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**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

Deceitful character of the Malays.

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the strict orders given on the subject I could see no more ; indeed there were both difficulty and danger attending these inquiries. I particularly wanted to obtain the miniature picture, and offered the Mandoor fifty rupees if he could procure it ; he laughed at me, and pointing significantly to his kris, drew one hand across my throat, and then across his own, giving me to understand such would be the result to us both on such an application to the rajah. It is the universal custom of the pirates, on this coast, to sell the people for slaves immediately on their arrival, the rajah taking for himself a few of the most useful, and receiving a percentage upon the purchase money of the remainder, with a moiety of the vessel and every article on board. European vessels are taken up the river, where they are immediately broken up. The situation of European prisoners is indeed dreadful in a climate like this, where even the labor of natives is intolerable ; they are compelled to bear all the drudgery, and allowed a bare sufficiency of rice and salt to eat.

It is utterly impossible for Europeans who have seen these pirates at such places as Singapore and Batavia, to form any conception of their true character ; there they are under immediate control, and every part of their behaviour is a tissue of falsehood and deception. They constantly carry about with them a smooth tongue, cringing demeanor, a complying disposition, which always asserts, and never contradicts, a countenance which appears to anticipate the very wish of the Europeans, and which so generally imposes upon his understanding, that he at once concludes them to be the best and gentlest of human beings ; but let the European meet them in any of their own campongs, and a very different character they will appear. The character and treacherous proceeding narrated above, and the manner of cutting off vessels and butchering their crews, apply equally to all the pirates of the East India Islands, by which many hundred European and American vessels have been surprised and their crews butchered."

On the 7th of February, 1831, the ship *Friendship*, Capt. Endicott, of Salem (Mass.) was captured by the Malays while lying at Qualla Battoo, on the coast of Suma-

tra. In the forenoon of the fatal day, Capt. Endicott, Mr. Barry, second mate, and four of the crew, it seems went on shore as usual, for the purpose of weighing pepper, expecting to obtain that day two boat loads, which had been promised them by the Malays. After the first boat was loaded, they observed that she delayed some time in passing down the river, and her crew being composed of Malays, was supposed by the officers to be stealing pepper from her, and secreting it in the bushes. In consequence of this conjecture, two men were sent off to watch them, who on approaching the boat, saw five or six Malays leap from the jungle, and hurry on board of her. The former, however, supposed them to be the boat's crew, as they had seen an equal number quit her previous to their own approach. In this they were mistaken, as will subsequently appear. At this time a brig hove in sight, and was seen standing towards Soo Soo, another pepper port, distant about five miles. Capt. Endicott, on going to the beach to ascertain whether the brig had hoisted any colors, discovered that the boat with pepper had approached within a few yards of the Friendship, manned with an unusual number of natives.

It appears that when the pepper boats came alongside of the Friendship, as but few of the hands could work at a time, numbers of the Malays came on board, and on being questioned by Mr. Knight, the first officer, who was in the gangway, taking an account of the pepper, as to their business, their reply was, that they had come to see the vessel. Mr. Knight ordered them into their boat again, and some of them obeyed, but only to return immediately to assist in the work of death, which was now commenced by attacking Mr. Knight and the rest of the crew on board. The crew of the vessel being so scattered, it was impossible to concentrate their force so as to make a successful resistance. Some fell on the fore-castle, one in the gangway, and Mr. Knight fell upon the quarter deck, severely wounded by a stab in the back while in the act of snatching from the bulwarks a boarding pike with which to defend himself.

The two men who were taking the pepper on a stage, having vainly attempted to get on board to the assistance

of their comrades, were compelled to leap into the sea. One of them, Charles Converse, of Salem, being severely wounded, succeeded in swimming to the bobstays, to which he clung until taken on board by the natives, and from some cause he was not afterwards molested. His companion, John Davis, being unable to swim, drifted with the tide near the *boat tackle*, or *davit falls*, the blocks being overhauled down near the water; one of these he laid hold of, which the Malays perceiving, dropped their boat astern and despatched him! the cook sprang into a canoe along side, and in attempting to push off she was capsized; and being unable to swim, he got on the bottom, and paddled ashore with his hands, where he was made prisoner. Gregory, an Italian, sought shelter in the foretop-gallant cross-trees, where he was fired at several times by the Malays with the muskets of the Friendship, which were always kept loaded and ready for use while on the coast.

Three of the crew leaped into the sea, and swam to a point of land near a mile distant, to the northward of the town; and, unperceived by the Malays on shore, pursued their course to the northward towards Cape Felix, intending to go to the port of Annalaboo, about forty-five miles distant. Having walked all night, they found themselves, on the following morning, near the promontory, and still twenty-five miles distant from Annalaboo.

When Mr. Endicott, Mr. Barry, and the four seamen arrived at the beach, they saw the crew jumping into the sea; the truth now, with all its horrors, flashed upon his mind, that the vessel was attacked, and in an instant they jumped on board the boat and pushed off; at the same time a friendly rajah named Po Adam, sprang into the boat; he was the proprietor of a port and considerable property at a place called Pulo Kio, but three miles distant from the mouth of the river Quallah Battoo. More business had been done by the rajah during the eight years past than by any other on the pepper coast; he had uniformly professed himself friendly to the Americans, and he has generally received the character of their being honest. Speaking a little English as he sprang into the boat, he exclaimed, "Captain, you got trouble; Malay kill you, he kill Po Adam too!" Crowds of Malays assembled on both

sides of the river, brandishing their weapons in a menacing manner, while a ferry boat, manned with eight or ten of the natives, armed with spears and krisses, pushed off to prevent the officers' regaining their ship. The latter exhibited no fear, and flourished the cutlass of Po Adam in a menacing manner from the bows of the boat; it so intimidated the Malays that they fled to the shore, leaving a free passage to the ship; but as they got near her they found that the Malays had got entire possession of her; some of them were promenading the deck, others were making signals of success to the people on shore, while, with the exception of one man aloft, not an individual of the crew could be seen. Three Malay boats, with about fifty men, now issued from the river in the direction of the ship, while the captain and his men, concluding that their only hope of recovering their vessel was to obtain assistance from some other ships, directed their course towards Muchie, where they knew that several American vessels were lying at anchor. Three American captains, upon hearing the misfortunes of their countrymen, weighed anchor immediately for Quallah Battoo, determined, if possible, to recover the ship. By four o'clock on the same day they gained an anchorage off that place; the Malays, in the meantime, had removed on shore every moveable article belonging to the ship, including specie, besides several cases of opium, amounting in all to upwards of thirty thousand dollars. This was done on the night of the 9th, and on the morning of the 10th, they contrived to heave in the chain cable, and get the anchor up to the bows; and the ship was drifting finely towards the beach, when the cable, not being stopped abaft the bitts, began suddenly to run out with great velocity; but a bight having by accident been thrown forward of the windlass, a riding turn was the consequence, and the anchor, in its descent, was suddenly checked about fifteen fathoms from the hawse. A squall soon after coming on, the vessel drifted obliquely towards the shore, and grounded upon a coral reef near half a mile to the southward of the town. The next day, having obtained a convenient anchorage, a message was sent by a friendly Malay who came on board at Soo Soo, demanding the restoration of the ship. The rajah replied that he

would not give her up, but that they were welcome to take her if they could ; a fire was now opened upon the Friendship by the vessels, her decks were crowded with Malays, who promptly returned the fire, as did also the forts on shore. This mode of warfare appeared undecisive, and it was determined to decide the contest by a close action. A number of boats being manned and armed with about thirty officers and men, a movement was made to carry the ship by boarding. The Malays did not wait the approach of this determined attack, but all deserted the vessel to her lawful owners, when she was taken possession of and warped out into deep water. The appearance of the ship, at the time she was boarded, beggars all description ; every part of her bore ample testimony of the scene of violence and destruction with which she had been visited. The objects of the voyage were abandoned, and the Friendship returned to the United States. The public were unanimous in calling for a redress of the unparalleled outrage on the lives and property of citizens of the United States. The government immediately adopted measures to punish so outrageous an act of piracy by despatching the frigate Potomac, Commodore Downs, Commander. The Potomac sailed from New York the 24th of August, 1831, after touching at Rio Janeiro and the Cape of Good Hope. She anchored off Quallah Battoo in February 1832, disguised as a Danish ship, and came to in merchantman style, a few men being sent aloft, dressed in red and blue flannel shirts, and one sail being clewed up and furled at a time. A reconnoitering party were sent on shore disguised as pepper dealers, but they returned without being able to ascertain the situations of the forts. The ship now presented a busy scene ; it was determined to commence an attack upon the town the next morning, and every necessary preparation was accordingly made, muskets were cleaned, cartridge-boxes buckled on, cutlasses examined and put in order, &c.

At twelve o'clock at night, all hands were called, those assigned to take part in the expedition were mustered, when Lieut. Shubrick, the commander of the detachment, gave them special orders ; when they entered the boats and proceeded to the shore, where they effected a lan ling