

We are at a loss whether we should be more astounded at the savage barbarity of the lawless desperadoes who hover about the entrance of our very harbour, or at the apathetical indifference (we would almost call it criminal,) of our Rulers, who though they hear, repeated reports, officially, of piracies committed on numerous native vessels trading with this port, shut their ears and eyes to every thing except their own immediate interests, and tacitly allow Piracies to attain to such a fearful height in the neighbourhood, as to threaten the very existence of our valuable trade with the neighbouring native states, on the success and extension of which hinges the very existence of this important settlement.

A groupe of Bugis Anakodas, headed by the chief of the Bugis Campong at *Kocho*, has just called to inform us of the most extensive and unparalleled act of piracy we have heard of for some time, committed within these few days. They state with the most positive assurance, and on the evidence of some of the sufferers themselves who were present, that a formidable pirate fleet consisting of no less than twenty two prows, most of them double-banked, and carrying upwards of 100 men each, are up to this moment, at or near *Pulo Tingih* off *Johore*, and that they have succeeded already, within a very few days, in cutting off no less than seven trading prows, as follows:—One from Singapore for Pahang, the crew of which were either murdered or retained as slaves—one Bugis boat from Bali, laden with Sarongs, Rice &c. the crew murdered and the prow burned at *Pulo Tingih*—two Bugis prows from Pontiana for this place, with gold dust, diamonds, rattans, &c.—the crews murdered and prows sunk—and three kakaps or small Malay prows from Pahang for Singapore, with upwards of 80 piculs of tin and some gold dust.—The crews of these boats a-

mounting to 18 in all, on being fired at, (by which two were killed,) deserted the kakaps and reached the neighbouring coast of *Johore*—and while wandering along the shore, on their way hither, they could observe the proceedings of the pirates. The Nacodas of the three boats, only, have arrived by crossing from *Johore*, in a sampan.

These state that the Pirates have established themselves in a camp at *Pulo Tingih*, from which they sally out occasionally, and that their object in coming at this period is evidently to interrupt the Bugis boats which usually begin to arrive at this season. How far they have succeeded may be seen by the present statement and that given in our number preceding the last.

These pirates are of the most desperate class, being from *Illanoon*, in *Malindan*, and from *Sadung* in *Brunai* or *Borneo Proper*, to the Pangeran of which they are subject.

The earnest and impassioned manner in which one of the Bugis Naquodahs spoke to us, was so striking that we are induced to give nearly his own words; he said, that in consequence of the Pirates succeeding last year with the utmost impunity, about this time, in making a prize of two Bugis boats proceeding hither, they have been induced to come again in greater numbers to try their fortune again,—but, said he, if matters are allowed to go on thus the Bugis traders on whose traffic Singapore greatly depends, will desert it altogether, and will seek another port from whose Government they will probably meet with greater protection! A few sarcastic reflections did he likewise throw out on certain officers of Government, as also did he make a comparison between the activity and earnest desire of the Dutch to extirpate piracy within their own line, and the unaccountable inactivity of the British in effecting the same, even within theirs.

It is but too well known to those who have reflected on the subject that the continuance of the native trade of this settlement is of vital importance to its prosperity and existence, the Bugis portion of it principally. If therefore the local Government possess the least desire of seeing it flourish and continue, or if it is not anxious to see the threat or the prediction of the Bugis Nacodahs speedily verified, let it adopt, or earnestly advise the adoption of such effectual measures as will prevent the recurrence of such atrocities as are recorded above. It remains also with the Merchants of this Settlement to use their influence and endeavours to obtain that so necessary protection for those interests with which their own are so intimately connected, if not from the local Government, from those powers which are more able and perhaps more willing to afford it. Had we a Raffles, or even a Crawford, affairs would be very different. But—"tempora mutantur"—whether for the better, or for the worse, remains yet to be seen.

The Bugis at this Settlement have volunteered their services, and offer their boats to attack the Pirates at *Pulo Tingih*—they only require a supply of arms and ammunition from the Local Government. We think such an offer ought not to be rejected, and as a fleet might easily be manned, with a few companies of Seapoys distributed among the boats, an expedition could very soon be sent to destroy the dangerous nest at *Pulo Tingih*. The native traders would then have practical demonstration of some signs of earnestness on our side to protect their navigation, and confidence would, in some degree, be restored.

A late letter from *Rio* informs us that the war prows had returned unsuccessful from their cruise. They did not however, go beyond what they consider the boundaries of Dutch dominion, leaving to the British the task of hunting down pirates within their own "close."