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**Pirates own book, or authentic narratives of the lives,
exploits, and executions of the most celebrated sea
robbers**

ELMS, CHARLES

New York [u.a.], 1842

Her sex discovered by Anne Bonney.

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-61163](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-61163)

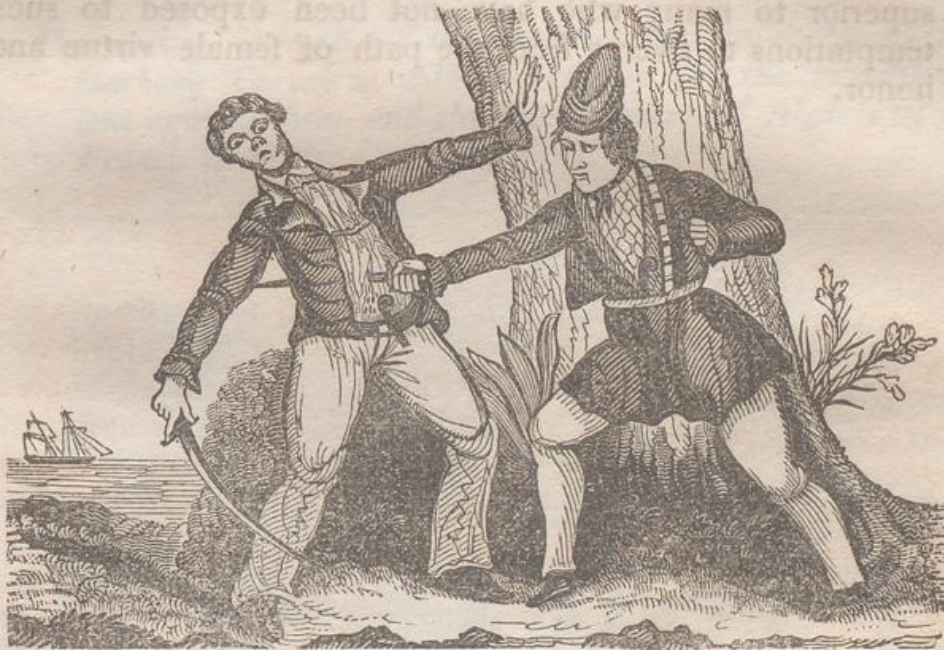
cessity of doing so to Anne Bonney. The reason of this was, that Anne, supposing her to be a handsome fellow, became greatly enamored of her, and discovered her sex and wishes to Mary, who was thus constrained to reveal her secret to Anne. Rackam being the paramour of Bonney, and observing her partiality 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