

CHAP.  
IX.

tunes; some by the cruelty of creditors; and others, perhaps, by the consciousness of their crimes. Captivated by the renown, and allured by the wealth of the Bucaniers, they joined in their expeditions against the Spaniards from no better motives than those of plunder and rapine; and to such men must be imputed those outrages and excesses which have stamped the proceedings of the whole association with infamy (*b*). But there is a time

(*b*) I conceive, however, that these have been wonderfully magnified and exaggerated. The narrative called *The History of the Bucaniers*, published towards the latter end of the last century, which has been quoted by writers of all descriptions ever since, as of unquestionable authority, was originally written in Dutch, by one John Esquemeling, who confesses that he had been one of the Bucaniers, and was expelled from their society. The reports of such a writer ought to have been received with great caution; but there is a still stronger circumstance to excite suspicion; and it is this: The English work is not taken from the Dutch original, but from a *Spanish translation*; and to suppose that a Spaniard would speak favourably of the Bucaniers, is the very excess of human credulity. Not having the original book to refer to, I cannot pronounce with certainty; but I am of opinion, that many of the tragical stories concerning the torture of the Spanish prisoners, and the violation of the women, are interpolations of the Spanish translator. I form this conclusion from the malignity displayed towards the character of the famous Sir Henry Morgan. If we may believe the account given of this gallant commander, he was the most inhuman monster that ever existed. Yet this very man (who by the way acted under a regular commission and letters of reprisal from government) after he had quitted the sea, was recommended by the earl of Carlisle to be his successor in the government of Jamaica, and was accordingly appointed lieutenant-governor in the earl's absence. He afterwards received the honour of knighthood from King Charles II. and passed the remainder of his life on his plantation in Jamaica. By the kindness of a friend in that island, I have had an opportunity of perusing some of Sir Henry Morgan's original private letters; and this I will say, that they manifest such a spirit of humanity, justice, liberality, and piety, as prove that he has either been grossly traduced, or that he was the greatest hypocrite living; — a character ill-suited to the frank and fearless temper of the man.

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