

Daily News (London, England),
Monday, March 25, 1850

A VOICE FROM SINGAPORE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE DAILY NEWS.

SIR,—Concurring in a great measure in the remarks which have appeared of late in your journal as to the doings of Rajah Brooke and his allies in Borneo, I beg to hand you extract of a letter, under date the 7th February, which I have received by this mail from a correspondent in Singapore; and, if you think it worth a place in your journal, please give insertion to the same. “I have this morning read the articles in the *Times* and *Daily News* regarding the late butchery at Borneo: the former writes in great ignorance of matters, and fancies, I suppose, that the Illanoons and Dyaks are one and the same; while the latter paper has evidently given the subject great consideration, and, in my opinion, takes a very correct view of it. Who ever heard of acts of piracy by the Dyaks of Borneo until Sir James Brooke became Rajah of Sarawak? or did you ever hear of any British or native square-rigged vessel being attacked by them? or, indeed, of their ever having been found or seen at sea at all as pirates? I am sure I never did, and many other old Singaponans say the same. The only instance, in 1839 I think it was, was when a brig of Rappa and Co.’s was wrecked on that coast, and Cook, the supercargo, was received by them, and even very humanely treated by these people. We have often heard of the Illanoons scouring the coasts of Borneo, and indeed our own; but don’t let them and the Borneans be mixed up together, as if they were one and the same. I look upon the late murderous proceedings as being much the same as what took place in China during the war—the blackguards of Canton, who deserved a drubbing, have escaped to this day—while the poor people at the northern ports were slaughtered for they knew not what. I think it is the same with the poor Borneans, and the Illanoons, who are the only pirates, escape any chastisement at all.

“There was no evidence given in our court to prove them pirates. A commission was sent to Sir James Brooke to take evidence, and of course he would take care that it would completely establish the fact in his own favour. He, as a British subject, has taken upon himself an awful responsibility. A native rajah, a British consul-general, and governor all in the same person! It would require a man of great daring and strong nerve to carry on properly as all three.”

In regard to piracy in square-rigged vessels, I can fully confirm the statement of my correspondent, for I have no recollection of any single instance of the same having taken place during my pretty long residence in the east. So much for the veracity of the *Times* correspondent, Commander Campbell; but who, by the bye, I am inclined to think is a man of straw, for I do not recollect any country skipper of that name, now alive, trading to Singapore and the eastward.

Yours,

G.

March 22, 1850.