

## THE MALAY PIRATES

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We received the letter which informed us of the battle of Lieutenant (now Captain) Elliot with a numerous fleet of Malay pirates off Manilla, too late last week to allow time for us to do deserved justice to the merits of that gallant officer and his crew. We will now endeavour to detail more fully this desperate boat-action; and all those who have had any experience in this kind of fighting, know it to be "the tug of war." The engaging of ships, either singly or in fleets, the charge of cavalry or infantry, are not as exciting or dangerous; neither do they require such iron nerves, such desperate, yet cool, determination as do a "cutting-out match" or a close boat engagement; supposing both sides to be equally sharp set. The gallant chivalry of Elliot's engagement has not often been equalled, and perhaps never surpassed.

He was cruising in a Government falwa (a large open boat), with a crew of 44, all told; armed with one large brass gun in the bow (an 18 or 24 pounder), four swivels on the stern, and small arms. The boat pulled 26 oars.

Passing round a point of land between Cape Capones and Corregidor, he suddenly found himself almost in the midst of 26 double-banked Malay pirate proas, each containing about 40 men. The moment Elliot saw the enemy, he, with great courage and coolness, gave the word "ready for action," which was promptly obeyed by his Tagalese crew.

The long gun was quickly double-shotted with grape, without stopping the boat's way, and when within hail the pirate chief (a renegado), who led the van—or rather the horn of a crescent (for they were moving to surround the gallant boat) hailed Elliot, and said—"If he was a brave man he would fight;" doubting what Elliot would do.

"Then the gallant Elliot flushed,  
To anticipate the scene;  
And his boat the fleetest rushed  
O'er the deadly space between;"

And when almost in contact fired his bow gun; the aim was so good and the effect so deadly, that the pirate chief's boat, with her crew, immediately sunk. Without losing way, on went Elliot over the wave which bubbled over the sunken proa towards the second chief's proa, and when with bowsprit almost over her fired, and

"It was but one moment of stir and commotion,  
And down went the proa, like a bird of the ocean."  
The remaining 24 proas, seeing the sudden and unexpected destruction of the chief's, fled. Elliot chased, they rather out-pulling him, but not so fast as to escape about 62 rounds of shot, mostly grape. As most of them pulled away with single banks only, it is probable the havoc amongst them was great. When Elliot's shot could no longer reach them, he repaired to a creek and there refitted, and then returned to Corregidor; but although he passed over the waters where the battle had been fought,

No vestige of the strife was there.

The fight continued about three hours. The falwa had two men killed and twelve wounded, two since dead. In the early part of the action the four swivels rebounded from their pivots and were lost.

When the particulars of the action were reported to the Governor he immediately made Elliot a Captain, and gave him a cross of honour. The petty officers and crew have been rewarded, and the families of the killed will be provided for by the Manilla Government.

The disparity of force in this action is amazing—one boat and 44 men opposed to 26 boats and upwards of 1,000 men! and those men were Malays, renegadoes and pirates—a race and kind of men whose ferocity and desperate determination are unequalled. This is an instance of what a leading, a master-mind can do; for all the credit of fighting the action is due to Elliot; and although his gallant Tagalese bravely seconded him, had he fallen can there be a doubt of the different result?—*Canton Register, May 24.*— [Some praise ought to be allowed to the 18 or 24 pounder—for had it hopped overboard like the swivels, there can be no doubt of a different result.]