

some striking incidents that accompanied his return, as to any extraordinary excesses as a pirate. The facts of his case appear to have been as follows:

Much odium having been cast on the colony of New York, in consequence of the number of piracies that had been committed by rovers sailing from the port of that name, the government in England deemed it necessary to take serious measures to repress the evil. This duty was in particular confided to the Earl of Bellamont, who had been appointed the governor of several of the colonies. Mr. Robert Livingston happening to be in England when the subject was under discussion, and being a man of influence in the colony of New York, he was conferred with, as to the most advisable means of putting an end to the practice. Mr. Livingston advised that a cruiser of force should be sent out expressly to seize all lawless rovers, and he introduced to Lord Bellamont, Captain Wm. Kidd, whom he recommended as a seaman qualified to be put at the head of such an adventure. Captain Kidd was said to have a knowledge of the pirates, and of their places of resort; and at the same time, to be a man on whose integrity and services full reliance might be placed. The first proposition was to employ a king's ship of 80 guns and 180 men on this service; but the war requiring all the regular cruisers, it is a proof of the spirit of the times, that the matter was referred to private enterprise, although the sanction of government was not only promised, but obtained. Mr. Livingston took one-fifth of the shares, and became the usual security for the lawfulness of Kidd's proceedings. The Lord Chancellor, and several other distinguished noblemen, took shares in the adventure also, and the crown reserved to itself a tenth of the proceeds, as a proof that it approved of the enterprise. Kidd received his commission and his orders from the Earl of Bellamont, whom he followed to America for that purpose, sailing from Plymouth in England, April 1698, for New York. There is much reason for thinking that Captain Kidd was not guilty of any illegal act himself, until he found that his more legitimate enterprise was not likely to be successful. In the end, however, he went to the eastward of the Cape of Good Hope, where he certainly committed piracies, though to what extent is now questionable. He was accused of ravaging the sea between Madagascar and the coast, from Babelmandel to Malabar, and of committing the usual excesses, though it is probable that there was much exaggeration mixed up with the histories and rumours of the day.