

The Cruise of the Caribbee

A CHAPTER OF UNWRITTEN HISTORY

BY THOMAS V. BRIGGS

It was shortly after the commencement of the rage for building clipper-ships and other fast-sailing vessels in the year 1852, that the principal firm of builders in Calais, Maine, having launched one of their famous ships, in order to make an economical use of material unsuitable for larger vessels, laid down the keel of a clipper-bark that was, as we shall see, enlarged to four hundred and thirty-six tons. Previously the manager had asked the master builder if he could build a vessel which should be faster than any he had yet turned out. The master answered that he could build a vessel that would sail, if it was only for sailing that he wanted a vessel. "Well," said the manager, "go to work and make a model, and I will see H. of S. [a draughtsman in Massachusetts] as I go along to New York on my way to England, and get him to make a model and send you, and you can build after his or your own, as you think best." The master completed his own model and waited for the other, but none appeared; and, after consulting with the other partner, he commenced to build after his own model. Accordingly, the keel was laid for a vessel of one hundred and twenty-five feet in length, twenty-nine and a half feet beam, and twelve feet depth of hold. The inside was nearly finished, and clamps in, when the manager returned from England. On going to the yard he said to the master, "How do you like the model I sent you?"

The master said. "I have not seen any." (It had been sent, but had gone astray.) And he added, "How do you like this one?"

"Well," said the manager, "she may sail but she won't carry anything. Can't she be made to carry something?"

It is certain that at that time neither of them had the least idea what she would carry in the course of a few months. "So," explained the master later, "as the vessel was not planked outside, I put in stanchions and made her four feet deeper, giving sixteen feet depth of hold. The stringers that were put in for the upper deck answered for the lower deck. Two lower beams were put in for each mast; the other beams were put in in New York, and the deck laid after she was sold, giving her a flush lower deck from stem to stern, the space between decks being four feet in the clear. This goes to show you," continued he, "that the vessel was not built for any particular trade. The manager was censured for building a vessel for an unlawful and inhuman trade."

As I said, the builder desired to attain the greatest possible amount of speed. All the relations of length to breadth of beam, depth of hold, also length of floor, deadrise, entrance, run, lines, and all those points which at that time and thirty years later were argued and debated pro and con by builders, owners, and nautical men and writers in our principal cities, had been wisely and carefully considered.

Of course the alteration, by interfering with her original dimensions, as we shall see, must have had the effect to lessen the speed, though giving more capacity and stability. It has been frequently said that "a perfect copy of a fine violin is as likely to prove worthless as otherwise." Also, of two vessels built after the same model, one may prove a very fast sailer and the other an indifferent one; but the expert and connoisseur knows that like causes produce like effects, and what the careless observer would consider a trifling or unimportant difference or departure would be likely to prove a defect and bar, either in the instrument or vessel. Given (as a very common illustration) a vessel properly constructed, how can she sail unless she is so ballasted or trimmed that her floor lengthwise shall be parallel with the surface of the water?—a truism frequently ignored.



Said an eminent man, "Build nothing without a well-digested plan, and then drive no nail not in the plan." The original plan, however, was departed from, and yet the vessel became as famous for her speed as her short career allowed. Her case must be considered as exceptional. The vessel was finally completed, masted, rigged as a bark, and launched. "She had cabin and forward-house on flush main-deck," good length of floor, large dead-rise, high transom, clean entrance and run, with considerable sheer. Her small figurehead was a copper-gilt courser in full speed, masts rather more raking than is usual nowadays, and finely tapered spars; mastheads, tops, cross-trees, and yard-arms were painted white; the remainder coated with bright varnish.

Her name was *Arabian*. A sufficient quantity of ballast was taken on board, and one hundred and sixty thousand feet of lumber.

Such was the *Arabian* when she left her wharf on the last day of June for the city of New York, her manager and master builder being on board. A large crowd of citizens witnessed her

departure. A fair and gentle breeze filled her sails as she swung around into the current, and as sail after sail was hoisted and sheeted home, she soon left the "Eastern city" far behind. Her run down the river and bay for thirty miles was soon accomplished. The master was sent on shore twenty miles outside. He wished to know how fast she could sail, but, said he, "I never found out."

The run to New York was made in four days, with headwinds all the way. She arrived at Sandy Hook the third day of July and on the fourth sailed up to the city, outsailing all the yachts in the bay. The pilot who took her in said she was the fastest vessel knew of.

Please remember that this was in the days of the *Rainbow*, *Flying Cloud*, etc., etc. The yachtsmen were, of course, astonished that a "down East" lumber-loaded craft should beat all their fancy cracks, and, as a matter of course,

AIN WAS A CUBAN



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SHE BECAME AS FAMOUS FOR SPEED AS HER SHORT CAREER ALLOWED

the bark attracted a vast deal of attention. Her unequalled performance excited the especial admiration of a wealthy Spaniard and his Cuban captain, who were on the lookout for a fast-sailing vessel; and when she hauled into her dock on the North River side they appeared for a nearer view, and also to get what information they could. They were invited on board, looked her over thoroughly, examined the logbook, got all the information possible in an hour's visit, and left well pleased. They were interested in sailing-vessels, had seen the bark as she came up the harbor and were pleased with her appearance. She also received visits from many others, and created quite a sensation among nautical men.

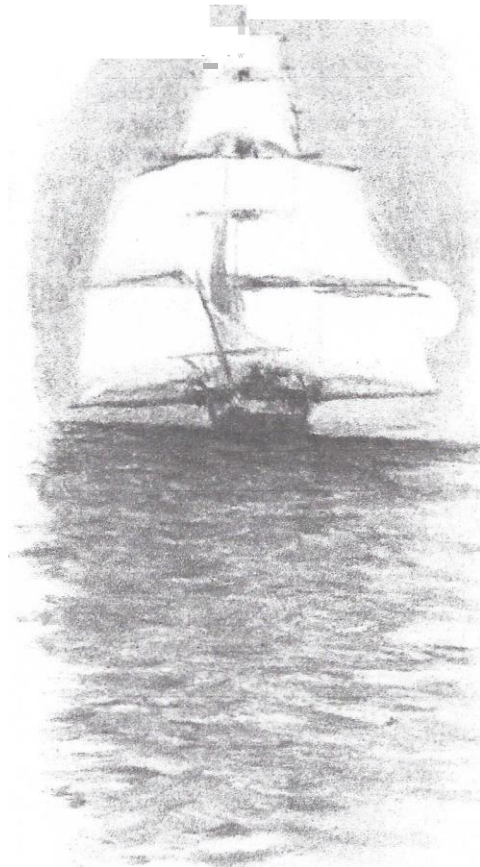
The Spaniard and his captain were no disinterested visitors: they learned that she was for sale, and finally saw the owner and got his price. Then they raised some objections and chattered, making an offer below the price. The owner had made his figures and intended to maintain them. Others looked at the vessel with a view to purchase, and the Spaniard kept himself posted as to the situation.

After discharging the lumber the captain gave his attention to certain small matters necessary in every vessel, and the Spaniard and his captain on visiting her one morning were taken aback by the information that the owner had left for Boston. On his arrival he found a telegram accepting his terms, and he at once returned to New York. Arrived at that city, the necessary papers were made out, the money—twenty-thousand dollars—paid over, the captain and crew discharged to find employment elsewhere, the Cuban captain placed in charge, and the transfer completed. One man of the old crew shipped under the new captain, and from him were learned many of the facts herein narrated. An American captain was employed to take the vessel to Cardenas. But little was said about the sale and the whole matter was kept as quiet as possible. A few thousand feet of the boards and scantling were shipped into the lower hold, and the bark was taken farther up the river to a repair-dock. Here the additional lower-deck beams were put in and the deck laid. She was also coppered to “the bends.” A full supply of stores was put on board, and also of goods suited to the African trade were shipped, and all made ready, and in due time she was cleared for the port of Cardenas, in Cuba, with an “assorted cargo.” She was destined for the African slave-trade. At that period it was neither a difficult nor uncommon matter for such vessels to be fitted out wholly, or in part, in the city of New York. In this case nearly everything needed was put on board. In five days she arrived at her port—an average of two hundred and seventy five miles per day. The captain had looked around New York for men suited for the purposes of his main voyage, and found half a dozen, some of them old hands and friends.

Arrived at Cardenas, a temporary deck was built in the lower hold, of the scantling and boards, as far aft as the after-hatch; a bulkhead was built well forward for the chains. The after half of the main-hatch was encased between decks, forming a separate opening to the temporary deck below. A bulkhead was also built at the after end of the temporary deck just forward of the after-hatch, athwart ships, leaving a space for a large door. The purposes of these arrangements will be manifest. They had occupied but a few days. The captain, while in New York, had supplied the vessel with such small arms and ammunition as an exigency might demand. At Cardenas, two old friends, in the shape of long brass nine-pounders, with their carriages and other appurtenances, were taken on board and covered in the lower hold. The rest of the crew, sufficient to make the number, all told, up to forty-five men were shipped, a quantity of liquors put on board, and crew and cargo were completed. The bark's name was changed to *Caribbee*, and in about five days she was ready, and sailed on her voyage to the Gulf of Guinea. The Spaniard was supposed to be the principal owner. He kept a large saloon at Cardenas, was well known to Eastern captains, and reputed to be wealthy. The Cuban captain had long been in the trade. He had made several fortunes and lost them. He was a gambler, and at this time was reduced and

desperate. He had generally been so successful in his voyages as to gain and retain the confidence of his copartners and employers. He stipulated for a good share of the profits.

He was then about forty, of medium height, with a tendency to stoutness, of great daring and courage, sound of judgment, yet prudent and careful, and was in every respect thoroughly posted in all that related to the trade and seamanship. The first mate was an Englishman—he hailed from Bristol—a stout, heavy, well-built, bulldog sort of man, known to be well-equipped and fitted for his present calling. In early life he had served on a British man-of-war, a part of the time as gunner's mate. He wished for greater freedom, and improved the earliest opportunity to leave the service. The second mate was a Spaniard, a worthy chum of the first; they had usually shipped in the trade together. The steward was a Cuban mulatto, and the cook an immense Mandingo, who had been kidnapped on the coast when a boy. The boatswain was a burly son of Norway weighing two hundred and twenty. The others were of various nationalities, the Spanish and Portuguese predominating. There was a time when the English were actively engaged in the slave-trade, and to them Americans owe their share in the inheritance. In later years Americans have not refused participation, and the American flag has secured immunity in the middle passage to many a trafficker in the bodies and souls of men. But the principal agents in the Atlantic slave-trade for many years had been those above mentioned. In no other countries had it been clung to so tenaciously as in the dependencies of Spain and Portugal and nations of kindred extraction. It was in the hold



of a British prison-ship that American patriots were chained and sunk in Hell Gate in ninety feet of water. "Their bones lie bleaching in the caverns of the deep." Their memories shall witness the tyranny and cruelty of the British kin and ministry—not people—while time shall last. But it is not strange that a nation which could produce a Philip II, a Duke of Alva, and a Menendez should be the last to give up the traffic in slaves. However, the crew were selected for known fitness for the venture. A few were induced to make the voyage by the offer of large wages, and a liberal bonus in case of

extra success. It was money they wanted. The greater risk the greater pay, and for money man will sell his soul. After a rather rough passage, Cape Palmas was sighted on the twenty-first day, and the bark was put on a southerly course, standing south by west for the next twenty hours, when she was just north of the equator. She was put in stays and steered east by north for about thirty seven hours, when she was in longitude about two degrees west of Greenwich. Then she was put away to the northeast with the wind abeam, and went bowling along for the "Bight of Benin." Shortly after her course was changed, a sail was descried by the lookout at the masthead,

off the starboard quarter, standing southerly. She soon changed her course and stood in an opposite direction. As she came nearer she was seen to be a British cruiser. Captain Bazin (for that was his name) hoisted the American flag and kept

THE CRUISER PILED ON ALL SAIL

on his course. He was well assured that no ordinary vessel could hold her own with the *Caribbee*. The cruiser piled on canvas and kept her course, and the bark followed suit.

At dark the cruiser was some ten miles astern. The light sails were taken in and all made snug for the night. No lights were carried to attract the enemy. Next morning no sail was in sight. The northeast course was kept for the day and following night with light and somewhat variable winds. In the morning a distant sail was seen standing southwest. From her appearance she was judged to be a slaver that had been successful in procuring a cargo. She had evidently come out with the night breeze of the previous evening, and was making the best of her way off the coast with all sail set, but seemed to be running into the jaws of the British lion. The wind was now lighter and more baffling.

Notwithstanding, the bark arrived at her destination early in the afternoon of the following day, in twenty-six and a half days from Cardenas. Once at anchor, Captain Bazin went on shore, where he expected to find some old friends and learn the prospects for a full freight. He was not greatly surprised to find that a vessel had sailed two days previously with nearly all the available stock, and that new gangs of slaves could not be expected from the interior for some weeks. He was strongly urged to await their arrival. But time to him was precious. The sickly season was approaching, and he at once decided not to tarry, hoping to be more successful down the coast. A small supply of fruits, fowls and vegetables was hastily secured, and bidding adieu to his old friends, he returned on board, and in a short time the bark was running merrily down the coast with the strong night breeze off the land. She touched at all the usual slave-marts, including Gaboon, Ambriz, etc., and found nothing but refuse lots or empty barracoons, and finally brought up at Saint Paul de Loanda, in lower Guinea. At most he could find but some hundred and fifty or two hundred, and he wanted four or five hundred at the least. Captain Bazin sailed into the beautiful harbor of Loanda and cast anchor. Going on shore, he soon found the prospects no better than at the upper ports. Gangs were expected in a few weeks, and runners were sent out to hasten them on, etc., and the captain was urged, as before, to await their arrival. At that time Saint Paul de Loanda was a city of some twelve thousand inhabitants. It belonged to Portugal. Its principal exports were ivory, palm-oil, beeswax, and slaves. It had the appearance of decay.

In 1854, two years after this, Livingstone arrived at Saint Paul from his long journey across the continent. He states that "in the year 1839 [thirteen years before the arrival of the *Caribbee*] Mr. Gabriel, the British commissioner for the suppression of the slave-trade, saw thirty-seven slave-ships lying in this harbor waiting for their cargoes, under the protection of the guns of the forts. At that time slavers had to wait many months at a time for a human freight, and a certain sum per head was paid to the government for all that were exported." Captain Bazin decided to wait but a single week. Meantime everything was put in order on board—the rigging was set up, water butts were filled, etc. The crew were allowed holidays on shore. Some trading was done for ivory, and the bark painted outside two coats of rather a light lead-color. At the end of the week the runners returned but brought "no favorable advices." The captain learned that farther down the coast of Benguela the prospects were equally poor. What was to be done? Was he to return to Cuba without his freight? Hardly. He and his partners had evidently counted the cost and laid their plans well. If one continent could not offer a full freight, another must. He was not to be balked of his prey. He collected what supplies he wanted that could be procured and sent them on board. These mostly came, as afterward in Livingstone's time, from Pungo Adongo, a hacienda in the interior not far distant. Having made his adieu, he went

on board. Weighing anchor and hoisting sails at nightfall, he soon left the harbor of Saint Paul far behind, and the next day was in the southeast trades with a fair wind and current, steering northwest for the equator. Looking at a proper map, you will see that the South Atlantic current, after leaving the Cape of Good Hope, passes at some distance from the coast of Lower Guinea in a northwesterly direction to the equator, and northward, thence along the equator, varying somewhat, across the Atlantic to the mouth of the Amazon. This last is called the equatorial current.

Along this current, is the southeast trade-winds. The *Caribbee* was now pursuing her way.

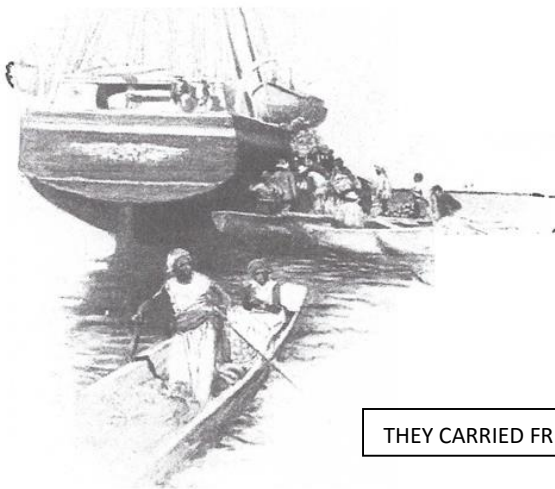
At the mouth of the great river Amazon, and immediately south of the equator, separated on the south by Rio Para, lies the island of Johannes; north and northwest of Johannes lie several smaller islands. Directly north, and distant some thirty miles, lies the largest of these. They all belong to the empire of Bruil, and are nominally under its jurisdiction. The largest at the time was supposed to contain several thousand inhabitants. They were mostly mixed blood—Indian, negro and Portuguese—and the Portuguese language was current. They had a so-called native king and queen, and generally managed their own affairs. The government had long had all it could do, and more, to keep in subjection the various tribes in its immediate territory, and to care for these outlying islands, as the various rebellions and insurrections, even in the city of Para itself, well attested. These people were semibarbarians, indolent and peaceable. Their limited wants were amply met by the natural and mostly spontaneous products of a fertile soil and tropical climate. The manioc, breadfruit, cocoanut, banana, yam, pineapple, and various other fruits and vegetables, flourish in the most luxuriant profusion. The islands were but rarely visited, being out of the usual track of commerce, and producing but little worthy of export to a distant market. A voyage to the great river itself was, at that time, a rare occurrence. It was, however, to the largest of these islands that the prow of the *Caribbee* and the hopes of her commander were now directed. There can be no doubt that in some of his former voyages to Brazil Captain Bazin had become somewhat familiar with this island and its inhabitants. At all events, he needed no other pilot to steer the swift and beautiful bark into the peaceful and nearly landlocked harbor of its principal town. She had made the voyage of forty-five hundred miles in a little more than sixteen days.

The island was indeed a paradise. Its climate was tempered by the ocean breeze. Here might the tired and worn souls and bodies of many who toil and strive and dig and delve on the barren hills of the north temperate zone repose in peace and plenty, and, freed from cares, find an earthly rest—yea, this poor life itself is luxury instead of a heavy and constantly increasing burden often gladly laid down before its allotted period. The harbor covered a space of some forty or fifty acres. It was nearly pear-shaped, with the entrance at the stem. The principal villa was at the head of the harbor opposite the entrance and facing the east. Back of the village, at the distance of half a mile, was a gently sloping ridge crowned with perennial verdure of the ceiba, mahogany, and live-oak, with occasional specimens of rosewood and other ornamental woods. A fair, smooth beach of bluish sand intermixed with fine gravel nearly surrounded the harbor. Above the beach the land rose gently for the space of several rods to the height of seven or eight feet. Here it formed a level platform, perhaps as many rods to the height of seven or eight feet in width and half a mile in length, conforming to the curve of the beach. On this platform the village was built, consisting of a single row of small dwellings, many, of course, being mere huts, extending the whole length of the platform. Back of the village the ground fell off to a flat, moist, alluvial interval extending to the slope of the ridge. This middle

distance included the gardens and cultivated land of such as cared to grow those vegetables or fruits which were not spontaneous, or were wanted in the highest degree of perfection. Here grew their limited supply of sugar-cane and cotton, and their abundance of bananas, pines, manioc, and tobacco. The slopes of the hills produced coffee, limes, oranges, nuts, etc. On the gently sloping bank in front of the village grew, at intervals of from fifteen to twenty feet, the stately towering palms, whose straight, clean boles were often from sixty to eighty feet in height, with massive crowns of immense leaves and clusters of refreshing and sustaining fruits. Here were large awnings of cocoanut-fibre mattings, shielding and sheltering their hammocks. Drawn up on the smooth beach below were their periaguas. The belt of trees nearly encircled the harbor, and was vividly reproduced and extended on the adjacent waters. These waters, clear and cool, where one could see down many a fathom, were teeming with fish easily caught.

Such were the principal village and its surroundings. Other villages were at no great distance. It was into the very midst of this paradise that the serpent now appeared, even the great anaconda. The great river could produce its thousands of immense caymans and constrictors, any one of which a single man or beast would satisfy for the time being. But this monster must needs swallow hundreds to be fairly gorged and satiated.

The *Caribbee* arrived just after noon-day and cast its anchor in the harbor. The natives at first were somewhat timid, but after a short time a few of them pushed off and ventured alongside. More soon followed. They carried fruits and vegetables, which were gladly received and liberally paid for in gay prints and bright trinkets, with which even many so-called civilized people are well pleased. They soon departed for the shore to exhibit their newly gained treasures to admiring friends, who were hastily informed that there were plenty for all. There on the smooth sandy beach, in the grateful shade, were assembled nearly the whole population of the village. It was to them a most unusual sight. The bark, like some showy female, was dressed in all her flags and challenged the admiration of all beholders as she rode quietly at her anchor in the placid water of the lovely bay, over which the now declining sun shed a soft and mellow light, and cast seaward the lengthening shadows of the stately palms. This setting brought no boom of cannon to break the peaceful repose or terrify the timid throng on shore. The time had not come for the serpent to show his fangs; he had but just begun to fascinate his prey. The captain had sent word to the king that on the morrow he would pay his respects in person, and after a luxurious repast on the foods and fruits, in an hour or so



THEY CARRIED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

all was quiet on the bark. A double watch was set, as usual, the lights were put out, and the shades of night veiled the waters of the lovely bay. The next morning the captain and mate donned their best clothes, went on shore, and paid visits to the king, queen and principal chiefs. They did not omit to make highly acceptable presents and explain the object of their visit: the captain had come to seek a new source of trade and supplies of their valuable products—cabinet and dye woods, coffee, cassava, fruits, etc.—and to encourage the people to enter

largely into

their production.

Whatever they could produce, he would purchase and pay them large prices for, and would furnish them with any kind or variety

of goods they might desire; he was much gratified at the prospect, and there was no manner of doubt but reciprocal trade would greatly stimulate production and be to the advantage of both parties; and as he had been the first to visit them for this purpose, he wished to secure the entire trade of this island for himself. He would make it an object to the king personally to grant him exclusive privileges. He had been too long in the trade not to be able to converse fluently in the Portuguese language, and the renowned "Sam Slick" himself could not have more fascinated and deluded the "Novas" than did our captain that poor simple islander.

In conclusion, the people generally were invited to go on board and trade for such commodities as they required, taking along such as they had to dispose of. They went, and were well treated and liberally dealt with. A most favorable impression was made. The captain received in return such articles as they had—hats, hammocks, cloths of grass, shells, a few bags of coffee, fruits, etc. In a very few days, from constant intercourse, they became well acquainted, and the people were much pleased with their liberal and generous visitors.

Then the king, queen, and royal family were invited on board, where they partook of a fine collation, which included some old wines of rare quality, and were dismissed with more presents. In return the captain, officers, and crew were invited on shore to a grand feast and fandango on the following afternoon. They went, leaving a few only in charge of the vessel, and of course had a gala time. Thus far all had progressed favorably. Nothing had occurred to produce ill-feeling or excite suspicion. The climax was near. The third day after, the king, queen, royal family, chiefs, and people were invited on board. They had previously been treated somewhat sparingly with liquors. In the mean time all the water-casks were filled and mostly stowed in the lower hold aft, together with all the stores and goods on a platform resting on the keelson. A very large supply of irons had been taken aboard at Cardenas. These were mostly ordinary handcuffs or bracelets, and screw-eye bolts, about ten inches long, made of three-quarter iron, a screw at the lower end and an inch and a half eye on the upper. During the voyage out the crew had spliced beackets of rope an inch in diameter into the eyes.

These beackets were about nine inches across on the inside, having sufficient room for the arms of two persons, and, being pliable, would afford some play and ease to the arms. Ring-bolts, all of iron, as were generally used, were unnecessarily cruel. Small holes were bored in the lower and temporary decks, into which the bolts were screwed about three inches. The first row was a foot and a half from the side of the vessel, the bolts about two and a half feet apart, extending fore and aft. The next row was nearly three feet from the first. Some of the bolts were placed nearer for those who were young or small, and thus all the space was occupied on both decks. The trading had been proceeding on the upper deck and a large supply of the various articles of food laid in, and now all was in reediness [sic]. The afternoon of the entertainment had arrived. Two large puncheons were placed on the upper deck and the heads knocked in, and about twenty-five or more gallons of strong rum put into each puncheon, also a hundredweight or so of sugar and a bushel of cut limes; to these were added a specific quantity of a certain

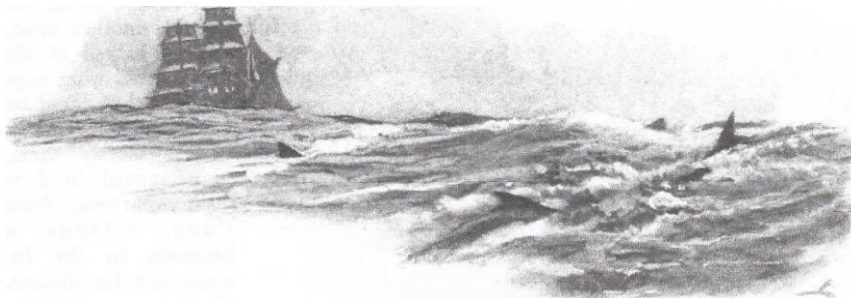


THEY HAVE A SO-CALLED KING



TWEEN DECKS OF THE SLAVER

drug which would presently produce a prolonged stupefaction. The between and lower decks were swept clean, and all was in readiness for the company. They came—king, queen, royal family, chiefs, and people—to the number of about fifteen hundred. As fast as they came on board they were plied with the drugged punch; many soon became stupid or helpless and were placed below to make room for others. When they were all on board and most of them stupefied, they were seized, ironed, and passed below. The first row were seated with the knees drawn up close to the side of the vessel, one arm put through the becket, and irons clapped on. In the next row another arm was put through the same becket, one bolt and becket thus answering for two persons. It will be remembered that the main-hatchway was partitioned in the middle, and the after part enclosed between decks, giving a separate connection with the temporary deck. A wide and short gang-board was placed from the after side of the hatchway to the temporary deck, well slanting, and the captives destined for the lower deck were placed on this and slid down, when they were packed and secured. The between-decks was packed full with nearly eight hundred, and about five hundred were on the temporary deck. There were still two hundred or more that they had neither room nor irons for. They might have been dropped into the periegues [sic] and left to find their way ashore when they came to their senses. It was too late; the periegues had been cut adrift as soon as they began to secure the captives. Now the anchor was tripped, sail hoisted, and the *Slaver Caribbee*, as she was afterward called, was miles away before the last were secured. Many of those remaining were now coming to their senses. Do you ask what became of them? “They were shot and thrown overboard;” such was the record.



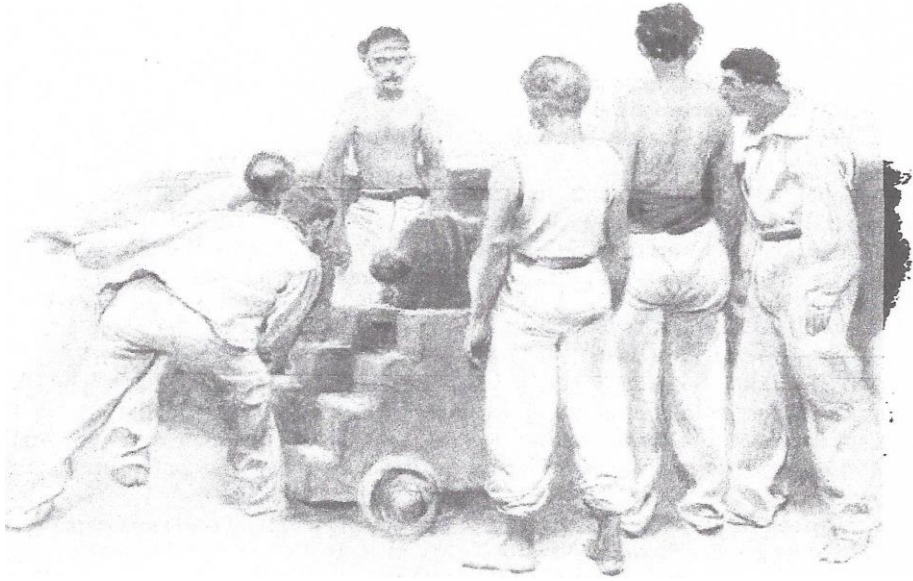
THE REST WERE SHOT AND THROWN OVERBOARD

The iron gratings were put on and a portable casing placed around the hatchway and made secure in case of a gale, and the *Caribbee* stood off the land for about one hundred miles, with a strong breeze and current. She was presently on the port tack, and after passing the “doldrums” was in the northeast trades. The captives did not fully realize their desperate condition until the second day. Then they made frantic efforts to break loose, and their despairing cries were terrible. All their efforts were vain, and vainly were they warned to keep quiet. Something must be done. Holes were bored

in the upper deck in various places and small quantities of boiling water poured down. Their efforts and lack of food had well-nigh exhausted their strength. They now became more quiet, and thus were finally reduced to submission. The third day they were partially fed. A large quantity of bananas were stripped of their rinds, placed in buckets, and a portion of the crew detailed for the duty. All were supplied with a ration, and thus they were fed from day to day on those fruits and vegetables that were most easily prepared and distributed. When these were gone, they were fed on rice. Water was also supplied in like manner. A force-pump had been put on board with a small hose, and both decks were washed fore and aft daily, the water and filth being allowed to escape near the after-hatch into the lower hold, and from thence was pumped out. The freight was too valuable to allow any sanitary measures to be neglected that were possible under the straitened circumstances. The *Caribbee* was forced with all the sail she could carry, and on the fourth day, at nightfall, was well up in the latitude of Martinique. The voyage of nearly twenty-seven hundred miles Captain Bazin hoped to make in not over ten days. A sharp lookout had been kept night and day; several distant sails had been seen, but none that caused any alarm. In the afternoon of the fifth day a sail was discovered off the lee bow, standing to the eastward. When she came into full view, she was made out to be their natural foe—a British cruiser. Captain Bazin hauled his wind a couple of points, and the cruiser, finding she was to fall short, went in stays and stood also on the port tack. It was of no use; before dark she was “hull down,” and did not appear again.

The bark was now put away, with the wind abeam nearly, and at noon of the sixth day she was north of the Virgin Isles, sailing free. She was kept on her course—west-northwest.

Just after noon of the seventh day a suspicious sail was descried to leeward. As she came nearer she was seen to be a cruiser standing northwest. It was presently seen that she was a very fast sailer. Everything was made ready for a sharp chase. The long nines [cannon] were hoisted on deck, with their carriages, and mounted. Not that a fight could be made, but with the hope of crippling the cruiser if she came too near. She was a large brig and came on rapidly. Never before had the *Caribbee met* with such an antagonist, but Captain Bazin kept her at a distance by standing more northerly. She was recognized by the mate as being the fastest sailer of her class in the British navy. At night she was about six miles astern and somewhat to the leeward. When it was dark the bark's course was changed to due west. A sharp lookout was kept, but no lights appeared. The wind was rather light and variable. At daylight the brig was discovered to windward, not more than two miles distant. She had been able to pull up with a favoring breeze that was not felt by the bark. As day came on the wind increased. The bark was again put away a couple of points, but the brig was too near. The bark's trim had become somewhat imperfect, and the long nines were wheeled aft to the taffrail. The vessels was new, strong, and stiff; would sawing the beams limber her and help her speed? It might be tried, and it was tried. The oakum-hooks were got out and applied. The bark had been so long in the tropics that the deck's seams were not entirely tight, and the oakum was easily pulled out, saws run down, and the beams sawed partly off in several places. The lower-deck beams were also “eased” at the hatchway and forward in a few places from below. The result was soon apparent. The wind increased, and the bark fairly “flew before the gale.” The long nines had been well and carefully loaded. The brig, at her nearest, had been but a mile and a half distant. As soon as she was found to be falling astern she fired a gun. The bark did not heave to. Presently a shot struck the water just to windward.



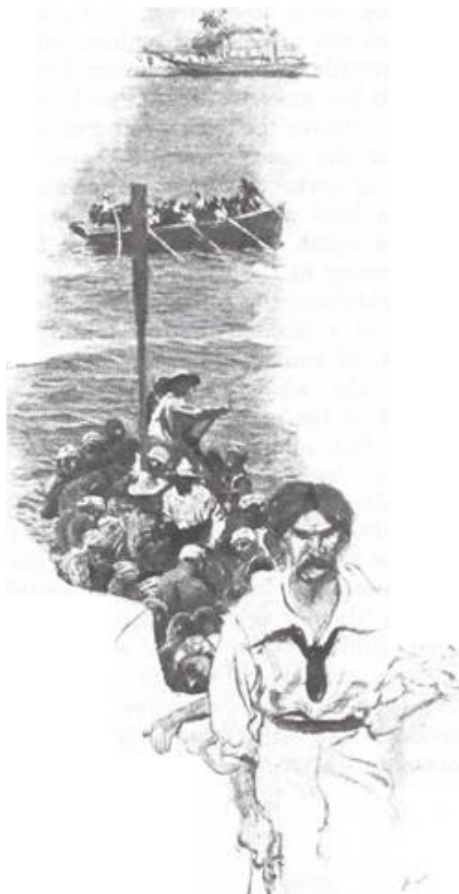
THE MATE ELEVATED AND SIGHTED THE GUN

Captain Bazin now directed the mate to try his hand, and the bark was put away to give the range. The mate elevated and sighted the gun and gave the word. The match was applied, and the shot struck the water just under the brig's weather-bow. The second gun was sighted with a little more elevation. The shot went through the brig's foresail, cut the foretopgallant-halyards, and did other slight damage to the rigging. Meantime the bark had ranged ahead, and leaving the brig to repair damages, she was again put on her course. Breakfast was now served to the crew, and the captives were fed and watered for the day. The brig repaired damages and continued the chase, but was far astern, and at nightfall her hull could just be seen. The wind was rather light during the night. The bark had crossed the Windward Passage and was hastening to her port.

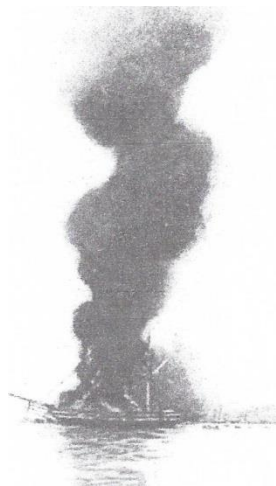
Next morning nothing was seen of the brig, but she was believed to be still in chase, and every effort was made to increase the distance. It was now the ninth day.

Various sails were seen, but nothing suspicious. At noon the bark was about one hundred miles east of Nuevitas. On the morning of the tenth day she was seen from the highlands and her presence telegraphed by flags to Cardenas. There everything was being made ready. The wind was more favorable. At noon she was but little more than one hundred miles distant, and if the wind held, Captain Bazin expected to arrive by ten o'clock P.M. He was not disappointed. The wind held, and shortly after ten he anchored off the town. Everything was let go by the run. The lighters were soon alongside, and the Spaniard immediately came on board. The situation was explained in a few words. Plenty of help was at hand. The captives from both holds were got out and put on board the lighters as speedily as possible. There was no striking of irons. A single stroke of the knife liberated two. As fast as they were landed they were hurried off in gangs to various plantations in

the interior. Those who were weak and feeble were placed in mule and donkey carts and [they] followed. In a little more than three hours they were all out, and soon the last gang was sent off; and now the guns, ivory, arms, charts, men's chests, and whatever could be got out easily and at once were put on board the lighters, a few sails cut from their lashings, cable shipped, the bark taken in tow by several boats, borne out to the bar, and set on fire in several places. Very soon she was a solid mass of flame from jib-boom to taffrail, from truck to keelson, and a dense black cloud of smoke rolled over the town. Soon after daybreak the brig appeared in the offing. Her commander at once took in the situation, and presently his departure. All that remained of the famous slaver *Caribbee* was a smoking, blackened hulk. She had landed about twelve hundred captives. "They were considered an extra lot and averaged one thousand each." So said a commission merchant from Matanzas; and also that "the owners cleared one million dollars." Captain John Locket carried six of the crew to New York. They told him they "received seven thousand dollars each." They ranked high and were paid accordingly.



LIGHTERS WERE SOON ALONGSIDE



SOLID MASS OF FLAME

NOTE.-The author [1817 - 1909] of this article himself witnessed the building of the Caribbee at Calais, Maine, in 1852, and watched her sail out of the home port. He is related to the Porters, for whom the vessel was built by James Hinds, and every fact in this narrative was obtained and verified by him at the time. - EDITOR.