

EXPEDITION AGAINST THE CHINESE PIRATES
Glasgow Herald (Glasgow, Scotland),
Monday, December 24, 1849; Issue 4894

EXPEDITION AGAINST THE CHINESE PIRATES.
(From the Overland Register of Oct. 29.)

The Peninsular and Oriental Company's steamer Canton, Capt. Jamieson, returned unexpectedly yesterday afternoon, about four o'clock, bringing despatches for the Admiral from Captain Hay, of her Majesty's brig Columbine, with seven seamen of that vessel badly wounded, and we regret to add, the body of Mr. Goddard, one of the midshipmen, a most promising young officer—who expired about two p.m., on the passage down, from the effect of wounds received in attack made by the Columbine, on a division of Shap'ng-tsai's pirate fleet, which will appear from the following particulars:—

The Canton left this on the morning of the 29th at three a.m., on a cruise northward, after the missing clipper Coquette. She spoke several fishing boats, but obtained no information from them. At eleven a.m., she sighted a fleet of fifteen large junks, chased by a square rigged vessel, which turned out to be her Majesty's brig Columbine. On seeing the steamer one division of the junks stood out to sea—the other in shore. The Canton, observing the Columbine hauling in shore with the view of cutting them off, hauled in likewise, determined to render the most effective assistance in her power to her Majesty's ship, without in any respect compromising herself by any overt attack upon the enemy. When the intention of the steamer (to cut them off from the shore) was perceived by the junks, the whole fleet put about, and stood out to sea—several of the weaker junks having been previously reinforced by drafts of men from the stronger.

The steamer then took the Columbine in tow, and stood over towards a junk, which appeared from her size and equipment to be the chief of the fleet. Upon getting within range the brig yawed, and poured in a broadside, which only took effect in the pirate's rigging. The junk then rounded to, returned his starboard broadside without doing any mischief, shifted his helm, and gave his port guns with like non-effect. Upon this the Columbine cast off, and made sail in chase, the steamer following, but keeping out of the range of the junk's guns. The chase made for a small cove in Hong-hae bay, the Columbine keeping up a sharp fire upon her from her bow guns, which was returned, shot for shot, by the junk. The latter knowing the channel better, got safely through into the cove—the Columbine having touched the ground outside was obliged to haul off. The junks having thus got into a land-locked position, the brig's guns could not be brought to bear on her, upon which Captain Hay immediately ordered out his boats. While this was being done, two small forts upon the shore opened fire upon the junk, which was immediately returned, apparently without much effect on either side. By this time the launch and pinnace, under command of Lieutenant Bridges, first officer of the Columbine, were under weigh through the channel, to carry the junk by boarding. On rounding the point a heavy fire was opened upon them from the decks of the pirate, while the Columbine kept up at the same time a brisk cannonade upon the forts on shore. Mr. Goddard, a midshipman in command of the pinnace, had by this time, in the most gallant manner, boarded the pirate over her bows, followed by his boat's crew. On seeing one, who appeared to be an officer of the junk, going down the forehatch, he followed with a marine, when, melancholy to relate, the vessel blew up, the magazine having been fired, her own crew, supposed to number over 80, with the whole of the boarders, being blown into the air together. One marine was killed, Mr. Goddard severely wounded and burnt, as well as the greater part of the boats' crews—two seamen being missing on the muster being called. Mr. Bridges having boarded immediately after Mr. Goddard, saved himself and one seaman of the Columbine by jumping overboard at the moment of the explosion, pulling the man along with him. The wounded men were immediately picked up by the boats, and taken on board the Columbine—the junk being totally destroyed, with all her crew but one, now a prisoner on board the brig. Through information received from this man, it was ascertained that the pirate fleet was bound for a place called Tai-poon, whither Captain Hay determined to follow them. Accordingly at seven a.m., on the 30th, the steamer took the Columbine in tow, and proceeded towards Tai-poon. On nearing that anchorage it was ascertained from fishing boats that nine large junks had entered a place called Byas Bay, and on reaching the entrance the two vessels saw a number of junks working up the inner waters, upon which the Columbine came to anchor in a position which commanded all the entrances. Captain Hay then despatched the Canton,

but as the steamer gradually opened it, 16 junks appeared with colours flying and guns all ready for action, and whilst those on board the Fury were doubtful whether they (the Chinese) would rely on their old system of chicanery and declare themselves merely fishermen armed only for their own protection, and not of course for the destruction of all whom circumstances might throw in their path, weaker than themselves, these surmises were pleasingly dispelled by their opening fire, the booming of the attacking party, and commencing a quick and well directed fire on the Fury.

At 10.30 a.m. the steamer returned their fire, and the first shell set one of their number in flames, shot after shot in rapid succession whirred over head, and several struck the ship, one raking and passing through the companion, after wounding in its passage one of the men at the wheel; several also passed through the paddle casings, but although the direction was good, all, fortunately, were harmless. In the meantime the 32-pounders from the Fury were telling with fearful effect, some of the shot passing through several of the junks ranged in line, and those from her bow-gun (a 68-pounder) went ringing through the enemy's craft, and ricochetting along the beach, afterwards finally entering, sans ceremonie, their strong and well-built houses.

At 10.45 a.m., the firing opened from the farthest junks, and another row on the right, which also commenced a rapid fire. Matters proceeded in this style until 11.30, when more of the junks took fire from the shells which exploded inboard, and the exertions of the pirates became now, for the first time, sensibly diminished. Within ten minutes of this period, two large junks blew up, with fearful effect on their neighbours as well as themselves, and those were succeeded by three others in rapid succession. A shell now entered one of the largest, from the foremost 68-pounder, and she almost immediately followed her predecessors; another also proved to be on fire, and also exploded. Their detachment on the right seemed now *hors de combat*; numbers might be seen jumping from the sterns of the still remaining junks, against whom the grape told with fatal effect. Such as escaped, took to the hills.

A harassing fire was still kept up from those on the left of the creek. At this period the boats were despatched, under cover of the fire, from the Fury, to inspect and see whether any fire-rafts were in preparation, and they returned at thirty minutes past four o'clock, towing out one of the smaller junks from the detachment on the right, which had been on fire, but extinguished, and those on board were presented with a specimen of our would-be fishing friends. She was fitted to row twelve large sweeps on either side, and mounted no less than seventeen guns, mostly of English manufacture, some evidently of a very recent period; the best of these were taken on board, and are now in Hong Kong, the vessel was afterwards destroyed. By two p.m., the firing on the part of the Chinese had ceased.

A party of marines were now despatched on shore under cover of the boats, to examine and destroy the various houses, and to prevent the descent of the enemy, who were watching on the summit of the various hills which surround this beautiful and well-chosen site, whilst others of the force were busily engaged firing the yet remaining junks; this accomplished, they returned on board.

The cool determination with which these delinquents descended the hills and attempted, nay, succeeded in several instances, in allaying the ravages of the flames on their devoted craft, had it been exerted in a worthier cause, must have excited feelings of wonder and admiration; shot after shot warned them away, grape and canister did their work, yet still they returned to the task apparently undaunted; their futile attempts even the deadly shell could not render apparent to them, and nothing save the presence of the boats filled with marines and small-arm men, and repeated doses of grape from the boats' guns, could drive these men from their rash and foolhardy attempts.

The scene which presented itself as night closed in was beautiful in the extreme. The small bay appeared one burning mass, the cracking of the burning vessels, ever and anon interrupted by the low boom that announced the explosion of the separate magazines (several exploding at distant intervals on board of each junk), combined with the report from the guns on board the devoted craft, which kept up a constant fire as in succession they became red-hot, rendered the scene one which far surpasses our poor ideas of the picturesque—yet, amidst a scene like this, might be seen at intervals the cunning, overreaching Chinese, working stealthily, at the hazard of their lives, for the recovery of those articles most valued by those who make their livelihood by plunder—parties might be seen carrying off guns towards the mountains. One quarter, at least, of the pirate force, according to the best authorities, is already destroyed: 23 junks, manned and armed, have been burned, together with 4 buildings; this, combined with the loss of all their stores and ammunition, and the destruction of at least 500 of these desperadoes, is a heavy blow; 200 of their guns have been either taken or effectually destroyed, together with well-stored magazines of powder, which, bearing the English stamp, must have been either procured at Hong Kong, Macao, or other marts in the East, or, what is far worse, have been captured, in cases where none have been left to tell to the world the horrible cruelties enacted by these celestial barbarians, the mere retrospect of which causes all well-regulated minds to shrink with horror from an abomination that has been, through the supineness of the powers that be, allowed to approach our very thresholds.

This pirate haunt (their naval arsenal, in fact), which, be it remembered, is now proved to have been Chui-a-poo's, is situated in Byas Bay, an inlet within forty miles to the eastward of Hong Kong, and there can now be no doubt that these crafty and rapacious villains are able singly to capture many of the merchant vessels at present trading to the northward. Their daring, in attacking one of the finest and best appointed steamers in her Majesty's navy, is now beyond doubt; and whilst narrating the result, we can only attribute it to an all beneficent Providence that so much has been effected with so little loss of life on the side of our gallant countrymen, and, in conclusion, we sincerely trust that the entire annihilation of these desperadoes will be effected with equal success.

The 2d of October was devoted to the completing of the good work so nobly begun on the day previous. As the sun rose the picturesque pirate creek of Pinghoi presented a far different aspect to that which it did previous to the vomiting forth those messengers of destruction which had effected their work of demolition so effectually a few hours before, still much remained to be done. Groups of men might be seen congregated on the hills, armed with matchlocks and spears, who on the least relaxation of vigilance on the part of those already fatigued with the exertions of the day previous, descended, and recommenced their efforts for recovery of their guns, and ere the boats had well reached the Fury at the seamen's dinner hour, small sampans were floated out of the creeks and hundreds might be seen busily engaged attempting to recover the yet undestroyed portion of their armament—a party was now despatched under the cover of our guns to effect at once their immediate destruction, and all being accomplished at sun-set, the Fury got under weigh and rejoined the Columbine, the pirates again descended from the hills, and might be seen prowling over the now useless relics of their former power.

At day-break, the succeeding morning, the whole force again got under weigh in search of certain junks of which information had been received, but which proved to be either incorrect, or else the loud-tongued yelping of the 68 pounder guns on board the Fury announced her whereabouts too plainly to be altogether comfortable.