

## CHAPTER XII.

### Piracy and the Straits Settlements.

No feature in the history of British Malaya has so impressed the popular mind as piracy. Mention a Malay to the average person and he at once conjures up a picture of a treacherous, blood-thirsty ruffian armed with a long wavy "kris." His favourite occupation was piracy, varied occasionally by running amok; and Europeans sailed the Eastern seas at the peril of their lives.

This conception is very far wide of the mark. It is true that one hundred years ago piracy was rampant throughout the Archipelago, and hundreds of ships were sunk. The vessels which suffered however were almost always the praus or native trading-boats; European ships were rarely molested.

The explanation of this is simple. The pirate was first and foremost a man of business: he wanted plunder and slaves, and preferred to win them with as little risk as possible. His vessel was generally a small low galley, while his guns were usually clumsy and of no great size. European merchantmen were many times his tonnage; much higher out of the water, and heavily armed. Moreover they always put up a desperate resistance. The pirates knew that an attack on a merchantman meant a very heavy death-roll with no certainty of capture at the end of it. Such a prize was worth many native praus; but the pirates wanted plunder, and not hard knocks. A European ship was rarely attacked unless she were wrecked, or becalmed, or surprised in harbour. If the wind failed her off a pirate coast a fleet would gather as if by magic and then, unless a favourable breeze sprang up, her fate was usually sealed. The pirates would overpower her by weight of numbers, and would usually carry her by boarding after a long battle, when they were sure from the silence of her guns that she had no powder left. Many ships were also captured in native ports when the crew were off their guard, by pirates who had come aboard disguised as merchants. Apart from these cases however European vessels were rarely attacked unless they were so small as to promise an easy capture. Malay praus and the smaller Chinese junks were the ships usually attacked. In many cases their size was not greater than that of a large pirate galley, they were not well armed, and their crews rarely resisted so well as Europeans.<sup>(1)</sup>

(1) J. I. A., III, 256-60. S. St. John. J. I. A., III, 581-88; 629-36; IV, 45-53; 144-162; 400-10; 617-28; 734-46. Anon. B. Pub., Range 13, Vol. 14: Sept. 23, 1835, No. 9. B. Pub., Range 12, Vol. 58; Feb. 1, 1831, No. 12. B. Pub., Range 123, Vol. 59: March 5, 1824, No. 49.

From this it must not be concluded that the pirates were cowards: there are far too many instances of the desperate courage with which they fought when escape was impossible. Moreover they frequently attacked small European warships, and on several occasions captured Spanish and Dutch gunboats; while more than one British and Dutch war-schooner barely made good her escape.<sup>(2)</sup> Out of many cases two typical instances may be quoted. In 1807 the small British sloop of war "Victor," 18 guns and 114 men, met three large Lanun pirates off the Java coast at sunset and ordered them to come alongside her. They obeyed, and a small guard of sailors was placed on two of them while their crews and cargo were being transferred to the war-ship. The Lanuns had been disarmed and about 120 brought on board when it was noticed that the third prau was beginning to draw away. A stern-gun on the "Victor" was fired at her, and sparks from the discharge ignited a large heap of loose powder from one of the captured praus which had been thrown on the deck nearby. The whole stern of the warship was blown up, and the ship caught fire. The sailors guarding the Lanuns on the "Victor" dropped their muskets and sprang for the hoses. The pirates promptly seized the muskets and their own weapons, which were lying on the deck, and fell upon the crew. At the same time the Lanuns still on the two captured galleys overpowered the prize-crews and then began to climb on board the warship. Seeing what was going on the third galley rowed back and opened fire. For the next thirty minutes the British had a very busy time of it, putting out the fire, working the guns, and trying to clear their decks of the pirates. There was a desperate hand-to-hand fight, cutlass and clubbed musket against spear and kris. At last the pirates were driven overboard, leaving 80 dead or "in a most mangled state" on the decks. The "Victor" lost nearly 30 killed or mortally wounded. One of the praus was sunk, the other two escaped. The "Victor" had so many casualties and was so severely damaged that she seems to have lost all interest in Lanuns, and instead came limping into port for repairs.<sup>(3)</sup> The second instance was the defeat of a squadron of eleven Balanini galleys by the H. C.<sup>(4)</sup> steamer "Nemesis" in 1847. The Balanini galleys were long, low open boats, something like the Viking ships, and carried 350 men in all. They were returning home after a successful voyage around Borneo when their ill-fortune brought them across the track of the "Nemesis," 103 men and four heavy guns. It was the first time the Balanini had seen a steamship, and they tried to escape. The steamer overhauled them, and the pirates took up their position in a bay close to shore. The action began at one in the afternoon, and for five hours the "Nemesis" steamed slowly up and down their line, pouring in broadsides of

(2) J. I. A., III, 256-59 S. St. John.

(3) United Service Journal, Part. III, Sept. 1835, pp. 38-39.

(4) H. C. i. e. "Honourable Company's," the letters always prefixed to the names of ships in the East India Company's navy.

grape and canister at only two hundred yards range. Captain Mundy, who heard the story from the officers of the "Nemesis" wrote that the pirates fought with splendid courage. Eventually, six of their galleys beat off a boat attack supported by the steamer's fire and about 9 p.m. escaped in the gathering dusk. Five were taken, and the six which got away had been so battered that three foundered before they reached home. (5)

Malay piracy—to use a well-known but somewhat misleading term—was in 1825 a wide-spread and very honourable calling. It was the profession not merely of outlaws, but of merchants, noblemen, and even Sultans. Its origin is lost in antiquity, but there is evidence that before the arrival of the Portuguese in the East it was a recognised thing for needy rajas to replenish their treasury by piratical raids. (6) The geography of the East Indian Islands is so peculiarly suitable for piracy that the surprising thing would have been if it had not existed. The whole of the vast Archipelago is a maze of islands divided by straits and gulfs, some of them of great size, and others so narrow as to be barely navigable. The coasts are lined with dense mangrove swamps, through which innumerable creeks and rivers afford easy passage into the interior. A more suitable field of operations cannot be conceived. The Malays were a race of skilled seamen and while their boats were rather crude, the numberless islands offered secure refuge in case of storms. The mangrove swamps and rivers, and the countless intricate passages between the islands served alike as hiding-places while waiting for their prey and safe refuges in case of defeat. The seas of the Archipelago abound in shoals and reefs close inshore, and while the pirate galleys always light in draught and knowing every foot of the way, negotiated them and disappeared in the creeks and swamps, their heavy European pursuers either ran aground or found the water so shallow that they had to give up the chase. Once the pirate had reached the shelter of the swamps he was safe, for the warship's boats soon lost all trace of him in the maze of waterways. Little help was to be had from the inhabitants of the country, since most of them were pirates when occasion served. (7) An interesting comparison can be drawn between the Malays and the Greeks of the Homeric period. In each case the same geographical features—an archipelago abounding in good harbours and safe lurking places—produced the same result.

The advent of Europeans probably gave a great impetus to piracy. The subject has never been properly investigated, but it is known that the Portuguese, and above all the Dutch, totally disorganized the very flourishing native commerce which had existed

(5) Mundy, "Brooke," II, 359-67. For other evidence of the pirates' courage v. J. I. A., III, 252. St. John.

(6) v. "Sejarah Malaya," passim.

(7) Keppel, "Macander," I, 281. Temminck, "Possessions Néerlandaises," II, 225. Crawford, "Descriptive Dictionary," 353 and v. infra.

for centuries. In order to gain a monopoly, the Dutch forbade many of the islands to carry on any trade while others were allowed to bring their merchandise only to certain ports. By this means Malays must have been ruined. The Rajas too lost a large part of their revenues, for then as later the chiefs were merchants as well as rulers. It was natural that a race of seamen should try to make good their losses by a means so congenial to their adventurous dispositions.<sup>(8)</sup> By the nineteenth century there were few Rajas who did not covertly support the pirates, and give them arms and shelter in return for a share of their plunder, "so that a pirate prau is too commonly more welcome in their harbours than a fair trader." Many went further, and openly sent piratical fleets to sea.<sup>(9)</sup> Another contributing factor was the universal decay of the Malay governments, which by 1825 was going on with alarming rapidity. Even if the Sultan wished to check piracy, he was often too feeble to do so. The petty chief of a few river-villages set up as an independent ruler and his suzerain was too weak to control him. To keep up his train of ragged followers required money, and since a Malay was too proud and indolent to work hard, revenue was obtained by the easy means of piracy.<sup>(10)</sup>

So deeply engrained was piracy in the native character that any sea-coast Malay would engage in it if the opportunity seemed favourable. The ordinary Malay trader was merchant and pirate by turns, as opportunity served.<sup>(11)</sup> In this as in so many other respects the semi-feudal conditions prevailing in Malaya in the nineteenth century strongly resembled those of Europe in the Middle Ages. There is a very interesting parallel between the native merchants of the Archipelago and the English, French and Flemish traders of the Channel ports six hundred years ago. No stigma attached to the career of piracy: it was an honourable profession, hallowed by antiquity<sup>(12)</sup> and patronized by the bluest blood of the East Indian Islands. The native attitude towards it was perfectly expressed by the views of Datu Laut, an important Lanun chieftain of North West Borneo about 1850. "In his own view he was no criminal; his ancestors from generation to generation had followed the same profession. In fact, the Lanuns consider cruising as the most honourable of professions, the only one which a gentleman and a chief could pursue, and would be deeply offended if told that they were but robbers on a larger scale. . . . . Notwithstanding his profession, Laut was

(8) v. Chapter I, J. I. A., II. N. S., 328-35. Lady Raffles, "Memoir of Raffles." Appendix 10.

(9) Keppell, "Maeander," I. 282-83. Ibid., 48, Hill. MS. S 811. Crawford, "Descriptive Dictionary" 254.

(10) Low "Penang" 216. W. E. Maxwell, "Piracy in Straits of Malacca" in "Ocean Highways," Jan. 1873, p. 312-14.

(11) W. E. Maxwell, "Ocean Highways," Jan. 1873, pp. 312-14. Lady Raffles, "Memoir" 48. Templer, Brooke's Letters," I. 277. and v. infra.

(12) B. Pub., Range, 13. Vol. 14. Sept. 23, 1835, No. 9.

a gentleman." (13) Precisely the sentiments which one would have expected from a Norman baron of the reign of Stephen.

By 1825 piracy had become so firmly established that it could truly be described as "a great and blighting curse," "a very formidable and frightful system," "an evil so extensive and formidable that it can be put down by the strong hand alone." (14) From Penang to New Guinea, and from Java to the Philippines, fleets of galleys scoured the seas in search of plunder and slaves. As with the Mediterranean pirates whom Pompey crushed, captives were as valuable a prize as merchandise. In Sulu, Brunei, Sumatra and other places were great depots where the pirates sold their loot and bought supplies. (15)

By far the most formidable were the Lanuns of Mindanao, in the Philippines, the dreaded "Pirates of the Lagoon." The Balanini, who lived in a cluster of islands in the Sulu Sea, were almost equally dangerous. They appear to have been less numerous and warlike, and for this reason their ravages were not so extensive. With this qualification the following description is equally true of both races. The Lanuns lived on a large lagoon-like bay on the island of Mindanao, surrounded by impenetrable mangrove-swamps, pierced by numerous runways over which their galleys could be drawn to escape pursuers. The lagoon was defended by many heavy batteries, and there were also a large number of slips for the construction of galleys. Raffles estimated the number of their warriors at 10,000. The Lanuns also had settlements in North West Borneo, at Tantoli in Celebes, in Sulu and at Indragiri in Sumatra, at the Southern end of the Straits of Malacca.

Their boats were long and narrow, propelled by oars and sails, and very swift. Attached to each fleet were often a number of light, fast spy-boats, to scour the seas and bring back news of approaching prizes. The galleys varied from 40 to 100 tons burden and carried from 40 to 60 men. The crew was protected by a breastwork of thick planks, and at times by a deck of split rattans. Their largest galleys were often over 100 feet long, and carried 150 men. Admiral Hunter, who accompanied the Lanuns on a cruise in 1847 disguised as a Malay, wrote that the flagship, on which he sailed was 95 feet long, with 90 oars, double-banked. She had 56 fighting men, and was armed with twelve *lelas* (a light gun of native manufacture, more noisy than effective), and a Spanish eighteen-pounder. (16) Each galley was armed in somewhat similar fashion, and also carried muskets, swords, spears, and shields. The oars were rowed by captives, who were treated with great cruelty. They were fed principally on rotten rice and bad water, and when worn out were

(13) Hunter, "Adventures of a Naval Officer." 83.

(14) J. I. A., III, 252, 257, 260. S. St. John.

(15) *Ibid.*, 258. Forrest, "Voyage to New Guinea," 303. Keppel "Maeander," I, 284. v. infra.

(16) Hunter, "Adventures of a Naval Officer." 60.

thrown over-board. They were forced to row for hours at a time, and when they became exhausted the Lanuns kept them awake by rubbing cayenne pepper into their eyes.

The Lanuns had several hundred galleys, and sent out fleets every year under the command of an Admiral. Each ship had a captain and three officers, and the loot was divided according to a recognised scale. As a rule the fleets sailed first to Tampassuk, their principal settlement in North-West-Borneo. There they divided into squadrons, which between them covered the whole of the Eastern seas. Some circumnavigated Borneo and visited Celebes and New Guinea; others ravaged the coasts of Bengal and Java: yet others sailed to the East Coast of the Malay Peninsula and the Gulf of Siam; while every year, in August, September and October, the "pirates' wind" brought Lanun squadrons to the Straits of Malacca. There they lay in wait for the praus sailing to Singapore, and did immense damage. The Rhio-Lingga Archipelago was ravaged with mathematical regularity, and until about 1835 Lanun squadrons sailing through the Straits of Malacca visited Penang and Kedah. Their ships were even met as far to the North as Rangoon. These cruises often lasted several years, and the pirates carried them out according to a definite schedule, visiting each part of the East Indies at a recognised time. So thoroughly was this the case that the Government in its reports referred as a matter of course to the events of the Lanun season. The Philippines, which lay nearest to Mindanao, perhaps suffered even more severely than other parts of the Archipelago. Since 1589 the Spaniards had fought a number of wars with the Lanuns and had generally got the worst of it. They claimed suzerainty however over them, apparently on the ground that Spain had formally annexed them, and therefore "ipso dicto" they were conquered. The Lanuns unfortunately declined to see the logic of this position, and having great contempt for the Spaniards, constantly raided even into the harbour of Manilla itself.

The damage done by the Lanuns and Balanini was incalculable. To estimate it is impossible, since they acted on the principle of "spurlos versenkt." A prau would disappear. Perhaps years later one of the crew might escape from slavery and eventually tell his tale in Batavia or Singapore; but in most cases not a single soul of the whole ship's company would ever be seen again. Villages near the coast were also raided, and all the inhabitants killed or carried into slavery. Whole islands in the Rhio-Lingga Archipelago were depopulated in this way. Like all the other pirates, the Lanuns avoided European merchantmen and warships, although quite a few traders, especially Spaniards, fell victims to them. They had the utmost contempt for the Dutch gunboats which protected the coasts of Borneo, Java and the other possessions of Holland. They seem rather to have enjoyed a fight with them, and captured a fair number. As late as 1844, Sambas,

the principal Dutch port in Western Borneo, was constantly blockaded by Lanun squadrons.

Had the Balanini and Lanuns made common cause with the Malay pirates they would have been even more of a menace than they actually were. Fortunately however they were the bitter enemies of the pirates of the Rhio-Lingga Archipelago, the headquarters of Malay piracy. So intense was their hatred that if either were attacking a merchantman and these rivals hove in sight, the trader was abandoned while the pirates hastened to engage one another.<sup>(17)</sup>

Near Mindanao lies a cluster of islands known as the Sulu Archipelago. Sulu, the principal town, was a line of houses straggling along the shores of a harbour. This was the commercial headquarters of the Lanuns and Balanini, the greatest slave-mart and thieves' market in the whole East Indian islands. Here the pirate fleets returned after their long cruises to sell their slaves and booty and buy supplies from the Chinese and Bugis merchants who came to it. A few venturesome Europeans also traded there. There appears to be some doubt as to whether the Sulus actually engaged in piracy themselves, or whether they merely aided and profited by their friends and allies the Lanuns. The best authorities seem to argue that the latter was the case. Hunt, who made a long report on the Sulus to Raffles in 1815, lived for six months on the islands. He contrived to win the friendship of the leading Datus, or chiefs, and had excellent opportunities for gaining information. He reported that the Sulus were arrant cowards, and while refraining from piracy themselves, equipped the Lanun squadrons, receiving in return 25 per cent of the booty. Sulu "is the nucleus of all the piratical hordes in the seas, the heart's blood that nourishes the whole, and sets in motion its most distant members." Hunt gave a very graphic picture of the keen activity which prevailed in this den of thieves. "Not a day passes without the arrival or departure of at least twelve to fifteen praus." During the six months he was there he heard of the capture of twenty-

(17) J. I. A., S. St. John, 251-54, J. I. A., III, 581-88; 629-36; IV, 45-53; 144-62; 400-10; 617-28; 734-46. Anon. S. St. John, "Life in the Forests of the Far East." I, 239; II, 239-40. Lady Raffles, "Memoir." 63. Crawford, "Descriptive Dictionary," 214, 354-55. Belcher, "Cruise of the Samarang," I, 135-45, 262-70, and passim. H. St. John, "Indian Archipelago." II, 111-12, 116-33, 136-42. Hunter "Adventures of a Naval Officer." 60. and passim. Moor. "Notices of the Indian Archipelago." 98. Command Paper (1351) of 1851, pp. 12-18, Vol. LVI, Part 1. Brooke's report on Piracy endorsed by Keppel in the highest terms (Keppel, "Dido," II, 134-51. ed. of 1847). J. Hunt, "Report on Sulu, 1815" in *Malayan Miscellanies*, I, 73-83. Earl. "Eastern Seas" 312-14. S. S. R., Vol. 159, Jan. 30, 1829. Long and valuable report by Presgrave, Resident Councillor of Singapore B. Pub., Range 13, Vol. 14: Sept. 23, 1835, Nos. 6-13. Command Paper [1976] of 1854-55, pp. 142-50. (Vol. XXIX).

seven or twenty-eight ships, including a Spanish brig, the kidnaping of 1000 natives from the Philippines, and sundry murders and minor piracies.<sup>(18)</sup>

After the Lanuns and Balanini the most important pirates were the Malays. Formerly they had been the most dreaded pirates of the Archipelago; but in the nineteenth century they had sadly degenerated from the lofty tradition of their ancestors.<sup>(19)</sup> The great centres of Malay piracy were within the Dutch sphere of influence. They were the Carimon Islands, the Rhio-Lingga Archipelago, near the Southern entrance of the Straits of Malacca, and Galang. Galang, an island to the South of the Straits of Singapore, was a miniature Sulu, the Malays' principal market for the sale of slaves and booty. Pirate settlements were also scattered all along the Sumatran coast as far as Achin, and in every state of the Peninsula from Trengganu on the East to Kedah on the West.

The Lingga Sultan (the Dutch protégé who ruled the island portion of the Empire of Johore) was strongly suspected both by the Dutch and British of tacitly encouraging piracy, even if he did not share in the spoils. His great court-officials openly supported it, equipping the Malay fleets in return for 100 per cent profit on their outlay. The Sultans of the different states of Sumatra and the Peninsula also aided the pirates in return for a share of their booty, the most notorious offender in the British sphere being the Bugis Sultan of Selangor. The Singapore Sultan, Raffles' nominee, and the Temenggong of Johore were strongly suspected both by British and Dutch officials of being deeply implicated. This was the Temenggong who in 1843-48 rendered great services to the British in suppressing piracy, and was warmly defended by Governor Butterworth against the aspersions cast upon his character. Possibly he was a much maligned man, perhaps he had seen the error of his ways; in the thirties at any rate officials and merchants alike strongly suspected him, although they could never obtain definite proof.

There seems some reason to believe that pirate praus were fitted out in Singapore itself, and that many pirates were accustomed to visit it when not engaged in professional duties. Little could be done to prevent this, as Singapore was a free port, and had not the elaborate system of registration and control which enabled the Dutch officials to ascertain fairly accurately the real character of trading-praus. It is probable that arms and supplies were sometimes obtained at Singapore, and that the pirates had spies in the port who sent them information when a rich prize was about to sail. Many respectable traders moreover could not resist the

(18) "Malayan Miscellanies." J. Hunt, "Report to Raffles on Sulu, 1815, I, 16-83. Moor Notices of the Indian Archipelago." Appendix, 30-5. Dalrymple, "Oriental Repository," I, 499-577. Hunter, "Adventures of a Naval Officer" 224-26.

(19) Crawford, "Descriptive Dictionary." 354.

temptation to capture another prau if they saw a favourable opportunity. Since the cargo was then sold as their own, and no inconvenient witnesses were left, it was very difficult to convict them of piracy.

It was believed that the Malay pirates had between 300 and 400 praus. Their boats were smaller and usually carried fewer men than the Lanun galleys; but they were sufficiently powerful to overcome most native traders except the large Chinese junks. The praus were generally of from six to twenty tons, propelled by oars and sails and armed with *lepas* (native cannon), or swivel-guns, usually of small calibre, muskets, swords, and spears. The crews varied from thirty or less to eighty or a hundred; and each vessel was under the command of a *Panglima* (fighting-man) and two mates. The spoil was divided between the crew and the Raja who had lent money to finance the cruise according to a recognised schedule. The galleys were extremely fast, and attached to each squadron were a number of smaller and faster spy-boats carrying only a few men apiece. The Malay praus were less dangerous than the Lanun galleys, and the Malays themselves were neither so brave nor so daring as the "Pirates of the Lagoon."

Occasionally a warship would burn a few Malay villages, or would happen upon a pirate squadron too far off-shore to make good its escape. Such incidents however did little more than give a pleasurable zest to a very profitable occupation. The Malays carried on their piracy in accordance with a well-arranged schedule. A few months were spent in fishing and repairing the galleys; but when the season of favourable winds arrived, each island and river sent out its ships. In squadrons of ten to twenty praus they cruised along the whole coast of the Malay Peninsula from Trengganu to Kedah, and also visited Bangka and Java. The Dinding Islands, in the Straits of Malacca, were a favourite resort.

Penang received annual attention from the date of its foundation, and the pirates built villages on the neighbouring islands, and in Kedah and Perak. Penang's trade suffered severely, and in 1826 raids were still frequently made into the harbour at night to capture prisoners for sale at Galang. As late as 1830 the pirate squadrons on their return home from their annual cruise were accustomed to sail through the middle of the harbour, between Penang and Province Wellesley. It saved them the trouble of rowing around the island.

The foundation of Singapore eventually caused the downfall of the Malay pirates, but for many years it actually increased their prosperity. The island was so conveniently situated in the midst of their settlements that no long and toilsome voyages were necessary before they reached the scene of operations; and the warships at the disposal of the Straits Government were so few and ineffective that they could afford little protection to the trading praus. Native traders generally sailed by themselves, or in groups

of three or four, so that they were easily overpowered by the pirates, whose squadrons were made up of ten or twenty, and sometimes double that number of praus. Large fleets of Malay, Balanini and Lanun pirates swarmed in the Straits, or lay in wait at Point Rumenia and other places close to Singapore. As late as 1835 attacks were actually made by daylight on boats plying between the shore and ships lying at anchor at the mouth of the harbour. Many vessels were captured when barely out of sight of the town. The native merchants suffered immense loss, and the situation grew steadily worse as the years passed. Many praus were afraid to visit Singapore because of the danger; and by 1830 the Straits Government seriously feared that the native trade must eventually become extinct.<sup>(20)</sup> A Malay of Singapore could not "set out on a voyage to the back of the Island (of Singapore)... without risk of being robbed and killed."<sup>(21)</sup>

After about 1840 the native trade of the Straits Settlements began to suffer from a new enemy, the Chinese. Before this date only isolated cases occurred; but at the very time when the Lanun and Malay pirates were being suppressed, the attacks of the Chinese rapidly increased. While they usually confined their operations to their own coast or to the Gulf of Siam, they were frequently met with as far South as the neighbourhood of Singapore. After 1860 their attacks gradually ceased.

The Chinese were more dangerous to native traders than the Malays or Lanuns, although in point of courage they were much inferior. Their ships were much larger, however, and carried heavier guns and stronger crews. The typical pirate junk was from 70 to 150 tons, with anything up to 25 cannon, and 100 to 200 men. Their largest boats were of 200 tons. Many renegade European seamen served as gunners and officers, whereas with scarcely a single exception the Lanun and Malay galleys were manned entirely by natives. Owing to these advantages the Chinese captured not only native traders, but even many European vessels.<sup>(22)</sup>

(20) S. S. R., Vol. 111: Sept. 8, 1826. S. S. R., Vol. 125: Nov. 3, 1828. S. S. R., Vol. 159: Jan. 20, 1829. B. Pub., Range 12, Vol. 55: Oct. 19, 1830, Nos. 2-9. B. Pub., Range 12, Vol. 58: Feb. 1, 1831, Nos. 3-21. *Ibid.*, Vol. 59: April 12, 1831, No. 6. B. Pub., Range 13. Vol. 14: Sept. 23, 1835, Nos. 6-13. B. Pub., Range 13, Vol. 20: Oct. 19, 1836, No. 40. "Moniteur des Indes Orientales," 1846-47, Vol. I, 195-97, 231, 268-76, 330. De Groot. *Lady Raffles*, "Memoir" 48. Begbie, "Malay Peninsula" 263-68, 273. J. I. A., II, 315-25. Horsfield: \*622 J. R. Logan. *Ibid.*, III, 581-85. Anon. Moor, "Notices of the Indian Archipelago." 243, 259, 272. Anderson "Malay Peninsula," 174-75. Wilkinson, "Malay Papers: History of the Peninsula." 64. Osborn "Quedah." 86. Earl, "Eastern Seas" 384-85.

(21) J. J. A., III, 464. Anon.

(22) "Chinese Repository," III, 68-82. Crawford "Descriptive Dictionary" 355. India Political and Foreign Consultations, Range, 200, Vol. 40: Oct. 7, 1853, Nos. 137-42, and v. references to Note 23.

The suppression of Chinese piracy belongs to the history of Hongkong rather than to that of the Straits Settlements. Although the coast of China had been notorious for piracy from time immemorial, it was not until the nineteenth century that European governments paid much attention to it. The change was due to the increase of their commerce with the Orient. Great Britain was the power mainly responsible for the suppression of Chinese piracy. Her trade with China was much larger than that of any other nation, and the commerce of Hongkong suffered severely from Chinese pirates in the early years of its history. Fleets of from 20 to 100 junks infested the neighbouring waters. From about 1849 onwards the British China squadron made constant expeditions against the pirates and destroyed several hundred vessels. Owing to these attacks Chinese piracy was finally suppressed, although even at the present day isolated cases are not unknown. With the destruction of the pirates' fortresses and fleets their squadrons gradually ceased to appear in the waters of the Archipelago.<sup>(23)</sup>

Piracy was also carried on in many other parts of the Archipelago, the Moluccas, Celebes and New Guinea, for example. The West Coast of Borneo was notorious in the early part of the nineteenth century. By 1835 however Holland had brought under her control Sambas and all the other West Coast states except Brunei, and within her sphere piracy was practically at an end.<sup>(24)</sup> The natives of these islands confined their operations largely to their own neighbourhood, and their depredations affected British trade only in a minor degree. The principal sufferer from them was Holland, so that in a history of the Straits Settlements they can be ignored. During the period 1824 to 1867 the five races of pirates with whom the British came in contact were the Lanuns, and Balanini the Malays, the Chinese, and the Sea-Dayaks of Brunei in North West Borneo. The latter were local pirates of a peculiarly dangerous kind, and are dealt with in the chapter on the work of Rajah Brooke.

Some difference of opinion exists whether the Bugis of Celebes were pirates during the nineteenth century. At an earlier date they certainly were so, and Crawford considered that they still practised it.<sup>(25)</sup> His opinion is supported by a few isolated cases in the Straits Settlements archives, and by the account of Dalton,

(23) P. P., H. of C. No. 739 of 1850, p. 2. (Vol. LV). P. P., H. of C., No. 449 of 1851, pp. 2-3, (Vol. LVI, pt. 1). Chinese Repository: passim, and especially I, 159, 248, 381; III, 62-68; IV, 522; V, 338, 384; X, 291, 516; XI, 184; XII, 56, 355; XV, 326, 400; XVI, 208, 462, 509, 514; XVII, 320, 372, 544, 651; XVIII, 558-60, 611-13. XIX, 162-65. Temminck, "Possessions Néerlandaises:" II, 443-44. Hunter, "Earlier Adventures" 130, 138. Hill MS. S. 29, 865, 901-33. Keppel, "A Sailor's Life" II, 114.

(24) Crawford, "Descriptive Dictionary" 354. H. St. John, "Indian Archipelago," passim. Temminck, "Possessions Néerlandaises." III, 67, 241-43. Moor, "Notices of the Indian Archipelago," 23-28, 101.

(25) Crawford, "Descriptive Dictionary." 75.

an Englishman who spent some time in their settlements on the Eastern Coast of Borneo in 1828-29.<sup>(26)</sup> Crawford however was speaking from hearsay, and the government of the Straits after examination of Dalton appears rather to have doubted the truth of his story.<sup>(27)</sup> Furthermore the various books written by Europeans living in the East Indian Islands never spoke of the Bugis as pirates. Moreover, Earl, who from his various voyages in the Archipelago, knew them well, warmly defended them against the charge.<sup>(28)</sup> From the evidence which is available it would seem that during the period 1824 to 1867 the Bugis did not engage in piracy. Instead they devoted themselves to trade, and were the most important native merchants in the whole East Indian Islands.<sup>(29)</sup>

Until after 1835 the total suppression of piracy was regarded by many well-informed authorities as impossible. In spite of every effort, it was actually on the increase. Yet within twenty-five years, between 1835 and 1860, Malay piracy was almost ended, while even the Lanuns and Balanini were far less of a scourge than they had been. The problem was solved by two means—the use of steamships and the repeated destruction of the pirate strongholds. In the days of sailing ships the suppression of piracy was almost impossible, for ships of the line, frigates, etc., were of little use. Their great height and towering masts made them visible long before they sighted the long, low galleys of their quarry, and sent every pirate for miles scurrying for shelter amongst the islands and swamps. Only if they chanced upon a prau too far from land to reach it had they much chance of capturing it. Even then, if the wind fell, the galley often escaped by rowing, while the men-of-wars' boats were left toiling hopelessly astern. On many occasions the pirates attacked and plundered traders in full view of a warship, helplessly becalmed and unable to assist. As to the small, swift guntcats which were used extensively by Spain, Holland and Great Britain, in too many cases they seem to have been ornamental incompetents. They had sails, and occasionally oars, and were armed with one or two heavy guns. The crews were generally natives—sometimes ex-pirates—although the captain was often a European. In proportion to their number and cost they were singularly ineffective, because their native crews could not be depended on to fight well.<sup>(30)</sup>

(26) Moor, "Notices of the Indian Archipelago." 15-29.

(27) B. Pub., Range 12, Vol. 58: Feb. 1, 1831, Nos. 3, 4, 24-26.

(28) Earl, "Eastern Seas." 389-91.

(29) *Ibid.*, Crawford, "Descriptive Dictionary," 75. v. chapter on Trade.

(30) It is difficult to give exact references for this opinion, but it is the general impression which one obtains from the countless reports in the Straits Settlements Records, the Bengal Public and Political Consultations, and the works of Keppel, Brooke, De Groot, etc., e. g. Osborn, "Quedah" 20. J. I. A., IV, 160-61, 401-2. Anon.

With the advent of the steamship in 1833-37 a new era began, for it was small and inconspicuous, and no longer at the mercy of a favourable wind. Within a few years there was a marked decline in the number of piracies committed. Brooke expressed the situation exactly when he wrote:—"A small steamer..... would do more towards the suppression of piracy than half-a-dozen sloops of war."<sup>(31)</sup>

It was also found essential to exercise a steady, remorseless pressure upon the pirates by constantly destroying their strongholds and ravaging their country. The sinking of a few praus, or the occasional burning of a village, had no lasting effects. The houses—built of palm-logs and branches—could be rebuilt almost as quickly as they were burned; and when the pirates found that a repetition of the offence brought no renewal of the punishment, they soon recovered their old audacity. When however a recurrence of piracy brought repeated and wholesale destruction upon them they soon decided that freebooting was too dangerous to be continued. A perfect example of the application of this principle was the success of Brooke and the British navy in destroying Lanun and Sea-Dayak piracy in Borneo.<sup>(32)</sup> With all his humanity Rajah Brooke was convinced that the suppression of piracy, could be brought about "only by steadily acting against every pirate hold. Without a continued and determined series of operations of this sort, it is my conviction that even the most sanguinary and fatal onslaughts will achieve nothing beyond a present and temporary good. The impression on the native mind is not sufficiently lasting. Their old impulses and habits return with fresh force; they forget their heavy retribution; and in two or three years the memory of them is almost entirely effaced. Till piracy be completely suppressed, there must be no relaxation."<sup>(33)</sup> "When these communities lose more than they gain by piracy, and feel piracy is like sitting on a barrel of gunpowder with a lighted match in the hand, then, and then only, they will discontinue it. Heretofore the efforts to put down piracy have been desultory and ineffective."<sup>(34)</sup>

The suppression of piracy in the East India Islands was due to the British, Dutch and Span.sh. The Spaniards may be dismissed in a few words. Their efforts were confined to protecting the Philippines against the Lanuns, a task in which they were fairly successful.<sup>(35)</sup> They also scored several notable successes. In 1848 they expelled the Balanini from their islands although this

(31) P. P., Borneo, 1846. "A Selection from Papers Relating to Borneo." p. 61.

(32) v. chapter on Brooke, and for the statement of the principle, De Groot, "Moniteur des Indes," 1846-47. I. 271-276.

(33) Keppel, "Dido," II, 230.

(34) Templer, "Brooke's Letters." II, 110.

(35) Keppel, "Life," II, 108.

victory was to a considerable extent nullified by the fact that many of them went elsewhere and for many years continued their raids.  
(36)

A few years later the Spaniards captured Sulu, and thereupon announced that they had conquered the whole Sulu Archipelago. In point of fact their conquest appears to have been limited practically to the town itself, since the Sultan and his followers retreated to the hills, and for many years continued their resistance. As late as about 1880 the Spanish soldiers did not dare to stray outside the walls of their fortress. It was however a great blow to the Lanuns that they no longer possessed a trading-centre where they could sell their booty and obtain supplies. Gradually moreover the Spaniards extended their sway over the Sulu Archipelago and Mindanao and the Lanun raids dwindled away into insignificance.<sup>(37)</sup>

The work of the Dutch was much more important, and on the whole they seem to have done more towards the suppression of piracy in the East Indian Islands than any other nation. Their efforts were directed mainly towards the protection of their own commerce, a duty which they performed much more systematically and efficiently than the British.<sup>(38)</sup> They had always far more warships in the Archipelago than Great Britain. Between 1819 and 1830 the government of the Straits Settlements had only a few gunboats and schooners, with occasionally a larger ship from the Company's or the Royal navy. Between 1830 and 1840 the Straits marine was increased: a steamship was sent out in 1837, and ships from the China squadron made periodical cruises. In 1841 the British Government finally realised that piracy could only be put down if warships made regular, instead of occasional voyages in the Archipelago. From this time at least one and sometimes several men-of-war were stationed there, along with one or more of the Company's steamships. There were occasions however when these ships had to be withdrawn for service in China, and the Straits Settlements were left with only a few gunboats to protect their trade.<sup>(39)</sup> Dutch commerce on the other hand was always protected by a large flotilla of gunboats and small schooners which patrolled the coasts of their possessions, as well as by a powerful squadron of larger vessels. In 1848 for example when the British had about two steamers and two sailing ships in the Archipelago the Dutch had nine of the former and twenty-four of the latter.<sup>(40)</sup>

(36) I. P. F., Range, 198, Vol. 32: Aug. 12, 1848, No. 204, B. Pub., Range, 13, Vol. 69: April 12, 1848, No. 22, and v. infra.

(37) St. John, "Life in the Far East," II, 242. J. R. A. S. S. B., XXI, 96. Treacher. Fryer, "Decade in Borneo," 113, 120.

(38) Keppel, "Life," II, 108. S. S. R., 159: Jan. 20, 1829.

(39) "American Historical Review," Jan. 1899, pp. 256, 260-61, H. M. Stephens. v. infra.

(40) "Moniteur des Indes," 1846-47, Vol. I, 240, 267, 319. De Groot. Ibid., 1848-49. II, Pt. ii, p. 1.

The reasons for the disparity between the fleets of Great Britain and Holland is easy to understand. The East India Company was unwilling to incur heavy expense for a settlement from which after 1833 it derived no revenue. The Royal Navy had so many calls upon it that it could not spare enough ships to police a distant and by no means the most important field of British interests. Holland on the contrary had few colonial possessions of importance outside the East Indian Islands, and it was therefore natural that the greater part of her navy on overseas service should be concentrated there. Considering the vast extent of her empire in the Archipelago, the astonishing thing is not that she had so many warships, but so few.

The Dutch methods for combatting piracy were four in number. They kept up a fairly regular patrol of their coasts, and sometimes protected praus by forming them into convoys under a guard of warships. They compelled native rulers to sign treaties promising not to give aid to pirates; but they found that it was far easier to obtain these agreements than to compel their observance. The Dutch also enforced an elaborate code of regulations prescribing the size, build, armament and crews of praus, to prevent pirates from masquerading as traders. Lastly, the Dutch made periodical although somewhat desultory expeditions against the pirate settlements within the limits of their empire. They rarely attacked piratical areas outside their own sphere of influence. Especially before 1843 the number of expeditions made by Holland greatly exceeded those of the British. By these means piracy was gradually put down in Celebes, the Moluccas, Dutch Borneo, the Rhio-Lingga Archipelago, and Sumatra. In the two last-mentioned places a large share of the credit belongs to the British.<sup>(41)</sup> There was however never any effectual co-operation between the British and Dutch navies, although the Treaty of 1824 had intended that they should work together. Despite several efforts to carry it out there was no common plan of operations, and the British and Dutch attacks on the pirates were independent of one another.<sup>(42)</sup>

Great Britain was entirely responsible for the destruction of piracy in the Malay Peninsula, while she also deserves a very large share of the credit for its suppression in the Rhio-Lingga Archipelago and the Sumatran states bordering on the Straits of Malacca. Through the efforts of Brooke and the navy Sea-Dayak piracy in Brunei was entirely put down, and the Lanuns of North-West Borneo were driven out and reduced to insignificance. Moreover such heavy punishment was inflicted upon roving squadrons

(41) "Moniteur des Indes Orientales," 1846-47: Vol. I, 159-61, 196-204, 230-41, 319-20, 330; De Groot. Ibid., 1847-48: I, 15, 32-43—De Groot. J. I. A., III, 629-36; IV, 45-53; 144-62; 400-10; 617-28; 734-46; Anon. St. John "Indian Archipelago." II, 186-88; 195, 204, 213. S. S. R., 132: Feb. 13, 1830. B. Pub., Range-13, Vol. 44: Dec. 4, 1843, Nos. 11-13.

(42) Keppel, "Maeander." I, 252-53. "Moniteur des Indes Orientales," 1846-47: I, 235, 238. De Groot.

of Lanuns and Balanini that they gave up cruising near the Malay Peninsula. And finally, Great Britain, far more than any other nation, was responsible for the suppression of Chinese piracy.

In 1835 however no one could have foreseen that within a generation piracy would sink into insignificance. The Straits of Malacca swarmed with pirates, Malay, Lanun and Balanini, and their fleets infested the waters near Malacca, Singapore and Penang. There were pirates in fleets, and in single praus, pirates in big hundred-oared galleys, pirates in small galleys, pirates in row-boats, and solitary pirates in tiny skiffs. The great pirate mart at Galang did a flourishing trade in booty and captives, many of whom had been kidnapped from Penang. The Southern part of Province Wellesley was uninhabited because no man dared to live there lest he should be captured and sold into slavery. Praus were constantly taken almost within sight of port, and the pirates were very rarely captured. In 1826, for example, the Resident Councillor of Singapore reported that he received "constant accounts" of the loss of trading-praus. "The shores and islands between this and Malacca are infested with piratical praus. . . . as soon as a native sail appears they assail their prey, which is seldom able to make any effectual resistance."<sup>(43)</sup> The records of Penang and Malacca are full of similar reports.<sup>(44)</sup>

The Government of the Straits Settlements was quite unable to protect native trade or, except in very rare cases, to capture the pirates, owing to the ridiculous inadequacy of its naval force. In 1824 the largest warship at Penang was a small schooner, the "Jessy," unfit for further service, and the Council therefore asked the Supreme Government to send it a warship and four gunboats.<sup>(45)</sup> The gunboats did not arrive for over a year.<sup>(46)</sup> The experiment was made at Singapore in 1826 of arming a few fast praus, but the attempt to check piracy by this means was a failure.<sup>(47)</sup> The H. C. Cruiser "Hastings" was stationed in the Straits from 1826 to 1828, when it was replaced until 1831 by the yacht

(43) S. S. R., 111: Sept. 8, 1826.

(44) S. S. R., 67: Oct. 7, 1818. Ibid., 77, Nov. 16, 1820. Ibid. 83: Sept. 21, 1818. Ibid., 86: July 11 and Aug. 29, 1822. Ibid., 94: April 15 and May 27, 1824. Ibid., 95: June 14, 1824. Ibid., 96: Dec. 16, 1824. Ibid., 99: Jan. 12, Feb. 16, March 5, March 15, 1825. Ibid., 101: May 5, 1825. Ibid., 102: June and July 29, 1825. Ibid., 104: Oct. 19, 1825. Ibid., 105: Dec. 10, 1825. Ibid., 108: Feb. 2, March and April 21, 1826. Ibid., 111: Sept. 14, 1826. Ibid., 112: Dec. 4, 1826. Ibid., 115: Jan. 2 and Jan. 17, 1827. Ibid., 118: Sept. 20, 1827. Ibid., 119: Nov. 15, 1827. Ibid., 144: Sept. 3, 1828 and passim. Ibid., 157: Aug. 30, Sept. 3, and Dec. 11, 1828. Ibid., 169: March 11, 1829. Ibid., 184: April 21, 1829. B. Pol., Range 123, Vol. 59: March 5, 1824. No. 49. The above are only a few of the entries in the Straits Settlements Records referring to piracy during this period.

(45) B. S. and P., Nov. 19, 1824.

(46) S. S. R., 100: Jan. 28, 1825. Ibid., 112: Sept., 21, 1826. Ibid., 123: July 21, 1828.

(47) S. S. R., 112: Dec. 7, 1826. Ibid., 195: June 17, 1829.

"Nereide."<sup>(48)</sup> The records make no mention of any captures made by these vessels. In 1831 the Straits Settlements had only three small ships for the protection of trade, the largest, the schooner "Zephyr," being only 84 tons.<sup>(49)</sup> The Straits Government in its despatches to India frankly admitted its powerlessness. In 1828 for example it spoke of the marine as "totally inefficient" for the protection of trade.<sup>(50)</sup> In 1830 Murchison, the Resident Councillor of Singapore, pointed out that the navy in the Straits had always been too weak to do more than protect the harbours and the waters immediately adjacent.<sup>(51)</sup>

The most striking characteristic of the despatches of the Straits Government before about 1835 is their tone of hopelessness. It was taken for granted that to extirpate piracy, or even effectually to check it, was utterly hopeless except at an expense which the Company would never sanction. Piracy was rapidly increasing, and by 1829 the Straits Government was afraid that the native trade of Singapore would eventually become extinct, because praus would be afraid to take the risk of sailing to it. The seven years between 1828 and 1835 were the zenith of Malay and Lanun piracy in the Straits of Malacca.<sup>(52)</sup>

Before dealing with the attacks on the pirates between 1830 and 1840 reference must be made to the occupation of the Dinding Islands in 1826. The district now known collectively as The Dindings is composed of Pangkor and some smaller islands in the Straits of Malacca, and a tract of land on the mainland of Perak opposite. The islands had long been notorious as "the chief haunt of all the pirates who come from the Southward," and a favourite hiding-place while waiting for their prey.<sup>(53)</sup> The nominal ruler, the Sultan of Perak, was powerless to suppress the pirates, who were doing great damage to his trade, and in 1826 he voluntarily offered to cede the islands to the Company. He asked it to place a garrison there, and drive out the pirates. The Burney Treaty with Siam had established Perak as an independent state and there was no question as to the Sultan's right to grant the territory. The Company therefore accepted his offer; but no British force was stationed on the islands until after the Treaty of Pangkor in 1874.<sup>(54)</sup>

(48) Ibid., 112: Sept. 21, 1826. B. Pub., Range 12, Vol. 37: July 31, 1828. Ibid. Vol. 59: April 12, 1831, No. 6.

(49) Ibid.

(50) S. S. R., 157: Sept. 3, 1828.

(51) B. Pub., Range 12, Vol. 55: Oct. 19, 1830, Nos. 2-9.

(52) S. S. R., 157: Sept. 3, 1828. Ibid., 159: Jan. 20, 1829. B. Pub., Range 12, Vol. 55: Oct. 19, 1830, Nos 2-9. Ibid., Vol. 59: April 12, 1831, No. 6.

(53) S. S. R., 83: passim. Ibid., 103: Sept. 15, 1825. Ibid., 108: April 10 and 21, 1826. Ibid., 139: Nov. 2, 1826.

(54) Ibid., 103: Sept. 15, 1825. Ibid., 139: Nov. 2 and 13, 1826, Aitchison, "Treaties." I. 407.

In 1830 the British navy at last appeared in Malayan waters. H. M. S. "Southampton" cruised in the Straits of Malacca, and her boats together with the Straits gunboat "Diamond" routed a fleet of some thirty pirate praus after several hours fighting.<sup>(55)</sup> In 1833 H. M. S. "Harrier" destroyed a notorious pirate settlement at Durian, an island south of the Straits of Singapore.<sup>(56)</sup> With these two exceptions no effective measures were taken by the government until 1835. In 1831 the Bugis merchants of Singapore complained to the Resident Councillor of the supineness of the Company, as compared with Holland, pointing out that a fleet of twenty-two large galleys, then cruising off the Johore coast, had in a few days captured seven praus. They informed him that unless there were a change of policy they would be compelled to abandon their voyages to Singapore.<sup>(57)</sup> The records for 1832 are full of accounts of praus being captured. In August of that year pirates chased a trading prau into the very entrance of Singapore harbour.<sup>(58)</sup> The Chinese of Singapore suffered some heavy losses, and in May 1832 the government allowed them to fit out at their own expense four large boats to attack the pirates lurking outside the harbour. They succeeded in sinking a pirate prau.<sup>(59)</sup>

In 1833 the same conditions prevailed. Pirate fleets roamed the seas with impunity, and twenty of their praus, meeting the Company's gunboat "Hawk" near Penang, attacked and forced it to retreat.<sup>(60)</sup> The most amazing event of the year occurred in April. A small fleet of Chinese traders, carrying a cargo valued at over \$200,000, was blockaded by pirates at Pahang. The Government at Singapore had no ship available to assist them, and the Chinese escaped only by good luck, and the assistance of a Malay ruler.<sup>(61)</sup> In consequence of this event the Chinese merchants of Singapore petitioned the Company to afford them effectual protection. They pointed out that they had built up a valuable trade, worth over \$1,000,000 a year, with the East Coast of the Malay Peninsula, with the result that they were affording a very comfortable and regular income to some forty or fifty pirate galleys who preyed upon it with impunity. The Chinese estimated their annual loss at \$15,000 to \$20,000.<sup>(62)</sup> During 1834 conditions remained unaltered; but in 1835 a new series of remonstrances finally roused the Indian Government to action. Petitions were submitted to Parliament and to the Supreme Government by the European and Chinese merchants of Singapore, and the Bengal

(55) B. Pub., Range, 12, Vol. 58: Feb. 1, 1831. No. 3. J. I. A., IV, 144-45. Anon.

(56) "One Hundred Years of Singapore," I, 293. T. E. Brooke.

(57) J. I. A., IV, 146. Anon.

(58) *Ibid.*, 147.

(59) *Ibid.*, 147. B. Pub., Range 13, Vol. 3. Aug. 19, 1833, No. 2.

(60) J. I. A., IV, 152. Anon.

(61) B. Pub., Range 13, Vol. 3: Aug. 19, 1833, No. 2.

(62) *Ibid.*

Chamber of Commerce, urging that effective measures should be taken against piracy. Of late years it had increased rapidly, and it "threatened the extinction of the native maritime trade of the Eastern Settlements," on which the prosperity of Singapore "in great measure" depended. The Singapore petitions also asked that Admiralty jurisdiction should be given to the Recorder's Court. Bonham, the Governor of the Straits Settlements, strongly supported the petitions.<sup>(63)</sup>

The lack of Admiralty jurisdiction prevented the Straits Court from trying prisoners accused of piracy, so that they had to be sent to Calcutta for trial, together with the necessary witnesses. In practice the result was that men charged with this crime were often released because it was not within the competency of the Straits Recorder to deal with them. Even when sent to Calcutta they frequently escaped from lack of evidence, because many of the witnesses were poor native traders who could not afford so expensive a journey.<sup>(64)</sup> The question was referred to the Directors, and in 1837 they secured the passage of an Act of Parliament granting Admiralty jurisdiction to the Recorder's Court.<sup>(65)</sup>

Meanwhile the petitions submitted in 1835 resulted in the despatch of H.M.S. "Andromache," Captain Chads, to the Straits of Malacca. In 1836 the Supreme Government appointed Chads and Bonham, the Governor of the Straits Settlements, Joint Commissioners for the suppression of Malay piracy. They were given very extensive powers, and the Straits marine—increased by three new gunboats—was placed under their control. Two other warships, H.M.S. "Wolf" and "Raleigh," were also sent to the Straits and did good work. During 1836 the ships cruised in the Straits of Malacca and along the East Coast of the Peninsula, and destroyed many pirate settlements both in the British and Dutch spheres of influence, including the notorious trading-centre on Galang Island. Chads also defeated several pirate squadrons with very heavy loss by disguising his ships as traders, and thus inducing the Malays to attack him. Malay piracy received a blow from which it never recovered.<sup>(66)</sup>

(63) *Ibid.*, Vol. 13: June 24, 1835, Nos. 10-17. *Ibid.*, Vol. 14: Sept. 23, 1835, Nos. 6-13.

(64) J. I. A., IV, 160. Letters Received from India and Bengal, Vol. 4: Sept. 2, 1835. B. Pub., Range 12, Vol. 58: Feb. 1, 1831, No. 12. B. Pub., Range 13, Vol. 13: June 24, 1835, Nos. 10-17. *Ibid.*, Vol. 14: Aug. 3, and Sept. 23, 1835.

(65) *Ibid.*, Vol. 15: Sept. 23, 1835, No. 13. Despatches to India and Bengal, Vol. 10: March 3, 1837.

(66) Letters Received from India and Bengal, Vol. 8: Aug. 3, 1836. *Ibid.*, 11: May 31, 1837. Despatches to India and Bengal, Vol. 19: Jan. 4, 1839. B. Pub., Range 13, Vol. 20: Oct. 19, 1836, Nos. 6-10. J. I. A., IV, 404-9. Anon. James, "A Midshipman in Search of Promotion," 261-66.

H. M. S. "Wolf" remained in the Straits from 1836 to 1838, and inflicted heavy losses upon the pirates. Much of her success was due to her habit of disguising herself as a trader carrying tropical animals. To quote one of her officers:—"Baboons flew playfully at your legs, a loathsome orang-outang, . . . crawled up to shake hands. . . . pigs and peccaries, sheep, fowls, a honey bear, and a black panther" made her "a perfect floating menagerie."<sup>(67)</sup> During 1837 and 1839 the Dutch were also very active in the Rhio-Lingga Archipelago and other islands near Singapore.<sup>(68)</sup>

The Government of India decided in 1837 permanently to increase the naval force in the Straits, so that the pirates might not forget the lesson taught them in 1836. Until conditions improved so far as to warrant a reduction, it was to consist of two ships of the royal navy and five gunboats. The Supreme Government also decided to station in the Straits the "Diana," a small steamer of 168 tons. Her speed was five knots ~~an~~ hour, and she carried two nine-pounder guns and twenty-five men.<sup>(69)</sup> The despatch of the "Diana" was due to the strong representations of the Straits Government and the Admiral commanding the Indian Squadron. They were at one in asserting that piracy could never be suppressed by sailing-ships and gunboats, and that the only effective weapon against it was the steamer.<sup>(70)</sup> The arrival of the steamship in the East Indian Islands was a turning-point in the history of piracy. The advent of a vessel which was independent of favourable winds destroyed the galleys' comparative immunity, and in a few years many even of the Lanuns gave up piracy.<sup>(71)</sup>

The first engagement of the "Diana" in 1837 was a painful surprise for the pirates. Six Lanun galleys were plundering a Chinese junk off the Trengganu coast when they sighted her. Never having seen a steamer, they decided from her smoke that she was sailing ship on fire, and bore down on her at full speed, anticipating on easy capture. To their horror, the "Diana" came up to them *against the wind*, and then, suddenly stopping opposite each prau, poured in her broadsides at pistol-shot range. One prau was sunk, 90 Lanuns were killed, 150 wounded, and 30 taken. The other five galleys escaped in a shattered condition, "baling out apparently nothing but blood, and . . . scarce a man at the oars." Three of them foundered before they reached home.<sup>(72)</sup>

(67) Ibid., 261-66. Buckley, "Singapore," I, 280. "One Hundred Years of Singapore," I, 296. Brooke.

(68) J. I. A., IV, 619, 625. Anon.

(69) Letters Received from India and Bengal, Vol. 11: May 31, 1837. Buckley, "Singapore": I. 281. B. Pub., Range 13, Vol. 22: March 1, 1837, Nos. 6A and 6B.

(70) Ibid., Vol. 17: Jan. 27, 1836. Nos. 1-2: and Feb. 3, 1836. Nos. 3-4. Ibid., Vol. 18: April 27 and May 1, 1836, No. 1, Ibid. Vol. 19: July 6, 1836, No. 14.

(71) Hunter "Adventures of a Naval Officer" 84-85, 93-94 and v. infra.

(72) Osborn, "Quedah," 20-21. J. I. A., IV. 620-21: Anon.

As a result of the navy's attacks from 1836 to 1839, and especially of Chads' cruise of 1836 and the "Diana's" fight of 1837, piracy in the Straits greatly decreased for several years. Very few praus were attacked, and the native traders had never been so safe.<sup>(73)</sup> About 1843 there was a recrudescence of Malay and Lanun piracy in the Straits of Malacca and along the East Coast of the Peninsula. It continued until 1849, and many trading-praus were captured, some of them very close to Singapore. Conditions however never became nearly as serious as they had been before 1836.<sup>(74)</sup> The Government of the Straits Settlements, with the assistance of the China squadron, and the Temenggong of Johore, managed to cope with the situation fairly well. It was greatly hampered however because the fleet was unable to spare sufficient ships to police so wide an area.<sup>(75)</sup> Gradually Malay piracy waned under the British and Dutch attacks, and after 1849 it dwindled into insignificance.<sup>(76)</sup>

For many years however piracy continued to exist on a petty scale in the neighbourhood of the Straits Settlements. It usually took the form of attacks by a few Malays on row-boats or small praus, although occasionally a junk or a fairly large prau was taken.<sup>(77)</sup> Such incidents grew steadily rarer, even though the Straits marine was not really effective. Sailing were not replaced by steam gunboats until 1861. Moreover the "Hooghly," the largest steamer, was very old and frequently disabled, as her boilers were nearly worn out. She was quite unable to catch a fast pirate galley. In 1862 she was replaced by a more powerful iron steamship, the "Pluto"<sup>(78)</sup> The Straits marine was much improved by the addition about the same time of a new steam gunboat, the "Avon," a large and fairly fast ship with twenty and sixty-hour pounder guns.<sup>(79)</sup> Even at the present day, instances of Malay piracy occasionally occur. The most notorious was the Selangor incident in 1871 which led to British intervention in the state.<sup>(80)</sup> In 1884 and 1909 Chinese merchantmen were

(73) Ibid., 626-27, B. Pub., Range 13, Vol. 25: Nov. 1, 1837 No. 3. Command Paper [1976] of 1854-55, p. 150 (Vol. XXIX).

(74) J. I. A., IV, 735-38. Anon. J. I. A., VI, 470-87. J. T. Thomson. Command Paper [1976] of 1854-55, p. 150 (Vol. XXIX). B. Pub., Range 13, Vol. 43: June 19, 1843. No. 18.

(75) Ibid., Vol. 54. Aug. 27, 1845, Nos. 12-13.

(76) B. Pub. Range 13, Vol. 64: April 7, 1847, No. 7. I. P. F., Range 200, Vol. 40: Oct. 7, 1853, Nos. 137-42. Ibid., Vol. 59: April 28, 1854, No. 182. "Ocean Highways," Jan. 1873, pp. 312-14, W. E. Maxwell.

(77) Cameron, "Malayan India," 30. McNair, "Convicts Their own Warders," 120-22. Straits Settlements Administration Report, 1860-61, pp. 1-2. Ibid., 1861-62, pp. 25 and 30. Ibid., 1862-63, pp. 6, 22, and 26.

(78) Ibid., 1861-62, p. 25. Ibid., 1862-63, p. 22. P. P., H. of C. No. 259 of 1862, p. 67 (Vol. XL). Cameron, "Malayan India," 251-52.

(79) Hill MS, § 942.

(80) Swettenham, "British Malaya," 115. Anson "About Others and Myself," 306-11.

attacked by Malay pirates near Singapore.<sup>(81)</sup> Speaking broadly however, one may say that Malay piracy has been extinct for over forty years.

In addition to crushing Malay piracy the British navy also made many attacks on the Lanuns and Balanini. During the thirties their fleets suffered heavy losses, as for example in the "Diana's" engagement of 1837; but until 1845 no serious attempt was made to attack their settlements. In 1845 and 1846 the British navy, assisted by Rajah Brooke and his Malays, destroyed the Lanun settlements in North-West Borneo, and piracy there came to an end. This result was achieved very largely through the terror inspired by the steamships.<sup>(82)</sup> In 1847 the H. C. steamer "Nemesis" inflicted a very severe defeat on a Balanini squadron near Labuan. The pirates suffered so heavily that for fifteen years they carefully avoided the coast of Brunei.<sup>(83)</sup> The Dutch were also very active at this time in destroying Lanun settlements; and the Spaniards dealt the Lanuns and Balanini two heavy blows by the capture of Sulu and the Balanini Islands in 1848 and 1851.<sup>(84)</sup>

The Lanuns and Balanini continued their annual cruises for many years after 1851, but their power gradually decreased until they sank into insignificance. Their decline was due partly to the growth of Spanish power, but in much larger degree to the terror inspired by steamships.<sup>(85)</sup> By 1854 the Straits Settlements had for some years been almost free from Lanun attacks. Soon afterwards the names of both the Lanuns and Balanini disappeared forever from the Straits records. In 1862 there occurred what proved to be almost the last fight between the British and the Lanuns. A squadron returning home from a successful cruise on the East Coast of the Malay Peninsula rashly ventured into Sarawak waters. It was attacked and almost wiped out off Bintulu in Brunei by Rajah Brooke's tiny steam gunboat after a desperate fight in which the pirates showed all their ancient courage.<sup>(86)</sup> Long after the Straits Settlements were free from their ravages the Dutch, and especially the Spaniards, were compelled to send periodical expeditions against the Lanuns and Balanini.<sup>(87)</sup>

(81) "One Hundred Years of Singapore," I, 299. Brooke.

(82) Command Paper [1421] of 1851, p. 320, (Vol. XXXIV). Hunter, "Adventures:" 84-85, 93-94, and passim. v. chapter on Rajah and Borneo Piracy for a fuller account.

(83) I. P. F., Range 198, Vol. 2: Oct. 23, 1847, Nos. 74-79. St. John, "Brooke" 121. A description of the battle was given in the opening pages of this chapter.

(84) J. I. A., V, 382. Anon. St. John, "Life in the Far East." II, 242.

(85) Ibid., I, 292; II, 235, 240.

(86) McDougall, "Sarawak," 204-14. London, "Times," July 16, 1862.

(87) Baring-Gould & Bampfylde, "Sarawak," 277-78.

When the British North Borneo Company was founded, its officials discovered that Lanun and Balanini colonies had been established on the East coast of Borneo. Tunku, the principal settlement was founded by Lanuns from North-West Borneo after the destruction of their strongholds there by the British navy in 1845 and 1846.<sup>(88)</sup> The pirates had only a shadow of their former power, but in 1878 they still carried on raids against the natives of Borneo and the Philippines. Tunku was destroyed by H. M. S. "Kestrel" in 1879, and in 1886 two villages were bombarded by a British warship because of various small acts of piracy. As a result of this punishment, and the firm rule of the Borneo Company, the last embers of Lanun and Balanini piracy in the island were stamped out. By the combined efforts of the British, Dutch and Spaniards the most famous pirates of the Archipelago were at last compelled to abandon their raids.<sup>(89)</sup>

At the very time when Malay and Lanun piracy was coming to an end, the Chinese pirates suddenly rose into prominence. The worst period seems to have been from about 1848 to 1855, although attacks were made until the seventies. The principal sufferers were junks from Cochin-China; and from the inadequacy of its marine the Government of the Straits Settlements could do little to protect them. The main theatre of Chinese operations was the Gulf of Siam, although many vessels were captured near Singapore. The attacks gradually died away as the China squadron destroyed the fleets and fortresses of the pirates in China.<sup>(90)</sup>

No one who studies the history of piracy in the East Indian Islands can fail to be impressed by its resemblance to that of the Barbary Coast. In each case piracy was fostered by a peculiarly favourable environment. How important this influence was in the development of piracy in the Archipelago has already been shown. The coast of North Africa was equally suitable. It is a "series of natural harbours, often backed by lagoons which offer every facility for...escape." There are "endless creeks, shallow harbours and lagoons where the Corsairs' galleys (which never drew more than six feet of water) could take refuge," and much of the coast is protected by shifting sand-banks.<sup>(91)</sup> Moreover in both cases the pirates' country lay alongside some of the most important of the world's trade-routes.

In Africa as in the Eastern Archipelago the actions of European nations greatly stimulated the piracy which already existed. What the destruction of the native trade-routes was to

(88) Ibid., 124.

(89) Ibid., 278. J. R. A. S. S. B., XXI, 96-101, 112 Treacher. Pryer, "Decade in Borneo" 9, 14, 31, 41-42, 55, and passim.

(90) I. P. F., Range 200, Vol. 40: Oct. 7, 1853, Nos. 137-42. Ibid., Vol. 59: April 28, 1854, Nos. 180-87. J. P. F., Range 201, Vol. 29: Sept. 14, 1855, Nos. 86-97. "One Hundred Years of Singapore," I, 297. Brooke J. I. A., VI, 470-84. Thomson.

(91) Lane-Poole, "Barbary Corsairs," 16-21, 186-91.

the Malays, the expulsion of the Moors from Spain was to the Corsairs. The Pirates of Northern Africa were not a very serious menace until their numbers were greatly increased towards the end of the fifteenth century by a swarm of refugees from Spain, filled with a burning sense of their wrongs, and determined to avenge the cruelties they had suffered at Christian hands.<sup>(92)</sup> The Corsairs also resembled the pirates of the Archipelago in that they were slavers as much as robbers: one of the principal objects of their cruises was to make captives for the slave-markets. With the possible exception of the Lanuns however none of the East Indian pirates seem to have treated their slaves with such callous cruelty as the Moors.<sup>(93)</sup> The last point of resemblance is that in both cases neither the ships nor the forts of the pirates were very formidable to European warships. They were a terror only to merchantmen.<sup>(94)</sup>

Apart from these points of similarity however the two races of pirates were radically different. Except in rare cases the Malays and Lanuns were never a menace to European merchantmen; while the Corsairs were the terror of every trader that passed their harbours. The reason for this was threefold, the assistance of Turkey, the encouragement of the great European powers, and the use of European renegades. From about 1518, when Charles V began to make serious attempts to crush them, until 1571 the Barbary Corsairs were under the protection of Turkey. The Janissaries, the flower of the Sultan's army, were sent to sail on their raids, and the pirate galleys formed part of the Turkish navy. Barbarossa and the other great leaders of the pirates commanded the whole Turkish fleet, and assisted the Sultans in their campaigns. Until the battle of Lepanto in 1571 the Turkish fleet had the command of the Mediterranean; and the Corsairs were protected and enabled to grow strong in the early years of their power when they could most easily have been crushed.<sup>(95)</sup>

Lepanto deprived the pirates of this protection, and they ceased to be robbers on the grand scale. The great powers of Europe could easily have crushed them; yet in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries their ravages were more extensive than ever before. Hundreds of European merchantmen and thousands of captives fell into their hands, the Mediterranean seaboard was constantly pillaged, and even villages in England and Ireland were destroyed. The pirates arrogated to themselves the right to war on every nation of Europe which did not buy their forbearance by tribute. Moreover they constantly broke the treaties which they

(92) Playfair, "Scourge of Christendom," 1-3. Lane-Poole, "Barbary Corsairs," 7-13, 22-27.

(93) Playfair, "Scourge of Christendom," 6, 20, and passim.

(94) *Ibid.*, 8-13, and passim.

(95) *Ibid.*, passim. Lane-Poole, "Corsairs" 13-181. Currey, "Sea Wolves of the Mediterranean," 177-78.

were bribed to sign, and renewed their ravages. Yet, apart from a few sporadic attacks never pushed home, the great powers replied by fresh gifts of money, new treaties, and more stores and munitions. The truth was that England, France and the other powers found the Corsairs too useful as a means of injuring one another's trade to allow them to be destroyed. While attempting to buy immunity for their own merchants by lavish gifts, they were constantly trying to bribe the pirates to attack their rivals.<sup>(96)</sup> The position was rather like that of Turkey and the Concert of Europe during the last seventy years, when the attempts to secure just government for the Sultans' Christian subjects failed because the mutual jealousy and distrust of the great powers made effective action impossible.

Finally, much of the power of the Corsairs was due to their employment of Christian renegades. Their gunners, many of the commanders of their galleys, and some even of their rulers, were renegades. Renegades generally guided them on their voyages, and formed the most daring part of their crews. In 1630 there were 8000 in Algiers alone. The abandonment of the galley for the sailing-ship at the beginning of the seventeenth century was due to a Fleming, Simon Dander, who taught the pirates how to build ships on the European model. Owing to the great superiority of their new type of vessel the Corsairs were able to extend their cruises into the Atlantic, and ravage the coasts of England and Ireland.<sup>(97)</sup>

The Malays and Lanuns on the contrary had none of these advantages. No European power protected or assisted them with arms and money as a means of injuring its rivals' trade. That they flourished so long was due not to the encouragement but to the indifference of Europe. Moreover the pirates of the Archipelago were not joined by European renegades. There appears to be only one case, in 1820, where a European commanded a Malay squadron, and even here there is no certain proof, but merely strong suspicion.<sup>(98)</sup> The Malays and Lanuns were therefore greatly inferior to the Corsairs in their types of vessel, their armament, and their skill in gunnery. For these reasons they were rarely a danger to European merchantmen, but only to the ill-armed native trading praus. So far as enthusiasm for their chosen profession went, the pirates of the Archipelago were fully the equals of the Corsairs. Had circumstances been favourable, they might have been as great a scourge to Europeans as the Moors: it was their misfortune, and not their fault, that they were comparatively innocuous.

(96) Playfair, "Scourge of Christendom," 4-6, 34-55. Lane-Poole "Barbary Corsairs," 182. Taffarel, "L'Algérie," 30-33, and passim.

(97) Playfair, "Scourge of Christendom," 4, 20, 53. Lane-Poole, "Barbary Corsairs," 200-1, 224-34.

(98) Hill, "Episodes of Piracy" S 25.