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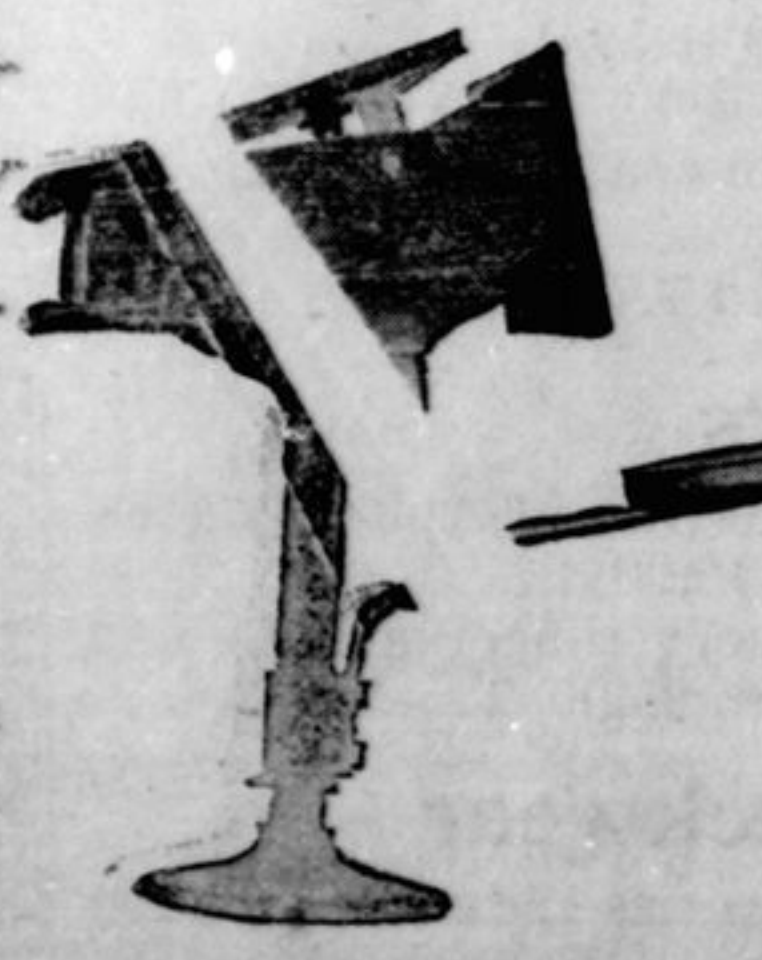
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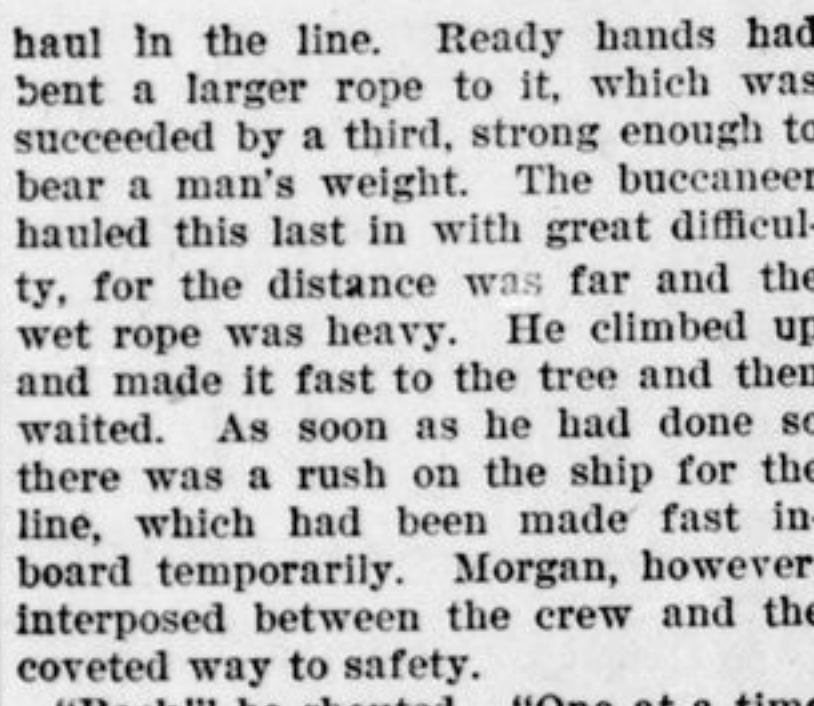
**SIR HENRY MORGAN, BUCCANEER**

By **CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY,**  
 Author of "The Southerners," "For Love of Country," "The Grip of Honor," Etc.

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The whole ship's company stared after him, spontaneously cheering and yelling cries of encouragement in spite of the fact that he could not hear a single sound in the roaring, raging seas. Morgan himself tended the line, skillfully paying it out when necessary. In a few moments, although the time seemed hours to the watchers, the feet of Teach touched the shore, and, although the terrific undertow of the wave that had dropped him there almost bore him back again, yet by a superhuman exertion he managed to stagger forward, and the next moment they saw him fall prostrate on the sand.

Had he fainted or given way? They looked at him with bated breath, but after a little space they saw him rise slowly to his feet and stagger inland toward a low point where a lofty palm tree was writhing and twisting in the fierce wind. He was too good a seaman not instantly to see what was required of him, for, waving his hand toward the ship, he at once began to



haul in the line. Ready hands had bent a larger rope to it, which was succeeded by a third, strong enough to bear a man's weight. The buccaneer hauled this last in with great difficulty, for the distance was far and the wet rope was heavy. He climbed up and made it fast to the tree and then waited. As soon as he had done so there was a rush on the ship for the line, which had been made fast inboard temporarily. Morgan, however, interposed between the crew and the coveted way to safety.

"Back!" he shouted. "One at a time and the order as I appoint! You, L'Olonnois, and you, and you," he cried, indicating certain men upon whom he could depend. "Go in succession, then haul a heavier rope ashore. We'll put a traveler with a bo's'n's chair on it and send the abbees and these priests first of all."

There was something about that man that enticed the abbees, whether they would or no. His orders were promptly obeyed and intelligently carried out by L'Olonnois and his men, who first went ashore. A heavy hawser was dragged through the surf and made fast high up on the sturdy palm tree. On it they rigged a traveler and the chair, and then the priests were brought forward from the cabin. They were stricken with fear, but renewed their courage at the sight of the calmness of the abbees.

"Hornigold," said Morgan, "are you still faithful to me in this crisis?"

"I shall obey you in all things—now," answered the boatswain.

"Swear it."

"By the old buccaneer faith," said the one eyed, again adding the significant adverb, "now."

For a wonder, the captain paid no attention to the emphasis on the word "now."

"Can you keep your pistols dry?"

"I can wrap them in oilskin and thrust them in my jacket."

"Go to the shore, then," said Morgan, "and receive this woman and these priests. March them away from the men to yonder clump of palms and guard them as you would your life. If any man approach you or them for any purpose shoot him dead without a word. I'll see that the others have no weapons. D'ye understand?"

"Aye, and shall obey."

"Go!"

The boatswain swung himself into the chair, and the men on the other end of the traveler pulled him to the other shore, none the worse for his wetting. He opened his jacket, found the weapons dry, and waved his hand as a sign to Morgan that he was all right.

"Now, which of you will go first?" asked Morgan.

He turned instinctively to the tall abbees. She indicated first one and then another among the poor captives, and as they refused she turned to Morgan and, with a grave dignity, said in Spanish, of which he was a master, that she would go first to show the way and then the others would be in better heart to follow. She sat down on the boatswain's chair, which was simply a bit of wood held like the seat of a swing in a triangle of rope, made the sign of the cross and waved her hand. She was hauled ashore in an instant, with nothing worse to complain of than a drenching by the waves. By Morgan's direction she walked past the clump of palms which had been indicated.

The Spanish priests took their turn after these reached the sand and the crew were sent ashore.

Morgan was careful to indicate each one's turn, so that he preserved a balance between the more reputable and the more degraded members of the crew both on ship and ashore. Among the last to go were the maroon and De Lussan. They had both received instructions, one to station himself at the palm tree, the other to cover the hawser where it ran along the shore before it entered the water. These precautionary orders which he had given were necessary, for when the last man had been hauled ashore and Morgan stepped into the chair for his turn one of the infuriated buccaneers, watching his chance, seized his jackknife, the only weapon that he had, for Morgan had been careful to make the men leave their arms on the ship, and made a rush for the rope to cut it and leave the captain to his fate. But De Lussan shot him dead and before the others could make a move Morgan stepped safely on the sand.

"That was well done," he cried, turning to the Frenchman.

"Ah, mon capitaine," answered the other, "it was not from affection, but because you are necessary to us."

"Whatever it may be," returned the old man, "I owe much to you, and, scuttle me, I'll not forget it."

The Frenchman, indifferent to Morgan's expressions of gratitude, shrugged his shoulders, turned away and made no reply.

The transportation of so many people across the slender line had taken a long time. The sun, just beginning to break through the riven clouds, was near its setting; night would soon be upon them. They must hurry with what was yet to be done. Morgan sent Teach and the Brazilian back to the ship with instructions to gather up enough weapons to arm the crew and send them ashore. This was promptly done. Indeed, communication was not difficult now that the force of the gale was abating. The ship had been badly battered, but still held together and would hold unless the storm came up again. As the arms came ashore Morgan served them out to those men whom he considered most reliable, and, after throwing out a strong guard around the band, the rest sought shelter around huge driftwood fires which had been kindled by the use of flint and steel. There was hardly a possibility they would be observed in that deserted land, but still it was wise to take precaution.

The buccaneers were hungry and thirsty, but they were forced to do without everything until morning, when they could get all they wanted from the ship. So they tightened their belts and disposed themselves about the fires as best they could to get what rest they might.

Morgan and the officers drew apart and consulted long and earnestly over the situation. They could never make the ship seaworthy again. To build a smaller one out of her timbers would be the work of months, and when it was finished it could not possibly carry the whole crew. To march westward toward the isthmus meant to encounter terrific hardships for days; their presence would speedily become known, and they would be constantly menaced or attacked by troops from the heavily garrisoned places like Porto Bello and Cartagena. Back of them a short distance away lay La Guayra. It could be taken by surprise, Morgan urged, and easily captured. If they started to march westward the Indians would apprise the Spaniards of their presence and they would have to fight their way to the Pacific. If they took La Guayra, then the viceroy, with the treasure of his palace and the opulent city of Caracas, would be at their mercy. They could ravage the two towns, seize the first ship that came to the roadstead and make their way to the isthmus safely and speedily. As to the treasure on the galleon, the buccaneer captain proposed to unload it and bury it in the sand and after they had captured La Guayra it would be easy to get it back again.

Morgan's counsel prevailed, and his was the resolution to which they came. The council of war broke up thereafter, and those not told off to watch with the guards went to sleep near the fires. Morgan, under the guardianship of the faithful Black Dog, threw himself upon the ground to catch a few hours' rest.

The next morning the wind had died away and the sea was fairly calm. The men swam out to the galleon, found her still intact, though badly strained, and by means of boats and rafts, working with persistent energy, succeeded in landing and burying the treasure under the very palm tree which held the rope that had given them salvation.

Morgan's plan was an excellent one, the best that could be suggested in the straits they then were, and it received the hearty assent of all the men. It took them all day to land the treasure and make their other preparations, which included the manufacture of several rude scaling ladders, pieces of timber with crosspieces nailed upon them, which could be used in surmounting the walls of the town. In the evening the order of march was arranged and their departure set for the morrow. They had saved their treasure, they had food in plenty and with dry clothes and much they began to take a more cheerful view of life. They were fairly content once more.

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ure, they had food in plenty and with dry clothes and much they began to take a more cheerful view of life. They were fairly content once more.

The next day, in the afternoon—for he desired to approach the town at nightfall—Morgan gave the order to advance. He was as much of a soldier as a sailor and sent ahead a party of choice spirits under Teach, while the main body followed some distance behind. As the shades of evening descended a messenger from the advance guard came back with the news that a party of travelers had been seen coming down the mountain; that they comprised a half dozen troopers, a number

of slaves, a heavily laden pack train and two women.

Teach had stationed his men under the trees at a bend of the road around which the travelers had to pass, and he awaited Morgan's orders. Taking a detachment of the most reliable men, with Velsers and Hornigold, and bidding the other officers and men to stand where they were until he sent word, Morgan and those with him ran rapidly forward until they came to the ambuscade which young Teach had artfully prepared. He and his had scarcely time to dispose themselves for concealment before a soldier came riding carelessly down the road. Waiting until the man had passed him a short distance and until the other unsuspecting travelers were fairly abreast the lies in wait, whom he had charged on no account to move until he gave the word, Morgan stepped out into the open and called. The buccaneers instantly followed him.

As the soldier saw these fierce looking men spring before him out of the darkness he cried aloud. The next moment he was shot dead by Morgan himself. At the same instant a volley rang out at contact range, and every man in the party fell to the ground. Some were killed, others only wounded. All of them except Alvarado were injured in some way. He struck spurs into his horse when he heard the cry of Fadrique and the shot. The surprised barb plunged forward, was hit by half a dozen bullets, fell to the ground in a heap and threw his rider over his head. The Spaniard scrambled to his feet, whipped out his sword, lunged forward and drove his blade into the breast of old Velsers. The next instant a dozen weapons flashed over his head. One rang upon his steel casque; another crashed against the polished breastplate that he wore. He cut out again in the darkness and once more fished his weapon.

Women's screams rose above the tumult. Beating back the swords which menaced him, although he was reeling from the blows which he had received, Alvarado strove to make his way toward Donna Mercedes when he was seized in the darkness from behind.

"Kill him!" cried a voice in English, which Alvarado and Mercedes both understood perfectly. "He's the only one alive."

"Nay," cried another voice, stronger and sterner, "save him. We'll question him later. Did any escape?"

"Not one."

"Are there any horses alive?"

Laying the treasure



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"Two or three?"

"Bring them hither. Now back to the rest. Then we can show a light and see what we have captured. Teach, lead on. Let no harm come to the women."

"Aye, aye," answered another voice out of the darkness, and a third voice growled out:

"Hadn't we better make sure that none are alive to tell the tale?"

"Of course; a knife for the wounded," answered the stern voice, "and bear a hand."

Greatly surprised and unable to comprehend anything but that his men had been slaughtered and no harm had as yet befallen his charges, Alvarado, whose arms had been bound to his side, found himself dragged along in the wake of his captors, one or two of whom, mounted on the unwarmed horses, with the two women between them, rode rapidly down the road.

**CHAPTER XV.**

ONE hundred yards or so beyond the place of the ambush the road dropped sharply over the last cliff to the narrow strand which led to the west wall of La Guayra, distant half a mile away. They had all been under the deep shadow of the thick trees overhanging the way until this instant, but in the faint light cast by the moon just risen Alvarado could see that a great body of people were congregated before him on the road. Who they were and what they were he could not surmise. He was not long left in doubt, however, for the same voice whose commanding tones had caused his life to be spared now called for lights. The demand was obeyed with a promptness that bespoke fear, indeed, or discipline of the sternest, and soon the captives found themselves in a circle of lurid light sent forth by a number of blazing torches. The illumination revealed to Alvarado as villainous and terrible looking a body of men as he had ever seen. The first glance convinced him that they were not Spanish brigands or robbers. He was too young to have had dealings with the buccaneers of the past generation, but he realized that if any such remained on this side of the earth they must be like these men who surrounded him. He wasted no time in surmises, however, for after the first swift comprehensive glance his eyes sought Mercedes. She sat her horse free and uninjured, apparently, for which he thanked God. She was leaning forward over her saddle and staring in bewilderment and surprise at the scene and confusion before her.

"Donna Mercedes," cried Alvarado, turning himself about in spite of his bonds and the restraint his immediate captors endeavored to put upon him, "are you safe—unhurt?"

"Safe," answered the girl. "And thou?"

"Well but for these bonds."

"God be thanked! Who are these men?"

"I know not, but—"

"Oh, sir," interrupted Senora Aguida, recovering her voice at the sound of the Spanish tongue. "What does this mean? Save us!"

"Senora," said that same sharp voice, but this time speaking in the Spanish tongue, as a tall man, hat in hand, urged his horse forward, "fear nothing; you shall be protected. And you, senora. Do I not have the honor of addressing Donna Mercedes de Lara?"

"That is my name," answered the girl haughtily. "Who are you? Why have you shot my people and seized me prisoner?"

"For love of you, Mistress Mercedes." "Just heaven! Who are you, I say?" cried the girl at this startling answer, turning in surprise and terror to look upon his countenance.

There was something familiar in the man's face that called up a vague recollection which she strove to master. "Who are you?" she cried again.

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