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On the 24th instant, H. M. S. *Wellesley*, bearing the flag of Rear-Admiral Sir FREDERICK MAITLAND came to anchor in the roads, and it is stated that in the course of a few days she will proceed to China. Although it has been for some time understood that China was the Admiral's destination, it does not appear to have transpired for what specific object or purpose he shapes his course towards the Central Kingdom. It was given out in a late Bombay paper that he was under instructions from the Admiralty to proceed to China, directly on his arrival in this country, and that he carried with him sealed orders, not to be opened until he reached that destination—and which it was hoped would enable him to put in force "strong measures" with regard to the Chinese. But whatever may be the contents of these sealed orders, it does not appear that *strong measures* are in contemplation by the Admiral with regard to China, or he would not have dismantled the *Wellesley* at Trincomalee of half her complement of guns—altho' there is still a sufficient number left to do a considerable deal of mischief with. Leaving it, however, to time to disclose the precise object of the Admiral's visit to China, we are disposed to consider the presence of the naval Commander-in-chief on the Indian station at this place as being now particularly opportune, with reference to a question which is not beset with those difficulties and complexities which surround our relations with China—we mean an expedition to the strongholds of Lanoon piracy in the Sooloo seas. It does not seem to be by any means satisfactorily ascertained what is the actual nature of the connexion subsisting between these marauders and the sovereign or chiefs of the countries and states which compose their head-quarters—whether they are a private confederacy of pirates, but of which the existence is known and connived at by their government; or whether they carry on their depredations under the immediate sanction of a Sultan or Rajah who, like the chief of

Sambas in former times, is prepared openly to avow his connection with them, and brave all consequences. The ambiguity which attaches to this part of the question was no doubt the cause why sentence was not passed by the Court on the Lanoon pirates convicted at the late Session—and so long as this ambiguity is allowed to exist, one or other of the parties continues without the due share of punishment which awaits their guilt, either the pirates themselves, or the piratical state of which they are the subjects. This is a state of affairs which it is desirable on every ground to terminate—and when we consider the probability there exists that the result of the investigations instituted may require preparations to be made against the Sooloo states, it is needless to descant upon the advantages of having the necessary inquiries conducted under the immediate superintendance of the naval commander-in-chief himself. Should the result, however, shew that the Illanoon pirates pursue a general system of plunder without any authority from their government, it is highly desirable that those who may be hereafter engaged in the destruction of such an extensive piratical confederacy should possess the means of becoming personally acquainted previously with the particulars of its strength, position, and means. There appears no doubt indeed that vast numbers are engaged in this nefarious practice. One of the captive pirates, a son of the man who commanded the fleet attacked by the Steamer, having stated that no less than 200 such prahus were frequently assembled before starting in different directions on their predatory expeditions—and Mr. HUNT, a gentleman who was despatched by Sir STAMFORD RAFFLES to the Sooloo Archipelago shortly after the conquest of Java, and who published at his request an account of what he had seen, and the information he had collected, particularises twelve different piratical establishments belonging to Sooloo, of which the aggregate force is rated at about 200 prahus, and above 8,000 men. This gentleman states that the share of the booty reverting to the Sultan was twenty-five per cent, or one fourth, of all captures—the Datus or nobles, advancing guns and powder—and from facts and circumstances which were elicited during the progress of the recent judicial proceedings with respect to the captured Illanoons, there seems every reason to believe that precisely the same system continues up to the present hour. The Malay pirates having been of late so effectually checked in their career of bloodshed and plunder, the men of-war on this station will find they have nothing left to do, unless employed against the Illanoons—and the most effectual way to crush these marauders is to assail them in their haunts and strongholds. The Spanish government of Manila has every inducement to act in concert with us in this object, from the successful accomplishment of which there is no doubt material benefit would result to the trade of both—the jealousies which might formerly have prevented the Spaniards from uniting with us for such a purpose in the Sooloo seas, having long gone to slumber with the causes that awakened them.

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