

Lieutenant and Adjutant Burton, to remain as a garrison in the fort, and sent Captain Boyle, with the remainder, about 150 in number, to the scene of operations by land, to cut off the enemy retreating from the junks, and to prevent the advancing boats being annoyed by gingalls or matchlocks from a large village adjoining,—a favourite tactic with the Chinese. One half of this force was ultimately sent back to the fort, and the remainder rejoined the squadron up the creek.

7. As soon as Commodore the Honourable H. Keppel perceived the men of the 1st division ascending the heights, he advanced up the channel on the east side of Hyacinth Island, with the gun and other boats of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th divisions, in the order stated in the programme. With the exception of the Haughty and Plover, the gun-boats soon grounded, but, agreeably with my instructions, the boats were pushed a-head. The junks which were admirably moored in position to enfilade the whole of the attacking force, soon opened a very heavy fire, keeping it up with great spirit until our boats were close alongside, when the crews commenced to abandon their vessels, and to effect their escape across the paddy fields. The blowing up of one or two junks hastened this movement. In about twenty minutes we had possession of fifty junks.

8. Leaving the 3rd and 4th divisions to secure the prizes, Commodore Keppel then proceeded about three miles further up the creek, where more mast-heads were visible, and found 20 junks moored across the stream in a very strong position, which opened such a well directed and destructive fire, that he was obliged to retire and wait for reinforcements. The launch of the Calcutta was sunk by a round shot, the Commodore's galley had three round shot through her, and several other boats were much injured. On additional boats coming up, the Commodore shifted to the Calcutta's black barge and again advanced, and after a severe action, the enemy gave way. They were pursued as far as Fatshan, a distance of seven miles, and seventeen of them captured and burnt. In consequence of my orders not to molest this large and important city, the three junks which passed through the creek on which it is built effected their escape.

9. The result of the expedition was the capture of between seventy and eighty heavily-armed junks, mounting, on an average, from ten to fourteen guns, (many of them long 32-pounders,) nearly all of European manufacture. As no object would have been gained by removing the prizes, I caused them, with a few exceptions, to be burnt; and the flames and numerous heavy explosions must have been seen and heard far and wide.

10. This engagement opens a new era in Chinese naval warfare. Great judgment was shewn in selecting the position for the fleet, and the Chinese, particularly the last division attacked by Commodore Keppel, defended their ships with skill, courage and effect. I enclose a list of casualties, which I regret to state is large, amounting to 3 officers and 10 seamen and marines killed, and 4 officers and 40 seamen and marines wounded, but it is to me a matter of surprise that under the circumstances of the case the loss was not greater.

11. I deeply regret to report the death of Major Kearney, Deputy-Assistant Quartermaster-General to the China Expeditionary force. This officer was on duty in the Canton River, and gallantly volunteered his services in the boats. He was killed by a round shot in the Fury's gig in the attack upon the upper division of junks.

12. I had the wounded collected as soon as

possible, and sent them to Hong Kong the same evening, in charge of Dr. Anderson, Staff-Surgeon of the Calcutta.

13. The force remained at anchor on the night of the 1st June, in the position before occupied by the junk fleet, and on the following morning dropped down to the main river, towing five of the captured vessels, which were the only ones saved from the general conflagration.

14. In the execution of these important services I need hardly state that every captain, officer, and man did his duty, and where all have so distinguished themselves I refrain from making individual selections. Should their lordships, therefore, consider the two engagements as worthy of special marks of their approval, I would beg to suggest that due regard should be paid to seniority and services.

15. I must not, however, omit to bring to their lordship's notice the gallant and efficient assistance afforded me by Commodores Keppel and Elliot, and the captains in charge of the several divisions. Commodore Keppel led the attack on the junks, and the fact of his galley having had three round shot through it, and five men, out of her crew of six, killed or wounded, is the best proof of the manner in which he maintained his position.

Commodore Keppel's report of his proceedings is herewith enclosed, and I beg to add a tracing of the Fatsham Creek, showing the position of the Forts and of the junk forces, before the commencement of the attack.

I left the river on the afternoon of the 3rd, for the purpose of receiving the mails from England, and of waiting the arrival of Lord Elgin.

All is perfectly quiet to the northward. The squadron continues generally healthy, but latterly there has been a slight increase of fever and dysentery, which may be expected at this season of the year.

I have, &c.

M. SEYMOUR, Rear-Admiral and Commander-in-chief.

I beg to add that Mr. George Raymond, Master of the Encounter, at Macao, volunteered his services as a pilot, and took the Hong Kong up the Fatsham Creek—a service of danger.

M. S.

*The Secretary of the Admiralty.*

#### OPERATIONS AGAINST MANDARIN JUNKS, &c., UP THE ESCAPE CREEK.

*Sybilie, 2nd Bar, Canton River,  
May 29, 1857.*

SIR,

I HAD the honour to report to you, yesterday, that Her Majesty's gun-boats, tenders, and ships' boats captured or destroyed about 40 mandarin junks (snake boats) on the 25th and 27th instant. I beg now to report the nature of the operations more in detail.

2. The fleet of junks which formerly remained near the main branch of the river, had moved to a position about five or six miles up the Escape Creek.

As it was very doubtful whether our small steamers could get up to them, it was necessary to have a sufficient boat force to follow up the creek, independent of gun-boat support. The arrangements I thought it necessary to make are chiefly embodied in a memorandum, of which I enclose a copy.

3. At daylight on the 25th, our force was in the creek, and soon afterwards a Mandarin fleet