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SLAVE TRADE IN THE INDIAN ARCHIPELAGO.

WE promised in our last number to follow up the Report of the Dutch Commissioners, appointed some years ago to inquire into the state of the Slave Trade amongst the Eastern Islands, with an Appendix :—we eagerly redeem our pledge.

ADDITIONAL REPORT BY THE TRANSLATOR,
(*Containing Facts and Circumstances not mentioned in the foregoing.*)

Being one day busy at Macassar in searching through the mass of voluminous half-decayed records, my eyes fell on a small uninjured manuscript, which when I looked into it, I found to contain the preceding Report on the Slave Trade of that settlement, drawn up by a committee of two members of the Council of Police at that time, pursuant to an order from the Government of Batavia received in 1798. I took the manuscript with me to my house merely to read it. After perusal I thought that the knowledge of its contents might be conducive to the good of the human race. The committee, however, whether they had been afraid of saying too much upon the subject, or from prejudice or self-interest did not wish for the entire abolition of the abominable traffic in human flesh, had purposely limited their remarks to the ordinary causes of the evils attending this trade, and to the manner of conducting it, and had avoided stating any facts, shewing too pointedly the horrible consequences which at different times have occurred. As I have been myself not only an eye-witness of several of them, but also occasionally a loser by their occurrence, I was induced to take a rough translation of that compendious work, and to enlarge it by a narrative of facts which my own experience had made me acquainted with during a former residence of seven years as a Dutch officer at that place.

That the horrors of the traffic in men at Macassar had risen to the highest pitch with impunity in every respect, even as to its mode of transaction ; and that the superiors, no less than the persons appointed by them for the restriction of its abuses, and of the evils they were sure to produce, more or less connived at them, according to circumstances or to the condition of

the persons concerned, is evident to me from what I have seen and experienced, and will appear so to every body else by the following particulars.

As an instance that the natives at Macassar do not fear to kidnap even half-cast Christians, I shall first state what happened in 1790, not long after my arrival there, to an Amboinese schoolmaster attached to the Orphan Institution, under the denomination of Malay Master. It was the duty of this man every evening at seven o'clock to go to the church within the fort, there to read some prayers by way of evening vespers, at which, however, no other congregation appears than one corporal and ten or twelve soldiers off duty, who by turn are obliged to attend. This man having in one dark evening performed his usual service, was on his way homewards, when between the fort and the town he was stopped by two native ruffians, who, notwithstanding his assuring them that he was a Christian, and the Malay Master, immediately stript him of his clothes, pinioned him, and throwing about him an old piece of cloth used by the natives, and called saroong, carried him strait to a slave trader of the name of Geesdorp. It being already late, Geesdorp, without looking at him, caused the poor stolen Amboinese to be conducted to the prison, or black-house, and told the ruffians to come back in the morning for the terms of the purchase to be settled, and the transfer to be made. When the kidnappers had quitted the house, the poor Malay Master immediately made himself known to those who guarded the prison, for he had not dared to do so in the face of the robbers, as they would immediately have killed him on the spot, even in the sight of Geesdorp, who would have been obliged to allow them to escape, for fear of being himself murdered, either by them, or, if they had been apprehended and brought to punishment, by their accomplices, their friends, or their relations. As soon as the people saw that the supposed new slave was in reality the Malay Master, they carried him before Geesdorp, who on looking him in the face knew him directly. Geesdorp kept the poor man within his house for the night. Very early in the morning, be-

fore the robbers could make their appearance, he repaired with him to the Governor, who, from the mouth of the Malay Master himself heard all the particulars of the treatment which the unfortunate victim had received. The Governor upon this desired Geesdorp to say nothing about the affair to the ruffians who had kidnapped the Malay Master, and to pay them their price without requiring from them a transfer, he taking upon him to refund the money. Had the Governor, instead of that, ordered Geesdorp positively to require the transfer, and for that purpose to bring them to the secretary's office in the fort, he then, by confronting them with the Malay Master, would have had an opportunity of confining them in the goal of the fort, and to prevent further consequences he might have secretly sent them to Batavia, where they would have received a due punishment, without their friends or relations knowing what had happened to them. Such examples repeated on similar occasions would certainly have deterred this race of miscreants from stealing people. Kidnappers might also, by other means, have been originally checked in their abominable profession, had those only whose care it was to guard against their nefarious practices, not connived at them in the making out of transfers for slaves purchased. If the desire for fees had not prevailed over the honesty of the secretaries, who were not to make out a transfer for any person sold as a slave without first examining all parties concerned, namely, the seller, the purchaser, and above all the supposed slave, the unfortunate subject of the transfer; if, on finding this last to have been stolen, they had detained the seller, and delivered him into the hands of justice for the infliction of the punishment due to his crime; if the purchaser himself, on discovery that he knew of the theft and that he had connived at it, had been likewise made legally to suffer for his villainy, there cannot be the least doubt but the practice of kidnapping either free people or real slaves, and the illegal purchase of them, would gradually have ceased, or at least become less common: but it was quite otherwise; the secretaries whose monthly income chiefly depended on the quantity of slave-transfers, were not so disinterested as to deprive themselves of a couple of

hundredrix dollars: by being honest and doing their duty. The same observation applies to the Fiscal, or magistrate, whose duty it was, on being applied to for a license, to put a new bought slave in irons, first to see the person and examine him, as well as the transfer made of him. If he found the person to be a legal slave, and as such liable to be carried abroad for sale, he was then to grant the license and receive his fee, but not otherwise. Self-interest, however, prevailed also in that quarter, and the miserable stolen people became the victims of official cupidity. From all this it is easy to be seen, that all the public men employed in checking the abominable abuse, had a share in it, and that none of all the restrictive and salutary orders successively passed against it, were ever in good earnest put into force. In this manner the affair of the Malay Master was hushed up. The thieves received their money, and when afterwards they learned that their stolen victim was really the Amboinese, or Malay Master, they laughed at the joke.

Of the readiness of the kidnappers to murder their stolen victims if they cannot dispose of them, I have been a personal witness, having once fortunately had an opportunity of saving the life of a poor man by purchasing him. It was in 1792, on a Sunday evening, between five and six o'clock. I had taken a walk through the Bougheese town, and on my return home between the town wall and the (Dutch East-India) Company's garden, I passed by an obscure lane leading into some jungle, where I perceived two natives dragging a third along with them. I was immediately struck with an idea of their criminal intention. Having two stout boys with me, and being myself armed with a sword-stick, I had nothing to fear from them: so I followed them with quick steps, and coming up to them, I asked what they meant to do in this jungle? The two ruffians, without the least hesitation, told me that, not being able to sell their slave, they were tired of carrying him about, and they would therefore give him his liberty, the usual expression of such villains when they put to death a stolen person they cannot dispose of. The stolen man was between twenty-nine and thirty years of age, but looked much older. On seeing me he

fall on his knees, and conjured me to buy him. I took pity on the poor man, and asking the kidnapers how much they wanted for him, they said that any money would be more acceptable to them than giving him his liberty for nothing, and that if I would give them eight Spanish rix dollars (about £3) I should have him. I closed the bargain with them, and ordering my boys to loosen the cords he was tied with, I took him home with me, accompanied by the two kidnapers. Having paid them their money, and intending to give the poor fellow his liberty, I told the thieves I did not want them to make out a transfer, and desired them to be gone. When they had quitted my house, the poor man, full of joy at having escaped being murdered by the ruffians, fell again at my feet, and offered me his warmest thanks. I desired him to rise, and questioned him what countryman he was, and whence he came? He told me that he was a Bougbee, dwelling at Boutualac, in the vicinity of the town; that having some time ago sold two buffaloes on credit to a relation of his at Maros, he had lately gone to Maros to demand the money due to him, amounting to fourteen Spanish rix dollars, twenty-eight rees; that having received the sum, he had but two days before left Maros, when on the road he was stooped by the two villains, who immediately seized him, took away his spear and kris (side arms), and pinioned and robbed him of all his money and clothes; after which one of them would have killed him on the spot, but the other prevented it, saying, "why will you kill him? he is not so very old, and still good enough for a Company's slave at Batavia; so we may as well sell him at any rate, it is better than to kill him for nothing;" that having then thrown one of their old clothes over him, they had dragged him to Macassar for sale, but none of the slave traders wishing to buy him, probably because they thought him too old, the ruffians had carried him to the place where I had found him, with intent to murder him, for fear of being detected, as he had imprudently given them a hint of his being an inhabitant of Boutualac. On the following morning he told me that if I would give him his liberty, he would not only repay me my money, but would in gratitude as long as

he lived attach himself to me. My answer was, that at the moment I rescued him from death it had been my intention to liberate him; that now he was at liberty to go where he pleased; and that if he was an honest man, he would not forget paying me when he should have it in his power to do so. He went, and took with him the two boys who on the preceding evening had attended me. In about three hours he returned with his wife, children, and relations, laden with presents of all kinds, such as the country affords. They thanked me with the warmest expressions they were able to find for the dear life I had saved, and having paid me my money, they once more blessed me, and returned to their homes. I afterwards received many little services from this grateful family.

With regard to the horrible consequences, attending the traffic in stolen people, I will relate two striking incidents which happened during the period of my former residence at Macassar. The first that I shall mention proved most terrible, both to the purchaser and to the victims who had made their escape. The other, by a timely discovery, was of no worse consequence to the trader than the loss of his money; but all the poor wretches who tried to regain their freedom, lost their lives in the attempt.

In 1794, a naval officer, Lieutenant in the (Dutch East-India) Company's Service, named De Roy, being stationed at Macassar, and in the command of a small cruising vessel, was ordered to sail to Batavia with despatches for the Supreme Government. This unfortunate man, having not long before married a young lady with some little money, thought his present voyage a fit opportunity to increase the sum by purchasing slaves, whom he would sell for a good price at Batavia. He bought accordingly nine or ten very fine stout young men, but intending to make the best of his money, every one of the slaves he picked up was what they call *worms*, meaning stolen, and he got them in consequence as cheap as he wished. Being ready to sail, he put these slaves on board his vessel, slightly secured, thinking that his small crew, consisting of a few Europeans, and some Javanese sailors, would be sufficient to guard them, and left the harbour.

When he came off the islands called the Brothers, the slaves thus slightly secured, observing the smallness of the crew, half of whom only kept watch, thought this a fair opportunity to rid themselves of their fetters, and their master. Accordingly, in the middle of the night, all being perfectly quiet on board, they rose all at once, each of them provided with a strong piece of fire-wood, and rushed upon deck with their usual yells upon such occasions. The unhappy officer being in this manner roused from his sleep, became panic-struck, leaped overboard, and drowned himself. Some of the few Europeans followed the example of their unfortunate commander, and also lost their lives in the watery deep. The rest, in their consternation, were all to a man cut off. The mutineers navigated the vessel northwards, behind the Brothers, to the shore of Mandhar, and having plundered the vessel, set it adrift, landed and dispersed. As soon as this horrible deed became known, and it was ascertained that the perpetrators were on the island, the Governor of Macassar applied to the King of Bone, and putting a high price on their heads, requested that prince to send in search of them, and if found, to deliver them over to the Company, in order that they might receive a condign punishment for the atrocious crime they had committed. The King of Bone, after a long search, at length got four of them and sent them to Macassar, where, after being delivered into the custody of the court of justice, their condemnation was, that they should first be brought to the ordinary place of execution, there to be laid upon the rack, pinched with red-hot pincers, to have their limbs broken, and to remain so till dead; and then, that they should be dragged by their legs to the sea shore, and thence carried over the Gallows Island, there to be hung up for the food of the birds of heaven. This sentence was in the morning at six o'clock, executed in all its horrors. The first who underwent the terrible punishment was a lad of about fifteen or sixteen years of age; he died immediately under the hand of the executioner. Two of the remaining three died some while after: but the fourth, who had been the ringleader, was at twelve o'clock still alive; and the executioner, to make an end of this horrid spectacle, took the cord by which the suf-

ferer's neck was tied to the rack, and strangled him. Then the remaining part of the sentence was executed on the whole of them.

The other instance happened on the 1st of January 1795, at the house of a slave-trader, named Alexander Desiso. It being New Year's Day, Desiso and his wife, according to custom, had been dining out with their father, and the people in their own house, availing themselves of the occasion, and partaking the festivities of the day, rambled about and neglected to watch their prisoners, who perceiving that, thought it a good opportunity to break loose and to liberate themselves by flight. In the mean while, Desiso and his wife came home, the first being rather heavy from the liquor at his father's table. Overheated as he was, he left his wife to enjoy her afternoon's nap in the bed-room, and laid himself down on a couch in the hall, where he fell asleep. Not long after, between three and four o'clock, eighteen or twenty of the confined slaves, seeing no people moving, and the gate open, broke loose and silently escaped though the gate leading towards the plain opposite to the fort. Unfortunately for them, one of Desiso's men met them at a short distance from the house. He ran directly home and roused his master, who immediately summoned all the people he could find at hand, secured the remaining slaves by a proper guard, and with some armed men, pursued the fugitives. Some dragoons and soldiers, who caught the alarm of *amock* (murder), without further inquiry gave him their assistance, and the flying wretches were overtaken, and partly shot and partly cut down in the most horrible manner, so that not one single man of them remained alive. Thus ended this affair, which, had the fugitives known that their keeper was lying so near on their passage, would, most undoubtedly, have begun with the murder of him before they quitted the house.

That the house-slaves assist in kidnaping their own comrades out of the house of the common master, I can assert, from my own experience, and from what happened to myself in 1795. I had a family of slaves in my house, consisting of the father, mother, and two grown daughters, the eldest of whom had three children. This family, my wife's mother had given

us on the day of our marriage. Among the other male slaves in the house, there was one of my own, a very good, indeed, and active boy. As I found him both faithful and intelligent, I always distinguished him from the other servants, which, particularly to the family I have described, caused great jealousy, and gave rise to perpetual bickerings between them. One day my wife, on a particular occasion, sent this boy with the eldest daughter of the above family to the bazar. My wife having for some hours waited in vain for their return, became anxious about them, and fearing they were lost, informed me of her apprehension. I immediately sent some people in quest of them, but the people returned without having been able to trace either the girl or the boy. Night came, and neither of them appeared. In fact, they were lost, and we never heard any thing of them till 1812, when my wife, following me to Macassar, stopt at Samarang, where, one day, she was surprised to behold the very girl lying at her feet, imploring her pardon for having kidnapped Amsterdam (such was the name of the boy), and carried him to the Bougheese town, to a Boughee, who was to sell him, and to divide with her the produce of the sale. But the Boughee had been more cunning than herself; he had kept her into the bargain, and sold her together with the boy to a Malay slave-trader from Java, who carried them with others to Samarang for sale. The boy had died since, and she being now old, her master, a Dutch gentleman, of the name of Van der Burgh, had given her liberty to shift for herself. She begged my wife to take her to Macassar; but she had behaved so very ill, that her request could not be prudently complied with.

In the report of the Dutch Committee, mention is made of Bondsmen; what sort of persons they are, I think it necessary to explain. That name is given to natives, who, for a certain sum pawn either themselves, their wives, children, brothers, sisters, or other relatives. The sum, for a single person, never exceeds twenty-five, or thirty Spanish rix dollars. The rate is in proportion to the price which the person pawned may fetch by being sold, in case the debt when due should not be discharged.

These poor people sometimes are horribly situated. If they are young, and bound for labour within the house of the pawnbroker, they are obliged, not only to work more than the slaves with whom they are associated, but every article, which they either spoil, break, or lose, is put to the account of their debt; and it very often happens, that a person being pawned for ten Spanish rix dollars, the debt in the course of one year increases to twenty or twenty-five. When such a person becomes sick, he who pawned him is obliged immediately either to pay the debt, or to supply in his room another person of the same description. If the person pawned, whether man or woman, proves unable to defray, by daily labour, not only the interest of the money for which he or she is pawned, but also the cost of the food he or she receives, and if the debt then is not discharged in a certain space of time provided for such a case in the deed of pawn, that person is carried to the chief interpreter, before the native court, expressly appointed to take cognizance of, and to adjust all differences of that kind. Of that court, the Governor is properly the president, though he never sits himself at it. The chief interpreter, who acts in the Governor's name, lays afterwards all such cases and proceedings upon them, with the opinion of the Court in writing, before him, which he either approves or disapproves, according to the explanation which the chief interpreter pleases to give him. Before that Court the person pawned is brought, and a secret fee of five or ten rix dollars, according to circumstances, added to the ordinary fees of the procedure, will always influence the chief interpreter to cause the native members of the Court, who fear him more than the Governor, to pronounce such person a legal slave, as not being able to pay his debt. The pawnbroker, in consequence, receives a deed from the Native Court, signed by the chief interpreter, and by the Malay secretary, instituting him lawful master of such person, and declaring that person to be his legal slave.

It sometimes happens, however, that such Bondsmen will stand up against their oppressor. Of this an instance occurred in 1796, with three Javanese bound

to a Dutch junior merchant, of the name of Vermeulen. This gentleman had not very long before arrived from Samarang, whence he had brought with him, the three pawned men, who being shoemakers, were employed by him to make shoes for the Macassar inhabitants. He had come furnished with a great quantity of leather, and as he gave to his three workmen only food, clothing, and a few doits for betel per week, he could sell cheaper than any other shoemaker in the place, and had, of course, considerable demands; so that the three pawned journeymen were obliged to work almost all day and night, to satisfy the customers of their master, as well as his own insatiable avarice. This hard labour, daily accompanied by a good flogging, and had food, could no longer be endured by them. One day then that Mr. Vermeulen was dining out at the Governor's, they formed the plan of throwing off the yoke of bondage by flight, but not before they had taken ample revenge upon their master's wife. Fortunately, Mrs. Vermeulen, who had gone up stairs into her bed-room to take her afternoon's nap, had not forgot to secure, as usual, the door inside. She had not been long on her bed, when the unhappy desperadoes, with their shoe-knives in hand, came to the door of the room in which she was lying. Mrs. Vermeulen, on hearing the noise made to force the door, had no doubt but that it was an *emock* of the three bondsmen, produced by the ill-treatment they had received from her husband. She jumped out of bed, and opening the window on the street, she gave the alarm to the people below, and to the passengers in the street, who immediately ran to the Government House, close by, and gave notice of what was going on. The unfortunate desperadoes seeing they could not succeed in forcing the door, and in avenging their wrongs upon Mrs. Vermeulen, had, as soon as the alarm was given, retreated and climbed to the roof of the house, with an intention, as it was supposed, to keep their station there with their knives in their hands till the night, when they could steal away from roof to roof, to a place of shelter, and having escaped the search of their master, go back to Java. But fate had decreed it otherwise! The body-guard of the Go-

vernor were ordered to lead their muskets and to shoot them down. They did so; and in less than three minutes, the miserable victims fell from the roof of the house, and lay on the ground wetting in their blood. They died almost instantly. The executioner was sent for, and dragged them by a rope tied to their feet, along the road to the sea-side, whence he carried them over to the Gallows Island, and hung them up by their legs.

I could relate several more instances of the same kind, were I not afraid of disgusting the public with such horrible stories. I trust I have said enough to convince my readers of the atrocity of the traffic in human flesh, not only in itself, but still more in the abominable consequences which attend it.

I must own, however, that had the salutary orders, successively given by the Court of Directors for the management of the affairs of the Dutch East-India Company to the Supreme Government at Batavia, been faithfully put into execution; had the purchase and sale of slaves, according to these orders, been limited to such persons only as were really born in slavery; and had the avarice of the traders been properly restricted to the purchase of slaves, proved to be so by a strict and impartial examination, the horrors of the trade could never have risen to such a height, as at length to become the source of inexpressible misery to numberless innocent people; and, at the same time, to depopulate the country of almost half its inhabitants. To my knowledge, there were annually carried off from the island, to Java, and to the other Eastern settlements, no less than four thousand persons, a just cause of the blame, which on that account, the Dutch drew upon themselves from the other nations of Europe. A well-regulated trade would, on the contrary, have been of great utility and convenience to the inhabitants of Java, and of other places; but more particularly of Macassar, where the natives have an insurmountable aversion to serve Europeans. But how could any regulation stand, when the public officers, whose duty it was to attend to the strict performance of the orders issued for the prevention of all abuses, were, by the temptation of presents and of fees, prevailed upon to con-

nive at every, not only secret, but even public transgression of those useful and wholesome orders.

Trusting that my readers will, in favour of the motive, pardon the weakness of my efforts in serving the cause of humanity by a faithful, though imperfect exposure of the outrages it suffered from the combined avarice of the slave-traders, and of their official accomplices, I beg leave to recom-

mand this little work to the kind consideration of a generous and enlightened community.

THE TRANSLATOR.

* * * It is truly wonderful how the writer of the foregoing article could finally reason himself into a persuasion of the expediency of a "WELL-REGULATED [SLAVE] TRADE!!"

THE PIECE OF GOLD.

It is well known that Hariri is the most celebrated, at the same time that he is the most difficult to be understood of the Arabian writers. The orientalisists of Europe have long desired to see an edition of this author, accompanied with a commentary for the elucidation of the text. Baron Silvestre de Sacy has indeed accomplished this desire in a most satisfactory manner; but the reading of his work is confined to the circle of learned orientalisists. It is for those who are learning Arabic, and for general readers, that M. Garcin de Tassy has attempted the translation of the fifty entertainments of the celebrated Hariri. M. Garcin de Tassy is already known among the orientalisists by the translation of an Arabian allegoric poem, entitled "The Birds and the Flowers," by Azz-eddin el Mocaddezy;* by an Exposition of the Musulman faith, translated from the Turkish of El Berkevi; and by various other translations from the Persian.

The extract here translated will give some idea of the nature of the work of Hariri. It is expedient to remark, for the information of such readers as are unacquainted with the writings of this celebrated Arabian poet, that the author supposes that a man named *Abouzaïd* gains his living by reciting verses *extempore*, and he travels for this purpose through many towns of

Asia and Africa, adopting all languages, and assuming all characters. The work is composed of fifty different adventures, which form as many chapters, wherein our hero enters always *incognito*, repeats his verses, and finishes by being recognized by the narrator.

THE PIECE OF GOLD.

(Extracted from the "Entertainments" of Hariri, now first translated from the Arabic by M. GARCIN DE TASSY, Assistant Secretary and Librarian to the Société Asiatique of Paris.)

I happened to be one day in an assembly consisting of men as intellectual as they were amiable. Among them the torch of genius never failed to emit its brilliant sparks, and the heat of disputation did not extinguish its devouring flames. The conversation was on literary subjects, when suddenly a lame man wearing the garb of misery entered the hall where we were sitting, and approaching us, he recited with most extraordinary eloquence the relation of the misfortunes which he suffered, and finished by imploring our generosity.*

Being touched with compassion at his words, I was desirous of relieving his misery; and astounded at the manner in which he related the history of his misfortunes and the happy choice of his expressions, it occurred to me to inquire of him

* In the text this man makes a long discourse, full of a play upon words and metaphors, quite impossible to translate, which terminates with these words. "Yea, I swear by him who made me come from the tribe of Kalla, that I am the brother of poverty." For this reason, Hariri has denominated this entertainment or adventure, "the Kalla;" others entitle it "The Piece of Gold."

* This work is published in 8vo. and sold by Messrs. Kingsbury, Parbury and Allen, London-hall Street; and by Treussel and Warts, 30; Soho Square. Price 10s. 6d.