vessels.

We have already taken notice, that when Captain Woods Rogers went to the island of Providence with the king's pardon to such of the pirates as should surrender, this brigantine, which Rackam commanded, made its escape through another passage, bidding defiance to the mercy that was offered.

To the windward of Jamaica, a Madeira-man fell into the pirate's way, which they detained two or three days, till they had their market out of her, and then they gave her back to the master, and permitted one Hosea Tidsel, a tavern keeper at Jamaica, who had been picked up in one of their prizes, to depart in her, she being bound for that island.

After this cruise they went into a small island, and cleaned, and spent their Christmas ashore, drinking and carousing as long as they had any liquor left, and then went to sea again for more. They succeeded but too well, though they took no extraordinary prize for above two months, except a ship laden with convicts from Newgate, bound for the plantations, which in a few days was retaken;

with all her cargo, by an English man-of-war that was stationed in those seas.

Rackam stood towards the island of Bermuda, and took a ship bound to England from Carolina, and a small pink from New England, both of which he brought to the Bahama Islands, where, with the pitch, tar and stores they cleaned again, and refitted their own vessel; but staying too long in that neighborhood, Captain Rodgers, who was Governor of Providence, hearing of these ships being taken, sent out a sloop well manned and armed, which retook both the prizes, though in the mean while the pirate had the good fortune to escape.

From hence they sailed to the back of Cuba, where Rackam kept a little kind of a family; at which place they stayed a considerable time, living ashore with their Delilahs, till their money and provisions were expended, and they concluded it time to look out for more. They repaired their vessel, and were making ready to put to sea, when a guarda de costa came in with a small English sloop, which she had taken as an interloper on the coast. The Spanish guard-ship attacked the pirate, but Rackam being close in behind a little island, she could do but little execution where she lay; the Dons therefore warped into the channel that evening, in order to make sure of her the next morning. Rackam finding his case desperate, and that there was hardly any possibility of escaping, resolved to attempt the following enterprize. The Spanish prize lying for better security close into the land, between the little island and the Main, our desperado took his crew into the boat with their cutlasses, rounded the little island, and fell aboard their prize silently in the dead of the night without being discovered, telling the Spaniards that were aboard her, that if they spoke a word, or made the least noise, they were all dead men; and so they became masters of her. When this was done he slipped her cable, and drove out to sea. The Spanish man-of-war was so intent upon their expected prize, that they minded nothing else, and as soon as day broke, they made a furious fire upon the empty sloop; but it was not long before they were rightly apprised of the matter, when they cursed themselves sufficiently for a company of fools, to be bit out of a good rich prize, as

she proved to be, and to have nothing but an old crazy hull in the room of her.

Rackam and his crew had no occasion to be displeased at the exchange, as it enabled them to continue some time longer in a way of life that suited their depraved minds. In August 1720, we find him at sea again, scouring the harbours and inlets of the north and west parts of Jamaica, where he took several small craft, which proved no great booty to the rovers; but they had but few men, and therefore were obliged to run at low game till they could increase their company and their strength.

In the beginning of September, they took seven or eight fishing boats in Harbour Island, stole their nets and other tackle, and then went off to the French part of Hispaniola, where they landed, and took the cattle away, with two or three Frenchmen whom they found near the water-side, hunting wild hogs in the evening. The Frenchmen came on board, whether by consent or compulsion is not certainly known. They afterwards plundered two sloops, and returned to Jamaica, on the north coast of which island, near Porto Maria Bay, they took a schooner, Thomas Spenlow, master, it being then the 19th of October. The next day Rackam seeing a sloop in Dry Harbour Bay, stood in and fired a gun; the men all ran ashore, and he took the sloop and lading; but when those ashore found that they were pirates, they hailed the sloop, and let them know they were all willing to come on board of them.

Rackam's coasting the island in this manner proved fatal to him; for intelligence of his expedition came to the governor by a canoe which he had surprised ashore in Ocho Bay: upon this a sloop was immediately fitted out, and sent round the island in quest of him, commanded by Captain Barnet, and manned with a good number of hands. Rackam, rounding the island, and drawing round the western point, called Point Negril, saw a small pettiaga, which, at the sight of the sloop, ran ashore and landed her men, when one of them hailed her. Answer was made that they were Englishmen, and begged the pettiaga's men to come on board and drink a bowl of punch, which they prevailed upon them to do. Accordingly, the company, in an evil hour, came all aboard of the pirate, consisting of nine per-

sons; they were armed with muskets and cutlasses, but what was their real design in so doing we will not pretend to say. They had no sooner laid down their arms and taken up their pipes, than Barnet's sloop, which was in pursuit of Rackam's, came in sight.

The pirates, finding she stood directly towards them, feared the event, and weighed their anchor, which they had but lately let go, and stood off. Captain Barnet gave them chase, and, having advantage of little breezes of wind which blew off the land, came up with her, and brought her into Port Royal, in Jamaica.

About a fortnight after the prisoners were brought ashore, viz. November 16, 1720, Captain Rackam and eight of his men were condemned and executed. Captain Rackam and two others were hung in chains.

But what was very surprising, was the conviction of the nine men that came aboard the sloop on the same day she was taken. They were tried at an adjournment of the court on the 24th of January, the magistracy waiting all that time, it is supposed, for evidence to prove the piratical intention of going aboard the said sloop; for it seems there was no act of piracy committed by them, as appeared by the witnesses against them, two Frenchmen, taken by Rackam off the island of Hispaniola, who merely deposed that the prisoners came on board without any compulsion.

The court considered the prisoners' cases, and the majority of the commissioners being of opinion that they were all guilty of the piracy and felony they were charged with, viz. the going over with a piratical intent to John Rackam, &c. then notorious pirates, and by them known to be so, they all received sentence of death, and were executed on the 17th of February at Gallows Point at Port Royal.

## THE LIFE AND EXPLOITS OF

## ANNE BONNEY.

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THIS female pirate was a native of Cork. Her father was an attorney, and, by his activity in business, rose to considerable respectability in that place. Anne was the fruit of an unlawful connexion with his own servant maid, with whom he afterwards eloped to America, leaving his own affectionate and lawful wife. He settled at Carolina, and for some time followed his own profession; but soon commenced merchant, and was so successful as to purchase a considerable plantation. There he lived with his servant in the character of his wife; but she dying, his daughter Anne superintended the domestic affairs of her father.

During her residence with her parent she was supposed to have a considerable fortune, and was accordingly addressed by young men of respectable situations in life. It happened with Anne, however, as with many others of her youth and sex, that her feelings, and not her interest, determined her choice of a husband. She married a young sailor without a shilling. The avaricious father was so enraged, that, deaf to the feelings of a parent, he turned his own child out of doors. Upon this cruel usage, and the disappointment of her fortune, Anne and her husband sailed for the island of Providence, in the hope of gaining employment.

Acting a part very different from that of Mary Read, Anne's affections were soon estranged from her husband by Captain Rackam; and eloping with him, she went to sea in men's clothes. Proving with child, the captain put her on shore, and entrusted her to the care of some friends until her recovery, when she again accompanied him in his expeditions.

Upon the king's proclamation offering a pardon to all pirates, he surrendered, and went into the privateering business, as we have related before: he, however, soon embraced an opportunity to return to his favorite employment. In all his piratical exploits Anne accompanied him; and, as we have already recorded, displayed such courage and intrepidity, that she, along with Mary Read and a seaman, were the last three who remained on board when the vessel was taken.

Anne was known to many of the planters in Jamaica, who remembered to have seen her in her father's house, and they were disposed to intercede in her behalf. Her unprincipled conduct, in leaving her own husband and forming an illicit connexion with Rackam, tended, however, to render her friends less active. By a special favor, Rackam was permitted to visit her the day before he was executed; but, instead of condoling with him on account of his sad fate, she only observed, that she was sorry to see him there, but if he had fought like a man he needed not have been hanged like a dog. Being with child, she remained in prison until her recovery, was reprieved from time to time, and though we cannot communicate to our readers any particulars of her future life, or the manner of her death, yet it is certain that she was not executed.

THE  
ADVENTURES AND HEROISM  
OF  
MARY REED.

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THE attention of our readers is now to be directed to the history of two female pirates,—a history which is chiefly remarkable from the extraordinary circumstance of the softer sex assuming a character peculiarly distinguished for every vice that can disgrace humanity, and at the same time for the exertion of the most daring, though brutal, courage.

Mary Reed was a native of England, but at what place she was born is not recorded. Her mother married a sailor when she was very young, who, soon after their marriage, went to sea, and never returned. The fruit of that marriage was a sprightly boy. The husband not returning, she again found herself with child, and to cover her shame, took leave of her husband's relations, and went to live in the country, taking her boy along with her. Her son in a short time died, and she was relieved from the burden of his maintenance and education. The mother had not resided long in the country before Mary Reed, the subject of the present narrative, was born.

After the birth of Mary, her mother resided in the country for three or four years, until her money was all spent, and her ingenuity was set at work to contrive how to obtain a supply. She knew that her husband's mother was in good circumstances, and could easily support her child, provided she could make her pass for a boy, and her son's child. But it seemed impossible to impose upon an old experienced mother. She, however, presented Mary in the

character of her grandson. The old woman proposed to take the boy to live with her, but the mother would not on any account part with her boy; the grandmother, therefore, allowed a crown per week for his support.

The ingenuity of the mother being successful, she reared the daughter as a boy. But as she grew up, she informed her of the secret of her birth, in order that she might conceal her sex. The grandmother, however, dying, the support from that quarter failed, and she was obliged to hire her out as a footboy to a French lady. The strength and manly disposition of this supposed boy increased with her years, and leaving that servile employment, she engaged on board a man-of-war.

The volatile disposition of the youth did not permit her to remain long in this station, and she next went into Flanders, and joined a regiment of foot as a cadet. Though in every action she conducted herself with the greatest bravery, yet she could not obtain a commission, as they were in general bought and sold. She accordingly quitted that service, and enlisted into a regiment of horse; there she behaved herself so valiantly, that she gained the esteem of all her officers. It, however, happened, that her comrade was a handsome young Fleming, and she fell passionately in love with him. The violence of her feelings rendered her negligent of her duty, and effected such a change in her behaviour as attracted the attention of all. Both her comrade and the rest of the regiment deemed her mad. Love, however, is inventive, and as they slept in the same tent, she found means to discover her sex without any seeming design. He was both surprised and pleased, supposing that he would have a mistress to himself; but he was greatly mistaken, and he found that it was necessary to court her for his wife. A mutual attachment took place, and, as soon as convenient, women's clothes were provided for her, and they were publicly married.

The singularity of two troopers marrying caused a general conversation, and many of the officers honored the ceremony with their presence, and resolved to make presents to the bride, to provide her with necessaries. After marriage they were desirous to quit the service, and their discharge being easily obtained, they set up an ordinary

under the sign of the "Three Shoes," and soon acquired a considerable run of business.

But Mary Read's felicity was of short duration; the husband died, and peace being concluded, her business diminished. Under these circumstances she again resumed her man's dress, and going into Holland, enlisted into a regiment of foot quartered in one of the frontier towns. But there being no prospect of preferment in time of peace, she went on board a vessel bound for the West Indies.

During the voyage, the vessel was captured by English pirates, and as Mary was the only English person on board, they detained her, and having plundered the vessel of what they chose, allowed it to depart. Mary continued in that unlawful commerce for some time, but the royal pardon being tendered to all those in the West Indies, who should, before a specified day, surrender, the crew to which she was attached, availed themselves of this, and lived quietly on shore with the fruits of their adventures. But from the want of their usual supplies, their money became exhausted; and being informed that Captain Rodgers, in the island of Providence, was fitting out some vessels for privateering, Mary, with some others, repaired to that island to serve on board his privateers. We have already heard, that scarcely had the ships sailed, when some of their crews mutinied, and ran off with the ships, to pursue their former mode of life. Among these was Mary Read. She indeed, frequently declared, that the life of a pirate was what she detested, and that she was constrained to it both on the former and present occasion. It was, however, sufficiently ascertained, that both Mary Read and Anne Bonney were among the bravest and most resolute fighters of the whole crew; that when the vessel was taken, these two heroines, along with another of the pirates, were the last three upon deck; and that Mary, having in vain endeavored to rouse the courage of the crew, who had fled below, discharged a pistol amongst them, killing one and wounding another.

Nor was Mary less modest than brave; for though she had remained many years in the character of a sailor, yet no one had discovered her sex, until she was under the ne-

cessity of doing so to Anne Bonney. The reason of this was, that Anne, supposing her to be a handsome fellow, became greatly enamored of her, and discovered her sex and wishes to Mary, who was thus constrained to reveal her secret to Anne. Rackam being the paramour of Bonney, and observing her partiality towards Mary, threatened to shoot her lover; so that to prevent any mischief, Anne also informed the captain of the sex of her companion.

Rackam was enjoined to secrecy, and here he behaved honorably; but love again assailed the conquered Mary. It was usual with the pirates to retain all the artists who were captured in the trading-vessels; among these was a very handsome young man, of engaging manners, who vanquished the heart of Mary. In a short time her love became so violent, that she took every opportunity of enjoying his company and conversation; and, after she had gained his friendship, discovered her sex. Esteem and friendship were speedily converted into the most ardent affection, and a mutual flame burned in the hearts of these two lovers. An occurrence soon happened that put the attachment of Mary to a severe trial. Her lover having quarrelled with one of the crew, they agreed to fight a duel on shore. Mary was all anxiety for the fate of her lover, and she manifested a greater concern for the preservation of his life than that of her own; but she could not entertain the idea that he should refuse to fight, and so be esteemed a coward. Accordingly she quarrelled with the man who challenged her lover, and called him to the field two hours before his appointment with her lover, engaged him with sword and pistol, and laid him dead at her feet.

Though no esteem or love had formerly existed, this action was sufficient to have kindled the most violent flame. But this was not necessary, for the lover's attachment was equal, if not stronger than her own; they pledged their faith, which they esteemed as binding as if the ceremony had been performed by a clergyman.

Captain Rackam one day, before he knew that she was a woman, asked her why she followed a line of life that exposed her to so much danger, and at last to the certainty

of being hanged. She replied, that, "As to hanging, she thought it no great hardship, for were it not for that, every cowardly fellow would turn pirate, and so infest the seas; and men of courage would starve. That if it was put to



*Mary Read killing her antagonist.*

her choice, she would not have the punishment less than death, the fear of which kept some dastardly rogues honest; that many of those who are now cheating the widows and orphans, and oppressing their poor neighbors who have no money to obtain justice, would then rob at sea, and the ocean would be as crowded with rogues as the land: so that no merchants would venture out, and the trade in a little time would not be worth following."

Being with child at the time of her trial, her execution was delayed; and it is probable that she would have found favor, but in the mean time she fell sick and died.

Mary Read was of a strong and robust constitution, capable of enduring much exertion and fatigue. She was vain and bold in her disposition, but susceptible of the tenderest emotions, and of the most melting affections. Her conduct was generally directed by virtuous principles, while

at the same time, she was violent in her attachments. Though she was inadvertently drawn into that dishonorable mode of life which has stained her character, and given her a place among the criminals noticed in this work, yet she possessed a rectitude of principle and of conduct, far superior to many who have not been exposed to such temptations to swerve from the path of female virtue and honor.