PREFACE.

AV'ING taken more than ordinary Pains in  
collecting the Materials which compose the  
following History, we could not be satisfied  
with our selves, if any Thing were wanting to  
it, which might render it intirely satisfactory

to the Publick : It is for this Reason on we have subjoined to  
the Work, a short Abstract of the Laws now in Force against  
Ty rates, and made choice of some particular Cases, (the  
most curious we could meet with) which have been hereto«\*  
fore tried, by which it will appear what Actions have, and  
what have not been adjudged Pyracy.

It is possible this Book may fall into the Hands of some

Masters of Ships, and other honest Mariners, who frequent-

ly, by contrary Winds or Tempests, or other Accidents inci­-

dent to long Voyages, find themselves reduced to great Di-

stresses, either through Scarcity of Provisions, or Want of

Stores. 1 say, it may be a Direction to such as those, what

Lengths they may venture to go, without violating the Law

of Nations, in Case they should meet other Ships at Sea, or

be cast on some inhospitable Shore, which should refuse to

trade with them for such Things as arc absolutely necessary

for the Preservation of their Lives, or the Safety of the Ship

and Cargoe.

We have given a few Instances in the Course of this

History of the Inducements Men have to engage themselves

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headlong in a Life of so much Peril to themselves, and so

destructive to the Navigation of the trading World; to re-

­medy which Evil there seems to be but two Ways, either to find Employment for the great Numbers of Seamen turn’d

adrift at the Conclusion of a War, and thereby prevent

their running into such Undertakings, or to guard suf-

ficiently the Coast of Africa\* the West-Indies, and other

Places whereto Pyrates resort.

I cannot but take Notice in this Place that during this

long Peace, I have not so much as heard of a Dutch Pyrate :

It is not that I take them to be honester than their Neigh—bours; but when we account for it, it will, perhaps, be a Reproach to our selves for our want of Industry: The Rea- son I take to be, that after a War, when the Dutch Ships

are laid up, they have a Fishery, where their Seamen find immediate Business, and as comfortable Bread as they had before. Had ours the' same Recourse in their Necessities,

I'm certain we should find the same Effect from it; for a Fishery is a Trade that cannot be overstock’d; the Sea is

wide enough for us all, we need not quarrel for Elbow-room: Its Stores are infinite, and will ever Reward the Labourer. Besides, our own Coast, for the most Part, supply the Dutch, who employ several hundred Sail constantly in the Trade, and so sell to us our own Fish. I call it our own, for the Sove­reignty of the British Seas, are to this Day acknowledged

us by the Dutch, and all the neighbouring Nations; where-

­fore, there was a publick Spirit amongst us, it would be

well worth our while to establish a National Fishery, which Would be the: best Means in the World to prevent Pyracy,

employ a Number of the Poor, and ease the Nation of a

great Burthen, by lowering the Price of Provisions in gene-

­ral, as well as of severa 'other Commodities.

I need not bring any Proofs of what I advance, viz. that

there are Multitudes of Seamen at this Day unemployed; it is but too evident by their straggling, and begging all over the Kingdom. Nor is it so much their Inclination to Idleness, as their own hard Fate in being cast off after their Work is

done, to starve or steal.- I have not -known a Man of

War

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War commission'd for several years past, but three times

her Compliment of Men have offer’d themselves in twenty

four Hours ; the Merchants take their Advantage of this?,

lessen their Wages, and those few who are in Business are

poorly paid, and but poorly fed; such Usage breeds Discon-

tents amongst them, and makes them eager for any Change. ,

I shall not repeat what I have said in the History con-

cerning the Privateers of the West Indies, where I have

taken Notice they live upon Spoil; and as Custom is a second

Nature, it is no Wonder that, when an honest Livlyhood is

not easily had, they run into one so like their own; so that

it may be said, that Privateers in time of War are a Nur-

sery for Pyrates against a Peace.

Now we have accounted for their Rise and Beginning, it

will be natural to enquire why they are not taken and ac-

stroy'd, before' they come to any Head, seeing that they are seldom less than twelve Men of War station’d in our Ame­-

rican Plantations, even in Time of Peace; a Force suff-

cient to contend with a powerful Enemy. This Enquiry,

perhaps, will not turn much to the Honour of those concern'd

in that Service; however, I hope I may be excus'd, if what

I hint is with a Design of serving the Publick.

I say, tis strange that a few Pyrates should ravage the

Seas for Years, without ever being light upon, by any of

our Ships of War; when in the mean Time, they (the Py­-

rates) shall take Fleets of Ships; it looks as If one was much

more dilligent in their Affairs, than the other. Roberts

and his Crew, alone, took 400 Sail before he was destroy'd.

This Matter, I may probably set right another Time,

and only observe for the present, that the Pyrates at Sea,

have the same Sagacity with Robbers at Land; as the latter undersland what Roads are most frequented, and where it is

most likely to meet with Booty, so the former know what

Latitude to lie in, in order to intercept Shps; and as the

Pyrates happen to be in want of Provisions, Stores, or any particular Lading, they cruise accordingly for such Ships,

and are moraly certain of meeting with them; and by the

same Reason, if the Man of War cruise in those Latitudes,

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they are as sure of finding the Pyrates, as the Pyrates are

to find the Merchant Ships; and if the Pyrates are not to

be met with by the Men of War in such a Latitude, then

surely down the same Latitude may the Merchant Ships

arrive safely to their Port.

To make this a little plainer to my Country Readers,

I must observe that all our outward bound Ships, sometime

after they leave the Land, steer into the Latitude of

the Place they are bound to; if to the West-India Islands,

or any Part of the Main of America, as New-York,

New-England, Virginia, &c. because the Latitude is

the only Certainty in those Voyages to be found, and then

they sail due West, till they come to their Port, without

altering their Course. In this West Way lie the Pyrates, whether it be to Virginia, &c. or Nevis, St. Christo-

phers, Montserat, Jamaica, &c. so that if the Mer­-

chant Ships bound thither, do not fall a Prey to them one

Dayy they must another: Therefore I sayy if the Men of War take the same Track, the Pyrates must unavoidably fall into their Mouths, or be frighted away, for where the Game is,

their will the Vermine be; if the latter should be the Case.

the trading Ships, as said before, will pass unmolested and safe, and the Pyrates be reduced to take Refuge in some of their lurking Holes about the uninhabited Islands, where

their Fate would be like that of the Fox in his Den, if

they should venture out, they would be hunted and taken,

and if they stay within they must starve.

I must observe another Thing, that the Pyrates general-

­ly Shift their Rovings, according to the Season of the Year;

in the Summer they cruise mostly along the Coast of the Con­tinent of America, but the Winters there, being a little

too cold for them, they follow the Sun, and go towards the Islands, at the approach of cold Weather. Every Man

who has used the West-India Trade, knows this to be

true j therefore, since we are so well acquainted with all

their Motions, I cannot see why our Men of War under a

proper Regulation, may not go to the Southward, instead of lying up all the Winter useless : But I Shall proceed too far,

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in this Enquiry, I shall therefore quit it, and say some

thing of the following Sheets, which the Author may venture

to assure the Reader that they have one Thing to recommend them, which is Truth; those Facts which he himself was

not an Eye-Witness of, he had from the authentick Relati­-

ons of the Persons concerned in taking the Pyrates, as well

as from the Mouths of the Pyrates themselves, after they

were taken, and he conceives no Man can produce better Testimonies to Support the Credit of any History.

It will be observed, that the Account of the Actions of Roberts runs into a greater Length, than that of any other Pyrate, for which we can assign two Reasons, first, because

he ravaged the Seas longer than the rest, and of Consequence there must be a greater Scene of Business in his Life: Second-­ly, being resolved not to weary the Reader, with tiresome Repetitions: When we found the Circumstances in Roberts’s Life, and other Pyrates, either as to pyratical Articles, or

any Thing else, to be the same, we thought it best to give them but once, and chose Robert’s Life for that Purpose, he ha­-

ving made more Noise in the World, than some others.

As to the Lives of our two female Pyrates, we must con-

fess they may appear a little Extravagant, yet they are

never the less true for seeming so, but as they were pub-

lickly tried for their Pyracies, there are living Witnesses

enough to justify what we have laid down concerning them;

It is certain, we have produced some Particulars which were not so publickly known, the Reason is, we were more inquisi-

tive into the Circumstances of their past Lives, than other People, who had no other Design, than that of gratifying

their own private Curiosty : If there are some Incidents and Turns in their Stories, which may give them a little the

Air of a Novel, they are not invented or contrived for

that Purpose, it is a Kind of Reading this Author is but

little acquainted with, but as he himself was exceedingly diverted with them, when they were related to him, he

thought they might have the same Effect upon the Reader.

I presume we need make no Apology for giving the Name

of a History to the following Sheets, though they contain no-

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thing but the Actions of a Parcel of Robbers. It is Bra-

very and Stratagem in War which make Actions worthy of

Record; in which Sense the Adventures here related will

be thought deserving that Name. Plutarch is very cir-

cumstantial in relating the Actions of Spartacus, the Slave,

and makes the Conquest of him, one of the greatest Glories

of Marcus Crassus; and it is probable, if this Slave had

liv’d a little longer, Plutarch would have' given us his

Life at large. Rome, the Mistress of the World, was no

more at first than a Refuge for Thieves and Outlaws; and

if the Progress of our Pyrates had been equal to their Be­-

ginning; had they all united, and settled in some of those

Islands they might, by this Time, have been honoured with

the Name of a Commonwealth, and no Power in those Parts

of the World could have been able to dispute it with them.

If we have seem’d to glance, with some Frecdom, at the Behaviour of some Governors of Provinces abroad, it has

been with Caution; and, perhaps, we have not declar’d as

much as we knew: However, we hope those Gentlemen in the same Station, who have never given Occasion for the like

Censure, will take no Offence, tho’ the Word Governor is sometimes made use of.

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