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*Admiralty, July 11, 1854.*

A LETTER, of which the following is a copy, has been received from Commander Rice, of Her Majesty's steam-sloop *Prometheus*.

No. 6. *Her Majesty's steam-sloop Prometheus, Gibraltar, June 28, 1854.*

I HAVE the honour to report to you, for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that, in pursuance of their Lordships' orders, I left Lisbon, on the evening of the 22nd instant, and proceeded towards Gibraltar.

On the afternoon of the following day, when about six miles S.W. of Cape St. Vincent, I fell in with Her Majesty's steamer *Medina*. On learning from her commander that she had despatches for Admiral Dundas, and that her coal would not be sufficient to take her either to Gibraltar or Cadiz, I kept company with her until the next morning, when, as it blew hard from the eastward, with a heavy sea, I was unable to take her in tow until the afternoon, when it moderated.

I left her at Cadiz, at 6 A.M., the 25th instant, and proceeded to Gibraltar, where I arrived at 6 o'clock the same evening.

Having immediately communicated with Captain the Hon. George Grey (delivering to him their Lordships' letter), I was informed by him that, on the night of Tuesday last, the 20th instant, an English brig, called the "*Cuthbert Young*," of South Shields, had been captured and plundered by piratical boats, about 10 miles to the N.W. of Cape Tres Forcas, but that the master and crew,\* 12 in number, had escaped, and arrived at Gibraltar. Captain Grey sent the master, Mr. Marshall, on board, as also a pilot, for the Riff Coast, and at 8 o'clock the same evening I proceeded to sea.

On the following morning I anchored for a short time near the Spanish Fort of Albuçema, which is on the coast of the district of Beni Oriaga (mentioned in the extract of a despatch enclosed in their Lordships' letter), and communicated with the Governor. I learnt from him that the boy referred to by their Lordships' letter had been given up and sent to Tangier, unhurt, in charge of two soldiers of the Emperor of Morocco, four days previously, having been confined five weeks in the neighbourhood of Albuçema.

The Spanish vessel captured by the Moors was

\* I have since learnt that only six arrived here; the other six went away from the brig in a boat but have not been heard of, they left half an hour before the master and other five escaped.

laden with water, oil, and Spanish Government stores for the fort of Albuçema. She was taken at night, and subsequently destroyed on the shore of Beni Oriaga, in sight of the Spanish garrison, just out of gun shot.

The Moors sent to offer to sell her, the cargo, and the boy, to the Governor of Albuçema for 6,000 reals. The Governor declined, and detained the messenger as a hostage for the security of the boy, and he is still a prisoner, but to be released.

The boy was given up immediately the two persons sent by the Governor of Setuan arrived. I believe their Lordships are informed that seven of the captors of the felucca were made prisoners by the Governor of Tetuan when attempting to sell the oil, &c., which they had carried there for sale.

The Governor of Albuçema also informed me that he believed the Spanish Government were about to station a force of armed vessels at Penon Velez, Albuçema, and Melilla for the suppression of piracy.

On leaving Albuçema, I proceeded close along the coast, in search of the brig "*Cuthbert Young*," and at 4 P.M. found her anchored about 200 yards from the shore, in a rocky inlet, 10 or 12 miles S.W. of Cape Tres Forcas, near the spot marked "*Zera*" on the chart. I steamed in towards her, and as we neared her, the Moors opened fire on us with volleys of musketry from the rocks, among which the brig was anchored. As the brig was in 3 fathoms water I could get close to her, and Lieutenant Visconti and a party of men were sent to make a hawser fast from our bows to hers, and to slip the cable. The cable could not be unshackled, the anchor was therefore hove up, and at 6 o'clock we backed out of the cove with the brig in tow.

Soon after the Moors had begun firing, and were assembled in considerable numbers round us, we opened fire on those ahead, and on the port bow from the pivot gun forward, and on those on the starboard side and starboard quarter, from the quarter deck guns, with grape, canister, and short range shells. The Minie muskets were also used with success.

The firing under the direction of Lieutenant Edye, senior lieutenant, was very accurate, and the Moors must, in all probability, have suffered severely.

Lieutenant Visconti and his party did their duty of running out and securing the hawser, and weighing the anchor, &c., &c., with great steadiness.