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PADERBORN

**Pirates own book, or authentic narratives of the lives,
exploits, and executions of the most celebrated sea
robbers**

ELLS, CHARLES

New York [u.a.], 1842

The English send an expedition against these Pirates, in 1819.

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sign of submission or conquest was witnessed throughout. The Ariel continued to discharge about fifty shot after all the others had desisted, but with as little avail as before, and thus ended this wordy negotiation, and the bloodless battle to which it eventually led.

In 1818, these pirates grew so daring that they made an irruption into the Indian Ocean, and plundered vessels and towns on the islands and coasts. A fleet was sent against them, and intercepted them off Ashlo'a Island, proceeding to the westward in three divisions; and drove them back into the gulf. The Eden and Psyche fell in with two frankies, and these were so closely pursued that they were obliged to drop a small captured boat they had in tow. The Thetes one day kept in close chase of seventeen vessels, but they were enabled to get away owing to their superior sailing. The cruisers met with the Joassamees seventeen times and were constantly employed in hunting them from place to place.

At length, in 1819, they became such a scourge to commerce that a formidable expedition under the command of Major General Sir W. Grant Keir, sailed against them. It arrived before the chief town in December, and commenced operations. In his despatches Gen. Keir says—

I have the satisfaction to report the town of Ras-el-Khyma, after a resistance of six days, was taken possession of this morning by the force under my command.

On the 18th, after completing my arrangements at Muscat, the Liverpool sailed for the rendezvous at Kishme; on the 21st, we fell in with the fleet of the Persian Gulf and anchored off the island of Larrack on the 24th November.

As it appeared probable that a considerable period would elapse before the junction of the ships which were detained at Bombay, I conceived it would prove highly advantageous to avail myself of all the information that could be procured respecting the strength and resources of the pirates we had to deal with.

No time was lost in making the necessary preparations for landing, which was effected the following morning without opposition, at a spot which had been previously selected for that purpose, about two miles to the southward

of the town. The troops were formed across the isthmus connecting the peninsula on which the town is situated with the neighboring country, and the whole of the day was occupied in getting the tents on shore, to shelter the men from the rain, landing engineers, tools, sand bags, &c. and making arrangements preparatory to commencing our approaches the next day. On the morning of the 4th, our light troops were ordered in advance, supported by the pickets, to dislodge the enemy from a bank within nine hundred yards of the outer fort, which was expected to afford good cover for the men. The whole of the light companies of the force under Capt. Backhouse, moved forward, and drove the Arabs with great gallantry from a date grove, and over the bank close under the walls of the fort, followed by the pickets under Major Molesworth, who took post at the sand banks, whilst the European light troops were skirmishing in front. The enemy kept up a sharp fire of musketry and cannon; during these movements, Major Molesworth, a gallant officer was here killed. The troops kept their position during the day, and in the night effected a lodgement within three hundred yards of the southernmost tower, and erected a battery of four guns, together with a mortar battery.

The weather having become rather unfavorable for the disembarkation of the stores required for the siege, but this important object being effected on the morning of the 6th, we were enabled to open three eighteen pounders on the fort, a couple of howitzers, and six pounders were also placed in the battery on the right, which played on the defences of the towers and nearly silenced the enemy's fire, who, during the whole of our progress exhibited a considerable degree of resolution in withstanding, and ingenuity in counteracting our attacks, sallied out at 8 o'clock this evening along the whole front of our entrenchments, crept close up to the mortar battery without being perceived, and entered it over the parapet, after spearing the advanced sentries. The party which occupied it were obliged to retire, but being immediately reinforced charged the assailants, who were driven out of the battery with great loss. The enemy repeated his attacks towards morning but was vigorously repulsed. During the seventh

every exertion was made to land and bring up the remaining guns and mortars, which was accomplished during the night. They were immediately placed in the battery, together with two twenty-four pounders which were landed from the Liverpool, and in the morning the whole of the ordnance opened on the fort and fired with scarcely any intermission till sunset, when the breach on the curtain was reported nearly practicable and the towers almost untenable. Immediate arrangements were made for the assault, and the troops ordered to move down to the entrenchments by daylight the next morning. The party moved forward about 8 o'clock, and entered the fort through the breaches without firing a shot, and it soon appeared the enemy had evacuated the place. The town was taken possession of and found almost entirely deserted, only eighteen or twenty men, and a few women remaining in their houses.

The expedition next proceeded against Rumps, a piratical town, eight miles north of Ras-el-Khyma, but the inhabitants abandoned the town and took refuge in the hill fort of Zyah, which is situated at the head of a navigable creek nearly two miles from the sea coast. This place was the residence of Hussein Bin Alley, a sheikh of considerable importance among the Joassamee tribes, and a person who from his talents and lawless habits, as well as from the strength and advantageous situation of the fort, was likely to attempt the revival of the piratical system upon the first occasion. It became a desirable object to reduce the power of this chieftain.

On the 18th December, the troops embarked at Ras-el-Khyma, at day break in the boats of the fleet under command of Major Warren, with the 65th regiment and the flank companies of the first and second regiment, and at noon arrived within four miles of their destination. This operation was attended with considerable difficulty and risk, owing to the heavy surf that beat on the shore; and which was the occasion of some loss of ammunition, and of a few boats being upset and stove in.

At half past three, P. M., having refreshed the men, (says Major Warren,) we commenced our march and fording the creek or back water, took up our position at sun

set, to the northeastward of the fort, the enemy firing at us as we passed, notwithstanding that our messenger, whom we had previously sent in to summon the Sheikh, was still in the place; and I lost no time in pushing our riflemen and pickets as far forward as I could without exposing them too much to the firing of the enemy, whom I found strongly posted under secure cover in the date tree groves in front of the town. Captain Cocke, with the light company of his battalion, was at the same time sent to the westward, to cut off the retreat of the enemy on that side.



The Sheikh of Rumps.

At day break the next morning, finding it necessary to drive the enemy still further in, to get a nearer view of his defences, I moved forward the rifle company of the 65th regiment, and after a considerable opposition from the enemy, I succeeded in forcing him to retire some distance; but not without disputing every inch of ground, which was well calculated for resistance, being intersected at every

few yards, by banks and water courses raised for the purpose of irrigation, and covered with date trees. The next morning the riflemen, supported by the pickets, were again called into play, and soon established their position within three and four hundred yards of the town, which with the base of the hill, was so completely surrounded, as to render the escape of any of the garrison now almost impossible. This advantage was gained by a severe loss. Two twenty-four pounders and the two twelves, the landing of which had been retarded by the difficulty of communication with the fleet from which we derived all our supplies, having been now brought on shore, we broke ground in the evening, and notwithstanding the rocky soil, had them to play next morning at daylight.

Aware, however, that the families of the enemy were still in the town, and humanity dictating that some effort should be made to save the innocent from the fate that awaited the guilty; an opportunity was afforded for that purpose, by an offer to the garrison of security to their women and children, should they be sent out within the hour; but the infatuated chief, either from an idea that his fort on the hill was not to be reached by our shot, or with the vain hope to gain time by procrastination, returning no answer to our communication, while he detained our messenger; we opened our fire at half past eight in the morning, and such was the precision of the practice, that in two hours we perceived the breach would soon be practicable. I was in the act of ordering the assault, when a white flag was displayed; and the enemy, after some little delay, in assembling from the different quarters of the place, marched out without their arms, with Hussein Bin Alley at their head, to the number of three hundred and ninety-eight; and at half past one, P. M., the British flags were hoisted on the hill fort and at the Sheikh's house. The women and children to the number of four hundred, were at the same time collected together in a place of security, and sent on board the fleet, together with the men. The service has been short but arduous; the enemy defended themselves with great obstinacy and ability worthy of a better cause.

From two prisoners retaken from the Joassamees, they

learnt that the plunder is made a general stock, and distributed by the chief, but in what proportions the dependents cannot say; water is generally very scarce. There is a quantity of fish caught on the bank, upon which and dates they live. There were a few horses, camels, cows, sheep, and goats; the greatest part of which they took with them; they were in general lean, as the sandy plain produces little or no vegetation, except a few dates and cocoa-nut trees. The pirates who abandoned Ras-el-Khyma, encamped about three miles in the interior, ready to retreat into the desert at a moment's warning. The Sheikh of Rumps is an old man, but looks intelligent, and is said to be the man who advises upon all occasions the movements of the different tribes of pirates on the coast, and when he was told that it was the wish of the Company to put a stop to their piracy, and make an honest people of them by encouraging them to trade, seemed to regret much that those intentions were not made known, as they would have been most readily embraced. Rumps is the key to Ras-el-Khyma, and by its strength is defended from a strong banditti infesting the mountains, as also the Bedouin Arabs who are their enemies. A British garrison of twelve hundred men was stationed at Ras-el-Khyma, and a guardship. The other places sent in tokens of submission, as driven out of their fortresses on the margin of the sea, they had to contend within with the interior hostile tribes.

