

EXTRAORDINARY MURDER AT SEA.

(From the *Liverpool Standard*.)

We have been favoured by Messrs. Heyworth and Co., of Liverpool, with the following particulars of a murder committed on board one of their ships while pursuing her voyage off the coast of Java:—

We, the undersigned master, officers, and crew of the bark *Rosendale*, do declare, that on Monday, April 6, 1835, at 2 a. m., we were disturbed from our sleep by our seaman John Lax running aft, and calling out that he had been stabbed by the black Malay who had come on board from the Arab ship on the 4th inst. When we came to him he was on the poop bleeding profusely from three wounds in his right shoulder. He said that, while lying asleep on the fore-castle, he was awakened by a person stabbing him in the arm, and before he could defend himself he had received two other stabs in the arm; but he no sooner got on his feet than he saw the Malay run from him, and jump overboard from the larboard cat-head. We all commenced a strict search, when it was discovered that the Malay had murdered two of our crew, John Mean, ordinary seaman, and Francis Richardson, apprentice. The boy Richardson was on the starboard side of the quarter deck, and had no doubt come aft to raise an alarm, but having had the windpipe cut through, and a deep stab in the left breast, he was not able to call out, and must have died from loss of blood instantaneously. John Mean had his throat cut in a most dreadful state, a piece apparently being scooped out of his neck, so that he must have died as soon as the deed had been committed. We found on the fore-castle on the larboard side, about where John Lax last saw the Malay, a knife covered with blood belonging to one of the seamen, a long sharp-pointed pocket knife, and that was the instrument that the Malay must have committed the murders with, as the breadth of the blade was exactly the size of the wound on John Lax's shoulder. We at daylight made another search, but could find no trace of the murderer, nor has he been seen since. J. Lax saw him jump overboard, so that he must have drowned himself, in our supposition. As there was no boat or vessel of any sort in sight at the time, we cannot form any idea what could have been his motive for so outrageous an act. There had been no quarrel between him and any other person, but, on the contrary, he had always been used with the greatest kindness by every one since he came on board, which was on the 4th instant in a very singular manner. A large Arab ship that left Sourabaya the same time that we did, and which, we understand, was bound to Batavia, being a light ship and there being little wind, she got two or three miles a-head of us. We discovered that we came up to her very fast, and that she was before the wind just on her weather bow. It being dark, we thought we should go to windward before we came close, but on nearing her, found that she had her topsails down on the cap, although there was no appearance of any squall, and was lying in a singular manner for a vessel working to windward. We hailed her, and desired her to make sail and haul to the wind, or we should be foul of her. We, after hailing three times, received an answer, but we were forced to wear to get clear of her. We then discovered that this Malay, who had been guilty of these outrageous murders, was on the head, and no clothing on except a handkerchief tied below his breast. The captain ordered him to be searched, but there was no weapon found on him. The ship being by daylight a long way to windward, and not seeming to take any notice of us, we were not able to send him on board, and, no person on board being able to interpret the Malay's language, we could not ascertain of him why or how he had left his ship. While she was in sight, we saw that he seemed very careful to keep out of view of her; and, if we pointed to the ship, and made signs of sending him on board, he appeared very much distressed, and would lay down on deck to imitate sleep, draw his hands across his throat, then jump up suddenly and throw his hands over the ship's sides, so that we concluded that he had been badly used, and that he was in danger of having his throat cut in his sleep and thrown overboard, occurrences not uncommon on board ships of that description, manned partly by Malays and partly by Arabs. The captain, therefore, allowed him to remain, as indeed there was no help for it, the ship never coming within hail again. Since we had lost sight of her, he appeared quite pleased and in high spirits. The following day he came aft of his own accord, and delivered up to the captain a small knife and fork, which we suppose he must have secreted in the head on his first coming on board.