

Journal from Singapore to Coti, Borneo.

(CONCLUDED FROM OUR LAST.)

The country is rich, but covered with jungle, and from the landing place, for many leagues, is a beautiful pebbled beach. It is quite impossible for a person to touch at this piratical country, without being particularly struck with the great beauty of the women. Every young woman was handsome, but some equal in beauty and symmetry to those in any part of the world, quite as fair as the inhabitants of the south of Europe. I was told the women of *Bagotta* were proverbial throughout Borneo, and the adjacent islands for superior attractions. I am quite concerned to think that nature should have placed the fairest of her works, in a country inhabited by the most villainous and abandoned (probably) of the human race; but so it is and no one can put his foot on shore without being astonished and delighted. They are not timid at the appearance of Europeans, although they so seldom see them, neither are they forward or bashful, but go about in a loose sarong, as if they had nothing to conceal, nothing to be ashamed of.

The country under this pirate contains about 1,200 square miles, without including the numerous islands. The Sabandar told me the inhabitants might amount to 10,000 altogether, but from others and what I consider to be much better information, the number was stated as 4,000. The truth might probably lay between the two. It may appear strange that so large an extent of country should contain so few inhabitants. It must be recollected, however, that most of the country, (indeed the whole with the exception of paddy fields, is little else than an impenetrable jungle, and not a monkey can penetrate fifty yards from the bank of the rivers, which are very numerous. I landed on several parts of the main land, likewise upon some of the islands, but could not find a yard of clear ground, nor could I learn of any such. I was a little surprised and disappointed on finding my fowling piece useless: as I did not see any thing to shoot at. At the place where I landed, there might be 500 people; about 20 miles further in the interior, where the Rajah keeps his seraglio, there are said to be 1500. All the people are thieves; it is indeed impossible for any man to keep their fingers out of his pockets.

All the rivers are infested by alligators of the largest kind; the people are always on their guard, as it is no uncommon occurrence for them to be dragged from the boats by them. The country is miserably poor; as on shore no work of any kind is carried on, every body lives by plunder; there is neither law or regulation; the stranger preys upon the weaker; and the Rajah takes from every one. The women, as throughout Borneo, are abject slaves; they plant and gather the paddy crops, do all the household and out-of-door work, such as fishing and paddling in the canoes, are ill used, and think themselves well off, if they get the heads of the fish themselves have caught. There is little or no trade carried on; the Bugis Captains assured me that to land any goods were to throw them away, as no instance occurred since this present Rajah reigned, of any person having been paid; money was out of the question; what little import there is consists of the articles tobacco and gambier, in return for which they receive rattans, which are abundant and of the best kind.

We laid in a small stock here at moderate prices; fowls 12, one rupee; eggs 60, a rupee; pine apples, very fine 30, a rupee. There are a few ducks, but a goose, the rajah informed me was never seen in the country. There are lots of deer, but the people are too indolent to look after them.

From this place we went to *Bataliching*, the rajah of which place was on a visit to *Bagotta* during our stay. I spoke with him; he is a pleasant old man perhaps 60, and is highly spoken of, as a strong contrast to his neighbour, and is believed to be friendly to Europeans. The Rajah of *Bagotta* is about 40 years of age, tall and well made, but of a most forbidding countenance; he looks like what he really is, a captain of banditti.

On Tuesday 4th December, broke ground and left this vile place, which I can with truth say I never expected to do alive. Standing out of the river in company of about 25 other prows, on course was south, which agrees with a former observation. On rounding the point the wind was fair, which gave us a fine run for two days. On the evening of the 7th caught a sight of *Palang Papang*—a high mountain 20 miles inland, N. W. of the mouth of *Coti* River, from whence come much black bird's nests. On making the mouth of *Coti* river a vessel of any considerable size should bring *Palang Papang* to bear due North, and not approach the shore during the night nearer than 13 or 14 miles. By not observing this we got aground three times about 6 miles from the shore, notwithstanding we only drew 7 feet water. On bringing the mountain north, steer parallel with the shore until when an opening will be perceived on the larboard side, which is the mouth of the large river; bring the opening due north, and steer directly first. In this direction the water will be found deep.

On getting into the track described, we had and 7 fathoms water. I would by no means advise a vessel to enter this river except with a light and leading wind there being rocks and shoals on both sides; boats should be ahead, that in the event of the wind failing, she might be towed the proper track. On passing the bar, where has been already stated, 6 and 7 fathoms were found, a vessel of any burden will ride in the greatest safety. The soil outside the bar is mud and clay, much like that at *Batavia* and *Singapore*. The breadth at first does not exceed that of the *Thames* and swarms with large alligators.

By the 10th we had pulled and tracked about 30 miles, when the river becomes very broad and

forms a deep bay a few miles further up, it narrows again, and branches off into two rivers; we pursued the northern one which is the larger, and about 10 A.M. on the 11th we arrived at a considerable village called *Semirinden* containing about 500 people, principally Bugis. The people live mostly in huts built upon the water, and are consequently always afloat; they have a most miserable appearance, but appear well satisfied with their situation. All the provisions we could procure were one fowl & 8 eggs, although there were abundance in the place. Here we were obliged to remain until the Sabandar came down the river. This officer it appears was in attendance on the Sultan, who had assembled the chiefs of his country to know what measures should be adopted to stop the small pox which had already carried off many hundreds in his country. All the people have the greatest dread of this disorder. Another dreadful sickness has been raging throughout the country, and taken off a fourth of the population. From what I could understand, I consider it the *Cholera Morbus*.

On the 12th the Sabandar paid us a visit having been sent by the Sultan to forward us, and on the next day we left the prow, with all our baggage. After taking some refreshment with the Sabandar, started again in a handsome swift boat, which 12 o'clock next day brought us to one of the Sultan's country houses, about 9 miles from the Capital. After putting ourselves in some little order, we were ushered into the presence of the Sultan, the Sabandar carrying my letter and present (a piece of red cloth) on a silver salver. We met with a kind reception and I soon found myself quite at home. The Sultan is about the age of 38, of a pleasing countenance and affable address. We found him in company with his brothers and surrounded with the Chiefs of the Country. Compliments being passed, the Sultan requested me to shew him the method of using a detonating gun, which I had brought, and which I managed with success, to the utter astonishment of all present, who could not conceive how the fire was produced. A musical box much pleased him; after requesting us to pass the night with him, dinner was produced the sight of which nearly made me sick. He then wanted me to engage in cock-fighting which I refused. On the morning we all left together, and by 12 o'clock arrived at the Capital, *TONGARRON*.

The Journal, we are sorry to say, ceases here; but from different detached memoranda found among his Papers, we are enabled to trace Mr. DALTON through most of his wanderings on *Borneo* and *Celebes*.

Before proceeding with a detail of his adventures, we have deemed it advisable to conclude the present paper with his remarks on *Bagotta* or *Pergottan*, which are found attached to the above Journal. It will be recollected that he spoke largely of this place in his essay on Piracy and among other facts mentioned that several Europeans both males and females are to be found there under captivity to the Rajah of that place, *AGI BOTA*, by name, "doing the work of slaves." The disclosure of this circumstance excited at that time considerable attention here, but all sympathy for the fate of our suffering brethren on *Borneo*, seems to have been lost, since Mr. DALTON'S demise, either in incredulity or indifference. When the said Rajah of *Bagotta* arrived at Singapore some months since, Mr. DALTON was called upon to corroborate his statements, and although then in a dying state, he was desirous of confronting Rajah *AGI BOTA*, which however he was not required to do. He made an affidavit as to the truth of the statements—but it appears the simple denial or word of a crafty Bugis was esteemed by our rulers, to be of much more weight, than the oath of an English gentleman, who had, (especially in such a state,) no earthly motive in imposing upon the credulity and feelings of the public by swearing to any false statements of what he himself witnessed and suffered in a barbarous country. It is remarkable that at that very time, one or two Bugis on interrogation corroborated several facts related by Mr. DALTON. Their accounts were also disregarded, and the Rajah after one or two questions being put to him, was allowed to "depart in peace," and there is every reason to suppose that the fear of a further investigation, he has already ordered the destruction of every European, within his power, and of every vestige of their ever having been in the country.

It was Mr. DALTON'S intention, and he lived to have made a strong remonstrance to the Supreme Government on the subject, which would probably have excited some other feeling besides mere curiosity, and it is with this object we now republish the following remarks on

BAGOTTA.

It is but little known to the Europeans world that at this moment many natives of Europe, women and men are doing the work of slaves in the interior of *Borneo*,—unfortunate beings who have been taken by Pirates at Sea, or suffered Shipwreck on the coast; and many are in the power of the most contemptible chief, probably, in the whole island, the Rajah of *Bagotta*. 500 Sepoys with 3 Gun boats could take his country with ease, and yet he is allowed to keep Europeans in his possession as slaves; the friends and relations of whom no doubt conclude them to be long dead. I am willing to believe the fact is not known, as so very few Europeans have even visited these countries; there however does not exist a doubt on the subject; or that the captives are living, (if living at all,) within 100 miles from the coast. That such was the case was communicated to me, and I in consequence determined to make all possible inquiries; the result is that there are now in the Rajah's house, two English women, and several men of the same nation, besides others, Dutch, and native Portuguese, with many Chinese.

This information I received from three several Chiefs who did not appear to be acquainted with each other. There were in the Bazaar 4 bibles; and pieces of broad cloth with some buttons attached

were seen on the persons of many of the people; they had formerly to jackets and waistcoats, pieces of shirts might likewise be seen tagged to other parts of their dress; broken pieces of instruments, such as quadrants, spy glasses, binnacles, &c. were to be purchased in the bazaar, with pieces of old ship sails, bolts, hoops, and a variety of gunners and carpenters stores; there were likewise seen two Pelisses, one the color of lilac, and the other dark grey; they were of modern cut, and fashionably made, and had evidently belonged to some lady of respectability. On enquiring how these articles came into their possession, I was told by some they were from a wreck on which was found no living being; others said the people to whom they belonged died at *Bagotta*, whilst others did not scruple to say they were taken from Europeans who had been brought into the country, and sold as slaves, and that the Rajah was the principal purchaser; that most or all the goods in the Bazaar belonged to him at the time, and were exposed or sale on his account, and that the remainder was in the Rajah's house. The mandoor, (or head man) shewed me some women's stockings some of which were marked by the letters S W. two chemises, one much torn; two flannel petticoats, one almost new; a miniature frame, the picture said to be in the Rajah's house, with much wearing apparel of both sexes. These were secreted by order of the Rajah when he received the news of two Europeans having arrived.

This Rajah has a brother named *RAGA*, who has committed more piracies and murders about this coast within the last 20 years than any other chief; he lives at *Kyle* near *Mandhar*, the western part of *Macassar*, and scours these seas every year with three or four prows, and generally takes all prizes into *Bagotta*, where he shares with his brother the Rajah; however, he is well known at other parts of *Borneo* particularly *Coti*, where in 1819, he murdered *CAPTAIN GRAVESSOME* and most of his crew. The vessel and part of the crew are now at *Tongarron*, in *Coti*.

Last year (1827) *RAGA* was upon the coast; no doubt he will, with his prows be again at *Bagotta* this year, about the month of September or October. This place is apparently made by nature favourable for Piracy; there are upwards of twelve rivers leading up to where the people live, and inside the mouths of these rivers are multitudes of small islands, beyond conception favorable to the natives, who can either fight or get away at pleasure whilst Europeans would be totally lost in the labyrinth of the mazes. In my opinion it would be an hundred to one if seamen could, without assistance from the people find an outlet into the sea, having once firmly got into the net. The people of the place say, not even the people of other parts of the coast can find their way there without a pilot. The only plan to pursue is to land about 200 men at the entrance of a small river under a mountain which I have called from its shape "the saddle"; this small river runs up past the Bazaar, to the Rajah's house, and commands the main points of the country. Here a battery might be built mounting long guns, where in a short time, they would be in possession of a very rich country. Two hundred men if Europeans, would be quite sufficient, and after burning down the jungle, they would have an open country before them, so they need be under little apprehension, whilst two or three gunboats might scour the main branches of the river. The pirates about the islands and other parts, find themselves cut off from the main points of land would soon leave the place.