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BORNEO REVELATIONS:

A SERIES OF LETTERS

ON

THE SEREBAN & SAKARRAN DYAKS,

AND

THE RAJAH BROOKE.

BY SCRUTATOR.

"THE PRESS—THE PRESS:—THE PRESS—AGITATE,
AGITATE,—DING-DONG."—*Sir James Brooke to Mr. Wise.*

Singapore:

PRINTED AT THE STRAITS TIMES PRESS

BY SHAICK KYAM.

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INTRODUCTION

"Jugulo hunc suo gladio."

The following letters appeared in the *Singapore Straits Times*, signed SCRUTATOR, in the numbers of our journal for Oct. 29th, Nov. 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th, and Dec. 3rd. These communications are now published in a connected form for the purpose of aiding the demand for Enquiry into the circumstances of the annihilation-process employed against the tribes of Serebas and Sakarran Dyaks, and also to enable us to furnish many parties who were disappointed in securing copies of the consecutive issues in which the letters appeared.

All we ask, sue, and pray for is ENQUIRY,—an investigation of the circumstances of the "Naval Execution" of July 31st. 1849; & not merely the proceedings of that melancholy onslaught, but also the policy that dictated it, and the occurrences anterior and subsequent. If the case possesses merits on which "the slaughter of 1500 beings in an incredible short space of time" can be justified, an enquiry—a full, searching examination would, obviously, contribute to establish the wisdom and "humanity" which dictated and directed it. Sir James Brooke of all men ought to court and not be chary in his demands for a public scrutiny. Falsehood and a consciousness of weakness avails itself of silence and uncertainty; truth is confirmed by investigation, and, to use a law maxim, "truth is afraid of nothing but concealment." If silence be persisted in, no other inference can be drawn save that the uncertainty of concealment is preferred for convenience sake, and because enquiry would disclose circumstances highly unfavorable to the author and approvers of proceedings

Clothed in the garb of secrecy—and guilt.

But, whether enquiry be granted or withheld, the statements of the *Rajah Brooke* (vide Letter I page 1) when juxtapotized with the allegations of *Sir James Brooke* (Letter I page 3) made for the purpose of establishing the fact of piracy against the Serebas and Sakarrans, clearly indicate a degree of prevarication,—coolly and deliberately written,—which must necessarily weaken our belief in any writings or narratives given to the world, emanating from such an author; & it involves a conclusion, irresistible we think, that the slaughter of the 31st. July was as wicked as it was merciless! So gross a misrepresentation of the occurrences of the 28th. Sept. 1839, detailed in the Diary—indited when the circumstances were fresh in the memory,—and so shamelessly distorted in an affidavit ten years afterwards, will, in some measure, prepare the reader for the want of ingenuousness displayed in the concoction of the letter of the *Rajah Muda Hassim* (vide Letter IV. p. 16—19) which was designed, and succeeded, in drawing off Captain Keppel's attention from the "terrible pirates" of the Archipelago—the *Illanuns* and *Balaninis*—to the tribes whose chief offence was their being inimical to the government of the Bornean *Rajah* and his European successor. The real pirates of the Archipelago are those designated as *Lanuns* or *Illanuns* and *Balaninis*, a description of whom and their prahus we have given from Keppel and an officer of H. M. S. *Wolf* (vide Appendix.) Had the operations of H. M. S. *Dido* been directed to the extirpation of the *Illanun* or *Balanini*—who may properly be designated *Hostis humani generis*—the scourge would ere this have effectually been suppressed. The ruse which successfully diverted Captain Keppel's attention from so desirable an object is equalled only by the slip recorded in the note at foot.*

* [From the *Straits Times* Oct. 1st. 1850.]

The following is taken from the *London Times* July 23rd as part of the Parliamentary oration of Mr. Hawes, the under Secretary:—

Then he had in his hand an important letter from one of the oldest merchants in Singapore *—the oldest surviving British merchant who had visited that coast; 16 years ago, when he visited the coast of Borneo, he witnessed the terror produced by the atrocity of those tribes, and the energy of Sir James Brooke had checked. The entire population of the towns along the coast and at the mouths of the rivers regarded these marauders with the utmost alarm and abhorrence. These were the words in which he wrote:—

"As one of the oldest, indeed, I believe the oldest, surviving British visitor to the western coasts of Borneo, I feel myself called upon to offer my testimony as to the state of those coasts 16 years ago. I have a lively recollection, even at this distant date, of the terror in which the coast was kept by the very tribes which you have been instrumental in checking. Scarcely more than a year before my arrival the entire population of the town of Sialak, a few miles to the south of Sambas, was cut off by a marauding expedition of Dyaks from the north-west coast; and I found all the smaller rivers that I wished to enter so barricaded with wooden piles that I found it difficult to obtain an entrance even for my small boat. I see that in my work on the *Eastern Seas* (page 269) I have alluded to these Dyaks as coming from 'Serassan'—an error which I discovered soon after publication, and which I intended to rectify if another edition had been called for before I left England. I feel convinced that the blow you have struck against the disturbers of the peace on the coast of Borneo will do more towards the general pacification of the tribes of the Indian Archipelago than any event that has occurred since the earliest period of our intercourse with this part of the world.—From the Speech of Mr. Hawes in the House of Commons.

* This statement of Mr. Hawes is all fudge—down-right bosh, as the Persians designate humbug. Mr. Earl made one voyage to the west coast of Borneo not as a merchant but in command of the Schooner *Stanford* (see "*Eastern Seas*" p. 209) and wrote and account of what was heard and seen during this flying visit. Mr. Earl claims only to be the oldest surviving visitor (not merchant) on the coast.—Editor.

For the communications of SCRUTATOR we solicit a patient and attentive perusal, a candid examination and calm reflection—they deserve not less, whilst the important subjects they discuss demands something more, namely, *action*, on conviction that a case is made out, and thus more loudly and widely spread the cry for PUBLIC ENQUIRY.—*Editor, Straits Times.*

Singapore, Dec. 5th. 1850.

We do not pretend to hazard a guess at what induced the author of "Earl's Eastern Seas" to indite the letter cited by Mr. Hawes, nor does it much matter, in as much as were the object to prop up the annihilation-process, the alleged facts avail nothing. Mr. Earl accommodates Sir James Brooke by fixing on the people of Sakarran the Slaku affair, and says although in "the *Eastern Seas* (page 269) "I have alluded to the Dyaks as coming from 'Serassan' instead of Sakarran" the error would have been corrected had the success of the first edition been such as to encourage another reprint of the work. Now turning to page 269 of Mr. Earl's book we find that the author heard—by the way, all the evidence against the Sakarrans is mere hearsay—that "the entire population of Slaku, a town situated a few miles distant from the mouth of the Sambas river" had been murdered by the Serassens. If "the entire population" was cut off, who supplied the narrative of the outrage? At page 214, where the same outrage is described, it is stated that "nearly all the inhabitants were murdered," and that the marauders "came down the coast from the northward," while at page 269 the attack is said to have been perpetrated "by a powerful tribe of wild Dyaks from the North-west coast." Such discrepancies may reasonably be expected in the versions of different writers, when mere hearsay evidence is credited; but the same narrator ought at least to preserve consistency in that which he puts forth as reliable facts. This, however, is not all. Notwithstanding the correction in the letter cited by Mr. Hawes, apparently accommodated to meet the wishes of Sir James Brooke, which misnomer Mr. Earl assures the world would be amended were a second edition of the *Eastern Seas* called for, when "Sakarran" should be substituted for "Serassan," we trust Mr. Earl, for his own reputation and for *Geography's sake*, will make no such substitution! Sirhassan and Sakarran are places distinct from each other, inhabited by different people; the affair of Slaku, the "entire population" (page 369) or "nearly all" (page 214) of whom were slain as described, could not possibly have been committed by the Sakarrans. In substituting "Sakarran" for "Serassan," Mr. Earl would seem not to be aware of the existence of the Sirhassen pirates, scarcely less formidable than the Lanuns. These Sirhassens, are natives of an island of the same name, one of the Natunas, whilst the country of the Sakarrans is on the mainland of Borneo, adjoining the dominions of Sarawak. The prahus of the Serassens have masts, spars, guns; those of the Sakarrans are mere canoes, sewn together, and, according to Brooke and Low, incapable of encountering the least bad weather or heavy sea, and without masts or guns. If Mr. Earl will turn to W. Robinson's Admiralty Reports vol. 2 page 354 he will gather something respecting these Serhassen pirates, who were fallen in with and attacked by the pinnace and two cutters of H. M. S. Dido, near the island of Serhassen.

✍️ Conductors of Public Journals who may notice, in their columns, the letters of SCRUTATOR will confer a favor by transmitting to the Editor of the *Straits Times* a copy of the paper containing their remarks.

BORNEO PIRACY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE STRAITS TIMES

AND SINGAPORE JOURNAL OF COMMERCE.

LETTER I.

SIR.—I am one of those who refused to sign the address got up here to Sir James Brooke, deprecating the attacks made on him through the English Press, relative to the slaughter of the Serchas and Sakarran Dyaks on the 31st July 1849; and, if I thought I saw good reason at the time, to decline subscribing to any such address, I am fortified in the conviction under which I then acted, by the perusal of certain portions of the evidence printed in the Parliamentary Papers, on which that unparalleled "naval execution" had been attempted to be justified. One specimen of that evidence I now beg to call the attention of yourself and readers to; and it is deserving of special attention, as being the evidence of the prime instigator of that awful transaction—the Rajah Brooke himself.

I must commence my task with quoting a somewhat lengthy extract from Brooke's Diary, published by Captain Keppel; but its perusal is indispensable to the due appreciation of what follows; and I must here only premise that when the adventure mentioned in the following extract befel Rajah Brooke, his yacht the "Royalist" was lying at the Mooratabas entrance of the Sarawak river, on the night of the 28th Sept. 1839, accompanied by a Malay pilot boat under the command of the Rajah Panglima of Sarawak. I quote verbatim, but the italics are my own:—

"The First part of the night was dark; and the panglima in his prahu with twelve men, lay close to the shore, *and under the dark shadow of the hill.* About nine the attention of the watch on deck was attracted by some bustle ashore, and it soon swelled to the wildest cries; the only word we could distinguish, however, being "Dyak," "Dyak!"—All hands were standing on deck, I gave the order to charge and fire a gun with a blank cartridge, and in the meantime lit a blow light,—The gig was lowered, a few muskets and cutlasses thrown into her, and I started in the hope of rescuing our poor Malay friends. The vessel in the mean time was prepared for defence, guns loaded, board-

" in gnetting ready for running up, and the people at quarters;
 " for we were ignorant of the number, the strength or even the description
 " of the assailants—I met the Panglima's boat pulling towards the vessel,
 " and returned with him, considering it useless and rash to pursue the foe.
 " The story is soon told. A fire had been lit in the river, and after the
 " people had eaten, they anchored their boat and according to their cus-
 " tom, went to sleep.—The fire had probably attracted the roving Serebas
 " Dyaks, who stole upon them, took them by surprise, and would in-
 " evitably have cut them off, but for our presence. They attacked the
 " prahu fiercely with their spears; five out of twelve jumped into the water
 " and swam ashore, and the Panglima was wounded severely. When
 " our blue-light was lit, they desisted; and directly the gun fired, paddled
 " away fast.—WE NEVER SAW THEM. The Panglima walked aboard with
 " a spear fixed in his breast, the barb being buried, and a second rusty
 " spear-wound close to the first; the head of the weapon was cut out, his
 " wounds dressed, and he was put to bed.—Another man had a wound
 " from a wooden headed spear; and most had been struck more or less
 " by these rude and luckily, innocuous weapons. A dozen or two of Dyak
 " spears were left in the Malay boat, which I got—some were well shap-
 " ed but the rest, simply pieces of hard wood sharp pointed, which they
 " hurl in great numbers. Five arms the Dyaks had none, and whilst at-
 " tacking, made no noise whatever; whilst the Malays, on the contra-
 " ry, shouted lustily, some perhaps from bravery, most from terror. The
 " force that attacked them was differently stated; some said the boat
 " contained eighty or a hundred men, others rated the number as low as
 " fifty; and allowing for exaggeration, perhaps there might have been
 " thirty five—not fewer from the number of spears thrown. Being ful-
 " ly prepared we set our watch, and retired as usual to our beds, the
 " stealthy and daring attack right under the guns of the schooner ha-
 " ving given me a lesson to keep the guns charged in future. The plan
 " was well devised, for we could not fire without the chance of hitting our
 " friends, as well as foes, and the deep shadow of the hill ENTIRELY
 " PREVENTED OUR SEEING THE ASSAILANTS.—29th Sept. I considered
 " it necessary to despatch a boat to Saravak to acquaint the Rajah Muda
 " Hassim with the circumstances of the attack made on his boat."
 Brooke's journal 28th and 29th Sept. 1839; Keppel vol. 1 p. p.
 89, 90, 91.

There is nothing further said about the matter; and if Brooke
 was told by the Malays that the, by him, UNSEEN ASSAILANTS were
 Serebas Dyaks; it was not likely he should express much surprise
 at the circumstance, as he had, only a few weeks before, been in-
 formed by the Rajah Mudah Hassim himself, and had recorded it in
 his Diary (August 17th) that the Serebas Dyaks "were inimical to
 his Government, and a skirmish had lately taken place between them
 and some of his subjects." (Keppel vol. 1. p. 35.) Not a word is
 then said about their being pirates—according to the Rajah Muda's
 own testimony, they were at war with Saravak.

Now, mark to what purpose Sir James Brooke converts this oc-
 currence ten years afterwards.—The following is an extract from the

vide F.P.
 24 Oct 1839

Deposition of Sir JAMES BROOKE, sworn to by him on the 25th. September 1849, and laid before the Admiralty Court at this Settlement, to establish the fact of piracy against the Serebas and Sakarran Dyaks, and forwarded by him to Lord Palmerston, to satisfy his Lordship of the accuracy of the information under which they were "annihilated" as pirates, viz.—

"Deponent further states that he is perfectly certain of the piratical character of the Serebas and Sakarran tribes; that as far back as the year 1839 deponent's attention was attracted towards these pirates on the 28th Sept. in that year; whilst lying in his (deponent's) schooner the *Royalist*, at the Moratabas entrance of the Sarawak river, two prahus containing about twenty men, acting as pilots to the *Royalist* were attacked by a party of Serebas men about nine o'clock at night; several of them were wounded and the most fled into the jungle. Deponent went to their assistance with two boats and pursued the pirates; he believes there were three or four piratical prahus, but the night was too dark to distinguish clearly.*"

The date specified, the position of the *Royalist*, her being accompanied with pilots, and other circumstances common to both accounts, place it beyond the reach of question or cavil that the attack, or minutely mentioned in the Diary, is identical with that referred to in the affidavit. We have some idea how a court of justice would deal with a witness whose evidence before a jury contained such discrepancies in point of fact as are presented between the record in Brooke's Diary, and the statement made by him under the sanction of an oath,—a form of allegation which is generally understood to enjoin carefulness and caution in giving evidence, but which Sir James Brooke would appear to regard as authorizing the utmost audacity of assertion. It is indeed painful to contemplate the position in which Sir James Brooke places himself by giving these two very different versions of the same occurrence. But it is not so much to the circumstance of his now swearing that he "*pursued the pirates*"—while in his Diary he distinctly states, that "he met the Panglima's boat pulling towards the vessel, and returned with him, considering it useless and rash to pursue the foe;"—it is not to his now swearing that instead of one Dyak boat with a crew estimated at thirty five men, as mentioned in the Diary, he affirms his "*belief that there were three or four piratical prahus*"—it is not to his now swearing that the night was merely "too dark to distinguish clearly," while the Diary three different times over repeats "we were ignorant of the number, the strength, or the description of our assailants."—"We never saw them"—the deep shadow of the hill entirely prevented our seeing the assailants;"—it is not, I repeat, to those discrepancies and other minor ones, to which I would particularly direct attention; although such glaring contradictions may help to determine the

* Papers on Borneo piracy laid before Parliament, April 1850.

claim of Sir James Brooke's statements and representations to the merit of scrupulous veracity, and although the whole circumstances may help to shew the public the nature of the means which he thinks himself at liberty to avail of in order to satisfy the minister of the British Crown, to whom he is officially responsible, that he possessed the most convincing proofs of the habitual piracy of the Serebas and Sakarran tribes.—All that is certainly bad enough.—But it is rather as a pregnant suggestion of the actual weakness of the whole case against these Dyaks, that I would invite attention to the above portion of the evidence on which they have been adjudged to be pirates—and I will venture to affirm that there is much more of that evidence equally valueless with that which forms the subject of my present observations. I will again address you on this subject; and in the meantime leave the above to the consideration of your readers.

* * *

LETTER II

SIR.—My former communication must not only have satisfied your readers that Sir James Brooke stands convicted of deliberate and wilful misrepresentation, in that portion of his evidence against the Serebas and Sakarran Dyaks, on which I have animadverted, but must also have tended to satisfy them that, when the prime agent in the process of extirpation which has been carried on against these tribes, finds himself reduced to such a deplorable necessity in furnishing his *proofs*, the question as to whether these people *are* or are *not* pirates, is not only matter of legitimate doubt, but ought to be one of careful inquiry. Of course, Sir, I, for my part, consider the question to be still at issue between Rajah Brooke and the Serebas and Sakarran communities; between him and the British people; and between the British people and the tribes of the slaughtered Dyaks; as to whether their rivers have been invaded, their villages plundered and destroyed, their habitations burned to the ground, their country laid waste, all trade with them interdicted even to the supplying of the necessaries of life, and their coasts strewn with their dead bodies in hundreds, on any evidence which brings home to them the guilt of habitual *piracy*, in the sense in which that word was always understood before Brooke became Rajah of Sarawak; or whether they have not been proceeded against from the first in a manner which no law can justify, and been doomed to destruction on false pretences. This question, with all its consequences of weal or woe to the defendants, I affirm to be still pending; and I shall have ill executed the task I have marked out for myself if, before I have done, I do not convince every candid reader, every reader not blinded by his prepossessions, that at the time when Captain Keppel first carried fire and sword into their countries in 1843, there was not a shadow of evidence before the public, that the Dyak tribes attacked by him were communities of *pirates*.

Let it be remembered that before Rajah Brooke's time no writer whatever had so much as even mentioned these tribes by name. In vain shall we search the pages of Dalrymple, of Forrest, of Raffles, or of Crawford, to learn a single syllable regarding these pirates. They are not mentioned by Mr. Hunt, whose "excellent notice of Borneo" is commemorated by Brooke himself, and who made a voyage on the coasts of Borneo in 1812 for the express purpose of gaining information for Sir Stamford Raffles. They are not mentioned by Mr. Earl in his work on the Indian Seas published in 1837. They are not mentioned in the columns of the *Singapore Chronicle* from the day of its first appearance in 1824 till its extinction in 1837. They are not mentioned in the *Singapore Free Press* from its commencement in 1835, until they are introduced to public notice through the medium of its columns, by Brooke himself, after he had become Rajah of Sarawak. Nor before that time, nor as we believe ever since, was any report made to the local authorities which connected the name of the Serebas or Sakarrans with a piratical attack on a native trading vessel of any description. Books of history, books of voyages, Newspapers far and near, official reports and judicial records, all alike bore testimony to the names and acts of the Malay pirates of the Straits of Malacca, of Linga, Billiton and other places, and of the Illanoon, Sooloo, and Balanini pirates; and all were alike silent as to the existence of these races of Dyak pirates; although Sir James Brooke can tell Lord Palmerston, in a recent despatch, that the hordes of Serebas and Sakarran had "for a long course of time carried on an extensive and unchecked system of depredation," before being attacked by Captain Keppel in 1843 & 1844*: and he does not shrink from representing to his Lordship that both "the interests of commerce and the maintenance of our national position in the Archipelago" require the entire extinction of a system of piracy carried on by people who paddle their rattan fastened prahus along the coast, never out of sight of land, who conduct their attacks without fire arms, and whose chief missiles are wooden spears, "*luckily innocuous weapons*" as he himself expresses it! What a rickety position must that of England be in the Eastern Seas, when savages so armed are likely to batter it down!

vide F.P.
24 Oct. 1834
see F.P.
1837 in
Earl's Eastern
Seas p.
Monit. des
Indes Or.
Vol p

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But this is a view of the question which I shall find more suitable occasion to return to. My present object is to trace Rajah Brooke in his relations with the Serebas and Sakarran Dyaks, from the time of his first acquaintance with them; and to indicate their relations with the surrounding tribes of Dyaks. For this purpose the principal authority consulted shall be Sir James Brooke himself; and I may here mention that I do not mean to avail of any writings hostile to him in pursuing my present enquiry. He shall be his own witness, with his friends Captains Keppel and Mundy, and Mr. Low: and the no less friendly pages of the *Journal of the Eastern Archipelago* and *Singapore Free Press*.

unavailable

* Sir J. Brooke to Viscount Palmerston 2nd Feb. 1850.

The very first mention we find made of Serebas in BROOKE'S JOURNAL, published by Captain KEPPEL, is on the occasion of his first visit to Sarawak in 1839, and it is worthy of attention, as we have just seen Sir James Brooke declaring that the Serebas and Sakarran hordes, were notorious pirates, for a long course of time anterior to Captain Keppel's invasion of their country in 1843. Having expressed his wish to the Rajah Muda Hassim to travel amongst the Dyaks, he is first cautioned against approaching the quarters of the rebels, obtains his cheerful assent to going amongst the Dyaks of Lundu and Sadong; but "Serebas, another large Dyak town, he advised me not to visit, as they were inimical to his government, and a skirmish had lately taken place between them and some of his subjects." Keppel vol. 1; p 35.

Could they not be pirates as well as inimical to Muda Hassim?

During this excursion he pays a visit to the dwelling of the chief of the Lundu branch of the Siubuyou Dyaks, whom he designated afterwards his "pet tribe," and where he finds that

"Some thirty or forty skulls were hanging from the roof of the apartment; and I was informed that they had many more in their possession; all however, the heads of enemies, chiefly of the tribe of Serebas. On enquiry, I was told that it was indispensably necessary a young man should procure a skull before he gets married and that it was a custom established from time immemorial and could not be dispensed with. I asked a young unmarried man when he would go to get a head. He replied "soon" "where would he go to get one? To the Serebas River." (Keppel vol. 1. p 55 56.)

Does this disprove the fact of their being pirates?

The Sibnyou Dyaks of the Sadong are also visited by him during the same expedition, and he finds that:

"Like their Lundu brethren and other Dyaks, they have a collection of heads hanging at the entrance of their chiefs' private apartments. Some of these heads were fresh, and with the utmost sang froid they told us they were women. They declared, however, they never took any heads but of their enemies, and that these women, unhappy victims, had belonged to a distant tribe." (Keppel vol. 1 p. 61.)

do

The following are the only further notices of the Serebas and Sakarran tribes which occur in the entries in Brooke's Diary during this early stage of his intercourse with Borneo, viz.

"The Dyaks of Sibnow came from the river of that name just beyond Balaban, though large communities are dispersed on the Lundu and the Sadong. The same may be said of the Serebas tribe (the most predatory and wild of the coast) which has powerful branches of the original stock on the Sakarran river. (Keppel vol. 1 p. 97.)

do

"I may now mention some curious facts I gathered from the cleverest man here, Makota. The natives of Lundu, Serebas and Bintulu, speak

"different languages, and vary greatly in dress and habits. Those of Lundu and *Serebas* do not use the blowpipe, nor are they tattooed like the Dyaks of Biantula. (Mundy vol. 1 p. 19.)

do

"Silakow is not far from Lundu, near the territory of Sambas. The Kurahs live in the same neighbourhood, half a day's journey from Sibulau. Among these tribes, they never have had war, but the Dyaks of *Serebas* sometimes attack them. The *Serebas* tribe is strong and fond of fighting." (Mundy vol. 1 p. 22.)

do
warlike

This information was communicated to Brooke by a Lundu Dyak, brought before him by Makota (Ibid.)

The foregoing passages comprise (inclusive of that quoted in my former letter) every individual direct mention of and incidental allusion to the *Serebas* and *Sakarran* Dyaks to be met with in Brooke's journals for 1839, published in the volumes of Captains Keppel and Mundy; when, as he himself says,

as careful
noticed
and quoted
by Mr. Wise

"My attention was anxiously directed to acquiring a knowledge of the Dyak tribes; and for that purpose I passed ten days amongst them at Lundu" (Keppel vol. 1 p. 86).

—besides the means he possessed of deriving information regarding their habits and practices at the hands of Muda Hassim and Makota.

It must be allowed even by Sir J. Brooke himself, that these notices contain no indication of the *Serebas* and *Sakarran* tribes being hordes of habitual pirates, dangerous either to British commerce, or to any other commerce, except it might be that of the tribes with whom they were from time to time at war, in the manner incident to savage life; nor does it here appear that their warfare was carried on in a more ferocious spirit than by their professed and avowed enemies whom he found coolly pointing to in the heads of women suspended from their roof, most probably the heads of women belonging to the *Serebas* or *Sakarran* tribes; for none of the Dyaks whom he visited on this occasion appear to have had any other enemies but these tribes.

If it is
supposed
Brooke to
make an
inference
why follow
this, or even
example?

LETTER III

SIR,—I proceed with my examination of the Journals. In August 1840 Brooke makes his second visit to Borneo, and finds his friend the Rajah Muda Hassim still at war with his insurgent subjects; and if the *Serebas* Dyaks were inimical to his Government on the occasion of the first visit, it would seem that hostilities betwixt them had ceased for a time, as we now find the Rajah Muda unsuccessfully soliciting their alliance to aid him in the war against the rebels. On the 16th. Oct. of that year, Brooke recounts certain arrivals in the camp, and adds:

Could they
not make
war on neighbouring
tribes
as well as
pirate?

"And lastly Pangeran Jedut came from *Serebas*, with information that the Dyaks of that name, in consequence of a war with *Linga*, could not come here. Thus they not only refused themselves, but obliged the *Linga* people to stay at home to defend their country.—To quiet this coast the *Serebas* should receive a severe lesson."—(Keppel vol. 1. p. 147.)

Succours from *Linga* afterwards arrive notwithstanding; and we find the "hostilities" of the *Linga* and *Serebas* tribes again alluded to in the following terms:—

"At this time Sheriff Jaffer from *Linga* arrived with about seventy men, Malays and Dyaks of *Balow*. The river being situated close to *Serebas*, and incessant hostilities being waged between the two places, he with his followers were both more active and warlike than the *Borneans*: but their warfare consists in closing hand to hand with spear and sword, and they scarcely understand the use of fire arms."—Journal Dec. 1840: *Ibid* p. 181.

do
When they go
to sea they
have Malay
with them who
do understand
fire arms

We are introduced to another tribe of Dyaks at enmity with the *Serebas*, consisting of a party whom Brooke fell in with in the river *Sadong*; and whom he thus mentions:

"We fell in with a party of *Balows*, who were building a prahu up a short creek. The *Pangerans* instantly swore they were the most treacherous and perfidious of the Dyak tribes, and assured me I should be murdered or maimed if I ventured near them. * * * They dislike the Malays, and few of their people will venture among them. * * * They are friendly with the *Sibuyans*, but at deadly feud with the *Serebas* and they seemed proud when they told me that the prahu they were making, was meant for a cruise against those enemies." (Journal Sept. 1840. *Mundy* vol. 1. p. 221.)

We are again told that the prahus of these *Balows*,

"Are carved about their high sterns, which distinguishes them from the plain boats of *Sakarran* and *Serebas*. They are represented as very brave, and are engaged in ceaseless warfare with their neighbours, against whom they maintain themselves, though very inferior in number." (*Ibid* p. 236.)

By other tribes also whom he meets at this time he is cautioned against Dyaks,

fierce &
treacherous
are qualities
of pirates
Proof of
piratical
character

"Who wear small ear-rings, for they assert them to be fierce and treacherous. The fiercest and most treacherous are the powerful tribes of *Serebas*."—*Ibid* p. 202.)

They are again thus characterised:

"By sea the *Sakarran* and *Serebas* reckon all they fell in with as fair prize, and acknowledge no friends but in their own waters; they

"are faithful to their agreements, hospitable, and it is reported kind to strangers, but I must not omit that they are held in detestation by all other Dyaks, who, to stigmatise them, remark when you meet a Dyak with many rings in his ears trust him not for he is a bad man. * * * The spear and the sword comprise their weapons; they have no muskets or fire arms, and never use the Sumpitan. * * * The Serebas 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 is enough to put the whole body to flight, and when they did run, fully the half disappeared returning to their homes."—(Mundy vol. 1 p. p. 235 236 237.)

They converse with Malays who use firearms.
accomplish we guilty in the eye of the law

Such is the manner in which the Serebas and Sakarran tribes are characterized, and their relations with neighbouring clans described by Brooke himself up to this period, under information drawn for the most part from their avowed and hereditary enemies.—In a state of society like that here presented to view, it would be absurd to construe the vague and general accounts thus received of the Serebas and Sakarrans "making prize of all they meet at sea," into the existence among them of a system of general piracy,—a term by the way, which Brooke is constantly using to designate incursions by land, as well as attacks at sea, "he is a pirate by land;" and "pirating on my territory," being expressions constantly occurring in his Diary, as well as in the work of Mr. Low on Sarawak. In fine, we quit the coast of Borneo with Mr. Brooke in 1840, without finding him bring forward any fact to prove that these tribes are pirates, and still less that they are formidable; and without discovering any circumstances in the relative conditions of the Dyak tribes or clans, which has not been found to characterise in some degree the feuds of all barbarous or savage communities in other parts of the world—hereditary feuds and long engendered hatreds, only to be appeased by blood, and the possession of the bloody trophies of successful vengeance—though it would appear that among the Dyaks, the spirit of revenge is allayed by the payment of the price of blood. Superior enterprise, superior audacity or guile, or the superior numbers, of a tribe, naturally gain for it the ascendancy, until the relentless use of this power, common to savages, and the jealousy and dread occasioned by it, surround them with hostile neighbours on every side, who will be sure so depict their oppressors in the very worst light. Such must I think, by every candid inquirer be pronounced to be the picture presented by Brooke himself, up to the period in question, of the relative position of the Serebas and Sakarran tribes and Dyaks of Linga, Sibuyou, Balows, and other hostile tribes whom he mentions. What Mr. Low writes of the Dyak wars confirms this view:—

vide Brooke's account of his first visit to Borneo
p. 24 Oct
1835-

"The wars of the sea Dyaks," he says, "are very frequent and more bloody than those of the Malays or the land tribes, many of the feuds in which the Dyaks of Serebas and Sakarran are now engaged are quar-

"rels which arose in the time of their ancestors and the ostensible object in carrying on of which now is that the balance of heads may be settled." (Low's Sarawak p. 213.)

And there is much more to the same effect to be gathered both from his writings and those of Sir James Brooke.

Who the pirates were who held the coast of Borneo in terror then and since, no one knew better than Brooke himself. Writing in Dec. 1840 and bewailing the condition of the Dyaks who dwell on the coast, he says:

"Now, they are in constant peril of their lives, not only from the roving Dyaks of their own nation, and from the treacherous Malays, but also from these terrible pirates the Illanuns and Balanans," and after expressing his earnest, and we believe at this period, sincere wish to ameliorate their condition, he thus concludes. "Injustice and tyranny stalk throughout the land. The Dyaks are slaughtered without mercy, and the coast may be said to be almost blockaded by the fleets of Lanun Pirates."—(Mundy vol. 1. p. p. 195 196.)

It was during his second visit that Brooke had come to an understanding with the Rajah Muda Hassim respecting his accession to the government of the Sarawak province; and he proceeds to Singapore in February 1841 to complete his arrangements. He returned in the following April; and if he left the coast infested with the Illanuns and Sooloo pirates, it would appear he found it no less so when he came back. His Diary of 4th. August says:—

"On our return we heard of the Illanun pirates being still on the coast; and from that time to this, they have been ravaging and plundering between Tanjong Datu, Serhassan and Pontianak. Malays and Chinese have been carried off in great numbers; Borneo and Sambas prahus captured without end; and so much havoc committed that the whole coasts as far as the natives are concerned, may be pronounced in a state of blockade." (Kempel, vol. 1 p. 223.)

No one ought to be surprised to hear all this of the desperate marauders to whom these depredations are attributed. The only remarkable thing is, that in later times, the wide spread devastations of the Illanuns and Sooloo pirates are wholly lost sight of by Sir James Brooke. In his despatches to the Foreign Office the ravages of the Seribas and Sakarran Dyaks, quite overshadow every thing else, and he hastens, nearly the first thing after he revisits Sarawak on his return from England, to acquaint Lord Palmerston that he meant to employ naval force against these hordes on account of their depredations "in the immediate vicinity of Sarawak"!*

But to return. While negotiations are proceeding, for the cession of the government of Sarawak, its future Rajah becomes acquainted with a circumstance which unexpectedly reveals to him the nature of the connexion existing between his friend the Rajah Muda Hassim and the tribes of Serebas and Sakarran. This is the actual presence in the Sarawak river of a fleet of a hundred Sakarran prabus mixed with Serebas and Malo Dyaks, and accompanied by some Malays, who had been admitted into the river, to ascend it for the purpose of invading the weak Dyak tribes of the interior, to slaughter them or make them captives, for the joint benefit of the Rajah Muda himself, his Pangerans, and the actors in this premeditated and atrocious foray. This Dyak force was stated by themselves to amount to 150 boats, containing 4,000 men; and Brooke's computation of their numerical strength will not allow a less number than 2,500. He expresses his horror at "the very idea of letting loose 2,500 wild devils in the interior of the country," and remonstrates against such an atrocity with so much animation and vigour that the Rajah Muda Hassim countermands the expedition, and the Dyak force retires. Had the incursion been allowed to take place, Brooke reckons that of the captives made,

*Good evidence
of his knowledge
of their
bad character.*

"Probably Muda Hassim would have got twenty shaves (women and children;) and these being reckoned at the low rate of twenty reals "besides other plunder amounting to one or two hundred reals more," makes 400 reals or £100 stg.! And for this wretched consideration the Rajah Muda Hassim consented to deliver up his own Dyak subjects to butchery and pillage! "Inferior Pangerans would of course partake likewise" (Keppel vol. 1. p. 215 216 p. 223 to 228; and p. 236.

Here we see the *well meaning* Rajah Muda, with all the Bornean nobles then in Sarawak, acting openly in concert with the sea Dyaks of Serebas and Sakarran as their allies and confederates; and openly encouraging them in an undertaking of the most infamous description, not in piracy indeed, but in an act still more revolting and horrible. But if the Rajah Muda had any pretence for considering the Sakarrans and Serebas as marauders, on whom it was fit and proper to retaliate the *piratical* misdeeds of all their brethren, why does he not take this opportunity to avenge on them the attack made on his Rajah Panglima's boat, on the *celebrated* night of the 28th. Sept. 1839, which Brooke told him all about, and which was so fixed in Brooke's recollection that *he recalled it 10 years afterwards in the way we have already seen.*

Let all this be borne in mind by your readers when they can come by and bye to witness the part which the Rajah Muda Hassim is called upon to play in regard to these Serebas and Sakarran Dyaks of whom we now see him the patron and confederate.

A few months after this notable occurrence Brooke became Rajah of Sarawak, and we ere long find the new Rajah up in arms

*Muda Hassim
had not then
entered into
any engagements
with the British
for the suppression
of piracy.*

He has so designated them from his first visit to the coast of Borneo.

against the "piratical" tribes, as he now finds it convenient to designate them, of Serebas and Sakarran. He begins, however, with announcing moderate and pacific views to the neighbouring chiefs; and having heard of an incursion of a wandering party of Sakarrans from which the land Dyaks have suffered, he says;

Malay leaders of piratical excursions

"I propose at first to send letters to Seriff Sahib of Sadong, Seriff Muller of Sakarran, and Seriff Jaffer of Linga, stating that "I wish to be on good terms with my neighbours, but am determined to attack any place which sends Dyaks to rob in my country, and that I call on them to restrain their subjects from making incursions here. In case the warning is neglected I must strike one blow suddenly, as a further warning; and keep a good look out at sea to destroy any Dyak fleet that may be prowling outside." We are then told that "Seriff Sahib is a great freebooter and despatches his retainers to attack the weak tribes here for the sake of the slaves. * * "Seriff Muller is a brother of Seriff Sahib, and lives at Sakarran, which powerful Dyak tribes are always willing to be sent by either brother on a frigate for heads and slaves. * * Seriff Jaffer is by no means mixed up with those brothers, and there is no love lost between them." (Ibid p. p. 263, 264.)

This, he adds, is the "foreign Policy."

Shortly after this we find note of hostile preparation:—

"In the evening I ordered a fine boat to be prepared for the war with Serebas and Sakarran which now appears inevitable; as it is impossible to allow these piratical tribes to continue their depredations, which are inconsistent with safety, and a bar to all trade along the coast" (18th January. Ibid 271.)

And this is written without any act of piracy on the part of these tribes, or a single attack on a trading vessel by them, being as yet particularised or even mentioned in Brooke's Journal. But hearken again:

"We are in active preparation to fit out a fleet to meet the piratical Dyaks. The Rajah Muda has a fine prahu which I have taken in hand to repair, and I have purchased a second, and the two with three or four small canoes will be able to cope with a hundred or a hundred and fifty Dyak boats." [Ibid p. 273.]

Two Sarawak prahus and three or four small canoes a match for a fleet of 150 Dyak boats!!—Why at this rate it would take about thirty of them to be a match for one of the ordinary Malay trading prahus which we see in Singapore harbour, almost every one of which carries a few muskets. And yet these are the pirates that are "a bar to all trade along the coast," the Illanuns and Balaninis, who were holding it in blockade being now quite forgotten!!! Observe, too, that all this is written only a few months after we have seen Brooke's predecessor, the Rajah Muda Hassim, on terms of friendship

They cooperate with the Januns and were the a branch of the piratical system

and alliance with the Serebas and Sakarrans, and their fleet in his river! What quarrel had Rajah Muda with his whilome allies that he should so suddenly take his "fine prahu" out of ordinary to attack them?

Nevertheless, no hostilities ensue; on the contrary we find that, "there are rumours of a war between the Serebas and Sakarran Dyaks, in consequence of the former tribe seizing a Balow woman on the territory of the latter, and refusing to restore her." (Ibid p. 282)

Seriff Sahib remains quiet and leaves Rajah Brooke to boast of his seizing all the rice and paddi collected by the Suntah Dyaks for his neighbour the Seriff's use, and which was the usual revenue of the district (Ibid 297.) This is said to be done in virtue of the Rajah Muda having written to the Seriff to say, that the Suntah Dyaks "were no longer his but Brooke's"!—and this enables the latter to boast that in the dispute about these Dyaks he got the best of it. "I outmanœuvred Seriff Sahib," he says, "and wrested the Dyaks from him," as a *tu quoque* for the Seriff's attack on the Sanpi Dyaks within the Sarawak territory, (Ibid 312;) although that incursion took place some eight or nine months before Brooke became Rajah, that is in Jan'y. 1841 (Mundy vol. 1, p. 240.) The powerful chief is left to smother the promptings of revenge as he best may, while his complacent antagonists triumph in the success of their *manœuvres*, and Rajah Brooke chuckles at the idea of the Seriff being "content as a fiend in the infernal regions." (Keppel vol. 1. 314.) Doubtless the proceedings of the new Rajah of Sarawak were unpalatable to the haughty chieftain, whose training had not been exactly after the model upheld by Exeter Hall, and who unfortunately was not aware to what an extent the principles of universal philanthropy, the cause of suffering humanity and so forth, were at the bottom of this invasion of his rights. But if Seriff Sahib had marshalled the tribes of Serebas and Sakarran, had carried fire and sword into Sarawak, had driven Rajah Brooke from power, and handed his head to the Serebas chief, who had a basket ready for its reception, what would have been the judgment of the world on his own history of his proceedings towards that Chief (had his Diary on such an event ever seen the light), but that he had rashly provoked the vengeance of a powerful neighbour, and perished from his own imprudence!

Peaceful counsels however, perhaps very reluctantly adopted, sway the Seriff, who believes Brooke "to be backed by the whole power of his country," (Ibid p.) and remains quiet; as does also his brother Seriff Muller. Sarawak is not attacked by the Serebas and Sakarrans, nor are they by Sarawak. A detachment of Dyak boats, thirteen in number, was (April 1842) attacked outside by Mr. Crimble at the head of some Sarawak prahus and chased away (Ibid. p.)—but

what Dyaks they were, and why attacked, does not appear; it seems enough that they were "prowling outside," but not one piratical attack on, or capture of, a single trading prahu, from Singapore or any where else, by the Serebas or Sakarran Dyaks is recorded during all 1841 and 1842. There are disturbing rumours; but no other foes to the general peace. Rajah Brooke finds matters, within and without, in so satisfactory a state that he feels himself at liberty to visit Borneo Proper in July of that year, and returned to Sarawak with the Sultan's confirmation of the grant of the territory and government of the province. He finds that "matters have been quiet during his absence," in spite of insidious rumours being spread to disturb the country, (Ibid. p. 334). On the 1st January 1843 he records his satisfaction with the existing state of affairs, foreign and domestic: "The Dyaks have been quiet, settled and improving; the Sarawak people wonderfully contented and industrious," (p. 335.) "At intervals a cloud threatens the serenity of our political atmosphere but it speedily blows over. However *all is well and safe and so safe that I have resolved to proceed in person to Singapore*" (Ibid p. 336.) On the 20th. of January he writes:—

"I have now been nearly two years in Sarawak without moving beyond the boundary of my newly adopted country, unless to punish the wild tribes who have made excursions across our frontier." (Mundy vol. 1. p. 334).

The last that we hear of the Serebas and Sakarrans, before they are attacked is at this juncture, and explains the existing relations between them and Rajah Brooke:

"Of the home politics I may here remark that the great object now is to get rid of Makota, and afterwards of the Rajah Muda Hassim; *when the latter is gone I doubt not Sulong, Sakarran and Serebas will be insolent*, but we can chastise them, and if necessary, I doubt not a league could be formed of Sarawak, Linga and Rejang against them, offensive and defensive." (20th Jan. Mundy vol. 1 p. 336.)

It would appear from this that it is the Rajah Muda's presence in Sarawak which keeps the peace between that country and Serebas and Sakarran, but at any rate these two chiefs, Seriff Müller and Seriff Sahib, have continued quiet; and though Rajah Brooke professes to consider their proffers of friendship and amity to be hollow and insincere, it is certain they have made no hostile movements, according to his own account. He leaves matters in this state at the beginning of 1843, and gets clear of the Sarawak river on the 9th. of Feb. on his way to Singapore, to return in a few months to his own province, and without shewing further cause than we have now before us to "Cry havoc, and let loose the dogs of war," against the de-

voted inhabitants of the Serebas and Sakaran countries, and literally to hunt to death the chiefs Seriff Sahib and Seriff Muller.

* * *

LETTER IV.

SIR,—We have now brought down our examination of Brooke's Journal to the period immediately antecedent to the invasion of the Serebas river, under Captain Keppel; but before that expedition takes place, and before the gallant officer is allowed to reach Sarawak, he has the good fortune to encounter a small detachment of Illanuns, "that enterprising tribe of pirates of whose daring adventures I had heard much"—and thus to form some notion of the actual prowess of these well known marauders, and of the power of their vessels. On his way over from Singapore in H. M. S. Dido, he falls in with three of their prahus, at the bottom of a deep bay, on the coast of Borneo, where he flatters himself, "he has them pinned into a corner," but much to his surprise, they effect their escape, dexterously manœuvring so as to avoid the broadside of the Dido, which had anchored, and sweeping away with a velocity which made them,

"Appear from their swiftness to be flying, and that, too, from under my very nose," * * "though our thirty two pound shot fell thick about their heads, frequently dashing the spray all over them, not a man flinched from his oar." (Vol. 2 p. 7.)

Besides these, the Dido's boats near the island of Murundu, came upon a fleet of five large prahus, each pulling fifty oars, either Balaninis or Illanuns, which fled from them, and "led to a very exciting chase with a running fire kept up on both sides," and, the next day, the boats were attacked by a fleet of six war vessels, "which in seven or eight minutes got ten men killed and twenty wounded," before the largest prahu struck; while the others made for the shore "keeping up a fire to the last." Again; the "Jolly Bachelor" armed with a brass six pounder, and manned with 21 men officers, seamen & Marines, from the Dido, is attacked at night by two Illanun prahus, which, in the face of a hot fire of grape and musketry, attempted to board, and it was only when one prahu had been disabled that the other took to flight, the captured prahu exhibiting a frightful scene of carnage:—

"At the bottom of the prahu in which there was about three feet of blood and water, were seen protruding the mangled remains of eighteen or twenty bodies." (Ibid p. 21.)

This afforded convincing enough proof of the quality of the *real* pirates of the Archipelago and justly enough does Brooke remark, "this will have shewn Keppel the frightful state of the coast and the necessity

of active measures." *Active measures against whom?* Against these daring Illanuns of whom the Dido's people have already had such experience, and "who go out in large fleets every year to look for trading prahus bound to Singapore and the Straits"?—Against these "terrible pirates" who had been plundering along the coast of Borneo, north and south, and keeping it "in a state of blockade"?—Against pirates who traverse the seas in prahus "the armament of each of which is one or two six pounders in the bows, one four pounder stern chaser; and a number of swivels, besides muskets, spears and swords;" and "who seem to have few fears of the Dutch or English men-of-war being able to take them"?—Is it against these pirates, of whom Brooke has said that the "misery and devastation they inflict upon the rest of the Archipelago are well known," that *active measures* required to be pursued? No: by no means! These truly formidable marauders are to be left to continue their ravages on the coast, unheeded and unchecked, so far as the operations of H. M. S. Dido are concerned; and Captain Keppel's attention is adroitly, and by a politic manœuvre, diverted from them to "the dangerous tribes," in the immediate vicinity of Sarawak, who navigate their rivers and the adjacent coast in prahus fastened together with rattans, without sails, and propelled by paddles, which are manned by crews who not only do not use fire arms, but whom the very sound of a gun dismays—against these tribes, *as the pirates principally concerned in the interruption of the trade between Singapore and Borneo*, is Captain Keppel's attention most cunningly, and most unjustifiably directed. In what manner I shall now proceed to shew.

Captain Keppel has anchored the Dido off Sarawak (16 or 17th May 1843); and a few days afterwards he received a letter, in the Malayan language, from the Rajah Muda Hassim:—

This is to inform you that there are certain great pirates of the people of Serebas and Sakarran in our neighbourhood, seizing goods and murdering people on the high seas. They have more than three hundred war prahus, and extend their ravages even to Banjarmassin; "they are not subject to the government of Bruni (Borneo); they take much plunder from vessels trading between Singapore and the good people of our country. It would be a great service if our friend would adopt measures to put an end to these piratical outrages."

The following is the reply:—

"Captain Keppel begs to acknowledge the receipt of the Rajah Muda Hassim's letter, representing that the Dyaks of Serebas and Sakarran are the pirates who infest the coast of Borneo, and do material damage to the trade of Singapore. Captain Keppel will take speedy measures to suppress these and all other pirates, and feels confident that Her Britannic Majesty will be glad to learn that the Rajah Muda Hassim is ready to cooperate in so laudable an undertaking."

It will be seen that Captain Keppel here understands the Rajah Mu-

*accuses those
allies by whom
they are aided
comforted and
abetted, who
furnish them
with supplies
their Malay
confederates
also pirate*

*vide confirmation
of this in Earl's
D. and main
see Index Br.
vol. p.*

da Hassim to represent that the Dyaks of Serebas and Sakarran as "THE pirates who infest the coast of Borneo, &c." and the expression may, perhaps, be received as significant of the pains which must have been taken at the time to imbue him with impressions of their formidable piratical character. He says: "This information (!) about the pirates gave me good ground to make a begining,"—and the invasion of the Serebas river is forthwith determined on. (Keppel vol. 2. p. 29.)

But who at all acquainted with the Malay character will for a moment regard the letter of the Rajah Muda Hassim as a spontaneous and self-suggested act of his own? The whole affair must indeed be pronounced a mere mockery—a farce—and it will not be difficult to demonstrate the worse than absurdity of the Rajah Muda coming forward at this juncture to denounce the Serebas and Sakarrans as pirates.

The nature of that man's relations and connexion with these tribes has been distinctly shown on three different occasions, in what I have already laid before your readers out of Brooke's own journals. On the first occasion he represents himself to Brooke as at war with Serebas. On the second, we find that he had been sending an ambassador, Pangeran Jedut, to their country, to solicit their assistance, in the war against his own rebel subjects. On the third and more memorable occasion, we behold him as the patron and confederate of the self same Serebas and Sakarrans, with their fleet in the Sarawak river, not to be called to account for their attack on his boat on the celebrated night of 28th Sept. 1839, but to be hounded on to the destruction of the Hill tribes of Dyaks, his own subjects!

Captain Keppel at the time of his receiving the letter must have been acquainted with this visit of the Serebas and Sakarran fleet to Sarawak; but it would appear that he had been taught that the prime mover and planner in the transaction was the "Serpent" Makota—for he says;

"He it was that gave the Sakarran pirates permission to ascend the river for the purpose of attacking the comparatively defenceless mountain Dyaks."

But this attempt to shift the burden of that shameful transaction from the shoulders of Muda Hassim, in order to make his antecedent connexion with these Dyaks consist with his professions in the letter to Captain Keppel, will not avail. The language in which Brooke marks Muda Hassim's participation in that proceeding, admits but of one construction. He remarks, in allusion to the presence of the Dyak fleet in the river;

"That any man besides the Rajah himself could have been bold enough to grant permission [for the fleet to enter] I knew from experience was impossible." * * Muda Hassim must have given his consent, must

"have been a participator in this atrocity, *nobody being desperate enough to do such a thing without his orders*. In fact they dare not move up the river themselves without leave, much less send up the Dyaks. It is a fearful feature in this government newly developed since the close of the war." (Keppel vol. 1 p. p. 216 and 228.)

The Rajah Muda Hassim, therefore stands branded as the patron and confederate of the Serebas and Sakarrans in their incursions for slaves and heads, on evidence far more convincing than any possessed by the Rajah Brooke as to the complicity of Seriff Sahib in similar undertakings. It may be urged, however, that Muda Hassim might employ the Serebas and Sakarrans to forage for heads and slaves, the slaves for him, the heads for them, but still might wish to punish them for being pirates!—To this it would only be necessary to reply that it had never been shewn that Muda Hassim had cause to consider them a pirates; and that it was not until after Brooke became Rajah of Sarawak, that he was moved to put his "fine prahu" into a state of repair for their annoyance.

But I am not yet done with this notable letter of the Rajah Muda to Captain Keppel. In the "Deposit ion of Sir James Brooke"—of which I have already exhibited one specimen,—that letter is inserted, with the following voucher of the value and importance of its contents : viz.—

"The following is a translation of a letter from the Rajah Muda Hassim (uncle to the Sultan of Borneo, and empowered by the Sultan to pacify the coast of Borneo) to Captain the Honorable Henry Keppel, then in command of H. M. S. Dido, to the general correctness of which deponent can testify, which will afford proof of the character of the Serebas and Sakarran tribes." [then follows the letter in the affidavit.

When Sir James Brooke thus attempts to connect the Rajah Muda Hassim's residence in Sarawak with a delegated power from the Sultan "to pacify the coast of Borneo" with referenee to piracy, he only resorts to a disingenuous artifice to gain credit for the facts and professions contained in the letter to Captain Keppel. In his Sarawak diary for 1839 he tells us that,

"Sarawak is but an occasioned residence of the Rajah Muda Hassim, and he is now detained here by a rebellion in the interior."

The same rebellion, which, with Brooke's assistance he successfully suppressed in the following year. Brooke knew full well, and his Diary throughout shews, that the powers under which Muda Hassim exercised rule over Sarawak, had nothing whatever to do with the suppression of the so called piracy of the Dyaks, and he possessed incontestable evidence that Mud a Hassim's government had been disgraced (in his eyes at least, certainly not in the Sultan's) by

Rajah Muda Hassim
did this all before
he p.

an infamous league with the Sakarrans for the invasion of the hill tribes of his own province! Under these circumstances the politic *Rajah* Brooke might allow Muda Hassim's letter to have its full influence over Captain Keppel, as a stroke levelled against his troublesome neighbours of Serebas,—but, did it become *Sir James Brooke*, as a high public servant of the British Crown, with the knowledge he must have possessed of *how that letter originated* to verify it by his own oath, as the testimony of a person competent from his position, as the Sultan's delegated pacificator of the coast, to establish the facts it advances?—Oh fie!!

But such are the miserable shifts that must be resorted to in order to get up a case against the Serebas and Sakarran Dyaks! And will it be believed that in this deposition the sole and only *facts* brought forward as proofs of the piratical habits of these tribes, *before* Keppel's invasion of their rivers in June 1843, are the celebrated night attack of the 28 Sept. 2839, and the *Rajah* Muda Hassim's letter to Captain Keppel!!! And then, half a dozen years after that event, the mere fact of Captain Keppel's invasion is brought forward as a proof that they were pirates; and adduced in justification of the massacre of the 31st. July 1849.!!! Never was there seen such a pregnant illustration of the force of the vulgar but expressive proverb, "*Give a dog an ill name and hang him.*"

But I hasten to some of the details of the first expedition against the Dyaks. The Dido's boats have almost had to fight their way to Sarawak through squadrons of the Illanuns and Balaninis on the high seas, but other game has been marked down, and the prey lies up the Serebas river.

Captain Keppel's preparations were not carried on without tidings of the intended expedition being spread abroad, and the Dyaks of Serebas had caught the alarm. Their "bird of ill omen" could not have been silent over the tempest which was to burst upon them from Sarawak; and they were busy with their preparations for defence. "All the adjoining Seriffs" says Captain Keppel "had in the utmost consternation sent me assurances of their future good intentions." From Seriff Sahib came there invitations to him and to Brooke (who had twice before been his guest,)

"To partake of a feast in their way to the Serebas rivers, and this was accompanied with a present of a couple of handsome spears and a porcupine; and also an offer to give up the women and children he had, with the assistance of the Sakarrans, captured from the poor Sow Dyaks up the Sarawak." "All of them" continues Captain Keppel, the powerful Seriff Muller, and Seriff Sahib "through fear at the moment sent me submissive messages; but their time had not yet come [ominous words!] and we proceeded towards the Serebas." (Ibid vol. 2. P. 44.)

Why were these overtures rejected? Why were not these chiefs even listened to by Capt. Keppel? It was not inconsistent with the general instructions from the Admiralty; it was not inconsistent with his duty as a British naval commander, to give them audience, nor would it have been against his orders, had he treated with them for the discontinuance of their alleged malpractices, accepted their pledges, and let them alone; at least until time and events had proved their sincerity or borne witness to their misdeeds.

It assuredly was not through fear *at the moment* that they made these professions to Captain Keppel; because ever since Brooke had been Rajah, they had continued quiet; and the gallant officer himself bears testimony to the long continued peace Sarawak had enjoyed; for he says, just before setting out on this expedition: "The Dyaks have enjoyed peace so long, that the whole country is in a state of cultivation." (Vol. 2 p. 40). *But their doom had been sealed.* The preparations were completed, and the Sarawak fleet dashed up the Serebas river, consisting of the pinnace, two cutters, and gig of the Dido, with the Jolly Bachelor contributed by Rajah Brooke, armed with a long six pounder, and manned with thirty of the Dido's crew; besides a native force of about a thousand men. "The latter, in addition to the Sarawak prahus, included the Dyak tribes of Lundu, Sow, and Singe, "all eager for heads and plunder" along with the Linga Dyaks under Sheriff Jaffer, which alone were between eight and nine hundred strong; all coming to their assistance; "or more likely," as Captain Keppel says, "to seek for plunder and the heads of their enemies, with whom they had been many years at war." [Vol. 2 p. 45.]

See Keppel's
Vol. 2 p. 55.

Their principal town, Paddi, was carried by assault on the 11th. June; the inhabitants, panic struck, flying into the jungle *without firing a shot*, and with such haste that the Dido's leading men "could scarce even get a snap shot at the rascals as they went"! And on that evening "the country was illuminated for miles by the burning of the capital, Paddi, and the adjacent villages, at which work and plundering, our native allies were most expert." (p. 53.) After this "lesson" the chiefs of Paddi, were most submissive, and received a lecture from Rajah Brooke respecting their "*piratical*" misdeeds, to the force of which they bowed in all penitence and humility!

Sheriff Jaffer, with his 800 auxiliary "savages" had meantime not been idle:—

"Round the still smoking ruins of the once picturesque town of Paddi, the country had been laid waste. *All had been desolated together with their extensive winter stores of rice. It was a melancholy sight.*"

The town and forts of *Pakoo* shared the same fate on the 14th; the "*pirates*" of this place also "flying panic struck, *without firing a shot*, on our first discharge"!

"The same work of destruction was carried on; but the town was larger than at Paddi, and night coming on, *the conflagration had a finer effect!*"

The chiefs here were of course equally submissive and *penitent* with those of Paddi.

The next point of attack was Rembas, which was carried on the 17th. Sheriff Jaffer's division of Dyaks received orders to

"*Creep stealthily to the rear of the town and make their assault when they heard the first shot.*"

But on the first discharge,—as at Paddi and Pakoo,—

"They fled in all directions, *without provoking us by firing a shot*, although we found the guns loaded; this Rembas was by far the largest and strongest place we had assaulted" * * * "After we had destroyed every thing, we received a flag of truce, when similar explanations and promises were made as at Paddi and Pakoo; and *here ended for the present the warlike part of our expedition.*"

The native followers had now permission to depart to their homes "*which they did loaded with plunder.*" (p. p. 60. 61.)

Here, I should say, ended a *predatory* expedition of the Sarawak forces, aided by their English allies, against the inhabitants of a country where an European face had never before been seen,—thousands of whom had never even seen an European vessel of any description, and many hundreds of whom had probably never seen the sea in their lives—involving entire communities in misery and ruin on pretence of crimes of which there was not *then*, and is not *now*, as much evidence before the public as Capt. Keppel would flog the meanest of his ship's boys on; and for which, if they could have been established at all, *their rulers were the accountable parties*—leaving the habitations of 6,000 Dyaks and 500 Malays, at which their force of *fighting* men was reckoned, burned to the ground and their families driven into the jungle for shelter, and to seek for food where they might find it; for all their stores of provisions had been destroyed or carried off, and their fruit trees cut down,—an extremity of cruelty and barbarity of which Rajah Brooke shall himself show the extent:—

"The utter destruction of a village or town" he says "*is nothing to the infliction of cutting down the fruit trees; the former can be rebuilt with its rude and ready materials in a few weeks; but the latter, from which the principal subsistence of the natives is gathered, cannot be suddenly restored, and then they are reduced to starvation*" !!!

And this is the man who is suffered to prate about his humanity, whose pharasaical cant has charmed the ears of a sympathising public, and whose philanthropic zeal has been commended to the skies! Away

with such stuff—let the man be judged by his actions, and not by *soliloquies* out of his Diary, written with the hope and wish of being read by as extensive an audience as any that are spoken to on the stage.

Captain Keppel says that the destruction of the Serebas towns created the utmost astonishment among the natives, and that the Dyaks declared that Brooke had “charmed the river.” It was not the river that was *under a charm*, but Captain Keppel himself. The ardent temperament ascribed to him had been kindled into a sort of enthusiasm regarding Brooke, of whose motives and views he appears to have at this time formed the most exalted conceptions, and the romance of whose position as the English Rajah of a Bornean country had captivated his imagination, and mastered his judgment. He could not without some such delusion, under the influence of which he continued too long, have headed expeditions such as those which he has himself recorded.*

The Sakarran river was to have been the next scene of similar operations, but, the Serebas expedition over, Captain Keppel found orders for the recal of the Dido to China, and the fate of the Sakarrans was postponed for a time.

This abrupt summons of the Dido from the coast of Borneo leaves Rajah Brooke to his meditations and his Diary; and on the 1st of July, six days after her departure, we find him writing as follows: viz.

“I have lately received much local information regarding piracy and find that in many places where the inhabitants themselves are not addicted to that crime, that encouragement is nevertheless given to regular pirates to visit them periodically.

“The chiefs of rivers who encourage piracy, serve to foster it in a remarkable degree. Of these Sheriff Sahib of Sadong is certainly the worst, and I am now convinced that Dyak piracy must be suppressed by a blow struck at him. The mischiefs and evils perpetrated by this man have been very great; he was the planner, the mover, the sharer of the plunder of all the expeditions against the unhappy Hill Dyaks.” (Mundy vol. 1. p. 351.

This appears to mark the nature of the Sheriff's connexion with piracy—he is charged with *encouraging it*, and with the chief par-

* Captain Keppel says that two years before this expedition, the Serebas chiefs had been warned “that the British nation would no longer allow the native trade between the adjacent islands and Singapore to be plundered, &c. &c.” Warned by whom? What British authority was there on the coast of Borneo in 1841 competent to speak in the name of the British nation? This must be mis-statement put into Captain Keppel's mouth. It was just about two years before this expedition that the Serebas and Sakarran fleet had been seen in the Sarawak River in league with the Rajah Muda Hassim! What are the “adjacent islands” between which and Singapore it is alleged the trade had been cut off by the Dyaks? When was a *Dyak* prahu ever seen outside the Natunas? and had not Captain Keppel on his way over from Singapore seen and fought with the pirates which interrupted the trade with Singapore?

cipation in such invasions of the hill tribes as has been shewn to have been a feature of the Rajah Muda Hassim's own government of Sarawak!

It is not until exactly one year after this that we find the Rajah Brooke reviewing the policy of the neighbouring rivers, he having in the interval visited Bruni, Singapore, Pinang and Acheen, and returned to Sarawak in May 1844. In the meanwhile Seriff Sahib, in much alarm at what had occurred on the Serebas, had withdrawn to the Sakarran country, and fortified himself at Patusen on the Batang Lupar, rumour ascribing to him such menacing intentions that Rajah Brooke on his arrival in his own province, found his capital in much alarm "and he sent to Seriff Sahib to inform him that he should suffer for his temerity."—(Keppel vol. 2. p. 81) and so he does suffer. The Diary under date 1st July 1844, contains the following further notice of that chief and his brother.

"Seriff Muller, the elder brother of Seriff Sahib, is the self constituted chief of Sakarran, and with about a hundred and fifty Malays has his settlement at the junction (of the Sakarran and Batang Lupar); but he had little control over the Sakarran Dyaks, was obliged to wink at their piracies, and the Malays with him encouraged and accompanied them on their predatory excursions. Seriff Muller from his inferiority of force was subservient to his brother Seriff; and the Dyaks of Sakarran looked up to the latter as their chief, as long as he encouraged them and participated in their profits"—(Mundy vol. 1. p. 363.)

This is penned within only a few weeks before the town and residence of Seriff Muller,—who is here represented as the tool of his more powerful brother, and compelled to wink at alleged piracies which he cannot controul—are sacked and burned, and himself driven forth into the jungle, where he shortly afterwards perishes!!

On the 24th of July, being, now in daily expectation of the return of H. M. S. Dido to Sarawak, he thus exults in the near prospect of the accomplishment of his plans:—

"With the neighbouring rivers our grand struggle is approaching, and I am rejoiced that it is so, for it will at once bring about what otherwise might have cost us years to effect, viz. the removal of all the bad and pestilent Rajahs and their followers, and the establishment of Sarawak influence and rule over all the contiguous rivers." * * * "Heaven help the right,"—which means, I suppose, God send Captain [Keppel] soon back again!

Who can now doubt that the real question at issue between Rajah Brooke and the neighbouring chiefs was one of power; and that the charge of piracy was the stalking horse behind which he sought to attain "the establishment of Sarawak influence and rule over all the neighbouring rivers,"—a policy which a system of intertribal war, and the

general bad name of the coasts of Borneo from marauders of whom Keppel had such experience on his way to Sarawak, rendered so specious and easy!

As to the process which Rajah Brooke purports when he talks of the *removal* of his rivals, I apprehend the sense in which Shakspeare's Iago uses the word will best explain his meaning. To appease Roderigo's jealous fears of Cassio, Iago suggests that no plan can be "so determinate as the removing of him"

"Rod. How do you mean *removing* him."

"Iago. Why by knocking out his brains."

A "mode of operation" quite consistent with the policy pursued by Rajah Brooke.

* * *

LETTER V.

SIR—Rajah Brooke's wishes were gratified to their utmost extent by the reappearance of H. M. S. *Dido* at Sarawak on the 1st of August, accompanied by the H. C. Steamer Phlegethon, and operations were forthwith commenced against the Sakarrans,—the farce of a second letter from Muda Hassim denouncing them as "pirates by sea and by land," not being wanting on the occasion; and a previous communication from Brooke himself had described the state of affairs as follows:—

"The case stands thus:—Seriff Sahib quite frightened at Sadong since last year, enraged likewise at his loss of power and his incapability of doing mischief, collected all the Sakarran Dyaks, and was joined by many of the Dyaks of Serebas, and some Balows. He likewise had good many Malays and bullied every one in his vicinity. This force met at the entrance of the Sadong Delta, and committed depredation. They were not less than 200 Dyak boats, and some 15 or 20 armed Malay prahus besides others."—vol. 2 p. 81.)

No wonder that Seriff Sahib was both frightened and angry, and it will not perhaps be out of place to introduce here Rajah Brooke's own account of the character and resources of this powerful chief; viz.

"His name and descent are Arabic; his father, an Arab, having married a daughter of the Borneo Rajah. The Malays evidently honor his descent, and consider his birth very high. His power, they say, equals his family, as he is, in some measure, independent, and were he to instigate the Sadong country to take arms against Borneo, it is very probable he would overthrow the Government and make himself Sultan of Borneo. In person this noble partakes much of his father's race both in height and features, being tall and large, with a fine nose and contour of face. His manners are reserved and kind; he looks as if too indolent to care much about acquiring power, too fat for an active traitor, though a dangerous man to oppress. We were the first Europeans he had ever seen; and on this our second visit he lost much of his previous reserve, and was curious in examining our arms and accoutrements."

The chief thus described, at the head of three hundred war prahus, and able to muster more than 8,000 fighting men within the territories which acknowledged his sway was, of course, fully competent to maintain the relations of peace and war, and was no more pirate:

"But in the meanwhile he had been joined by Makota, who was his principal adviser, and in whose house the councils of war were generally held." (p. 87.)

And this alliance is a feature of the war deserving of special attention, with reference to the character and position of this new actor in the "piratical" confederacy. The Pangeran Makota, was a relative of Muda Hassim, and the ruler of Sarawak in his absence; he is allowed by Brooke to be a man of much ability, and well acquainted with English and Dutch affairs for a native, though denounced as a juggling intriguer, when he came to manifest his aversion to Brooke's supremacy as Rajah of Sarawak. "He was determined at all hazards" says Brooke "to drive me from the country;" "I it like Seriff Sahib he was "out manoeuvred" and compelled to give in. Can it, however, be supposed that this Makota, who well knew what piracy was, and how pirates were dealt with, who is one of the chief nobles of Borneo, and as I now hear, the Sultan's most confidential minister, would have allied himself to the cause of Seriff Sahib, in opposition to Sarawak and an English naval force, had it been that of a mere pirate? No: Makota no doubt thought it quite as lawful for him to unite with Seriff Sahib, as for Muda Hassim to side with the alien rajah of Sarawak, whom it had all along been his policy to expel, in a war which all the natives saw only in one light, namely, a war for the supremacy of Sarawak over the neighbouring rivers.

Makota's alliance, however, proved no Aegis to Seriff Sahib whose principal town and stronghold Putusen, on the Batang Lupar, was stormed, sacked, and burnt, on the 7th of August, by the expedition under Captain Keppel, with the loss of one European seaman killed, and two wounded. Another town of the Seriff's situated up a tributary branch (the Graha) of the same river, was immediately afterwards assaulted and carried, the natives decamping, without firing a shot, and here they found the chief's residence and "all his curious and extensive wardrobe." Returning to Putusen, the invading force "destroyed every boat and sampao, as well as every house and hut" and the results of this preliminary operation are thus summed up:—

"The habitations of 5,000 pirates had been burnt to the ground, four strong forts destroyed, together with several hundred boats, upwards of sixty brass cannons captured, besides vast quantities of other arms and ammunition, and the powerful Seriff Sahib the great pirate-patron, for the last twenty years [!] ruined past recovery"—(Ibid. p. p. 90; 91; 92; 93.

On the Undop, another tributary of the Batang Lupar, some miles

above Patusen, stood the village and residence of Seriff Muller, which was the next point of attack; for says Captain Keppel,

" I deemed it advisable before proceeding to the punishment of the Sakarrans TO DESTROY THE POWER AND INFLUENCE OF SERIFF MULLER"! That chief's "devoted town" was accordingly entered: " With the exception of his own house, from which some eight or nine Malays were endeavouring to move his effects, the whole place was deserted. *They made no fight and an hour afterwards the town had been plundered and burnt.* The only lives lost were a few unfortunates who happened to come within range of our musketry, in their exertions to save some of their master's property;" (p. 99) the Seriff himself being so hotly pursued that he was compelled to swim for his life, and hide himself in the jungle, Makota having it is said, retreated along with him. (p. 103 and 104.)

And now says Captain Keppel: " Having driven away and destroyed the strongholds of the two principal instigators and abettors (viz. Seriff Sahib and Seriff Muller) of all the piracies committed on the coast of Borneo and elsewhere, it now remained for us to punish, as far as in our power lay, THE PIRATES THEMSELVES, the Sakarrans being the only ones now remaining who had not received convincing proofs that their brutal and inhuman trade would no longer be allowed"! (vol. 2 p. 106.)

I really find it difficult to deal with this unparalleled avowal. Captain Keppel has just told us that at Patusen alone he had burned to the ground the habitations of 5,000 PIRATES, and destroyed all their property and provisions, the same sweeping process of destruction being pursued on the Grahn and Undop; and here his readers are coolly informed that all this slaying, burning, and plundering has been carried on against people *who are not pirates at all*, but who have the misfortune to live under the rule of chiefs against whom there was a vague charge of *abetting* piracy; and one of whom, Seriff Muller, we are distinctly told by Brooke himself, " had little controul over the Dyaks, and was obliged to wink at their piracies;"—yet all are involved in one common destruction, and no distinction is for one moment attempted to be made between them and those who are called " THE PIRATES THEMSELVES"!!! Shame on Rajah Brooke's policy! Most of your local readers know, and the authorities past and present of this Settlement know still better, that not many years ago there was scarcely a petty Malay State on the coasts and islands adjacent to Singapore, of which the chiefs did not labour under the same charge of abetting and encouraging piracy; and no doubt whatever was entertained that several of them secretly derived advantage from the systematic acts of spoliation committed by their subjects, and by the subjects of other states. But look at the humane and considerate policy pursued with respect to them in 1836, after a quarter of a century of complaint and irritation on the part of the inhabitants of the Straits settlement! The journals of the period shew that Governor Bonham made a progress as Commissioner among these States, on board

of H. M. S. *Andromache*, and visited every suspected place; and although he found in more places than one undoubted evidence of the connivance of the chiefs at piratical undertakings, as well by their being in possession of captives taken by pirates, as by other no less convincing proofs, that excellent public functionary considered the weakness and long subsisting irregularity of the governments of these Malay States, and resorted to no measures of violence even against the chiefs, much less to indiscriminate retaliation against a whole population. Pledges were taken from the chiefs, emphatic warnings given, and the pirates were destroyed *at sea*; the well known pirate-nest at Gallang, which had no acknowledged chief, being the only *place* attacked by the squadron then so successfully acting in these seas. This policy has been productive of the best effects, and I believe that there has since scarcely been an instance of a Malay pirate prahu being seen in the Straits of Malacca—the chiefs have ceased to encourage piracy among their subjects, and I, and all you other local readers, know well where to point to an eminent instance of the wise and considerate course pursued by Governor Butterworth in the same respect. What a contrast does all this afford to the infernal system which Rajah Brooke so soon adopted for his model, and which has been unrelentingly but *fruitlessly* pursued under aggravated horrors, until it has led to a butchery without parallel in our annals.

But let me not anticipate. The Sakarran river was *at last* invaded, "*the pirates themselves*" attacked; the expedition proceeding up a stream of which for a considerable extent,

"The banks had been a continued garden, with sugar-cane plantations and banana trees in abundance." (p. 110.)

There was a good deal of tumultuary fighting with the Dyaks, and with considerable loss to the invading force, although these "*pirates themselves*" had only a few fire arms which they could not use, and discharged spears and stones at the boats (p. 112). Their capital Karangan was burned, and, "no further resistance being offered" the expedition withdrew.—The Linga river was afterwards ransacked for Seriff Sahib, to whom Rajah Brooke had interdicted food and shelter among the neighbouring Dyaks, and who was so hard pressed that,

"He threw away his sword and left behind him a child whom he had hitherto carried in the jungle." (p. 119).

Makota was made prisoner, but never detained in custody, and an entire, and what appears to me a very suspicious, silence is ever after observed regarding the part he had taken. I conclude my notice of the details of this expedition with the following example of one its of results:—

"When our expedition," says Captain Keppel, "had been watched safely out of the Batang Lupar on its return to Sarawal, *all those unfortu-*

"nate families that had been concealed in the jungle after the destruction of
 "the different towns of Patusen and Undop, had emerged from their hiding
 "places and embarking on rafts, half ruined boats or in short any thing that
 "would float, were in the act of tiding and working their passage towards
 "the extensive and flourishing town of Bunting, and their dismay can
 "well be imagined when at day light on the morning of the 29th. they
 "found themselves carried by the tide close alongside the long black
 "terror spreading steamer, and in the midst of our augmented fleet.
 "Escape to them was next to hopeless, nor did the softer sex seem
 "much to mind the change; probably thinking that to be swallowed up
 "by the white man *was not much worse than dying in the jungle of starva-*
 "*tion.* I need not say that, instead of being molested, they were sup-
 "plied with such provisions and assistance as our means would permit
 "us to afford, and allowed to pass quietly on; in addition to which we
 "despatched several of our native followers into the Batang Lupar to
 "inform the poor fugitives that OUR BUSINESS WAS WITH THE CHIEFS AND
 "INSTIGATORS OF PIRACY, AND NOT TO MOLEST THE MISGUIDED NA-
 "TIVES" !!!

Good Heaven! These unfortunate beings, who are neither "the
 pirates themselves" nor their families, but the miserable inhabitants
 of Patusen, Undop and other desolated towns, have seen their habi-
 tations in flames, and burnt to the ground, from the dwellings of
 their chiefs down to the meanest hut, their stores of provisions utter-
 ly destroyed, and themselves flying into the jungle for shelter, until
 they are driven to the alternative of perishing by starvation, or to es-
 cape it by embarking on anything that would float, and thus incur
 the risk of drowning, to reach the dwellings of a friendly tribe—and
 to these forlorn, houseless and destitute fugitives, in this Exodus from
 their desolated hearths is the consolation administered that Rajah Brooke's
business is with the chiefs and not to molest the misguided na-
natives !!! "Famine, Fire, and Slaughter" have swept them from
 their hearths, but the misguided natives, are NOT MOLESTED !!! And
 the pages in which these deeds are told, in which these things are
 printed, have been before the "ignorant and distant" British public
 for four years, and the perpetrator of such acts, has met with un-
 bounded admiration, and been extolled to the skies as a first rate mo-
 del of philanthropy and humanity !!! Little does it become Rajah Brooke
 to exclaim over the "ignorance and distance" under the effects of which the
 judgment of the English public is so often misled, for viewed through
 that vaporous atmosphere he has himself loomed into the dimen-
 sions and been encircled with the halo of a demigod. But it is to be ho-
 ped that the delusion will pass away, and that we shall see the gaudy
 imposture, which has fascinated the gaze, dwindle to its proper pro-
 portions and displayed in its true colours.

But the circumstance that has called forth this expression of indignant
 feeling, has yet another marked feature. Rajah Brooke's business, the
 poor natives are told, was with their chiefs. How comes it then that
 the Pangeran Makota, whose standing and position with reference to
 the government of the Sultau in all probability emboldened Serif Sahib

in his opposition to Rajah Brooke, at once resumed his former position, without being either detained a prisoner, or otherwise proceeded against in any way!! So little idea did this worthy appear to entertain of his having done anything very wrong in joining Seriff Sahib, that when we next hear of him it is as presenting himself before Rajah Brooke to ask a loan of money.

The Dyaks of Serebas and Sakarran having been thus "punished," Rajah Brooke forthwith proceeded to assert his Supremacy, and to lord it over his humbled adversaries. He wrote a letter to the chiefs of the former tribe containing the "commands of the Tuan Besar (Great Lord) to the chiefs of Serebas" (Mundy vol. p. 7); and about six months after the destruction of Patusen, deceived by some acts of submission of the chiefs, very natural in their existing state of humiliation, he thus triumphs in the seeming success of his system:

"But yesterday, Serebas and Sakarran, with their acknowledged receivers and promoters sent out formidable pirate fleets. Keppel attacked them; Seriff Sahib has fled, and the Dyaks are peaceable" (February 1845, Mundy vol. 2 p. 13.)

A few months later he thinks he still sees cause to flatter himself on his policy;

"Sakarran and Serebas," he says "are as houses divided against themselves, and I shall soon ascertain who are really my friends" (Oct. 1845, Ibid p. 52.)

Vain hopes! The Dyaks and their chiefs were not so submissive as was expected, and before the year is ended we find that,

"A sharp stringent policy is required to correct the evil propensities of the Sakarrans and Serebas. They must be again attacked." (Dec. 1845, Ibid p. 78.)

And for what offence are these tribes thus threatened anew? Why because Rajah Brooke had been pleased to issue "orders" for the expulsion by the Dyaks of three Seriffs, "hostile to trade"; an order which these Seriffs summon their forces to resist; and being defeated in this "Piratical" act, as Rajah Brooke calls every act of resistance to his authority, by another party of Dyaks whom he raised up in arms against them, they had first found shelter with Rajah Panguimah of Serebas, and finally in Sakarran where they intended to settle. "They must be out of their senses," exclaims the Dictator of the coast, by this outrageous act of folly in seeking to provide for their own safety! (Ibid p. p. 46, 56, 63, 68, 78)—a precious sample of the system by which the pacification of the coast of Borneo is to be effected, under Rajah Brooke, at once arrogant, short-sighted and fruitless.

The blindness and inefficiency of this policy are further demonstrated by what he writes a few months later, viz. March 1846:

" I have suddenly received information that the Sakarran Dyaks have again been at sea with a force of seventy prahus, and not less than 1200 men, perpetrating many ravages, burning many villages and carrying off women and children into slavery, and laying waste the country wherever their arms could reach.—It was not to be expected that the single attack made in this river by Keppel should totally eradicate, from amongst a numerous and warlike population, the deep rooted and long indulged habit of piracy. * * *—I find that *measures of kindness and conciliation* are entirely thrown away."

And only a few months later he is in expectation of Captain Mundy in H. M. S. IRIS for the purpose of "undertaking hostile measures against the Sakarran pirates" (Ibid p. 92.) and yet in the face of this and what he himself calls the "Sakarran war," caused by the resistance of three Seriffs, about one year after Keppel's invasion, he tells Lord Palmerston in his despatch of 2nd Feb. 1850 that "the good effects resulting from Captain Keppel's operations continued for two years"! (Moody vol, 2 p. 46.)

Such are some of the principal features and consequences of these memorable expeditions; and before proceeding to notice the third one, I should wish to call attention to certain assertions made by Sir James Brooke relative to the former ones.

He states in his affidavit of 25th September 1849, already more than once alluded to by me, that the

" Piratical character of the Serebas and Sakarrans had been already decided in a court of Admiralty Judicature in England in the case of Captain Keppel, when he received compensation under the act of Parliament, and may now be adduced as the *fullest proof* of the petitioner's claim; "

That is of Captain Farquhar's claim.

This is incorrect in the first place, in point of fact, as regards the Serebas. Captain Keppel received no Head money as compensation under the Act for the first expedition, that is for the operations in the Serebas river, as the returns of Head money, presented to Parliament in March last, plainly prove; nor is it easy to see how he could obtain such compensation as the Act refers to piratical vessels; and the crews of vessels; whereas towns & villages were the only things attacked in the Serebas. These Returns show that Captain Keppel received Head money compensation for the "crews of six war Prahus, all Dyaks in the Sakarran River, Borneo" captured 19th August 1844, and for "the crews of a great number of piratical vessels belonging to Seriff Muller, a notorious pirate chief (!!!) 15 miles up the river Undop, a branch of the river Sakarran, Borneo," captured 14th August 1844. The expedition to the Serebas took place fourteen months previously in June 1843; and, we repeat, the Parliamentary Returns (from 1826 to 1849) show no Head money paid for the operations there. So much for Sir James Brooke's "*fullest proof*" against the natives of Serebas; and

some idea may be formed of the kind of evidence upon which a Court of Admiralty in England decides, on seeing Seriff Muller, who "had little control over the Sakarrans and was compelled to wink at their piracies," described as a notorious pirate chief!

Nor is there the least evidence to shew that the sacking and burning of the towns of Paddi, Pakoo, and Rembas on the Serebas, and of Patusen on the Batang Lupar, ever were before any Admiralty Court in England, much less the subject matter of the decision of any such court.

But what was the evidence that Captain Keppel had before him, when *he* set out on the invasion of the Serebas and Sakarran rivers? Why at best, Rajah Brooke's newly manufactured history of the night attack of 28th Sept. 1839; and the Rajah Muda Hassim's famous letter—both equally worthless.

I now come to the third expedition; of this there are two accounts before me: namely one, singularly brief and cursory in Sir James Brooke's despatch to Lord Palmerston of 16th April 1849; and one more detailed published in the local Journal of the Indian Archipelago for May 1849, and contributed by Mr. Arthur Crookshank,—Rajah Brooke's Deputy at Sarawak, during his absence. This expedition set out from Sarawak on the 25th March of that year, and consisted of 98 war prahus, including those of the Dyaks of Sibuyou, Linga and Balow, the hereditary and inveterate foes of the Serebas and Sakarrans, with the Malays of Sadong and Seriki, and led by four boats belonging to the H. C. steamer Nemesis, which vessel had been placed at Sir James Brooke's disposal. It is alleged to be undertaken to check the depredations of the Serebas and Sakarran fleet, which are said to have been out ravaging and plundering the whole coast, devastating two rivers, attacking and burning three villages and killing and making captive between 300 to 400 persons, besides capturing several trading boats; and there was a report when the expedition started that the hostile fleet had captured the town of Sadong, in the Sadong river.*

I can find nothing in this account of the devastation imputed to the Serebas and Sakarran Dyaks at all inconsistent with the supposition that they were making legitimate war in their own way against hostile tribes, or as other than the most natural consequence of the former attacks from Sarawak upon themselves. Is the plundering and burning of villages, devastating of rivers, and slaughter of their inhabitants ascribed to these Dyaks, more frightful than what we have seen inflicted on themselves?—and by whom? Why, by the "white man" in alliance with their ancient and inveterate foes! Was it not with the Dido's seamen and marines brigaded with the Dyaks of Linga, Lundu and other places, "all eager for heads and plunder;" as Captain Keppel says, "all coming to seek for plunder and the heads

* Vide the despatch mentioned; another of the 6th March, and the article in the Journal of the Indian Archipelago.

of the enemies with whom they had been so many years at war," that the Serebas and Sakarran rivers were invaded, the towns burned and the inhabitants slain, and the women and children reduced to starvation? And did Rajah Brooke suppose that the burning sentiments of revenge, which he himself so strongly depicts as inherent in the Dyak races, were to go to sleep in the breast of such powerful tribes, as the Serebas and Sakarrans, when they thought the opportunity for retaliation at hand?—and who that has read the mention of the hereditary feuds of the Dyak races both in Brooke's writings and those of Mr. Low, will say that that retaliation was not as legitimate as any warfare among them ever was? If the town of Gadong, on the Sadong, was attacked by them, do they not find the prahus of the Sadong Malays in the Sarawak fleet? If they devastate the Samarahan and Linga rivers and every river lying between the Sarawak and the Serebas, do they not find these rivers each and every one contributing its quota of war prahus to the hostile fleet of Sarawak? It is in one or other of these RIVERS, not *at sea*, that the Sarawak expedition expects to meet with the enemies they are in quest of; and says Mr. Crookshank's account, "we visited every river between Sarawak and Serebas in hopes of finding the enemy, but without success." But the flotilla did not return to Sarawak without inflicting as much mischief as it could. To harass the population of Rembas, "at about 60 miles up the Liput from the sea, a force of about 2,000 men was landed, and was absent for three days during which it captured several places and destroyed large stores of rice and salt." Rajah Brooke is no longer horrified at the idea of "letting loose 2,000 wild devils in the interior" to seize, burn, and destroy! Could any Dyaks wage a more cruel and devastating system of warfare? and to crown all they are to be deprived of the first necessary of life;

"The enemy," says Mr. Crookshank "received serious damage in the interior of the Rembas, and will feel sensibly the want of that first necessary of life—salt, now that the intercourse with Liput is cut off."

There is one circumstance, however, which Mr. Crookshank has omitted mention of. He has forgotten to tell that he himself fired with his rifle at a single Dyak on a raft or canoe in the Serebas river, and that having failed in his aim, the man was assailed by some of his native followers, and decapitated; and that he, Mr. Crookshank, disgusted the officers of the H. C. steamer *Nemesis* by displaying to them, in his own hand, the head of the unfortunate victim! *

If an European thus high in the confidence and employment of Rajah Brooke can thus act, what are we to expect will be the conduct of the native auxiliaries whom he leads against their ancient and inveterate enemies.

* This fact was incidentally confirmed during the enquiry which took place on board H. M. S. *Hastings*, in the presence of Captains Austin and Willeux and Commander Wallage.—Editor, *Straits Times*.

LETTER VI.

SIR,—The expedition of which I have just given an account, was headed by Brooke in person; and though not wanting in the barbarity which had characterised the preceding ones, was equally fruitless and unproductive of any desired end. Ere many weeks were over, the Serebas Dyaks were as eager as ever for vengeance on their ancient enemies, who had wrought them so much damage under the banner of the Rajah of Sarawak; and after some detached parties had made reprisals, and killed several persons at the mouth of the Sarawak river,* their assembled fleet prepared to strike a blow at one of "our allies," and the information was, that the Malay town of Seriki on the Rejang was the destined object of attack. And here, Sir, it becomes of importance to enquire into the relations which had existed between the Serebas and Sakarran communities, and the Malay state of Seriki; and I call upon your readers to peruse what follows on this subject with attention. Sir James Brooke shall be the chief authority cited; and I pledge myself to the fidelity of the following extracts from his Diaries,—they cannot be called *select* *me*, for they contain all that I find upon the subject in the volumes of Captains Keppel and Mundy:

The Diary of 1st. July 1844 contains an account of the neighbouring rivers, their political relations to Sarawak, and the character of their rulers and inhabitants; and it is there we find the first notice of Seriki and its chief; viz.

"The last place I shall mention here is the Rejang river, twenty miles from the mouth of which is *Seriki*, the residence of Patingi Abdulrahman. The Malays are numerous and flourishing, and the interior is peopled by Kayans of various tribes * * * Patingi Abdulrahman has held himself aloof from Sheriff Sahib, and consequently incurred the impotent anger and hatred of that chief. *He has never allowed piracies or received pirates, and has always been in a feeble and desultory way at war with the Serebas and Sakarran Dyaks.*" Mundy vol. 1. p. 364, 365.

The Diary of 26th. January 1845, shews further the relations of the Sakarran Dyaks and Seriki. After mentioning that these Dyaks had been agitated by rumours that they would be shortly attacked again by the white men, Rajah Brooke thus proceeds:—

"These rumours are spread by the *Seriki* people, to induce the Sakarrans to quit their river and take refuge in the interior of the Rejang; and once there, the Sakarrans would be in a very great measure at the

* These natural & justifiable reprisals were given in evidence before the Admiralty Court here as acts of piracy. Of course the same depositions say nothing whatever of the invasion of the Rembas division of the Serebas territory not many weeks previous when the 2,000 native auxiliaries were let loose into it and the supply of salt cut off. This is a notable specimen of the entire *one sidedness* of everything that comes before an Admiralty court under applications for Head Money.

"mercy of the Seriki people. This a perfect specimen of Malay dealing with Dyaks; but in this case it has failed, as the Sakarrans are too much attached to their country to quit it." (Keppel vol. 2 p. 126.)

But the scene changes; and new relations arise between the Malays of Seriki and these Dyaks. In the Diary of 22nd. Nov. 1845, we find that the Patingi Abdulraman, who "has never allowed piracy or received pirates." is all of a sudden becoming piratical:

"I have had accounts of Patingi Abdulranam of Seriki. His government compared with that of his predecessors was tolerable; but of late he has shewn an inclination to join with the evil disposed of Sakarran and Serebas; and he allows their boats an outlet through his rivers to pirate upon the high seas; he has lately gone beyond even this acquiescence and connivance at piracy by sending his own Dyaks (the Kanowit tribe) to attack a quiet village at the entrance of Palo. In this attack he was successful and the people were carried into captivity. * * * Nov. 25th. the chief of Palo is here and confirms the history detailed above. He assures me that Patingi Abdulraman and Seriff Sakarran are allied and send out Dyaks to pirate at sea." (Mundy vol. 2 pp. 69, 70.)

Two day subsequently there is more information to the same effect, viz.—

"I have very bad accounts of the Dyaks of the Rejang who are sent out by Patingi Abdulraman to pirate on the seas. The villages on the coast are harassed by continual attacks. Sometime ago I wrote to this chief and quietly, yet firmly, pointed out to him the folly (!) of his proceedings and warned him to bear in mind the fate of Seriff Sahib. In spite of this remonstrance he has again collected his Kanowit Dyaks, has fitted out a fleet which has been seen off Cape Datu, & which consequently must have passed by the entrance of the Sarawak river, forming a junction with some boats from the other rivers. Really these gentlemen seem determined to rush head-long to destruction, and will yet oblige me to teach them that two can play at the dangerous game of war!" (Ibid p. 77.)

Be it remarked, in passing, what an example this alliance of Patingi Abdulraman with his quondam Sakarran foes, and the union of the fleet with "boats from the other rivers," furnishes of the vaunted success of Rajah Brooke's system of pacification!

In the month of June 1846 (the interval being signalled by the assassination of Muda Hassim and his relations in the capital) Rajah Brooke, in the *Phlegethon*, steamed up the Rejang to the town of Seriki, accompanied by Rear Admiral Sir T. Cochrane, to detach Patingi Abdulraman from this piratical league, and to put him on his good behaviour; the old chief being stated, on Captain Mundy's authority, to have "been long well known as the friend of the piratical party." Notwithstanding this the commander-in-chief,

"Contented himself with recommending the Patingi to abstain from his piratical proceedings and to keep his war boats within the river, which he solemnly protested he would do." (Ibid p. 119)—

A moderation which Captain Mundy so far wrongs his superior officer as to attribute to his desire to carry out Brooke's *pacific policy* !

The Patingi would appear to have kept his promises in one respect, but not to the extent of "keeping his war boats within the river," as we will presently find that they were again employed *against the Serebas*.

"The populous town of Serebas" says Mr. Low, whose book was published in 1848 "was last year attacked by the Kyans in conjunction with their ally Patingi Abdulraman of Seriki, to whose assistance they are reported to have come with ninety boats, under three of their Rajahs, or most powerful chiefs." (Low's Sarawak p. 322) and these Kyans, Mr. Low also tells us, "are the hereditary foes of Serebas and Sakarran, than whom they are more powerful." (p. 324.)

Here then we have from Rajah Brooke's own pen, and of his confidant, Mr. Low, a clear view of the relations which had existed between the Dyaks of Serebas and Sakarran, and the Malays of Seriki, before the meditated attack on the latter place by the Serebas fleet. This account of them, too, was penned with reference to events passing at the time, and with no other apparent object or design than to present a fair picture of the reality—and it establishes, on evidence which it is impossible SIR JAMES BROOKE can dispute, that between these Dyaks and the Malays of the Seriki, there had long been desultory wars; that these wars were succeeded by an alliance, during which both parties molested the rivers he had taken under his protection—that there was a rupture of that alliance, effected by Sir Thomas Cochrane and himself—and that that rupture was succeeded by a hostile attack on the Serebas by Patingi Abdulraman of Seriki, in conjunction with the Kayans, the known hereditary foes of the Serebas and Sakarrans, and which appears to have taken place sometime in 1847.

Brooke proceeded to England in the course of that year, and reappeared in Sarawak in September 1848; and during that interval we hear nothing of the quarrels or alliances of the Serebas with the Malays of Seriki, but that they continued at enmity from the period of Patingi Abdulraman's attack, mentioned by Mr. Low, may be evidenced from the fact of the Seriki war prahus forming part of the combined Sarawak flotilla, and joining in the expeditions against the Serebas.

I allow that it may be competent for the ambitious and war-loving English Rajah of Sarawak, to adopt a course of policy, and to pursue plans of conquest, with reference to the native states and communities, adjacent to his own territory, which the British people have no more right to call in question than if Sarawak were governed by a native Rajah. But I deny that any such person can, either as an honest man, or as an honest public servant, allow such views to influence his conduct in the discharge of his duty towards the government by

which he is commissioned, to assist in determining and regulating the relations and proceedings of such native states and communities. When do we ever in the course of Brooke's career, discern a single trace of his separating his political views and proceedings as Rajah of Sarawak, from the course of conduct incumbent on him as a servant of the British Crown? In September 1841 he became Rajah of Sarawak; in June 1843 he induced Captain Keppel to invade Serebas, and in August 1844 Sakarran was invaded by the same gallant officer. Early in 1845 Brooke was nominated confidential Agent in Borneo for, it seems, the British Government; but without any powers but, that of advising. In 1847 he was appointed Her Majesty's Consul General and Commissioner to the Independent princes of Borneo; and it is while he is acting in the latter capacity that the 3rd expedition, as well as that now under review, took place. Captain Keppel was instigated by *Rajah Brooke* to the invasion, first of Serebas, then of Sakarran, precisely *in the same spirit* in which Captain Farquhar was led by *SIR JAMES BROOKE*, Her Majesty's Commissioner for the affairs of Borneo, to the anguinary and terrific day of the 31st. July—and he would no doubt continue to make his Sarawak interests and public duties walk hand and hand to the end of the chapter. *The Rajah* might have regarded the Serebas as a horde of pirates to be attacked at any place; but it was the duty of Her Majesty's Commissioner to have made Captain Farquhar officially acquainted with all he himself knew, or had learned, regarding the wars and alliances of the Serebas tribes with the Malays of Seriki, as soon as information was brought to him that the latter place was the object of attack, and the more so as it was not unknown to Sir James Brooke that Rear Admiral Sir Francis Collier, Captain Farquhar's superior officer, had more than doubted the justice of treating the Serebas as pirates.* There can be no doubt whatever that Seriki was believed to be the object of attack by the Serebas, when the force under Captain Farquhar and the Sarawak flotilla, heard of their balls having left the Serebas river, as the gallant officer distinctly states it to be so in his despatch. But it mattered not to Sir James Brooke what place the Dyaks intended to attack. *They were out*; he knew they must return in a few days, and the long treasured wish of his heart was about to be gratified, for now he could "*have them all*," † and his preparations were perfect. With a marvellous and most convenient simultaneousness of movement the prey was on their way towards the snare, at the exact time the nets were spreading to receive them.

On the 25th of July 1849, the steam er NEMESIS, having the boats of H. M. Sloops of war ALBATROSS and ROYALIST in tow, left the Sarawak river, followed by the native force, which a subsequent junction with other war-prahus, raised to 70 prahus, averaging

* What the late Sir Francis Collier's official despatch may contain on this subject remains yet to be known; but in this place the gallant Admiral made no secret of his views in conversation, and never would allow that the Serebas and Sakarrans were pirates.

(Note)— Vide his letter to Keppel 29th May 1848—Keppel vol. 2 p. 81.

40 men each, Malays and Dyaks; the hostile balla, upwards of 100 prahus averaging 25 men each, having according to "certain information" moved from the Serebas river on the morning of the 26th, with the supposed intention of attacking "the peaceful town of Serebas."²

What followed is well and widely known. The Serebas fleet returned at the expected time to find both the entrance of their own river, and of the friendly Kaluka, effectually guarded, and saw nothing before them but the destruction which was dealt out to them with a pitiless and unsparring hand. The panic-struck multitude were slaughtered like sheep, under the combined effects of the *cannonade*, *mitrailade*, *fusillade* and *noyade*, which awaited them; and Mr. Vigors, and the other amateur gentleman of the expedition, *sniped* away from the NEMESIS at the miserable fugitives, with as much safety and impunity as they could have fired upon a flock of sheep from a balcony in Piccadilly! Five hundred of the Serebas were killed in this *battue*; and Captain Farquhar's despatch says "and more than an equal number would in all probability perish in the jungle. "Indeed I have since learned that this is below the number"—Most likely it was, since the Sarawak account in the Indian Archipelago Journal says; "fully 2,500 of the enemy sought refuge in the jungle where our people were eagerly hunting them in detached parties;" and a few days afterwards it was reported to Captain Farquhar that "many fugitives from the late fleet had been destroyed by the Dyaks ascending the rivers in rafts and small bark canoes." And thus probably 1200 men perished in the carnage and pursuit, while the loss of the assailants amounted to 2 natives killed and about six wounded!! And this overthrow of an enemy, whom the discharge of blank cartridge would have effectually dispersed, is pronounced by Lord Palmerston to be a "*gallant* and successful operation."!! But, successful as it may have been, the punishment inflicted was not sufficient in the estimation of the victors: On the day following the carnage, the Serebas river was ascended by a portion of the force; and the town of Pakoo, with many adjacent villages, was again burnt, not because it resisted, for Captain Farquhar's despatch says, "Pakoo being found deserted, was pillaged and burned by the native auxiliaries," but because "*sunk, burn, and destroy; resistance or no resistance*, had all along been the watch word of Rajah Brooke in the Serebas and Sakarran rivers. This feat accomplished, the force was again in motion, as soon as the NEMESIS was supplied with fuel, to punish the Kanowit Dyaks on the Rejang. The inhabitants are said by Captain Farquhar to be quite taken by surprise, and to decamp at once—"their villages therefore becoming an easy prey to the natives" (i. e. native auxiliaries;) and "for two days we continued to ascend the stream destroying every thing in our way"—as

(Note)—Vide Commander Farquhar's despatch to Sir E. Collier 29th. August 1849 and an article in the Indian Archipelago Journal of Sept. 1849, penned either by Sir J. Brooke himself or at his dictation.

customary; and then after this, Poè, on the banks of the Rejang is visited, the chiefs of which were summoned to attend, and were ordered by Sir James Brooke to "pay a fine for acts of piracy, and for having broken faith by *trading with the Serebas*"! And finally we are told that his Excellency "has already entered into compacts with every tribe bordering on the sea not to trade with, or supply those pirates with salt!" (Captain Farquhar's despatch 25th August 1849.

I protest that these are extremities of cruelty and barbarity which no law can justify, and which no considerations of policy or expediency can palliate or excuse. Was it not enough that an immense slaughter of the male population of these Dyaks had just taken place; that their country for a second time within the space of three months had been invaded and devastated, with the destruction of large stores of rice and salt, and, on the side of the Liput their supply of the latter indispensable article cut off, without forming a league, which amounted to a decree of starvation against the whole population, man, woman and child, so far as they depend on external resources for their means of subsistence!!

This treatment would have been too bad even for the most undoubted pirates, but what was the last offence for which these tribes were to be first butchered and then starved? Because they presumed to "play at the dangerous game of war" against their alternate allies and foes of Seriki, in the exact manner the same game had been played against them, by the same people! But in point of fact it was not known whether they had attacked Seriki or any other place, or done any thing mischievous or unlawful when the carnage began; no information whatever having been received either of what they had done or where they had been before they were set upon. The mere appearance of their fleet of boats at sea was deemed sufficient ground to "*have them all.*" It may have been a painful sense of the absence of any colourable ground for such an attack, which induced the writer of the Sarawak account of the proceedings in the Indian Archipelago Journal, to state that on "the evening of the 30th. (that is, the evening before the massacre)" "intelligence was received of the "pirates having partially plundered Palo, &c." But the statement must be incorrect; for both Captain Farquhar's despatch, and that of Sir James Brooke to Lord Palmerston, incontestably prove that nothing whatever was known of the operations of the Serebas balla, until *after* it had been attacked and destroyed. The latter distinctly states,

"From information obtained *from some prisoners and since confirmed from other sources*, it appears that a force of from 100 to 120 pirate prahus attacked the towns of Palo and Mato."

The Serebas were attacked and massacred upon mere *supposition* of what they had been about; the only authorized supposition being, that they were returning from an attack on Seriki; that is from a legitimate reprisal on a hostile community.

Sir James Brooke may repeat over and over again his sweeping dogma regarding *piracy*, but that will not prevent me, nor ought it to prevent any one else, from examining the conduct and proceedings of his Serebas foes upon natural and rational principles. I contend that from the first invasion of their rivers, down to the last butchery, the operations against the Serebas and Sakarran Dyaks were conducted in a manner which could not fail to induce the belief among them, that they were *warred upon by Sarawak and its native and English allies, in the same spirit in which they were warred upon by the Kayans*, that is, to try which side was to have the upper hand. They were attacked from the Sarawak river by the white men, joined with the enemies they had been incessantly at war with. What could these ignorant and barbarous tribes know of England and her policy, when Brooke was the first European that even their powerful and Arab-descended ruler Seriff Sahib had ever seen! And what could they see in Brooke but a great "white man" from beyond the sea, who was powerful enough to make himself Rajah of Sarawak, and could bring big ships filled with other white men and great guns to subdue them and make them his subjects! How absurd, how preposterous, to suppose that a set of wild and ignorant savages, born and bred in such a mode of life as Brooke found them in, who knew no other; and who had only heard that there were people who had white skins, would believe him when he told them that his only purpose in coming such a long way, and in coming up their rivers to kill them and burn their dwellings was—to teach them that "honesty was the best policy"!!! Bah! They thought him a great chief and warrior not an apostle, and not liking his system, or the *lessons* he gave, they took to killing and burning in return. They did not indeed attack *him*, for he was too powerful even for their great chief Seriff Sahib, but they made war in their accustomed fashion upon the Malays and Dyaks, their ancient and inveterate foes, who had assisted the "*white man*" in his wars upon them; and I maintain that this view affords, as well upon natural and rational principles, as upon a just and fair construction of the facts recorded by Brooke himself, an explanation of the wars and disorders on the Coast, of which he is the historian, and which form the subject of my comments and observations. Most disastrous have the antecedent events of this war been to the doomed tribes of Serebas and Sakarran; and if any thing be yet wanting to prove that they regarded it as a strife between themselves and *Sarawak* it, is to be found in what either Sir James Brooke himself, or one of his own annalists, has written regarding the movements of the Serebas fleet, before its destruction. In the account already referred to, of the operations, published in the Journal of the Indian Archipelago, we find the following:

"The next morning a Malay prisoner having been brought in, the following information of the movements of the destroyed pirate fleet was obtained. A force (by his account of 120 boats) had set out under the

"firm persuasion that THE MALAYS OF SARAWAK would not make any attack during the Ramadan or fast month".

Nothing could be more conclusive. A prisoner from the Serebas ranks is brought in, and probably on board of one of the British ships of war which destroyed the fleet, tells his European questioners that it was believed by the enemy that the Mahomedan fast month of the *Malays of Sarawak* would keep them at home, or the Serebas fleet would not have moved! Sir James Brooke after all this may exclaim *pirates, pirates, pirates*, against the Serebas, as the Spanish Ambassador Gondomar thundered, "*pirato, pirato, pirato*" against Raleigh in the audience chamber of King James, but we have no doubt the world will in time come to appreciate the outcry at its true value, and that the question will be ultimately decided on principles which can neither be derided as a weak and indiscriminating compassion, nor decried as an outrage against humanity.

I must confess that I regard with much suspicion, and some disgust, the manner in which Sir James Brooke denounces a policy of forbearance as "a weak compassion, a false humanity" towards these tribes; although it sits much more easy upon him than his oratorical philanthropy, which after all never appears to have been any thing but mere *theory* with him. "Oh! how great are the evils which flow from a false compassion," were the very words used by the men, who, in the Reign of Terror, were shedding innocent blood like water, and they had *their* theories of universal philanthropy. Brooke laments over the misfortune of his Sow Dyaks at the moment he is barbarously putting to death the two Dyak chiefs for resistance to his authority, which no law on earth bound them to recognize—he bemoans in piteous accents the sufferings of the Hill tribes, and can yet behold without emotion hundreds of "their misguided" brethren of the coast slaughtered like sheep before his eyes while he apostrophises their slayers as "*Gallant Albatrosses!*" "*Gallant Snakes!*" Surely it is time for the British people to raise their indignant voice against the hypocritical cant, and wholesale system of blood of this Pecksniff Pizarro.

The outcry so dexterously got up against Dyak piracy has been re-echoed with a vehemence, which, to those in the least acquainted with the circumstances, would be absolutely ludicrous, were not the case too serious for laughter; and, of course, foremost amongst those who are the most loud in their exaggerations, are the friends and supporters of Brooke; in the Press, in Parliament, and out of Parliament. In the face of palpable and indisputable facts to the contrary, in spite of "men and gods and columns" with incredible ignorance in some, with incredible effrontery in others, these Dyaks are held forth as "the scourge and terror of the Archipelago," and as equal to if not surpassing the Algerine.!! And Sir James Brooke's organ in this

place, your contemporary of the *Free Press* has not been ashamed to insert in his paper, without note, comment or correction of any kind articles from the English Journals, containing these gross misrepresentations, and thus indirectly to lead his authority to the propagation of absurdities which he must be sensible it would require a violent effort of the imagination in any one acquainted with the facts to produce! * I fear too that some of my fellow merchants, involuntarily I am sure, have contributed to maintain this delusion, by the terms of their address to Sir James Brooke in November last year. Their readiness to yield assent, without requiring proof, was, perhaps, excusable, under the bad name which had so long attached to the west and N. W. coast of Borneo, (*though not from the piracies of the natives of the island,*) which no writer, (before Brooke) that I am acquainted with, has ever imputed to them. The Dyaks have repeatedly been mentioned by travellers, but no where that I can find as pirates, though none of these writers are silent regarding their head hunting expeditions, and their intertribal wars. The signers of the address, had they referred to Mr. Earl's extremely well written and agreeable pages, would have found a long account of the Dyaks, and that he mentions that the N. W. coast of Borneo,

"Is occupied by several powerful Dyak tribes, differing only in dialect, who here, as elsewhere are engaged in perpetual warfare. The most adventurous of these tribes is that of Serassan † [most probably he means Sakarran] the people of which are said by the Malays to be of more lofty stature than the others, a statement which I suspect must be considered as meaning only that the tribe is more powerful." (p.312).

He no where styles the Dyaks piratical tribes, and my neighbours will observe that his attention was called by his Malay informants, not to their piracies but to their more adventurous spirit and lofty stature compared with other Dyaks. And I appeal to each and every one if they ever heard the name of Dyak coupled with the formidable piracies on the coast of Borneo till Brooke became Rajah of Sarawak. It sometimes happens that we merchants embarrass ourselves by an overhasty expression of views adopted without sufficient information; but at any rate it is right it should be known that the *nonsigners* of the memorable address are not confined to three, as mentioned by Brooke in his despatch to Lord Palmerston, nor indeed form the minority of the local mercantile body, and it may well be doubted whether it would now be signed over again so numerously. The *Journal of the Indian Archipelago* for August 1848 remarks that :

* Your contemporary has even gone out of the way in his attempts to maintain, by these indirect means this preposterous delusion, by inserting an extract from a private letter from Java which has nothing whatever to do with the matter.

† On this supposition, I might be called on to acknowledge that Mr. Earl had before Brooke's time, mentioned the Sakarran contrary to what I have advanced in another letter. Quite willing am I to do so or to correct any mistake made by myself even when not occasioned by an oversight of my own. But Mr. Earl writing Serassan for Sakarran only strengthens my position, for his Dyaks of Serassan are never designated piratical, but only as more handsome, adventurous and powerful, than the other Dyaks whom he finds engaged "in perpetual warfare." In his three Chapters on the inhabitants and the N. W. Coast of Borneo the term "piratical" and "pirates" are never used except when applied to the Lamuns or Usumans, as occasional occupants of harbours on the coast, and Mr. Earl knows very well that the Lamuns might do as they please with the Sakarran Dyaks, could make mince-meat of them, or slaves, or friends, at their own good will and pleasure, or as policy might dictate.

"Captain Keppel's volumes increased instead of satisfying the desire which prevailed in Singapore to know how far the personal interests of the owner of Sarawak were concerned in the invasions of neighbouring rivers by British men-of-war, and how far their presence had, in other respects, subserved those interests. *We believe* the Journals edited by Captain Mundy have put Sir James Brooke right with the public of Singapore, &c. &c."

My belief is very different, and I apprehend much better founded. The suspicions always entertained by many of the aim and object of Sir James Brooke's policy and proceedings, however prejudicial to his character, have latterly increased not diminished, and have extended to more quarters than his friends wish to believe.

But it is not regarding Dyak *piracy* alone that anomalous notions are entertained, for even Earl Grey has been so far misled as to state in the House that before Brooke's time no unarmed vessel dared approach the coast of Borneo, whereas it is incontestably shown in the pages of the Singapore *Free Press* that for many years before Brooke was ever heard of, the N. W. coast of Borneo, both at Borneo Proper and Sarawak, was perfectly safe for residence, and for trade; and it is curious enough, in contrast to such a statement as is attributed to Earl Grey, to find an article in the *Free Press* of 1840 *actually assigning the safe and secure state of the coast of Borneo as an argument in favor of Mr. Brooke's settling himself at Sarawak, in opposition to a different doctrine put forth by some distant contemporary journal!** The hallucinations regarding Sarawak itself, and Brooke's establishing himself there, are not less extravagant. Captain Mundy writes of the Royalist's first visit to Sarawak with Brooke on board, as if he had newly discovered the country :

"The awe and astonishment" he says "of the semi barbarous inhabitants at seeing a small schooner, the entire crew of which did not amount in number to a third of the crew of one of their war prahus, boldly ascend twenty miles into the interior, and quietly take up her berth off the residence of the Rajah, may easily be conceived;—"

And then we have a parcel of nonsense about the natives being "Impressed! with awe and reverence for the white stranger." (vol. I p. 26.)

Why Mr. Earl, who travelled in Borneo, six years before Brooke saw Sarawak, had noticed the place very fully and remarked that,

"The rapidity with which Sarawak has risen into importance, proves how very little encouragement the natives require to induce them to turn the valuable productions of the island to account."†

* Vide the extracts in the Appendix.

† "In the year 1834" says Mr. Earl "soon after my return from the west coast of the Island, an enterprising American merchant of Singapore despatched a ship to Borneo proper for the purpose of opening a trade, and the commander, an Englishman, and an American gentleman on board, were well received by the Rajah, who appeared highly desirous of establishing a commercial intercourse with the British settlements. The ship returned to Singapore with a valuable cargo of Camphor, Pepper, Gold dust and Diamonds. Several vessels have since visited Borneo Proper, and the trade appears to be established on a secure footing, since the premiums of Insurance from Singapore, amounts only to one and a quarter per cent, the same as that to Java and China, and less than to Manila." (p. 37.)

And the same article in the Singapore *Free Press* above alluded to distinctly proves that the inhabitants of Sarawak traded to Singapore, where they saw abundance of white strangers, without either awe or reverence,—that British vessels with Europeans on board had been in the habit of trading to Sarawak, and that the crew of the brig *Napoleon*, wrecked there during a trading voyage of which several were Europeans, actually resided at Sarawak for nine weeks; their persons quite safe, and their wants hospitably relieved. I saw it lately mentioned in an English newspaper that Captain Mundy's volumes were prepared for publication under Brooke's own eye when living at Mivart's; if this be true, and if Sir James Brooke saw the passage I have just quoted from the gallant Officer's work, its appearance there is most discreditably to him, and proves, what perhaps is only too apparent already, that he is quite content to contribute by questionable means to maintain the delusions existing in the public mind regarding himself and his achievements.

It is not any part of my object, as may have long ago been seen, to represent the tribes of Serebas and Sakarran as a harmless and inoffensive race of savages; nor do I mean to offer one word in extenuation of the inhuman practice of foraging for slaves and heads, and carrying off the inhabitants of whole villages. But in these ferocious habits they are not worse than their neighbours of Balow, Linga, Lundu and other Dyaks of the coast whom Rajah Brooke has taken under his protection; and who were only less destructive than the former, from no want of inclination, but from want of power. That these hordes, when brigaded with the British forces, were as ready as ever to act upon their own ferocious principles of warfare, is only too manifest. They came eager for heads, and were allowed to gratify their inclination, and load their prahus with the heads of all they killed,—a system which put *quarter* in battle wholly out of the question, and shows to what extent the British are teaching the lesson of Mercy, in their support of Rajah Brooke. Nay, as an inducement to spare the women and children of the enemy whom "our allies" would have decapitated as a matter of course, in his letter to Lord Palmerston dated March 1st 1850, he confesses that he has been compelled to offer rewards for all the captive women and children brought in alive!! But who can tell what horrors may have signalized the irruption of the 2000 savages let loose into the Serebas country for three whole days, on the third expedition, so complacently related by Crookshank, and so glibly disposed of in the despatch in which Brooke tells Lord Palmerston, "I despatched a native force inland, &c."! I trust there is none of my fellow-merchants, or fellow-residents, who will not raise his voice against this diabolical system. Let Brooke lead his own savages against any other savages he pleases, but do not let England consent to stain the honour of the British name, and the lustre of the British arms, by

arraying her sailors and soldiers with savages of this description, and openly countenancing all the horrors they practice.

Sir James Brooke asserts that after the invasion of their country by Captain Keppel, the Dyak chiefs of Serebas and Sakarran "announced frequently and openly to him their acts of piracy." This alleged confession or admission of the chiefs, is either good for every thing or good for nothing. I have not only no doubt whatever that they confessed the acts *imputed as piracy*; but that in the hour of their defeat and humiliation they would have confessed to any thing they thought would have pleased the victor; and I have not the least doubt that if Sir James Brooke sets about it now, he could produce affidavits from every chief whom he has left alive, to swear point blank that they had been *pirates* from their childhood upwards! But will he tell the British Public, that if the Orang Kaya Pamanka, whom he says, they call among themselves "the dreaded and the brave" were to become the spontaneous annalist of the tribe, he would tell their history in such words as these:

"We were a bad set from the beginning; we were *pirates* and persecutors, every mother's son of us; we pirated against the poor Dyaks of Landu, we pirated against the Dyaks of Linga, of Balow, and against the Malays of Seriki, and right and left we pirated by sea and by land, until a great white Rajah taught us the evil of our ways."

Pooh! Pooh! The Orang Kaya Pamanka would recount their battles, their victories, their triumphs, until there came a white man from beyond the sea with such ships and such guns as no Dyak had ever before seen or heard of, who, confederating with these sons of Dogs of Linga, Landu and Balow, had utterly destroyed them, and so the good old times of their fathers would never come back again! We have never been told by any of the Sarawak historians what distinction the Dyak language makes between a *pirate* warrior and a *legitimate* warrior, or how they distinguish between their wars lawful and wars unlawful, wars piratical and wars just and legitimate. But perhaps Sir James Brooke may yet tell us how it is, that the Dyak races make a proper war, or whether there is anything which makes an authorized war by Dyak against Dyak, different from the manner in which the Serebas balla left their river to attack Seriki.

I cannot bring this letter to a conclusion better than by adding a few words to present the Dyak character in some of its milder aspects; and all who have had an opportunity of judging, concur in representing them as highly and readily susceptible of improvement: and Brooke himself testifies to qualities among the Sakarrans which shews their character in a very favourable point of view,—to their being faithful to engagements, hospitable and kind to strangers; and speaking generally of all the tribes he says: "they present so many good features of character that their improvement might be rapidly calcu-

lated upon." (Mundy 235 and 238.) In the little knowledge possessed by them of the useful arts, the Sakarans and Serebas appear to have surpassed the others; as they are the only Dyaks who manufacture cloths for wearing apparel (Low, p. 209.) "They are all exceedingly fond of their children;" and, according to Mr. Low, slavery is seen in its very mildest form among them:

"In many instances," he writes, "children who have been taken from the Land Dyaks, become so endeared to their conquerors, that these latter adopt them as their own, and they are admitted to all the privileges of the free born tribe, and intermarry with the sons and daughters of the other inhabitants of the village; and instances are not uncommon where children thus treated have forgotten their parents, and been unwilling when opportunity offered to return to their parents. * * * In the village the slaves are not distinguishable from their masters and mistresses, as they all live together and fare precisely the same, eating from the same dish and of the same food."

Mr. Earl remarked on the predilection of the sea Dyaks for commerce, saying,

"They are greatly addicted to commerce, and spare no pains to procure articles of foreign manufactures for which they have acquired a taste" (p. 237.)

And he recommends an European settlement on one of their large rivers as a means of attracting them, an expedient which Sir James Brooke appears to confess the advantage of in the following extract from one of his despatches to Lord Palmerston: After mentioning his proposal to build a fort at the entrance of the Sakarran river he says,

"It will protect the numerous population of the Dyak tribes of the Batang Lupar, and will become a place of considerable trade, WHICH WILL GO FURTHER TOWARDS CURING THE PROPENSITY FOR PIRACY THAN ANY OTHER MEASURE!"

What a commentary does this avowal furnish on seven antecedent *experimental* years of invasion, devastation and slaughter!

* * *

LETTER VII.

SIR.—I have had frequent occasion in what is already before your readers to make incidental reference to the Papers laid before Parliament relative to Borneo Piracy, but these important documents are worthy of more than a cursory notice, and illustrate points of this important question too forcibly not to be more particularly dwelt upon.

Let me begin by laying before your readers the instructions from

the Admiralty to the late Admiral Sir F. A. Collier, regarding the suppression of piracy in the Eastern Archipelago, conceived as they are in a spirit of considerate humanity so closely followed out in the Serebas massacre!

"You will employ the force under your orders to the utmost in checking piracy as well in the Malayan seas as on the coast of China, but will more endeavour to check piracy amongst the Islands of the Archipelago by a good understanding and by enforcing the observance of treaties with the native chiefs than by encouraging hostile operations and expeditions of a coercive character."^{*}

The same page of the Blue Book, in which this considerate order is printed, contains at once a specimen of Brooke's intermeddling spirit, his disregard of the principles on which the Naval-Commander-in-Chief was instructed to act. He had scarcely set foot at Sarawak in 1848, on his return from England, when he announced to Lord Palmerston his

"Purpose of sending to the river Sadong in order to enquire into and expose an intrigue which the Rajahs of Borneo Proper were carrying on through a few of their adherents with the piratical chiefs of the Serebas and Sakarran rivers, *with whom they have been holding a friendly communication for the purpose of acquiring power amongst them.*" To this line of conduct during my absence, and owing to the length of time which has elapsed since their last punishment may be attributed the increasing boldness of these pirates who now venture as formerly to cruise in large fleets of their war prahus.[†]

And he intimates his intention of following his old "stringent" policy by "punishing the inhabitants of these rivers," while as to the rulers of Borneo he pretends that "their government is so weak and their influence so inconsiderable that it would hardly at present be worth while to punish them," for their alleged breach of the treaty.

If there be one word of truth in this history of intrigue, respecting which not one single word more appears in the Parliamentary papers; and if there be meaning in words, the tendency of the whole is to demonstrate, in the plainest manner, that the so called piratical chiefs of Serebas and Sakarran had been sanctioned in their secret expeditions by the "central Government," as Brooke himself designates it, of Borneo Proper; and, in compliance as well with the views of the Admiralty as according to every recognized principle of policy and diplomacy, the question ought to have been settled with the government of the Sultan. And what are the grounds which our Rajah Diplomatist assigns for not proceeding against the rulers of Borneo Proper? First,—their *government is so weak* that it would not be worth while to punish them, which means, I suppose, that the easier the thing is to do the less

^{*} Papers presented 5th. February 1850.

[†] Sir James Brooke to Lord Palmerston 13th. September 1850.

occasion there is for doing it! Secondly—"their influence is so inconsiderable." Why the man has just told Lord Palmerston that it is owing to the line of conduct pursued by the rulers of Borneo Proper that the Serebas and Sakarrans have been emboldened to "commit fearful depredations both by sea and on the coasts;" and yet, *producing* all this mischief, their influence is represented to be *so inconsiderable* as not to be worth notice! I suspect there never were before seen such contradictory statements in a public despatch. But the ruling principle is ever the punishment of the inhabitants of the Serebas and Sakarran, and in pursuit of that cherished policy he bids adieu to consistency and every thing else.

At the moment we have the *court* and *cabinet* of Borneo Proper before us as the instigators and abettors of *piracy*, it might not perhaps be uninteresting to present them in another light, as actually raising their voices against the depredations of those selfsame Serebas and Sakarrans whom they had so lately been in friendly communication with! Among the documents printed in the Blue Book, which Sir J. Brooke forwarded to Lord Palmerston in vindication of the sharp and stringent policy which resulted in the massacre of the 31st. July 1849, there are two translated letters: one from the Sultan of Borneo himself, the other from his confidential minister, the Pangeran Macota!!!—both calling upon Sir James Brooke to execute vengeance upon the Dyaks of Sakarran, and the Dyaks of Serebas; and this, I presume, may be taken as another "perfect specimen of the Malay dealing with the Dyaks," as it certainly is of Rajah Brooke's mode of dealing with both! The Pangeran Macota may put on and put off piracy like a garment at his proper pleasure, the Sultan and his Government may instigate and reap the fruits of Dyak depredation, but the inhabitants of the Rivers are to be punished for doing the bidding of their Malay tyrants; while the world is told that Sir James Brooke's business is with the chiefs, not the misguided natives!! Who knows what share the Sultan or Macota may have had in the depredations they denounce, after what Brooke has told Lord Palmerston.

But these two letters are noticeable in another respect. They are transmitted to Lord Palmerston along with other documents "to refute the clamour which has been raised" regarding the Serebas massacre. The Sultan's letter concludes with saying "such are the reasons for which we make this information to our friend, so that, if possible, our friend may check the doings of these Dyaks"—and the virtuous Macota's letter also purports "to send information to our friend respecting the doings of the Dyaks of Serebas and Sakarran" that they may be put an end to. Both these letters are dated "*Mahommedan year* 1266, *corresponding* with 1849—1850; and, not being at home in the Mussulman calendar, and looking duly to the apparent intent of these documents, I concluded they were addressed to Sir James Brooke previous to the attack of 31st. July, and that they were laid

before Lord Palmerston as evidence in his possession at the time of that fearful occurrence. On enquiry, however, I found that the *first* day of the Mahomedan year 1266 corresponds with the 19th. day of November 1819; so that at the very soonest these letters must have been written *three months and nineteen days after the massacre!* Of course it is for Lord Palmerston to say whether a date sweeping over 1819 and 1850, and which might *possibly* embrace a date anterior to the massacre, is as precise as the information he is in the habit of getting or ought to receive. As evidence of anything, except of the effrontery of the writers, the letters in question are worthless; for independent of other matters, the particular facts mentioned in them against the Dyaks might have occurred ten or twenty years ago for aught we see to the contrary. I will conclude my notice of these letters with the expression of a hope that, if Sir James Brooke did not receive them with an indignant rebuke to their writers, for their complicity in and known encouragement of similar acts, he at least forwarded copies of them to the Dyak chiefs, to let them see that when acting under either the Sultan of Borneo or his Pangerans, they were in the hands of scoundrels who made no scruple of betraying them to destruction.

Sir James Brooke seems very indignant in his despatch of 2d. Feb. 1850 to the Foreign Office, that "the policy *so long pursued* for "the suppression of Piracy in these seas is to be called in question "in Parliament, &c." I deny that the course of measures pursued by him extenuates any policy which can be said to have been either *long* or *generally* pursued either by British local Governments, or under the British flag, for the suppression of piracy in these seas. He can point to no antecedent policy, having British sanction, that resembles his own, which began and will, I hope, end with himself. I have already instanced the more mild, considerate, and efficacious policy pursued in 1836 towards the Malay pirates of the Straits of Malacca, and the adjacent coast and Islands: and, it is easy to shew that Brooke's extirpatory and indiscriminate process had always been denounced:

"The idea," says Mr. Hunt, who wrote in 1842, "of extirpating "whole hordes of piratical states, were it possible, must, from its cruelty, "be incompatible with the liberal principles and humane policy of a "British Government. The simple burning down of a Malay town "can prove no serious impediment to future piratical enterprises; con- "structed as they are of Bamboos, mats and Attap leaves, a town is al- "most rebuilt in the same period of time it takes to destroy it. The "Dutch who had centuries of dear bought experience, knew that there "was no other mode of prevention and radical cure than building small "redoubts at the principal towns, and keeping up an adequate force "to check piratical enterprises and thus to turn their restless minds to "exertions of industry. This is the true history of the innumerable little

"forts on Celebes, Borneo Timor and all the Eastern Isles." (Vide appendix to Keppel's vol. 2.)

This system of fort building adopted by the Dutch, thus enforced by Mr. Hunt, and indicated by Mr. Earl, is precisely the policy Brooke himself has at last seen the efficacy of, after years of bloodshed and destruction. He well knew that a Malay town could be speedily rebuilt, but to the burning down of the towns he added the destruction of the stores of rice and the devastation of the country by hordes of auxiliary savages. Other ferocious features were superadded, which never were in contemplation of Mr. Hunt, and from which his superior, Sir Stamford Raffles, would have shrunk with horror. It was not enough that at the first invasion of the Serebas, the effusion of blood should be avoided by the immediate flight of the panic-stricken natives, but, as we have seen, a party of 700 savages was detached to *creep stealthily* to the rear of one of their towns, to cut off the retreat of wretches who had shown themselves only too ready to fly. Then look at the second invasion of the same country when two thousand savages are let loose for three days to work all the ruin in their power, and to get their fill of heads. Look at all the other barbarities which have signalized those expeditions, and call this a policy fit for the British people to pursue. It is a policy which stands alone and apart from every other course of measures pursued for the suppression of piracy in the British name, and ought never to belong to the annals of "the most unbloody people in the world."

There are assertions and representations contained in the same despatch, relative to Dyak piracy, which have been fully disposed of in my former communications, and it must on the whole be said that it would be difficult to conceive a despatch from a public servant, more calculated to mislead by the gross exaggeration of its colouring, and the boldness of its allegations:

"The hordes of Serebas and Sakarrans" he says, "had for a long course of time carried on an extensive and unchecked system of depredations, and were first attacked by Captain Keppel, in 1843 and 1844 at the request of the government of Borneo [Borneo Proper] and after the most convincing proof had been obtained of their piratical habits and of the unprovoked and general character of their piracies by sea and by land upon peaceful people of every class and nation."

The notable letter of Muda Hassim to Captain Keppel is here made to do duty as "the request of the Government of Borneo Proper," and manifold appear to be the virtues and uses of that document. It is given in the first place in Keppel's work as the "*information*" on which he undertook the expedition against Serebas; then in Sir James Brooke's deposition as in itself affording *proof* of the piratical character of the Serebas and Sakarran tribes; and in the despatch it is interpreted into the request of the Government of Bruni to attack them, and Captain Keppel is stated to have attacked them on that request "*after the most convincing proofs had been ob-*

tained of their piratical habits." What other convincing proofs did Captain Keppel obtain which the letter itself was not assumed as affording? And if there were such proofs why does Sir James Brooke not mention them in his affidavit, instead of swearing only to the letter itself as furnishing the proofs required? The fact is that the letter itself, *the request of the Government of Borneo, and the convincing proofs*, are all one and the same thing; with this qualification, perhaps, that to the convincing proofs might have been added the "perfect certainty" which Brooke desired of their piratical habits, from the fact of the celebrated night attack, nearly four years before Keppel came, and two years after which the so called pirates were seen in the Sarawak river in friendly intercourse with Muda Hassim's Government. And these are the only *convincing* proofs of the piracies of these tribes, which, from the beginning to the end of all that has come before the public, are shown to have been in existence when the first invasion of the Serebas river took place. All this may be, and I believe is, quite unnecessary after the exposé contained in my preceding communications; but Keppel's expeditions form the backbone of Brooke's arguments, of which the derivative effect is intended to be that the Serebas and Sakarians then were, and have all along been, pirates whom it is lawful to attack on every occasion; and the paragraph I have quoted from this despatch may be received as a specimen of the unflinching and sweeping assertion which Sir James Brooke offers to Lord Palmerston.

I shall now only examine one or two other statements in these despatches, before proceeding to take a glance at the native depositions regarding piracy, printed in these papers.

Sir James Brooke says that it was "after his departure for England in July 1847 that the pirates once more threw off all restraint, put to sea in large bodies, devastated the coast and incessantly harassed the trade,"—disorders which he had previously shown to arise from the agency of the *government* of Borneo Proper. But let that pass: I have examined with the utmost care the pages of your own journal, and of your contemporary the *Singapore Free Press*, from the time Sir James Brooke left Sarawak in 1847 until his return in Sept. 1848, and not one single instance is mentioned in either of depredations of any kind in the vicinity of Sarawak, during all that time, although there was his own schooner, the "Julia," constantly passing and repassing between the two places all the time, to bring information. It appears, however, from this same despatch that he and Captain Keppel, when at Sarawak, *publicly pledged themselves* to attack Serebas and Sakarran, as soon as the proper season should arrive, that is with the change of the monsoon in the following March—fully six months after. But in the despatch of 13th, Sept. 1848 from Sarawak, Captain Keppel in H. M. S. "Mæander" being then in that river, there is not a word about this *pledging*; Lord Palmerston being merely informed that, "I propose when the proper season returns to request the aid of the Naval officer in command to punish, &c."

"Notorious facts," he says further, "can only be doubted through the medium of ignorance and distance, and there is no person of competent information who does not well know that the north-west coast of Borneo would be secure for the trader and that the inhabitants would be at peace with one another if not disturbed and harassed by the excursions of these pirates."

I flatter myself that I, and many others in Singapore, who think with me are persons of competent information, and I undertake to say that the foregoing representation utterly unworthy of attention by any person either here or at a distance, whose belief in it would only leave him more *ignorant* than ever; and that it is inconceivable how any such statement should be found in a despatch to a minister of the British Crown, purporting to convey to him correct information, and impress him with just views of piracy in these seas.

But these despatches are throughout marked with extravagance; and he comes at length to advance the preposterous doctrine that the Dyaks of Serebas and Sakarran are to be put on the proof of their innocence! "I cannot," he says "find any specific facts are urged to prove the innocency of this piratical community." If this be the principle on which he framed his policy regarding them, no wonder they have been slaughtered! Specific facts were the very things wanting on his own side, but the public saw none of them; and had nothing diined into its ears save a general charge of piracy, until the application for Head-money to the Admiralty Court at this settlement, under the attack of the 31st. July, rendered it necessary to rake together a bundle of affidavits, *all one side*; for I know this much of the proceedings of a Court of Admiralty, under similar circumstances, that they are *wholly ex parte*; the applicants for Head-money and their witnesses deposing away, quite at their ease, without any cross questioning, against pirate chief this, and pirate chief that, and that these were pirates, and those were pirates who are all the time either dead and buried, or, it may be, thousands of miles away; and, as if this were not one sided enough, Brooke himself,—the prime delinquent (if there were any at all on the killing side)—was placed at the head of the commission, issued from the Court here, to take the depositions of parties at Sarawak; all the natives, living under his influence, upon whose testimony it is that the Serebas and Sakarrans have been adjudged to be pirates!

In any other case, every Englishman would sentence such testimony to the flames, but this "Description of persons treated as pirates," according to the phrasing of the Head money returns, *have no friends*; and no counter affidavits are ever called for; so that the case was as *plain sailing* for the applicants, under the Head money act, as could be possibly desired. I am not going to attempt any analysis of this evidence, as printed in the Parliamentary papers: but mean to deal with it more summarily. The depositions are of two kinds—one to prove the numerical force of the "piratical" fleet,—for the purpose of determining the amount of Head money compensation demand-

able; the other to establish the fact of piracy, general and particular, against the Serebas and Sakarrans Dyaks. It is only with the latter that I purpose having any thing to do, further than in remarking that the numerical force of these tribes, both in prabus and men, considerably exceed, according to the depositions, the numerical force allowed by the Admiralty Court. As to the proof the depositions furnish of *piracy*, I count it as nothing to find the native deponents to the several affidavits, *all* Malays, with the word "pirates" and "piratical fleet" always in their mouths, considering the circumstances under which these depositions were taken, and that we have them before us in English. *The Serebas balla* would doubtless be translated "the piratical fleet," as "orang Serebas" would be translated "the pirates;" and their appearance outside their river "a piratical cruize." But there is no doubt that the whole body of the evidence shows that the expedition of the Serebas and Sakarran Dyaks, when they left their rivers, were directed against some *district, town, or village*, on the adjacent coast, while there is a total want of evidence, on the face of these depositions, to shew that they at any time went to sea to *cruise against trading vessels*, or that trade on the high seas was the object of their attacks. The evidence, indeed, appears to be all the other way; and the rapidity of their movements toward, and return from, the destined point of attack, seems of itself to forbid the supposition that their attacks were directed against the *commerce of the seas*. And we find that Sir James Brooke himself informed Captain Farquhar that from his knowledge of the character and habits of these tribes, "their expedition would certainly not extend over five to seven days;"* both of them at the time themselves believing that the town of Seriki was the object of the attack. Now, Sir, I believe that, according to the law which every European nation has hitherto acted on, it does *not* constitute *piracy* when the fighting men of a whole community, amounting themselves to several thousands; under the immediate command of their acknowledged chiefs, sally out of their river on an expedition, to attack another town on the coast, as was the case when the Serebas were slaughtered. Trading prabus may be taken and plundered; but the act may or may not be piratical, according to circumstances; for they may belong to the hostile tribes attacked; or it may be the separate act of a small section of the force, without any authority from its chief, and Sir James has in other instances shown himself extremely tender towards such "*occasional pirates*."† On the occasion in question, the two prabus taken were both at the time close to the defences of the river of the *town* attacked (deposition of Burut;) and if no question was asked regarding them before they were plundered and destroyed, the proceeding exactly resembles what occurred at Patusen, when hundreds of boats were destroyed, from a war prahu down to a cock boat, without enquiry whose property they were. If

* Capt. Farquhar to Rear Admiral Sir F. A. Collier. 25 August 1849.

† See the pardon and dismissal of *the pirates who attacked the Dido's boat* of Serhassen, Keppel Vol. 2. p. 26.

there be intertribal war, and who can deny it among the Dyak races of the coast of Borneo, how distinguish between an expedition which sails to inflict a just retaliation, and one which sallies forth for the attack of a town to procure slaves and heads? which latter, abomination as it may be, is not necessarily a *piratical* act. But in point of fact Sir James Brooke had adopted a dogma which enabled him to dispense with every consideration connected with the relative situation of the tribes to each other, as is plainly evidenced by what follows:

"We only," he says, "concede the right of war to *recognised states*, and even then we must *carefully avoid introducing the refinements of European international law*, amongst a rude and semi-civilized people, who will make our delicacy a cloak for crime, and declare war merely for the sake of committing piracy with impunity. On the contrary all chiefs who have seized on territory and arrogate independence (making this independence a plea for piracy) *can never be allowed the right of declaring war, or entering on hostilities with their neighbours.*" (Keppel 2 p. 199.)

This is a convenient doctrine certainly for a Rajah of Sarawak, who is also Her Majesty's Commissioner to the Independent States of Borneo; and who may himself determine what is to be a *recognized state*. The Serebas and Sakarrans, according to the statement in Muda Hassim's letter to Capt. Keppel, were "not subject to the government of Borneo, (Borneo Proper)." They numbered from ten to twelve thousand fighting men, which gave a population of sixty thousand, and had acknowledged chiefs with whom Rajah Brooke entered into negotiations; and in what were they deficient in their claims to be recognized as a state, more especially in the confusion and dislocation of nearly all political relations in which Brooke found the coast of Borneo, when he established himself in authority at Sarawak, and when as he himself says, with reference to the alliance of the Patingi of Seriki and Sakarran against himself, that, "from the weakness of the central government at Bruni, these people consider themselves almost independent and carry on a predatory war, without reference to superior authority." (Mundy vol. 2 p. 70). But I am not here going to enter into the discussion of any questions of international law; which are out of my province. Sir James Brooke's doctrines and principles, and the ruthless manner in which they have been enforced, are before the British public; and it seems will soon be before the highest tribunal of the Empire; and the question as to whether he will be allowed to persist in them, or be bound over to a policy more consistent with the humane and liberal principles which before his time regulated the conduct of the British, in regard to piracy in these seas, will probably ere long be determined. If I have done aught, in the foregoing pages, that can in the smallest degree help towards the determination of this question, on just views, my object will be fully attained.

APPENDIX.

THE COAST OF BORNEO BEFORE BROOKE'S TIME.

We have no doubt the great hydrographer* described the Borneo Malays *of his own day*, either as he found them by his own experience, or from the representation of others who had the means of judging of their character—but, with all due deference to so high an authority, we are of opinion that, as regards the existing characteristics of the Borneans, the preference is due to those who have had opportunities of intercourse with them at the present time. We at least see neither the advantage or fairness of estimating the character or circumstances of these tribes by the criterion of what they were found to be thirty or forty years ago, in opposition to representations of what they now are, proceeding from actual eye witnesses of the present day.

But even at a period much anterior to that referred to by HORSBURGH we find by the following quotation from a paper of Mr. CRAWFURD'S, written in December 1821, that the English had been treated with hospitality and kindness by the Borneo chiefs—in which he also makes allusion to the reluctance formerly felt by Europeans to frequent the Coast of Borneo:—

“Europeans have for a number of years forbore to visit Borneo on account of its violent and anarchical government. We believe that European ships might now visit it with perfect safety, owing to the accession of a new and favorable prince, the professions of friendship and desire of trade which have been anxiously held out, and the real benefits which the Borneans themselves have experienced from their commercial intercourse with us, and which they would surely be reluctant to put to any hazard by aggression upon ours. The English indeed have no good reason to complain of the Borneans. They never formed any European alliance but with us, and when the Sooloos, half a century ago, treacherously drove us from Balambangan, it was this people who afforded us an asylum and who proffered us a settlement on the river of Borneo and the island of Labuan, which we accepted for a season.”

Mr. CRAWFURD was quite correct in his estimate of the advantages the Borneans felt they must derive from the cultivation of a commercial intercourse with us, and of the ameliorating influences upon their habits

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and feelings that must follow. Not a single instance has there occurred, since the passage above quoted was written, of outrage having been offered either to the person or property of Europeans in any part of the Coast of Borneo to which they have traded—and Mr. BROOKE'S friendly reception by the Sarawak chief, by no means a singular example of such treatment, nor is the confidence he reposes in the continued existence of a friendly disposition on their part towards the English, a solitary instance of a similar sentiment.—If our Bengal Contemporary will turn to our number of 15th Sept. 1836, he will there find an account of a visit to Borneo Proper, for trading purposes by two Europeans, and of a residence of some duration, during which nothing was experienced but kind and hospitable treatment, notwithstanding the *destruction* with which HORSBURGH threatened them.—Europeans from this port have also repeatedly traded to *Sarawak*, the port visited by Mr. BROOKE, and resided on shore for months, buying and selling unmolested and undisturbed by apprehension of any sort.—It is also worth mentioning, that when the brig *Napoleon*, belonging to this port, was wrecked last year in the mouth of the *Sarawak* river, the Captain, officers, and crew, the former Europeans, and all of whom had lost everything they had on board, were succoured, sheltered, and treated, during a period of nine weeks, with a degree of hospitality, and attention to their wants, which we wish were still the characteristics, on similar occasions, of some countries that boast of their superior civilization.—*Singapore Free Press June 11th, 1840.*

Description of the Ilanun Pirate Prahus.

The prahu captured was 54 in length and fifteen feet beam, but their general length was 56 feet, strongly built with a round stern and the stern post having a considerable curve, on which the rudder is made to fit, was hung on a pintle and gudgeon. The decks, after the same fashion as the Malay prahu, were made of split neebong fastened together with rattan, the neebong being cut into convenient lengths so that any part of the deck could be rolled up—the depths of hold about six feet. From the upper edge of the prahu a projection of bamboo nearly two feet broad, was made all around the vessel from the stockade near the bow to the stern, on the outer edge of which was raised, of the same material, a breastwork about three feet high, and outside this their rattan plaited cables were placed around, one coil above another, —an excellent protection against shot.

These vessels were double banked, pulling 36 oars, 18 on each side, nine of which rested on the edge of the prahu passing through the projecting raised work alluded to, the upper tier of nine oars, being worked over all the lower tier were pulled by men sitting on the deck inside the boat itself, the upper by others sitting on the projecting bamboo work, whose heads could barely be seen above it—the oars were worked diagonally in the style, as has been supposed by some authors, of the ancient war galleys, by which contrivance considerable room is

saved. Indeed this work projecting from the side of the vessel, favours in some measure the ingenious theory of the late General MELVILLE, in his essay on the galleys of the Greeks and Romans.

The rowers among the pirates were of the lower castes, or slaves captured in their cruizes; hence a strong Chinese became a valuable acquisition to them, and the oars could admit of two men pulling at each if necessary.

Their rigging was of the most simple kind, a large sail foreward and a smaller sail abaft, made of light mats sewed together—stretched on bamboos above and below, having cross pieces at intervals from top to bottom in the foresail only—which was hoisted on a triangle of stout bamboos forming the foremast—this is done exactly like the Bugis boats, a bamboo lashed close to the outer edge of the vessel on each side, and a third fastened to the deck amidships, immediately behind the stockade, is brought up to meet the two upright pieces, and all lashed together at the top forming a very efficient support to the sail, and excellently adapted for resisting shot; in fact it was found very difficult to shoot them away, for when struck by shot they were only split and still stood as well as before—the small mast behind was a spar.

The working of these sails was likewise very simple, for when the prahu went about the tacks and braces were let go, the bow pulled somewhat round, and the sail turned round to the other side of the mast, the foretacks boused down and the braces, which led aft, made fast, and soon the vessel was on the other tack. Each prahu had a stockade, not far from the bow, through which was pointed an iron four pounder, another stockade abaft on which was stuck two swivels, and around the sides were from three to six guns of the same description, all brass, stuck upon upright pieces of wood: they had likewise muskets, spears &c., and many of the pirates wore very large bamboo shields covering all the upper part of the body. The fighting men wore long hair which was loose in the battle and gave them a savage appearance. It may be mentioned that the orang kaya's prahu was armed with brass guns, according to the report of his son who is one of the captives.—*Singapore Free Press, June 16th 1838.*

THE following description of the Lanun prahus is taken from the evidence of the late Captain Samuel Congalton of the Straits Steamer, given on the trial of the 18 Lanun pirates before the Criminal Court at Singapore June 9th. 1838:—"He captured the prisoners off Trianganu, their prahu was one of a fleet of six which was in chase of a China junk when he fell in with them—observed the junk return fire, and the pirates were preparing to renew the attack when the Steamer approached, the pirates, bore down upon her, supposing her to be a vessel on fire, but finding out their mistake as they came nearer,

"forts on Celebes, Borneo Timor and all the Eastern Isles." (Vide appendix to Keppel's vol. 2.)

This system of fort building adopted by the Dutch, thus enforced by Mr. Hunt, and indicated by Mr. Earl, is precisely the policy Brooke himself has at last seen the efficacy of, after years of bloodshed and destruction. He well knew that a Malay town could be speedily rebuilt, but to the burning down of the towns he added the destruction of the stores of rice and the devastation of the country by hordes of auxiliary savages. Other ferocious features were superadded, which never were in contemplation of Mr. Hunt, and from which his superior, Sir Stamford Raffles, would have shrunk with horror. It was not enough that at the first invasion of the Serebas, the effusion of blood should be avoided by the immediate flight of the panic-stricken natives, but, as we have seen, a party of 700 savages was detached to *creep stealthily* to the rear of one of their towns, to cut off the retreat of wretches who had shown themselves only too ready to fly. Then look at the second invasion of the same country when two thousand savages are let loose for three days to work all the ruin in their power, and to get their fill of heads. Look at all the other barbarities which have signalized those expeditions, and call this a policy fit for the British people to pursue. It is a policy which stands alone and apart from every other course of measures pursued for the suppression of piracy in the British name, and ought never to belong to the annals of "the most unbloody people in the world."

There are assertions and representations contained in the same despatch, relative to Dyak piracy, which have been fully disposed of in my former communications, and it must on the whole be said that it would be difficult to conceive a despatch from a public servant, more calculated to mislead by the gross exaggeration of its colouring, and the boldness of its allegations:

"The hordes of Serebas and Sakarrans" he says, "had for a long course of time carried on an extensive and unchecked system of depredations, and were first attacked by Captain Keppel, in 1843 and 1844 at the request of the government of Borneo [Borneo Proper] and after the most convincing proof had been obtained of their piratical habits and of the unprovoked and general character of their piracies by sea and by land upon peaceful people of every class and nation."

The notable letter of Muda Hassim to Captain Keppel is here made to do duty as "the request of the Government of Borneo Proper," and manifold appear to be the virtues and uses of that document. It is given in the first place in Keppel's work as the "*information*" on which he undertook the expedition against Serebas; then in Sir James Brooke's deposition as in itself affording *proof* of the piratical character of the Serebas and Sakarran tribes; and in the despatch it is interpreted into the request of the Government of Bruni to attack them, and Captain Keppel is stated to have attacked them on that request "*after the most convincing proofs had been ob-*

tained of their piratical habits." What other convincing proofs did Captain Keppel obtain which the letter itself was not assumed as affording? And if there were such proofs why does Sir James Brooke not mention them in his affidavit, instead of swearing only to the letter itself as furnishing the proofs required? The fact is that the letter itself, *the request of the Government of Borneo, and the convincing proofs*, are all one and the same thing; with this qualification, perhaps, that to the convincing proofs might have been added the "perfect certainty" which Brooke desired of their piratical habits, from the fact of the celebrated night attack, nearly four years before Keppel came, and two years after which the so called pirates were seen in the Sarawak river in friendly intercourse with Muda Hassim's Government. And these are the only *convincing* proofs of the piracies of these tribes, which, from the beginning to the end of all that has come before the public, are shown to have been in existence when the first invasion of the Serebas river took place. All this may be, and I believe is, quite unnecessary after the exposé contained in my preceding communications; but Keppel's expeditions form the backbone of Brooke's arguments, of which the derivative effect is intended to be that the Serebas and Sakarrans then were, and have all along been, pirates whom it is lawful to attack on every occasion; and the paragraph I have quoted from this despatch may be received as a specimen of the unflinching and sweeping assertion which Sir James Brooke offers to Lord Palmerston.

I shall now only examine one or two other statements in these despatches, before proceeding to take a glance at the native depositions regarding piracy, printed in these papers.

Sir James Brooke says that it was "after his departure for England in July 1847 that the pirates once more threw off all restraint, put to sea in large bodies, devastated the coast and incessantly harassed the trade,"—disorders which he had previously shown to arise from the agency of the *government* of Borneo Proper. But let that pass: I have examined with the utmost care the pages of your own journal, and of your contemporary the *Singapore Free Press*, from the time Sir James Brooke left Sarawak in 1847 until his return in Sept. 1848, and not one single instance is mentioned in either of depredations of any kind in the vicinity of Sarawak, during all that time, although there was his own schooner, the "Julia," constantly passing and repassing between the two places all the time, to bring information. It appears, however, from this same despatch that he and Captain Keppel, when at Sarawak, *publicly pledged themselves* to attack Serebas and Sakarran, as soon as the proper season should arrive, that is with the change of the monsoon in the following March—fully six months after. But in the despatch of 13th, Sept. 1848 from Sarawak, Captain Keppel in H. M. S. "Mæander" being then in that river, there is not a word about this *pledging*; Lord Palmerston being merely informed that, "I propose when the proper season returns to request the aid of the Naval officer in command to punish, &c."

"Notorious facts," he says further, "can only be doubted through the medium of ignorance and distance, and there is no person of competent information who does not well know that the north-west coast of Borneo would be secure for the trader and that the inhabitants would be at peace with one another if not disturbed and harassed by the excursions of these pirates."

I flatter myself that I, and many others in Singapore, who think with me are persons of competent information, and I undertake to say that the foregoing representation utterly unworthy of attention by any person either here or at a distance, whose belief in it would only leave him more ignorant than ever; and that it is inconceivable how any such statement should be found in a despatch to a minister of the British Crown, purporting to convey to him correct information, and impress him with just views of piracy in these seas.

But these despatches are throughout marked with extravagance; and he comes at length to advance the preposterous doctrine that the Dyaks of Serebas and Sakarran are to be put on the proof of their innocence! "I cannot," he says "find any specific fact are urged to prove the innocency of this piratical community." If this be the principle on which he framed his policy regarding them, no wonder they have been slaughtered! Specific facts were the very things wanting on his own side, but the public saw none of them; and had nothing dinned into its ears save a general charge of piracy, until the application for Head-money to the Admiralty Court at this settlement, under the attack of the 31st. July, rendered it necessary to rake together a bundle of affidavits, *all one side*; for I know this much of the proceedings of a Court of Admiralty, under similar circumstances, that they are *wholly ex parte*; the applicants for Head-money and their witnesses deposing away, quite at their ease, without any cross questioning, against pirate chief this, and pirate chief that, [and that these were pirates, and those were pirates who are all the time either dead and buried, or, it may be, thousands of miles away; and, as if this were not one sided enough, Brooke himself,—the prime delinquent (if there were any at all on the killing side)—was placed at the head of the commission, issued from the Court here, to take the depositions of parties at Sarawak; all the natives, living under his influence, upon whose testimony it is that the Serebas and Sakarrans have been adjudged to be pirates!]

In any other case, every Englishman would sentence such testimony to the flames, but this "Description of *persons treated as pirates*," according to the phrasing of the Head money returns, *have no friends*; and no counter affidavits are ever called for: so that the case was as plain sailing for the applicants, under the Head money act, as could be possibly desired. I am not going to attempt any analysis of this evidence, as printed in the Parliamentary papers: but mean to deal with it more summarily. The depositions are of two kinds—one to prove the numerical force of the "piratical" fleet,—for the purpose of determining the amount of Head money compensation demaund-

able; the other to establish the fact of piracy, general and particular, against the Serebas and Sakarrans Dyaks. It is only with the latter that I purpose having any thing to do, further than in remarking that the numerical force of these tribes, both in prahus and men, considerably exceed, according to the depositions, the numerical force allowed by the Admiralty Court. As to the proof the depositions furnish of *piracy*, I count it as nothing to find the native deponents to the several affidavits, *all* Malays, with the word "pirates" and "piratical fleet" always in their mouths, considering the circumstances under which these depositions were taken, and that we have them before us in English. *The Serebas balla* would doubtless be translated "the piratical fleet," as "orang Serebas" would be translated "the pirates;" and their appearance outside their river "a piratical cruize." But there is no doubt that the whole body of the evidence shows that the expedition of the Serebas and Sakarran Dyaks, when they left their rivers, were directed against some *district, town, or village*, on the adjacent coast, while there is a total want of evidence, on the face of these depositions, to shew that they at any time went to sea to *cruise against trading vessels*, or that trade on the high seas was the object of their attacks. The evidence, indeed, appears to be all the other way; and the rapidity of their movements toward, and return from, the destined point of attack, seems of itself to forbid the supposition that their attacks were directed against the *commerce of the seas*. And we find that Sir James Brooke himself informed Captain Farquhar that from his knowledge of the character and habits of these tribes, "their expedition would certainly not extend over five to seven days;"* both of them at the time themselves believing that the town of Seriki was the object of the attack. Now, Sir, I believe that, according to the law which every European nation has hitherto acted on, it does *not* constitute *piracy* when the fighting men of a whole community, amounting themselves to several thousands, under the immediate command of their acknowledged chiefs, sally out of their river on an expedition, to attack another town on the coast, as was the case when the Serebas were slaughtered. Trading prahus may be taken and plundered; but the act may or may not be piratical, according to circumstances; for they may belong to the hostile tribes attacked; or it may be the separate act of a small section of the force, without any authority from its chief, and Sir James has in other instances shown himself extremely tender towards such "*occasional pirates*."† On the occasion in question, the two prahus taken were both at the time close to the defences of the river of the *town* attacked (deposition of Burut;) and if no question was asked regarding them before they were plundered and destroyed, the proceeding exactly resembles what occurred at Patusen, when hundreds of boats were destroyed, from a war prahu down to a cock boat, without enquiry whose property they were. If

* Capt. Farquhar to Rear Admiral Sir F. A. Collier, 25 August 1849.

† See the pardon and dismissal of the *pirates* who attacked the *Dido's* boat off Serlussen. Keppel Vol. 2 p. 26.

there be intertribal war, and who can deny it among the Dyak races of the coast of Borneo, how distinguish between an expedition which sails to inflict a just retaliation, and one which sallies forth for the attack of a town to procure slaves and heads? which latter, abomination as it may be, is not necessarily a *piratical* act. But in point of fact Sir James Brooke had adopted a dogma which enabled him to dispense with every consideration connected with the relative situation of the tribes to each other, as is plainly evidenced by what follows:

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The working of these sails was likewise very simple, for when the prahu went about the tacks and braces were let go, the bow pulled somewhat round, and the sail turned round to the other side of the mast, the foretacks boused down and the braces, which led aft, made fast, and soon the vessel was on the other tack. Each prahu had a stockade, not far from the bow, through which was pointed an iron four pounder, another stockade abaft on which was stuck two swivels, and around the sides were from three to six guns of the same description, all brass, stuck upon upright pieces of wood: they had likewise muskets, spears &c., and many of the pirates wore very large bamboo shields covering all the upper part of the body. The fighting men wore long hair which was loose in the battle and gave them a savage appearance. It may be mentioned that the orang kaya's prahu was armed with brass guns, according to the report of his son who is one of the captives.—*Singapore Free Press, June 16th 1838.*

THE following description of the Lannu prahu is taken from the evidence of the late Captain Samuel Congalton of the Straits Steamer, given on the trial of the 18 Lannu pirates before the Criminal Court at Singapore June 9th. 1838:—"He captured the prisoners off Tringanu, their prahu was one of a fleet of six which was in chase of a China junk when he fell in with them—observed the junk return fire, and the pirates were preparing to renew the attack when the Steamer approached, the pirates, bore down upon her, supposing her to be a vessel on fire, but finding out their mistake as they came nearer,

they turned round again and endeavoured to escape—gave chase and steered right for the middle of them—took one prahu after totally disabling her, the others favoured by night coming on and the squally weather, effected their escape—the prahu that was taken had twenty-nine fighting men in her—the other prahus were numerously manned, should say they contained about 30 men each, some perhaps more—cannot say what was the loss of lives in the other prahus, seven or eight were killed in the one that was taken, and she was less fired into than any of those that escaped, which were baling out apparently nothing but blood, when they wore away, and scarce shewing a man at their oars—there must have been twice as many killed on board of each of the prahus that escaped as in that which was captured. Proceeded to the attack of the pirates by order of Capt. STANLEY of H. M. Sloop-of-War *Wolf*, which was lying in sight, but prevented from coming up by light baffling winds—had a party of men on board from the *Wolf* with two of her boats. Never before met with any pirate prahus of the same description as these—they are quite different from the Malay prahus—they mounted each one long gun in the bow, with swivels along the sides, and the men were armed with muskets, spears, and other weapons—the captured prahu was 56 feet long and 15 feet beam—the others also were half the length of the Steamer, reaching from her paddle boxes to her stern.—*Ibid.*

The following description is from Captain Keppel's pen:—

“In the evening I pulled through the fleet, and inspected several of the largest prahus. The entire force consisted of eighteen boats, viz. three Malukus and fifteen Illanuns; the smallest of these boats carried thirty men, the largest (they are mostly large) upwards of a hundred; so that, at a moderate computation, the number of fighting-men might be reckoned at from five to six hundred. The Illaun expedition had been absent from Magindano upwards of three years, during which time they had cruised amongst the Moluccas and islands to the eastward, had hunted Boni Boni Bay and Celebes, and beat up the Straits of Macassar. Many of their boats, however, being worn out, they had fitted out Bugis prize prahus, and were now on their return home. They had recently attacked one of the Tambelan islands, and had been repulsed; and report said they intended a descent upon Sirbassan, one of the Southern Natunas group. These large prahus are too heavy to pull well, though they carry thirty, forty, and even fifty oars: their armament is one or two six-pounder in the bow, one four-pounder stern-chaser and a number of swivels, besides musketry, spears, and swords. The boat is divided into three sections, and fortified with strong planks, one behind the bow, one amidships, and one astern to protect the steersman. The women and

children are crammed down below, where the unhappy prisoners are likewise stowed away during an action. Their principal plan is boarding a vessel, if possible, and carrying her by numbers: and certainly if a merchantman fired ill she would inevitably be taken; but with grape and canister fairly directed, the slaughter would be so great that they would be glad to sheer off before they neared a vessel. This is, of course, supposing a calm; for in a breeze, they would never have the hardihood to venture far from land with a ship in sight, and would be sorry to be caught at a distance.—Keppel vol. 1 p. 95

Description of the Dyak War prahus.

As the Sea Dyaks only go on cruises in the fine season, or from April to October, their boats are taken to pieces during the bad monsoon, by cutting the rattans adrift which hold the planks together. * * * * From the nature of these boats, and the slightness of their build, it may easily be imagined that they are not manageable in a sea-way, the length causing there to open at the seams.—*Low's Sarawak* p. p. 221 and 222.

Though the pirates were encouraged by the rulers of the West coast, it does not appear that they have succeeded in inducing the natives of it themselves to go on piratical cruises. Teluk Serban, a bay inside of Tanjong Dattu, and opposite the islands of Telung Telong, was a station occupied during the S. W. monsoon by the pirates of Sooloo and Magandanao. * * * Here their principal fleet lay anchored and from whence they sent a sufficient force to capture a sail, and sent the slaves and goods in the Sarawak and Sadong rivers in exchange for provisions, &c.—*Low's Sarawak* p. 128.

Piracy does not therefore appear to have been proper to the native inhabitants of the west coast of Borneo, though frequently carried on from its ports.—*Low's Sarawak* p. 129.





