

THE "TIMES" AND ITS "COUNTRY CAP-  
TAINS."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE DAILY NEWS.

SIR,—Another of the bluff and bronzed sea captains of the *Times* newspaper, has presented himself for our enlightenment in its columns—one Captain Alexander Campbell, forty-one years in the sea-service, twenty-seven chiefly in the Eastern Archipelago. "I presume," says the captain modestly, "that I may be allowed to know something of the state of things in those distant seas." He does, indeed, "presume" a little, for it turns out that the "something" which he knows is something of the smallest, and seen too, only through a fog. It may loom a very mountain of knowledge to Capt. Campbell, and yet it is only a molehill.

The question at issue regards the justice or necessity of putting to death, without warning and without evidence that they were pirates, certain heathen tribes, who have no knowledge or use of fire arms. Our sea captain says not one word about them. Probably he never saw a man of them, or even heard of them, until within the last two or three months. But eschewing the real question, he chatters (called "jawing" on the quarter deck) about Malays and the like, people who have known and used fire-arms for the last 350 years, and whose piracies, not formidable but troublesome, no one in his right senses ever thought of doubting. In short, Captain Alexander Campbell blusters truisms, and, like one of his own typhoons, blows and puffs in every direction except the right and fair one.

Here is an example of the knowledge and enlightenment which our sea captain has gained in seven-and-twenty years' time. His credulity is such that he actually believes and says it, that all Malay knives, and spears, and arrows are poisoned. The poisoning of any weapon effectually the captain does not seem to know is a matter of very great difficulty, but if it were ever so easy, it would be useless, for a wound inflicted with a kres or spear by a Malay hand is quite fatal enough without any poison. At present the poisoning of weapons by Malay or any one else stands on the same footing as magic or witchcraft. None believe in them except a few vulgar old women, or those who in understanding are on a level with vulgar old women.

"But, sir," says Captain Campbell to the *Times*, "I promised you facts and you shall have them." Here, then, are what he calls facts. He was attacked in his single ship thrice and chased twice, and his single ship was never captured, although the pirate fleet amounted on one occasion to 58 sail, and on another to 70. This proves that there are certainly pirates, and also that they are, although a pest, not very formidable. He says that in the 20 years, from 1826 to 1845, no fewer than 11 other English ships were attacked, five of them being taken, and "every man of their crews murdered." If "every man" was "murdered," who told the story of the captures and the murders? Captain Alexander Campbell has been inspired to report what no other man ever heard of. In the waters of the Archipelago one English ship of some sort or other was by his account lost once in four years, and the narrator jumps to the conclusion that all of them must have been captured by pirates, and their crews to a man massacred, although there was no living creature to testify. This is not giving the *Times* "facts," but furnishing it with reckless assertions; promising it mountains and furnishing it with molehills producing only a few wretched mice.

Captain Alexander Campbell charges the member for the Tower Hamlets with ignorance for not knowing that "the Sultan of Borneo" was a dependent of the Dutch—a fact, according to him, which "any schoolboy could have told him." The ignorance and the ill-manners with which the charges are made are the poor captain's own. The Sultan of Borneo never was a tributary of the Dutch, nor alleged by the Dutch to be so. A couple of small chieftains on the south coast of Borneo, assuming that title, are tributary to them. But the bluff commander, neither in sense or grammar, knows the difference between the definite and the indefinite article. He is himself in need of a lesson from "little children."

For the purpose of the *Times* Alexander Campbell seems, in a word, to be as ineffectual a blunderbuss as Aaron Smith himself. I am, sir, &c.

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AN EAST INDIAN.