

a flame on the water, was like to have set him on fire and turned her clear of them. The buoy rope of the *William's* anchor got between the rudder, and the rudder got clear of them. When the inhabitants who had fled into the woods, and had hidden behind the rocks, saw Capt. Gill's courage, they came down and appeared in a body in arms, which when the French saw, they immediately weighed anchor, and set sail, carrying the masters and men with them. When about forty leagues off the N. E. coast they gave the masters and some of the men a boat, who in due course returned, testifying that the French declared, that if they had captured Capt. Gill, they would not have left house, stage or goods in the harbour. All of which is owing, under the goodness of God, to the gallant captain. He had only one man killed, and three wounded, but the enemy had several killed and wounded."

It was certainly the gallant conduct of Capt. Gill that saved Bonavista, nor does it require a very large stretch of the imagination to picture the terror of the inhabitants of the quiet town more than two hundred years ago.

The following spring, 1705, the French pirates again appeared upon the scene making another raid on the peaceful inhabitants of the town. Captain Michael Gill was not there, and the business of defending the town devolved upon George Skeffington, a quaker by religious profession. He with eighty or ninety of the inhabitants had fortified Green Island. They had nine cannon with which to strike terror into the enemy, but Skeffington's heart failed him, and he surrendering to the enemy, signed a bond, as a ransom, to pay the sum of £4,500 (four thousand five hundred pounds) to M. de Montigny as a guarantee for the protection of their homes.

But this did not end their terrorizing campaigns on other settlements, for they kept the inhabitants of Trinity and Conception Bays in constant terror for the whole of the fishing season. Bonavista must have been an undesirable spot in those eventful years from 1697 until 1705. But there were no more French raids, and the town had rest after the capitulation of George Skeffington and the payment of the ransom.