

**ALLEGED MURDER ON THE HIGH SEAS.**

On Tuesday, at the Thames police-court, *Aban* and *Alli*, two Malay seamen, belonging to the barque "Queen of the Teign," *Wm. Northcote* and *Robert Goldsworthy*, European seamen, of the same vessel, and *Mr. Wm. Stooke*, the master, were charged before Mr. Yardley, on suspicion of being concerned in the wilful murder of five Lascar seamen who had formed a part of her crew on the homeward-bound voyage. Mr. Humphreys appeared for the captain.

Previous to the case being entered into much interest was excited by the introduction of a coffin-like box, which was placed on the bench close to the magistrate, and was broken open by one of the river police by direction of Superintendent Evans. Some at first supposed that it contained mangled human remains, but on the removal of the straw which formed the packing, divers fearful weapons were produced, including crow-bars, long iron bars, outlasses (some broken near the hilt, some in the middle, and some whole), with three or four Malay daggers, called kreis, of singular workmanship, with polished wooden handles and sheaths, and formidable blades about fourteen inches long. There was also a large paper package, containing what appeared to be a log-book and copies of depositions taken before Mr. William Woolrige, a magistrate at Gibraltar, by whom, it appeared, the wooden case containing the articles had been forwarded.

The first witness examined was David Fairfield, who, in answer to Mr. Yardley, said: I joined the "Queen of the Teign" at Singapore. There were no Lascars on board at the time. I signed articles after the Lascars joined. They had a serang and a tindal under him. The serang is alive now. I do not know how many Europeans were on board, or how many Malays. Mr. Triatt was the chief mate. There was no disturbance up to the 22nd of July, except that the captain struck me several times. When certain Lascars met their death, the vessel had crossed the line, and was in the North Sea. She was bound up the Straits.

Mr. Yardley (who appeared to put his questions from the voluminous depositions before him) asked what was the state of discipline on board at the time? Witness: It was all right, except a row between the serang and the tindal. There was no disturbance by the native crew. On the night of the row, when the men were killed, my watch was from eight to twelve. It was the master's watch. My watch below was from twelve to four, and the mate, Mr. Triatt, had command of the watch on deck. I went below at twelve, but could not say whether I left the master above. I was roused about one by the people in the fore-castle. The natives shook me, and bade me turn out. I dressed in five minutes, not knowing what was up. When I got upon deck, I saw a man standing before me with a gun. It was William Northcote. The gun was pointed towards the hatch. I went aft, and saw a Lascar lying on the deck, on the larboard side. He appeared to be dead. Northcote and Goldsworthy were forward at the hatch. The captain was aft, but I saw nothing in his hand. I saw the tindal come aft, and he was killed by blows from outlasses. He had two on him, and received a great many blows, but I cannot say who struck him. I think William Northcote was one, but I cannot say. I do not know of any one else being killed aft. The tindal was coming aft, with his cap in his hand, when he was cut down with the outlasses. He appeared to be asking pardon. One of the outlasses was a broken one.

Mr. Yardley: Well, if you could see that, you could see who used it.

Witness: Well, it was William.  
Mr. Yardley: Have you any doubt of that? Witness: No, I have no doubt. I then saw a Lascar at the head of the ship, and the captain cried out, "Here's one ahead." William (Northcote) fired a gun, and the Lascar fell from the head into the water. I saw him swim towards the chain, and never saw him after. I saw some Lascars thrown overboard; one of them was alive: I think five Lascars were lost. I saw Goldsworthy forward. I did not see the two Lascars now in the dock until I saw them in irons. They were kept in irons until we came to Gibraltar. The serang's wife died on board. I saw a kreis poked up on the fore-castle next day. I did not mess with the Europeans. I was put forward with the Lascars; I suppose as a punishment.

Mr. Yardley to Mr. Humphreys: This is the substance of what the witness stated in Gibraltar. It would be absurd in a case of so much magnitude for a magistrate to fish out evidence in this way. If I find enough to remand the case—and I think there is enough—I shall postpone it until steps be taken in the proper quarter.

Mr. Humphrey: I do not propose to cross-examine this man, but I trust your worship will take bail.

Mr. Yardley: I should not like to take bail for any prisoner involved in so serious a charge of homicide; but I will endeavour to fish out more evidence as well as I can.

Mr. Humphreys: I shall not in this stage of proceeding enter into any cross-examination, however unwilling I may be that my client should go to prison.

Mr. Yardley: The evidence given, though serious, does not yet much affect the captain.

William B. Triatt, the chief officer, said: I joined the "Queen of the Teign" at Sunderland. We took a number of Lascars on board at Singapore, about fourteen, including the serang and the tindal. The conduct of the natives was very good up to the 22nd of July. It was my watch from twelve to four that morning. The captain's watch had been previously kept by Adam Cumming, the boatswain. The tindal and four natives, with two Europeans besides myself, were in my watch. Goldsworthy was one of the Europeans. About half-past one I saw two or three Lascars come aft, but did not take much notice, as we allowed them to do so, that they may learn to use the compass. Goldsworthy, who was at the wheel, cried, "Look out," and ran towards the cabin. A Lascar with a kreis in his hand pursued; another fellow made at me with a piece of iron. It had an eye at the end in which there was a hole. (Here a heavy belaying pin was produced, and witness said it was such a weapon as that.) The fellow made a blow at me, holding it with both hands. I avoided the blow, seized him, and took him to the main deck. Another fellow made a stab at me with a kreis, which pierced through my coat and waistcoat, but did not touch the skin. He made a second blow at me, which in warding off took me in the fore-arm. Three or four others were jobbing at me at the same time. I sustained nine wounds. There were more Lascars around me than those in my watch at the time. The tindal had a kreis. All the Lascars were on deck at the time, or at least eight or nine. I called the watch below, and Cumming and Northcote came up. The captain was the first up, and his coming saved my life. When they saw him they ran away. I was very weak from loss of blood, and when I went to the cabin I fainted. I saw no more after that, and was confined to the cabin for a month with my wounds. None of the natives were for us. I understand they intended to kill the serang and the natives in the watch below.

Mr. Yardley: Did you know they had these kreises?—No; if we had been aware of it we should have taken them from them.

To Mr. Humphreys: I called Bill, meaning Adam Cumming. He was known by that name. The captain was awakened by the noise on deck, which was fortunate for me, as it saved my life. He wrested a kreis from one of the men who was stabbing me.

Mr. Yardley: How far were you from land at the time?—Seven or eight hundred miles.

Mr. Yardley: Could any of the natives navigate the ship?—No, not one.

Adam Cumming examined: I went out as an able seaman in the "Queen of the Teign," and was afterwards made second mate. I was below when the disturbance took place, and was awakened by the scuffle, and the cry of murder from a man in the cabin. I got on deck as quickly as I could. As I put my hand on the scuttle to get up, it was struck with a stick or some hard substance. The mark is on it still.

Mr. Yardley: Do you know who struck you? Witness (pointing to *Alli*): There he is. I cannot tell how many Malays were there at the time. There were more than two. I saw three of them scuffling with the mate abreast of the poop. I caught one of them and struck him. The captain came up with two outlasses, and gave me one of them. I hit the fellow with the cutlass. I then ran forward, where there was a party of them beating one of our men. I rushed amongst them and used the outlass, for I considered it was a mutiny. I cannot say whether it was with a piece of wood or iron I was struck on the hand. The fray continued for half an hour. No blows were struck after the Malays were put into irons.

Mr. Yardley: This evidence alters the aspect of the case, and furnishes ample reason why bail should be accepted. When the prisoners were first placed before me, I concluded

they were involved in a joint offence, which I find is not the case.

Mr. Humphreys then tendered the father of the captain, with Mr. David Edward Power, 110, Fenchurch-street, who stated that his firm at Gibraltar had previously been bail for Captain Steokes. The father would also be bail for Northcote and Goldsworthy.

Mr. Yardley: I suppose Mr. Power will have no objection to be joint bail?—Mr. Power: I should rather not, not having the sanction of my brother.

Mr. Yardley: I should be sorry to have these men kept in custody, but it is necessary to have two sureties, lest one should die, and there has been extensive homicide.

Bail was then taken for the captain, himself in 200*l.*, and two sureties of 100*l.* each, his father and Mr. Power. Bail, two sureties in 50*l.*, was then procured for the other two, and the case was remanded for a week.