

DESTRUCTION OF BORNEAN PIRATES.

For the past few weeks the extreme members of the Liberal Press of this country have been raising a cry against the slaughter of the 1,500 Bornean pirates by Rajah Brooke and his officers, as an act of unwarrantable cruelty. A meeting of the Peace Society, intended as a condemnation on Sir James Brooke, was held in London on Wednesday evening, at which Mr. Joseph Sturge and the leading men of the Peace Society were present. During the evening the movers in this opposition met with an opponent who made himself more than agreeable by the astounding statements furnished by his own experience. Resolutions condemnatory of Rajah Brooke having been moved an old officer presented himself to the meeting in the person of

Captain Smith, who said, I didn't come here to offer obstruction to the meeting; but the Chairman said there had never been a British ship attacked by pirates in the China seas. Now I am an ocular demonstration to the contrary, and facts are stubborn things (Cheers and confusion). Now I have been attacked at midnight by a fleet of Malay pirates (sensation upon the platform, and some confusion in the meeting). I have navigated those seas for 30 years. I am not a naval officer in her Majesty's service, and I have never received a farthing of Government money; but I am proud of being a British seaman, and I will say that the naval commanders in those seas possess as much kindness of heart and as much humanity as any other class of her Majesty's subjects. I have not the pleasure of being acquainted with Sir J. Brooke, but I must say, that those people who navigate those seas are under obligations to those gentlemen for what they have done. I have passed many sleepless nights in those seas from fear of the pirates. I was bound from Sourabaya to China, when at twelve at night, on the 30th of April, 1836, we were surrounded by a fleet of pirates. I hastened on deck, and very soon a shot passed between me and my steward. A three hours' engagement ensued. I was attacked at midnight, nor was it the first time I had been engaged with them. I have heard it said there may have been some mistake about their being pirates, but there was "no mistake" here. There were 20 prahus, with 100 men in each. I have heard it said to-night that their boats are made with bamboo and rattans, and that they are mere "baskets." I can only tell you that they are manned by 100 men a-piece nearly, and they are pulled by 70 or 80 oars; and after that it is for you to determine what kind of "baskets" they were (Cheers.) It is not my object to tell you about myself. I do not eulogise myself, but if these fellows had come at midnight to attack you, it would have been your duty, and the duty of every man, to do as I did, and defend himself (Grave and dubious looks from the chairman and other members of the Society of Friends upon the platform.) We had a three hours' engagement, and during that time I can tell you I killed as many men in proportion as Rajah Brooke (Gentle exclamations of horror and surprise from the ladies, and much excitement among the gentlemen who surrounded Captain Smith upon the platform.) I only did my duty for it was my duty to defend my ship. After a three hours' engagement there were about 100 of 'em shot (Sensation.) I destroyed one crew, and disabled the rest. The next morning I hoisted out the British ensign that the chief of the pirates might know who he had to do with. But he hoisted up another British ensign. Now, he could'nt have bought one in those seas, and the one he held up could only have been gained by the massacre of those to whom it had belonged (Cheers.) Why, there had been many Manilla vessels that had never been heard of, and the Java seas were notorious for that class of men (Hear, hear.) These gentlemen have told us that Rajah Brooke took possession of Borneo in his yacht, but they don't seem to know that Borneo is an island eight times larger than England, and nearly half as large as Europe. We have heard something about the merchants of Singapore. Now I don't like to slander a man behind his back, and what did they do about Rajah Brooke? I have had dealings with the Singapore merchants, and I know that a more honest, a more just, a more religious, and a better class of men do not exist than the British merchants of Singapore (Sensation and expressions of dissent from the platform.) Now, what have they done? they are within a stone's-throw; they have had dealings with the Dyaks; and they have signed an unanimous declaration that Governor Brooke is justified in what he has done. It is said you ought to take these men alive. If you can take a man alive, do it (Hear, hear.) But remember, you may meet 300 prahus with 100 men in each, all armed with poisoned spears. "I wish" (said Capt. Smith with great emphasis and turning round to the rev. gentlemen behind him), "I wish any of you would go on the coast of Borneo" (Great consternation upon the platform, expressions of horror from the ladies, and much confusion in the body of the room.) Why I have been obliged to land with a brace of pistols and a sword at my side to procure water; I have had poisoned spears thrown at me like a wild beast. Humanize them if you can, but depend upon it you must either put them down or they will cut off every British ship *seriatim* that goes in those seas. I am sorry if I have at all interfered with this meeting, but I could not stand by and see those brave men and defenders of their country—the conclusion of the sentence was drowned in cheers.) One gentleman has talked about Nelson, and said he would not have done such a thing; but, when you get among pirates who will kill every man they can get hold of, and boil you next day, what are you to do? (A laugh, and "hear, hear.") If our sailors have done wrong in destroying such men, what did Nelson deserve at Copenhagen? The fact is, they have done no more than they legitimately could to suppress piracy, and they ought to have credit given them for having done their duty (Hear.) There is no evidence that they have committed any unjust act of cruelty, and I say they should be praised rather than censured (Cheers.) I agree with you that there ought to be no such thing as head money ("Hear" and cheers.) A naval officer should be paid for his services, and that is enough. If you can civilize these pirates, do it; but I thought, as I happened to be present, I would tell you that a more gallant race of men than our officers and sailors in these seas never existed, or a more humane set of men. (Captain Smith here resumed his seat apparently to the inexpressible relief of the promoters of the meeting.)