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PADERBORN

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

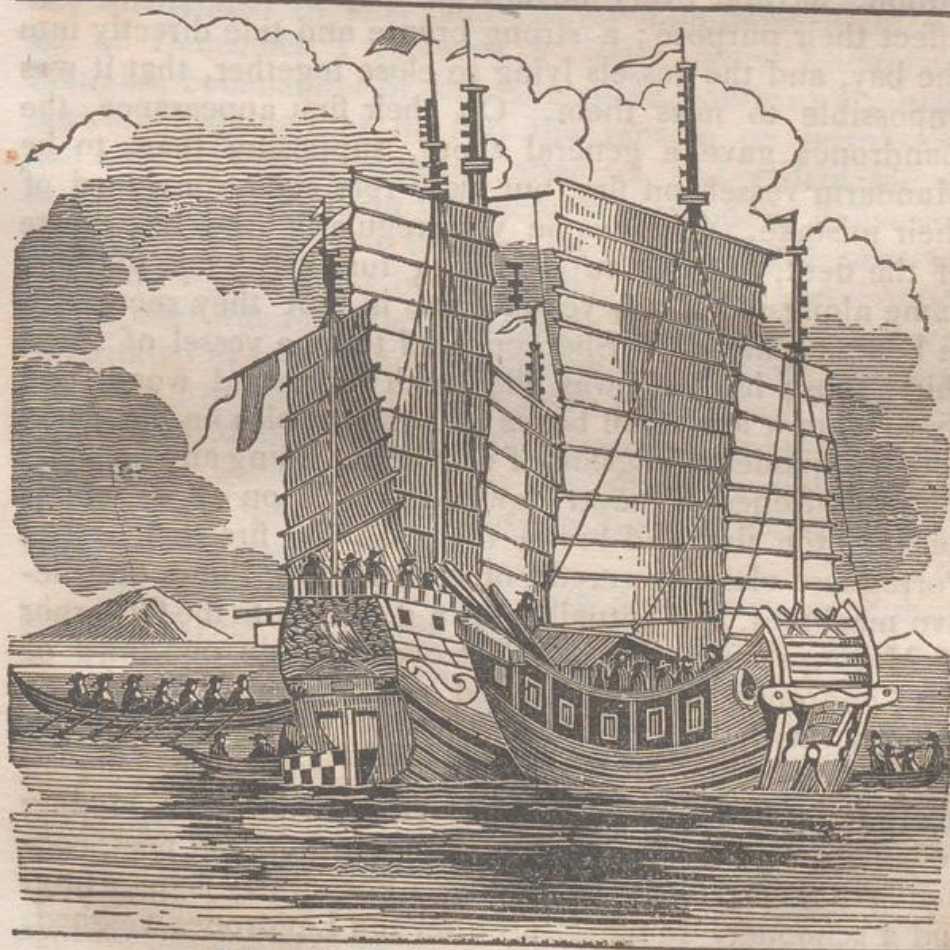
ELLS, CHARLES

New York [u.a.], 1842

Futile attack of the Mandarins.

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the bay. On nearing us, they formed a line, and stood close in; each vessel, as she discharged her guns, tacked to join the rear and reload. They kept up a constant fire for about two hours, when one of their largest vessels was blown up by a firebrand thrown from a Ladrone junk; after which they kept at a more respectful distance, but continued firing without intermission till the 21st at night, when it fell calm. The Ladrones towed out seven large vessels, with about two hundred row-boats to board them: but a breeze springing up, they made sail and escaped. The Ladrones returned into the bay, and anchored. The Portuguese and Mandarins followed, and continued a heavy cannonading during that night and the next day. The vessel I was in had her foremast shot away, which they supplied very expeditiously by taking a mainmast from a smaller vessel.



The War Junks of the Ladrones.

“On the 23d, in the evening, it again fell calm; the Ladronees towed out fifteen junks in two divisions, with the intention of surrounding them, which was nearly effected, having come up with and boarded one, when a breeze suddenly sprang up. The captured vessel mounted twenty-two guns. Most of her crew leaped overboard; sixty or seventy were taken, immediately cut to pieces, and thrown into the river. Early in the morning the Ladronees returned into the bay, and anchored in the same situation as before. The Portuguese and Mandarins followed, keeping up a constant fire. The Ladronees never returned a single shot, but always kept in readiness to board, and the Portuguese were careful never to allow them an opportunity.

“On the 28th, at night, they sent eight fire-vessels, which, if properly constructed, must have done great execution, having every advantage they could wish for to effect their purpose; a strong breeze and tide directly into the bay, and the vessels lying so close together, that it was impossible to miss them. On their first appearance, the Landrones gave a general shout, supposing them to be Mandarin vessels on fire, but were very soon convinced of their mistake. They came very regularly into the centre of the fleet, two and two, burning furiously; one of them came alongside of the vessel I was in, but they succeeded in booming her off. She appeared to be a vessel of about thirty tons; her hold was filled with straw and wood, and there were a few small boxes of combustibles on her deck, which exploded alongside of us without doing any damage. The Landrones, however, towed them all on shore, extinguished the fire, and broke them up for firewood. The Portuguese claim the credit of constructing these destructive machines, and actually sent a despatch to the Governor of Macao, saying they had destroyed at least one-third of the Landrones' fleet, and hoped soon to effect their purpose by totally annihilating them!

“On the 29th of November, the Landrones being all ready for sea, they weighed and stood boldly out, bidding defiance to the invincible squadron and imperial fleet, consisting of ninety-three war-junks, six Portuguese ships, a brig, and a schooner. Immediately after the Landrones weighed,

The War-junks of the Ladronees.

they made all sail. The Landrones chased them two or three hours, keeping up a constant fire; finding they did not come up with them, they hauled their wind, and stood to the eastward. Thus terminated the boasted blockade, which lasted nine days, during which time the Landrones completed all their repairs. In this action not a single Landrone vessel was destroyed, and their loss about thirty or forty men. An American was also killed, one of three that remained out of eight taken in a schooner. I had two very narrow escapes: the first, a twelve pounder shot fell within three or four feet of me; another took a piece out of a small brass-swivel on which I was standing. The chief's wife frequently sprinkled me with garlick-water, which they considered an effectual charm against shot. The fleet continued under sail all night, steering towards the eastward. In the morning they anchored in a large bay surrounded by lofty and barren mountains. On the 2d of December I received a letter from Lieutenant Maughn, commander of the Honorable Company's cruiser Antelope, saying that he had the ransom on board, and had been three days cruising after us, and wished me to settle with the chief on the securest method of delivering it. The chief agreed to send us in a small gun-boat till we came within sight of the Antelope; then the compradore's boat was to bring the ransom and receive us. I was so agitated at receiving this joyful news, that it was with difficulty I could scrawl about two or three lines to inform Lieutenant Maughn of the arrangements I had made. We were all so deeply affected by the gratifying tidings, that we seldom closed our eyes, but continued watching day and night for the boat.

"On the 6th she returned with Lieutenant Maughn's answer, saying, he would respect any single boat; but would not allow the fleet to approach him. The chief, then, according to his first proposal, ordered a gun-boat to take us, and with no small degree of pleasure we left the Ladrone fleet about four o'clock in the afternoon. At one P. M. saw the Antelope under all sail, standing towards us. The Ladrone boat immediately anchored, and dispatched the compradore's boat for the ransom, saying, that if she approached nearer they would return to the fleet; and they

were just weighing when she shortened sail, and anchored about two miles from us. The boat did not reach her till late in the afternoon, owing to the tide's being strong against her. She received the ransom and left the Antelope just before dark. A Mandarin boat that had been lying concealed under the land, and watching their manœuvres, gave chase to her, and was within a few fathoms of taking her, when she saw a light, which the Ladrones answered, and the Mandarin hauled off. Our situation was now a critical one; the ransom was in the hands of the Ladrones, and the compradore dare not return with us for fear of a second attack from the Mandarin boat. The Ladrones would not wait till morning, so we were obliged to return with them to the fleet. In the morning the chief inspected the ransom, which consisted of the following articles: two bales of superfine cloth; two chests of opium; two casks of gunpowder, and a telescope; the rest in dollars. He objected to the telescope not being new; and said he should detain one of us till another was sent, or a hundred dollars in lieu of it. The compradore, however, agreed with him for the hundred dollars. Every thing being at length settled, the chief ordered two gun-boats to convey us near the Antelope; we saw her just before dusk, when the Ladrone boats left us. We had the inexpressible pleasure of arriving on board the Antelope at seven, P. M., where we were most cordially received, and heartily congratulated on our safe and happy deliverance from a miserable captivity, which we had endured for eleven weeks and three days.

(Signed) RICHARD GLASSPOOLE."

"China, December 8th, 1809."

"The Ladrones have no settled residence on shore, but live constantly in their vessels. The after-part is appropriated to the captain and his wives; he generally has five or six. With respect to the conjugal rights they are religiously strict; no person is allowed to have a woman on board, unless married to her according to their laws. Every man is allowed a small berth, about four feet square, where he stows with his wife and family. From the number of souls crowded in so small a space, it must naturally be sup-

posed they are horridly dirty, which is evidently the case, and their vessels swarm with all kinds of vermin. Rats in particular, which they encourage to breed, and eat as great delicacies; in fact, there are very few creatures they will not eat. During our captivity we lived three weeks on caterpillars boiled with rice. They are much addicted to gambling, and spend all their leisure hours at cards and smoking opium."

At the time of Mr. Glasspoole's liberation, the pirates were at the height of their power; after such repeated victories over the Mandarin ships, they had set at nought the Imperial allies—the Portuguese, and not only the coast, but the rivers of the celestial empire seemed to be at their discretion—and yet their formidable association did not many months survive this event. It was not, however, defeat that reduced it to the obedience of the laws. On the contrary, that extraordinary woman, the widow of Ching-yih, and the daring Paou, were victorious and more powerful than ever, when dissensions broke out among the pirates themselves. Ever since the favor of the chieftainess had elevated Paou to the general command, there had been enmity and altercations between him and the chief O-po-tae, who commanded one of the flags or divisions of the fleet; and it was only by the deference and respect they both owed to Ching-yih's widow, that they had been prevented from turning their arms against each other long before.

At length, when the brave Paou was surprised and cooped up by a strong blockading force of the Emperor's ships, O-po-tae showed all his deadly spite, and refused to obey the orders of Paou, and even of the chieftainess, which were, that he should sail to the relief of his rival.

Paou, with his bravery and usual good fortune, broke through the blockade, but when he came in contact with O-po-tae, his rage was too violent to be restrained.

O-po-tae at first pleaded that his means and strength had been insufficient to do what had been expected of him, but concluded by saying,—“Am I bound to come and join the forces of Paou?”

“Would you then separate from us!” cried Paou, more enraged than ever.

O-po-tae answered: "I will not separate myself."

Paou:—"Why then do you not obey the orders of the wife of Ching-yih and my own? What is this else than separation, that you do not come to assist me, when I am surrounded by the enemy? I have sworn it that I will destroy thee, wicked man, that I may do away with this soreness on my back."

The summons of Paou, when blockaded, to O-po-tae was in language equally figurative:—"I am harassed by the Government's officers outside in the sea; lips and teeth must help one another, if the lips are cut away the teeth will feel cold. How shall I alone be able to fight the Government forces? You should therefore come at the head of your crew, to attack the Government squadron in the rear, I will then come out of my station and make an attack in front; the enemy being so taken in the front and rear, will, even supposing we cannot master him, certainly be thrown into disorder."

The angry words of Paou were followed by others, and then by blows. Paou, though at the moment far inferior in force, first began the fight, and ultimately sustained a sanguinary defeat, and the loss of sixteen vessels. Our loathing for this cruel, detestable race, must be increased by the fact, that the victors massacred all their prisoners—or three hundred men!

This was the death-blow to the confederacy which had so long defied the Emperor's power, and which might have effected his dethronement. O-po-tae dreading the vengeance of Paou and his mistress, Ching-yih's widow, whose united forces would have quintupled his own, gained over his men to his views, and proffered a submission to Government, on condition of free pardon, and a proper provision for all.

The petition of the pirates is so curious a production, and so characteristic of the Chinese, that it deserves to be inserted at length. "It is my humble opinion that all robbers of an overpowering force, whether they had their origin from this or any other cause, have felt the humanity of Government at different times. Leang-sham, who three times plundered the city, was nevertheless pardoned, and at last made a minister of state. Wakang often challenged

the arms of his country, and was suffered to live, and at last made a corner-stone of the empire. Joo-ming pardoned seven times Mang-hwo ; and Kwan-kung three times set Tsaou-tsaou at liberty. Ma-yuen pursued not the exhausted robbers ; and Yo-fei killed not those who made their submission. There are many instances of such transactions both in former and recent times, by which the country was strengthened, and government increased its power. We now live in a very populous age ; some of us could not agree with their relations, and were driven out like noxious weeds. Some, after having tried all they could, without being able to provide for themselves, at last joined bad society. Some lost their property by shipwrecks ; some withdrew into this watery empire to escape from punishment. In such a way those who in the beginning were only three or five, were in the course of time increased to a thousand or ten thousand, and so it went on increasing every year. Would it not have been wonderful if such a multitude, being in want of their daily bread, had not resorted to plunder and robbery to gain their subsistence, since they could not in any other manner be saved from famine ? It was from necessity that the laws of the empire were violated, and the merchants robbed of their goods. Being deprived of our land and of our native places, having no house or home to resort to, and relying only on the chances of wind and water, even could we for a moment forget our griefs, we might fall in with a man-of-war, who with stones, darts, and guns, would knock out our brains ! Even if we dared to sail up a stream and boldly go on with anxiety of mind under wind, rain, and stormy weather, we must everywhere prepare for fighting. Whether we went to the east, or to the west, and after having felt all the hardships of the sea, the night dew was our only dwelling, and the rude wind our meal. But now we will avoid these perils, leave our connexions, and desert our comrades ; we will make our submission. The power of Government knows no bounds ; it reaches to the islands in the sea, and every man is afraid, and sighs. Oh we must be destroyed by our crimes, none can escape who opposeth the laws of Government. May you then feel compassion

for those who are deserving of death; may you sustain us by your humanity!"

The Government that had made so many lamentable displays of its weakness, was glad to make an unreal parade of its mercy. It was but too happy to grant all the conditions instantly, and, in the fulsome language of its historians, "feeling that compassion is the way of heaven—that it is the right way to govern by righteousness—it therefore redeemed these pirates from destruction, and pardoned their former crimes."

O po tae, however, had hardly struck his free flag, and the pirates were hardly in the power of the Chinese, when it was proposed by many that they should all be treacherously murdered. The governor happened to be more honorable and humane, or probably, only more politic than those who made this foul proposal—he knew that such a bloody breach of faith would for ever prevent the pirates still in arms from voluntarily submitting; he knew equally well, even weakened as they were by O-po-tae's defection, that the Government could not reduce them by force, and he thought by keeping his faith with them, he might turn the force of those who had submitted against those who still held out, and so destroy the pirates with the pirates. Consequently the eight thousand men, it had been proposed to cut off in cold blood, were allowed to remain uninjured, and their leader, O-po-tae, having changed his name to that of Hoe-been, or, "The Lustre of Instruction," was elevated to the rank of an imperial officer.

The widow of Ching-yih, and her favorite Paou, continued for some months to pillage the coast, and to beat the Chinese and the Mandarins' troops and ships, and seemed almost as strong as before the separation of O-po-tae's flag. But that example was probably operating in the minds of many of the outlaws, and finally the lawless heroine herself, who was the spirit that kept the complicate body together, seeing that O-po-tae had been made a government officer, and that he continued to prosper, began also to think of making her submission.

"I am," said she, "ten times stronger than O-po-tae, and government will perhaps, if I submit, act towards me as they have done with O-po-tae."

A rumor of her intentions having reached shore, the Mandarin sent off a certain Chow, a doctor of Macao, "Who," says the historian, "being already well acquainted with the pirates, did not need any introduction," to enter on preliminaries with them.

When the worthy practitioner presented himself to Paou, that friend concluded he had been committing some crime, and had come for safety to that general *refugium peccatorum*, the pirate fleet.

The Doctor explained, and assured the chief, that if he would submit, Government was inclined to treat him and his far more favorably and more honorably than O-po-tae. But if he continued to resist, not only a general arming of all the coast and the rivers, but O-po-tae was to proceed against him.

At this part of his narrative our Chinese historian is again so curious, that I shall quote his words at length.

"When Fei-heung-Chow came to Paou, he said: 'Friend Paou, do you know why I come to you?'

"Paou.—'Thou hast committed some crime and comest to me for protection?'

"Chow.—'By no means.'

"Paou.—'You will then know how it stands concerning the report about our submission, if it is true or false?'

"Chow.—'You are again wrong here, Sir. What are you in comparison with O-po-tae?'

"Paou.—'—Who is bold enough to compare me with O-po-tae?'

"Chow.—'I know very well that O-po-tae could not come up to you, Sir; but I mean only, that since O-po-tae has made his submission, since he has got his pardon and been created a Government officer,—how would it be, if you with your whole crew should also submit, and if his Excellency should desire to treat you in the same manner, and to give you the same rank as O-po-tae? Your submission would produce more joy to Government than the submission of O-po-tae. You should not wait for wisdom to act wisely; you should make up your mind to submit to the Government with all your followers. I will assist you in every respect, it would be the means of securing your own happiness and the lives of all your adherents.'

“ Chang-paou remained like a statue without motion, and Fei-heung Chow went on to say: ‘ You should think about this affair in time, and not stay till the last moment. Is it not clear that O-po-tae, since you could not agree together, has joined Government. He being enraged against you, will fight, united with the forces of the Government, for your destruction; and who could help you, so that you might overcome your enemies? If O-po-tae could before vanquish you quite alone, how much more can he now when he is united with Government? O-po-tae will then satisfy his hatred against you, and you yourself will soon be taken either at Wei-chow or at Neaou-chow. If the merchant-vessels of Hwv-chaou, the boats of Kwang-chow, and all the fishing-vessels, unite together to surround and attack you in the open sea, you will certainly have enough to do. But even supposing they should not attack you, you will soon feel the want of provisions to sustain you and all your followers. It is always wisdom to provide before things happen; stupidity and folly never think about future events. It is too late to reflect upon events when things have happened; you should, therefore, consider this matter in time!’ ”

Paou was puzzled, but after being closeted for some time with his mistress, Ching-yih's widow, who gave her high permission for him to make arrangements with Doctor Chow, he said he would repair with his fleet to the Bocca Tigris, and there communicate personally with the organs of Government.

After two visits had been paid to the pirate-fleets by two inferior Mandarins, who carried the Imperial proclamation of free pardon, and who, at the order of Ching-yih's widow, were treated to a sumptuous banquet by Paou, the Governor-general of the province went himself in one vessel to the pirates' ships, that occupied a line of ten *le*, off the mouth of the river.

As the governor approached, the pirates hoisted their flags, played on their instruments, and fired their guns, so that the smoke rose in clouds, and then bent sail to meet him. On this the dense population that were ranged thousands after thousands along the shore, to witness the important reconciliation, became sorely alarmed, and the Go-

vernor-general seems to have had a strong inclination to run away. But in brief space of time, the long dreaded widow of Ching-yih, supported by her Lieutenant Paou, and followed by three other of her principal commanders, mounted the side of the governor's ship, and rushed through the smoke to the spot where his excellency was stationed; where they fell on their hands and knees, shed tears, knocked their heads on the deck before him, and received his gracious pardon, and promised for future kind treatment. They then withdrew satisfied, having promised to give in a list of their ships, and of all else they possessed, within three days.

But the sudden apparition of some large Portuguese ships, and some Government war-junks, made the pirates suspect treachery. They immediately set sail, and the negotiations were interrupted for several days.

They were at last concluded by the boldness of their female leader. "If the Governor-general," said this heroine, "a man of the highest rank, could come to us quite alone, why should not I, a mean woman, go to the officers of Government? If there be danger in it, I take it all on myself; no person among you need trouble himself about me—my mind is made up, and I will go to Canton!"

Paou said—"If the widow of Ching-yih goes, we must fix a time for her return. If this pass without our obtaining any information, we must collect all our forces, and go before Canton: this is my opinion as to what ought to be done; comrades, let me hear yours!"

The pirates, then, struck with the intrepidity of their chieftainess, and loving her more than ever, answered, "Friend Paou, we have heard thy opinion, but we think it better to wait for the news here, on the water, than to send the wife of Ching-yih alone to be killed." Nor would they allow her to leave the fleet.

Matters were in this state of indecision, when the two inferior Mandarins who had before visited the pirates, ventured out to repeat their visit. These officers protested no treachery had been intended, and pledged themselves, that if the widow of Ching-yih would repair to the Governor, she would be kindly received, and every thing settled to their hearts' satisfaction.

With this, in the language of our old ballads, upspoke Mrs. Ching. "You say well, gentlemen! and I will go myself to Canton with some other of our ladies, accompanied by you!" And accordingly, she and a number of the pirates' wives with their children, went fearlessly to Canton, arranged every thing, and found they had not been deceived. The fleet soon followed. On its arrival every vessel was supplied with pork and with wine, and every man (in lieu it may be supposed, of his share of the vessels, and plundered property he resigned) received at the same time a bill for a certain quantity of money. Those who wished it, could join the military force of Government for pursuing the remaining pirates; and those who objected, dispersed and withdrew into the country. "This is the manner in which the great red squadron of the pirates was pacified."

The valiant Paou, following the example of his rival O-po-tae, entered into the service of Government, and proceeded against such of his former associates and friends as would not accept the pardon offered them. There was some hard fighting, but the two renegadoes successively took the chief Shih Url, forced the redoubtable captain, styled "The scourge of the Eastern Ocean" to surrender himself, drove "Frog's Meal," another dreadful pirate, to Manilla, and finally, and within a few months, destroyed or dissipated the "wasps of the ocean" altogether.

I have already noticed the marked intention of the Chinese historian, to paint the character of Paou in a poetical or epic manner. When describing the battle with Shih-Url, he says:—

"They fought from seven o'clock in the morning till one at noon, burnt ten vessels, and killed an immense number of the pirates. Shih-Url was so weakened that he could scarcely make any opposition. On perceiving this through the smoke, Paou mounted on a sudden the vessel of the pirate, and cried out: 'I Chang Paou am come,' and at the same moment he cut some pirates to pieces; the remainder were then hardly dealt with. Paou addressed himself in an angry tone to Shih-Url, and said: 'I advise you to submit: will you not follow my advice? what have you to say?' Shih-Url was struck with amazement, and

his courage left him. Paou advanced and bound him, and the whole crew were then taken captives.'

"From that period," says our Chinese historian, in conclusion, "ships began to pass and repass in tranquillity. All became quiet on the rivers, and tranquil on the four seas. People lived in peace and plenty. The country began to assume a new appearance. Men sold their arms and bought oxen to plough their fields; they burned sacrifices, said prayers on the tops of the hills, and rejoiced themselves by singing behind screens during day-time"—and (grand climax to all!) the Governor of the province, in consideration of his valuable services in the pacification of the pirates, was allowed by an edict of the "Son of Heaven," to wear peacocks' feathers with two eyes!