CHAPTER IV

SIR FRANCIS DRAKE

Any account of Spain's glory in her Isthmian ports of the sixteenth century would be incomplete without the romantic tales of the English pirates who, long before Spain had reached the culmination of her golden era in the western hemisphere, became a menace to the rich galleons throughout the Spanish Main and to the wealth laden mule trains of the Isthmus. Beginning with Sir Francis Drake, we find a galaxy of brilliant adventurers whose bravery, quaint ideas of honor and personal honesty partly compensate for the evil of their calling. A good half dozen of the greatest ones, who followed in Sir Francis' footsteps—Parker, Morgan, Sharp, Ringrose, Wafer and Dampier—found the Isthmus the logical place for their principal operations.

While we cannot reconcile the careers of these knights of the mast and of the tropical Main with our modern standard of ethics, in all fairness to them it must be said that Spain brought much of their ravaging upon herself. Having settled at Santo Domingo in Haiti and in other ports of the West Indies, driving the Indians to the interior or
It was from this tree that the Isthmus of Panama received its name.
killing them off, as best suited her convenience, Spain had become firmly established, and regarded the country as her own. Accordingly she resented the peaceful visits of English, Dutch or French traders who came on some mission of commerce. This resentment grew into open hostility, and eventually into a state of war, which continued vigorously for a hundred and fifty years. Treaties of peace between the mother countries did not serve to lessen this enmity. A Spanish port or a Spanish galleon was considered legitimate prey by the rovers, while the rovers themselves, on a mission peaceful or piratical, were never safe from the Spaniards unless they came in overwhelming numbers.

The English achieved distinction as special objects of Spanish hatred, partly because of the sixteenth century strife between Spain and England, but largely because the English came in greater numbers than did the French and the Dutch adventurers. From this state of semilegitimate warfare, it was but a step to the buccaneering which Drake and his followers openly pursued, winked at, if not licensed, by the home government.

In 1563 Francis Drake, then a lad of eighteen, made a trading trip to the Spanish Main with his cousin, Sir John Hawkins. Forced to put in at Vera Cruz on account of a storm, the English had no sooner arrived than a Spanish squadron hove in
sight. Fearing that they would be treated as pirates, Hawkins made plans to prevent the Spaniards from entering the harbor, and he might have been able to carry out his plans. The Spanish, however, insisted that they meant no harm. Finally they were allowed to enter, and then they treacherously attacked the English. Of the English fleet only two ships escaped, on one of which was Drake. This event Drake always gave as his reason for a lifelong hatred of the Spaniards. If, as it is claimed, Drake recorded an oath on this occasion to make the Spaniards "rue the day," he certainly made them rue it during the subsequent quarter of a century in which he was a terror to every Spanish garrison from Trinidad to Campêche.

In 1572 Drake set out for the Spanish Main with two well equipped ships and seventy-three men. He was not only provisioned for a long stay, but well supplied with all the necessities for a freebooting expedition. It was characteristic of him that he should go prepared for emergencies. Information gained on previous voyages directed him to a secret haven along the Spanish Main from which he could work out what was perhaps the greatest Isthmian raid. The sack of Nombre de Dios, and the capture of the rich plate which was to go via mule train across the Isthmus to be unloaded on ships for Spain, were Drake's two objects.
About three o'clock one morning in the summer of 1572, Drake and his men, most of them youngsters, put into the harbor at Nombre in four small boats. Landing without accident, they spiked the few batteries of the place, and before the townspeople knew what was happening, had attacked Nombre de Dios and secured positions of vantage. Drake charged, the Spaniards fled pell-mell, and the pirates gathered at the governor's palace to seize the plate stored there and to break into the treasure house rilled with precious pearls and gold. But all this took time, and Drake's men, being inexperienced, were almost as confused by the novelty of it all as were the Spaniards. Then came a typical Nombre de Dios shower. It deluged everything, and considerably dampened the ardor of the English. Suddenly it was discovered that Drake was injured, and the pirates, now nearly in a panic, retreated to their boats with only a small part of the booty they could have captured. Undismayed by this near-failure, Drake determined to make good the purpose of his expedition by capturing the Spanish plate on its way across the Royal Road. The plan was to go up the Chagres River to Cruces and waylay the treasure caravans en route from Panama to Nombre de Dios. This treasure, the annual shipment from Peru, was due to go over the Isthmian route about the first of the
year, 1573. Becoming friendly with the Maroon Indians, Drake and his party made the trip to Cruces without incident. Accounts of this trip contrast strangely with the story Esquemeling tells of the hardships which Morgan's expedition underwent a century later. Drake, however, had certain advantages, chief of which was that he was stealing up the river valley unmolested by hostile natives.

- Getting beyond Cruces and almost within sight of the rolling savannas of Panama city, Drake and his party awaited the treasure train. They even sent a spy into the city to learn the time the caravan was to start. But the indiscretion of a member of the Drake party spoiled all the well laid plans. He allowed himself to be seen by a Spanish horseman who, becoming suspicious, advised a ruse. The experiment of changing the order of the mules was made. Instead of sending in front the fourteen mules that were loaded with gold and jewels, they were shifted far to the rear, while the beasts that bore unimportant baggage were sent ahead.

The English fell upon the caravan when it first reached their ambush. This gave ample time for the rest of the caravan to make a safe retreat into Panama with the precious cargo. When the pandemonium following the sudden attack had subsided and the pirates had time to realize their mistake, they fell back upon Cruces and attacked it. But
the warehouses of the place were almost empty and Drake got little out of the raid.

Disappointed again when untold wealth seemed almost within his grasp, Drake became desperate in his desire to make his expedition a success. The treasure caravan had yet to make the trip across the Isthmus, and the only thing left was to waylay it. Retreating from the Isthmus, Drake was successful, with the help of the Indians, in making it appear that he had left the Spanish Main for good.

Accepting as a partner Captain Tetu, a French pirate with twenty men, Drake with his own diminished force of thirty sneaked back into the Isthmus by way of the Francisco River. It was a long way to Nombre de Dios, but the adventurers managed to creep up unnoticed until they were almost within hailing distance of the town. They were just in time, for the mule trains were now coming along with bells tinkling; and their guardians had no thought of danger. With a sudden swoop, Drake’s force fell upon the richly laden caravan. The thirty Spanish foot soldiers were overcome and the bulk of the treasure captured.

How much wealth the pirates took on this raid is not known, but an old chronicler puts it at "thirty tons of silver." In addition there were precious jewels and much gold. It would be safe, perhaps, to estimate the value of the booty at one hundred
thousand dollars. Of course, they could not carry it all away, and much of it was buried, as it was necessary to beat a hasty retreat before the Spaniards could recover.

The sheer audacity of Drake’s successful attempt is evident when it is remembered that he had scarcely more than half a hundred men and was many miles from his base. Captain Tetu, the French pirate, had been wounded, and it was necessary to leave him behind in the forest with two comrades to guard him. One of the men later escaped to tell a horrible story of how the Spaniards had captured them and had slain his two companions.

By the middle of the summer of 1573 Drake, with his two vessels heavy laden with spoils, was back in England. It was by no means his last voyage against the Spanish. He raided Nombre de Dios again in 1595, burning the town. It was at Nombre de Dios that Drake contracted the flux of which he died. Off the harbor at Porto Bello, which he sacked in 1595, following his final raid at Nombre de Dios, the old Admiral’s body was lowered to rest in Davy Jones’s locker, which has served as the tomb for so many adventurers of the Spanish Main.
CHAPTER V

MORGAN'S Isthmian Raids

If the Spaniards had cause to fear Sir Francis Drake during his activity along the Spanish Main, they also had occasion to recall him and to heap imprecations upon his memory during the century following his death. The success of his raids opened up new roads to power and to wealth for many an adventurous English sea-dog. For a century after Drake, preying upon Spanish commerce and Spanish ports in the New World became a recognized occupation.

The hazardous features of the life were offset by the prospect of enormous gain, while the adventure itself held strong attraction for the roving spirits of that day.

The term "buccaneer" was brought into the English language by these terrors of Spanish America. Leading a rough life when ashore, the pirates "boucanned" their meat after the manner of the Indians along the coast of Brazil; that is, they cured their fresh meat by placing it on a grating above their camp fires, smoking it with the fumes of burning
green sticks. They ate the meat, thus cured, without further cooking.

The ports of the Isthmus of Panama were never free from danger during the hundred and fifty years when the pirates were operating in the New World. The menace became so great that for a time the Royal Road from Panama to Nombre de Dios and Porto Bello was almost abandoned, the vast wealth of Peru finding its way to Spain via the Strait of Magellan. But in 1579, Drake made his memorable voyage around the Horn and wrought such havoc upon Spanish galleons that commerce once more shifted to the Isthmian route as the less dangerous.

Of all the pirates who visited the Isthmus on missions of pillage after Drake's time, Henry Morgan is perhaps best known, partly because of the devastation he wrought and partly because of the interesting and detailed account which Esquemeling has left us. Morgan was a Welshman without means. In 1665 he joined with Mansvelt, a pirate of Dutch extraction, to colonize the island of Santa Katalina off the Nicaraguan coast as a rendezvous for buccaneers. Mansvelt died without completing the project, and the island was captured by a Spanish expedition under the governor of Panama. It is interesting to note that the English prisoners seized at the capture were taken to Porto Bello, where they were set to work in constructing Iron Castle, one of
the strongholds which Morgan captured a few years later.

Morgan was in Jamaica at the time Santa Catalina fell and was not seriously handicapped by its loss. Indeed, he had gained so much prestige by his alliance with Mansvelt that shortly afterward he was able to lead a piratical expedition of twelve ships and seven hundred men, English and French, against the town of Puerto del Principe in Cuba. This was in 1665, ten years after Jamaica was seized by the English. The fact that the island now belonged to England meant much to Morgan and to subsequent freebooters. Unlike Drake, they were never too far from an operating base, and if it became necessary to have a show of authority for their operations, they could generally get a commission from the governor of Jamaica. It was on the pretense that the Spanish were intending to attack the island that Morgan now planned his raid against Porto Bello.

It was only four years less than a century after Drake's famous voyage against the Atlantic ports of the Isthmian trade-route, when Morgan set out with a fleet of nine sail and four hundred sixty military men to plunder Porto Bello. This was no small undertaking, to go against such a stronghold, nestled securely in its fort-girdled harbor, well garrisoned and only sixty miles from Panama, where there was a larger force.
Esquemeling tells the story of the sack of Porto Bello in form as accurate as we are able to get it. He was himself a pirate, probably Dutch; he was on the Morgan raids of 1668–1671, and he wrote his account seven years after. The pirates, according to Esquemeling, anchored their ships about ten leagues from the city, and then entered small boats. Going ashore some time after midnight, they came upon the outermost sentry, whom they bound securely, and plied with questions as to the strength of the garrison. Advancing toward the city the buccaneers came to an outlying castle, which they surrounded, and made demands for a quiet surrender. But the garrison opened fire, arousing the whole town.

The fort was easily taken. Morgan, perhaps incensed because it had not surrendered quietly, allowed his men to blow up the fort with all the Spaniards therein, after they had been assembled in one room for that purpose. By this time all Porto Bello was in an uproar. Soldiers hurried to the guns and battlements, excited citizens rushed to places of protection, pausing to cast their money and jewels into cisterns and wells. The governor was unable, because of the confusion, to rally his people, and so retired to one of the castles and began a steady fire on the pirates.

From this time on the battle was in deadly earnest
and lasted from break of day until noon. The attack centered about the castle in which the governor had taken his stand. Attempts to burn it were frustrated by the Spaniards, who threw down pots of burning metal upon the pirates. Attempts at scaling the walls were equally futile until Morgan adopted a most inhuman trick. Early in the struggle a number of nuns and friars had been seized. Hastily constructing some scaling ladders, Morgan’s men forced these religious people to place them on the walls, expecting that the governor would not fire on his own people. He was mistaken, however, for the poor souls, while pushed forward by the pirates to place the ladders, were fired upon by their own people. They “sent their wails heavenward and died agonizing deaths.” The scheme was successful. With the ladders so placed it was possible for the pirates to capture the castle, which meant the fall of the city. The bravery of the governor is extolled by Esquemeling, who says that he refused quarter and died defending the fort, despite the pleadings of his wife and his daughter. For fifteen days the pirates stayed at Porto Bello, sacking, reveling and engaging in all manner of excesses. Then Morgan demanded and received from the citizens a ransom of $125,000. The governor of Panama sent a small company of soldiers to the aid of Porto Bello, but they were driven back by the pirates at a pass out-
side the city. After that the Panama executive left the place to its fate.

The sack of Porto Bello completed, Morgan returned to the West Indies to live in rioting and debauchery. The wealth the pirates had seized did not last long, however, and inside two years Morgan found it necessary to get up another expedition. The success of his Porto Bello raid had given him a reputation, so he did not have to call twice for volunteers. Indeed, pirates from all over the Indies flocked to the Isle of Tortuga, which he had appointed as a rendezvous. Here, on October 24, 1670, Morgan was made admiral of an enormous expedition and drew up the terms of contract for one of the biggest raids ever attempted. There were thirty-seven ships and two thousand pirates.

At the head of such a force, Morgan was no longer a freebooting pirate without means or influence. He carried letters from the Jamaican government and gave his expedition the formality of legal sanction by furnishing each of his captains with letters which permitted them to capture any Spanish vessels on the high seas or to go against any Spanish port. In fact, some English writers choose to consider him the saviour of the English West Indies at this time. Morgan's position is in strong contrast with his position in the Porto Bello raid.

At the conference in Tortuga three places were
discussed as objective points for the raid — Vera Cruz, Cartagena and Old Panama. The last mentioned was finally chosen. On its way to the Isthmus the Morgan expedition stopped at the island of Santa Katalina which Mansvelt had planned to make a piratical stronghold a few years before. The place was now in the hands of the Spaniards, but with little difficulty Morgan’s men captured it — the Spanish governor making a deal to surrender after a make-believe attack and defense which were arranged to deceive the Spanish governor at Panama. While the bulk of Morgan’s expedition tarried at this island, Captain Brodley, one of his lieutenants, with four ships and four hundred men, set out to take Fort San Lorenzo at the mouth of the Chagres River. It was a small expedition for so large an undertaking, and the wonder is how they ever managed to take that great natural stronghold. Morgan must have had great confidence in Brodley’s ability, for Esquemeling says the expedition was “no larger lest the Spaniards should become aware of the later designs upon Panama.” Had Brodley failed, the great raid against Panama would have been well-nigh impossible.

On the seaward side of Castle Chagre, or Fort San Lorenzo, is a ravine which separates the natural bluff of Lorenzo from the hill opposite. This ravine is about sixty feet deep and is the valley of a little
stream which here trickles into the small bay at the east of the fort. It was on to this barren slope opposite Fort Lorenzo that Captain Brodley and his men suddenly pounced one afternoon. They had secreted their vessels down shore and crept upon the fort through the mangrove swamps.

Despite their attempts at surprise, the Spanish garrison was ready, and with cries of "Come on, you English heretics; you shall not get to Panama this bout," the Spaniards met the first charge of the pirates with a terrific fire. The stubborn defense compelled the English to retire into the jungle and to await the passing of daylight. Then the pirates renewed their attack; again and again Brodley's men rushed across the ravine under a withering fire from the fort. Almost a fourth of the pirates were dead and no headway had been made toward the capture of Chagre.

Finally, so the story goes, a pirate running across the ravine in a stooping posture was struck in the back with an arrow. Drawing it out, he wrapped its shaft with cotton for a wad, and placing it in his musket, shot it back over the wooden palings which formed the palisades of the fort. The cotton had ignited from the discharge of the gun. By the merest chance the blazing arrow struck in the vicinity of a palm thatch close to a powder magazine. Unnoticed by the Spaniards, the fire gained headway,
FORT LORENZO OF TO-DAY

Interior View

Old Guns

Entrance

Tower on Summit

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until a terrific explosion brought the garrison running to the scene. Thus the guns guarding the palisades were left unmanned and the pirates were able to set fire to the rows of wooden palings. The English then retired to the woods to watch the palisades burn. When the fire abated, the pirates saw that a perfect slope of earth ran from the bottom of the ravine to the top of the outer walls; by rushing up that slope they could reach the inside of the fort.

Until morning Brodley's men contented themselves with picking off Spanish soldiers who were exposed in the bright light of the blazing fort. The second day dawned with everything in favor of the English, but the brave Spanish garrison had not given up. Just as if the walls still protected them, the garrison maintained a steady fire from the guns. But by noon the vigor of the English attack began to tell; the last stand had been made at the inner castle on the top of the fort; the governor had been killed; all but forty of the garrison of three hundred and fourteen were dead; the pirates had lost more than a hundred killed and seventy wounded. Of the mere handful of Spaniards left alive, some eight or ten had slipped away to carry the news of English success up the Chagres River to Panama.

A few days later Morgan's main force from Santa Katalina hove in sight of Fort San Lorenzo. It is said that when the pirate fleet saw the English colors,
their joy was so great that the crews of four of the ships allowed their vessels to drift on to the reef which runs out from the opposite bank of the river. A storm came up and the four ships were beaten to pieces on the coral beach. Most of their cargo was saved, however, and plans went on apace for the trip up the Chagres to Panama. Morgan rebuilt Fort Lorenzo, repaired the palisades, rethatched the huts, and left a garrison of five hundred pirates to hold the place as a base of operations while, with twelve hundred men, he started out on his memorable trip across the Isthmus. The start was made on January 18, 1671.

Of the hardships of this ten-day march across the Isthmus, Esquemeling has left us a graphic account. The pirates were unable to carry provisions, and since the Spaniards and Indians had devastated the country before them and had destroyed every source of food supply in sight, the English suffered the extreme of hunger and of thirst. A tropical jungle is repellent to human beings. How much of a death trap it must have seemed to the pirates, who stumbled ahead with the knowledge that hostile eyes might be peering at them from every bit of foliage and that the inhabitants of the country, both white men and red, considered them enemies whose death by starvation would be almost too easy a fate!

In a vivid picture Esquemeling convinces us that these ten days were days of terrible hardship. "The
Spaniards, being every one fled and leaving nothing behind them unless it was a small number of leather bags, our hunger grew so sharp that it did gnaw our very bowels." On the fifth day the pirates reached Barba- coas, on the seventh day Cruces and on the ninth they were fortunate enough to find some bread and wine in the storehouses belonging to the king. Most of them fell sick after eating and believed themselves poisoned. However, it was only the natural sickness following excess in eating after a forced period of fasting.

Coming upon the rolling green savannas before the royal city of Panama, the pirates saw a sudden end to their days of hunger. Without stopping to contemplate the beautiful picture of Old Panama nestled in her peaceful bay, they fell upon the grazing asses, cattle, and horses and satisfied their gnawing appetites. On the tenth day the buccaneers advanced toward Panama, whose possession was to be disputed with the flower of Spanish chivalry, consisting of four hundred horse and twenty-four hundred foot soldiers. In addition, the Spanish force included sixty Indians and negroes, who were to drive two thousand wild bulls into the English camp. This, according to Esquemeling, was the formidable force which the Spanish were able to line up against the tired buccaneers. The governor of Panama puts the number of foot soldiers at fourteen hundred and the horse at two hundred.
CHAPTER VI

PANAMA AND THE PIRATES

Certainly the Spaniards were equal to the pirates in point of numbers and they had the added advantage of being on the defensive and of being near their base. However, instead of making the pirates do the attacking—which in their desperate state they would have been forced to do—the four hundred Spanish horse wheeled into battle and charged across a boggy field. Then, just as their English forbears had done when the French charged at Agincourt, the buccaneers put one knee to the ground and poured deadly volleys into the floundering horse. The rain of bullets on the savannas of Panama had the same effect as the shower of arrows at Agincourt. In two hours' time the Spanish attack had become a rout. The foot soldiers had been no more successful than those on horse, while the two thousand wild bulls became frightened with the noise of battle and ran away.

The pirates were too exhausted to follow the fleeing Spaniards, who sought refuge in the jungle which bordered the savannas. After a rest the buccaneers
marched on the city, the way to which was now open. Some effort at defending it was made, so there were three hours of fighting before the whole place lay at the mercy of Morgan. A detachment of pirates was dispatched to round up the citizens in hiding. They brought in two hundred prisoners who were tortured into revealing the whereabouts of their treasure. In marked contrast to their wild excesses at Porto Bello, the buccaneers remained sober and went about their pillage and robbery in a very business-like manner. Esquemeling says Morgan kept his men sober by pretending he had secret intelligence that the Spaniards had poisoned all the wine in the city.

This precaution was not effective throughout the pirates' stay, however, for the chroniclers tell of several instances of riotous excess by the invaders. At Taboga one party of them allowed a rich galleon to escape because they wanted to get some casks of fine wines which they had heard were on the island. Morgan, himself, did not live up to the code of morals he prescribed.

Three weeks the pirates held Panama city, or what was left of it, for shortly after the capture several of the important buildings caught fire. Despite the combined efforts of the pirates and citizens, nothing could stop the flames. In two days' time whole streets had burned out. Esquemeling attributes
the fire to Morgan, though just why he should turn incendiary at this time is not clear. At the end of these memorable three weeks the pirates had stripped the city and had collected all the available ransom from the citizens. Morgan's threat to those who had been slow in paying their ransom was transportation to Jamaica as slaves.

On February 24, 1671, Morgan and his men departed from the ruins of the city which they had found at the height of commercial prosperity less than a month before. The pirates with their prisoners marched back along the same route over which they had come. At Cruces many of the prisoners were able to pay their ransom and were released. Arriving at Fort Lorenzo, Morgan had the spoil divided. Everybody was dissatisfied with the small share, about one hundred dollars, which was given to each man. It seemed a most inadequate amount after the hardships and dangers to which they had been exposed.

The expedition, after all, had not been very successful. Despite the vigor of the pirates' attack on Panama and their scouring of the seas in quest of treasure-laden ships, one galleon containing all the king's plate newly arrived from Peru had escaped. On board this boat were also the nuns of a certain monastery who had not forgotten to take with them all the rich ornaments of the church. In-
proportion to the devastation wrought and the hardships endured by the pirates, the raid on Panama was not as successful as that on Porto Bello.

The pirates felt they had good cause to curse Henry Morgan for his unfair division of the spoils, and they did not hesitate to curse him to his face during the few days’ stay at Fort Lorenzo. At last, when the advice boat had returned from Porto Bello with a message from its citizens declaring they would do nothing toward ransoming the fort, the admiral judged it wise to steal away while he was still safe. Making secret preparations he sailed from Lorenzo, followed by only a few of his ships and without the formality of an adieu to the majority of his men, whom he left amidst the ruins of the old fort. The deserted pirates got away the best they could, financially but little better off than when they started on the hazardous expedition.

Morgan went to Jamaica, and after dutifully giving a share of the spoils to the governor, left his former way of life and in a few years became governor himself. Strange to say, he then did more to suppress piracy than any of his predecessors. Calling in British warships, he thoroughly discredited buccaneering along the Spanish Main.

Through the influence of the Viceroy of Peru, steps were at once taken to rebuild Panama city. On October 31, 1672, the queen of Spain signed a decree
changing the location of the city to its present site. The building of the new city was started on January 21, 1673. The new site was chosen for various reasons, chief of which was that it afforded better facilities for defense. The value of Ancon Hill for fortifications was mentioned frequently in the dispatches of the time. Money to carry on the work was to come largely from Peru, and those in charge were warned by the Spanish monarch to use care and judgment in its expenditure. The new city grew apace. Elaborate walls rose for its protection oceanward, and there was great laying out of streets and building of homes. These walls, which are among the most interesting sights of Panama to-day, cost a vast amount of money.

With Morgan's great raid, buccaneering as a business began to wane in the Spanish-American waters, but the Spanish ports of the Isthmus were not entirely neglected by the pirates. In 1679, Dampier, Sharp, Hawkins and other leaders of the later pirates raided Porto Bello, which had recovered some of its former glory. The town made little effort to defend itself, but it was sacked hurriedly—warrants were out for the pirates which, if served, would have meant hanging. They stopped at Bocas del Toro and again at the San Blas Islands. In this party, which later went to the Pacific to sack Santa Maria in the Gulf of San Miguel, were Dampier,
Ringrose and Lionel Wafer, who later became historians of the exploits. The last mentioned carried back to England a report that in one part of the Isthmus of Panama there were no mountains, a report which interested those who had long cast eyes of hope toward connecting the two oceans by water. Wafer's mistaken idea led to some interesting history in connection with canal projecting which will be mentioned later.

After varying fortunes this band of pirates, some three hundred and fifty strong, set out to attack the new city of Panama. Catching up with a Spanish boat in the Pacific, they were careless enough to allow it to get away and to carry intelligence of their coming. On April 23, 1680, the pirates arrived in the Bay of Panama, where a great naval battle was fought and won by them. The five Spanish men-of-war were not properly manned and proved unable to withstand the attack.

Though victorious in the naval engagement, the pirates did not attempt to land at Panama, contenting themselves instead with lying out in the bay and selling to the merchants goods which they had captured as spoils of the battle. A part of the time they spent at Taboga, consuming in all ten days in the waters of Panama Bay. Finally, after threatening to return later to sack the city, the pirates left for a cruise along the coast of South America.
After months of varying success the party split in two, those who did not care to follow Sharp, the commander of the expedition, sailing for the Gulf of San Miguel on the Pacific coast of the Isthmus. Dampier and Wafer were in this party of forty-four men who later undertook the perilous trip across the Isthmus to the Atlantic. The account of their hardships reads much like the story of Morgan's famous march. They were surrounded by hostile Indians, compelled to choose the most circuitous route to avoid contact with the Spaniards, forced to ford swollen streams and to flounder through almost impassable tropical jungle. Wafer, the surgeon of the party, met with an accident while drying out his powder one day, and with two companions was left behind to the mercy of the Indians. Good fortune was with him, however, for a few weeks later he and his comrades reached the Atlantic and found Dampier's sloop.