

AN ADVENTURE WITH PIRATES.

THE following narrative, written by a passenger on board the *Henry Darling*, gives an account of events which occurred only about fifty miles from Hong-Kong:—

"We left Double Island, Swatow, on the 25th of October with a light fair wind, and got fairly out to sea by the afternoon. Towards evening it fell calm, and we drifted with a current. We had noticed a large Macao lorcha evidently dodging us, passing and repassing, as she could easily come up to us at any time, as the light winds and calm continued; evening came, and this lorcha came closer. The pilot then said, 'That piecey boat pirate, he makey fighty another piecey last night.' We had, however, taken timely warning, the Captain (J. Haniball) having ordered all the arms on board to be ready in case of need. I had a good revolver with me ready loaded. Eight p.m. the boat came so close that by the dim light of the young moon we could see a stir among them. The two six-pounders were loaded with round shot on the main deck, and also two three-pounders on the quarter-deck, the muskets brought up from below, and bayonets fixed, as well as the few cutlasses we had. He began to steal aft of us, and we could distinctly hear them talking on board the lorcha; we were now quite assured of their intentions, and we had made up our minds to fight or die—we knew it would be one or the other. Orders from the captain were given to fire the six-pounder on the starboard side, as the pilot had been telling him so too, or soon they would be under the stem, and there being no steege way on the ship the large guns would be useless. At 8.30 bang went the first, and he was not slow in replying; now we were all assured of his intentions; the small guns of the quarterdeck were then fired, and it soon became hot work. His muskets began hot upon us, and I took up the muskets as soon as possible, along with the captain and chief officer. We saw them getting their stink-pots ready from the foremost top. They soon, with the help of oars, came under our stern, and the stink-pots flew by the dozen, and the balls as thick as hail; we then beat a retreat from the quarterdeck, still firing. The men from the lorcha now had jumped on board, and, rushing at us madly, we made for the fore part of the ship. The Chinese had long previous to this gone off to hide themselves, but the Malays stood till we could stand no longer. The deck of the ship was now one mass of fire. The captain going up the forestay was shot dead, and fell down at my feet; the chief officer took to the fore-rigging, and in his ascent was shot in three places; I had no alternative but to go over the bows, and, as one came forward to me, I shot him with my revolver dead; soon others filled his place, and I got over the bows to go on the martingale. A Chinaman bayoneted me between the shoulders into the lungs, just glancing off the backbone; another shot me in the arm, and I fell into the sea. There were many Malays hanging on to a rope over the bows, and they kept firing their three re-

volvers at us in turn. Now nothing but sink or swim, life or death. A faint breeze began to ripple the water now, and the vessel began to move, perhaps, about two miles an hour, as all the sails were left hanging. There were now too many for one rope to hold on to, and some must leave and swim at their own risk. A sudden splash, with a yell from the Chinese on deck, I looked around; another, and then another splash; the carpenter had gone, to rise no more. I had now begun to feel faint, and, as the ship was increasing her speed, I came round to the starboard side, but, with all my good swimming, the vessel was leaving me. By this time I got abreast the poop, and I heard a voice call out, 'Jack, here is a rope's end for you' (he spoke good English); 'come up, we will not kill you; come up.' 'Oh, no; I had better die here.' I got round the stern, and, a rope hanging over me, seized hold, as I could not have done much more; but my friend's voice again said, 'Here is a rope, make it fast round you, and we will haul you up; I can assure you nothing shall happen.' I made the end fast, and four men hauled me up, took off my clothes, and brought me a pair of flannel trousers (dry) from among my own things, as all my clothes were turned out on the cabin floor. As soon as I could walk he led me down into the saloon, and one of them said, 'Oh, I know you; no fear.' Another, not quite so pleased at my reception, struck me a heavy blow across the side of my face with the flat of his sword; but the other, patting me on the back, said, 'Don't take offence.' Now I was interrogated about the ship, where from, cargo, money, &c., and led on deck at the peril of my life if I did not reveal all, and where the captain was, and others belonging to the vessel, as they had made up their minds to burn her. I went back to the cabin; there was my boy, ready for his head to be cut off; and, after entreating with this little friend, the vessel was to be spared and the boy, but they would take everything of use away. True to their word, they did not leave us scarcely sufficient clothes to put on. All the cabins were sacked—rice, biscuit, fowls, beef, ducks, ropes—ay, even our very bedding was carried off, and they left the vessel, and us to starve, about twelve midnight. I went down to the hold and found some of the men, got them up, and in half-an-hour, to my surprise and delight, down came the chief officer. They had been taking the ship to seaward, and left no chronometer, barometer, no compass, no lamps. Now a gale. I, weak and faint from four wounds; he ditto. We struggled all night, next day, all night again—morning came, land; but where are we? At last we came across a fishing boat, which we got with some difficulty to pilot us for 100 dollars into Hong-Kong, where we arrived, after living on scarcely anything, on Saturday night, the 28th of October, from the most perilous voyage I ever made, and hope never to make another such."—*China Overland Mail*.