

men at their guns pointed for the passage. I ordered Mr. Turner, the Master, who on board the Pavunshan, was towing a-head and piloting us in, to keep her at fullest speed, and with sail on the Bittern to the last moment, we were still exposed for more than ten minutes to a heavy raking fire before a shot was returned, and the ship could be brought up and sprung into position; then we found our port broadsides engaged at about 500 yards with a line of twenty-two west coast boats, lashed head and stern, the left wing of which was sufficiently advanced to cross their fire; this they kept up with astonishing spirit for some time, and it took more than an hour to silence them altogether; fortunately, being much within their first range, we suffered less than might have been expected.

3. On deserting their vessels the remains of the crews collected in bodies, with gingalls, spears, and other arms, and made for heights overlooking the village. A body of forty or fifty tried to escape in one of their captured vessels. This we dismantled and drove on shore; the pirates, scrambling up some rocks, were seized or destroyed by country people. Another body attempted to escape in a like boat, by passing round the small islands opposite Sheipoo village. The Pavunshan chased her out of the harbour and drove them on shore. On taking possession only one of the whole twenty-two vessels was found uninjured enough to move; she had eleven guns bearing on us, which had evidently been well served. A larger craft, pointed out to me early in the action as working fourteen guns, was singled out for our best shots, and was quickly sunk. I cannot resist bringing to your Excellency's notice the beautiful practice and cool management of his gun by a young able seaman, John E. Matless, who had been raised to the situation of captain of a gun, from my experience of his proficiency when exercising on a target. We removed all the guns practicable from such of the squadron as had not been sunk or blown up, and burnt the whole of the remains of the hulls at low water.

4. The only prize I have brought into port was saved by the pirates having lashed a merchant vessel on her engaged side, laden with mud, coals, &c., sunk deep enough just to admit of their firing over her. A double tier of bales of cotton on the deck completed this perfect fender and battery, through which our shot could not penetrate. A shell had fired part of her upper works. Two other merchant craft moored in like manner but not laden had proved useless as fenders. Vast quantities of powder, stink pots, iron pointed rocket arrows, &c., were destroyed, and about one hundred guns brought away, these varying from long 18-pounders downwards, some larger could not be removed, and many were lost in vessels sunk or blown up. From the country people and a prisoner whom I have kept, as he volunteered information, we learn that the fleet had about two hundred guns, with about one thousand men, chiefly Cantonese; that twelve of them had met us to the northward, and that their chiefs had given out some days before they expected the arrival of a war brig and steamer; that it would be seen how they, the pirates, would handle them.

5. On the 19th ultimo, the morning after the action, I landed a strong party under the Second Lieutenant to dislodge a body of some 300 of the escaped pirates that had established themselves in a gorge overlooking the town of Sheipoo, which they threatened. The Mandarins, greatly alarmed, were powerless, and explained through Mr. Interpreter Sinclair the evils that must befall all honest people in the neighbourhood, should I leave these

men, then become desperate, at large. I desired the officials to be in attendance to receive prisoners, and the force turning the pirate flank escaped a fire of gingalls which were pointed down a causeway leading into the town, and overpowered them without any serious casualties; the excessive heat however told, one Marine has since died from its effects, and the Second Lieutenant is suffering. This town of Sheipoo is about a mile further south than the village off which the pirates were moored, and in which many of them resided. I much fear the village is thoroughly piratical; but seeing crowds of children, women, and old men about during an armed examination I agreed with Mr. Sinclair that it would be impossible to deal severely upon the doubtful evidence collected, so warning them of the risk all incurred who had anything to do with pirates, we required them to deliver up all guns and munitions of war, and continued the search of suspected spots on either side of the harbour.

6. We received three European anchors, the smallest fitted for an iron stock, of about 16 cwt., without mark, and the two others of from 25 cwt. to 28 cwt. each, one marked "Tom Bowline," Newcastle, the other 3185, this latter confirming the statement of an American, Eli M. Boggs, a copy of whose deposition was enclosed in my letter of proceedings to your Excellency of the 11th ultimo. Besides three merchant vessels, we re-captured the Ningpo boat taken from Mr. Russel, but could find nothing of the lost property beyond an umbrella and a letter, addressed to a Mrs. Martin, Potoo; so, with the boat in tow, we proceeded direct for the channel of Sinkeamoon, where the outrage had taken place, and sending armed boats to examine it and Potoo, saw nothing of any more pirate craft, and learnt that the ladies, hearing the coast was clear, had escaped three days before, and I am happy to say we found them the following day in safety at Ningpo; indeed, news of the complete success of Her Majesty's sloop at Sheipoo had already reached the Chusan archipelago, and, doubtless, frightened many smaller villains into good behaviour for the time. We should find great difficulty in dealing with this class of boats, generally with white sails and the Ningpo rig; I examined one, the officer could find nothing European on board, and we had no information against her. The Chinese official sent with us from Ningpo, pronounced her a pirate at first, then thought her honest; within an hour of allowing her to proceed, fishing boats pulled alongside and declared she was a pirate.

7. I beg to bring conspicuously forward for your Excellency's favourable consideration the name of the Second Lieutenant George A. C. Broker, who was slightly wounded on the 18th ultimo, carried the heights on the following morning, and who besides conducting a laborious and hazardous work in destroying the deserted fleet of piratical craft, within musket range of the shore, on which some hundred of their crew had collected, was again employed in the boats in Sinkeamoon Channel, and at Potoo on the 24th ultimo. Mr. Todd, Acting Mate, and the Assistant-Surgeon Mr. Newton, were under the Second Lieutenant on these occasions, and of whom he speaks highly. Mr. Interpreter Sinclair, from Shanghai, accompanied the expedition and was of the greatest service throughout, occasionally at personal risk; and, besides that, of the seaman John E. Matless (who was a boy in the Excellent) it becomes me to bring forward the name of Henry Hurneyman, Quartermaster, Captain of a Gun, a good and cool shot, and at whose gun the men's