

ago, it was renewed on the breaking up of the Spanish empire in America.

In every one of these cases the pirates have belonged to energetic races, and were members of communities considerably advanced in civilisation. The pirates of the Colombian Archipelago were Englishmen and Frenchmen, and the pirates of the Indian Archipelago known to Europeans were never alleged to be any other than the most advanced nations of that part of the world,—Malays and natives of the Philippine islands, with a knowledge of the useful arts, navigating stout vessels prepared for war, and, from the first moment in which they were seen by Europeans, possessed both of cannon and small arms. In no case were the pirates mere untutored savages, without arts or effective arms. The pirates of the American Archipelago were not the Caribs, nor any other sort of red men; and the pirates of the Indian Archipelago were not mere Dyaks of Borneo, or any other savages, sailing in cockle-shells and destitute of any weapons which could make them dangerous even to an English long-boat. In fact, Dyaks were never, until the last seven years, even alleged to be pirates.

The discovery that the savages of Borneo were pirates was first made by Sir James Brooke about the year 1844, and from that time they have certainly been hunted down as such. But down to the month of October, 1849, we have no evidence that these miserable men were either pirates, or capable of committing piracy. In that month we have the first technical evidence of it. It consists of the certificate given by the Recorder of the Straits Settlements, acting in his capacity of Admiralty Judge; and the testimony on which it was given, and on the strength of which the sum of 20,700*l.* has been paid to the assailants from the British Treasury, deserves an analysis. The affidavits of piracy sworn to before the Recorder himself are not forthcoming at all, nor have the names or character of the deponents been divulged. Whatever they were, they were not deemed good enough, even by the Judge, who consequently issued a commission to take further evidence; and the selection of the commissioners, with the scene of their operations, are quite a curiosity. They were, Sir James Brooke, the adviser, instigator of, and participator in the attack,—the autocrat of Sarawak; the clergyman who was living under his protection; and the superintendent of his trading concerns in opium and antimony. The only European witness was Sir James Brooke himself, who swears before the other two commissioners. The other witnesses were certain prisoners taken in the *melée*, of whom Sir James was at the moment virtual gaoler within the little state in which he was himself both law and gospel. Five months after the expiration of the commission, the depositions of some additional witnesses were taken before two persons calling themselves "justices of the peace" without the Queen's commission, which indeed would hardly run, even if they had it, in a territory not British, but Bornean. These *soi-disant* justices were, one of them, Sir James's superintendent of trade, and the other a private trader on his own account. All this is explicable only on the supposition that law in the Rajahship of Sarawak is in the very gristle. The evidence goes to show, not that the Dyaks committed robbery on the high seas, or the narrow seas, but that, like all savages in every part of the known world, and in every known period of the world's history, one tribe of savages carried on war with another tribe, and that their great glory consisted in cutting off each other's heads, smoking them, and handing them down as heirlooms to their posterity. The evidence further showed that the pirates captured one empty boat, and another with a cargo worth about 4*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*, both within the river and territory of a neighbouring hostile tribe of savages.

The next evidence we have of piracy by Dyaks consists of the depositions of two Malay commanders of boats trading between Borneo and Singapore. One of them deposes that he had made six such voyages, and had been chased by pirates, without however saying of what sort. He added that "the coast of Borneo is infested with pirates, and has been so for years," and that they consist of Lanuns and Dyaks. He had never been at Sakarran, the alleged nest of the pirates, but "he had been told" that the inhabitants were pirates. All this is simply hearsay, not evidence. The other commander deposed that he was a native of Moka in Borneo, that he had been "often at Singapore to trade," that there were undoubtedly many pirates on the coast of Borneo, but that for himself, he added, "I have never fallen in with any during my repeated voyages to and fro." This evidence plainly amounts to just nothing at all, and we only wonder at the easy credence of the Governor, who fancied it good testimony.

There is one kind of legal proof that the Dyaks were really pirates which might have been obtained, but which, to our great surprise, was never had recourse to. The prisoners taken in the various attacks from 1844 might have been easily taken to Singapore and there tried by an English judge and jury. Real pirates had been tried, convicted, and executed by that court, within the time specified; but no Dyak has ever been subjected to this easy test—why, remains to be explained, for as yet it certainly has not been.

The evidence on the opposite side, against the savages of Borneo being pirates, is in its nature negative; and the chief witness here, too, is Sir James Brooke. He describes the worst of the two reputed piratical tribes thus: "The Sarebas are by no means so warlike as the others, and from their great dread of fire-arms, may be kept in subjection by a comparatively small body of Malays. The sound of musketry or cannon was enough to put the whole body to flight; and when they did run, fully the half disappeared, returning to their own homes." A precious set of buccan-

eers, certainly!! Of the brother horde of these desperate runaways, the Sakarran, he says: "The spear and sword comprise their weapons; they have no muskets or fire-arms, and 'never use the sumpitan.'" The last is a blow-pipe used by some of the Bornean tribes for shooting arrows, with which might possibly be slain a wren or even a robin, but nothing bigger. This account is confirmed by the naval commander of the expedition, who states, in his public report of that battle in which the blows were all on one side and the running all on the other, that "the Dyaks being almost devoid of fire-arms, cannot stand against a well-armed force." He might, we think, have added, even "against an ill-armed force," provided it had but one old musket! The fair inference which we think deducible from all this is, that the danger of a piratical attack from virtually unarmed pirates to European or native shipping, themselves always sufficiently armed, is about on a level with the risk which an armed Matador would run from the onslaught of a bull-calf six months old.

All we have here stated is confirmed by the address of fifty-three merchants and others, British inhabitants of Singapore, to Mr Hume, entreating him to proceed with his motion for a Parliamentary inquiry. In this they say: "There is not one among us who ever heard the captain of a merchant vessel, or the Nacodah of a trading prahu, mention their having seen a Dyak pirate; and the circumstance of either the one or the other of them having fallen in with, or been attacked by, prahus which were propelled by paddles, and had neither masts nor sails, would have been a novelty which could not have failed to attract attention, to say nothing of the want of fire-arms." Among the parties signing this address, were six master mariners, who had long navigated the very seas said to be so sorely infested by Dyak pirates. We add to this overwhelming testimony the strong fact that no author, Portuguese, Spanish, French, Dutch, or English, down to the time of Sir James Brooke, has ever charged the Dyaks or savages of Borneo with piracy, although all of them treat of the piracies of such nations as the Malays, the Lanuns, the Sooloos, and the Balaginis.

The pirates pursued by Sir James Brooke, let it be noted, are his conterminous neighbours only,—the hereditary savage enemies of his own equally savage subjects. Sir James's seat of rampant piracy would seem to be thus confined to a coast of 100 miles of one island out of 1,000, that island alone having a line of 2,000 miles; while the rovers are confined to two tribes out of 100, of the same manners and the same state of society. He knows that there are real pirates in the great Archipelago, and he mentions them by name as "the regular pirates;" but all his attacks are directed against tribes that no one before himself ever denounced as pirates. According to him, the two peccant tribes may fairly be included in the category of piracy, because they lay waste the lands of their hereditary enemies, and store their enemies' smoked heads, although not one recorded instance of piracy can be brought against them. On such a definition of piracy the republics of Greece were pirates when they laid waste each other's lands, and the Romans were pirates when they sacked the cities of Etruria, the offence of both justifying the interference of a distant foreign power—of a Persia or a Carthage.

Involved by his position in a whirl of small politics, of jungle aggrandizement, of traffic, of propagandism, of legislation and administration, it is easy to fancy the enthusiastic knight deluded into a sincere belief that his troublesome neighbours are regular pirates. Those whose judgment are not so trammelled will, we think, on reading the papers now before us, come to the conclusion that the two proscribed tribes are only poor savages, somewhat less truculent than savages in the same state of society usually are in other parts of the world,—incapable, from sheer impotency, however willing, of committing piracy on the high or narrow seas, and mischievous only to their savage neighbours, who, as usual, retaliate by mischief for mischief. The public is either asleep, or not quite sober on this subject.

Sir James Brooke is without doubt a man of considerable parts, of much enterprise, and of stirring ambition; and it is only a pity that such valuable qualities in a public man should not have a less questionable field for their exercise. Yet we must add, until satisfactory explanations be given, that he is apparently somewhat unscrupulous about means, as evinced by his creation of monopolies amid the cry of free trade; and by his putting to death, since he became a Malay Raja, of three chieftains, on an allegation of piracy, and of two others, for pure *lèse majesté* towards himself—all without trial, and on his own "mere motion." It is himself who has, in his diary, narrated the tragedies referred to, and with a pathos becoming the occasions. His ambition would seem to be, to play the part of a little Cortez; but ours, he should remember, is neither the age nor the country for a Cortez or a Pizarro, any more than Borneo is a Mexico or a Peru.

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THE BORNEO PIRATES.

Mr Hume has given notice of a motion in the House of Commons for enquiring into the conduct of Sir James Brooke and the naval force which, on the 31st day of July, 1849, attacked and destroyed a reputed piratical fleet of prahus on the north-western coast of Borneo. In this attack, which the *Times*, when the account was first received, called "a military execution," 500 men were killed without resistance, out of the whole number of 2,640 supposed pirates that were alive when the action commenced. Mr Hume, and some other members of the House of Commons, call this a massacre; and Sir James Brooke and his friends,—the just and exemplary punishment of notorious pirates. There is no accord between them, but on the contrary a broad issue.

Let us look to the facts. We have before us a mass of Parliamentary and other papers on the subject, from which we shall endeavour to extract them. The existence of piracy in the Indian Archipelago is undoubted. It exists at this day, and it has existed pretty much in the same way for more than three centuries. The Indian is the largest Archipelago in the world, and affords the safest haunt for pirates. No great Archipelago was ever indeed without pirates when disorder and anarchy afforded an opportunity, which in the Indian Archipelago seems never to have been wanting. The more ancient Greeks were notorious pirates, and gloried in their depredations. Piracy on a great scale was renewed in the same Archipelago in the last days of the Roman Republic; and once again in our own times, when the Greeks threw off the yoke of the Turks. The Colombian Archipelago was the scene of piracy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, under the notorious buccaneers; and thirty years