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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

Rackam taken by surprise.

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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.