

A VOICE FROM THE CLOUDS SPEAKING
OF BORNEO.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE DAILY NEWS.

SIR,—The *Times* has got a new ally; one J. E. T., perhaps somewhat more reputable, but not one whit more efficient than Aaron Smith, of Cuban fame, or Alexander Campbell, the Caledonian skipper of straw. J. E. T. tells us that he has just returned from "the East," and, therefore, it is to be inferred that his oriental lore is fresh and exuberant; yet he makes no sign! "He knows," he says, "something of the recent operations in Borneo." But of that "something," whether great or small, he says nothing. In what particular part of the Orient his stores of knowledge were laid in, he does not say, and, therefore, on this point, we are left to conjecture. It may be that it was in the Taprobane of Ptolemy, and that in this island, famed for cinnamon and taxation, he may have had a main hand in the fabrication of certain six tax ordinances, which made a little rebellion, which little rebellion gave rise to great expenditure and great confusion, ending in the execution, the flogging, and the banishment of some scores of the "impatient of taxation." One thing is quite sure, he, the mysterious one, heartily admires the late heavy piratical *réchauffé* of the *Times*, although that unsavoury mess has no spice in it, save romance. That, however, is a matter of taste, perhaps of Hibernian taste, and the admiration is not unnatural in one whose own 3,000% a year "*dum bene se gesserit*" may at this very moment be in some jeopardy.

Although "J. E. T." gives us but nine trivial lines of his own, he furnishes us with an extract of a letter "from a most intelligent friend," who writes from Singapore after a visit to Borneo. The reader shall himself judge of the intelligence of the friend, and of the judgment of him who believes in the friend's high intelligence. "From this great territory," says the friend, "there is almost literally no revenue, except low fines for offences, and a tax on opium smoking." The territory which is here made to contain some 10,000 square miles, is described by Sir James Brooke himself in his diary as being 60 miles in length by an average breadth of about 50. This makes 3,000 square miles, or less than "one-third" part of the aforesaid area. The little territory is thus converted into a great territory, by the simple process of drawing on the imagination for an additional 233 per cent. Then, according to the voyager and correspondent, there is no revenue derivable from Sarawak, except from low judicial fines and opium smoking. Sir James Brooke in his very code of laws proclaims that he reserves to himself the monopoly of antimony, understood to yield a nett seignorage of nearly 3,000% a-year. By his own statements, too, he receives tributes from all his Dyak, Malay, and Chinese subjects. If the "highly intelligent friend" writes more in this strain people will begin to think him no better than Aaron Smith, and the man that faucies him an authority as credulous as the *Times* when it believed in Captain Alexander Campbell. The *Times* is not lucky in its correspondents, whether as to sense, fidelity, or intelligence.

I had written this before I saw your most pertinent and crushing remarks of this morning, and I am glad that I am come to the same conclusions as yourself.

I am, &c.,

AN EAST INDIA MERCHANT.

Manchester, April 5, 1850.