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PADERBORN

**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**

Courage of Mary, during an Attack of the enemy.

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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