

## Under the Brave Black Flag: Pirates and Mutineers

"TO LIVE AND DIE A PIRATE KING": A HISTORY OF PIRACY

The outlaw, society's outcast, operates outside of the community of man. Despised, feared, hunted, incarcerated when caught, he is at the same time sometimes admired, even respected, as the grand adventurer unafraid of risk and danger. Robin Hood, Jesse James, the famed Highwayman galloping down the road cape flying behind him are but a few images that evoke the hero-outlaw.

On the high seas, where the drama of human life is intensified, the outlaw evokes an even greater aura of romance. On deck, beneath a black flag adorned with skull-and-crossbones, the bronze-skinned adventurer looms in epic stature: a gold hoop through one ear, a red bandana about his head, a sword at his hip, and a black patch covering an eye—the pirate!

Historically, the pirate is probably as old as his brethren on dry land. As soon as man took to water, someone else followed to steal what he had caught or found. The Bible makes reference to pirates, referring to them as "princes of the sea," a curiously positive allusion to what could hardly be referred to as a princely occupation. As a youth, Julius Caesar was captured by pirates and held for ransom while other captives from his ship were bound back to back and drowned (see "Caesar Is Captured by Pirates," the next article). Later, as Emperor, Caesar subdued bands of pirates in his attempts to conquer Brittany. Plutarch tells how during civil strife, piracy flourished in ancient Rome. Pirates commanded great fleets with purple sails, silver oars, and expert pilots. They preyed upon merchant corn ships, and it finally took Pompey the Great and 500 ships to quell them. Apparently Rome's scourge of piracy was not heeded at first. Only when it became a persistent and great danger were steps finally taken against it. This fact was to be repeated through history.

Piracy flourished wherever sea commerce existed. Madagascar, the Red Sea, the northern European waters—all had their share of piracy. From 798 A.D. onward, mention is made of Viking pirates raiding coastal communities where they would rape (and sometimes marry) local women. Their seed was sown southward through the British Isles, down to Normandy; by 912 they reached as far south as Spain and the Mediterranean. In 1214 the Hanseatic League was formed by European trading cities, and it made a great effort to suppress robbery and plunder at sea. However, many of the men hired to fight piracy

themselves succumbed to the lure of adventure and fast money.

As a rule piracy has flourished throughout history during unsettled times, in times of war, and when governments were too weak or indifferent to take action. The mid-sixteenth century, for example, became a heyday for piracy. Queen Mary of England was more concerned with her soul than with the growing number of marauders along her shores. Trading communities banded together to fight and defend themselves against onslaughts from the sea. Later these same defenders took to plundering non-English ships that traveled near their coastlines. By the time of Queen Elizabeth I, piracy was widespread and nearly respectable. *Privateering* (a word first recorded in the thirteenth century), where private ships were commissioned by the government to plunder ships of hostile nations—abounded, so long as a portion of the plunder was turned over to the Crown.

Elizabeth treated pirates as a privileged class. Always exonerated, always escaping punishment, pirates were used by the Virgin Queen to build her navy and provide her with defense and manpower in her battles against Spain. Francis Drake, her favorite, sailed the *Golden Hind* and returned with a vast fortune from the Spanish settlements. His escapades were rewarded with knighthood.

Drake went on to lead the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and that event ushered in the era known as the Golden Age of Piracy. The seventeenth century began with peace, a peace that King James was anxious to preserve. The only piracy he encouraged was against infidels (and then only when he got his share). Peace brought unemployment to the many legitimate sailors, those who had been part of a navy that no longer required their services. These unemployed former seamen frequently turned to piracy as a way of life. The transition was natural enough. After being at sea, life on dry land was prosaic even if one could find means of self-support. In contrast to the stability of sedentary life, piracy offered the chance for wealth and adventure without the excessive discipline that characterized the British Royal Navy. There a poor sailor could expect little better than bad food, harsh treatment, and the ever-looming threat of the lash. As a pirate, one was equally exposed to the dangers of the deep, but one enjoyed an atmosphere of comparative freedom, with the opportunity for grand escapades and gold. Morally speaking, an ex-seaman could see little difference between legitimate privateering and illegitimate piracy.

of society's castoffs, escaped convicts, and the like. No questions were asked. All served under the motto, "No prey, no pay."

The West Indies, scene of naval adventures prior to the defeat of the Spanish Armada, was ideally suited for piracy. Ships from many nations sailed the Caribbean Sea with treasures from the Old and New Worlds in their holds. Hiding places—inlets, coves, small islands—were plentiful.

Once again piracy was aided and abetted by local governments, who used the pirates both for protection and as a source of luxuries that were difficult to come by. The British governor of Jamaica authorized privateering. France encouraged the pirating of Spanish ships.

The growth of the North American colonies in the seventeenth century provided pirates with even greater opportunities. English and Dutch settlements welcomed them as if they were legitimate traders, for they supplied otherwise unobtainable goods in the rustic environment of the New World, goods that took interminably long to arrive from the mother country. By the mid-seventeenth century, pirates operated along the Atlantic coast with impunity. They favored South Carolina's coast and the Chesapeake Bay area. Rhode Island became a clearinghouse for booty. The law was simply ignored when pirates were caught. These providers of valuable services were given little more than token punishment at best. Even in Boston, that bastion of Puritanism, captured pirates were allowed to pay for their freedom.

Pirates were by then admired for their daring and exciting lives, luring landlubbers with promises of wealth and grand adventure. A noted French pirate leader of the 1660s was Pierre le Grand, who with his partners fearlessly attacked great Spanish vessels from small boats and managed to subdue adversaries far mightier than himself. Ownership of such pirate ships was usually shared. The vessels were obtained as booty or via trade: small ships were favored over large ones, and sloops were much preferred for speed and maneuverability. Often names like the *Defiance* or *Revenge* reflected their adventurous aims. Others like the *Merry Christmas* or *Most Holy Trinity* revealed a touch of irony.

Pirates naturally enough hated discipline. The social structure aboard ship was democratic, tending toward anarchy. Officers were elected. Frequently they adopted colorful nicknames like "Blackbeard," "Long Ben," or "Captain Flogger." More important than the captain, who usually was little more than a figurehead, was the quartermaster. He made the crucial decisions (what loot to take) and led the boarding party onto a captured ship. Only he could administer punishment. Otherwise rank differences were minimal, even in so far as accommodations and food went. The Royal Navy command

to govern life aboard ship. The menacing skull-and-crossbones flew atop the highest mast. Symbolizing death, it became the hallmark of the pirate ship and was often called "the Jolly Roger."

Much has been made of the bloodthirstiness of pirates. They are often pictured as cruel, sadistic, and hungering for violence. Actually, pirates were after loot, not blood. Prisoners were as a rule treated decently and released with the ship intact after plunder. Women were not raped as a matter of course, usually being treated with some respect. Harsh treatment was reserved for members of the pirate crew. Desertion was the capital offense, and punishment for it was inescapable. Sometimes a deserter was marooned on an island with no means of escape or support.

Pirates were a rowdy, unstable lot. They enjoyed their rum. It is unlikely that they would bury their treasure: rather they would blow it all on good times. Their attitude was carefree. Life had little value.

There were instances of female pirates joining a company, even of shipboard marriages. The women involved seemingly adjusted readily to pirate life with few accommodations for the demands of their sex.

Some pirate leaders achieved such renown for their colorful and contradictory natures that they have lived on as part history, part myth. Henry Morgan, like his predecessor Francis Drake, was rewarded for his plunder with knighthood and in later years attacked pirates as a "dangerous pestilence." Sir Henry Mainwaring, a pardoned freebooter, was hired by the Crown to hunt pirates, a task at which he was most successful. However, he kept a healthy sideline going—piracy in northern waters as far up as Newfoundland.

The most famous, or infamous, pirate was Edward Teach (Captain Blackbeard). Originally a merchant seaman who privateered during Queen Anne's war, 1702–13, Teach requested and received command of a captured French ship, the *Concorde*, and turned her into a pirate ship which he renamed *Queen Anne's Revenge*. Eventually, he commanded a fleet of pirate ships. Tall, powerful, a brave and daring leader, Teach developed connections with many powerful people in the colonies, which smoothed the way for his lawless activities. With a mass of black hair, braided and tied with ribbons, he was a formidable-looking character who could be violent, dissipated, and cruel. Teach's enemy was Governor Alexander Spotswood of Virginia, an ardent foe of piracy whose aim in life was to crush Teach and other naval outlaws like him. In 1718 Spotswood chartered two sloops under the command of Lieutenant Robert Maynard, who boarded Blackbeard's boat and killed him in a dramatic duel.

This event pointed to the end of piracy's golden age. In 1721, the Piracy Act was broadened to in-



... many were soon objects of pirate attacks in their midst, and better government in the colonies meant stricter treatment of the breed. Additionally, guard ships in the West Indies began to employ well-trained captains who were aggressive in rooting out pirates. Captured pirates were now returned to England and often hung after trial. As a result piracy decreased significantly, and shipping and trade were less menaced. By the second quarter of the eighteenth century, pirates were mainly Spaniards and amateurs, no longer protected or dealt with by governments. Punishment was no longer waived for those captured. In retaliation pirates became more ruthless and cruel, qualities that were not typical of them in earlier years.

While piracy's golden age ended around 1725, it lives on in lore and myth. What better stuff for adventure than tales patterned on the brave outlaws of the beautiful West Indies, with their singular customs and daring escapades. Over a century after piracy had been significantly subdued, it was a frequent literary theme in Victorian England. *Treasure Island* (1883), the Robert Louis Stevenson classic tale of adventure, is the romanticized version of buried treasures (which rarely existed in the real world of piracy), cruel and bloodthirsty pirates like the particularly loathsome one-legged Long John Silver, and victims of the peculiar pirate punishment, marooning, like the brave Ben Gunn.

Sir James Barrie carried the romanticism of piracy into the realm of fantasy in his enduringly beloved *Peter Pan* (1904). Pirates, in this tale, are coupled with another group of likely adventurers—Indians. The unforgettable Captain Hook, whose arm was bitten off by a crocodile, has continued to captivate and fascinate children today. Such horrible villains were these pirates that they tried to make Wendy and the lost boys "walk the plank," another pirate custom truer to fiction than history.

The Gilbert and Sullivan operetta *The Pirates of Penzance* (1879) provides what may be the cleverest perspective on the subject of piracy. In a typically convoluted plot dealing with lost babies, mistaken identities, great confusions, and happy endings, the operetta skillfully places piracy in a satiric situation vis-à-vis Victorian society. The pirate king makes it perfectly clear:

*Oh better far to live and die,  
Under the brave black flag I fly,  
Than to play a sanctimonious part  
With a pirate head and a pirate heart.  
Away to the fleeting world go you.  
Where pirates all are well to do.  
But I'll be true to the song I sing,  
And live and die a pirate king.*

These lines may be the very "last words" on piracy. While piracy of sorts persisted through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and exists in

300 years ago where in the beautiful azure waters of the Caribbean Sea, beneath a sky of the most brilliant blue, the black flag of skull and crossbones heralded the approach of the most fearless figures the sea has ever known.

—Myrna Frommer

### CAESAR IS CAPTURED BY PIRATES

Piracy, said to be the world's oldest profession following prostitution and medicine, is recorded long before Julius Caesar's day, but the Roman emperor was the most notable of ancient men to be captured by pirates. In 78 B.C. pirate bands dominated the Mediterranean, many governments paying them tribute. Gaius Julius Caesar had been exiled from Rome for supporting the party of his uncle, Marius, and decided to journey to Rhodes, where he planned to take elocution lessons from the great orator Apollonius Molon. But a pirate galley seized his ship off the coast of Caria in Asia Minor. Caesar and the other passengers were jailed in rude huts near the town of Pharmacussa while the pirates tried to raise ransom money for them.

Caesar bided his time reading and practicing with his javelin, even writing poetry, until his friends sent the 50 talents the pirates demanded for his ransom. All the while he showed the strength, arrogance, and boldness that was to characterize him for the rest of his life. Yet when he vowed on leaving that he would have their lives for his kidnapping, the pirates thought him insane. No one had ever threatened them before; they were virtually immune to prosecution in this corner of the world.

On his release young Caesar promptly persuaded the legate of Miletus to provide soldiers and ships for him to launch an expedition against his pirate captors. Sailing immediately, he reached Pharmacussa late at night when the drunken pirates were sleeping off the effects of their victory celebration. Stealing up on them stretched out before their campfires, he captured the entire band without a struggle.

But part of his vow remained unfulfilled. Caesar had sworn that the pirates would be executed, and now he discovered that they enjoyed the protection of Junius, the powerful praetor of Asia Minor, who had agreed to leave the pirates alone if they kept their hands off Roman ships of commerce. Caesar located the praetor in the field, far from his offices at Pergamus, the site of ancient Troy. Amazed at his presumption, yet somewhat fearful of Caesar's possible political influence, Junius gave the future ruler of Rome only a vague promise that he would make a decision when he returned to Pergamus.

Caesar, however, would have none of that. Returning to Pergamus, he informed the acting praetor that Junius had ordered the pirates punished. So forceful was his presence that the man did not dare

### THE LIFE OF A PIRATE

There are few realistic renderings of pirate life. Dr. Hugh F. Rankin, a history professor at the University of North Carolina, had to piece together many accounts to fashion this excellent study of the lives of the men who went "a-pirating," from their ignoble beginnings to their ignominious ends.

Pirates were an ornery lot. The movies and novels have painted a picture of these freebooters as a romantic fraternity, and nearly always as wronged men following some noble cause. Nothing could be farther from the truth. In general, they were little more than the dregs and scum of the seaports of the world. Today we would consider them gangsters. In the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, they were a part of the life of the times, just as criminals are today. They existed in every part of the world—the seas around Europe, off Africa, in Oriental waters, the Caribbean, and off the North American coast.

A pirate, in most cases, began life as an honest seaman. But he lived in an age when the life of a sailor was hard, and the pay was small. A dissatisfied sailor was always a good prospect as a future pirate. And it wasn't difficult to find others who dreamed of easy money. Commonly a number of these unhappy seamen would find themselves in the crew of some merchant vessel whose captain was a hard taskmaster. Upon such occasions, it was easy to turn pirate. A mutiny would be staged, and the discontented men would seize control of the ship. After a successful mutiny, the captain and the loyal members of the crew would either be murdered or perhaps set ashore and marooned on the nearest island. Sometimes these seagoing gangsters would become so bold as to steal a ship as it lay at anchor within a harbor.

The capture of his ship was sometimes the occasion which would lead an otherwise honest seaman to take up piracy. Pirates usually offered the crew of a captured vessel an opportunity to join them. The decision was not too difficult. Many a sailor, bored with the humdrum existence aboard a merchant vessel, jumped at the chance for excitement and easy money. This last reason, probably more than any other, was the most popular excuse for turning pirate.

Many pirates began their careers as privateers, in a form of legal piracy. In fact, privateering was described during this period as being "a nursery of pirates." Privateering came about because in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries nations could not afford to maintain large regular navies. When war did break out, they were forced to increase their naval strength to meet the challenge of an enemy, yet remain within reasonable bounds

their ships with cannon, sign on fighting crews, and prey upon the commercial shipping of the enemy. All captured prizes were brought back into port, sold at auction, and the sale proceeds divided between the government, the owner, and the crew. This practice not only weakened the economic resources of the enemy, but it enriched those seamen who were willing to risk their lives upon the open sea. At the end of war, few privateersmen looked forward to returning to the poorly paid and rather dull existence of ordinary seamen. The answer was piracy!

It was not difficult to find enough men to form a crew; but pirates without a ship are about as useless as a saddle without a horse. This problem was usually solved by stealing what they needed. After spotting a likely looking small ship anchored in the harbor, the pirates would wait for a dark night when most of the ship's crew was ashore. Then, in small boats or even canoes, they would row silently out to their intended prize. Slipping quickly over the side, they would overpower the crew members still on board. Still under cover of darkness, they would sail quickly out of the harbor. Sometimes this small ship would be used to capture a larger vessel better suited to the needs of piracy. The first would be sunk or abandoned. Seldom were ships especially built for piratical activities, although this was done upon some occasions.

Most merchant ships had to undergo considerable changes before they were felt to be suitable as pirate vessels. The deck houses, for instance, were cut down flush, or level, with the deck. This not only lowered the silhouette upon the open sea, but also lessened the danger of flying wood splinters during battles. Next the gunwales, or railings along the sides, were built up. This not only protected but also offered concealment for the pirates on deck.

The captain was quite often the only man aboard who had a private cabin. The men usually slept below deck. There was no limit to the size of a pirate crew, which often led to crowded conditions. In most cases, each man had a small space that he could call his own, where he could eat and sleep. Yet, when the crew became exceptionally large, some of the men had to sleep out on the open deck, even in the midst of heavy seas and violent storms. The life of a pirate was by no means a comfortable existence.

Generally pirates preferred a small ship to a large one. There were several reasons for this. First, they were usually faster and more maneuverable. If pursued by a more powerful adversary, they could slip into the shallow inlets and sounds where larger vessels could not follow. Then, too, a smaller ship was easier to "careen." This was a necessary procedure for all ships of the day. It involved sailing the vessel into shallow water until she ran aground. The cargo, cannon, and other gear would then be moved to one side, causing the ship to cant, or lean heavily to the other side. The slanted position would expose that



leys to pull it over even more.

Careening was necessary because of the tendency of barnacles and other marine life to attach themselves to the bottom of the ship. This accumulation of parasites acted as a drag and prevented the vessel from slipping easily through the water. In tropical waters there was also the teredo, a worm which attached itself to the hull and bored thousands of tiny holes through the wooden planking. Careening made the task of scraping the bottom much less difficult. After the bottom of the ship had been scraped clean, the hull was treated with a daubing of tallow and sulphur.

It was sometimes necessary to careen a ship as often as three times a year. This was especially true of vessels operating in tropical waters. While this operation was being carried out in the shallow waters of some sheltered cove, the pirates would pitch camp on the shore. A temporary fort would be constructed by throwing up earthworks. This they would strengthen by bringing cannon from their ship and mounting them on crude fortifications. The idea behind this was to prevent possible surprise and capture.

There was little consistency in the selection of names for pirate ships. The favorite seems to have been *Revenge*. Blackbeard's ship was called the *Queen Anne's Revenge*, while another pirate, Richard Worley, named his vessel the *New York Revenge's Revenge*. Perhaps this was their way of revenging themselves upon the life which they felt had treated them so shabbily in the past. More expressive names were sometimes selected, among them: *Defiance*, *Adventure*, *Black Joke*, *Bravo*, *Sudden Death*, *Flying Horse*, *Bachelor's Delight*, *Good Fortune*, *Night Rambler*, *Flying Dragon*, and *Snap Dragon*. Stede Bonnet's *Royal James* implied political affiliations. Many bore poetic or religious names entirely out of keeping with their sinister purpose. Among these were the *Happy Delivery*, *Most Holy Trinity*, *Blessings*, *Mayflower*, *Liberty*, *Childhood*, *Merry Christmas*, and *Morning Star*. It would seem that pirates sometimes considered the names of their ships as jokes upon their intended victims.

The captain of a pirate ship was in most instances elected to his position by the other crew members. If they later decided that he was not the proper person for the job, they would reduce him in rank simply by holding another election. If the former captain should object to his demotion, there were other methods of getting rid of him. He could be shot, stabbed, thrown overboard, or marooned on some desert island. One pirate crew went so far as to elect 13 different captains in the short space of several months. And the captain was not always the most important man aboard ship. In many crews it was only during the course of a battle that he had supreme authority. Then it was his duty to direct and lead the fighting. But as with all rules, there were

The officer of next importance was the quartermaster. He also was elected by the crew members. It was his duty to look after the interests of the men. On some ships, the captain was not allowed to make an important decision until he had first secured the consent of the quartermaster. This was the pirate way of preventing a captain from assuming too much authority. It was the responsibility of the quartermaster to decide just what loot was to be taken from a captured prize. In doing this, he had to determine the amount of cargo space in his own ship and how easily the captured articles could be sold without too many questions being asked. It was also his duty to supervise the sale of all plunder and to divide the proceeds among the crew.

Other officers aboard ship were usually appointed by the captain and the quartermaster, although in some ships these also were elected by the crew. Among these were the lieutenant, who acted as second in command to the captain. He had no regular duties but was to take over the command if the captain should be killed in battle.

There was also the sailing master, a most important person. His responsibility was the navigation of the ship and the supervision of the trimming of the sails. Next in importance was the boatswain, or bo'sun. The bo'sun acted in the capacity of foreman, for he was in charge of the general upkeep of the ship and all supplies. The gunner was another very busy man. Not only did he have the care and repair of the weapons on board, but he was also to instruct the crew members in their use. There were various other minor officers on board ship whose duties were more specialized, including the carpenter, the sailmaker, and the surgeon.

Pirates were a cantankerous pack. This, in turn, made the problem of discipline one of the most difficult on board ship. The whip was the primary instrument of punishment, but the quartermaster was the only officer who was given authority to flog a member of the crew. There were other methods by which a dispute could be settled. If two seamen should start a fight on shipboard, the quartermaster was supposed to make an attempt to persuade them to settle it peacefully. If he was unsuccessful, he would then take them ashore to the nearest land. Each was given a cutlass and a pistol, and they were instructed to settle their differences by a duel. The first of these quarrelers who drew blood, if only by a nick, was declared the winner.

More serious offenses were tried before a pirate jury. If found guilty, one might be "keel-hauled." This meant tying one rope under his arm and another to his feet. Then he would be thrown overboard and dragged beneath the hull, from one side of the ship to the other. Even if he survived this punishment, the pirate would be badly cut from the barnacles clustered on the bottom. If the jury decreed death, little time was wasted. The guilty seaman was tossed

with little or no food and water. Alexander Selkirk, whose adventures inspired Daniel Defoe to write *Robinson Crusoe*, was a privateer who was marooned by his captain on Juan Fernández Island.

When on the prowl, the pirate crew would usually cruise until they sighted a lone ship, not too heavily armed. While they were at a distance, they would fly some respected flag, such as the Union Jack of England, that would not arouse the suspicions of the intended prize, so that they could creep up within cannon shot. Then up would ride the Jolly Roger. A hail would float across the water, ordering the prize to heave to. If the victim attempted to flee, a cannon would send a warning shot across the bow. If this was not too successful, the pirates would pile on sail to try to maneuver into such a position as to deliver crippling broadsides.

A barrage of cannonballs ripping through the sails and rigging and crashing through the hull would soon leave a prize helpless and drifting aimlessly. The pirate ship would be steered alongside. Grappling hooks would be flung across the interval. Mighty heaves on the ropes attached to the grappling hooks would bring the two ships side by side. They would be lashed tightly to prevent their drifting apart. Then shouting, firing pistols, and swinging cutlasses, the pirate crew would swarm across the gunwales. The fight would soon be over. The pirates always outnumbered the crews of the ships they attacked.

Pirates rarely killed their prisoners. If they did, it was generally because their captives had offered a particularly strong resistance before surrendering. In such cases, those crews which fought the most fiercely could expect the least mercy. To discourage further opposition, the pirates made sure that stories of their atrocities were spread throughout the seaports of the world. This explains why the pirates were often able to take, without too much effort, larger and better-armed vessels than their own. Remembering the tales of the cruelty of pirates, ordinary sailors were often unwilling to risk death and torture just to save a merchant's cargo.

Sometimes the practice was to release the prisoners shortly after the captured cargo had been transferred to the pirate vessel. If the captured ship was more to the pirate's liking, the prisoners were given their old vessel. Upon some occasions, the captives would be put ashore in a spot where there was a good chance of their being picked up by some passing vessel. Often the crews of the surrendered merchant vessel would be offered the opportunity of signing on with the pirate crew. Many did.

The plunder taken off the North American coast by these sea rovers would in most cases be taken into some colonial port and sold. The merchants welcomed them. Not only did this provide a way for getting around the payment of the customs duties of the despised English trade laws, but the pirates always sold their goods cheaper than anyone else. Thus

quartermaster to divide the proceeds. Upon nearly every occasion it was soon gone, spent carousing and merrymaking in the nearest tavern. This brought in additional profits to the local merchants.

The idea of buried treasure is one of the most exaggerated notions concerning piracy. Much more money has been spent searching for pirate gold than has ever been found. In the first place, most pirates were of such spendthrift nature that they seldom accumulated enough treasure to bury. Their future was so uncertain that there was little use in saving their ill-gotten gains. There are few instances of any pirate ever dying a rich man.

All in all, the picture of piracy is not a pretty one. The life of the average buccaneer was a life of hardship, brutality, and danger. And that life was a short one. When they died, few people took time to mourn their passing. Seldom did a pirate die in bed of natural causes. The end usually came with a terrible suddenness, in the midst of battle, shipwreck, in a tavern brawl, of scurvy and tropical fevers, or of other diseases. Even if he was fortunate enough to escape these hazards, there was always the gibbet with its hangman's noose. All nations punished piracy by hanging. Sometimes when captured at sea, pirates were not even allowed a trial or hearing of any sort. Swift justice came at the end of a rope swung from the nearest yardarm. Even in death there was little respect paid their mortal remains. Few pirates ever received a decent burial. Bodies of the more notorious pirates were embalmed in tar, and then hung in chains at some prominent point along the water, there to sway in the wind and serve as a terrifying example to those who might be tempted to follow their career.

One of the very few pirates who managed to escape the hangman's noose and other pitfalls of his profession was Captain Thomas Goldsmith. He died in Dartmouth, England, in 1714. Even in death his reputation and the opinion of his fellow man followed him into the grave. The epitaph on his tombstone read:

*Pray then ye learned clergy show  
Where can this brute Tom Goldsmith, go?  
Whose life was one continuous evil  
Striving to cheat God, Man and the Devil.*

What a memory to leave behind!

—Hugh F. Rankin

#### ON PIRATE PHILOSOPHY

Pirate Captain Charles Bellamy summed up the anarchist philosophy of many pirates when he condemned a captured merchantman captain who refused to join him under the black flag. Roared Bellamy, "Damn ye, you are a sneaking puppy, and so are all those who will submit to be governed by laws which rich men have made for their own security,