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PIRATE TREASURE

by Howard Pyle

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The adventure of two of the great buccaneers of the Spanish main have already been told—of Porro in Grand and how he took the great Spanish treasure ship; of Sir Henry Morgan and the sacking of Panama.

Sir Henry Morgan was the last of the great buccaneers; after him came an entirely different sort of pirate who preyed upon the ships not only from Spain, but of all nations.

After the peace of Ryswick had been signed the English and Holland against whom the buccaneers had been fighting so long, found themselves at liberty to make war upon the buccaneers in whatever part of the West Indies or elsewhere they chose. For England and Holland this was a very good thing to do, for the buccaneers had become a perfect pest to those lands. For the Spanish and French colonists, however, it was a very different matter. They had been very glad to have the buccaneers to protect them from the attacks of the English and Dutch, and now that these latter powers were at peace with them they were afraid that the buccaneers would be driven away and left to the mercy of the enemy. Many of the buccaneers, however, were not willing to give up their calling, and, finding that they could no longer remain in the West Indies, they turned their attention to the Spanish ships that were sailing between Spain and the Spanish Main.

Of the pirates who preyed upon the Spanish ships none were more successful than Captain Avery and his consort, Captain Thomas Tew. Avery was a Devonshire man, and had been a mate in the service of the English East India company. Tew was a Rhode Islander, and had been a privateersman in the service of the governor of that province. Both men had been very successful in their calling, and had amassed considerable fortunes. Avery had a ship of his own, and Tew was in command of a fine vessel belonging to a company of London merchants.

Both men had been in the habit of visiting Madagascar, and it was there that they met and formed a friendship. Avery was the first to suggest the idea of turning pirate, and Tew was not long in falling in with the suggestion. Tew's vessel was a fine one, and well armed, and Avery's ship was a stout craft, and could sail very fast. Both vessels were well manned, and the two captains were confident that they could make a very successful cruise.

They sailed from Madagascar to the Red sea, and there they lay in wait for the ships that were returning from the East Indies. They had not long to wait before a large ship hove in sight, and they gave chase. The ship was a rich prize, and the pirates were overjoyed at the sight of the treasure that she carried. Tew was killed in the fight, but Avery succeeded in capturing the ship, and he and his men transferred the booty to their own vessel. Then they scuttled the prize and left her to sink.

Avery now had a fine ship and a rich cargo, and he and his men were in high spirits. They sailed around the Cape of Good Hope and up the coast of Africa, and then they headed for the West Indies. Here they met with no success, and they began to think that they would have to go home empty handed. Then they fell in with a large ship, which they captured after a short fight. She proved to be a rich prize, and the pirates were overjoyed at their success. They transferred the booty to their own vessel, and