

In laying the accompanying extract of a letter before our readers, we must again ask for what purpose have his majesty's vessels of war been sent to this country? It is quite clear they are but of little service. Sometime ago piracy in the Straits was seldom heard of, and when it was, it was only attempted on that small description of boat or vessel which is to be seen trading from one island to the other. Repeated successes on a small scale have made those lawless rascals bold, and they now do not hesitate at attacking vessels of the largest class. It is time decisive measures were taken. His majesty's vessels ought to be sent about their business, and a considerable increase to the Indian Navy be made. The Indian Government has a direct interest in suppressing piracy in the India Seas, and would take and at once the most effectual means to crush it were the means within their power. A British admiral has no such interest, and when his aid is needed, he is not at hand to afford it. We are aware H. Majesty's vessels cannot be dispensed with at the mere pleasure of the Indian Government, and more the pity 'tis so. But it is unjust towards India that while she is made to pay for this auxiliary force, she is not allowed to derive that benefit and security from it which the amount expended would, if under her own guidance and control, secure to her. We say this is unjust, and a sacrificing of her interests to state policy. India therefore owes it to herself to remonstrate against this misuse and misapplication of her means, and disregard to her interests. We have no hesitation in saying that had the controul of those matters been left to the India Governments, and they allowed to have an increased navy of their own (which the money they pay to His Majesty's vessels would well allow to have) not even the name of pirate would now be heard of in those channels of trade.

A further proof of the total uselessness of his majesty's vessels for the purposes for which they are required in this country, is to be found in the measures now proposed to be taken by the Singapore Government for the suppression of piracy. Trade is in such a state of insecurity in Singapore, owing to the daily increasing numbers and boldness of those pirates, that a tax is to be levied for the purpose of providing the Government with the means of protecting it. If this is the case in Singapore, Bombay, Madras, and other commercial stations will soon require to do the same, and thus they will have to pay a double tax for the performance of a duty which, had the Indian Government the control as they ought to have, would be well and effectually done in payment of a single tax.

About a month ago we noticed the attack made on the *Lady Grant* of Bombay while on her passage to China with a valuable cargo of opium. The instance we now record took place about the same spot as that of the *Lady Grant*. The vessel (*Anna*) also belongs to Bombay, and had on board a very valuable freight consisting of Dollars and Sycee. There is little doubt that a complete colony or community of these buccaneers is to be found on some of those islands. Until active measures are taken to hunt those lawless characters down, we would strongly advise all commanders of vessels from this port, and all owners and underwriters to see that the vessels are all properly manned and armed; and perhaps they may take a hint from the muster roll of fighting men which the *Lady Grant* exhibited; her crew, with the exception of six European sailors, consisted of lascars, and those six Europeans with the officers and Commander were all who showed fight, the others having taken themselves to more secure quarters. Indeed, in all cases, we think some four or five European Sailors on board a country ship would be an acquisition of importance, whether to point a gun against a pirate, or defeat the machinations of enemies of a more insidious description,—we mean those men who would not hesitate to use the assassin's knife.

The following is the extract:

'We narrowly escaped being boarded by a Malay Prao of Pulos Jarra: luckily we saw him during the day, and prepared the whole of our arms. It was a large Prao with a low boat nearly her own length towing astern, and she followed us the whole of the

day, either making or shortening sail to keep in company with us. It was with the boat she had astern she made the attempt, and it was close to us before seen. We fired one of our carronades at the boat double shotted, when she immediately pulled away in an opposite direction. The object in having a boat of the above description is to fill her with men, and board vessels during the night. It is very likely, had we not seen the Prao in the day, which kept us on the alert when night came on, the boat would have been alongside before we could see it as the night was dark.'

Under present circumstances, and until some better security is offered, we would recommend all shipments of valuable cargo such as opium, to be made on the largest class vessels, as no attempt has yet been made by those pirates, nor is it likely they will as yet make an attempt on vessels which they may suppose are well prepared to receive them. The vessels already attacked were brigs.—[*Bombay Gazette*, Apr. 12.] *Englishman*, April 14.