

MISTAKES OF THE "TIMES."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE DAILY NEWS.

SIR,—Surely the *Times*, if it be an oracle, is the most blundering oracle that ever vaticinated. It would seem to be working very hard to get rid of all character for forecast, or to be under the belief that all its readers are predestined dupes, whose gullets are wide enough to swallow any given amount of imposture. In a long leader of Saturday last, there was a diatribe against "the Manchester school," in which misrepresentations are as plentiful as blackberries. Here are some samples. The power of Russia is "exemplified by her instantaneous conquest of a kingdom which for twelve months had kept all other enemies at bay." Hungary had but one enemy, Austria—and not many enemies. When Russia succeeded, as here asserted, it was not alone, or in an instant, but with the assistance of 200,000 Austrians, at the end of a long and difficult campaign, and by the treason of the Hungarian general, that the conquest was effected. When left to its own resources, it has been baffled for 25 years by the mountains of the Caucasus. A little barbarian, called the Khan of Khiva, beat a Russian army disgracefully, and sent it home reduced by one-half its whole numbers not many years back. Russia made war on the Turks, with no one to help the latter, but all Europe looking on. Yet it was only at the end of the second campaign and after heavy losses, that a Russian army contrived to scramble as far as Adrianople, and then in such a plight that it dared venture no further. Two months ago Russia and Austria united, threatened Turkey with war, and on the first news of an English and French fleet being in the Dardanelles, the imperial bullies sneaked back like a couple of cowed mongrels. So much for the power which, single-handed, effects "the ins'taneous conquest of a kingdom that for twelve months has kept all other enemies at bay."

"Recently," says the *Times*, "it has been loudly declared that there were no such people as pirates, that the character was the pure invention of blood-thirsty officers, devised to gratify their own butcherly propensities, &c. &c." Now, this fancied denial of piracy, anywhere, is a clumsy figment of the *Times*. No one in his senses ever thought of denying the existence of piracy, and of a rather formidable piracy too, on the coast of China, and of one, although much less so, even in the waters of the Archipelago.

What was really denied was, that two tribes of savages waylaid and cut to pieces, on the 31st of July last, and whose heads are now officially valued at the sum of 20,700*l.*, were pirates, or, at least, formidable pirates, meriting wholesale extermination. The denial of piracy in this particular instance was grounded on the absence, down to this hour, of all evidence of piracy, and on the recorded testimony of Sir James Brooke that the slaughtered barbarians were unacquainted with fire-arms, the very boldest of them running away at the report of a musket, confirmed by their offering no resistance, and inflicting no injury on those that attacked them.

The object of the *Times* is to confound proved pirates with suspected pirates—the intrepid mariners of Fokien wielding the old civilisation of China, and far more than the ordinary courage of China, with the unarmed and untutored savages of Borneo—to include in one category stout junks carrying 18 and 20 guns, and the warboats or fishing-boats of savages, that carry not even a single musket or matchlock. Here is Sir James Brooke's account of one of the war boats of the Illanuns, certainly the most formidable of all pirates of the Malayan race, and commanded by one of their redoubted chiefs, "Abu Bakar," says he, "with a crew of 15 men, chiefly Illanuns, I found living ashore at Talang with a small boat and a huge long six pounder in her, which fired twice must have separated her planks. I learned also that six Balinini (Illanuns) boats had been to Talang and had had a friendly conference with Sheriff Abu Bakar." Mundy, Vol. I., p. 307. This boat, with the six-pounder that would have shivered her planks at the second shot was deemed so formidable by Rajah Brooke, that "the question arose" in his mind "whether by any means he could include her crew in the punishment he meditated to inflict on her consort, and which punishment, as it turned out, consisted in summarily putting the chief to death and the crew in irons." But the recorded testimony of Sir James Brooke goes for nothing with the *Times*; on the contrary, it kicks its own witness and client out of court, in order that it may bawl its own untruths the louder into the public ear without interruption.

The vast difference between Chinese corsairs and Malay pirates of the most aggravated character, to say nothing of pirates without firearms, is proclaimed in the plainest and most incontrovertible manner by the well-known fact that some five hundred voyages up and down the China sea, of which Borneo and the more piratical islands off it form the southern barrier, are yearly performed, and no true junk is ever known to have been captured.

One more misrepresentation. The *Times* says, "Tidings reached England that Labuan, a settlement established at the express instance of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, had been cleared of the pirates which infested its coasts by an expedition so happily planned that its objects were effected without the loss of a man." No such tidings as are announced by the veracious chronicler ever reached England. Since the British flag was planted at Labuan, not a single pirate has appeared on its coast. The two tribes that were slaughtered "without the loss of a man" were, at the time of the battue, at least 300 miles distant from Labuan, and out of the highway of commerce. The majority of them most probably never saw the island, or even knew of its existence. As to Labuan being settled at the instance of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, that body, in common with others of the same class, did recommend it at the eleventh hour; but the settlement was *in petto* and even pretty well resolved on, for at least two years before the merchants of Manchester knew that there was such an island in existence. Is the *Times* in ignorance, or feigning it, to delude? It surely errs in discretion, when it obtrudes so unnecessary a quantity of mendacity.

I am, &c.,

AN EAST INDIA MERCHANT.

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