



CHAPTER 1

THE OLD PIRATE AT THE ADMIRAL BENBOW

Mr. Trelawney, Dr. Livesey and the other gentlemen asked me to write down the story of Treasure Island, from beginning to end. My name is Jim Hawkins. I was only a boy at the time when my father kept the Admiral Benbow Inn.

One day an old seaman came to the inn. I remember him very well. He came to the inn door carrying his sea chest; a tall, strong, heavy, brown man, with a scar across one cheek and with black broken nails. When my father appeared, the man called roughly for a glass of rum. When he got it, he drank it slowly, looking around.

'Well, then,' he said, 'I'll stay here a bit. I'm a plain man, rum and bacon and eggs is what I want. You may call me Captain.'

And he threw down three or four gold coins.

He was a very silent man, as a rule¹. All day Captain walked round the cove with a telescope; all evening he sat in a corner of the sitting-room near the fire and drank very strong rum. I remember the old shanty that he often sang:

*'Fifteen men on the dead man's chest –
Yo –ho –ho, and a bottle of rum!'*²

Every day when the captain came back from his walk, he asked about other seamen. At first we thought that he wanted company. Then we began to realize that he wanted to avoid it. For me there was no mystery about it because one day he promised me a silver coin on the first day of every month. I only had to 'watch for a seaman with one leg' and inform him when he appeared.

Of course, I was very frightened when I thought about the seaman with one leg. I even dreamt about him every night. I was not afraid of the captain much, but the others were.

There were nights when he drank a lot of rum and then he sat and sang his wicked, old, wild shanties, and everyone joined him or listened to his stories. The house was shaking with 'Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum'. His stories were dreadful. They frightened people most of all. He described his life among wick-

¹ as a rule – як правило

² П'ятнадцять хлопців на скрині мерця.

Йо-го-го, ще й пляшечка рому!