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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**

Daring exploit in capturing a Spanish, Man-of-war.

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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-