

B. BARKER

A photograph of a rocky coastline with a three-masted sailing ship on the water. The ship is a dark-hulled vessel with three masts, sailing on a deep blue sea. The foreground shows a rugged, light-colored rock formation with some sparse green vegetation. The sky is a pale, hazy blue.

***BLACKBEARD;
OR, THE PIRATE
OF ROANOKE***

B. Barker

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CHAPTER I.

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The Island of Trinidad. Landing of the Earl of Derwentwater and his party upon the Isle—Its Enchanted Scenery. Unnatural Sounds. Sudden appearance of the Notorious Pirate Blackbeard.

Situated upon the broad bosom of the vast Atlantic Ocean, about two hundred leagues from the coast of Brazil, is a small but fertile island, which has retained from the period of its first discovery, the familiar name of Trinidad. This beautiful island, although a lovely and sequestered spot, has been for various general reasons, but rarely visited by the hardy mariners of the deep, and never permanently settled or inhabited by man. Its surface is agreeably diversified with high hills and low beautiful valleys, whilst its circumference is almost wholly surrounded by a chain of dark, rocky cliffs, which gives to this remote island a somewhat fantastic appearance to the eye of the beholder, as he approaches it from the sea. On this circumscribed but favored spot of earth, nature seems to have reveled in almost boundless profusion, scattering here and there throughout its valleys her choicest favors, in the shape of delicious tropical fruits, and ever green luxuriant herbage, whose fragrance as it mingled with the pure fresh breeze of the ocean, has proved to be a sweet balsam of health to many a sick and weary mariner as he sailed within reach of its invigorating influence. Although this fair island possessed no convenient harbor for its vessels of any class, still there

was upon its southern side, a small piece of white sandy beach, upon which a single boat might easily land, and here upon this same spot, a boat did land about an hour after sunrise, on the thirty-first day of October, 1717.

The boat in question, was occupied by six persons, who, as soon as its keel grazed upon the clear white sand, immediately disembarked and dispersed themselves singly and by twos, in different directions for the purpose of enjoying a short ramble amongst the shady trees and fragrant foliage of the island.

The party to which we have alluded, consisted of the Earl of Derwentwater, a noble looking gentleman, who, apparently had but just spent the prime of life,—his fair niece, Mary Hamilton, a stately and beautiful girl, about twenty-three years of age,—Arthur Huntington and his twin brother, Henry—a huge red headed but fat and good natured son of the 'Emerald Isle,' who acted in the capacity of servant to the earl, and last, though by no means least, a beautiful golden haired, cherry cheerful nymph of fourteen, whom for the sake of a name we shall call Ellen Armstrong.

After having rambled about for a short space of time, the earl and his fair niece suddenly encountered each other on the brow of a rising eminence, when the latter then accosted her companion:

'Dear uncle, this lovely island seems to me, like a miniature paradise, wherein I could always wish to live as long as the precious boon of life should be granted unto me.'

'I declare, Mary,' replied the earl, as a slight smile passed over his noble countenance, 'you appear to be an enthusiast

in every thing. I grant, that this is a beautiful spot, yet not to be compared in my estimation, even for a moment, with my lovely park near London, in merry old England.'

'But, you forget, dear uncle,' replied Mary Hamilton, 'that our English parks are not now what they once were.'

'How so, Mary, do not the staunch old oaks, grow to a height as lofty as of yore?'

'Perhaps they do, but still, uncle, there is too much art mixed up with nature, in our English scenery. Here all is nature.'

'And I think you must be a very great lover of it, if you prefer this hilly, iron bound island, to the level green sward of Derwent park,' replied the earl.

'I must still plead guilty of the charge of loving nature as it is, uncle,' responded Mary. 'I have seen it in a great variety of forms. I have viewed its high grandeur amid the forests and mountains of America; but never before this hour, have I ever seen it so pure, so serene, and so calmly beautiful.'

'I must needs own, that this is at present, a quiet place enough,' answered the earl, 'but do you not know, dear Mary, that even here, the face of nature is oft times suddenly changed, by the awful sweep of the howling hurricane, or the thundering shock of the subterraneous earthquake.'

'Why, I really believe, that you are getting to be enthusiastic now, dear uncle,' replied Mary Hamilton, 'but we cannot exactly agree, I move that we drop the subject forthwith.'

'And I second the motion,' laughingly responded the noble earl.—'But look at the ship, Mary, and see, she is almost hull down in the distance.'

The vessel to which the earl alluded, the white sails of which were just visible to his eyes and those of his companion, from the eminence on which they stood, was the honorable East India Company's ship *Gladiator*, to which belonged the boat that had conveyed the Earl and his party to the shore, in the manner before related. She was bound to Rio Janeiro, from thence to Batavia, and as they had a long passage from the Downs, Captain Rowland was easily persuaded to allow his distinguished passenger the long coveted recreation of visiting the small though beautiful island of Trinidad.

'Rowland is going to make a long tack, this time I guess,' continued the earl, as they both stood watching the still lessening sails of the huge Indiaman.

'Suppose, dear uncle, replied Mary Hamilton, 'that this Captain Rowland should sail away and leave us here upon this remote island.'

'Then you would have a most excellent chance to study nature as it is,' responded the earl playfully. 'But Rowland would never dare to do any such foolish thing as that to which you have alluded.'

'It may be so, uncle, but still I must sincerely confess, that there is something about this Captain Rowland and his general conduct which I by no means like.'

'Oh, you are too fastidious, dear Mary,' replied the earl, 'for I am sure that as far as my observation has gone,