

**CLASSICS TO GO**

# **PRINCE RUPERT THE BUCCANEER**



**CHARLES JOHN CUTCLIFFE WRIGHT HYNE**

**Prince Rupert**  
**The Buccaneer**

**Charles John Cutcliffe Wright Hyne**



"THEY MARCHED . . . LIKE MEN WHO HAD LOST ALL INTEREST IN LIFE."  
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INTEREST IN LIFE**

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

They marched ... like men who had lost all interest in life . . .  
*Frontispiece*

Prince Rupert shone out like a very Paladin

Then one Watkin, a man of iron and a mighty shooter, took the lead

It would be a perpetual sunshine for me, Querida

Master Laughan endeavoured to outdo them all in desperation and valour

"Oh, I say what I think," retorted Watkin with a sour look

The secretary was occupied in leading her own.

There is no mistaking the manner of buccaneers returning well-laden

## CHAPTER I

### THE PAWNING OF THE FLEET

"Not slaves, your Highness," said the Governor. "We call them *engagés* here: it's a genteeler style. The Lord General keeps us supplied."

"I'll be bound he gave them the plainer name," said Prince Rupert.

The Governor of Tortuga shrugged his shoulders. "On the bills of lading they are written as Malignants; but judging from the way he packed the last cargo, Monsieur Cromwell regards them as cattle. It is evident that he cared only to be shut of them. They were so packed that one half were dead and over the side before the ship brought up to her anchors in the harbour here. And what were left fetched but poor prices. There was a strong market too. The Spaniards had been making their raids on the hunters, and many of the *engagés* had been killed: our hunters wanted others; they were hungry for others; but these poor rags of seaworn, scurvy-bitten humanity which offered, were hardly worth taking away to teach the craft—Your Highness neglects the cordial."

"I am in but indifferent mood for drinking, Monsieur. It hangs in my memory that these poor rogues once fought most stoutly for me and the King. Cromwell was ever inclined to be iron-fisted with these Irish. Even when we were fighting him on level terms he hanged all that came into his hands, till he found us stringing up an equal number of his saints by way of reprisal. But now he has the kingdom all to himself, I suppose he can ride his own gait.

But it is sad, Monsieur D'Ogeron, detestably sad. Irish though they were, these men fought well for the Cause."

The Governor of Tortuga emptied his goblet and looked thoughtfully at its silver rim. "But I did not say they were Irish, *mon prince*. Four Irish kernes there were on the ship's manifest, but the scurvy took them, and they went overside before reaching here."

"Scots then?"

"There is one outlandish fellow who might be a Scot, or a Yorkshireman, or a Russian, or something like that. But no man could speak his lingo, and none would bid for him at the sale. You may have him as a present if you care, and if perchance he can be found anywhere alive on the island. No, your Highness, this consignment is all English; drafted from foot, horse, and guns: and a rarely sought-after lot they would have been, if whole. From accounts, they must have been all tried fighting men, and many had the advantage of being under your own distinguished command.—Your Highness, I beseech you shirk not the cordial. This climate creates a pleasing thirst, which we ought to be thankful for. The jack stands at your elbow."

Prince Rupert looked out over the harbour, and the black ships, at the blue waters of the Carib sea beyond. "My poor fellows," he said, "my glorious soldiers, your loyalty has cost you dear."

"It is the fortune of war," said D'Ogeron, sipping his goblet. "A fighting man must be ready to take what befalls. Our turn may come to-morrow."

"I am ready, Monsieur, to take my chances. It is not on my conscience that I ever avoided them."

"Your Highness is a philosopher, and I take it your officers are the same. Yesterday they rode with you boot to boot in the field, ate with you on the same lawn, spoke with you in council across the same drum-head. To-day they would be happy if they could be your lackeys. But the chance is not open to them; they are lackeys to the buccaneers."

Prince Rupert started to his feet. "Officers, did you say?"

"Just officers. The great Monsieur Cromwell has but wasteful and uncommercial ways of conducting a war. He captures a gentle and gallant officer; he does not ask if the poor man desires to be put up to ransom, but just claps the irons on him, and writes him for the next shipment to these West Indies, as though he were a common pikeman." The Governor toyed with his goblet and sighed regretfully—" 'Twas a sheer waste of good hard money."

"And you?"

"We kept to the Lord General's classification, and sold gentle officer, and rude common soldier on the same footing. There was no other way. We were too far off your England here to treat profitably for ransom. Besides, the estates of most were wasted during the war, and what was left lay in Monsieur Cromwell's hands."

"All the gentlemen of England are beggared. They sent their plate to the King's mint to be coined for the troops' pay; they pawned their lands; and now they are sent to be butcher-boys to horny-handed cow-killers. I think you have dealt harshly, Monsieur D'Ogeron."

"It was your war," said the Governor good-humouredly, "not mine; and the harshness of it was out of my hands. The men were sent here, and I dealt with them in the most

profitable way. If it would have paid me to weed out the officers, I should have done it. As it didn't, I e'en let them stay herded in with the rest."

"But surely, Monsieur, you must have some regard for gentle blood?"

"Mighty little, *mon prince*, mighty little. I had it once in the old days, in France; but I lost it out here. It's not in fashion. A quick eye and a lusty arm we value in Tortuga and Hispaniola more than all the titles a king could bestow. Gentility will not fill the belly here, neither will it ward off the Spaniards, neither will it despoil them of their ill-got treasure to provide the wherewithal for an honest carouse. What we value most is a little coterie of Brethren of the Coast sailing in with a deep fat ship, with their numbers few and their appetites whetted. To those we are ready to bow, as we did once in the old countries to knights and belted earls—till, that is, they have spent their gains."

"And then?"

"Why, then, *mon prince*, we are apt to grow uncivil till we see their sterns again as they go off to search the seas for more. Oh, I tell you, it's a different life here from the old one at home; and a rustling blade, if he can contrive to remain alive, soon makes his way to the top, be he gentle, or be he mere whelp of a seaport drab."

"You state your policy with clearness. This is not known in France, and there, I make bold to say, Monsieur, it would not be liked."

The Governor drank deeply. "Here's to France," quoth he, "and may she always stay a long way off! I'm my own master here, and have a strong place and a lusty following."



"Stronger places have been taken," said the Prince.

"Not if they were snugly guarded," said D'Ogeron. "I use my precautions. There are two entrances to this harbour, but only one channel. There are many bays, but only one anchorage. Your ships are in it now; my batteries command them."

"Monsieur," said Rupert stiffly, "do you distrust me?"

"Except for my own rogues, and you are not one of them  
——"

"Thank God!"

"Except for my own rogues, I trust no one."

"Monsieur," said Rupert, "I am not in the habit of having my word doubted. I have had the honour to inform you before that I came in peace."

"So have done others, and yet I have seen them bubble out with war when it suited their purpose."

"Monsieur, you may have your own individual code of honour in these barbarous islands, but I still preserve mine. You have seen fit to put in question my honesty. I must ask you to call back your words, or stand by the consequences."

The Governor winked a vinous eye. "You don't catch me fighting a duel," said he. "The honour of the thing we may leave out of the question: we don't deal in it here. And beyond that, I have all to lose and nothing to gain."

"Monsieur," said the Prince, "you have your sword, and I have mine. I can force you either to fight or apologise."

The Governor wagged his goblet slowly. "Neither one nor the other," said he. "Alphonse," he cried, raising his voice, "haul across that curtain."

There was a scuffle of feet. A piece of drapery that seemed to hide the wall behind the Prince's chair clattered back on its rings, and showed another room, long, narrow, and dusky. In it at the farther end was a demi-bombarde, a small wide-mouthed piece on a gun carriage, with a man standing beside its breech holding a lighted match over the touch-hole.

The Prince turned sharply to look, and then slewed round to the table again. "It covers me well, but I have known a single shot to miss."

"But not a bag of musket balls, *mon prince*, with a small charge behind them," said the Frenchman politely.

"They would be safer," said Rupert. "Yes, Monsieur, it is a pretty trap, but to me it scarcely seems one that a gentleman would set for a guest."

D'Ogeron shrugged his shoulders. "It contents me," he said, reaching for the black-jack. "I have ceased to be a gentleman. I am Governor of Tortuga."

"If I cannot compel you just now to fight me for your discourtesy," said Rupert, "at least I will not drink with you." And he spilled his liquor on the floor.

"Every man to his humour," said D'Ogeron. "The jack's half full yet, but I'm not averse to doing double duty. This sangoree puts heart in a man. Now touching these *engagés* we started from: there is a way open by which you can serve them quite to their fancy. All who are left, that is, for I make no doubt that some have not survived. Newcomers

are apt to be full of vexatious faults, and the cow-killers are not wont to be lenient when their convenience is injured. Give out that you are here with money, and ready to buy, and within a month I'll have all of them brought here to look at, with their prices written in plain figures. Say the word, *mon prince*, and I'll send out news this very day."

It irked Prince Rupert to deal with this man, it irked him to sit in the same room with such a fellow; but the woes of those that had fought by his side cried aloud for relief, so he swallowed back his nausea and spoke him civilly. Besides, if the Governor chose to pocket the affronts and go on sipping his sangoree, it was the Governor's affair. So the Prince said that he was ready to buy back the liberty of those officers who had served his late majesty King Charles in the wars, and was prepared to remain in Tortuga harbour with his three ships till these were brought in.

"Well and good," said D'Ogeron. "But I must warn your Highness that prices will rule high. When your very excellent friends were sold here, newly out of the ship, being raw with wounds, and galled with their shackles, and damaged with scurvy, they went cheap. But since then they have been in training as hunters, and porters of meat, and makers of bucan, and dressers of hide, and so they have acquired value as handicraftsmen. Moreover, when ransom is spoken of, it is always our custom to acquire new interest in a prisoner. You take me?"

"I do. Had I one tenth of your commercial power, Monsieur, the King, my master, for whom I came out here to glean the seas, could keep a richer court at the Hague."

The Governor leaned across the table and stared. "Do I hear you say you are working for Charles II.?"

"Certainly. I am his servant since his late Majesty's murder. His kingdom for the nonce is unhappily in the hands of others, and with it the natural revenues. A king must have a court; a court needs money; I sail the seas to win that money: the thing is simple."

Monsieur D'Ogeron hit the table. "The thing is unheard of," he cried. "Loyalty is a home-growth which does not bear transporting across the seas. In France, in the old days, I was the king's man—I forget what king's. I left France full of that loyalty, and for a while it lasted. But when my ship ran into the trade winds, it began to ooze from me, and when I got set down here, in these islands of the Caribbean, there was but a dim memory of that loyalty left. France is so many a weary league away, that the King's shadow cannot reach across the seas. For a while I missed it; for a while there was a blank in my life. And then I found another master: a master whom I could always admire and strive for; a master whose every action interested me, whose every woe was mine; and him I have served this many years with infinite zest and appetite. Never had man a master he wished to serve so well."

"May I hear his name?" the Prince asked.

The Governor turned to a silver mirror which hung against the wall, and lifted his goblet.

"I drink to him," he said, "with all heartiness. His name is Camille Baptiste D'Ogeron, patron of the buccaneers."

"And skimmer of their gains?"

"Skimmer of their gains, most certainly, *mon prince*, or why Governor of Tortuga? What am I else but a king? I have no hollow pomp about my court, it is true, but I could have it if I chose to pay. I could have drums beat in my path

when I went abroad, and powder burned upon my saint's day. I could have courtiers in silken robes and golden chains, and a palace with forty rooms instead of four. But I take only what suits my whim. My visitors come in tarry breeks or the bloodied shirts of cow-hunters. My attendants can make a roast, or brew a bowl, or slit a throat with equal glibness. My enemies, when they call, leave behind them their heads on the spikes above the gateway. And I have also the delicate joys of domesticity. Though I have been widowed these nine times, I married a new wife brought in by one of the ships only the other day, and already she adores me."

Prince Rupert sighed. "I can conceive," he said, "that the situation would not be intolerable for some men. There is a certain relish in robbing the Spaniard."

"More for you, *mon prince*, than for me. They are Pope's men, and I was a Pope's man bred myself. You were always Protestant."

"I glory in it," said Rupert fervently, "though it has made me a ruined fellow from my birth up."

"There you are, then," said the Governor. "Take your revenge, which is here ready to your hand, and grow rich at one and the same time."

"I shall take my revenge," said the Prince quietly, "and I shall take revenge for others also. But it is my King who will have the riches."

"Yet, if it could be otherwise," said the Frenchman musingly: "if you would follow what is in the atmosphere out here, and be content to fight for your own hand, what a glorious future there would be before you! There are with you three ships in harbour now: a very tolerable

commencement. You could take them up a creek to careen, and clean them from the weeds of the voyage, and re-set-up your rigging, and get all put a-tauto. You have pretty enough crews on board already. I can get you also those of your late soldiers whom Monsieur Cromwell sent me, and who will be none the worse for their short apprenticeship with the buccaneers. There are hundreds of the buccaneers themselves that would join in such an enterprise, and I also could lend a couple of well-found ships to assist it.

"And what is this enterprise?"

"Seize every plate ship that's sent home to Spain. Sack every city on the Main in its turn, squeeze out all the gold, and sail away and leave its people to spin more."

"You propose I should do this as your lieutenant?"

"That sticks in your gizzard, eh, *mon prince*? But, as it chanced, I was not going to make any such suggestion. I never aspire to having men of your calibre as my subjects. They would take too much looking after, and I have no wish to find one from below climbing up and trampling on me, and becoming chief in my place. This governorship has been too hard to get, and is too snug a property to jeopardise for the mere ambition of having Rupert Palatine for a mere week or so as my dutiful lieutenant." And Monsieur D'Ogeron winked pleasantly. "No, *mon prince*, go and seize an island for yourself, and set up a government, and we will call ourselves allies. We will form a buccaneer kingdom with a dual head, and there will be no limit to our prosperity. Look at the crop there is at hand: wine, women, meat, corn, silks, pearls and gold in all abundance. All the strong men will flock to us and help in the taking. The Spanish power will melt away like sand cliffs before a sea."

Prince Rupert thrust back his chair from the table and smote the arm with his fist. "Have done, Monsieur!" he said. "It is against my honour that I should listen to you more. I came out here as a King's man, and if life remains to me, it will be as his man that I go back."

"But," said the Governor, with a puzzled brow, "your King's Cause is distant; it is weak; it is nearly on the ground; it is doubtful if it ever pulls round again. Nay, your Highness, by this time, for aught you know, the Second Charles has followed the way of his father, and there is no Cause left."

"Then I shall build it up again and fight for it. In Europe, Monsieur, we do not esteem a man any the less honourable because he keeps his fidelity to a Cause that is for the moment drooping."

"Well," said Monsieur D'Ogeron, "I am thankful that I have left Europe behind, with those old unpracticable ideas." He leaned back in his chair and stretched. Then he laughed craftily, and went on with his speech. "As it seems, then, we cannot trade over this idea of a buccaneer kingdom, your Highness, let us go back to the question of ransoming these *engagés*. You are prepared to pay good hard money down?"

The Prince frowned. "For a gentleman, Monsieur, you are unpleasantly commercial."

"Your Highness rather wearies me," said the Governor, with a whimsical shrug. "Gentility I have dropped, as being quite unprofitable; and as for keenness over a bargain, why, there I could skin a Jew; so now you have a fair and final warning."

"I have no money at present."

"I did not suppose you had. Ships which sail from here to the Old World are oftentimes rich; but ships coming here, never. Since history began, they have always been barren and empty—or why else should they come?"

"I will make payments, Monsieur, out of the first prizes which come into my hands."

"I hear your Highness say it. But—Tortuga is not Europe, and we give mighty little credit here. If you were known to be fighting for your own hand, it might be different. But when you openly say you are merely an admiral of some king across the water, you speak beyond our simple minds altogether. I answer not only for myself: I answer for the whole community. You must offer some other scheme, *mon prince*, or your friends must stay on as *engagés* and work out their time. Come, think it out. I do not wish to hurry you."

Prince Rupert sat with his chin in his fingers and pondered deeply, but no schemes came to him. It irked him terribly to think that the men who had fought by his side during all the battles of the war should be left unrescued in this horrible servitude, whilst he was at hand with the will to set them free, and only lacking of the bare means. And if fighting would have done the deed, the Prince would have recked little of the odds against him. But though he captured all Tortuga, with its forts and batteries, and killed the Governor, yet he would be no more forward in his design. For those he wished to relieve were scattered in ones and twos far over the Savannahs of Hispaniola across the strait, and nothing but the good-will of Monsieur D'Ogeron could make the buccaneers, their masters, bring them in.



The Governor at the end of the table smoked tobacco and sipped his sangoree. He seemed quite contented, and perhaps a little drowsy.

Prince Rupert stood up, and began to walk to and fro across the chamber, as was his wont when thinking deeply. But scarcely had he left his chair, when the roar of an explosion shook the place, and the chamber was filled with smoke, and the chair itself and a part of the table beyond were blown to the smallest of splinters.

But at the head of the table the Governor sat unmoved, and, as it seemed, unstartled; and presently he began to laugh. "Fore God," he said, "that was a sleepy rogue of a cannonier. Has your Highness guessed what happened?"

"No," said the Prince. "Your efforts at hospitality are somewhat beyond me."

"Why, the man with the lighted match in his hand has been growing more and more drowsy, and nodding and nodding, till at last his hand drooped down over the priming. When the piece fired I chanced to look round, and saw him waken and start, as though he had been hit himself. 'Twas a most comic sight."

"Through his carelessness I have had a most narrow escape."

"But you did escape," said the Governor. "And the damage done to the chair and table I will forgive him for the amusement he afforded me."

"I must request you, Monsieur," said the Prince, "to order this man a flogging."

The Governor was all affability. "*Mon prince*," quoth he, "if it pleases you, he shall be flogged first and hanged afterwards. Or would you prefer that he should have his wakefulness improved by a generous taste of the rack? You have had a start. I had forgot you were newly from Europe and would care for these things. We think little enough of such small humours here, so long as we are not hurt. But you are fresh from the Old World, and my man shall pay dearly enough for his indiscretion."

The Prince frowned. "I wonder, Monsieur," he said, "that you do not punish the man as taking away your only guard over me."

This time Monsieur D'Ogeron laughed outright. "*Mon prince*," he said, "you have small idea of the completeness of my defences. Were it my will, I could have you safe in an unbreakable prison before another second had passed."

"I do not take you, Monsieur."

The Governor rubbed his hands appreciatively. "My dungeons," he said, "are beneath this chamber, rock-hewn, deep and vastly unpleasant. The floor on which we stand is so ingeniously contrived that at will any portion of it can be made to give way, and drop an inconvenient person into safety below. I have a trusty knave at hand attending on the bolts."

"Who is probably asleep, like your other fellow."

The Governor frowned. "I do not think so, your Highness. But we will soon see. I might call your attention to the embrasure of the window behind you. In case other foothold goes, it will afford you a scanty seat." Then, lifting his voice, he cried loudly for "Jean Paul!"

On the instant a great flap of the floor beneath the Prince's feet swung downwards, and had not Rupert been warned, there is not a doubt but that he would have been shot helplessly through the gap into the prison beneath. But as it was, with a scramble he reached the ledge of the window, and sat there cursing aloud at Tortuga and all the monkeys and the monkeyish tricks it contained.

It was plain the Governor wished to laugh—for when half drunk he was a merry enough ruffian—but he saw the Prince's rage and choked back his mirth. "Nay, your Highness," he said, "you brought it on yourself by doubting whether my man Jean Paul stayed awake. I have known all my fellows long. Alphonse drowns sometimes when the heat is great and he has liquor in him, but, Jean Paul never. That is why I have set Jean Paul over the strings which govern the bolts, and he has never failed me, and never pulled the wrong string. And it is no light business to keep the tally of them either, for there is a separate string for every square fathom of the floor."

"You keep a most delicate care of your health, Monsieur."

"It is necessary," said the Governor, with a shrug. "I have some queer callers. Men in these seas want many things, and when they cannot get them for the asking, they are not averse to using violence if they think it will succeed. I dare lay a wager, *mon prince*, that if you saw those late officers of yours, which Monsieur Cromwell sent me, standing by the harbour side, you would not think twice about clapping them on board and carrying them to sea without a piastre of recompense?"

"It would be my bare duty to gentlemen who have been my very faithful comrades."

"And your King's servants. How far would his present Majesty go towards ransoming these unlucky soldiers?"

"He would go far, Monsieur. I have no commission from him to speak upon the matter: I could have no commission, seeing that his Majesty knew no more than I that Cromwell has sent unfortunate cavaliers to be enslaved in these savage seas; but I take it upon myself to say that his Majesty would sacrifice much to see them relieved."

"Well," said the Governor, "if he sends out money, I will see the matter most circumspectly attended to."

"He can send out no money," said Rupert gloomily. "His Majesty has nothing save for what I earn for him."

The Governor spread his hands. "Then what can you expect? There is nothing for it but to let your good friends continue their employment, unless——"

"Unless what, Monsieur?"

The Governor dropped his *insouciance* and stood to his feet. The drink seemed to warm into life within him. The Prince was still sitting absurdly enough in the window embrasure, with the fallen trap yawning beneath his feet. D'Ogeron strode up and faced him across the gap. "Give me the services of your fleet for six short months," he cried, "and the men shall be yours. We will send the ships away to-morrow to careen. I will despatch messengers, and these cavaliers of yours shall join them before they are cleaned. Then they shall sail away to harry a Spanish town on the Main, and their earnings during those six months shall count for all the ransom."

"It is a bargain," Rupert said. "The King will forgive my alienating his revenues for the sake of these cavaliers who

have served him so well. So, Monsieur, I sell myself into the service of the Governor of Tortuga for six desperate months."

"Stay a moment," said the Frenchman. "I made no design on your Highness's utility. It is part of my design that the fleet should sail under an officer of my own, and that your Highness should stay on here, and accept my poor hospitality."

"And for why, Monsieur? Do you honour me by doubting my capacity as an admiral?"

"By no means. I have the highest opinion of your fighting genius, *mon prince*. But I would like to ensure that the fleet, after glutting itself with spoil on the Spanish Main, called back in this harbour here, and did not sail direct to Helveotsluys or some other port of Holland."

"So, Monsieur, you doubt my poor honesty? You do well to put a barrier between us, for this is a killing matter."

"I have learned to doubt everybody, your Highness; but I doubt you doubly because of your loyalty to this king without a kingdom, by whom you have been sent out a-foraging. Once you and your cavaliers had the gold aboard and under hatches, it might come to your memories that this king of yours was poor, and wanted immediate nourishment, and that Monsieur de Tortuga could bear to have his account settled on a later day. You take me?"

"I cannot bargain with you," said Rupert violently. "I will not be separated from my fleet. But if hard necessity makes me desert these unfortunate cavaliers now, be assured that I do not forget them. And when opportunity arrives, and I come back to rescue them, look to yourself, Monsieur."

"You may trust me to do it," said the Frenchman. "I am always ready to receive my visitors fittingly. That is why I remain Governor of Tortuga. Well, your Highness, for the present negotiations seem at an end between us. Tomorrow I suppose you will buy what food you have moneys for, and draw anchor, and be off outside towards the Main, to set about your earnings. But for the present I have a kindness towards you, although in truth you have yielded me but very slender deference, and I would e'en let you have a passing look at these good comrades from whom you have been so cruelly parted."

"What, you have them here, then?"

"Some of them are coming to the Island now with their produce. Looking over your Highness's shoulder through the window, I saw three canoe-loads of them disappear behind the point. If it please you to take a short promenade in my company, you can watch their march when they land."

"Monsieur," said the Prince, "I accept your condescension. But first you must make me a pathway across this gap. I cannot fly."

"That can soon be done," said the Governor. He put a finger through his lips and whistled shrilly. A man stepped into the room from behind a curtain. "Jean Paul," said the Governor, "the drawbridge." The man lugged a plank from beneath the table, threw it across the space in the flooring, and assisted the Prince to cross. The Governor himself handed his walking-cane and plumed hat, and together they passed out of the chamber, Jean Paul and Alphonse following, with hands upon their pistols.