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1822.

news to the Governor from the god of war. This was no other than a messenger from one of the Company's cruisers outside of the harbour, announcing that a Malay fleet of 100 sail of prows and upwards was in sight, and appeared to be bearing down on the island. You may judge that all was bustle and confusion; the alarm bell was rung; fires were lighted on the hill; the houses illuminated; the soldiers called out; and orders sent to the ships in the harbour to load and double shot their guns. In this state we have been all day, and now, at eight at night, the prows are still in sight. I know not how it will end, but I will keep this open and write you. By the bye, I must send this from Singapore, as no ship is likely to sail soon from hence.

Dec. 28.—An opportunity offers quite unexpectedly of sending this to Calcutta, and of course I embrace it. The island is now again quite tranquil, the prows having left it, and I expect we shall leave it on the 2d or 3d of January 1822. I write this from Quedah, where we have a tent, and are engaged in a tiger hunt.—*Hurkaru.*

MALACCA.

RELEASE OF SLAVES.

To the Editor of the Penang Gazette.

"Sir: The effect of custom on the human mind is truly astonishing. Things which at first make us shudder with horror, or redden with shame, by custom and interest become first bearable, then expedient, and finally indispensable. Such, in my humble opinion, is the case with the detestable traffic in human flesh, blood, and bones, commonly softened down by the gentler (but still revolting) epithet of "the slave trade." Happily for the colony of Malacca, this detestable traffic is declining, and its requiem will, I trust, ere another generation roll away, be most gratefully chanted. The importation of slaves was always prohibited since I have been in Malacca, and since the close of 1819, there have been none born slaves in the colony. This is truly a delightful consideration. The moment they are born, they are free! This is, indeed, the natural right of every human being, but it is now recognized as such by law; and though there may be instances in which interested individuals will clandestinely violate this as well as any other law, yet it cannot be often done with impunity. There is, however, still something more to be done; and it is pleasing to see individuals, both in and out of the colony, setting free some of those to whom the emancipation did not extend: I mean those who were actually slaves in the close of 1819. It is desirable to give all due publicity of such acts of benevolence, in order to induce

other persons to "go and do likewise." For this purpose I have much pleasure in communicating to you the following particulars for general information.

"In the course of last week Isaac Zecharias, an Armenian merchant of Madras, who has for many years traded to Manilla, on his way to the latter place, seeing some slaves put up here to be sold by public auction, was so moved with the sight, that he purchased eleven of them (whether more were put up I know not), and gave them all instantly their liberty; and, as I have understood, made, or is to make, some provision for those of them that are growing old and infirm. The importance of giving an education to the youngest ones was suggested to Mr. Zecharias, and he has partly promised to do so at a future time. But no delay should have taken place; they should have been at once placed at school: it would have rendered the work more complete, and in every respect more worthy of its benevolent author. I sincerely hope that Mr. Z.'s life may be spared, to render this additional service to them. In so far, however, he is entitled to the cordial thanks of the Christian public, and of all lovers of humanity; and some token of public approbation and respect should, in my humble view of the case, be paid to such worthy individuals, in order to encourage them, and to induce others to follow their example.

"In connection with the topic of this paper, are the following anecdotes and reflections relative to the manner in which slaves are seized and dragged away from their country; and which were penned about two years ago, under peculiar sensations of mind. I hope you and your readers will excuse the style of language in which I offer them to you: you may rely on the authenticity of them.

"A short time ago I asked a slave woman, now (1819) alive in Malacca, about her country, and the manner in which she was taken away from it. She said, 'I was married, and had three children in my country. As I, with my eldest children, and twenty-one other persons, were reaping a paddy field near the sea, we were surprised by a number of persons who rushed upon us from their boats, and seized and bound all they could: With parangs (a sort of hatchet) they killed several of the men, who either wished to resist, or were attempting to escape. I and my two children were taken and bound fast, and we were all gagged, by a kind of belt, firmly fastened from the top of the head down under the chin, so that we could neither cry nor speak; after which we were dragged to the boat, and carried away we know not whither.' I then asked her whether there was no police on the coast of her country to prevent such

atrocities. She answered to this effect: "The persons who come and steal away people, come professedly with the view of trading; when they happen to steal children and others at a little distance from the coast, having gagged them, they fasten up their feet and legs to the body, put them into a bag, and carry them between two men, the bag being suspended to a long elastic pole placed on the men's shoulders. If any one meet them, and inquire what they have got, they answer, "*a babbe*," i.e. pig! and are suffered to pass." I then asked her whether she ever thought of her country, husband, and child at home? Her eyes filled with tears: she looked up to the clouds, sighed deeply, and said nothing. But what language could be so impressive, or so loud in the ears of humanity, as these tears, looks, and sighs! I pointed her to the God who reigns above the clouds, the universal Father. told her of Jesus, who descended from Heaven to redeem sinful men; advised her to be obedient to her master and mistress, and faithful to whatever trust they reposed in her. I then returned home, looked round on my own four little babes, and said in my heart, 'Ah! my dear lambs, shall it ever be your lot to be thus torn, with a rapacious and cruel hand, from your father's home, tied and bound, carried to some distant shore, and there sold like horses and oxen? Heaven avert it! Yet what are you better than this poor woman and her children, whose story I have been hearing?' The very thought tore my heart with anguish, and made me feel grateful to God for the wise regulations under which we live, and the protection which the laws afford to persons and property. Another woman told me as follows: 'I was married in Borneo; the Rajah of Banjer Massain, having obtained the victory in battle over our Rajah, my husband and myself were taken prisoners, and sent to work as slaves in the fields, along with multitudes of others. Some time after I was forced away from my husband, and sent along with eleven others to Malacca, as a present to a European merchant. From my husband and relatives I have never since heard, though it is now sixteen years.' Here the poor old worn-out creature lifted up her eyes and hands to Heaven, and floods of tears rushed down her cheeks.

"A slave man of twenty-three years of age told me that he was clandestinely imported, since the law prohibiting fresh importation of slaves was passed, in the following manner: 'I am originally of the Macassar nation; I was in a trading prow at Rhio. Walking on the beach one evening, I was overtaken by two Malays, who invited me on board their prow to eat betel. Not suspecting any thing, I went. Having eaten and amused myself till late,

they gave me something to drink, which made me very sleepy: I fell asleep; but alas! on waking, found myself in a strange vessel; saw beams and boards above my head, and when I wished to rise, found my feet fastened together with iron cords. I perceived, from the speech of some persons above my head, that they were not Malays; and after three days and nights, a man with a white face, and a native man, with long ear-rings, at night opened a hole above, and having fixed a ladder, came down with a candle; they felt my hands and sides, and inspected the soles of my feet, and looked me often in the face. During the night I was taken into a small prow, and carried up a river to the country; from which, after two months, I was brought down to town, and told I was now a slave. At night, I was for several months fastened by an iron cord and locked to a large block of wood, until my master began to think the danger of running away was over. In this condition I remained for eight years. Thank God and the Governor, I have now, since the law about slave-dealers, got my liberty.' Another instance occurred also within my own knowledge. A Siamese, who had been taken in war by the Malays, was carried to Perah, and there sold for two bags of rice! (commonly not worth more than four dollars). His master clandestinely imported him into the colony, and kept him working on his farm for nearly eight years, and most likely would have done so for life, had not a person lately dared to be the slave's friend, and procured his release, in consequence of the law relative to slave-dealers.

"The present is a happy age; most civilized nations in the west and in their eastern possessions begin to cherish the noble idea of putting a stop to this vilest of all abominations that ever stained the name of commerce, I mean the barter, or sale of flesh and blood. It is a most happy circumstance for these countries, that the Dutch Government have agreed to the treaty for the abolition of the Slave Trade. It is to be hoped they will take all prudent means to effect so desirable an object. It cannot, indeed, be done in a day, but attempts may be made, and there is no doubt of final success. I now conclude, hoping and praying that slavery, in all its forms, may speedily terminate. In the mean time, education should be given to this class of the community; they should not, in any part of the world, be denied lawful marriage, and thus laid under a sort of necessity to live in fornication. Religion should be taught them; they should be considered and treated as human beings.

"I am, Mr. Editor,

Malacca, Sept. 1821. "A FATHER."

"P.S. It will afford me the highest pleasure, at any future time, to give you early

notice of any other similar instance of humanity, of the liberation of slaves, or of any attempt to educate and improve them in morals, which may occur within the sphere of my observation."

SINGAPORE.

Having just received a very valuable communication on the condition and prospects of our infant settlement of Singapore, we commit it to the press without other comment than an assurance that it is from a most respectable quarter, and that we have reason to think our readers may depend on the correctness of all that is advanced in it.—*John Bull.*

Extract of a Letter dated on board the ship
—, Singapore Roads, 1st Nov. 1821.

"Having stopped and obtained here as much freight as we had room for, our consequent detention has been sufficient to enable me fully to gratify the curiosity I had to see this infant and much talked of settlement, and transmit you a faithful account of it. Greatly as my expectations were raised by all I have heard in its praise, I cannot say they have been attended with disappointment, as too frequently happens in such cases; on the contrary, I think that its central and sheltered situation in the heart of the eastern countries and islands, where it is not inaptly called by the natives the *navel* thereof, and in a Strait through which vessels to and from various parts are constantly passing, and cannot pass without going close to it, the facility with which goods can at all times be shipped or landed, the goodness of the water and soil, the abundance of wood, and the extreme salubrity of the climate, besides other natural advantages, as well as many resources and capabilities, all conspire to render its selection, for the purpose for which it is intended, a most eligible one.

"My astonishment on finding so large a population of Chinese, Bugis, Malays, &c. comfortably settled and industriously employed on an island that, for ages past, has been covered with impenetrable forests, and known only by name to European navigators, was much increased on my being assured that this sudden conversion of woods and solitude into a cleared and inhabited country, a thriving and busy port, had been the work of only a few months after the judicious occupation of it, by its enterprising and intelligent founder, who was deputed to carry into effect the wise and enlightened views of a superior authority, by fixing that foundation of Eastern commerce and civilization for which Singapore is so well calculated; the great uncertainty of its retention by the British which subsequently prevailed having checked all further advancement. The late favourable Report,

however, of the Select Committee of the Lords, on the opinion of the Foreign Trade of Great Britain, in as far as relates to Singapore, seems to have inspired such a confidence on the part of the European and some of the more opulent Chinese merchants, of an ultimate, if not speedy, confirmation of the port, as to induce them to commence the erection of permanent and substantial houses and godowns. The less adventurous Armenians, Arab, Chuliah, and other traders, will no doubt soon follow the example; and as the soil, shores, and forests of Singapore furnish an inexhaustible quantity of bricks, tiles, slate, stones, lime and timber, of an excellent quality, we may soon look for a well-built town, with numerous and convenient wharfs along the banks of the river, or rather inlet of the sea, contiguous to which the principal mercantile part of it is marked out, and already partly occupied with the warehouses of some of the individuals to whom portions have been allotted. This inlet penetrates far into the interior, in a winding course; is about three hundred feet wide towards its mouth, has regular tides, which rise twelve feet at the springs, and is capable of admitting vessels of at least two hundred and fifty tons, I myself having just witnessed the dropping out of it of an Arab ship of that burthen.

"Between the inlet and a parallel rivulet on the right as you land, and at the distance of a quarter of a mile, there is a nearly square plain (the greater part of which is appropriated for a cantonment), faced with a high sandy beach, free from surf, and terminated on the inner side by a steep hill, of a sufficient elevation to possess a beautiful and commanding view of the surrounding country and the straits, and which has been cleared preparatory to the erection of a Residency House on it. On the further side of the inlet is, on one hand, a regularly built Chinese town; and on the other, beyond the rivulet, is an extensive plain, in front of which the sandy beach before-mentioned stretches into an inner bay, and whence another inlet resembling a river encompasses it behind. The nearer part of this plain is marked out for a European town, and intersected by roads at right angles to each other. That more remote is partly occupied by the Bugis and Malays, &c.; and it is there the Sultan resides.

"The interior of the island, which, from a late general survey by the Resident, is found to be several times larger than was supposed or is laid down in the charts, consists of an undulating mixture of hills and dales, which when cleared and diversified with various growths, will render it both interesting and valuable. Plantations of gambier, pepper and spices are already making their appearance in many parts of