

The Examiner.

AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCER.

"This is true Liberty, when free-born men, having to advise the Public, may speak free."—MILTON'S EURIPIDES.

NEW SERIES.]

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THE PIRATES IN THE CHINA SEAS.

EVEN the members of the Peace Society must rejoice to hear that three of her Majesty's vessels have safely returned from performing a desperate service without casualty or damage, for though war is at all times an evil it is surely a less evil according as a less aggregate mischief has been wrought by its operations. But five years ago it was credibly reported, and never authentically denied, that there were civil broils between two of the interior provinces of China upwards of 10,000 lives were lost on each side, though the quarrel, even after these results was considered so common-place and insignificant as to provoke no notice whatever on the part of Government.—This is one stage of warlike science; what we are now going to relate exemplifies another, and the reader can form his judgment between the two as respects the interest of human life only.

The last Chinese mail left us in some uncertainty respecting the success of the expedition, consisting of the *Fury*, *Columbine*, and *Phlegethon*, despatched against the notorious pirate-chief Shaping-tai; but all anxiety on this score has been relieved by the despatches just published. From the private correspondence and other papers which have reached us we extract the following narrative, remarkable so less for its incidental illustrations of Chinese character than for the description of the engagement which it contains. It will be found very easy to track the proceedings on the chart, for the surveys of the south-western coast of China are far from perfect, and besides this, the names of places as rendered into our vernacular tongue resemble each other so closely—seldom differing in more than two letters out of ten—that any precision of topography becomes well nigh impossible. The reader will observe, however, on glancing at an ordinary map of China that its southernmost point terminates in a short peninsula, off which lies an island of considerable size, called Hainan, situated something like Ceylon at the southern extremity of India. Between the two is a channel admitting the passage of junks, and leading westward into the Gulf of Tonquin. It was somewhere in the "barbarian waters" at the head of this gulf that the encounter took place.

On leaving Hong-Kong the three British vessels proceeded westward on their search, collecting intelligence of the pirates from port to port, and often meeting with fresh traces of their recent presence. On the fourth morning of their expedition they learnt that Shaping-tai had just sailed from Hainan, that he had attacked and totally destroyed a considerable trading town on the peninsula, and that he had made off in the direction of the numerous wild islands at the head of the gulf. Thus instructed Captain Hay immediately sailed for Hoi-how, on the island of Hainan, and put himself in communication with Ho, the Governor-General of the district. By this officer and his colleagues he was most graciously received in an illuminated artificial garden, to the extreme joy of the local population; and no wonder, for such was the audacity and power of the pirate chief, that he had actually attempted an attack upon this city, and had only been defeated by the shoals, which prevented his heavy junks from coming into action. The Mandarins professed great anxiety that Captain Hay and his officers should stop to breakfast in state on the following morning; but, on hearing that in the British service such entertainments were usually postponed till the work in hand was completed, they readily acquiesced, and immediately reinforced the expedition with a quota of eight junks, carrying 100 native soldiers, under the command of Hwang, an officer who had formerly held office in these waters, and who had been raised to the rank of Mandarin for his distinguished gallantry in repulsing the pirates, at attack upon Hoi-how.

With these aids the squadron now set sail, and steered for the scene of the most recent atrocities, Pak-hoi. Here they heard that the pirates had just left, and repaired to Chuck-shan to refit. On following the enemy to Chuck-shan, they found evidence but too plain that they

were on the right track, for in consequence of some failure of the poor villagers to furnish the supplies demanded, the pirates had burnt the town, massacred a number of the inhabitants, and carried away the women and children. From Chuck-shan the expedition was directed to Hoonong, and from Hoonong to Fa-lung, where it is said that the population were actually awaiting an attack from this terrible chieftain. This intelligence proved correct, and as the squadron neared the specified point they at length saw the famous pirate fleet, numbering no fewer than sixty-four vessels, and carrying 1200 guns and 1300 men. There still, however, remained the difficulty of closing with them, for they were within the shallows, where Shaping-tai had boasted that no English could follow him, and in very truth for upwards of nine hours the British cruisers were hunting and prying about for the channel, as Captain Hay's despatch expresses it, "like tarriers at a rat-hole." At last a native pilot contrived to escape from the shore to the fleet, and took them over the bar. On coming to close quarters, the first of Shaping-tai's proceedings was to behead his agent and his whole boat's crew on suspicion of treachery, and the next to lash to the mainmast, as a target for four guns, an unfortunate envoy who had been despatched to him from Canton. He then resolutely awaited the attack with a score of his heaviest vessels moored in line, the guns of which he presently opened upon some of his own junks, which showed symptoms of wishing to escape. The fighting then became very sharp till a lucky shell from the *Phlegethon* entered the pirate flag-ship, and blew all into the air. Singularly enough, the poop of the vessel remained afloat, with the flag of defiance still flying at the top of the railing until it was consumed by fire.

This closed the first day's action; but the next morning the engagement was resumed under circumstances of greater difficulty, for the junks had betaken themselves to spots where they could only be reached by boats; and had the science of the pirates been but equal either to their desperation or their means of offence, the results must have been serious. On boarding one of the junks, a heavy gun was found loaded to the muzzle, depressed so as to bear upon the approaching boat, and behind it lay its captain dead, with the match still lighted in his hand. A chance shot had probably saved the whole of the boat's crew. In the large junks which were captured everything was found in such fighting order as would have disgraced the smartest European frigate. Quarters were clear, sponges and rammers by the side of the guns, ammunition in flannel cartridges, carefully stowed away, and all screened from accident by blankets. The shoals and banks of the river of course afforded considerable facilities of escape to the pirate crews, but the Cochinchinese, exasperated by innumerable acts of barbarity, and overjoyed at so unexpected a turn of the tables, soon surrounded the fugitives with spears and knives, and probably gave a pretty good account of them, while every native fort and garrison along the shore yielded its quota against these implacable enemies. After executing this duty, the British squadron returned to Hoi-how, where they were received with transports of gratitude and welcome. The opinions entertained by the natives of the service to peace and commerce which had been thus performed may be learnt from a "necessary communication" addressed by the Chinese Governor of Hainan to the British authorities at Hong-Kong, and we are sure our readers will have been pleased to see from the promotion-list that the gallantry of those engaged has been as well appreciated at home.

Perhaps at the next meeting of the Peace Society, some person will favour the world with a definition of what, in these days, is still to be before us. Here were upwards of 1300 men sailing from place to place, with a fleet of 64 ships, mounting 1200 guns levying contributions wherever they found means, burning all towns which affronted them, massacring men, and carrying women into slavery. Their vessels were found built, armed, and appointed for fighting only, nor was there anything on board resembling mer-

chandise except the plunder just carried off from Lien-Chou-fou, and some goods which were identified as part of the cargoes of the unfortunate *Sylph Greyhound*. How are these men to be described, if not as pirates?—and, if as pirates, is not an agitation for the protection of these "innocent fishermen" about as reasonable as an appeal to the Society for Preventing Cruelty to Animals in behalf of the now ravenous wolves in the Pyrenees?—*Times*.

ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND FORTY-NINE.

If 1848 was a revolutionary, it was likewise a reactionary year. The popular element, triumphant in the months of February, March, and April, at Paris, Vienna, Berlin, Frankfurt, Buda, Prague, Milan, Rome, Naples, and Messina, spent its force everywhere in lamentable excesses, and was quenched in rivers of blood. The middle and upper classes, terrified by the fierce onslaught of communism, united all over Europe to put it down by force, and so well did they succeed, that before the end of the year, or shortly after its close, all the above named capitals, with the exception of Rome and Messina, had been occupied by the military, and placed in a state of siege. The first of January, 1849, dawned upon Europe lying in seemingly hopeless bondage. Within less than three months, the three most powerful Governments had fallen, and most of the others tottered to their fall. Dormant nationalities started to life like spring-flowers. Parliaments and Constitutions rose like card-castles. The people were omnipotent and their rulers nothing. Society, held together by mere natural ties, had lost all legal coherence. Court politics and diplomacy seemed exploded sciences, destined to be superseded by the curt and manly allocutions of statesmen like Lamartine; and nations long gagged and manacled by banded despots, spoke to each other in friendly language, without the intervention of forms. Never had such a state of things been seen before, no, not since the world began. But the millennium of fraternity did not last long. The dynasties soon recovered from the electric shock which the flight of Louis Philippe had given them, and covertly and cunningly they repossessed themselves of the reins; for the follies and crimes of the popular leaders and partisans gave them too good grounds for denouncing the latter as the enemies of order, as well as of tyranny, of property as well as of privilege; and every man who felt that he had more to lose than he was likely to gain, lent the weight of his influence to the Conservative cause, or at least remained neutral while the struggle went on. The first of January 1849, beheld the various European Governments re-constructed, the people again bridled though chafing, the revolution all but spent, and reaction complete. Hungary, indeed, was still up in arms, but the Austrian bulletins daily proclaimed new successes on the part of the Imperial Generals, and no one anticipated the glorious struggle of the last campaign, which was to make the land of the Magyar classic ground, and associate the names of Comorn and Debreczin with those of Warsaw and Praga. Sicily, too, held out bravely against the King of Naples, although the latter was already making preparations for that decisive attack, under which the patriots succumbed. Rome was under a liberal ministry. Pius IX., who had taken refuge at Gaeta about a month before, had sent an *ultimatum* to his former subjects, which they treated lightly. The old chambers had ceased to sit, and a constituent assembly, based on universal suffrage, was on the point of being convoked. At Florence, Gioberti had proclaimed the independence of all Italy, and Leghorn had hoisted the Italian flag. In France, on the other hand, the lamentable insurrection of June had borne its natural fruits. The Republic was at a discount, and every body presaged its fall. The newly elected president had quarrelled with his ministry on what seemed a trivial, but was really a vital question,—whether or not he could, of his own authority, take possession of certain state papers relative to the foolish affairs of Boulogne and Strasbourg, where

he had figured as a pretender to the throne. The Constituent Assembly had sunk into contempt, and its dissolution was loudly called for. A consulate, an empire, or a monarchy seemed the only alternatives left to the French, if they would escape from the constant apprehension of anarchy and bloodshed, which the first republic had left as a legacy to the second. Lombardy was in the safe keeping of Radetzki, and a war contribution of 4½ million *liores* had been imposed upon its already impoverished capital. Charles Albert was meditating another inroad into that fertile province, where he was sure to find, as before, a host of adherents. Venice, the queen of the sea, still defied the Austrian troops, protected by her navy and her lagoons, and the echo of her former fame. Berlin was in a state of siege, and so was Vienna, but both in Prussia and Austria a sort of liberal constitution had been *octroyed*, and though the democratic party had been vanquished, the despotic party felt that they had not conquered. In Schleswig Holstein, the Danes were threatening as now, to break the armistice, and large bodies of troops were being concentrated in the Isle of Alsen for a descent on the peninsula. Russia was watching an opportunity which soon cast up, when the youthful Emperor of Austria, beaten by the Hungarians, saw his sceptre on the point of falling out of his nerveless grasp, and humbly besought the armed intervention of his "natural enemy" to curb his rebellious subjects. The rest of the continent had escaped the revolutionary storm of the bygone year, felt it but slightly, and every thing went on there in its usual course. At home, there was a complete lull in the political "heaven;" but parliament was on the eve of meeting, and it was foreseen that the tug of war would be fierce and stern on the Irish and Navigation Law Questions. Thus opened the last year of the first half of the nineteenth century. It closes in a very different, and, we are fain to believe, in a much more satisfactory and auspicious manner. With the exception of Germany, which still remains in an anomalous condition, all Europe is again under regular government, not of the best kind, certainly, but certainly better on the whole than at any former period. Thanks to Russia the colossus of Austria still stands entire. The Magyars have been outnumbered but not conquered, and now Servia has risen to assert her rights. In the South, Naples groans under tyranny, and Sicily has resumed a hateful yoke, but even the Bourbon Ferdinand has felt obliged to give the latter a constitution, and the former is trampled on only because it deserves to be so. Rome has suffered a gross outrage at the hands of professed friends. She has been deprived of the government of her choice, and forced to take back her old rulers. Mazzini and Garibaldi are exiles. Tuscany has returned under the mild and patient, if old-fashioned, rule of the Duke. Venice, alas, has fallen, and ceased to be a free port, but she has redeemed her ancient character for courage and constancy, and given an earnest of what she will do when a better time comes. Sardinia was struck down in the short campaign of Novara, and Lombardy is again an Austrian province; but the victor, thanks to the Hungarian war, was lenient to his demands, and Charles Albert having abdicated and withdrawn to Portugal to die of a broken heart, his successor has been permitted to reign unmolested, and promises fair to be a good constitutional king,—the first that Italy has had since the days of Servius Tullius. In France, the republic, if not thoroughly consolidated, now stands at least more chance of permanency than it did a year ago. Louis Napoleon, whom some considered a bully, and others an imbecile, has proved himself to be neither. His policy, if not the most brilliant or even the most consistent, has not compromised the peace of Europe, as all feared it would, and that, of itself, is no trifling merit, considering the very critical circumstances in which France was placed, as well as the neighbouring countries. The legal condemnation and banishment of the insurrectionists of June last have rid France of a lot of disorderlies; while in Prussia and Wurtemberg the acquittals of Walddeck and Jacobi have demonstrated the

supremacy of the law and good effects of the newly introduced system of jury trial. Christendom has happily escaped that curse of curses—a general war; yet we have had the Hungarian death-struggle, carried on on a scale of unprecedented magnitude, the route of Novara—the Roman expedition,—the massacre of Palermo,—the insurrection in Baden and the Palatinate, quenched in blood—the sack of Genoa, Berlin, Dresden, Breslau, and Ancona—the war in Schleswig Holstein, the bombardment of Fredricka, and the Danish blockade. In the east, the siege of Mooltan, and the battle Jhelum have laid all the Punjab at our feet, and hushed the rising murmurs of disaffection throughout India. In the Colonies, however, matters are not so prosperous. Canada, New South Wales, and the Cape are in deep ferment; Jamaica and British Guiana are alike disaffected; Cephalonia has been in rebellion; and Malta and Labuan have been both causes of trouble. At home, the Parliamentary Session has been signalled by the passing of two great measures, not to mention others, the Irish Encumbered Estates Act, and the Navigation Act. After an interval of seventeen years, Asiatic Cholera has paid a visit to Europe, and the mortality in various places has been alarmingly great. Our own country has not been spared, for many hundreds have fallen victims, stricken down in a day by the mysterious and noisome pestilence. But it has effectually aided the popular cry for Sanitary Reform: the Central Board of Health energetically at work; drainage, sewerage, and a supply of good water are urged as necessities for all our large towns; and in this manner we may expect the calamity to end in a blessing. The Peace Movement, the Parliamentary and Financial Reform Movement, the Freehold Land Movement, have all acquired shape and consistency within the year, and promise to go on increasing in strength until they either accomplish their several objects, or at least do some signal service to the cause of humanity. In the Church, the imprisonment of Mr Shore, and the secession of Baptist Noel and Mr. Dodson, have had no immediate result. Mr. Gorham's case, which is still undecided, will bring matters to a crisis. The commotion in the great Wesleyan body, raised on account of the ejection of Messrs. Everett, Dunn, and Griffith, has subsided for the nonce, and waits the reopening of Conference, when a strong effort will, in all likelihood, be made to get the unlucky vote of last year rescinded, and a spice of the lay element introduced into the church courts. Public indignation has been deeply raised during the year by three atrocious murders, at Stanfield Hall, Bermondsey, & Liverpool. The caterers to a depraved taste have done their utmost to work up the tragedies to the best advantage, and the names of Rush, Manning and Gleeson Wilson, will be eternally gibbeted for the execration of mankind, along with those of Burk, Courvoisier, and Thurtell. The obituary for the year contains several notable names, including the Queen Dowager, Mehemet Ali, Maria Edgeworth, Ebenezer Elliott, Isambard Brunel, John Fielden, Patrick Fraser Tytler, Albert Gallatin, the Marquis Spineto, Lady Blessington, and Horace Twiss.

OLD TUNES.

BY ELIZA COOK.

We love music dearly; love it with deep and fervent adoration that amounts, we suspect, to "blind idolatry;" for though the warm impulses of our soul are ever ready to rush into sublime ecstasy at the sound of "Handel's Coronation Anthem," they betray an equal susceptibility at the jingling of "Fisher's Horn-pipe" on a *dean's* piano with which a little Italian boy occasionally refreshes our narrow street. Nay, we even plead guilty to being touched by the mouth organ and drum that, time out of mind, have drowned the groans of the dying in the matrimonial battle field of Punch and Judy. The reeds may be sharp and the sheepskin flat; but we have a happy knack of reconciling the difference by some mysterious tuning fork of benevolence in our auricular faculties, and often have we put on a deafening pace and lingered on our errand, in order to hear the conclusion of