

sloop, who answered they were English men and desired them to come aboard and drink a bowl of punch, which they at first refused, but afterwards with much persuasion, they went on board, in the sloop's canoe, and left their own pettiaga at anchor; that they had been but a short time on board, when Captain Barnet's sloop heaved in sight; that Rackam ordered 'em to help weigh the sloop's anchor immediately, which they all refused; that Rackam used violent means to oblige them, and that when Captain Barnet came up with them they all readily and willingly submitted.

When the prisoners were taken from the bar, and the persons present being withdrawn, the court considered the prisoners cases, and the majority of the commissioners being of opinion, that they were all guilty of the piracy and felony they were charged with, which was 'the going over with a piratical and felonious intent to John Rackam, etc, then notorious pirates, and by them known to be so', they were all received sentence of death; which everybody must allow proved somewhat unlucky to the poor fellows.

On the 17th of February, John Eaton, Thomas Quick and Thomas Baker were executed at Gallows Point, at Port Royal, and the next day John Cole, John Howard and Benjamin Palmer, were executed at Kingston; whether the other three were executed afterwards, or not, I never heard.

Two other pirates were tried that belonged to Rackam's crew, and being convicted, were brought up, and asked if either or them had any thing to say why sentence of death should not pass upon them, in like manner as had been done to all the rest, and both of them pleaded their bellies, being quick with child, and prayed that execution might be stayed, whereupon the court passed sentence, as in cases of piracy, but ordered them back, till a proper jury should be appointed to enquire into the matter.



## The life of *Mary Read*



Now we are to begin a history full of surprising turns and adventures; I mean that of Mary Read and Anne Bonny, alias Bonn, which were the true names of these two pirates. The odd incidents of their rambling lives are such, that some may be tempted to think the whole story no better than a novel or romance, but since it is supported by many thousand witnesses, I mean the people of Jamaica, who were present at their trials, and heard the story of their lives, upon the first discovery of their sex; the truth of it can be no more contested, than that there were such men in the world, as Roberts and Blackbeard, who were pirates.

Mary Read was born in England, her mother was married young, to a man who used the sea, who going a voyage soon after their marriage, left her with child, which child proved to be a boy. As to the husband, whether he was cast away or died on the voyage, Mary Read could not tell; but however, he never returned more. Nevertheless, the mother, who was young and airy, met with an accident, which has often happened to women who are young and do not take a great deal of care; which was, she soon proved to be with child again, without a husband to father it, but how, or by whom, none but herself could tell, for she carried a pretty good reputation among her neighbours. Finding her burden grow, in order to conceal her shame, she takes a formal leave of her husband's relations, giving out that she went to live with some friends of

her own, in the country. Accordingly she went away, and carried with her her young son, at this time not a year old. Soon after her departure her son died, but providence in return was pleased to give her a girl in his room, of which she was safely delivered, in her retreat, and this was our Mary Read.

Here the mother lived three or four years, till what money she had was almost gone; then she thought of returning to London, and considering that her husband's mother was in some circumstances, she did not doubt but to prevail upon her, to provide for the child, if she could pass it upon her for the same, but the changing of a girl into a boy seemed a difficult piece of work, and how to deceive an experienced old woman, in such a point, was altogether as impossible. However, she ventured to dress it up as a boy, brought it into town



and presented it to her mother in law as her husband's son; the old woman would have taken it, to have bred it up, but the mother pretended it would break her heart, to part with it. So it was agreed between them, that the child should live with the mother, and the supposed grandmother should allow a crown a week for it's maintenance.

Thus the mother gained her point, she bred the daughter as a boy, and when she grew up to some sense, she thought proper to let her into the secret of her birth to induce her to conceal her sex. It happened that the grandmother died, by which means the subsistence that came from that quarter ceased, and they were more and more reduced in their circumstances; wherefore she was obliged to put her daughter out, to wait on a French lady as a foot-boy, being now thirteen years of age. Here she did not live long, for growing bold and strong, and having also a roving mind, she entered herself on board a man-of-war, where she served some time, then quitted it, went

over to Flanders, and carried arms in a regiment of foot, as a cadet. And though, upon all actions, she behaved herself with a great deal of bravery, yet she could not get a commission, they generally being bought and sold; therefore she quitted the service, and took on in a regiment of horse. She behaved so well in several engagements that she got the esteem of all her officers, but her comrade who was a Fleming, happening to be a handsome young fellow, she falls in love with him, and from that time grew a little more negligent in her duty, so that it seems Mars and Venus could not be served at the same time: her arms and accoutrements which were always kept in the best order, were quite neglected. 'Tis true, when her comrade was ordered put upon a party, she used to go without being commanded, and frequently run herself into danger, where she had no business, only to be near him. The rest of the troopers little suspecting the secret cause which moved her to this behaviour, fancied her to be mad, and her comrade himself could not account for this strange alteration in her, but love is ingenious, and as they lay in the same tent, and were constantly together, she found a way of letting him discover her sex, without appearing that it was done with design.

He was much surprized at what he found out, and not a little pleased, taking it for granted that he should have a mistress solely to himself, which is an unusual thing in a camp, since there is scarce one of those campaign ladies, that is ever true to a troop or company; so that he thought of nothing but gratifying his passions with very little ceremony. But he found himself strangely mistaken, for she proved very reserved and modest, and resisted all his temptations, and at the same time was so obliging and insinuating in her carriage, that she quite changed his purpose, so far from thinking of making her his mistress, he now courted her for a wife.

This was the utmost wish of her heart, in short, they exchanged promises, and when the campaign was over, and the regiment marched into winter quarters, they bought women's apparel for her, with such money as they could make up betwixt them, and were publicly married.

The story of the two troopers marrying each other made a great noise, so

that several officers were drawn by curiosity to assist at the ceremony, and they agreed among themselves that every one of them should make a small present to the bride towards housekeeping, in consideration of her having been their fellow soldier. Thus being set up, they seemed to have a desire of quitting the service, and settling in the world; the



adventure of their love and marriage had gained them so much favour, that they easily obtained their discharge, and immediately set up an eating house or ordinary, which was the sign of the Three Trade Horses, near the castle of Breda, where they soon run into a good trade, a great many officers eating with them constantly.

But this happiness lasted not long, for the husband soon died, and the Peace of Ryswick being concluded, there was no resort of officers to Breda as usual, so that the widow, having little or no trade, was forced to give up house-keeping, and her substance being by degrees quite spent, she again assumes her man's apparel, and going into Holland, she there takes on in a regiment of foot, quartered in one of the frontier towns. Here she did not remain long as there was no likelihood of preferment in time of peace, therefore she took a resolution of seeking her fortune another way, and withdrawing from the regiment, ships herself on board of a vessel bound for the West Indies.

It happened this ship was taken by English pirates, and Mary Read was the only English person on board, they kept her amongst them, and having plundered the ship let it go again. After following this trade for some time, the King's proclamation came out and was published in all parts of the West Indies, for pardoning such pirates, who should voluntarily surrender themselves by a certain day therein mentioned. The crew of Mary Read took

the benefit of this proclamation, and having surrendered lived quietly on shore, but money beginning to grow short, and hearing that Captain Woodes Rogers, Governor of the island of Providence, was fitting out some privateers to cruize against the Spaniards, she with several others, embarked for that island in order to go upon the privateering accounts, being resolved to make her fortune one way or other.

These privateers were no sooner sailed out, but the crews of some of them, who had been pardoned, rose against their commanders and turned themselves to their old trade. In this



number was Mary Read. It is true, she often declared, that the life of the pirate was what she always abhorred, and went into it only upon compulsion, both this time, and before, intending to quit it when ever a fair opportunity should offer itself; yet some of the evidence against her, upon her trial, who were forced men, and had sailed with her, deposed upon oath, that in times of action, no person amongst them were more resolute, or ready to board or undertake anything that was hazardous, as she and Anne Bonny; and particularly at the time they were attacked and taken, when they came to close quarters, none kept the deck except Mary Read and Anne Bonny, and one more, upon which she, Mary Read, called to those under deck to come up and fight like men, and finding that they did not stir, fired her arms down the hold amongst them, killing one and wounding others.

This was part of the evidence against her, which she denied; which, whether true or no, thus much is certain, that she did not want bravery, nor



indeed was she less remarkable for her modesty, according to her notions of virtue. Her sex was not so much as suspected by any person on board, till Anne Bonny, who was not altogether so reserved in point of chastity, took a particular liking to her; in short, Anne Bonny took her for a handsome young fellow, and for some reasons best known to herself, first discovered her sex to Mary

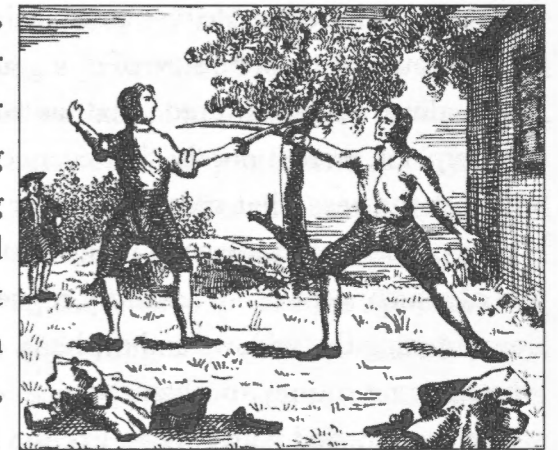
Read. Mary Read knowing what she would be at, and being very sensible for her own incapacity that way, was forced to come to a right understanding with her, and so to the great disappointment of Anne Bonny, she let her know she was a woman also; but this intimacy so disturbed Captain Rackam, who was the lover and gallant of Anne Bonny, that he grew furiously jealous, so that he told Anne Bonny he would cut her new lover's throat, and therefore, to quiet him, she let him also into the secret.

Captain Rackam (as he was enjoined) kept the thing a secret from all the ships' company, yet, notwithstanding all her cunning and reserve, love found her out in this disguise and hindered her from forgetting her sex.

In their cruize they took a great number of ships belonging to Jamaica, and other parts of the West Indies, bound to and from England; and whenever they meet any good artist, or other person that might be of any great use to their company, if he was not willing to enter, it was their custom to keep him by force. Among these was a young fellow of a most engaging behaviour, or, at least, he was so in the eyes of Mary Read, who became so smitten with his person and address, that she could neither rest, night or day; but as there is nothing more ingenious than love, 'twas no hard matter for her, who had before practised in these wiles, to find a way to let him discover her sex: she first insinuated herself into his liking, by talking against the life of a pirate, which he was altogether averse to, so they became mess-mates and strict

companions. When she found he had a friendship for her, as a man, she suffered the discovery to be made, by carelessly showing her breasts, which were very white.

The young fellow, who was made of flesh and blood, had his curiosity and desire so raised by this sight, that he never ceased importuning her, till she confessed what she was. Now begins the scene of love: as he had a liking and esteem for her, under her supposed character, 'twas now turned into fondness and desire; her passion was no less violent than his, and perhaps she expressed it, by one of the most generous actions that ever love inspired. It happened this young fellow had a quarrel with one of the pirates, and their ship then lying at an anchor, near one of the islands, they had appointed to go ashore and fight, according to the custom of the pirates. Mary Read, was to the last degree uneasy and anxious, for the fate of her lover; she would not have had him refuse the challenge, because she could not bear the thoughts of his being branded with cowardice; on the other side, she dreaded the event, and apprehended the fellow might be too hard for him. When love once enters into the breast of one who has any sparks of generosity, it stirs the heart up to the most noble actions; in this dilemma, she showed, that she cared more for his life, than she did for her own; for she took a resolution of quarreling with this fellow herself, and having challenged him ashore, she appointed the time two hours sooner than that when he was to meet her lover, when she fought him at sword and pistol, and killed him upon the spot.



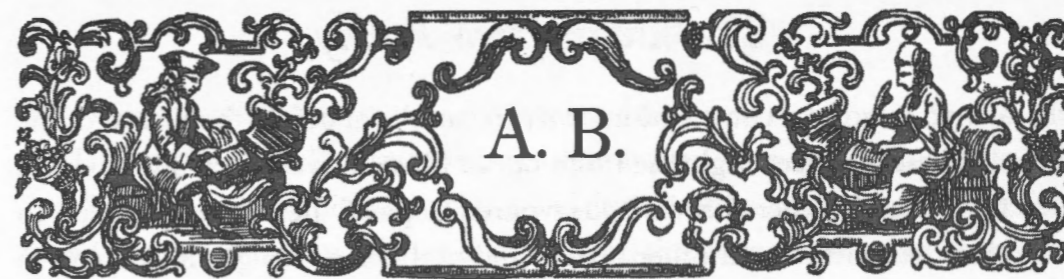
It is true, she had fought before, when she'd been insulted by some of those fellows, but now it was altogether in her lover's cause, she stood as it were between him and death, as if she could not live without him. If he had no regard for her before, this action would have bound him to her for ever; but

there was no occasion for ties or obligations, his inclination towards her was sufficient; in fine, they applied their troth to each other, which Mary Read said she looked on to be a marriage in conscience, as if it had been done by a minister in church; and to this was owing her great belly, which she pleaded to save her life.

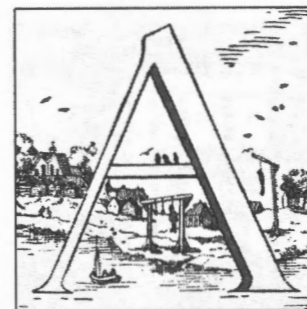
She declared she had never committed adultery or fornication with any man, she commended the justice of the court before which she was tried, for distinguishing the nature of their crimes; her husband, as she called him, with several others, being acquitted; and being asked who he was, she would not tell, but said he was an honest man and had no inclination to such practices, and they had both resolved to leave the pirates the first opportunity, and apply themselves to some honest livelihood.

It is no doubt but many had compassion for her, yet the court could not avoid finding her guilty; for among other things, one of the evidences against her deposed, that being taken by Rackam, and detained some time on board, he fell accidentally into discourse with Mary Read, whom he taking for a young man, asked her what pleasure she could have in being concerned in such enterprizes where her life was continually in danger, by fire or sword; and not only so, but she must be sure of dying an ignominious death, if she should be taken alive? She answered, that as to hanging, she thought it no great hardship, for, were it not for that every cowardly fellow would turn pirate, and so infest the seas, that men of courage, must starve: that if 'twas put to the choice of the pirates, they would not have the punishment less than death, the fear of which, kept some dastardly rogues honest; that many of those who are now cheating the widows and orphans, and oppressing their poor neighbours, who have no money to obtain justice, would then rob at sea, and the ocean would be crowded with rogues, like the land, and no merchant would venture out; so that in trade, in a little time, would not be worth following.

Being found quick with child, as has been observed, her execution was respited, and it is possible she would have found favour, but she was seized with a violent fever soon after her trial, of which she died in prison.<sup>1</sup>



## The life of *Anne Bonny*



As we have been more particular in the lives of these two women than those of other pirates, 'tis incumbent on us as a faithful historian, to begin with their birth. Anne Bonny was born at a town near Cork, in the kingdom of Ireland, her father an attorney at law; but Anne was not one of his legitimate issue, which seems to cross an old proverb, which says, 'that bastards have the best luck'. Her father was a married man, and his wife having been brought to bed, contracted an illness in her lying in, and in order to recover her health, she was advised to remove for change of air; the place she chose was a few miles distance from her dwelling, where her husband's mother lived. Here she sojourned some time, her husband staying at home, to follow his affairs. The servant-maid, whom she left to look after the house, and attend the family, being a handsome young woman, was courted by a young man of the same town, who was a tanner; this tanner used to take his opportunities, when the family was out of the way, of coming to pursue his courtship; and being with the maid one day as she was employed in the household business, not having the fear of God before his eyes, he takes his opportunity, when her back is turned, of whipping three silver spoons into his pocket. The maid soon missed the spoons, and knowing that nobody had been in the room, but herself and the young man, since she saw them last, she charged him with taking them; he very stiffly denied it, upon which she grew outrageous and