

CONCILIATION AND PEACE—WAR AND SLAUGHTER.

Some apparently semi-official accounts of an attack by Sir James Brooke on his neighbours in Borneo, contained in Singapore journals just received, have very much the character of an Algerine *razzia*. Immediately to the north-east of his territory is a native tribe, called Saharan, a maritime people, dwelling at the mouths and on the banks of three rivers, and seemingly more populous and civilised than any of the native inhabitants of Borneo that have not adopted a foreign religion. These are the object of Sir James's expedition, and they are assaulted in their own rivers. They are called "pirates" over and over again,—they are called "a ruthless horde," having "a formidable fleet at sea of 120 war-boats, manned by 2,300 men, and carrying on blood-thirsty pursuits." For all this foul language we have, however, at present nothing but simple assertion,—not a tittle of evidence. But the British public, that pays for the expedition, will require the evidence.

Against the Saharans, however, there sails an expedition of small craft, with 150 European sailors, headed by Sir James Brooke, and a tail of Malay auxiliaries. The Saharan fleet is encountered, and makes about the same resistance as a covey of pheasants at a *battue*. The punishment inflicted, as the report says, "was most complete;" for of 120 prahus 87 had been destroyed, and 1,200, or almost one half of their whole crews, drowned or killed. The following is both graphic and painful to read. "Two large prahus had been seen escaping, and one pursued by a small steamer. One she sends to the bottom with a congreve rocket. "The Nemesis, which had been dealing death and destruction to all around her, ran the other prahu down, and the scene which took place as her crew, above sixty in number, came in contact with the paddle-wheels, beggars description." The writer of this, it is clear, is an amateur. The loss on the side of the assailants is not unlike that in the before alluded to pheasant *battue*. "Saving a few slight casualties, all were unscathed." So much for the fierce, ferocious, and formidable pirates of Borneo.

But the expedition did not end with the destruction of the piratical fleet. It went up three different rivers, and scoured them clean, with the exception of one village, where Sir James, like Julius Cæsar, inflicted a mulct, carried off arms, and took hostages. It destroyed the town of Paku, and on the river Saharas, "the whole of the settlements on either side were totally destroyed." One curious proof of the ferocity of the barbarians is given as follows:—"No more convincing instance of their inhuman disposition need be cited than the fact, that the bodies of women were found on the bank, on whom they had wreaked their vengeance. They were all decapitated, and their bodies gashed from shoulder to foot." We greatly doubt the explanation. The probability is that the Dyaks, like the Hindus and ancient Spaniards, massacred their own women to prevent their falling into the power of strangers.

The whole affair is a tragedy which Parliament when it meets will no doubt inquire into. It will have to decide the question whether conciliation and peace, or war and wholesale slaughter, be the most effectual means of civilising the rude people of Borneo, heretofore described as so simple and so innocent.