traders, or interlopers, as they were called, were frequently seized by stratagem by the Dutch garrisons on the coast, and treated with great severity. But they provided themselves with fast sailing ships, went well armed and manned, and generally fought to the last man, rather than be taken by the Company's forces. Capt. Phillips, in 1693, found more than a dozen of these interlopers on the coast, and had seen four or five of them at a time lying before Elmina castle for a week together, trading, as it were, in defiance of it.

The English had also their incorporated company, and their private traders. Of the character of the latter, we find no specification which dates in this century. In 1721, there were about thirty of them settled on the "starboard side" of the bay of Sierra Leone. Atkins describes them as "loose, privateering blades, who, if they cannot trade fairly with the natives, will rob. Of these," he says, "John Leadstine, commonly called 'Old Cracker,' is reckoned the most thriving." This man, called Leadstone in Johnson's "History of the Pirates," had been an old buccanier, and kept two or three guns before his door, "to salute his friends the pirates when they put in there." Such, substantially, appears to have been the character of the English "private traders" upon this coast from the beginning. Of the regular traders, English and Dutch, a part, and only a part, seem to have been comparatively decent.

The influence of the Pirates on this coast deserves a distinct consideration.

They appeared there occasionally, as early as the year 1600, and seem to have increased with the increase of commerce. For some years the piratically disposed appear to have found scope for the indulgence of their propensities among the buccaniers of the West Indies. But after the partial breaking up of the buccaniers in 1688, and still more after their suppression in 1697, they spread themselves over the whole extent of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. The coast of Guinea was one of their principal haunts, and Sierra Leone a favourite resort. They not only plundered at sea, but boldly entered any port where the people, whether native or European, were not strong enough to resist them, and traded there on their own terms. In 1693, Phillips found that the governor of Porto Praya made it a rule never to go on board any ship in the harbour, lest it should prove to be a pirate, and he should be detained till he had furnished a supply of provisions, for which he would be paid by a bill of exchange on some imaginary person in London. Avery, commonly known as "Long Ben," had thus extorted supplies from the governor of St. Thomas, and paid him by a bill on "the pump at Aldgate." At Cape Mesurado, Phillips found a Scotchman, of the crew of Herbert the pirate. The crew had quarrelled, all the rest were killed or afterwards died of their wounds, he ran the brigantine ashore near the Cape, and had since been living among the natives. Capt. Snelgrave arrived at Sierra Leone, April 1, 1719. He found three pirates in the harbour; Cocklyn, Le Bouse and Davis. They had lately taken ten English vessels. His first mate, Jones, betrayed him into their hands. He had with him a royal proclamation, offering pardon to all English pirates who should surrender themselves on or before the first of July. An old buccanier tore it in pieces. They took Snelgrave's vessel for their own use, leaving an inferior one for him, and left the bay about the 29th of the month. Afterwards, he tells us, that more than a hundred vessels fell into the hands of these pirates on the coast of Guinea, and some of the gang, did immense damage in the West Indies. A few days after sailing, Davis took the Princess, of London, plundered her and let her go; but her second mate, Roberts, joined him. He landed at Prince's Island, where the Portuguese

governor at first favoured them, for the sake of their trade, but finally assassinated Davis. The crew then chose Roberts for their captain, whose exploits were still more atrocious.

The same year, England, the pirate, took an English vessel near Sierra Leone, murdered the captain, Skinner, and gave her to Howell Harris, who, after trial and acquittal, obtained command of a merchant sloop, and turned pirate. Having had "pretty good success" for a while, he attacked St. Jago, in the Cape Verde Islands, but was repulsed. He then took, plundered and destroyed the English fort St. James at the mouth of the Gambia. The fort appears to have been partially rebuilt immediately. In 1721, the African Company sent out the Gambra Castle, Capt. Russel, with a company of soldiers under Maj. Massey, to strengthen it. The new governor, Whitney, had just arrived. Massey, with the assistance of Lowther, second mate, seized both the fort and the ship; and after cruising a while as a pirate, went home, brought on his own trial, and was hanged.

In 1721, Roberts, before mentioned, had become so formidable as to attract the notice of the English government. Two ships of 50 guns each were sent out to capture him. Atkins, surgeon of the squadron, has given an account of the cruise. At Elmina, in January, they found that Roberts had "made a bold sweep" in August, had taken a vessel a few leagues from that place, and had "committed great cruelties." His three ships were well manned, "seaman every where entering with them; and when they refused, it was oftener through fear, than any detestation of the practice." This shows what was then the general character of English seamen in that region, and what influence they must have exerted on the natives. January 15, they reached Whidah. The pirates had just plundered and ransomed eleven ships, and been gone twenty-four hours. They followed on to the south, and by the 12th of February, took all three of their ships; the crew of the last having abandoned it and fled. They found on board about 300 Englishmen, 60 or 70 stout negroes, great plenty of trade goods, and eight or ten thousand pounds of gold dust, The trial of these pirates occupied the court at Cape Coast Castle twenty-six days; 52 were executed there, 74 acquitted, 20 condemned to servitude, and 17 sent to the Marshalsea.

The next year, Capt. George Roberts was taken by three pirates, of whom Edmund Loe was the chief, at the Cape Verde Islands. While there, after Loe had gone, he fell in with Charles Franklin,* who had been taken some time before by Bartholomew Roberts, a pirate, had escaped from him at Sierra Leone, and taken refuge among the negroes in the interior.

The pirates seem generally to have been content with trading at Sierra Leone, without plundering the people; though Roberts took the place in 1720. They afterwards took permanent possession of the first bay below the Cape, and occupied it for seven years or more, till broken up by an expedition from France in 1730. Hence the place was called "Pirate's Bay," and was so named on British charts.

*This case is mentioned chiefly for the sake of introducing a note,—Franklin says that "these inlanders have a notion that the Bakkaraus [whites] have a new world, where they intend to reside, which is inconceivably better than the old; but that there wants so much to be done to it, that it will be many ages before it can be made fit for their reception; that they send all the most valuable things from their old world thither, the labor of which is carried on by the negroes they yearly take out of Guinea; that all those blacks must work and slave very hard, without any intermission or redemption, until the new world is completely fitted up in a very beautiful manner, and the Bakkaraus are all settled there. But when that is done, having no farther service for the blacks, they will send them home to inhabit this world, without ever being molested more by the whites, who will never come here again. This happy time they earnestly wish for."

Such was Franklin's statement to Roberts in 1722, published in London in 1726, and now transcribed from a copy printed in 1745. Is not Bakkarau about ready to spare them?

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

XII. Newspapers
A. Maryland Colonization Journal

2. June 1841 (n.s. I, 1)--May 1861 (n.s. X, 24)

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