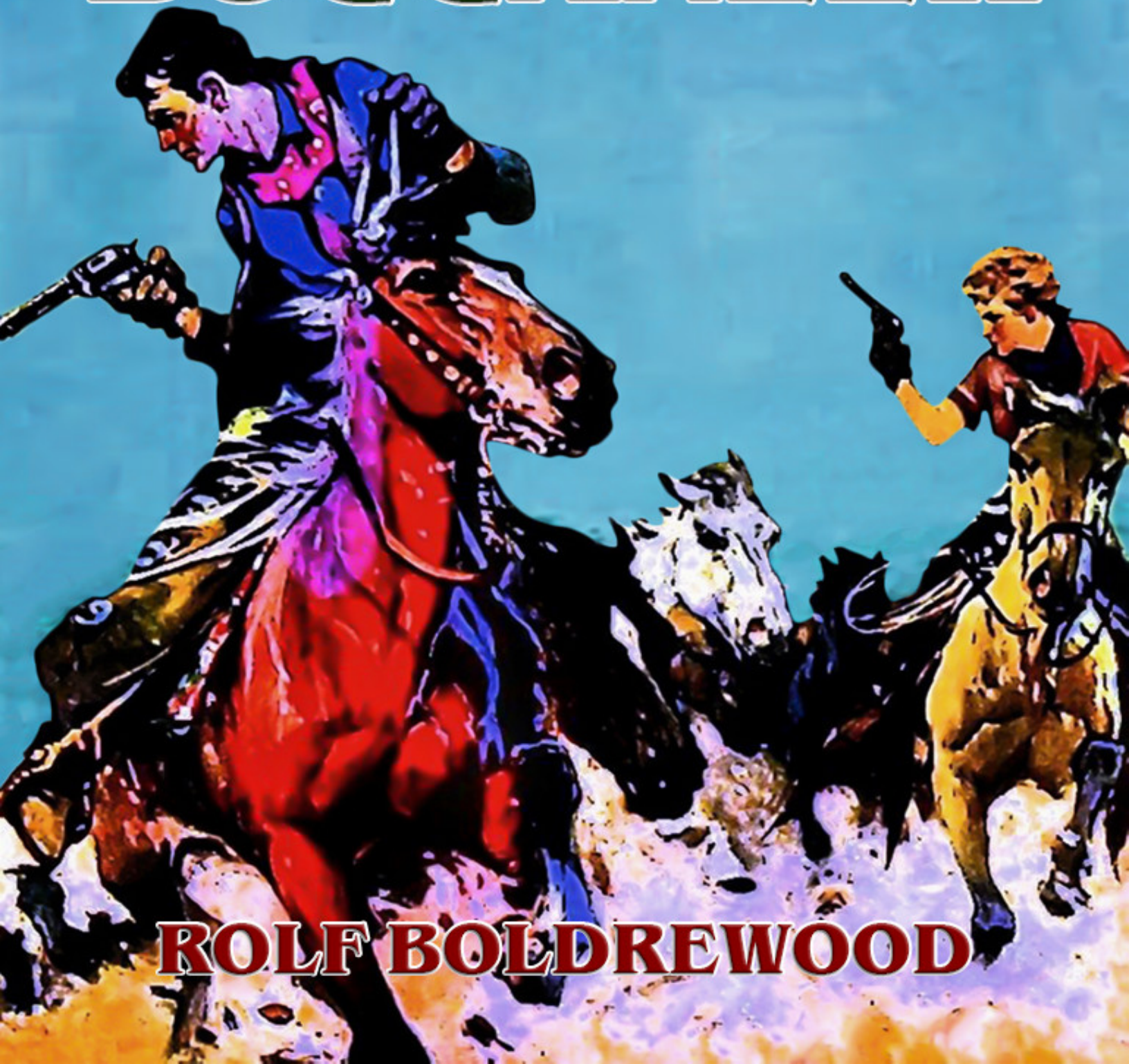
CLASSICS TO GO

A MODERN BUCCANEER



ROLF BOLDREWOOD

A MODERN BUCCANEER

Rolf Boldrewood

CHAPTER I

MY FIRST VOYAGE

Born near Sydney harbour, nursery of the seamen of the South, I could swim almost as soon as I could walk, and sail a boat at an age when most children are forbidden to go near the water. We came of a salt-water stock. My father had been a sea-captain for the greater part of his life, after a youth spent in every kind of craft, from a cutter to a man-of-war. No part of the habitable globe was unfamiliar to him: from India to the Pole, from Russia to the Brazils, from the China Sea to the Bight of Benin—every harbour was a home.

He had nursed one crew frost-bitten in Archangel, when the blankets had to be cut up for mittens; had watched by the beds of another, decimated by yellow fever in Jamaica; had marked up the "death's-head and cross-bones" in the margin of the log-book, to denote the loss by tetanus of the wounded by poisoned arrows on Bougainville Island; and had fought hand to hand with the stubborn Maories of Taranaki. Wounds and death, privation and pestilence, wrecks and tempests were with him household words, close comrades. What were they but symbols, nature-pictures, the cards dealt by fate? You lost the stake or rose a winner. Men who had played the game of life all round knew this. He accepted fortune, fair or foul, as he did the weather—a favour or a force of nature to be enjoyed or defied. But to be commented upon, much less complained of? Hardly. And as fate had willed it, the worn though unwearied sea-king had seen fit to heave anchor, so to speak, and moor his vessels

—for he owned more than one—in this the fairest haven of the southern main. Once before in youth had he seen and never forgotten the frowning headlands, beyond which lay so peerless a harbour, such wealth of anchorage, so mild a clime, so boundless an extent of virgin soil; from which he, "a picked man of countries," even then prophesied wealth, population, and empire in the future.

Here, then, a generation later, he brought his newly-wedded wife. Here was I, Hilary Telfer, destined to see the light.

From the mid-city street of Sydney is but a stone's throw to the wharves and quays, magnificent water-ways in which those ocean palaces of the present day, the liners of the P. and O. and the Orient, lie moored, and but a plank divides the impatient passenger from the busy mart. Not that such stately ships were visitors in my school-boy days. Sydney was then a grass-grown, quiet seaport, boasting some fifty thousand inhabitants, with a fleet of vessels small in size and of humble tonnage.

But, though unpretending of aspect, to the eager-hearted, imaginative school-boy they were rich as Spanish galleons. For were they not laden with uncounted treasure, weighed down with wealth beyond the fabled hoards of the pirates of the Spanish Main, upon whose dark deeds and desperate adventures I had so greedily feasted?

Each vessel that swept through the Heads at midnight, or marked the white-walled mansions and pine-crowned promontories rise faintly out of the pearl-hued dawn, was for me a volume filled with romance and mystery. Sat there not on the forecastle of that South Sea whaler, silent, scornful, imperturbable, the young Maori chief, nursing in his breast the deep revenge for a hasty blow, which on the return voyage to New Zealand and the home of his tribe was to take the form of a massacre of the whole ship's company?

Yes, captain and officers, passengers and crew, every man on that ship paid the death penalty for the mate's hard word and blow. The insult to a Rangatira must be wiped out in blood.

The trader of the South Sea Islands was a marine marvel which I was never weary of studying.

I generally managed to make friends with one or other of the crew, who permitted me to explore the lower deck and feed my fancy upon the treasures from that paradise with which the voyager from an enchanted ocean had surely freighted his vessel. Strange bows and arrows—the latter poison-tipped, as I was always assured, perhaps as a precautionary measure—piles of shaddocks, tons of bananas, idols, skulls, spears, clubs, woven cloth of curious fabric, an endless store of unfamiliar foreign commodities.

Among the crew were always a few half-castes mingled with the grizzled, weather-beaten British sea-dogs. Perhaps a boat's crew of the islanders themselves, born sailors, and as much at home in water as on land.

Seldom did I leave, however unwillingly, the deck of one of these fairy barques, without registering a vow that the year in which I left school should see me a gay sailor-boy, bound on my first voyage in search of dangerous adventures and that splendidly untrammelled career which was so surely to result in fortune and distinction.

Then the whaleships! In that old time, Sydney harbour was rarely without a score or more of them. In their way they were portents and wonders of the deep. Fortune failed them at times. The second year might find them far from full of the high-priced whale-oil. The capricious cetacean was not to be depended upon in migration from one "whaling ground" to another. Sometimes a "favourite" ship—lucky in

spite of everything—would come flaunting in after an absence of merely eleven or twelve months—such were the *Florentia* and the *Proteus*—full to the hatches, while three long years would have elapsed before her consort, sailing on the same day and fitted up much in the same way, would crawl sadly into Snail's or Neutral Bay, battered and tempest-tossed, but three-quarter full even then, a mark for the rough wit of the port, to pay off an impoverished crew and confront unsmiling or incredulous owners.

Every kind of disaster would have befallen her. When she got fast to a ninety-barrel whale, her boats would be stoven in. When all was well, no cheery shout of "There she spouts!" would be heard for days. Savage islanders would attack her doggedly, and hardly be beaten off. Every kind of evil omen would be justified, until the crew came to believe that they were sailing with an Australian Vanderdecken, and would never see a port again.

The grudging childish years had rolled by, and now I was seventeen years of age—fitted, as I fully believed, to begin the battle of life in earnest, and ardent for the fray. As to my personal qualifications for a life on the ocean wave, and well I knew no other would have contented me, let the reader judge. At the age when tall lads are often found to have out-grown their strength, I had attained the fullest stature of manhood; wide-chested and muscular, constant exercise with oar and sail had developed my frame and toughened my sinews, until I held myself, with some reason, to be a match in strength and activity for most men I was likely to meet.

In the rowing contests to which Australians of the shore have always been devoted, more particularly the privileged citizens of Sydney, I had always taken a leading part. More than once, in a hard-fought finish, had I been lifted out fainting or insensible.

My curling fair hair and blue eyes bore token of our Norse blood and Anglo-Norman descent. The family held a tradition that our surname came from Taillefer, the warrior minstrel who rode in the forefront of Duke William's army at Hastings. Strangely, too, a passionate love of song had always clung to the race. "Sir Hilary charged at Agincourt," as saith the ballad. Roving and adventure ran in the blood for generations uncounted.

For all that trouble arose when I announced my resolve. My schoolmates had settled down in the offices of merchants, bankers, and lawyers, why could not I do the same? My mother's tears fell fast as she tried in vain to dissuade me from my resolution. My father was neutral. He knew well the intensity of the feeling. "If born in a boy," he said, "as it was in me, it is his fate—nothing on earth can turn him from it; if you stop him you will make a bad landsman and spoil a good sailor. Let him go! he must take his chance like another man. God is above the wave as over the earth. If it be his fate, the perils of the deep will be no more than the breezes of the bay."

It was decided at length that I should be allowed to go on my way. To the islands of the South Pacific my heart pointed as truly as ever did compass needle to the North.

I had read every book that had ever been written about them, from Captain Cook's *Voyages* to *The Mutiny of the Bounty*. In my dreams how many times had I seen the purple mountains, the green glow of the fairy woodlands, had bathed in the crystal streams, and heard the endless surf music on the encircling reef, cheered the canoes loaded with fruit racing for their market in the crimson flush of the paradisal morn, or lingered amidst the Aidenns of the charmed main, where the flower-crowned children of nature —maidens beauteous as angels—roamed in careless happiness and joyous freedom! It was an entrancing picture.

Why should I stay in this prosaic land, where men wore the hideous costume of their forefathers, and women, false to all canons of art, still clung to their outworn garb?

What did I care for the sheep and cattle, the tending of which enriched my compatriots?

A world of romance, mystery, and adventure lay open and inviting. The die was cast. The spell of the sea was upon me.

My father's accumulations had amounted to a reasonable capital, as things went in those Arcadian non-speculative days. He was not altogether without a commercial faculty, which had enabled him to make prudent investments in city and suburban lands. These the steadily improving markets were destined to turn into value as yet undreamed of.

It was not thought befitting that I should ship as an apprentice or foremost hand, though I was perfectly willing, even eager, for a start in any way. A more suitable style of equipment was arranged. An agreement was entered into with the owner of a vessel bound for San Francisco viâ Honolulu, by which a proportion of the cargo was purchased in my name, and I was, after some discussion, duly installed as supercargo. It may be thought that I was too young for such a responsible post. But I was old for my age. I had a man's courage and ambition. I had studied navigation to some purpose; could "hand reef and steer," and in the management of a boat, or acquaintance with every rope, sail, and spar on board of a vessel, I held myself, if not an A. B., fully qualified for that rank and position.

Words would fail to describe my joy and exultation when I found myself at length on blue water, in a vessel which I might fairly describe as "our little craft," bound for foreign parts and strange cities. I speedily made the acquaintance of the crew—a strangely assembled lot, mostly shady as to

character and reckless as to speech, but without exception true "sailor men." At that time of day, employment on the high seas was neither so easy to obtain nor so well paid as at present. The jolly tars of the period were therefore less independent and inclined to cavil at minor discomforts. Once shipped, they worked with a will, and but little fault could be found with their courage or seamanship.

Among other joys and delights which I promised myself, had been a closer acquaintance with the life and times of a picturesque and romantic personage, known and feared, if all tales were true, throughout the South Seas. This was the famous, the celebrated Captain Hayston, whose name was indeed a spell to conjure with from New Zealand to the Line Islands.

Much that could excite a boyish imagination had been related to me concerning him. One man professing an intimate knowledge had described him as "a real pirate." Could higher praise be awarded? I put together all the tales I had heard about him—his great stature and vast strength, his reckless courage, his hair-breadth escapes, his wonderful brig,—cousin german, no doubt, to the "long low wicked-looking craft" in the pages of *Tom Cringle's Log*, and other veracious historiettes, "nourishing a youth sublime," in the long bright summer days of old; those days when we fished and bathed, ate oysters, and read alternately from early morn till the lighthouse on the South Head flashed out! My heroes had been difficult to find hitherto; they had mostly eluded my grasp. But this one was real and tangible. He would be fully up to description. His splendid scorn of law and order, mercy or moderation, his unquestioned control over mutinous crews and fierce islanders, illumined by occasional homicides and abductions, all these splendours and glories so stirred my blood, that I felt, if I could only once behold my boyhood's idol, I should not have lived in

vain. Among the crew, fortunately for me as I then thought, was a sailor who had actually known in the flesh the idol of my daydreams.

"And it's the great Captain Hayston you'd like to hear about," said Dan Daly, as we sat together in the foc'sle head of the old barque *Clarkstone*, before we made Honolulu. Dan had been a South Sea beach-comber and whaler; moreover, had been marooned, according to his own account, escaping only by a miracle; a trader's head-man—once, indeed, more than half-killed by a rush of natives on the station. With every kind of dangerous experience short of death and burial he was familiar. On which account I regarded him with a fine boyish admiration. What a night was it, superbly beautiful, when I hung upon his words, as we sat together gazing over the moonlit water! We had changed our course owing to some dispute about food between captain and crew, and were now heading for the island of Rurutu, where fresh provisions were attainable. As I listened spellbound and entranced, the barque's bows slowly rose and fell, the wavering moonlight streamed down upon the deck, the sails, the black masses of cordage, while ghostly shadows moved rhythmically, in answering measure to every motion of the vessel.

"You must know," said Dan, in grave commencement, "it's nigh upon five years ago, when I woke up one morning in the 'Calaboose' as they call the 'lock-up' in Papiete, with a broken head. It's the port of the island of Tahiti. I was one of the hands of the American brig *Cherokee*, and we'd put in there on our way to San Francisco from Sydney. The skipper had given us liberty, so we went ashore and began drinking and having some fun. There was some wahines in it, in coorse—that's whats they call the women in thim parts. Somehow or other I got a knock on the head, and remimbered nothing more until I woke up in the 'Calaboose,'

where I was charged with batin' a native till he was nigh dead. To make a long story short, I got six months 'hard,' and the ship sailed away without me.

"When I'd served my time, I walks into the American Consulate and asks for a passage to California.

"'Clear out,' says the Consul, 'you red-headed varmint, I have nothing to say to you, after beating an inoffensive native in the manner you did.'

"'By the powers,' says I to myself, 'you're a big blackguard, Dan Daly, when you've had a taste of liquor, but if I remimber batin' any man black, white, or whitey-brown, may I be keel-hauled. Howsomdever, that says nothing, the next thing's a new ship.'

"So I steps down to the wharf and aboord a smart-looking schooner that belonged to Carl Brander, a big merchant in Tahiti, as rich as the Emperor of China, they used to say. The mate was aboord. 'Do you want any hands?' says I.

"'We do,' says he. 'You've a taking colour of hair for this trade, my lad.'

"'How's that?'

"'Why, the girls down at Rimitara and Rurutu will just make love to you in a body. Red hair's the making of a man in thim parts.'

"Upon this I signed articles for six months in the schooner, and next day we sailed for a place called Bora-bora in the north-west. We didn't stay there long, but got under weigh for Rurutu next day. We weren't hardly clear of Bora-bora when we sights a brigantine away to windward and bearing down on us before the wind. As soon as she got close enough, she signalled that she wanted to send a boat aboard, so we hove to and waited.

"Our skipper had a look at the man who was steering the boat, whin he turns as pale as a sheet, and says he to the mate, 'It's that devil Hayston! and that's the brigantine he and Captain Ben Peese ran away with from Panama.'

"However, up alongside came the boat, and as fine a looking man as ever I set eyes on steps aboord amongst us.

"'How do ye do, Captain?' says he. 'Where from and whither bound?'

"The skipper was in a blue funk, I could see, for this Bully Hayston had a terrible bad name, so he answers him quite polite and civil.

"'Can you spare me half a coil of two-inch Manilla?' asks the stranger, 'and I'll pay you your own price?'

"The skipper got him the rope, the strange captain pays for it, and they goes below for a glass of grog. In half an hour, up on deck they comes again, our skipper half-seas over and laughing fit to kill himself.

"'By George!' says he, 'you're the drollest card I ever came across. D—n me! if I wouldn't like to take a trip with you myself!' and with that he struggles to the skylight and falls in a heap across it.

"'Who's the mate of this schooner?' sings out Hayston, in such a changed voice that it made me jump.

"'I am!' said the mate, who was standing in the waist.

"'Then where's that Mangareva girl of yours? Come, look lively! I know all about her from that fellow there,' pointing to the skipper.

"The mate had a young slip of a girl on board. She belonged to an island called Mangareva, and was as pretty a creature,

with her big soft eyes and long curling hair, as ever I'd seen in my life. The mate just trated her the same as he would the finest lady, and was going to marry her at the next island where there was a missionary. When he heard who the strange captain was, he'd planted her down in the hold and covered her up with mats. He was a fine manly young chap, and as soon as he saw Hayston meant to take 'Taloo,' that was her name, he pulls out a pistol and says, 'Down in the hold, Captain Hayston! and as long as God gives me breath you'll never lay a finger on her. I'll put a bullet through her head rather than see her fall into the hands of a man like you.' The strange captain just gives a laugh and pulls his long moustache. Then he walks up to the mate and slaps him on the shoulder.

"'You've got the right grit in you,' says he. 'I'd like to have a man like you on board my ship;' and the next second he gripped the pistol out of the mate's hand and sent it spinning along the deck. The mate fought like a tiger, but he was a child in the other man's grasp. All the time Hayston kept up that devilish laugh of his. Then, as he saw me and Tom Lynch coming to help the mate, he says something in a foreign lingo, and the boat's crew jumps on board amongst us, every one of them with a pistol. But for all that they seems a decent lot of chaps.

"Hayston still held the mate by his wrists, laughing in his face as if he was having the finest fun in the world, when up comes Taloo out of the hold by way of the foc'sle bulk-head, with her long hair hanging over her shoulders, and the tears streaming down her cheeks.

"She flings herself down at the Captain's feet, and clasps her arms round his knees.

"'No, no! no kill Ted!' she kept on crying, just about all the English she knew.

"'You pretty little thing,' says he, 'I wouldn't hurt your Ted for the world.' Then he lets go the mate and takes her hand and shakes it.

"'What's your name, my man?'

"'Ted Bannington!' says the mate.

"'Well, Ted Bannington, look here; if you'd showed any funk I'd have taken the girl in spite of you and your whole ship's company. If a man don't think a woman good enough to fight for, he deserves to lose her if a better man comes along.'

"Taloo put out one little hand, the other hand and arm was round the mate's neck, shaking like a leaf too.

"'I'm so sorry if I've hurt your wrists,' says he to the mate, most polite. Then he gave some orders to the boat's crew, who pulled away to the brigantine. After they had gone he walked aft with the mate, the two chatting like the best friends in the world, and I'll be hanged if that same mate wasn't laughing fit to split at some of the yarns the other chap was spinning, sitting on the skylight, with the Captain lying at their feet as drunk as Davy's sow.

"Presently the boat comes alongside agin, and a chap walks aft and gives the strange captain a parcel.

"'You'll please accept this as a friendly gift from Bully Hayston,' says he to the mate; and then he takes a ten-dollar piece out of his pocket and gives it to Taloo. 'Drill a hole in it, and hang it round the neck of your first child for luck.'

"He shakes hands with her and the mate, jumps into the boat, and steers for the brigantine. In another ten minutes she squared away and stood to the south-east.

"'Come here, Dan,' says the mate to me; 'see what he's given me!' 'Twas a beautiful chronometer bran new, in a splendid case. The mate said he'd never seen one like it before.

"Well, that was the first time I ever seen Bully Hayston, though I did a few times afterwards, and the brigantine too.

"They do say he's a thundering scoundrel, but a pleasanter-spoken gentleman I never met in my life."

CHAPTER II

WILLIAM HENRY HAYSTON

These were the first particulars I ever heard of the man who had afterwards so great an influence upon my destiny that no incident of my sojourn with him will ever be forgotten. A man with whom I went into the jaws of death and returned unhurt. A man who, no matter what his faults may have been, possessed qualities which, had they been devoted to higher aims in life, might have rendered him the hero of a nation.

Our Captain's altercation with the crew nearly blossomed into a mutiny. This was compromised, however, one of the conditions of peace being that we should touch at Rurutu, one of the five islands forming the Tubuai group. This we accordingly did, and, steering for San Francisco, experienced no further adventures until we sighted the Golden Gate. When our cargo was sold I left the ship.

My occupation being from this time gone, I used to stroll down to the wharf from my lodgings in Harvard Street to look at the foreign vessels. Wandering aimlessly, I one day made the acquaintance of a "hard-shell down-easter," with the truly American name of Slocum, master of a venerable-looking rate called the *Constitution*. He himself was a dried-up specimen of the old style of Yankee captain, with a face that resembled in colour a brown painted oilskin, and hands like an albatross's feet. He had been running for a number of years to Tahiti, taking out timber and returning with island produce.

Not being a proud man, he permitted me to stand drinks for him in a well-known liquor saloon in Third Street, where we had long yarns over his trading adventures in the Pacific.

One Sunday morning, I remember it as if yesterday, we were sitting in a private room off the bar. Slocum was advising me to come with him on his next trip and share the luxuries of the *Constitution's* table, for which he asked the modest sum of a hundred dollars to Tahiti and back, when we heard some one enter and address the bar-keeper. "Great Scott!" came the reply, "it's Captain Hayston! How air you, Captain, and whar d'ye come from?"

"I've come to try and find Ben Peese. We're going to form a new station at Arrecifu. He left me at Yap in the Carolines to come here and buy a schooner with a light draught; but he never turned up; I'm afraid that after he left Yap he met with some accident."

The moment Slocum heard the stranger's voice his face underwent a marvellous change. All his assurance seemed to have left him. He whispered to me, "That's Bully Hayston! I guess I'll lie low till he clears out. I don't want to be seen with him, as it'll sorter damage my character. Besides, he's such a vi'lent critter."

The next moment we heard the new-comer say to the barman,—

"Say, Fred, I've been down to that old schooner the *Constitution*, but couldn't find Slocum aboard. They told me he often came here to get a cheap drink. I want him to take a letter to Tahiti. Do you know where he is?"

Slocum saw it was of no use attempting to "lie low," so with a nervous hand he opened the door.

I've knocked about the world a good deal since I sat in the little back parlour in Third Street, Frisco, but neither before nor since I left Strong's Island have I seen such a splendid specimen of humanity as the man who then entered.

Much that I am about to relate I learned during my later experience.

William Henry Hayston was born in one of the Western States of America, and received his education at Norfolk, Virginia. As his first appointment he obtained a cadetship in the United States Revenue Service, subsequently retiring to become captain of one of the large lake steamers.

In '55 he joined the navy, serving with great gallantry under Admiral Farragut. The reported reason of his leaving the service was a disagreement with Captain Carroll, afterwards commander of the rebel cruiser *Shenandoah*. So bitter was their feud, that years afterwards, when that vessel was in the South Pacific, her commander made no secret of his ardent wish to meet Hayston and settle accounts with him, even to the death.

Hayston was a giant in stature: six feet four in height, with a chest that measured, from shoulder to shoulder, forty-nine inches; and there was nothing clumsy about him, as his many antagonists could testify. His strength was enormous, and he was proud of it. But, apart from his magnificent physique, Hayston was one of the most remarkably handsome men about this time that I have ever seen. His hair fell in clusters across his forehead, above laughing eyes of the brightest blue; his nose was a bold aquiline; a well-cut, full-lipped mouth that could set like fate was covered by a huge moustache. A Vandyke beard completed the *tout ensemble* of a visage which, once seen, was rarely forgotten by friend or foe. Taking him altogether, what with face, figure, and manner, he had a personal magnetism only too

fatally attractive, as many a man—ay, and woman too—knew to their cost. He was my beau ideal of a naval officer—bold and masterful, yet soft and pleasant-voiced withal when he chose to conciliate. His sole disfigurement—not wholly so, perhaps, in the eye of his admirers—was a sabre cut which extended from the right temple to his ear.

For his character, the one controlling influence in his life was an ungovernable temper. It was utterly beyond his mastery. Let any one offend him, and though he might have been smiling the instant before, the blue eyes would suddenly turn almost black, his face become a deep purple. Then it was time for friend or foe to beware. For I never saw the man that could stand up to him. Strangely enough, I have sometimes seen him go laughing through a fight until he had finished his man. At other times his cyclone of a mood would discharge itself without warning or restraint. It was probably this appalling temper that gained him a character for being bloodthirsty; for, once roused, nothing could stop him. Yet I do him the justice to say that I never once witnessed an act of deliberate cruelty at his hands. In the islands he was surrounded by a strange collection of the greatest scoundrels unhung. There, of necessity, his rule was one of "blood and iron."

And now for his pleasing traits. He was one of the most fascinating companions possible. He possessed a splendid baritone voice and affected the songs of Schumann and the German composers. He was an accomplished musician, playing on the pianoforte, violin, and, in default of a better instrument, even on the accordion. He spoke German, French, and Spanish, as well as the island languages, fluently. Generous to a fault, in spite of repeated lessons, he would insist on trusting again and again those in whom he believed. But once convinced that he had been falsely dealt with, the culprit would have fared nearly as well in the jaws

of a tiger. He was utterly without fear, under any and all circumstances, even the most desperate, and was naturally a hater of every phase of meanness or cowardice. But one more trait, and my sketch is complete. He had a fatal weakness where the fairer sex was concerned. To one of them he owed his first war with society. To the consequences of that false step might have been traced the reckless career which dishonoured his manhood and led to the final catastrophe.

"Come, gentlemen!" he said on entering—in so pleasant and kindly a tone, that I felt drawn towards him at once, "let us sit down and have a drink together."

We went back to the room, Slocum, I could see, feeling intensely uncomfortable, fidgeting and twisting. As we sat down I took a good look at the man of whom I had heard so much. Heard of his daring deeds in the China seas; of a wild career in the Pacific Islands; of his bold defiance of law and order; besides strange tales of mysterious cruises in the north-west among the Caroline and Pellew Islands.

"And how air yer, Captain?" said Slocum with forced hilarity.

"I'm devilish glad to see *you*," replied Hayston; "what about that barque of mine you stripped down at the Marshalls, you porpoise-hided skunk?"

"True as gospel, Captain, I didn't know she was yours. There was a trader at Arnu, you know the man, an Italian critter, but they call him George Brown, and he says to me, 'Captain Slocum,' says he, 'there's a big lump of a timber-ship cast away on one of them reefs near Alluk, and if you can get up to her you'll make a powerful haul. She's new coppered, and hasn't broke up yet.' So I gave him fifty dollars, and promised him four hundred and fifty more if his news was

reliable; if that ain't the solid facts of the case I hope I may be paralysed."

"Oh! so it was George who put you on to take my property, was it? and he my trader too; well, Slocum, I can't blame you. But now I'll tell you my '*facts*': that barque was wrecked; the skipper and crew were picked up by Ben Peese and taken to China. He bought the barque for me for four hundred dollars, and I beat up to Arnu, and asked George if he would get me fifty Arnu natives to go with me to the wreck and either try and float it or strip her. The d—d Marcaroni-eating sweep promised to get me the men in a week or two, so I squared away for Madura, where I had two traders. Bad weather came on, and when I got back to Arnu, the fellow told me that a big canoe had come down from the Radacks and reported that the barque had gone to pieces. The infernal scoundrel! Had I known that he had put you on to her I'd have taken it out of his hide. Who is this young gentleman?"

"A friend of mine, Captain, thinking of takin' a voyage with me for recruitin' of his health," and the lantern-jawed Slocum introduced us.

Drawing his seat up to me, Hayston placed his hand on my shoulder, and said with a laugh, looking intensely at Slocum, who was nervously twisting his fingers, "Oh! a recruitin' of his health, is he? or rather recruitin' of your pocket? I'm glad I dropped in on you and made his acquaintance. I could tell him a few droll stories about the pious Slocum."

Slocum said nothing, but laughed in a sickly way.

Leaning forward with a smiling face, he said, "What did you clear out of my barque, you good Slocum?"

"Nigh on a thousand dollars."

"You know you lie, Slocum! you must have done better than that."

"I kin show my receipts if you come aboard," he answered in shaky tones.

"Well, I'll take your word, you sanctimonious old shark, and five hundred dollars for my share."

"Why, sartin, Captain! that's fair and square," said the other, as his sallow face lighted up, "I'll give you the dollars to-morrow morning."

"Right you are. Come to the Lick house at ten o'clock. Say, my pious friend, what would our good Father Damien think if I told him that pretty story about the six Solomon Island people you picked up at sea, and sold to a sugar planter?"

The trader's visage turned green, as with a deprecating gesture towards me he seemed to implore Hayston's silence.

"Ha! ha! don't get scared. Business matters, my lad," he said, turning to me his merry blue eyes, and patting me on the back. "Where are you staying here?"

I told him. Then as we were rising to go, speaking to me, and looking Slocum in the face, he said, "Don't have any truck with Master Slocum, he'll skin you of every dollar you've got, and like as not turn you adrift at some place you can't get away from. Isn't that so, my saintly friend?"

Slocum flinched like a whipped hound, but said nothing. Then, shaking hands with me, and saying if ever I came to the Pacific and dropped across him or Captain Ben Peese I should meet a hearty welcome, he strode out, with the shambling figure of the down-easter under his lee.

That was the last I saw of the two captains for many a long day, for a few days later the *Constitution* cleared out for Tahiti, and I couldn't learn anything more about Hayston. Whether he was then in command of a vessel, or had merely come up as passenger in some other ship, I could not ascertain. All the bar-keeper knew about him was that he was a gentleman with plenty of money and a h—l of a temper, if anybody bothered him with questions.

Little I thought at the time that we were fated to meet again, or that where we once more forgathered would be under the tropic sun of Polynesia.

CHAPTER III

IN SAMOA

From what I have said about Hayston, it will readily be understood that every tale relating to him was strangely exciting to my boyish mind. For me he was the incarnation of all that was utterly reckless, possibly wicked, and of course, as such, possessed a fascination that a better man would have failed to inspire.

My hero, however, had disappeared, and with him all zest seemed to have gone out of life at Frisco. So after mooning about for a few weeks I resolved on returning to Sydney.

My friends on the Pacific slope did their best to dissuade me, trying to instil the idea into my head that I was cut out for a merchant prince by disposition and intellect. But I heeded not the voice of the charmer. The only walk in life for which I felt myself thoroughly fitted was that of an armed cruiser through the South Sea Islands. All other vocations were tame and colourless in comparison. I could fancy myself parading the deck of my vessel, pistol at belt, dagger in sheath, a band of cut-throats trembling at my glance, and a bevy of dark-skinned princesses ready to die for me at a moment's notice, or to keep the flies from bothering, whichever I preferred.

I may state "right here," as the Yankees have it, that I did not become a "free trader," though at one time I had a close shave of being run up to the yardarm of a British man-of-war in that identical capacity. But this came later on.

I returned, therefore, to my native Sydney in due course of time, and as a wholesome corrective after my somewhat erratic experiences, was placed by my father in a merchant's office. But the colourless monotony became absolutely killing. It was awful to be stuck there, adding up columns of pounds, shillings, and pence, and writing business letters, while there was stabbing, shooting, and all sorts of wild excitement going on "away down in the islands."

It was about this time that I made the acquaintance of certain South Sea Islanders belonging to whalers or trading vessels. With one of them, named George, a native of Raratonga, I became intimate. He impressed me with his intelligence, and amused me with his descriptions of island life. He had just returned from a whaling voyage in the barque *Adventurer* belonging to the well-known firm of Robert Towns & Company.

So when George, having been paid off in Sydney with a handsome cheque, confided to me that he intended going back to the Navigators' Islands, where he had previously spent some years, in order to open a small trading station, my unrest returned. He had a hundred pounds which he wished to invest in trade-goods, so I took him round the Sydney firms and saw him fairly dealt with. A week afterwards he sailed to Samoa viâ Tonga, in the *Taoji Vuna*, a schooner belonging to King George of that ilk.

Before he left he told me that two of his countrymen were trading for Captain Hayston—one at Marhiki, and one at Fakaofo, in the Union group. Both had made money, and he believed that Captain Hayston had fixed upon Apia, the chief port of Samoa, as his head-quarters.

Need I say that this information interested me greatly, and I asked George no end of questions. But the schooner was

just leaving the wharf in tow of a tug, and my dark-skinned friend having shipped as an A. B., was no longer of the "leisure classes." So, grasping my hand, and tell ing me where to hear of him if I ever came to Samoa, we parted.

Before going further let me explain the nature of a Polynesian trader's mission.

On the greater number of the islands white men are resident, who act as agents for a firm of merchants, for masters of vessels, or on their own account. In some cases a piece of ground is rented from the king or chief whereon to make the trading station. In others the rulers are paid a protection fee. Then, if a trader is murdered, his principal can claim blood for blood. This, however, is rarely resorted to. A trader once settled on his station proceeds to obtain cocoa-nuts from the natives, for which he pays in dollars or "trade." He further employs them to scrape the fruit into troughs exposed to the sun, by which process the cocoa-nut oil is extracted. Of late years "copra" has taken the place of the oil. This material—the dried kernel of the nut—has become far more valuable; for when crushed by powerful machinery the refuse is pressed into oil-cake, and proved to be excellent food for cattle.

To be a good trader requires pluck, tact, and business capacity. Many traders meet their death for want of one or other of these attributes. All through the South Seas, more especially in the Line Islands, are to be found the most reckless desperadoes living. Their uncontrolled passions lead them to commit acts which the natives naturally resent; the usual result being that if the trader fails to kill or terrorise them, they do society a kindness by ridding it of him. Then comes the not infrequent shelling of a native village by an avenging man-of-war. And thus civilisation keeps ever moving onwards.

The traders were making fortunes in the South Seas at that time, according to George. I returned to business with a mind full of projects. The glamour of the sea, the magic attraction of blue water, was again upon me; I was powerless to resist. My father smiled. My mother and sisters wept afresh. I bowed myself, nevertheless, to my fate. In a fortnight I bade my relations farewell—all unworthy as I felt myself of their affection. Inwardly exultant, though decently uncheerful, I took passage a fortnight later in a barque trading to the Friendly and Navigators' Islands. She was called the *Rotumah*, belonging to Messrs. M'Donald, Smith, & Company, of Hunter Street, Sydney. Her captain was a Canadian named Robertson, of great experience in the island trade.

There were two other passengers—a lady going to join her brother who was in business at Nukulofa, in Tonga, and a fine old French priest whom we were taking to Samoa. The latter was very kind to me, and during our passage through the Friendly Islands I was frequently the guest of his brother missionaries at their various stations in the groups.

How shall I describe my feelings, landed at last among the charmed isles of the South, where I had come to stay, I told myself? Generally speaking, how often is there a savour of disappointment, of anticipation unrealised, when the wish is achieved! But the reality here was beyond the most brilliant mental pictures ever painted. All things were fresh and novel; the coral reefs skirting the island shore upon which the surf broke ceaselessly with sullen roar; cocoa-palms bowed with their feathery crests above a vegetation richly verdurous. The browns and yellows of the native villages, so rich in tone, so foreign of aspect, excited my unaccustomed vision. Graceful figures, warm and dusky of colouring, passed to and fro. The groves of broad leafed bananas; the group of white mission houses; the balmy, sensuous air; the

transparent water, in which the very fish were strange in form and hue,—all things soever, land and water, sea and sky, seemed to cry aloud to my eager, wondering soul, "Hither, oh fortunate youth, hast thou come to a world new, perfect, and complete in itself—to a land of Nature's fondness and profuse luxuriance, to that Aïdenn, long lost, mysteriously concealed for ages from all mankind."

At the Marist Mission at Tongatabu I was received most kindly by the venerable Father Chevron, the head of the Church in Tonga. His had been a life truly remarkable. For fifty years he had laboured unceasingly among the savage races of Polynesia, had had hairbreadth escapes, and passed through deadliest perils. Like many of his colleagues he was unknown to fame, dying a few years later, beloved and respected by all, yet comparatively "unhonoured and unsung." During the whole course of my experiences in the Pacific I have never heard the roughest trader speak an ill word of the Marist Brothers. Their lives of ceaseless toil and honourable poverty tell their own tale. The Roman Catholic Church may well feel proud of these her most devoted servants.

One morning Captain Robertson joined me; the Father seemed pleased to see him. On my mentioning how kindly they had treated me, a stranger and a Protestant, he replied,—

"Ay, ay, my lad; they are different from most of the missionaries in Tonga, anyway, as many a shipwrecked sailor has found. If a ship were cast away, and the crew hadn't a biscuit apiece to keep them from starving, they wouldn't get so much as a piece of yam from some of the reverend gentlemen."

I asked Father Chevron if he knew Captain Peese and Captain Hayston.

"Yes! I am acquainted with both; of the latter I can only say that when I met him here I forgot all the bad reports I had heard about him. He cannot be the man he is reputed to be."

I was sorry to part with the good Father when the time came to leave. But a native messenger arrived next day with a note from the captain, who intended sailing at daylight.

So I said farewell and went on board.

We called at Hapai and Vavau, the two other ports of the Friendly Islands, sighting the peak of Upolu, in the Navigators', three days after leaving the latter place.

We rounded the south-east point of Upolu next day, running in so close to the shore that we could see the natives walking on the beaches. Saw a whaleboat, manned by islanders and steered by a white man, shoot through an opening in the reef opposite Flupata. For him we tarried not, in spite of a signal, running in as we were with the wind dead aft, and at four o'clock in the afternoon anchored in Apia harbour, opposite the American consulate.

The scenery around Apia harbour is beauteous beyond description. Spacious bays unfold themselves as you approach, each revealing the silvery white-sanded beach fringed with cocoa-palms; stretching afar towards the hills lies undulating forest land chequered with the white houses of the planters. The harbour itself consists of a horseshoe bay, extending from Matautu to Mullinu Point. Fronting the passage a mountain rears its summit cloud-enwrapped and half-hidden, narrow paths wind through deep gorges, amid which you catch here and there the sheen of a mountain-torrent. On the south the land heads in a graceful sweep to leeward, until lost in the all-enveloping sea-mists of the tropics, while the straggling town, white-walled, reed-roofed,

peeps through a dark-green grove of the bananas and cocoa-palms which fringe the beach.

At this precise period I paid but little attention to the beauties of Apia, for in a canoe paddled by a Samoan boy sat my friend George. I hailed him; what a look of joy and surprise rippled over his dark countenance as he recognised me! With a few strokes of the paddle the canoe shot alongside and he sprang on deck.

"I knew you would come," he said; "I boarded every ship that put in here since I landed. Going to live here?"

"I think so, George! I have some money and trade with me; if I get a chance I'll start somewhere in Samoa."

He was delighted, and said I would make plenty of money by and by. He wouldn't hear of my going to an hotel. I must come with him. He had a Samoan wife at Lellepa, a village about a mile from Apia on the Matautu side.

It was dark when we landed. As we walked towards his home George pointed out a house standing back from the beach, which, he said, belonged to Captain Hayston.

That personage had just left Samoa, and was now cruising in the Line Islands, where he had a number of traders. He was expected back in two months. A short time before I arrived, the American gunboat *Narraganset* had suddenly put in an appearance in Apia where Hayston's brig was lying. Her anchor had barely sounded bottom, before an armed boat's crew left her side, boarded, took Hayston prisoner, and kept possession of the *Leonora*.

There was wild excitement that day in Apia. Many of the residents had a strong liking for Hayston and expressed sympathy for him. Others, particularly the German element,