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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**

Lord Exmouth`s attack on Algiers.

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"It was now," says Mr. Salamé, in his entertaining narrative, "half-past two, and no answer coming out, notwithstanding we had staid half an hour longer than our instructions, and the fleet being almost opposite the town, with a fine breeze, we thought proper, after having done our duty, to lose no more time, but to go on board, and inform his lordship of what had happened.

"Mr. Burgess, the flag-lieutenant, having agreed with me, we hoisted the signal, *that no answer had been given*, and began to row away towards the Queen Charlotte. After I had given our reports to the admiral, of our meeting the captain of the port, and our waiting there, &c. I was quite surprised to see how his lordship was altered from what I left him in the morning; for I knew his manner was in general very mild, and now he seemed to me *all-fightful*, as a fierce lion, which had been chained in its cage, and was set at liberty. With all that, his lordship's answer to me was, '*Never mind, we shall see now;*' and at the same time he turned towards the officers, saying, '*Be ready;*' whereupon I saw every one with the match or the string of the lock in his hand, most anxiously expecting the word '*Fire!*'"

No sooner had Salamé returned, than his lordship made the signal to know whether all the ships were ready, which being answered in the affirmative, he directly turned the head of the Queen Charlotte towards shore, and, to the utter amazement of the Algerines, ran across all the batteries without firing or receiving a single shot, until he brought up within eighty yards of the south end of the mole, where he lashed her to the mainmast of an Algerine brig, which he had taken as his direction, and had then the pleasure of seeing all the rest of the fleet, including the Dutch frigates, taking up their assigned stations with the same precision and regularity. The position in which the Queen Charlotte was laid was so admirable that she was only exposed to the fire of three or four flanking guns, while her broadside swept the whole batteries, and completely commanded the mole and marine, every part of which could be seen distinctly from her quarter-deck. Up to this moment not a shot had been fired, and the batteries were all crowded with spectators, gazing in astonishment

at the quiet and regularity which prevailed through all the British ships, and the dangerous vicinity in which they placed themselves to such formidable means of defence. Lord Exmouth, therefore, began to conceive hopes that his demands would still be granted; but the delay, it appeared, was caused by the Algerines being completely unprepared for so very sudden an approach, insomuch that their guns were not shotted at the moment when the Queen Charlotte swept past them, and they were distinctly seen loading them as the other ships were coming into line. Anxious, if possible, to spare unnecessary effusion of blood, his lordship, standing on the quarter-deck, repeatedly waved his hat as a warning to the multitudes assembled on the mole to retire, but his signal was unheeded, and at a quarter before three in the afternoon the first gun was fired at the Queen Charlotte from the eastern battery, and two more at the Albion and Superb, which were following. "Then Lord Exmouth, having seen only *the smoke of the gun*, before the sound reached him, said, with great alacrity, '*That will do; fire my fine fellows!*' and I am sure that before his lordship had finished these words, our broadside was given with great cheering, which was fired three times within five or six minutes; and at the same time the other ships did the same. This first fire was so terrible, that they say more than five hundred persons were killed and wounded by it. And I believe this, because there was a great crowd of people in every part, many of whom, after the first discharge, I saw running away, under the walls, like dogs, walking upon their feet and hands.

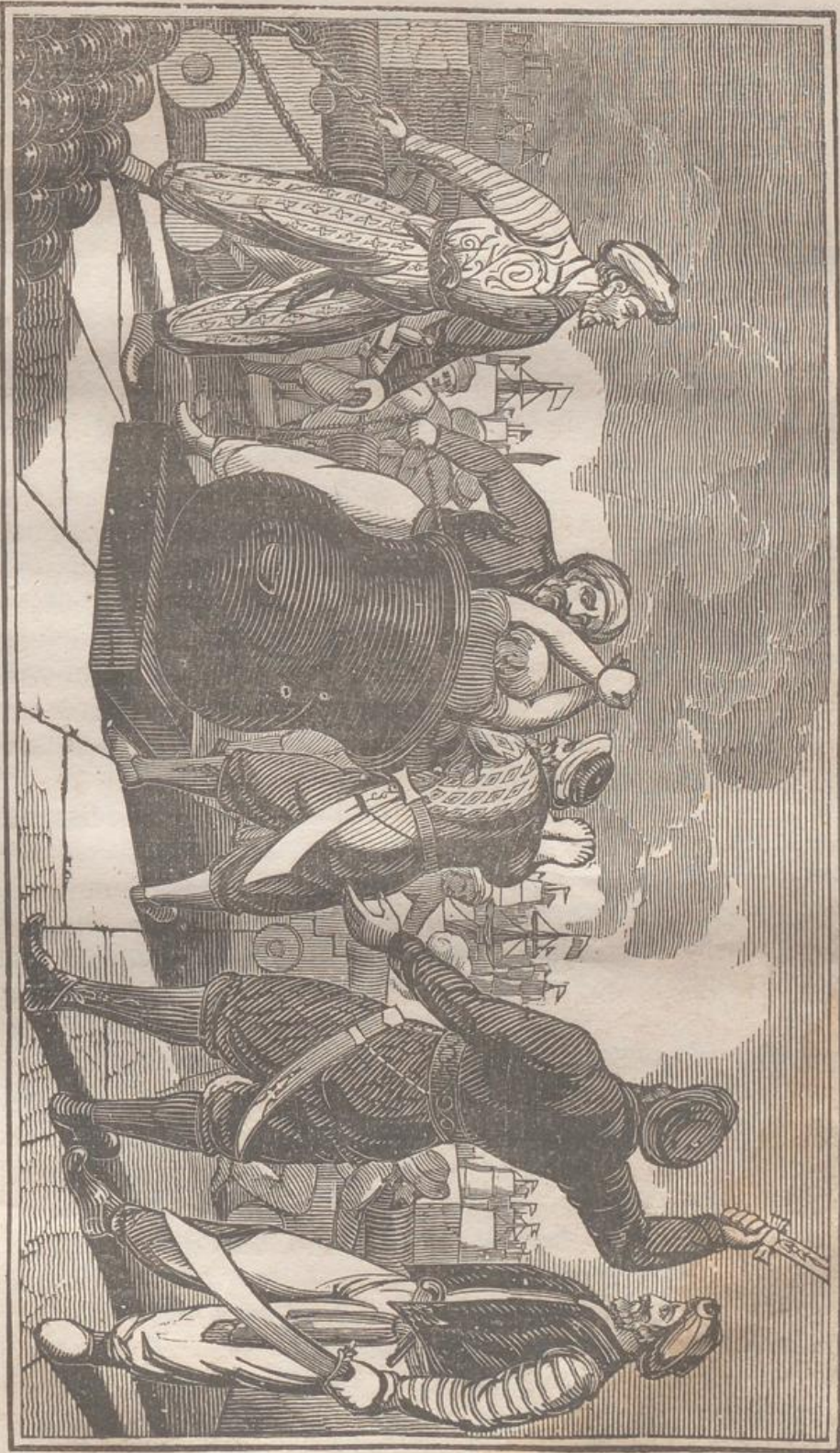
"After the attack took place on both sides in this horrible manner, immediately the sky was darkened by the smoke, the sun completely eclipsed, and the horizon became dreary. Being exhausted by the heat of that powerful sun, to which I was exposed the whole day, and my ears being deafened by the roar of the guns, and finding myself in the dreadful danger of such a terrible engagement, in which I had never been before, I was quite at a loss, and like an astonished or stupid man, and did not know myself where I was. At last his lordship, having perceived my situation, said, 'You have done your duty, now go below.' Upon which I began to descend from the quarter-deck, quite

confounded and terrified, and not sure that I should reach the cock-pit alive; for it was most tremendous to hear the crashing of the shot, to see the wounded men brought from one part, and the killed from the other; and especially, at such a time, to be found among the *English seamen!* and to witness their manners, their activity, their courage, and their cheerfulness during the battle!—it is really most overpowering and beyond imagination.”

The battle continued to rage furiously, and the havoc on both sides was very great. There were some awful moments, particularly when Algerine vessels so near our line were set on fire. The officers surrounding Lord Exmouth had been anxious for permission to make an attempt upon the outer frigate, distant about a hundred yards. He at length consented, and Major Gossett, of the corps of marines, eagerly entreated and obtained permission to accompany Lieutenant Richards in the ship's barge. The frigate was instantly boarded, and, in ten minutes, in a perfect blaze. A gallant young midshipman, although forbidden, was led by his too ardent spirit to follow in support of the barge, in which attempt he was desperately wounded, his brother officer killed, and nine of the crew. The barge, by rowing more rapidly, escaped better, having but one killed.

About sunset the admiral received a message from rear-admiral Milne, stating his severe loss in killed and wounded, amounting to one hundred and fifty, and requesting that, if possible, a frigate might be sent him to take off some of the enemy's fire. The Glasgow accordingly was ordered to get under weigh, but the wind having been laid by the cannonade, she was obliged again to anchor, having obtained a rather more favorable position. The flotilla of mortar, gun, and rocket boats, under the direction of their respective artillery officers, shared to the full extent of their powers the honors and toils of this glorious day. It was by their fire that all the ships in the port (with the exception of the outer frigate already mentioned) were in flames, which, extending rapidly over the whole arsenal, gun-boats, and storehouses, exhibited a spectacle of awful grandeur and interest which no pen can describe. The sloops of war which had been appropriated to aid and assist the ships

The Algerines in the act of firing off the French consul from a mortar at the French fleet. p. 410.





of the line, and prepare for their retreat, performed not only that duty well, but embraced every opportunity of firing through the intervals, and were constantly in motion. The shells from the bombs were admirably well thrown by the royal marine artillery, and, though directed over and across our own men-of-war, did not produce a single accident. To complete the confusion of the enemy, the admiral now ordered the explosion ship, which had been charged for the occasion, to be brought within the mole; but upon the representation of Sir David Milne that it would do him essential service, if made to act on the battery in his front, it was towed to that spot, and blown up with tremendous effect.

This was almost the final blow;—the enemy's fire had for some time been very slack, and was now almost wholly ceased, except that occasionally a few shots and shells were discharged from the higher citadel, upon which the guns of the fleet could not be brought to bear. The admiral, who from the commencement had been in the hottest of the engagement, and had fired until his guns were so hot that they could, some of them, not be used again; now seeing that he had executed the most important part of his instructions, issued orders for drawing off the fleet. This was commenced in excellent order about ten at night, and the usual breeze having set off from shore favored their manœuvre, so that, all hands being employed in warping and towing, the vessels were got safely into the bay, and anchored, beyond reach of shot, about two o'clock the next morning.

So signal and well contested a victory could not have been gained without a considerable loss and suffering. It amounted in the English fleet, to one hundred and twenty-eight men killed, and six hundred and ninety wounded; in the Dutch squadron, to thirteen killed, and fifty-two wounded; grand total, eight hundred and eighty-three. But the enemy suffered much more severely; they are computed to have lost, in killed and wounded, not less than between six and seven thousand men. The loss sustained by the Algerines by the destruction in the mole was four large frigates, of forty-four guns. Five large corvettes, from twenty-four to thirty guns. All the gun and mortar-

boats, except seven; thirty destroyed. Several merchant brigs and schooners. A great number of small vessels of various descriptions. All the pontoons, lighters, &c. Store-houses and arsenal, with all the timber, and various marine articles destroyed in part. A great many gun-carriages, mortar-beds, casks, and ships' stores of all descriptions.

Negotiations were immediately opened in form; and on the 30th August the admiral published a notification to the fleet, that all demands had been complied with, the British consul had been indemnified for his losses, and the Dey, in presence of all his officers, had made him a public apology for the insults offered him. On the 1st of September, Lord Exmouth had the pleasure of informing the secretary of the Admiralty, that all the slaves in the city of Algiers, and its immediate vicinity were embarked; as also 357,000 dollars for Naples, and 25,000 dollars for Sardinia.

The number of slaves thus released amounted to one thousand and eighty-three, of whom four hundred and seventy-one were Neapolitans, two hundred and thirty-six Sicilians, one hundred and seventy-three Romans, six Tuscans, one hundred and sixty-one Spaniards, one Portuguese, seven Greeks, twenty-eight Dutch, and not *one Englishman*. Were there an action more than another on which an Englishman would willingly risk the fame and honor of his nation, it would be this attack on Algiers, which, undertaken solely at her own risk, and earned solely by the expenditure of her own blood and her own resources, rescued not a single subject of her own from the tyrant's grasp, while it freed more than a thousand belonging to the other European powers.

In August, 1816, the strength of Algiers seemed annihilated; her walls were in ruins, her haughty flag was humbled to the dust; her gates lay open to a hostile power, and terms were dictated in the palace of her princes. A year passed, the hostile squadron had left her ports, the clang of the workman's hammer, the hum of busy men resounded through her streets, fresh walls had risen, new and more formidable batteries had been added; again she resumed her attitude as of yore, bid defiance to her foes, and declared war on civilization:—again her blood-stained



corsairs swept the seas, eager for plunder, ready for combat;—Christian commerce once more became shackled by her enterprize, and Christian captives once more sent up their cry for deliverance. In 1819, her piracies had become so numerous that the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle caused it to be notified to the Dey, that their cessation was required, and would be enforced, by a combined French and English squadron. His reply was brief and arrogant, and the admirals were obliged to leave without obtaining the least satisfaction. By menaces, however, accompanied by the presence of some cruizers, England, France, and the United States caused their flags to be respected.

Ali, the successor of Omar, had died in 1818, and was succeeded by Hassein Pasha, who, from the commencement of his reign, evinced the strongest antipathy to the French power. In 1824, he imposed an arbitrary tax through all his provinces on French goods and manufactures; the consul's house was frequently entered and searched in a vexatious manner, contrary to the express stipulations of treaties; and, finally, April, 1827, the consul himself, having gone at the feast of Bayram to pay his respects, was, upon a slight difference of opinion arising during their conversation, struck across the mouth with a fly-flap which the Dey held in his hand, and in consequence soon after left Algiers, while the Dey ordered the destruction of all the French establishments along the coast towards Bona, and oppressed in every manner the French residents within his dominions. A blockade was instantly commenced by the French, and maintained for nearly three years, until it was found that they suffered much more by it than the Dey, the expense having reached nearly £800,000 sterling, while he appeared no way inconvenienced by their efforts, and even treated them with such contempt as to order his forts to fire on the vessel of Admiral De la Bretonnière, who, in 1829, had gone there under a flag of truce to make a final proposal of terms of accommodation. So signal a violation of the laws of nations could not be overlooked, even by the imbecile administration of Charles X. All France was in an uproar; the national flag had been dishonored, and her ambassador insulted; the cry for war became loud and universal; conferences on the subject

were held; the oldest and most experienced mariners were invited by the minister at war to assist in his deliberations; and an expedition was finally determined on in the month of February, 1830, to consist of about thirty-seven thousand men, a number which it was calculated would not only be sufficient to overcome all opposition which might be encountered, but to enable the French to reduce the kingdom to a province, and retain it in subjection for any length of time that might be considered advisable. No sooner was this decision promulgated, than all the necessary preparations were commenced with the utmost diligence. It was now February, and the expedition was to embark by the end of April, so that no time could be lost. The arsenals, the naval and military workshops, were all in full employment. Field and breaching batteries were mounted on a new principle lately adopted; gabions, earth-bags, *chevaux-de-frise*, and projectiles were made in the greatest abundance; maps, notes, and all the information that could be procured respecting Barbary were transmitted to the war office, where their contents were compared and digested, and a plan of operations was drawn out. The commissariat were busied in collecting provisions, waggons, and fitting out an efficient hospital train; a deputy-commissary was despatched to reconnoitre the coasts of Spain and the Balearic Islands, to ascertain what resources could be drawn from them, and negotiate with the king for leave to establish military hospitals at Port Mahon. Eighteen regiments of the line, three squadrons of cavalry, and different corps of artillery and engineers were ordered to hold themselves in readiness; four hundred transports were assembled, and chartered by government in the port of Marseilles, while the vessels of war, which were to form the convoy, were appointed their rendezvous in the neighborhood of Toulon. After some hesitation as to who should command this important expedition, the Count de Bourmont, then minister at war, thought fit to appoint himself; and his *etat-major* was soon complete, Desprez acting as chief, and Tholozé as second in command. Maubert de Neuilly was chosen provost-marshal, De Bartillat (who afterwards wrote an entertaining account of the expedition) quarter-master general, and De Carné commis-