

DESTRUCTION OF A NEST OF PIRATES

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A British ship of war has just been engaged in battering and burning to the earth a fortified town in the East Indies, and her commander, Captain Robinson, has supplied official details of the affair. Though not of itself greatly important, it arose out of a very serious outrage, and its effect will probably be felt throughout the Malayan waters, unless, indeed, as the Straits journals seem unaccountably to fear, the proceedings of Commander Robinson, if not disavowed, are canvassed in a manner to cripple the discretion of our naval officers in those seas for years to come. Some months ago a buccaneering gang, from the Salangore territory, in the Malay Peninsula, on the Malaccan side, boarded a commercial junk, and in cold blood murdered thirty-four men, women, and children. Many of the assassins were made answerable for the deed, but six were known to be in refuge behind the strongholds of the Salangore river, long notorious as a piratical nest, though nominally within the frontiers of an independent prince friendly to the British flag. It was felt by the entire mercantile community of the settlements, from Hong Kong to Singapore and Penang, that while these miscreants enjoyed an asylum, and while the value of the cargo they had pillaged was not recovered, no valuable freight in a Chinese or any other unarmed vessel, and the lives of no persons in charge of it, would be safe, not to speak of the small traders and even fishers, whose craft, with their crews, continually disappear, and are never heard of more. Colonel Anson, Governor of the Straits Settlements, deemed it his duty early in July last to deal a little more emphatically than usual with the Salangore horde, and accordingly summoned to his aid Commander Robinson, of the *Rinaldo*, seven guns, who retained for his service the *Pluto*, colonial steamer, and an expedition was undertaken. Its incidents may be rapidly summed up: the river was reached and searched by boats; the principal man of the place, styling himself a Rajah, dissimulated, promised help, and led the party into an ambush, whence it was fired at from huts and bushes. Severe wounds were inflicted, one upon the officer in charge, and one, supposed to be mortal, upon the leading seaman. There was no chance of immediate retaliation; the men were crowded in their boats—an open mark; the enemy lay concealed in the jungle; the *Pluto*, like the *Rinaldo*—thanks to the providence which sits up aloft at the Admiralty—was without a surgeon; it was necessary to be patient, and to get reinforced for a struggle in the marshy woodland which fringes the channels everywhere throughout that region of piracy. What vengeance could be taken, however, was not long delayed. The *Rinaldo* followed in the path of *Pluto*, crossed the bar of the Salangore river, though destitute of a chart, and necessarily locked up by the tide for at least twelve hours, cannonaded the batteries, turned and silenced them, knocked the defences of the town into mounds of rubbish, destroyed the town itself, but left the guns undestroyed; was kept from landing her men by a perfectly justifiable apprehension of fresh ambushes, and, in fact did all that was possible to be done, at a cost of three men wounded. Subsequently, a landing was effected among the shore forts, which were gutted; their artillery spiked or broken up, five of their armed prahus burnt, and a quantity of warlike munitions captured. But no indemnity could be exacted, and the six pirates in pursuit of whom the expedition had been organised remained at large.—*Standard*.