

The Caribbean Courier

Scandal-sheet and gossip-rag throughout His Majesty's Colonies of the Western Indies

Governor and Daughter Kidnapped!

All Port Royal is in turmoil, after the daring kidnap of British Governor Sir Percival Stanforth and his daughter Elizabeth. The dastardly pirate vessel the *Fury*, captained by 'Saucy' Nancy Martin, sailed boldly into harbour under cover of night and dense fog – and after a brisk and bloody fire-fight, snatched the Stanforths from their very own gubernatorial mansion!

The Governor's other daughter, young Meg Stanforth, was not available for comment – but there were plenty of wiseacres not slow to say that this is all Stanforth's own fault, for making a series of tough speeches about his intention to capture all the region's pirates and deliver them to justice.

Six months on, Flint is not mourned

While Captain James Flint was alive, it would have been a brave soul that dared to speak or act against him, such was the terror with which his name gripped the entire Caribbean. Since his death, throat slit by mysterious masked do-gooder 'El Cuervo' while he slept in his own cabin, his ramshackle piratical empire has crumbled like a sand-castle in the tide.

First Flint's two ill-matched lieutenants ('Black' Jack McCracken and 'Saucy' Nancy Martin) fell out publicly, divided Flint's crew and his two ships, and decided to go their separate ways. So now we are plagued by the *Scurvy Knave* and the *Fury* as independent menaces – but 'tis sure that, thus separated, the two captains muster nothing of the menace or effectiveness of their late superior.

The latest news whispers that both captains have received anonymous notes relating to the disposition of Flint's massive hidden treasure! Yes, apparently he buried his ill-gotten gains on a small island somewhere in the nearby seas, outside the British provincial boundaries, killing all witnesses. But he cannot have taken the secret of its whereabouts quietly to his grave, if now a little bird is murmuring tales of where it might be found...

'El Cuervo' strikes again

The masked desperado known only as 'El Cuervo' ha struck again, rescuing a young maiden who was being menaced by a ruffian in a Port Royal back street. The bully was knocked flying by El Cuervo's fist, and the maiden was left with a kiss and a black crow's feather as token of her liberator's gallantry.

All are agog to learn the true identity of this secretive hero, avenger of injustice and defender of the weak, who has never been heard to utter a word. What does he have to hide? wonders the *Courier*.

Volcanic instability

The wise professors of His Majesty's Naval College at Greenwich have issued a warning of severe danger that volcanoes, earthquakes and other such dire portents and signs of the hand of God will plague our region in the coming months. They claim that this is due to 'subterranean instability' and other such mumbo-jumbo, but the *Courier* says: look to your consciences, men and women of the Caribbean, and pray for forgiveness!

The small chain of islands of which Santo Oloroso is the most notable member is thought to be most at risk. That island's volcano has never been entirely quiet, and soon it could see a mighty spewing forth of fire to rival the last days of Sodom and Gomorrah. Fortunately, the island is inhabited only by natives.

Shocking mutiny of the HMS Bully

One of His Majesty's finest warships, the *HMS Bully*, has fallen into the hands of a savage gang of uncivilized ragamuffins. No, the *Courier* doesn't mean that it's been captured by the Spanish! Far worse even than that – the crew have mutinied and taken charge of the vessel.

Young Captain Hal Overy was set adrift in a small boat, and the *Courier* can only urge its readers to pray that he manages to wash up on some inhabited island somewhere, rather than perishing miserably at sea under the burning, pitiless sun. Just one seaman – Bo'sun Arnold Barnes – spoke up loyally for his captain, with the result that he too was cast adrift.

And all this because Captain Overy had upped the daily flogging ration to six lashes with the rope's end per man! What weak whimsies these modern sailors are, if they think that constitutes an unbearably harsh regime. In our day, we thought nothing of a brisk beating with the cat-o'-nine-tails before breakfast... <cont'd. at length within>