

AFFAIR WITH PIRATES.

Incident in Malaya Fifty Years Ago.

Sir Archibald Anson, K.C.M.G. has just completed a volume entitled *About Others and Myself*, in which he relates his experiences in the Crimea, Mauritius, Madagascar, Penang, Singapore and elsewhere. The author, who is now in his 93rd year, was Lieutenant-Governor of Penang in 1865, subsequently becoming Administrator, Straits Settlements. The following is an extract from the volume, which is published by John Murray, Albemarle Street, London, W. :—

On June 24, 1871, I received a report from the Acting Lieut.-Governor of Penang, that a junk, owned by Chinese merchants, had sailed for a place in the neighbouring State of Perak, about a day and a half's sail from Penang; and, although more than eight days had elapsed, nothing had been heard of it. There were on board, including the crew and passengers, 49 persons. Information had reached the owners that some of the passengers who had been taken on board, just as the vessel was about to sail, were pirates, who had murdered the crew and their fellow passengers (numbering 34 men, women and children), and carried off the vessel. The junk was valued at \$1,500; and the cargo, including \$3,000 in specie, at \$7,000. I directed the Colonial Government steamer *Pluto*, with a force of armed police on board, to proceed up the west coast of the Malay Peninsula, and, if necessary, the east coast of Sumatra, in search of the junk or tidings of it. The missing junk was found at Selangor, in the native State of that name; and the greater part of the cargo in the shops of that native town. The money, of course, was gone. The junk was seized, and nine of the pirates secured; but being threatened by the local rajah and his followers, and being fired on, the *Pluto* took the junk, with the prisoners in tow to Penang.

Naval Vessels Despatched.

On receipt of the above information by telegram from the Acting Lieutenant-Governor of Penang, I requested Captain Robinson of H.M.S. *Rinaldo* to proceed with his ship to Selangor, and endeavour to secure the remainder of the pirates, and, if possible, obtain possession of the stolen property. I also telegraphed, directing the *Pluto* to meet the *Rinaldo* at the Torch light-vessel, on the North Sands, 200 miles from Singapore, 160 miles from Penang, and about 50 miles south-west of the Selangor river. The *Rinaldo* and *Pluto*, having met, proceeded to, and anchored on July 3, near the bar of the Selangor river. Here Captain Robinson

manned and armed his boats and sent a party, with a field piece, ashore. The officers of the naval force that went in the *Rinaldo* under command of Captain Robinson, were Lieut. Stopford, Acting Lieut. Maude, Sub-Lieut. Williams, and Acting Sub-Lieut. Ward. The party on landing was fired on by the enemy, and Lieut. Maude (son of Colonel Maude, late R.H.A. Crown Equerry, and secretary to the Master of the Horse, Royal mews) was wounded by being cut on the wrist by a kris. One leading seaman was mortally wounded, being shot through the lungs; the armourer was shot through both legs, and four other seamen were wounded. The following day the *Rinaldo* was fortunate in getting over the bar, and entering the river, and when about 400 yards from the forts a hot and well directed fire was opened on the man-of-war, and in less than six minutes three men were wounded, and the vessel had suffered severely in hull and rigging.

The *Rinaldo* soon returned the fire, and silenced the fort. The *Pluto* had gone to Penang with the wounded sailors, and Captain Robinson having intimated to me that he required the assistance of troops, I telegraphed to the Acting Lieutenant Governor to send troops by the *Pluto* from Penang, and at the same time chartered a small light-draught steamer, and despatched by it, from Singapore, the master attendant, an officer, 25 sepoys, and a medical officer, of the 9th Madras Infantry, with three 12-pounder howitzers, to the assistance of Captain Robinson. The troops sent from Penang consisted of 1 lieutenant, 3 non-commissioned officers, 1 trumpeter, 17 gunners Royal Artillery; two native officers, 10 non-commissioned officers, 1 bugler, 100 privates 19th Madras Native Infantry; and 1 staff assistant surgeon; under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Shortland of the Madras regiment.

Forts Demolished.

On the arrival and anchoring of the *Pluto*, the enemy commenced to fire from the fort, as was supposed, to obtain the range of their guns. The following morning, under cover of the fire of the guns of *Rinaldo*, the troops and a detachment of sailors, under the same naval officers, landed and demolished the forts, and burnt the town. Five piratical prahus, of from 80 to 100 tons each, were also burnt. Three of these had a 24-pounder and one gun in each. All had spears, muskets, and pistols on board. The following guns and ammunitions were taken in the forts: fifteen 32-pounder iron guns on carriages, nine of various calibres on carriages, one 24-pounder and one other without carriages, one burst iron gun, one brass gun without carriage, and two swivel guns; 200 barrels, of 20 lbs each, of gunpowder, of French manufacture.

According to the reports of the boatswain and the ship's carpenter, the *Rinaldo* had 25 injuries to her rigging, 6 injuries to her starboard side, and 5 to her port

side; her main mast was splintered, her rig smashed beyond repair, a shot through her second cutter, her dinghy and first cutter badly shaken, and one other injury on deck.

On July 14, H.M.S. *Teaser*, Captain Blomfield, returned to Singapore, and I sent by him a letter to the Sultan of Selangor requesting him to appoint some person, in whom the Colonial Government could have confidence, to govern the district where the pirates had been living. I also requested Captain Blomfield to ascertain what had taken place since the *Rinaldo* had left, and to call upon the Sultan to have the remainder of the pirates arrested and given up to the Colonial Government.