

SULU PIRATE BOATS.

Mr. Henry Savage Landor, in "The Gems of the East" (Macmillan), records experiences that he met with when visiting the savage inhabitants of the Philippines and the Sulu Islands. After paying his respects to the Sultan of Sulu, Mr. Landor went by steamer to a pile-built village called Balambing, not far from the east coast of Borneo. It is the stronghold of the Malay pirates. The village consisted of large, beautiful houses, each having a landing-stage, with a boat moored to it. The boats are often of large size, well over 60ft. They are by far the swiftest sailing-boats afloat, and will overtake and pass an American clipper ship on her best point of sailing. They are fitted with the "catamaran" outriggers, so that their carrying capacity is small in proportion to their length. Their sails are square or triangular, of white and coloured cloth, and are rolled "on the foot" when it is necessary to reduce the sail area. Fifty years ago, in the days of "single topsails," an English inventor made an adaptation of this arrangement for use in the British navy. The pirates seemed a repulsive people, of criminal type, though they treated their guest with every courtesy. When on shore they pass their time in drinking strong drink and listening to the fiddle, "wherein they find notable entertainment." A curious fact is mentioned about the construction of their proas. No iron is used, nor indeed any metal, the planks and spars being lashed with "bejuco," a tough, pliable rattan.
