

and bad company had taken the nerve out of him. In ten minutes I had him lying on the sand waving the white flag.

“‘Get up,’ says I, kicking him in the ribs, ‘and come along with me.’

“Liverpool got up and followed behind me because it was his habit, wiping the red off his face and nose. I led him to Reverend Pendergast’s shack and called him out.

“‘Look at this, sir,’ says I — ‘look at this thing that was once a proud Britisher. You gave us two dollars and told us to celebrate the day. The star-spangled banner still waves. Hurrah for the stars and eagles!’

“‘Dear me,’ says Pendergast, holding up his hands. ‘Fighting on this day of all days! On Christmas day, when peace on — ’

“‘Christmas, hell!’ says I. ‘I thought it was the Fourth of July.’”

“Merry Christmas!” said the red, white, and blue cockatoo.

“Take him for six dollars,” said Hop-along Bibb. “He’s got his dates and colours mixed.”