

How Britannia Came to Rule the Waves

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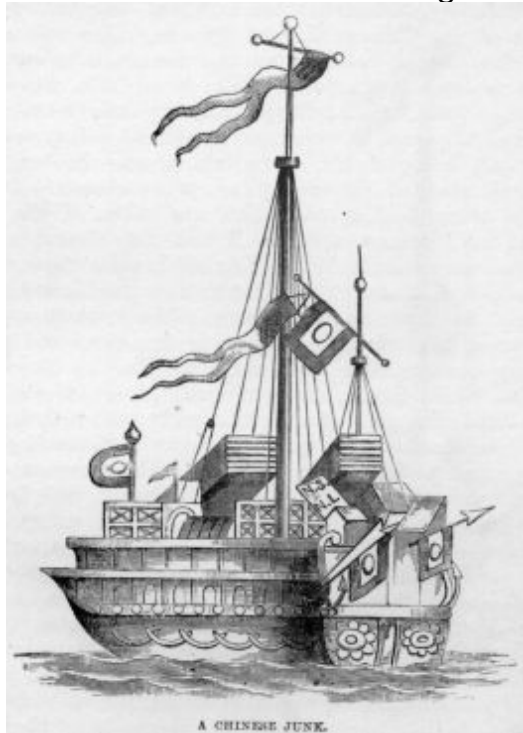
Chapter XVIII.

First War with China, and efforts to suppress the Slave-Trade—A.D. 1840.

The Chinese had long designated the English, as well as all other Europeans, the "outer barbarians," and treated them in the most insulting manner. At length the Chinese government, finding that silver alone was given in exchange for opium, was afraid that the country would be drained of that precious metal, and resolved to put a stop to the importation of the drug. Commissioner Lin was sent to Canton for that purpose, and, to prove that he was in earnest, he ordered the first Chinese opium smuggler he could catch to be strangled, shut up the British merchants in their factories, and then demanded the delivery of all the opium ships in the river. At the same time the British flag was fired on, British ships were detained, and a Chinaman having been accidentally killed by a British seaman, the life of a British subject was demanded in return. Captain Elliott, R.N., acting at that time as chief superintendent of trade, immediately sent home an account of the state of affairs, summing up altogether a long list of complaints against the Chinese. On receipt of the news a squadron was sent out of 3 seventy-fours, 2 forty-fours, 3 38-gun frigates, and several sloops of war and brigs, which, on their arrival, were joined by 4 of the East India Company's armed steamers, and to meet them on their arrival about 4000 troops were despatched from India. Before this the *Volage* and *Hyacinth*, while lying in Canton River, had a sharp engagement with a fleet of war-junks, under the Chinese Admiral Kwang. Gallantly as Kwang behaved, in a short time one of his junks blew up, three sank, several were shattered and deserted by their crews, and the remainder fled in the greatest confusion, Kwang's junk being in a sinking condition. Captain Smith, not wishing to cause any unnecessary bloodshed, retired with his ships to Macao, where he embarked a number of British residents. Kwang, in consequence, boasted that he had gained a great victory, and was covered with honours, his countrymen being encouraged to persevere in the contest. The Chinese also issued a proclamation offering 20,000 Spanish dollars to any one who would capture an English 80-gun ship, and 5000 dollars to the man who took alive a foreign mandarin or captain, and so on in proportion to the rank of the captives; while a third of the sum was to be paid for killing them. The Chinese, determined to resist, prepared fire-ships, exercised their troops, and got up sham fights, dressing some of their men in red clothes, who were always soundly beaten, to teach the Celestials to conquer the barbarian English. They had likewise purchased the *Cambridge*, an old East Indiaman, of 900 tons, and armed her with thirty-four guns, and had built some curious craft with paddle-wheels, in imitation of English steamers. It was said even that they had funnels, with fires below them to create a smoke, in order to deceive the barbarians. They also threw up forts along the banks of their rivers, sometimes facing them with thin boards or canvas, painted to look like stone, in order to frighten their invaders.

A considerable squadron, under the command of Rear-Admiral Elliott, in the *Melville*, 74, now arrived. When at Singapore, Captain Maitland had drilled 350 of her seamen to act as light-infantry troops, and had brought them into an admirable state of

efficiency. While one part of the fleet blockaded the mouth of the Canton River, the remainder proceeded to the northward to look into different harbours. On her way the *Blonde* came off Amoa, near which she observed batteries thrown up, and in a short time a number of large armed junks came down as if to attack her. On a boat



being sent on shore with a flag of truce, she was fired on by the Chinese. On this the *Blonde* opened her broadsides, soon knocked the forts to pieces, and compelled the war-junks to run up the harbour.

The *Wellesley*, with a part of the squadron, then appeared off Chusan. Commodore Bremer was in hopes that his overwhelming force would induce the Chinese to yield, but their fleet was commanded by a tough old admiral, who, ignorant of the power of the English, had no intention of doing so without a fight. During the night the Chinese were seen by the light of thousands of painted lanterns throwing up embankments, and placing fresh guns in position, while numberless merchant-junks, loaded with goods, women, and children, were observed making their way down the river to escape. After giving the Chinese several opportunities of negotiating for peace, the *Wellesley* opened her fire.

It was answered by the whole of the Chinese line of defence. The rest of the fleet than began bombarding the place, and in seven or eight minutes it was reduced to ruins. On the smoke clearing away, the principal battery was seen to be knocked to pieces, as were four war-junks, a few wounded men only being visible, among whom was the brave old admiral, who had lost his leg from a round-shot. On the troops being landed, possession was taken of the abandoned fortifications, and the British flag floated on the first military position in the Chinese Empire captured by her majesty's forces. An inner fortress was, however, discovered, from which the Chinese soldiers which crowded it, opened their fire, beating their tom-toms and gongs, waving banners, and beckoning the English to attack. A few shells having been thrown into it, the Chinese evacuated the place during the night, and with many of the inhabitants fled into the country. Several persons were found to have been killed, and the governor of the town drowned himself in despair. Chusan was held for some months, at the cost of the lives of many of the soldiers, who suffered from the poisonous exhalations from the paddy-fields, having nothing to do to employ their minds; while the seamen of the *Melville*, which had been hove down for repairs, kept their health during the six weeks they were employed on her. The squadron got as far north as the great wall of China. On the passage the *Pylades* corvette, Captain Anson, fell in with three junks. As his boats ranged up alongside of them, upwards of 100 men, who had been concealed, started up and commenced firing and hurling spears and stink-pots on the crews. On this the British shoved off to a short distance, and pouring in some well-directed volleys, killed half the pirates, the remainder jumping overboard and making for the shore—though many were drowned. The other two junks escaped.

One of the favourite exploits of the Chinese was to kidnap the English. A Madras officer of artillery, Captain Anstruther, had been carried off while taking a survey near Chusan. The crew of a merchant-vessel, the *Kite*, wrecked on the coast, and Mrs. Noble, the captain's wife, were also captured. Near Macao a Mr. Staunton had been been carried away, on which Captain Smith, then the senior officer on the station, sent to demand his release. It being refused, and the Chinese being

observed strengthening the barrier which runs across the isthmus, joining Macao to the mainland, he considered it probable that the enemy would attack the city. Taking, therefore, the *Larne* and *Hyacinth*, with the *Enterprise* steamer and *Louisa* cutter, he ran up close to the barrier and opened so warm a cannonade on the Chinese works and barracks, that the enemy's fire was silenced in about an hour. Some blue-jacket small-arm men and soldiers being then disembarked, they drove the Chinese from every one of their positions, spiked the guns, and burnt the barracks and other buildings. This was the last hostile proceeding of the British in the year 1840. The Chinese, wishing to gain time, induced Admiral Elliott to agree to a truce, shortly after which he resigned command from ill-health, and returned to England, leaving Sir Gordon Bremer as commander-in-chief. At the commencement of 1841 the squadron was further increased by the arrival of the *Nemesis* steamer, commanded by Mr. W.H. Hall, then a master in the navy, and the *Sulphur*, Commander Belcher. The *Nemesis*, though not commissioned under the articles of war, most of her officers were in the Royal Navy; but she belonged to the East India Company. She was built by Mr. Laird at Birkenhead, and although of about 630 tons burden, with engines of 120 horse-power, with all her armament complete, she drew only 6 feet of water. Her extreme length was 184 feet, her breadth 29 feet, and her depth 11 feet. She had no fixed keel, and was almost perfectly flat-bottomed. She had, however, two sliding or movable keels, made of wood, each about 7 feet in length, one being placed before and the other abaft the engine-room, and, being enclosed in narrow cases reaching to the deck, they could be raised or lowered at will by means of a winch. With the exception of the great paddle-beams across the ship, the planks of the deck, and the cabin fittings, with a few other portions, she was built entirely of iron. As, from her form, she could not have been steered by an ordinary rudder, a movable rudder was attached to the lower part of the true or fixed rudder, descending to the same depth as the two false keels, and, like them, could be raised or lowered at pleasure. Another striking peculiarity of her construction was that she was divided into seven water-tight compartments by means of iron bulkheads, so that, in fact, she resembled a number of iron tanks cased over, a contrivance which saved her from the almost certain destruction which would otherwise have been her lot. By some cleverly-contrived lee-boards her leeway, under sail, was reduced fully one-half. It was found, however, that the want of a fixed keel was a great detriment to her seaworthy qualities.

After a voyage, during which she encountered many dangers, she arrived safely in China, the first iron steamer which had ever performed so long a voyage. From her shallow draft of water she was enabled to play a conspicuous part in most of the operations in the Chinese seas.

Finding that the Chinese, though carrying on negotiations, were making strenuous preparations for war, Sir Gordon Bremer resolved to attack Canton. The entrance of the Canton River is called the Boca Tigris, on either side of which were lines of defences known as the Bogue Forts, supposed to be of great strength. These it was necessary to silence. The marines and other troops were sent on shore to assault the fort of Chuenpee, on the land side, while the ships battered it from the sea. The fort having been attacked by the troops, many of the Chinese were shot, and a large number, not aware that quarter would be granted, threw themselves from the battlements. Fort Tykocktow, on the opposite side of the river, was at the same time attacked by the *Samarang*, with three other vessels, and a breach being effected, the boats of the squadron, with a body of seamen, were sent on shore, who soon mastered the place. On the Chuenpee side was Anson's Bay, at the entrance of a small river, here protected by an island at its mouth. A Chinese fleet of about 15 war-junks lay moored in shoal water, under the command of Admiral Kwang. The

Nemesis, with the boats of several other ships, was joined by Captain Belcher, of the *Sulphur*, with two of his ship's boats, and by Lieutenant Kellett, of the *Starling*, while the *Nemesis* soon got close enough to bring her 32-pounder pivot-guns to bear; and at the same time one of the *Larne's* boats, under Lieutenant Harrison, made her way outside the island to cut off the junks in the rear. The first Congreve rocket fired from the *Nemesis* having entered a large junk near that of the admiral, she almost immediately blew up, pouring forth a blaze like the rush of fire from a volcano, and destroying all on board. This so terrified the Chinese that, after a few discharges of round-shot had been fired into other junks, the crews of many jumped overboard, while others cut their cables in the hopes of escaping on shore. Some were immediately captured, others escaped up the river, pursued by the *Nemesis*, which succeeded in bringing one down and burning another which had grounded.

The next day Admiral Kwang sent off a boat with a flag of truce, in which were an old man and woman, bearing proposals for the cessation of hostilities. They came to request Captain Elliott to meet Commissioner Keshen, who finally agreed that the island of Hong-Kong should be ceded to the British, on condition that the Bogue Forts should be given up, and that, on the English captives being set at liberty, Chusan should be evacuated. To these terms Captain Elliott, the superintendent of trade, agreed, and Hong-Kong was taken possession of on the 26th of January. These terms having been rejected by the emperor, the fleet proceeded, on the 26th of February, to the attack of the remainder of the Bogue Forts. Their defenders were either put to flight or yielded themselves prisoners, and in a short time the British colours were flying on the whole chain of those celebrated works. The next day, the 27th, the light squadron, consisting of the *Calliope* and *Herald*, and the *Alligator*, *Sulphur*, *Modeste*, *Madagascar*, and *Nemesis* steamers, under Captain Herbert, were sent up to destroy any fortifications they might meet with. On reaching Whampoa Roads, a large armed fort, mounting 47 guns, was seen on the left bank, and extending across the river was a line of rafts secured to sunken junks, on the other side of which were forty large junks and the *Cambridge*, carrying the admiral's flag. The steamer pushing on, opened a heavy fire on the Chinese fleet, as well as on the batteries. For about an hour the Chinese held out, and when their fire was nearly silenced, the marines and small-arm men being landed, stormed the works, driving before them upwards of 2000 Chinese troops, and killing nearly 300. The *Cambridge* and some of the junks still held out, when Lieutenant Watson, first of the *Calliope*, having gallantly succeeded in dragging one of the boats across the raft, launched her on the other side. As soon as she was in the water, Mr. Brown, master of the *Calliope*, Mr. Hall and Mr. Galbraith, of the *Nemesis*, and Mr. Saint Leger, got into her with nine or ten men, and pulled away for the *Cambridge*. So confused were the Chinese that, as the boarding party climbed up on the port side, they jumped overboard on the other, and many were drowned in attempting to swim on shore. A number of dead and wounded were found on her decks. As she was an old ship, she was doomed to destruction, and the wounded being removed, she was set on fire, and soon afterwards blew up with a terrific explosion, the sound of which must have reached Canton. Numerous other forts were destroyed in succession, as were also a considerable number of junks. The steamers had many difficulties to encounter, as thick stockades had been placed across the channel, through which they had to force their way. At length the squadron came to an anchor off Whampoa, when the *Nemesis* was despatched with a letter to the Chinese authorities. Captain Bethune having undertaken to deliver it, pushed off in a boat with a white flag, when a shower of grape and shot was discharged on her from a fort. In consequence of this the ships pushed on to Canton, and opened a hot fire on the batteries which protect the city. After the bombardment had continued about an hour, the marines were landed, immediately stormed, and completed the capture of the enemy's works,

notwithstanding a determined resistance on the part of the Tartars. Captain Bouchier, in command of the blue-jackets on shore, prevented any outbreak of the population, and he observing a number of burning junks drifting down on the suburbs, to which they would inevitably have set fire, by the most energetic exertions of his officers and men towed them away from the spot. The *Herald* getting up later in the day, by her imposing appearance contributed to bring the Chinese to reason, and in a short time the British colours were hoisted on the flagstaff of the factory by Commander Belcher. Thus one of the most important cities of China fell into the hands of the British, with a loss of only seven men wounded.

A truce was now agreed to, and trade was again opened, but the Chinese very soon began to rebuild their fortifications, and to fit out junks and fire-rafts. The main body of the fleet having retired, a small squadron remained in the neighbourhood of Canton. The night of the 21st of May was unusually dark; a sharp look-out was therefore kept, the officers lying down in their cloaks on the decks of the ships, ready for service. The *Modeste* being a little in advance, one of her sentries observed several dark-looking masses dropping down with the stream. On his hailing, they were immediately set on fire by the Chinese, and the flames bursting forth, pointed out the danger to the other vessels. In nine minutes the *Nemesis* had her steam up, and was running towards the fire-rafts to assist the boats in towing them away. These rafts were formed of boats chained together, so that, drifting down with the stream, they might hang across the bows of the ships, from which they would with much difficulty have been cleared. The Chinese batteries at the same time opened on the squadron, which of course fired in return, while the small-arm men picked off the people on the fire-rafts. In the morning the Shameen battery was taken, and 43 war-junks and 32 fire-rafts were destroyed. During these operations a Congreve rocket, which had been placed in a tube and ignited, hung within it instead of flying out. In another moment it would have burst, scattering destruction around, when Mr. Hall thrust his arm into the tube and forced it out from behind. The rush of fire, however, severely burnt his hand, and caused him much suffering. Several other attempts to destroy the squadron by fire-ships were defeated by the vigilance of the officers and crews. On one occasion, the *Wellesley*, anchored at the Bogue, was attacked by 20 fire-vessels, filled with gunpowder and a variety of combustibles, and chained in twos and threes. Captain Maitland was absent with most of her boats and a large number of her crew and officers, and it was not without great exertion that Commander Fletcher, who had only three boats left on board, was able to tow them clear of the ship.

As it was evident that the Chinese still intended to hold out, the fleet proceeded to attack Canton. The troops and the blue-jackets, who had been landed quickly, stormed the outer defences, while the smaller vessels of the squadron bombarded the batteries on the river-front of the city. The Chinese again made use of fire-vessels, but as they drove down rapidly towards the fleet, the boats pushing off, towed them clear and carried them on shore, when they set fire to the suburbs. Several naval officers lost their lives, and others were wounded. Lieutenant Fox and Mr. Kendall, mate, both of the *Nimrod*, each lost a leg; and Mr. Fitzgeorge, mate of the *Modeste*, was killed. Lieutenant Fox died the same evening.

In the course of three days the whole of the fortifications of Canton were in the power of the British, and though the city contained an immense army, flags of truce were waved from the walls, and the Tartar generals came alongside humbly suing for peace, and offering six millions of dollars for the ransom of the city. This sum was accepted, and sent on board the ships of war, when 18,000 Tartars marched out of Canton. Many officers and men suffered from the fatigues they underwent,

and Sir Humphrey Le Fleming Senhouse died in consequence of the exertions to which he had been exposed.

The fleet now proceeding northward, on the 26th of August captured Amoy, a place of considerable importance, about 300 miles north of Hong-Kong. The Chinese fought with more courage and stubbornness than usual, but were driven out of their fortifications by the ships, when the troops, the blue-jackets as usual playing their part, stormed and carried the place. Chusan, which had been given up to the Chinese, was next recaptured, after which Chinghai, a strong place situated at the mouth of the Takia River, was attacked. It was surrounded by a wall 2 miles in circumference, 37 feet thick, and 22 feet high, mounted by 69 heavy guns and numberless jingalls. A lofty and precipitous hill, with a citadel on the summit, commanded the town; stockades had been driven into the water in front of all the batteries and landing-places, and an army of 10,000 men lay encamped, with numerous guns, a short distance from the bank of the river. The ships approached till they touched the ground, when they opened their fire, and a breach was soon effected in the citadel. On this it was stormed by the blue-jackets and marines, when the garrison effected their escape into the city, the walls of which were then scaled in two places, and Chinghai was captured. Ningpo, higher up the river, was taken with even less difficulty. A desperate attempt was afterwards made to recapture the latter place, but the Chinese were repulsed with dreadful slaughter; while another attempt to burn the ships of war by fire-vessels was also defeated. Not less than 50 or 60 fire-rafts were seen coming down together, burning furiously, but the boats of the ships were ready, and grappling them bravely, towed them clear of the fleet.

Still, as the Chinese showed no readiness to come to terms, another town, which lies on the opposite side of the bay in which Chinghai is situated, called Chapoo, was attacked. Sir William Parker landed with a battalion of seamen and marines under Captain Bouchier, while the troops, headed by Sir Hugh Gough, drove the enemy before them. A large body of Tartars had thrown themselves into a building of considerable strength, and in attempting to enter it, Colonel Tomlinson, of the 18th, and a number of his men were killed. Mr. Hall, Lieutenant Fitzjames, and other naval officers made several gallant attempts to force their way in. At length the gate was blown open by a powder-bag; many of the defenders were destroyed, and fifty captured. The loss of the British was considerable. The Chinese wounded received great attention from the British medical officers; a conduct appreciated by the governor of Chapoo, who thanked the admiral and general, and when some English fell into the hands of the Chinese, they in return were treated with every kindness.

Before the expedition left Chapoo, all the Chinese prisoners were set at liberty, each man receiving three dollars; when the Chinese, not to be out-done in liberality, restored all the persons they had kidnapped, giving thirty dollars to each white man and fifteen to each native of India.

As the numerous places which had hitherto been taken were at a distance from the capital, the emperor still hoped that he might set the British at defiance. It was determined, therefore, to attack Nankin itself, the second city in the empire, situated about 200 miles up the great river Yang'tse Kiang, or Yellow River. The difficulties of the navigation had hitherto been considered an insuperable obstacle; although the river is of great size, the current runs with prodigious force, and there are numerous shoals and rocks in its course. The river, however, was surveyed by Commanders Kellett and Collinson, and as they reported that water for the largest ships was found right up to Nankin, the admiral undertook to carry the whole of the fleet up to

the walls of that city. Woosung and Shanghai, situated on the banks of a river which falls into the sea at the entrance of the Yang'tse Kiang, were first captured, and on the 6th of July, 1842, a fleet of nearly 80 sail, including among them the *Cornwallis*, of 72 guns, Sir William Parker's flag-ship, in five divisions, sailed up the mighty stream on their voyage of 200 miles into the very heart of China. Before reaching Nankin they came off the large city of Chin Keang Foo, near which passes the great canal of China. It was captured on the 20th by the troops, aided by a body of seamen and marines under Captain Peter Richards, who scaled the walls on one side while the soldiers got over on another. The Tartars fought with the most determined bravery, holding every house and street, resolved to sell their lives dearly. Frequently, on being defeated, they put an end to themselves, and often destroyed their wives and children. Lieutenant Fitzjames distinguished himself in the attack, having brought up some rockets which, fired among the enemy, threw them into confusion. The gate of the city was just then blown open by powder-bags, when Sir Hugh Gough, who was with the third brigade, accompanied by Sir William Parker, dashed over the ruins. They were met, after fighting their way for some distance, by a sudden fire from a body of Tartars, when Lieutenant Fitzjames and several men were wounded. The British, however, uttering a loud cheer, attacked the Tartars with such fury that they were soon put to flight, when numbers fell by their own hands. The British were speedily in entire possession of the city. Every means was taken to spare life, to prevent plunder, and to restore order. During these operations several vessels of the fleet were employed in blockading the mouths of the great canal, in capturing all the trading junks which came in sight, and in preventing provisions being carried to the city. Still, it was necessary in order to bring the emperor to reason, for the fleet to appear before the walls of Nankin. Having been detained by contrary winds, it was not till the 4th of August that the ships could get up, carrying 4500 troops, besides marines and blue-jackets. The *Cornwallis* and *Blonde* then took up their positions within one thousand paces of the Ifung Gate of Nankin, and every arrangement was made for the troops to attack the city. Before the British proceeded to extremities, the emperor having been informed the true state of affairs, authorised his commissioner to treat for peace, and on the 29th of August the treaty for which the British had been so long contending was signed on board the *Cornwallis*. Among other clauses, China agreed to pay twenty-one millions of dollars; Canton, Amoy, Foo-Chow, Ningpo, and Shanghai, were thrown open to British commerce, Hong-Kong was ceded in perpetuity to Her Britannic Majesty; all British subjects imprisoned in China were to be released, and correspondence was in future to be conducted on terms of perfect equality between the officers of both governments. Thus the war in which the navy of England had played so conspicuous a part was terminated. Its greatest achievement, however, was the passage of the fleet 200 miles up the river, and its return without the loss of a single vessel. This, however, could not have been effected without steamers, which, besides towing the sailing ships, performed important parts in all the operations of the war. Among those who especially distinguished themselves by their activity were Commander Belcher, afterwards Sir Edward Belcher, Mr. Hall, of the *Nemesis*, who was deservedly made a lieutenant and commander, and is now Admiral Sir W.H. Hall, Commanders Kellett, Collinson, and Fitzjames, well known as Arctic explorers, Lieutenant McCleverty, and the bravest among the brave, Captain Loch, who fell in Burmah.

Destruction of Pirates in the Indian and China Seas.

For many years the pirates of the Eastern Archipelago and China seas had committed depredations on the commerce of the more peaceably-disposed people of that part of the world, and had frequently attacked merchant-vessels belonging to

the English, as well as those of other nations, generally treating the prisoners they captured with the greatest barbarity. So audacious had they become that in 1836 the Governor-General of India determined to put an end to their proceedings, and Captain Chads, of the *Andromache* frigate, was sent into those seas to destroy as many piratical fleets and strongholds as he could fall in with. The pirate proas are vessels of considerable size, upwards of 60 feet in length and 12 in beam; though, as they draw scarcely four feet of water, they can run up into shallow rivers and escape. Each proa carried about 80 men, with a 12-pounder in the bows, 3 or 4 smaller pivot-guns, besides jingalls, stink-pots, spears, and the murderous kris which each man wore at his side. The crew in action were protected by a bulwark four or five feet high, thick enough to withstand musket-balls and grape-shot. They sailed in fleets of twenty or thirty vessels together, and were thus more than a match for any British merchantman, even though well-armed, they were likely to fall in with. The boats of the frigate, however, pursued them into their strongholds, and piracy in the neighbourhood of the Malay peninsula was for a time put a stop to. It existed, however, to a far greater degree in other parts of the Eastern seas, and it was not till 1843, that Rajah Brooke had established himself at Sarawak, on the western side of Borneo, that far more strenuous efforts than heretofore were employed against those pests of commerce. Several of the ships of war which had been engaged in the operations against China, on the conclusion of peace, were despatched to the assistance of Rajah Brooke in his noble and philanthropic object. Among the officers employed in the service were the Honourable Captain Keppel, of the *Dido* frigate, Sir Edward Belcher, of the *Samarang*, Captain Nicholas Vansittart, of the *Magician*, Captain Edward Vansittart, of the *Bittern*, Commander Fellowes, of the *Rattler*, Captain Mundy, of the *Iris*, besides many others. The *Nemesis* and *Phlegethon*, which had been so actively engaged in China, were sent with other steamers belonging to the East India Company. Sir Thomas Cochrane, commander-in-chief on the Indian station, also visited Borneo in his flag-ship the *Agincourt*, to superintend the operations which were now energetically pursued for the destruction of the pirates. There is no space to give more than an example of the sort of service in which the smaller vessels and the boats of the squadron were chiefly engaged against the common enemy.

The chief of a piratical band, Sherif Osman, had entrenched himself in a strong position on the banks of the River Songibusar, which falls into the bay of Malludu, near Labuan, in Borneo; and as it was of the greatest importance to destroy him, an expedition, under the command of Captain Talbot, was sent up the river for that purpose. It consisted of the *Vixen*, *Nemesis*, and *Pluto* steamers, and the boats of the *Agincourt*, *Daedalus*, *Vestal*, *Cruiser*, and *Wolverine*, several of them carrying guns in their bows, and another furnished with rockets. Altogether, the force consisted of 350 blue-jackets and above 200 marines. After working his way up the river, Captain Talbot came in sight of the enemy posted in two forts, mounting about twelve guns, and protected by a strong and well-contrived boom. Before the fight commenced, Sherif Osman sent a flag of truce begging to confer with Rajah Brooke, and hearing that he was not present, he invited Captain Talbot to meet him, offering to admit two gigs to be hauled over the boom. This being declined, the enemy opened their fire. Before the boats could advance, it was necessary to cut away the boom. While thus employed, axe in hand, a gallant young officer, Gibbard, of the *Wolverine*, fell mortally wounded. All the time the boats were under a heavy fire, to which they replied with their guns. The boom was fastened to the chain-cable of a vessel of three or four hundred tons. It was at length cut through, when the marines and small-arm men landing, carried the place after a desperate resistance, with a loss of 6 killed, 2 mortally wounded, and 15 severely wounded. The loss of the enemy was proportionably great. Sherif Osman was wounded dangerously, and

though he managed to get off, it was supposed that he soon afterwards died in the jungle. In the forts were discovered numerous evidences of the piratical character of the defenders; several chain-cables, two ships' bells, a ship's long-boat, and ships' furniture of various descriptions. Some piratical Illanun and Balagnini boats were burnt, and twenty-four brass guns and several iron ones captured. Thus this piratical nest was completely destroyed.

In the year 1846, several chiefs friendly to the English and opposed to piracy having been cruelly murdered by the Sultan of Brunei Sir Thomas Cochrane determined to destroy his city. There being sufficient water over the bar of the river, the *Agincourt*, towed by the *Spiteful* steamer, entered it and anchored within Moarra Island. The smaller vessels being lightened, proceeded up the river, carrying a force of 200 marines and 600 blue-jackets armed as light-infantry, accompanied by the boats of the squadron towed by the steamers. On turning an angle of the river four batteries were seen, two of which were directly ahead, while the stream was staked across. As the squadron was making its way through the piles, the enemy's fire opened at a distance of 1000 yards. The round and grape passed between the masts of the *Phlegethon* and beyond the *Spiteful*, without striking. The guns having been pointed at the stakes, the *Phlegethon* immediately returned the compliment with rockets and her pivot-guns. After an hour's cannonade, Captain Mundy shoved off in the gunboats, Lieutenant Patey being ordered to pull for the shore and to storm the batteries which were erected on a precipice nearly a hundred feet in height from the bank of the river. So heavy, however, had been the fire from the steamer and gunboats that the resolution of the enemy failed them, and the gallant crews forced their way through the embrasures. In capturing the enemy's flag a skirmish took place between their rear-guard and the leading party of the British, while the former were endeavouring to escape into the jungle. Three handsome brass guns were carried off, the iron guns were spiked, and the magazines destroyed. The steamer then taking the *Royalist* and gunboats in tow, passed two other batteries and anchored half-a-mile below the city, when all hands went to dinner. At half-past one the expedition was again in motion, working up against an ebb tide of three knots. As the *Phlegethon* opened round the point, the city battery and hill forts mounting 18 guns, commenced firing, and two men were killed and several wounded on board the *Phlegethon*. She, however, opened a hot fire, and Captain Mundy shoving off in the gunboats, attacked the batteries at close quarters; but before he could reach them, the enemy fled. Nine shot had entered the *Phlegethon's* side below the water-line; and had she not been divided into compartments, she would inevitably have sunk. The marines were now landed and occupied the heights above the sultan's palace, the batteries on which had been silenced by the rocket and field-piece party under Lieutenant Paynter. The pirates had in the meantime manned the batteries already passed, on which Captain Mundy was sent down with the gunboats to destroy them. This he partially did in five hours, but so great was their strength that it would have taken days to do so effectually. Thirty-nine guns, mostly of large calibre, nineteen of them being of brass, fell into the hands of the British. The sultan and his boasted army had taken to flight. He was accordingly pursued by a party under Captain Mundy, to whom Lieutenant Vansittart acted as aide-de-camp. Having gone as far as they could in the boats, they landed, and in their progress destroyed several newly—erected forts. The natives now observing that no injury was done to private property, joined them and offered their services as guides. On their way they fell in with two houses belonging to the sultan, containing shields, arms, and magazines of powder. They were accordingly set on fire and destroyed, but the sultan himself escaped for the time, though his power was completely broken.

The towns of Pandassan and Tampassuck, notorious haunts of Illaun pirates, were

destroyed by Captains McQuhae and Mundy, and numerous piratical proas captured, sunk, or burnt. The fierce and desperate character of the pirates was shown on all occasions. The *Ringdove*, Commander Sir William Hoste, having taken a proa, she was brought under the counter of the brig. From the way in which the crew behaved, it was doubted whether she was really a pirate, but as a protection a guard of three marines and several seamen was placed over them. Suddenly, during the night, they rose without the slightest warning and flew simultaneously with their crises upon the seamen and marines, and before the latter could defend themselves, one marine was killed and the remainder of the guard severely wounded. As the unfortunate marine fell into the hold of the proa, the pirate chief seized his musket and fired it at the officer standing at the gangway. Another desperado, lunging his spear through the after-port of the brig, mortally wounded the master. The pirates then cut the hawser, and seizing their paddles, made off for the shore. The boats were immediately manned and sent in chase, when in ten minutes the proa was boarded, upon which the pirates retreated below, and with their long spears through the bamboo-deck made a desperate defence, but finally, refusing quarter, were slain to a man, and the proa was sunk by the guns of the pinnace.

The piratical fleets cruising off the coast of China committed even greater depredations on commerce, as well as on the population of the sea-board, than even those in the Indian seas. Captain Edward Vansittart, in command of the *Bittern*, was sent against them with two steamers fitted out by the Chinese merchants. The latter were manned chiefly from an American frigate, the *Macedonian*, then cruising off the coast. After a search of some days he discovered a flotilla of nearly forty junks, which bore down on him with tom-toms beating, evidently intending to fight. In order to draw them off the shore, he stood away, but as they would not follow the *Bittern* out of shoal water, she again steered towards them, yawing to bring her guns to bear, while they kept up a steady fire on her. She, however, sank or disabled eight of them, but the rest for a time escaped. Commander Vansittart was, however, able to set free a number of merchant-vessels up different rivers in the neighbourhood, which had been afraid to put to sea on account of the pirates, who had demanded 1200 dollars for the ransom of each vessel. The following day he captured twelve more, each carrying 10 guns with a crew of 50 men. Proceeding northwards, he reached the mouth of the Yang'tse Kiang, where he heard that a strong squadron of pirates had been blockading the island of Potoo, in which place a party of English ladies had taken refuge. On pursuing them, towed by the *Poushan* to Sheepoo, he discovered twenty-two junks lashed head and stern together across the entrance to the harbour. As the *Bittern* approached, the pirates commenced a vigorous cannonade, to which she, however, returned so hot a fire that in little more than an hour she had knocked the greater number to pieces, one junk alone being in a condition to carry off. No prisoners were made, but the pirates as they escaped to the shore were put to death by the inhabitants. Commander Creswell, in the *Surprise*, and Captain N. Vansittart, in the *Magician*, were equally successful in other directions. The latter had under his command the *Inflexible*, Commander Brooker, with the *Plover* and *Algerine* gunboats. As he proceeded, reports reached him of the atrocities committed by the pirates, and the natives were everywhere ready to give him accurate intelligence of their hiding-places. As they saw the British squadron, they took refuge when they could on uninhabited islands; when they escaped to the mainland the people of the country put them to death without mercy. As he was engaged in burning some captured junks, a sound of firing from the shore reached him. Immediately landing with a party of his men, he pushed in the direction from which the firing proceeded. He did not allow a gun to be discharged till he was within pistol-shot, so that the enemy were not aware of his approach. The whole of his party then opened their fire, and the pirates taken by surprise, scampered off

without an attempt at resistance. The British having clambered over a formidable stockade, found themselves in a battery of 14 heavy guns, which must have contained a garrison strong enough to offer a successful resistance had the pirates fought with any courage.

Six large junks were soon afterwards met with, the whole of which were captured, and the crews of every one killed or made prisoners, besides which upwards of twenty prisoners taken by the pirates were released. Soon afterwards, while pursuing a pirate up a creek, his own light gig being far ahead of the heavier boats, he came up with the chase, which with his small party he gallantly boarded, several of her crew being killed, among which was Chappoo, a pirate chief long the terror of those seas. Altogether, in a week's cruise he had destroyed a 14-gun battery and 100 piratical craft, and had taken upwards of 200 guns and 36 pirates, besides having killed nearly 400 more. He had, in addition, retaken six vessels and liberated sixty prisoners captured by the pirates.

One more example alone can be given of the expeditions against the pirates of those seas. On the 30th of January, 1849, news was brought to Sir James Brooke that a large fleet of pirates had attacked the neighbouring village of Palo, and had threatened with destruction the inhabitants of the Sarabas River. A force, consisting of H.M. brigs *Albatross* and *Royalist*, with the *Nemesis* and *Renée*, under the orders of Commander Farquhar, immediately got under way, accompanied by a native flotilla, under Rajah Brooke, and proceeded to meet them. The *Nemesis* steamed out to sea to prevent their escape in that direction, and as soon as she was descried by the pirates they made at once for the Kaluka River, where they were intercepted by the native boats and those commanded by Lieutenants Welmshurst and Everest. The pirates then made a dash to reach their river, when they came in contact with the men-of-war's boats. It being now dark, there was considerable danger that the latter would fire into each other, or into the craft of their native allies. The password was "Rajah," and the Malays screamed this out at the top of their voices when they thought any of the Europeans were near them. Commander Farquhar seeing two large proas escaping seaward, ordered the steam-tender to chase. The nearest one, having barely escaped one of her 6-pounder rockets, made for the river, but in her course was encountered by the *Nemesis*, which dealing death and destruction to all around her, ran her down, and a fearful scene took place as her crew, above sixty in number, came in contact with the paddle-wheels. A large Congreve rocket from the smaller steamer entered a proa which had stood out to sea, and completely destroyed her. The battle continued till past midnight, when Commander Farquhar, taking the boats in tow, commenced the ascent of the Sarabas, to prevent the escape of the pirates by the Rembas branch. At daylight the whole bay presented one mass of wreck, shields, spears and portions of destroyed proas, extending as far as the eye could reach, as well as on the sandy spit which extends a considerable distance seawards. On the left bank of the Sarabas were upwards of seventy proas, which the natives were busy clearing of all valuables and destroying. Of 120 proas which are said to have started on a piratical expedition, more than 80 were destroyed, with 1200 men. No more convincing proof of the inhuman disposition of the pirates need be cited than the fact that the bodies of women, supposed to have been captives taken by the pirates, were found on the beach decapitated and gashed from the shoulder to the feet. On sailing up the river the force destroyed a piratical town, some villages and war-proas, and then passing the Rejang River, chastised another tribe of pirates. Some prisoners were secured, among whom was a child, apparently of European origin. In other districts hostages were taken for the future peaceable demeanour of the inhabitants. By this severe example it was hoped that the piratical habits of the people would be effectually checked, and an

opportunity given to the nascent civilisation of those regions to develop itself.