

Mr. Editor,

The *Wolf* and *Zephyr* in their late cruises sent away armed boats on the 19th. April to examine the Island of Pulo Tingy, where they found between thirty and forty sampans, with men, women, and children collecting Tripang, Birds Nests, and Shell-fish for the Chinese market; among them "the Triton of the Minnows," a large Prah from Pahang, armed with four or five jin-jalls and many men, owned and commanded by a polite old Nacodah, who was ostensibly employed in supplying the sampans with rice and sugar in exchange for the above mentioned articles of commerce. He was armed of course as a protection against pirates. The sampans were horribly afraid of pirates, had plenty of information concerning them; in fact, pirates were to be found every where but at Pulo Tingy. The boats in pulling round the island, had their attention called by a man running out from the jungle, with outlandish cries, up to his neck in water, and on being taken into the boats made signs that he had some messmates left on shore; presently another came, when the two hailed a third who did not answer, when Lieutenant Macdonald and some of the crew armed, advanced into the jungle where they heard some slight struggling, when a third man joined them making signs that some person or persons had held their hands over his mouth, and a kris to his throat to prevent his crying out. These unfortunate men were part of a crew of twenty-seven belonging to a Cochin-China Tope taken some days before near Pulo Tingy by pirates, they made their escape in a sampan to this island, and again fell into other hands connected with this nefarious traffic. Their vessel was taken towards, if not to, Pahang, which is very probable from what afterwards took place; they were three or four days in the jungle, and their small sampan was picked up floating out of the bay in which were congregated the fleet of sampans with their Pahang Admiral. Leaving aside for the present the *Wolf's* boats falling in with and chasing six Prahus and a Tope, who only were saved I believe by night coming on, and being the means of preventing two China Junks being taken near Pulo Tingy by the said Prahus, I have to remark, that Pirates could not exist on this island without the knowledge and assistance of the sampans present, who all sailed from Singapore or its vicinity, if they were not men belonging to the sampans themselves.

In a small bay, the same where these boats were, was seen the ribs and trucks of a large Tope burnt to the waters edge, a sad memorial of piratical destruction; there was the vessel, but what had become of the beings who must have navigated her? It is more than likely that they suffered a cruel and violent death, because the native chiefs are afraid to encourage the buying Chinamen as slaves, they, as our friends the Scotch say are too 'ken-speckled', and what is the next alternative Mr. Editor? Why a rough and rude death by a kris. Around Pulo Tingy are scattered upwards of twenty small islands and rocks, from which it would be difficult to dislodge Prahus, because they are light, well manned, and pull swiftly, whereas the Kings armed boats are heavy, and it is a most fatiguing business for the men.

In returning towards Point Romania, the boats were constantly away day and night examining the bays and rivers, where they saw no pirates. But they saw what makes human nature shudder to think of, the bays were strewn with pieces of wrecks of Junks, Topes &c., and what is infinitely of more importance, the wreck of humanity itself in skulls and human bones in abundance. On the evening of the 27th. the boats boarded three Prahus from Singapore to Pahang; two had port-clearances; the third was taken on board the *Wolf*, when the Cochin-Chinamen immediately identified them as part of the men who boarded and took their Tope off Pulo Tingy 29 days before, and swore to clothes belonging to themselves on the persons of the pirates. The Chinamen thinking this 'like proof from holy writ' asked if Captain Stanley would favour them by allowing them to cut the Pirates throats! I am certain, Mr. Editor, that all hands on board both ships are only sorry that so little has been done towards the suppression of these rascals, at the same time I am bound to observe that Captain Stanley has been well seconded in his efforts by his officers, and I wish particularly to mention the great assistance that Captain Congalton of the *Zephyr* and Mr. Mitchell his chief officer commanding the gun-boat, have been in all the boating business, from their being well acquainted with the language and customs of the people carrying on Piracies, as well as entering into all the fag, heart and hand. The above facts, Mr. Editor, will furnish food for serious reflection; for in the first place, from what came under view of the boats, there is not the slightest doubt but there is an immense expenditure of human life between Pulo Tingy, Point Romania, and Bintan in the course of one year, and to an extent which the authorities of Singapore have no idea of. The quantity of wrecks, and part of wrecks, with masts, anchors (Chinese), timbers, masts, and spars belonging to Junks and Topes, skulls and limbs strewn along shore, is really astonishing, and calls loudly for interfer-

ence from the Supreme Government to cut short this work of destruction by which hundreds perish under the hands of reckless and naked savages. The second thing to be noticed, Mr. Editor, is the loss of property by this system, which altho' falling on Chinamen principally, may and does occasionally fall on the Merchant of India; but this I will not enter into, you understand the thing better than I do.

The first duty of a Government is to protect its subjects, the next to give security to friends and allies trading to the ports of that government; now what protection has been given to the Straits of Malacca, the great gate from India proper to the East (or far Cathay)? Why, one small schooner, which cannot become ubiquitous however well the commander performs his duty, and three gun-boats of no use at all; and so protected, and so left, British subjects are to be bearded at their own doors, by contemptible cut-throats, so as even to prevent the excursions of pic-nic business to the islands around, and even to limit the pleasure trips of the gallant little yacht 'Snipe.'

But it is probable, that the Supreme Government is unacquainted with the extent of this evil at the extremity of its dominions; if so, there is blame somewhere, for it has been going on for years, and I should hope the servants of the government in this quarter have from time to time brought it to their notice in as strong and clear a manner as the necessity of the case demanded. If such has been done, what was to hinder two or more of the seven Bombay cruisers from being more actively employed than they generally are, by sending them to the Straits, and in concert with H. M. Ships might have done something towards the suppression of this trade, and wipe away this blot on the government of India, for it cannot be too strongly impressed on the minds of all concerned, that hundreds perish annually in the Straits, by the hands of these kris'd Malays.

A government that sits down and coolly calculates the expense of suppressing Piracy, or who puts in competition human life and property with the expenditure of filthy lucre, ought to be sent to Coventry; the government of India is a rich and splendid one, and will never hold the Pariah idea of want of funds; forbid it humanity! forbid it Englishmen!

There is another thing, Mr. Editor, that the supreme government has neglected, which is not having established a court of Admiralty at Singapore long ere this,—the place in India where it is imperatively called for;—at the other presidencies where admiralty courts are found, a case of piracy is not tried in thirty years, whereas here we might find cases weekly. Twenty years have passed over since this colony was planted, and still no such court provided, for trying delinquents on the high seas, this is a sad oversight; for Pirates and their Prahus without papers of any kind well known as being engaged in piracy, are daily allowed to depart to their old and favourite trade. There is no better known law than, that ships or boats (prahus) found without bounds of ports or harbours unfurnished with the proper documents, are prizes to the first man of war falling in with them, nor can the authorities of any port liberate them, nor can an admiralty court liberate them, they must be condemned. Yet in Singapore altho' a regulation exists that prahus must have a port clearance, there is no penalty for a breach of this order!

I trust Mr. Editor that the above will have its due weight in the proper quarter, and that it may lead to some wise measures by the Supreme Government of India for repressing piracy in these straits. I assure you that any observations of mine have been drawn forth by the sincere desire of making the authorities bestir themselves actively to put an end to the horrid butcheries daily practised by cowardly assassins on unarmed and peaceful people.

Yours truly,

NAUTICUS.

Singapore, 6th May, 1836.

The *Zephyr*, Captain Congalton, left this for Pinang on Thursday morning at day break, her presence being required in that quarter by the government. In our last numbers of Pinang Gazettes we do not observe any instances of late piracies, and unless the *Zephyr* has been recalled upon some public service of emergency, there can be no doubt that her absence at this particular time will be highly prejudi-

cial to the trade. H. M. Ship *Wolf* leaves us tomorrow, and this double deprivation after a season of active exertions against pirates is likely to be followed by most injurious results, and can only induce the pirates to recommence their depredations with renewed vigour and satiate themselves at leisure with an abundant harvest of blood and plunder. As trade will now be left without any protection for perhaps an indefinite time, we think a favorable occasion now offers for the community to step forward and represent the inefficacy of the system now pursued by government calling upon them to supply in the best manner circumstances will admit some temporary protection, until more permanent arrangements, supposed to be in contemplation, for the suppression of piracy can be adopted. There is every probability the *Wolf* will have to proceed to Madras from Pinang for provisions, in which event her return here may not take place under three months.