

THE MANCHESTER TIMES,

THE EXPEDITION TO BORNEO OF H. M. S. DIDO, FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF PIRACY: with Extracts from the Journal of James Brooke, Esq., of Sarawak (now Agent for the British Government in Borneo). By Captain the Hon. HENRY KEPPEL, R.N. Two vols. Chapman and Hall.

The interest and the importance of this book are extremely great. We do not remember a book that opens up graver matters for consideration; or sets before us more novel incident, more heroic exertion, or more romantic or striking incidents.

Its groundwork may be briefly stated. At the close of the Chinese war Captain Keppel was ordered to the Malacca Straits, with instructions for the protection of trade and the suppression of piracy. This station included the island of Borneo (the largest island in the world, reckoning Australia as a continent), notorious as the centre of a system of piracy, most atrocious in its character, and of terrible extent. All who are acquainted with the humane exertions of Sir Stamford Raffles, or with what Earl and Crawford have written of the people and the commerce of the Indian Archipelago, will remember the frequent discussion there has been of the policy and practicability of British colonization in those eastern seas, and the uniform failure of every attempt made. But the experience of the Chinese war seems again to have forced attention to a subject too long dropped and disregarded. The want of a harbour of refuge between Singapore and the Chinese sea, was particularly felt; and the expedition of Captain Keppel against the Borneo pirates was, we may hope, the fortunate step to the adoption of a policy which will receive government sanction in the establishment of a British settlement on the north-west coast of Borneo.

For the wisdom of such a policy this book suggests strong and powerful arguments. Most of all in the success which has attended the romantic heroism of Mr. James Brooke. We hardly know how to describe, that we may best do it justice, the enterprise and devotion of this excellent man. He served with distinction in the Burmese war, and afterwards, for health and amusement, visited China; the condition of the islands of the Asiatic Archipelago came under his eye. He was struck with their immense commercial resources, and with the degraded and forlorn condition of the native races. The thought occurred to him that he might complete and extend the views of Sir Stamford Raffles over that distant scene; suppress piracy, extirpate the slave-trade, and carry to the Malay people, so long the terror European merchant-vessels, the blessings of civilization. Possessed with this idea, he devoted fortune and life to its accomplishment. He came to England, purchased a yacht, with incredible skill and pains disciplined a crew, and, after three years of preparation, sailed in 1838 for Singapore. What followed, up to 1843, is the subject of the first volume of this work. It is made up of extracts from Mr. Brooke's own journal, given by him to Captain Keppel when they met at Singapore in the latter year.

Mr. Brooke writes as he seems to act; with simple force and strong sincerity. There is no attempt at fine writing, no book-manufacturing, in his journal. It is emphatically the record of a man; and none but an Englishman, we flatter our national pride with thinking, could have written it. Its exploit is peculiar English. Mr. Brooke belongs to the race whose business it is to found colonies and empires; in whom firmness and dogged perseverance blend with knowledge and enthusiasm; and whom masses of men, with the instinct by whom they should be governed, are easily persuaded to obey. We can give but a few lines the outline of his romantic career in these eastern seas; but they will suffice, we think, to send the reader with abundant curiosity to Captain Keppel's volumes.

Hearing at Singapore a favourable account of the friendly dispositions of the ruler of Borneo, he abandoned his intention of proceeding to the north-west coast, and went to Sarawak. He found several of the Dyak tribes (supposed to be, as contrasted with the Malays, the aborigines of Borneo) in rebellion against the Rajah, and was induced to take part in the struggle. It lasted several weeks; and it is most amusing to trace its progress through the incidental notices of the "journal." The movements of the "grand army" against the insurgents, the whimsical tactics and doubtful courage displayed on both sides, and his own position in the midst, are sketched with great vivacity and humour. In the end the rebels are defeated; Mr. Brooke induces the Rajah (though on abstract grounds he admits he had the worst of the argument) to spare their lives; and is himself straightway invested with the government of the province of Sarawak. An eastern tale is not more interesting than this part of the book. His assumption of the government, the strange mingled confidence and awe of the native tribes, his negotiations with the neighbouring chiefs, his patriarchal sittings in his hall of audience, and his gradual but decisive substitution of justice and peace for outrage and anarchy, have no parallel that we know of, excepting in romance.—*Examiner*.