

RESCUE OF THE CREW OF THE SIR C. NAPIER,  
OF SUNDEBLAND.

Her Majesty's government, through the Board of Trade, have presented a sextant to Captain Barton, and a telescope to Mr. Thompson, the second mate of the ship *Melanie*, of Coringa, for the gallantry they exhibited in rescuing the crew from off the island of Pulo Brasso, where they had been seized and detained by the pirates and natives; 300 rupees have also been awarded to Captain Barton by the Board of Trade, for maintaining the shipwrecked crew. The *Sir Charles Napier*, Balsillie, left Rangoon, May 17, for Falmouth, and the ship suddenly showed indications of having sprung a leak, the vessel having made a steady leak at the rate of two inches per hour from the time she left Rangoon until the day before the accident, when it greatly increased. Captain Balsillie, finding the crew unable to keep the water from increasing, and the ship afloat, gave orders for the boats to be prepared, and such portable articles as could be removed to be stowed therein; and at 7.30 A.M. on the 2nd of June the three boats were lowered, there being at this time eight feet of water in the hold. The captain, his wife, Alexander Greig (first mate), Charles Morgan, and James Johnson, seamen, proceeded in the longboat; in the gig were Robert Balsillie, (second mate), Martin Gardiner, Alexander Mackintosh, John Chemist, and William Dixon; and in the jollyboat Alexander Paul, Thomas Wilson, John Brown, William Miller, and Thomas Smith. The boats were ordered by the captain to proceed towards the nearest land, supposed to be the island of Pulo Brasso. On the same day they made the land, which proved to be the island; a strong breeze springing up, separated the boats. The jollyboat first got into Pulo Brasso, the gig second, and the longboat made the other side of the island. The two former boats were in company all the first night, steering for Acheen; at the same time they were chased by two armed prahus, under oars. Owing to the darkness of the night they escaped. Daylight next morning the two prahus were seen at anchor off the mouth of the river, and which gave chase after the gig, and fired ball at it to surrender, which compelled the boat to heave to. The two prahus came up alongside the boat, and robbed the occupants of all they had. The jollyboat escaped into Acheen. The gig was seized by both prahus, the crew of each consisting of 30 in number. The pirates then took the shipwrecked mariners on shore, gave them some rice and curry, and sent them under a guide a distance of three miles, to the King of Acheen, where they remained two days. The crew of the longboat, however, did not fare so well; for on landing at Pulo Brasso, the captain, his wife, and crew, were, from the treachery and barbarity of the natives, kept in constant fear of being stabbed. All their clothes, the ship's chronometer, were taken from them, and they were not allowed any food, or to sail away, and for two days were in the boat constantly on watch, fearing the natives were coming to put an end to their existence. At this time it was reported to Captain W. Barton, of the ship *Melanie*, of Coringa, and to Captain Petibon, of the French ship *Jean Victor*, that the crew of an English ship were in the hands of the natives, and they forthwith volunteered to bear down for the island. The *Melanie* arrived off Pulo Brasso, having on board the *Malay*, who had given the information, and whom they forced to go with them. On landing on the south-east coast of the island, the *Malay* told them the white men were on the other side. Captain Barton and his second mate, Mr. Thompson, took their course through the woods over the island, when they met some of the natives, being the same who had plundered the boats. Captain Barton spoke to some of them, he being acquainted with their language, when one of them went behind him, and drawing his knife was about to stab the captain, but he perceived the fellow's intention, and drawing his own sword, he told him that although they were many he was not afraid of them all. He demanded that his fellow-creatures should be delivered up to him, and if his request was complied with he would make them a handsome present; but if not, he and his second mate were determined to sell their lives dearly. Mr. Thompson having promised Captain Barton to share his fate, be it what it might, Captain Barton, sword in hand, caught hold of the head man by the arm, and forced him to show where the longboat was lying at anchor inside the surf. It is impossible to describe the feelings of Captain Balsillie, his wife, and fellow-sufferers, when they perceived Captain Barton and his mate. Captain Barton compelled the natives to give up the ship's chronometer, and many of the articles plundered, but, as night was coming on, it was not thought prudent to remain on shore, and sail was made for the *Melanie*, which was reached at 8 o'clock that evening. Captain Balsillie, in company with Captain Barton, went to the Acheen River to learn the fate of the other boats, when they met the mate of the French ship *Jean Victor*, who informed them the remainder of the crew had been taken from the shore to that ship by Captain Petibon. It appears that he had heard of the detention of the men of the *Sir Charles Napier*, and of the conduct of the natives towards them; and being on intimate terms with the King of Acheen, he went up to Acheen and requested his assistance in procuring the liberation of the Englishmen. The King sent a messenger to where the boat had been plundered, and Captain Petibon having promised the natives a present if they delivered up their prisoners free from any further molestation, a boat was seen soon afterwards to leave the shore, and ultimately the men were taken charge of by, and placed on board the *Melanie*, which proceeded with them to Madras. These facts having been represented to the Foreign Office, they were communicated to the Marine Department of the Board of Trade, and the testimonials mentioned were awarded. The Foreign Department are about to present Captain Petibon with some suitable acknowledgment for his services.