

Fortunately it did no harm to them, but caused an explosion, which killed from 20 to 30 Chinese.

The fourth vessel having been a capture made by the pirates, I released, having previously obtained a written statement to that effect.

I have great pleasure in bringing to your Excellency's notice the admirable and gallant conduct of Mr. Morice, Second Master, the other officers and ship's company of the *Staunch* in this action, under the double disadvantage of a very reduced complement and armament, with these three junks, carrying a long 24-pounder gun amidships, and six broadside guns of smaller calibre, besides several mounted gingalls.

Charles Ansell, Quartermaster, I also wish particularly to bring to your notice, for his assistance in pointing the howitzers, and his gallant conduct throughout the engagement.

I enclose my list of casualties and defects.

I have, &c.,

LEVESON WILDMAN,

Lieutenant and Commander.

P.S.—I should have mentioned that from the quantity of European knives, revolver cartridges and rifles, and the desperate resistance they made in keeping up a heavy fire, that Europeans must have been on board; the engagement having lasted five hours.

Rear-Admiral Sir M. Seymour, K.C.B.,
Commander-in-Chief.

OPERATIONS AGAINST PIRATES.

*Calcutta, at Hong-Kong,
September 10, 1858.*

SIR,

INFORMATION having reached me, on the evening of the 22nd ultimo, that a fleet of 20 pirate vessels had captured a junk bound to Hong-Kong, in the neighbourhood of this island, I despatched Her Majesty's steam-gun-vessel, *Surprise*, on the following morning, in search of them. She returned the same evening, having succeeded in destroying or capturing 26 heavily-armed junks at the island of Singting, mounting over 300 guns. I enclose Commander Cresswell's report of his proceedings, dated the 24th August, and beg to draw their Lordships' favourable notice to the gallant manner in which the commander, officers, and crew of the *Surprise* engaged and overcame so superior a force.

2. It being reported that the pirates destroyed by the *Surprise* formed a division of a large fleet to the southward, which has harassed the coasting trade for some time, I ordered the *Magicienne*, *Inflexible*, *Plover*, and *Algerine*, under the orders of Captain Nicholas Vansittart, C.B., to scour the coast in that direction. By that officer's report, herewith enclosed, dated the 4th instant, their Lordships will perceive that the expedition was attended with the most complete success, no less than 100 piratical vessels having been destroyed, and 236 guns sunk in deep water, with heavy loss to those desperate miscreants. The town of Coolan, the head-quarters of the pirates, was also destroyed, as well as a stockaded fort of fourteen guns. The conduct of the officers and men of the squadron is deserving of the highest praise.

3. On Captain Vansittart's return, I ordered him to cruise to the northward of Hong Kong; but though he visited all the usual haunts of the pirates, the people stated that they had not been troubled for some time past.

4. These important successes have afforded much satisfaction to the Chinese traders. Captain Vansittart justly gives great credit to Mr. Caldwell, Registrar-General, who accom-

panied the expedition, for obtaining information. This gentleman's name must be familiar to their Lordships, from his numerous services against pirates.

I have, &c.

M. SEYMOUR,

Rear-Admiral and Commander-in-Chief.
The Secretary of the Admiralty, London.

REPORTING CAPTURE AND DESTRUCTION OF PIRATICAL VESSELS.

*Her Majesty's ship Surprise,
at Hong Kong,*

August 24, 1858.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to inform you that, in compliance with instructions received from you, on the night of the 22nd inst., directing me to proceed in search of piratical junks, near the Leman Islands, and effect their capture or destruction, I proceeded to sea at daylight the following morning, having with me the launch and barge of Her Majesty's ship *Cambrian*.

Shortly after opening out from Hong Kong Bay the pilot pointed out three boats working to windward, and informed me that they were part of the piratical fleet. I fortunately, at this time, observed many masts in a small bay, in N.W. part of the island of Ling-Sing, and being informed it was the main body of the piratical force, I proceeded toward them.

When within about 1700 yards they opened fire on me, which I did not return, until within about 1000, when we engaged them with one port broadside, firing shot and shell.

I then directed the *Cambrian's* boom boats to take up a position in shore of us, so as to be able to advance, taking them in the flank, as their guns came within range: the enemy directed much of their fire to the boats, which was admirably replied to by Lieutenant J. W. Webb, as he steadily advanced with his boats.

The enemy opened on us at 8 A.M., keeping up a smart and well-directed fire with round shot, and spear headed rockets, and, as we closed, with grape and canister, hulling the ship on several occasions, and had we not kept on a continual move would doubtless have caused us material damage.

After about 35 minutes their fire considerably slackened, and at about 9 o'clock two of their largest lorchas blew up with a tremendous explosion, caused apparently by the bursting of one of our shells; they appeared immediately paralyzed, and their firing ceased. Taking advantage of this, I pushed on with my own boats, and joining with the *Cambrian's* boats, effected a landing within a very short distance of the junks, having observed the crews desert their vessels and take to the hills.

On advancing to the top of a neighbouring ridge, some more piratical vessels were discovered in a snug creek in the opposite side, crowded with men, and evidently prepared for an attack from seaward; our position completed commanded them, and by opening fire on them with our rifles, killing a great number, caused the others to run away, after a vain attempt to reach us with their gingalls, our height being too great for any effective fire from the large guns.

Not deeming it prudent to expose the men unnecessarily to the scorching heat of the sun, I ordered their return to the boats in preference to advancing by land, and returning myself to the *Surprise*, closed and, taking the boats in tow, steamed round abreast the creek, and fired a few shells. I then despatched the *Cambrian's* and our