

DARING ATTEMPT BY SOME MALAY CONVICTS  
TO TAKE THE SHIP HARRIET SCOTT.

(From the Penang Gazette, Sept. 1843 )

It is our most painful duty to report a very daring and outrageous attempt which was made on Monday morning last to take the ship Harriet Scott, at sea, by a party of fourteen Malay convicts that had been embarked and sailed on board of that vessel from this port on the preceding Friday, under sentence of transportation to Bombay; in which attempt the commander, Captain Beynon, was most cruelly murdered, and the chief mate, Mr. M<sup>r</sup>. Fee, and three of the crew severely wounded. It appears that between four and five o'clock on Monday morning, after the watch had been relieved, a squall took the ship, and while the crew were engaged shortening sail, the fourteen convicts made a rush out of the long boat (in which they were lodged and accommodated) towards the quarter-deck, armed with capstern bars, pump-break, crow bars, pump-spears, &c. upon which the captain immediately got into the cabin and procured a cutlass, with which he attacked them, and being soon joined by the chief mate, they were kept off for a short while until their numbers increased, when the captain received a blow on the head which felled him, while another knocked down the chief mate, who, however, made good his retreat into the cabin and barricaded the door, by which means the convicts were fired upon through the skylight and other available parts of the cabin. One was shot dead and three mortally wounded; and the remainder finding it impossible to continue in the ship, although they had possession of her for nearly five hours, got into and lowered the quarter-boat and escaped. After they had quitted the vessel the captain was discovered lying on the deck almost lifeless, with extensive and several wounds on his head, and his body shockingly mutilated. He was removed into the cabin, and every attention paid to him, but he died about half an hour afterwards; his body was subsequently preserved in a cask to be interred here, for which purpose, and the weakly and reduced state of the crew, several of whom, beside the chief mate, were wounded and required medical treatment, the ship was put about and returned to this port.

Nothing was subsequently seen of the quarter boat with the convicts in her, but it appears that they were picked up on Tuesday afternoon by the garb brig Harsinger, bound to Calcutta, in sight of this island, when they were recognised, and brought back as prisoners into port. Had it not been for a very intelligent native Hyder Ali, who reads and writes English, and who was a passenger on board of the Harsinger, it is very probable that the tale which the convicts gave out of their having been shipwrecked would have been credited, and they carried on to Calcutta; but the names of the ship and captain being painted on the stern sheets of the boat immediately discovered to Hyder Ali who they really were, and it was at his recommendation that the Nacoda secured the villains and conveyed them hither.

The Harriet Scott is a Belfast vessel, the property of Mr. James Lemon, of this town; and Captain Beynon, the unfortunate individual so cruelly murdered, was a clever seaman, and highly respected by his employer.