

PIRACY.

We have heard it remarked that the frequent occurrence of piracies in these parts, if fully detailed, would furnish matter for a Newspaper to be exclusively devoted to the

notice of piratical acts; and to the readers of the Straits Journals this observation may perhaps appear to be no more than just. Since our last recent notice of piratical depredations, others of an atrocious nature have occurred, which help to swell the catalogue of murders and rapines committed in our immediate neighbourhood and to fix more indelibly a stigma on the British Indian Government for its most culpable indifference to, and tardiness in supplying efficient means of checking such a destructive evil—destructive of human life, and of the best interests of Commerce and civilization.

The first of these piracies we have to record in our present number, is one committed not many days ago on a Junk from *Hainan* and *Cochin-China*, laden with rice, salt, oil, &c. and having a crew of 28 men, which was attacked off *Tanjong Panusoo* by ten prahus—three of which were large, carrying, apparently, from 40 to 50 men each; and the others, of a smaller size, having from 20 to 30 men each. These boats opened a fire on the junk, by which five of the crew were killed and several others wounded, and the vessel being unprovided with defensive weapons, was, after some time, boarded and plundered—and the crew made captives, with the exception of two, who threw themselves overboard and escaped to a small island off *Bintang*, whence they were conveyed by a Malay to this Settlement.

Again,—a trading boat on her way from *Pahang* to this port, was attacked some days ago, near the same place, off *Panusoo*, by eight prahus—but there being a strong and favorable breeze, she effected her escape into the harbour, although pursued by the pirates some time, who fired a great number of shots at her;—fortunately without doing much damage.

A day or two after, a fishing-boat with seven men, was attacked, in the same quarter, by ten piratical craft, which fired on her, wounding one man in the breast and 2 others severely also. The fishermen all jumped in the water and saved themselves by swimming to the shore, with the loss of their boat, fish, &c. The wounded men, are now, we believe, in the Hospital.

On the same night, 12 men, were proceeding in a boat from *Tanah Merah*, (a place on the east side of our harbour) to another at no great distance in the *Johor* territory, for the purpose of collecting rattans, when they were suddenly fired on by a pirate boat, which caused them to take to the water and escape to the shore, with loss of boat and all it contained.

And lastly, the day before yesterday, a small fishing boat was attacked beyond *Tanah Merah*, by a sampan, the crew of which took all the fish it contained. The owner jumped into the water to save himself, but returned to his boat, after the pirates had ransacked her.

We have the pleasure to state, however, that H. M. Sloop of War *Wolf*, Captain Stanley, and H. C. schooner *Zephyr*, Congalton, opportunely arrived here on the 22nd. instant, from a cruise, and have already proceeded to the eastward in search of the piratical fleet, which seems to be infesting the vicinity. It is high time that some effort should be made to expel these marauders from so close and so dangerous a proximity, and to exhibit to the native traders here as also in their own ports, that the British Indian Government has the power to protect our trade, whenever it wills to exhibit it.

The boats of the *Wolf*, while in the Straits, fell in with five boats off the entrance of *Cocob Straits*, and from the suspicious circumstance of their having no port-clearances and no cargo on board, the crews were detained and brought into this place, but have since been liberated, there being no evidence to prove them pirates. They account for themselves by stating that they had brought cargoes of rice and ebony to New Harbour from a small port near Malacca, and were returning thither when they were met by the *Wolf's* boats.

However plausible this story may appear, we think it most probable that these boats were carriers of goods from some piratical depôt on the Malacca coast to head-quarters, *Teluk Blanga* or New Harbour.

We sincerely hope that the vigilance of the gallant Officers and Crew of the *Wolf* will be rewarded with better success during the present cruise. The length of time that pirates have been allowed to have their own way outside, with perfect impunity, requires the utmost energy and vigilance, a display of which on the part of H. M. Officers, we are well assured, will be duly appreciated by both the European and native communities here.