

THE ATTACK ON THE PIRATES OF BORNEO.

The following is an extract from a private letter received from one of the officers engaged in the late affrays with the pirates &c., at Borneo, and contains a more graphic account of the affair than has yet been published:—

“The fleet, under the command of Sir Thomas Cochrane, comprising the *Agin-court*, 72, *Vestal*, 26, *Dædalus*, 20, *Wolverine*, 16, the *Vixen* steam-sloop, and the Hon. Company's steamers the *Nemesis* and *Pluto*, started for Borneo, from Singapore, in July last, touching at Serawak, and thence sailed for Borneo, where the Sultan, who nominally possesses the country, lives. This place being situate up a river, the ships could not get up on account of their great draught of water, consequently the only vessels that could go up were the three steamers *Vixen*, *Nemesis*, and *Pluto*, with the Admiral and all the captains, and about 200 marines on board. The marines were sent as a guard of honour, but, in the end, proved rather valuable coadjutors. They were received very civilly by the Sultan, who appeared delighted to see them; not so, however, a brother of his, and who is a sort of pretender to the throne. He sent a message to the Sultan, “that if he (the Sultan) did not send the foreigners away he should most certainly come down, take the vessels, and cut all their (the English) throats.” This threat much alarmed the Sultan, who, immediately went to the Admiral (Sir T. Cochrane) to request he would depart if he had any regard for his life. The Admiral, however, not being a man to be frightened at trifles, laughed at him, much to the perfect astonishment of the Sultan, who concluded instanter that the English were all mad. The Admiral then sent a message to the Sultan's brother, to say that his object in coming there was peace and not war, but that he was quite as well prepared for one as the other, and advised him, at the same time, to keep a civil tongue in his head. This he would not listen to; but the next morning he came down, with a number of men, to the two forts, near the position of the three steamers, and opened fire upon them, which we (the English) lost no time in returning, and, in almost as short a time as I am telling you, the forts were demolished by shells, the marines landed, and the man that would fight, with the miserable rabble that composed his army, ran off to the hills as fast as his legs would carry them. The guns (brass, and very valuable) were all taken and given to the Sultan, together with everything of value that could be found, and then his (the Sultan's) rival's place was set on fire and burnt to the ground. The Sultan appeared much pleased at this, and concluded upon the spot a treaty of alliance, &c., with the English. Our loss was only one man killed and two or three wounded; that of the enemy is supposed to have been very great. Two prisoners, or rather men who had been prisoners to a set of pirates, and had made their escape, were found here, and, from their information, the Admiral decided upon proceeding with the squadron to the place pointed out by them, at the north end of the island (Borneo), to exterminate the pirates, and teach them a lesson as to English punishment for piracy. We arrived there on the 17th of

August last. It was an immense bay, at the head of which was a large river divided at its mouth into several branches, up one of which the pirate colony was situate. To all appearance no one would suppose that any human being was ever created there, for as far as the eye could reach there was one mass of impenetrable jungle; nevertheless, in its recesses were concealed a horde of the most sanguinary ruffians, whose greatest pride and glory is the murder of an European. This place, then, it was resolved to destroy, and, to effect a consummation so devoutly to be wished for, an expedition, consisting of three steamers and about 700 men, was dispatched under the command of Captain Talbut, of the *Vestal*. On reaching the mouth of the branch of the river it was found to be too shallow to allow the passage of the steamers, so, as a *dernier resort*, we were obliged to take to the boats, with about 350 seamen and 200 marines, and see what we could do with them. This was on the 18th of August last, about three p.m., and, as darkness soon set in, it was deemed advisable to anchor and wait for daylight, knowing the treacherous disposition of the Malays, or pirates, and the disadvantage we should be under did we attack them at night, from their superior knowledge of the country. In the morning we all roused up, and, about seven a.m. on the 19th of August last, started up one of the most beautiful rivers I ever saw. There were a great number of monkeys, birds, and alligators, but no Malays. After proceeding about ten miles up, two boats pulled a-head to reconnoitre, and, after pulling for about three miles, on rounding an abrupt point we came in full sight of the pirates' position, which consisted of two batteries of eight very heavy guns on each side of the river, in addition to several large brass wall pieces, and other weapons calculated to do a great deal of mischief. On coming in sight a tremendous row immediately ensued, calling the garrison to arms, and in two minutes the batteries were swarming with men, armed *à la sauvage*, with shield and spear. About 200 yards below the batteries was an immense boom across the river for the purpose of preventing vessels from approaching the town. Having observed all that was necessary, we pulled back to the other boats, and having made arrangements for proceeding, the plan was this:—The smaller boats were to advance and cut away the boom, and the large boats (of which there were ten), with carronades on board, were to cover them by their fire during the operation. This being arranged, off we started. Directly we were seen again a flag of truce was sent out to us, and after a great deal of palaver to no purpose, returned to the batteries. In about five minutes it was again sent, but with no better success; and it had scarcely got back when the enemy opened fire from the three gun batteries, and the action then became general on both sides. The boom was the great obstacle, occupying fifty-five minutes in cutting it away; the whole of which time we were under a most galling fire, which killed ten and wounded (some of them severely) fifteen. But amply were they revenged. No quarter was given or asked. Every Malay seen was hunted down and shot. We then landed, and in a short time destroyed all the stores, burnt every house down in the place, spiked and destroyed all the guns, and made in the brief space of time—viz., of two hours—what was a flourishing town in the morning a perfect desert. The loss of the enemy was very great.”