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**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**

The Adventures, Trial and Execution of Capt. Gow.

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THE ADVENTURES, TRIAL AND EXECUTION OF  
CAPTAIN GOW.



*Gow killing the Captain.*

CAPTAIN Gow sailed from Amsterdam, in July, 1724, on board the George, galley, for Santa Cruz, where they took

in bees'-wax. Scarcely had they sailed from that place, when Gow and several others, who had formed a conspiracy, seized the vessel. One of the conspirators cried, "There is a man overboard." The captain instantly ran to the side of the vessel, when he was seized by two men, who attempted to throw him over; he however so struggled, that he escaped from their hands. One Winter, with a knife, attempted to cut him in the throat, but missing his aim, the captain was yet saved. But Gow coming aft shot him through the body and throwing him over the rail he caught hold of the main sheet; but Gow taking up an axe, with two blows so disabled him that he fell into the sea and was drowned. The conspirators proceeded to murder all who were not in their horrid plot, which being done, James Williams came upon deck, and striking one of the guns with his cutlass, saluted Gow in the following words: "Captain Gow, you are welcome, welcome to your command." Williams was declared lieutenant, and the other officers being appointed, the captain addressed them, saying: "If, hereafter, I see any of you whispering together, or if any of you refuse to obey my orders, let every such man depend upon it, that he shall certainly go the same way as those that are just gone before."

Their first prize was the Sarah Snow, of Bristol. After they had rifled the vessel and received one man from it, they allowed her to prosecute her voyage. The Delight, of Poole, was the next vessel that fell into their hands; but they not long after captured two others, from one of which they received a quantity of fish, and from the other bread, beef, and pork. They also forced two men from the latter ship. A French ship, not long after, furnished them with wine, oil, figs, oranges, and lemons, to the value of 500*l*. In a short time after, they captured their last prize, and, as she made no resistance, they plundered and dismissed her.

They next sailed for the Orkney Isles to clean, but were apprehended by a gentleman of that country, brought up to London, and tried before a Court of Admiralty, in May, 1725. When the first indictment was read, Gow obstinately refused to plead, for which the Court ordered his thumbs to be tied together with whipcord. The pun-

ishment was several times repeated by the executioner and another officer, they drawing the cord every time till it broke. But he still being stubborn, refusing to submit to the court, the sentence was pronounced against him, which the law appoints in such cases; that is, "That he should be taken back to prison, and there pressed to death." The gaoler was then ordered to conduct him back, and see that the sentence was executed the next morning; meanwhile the trials of the prisoners, his companions, went forward.

But the next morning, when the press was prepared, pursuant to the order of the Court the day before, he was so terrified with the apprehension of dying in that manner, that he sent his humble petition to the Court, praying that he might be admitted to plead. This request being granted, he was brought again to the bar, and arraigned upon the first indictment, to which he pleaded Not guilty. Then the depositions that had been given against the other prisoners were repeated, upon which he was convicted, and received the sentence of death accordingly, which he suffered in company with Captain Weaver and William Ingham.

The stories of these two men are so interwoven with others, that it will be impossible to distinguish many of their particular actions. They were, however, proved to have been concerned, if not the principal actors, in the following piracies: first, The seizing a Dutch ship in August, 1722, and taking from thence a hundred pieces of Holland, value 800*l.*; a thousand pieces of eight, value 250*l.* Secondly, The entering and pillaging the *Dolphin* of London, William Haddock, out of which they got three hundred pieces of eight, value 75*l.*; forty gallons of rum, and other things, on the twentieth of November in the same year. Thirdly, the stealing out of a ship called the *Don Carlos*, Lot Neekins, master, four hundred ounces of silver, value 100*l.* fifty gallons of rum, value 30*s.* a thousand pieces of eight, a hundred pistoles, and other valuable goods. And fourthly, the taking from a ship called the *England*, ten pipes of wine, value 250*l.* The two last charges both in the year 1721. Weaver returned home, and came to Mr. Thomas Smith, at Bristol, in a very rag-

ged condition; and pretending that he had been robbed by pirates, Smith, who had been acquainted with him eight or nine years before, provided him with necessaries, and he walked about unmolested for some time. But Captain Joseph Smith, who knew him when a pirate, one day met him, and asked him to go and take a bottle with him; when they were in the tavern he told him that he had been a considerable sufferer by his boarding his vessel "therefore," said he, "as I understand that you are in good circumstances, I expect that you will make me some restitution; which if you do, I will never hurt a hair of your head, because you were very civil to me when I was in your hands." But as this recompense was never given, Weaver was apprehended and executed.

#### PIRATE'S SONG.

To the mast nail our flag! it is dark as the grave,  
 Or the death which it bears while it sweeps o'er the wave;  
 Let our deck clear for action, our guns be prepared;  
 Be the boarding-axe sharpened, the scimitar bared:  
 Set the canisters ready, and then bring to me,  
 For the last of my duties, the powder-room key.  
 It shall never be lowered, the black flag we bear;  
 If the sea be denied us, we sweep through the air.  
 Unshared have we left our last victory's prey;  
 It is mine to divide it, and yours to obey:  
 There are shawls that might suit a sultana's white neck,  
 And pearls that are fair as the arms they will deck;  
 There are flasks which, unseal them, the air will disclose  
 Diametta's fair summers, the home of the rose.  
 I claim not a portion: I ask but as mine—  
 'Tis to drink to our victory—one cup of red wine.  
 Some fight, 'tis for riches—some fight, 'tis for fame:  
 The first I despise, and the last is a name.  
 I fight, 'tis for vengeance! I love to see flow,  
 At the stroke of my sabre, the life of my foe.  
 I strike for the memory of long-vanished years;  
 I only shed blood where another shed tears.  
 I come, as the lightning comes red from above,  
 O'er the race that I loathe, to the battle I love.

FINIS.