

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE BUCCANEERS IN PANAMA BAY AND THE SOUTH SEA.

“O'er the glad waters of the dark blue sea,
Our thoughts as boundless and our souls as free,
Far as the breeze can bear, the billows foam,
Survey our empire and behold our home!
These are our realms, no limits to their sway—
Our flag the sceptre all who meet obey.
Ours the wild life in tumult still to range
From toil to rest, and joy in every change.”

Lord Byron.



THE sack of Old Panama by Henry Morgan called the attention of the Buccaneers to the feasibility of crossing the Isthmus, and the opportunities for plunder on the Pacific coast. During Morgan's stay in Panama, he had great difficulty, as we know, in preventing some of his men from seizing a ship, and sailing away on their own account. The invasion of the Isthmus by Buccaneers, the fall of San Lorenzo, and the capture of Portobello and Panama, showed how easy it was to open the "Gateway" of the New World. The king of

Spain became alarmed, and ordered that Panama be rebuilt on a better site; and that the forts at Portobello, and the castle at the mouth of the Chagre, be repaired and strengthened.

In 1674, Don Alonso Mercado de Villacorta established the present city of Panama on a rocky peninsula at the foot of Ancon Hill, eight kilometers two hundred and sixty meters southwest of the old city. The new location was easier to defend, but not so advantageous commercially by reason of the reefs, which prevented vessels coming up to the city, except at high tide. The streets of *New Panama* were laid out at right-angles about a central plaza. The city was surrounded by a wall from twenty to forty feet high, and ten feet wide, with bastions and watch-towers every two or three hundred feet. A moat separated the city from the mainland, and access was

Four hundred thirty-nine

THE BUCCANEERS IN PANAMA BAY

gained through three massive gateways. So expensive were the fortifications of the new city that the council in Spain, auditing the accounts, wrote to inquire whether the walls were constructed of silver or of gold.

In 1673, Thomas Peche, an English privateer, sailed into the South Sea; and in 1675, strange ships were reported off the coast of Chili. The viceroy of Peru sent Don Antonio de Veá in a ship to reconnoitre, and he went as far as the west entrance of the Strait of Magellan, but found no intruders. One of his tenders, with a crew of sixteen men, was wrecked on the small islands called Evangelists, at the mouth of the strait; De Veá returning to Callao in 1676.

The first to follow Morgan in raiding the Isthmus were the French. In 1675, Captain La Sound, with a hundred and twenty filibustiers, was guided to the town of *Chepo* by some Darien Indians¹; but the Sargento Mayor D. Alonso de Alcaudate, with the assistance of the inhabitants, repulsed them with energy. In 1678, another French expedition, commanded by Captain Bournano succeeded in taking *Chepo*, and plundered the town. The Indians offered to conduct the French to a place called *Tocamoro*, where they said the Spaniards had much gold; but Bournano thought his force too small, promising to come again better prepared.

In 1679, as we already know, the crews of two English and one French vessel united in an attack on Portobello. They landed two hundred men at such a distance from the town that it required three nights marching to reach it; for during the day they lay concealed in the woods. When near Portobello they were discovered by a negro, who ran ahead to give the alarm, but the buccaneers followed so closely that they got possession of the town before the people could prepare for defence. Not knowing the smallness of their force, the inhabitants all fled. The buccaneers spent two days and nights in Portobello, collecting plunder, and in constant apprehension that the Spaniards would return in force and attack them. However, they got back to their ships unmolested, and shared 160 pieces-of-eight to each man.

This same year, William Dampier, the famous navigator, naturalist, and buccaneer, returned to Jamaica, and started out on a trading voyage with Mr. Hobby to the Mosquito shore. Soon after leaving Port Royal, the ship anchored in a bay in the western end of the island, where were Captains Coxon,

¹ As usual, the white man required the help of the natives.

AND THE SOUTH SEA

Sawkins, Sharp, and other "privateers." Mr. Hobby's crew deserted to the buccaneers, and with them went Dampier. From here, the buccaneers went to Boca del Toro, where there were plenty of fat turtles; and then assembled with some French ships at the *Samballas*, or Isles of San Blas, near the coast of Darien. It was their intent, on the report made by Captain Bournano, to go against "a very rich place named Tocamora." The Indians of Darien,² on whom the buccaneers depended for aid, now disapproved the project of going to Tocamora, and advised an attempt on the city of Panama; offering to guide them. The English were willing, but the French objected to the length of the march, and the two nationalities separated; the English buccaneers going to Golden Island (*Isla de Oro*), "which is the most eastern of the Samballas, if not more properly to be said to the eastward of all the Samballas."³

Panama was considered too great an undertaking without the assistance of the French; but the English were bent on crossing the Isthmus, and, at the suggestion of the Indians, they decided to make a raid on a town called *Santa Maria*,⁴ situated on the banks of a river that ran into the gulf of San Miguel. This place was simply a gold collecting station, and was guarded by a detachment of Spanish troops.

The buccaneer forces engaged in this expedition were the following:

	Guns.	Men.			
A vessel of	8	and 97		commanded by John Coxon.	
" "	25	"	107	"	Peter Harris.
" "	1	"	35	"	Richard Sawkins.
" "	2	"	40	"	Bart. Sharp.
" "	0	"	43	"	Edmond Cook.
" "	0	"	24	"	Robert Alleston.
" "	0	"	20	"	— Macket.

The last two captains, Alleston and Macket, with thirty-five men, including themselves, were left to guard the seven vessels

² Dampier says that the foundation of the friendship of the Dariens for the English was laid by Captain Wright, who, in 1665, off the Samballas, captured an Indian lad, whom he named John Gret. Wright treated the boy well, and convinced his tribe that the English hated the Spaniards.

³ Captain James Burney.

⁴ Real de Santa Maria.

THE BUCCANEERS IN PANAMA BAY

during the raid; which was not expected to be of long continuance. Chief Andrés,⁵ styled Emperor of Darien, agreed to furnish guides and supply subsistence during the march; payment being made in axes, hatchets, knives, needles, beads, and trinkets.

On the 5th of April,⁶ 1680,⁷ three hundred and thirty-one buccaneers, most of them Englishmen, passed over from Golden Island to the mainland; each man provided with four cakes of bread called dough-boys, with a fusil, a pistol, and a hanger. The crews⁸ marched under their several commanders, with distinguishing flags, Captain Bartholomew Sharp and his men taking the lead. Among the medical men was Lionel Wafer, surgeon's mate, who wrote such an interesting account of the Isthmus.⁹ Chiefs Andrés and Antonio had charge of the Darien allies; and there were also a few Mosquito Indians from about Cape Gracias á Dios, always faithful friends to the English, whose king they voluntarily acknowledged as their sovereign.

⁵ Written Andreas by the English.

⁶ Near the end of the dry season on the Isthmus.

⁷ A short time before this undertaking, Captain Coxon (with Dampier aboard), in company with several more privateers, captured some Spanish Packets about four leagues east of Portobel. "We open'd a great quantity of the Merchants Letters, and found the Contents of many of them to be very surprising, the Merchants of several parts of Old Spain thereby informing their Correspondents of Panama, and elsewhere, of a certain Prophecy that went about Spain that Year, the Tenour of which was, That there would be English Privateers that Year in the West Indies, who would make such great Discoveries, as to open a Door into the South Seas; which they supposed was fastest shut: And the Letters were accordingly full of Cautions to their Friends to be very watchful and careful of their Coasts. This Door they spoke of we all concluded must be the Passage over Land through the Country of the Indians of Darien, who were a little before this become our Friends, and had lately fallen out with the Spaniards."

⁸ "Our several companies that marched were distinguished as follows. First, Captain Bartholomew Sharp with his company had a red flag, with a bunch of white and green ribbons. The second division led by Captain Richard Sawkins, with his men had a red flag striped with yellow. The third and fourth, led by Captain Peter Harris, had two green flags, his company being divided into two several divisions. The fifth and sixth, led by Captain John Coxon, who had some of Alleston's and Mackett's men joined to his, made two divisions or companies, and had each of them a red flag. The seventh was led by Captain Edmund Cook with red colours striped with yellow, with a hand and sword for his device. All or most of them, were armed with fuzee, pistol, and hanger."—Exquemelin.

⁹ That gifted man, William Dampier, with Basil Ringrose, and Alexandre Olivier Exquemelin, were also in this expedition, and have left accounts of their adventures.

AND THE SOUTH SEA

The first day, the expedition marched through the skirt of a wood, then along a bay for a league, and afterwards about two leagues directly up a woody valley; which brought them to an Indian house and plantation by the side of a river. Some passed the night in the house, others built huts; the Indians cautioning them against sleeping in the grass, on account of adders. The stones in this river, when broken, shone with sparks of gold.¹⁰ The Indians said these stones were washed down from the mountains during the rainy season. The first day's hike satisfied four of the buccaneers, and they backed out and returned to the ships.

The second day, April 6th, they started out at sunrise, and labored up a steep hill, which they surmounted about three in the afternoon; and at the foot, on the other side, the buccaneers rested on the bank of a river, which Capt. Andrés told them ran into the South Sea, and was the same by which Santa Maria was situated. They proceeded about six miles farther, over another steep hill, where the path was so narrow that seldom more than one man could pass at a time. At night they camped by the river, having marched this day about eighteen miles.

The next day, the party continued down the river, which ran with a swift current and serpentine course, which they had to cross almost at every half mile, sometimes only knee-deep, other times up to their middle. About noon they arrived at some large Indian houses, thatched over with palmito leaves, and the interior divided into rooms, but no upper storey. Before each house was a large plantain walk. Continuing their journey, at five in the afternoon they came to a house belonging to a son of Chief Andrés, who wore a wreath of gold about his head, for which he was dubbed by the buccaneers King Golden Cap (Bonete de Oro). The young chieftain entertained the party so well that they rested there the whole of the following day.

On the 9th of April, they resumed the march, accompanied by about two hundred Indians, armed with bows and arrows. They descended along the river, through which they had to wade fifty or sixty times. The buccaneers came to a house "only here and there"; at most of which the owner, who had been apprised of their coming, stood at the door and handed each man a ripe plantain, or some sweet cassava root. Here the Indians counted the white men by dropping a grain of corn for every one that went by. That night they lodged at three large houses, where entertainment was provided.

¹⁰ Confer reports by the Caledonia colonists a few years later.

THE BUCCANEERS IN PANAMA BAY

The next morning, Captain Coxon and Captain Harris had some disagreement; and Coxon fired his fusil at Harris, but without effect. Harris was about to return the shot, when he was restrained by Captain Sharp and others. The river was now navigable, and fourteen canoes had been provided, each managed by two Indians. These could accommodate only seventy of the British, the rest continuing by land. Those in the canoes became as weary as those marching, for at almost every furlong they were compelled to carry their boats over rocks, fallen trees, and sometimes over necks of land. At night they stopped and built shelters for themselves on a green bank by the river's side, where some wild-fowl were shot.

The following day, being the 11th day of April, the canoes continued to descend the river, meeting with the same obstacles as on the preceding day, and at night camped on the shore. "Our supper entertainment was a very good sort of a wild beast called a "warre," which is much like to our English hog, and altogether as good. There are store of them in this part of the world: I observed that the navels of these animals grew upon their backs."¹¹ At night a "Tygre"¹² visited the camp, looked at them for some time, and then went away. The buccaneers refrained from shooting the animal lest the report of their muskets should alarm the Spaniards about Santa Maria. So far, the land party had not caught up with those in the canoes.

The next day, the water party continued down the same river, somewhat concerned about not hearing from their comrades on the land. Perceiving their anxiety, Captain Andrés sent back a canoe, which returned before sunset with some of the land party, and intelligence that the remainder were not far behind.

Early the next day, Tuesday the 13th, the buccaneers arrived at a beachy point of land; where another stream from the hills joined the river. This was a point of rendezvous for the Indians: and here the entire party rested and cleaned their

¹¹ A common, but erroneous observation by the early writers. The "navel," so-called, on the back of the animal is a fetid gland, which must be removed soon after killing it to prevent the meat becoming tainted.

¹² Properly speaking, there are no tigers in the western hemisphere. The *Jaguar* is called *tigre*, or tiger, all over Central America; and sometimes the natives apply the term *tigre* to other members of the Felidae, even to the *puma*, or lion. Within the limits of Panama are found two varieties of the jaguar, the spotted and the black (*el tigre pintado* and *el tigre negro*). The writer encountered a pair of beautiful black "tigres" in the mountains of the Isthmus.

AND THE SOUTH SEA

arms. Thus far the canoes had been carried down by the current, and guided with poles, but here the river was broad and deep, so they made paddles to navigate with.

On the 14th, buccaneers and Indians, nearly six hundred men in all, embarked in sixty-eight canoes provided by the natives, and at midnight made a landing within half a mile of Santa Maria. At daybreak of the 15th of April, they heard guns fired by the guard in the town, and a "drum beating a *travailler*." By seven o'clock the buccaneers were on the open ground in front of the fort, when the Spaniards began firing. The fort was formed simply of palisades, some of which the English pulled down and entered without difficulty. The Spaniards surrendered without much opposition; nevertheless, twenty-six were killed and sixteen wounded. After the fight, it seems that the Indians were left in charge of some of the Spaniards, whom they took out in the adjoining woods, and then proceeded to kill them with lances. Fortunately, they were discovered at this pastime by the buccaneers, else not a prisoner would have been left alive.¹³ The Governor and some others escaped down the river. Captain Sawkins and ten men pursued them in a canoe, hoping to prevent news of the buccaneers reaching Panama.

The Spaniards had received some notice of the coming of the buccaneers, and all they could pillage, either in the town or fort, amounted to but twenty pounds weight of gold and a little silver; whereas three days sooner, they would have found three hundred weight of gold in the fort. The buccaneers were much disappointed, and now wanted to try their luck in the South Sea, to seek compensation for their failure at Santa Maria. Captain Coxon and his crew were for returning to the North Sea; but joined the majority when Coxon was made general of the expedition. Most of the Darien Indians left for their homes, but Andrés and his son Golden Cap, with some warriors, continued with the English.

The buccaneers burnt the town, and on the 17th started down the Santa Maria river,¹⁴ which is the largest of several rivers which fall into the gulf of San Miguel. About thirty Spanish

¹³ A daughter of Chief Andrés had been stolen by a Spanish officer at Santa Maria, and was now found with child by him. This increased the natural enmity between the two races.

¹⁴ Abreast the town, the Santa Maria was reckoned to be twice as broad as the Thames at London; and the rise and fall of the tide was two and a half fathoms.

THE BUCCANEERS IN PANAMA BAY

prisoners entreated not to be left behind to fall victims to the Indians, and managed to construct rafts on which to follow the buccaneers. The Englishmen landed on a small island at the mouth of the river, where they found two women left by the fleeing governor. Basil Ringrose was tardy in getting away from Santa Maria, lost his way on the river, and was over-turned in the gulf of San Miguel. He escaped to a little island, and later, fell into the hands of the Spaniards; but was released for having saved the lives of some of the Santa Maria prisoners.

On the 19th of April, 1680, the buccaneers passed from the gulf of San Miguel into the gulf of Panama. The same day they all united at Plantain Island, where they captured a vessel of thirty tons, on which 130 of the party embarked. The buccaneers separated to seek provisions, agreeing to rendezvous at the island of *Chepillo*. Captain Sharp went to the King, or Pearl Island, in the bark hunting fresh water, but the rest met at *Chepillo*, at the entrance of the river *Chepo*, on the 22nd; and at four o'clock that same afternoon started towards *Panama* in canoes. On the morning of the 23rd, they came in sight of the new¹⁵ city, and found eight vessels lying in the road.

The authorities at Panama knew that the buccaneers were in the bay, and had manned three ships with all the crews in the harbor, as well as with some of the land force. The flagship had a crew of 86 Biscayans, and was commanded by Jacinto de Barahona, high admiral of the South Sea; the second ship was manned by 77 negroes, and commanded by Francisco de Peralta; the third contained a crew of 65 mulattoes, under Diego de Carabajal. As soon as the buccaneers were descried, the three war vessels stood towards them. A desperate battle ensued, which lasted the greater part of the day. The wind was too light for the ships to maneuver to advantage, and the buccaneers in their canoes could so place themselves as to avoid the gun-fire of the Spanish. The flagship was captured, the admiral being killed in the attempt. Peralta fought his ship gallantly, and repulsed two efforts of Sawkins to board her. Several explosions of powder took place, and when Sawkins succeeded on the third attempt, the deck presented a horrible

¹⁵ At this time (1680) New Panama was already built up, though its eight churches were not yet completed. The cathedral church at the old city was still in use, "the beautiful building whereof," says Ringrose, "maketh a fair show at a distance, like unto the church of St. Paul's at London."

AND THE SOUTH SEA

sight. "There was not a Man but was either killed, desperately wounded, or horribly burnt with Powder. Insomuch, that their Black Skins were turned White in several places, the Powder having torn it from their Flesh and Bones." The third ship was more easily secured.

Captain Sharp was still away in the bark with about one hundred men, so the number of buccaneers engaged in the fight was about 200, of whom 18 were killed, and above 30 wounded. Among the latter was Captain Peter Harris, who died two days later. They considered that Captain Sawkins had particularly distinguished himself; while many thought their commander, John Coxon, had shown backwardness in the fight. The Darien chiefs were in the heat of the combat. After the battle, the buccaneers went to the island of Perico, where the five other ships were found abandoned; the largest, called the *Santisima Trinidad*, of 400 tons, was burning. The English put out the fire, and used her as a hospital for the wounded, and later for cruising. In the other prizes were found ammunition, flour, and other provisions. Some of the stores, which the Spaniards refused to ransom, they destroyed. Among the islands they also captured some small vessels laden with poultry. Thus, within a week after entering the South Sea, the buccaneers had provided themselves with a fleet sufficient for their number, fairly well provisioned, with which they maintained a close blockade by sea of Panama.¹⁶

A few days after the battle with the Spanish *armadilla*, Captain Coxon, aggrieved at the reflections cast upon his behaviour during the fight, departed with about 70 adherents to return to the North Sea by the route they had come. He, of course, left his wounded, but carried off nearly all the medicines and the best doctor in the party. Captain Andrés and Captain Antonio, with most of the Dariens, departed at the same time; but chief Andrés left one son and a nephew with the buccaneers.

Richard Sawkins¹⁷ was now chosen general or commander. After remaining ten days before the city, they retired to the

¹⁶ When the Buccaneers first appeared before the new Panama, most of the garrison, consisting of 300 regular troops and a larger number of militia (said to have been 1100), were away; and the few remaining soldiers were put on the fleet. Had the Buccaneers attacked the city at this time, it probably would have fallen. A few cannon on the slope of Ancon Mountain would have commanded the town.

¹⁷ Sometimes confused with Capt. Richard Hawkins (son of Sir John Hawkins), captured by the Spaniards in the South Sea, and who passed through Panama.

THE BUCCANEERS IN PANAMA BAY

island of *Taboga*,³⁸ more distant, but where they could better observe vessels leaving or approaching Panama. The buccaneers made some captures, securing 1200 packs of flour, 2000 jars of wine, brandy, sugar, merchandise, and between 50,000 and 60,000 dollars. At *Taboga* they were visited by the merchants of Panama, who bought some of the prize goods, and negro slaves at 200 pieces-of-eight a head. The governor of Panama sent a message demanding "why, during a time of peace between England and Spain, Englishmen should come into these seas to commit injury, and from whom they had their commissions so to do." Captain Sawkins replied that they had come "to assist their friend the King of Darien, who was the rightful Lord of Panama and all the country thereabouts"; that as yet all his company were not come together, but when they were come up, they would visit him at Panama and bring their "Commissions on the Muzzles of their Guns, at which time he should read them as plain as the Flame of Gunpowder could make them." Sawkins further added that, "as they had come so far, it was reasonable they should receive some satisfaction for their trouble; and if the governor would send to them 500 pieces of eight for each man, and 1000 for each commander, and would promise not any farther to annoy the Darien Indians, their allies, that then the buccaneers would desist from hostilities and go quietly about their business."

By the merchants who traded with them, Captain Sawkins learned that the bishop of Panama, the famous *Piedrahita*, was the person whom he had captured when in the West Indies, and sent him a gift as a token of regard; the bishop sending a gold ring in return. A rich ship was expected from Lima, and Sawkins wished to wait for her, but the men had consumed all the fresh food within reach, and wished to go elsewhere.

On the 15th of May, 1580, the buccaneers departed from *Taboga* and sailed to the island of *Otoque*, where they found hogs and poultry; and the same day, or the next, they left for the large island of *Quibo*; with the intention of attacking *Pueblo Nuevo*, on the mainland. The buccaneers were now in three ships and two small barks, when encountering rough seas and contrary winds, the two little vessels—one with fifteen men, the other with only seven—became separated from the ships.

³⁸ "This *Taboga*," says Sharp, "is an exceeding pleasant island, abounding in fruits, such as pine-apples, oranges, lemons, pears, mamees, cocoa-nuts, and others; with a small, but brave, commodious fresh river running in it. The anchorage is also clear and good."



Photo by Isthmian Canal Commission.

STREET IN VILLAGE OF TABOGA.



AND THE SOUTH SEA

The one with seven men was taken by the Spaniards, but the other reached the gulf of San Miguel, and recrossed the Isthmus with Captain Coxon.

Arriving at *Quibo* about the 21st, Captain Sawkins, with sixty men, went in the smallest ship to the entrance of the river which leads to the town.¹⁹ From the north shore of *Quibo* to *Pueblo Nuevo* was reckoned eight leagues. At the mouth of the river, the commander proceeded in canoes, using a negro prisoner for pilot, directing the ship to follow. The ship entered the river keeping close to the east shore, on which there is a round hill. "Within two stones' cast of the shore there was four fathoms' depth; and within the point a very fine and large river opens. But, being strangers to the place, the ship was run aground nigh a rock which lieth by the westward shore; for the true channel of this river is nearer to the east than to the west shore. The island *Quibo* is south south-east from the mouth of this river."²⁰

A Frenchman had deserted the buccaneers at *Taboga* and disclosed their plan to go against *Pueblo Nuevo*. Those in the canoes found the river obstructed with trees which the Spaniards had felled, and the town protected with a "stockado," and well defended. The buccaneers waited in their canoes till daylight, when Sawkins landed and led the charge against a breastwork. The captain²¹ and two others were killed, and four or five wounded, by the fire of the Spaniards, who were on the alert. The death of their commander, who was much loved by the men, discouraged the buccaneers, and Captain Sharp,²² next in command, ordered a retreat. Three more men were wounded during the re-embarkation. Going down the river they took a ship containing indigo, butter, and pitch; and burnt two others.

Returning to *Quibo*, the buccaneers elected Bartholomew Sharp to be their leader, but between sixty and seventy were dissatisfied with the choice, and departed in one of the vessels, to return over the Isthmus by the gulf of San Miguel. All the

¹⁹ *Pueblo Nuevo*, more often called *Remedios*, is on the *Rio Santa Lucia*.

²⁰ Basil Ringrose.

²¹ "Captain Sawkins was a valiant and generous spirited man, and beloved above any other we ever had among us, which he well deserved."
—Ringrose.

²² Ringrose describes him as "that Sea-Artist, and Valiant Commander, Captain Bartholomew Sharp."

THE BUCCANEERS IN PANAMA BAY

remaining Darien Indians went back with this party, leaving 146 buccaneers with Captain Sharp.

On the 6th of June, 1680, Sharp and his party sailed from Quibo in two ships for the coast of Peru. On the 17th they anchored on the south side of the island of *Gorgona*, then uninhabited, where they lived on rabbits, monkeys, turtle, oysters, and birds. July 25th, they put to sea again, and instead of attacking Guayaquil, as he started out to do, Captain Sharp continued on southward. August 13th, they arrived at the island of *Plata*; where Francis Drake is said to have divided his silver by the bucketful. Here they killed a hundred goats in one day, salting what they did not consume at the time. Leaving here, they continued on south; and on the 25th, when near Cape St. Elena, captured a Spanish ship bound for Panama, in which they found three thousand dollars. This prize was sunk, and soon afterward the buccaneers abandoned one of their vessels, it being a poor sailer, and all went in the "Trinidad."

September 4th, they took a vessel from Guayaquil bound for Lima, and later passed Callao at a distance from land, being apprehensive there might be ships of war in the road. On October 26th, Sharp manned the boats to make an attack on *Arica*; but found the surf high, and all the people up in arms, so abandoned the attempt. Farther south, they succeeded in landing at *Ilo*, securing provisions and fresh water. December 3rd, they took the town of *La Serena*, where was found 500 pounds weight of silver. Here, Sharp released all his prisoners, except a pilot, and stood from the continent for Juan Fernandez, where he arrived on Christmas Day. Sharp and the more thrifty buccaneers were now for going home by way of the Strait of Magellan; but the majority had gambled away their shares, and wished to try their fortune longer in the South Sea.

While at *Juan Fernandez*, the buccaneers settled their disagreement by deposing Sharp, and giving the command to John Watling, "an old privateer, and esteemed a stout seaman." Articles were drawn up in writing, and signed by Watling and the crew. Captain Watling's first order was for the observance of the Sabbath. "This day, the 9th January, was the first Sunday that ever we kept by command since the loss and death of our valiant commander Captain Sawkins, who once threw the dice overboard, finding them in use on the said day."

On the 11th day of January, 1681, two boats were sent to a

AND THE SOUTH SEA

distant part of the island to catch goats,²² but returned in great haste on the following morning, firing muskets to give alarm. They reported three ships, believed to be Spanish war vessels, heading for the island; so the men getting water and hunting on shore were hurriedly called aboard, the cable was slipped, and the "Trinidad" put to sea. One of the Mosquito Indians, called William, was absent in the woods hunting goats, and did not hear the alarm, and in the haste to get away poor Will was left behind.

The three Spanish cruisers and the buccaneer ship remained in sight of each other for two days; but neither side attempted battle. The English had no cannon, and must have trusted to their small arms and to boarding. On the night of the 13th, the buccaneers steered eastward, returning to the coast of Peru, and on the 26th, arrived at the small island of Yqueque, where the Indians ate certain leaves "which were in taste much like to the bay leaves in England, by the continual use of which their teeth were dyed of a green colour."

Captain Watling, on the 30th, landed with ninety-two men on the mainland, and gained the town of Arica. The affair was managed badly, and the Spaniards recovered from their surprise, and bravely drove the intruders back to their boats. The buccaneers lost twenty-eight men, killed or captured; among the former being Captain Watling. Those taken prisoners by the Spaniards were all knocked on the head, except two surgeons, "they being able to do them good service in that country."

On the 17th of April, 1681, when near the Isle of Plata, a division again occurred among the buccaneers, the majority reinstating Captain Sharp in the command; while the minority, forty-seven in all, departed in the long-boat and canoes for the gulf of San Miguel, to return over the Isthmus to the Caribbean Sea.

From the island of Plata, Captain Sharp went north again, passing Panama without stopping, and entered the gulf of Nicoya. In Caldera Bay, he careened and repaired the ship, pressing some local carpenters into service. After sacking *Esparza*, the buccaneers sailed back again to the island Plata, taking three prizes on the way. The first was the "*San Pedro*," with 37,000 pesos aboard; the second, a packet from

²² Introduced by Juan Fernandez, who discovered these islands in 1574. The group is 350 miles west of Valparaiso, Chile.

THE BUCCANEERS IN PANAMA BAY

Panama bound for Callao, from which they learned that the people of Panama believed all the Englishmen had returned overland to the West Indies. The third ship was the *San Rosario*,²⁴ which resisted until her captain was killed. Besides brandy, wine, oil, and fruit, she yielded to each buccaneer ninety-four dollars; 700 pigs of plate, supposed to be tin, were left in the Rosario.²⁴ She also had a great number of charts and maps of the navigations performed by the Spaniards in the Pacific Ocean, which were taken along, and afterwards turned over to the British government.

"August the 12th they anchored at the island Plata, whence they departed on the 16th, bound southward, intending to return by the Strait of Magelhanes or *Strait le Maire*²⁵ to the West Indies." Meeting with stormy weather, generally found at the Pacific entrance of Magellan's Strait, Captain Sharp went around Cape Horn, stealing on the way an Indian boy, whom they named Orson. December 5th, when in the Atlantic Ocean, and steering for the West Indies, the balance of the plunder was divided; each man receiving 328 pieces-of-eight. On the 15th of January, died William Stephens, a seaman, whose death was attributed to his having eaten three manchineal apples six months before, when on the coast of New Spain; "from which time he wasted away till he became a perfect skeleton."

On the 28th of January, 1682, Captain Sharp and his party of buccaneers arrived at the island of *Barbadoes*, but on learning that the "*Richmond*," a British frigate, was lying at Bridgetown, they were afraid to stop. "We, having acted in all our voyage without a commission, dared not be so bold as to put in, lest the said frigate should seize us for pirateering and strip us of all we had got in the whole voyage." They then sailed to *Antigua*, which they reached February 1st; where the governor, Colonel Codrington, would not let them enter the harbor;

²⁴ "We took only one pig of the 700 into our ship, thinking to make bullets of it; and to this effect, or what else our seamen pleased, the greatest part of it was melted and squandered away. Afterwards, when we arrived at Antigua, we gave the remaining part (which was about one-third thereof) to a Bristol man, who knew presently what it was, who brought it to England, and sold it there for £75 sterling. Thus we parted with the richest booty we got in the whole voyage through our own ignorance and laziness."—Exquemelin.

²⁵ Le Maire and Van Schouten, two Dutch navigators, doubled Cape Horn (Hooru) in January, 1616, giving it the name of the birth-place of Van Schouten. The discovery of this route rendered worthless the Spanish defences in Magellan's Strait. Francis Drake probably sighted Cape Horn in 1578.

AND THE SOUTH SEA

though they sent some jewels to his lady, which, however, were not accepted. Some of the men got ashore here, while Sharp and others went on to the island of *Nevis*, whence they got passage to England. Their ship, the *Santissima Trinidad*, which they had found burning at Perico in Panama Bay, was left to seven of the company who had gambled away their shares.

Three of Sharp's crew were tried at Jamaica, and one simple fellow was wheedled into a confession, and hanged. The other two stood it out, and escaped for want of witnesses to prove the fact against them. When Captain Bartholomew Sharp arrived in England, he and a few others were apprehended at the instance of the Spanish ambassador, and tried for piracy before a court of admiralty, held at the Marshalsea in Southwark. They claimed to have acted under authority from the chiefs of Darien, who were independent princes, and not subject to Spain; but chiefly for want of evidence, they escaped conviction.

Shortly after this, Captain Sharp, and Basil Ringrose, a member of his party, each wrote an account of the voyages and adventures of the buccaneers.

Not caring to serve under Captain Sharp, the minority separated from the main body of the buccaneers at the island of Plata, or Drake's Island, on the 17th of April, 1681. The party consisted of 44 Europeans, 2 Mosquito Indians, 1 Spanish Indian, and 5 Negro slaves (usually not counted); making 52 in all. Among the number were John Cook, afterwards a buccaneer captain; William Dampier, the ablest of them all; and Lionel Wafer, now the ranking surgeon, who lived four months with the Darien Indians.

This party started off in the long-boat of the "*Trinidad*" and two canoes; being nearly swamped before reaching the shore of the mainland. The next day they were lucky enough to capture a small vessel under the lee of Cape Pasado, in which they embarked. Sailing northward, they stopped at the isle of Gorgona, and escaped in a rainstorm from a couple of Spanish cruisers out looking for them. At Point Garachina, south of the gulf of San Miguel, they stopped and dried their powder, anticipating a fight on landing. April 30th, they entered the gulf of *San Miguel*, and anchored outside an island, four miles from the mouth of the Santa Maria river. Sending a canoe to investigate, a warship was found at the mouth

Four hundred fifty-three

THE BUCCANEERS IN PANAMA BAY

of the river, and on the bank an encampment of soldiers. Dampier urged his companions to ascend the Rio Congo, three leagues off, but could not persuade them of its existence.

May 1st, 1681, the buccaneers effected a landing in a small creek, a league beyond Cape San Lorenzo. They sank their bark, and started in a northeast direction to cross the Isthmus; making the desperate resolve to shoot all stragglers to prevent information being extracted from them by torture, in case of capture by Spaniards. They soon struck a trail which led to some Indian shacks, where they were well received, and secured a guide. The next day they reached the Congo, and came to the hut of an old Indian. For several days they journeyed through the rain, wading the streams; with no fires, and scarcely any food.

On the fifth day—being also the 5th of May—Doctor Wafer was sitting on the ground near one of the men who was drying gunpowder in a silver plate. From the spark of a pipe, according to Dampier's narrative, the powder blew up, and burned the doctor's knee and thigh so badly that the flesh was torn away, and the bone exposed. He applied such remedies as he had in his knapsack, and made shift to jog along for a few days. The company assigned him one of the slaves to carry his medicines; but on the night of the seventh day, the negroes, all but one, ran away, taking Wafer's medicines, gun, and all his money.

On the 8th, the guide said the river would have to be crossed again, but was too swollen to ford. George Gayny started across with a line about his neck, but the man paying it out suddenly stopped, pulling Gayny on his back. The rope-man then threw the line in the stream, when the swift torrent bore him away; and having 300 pesos at his back, Gayny was drowned. They then felled a tall tree across the river and got over, and reached an Indian village, where they fared well.

The 10th day the doctor was suffering so much with his wound that he decided to take his chances with the Darien Indians. Two others of the company, who were played out, staid with him; John Hingson, a mariner; and Mr. Richard Gopson, who had with him a Greek Testament, which he frequently read, and translated *extempore*, into English for his comrades. The buccaneers did not execute their order about executing stragglers, but took a very kind leave of these men. Indeed, two men, Robert Spratlin and William Bowman, hesi-

AND THE SOUTH SEA

tated to attempt to pass the Congo, on the 6th of May, and had not been seen since.

"Being now forced to stay among them, and having no means to alleviate the Anguish of my Wound, the Indians undertook to cure me; and apply'd to my Knee some Herbs, which they first chew'd in their Mouths to the consistency of a Paste, and putting it on a Plantain-Leaf, laid it upon the Sore. This prov'd so effectual, that in about 20 Days use of this Poultice, which they applied fresh every Day, I was perfectly cured; except only a Weakness in that Knee, which remain'd long after, and a Benumbedness which I sometimes find in it to this Day."²⁸

In three or four days, Spratlin and Bowman dragged themselves into the settlement, very much fatigued with rambling through the woods. They told of seeing the corpse of Gayny lying on the bank of the river, where the floods had left it. The money was still at his back, but they were so exhausted, they cared not to meddle with it. Notwithstanding the Indians still dressed the wounded knee, they were not very generous to the five white men in their midst. They seemed to be concerned about the fate of the two guides who went ahead with the main party, and threw green plantains to the Englishmen, as they sat cringing and shivering, like you would bones to a dog. There was one exception to this stern treatment. The young Indian at whose house they stopped would often give them food on the sly, even rising at night to go by stealth to the Plantain-walk to fetch them a bundle of ripe plantains, which he would distribute unknown to his countrymen. This kind Indian had formerly been a prisoner among the Spaniards, serving under the bishop of Panama till finding a chance to escape. He had learned considerable Spanish, and with the additional use of signs, was able to converse with the buccaneers.

The guides not returning when expected, the Indians resolved to be revenged on the five Englishmen in their power. Some were for turning them over to the Spaniards, but the greater part hating those people, decided to burn the buccaneers, and prepared a great pile of wood for that purpose. Their principal chief, *Lacenta* happened along, and directed two Indians to conduct them to the north side of the Isthmus, and find out what had become of the guides of the main company. The next day, they started out and marched joyfully for three days through the mud and rain, lodging at night under the dripping

²⁸ Lionel Wafer.

THE BUCCANEERS IN PANAMA BAY

trees. The two conductors now departed, and the helpless white men wandered about for days, with only a few macaw berries to eat. They came to a river over which a tree had been felled, and judged, rightly, that their comrades had passed over. The tree was so wet and slippery that Bowman²⁷ fell off, but was washed ashore alive a quarter of a mile below. On the evening of the sixth day after leaving the Indians they came to where another river²⁸ joined the one they were following; both of which ran in a northerly direction, as shown by a pocket compass. This confirmed them in the belief that they were on the north side of the divide, so they made two "Bark-logs," or rafts, on which to float to the North Sea.

That night, Wafer and his companions camped in the fork of the rivers, when "it fell a Raining as if Heaven and Earth would meet, which Storm was accompanied with horrid Claps of Thunder, and fuch flashe of Lightning, of a Sulpherous smell, that we were almost stifled in the open air." The flood covered the hillock on which they were located, and forced them to take to the trees to save their lives, each thinking the others drowned. With thanksgiving they found each other in the morning, and discovered their Bark-logs sunk and full of water, though made of "Bamboes." This was a god-send, for had they gone down this river, which empties into the Chepo, or Bayano, they would have run into the Spaniards.

Not being able to pass either river, the party turned back to hunt the Indian village from which they had departed. This was the eighth day of their wanderings, with nothing to eat but a handful of Maiz, some Macaw-berries, "and the Pith of a Bibby-Tree we met with, which we split and eat very favourly." When nearly dead with hunger, they espied a deer fast asleep. "But one of our Men putting the Muzzle of his gun clofe to him, and the Shot not being wadded, tumbled out, juft before the Gun went off, and did the Deer no hurt; but ftarting up at the noife, he took the River and fwam over." The Doctor's party now took leave of the river, and "After a little Consideration what courfe to fter next, we concluded it beft to follow the Track of a Pecary or Wild-Hog, hoping it might bring us to

²⁷ "This Man had at this time 400 pieces of eight at his Back: He was a weakly Man, a Taylor by Trade."—Wafer.

²⁸ "This laft River was as wide and deep as the former; fo that here we were put to a *Non-plus*, not being able to find means to Ford either of them, and they being here too wide for a Tree to go acrofs, unless a greater Tree than we were able to cut down; having no Tool with us but a Macheat or long Knife."—Wafer.

AND THE SOUTH SEA

some old Plantain Walk or Potato Piece, which these Creatures often resort to, to look for Food." The trail of the peccary brought them, according to expectation, to a banana plantation, near which was an Indian settlement. In fear, the Doctor went forward alone, and found himself in the same village they had left eight days before. The Indians crowded about and began to ask questions, which Wafer cut short by falling into a swoon, occasioned by the heat of the house, and the scent of meat boiling over the fire.

The long-expected guides, who had gone with Mr. Dampier²⁹ and the main body, had returned from the north coast, loaded down with presents; so the Indians now were very kind and generous. After resting seven days, the five white men set out again for the North Sea, conducted by four willing and lusty natives. When they came to the river over which the tree was felled, they turned up stream instead of down; and soon afterwards pursued their journey in a canoe, the Indians paddling stoutly against the current. In six days they came to the palace of Lacenta, prince over the south side of Darien, who had before saved their lives. His house was situated on a fine little hill, in a grove of stately "Cotton Trees," from six to eleven feet in diameter.

"The Circumference of this pleafant little Hill, contains at least 100 Acres of Land; and is a Peninsula of an Oval form, almost furrounded with two great Rivers, one coming from the East, the other from the West, which approaching within 40 foot of each other, at the front of the Peninsula, separate again, embracing the Hill, and meet on the other side, making there one pretty large River, which runs very swift. There is therefore but one way to come in toward this Seat; which, as I before observed, is not above 40 foot wide, between the Rivers on each side; and 'tis fenced with hollow Bamboes, Popes-heads

²⁹ Dampier tells us that after leaving Wafer and his companions, on May 10th, the main body crossed one river thirty-two times that same day. The first night, the last of the five negroes ran away. The buccaneers struggled on through rain and mud; living on plantains, with an occasional monkey or bird. May 20th, they came to the river Cheapo, the last that ran into the South Sea. On the 21st, the party ascended a high mountain; and on the 22nd, they went up another high mountain, and to their great comfort saw the North Sea. The 23rd day they passed in canoes down the river Conception, spending the night in the Indian settlement at the mouth of the river. The next day, May 24th, the buccaneers went on board a "Barcolongo," a French privateer commanded by Captain Tristian, lying out at La Sound's Key.

THE BUCCANEERS IN PANAMA BAY

and Prickle-pears, so thick set from one side the Neck of Land to the other, that 'tis impossible for an Enemy to approach it."³⁰

The chieftain sent back the guides, and told the Englishmen that they would have to stop with him, because the rainy season was now at its height, and it was not possible to travel to the north coast. They had not been there long before an incident occurred which brought Doctor Wafer into great esteem, and benefitted his comrades as well.

"It so happen'd that one of Lacenta's Wives being indisposed, was to be let Blood: which the Indians perform in this manner: The Patient is feated on a Stone in the River and one with a small bow shoots little Arrows into the naked Body of the Patient, up and down; shooting them as fast as he can, and not missing any part. But the Arrows are gaged, so that they penetrate no farther than we generally thrust our Lances: And if by chance they hit a Vein which is full of Wind, and the Blood spurts out a little, they will leap and skip about, shewing many Antick Gestures, by way of rejoicing and triumph.

I was by while this was performing on Lacenta's Lady: And perceiving their Ignorance, told Lacenta, That if he pleased, I would shew him a better way, without putting the Patient to so much Torment. Let me see, says he; and at his command, I bound up her Arm with a piece of Bark, and with my Lancet breathed a Vein: But this rash attempt had like to have cost me my Life. For Lacenta seeing the Blood issue out in a Stream, which us'd to come only drop by drop, got hold of his Lance, and swore by his Tooth, that if she did otherwise than well, he would have my Heart's Blood. I was not moved, but desired him to be patient, and I drew off about 12 Ounces and bound up her Arm, and desired she might rest till the next Day: By which means the Fever abated, and she had not another Fit. This gained me so much Reputation, that Lacenta came to me, and before all his Attendants, bowed, and kiss'd my Hand. Then the rest came thick about me, and some kiss'd my Hand, others my Knee, and some my Foot: After which I was taken up into a Hammock, and carried on Men's Shoulders, Lacenta himself making a Speech in my Praise, and commending me as much Superior to any of their Doctors. Thus I was carried

³⁰ Señor Don Vicente Restrepo, of Bogotá, who has translated Wafer's narrative into Spanish, thinks Lacenta's stronghold may have been situated at the junction of the Sábalo with the Cañaza. The Mandingas tribe had its headquarters in this region.



From copper-plate in Wafer, *Isthmus of America*, 1699.

LACENTA, CHIEF OF THE DARIENS, AND RETINUE.

AND THE SOUTH SEA

from Plantation to Plantation, and lived in great Splendor and Repute, adminiftring both Phyfick and Phlebotomy to thofe that wanted. For tho' I loft my Salves and Plaifters, when the Negro ran away with my Knapfack, yet I preferv'd a Box of Infruments, and a few Medicaments wrapt up in an Oil Cloth, by having them in my Pocket, where I generally carried them."

Dr. Wafer became a great favorite among the natives, not only from his knowledge of medicine, but also because he readily adapted himself to their mode of life. He allowed himself to be painted, went naked, and wore a golden nose-plate,²¹ like the chiefs. He accompanied Lacenta on his hunting trips; and one time, when toward the southeast part of the country, he secretly watched the Spaniards washing out gold from the sands of a river, perhaps the Rio Balsas. It became so that the chief would go nowhere without the Doctor, and the latter perceived that Lacenta intended to keep him alway. One day they started a peccary, which held the Indians and their dogs in play the greater part of the day, till the chief was weary, and impatiently wished for some better way of chasing the game. Wafer, who now understood a great deal of the Darien language,²² took this opportunity to commend the English dogs, and offered to bring him a few from England, if he would suffer him to go thither for a short time.

Lacenta demurred at this for a while, but at length he swore by his tooth, laying his fingers on it, that Wafer and his companions should have their liberty; provided the Doctor promised, and swore by his tooth, to come back, marry the chief's daughter, and settle among them. Doctor Wafer promised to do so; and the next day parted from Lacenta in the hunting grounds, and with a convoy of natives returned to the Chief's palace; where he arrived in about fifteen days, and was joyfully greeted by his friends.

After resting a few days, the five white men started for the north coast, having a strong retinue of armed Indians. They travelled over many high mountains, and at last came to one far surpassing the rest in height, they being four days gradually

²¹ Described in Chapter XIX.

²² "My Knowledge of the High-Land Language made me the more capable of learning the Darien Indians Language; when I was among them. For there is fome Affinity, not in the Signification of the Words of each Language, but in the Pronunciation, which I could eafily imitate; both being fpoken pretty much in the Throat with frequent Afpirates, and much the fame fharp or circumflex Tang or Cant."

THE BUCCANEERS IN PANAMA BAY

ascending it, though with some descents between whiles. This mountain was so high that both Europeans and natives experienced giddiness in the head, and the other mountains they had passed seemed far beneath them. The Doctor looked over a perpendicular part, while two men sat on his legs, but could see nothing but clouds below. At one place they all had to straddle over a narrow ridge.

At the foot of the mountain, on the other side, they came to a river that ran into the North Sea. Here were some houses, where they stopped for the night, "my Lodging, by the way, being in a Hammock made fast to two Trees, and my Covering a Plantain-Leaf." The following morning they set forward, and in two days time arrived at the seaside; where they were welcomed by forty chief Indians,³³ dressed in long white gowns, with fringes at the bottom. The Englishmen asked when they expected any ships, and the Indians said they would inquire; sending for their conjurers or *Pawawers*, "who immediately went to work to raise the Devil, to inquire of him at what time a Ship would arrive here, for they are very expert and skilful in their sort of Diabolical Conjurations." They went into a house by themselves, beating drums, sounding conch-shells, imitating the cries of all kinds of birds and beasts, and uttering the most hideous yells and shrieks.

After a considerable time the oracle declared, "That the 10th Day from that time there would arrive two Ships; and that in the Morning of the 10th Day we should hear first one Gun, and sometime after that another: That one of us should die soon after, and that going aboard we should lose one of our Guns: All of which fell out exactly according to the Prediction."

On the morning of the tenth day thereafter was heard first one gun, and then another; which was the buccaneers' signal for the Indians to come aboard. Wafer and his companions, with three natives, started out in a canoe; but as they crossed the bar of the river, it overturned, whereby the gun of Mr. Gopson³⁴ was lost; though the buccaneers never went in a canoe without lashing their guns to the sides or seats. The party got ashore, and set out again, standing over to *La Sound's Key*, where the two ships lay. Wafer relates that they went aboard one of the ships, where his four companions were greeted by

³³ Confer their reception of the Scotch visitors, in 1698.

³⁴ Dampier calls him Richard Cobson. He died three days later, and was buried in *La Sound's Key*.

AND THE SOUTH SEA

their friends; "but I fat a while cringing upon my Hams among the Indians, after their Fashion, painted as they were, and all naked but only about the Waift, and with my Nose-piece hanging over my Mouth. I was willing to try if they would know me in this Difguife; and 'twas the better part of an Hour before one of the Crew, looking more narrowly upon me, cry'd out, Here's our Doctor, and immediately they all congratulated my Arrival among them."

The return of these men by the Isthmus to the North Sea, with the arrival of Captain Sharp's party at Barbadoes in the following January, terminated what may be called the first expedition of the Buccaneers in the South Sea; the boat excursion by Morgan's men in the Bay of Panama being of too little consequence to be so reckoned. They had now made successful experiment of the route both by sea and land, and the Spaniards in the South Sea had reason to apprehend a speedy renewal of their visit.

The success of the first venture, with the restrictions and prohibitions unwisely imposed upon the French and English in the West Indies by their home governments, soon led to other incursions into the Pacific; either overland across the Isthmus, or by sea around South America. During the next few years piratical and privateering expeditions, both from the West India islands and from Europe, invaded the South Sea; harassing Spanish commerce, and plundering the towns near the coast. These outfits generally acted independent of each other, especially the French and English; but occasionally they united in some large undertaking.

It is not our intention to write further of the buccaneers, excepting certain transactions in the Bay of Panama in the year 1685. Early in 1684, William Dampier, Lionel Wafer, Edward Davis, Ambrose Cowley, and other experienced buccaneers, were again in the South Sea, having sailed around the Horn in the "*Batchelor's Delight*," a thirty-six gun ship, commanded by Captain John Cook. They soon fell in with the "*Nicholas*," John Eaton commander, which had left the Thames on a pretended trading voyage. They sailed up the coast together, passed Panama without stopping, and entered the gulf of Nicoya; where Captain Cook died, and was buried on the shore. Edward Davis, the quarter-master, was then unanimously elected

Four hundred sixty-one

THE BUCCANEERS IN PANAMA BAY

to the command of the "Bachelor's Delight"; and the two ships separated, though each sailed for Peru.

At the island Plata, Capt. Davis fell in with the "Cygnet," Captain Swan, fitted out from London as a genuine trading vessel. Peter Harris, nephew of the Peter Harris killed before Panama in 1680, also joined in a small bark. They made some unimportant captures, and attempted to surprise *Guayaquil*, but the plan miscarried, though four ships were taken in the bay, three of them containing 1000 negroes.³⁵ The little fleet then steered northward towards the *Gulf of Panama*, picking up a packet-boat bound for Lima, which the president of Panama had despatched to hasten the sailing of the plate fleet from Callao. They put some of their prisoners on shore at Gorgona³⁶ Island, and January 21st, 1685, arrived at the Pearl Islands³⁷, where they lay the ships aground to clean them. The buccaneer force, consisting of about 250 men, then anchored near Panama; exchanging prisoners, but making no demonstration against the city.

Shortly afterwards, when lying at *Taboga*, Davis was visited by a merchant, who proposed to come off privately at night with such goods as the buccaneers desired to buy. They agreed to this; but instead of merchandise, his vessel was fitted up

³⁵ Captains Davis and Swan chose each fifteen slaves, and let the vessels go. William Dampier, then with Davis, entertained different views of what should have been done; and anticipated William Paterson in his scheme to displace the Spaniards in Darien. Dampier writes—"Never was put into the hands of men a greater opportunity to enrich themselves. We had 1000 negroes, all lusty young men and women, and we had 200 tons of flour stored up at the Galapagos Islands. With these negroes we might have gone and settled at Santa Maria on the Isthmus of Darien, and have employed them in getting gold out of the mines there. All the Indians living in that neighborhood were mortal enemies to the Spaniards; were flushed by successes against them, and for several years had been the fast friends of the privateers. Add to which, we should have had the North Sea open to us, and in a short time should have received assistance from all parts of the West Indies. Many thousands of buccaneers from Jamaica and the French islands would have flocked to us; and we should have been an overmatch for all the force the Spaniards could have brought out of Peru against us."

³⁶ At Gorgona, the Buccaneers observed how the small black monkeys secured shell-fish when the tide was out. "Their way was to take up an Oyster and lay it upon a Stone, and with another Stone to keep beating of it till they had broke the shell to pieces."—Waefer.

³⁷ Of these islands, Dampier writes—"Why they are called the Pearl Islands I cannot imagine, for I did never see one pearl oyster about them, but of other oysters many."

AND THE SOUTH SEA

with combustibles as a fire-ship.³⁸ The buccaneers, suspecting treachery, cut from their anchors, and escaped the danger. The next morning the ships returned, and while striving to recover the anchors, were alarmed at the sight of many canoes, filled with men, coming from another island toward Taboga. The buccaneers weighed, and stood towards them; when they were discovered to be 200 Frenchmen and 80 Englishmen, commanded by Captains Grognet and L'Escuyer, who had just come over the Isthmus by the Darien route. They told of another outfit which had crossed over, composed of 180 buccaneers under an Englishman named Townley, who were now building canoes in the gulf of San Miguel. Townley's party was soon discovered, already in possession of two ships they had taken; and soon afterwards they picked up six more Englishmen under William Knight.

In April, 1685, while at the Pearl Islands, the buccaneers were joined by 264 filibusters, commanded by Jean Rose, Des-Marais, and Le Picard; the last being a veteran who had served under L'Olonois and Morgan. With this party came Raveneau de Lussan, probably the only Frenchman to leave an account of the filibusters in the South Sea. In addition to the writers already mentioned, Ambrose Cowley also kept a journal of his adventures.

The combined English and French forces in the *Bay of Panama* now numbered nearly 1000 men, and they thought seriously of assaulting the city; but learning that a rich treasure had been despatched from Lima, they agreed to postpone the attempt on Panama, and lay in wait for the plate-fleet. In the meantime, they took several prizes, and captured the town of *Chepo*, where was found neither opposition nor plunder.

The Viceroy of Peru believed his *flota* strong enough to risk an encounter with the buccaneers; but ordered the commander to try and avoid a meeting until after the treasure should be landed. Accordingly, the Spanish admiral, Don Antonio de Beas, sailed more westerly until he fell in with the coast of Veragua, west of Punta Mala. Afterwards, he entered the gulf, keeping close to the west shore, and safely landed the treasure at *Lavelia*.³⁹ When the buccaneers discovered the Spanish fleet, it was laying at anchor before Panama, where it was soon reinforced with more seamen hurried over from

³⁸ Dampier states that this fire-ship was prepared by Captain Bond, a deserter from the privateers, then an honored guest in Panama.

³⁹ Meaning La Villa; as Los Santos was called in colonial days.

THE BUCCANEERS IN PANAMA BAY

Porto Bello. Thus strengthened, the Spanish fleet, numbering fourteen sail, and much superior in guns and men, started out to hunt the buccaneers, whom they found on the 28th of May, 1685, near the island of Pacheca, the northernmost of the Pearl Islands.

The buccaneer fleet, consisting of ten vessels of different sizes was deficient in men and cannon, but sufficient in musketry, so it was the policy of Edward Davis to avoid long range fighting, and close in quickly for musket fire and boarding. About three o'clock in the afternoon, he got the weather-gage of the Spaniards, and gave the order to bear down upon them. This was the high-water mark of the Buccaneers in the South Sea. A voluntary and heterogeneous band of adventurers, without a national support, and with only such supplies and pay as they themselves could secure, now threatened Spanish dominion in these waters; with a likelihood of controlling the Isthmus, and severing Spain's possessions in America. Captain Davis had the largest number of trained seamen and fighters ever brought together under the Buccaneer flag in the Pacific, and had the wind of the enemy.

He directed Grognet to board the Spanish vice-admiral, while he went against the main division of their fleet. Grognet refused to engage the enemy, and even Swan shortened sail; so that lacking the support of his principal ships, Davis had to retire, exchanging a few shots with the vice-admiral. At night, the Spanish admiral anchored; but showed a light on a small vessel, which he sent to leeward. This the buccaneers followed, and in the morning found themselves to leeward of the *flota*, which now bore down upon them. Deeming it imprudent to fight under these disadvantages, the buccaneers did not wait for them. Townley, being hard pressed, escaped through a narrow passage between some islets on the south side of Pacheca. Davis and Swan, who had the fastest sailers, held back to delay the Spaniards; who declined to board, but held off and used their big guns.* There was some fine seamanship displayed, but very little fighting; for after a circuitous chase, lasting all day, the buccaneers anchored by Pacheca, nearly in the same spot from which they had started in the morning. The next day, the Spanish fleet was seen at anchor three leagues to leeward. When the wind freshened a little at ten o'clock, the Spaniards took up their anchors; but instead of making towards the buccaneers, they sailed away to Panama. Davis knew by the Spanish fleet coming from Panama that the trea-

AND THE SOUTH SEA

sure must have been landed, and he could have little motive for urging the fight; but it was the duty of the Spanish admiral, at all hazards, to at least attempt to destroy the enemies of his country, and strike such terror into them as would discourage others from invading the South Sea.

On the 1st of June, 1685, the buccaneer fleet sailed from the Bay of Panama for the island Quibo.* Dissatisfaction at the outcome of their operations at Panama led to dissensions, and the short-lived confederacy resolved into its elements. During July, 341 French filibustiers (or privateers, as war then existed between France and Spain) separated from the English under Davis, and went off under Captain Francois Grognet. They took *Pueblo Nuevo*, *Ria Lexa*, *Nicoya* and other places; and in January, 1686, ascended a river between Quibo and Point Burica, and surprised *Chiriquita* [David]. Later, they united with Captain Townley; and on April 10th, 1686, captured *Granada*, firing the houses.

On the 20th of July, 1685, Edward Davis, with all the English, and fourteen French under Jean Rose, departed from Quibo and sailed to the northwest. In August they possessed the city of *Leon* without resistance, which they plundered; and on the 14th set fire to the place and returned to the coast. No expedition of magnitude being in view, the English divided; Captain Swan saluting Davis with 15 guns, and Captain Davis saluting Swan with 11 guns.

Captain Swan, in the "*Cygnets*," sailed up towards the gulf of California. On February 19th, 1686, at *Santa Peccaque*,[†] Mexico, he lost a lot of men, Basil Ringrose among the number.

* Dampier, who was in Davis' ship, says—"The Spanish admiral and the rest of his squadron began to play at us and we at them as fast as we could: yet they kept at distant cannonading. They might have laid us aboard if they would, but they came not within Small-arms' shot, intending to maul us in pieces with their great guns."

† Two buccaneers were killed by serpents at Quibo. Lussan writes: "Here are serpents whose bite is so venomous that speedy death inevitably ensues, unless the patient can have immediate recourse to a certain fruit, which must be chewed and applied to the part bitten. The tree which bears this fruit grows here and in other parts of America. It resembles the almond-tree in France in height and in its leaves. The fruit is like the sea-chestnut (*Chataines de Mer*) but is of a grey colour, rather bitter in taste, and contains in its middle a whitish almond. The whole is to be chewed together before it is applied. It is called *Graine à Serpent*, the serpent berry."

‡ Swan lost 54 Englishmen, and 9 negroes; the greatest calamity suffered by the Buccaneers in the South Sea, excepting the 100 killed under Morgan at Old Panama.

Four hundred sixty-five

THE BUCCANEERS IN PANAMA BAY

March 31st, 1686, Captain Swan started across the Pacific, having on board William Dampier. The first land they touched was *Guahan* (Guam), and afterwards they went to *Mindanao* in the Philippine group.

Captain Townley returned to the Bay of Panama, and took and burnt *Lavelia* [La Villa], securing some of the treasure landed there by the Spanish *flota* more than a year before. August 22nd, 1686, Townley, in command of English and French buccaneers, was lying at *Taboga*, when they were attacked by three Spanish vessels armed with cannon. One of the Spanish ships blew up, when the other two were taken, as well as a fourth which arrived from Panama as a reinforcement. The buccaneer loss was only one killed, and twenty-two wounded, including Captain Townley. Townley sent a messenger to the President of Panama, Don Pedro Ponte y Llerena, Count of Palmar, demanding supplies, the release of five buccaneers held prisoners, and ransom for his numerous captives. The President sent only some medicines; when the buccaneer chief dispatched a second message, threatening to send the President the heads of all his Spanish prisoners if his demands were not acceded to. The President paid little attention to this threat; but on receiving the heads⁴³ of twenty Spaniards, he hastened to release the five buccaneers, and pay a ransom for the remaining men. On September 9th, Captain Townley died of the wound he received in the battle at *Taboga*.

August 27th, 1685, Captain Davis parted from Swan at *Ria Lexa* [Realejo]; sailing with the vessels of Knight, and Harris, and a tender which with his own ship, the "Bachelor's Delight," made four in all. Above 130 of the men fell ill of a spotted fever, attributed to the unwholesome air or bad water at *Ria Lexa*⁴⁴; in consequence of which Davis sailed to *Amapalla Bay*; where they built huts on one of the islands for the sick, who were attended by the surgeon, Lionel Wafer. While here, they went to the mainland to seek food at a "Beef-Eftantion" (*estancia*); where the Doctor investigated a river of hot water which issued out from under a hill. After many had died of the fever, the disease abated; and the fleet sailed south to *Cocos*

⁴³ "Ce moyen etoit a la verité un peu violent, mais c'etoit l'unique pour mettre les Espagnols a la raison."—*Journal du Voyage au Mer du Sud*," par Raveneau de Lussan.

⁴⁴ The rarity of disease among the Buccaneers has already been remarked.

AND THE SOUTH SEA

Island, where were plenty of coconuts,⁴ as the name would indicate. Peter Harris departed from here for the East Indies.

Davis cruised off the coast of Peru for some time, taking prizes and raiding the towns. When in possession of *Payta* he intercepted a courier with a message from the governor of Guayaquil to the viceroy at Lima, informing him that *Guayaquil* was in the hands of the buccaneers, and that he should hasten warships to the place. Captain Davis immediately hurried to the aid of his brethren, and on May 14th, 1687, arrived in the Bay of Guayaquil; finding the French under Grognet, and the English under George Hout (who had succeeded Townley) masters of the town. Captain Grognet was mortally wounded in the fight, and *Le Picard* was chosen chief of the filibustiers. A large amount of money was included in the booty, besides jewels, church-plate, and merchandise. Davis came up just in time to help fight the Spanish frigates, and save the plunder, so shared in the distribution of the spoils.

All hands now had sufficient wealth to think of returning to the West Indies. While the Spaniards had failed to suppress the buccaneers in the South Sea, they had succeeded in making a treaty with the Darien Indians; in consequence of which the Isthmian route was no longer open to the buccaneers. Davis had a stout ship, and proposed to go back by sea; being joined by most of the English. No other vessel in their possession was strong enough for this undertaking; so all the French, with many of the English, sailed north to the *Bay of Amapalla*. Here the party destroyed their vessels, and on the 1st of January, 1688, landed on the mainland, dividing into four companies of seventy men each. After stealing sixty-eight horses, they "said their Prayers," and started across the continent on the 2nd, loaded down with silver and plunder. The people offered but little opposition, and on January 11th the buccaneers entered *Segovia*, finding it deserted and cleared of provisions.

January 17th, they came to Wank river, which they descended

⁴After telling of the excellent fresh water, and a delightful water-fall, at Cocos Island, Wafer writes,—“One day, some of our men being minded to make themselves merry went ashore and cut down a great many cocoa-nut trees, from which they gathered the fruit, and drew about twenty gallons of the milk. They then sat down and drank healths to the king and queen, and drank an excessive quantity; yet it did not end in drunkenness: but this liquor so chilled and benumb'd their nerves that they could neither go nor stand. Nor could they return on board without the help of those who had not been partakers of the frolic, nor did they recover under four or five days' time.”

THE BUCCANEERS IN PANAMA BAY

on rafts to the Caribbean Sea, which they entered to the south of *Cape Gracias á Dios*. The English remained for a time with their friends, the Mosquito Indians; but the French dispersed. About seventy-five went to Jamaica, and were imprisoned by the governor, the Duke of Albermarle. The following year, on the death of the duke, they were released; but neither their arms nor plunder were restored to them.

From Guayaquil, Captain Davis sailed again to the Galapagos, and Juan Fernandez; refitting and careening his ship for the homeward voyage. Sailing southward, he passed around the Horn without seeing land, but encountered so many ice islands that Davis ran far to the east before steering northward. The party reached the West Indies in the spring of 1688; at a time when the king of England had issued a pardon to all buccaneers who would abandon their calling.

The English governors refused longer to countenance the buccaneers, and piracy became unprofitable as well as illegal. Following the accession of William III. to the crown of Great Britain, England joined Spain in war against the French. This divided the French and English buccaneers, who united with the regular troops on either side, and they never afterwards confederated in any buccaneer enterprise. In the West Indies, the French attacked the English part of St. Christopher (the site of their original settlements) and drove the inhabitants over to Nevis. The next year, the English returned and took St. Christopher from the French. At this time, the French fibustiers stole so many negroes from the English in Jamaica, that in derision they called that island "Little Guinea."

The French became alarmed at the number of *habitans*, or settlers, leaving Saint Domingue and other colonies in the West Indies, and relaxed in her prohibitions, and in severity towards the fibustiers.

The last large buccaneering undertaking was the capture and sack of *Cartagena*, in 1697, by a force of French regulars, under the Baron de Pointis; effectively aided by about 1200 fibustiers, settlers, and negroes, headed by M. du Casse, governor of the French colonies in Hispaniola. On May 3rd. the city capitulated, when M. de Pointis stationed the French buccaneers outside the walls, while he and his officers gathered in the treasure, amounting to from 20,000,000 to 40,000,000 livres. The last of the month, he sailed away with his regular armament; leaving a paltry 40,000 crowns to the fibustiers. The

latter, who had already embarked, returned to the unfortunate city, and extracted nearly 5,000,000 livres more from the miserable inhabitants. On the way back towards Hispaniola, the filibusters encountered the combined English and Dutch fleets, from which De Pointis had just escaped by superior sailing. Two of the buccaneer ships were taken; two driven on shore, the crew of one being captured by the Spaniards; while the five others managed to reach *Isle à Vache* in safety.

In September, 1697, the treaty signed at Ryswick put an end, for a time, to war between the rival nations in the West Indies, With no headquarters, and no ports open to them wherein to riot and dispose of their plunder, the loose association of sea-rovers known as "Buccaneers" ceased to exist. "Their distinctive mark, which they undeviatingly preserved for nearly two centuries, was their waging constant war against the Spaniards, and against them only."⁴⁴ Many followed the sea as legitimate mariners, or settled down as honest planters among the islands. Some still sailed about the world for booty; a few going to the Bahamas, making Providence Island⁴⁵ their home, there to propagate a breed of common pirates to scourge the seas during the next century. Several of the old filibusters located among the Darien Indians, who had resumed their hostility to the Spaniards on the Isthmus. We read that in 1702 a party of Englishmen, having commissions from the governor of Jamaica, landed in Darien; where they were joined by the old buccaneers who had married natives, and also by three hundred Indians. They drove the Spaniards from some mines, and captured seventy negroes; whom they kept at work twenty-one days, and obtained about eighty pounds of gold.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Captain Burney.

⁴⁵ Called New Providence to distinguish it from the island of Old Providence (Santa Catarina). A saying arose in the West Indies that "shipwrecks and pirates were the only hopes of the island of Providence."

⁴⁶ In the account of this expedition by Nathaniel Davis, he relates that, in the year 1702, Col. Peter Beckford, Lieut-Governor of Jamaica, granted commissions to the captains of four sloops "to go a Privateering" against the French and Spaniards. On the 24th July, they sailed from Jamaica, and soon came to the "Samballoe-Keys," off Darien, where they were joined by other ships. Don Pedro, King of the Indians, treated with the privateers, and promised to furnish 300 Indians, and guide them through the woods up to the Mines. The 482 Englishmen disembarked up a river at the Barkadeers, or landing-place, on the 19th of August. The usual hard hiking followed, and some Spanish scouts were killed.

"This day" [August 29th] "we marched over the highest of all the

THE BUCCANEERS IN PANAMA BAY

"In the history of so much robbery and outrage the rapacity shown in some instance by the European governments in their West-India transactions, and by governors of their appointment, appears in a worse light than that of the buccaneers, from whom, they being professed ruffians, nothing better was expected. The superior attainments of Europeans, though they have done much towards their own civilization, chiefly in humanising their institutions, have, in their dealings with the inhabitants of the rest of the globe, with few exceptions, been made the instruments of usurpation and extortion."⁴⁰

Mountains, and such a one as I thought Man could not be able to get up: I do really believe it could not be less than seven or eight miles high. Some of our Men imagined it to be within a Stone's cast of Heaven, and would willingly have tarry'd there, especially being much wearied with the Fatigue they underwent, and supposing they should never come again so near the blissful Region."

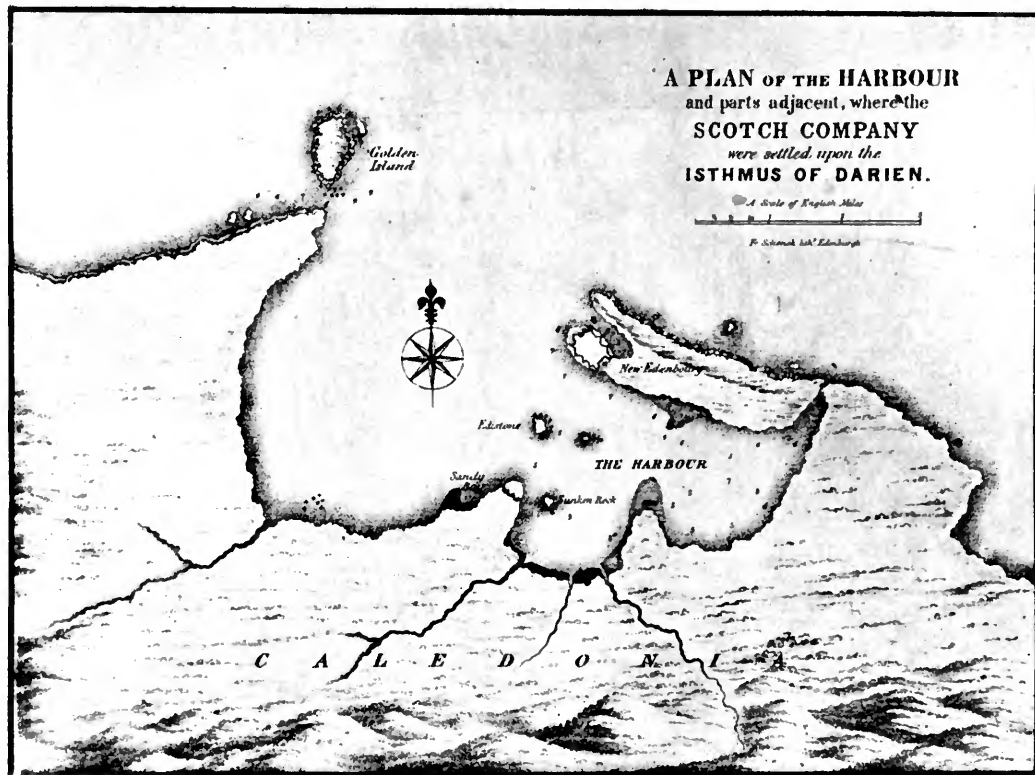
On the 30th, the English and Dariens took Cana, a town of 900 houses, with one church. Most of the Spaniards had fled with their wealth. The privateers worked the mines for a week with the negro captives and departed on September 7th, after firing the town. Chief Pedro killed the old *padre* with a stone before leaving. The native allies were not so attentive on the way back, and the white men suffered much from lack of food and from sleeping in the rain. September 18th, the privateers were back at the Barkadeers [*embarcadero*, doubtless].

⁴⁰ Captain Burney.

When in Golfo Dulce, in June, 1681, a prisoner taken in the Gulf of Nicoya told the Buccaneers of the Stratagem of War by means of which the Spaniards had forced a Peace upon the Indians of the Province of Darien.

"The Manner was as follows. A certain *Frenchman*, who ran from us, at the Island of *Taboga*, to the *Spaniards*, was sent by them in a Ship to the River's Mouth, which emptieth itself from that Province into the *South Sea*. Being arrived there, he went ashore by himself in a Canoe, and told the *Indians*, that the *English* who had passed that Way, were come back from their Adventures in the *South Sea*. Withal he asked them, if they would not be so kind and friendly to the *Englishmen*, as to come aboard and conduct them on Shore? The poor deceived *Indians* were very joyful to understand this good News; and thus forty of the Chiefest of them went on board the *Spanish Vessel*, and were immediately carried Prisoners of War to *Panama*. Here they were forced to conclude a Peace, though upon Terms very disadvantageous to them, before they could obtain their Liberty."

Boucaniers of America—vol 2, p. 56.



From *The Darien Papers*.

CALEDONIA BAY AND NEW EDINBURGH.

The old town of Acla, where Balboa was beheaded, probably was located near the mouth of the Alglasniqua river, represented on the left.

