of their kind more pleasant than West Africa, the Spanish Main.

> "The world of waters is our home,
> And merry men are we,"

they might have sung, had Alan Cunningham's song of the sea then been written. "Merry" men they were, according to their own somewhat primitive and bestial ideas of merriment, rum, much rum, being one of their necessaries of life, and their chief ambition of no higher elevation than to lead a short life and a merry one.

Many a notorious pirate served his apprenticeship on this Guinea Coast, or perchance there ended his days. There were Roberts and Avery—Long Ben Avery—among the more famous; there was Massey—surely the gentlest pirate that ever

> "Left a corsair's name to other times,
> Link'd with one virtue and a thousand crimes."

*His* crimes were not many, however, not numerous enough indeed to suit a pirate crew. Poor Massey! He gave himself up later, and insisted on being hanged as a salve to his conscience.

There were Cocklyn, England, Davis, Moody, Lowther, and many another, before some of whom—typical pirates, brutes without redeeming point—

> "Hope withering fled, and Mercy sighed farewell!"

When Captain Thomas Phillips of the ship *Hannibal* (36), Letter of Marque, visited the Coast in 1693, he found everywhere the fear of pirates, in every port men looked at him askance. Even at the

Cape de Verde islands, where he called on the way south, suspicion awoke with every strange sail that appeared. At St. Jago, in the Bay of Porto Prayo, the *Hannibal* was fired on before she brought to, for what cause Phillips knew not till he landed. Then the officer in command of the guard, "a well looking old man," explained matters in his quarters, over a glass.

"This old Officer had an old House, with a crazy Pair of Stairs, which they ascended into a large open Room. Here he gave them a satisfactory Account why he fired so eagerly at their Entrance, (for he had shot three Times, and the last with a Ball,) taking them to be Pirates." A pathetic, neglected figure, courteous and dignified, was this old officer, "decoyed hither by fair Promises from the Governor of Lisbon, which were never performed"; a brave man, flung aside and forgotten, yet putting the best face on the matter, and striving to do his duty, though sore harassed by his commanding officer, the Lieutenant-Governor, a youth of twenty, "proud and empty," with an "insolent Air," says Phillips.

The Governor, an older man than this youth, gave Phillips a most indifferent meal, consisting of "a Loaf of good white Bread, a Box of Marmalade served on a Napkin; and for Drink there was a Squeeze-Case Bottle half full of Madeira wine, but so thick, foul and hot, that the Author had much ado to drink it." Even for this unappetising repast Phillips had to pay in presents; but not to be outdone in hospitality, he invited the Governor to come on board the *Hannibal*.

His Excellency, however, could not be prevailed on to quit solid land. How did he know, indeed, that Phillips was not a pirate, who merely wanted to get him on board in order to keep him there till he (the Governor) had sent ashore orders to supply the ship with whatever was demanded, and having got everything the island could provide, then be off to sea, paying for all with a fictitious bill of Exchange on London, drawn, (as was later done by Avery in dealing with the Governor of San Thomé), "on John a Noakes or the Pump at Aldgate"? (Avery had a pretty wit—for a pirate.)

The Governor of St. Jago was a "a Man of good Parts, Experience, and Subtility," we read, and of noble family; but his "Cloaths very ordinary. He had a long black Wig which reached to his Middle, but somebody had plucked out all the Curls." Even a pirate might not covet that wig. He had not, perhaps, a very attractive personality, this Governor.

It was not till she had run some way down the African coast, and sighted Cape Mesurado, that the *Hannibal* fell in with trace of pirates. Off this cape, signals from her consort, the *East India Merchant*, under Captain Shurley, which had lost her fore top-mast and fore yard in a tornado, caused her to run in and let go her anchor. Here, living amongst the blacks, they found a Scotchman "who could give no good account of himself." Anxious to get away, this man wished to ship as A.B. on board one of the two English vessels, but he had "so much of the villain in his face" that neither Phillips nor Shurley "cared to meddle with him."

He was a pirate, Phillips learned later, and had belonged to a small brigantine, under a ruffian named Herbert, who had seized her in the West Indies, and, to avoid unpleasant results, had made his way with her over to the Guinea Coast. Here the crew quarrelled and fought desperately amongst themselves —as pirate crews were wont to do when over-much rum was aboard. When the fight ended, there was but this one man left capable of handling the vessel, and he, to save his own life, ran the brigantine ashore, when all his wounded shipmates perished. He had, we learn, "a long flaxen Wig, and a white Bever Hat" —a costume singularly inappropriate to the West African coast, one would suppose,—and with "much of the villain in his face," he was no doubt a sufficiently unattractive object. Another ship did eventually take pity on him, but speedily put him ashore again on Sherbro Island, and one hears no more of this particular rascal. If he did not die of fever and rum, not improbably he ended his days at Execution Dock, or perhaps, as John Silver said of Roberts's crew, he was "hanged like a dog, and sun-dried like the rest, at Corso Castle."

Men changed their flag easily in those breezy times; it was that of England which flew over them one day, and the next, perhaps, they were under the *Jolly Roger*, showing their heels to a frigate, or were themselves snoring through the water in hot pursuit of some fleeing, hard-pressed merchant-vessel, half of whose crew when the chase ended—as it mostly did —in capture, would light-heartedly turn pirates. After all, for those who already were inured to the

horror of trading in human flesh, it was no great step from Slaving to Piracy. It was the commonest thing in the world. Some of the very men-of-war's men, for example, who behaved with such conspicuous gallantry when capturing the notorious pirate Teach, or Black Beard, themselves afterwards became pirates. And of the crews of nine vessels (of from two to twelve guns each) taken by England the pirate on the Guinea Coast in the year 1719, no less than fifty-five without hesitation joined the Black Flag. One of Phillips' own men, indeed, at the end of this voyage turned pirate. William Lord, his trumpeter, "a most dissolute, wicked Wretch," having the misfortune in a drunken quarrel to stab in the stomach another roysterer, was put in irons, and so kept on the ship's poop during the voyage from St. Thomas to Barbadoes, where it was Phillips' intention to hand him over to the discipline of a man-of-war. But Phillips relented, and pardoned the man, who straightway ran off, and with many seamen from other ships joined a vessel which was then setting out with the ill-concealed purpose of preying upon the ships of the Great Mogul in the Red Sea. Piracy was winked at in those days by men in high places, or was called by some prettier name. In this particular instance, Colonel Russel, then Governor of Barbadoes, was a shareholder in the venture. "The Pretence of the Voyage was for Madagascar to purchase Negros; but Phillips had been well assured that her Design was for the Red Sea, to make the best of her Market with the Mogul's Ships; which having done, and bought a few Negros for a Colour, she might safely

return to Barbadoes. . . . What became of her he knew not."

Whilst Phillips was still on the African coast, at Cape Coast Castle, there arrived two Danish ships of twenty-six guns each, specially sent out from Denmark to treat with the blacks for the restoration to the Danes of their fort at Cape Corso, "for which end they had brought a Governor, Soldiers, Provisions, Ammunition, Merchandise, etc." This Danish fort had, a little time before, been surprised and pillaged by the negroes, the Governor escaping, sore hurt, by flinging himself from a window. At the time of Phillips' visit, the black "General,"—or "King," as he is indifferently called, though he had in reality merely been cook at one of the English factories,—was masquerading as Governor, amusing himself generally by indulging in too much strong drink, and in firing salutes on every possible and impossible occasion; even when Phillips was regaled with rum, the occasion was celebrated by every gun in the fort being discharged.

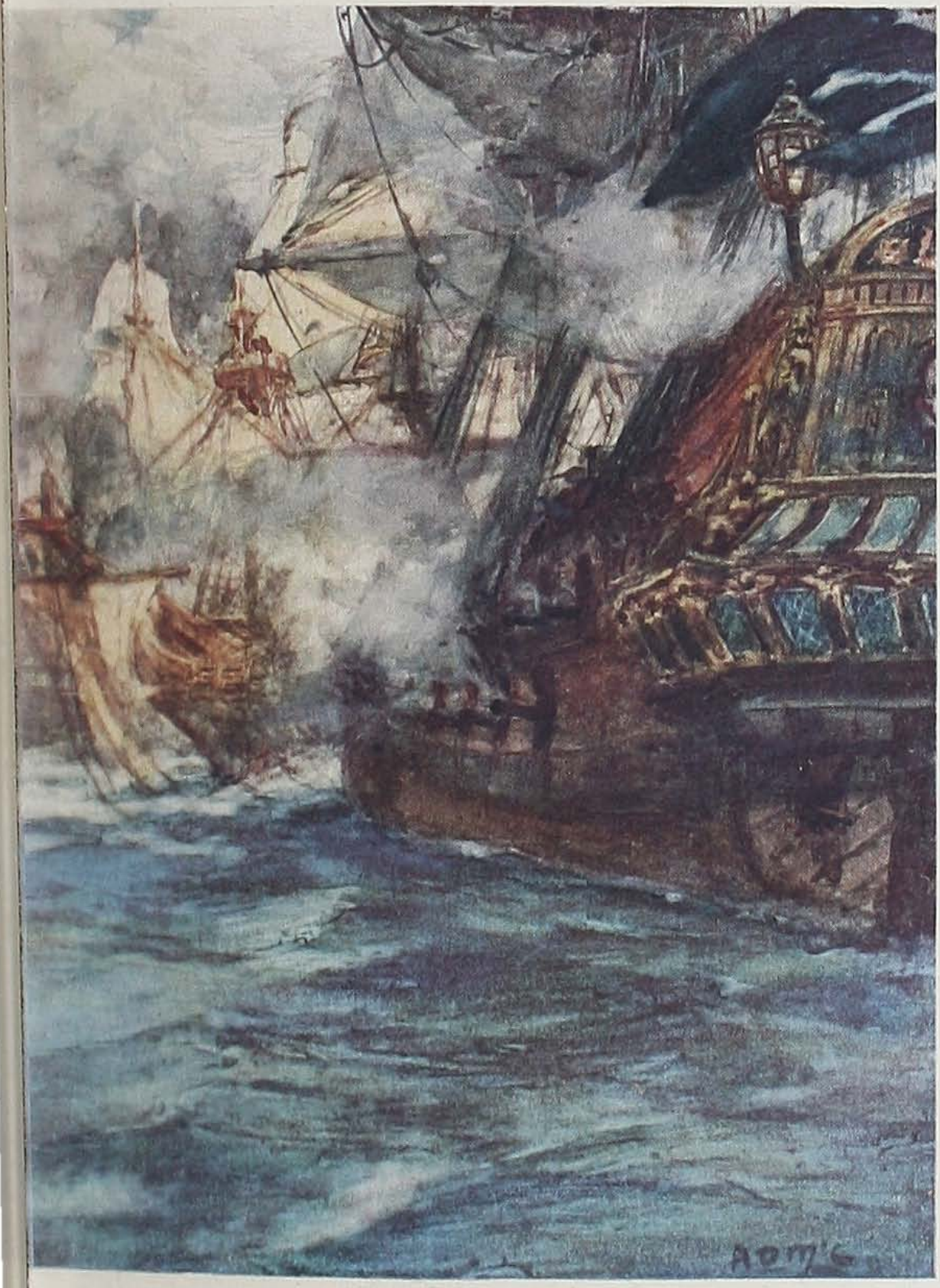
This coloured gentleman, however, when sober was remarkably acute, and he not only successfully bargained with the Danish ships that neither he nor his followers were to be held responsible for the plundering of the fort, but that in consideration of his vacating the building, he was to receive fifty marks in gold.

Having concluded this bargain, and left in the fort a new Governor and garrison, the two Danish vessels sailed for Whydah to buy slaves; but unfortunately for themselves on the way thence to the

West Indies they called at Prince's Isle to water. Here they fell in with Avery, the pirate, who, in spite of their fifty-two guns, "fought, took, plundered, and burnt them, which was the unhappy End of their Voyage." It was a notable exploit for Long Ben, who indeed was more famed for his cunning than for his courage. But perhaps sight of the dreaded black flag flying at Avery's peak took all fight out of the Danes; crews that allowed a rebel black cook to overreach and browbeat them, in any case probably had little backbone. Ill fortune pursued that Danish Governor whom the negroes had turned out of his fort. Depressed by prospect of the censure and probable ruin that awaited him in Denmark, he had accepted a passage to England offered to him by Phillips, but when ships under the flag of his own nation arrived on the coast, not unnaturally he had changed his mind and preferred to sail with them, with the result that in the end he fell into the hands of Long Ben and his crew of ruffians.

Edward England was another pirate who was on the Guinea Coast after this time. Mate of a sloop trading out of Jamaica, he was captured by Captain Winter, a notorious West Indian pirate. Nothing loth, England joined Winter's crew, and soon was given command of a small vessel, in which he presently set off to the African coast.

England was a man not ill educated, possessed of "a great deal of good Nature, and did not want for Courage; he was not avaricious, and always averse to the ill Usage Prisoners received; he would have been contented with moderate Plunder, and left



Avery, the Pirate, taking the two armed Danish Ships

mischievous Pranks, could his Companions have been brought to the same Temper; but he was generally over-rul'd, and as he was engaged in that abominable Society, he was obliged to be a Partner in all their vile Actions, in spite of his natural Inclinations."[1]

However good his natural disposition, he had not that ascendancy over his men which would have enabled him to maintain some sort of discipline, and consequently terrible scenes were sometimes enacted on his ships, or on vessels captured by him. There was, for instance, that dreadful business of the *Cadogan* snow of Bristol, which he captured at Sierra Leone. Her master, Skinner, was brought on board England's vessel, and it so happened that the first man of the pirate crew Skinner there set eyes on had at one time been his own boatswain. There had been, it appears, something of the nature of a mutiny on board, and this boatswain, with a few of the other hands prominent in the mutiny, had been handed over by Skinner to a man-of-war with which he fell in. At the same time, he considered this an occasion on which it was right to refuse payment of wages due to the mutineers. These men had afterwards deserted from the man-of-war, and had joined England.

Now the tables were indeed turned on poor Skinner. Swaggering up to him with the look of a malignant fiend, the boatswain stared hard in his face, then, with the smile of a devil, said:

"Ho! It's *you*, Skinner! The very man I most wanted to meet. I've owed you something this long

[1] Johnson's *History of the Pirates*.

while, and now I'm going to pay you in your own coin."

Calling some of his fellow-ruffians, they lashed poor Skinner to the capstan, and amused themselves for a time throwing glass bottles at him, till his face and hands streamed with blood; then stripping the poor man, they flogged him round the decks till that amusement, too, palled upon them. Finally, because, said they, he had been a good master to his men, and should therefore die an easy death, they put a pistol to his head and blew out his brains.

Doubtless England was powerless to prevent such horrors, even if he had the inclination to do so. There is no doubt that occasionally—as for instance in the case of Captain Mackra of the *Cassandra*, whom he captured off the coast of Madagascar—he did successfully incline his ruffians to mercy, at least to a modified form of mercy. And by such acts he quickly lost influence with his crew. "D—n England! We may thank *him* for this," they began to say when things went not to their liking. The end was that, led by a scoundrel named Taylor—who afterwards took command—"a fellow of a most barbarous Nature, who was become a Favourite amongst them for no other Reason than that he was a greater Brute than the rest," the crew marooned England and three of the more mercifully inclined of his men on the island of Mauritius.

It was to the Indies that England had sailed in the *Cassandra* after converting her to his own use; the same *Cassandra* that Jim Hawkins (of *Treasure Island*), lying hid in the apple barrel, heard

John Silver talking of: " . . . the *Cassandra*, as brought us all safe home from Malabar, after England took the Viceroy of the Indies." And John Silver,—surely *he* sailed with England! In Johnson's *History of the Pirates* it is told of Captain Mackra that "when they were in a Tumult whether they should make an End of him or no . . . an Accident happened which turn'd to the Favour of the unfortunate Captain; a Fellow with a terrible pair of Whiskers, and a wooden Leg, being stuck round with Pistols . . . comes swearing upon the Quarter-Deck, and asks, in a damning Manner, which was Captain Mackra; the Captain expected no less than that this Fellow would be his Executioner;—but when he came near him, he took him by the Hand, swearing, 'D—n him, he was glad to see him; and show me the Man,' says he, 'that offers to hurt Captain Mackra, for I'll stand by him,' and so with many Oaths he told him, 'he was an honest Fellow, and that he had formerly sail'd with him.'" Surely this was John Silver in the flesh.

Of the many vessels taken by England on the Guinea Coast, two or three, under new names, were fitted out as pirate ships; a few, a very few, were let go; several were burned,—at Cape Coast, where two English vessels had run in and anchored so close under the Castle's guns as to prevent the possibility of capture by the pirates, England utilised one of his prizes as a fire ship in a vain attempt to burn the fugitives; and one, the *Cadogan* (whose master, Captain Skinner, as already related, was so brutally murdered), was handed over to her

own mate, Howel Davis, a man who afterwards, as a pirate, like England made his name notorious, but who, unlike England, was able to keep his wild beast crew in some semblance of order.

Davis maintained that England on this occasion "mightily solicited" him to join the pirate crew, and that he, defying the Pirate captain, refused, saying that he "would sooner be shot to Death than sign the Pirates' Articles." On which England, pleased with Davis's boldness, sent him and his crew back on to the snow, with permission to continue their voyage. Perhaps Davis really did refuse; he had no lack of courage. But taking into account what one knows of his after life, one cannot help suspecting that his refusal might possibly arise not so much from superior virtue as from the feeling that England did not offer him terms sufficiently attractive. Possibly, too, he was disgusted at the sight of wanton bloodshed; or he may have been ambitious, and disinclined to serve under any man's command.

England, Davis says, before they parted company gave him a written paper, with orders not to open it until he should reach a certain latitude, and that at the peril of his life he must follow the instructions therein given. Davis accordingly at the appointed spot opened this document and read to the crew the contents. It proved to be something in the nature of a Deed of Gift of ship and cargo, and it ended with directions to proceed at once to Brazil, there to dispose of the latter for their own benefit.

Davis was not unwilling, but to his infinite dis-

gust the crew would have nothing to say to any such arrangement; it was piracy pure and simple, they thought, leading in the end to the gallows' foot. For the times, it was a crew singularly virtuous, or cautious to an unwonted degree. But whatever may have been the cause, they insisted on heading for Barbadoes, to which island they knew that part of the cargo was consigned. At Barbadoes the information supplied by the crew as to the death of Skinner and the proposal made to them by Davis, led to the latter being committed to prison; but as no act of piracy had actually been committed, he was liberated in the course of a few months—in no wise, one may suppose, better reconciled to the Law by his confinement.

All chance of honest employment in Barbadoes, however, now being gone, Davis made his way to the island of Providence, in normal times then "a kind of Rendezvous of Pirates," meaning there to ship with some crew of Rovers. Disappointment awaited him; the pirates, taking advantage of the Act of Grace which had lately come from England, had all surrendered to Captain Woods Rogers.

Unemployment, however, from a piratical point of view, was in those days seldom of inconveniently long duration. Ere many weeks had passed, Davis had shipped on board a trading sloop laden with rich goods, and finding amongst her crew not a few of the pirates who, under the Act of Grace, had recently been pardoned, he had no difficulty in persuading them to join him in seizing the ship. At Martinique, therefore, they rose in the night, secured the master

in his cabin, and soon had possession of the sloop. Her consort, which lay at anchor near at hand, they knew also to be full of ex-pirates, and very soon both vessels were in possession of the mutineers.

Here, then, were pirates sufficient to man with some strength one of the sloops, and nothing remained but to appoint a captain. Over a big brew of punch, —little was done in those days without a brew of punch,—the choice fell almost unanimously on Davis, who indeed had been the moving spirit in the whole affair. The appointment secured, Davis, knowing the value of a good beginning with such a crew, struck while the iron was hot, and drew up Articles to which the men readily enough agreed. Of these articles, one, indicative of Davis's character, and entirely at variance with generally accepted piratical usage, was to the effect that, on pain of death, whenever an enemy called for quarter it should be granted.

The question next arose, where first to try their fortune. Coxon's Hole was chosen, a secure haven in the East end of the island of Cuba, with an entrance so intricate and narrow that one vessel might readily prevent any hostile force from entering. Here they careened, and cleaned the sloop's bottom, determined at least to hold the advantage of being able to show a clean pair of heels if chased. Then setting forth, they, with a crew of no more than thirty-five men, took a 12-gun French vessel. Even as they boarded her, another sail hove in sight, which the master of the prize pronounced to be a Frenchman of 24 guns who had spoken him the previous day,—heavy odds against a crew of thirty-five, twelve

of whom were now away in the prize. A man-of-war of 24 guns in those days would carry a crew of one hundred and sixty men; no doubt this Frenchman would have at least two or three times the number of men that were on board Davis's ship.

Davis, to give the devil his due, was not the man to be dismayed by odds. "That's the ship we need, and that's the ship we're going to take," said he, to his hesitating and uncertain crew. And such already was his ascendancy over the men, such their faith in him, that they made the attempt. "They wondered at his Impudence," one reads of the other ship—a giant opposed to a pigmy,—but partly by force, partly by supreme audacity and "bluff," Davis took the giant, and without loss to himself soon had her crew in irons under hatches. It was a great achievement, —one cannot help admiring the man at all times for his reckless gallantry. In other circumstances, in another Age, he might have been one of his country's Heroes.

This big prize, however, proved to be a very dull, lumbering sailer, so after taking out of her, and also out of the smaller prize, everything that could be of use to him, Davis handed back to the Frenchman the two vessels, and went on his way in the sloop originally seized at Martinique.

Here a prize and there a prize dropped into his hands, and from each came willing recruits to join him. Ere long the pirates mustered a crew of ruffians of all nations, desperate villains, most of them, who would stick at nothing, yet fearing and obeying their leader as a dangerous dog obeys and fears his master.

But prizes grew scarce in West Indian waters; so they sailed for the Cape de Verdes, anchoring presently at St. Nicholas, where the Portuguese, taking the ship to be an English privateer, showed much civility to them. "Davis, making a good Appearance, was caressed by the Governor and the Inhabitants, and no Diversion was wanting which the Portuguese could shew, or their Money purchase." So charmed, indeed, were the pirates with this paradise of St. Nicholas, that in five weeks' time when the sloop again put to sea, several of the crew remained behind, having taken to themselves wives of the island,—a benefit that St. Nicholas might well have dispensed with. Are there descendants of these pirates there to this day, one wonders; and to what form were the English names converted in the Portuguese tongue?

The island of Bona Vista next had Davis's attention, but here the covert was drawn blank, no shipping was in port. In the next island visited, however, fortune favoured them; "they met with a great many Ships and Vessels in the Road, all of which they plundered, taking out of them whatever they wanted . . . also strengthened themselves with a great many fresh Hands, who most of them enter'd voluntarily." Indeed there were now crews sufficient to man two vessels, so one of the last captured prizes, fitted with 26 guns and re-named the *King James*, was pressed into the service.

Unbroken success and long impunity now tempted the pirates to water at St. Jago, and here the Governor, meeting Davis on shore, did not scruple to express

doubts as to the honesty of his ship. In a word, he and his men were pirates, said his Excellency. Davis stormed, and brazened the thing out. He "scorned the Governor's words," said he. But nevertheless he got aboard his ship with all speed, vowing vengeance. That night, well-armed boats' crews stole quietly ashore and surprised—it was easy to surprise—the not very vigilant garrison. Captain Phillips' "Old Officer," troubled no more by the broken promises of men in high places, must long ere this have gone to his rest, or the feat might not have been so easy.

Without giving the alarm, Davis's men succeeded in entering the fort, where the garrison quickly giving way, ran into, and barricaded themselves in, the Governor's house, into which the pirates not being able to force an entry, threw "Granadoe Shells, which not only ruin'd all the Furniture, but kill'd several Men within." And so when it was day, the pirates, having dismounted the guns of the Fort and done all the mischief possible, with the loss of but three men rejoined their ships, not caring to face on land the wrath of an aroused populace.

Fort James on the Gambia was the next bait that tempted Davis. There was always there great store of money, said he to his crew; it was well worth running some risk.

"But the place is too strong; moreover, it is garrisoned by the English," argued his crew. "The thing is impossible; too hard a nut altogether." (Truly, it was, as Barbot says, "the next best

Fortification to Cape Coast Castle of all that are to be found on either the North or South Coast of Guinea.")

"Trust me, and I'll get you in," answered Davis. And without more ado they shaped a course for the Gambia, trusting confidently in their leader's luck and courage.

Arrived within sight of the fort, all his men, except so many as were absolutely necessary to work the ship, were ordered to keep below out of sight, so that the garrison seeing a vessel come to the anchorage in lubberly fashion, handled by a numerically weak crew, might have no suspicion of treachery or imagine that she was anything except what her appearance indicated, an innocent trader. Dropping anchor as close to the fort as the water would allow, Davis, with the master and the surgeon rigged as merchants, and with a boat's crew of six men in slovenly dress (all of whom had been instructed what to answer if questioned), was rowed clumsily ashore, where he was received by a file of soldiers and conducted to the Governor's quarters.

He was from Liverpool, said Davis, laden with iron and plate, bound for the River Senegal to trade for gum and elephants' teeth. He had been chased by two French men-of-war, and had very narrowly escaped. Rather than again run the risk of capture in an attempt to reach the Senegal, he was minded to make the best of a bad market and discharge in the Gambia.

"Well," said the Governor, "iron and plate are wanted here, and I am willing to fill you with slaves

to the full value of your cargo, if that will meet your views."

Yes; Davis thought that would suit nicely.

"Had he any European liquor on board?" then asked the Governor.

"A little, for their own use only," said Davis, "but a hamper was at the Governor's disposal."

Thereupon the unsuspecting Governor very politely asked them to stay and dine with him.

"But," said Davis, "I am commander of the ship, and I must go aboard again and see her securely moored, and to give some necessary orders. Those other gentlemen may stay if they choose, and I myself will be back in time for dinner; and I'll bring the case of liquor with me."

And off he set. But all the time during his visit, Davis had been making careful mental note of everything, where the sentries were posted, where was the guard-room, how the men on duty carelessly stood their muskets in a corner of the building, where, also, the small arms were kept in the hall opening off the Governor's quarters. Nothing escaped him.

"If you men don't get drunk meantime, it's a sure thing," said Davis, when he got on board his own vessel. "Keep sober, and send twenty hands ashore well armed, as soon as you see me strike the flag that's flying over the fort."

But an awkward circumstance here presented itself. A sloop, running in, had anchored close to the pirate ship, and any unusual bustle on board the latter, any appearance of a crew more numerous than her appearance as a trader might warrant, would

certainly rouse suspicion and cause the sloop to warn the garrison.

"Go quietly aboard that sloop," said Davis to some hands whom he could trust; "clap the master and crew in irons, and bring them here."

Ashore again went Davis and his boat's crew, each with a pair of pistols concealed under his clothing.

"Go into the guard-room, get into talk with the men, and if possible get between them and their muskets, and when I fire a pistol through the Governor's window, jump up and secure all the arms. Smartly now," whispered Davis as they secured the boat at the landing.

Dinner was not ready when Davis reached the quarters of the Governor, and the latter, poor man, bent on hospitality, was making a big bowl of punch wherewith to regale his guests. To him went Davis, by way of helping; and just then the coxswain of the pirate boat, masquerading as his captain's servant, whispered, "All's ready!"

"You are my prisoner!" cried Davis, clapping his pistol to the Governor's breast. "Hold up your hands, and quickly; and make no noise, or you're a dead man."

The Governor, "being no ways prepar'd for such an Attack, promis'd to be very passive and do all they desir'd." Poor man, what else was there for him to do on the spur of the moment? Now, having secured and loaded all arms in the room, Davis fired his pistol through the window, as already planned, his men sprang on the muskets of the soldiers, and in a trice the whole garrison was under lock and key,

closely guarded. Fort James was taken, without drop of blood spilt on either side, without hurry, without confusion, by the exercise of little but supreme audacity.

Davis harangued the soldiers, we are told, and many of them without hesitation exchanged the uniform of King George I. for the, to them, more congenial life of a pirate. Many a gaol-bird helped to fill the ranks of our army in those days; whole batches of recruits were often but the scourings of the streets of London. In this case, the men who would not join him Davis sent on board the sloop from which he had so lately removed the master and crew, and to prevent the necessity of keeping a guard over them, he simply took away from the sloop all boats and sails, so that they lay there in the river helpless and at his mercy.

The remainder of this day "was spent in a kind of Rejoicing, the Castle firing her Guns to salute the Ship, and the Ship paying the same Compliment to the Castle." One may assume that the timing of the salutes would not be very accurate, the number of guns not strictly in accordance with regulation; they merely blazed away a deal of powder, punctuating the salutes with bottles of rum as long as rum allowed the men to load and fire. However, the next day, we are told, they "minded their business," which was, of course, to collect the booty. Very considerable was its amount, but not so considerable as the pirates had reckoned on;—two thousand pounds in bar gold, and "a great many other rich Effects" they got, indeed, but most of the money in

the fort, a large sum, unfortunately (or fortunately) had been sent away a few days before. What they valued they took on board; what was of no immediate use to them they made a present of to the master and crew of the little sloop, to whom also they returned that vessel.

Then to work they set, blowing up the fortifications, dismounting the guns, wrecking the entire place so far as lay in their power. Unhappy Fort James! If it was not Pirates, it was the French, and if it was not the French it was pirates, who continually made hay there. The place was not weak, yet it fell continually with extraordinary facility, almost, like the walls of Jericho, at the blowing of a trumpet.

But it was not, as we shall presently see, the only fortified place that yielded to Davis.

Ere almost he had finished with the sacking of Fort James, while yet the fumes of its rum sang in his men's heads, there came sailing up the Gambia River on the flowing tide a ship showing French colours, that boldly bore down on them, evidently under the belief that here was a rich prize ready to hand. Davis, not to be caught napping, got up his anchor and made sail, and the enemy, seeing his decks crowded with men, and a formidable number of guns grinning through his ports, rather hung in the wind for a minute, hesitating, till, bolder councils prevailing, she suddenly fired a gun, ran up the black flag, and bore down to board. Thereupon Davis also fired a gun and hoisted similar colours. The rival pirate was a Frenchman of 14 guns and a crew

of sixty-four, half-French, half-negroes, commanded by one La Bouse, who now effusively and with enthusiasm embraced Davis, who on his part agreed to sail in company down the coast with La Bouse.

Sierra Leone was the first port entered, and here "they spied a tall Ship at Anchor," which showed no uneasiness at the near approach of suspicious strangers, on whose decks men clustered like swarming bees, and which made no attempt to get away. She must be strong, concluded Davis, as, far in advance of La Bouse, he drew near to the still anchored vessel. And strong she was. As Davis ranged alongside, the stranger brought a spring upon her cable and fired a whole broadside into him, at the same time running up the black flag. Davis at once hoisted his own black colours, and, to show he was a friend, fired a gun to leeward. Birds of a feather were indeed now flocking together. This was a ship of 24 guns, commanded by the pirate Cocklyn, who had lain there like some foul spider imagining that Davis and La Bouse were two innocent flies blundering into his web.

No great harm had been done to Davis's ship by Cocklyn's broadside, no harm at least that the carpenter and his mates could not readily repair, and the three pirates agreed to join forces: for "Hawks pyke not out hawks' een." Davis was chosen as Commodore of the squadron, and the first enterprise entered on was characteristic of him,—no less than the reduction of Sierra Leone castle. He ever flew at big game.

At high water on the third day after meeting, the

three captains, with a full crew in Cocklyn's brigantine, dropped anchor within musket-shot of the fort, the commander of which having a shrewd suspicion of the strange vessels' intentions, at once opened heavy fire. The brigantine replied as hotly, and for many hours the two hammered away, till the other pirate vessels coming up to take part in the fray, the garrison were overcome with panic and fled, leaving everything to the tender mercy of the pirates.

In this castle they remained seven weeks, meantime cleaning their ships, and taking now and again some unfortunate vessel that happened unsuspectingly to put in. Here, too, Cocklyn captured Snelgrave, the slaver already mentioned in a former chapter. "Cocklyn and his Crew," says Snelgrave, "were a Set of the basest and most cruel Villains that ever were." They had chosen Cocklyn to command them, Snelgrave learned, "on account of his Brutality and Ignorance; having resolv'd never again to have a Gentleman-like Commander, as they said Moody was." (Moody was a pirate captain, who, not caring to associate with Cocklyn and such as he, had some months before marooned him and his men, an action, however, which was of little benefit eventually to Moody, for the remainder of his crew presently marooned him and twelve others in an open boat, and they were never heard of more.) As to Davis, of whom also at this time Snelgrave saw not a little, he is described as "a most generous and humane Man," and elsewhere as "a generous Man, and kept his Crew consisting of near a hundred

and fifty Men, in good order; nor did he join with the others, to the Author's misfortune."

But before telling the tale of Snelgrave's captivity amongst the pirates, it is well perhaps to finish with Davis.

No more than seven weeks lasted this alliance between the three captains; then they quarrelled during a drinking bout on Davis's ship. Cocklyn and La Bouse became more brutal than Davis could tolerate.

"Hark ye," said he, starting up, "you Cocklyn and La Bouse. I find by strengthening you I have put a Rod into your Hands to whip myself. But I am still able to deal with you both. However, since we met in Love, so let us part, for I find that three of a trade can never agree long together."

And that was the end; they met no more, each sailing on a separate course, each, like some foul bird of prey, questing on his own account.

Davis held on down the coast, taking, plundering, and then letting go, several English and Scottish vessels. The most formidable foe that he fell in with was a large Dutch interloper of 30 guns and ninety men. Off Cape Three Points the two met and fought it out. The Hollander was the quicker to get in a first broadside, killing at the one discharge no less than nine of Davis's men; but Davis, not behind, replied as warmly. And so, from two bells in the afternoon watch, through all that evening, throughout the long dark sweltering tropic night, the thunder of their guns echoed, like summer lightning their flash lit the sky, and till nine next morning

that stubborn battle raged. Then the Dutchmen gave way and struck their flag. Davis's greater tenacity and the superior discipline of his men told their tale, as they ever must tell where strength is anything like evenly balanced.

A welcome capture was this interloper, and Davis converted her to his own use under the name of the *Rover*, mounting in her 32 guns and 27 swivels. In every respect she was a vessel far superior to his own. In the *Rover*, one of his first captures was that of the ship *Princess*, whereof the second mate —as his ill fortune willed it—was a man afterwards very famous, or infamous,—Roberts the notorious pirate. Of whom more hereafter.

After this, running down the coast for Princes Isle, capture after capture fell to Davis, and one of them he handed over to his Dutch prisoners, for Davis was, as Snelgrave said, "a generous man," far removed from that type of pirate who caused his prisoners to walk the plank. As a general thing, indeed, he got rid of captured ships by presenting them to those prisoners who declined to serve with him. Sometimes even he restored at once to its commander a captured vessel,—after having, it must be admitted, removed to his own ship everything of value in shape of money or merchandise. Such an instance was that Dutch vessel on board of which the Governor of Acra was taking all his effects and his fortune home to Holland. Money alone to the amount of £15,000 sterling was the haul on this occasion, besides much else that was of value. Thereafter the Dutchmen received their vessel back

again, none the worse in hull or rigging, save for the one broadside which Davis gave her before she struck. And it is to be hoped that the Governor, poor man, esteemed himself lucky to escape sound in wind and limb, if considerably lighter in pocket.

But now Fortune wearied of Davis. His day was done; at Princes Isle came the end. Running in to the anchorage under English colours, Davis gave out that he was a King's ship in search of pirates, of whose presence on the coast he had information. The Portuguese saluted as the *Rover* ran in and anchored under the fort's guns, and Davis returned the compliment in real man-of-war style.

Then ashore went he, where the Governor with a guard of honour ceremoniously awaited him. Everything, of whatsoever kind, that he needed should be promptly supplied, promised the Governor. And "Thank your Excellency. The King of England will pay for whatever I take," answered Davis. And all went merry as a marriage bell. Even when a French vessel came to an anchor in the Road, and Davis, unable to resist the temptation, plundered her, alleging to the Portuguese Governor that she had had dealings with the pirates, and that in fact he had found on her "several Pirates' Goods" which he had confiscated "for the King's use," no suspicion was aroused; on the contrary, the Governor highly commended his vigilance and promptitude.

Days passed, till, having cleaned and overhauled his ship, Davis felt that he must now turn his attention to the island itself and its Treasure Chest. But where lay this Treasure Chest? To find that was

the difficulty. So he hit on a stratagem. A dozen negro slaves were to be presented to the Governor as a small return for his civility and attention to the wants of this English man-of-war; then following on the presentation, the Governor, the chief men of the island, and some of the priests, should be invited to a great banquet on board the *Rover*. Once on board, it should go ill if they got off under a ransom of £40,000. A very pretty scheme no doubt, but one in which there was a flaw that proved fatal. A Portuguese negro lad on board the *Rover* had overheard the pirates discussing this plot — rum had loosened their tongues and dulled their ears and wits. He swam ashore during the night and gave information.

Now, the Governor of Princes Isle was a cunning man, in his own estimation a diplomatist of no mean order, haughty and proud. It hurt his sense of the fitness of things that impostors, common pirates, should plot to deceive and to kidnap *him*. "Nay! I know a trick worth two of that," thought his Excellency. So he kept a still tongue. No word said he, but he smiled, when Davis, to do him, as it were, the greater honour, in person brought the invitation to his banquet. "Would the Governor go? Assuredly; with unbounded pleasure; the honour was great. Meantime would the English captain with his officers and boat's crew before returning to their ship be pleased to partake of refreshment in the Governor's poor abode?"

Alas for Davis! No suspicion crossed his mind. As they passed a clump of bushes on the way to

Death of Davis, the Pirate

Government House, at a given signal a volley of musketry dropped every man of the pirates save one, and that one, flying for his life, alone escaped on board. Davis fell, shot through the stomach, but struggling again to his feet, in great agony vainly tried to regain the beach. Poor Davis! Feebly he strove to hold himself erect and to stagger shoreward; but strength failed and he fell, and died, even as he died firing his pistols at those who only now dared to face him.

He was a great scoundrel, no doubt;—a gallows-bird. Yet he was a brave man and never a cruel one, and one cannot withhold from him a sneaking kind of regard. A gallant life wasted! Had his lines fallen differently, what might he not have done, fighting his Country's battles as an officer in the grandest Service the world has seen, the Royal Navy? He might have lived to fight, with Vernon, at Porto Bello, or with Anson have circumnavigated the Globe.

Dismay and rage were on the *Rover* that night, dismay and rage, and a consuming hunger for revenge. In their own way, his men, even the baser among them, loved Davis, and they thirsted for the blood of his murderers. But first a leader must be chosen.

Though he had joined the pirates with reluctance, and had been in all but six weeks on board, the choice fell on Roberts, who accepted the post not over graciously. "Since he had dipped his hands in muddy water, and must be a pirate, it was better to command than to serve," said he. No choice more likely to bring success could have been made. He

was known to be a skilled seaman and navigator, he had proved himself to be a man whom nothing could daunt, he was not given to drink, and, as the Articles afterwards drawn up by him prove, he was, or wished to be, a disciplinarian. His was, in short, like Davis's, a good life thrown away.

Roberts's first act on assuming command was to send ashore a force sufficient to deal out punishment. Thirty pirates, led by one Kennedy, a North of Ireland man, a daring fellow, but save for brute courage without one redeeming quality, attacked the fort, from which the Portuguese fled without making any pretence of defending it. Thereupon the *Rover's* men marched in, rolled the guns down the cliff into the sea and set the place on fire. But this was not enough, and most of the crew voted for sacking and burning the town. Roberts, however, restrained them, showing how lean would be the advantage gained, and at what risk of being cut off, and instead suggested that the French ship lately taken should be lightened so as to draw very little water, and, mounted with 12 guns, should be run in close to the town, where she could securely and at leisure knock the place about the ears of the inhabitants. Having carried out this plan to their hearts' content, the pirates handed back the French sloop to her owners and withdrew from the bay, leaving behind them a mass of ruins on land, and a bonfire of Portuguese shipping on the water.

## CHAPTER XVI

### PIRATES OF THE GUINEA COAST: ROBERTS, MASSEY, AND COCKLYN

SAIL was made on the *Rover*, and a course shaped to the southward, and finally for the coast of Brazil, where, keeping wholly out of sight of land, for over two months not a prize fell to them, not a sail showed white on the empty world of waters. Luck had fled with the death of Davis.

However, as the *Rover* ran in one day to make the land preparatory to taking a departure for the West Indies, off Los Todos Santos Bay gleamed the welcome topsails of no less than forty-two heavily laden Portuguese ships, a very feast of shipping for the pirates to gloat over. Every ship no doubt was armed, some heavily armed, and to leeward of them were two 70-gun ships-of-war, meant to act as convoy. But they were "only Portuguese," scornfully said the pirates, and Roberts never hesitated. Keeping his men carefully hidden, he ranged up on the weather side of the deepest-laden of the merchantmen, one straggling somewhat wide from the rest of the convoy, and ordered her master to come on board the pirate ship instantly and quietly, otherwise

the Portuguese ship should be blown out of the water. Surprised and intimidated, the merchant skipper obeyed, and once on board—

"Now," said Roberts, "point out to me the most richly laden vessel in your fleet. If you speak true, all shall go well with you; but if you hesitate, or deceive me, there ends your life."

The master, yellow with fear, pointed to a large vessel at no great distance, a ship of 40 guns and at least a hundred and fifty men. Not an instant paused Roberts to calculate chances. Said he to his trembling prisoner, as soon as the *Rover* drew within hail of her bulky foe,

"Invite her master to come aboard here."

"He would come presently," was the answer. But from the immediate bustle and hurry that were apparent on board, it was quite evident that the "Portugal" smelt a rat, and that they so answered merely to gain time. Without waiting to give them that time, the *Rover* poured in a broadside and sheered alongside to board. The fight was brief, if on the Portuguese side bloody. In the rush of boarding, two only of the *Rover's* men were killed, but the Portuguese fared ill at the hands of the pirates.

A pretty panic was there now in the convoy, guns firing on all sides, from every ship signals fluttering and constantly being changed, and the big men-of-war slowly bearing down towards Roberts, as he and his prize drew out from the crowd of shipping. The great 70-gunners, however, "made but sorry Haste" to the rescue; yet the prize sailed no

faster than a hayrick, and however slow they came it was evidently but a matter of brief time till overwhelming force should snatch this rich morsel from the *Rover's* jaws. One of the ships-of-war was far in advance of her consort, and Roberts boldly played a trump card; he backed his main top-sail and waited for her.

But that did not suit the big ship; she would not venture to attack unsupported, and so she luffed up in the wind and also waited. That was what Roberts had calculated on; by the time the second man-of-war had got near enough to stiffen the resolution of the first, the prize was safe away, and the *Rover* then showed the big line-of-battle-ships her heels, without so much as having a shot fired at her. It was not exactly a glorious victory for the Portuguese.

Exceeding rich was this prize that the *Rover* had taken, and great was the jubilation over her capture. Sugar, skins, tobacco, four thousand gold moidores, jewels, gold chains, and, to crown all, a great diamond cross that was being sent home for the King of Portugal, formed the chief part of her cargo. To enjoy this booty the pirates put into the Surinam River (Dutch Guiana), at the appropriately named Devil's Island, where, we read, they "found the civilest Reception imaginable."

And here it was that events gave rise to the dispersal of the pirates, and to the eventual return of Roberts and a portion of his crew to their former haunts on the Guinea Coast. It chanced that the *Rover* was short of fresh provisions, and hearing

from the master of a small sloop captured at the mouth of the Surinam River that a vessel laden with such stores as were needed was then due on the coast from Rhode Island, a sharp look-out was kept for her. Why indeed should they buy when they might so conveniently take!

In a day or two the look-out man reported a sail, without doubt the expected vessel, apparently making for the entrance. On the principle that if you want a thing well done, do it yourself, Roberts himself with an armed crew of forty men tumbled hastily on board the lately captured sloop, hoisted sail, and started to cut off the anticipated prize before she should enter the river. It was a job but of an hour or two; by the afternoon they would be again on board the *Rover*. But the stranger steadily kept her course down the coast to the southward, and the sloop gained slowly, if at all; nay, by nightfall the chase was hull down, and by morning all sign of her was gone. Worse still, wind and current were both against the sloop, and eight days' beating found her, with food and water both giving out, still ninety miles to leeward of Surinam, and without immediate prospect of being able to rejoin their ship.

As a last resource a boat was sent off to order the *Rover* to drop down for them. Dismal were the tidings the boat brought back after many days. Kennedy—he who had led the landing party after the death of Davis at Princes Isle—had been left in charge; and Kennedy had played them false. An ill dog was this Irishman, originally a pickpocket, then a housebreaker; reckless courage was the one

quality that caused him to be tolerated by the pirates, who despised petty larceny or small crimes like burglary. But he had a following of his own on the *Rover*, and no sooner was the sloop out of sight that day when she left the river, than he had set about undermining Roberts's authority. To Kennedy, honour among thieves was a creed unknown. Here, said he, they had a good ship and a rich prize by her side; let them now clear out with both, for so much the greater would be each man's dividend if Roberts and his forty men were out of the division.

Little did Kennedy's treachery benefit him then or later. The traitors got clean away, it is true, for the time being at any rate, and some went one way, some another, carrying with them their plunder. The rich Portuguese prize, still half laden, was handed over to the master and crew of the sloop captured in Surinam River. From near Barbadoes a few of the absconding pirates took arbitrary passage on board a Virginian schooner, whose captain, a Quaker named Knott, later succeeded in bringing to the knowledge of Governor Spotswood of Virginia what manner of passenger he had been forced to carry, knowledge which speedily brought to the gallows four of the pirates. Kennedy and some of the others sailed for Ireland on board a Boston sloop then captured by them, though Kennedy, despised for his treachery even by those who had aided him, was permitted to join with them only after taking—to save his life—the most stringent oaths of fidelity. Those who remained on the *Rover* were never more heard of,—probably they landed at some convenient spot, some

former haunt, for the ship was presently found drifting derelict among the islands, void of crew, but with still a few hapless slaves on board. Kennedy and those with him, who had shaped a course for the Irish coast,—it was in that green isle that they planned to scatter their wealth,—were so far out in their reckoning (one only amongst them had even a superficial knowledge of navigation), that the north-west coast of Scotland was the first land sighted. However, it was land, and there they left the sloop to look after herself, whilst they themselves, routing and roaring like wild bulls, to the terror of a quiet countryside, hastened townward, drawn by the load-stone of debauchery.

Not long did their "fling" last. As they neared Edinburgh, some while drunk and reeling along the roads were murdered for their money. Others, to the number of seventeen, on vague charges were laid by the heels in prison, and the proffered evidence of two brought a halter and the gallows to many. Kennedy, who had stolen over to Ireland, soon spent all his money, and destitute, made his way to London, where, lying in prison on charge of house-breaking, he was recognised by the mate of a vessel he had plundered, and was tried for piracy. To save his life, Kennedy turned King's evidence, which availed him not at all, and to the sorrow of none, not even of his comrades, who indeed are said to have heartily approved the sentence, he ended his evil career on the scaffold. Of those against whom he had informed, one only was taken, and he—various extenuating circumstances being taken into

account—received a pardon. But "Walter Kennedy, a notorious Offender, was executed the 19 of July 1721."

Roberts, without provisions or water, and in no position to obtain either, was left, as we have seen, in a most unenviable situation, from which there was small chance of escape unless a prize should fortunately turn up. As it chanced, good fortune did attend him in that respect, and with immediate necessities relieved, the sloop bore up for the West Indies. Here prize after prize came to the pirates' net, and to prevent a repetition of treachery such as Kennedy's, Roberts drew up a stringent set of Articles for the better ruling of their affairs and for the better control and discipline of the crew. Every man had a vote; every one was entitled to an equal share of fresh provisions and liquor, to which he might help himself when he pleased, (a law which, however inevitable and excellent from a socialistic point of view, possibly might not lead to the easier control of individual members, nor to the greater well-being of the whole). Any man defrauding the company, to the extent even of one dollar, was to be marooned on some desolate isle or cape, provided only with a gun, some bullets, a bottle of water, and a bottle of powder. If a man stole from another member of the crew, he should also be set ashore, though not necessarily on an uninhabited spot, his nose and ears first being slit. No person was permitted to gamble for money with cards or dice. All lights must be out by eight o'clock, and any of the crew desiring to continue drinking after that hour must drink on deck. (This rule it was found impos-

sible to enforce.) Deserting the ship, or deserting their quarters in action, was punishable with death; but in battle, also, the captain might with impunity shoot any man who refused to obey orders. Quarrels must be fought out on shore; no man might strike another on board ship. Such were some of the Articles. But perhaps, for a pirate ship, the most strange was Law XI., which provided that the ship's Musicians "should have Rest on the Sabbath Day." That pirates should cultivate music is almost as strange as it is to learn that they paid any form of respect to the first day of the week. Some recollection of boyhood's days, and the savour of a pious mother's upbringing, perhaps still clung to Roberts.

Many a hair's-breadth escape from defeat and capture had the pirates about this time, and notably they caught a Tartar and escaped with the skin of their teeth, when off Barbadoes they ran alongside one of two innocent-looking Bristol ships, which, as it happened, had been specially fitted out to deal with them.

Nevertheless, they increased in numbers, ever finding ready recruits. But Roberts's influence over them waned. He did not drink, (and in such a community sobriety brought a man under suspicion); and he kept, much and increasingly, to himself;—two offences hard to pardon. Probably for this reason, that they were getting out of hand, it came to pass that the mischief done became more wanton, the treatment of prisoners less humane. Thus, when with the Death's Head and Cross Bones flying, the

pirates ran one day into a Newfoundland port, they burned there more than a score of vessels, and did incalculable mischief ashore, without excuse and without any possible benefit to themselves. Then, cruising on the Banks, they took many ships, sometimes sinking or burning wantonly, or throwing into the sea valuable merchandise they did not themselves need; sometimes, too, maltreating passengers. Utterly reckless and out of hand they had become, and they told one captain whose ship they had captured that "They would accept of no Act of Grace; that the King and Parliament might be d—d with their Acts of Grace for them. Neither would they go to Hope Point, to be hanged up a sun-drying, as Kidd's and Braddish's company was; but that if they should ever be overpowered, they would set fire to the powder with a pistol and all merrily go to Hell together."

It remained to be seen if they would carry out those easily made boasts; and on the Guinea Coast later the opportunity was given to show if they were real, or mere cheap bombast born of habitual alcoholic excess.

Roberts was then cruising in a fine frigate-built vessel captured at Sestos from the Royal African Company, the *Onslow*, re-christened by the pirates, in remembrance of another of their ships, the *Royal Fortune*, and fitted by them to carry 40 guns. Of the *Onslow's* crew, the majority readily joined the pirates, and even her passengers, a detachment of soldiers under orders for Cape Corso Castle, followed the example. These last, it may be said, were only

tolerated and allowed to join as a favour, for the pirates held unbounded contempt for mere landsmen, especially for "sodgers." The soldiers' dividend, in fact, was to be but a quarter that of a fore-mast hand,—a trifling matter of charity indeed.

To another passenger on the *Onslow*, however, the pirates offered full dividends if he would but join. His work, said they, should be no more than to make Punch and to say Prayers. They never had had a real live Chaplain of their own, and to be complete their ship was in need of one. Here was the article ready made to their hand—the new Chaplain of Cape Corso Castle on his way out from England! Come he must and should. But the berth was not to the parson's liking. The honour was declined. Curiously enough, no resentment was shown by the pirates at the Chaplain's plain speaking; they even allowed him not only to retain all his own property, but to lay claim to anything else on the ship, and "in fine, they kept nothing which belonged to the Church, except three Prayer Books, and a Bottle Screw."

In this new *Royal Fortune*, then, Roberts sailed down the coast, carrying everywhere dismay and confusion, taking ship after ship, burning one, sinking another, letting a third go at ransom.

"This is to certify whom it may or doth concern, that we Gentlemen of Fortune have received eight pounds of Gold-Dust for the Ransom of the *Hardey*, Captain Dittwitt, Commander; so that we discharge the said Ship.

Witness our Hands this 13th of Jan. 1721-2.

(*Signed*) BATT. ROBERTS.
HARRY GLASBY."

So runs the copy of a document the duplicate of which was received in those days by many a vessel less unfortunate than some of her fellows. At Whydah, where presently the *Royal Fortune* put in, ten such papers were issued by Roberts. The pirates must have made here the pretty haul of close on £5000 in ransoms alone, and one might look with less jaundiced eye on the transaction, were it not for their treatment of an eleventh ship captured there, but not ransomed. The *Porcupine*, an old vessel of little value, but full of slaves, lay there at anchor amongst the others. Her captain, who was ashore at the time of her capture, did not think her—irrespective of her cargo—worth the ransom demanded, and he refused to pay. Roberts sent a boat to remove the slaves preparatory to burning the ship, but his men losing patience over the delay caused by unshackling the poor creatures, set her on fire as she lay, leaving eighty human beings to choose between death by burning and being torn in pieces by the sharks with which Whydah Road swarms. It was the worst, and among the last, of the many evil deeds that stand to the debit of Roberts and his men.

Into Whydah the *Royal Fortune* had run on this errand of ill, "a black Silk Flag flying at their Mizzen Peak, and a Jack and Pendant of the same: the Flag had a Death upon it, with an Hour Glass in one Hand, and Cross Bones in the other, a Dart by it, and underneath a Heart dropping three Drops of Blood. The Jack had a Man pourtray'd on it with a flaming Sword in his Hand, and standing on two Skulls." A terrifying enough sight, this, to honest

traders, but dear to the hearts of ruffian sea robbers, who in all ages and races have affected the pomp and circumstance of the theatre, and who from ancient Sallee Rover down to present-day Chinese pirate have loved to strike terror to the hearts of their victims by use of ghastly or fear-imposing symbols.

On one other notable occasion Roberts's men flew those colours,—the last on which they ever fought under the ill-omened emblems.

At Whydah, Roberts, by an intercepted letter, learned how closely H.M.S. *Swallow* was dogging his course. But a few months now of beating up and down that coast, and then—the end. The *Royal Fortune* left Whydah on January 13th; the *Swallow* arrived four days later. In May, Chaloner Ogle in the *Swallow*, with his consort the *Weymouth*, was at Sierra Leone, and put to sea but a little time before Roberts happened to look in. There Roberts learned news which lulled the pirates into the carelessness of fancied security. The ships-of-war were foul from long cruising, and must clean. Moreover, before they finished cleaning at Princes Isle, an epidemic broke out on board which in three weeks' time carried off a hundred men, and left the ships' companies in a state too weak to handle them or to make sail smartly. It was all in favour of Roberts, and the pirates vapoured up and down the coast unmolested.

But there came a day when, near the dawning, the *Swallow*, off Cape Lopez, heard the report of a gun, and presently looking into the bay, spied three vessels at anchor, the largest flying King's colours and pendant. That this could be no King's ship was

well known to the *Swallow's* people; therefore it must be some one, probably Roberts, for his own purposes masquerading as a ship of war.

Naturally, a trader putting in there, if she saw a King's ship lying at anchor, would, for the sake of security, moor as near to her as might be. Hence, when the *Swallow* made towards the strangers, no move was made on board the anchored ships. But when the *Swallow*, to avoid the Frenchman's Bank, a long and dangerous shoal, headed as if she might be trying to leave the bay in alarm, one of the smaller of the three strangers made instant sail, and gave chase. This confirmed the *Swallow* in her suspicions, so while feigning to clap on every rag of canvas that would draw, her commander yet so contrived to handle her that the pirate slowly but surely gained. Presently, but yet so far at sea that the sound of firing might not be heard in the bay, the pursuer had drawn near enough to fire her bow chasers; the black flag was run up, her sprit-sail yard swung amidships that nothing might prevent her running alongside to board the flying merchantman, her crew stood ready to jump, as they imagined, at the throats of terrified traders. Then in a twinkling all was changed. Suddenly the *Swallow* rounded to, up went her lower deck ports and a stinging broadside sent splinters flying about the pirates' ears and made the scuppers run blood. For two hours the action continued, till her main top-mast coming down by the run, and thirty of her men lying dead or wounded on her deck, the *Ranger*, of 32 guns and a hundred and three men, struck her colours. Skrine, her captain,

had a leg carried off by a round shot, yet remained on deck and continued to fight his ship to the end. Her crew, it is said, "appeared gay and brisk, most of them with white Shirts, Watches, and Silk Vests"; but some of them, as the man-of-war's boats drew alongside, spoilt part of their finery by an abortive attempt to blow up the ship. Had there been powder enough, probably the attempt would have been successful; as it was, it but served to burn and disfigure those who tried it. Thus far at least they had justified their boasting. And some of the wounded men that night lay and raved in delirium that as soon as Roberts came they would be freed.

Badly mauled and sinking as was the *Ranger* at the end of the fight, so sure was the *Swallow's* captain that the *Royal Fortune* would await her consort's return, that he lay alongside for two days, repairing the damaged ship, before bearing up once more for Cape Lopez. That he was right in his expectation was at once evident when again the Cape was sighted, for there was the *Royal Fortune*, just rounding the point, running in with a prize newly taken. That was evening, and for that night at least nothing could be done. But in the early morning, as the *Swallow* came round the Cape her topsails were seen by Roberts's man, showing over the tree-clad point of land that shut in the bay. Yet no notice was taken by any of them, no preparation made. "It's a Frenchman," said one; "a Portuguee," said another; "the little *Ranger* coming back," thought many. But most cared no whit either way, for they

had passed the night drinking in their new prize's rum, "Success to pirating."

However, there was one pirate who knew her only too well as she came full in view, who saw her with sinking heart, a deserter from the *Swallow*, a man named Armstrong. He must have been below, or fuddled with rum, that time when she decoyed the *Ranger* out of the bay, or the pirates would have known better than to lie where they were. Now at least there were none who did not know what they had to expect, but the more pot-valiant boasted of what they would do with this King's ship. As the *Swallow* raised her ports and hoisted her colours, Roberts slipped his cable and made sail, at the same time beating to quarters. But, "It's a bite," he said with a bitter oath.

With every sail drawing and her black flag fluttering aloft, the *Royal Fortune* tried to slip past the *Swallow* without immediately replying to the latter's broadside, designing when once out of the bay to run before the wind, that being, as Armstrong reported to Roberts, the point on which the frigate sailed worst. If disabled, the pirates would run their ship ashore, land as best they might, and trust to getting clear away in the bush; or, if the worst came to the worst, then there was nothing for it but to close with the *Swallow* and try to carry her by boarding.

But things went amiss. The men were drunk, orders were not promptly carried out; the frigate coming round smartly let fly a second broadside, and bad steering or a sudden shift of wind caused the pirate to be taken aback. Even yet Roberts might

have made a good fight. But as he stood by the mizzen rigging, a gallant if theatrical figure, clad in "a rich crimson damask Waistcoat and Breeches, a red Feather in his Hat, a Gold Chain round his Neck with a Diamond Cross hanging to it, a Sword in his Hand, and two pair of Pistols hanging at the end of a Silk Sling flung over his Shoulders," a grape-shot took him in the throat. "He settled himself on the Tackles of a Gun; which one Stephenson, from the Helm, observing, ran to his Assistance, and not perceiving him wounded, swore at him, and bade him stand up and fight like a Man; but when he found his Mistake, and that his Captain was certainly dead, he gushed into Tears, and wished the next Shot might be his Portion."

That practically settled the matter; there was little fight left in the pirates after the fall of their leader, and when another broadside carried away their mainmast by the board, they deserted their quarters and surrendered, calling out for quarter. But before they struck, some of the men, not forgetful of an old promise to Roberts, threw his body overboard in all its finery.

As the frigate's boats came alongside the *Royal Fortune*, a few of the more reckless of the pirates tried to blow her up, according to their boast, but the attempt was foiled by some of themselves, and soon all the survivors were under hatches, the bulk of them on board the *Swallow*, but a few, chiefly the wounded, on their own ship.

Thus was Roberts's whole squadron wiped out, for the pirates without even attempting to make sail

One Stephenson . . . swore at him, and bade him stand up and fight like a man

deserted the other consort which had remained with him, and panic-stricken fled ashore. The prisoners, something like one hundred and sixty of them, were a dangerous lot for the frigate in her weakened condition to convey round to Cape Coast. It was an anxious time for officers and men, and more than one plot to rise and murder the crew was nipped but just in time.

Notwithstanding the fact that all the prisoners were shackled, some of them contrived to get rid of their fetters, and it had gone hard with the numerically weak prize crew on the *Royal Fortune*, had not a pirate, perhaps more timid, or more diplomatic, than his fellows, given timely information of a plot hatched and near brought to maturity by the pirate surgeon.

Some of the prisoners remained quiet throughout, frightened no doubt; one hesitates to say they were repentant, though a few, to the infinite annoyance and disgust of their more dissolute comrades, read the Bible and prayed often. A man named Sutton, one of the most profane and reckless of the lot, utterly unmoved by prospect of his almost certain doom,—he was amongst those afterwards hanged,—it chanced was secured in the same irons with another prisoner who read and prayed without ceasing throughout the passage. "This man Sutton used to swear at, and ask him, 'what he proposed by such Noise and Devotion?'

"'Heaven,' says the other, 'I hope.'

"'Heaven, you Fool!' says Sutton, 'did you ever hear of any Pirates going thither? Give me Hell, it's

a merrier place. I'll give Roberts a Salute of thirteen guns at my Entrance.' And when he found such ludicrous Expressions had no Effect on him, he made a formal Complaint, and requested that the Officer would either remove this Man, or take his Prayer Book away, as a common Disturber."[1]

With most, however, this recklessness and bravado did not survive the voyage. When they came to be under lock and key on land their tune changed, and the greater number joined twice a day in public prayers and the singing of Psalms. Poor wretches! There was heavy reckoning to pay. Of the hundred and sixty, seventy were condemned,—there was no evidence legally to convict the others,—and fifty-two were hanged "without the Gates of this Castle . . . within the Flood Marks," as the words of the sentence ran. Afterwards, according to the barbarous custom of the times, their bodies were hung in chains at various places along the coast, a grizzly spectacle. Mr. Joseph Allen, R.N., in the 1852 edition of *Battles of the British Navy*, says that "several of the gibbets until very lately remained standing."

Mention has already been made of Captain John Massey, whose reign as a corsair was singularly brief, unstained too by bloodshed or by other crime common to the vile brotherhood that served under the black flag. Massey seems indeed to have embarked on the life more in a fit of anger at real or fancied ill-treatment by the Royal African Company, than from any special attraction that such a career held for him.

[1] Johnson's *History of the Pirates*.

He was in fact the dupe of others. A gentleman and a soldier, entirely unused to a sea-faring life, Massey was as little fitted to be a Pirate as he was to be an Archbishop. Sent out from England in 1721 in command of a detachment of soldiers under orders to garrison Fort James in the Gambia, after its capture and destruction by Davis, he discovered there a state of affairs which roused all his professional prejudices, and hurt his natural pride as a man. Instead of finding himself treated with respect, and with some show of deference, as commander of the garrison of a rising settlement, he realised that in effect he was nothing more than a sort of upper servant of the merchants and factors of the Gambia. Moreover, the provisions and liquor supplied to his men by order of those merchants were not only bad in quality but insufficient in quantity. Massey remonstrated. He had not come to the Gambia to be a Guinea slave, said he. He alone was responsible for the welfare of the soldiers under his command, and he had promised them good treatment and good and sufficient food and drink. Things must be altered speedily, or he would "take suitable measures for the preservation of so many of his countrymen and companions." His remonstrances were but so much wasted breath. The merchants were probably making far too good a thing out of supplying the garrison stores to pay any heed. Massey consulted the new Governor, Colonel Whitney, and found him equally with himself simmering with indignation. Moreover, he had found himself treated with no greater deference or respect than was Massey; his position

was just as little satisfactory. But the Governor was sick of a fever and in no condition to cope with the difficulty. What he could say, he did say; and perhaps, for Massey's good, he said more than he should have said, or Massey's just indignation put on his words a construction they were not meant to bear. Sick men do not always choose their words with discretion. At all events, Massey was encouraged to rebel, to take what he thought to be "suitable measures."

It so chanced—unhappily for Massey—that on the *Gambia Castle*, the vessel on which he and his men came from England, there was a certain George Lowther, her second mate, with whom during the voyage he had become very intimate. Lowther was a coarse but plausible man, a great favourite with the crew, though on bad terms with his captain, with whom he had quarrelled during the voyage, and whom indeed only the threatening attitude of the men had prevented from putting the second mate in irons. Thus both Lowther and Massey had a grievance, and as they nursed each other's wrath, gradually the former fanned the soldier's indignation to the striking point. Massey burned to take his men away from this vile hole. Well, why should not he and Lowther seize the ship and go home, suggested the latter. The crew, said he, would stick to him through thick and thin. The idea struck Massey as magnificent; more "suitable measures" could not possibly be devised, and he knew that where he led his men would follow without question.

So the plot ripened. And one day when the captain was on shore, Lowther seized the ship, and sent to Massey a message that "Now was the time." Massey hastened to the barracks. "You men that are of a mind to go to England, now is your time," cried he. Naturally they were all of a mind to go to England if their commanding officer gave them the chance. The fort was seized, the guns dismounted, the store-house ransacked for provisions and wine for the voyage.

Then Massey found that the Governor, whatever his feelings might have been when the question of "measures" was orignally discussed by them, was not with him in what had now been done, and would have none of it. But it was too late to draw back; to England they must go without Colonel Whitney. And so the soldiers soon found themselves on board the *Gambia Castle*, standing down the river towards the open sea, none the worse of the few shots fired at them by other ships, and lucky in getting off a mud-bank on to which the stream set them.

Once at sea, Lowther came out in his true colours. To take to piracy had been his intention all through, he owned. Whether he liked it or not, Massey had taken part in an act of piracy, and he had better make the best of it; there was no escape now, for to England he (Lowther) had no intention of going. Say what he might, do what he could, Massey was helpless. And, moreover, he did complicate matters sadly a few days later, by joining in the capture of a vessel. But she was French, and to harass the French under all circumstances was no doubt in his

eyes a virtue. To harass the French, indeed, was now his one idea, and when the ship arrived in West Indian waters he entreated Lowther to give him thirty men and to let him go ashore to harry the French settlements. Lowther refused, and out of his refusal grew a quarrel so bitter that in the end, finding Massey hopeless as a Pirate, he put him, and ten of his soldiers who disliked ship life and piracy as much as did their leader, on board a captured sloop and left them to shift for themselves.

Massey headed at once for Jamaica and gave himself up to the Governor, Sir Nicholas Laws, telling him the entire tale, sparing himself in nothing, and owning that he certainly merited hanging. But, said he, "'twas to save so many of His Majesty's subjects from perishing; and his design was to return to England, till Lowther conspiring with the greater part of the company went a-pirating with the ship."

The Governor was not greatly struck with the blackness of Massey's guilt, and allowed him to go free, allowed him even to help in the attempt to capture Lowther. But Massey was afflicted with a most morbid and inconvenient conscience; his guilt preyed upon his mind, and he could not rest content with the Governor's pardon. He must needs go home, and accuse himself there; nothing apparently would satisfy him but that he should be hanged as high as Haman.

So to England went Massey, even borrowing money from Sir Nicholas Laws to pay his passage. Arrived in London, with conscientious zeal this repentant sinner sat down and wrote to the

Governor and Directors of the African Company a long and particular account of his misdeeds. "Rashness and Inadvertency, occasioned by his being ill used, contrary to the Promises that had been made him," was the one excuse he urged. For the rest, he owned that his crimes deserved death. "Yet," concluded this pitiful, pathetic letter, "if you have Generosity enough to forgive me, as I am still capable to do you Service as a Soldier, so I will be very ready to do it; but if you resolve to prosecute me, I beg only this Favour, that I may not be hang'd like a Dog, but suffer'd to die like a Soldier, as I have been bred from my Childhood: that is, that I may be shot."

Poor Massey! Did he think that a Board of Directors could be delivered of an offspring so angelic as Mercy; that on a question which touched their pockets they would return an answer savouring of leniency! Their reply was that he "should be fairly hang'd."

Why did the man not go away, even now! They had nothing except his own word on which to proceed against him, no evidence worth a jot from a legal point of view. There were no witnesses in England who could testify to anything, and if Massey chose to hold his tongue, how could they even prove that he had written to the Board that accusatory letter?

But the unhappy man on receipt of the Board's reply must needs go off to the Lord Chief Justice's Chambers, enquiring there, "if my Lord had yet granted a Warrant against Captain John Massey for piracy?" No such warrant had been applied for;

even the Board of the African Company was in no hurry. There was yet time for this self-accused pirate to take himself off. If he would but have owned to himself that he had been a dupe and not a villain! But no man likes to write himself down an ass; even the victim of the Confidence Trick seldom confesses to himself how simple he has been.

Massey left his address at the Lord Chief Justice's Chambers, against the time when he should be wanted. It was a new experience for my Lord's clerks to have a pirate storming the very citadel of the Law, but they took down his address in writing, and a few days later the Runners found Massey at his lodgings, patiently waiting for them. Nothing could be proved at his trial; he went about for months on bail, till witnesses—the Captain of the *Gambia Castle* for one—had been brought from the Guinea Coast; and then, at last, they condemned him to death. Poor, simple Massey! He was not even shot, as he desired to be. He died the one death he dreaded, the death of a Dog. He was hanged at Execution Dock on 26th July 1723.

What, one may wonder, would have been the opinion held of Massey by such a man as Captain Cocklyn, his very antithesis, a man whom no qualms troubled, for whom nothing was too gross and brutal? In a former chapter it has been mentioned that brutality alone gained for Cocklyn "that bad eminence" of leader in a murderous band. The life and doings of the ordinary pirate of those days do not make savoury reading; they were drunken scoundrels for the most part, except when led by a man like Davis

unrestrained by even a lingering sense of decency. The fiends in hell might have shrunk from presuming to vie with them in their brutal lusts; at sight of their lighter amusements, the angels in heaven must have shuddered. Even the Red Indians of North America were not more fiendishly cruel in the tortures inflicted on their prisoners, than were those white men in the fashion in which they made merry at the expense of members of captured crews who refused to join the brotherhood.

If by chance the pirates were in sportive mood, their wretched captives were not made to walk the plank and so become food for sharks; some of them, mayhap, would be run up in the bight of a rope to the main or mizzen top, and the rope belayed for a brief period, leaving the man dangling. Then suddenly—perhaps simultaneously in the case of two victims, in order that the pirates might bet on which would first touch the deck—the rope would be cast loose, and down in a heap would fall the unhappy wretches, if not breaking bones, at least otherwise painfully injuring themselves.

Or they would "sweat" a man, a favourite amusement. Sweating was performed in this way: A circle of lighted candles was placed round the mizzen mast between decks. Around this circle stood those pirates who, in jocular frame of mind, were about to take part in the game, each brute armed with a penknife, a pair of compasses, a steel fork, or other small and sharp-pointed instrument. Then the "patient" was introduced within the circle. As the pirates closed in nearer the unsuspecting victim, one, with,

it might be the fork, would run the instrument deep in a fleshy part of the body; the recoil would naturally place him within reach of a second stab, say, this time with the penknife. And so from reach of one pirate the poor wretch would shrink and jump, only to place himself within striking distance of another, until—while the brutes yelled with ever increasing riotous glee—the tortured victim fell, utterly spent. Then maybe they would give him what was called "his discharge," which meant that every one present administered ten lashes with the "cat." If he were unable to jump up and run for such shelter as might be found, so much the worse for him.

In all these pastimes, and more, Cocklyn and his crew indulged. Many of their misdeeds will not bear re-telling; the mind wearies of the sameness of their brutality, shrinks from its grossness.

Yet Snelgrave's account of his capture and detention by Cocklyn contains a good deal that is of interest, and gives some idea of the senselessly improvident ways and objectless lives of the Pirates.

When Snelgrave, fresh from England in the *Lion* galley, made the land off Sierra Leone river on April the 1st, 1719, it chanced that the wind fell light and presently altogether left them, so that when the ship, now embayed, had ceased to drift inward on the flowing tide, as the sun went down they were forced to drop anchor in deep water near the shore. Far distant up the estuary, beneath the golden glory of sunset, the naked spars of a vessel lying at anchor traced themselves sharply against a background of vivid green, but save for this and a thin column of

smoke rising sluggishly among the trees on the nearest point of land, and hanging motionless over their tops, there was no sign of life. Little wisps and wreaths of mist stole over the water shoreward, and darkness, as is its way in tropical latitudes, came with a rush, closing round the ship, blotting out everything but the stars overhead. An evening still as the hush of death itself.

On such a night sound travels far. Thus it came to pass that as Snelgrave sat at supper the officer of the watch sent to him a message asking him to come on deck; he fancied he could hear a boat at some distance approaching the ship from direction of the vessel seen at anchor as they came in. The tide was on the turn when Snelgrave went on deck, but the *Lion* still lay with her head to seaward. Listening, he could distinctly make out the cheep and muffled thud of oars astern.

"Send twenty men aft here with muskets and cutlasses," ordered Snelgrave. Then, "Boat ahoy!" he hailed. "What boat's that?"

"The *Two Friends*, Captain Elliot, of Barbadoes," came an answering hail, after momentary hesitation.

"I mislike it," muttered Snelgrave to the officer who had sent for him. "Smartly, below there, with those muskets." Then again, to the approaching boat, "Where are you from?"

"From America."

And with the words came a volley of musketry singing past the ears of those standing on the quarter-deck.

"Fire on them through the steerage ports," cried

Snelgrave to Jones his first Mate, who was below with the men. But never a musket cracked in response to his order. Jumping down below, himself, he found his people huddled together, staring stupidly at the Mate and at each other, and neither musket nor cutlass yet served out. "The Arms chest could not be found," some one said, lamely enough, by way of explanation. In any case, it was now too late, the attacking party was already on board firing pistols, (whereby one of Snelgrave's men was killed,) and throwing hand grenades down between decks.

Then some one sang out for quarter, whereon down came a man cursing and swearing and calling out, "Where's your Captain?"

"I am the person that was captain up to now," said Snelgrave.

"Then what the —— do you mean by telling your people to fire on us through the steerage ports?"

With that he clapped his pistol to Snelgrave's breast, and fired. But Snelgrave struck the weapon partly aside, and the bullet passed between his arm and his ribs without wounding him, whereupon the man brought him to his knees with a blow over the head from the pistol butt. Quickly recovering his feet, Snelgrave jumped for the quarter-deck, where another man, swearing no quarter should be given to a captain who tried to defend his ship, struck viciously at his head with a cutlass. Snelgrave ducked, and the weapon bit deep into the quarter-deck rail, breaking short off at the hilt. By great good fortune this man's firearms were all discharged, otherwise Snelgrave most certainly would have been shot. As

it was, the brute tried to beat out his brains with the butt end of a pistol. It had gone ill with Snelgrave now had not some of his own men cried out: "Don't kill the Captain! We never sailed with a better man." (For it was customary with the Pirates to spare the captain of a captured vessel against whom his crew had no ill-will; at least they would seldom go to extremities unless his crew made complaint against him,—a tenure of life a little precarious, one would think.)

In celebration of their success, the pirates now began firing volleys of musketry; and this led to things more serious. Cocklyn, who commanded the ship from which the pirates had come, hearing the continual rattle of musketry and imagining that fighting still went on, cut his cable, drifted down with the now ebbing tide and fired a broadside into the *Lion*.

"'Vast firing there," called out one of the ruffians. "We've taken a fine prize with plenty of rum and fresh provisions aboard."

That brought Cocklyn himself in a trice, with a crowd of others, all intent on an orgie. Liquor flowed; geese, turkeys, ducks, fowls were taken, and without being even plucked, except as regards the tail and wing feathers, were pitched into the ship's copper in the galley, accompanied by several Westphalia hams and a big sow, newly killed, from which they had not troubled to scrape the bristles, and the cook was ordered to boil them all together and serve up as quickly as possible,—a Gargantuan meal.

It was for Snelgrave the beginning of a life more strenuous than desirable.

"What o'clock is it by your gold watch?" demanded one ruffian. And, however much against the grain, Snelgrave knew that he must hand over his excellent watch—there was nothing else to be done. The pirates kicked it about the deck like a football, till they tired of the game, when it was pitched into the common chest, to be sold at auction before the mast. Davis bought it later for £100, in spite of the ill-usage it had undergone.

After the rape of his watch, Snelgrave was taken from his own ship to that of the pirate, and there questioned closely as to the sailing qualities of the *Lion*, the result being that Cocklyn joyfully fitted her out for his own use. It was a bad time for Snelgrave, this first night on Cocklyn's vessel, and it had like to have been his last on earth had it not been for the intervention of one of the pirate crew, a man named Griffin, who, as it turned out, had been at school with Snelgrave. This man swore to protect his old schoolfellow, and indeed passed the hours till morning marching up and down with pistols and cutlass alongside the hammock where lay Snelgrave, sleepless owing to "their horrid oaths and blasphemies."

Towards 2 A.M. there returned to the ship, very drunk and quarrelsome, that man who had attempted to cut Snelgrave down on the quarter-deck of the *Lion*.

"Where's Snelgrave?" he bawled. "I'm going to slice his liver for offering to fire on us! Where's that —— Snelgrave? *I*'ll slice him!" And assuredly he had engaged in that delicate operation if Griffin with

his cutlass had not driven the drunken brute off. Nor was this by any means the only attempt on Snelgrave's life made by the same man. On at least one other occasion the brute tried to shoot him. But here the would-be assassin came badly off; in the dark he fired at the wrong man, a mistake which cost him dear, for he was hunted round the ship with a naked cutlass till his condition was little better than if he had been "sweated."

The following day came the overhauling of Snelgrave's cargo. Overboard, into the sea, went everything, bales and cases, no matter how valuable, if they did not suit the needs of the pirates. Overboard went all Snelgrave's "private adventure," (captains were allowed to trade on their own account in those days); overboard, too, went his library,—"enough jaw work here to poison a ship's company," swore one of the pirates. Soon nothing was left to him of all his own belongings.

Later, a good deal of his private property was restored at the intervention of the pirate Davis, and also, strangely enough, through the intercession of one Captain Henry Glynn, a private trader who lived on shore here, and who was afterwards Governor of Fort James in the Gambia. On curiously friendly terms with the pirates was this embryo Governor when Snelgrave met him at Sierra Leone. To hunt with the hounds and run with the hare was apparently in those days a feat not hard of accomplishment on the Guinea Coast.

After all, the good-will of Davis and Glynn availed Snelgrave little. His things, mostly tied up

in bundles, were brought to him in "the great cabin," it is true, but presently in came a party of drunken pirates, who, stumbling over the bundles, in a fit of rage threw them overboard, leaving one only remaining. This also soon disappeared. A man—as chance ruled, it was Kennedy, he who afterwards played Roberts false—coming in, just drunk enough to be persistent, and answering all Snelgrave's mild expostulations by blows from the flat of his cutlass, took the bundle to examine its contents. A good new black suit and a hat and wig were what he found, and the pirate must needs put on the suit and go swaggering on deck in it. The result was that the other pirates, resenting his fine feathers, soused him with buckets of claret, and the suit being thus ruined after half an hour's wear was also thrown overboard.

All the liquor on Snelgrave's ship had been brought up on deck to be divided amongst the three pirate vessels then in the bay, and the casks not immediately removed to Davis's and La Bouse's ships were straightway up-ended and had their heads knocked out that cans and bowls might the more readily be dipped in when men wanted to drink. They did things in a large way, those topers, and wild were the scenes and great the havoc that followed. Cocklyn bawled healths to the Pretender —King James the Third, they styled him; they drank confusion to the House of Hanover; they drank to everything and to everybody; and what liquor they could not pour down their own capacious throats, in sport they threw over each other. With

what remained in the casks of claret they washed down the decks in the evening ; nothing was left by nightfall save a little French brandy. Everything was wasted, wine, cheeses, butter, fresh food of all kinds, thrown into the sea by those improvident scoundrels. It was a heart-break to Snelgrave, who moreover had the additional anxiety of not knowing the day or hour he himself might not be knocked on the head and sent after his goods, to feed the sharks.

The net result of Snelgrave's first day among the pirates was that he lost everything he possessed, save only the clothes he stood up in and a hat and wig. And the wig, it may be thought, in such a climate might be a luxury of doubtful value or utility. With a thermometer standing in the neighbourhood of 100° in the shade and an atmosphere humid as the steam off a heating cauldron, one can imagine that article to have been little less blighting in effect than all the Plagues that smote Pharaoh and his people. Of his "private adventure" sorry was the fate. His bales of fine holland were dragged up on deck, opened, and spread in heavy folds to serve as soft couches for those whose potations had been over deep, and the whole, beds and men, were presently soused with claret by the more facetious and less drunken of the pirates.

A box containing three second-hand richly-embroidered coats was seized by Cocklyn, and lots were drawn for choice of garment by Cocklyn, Davis, and La Bouse. Now it chanced that the first named was short of stature, almost dwarfish, and the

Fates willed that to him fell the longest coat, so long that it covered his ankles and brushed the deck as the little man, in some doubt at first as to the effect, strutted about with a lurch in his gait.

"Change with me, Davis! Change with me, La Bouse!" he implored. "It don't (hiccup) seem to favour me."

But they refused, pointing out how striking was the effect, how gay the contrast of its scarlet cloth with the silver braid, and in the end the stunted little rascal swaggered off ashore in it, beyond measure vain of his appearance. Even a pirate of the most brutal type, one sunk below the level of the beasts that perish, steeped in crime as was Cocklyn, is still swayed by the pettiest vanity. Indeed those coats made trouble throughout the pirate squadron, for so envious were the men of the effect produced that they insisted on the garments being put into the common chest. It was no part of a pirate captain's privileges that he should wear fine clothes, from the use of which the men were debarred,—good, sound, socialistic doctrine, no doubt.

Snelgrave's time amongst those villains must have been even more hazardous than it actually was, had it not been for the presence and influence of Davis, that "generous and humane" pirate, his constant protector so long as the squadron kept together. To a less degree he was indebted to Griffin. It was through Davis indeed that he regained liberty; it was through him that a captured vessel (of no great value) was handed over to Snelgrave, with the battered remnants not only of his own cargo, but of

those also of several other prizes, to the value of some thousands of pounds. The fore-mast pirates, indeed, desired,—at a time when Davis had fanned their weathercock sentiments momentarily to white heat in Snelgrave's favour,—to take him with them down the coast, handing to him all the proceeds of their villainies not immediately wanted by themselves. He might then sail, said they, for the West Indian island of St. Thomas,—a free port in the possession of Denmark,—there realise a fortune by their sale, and return home to snap his fingers at the merchants of London and Bristol. It needed all Davis's tact to smooth away the resentment felt by the pirates at the rejection by Snelgrave of their generous offer. They could not understand why their gift of cargoes plundered from captured vessels should not legally be Snelgrave's property.

It was, later, owing to Griffin's friendship that Snelgrave got clear away on shore at a time when the commoner and more brutal pirates, incensed against him for some trumpery cause, were vowing to cut him in pieces or to flog him.

Of his old crew, the majority remained faithful and accompanied Snelgrave on his homeward voyage after the departure of the pirates. Some (near a dozen) threw in their lot with the latter, among them Jones, the Mate, who came to Snelgrave with a cock-and-bull story of how he had a wife at home whom he could not love, to whom he felt he could not return; rather than continue to live with one so uncongenial, he had tardily decided that it was preferable to join Cocklyn and his rovers. The man

was probably a sentimental humbug. As Snelgrave learned later from his men, Jones had divulged to them on the voyage out his scheme for turning pirate, and it was he who had hid the arms chest before the *Lion* was boarded at Sierra Leone.

Snelgrave's detention by the pirates lasted a full month, four weeks of turmoil and anxiety, weeks that cost him dear. On more than one occasion the vessel on which he was detained was set on fire through carelessness, or by one of the pirates when drunk, and it was each time with difficulty saved. Once a cask of rum was accidentally set alight, and exploded violently not far from the magazine; and once a fierce fire broke out almost in the magazine itself. It is a marvel that any pirate ship survived a single cruise.

Snelgrave was not altogether ruined in pocket, and he got command of another ship with but small delay after his return to Bristol. History is silent as to his subsequent career. Doubtless he visited the Guinea Coast again, traded in "black ivory," and risked the pirates. But Davis was gone, and Roberts; Cocklyn and La Bouse were no longer there to terrorise. Along the Coast dead pirates swung in the wind and the sun, creaking in their chains as the breeze wantoned with its grizzly playthings.

They were a curious mixture of evil and of good; much evil, relieved by perhaps an infinitely small leaven of good. But all were not brutes such as Cocklyn or Kennedy, La Bouse or Captain Teach, and many another. Roberts was not all bad, and Davis had many virtues. So had Griffin, who escaped

later and made his way (honestly) to the West Indies, where he died of Yellow Fever.

A many of them erred through weakness; not all through vice. There were others besides Massey remorseful, others besides Griffin who longed to escape from the life and to begin anew. Yet as a whole one would neither feel pity for, nor exercise mercy towards, the Pirates. For with the same measure that they did mete withal it shall be measured to them again.

# CHAPTER XVII

## CONCLUSION

If one were to embark on a work very far beyond the scope of this present volume, West Africa's history at the end thereof would still present a huge mass of romance and interest practically untouched, a mine the workings of which would yet be but surface scratchings. One would fain dwell on many an incident, many a fact or event, to which considerations of space now forbid more than brief allusion. There is much of moment still untouched in the history of each separate section of the Guinea Coast and its Hinterland.

It would, for example, have been not without interest to watch the development of Sierra Leone, from its early days of tolerably honest trade through the times when it was little better than a depôt for slaves, or the headquarters of Pirates, down to its present status (at Freetown) of first-class fortified Imperial Coaling Station and trade centre.

It was here that in 1787 an abortive attempt was made to carry out Dr. Smeathman's philanthropic scheme of colonising parts of West Africa with liberated negro slaves, a scheme admirable in theory,

but—at least in those days—hopeless of execution. "During the American War," says Mr. Hugh Murray in his *Discoveries and Travels in Africa*, "many negroes . . . had entered on board the British ships of war, or repaired to the British standard, where they had been formed into regiments of Rangers. At the termination of the war, in 1783, they were dispersed, with the white loyalists, among the Bahamas Islands and Nova Scotia, while many were conveyed to Great Britain, especially to London. There, indigent and idle, despised and forlorn, they were soon vitiated by intercourse with their profligate brethren, who, having contrived to convey themselves from the West Indies, infested the streets of London." Probably no inconsiderable portion of those who "infested the streets of London" were black servants brought by their masters some time before from the West Indies, numbers of whom, in consequence of Lord Mansfield's famous decision of 1772, were turned adrift on the streets.

To cope with this growing evil, a Committee was formed, which zealously tried to carry out Dr. Smeathman's "Plan of a Settlement to be made near Sierra Leone on the Guinea Coast." As a result, "above four hundred blacks, with about sixty whites, but who were chiefly women of abandoned character, debilitated by disease," were shipped off in a Government transport to Sierra Leone, provided with all things deemed by the philanthropists necessary to the support of colonists. Of provisions, arms, implements of agriculture, there was a ship load, but the Committee, careful in the matter of spades and ploughs,

had taken no precautions whatever to ensure that the colonists should be of tolerably good character. The sole qualification might almost seem to have been that the skins of the black men should be as shady as the characters of the white women. However reasonable it may have been to suppose that for persons of African descent the land most suitable must be that of their forefathers, it is difficult to assign any philanthropic reason for the despatch to that same land of a considerable female white population. To ship undesirables off to distant over-sea parts was the fad of the hour, no doubt. It will be remembered that in this same year 1787 took place the first shipment of convicts to Botany Bay in Australia, wanton pollution of a great virgin land. The idea was not new, of course. It is the same that Hanno the Carthaginian in his day was set to carry out.

The end of the Committee's philanthropic scheme was what from the beginning it was bound to be, a disastrous failure. The "unemployed" black of the latter end of the Eighteenth Century no more wanted to work than does his professional unemployed white brother of this present Twentieth Century. The voyage was little short of a prolonged debauch; on arrival at Sierra Leone, "indolence and depravity so generally prevailed that hardly a man could be induced to labour steadily in erecting the hut in which he was to be sheltered, or in unloading the provisions by which he was to be supported."

The expedition arrived on 9th May 1787. By 11th September of that year, out of a total of close

on five hundred persons landed, only two hundred and seventy-six remained in the colony. Death and desertion, but chiefly the former, had in four months accounted for over two hundred human beings out of that small community. In such a climate, among such a people, it could not well have been otherwise.

In 1792 another attempt was made on better lines, when twelve hundred free blacks from Nova Scotia were brought over. After many vicissitudes, and after being raided in 1794 by a French squadron, —consisting chiefly of privateers who construed their principles of "*Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*," into liberty to help themselves to everything that their black brethren possessed, with an equal right to burn after they had looted,—that, too, proved a failure, and in 1807 the colony was handed over to the Crown. It is interesting to note that the Maroons, (descendants of those negro slaves who fled to the mountains of Jamaica when that island was captured by England from Spain in 1655, and who for a hundred and forty years waged incessant warfare against us,) were in the year 1800 transported to Sierra Leone. They were, says Lucas, "a strong and healthy element," and it was chiefly due to their great fighting powers that the authorities of the colony were able to quell that dangerous rising which, owing to the imposition of a quit-rent, broke out among the Nova Scotian negroes who had been brought over in 1792. "Years after, when slave emancipation was an accomplished fact, the survivors of those Maroons returned once more to their old homes in Jamaica."

"The White Man's Grave," Sierra Leone has been

called, and to the European it has ever been deadly; but in the two instances mentioned above it was also the black man's grave. Not even those of negro blood could with impunity live recklessly or carelessly in such a climate. Yet it is fair to say that not every white man has so sweepingly condemned it. By Zachary Macaulay (to whom in those early days the colony owed much), its able Governor in 1793-94, Sierra Leone was esteemed healthful, if not pleasant. Indeed, nothing is said to have more annoyed Macaulay than to hear it talked of as a climate necessarily hurtful to Europeans.

Meredith [1] too, writing of the Gold Coast in 1812, says of that part of West Africa that it "has the advantage of the West Indies, not only in soil and climate, but also in seasons. . . . The climate will be found as temperate and salubrious as the West Indies, and if it were cultivated it would probably surpass the West Indies in point of salubrity."

The truth one may suppose to be that, (whatever modern conditions and medical science may now have made it,) to a certain few, very few, constitutions in former days it was not directly harmful, but that to the vast majority of Europeans, in whatever fashion they might live, however careful they might be, the climate of West Africa was trying and even deadly. Miss Mary Kingsley compares it in the wet season to the "inside of a warm poultice," and she mentions how when she asked to be shown "the Settlement," they grimly took her to the Cemetery!

On the tale of the Gold Mines and the Gold Dust

[1] Meredith's *Account of the Gold Coast.*

of West Africa,—in times long past, its "Golden Trade,"—one would also willingly have dwelt. The source is not dry from which Carthage in the days of her magnificence drew part of her supply of that metal for which man in all ages has perilled soul as well as body. At the present day the flow is greater than it has ever been before. New methods have borne rich fruit. Though in 1901 the value of gold coming from the Gold Coast had dropped to the low level of £22,000, so rapid has been the recovery since that date that in 1907 the output was £1,163,516; whilst in 1908 the output was 281,257 oz. and the value £1,194,743. How widely different both in method and result from those days midway through the Seventeenth Century when Scottish Cavaliers, expatriated and enslaved, forsaken of God and man, toiled wearily under brazen sky to scrape the shining dust into the pockets of their masters, the merchants of Guinea.

Were space available, much might be said on the subject of present-day Missions and their work. Though probably success has not relatively been so great here as of late years it has been with the Missions of East Central Africa, yet one may hope that the time has gone by, or is rapidly going, when it might be truly said, as by Miss Kingsley, that "the mission attempt to elevate the African mass seems like unto cutting a path through a bit of African forest; you can cut a very nice tidy path there, and as long as you are there to keep it clear, it's all a path need be, but leave it and it goes to bush."

The shortcomings, too, must necessarily be great

of any attempt to tell the story of West Africa which contains no more than passing reference to its explorers. Yet again space forbids that more than passing reference should be made. Of all Africa's explorers, there is none to whose name clings so great a share of romantic interest as to that of Mungo Park. Not only in his native land, the Scottish Border, is his memory yet proudly cherished, but wherever the English language is spoken, there still lives his fame, even after the lapse of more than a century. The first of Europeans to penetrate inland to the headwaters of the Niger, he perished on his second journey in an attempt to follow that river to its mouth, leaving scarcely a trace behind him. That he was drowned in his attempt to descend the Niger, is probable, but Mr. Bowdich mentions that in Ashanti he himself was informed by Moors that a white man, answering to the description of Park, was for two years held prisoner by a native king, at the end of which time he died of fever.[1] "For actual hardships undergone, for dangers faced, and difficulties overcome, together with an exhibition of the virtues which make a man great in the rude battle of life, Mungo Park stands without a rival."[2]

Until Park's day, the Niger formed one of the most perplexing of geographical problems, a problem on which scarce any two authorities could be found entirely to agree. It flowed into the Nile, said some; without doubt it joined the Congo, affirmed others, (and it was to prove or disprove this last

[1] *Quarterly Review*, June 1818.

[2] Joseph Thomson's *Life of Mungo Park.*

theory that Park undertook the journey from which he never returned); it was an independent river emptying itself into some vast inland lake, argued a third group; the Senegal and the Gambia were themselves but two of the many mouths of the Niger, protested a fourth. All was uncertainty, and Park was the first to throw light on the darkness. Since his day, much has been done, but even yet there remains a portion of the Niger of which little is known.

If one desired to deal with the story of our troubles with the kingdom of Ashanti, of the many Ashanti invasions of Gold Coast territory, of our various punitive and other expeditions and missions to Kumasi, a volume would be required for that alone. Since the beginning of the Nineteenth Century the invasions have been many, our expeditions, great and small, not few. Great Britain—in the fashion that until recently was peculiar to her in matters of Colonial policy—did not know her own mind; one year she would be intent on giving up her West African colonies, retiring from positions which were merely an expense and a trouble; the following year something had happened which necessitated a farther forward move on her part. Then again she would revert to her policy of "scuttle," or blow hot and cold almost in the same breath. Party Government no doubt was responsible for much of this, ignorance for the rest. Statesmen in those days possessed in small measure the gift of prescience; geographically their ignorance was unfathomable. Is it not on record that an ex-Cabinet Minister once told the

wife of a distinguished Colonial Governor that all he knew of West African geography was that Africa had a hump which stuck out somewhere into the sea, and that he believed our West African Colonies were there? Perhaps the amount of this Statesman's geographical knowledge was a little greater than he admitted, but in truth what he said of "the hump" about sums up the geographical knowledge possessed in former days by the average inhabitant of Great Britain. And this lack of knowledge, combined with an invincible determination not to trust the man on the spot, has, joined to the vacillating policy of advance and retire, been fruitful of trouble in many lands.

We have seen the great Sierra Leone rising of 1898, and there has been an expedition to Benin, but our chief and most constant native troubles have been with the Ashantis. Many times have they raided us. In 1814 they took our fort of Winnebah, killing its commander, Mr. Meredith, a writer whose favourable opinion of the Gold Coast climate is quoted a few pages back. In 1816 they all but took Cape Coast Castle. In 1820 they invaded us; and again in 1826.

In 1817 we sent under Mr. Bowdich a mission to Kumasi; in 1824 Sir Charles M'Carthy led an expedition against the Ashantis, and was defeated by them and killed. In 1873-4 came the greatest of our native wars in that part of the world, the expedition led by Sir Garnet Wolseley, when Kumasi was taken and burnt, and much strange loot brought back.

It may be hoped that with the development of

Railways in West Africa the day of these native wars is ended. Kumasi, the capital of Ashanti, is now in railway communication with the coast, and is indeed in point of time no more than sixteen days from London.

Sierra Leone possesses close on two hundred and thirty miles of Railway, and other parts of Guinea are not far behind,—a striking contrast to days not remote when travelling in West Africa was for the most part by narrow paths laboriously cut through dense forest. It is hard to realise that where in comparatively recent times pirate ships sheltered, and the bush echoed to the shouts of their ribald crews, now falls on the ear the shriek of railway whistle or the clank of windlass on some great steamship.

Rough times were the days of the Pirate and the Slaver, rough and cruel. Yet it is open to question if those days did not, on the average, produce a finer and more robust type of manhood than is commonly to be found in this Twentieth Century. Without question those days were coarse and full of brutality, but it is, unhappily, equally without question that we, in our day, are in sore danger of being handed over to the degenerating influence of emotional sentimentality. *Vox populi, vox dei,* shouts with increasing clamour our army of demagogues ; and unfortunately for Britain the voice of the People is fast becoming totally opposed to wholesome discipline. Except to the upper classes, the rod as an instrument of education and upbringing is almost a thing of the past. The People are swayed by sentiment, not by reason ; they have lost control of their children, and of them-

selves; and where is to be the end? To what is the Nation heading? We are rapidly losing steerage way, and are in danger of drifting on to the breakers of false sentiment. If the old breezy days were bad, at least they produced a breed of Men such as we do not now see; if they were hard, there are worse things than hardness in life. Better surely a little of the roughness, even a spice of the brutality, of old West African days than that the Nation should slip farther down the fevered path of sentimentality.

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THE END



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