

The Hull Packet  
Friday, October 7, 1853

MUTINY AND MURDER ON THE HIGH SEAS.—  
The crime of murder on the high seas has been alleged against the master and four seamen of the barque Queen of the Teign at the Thames police office. The master's name was Stooks, and two of the other defendants, named Ahan and Ali, were Malays, the remaining two being Englishmen. They were charged with having caused the death of five Lascar seamen belonging to the same vessel on the 22nd of last July, shortly after crossing the line, on the voyage from Singapore to England. Some previous investigation of the charge had taken place at Gibraltar, whence the magistrate had forwarded a coffin-like box to the British police court. On this box being opened by Mr. Yardley, divers fearful weapons were produced, including crowbars, long iron bars, cutlasses (some broken near the hilt, some in the middle, and some whole), with three or four Malay daggers, called kreiss, 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, the Gibraltar magistrate. The evidence now given before the court was most conflicting. One witness, a seaman, declared that all seemed going on right, and the Lascar seamen, who numbered fourteen in all in the vessel, were behaving well until the night in question, when he was roused by a "row" on deck, and, going up, found that some of the Lascars had been cut down and wounded with cutlasses, shot with pistols, or thrown overboard. There were five, he said, killed in all, and all the defendants were noticed to be more or less participating in these acts of violence. Mr. Triatt, chief mate of the barque, gave a different narrative of the affair. He was a watch on the deck at the time when the Lascars made a rush aft, pursued and wounded the man at the wheel, and, breaking out into open mutiny, attacked him with kreisses, and other weapons, wounding him severely, insomuch that his life was saved only by the timely arrival of the captain, who had been disturbed by the uproar. Much resistance was made, however, by the mutinous Lascars, which resulted in the death of five of their number before they could be thoroughly overpowered. Their object, evidently, was to seize the ship, though none of them were competent to navigate her, and she was eight hundred miles from land at the time. Mr. Yardley adjourned the case, trusting that the affair would be investigated by the professional authorities of the crown. Bail was accepted for the defendants. The case was further invested on Tuesday, when Mr. Bodkin, by desire of Lord Palmerston, appeared on behalf of the crown. The names of the prisoners are William Stooks, master, William North Cote and Robert Goldsworthy seamen, charged with the murder of five Malay seamen. Ahan and Ali, the two Malay prisoners, were charged with mutiny. They were all further remanded till Friday (this day.)