

## THE EXPEDITION AGAINST THE SAKARRAN AND SAREBAS PIRATES.

We make the following extract from the *Singapore Free Press*, of the 7th September, giving a detailed semi-official account of the expedition against the Sakarran pirates, of which accounts arrived in England some time since:—

By the arrival here of her Majesty's brig *Albatross*, and the Hon. Company's steamer *Nemesis*, we are enabled to lay before our readers a more detailed account than that given some weeks ago of the proceedings of his Excellency Sir James Brooke, and the small naval force co-operating with him, and which has resulted in cutting up a formidable piratical fleet, and in quenching the power of the pirates for a time. It is to be hoped that this severe lesson will enforce the exhortations to a peaceable and industrious course of life which now, as on many previous occasions, have been addressed to the piratical tribes by Sir James Brooke; and if they are shown, by the occasional appearance of our vessels of war on their coasts and rivers, that they are watched, they may perhaps in time be convinced that it is now impossible any longer to follow their lawless and blood-thirsty pursuits without retribution overtaking them for every act of outrage and rapine they commit.

The *Mæander*, Captain the Honourable H. Keppel, not having arrived, it was determined to proceed with the available force. Early on the morning of the 24th of July, the *Nemesis* started with her Majesty's brig *Royalist* and the *Mæander's* steam tender *Ranee* in tow. The boats of her Majesty's brig *Albatross* quickly followed, and the picturesque banks of the Sarawak echoed and re-echoed with the cheers given only as British seamen can to their departing messmates. The European force anchored that night off the mouth of the Moratabas, and consisted as follows:—

Her Majesty's ship *Royalist*, Lieutenant Everest, with twelve 12 pounder brass guns, and one 12 pound howitzer.

Honourable Company's steamer *Nemesis*, T. Wallace, Esq., commander: two 32-pound traversing guns, four 6-pound brass guns, and two 3-pound rocket tubes.

Boats of the *Albatross*—Gig, Commander Farquhar (in command of the squadron): one 1½-pound swivel gun and ten men. Pinnace, Lieutenant Brickwell (second in command): one 12-pound howitzer, one 1½-pound howitzer, and twenty-two men. Cutter, Lieutenant Wilmshurst: 12-pound light brass howitzer, one 3-pound rocket tube, and fifteen men.

Boats of the *Nemesis*.—No. 1, paddle-box boat, Mr. Williams, 3-pound brass gun and nineteen men from *Albatross*; No. 2, Mr. Goodwin, 3-pound brass gun, and nine men; cutter, Mr. Alexander Baker, one 3-pound brass gun and eight men.

*Royalist* cutter, Lieutenant Everest, one 3-pound brass gun, one 3-pound rocket tube, and fifteen men; and *Ranee*, Mr. E. W. Baker, engineer in charge, one 6-pound rocket tube, one swivel gun, and seven men.

His Excellency Sir James Brooke and the Sarawak flotilla joined company during the night. Next morning, the *Royalist*, *Ranee*, and European boats were taken in tow by the *Nemesis*, and reached the entrance of the Sakarran river at five p.m. The boats then anchored in line across its mouth, whilst the *Nemesis* proceeded up the river with *Royalist* to leave her off the Linga branch, and, having accomplished this she returned early on the morning of the 28th, and took the boats in tow, and proceeded towards the Sarebas, off which she anchored at 3 p.m. to await the arrival of the native force. On the 28th intelligence was received that a large force of upwards of 100 prahus were out from Sarebas, in the direction of the Rejang, with the intention it was supposed, of attacking the town of Siriki. All were now on the alert. Sir James Brooke and part of the native force anchored off the Kaluka, and the other detachment at the mouth of the Sarebas, the *Nemesis* in the bay between the two rivers, and the men-of-war's boats in line shoreward. In this position all remained until the evening of the 30th, when tidings were brought that the pirates had attacked Palo, and after threatening destruction to the inhabitants unless they furnished them with salt, had gone to a river named St. Maring, where they then then lying. On the evening of the 31st the *Ular*, one of the scout boats arrived with the intelligence that the pirate fleet was advancing in full force. In about fifteen minutes all were in motion to meet them, the *Nemesis* proceeding seaward to command them, and prevent their escape to sea. As soon as she was descried by the pirates, they made at once for the Kaluka river, where their progress was intercepted by the native boats, and those commanded by Lieutenants Wilmshurst and Everest. The pirates then, as a dernier resort, made a dash to reach their own river, when they came in immediate contact with the men-of-war boats, and the action became general. It was now dark, and the great danger was that of firing into each other, or into our native allies. The pass-word selected was "Raja," and the Malays screamed this out at the top of their voices when they thought

any of the Europeans were near them. Commander Farquhar, who directed the operations, was in the midst of the *mêlée*, giving orders and exhorting the crews of the various boats to be careful, and not to fire into each other, and several of those present, from their age and service capable of giving an opinion, state that they never in any boat actions saw firing so rapid and destructive. Two large prahus were seen by the commander escaping seaward, and the steam-tender was ordered to chase; the nearest one, having barely escaped one of her six-pound rockets, made for the river and met a pirate's doom. The *Nemesis*, which had been dealing death and destruction to all around her, ran her down, and the scene which took place as her crew, above sixty in number, came in contact with the paddle-wheels, beggars all description. A large congrève rocket from the little steamer entered the prahu that had continued out to sea, and rendered her destruction complete. A signal was now made to close; and the scene as witnessed from the bridge of the *Nemesis* was most exciting. It was evident from the first that the day was our own, but a rapid, running fire was still kept up along the margin of the bay. This having gradually subsided, at 12.30 on the morning of the 1st of July, Commander Farquhar ordered the boats of the various vessels in tow, and having sent the *Ranee* with dispatches to Sir James Brooke, then in some part of the Kaluka river, we commenced the ascent of the Sarebas to prevent escape by Rembas branch. In doing so we were deprived of a sight which all state took them by surprise. At daylight the bay was one mass of wreck, shields, spears, and portions of destroyed prahus extended as far as the eye could reach, whilst on the sandy spit, which extends a considerable distance seaward on the left bank of the Sarebas, were upwards of seventy prahus, which the natives were busy clearing of all valuables, and destroying. The punishment inflicted on these fierce barbarians had been most complete. Of one hundred and twenty prahus which it is said started on the expedition, and all of which were in the bay on the preceding evening, more than 87 were destroyed, and the loss of life on their side must have been immense—indeed, it has been placed as high as 1200 men. On our part, saving a few slight casualties, all were unscathed. The observer was compelled to ask himself could destruction so immense, success so complete, at least one-third of this ruthless horde sent to their account, be effected in a space so brief, and with a European force so small? Had success attended the pirates our fate was certain. No more convincing instances of their inhuman disposition need be cited than the fact that the bodies of women were found on the beach on whom they had wreaked their vengeance. They were all decapitated, and the bodies gashed from the shoulder to foot. These are supposed to have been captives taken by the pirates on the expedition from which they were returning. It was afterwards learnt from a Malay prisoner, that the piratical fleet had gone out in the confident belief that the Malays of Sarawak would not act against them during the Ramadan or Mahomedan fast month; and that after plundering Palo, they had gone to St. Maring and from thence to Mato, which they attacked, seizing on the voyage 2 trading boats, one from Sarawak to Singapore with a cargo of sago, and the other coming from Singapore to Sarawak with piece goods. Very large numbers of the pirates escaped into the jungle, where they were pursued by our native auxiliaries.

On the 1st August we were rejoined by the steam-tender, and received the information that Sir James Brooke would join us on the following day. On the 2nd, the native force having arrived, we weighed and proceeded up the river, where we anchored on Friday the 3d, at eight A.M., having ventured as far up an unexplored river as was thought prudent. At noon the larger prahus were anchored inshore, and the smaller prahus with the steam-tender and men-of-war boats proceeded up the stream, and anchored the same evening off the site of Paku, the town formerly destroyed by Captain Keppel, in 1843. At day-light on the morning of Saturday, the 4th of August, the further ascent of the river was soon prosecuted and the town of Paku destroyed. The steam-tender was prevented from reaching this spot by the immense trees which extended across the narrow and tortuous stream, in ascending which the men-of-war boats had to be carried over or depressed under the various natural and artificial barriers that existed every few yards. She then returned to a village a few hundred yards lower down the stream, and destroyed it, and a large prahu secured on its banks. Commander Farquhar hearing guns, despatched the *Nemesis's* cutter, with orders to lie by the steamer during the night. She, however, commenced the descent the same evening, steam being up, and reached the *Nemesis* at nine on Sunday morning, with one European killed and two wounded, bringing intelligence of the death of the two sons of the Orang Kaya of Lundu, two of the bravest of the native chiefs, who had been cut to pieces by the pirates on their first landing in the jungle off the late piratical settlement of Paku. The boats returned from Paku on the morning of the 7th, and it was determined by Sir James Brooke to ascend into the Sarebas territories by the Rejang. The *Nemesis* then proceeded to the mouth of that noble river and wooded, and was joined by the native boats on the 9th. On the 11th, sufficient wood having been procured, we commenced the ascent of this river, and proceeded upwards until the 14th, when we anchored off

the Kanawit river. On the 16th, the European boats, small steamer, and native prahus were despatched to ascend the river, which occupied two days, and the whole of the settlements on either side were totally destroyed. A few prisoners were secured, but the major part of the inhabitants betook themselves to the covert of the dense jungle. Amongst the captives taken up this river was a child, whose perfectly white skin and fair hair would induce the belief that it was of European extraction. This little innocent will be brought up amongst the small family of orphans under the charge of the lady of the Rev. Mr. M'Dougall, the excellent missionary resident at Sarawak. On the evening of the 18th the *Ranee* returned to us with several men sick with fever, and one poor fellow with a barbed spear through him, which it was found impossible to extract with safety, and which was therefore filed off level with the back; very slight hopes are entertained of his recovery. The native and European boats, the former laden with goods recaptured from the Sarebas Dyaks, rejoined us on the succeeding morning. At noon we were again under weigh, and at 4 p.m. anchored abreast of the Poé, the natives of which place had been aiding and abetting the Sarebas men in their predatory excursions, but as the chiefs promised to refrain from connection with the Sarebas pirates in future, the town was spared, Sir James Brooke fining them and taking one of their principal men as a hostage, and also bringing away some brass guns. All having been amicably arranged, on the morning of the 23d we started on our return, and were somewhat alarmed on arriving off the Kanawit for the safety of the steam-tender and gig which had been left here, but during the day we discovered them proceeding downwards. On arriving at Rejang a supply of wood was speedily procured, and on the 24th Sir James Brooke, who had quitted his native boat and embarked on board of us, was landed at Sarawak. Mr. Crookshank, who had joined us up the Rejang off Kanawit, brought intelligence of an attack of the Sakarrans on a fishing village at the mouth of the Moratabas, and of the murder of five of its inhabitants, several others being seriously wounded. He also communicated the pleasing news that the *Mæander* had been seen by him off Tanjong Po, and all were most anxious to welcome Captain Keppel to the scene of his former exploits; but the expectation of seeing him was soon put an end to by the intelligence that the *Mæander* had sailed for Singapore.

Such are the particulars of this most successful expedition, in which a steamer, steam-tender, and seven men-of-war boats, with a European force of less than 150 men, and the small band of native auxiliaries, totally destroyed a piratical squadron consisting of upwards of 100 large prahus, manned by not less than fifty men each. They fearlessly ascended for days into a country unknown to them, tracking the evil-doers to their inland haunts, and destroying their houses and ill-gotten treasure. Commander Farquhar and the officers under him proved themselves worthy representatives of the noble service to which they belong, by the courage, coolness and perseverance with which they followed out their dangerous, severe, and exhausting labours, and the *Nemesis* added another to the daring and successful exploits for which she has become celebrated in maritime annals. The rewards which are due to skill and bravery will no doubt be awarded in ample measure.

The cases of fever on board the *Nemesis* and *Albatross* are, we learn, numerous. This, however, was to be expected, since thirty-two days in open boats, subjected alternately to heavy rains and a scorching sun, are more than sufficient to produce disease in climates more healthy, and more congenial to European constitutions, than that experienced in Bornean rivers.

On the occasion of the departure of her Majesty's ship *Albatross*, after her recent successful expedition Captain Farquhar and his officers gave an entertainment to Sir James Brooke and the European inhabitants of Sarawak. After dinner, Captain Farquhar, in an able and complimentary speech, proposed the health of Sir James Brooke, which was enthusiastically pledged by his numerous guests assembled.