

## THE SLAUGHTER AT SARAWAK.

(From the *Straits Times* of March 21.)

On Tuesday last we issued an Extra giving an outline of the recent outrages committed by the Chinese at Sarawak, particulars of which were brought from that place by the schooner *Good Luck*, which sailed on the 21st ultimo and arrived on the 10th instant. Although rumours had been current that the Kungsi contemplated resisting the authority of the local government, the latter appear to have treated the matter with indifference. Suddenly, however, a large body, numbering about 200 Chinese, came down the river on and before the 17th February, and at midnight commenced a most determined attack on the government people and property. They first secured possession of the two forts, one below and the other above the town of Kuchin (the seat of Rajah Brooke's authority), which were only garrisoned by 12 men, and, having furnished themselves with all the arms and ammunition in the forts, they proceeded to the work of destruction upon which they had ventured. This was at midnight, when all were asleep. One party made an attack on the residence of Sir James Brooke, whilst the remainder assaulted the houses of Mr. Crookshank, the magistrate, and Mr. Middleton, also a government official. For some days previous Sir James Brooke was unwell, and was about to proceed to Simunjang, on the Sadong river (the seat of the Borneo Company's operations), for change of air. On the night in question his servant was sleeping in an adjoining room, and under the same roof was residing a young and very promising gentleman, named Nicolets, who had joined the Rajah's circle as a guest within the last 12 months. The surprise and consternation was so great, and the measures of the attacking party so well organised, that all communication between the different European members of the community was impossible. While the Chinese attacked the front of the house, Sir James Brooke succeeded in effecting an extraordinary escape; he passed down the bath-room and swam across a creek near his house, by which means he succeeded in gaining the Malay village; thither also others of the European residents happily reached shortly afterwards. The assailants fired into Sir James Brooke's residence, killed Mr. Nicolets (whose body was buried in the ruins), plundered the place of every thing of value in their estimation, and then

set fire to the building, ruthlessly destroying Sir James Brooke's excellent library and the valuable collections of his whole life—a loss which friend or foe must equally regret. At the house of Mr. Crookshank the assailants met with a firm resistance, but that gentleman was overpowered; he defended his amiable and recently-married lady with the utmost gallantry. Mrs. Crookshank was brutally wounded before his eyes, and dragged away when he was no longer able to defend her. Mrs. Crookshank was believed to have been killed, but happily next morning she was found in the jungle. Her wounded body was covered with cocoa-nut leaves. She was removed to the Mission-house, where, under the skilful treatment of the Bishop, the Right Rev. Dr. McDougall, she was, at the date of the latest advices, doing well. Mr. Crookshank, after passing the night in the jungle, by some means reached the Mission-house next morning in an almost insensible state. The house of Mr. Middleton (also in the service of Sir James Brooke) was attacked; his house was fired, and two of his children unhappily perished in the flames. Mr. Wellington, a metallurgist, in the service of the Borneo Company, a guest of Mr. Middleton's, was killed and his head cut off, probably under the mistaken supposition that he also was in the service of the Sarawak government, as the head was given up on the following day. The government treasury was plundered of everything it contained, which we regret to hear was considerable; nearly every European had placed his money there as the most secure place. About 10,000 dollars belonging to the Borneo Company was carried off. In the course of a few hours a large amount of government property was destroyed.

Next day the Chinese Kungsi stated that they had no hostile intentions against any one but persons connected with the government; indeed, they expressed a wish that Bishop McDougall and Messrs. Ruppell and Helms should act as their chieftains, whilst they unreservedly declared their determination to destroy Sir James Brooke and every one in his service. During the day negotiations were opened with the Chinese, and it was arranged that they should depart, unmolested by the Malays, with the plunder they had obtained; at 4 p.m. they started up the river in their boats.

The immediate cause of this frightful attempt to destroy the whole of the government European authorities at Sarawak is stated to be the stringent measures which Sir James Brooke has found it expedient to adopt to prevent opium smuggling. Some heavy fines had been levied on the smugglers, the amount being paid by the Kungsi; and latterly some of the offenders had been imprisoned. But these seem scarcely sufficient to account for such ruthless slaughter and destruction, not sparing age or sex.

Sir James Brooke is stated to regard the affair as trifling and soon to be retrieved. The government gunboats and the Malays were in eager pursuit of the Chinese, and if the latter are overtaken the retribution will doubtless be severe. The Malays everywhere expressed their confidence in Sir James Brooke. The arrival of the steamer *Sir James Brooke*, belonging to the Borneo Company, was anxiously looked for, and as that vessel left this on the 21st ult., she would most likely reach Sarawak on the 24th. The European ladies had, we hear, quitted for the mouth of the river, where they would be safe under protection of the Malays.

On the arrival of the news here the Singapore agents of Sir James Brooke and the Borneo Company lost no time in chartering the schooner *Waterlily*, and loading her with arms and ammunition, as also some volunteers for service. The steamer *Inflexible*, which sailed for Hong Kong, took the *Waterlily* and gunboat in tow, and we hear that the *Starling* will look in at Sarawak, on her way to China.

Sir James Brooke, by latest advice, had departed for Simunjang, on the Sadong, the scene of the Borneo Company's operations, and where a large number of Chinese coolies are employed, with the hope, no doubt, that his presence would prevent any rising on the part of the coolies in that quarter.

In our hurried Extra of Tuesday last we stated that the Chinese authors of the above sad outrage were refugees from Sambas; in this particular we were in error. The Kungsi comprises the Chinese settlers Sir James Brooke found at Sarawak on his arrival there. The formidable character of these Chinese is given in Mundy's first volume, page 289 *et sequel*, and to resist their then demands Sir James Brooke (p. 294) says he was prepared to push the affair to extremity "if they did not yield to the terms demanded," whilst he prophetically observes, "I look forward to future trouble in that quarter; but by just government and fair trade they may be brought to good temper, and, at any rate, the chances are we shall strengthen in a greater proportion than they will be able to do." The recent outrage has clearly shown that the strengthening means have been overlooked, with a fearful result too.

(From the *Straits Times* of March 23.)

The British steamer *Sir James Brooke*, belonging to the Borneo Company, arrived at Singapore yesterday (Sunday), having left Sarawak on the 19th inst., by which opportunity we have received late and important news, which we hasten to lay before our readers.

Our latest advices by the steamer *Good Luck* were to the 20th February, at which date Sir James Brooke had retired to Simunjang, on the Sadong river, the headquarters of the Borneo Company's operations. Messrs. Crookshank, Crymble, Steel, and Penty accompanied the Rajah to Simunjang; the object of the Rajah's visit to that quarter being, as we now learn, to collect forces in the neighbouring rivers, with the view of returning to Sarawak. We previously announced that the Chinese Kungsi people (the insurgents) had evacuated the town of Kuchin, and retired up country, and that the Malays were preparing to start in pursuit. We now continue the narrative of events.

It appears that on Sunday, Feb. 22, Sir James Brooke received intelligence of the retirement of the Chinese, whereupon he returned from the Sadong to the Sarawak river, but before he could land the Chinese Kungsi had a second time ventured down the river in great force (between 500 and 600), and with feelings whetted, as it were, by their late partial success, and yet chagrined at their failure to overturn the Rajah's authority. The return of the Chinese with so large a force somewhat surprised the Rajah, and compelled him to retire or venture a collision with an inadequate force. In the meantime the Kungsi people availed themselves of the time to commit further depredations on the government property. It now became apparent that most extensive means were needed to suppress the advance of the Kungsi people, whose object appeared to be to secure for themselves the entire paramount authority, alike indifferent to brute force, base treachery, or the vilest measures. Under these circumstances Sir James Brooke proceeded to Linga, to secure the co-operation of the chief and the people of that district, but on his way the steamer *Sir James Brooke*, from Singapore, hove in sight most timely; her arrival was not merely opportune, but the site of her anchorage formed the base of all subsequent operations. Sir James Brooke and his party at once proceeded in the steamer to Kuchin, and soon succeeded in driving the miscreants out of the town. On inquiry and search it was found that the Dattoo Bandar was defending himself against the Chinese, amid a cluster of prahus. The Dattoo succeeded in recapturing nine sampans (boats) and one of the government prahus (vessels) containing stores, gunpowder, opium, &c.

The body or main force of the Chinese, driven from the town, were finally either cut off by the Dyaks, or were starved in the jungle. At the outset about 100 of the Chinese were killed. The warfare assumed a mode of irregular attack. The Dyaks were let loose, who from a large circuit, battue-like, drove the Chinese into their fastnesses, accompanied by great loss to the retreaters, where they were hemmed in; in other words, there took place a kind of guerilla warfare of the most harassing character, grievously thinning the number of the rebels. Still the Chinese were undaunted; from their stronghold they ventured an attack in five prahus, and commenced ravaging the banks of the river. This was on the 9th March. The Dattoo Bandar was stationed in a single prahu at Tangab Lidah (the junction of two rivers), about 15 miles above Kuchin; meeting the Kungsi in their boat the Dattoo, in his single prahu, offered battle, which the Kungsi declined. Thinking this to be an excellent site the Kungsi landed, and constructed

stockade, which they armed with four guns, and garrisoned by about 250 men with muskets, &c. Believing themselves to be secure the Chinese very foolishly neglected to secure their boats, which were captured by their opponents. Leaving his war prahu near the stockade, the Dattoo chivalrously proceeded to Kuchin in a small canoe-boat for assistance. The Dattoo hastened to Kuchin to secure reinforcements, and on the 10th March he returned to the stockades with two large prahus, and some Dyak bangkongs as a reserve. Thus strengthened the Dattoo, with his 3 prahus, made a dash at the Chinese stockade, where he landed with his party and carried the place without a repulse. The Chinese in the stockade were cut to pieces; in half an hour they lost from 100 to 120 men; the rest in the stockade, having lost their boats, took to the jungle. We may remark that the defeated party in the stockade consisted of picked men; their principal chiefs were killed in the assault. The effect of this signal attack was complete. A panic seized the Kungsi people, which was eagerly availed of; the Chinese successively fled from Balaida, Siniawan, and Ban. By the night of the 11th March the Kungsi people were in full retreat towards Sambas, closely followed by bands of Malays, who availed themselves of every opportunity to cut off the stragglers. The Chinese retired in a close body—so close, indeed, that their assailants failed to cause disorder—and made a desperate resistance in the presence of their wives and children.

Had time permitted to have organised a concentrated attack, not an individual would have escaped. As it is, the wretched fugitives are driven into the jungle, where a vast number of them must perish from want and exposure before they can reach a place of security.

According to the most moderate estimate at least 1,000 Chinese have been killed at the various places, while all the flourishing settlements of the Chinese (except at Kuchin) have been destroyed. The exact number of Chinese who have perished during the retreat it is impossible to say; it must be considerable, since out of a population of 4,000 to 5,000 Chinese belonging to the Kungsi, not more than 2,000 escaped the late retribution, including women and children.

Much as we regret letting loose the Dyaks to commit the most savage decimation or rather destruction of a whole people, we cannot sympathise with the diabolism of the Kungsi, who both individually and collectively have always received at the hands of Sir James Brooke Borneo justice—a code regulated by circumstances. The diabolical attempt of the Chinese Kungsi has met with the punishment it deserved; no reasonable being will pity them, however much they may regret the frightful sacrifice of human life. Experience too sadly proves that at the present period, kindness, humanity, and forbearance are either misunderstood or but too lightly appreciated by the Chinese, who think they ought to be dominant for no earthly reason, that we can discover, but because they are cruel and vain.

Having thus disposed of the leading events from Sarawak, there are a few matters of both general and local interest which we cannot allow to pass;—the omission would be rather unjust, inasmuch as the circumstances are fresh in our memories. It appears that on the 27th February, when affairs assumed a rather ugly aspect, Mr. Helms (the agent for the Borneo Company) was despatched to Sambas, to inform the Dutch authorities there how matters stood at Sarawak, and to request assistance. The assistant resident at Sambas expressed great sympathy, and immediately despatched a fast boat to Pontianak, where the chief resident was then staying. The latter, without hesitation, despatched a war steamer, with such soldiers as he could well spare, accompanied by an offer of farther assistance, should it be necessary for the protection of British lives and property—an act quite characteristic of our Dutch neighbours. The Dutch war steamer arrived at Sarawak on the 15th instant (when all was happily over), and after staying three days returned to Sarawak.

On inquiry amongst the Chieftains who acted against the Chinese, it was found that their loss did not exceed 12 Malays and Dyaks.

The Chinese residents at Kuchin were completely restored to confidence when the steamer left, and had re-opened their shops. So great, indeed, was their reliance in the stability of the Rajah's government, that not one of their wives or children was sent away to Singapore in the steamer. A letter received from Sir James Brooke mentions that most of the guns taken by the Kungsi had been recovered, as also a large proportion of the muskets carried away from the forts. The loss by the late outrages chiefly falls on Sir James Brooke and the government people.

We are right glad to notice that Mrs. Crookshank had nearly recovered from her injuries, and her husband's wounds were doing well. Sir James and the bishop were in good health and spirits.