

THE BUCCANEERS.

BY JOHN R. SPEARS.

THE BLOODY HISTORY OF THE SEA WOLVES OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY—HOW MORGAN AND OTHER FAMOUS FREE-BOOTERS TERRORIZED THE SPANISH MAIN, LOOTING TREASURE FLEETS, SACKING CITIES, AND MASSACRING GARRISONS.



ABOUT the middle of the seventeenth century—the precise date is not recorded—one Pierre le Grand, with twenty eight companions, set sail in a big row-boat from the island of Haiti, bound on a piratical cruise.

It is likely that all Le Grand's men were natives of France. They had been living in Tortuga and Haiti, as many Frenchmen were then living in the wilds of North America, being hunters, fishermen, and backwoods farmers, all in one. But they had grown weary of the tameness of even the hunter's life in the mountains, and, with nothing better than an open boat to carry them, they went cruising in the narrow waters between Cuba and Haiti in search of Spanish merchant ships. For many days they ranged to and fro, or rolled idly on the choppy sea, seeing no vessel until they were well abreast of Cape Tiburon, at the southwest corner of Haiti, when, one afternoon, the great square topsails of a Spanish man of war rose above the horizon. To the well trained eyes of Pierre le Grand it was plain, even before her hull appeared, that this war-ship carried from thirty to forty cannon and a crew of three hundred and fifty or four hundred men. He knew, also, that the ship was from Porto Bello or Caracas, homeward bound, with silver, gold, and pearls on board to the value of hundreds of thousands of pieces of eight. It is everywhere agreed that no piratical story, whether fact or fiction, can command respect unless it has something about "pieces of eight" in it. A piece of eight meant a silver coin equal to the value of eight reals; in other

words, a silver dollar. But that doesn't sound nearly so well as "pieces of eight."

The thought of all the pieces of eight represented by the cargo of the war ship was maddening to Pierre le Grand and his men, after their long waiting; and when one desperado proposed that they attack her, the whole gang shouted delirious approval. It was sheer madness for twenty nine men in an open boat to hope to overcome four hundred on a man of war, but the pirates swore to board her and fight till dead, invoking eternal torment on those who failed to keep the oath.

The lookouts on the war vessel sighted the boat, and reported it to the admiral, thinking its appearance of sufficient importance to be brought to his attention. He was a proud and scornful man.

"What then, must I be afraid of such a pitiful thing as that is?" he said, when they warned him that the boat was probably a pirate craft. "No, though she were a ship as big and as strong as mine!"

As the sun went down, the admiral and his officers ate their dinner and then, having cleared the table, began to while away the evening by playing cards. In the mean time the pirates had eaten their scanty supper, and, with muffled oars, came rowing to the war ship. Each man had a well whetted sword and a carefully loaded pistol, save only the surgeon. He was



armed with an auger, and with it he bored holes in the bottom of the boat, so that the feet of the pirates were wet by the inflowing sea, and she sank as they clambered up the sides of the war ship. They desired no means of escape.

or what are they?" said the admiral, as he gave up his sword.

THE FIRST OF THE BUCCANEERS.

History now replies to the admiral's question. They were not exactly devils;



"ARE THESE DEVILS, OR WHAT ARE THEY?"—BUCCANEERS BOARDING A SPANISH GALLEON.

Unimpeded, they reached the deck, and then, while some cut their way to the gun room and magazine, others entered the cabin, and, with pistols at his breast, demanded of the admiral that he should surrender the ship.

"Jesus bless us! Are these devils,

they were the first of the buccaneers, a predatory host of such able fighting men that, though they never counted more than a thousand in any battle, and were commonly found in companies numbering from a hundred and fifty to five hundred, they were able, during twenty



HENRY MORGAN, THE
MOST FAMOUS OF ALL
THE BUCCANEERS.

years of the seventeenth century, to pillage every coast of Spanish America, and to fill the hearts even of Spanish war veterans with abject terror.

Although not the first man to cruise against the Spaniards in the West Indies, Pierre le Grand was the first of his class to do a notable deed. His fame spread like the wind over the

region, and moved the woodsmen of the islands and the logwood cutters at Campeche Bay to take to the sea. They had muskets which they could use better than any other class of men in the world. Their trade of hunting had also taught them the possibilities of the knife, which they used in butchering the wild cattle and game they killed, and of the machete or sword, which the natives of the tropics use to this day in cutting their way through the tangled jungle. The game these hunters killed was dried and was known in the market as boucan, and they were called "boucaniers," just as some farmers are now called "hayseeds" or "buckwheats." In canoes made by hollowing out the trunks of huge trees, if no better boat could be had, with only salted or dried meat for food, and no other arms save those they used in hunting, they went afloat to do as Pierre le Grand had done.

With twenty six men, Pierre François captured a man of war that was guarding the pearl fleet off the Rio de la Hache. Bartholomew Portugues, with thirty men, captured a merchantman bound from La Guaira to Havana, with a hundred and twenty thousand dollars' worth of cocoa and seventy thousand dollars in coin. Roche Brasiliano, "having fitted out a small vessel at Jamaica, took a great ship coming from New Spain, which had a great quantity of plate on board." So the story runs for many other ships. Having small boats and being few in number, the pirates

were able to get alongside the Spanish ships, either unseen or without exciting alarm. Once they boarded, their skill with arms—especially with muskets, for "every shot killed a man"—soon won the battle, no matter what the odds. The prizes were carried to Jamaica, where they wasted all their gains in the most riotous debauchery.

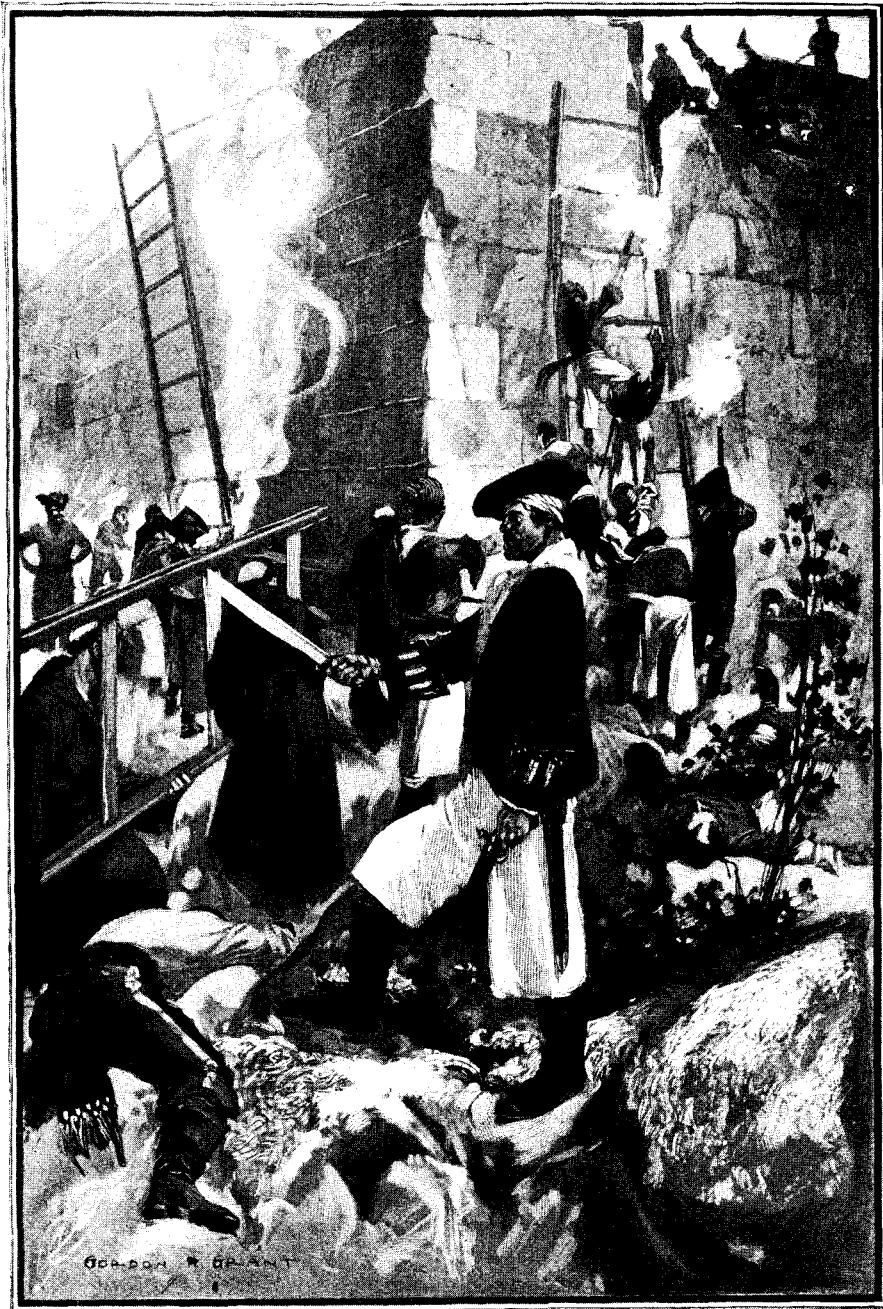
From looting ships the buccaneers turned to robbing Spanish ports. Lewis Scot was the first to land. He captured Campeche, Mexico. Mausvelt crossed to the Pacific and returned safely. John Davis went up the San Juan River to Lake Nicaragua, and looted the city of Granada. Lolonois captured Maracaibo, and held it two months. The gains of all were great.

THE EXPLOITS OF HENRY MORGAN.

And then arose the most noted of them all, Henry Morgan, a Welshman who had been sold as a slave at Barbadoes. Three fourths of the buccaneers had had a similar experience before going afloat. When free from servitude, Morgan went to Jamaica, and made three successful voyages with the pirates as a man before the mast. He saved some of his gains, which was most remarkable, considering his company, and then, with a few others who happened to have capital, fitted out a small vessel. A voyage to Mexico turned out so well that Morgan was able to gather a fleet of fifteen small boats. With them he took St. Catherine's Island (Old Providence), and purposed crossing the isthmus to Nata, the port from which the gold of Veraguas was shipped by the ton, it is said, to Panama.

The Spaniards, however, heard of his coming, and gathered such a force that Morgan left the isthmus and went to Cuba, where he captured the town of Puerto Principe. Here, also, the Spaniards were advised of his coming. While they could not stop him, they hid their treasures, so that Morgan secured but fifty thousand pieces of eight. This "sum being known, it caused a general grief to see such a small purchase, not sufficient to pay their debts in Jamaica," says an old chronicle.

Many of the buccaneers left Morgan as an unlucky leader, but he gathered



MORGAN ATTACKING PORTO BELLO—HE FORCED THE MONKS AND NUNS OF THE TOWN TO SET HIS SCALING LADDERS AGAINST THE CASTLE WALLS.

nearly five hundred men and sailed south, telling no one his destination until in sight of the Isthmus of Panama, when he announced that they were to take Porto Bello, the north shore port of Panama and the point whence the wealth of the Pacific coast was shipped

to Spain. Bold as were these men, the proposition made some of them stand aghast, as well it might, for the port was fortified and guarded in the best manner known to the age. When they demurred, Morgan said:

"If our number is small, our hearts

are great; and the fewer persons we are, the more union and better shares we shall have in the spoil."

Guided by an Englishman who had been held a prisoner in that region, they arrived at night and unheralded under the walls of one of the forts. Their summons to surrender was answered by a volley of musketry, though they had threatened to give no quarter if resistance was made, and with that the fight began.

It is noted in history that the walls of this fort were rugged. To men who had climbed trees and precipices as a daily occupation for years, the unevenness was an advantage. They found handholds and footholds, mounted to the top, and killed every Spaniard they met. A second fortress was blown up with powder found in the first, but the third, the castle, had walls they could not climb, though they raged around it from sunrise till noon. Then Morgan made ten ladders large enough for three men to climb abreast, and when these were done the monks and nuns of the town were compelled to carry them to the castle walls. Morgan did not believe the Spanish governor would fire on these religious people, but he did, in spite of their loud prayers for mercy. So many of them were killed and wounded; but, being menaced with certain death from the rear, they raised the ladders. Then the buccaneers swarmed up, with pistols, hand grenades and fire balls. The governor fought desperately and killed many of the pirates with his own hands, but they cut him down and so ended the battle.



For fifteen days the buccaneers held the town. The inhabitants were subjected to every imaginable torture to compel them to reveal the hiding places of their gold and jewels, and many of them died on the rack. A relief party on the way from Panama was intercepted by a hundred buccaneers and put to flight. Not only was the port

thoroughly looted, but the governor of Panama was compelled to send a hundred thousand dollars to keep the pirates from razing the forts, burning the town, and killing all the prisoners. In all, Morgan obtained a quarter of a million dollars in coin, "besides other merchandises." Probably each buccaneer received a thousand dollars on returning to Jamaica.

Morgan's next exploit was the capture of Maracaibo. The headlands at the entrance of the bay had been well fortified after Lolonois looted the place, but such was the terror which the deeds of the buccaneers aroused that when Morgan arrived the garrison fled without a shot. When ready to sail away, the pirates found the bay blockaded by three men of war. Morgan's whole force was little greater than the crew of the largest ship, and he had no cannon, while the Spanish vessels were provided with the largest and best ordnance of that day.

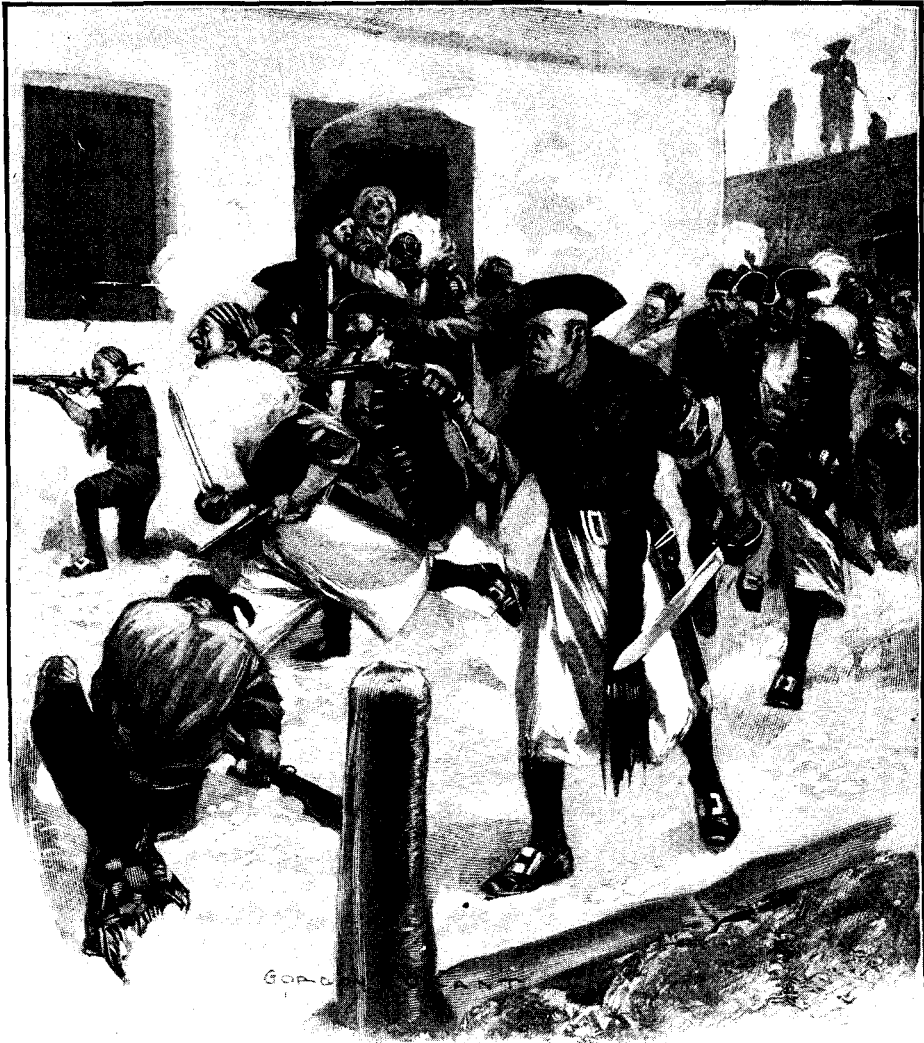
It seemed that there was little chance for the buccaneers, but Morgan was equal to the emergency. He made a fire ship, armed it with dummy guns, covered it with a crew of dummy men, manned it with a forlorn hope of hardy souls, and sent it forth to do battle with the Spanish flagship. They grappled the admiral's vessel, and its crew, thinking that this was Morgan's own ship, fought desperately to sink her. Then the fire ship blazed out, the flames spread to the Spaniard, and in the confusion the second ship of the squadron was captured and the third beached. This battle took place on April 30, 1669.

MORGAN'S GREAT RAID ON PANAMA.

The attack on Panama followed. Morgan started on this expedition with two thousand enthusiastic seamen and hunters, and a fleet of thirty seven vessels, to which he gave letters patent, or commissions, "to act all manner of hostilities against the Spanish nation," a formality that was imitated by the pirates of the nineteenth century in curious fashion. First of all, the fleet went to Old Providence Island, which was garrisoned as a place of refuge. Thence Morgan sailed to what is now called Colon. The fort at Colon, called Chagres

then, was manned by three hundred Spaniards, who resisted Morgan's assault so desperately, even when quarter was offered them, that but thirty men

The smallness of this army was the least of Morgan's troubles. His greatest was hunger. He left Colon with food for but one day, expecting to live



THE RAIDING OF GRANADA, NICARAGUA, BY CAPTAIN GROGNET, WHO WITH THREE HUNDRED AND FORTY FIVE BUCCANEERS DROVE TWENTY FIVE HUNDRED SPANISH SOLDIERS OUT OF THEIR FORTIFICATIONS.

remained alive, and of these twenty were wounded, when the fight ended. From Colon, Morgan went up the river as far as he could with boats and canoes. So many of his followers were left at Colon, and in charge of two landings for boats and canoes, that when he finally started marching towards Panama he had fewer than a thousand fighting men.

on the country. He found it swept clean. At Torna Caballos he found a few rawhide bags, such as are used to this day to carry grain in that country. These were divided among the weakest, who soaked the bits in water, pounded them between rocks, boiled and ate them, "helping it down with frequent gulps of water." For eight days that army starved; they had nothing but

leaves and roots and bark, gathered in the forest, to eat. But on the ninth they saw the South Sea from a hilltop, and "this happy sight, as it were the end of their labors, caused infinite joy among them."

Their sorrows were at an end, and those of the Spaniards at hand. The buccaneers found cattle that day, and feasted, so that with renewed strength they set out next morning to meet four regiments of foot soldiers, four squadrons of cavalry, and a huge number of wild bulls, which were driven by a great number of Indians. It was a force that should have whelmed the buccaneers as hurricane waves crush a wreck on the beach. But they put forward two hundred of their number "who were very dexterous with their guns," and because these old hunters made every shot effective, they routed the Spanish force and took the city with but a trifling loss.

Many a battle has been decided since that date by a few good marksmen, but it is a curious fact that military men still believe that the first qualification of a soldier is to move like a machine when ordered.

A ship in Panama harbor had been laden with the king's plate and jewels, the precious merchandise of the richest merchants, and the vast treasures of a nunnery. It was a ship worth millions, and a company of buccaneers was sent in a boat to secure it. But these buccaneers took a number of women prisoners into their boat, together with a large quantity of wine, and they failed to find the treasure ship.



Panama was then a city of twelve thousand houses. Its trade was so rich that favorably placed stores rented for a thousand dollars a month. But when Morgan had wrung all the wealth possible from those he captured, his division of the loot gave only two hundred dollars to each man of the expedition. He was at once accused of robbing the Frenchmen of the expedition by the aid

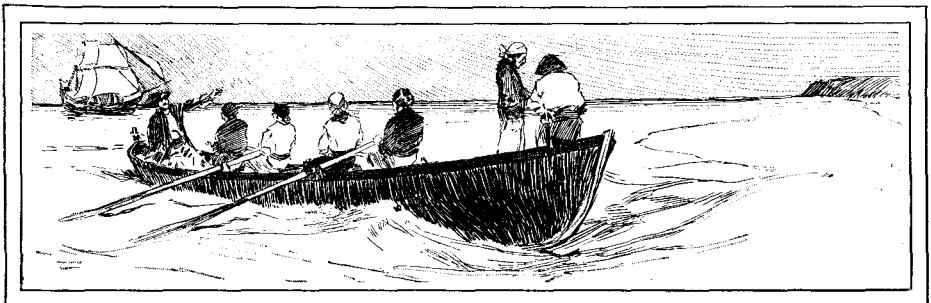
of his British friends, and the fact that he caused everybody to be ostentatiously searched for jewels, himself among the number, confirmed the suspicion. The mutinous spirit grew till Morgan was obliged to sneak away from Chagres in the night.

The strongest bit of circumstantial evidence against Morgan is this: On reaching Jamaica, he retired from the sea with such an immense fortune that he was able to buy "the honour of knighthood" from Charles II, and the post of governor of Jamaica as well.

THE WOLVES OF THE SPANISH MAIN.

One might tell of Van Horn, who obtained a million dollars and fifteen hundred slaves when he captured Vera Cruz, and of various other men who looted the north coasts of the Spanish main, but there was another class of buccaneers still more notable—those who, under Sawkins, Sharp, Cook, Bournano, Willnet, David, Grognet, William Dampier, Townsley, and other captains, crossed the mainland on foot and went cruising on the Pacific in canoes until they could capture Spanish ships.

These men, in companies that never



exceeded four or five hundred men, and were often no stronger than a hundred or so, ravaged the coast from Acapulco to Valdivia. They blockaded Panama. They destroyed the coasting trade until the Spanish rulers, on hearing that such and such a company had crossed the mainland, would lay an embargo on the whole coast to keep these freebooters from getting afloat under sail. They met such squadrons as were sent against them, and in spite of odds they almost invariably won victories. Success failed them only when they landed on coasts where the Spaniards had had time enough to make ample preparations for defense, and were gathered in overwhelming numbers. Even then the buccaneers by their ferocious charges and their deadly accuracy of fire sometimes won.

Thus on April 7, 1686, three hundred and forty five men under Captain Grognet started inland from the open sea to capture Granada, on Lake Nicaragua. They found the city ready for battle, with the streets leading to the main plaza guarded by fortifications fully supplied with cannon. The Spanish forces, as was learned afterwards, amounted to more than twenty five hundred well armed men. The buccaneers charged up one of the fortified streets. Whenever the Spanish fired their cannon, the buccaneers "saluted them down to the ground"—that is, threw themselves on their faces and let the shot fly over them. So they soon gained the roofs of the adobe houses, from which they could pour their deadly fire into the fort. Then the Spaniards fled—twenty five hundred men fled from three hundred and thirty three; for the buccaneers had four killed and eight wounded. It was not a profitable assault, for the Spaniards, in anticipation of defeat, had sent their valuables to an island on the lake, with all the boats; but, though the booty was small, the fight shows the prowess of the buccaneers.

On another occasion a foraging party of thirty buccaneers met six hundred Spaniards, and beat them in fair battle. Though the buccaneers were armed with matchlock guns, they advanced to short range, where every shot killed a man, and the Spaniards could not face a fire

like that. Indeed, few soldiers could, in those days or in these.

A BUCCANEER HISTORIAN.

The account of *Sieur Ravenau de Lussan*, an ensign in one of these Pacific pirate crews, is enchanting, because it is so simple and so manifestly truthful. Yet it is somewhat doleful, because the Spaniards kept the buccaneers on the verge of starvation much of the time. Lookouts were stationed on every eminence along shore, and when the company landed it was usually to find, at best, enough green bananas to satisfy their hunger, and but little more. Very often the capture of a horse seemed a great treat. But there were times when they feasted and reveled. At the capture of *Quiaquilla*, for instance, they obtained so much gold and so many jewels that they took of silver coin no more than "what might amount to five hundred thousand pieces of eight, which money, as we were out of hopes to carry it along with us, served us to play for on board our ships for our diversion." They were so rich in gold and jewels that they cared nothing for silver dollars. They took half a million of them for use as "chips" in gambling, but left more than a million more that were gathered in barges, besides immense quantities of plate; for in that place silver was used in place of copper and iron to make cooking utensils. The buccaneers expected to return home overland, and did not care to burden themselves with silver.

This was in 1687. The priests, as the *Sieur de Lussan* tells us, had taught the people to believe that the buccaneers were not like men in shape, and that they ate human flesh. When the pirate historian was gallantly conducting a young lady through a street in *Quiaquilla* to put her in a church, she turned on him with streaming eyes, and begged him, "for the love of God," not to eat her.

"After they came once to know us, they did not retain all the aversion for us that had been inoculated into them when we were strangers unto them," he says, and then he tells a story of one of his own adventures, which for various reasons cannot be repeated here.

At the Island of Juan Fernandez the *Sieur de Lussan* once found two ships bound home. One was under Captain David and the other under Captain Willnet. The crews of both ships had divided plunder amounting to five thousand dollars each. Willnet had accumulated his store with but forty seven men. Meantime, however, these crews had been gambling, and about half the men had lost their shares to their fellows; so those who had been lucky went home with their plunder, while the others, including Captain David, returned up the coast for more.

The *Sieur de Lussan's* company, to the number of two hundred and eighty men, went home by the way of Choluteca, Honduras, and Segovia, Nicaragua. They chose this route because "no more than five or six thousand men could be found" on the way to oppose their passage. But at the worst pass in the mountains they found the trail blocked with many newly cut trees, and three different breastworks erected to give shelter to the fifteen hundred soldiers gathered to oppose them. And there were three hundred Spanish soldiers coming up the trail behind them. It was as tight a place as they had ever seen, for the mountain seemed inaccessible; but, says the chronicler, "we said our prayers as low as we could, that the Spaniards might not hear us," and then "set forward to the number of two hundred men," who scaled the rocks at night, and at daylight fell on the rear of the Spaniards, whom they slaughtered until at last "being affected with compassion upon sight of the great quantity of blood we saw running down into the rivulet, we spared the rest." The buccaneers lost one man killed and two wounded. When the fight was over the Frenchmen sang a "Te Deum" on the field of battle. They always sang it after a victory, and they were always strict in the observance of the forms of their religion. The *Sieur de Lussan* says, in noting each success, that God gave it to them.

But the British buccaneers had not this devotion in religious matters, though they quarreled with the French over questions of faith. Indeed, the French pirates sometimes refused to as-

sociate with the British because the latter scoffed at, and even shot at the images in the churches. They used their pistols in churches as cowboys on our frontier once used revolvers in saloons. The religion of these pirates seems worthy of more attention than has yet been given to it, for in their way many of the buccaneers were sincere men.

The *Sieur de Lussan* carried home fifteen thousand dollars. The foundations of fortunes lasting to this day were laid by strong right arms wielding swords instead of trowels.

The heyday of the boucan makers, the hunters and woodsmen who turned pirates, lasted a little more than twenty years, or, say, from 1666 to 1688. The common histories of the sea include such men as Teach (Blackbeard) and Lafitte, of Barataria, among the buccaneers, though both lived many years later, Lafitte having been the chief pirate of the nineteenth century. But the buccaneers were a class apart. They formed seafaring, predatory communities in the strict meaning of the word. They were piratical republicans, who provided themselves with laws adapted to preserve all the rights of the individual, while promoting the prosperity of the community. Their prowess was not due to physical strength and skill only, but to that might which is found in armies where each man is animated by a strong personal interest in the result. And they were mighty, too, because, while nearly all of them had been slaves, nearly all of them were men of education.

Their great defect of organization was the lack of means for holding the companies together, although they split up only when the leaders strove to transgress the just rules of the band. Their most marked defect of character was their cruelty, but they were no more cruel than the Spaniards upon whom they preyed. The excesses and debauches of which they were guilty were found among the regular troops in the wars of Europe—at Badajoz, for instance. The operations of the buccaneers constituted a real though unlicensed war on the power of Spain, and it was a war that left scars on the Spanish main seen and described with shudders even to this day.

THE SHADOW OF THE LAW.

BY ERNEST W. HORNUNG.

MR. HORNUNG FIRST ATTRACTED ATTENTION SOME EIGHT YEARS AGO WITH HIS STORIES OF AUSTRALIA, AND RECENTLY HE CONFIRMED HIS REPUTATION AS A NOVELIST WITH "THE AMATEUR CRACKSMAN." "THE SHADOW OF THE LAW" IS A TALE OF MODERN LIFE, AND THE STRONGEST WORK THAT ITS AUTHOR HAS YET PRODUCED.

I.

"IT is finished," said the woman, speaking very quietly to herself. "Not another day, nor a night, if I can be ready before morning."

She stood alone in her own room, with none to mark the white hot pallor of the oval face, the scornful curve of quivering nostrils, the dry luster of flashing eyes. But while she stood a heavy step went blustering down two flights of stairs, and double doors slammed upon the ground floor.

It was a little London house, with five floors from basement to attic, and a couple of rooms upon each, like most little houses in London; but this one had latterly been the scene of an equally undistinguished drama of real life, upon which the curtain was even now descending. Although a third was whispered by the world, the persons of this drama were really only two.

Rachel Minchin, before the disastrous step which gave her that surname, was an Australian girl whose apparent attractions were only equaled by her absolute poverty; that is to say, she had been born at Heidelberg, near Melbourne, of English parents, more gentle than practical, who soon left her to fight the world and the devil with no other armory than a good face, a fine nature, and the pride of an heiress.

It is true that Rachel also had a voice; but there was never enough of it to assure an income. At twenty, therefore, she was already a governess in the wilds, where women are as scarce as water, but where the man for Rachel did not breathe. A few years later she earned a

berth to England as companion to a lady; and her fate awaited her on board.

Mr. Minchin had reached his prime in the under world, of which he also was a native, without touching affluence until his fortieth year. Nevertheless, he was a traveled man, and no mere nomad of the bush. As a mining expert, he had seen much life in South Africa as well as in Western Australia; and at last he was to see more in Europe as a gentleman of means.

A wife had no place in his European scheme; a husband was the last thing Rachel wanted; but a long sea voyage, an uncongenial employ, and the persistent chivalry of a handsome, entertaining, self confident man of the world, formed a combination as fatal to her inexperience as that of so much poverty, pride, and beauty proved to Alexander Minchin. They were married without ceremony on the very day that they arrived in England, where they had not an actual friend between them, nor a relative to whom either was personally known. In the beginning this mattered nothing; they had to see Europe and enjoy themselves; that they could do unaided; and the bride did it only the more thoroughly, in a sort of desperation, as she realized that the benefits of her marriage were to be wholly material after all.

In the larger life of cities, Alexander Minchin was no longer the idle and good humored cavalier to whom Rachel had learned to look for unfailing consideration at sea. The illustrative incidents may be omitted; but here he gambled, there he drank; and in his cups every virtue dissolved. Rachel's pride