

ESCAPE OF AN AMERICAN FROM A DUTCH
DUNGEON.

The New York papers contain lengthy statements respecting the recent arrival at New York of Captain Walter M. Gibson, of the American schooner *Flirt*, who had escaped from the dungeons of the Dutch government of the Island of Java, where he had been imprisoned about twelve months. His adventures, seizure, and imprisonment possess considerable interest. In 1851 Mr. Gibson purchased the American schooner *Flirt*, in which he left New York on the 13th of May, as an adventurer, ready for any enterprise in which courage and spirit were required, probably with the intention of carrying military aid to General Carrera, who was then striving to seize the reins of power in Guatemala. Obstacles were, however, thrown in his way, and he altered his original plan and sailed his vessel to the coast of Brazil, where, however, he became involved in further difficulties, and, owing to the disaffection of the crew, was unable, as he intended, to sell his schooner to advantage. Having had an uncle largely connected with the East India trade, he resolved to try his fortunes there, and accordingly left Pernambuco for Singapore, intending, if unsuccessful there, to sail for San Francisco, where he had interests connected with the Hungarian colony, which he had aided in emigrating from New York. While in the Java sea, stress of weather and shortness of water compelled him to put into Mintok, on the island of Banca, celebrated for its tin, and owned by the Dutch. He remained here some time, being treated with the greatest apparent kindness by the Dutch authorities, and entertained at public dinners, on no less than thirteen different days, by the Dutch governor. This apparent-kindness, he afterwards asserted, was merely assumed to enable the Dutch governor, who had heard of the Cuban invasion and the general marauding propensities of the Americans, to place a spy on his actions, and to collect evidence to proceed against him. For this purpose they furnished him with a native secretary, the son of a Malay chief, with whom he visited various districts, becoming intimate with a number of native princes and chiefs, some of whom were looking for the deliverance of their territories from the sway of the Dutch. With one of the most prominent of these, Prince Tiang Alam, he talked with great and imprudent freedom of the natural resources of the country, of the immense progress it might make under better auspices and a better government, and, probably, of the special fitness of the Yankee character for its proper development. These conversations, and the rapid favour he was acquiring with the native tribes, excited still farther the jealousy of the Dutch authorities, who kept a still closer watch upon his movements, and laid secret plans to entrap him. Intending to make a trip up the Jambee River to the Dutch fortress of Palembang, he instructed his Malay secretary to write a letter to the Sultan of Jambee, apprising him of his design. Instead of writing what was dictated, the treacherous secretary wrote a letter full of the most violent denunciations of the Dutch, in the highest degree inflammatory and offensive to them; stating that he (Captain Gibson) "wished to give freedom to the Malay people, and restore them to their former glory and united dominions; that he desired all the Dutch to be annihilated, except a few; and that in a few days he would take possession of the empire for the Sultan." This missive was entrusted to one of his own officers to convey to the Sultan. The secretary being requested to procure guides for Captain Gibson's messenger, procured two servants of the resident Governor of Palembang, named Moonchwa and Bahdoo, who immediately gave notice of the intended expedition to the governor, and he sent 120 men, in armed prows, up the river, to watch Captain Gibson's officer, the bearer of the letter whose contents had been revealed by the Malay secretary. The officer had, therefore, gone only eight miles, when he was seized and brought back. On the following morning Capt. Gibson was arrested by Commodore Nicholson, of the Dutch gun-brig *Pylades*, who denounced him as a d—d Yankee *insurrectionaire*, and ordered him to be shot in two hours. The governor's counsel, however, interfered, and Gibson was thrown into prison. Since then he had been several times placed on his trial charged with treason, and that his movements were dangerous to the peace of Netherland India. He had on every occasion been ordered to be set at liberty; and, on one occasion, the Dutch government were to pay \$82,000 damages for his detention. He was, however, always re-arrested; and, shortly before his escape, he learned from his counsel that the government had determined upon his execution, and would order it for the 25th April. He at once made arrangements with the captain of an American clipper which happened to be in port, and with others who acted as his friends. They procured disguises, and one day while the prisoners were at their meals he passed the guard, left the prison in the dress of a servant, climbed over the two walls he had to pass, waded the shallow ditch by which the prison was surrounded, and, by the aid of horses which had been provided for him, soon reached the sea-shore and got on board the American clipper. At nine o'clock the alarm of his escape was given, lights were hoisted, and the guard-ship fired a shot at the clipper ordering her to stop. She was by this time, however, well under-way, and firing repeatedly by way of challenge to the Dutch vessels to catch her if they could, stood out to sea. Captain Gibson reached New York on the 26th of July, in good health, and in no wise daunted by the strange adventures he had experienced.—His mate, Mr. Graham, was too sick to make an attempt to escape, and, as well as the cabin-boy, still remains in the power of the Dutch authorities.