

**THE SPANISH MAIN:
OR, THIRTY DAYS
ON THE CARIBBEAN**

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The Spanish Main: Or, Thirty Days on the Caribbean by Edward T. Hall

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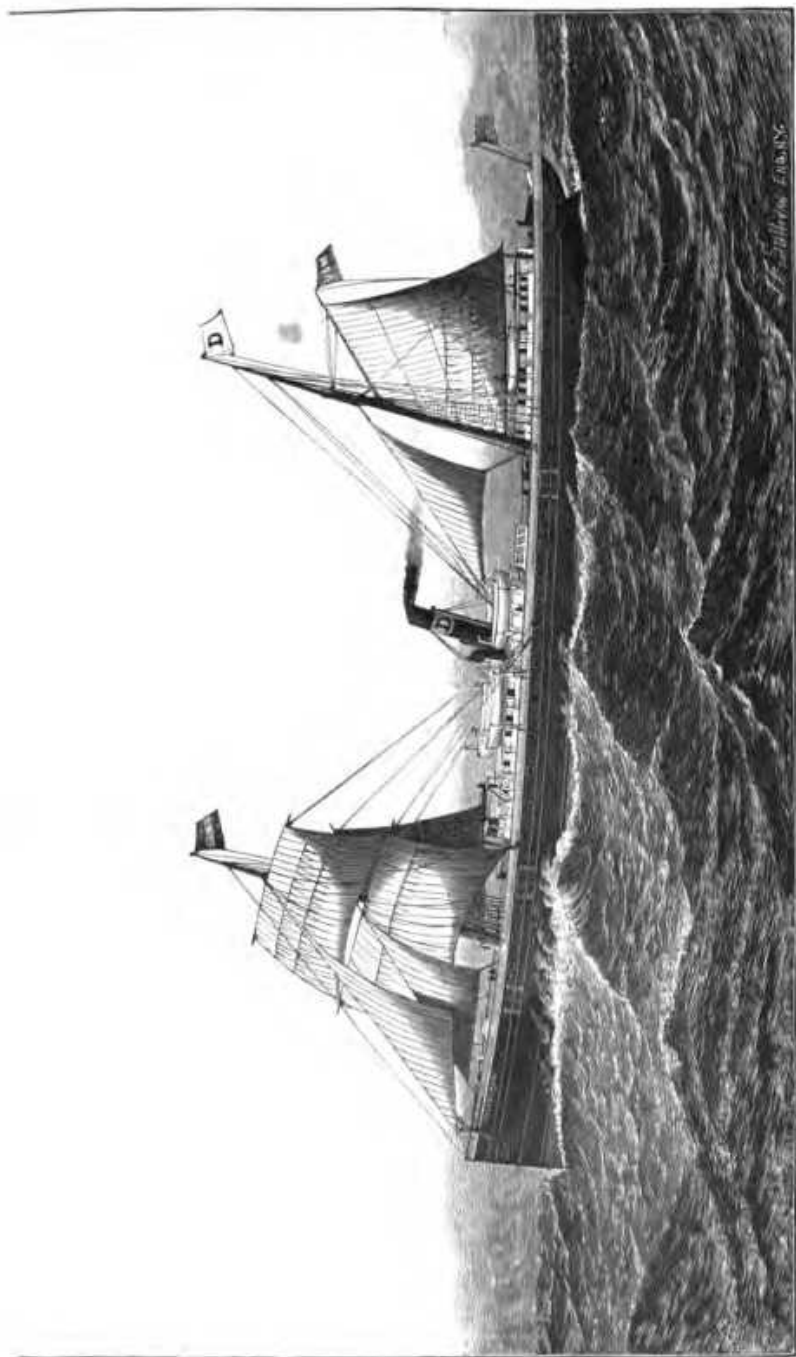
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EDWARD T. HALL

**THE SPANISH MAIN:
OR, THIRTY DAYS
ON THE CARIBBEAN**



THE STEAMSHIP PHILADELPHIA.

THE
SPANISH MAIN;

OR,

THIRTY DAYS ON THE CARIBBEAN.

BY EDWARD T. HALL.

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE AUTHOR'S PHOTOGRAPHS, ENGRAVED BY
MISS JULIA M. HALL.

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1888.

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THE SPANISH MAIN.

CHAPTER I.

A VOYAGE TO THE SPANISH MAIN.

I WAS born in the City of New York, and spent nearly the whole of the early part of my life in that great metropolis.

In my school-boy days it was my infinite delight to roam and linger along the docks and watch the stately ships as they came and went, or as they lay at their piers discharging or taking in cargo. As I gazed at the tapering masts and spars and saw the sailors running up and down the shrouds and ratlins like squirrels, or clinging to the cross-yards like spiders on a wall, I wished that I could be a sailor. But as I grew older, and by education came to know the hardships and privations of a sailor's life as well as its perils, and more especially as I reflected upon his necessitated seclusion from the society of those he dearly loves, and which tends so much toward making up the sum of human happiness, I was easily persuaded to relinquish the desire to adopt a seafaring life.

But my love for the ocean and my longings to visit foreign shores grew no less as the years sped on. I fed my passion on the entrancing sea novels of Cooper and Maryatt. Like as Claude Melnotte said to his Pauline, "We'll read no books that are not tales of love, that we may smile to think how poorly eloquence of words translates the poetry of hearts like ours," so did I seek to read only such books as were tales

of the sea, and dream of that happy time—that I felt sure would come to me—when I could gratify the yearnings of my heart.

But, as if to mock at my youthful hopes, Dame Fortune decreed that I should live for many years an inland life, deprived even of a glimpse of the ocean, or a sight of those gallant ships which bring from afar for us the products of other lands, and scatter the wealth of all climes broadcast among the sons of men.

Thus it was that middle-life had come and gone before I was able in any degree to indulge the passion which had so early animated my breast, and which has never ceased to burn brightly on the altar of my fondest hopes.

But there finally came a time when I could lay aside temporarily every year the cares of business, and enjoy with keenest zest the ever-changing experience of ocean voyages and visits to strange countries.

It is my purpose at the present time to give some account of a voyage to the Spanish Main, which I had the pleasure of making in the early spring months of 1887.

At one o'clock on Wednesday, March 2d, I was a passenger on the iron steamship "Philadelphia," of the Red "D" Line, which sailed from Pier 36, East River, in the port of New York. The day was an exceptionally fine one for this season of the year. The sun shone brightly and the air was as balmy as in the leafy month of June. A tug-boat helped us to swing around toward the bay against a strong flood tide, and in a few minutes we were steaming majestically along under the great bridge that spans the East River and unites the City of New York to her sister City of Brooklyn. Soon we were rapidly passing the now famous statue of "Liberty Enlightening the World," sometimes familiarly called "Mademoiselle Bartholdi." When we reached Sandy Hook our good-looking

young pilot, after courteously shaking hands with the captain and first officer, swung himself lightly over the rail, and by a rope-ladder descended to a small row-boat which had put off from a pilot-boat, on a signal from our mast-head, to take him from our steamer.

To a landsman the transit from a great ocean steamer to a little row-boat, which bobs up and down on the waves like an egg-shell, would be an awkward feat to accomplish, and might easily result in a broken limb or a sea-water bath, but to our pilot, with his experience and coolness and strength of arm, it appears to be as easy as "rolling off from a log." He descends the rope-ladder to within a few feet of the heaving waters, but is in no hurry to let go. He bides his time until a wave brings the little boat up to the proper position for his purpose, when he drops lightly down and in a twinkling is in the stern-sheets, with his hand on the tiller. His cheery voice shouts, "Give way, my lads!" and the oarsmen row him quickly away from the great steamer.

Now the captain takes charge, and our course is laid south, one and a quarter points east, which course we will continue to hold for several days and nights till we approach the islands of St. Domingo and Porto Rico, between which we are to sail, taking care to avoid two smaller islands lying between these two greater ones just named, and which are called, respectively, "Mona Island" and "Monita Island;" that is to say, "Monkey Island" and "Little Monkey Island."

This course between these islands is designated on the charts as the "Mona Passage," and here our course will be changed to a more southerly one, and we will enter the Caribbean Sea. Thence we will shape our course a little west of south for the tropical island of Curacao. This island is one of that great group that come under the general name of the West Indies, but it is more particularly known as one of the

Caribbee Islands. It also belongs to that group known as the "Leeward" Islands, in contradistinction to a group farther eastward, known as the "Windward" Islands. So it is proper to speak of Curacao as one of the West India Islands, or as one of the Carib or Caribbee Islands, or as one of the Leeward Islands, either expression being correct.

And now, while we are bowling along at the rate of twelve or thirteen knots an hour, I will bring this first chapter to a close, and in my state-room bed shut my eyes and woo the drowsy god of sleep, while listening to the waves swashing against our steamer as she proudly plows her way through them. The majesty of the ocean ceases not when the eye is closed upon its heaving bosom. The rushing sound of its many waters, when the head is on the pillow, makes its impress on the reflective mind as deeply as to gaze on its restless billows.

Here is a beautiful ode to the Sea, written by a German poet :

TO THE SEA.

Thou boundless, shining, glorious Sea,
With ecstasy I gaze on thee ;
Joy, joy to him whose early beam
Kisses thy lip, bright Ocean-stream !

Thanks for the thousand hours, old Sea,
Of sweet communion held with thee :
Oft as I gazed, thy billowy roll
Woke the deep feelings of my soul.

Drunk with the joy, thou deep-toned Sea,
My spirit swells to heaven with thee ;
Or, sinking with thee, seeks the gloom
Of nature's deep, mysterious tomb.

At evening, when the sun grows red,
Descending to his watery bed,
The music of the murmuring deep
Soothes e'en the weary earth to sleep.

Then listens thee the evening star,
So sweetly glancing from afar ;
And Luna hears thee when she breaks
Her light in million-colored flakes.

Oft when the noonday heat is o'er,
I seek with joy the breezy shore,
Sink on thy boundless, billowy breast,
And cheer me with refreshing rest.

The poet, child of heavenly birth,
Is suckled by the mother earth ;
But thy blue bosom, holy Sea,
Cradles his infant fantasy.

The old blind minstrel on the shore
Stood listening thy eternal roar,
And golden ages, long gone by,
Swept bright before his spirit's eye.

On wing of swan the holy flame
Of melodies celestial came,
And Iliad and Odyssey
Rose to the music of the Sea.

—*Frederick Leopold, Count of Stolberg.*