

## DESTRUCTION OF SALANGORE

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THE DESTRUCTION OF SANGALORE.—Last week we published a report addressed by the commander of her Majesty's steamer *Rinaldo* to the British administrator of the Straits Settlements, describing an act of condign punishment inflicted upon a nest of Malay pirates. Unfortunately the degree of satisfaction with which some of us might be disposed to read of a stern lesson in civilisation impressed upon the oriental mind by the gallantry of the British navy, must give way to a great revulsion of feeling if we are to trust another and later account of the affair which has been put forth on high authority. Sir P. BENSON MAXWELL, late chief justice of the Straits Settlements, and who was previously recorder of Penang, undertakes to assure the public that there is no longer any pretext for treating piracy as a prevailing system in the Malay peninsula; and he submits the *Rinaldo* exploit to a lawyer-like examination, which our sense of justice forbids us to ignore.

Sir BENSON MAXWELL'S statement, which he has addressed to a London paper, professes to give "the first chapter" of the history of which the commander's report is the second. The facts as now presented are gathered by collating together the despatch of Captain ROBINSON, of the *Rinaldo*, and the recent Straits papers. The whole transaction is traced to the murder of 34 men, women, and children on board a Chinese junk which left Penang on the 14th June. This massacre was the work of a number of Malays, who were among the passengers. They took possession of the vessel and a valuable cargo, and navigated her to Sangalore, a fortified place on the Malay coast, by the assistance of three of the crew whose lives they spared. The owner of the vessel, who is probably a British subject—whether by birth or by naturalisation—brought his complaint before Colonel ANSON, the Acting-Governor of the Straits Settlements. Colonel ANSON despatched the colonial steamer *Pluto* to Sangalore, with a body of Straits police, and a letter to the Malay Sultan. The Sultan was absent, but, according to Sir BENSON MAXWELL'S information, the police were received in the best possible spirit by the Sultan's son, Rajah MUSA. He exerted himself to procure the restitution of the vessel and its cargo, and the apprehension of the criminals. A party of his own men assisted the colonial police in searching the houses, and the result was the capture of six of the murderers, and the recovery of a portion of the property.

A difficulty, however, arose in dealing with a seventh man, who was arrested on suspicion. One of the junk's crew had recognised him, and the RAJAH'S men at first gave him up to the police, but he was subsequently liberated in consequence of the intervention of another Malay authority, Rajah MAHMOOD, to whom he appealed. It seems the Straits police were not inclined to part with him, even on the promise of Rajah MAHMOOD that he should be forthcoming at a future time for an investigation of his case. A dispute arose which ended in the retirement of the police with their six prisoners, but minus the seventh, whom they relinquished when "overawed by the superior force and drawn crises of the Malays." At the last moment, indeed, the Malays, in their irritation at the efforts of the police to carry off a prisoner against the will of Rajah MAHMUD, refused to allow a portion of the property which had been identified to be taken on board the *Pluto*. Another portion, however, was safely embarked, and on the following morning the Sultan's son visited the *Pluto*

to offer an apology for the detention of the coveted prisoner. Either Rajah MUSA'S supremacy was not sufficient to reverse the action of Rajah MAHMUD, or else he was not disposed to carry his complaisance quite so far as to put it in force, and it does not appear that the apology was followed by any more substantial measure of satisfaction. If the opinion of the ex-Chief Justice of the Straits Settlements be worth anything, and certainly it ought to be, no satisfaction was required. The attempt of the colonial police to arrest the man on Malay territory was an act no more to be justified than would be the conduct of a French police agent who should seek to arrest a Communist fugitive in the streets of London. Sir BENSON MAXWELL thinks there was great excuse for the anger of the Malays.

The Acting Governor was of a very different mind, and it was on hearing the results of his embassy as above described that he issued the order to Captain ROBINSON of the *Rinaldo* to "arrest the pirates who were still at large." It may be remembered that Captain ROBINSON'S report of his expedition set out with a reference to the instruction he had received from Colonel ANSON to proceed to Sangalore for the purpose of seizing six pirates who had not been arrested; and, further, "to take such measures as might seem best for the punishment of those Malays who resisted the colonial officers and men in their attempt to secure the pirate." Our readers have already been informed in part of how the mission ended. If the Malays resisted the arrest against their will of one suspected pirate, it was not to be supposed that they would quietly give up MAHMUD and two other rajahs to be carried away by the English boats' crews, who landed in quest of them. The rajahs refused to go on board the *Rinaldo*, and while the matter was being disputed, it is alleged that some of the Malays opened fire from the jungle. Some of the English were wounded, and one was killed. The upshot of the matter was that on the next day the *Rinaldo* undertook an achievement of which there seemed so much reason to be proud, so long as we were able to look at it as an act of bravery, free from any question as to the proceedings which brought it about. The ship steamed over a bar—two miles in width—up the Sangalore river, where it might have to remain under fire for twelve hours before the water would be high enough to steam out again. The Malay forts "fired first," without waiting to be asked, but the *Rinaldo* silenced them all, and remained in the river all day, partially burning the town. So much we learned from Captain ROBINSON'S report, published last week, but a subsequent despatch, quoted by Sir B. MAXWELL, completes the story. The *Rinaldo* returned accompanied by the *Pluto*; the forts offered no resistance, and a day was spent in "utterly destroying" the place. "The town of Sangalore," says Captain ROBINSON, "is completely burnt down; its forts are demolished, and the guns spiked and broken up." Into the sequel of all this we need not enter, though the Straits Colonial Secretary, Mr. BIRCH, is alleged to have interfered in an extraordinary degree in the internal affairs of the Malays. Mr. BIRCH made his way to the Sultan, whom he found "highly delighted" to hear of the punishment inflicted on Sangalore. The ex-Chief Justice, on the contrary, does not hesitate to say that, unless there be some facts hitherto unpublished which alter the character of the transaction, it deserves to meet with nothing but condemnation on our own part. Acts of invasion and war were committed which could only be justified in dealing with a piratical State. But, as a matter of fact, we have extradition treaties with the Malay chiefs, which are usually observed by them "with respect, and even alacrity." In the present case there seems no reason to doubt that if Rajah MUSA'S apparent good faith had been temperately responded to, the extradition of the criminals might have been completed as peaceably as it was begun.