

THE
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1827.

IMPROVEMENTS.

Among the improvements proceeding under the superintendence of the new committee of assessors, we are happy to learn that the importance of opening new roads in several parts of the island has not been overlooked: the want of a convenient communication with the western districts has long been felt. A new road, extending about three miles, is now cutting from the Ayer Etam valley across the hills to the western districts, where the principal pepper gardens are situated, and this will afford a much more speedy and safe means of conveying the produce to George Town than the present mode of transport by water. Another road will lead from the Vale of Tempé to Tulloh Bahang, where a considerable number of Chinese and Chooliahs have lately settled. The unusual long duration of dry weather has enabled the committee also to make some very perceptible improvements in the streets of George Town and the roads in the vicinity. We have heard of other works in contemplation, which, if carried into effect, will materially conduce to the embellishment of our little city, and the health and comfort of its inhabitants.—[*P. of W. Isl. Gaz.*, March 3.

THE ANDAMANS.

By a late arrival from Tavoy we learn that the brig *Lovely Sophia*, from this port, bound to Rangoon, had put into Coringa. It appears that this vessel touched at Rutland Island, which is near the south end of the Great Andaman, for water, and that a boat having been sent on shore, the crew of which were attacked by the natives, and two of them killed and others severely wounded. It would appear that water had been obtained without any of the natives having been seen, and that the boat had again proceeded to the shore when this attack took place.—[*Ibid.*

Singapore.

PIRACY.

The *Singapore Chronicle* contains a letter from a correspondent on the subject of piracy, which prevails to a serious extent in those seas. The following are the principal passages:

"With reference to that article of the treaty between Great Britain and the Netherlands which provides for the extirpation of piracy by the combined efforts of both powers, and Singapore being now established on a permanent footing, I take the liberty of submitting the following ideas on that subject. These ideas have been before submitted to the local authorities; but while Singapore was annexed to Fort Marlborough, it was considered ex-

pedient to defer these matters until the occupation of Singapore should be confirmed: the same considerations existed while the settlement was under the Supreme Government, and when I conversed with Mr. Crawford on the subject, that gentleman seemed to incline to the employment of steam vessels solely.

"At the present day, from the more enlarged intercourse of the natives with Europeans, piracy is on the decrease, and is carried on in comparatively small craft to what were formerly used, or are at present to the eastward. The prahus generally made use of were in length from fifty to sixty feet, in breadth from eleven to thirteen, and draw from five to seven feet water: they are of the description called Lanchang, and carry from twenty-five to thirty men. Taking advantage of their easy draft, they conceal themselves along the shoal shores of these parts, among the creeks found every where in the mangrove jungle, and thence issue forth upon some passing defenceless prahu: it is seldom they cruise far from shore. European vessels have scarce a chance of meeting pirates, and if they do it is difficult to distinguish their craft from Malay trading prahus. But, admitting that an European vessel of war does meet prahus engaged in piratical pursuits, their situation prevents the vessel from acting, and it becomes necessary to employ the crew in boat service, peculiarly hazardous, as the prahus anchored in smooth water, armed with heavy ordnance, and her crew protected by their ampan or mantlet, would be enabled to do considerable execution upon the assailants.

"I have before mentioned, that Mr. Crawford considered steam-boats best adapted for this service, and the opinion has been advocated in the public prints. If a steam-boat had a fair view of a pirate prahu, there is no doubt she would overtake her; but how is she to perceive her, concealed as I have stated among the mangrove? I have therefore always considered that boats of a superior construction to the Lanchang, of easier draft and greater speed, rigged in such manner as to entice the pirate prahus from their lurking places, would be most effectual. Something similar to this appeared eligible to Capt. Campbell, of H.M.S. *Cyrene*, who lately disguised two of his boats to resemble trading prahus.

"But it is probable that preventive measures would be more efficacious, and the following appear most likely to ensure the desired result:

"1st. The principal pirate stations are Poda, Pama, Scanna, and Timiang, under the native chief of Rhio, and Moro, Trong, Sugbi, Gallang, and Pakakas, under the Tomonggong. A concerted expedition between the British and Dutch might proceed to these and other piratical places, and

and insist that the prahus and ordnance should be given up at a fair valuation, as depriving the owners of them without a fair equivalent would, according to the ideas of the Orang Laut, ensure the assistance of heaven in future piratical expeditions.

"2d. All trading prahus should be required to procure a pass from the local authorities at the port to which they belong; in this should be specified the number of the crew and arms, with a detailed description of the latter. Should any prahu be found in a port or by a cruiser to have more or less arms or men than specified in the pass, she should be detained for examination.

"3d. The Malay chiefs have no longer any interest in encouraging piracy, or in enabling pirates to escape detection; and I have no hesitation in asserting that the chiefs of Patani, Kalantang, Tringanu, and Lingin, the Irang Di Per Tuan Muda at Rhio, the Bandahara at Pahang, and our own chiefs, would, if required by the European powers, concur in the above measures. I cannot speak so positively of the chiefs along the Sumatran shore, but have no doubt Mr. Anderson, of the civil service, would entertain an opinion of their being equally well inclined. The whole might be required to carry the second measure into effect at all the ports subject to their authority."

Malacca.

VISIT TO PAHANG.

Mr. Gray, who lately went on a commercial trip to Pahang, returned last week after an absence of thirty-six days. He is the first, we understand, who has performed the journey in so short a time, the natives usually requiring between two and three months to travel by the same route. In our next we hope to give the particulars of Mr. Gray's expedition. In the mean time we are authorized to say that he met with no molestation by the way, but was treated with kindness, and assisted by the the natives, from whom he suffered no loss. He slept in-doors every night except when on the rivers. He found the lands for the most part planted with paddy. Upon the whole, it would appear that there are no obstacles of any importance to prevent our Malacca friends from availing themselves of the advantages to be derived from trading with the natives of Pahang, &c. We understand that a considerable quantity of gold-dust was brought to Malacca last week by natives from Pahang. We trust it will meet with that ready market which will induce the Malays of that place to multiply their visits of this nature.—*Malacca Observer*, Feb. 13.

THE MALACCA OBSERVER.

This paper is in future to receive the additional title of "Chinese Chronicle," and to contain a department appropriated to Chinese literature, history, politics, &c. &c.

Siam.

THE LATE TREATY.

The *Calcutta Gov. Gazette* of March 15 contains the following observations upon the late commercial arrangements with Siam:—

The Siamese negotiators could not be persuaded to specify, either in the fifth or ninth articles of the treaty, the particular ports which they would not allow British vessels to visit. It was evident that the Siamese government desires to reserve to itself the power of preventing British vessels from entering those ports which they have not been accustomed to visit, although it was ashamed to avow this desire after having been assured that Siamese vessels and merchants might proceed to any English country. It appears to be the object and policy of Siam, in the same manner as with many other states, to make the capital an entrepôt for the whole commerce of the country, and to discourage foreign vessels from proceeding to the provincial ports, or direct to the places of growth for their cargoes.

The sixth article of the treaty provides a more equitable mode than what has hitherto obtained for the adjustment of "any complaint or suit" that British merchants may have at Bangkok. The Siamese law of debtor and creditor gives the latter a right to go himself and seize the former and imprison him, or any of his family, until the debt be discharged. If, however, the creditor, when employed in apprehending the debtor, strike him or any of his family, the debt is immediately cancelled. Hitherto, whenever an English trader complained to the P'hra K'hlang against any person in his debt, he was asked why he had trusted the party, and told to go himself and imprison him. The mission saw an instance of Messrs. Hunter and Mallock detaining the person of a prince for debt. This system was of course liable to many objections, and particularly as an attempt to seize a debtor might often be the cause of a serious affray between the foreign trader and the inhabitants of Bangkok, and the rules detailed in the sixth article of the treaty will less objectionably provide for the merchant's security. The concluding expression, "it will be the merchant's own fault," refers to the circumstance of foreign traders demanding satisfaction from the king for losses or irrecoverable debts; and so long