

fro in the West Indies and the Caribbean Sea among the islands, carrying to them much needed merchandise which they sold at rates far below those that could be offered by law-abiding Spanish merchants handicapped by Spain's taxes and duties—rollicking smugglers. There were those who had hung about the far Atlantic like gentlemen-of-the-road lurking on a common, waiting the coming of the galleons on the wide sea highways.

To boys they did not talk much of their doings, nor even to their peers, the tendency amongst them rather being to hint darkly that men must be men indeed to do some things that had to be done in these far sea-fields. But they lounged on the quay and watched the tides come and go, spitting into the river; and criss-crossed to and from the waterfront ordinaries. Still, their tales, though the half were never told, were in the air. They made an atmosphere around them. Faces and gait spoke. Their tales exuded from them. And the things they brought home, as sailors always do, spoke—aye, some spoke literally; for they had a great fancy, when they could, to fetch home parrots, till nearly every ordinary had its "pretty Poll." And the parrots would let out a deal, one way or another. There was one, at "The Dolphin," that would cry: "Prepare to meet thy God. The ship's going down."

These seamen did their best to make Bideford not tedious during their spells ashore, and Bideford did its best to amuse them. Some might go to church or meeting-house, and the meeting-house had

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