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

ELLS, CHARLES

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Barbarities of the Algerines.

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thousands who have been taken, enslaved, and perished in bondage by these monsters should long ago have drawn upon them the united vengeance of all Christendom. Many a youth of family and fortune, of delicate constitution has been captured and sold in the slave market. His labor through the long hot days would be to cleanse out the foul bed of some large empty reservoir, where he would be made to strip, and descending into the pond, bring up in his arms the black stinking mud, heaped up and pressed against his bosom; or to labor in drawing huge blocks of stone to build the mole; or in building and repairing the fortifications, with numerous other painful and disgusting tasks. The only food was a scanty supply of black bread, and occasionally a few decayed olives, or sheep which had died from some disorder. At night they were crowded into that most horrid of prisons the Bagnio, to sleep on a little filthy straw, amidst the most noisome stenches. Their limbs in chains, and often receiving the lash. Occasionally an individual would be ransomed; when his story would draw tears of pity from all who heard it. Ladies were frequently taken by these monsters and treated in the most inhuman manner. And sometimes whole families were enslaved. Numerous facts, of the most heartrending description are on record: but our limits oblige us to be brief.

A Spanish lady, the wife of an officer, with her son, a youth of fourteen, and her daughter, six years old, were taken in a Spanish vessel by the Algerines. The barbarians treated her and both her children with the greatest inhumanity. The eldest they kept in chains; and the defenceless little one they wantonly treated so ill, that the unhappy mother was often nearly deprived of her reason at the blows her infant received from these wretches, who plundered them of every thing. They kept them many days at sea on hard and scanty fare, covered only with a few soiled rags; and in this state brought them to Algiers. They had been long confined in a dreadful dungeon in the Bagnio where the slaves are kept, when a messenger was sent to the Aga, or Captain of the Bagnio, for a female slave. It fortunately fell to the lot of the Spanish lady, but at the instant when she was embracing her son, who was

tearing himself from his mother with haggard and disordered looks, to go to his imperious drivers ; and while in despair she gazed on her little worn-out infant, she heard herself summoned to attend the guard of the prison to a family that had sent for a female slave. She obtained permission to take her little daughter with her. She dreaded being refused, and sent back to the horrid dungeon she was leaving where no difference was paid to rank, and slaves of all conditions were huddled together. She went therefore prepared to accept of anything short of these sufferings. She was refused, as being in every respect opposite to the description of the person sent for. At length her entreaties and tears prevailed ; compassion over-ruled every obstacle ; and she, with her little girl, was accepted. But there remained another difficulty ; she had left her son chained in the midst of that dungeon from which she had just been rescued. Her kind patrons soon learned the cause of her distress ; but to send for the youth and treat him kindly, or in any way above that of a common slave, must hazard the demand of so large a ransom for him and his mother, as would forever preclude the hope of liberty. He was, however, sent for, and the menial offices they were both engaged to perform were only nominal. With circumspection the whole family were sheltered in this manner for three years ; when the war with the Spaniards growing more inveterate, the Algerines demanded the youth back to the Bagnio, to work in common with the other slaves, in repairing the damages done to the fortresses by the Spanish cannon. He was now compelled to go, loaded with heavy stones, through the whole of the town ; and at almost every step he received dreadful blows, not being able to hasten his pace from the great weight.

Overcome at last with ill usage, the delicacy of his form and constitution gave way to the excessive labor, and he one morning refused the orders of his master, or driver, to rise from the straw on which he was stretched, declaring they might kill him if they chose, for he would not even try to carry another load of stones. Repeated messages had been sent from the Venetian consul's, where his mother and sister were sheltered, to the Aga, to return him ; and when the Algerines found that they had absolutely reduced

him so near death, they thought it best to spare his life for the sake of future ransom. They agreed, therefore, to let him return to the Christians. His life was for some time despaired of; but through the kind attention he received, he was rescued from the threatened dissolution. His recovery was concealed, for fear of his being demanded back to work; and a few months after, the Spanish peace of 1784 being concluded, a ransom was accepted by the Algerines for this suffering family, and they were set at liberty.

These pirates in old times extended their depredations into the Atlantic as far as the British Channel. They swarmed in the Mediterranean, not only belonging to Algiers, but Tunis, and other ports on the coast of Barbary. Their corsairs making descents on the coasts of those countries which border on the Mediterranean, pillaging the villages and carrying off the inhabitants into slavery. The corsairs were vessels of different descriptions; some large armed ships, and latterly frigates; others were row galleys and the various craft used by the nations which navigate that sea, and had been taken by them and added to their marine. Upon the slaves being landed at Algiers they were marched to the Dey's or Bashaw's palace, when he selected the number which according to law belonged to him; and the rest were sold in the slave market to the highest bidder. A moiety of the plunder, cargoes and vessels taken also belonged to the Dey. Occasionally, a person by pretending to renounce his religion, and turning Mahomedan would have his sufferings mitigated.

The most desperate attempts were sometimes made to effect an escape from these ruthless monsters, which occasionally succeeded.

In 1644 William Oakley and four companions escaped from Algiers, in a most miraculous manner, in a canvas boat. There was at this time an English clergyman, Mr. Sprat, in captivity, and the wretched slaves had the privilege of meeting in a cellar, where he would pray with them.

Oakley had got into the good graces of his master, and was allowed his time by giving his master two dollars a month. He traded in tobacco and a few trifling articles, so that a strict watch was not kept on his movements. He