

THE *TIMES* AND RAJAH BROOKE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE DAILY NEWS.

SIR,—The *Times* of the 13th has a letter without name or signature of any sort, purporting to be from a Christian pastor, but whether catholic, protestant, or Greek, is not said. Indeed he may be a Mahomedan mufti, or a Hindoo Brammi, or a Siamese Talapoin, or a Chinese Bonze for all that any one can be sure of, in a correspondent of the *Times*, after seeing it so cruelly hoaxed by false sea captains and false insurance brokers. One thing, however, is tolerably certain, on his own assurance, and that is, that he belongs to a "church militant" of some sort or other, be it Christian, Mahomedan, or Heathen, for he informs us himself that he was once asked by the master of a ship who was "nervous" "to drill his men for him," and he approves with all his heart of the slaughter of the 1,500 barbarians in the rivers of Borneo, without adducing one iota of evidence of their criminality. From this internal evidence, and as he is meanwhile anonymous, I am far more disposed to view him as of the sort of Emar or of All than as a member of any community whatsoever.

This letter writer, whatever may be his creed, is as dexterous a dodger as Aaron Smith himself. The matter he sets out to justify is the slaughter of certain heathen Bornean savages, on the 31st of July last, and without saying a syllable about them, he forthwith begins to discourse, with infinite exaggeration, about Mahomedan Malays,—tolerably advanced in civilisation, tolerably well armed, and whose occasional piracies have been patent to the wide world for three centuries. The French are just now at war with the Argentine republic, but although the independent Aruncanian Indians happen to inhabit the same land as the Argentines, that would be no justification for the French if they surprised and slaughtered the Aruncanians, who never harmed them, nor have the power to do them harm. Paganini played well on one string, but the defenders of the Bornean massacre only harp discord on a single string, and that ever the wrong one. That even the Malays, however (for all that the terror-stricken writer alleges) are not particularly dangerous to British commerce, Mr. Janson has shown, in a manner wholly uncontrovertible, by the plain statement of fact that there is not a farthing's difference in the rate of insurance in the Indian seas infested by the Malay, and in those in which neither they nor any other pirates are ever seen.

Let us, however, bring the letter-writer to the test. He does not say that he himself was ever engaged with Malay pirates, or indeed that he ever saw a Malay pirate, notwithstanding his long residence in the Archipelago; but he tells us the following edifying story, which, if it proves nothing else, proves at least that he himself was "horribly afraid" of pirates, or of some one thing or another which he took for pirates. "I have been in a ship-of-war in those seas, and when at midnight there was a cry of 'Pirates,' from the watch, the commands, 'Beat to quarters,' 'Load the guns, muskets,' 'Out boarding pikes, netting,' &c, followed pretty quickly. However, a blue light was burnt, and perhaps our taunt masts and pennant made our enemy vanish, but the guns were stood to the whole night." The name of the man-of-war, the name of her commander, the number of her guns or her crew are not stated. She may have been a ship of the line, or a frigate, or a corvette; let us suppose her the smallest of these, and her crew would have been some 200. Such a ship would have set at defiance all the Malay pirates that haunt the waters of the Archipelago from Sumatra to New Guinea. I conclude, therefore, that the commander who behaved as the narrator describes, was not a British seaman, but some outlandish landlubber. A British seaman, under such circumstances, instead of burning a blue light, and so displaying his pennant, his taunt masts, and his bristling cannon, would have masked his ship, and encouraged the supposed pirates to board, when the English seamen and their officers would have soon settled the matter, and no one would have pitied the assailants, or grudged the head-money.

But, as the story is told, it turns out that there was nothing to alarm any one. It was 12 o'clock at night, and nothing visible but by the flame of a blue light; and when day came, whatsoever there was had "vanished." What produced the alarm might have been a fleet of fishing-boats or of trading-boats, or the mere phantom of a fleet of boats! In fact the danger was about as real as if the narrator, in a nightmare, had dreamt that he had broken his head by a fall over a precipice, but, awakening, happily discovers that his head was as sound as could be expected.

The letter writer in the *Times* says he knows Sir James Brooke, and knows him to be a man "of amiable and benevolent feelings." Then he, if he be what he says he is, a Christian Pastor, has evidently not read the narrative, in Sir James Brooke's diary, of the Borneo and Lanun chiefs, executed on supposition of piracy, and of the Dyak chief, Parimban, and his companion, whose property was confiscated, and whose bodies were executed for mere contumacy! The lawyers, and the priests, and the high priests,—the scribes and the pharisees, who defend the massacre of the Dyaks, have hitherto preserved a solemn and suspicious silence respecting these authentic tragedies. If they have anything to plead in extenuation why not out with it.

The present writer is more inane than Aaron Smith himself. Its friends must pity the destitution of the *Times* that can produce no better witnesses. I do not, seeing it engaged in defending, with more tenacity than discretion, a very dirty and untenable position. — I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

A. LAYMAN.

London, 16th Feb., 1850.