



JOHAN MORGAN,
*gebooren in de Provincie van Wales, in Engelandt—
Generaal van de Roovers op Jamaica.*

From Exquemelin, *De Americaensche Zee-roovers*. 1678.

SIR HENRY MORGAN — OFTEN CALLED JOHN MORGAN.

The original of many subsequent portraits.

CHAPTER XXII.

HENRY MORGAN AND THE SACK OF PANAMA.

"Oh, what a set of Vagabundos,
Sons of Neptune, sons of Mars,
Raked from todos otros mundos,
Lascars, Gascons, Portsmouth tars,
Prison mate and dock-yard fellow,
Blades to Meg and Molly dear,
Off to capture Porto Bello
Sailed with Morgan the Buccaneer!"
—Edmund C. Stedman.



MORGAN English people, the best known of the Buccaneers is Henry Morgan. Spanish writers often call him Juan Morgan, and he is sometimes designated Henry John Morgan. Morgan was born about 1635, at Llanrhyhny, Glamorganshire, in Wales; and was the eldest son of Robert Morgan, "a rich Yoeman or farmer of good quality." While yet young, he left home and went to Bristol, where he was kidnapped and sent to Barbados, at which place he was sold as a bondsman, like so many other Europeans who went to the West Indies at this period.

After serving his time, Morgan went to Jamaica, where he joined the Buccaneers and rose rapidly into favor. His uncle, Colonel Edward Morgan, came out as Lieutenant-Governor of Jamaica in 1664, but died the following year in the attack on St. Eustatius. Henry Morgan was not in this expedition, but was one of the captains in Mansfield's expedition against Curacao, in 1666.

After several ventures, he accumulated enough money, with the help of some comrades, to buy a ship. Morgan was elected captain, and succeeded in capturing several Spanish vessels off the coast of Campeche. Probably he was that Morgan who, in

Four hundred one

HENRY MORGAN AND

January, 1665, went up the Tabasco river in Campeche, with Captains Morris and Jackman, when they took and plundered Vildemos; after which, they seized Truxillo, in Honduras; and then went up the San Juan river to Lake Nicaragua, and sacked the city of Granada. He attracted the attention of Captain Mansfield, who made him his vice-admiral in the attack on Santa Catarina.

Shortly after the death of Mansfield, in 1668, Morgan captured and looted the town of *Puerto Principe*, in Cuba. The Spaniards still claimed Jamaica, and Governor Modyford had instigated this expedition to discover plans of an attempt to retake the island. In this affair, the French members of his company began those complaints of unfair treatment which continued throughout Morgan's career. He got but fifty thousand pesos, as a Spanish prisoner aboard his ship escaped to the shore and warned the people.

His next expedition was against *Puerto Bello*, which was, says Exquemelin, the strongest possession of the King of Spain in the West Indies, excepting Havana and Cartagena. "It is judged to be the strongest place that the King of Spain possesses in all the West Indies, excepting two, that is to say Havana and Cartagena. Here are the castles, almost impregnable, that defend the city, being situated at the entry of the port; so that no ship or boat can pass without permission. The garrison consists of three hundred soldiers, and the town constantly inhabited by four hundred families, more or less. The merchants dwell not here, but only reside for awhile, when the galleons come or go from Spain; by reason of the unhealthiness of the air, occasioned by certain vapours that exhale from the mountains. Notwithstanding, their chief warehouses are at Porto Bello, howbeit their habitations be all the year long at Panama; whence they bring the plate upon mules at such times as the fair begins, and when the ships, belonging to the Company of Negroes, arrive here to sell slaves." Morgan did not disclose his plans, but sailed with nine vessels, and about four hundred and sixty men, nearly all English, towards the Isthmus. When he told his captains and men of his intention to attack Puerto Bello, some of them objected on the grounds of his small force; to which Morgan replied, "If our number is small, our hearts are great, and the fewer persons we are, the more union and better shares we shall have in the spoils." They sailed first to *Puerto de Naos*, now known as Limon Bay, the port of Colon. The following places are not so easily identified:

Four hundred two

THE SACK OF PANAMA

"Being come to this place, they mounted the river in their ships, as far as another harbour called Puerto Pontin [Ponton]; where they came to an anchor. Here they put themselves immediately into boats and canoes, leaving in the ships only a few men to keep them and conduct them the next day to the port. About midnight they came to a certain place called Estera longa Lemos,¹ where they all went on shore, and marched by land to the first posts of the city."

Morgan was much assisted by one of his crew, an Englishman, who formerly had been a prisoner in Puerto Bello. It was rumored that several Englishmen, among them Prince Maurice, were then confined in the dungeons. The place was surrounded, and the sentinel captured. Surrender was demanded, otherwise no quarter would be given. Puerto Bello was strongly fortified, and garrisoned by three hundred troops, besides four hundred citizens capable of bearing arms. The castle of Triana in the western part of the town was first attacked and captured. Because its defenders refused to surrender, Morgan shut them up in the castle and fired the magazine; thereby destroying both castle and garrison. In the meantime the town people had fled, first hiding their valuables or casting them into wells.

The Governor rallied his men and retired to the strongest remaining fort, where he kept up the fight from break of day till noon. Morgan was almost in despair of taking the castle, when he conceived the plan of having a number of wide wooden ladders made, so broad that three or four men at once might ascend by them, which he forced the priests and nuns to erect against the walls. The Buccaneers then ascended these ladders, using the religious persons as a shield, and throwing fire-balls and pots of powder among the Spaniards, which overcame them so that they asked quarter.

The priests and nuns begged the Governor by all the saints in heaven to surrender, and to their prayers were added the entreaties of his wife and daughter, but the brave man would not yield. He did not hesitate to fire on the priests who were forced

¹ Estero Longarremos. From Limon Bay, the Buccaneers went east of Manzanillo Island (Colon), and anchored in Puerto Manzanillo. They then took to the small boats and rowed northeast by sea, around Punta Manzanillo, until they came to Estero Longarremos. The point of land east of Punta Manzanillo is still called Punta Longarremos.

HENRY MORGAN AND

in front of the Buccaneers, and killed not a few of his own soldiers because they would not stand to their arms.

All the Spaniards in the castle were killed, or craved quarter, except the Governor. When asked to surrender, he constantly answered: "By no means; I had rather die as a valiant soldier than be hanged as a coward." The pirates endeavored to take the governor alive, but he defended himself so obstinately that they were forced to kill him. The castle commanding the entrance to the port was the next to fall.

All prisoners were shut up in one of the castles, and the wounded Buccaneers placed in charge of some female slaves, Morgan telling them: "Your groans shall supply the place of clothing for your wounds." The victors then proceeded to loot the town and indulge in all manner of drunkenness and debauchery. The next day, a number of citizens were put to the torture to discover where they had hidden their riches.

Morgan sent two prisoners as messengers to the President of Panama to procure a ransom of one hundred thousand pieces-of-eight, or Porto Bello would be consumed to ashes. Instead of sending the money, the President started with a body of troops, stated to be fifteen hundred, to relieve Porto Bello; but was ambushed and put to flight by one hundred Buccaneers, "at a narrow passage through which of necessity he ought to pass."

Morgan had brought up his ships, which gave him a secure retreat; so he remained in the town, and threatened to kill all his prisoners and blow the castle into the air if the ransom was not paid. The miserable citizens managed to raise the amount, and the Buccaneers loaded their vessels with pillage and vic-tuals, and prepared to depart.

Morgan also carried away the best guns of the castles, nailing the rest which he could not take with him. During the fifteen days the Buccaneers held Porto Bello, a number had died from excesses and from the unhealthiness of the country.

The President of Panama, filled with admiration that four hundred men had been able to take such a great city, with so many strong castles, sent a messenger to Captain Morgan, "desiring him to send him some small pattern of those arms wherewith he had taken with such violence so great a city." Morgan gave the man a pistol and a few small bullets of lead, to carry back to his master; with this answer: "He desired him to accept that slender pattern of the arms wherewith he had taken Porto Bello, and keep them for a twelvemonth; after

THE SACK OF PANAMA

which time he promised to come to Panama and fetch them away."

The President soon returned these to Morgan, thanking him for the favor of lending him such weapons as he needed not; and, as illustrating the polite usages of the times, also sent Captain Morgan an emerald set in a ring of gold, with this message: "That he desired him not to give himself the labor of coming to Panama, as he had done to Porto Bello; for he did certify to him, he should not speed so well here as he had done there."

Morgan and his men sailed away to the south coast of Cuba, where division of the booty was made. The ready money amounted to two hundred and fifty thousand pieces-of-eight; besides silks, linens, and other merchandise.

The Buccaneers then returned to their rendezvous in Jamaica, and gave themselves up to debauchery; "Spending with hugh prodigality what others had gained with no small labor and toil."

Morgan's official report of his Porto Bello expedition, found in the "State Papers," differs considerably from Exquemelin. Morgan relates that Porto Bello was left in as good condition as he found it, and that the people had been well treated; "several ladies of great quality and other prisoners who were offered their liberty to go to the president's camp refused, saying they were now prisoners to a person of quality, who was more tender of their honours than they doubted to find in the president's camp; and so voluntarily continued with them."

Gov. Modyford was somewhat in doubt how the capture of Porto Bello might be regarded in England, as Morgan's commission was only to war against ships. Nevertheless the governor gave Morgan another commission shortly afterwards.

Not long after the loot of Porto Bello, the Buccaneers of Jamaica determined to go on another venture. Morgan notified the commanders to meet at *Isla de la Vaca* (Isle à Vache) on the south side of Haiti. While there, he increased his unpopularity with the French by forcibly seizing a large ship belonging to some French *flibustiers* who would not join him. This treacherous act was soon followed by retribution.

Having decided at a council to lie in wait for the Spanish *flota* at the island of Savona, the English proceeded to fire off guns, and drink many healths for joy of their new enterprise. While most of the men were drunk, Morgan's great thirty-six

HENRY MORGAN AND

gun ship, the frigate *Oxford*, was blown up into the air, with the lives of three hundred and fifty Englishmen, and the French prisoners that were in the hold. There escaped only about thirty men, including Morgan, who were in the cabin at some distance from the force of the explosion. The English blamed the French for this disaster, and sent the French ship, the *Cour Volant*, and the remainder of her crew to Jamaica, where their vessel was confiscated and the men threatened with hanging.

After mourning eight days for the loss of the ship and men, Morgan commanded the bodies floating on the sea to be searched for valuables, and the gold rings to be cut off their fingers.

Later, Morgan mustered eight small vessels and five hundred men at Savona. By the advice of one of his captains, a Frenchman who had been with Lolonnois and Michel le Basque, Morgan sailed for *Maracaibo*.

The Buccaneers entered the gulf of Maracaibo by night, so as not to be seen from the Vigilias, or watch tower. The next morning, Morgan found himself under the guns of the fort, which opened fire on him.

"The dispute continued very hot on both sides, being managed with huge courage and valour from morning till dark night." During the night the Spaniards vacated the fort, and the next day the Buccaneers passed up to the city of Maracaibo in small boats. The principal inhabitants had departed with their riches, but such as remained were subjected to inhuman cruelties to make them disclose the hiding place of valuables.

After three weeks of rioting, Morgan and his men proceeded up the lake and took *Gibraltar*, just as Lolonnois had done two years before. Five more weeks of pillage and murder at this place; and then Morgan went back to Maracaibo.

Here he heard that three Spanish men-of-war, under command of Don Alonso del Campo y Espinosa, lay in wait in the entrance of the lake, to dispute his exit. May 1st, 1669, at dawn, Morgan attacked the Spanish fleet, and by means of a *brulot*, or fire-ship, which one of the Buccaneers had prepared, he was able to destroy two of them and capture the third. Most of the Spaniards escaped to the castle on the shore.

Morgan again returned to Maracaibo, collected a ransom, divided two hundred and fifty thousand pieces-of-eight among his men, besides merchandise and slaves, and prepared to leave.

By a clever stratagem, he was allowed to drift out the lake at night on an ebbing tide, without sails, and thus pass the castle

THE SACK OF PANAMA

commanding the entrance. The Buccaneers encountered a great tempest at sea, but finally all arrived safely at their headquarters in Port Royal.

Another party, under Captain Hansel, about the same time, returned empty handed from an attempt on the town of Cumana. Morgan's men ceased not to mock and jeer them for their ill success, saying: "Let us see what money you brought from Comana, and if it be as good silver as that which we bring from Maracaibo."

It was not long before the Buccaneers were again clamoring for another expedition against the Spaniards. The men had spent their money, and many were in debt to the rum-sellers and merchants of Port Royal. Rumors had reached the West Indies of an impending treaty of peace between Great Britain and Spain, and the brotherhood were anxious to engage in some great undertaking before it went into effect. The fame of Morgan was now so well established that they importuned him to lead them. "He undertook therefore to equip a new fleet of ships; for which purpose he assigned the south side of the Isle of Tortuga, as a place of rendezvous. With this resolution, he wrote divers letters to all the ancient and expert Pirates there inhabiting, as also to the Governor of the said isle, and to the planters and hunters of Hispaniola, giving them to understand his intentions, and desiring their appearance at the said place, in case they intended to go with him. All these people had no sooner understood his designs than they flocked to the place assigned in high numbers, with ships, canoes, and boats, being desirous to obey his commands. Many, who had not the convenience of coming to him by sea, traversed the woods of Hispaniola, and with no small difficulties arrived there by land. Thus all were present at the place assigned, and in readiness, against the 24th day of October, 1670," (Exquemelin).

Morgan sailed, August 14th, 1670, from Port Royal for Port Corillon [Couillon] in the island of Vache, where he held council with his leaders.

A lot of Buccaneers were set to work on Hispaniola, killing cattle and curing the meat; another party, comprising four or five ships, under command of Captain Bradley (Sharp says vice-admiral Collyer) was sent to the *Rio Hacha* to loot the village of La Rancheria, a place famous for its abundance of

Four hundred seven

HENRY MORGAN AND

corn; while the remainder cleaned the ships and fitted them for sea.

The hunters soon had an abundance of dried beef, and in five weeks Bradley returned with four thousand bushels of maize as ransom for Rancheria; a good ship from Cartagena already laden with maize; and other booty and prisoners. Morgan distributed the provisions among his crews, inspected the ships, and sailed for *Cape Tiburon*, the last place of rendezvous. Here he was joined by some more ships from Jamaica, "So that now the whole fleet consisted of thirty-seven ships, wherein were two thousand fighting men, besides mariners and boys; the Admiral hereof was mounted with twenty-two great guns, and six small ones, of brass; the rest carried some twenty, some sixteen, some eighteen, and the smallest vessel at least four; besides which they had great quantity of ammunition and fire-balls, with other inventions of powder."

Morgan's present commission gave him free hand against Spain, and further stated that "as there is no other pay for the encouragement of the fleet, they shall have all the goods and merchandise that shall be gotten in this expedition, to be divided amongst them according to their rules." Pursuant to his authority as admiral, Morgan then issued sub-commissions to his vice-admiral and captains.

On the second of December, the thirty-seven captains met and drew up articles of agreement for the division of the spoils. Morgan should receive one-hundredth of the whole; every captain was to have the shares of eight men for the expenses of his ship, besides his own share; the surgeon should have two hundred pieces-of-eight for his chest of medicaments, in addition to his ordinary pay; and the carpenter an extra one hundred pesos. Recompenses for the maimed, and rewards for bravery, were regulated much higher than usual.

The council then considered whether to go against Cartagena, Panama, or Vera Cruz. The lot fell upon *Panama*; believed to be the richest of the three. Another reason was "that it stands most for the good of Jamaica and safety of us all to take Panama, the president thereof having granted several commissions against the English."

The Buccaneers had no knowledge of the routes to Panama, so in order to procure guides, they determined to retake the island of *St. Catharine* (*Santa Catarina*), now used as a penal settlement by the Spaniards, trusting to find there banditti and outlaws familiar with Panama and its approaches. Flying the

THE SACK OF PANAMA

English flag, the fleet sailed from Cape Tiburon (the southwestern corner of Haiti), the sixteenth day of December, 1670; and on the fourth day arrived at St. Catharine, and summoned the garrison to surrender.

The Spaniards had no show against such a large armada, but in order to save his face the Governor "desired that Captain Morgan would be pleased to use a certain stratagem of war, for the better saving of his own credit, and the reputation of his officers both abroad and at home." In other words, a sham fight was arranged which waged fiercely throughout the night, and during which much powder was consumed. The fort of St. Jerome, the battery called St. Matthew, and the castle of Santa Teresa fell in turn; and soon all of the nine fortresses were in the hands of the assailants. Real war was then made against the poultry and cattle by the hungry Buccaneers.

The population of the island, male and female, numbered, in all, four hundred and fifty souls, including one hundred and ninety soldiers. Among the felons were two Indians and a mulatto from Panama. The Indians, aware that their own people would probably suffer, feigned ignorance of the road to Panama, but the negro betrayed them. After one had been broken on the rack until he died, the other Indian consented to guide the buccaneers.

Morgan decided to approach Panama by the Chagres river route, a selection which required the subjugation of the castle guarding the mouth of the river. He must have considered the use of artillery essential in subduing Panama, and that the control of the Chagres was necessary in order to transport it as far as possible by water; otherwise Morgan would not have selected the most difficult way of getting to Panama at this time of the year. As we shall see later, when he went up the river he had "five boats with artillery," which he was forced to leave behind at the end of the second day. The facility with which Francis Drake reached Cruces, and even within sight of Panama, by land in 1573, seems to have been entirely forgotten. Had the Buccaneers taken the Camino Real, back of Porto Bello, they would have avoided the heavy losses at San Lorenzo, and the starvation trip up the Chagres; and could have reached Panama in three or four days in comfort. The dry season had begun, and the Royal Road was easy footing for such amphibious creatures as the Buccaneers. Morgan sent Colonel Joseph Bradley, a famous privateer familiar with those coasts,



THE SACK OF PANAMA

to defend likewise the mouth of the said river. At one side of the castle are built two great store-houses, in which are deposited all sorts of warlike ammunition and merchandize, which are brought thither from the inner parts of the country. Near these houses is a high pair of stairs, hewed out of the rock, which serves to mount to the top of the castle. On the West side of the said fortress lies a small port, which is not above seven or eight fathom deep, being very fit for small vessels and of very good anchorage. Besides this, there lies before the castle, at the entry of the river, a great rock, scarce to be perceived above water, unless at low tide."

Their guides served them exactly, bringing them out into an open space so close to the castle that many of the Buccaneers were killed by the first fire of the guns. This brisk defence from a seeming impregnable position much perplexed the Pirates in their minds, and caused them to fear the success of their enterprise. The Buccaneers tried to take the place by assault, and advanced with swords in one hand and fire-balls in the other. The Spaniards repulsed them bravely, crying withal:

"Come on, ye English dogs, enemies to God and our King; let your other companions that are behind come on too; ye shall not go to Panama this bout."

Failing to climb up the walls, the besiegers were forced to retreat. Resting until night, they renewed the attack, and were almost in despair, when an accident gave them the opportunity for victory.

"One of the Pirates was wounded with an arrow in his back, which pierced his body to the other side. This instantly he pulled out with great valour at the side of his breast; then taking a little cotton that he had about him, he wound it about the said arrow, and putting it into his musket, he shot it back into the castle. But the cotton being kindled by the powder, occasioned two or three houses that were within the castle, being thatched with palm-leaves, to take fire, which the Spaniards perceived not so soon as was necessary. For this fire meeting with a parcel of powder, blew it up, and thereby caused great ruin, and no less consternation to the Spaniards, who were not able to account for this accident, not having seen the beginning thereof."

Four hundred eleven

HENRY MORGAN AND

Cliffs protected the castle on the north, south, and west. The only way it could be approached was by the hill on the east side. At the crest of the hill was the ditch, thirty feet deep, crossed by a drawbridge, the only entry to the castle. Back of the ditch was the wall of earth held up by wooden palisades. When the latter were consumed, the dry earth dropped into the ditch, filling it more or less, and allowing the Buccaneers to pass over. At the same time the interior of the castle became exposed to the fire of the enemy. The valiant Governor caused his artillery to be transported to the breaches, and made his men stand to their posts.

The Buccaneers would creep up as near as they could, and shoot the Spaniards they perceived in the glare of the burning buildings. When day was come, they could see those within the castle better. About noon, the Buccaneers charged, and gained a breach held by the Governor and twenty-five men, who defended themselves in the most desperate manner with muskets, pikes, stones, and swords. After this, the rest was easy. The Governor, Don Pedro de Lisardo, retreated to the *corps du garde*, before which were placed two pieces of cannon. Refusing to ask quarter, he was killed by a musket shot which pierced his skull. Many of the remaining Spaniards cast themselves from the castle into the sea, or to the bottom of the cliff (few or none surviving the fall), rather than ask any quarter for their lives.

The President of Panama had long been aware of the coming of the Buccaneers, and had reinforced the regular garrison of one hundred and fifty men with one hundred and sixty-four more. This made a total of three hundred and fourteen regular troops, besides a lot of Indian bowmen. It is seen that the defenders were nearly as numerous as the Buccaneers. Of this number, only thirty remained alive, whereof scarce ten were not wounded. Not one officer survived. Consider, then, the daring and desperation necessary to overcome such valorous resistance in an almost impregnable position.

Of the Buccaneer force, of not over four hundred men, more than one hundred were killed, and the wounded exceeded seventy. Colonel Bradley lost both legs by a round shot, which caused his death within ten days, to the great grief of all. The church of the castle was turned into a hospital, where also they

THE SACK OF PANAMA

shut up the women. The Buccaneers made the surviving Spaniards cast their own dead from the cliffs, and afterwards to bury them.

From considerable reading of Buccaneer history, and from personal knowledge of many of the places taken by them, I am of the opinion that the capture of San Lorenzo by Colonel Bradley was the bravest of their achievements; and, of course, was an indispensable precedent to reaching Panama by the river route.

From Chagre, word was sent to Morgan that the castle had fallen. He dismantled all the forts on St. Catherine except St. Teresa, and burnt all the houses. Morgan collected all the maize, cassava, and other provisions that he could, and putting the prisoners aboard his ships, sailed for the Chagres river, where he arrived in the space of eight days.

“Here the joy of the whole fleet was so great, when they spied the English colours upon the castle that they minded not their way into the river, which occasioned them to lose four of their ships at the entry thereof, that wherein Captain Morgan went, being one of the four. Yet their fortune was so good as to be able to save all the men and goods that were in the said vessels. Yea, the ships likewise had been preserved, if a strong northerly wind had not risen on that occasion, which cast the ships upon the rock above-mentioned, that lies at the entry of the said river.”

The commander-in-chief entered the castle amid the acclamations of the Buccaneers. He set the prisoners to work building new palisades, and gathered boats for the journey up the river.

When Morgan was in Porto Bello, and made his boast to call on the President of Panama within a year, it is very unlikely that he had any intentions at that time of such an undertaking. Had he cherished such a plan, it would have been the part of wisdom, and more in accord with his usual custom, to have kept it quiet. Nevertheless, the success of the Buccaneers at Porto Bello and other places ashore, had alarmed the people of Panama, and preparations had been made to repel an invasion. That the President of Panama, Don Juan Perez de Guzman, had strengthened his defenses, was shown by con-

HENRY MORGAN AND

fessions of Spanish prisoners, and actual commissions signed by him found in captured vessels.

The raids of Drake and Oxenham had not been forgotten by the Spaniards, and the increasing aggressions of other European nations kept them in a constant state of alarm. Indeed, there were a number of times when the Buccaneers could have seized and held the Isthmus, or other parts of Spanish America, had they had any desire for permanent possession and orderly government.

Morgan learned from the prisoners taken at San Lorenzo that the President of Panama had received notice three weeks previously from Cartagena, and also by a deserter from the Buccaneers while at the Rio Hacha, of his designs on Panama. They also told him that ambushes had been placed along the Chagres, and that the Spaniards awaited the Buccaneers with a force of three thousand six hundred men, in the open plain in front of Panama. This was so well known that the Buccaneers were repeatedly greeted, by both Spaniards and Indians, with the cry: A la Savanna!

The President states in a letter, given in Sharp's *Voyages*, that he had sent two hundred additional men to Puerto Velo (Porto Bello), and one hundred and fifty to reinforce Chagre (San Lorenzo); and had placed five hundred more in ambushes along the Chagres, under the command of Don Francisco Saludo. He further states that he held consultations with his officers, and was assured that the castle and forts on the river were impregnable.

Among the Spanish boats found at Chagre were four little ships, a lot of canoes, and some vessels called chatten, (*chata*—a flat-bottomed boat) which were used for transporting merchandise up and down the river, as also for going to Porto Bello and Nicaragua. These latter vessels were commonly mounted with two great guns of iron, and four small ones of brass.

Leaving Captain Norman with five hundred men to garrison San Lorenzo, and one hundred and fifty more to remain with his fleet; Morgan started up the Chagres river, January 9th, 1671, with fourteen hundred men in seven ships and thirty-six boats, on his way to Panama. According to Exquemelin, who was not always accurate in his dates,³ he departed on January

³ It is probable that this conflict in dates may be explained by the difference between the Julian and Gregorian calendars, which at this time amounted to about ten days.

THE SACK OF PANAMA

18th, at the head of twelve hundred men, in "five boats with artillery and thirty-two canoes." Morgan carried but few provisions, being in good hopes he should provide himself from the Spaniards.

In my account of the trip up the Chagres I shall give the names of places, and distances traveled, as narrated by Exquemelin. Those familiar with the river will be able to locate the stops, and make corrections for distance.

First day—

The first day they journeyed six leagues, and came to a place called *De los Bracos* [at the mouth of the Trinidad]. The men left their cramped quarters on the boats, and went ashore to sleep for a few hours. After which, they sought something to eat among the neighboring plantations, but found nothing, as the Spaniards had fled and carried with them all their provisions. Many of the Buccaneers had to be content with a pipe of tobacco for refreshment.

Second day—

They resumed their journey very early in the morning, and about evening arrived at a place called *Cruz De Juan Gallego*. "Here they were compelled to leave their boats and canoes, by reason the river was very dry for want of rain, and the many obstacles of trees that were fallen into it."

Third day—

All went ashore in the morning except one hundred and sixty men left to defend the boats and hold them as a refuge in case of necessity. These men had strict orders, under great penalties, that no one should leave the boats for fear of being cut off by the Spaniards that might chance to lie thereabouts in the neighboring woods, which appeared so thick as to seem almost impenetrable. The Buccaneers found marching so dirty and irksome that they re-embarked in the canoes. By making two trips, Morgan was able to get his column up the river as far as *Cedro Bueno* by evening. They were now reduced to such extremity of hunger that they were infinitely desirous to meet some Spaniards, that they might roast or boii them to satisfy their famine.

Fourth day—

Most of the party traveled by land, being led by one of the guides. The rest went by water, being conducted by another guide, who always went ahead to discover ambuscades. The Spaniards, of course, had spies along the river, who gave notice of the advance of the Buccaneers.

Four hundred fifteen

HENRY MORGAN AND

About noon, when near a post called *Torna Cavallos* [opposite Bujio de Soldado], the guide of the canoes gave warning of an ambush ahead. Instead of being alarmed, the Buccaneers were filled with joy at the thought of finding something to eat. But they found the place abandoned, and judged that about five hundred Spaniards had been there. Crumbs of bread strewn about tantalized their appetites, so that they fell upon some leathern bags and devoured them, to quell the ferment of their stomachs.

After feasting on these pieces of leather they marched farther on, till about night they came to another post, called *Torna Munní*. Here they found another ambuscade, also barren of provisions.

“Here again he was happy, that had reserved since noon any small piece of leather whereof to make his supper, drinking after it a good draught of water for his greatest comfort. Some persons, who never were out of their mothers’ kitchens, may ask how these Pirates could eat, swallow and digest those pieces of leather, so hard and dry. To whom I only answer: That could they once experiment what hunger, or rather famine, is, they would certainly find the manner, by their own necessity, as the Pirates did. For these first took the leather, and sliced it in pieces. Then did they beat it between two stones, and rub it, often dipping it in the water of the river to render it by these means supple and tender. Lastly, they scraped off the hair, and roasted or broiled it upon the fire. And being thus cooked they cut it into small morsels, and eat it, helping it down with frequent gulps of water, which by good fortune they had near at hand.”

Fifth day—

About noon on the fifth day the Buccaneers had gotten as far as *Barbacoa*, the present Barbacoas, where the Panama Railroad crosses the Chagres river, and a midway point across the Isthmus. Here were signs of another ambuscade, but not a particle to eat. Several plantations in the neighborhood were narrowly searched, but not an animal or any food found. After searching up and down the river they found a grotto, lately hewn out of a rock,

THE SACK OF PANAMA

"in which they found two sacks of meal, wheat and like things, with two great jars of wine, and certain fruits called Platanos."

Morgan, wisely, distributed this food among those who were in the greatest need. They then advanced again with greater courage, and late at night arrived at a deserted plantation, where they rested until morning.

Sixth day—

They continued their progress, partly in canoes, and partly by land through the woods; but constrained to rest frequently on account of the ruggedness of the way and their great weakness. The men were in such extremity of hunger that they ate the leaves of trees, grass, and green herbs.

"This day, at noon, they arrived at a plantation, where they found a barn full of maize. Immediately they beat down the doors, and fell to eating of it dry, as much as they could devour. Afterwards they distributed great quantity, giving to every man a good allowance thereof."

About an hour after resuming their journey, they ran into an ambuscade of Indians, who retreated before them, and were routed by the Forlorn (the advance guard) under Captain Thomas Rogers. Some of the Buccaneers crossed the river and pursued a body of about one hundred on the other side, hoping to catch a few of them. The nimble Indians easily avoided the Buccaneers, and killed two or three of them with their arrows; at the same time taunting them with cries of *Ha! perros, a la savana, a la savana. Ha! ye dogs, go to the plain, go to the plain.*

The Buccaneers had now traveled as far on the northern or east bank of the river as it was necessary to go, so went into camp for the night at a post called *Santa Cruz*. Many murmured against Captain Morgan for his conduct of the enterprise, and were desirous to return home, but a guide comforted them, saying: *It would not be long before they met with people, from whom they should reap some considerable advantage.*

Seventh day—

The next morning the Buccaneers cleaned their arms, and each man discharged his pistol or musket, without bullet, to test his firelock. They then crossed the Chagres in their canoes, and continued their march, in an easterly direction, on the south side of the river. Smoke was seen ahead, and they

Four hundred seventeen

HENRY MORGAN AND

hurried forward, and at noon arrived all sweating and panting at the village of *Cruz*, the modern Cruces. The smoke ascending from each house led them to hope for good cheer within, but the Spaniards, as usual, had taken their departure and left no eatables behind. Before leaving, each man had set fire to his own house, excepting only the store-houses and stables belonging to the King.

The Buccaneers found a few cats and dogs, which they immediately killed and devoured; and in the King's stable were fifteen or sixteen jars of Peru wine, and a leather sack full of bread. In their half starved condition, the wine made the men sick, and caused them to think it was poisoned, which created much consternation for a time.

Morgan concealed one of his canoes and sent the rest back to where he had left his boats, not caring to weaken his force by leaving enough men at Cruces to defend them.

Contrary to orders, a party of English left the village in search of food, but were driven back by Spaniards and Indians, who captured one of them.

By reason of the sickness of his men, Morgan was compelled to remain at Cruces until the next morning.

“This village is situated in the latitude of nine degrees and two minutes, North, being distant from the river of Chagre [mouth of the Chagres] twenty-six Spanish leagues, and eight from Panama.”

Eighth day—

At Cruces, Morgan left the river and started south towards the city of Old Panama. He sent out an advance guard of two hundred men to give warning of the enemy.

Exquemelin complains of the road being so narrow that only ten or twelve men could march in a file; but at the present time on the Isthmus this would be considered a very fine highway. As a matter of fact, that old Camino Real was the best roadway the Isthmus ever had.

After marching ten hours, and reaching a spot called *Quebrada Obscura*, they suddenly received a flight of three or four thousand arrows from unseen foes.

“The place whence it was presumed they were shot was a high rocky mountain, excavated from one side to the other, wherein was a grotto that went through it,

Four hundred eighteen

THE SACK OF PANAMA

only capable of admitting one horse, or other beast laded."

The firing ceased, and the Buccaneers advanced and entered a wood, when they saw some Indians fleeing. One band of Indians, however, stood their ground, and fought with huge courage till their chief fell mortally wounded. The Buccaneers had eight men killed, and ten wounded. Shortly after, while passing through a savana, they perceived a party of Indians on top of a mountain. Fifty of the most active among the Buccaneers tried to catch some of them, but the Indians vanished, only to reappear in another place, hallooing to the English: *A la savana, a la savana corundos, perros Ingleses!*

A little further on, Morgan avoided an ambuscade in a wood, and saw a body of Spaniards and Indians on a mountain, but they soon retired and were seen no more. About night there fell a great rain. The Indians had burned the houses thereabouts, and driven away the cattle, so there was neither shelter nor food for the invaders. Notwithstanding, after diligent search, they found a few huts in which a few men from each company kept dry the arms of the remainder of the army. It rained all that night; and those tired, famished men suffered much hardship.

The Spaniards seen this day were the first encountered by the Buccaneers since leaving San Lorenzo. Don Francisco Saludo, with headquarters at Barbacoa, was in command of five hundred men to defend the passage of the Chagres. As the Buccaneers came up the river, Luis de Castillo, Captain of the Mulattos, retired from his post at *Barro Colorado* [opposite Tabernilla] and fell back on his chief at Barbacoa; and the latter very promptly retreated to Cruces. Removing and destroying supplies, and burning houses were wise measures, but not sufficient, without active opposition, to hold back the Buccaneers.

The only resistance offered was by the Indians. Had the Spaniards exhibited the same spirit, and continually harrassed the Buccaneers, those weakened and discouraged men never would have reached Panama.

Ninth day—

At the break of day, "being the ninth of this tedious journey," Morgan continued his march. "For the clouds then hanging as yet over their heads were much more favorable to them than the scorching rays of the sun, by reason the

HENRY MORGAN AND

way was now more difficult and laborious than all the preceding."

In about two hours they saw a body of twenty Spaniards, but could not succeed in capturing any of them. They then came, towards noon, to a high mountain, from the top of which they saw the South Sea, which filled them with joy. This hill has ever since been known as "*El Cerro de los Bucaneros.*" (The Hill of the Buccaneers).

They also descried a ship and six boats sailing from the direction of Panama toward Tovaga and Tovagilla [Taboga and Tabogilla]. Descending this hill, their hungry eyes perceived a little valley filled with cattle. "Here while some were employed in killing and flaying cows, horses, bulls, and chiefly asses, of which there was greatest number, others busied themselves in kindling of fires and getting wood wherewith to roast them. Thus cutting the flesh of these animals into pieces, or gobbets, they threw them into the fire, and half carbonadoed or roasted, they devoured them with incredible haste and appetite. For such was their hunger that they more resembled cannibals than Europeans at this banquet, the blood many times running down from their beards to the middle of their bodies." This was the first square meal since leaving San Lorenzo. It was a stupid blunder on the part of the Spaniards to permit this stock to range within reach of the Buccaneers, so that they could strengthen their weakened bodies and revive their courage. During the meal, Morgan sounded a false alarm, fearing his men might be surprised, which proved to be a wise precaution. After satisfying their hunger, the Buccaneers resumed their march. Morgan was anxious to take some prisoners, that he might extract from them, by torture if necessary, the condition and forces of Panama.

In the evening they discovered a troop of two hundred Spaniards, and soon after they had their first sight of the highest steeple of the city. The Buccaneers leaped and yelled for joy, and sounded their trumpets and drums. In great content they went into camp, waiting in impatience for the morning to come to attack the city. About fifty horsemen, preceded by a sweet sounding trumpeter, issued from the city, and came almost within musket-shot of the Buccaneers, and shouted "*Perros! Nos Veremos.*" (Dogs! we will see you again). A few of the horsemen hovered about them as scouts, while the two hundred previously seen, re-appeared, and placed themselves so as to cut off retreat. Panama began shooting with

THE SACK OF PANAMA

her biggest guns, and kept up a useless firing all during the night. The Buccaneers placed sentries about their camp, made a hearty supper off the meat which they had reserved since noon, and laid themselves down to sleep upon the grass with great repose.

Tenth day—*The Capture of Panama, comprising the Battle of the Savana, and the Assault on the City.*

January 18th, 1671 (January 27th, according to Exquemelin), being the tenth day after leaving San Lorenzo, the Buccaneers fought the battle of Old Panama, and captured the city. The battle began early in the morning, and was executed in two stages; the first, being the destruction of the Spanish cavalry and rout of the wild cattle on the Savana, which lasted two hours; and the second stage, which comprised the assault and capture of the city, lasting three hours; and terminating at noon; or at three o'clock, as some say.

When the Governor (then called the President) of Panama heard of the continued advance of the Buccaneers, and retreat of Saludo, he left his sick bed and took the field in person. He writes—"In this conjunction having had the misfortune to have been lately Blooded three times for an *Erysipelas* I had in my right Leg, I was forced to rise out of my Bed and march to Guiabel [on the Cruces road] with the rest of the People, which I had raised in Panama." He soon returned to Panama with all his forces, and prepared to repel the Buccaneers. "But what was Don Juan Perez de Guzman doing while Morgan was on his way up the Chagre, after capturing the high-mounted castle of San Lornezo? Masses were being said daily for the success of the Spanish Arms. The images of our lady of pure and immaculate conception were being carried in general procession, attended by all the religious fraternity of the cathedral. Always the most holy sacrament was left uncovered and exposed to public view. Oaths were being taken with much pious fervor in the presence of the sacred effigies, and all the president's relics and jewelry, including a diamond ring worth forty thousand pesos, were laid on the altars of the holy virgin and of the saints, who held in their special keeping the welfare of Panamá." (Bancroft).

Early in the morning, with drums beating and trumpets sounding, the Buccaneers advanced in orderly array towards the city. They marched under the English flag, and Morgan held his commission from the Governor and Council of Jamaica,

Four hundred twenty-one

HENRY MORGAN AND

so their status was that of privateers operating on land, or authorized guerrillas.

By the advice of his guide, Morgan did not follow the main road, but took another way that went through the woods. Very often the Buccaneers were indebted to the Indians for the success of their enterprises, and this guide was probably that Indian who was brought from St. Catherine. This flanking movement disarranged the Spanish plan of battle, so that they were forced to leave their batteries and ambuscades which commanded the Camino Real, and form upon the plain. The Governor, therefore, drew up his men in battle array on the Savana in front of the city.

The Spanish forces consisted of two squadrons of horse, amounting to four hundred men; twenty-four companies of foot, of one hundred men each; and "sixty Indians and some negroes." Morgan mustered about twelve hundred men for the attack. "The Pirates being now upon their march, came to the top of a little hill, whence they had a large prospect of the city and campaign country underneath." This hill afterwards came to be known as "*El Cerro de Avance*" (the Hill of the Advance). When they saw the large Spanish force drawn up to receive them, they were filled with fear. They knew no quarter could be expected, and there were few or none but what wished themselves at home. The Spanish army was not made up simply of merchants, planters and servants, but contained, besides, many regular troops; veterans of the wars in Flanders, Sicily, and other countries of Europe.

The Buccaneers moved down the hill in three bodies, the battalion of *boucaniers* being in the van. "The next Morning being the eighteenth, our Admiral gave out very early his Orders, To draw out his Men in Battalia; which was accordingly performed, and they were drawn up in form of a Tertia. The Vanguard, which was led by Lieutenant Colonel Prince, and Major John Morris, was in number three hundred Men. The main body, containing fix hundred Men, the right Wing thereof was led by the Admiral, and the Left by Colonel Edward Collyer. The Rereguard, confisting of three hundred Men, was commanded by Colonel Bleary Morgan." At the same time the Spanish horsemen, commanded by Don Francisco de Haro, advanced on prancing steeds (400 gennets, says one writer), shouting *Viva El Rey* [Long Live the King!] The fine marksmanship of the cattle-hunters largely determined the success of the Buccaneers. The *boucaniers*, comprising the advance battalion of the Buccaneers, dropped on one knee, took deliber-

Four hundred twenty-two



*The Battel Between the
Spaniards and the pyrats or
Buccaniers before the City of
PANAMA. part. 3 : Chap: 6:*

From Exquemelin, *Bucaniers of America*, 1684.

BATTLE OF OLD PANAMA.

This old copper-plate represents the city already in flames before the entry of the Buccaneers.

THE SACK OF PANAMA

ate aim with their long, clumsy muskets, and rapidly emptied the Spanish saddles. The gallant Don Francisco reformed his troop, but fell while leading the charge. All authorities agree that the Spanish cavalry behaved splendidly. No doubt, they included most of the gentry of the Isthmus, descendants of the Conquistadores; excellent horsemen, and superbly mounted.

Though the dry season was well advanced, the heavy rain of two nights before had made the plain soft under foot and full of quags, so that the cavalry could not maneuver and wheel as they desired. The Spanish infantry endeavored to support their cavalry, but, by chance or design, the Buccaneers were so placed that a morass protected them from attack except from the front.

After the horse had been nearly annihilated and repulsed by the Buccaneers, the foot came forward, but met such a furious reception that they never came to handystrokes. Failing likewise with their infantry to overcome the enemy, the Spaniards thought to break their ranks and rout the Buccaneers by over-riding them with a lot of wild cattle. From either flank, a thousand wild bulls in charge of 50 vaqueros, Indians, and negroes, were driven toward the Buccaneers, with the intent, like the elephants of Pyrrhus, to disorganize the foe. Instead of shooting the cattle, Colonel Morgan ordered his men to shoot the cowboys; and the bulls were soon out of control, and stampeded in every direction but towards the Buccaneers. A few half-crazed bulls, excited by the noise and carnage, were attracted by the English colors and charged the standards, goring them into shreds.

The Buccaneers then followed up their advantage, and the Spaniards, thoroughly disheartened, threw down their arms and fled in every direction. The Governor, Don Juan, seeing the left wing under Don Alonso Alcandete giving way, placed himself at the head of the right wing, shouting—according to his own story—"Come along Boys, there is no other remedy now but to Conquer or Die; Follow me!"

He further states that he soon found himself alone, deserted by all his troops. A priest of the great church, called Juan de Dios, came up and persuaded him it was not like a Christian to remain out there all alone and be killed; so he returned to the city, giving thanks to the Blessed Virgin who had brought him off safe from amidst so many thousand bullets.

Many of the Spaniards who hid in the woods, and among the bushes along the seashore, were captured and killed by the

Four hundred twenty-three

HENRY MORGAN AND

Buccaneers. A few Franciscan friars who remained on the battle field to minister to the dying, were brought before Morgan, who ordered them pistolled. Some Spaniards were held as prisoners, including a captain who told Morgan that the city had defences, and its streets were barricadoed with 32 brass guns.

Morgan reviewed his men, and found his losses in killed and wounded very heavy. It was estimated that six hundred Spaniards lay dead on the field. The fight had lasted two hours, and left the Buccaneers victorious on the plain; but the city yet remained to be taken.

Second Stage—The Buccaneers Take The City.

After giving his men a short rest, Morgan proceeded to attack the city. Instead of being depressed by their losses, the Buccaneers were filled with pride that they had overcome such a large body of troops, and renewed their oaths to each other that they would fight till never a man was left alive.

Old Panama was the first settlement by white men on the Pacific coast of the New World, and one of the largest and wealthiest cities of all the Americas. The city was really started by Gaspar de Espinosa, in 1517; but two years later, in 1519. Governor Pedro Arias de Avila—who stole everything he could get hold of—moved over from Antigua on the north coast and appropriated the honor of founding Panama. The name of the fishing hamlet *Panama* (meaning "abounding in fish"), which preceded it, was retained. The streets were laid out in regular form about the Plaza Mayor according to the cardinal points, "so that when the sun rises no one can walk in any of the streets, because there is no shade whatever; and this is felt very much as the heat is intense; and the sun is so prejudicial to health, that if a man is exposed to its rays for a few hours, he will be attacked with a fatal illness, and this has happened to many."

Panama Viejo was built on a rectangular point of land, bordered by low rocky bluffs, which projects into the bay. The sea surrounds it on three sides, and at high tide waters a slough or morass on the landward side, at the mouth of the Rio Algoroba, to cross which the Spaniards had constructed a causeway and stone bridge. The viaduct is yet used by the infrequent visitor to the old ruins, and the South Sea still ebbs and flows beneath the archway over which the pack trains carried the

THE SACK OF PANAMA

wealth of an empire, and across which rushed the Buccaneers to sack the city. These structures, with the old cathedral tower and foundation ruins covered with jungle, are the only visible evidences of former habitation.

At the time of its destruction, the city comprised about seven thousand houses and shacks, and contained in the neighborhood of thirty thousand inhabitants; nearly as populous as the Panama of today, five miles to the westward. It had a large transit trade in the silks, linens, spices and drugs of the East Indies; and received the produce of the west coast from Acapulco, in Mexico, to Lima, in Peru; and furnished those parts with flour, wine, iron, and utensils from Europe. The adjoining waters are shallow, and vessels could come in close to the city, to load and unload, only during high water. At full moon the waves frequently entered the houses in the low part of the town.

The richest commodities were the silver and gold from the Peruvian and other mines, and pearls from the islands in the gulf of Panama. In its prime, Panama Viejo was the greatest mart for gold and silver in the whole world. The great Cathedral of San Gerónimo⁴ and other churches were adorned with massive silver railings and candelabra, golden plate and chalices, and jewelled vestments. Many private houses were of two stories and constructed of cedar or stone. Two hundred residences, belonging to the rich officials and merchant princes, were of European elegance, finely furnished, with rich carvings and rare paintings. The wealthy had villas and gardens in the savannahs, like the same class of Panamanians of today.

Most writers, following Exquemelin and Burney, state that Panama lay open and accessible to plain fighting, because it did not have the defence of walls and regular fortifications. This misrepresents and belittles the strength of the city; for on account of its protection by the sea, and large population, Panama was really a formidable place to capture.

Since the days of Drake and Cavendish, no foe had menaced Spain in the South Sea, and the only probable route for an enemy to approach was by the slow and dangerous march across the Isthmus, or up the Chagres river. This gave the Spaniards plenty of time in which to prepare to repel the

⁴ San Francisco, according to the letter of Governor Guzman. Confusion has arisen among English writers from translating *iglesia mayor* as necessarily meaning the cathedral church. See note 20, chap. I.

HENRY MORGAN AND

invasion. That the people of Panama failed in this instance is to be ascribed to their over-confidence, the incompetence of the Governor and other officers, and to too great reliance on masses and religious processions.

Authorities agree that it took three more hours for the Buccaneers to get possession of the city, but differ as to the amount of resistance offered by the Spaniards. As the Buccaneers advanced, the city opened fire on them with her defenses. There appears to have been several batteries, one of which was so situated as to command the road over the causeway. Details of the fight are wanting. The Buccaneers rushed over the bridge and took the gate-house, and fort nearby. Another party probably entered the town by the low ground to the north. Trenches had been dug across the streets and barricades constructed, which had to be approached carefully, and carried. The batteries had been so placed as to command the main approaches, while the musket-men fired from the upper windows.

The last stand was made in the Great Plaza, where the Spaniards fired their battery and killed four Buccaneers, and wounded five more. The Governor caused his chiefest fort to be blown up, which was done in such haste that it carried with it forty of his best soldiers.

The Governor in his report, writes: "After this I endeavored with all my industry to persuade the Soldiers to turn and face our Enemies, but it was impossible; so that nothing hindering them, they entered the City, to which the Slaves and Owners of the Houses had put Fire, and being all of Boards and Timber, 'twas most of it quickly burnt, except the Audiencia, the Governor's House, the Convent of the Mercedes, San Joseph, the Suburbs of Malambo, and Pierde Vidas, at which they say the Enemy fretted very much for being disappointed of their Plunder. And because they had brought with them an English Man, whom they called The Prince, with intent there to Crown him King of the Terra Firma."

According to Captain Sharp's narrative, the Buccaneers had five killed and ten wounded while entering the city. He gives the Spanish loss as four hundred men, which would indicate that no quarter was given. The Governor, with most of the people who had not already departed, managed to escape from the city, but some of the populace still remained.

Henry Morgan had made good his boast, uttered at Porto

THE SACK OF PANAMA

Bello two years before, to call upon the President of Panama, and with small arms take his city.

The Spaniards did not defend their city with the energy and desperation to be expected of people protecting their homes. Had they fought with half the spirit and bravery exhibited by the garrison at San Lorenzo, the Buccaneers might have reached the city, but there would have been few left to rejoin their companions at Chagre. It seems that the authorities of Panama had planned to exterminate the Buccaneers in the Sabanas in front of the city. "A la savana" was the taunting cry from Chagre to Panama. When this failed, and their best troops, the Spanish cavaliers, were nearly annihilated, the defenders were thoroughly disheartened.

The Spaniards first blundered in not harassing the Buccaneers while toiling up the Chagres, and passing through the hills between Cruces and Panama; and again, when they fought upon the plain, instead of making a defensive fight from behind stone walls and barricades. The Buccaneers had no artillery, a fact of which the Spaniards were well aware. Every church, and each of the eight convents, the Audiencia, the Royal stables where the *recuas* were kept, the palace of the Genoese, and many private houses and places of business were thick-walled and barred, and capable of effective defence. I have gathered the impression that the Spanish foot was poorly armed; but that was only another reason for not opposing well-armed and skillful warriors in the open.

When the Buccaneers came into complete possession of the city, which was not later than three o'clock in the afternoon, fires were discovered in a number of places, and by midnight most of Panama was consumed. Two churches, and three hundred houses in the suburbs, were saved. Spaniards have always claimed that Panama was secretly fired by order of Morgan. The pirate-chronicler, Exquemelin, and also von Archenholtz, confirm this charge. On the other hand, Morgan himself, and English writers generally, say the Spaniards burnt their city; and English official papers substantiate their assertions.

After considerable reading and study of the case, I can find no reason why Morgan should burn the city before he had a chance to pillage, and hold it a time for ransom, as was the custom. Henry Morgan was that rare bird, a thrifty Buccaneer. He knew of the pending treaty between England and Spain, saw that piracy was doomed, and determined to make

HENRY MORGAN AND

his fortune, at any hazard, as soon as possible, and get out of the business. His men needed the shelter and protection of the houses, and the provisions therein, and it is not likely that Morgan would wantonly destroy a probable source of revenue. Had the burning occurred as the Buccaneers departed from Panama, and with the present data, everyone would believe Morgan guilty. As it is, I do not believe that Morgan or his men fired Panama. It is just possible that the statement of the Governor is true, and that the Spaniards credited the report about a young Englishman, and fired their houses with their own hands, rather than see an English Prince crowned King of Tierra Firme in the Spanish capital of the South Sea.

My opinion is, that Old Panama was set on fire, in the confusion of the moment, by Indian and African slaves, both of whom held racial and personal reasons for avenging themselves upon their Spanish masters. Anyhow, it was not the wish of the mass of the Buccaneers to see their loot destroyed before they had a chance to plunder, so they assisted the remaining citizens in trying to extinguish the fire by blowing up houses with gunpowder, and tearing down others. Panama burnt for days: and a month later, when the Buccaneers took their departure, the ruins were still smouldering. Some negro slaves are reported to have lost their lives during the fire, probably from being locked up. When they saw that the city was doomed, guards were placed, and the men withdrew to the *sabanas* and rested. At night-fall they re-entered the desolated city, and sought lodging in such houses as were not destroyed. The wounded were placed in one of the churches which had escaped the flames.

After taking a town, the first instinct of the Buccaneers was to get drunk quickly. Many times they lost valuable booty by first seeking the wine cellars. At Panama, one of the first acts of Morgan was to forbid his men drinking any wine, telling them that he had received warning that it had all been poisoned. "This dexterous falsehood produced the desired effect; and for the first time the Free-booters were temperate." (von Archenholtz). This was no needless precaution, as parties of Spaniards were still hovering in the *Sabanas*, and might rally their forces at any time, and catch the Buccaneers in a drunken stupor.

When the Buccaneers appeared before Panama, many of the citizens placed themselves and valuables aboard vessels in the bay, and awaited the result of the battle. The evening the city

THE SACK OF PANAMA

was taken, a bark which had delayed her departure for the turn of the tide, fell into the hands of the Buccaneers. Morgan placed twenty-five men on her, under command of Captain Searles, with orders to cruise about the bay. The next day they landed on Taboga, and in the evening captured a party of mariners who were getting water for a ship that was lying on the other side of the island. His men also found some wine in a gentleman's country house, and proceeded to get drunk in regulation pirate style. Captain Searles feared to attack the Spanish ship with his befuddled crew, so waited till morning.

The Spanish commander, Don Francisco de Peralta, becoming alarmed at the prolonged absence of his men, slipped away during the night. The next day the Buccaneers had the chagrin of learning that the Spanish vessel was the "*Trinidad*" of four hundred tons, carrying bullion for ballast, and having on board the old gentlemen and matrons of Panama, with friars and nuns, to the number of fifteen hundred; together with their most precious valuables, and church ornaments and jewels. The *Trinidad* contained one of the richest cargoes ever floated, being comparable in value to the *Cacafuego*, *Madre de Dios*, and *Santa Anna*. Hard luck seems to have followed Captain Searles, for a few years later we read of him cutting log-wood in the lagoons of Campechy, where he was killed by one of his company.

The *Trinidad* (Trinity) was an old half-rigged galleon, having no sails but topsails on the mainmast, and deeply laden. She was poorly manned, and armed only with seven small guns, and a dozen muskets. When Morgan heard of this rich prize almost within his grasp, he manned four barks and sent them out to look for her. They searched about the Gulf of Panama for eight days, but heard no more of the treasure-ship. They picked up a few small prizes, and returning to Taboga, captured a good ship lately come from Payta, containing provisions and twenty thousand pieces-of-eight. It is stated that the church-plate and jewelled vestments belonging to the great cathedral were hidden on Taboga, and that to this day their hiding place remains undiscovered.

At the same time, Morgan sent a convoy of one hundred and fifty men back to Chagre with the news of his victory; and parties, of two hundred each, to scour the savannahs and hills for twenty leagues around, to look for loot and bring in prisoners of both sexes. These detachments divided and weakened

Four hundred twenty-nine

HENRY MORGAN AND

his forces, and gave the Spaniards another opportunity to take the Buccaneers at a disadvantage, and whip them piecemeal.

As the ashes of Panama cooled, the Buccaneers searched the ruins for gold and silver. They also found money and jewelry hidden in the wells and cisterns. Two hundred prisoners, of both sexes, were subjected to fiendish and exquisite tortures to make them disclose the hiding place of their own or their neighbors' valuables. Several warehouses well stocked with all sorts of goods escaped the conflagration. One poor wretch, a simpleton, servant to a wealthy gentleman, took advantage of the occasion to discard his rags and don his master's finery. The Buccaneers found him strutting around with a silver key suspended from his belt. They asked where his wealth was concealed, and refused to believe him when he showed them his ragged clothes. They put him upon the rack, wherewith they disjointed his arms, twisted a cord about his head till his eyes bulged out, singed his beard, and cut off his nose and ears; but still no confession. When so nearly dead that he could no longer lament his misery, a slave was ordered to run him through with a lance.

Beautiful woman has ever adorned, if she did not instigate, most of the notable events in the history of the world. The woman who graces the tragedy of Old Panama loses nothing by comparison with other famous females. "Her years were but few, and her beauty so great as peradventure I may doubt whether in all Europe any could be found to surpass her perfections either of comeliness or honesty." Her name, I regret to state, has been lost, but we know that she was a lady of quality, the young wife of a wealthy merchant then on a business trip to Peru. She was taken prisoner on Taboga, whither she had fled from Panama, and was brought before Morgan, who fixed her ransom and exemption from indignity at thirty thousand pesos. Her charms inflamed the passion of the Buccaneer commander, and he sought to win her favor by kindness and gentle treatment. He housed her in the best quarters remaining unburnt, assigned slave girls in attendance, and showered her with pearls and jewelry filched from her own countrywomen. She had heard much of the fierceness and cruelty of the pirates, but when she found herself treated well, and heard frequent mention of the name of God and of Jesus Christ by the cursing Buccaneers, she began to have better thoughts of them. Morgan soon undeceived her by disclosing his design; when she replied: "Sir, my life is in your hands; but as to

THE SACK OF PANAMA

my body, in relation to that which you would persuade me to, my soul shall sooner be separated from it, through the violence of your arms, than I shall condescend to your request." Morgan then had her stripped of her finery and confined in a dark cellar, and fed upon miserable fare. Tiring of her chastity, he attempted force; but faced a desperate woman who preferred death to ravishment. "Stop," she cried, "Thinkest thou then that thou canst ravish my honor from me, as thou hast wrested from me my fortune and my liberty? Be assured that I can die, and be revenged." Saying which, she drew a poniard from beneath her gown, and would have plunged it into his heart, had he not avoided the blow. Her treatment by Morgan, who was never popular, excited the remonstrance of his men; and it was probably only the fear of them which preserved the woman inviolate.

In contrast to this, we have the story of a woman of weak understanding, who had been told that Pirates were not like ordinary men,⁸ but were monstrous beasts, "who did neither invoke the blessed Trinity, nor believe in Jesus Christ." After an experience with them, she exclaimed: "Oh Holy Mary! These thieves be just like us Spaniards in every respect." There is no doubt but that the women were brutally assaulted; but this again is denied by some English writers, who claim that no woman was forced against her will.

In a couple of weeks the convoy returned from Chagre, leaving their canoes at Venta Cruz. They brought the pleasing news that the garrison of San Lorenzo had not been idle, but had lured a rich ship from Cartagena into port by raising the Spanish colors over the castle. The vessel carried several chests of emeralds, and a lot of provisions much needed by the garrison.

The Buccaneers remained nearly a month in Panama, during which time as many as three thousand prisoners are said to have been gathered in. Probably this is an exaggeration. Many were put to the torture, while others ransomed themselves as

⁸ They say some Spanish *padres* told the people that the Buccaneers were not even of human form, and that they ate women and children. Raveneau de Lussan, on another occasion, relates how a Spanish lady implored him, "Señor, for the love of God do not eat me." According to his own story, Lussan was entirely successful in disabusing the lady's mind of her false belief as to his human nature. Similar tales were circulated, in 1898-1900, in the Philippines concerning the American soldiers; and the Americanos succeeded equally well with the Filipinas in removing their delusions.

HENRY MORGAN AND

soon as they could communicate with friends. A number of small vessels were seized, and the Buccaneers became fond of cruising about the Gulf of Panama. The exploits of the Elizabethan Seamen in the Pacific were recalled, and Morgan's daring spirits saw the possibilities awaiting them in the South Sea; particularly in the direction of Peru, from whence came the plate-ships. Several of his Captains planned to leave Morgan, and carried provisions and arms aboard ship for that purpose.

It is doubtful whether, as often stated, this was mutinous conduct, as officers and men among the Buccaneers were at liberty to leave when the dangers of an expedition were past. The movement was becoming popular, so that soon they would be strong enough to demand division of the spoils before leaving Panama. This would materially interfere with Morgan's scheme for making away with the major portion of the loot. Accordingly, he chopped down the masts and burnt the vessels in the bay. There were also rumors that the Governor was forming another army to ambuscade the Buccaneers on their return, so Morgan thought it about time to be leaving Panama.

Before relating his departure, let us take our leave of Don Juan Perez de Guzman. After being driven out of Panama, he writes: "After this misfortune, I gave order to all the People I met, that they should stay for me at *Nata*, for there I intended to form the Body of an Army, once more to encounter the English. But when I came to that City, I found not one Soul therein, for all were fled to the Mountains." He then very truly adds: "This Sir, has been a Chastifement from Heaven, and the same might have happened to that great Captain Gonsalo Fernando de Cordova, as did to me, if his Men had deserted him, for one Man alone can do little." In spite of this explanatory letter, the Governor was deposed from office and carried prisoner to Lima, by order of the Vice-roy of Peru. He was succeeded by D. Antonio Fernandez de Cordoba, who was commissioned to rebuild the city on a better site. He died, however, in 1673, without having made the translocation; and was replaced by D. Alonso Mercado de Villacorta, who, in 1674, laid the foundations of the new city, the present Panama, on a point of land at the foot of Ancon Hill, about five miles west of Panama Viejo.

Having plundered every hamlet, *estancia*, and shack, for leagues around, Morgan gathered together pack animals and prepared to leave Panama. February 14th (according to Exquemelin, the 24th), 1671, the Buccaneers departed from the

THE SACK OF PANAMA

desolate and still smouldering city, with six hundred prisoners, including men, women, children and slaves; and one hundred and seventy-five animals laden with loot. Fearing ambuscades, they marched in good order, with van and rear guard, and the prisoners in a hollow square in the center. It was money and not prisoners that Morgan wanted, so he half-starved his captives, and made their lot as miserable as possible, so that they would make greater efforts to seek for ransom; otherwise they would be taken to Jamaica and sold into servitude.

The beautiful lady of quality, before mentioned, was especially guarded by a Buccaneer on either side. She lamented her unhappy fate, and told of authorizing two priests to obtain her ransom. They got the money all right, but applied it to ransoming their own friends. A slave brought a letter telling of their perfidy, and the two priests, who were still prisoners, acknowledged their treachery. Finding her story true, Morgan ordered the woman and her parents to be set at liberty. This is the only apparent generous act that I can find in the entire life of Morgan, and I am inclined to believe that it was induced by the sympathy of his men for the unfortunate lady. This is the last we hear of this admirable woman. Should the people of the Isthmus ever require a model of Beauty and Loveliness, Constancy and Chastity, they need seek no farther than the Beautiful Lady of Old Panama. I know that you will be sorry to hear that those two false priests were ransomed, a few days later, while Morgan tarried at Venta Cruz.

The caravan wended its way up through the foot-hills, and after a last view of Panama and the South Sea, crossed over the divide into the valley of the Chagres, and reached Cruces the next day, February fifteenth. The Buccaneers rested three days at Cruces, waiting for ransoms, and collecting maize and rice. Another account says that they remained here until February twenty-fourth. They then loaded the canoes with the stores, and started down the river, reaching Chagre (the modern Chagres) on the twenty-sixth. Half way to San Lorenzo they made a landing, and Morgan had every man searched for valuables, setting the example himself. One out of each company was assigned to search the rest, and so thoroughly was this done that even the muskets were taken apart to see that no precious stones were concealed therein. This caused much dissatisfaction, especially among the French *fibustiers*.

At San Lorenzo they found all in good shape, except that most of the wounded left behind had died. The plunder was

Four hundred thirty-three

HENRY MORGAN AND

then divided. The spoils of the Panama expedition have been reckoned at several millions, but instead of receiving two or three thousand dollars per man, as they expected, each share amounted to but two hundred pieces-of-eight (two hundred silver dollars). This filled them with chagrin, and anger at their leader. Many of the Buccaneers, including some of the English, did not hesitate to tell Morgan to his face that he had reserved the best jewels for himself.

Morgan sent some of the Spanish prisoners taken at St. Catherine as messengers to Puerto Bello, informing the authorities there that he would destroy the castle of San Lorenzo, if they did not redeem it. Puerto Bello declined to ransom San Lorenzo; so Morgan took the guns aboard his ships, and set his men to work demolishing the fort.

Discontent was growing among the Buccaneers, and Morgan himself was too rich a prize to remain longer with his mutinous crew; so about March 6th he went aboard his ship at night, and sailed away with his English favorites, in three or four vessels, for Jamaica. As Captain Burney truly says, "Morgan was a great rogue, and little respected the old proverb of honor among thieves." Morgan was followed because he was successful; obeyed because he was feared; but never liked or respected by his men.

The French, Dutch and other nationalities left behind at Chagre, fumed in impotent rage, and started to sail after the Englishmen to fight for their share of the booty; but it was found that the remaining ships were the poorest in the fleet, and the plan was abandoned. They then broke up and dispersed. Some went to Honduras and Campeche to cut log-wood, always keeping their weather eye open for a chance to plunder. One party went to Cuba and sacked the Town of the Keys. Our friend, Exquemelin, as his name would indicate, was one of those left in the lurch by Morgan. He accompanied another party of the Buccaneers that went up to *Boca del Toro* (Chiriqui Lagoon), where they lived on turtle, "the pleasantest meat in the world." We next hear of Exquemelin crossing the Isthmus in 1680, with captains Coxon, Sharp, Sawkins, and others, and taking part in the fights before the new Panama.

Morgan arrived safely at Port Royal, and the Governor, Sir Thomas Modyford, collected the Government's share of the spoils of Panama. Morgan then applied himself to recruiting for his settlement on Santa Catalina, but was compelled to desist by the hostile attitude of his government.

THE SACK OF PANAMA

The "Treaty of America," abolishing hostilities between Great Britain and Spain, had been signed at Madrid in July, 1670, and England was experiencing one of her ephemeral outbursts of virtue. The complaints of the Spanish Ambassador were now so effective that Modyford was arrested on the charge of "making war and committing depredations and acts of hostilities upon the subjects and territories of the King of Spain in America, contrary to his Majesty's express order and command." He was taken to London and imprisoned in the Tower. A few months afterwards, in 1672, Morgan was also carried prisoner to England for his connection with buccaneering.

Their arrest was of short duration, and Morgan rose rapidly in royal favor. With a goodly slice of his ill-gotten riches, and judicious presents to the King's favorites, Morgan was able to purchase knighthood from Charles II. John Evelyn notes in his diary: "20th October, 1674. At Lord Berkley's, I discoursed with Sir Thomas Modyford, late Governor of Jamaica, and with Colonel Morgan, who undertook that gallant exploit from Nombre de Dios [an error] to Panama, on the continent of America; he told me 10,000 men would easily conquer all the Spanish Indies, they were so secure. They took great booty, and much greater had been taken, had they not been betrayed and so discovered before their approach, by which the Spaniards had time to carry their vast treasures on board ships that put off to sea in sight of our men, who had no boats to follow. They set fire to Panama and ravaged the country for sixty miles about. The Spaniards were so supine and unexercised, that they were afraid to fire a great gun."

This would seem to indicate that Morgan himself told Evelyn that he had fired Panama. As I said before, I do not believe that the Buccaneers burnt the city. It is likely that in later years Morgan and other Englishmen claimed credit for what came to be looked upon as a meritorious deed. Sir Henry returned to Jamaica in 1675, and led the life of a man of wealth and of affairs in the colony. Officially, he distinguished himself by his severity towards the Buccaneers who had formerly been his followers and the makers of his fortune.

The most accurate and condensed account of Henry Morgan is the article in "National Biography," by Laughton. For the period after his return from Panama, I quote freely: "At Jamaica Morgan received the formal thanks of the Governor and Council on the 31st of May. But meantime, on the 8th of July, 1670, that is, after the signing of Morgan's commission,

Four hundred thirty-five

HENRY MORGAN AND

a treaty concerning America had been concluded at Madrid, and although the publication of this treaty was only ordered to be made in America within eight months from 10th October (Cal. State Papers, A. and W. I., 31 Dec. 1670, p. 146), and though in May, 1671, Modyford had as yet no official knowledge of it (ib. No. 531), he was sent home a prisoner in the summer of 1671, to answer for his support of the buccaneers; and in April, 1672, Morgan was also sent to England in the *Welcome* frigate (ib. No. 794). His disgrace, however, was short. By the summer of 1674 he was reported as in high favor with the King (ib. No. 623), and a few months later he was granted a commission, with the style of Colonel Henry Morgan, to be lieutenant-Governor of Jamaica, 'his Majesty,' so it ran, 'reposing particular confidence in his loyalty, prudence and courage, and long experience of that colony.' (ib. Nov. 6, 1674, No. 1379). He sailed from England in company with Lord Vaughn early in December, having previously, probably in November, been knighted.

His voyage out was unfortunate. 'In the Downs,' wrote Vaughn from Jamaica, on 23 May, 1675, 'I gave him orders in writing to keep me company. * * * However, he, coveting to be here before me, wilfully lost me, and sailed directly for *Isle de la Vache*, where, through his folly, his ship was wrecked, and the stores which he had on board were lost. (Dartmouth MSS., Hist. MSS Comm. 11th Rep. pt. V. p. 25; cf. Bridge, *Annals of Jamaica*, i. 273).

For the rest of his life Morgan appears to have remained in Jamaica, a man of wealth and position, taking an active part in the affairs of the colony as lieutenant-governor, senior member of the Council, and commander-in-chief of the forces. When Lord Vaughn was recalled, pending the arrival of the Earl of Carlisle, Morgan was for a few months acting-governor; and again on Carlisle's return in 1680, till in 1682 he was relieved by Sir Thomas Lynch. "His inclination," said the Speaker in a formal address to the Assembly on 21st July, 1688, "carried him on vigorously to his Majesty's service and this island's interest. His study and care was that there might be no murmuring, no complaining in our streets, no man in his property injured, or of his liberty restrained." (*Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*, i. 121)."

Some time after 1665, Morgan married his first cousin, Mary Elizabeth, daughter of that Colonel Edward Morgan who died at St. Eustatius. Henry Morgan died in 1688, without issue,

THE SACK OF PANAMA

and was buried in St. Catherine's church, Port Royal, on the 26th day of August. Lady Morgan lived until 1696, when the fortune went to Charles Bundless, or Byndlos, the son of her eldest sister, conditionally on his taking the name of Morgan.

Letter of Don *Alonso del Campo* and *Espinosa*, Admiral of the Spanish Fleet, unto Captain *Morgan*, Commander of the Pirates.

"Having understood by all our Friends and Neighbours, the unexpected news, that you have dared to attempt and commit Hostilities in the Countries, Cities, Towns, and Villages belonging unto the Dominions of his Catholick Majesty, my foveraign Lord and Master; I let you understand by these lines, that I am come unto this place, according to my obligation, nigh unto that Castle which you took out of the hands of a parcel of Cowards; where I have put things into a very good posture of defence, and mounted again the Artillery which you had nailed and dismounted. My intent is to dispute with you your passage out of the Lake, and follow and pursue you every-where, to the end you may see the performance of my duty. Notwithstanding if you be contented to surrender with humility all that you have taken, together with the Slaves and all other prisoners, I will let you freely pass, without trouble or molestation; upon condition that you retire home presently unto your own country. But in case that you make any resistance or opposition unto these things that I proffer unto you, I do assure you I will command Boats to come from Caracas, wherein I will put my Troops, and coming to Maracaibo, will cause you utterly to perish, by putting you every man to the sword. This is my last and absolute resolution. Be prudent therefore, and do not abuse my Bounty with Ingratitude. I have with me very good Souldiers, who desire nothing more ardently, than to revenge on you and your People, all the cruelties and base infamous actions you have committed upon the Spanish Nation in America. Dated on board the Royal Ship named the *Magdalen*, lying at anchor at the entry of the Lake of Maracaibo, this 24th day of April, 1669."

—Don Alonso del Campo y Espinosa.

Four hundred thirty-seven

