

STRUGGLES
THROUGH
L I F E,
EXEMPLIFIED
IN THE
VARIOUS TRAVELS AND ADVENTURES
IN
EUROPE, ASIA, AFRICA, and AMERICA,
OF
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Formerly of Rochford, in Essex; now Resident-Magistrate of the
THAMES-POLICE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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## CHAPTER XLIV.

*Arrive at Acheen ; introduced to the sultan ; large cannon half sunk in the earth, evidence of greater strength formerly ; an enormous gun over the gate-way of the palace.*

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AT Acheen, and all the Malay ports along the coast of Sumatra, I found an order of men distinct from any I had ever met with before. Compared with the inhabitants of India proper, across the Bay, they appeared completely savage, ferocious, and exceedingly sanguinary in all their punishments. I had an opportunity of examining them attentively, from a novel kind of introduction by Captain P——, which, as he had hinted at Madras, would serve his interests and occasion me a pleasant reception from the Malay chiefs. To this end, he had Sepoy uniforms made for some of the Lascars belonging to the ship, who were to appear as my body-guard as often as required.

On Captain P——'s going on shore at Acheen, he waited upon the sultan's agent for regulations of the port ; acquainting him, a British officer was on board the ship, who, from a strong desire to pay his respects to the Great Sultan of

Acheen, before he returned to England, had crossed the bay for such purpose, but would not land until assured of a reception suitable to the dignity of the great monarch he served. This compliment was well suited to the meridian of Acheen.

By the sultan's orders, a boat, or rather a barge, was sent off to the ship; in which boat were the agent and several officers of his court, who invited me, in the sultan's name, to grace his palace. The ship's guns saluted them as they came on board; saluted me on leaving the ship, attended by my guard; and, on approaching the shore, we were so closely saluted by guns of an enormous calibre, that we would gladly have excused the compliment of being fired at so near our heads. On landing, I was met by an Indian Portuguese, a resident merchant, who spoke English fluently: he was to act as interpreter. Other officers of the court were with him, to receive and attend me to the palace; on entering which, the guns of the palace fired another salute, which was repeated by the guns on a battery and by the ship.

The ceremonies of introduction to princes of the East were grown familiar to me, and I plainly observed that my regimental uniform was a novel attraction to the sultan and all his court. I was most graciously received, and acknowledge I rather exceeded the truth when repeating what

Captain P—— had advanced, respecting my desire to see so great a sultan before I left India; and I believe the little that I did say was considerably enlarged upon by the Portuguese merchant, who, I understood afterwards, was as much interested in my favourable reception as Captain P——; for, without permission from the sultan, no ship was allowed to trade, and was frequently refused until considerable presents were made: all which was smoothed down, and the permission obtained, through my means.

Within a week, Captain P—— was enabled to dispose of such part of his cargo as suited the Malay market, (opium and blue long-cloths in exchange for gold-dust, &c.) to great advantage to himself and the Portuguese merchant, who acted as his factor. During this, my time was partly occupied in rambling about, having three Malay attendants to escort and shew me where I liked; and partly by attending to the sultan, who invited me every day to a short conference, and to chew chenam and beetle-nut with him. Our conversations were not very edifying, conducted through the medium of an interpreter, and consisting of short questions and answers, more of curiosity than any thing else. However, my time altogether passed pleasantly, having a table well supplied by direction of the Portuguese, with female slaves to attend.

From the number of large cannon I observed in my rambles and rides, (most of them half sunk in the earth from lying there so long,) it was evident that Acheen had been a place of greater note formerly, and much better fortified; yet the ignorance of the inhabitants respecting these guns was astonishing. That they were of European manufacture I had no doubt, though the Malays would not allow this, notwithstanding they could give no account how or when they were brought. But, as a proof of their capability of performing greater things, they pointed to an enormous large cannon, placed on high over the great gate-way at the entrance to the palace; a cannon, which I believe no European would claim the manufacturing of. It was big enough for a stout man to go into with ease; very coarse and clumsy, both inside and out; and there were a few stone balls lying near, very suitable in appearance to the piece of ordnance they were made for. This, as I understood, was only to be discharged when an enemy approached in front of the gate: it had never yet been fired; and, to say the truth, I would rather have been the object fired at than the person to fire it.

## CHAPTER XLV.

*Malay punishments; precautions necessary to guard against surprise from Malay pirates; running a muck; jealousy and savage revenge; singular ordeal of Malays accused of adultery.*

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In my first walks about Acheen, particularly in the buzar, or market-place, I was surprised to see so many cripples, some without hands and feet; many with the loss of either one hand or one foot; and others with the loss of two. On inquiry, I found they were all culprits, punished, according to the enormity of the offence which they had committed, by the cutting, or rather chopping, off a hand or foot. Some of them, by a repetition of offences, had been so often punished as to have neither hand nor foot left, and thus far were rendered nearly incapable of committing farther offences. But the most extraordinary circumstance, as it appeared to me, was the account I received of their mode of treating the stump of the leg, after the foot was literally chopped off by an instrument, at one stroke, a little above the ankle. A bamboo cane was prepared, ready suited to the size and length of the culprit's leg; the hollow of which

cane was nearly filled with heated dammer.\* The instant the punishment was inflicted, by lopping off the limb, the bleeding stump was thrust into this heated resin within the bamboo, which, as it cooled, became fixed; and thus, if the victim to the law lived, he was provided with an excellent bamboo jury-leg, to stump about on. Many, I have no doubt, died; but of that the Malays were very indifferent.

After leaving Acheen, we touched at other Malay ports along the coast. Those, that were in subjection to the Sultan of Acheen, received and traded with Captain P—— very readily. I was considered as the great man, and accordingly treated with great respect.

At other Malay ports, independant of Acheen, and some of them said to be at war with the sultan, Captain P—— was not only refused permission to traffic, but we were obliged to keep a strong guard on deck, day and night, to prevent being taken by surprise. We, therefore, never allowed more than one Malay boat, at a time, to be along side the ship; and even to the few that came on board, six or eight at a time, it was deemed necessary to shew we were well armed. Every free Malay man wears his creese constantly in the sash, or girdle, round his waist;

\* A resinous kind of substance, something like pitch, but apparently of a harder nature and not so ready to melt.

and many ships have been cut off and every soul murdered by these blood-thirsty savages, after coming on board as friends to trade, &c., when they have found the people of the ship negligent and off their guard.

There is no doubt of the Malays practising that most singular and barbarous custom of running a muck; but, as I saw no instance myself, and there are accounts given by others who have, I shall briefly explain it, for the information of those who may not understand the term.

A Malay man, who abandons himself to despair from any cause, though it most commonly proceeds from the ruin attending his extreme propensity to gambling, takes opium until producing phrenzy; and then, with dishevelled hair, he draws his creese, and, running along, stabs and destroys all he meets, until he is destroyed himself.

The Malays are savagely jealous, and revenge themselves by assassinating the party they suspect, even without proof; but, on actual detection, the injured Malay kills both the man and woman if he can. The woman is sure to fall a sacrifice; and, should the man escape at the time, being accused thereof and suspected to be guilty, he has to go through an ordeal from which few can escape with life.

He is taken to a large open spot, where every Malay in the neighbourhood, who wears a creese, attends. A ring is formed, according to the number assembled, and the delinquent is placed in the centre. If he can make his way through these surrounding opponents, all armed with their creeses, and then, by flight, can reach a certain tree as his sanctuary, he is deemed innocent and escapes. If he makes no attempt to escape, the circle is drawn in closer and nearer, until one or more stab him with their creeses. His best chance, therefore, is to start off at first, before the ranks thicken by the drawing in of the circle. I saw nothing of this ceremony, but was shewn a tree said to be one of these sanctuaries. I understood likewise, that there was pretty frequent cause for jealousy, notwithstanding the threatened penalties.