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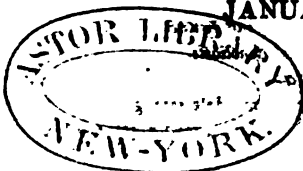
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large piece of it to a Chinese, in the year 1795. This piece of ground had been obtained by the mission, together with some other estates, at the death of a Russian nobleman, named Wojeikow, who, having been sent hither in the year 1726, for the purpose of learning the Chinese and Mandshoo languages, and being a man of fortune, lived here for eight years in the true Chinese stile of splendour; and at his death bequeathed his property towards the support of our mission.

Y. Z.

(To be continued.)

MALAY PIRATES.*

A GLANCE at the map of the Indian islands will convince us that this region of the globe must, from its natural configuration and locality, be peculiarly liable to become the seat of piracy. These islands form an immense cluster, lying as if it were in the high road which connects the commercial nations of Europe and Asia with each other, and affords thus a hundred fastnesses from which to waylay the traveller. A large proportion of the population is at the same time confined to the coasts or to the estuaries of rivers; they are fishermen and mariners, they are barbarous and poor, therefore, rapacious, faithless, and sanguinary. These are circumstances, it must be confessed, which militate strongly to beget a piratical character. It is not surprising, then, that the Malays should have been notorious for their depredations from our first acquaintance with them. It is, indeed, on the contrary, rather remarkable, considering the extraordinary temptations which exist, that the matter should be no worse; a result for which we are indebted to the feeble and unenterprising character of this people. A race of European buccaniers, under the same circumstances, would soon render these seas impassable for the greater part of the trade that now frequents them.

Among the tribes of the Indian islands, the most noted for their piracies are, of course, the most idle, and the least industrious, and particularly such as are unaccustomed to follow agriculture or trade, as regular pursuits. The agricultural tribes, indeed (embracing the whole of Java, and much of Sumatra), never commit piracy at all; and the most civilised inhabitants of Celebes (although all mariners) are very little addicted to this vice. Among the most confirmed pirates are the

true Malays, inhabiting the small islands about the eastern extremity of the straits of Malacca, and those lying between Sumatra and Borneo, down to Billitin and Carimatta. Still more noted than these, are the inhabitants of certain islands situated between Borneo and the Phillipines, of whom the most desperate and enterprising are the Sooloo, and Illanoons, the former inhabiting a well known group of islands of the same name, and the latter being one of the numerous nations of the great island of Magindanao.

The depredations of the proper Malays extend from Junkceylon to Java, through its whole coast as far as Grisey, to Pasir and Kutti, in Borneo, and along the western coast of Celebes. In another direction, they infest the coasting trade of the Cochin Chinese and Siamese nations in the gulph of Siam, finding sale for their booty, and shelter for themselves, in the ports of Tringhanu, Calantan, and Pahang. The most noted piratical stations of these people, are the small islands about Lingin and Rhio, particularly Galang, Tamiang, Sakanna, and Maphar. The chief of this last is said to have seventy or eighty proas fit to undertake piratical expeditions. Not less famous than these was Singapore down to the moment in which it was occupied as a British settlement. The most ordinary places of rendezvous are the Sambilans, Dingdings, Carimons, Puledure (in the straits of Dryan), Billitin, and the Carimattas.

The Sooloo pirates chiefly confine their depredations to the Phillipine islands, which they have continued to infest, with little interruption, for near three centuries, in open defiance of the Spanish authority, and the numerous establishments maintained to check them. The piracies of the Illanoons, on the contrary, are widely extended,

* Extracted from the Singapore Chronicle.

tended, being carried on all the way from their native country to the spice islands, on one side, and to the straits of Malacca on the other. In these last, indeed, they have formed, within the last few years, two permanent establishments; one of these, situated on Sumatra, near Indragiri, is called Ritti, and the other, a small island on the Coast of Linga, is named Salangut.

Besides those who are avowed pirates, it ought to be particularly noticed that a great number of the Malayan princes must be considered as accessories to their crimes, for they afford them protection, contribute to their outfit, and often share in their booty; so that a piratical proa is too commonly more welcome in their harbours than a fair trader. Among the worthies of this class, may be enumerated the Rajahs of Perah, Salangor, Siac, Kampar, Indragiri, and many others. Those who carry on trade and become rich, learn, at the same time, the utility of being honest, of which we have good examples in Tringanu, Kalantan, Pontiana, formerly Palembang, the west Coast of Sumatra, and Coast of Pedier. The people of Johore were formerly, and in periods by no means remote, celebrated for their piratical habits; a distinction which, in some dialects of the Malayan language, made the word "johore," synonymous with "robber."

Another description of piracy, of a more atrocious nature than any of the rest, consists in the treacherous attacks made upon ships invited to trade in a friendly manner at different native ports. This is a sort of piracy which has become extremely unfrequent since the conquest of Java, and which, now that strong European governments are established within the Archipelago, is not likely to be again much repeated.

The Malay piratical proas are from six to eight tons burden, and run from seven to eight fathoms in length. They carry from one to two small guns, with commonly four swivels or rantakas to each side, and a crew of from twenty to thirty men. When they engage, they put up a strong bulwark of thick plank; the Illanoon proas are much larger and more formidable, and commonly carry from four to six guns, and a proportional number of swivels, and have not unfrequently a double bulwark covered with buffalo hide; their

crews consist of from forty to eighty men. Both, of course, are provided with spears, krissees, and as many fire-arms as they can procure.

Their modes of attack are cautious and cowardly, for plunder and not fame is their object. They lie concealed under the land, until they find a fit object and opportunity. The time chosen is when a vessel runs aground, or is becalmed in the interval between the land and sea breezes. A vessel under weigh is seldom or never attacked. Several of the marauders attack together, and station themselves under the bows and quarters of a ship when she has no longer steerage way, and is incapable of pointing her guns. The action continues often for several hours, doing very little mischief; but when the crew are exhausted with the defence, or have expended their ammunition, the pirates take this opportunity of boarding in a mass.

This may suggest the best means of defence. A ship, when attacked during a calm, ought perhaps rather to stand upon the defensive, and wait, if possible, the setting in of the sea-breeze, than attempt any active operations, which would only fatigue the crew, and disable them from making the necessary defence when boarding is attempted. Boarding-nettings, pikes, and pistols, appear to afford the most effectual security; and, indeed, we conceive that a vessel thus defended by a resolute crew of Europeans, stands but little danger from any open attack of pirates whatsoever; for their guns are so ill served, that neither the hull or rigging of a vessel can receive much damage from them, however much protracted the contest.

The pirates are, upon the whole, extremely impartial in the selection of their prey, making little choice between natives and strangers, giving always, however, a natural preference to the most timid and the most easily overcome. The Javanese are, on this account, great favourites; and, consequently, the coast of Java has, in all times, been haunted by pirates, notwithstanding every effort of the European government. For the same reason, the Chuliah, or natives of the Coromandel Coast, are in still greater requisition. This fact seems to be well understood on both sides; and it has consequently happened, that of the native vessels from the Coromandel Coast, which visit Prince of Wales' Island,

land, to the number of fifty or sixty annually, none attempted to come further on; the adventurers being compelled to trahip themselves and their goods on board European vessels, in order to reach the markets of Malacca, Singapore, or Java. One vessel which attempted to pass on, between two and three years ago, was attacked, and would have been captured, but for the accidental appearance of an English merchantman.

The Chinese, on the contrary, who are numerous and intrepid in the defence of their property, are very rarely attacked. The Arabs escape for the same reason; and we have seldom heard of the Bugese press being attacked.

When an expedition is undertaken by the pirates, they range themselves under the banner of some piratical chief noted for his courage and conduct. The native prince of the place where it is prepared, supplies the adventurers with arms, ammunition, and opium; and claims, as his share of the plunder, the female captives, the cannon, and one-third of all the rest of the booty. The better sort of prisoners taken are often freely discharged or disposed of for a ransom, and the inferior ones sold as slaves. Europeans, it may always be expected, will be ransomed, of whatever description, as the Malays are known to put little or no value upon their services, deeming them an obstinate and untractable race of men. When no resistance is made, it does not appear to be the custom among the pirates to put the prisoner to death.

This sketch of the state of piracy in the Indian islands may be of some service in suggesting the best means of eradicating or suppressing it: but upon this interesting topic we have not at present room to enter at any length. The encouragement of industrious habits in the people will afford the surest means of effecting so great a good. This can only be effected, as far as we are concerned, by affording them a ready and free market for their productions. By such means, and which are now fortunately in operation, the most

respectable part of their own communities become not less interested than ourselves in suppressing piracy, and are thus made our natural allies. As far as force can be useful, it will be enough to say, that the pirates are now in a manner hemmed in by European establishments, more active and numerous than ever existed in these seas before; and that no act of piracy ought to be henceforth overlooked, but followed, sooner or later, by inevitable punishment from one or other of the European governments. A heavy contribution might be levied on native princes harbouring notorious pirates; and the haunts of some of the most noted and abandoned of these vagabonds should be destroyed by way of example. Towards any effective plan of operations against the pirates, it will be necessary that the European governments act in concert, and have a thorough understanding with each other. Were the pirates, during a moderate period, pertinaciously and systematically harrassed on the principle now proposed, industry at the same time rendered beneficial, the profession of piracy would become hazardous and discreditable, and industry and fair trade become honourable and prevalent in proportion.

It will at once occur to any one at all acquainted with the habits of the pirates, and the nature of the seas they frequent, that armed steam boats will afford the most effectual means of prosecuting offensive operations against them. The tranquil navigation and abundant fuel of these parts seem peculiarly propitious to the employment of steam vessels. In these, the pirates, who, by taking advantage of calms and shoal water, constantly escape from all other armed vessels, would be pursued to certain destruction; they would be suddenly attacked in their haunts, when unprepared for resistance; and, in short, from the steadiness, rapidity, and certainty of such attacks, they would find themselves reduced to a condition of the utmost precariousness and insecurity.