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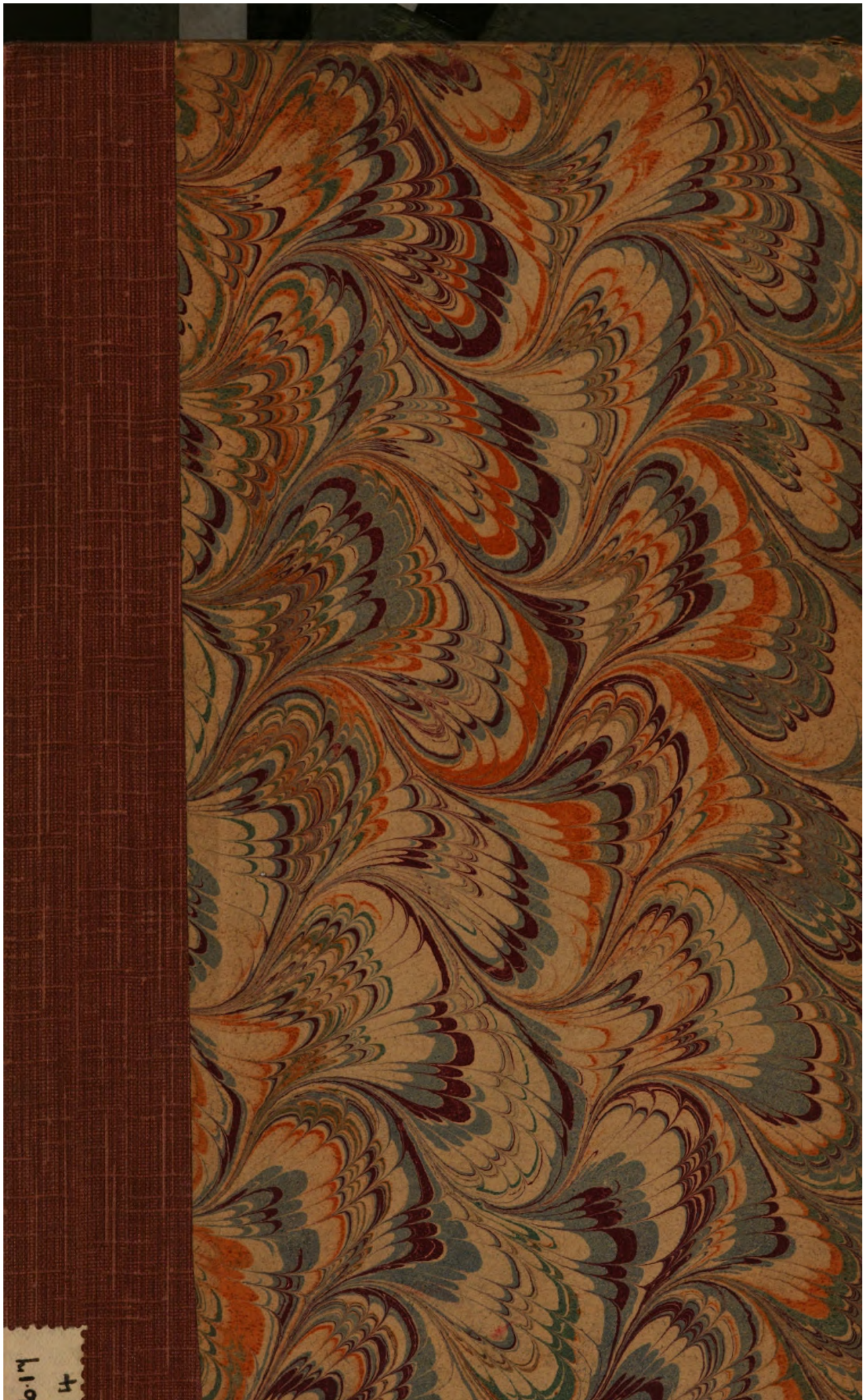
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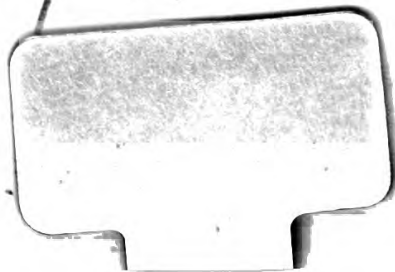


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A

LETTER FROM BORNEO;

WITH

**NOTICES OF THE COUNTRY AND
ITS INHABITANTS.**

ADDRESSED TO JAMES GARDNER, ESQ.

BY J. BROOKE, ESQ.

LONDON :

PUBLISHED BY L. AND G. SEELEY,
169, FLEET STREET;
AND SOLD BY SMITH, ELDER, AND CO., CORNHILL.

1842.

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PRINTED BY
L. AND G. SEELEY, THAMES DITTON, SURREY.



IT may be remembered that at the close of the year 1838, Mr. Brooke left England in the Royalist schooner, 142 tons, R. Y. S., with the intention of visiting Borneo. He arrived at Singapore early in 1839, and shortly after crossed over to Sarāwak, in Borneo, where he has been since engaged, making occasional returns to Singapore; and in one instance made an expedition to Celebes, which occupied about six months. Some valuable collections in natural history, and other interesting scientific details, both from Celebes and Borneo, have been forwarded to this country by Mr. Brooke.

A LETTER,

&c. &c.

Kuchin Sarāwak, Island of Borneo,
10th December, 1841.

MY DEAR SIR,

YOU are good enough, in your letter of the 4th of August last, to say that if I will furnish some details respecting this country, and of my views in settling here, you will endeavour to lay them before Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies. Amid the numerous plans for the extension of commerce, the propagation of Christianity, or the amelioration of an interesting but most unhappy aboriginal race, my present undertaking may merit attention; and I trust it may claim a candid consideration, as being divested of all personal views of advantage, except such as may ultimately flow from the improvements of the country.

Of the time I have already devoted, in order to

acquire a knowledge of this island, and of the pecuniary sacrifices I have made to benefit the people, you are well aware ; and it is only for me, in alluding to these circumstances, to add that although anxious to see a settlement under British influence and protection established here, I am indifferent whether it be formed under my own superintendance or under the direction of others, and am willing to transfer the rights and interests I have acquired to any successor who, with better means and better support, shall be able more effectually to carry my views into execution. I wish it therefore to be understood, that on public grounds only I request the support of Government or the assistance of the commercial community ; that my objects are to call into existence the resources of one of the richest and most extensive islands of the globe ; to relieve an industrious people from oppression, and to check and, if possible, to suppress PIRACY and the SLAVE TRADE, which are openly carried on within a short distance of three European settlements, on a scale and system revolting to humanity. These objects are by no means so difficult to accomplish as may at first sight appear ; and whilst I devote myself to this task, I cannot but hope it will excite the interest which it appears to me to deserve, and that, as I have already borne all the brunt, I shall not be left to bear all the burden likewise. It is evident that the success of such an undertaking must depend greatly on the

means which are employed, and though the limited resources of an individual may render the result doubtful, yet, with means better adequate to the end in view, it may be reduced nearly to a certainty, and the advantages flowing from success must overpay, a thousand fold, the moderate outlay dictated by humanity and risked for the extension of commerce.

Convinced as I am of the good that must result both to Malays and Dyaks* from even my own endeavours, and resolved to persevere in them, (as if I fail in all I propose I shall at least pave the way for future improvement, and leave, I trust, a favourable impression of English character) yet to enable others to judge of the reasons for my conviction, it will be necessary for me to enter into some brief details on the following points:—1st. The government of Borneo. 2nd. The description of the country, its inhabitants and produce. 3rd. My own past and present proceedings, and future prospects; the difficulties yet to be encountered, and the means necessary to ensure success.

1. The Government of *Borneo Proper*,† like that of every other Malay State in the present day, is in the last stage of decay and distraction, without internal power or external influence; and to such a

* The Dyak tribes are the aborigines of Borneo, inhabiting the interior of the island, and are in subjugation to the Malays who line the coast.

† Borneo Proper is the northern and north-western part of the island of Borneo, and is completely an independent state, uninfluenced by any European nation whatsoever.

degree do their intrigues and dissensions extend, that for the last twenty years the Sultan and the four hereditary Officers of State of the Royal family have merely held nominal titles, being each unable to obtain the legal investiture from the jealousy of the others. The Capital, once a place of importance, is now greatly reduced and wretched in the extreme, and though formerly containing 30,000 inhabitants it is now reduced to 4,000. The trade there is nearly at an end, both with China and the European settlements, and is confined to a few native prows: throughout the territory, the same distraction prevails. A few chiefs hold possession of the mouths of the rivers, war with each other without check or control, and oppress the inhabitants, especially the Hill Dyaks, until trade is reduced to its lowest possible limit, and produce only gathered in the smallest possible quantity; and countries abounding with the richest gifts of nature scarce feed a scanty and diminishing population. Nor does the evil cease here, for a swarm of petty Pangerans or chiefs, by their rapacity, frequently drive the people into rebellion, or reduce them to the most abject state of distress and even starvation. I am unacquainted with any parallel state of society; for though in other countries rapacity, corruption and intrigue, may be very general, there is usually some power, some rallying point for aggression or protection; but here all are rapacious, all are poor, and all so weak that

fifty Europeans would take the whole country from end to end.

Borneo Proper has scarcely held any communication with Europeans, and I believe the only treaty was entered into with the English in the year 1775, which certainly was little adhered to by either party. The Dutch have had no footing or no treaty, and the Borneons * are jealous of their neighbours, as they well may be; for the Dutch governments of Sambas and Pontianak, however advantageous they may be to Holland, in a pecuniary point of view, do not even aim at the improvement of the natives or *the extension of trade*. It is in consequence of this slight intercourse with the civilized world that the *Borneons* are more rude and more ignorant than the other Malays; and the demands of commerce, instead of improving the country generally, have had the opposite effect, and have rendered the chiefs and traders jointly, the oppressors of the poorer classes.

I may here be allowed to offer a few remarks which apply generally to the Eastern Archipelago, but more particularly to the country of Borneo. Commerce has been indiscriminately described as an important medium of improvement, and no doubt it is so, in many (perhaps all) cases where it is unshackled and left to the impulse of the people; but there are exceptions to this rule, and amongst

* Borneons. These are the Malay inhabitants of Borneo Proper, and must be considered as quite distinct from the Dyaks, or aboriginal population.

them must be reckoned the commerce of the Eastern Archipelago, which is generally in the hands of the native chiefs, and often is the most fatal instrument of oppression. Space forbids my entering more largely on this question ; but if we were to enquire into the benefits conferred by trade within the last two hundred years in the Archipelago, it would be difficult to point out one single Malayan state either more civilized, more powerful, or more happy than they were formerly ; whilst the examples of the contrary, either from this or other causes, are unhappily too numerous. My experience here enables me to affirm, from the distracted state of the government and the depression of the people, that trade, instead of being a blessing, is a curse ; and that the richer a country is, and the greater the demand by European vessels for any staple commodity, the more wretched are the inhabitants and the more rapacious the chiefs, who drive the people to unrequited labour, as long as there is any demand, to the neglect of their agricultural pursuits, on which they depend for food. The chief grows rich ; but the people are abjectly poor ; and the country is ruined by the desertion or rebellion of its inhabitants. The trade from the coast, carried on in the native prows, leads to less mischief, although it confers little good on the poorer classes : as I have remarked before, the trade is confined to a few chiefs and Nakodahs, and as the Dyak producers derive

scarcely any advantage, the export produce is limited to the smallest possible quantity, which will serve to satisfy the demands of their rulers and to purchase that indispensable necessary of life—salt. I may here mention the usual prices demanded of the Dyaks, besides other extortions to be noticed hereafter. One gantang of salt for three or four gantangs of rice, the value of the two articles being fourteen dollars for a royan of salt and fifty for a royan of rice!! When the chief has reduced the tribe to starvation, he returns the same rice and demands ten pekuls of antimony-ore for one rupee's worth of paddy or rice in the husk. Each pekul of antimony-ore may be sold for one and a half or two rupees on the spot. Half a catty of birds' nests are taken for one gantang of rice, being a moderate profit of 2,000 per cent. I would call the attention of intelligent men to this subject, and will only add that until the merchant can deal with the producer, or at any rate till the producer has the liberty of taking the best price offered for his goods, there can be no hope of ameliorating the condition of the Dyaks, by developing the resources of the country. To what extent this end might be effected I shall hereafter have to mention.

2ndly. The Borneon territory is comprised between Tanjong Datu, in lat. 2 deg. 7 min. 17 sec. N., long. 109 deg. 43 min. 57 sec. E., and Mal-ludu Bay; but the northern part of the island is inhabited by a number of Piratical communities,

formed from a mixture of the surrounding countries, and the authority of the Borneon government is scarcely recognized to the northward of the capital of Borneo Proper river, the entrance of which lies in lat. 5 deg. 6 min. 42 sec. N. and long. 115 deg. 24 min. 00 sec. E.

Between Tanjong Datu and the Murah Basar, or principal entrance of the Borneo river are the following rivers: Samatan, Lundu, Sarāwak, Samarahan, Sadong, Linga, Sakarran, Serebas, Kalaku, Niabur, Kejang, Kanowit, Palo, Bruit, Matto, Oya, Muka, Latow, Bintulu, Meri, Barram, Birah, Balyit, Tutong, Pungit, Murah-damit, (small entrance,) and Murah Basar, or Borneo river.

Several of these rivers are navigable for European vessels; many of them connected with each other in the interior, and diverging into numerous streams which descend from the range of mountains, separating the north-west coast from the Pontianak river. It is not my purpose to enter into any detail of these countries, of which it will be here sufficient to say that they are generally inhabited by Malays at the entrance of the rivers, and Dyaks in the interior, and that they are all in the state I have before described, with the exceptions of Serebas and Sakarran, two powerful Dyak tribes, who having thrown off the authority of the Malays have turned Pirates, and ravage the coasts even as far as Celebes.

Sarāwak, the more immediate subject of atten-

tion, extends from Tanjong Datu to the entrance of the Samarahan river, a distance along the coast of about sixty miles in a E.S.E. direction, with an average breadth of fifty miles. It is bounded to the westward by the Sambas territory, to the southward by a range of mountains, which separate it from the Pontianak river, and to the eastward by the Borneo territory of Sadong. Within this space there are several rivers and islands, which it is needless here to describe at length, as the account of the river of Sarawak will answer alike for the rest. There are two navigable entrances to this river and numerous smaller branches for boats, both to the westward and eastward; the two principal entrances combine at about twelve miles from the sea, and the river flows for twenty miles into the interior, in a southerly and westerly direction, when it again forms two branches—one running to the right, the other to the left hand, as far as the mountain range. Besides these facilities for water communication, there exist three other branches from the easternmost entrance, called Moratabas, one of which joins the Samarahan river, and the two others flow from different points of the mountain range already mentioned. The country is diversified by detached mountains, and the mountain range has an elevation of about three thousand feet. The aspect of the country may be generally described as low and woody at the entrance of the rivers, except a few high mountains; but in the

interior undulating in parts, and part presenting fine level plains. The climate may be pronounced healthy and cool, though for the six months from September to March a great quantity of rain falls. During my three visits to this place, which have been prolonged to eight months, and since residing here, we have been clear of sickness; and during the entire period not one of three deaths could be attributed to the effects of climate. The more serious maladies of tropical climates are very infrequent; from fever and dysentery we have been quite free, and the only complaints have been rheumatism, colds and ague; the latter however attacked us in the interior, and no one has yet had it at Kuching, which is situated about twenty-five miles from the mouth of the river.

The soil and productions of this country are of the richest description, and it is not too much to say, that within the same given space, there are not to be found the same mineral and vegetable riches in any land in the world. I propose to give a brief detail of them, beginning with the soil of the plains which is moist and rich, and calculated for the growth of rice, for which purpose it was formerly cleared, and used, until the distractions of the country commenced. From the known industry of the Dyaks, and their partiality to rice cultivation, there can be little doubt that it would become an article of extensive export, provided security be given to the cultivator and a proper

remuneration for his produce. The lower grounds, besides rice, are admirably calculated for the growth of sago, and produce canes, rattans, and forest timber of the finest description for ship-building and other useful purposes. The Chinese export considerable quantities of timber from Sambas and Pontianak particularly of the kind called Balean by the natives, or the lion wood of the Europeans, and at this place it is to be had in far greater quantity and nearer the place of sale. The undulating ground differs in soil, some portions of it being a yellowish clay, whilst the rest is a rich mould; these grounds generally-speaking as well as the slopes of the higher mountains, are admirably calculated for the growth of nutmegs, coffee, pepper, or any of the more valuable vegetable productions of the tropics. Besides the above mentioned articles, there are birds' nests, bees' wax, and several kinds of scented wood in demand at Singapore, which are all collected by the Dyaks, and would be collected in far greater quantity provided the Dyak was allowed to sell them. Turning from the vegetable to the mineral riches of the country we have diamonds, gold, tin, iron, and antimony ore certain; I have lately sent what I believe to be a specimen of lead ore to Calcutta, and copper is reported. It must be remembered in reading this list that the country is as yet unexplored by a scientific person, and that the enquiries of a geologist and a mineralogist would throw further light

on the minerals of the mountains and the spots where they are to be found in the greatest plenty. The diamonds are stated to be found in considerable numbers and of a good water, and I judge the statement to be correct from the fact that the diamond workers from Sandak come here and work secretly, and the people from Banjar Massing, who are likewise clever at this trade, are most desirous to be allowed to work for the precious stone. Gold of a good quality certainly is to be found in large quantities. The eagerness and perseverance of the Chinese to establish themselves is a convincing proof of the fact ; and about ten years since a body of about 3000 of them had great success in procuring gold by their ordinary mode of trenching the ground.

The quantity of gold yearly procured at Sambas is moderately stated at 130,000 bunkals, which reckoned at the low rate of 20 Spanish dollars a bunkal, gives 2,600,000 Spanish dollars, or upwards of half a million sterling. The most intelligent Chinese are of opinion that the quantity here exceeds the quantity at Sambas, and there is no good reason to suppose it would fall short of it when once a sufficient Chinese population is settled in the country.

Antimony ore is a staple commodity which is to be procured in any quantity. Tin is said to be plentiful, and the Chinese propose working it, but I have had no opportunity of visiting the spot

where it is found. The copper, though reported, has not been brought, and the iron ore I have examined is of inferior quality. The specimen of what I supposed to be lead ore has been forwarded to Calcutta, and it remains to be seen what its value may be. And besides these above-mentioned minerals there can be little doubt of many others being discovered, if the mountain range was properly explored by any man of science. Many other articles of minor importance might be mentioned, but it is needless to add to a list which contains articles of such value, and which would prove the country equal in vegetable and mineral productions to any in the world.

From the productions I turn to the inhabitants, and I feel sure that in describing their sufferings and miseries I shall command the interest and sympathy of every person of humanity, and that the claims of the virtuous and most unhappy Dyaks will meet with the same attention as those of the African. And these claims have the advantage that much good may be done without the vast expenditure of lives and money which the exertions on the African coast yearly cost, and that the people would readily appreciate the good that was conferred upon them, and rapidly rise in the scale of civilization. The inhabitants may be divided into three different classes, viz., the Malays, the Chinese, and the Dyaks, of the two former little need be said, as they are so well-known. The Malays are not

numerous, and, generally speaking, with the exception of the Borneo Pangerans, are well inclined to aid me as far as lays in their power. The Chinese are about 400 in number, and the only impediment to their immigrating is their poverty and the present high price of provisions. The Chinese, as it is well known, are divided into kunsis or companys, and a rival company to the one at present here, offers to bring 3000 men in a few months provided they can get permission to do so. The Chinese are so industrious a people that the aspect of a country soon changes wherein they settle ; and as they are most desirous to gain a footing here, there can be no doubt of success ultimately in developing the resources of the soil and working the minerals to great advantage. The Dyaks, by far the most interesting portion of the inhabitants, are confined almost entirely to the mountainous country where they have fastnesses to which they fly on the slightest alarm. These people are mild, industrious, and so scrupulously honest that a single case of theft has not come under my observation, even when surrounded by objects easily appropriated and tempting from their novelty. In their domestic lives they are amiable and addicted to none of the glaring vices of a wild state : they marry but one wife, and their women are always quoted amongst the Malays, as remarkable for chastity, nor are they degraded as in many communities. The head hunting or taking the

heads of their enemies is a feature in warfare by no means new or extraordinary, and similar to the scalping of the North American Indian, is a trophy of victory and prowess. Amongst the hill Dyaks, this custom is confined entirely to the heads of enemies, and is the effect and not the cause of war; their wars are by no means bloody, and are never carried on but by small companies who enter on the enemies' ground and lay in ambush for parties or individuals of their foes. The exaggerated accounts of some travellers have been drawn from the more savage and predatory tribes of the coast, but these tribes have forsaken their original customs, and have joined piracy to their former practice of taking heads, and they are not different from other pirates who destroy as well as plunder. The hill Dyaks, such as I have briefly described them, are a most interesting race, and present more facilities for the amelioration of their condition than any other people. In general, however, they are sunk in misery, and too frequently exposed to famine; but when only moderately oppressed, I have seen tribes who brought to mind the simplicity, if not the happiness, of primitive society. The number of these people in the country of Sarāwak may generally be stated at 10,000; but with the slightest protection, numbers who have retired beyond the reach of their cruel oppressors would return to their former habitations. Their freedom from all prejudice, and their scanty

knowledge of religion would render their conversion to Christianity an easy task, provided they are rescued from their present sufferings and degraded state, but until this be done, it will be in vain to preach a faith to them, the first precepts of which are daily violated on their own persons. Never indeed were people more oppressed or more wretched ; and although to those far removed from witnessing their sufferings and their patience, the enthusiasm I feel and cannot help expressing, may appear exaggerated, yet probably were they themselves to change situations with me, they would perhaps speak, if not feel, more warmly than I do. In order, however, to give a clear idea of the past and present state of the Dyaks, it will be necessary to revert to the *customs* by which they are governed. They are always considered an inferior race, and a heavy penalty is imposed on them for committing any offence against a Malay ; to kill a Malay, under *any circumstances of aggression*, would subject them to death, or even worse punishment ; to strike or scuffle with a Mahomedan, though he be caught in the act of stealing their property, would likewise be a grave offence, and so far is this carried that should a Malay be hurt by one of the traps laid by the Dyaks for wild boars, the Dyak would gladly compound *this crime* by making over two thirds of all his property to the person so injured, and he would be lucky to escape at so cheap a rate ; on the other hand a Malay killing a Dyak is rarely

*punished, even by the imposition of a small fine, and the only inconvenience he suffers is being unable to visit that particular tribe from a just fear of retaliation. The direct tax paid by the Dyaks to their local rulers is trifling in amount, but they suffer afterwards from all sorts of exactions carried on by means of artifice or violence. It would be impossible to describe all these exactions, and I shall therefore confine myself to such as are most oppressive, and the effects of which are most ruinous. The Dyaks, as I have already mentioned, are extensive cultivators of rice, and it will appear from what follows how necessary a precaution it is, to save themselves from the consequences resulting from a failure to meet the demands made on them by the Malays. The local rulers have the following rights:—First, the monopoly of all the Dyak trade in bees'-wax, birds' nests, &c., &c., the price of these articles being fixed by the purchaser at a five hundredth part of their value in the market,—nor dare the Dyak refuse this nominal remuneration, or accept a better from another purchaser. They have likewise the right of indirect taxation, which is carried on to a very great extent and in the following manner:—An article, say a piece of iron two feet long, is sent to the head of the Dyak tribe with orders for him to buy it at two, three, or even four pound sterling, and *he dare* not refuse. Another is sent in the same way, another and another, until the rapacity

of the chief is satisfied, or, which is more frequently the case, the victim can no longer meet the demand. All their valuable produce is thus wrested from them, rice is taken in the same way, and to finish this list of exactions, they are called upon to labour at antimony ore, or any work too heavy to suit the lazy habits of their tyrants. When the demands of the chief have been met, the herd of petty Pangerans and worthless followers flock to the plunder of the Dyaks, and by threats, violence, and false accusations, extort what remains of their provisions until the cultivator, who supplies rice *for export*, at the end of each year has not sufficient to feed his family, and lives on raw sago, fruit, or vegetables, and too often is reduced to a state of famine as deplorable to contemplate as it is difficult effectually to relieve. I wish for the sake of humanity I could stop here, but the worst feature of cruelty yet remains to be stated. The Dyaks reduced to starvation, sometimes are unable, sometimes refuse to meet these multiplied demands; at other times the Malays bring some trifling accusation, and often are not at the trouble to seek any plea to justify their proceedings. The result is the same, the Dyak tribe is attacked and plundered, and their wives and children seized *and sold as slaves!*

This practice is carried on to an extent revolting to humanity,—not only here, but throughout the Borneon territory wherever the Dyaks are weak

and their oppressors strong ; and the unwarlike Malays do not incur risk, as they generally employ the Serebas and Sakarran Dyaks, aided by a small party with fire-arms, to make the attack. The terms of the agreement are, that the Malays get two-thirds of the property and slaves, whilst the predatory Dyaks get the other third, and all the heads. A few facts which have fallen under my own observation will speak for themselves. Of twenty Dyak tribes under this government more than half have been robbed of their wives and children in part ; and one tribe is without women or children amongst them, upwards of two hundred having been led away into slavery at Sakarran and Sadong. The Chief of this tribe, when he met me a short time since, described their former and their present condition with great truth and force, and concluded his appeal in the following words :—“ For more than a year we have asked the Pangerans to restore our wives and children : they have promised, and deceived us. If you will get our families—if you will give us our wives and children back, we will be faithful in prosperity and adversity : we will work for you, and all that we have or can get shall be yours.” I may perhaps be pardoned for saying that I am now in treaty for the release of these unhappy victims, and have hopes I may ultimately succeed in restoring them to their husbands. A short time since, the following case came before me :—A Pangeran extorted

a slave from a Dyak chief, but left him with his tribe; when a few months after a Malay, representing himself as sent by the same Pangeran, demanded and took the slave away. The Pangeran denied having sent, and ordered ten slaves to be paid in lieu for the one lost; and would have succeeded in getting them, had I not heard of the circumstance. No comment need be made, except that it is probable he sent for his slave himself; and at any rate the man who took him remains unpunished. One more fact, and I will conclude this branch of my subject. Several of the Borneo Pangerans, about six months since, invited a large party of Sakarran Dyaks to the plunder of the tribes up this river, but before their call was answered my arrival in the 'Royalist' disconcerted their plan in some measure. A hundred war prows of the Sakarrans carrying some fifty, and none less than twenty-five men, and in all certainly a body of three thousand men, arrived however at Kuching, and requested permission to make the arranged attack. The Rajah Muda Hassim, who is incapable of such an act, was worked upon by fear to give over the management of the business to another, and retired into his seraglio. I was all along assured that the Sakarrans could not ascend the river, and the first intimation to the contrary was the departure of the war prows, attended by sixty Malays, to guide them to their prey. They had however reckoned too much on

my forbearance ; for the instant I was apprized of the circumstances I loaded the schooner's guns, and armed her boats, and threatened not only to attack the Sakarran Dyaks, but to make the Pangerans answerable for their act. After a vain attempt to convince me the Dyaks were too powerful to be resisted, they quietly yielded to my peremptory demand ; and I had the satisfaction, on the following morning, to see the fleet return. The consequences would have been lamentable, indeed, had these Pangerans been allowed to carry their iniquitous scheme into execution ; and I cannot but rejoice in having been instrumental in saving the Dyaks from this aggravation of their miseries. Since that time, another native chief has sent the Sakarran Dyaks to attack a tribe called Sunpro, and after a night surprize they captured forty women and children ; killing about the same number of men, and burning their village.

Such is the sad condition of the Dyak tribes : such the sufferings of an innocent and industrious race, which are scarcely to be matched in the annals of nations, and unequalled even on the coast of Guinea ; for there the lot of slavery falls only on a portion of the community, whilst here it is the wanton butchery and the wholesale slavery of entire communities. I need make no further comment of my own, save that I have endeavoured to render this statement as plain and matter-of-fact as possible ; and have sought instead of ex-

aggerating, to soften the features of a most horrible picture. After residing amongst this people, and becoming intimately acquainted with their characters and many virtues,—after witnessing their sufferings and patience, and very firmly convinced of the facilities with which they might be improved ; after struggling for a year to protect them, and after acquiring their slowly-bestowed confidence, it cannot be a matter of surprise that I appeal in their behalf to that generosity which I am led to think aids the distressed and commiserates the sufferings of our fellow-creatures. If a case of misery ever called for help, it is here : and the act of humanity which redeems the Dyak race from their condition of unparalleled wretchedness, will open a path for Religion and for Commerce which may in future repay the charity which ought to seek no remuneration.

If the British public be indifferent to the sufferings of this unhappy race, now for the first time made known to them ; if when the means of ameliorating this inhuman state of things, and alleviating the miseries of an innocent and much abused people, are pointed out, they turn a deaf ear to the appeal, they are not what I believe them to be, and what they profess themselves.

It now only remains for me to state my proceedings since my first arrival at this place, and my views as to the best mode of suppressing the atrocities I have described, and of developing the resources of

the country in a commercial point of view. In doing so I shall confine myself to the lowest possible limit which may offer a fair prospect of success ; and I shall be better pleased if the plan is enlarged so as to embrace a more extended field of operations. The rebellion of this place arose out of the intrigues of two or three Borneo Pangerans, conjointly with some of the Pangerans of Sambas, and the Rajah Muda Hassim came from Borneo to suppress it, and to prevent the alienation of the territory. I may say of this prince that he is mild, humane and just ; wishing to do well, without the resolution or energy of character necessary, and decidedly partial to the English. On his arrival here he found a most difficult task ; and after four years, from the lukewarmness of his followers, the deceit and intrigues of his rivals, and the falseness of some of those about him, he was reduced to circumstances of great distress and difficulty. I first visited Sarāwak in 1839, and in July 1840 returned, with the intention of remaining ten days, which was prolonged week after week at the urgent entreaties of the Rajah. Having at length intimated my intention of taking leave, a request was made to me to assist in the war, which I refused in the first instance, but afterwards acceded to, the following reasons inducing me to alter my determination. The Rajah Muda Hassim's cause was undoubtedly just, and was identical with the independance of Borneo : and on the continu-

ance of this independence depends the considerable trade between the coast and Singapore. I had a good opinion of the Rajah Muda Hassim's character and intentions, and could not but lament to see an amiable prince, who had shown himself partial and friendly to our nation, reduced to such difficulties. The Rajah himself urged upon me that he was deceived and betrayed by the intrigues of Pangerans, who aimed at alienating his country, and that if I left him he should probably have to remain here for the rest of his life, being resolved to die rather than yield to the unjust influence which others were seeking to acquire over him; and he appealed to me that after our friendly communication I could not, as an English gentleman, desert him under such circumstances. I felt that honourably. I could not do so; and though reluctantly enough, I resolved to give him the aid he asked;—small indeed, but of consequence in such a petty warfare. After a three month's campaign, the rebels surrendered at discretion, and the difficult task of saving their lives was imposed upon me; for although their lives were forfeited by the law of all countries, I could not reconcile it to myself to allow their execution, when I had been a party to their capture. Those who know the Malay character will appreciate the difficulty of the attempt to stand between the monarch and his victims; and to the kindness of the Rajah's disposition my success may be attributed. I may

here mention that the women and children of the rebels were taken as hostages, and kept confined for nine months, when I had the satisfaction of releasing them, and restoring them to their families. At this period Muda Hassim offered me the government of the country, and we held several conferences on the subject, when it was finally settled that I should bring from Singapore a supply of all the necessaries required, and in return receive antimony ore, and that on my return Muda Hassim should give this grant which he had volunteered. I could at once have obtained this grant, but I preferred interposing a delay ; because to accept such a boon when imposed by necessity, or from a feeling of gratitude for recent assistance, would have rendered it both suspicious and useless ; and I was by no means eager to enter on the task (the full difficulties of which I clearly foresaw) without the undoubted and spontaneous support of the Rajah. In the month of April of this year I once more arrived at Kuching, but it was not until the 24th of September that Muda Hassim affixed his seal to the deed which made over the government into my hands. This delay arose in a great measure from the intrigues of those about him, from his own procrastinating disposition, and from his fear of releasing the rebel families, on which I insisted as a necessary preliminary.

The agreement is to the following effect. " That

the country and government of Sarāwak is made over to me (to be held under the crown of Borneo,) with all its revenues and dependencies, on the yearly payment of 2,500 dollars. That I am not to infringe upon their customs or religion ; and in return, that no person is to interfere with me in the management of the country.” This agreement is made only by Muda Hassim ; and it may be objected that he alone is not capable of granting without the consent of his nephew the Sultan ;* but let it be answered to this, that there is no Sultan in Borneo, and that the Rajah Muda Hassim’s claim is as good as that of his nephew ; and secondly, that he holds a deed from his nephew for the disposal of this country according to his pleasure. From the imbecility of his nephew, Amar Ali, the affairs of Borneo are entirely in the hands of the Rajah Muda, and no difficulty will be found in gaining the additional signature, if required. I may add, that since the 24th of September I have issued a brief code of regulations, a translation of which accompany this paper, and have instituted a Court of Justice, where the brothers of Muda Hassim sit with myself to decide on cases. I have also had an interview with most of the Dyak chiefs, to whom I have explained minutely my wishes in their favour, and my intention of substituting a fixed rice tax, in lieu of the system of robbery which is yearly carried

* Amar Ali is the nephew of the Rajah Mada Hassim, and claims the title of Sultan, but has hitherto been unable to make his claim good.

on. These measures have all been successful ; and our further progress is now only checked by the arrival of a brig from Sambas, with the avowed purpose of recovering a debt from the Chinese, and the real one of disturbing me here. In the latter attempt, however, they have met with little success ; for although causing some anxiety, my influence has been strengthened rather than weakened by this interference. The only excuse I can plead for this egotistical detail is, that it will be found necessary to the right understanding of my present position ; and I escape with pleasure from prosecuting it further, in order to lay before you what may be done by a moderate outlay in furtherance of the three great objects already mentioned, viz. the extension of trade, the propagation of Christianity, and the suppression of the atrocities practised in the Dyak tribes.

The riches of the island of Borneo are not to be questioned ; and it possesses a population of some millions of inhabitants shut up in its interior, who are debarred the use of British manufactures from the restrictive policy of the Dutch, and the state of warfare they live in with the Malays. It will be found impossible, however, to open an effective communication with these people, or to develop the resources of the island generally, without the previous amendment of its internal condition, and until the cultivator derives some adequate remuneration for his produce. To effect these objects, it

is not required that any expensive establishments should be maintained, or any great capital risked, but only that a friendly intercourse should be opened with the chiefs, a knowledge gained of their country, and a free trade encouraged at a station like Sarāwak, where the small native canoes might resort, and whence an inland communication might be carried on.

It was with these views I accepted the government of Sarāwak ; and in order to carry them out, I propose the following steps :

1st, to encourage the immigration of Chinese and Javanese, and after twelve months to tax them at the yearly rate of one real, or 3s. 6d. per head. The same light tax, or its equivalent in rice, to be imposed likewise on the Malays and Dyaks whenever the former people can afford to pay it.

The industry of the Chinese will insure the prosperity of the country ; and there can be no doubt they will crowd here in vast numbers when *any government* is established, as they have already persevered in forming settlements spite of repeated disasters arising from the disturbed state of the country. The Javanese, like the Chinese, would easily be procured, and form a body distinguished for their peaceful habits and fondness for agriculture ; whilst the Bugis,* from their love of commerce and enterprising disposition, have expressed a desire to come here, provided I resolved to stay. In

* The Bugis are the trading races of the Eastern Archipelago.

short, there can be no doubt that a country eminently calculated to support a large population, would be rapidly filled, should there be a government sufficiently strong to save them from being plundered, and to clear the sea of pirates. Time, however, is requisite to settle a population, and to allow them to gain some profits from the soil, and the expense in the interim is the question which occupies my attention, and forms the principal obstacle to success. If left entirely to my own resources for the future, it is necessary that I depend on the trade, to defray the charges of the establishment which I am obliged to keep, and being forced to trade is contrary to my wishes, and my avowed objects, may weaken my influence, by creating jealousy, and must include a monopoly of antimony ore. I must therefore repeat that only whilst forced by circumstances will I mix myself up with commerce.

2ndly, I propose to open a friendly communication with the different chiefs, and with the interior tribes, by visiting them either once or twice a year, and inspiring a confidence in our good intentions; and there will be no difficulty in so doing, as from their knowledge of me, they are already well disposed to take any steps which I may point out.

3rdly. To return with the Rajah Muda Hassim to Borneo Proper, and through his means to stop the distractions and intrigues of the capital, and establish an English influence.

4thly. By a free trade to remove the oppression practised on the cultivator, by giving him a proper participation in the profits of his produce. This will be effected, in a great measure, by a post like Sarāwak, which they can reach in their small boats, (as the poorer classes of Malays and Dyaks will then trade themselves, which they are now unable to do in consequence of the distance from Singapore,) and from the visits of the European merchant to the numerous ports on the coast. When the producer is remunerated, the resources of the island will be called into existence, and certainly not one five hundredth part now ever finds its way to market, even from the rivers of the coast. I need not dwell longer on this point, for whoever remembers the former accounts of the city of Borneo, with its European and Chinese trade, and compares them with the present state, will be able to judge what the country might be.

5th. The extirpation of Piracy!

No remark is necessary on this head, except that the slave trade and piracy joined is carried on openly on this coast; that each year fleets of Piratical Lanoons wait for the prows* bound for Singapore, and reduce their crews to slavery, after capturing their vessels. Nor is this slavery of that mild description which is often attributed to the Asiatics, for these victims are bound for months

* The Lanoons are pirates inhabiting the small cluster of islands between Borneo and Magindano.

and crowded in the bottom of the pirate vessels, where they suffer all the miseries which could be inflicted aboard an African slaver. Besides the Lanoon pirates, the Dyaks of Serebas and Sakarran yearly sweep the shore, even to Celebes, murdering the men of all nations, and capturing women and children, rendering the communication along the coast dangerous, and preventing the cultivation of the soil near the sea shores. It is sufficient to say that all this has been going on for years, within a few days sail of Singapore, and that it might be suppressed in a few months by vigorous measures. The protection of the Dyak race in Sarāwak would quickly follow the residence of Europeans, and indeed already their condition has been improved in some measure, and in future the residence of missionaries amongst them would give them confidence to resist the unjust demands which they are now forced to comply with. In the present day, I know no field for the missionary which promises such a harvest as the Dyak tribes, if their condition be ameliorated simultaneously with the introduction of a new faith.

These are the advantages which may result to commerce and humanity, by a proper British influence being established in Borneo ; and I conceive that policy dictates these measures at the present time, because in case of any delay it will no longer be in our power. From the distractions of Borneo, some European state must very shortly interfere

in their concerns, and the supremacy of the Dutch government would be the knell of the British trade which now is carried on, and effectually stop all measures of improvement. The means for carrying these measures into effect would be as follows:—A steam-boat of 100 tons, drawing little water, and properly manned and armed. This vessel, besides being employed in suppressing piracy and keeping open a communication with Singapore and China, might survey the coast of Borneo and the Palawan passage. This survey is greatly required, to prevent the yearly loss of life which occurs; and a knowledge of these seas is daily becoming important, from the increased communication which will follow our present struggle with China.*

The recent discovery of coal in Borneo (the capital) may attract attention, as facilitating our steam intercourse; and at any rate it is fully time that a knowledge should be acquired and a check put to the depredations of the pirates who issue from the northern ports of Borneo, Magindano, and Saluk.

The establishment ashore could not be less than six Europeans, ten Javanese, and one hundred Bugis, and the amount yearly for wages at £2,000 to £2,500 sterling, making in all a total of £4,000 to £5,000 yearly expense. I do not dwell on this

* I mention a steamer as the most efficient vessel; but my schooner, the *Royalist*, might be substituted at a yearly cost of 2,000*l.* sterling.

topic, but the amount here mentioned is probably the lowest on which the undertaking could be prosecuted so as to ensure a fair prospect of success ; and as the country becomes populous, it would gradually maintain a portion of the outlay, or its increasing resources might be expended in strengthening its force. The pecuniary amount is not a large one, if the objects proposed be considered ; and for the purposes of humanity alone, larger sums are spent on less certain grounds. I leave, however, the consideration of the subject to those who read what I have already advanced, and whether the government directly or indirectly give their sanction to the undertaking, or whether the public support it, every facility shall, on my part, be given to aid the ends in view, and *no arrangement* which aims at developing the country and assisting the Dyak races shall meet with obstruction from me : for I wish it to be clearly understood that I consider myself as an agent whom fortune has enabled to open the path, and that I am as ready to give place to a successor as I am to remain ; and in doing either, seek only to advance the object which I consider recommended both by policy and humanity. My own intentions will by no means be altered, if I fail in rousing the attention and sympathy of those able, if willing, to enter on the task ; and the only difference will be, that I must seek to raise the necessary expences by entering on trade, in which case my position will be less

influential and less useful than it would otherwise be, and my attention distracted by details foreign to my principal object. If my own advantage was the prominent motive, the latter plan has more to recommend it, for at the present time nothing prevents my monopolizing the produce of the country and holding its imports as a monopoly too ; and if I wanted an excuse, I should readily find it in the example of my European neighbours. I am convinced, however, that nothing but a free trade will benefit this country, and call its resources into existence ; but it must be a free trade which strikes at the monopolies of the interior,—at Malay monopoly as well as others. That my views will one day be appreciated, I feel assured ; but if delay be interposed, I doubt whether they will ever be acted upon ; for, as I have before remarked, we shall lose the trade we have, if the Dutch encroach on the territory of Borneo. How much may be effected by small means I have already shown ; and I am now, and have been holding the government of the country, with the Rajah Muda Hassim's assistance, with only four Europeans and eight natives, and in the space of eight months from a state of distraction, amounting almost to a struggle, the country is peaceful and its inhabitants cultivating the ground. The experiment of developing a country through the residence of a few Europeans, and by the assistance of its native rulers has never been fairly tried ; and it appears to

me in some respects more desirable than the actual possession by a foreign nation ; for if successful the native prince finds greater advantages, and if a failure the European government is not committed. Above all it insures the independence of the native princes, and may advance the inhabitants further in the scale of civilization by means of this very independence, than can be done when the government is a foreign one, and their natural freedom sacrificed. Whatever may be the result in my own case, I shall have no cause to complain, and whatever sacrifice I may fruitlessly make, it will ever be a source of satisfactory reflection that I have done much good in the country, that I have saved the lives of many men, restored many captives to their families, and freed many slaves from bondage ; that I have rescued an amiable and worthy native prince from the difficulties which beset him, and that I have restored him to a position whence he can claim what is his due ; that I have fostered an industrious and oppressed race, and in a time of famine have relieved numbers from starvation. That I turned back a piratical fleet who would have carried destruction and slavery throughout the country ; that I have assisted the Chinese to settle here, and above all, that I have repressed vice and assisted the distressed. I am proud to say this much ; and whatever the future may bring, I am ready to meet ; and I sincerely trust it may be of some benefit to the native races

and the cause of humanity. Let not those at a distance imagine that I have suffered nothing, or sacrificed nothing in this task ; but personal convenience and personal advantage has not been and is not my object, and after devoting time and fortune I shall retire with pleasure, if others will undertake to prosecute the plan more effectually. And finally if I appeal, it is not in my own name, but in the name of the oppressed and enslaved Dyaks. I appeal to those whose views of policy lead to the extension of commerce, to the religious body in England who may here find a field for missionary labour, too long untried. I appeal to the humane who desire to suppress all the horrors of piracy and the slave-trade, and whose feelings would lead them to end a state of things repugnant to every idea of right and to atrocities not to be exceeded in any part of the globe.

J. BROOKE.

THE END.

PRINTED BY
L. AND G. SEELEY, THAMES DITTON, SURREY.







