

PIRACY, MURDER, AND SHIPWRECK.

Accounts from Singapore of the 7th of March, bring intelligence of a sad tragedy having been committed by convicts on board the ship *General Wood*, of 700 tons, Captain Stokoe, when the captain, officers, and above 75 persons perished by butchery and shipwreck. It appears that the unfortunate vessel sailed on the 2nd of January last from Singapore, for Penang, with 92 Chinese convicts on board, and without any military guard. Lieut. Seymour, of the Bombay Cavalry, with his wife (newly married), and Mr. Andrew Farquhar, their cousin, were passengers. At one a.m. on the 3rd of Jan. a great noise was heard on deck, in consequence of the convicts having got loose. The convicts put out the cuddy lights. It was then the second mate's (Mr. Tummony's) watch, and he immediately roused the chief mate (Mr. T. Quintom), and the third mate (Mr. Gill). On reaching the main deck the chief mate was struck on the head with pieces of firewood. Mr. Quintom fell down the hatchway from the effect of the blows, and went to the lower deck quarter gallery from whence he managed to get into the sea, and was no more seen. The second mate, finding he could do nothing against so many convicts, ran forward and jumped overboard, and he was seen no more. Mr. Gill, the third mate, on being roused, and looking out of his cabin door, received a severe blow on the head; he then withdrew, got his pistols, and went out and fired amongst the convicts. Mr. Gill proceeded to Lieut. Seymour's cabin, and fell down groaning, from whence he made for the quarter gallery, and endeavoured to thrust his assailants with a bayonet; but after receiving many wounds, he got through the gallery window to the deck, and from thence to the mizen-top, from whence he was dragged to the deck, where his hands were tied. In this exhausting state he remained till morning, and then expired. The captain (Stokoe) hearing the alarm, forced the cabin door, with the assistance of the gunner, but shortly retreated to Mr. Seymour's cabin, where he seems to have lost all presence of mind; at one time he seized his pistols, loaded them, and fired at random. Shortly after, Capt. Stokoe endeavoured to cut away one of the quarter-boats, but was unsuccessful; he then got through the quarter gallery into the sea, and clung to the rope for some time, until quite exhausted, his hold failed, and he sank to rise no more. When the convicts rose *en masse*, the lascar crew, being alarmed, made for the rigging; others jumped overboard, and some were killed by the mutineers. At the time of the alarm the passengers were asleep; on waking up, and finding the vessel in the possession of the Chinese, they kept for some time in one cabin. Mr. Farquhar endeavoured to reach the deck from the quarter gallery, but, observing a blow directed against his head, he dropped into the water, swam to the rudder, and held on till morning. At daybreak the Chinese called all who were in the water to return to the ship, which they did; but on Mr. Farquhar attempting to regain the deck, he was struck by a cutlass on the hands, and compelled to let go his hold; he again swam to the rudder, and held on for some hours. A second time he tried to reach the deck and succeeded. Lieut. Seymour had himself a very narrow escape; he was forced overboard, but contrived, though wounded by a cutlass, to get hold of a rope and conceal himself in the gig, where he was discovered in the morning, and being recognised as a passenger, and not an officer, he was ordered on deck and his life spared. The crew were all, or nearly all, murdered or drowned. The lives of the passengers were spared. The Chinese then got the ship under weigh, and managed to work her themselves, with the assistance of the remaining portion of the crew, who were compelled to labour. After sailing twenty days, in various directions (the Chinese not knowing where to proceed), about 9 o'clock in the morning of January the 23rd the ship grounded on a reef, distant about 9 miles from Pulo Laot, North Natunas. The Chinese, as many as could, including the passengers, took to the boats, and steered for Pulo Laot, which place they reached at about sunset, and landed. When about half way to the island, the ship went down, head foremost, carrying with her some of the crew and Chinese, for whom there was no room in the boats. On reaching the island, four Malays (the only residents in the place) met them; the Chinese endeavoured to prevent the passengers (who spoke Malay) holding a conversation with the Malays. The latter succeeded in securing the whole of the passengers and the remainder of the crew, and conveyed them to their houses, from whence the Malays returned to the beach, to capture the convicts, but succeeded in getting only seventeen, the others having escaped in the ship's boats. The Malays managed to communicate with the Orang Kya of Pulo Bungoran, who proceeded himself, before daybreak, to Pulo Laot. From thence he conveyed the passengers and others to Bungoran. The Orang Kya then went in search of the other Chinese who had escaped, but the Malays did not succeed in falling in with them.—The Orang Kya sent directions to the heads of the numerous islands forming the North Natuna group, to search for and secure the Chinese who escaped, and to forward them to Bungoran. The captured convicts had been brought to Singapore in the Malay prows, examined, and committed for piracy and murder. They appeared reckless as to their fate. The Government had acted with great liberality towards the Orang Kya or Rajah of the North Natunas. The Straits executive has resolved to present him with a gold mounted kris, a silver seree box, and 500 Spanish dollars, as a token of remembrance for the great service rendered to British subjects thrown upon his shores. Nothing more has been heard respecting the 46 Chinese convicts that escaped in the long and quarter boats belonging to the ship; it is thought probable they would endeavour to reach the Anambas or South Natunas: in either case they would be delivered up to the English. The hon. company's steamer *Hooghly*, and her Majesty's sloop *Ringdove*, were about to proceed to the Natunas and Anambas, in search of the escaped pirates.