

Bittern. That they would not hesitate to attack merchantmen is evident from the vigorous manner they opened and maintained their fire upon us; their guns six or seven to fourteen and upwards in each, vary from 24-pounders downwards; perhaps an occasional 32-pounder may be met with, but a nice sort of medium 18 is the most common in use. This fleet, all of which is called the west coast build, and of from I should say 90 to upwards of 200 tons burthen (excepting two, which seemed considerably larger), had a hide crow's nest (said to be musket ball proof) at the main and foremast heads, capable of sheltering men who sling the stink-pot to a considerable distance; vast quantities of these were found, and an almost incredible supply of ammunition, pikes, knives, &c., on board those captured.

9. It is impossible to estimate the amount of trade thrown open for the present, if Chinese are to be credited, fully to the value of two or three millions of dollars; the prisoners talked of two hundred thousand dollars having been amongst the fleet, and assured us a considerable portion of it went down in the largest of their vessels which had sustained their fire with such spirit: it would have been well to have brought away the heavier guns, but the delay would have cost us some of the fleet; the officers saw quantities of rich furs and other booty on board those vessels which they burnt.

10. I am happy to say none of our people were wounded, one only was hurt in a trifling manner; a round shot took an awkward score between two and three inches deep out of the bowsprit, besides rending the spar; the carpenter tells me it can be rendered permanently secure by a fish we have prepared.

I have, &c.,  
(Signed) E. W. VANSITTART,  
Commander.

*His Excellency Rear-Admiral  
Sir James Stirling, Kt.*

*Winchester, at Hong Kong,  
October 30, 1855.*

SIR

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 5th September, in which you report that Her Majesty's sloop under your command, accompanied by the Confucius and Pavushan steamers, the former manned and armed from the United States frigate Macedonia, and the latter employed by the parties interested in the object of your intended expedition, and supplied by the Chinese authorities with necessary officials, pilots, and informers, had proceeded to the head of the Gulf of Leotung, and had accomplished the capture or destruction of 20 junks, whose piratical outrages had for some time previously infested the coast of China to the north of the Yangtze-Kiang, and greatly obstructed the legitimate channels of trade.

I cannot but express the satisfaction I feel at your report of the gallant conduct of Lieutenant Brooker and of Messrs. Turner and Todd, nor can I allow the present occasion to pass without conveying to you the expression of my high opinion of your own personal merit in the direction of the expedition, the success of which reflects the greatest credit on all concerned; and it will afford me great pleasure to forward to the Admiralty a copy of your communication and of this reply.

I have, &c.,  
(Signed) JS. STIRLING,  
Rear-Admiral, &c.

*Commander Vansittart,  
Her Majesty's sloop Bittern.*

*Her Majesty's sloop Bittern,*

SIR, *Sheipoo Harbour, September 22, 1855.*

IT is my painful duty to report the death, at 8-55 A.M., of Mr. Charles Turner, late Master of Her Majesty's sloop, under my command. Being in tow of the Pavushan, Mr. Turner on board that steamer had successfully piloted us into port on the 18th instant, and it was some time after, during the heat of the action, whilst altering the position of the steamer, he was led to pass outside of us into the direct line of all the piratical fire that went over the Bittern, when he received his death wound from a round shot which tore away part of his right side.

Your Excellency is well aware of the loss Her Majesty's service sustains in the premature death of this valuable officer. A thorough sailor and a first rate master, doubtless when represented by his commander-in-chief, his services will be favourably considered by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty in awarding some pension or assistance to his family. His mother, Mrs. Turner, the widow of an old Lieutenant who died a Retired Commander, resides in Parker's-place, Exmouth, Devon, and with two daughters was, I am informed, chiefly dependant on the support she received from the late lamented officer and another son in the merchant service.

I have, &c.,  
(Signed) E. W. VANSITTART,  
Commander.

*His Excellency Rear-Admiral  
Sir Jas. Stirling, Kt., Com-  
mander-in-Chief, &c. &c. &c.*

*Her Majesty's sloop Bittern,*

SIR, *Shanghai, October 5, 1855.*

I HAVE the honour to report the return last evening of Her Majesty's sloop, under my command, from the contemplated cruise mentioned in my letter of proceedings of 11th ultimo. On clearing the Yang-tze-kiang the following day, instead of steering for Ningpo, as intended, we were induced by information that morning received, to make direct for Chusan, and in Tinghai Harbour found five doubtful looking, well armed, west coast boats, a part of the Ningpo batch in Imperial Bay; we then learnt how a strong squadron of piratical craft had lately blockaded the island of Potoo, on which some English ladies were at the time, and in Sinkeamoon Channel, only a few miles distant, captured an Englishman's boat, with European passengers, bound from Ningpo for Potoo; and further, that the pirates had just gone southward, as supposed, to their favourite haunt of Sheipoo; so hurrying across to Ningpo, we anchored off Chinhae on 15th ultimo, and found there the Pavushan merchant steamer, which vessel had again been placed at my disposal. This was most fortunate, for the information received from the Chinese at Chusan proved correct; the ladies were in great danger; some of their friends, with a Mr. Russel, had already been taken within sight of Potoo, making the case far too urgent to await the assistance of the much hoped for steamers-of-war, and the towing power of the Pavushan, little as it is, enabled us to proceed to Sheipoo with more confidence.

2. Taking the time of slack water, we entered the secure and beautiful harbour of Sheipoo by its N.E. pass, on opening which, the piratical craft were seen, bearing many different banners, moored in an excellent defensive position close off the village of Sheipoo, with crowded decks,