

On the 20th. instant Bookoo, a Malay man, deposed at the Police Office that himself and three others had gone to Changee river to cut firewood, and that while there they had been attacked and robbed by other two boats, the crews of which would appear to have come to the same place for the purpose of cutting timber. By the deposition the robbers, besides assaulting the deponent's comrades, took away the sails of the boat, four axes, two hatchets, one musket, five gantons of rice, one water cask, two gantons of Dhammer oil, some sarongs and some badjus, after which, the thieves decamped, and though Malays were personally unknown to the deponent, who afterwards went on board of his boat to sleep and was rejoined by one of his companions at midnight. The others have not yet re-appeared notwithstanding they had escaped on shore before the deponent, who by his own account solely remained to oppose his individual strength against ten opponents until he was overpowered when he also seized the opportunity of escape, watching with the utmost minuteness from his retreat the plunder of all the articles mentioned from his boat.

On perusing the deposition it did not produce any surprise; we viewed the complaint as an ordinary every day occurrence and of that description against which there was no possible prevention.—Changee river is within the jurisdiction of Singapore, and no doubt, we think, can exist that on the apprehension of the offenders they might be tried for the robbery; but if such petty offences, perhaps the result of a mere affray, are to be classed as constituting piracy, we shall have no apprehension of any detriment to the trade of the port when confined to such insignificant violations of the law. As to the notion that the late effectual operations of the Commissioners' against piracy,—the opening the high seas to freedom of navigation,—the eradicating all the well known and ascertained haunts of piracy by the destruction of piratical villages and the deprivation of their inhabitants of the means of offence,—should ever be contemplated as likely to produce an utter annihilation of robbery or other petty offences among natives passing to and fro upon rivers within the jurisdiction of the settlement, seems to us somewhat incomprehensible. But our cotemporary in his number of thursday last would appear to entertain some such notion, and while he expresses his disappointment that “the severe examples among the pirates infesting our neighbourhood, have not had those salutary effects which were to be expected”, has not yet shewn us what strength of naval force it will require to bring us to that state of perfection that in no creek or corner in or about Singapore, on its rivers or their banks, thefts and robberies of infinite variety shall no longer have any existence! The Commissioners' are acknowledged to have done much for us in having effected the intimidation and destruction of the hitherto formidable obstructers of the trade on the open seas, but will it not be asking too much of them to convoy boats in our own rivers to protect their owners in cutting firewood?