

THE ALLEGED MURDER ON THE
HIGH SEAS.

Mr. W. Stooks, master, and W. Northcote and Robert Goldsworthy, seamen of the Queen of the Teign, surrendered to their recognizances at the Thames Police-court, yesterday, on the charge of having wilfully murdered five Malay seamen, who had formed part of the crew of that vessel. The case excited the deepest interest.

Mr. Bodkin, with Mr. Jarman, one of the clerks of the solicitor to the Treasury, appeared on the part of the Crown; and Mr. Clarkson, instructed by Mr. Humphreys, was for the defence.

Mr. Yardley, in allusion to the men of colour who were in the first instance placed in the dock with the European prisoners, said he thought that they were at that time charged with a joint offence, but the development of the evidence made it appear quite otherwise.

Mr. Bodkin: I have been instructed by Lord Palmerston, to appear in this case, in which it appears that five lives have been lost. My attendance is owing to some observations made by your worship on a former occasion, and it will be my duty to render you all the assistance in my power. I have not had an opportunity of looking over the voluminous evidence, but I am ready to adopt any course you may think proper to suggest.

Mr. Yardley: The prisoners are charged with having caused the death of certain men of colour, and it is clear that the men of colour who were previously in the dock had no participation in that act, though it may be that they are amenable to some other charge. They are, therefore, held in custody to meet any charge that may be hereafter made against them.

Mr. Clarkson: I appear for the captain and the two Europeans.

Mr. Yardley (to Superintendent Evans): How is it that, where a charge of mutiny is alleged, you have no more than two coloured men in custody?

Mr. Evans: There were no others given in charge.

Mr. Clarkson: I have not seen the depositions taken at Gibraltar, but I understand my clients have been sent here under a supposed arrest, and I shall abide any course your worship may think fit to adopt.

Fairfield, Treat, and Cumming, the witnesses previously examined, were again called, and their evidence read over by Mr. Fyer, the junior clerk.

Fairfield, in answer to Mr. Clarkson, said the Serang was alive, and he had seen him that day.

Mr. Yardley: There is no evidence that the Serang was on deck or took any part in the affair.

Mr. Clarkson: Yes, but his evidence may be important in a future stage of the proceedings.

Fairfield, in addition to his previous testimony, said he did not know the two Lascars who awakened him on the night of the row. They said the captain wanted him. He did not assist the captain. He would if he had seen that the captain was in danger. Had heard nothing of taking the vessel to California. He was disgraced and sent forward amongst the coloured men, because it had been said he was not able to steer the ship. She was worked by a wheel, not a tiller.

The witness was here examined at some length, to show that he was a habitual liar and skulker.

Mr. Clarkson: Did the captain call the men on the after-deck, after what you call the mutiny, but to which others give another name, and tell them that, from the information of two Lascars, he had a serious charge to make against one of the European crew?—Witness: He did something like that.

Mr. Clarkson: Did he not distinctly say that he was told one of the European crew offered to navigate the ship to California, or anywhere else that the Lascars wished?

The witness fenced about this question, as if he would not or could not understand it, but admitted that there was something like such a conversation.

Mr. Clarkson: Come, come, my man—did he not charge you as the person who made that offer to the Lascars?—Witness: I do not know. Several said, "It is not me." I said nothing. On one occasion Cumming said I did not steer right; and on another, when I was at the wheel, the captain said, "Where is the ship going?" I did not, on the Sunday previous to the row, ask a man named Mills whether the captain had much money on board, nor did he answer, if he had he would not have told me of the matter. The captain, when he called us aft after the row, said there was one to go in irons, and that was me.

Mr. Yardley: You were charged with mutiny at Gibraltar along with the others?—Witness: Yes, but I was discharged, and a policeman came to me when I came to Gravesend.

To Mr. Bodkin: The captain, Northcote, and Goldsworthy were charged with killing the Lascars at Gibraltar.

Mr. Treat, the chief officer, described the attack made on him as already reported, and produced his coat to show where it had been pierced by the Malay daggers, called kreis, with the corresponding marks on his person. It was not known that the Malays had weapons on board, or they would not have been allowed to retain them. The freight consisted of sugar, nutmegs, pepper, antimony oil (a very valuable article), and Chinese ornaments. The vessel, of which the captain's father was the owner, was worth from £3,000 to £4,000, and, with the cargo, the value was £15,000. One of the wounds witness sustained pierced through thirteen folds of outer covering.

In answer to Mr. Clarkson, the witness Cumming said: I have no doubt there was a mutiny. I used my weapon with all my force, and if I could I would have killed all the mutineers with one blow. Fairfield, though stouter than I, did not do his work like an able seaman. I heard the captain say, in Fairfield's presence, that he had been informed by two Lascars that one of the Europeans had offered to take the ship to California, or any port where the Lascars wished. All the crew said "It was not me," except Fairfield, who seemed confused, and held down his head. The captain ordered him into irons, but gave directions that he should have his full allowance of provisions. On one occasion Fairfield struck the captain, who, witness believed, returned the blow.

This, for the present, concluding the case against the prisoners.

Mr. Yardley said there was sufficient evidence to sustain the charge of mutiny, and the question which now remained was whether, after it had been quelled, any unnecessary violence had been resorted to.

Mr. Bodkin said, before entering into further responsibility, he should like a little more time before proceeding with so serious a charge; and, with the consent of all parties, further inquiry was postponed until Friday next, the same amount of bail being accepted for all the prisoners.

Ahart and Ali, the Malays, were then charged with cutting and wounding one of the European sailors, named Robert Mills, who stated that he was on the watch from twelve to four on the morning of the 22d of July. A Malay, named Sadi, knocked him down twice with an iron bar as he sat near the winch. He was knocked down three times. The prisoner Ali then struck at him with a knife, as did also Ahart. Three of them were on him with knives. He ran, and Ahart, who followed, pushed him down near the rail. Witness seized a stick, which was wrested from him by Ahart, and in the struggle witness fell from fright, being subject to fits. While he was down Ali stabbed him three times in the foot. He had the marks yet. He got to the cabin and procured two cutlasses, one of which was taken from him by a European as he ascended. He fell in one of his fits as he got on deck. Both the prisoners had sheath knives at the time.

Both charges, after some consultation, were remanded until Friday next.