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Admiralty, October 29, 1858.

DESPATCHES, of which the following are copies or extracts, have been received by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty from Rear-Admiral Sir Michael Seymour :

CAPTURE OF PIRATE VESSELS BY STAUNCH GUNBOAT.

*Calcutta, at Hong Kong,
August 24, 1858.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to transmit, to be laid before the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, a copy of a letter dated the 4th August, with its inclosures, from Lieutenant L. Wildman, commanding Her Majesty's steam gun-boat *Staunch*, reporting an attack on three pirate vessels, on his passage from Shanghai to Hong Kong, and the destruction of two of them with most of their crews.

2. Taking into consideration the great disparity of force opposed to the *Staunch*, and that the latter had only her two 24-pounder howitzers on board, I consider this gallant action reflects great credit on Lieutenant Wildman, his officers, and limited complement.

I have, &c.,

M. SEYMOUR,

Rear-Admiral and Commander-in-Chief.

The Secretary of the Admiralty.

REPORTING THE CAPTURE OF TWO PIRATICAL JUNKS.

*Her Majesty's gun-boat Staunch
off Te-plain Island,
August 4, 1858.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to report for your Excellency's information the particulars of an engagement which took place this morning off the island Taon Pung, about fifty miles to the north of the port of Wauchon, between Her Majesty's gun-boat under my command and three piratical junks.

At 8 A.M., whilst at anchor off that island, two Sanpans came alongside with information that some piratical junks had attacked and plundered a village, &c., and were then rounding a neighbouring point.

I immediately weighed, cleared for action, and stood (under steam) towards four junks which had just then cleared the point, one flying an English ensign, a second a Portuguese, the other two Chinese flags. When we had closed within 200 yards the three largest junks opened a smart and

effective fire on us, doing much damage aloft; and to prevent injuring my boats, as I determined to take them by boarding, I deemed it prudent to lower and tow them astern. I then returned their fire with the *Staunch's* two howitzers, still closing with them; but as our long gun had been sent on board Her Majesty's ship *Fury* by your Excellency's orders, to ease the gun-boat coming down the China Sea, during the typhoon season, our fire was comparatively feeble.

I went ahead at full speed on to the largest junk, giving orders to lash her alongside us; but the instant we touched, such a shower of stink-pots and other combustible matter was thrown on board us, it was impossible for any person to remain forward, or to see through the dense smoke they occasioned.

It was at this moment, I deeply regret to state, that Edward George, A.B., who was actually engaged in lashing the junk alongside, having gallantly jumped on board her for that purpose, was cut to pieces, and his remains thrown overboard. The strong breeze favouring the junk, and a heavy swell making it difficult to lash her, she sheered off; and the Chinese in the meantime, having cut our boats adrift, and being close to the rocks, I backed astern, and having picked them up, I remounted the howitzers, which had been dismantled from the rapidity of my fire, and renewed the engagement, running alongside one and boarding, killing a great number of her crew, many of whom endeavoured to escape by jumping overboard, but only a small number reached the shore.

Leaving this vessel in charge of Mr. Morice, the Second Master, and a party of men, I gave chase to a second in my gig, and having come up with her, I boarded and took possession, making prisoners of the only two living men on board, many having been killed, and a few escaping by jumping overboard. The third junk, in the meanwhile, having got some distance away, and not having more than five effective men left after the engagement, I deemed it prudent not to follow her among the numerous rocks and intricate passage she had taken, and being unable to spare any officers and men for the captured junks, I gave directions for them to be burnt, which was done.

I should observe that, during the time Mr. Morice and the men whom I had left with him to burn the first junk, were performing this duty, a number of Sanpans pulled alongside, and endeavoured to recapture her, firing her long gun below where our people were lighting a fire.