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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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A stern fight was being waged in the square, whither all the combatants had congregated, the buccaneers driven there, the Spaniards following. The disciplined valor and determination of the Spanish, however, were slowly causing the buccaneers to give ground. No Spanish soldiers that ever lived could have defeated the old time buccaneers, but these were different, and their best men had been killed with Teach and L'Ollonnois. The opportune arrival of Morgan and De Lussan, however, put heart in their men. Under the direction of these two redoubtable champions they began to make stouter resistance.

The battle might have gone in their favor if, in the very nick of time, the viceroys himself and the remainder of the troops had not come up. They had not thought it necessary to come on foot since the surprise had been effected, and the viceroys rightly divined they would have more advantage if mounted. Choosing the very freshest horses, therefore, he had put fifty of the best soldiers upon them and had led them up on a gallop, bidding the others follow on with speed. The fighting had gradually concentrated before the church and in the eastern fort, where Brazilliano had his headquarters. The arrival of the horsemen decided the day. Morgan and De Lussan, fighting desperately in the front ranks with splendid courage, were overthrown. De Lussan was wounded, fell and was trampled to death by the Spanish horsemen, and Morgan was taken prisoner, alive and unharmed. When he saw that all was lost he had thrown himself upon the enemy, seeking a death in the fight which, by the viceroys' orders, was denied him. Many of the other buccaneers also were captured alive—indeed, the viceroys desired as many of them saved as possible. He could punish a living man in a way to make him feel something of the torture he had inflicted, and for this reason those who surrendered had been spared for the present.

Indeed, after the capture of Morgan the remaining buccaneers threw down their arms and begged for mercy. They might as well have appealed to a stone wall for that as to their Spanish captors. A short shrift and a heavy punishment were promised them in the morning. Meanwhile, after a brief struggle, the east fort was taken by assault, and Brazilliano was wounded and captured, with most of his men. The town was in the possession of the Spanish at last. It was all over in a quarter of an hour.

Instantly the streets were filled with a mob of men, women and children, whose lives had been spared, bewildered by the sudden release from their imminent peril and giving praise to God and the viceroys and his men. As soon as he could make himself heard in the confusion De Lara inquired for Alvarado.

"Where is he?" he cried. "And De Tobar?"

"My lord," answered one of the party, "we were directed to take the west fort, and those two cavaliers were in the lead, but the pressure of the pirates was so great that we were stopped and have not seen them since. They were ahead of us."

"De Cordova," cried the old man to one of his colonels, "take charge of the town. Keep the women and children and inhabitants together where they are for the present. Let your soldiery patrol the streets and search every house from top to bottom. Let no one of these ruffianly scoundrels escape. Take them alive. We'll deal with them in the morning. Fetch Morgan to the west fort after us. Come, gentlemen, we shall find our comrades there, and pray God the ladies are still unharmed."

A noble old soldier was De Lara. He had not sought his daughter until he had performed his full duty in taking the town.

The anteroom of the fort they found in a state of wild confusion. The dead bodies of the sentry and the others the two cavaliers had cut down on the stairs were ruthlessly thrust aside, and the party of gentlemen, with the viceroys in the lead, poured into the guard-room. There, on his back, was stretched the hideous body of the half breed where he had fallen. There, farther away, the unfortunate De Tobar lay, gasping for breath, yet making no out-

cry. He was leaning on his arm and staring across the room, with anguish in his face not due to the wound he had received, but a sight which broke his heart.

"Alas, De Tobar!" cried the viceroys. "Where is Mercedes?"

He followed the glance of the dying man. There at the other side of the room lay a prostrate body, and over it bent a moaning, sobbing figure. It was Mercedes.

"Senorita," cried one of the officers, "Don Felipe here is dying! He would speak with you."

Mercedes suffered herself to be led to where De Tobar lay upon the floor. One of his comrades had taken his head on his knee. The very seconds of his life were numbered. Lovely in her grief, Mercedes knelt at his side, a great pity in her heart. The viceroys stepped close to him.

"I thank you, too," she said. "Poor Don Felipe! He and you saved me, but at the expense of your lives. Would God you could have been spared!"

"Nay," gasped the dying man. "Thou lovest him. I watched thee. I heard thee call upon his name. Thou wert not for me, and so I die willingly. He is a noble gentleman. Would he might have won thee!"

The man trembled with the violent effort it cost him to speak. He gasped faintly and strove to smile. By an impulse for which she was ever after grateful she bent her head, slipped her arm around his neck, lifted him up and kissed him. In spite of his death agony at that caress he smiled up at her.

"Now," he murmured, "I die happy—content. You kissed—me—Mercedes!"

"He is dead," said the officer.

"God rest his soul, a gallant gentleman," said the viceroys, taking off his

me in his arms, which of you, my lords," she said, throwing back her head with superb pride, "would not have done the same? Don Felipe de Tobar is dead. He was a gallant gentleman, but I loved him not. My father, you will not part us now?"

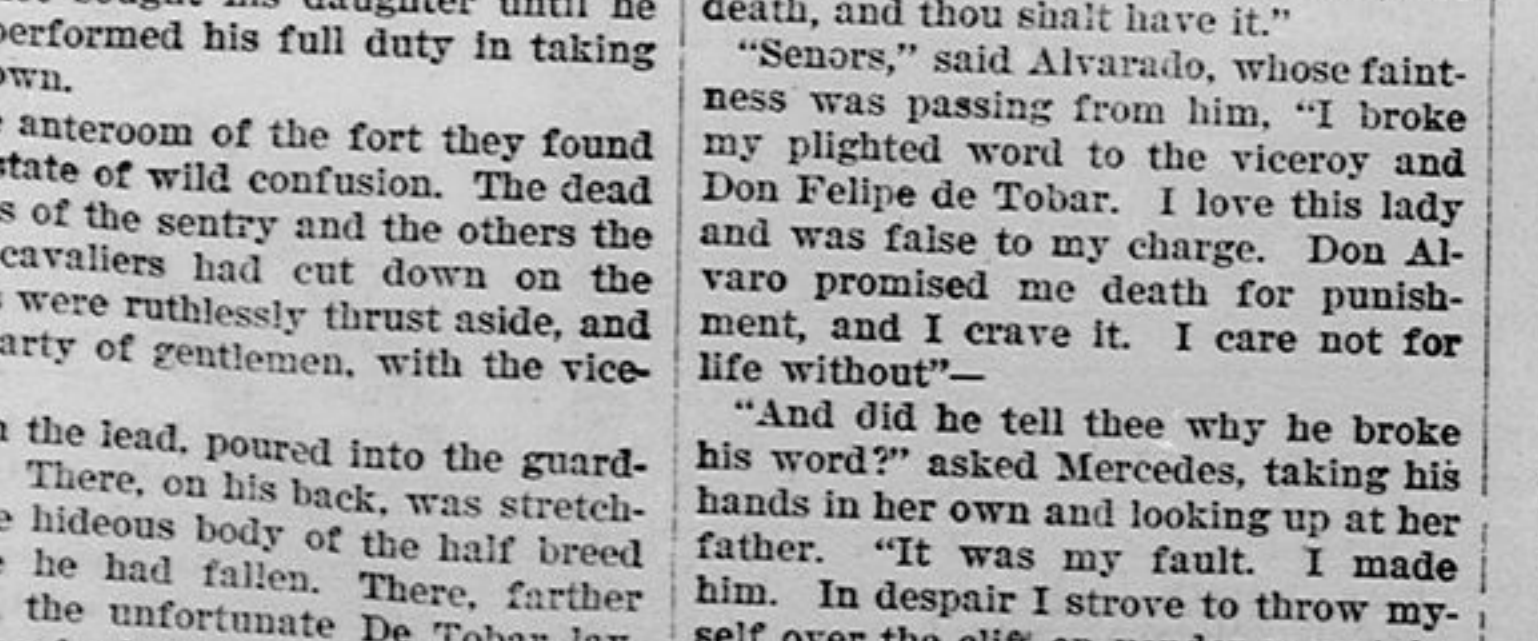
"No," said the old man, "I will not try. I care not now what his birth or lineage, he hath shown himself a man of noblest soul. You heard the wish of De Tobar. It shall be so. This is the betrothal of my daughter, gentlemen. Art satisfied, captain? She is noble enough, she hath lineage and race enough, for both of you. My interest with our royal master will secure you that patent of nobility you will adorn, for bravely have you won it."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE blow that struck Alvarado down had stunned him rather than anything else, and he would not have been put out of the combat so easily had it not been that he was exhausted by the hardships of those two terrible days through which he had just passed. He faced the viceroys, his hand in that of Mercedes, with a flush of pleasure and pride upon his face.

It was the consciousness of having won permission to marry the woman whom he adored and who loved him

Alvarado drove home the stroke



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"What's this?" cried the viceroys in great surprise. "Another pirate free and unbound? Seize him!"

Three or four of the men made a rush toward the old buccaneer, but with wonderful agility he avoided them and sprang to the side of Alvarado.

"Back, seniors!" he cried coolly and composedly, facing their uplifted points.

"My lord," said Alvarado, "bid these gentlemen withdraw their weapons. This man is under my protection."

"Who is he?"

"He I told you of, sir, who set me free, provided Donna Mercedes with a weapon, opened the gate for us—one Benjamin Hornigold."

"Thou traitor!" yelled that fierce, high voice on the outskirts of the crowd.

There was a sudden commotion. A sound man burst through the surprised cavaliers and threw himself, all fettered though he was, upon the sailor. He was without weapon or use of hand, yet he bit him savagely on the cheek.

The old buccaneer was an awful figure as he poured out a horrible torrent of curses and imprecations upon the sailor, grinding his teeth beneath his jammed lips, and even the iron

hearted sailor, striving to stanch the blood, involuntarily shrank back appalled before him.

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He bit him savagely on the cheek



"Senor," he cried, appealing to Alvarado, "I was to have protection?"

"You shall have it," answered the young soldier, himself shrinking away from the traitor, although by his treason he had so greatly benefited. "My lord, had it not been for this man I should still be a prisoner, the Lady Mercedes like those wretched women weeping in the streets. I promised him, in your name, protection, immunity from punishment and liberty to depart with as much of the treasure of the Porto Bello plate galleon, which was wrecked on the sands a few days ago, of which I told you, as he could carry."

"And you did not exceed your authority, Captain Alvarado. We condemn treason in whatsoever guise it doth appear, and we hate and loathe a traitor, but thy word is passed. It will be held inviolate as our own. You are free, knave. I will appoint soldiers to guard you, for should my men see you, knowing this, they would cut you down, and when occasion serves you may take passage in the first ship that touches here and go where you will. Nay, we will be generous, although you like you not. We are much indebted to you. We have profited by what you do despite. We would reward you. Ask me something that I may measure my obligation for a daughter's honor or saved if you can realize or feel what that may be."

"My lord, hear me," said the boat-swain quickly. "There be reasons and reasons for betrayals, and I have one. This man was my captain. I perilled my life a dozen times to save his. I followed him blindly upon a hundred terrible ventures. I lived but for his service. My soul—when I had a soul—was at his command. I loved him. He could ask of me anything that I could have given him and he would not have been refused."

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