



UNIVERSITÄTS-  
BIBLIOTHEK  
PADERBORN

**Pirates own book, or authentic narratives of the lives,  
exploits, and executions of the most celebrated sea  
robbers**

**ELLS, CHARLES**

**New York [u.a.], 1842**

Division of Ireland by Pirates.

---

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-61163](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-61163)

dom, as we all know, to their ravages. They immediately passed over to Ireland, and divided it into three sovereignties; that of Dublin fell to the share of Olaf; that of Waterford to Sitrih; and that of Limerick to Yivar. These arrangements dispersed the forces of the enemy, and watching his opportunity, Alfred issued from his retreat, fell on them like a thunderbolt, and made a great carnage of them. This prince, too wise to exterminate the pirates after he had conquered them, sent them to settle Northumberland, which had been wasted by their countrymen, and by this humane policy gained their attachment and services. He then retook London, embellished it, equipped fleets, restrained the Danes in England, and prevented others from landing. In the twelve years of peace which followed his fifty-six battles, this great man composed his body of laws; divided England into counties, hundreds, and tithings, and founded the University of Oxford. But after Alfred's death, fresh swarms of pirates visited the shores, among the most formidable of whom were the Danes, who spread desolation and misery along the banks of the Thames, the Medway, the Severn, the Tamar, and the Avon, for more than a century, though repeatedly tempted to desist by weighty bribes, raised by an oppressive and humiliating tax called *Danegelt*, from its object; and which, like most others, were continued long after it had answered its intent.

About the end of the 9th century, one of the sons of Rognwald, count of the Orcades, named Horolf, or Rollo, having infested the coasts of Norway with piratical descents, was at length defeated and banished by Harold, king of Denmark. He fled for safety to the Scandinavian island of Soderoe, where finding many outlaws and discontented fugitives, he addressed their passions, and succeeded in placing himself at their head. Instead of measuring his sword with his sovereign again, he adopted the wiser policy of imitating his countrymen, in making his fortune by plundering the more opulent places of southern Europe. The first attempt of this powerful gang was upon England, where finding Alfred too powerful to be coped with, he stood over to the mouth of the Seine, and availed himself of the state to which France was reduced. Horolf, how-

ever, did not limit his ambition to the acquisition of booty, he wished permanently to enjoy some of the fine countries he was ravaging, and after many treaties made and broken received the duchy of Normandy from the lands of Charles the Simple, as a fief, together with Gisle, the daughter of the French monarch, in marriage. Thus did a mere pirate found the family which in a few years gave sovereigns to England, Naples, and Sicily, and spread the fame of their talents and prowess throughout the world.

Nor was Europe open to the depredations of the northern pirates only. Some Asiatic moslems, having seized on Syria, immediately invaded Africa, and their subsequent conquests in Spain facilitated their irruption into France, where they pillaged the devoted country, with but few substantial checks. Masters of all the islands in the Mediterranean, their corsairs insulted the coasts of Italy, and even threatened the destruction of the Eastern empire. While Alexis was occupied in a war with Patzinaces, on the banks of the Danube, Zachas, a Saracen pirate, scoured the Archipelago, having, with the assistance of an able Smyrniote, constructed a flotilla of forty brigantines, and some light fast-rowing boats, manned by adventurers like himself. After taking several of the surrounding islands, he established himself sovereign of Smyrna, that place being about the centre of his newly-acquired dominions. Here his fortunes prospered for a time, and Soliman, sultan of Nicea, son of the grand Soliman, sought his alliance, and married his daughter, about A. D. 1093. But in the following year, young Soliman being persuaded that his father-in-law had an eye to his possessions, with his own hand stabbed Zachas to the heart. The success of this freebooter shows that the Eastern emperors could no longer protect, or even assist, their islands.

Maritime pursuits had now revived, the improvement of nautical science was progressing rapidly, and the advantages of predatory expeditions, especially when assisted and masked by commerce, led people of family and acquirements to embrace the profession. The foremost of these were the Venetians and Genoese, among whom the private adventurers, stimulated by an enterprising spirit, fitted out armaments, and volunteered themselves into the ser

vice of those nations who thought proper to retain them ; or they engaged in such schemes of plunder as were likely to repay their pains and expense. About the same time, the Roxolani or Russians, became known in history, making their debut in the character of pirates, ravenous for booty, and hungry for the pillage of Constantinople—a longing which 900 years have not yet satisfied. Pouring hundreds of boats down the Borysthenes, the Russian marauders made four desperate attempts to plunder the city of the Cæsars, in less than two centuries, and appear only to have been repulsed by the dreadful effects of the celebrated Greek fire.

England, in the mean time, had little to do with piracy ; nor had she any thing worthy the name of a navy ; yet Cœur de Lion had given maritime laws to Europe ; her seamen, in point of skill, were esteemed superior to their cotemporaries ; and King John enacted, that those foreign ships which refused to lower their flags to that of Britain should, if taken, be deemed lawful prizes. Under Henry III., though Hugh de Burgh, the governor of Dover Castle, had defeated a French fleet, by casting lime into the eyes of his antagonists, the naval force was impaired to such a degree, that the Normans and Bretons were too powerful for the Cinque Ports, and compelled them to seek relief from the other ports of the kingdom. The taste for depredation had become so general and contagious, that privateers were now allowed to be fitted out, which equipments quickly degenerated to the most cruel of pirates. Nay more : on the disputes which took place between Henry and his Barons, in 1244, the Cinque Ports, who had shown much indifference to the royal requisitions, openly espoused the cause of the revolted nobles ; and, under the orders of Simon de Montfort, burnt Portsmouth. From this, forgetful of their motives for arming, they proceeded to commit various acts of piracy, and considering nothing but their private interests, extended their violence not only against the shipping of all countries unfortunate enough to fall in their way, but even to perpetrate the most unwarrantable ravages on the property of their own countrymen. Nor was this confined to the Cinque Port vessels only ; the example and the profits were too stimulating to the rest-